

Immigration to Australia – Ascertaining all Ancestral Arrivals

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A pedigree¹ in which forty ancestral immigrants feature, as the fabric from which our family has been tailored, is a microcosmic account of Australian immigration as a whole. It spans 111 years and four Australian States and Colonies. Assisted, unassisted and bounty passengers, as well as convicts, crew-members and one exile are represented. It includes single males, single females, married couples, some with children and extended families, with varying levels of education. Births and deaths at sea, shipboard romances resulting in Colonial marriages, an application for the passage of a convict's family, desertion, reunions and a solitary return to the homeland are also involved. The nineteenth century immigrants originate from England and Scotland, and a twentieth century Italian migrant rounds out the pedigree. Confusion with names on passenger lists has enforced the location of alternative documentation to ensure accurate identification. Many research avenues have been scrutinised in order to ascertain the vessel, arrival date and place of origin for each immigrant ancestor, thus sifting out any "swimmers".

The research into this particular pedigree began, as should all nineteenth century immigration investigations, with the assisted arrivals. The Public Record Office Victoria has an index to assisted immigration, now also available on microfiche. Initially this index revealed that Isaac and Sarah PRIMMER and their three children, John H, 10, James, 9 and Harriet, 2, departed from Southampton on 3 October 1856 on the *Balnaguith* and disembarked at Belfast on 17 January 1857.²

Robert and Mary Ann SURKITT and their sons, George and William, arrived at Portland on board the *Helen* on 12 November 1852.³

There are entries for two men named Alexander DUNCAN,⁴ however a surviving letter dated 20 December 1856, written shortly after his arrival and returned to Australia by his younger brother,⁵ indicated that he landed at Belfast per the *Euphrates* on 19 November 1856 and was employed by A C KELL,⁶ a farmer, whose daughter he would eventually marry.⁷

The aforesaid Andrew KELL, and his bride Sarah, had arrived as bounty passengers per the *England* on 17 July 1841.⁸ Andrew's brother, John, was on board the same ship in the single men's quarters.⁹ Andrew and Sarah's surname was recorded as KILL.¹⁰ Andrew's parents and younger siblings who, according to family legend, emigrated with them, were not located at this time.

William and Eliza BURCOMBE accompanied by daughter, Martha, brought a handwritten copy of their Evercreech marriage certificate¹¹ on the *Annie Wilson* which docked in Melbourne before sailing on to Belfast and landing there on 18 January 1859.¹²

William SCRIVENS, a shepherd, sailed on the *Marion*, one of nine ships to bring exiles to Port Phillip in the 1840s,¹³ arriving on 25 January 1848.¹⁴ The nominal list detailed his ten-year sentence for sheep stealing and imprisonment at Millbank.¹⁵ The Surgeon's Journal described his bout of fever and treatment on board.¹⁶

¹ Pedigree charts for Wayne John PRIMMER and Gloria Jessie FERRI, displaying their children's 40 immigrant ancestors.

² *Balnaguith* shipping list, PROV VPRS 7310, book 12, p256.

³ *Helen* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 6, p114.

⁴ Microfiche index to Register of Assisted Immigrants from UK 1839-1871, PROV VPRS 7310, Alexander DUNCAN.

⁵ *Log of Logs Volume 3*, Ian Nicholson, p152 and *Australian Historic Records Register* fiche 6, no. 2833.

⁶ *Euphrates* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 12, p242.

⁷ Marriage certificate of Alexander DUNCAN and Agnes Shearer KELL, Vic BDM 1859/4272.

⁸ *England* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 1, p25.

⁹ *ibid* p30.

¹⁰ *ibid*, p30.

¹¹ Marriage certificate of William Cox Burcombe FURBER and Eliza KINGSTON, Evercreech PR no. 135.

¹² *Annie Wilson* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 13, p292.

¹³ *The Exiles*, edited by T R Hill and V M Lyons, 1986, introduction by Ian Wynd.

¹⁴ *Marion* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 2 & 3, p292.

¹⁵ *ibid*.

¹⁶ Surgeon's Journal, *Marion*, AJCP 3203 ADM 101/49 case 25.

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Exiles were not supervised like convicts, but were unable to return to their homeland until the expiration of their original sentence.¹⁷

Also noted at the same time, and awaiting further research before claiming, were single men John CARMODY, a blacksmith of “Edinboro” arriving on the *Cheapside* on 18 August 1848¹⁸ and Quenten DICK who arrived on the famed *David Clark*,¹⁹ the first ship to bring immigrants directly from Great Britain to the Port Phillip District of NSW. It docked on 27 October 1839.²⁰

Subsequent research would prove these men belonged to the PRIMMER pedigree, both meeting their prospective brides on the voyage. Quintin DICK married Agness EDGAR²¹ in Melbourne²² as soon as his original 3 month term of engagement in the country had expired.²³ John CARMODY was in fact a blacksmith,²⁴ and married shipmate Margaret McARTHUR,²⁵ recorded as Margaret McKESTER. She was positively identified by her age, place of origin and the fact that she was employed by her uncle Peter,²⁶ a well-to-do squatter who left her an annuity in his will.²⁷ Further research would be needed to positively identify other arrivals.

Meanwhile, moving on to the Unassisted Passenger lists. The parents of Sarah KELL, Robert and Agnes SHEARER, and two of their adult daughters, Elizabeth, 27, and Janet, 22, arrived on board the *Cheviot* on 13 September 1854.²⁸ Robert and Agnes, both in their sixties,^{29,30} lowered their ages by ten years,³¹ seemingly to comply with regulations governing requirements for immigrants.

William and Elizabeth McKENZIE also arrived as unassisted passengers. They sailed on board the *Thames* arriving in Geelong in May 1857 and are recorded as Mr & Mrs McKENZIE, both aged 22.³² It can be deduced that, as they married in Scotland on 22 January 1857³³ and their eldest daughter, Jane, was born at Barwon on 18 December 1857,³⁴ they arrived in between those dates. The ages and nationalities given corroborate these findings.³⁵

James McLELLAND³⁶ and the Archives Office of NSW have published some handy guides to early Victorian immigration,³⁷ and a perusal of these can assist in solving some naming problems, such as the discovery of Edward and Margaret CARROLL and their three children on the *England* in 1841.³⁸ Could this be the Edward and Margaret KELL who were meant to have arrived on that ship with their sons and daughter-in-law?

¹⁷ *The Exiles*, edited by T R Hill and V M Lyons, 1986, introduction by Ian Wynd.

¹⁸ *Cheapside* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 4, p48.

¹⁹ *David Clark* disposal list PROV VPRS 7320, book 1, p18.

²⁰ *Historical Records of Victoria – Foundation Series* Volume 4, p310.

²¹ *David Clark* disposal list PROV VPRS 7310, book 1, p52.

²² Marriage certificate of Quintin DICK and Agness EDGAR, Vic BDM ECR 1840/485, fiche 1117, Pres. Melbourne.

²³ *David Clark* disposal list PROV VPRS 7310, book 1, p18.

²⁴ Marriage certificate of James PRIMMER and Mary CARMODY, Vic BDM 1869/226.

²⁵ Marriage certificate of John CARMODY and Margaret McARTHUR, Vic BDM ECR 1850/2370, fiche 785, Pres. Melbourne

²⁶ *Cheapside* disposal list PROV VPRS 7310, book 4, p57.

²⁷ Will of Peter McARTHUR VPRS 7591 series 66/140.

²⁸ *Cheviot* shipping list, fiche 76, p2.

²⁹ OPR 560 Cathcart, Scotland birth of Robert SHEARER 8 April 1788.

³⁰ OPR 490/3 Stirling, Scotland baptism of Agnes NICOL 25 July 1790.

³¹ *Cheviot* shipping list, fiche 76, p2.

³² *Thames* shipping list, fiche 124, p2.

³³ Marriage certificate of William Simpson McKENZIE and Elizabeth INGRAM, Parish of Auchterless, Scotland 22 January 1857.

³⁴ Birth certificate of Jane McKENZIE, Vic BDM 1858/2559.

³⁵ *Thames* shipping list, fiche 124, p2.

³⁶ James McLelland's *A Guide to Locating & Searching Family, Convict, Pioneer & Immigrant Records of Australia*

³⁷ Guide to the State Archives of NSW No 16 – Index to Assisted Immigrants Arriving Port Phillip, 1839-51.

³⁸ *ibid*, p32.

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Certainly the beginning, middle and last sounds of both names could easily be confused when spoken and, once transcribed, remain alphabetically estranged. Other details of ages, place of origin and children's names fit known information, with the exception of James aged 4 being recorded as John.³⁹ Edward and Margaret KELL were documented in baptismal⁴⁰ and land records⁴¹ in the 1840s. Edward, a shoemaker, returned to Scotland alone and was living with a woman in Rothesay in 1851,⁴² and died there in 1867.⁴³

In an attempt to track down the remaining arrivals, alternate spellings were explored, working on the theory that if KELL could be recorded as "KILL", then WELLS may be listed under WILLS or WALLS. A theory well worth following up, as a likely family was discovered under the name of WALLS, with all other information bearing out the previously known data. James C and Mary WALLS and their daughters, Jane, Agnes and Wilhelmina from Dumfries arrived on the *Garland* on 31 July 1852.⁴⁴ Their son, James U WALLS, died at sea and is documented in the List of Deaths.⁴⁵ A check of Black's *Surnames of Scotland* explained that in Dumfriesshire, the pronunciation is WALLS.⁴⁶

Two other families were subsequently found in the Victorian assisted immigration indexes, following the discovery that Jessie May BRILL's parents, William and Rachel,⁴⁷ had changed their names. William turned out to be James LITCHFIELD⁴⁸ who had arrived from Cambridge aged 9 on the *America* with his father, John, 38, stepmother Ann, 21 and sister, Elizabeth, 12.⁴⁹ John's second wife Ann gave birth to a son on board ship and his birth is recorded on the passenger list⁵⁰ and registered in the marine births.⁵¹ Fourteen year old Joseph LITCHFIELD emigrated with his family, but was in the single men's quarters.⁵² Rachel's name was actually Rachel BATTY⁵³ and her parents, Abraham and Martha BATTY, arrived at Geelong on 8 November 1848 on the *Andromache* with their young family, Kezia, Charlotte, Dawson Wilson and Jemima.⁵⁴

The Victorian branch of the Australian Archives Office holds records of passenger arrivals and departures at Port Melbourne 1924-1968.⁵⁵ A search of these lists (not indexed) showed Fiorano FERRI arrived in Melbourne on the *Caprera* on 1 February 1925.⁵⁶ Searches for foreign arrivals are aided by naturalization documents which usually give the date, place and ship of arrival, as in the case of F FERRI.⁵⁷ These should be consulted before conducting unnecessarily laboriously long searches into unindexed material.

Moving interstate to South Australia, where a search of the index to assisted immigration revealed the arrival of the HOWARD family of Northampton on board the *Magdalena* on 26 August 1853. Brothers Alfred HOWARD, 35, and Christopher HOWARD, 31, were accompanied by their respective wives, Elizabeth and

³⁹ *England* shipping list, AONSW date 1841, 4/4813, p173.

⁴⁰ Baptism of Margaret Cowan KELL, Vic BDM ECR 1844/13625, fiche 275, CofE St James, Melbourne.

⁴¹ Land memorial for Edward KELL O 594, 595.

⁴² 1851 census District 558 Montague Street, Rothesay, Scotland.

⁴³ McKirdy Index Bute Deaths 1855-1875, fiche 82, entry 58, Edward KELL 1867 Rothesay, Scotland, LDS film 0349060.

⁴⁴ *Garland* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 8, p132.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, p140.

⁴⁶ George F Black, *The Surnames of Scotland – Their Origin, History and Meaning*, p808.

⁴⁷ Birth certificate of Jessie May BRILL, Vic BDM 1880/18301.

⁴⁸ Gloria Primmer, *Litchfield to Brill – An Unsolved Mystery*, 1990 SLV call no. SL TF 929.20994B76PL.

⁴⁹ *America* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 10, p237.

⁵⁰ *ibid*.

⁵¹ Register of Marine Births, Vic BDM 1854/123M.

⁵² *America* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 10, p240.

⁵³ Marriage certificate of James LITCHFIELD and Rachel BATTY, Vic BDM 1866/3034.

⁵⁴ *Andromache* shipping list PROV VPRS 7310, book 4, p118 (nominal), p128 (disposal).

⁵⁵ *Family & Local History Sources in Victoria*, 6th edition by F Brown, D Meadley, M Morgan, p64.

⁵⁶ *Caprera* passenger manifest 1 February 1925.

⁵⁷ Australian Archives CRS AI Item 35/9088.

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Priscilla, and families, Ruth, 11, Sarah, 8, Mary Ann, 5 and infant Elizabeth and Elizabeth, 8, John, 5, and Charles, 1.⁵⁸ Thomas LIVERTON of SA did not appear on this index.

Tasmania was the destination for several earlier ancestral arrivals. The parents of Elizabeth TAPSELL both arrived in Hobart. Her mother, Jane SWIFT, a widow,⁵⁹ was transported for seven years, arriving on the *Mary (3)* on 5 October 1823.⁶⁰ Jane married James TAPSELL,⁶¹ a crew-member of the *Regalia* which arrived on 30 November 1819.^{62,63} He made several trips as a steward on this ship between Hobart and Sydney.⁶⁴ James and Jane's only child, Elizabeth,⁶⁵ married John JONES.⁶⁶ The permission to marry records at the Archives Office of Tasmania defines John's arrival on board the cholera-ravaged⁶⁷ *Katherine Stewart Forbes*^{68,69} on 16 July 1832, being transported for fourteen years.⁷⁰ He changed his name to John WALKER in 1846 at the expiration of his sentence⁷¹ and changed it again to George MOORE when he moved to Victoria.⁷²

Convict James LAMBERT arrived in Hobart on the *Asia V* (Agar) on 7 December 1827⁷³. Due to good behaviour, he was able to apply to have his wife, Elizabeth, and five children, Maria, 18, Mary Ann, 16, James, 12, George, 7 and Jane, 5, of Motcombe, Dorset, sent out to join him.⁷⁴ His wife and four of the five children did indeed emigrate, Maria the eldest being the exception.⁷⁵ They are recorded as Elizabeth LAMBERT and four children and were given passage on the female convict ship *Mary (3)* on its voyage to Hobart arriving on 19 October 1831.⁷⁶

Another convict, David JONES' arrival was traced through a document discovered at the LDS Family History Centre which listed Convict Records in Tasmania 1804-1841.⁷⁷ The entry for David JONES showed two separate convictions, one in Launceston on 12 March 1835 and one twenty-two years earlier in 1813⁷⁸ for which he was transported to Sydney on board the typhus-stricken⁷⁹ *Surrey (1)* which arrived on 28 July 1814,⁸⁰ then removed to the Derwent on board the *Emu*, arriving at George Town on 30 July 1815.⁸¹ This record confirmed that David JONES, a carpenter of Campbell Town in the 1830s had,^{82,83} in fact, been transported two decades earlier.

⁵⁸ *Magdalena* shipping list 313 53/11 frame 4.

⁵⁹ Phillip Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets And Dangerous Girls*, Collins/Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1990, entry 803.

⁶⁰ *Mary (3)* shipping list AOT 13/2, p501.

⁶¹ Marriage certificate of James TAPSELL and Jane SWIFT, Tas BDM 1825/810 RGD 36.

⁶² Ian Hawkins Nicholson, *Shipping Arrivals & Departures Tasmania 1803-1833* Volume 1, p57, *Regalia*.

⁶³ AOT Crowther Port Certificate Book L11, p79.

⁶⁴ AONSW Ships Musters 1816-1825 ref Cod 420, 0221 4/4771 and AOT Crowther Port Certificate Book L11, p105.

⁶⁵ Baptism certificate of Elizabeth TAPSELL, Tas BDM event 1824 Reg 1826/2031 RGD 32.

⁶⁶ Marriage certificate of John JONES and Elizabeth TAPSELL, Tas BDM 1841/1098 RGD 37.

⁶⁷ Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships*, pp274-275.

⁶⁸ AOT Permission to marry records Con/52 JONES and TAPSELL.

⁶⁹ Anne M Bartlett, *Local & Family History Sources – Tasmania*, p4.

⁷⁰ *Katherine Stewart Forbes* assignment list AOT con 13/5.

⁷¹ Baptism certificates of John and William WALKER, St George's Battery Point, Hobart 19 April 1846 nos 230, 231.

⁷² Marriage certificate of George MOORE and Elizabeth TAPSELL, Vic BDM ECR 1852/25220, fiche 368, CofE Gippsland.

⁷³ *Asia V* shipping list CSO 1/217/5237 p249 James LAMBERT.

⁷⁴ Application for wife and family of James LAMBERT to be sent to VDL 1830 GO33/7, p394, no. 359.

⁷⁵ Tasmanian Pioneer Index, LAMBERT marriage entries 1833/2323, 1839/460, 1842/4, 1852/960.

⁷⁶ AOT Free Arrival Index *Mary (3)* shipping list 19 October 1831 CUS 30, p68.

⁷⁷ Convict Records Tasmania 1804-1841 Vol Con 22/1.

⁷⁸ *ibid*, LDS film 991952849 David JONES.

⁷⁹ Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships*, pp195-198.

⁸⁰ *Surrey (1)* shipping list AONSW COD140.

⁸¹ *Emu* shipping list AOT Con 13/1 p45 and AONSW reel 6004 4/3494, p126.

⁸² Baptisms of William, Elizabeth and George JONES, Tas BDM 1835/6619, 1835/6640, 1837/8202.

⁸³ David JONES squatting and sly-grog letters AOT 1835 LSD 1/6/209-11 and 1837 ref 1/6/213-217.

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This left just two ancestors to track down. Mary Ann ROTHERY who, despite searches under alternate spellings defied all attempts to be traced in Victoria where she married,⁸⁴ lived⁸⁵ and died.⁸⁶ However, the release of the Biographical Index of South Australians noted her presence in a small entry⁸⁷ taken from the Adelaide Hospital Admissions.⁸⁸ A check of the assisted immigration index located her arrival in Adelaide on the *Harry Lorrequer* on 26 December 1849.⁸⁹

Thomas LIVERTON's arrival was ascertained following contact with a distant relative in Devon, England⁹⁰ who recounted the tale of his departure from home, as told to her by an elderly relative, Ruby BIDGOOD, who had heard this story as a young child from her grandfather, John LIVERTON, brother of Thomas. One day Tom LIVERTON came across the local parson riding on horseback; they met in a gateway and the parson ordered him to open the gate. Tom replied that he would open it if the parson said 'please' in a civil manner. This so enraged the parson he hit Tom with his riding crop, and Tom pulled him off his horse and thrashed him. When Tom went home and told his mother, she was so terrified for his life that they went to Barnstaple where he signed on as an able-bodied seaman on the *Star of Peace* just leaving for Australia.⁹¹ On arrival he jumped ship and walked up into the Adelaide Hills.⁹² The Archives Office in South Australia was able to confirm that Thomas LIVERTON had deserted from the *Star of Peace* which docked in Adelaide on 14 July 1857.⁹³

These immigrant ancestors to Australia faced all the challenges encountered by their contemporaries, long journeys in less than ideal conditions, enduring the sometimes tedious, sometimes treacherous journey to the other side of the world, to pioneer a young country in an endeavour to improve the way of life for themselves, their children and ultimately their grateful descendants.

⁸⁴ Marriage certificate of William SCRIVENS and Mary Ann ROTHERY, Vic BDM ECR 1852/6102, fiche 971, CofE Melbourne.

⁸⁵ VPI SCRIVENS births 1855/3794, 1857/5106, 1860/1018, 1862/16266, 1865/13372, 1868/324R, 1871/15892.

⁸⁶ Death certificate of Mary Ann SCRIVENS, Vic BDM 1900/14758.

⁸⁷ *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885*, SAGHS 1986 Vol 3 L-R, p1391.

⁸⁸ Adelaide Hospital Admissions GDG 78/49/1 Admitted 20 March 1850.

⁸⁹ *Harry Lorrequer* shipping list SA 1849/24 frame 8.

⁹⁰ Devon Family History Society Members' Interest Directory 1982.

⁹¹ Letter from Beryl YATES dated 29 December 1982.

⁹² *South Australian Deserters Register 1852-1876*, SAGHS, Alphabetical List from Australian Archives fiche 2.

⁹³ Letter from SA Archives dated 6 April 1983.