



Jan - Mar 2025
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PIONEER ECHO

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PAST

Newsletter No: 237

ABORIGINAL TRACKER

YANGGENDYINANYUK

(traditional name **JUMUMJEANUKE /JUNGUNJINUKE**, also known as **DICK-A-DICK** and **KING RICHARD**) (c. 1834 – 1886) was an Australian Aboriginal tracker and cricketer, a Wotjobaluk man who spoke the Wergaia language in the Wimmera region of western Victoria. In Wergaia, **YANGGENDYINANYUK** means 'his



walking feet'. He was a member of the first Australian cricket team to tour England in 1868 and was one of the most well-known Aborigines of the nineteenth century.

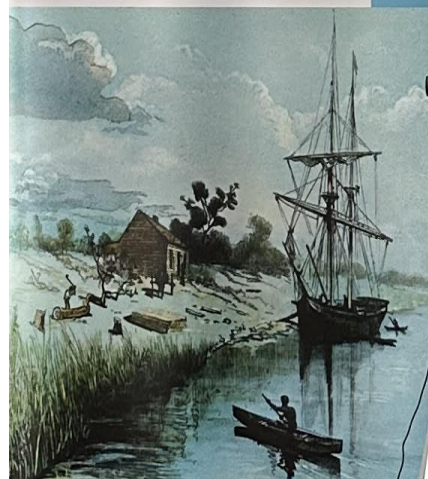
Source: <https://monumentaaustralia.org.au>

But why was he so famous?
See more of his story on page 3.

DO YOU REMEMBER *BABES IN THE WOOD*?

See page 4 for the story of the Cooper-Duff children

Port Phillip Pioneers Group



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PORT PHILLIP PIONEERS GROUP INC.

Inc. No. A0022862G / ABN: 79 213 729 409

A Member Society of the G.S.V. Inc.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Part of my reading over the summer months has been about how the Victorian Parliament began its operations. It occurred to me that our first parliamentarians must have been here before 1851 but amongst the PPPG Profiles, there is little mention of most of these highly-committed Victorians.

Two examples I came across were William Clarke **HAINES** and James **GRAHAM**. **HAINES** was Victoria's first Premier, although then called 'Chief Secretary' and before that position, he was a surgeon. He and his wife Mary Ann had 9 children. **GRAHAM** was a pastoralist who arrived in the colony in 1839 and lived at 'Elibank', a house which is still on the Punt Road hill in direct line with the Melbourne Cricket Ground. I know that **GRAHAM** was here before 1851 because he left his 'card' (as you did in those days) at the St Patrick's Church Hall on the night of the fancy dress ball held to celebrate the passing of the Imperial legislation to give effect to the Separation of Victoria from NSW. These two prominent colonists had families who intermarried. In death, **HAINES** and **GRAHAM** are remembered by memorials facing each other on the walls of Christ Church South Yarra. Perhaps someone can claim a connection.

Our website needs more stories and interesting (even quirky) articles about life prior to 1851 so let us see if we can make a contribution to the group's activities this year. Meanwhile, welcome to 2025. I hope you will enjoy the informative talks we have in place from our list of speakers.

Paul Cronin

President

NEW MEMBERS

PPPG NO	Member Name	Descended From	Details	Date	Ship or other means
1578	Lindsay JOLLEY	James JOLLY	Arr. P.P.D.	16 Feb 1848	<i>Lady Peel</i>
1364	Jan HUMPHREYS (additional claim)	Edward JORDAN	Arr. P.P.D.	18 July 1840	<i>Theresa</i>

VALE



Lindsay Mann

d. 3 /11/2024

Associate Member No. 6002



Address at the General Meeting on 9 November 2024

THEY RESCUED US! - ABORIGINAL HEROES ON COUNTRY

Speaker: Dr. Fred Cahir

When Dr. Fred Cahir, Professor of Australian History at the Federation University of Australia addressed the P.P.P.G. meeting, he talked about how thousands of colonists were rescued by Aboriginal people from life threatening events and his presentation paid tribute to the knowledge, mercy and heroic deeds which were freely offered by Indigenous Australian's to the European settlers occupying their Country.

Fred spoke of Aboriginal people rescuing colonists and their livelihoods. One such example was during the Black Thursday bushfires of 6th February 1851 that burnt about a quarter of the Colony's area. He described how Dja Dja Wurrung women saved the Egan children by taking them to a nearby creek and how an Aboriginal couple returned to save their house. He told us about Aboriginal's educating colonists about fire behaviour and practices, and the utilisation of fire skills and land management.

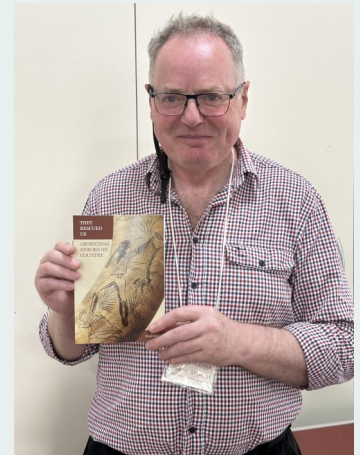
Fred also spoke of Aboriginal heroism in rescuing shipwreck victims, like the Aboriginal man who tied a rope around his waist and swam out to tether a line to a ship to help rescue new arrivals whilst white colonialists stood by helplessly and watched on shore.

Another instance where Aboriginal knowledge was used was in the rescue of the three Duff children who were lost in the bush in 1864. When the frantic parents and searchers had almost given up hope of finding the children, Aboriginal trackers were called upon and it was they who located the children. Jane Duff became a national heroine and the children became known as the 'Babes in the Wood.' During his research, Fred was able to identify the Victorian Aboriginal trackers as **YANGGENDYINANYUK** (also known as **DICK-A-DICK**), **JERRY** (or **RED-CAP**) and **FRED**. In 1935 a memorial to the children was erected near the place where they were found but it made no mention of the Aboriginal trackers who actually found them just like in contemporary reports and even the retold version as seen in the 1934 article where they are fleetingly referred to as black-trackers. (middle right).

Fred's talk highlighted the debt Victorian colonists owed to Aboriginal people who had willingly rescued them from bushfires, shipwrecks, waterways and being lost in the bush by tracking or guiding them to safety.

Interestingly, in 2014, some of the descendants of the Duff family chose to acknowledge the part played by Aboriginal trackers in the rescue of the children by placing a second plaque on the original memorial. (see inscription at right)

Contributed by: Dianne Wheeler PPPG Member No. 1505



Dr Fred Cahir holding his book *They Rescued Us—Aboriginal Heroes on Country*

HEROISM IN THE BUSH

Jane Duff's Memory Honoured

HORSHAM, Friday. — The Horsham Council has decided to change the name of Williams lane to Duff street to perpetuate the memory of Jane Duff. In 1864 Jane Duff, then aged 7 years, and her two young brothers, were lost in the bush near Natimuk for nine days. By exercising great self-denial and enduring terrible privations she managed to keep her brothers alive until they were all rescued by black-trackers. She later married Mr. G. Turnbull, and died at Horsham in 1932, aged 75 years.

The Argus, Sat 7 Jul 1934 p24

IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE 154TH ANNIVERSARY
HONOURING THE
COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE
WIMMERA PIONEERS
AND
ABORIGINAL TRACKERS IN
FINDING THE
COOPER-DUFF CHILDREN

DO YOU REMEMBER... *BABES IN THE WOOD?*



Source: SLV

“On a delightful spring day in August, 1864, Mrs John Duff was alone with her three children Jane Cooper, aged 7 years, Isaac Cooper, 9, and their step-brother, Frank Duff, 4, in their cosy little shepherd's home of bulloak slabs with its gumbark roof and floor of red clay set hard as cement.

It was a typical Australian boundary-rider's two-roomed hut on Mr Duncan Smith's Spring Hill sheep run, in the southern Wimmera. Away to the east rose the serrated ridges of the majestic Grampians Range, and nearer towered Mount Arapiles an isolated peak. Open plains, dotted with eucalypts and sheoaks, stretched away to the South Australian border. To the south lay the celebrated Western District

grazing territory. It is the northern area of dense Mallee belts, which was the setting of the story of the Australian Babes In the Woods ... On that eventful spring morning Mrs Duff said to the children after breakfast, "Go out to the scrub, children, and gather me some broom-bush to make a new broom." The children had frequently gone into the adjoining scrub chasing the swiftly dodging paddymelons with the dogs, and had previously gathered broom-bush for their mother, so she had no misgivings about their finding their way home.

The children made their way through the shimmering grasses, picking a flower here and there, chasing wild bees and butterflies ... They were wandering in a great natural park. At every yard the children found something to interest and fascinate them, with the result that the flight of time passed unnoticed. Suddenly they thought of their mother's directions to gather broom-bush, then each child picked an armful. The sun was slowly sinking in the west ... But the dense belts of Mallee confused their sense of direction, and ... they encountered new and unfamiliar scenes.

The lustrous blackness of the soft Australian night encompassed the forests. The children, by direction of Isaac, decided to camp at the butt of a eucalypt tree, which towered above the other giants of the forest ... They coo-ed but the only answer was a startling cascade of hilarious laughter which stilled all other bush sounds and made the forest ring. The children knew that laughter well - it was the Kookaburras' farewell song to the sun.

As the moon rose in the east ... a weird thin quivering wail, which developed into a fierce mournful dirge, rose and fell far away towards the Grampians range. The children were afraid, they knew it was a pack of dingoes sitting on their haunches, noses pointed straight up to the stars howling in chorus at moon-rise ... Jane took off her skirt and wrapped it around her little brother Frank, who began to whimper as the air became colder. Then the three children, who had made a light cushion of freshly picked eucalyptus leaves, fell asleep. At dawn the children were awakened by the ringing chorus of the Melbas (black and white "magpies") and the kookaburras - the "settler's clocks," who heralded the crimson dawning of the day.

Isaac's bushcraft stood the children in good stead. Under his direction they gathered the broad eucalyptus leaves, which held pure sparkling diamond dew drops, and quenched their thirst by licking off the moisture. They dug up native yams, gathered cranberries and wild berries and ate them. ...

Day after day for eight days they roamed the forest weak and hungry, but they never abandoned hope of finding their way home. Isaac and Jane knew their father would be searching for them. Isaac and Jane took turns at carrying the weary, footsore little Frank, although they too, were weak and exhausted ... On one occasion they crossed the dry bed of a creek which, if they had followed it in the right direction, would have taken them to the Wimmera River and civilisation.

When the children did not return home, Mrs Duff became alarmed and walked to Spring Hill Station and informed her husband. A search party was organised by the station people, but as they failed to discover the children on the fifth day, at nightfall Peter McCartney, of Nurcoung, rode north in the night through the bush 60 miles to Mount Elgin Station to fetch **DICK-A-DICK**, the native tracker. The Australian natives are the world's cleverest trackers. **DICK-A-DICK** brought two other natives, **TONY** and **RED CAP**, with him to assist in the search.

At Duff's hut the natives circled, but were some time picking up the tracks of the children, as they had been criss-crossed by the white searchers. Once they discovered the trail the pursuit was on and gradually the pace quickened, **DICK-A-DICK** leading. It was then ascertained that the children had taken a northerly direction leading into the dense mallee scrub ...

Sometimes **DICK-A-DICK** proceeded quickly, almost "galloping" on his hands and feet, occasionally stopping to carefully scrutinise the ground, the grass, leaves and bushes, and then intently to examine the surrounding bush. He pointed out to McCartney where the children had occasionally fallen, rested and slept. "Ah — two fella." He held up two fingers and appeared to be temporarily puzzled. Then he shouted, "Ah, big fella carry little fella," and the pursuit proceeded. "Them fella bin sit down." Three fella walk about. Ah! Him bin thinkit bin close up mia-mia (home). Him bin pickem bush for sweepim broom." This was the place which the children thought they recognised as being near their home, and where they had picked a fresh lot of broom-bush.

Early in the morning of the ninth day **DICK-A-DICK** indicated that the children were becoming very weak, and, possibly, they might be found dead. They had ceased to look for berries and yams, he said. "Him bin close up now!" **DICK-A-DICK** motioned to the two following natives, who were continually glancing over their shoulders to the right and left, as is their habit, and they froze. He then cautiously moved on alone and entered a small open enclosure, with a belt of banksia on the south-side. Then he too froze and pointed ahead and then silently motioned to Duff and McCartney to proceed. **DICK-A-DICK**'s job was accomplished - there lay the three children beside a banksia tree, straight ahead.

Duff was overjoyed when he discovered the children were alive. "Daddy, it's cold— cold. We knew you would come to us," was all that Isaac and Jane could murmur.

Several years ago a memorial was erected at a site at Nurcoung near the old home of the Cooper-Duff family, in memory of the heroism displayed by the children."

Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne, Vic: 1861-1954) Thu 2 Jan 1938 page 37

As a reward, **YANGGENDYINANYUK** received 15 pounds and was dubbed 'King Richard'. The miraculous rescue captured headlines and inspired paintings and children's books across Australia and England. Generations of Victorian school students came to know of 'King Richard' and his tracking prowess as they read the '*Lost in the Bush*' story in compulsory schoolbooks from 1896 to the 1950s. The Wutyubaluk warrior's "walking feet" have left enduring tracks.

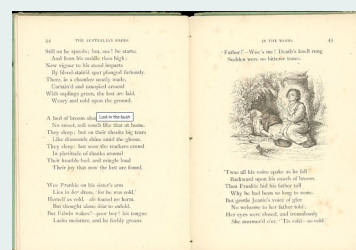
Source: <https://meanjin.com.au/>

Contributed by: Dianne Wheeler PPPG Member No.1505



<https://monumentaustralia.org.au/>

Jane Duff Memorial



The Australian Babes in the Wood - a poem from the Australian School Reader

Source: Digital Collection State Library of South Australia

Meet the P.P.P.G. Committee and Volunteers

Committee

Members:

Marney Butler-Jones,
Nick Wakeling,
Stuart Hamilton (Hon.
Secretary),
Dean Wheeler (Hon.
Treasurer),
Bev Jacobson (Vice
Pres.),
Paul Cronin (Pres.),
Ann Bevis,
Bronwyn Quint,
Susan Wheelahan
(absent)



Volunteers:

Ken Smith, Di Wheeler,
Maureen Matthews, Jan
Hanslow and Tom
Davison



Bev Jacobson and Bronwyn Quint represented the PPPG on 26 October, 2024 at the History Fest that was presented by the Kingston Libraries. The aim was to bring together local historical societies, objects, valuers and conservers in order to explore the history of Kingston and its people.

Whilst the event was a success it is hoped that it will be better attended in 2025 with improved marketing.



Telling Port Phillip Pioneer Ancestor Stories

One of the main functions of the PPPG is to preserve and transmit stories of our ancestors who were in the Port Phillip District of NSW between 1803 and 1851. An audio (or video) short story is now one way you can do this. Your ancestor's most interesting facts, recorded as a spoken teaser of just a couple of minutes, will be posted in the Members Only area, for our members to listen to.

How do I do this?

- Record an audio file using the Voice Memos App on your phone.
- Include only one or two interesting verifiable facts about your Port Phillip Pioneer, and please no fiction.
- Make sure you are in a very quiet room when recording.
- Keep it to two minutes or less.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Make it entertaining and easy to listen to.
- Email it to:
info@portphillippioneersgroup.org.au

By emailing this file you are agreeing to have your audio file published on the Port Phillip Pioneers Group website. In the future these files may be posted on the public website. If you need help about using the Voice Memos App, ask a friend or relation, or about the content, ask a committee member.

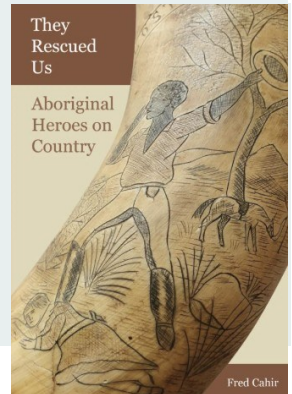
An example can be found on the website at Member News - 3 Ways to Tell Ancestor Stories, kindly provided by Beverley Jacobson Member No. 1403

LIBRARY NEWS

Latest addition to the
P.P.P.G. Library;

Dr. Fred Cahir's book

*They Rescued Us—
Aboriginal Heroes on
Country*



PPPG Puzzle # 5

(from the PPPG Puzzler Di Wheeler)

J	P	W	X	C	A	H	I	R	L	T
A	A	N	B	V	H	Y	F	R	Q	E
N	D	Y	A	C	R	O	G	Y	F	E
E	E	D	V	M	M	M	Q	Q	X	F
C	M	T	W	N	T	A	Y	C	D	G
O	E	N	D	F	U	S	B	T	Y	N
O	L	A	J	Y	Q	P	A	F	D	I
P	O	T	C	D	A	L	X	O	X	K
E	N	A	U	S	Q	U	P	L	H	L
R	A	U	Q	W	O	H	A	X	M	A
K	U	L	A	B	O	J	T	O	W	W

Word Search clues:

- Recent speaker Fred _____
- Meaning of Yanggendiynanyuk
- A member of the ancient merchant guild of Newcastle (UK), in charge of coal shipping
- Duff family heroine
- Nickname of John Hunter
- Dick-a-Dick was one of these men

WE, AS HUMAN BEINGS, ARE THE SUM OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US.

If you were born when the Port Phillip District formally became the Colony of Victoria on 1 July 1851, you were approximately the 1,228,780,328th person alive on Earth. If you were born on that same date but in 2024, that is, 173 years later, you were the 8,155,415,000th person alive on Earth.

Source: <https://worldpopulationhistory.org/my-population-number>

Contributed by Dianne Wheeler PPPG member No 1505

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Saturday: 1 March, 2025

Speaker: Craig Proctor

Topic: Telling the story of Pioneer Women

Saturday: 10 May 2025

Speaker: Dr Rosalie Triolo OAM FRHSV

Topic: Local and international historical sources and resources you might not have used in local/family research

MEETING VENUE

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.

Venue: **NOTE: This meeting will be held in the parish hall to the west of the usual Wesley Hall, St. Andrew's Uniting Church,** cnr Burke and Malvern Roads, Gardiner.

Melways Reference: Map 59 H7.

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