



# Melton Family History Group Inc

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Registered 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 1994

## August 2022-September 2022

Meeting Times: 6:30pm on the second Thursday of each month except for January

Venue: Melton Library – McKenzie Street, Melton

Membership Fee: \$25 per year payable July each year prior to August A.G.M.

Correspondence: 17 Sutherland Ave, Melton Sth, Vic, 3338.

President: Judith Bilszta

Vice President Janeen O’Connell

Secretary: Ian Bowey

Treasurer: Deborah Slattery

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Web site [www.meltonfamilyhistory.org](http://www.meltonfamilyhistory.org)

Committee Members: Sue Morton and Pauline Stotten

### 2022 Monthly Meetings at Melton Library in McKenzie Street.

11 <sup>th</sup> August	Cancelled due to lack of available members.
8 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>Annual General Meeting.</b>
13 <sup>th</sup> October	T.B.A
10 <sup>th</sup> November	T.B.A
8 <sup>th</sup> December	T.B.A

All dates and times are subject to change

## **Update: Regular work:**

We have had a promising number of requests for assistance in the recent months. One reason could possibly be because of all the lockdowns since early 2020, members of the public have decided to commence or continue with their research.

A questionnaire was sent to all members asking for their thoughts on changing our meeting dates and or times. Replies have been much varied.

With Ian (secretary) being away in August, a decision was made in our April meeting to postpone our Annual General Meeting until September. A vote will be taken then for changing our monthly meeting times and dates. This item was discussed with all members present during our July meeting.

Melton Library's Nicole H recently introduced tertiary placement student Briony-lee to the group. Briony-lee is studying to be a librarian and currently doing her work placement with Melton Library.

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I recently received this delightful e-mail from Karen Guest. I then wrote to and received permission from Karen to include her e-mail in our newsletter. In her reply giving permission, Karen kindly gave a further insight into the life of her great uncle and family. Hope you all enjoy reading this.

Ian

*Hello,*

*My name is Karen Guest and my maternal great uncle was Clive Kelly who has a profile in the Just Another Pair of Socks information.*

*Only recently did I discover that he had worked at the Clarke stud at Coburn and now understand why he had been given a beautifully framed certificate honouring his service from the Melton Shire dated 1920. He was born in Bolinda and his father was a blacksmith who worked on the Clarke's Bolinda Vale property. He and his family had a very hard poverty stricken life. Clive and my grandmother were extremely close and she was the youngest child of five children.*

*He would be so deeply honoured by your work and his name being placed on honour rolls as well.*

*Clive was a beautiful and humble man who was going to marry a Scottish nurse and she was killed.*

*He had lots of joy going to the races, growing Tom Thumb tomatoes and visiting my grandparents living in Riddells Creek. He would bring the form Guide booklets for me.*

*I can still see him cutting thistles at Riddells Creek.*

*He never spoke about his time in France. In his diary he mentions seeing the Red Baron flying overhead. He formed a very strong friendship with another soldier who would come and stay at my Grandparents home many years. One of them saved the other man's life but we don't know which did what.*

*Apparently he and some other men smuggled a small dog home from overseas.*

*I have his brass spurs. My Grandmother his younger sister would talk about knitting socks for the serving men at school. So very apt title.*

*I also have copies of the beautiful postcards he sent home to his mother and my GrandMother.*

*On one of them he asked his mother if they had mentioned anything in Romsey (near to Bolinda) of his enlistment. He also offered for his sister Olive to take up Piano lessons. Sadly she did not do this as that would have been an absolute luxury when fox was scarce. Apparently he was not a fan of ANZAC Day.*

*In the Bolinda Primary School booklet for 100 years there is more information on Clive enlisting and his service etc. That information led me to the Melton connection and Clive working for a member of the Clarke family at their horse stud/stables.*

*Once again many heartfelt thanks for your research and am deeply touched and so grateful. I work in Melton at Melton Primary School-and had no idea of his name being on cenotaphs etc. am so proud of him.*

*Kind regards,*

*Karen Guest.*

*Hello Ian,*

*The website project has meant that we have another part to Clive's journey in World War One.*

*I remember his sister Neta confronting my Grandmother about his medals one day wanting them and now they are lost unfortunately.*

*Clive lived in Williamstown with his cousin Jesse until his death. Please include this in the newsletter.*

*As mentioned previously Clive and Olive were close and she would also talk about having to get rid of all the kittens breeding on their property as their father would not let anyone hurt the cats. So they had to wait for him to go to work at Bolinda Vale owned by the Clarke family. Funnily enough the cat theme and horses run deep in the family through the generations. Not the getting rid of cats part! Even my niece living in Italy keeps bonding with cats.*

*His Grandfather was an early settler in Gisborne and then Bolinda and I must admit was disappointed that I could not find anything re Clive in the Romsey papers etc of the time.*

*If my recollections further support your work feel free to use it for your newsletter. Am looking forward to getting back to school and locating the cenotaphs and seeing his name.*

*Regards,*

*Karen Guest.*



The Photograph of Clive Kelly, kindly sent to me by Karen.

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The following article is by courtesy of Judith Bilszta, and was initially taken from newspaper cuttings held by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

**The Age 27<sup>th</sup> August 1955**

**Frank Fitzgerald**

Recently I met a Melbourne man whose uncle Uriah Whidycombe was the boatswain who sailed the John Bunyan from Bristol to Melbourne more than 100 years ago with emigrants aboard at the time of the Victorian gold rush. Many on board were bound for the diggings.

I can imagine many people exclaiming in surprise "A boatswain sailing a ship all the way from England to Australia? That's impossible. Where was the captain?"

The truth is, that on this particular voyage in 1852 the captain wasn't to be seen. He and his mate were not sober after the first day out from Bristol. It was the boatswain, Uriah Whidycombe, who took over the captain's duties and brought the ship and her passengers safely to Port Phillip Bay.

As the vessel sailed up the bay, the grateful passengers assembled on deck and presented Whidycombe with a testimonial bearing more than 100 signatures. It told of the passengers' appreciation of the boatswain's high qualities and valuable service, and presented their gratitude by a cash contribution of £6-2s, collected in small sums ranging from 6d to 5\.

### **Original document.**

The original document is preserved today in the archive of the Public Library of Victoria and the story of the eventful voyage of the John Bunyan is still told by the few surviving children of the kinsmen who made that voyage to Australia.

One of them is Mr William Whidycombe Bevan of Rowland Street, Kew, a nephew of Uriah Whidycombe, the boatswain, and son of James Bevan, a Bristol man who worked his passage to Australia as a member of the crew of the John Bunyan.

The John Bunyan arrived in Melbourne about the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, 1852. The great majority of emigrants to Australia at that time made the voyage in sailing ships – most of them small vessels that took anything from four to six months to reach their destination. It was often a dangerous voyage and shipwrecks were a common occurrence. Every long voyage, in fact, was fraught with anxiety - not only for passengers and crew but for relatives and friends as well.

Among the passengers on the John Bunyan were Mr and Mrs Thomas Derrick, from Cotham, a suburb of Bristol, and their two daughters, Elizabeth (aged 19) and Hester (14 years).

Two of their sons, Samuel and William Jerrick had emigrated to Australia a year or two earlier, and settled at Kew, then a little township in the bush about four and a half miles from Melbourne.

James Bevan, a young man and friend of the Derrick family was able to obtain work as a member of the crew on the vessel because of the extraordinary demand for seamen to man ships bound for the Australian gold fields. The boatswain, Uriah Whidycombe, was a Devonshire man.

The voyage to Australia was not pleasant. Weather was bad over the greater part of the distance, and the intemperate conduct of the captain and the mate was the cause of grave misgiving among passengers and

crew. But for the fine seamanship of the boatswain, passengers afterwards declared that the ship might never have been brought to port.

But in spite of this many friendships were made among the passengers and crew, and before many years had passed, the two Derrick girls were married –Elizabeth to Uriah Whidycombe and Hester to James Bevan.

Before the weddings however, the bridegrooms tried their luck at the gold diggings for, like any other members of ships' crews at the time, Uriah Whidycombe and James Bevan deserted the ship when it reached Melbourne to join in the gold rush.

The Derrick brothers also went along, leaving their wives and children in their comfortable little homes at Kew.

James Bevan was at Ballarat at the time of the Eureka rising. It is told of William Derrick that whilst he was at the Bendigo diggings he received a message that his wife was seriously ill. He set off at once on foot for his home at Kew, more than 100 miles distant and completed the journey in two days. His wife recovered and became a mother of a large family- four boys and nine girls.

Uriah Whidycombe and James Bevan both settled in Kew after their return from the gold fields. Neither, however, had made a fortune but there was plenty of money about and they were able to make a living in the Kew Settlement with less exertion and more certainty than they had at the diggings.

James Bevan procured a horse and dray and set up business as a water carrier, carting water from the Yarra in the dry season to householders in Kew and Hawthorn.

The best customers were the occupants of large homes in Studley Park Road, Kew. The little enterprise prospered and later developed into a large carriage contracting business.

## **Subdivisions**

About that time large areas of Kew were being subdivided into small farm lots and residential areas and sold to settlers. The Derricks, James Bevan and another man from Bristol, James Sen Morgan formed a syndicate and bought a large section of land extending from the present Kew Junction to the cemetery.

James Bevan secured the triangular block behind the Post Office with frontage to High Street, Cotham Road and the short street which was named Derrick Street after William Derrick, who was elected to the first municipal council of Kew, and was one of the early mayors.

It was through Cr Derrick that Cotham Road was so named, after the Derrick family's home town near Bristol. Originally it was the main road to Gippsland and some of the early councillors wanted to name it the Great Gippsland Road, but the Derricks and their friends from Bristol got their way.

The Derrick brothers and their families eventually moved to Lancefield where some of the descendants are still to be found. William Derrick and his sons later established a large dairy herd in the Mirboo district, Gippsland and finally took the herd overland to Queensland.

James Bevan and his family continued to live in Kew. His son William Whidycombe Bevan was born in 1879, went to the Kew State School, afterwards to the old Hawthorn College. In 1896 he joined the staff of the Argus Building Society, one of the few building societies that survived the land boom of the early 'nineties. He remained on the staff until his retirement 50 years later. He and his wife are at present on a visit to their son, Derrick, in Perth.

Mr Bevan has a copy of the testimonial document presented to Uriah Whidycombe by the passengers on the John Bunyan 103 years ago. The inscription read: 'We, the undersigned passengers on board the John Bunyan desiring to express our sense of your ability and the uniform kindness of disposition you have evinced towards us during the voyage, wish to offer you the accompanying Testimonial which though small will show to you the good feeling and respect you gained from all classes of passengers in this ship.

We wish further to express our admiration of the very able and seamanlike manner in which during very trying weather you have performed the arduous duties committed to you'.

Then follows the long list of subscribers to the testimonial fund. Most of the contributions were for 1\-. A considerable number contributed 2\6 and one man, James Prior paid in 5\-.

### **Notable signatures**

A notable signature was that of R. Brough Smyth who became the first Secretary of Mines for the now Colony of Victoria, and subsequently wrote the monumental work "The goldfields and Mineral Districts of Victoria", published in 1869.

When Mr William Whidycombe Bevan was born 76 years ago, Kew was a well-established suburb of Melbourne but it was more rustic than urban, a kind of ultima thule of the metropolis, with farms and pastoral lands extending from its outer boundaries to the distant ranges.

Today it is a city of about 40,000 inhabitants. The land originally owned and occupied by the Derricks and Bevans is now covered with shops and flats and houses, but one of the original homes remains- an old brick house built by James Ven Morgan in Charles Street, near the crest of the High Street hill.

It is a solid old fashioned house on the west side of Charles Street. Mr Bevan believes it to be the oldest house in Kew. "The old place is not much to look at", he says "but it brings back pleasant memories".

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Judith Bilszta recently gave me some transcripts of letters from children to newspapers. Below is one such letter. These letters are from far more innocent times.

### **An Outing in The Forest**

It is now 7 am., the sun is just rising above the purple hill tops. We are delighted at the beautiful colours, dark red, tinged with a soft gold and yellow. In a while it is out in all its glory. Its soft rays fall upon us, as we get into our car.

We climb up winding hills at a steady speed. We can hear three kookaburras laughing high up in a gum tree, while the magpies' clear pipe-like note echoes through the forest. While the less timid birds peer at us out of the bracken and we know that if we walk through the forest we will see more of Nature's beauty, so we leave our car on the roadside, get our lunch and walk into the dense forest. The trees bend their lower branches towards us, as though welcoming us into their kingdom, rabbits scurry here and there at our approach but we mean them no harm. After having our lunch we make towards our car and drive home, after a happy outing in the bush.

— CHRIS ARNOLD. Ballarat Road, Melton, wins a Weekly Times pencil.