

# E-MUSTER

Central Coast Family History Society Inc.



April 2023

Issue 35



Avoca Beach 1940.

***THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CENTRAL COAST  
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.***

# CENTRAL COAST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.



Members of NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc. (State Body)  
Australian Federation of Family History Organisation (National Body)  
Federation of Family History Societies, United Kingdom (International Body)  
Associate Member, Royal Australian Historical Society of NSW.

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Robyn Gregg, Yvonne Potts, Jacqueline Smith, Heather Yates.

## **RESEARCH CENTRE**

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Phone: 4324 5164 - Email [admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au](mailto:admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au)  
Open: Tues to Fri 9.30am-2.00pm;  
Thursday evening 6.00pm-9.30pm  
First Saturday of the month 9.30am-12noon  
Research Centre Closed on Mondays for Administration

## **MEETINGS**

First Saturday of each month from February to November  
Commencing at 1.00pm – doors open 12.00 noon  
Research Centre opens from 9.30am  
Venue: Gosford Lions Community Hall  
Rear of 8 Russell Drysdale Street, EAST GOSFORD NSW

# THE E-MUSTER

April 2023 – No: 35

The **E- MUSTER** is the Official Journal of the Central Coast Family History Society Inc. **THE MUSTER** it was first published in April 1983.

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The Society does not hold itself responsible for statements made or opinions expressed by advertisers or authors of articles appearing in **E- MUSTER**.

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All articles to:  
[admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au](mailto:admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au)

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July 20th  
November 20th

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From Good Old Central Coast  
Facebook page.

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the April 2023 *e-Muster*.

Thank you so much to the contributors who have provided articles in this latest issue of the *e-Muster* for our enjoyment and interest.

Happy Easter to our Members, and to your families, we wish you a safe and very Happy Year of the Rabbit.

I have included a very interesting article I found on Ancestry recently about Maria Ikin and her husband Charles Bullivant who are my distant ancestors.

**Heather YATES Member 675**

**Editor**

## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Dear Readers,

It's now April and a quarter of the year has passed. So why does time go so quickly these days? Maybe we're busier than we used to be! So much to do and not enough time to do what we must. Should we be slowing down or perhaps quickening up to finish what we've already started? Well, maybe best to slow down and take in everything around us and read what the members of the CCFHS have sent in for the April edition of the *e-muster*. Stories from around the globe to keep you enthralled. Stories which have never been told and others which make you wonder, and each one connected to one of our member's families.

Now if you have a story which you'd like to tell, let Heather Yates know so it can be included in the August edition. Get your stories out there so they can be shared around.

We are now approaching the AGM and the end of the 2022-2023 year and so much has happened inside the "Cottage". Computers and programs have been upgraded and more space is on offer in the research room. Administration computers have been upgraded and new accounting software is being installed to make the running of the Society much smoother. The Library has had a major upgrade with many new titles added to the collection. Training sessions have commenced and day trips are back on the agenda. All this is because of the efficiency and dedication of the hard working committee and I thank each and every one for their support and input to make sure that Society prospers into the future. Also many thanks to the daily helpers and those who put their time and efforts to good use in the Cottage.

May the next year see our combined efforts lift the Society above the lofty heights which we've enjoyed in the past, and set ourselves up to prosper in the next decade and beyond.

**Rod HORTON Member 1280J**

**President CCFHS.**

## LATEST NEWS

### MEMBERSHIP

The Management Committee is entrusted with the appropriate operation of the Society and this includes the health and wellbeing/safety of the members while on the premises and during activities. By law we are required to comply with the directives of the Gov. Medical Authorities.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/business/rules-guidance/nsw-rules>

We are also required to comply with any directives applied by our landlord, Central Coast Council/Properties. We have to consider the general age and health of our members and it is with these facts we would prefer members be double vaccinated. Wearing a mask inside and distancing is suggested.



3 Great Events coming up soon. Book in on the RAHS website.

Wed  
5

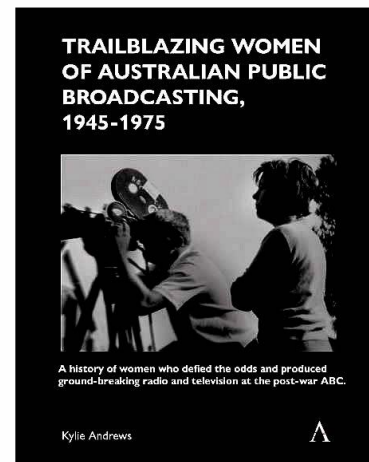
April 5 @ 13:00 - 14:00

### RAHS Day Lecture – Trailblazing Women of Australian Public Broadcasting

Online via Zoom

In this lecture, Kylie Andrews will talk about the trailblazing women of Australian public broadcasting between 1945 to 1975.

Get Tickets Free



Wed  
10

May 10 @ 11:30 - 12:30

### RAHS Excursion – Q Station: Quarantine Wander Tour

Q Station 1 North Head Scenic Drive, Manly, NSW

For over 150 years, the Quarantine Station was, for many, the beginning of a new life in Australia. Join this guided tour to learn about its history.

\$10 – \$25





Tue  
23

May 23 @ 10:30 - 12:30

## RAHS Excursion – Edina

War Memorial Hospital, Waverley

Join Michael Waterhouse for a tour of 'Edina', one of the grandest private houses surviving in Sydney from the late Victorian era.

\$20



## • GROUP: Genealogical DNA Analysis Tool (GDAT) User Group

- When **15 Apr 2023** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- Location Via Zoom Spaces left 492



**Genealogical DNA Analysis Tool**  
*Utilizing Autosomal DNA to Research Family Trees*

### Genealogical DNA Analysis Tool (GDAT) User Group

If you already have DNA chromosome analysis skills and are using the GDAT database tool to manage your DNA

information, you might wish to join our new user group. SAG user groups are aimed at 'members helping members' so this is a collaborative working group aimed at sharing information and knowledge. You must be a SAG member to join this group.

- Sessions will include a short presentation on a specified topic identified by the group, followed by discussion between group members, then round table Q&A regarding the product. We will meet on Saturdays at 10.00-12.00...

## Webinar: Message in a Bottle



- When **19 Apr 2023** 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM
- Location Via Zoom Spaces left 494

**Join us to hear the story of local historian Anne Field's unusual tribute to her Grannie via a Message in a Bottle released into the ocean 100 years to the day that her Grannie sailed through the same waters on her immigration journey to Australia.**

Anne Field is a former local secondary Social Science teacher, Local Government Councillor at Rockdale Council and then Kogarah Council, and a local historian as the author of the History of Moorefield Racecourse Kogarah, Sydney, Australia (1888-1951). She took to the high seas twice in 2012 as a special tribute to her Scottish Grannie, who had sailed on the *Pakeha* from London to Sydney in 1912. Her Message in a Bottle was first committed to the Southern Ocean out of Albany...

## GROUP: Irish Research Group

- When  
16 May 2023
- 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
- Location  
via Zoom
- Spaces left 485



### Topics: The Earl Grey Orphan Scheme

Get together with others who have ancestors from any part of Ireland, or just have a research interest in those areas. Discuss research strategies and resources, and swap ideas and knowledge.

If you would like to submit a question in advance [click here](#). Please submit your question at least three (3) days before the event.

All welcome.

## NEW MEMBERS

We wish to extend a very warm welcome to our new and returned members. We hope they have many happy researching and social hours with us. Please remember to lodge your Members' Interest form with Brian Davies for inclusion on the Website.

|      |               |      |                 |
|------|---------------|------|-----------------|
| 2185 | Robyn Marsden | 2190 | Joanne Evans    |
| 2186 | Cheryl Pore   | 2191 | Rebecca Danswan |
| 2187 | Lynne Smith   | 2192 | Sue Cooper      |
| 2188 | Robert Doyle  | 2193 | Lee Monk        |
| 2189 | Helen Carson  | 2194 | Shirley Wrench  |

# MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION



**A Gold coin donation is gratefully received when attending the Research Centre to assist in offsetting the cost of online subscription sites. A Day Research fee for Non-Members is \$10.**

All workshops will incur a fee of \$10 for members unless otherwise stipulated and must be paid for prior to the day.

**OUR MEMBERSHIP FORM** is available to download from the website. From the front page click on the ...read more information Tab under Membership on the banner and all will be revealed. Remember the website is [www.centralcoastfhs.org.au](http://www.centralcoastfhs.org.au)

Please read the two additional questions on your membership form regarding the Rotary Raffle to the value of \$10.00 and/or a once per year donation of \$10.00 to the Equipment Maintenance Fund.

You can choose to collect the Tickets from the Centre or send in a stamped addressed envelope and we will post them to you.

## Next Issue

### **No. 36 August 2023 E-MUSTER**

Deadline for articles for the next edition of the e-Muster  
20<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.



## Seath Mor Sgorfhiachlach.

His grave lies in the kirkyard of St Tughaldus, once the traditional burial place for the Shaw family who held the seat at Rothiemurchus in the Scottish Highlands before it passed to the Grant family. Written on his gravestone is a tribute to the man who was ‘Victor in the Combat at Perth in 1396’, the only man to survive the Battle of The Clans, Seath himself would not pass away until 1405.

Lying deep in ancient woodland on the Rothiemurchus Estate in the Scottish Highlands, this 14th-century grave is linked with ghostly sightings and elf-like spirits; the Guardian Spirit of the Grave. Nowadays, the grave is encased in an iron cage for people’s own protection, but legend speaks of men who have fallen foul of the grave’s curse after touching the stones on top. Some not living to tell the tale. But just what makes this site so eerie?

Nestled on top of the grave of Seath Mor Sgorfhiachlach, clan chief of the Clan Shaw, in the Doune at Rothiemurchus, there are 5 cursed homing stones.

Said to represent those who survived the Battle of the Clans in 1396, people who tamper with the stones are said to suffer a serious illness or even death. In 1983 an iron cage was placed over the grave to protect visitors from the curse.



The cylindrical granite stones, which have been described as ‘cheese shaped’, rest on top of a curved stone covering on top of the grave. This stone covering has six rectangles etched into the top, and the homing stones are placed in a ‘typical’ pattern of five.

Tamper with any of the stones on top of the grave of Seath Mor and the Bordach an Duin will come and get you, but it is only the centre stone that is said to be the one that will kill you.

Guarding the grave is the 'Guardian Spirit of the Shaws', an elf-like spirit with a raging temper known as the Bordach an Duin or Doune. The spirit, also known as The Old Man of the Duin, was said to once guard the estate while it was held by the Shaws. When ownership of the estate fell into the hands of the Grants, the Bordach began to guard Seath's grave instead.

But who has been brave enough to test the legend and have any of them lived to share their story? Touch the cursed stone of the Doune and chances are you probably won't be lucky enough to tell the tale.

Despite the well-known folklore that surrounds the grave, there are still people who are willing to push their luck and see if these stories are true. Research points to five main victims of the cursed homing stones.

During the early 1800s, when body snatching was just starting to take hold in Scotland, a footman said to be in the employment of the Duke of Bedford, wanted to prove to everyone that the legend was purely fictitious. After walking bravely up to the grave he clasped his arms around one of the stones and hurled it into the nearby Spey. Reports say that the stone was missing for 3 days and all was well. On the 4th day, however, the stone was found returned to its rightful place and the footman was found drowned in the nearby river.

In the inter-war years, a journalist had strong ideas of discrediting the story of the cursed stones and decided to visit the site himself.

During his visit, he took hold of one of the stones and held it high above his head, reportedly in a 'mocking fashion' showing everyone how little he believed the stories. It was to be on his way back home, as he was travelling south in his car that he perhaps began to believe the tales that he'd heard. He was to die in a car crash on his journey south.

In 1978, the stones cast individual curses on three men who were renovating the churchyard at the Doune. Leslie Walker and his two friends were carrying out work in the churchyard when Mr. Walker turned one of the stones around to show it to some friends. In an interview in the Aberdeen Evening Press, he recalled how he was taken ill later that night with a temperature of 103 degrees. This quick touch of only one stone landed him in hospital for a period of 6 weeks together with a weight loss of 3 stones (19kg).

One of the men he was working with, however, wasn't quite so lucky. He too had touched the stones, but instead of only turning them a little, it's reported that he 'completely rearranged' them. Less than 24 hours later, he was found dead in the graveyard having suffered a cerebral haemorrhage.

The final curse resulted in the third man in this group being hospitalised with severe stomach pains after he was called to identify the man who had died.

Is Seath Mor's Grave Really Cursed?

In 1977, it was reported that two of the stones from the top of Seath Mor's grave had disappeared. After being missing for only a few days, they were recovered and replaced back on top of the grave.

The last known foolish attempt to tamper with cursed stones was made in August 1982 when all five stones were reported missing for two weeks.

They were thrown off the road bridge into the river Spey only to reappear just as mysteriously as they had gone. The Aberdeen Evening News stated that although the police had 'a good idea' who carried out the first theft, and who incidentally has remained in the best of health, they could only guess as to who the culprits of the last 'high spirited prank' could be.

Although the Aberdeen Evening News reported that the police didn't know who'd thrown all five stones into the river, the memory of one Aviemore local can shed some light on the story.

When researching for this post I came across a Facebook page for the Outlander Scottish Language Group where the legend of the cursed stones had been posted. A reply to the post gave 'first-hand knowledge' to the story, which I have summarised below.

After all five stones had been thrown into the river Spey in 1982, they were retrieved by a John S, and the Gamekeeper on the Rothimurchus Estate, Jimmy Gordon. The stones, once identified, were returned to the grave, it seems by a member of the Shaw clan (?).

No mention of anyone falling foul of the curse was included in the post. It was at this time that the now famous 'mortsafe', made by the gamekeeper Jimmy Gordon, was placed over the grave to protect not only the homing stones and the grave itself, but also to guard against any future thefts.

The mortsafe over Seath's grave is often mistakenly linked with the mortsafes erected in Scotland's kirkyards during the 19th century to guard against body snatchers. Unfortunately, as you now know, this is not the case.

Rumour has it, however, that there is a genuine mortsafe embedded in the grass here, lying within the walls of the ruined kirk itself. Was there a body snatcher brave enough to venture into the kirkyard at night or was the mortsafe a mere precaution?



Surrounded by ancient woodland, there's bound to be a tale or two of spirits walking through the trees. Seath's spirit is seen by many who visit the area and is said to appear to hikers who perhaps stray too deep into the forest. Show fear to the challenge supposedly given by Seath and run away from the ghostly apparition, then you are never heard of again. If, however, you accept the challenge, Seath is said to just disappear and leave you in peace.

<https://mymacabreroadtrip.com/the-cursed-grave-of-seath-mor/>

*Clan Farquharson, of Celtic origin, derives from Farquhar, fourth son of Alexander "Ciar" Mackintosh of Rothiemurchus, 5th Chief of Clan Shaw. A grant of arms made by Lord Lyon in 1697 stated that John Farquharson of Invercauld was lawfully descended of Shaw son of MacDuff, Thane of Fife whose successors had the name Shaw until Farquhar Shaw, son to Shaw of Rothiemurchus, Chief of the whole name came to be called Farquharson. Thus the Farquharsons branched from Clan Shaw.*

<https://www.clanfarquharson.com/clan-history>

**Rod HORTON Member 1280J**





"I HAVE NO NEWS OF HIM"

THE SEARCH FOR W. D. R. GROVES

By

Dawn G. Springett



# "I HAVE NO NEWS OF HIM"

## THE SEARCH FOR W. D. R. GROVES

By

Dawn G. Springett

Life changing events happen to us all. Many of us move on with our lives; others are affected throughout the years. I grew up in an English working class family the only daughter of Dorothy Peace Springett, nee Groves, and Harry Claud Springett. We lived in the naval town of Portsmouth in Hampshire and we immigrated to Australia in 1956.

My parents worked very hard and "made good" ensuring that their latter years were comfortable.

My father died in 1999 aged 81 and my mother lived to be 90 years of age and died in 2008.

Throughout her life my mother never spoke of her father. Once, when looking through old photographs with my father I asked about a small photograph that may have been my maternal grandfather. My father had said not to ask my mother and I never did. My mother was born on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1918, her sister, Phyllis Martha was born on 12th September 1920 and her brother William Douglas Rohan, was born in 1922. On my mother's birth certificate her mother's name was given as Martha Mealyer formerly Stickley. Dorothy's father's name was given as William Douglas Rohan Groves and his occupation was Able Seaman, HMS Gunwharf.

The photograph was the size of a cigarette card and the man in the photograph was in his late twenties or early thirties. The tiny photograph was cut from a postcard size photograph so the two people either side had been cut away. The photograph had been taken in the Whitney Brothers Electric Studios in Bourke Street in Melbourne. On the back, in neat handwriting, was written "Much love, Daddy". Had my grandfather briefly visited Australia? Another photograph is of two little girls wearing their best dresses.

On the reverse is written "Dolly & Phyllis Taken October 22 1923".





"Much love Daddy" Whitney Brothers  
Electric Studios Melbourne Date?



William's  
daughter  
Dorothy with  
her mother  
Martha 1919



Over the years my interest in my family history waxed and waned. The Springetts were far easier to research because the name is uncommon and there had been famous Springetts. Groves was a common surname and many of the Groves I found were William so I never knew if any of them may have been my mother's "William".

I knew of no accurate way of confirming which, if any, of the many Williams I had identified was my mother's father, my grandfather. I retired from employment at the end of 1999 and joined the Society of Australian Genealogists. When I spoke to my mother, without mentioning William, that I wanted to research my family history she quickly said "that's all in the past; you don't want to spend your time on that". But I did and using the certificates that my mother had kept I attempted to find my Groves Family. I still was not able to verify which of the many William Groves I had found may have been my William. I had no tangible evidence that William had travelled to Australia to settle there or if he had visited Australia during his years in the Royal Navy.

The development of The Internet and the World Wide Web changed all that. The National Archives had begun the digitalisation of Royal Navy records and I was able to find William's naval record. His date of birth was June 12th 1895 and he had entered the Royal Navy on his eighteenth birthday in 1913. William gave his occupation as "porter". He saw service in World War I and eventually joined the Royal Fleet Reserve in 1919. Now that I had William's date of birth I was able to access the 1901 and 1911 Census and subsequently identify his family:

1901 Census:

64 South Grove Walthamstow,  
Essex Household Members:

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| John Groves    | 40 years         |
| Sarah Groves   | 40 years         |
| Daisy Groves   | 17years          |
| Mabel Groves   | 16 years         |
| Thomas Groves  | 14 years         |
| George Groves  | 12 years         |
| Phyllis Groves | 7 years          |
| William Groves | 5 years          |
|                | Domestic Gardner |

1911 Census:

64 South Grove Walthamstow, Essex

Household Members:

|                |          |                               |
|----------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Groves John    | 50 years | House decorator               |
| Groves Sarah   | 50 years |                               |
| Groves William | 16 years | Single                        |
|                |          | Assisting at house decorating |

All three living at 64 South Grove Road, Walthamstow

|                |          |   |
|----------------|----------|---|
| Mabel Groves   | 24 years | Single, Forewoman, mechanics insulation |
| Thomas Groves  | 23 years | Single, Builders carpenter              |
| George Groves  | 22 years | Single Builders' paper hanger           |
| Phyllis Groves | 17 years | Single Assistant to sister              |

All four living at 23 Badlis Road, Walthamstow

1911 8<sup>th</sup> April Mother Sarah Groves died aged 50 years

It would appear that William had named his second daughter Phyllis after one of his sisters and his son William after himself.

In the meantime my mother's sister Phyllis had died and her husband told me that not only had William abandoned his family but he had secretly sold the fish and chip shop that my grandmother owned and operated. Because my grandmother had been left destitute she needed to work so was forced to place Dorothy aged five, Phyllis aged 3 and William aged one into care.

My mother and her sister stood in a cot crying for their mother. I understood then why my mother had been so sadly secretive.

In 2006 my mother became very ill and during an interview in the hospital she was asked about the health of her mother and father. She was able to talk about her mother Martha but when asked specifically about her father she said "I have no news of him".

It was such a strange reply and so uncharacteristic of the way my mother spoke that I felt a very strong reaction to her remark.

I became obsessed with finding "Bill Groves".



Martha Whiteman Formerly Mealyer, nee Stickley



Dorothy Peace Springett  
Nee Groves 1943



Phyllis Martha Groves 1947



In 2007 The Society of Australian Genealogists moved to new premises in Kent Street and a bank of computers with access to special editions of *Findmypast* and *Ancestry.com* were made available. Because *Findmypast* had the shipping records of passengers leaving England I searched for William Douglas Rohan Groves. When his name appeared in a 1923 passenger record I was utterly astonished. Physically I felt I wanted to jump about; emotionally I wanted to burst in to tears. Neither seemed appropriate in The Society's Library!

William had sailed on the *55 Ballarat* from London on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1923. His passage ticket was No. 2036 and his trade was recorded as "farming". I was later to discover that he had no knowledge or experience of farming. The vessel arrived in Fremantle, William's port of disembarkation, on, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1923. William had sailed just days before my mother's fifth birthday. I felt a very strong feeling of sadness for my mother but I could not bring myself to tell her what I had found.

The National Library of Australia's digitalisation of Australian newspapers gave me access to Western Australian newspapers with articles written about the arrival of the SS *Ballarat* and "The *Ballarat* List" which included William's name under Selected Civilians. These men and women were part of various settlement schemes set up by such organisations as The Salvation Army to bring young immigrants to Australia.

However the newspaper articles swung between "Good type of migrant" to "Not entirely suitable" Despite extensive searching William's name does not appear in any of the existing records for Western Australian settlements.

Because William's photograph was taken in Melbourne I could only conjecture that he had not stayed in Western Australia and had eventually reached Melbourne. Where had he lived in Australia? How did he earn his living? Had he died many years ago? Did William return to England? I was able to confirm through the National Archives of Australia that William had disembarked at Fremantle but I could find no record of how long he stayed in Western Australia. The *Ancestry.com* records had no apparent record of William returning to England.



At every opportunity I continued the search for William but after 1923 he had completely disappeared. In 2009 my friend Beverley Runcie emailed me some Internet sites that had been identified by a family history society. I have a range of interests as does Beverley and we exchange the details of new sites we have found. By an extraordinary coincidence one of those sites was the newly released digitised wills from the Archives Office of Tasmania. I almost did not search for William but when I checked for the name *William Douglas Rohan Groves* "1" appeared. He was there! My first reaction was to think that what I was looking at I had simply imagined. Physically my body was reacting as if I was in shock and when I had recovered and confirmed that William had indeed lived and died in Tasmania I felt both utter astonishment and sadness. I instantly telephoned Beverley and behaved in an ecstatic manner!

I then searched the cemetery records and found that William had died on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1974 and he was buried in Mersey Vale Memorial Park in Devonport. I was able to order a copy of his will and discovered that William had lived in Port Sorell, near Devonport in Northern Tasmania. He had left his estate to The Red Cross "for the use of that organisation for its work in Tasmania". William's will had been the first tangible evidence that he had stayed in Australia. I applied for his death certificate and wrote for the first time that he was my grandfather.

The certificate described him as a retired storekeeper and he had died in 1974 in Devon House which provided care for aged people. He had never married. For eighteen years my mother had been living in the same country as her father who had disappeared in 1923.

A search of the State Library of NSW's catalogue produced "A history of Port Sorell 1844 -1994" edited by Faye Gardam. I was startled to read that W. D.R. Groves is mentioned as "an old sailor who arrived in an unseaworthy vessel about 1940 and decided to stay". The area was then known informally as "Muddy Creek". A description of William's first and subsequent shop built of concrete blocks on the corner of Darling Street and The Esplanade, Port Sorell, made William very real to me. Apparently customers preferred to buy tinned and bottled goods for safety but "he crafted and sold good cuta knives made from used hack saw blades".

PORT SORELL

14/11 1952.

M *W. R. Rutledge*  
Bought of

**W. D. R. GROVES**  
General Storekeeper and Ships Chandler  
All Brands of Motor Oils and Petrol Stocked

**Bushells—the Tea of Flavor**

|                     |          |          |           |           |
|---------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| <i>Apples</i>       | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>27</i> |
| <i>Butter</i>       |          |          | <i>4</i>  | <i>3</i>  |
| <i>Bread</i>        |          |          | <i>3</i>  | <i>0</i>  |
| <i>Tea</i>          |          |          | <i>2</i>  | <i>10</i> |
| <i>Orange Juice</i> |          |          | <i>4</i>  | <i>8</i>  |
| <i>Bread</i>        |          |          | <i>2</i>  | <i>0</i>  |
| <i>Rice</i>         |          |          | <i>3</i>  | <i>82</i> |
| <i>Meat</i>         |          |          | <i>1</i>  | <i>9</i>  |
| <i>Soy Veg</i>      |          |          | <i>2</i>  | <i>4</i>  |
| <i>Beans</i>        |          |          | <i>2</i>  | <i>10</i> |
| <i>Dinner</i>       |          |          |           | <i>5</i>  |
|                     |          | <i>4</i> | <i>0</i>  | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>By hand</i>      |          | <i>3</i> | <i>0</i>  | <i>0</i>  |
|                     |          | <i>6</i> | <i>0</i>  | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>By hand</i>      |          | <i>2</i> | <i>0</i>  | <i>0</i>  |
|                     |          | <i>4</i> | <i>0</i>  | <i>1</i>  |
|                     |          |          | <i>18</i> | <i>1</i>  |
|                     |          | <i>4</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>2</i>  |

2

**W. D. R. GROVES**  
General Engineer and  
Boat Chandler . . .

Port Sorell,  
Tasmania.

Port Sorell was a small fishing village that became popular for day trippers from Devonport and Latrobe. The subsequent building of "weekenders" and a successful fishing industry ensured a more permanent population. Since William's time the area has flourished and land values have risen dramatically so I became anxious to see Muddy Creek and the area where William had lived. A visit to Tasmania became inevitable.

In the meanwhile I returned to the digitised Australian newspapers and found for the 1940's and 1950's several references to W. D.R. Groves in Port Sorell. Snippets appeared including a notice to say that he was installing petrol pumps, had become an agency for farm equipment and had won a camera in a competition!

He made small donations to charity, advertised a Morris Cowley car for sale and whilst driving, in 1946, he knocked a youth off his bicycle. I was intrigued that not only had William kept his distinctive name but he used W. D. R. Groves to describe himself.

Did he secretly hope that one day someone would find him on the other side of the world?

I needed to give identity and character to William so I began a search of telephone books and commercial directories up to 1974. Entries for W.D. R. Groves appeared under "Confectionary Shops & Milk Bars" and "Grocers & General Store Keepers". In 1954 William paid for a masthead advertisement extolling a variety of goods from fishing tackle to petrol. Business was apparently very successful.

The population of Port Sorell over the years to 1974 increased from 29 to approximately 600 people. William's telephone number was "5".

The years between 1923 and 1940 were still a complete blank. William's skill at making "good couta knives" and his photograph taken in Melbourne made me think he may have been living in Victoria and perhaps earned his living as a fisherman. I wrote to every family history society in Victoria but no one had "any news of him". I investigated the fishing industry all along Victoria's coastline but I found nothing relevant.

A search of *Ancestry.com* identified two Electoral Roll entries: one for 1949 another for 1954. Both entries listed the district as Wilmot Subdistrict: Latrobe. William was identified as a "Fitter".

The next step was to contact the local family history society. Without saying that William was possibly my grandfather I contacted the Devonport Branch of The Tasmanian Family History Society and the research officer, Ros Coss, located a death notice in *The Advocate* 18<sup>th</sup> April 1974. It simply said: "Private burial. No flowers or condolences by request". Ros also identified a relevant entry in *The Tasmanian Government Gazette* April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1940. W. D. R. Groves was listed as owning land and shed at Port Sorell. I was able to obtain a copy of the land title of the relevant purchase. William sold the land to Real Estate Agent Archibald Day on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1940. He subsequently bought it back on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1943.

As I began to plan my trip to Port Sorell and the surrounding towns I contacted the local historian Faye Gardam who had edited "A History of Port Sorell" explaining that I was searching for William Groves.

Faye, of course, asked me "what was my relationship to this man" to which I cautiously replied that he was my grandfather. Faye responded "I always felt he had been married". He had apparently never married but nevertheless he had two daughters and a son. Faye generously organised a day for us to spend some time in Port Sorell and Muddy Creek. Faye eventually told me that she had contacted two old chaps who remembered "Bill" and were interested to talk to me. When I arrived at my Devonport motel there was a message from Faye who had written that "she had a wonderful day planned" and indeed it was.

During the drive to Port Sorell Faye told me about "the two old chaps" and spoke about the shop that Bill had operated for many years. Muddy Creek was still a sleepy hamlet surrounded by bush and nothing like I had imagined.

Faye mentioned we would meet near the swimming pool because there was a shelter shed there and as we drove into the parking area I was astonished to see eleven people waiting to talk to me! For a split second I thought "what if this Bill Groves is not my "Bill Groves" but I was welcomed as if I was a celebrity!

Stories were quickly forthcoming about "Old Bill Groves" as he was known. There was some agreement that in 1939 he sailed from Smithton in North West Tasmania to Port Sorell in a double ended timber boat 28' long called "Why Worry".

He ran into a couple of sandbars... not a good handler of the boat... he sailed it on to the "grassy coast" and there it stayed. The boat was falling to pieces and William was destitute ..."

He did though, become a successful shopkeeper. Soon after arriving in Port Sorell he built a fish smoke house and produced "kippers". Apparently at weekends and holiday times hundreds of visitors came to Port Sorell and Bill sought permission from The Local Council to open his shop on a Sunday.

"This was agreed to, providing only fruit and confectionery was sold between noon and 5 p.m.". He sold so much ice cream that he was the best customer the ice cream manufacturer had! Most of his stock for the shop came from the mainland so if a customer wanted something he did not have he would say "It's on the [S.S.] Woniora".

The people that had joined me on that morning agreed that Bill was fairly well educated spoke well and made neat signs for the shop. One lady Kate still had hand written orders and receipts that Bill had carefully written out. The printed paper was headed "W. D. R. Groves" and included an advertisement for "Bushells - The Tea of Flavour".

Helen and Russell gave me a business card inscribed "W. D. R. Groves General Engineer and Boat Chandler" and a very old hand drawn map of the location of Bill's shop. All of these items are much cherished by me.

Bill was described as an uncommunicative man. He hardly spoke to his customers and never asked them how they and their families were. Was he a taciturn man because "passing the time of day" may encourage someone to ask about his early life?

Bill operated the shop until new stricter health regulations became mandatory. The Council closed him down so he ate everything in the shop and never re-opened.

Every day after that he drove into Devonport for a midday meal at "The Alexander Hotel". He always wore his best hat if "he went into town". He eventually moved into a flat in east Devonport and when he became frailer he moved into Devon House.

Before he died Bill had sold the land with the shop to a local family. His old concrete block shop on the corner of The Esplanade and Darling Street still stands almost as it was when he sold it and it has been boarded up for many years. Through the cracks I could see remnants of a hoist, old boxes and shelving.

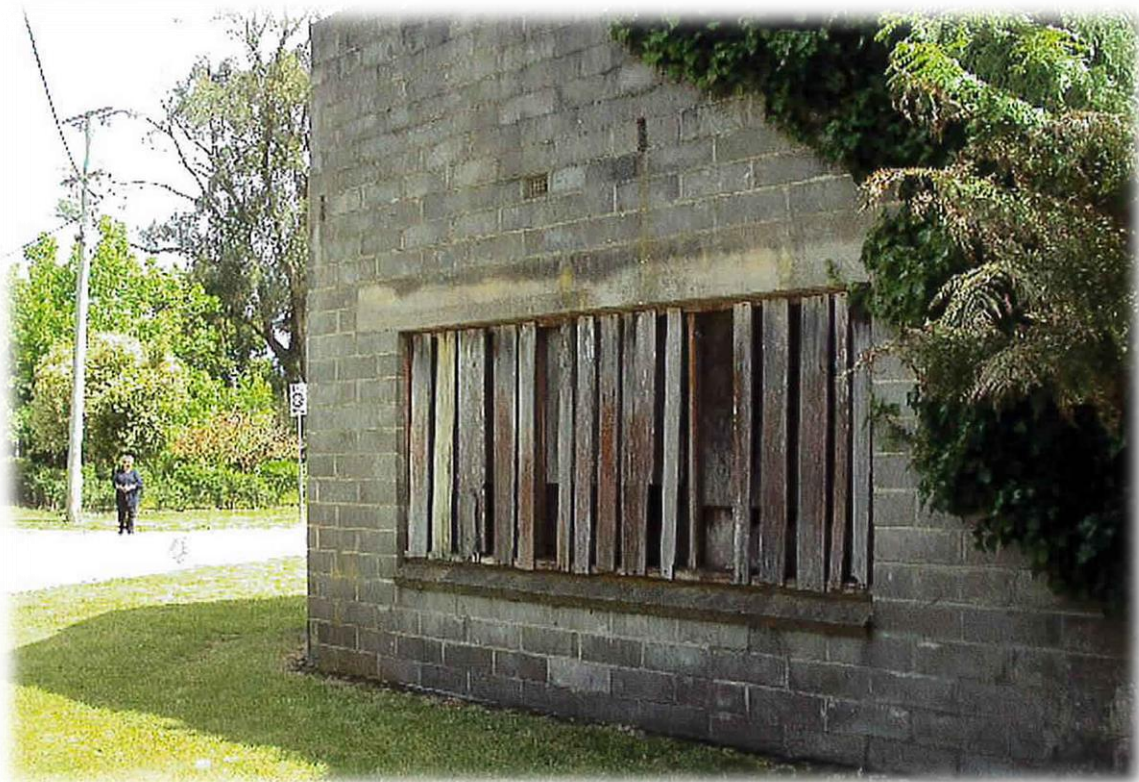
Slowly "Old Bill Groves" as he was known, became more and more of a real person to me. As the morning came to an end one of the visitors said to me "I must admit that I was very sceptical that Bill had a family but I knew as soon as you got out of the car ... I could see the likeness... you were Bill's granddaughter ... you had his mannerisms".

My feelings swung between excitement and a feeling of sadness that my mother's father had remained hidden in a very tiny town far from anywhere. Had he chosen such an isolated location to remain hidden? Or perhaps he could not bear to think about what he had done in 1923.





**Muddy Creek**



**William's Shop**



Later Faye took me to the cemetery and we located Bill's grave. I laid flowers there not because of any feeling of grief but simply to acknowledge that Bill had lived in a remote part of Tasmania and for me, at long last, his story had a conclusion. I wrote on the card "I have no news of him" and I signed it "Dorothy, Phyllis, William and Dawn".

The search for William continues. I have looked at so many possible sources but for the most part I have not added to my knowledge of William since the early part of 2012 so William remains "a work in progress". Most particularly I shall continue to search for information on the still missing years of William's life.# It may give me some answers to some of the questions I would like to ask him such as "did he take a copy of the photograph taken in October 1923 of Dorothy and Phyllis with him to Australia"? Why did he not assume another name so that he could remain hidden? Instead he always described himself as W. D. R. Groves which was very identifiable? I can only hope that when William wrote "Much love, Daddy" on his tiny photograph that he really meant it.

My mother never knew that I had found William. I think she may have guessed that I was searching for him but she never asked and I only told her about her grandmother's family and the many children they had.

When I look at the now faded photograph of my mother at almost five years old with her sister Phyllis who was three I still feel sadness but my mother's sadness was far greater and she took that sadness with her to her grave.

In fact there was far more "news of him" than my mother could have ever imagined.

Ongoing research has subsequently identified William as living in St. Kilda in Victoria for some years.

"I have no news of him" 2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Edition September 2016.

**Dawn SPRINGETT Member 1743**

## Erina of Old

**W**HHEELS were purring softly as I entered a little factory in the township of Erina, where brush and broom stocks, large and small, are made; and as I watched a workman skillfully moulding handles at a lathe the subtle perfume of red coachwood and yellow sassafras awoke memories of hot summer days spent in a shaded gully near the sea. The man who started the factory, Mr. T. D. Bertwistle, had been employed as an engineer when the last of Erina's saw-mills closed in 1928. He then began the manufacture of fruit-cases, which developed into the present business. The steep gullies of Kulnura, 28 miles distant, provide his timber. Many years ago, when Howards' mills were in operation, millions of feet of timber were sawn and sent to Sydney in ketches and schooners, which filled their holds from the low banks of Erina Creek. But to-day an iron bridge bars the mouth of the creek. When erected fifty years ago it had a movable span to allow for the passage of shipping.

**B**EFORE the drawbridge was built passengers were transported across the creek by a hand-punt. Old residents still remember Bill Boston, the blind ferryman, who had his home on the west bank, and on whose roof late travellers threw stones to rouse him to duty. Charges were 2d for pedestrians, 6d for a horse, and 1/- for a vehicle. Erina's first store and post-office was run by William Aldrick in the early 'seventies. The timber-cutters used to take advantage of his ignorance of the bush by beguiling him to the same log twice and thus receiving credit for each end of the stick. On the other hand, there is good authority for saying that the word of the unschooled timber-cutters of last century was their bond, and that they could be relied upon to carry out their contracts and receive payment without a single line in ink.

**T**HE oldest resident of Erina is Mrs. S. J. Miles, now 83, who has been in the same house for 45 years. During her

long married life her home satisfied her completely. To-day her clear blue eyes and mental alertness characterise the woman whose help was so willingly given to all in trouble. In her early married life there were no doctors nearer than Newcastle, and neighbours meant a lot more to each other than they do to-day. Most of the settlers kept goats for milk, and life was primitive. Yet there were occasions when sumptuous dinners were served at 10/- a head—after cricket matches, for instance. "Everything was on the menu," says Mrs. Miles, who took a leading part in such functions, "everything" including tender poultry and roast pork, new potatoes and green peas "from our own backyards."

**W**HEN the 2000 acres known as "Donnison's Grant" were subdivided and sold by the auctioneers, Boyd and King, prices reached phenomenal heights. Donnison was an Englishman who lived in style and had rather a contempt for things colonial, yet was thoroughly honourable and just. His ticket-of-leave men received the prescribed "10, 10, 2, 1" (flour, meat, sugar, and tea). To enrich their plain fare they used to bait a hook with a grain of corn and thus provide poultry for their meals; and they were wise enough to bury instead of burn the feathers for fear the smell would reach the nose of the boss. They also had a simple method of brewing their own spirit. A large tin teapot made a good still, which, with a quart pot wound round with a wet rag and turned upside down over the spout, acted as a condenser. A pannikin underneath caught the drip and provided their thirsty throats with a little nip of rare fluid.

I was shown the slope on which Donnison grew his seedling oranges and shad-docks, and 100 yards away from the orchard there is still to be found in good repair an old stone well, 14 feet deep, which can always be relied upon to provide the purest of water for man and beast. — *W. Gilmour.*

Erina of Old and S.J Miles from the SYDNEY MAIL 13 October 1937.

The first land grant on the Central Coast was made to ex-marine of the First Fleet, William Nash, in 1811 but he did not settle there. The proximity of a penal colony at Newcastle discouraged settlement and the rugged terrain made the area a haven for smugglers, moonshiners, escaped convicts and ticket-of-leave men.

The first white settlers were drawn by the possibilities of exploiting the local supplies of cedar, forest oak, blue gum and other hardwoods. Boat building also began at this time and continued until World War I.

Small settlers took up land on the ocean shores, growing small plots of maize, onions, potatoes and hay. Others began dairying or gathered cockle shells which were loaded on to ketches and sent off for lime-burning. The gentry purchased the timbered areas along Erina and Narara Creeks.

A survey in 1829 listed about 100 persons (half of them convicts assisting the timber getters) living along Brisbane Water, with 916 cattle, 7 horses and 205 acres under cultivation. A courthouse was built on the Gosford site as early as 1827. By 1833 there were 315 people.

A private township was established by Samuel Peek at what is now East Gosford in the 1830s but it was slow to develop. A government township was eventually surveyed and laid out in 1839 on and between Narara and Erina Creeks and an Anglican church erected between 1838 and 1843. It was called the Township at Point Frederick on the survey submission, in honour of Frederick Hely who had died in 1836, but Governor Gipps crossed this out and wrote in Gosford, in honour of Archibald Acheson, 2nd Earl of Gosford (1776-1849), who had served with Gipps as a commissioner in Canada from 1835 to 1837.

There were 53 persons in the town by 1848 when a new courthouse was built. Christ Church was erected in 1857-58 and is extant. The first school wasn't started until 1865 as the population of Gosford was still only 193 in 1871.

In the 1880s tourism got under way particularly with the completion of the Sydney to Newcastle railway in 1889 and a new focus on leisure and health in the culture. The Central Coast quickly became a primary tourism destination of Sydneysiders, fishing being the main drawcard, though sightseeing and hunting were also attractions. Holiday homes began to appear. The train line also facilitated the expansion of existing industries.

Gosford was declared a municipality in 1886, incorporating the two towns. Since World War II it has virtually become a part of metropolitan Sydney with the construction of the freeway in the 1960s and the improvement of the rail service in the 1970s. Agriculture and horticulture have declined in importance as Gosford has developed as a commuter, holiday and retirement centre. It was proclaimed a city in 1980.





## The FINDLEY family in Australia.

My family have been in Australia since 11<sup>th</sup> Jun 1879 and spread our wings to all parts of our nation.

I was a founding member of the Scottish Australian Heritage Council in the early 1980's. One of the functions that I attended was the first Ball at the University of NSW at Randwick.

It was a very successful night with some of the Australian born Scottish Chiefs attending and with me in attendance as an armed guard for the MacLeod of Raasay- whose family came to Australia in the Highland clearances. At the function we were entertained by Highland Dancers and Country Dancers as well as the Pipe band. At present according to the Commonwealth Statistics about 2.3 million Australians are Scottish or of Scottish descent. The majority of them came from farming communities from Highland and Lowland areas of the nation.



The Gentleman behind me is the Standard Bearer, Torquil and Lady MacLeod is behind us,

My family came here on their own finance when the taxes from Westminster became too much to bear.

I have a lot of distant cousins on the Central Coast including the following families,

Everingham, Hibbs, Bridge, Cobcroft, Fernance, Bailey, and Jurds. As a member of the CCFHS I feel very much at home. We must hold our heritage high and proud of both nations that have been in the forefront of exploration, engineering, law enforcement, mining, teaching and in the general workforce.

Robert FINDLEY Member 2018



## **A Different Type of Tree.**

**I am a tree lover, both my genealogical family tree and also the horticultural variety. I often gaze upon particularly beautiful specimens around the Central Coast.**

**This e-Muster I have included an Angophora Costata spotted by our President Rod Horton on a recent trek through Rumbalara National Park in Gosford. The Beautiful colours that show after shedding its bark make for an impressive specimen.**



**I am inviting you to share a tree with us in each issue of the *E-muster*, one that has enraptured you or one that is your favourite. Please email details and a photograph to our email address and we will feature them in our Journal.**



## SOCIETIES MAILING LIST

The email address for our Society is [admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au](mailto:admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au)

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The following is a list of who does what to keep the society running as smoothly as it does.

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| Event Coordinator                | Committee           |
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|                                  | Heather Yates       |
| Grant Applications               | Marlene Davidson    |
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Email [joy@joymurrin.com.au](mailto:joy@joymurrin.com.au)



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