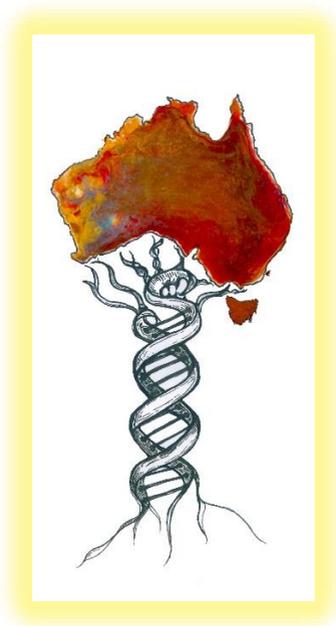


# **Related Histories: Studying the Family**



**28-29 November 2017**

**Theatre  
National Library of Australia**

# Conference Program

## Day 1: 28 November 2017

**8.30-9.00am** Registration (foyer, NLA)

**9.00-9.30am**

*Traditional welcome to country:*

**Dr Matilda House**

*Introductions:*

**Melanie Nolan** (Director, National Centre of Biography/General Editor, Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University)

**Margy Burn** (Assistant Director-General, Australian Collections & Reader Services, National Library of Australia)

### **Session 1: 9.30-11.00am**

*Family History as Genre*

Chair: Stephen Foster

This session addresses themes relating to the writing of family history including its relationship to creative (non) fiction. It will also consider family history, memory and oral story-telling practices.

Speakers:

**Susannah Radstone** (University of South Australia). 'Remembering the family: Memory-work as approach and method'

**Tim Bonyhady** (Australian National University). 'A way to change your life: Writing family history in the National Library of Australia'

**Anna Green** (Victoria University of Wellington). 'The Missing Link: Pākehā/New Zealand European intergenerational family memory'

**11.00-11.30am:** *morning tea* (foyer, NLA)

# Conference Program

## **Session 2: 11.30am-1.00pm**

*Family History Across the Disciplines*

Chair: Sophie Scott-Brown

This session considers how family history facilitates inter-disciplinary research across the social/natural sciences.

Speakers:

**Cathy Day** (Australian National University). 'Family history and biological anthropology'

**Simon Easteal** (Australian National University). 'Family history and genomics'

**Janet McCalman** (University of Melbourne). 'Family History en masse: demographic prosopography as a tool for social and medical research'

**1.00-2.00pm:** *lunch* (foyer, NLA)

## **Session 3: 2.00-3.30pm**

*Family History and Transformational Learning*

Chair: Tanya Evans

This session looks at family history as pedagogy, its implications for democratising history-making and interventions into civic consciousness.

Speakers:

**Emma Shaw** (University of Newcastle). 'Family history as public pedagogy: Learning to "do" and produce history in public spaces'

**Kristyn Harman** (University of Tasmania – via video link). 'The Diploma of Family History in an age of digital literacy'

**Anna Clark** (University of Technology Sydney). 'Private Lives, Public History'

**3.30-4.30pm:** *afternoon tea* (foyer, NLA)

# Conference Program

## **Session 4: 4.30-6.00pm**

*Works-in-Progress*

Chair: Melanie Nolan

This session invites scholars to give presentations on works-in-progress and provides opportunities to reflect on the personal experiences of research.

Speakers:

**Marian Lorrison** (Macquarie University)

**Sauna Bostock-Smith** (Australian National University)

**Helen Morgan** (University of Melbourne)

**Babette Smith** (independent researcher)

**Barry McGowan** (Australian National University)

## **6.30-7.30pm: Keynote Lecture:**

**Graeme Davison**, 'My Grandfather's Clock: The History of an Heirloom'

Theatre, NLA

Graeme Davison, author of the acclaimed *Lost Relations: Fortunes of My Family in Australia's Golden Age* (2015), reflects on his research process and its impact on his historical thinking.

# Conference Program

**Day 2: 29 November 2017**

## **Session 5: 9.00-10.30am**

*The Politics of Family History*

Chair: Malcolm Allbrook

This session addresses family history, national identity, gender, race and relationship to public history and critical historiography.

### Speakers:

**Angela Wanhalla** (University of Otago). “To finally know that I belong to someone would be beyond my wildest dreams”: Finding family in the wake of the Pacific War’

**Jane McCabe** (University of Otago). ‘Out of the shadows: transforming family narratives and beyond’

**Jenny Hocking** (Monash University). ‘From “Grandfather the felon” to secrets of the Dismissal: Transforming history through political biography’

**10.30-11.00am:** *morning tea* (foyer, NLA)

## **Session 6: 11.00am-12.30pm**

*Family History and the Digital Revolution*

Chair: Sophie Scott-Brown

This session looks at the impact of multimedia technologies on family history making.

### Speakers:

**Christine Fernon** and **Scott Yeadon** (Australian National University). ‘Family history and the Australian Dictionary of Biography’

**Kate Bagnall** (University of Wollongong). ‘Communication and collaboration in the digital age’

**Lorina Barker** (University of New England). ‘Looking Through Windows: Using multimedia to capture Aboriginal people’s memories and stories’

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**12.30-1.30pm:** *lunch* (foyer, NLA)

## **Session 7: 1.30-3.00pm**

*Family Histories in the Making*

Chair: Stephen Foster

This session invites family history professionals (archivists, librarians, genealogists etc.) to provide 'how to' papers on some aspect of family history research.

### Speakers:

**Cheney Brew** (TROVE team, National Library of Australia)

**Gail White** (Australian Institute of Genealogy)

**Martin Playne** (Genealogical Society of Victoria)

**Gina Grey** (National Archives of Australia)

**3.00-3.30pm:** *afternoon tea* (foyer, NLA)

## **Session 8: 3.30-5.00pm**

*Family History, History and Historians*

Chair: Melanie Nolan

This session addresses themes including: the rise, fall, rise again of family history within the profession; family history outside of the profession; and the work of historians engaged in some form of family history research.

### Speakers:

**Penny Russell** (University of Sydney). 'Extended families: Politics and practice in family history'

**Alan Atkinson** (University of Sydney). 'Family life and the creation of conscience: The Macarthurs 1780-1860'

**Nick Brodie** (independent researcher). 'How family history (almost) made me famous'

**5.00-5.15pm** **Tanya Evans** (Director of Applied History, University of Macquarie). Concluding comments.

## Conference Program

### **5.30-6.30pm Book Launch** (foyer, NLA)

Join Professor Kim Rubenstein, ANU College of Law, and author Stephen Foster for the launch of Stephen's book *Zoffany's Daughter: Love and Treachery*.

For further details and to book:

<https://www.nla.gov.au/event/book-launch-zoffanys-daughter>

# Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

## Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

### Session 1: Family History as Genre

#### **Susannah Radstone**

'Re-membering the family: Memory-work as approach and method'

This paper will explore the distinctiveness of a memory studies approach to researching the family. Taking as its case studies some early contributions to the field it will also discuss my own planned, and briefly piloted, foray into autobiographical memory-work. Working with photographs as well as analysing texts, it will seek to examine the aims and methods of a memory studies approach while offering some suggestions about how memory studies might complement the approaches of family historians and genealogists to the broad field of family history. Texts discussed will include Annette Kuhn's *Family Secrets* (1995; 2nd ed. 2002), Carolyn Steedman's *Landscape for a Good Woman* (1986), Ronald Fraser's *In Search of a Past* (1984; 2nd ed. 2010) and Jo Spence's, *Putting Myself in the Picture* (1986).

*Susannah Radstone is Professor of Cultural Theory in the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of South Australia, and Adjunct Professor in the School of Historical, Philosophical and International Studies, Monash University. She was previously Professor of Cultural Theory at the University of East London. An interdisciplinary researcher, she has published extensively on cultural memory studies, psychoanalytic and feminist cultural theory and in literary and cinema studies. Her books include The Sexual Politics of Time (2007); (ed. with Bill Schwarz) Memory: History, Theory, Debates (2010); (ed. with P. Perri, Corinne Squire and Amal Treacher, Public Emotions (2007); ed. with Caroline Bainbridge, Michael Rustin and Candida Yates, Culture and the Unconscious, (2007); (ed. with Katherine Hodgkin) Memory, History, Nation: The Politics of Memory (2005); (ed. with Katharine Hodgkin) Memory Cultures: Subjectivity, Recognition*

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and Memory (2005); (ed.) Memory and Methodology (2000). With Felicity Collins, she has recently co-edited a special half issue of Continuum titled 'Re-thinking witnessing across history, culture and time' and is currently completing a new monograph titled *Getting Over Trauma*.

### **Tim Bonyhady**

'A way to change your life: Writing family history in the National Library of Australia'

*Professor Tim Bonyhady is an environmental lawyer and cultural historian at the Australian National University. His Good Living Street: The Fortunes of My Viennese Family was first published in Sydney and New York in 2011, then in London in 2012 and in Vienna in 2013.*

### **Anna Green**

'The Missing Link: Pākehā/New Zealand European intergenerational family memory'

In this paper I want to explore the contribution that family memory, recorded through oral history interviews, can make to our understanding of social and cultural history. This discussion is based upon my current Marsden-funded research project, 'The Missing Link: Pākehā/New Zealand European intergenerational family memory'. Four oral historians are half way through recording interviews about the family history, memories, photographs and objects with sixty multigenerational families, approached through a random sample of the general electoral rolls. One member from each generation (from two to four generations) agreed to be recorded individually. Two overarching questions drive this research. First of all, can family memory provide insights into the subjective, interior world of the family in the past? Secondly, to what extent does family memory frame the historical consciousness of Pākehā New Zealanders in the present? Here, I would like to focus on the first question, and explore some of the ways in which memories of grandparents can provide valuable insights into the internal world of the family,

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and merits more attention from historians.

*Anna Green was born in England and completed her postgraduate degrees at the University of British Columbia and the University of Auckland. She is interested in history and theory, teaches this at postgraduate level and recently completed, with her co-author Kathleen Troup, a second edition of The Houses of History (2016). The primary focus of her research is oral history, including twentieth-century labour and community histories, collaborative research on the memory of environmental disaster and, more recently, family memory. Research with twelve families on intergenerational family memory conducted in the U.K., while working at the University of Exeter, led to 'Intergenerational Family Stories: Private, Parochial, Pathological?' in the Journal of Family History (2013). Awarded a Marsden Grant in 2016 to expand and develop this area of enquiry in New Zealand, Anna is currently half way through a three-year project entitled 'The Missing Link: Pākehā/New Zealand European intergenerational family memory': [www.familymemory.nz](http://www.familymemory.nz).*

### **Session 2: Family History Across the Disciplines**

#### **Cathy Day**

'Family history and biological anthropology'

Biological anthropology is the study of human biology, focussing on how biology affects human behaviour and how human behaviour affects biology. Two projects will be described, which use family history techniques to investigate questions of biological anthropology. The first project used family history sources and techniques to build pedigrees of almost 3,000 people married in Wiltshire, England, in the period 1754-1914, and to examine issues like cousin marriage and geographic mobility, which influence gene flow. The second project is currently underway, and uses family history sources and techniques to examine the lives of two branches of the Dring family, who were resident in India from the 1790s. One branch was white-skinned and its members became knights, dames, owners of mansions and in one case, Prime Minister of

## Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

a small country; the other branch was brown-skinned and had much less material success in life. This project considers the biology and science of skin colour and the impact of skin colour on the life choices available to people, using these two branches of one family as an illustration.

*Dr Cathy Day is a family historian interested in the questions “where do we come from?” and “how did we get here?”. This led to an academic interest in biological anthropology, which asks the same questions about the human species. Cathy obtained a PhD in biological anthropology, harnessing the power of dozens of volunteers to transcribe hundreds of thousands of records of baptism, marriage and burial in 18th, 19th and 20th century England. These records were the raw material from which her PhD thesis was crafted. Cathy is a Research Manager in the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University.*

### **Simon Easteal**

‘Family history and genomics’

My research is about the evolution of human diversity and the influence of our evolutionary past on our current health and wellbeing. How have environmental factors influenced the function of the human genome? What is the human genome? How has the human genome evolved in response to environmental change? How do individual differences in genome structure modify environmental influences on development, ageing, performance and health? How do differences in genome structure and function indicate health status and biological functioning? In this paper I will consider family history and genomics.

*Simon Easteal is a Research Professor at the John Curtin School of Medical Research at the Australian National University, where he has been the Deputy Director and is now Group Leader, Genome Diversity and Health Group, and Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Genomics. He was born and raised in Sri Lanka, educated there, in Scotland*

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*and in Australia. Before becoming an academic researcher he worked for a time in the bauxite mine at Weipa in North Queensland. He has held numerous academic appointments in the United States, Fiji and Australia. He has a wide range of research interests and a strong commitment to understanding the broader societal implications of his research. Professor Easteal has served on numerous editorial boards, advisory committees, government taskforces, working parties and other bodies in public and private organisations, and he has provided expert opinion in relation to genetic evidence used in court cases in most Australian jurisdictions. He founded a personalised medicine company, and has been a member of the scientific advisory boards of two biotechnology companies.*

**Janet McCalman** (with Len Smith and Rebecca Kippen)  
'Family History en masse: demographic prosopography as a tool for social and medical research'

Family history is generally written by the winners, the descendants of those whose lineages have survived the ravages of infant mortality, orphanhood, family breakdown, infertility, disease and premature death. But the history of a population constructed from multiple, linked family histories tell us very different stories about intergenerational effects, inherited privilege or disadvantage, about the passage of people through their wider history and the impact of wars, booms and busts, migration and settlement, health and illness. Those reconstituted population histories include the solitaries who left no descendants, the economic and social failures whose lineages died out, and therefore provide a human narrative of the *longue durée*, that can also be analysed using the tools of historical demography and social epidemiology. The Swedes and the Québécois have built longitudinal linked datasets from their parish records that start in the eighteenth and early seventeenth centuries and are being linked to the present day population. These datasets make huge contributions to genetic and epigenetic studies, social epidemiology and historical demography. We can do likewise

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in Australia because of our colonial and penal bureaucratic legacy. Our method is what we call 'demographic prosopography' or systematic mass biographies of discrete populations where we can code multiple social and economic factors for analysis. And with the help of volunteer genealogists, we have been building datasets based on Tasmanian convict records, Victorian and Tasmanian vital registrations and Aboriginal Protection Board records, midwifery records and finally from the service and repatriation files of the First AIF. Now the challenge, using crowdsourcing, is to do that for the whole population of Victoria from its world-leading vital registrations.

*Janet McCalman is the author of two cohort histories Struggletown (1984) and Journeyings (1993), and of a history of women's health as seen through the work of Melbourne's (now) Royal Women's Hospital, Sex and Suffering (1998). Since the late 1990s she has been working on historical population health and history. She is Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor at the Melbourne School of Population & Global Health, University of Melbourne.*

*Dr Len Smith is an historical demographer of Aboriginal Australia, affiliated with the Australian National University's Demographic and Social Research Institute. He was founding director of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.*

*Rebecca Kippen is Australia's leading historical demographer, and is Associate Professor of Demography at the Monash University School of Rural Health, Bendigo.*

### **Session 3: Family History and Transformational Learning**

#### **Emma Shaw**

'Family history as public pedagogy: Learning to "do" and produce history in public spaces'

The multibillion dollar family history industry is indeed a popular one, with millions of participants worldwide. This paper draws

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on a small section of an Australia-wide study conducted into the research practices and historical thinking of family history researchers (n=1406). It positions family history research as a pedagogical practice, in which historical research methodologies are learned, developed and refined in predominantly public pedagogic spaces. A large majority of the family history researchers studied were self-taught researchers, yet most were found to be skilled in the substantive and procedural nuances of the history discipline. Many moved fluidly between the familial and the broader historical landscape when assembling their familial narratives and most augmented their family histories with social history through the process of contextualisation. A large number of participants contribute to social and public history discourses through the publication of their research findings on a variety of media platforms, and can thus be considered producers of alternate historical knowledge. With the democratisation of information, and growing digital access to historical records, the binary division between the professional and amateur historian has been blurred, despite family history researchers learning the historian's craft with little to no intervention from a formal institution of learning.

*Emma Shaw is a self-confessed enthusiast of all things historical, and has recently submitted her doctoral thesis on an exploration of the motives and metahistorical understanding of family history researchers. A history teacher 'by trade', she currently works at the University of Newcastle, tutoring pre-service history teachers in their specialist studies courses. She also lectures and tutors on many other courses including Society and Culture, Aboriginal Studies, and Studies of Religion; History, Nation and Memory; Multiliteracies; Research design and critique; and HSIE foundational studies courses. Emma is a member of the HERMES research team, and is the book review editor of the Historical Encounters Journal. Her areas of scholarly interest include family history, public pedagogies, historical consciousness, and public history. When not with her three gorgeous boys in her spare*

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*time, Emma can be found wandering old cemeteries, exploring local history museums, and reading historical fiction.*

### **Kristyn Harman**

'The Diploma of Family History in an age of digital literacy'

The 21st century has seen a veritable explosion in family history resources available online. At the same time, many exceptional tools have become available to facilitate academics and students working together in online learning and teaching environments. This presentation explores the confluence between these key factors in the development and delivery of a new, highly successful, fully online, Diploma of Family History at the University of Tasmania. Particular attention will be given to the evolution of this new course, including to the imperatives of authenticity, sequencing, scaffolding, digital literacy, critical approaches to source material, and referencing that underpin the framework for its delivery. Student responses to, and outcomes from, their learning experiences will also be canvassed.

*Dr Kristyn Harman is the inaugural Course Co-ordinator for the Diploma of Family History in the College of Arts, Law, and Education at the University of Tasmania. She is also a Senior Lecturer in History who specialises in cross-cultural encounters across Britain's nineteenth-century colonies and twentieth-century Australasia. Her thematic interests cohere around socio-cultural frontiers including: convict transportation to, and within, the British Empire's penal colonies; frontier warfare; Indigenous incarceration; colonial domesticity; and the Australian and New Zealand home fronts during World War II.*

*Author of Cleansing the Colony: Transporting Convicts from New Zealand to Van Diemen's Land (2017) and winner of the 2014 Australian Historical Association Kay Daniels award for her first book Aboriginal Convicts, Kristyn's work is represented in top tier journals including the Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History, and the Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History.*

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### **Anna Clark**

'Private Lives, Public History'

This paper reflects on a recent research project into historical consciousness in Australia that was motivated by historical paradox: despite growing public debates about Australian history in the media and in politics, the voices of 'ordinary people' are notably absent from that public discourse. We know that historical interest in Australia is booming: there are tens of thousands of local history groups and museums, as well as genealogical societies and family history groups, heritage tours, reading groups, and a widespread consumption of historical fiction, film and television programs. But to what extent do those intimate pasts intersect with broader historical questions and debates? The *Private Lives, Public History* project *mapped* the voices of 'ordinary people' alongside public debates and discourses, contemplating themes of historical engagement and inheritance, as well as commemoration, historical contestation and place.

*Anna Clark holds an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship and is Co-Director of the Australian Centre for Public History at the University of Technology Sydney. She has written extensively on history education, historiography and historical consciousness, including: Private Lives, Public History (2016), History's Children: History Wars in the Classroom (2008), Teaching the Nation: Politics and Pedagogy in Australian History (2006), and the History Wars (2003) with Stuart Macintyre, as well as two history books for children, Convicted! and Explored! Reflecting her love of fish and fishing, she has also recently finished a history of fishing in Australia.*

### **Session 4: Works-in-progress**

#### **Marian Lorrison**

My working title is *Sex and the New Woman in New South Wales, 1880–1914*. My research takes a case study approach to trace how developments within society affected sexual relationships across an era of significant social change. Each

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of my ten or so case studies will involve women whose husbands sued for adultery in the Divorce Court of New South Wales. I am trying to find out how modernity and emancipation for women within the broader society carried over into intimate relationships. I plan to investigate if, and how, sexual intimacy changed as the gender dynamic changed, and how a changing balance of power affected individual couples.

At this stage I have located only one of my case studies, a young Jewish woman whose husband sued for divorce in 1883 on the grounds of her affair with a young man living nearby. I am using the legal records, extensive press coverage and related archival material such as Judge's Notebooks and Divorce Minutes. I would love to find more genealogical information about the women and men I'm studying. In addition, I would be interested in learning how to connect with a wider general as well as an academic audience, and how to take advantage of family history techniques to extend my research.

*Marian Lorrison is a feminist historian who taught for 22 years in New South Wales schools before family research led her to study Australian history. Her recently completed Master of Research analysed four cases involving adulterous women whose husbands sued for divorce in New South Wales during the 1870s. Again turning to the divorce case files, her current PhD thesis examines the rise of the New Woman in Australia between 1880 and 1914, and traces the effects of increasing emancipation on twelve ordinary women. It considers the extent to which a burgeoning sense of self-autonomy for women transferred to the realm of sexual and gender relations.*

### **Shauna Bostock-Smith**

'From colonisation to my generation: The history of an Aboriginal family group over several generations'

I have traced the history of my four Aboriginal grandparents' family lines to as far back as my family can go in the written historic record, which is roughly one generation after white settlement of Bundjalung country, on the North-Eastern point of New South Wales. The scope of this thesis spans five

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generations and uses archival research, newspaper articles and an extensive collection of photographs to vividly illustrate a rich narrative of the lived experience of my ancestors, and other Aboriginal people, from past to present. This thesis is both a macrocosmic and microcosmic study in that the chronology spans the broader scope of history, but also zooms in to focus on the individual lives of my ancestors, placing them in the context of Aboriginal and Australian history. I have found that even under the oppression of regional and structural racism, and even under the mind-numbing paternalistic and protectionist control of Aboriginal people in the past, there were shining examples of Aboriginal agency, solidarity and resistance. I argue that a scholarly examination of Aboriginal family history research does much more than just illuminate the Aboriginal perspective of Australian history, it is also a revelatory journey that can liberate Aboriginal people from the burden of our ancestral history, and connect us with more positive aspects of our own heritage.

*Shauna Bostock-Smith's life had a major change in direction after workplace redundancy. Her daughter was still young so she decided to become a primary school teacher. Shauna graduated from Australian Catholic University with a Bachelor of Education in 2006. She was a school teacher for a few years, but her interest in her Aboriginal family's history grew, and after writing a thesis about her grandparents' lives 'on the mission' she graduated with first class Honours from Griffith University in 2013. Shauna discovered that a number of her ancestors and family members had been active participants in, or witness to, many of the major milestones in Aboriginal history. Knowing this family history is a rich contribution to Australian history, she enrolled at the Australian National University and is completing a PhD. Her goal is to write a book about her ancestors' lives to provide extraordinary insight into the life and times of Aboriginal Australians from the past to the present.*

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### Helen Morgan

Through my involvement with the Australian Women's Archive Project I have been privileged to work with a number of feminist historians specialising in Australian women's history, and to have shared floor space with the Find and Connect web resource team, documenting the history of child welfare in Australia. Late last year I was bitten by the family history bug, taking up the gauntlet of my father's sadness at knowing nothing about his father's family. The simple act of searching on my great grandfather's name in the digitised newspapers in Trove – despite the ubiquity of it being, like mine, Morgan – dropped me straight into the history I had till then only experienced at the researcher's remove. I found my great grandfather, alongside his sister, before the courts as a neglected child, their mother Elizabeth Morgan apparently one of the 'undeserving' poor, known to have 'imposed' upon the Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society. Since discovering this little, yet momentous, sliver of family history I have not been able to leave it alone. I have probed the gamut of records available, including certificates, articles and family notices in newspapers, wills, inquest, prison, asylum and court records, and eventually some family correspondence and the memory of one living grandson of my great grandfather who, like my father, never knew his grandfather but, unlike my father, knew those who did. Elizabeth's and her children's stories have fired my interest in mid to late nineteenth century Melbourne, in what it meant to be a woman (with children) of inadequate means and little by way of family support. I have been unable to determine Elizabeth's date of death and her story stops, in official records, with the last mention of her writing, yet again, to Victoria's Chief Secretary in 1885, asking for the release of her daughter from the Industrial School system. While much of the emotion and feeling of this story can be detected in and drawn from the record traces, the records can only take you so far. I am drawn to the speculative space and contemplating the best form to do justice to this story, to – as literary theorist Paul

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de Man has described it<sup>1</sup> – inhabit the life of my great great grandmother and her children and ‘posit the possibility of her reply’. My presentation will discuss why, as an historian, archivist and writer of non-fiction, I feel drawn to creative writing, in particular ‘biofiction’, for exploring and communicating this reply.

*Helen Morgan is a senior research fellow at the University of Melbourne’s eScholarship Research Centre. A historian with archival and editing qualifications, she has worked as information architect and exhibition designer on the Australian Women’s Archives Project since its inception in 2000, and is co-editor of the Australian Women’s Register. Helen is Deputy Chair of Her Place Women’s Museum, Australia, and an investigator on the ARC funded Invisible Farmer project. Her research interests include the collecting and curating of personal, private (archival) and public domain data and its publication online in a climate of waning privacy; and, life histories and life writing as seen through the lens of oral history, archives, family history, biofiction and feminist theory.*

### **Babette Smith**

‘Flesh on the Bones’

My current project about female convicts has caused me to think deeply about the historiography on this topic. To realise how family history put flesh and blood on the skeleton of writing ‘history from below’. I’ll use my ten minutes to ponder the significant methodological shift that has resulted. How focus on the personal and the ordinary also produced changes in interpretation and perspective. Family history has led to the discovery of new sources. It has influenced the digitisation of existing sources. In a society established by the working class for the working class rather than created from above, it has

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by Catherine Padmore, ‘The paradox of writing the dead: Voice, empathy and authenticity in historical biofictions’, *Writing in Practice*, 3, 2017.

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provided insights into what makes us tick and never more so than the study of women's contribution.

### **Barry McGowan**

'Families, friendship and Aboriginal connections: Wellington, New South Wales'

The Wellington Chinese community was one of the largest in rural NSW, if not Australia. Dating back at least to the 1870s, the Chinese people were pioneers in large scale market gardening, and their industry was critical to the town economy. This large community was highly interdependent and had strong relationships with the Aboriginal community and many Europeans. Some Chinese men were prominent entrepreneurs in other enterprises as well. Aboriginal labour was of critical importance to the market gardeners, as was the labour of women and children, who worked alongside the men. Aboriginal elders regarded the Chinese as their saviours, as they paid and treated them fairly and often gave them produce free of charge. Many Aboriginal people lived on the Chinese farms.

Barry recounts the many instances of friendship and co-dependence between the Chinese families and the Chinese people and other ethnic groups. It is an untold story.

*Dr Barry McGowan is a Canberra-based historian and heritage consultant and an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University. He has written extensively on the Chinese in Australia, and has completed thematic studies of Chinese people in the Riverina district of NSW and the Rutherglen Wahgunyah district of Victoria. His latest study, on the Chinese people in the Orange and Wellington districts of New South Wales, has been published recently.*

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## Session 5: The Politics of Family History

### **Angela Wanhalla**

“To finally know that I belong to someone would be beyond my wildest dreams”: Finding family in the wake of the Pacific War’

Between 1942 and 1945, over two million servicemen occupied the southern Pacific theatre, the majority of them Americans in service with the Marines, Army, Navy and Air Force. These forces left behind thousands of children born to Indigenous women. While the global significance of the war is widely recognised, scholars have rarely examined the social impacts and legacies of the American military occupation upon Indigenous societies. This presentation introduces a collaborative archival and oral history project – known as Mothers’ Darlings – that traced the lived experiences of the children fathered by American servicemen with Indigenous women in the South Pacific Command, covering New Zealand, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Tonga, and Samoa. As the project progressed, family history methods became increasingly central to the project and required we become genealogists as part of our commitment to research, based on the principles of manaakitanga (generosity), atawhai (kindness) and utu (reciprocity). These are core principles shaping how families relate, behave, and interact in Māori society. In this presentation I discuss how these cultural principles informed family history as method, and the family as an analytic, in the Mothers’ Darlings Project.

*Angela Wanhalla is an associate professor in the Department of History and Art History, University of Otago, New Zealand. She is the author of Matters of the Heart: A History of Interracial Marriage in New Zealand (2013), and co-edited Mothers’ Darlings of the South Pacific: The Children of Indigenous Women and US Servicemen, World War II (2016), with Judith A. Bennett.*

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### Jane McCabe

'Out of the shadows: Transforming family narratives and beyond'

In this talk I will speak to two projects that highlight the process by which academic history can transform family narratives. The first is my PhD research, which brought to public view a hidden story of a Scottish Presbyterian missionary scheme that resettled 130 Anglo-Indian adolescents to New Zealand over a 30-year period. My dissertation provided the forum through which both family histories were transformed and a collective history constructed. The second project is one that I have recently embarked on: a cross-cultural history of rural families and inheritance in New Zealand. It is no coincidence that I have targeted another topic that enables me to interrogate the connection between family silences and neglected aspects of national histories.

Taking a broad view of the dynamics revealed by these projects, I ask questions about the consequences of bringing hidden and/or strained aspects of family history into an open forum – be it within the family, or in the realm of public/professional history. How do these altered narratives affect family dynamics? Do families who have experienced such transformations view History and the work of historians differently as a result? How might these interactive personal-professional interactions shape the teaching of History?

*Jane McCabe is a Lecturer in History at the University of Otago, where she teaches on Modern India, Colonial India, Migration to New Zealand, and Global History. Her monograph Race, Tea and Colonial Resettlement: Imperial Families, Interrupted (2017) examined a Presbyterian scheme that resettled 130 mixed-race children from Indian tea plantations to New Zealand in the early 20th century. Jane's current research project, funded by a Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Grant, is a cross-cultural history of family farms and inheritance.*

# Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

## **Jenny Hocking**

'From "Grandfather the felon" to secrets of the Dismissal: Transforming history through political biography'

Family biography brings a particular perspective to history. With its focus on individuals across and within familial generations, family biography is an ideal vehicle for exploring thematic continuities and discontinuities across generations, which both shape and reflect its changing dynamics. At its best, family biography can retrieve forgotten historical figures, reveal previously unknown details of key historical moments and offer new interpretations. In this way, biography can also transform history.

Political biography, with its particular historically contextualized research focus on fine archival research, contemporaneous records and personal interviews, can and should uncover material that challenges historical certainties and reanimate debates long thought settled. Drawing on my current project, a three-generation family biography of the Wills family from colonial times to Australian rules football, and my recent political biography of Gough Whitlam, this paper will explore the ways in which biography can interrogate, contest and ultimately re-inscribe our knowledge and understanding of critical junctures in history. Specifically, of Gough Whitlam, his government and its dismissal.

While the Whitlam biography is a political biography it is also the case, as Jim Davidson observed, that 'the family is always present' in this biography. If a political biography is to elicit a foundational understanding of the political subject – their influences, political formation, beliefs and ethical frame – then family will frequently be central to its development.

Political biography, particularly of a contested figure, brings its own constraints: the authorial relationship with the subject, the dilemma of being 'authorised', dealing with the subject as interviewee and distilling their subjective representations, and separating polarised political positions and individual recollections in an often deeply contested space.

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*Professor Jenny Hocking is an award-winning biographer, Professorial Fellow with the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University and inaugural Distinguished Whitlam Fellow at the Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney. She is the author of the two-volume biography of former Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam – Gough Whitlam: His Time and Gough Whitlam: A Moment in History – winner of the Fellowship of Australian Writers Barbara Ramsden Award and shortlisted for several major literary awards including the National Biography Award and the Prime Minister's Awards for Literature (twice). She has also written biographies of Whitlam's Attorney-General and High Court justice Lionel Murphy; and of the Australian communist author Frank Hardy.*

*Her latest book The Dismissal Dossier: Everything You Were Never Meant to Know About November 1975 was published in 2015, as a new edition in 2016, and was published as a new updated edition The Dismissal Dossier: Everything You Were Never Meant to Know About November 1975 – The Palace connection in October 2017.*

### **Session 6: Family History and the Digital Revolution**

#### **Christine Fernon and Scott Yeadon**

'Family history and the Australian Dictionary of Biography'

Since going online in 2006 the Australian Dictionary of Biography has adopted a variety of approaches to increase its coverage and improve its research capabilities. Firstly, we created two companion websites, *Obituaries Australia* and *People Australia*, which has given us the ability to add records for all Australians. Secondly, we have vastly increased the amount of indexing that we do and added more advanced browsing capabilities to enable researchers to easily undertake more complex research queries. Finally, we have added some general visualisations and charts to assist researchers view groups of data such as family trees and networks.

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We will demonstrate some of the more sophisticated family queries that you can now undertake on our site, and discuss some of the family history projects that we, ourselves, have undertaken.

*Christine Fernon is the online manager of the National Centre of Biography/Australian Dictionary of Biography. She has previously worked as a research editor and bibliographer with the Australian Dictionary of Biography and co-edited, with Melanie Nolan, The ADB's Story (2013).*

*Scott Yeadon is a web programmer at the National Centre of Biography. He joined the NCB in 2010 to undertake the redevelopment of the ADB web site. He is responsible for the ongoing maintenance and development of the ADB web site and its complementary People Australia and Obituaries Australia sites.*

### **Kate Bagnall**

'Communication and collaboration in the digital age'

Since the 1990s, the field of Chinese Australian history has been characterised by the active participation of family and community researchers alongside academic historians, museum curators and heritage professionals. Over the same period, digital technologies have changed the ways that we communicate and how we do historical research. In this paper I want to consider questions of communication and collaboration between academic and family historians in the digital age, based on my work in Chinese Australian history. Working with family historians and descendants over the past two decades has shaped my practice as an academic historian, in particular in thinking about who I write for and why. In the paper I will discuss some of the ways I have made my work accessible and actively engaged with family historians, particularly in the digital realm, and contemplate the benefits and challenges of doing so as an academic historian today.

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*Dr Kate Bagnall is a historian and writer based in Canberra. She is currently an ARC DECRA Research Fellow in the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry at the University of Wollongong, having previously worked in the public service, including at the National Archives of Australia, and as a freelance historian and editor. Kate has published on various aspects of Chinese Australian history and is co-editor, with Sophie Couchman, of Chinese Australians: Politics, Engagement and Resistance (2015). Much of her research explores the lives of the women, children and families of Australia's early Chinese communities and the transnational connections and qiaoxiang ties of Chinese Australians before 1940. In 2017 she and Sophie Couchman led their first Chinese Australian family history study tour to Hong Kong and Guangdong, China. Kate is @baibi on Twitter. You can find her research blog at [www.chineseaustralia.org](http://www.chineseaustralia.org).*

### **Lorina Barker**

'Looking Through Windows: Using multimedia to capture Aboriginal people's memories and stories'

Looking Through Windows is a multimedia exhibition about the removal, dispossession and 'protection' of Aboriginal people in the New England and Northwest regions of New South Wales. Combining artwork, oral histories, language, music, film and photography the exhibition captures stories of what it was like to live 'under the Act' on missions, reserves and on the fringes of society. To share experiences of removal to places like the Cootamundra Girls Home or the Kinchela Boys Home. Together, old artforms and new technologies show how language, culture and histories can be preserved, reclaimed and passed onto new generations. Through the Looking Through Windows project, Aboriginal Elders and community members gathered together to share stories, to reconnect to family, to Country and to begin/complete their journey of healing from the legacy of inter-generational trauma of removal. These gatherings provide a culturally safe place to listen to our Elders and community members' stories and by doing so, we are Looking Through Windows into the past, only

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to see our stories reflected back at us. This is an example of some of the installations in the exhibition that invites people to look at themselves, their histories and cultures – to rediscover, reclaim and reconnect to their history and culture.

*Dr Lorina L. Barker is a descendant of the Wangkumara and Muruwari people from northwest NSW, Adnyamathanha (Flinders Ranges SA), the Kooma and Kunja (southwest Qld) and the Kurnu-Baarkandji (northwest NSW). Lorina is an oral historian and filmmaker and teaches modern Australian history, Oral history and Local and Community History. She uses multimedia as part of her community art-based projects to transfer knowledge, history, stories and culture to the next generations in mediums that they use and are familiar with, such as film, short stories, poetry and music. She wrote and directed the short film documentary, Tibooburra: My Grandmother's Country.*

### **Session 7: Family Histories in the Making**

#### **Cheney Brew**

TROVE team, National Library of Australia

Lives are never lived within the confines of a single library or archive's collection. Trove's digitised Australian newspapers are a well-loved resource, but how much do you know about all the other kinds of content you can find in Trove?

Discover how you can trace stories through maps, journals, photographs, oral histories and more. Along with a few tips and tricks for advanced searching and discovery, be inspired by ways to add context to, and unlock more information on, your family's history.

*Cheney Brew is a communications specialist for the National Library of Australia's discovery service, Trove. Cheney has a multidisciplinary background encompassing research and communications work for universities, government and cultural organisations. As part of the Trove Outreach team, Cheney encourages wide engagement with all of Trove's collections.*

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*Cheney has recently co-presented a series of Trove Roadshows across Australia, for organisations to learn about partnering with Trove to build a complete picture of Australia's history online. The best part of her job is hearing about the wonderful discoveries people make in Trove.*

### **Gail White**

Australian Institute of Genealogy

The Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies (AIGS) is based in Blackburn in Melbourne. This year the presentation of the forty-third annual Alexander Henderson Award and the fifth Don Grant Award was held.

The Alexander Henderson Award was first awarded in 1974 for the best Australian family history submitted for the Award. This Award is given in memory of Alexander Henderson, one of a number of dedicated persons who laid the foundations of genealogical studies in Victoria.

The Don Grant Award was introduced in 2012 to honour the memory of this respected genealogist. It is presented for the best Australian historical biography with a family history focus submitted for the award.

The judging of the entrants for both awards places great emphasis on the historical context of the writing, whether it be local, national or international.

*Gail White has been involved in family history for over thirty years, an involvement which started professionally as a public librarian, and which led to a private obsession!*

*She is a long-time member of the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies in Melbourne. Soon after joining she became the Honorary Librarian, then a Councillor and has been President for the past four years. She is one of the judges of the annual Alexander Henderson and Don Grant Awards.*

*Her aim is to write a book about each family of her ancestors who emigrated to Victoria. Two books have already been*

## Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

*published and now she only has three more to write! She has noticed how time-consuming it is to set the family history facts into their historical context, but finds this research interesting and very satisfying.*

### **Martin Playne**

Genealogical Society of Victoria

'Publishing genealogy to make it accessible to social historians'

Many family historians conduct meticulous research and reference their sources studiously. Having gathered their data, produced a chart of their family tree, and presented their findings to their family, this material all too often then gets 'shelved' and eventually lost. Self-publication has become the norm for works on family history because print runs are usually too small to be attractive to commercial publishing houses.

Arising from a genealogical research study, the appropriate size and type of publication will vary, ranging from articles (2000 to 7000 words) in established journals, such as *Ancestor* (GSV) and *Victorian Historical Journal* (RHSV), to self-published booklets (of 16 to 64 pp), to full length books (from 300 to 600 pp). It is with these last two categories that genealogists often fail to ensure that their efforts become widely available. Essentially, this can be overcome at low cost by obtaining an ISBN number, and by obtaining a cataloguing-in-publication registration from the National Library, and placing legal deposit copies with both the National Library and the relevant State Library, and donating copies to local libraries and particularly historical libraries. If the study covers other countries or other states, then also donate copies to libraries in those locations.

*Dr Martin Playne was trained as a scientist at the University of Queensland, and at the University of Edinburgh. He has had a career as a research scientist in biotechnology with CSIRO. After retirement in 2000, he started research on his family history. This resulted in the publication of *Two Squatters: the lives of George Playne and Daniel Jennings*, which is his first book on social history. The book illustrates the historical value*

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*of examining, in detail, lives of individuals during those boisterous years of early settlement and the gold rush. Dr Playne is an editor for the journal Ancestor published by the Genealogical Society of Victoria. He is currently writing a book on the families and lives of the London will-forgers of 1844, which involved another family member. It is set in England, Norfolk Island, Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland.*

### **Gina Grey**

National Archives of Australia

“A bit of a messer”: Jo Takasuka and his family’s records in the National Archives of Australia’

This presentation is about the records held by the National Archives of Australia that document the interactions between the Commonwealth of Australia and Jo Takasuka and members of his family.

In Jo Takasuka’s *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry, David Sissons notes his many achievements after coming to Australia in 1905, including his ‘twenty-year battle against the elements in what was then the only sustained attempt to grow rice in Victoria’. The records held by the Archives help to tell this part of his story but they also tell us much more about his and his family’s broader experiences in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century.

A key to discovering what these government records can tell us about this family’s story also lies in understanding who created the records, why they were created, what was documented in them, how they came to the Archives and the archival work the Archives has done so that they can be found and used. By exploring the Takasuka family’s records in the Archives we glimpse parts of their lives through a specifically archival lens.

*Gina Grey has worked as an archivist at the National Archives of Australia since 2002. Before joining the Archives, she spent almost twenty years working at the Australian National University in a variety of research positions, including over ten*

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*years at the then Social Science Data Archives. She has a Bachelor of Arts majoring in History from the ANU and is a professional member of the Australian Society of Archivists.*

### **Session 8: Family History, History and Historians**

#### **Penny Russell**

‘Extended families: Politics and practice in family history’

How does the passion for genealogy change the way we read, understand and respond to history? Some say family history democratises the past, making it available to everyone. Others worry that instead it reinforces existing hierarchies, giving those who are already privileged the additional luxury of a pedigree, while families whose ancestors’ lives were ruptured by poverty, forced migration or colonial conquest may search in vain for missing links. Some say family history encourages empathy for past lives and struggles; others worry that instead of giving life to dead ancestors, we now demand that they give meaning and identity to us. As a historian who has fallen victim to the family history boom, in this paper I ask whether enthusiasm for genealogy – even of the white colonising kind – can embrace an expansive understanding of history, and whether a single family can usefully serve as a window onto an unequal, complex and contested past.

*Penny Russell is the Bicentennial Professor of Australian History at the University of Sydney, where she teaches Australian and gender history. Recent books include Savage or Civilised? Manners in Colonial Australia (2010) and, with Nigel Worden, Honourable Intentions? Violence and Virtue in Australian and Cape Colonies, 1750-1850 (2016). She is interested in all aspects of gender and colonial society, including middle-class domestic life and manners. She is currently writing a history of Sydney from the perspective of one branch of her own family, the Thompsons, who emigrated to Australia in 1834.*

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### **Alan Atkinson**

'Family life and the creation of conscience: The Macarthurs 1780-1860'

This paper will sketch a research project begun this year. I deal with two generations of the Macarthur family, of Parramatta and Camden, in New South Wales, Elizabeth and John Macarthur, who arrived together in 1790, and their seven children. Partly a multi-biography, the work will concentrate on unfolding world-views but also (interwoven with these) evolving relationships. The two spring-board periods, the 1780s (first generation) and the 1820s (second generation) are crucial. Also, what is inheritance and what is innovation, and how does one affect the other?

I will concentrate on issues of subjectivity and intellectual life, and on the shaping of conscience, so as to explore the impact of private conscience – moral sensibility as a function of intimacy and domestic life – on ideas about responsibility beyond the home, and by the latter I mean three things, which overlap: social and economic justice, invasion and frontier relations, and 'national conscience' in a broad sense.

*Alan Atkinson taught Australian history in several universities (mainly the University of New England) and is now retired and living in Western Australia. His books include Camden: Farm and Village Life in Early New South Wales (1988), The Commonwealth of Speech (2004) and the three volumes of The Europeans in Australia (1994-2014). He has always been interested in the internal dynamics of family life, in subjectivity and, especially more recently, the impact on both those things of religious understanding.*

### **Nick Brodie**

'How family history (almost) made me famous'

My transition from academic lecturer to public historian is a direct result of my interest in family history. From pitching the idea for *Kin: A Real People's History of Our Nation*, through researching generations of my people, to writing for the mostly

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unrelated masses, doing my family history was personally rewarding but in some ways also professionally wrenching. Like forebears from overseas, I had to make a conscious effort to leave a place I knew, and go somewhere new. In a way, *Kin* was my boat. This talk explores my journey into popular historical writing through the unique lens of overlapping family and national histories, and charts how that experience of familial history, and engagement with family historians, continues to inspire and influence my work.

*Nick Brodie is a professional history nerd. He has a PhD in late medieval vagrancy, is a qualified field archaeologist, and taught university-level history for a decade. With research expertise ranging from ancient poor boxes to manuscript studies to cross-cultural encounters Nick strives to combine research originality with popular accessibility. Bringing technical proficiency and fresh perspectives to Australian history-telling Nick is the author of Kin: A Real People's History of Our Nation and 1787: The Lost Chapters of Australia's Beginnings, both published to critical acclaim. He has also edited the First World War correspondence of Victorian Anzac George Martindale in Dodging the Devil: Letters from the Front. Nick's latest work is the much-anticipated The Vandemonian War: The Secret History of Britain's Tasmanian Invasion (2017).*

# Family Secrets

## Family Secrets

Some of our speakers have shared some tales from their research and/or from their own family histories (*we're keeping them anonymous to prevent a scandal!*).

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A bizarre Tasmanian story runs that a settler family protected Aboriginal people from the government, learned myths and legends from their secret friends, wrote this down, accidentally burned the papers, and then later reconstituted it from memory. It is, with good reason, quite unbelievable. But the proof that debunks this storied concoction is itself a dastardly secret, a dark truth hidden by manufactured stories of humanitarian concern and fairy-tales. This supposedly protective family, it turns out, were intimately involved in operations against Aboriginal Tasmanians and were, in fact, local representatives of government. After contributing to the dispossession of Aboriginal people, and applauding operations against them, members of this family collected artefacts, corresponded with experts, and helped scientists characterise Aboriginal Tasmanians as exceedingly primitive. They even had their own collection of Aboriginal skulls. Their oral tradition wasn't just wrong, it was a complete misrepresentation of their own frontier history.

\*\*\*\*\*

It must have been a dreadful shock to Joseph and Mary Thompson, devout Congregationalists of stern moral rectitude, when Mary's sister Elizabeth fell pregnant out of wedlock. Elizabeth Sims had led an adventurous life as the wife of a master mariner in the West Indian trade, but his premature death left her destitute. In 1833 she took passage to Sydney as an assisted emigrant, her enterprising example perhaps encouraging her brother-in-law to follow, with his entire family, the following year. But in the spring of 1837, Elizabeth yielded

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to the seductive charms of the elderly, and inaptly named, William Faithful, one time private soldier in the NSW Corps and now a substantial landowner married to his second wife. Her son was born the following June. The Thompsons were aware of her predicament – indeed, in 1843 Joseph supported her unsuccessful application to place the child in the Liverpool Orphanage. But family letters and memoirs are altogether silent on the subject of Elizabeth Sims and her colonial life. The press was less reticent. In 1846 the affair came to the attention of *Bell's Life in Sydney*, after Sims brought a claim for maintenance before the Parramatta District Council. Faithful had recently married for the third time, and since then, she claimed, he had given her no support for the child. *Bell's Life* was less concerned with the rights of the case than with the spectacle of this 'withered brace of lovers'. The age of both parties, and especially of Faithful, whom they estimated to be over 80, was an object of great hilarity and the inspiration for much laboured wit. The horror the Thompsons would have felt at this crass piece of reporting can be imagined. But whether they would have regarded Elizabeth's marriage in 1850 to ex-convict Gervas Charles Vardy as a relief from disgrace, or a further slide into it, I simply cannot tell.

\*\*\*\*\*

My family name comes from my great-great-grandfather, a non-Indigenous man called Augustus John. He married my great-great-grandmother a traditional Bundjalung woman from Wollumbin/Mt Warning in Northern NSW. They had a son also called Augustus, who was known as Gus. Gus married Lena in 1905 and I noticed on their marriage certificate that a woman called Ina was a witness at Gus and Lena's (my great-grandparents) wedding.

I became curious about Ina. I wondered if she was a daughter of my great-great-grandparents that I may have missed. Research revealed that my great-great grandfather, Augustus

## Family Secrets

John was indeed Ina's father, but her mother was not my great-great-grandmother. Augustus John fathered a son and a daughter to two different Aboriginal women from Wollumbin/Mt Warning.

In the time of Augustus John's unions with these women, polygamous marriage was not recognised by British law. Although birth, death, marriage and baptisms records are unable to tell us whether these Aboriginal women were alive at the same time, an old family photograph reveals a very blurred image of a man identified as Augustus John standing with two Aboriginal women and children. I have often wondered if he had a polygamous relationship with them.

\*\*\*\*\*

### The Life of Augustus George Fletcher (my GGG uncle)

He was involved in a theft from the safe deposit vault of the Union Bank in Melbourne in 1864. He was Chief Cashier in the bank and regarded as very trustworthy. He stole a debenture worth £10,450 from an elderly Tasmanian squatter, Mr Lewis, who had deposited it in the Bank for safe keeping. A rather lax system in the bank allowed Fletcher to steal the debenture. He then went overseas on leave and spent much of the proceedings, before the loss was detected at the bank. After travelling to New York, Paris and Buenos Aires, he returned to England with remorse and decided to hand himself into the Union Bank. As it was Friday afternoon the manager told him to return on Monday. He eventually was taken into custody by a policeman. He pleaded guilty to the theft, however, the English court decided that he could not be extradited to Melbourne for technical reasons, as he had surrendered himself. So, he was allowed to go free. Later, he is detected in New York, where he started a new life.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Family Secrets

This involves one of the women whose divorce I researched. Fanny Teas lived in Manly, with her two children and a number of servants. Her husband Joseph was in London on business for around 19 months, and in his absence Fanny fell madly in love with a young man James Smithers, who saved her daughter from falling overboard on the Manly ferry.

Fanny and Smithers sent the servants out at all hours to get more porter, Old Tom gin and ale from the nearest public house, and romped about 'as if they were husband and wife'. When Joseph arrived home unannounced, Fanny was so overcome with nerves that she pushed James out of the bedroom window, and then proceeded to black her husband's shoes with chimney polish. On another occasion, the housekeeper peered through the bedroom door and was so distressed by what she saw that she refused to stay in the house a moment longer.

\*\*\*\*\*

A Cornish woman from a good family background married a Cornish man from a similar background. Several sons were born in Cornwall. They emigrated to Port Phillip. She was pregnant and only ten days before the ship arrived in January 1842, she gave birth to another son. They settled in Collingwood and had two more children. The father and three sons moved to Burrumbeet.

The mother disappeared with the two youngest children and was later found to be living in Warrnambool with another man – a man who was on the same ship and who also lived in Collingwood. She and the man, fifteen years younger than her, had another child.

Tragedy struck both families:

One son and the baby died shortly after arrival in Melbourne.

One son drowned in Lake Burrumbeet.

## Family Secrets

Another son accidentally shot his brother dead while rabbit hunting.

The wife of another son died in childbirth (she was his cousin).

One son died on a hunt.

The only daughter died from tuberculosis.

The mother died aged eighty-one!

\*\*\*\*\*

My Irish 2g-grandmother was called Bridget McNamara and she migrated to Ararat, Victoria, in her teens. She and her husband Ned were volatile people who got into a lot of fights with their neighbours. On one occasion, the judge sentenced the husband and wife to prison terms for assaulting a neighbour, but had them serve their sentences at different times so that one of them could be home to take care of their seven children. When Bridget was released from prison, she returned home and her neighbour greeted her at the gate, telling her what an awful person she was and that prison was too good for the likes of her. The neighbour wagged her finger in Bridget's face, which so infuriated Bridget that she bit her neighbour's finger off! She went straight back to prison.

\*\*\*\*\*

My grandfather was someone I always looked up to. A World War II veteran, he was strong, funny, and extremely well-read. He was also an alcoholic womaniser! My mother told me that when she was 10, he moved his latest (pregnant) mistress to the cabin at the bottom of their property. Enraged, my grandmother left my mother and her brother and moved to Melbourne to her family. My grandfather immediately moved the woman into the house. Mum talks of how she used to watch the woman, deemed far more glamorous than my grandmother, brush out her hair and put on her makeup and jewellery. One

## Family Secrets

morning the woman had gone and my grandmother was back. Mum remembers watching my grandmother bundle the woman's possessions into a box and bury it in the backyard. The next day, a clothesline was cemented in over the top of it. Despite numerous searches, no records have been found of the woman or her child, as my grandfather was not named on the birth certificate. It was never spoken of, and we always joked that perhaps more than the jewellery was buried under the clothesline!

\*\*\*\*\*

'Auntie Tottie' – my mother's maternal great-aunt – was born in 1880 at Glebe and married at Robertson in 1913, aged 33. Tottie's husband, Thomas, enlisted in the Light Horse in September 1915, leaving Australia a month later. Tottie gave birth to a daughter in July 1916, and, sometime later, Thomas's sister wrote to tell him that Tottie had been 'playing around'. Thomas was granted leave to return to Sydney from Egypt, and he successfully sued for divorce on the grounds of adultery in October 1917. The baby, my nana's cousin, grew up to believe that Thomas was not her father. Family history research has uncovered many of the facts of the story, most of which were not known or spoken of in the wider family after the scandal of the divorce. One such fact, found in Thomas's World War I service record, is that a year after arriving in Egypt he was twice hospitalised with gonorrhoea.

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