



Colac & District
Family History Group Inc.

Coladjins

Inc. No. A0022664A ABN 29618437272

Winter Year 2018 Issue 105



1914-1918



Nursing Life at the Colac Hospital

When one of the nurses graduated at the Colac Hospital in 1926, her friends helped to celebrate by staging a mock wedding. This photograph showing a lighter side of nursing life in the country, was recently donated to our group, along with postcards and letters. The impressive outfits were creatively cobbled together from any items the nurses could find and borrow. Officiating at the “wedding” was a “parson” dressed in an old black skirt, a doctor’s gown, two sister’s caps for sleeves, a black scarf and an evening wrap for the back piece. Nurse Bell, the “groom”, wore her brother’s best suit and “bride” Reta Goudie, wore an “Irish lace” veil, which was a mosquito net, and carried a native selection for her bouquet - gum leaves and capeweed. Following the “ceremony” breakfast was held in the sitting room. Reta, the letter-writer, undertook nursing training in Colac, passing her final examination in mid 1927.

Written to a male friend, the letters described her work, leisure time and various events in Colac such as Easter 1925. “Colac was quite gay during Easter - Dances, Carnivals, Picture nights and Concerts. The weather was delightful and everybody seemed to have the real holiday spirit. The hospital had 35 fowls, 4 ducks, 2 turkeys, and 15 puddings, so you can imagine what a beautiful Easter Sunday’s dinner the patients and staff alike enjoyed”. In contrast, her nursing duties were not always as joyful. Rostered in the Isolation Ward Reta wrote “there is an epidemic of scarlet fever, some very bad cases, a dear wee girlie died yesterday”. In March 1928, Reta married journalist Joseph Larkin who had also been working in Colac, living at Orient House. The couple settled in Melbourne and the following year she gave birth to a son. It is not known if Reta resumed her nursing career after her marriage.

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Opening Times

Monday & Tuesday 10:00am to 2:00pm

Thursday, Friday 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Sunday 2:00pm to 4:00pm

Closed Public Holidays

Out of hours opening by arrangement

Dates to Remember

NOTE New meeting date

Tuesday 11 September 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

◇ General Meeting

◇ Acknowledgement of Past and Present
Volunteers

◇ Afternoon Tea

Friday 7 September - History Centre

◇ All contributions for the next
newsletter are due



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PRINTING OF THE NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is kindly printed by the staff at the office of Richard Riordan MP, member for Polwarth. We appreciate the support.

Cover Story

Thanks to Susan Voutier and her family for their generous donations of letters, postcards and the photograph and for providing some background information.



John Reginald Lane, Solicitor

John Reginald Lane, solicitor, had the good fortune to be raised at Coffleet House, Yealhampton, situated in the Devon countryside.

Wealthy solicitor Thomas Veale had purchased the property during the 1700s and having no living children at the time of his death bequeathed Coffleet, along with several other estates to his nephew, John's grandfather, Thomas Lane.

The properties were later inherited by John's father, Richard Lane,

John was born about 1820, the second son of Rev Richard Lane and his wife, Lucy Dennys. They had a large family of thirteen children, with elev-



Watercolour of "Coffleet" seat of Lane Esq.

Kindly provided by the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office



Brixton Church where John was baptised regularly worshipped.

en surviving to adulthood. John's father was minister at the Brixton Church where the family regularly worshipped.

As the second son, John would not stand to reap any benefits from the family's dwindling inheritance, and he embarked on a career in the law.

In 1838, at just 18 years of age, he registered as a clerk for Attorney Charles Cobleby Whiteford of Coffleet and by 1843 he was admitted as an Attorney. In the 1851 census, John aged 30, solicitor, and his maid were living at 100 Market

Terrace, Newton Abbey, about 40 kilometres from Corffleet.

Between 1851 and 1853 John chose to emigrate to Australia, first settling in Geelong, where he went into partnership with Davenport Welch Collyns, "Attorneys, Solicitors and Proctors".

The partnership was dissolved in 1857.

During this time, John represented several men who had the misfortune to become insolvent.

Whether through bad luck, or bad management, two years after the dissolution of the business, John was also declared insolvent.

The Hon Redmond Barry Esq. placed the estate under sequestration and the situation was dire.

John had assets of just ten pounds and liabilities of 2665 pounds 10 shillings and 5 pence. The reasons given for the insolvency were, "pressure of creditors and threatened arrest".

Five months later John applied for a certificate of discharge from his debts and it is possibly around this time that he made his way to Colac.

The insolvency didn't appear to affect John's legal career, and in the early 1860s he was appointed to the interesting role of "Commissioner for taking acknowledgements of married women" and in

A Special Project of the Colac & District Family History Group

Almost Forgotten Pre-1900 Burials in the Colac Cemetery



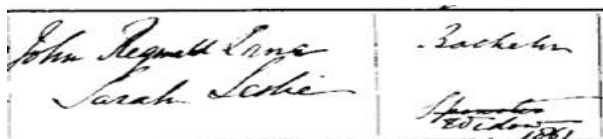
John Reginald Lane cont.

1863 was one of ten gentlemen elected to the Victorian Law Institute. A puzzling court case was brought by John against William Archer of Colac in that same year, taking offence at being accused of “living with another man’s wife, or with a married woman”, and with “having been in prison for some time”. It seems John brought the case before the court because he found William Archer’s accusations to be “irritative”. The bench fined William 3 pounds and 5 shillings costs. The case is puzzling, because it appears that some or perhaps all of the accusations could have been correct.



All Saints Church, St Kilda

On a hot, stormy Saturday in Melbourne, January, 1869, John married “widow” Sarah Leslie, maiden name Williams, at All Saints Church, St Kilda. In fact Sarah was not a widow, she was still married to George Leslie, who she had married at St Peters Melbourne in 1856. On the certificate



that both John and Sarah signed, a line has been crossed through “spinster” and replaced with “widow 1861”, neither being a true account of her marital status at the time.

John and Sarah resumed living in Colac where he continued with his legal practice.

John’s father had died in 1858 and his mother died in 1873. They are buried in the grounds of the Brixton Church where Rev Richard Lane preached for 58 years.

John went back to England for health reasons in the mid 1870s and after returning to Colac, continued to work until shortly before his death. On February 3, 1886, John retired to rest and shortly afterward was “attacked with paralysis”. He died a few hours later.

In his obituary, John was described as “very old and respected resident of the district”. Also “he was justly and deservedly respected by a large circle of friends and his death will be regretted by many”. The funeral took place at Colac Cemetery yet there is no record of where he was buried or a headstone to mark his grave. There does not seem to have been a will.

Sarah continued to live in in Polwarth Street until mid 1897 when she sold her property and household effects. She moved to Geelong where she

H. M. HEARN has received instructions from Mrs Lane (who is leaving Colac) to **SELL** by **AUCTION**—
The whole of her **HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE AND EFFECTS** consisting of—
Tables, Chairs, Bedssteads, Washstands, Couch, Sideboard, Crockery, Kitchen Utensils, &c., &c.
3 Allotments of Land adjoining her house
For Positive Sale.

died in 1923, aged 96 years. She was buried in Geelong. Sarah left no will and her total estate consisted of a small amount of cash and jewellery and a few household effects, to a total value of twenty pounds, twelve shillings and five pence. *Addendum: Sarah’s first husband remarried in 1875 and stated that he was a “widower”.*

We thank Samantha Tucker, researcher from Devon, for her photographs and assistance with the Lane family history in Devon and Laeonie David, descendant of the second marriage of George Leslie, Sarah’s first husband.

VISITS FROM MEREDITH & BELLARINE

We recently had the pleasure of hosting visits from Meredith History Interest Group and the Bellarine Historical Society. Representatives from both groups spent a day with our volunteers exchanging ideas and checking how we work. We were very fortunate that our mayor, Cr Joe McCracken, was interested to learn about the Bellarine visitors and



Liz and Norma with ladies from Meredith

popped in to welcome them to Colac.

Our members have been digitising our collection

for many years now and the database has almost 300,000 entries.

(Watch for major announcement pending when that milestone is reached!)

We talked about how we have recently undertaken a huge audit to be able to itemise exactly what work has been done and prioritise in the future. We also discussed issues common to all groups: workload, attracting and maintaining new members, recruiting volunteers, and charging fees for research and other services.



Cr McCracken welcomes Bellarine Group

GARDENING AND FAMILY HISTORY

1. Like gardening, your tree is NEVER finished
2. Both involve LOTS of digging
3. Like gardening, from time to time you do have to prune branches off your tree
4. There's no doubt about it ... both gardening and family treeing take time
5. Like weeding, every little you can do helps you see results
6. Like gardening, it's super exciting when you discover something new – something you didn't know existed
7. Not sure about you, but I love colour, both in my garden, and in my family history. And as researchers we love those colourful characters don't we!
8. Like gardening, from little things big things grow (well that's the theory, and it sometimes works)! Start with a name or two ... and in time you'll have a family tree
9. Like actual trees, some family trees are spread wide, while others are narrow but tall (more direct line type trees)
10. When gardening you'll come across different soil types. Some nice and soft, others like clay hard or with lots of rocks. Obviously when planting there, they take more effort and more time to nurture what grows there. This reminds me of brick wall. it's do-able, but they take a lot more time and effort.
11. There will ALWAYS be weeds in your garden, and in your family tree as well. They are those you need to verify if they are actually part of your tree or not (eg. which of the five William Slater's born in a particular village within a five year period is yours?)
12. Just like gardening, you'll need different tools for the job when doing your family history (a family tree program, websites, charts to fill in, guide books, original records and so on)
13. If you're like me you probably work on different sections of the garden, depending on what catches your eye at the time ... the same goes with genealogy. Multiple different trees, or branches, not to mention the BSO (Bright Shiny Objects) we get sidetracked by
14. Like gardening, if you don't 'tend' to your family tree (aka keep working on it) it can get out of control
15. Enjoy the fruits of your labour. Sit back every now and then and take in all the hard work that you've done with researching, and think of the amazing legacy you've created for the next generation.

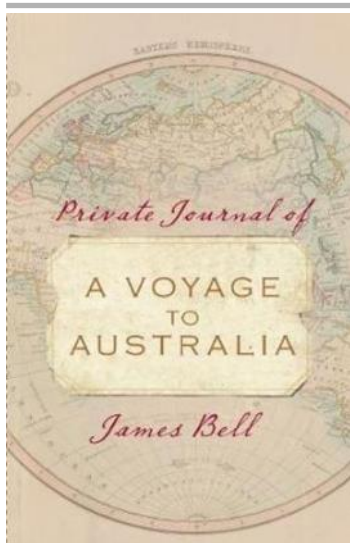
So there you go. Gardening is not unlike genealogy at all. So next time you're out in the garden (which could be a while for me, as winter is starting to set in) ... just think of how similar it is to you doing family history.

Happy gardening

Reprinted with permission. Originally published by Alona www.lonetester.com/2018/05/15-reasons-that-genealogy-is-like-gardening/

BOOK REVIEW - A VOYAGE TO AUSTRALIA

Private Journal of James Bell



An interesting and honest account of the journey of James Bell, an Intermediate passenger, on board “the Planter” from St Katharine Docks London to Port Adelaide in 1838/9. The journey was extremely lengthy, almost 6 months (usually about 130 days), due to an incompetent captain, contrary weather and other misadventures along the way. The journal, written for his beloved ‘C.P.’ only (back in Scotland), was never intended to be read by a third party, and contains many quotes from poetry, nostalgic memories of his former life, and much indication of his staunch Presbyterian faith. However, the diary made its way back across the sea to its intended reader, and was kept much longer, curiously appearing in a country bookstall in England many years later. Eventually it was sold at auction to the State Library of South Australia, where it was transcribed, edited by Richard Walsh, and published in 2011, for us all to read and enjoy.

This is an intriguing insight into life aboard an emigrant vessel of the period. The lack of fresh food, and water, the apparent incompetence of the master, in addition to living in close quarters with so many people of varying social status, was clearly a test of James’ endurance. The cramped, uncomfortable living conditions plus the anxiety of the dangers at sea made it a very difficult experience. This demonstrates what so many of our emigrating ancestors dealt with. Finally, there is relief and excitement upon his arrival at Port Adelaide to begin a new life in a new land. *Review written by Diana McGarvie*

Note: If you have read an interesting book about family or local history, please consider writing a short review to be published in Coladjins and sharing that information with other members of the group.

THE CHALLENGES OF RESEARCHING POPULAR OR COMMON NAMES

Recently one of our newer members came from Melbourne for a day to try to obtain some information about his family. The names he was researching were Thomas Dwyer and Mary Byrne and like many names of that era, there were several variations of the spelling of both of those surnames.

Together we checked through the resources at the family history group, slowly uncovering bits of information and building a picture of the family. We were fortunate to find that there was a copy of one of the children’s birth certificates in the records, which provided some information on the parents’ marriage and some of the siblings. Buoyed by those findings, Peter purchased what appeared to be the Victorian BDM marriage record of Thomas and Mary. Disappointingly it



was only a copy of a church record with the date, place and the participants’ names.

Two of our experienced researchers, Raye and Jill, took up the challenge and spent the following two days (at home) trying every avenue to discover what happened to the family.

Raye put the information into a family tree to see where the gaps were, and with emails flying after each discovery, or suggestion of a new place to look, the two “detectives” finally found what they were looking for. They had trawled TROVE and PROV websites, following each small lead with diligence and determination, checked cemeteries and records on ancestry and various other places. Peter was given enough solid basic information on his family to be able to continue his own family research. We didn’t want to spoil his fun, after all.

There is no suggestion that you will ever get better service from our volunteers by providing cake - but we can say that it was delicious –thanks Peter



GENERAL MEETING AND CELEBRATION OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

The next General Meeting will be **2pm to 4pm Tuesday 11 September** at the History Centre when we will **celebrate and acknowledge** our past and present volunteers

The family history group owes its current success to the solid foundations laid by the members and volunteers from previous years and the continuing work and generosity of our current members and volunteers.

The next General Meeting, previously scheduled for August, and now moved to September 11, will celebrate the contributions of our past and present volunteers.

If you have ever been a volunteer, a member, a friend of the group or just interested in family history, you are welcome to come along.

There will be a short meeting at 2pm, followed by some “reminiscences of the past”. The day will end with a delicious afternoon tea.

If you would like any information, or to RSVP, please phone us during opening hours or email: secretary@colacfamilyhistory.org.au We look forward to seeing you there.



VOLUNTEERING HAS REWARDS

Being the Colac Family History Group duty person at the History Centre can be quite an interesting experience. One never knows quite what to expect. It is occasionally very quiet and you can do some research for yourself or enter data into our growing database or even have a cuppa and a chat with the duty person from the Historical Society. Sometimes something quite unexpected can happen as was the case when someone from Melbourne brought in a headstone that she felt belonged in Colac and not in her garden where she found it. And there can be the immensely satisfying times when we are the instrument in bringing families together. This is what happened recently when I had a couple from Meredith who were researching Caroline White and Joseph Simpkin. They had very generously brought in the family photo album on a flash drive to share with us as well as the relevant family pages from the family bible. And we were able to find copies of marriage certificates of their family from one of the local churches as well as other information we had. Whilst all of this was happening there was

another person waiting for some assistance with research into her family. This lady had travelled from Melton and, yes, you've guessed it, she was also researching Caroline White and Joseph Simpkin. It turned out they were her gg great grandparents and the g great grandparents of the man I was working with. Needless to say we had some very excited people at the Centre that day. I didn't mind closing much later than usual and I also remembered to take a photo of the occasion.

Story and photograph by Norma Bakker



Relatives of Joseph Simpkin and Caroline White meet by chance for the first time at the family history group

ANZAC DAY COLAC 2018



*The Colac Memorial. 6am Anzac Day 2018
A cross and candle to commemorate each local soldier who died a century ago, in 1918*



Relatives of William Bannister who served in WWI and the Boer war, came from Qld, NSW and the Bellarine Peninsula to honour his memory



Beryl the organiser of the crosses each year with Paul, who travels from Melbourne to help



Rob Maguire from Ballarat honoured a great uncle



BITS & PIECES

MAY GENERAL MEETING



There was an excellent attendance at the last general meeting, where guest speaker (and member) Robert Wuchatsch, gave a talk about his multi-decade quest to learn about his German ancestors. Robert has written three books and is currently working on two more: his own family history and a history of the Stony Rises. Robert's diligence and curiosity in his research earned him our coveted "Rabbit Award", which is presented to people who are willing to follow their research in any direction that it may take them. Thanks Robert, it was an excellent presentation.

A SPECIAL MOMENT

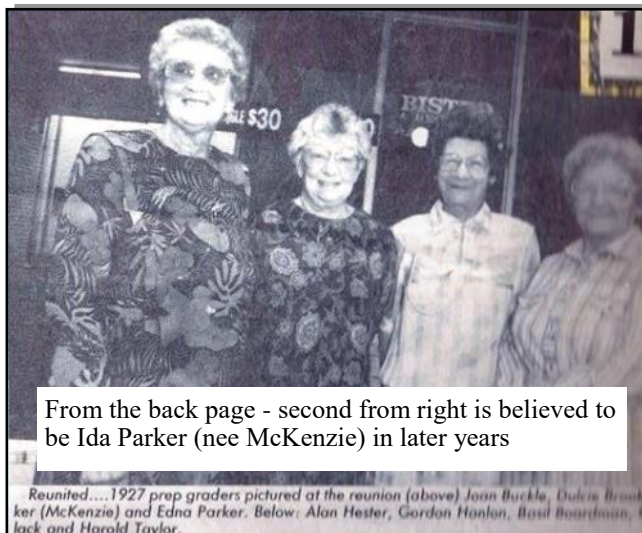
There are many "special" moments at the Family History Group and this was no exception. A family from NSW dropped in to try to find out about their Irish and possibly Aboriginal ancestors who they believed had connections to the Colac district. While our volunteers were busy helping the parents check our collection, a complete stranger, who was also a visitor to the centre, took the children under her wing and spent the best part of an hour showing them how to explore their family on-line.



NEWSLETTER RECOGNISED



Coladjins Summer 2017 issue recently came runner-up in the Nick Vine Hall Family History Newsletter and Journal competition.



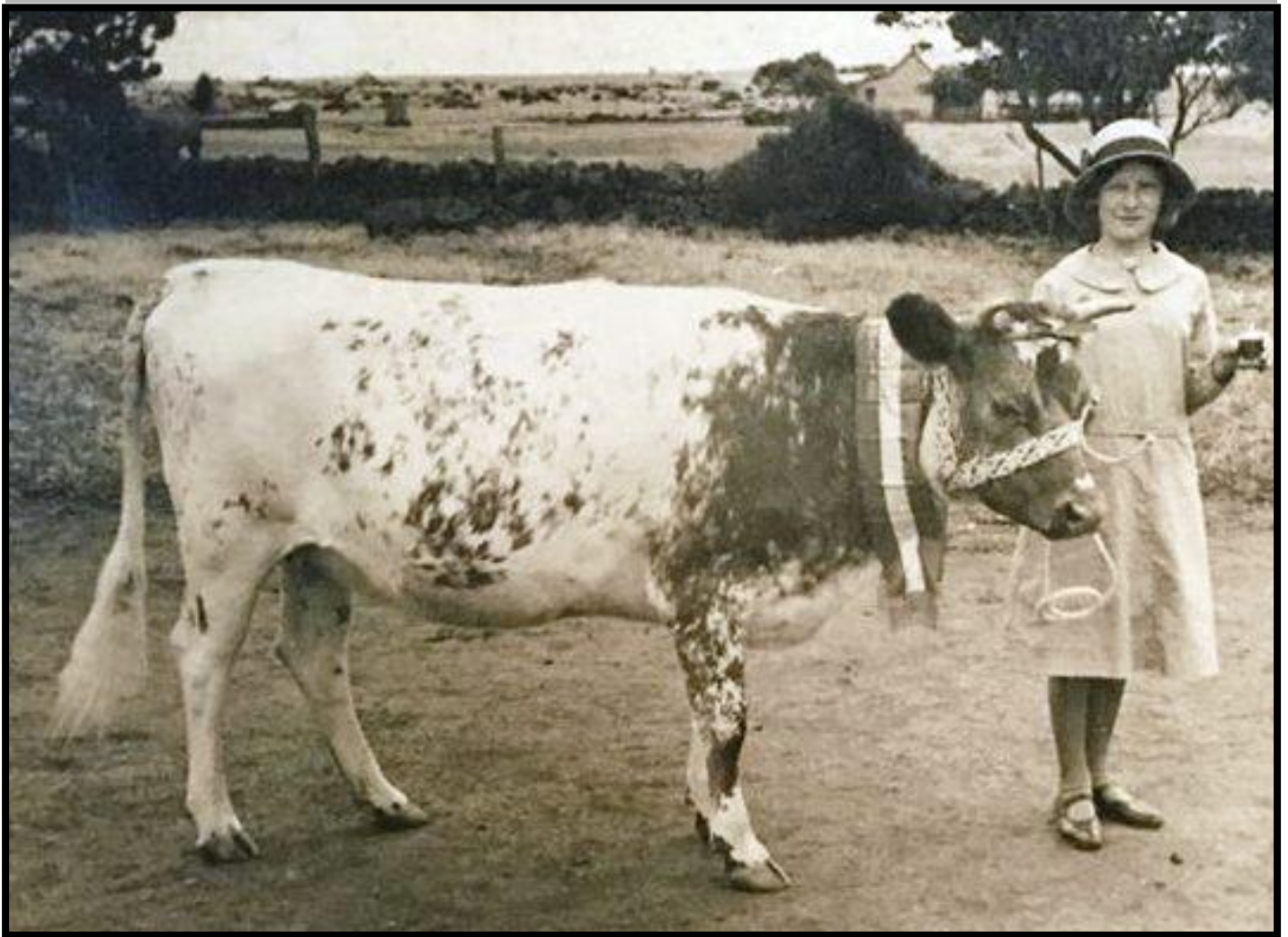
YOUR DNA STORY

DNA is the "flavour of the month" at present and many of our members have done the "spit" test and sent it away. Next come the results of your "estimated ethnicity" and if you are with ancestry.com, the first splatterings of DNA matches and suggested relationships start to appear.

You will be informed that you have a number of "fourth cousins" or other connections, and list of people that you may, or may not, wish to contact. It can be overwhelming and confusing and you need to prepare for the highs and the lows of what you might discover.

In future issues we would like to include stories of our members' experiences with their own DNA matches. If you have done the DNA test, please think about sharing your story of how you navigated the initial information, relatives that you chose to contact and what that has meant to your history.

Memories...



This photograph was recently shared with us on facebook. The owner of the photograph, a lover of cows, picked it up in a second-hand shop and was keen to find out if anyone knew who Ida McKenzie might be. The caption read “Ida McKenzie’s “Lilac” Champion of Club (92 points) Wool Wool. Some of our facebook followers were onto the case and suggested that Ida McKenzie became Ida Parker and a grainy old photograph of a school reunion, from an undated newspaper seemed to confirm that. (see photograph on page 9) It is possible, although not confirmed, that Ida was the daughter of Evelyn Susan Ilett and Gordon Kenneth McKenzie who lived at Ivybanks, Dreeite. It is also possible that Ida McKenzie married Reginald Ernest Parker.

Thanks to these organisations for their ongoing support

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