

MERRY CHRISTMAS

ISSN 14440970

# The Skeleton

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AUSTRALIND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY  
(INC.)

Affiliated with WA Genealogical Society (Inc.)



*Early Days Christmas in the bush*  
Courtesy of State Library of Victoria

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB**

[www.australindfhs.org](http://www.australindfhs.org)

**THE AUSTRALIND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.**

**Library and Research Centre**

Situated at: Australind Library Complex,  
off Paris Road, Australind WA 6233

All correspondence to:  
The Secretary  
PO Box A279  
Australind WA 6233

**Phone:** (08) 9796 1050

**Email:** [alindfhs@iinet.net.au](mailto:alindfhs@iinet.net.au)

**Website:** [www.australindfhs.org](http://www.australindfhs.org)

**Annual Subscriptions: 1 Jan - 31 Dec**

Single Membership                \$35  
Joint Membership                \$45

**Honorary Office Bearers**

President	Chris Shaw	9725 4783
Vice President	Anne Kirkman	9796 0263
Secretary	Glenice Stamp	9725 9667
Treasurer	Chris Riley	9796 0286
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C'ttee Members:		
	Carol Sims	9724 1178
	Kate Bullock	9725 9445
	Jayne Denham	9797 1629
	Avalon Donovan	9797 0198

**LIBRARY HOURS**

Tuesday                10 am - 4 pm  
Wednesday            10 am - 4 pm  
Thursday               10 am - 4 pm  
Saturdays by appointment - no extra charge

**Non-member charges**

Use of library                \$5 per session

A researcher is available to conduct  
research on behalf of the Society

Contact Mr Alan Reynolds via the Library on  
9796 1050 or email: [alindfhs@iinet.net.au](mailto:alindfhs@iinet.net.au)

**Research**

Initial Fee                \$10 for 2 hrs  
Additional                \$ 5 per hr  
Photocopying and Postage extra



*Your Contributions . . .*

Please email articles for the next newsletter to the Australind website with  
'Newsletter' in the Subject line or leave in the tray at the Family History  
Library: [alindfhs@iinet.net.au](mailto:alindfhs@iinet.net.au)

**Deadline for the receipt of articles for next edition of the *Skeleton*.**

**15th February 2017**



**Disclaimer**

*The Society does not hold itself responsible for statements or opinions expressed by authors of papers published in this newsletter. The accuracy of offers, services or goods appearing here cannot be vouched for by the Society. The Editorial Team reserves the right to condense and edit articles to meet the approved size limits of our newsletter.*

### Message from the Editorial Team

Hello Everyone,

What a busy year we've had!

In this edition of the *Skeleton* we have included more on "Australind Beginnings", continued on from the September edition. Also there are again some interesting stories from our members for you to read. We would like to thank those members who have sent in their stories to us and if they haven't yet appeared we will use them in future *Skeletons*. More stories are most welcome!

We hope you've enjoyed your year of researching and we are looking forward to seeing you all again in 2017 to start the process all over again!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Anne & Jayne  
The E-Team

P.S. Thanks again Marg!

#### **DATES for your DIARY**

On request we can arrange appointments for researchers to come into the Library on Saturdays (between 10am and 2pm).

**"Spirit of Anzac Centenary Experience" - to be held at Eaton Recreation Centre from 11-16 January 2017**

**"175th Anniversary of the Ships Arrival in Australind" on Sunday, 2nd April 2017 - see information on page16**

**Committee meetings:** Last Friday of the month. 10am. AFHS Library.

WAGS Library open Mon 9:30 - 20:00  
Wed-Fri 9:30 - 14:30 Sat 13:00 - 17:00  
[www.wags.org.au](http://www.wags.org.au)

**TIP:** *Don't forget to bring along your USB thumb drive to save files from your web research.*

#### **AFHS SERVICES**

##### **Library Visit**

Affiliated Societies - no charge (show membership card)  
Non members - \$5 per visit

##### **Membership**

1 Jan 2017 – 31 Dec 2017.

##### **Computer Use**

Internet Access -includes Ancestry.com + Find My Past and many more.

All users	\$2 per hr
Printouts	30c each
Burn CDs	\$1 each

##### **Micro Film/Fiche Readers/ Pro Scan**

All users	\$2 per hr
Printouts	30c each

##### **Photocopying**

A4 B&W single	20c	Double-sided	30c
A4 Colour single	30c	Double-sided	50c
A3 B&W single	30c	Double-sided	60c

##### **Ring Binding**

Up to 50 sheets	\$2
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##### **Laminating**

Please ask at desk

## **President's Report**

Hello fellow members and researchers,

Welcome to the December *Skeleton* and thanks to the E-Team for putting it all together for us to read.

Many people have responded to the advert in the 'Can You Help' column in *The West Australian* regarding the "175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Ships Arrival in Australind" to be held in April 2017. If you are a descendant and are interested in attending please contact us.

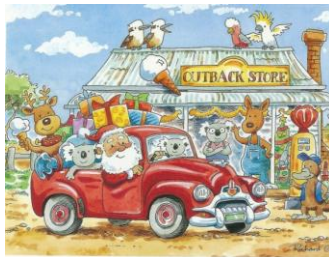
We would like to remind you to renew your membership in the New Year. The Library will reopen on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

Our new opening times are: Tuesday – Thursday 10am – 4pm.

Now the year is coming to a close, I would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy Christmas and a prosperous and enjoyable 2017. Please come and visit us at the Library next year even if it's for a cuppa and chat.



Cheers, Chris Shaw



Dashing through the bush  
In a rusty Holden Ute  
Kicking up the dust  
Esky in the boot  
Kelpie by my side  
Singing Christmas songs  
It's Summer time and I am in  
My singlet, shorts and thongs  
Oh! Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells  
Jingle all the way  
Christmas in Australia  
On a scorching summer's day  
Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells  
Christmas time is beaut  
Oh what fun it is to ride  
In a rusty Holden Ute.

Engine's getting hot  
We dodge the kangaroos  
The swaggie climbs aboard  
He is welcome too  
All the family's there  
Sitting by the pool  
Christmas day, the Aussie way  
By the barbecue!

Oh! Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells  
Jingle all the way  
Christmas in Australia  
On a scorching summer's day  
Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells  
Christmas time is beaut  
Oh what fun it is to ride  
In a rusty Holden Ute.

Come the afternoon  
Grandpa has a doze  
The kids and uncle Bruce  
Are swimming in their clothes  
The time comes round to go  
We take the family snap  
Pack the car and all shoot through  
Before the washing up

Oh! Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells  
Jingle all the way  
Christmas in Australia  
On a scorching summer's day  
Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells  
Christmas time is beaut  
Oh what fun it is to ride  
In a rusty Holden Ute.

*by Anne Kirkman*



Perhaps you know of Dame Mary Durack, not only an Australian author of "Kings in Grass Castles", but that also her family were settlers and pioneers of the Kimberley Region of Western Australia.

On a recent trip to Perth, my husband and I took a tranquil walk along the South Perth foreshore heading east toward Burswood Heritage Park. In the distance the walk takes in the view of the hustle and bustle of Perth City, the ferry transporting commuters and travellers across the Swan River heading towards the new Perth City landmark of Elizabeth Quay. Along the way observing a delightful picture of the swans with their cygnets, ever protective.

On reaching the Heritage Park bronze sculptures begin to appear that depict Western Australian history. There were two particular sculptures that caught my attention the first of which is Mary Durack, elder, reading to her younger self, she is the ancestor relating the story of her family history.



The scene of the other sculpture is of three children playing hopscotch, a pastime we all may remember. I had a feeling of contentment looking at those children.

Several other sculptures can be viewed within the trail and I would highly recommend you take the walk when next in Perth.

>>>>>>>>>>>>



**I used to get letters; now all I get are e-mails saying  
"Dear Santa check out my blog!"**



## AUSTRALIND - BEGINNINGS



*...continuing on from September edition*

### March 1841

The passengers on board the vessel *Parkfield* waited anxiously for the Commissioner, Mr Clifton, to return from Perth, hoping against hope that they could stay at the original site proposed by the West Australian Company, and not have to sail north to Port Grey. Their hopes were gratified and all could now disembark to the Leschenault foreshore to begin their new life.

Once on shore, the survey team who had arrived on *The Island Queen* a few months previously, gave the new settlers a very warm welcome. The newcomers were happy to be on terra firma. The shoreline was a hive of activity transporting not only the passengers, but their belongings and cargo. Erecting of tents followed.

*"Just made our beds on the ground, arranged our tent for the night and with the moon shining brightly through the canvas overhead, solemn stillness reigning all around except where broken by the merry laugh of the grass-hoppers, and now and then the breaking of a wave upon the distant shore."*

*First night on land - April 5th 1841.*

What lay ahead were the arduous tasks of clearing the land, surveys to be conducted, buildings erected and exploring the outer reaches of the settlement. Land allotments would not be allocated for at least a year pending approval of the West Australia Company directors (approval received April 1842).

Of the new arrivals, only thirty were labourers. Therefore long days of strenuous work lay ahead of them in an unforgiving environment. But those hardy souls continued on.

Much havoc occurred not long after their arrival when a severe storm hit the settlement upending tents and leaving the inhabitants without shelter for the night. The following day they had to salvage what they could laying items out to dry, sadly some property being lost.



*Some of the first buildings at Australind*

Traversing the outskirts of the settlement was an undertaking with little or no equipment available other than brute strength to manoeuvre through the bush; never mind the rivers to be crossed. (Australind is bordered on the south by the Collie River and on the east by the Brunswick River). Ease of access was achieved with the opening of the Brunswick Bridge in 1845.

Virgin bush interspersed with native flora abounded the settlement site, with an abundance of mahogany trees. Many of these were felled to build huts. These huts had a thatched roof with rushes used for flooring, and the womenfolk were delighted. Now they were sure to be dry!

By June 1841 a large storehouse had been built followed by stables for horses, public offices and in early 1842 an hotel was to be built. Rations and much needed supplies came by merchant ships. Unfortunately, one such ship, the *Devonshire* sank, resulting in the settlement being threatened by famine.

In later years a similar occurrence caused roasted wheat to be a substitute for coffee! American whaling ships frequented Koombana Bay (11 kms from Australind). These 'stop overs' offered the settlers a good market for their garden produce and they could buy clothes and shoes from the whalers.



*The Storehouse of the West Australia  
Company at Australind in 1841*

Conditions were not ideal and some settlers chose to move to other parts of the colony and even interstate which impeded the progress of the settlement. Labour was short but the arrival of the *Diadem* in April 1842 with 160-odd passengers caused much excitement for those who had stayed on. A large marquee and tents were provided for the new arrivals. They received rations from the company for which they had to work from 6am - 2pm. The rations were provided until they could find employment.

#### **Ration scale:-**

<b>MEN</b>	<b>WOMEN</b>	<b>CHILDREN</b>
1 lb meat	1/2 lb meat	1/2 lb meat
1 1/2 lb flour	1 lb flour	1/2 lb flour
1 1/2 lb potatoes	2oz sugar	1 oz sugar
2 oz sugar	1/4 oz tea	1/8 oz tea
1/4 oz tea		

**\*Added to this was a little rice and a small quantity of peas.**

In that same year another vessel the *Trusty* landed at Port Leschenault after a voyage of four months. The joy of arrival was short-lived when in 1843 the directors of the company indicated to the Commissioner that costs had to be reduced and that no further supplies would be sent to Australind. The depression in England had halted investment in land schemes and in the interest of the West Australian Company's shareholders they felt it necessary to curtail expenses. As the settlers lacked finance they had no alternative but to stay and survive as best they could.

*"October 1843 cessation of land sales by the Company with directions for the discharge of the survey departments as well as every person employed by the commissioner by December 1843."*  
*Swan River Gazette - 11th November 1843.*

Several excursions into the surrounding country by Mr Clifton and others showed promise for agriculture and he laboured energetically to bring portions of this land under cultivation.

*" ..... the sow thistles were 15 feet high in many places wild lettuce, kangaroo grass and wild lucerne, which cattle are very fond of, green and luxuriant, wheat on the flats could be grown for several years without manure."*  
*Bunbury Herald - 25th September 1918.*

The Company was informed that with a little clearing the outlying land was suitable for agriculture. However there was no market at this time for agricultural produce grown here and it was merely for subsistence. Without capital it was a costly business to clear land. This discouraged settlers as it was beyond their means having invested all they had in equipment and stock. It wasn't until the 1850s that several properties were established and are still in existence today. It was a long hard struggle for those hardy pioneers.

Of the twenty three settlers who arrived on the *Trusty* in 1844 most had paid their own way. What they encountered must have disappointed them greatly and it wasn't long before they moved beyond Australind.

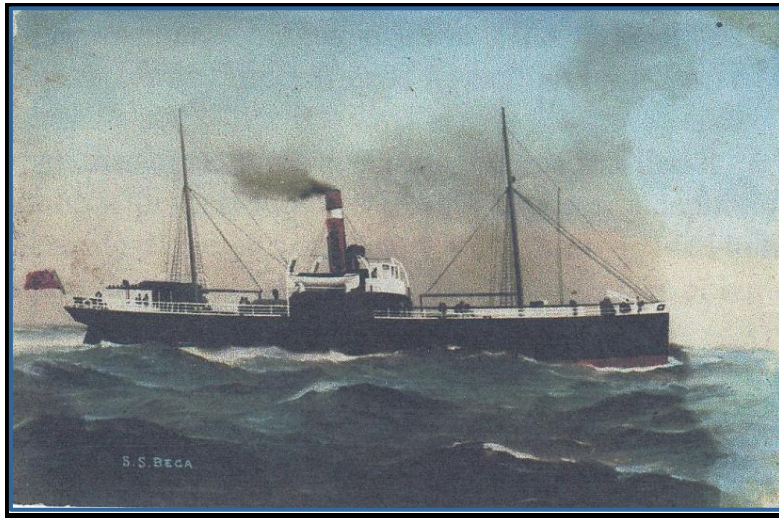
One gentleman wrote in 1844:

*"Australind seems to be more and more deserted, many are going home, many more would but they can't pay their passage."*

Many descendants of those early pioneers still live in the Australind region. The town although not a city of grand proportions as envisioned, is a thriving community on the Leschenault foreshore.

**to be continued.....**

**The Lillie May Pettersen Story**  
*by member Marie Duncan*



*Postcard c1905 of the S.S. Bega*

My husband's grandmother hit the headlines of the local papers when she was ship-wrecked in 1908 at the tender age of sixteen.

Grandma was returning from a holiday at Pamula on the coastal steamer *S.S. Bega* at that period of time the trains ran only as far as Wollongong and passengers and freight from the far south coast had to travel by ship to Sydney. Amongst her luggage was a live turkey in a cage given to her by farmer friends for her family's Easter dinner.

When the ship berthed at Bega, Grandma recalled it hitting with great force some object submerged at the wharfside. Prize pigs and a few horses were loaded to be exhibited at the Royal Easter Show, more boxes of butter were put in the hold and the voyage resumed. Later that afternoon the ship began to list to port. As she continued on her way the Captain assured passengers that all was well, saying that some of the cargo had shifted. Soon it was obvious that all was not well and the passengers watched aghast as the Captain ordered that the unfortunate pigs and horses thrown overboard to lighten the load. The poor animals swam around in circles until they sank with exhaustion. Night fell as the ship struggled on. A full moon rose lighting the calm sea. So great was the list now that those on-board could only crawl along the decks. It was then that the Captain finally gave order to abandon ship.

Because of the pressure and fear, an old man had a heart attack, Grandma went to help him and he died with his head in her lap. The passengers including women and children who behaved splendidly and two sailors to help with rowing were put into the only two lifeboats which were lowered into the ocean. The dead man's body was lashed to the ship's raft, it was tossed overboard and the crew and the Captain clambered into it from the fast sinking ship. Grandma watched with sadness and awe as the *Bega* glided under the sea her lights still shining.



In those days there were few if any safety regulations governing ships. The people in the overcrowded lifeboats soon discovered that there was only one pair of oars between them, no provisions or water and no balers. The boats had never been in the water since they were placed on the *Bega's* decks, the timber had so shrunk that water was entering rapidly. Grandma was in the oarless boat which was drifting aimlessly until one of the sailors hitched it to its luckier companion. It was taken in tow and the little group set off on the back-breaking-row to the distant shore barely visible on the horizon.



They continued on, sitting up to their waists in water when someone suggested that the ladies take off their skirts (skirts and blouses being the height of fashion then) dip them in the rising water and wring them out over the side. So the ladies immodestly attired in petticoats dipped and wrung, dipped and wrung through the long hours until dawn.

Later that day they were put on a second coastal vessel for the voyage home, but their troubles were added to when its engines broke down. They had had enough and insisted on leaving the ship at Wollongong to finish their journey by train. At Central Station they were given a hero's welcome by anxious relatives, the public and the press.



In 1913 this girl married Walter Henry Jackson and thus became my husband's grandmother.

[illegible]

**DISASTER TO S.S.BEGA**  
**FOUNDERS AT SEA**  
 ---  
**ONE LIFE LOST**  
 ---  
**LOW CATTLE AND HORSES LOST**  
 ---  
**USE OF DISASTER A MYSTERY**  
 ---  
**PASSENGERS SAVED**  
 ---  
**THE CARGO LOST**

*Reports received from Bega state that the steamer Bega had capsized and sank last night, when 28 of her passengers and crew landed at Wallagoot. This morning two boats were missing; but later information received says that the missing boats containing 17 passengers and 10 seamen had arrived at Cuttagee.....*

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## CAN YOU HELP?

Does anyone know the whereabouts of Mrs Val Currie who lived at 12 Travers Drive , Australind, WA 6233 during 1999. On behalf of a member of Australind Family History Society, we are trying to trace her or a family member as the member has some old family letters, documents and photos that he would love to return to their rightful owners. Please contact Australind Family History Society, Email: [alindfhs@inet.net.au](mailto:alindfhs@inet.net.au) or Ph: 97961050.

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## LIBRARY – LATEST ACQUISITIONS

*Many thanks to the generous people who have donated books to the Library.*

When Blue was True. The brief history of Brunswick area
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Bernard Stanley
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>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

**\*\* WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS \*\***

690

Christine Cornford

Bunbury

691

Peter Meek

Australind

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

## WEB CORNER

\*\*\* Remember to visit our own AFHS Website administered by Chris Riley\*\*\*

[www.australindfhs.org](http://www.australindfhs.org)

**Friends of Battye Library - Convicts Records of Western Australia** have been updated. Go to: [www.friendsofbattvelibrary.org.au](http://www.friendsofbattvelibrary.org.au). \*We have a printed copy here at the Library.

If you could help with research on **Mountbellew Workhouse in Co Galway** on board the 'bride ship' then please click on: <http://www.irishcentral.com/roots/ancestry/Could-you-ancestors-have-been-an-orphan-workhouse-girl-who-emigrated-in-1853.html>

Also there is a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Mountbellew-Workhouse-Cemetery-Restoration-814745548596059/> (For more information see pages 13-14)

**India - FIBIS** have recently added:-

- *Times of India* arrival and departure notices 1862 (2,426 arrivals and 1,672 departures)
- *Who was Maud Lewis? Part 1 Daughter of the British Army in India*
- *Who was Maud Lewis? Part 2* [Available at: www.fibis.org/](http://www.fibis.org/)

## DROWNED WHILE DROWN- ING A MOUSE.

While Mr. William Southwell, of Dering-road, South Croydon, London, was attempting to drown a mouse in a water-butt, he was seized with faintness, fell into the butt, and was drowned.



*Express and Telegraph newspaper, 12th June 1909*

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

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### Mountbellew Workhouse in Co Galway

We are tracing the descendants of the Immigrants of the ship *Palestine* that left Ireland and travelled to Australia in 1853. On this ship were 33 Mountbellew workhouse orphan girls. We are trying to connect with as many of the Orphan Workhouse Girls descendants in Australia with the hope of telling their stories, establish where they came from in Galway and hopefully connect with their Irish cousins! We want to ensure these orphan workhouse girls are not forgotten.

#### Background to the Workhouse assisted passage to Australia

A group of 33 young girls were transported to Australia on the *Palestine* ship 1853 from the Mountbellew workhouse. It was renowned that these bride-ships carried destitute girls from orphanages, poorhouses or had a sponsored fare during the Great Famine. The Mountbellew workhouse at that time had (August 1852) 418 inmates, 130 able bodied females. In November 6<sup>th</sup> 1852 there were 392 inmates and 124 able bodied females.

On November 20<sup>th</sup> 1852 there were 401 inmates in the workhouse, 134 able bodies females, though 32 able bodied females were discharged during this week (presumably the 30 for assisted emigration). The county was very much affected by the famine of 1845-47. In 1841 the population was 443,000. Ten years later, it had fallen to 322,000.

In early September 1852, an entry in the Mountbellew Poor Law Union Board of Guardian Minutes, described a letter from Lieutenant Saunders, (R.N. Emigration Agent) stating that the Emigration Commissioners had instructed him to make a selection of 30 young women from the female inmates in Mountbellew workhouse who were candidates for emigration to Van Diemen's land, for passage to the colony by the ship *Travencore*, which will sail from Plymouth on 23<sup>rd</sup> inst, and requesting to be informed of the day he could make his selection.

On the 10th September 1852 there was another entry:-

That Lieutenant Saunders Emigration Agent had selected 30 of the female inmates for passages to Van Diemen's land by the ship *Travencore* which will sail from Plymouth on 23<sup>rd</sup> inst and from the limited time given to have the outfit necessary for them prepared he purchased 500 yards of grey calico for the requisite number of shifts, which are complete and prayed the Boards sanction to his so doing: he submitted the following list of articles necessary to complete the outfit prescribed by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners and requested the Boards attention to same viz: 40 yards calico, 210 yards, flannel, 540 yard cotton, 360 yards cashmere and 120 towels. Resolved: That the Master be authorised to purchase the above articles required.(Mountbellew Poor Law Union Board of Guardian Minutes held in Galway Library Nuns Island).

After the first successful deployment of the *Travencore*, another list of passengers was drawn up and the *Palestine* later set sail from Plymouth on 26 November 1852. Among the girls chosen to make that fateful journey to Australia was Mary Dooley.

Mary and three other girls replaced several girls deemed medically unfit to make the long journey to Australia. *This is where their life stories begin! They led interesting lives.*

The girls that set sail on the *Palestine* were:

**ATKINS Marianne 18,  
BUTLER Mary 19,  
CARBERRY Elizabeth 20,  
CARBERRY Mary 18,  
COLDHAN Celia 20,  
COLEMAN Catherine 16,  
CONCANNON Biddy 22,  
CUNNINGHAM Catherine 20,  
CUNNINGHAM Mary 20,**

**GERAGHTY Mary 21,  
GLYNN Catherine 18,  
HANSBERRY Ellen 22,  
HEAVY Mary 20,  
HUGHES Catherine 18,  
KILFOYLE Mary 22,  
KILROY Mary 20,  
LOWE Marie 19,  
MANNION Mary 24,**

*DOOLEY Mary 20,  
EGAN Margaret 18,  
EGAN Martha 18,  
FITZGERALD Biddy 18,  
FLANAGAN Mary 18,  
FLYNN Mary 18,  
FLYNN Mary 20,*

*NEILLE Jane 18,  
NEILLE Maria 18,  
NOON Mary 20,  
STAUNTON Biddy 19,  
TAYLOR Mary 19,  
TULLY Biddy 21,  
TULLY Catherine 22.*

They travelled over land to Dublin and from there they sailed to Plymouth prior to their departure for Australia.

Mary and the other girls arrived in Western Australia on 28 April 1853 after five long and probably terrifying months at sea. On arrival, it is believed that Mary found employment as a servant with a local hotel proprietor at the 'Ship Hotel'. Several months later, Mary married.

### **Aims of Mountbellew Workhouse project**

The aim of this project is: Two fold, one tracing the Orphan Girls descendants in Australia and one looking at possible descendants of relatives here in the surrounding localities of Mountbellew, Caltra, Castleblakeney, Moylough, Newbridge, to name a few in the West of Ireland.

Our aim once we have collated all the descendants is to reconnect them with their ancestors here in the community! We do realise that some of these were classed as orphans, but in reality, they did have one parent still living when they left for Australia?

We plan to have a service in Mountbellew to celebrate their lives, in May 2018 and recognise they were not forgotten. They deserve to be remembered in Irish history.

We have some representatives of the orphan girls already wishing to attend.

We have made great strides already in Australia, and have managed to connect with quite a few of the orphan girls descendants.

Of course even to this day, there is still an element of stigma attached to having relatives in the Irish Workhouses.

**\*Contact for anyone wishing to assist or comment is through Facebook *Mountbellew Workhouse Cemetery Restoration***

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### ***Adam and Eve***

*From member Bob Rigley*

*One day, a little girl asked her father,  
"How did the human race start?"  
The father answered,  
"God made Adam and Eve and they had children, and  
so all mankind was made."*

*Next day, the girl asked her mother the same question.  
The mother answered,  
"Many years ago, there were monkeys, from which the  
human race evolved."*

*The confused girl returned to her father and said,  
"Dad, how is it possible that you told me the human  
race was created by God, and Mum said they  
developed from monkeys?"*

*The father answered,  
"Well, dear, it is very simple.  
I told you about my side of the family and  
your mother told you about hers".*







## THE AUSSIE CHRISTMAS

The Aussie Christmas was essentially influenced by the nineteenth century English Christmas during the reign of Queen Victoria and her German husband Prince Albert. They introduced the German custom of decorating a Christmas tree. The first Christmas cards were given during this period too. The early European settlers wanted the day to be as close as possible to what they had left behind. Even the traditional Christmas dinner of roast turkey and steamed plum pudding was served on a hot Christmas Day.

From the 1850s onwards, Aussie Christmas most people would attend Christmas services in the local church. The day was celebrated with a family or community picnic day out - more than likely at their favourite recreational spot in the bush. There was always a fun game of cricket to be enjoyed, a pastime which continues today. They would cut Australian flora from the bush to decorate their homes. It was quite early on that Aussie Christmas cards pictured Santa's sleigh being pulled by a kangaroo!

Of course the weather plays a major part in how Aussies celebrated Christmas. The festive season in the southern hemisphere falls in the summer months and the weather averages at 35 degrees Celsius! Too hot to prepare roast turkey with all the trimmings!

Nowadays a typical Aussie Christmas dinner would be either cold meat or seafood served with salads, or just an outdoor barbecue, spent with family and friends. Usually lots of festive food and drink are consumed during the day. Desserts such as pavlova and ice-cream are an alternative to plum pudding.

Excited young children wake at the crack of dawn to see what pressies Santa has left them. Later they splash under the sprinkler, swim in the backyard pool or go to the beach.

The introduction of 'Carols by Candlelight' in Melbourne in the 1930s has now become an Aussie tradition and is one of the most magical evenings to celebrate Christmas. In our homes, the majority of Aussies still decorate a tree at Christmas, albeit an artificial one. Our streets are adorned with a display of lights and decorations with a giant-sized Christmas tree standing centre-stage. Christmas pageants are run in every State capital in Australia. Young and old are involved and they parade the streets in a spectacular display of floats.

Here is an article from [trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au) describing how the early settlers spent Christmas:-

*"Christmas Day. Here we are in a broiling sun, from which our only refuge is to sit indoors and endeavour to catch every light breeze that blows. Some people seem to enjoy it. We have had Divine Service and the Sacrament of which we all partook... I bought our first piece of beef for our Christmas dinner, and hearing that some plums were to be purchased off a man in the bush, whose wife had recently brought them from Fremantle for sale. Mary obtained ingredients for a dear old-fashioned plum pudding both for parlour and kitchen and we fared sumptuously. We did not forget any of our dear relations and friends, but drank their health and happiness in a glass of Constantia. What can they be doing now? Amid frost and snow, yet doubtless before a comfortable English fire. I keep up our old custom of evergreens with branches of the wattle - a very fair substitute for the laurel."*

**West Australian - 23rd December 1933.**

***Whichever way you celebrate your Christmas, we hope you have a wonderful time and this only leaves us to wish you all a very Merry Christmas from all of us at the Library!***



