

# BOYKETT FAMILY HISTORY NEWSLETTER

No. 2, September 2006

Welcome to this second newsletter for people interested in the Boykett family. I know it has been a long time coming (11 months.) And we have found out so much more in the meantime.

## **THOMAS' WIFE HANNAH:**

I mentioned in the first newsletter that details of Hannah's burial had come to light. The information from Berenice was that Hannah had been buried in the churchyard of St. Alphege's Church, London Wall in 1833. That church was apparently destroyed during the war. The records have however been transferred to the Guildhall in London. An attempt to obtain the details over the Internet failed, so I engaged a researcher who advertised in *Australian Family Tree Connections*. He obtained a copy of the record, which confirmed that Hannah did in fact die in November 1833. This would suggest that she died as a result of giving birth to John, who was born in that year. John's obituary in the *Adelaide Advertiser* states however that he was born at Sittingbourne, Kent. I had noticed that this was his place of birth according to earlier researchers, but I and my researcher both question it, because although the family appears to have moved around London repeatedly, there is no record of their having lived outside London. I have written to the Sittingbourne Historical Society for confirmation. Thomas' brother Francis died in Kent. His son, Francis Jnr, was articled to Thomas in London at about the same time as William.

## **FURTHER ENGLISH ENQUIRIES:**

Although this was outside his original retainer, my researcher obtained a lot of very useful further information. Firstly,

he located Thomas's marriage details.

Thomas made his declaration of intention to marry on 8 May, 1825 and married on 14 May. The Declaration covers a requirement that one of the parties must have been living in the Parish for over 14 days. That would make it difficult for "society" weddings.

The interesting thing is that on the same day as Thomas, a Charles Boykett also registered his intention to marry. The name Boykett is comparatively rare, and this suggests that Charles is Thomas' elder brother Charles George, mentioned in my first newsletter. We have only one marriage for him, in 1842, when he would have been 37. On the other hand, Francis Musto, who is descended from this Charles, is not aware of any earlier marriage, or of any children from such a marriage. A broken engagement, perhaps? The marriage was to take place outside my researcher's area, and in any case, a marriage certificate for that wedding would not necessarily give the parents' names, and civil registration did not begin until part-way through 1837.

In 1831, Thomas wrote a letter to his sister Eleanor, mentioning his three sons.

We were aware of only two sons living at that date, William and Charles. My researcher found the other son in the 1841 census. He was then 15, so he was the first born, and his name was his father's, Thomas, like every other eldest son. I have so far located no other reference to him. He was not with the rest of the family in 1851, but by then, he may have set up his own household.

Conversely, Charles was not at home on the night of the 1841 census. In 1841,

the family was living at Finsbury, of which Thomas was the Returning Officer. Every significant event in the family's history seems to have occurred in a different parish.

### **CLOSE TO HOME:**

We are now living in the Bendigo Retirement Village. If Australians search <http://www.whereis.com> for Francis Street, Spring Gully, we are in the unnamed dead-end street running off it (Because whereis.com is not a .com.au, this probably won't work if your Internet Service Provider is outside Australia.)

I noticed among Joan McEwing's correspondence a lot of letters from "Bonnie". Peter Osborne told me that she was Linda Woodland Boykett, and she and her sister Beryl shared a unit at this same Village for a time. The staff remember them, and the couple with whom they went to Church in Melbourne.

Apparently they were Spiritualists. There would have been no local church for them in Bendigo.

### **THE GEELONG CONNECTION:**

We know that William and Charles both moved to Victoria. The early BMD certificates are several to a page, and the unwanted ones are often made available for others. I learned that one such source had the birth certificate for William's daughter Hannah (born 1860)

When the Certificate arrived, I was surprised to find that she was born at Geelong. Both William and Charles lived in Geelong for a few years, William in Autumn Street, and Charles in Corio Street. Charles was in business as an architect, from contemporary advertisements, but it seems that William was never admitted to practice as a lawyer in Victoria. After he moved to Smythesdale, the only work he did was journalism.

From biographical details Roger Freeman obtained from the Melbourne University, both Charles Bolton Boykett and his

brother Thomas worked as architects with their father. There are references as well to Charles' time in Geelong.

### **THE NEW ZEALAND CONNECTION:**

Bonnie's letters referred as well to the New Zealand branch of the family. I had been told that one girl in my family had been shipped to New Zealand for having an illegitimate daughter, whom my grandmother brought up. My grandfather gave the daughter away at her wedding, but the bit about New Zealand was wrong. The mother married locally, and settled down at Illabarook, in the Ballarat/Smythesdale area. The right connection (also thanks to Peter Osborne) was Francis King Boykett (No. 1259) born 16 April, 1885 at Brunswick, who went to New Zealand and married there. The 3 Boyketts in the New Zealand phone book are all members of that family, a mother and two sons.

### **PARISH RECORDS:**

Of course, only events occurring in a Church of England parish were in the Parish records. Until universal civil registration in 1837, this was a real problem for Nonconformists, Catholics and Jews. In one case at least, a Jewish birth was noted in the Parish records at the father's request, as being the closest thing to an official record. That depended on the co-operation of the vicar or Parish officers, however.

The English civil registers of births, marriages and deaths can be searched at <http://www.freebmd.org.uk> (a voluntary effort) and at [www.1837online.com](http://www.1837online.com) if you are willing to pay. From these, details sufficient to order a Certificate can be obtained. A similar volunteer project to index the Parish records is at <http://freereg.rootsweb.com/> which, after many delays "is being deployed gradually, and is not yet available from [my] location." (as at 15 Sep 2006.) At least it is now worth a bookmark.

## **WHY DID THEY LEAVE ENGLAND?**

The following is taken from an email received from Peter of Wellington, N.Z. whose ancestors travelled to New Zealand on the *Gipsy* a year later:

"In the days when our ancestors were emigrating to New Zealand, Australia, America, India and as many parts of the known world which were tinted red on the maps (British colonies) life in Britain was not lived in a "green and pleasant land". The Industrial Revolution had taken its toll on the agricultural and manual industrial sector of life and occupation. Many were living in poverty without work or, indeed, hope of work. "The Colonies" were advertised (advertising was a cunning then as it is now) as the only hope for the struggling masses. There are picture advertisements showing "life in England" alongside "life in the colonies". Lean, bedraggled citizens pictured alongside healthy, bouncing families and strong, hope-filled parents were strong reminders that hope lay elsewhere.

"In Ireland there were the famines and in Scotland there was the expulsion of the Scots from their farmland homes to make way for the English sheep farmers. Times were very hard for our peasant ancestors and many, very many, saw New Zealand, Australia etc, etc as the golden opportunity to "make good". Indeed, many did and it is to them that we must credit the success of our South Seas countries."

*The Long Farewell* which quotes the mutiny scene from T.H. Boykett's letter, supports him. I probably admire Catherine the most - only 20, three years younger than Mary Ann, newly married and expecting her first child.

## **CONDITIONS ABOARD SHIP.**

How big was the *Gipsy*? it was of 453 tons, but that doesn't give us an idea of size. Here are some comparisons with the *Polly Woodside* at Melbourne and with the *Buffalo* at Glenelg Harbour:

The *Polly Woodside* is 192 feet long and her registered tonnage is 647.67.

Assuming that all such ships were approximately the same shape, this puts the *Gipsy's* length at about 85% of the PW, or 163 feet.

The *Buffalo* is even smaller, half the length of the *Polly Woodside*. No tonnage is given. The present ship is a replica, and the ceilings are two feet higher than in the original. Their Web site states that it is for visitor comfort. Perhaps as well, it was a requirement before it could obtain a restaurant licence.

I thought that the matron passengers would probably look after a birth, but no, the Ship's Surgeon attended, or if he was unavailable, the Captain did.

## **THE ARTICLE IN AFT CONNECTIONS:**

Nothing heard to date. I doubt whether it will ever be published.

## **CD-ROM AVAILABLE:**

A utility is available that will allow my Family Tree the program to be run from a CD-ROM, or from any Windows computer.

I am willing to burn copies of the tree for anybody who requests them. They are only what you see on the Web site, not a family history. That is still some way off.

I will have to write a story of some kind for my own guidance. Making a history readable is the big challenge.

Doug.