



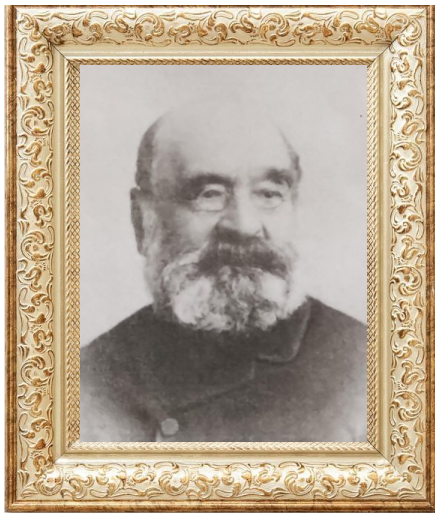
Jun—Jul 2026
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PIONEER ECHO

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PAST

Newsletter No: 244

Edward Sayce



Quaker

The Society of Friends (commonly known as the Quakers) was founded in England by George Fox in the mid-seventeenth century. He argued that all humans were equal before God, and ranks, titles, consecrated buildings and ordained ministers were irrelevant to the individual seeking God. The movement became associated with pacifism, non-violence, sobriety in dress and manners, and concern for social reform. Partly on account of persecution, it soon spread to the British colonies.

There was a sprinkling of well concerned Friends in Australia, where Quakers were active from the 1830's and amongst these were Edward and Deborah Sayce who commenced regular Meetings in their Little Bourke Street home in Melbourne, from July 1843.

Read more about Edward and Deborah SAYCE on page 5

PORT PHILLIP PIONEERS GROUP INC.

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

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

Port Phillip Pioneers Group



Above: Fawkner's *Enterprize* by Woodhouse and Schell, 1925: SLV

Left: Portrait of Edward SAYCE

Source: ancestry.com.au

Article sources:

- <https://nla.gov.au>: Records of the Society of Friends
- The Journal of the Friends Historical Society, Vol 59 No.1



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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Just over 190 years ago Batman set out on his voyage from Launceston to Port Phillip to make a deal with the local inhabitants intending to become what would have effectively made him and his associates amongst the biggest land proprietors in the then known world. That was the intention but consistent with the British policy that instructed Captain Cook that no European nation had the right to settle in a country without the voluntary assent of the original inhabitants, the Governor of New South Wales only weeks later, declared those types of land contracts invalid and further that the occupants would be deemed trespassers. As they say, "the rest is history". What is still remarkable about that inauspicious beginning of Victoria is that within 16 years, the colony was sufficiently developed, and its occupants sufficiently insistent upon self-government, that Separation from New South Wales occurred in 1851. What happened to these settlers after the colony became self-governing is often not a topic about which we have much discussion. Our Pioneer Profiles usually trace ancestors onwards from their initial residence in the fledgling colony, but I wonder whether we should also be providing speakers who can trace some of these first settlers after 1851 to show the development of Melbourne?

For our next meeting on Saturday 11 July, we have had to change direction as our organised speaker has become unavailable. Committee Member Bronwyn Quint has stepped into the speaker role and will take us through the PPPG presentation which contains lots of information and pictures. This presentation may be used by members who desire to speak to groups in the community, so it is not to be missed.

Speaking of the Committee, may I again thank members who have accepted positions and if anyone is still interested, please speak to me.

Also don't forget the PPPG Pamphlet is now available if anyone is willing to distribute some to libraries or community hubs. I recently delivered a batch to a local senior citizens group and they were excitedly taken; we shall see whether we get new membership interest.

Our next meeting starts at 2 pm

Paul Cronin

President

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

PPPG No.	MEMBER NAME	DESCENDED FROM	DETAILS	DATE	SHIP OR OTHER MEANS
1585	Sue-Ellen McGRATH	Peter Robert MANSERGH Anne MANSERGH (nee BLAIR)	Arr. P.P.D. “	May 1840 “	<i>China</i> “
1586	Victoria SPICER	Robert BENTLEY Martha BENTLEY (Redfern)	Arr. P.P.D. “	17 July 1841 “	<i>England</i> “
6015	Doug Elms (Associate member)				
6016	(Louis) Shane Allan (Associate Member)				

AGM

The PPPG AGM was held on Saturday 9 May 2026 at Wesley Hall, St Andrew's Church at 2pm.

The following motions were moved and agreed upon:

- Financial Statements for 2025
- Increase the cost of hard copies of Pioneer Echo by \$5 (to \$30 for singles and \$35 for families)
- Number of Ordinary Committee Members should be five
- The President declared all positions to be vacant. The following people were duly elected:
 - ◇ President: Paul Cronin
 - ◇ Vice-President : Beverley Jacobson
 - ◇ Hon. Secretary: Nick Wakeling
 - ◇ Hon. Treasurer: Dean Wheeler
 - ◇ Committee Members: Ann Butler, Marney Butler-Jones, Bronwyn Quint, Susanne Wheelahan, Di Wheeler



Committee Members 2026-27 - Dean Wheeler, Di Wheeler, Bronwyn Quint, Susanne Wheelahan, Ann Butler, Marney Butler-Jones, Paul Cronin, Beverley Jacobson and Nick Wakeling (not in picture)

Other Voluntary Positions

The President advised that the following positions have been filled and thanked members who nominated or agreed to continue. He also thanked Maureen Matthews for her afternoon tea preparation over recent years.

- ◇ Examiner of Proofs: Marney Butler-Jones
- ◇ Membership Secretary: Dean Wheeler
- ◇ Newsletter Editor: Dianne Wheeler
- ◇ Pioneer Profiles Editor: Beverley Jacobson
- ◇ Web Manager: Dianne Wheeler (assisted by Dean Wheeler)
- ◇ Zoom Manager: Bronwyn Quint (assisted by Susanne Wheelahan)
- ◇ Property Officer: Tom Davison
- ◇ Librarian: Jan Hanslow
- ◇ Doorperson: Ken Smith
- ◇ Afternoon Tea: Beverley Jacobson (assisted by Susanne Wheelahan)
- ◇ Speaker Co-ordinator: Ann Butler



Volunteers 2026/2027—Ken Smith, Jan Hanslow, Tom Davison and Di Wheeler

- The President also thanked outgoing Secretary Stuart Hamilton and Committee Member Anne Bevis (Examiner of Proofs) for their work with the Group over many years and Certificates of Appreciation were given.

Other business discussed included the new PPPG brochure, a planned visit to the RHSV Hoddle Grid Exhibition, possible walks to early sites, and the results of the recent PPPG Survey which can be found on our website at pppg.org.au > Member News > PPPG Member 2026 Survey Results.

Summary contributed by Di-anne Wheeler Member No. 1505

Address at the AGM on 9 May 2026

THE MELBOURNE ATHENAEUM aka THE MELBOURNE MECHANICS INSTITUTE

By Fiona Malcolm

Fiona Malcolm, the Library Manager of the Melbourne Athenaeum, previously known as the Melbourne Mechanics Institute (MMI), discussed the history and evolution of the institution highlighting its role as a cultural hub in Melbourne, offering education, exhibitions, and public events.

The first Mechanics Institute in Australia was established in Hobart in 1827, followed by the Sydney School of Arts and Mechanics Institute in 1833 and the MMI established in 1839. They were inspired by the British Mechanics Institute movement founded by George Birkbeck in Scotland. Fiona explained how mechanics institutes served as early precursors to TAFE colleges and public libraries, with many operating in regional areas.

Focusing on the MMI, Fiona detailed its initial committee structure and the growth of its membership, mentioning the institute's efforts to build a permanent facility in the 1840s. The committee of the MMI successfully colluded to purchase two blocks of land for £130 each, significantly below the expected price of £400. The committee sought donations to form a library and museum in their first year of operation and the institute moved from temporary Bourke Street premises to their current building at 188 Collins Street in 1842. Fiona shared interesting historical details about the building's construction, including labour disputes and the building's cost of just under £2,000, while noting that the current building is essentially the same as the 1870 structure.

The MMI museum collection dates from 1846-1861 and includes items like coins, fossils, and a vampire bat, but the exact contents remain unknown as a full catalogue has not been found. The institute's role as a central meeting place for arts and culture was established in the 1840s and 1850s, with notable events including the first performance of Handel's Messiah in Victoria and the planning of the Burke and Wills expedition.

Fiona presented a historical overview of the Athenaeum building highlighting its evolution, including the installation of a three-level theatre in the 1920s and its role as the first cinema in the world to show "The Story of the Kelly Gang."

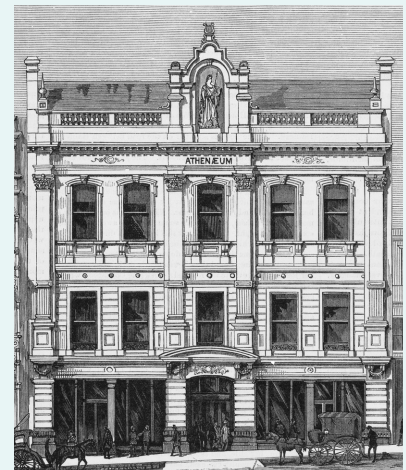
She shared insights into the building's past uses, such as hosting art exhibitions and serving as a library, about early female members and classes offered to women, and about the ongoing oral history project currently underway and invited attendees to visit the library or participate in future oral history initiatives.

The Melbourne Mechanics Institute, now known as the Athenaeum has been a vibrant cultural institution for almost 200 years and this landmark building is home to the Melbourne Athenaeum Library and two theatres.



The Melbourne Athenaeum c1873

Source: NLA online



Above: Exterior after renovations 1886;
View of theatre interior; Athenaeum
Library

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

The Society of Sayce

Edward **SAYCE** (1813-1892) left Liverpool in England and arrived in Port Phillip Bay in January of 1842 on the ship *Arkwright*, a merchant ship of 414 tons, with a fast voyage of 92 days at sea, well before gold fever struck Victoria.

Edward had strong convictions to share his faith and he would later become known as the “Founding Father” of the Society of Friends, taking his Quaker influence to distant shores in his quest to help establish Australian Quakerism.

He was born in Stockport, Cheshire in 1813 to parents John Sayce (1775-1841) and Elizabeth Price (1779-1822) who were woolen drapers and tailors. In 1837 he married Deborah Ann Hall Smith (1818-1878), in Manchester, the daughter of a grocer Henry Hall Smith.

Leaving his brothers behind in England, Edward was determined to travel with his wife and family and invest some capital into building a meeting house and a home, albeit on the other side of the World in Little Bourke Street Melbourne.

Edward and Deborah **SAYCE** would eventually have twelve children, one of whom was born on the voyage out in 1842 and named Indiana, after the ships location somewhere in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

Edward's brother, Joseph Sayce would follow his sibling to Melbourne in 1852, after selling the family's drapery and tailoring business called “Sayce and Jesper” of Stockport. A third brother George stayed in England as a tea merchant. After their arrival in Melbourne, Edward and Joseph travelled rather different paths. Joseph made a significant contribution to the banking industry and became part of the Victorian Horticultural Society, Acclimatisation Society and the Apiarian Society. He purchased seven acres of land and built his home *Edenthorpe* in Caulfield. Joseph Sayce, was known as an amateur horticulturist who designed the Melbourne Domain gardens. He married, had three children and died at Hobart Town in Tasmania in 1876.

From small beginnings the Quaker Society of Friends was gaining members and Edward, having secured land with deeds in 1848, including a trust set up for burials of the Society of Friends, decided to head back to England in 1853. Edward wanted his children to become well educated at Ackworth, a Quaker school, while he ministered at meeting houses spread around England.

It would be another ten years before Edward, Deborah and their large family returned to Australia on the ship *Dover Castle* arriving in January of 1863. He invested in a mercantile business that supplied glass, china, as well as dry goods and flour, becoming a successful gentleman. He became the Mayor of Hawthorn from 1874-1876, living in a substantial residence named *Broomfield* in Hawthorn.

Edward **SAYCE** continued to live in the area until his death in 1892 with his burial in a large family plot located in the ‘other denominations' section in St Kilda cemetery.

These two **SAYCE** brothers, Edward and Joseph, left the drapery and tailoring trade behind in England to pursue new opportunities that in time, would bring prosperity and acceptance, adding their mark to the early landscape of Melbourne.

References: Trove newspapers for Obituary

Contributed by Kay Middlemiss PPPG Associate Member No. 6013

St Kilda Cemetery—Other denominations A		
Inscription	Death Date	Age
53,54, SAYCE PIERSON		
55,56 Edward SAYCE	25. 9.1892	79
also his wife Deborah Ann	4. 1.1878	57
also their son John	17. 4.1874	34
& their dtr Mary Eleanor	22. 1.1867	6mth
& their dtr in law Florence Mary, wife of Joseph Nicholson SAYCE	27. 4.1885	26
also their son Henry Smith	27. 8.1902	58
Indiana Mary ALLEN	2. 8.1964	96
Edith Isabel PIERSON	3. 3.1872	11mth
also Amy Isabelle PIERSON	16. 1.1876	nrly
Ethel Deborah PIERSON	22. 6.1944	71
Emmeline PIERSON	27. 5.1970	95
Octavius Albert SAYCE, A.L.S.	29. 4.1911	49
also his wife Rita Catherine	25. 6.1911	48
our only son Joseph Arthur PIERSON, DDS (University Penn. USA) LDS, MA, CD. Vic.	9. 2.1907	25
also Joseph PIERSON, husband of Indiana PIERSON & father of above	14. 2.1909	78
also our mother Indiana PIERSON	26. 6.1929	87
Source: Ancestry.com.au—Victoria, Australia, Cemetery Records and Headstone Transcriptions, 1844-1997 - St Kilda Cemetery, 1859 - 1987		

The Society of Sayce

Children born to Edward and Deborah Ann SAYCE:

- *John Greeves SAYCE 1840 England-d.1874 Victoria aged 34
 - *Indiana SAYCE b1842 on board *Arkwright* - d.1929 Victoria
 - Henry Smith SAYCE bc1844 d.1902 Vic. (Yarra Bend Asylum - "frightened by nurse when young and never recovered.")
 - George Yates SAYCE bc 1845 d. Brisbane
 - *Edward SAYCE c1848 - 1914 Brisbane
 - *Joseph Nicholson SAYCE 1850 - 1932 Perth
 - *Elizabeth Ann SAYCE c1852- 1910 Victoria
 - *Alfred Richard SAYCE 1854 Eng - 1949 NSW aged 94
 - *William Joseph SAYCE b. 1858 Eng - d.1946 Eng
 - *Sarah Emma SAYCE c1859 -1949 Victoria
 - *Octavius Albert SAYCE c1862 Eng - 1911 Victoria
 - Mary Eleanor SAYCE 1866 - 1867 Victoria
 - (* mentioned in fathers Will and Bequests)
- (source: <https://www.bios.quakersaustralia.info/Pre1862>)

30/8/1865 - At Melbourne, JOHN, eldest son of Edward SAYCE, to ELIZA JANE, youngest daughter of Henry Crispin.

11/12/1867 - At the Friends' Meeting House, Melbourne, Victoria, JOSEPH PEARSON, of Melbourne, son of the late Joseph Pearson, of Coha, co. Cavan, Ireland, to INDIANA SAYCE, eldest daughter of Edward Sayce, of Earlamhope, St. Kilda, Victoria. -source: <https://qfhs.co.uk/>

1878 - THE DEATH OF MRS. SAYCE.

An inquest was held by Dr. Youl at the hall of the Society of Friends, Russell-street ... concerning the melancholy death of Mrs. Deborah Ann Sayce, aged 59 years .

Edward Sayce, gentleman residing at Hawthorn, deposed that ... he and his wife ... were in a buggy ... The deceased was sitting beside witness on the back seat. Witness was looking out at his own side of the buggy, and on turning round to speak to his wife found that she was gone... the buggy stopped at once ... found the deceased lying upon her face on the road ... carried her to the meeting house of the Society of Friends ... thought [she] had fainted and fallen out of the buggy.

William Campbell, surgeon ... gave evidence ... There was a bruise on her forehead, and her neck was broken ... the cause of death was fracture of the bones of the neck. Deceased had evidently fallen upon her head.

The jury returned a verdict ... accidentally killed. (*The Argus*, Monday 7 January 1878, page 6 1892)

1892 - SAYCE - On the 25th ult., at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. W. Walker, Guildford-road, Surrey Hills, Edward Sayce, 79 years, late of Hawthorn. (*The Australasian* Sat 1 Oct 1892 Page 46)

Additional information contributed by Di-anne Wheeler PPPG Member No. 1505



Sayce family graves at St Kilda Cemetery

Source: findagrave.com

WILLS AND BEQUESTS.

Edward Sayce, late of Auburn-road, Hawthorn, gentleman, who died on the 25th September, 1892 by his will, dated 6th April, 1892, appointed his daughter, Indiana Pierson, and her husband, Joseph Pierson, trustees. He bequeaths to his said daughter all his household furniture and effects, and to his grand-daughter, Bertha Crispin, he bequeaths the sum of £100. The residue of the estate is to be realised and the proceeds divided between his children, Indiana Pierson, Elizabeth Ann Cooper, Sarah Emma Walker, Edward Sayce, Joseph Nicholson Sayce, Alfred Richard Sayce, William Joseph Sayce and Octavius Albert Sayce. Value of real and personal estate, £5209.

The Melbourne Punch, 20 Oct 1892 p14

MEMBER NEWS

Future payments: Please note the change to the PPPG Banking details below

Account name: PORT PHILIP PIONEERS GROUP INC.

Bank: BENDIGO BANK

BSB: 633 000

Account Number: 178805867

*Please identify the EFT payment or deposit with your surname and initials

Research Resources

Obituaries

Never overlook old obituaries because they can be a treasure trove of family history information.

They often tell us:

- Date of birth
- Date of death
- Date of funeral service
- Age
- Name of spouse/s
- Where they were born
- Parents and siblings, especially names of married sisters
- Immigration details: date and name of ship they came to Port Phillip on
- Names of homes, businesses, churches, memberships
- Names of children and whether living or deceased

TROVE online is a wonderful source.

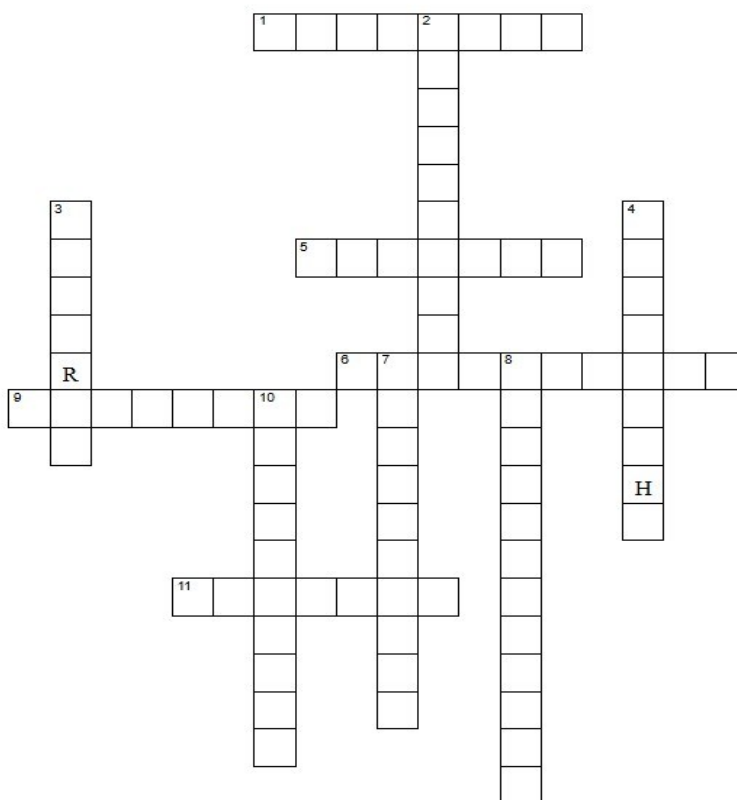
Try it out here:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Corrigendum: from Ken Smith, contributor of article 'The Riot of 1843' in *Pioneer Echo* No. 243 page 3 line 1: should read New South Wales Legislative Council not Assembly

PPPG PUZZLE # 8

(from the PPPG Puzzler Di Wheeler)



Across:

1. Founder of British Mechanics Institute
5. Name of Sayce child born at sea
6. Discussion point at AGM, RHSV --- --- Exhibition
9. Quaker belief
11. Society of Friends

Down:

2. Name of Sayce family home
3. Wife of Edward Sayce
4. Arrival ship of Sayce family in 1842
7. Research resources
8. Street name of Quaker Meeting House in 1843
10. This event happened 1 July 1851

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Saturday: 11 July 2026

Speaker: Bronwyn Quint

Topic: Resources for Researching Port Phillip Pioneers

Saturday: 12 September 2026

Speaker: Adam Wakeling

Topic: The agitation for self-government in the Port Phillip District in the 1840s and the creation of the Victorian Parliament Meetings Venue

Saturday: 14 November 2026

Speaker: tba

Topic: tba

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: Wesley Hall, St. Andrew's Unit-ing Church, cnr Burke and Malvern Roads, Gardiner.

Melways Reference: Map 59 H7.

Or Online via Zoom digital platform

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