



Pioneer Echo

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Elizabeth Phillips Harding, wife of Thomas Austin
(Source: Wikipedia)

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PORT PHILLIP WOMEN

- ◆ Inez Seville COTTER nee FITZGERALD
- ◆ Mary Ann RENOWDEN nee EADES
- ◆ Elizabeth Phillips AUSTIN nee HARDING
- ◆ Charlotte Mary HARRIS nee COLE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello members and friends,

Thank you to all who came to our last meeting, in person or by Zoom. There were a few hiccups with Zoom on the day but the problem was quickly identified and corrected. Thank you all for your patience.

The AGM has left us with two vacancies on the committee, thankfully Stuart has offered to be our new Secretary and Paul taking his place in the role of Vice President. We still need to fill the two general committee roles so please come on board. It is an important and necessary thing to have a full committee as every person has a special skillset to bring to our great Group, so please consider it.

The new resolution allowing people to join as Associate Members was passed and we are looking forward to new members in this category.

The new website has been constructed and will be online as soon as possible and it will have a 'Members Only' section. The old one will still be operating until this happens, so keep an eye on it.

We are encouraging you to tell your family story. You've done the research and I am sure your family would love to discover what their ancestors' lives were like. So please consider submitting an article for the newsletter or a story for Pioneer Profiles Vol 8.

We are looking at the women's experience next year and at the February meeting, we are encouraging members to produce a talk, short video or power point presentation about your female ancestor.

Please feel free to share any new ideas with us. All ideas are welcome. Hoping to see you soon at a meeting. Please don't forget to bring two dollars if you are coming in person as this helps pay for the hall.

Barb Hawkins, President PPPG

From the Editor:

Naming the PPPG Newsletter Competition:

Congratulations to Neil Haggard for the winning entry as voted on by attendees at the meeting held 14 May 2022. **Pioneer Echo** it is.

And also, thanks to our new volunteers Ken Smith (Welcome Desk) and Maureen Matthews (afternoon tea co-ordinator).



❧ **WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS** ❧

PPPG No	Member Name	Descended From	Details	Date	Ship or other means
1542	Lynda COLLIER	a) John COLLIER b) Ann COLLIER nee SCHOFIELD c) Samuel COLLIER	Arr. P.P.D. “ Born P.P.D.	2 Jan 1841 “ 6 Aug 1842	<i>Salsette</i> “
1543	Janet HOLLOWAY	a) Henry MORTIMER b) Mary MORTIMER nee ADDIS c) Marcus MORTIMER	Arr. P.P.D. “ “	16 Dec 1839 “ “	<i>Caroline from V.D.L.</i> “ “
1544	Graeme McINTOSH	a) Daniel McINTOSH b) Margaret McINTOSH nee McGREGOR c) John McINTOSH	Arr. P.P.D. “ Born P.P.D.	28 Jul 1841 “ 9 Feb 1843	<i>William Abrams</i> “
1545	Robyn DOBLE	a) John ACKERS b) Susannah ACKERS nee CLIFFORD c) John FARRELL d) Jane AUSTEN e) Hannah FARRELL	Married P.P.D. Arr. P.P.D. Res P.P.D. Married P.P.D. Born P.P.D.	29 June 1842 26 Jan 1842 1837 4 Feb 1842 12 Oct 1848	St James <i>Robert Benn</i> St James Hopkins River
1546	Tricia ENGLER	a) Ignatius KEOGH b) Frances KEOGH nee FRENCH c) Michael KEOGH	Arr P.P.D. “ “	21 Jan 1841 “ “	<i>Sir Charles Forbes</i> “ “



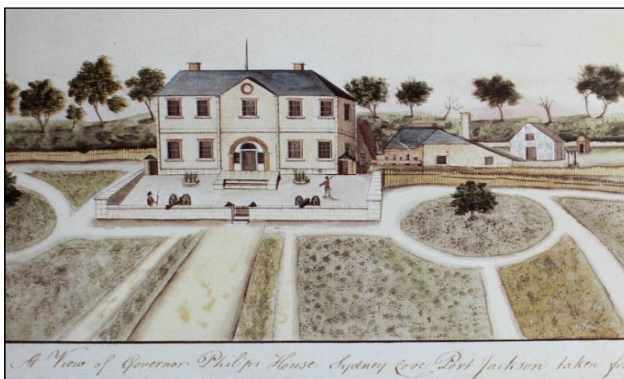
Address at the Annual General Meeting on 14th May 2022

Professor Miles Lewis - Portable Buildings in Early Australia

Professor Miles Lewis AM is one of Australia's most notable Architectural historians and is Professor in the faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne. He presented a very interesting address, illustrated with numerous photos and sketches to aid his explanations.

It is a strange notion that people should have to supply their own house when they moved to another place to live or work. But that was the situation in many places in the world where there was not enough available skilled labour.

After Governor Phillip arrived in Sydney and moved from ship to shore in February 1788, he lived in a prefabricated timber framed building. It came with a wooden floor and windows, but it was covered with oil cloth. It is depicted in a watercolour owned by the British Museum in London, titled 'A View of Governor Philips (sic) House, Sydney Cove.' (In the picture below it is the building on the right)



Source: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an3329075-1>

Australia has the largest number of surviving prefabricated buildings in the world, although in many respects this is quite by chance. San Francisco had many prefabricated buildings dating from the gold rush days but due to fires and other mishaps, none survive today.

Victoria had the highest number of prefabricated buildings in Australia as it wasn't a penal settlement, and thus did not have enough skilled labour. Likewise in the Swan River area (Perth), it was cheaper to bring buildings from Britain. In Sydney there was no point in importing buildings when they could make

them cheaper with convict labour, and eventually Sydney itself became an exporter of buildings.

Police Magistrate, Captain William Lonsdale arrived in the settlement of Melbourne in 1836 and brought with him his own house. Built in Sydney by the Royal Engineers, it was shipped on the *Isabella*. Several components were washed overboard on the voyage, and the roof was found to be not big enough to cover the house. The building was completed however, and additions added later. Eventually it was moved to Carrum and subsequently acquired by the National trust. Whilst being transported to another site by truck, part of the building fell off and sadly as a result of further mishaps over time, all that remained from Lonsdale's home, were a few short pieces of timber.

La Trobe's cottage in Jolimont thankfully fared much better, as a factory built adjacent to the cottage served to protect it. Other worthy buildings to have survived include the Steam Packet Inn in Portland, which was built in Tasmania by convicts.

Woodlands Homestead near Tullamarine is another. It was a large preconstructed timber kit home brought out from Britain. Some timbers were from Jamaica. Panels for the ceiling could be dropped into place and it had lightweight trusses which were easy to transport and assemble.

There were some notable British prefabricators who designed and built timber buildings, including Peter Thompson who exported to Adelaide, Melbourne and New Zealand. Also, Henry Manning, whose father had started a business transporting components, which were to be assembled later in various overseas locations.

The systems used varied. A particular design of house could be ordered from a catalogue, and the parts would arrive with markings showing where timbers had to be matched or fitted together. The markings were usually in Roman numerals because the Arabic numerals were too difficult to make with a chisel. Another method was to order a certain number of components and then design the building yourself. For example, an order might request fifty posts twenty panels, three doors etc.

Another system had panelised sections which were interchangeable. The walls of a building could be made up of doors and windows. All components arrived numbered, and a list of components travelled with the cargo.

The timber itself came from various places. At the time of the gold rush in California there was no railway across the country from the east coast. There was no Panama canal, and thus timber had to be transported to California and Australia via Cape Horn. This was expensive and dangerous. British factories which were then set up in Hong Kong and Singapore, supplied the market.

It was not uncommon to see timbers marked with Chinese characters. Hong Kong supplied round posts whereas those from Singapore were more sophisticated. Some beams for roofing were designed to be fitted together in the style of a Malaysian building. Sidney Seymore's gold rush era cottage in Romsey, Victoria, had external walls made completely from prefabricated doors constructed out of meranti timber from Singapore. Professor Lewis was fortunate to watch a building being dismantled (which hopefully will be reconstructed soon) and he took particular notice of 'quirked' board cladding.

Not all the houses were timber. South Melbourne had a significant number of iron houses. The National Trust cares for three iron buildings at 399 Coventry Street, South Melbourne and one of the houses, Patterson House, is on its original site. A much more substantial iron house is Corio Villa in Eastern Beach Road, Geelong.

An interesting concept was formed in the 1970s when the Australian House Museum was created just out of Geelong. A row of portable houses were arranged as if in a street. Although this project has ended it did save a lot of prefabricated buildings in Geelong from being demolished.

Andrew Muir, owner of a Singaporean Cottage at 136 Sackville Street, Collingwood, who has restored 5 Singapore cottages, has joined Professor Miles Lewis and Dr Barry Jones in proposing that 104 prefabricated buildings be placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. These buildings are indeed a very important part of our early history.

For further information visit:

<https://www.mileslewis.net/illustrated-contents/10-australian-building/15-prefabrication.pdf>

Contributed by Jan Hanslow, PPPG Member No. 1057

The Tricky Business of Fact and Fiction

by Moira McAlister (nee Barry-Cotter)

Dr Barry Cotter was the first doctor in Melbourne, arriving on the *Norval* with John Batman in November 1835. His was an interesting life and well documented through the Historical Records of Victoria, newspaper reports, official correspondence and other sources. In 2015 I published the website, *Dr Barry Cotter: The first doctor in Melbourne* which tells his story and references all my research. This website is updated regularly and freely available to read at drbarrycotter.com I also wrote a profile for the PPPG publication *Pioneer Profiles* which appears in Volume 6.

Dr Cotter married Inez Seville Fitzgerald in Melbourne in January 1838 and their marriage lasted six years and produced four children. Inez, like most women of the 19th century, left little evidence of her life, but the few facts I found were startling and unexpected and pointed to a strong woman, bound by the conservative attitudes of her time. It was an age when women were powerless, when they were legally owned by husbands and fathers with few rights and limited opportunities for financial independence. Inez's determination to survive and educate her four children after being repeatedly abandoned by the men in her life was a story, I felt, worth telling.

It is a story set against a backdrop of iconic events of the 19th century – the first illegal settlement of Melbourne, the Irish Famine, the First Anglo-Sikh War and the Great Exhibition in London in 1850. *Izzy*, the fictionalised reinvention of Inez, is faced with a series of challenges that test her strength, all of which are based on fact. At times she is nearly beaten but she gathers strength and meets these challenges with perseverance. Her resilience wins through.

Writing fiction based on facts is a tricky business. Facts gleaned through birth, marriage and death certificates, shipping and census records, property purchases etc, tell only part of the story and alone will provide a dry tale. The record that a person lived in this place or travelled on that ship or married this person is evidence of the fact and describes the action, but it doesn't provide the motivation for the action.

For example, we might presume that a marriage certificate meant that the couple was in love. But at times in the Australian colonies, men outnumbered women by 20 to 1, so there were many reasons for a couple to marry – security and respectability for women, housekeeping and companionship for men. Love was not always the prompt to marriage.

We can only relate to people of the past through our shared human condition and to really believe and know them as real people we need to find common human links with them. These links exist in what are sometimes called ‘universals’, those hundreds, perhaps thousands of human traits that surpass race, culture, distance and most especially in this case, time. Human beings are always human beings. They laugh, cry, love, hate, despair, murder. They are puffy with self-importance. They can show incredible courage or tenderness or fear. These universals are a powerful way for a writer to connect a character with a reader. People are always people and how they relate to each other is the basis of all literature. The tricky part here is to identify the ‘right’ or at least the most feasible motivation, given the surrounding facts.

The next tricky thing is the linking of facts. Using fiction to ‘fill in the bits’ between the facts can result in a patchy, disjointed story unless the author does her work thoroughly. To me, the facts were like lampposts on a dark road, illuminating just a small space around them. I could see the next lamppost in the distance but needed to employ plausible and well researched, but fictitious characters, actions and motivations to get there. This is the image that sustained me throughout the writing of *Izzy*. The real research for this book was not so much about her life, (I had already completed most of that for the website in 2015). The real research was about the world that Inez lived in – the social history –manners, protocols, fashion along with the events that she witnessed, the industrial and technological progress of the 19th century and a hundred other aspects. This information became the plausible background, the believable world, so the reader is not simply focused on the protagonist but is fully and seamlessly immersed in the world in which she lives.

This leads to the third tricky aspect which is the people. Many of the characters in *Izzy* are historical figures and their lives are well documented – John Batman, JP Fawkner, William Buckley, Charles La Trobe – I have used their true names because they are acting within their historical role and I have not

assigned any other motivations to them. What they say and do is factual. Others are purely fictional like Mrs. Betts, Madam Foveaux, Harriet and Sarah and their task is to give direction to the story when I did not have any facts to rely upon (i.e., between the lampposts). Even then, these characters are an amalgamation of similar characters I had researched – nannies, milliners, teachers etc. The third group of characters is comprised of those who are based on fact – Izzy, Bryn, Nell, Francis, Mary Parkins, Captain Bradley and others. I found that by using fictional names I was liberated to explore their motivations more freely, free to really create them as full characters. Their words and actions are in keeping with the known facts but not bound by them.

As with all fiction, readers expect to be entertained. Diverging from the ‘true’ story in the interests of plot, structure or tension is part and parcel of fiction writing. Readers want a good story, action, believable characters, a twist perhaps, a satisfying resolution, something to think about. With historical fiction, readers want all that while being transported to another time and place. The era, events, settings and characters may or may not be familiar and the author’s task is to create that world as authentically as possible.

Using ancestors as the main characters is fraught with difficulties. Family stories often contain a grain of truth but they are not facts and relying on them is shaky ground. Research is necessary to confirm or discount such stories. I found that because I had already researched and written the factual, biographical story of Dr Cotter and Inez, I was free to explore the likely motivations and see the facts from Inez’s perspective. The goal of fiction is to distil the essence of the characters in order to tell their stories. I see the two publications as bookends, both holding the truth about this extraordinary couple.

Moira will be the guest speaker at the 12th November PPPG meeting and *Izzy* will be available for purchase on the day.

Izzy is available at all online bookshops in print or ebook format.

For more information about Moira McAlister, visit her website, moiramcalister.com

WOMEN OF PORT PHILLIP

International Women's Day occurs on the 8 March each year and celebrates the vital role women play in society where difference is valued and celebrated, and diversity, equality and inclusiveness are promoted.

It celebrates the achievements of women, those who came before us, those who stand beside us now, and those who will come after.

As stated in the previous article by Moira McAlister, "most women in the 19th century left little evidence of their life," so that is why in this issue we celebrate the women of Port Phillip by highlighting several women who overcame hurdles, broke through the barriers of discrimination, bias and stereotypes and whose deeds, however seemingly insignificant at the time, paved the way for a more equal gender world.

MARY ANNE RENOWDEN

(nee EADES; born 1845 Geelong—died 1932 Western Australia)

Postmistress

Mary Ann Eades, also known as Mary Cranwell Eades was born in 1845 in Geelong, Victoria the daughter of Samuel Eades and Ellen Eades (nee Kerwan). Mary came from a family of six children. In 1866 she married Zachariah Dawson Wilson in Geelong and they had six children. A Lieutenant with the Victorian Company Department, Wilson died at Warrnambool, Victoria, in 1881 at the age of 46 years.

Mary moved with her family to Silvertown, near Broken Hill in New South Wales. In 1886 she married John Oliver Renowden, and had two more children.

John Oliver Renowden was a member of Broken Hill's first Progress Committee. His sketch of the town pre-settlement is now held at the Broken Hill Railway Museum. When the Committee elected to appoint a postmistress and run a mail coach between Silvertown and Mount Gipps, Mary was appointed postmistress. So from hardship and struggle, Mary Renowden became the first government official in Broken Hill, New South Wales, serving as postmistress from 1 January 1886, with a salary of ten pounds per annum. Mary left Broken Hill with her family in 1893 to live in Parkerville, Western Australia where she died 6 September 1932.

[<http://nla.gov.au/nla.party-716078>]

ELIZABETH PHILLIPS AUSTIN

(nee HARDING; born 14 August 1821 Somerset, England— died 2 September 1910 Winchelsea, Victoria)

Pastoralist and Philanthropist

Elizabeth was the fourth daughter of Robert Harding, a yeoman farmer, and his wife Mary (née Phillips). She sailed for Australia in 1841 with her brother William, who settled in Winchelsea. In 1845 Elizabeth married her neighbour, Thomas Austin, in Melbourne. She had eleven children, three of whom died in infancy. The Austins lived at Barwon Park, where they entertained the Duke of Edinburgh in 1867. Embarrassed by their 'undistinguished home-stead', Elizabeth persuaded her husband to build a new home, and a bluestone mansion was completed by 1871. Thomas Austin passed away shortly afterwards.

According to historian Paul de Serville, Elizabeth Austin - described by grandchildren as a 'shrewd, determined woman' - had 'quietly begun a second career, as a philanthropist' by 1880. She responded to an appeal to found a hospital for incurables in Melbourne, offering £6,000 (via an intermediary) to launch it. Reputedly, her interest in incurable disease 'derived from a case among her staff'. On her birthday in 1882, the Austin Hospital for Incurables was opened. She continued to give money for maintenance, and paid for the establishment of a children's ward in 1898. Austin visited the hospital once a month, and three of her granddaughters served on its committee until the 1960s.

Another major philanthropic gift went to the Austin Homes for Women at South Geelong, built as part of the Jubilee celebrations for Queen Victoria in 1887.

Austin also gave to the Servants' Training Institute, St Thomas's Church (Winchelsea), the Ladies' Benevolent Society and local charities. She was buried in the Geelong cemetery with Anglican rites.

In 2012 Elizabeth Austin was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

[The Australian Women's Register: <https://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE3970b.htm>
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.party-769066>
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10016b.htm>]

CHARLOTTE HARRIS

(nee COLE; born 1819 Sudbury, England—died 1898 Glenferrie, Victoria)

Divorcee and Head Teacher

Charlotte Mary COLE was a 21-year-old servant from Middlesex England who arrived in the Port Phillip District on 26 February 1842 on board the *Himalaya* accompanied by sister Martha and brothers George and Thomas. Two months after arriving in the colony she married Francis HARRIS, a man of dubious character.

Not much is known about their early years together but it's an 1861 newspaper article and her Will dated 1898 that really shines a light on her struggles. According to the *Bendigo Advertiser* dated 14 October 1861 Charlotte made an application to Mr. Sturt, P.M. [Police Magistrate], in his private office, for protection under the new Divorce Act. The information made by the applicant set forth that she was married to the respondent, Francis Harris, on the 30th of April, 1842, in St. James's Church, Melbourne, and that about the month of April 1855, he was convicted of uttering several forged cheques, and sentenced, cumulatively, to a period altogether of eleven years' penal servitude. On the 26th of June, 1861, he obtained a ticket-of-leave for the district of Gipps Land, and left Melbourne without having then or since, contributed anything to the support of the applicant, or settled any property upon her. She had given no just cause for deserting her, and as by her own industry as a schoolmistress she was able to support herself, and had acquired some property, she prayed for the protection of the magistrate against the respondent or any of his creditors. The application was granted.

Records at the PROV show Mrs Charlotte Mary Harris, Teacher Record No. 1301-1600A, resigned aged 46, on 31 December 1868. An attached newspaper article stated that Charlotte had died on 14 June 1898 at her residence in Hawthorn. She devoted herself considerably to charitable deeds in Melbourne and was appointed Governor to the Melbourne Hospital. Despite a difficult beginning she lived a frugal but generous life and left assets to the value of just over £900. Amongst the bequests made in her will were the following; £25 to the Melbourne Hospital, the Little Sisters of the Poor, Northcote and the Benevolent Asylum Melbourne, and £50 to the Church of the Immaculate Heart, Hawthorn. Her remains were interred in the Cheltenham Cemetery on the 16th December 1898 where a headstone was erected by her adopted daughter Mrs A. L. Doyle (Western Australia)

It is worthy of mention that the late Mrs Harris was for 20 years head teacher of St Patrick's Catholic School, Eastern Hill.

So, from a young servant immigrant, Charlotte Harris

made a success of her life in the Port Phillip District by achieving financial independence with the help of the new divorce legislation.

CONTRIBUTED BY DIANNE WHEELER PPPG MEMBER # 1505



VALE

Alison Stephen nee Woods

PPPG Honorary Life member [#272]



Alison was married to Brian Stephen, brother of Lester. She and Brian met through PPPG and they married. They were active members and did lots of open days making displays for the PPPG and the Cornish connections, as well as other things.

She was the most lovely lady.

Clive Luckman

FGSV. Died on 22 January 2022

I was deeply saddened to read this in the June edition of the Ancestor Magazine. Many of you that are GSV members and some that were involved in digitising Lester Stephen's material will remember Clive. He was our mentor and digital advisor over the two years of this exercise. He was patient, funny, approachable and a great person. Sadly missed.

Barb Hawkins

MEMBERS, DID YOU KNOW?

- The Port Phillip Pioneers Group are affiliated with the RHSV, which has a wealth of information about early Victoria. As a PPPG member you have free entry if you produce a financial membership card. This can be obtained from Dean Wheeler on request.
- Do not forget the State Library, for maps, images and all manner of subjects of value to add to the story.
- The GSV had their annual Member Society Day (March 28) on Zoom, which I attended. The GSV have over 50 member societies throughout Victoria and NSW. Since Covid hit, they have been working very hard to get as much as possible available online for members and groups. Each group has a representative to access their resources on your behalf, and I am currently that person for the PPPG. Please email me if you would like to access this resource.
- You can get a visitor E-Pass for the reduced amount of \$10 for six hours. You can use this to watch any of the 200 webcasts that are available, which is very exciting. You can see this list in the public area.
- The GSV writing prize is also open to you as one of our members. The winner receives a twelve-month subscription to Ancestry and their Worldwide Membership, and an Ancestry DNA test kit.
- The GSV also have a blog that has 400 non members subscribing to it, you do not have to subscribe though. Have a look at it you might see something that sparks your interest.

Check out the catalogue on the GSV website for details on all these things.

Barb Hawkins, PPPG President

MEETINGS

Next Meeting:	Saturday 9 July 2022
Speaker:	Speaker: Martin Playne Topic: Harbours & Shipping on Port Phillip
Hall Entry:	\$2.00
Doors Open:	1.30 pm. Sign in. Time to browse notice board, borrow library books, and chat.
Meeting Starts:	2.00 pm.
Guest Speaker:	2.30 pm.
Afternoon Tea:	3.30 pm. Refreshments.
Venue:	Wesley Hall, St. Andrew's Uniting Church, cnr Burke and Malvern Rds, Gardiner. <u>Victorian Government Covid-19 Regulations permitting</u> Public Transport: Right on the route of the No 72 tram and only a short walk from the Gardiner Railway Station. Melways Reference: Map 59 H7. or Online via Zoom digital platform Please register your email with the Secretary at info@portphillippioneersgroup.org.au by 6pm Thursday 7 July if you wish to participate.
Upcoming Meetings:	10 Sept 2022: Cheryl Griffiths - Education Schools & Teachers 12 Nov 2022: Moira McAlister - Dr Barry Cotter, the First Doctor in Melbourne

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINES : At least 1 month prior to meeting date

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