



### Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations

PO Box 3012, Weston Creek ACT 2611  
[www.affho.org](http://www.affho.org)

#### AFFHO Council

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\*seconded

#### AFFHO Officers

June Penny	Public Officer; Archivist
Peter Applebee	Website: <a href="mailto:webmaster@affho.org">webmaster@affho.org</a>
Kerrie Gray	2015 Congress (HAGSOC)
Shauna Hicks	Coord Nat. Family History Week
Don Mountain	<i>Newsflash</i> Editor: <a href="mailto:dmountain@netspeed.com.au">dmountain@netspeed.com.au</a>
Barry Weeden	Auditor

#### Current Projects

Save the Census Index of Indexes  
National Family History Week (AUS)  
National Family History Month (NZ)

#### Membership

Full membership is open to any organisation based in Australasia, which satisfies the Council that it is primarily concerned with family history, genealogy, heraldry or allied subjects.

Associate membership is open to any organisation which satisfies the Council that it is interested in family history, genealogy, heraldry or allied subjects.

Current members are listed at [www.affho.org](http://www.affho.org)

### President's Message

Welcome to the September *Newsflash*. We aim to make this useful and informative and hope that our member Societies find it so and make it available to their members. Sharing information is a vital part of family history research.

National Family History Week (NFHW) 2012 was a busy one throughout Australia. There is an article about some of the activities in this *Newsflash* and it may give ideas for next year. Shauna Hicks will co-ordinate NFHW 2013 and I am looking forward to working with her.

Along with nearly 400 other keen family historians, I attended the NSW & ACT Annual Conference hosted by Botany Bay Family History Society. This was a wonderful event with a great variety of trade tables to visit, excellent speakers to hear and, of course, lots of friends from all over to catch up with. Read Pete Applebee's report on page 5 to find out more.

At Conference I was impressed by a woman who stood up and spoke very passionately about plans to replace the existing Windsor Bridge with a high, modern structure with a road approach through Thompson Square. Windsor is about an hour and a half from Sydney CBD and is one of the Macquarie Towns. Why was she so passionate? If the proposal goes ahead, this historic bridge will be demolished and the square will be changed forever. The website of Community Action for Windsor Bridge (CAWB) tells us that the existing Windsor Bridge is the first bridge crossing over the river at Hawkesbury and was opened in 1874. Parts are original and over 130 years old. The site also quotes *Austral Archaeology*, 2011, p140 which said "Thompson Square is one of the oldest public squares in Australia and notable for the large number of Colonial Georgian buildings which surround it. It is the only public space remaining from the original town and has played an important part in the history of the town. It is the only remaining civic space as laid out by Governor Macquarie and is a vital precinct in the preservation of the early Colonial character of Windsor. The Square reflects Macquarie's visionary schemes for town planning excellence in the infant colony".

There are so few places we can visit to see any vestiges of our early European history. It seems to me to be simply wrong to damage or destroy the little that remains, particularly when many in the local community are opposed and the basis on which the decision has been made is being challenged.

If you would like to know more or would like to join more than 11,000 signatories to the CAWB petition, go to their website at <<http://cawb.weebly.com/>>.

*Kerrie Gray  
President*

## *National family history week, 2012*

National Family History Week (28 July – 5 August) again provided the opportunity for family history organisations throughout Australia to highlight their existence and appeal by promoting events that would be of interest to their local community. National Family History Week was the initiative of Lesle Berry when she was President of AFFHO in 2006, and Lesle has been the Co-ordinator of the Week ever since. Lesle had indicated that the 2012 Week would be her last in this role, and AFFHO would like to thank her for her wonderful efforts in establishing and growing National Family History Week. It is the most important annual event on the AFFHO calendar, and, given the underlying interest in family history in the community, it is likely to increase in importance.

AFFHO would like to thank the four key sponsors that make National Family History Week possible – FamilySearch, Ancestry, Findmypast and the National Archives of Australia.

### *Launch:*

National Family History Week was launched by well-known genealogist Shauna Hicks at the Victorian Archive Centre in Melbourne on 27 July. Shauna gave a fascinating talk entitled 'It's 35 years since the TV miniseries Roots!' reflecting her personal observations of the transformation of family history research and technology during this period. Shauna was also a speaker at the State Library of Victoria's Family History Feast, and at five of the local library events of National Family History week.

### *Events:*

The number of family history events listed on the National Family History Week website was 129, including many from Australian libraries which were requested to participate this year. AFFHO is aware that a number of family history organisations did have activities on during this week but had not listed them on the website; we encourage them to do so next year. Victorian listed 59 events, including some that have become established annual favourites, such as the State Library's Family History Feast featuring the Don Grant Lecture, and the Genealogical Society of Victoria's Open Day. Beginning family history classes were held at the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies,

the Genealogical Society of Victoria, the Prahran Mechanic's Institute Victorian History Library, and the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum. Local libraries hosted 34 events, featuring workshops and talks by prominent family historians and librarians on a wide variety of topics.

New South Wales listed 30 events, including five morning sessions at the State Library, the Society of Australian Genealogists' 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Seminar, and open days at Botany Bay, Central Coast, Taree, Port Macquarie, Wagga Wagga and at the Australian History Research Centre, Ulladalla. FamilySearch held family history fairs at Liverpool and Emu Plains and open days at Merimbula and Bourkelands.

Tasmania listed 16 events, 11 of which were from LINC Tasmania in Hobart and three from Devonport LINC, covering an interesting range of family history topics. Hobart Family History Centre and Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society also held events.

Queensland events included a family history seminar at Pittsworth and open days at Logan River, Sunshine Coast, Gympie, Dalby, and the Queensland Family History Society (with exposure to their many Special Interest Groups).

Western Australia featured programs at the State Library, an open day at the Western Australian Genealogical Society, and events at South Perth, Applecross, Albany, Northam and Geraldton.



*Shauna Hicks receiving flowers from Alan Fincher at the NFHW launch.*

South Australia held seminars at the Genealogy SA Library, open days at Adelaide Northern Districts Family History Group, and events at Mt Barker, Dublin and Port Lincoln.

Australian Capital Territory was represented by the Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra which held its annual family history course over the two Sundays of National Family History Week.

#### *New NFHW Co-ordinator*

AFFHO is delighted that Shauna Hicks has accepted the role of Co-ordinator of Family History Week for 2013. Shauna is very well known in family history circles within Australia and overseas and willingly shares her knowledge and expertise with the wider community. Her blog, *Diary of an Australian Genealogist*, is great reading for all who are interested in family history.

Shauna has been tracing her own family history since 1977 and is a Fellow of the Queensland Family History Society. In 2009 Shauna received the Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations (AFFHO) Services to Family History Award for her achievements in Queensland, the ACT and Victoria.

#### *Nick Vine-Hall Awards*

This award was introduced by AFFHO to promote family history journals and newsletters and to honour the memory of Nick Vine Hall AM, who did so much to retain the census in Australia and to bring genealogy to the forefront through his radio broadcasts

The winners of the Nick Vine Hall Award 2012 were announced at the launch of National Family History Week and were:

✧ Category A (societies with less than 500 members)  
Winner: Cape Banks Family history Society, NSW, for its journal *Kith & Kin*. Runner-up: Armidale Family History Group, NSW, for its journal *Dust of Ages*.



*Patricia Barth (Nick's widow) and Tony Arthur President of GSV after Tony had received the Nick Vine Hall Award*

✧ Category B (societies with more than 500 members)  
Winner: The Genealogical Society of Victoria for its journal *Ancestor*. Runner-up: The Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra for its journal *The Ancestral Searcher*.

Patricia Barth, Nick Vine Hall's widow, attended the NFHW launch and presented the first prize in Category B to Tony Arthur, President of the Genealogical Society of Victoria. The first prize in Category A was presented to Cape Banks Family History Society at the 28th Annual Conference of the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies in September.

### ***Vale Joyce Ryerson***

With great sadness, we advise you that Joyce Ryerson passed away on Thursday, 30 August, aged 95.

Some may not be aware of the influence that Joyce had on the Index which bears her name. At the May 1999 meeting of the Sydney Dead Persons Society, Joyce offered to provide "some *Sydney Morning Herald* Death Notices" which she had saved, so that we could index them for Ryerson. The "some" turned out to be an almost complete run from 1986 to 1999. At this time the Sydney DPS were not back-indexing any papers, so Joyce's gift provided the impetus to get to where the index is today.

The following tribute to Joyce was read at a recent meeting of the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society:

You will be saddened to hear of the passing last Thursday afternoon of our long time member and fellow family historian Joyce Ryerson.

Her archival activities at her old school SCEGGS Darlinghurst will be appreciated by generations of students in years to come.

Joyce has left a legacy to many of us in company with the Sydney Dead Persons Society who named the Ryerson Index after her because of her huge collection of *Sydney Morning Herald* Death Notices, stashed away in a laundry cupboard.

This Index is used by family historians world-wide, some daily, some not quite so often, but few have not ever used this index.

Thank you Joyce for your interest in our Family History Group, your company, your family history skills and your friendship.

**Copy deadline for the next issue  
15 November 2012**

## *The unknown child on the Titanic*

When asked to write a short article on our favourite session at the recent 13th Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry in Adelaide. I quickly accepted to write on the first session of the Congress “The unknown child on the Titanic” given by Colleen Fitzpatrick. Firstly as the first session at the Congress and still feeling fresh they always remain in ones memory. Also this particular first session will remain in my memory for many years to come. It is thought provoking that one hundred years after an event that it is still firmly implanted in the public’s mind. Colleen spoke on modern means of identifying one of the small children whose bodies were recovered from the sinking of the Titanic. She spoke on the means of using DNA to attempt this feat. We follow the team’s efforts in using mitochondrial DNA. Until this time although fascinated by the process of using DNA for furthering family history I was sadly lacking in my knowledge of Mitochondrial DNA. One of the fascinating aspects of this talk to me was that of the five small boys being tested two of these children who were of different nationalities and no known connection showed in the testing they had a common ancestor within the last two thousand years.

Having reread Colleen’s paper several times since her talk I am eager to learn more about the subject of DNA testing for family historians.

I urge all those who were unable to attend this session to read the paper from the Congress proceedings. Colleen’s notes although sometimes academic in nature are extremely easy to follow.

Colleen Fitzpatrick has written other material on this subject and as a family historian I can only hope we have other opportunities to hear her talk on this subject.

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## *Michael Gandy*

The Australian family history community is delighted that Michael Gandy will visit Australia in early November and there will be a number of opportunities to hear him speak. Michael accepted an invitation from the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) to be its keynote speaker at its annual Lost In weekend conference and SAG then invited other societies to host him for a few days while he is in Australia.

Michael is well known for his work on nonconformist groups, the Irish in England, London ancestry and the resources of the National Archives. He writes and lectures widely and for many years had a column in *Practical Family History*.

Michael will be in Australia from 31 October until 19 November. Specifically, he will be presenting sessions in Sydney for SAG on 3 and 4 November, in Canberra for the Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra on

7 November, in Melbourne for the Genealogical Society of Victoria on 10 November, then to WA on 14 November where he will spend time with the Family History Society of Rockingham and District, the Western Australia Genealogical Society and the Geraldton Family History Society. Contact the relevant host society for full details.

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## *Family History Month New Zealand*

Family History Month was celebrated in New Zealand throughout the month of August, 2012. The New Zealand Society of Genealogists, its Branches and Interest Groups took the opportunity to have events to both publicise their activities and enthuse the public about family history, the theme for this year being “Family History is Cool ... Pass it on”.



The first of August saw Brad Argent from <ancestry.com.au> at the Family Research Centre in Panmure, Auckland, chatting with members who regularly visit the rooms to do research on a Wednesday evening. The next evening he gave a talk to St Johns Branch about how to get the best from searching.

The NZSG library supervisor sent out publicity kits to all Branches and many of them used these to contact their local newspapers and arrange interviews. There were displays in libraries and shops in many towns and cities around New Zealand with family trees, old photos, and examples of research. There were cemetery tours – always very popular –, and question and answer forums.

Panmure Branch members put together displays featuring an ancestor and these adorned the walls of the Family Research Centre for August. The month was capped off with the annual ‘Lock-In’ where those interested in family history were able to research from 8 pm to 8 am on 31 August at the Auckland City Library. Some 60 people took part and there were members of NZSG together with library staff on hand to assist those who needed guidance.

In other regions, such as Wellington, Branches took the opportunity to collaborate with local libraries and archives to present repository tours and programmes of speakers, as well as holding special events, such as the Kapiti Branch’s presentation of *Why You Are You*, featuring actor and broadcaster Dame Kate Harcourt, in a journey through her life and ancestry.

And of course our Society’s journal *The New Zealand Genealogist* featured the theme of Family History Month.

## 2012 NSW & ACT State Conference

What a great event, hosted this year by the Botany Bay Family History Society and held at Tradies at Gympie. A Free Family History Expo was held on Friday 14 September and open to the General Public. There was the Traditional Trading Tables with various vendors and societies showing their wares, as well as a number of small presentations taking place during the day. Plus the two specialist \$5 workshops that set the scene for the following conference. The Traditional was with Heather Garnsey with Researching the UK National Archives from Australia and Jill Ball with the New Age, Geneablogging: A New Endeavour for Genealogists. The day closed with a Meet and Greet Gathering for Conference delegates with a bit of entertainment provided by some of the Botany Bay Members in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Clothing poking fun at today's New Age jargon.

The Saturday commenced with the Welcome to Country by Les Bursill OAM and the official event opening by Sunderland Shire Mayor Carol Provan. The first session was by Carol Liston on Discover On-Line Land Records where we heard that the NSW Torrens Title Purchase Records Index 1863-1971 will hopefully be available on-line by Christmas. We also learnt that the Primary Applications for Torrens Title System were also a Huge Resource although these are not on-line. Also in the pre-lunch sessions we had Ian Heads OAM with Things Found along the Way: Discoveries and Dilemmas of a Sporting Historian and Trish Levido – Valuing Memories: Your Spoken Family History Legacy.

Following Lunch we were offered up a smorgasboard of choice in the Alternative Sessions. Carole Riley: *Why Family Historians Should Embrace Social Media* or Pat Fearnley with *An Adventure: Build Your Own Website*. After a room swap or a short break, Caitlin Hickie and Kerry Farmer followed up with *Preserving Your Family History Amidst the Challenges of Technology* and *DNA Technology and Family History* respectively. Following afternoon tea the Delegates retired for the NSW & ACT Association Annual General Meeting.

As with all these events the Dinner is normally the highlight of the Conference, with a number of presentations taking place. NSW & ACT Association

Awards presented were the **Dorothy Fellowes Website Award** which went to Central Coast Family History Society and the **Cynthia Foley Encouragement Award** which went to Parramatta Female Factory Friends. Both Dorothy and Cynthia were at the dinner and able to present the Awards. Kerrie Gray, AFFHO President presented AFFHO Awards, named in honour of Nick Vine Hall. These went to Category A winner, Cape Banks Family History Society for their Journal *Kith & Kin* and Category B runner up to The Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra for their *The Ancestral Searcher* Journal.

When we returned on Sunday morning conference Convener Allan Murrin took the opportunity to thank all members of Botany Bay who had worked so hard to present the Conference. Later in the morning Allan was thanked by his team.

Once back in session we had a wonderful range of presentations. Brad Manera for the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney with *Private William Irwin's Adventure: Discovery of an Anzac Story*. Lisa Murray, a City of Sydney Historian with *Community Connections: Technology and the Renaissance of Local and Family History*. Paul Parton from FamilySearch showed us their plans to introduce shortly their single *Family Tree for the Human Race*. Paul Brunton of the Mitchell Library took us on a journey to the foundations of our Country with *The Great What-if of Australian History: the Endeavor Voyage and the Charting of the East Coast of Australia*.

Next year's event is in Canberra at The Hellenic Club, Woden, ACT hosted by HAGSOG. For more information go to <<http://www.conference2013.org.au/>>.

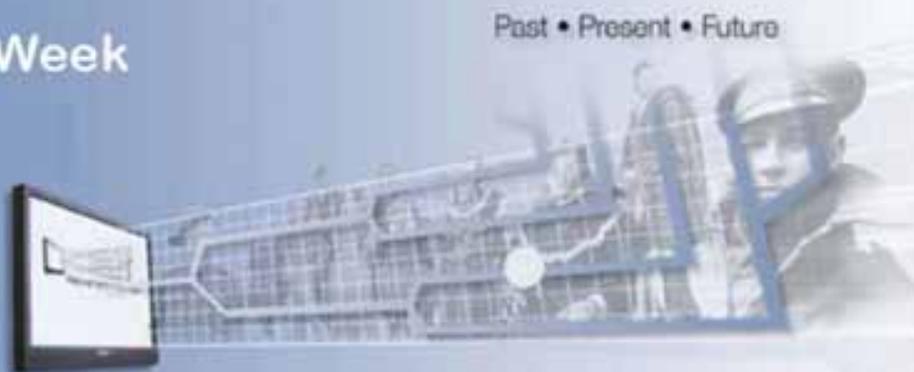
I have been involved with judging the Dorothy Fellowes Website Award for NSW & ACT Association for three years now, and have just attended my Second Conference. I found this one well thought out, entertaining and most importantly, informative. I particularly liked the way this conference pushed the technology barriers normally associated with younger generations.

Peter Applebee  
AFFHO Webmaster

National Family History Week

2 to 11 August 2013

[www.familyhistoryweek.org.au](http://www.familyhistoryweek.org.au)



# Family History in Canada

Andrew G Peake

Recently I spent a month in Canada and as I had time to spare as I travelled across Canada by train from Montreal to Vancouver, I visited a number of family history society libraries. I manage a one-name study for the Peak/e surname so I had a good excuse to visit libraries as there are many Peak/e's located throughout Canada.

From a national family history perspective, all the Canadian Provinces have a good coverage of family history societies, each with a Provincial society, headquartered in the capital city, plus numerous branches or local family history societies, many of which are affiliated with the Provincial society. However, there is no Canadian peak body such as we have in Australia and New Zealand with AFFHO. As a consequence there is no coordination of family history across the nation, for example with regular national family history conferences. Access to civil registration is patchy with some material available on the web and some only available by visiting the library. In some cases the original records can be seen on microfilm, in others only the index. They cover varying periods.

## *Ontario*

The Ontario Genealogical Society library is located in Toronto, the largest city in Canada. The Society has a large membership with branches throughout the Province and there are in addition a number of other local family history societies. The OGS library is located at the North York Public Library on the seventh floor of a large library complex which is part of a shopping mall. This has the benefit for the Society that they do not rent library premises and roster volunteers to staff the library – a major commitment for most societies.

There is a large collection of hard copy publications, not only for Ontario but also for the other provinces. The Society has a large collection of church register transcripts, well indexed. The Society has also transcribed over a thousand cemeteries in the Province, with each cemetery indexed within itself and a master index which is available on the Society website. This is fine for most cemeteries, but some of the municipal cemeteries are huge and each section has its own index, rather than a consolidated index, so it is still like 'looking for the needle in a haystack'. These cemetery transcripts are not on public access so it necessary to extract the reference details off the electronic index and have the transcript retrieved. There is a large collection of society journals from throughout Canada and the rest of the world.

There is no fee to use the library.

## *Manitoba*

The Manitoba Genealogical Society library is located in a commercial unit in suburban Winnipeg, open several days per week and staffed by society volunteers.

They have a large collection of publications and journals. In addition there is a substantial cemetery transcript collection (1363 cemeteries), to which there is an index, although this is not on the web. They also have access to several large newspaper digital files. Canadian death notices are much more comprehensive than what we are used to in Australia, more akin to an obituary, than a simple notice and often include a photograph.

There is a nominal visitor's fee to use the library.

## *British Columbia*

The British Columbia Genealogical Society library is located in a commercial unit in Surrey, which is a city within greater Vancouver, a city of about 2½ million. It too is open several days per week and staffed by volunteers.

There is a nominal visitor's fee to use the library.

## *Vancouver*

The Vancouver Public Library also has a large family history collection with a full set of microfilms of British Columbia and Ontario birth, death and marriage registrations. The index for both is available on the web and it is a simple matter of loading the film and retrieving the certificate. There are also microfilms for divorce, probate, shipping and other records. I understand that the city of Surrey public library has an even larger family history collection.

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## News from Dublin's General Register Office

The GRO has implemented new rules about General Searches and has increased the number of uncertified copies (photocopies) it allows each researcher to obtain on a daily basis from five to eight for those undertaking a General Search. The Council of Irish Genealogical Organisations welcomed the news, but indicated that a more practical and equitable method of supplying uncertified copies could easily be provided.

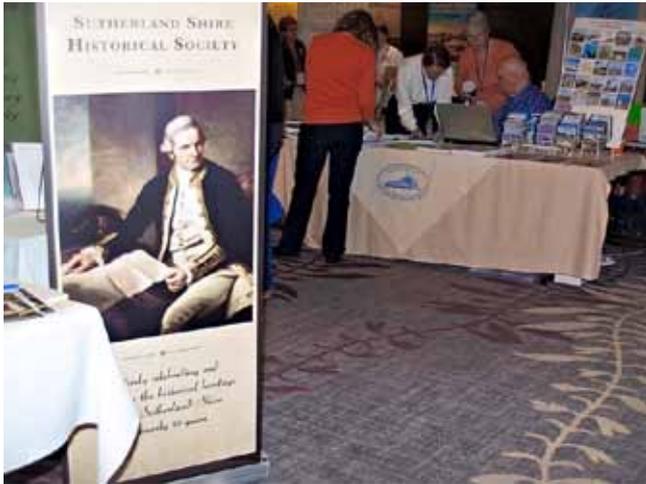
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## The British Raj in India

Expressions of interest are being called for a proposed 20 day trip to India in Dec 2013. The trip is to be led by anthropologist Dr Judy Hudson. Destinations include Delhi, Shimla, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Agra, Mumbai and Kochi. For more information contact Judy at <kanangra04@bigpond.com>.

# The 2012 NSW & ACT State Conference

Gymea NSW, September 2012



*Much action on the Newcastle stand*



*Robyn Middleton and Kerrie Gray on the Canberra stand*



*The Port Macquarie & District FHS stand.*



*Jackie Buttars, Jean Campbell, Sue Jones and Margaret Heaton*



*There is always someone new to meet, something new to find at the Conference stalls*



*Photos by Peter Applebee*