



Melton Family History Group Inc

A0030595D

Registered 6th Dec 1994

December 2022-February 2023

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: Janeen O’Connell

Vice President Judith Bilszta

Secretary: Ian Bowey

Treasurer: Deborah Slattery

Email: sec.meltonfhg@outlook.com

Web site www.meltonfamilyhistory.org

Committee Members: Sue Morton and Pauline Stotten

2022/2023 Monthly Meetings at Melton Library in McKenzie Street.

8 th December	T.B.A
9 th February	T.B.A
13 th April	T.B.A
8 th June	T.B.A
10 th August	Annual General Meeting.

All dates and times are subject to change

Update: Regular work:

New members are always welcome, so if any member can help by recommending our group then please do so. To accommodate our members' busy lives, we will now be holding our meetings every other month. This will start on Thursday the 9th of February, 2023. The meeting times remain the same at 6:30pm, on the second Thursday of every second month at the Melton Library.

Melton Library's Nicole H has resigned and has accepted a position with Williamstown Library as a Heritage Librarian. Many thanks to Nicole for her assistance with the group. We all wish her well in her new role.

After our November meeting, an Ancestry D.N.A presentation was conducted by Janeen. We had a pleasing number of visitors attend. Many thanks to Janeen for her presentation.

The article below is by courtesy of Judith Bilszta and Bernie Coburn. A big thank you to both Bernie and Judith for their kind efforts.

VALE GEORGE BILSZTA

(1942-2022)

It is 13,000 kilometres from Zmiev in Ukraine, where George Bilszta was born in 1942, to Melton in Australia where he died on 4 October 2022. But it is more than distance that separates the two. In 1942, WWII raged throughout Europe. A war had never been fought on Australian soil. The contrast was recognized and appreciated by George, and he spent his life enjoying all Australia had to offer whilst, all the time, working to make Australia, and more particularly Melton, a better place. George's parents Alexander and Alice were Russian. While they were studying at Kharkov Technical School George was cared for by his grandmother, a teacher. One grandfather disappeared when serving in the Czar's army, the other was sent to a Gulag sometime in the 1930's. It was as though a precedent for family tragedy had been set. When Germany occupied Ukraine, during the war, it used Ukraine's citizens as forced labourers. His mother's family, and George with them, were transported across Europe to Kaliningrad in Poland, to work on farms. All contact with George's father was lost in the turmoil of war and after years of fruitless search, given the death toll that war inevitably brings it was assumed he was dead. When George was four-years old his mother Alice married a Polish man, Stanislaus Bilszta. Stanislaus, a good provider was also a man of vision and saw that citizenship in one of the modern countries was preferable to life in an always-in conflict- Europe. Stanislaus' decision to leave was founded on logic, but his method of finding a destination bordered on gambling -with a piece of string and a map he worked out which was the country most remote from Europe! The Bilszta's docked in Melbourne in 1952.

Knowing four languages, none of them being English, was the first problem confronting the ten-year old George during his early-schooling days at Yarraville and Kingsville primary schools. George moved to Footscray High School and later University High School for his secondary education. He resolved to be a teacher because knowledge was the key to a good and satisfying life. After graduating from the Melbourne Teacher's College George taught in Ballarat and Sutherland Creek. He then had a break and travelled around Europe, teaching, exploring, and trying to find out what had happened to his father a quest that went nowhere. On returning to Australia George recommenced teaching in the Ballarat area. His classes at Urquhart Street Primary were on the first floor. Another young teacher, Judith, taught on the ground floor. They must have found a common level because they were married in 1968. Gyles made a brief appearance into the world in 1973 and Justin was born in 1974.

In 1972 George, Judith and Justin settled in Melton. Over the rest of his career George taught at Richard Road, Kurunjang, Melton South, Wedge Park, Sydenham and Macedon. The Bilsztas joined a community of around 5,000, but massive changes lay ahead. By the time George became shire president in 1979 the population had grown to around 18,000. Those seven years, 1972 to 1979, saw the new residents, George among them, sometimes leading them, drive Melton forward to a size where its citizens could enjoy the facilities and services that come with a greater population. An example was the opening, in 1980 during George's term as shire president, of the three-million-dollar Melton Markets on the corner of High Street and Station Road. Another was the Melton Sewage Authority when George was chairman of the authority. When he nominated for council George said he "strongly supported a more concentrated effort in providing the basic amenities" to the shire. He could be satisfied that he played a large role in bringing the basic facilities to Melton.

Council was not the only body on which George worked for the public good. There were many others including the Public Library, the Willows Historical Park, the Resource Centre, the Civic Hall, the Cemetery Trust, Rotary, numerous school councils and as a Justice of the Peace.

In 1998 George with Judith went back to Zmiev the town where this story began to re-connect with George's mother Alice and to again try to find out what had happened to Alexander. The curator of the small museum in Zmiev arranged for them to meet with long-time residents. Among them was an old school friend of Alice's. She contacted a distant relative of Alexander's and told him that Alexander's son was looking for him and shortly after the family returned home George received a call from his father and they spoke after fifty-six years of silence. Judith says it was not really a conversation as they were both too emotional to speak. George and Justin, with Alice, flew to Moscow to be united with Alexander and they spent three happy weeks filling in a lifetime of lost memories.

Not everything went George's way in his adopted country. For thirty-one years George, Judith and Justin were Geelong Football Club members, but the passion did not filter down to the third generation. His only grandson Lachlan barracks for the Tigers!

George's life was a life well spent using his passion, knowledge and talents to provide for his family and his community. He is survived by his wife of fifty-three happy years Judith, his son Justin and partner Denise, and grandson Lachlan.

The article below is taken from a recent newsletter of 'The Genealogist' newsletter. Author unknown.

Scotland

The Kingdom of the Picts was the state that eventually became known as 'Alba' or 'Scotland'. By the 12th century, the kings



of Alba had added the English-speaking land in the south-east to their territories and attained overlordship of Gaelic-speaking Galloway and Norse-speaking Caithness; by the end of the 13th century, the kingdom had assumed approximately its modern borders.

Feudalism, government reorganisation and the first legally recognised towns (called burghs) began in the 12th century. Influenced by Anglo-French knights, the culture and language of the low-lying and coastal parts of the kingdom's original territory in the east became English-speaking, while the rest of the country retained the Gaelic language, apart from the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland, which remained under Norse rule until 1468.

The Scottish state entered a largely successful and stable period between the 12th and 14th centuries, there was relative peace with England, and trade and educational links were well developed with the Continent.

The death of Alexander III in 1286 broke the centuries-old succession line of Scotland's kings. Edward I of England was asked to arbitrate between claimants for the Scottish crown, and John Balliol was pronounced king in 1292. Edward steadily undermined his authority. In 1294, Balliol and other Scottish lords refused Edward's demands to serve in his army against the French; Scotland and France sealed a treaty in 1295, known as the Auld Alliance. War ensued and King John was deposed by Edward who took personal control of Scotland. War ensued and King John was deposed by Edward who took personal control of Scotland. Andrew Moray and William Wallace initially emerged as the principle leaders of the resistance to English rule in what became known as the Wars of Scottish Independence (1296-1328).

In the early 14th century Robert the Bruce battled to restore Scottish independence, gradually winning Scotland back from the Norman English invaders, with victory at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. However, war with England continued for several decades after the death of Bruce.

The Stuarts ruled Scotland for the remainder of the Middle Ages. The country they ruled experienced greater prosperity from the end of the 14th century through the Scottish Renaissance to the Reformation. This was despite continual warfare with England, and the increasing division between the Highlands and Lowlands.

In 1502, James IV of Scotland signed the Treaty of Perpetual Peace with Henry VII of England and married Henry's daughter. A decade later, James made the fateful decision to invade England in support of France under the terms of the Auld Alliance. He was the last British monarch to die in battle, at the Battle of Flodden.

In 1560, John Knox realised his goal of seeing Scotland become a Protestant nation and the Scottish parliament revoke papal authority in Scotland. Mary, Queen of Scots, a Catholic and former queen of France was forced to abdicate in 1567.

In 1603, James VI King of Scots inherited the thrones of the Kingdom of England and Ireland, and became King James I of England and Ireland, leaving Edinburgh for London. With the exception of a short period under the Protectorate, Scotland remained a separate state, but there was considerable conflict between the crown and the Covenanters over the form of church government. In the 1690s, Scotland experienced famine, which reduced the population of parts of the country by at least 20%.

On the 22nd of July 1706, the Treaty of Union was agreed between representatives of the Scots Parliament and the Parliament of England and the following year twin Acts of Union were passed to create the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

Scotland remained independent in many ways. Following the union, the country maintained its own separate legal system on Scots Law, its own education system and its own state church. As a result, Scottish family history records tend to be very different to those found elsewhere in the British Isles.

The civil registration of Scottish births, marriages and deaths, for example started in 1855, 18 years after England-but the records hold much more information than their English and Welsh counterparts, such as the names of both parents (including maiden name) in each. The land system of feudalism in England and Wales, with 'Vassals' holding land of their 'superiors', was abolished in medieval time, but governed virtually every land transfer in Scotland until its abolition in 2004. And where the state church in England, Wales and Ireland was the Anglican Church, administered by bishops and archbishops etc., the Scottish Kirk had no bishops at all for most of its existence, with congregations instead democratically electing their own ministers.

Scotland was one of the main powerhouses in the Industrial Revolution in Britain, but prior to the invention of steam power was largely rural. People worked on their own plots of land as well as that of their laird, or put themselves out for hire for set periods at the Scottish term days of Whitsun and Martinmas. To the north of the Highland line, the Gaelic-speaking clans lived in small separate territories under the protection of a clan chief. Those in the more urbanised population lived in the main trading burghs of the Scots-speaking central belt and eastern coast, working as craftsmen and merchants, and with constant contact with their English neighbours. The inhabitants of the Lowlands and the Highlands regarded each other as foreigners and with much suspicion.

Several major developments changed the country by the end of the 17th century and early 18th. The Union was not popular with the common folk of the country, who saw it as a means for the Scottish nobility to advance themselves at the people's expense.

With strong support from the peoples of the Highlands, there were several Jacobite rebellions in the first half of the 18th century to try to restore the power of the Stuarts. With their failure, the clan system breathed its last, with the resultants pacification of the Highlands. Many of the chiefs then adopted the idea of trying to make money from their lands rather than protect the clan to which they were supposed to give a lead. Thousands of people were forced from their homes into exile during what became known as the 'clearances', and in their wake more profitable sheep.

In the southern half of the country, a different story would unfold. Vast open estates were enclosed into more efficient farms, and many former agricultural labourers flocked to the big cities to seek work. As the Industrial Revolution took a hold, coal and iron ore was mined in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Fife, while textile mills were established in Glasgow, Perth and Dundee. Navvies carved out an infrastructure of canals and then built the railways and, on the Clyde, John Brown's shipyard workers built a fleet for the rapidly growing British Empire, first from wood and then of iron.

As the country grew, the churches structure of parishes found it hard to cope with the expansion of the major cities. There were regular disagreements about the role of the state and the role of landowners in the affairs of the Kirk. During the 18th and 19th centuries various wings split from the establishment, the most important being in 1843 when a third of the Kirk's ministers walked away to form the Free Church of Scotland. The role of the Kirk itself declined in everyday life, and the various roles it once had were gradually transferred to the state, such as education, discipline and the administration of poor relief.

} SCOTTISH RECORDS ONLINE

Many records for Scotland can be found at TheGenealogist.co.uk:

- **Census records** from 1841 to 1901.
- **Trade directories**: directories for Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greenock, Perth-shire, Orkney and Shetland.
- **Parish registers** for Torphichen, Dumess, Restalrig and Haddington.
- **Land owners**: a directory of landowners in 1872-73.
- **Educational registers** for Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh.
- **Burgesses of Edinburgh** 1406-1700.
- A collection of 17th century Edinburgh **wills**.
- Records of the Scots Navy from 1689 to 1710, and more.

The Australian citizenship practice test

1. What do we commemorate on Anzac Day?

- a. The landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli, Turkey during World War I
- b. The arrival of the first free settlers from Great Britain
- c. The landing of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove

2. What are the colours of the Australian Aboriginal Flag?

- a. Black, red and yellow
- b. Green, white and black
- c. Blue, white and green

3. What is the Commonwealth Coat of Arms?

- a. The national anthem
- b. Australia's national flower
- c. The official symbol of Australia, which identifies Commonwealth property

4. What happened in Australia on 1 January 1901?

- a. The Australian Constitution was changed by a referendum
- b. The separate colonies were united into a federation of states called the Commonwealth of Australia
- c. The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was formed

5. What is the capital city of Australia?

- a. Brisbane
- b. Canberra
- c. Perth

6. Which of these is an example of freedom of speech?

- a. People can peacefully protest against a government action
- b. Men and women are treated equally in a court of law
- c. Australians are free to not follow a religion

7. Which of these statements about government in Australia is correct?

- a. The government does not allow some religions
- b. The government in Australia is secular
- c. Religious laws are passed by Parliament

8. Which of these is an example of equality in Australia?

- a. Everyone follows the same religion
- b. Men and women have equal rights
- c. Everyone belongs to the same political party

9. Which of these is a responsibility of Australian citizens aged 18 years or over?

- a. To attend local council meetings
- b. To vote in federal and state or territory elections, and in a referendum
- c. To have a current Australian passport

10. Which of these statements about passports is correct?

- a. Australian citizens can apply for an Australian passport
- b. Permanent residents can hold an Australian passport
- c. Australian citizens need a passport and visa to return to Australia

11. Which of these statements about voting in Australian elections is correct?

- a. People are free and safe to vote for any candidate
- b. Voting is by a show of hands
- c. People must write their name on their vote

12. What is the name of the legal document that sets out the basic rules for the government of Australia?

- a. The Australian Federation
- b. The Australian Commonwealth
- c. The Australian Constitution

13. What is a referendum?

- a. A vote to change the government
- b. A vote to change the Australian Constitution
- c. A vote to change the Prime Minister

14. Which arm of government has the power to interpret and apply laws?

- a. Legislative
- b. Executive
- c. Judicial

5. Which of these is a role of the Governor-General?

- a. The appointment of state premiers
- b. Signing all Bills passed by the Australian Parliament into law
- c. The appointment of the Head of State

16. Which of these statements best demonstrates Australian values about freedom of expression?

- a. Everyone can peacefully express their opinions within the law

- b. People with different views from me need to keep quiet
- c. Only approved topics can be discussed

17. Should people in Australia make an effort to learn English?

- a. People in Australia should speak whichever language is most commonly spoken in their local neighbourhood
- b. There is no expectation to learn any particular language in Australia
- c. Yes, English is the national language of Australia and it helps to get an education, a job, and to integrate into the community

18. In Australia, can you encourage violence against a person or group of people if you have been insulted?

- a. Yes, if you do not intend to carry out the violence
- b. No, it is against Australian values and the law
- c. Sometimes, if I feel very offended

19. Should people tolerate one another where they find that they disagree?

- a. It is against the law to disagree with one another
- b. No, people only need to treat each other with respect if they agree with one another
- c. Yes, peaceful disagreement reflects Australian values in relation to mutual respect

20. Which of the following is an example of contributing to the Australian community?

- a. Volunteering or fundraising for a charity is a great opportunity to strengthen our community
- b. I should not make any effort to get to know other people
- c. People in Australia should not contribute to the community because Australia is a free country

The above practice test is taken from:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/test-and-interview/prepare-for-test/practice-test-new>

Something to either make you groan or bring a Christmas smile to your face.

What do we call paper that likes music?

Rapping paper.

Lastly, on behalf of all committee members, a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

Ian