RBDM Family History Journal

Issue 3: December 2013

Welcome to the third edition of RBDM's *Family History Journal*, the quarterly newsletter which keeps you up to date with the latest developments in our Family History Research service.

First of all, I'd like to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year. It has been a busy few months for family history research. In October I was delighted to announce the release of a new, improved version of the index search engine. In this newsletter we'll look in more depth at some of the improvements we made.

I'm also pleased to report that since June 2013 RBDM has made more than 95,000 images available online and in November we released a further 3000 maritime death records.

As 2014 marks 100 years since the outbreak of World War One, in this issue we look through our Great War death registrations. Few people realise we hold records for many service men and women killed in both World Wars and we hope to make these records available online to mark the WWI centenary.

Our family history research community continues to grow, passing 1000 newsletter subscribers just before the last issue was distributed. Please continue to forward the newsletter to interested friends and encourage them to subscribe to receive future issues and news updates.

Thank you for your support, keep the feedback coming and I look forward to updating you about developments at RBDM over the coming year.

David John
Registrar-General.

Great state. Great opportunity.

In this issue

Improved index searching introduced

On October 16 an improved version of the family history search facility was introduced. We look at the new features of the search facility in a little more detail and examine how it can improve searching the RBDM index online.

World War One casualty records revealed

As we approach the centenary of the outbreak of World War One we look in detail at the registry's records for service personnel killed during the Great War; including how the records were compiled and what information is included in the registers.

Searching for Steele Rudd in Rudd's Pub

We look through the archive for one of Queensland's literary greats, bush author Steele Rudd, and follow in his illustrious footsteps to Rudd's Pub in Nobby where he whiled away many happy hours writing and drinking.

G.I. blue—The Battle of Brisbane

While a soldier being shot is pretty common during wartime, it's not when they're gunned down on home soil by their own side in the run up to Christmas. That's what happened to Edward Webster in late November 1942 during a blue with American GIs.

Researching niggly name

In the last newsletter we looked at troublesome dates; in this issue we switch our attention to niggly names – how we index names, using middle names to search, and things to think about to identify the right name to use in your search.

The sea gives up her dead

The Registry has just released images of records for more than 3000 people who died at sea between 1889 and 1916 where Queensland was the first landfall after their death. We look at what's held in the Marine Register of Deaths for the *S.S.Dorunda*.

Queensland state archives

Queensland State Archives in Runcorn is a great resource for the family historian or anyone interested in Queensland's history. We take a look at some of the information held amongst its 50 kilometres of priceless records.

Improved index searching introduced

Making searching RBDM's index easier

In June we launched the enhanced family history research facility on the Queensland Government website. While this was largely well received, your feedback highlighted a number of areas where its usability could be improved. Over the next three months we worked closely with our developers to incorporate a number of enhancements into the system; the result was the improved version of the search index released on Wednesday October 16.

The most obvious change was the removal of the purchasing terms and conditions from the entry point to the index search. We had a number of comments that it was frustrating to repeatedly accept terms and conditions when you were only searching the index. The terms and conditions have now been moved to the ordering section of the search facility, so you only have to accept them when you place an order online.

The search engine is now more closely integrated with the Queensland Government website, allowing you to access the search pages with just a couple of clicks from the family history research menu.
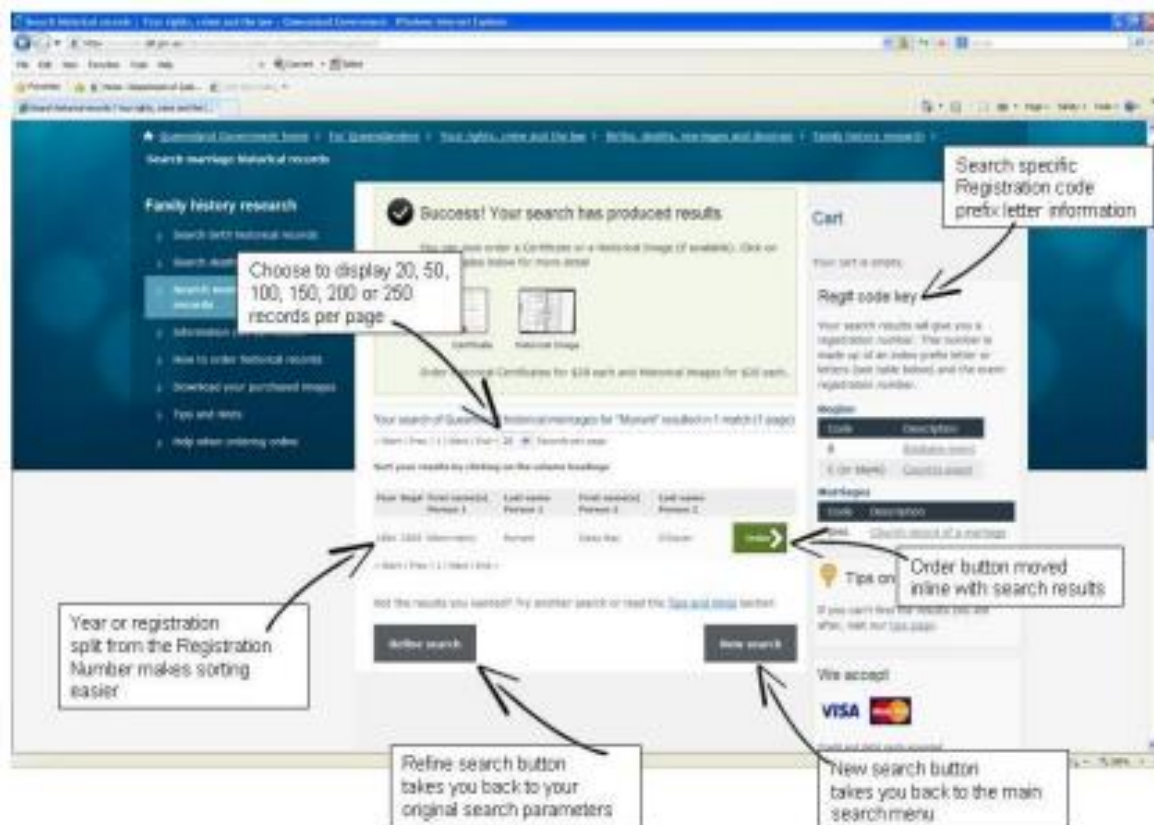
Above: *The new look search results page highlighting some of the improvements introduced in November 2013. The record shown is the marriage record for English émigré Edwin Henry Murrant who married Daisy May O'Dwyer in Charters Towers in 1884. He was later to change his name and gain notoriety as Harry "The Breaker" Harbord Morant.*

The search options themselves have also been improved. To help you know what needs to be entered and where, we have added ghost text behind each search parameter. This is greyed out text that appears in each field as a guide. You simply type your search information into the field and the ghost text disappears; there is no need to delete ghost text from fields you don't fill in.

Great state. Great opportunity.

The associated help pages have also been re-written to make them easier to understand and search-specific registration code information is now displayed alongside the results in the right hand side panel, so you don't have to keep flicking into the Hints and Tips page to view the prefix letter table.

The search options have also been made more flexible and you no longer have to enter information in the person's 'Last name' field to search. You still have to enter at least some name information to search by; however, you can now enter the person's first or last names, their father or mother's first names, or any combination of these, and you can still use the wildcard feature on all of the name fields when searching.

When search results have been found and displayed, we have made a number of changes to make it easier to identify the specific records you are interested in. The year of registration had been split from the record's reference number, making it easier to sort and view your records by year; however, remember this is the year the record was entered into the register, which is not necessarily the year the event occurred.

We have also added the 'Refine Search' button at the bottom of the page. Clicking 'Refine Search' takes you back to the search page. Your original search parameters are retained allowing you to add in more name parameters—or reduce the size of the date range—to narrow down your search. The 'New search' button, which has also been added to the bottom of the search results page, takes you back to the main search menu. If your search finds a large number of records you can also choose how many records you want to display on the page; the default is 20, but you can now choose to display 20, 50, 100, 200 or 250 records per page. This also makes it easier and quicker to scroll through and review your results.

Finally the large blue 'Order product' button which was displayed underneath each matching record has been changed to a green 'Order' button displayed on the same line as the record. This helps to make the results easier to review and ordering less confusing. You simply click on the 'Order' button next to the record you are interested in when you want to buy a copy of the certificate or image of the register page.

RBDM Registrar-General, David John, said of the changes: "We are delighted to be able to bring these improvements in so quickly. After the launch of the enhanced family history search engine in June, we received a number of suggestions for improvements. We analysed this feedback and made a number of significant changes as a result, specifically to make it easier for people to use the system.

"This is an ongoing process.

"In November I hosted a visit to the Registry by a group of genealogists and we discussed other areas where we may be able to improve the service we provide to genealogists and family historians. We made some more minor improvements to the system in early December and are already looking at a number of other ways we can make searching and ordering our historical records even easier.

"I stress that these changes to the index search engine and family history web pages have been made in direct response to comments made by you, our users. We really do value your feedback and, as you can see, we have used it to provide a better service, so please keep it coming."

If you would like to provide feedback about the online search facility or the family history newsletter, please send us an email.

They 'gave their lives for Queensland'

World War One casualty records revealed

Story by Adrian Harrison

Few people realise that RBDM holds comprehensive death registrations for a large number of service men and women[1] who enlisted in Queensland and who died while on active duty during both world wars. Only the registries in South Australia and Tasmania took the trouble to compile similar archives. In total RBDM holds close to 10,000 death registrations for World War One and a further 5,000 from World War Two.

Above *Some of the registers holding the 10,000 World War One death registrations in the RBDM archive. Unlike the standard registers, these are in alphabetical rather than date of event order.*

The First World War registrations were compiled under the direction of George Porter, who became Registrar-General in October 1921. Porter was by all accounts a bit of a maverick who did not necessarily rely on legislation to back up his decisions, and he took it upon himself to register the deaths of all the men and women who had, in his words, 'given their lives for Queensland'.

Porter believed that the registration of the death, and so the ready availability of a death certificate, would provide bereaved families with some form of closure for their lost loved ones, who at best were buried on the other side of the world—the British Empire had a strict policy of not repatriating its war dead—and at worst, had no known grave at all. Copies of the completed death certificates would be made available to the relatives for two shillings.

Compiling and entering the records was a mammoth and complex task. The battalion in which a dead soldier was serving when they died was not necessarily an accurate reflection of where they had enlisted. Although at the outbreak of war battalions had been raised largely within individual states, as the war progressed and casualties grew, battalions were merged and re-organised and reinforcements were sent wherever they were needed.

By the time a volunteer from Queensland died, they could well have been fighting in a unit raised anywhere in Australia. So not only was a list of dead service personnel needed—and Australia had suffered close to 62,000 killed and missing during the course of the war—this had to be cross checked against where the person had enlisted. There were nearly 58,000 enlistments registered in Queensland.

Once it was established that the dead soldier had indeed enlisted in Queensland, information was taken from their service record and sent to the next of kin on a death registration form. This was accompanied by a letter from George Porter explaining the work the registry was undertaking.

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[1] There are at least two nurses listed in the records as dying in the line of duty; Norma Mowbray from St George and Rosa O'Kane from Charters Towers.

The next of kin were asked to add further detail and sign to certify that the information was correct, and if they could not do so, forward it to someone who could. The certified details were then entered into the registers in alphabetical order. It was a process which could take years to complete as many Queensland volunteers had been born in another state and many in a different country altogether[1].
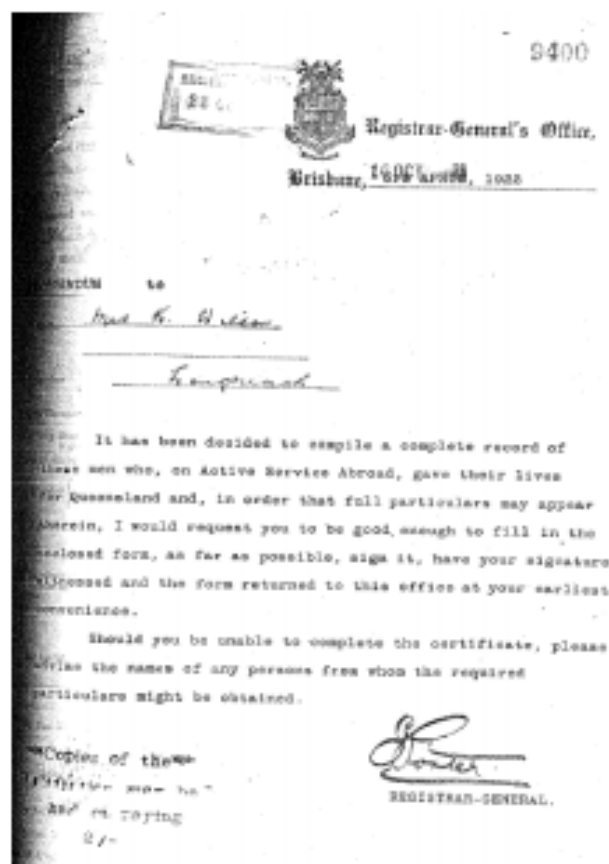
Left: George Porter's accompanying form letter sent to John Wilson's widow Kate, in Longreach, along with a death registration form. John Wilson was a railway worker originally from Rockhampton. He volunteered in September 1915 and was sent to the Western Front as reinforcement for the 26th AIF Battalion. He was killed in action on November 5 1916 during the assault on German trenches north of Gueudecourt. It was one of the last actions of the battle of the Somme which officially ended 13 days later on November 18.

This letter was sent to John Wilson's widow in April 1922 but the completed death registration wasn't received back at the registry until October, after being sent on to the soldier's bereaved father. John Wilson has no known grave and is remembered on the Australian War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux.

The registers themselves were compiled between 1921 and 1924; separate registers were created specifically to record the war dead. As detailed in the first issue of our Family History Newsletter, these registrations were given the prefix letter 'F' in the index, indicating an AIF death from the First World War and an "S" indicating a World War Two death that may have occurred outside Australia; some of those registered had been repatriated to Australia and subsequently died of their wounds.

As a test to find out just how much information is contained in the World War One registrations, and how accurate they are, I looked at the entry for a Great War casualty who enlisted in Queensland that I knew a little bit about.

I lived for many years in South London and one day, while out running, I stumbled on a small Australian military cemetery in Earlsfield, near Wimbledon. I was fascinated, and after a little research discovered that the servicemen buried there had died in a war hospital—Wandsworth's 3rd London General Hospital—which had been housed for a number of years in the Royal Victoria Patriotic Asylum, a nearby school for orphan girls. During the war the hospital—housed in the school buildings and in tents which sprawled across the grounds—tended to thousands of allied wounded from Gallipoli and the Western Front[2]. As Earlsfield was the nearest municipal cemetery, more than 250 soldiers of the Great War had been buried there, 33 of them Australians.

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[1] Close to 20% of those who served in the AIF during World War One had been born in the United Kingdom

[2] The Australian War Memorial has a large canvas by war artist George Coats entitled First Australian wounded at Gallipoli arriving at Wandsworth Hospital, London

Great state. Great opportunity.

One of the Australian casualties turned out to be a relative of my wife and I was able to piece together his story from various war records—particularly his service record which can be viewed online at the National Archives of Australia in Canberra—and learned the journey an Irish émigré took to end up in a small Australian war cemetery in South London.

Terence Keating was the cousin of my wife's Irish grandfather. In 1914—just a few months before the outbreak of the First World War—they emigrated together from their home in County Cavan to Brisbane. In 1915 Terence joined the AIF, probably in the hope of getting a free trip back to Ireland rather than for any feeling of patriotic duty; as a Catholic from Southern Ireland he wasn't that well disposed to the British Empire. Unfortunately during August 1916, rather than wandering down Farnham Street in Cavan, he found himself on the Western Front in the mud and slaughter of the Battle of The Somme.

Left: Looking from Australian trenches across the desolation of no-mans-land toward Mouquet Farm August 1916. The 'farm' is the small pile of rubble on the horizon to the left of centre of the picture.

Picture from the Australian War Memorial Collection

He had been sent as a reinforcement to the Australian 52nd Infantry Battalion which on September 3 1916 made the last of a series of unsuccessful attacks against the German strongpoint at Mouquet Farm, just north of Pozières. The Australians had been trying to take the farm since August 8 and by September the farm had been reduced to little more than a pile of bricks and splintered wood; however, the tenacious German defenders continued to put up fierce resistance from the farm's cellar and a labyrinth of trenches and tunnels they had dug underneath the rubble.

Sometime during the September 3 assault, Terence Keating suffered multiple bullet wounds to both legs, probably from the sweep of a German machine gun[1]. Although his wounds weren't immediately life threatening he was left stranded in the mud of no-mans-land, in agony and unable to walk with his right knee shattered. Unknown to Terence, who was probably just happy to be alive, the bullets had forced pieces of fetid uniform deep into his wounds. Stretcher bearers recovered him after the battle and carried him to a field hospital where doctors cleaned his wounds as best they could and patched him up with bandages and dressings.

Left: Allied soldiers struggle through the mud of no-mans-land with a badly wounded stretcher case. This picture can be dated as after 1916 as the troops were only issued with steel helmets at the start of the battle of the Somme after so many men had suffered head injuries from shell splinters and shrapnel.

Picture from the Imperial War Museum Collection

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[1] The series of attacks mounted between 8 August and 3 September 1916 against Mouquet Farm resulted in over 11,000 Australian's being killed or wounded. All the attacks were unsuccessful.

Needing more intensive treatment on his smashed knee he was evacuated back to England, and although it was only a relatively short journey, by the time he reached hospital in London he was already seriously ill with blood poisoning. Just seven days after being shot he died of septicemia and was buried in Earlsfield cemetery.

Left: Women laying flowers on Australian graves in Earlsfield cemetery during the Great War. The woman on the left is standing beside Terence Keating's grave **Right:** Terence Keating's grave as it looks today, after a fresh fall of snow.

Picture from the Australian War Memorial Collection

I was surprised just how accurate and detailed Terence Keating's RBDM record actually is. It is largely complete, the only information missing from the registration are the burial details which just state 'Military Funeral'; for war records, burial information—or for those missing in battle the memorial they are remembered on—can easily be found online from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission or the soldier's service record.

Above: Terence Keating's entry in the RBDM death register. The registration shows he died of wounds, 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth. His service records, which can be viewed online at the National Archives of Australia, show he died of septicemia.

Above: The record even states how long he had lived in Queensland 'about two years'. As the registrar was recording so many deaths, stamps were made up for Registrar-General George Porter's signature, where the death was registered and the burial details.

Thanks to the meticulous research of Registrar-General George Porter and his staff, Terence Keating now has a death certificate in England, where he died, and Queensland where he enlisted.

You can order any of RBDM's World War One and World War Two certificates online through the search index. The records are currently being digitised and we are hoping to release scans of the AIF Register pages during 2014 as part of the commemorations to mark the start of the First World War.

Great state. Great opportunity.

Searching for Steele Rudd in Rudd's Pub

Story by Adrian Harrison

In the last issue of the Family History Journal, in my article about the Kenniff brothers, I mentioned Arthur Hoey Davis, better known as the bush author Steele Rudd. As Under-Sheriff of Brisbane between 1902 and1904 he presided over executions in Boggo Road Gaol, and had the difficult duty of signalling the moment the hangman was to pull the lever and drop bushranger and convicted murderer, Pat Kenniff, to his death.

Convinced by Kenniff's protestations of innocence on the scaffold and disturbed by the whole experience of bringing about the death of another human being[1], Rudd became a firm opponent of capital punishment and even wrote material in an attempt to clear Kenniff's name.

It was suggested we follow this up with an article about Steele Rudd himself. So I did some research in the RBDM archives and followed in the great man's footsteps to Rudd's Pub the little township of Nobby on the Darling Downs where he lived for nine years. The Darling Downs was where Steele Rudd was most at home and the main source of his literary inspiration. He—as Arthur Hoey Davis that is—was born there, in Drayton near Toowoomba, on 14 November 1868. Biographies state he was one of 13 children born to Welsh born blacksmith, selector and convict Thomas Davis[2] and his Irish wife Mary, née Green; however, RBDM's archive shows the energetic couple registered the birth of only 11 children between 1857 and 1879.

Your search of Queensland historical births for "Davis Thomas Mary Green"
11 matches (1 page).

+ Start | Prev | 1 | Next | End + 20 ☑ Records per page

Year	Reg#	First name(s)	Last name	Father's name(s)	Mother's name(s)
1879	C1461	Harry	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1868	C849	Arthur	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1867	C365	Margaret	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1870	C592	Robert Llewellen	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1859	C446	Jane	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1860	C904	Mary	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1857	C294	John	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1863	C169	Richard	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1865	C342	Edward	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1871	C631	Catherine	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green
1873	C3210	Catherine	Davis	Thomas	Mary Green

+ Start | Prev | 1 | Next | End +

Above: The RBDM birth records for the prolific Davis family show Arthur Davis (circled) and his 10 registered siblings. Note that his middle name—Hoey, an Irish surname which according to Robyn, one of the owners of Rudd's Pub in Nobby, was the name of a gaoler who had been kind to his father—has not been registered. Interestingly he had two sisters

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[1] Friends described him as being nervous and irritable for months after the execution. In his 1926 novella, *The Miserable Clerk*, Davis describes what it was like and how he felt presiding over executions—the book's title is a pretty clear indication—and concludes with a harrowing account of him informing Pat Kenniff in the condemned cell that his appeal had been refused and he was to be executed.

[2] Thomas Davis—or Davies as he was then known—was convicted in Swansea for petty theft and sentenced to two years in a Welsh prison followed by five years transportation. He arrived in Sydney in 1849 effectively a free man and was given a 'ticket-of-leave passport' in 1850 allowing him to travel north to join James Charles Burnett's survey party on the Darling Downs where he later settled.

called Catherine, the eldest died in 1872 aged just 8 months—although her death was registered as Kate.

The death register for the same period shows the couple lost four children during the same time period. One of the dead children—poor little Gwen—wasn't registered as a birth and if the biographies are correct one child wasn't registered as either a birth or death.

Above: The deaths register entry for Arthur Hoey Davis's sister Gwen, who died at the age of 8 months and whose birth wasn't registered. The cause of death is given as 'Teething'[1].

He grew up on the family's Darling Downs selection at Haldon, not far from Nobby, leaving school at the age of 12. In 1885 he passed the Civil Service entrance exam securing a position as junior clerk in the Estates office; transferring four years later to the more prestigious Supreme Court's sheriff's office.

His first published writing was a regular rowing column for Brisbane's weekly *Chronicle* newspaper; however, in 1895 he started regularly contributing short stories about country life to the *Bulletin*, the weekly magazine which was at the time a breading ground for Australian literary talent[2]. These stories, infused with wry humor and pathos, were based on his father's reminiscences and his own experiences of growing up on the family's Darling Downs' smallholding. In 1899 the stories were compiled into Steele Rudd's massively popular book *On our selection* and this was followed by a sequel, *On our new selection*, in 1903; these later became the basis for the long running *Dad and Dave* radio series of the 1930s, 40s and 50s and numerous films of the same name[3].

Rising to the fairly senior Civil Service position of Under-Sherriff of Brisbane—whose job, as I mentioned, included presiding over executions in Boggo Road gaol—Davis was retrenched in January 1904, mainly because his superiors were jealous of his literary success. Although he was published under the pseudonym Steele Rudd[4], his identity had been revealed by the *Bulletin* in 1897.

After a period in Sydney writing and producing his own magazine, imaginatively titled *Steele Rudd's Magazine*, in 1908 he moved back to the Darling Downs buying a 160-acre farm 'The Firs' near Nobby, midway between Toowoomba and Warwick and near to the Davis family selection at Haldon where he grew up.

Despite his selector heritage Davis was by all accounts a reluctant farmer, adopting a largely passive role in the farm's operation. A neighbour was employed to manage its day to day running while the majority of the work was done by Davis's wife and children; in his enlistment papers in 1915 his son Vincent, who was just 18 at the time, has his occupation listed as a farm labourer.

Initially Davis preferred to while away his time in Nobby writing, and a further four stories were published between 1909 and 1911, including *On an Australian Farm* (1910) and its sequel *The Dashwoods* (1911). He purportedly spent a lot of time at Nobby's Davenporter Hotel

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[1] Teething was often entered as a cause of infant death in the 19th Century. See the item about Marine Deaths in this newsletter for more information about 'Teething' as a cause of death.

[2] At the time the *Bulletin* was famous for publishing the work of Banjo Patterson and the bush poetry of 'Breaker' Morant who is used as an example in the articles in this newsletter about searching and names.

[3] *Dad and Dave from Snake Gully*, as it was known, first aired in 1937. It ran until 1953 and only finished due to the death of one of the stars George Edwards.

[4] He came up with his pseudonym when he started writing his rowing column, initially adopting the name Steele Rudder, combining the name of 18th Century British essayist and politician Richard Steele, who he greatly admired, with a boating reference. He later shortened Rudder to Rudd.

where he would sit writing in front of the fireplace in the pub's front room. According to his son Eric—who was born at Nobby in1908—Davis's time at 'The Firs' was one of the happiest periods of his life if creatively unproductive; the six books published while he was living at Nobby among his least successful works.

More successful at this time was his work for the theatre. An adaptation of *On Our Selection* opened at the Palace Theatre, Sydney in May 1912 and proved incredibly popular. So much so that in 1913 Davis announced he was taking a sabbatical from writing his bush tales, preferring to concentrate on adapting his existing material for the stage.

He also threw himself into genteel country pursuits. A keen polo player, Davis became president of the Darling Downs Polo Association in 1913 and his only real contribution to farm life was breeding polo ponies. He was also prominent in the church and local politics, being elected foundation chairman of the Cambooya Shire Council in September 1914—a position he was to hold for three years—and chairing the local recruiting committee during World War I. He returned to writing in 1915 and two further books *Grandpa's Selection* (1916) and *The Old Homestead* (1917) were published while he was still living at 'The'Firs'. One of the last things he worked on in Nobby was the 'photo play' *The capture and trial of the Kenniffs* which he wrote with long time collaborator and illustrator, Ashton Murphy. This contained controversial views on the Kenniffs' trial, presumed innocence and the brothers' unfair treatment at the hands of the law; as a result the play was never published.

By 1917, the combined effects of war, drought and Davis's disinterest had crippled the farm and the health of Davis's wife suddenly deteriorated; some biographies put this down to her being distraught at the news their son Gower had been wounded in France; however, there is no record of Vincent Gower Davis ever being wounded in his army records, although it does state that during 1917 he was hospitalised with chronic bronchitis and evacuated to England, which may well have been the result of a German mustard gas attack[1].

With the farm's situation hopeless, Davis decided to abandon 'The Firs', handing it over to a share-farmer and moving the family back to Brisbane, settling in Clayfield; however, the people of Nobby have never forgotten having the illustrious writer in their midst.

Above Rudd's Pub in Nobby. *Left:* Noel Lipp, descendant of Steele Rudd's neighbour in the Pub's Heritage room surrounded by Steele Rudd memorabilia.

In the 1980's the Davenporter Hotel, where Davis spent many a happy hour, was renamed Rudd's Pub in his honour. If you visit the pub today, as I was lucky enough to do in early December, you get a real feeling of what the little township was like when Arthur Hoey Davis

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[1] In a presentation to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland in 1970, Rudd's youngest son Eric went as far as to claim his mother's health problems were due to his brother having been 'killed on active service'; however, RBDM records show that Vincent Gower Davis died in 1963. It appears Vincent may have suffered mental health problems as a result of his war service.

lived in Nobby. The walls are decorated with ephemera from a bygone era and Steele Rudd memorabilia is everywhere. His portrait hangs in pride of place over the fireplace, beside which he reputedly would sit; underneath is the lease for his father's—Dad's—selection.

Even more fascinating are personal photographs that link the great man to Nobby; a picture of the Nobby Presbyterian Church Sunday School picnic in 1911, Steele Rudd standing incognito at the back of the happy picnic party.

During my visit I was lucky enough to be shown around by Robyn and Sam Little, the pub's current owners, who are a wealth of knowledge about Nobby, Steele Rudd and Rudd's Pub. I also got to chat with local Noel Lipp, a descendent of Thomas Davis's neighbour. The Lipp family are some of the few people mentioned by their real name in *On our new selection*, which includes a line drawing of the Lipp family's simple shingle house, and Noel's grandfather even played polo against Steele Rudd!

Just a few kilometres down the road from Rudd's pub is the site of Thomas Davis selection on which a replica of Steele Rudd's homestead now stands and, if you follow the road back into Toowoomba, you come to Drayton where Steele Rudd was born, his father's family is buried and where Steele Rudd himself is remembered by a memorial cairn[1]. For anyone interested in history and literature, a visit to Nobby and the Darling Downs is fascinating and a pleasure not to be missed.

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[1] Arthur Hoey Davis is buried in Toowong cemetery.

G.I. blue—The Battle of Brisbane

While a soldier's death from gunshot wounds is pretty common during wartime, it's rather unusual when they're gunned down on home soil by one of their own side in the run up to Christmas.

That's just what happened to Edward Webster during World War Two. Eddie was a 31 year old 'Gunner' in the Australian 2/2nd Anti-Tank Regiment and a decorated veteran of the war in the Middle East. He was shot by a US Military Policeman when a mass brawl between American and Australian servicemen got out of hand in late November 1942, an incident which became notorious as the Battle of Brisbane.

As a major naval base for fighting in the Coral Sea and the HQ for US forces in the South-West Pacific—General Douglas MacArthur had his headquarters in what is now MacArthur chambers—Brisbane in 1942 was alive with American servicemen. Brisbane's population of 300,000 had been swollen with 80,000 American G.I.s[1] virtually overnight and surrounding towns were literally taken over by the US military; Coolangatta on the Gold Coast became a massive rest and recreation (R&R) centre for American servicemen, and many of the local population were displaced as a result.

Left: *American Military Policemen pose outside Brisbane's Central Hotel during 1942. Their boots are resting on a salt water pipe. During the war a network of these pipes were laid around city streets as a precaution against Japanese bombing raids; the Germans having used incendiary bombs to great effect against British cities during 1940 and 1941.*

John Oxley Library Negative number: 107852

Despite the difficulties of having to quickly accommodate so many men, the Americans were initially greeted as heroes saving Australia from impending Japanese invasion; however, their welcome soon wore out as US servicemen lived up to their reputation for being overpaid, oversexed and over here. They particularly upset the Australian troops, many of whom had already seen action, and who resented the attitude of their arrogant allies who swaggered around like they owned the place.

The focus of Australian servicemen's discontent became the American PX[2] housed in the Primary Building on the corner of Brisbane's Creek and Adelaide Streets. The PX sold a glittering array of merchandise forbidden or heavily rationed in Australia and, with better pay than their Australian counterparts in the run up to Christmas, the American troops could freely buy alcohol, cigarettes, hams, turkeys, ice-cream, chocolates, and nylon stockings at very low subsidised prices, all of which were guaranteed to turn a pretty Aussie girl's head[3]. The Australian servicemen weren't even allowed in to the PX to buy themselves a drink.

Tension between the allies reached boiling point on the sultry evening of Thursday November 26 1942 when Australian servicemen—some of whom it has to be said had had a few drinks—besieged the American PX.

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[1] G.I. is a common term for American troops derived from the initials of Government Issue often stamped on their equipment.

[2] PX stands for postal exchange—a combination of tax free shop, canteen, pub and post office specifically for American servicemen.

[3] Approximately 12,000 Australian women married American servicemen during the war.

John Oxley Library Negative number: 106429

Above: *Workmen fixing broken windows in the American PX on 28 November 1942. The windows had been smashed in the previous nights rioting during which private Webster was killed.*

Above: *The Primary Building on the corner of Brisbane's Creek and Adelaide Streets which housed the American PX today. Now offices and a convenience store, this picture was taken on 26 November 2013, 71 years to the day after Edward Webster was shot in front of the building.*

There had been some minor scuffles earlier in the day and tensions were already running high when shortly after closing time—which during the war was only 6.50pm—American Military Police (MPs) attempted to arrest a US serviceman who had been drinking with a group of Australians. A drunken mob started to gather around the PX and more scuffles broke out. Soon outnumbered, the MPs retreated inside the PX, barricading the doors against the mob which was quickly turning ugly. Rocks and bottles soon started raining through the windows and more MPs, now armed with pump–action shotguns, were rushed in to disperse the rioters; however, this simply inflamed the situation.

A heavy handed attempt by the Americans to clear the mob from around the PX—which by 8pm now numbered in the hundreds—broke out into a mass brawl and in the ensuing mêlée Gunner Webster grabbed the barrel of an American's shotgun which went off, blowing a hole in his chest killing him instantly. Two other shots were fired wounding another five Australian servicemen—two seriously—and a civilian who had come to join in the fun. Two other Australian servicemen were also severely beaten over the head in the ensuing fighting and ended up in hospital.

Above: *The Brisbane register entry for Edward Sidney Webster states he died in Brisbane Hospital of a gunshot wound to his chest and that an inquest was held into his untimely death.*

Details of the event were quickly suppressed by the military authorities. The Chief Censor's Office in Brisbane ordered that there should be 'no cabling or broadcasting of details of tonight's Brisbane servicemen's riot. Background for censors only: one Australian killed, six wounded.'

Great state. Great opportunity.

The Courier Mail did print a small but heavily censored article about the riots buried on page three of Friday's paper which was more preoccupied by the Russian breakthrough and encirclement of German forces besieging Stalingrad than Australians breaking windows and besieging the American PX in Brisbane's CBD.

Unfortunately the censorship didn't work and if anything made matters worse. Wild rumors circulated that as many as 15 Australians had been gunned down by the Americans and despite measures to keep the brawling allies apart, another night of vicious fighting followed.

It was estimated that anything between 2000 and 5000 servicemen took part in a second night of rioting during which eight U.S. MPs, one G.I. and four American officers ended up in hospital and countless others were injured as Australians sought retribution for their dead and injured mates. To stop further rioting the units involved were quickly moved out of Brisbane, more MPs were brought in to patrol the city and the American PX was relocated. An American MP—Norbert J Grant—was later court-martialed for the manslaughter of Gunner Webster, but was acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. Rather unfairly five Australians were convicted of assault during the riots and one was jailed for six months.

As recorded in RBDM's register, Edward Sidney Webster was buried in the military section of Toowong Cemetery on November 28. His grave is marked with a standard white marble military headstone.

Military headstones follow a standard pattern developed after the Great War to convey every soldier's equality in death. The top of each headstone has the national emblem (or a service badge or regimental crest), below is the rank, name, unit, date of death and the age of the soldier at death. Beneath may be a religious emblem appropriate for the person's denomination; in Edward Webster's case he has a cross and the register states his religion as Church of England. At the foot of the headstone there is often a personal inscription chosen by the relative; in Edward's case it carries the simple line 'His Name Liveth For Evermore' a biblical phrase chosen by Rudyard Kipling for the remembrance of war dead.

Above right: Edward Webster's grave in Toowong Cemetery. He is buried in portion 10 section 45 grave 28.

Left: How The Courier Mail reported Brisbane's rioting, an event which would have been front page news in peace time. The November 27 edition carried a highly censored account (circled in red) buried on page three of the paper. The account which doesn't mention Edward Webster by name is surrounded by incidental items and sits next to an advert for Pond's Cold Cream. Immediately below is an article reminding readers that the manufacture of waistcoats remained banned to save material much needed for the manufacture of military uniforms.

Researching niggly names

In the last edition of the Family History Journal we looked at troublesome dates, in this issue we switch our attention to niggly names.

Although the new search facility introduced on 16 October is more flexible—you now no longer have to enter information in the last name field to search—you still have to enter at least some of the person's name details to search by. You can enter the person's first or last names, their father or mother's first names, or any combination of these.

Before starting any search you should gather as much information as you can about the person you're looking for; an accurate name—with possible variations in spelling—is vital. While this may sound easy, finding the correct first and last name is often not as clear-cut as it may seem.

Firstly let's clear up the nomenclature of names and how we index them. All our records are indexed by the person's last name and their first name, or names, if they have more than one. The last name is sometimes referred to in source documents as the person's surname or family name. Similarly, the first name can also be known as their Christian name, forename or given name and, just to confuse matters, in our index the first name field may also include the person's middle names. However, all the names—if they have been recorded—are indexed separately, which means you can search by any of the person's given names individually—in the First names field—to find a person's record.

Left: Sir Charles Edward Kingsford 'Smithy' Smith—MC AFC was born in Hamilton, Brisbane on February 9 1897. The Queensland aviator shot to global fame in June 1928 when he successfully made the first trans-Pacific flight from the United States to Australia.

Photograph courtesy of the John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Ref No7104

For example, famous Queensland aviator Charles Edward Kingsford 'Smithy' Smith is indexed as:

Last name: **Smith**
First name(s): **Charles Edward Kingsford**

This means that you could find this record by entering Charles, Edward or Kingsford in the 'First names' field.
This can be a very useful way of cutting down the number of records displayed by the search; particularly when the person has an unusual given name like 'Kingsford' and a common last

name like 'Smith'. For example, searching the births index between 1896 and 1901 for Smith and Charles, will result in 26 records being found. Searching for Smith and Edward will result in too many records for the system to display—the system will time out with an error message—while searching for Smith and Kingsford will find just the one record, the one we are looking for.

Results

Your search of Queensland historical births for "Kingsford Smith" resulted in 1 match (1 page).

« Start | Prev | 1 | Next | End » 20 ▼ Records per page

Year	Reg#	First name(s)	Last name	Father's name(s)	Mother's name(s)	Purchase Certificate
1897	C9077	Charles Edward Kingsford	Smith	William Charles	Catherine Mary Kingsford	Order

« Start | Prev | 1 | Next | End »

Above: Search results. *Searching in the First name(s) field for Kingsford, Last name Smith finds Charles Edward Kingsford Smith, even though Charles was his first name.*

However, while searching using a person's other given names—rather than their first name—can be a useful technique, be warned that middle names may not necessarily have been registered.

In this edition of the Family History newsletter we also look at Steele Rudd—real name Arthur Hoey Davis—and as you will see, his unusual middle name was never officially registered and therefore can't be used to search.

It's important to consider that during their life the person may have been known by a shortened form of their first name or a nickname. This can cause problems when searching as the person will most likely have been registered under a more formal version of their name, particularly in historical records. For example, a family member commonly known as Jack—now often used as a first name in its own right—is likely to have been registered 100 years ago as John. Nicknames or shortenings can also create lots of confusion as they may be interchangeable with other names. For example 'Bob', 'Bobby', 'Robbie ', 'Bert', 'Berty' or 'Bertie' may all be recorded as 'Robert' while 'Bobby may be short for Roberta, and 'Bert', 'Bertie' or 'Berty' may also be shortenings for 'Herbert', 'Bertram', 'Englebert', 'Norbert' or 'Albert'.

Left: Bert Hinkler, the musical—*Bert Hinkler AFC DSM was born on 8 December 1892 in Bundaberg. He was always known as Bert, as immortalised in this two shilling Music Hall score from 1928; however, his given names were Herbert John Louis and you could use any of these names—but not Bert—to find his birth certificate in the RBDM archive.*

National Library of Australia No: 14181209

Great state. Great opportunity.

For example, Bert Hinkler was another very famous Queensland aviation pioneer and a contemporary of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith; in February 1928 he was the first person to fly solo from England to Australia. He was commonly known as Bert throughout his life however, if you search in the index for Bert Hinkler, you won't find any records. You have to know that his first name was Herbert, although you could also find the record using either of his other given names, John or Louis; particularly as Hinkler is a fairly unusual last name of German origin—his father was a Prussian-born stockman.

A non English name—like Hinkler—can also cause problems. 'Foreign' names—those that didn't sound Anglo-Saxon—were often anglicised when people came to Australia. Names were often written down phonetically based on how they sounded when pronounced in the person's mother tongue. They are also likely to have lost any name prefix they may have had in their country of origin—so O'Farrell becomes Farrell or Farrelly—and they may have intentionally altered their name to avoid prejudice.

For example the American actress Mitzi Gaynor, famous for washing men out of her hair in the musical 'South Pacific' was born Francesca Marlene von Gerber in Chicago in 1931; not an easy name to get up in lights on cinema awning. Gerber in German means a tanner or preparer of hides, while 'von'—which basically translates as from—is indicative of noble lineage. Many people of German origin purposely anglicised their names during and after the World Wars because of anti-German feeling; even the British Royal family changed their name in 1917 from the House of Saxe–Coburg–Gotha (the family name of Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert) to the more English sounding Windsor.

A person may have changed their family name for any number of reasons—particularly to hide something in their past—in which case they may be recorded under a spelling variation of the name you know, they may have adopted a middle name as a last name, created a hybrid name or even chosen a different name altogether.

Two examples can be found in this newsletter. The graphic used to demonstrate the improvements made to the search engine shows an index search the 1884 Charters Towers marriage record for Edwin Henry Murrant. He enlisted for service in the Boar War under the name Harry Harbord Morant and was known as 'the Breaker'. His change of name was probably to disguise some charges against him for petty theft In Charters Towers and to support his claim that he was the illegitimate son of Admiral Sir George Digby Morant. In our article about Steele Rudd (whose real name was Arthur Hoey Davis) can be found another example. His Welsh father was born Thomas Davies; however, convicted of petty theft and transported to Australia he shortened his name to Davis, presumably in an attempt to hide his criminal past. Strangely, although Thomas Davis's death registration in RBDM's archive gives his last name as Davis, his headstone in Toowoomba's Drayton cemetery says Davies.

You can see how something as simple as a person's last name can become very complicated when it comes to choosing the right name to use to search the historical index!

Last month marked 50 years since the assassination of JFK, and while you won't find the Kennedy's listed in the Queensland registry, they provide an extreme example of where name confusion can arise. During their lifetime the Kennedys were both commonly known by shortenings of their first names—Jack and Jackie—and they could have been recorded in official documents under these names. Jackie also incorporated her maiden name—Bouvier—into her married name and this too may appear in official documentation.

Left: This family portrait of one of the most famous couples in history is a good example of where names can be confusing. Is this a family portrait of Jack and Jackie Kennedy or John and Jacqueline Kennedy or John Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier?

In a historical search, JFK's heritage could also be an area of confusion as many Irish family names have been anglicised from the Gaelic. Kennedy is a version of the Irish last name O'Cinneide, anglicised to O'Kennedy before dropping the 'O' while John can be an English translation of the Irish first names Iain, Seán or Eoin.

The tragedy of their lives can also complicate matters. When a woman has had matrimonial tribulations such as separation and divorce—or their husband has been assassinated—they may have adopted their second family name, reverted back to their maiden name or adopted a new hybrid name using both family names; which is what Jackie Kennedy in fact did, being commonly known in later life as Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

Above: *On her headstone in Arlington cemetery, where she was laid to rest next to her first husband in 1994, it states her name as Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis, while her death certificate is just Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.*

The most important things to remember with names is don't trust them! Research the name as much as you can before your start searching; and if you can't find what you were looking for, use variations of the name or the wildcard feature. We will look at the wildcard feature in more detail in the next edition of the *Family History Journal*.

The sea gives up her dead

Being an island nation, until the last decades of the 20th Century all immigrants arrived in Australia by sea. Not surprisingly, with voyages across the world taking many months, many people died on the arduous journey before they ever got to set foot in the lucky land. Most were buried at sea, 'their bodies committed to the deep'. Now, though, the sea has given up her dead, or at least the details of more than 3000 who died at sea.

Since June 2013 RBDM has made more than 95,000 images available for online ordering, and in November, RBDM released digital images detailing more than 3000 deaths at sea between 1889 and 1916. These were from the Marine Register of Death, a form completed by the captain or senior officer detailing people who died and had been buried at sea where a Queensland port was the first landfall after their death or, in some cases, the ship's final destination. The records can be easily identified in the search index by their registration number, which has the prefix letter 'M'.

Examples of marine deaths can be found among the passenger list of the ill-fated British India Steam Navigation Company's steamship *Dorunda*. The *S.S.Dorunda* set sail from Gravesend at the mouth of the Thames on October 20th October 1885, bound for Brisbane. Packed onboard were more than 470 passengers and crew, mostly immigrants cooped up in the bowels of the ship. They had embarked earlier at London's Blackwall docks for an eight-week passage across the world to start a new life in Queensland.

Left: *The S.S.Dorunda—S.S stands for steam ship—docked at Port Said, Egypt at the mouth of the Suez Canal. The Dorunda was built in 1875 and regularly carried immigrants from London to Queensland, returning loaded with cargo from Brisbane. The ship ran aground and was wrecked off the coast of Portugal in 1894.*

John Oxley Library negative number: 101316

The ship had barely left English waters before the first death was recorded, according to the subsequent enquiry a very young child—from the RBDM records this was 7-month-old Albert Smith—was recorded as dying from 'teething' as the ship passed through the English Channel[1]. The child had been reported as sick at the medical examination before the immigrants embarked at Blackwall. This was just the first of the deaths onboard the *S.S.Dorunda*.

On November 2 the ship stopped at Port Said in Egypt before steaming through the Suez Canal. It changed crew at Aden and crossed the Indian Ocean, arriving in Indonesia at the port of Batavia—now Jakarta—on November 22.

In Batavia the ship took on coal, and fresh fruit and vegetables for the Saloon—first class—passengers who were allowed to go ashore and stay overnight in a hotel. Steerage

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[1] Teething was often listed in the 19th Century as a cause of death. Many children died before the age of one, at the same time as teething and with similar symptoms—high temperature, pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, and loss of appetite—all of which were probably due to a bacterial infection such as cholera infantum. This was not actually cholera, but an often fatal form of gastroenteritis common in children London registration records for 1842 show around 5% of child deaths under the age of one were attributed to teething.

passengers, immigrants and the ship's crew had to remain cooped up onboard; although it was reported in the subsequent inquiry that some of those kept on the ship managed to buy fruit from a Javanese trading boat that pulled up alongside. The *Dorunda* set sail for Cooktown early the following day.

Above: *The Marine Register of Deaths for the S.S.Dorunda. It was completed by the ship's captain when it reached Moreton Bay detailing all those onboard who had died and had been buried at sea.*

On December 4 a second infant died—7-month-old German national Otto Hermann Friedrich Schafer—although it wasn't till a third child died two days later suffering convulsions and diarrhoea and other passengers fell ill with similar symptoms that the ship's doctor began to suspect the vessel may be carrying an infectious disease.

The ship reached the Torres Strait on December 7 and stopped at Thursday Island where a health officer was brought onboard to inspect the sick, but found no reason that the ship should not continue its journey down the Queensland coast. The *Dorunda* reached its next port of call—Cooktown—on December 9 and, despite the mounting list of sick onboard, two male passengers were allowed to leave the ship and mail and cargo was unloaded before it set sail for Townsville. That same day 33–year–old Thomas Doran—an immigrant from Manchester—fell sick and died; two of his sons, Frank and Henry, died the following day. All were recorded as dying from 'Batavian' Cholera—better known as Asiatic cholera.

Above: *The index—note the registration number prefix letter 'M'—and marine death records for Thomas Doran and his son Frank, the first deaths onboard the Dorunda reported as 'Batavian' Cholera. By this point in the voyage three young children had already died onboard the S.S.Dorunda, one of which was almost certainly from Cholera.*

The *Dorunda* arrived at Townsville on December 10 and another health officer boarded the ship; he confirmed the ship's doctor's suspicion that the *Dorunda* was carrying cholera. Townsville's quarantine station—at the time located at West Point on Magnetic Island—was deemed inadequate for so many passengers and the *Dorunda* was ordered to proceed directly to Brisbane's quarantine station on Peel Island in Moreton Bay[1].

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[1] We mentioned Peel Island in Issue 1 of the Family History Journal as a Lazaret—a leper colony—between 1907 and 1959 but it also acted as a quarantine station during the 19th Century.

Great state. Great opportunity.

Before the ship left, the latest victim—a soldier called Lorenzo Eid who was travelling with four other soldiers to join Queensland's Permanent Defence Force[1]—was buried on Magnetic Island.

The presence of a highly infectious disease onboard the *Dorunda* didn't stop Townsville's quarantine officer disembarking before the ship sailed, potentially taking cholera onshore with him. Fear of cholera was so great that when news of the deaths onboard the *Dorunda* reached shore, the people of Townsville had the health officer isolated in his own house and authorities hurriedly tracked down the passengers who had left the ship at Cooktown; they were quarantined on the station they were working on near Port Douglas.

Above: *Two victims of the cholera outbreak on the S.S.Dorunda recorded in the Townsville death register. Twenty-one-year-old single woman Prudence Ladner was buried at sea, where as Lorenzo Eid was interred on Magnetic Island; therefore his index record does not carry the 'M' prefix. Both were registered from the quarantine station on Peel Island in 1886 so carry this date in the reference number—not the date the event occurred which was December 1885.*

News that a cholera ship was bound for Moreton Bay—the information was telegraphed from Townsville—also created panic in Brisbane. Many residents were convinced the disease, commonly associated with bad smells, could be carried on the wind across to the bayside townships and so bring an epidemic down on the city.

The *Dorunda* slipped into Moreton Bay on December 14 and anchored at the mouth of the Brisbane River flying a yellow quarantine flag indicating infectious disease on board; a further five passengers had died on the journey down from Townsville and many more were now sick. The ship's arrival was greeted with an alarmist article in *The Brisbane Courier* which cried 'CHOLERA is within the hearing of the time gun fired daily to indicate midday at Brisbane...' and went on to suggest drastic action that should be taken to improve the city's sanitation and stop the spread of the disease.

The desperate passengers had to endure another night onboard the stricken vessel while the quarantine station was prepared for their arrival. The facilities on Peel Island were not adequate to cope with so many passengers—many of them now desperately ill—and tents, provisions and a fully equipped military hospital had to be ferried across from the mainland on the Queensland Maritime Defense Force patrol boat *Otter*. Two more passengers died while they waited in Moreton Bay to disembark and one had to be hastily buried on the uninhabited Mud Island for fear of further infection from the diseased corps.

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[1] Until federation each state effectively had its own army and navy. Queensland had the Queensland Defence Force and the Queensland Maritime Defense Force made up of permanent soldiers and sailors supplemented by militia volunteers.

Great state. Great opportunity.

The passengers were finally landed on Peel Island on December 15 and the crew set about fumigating the ship. All belongings and bedding were burned and the ship was scrubbed and disinfected.

They were to remain isolated over the Christmas period and during the weeks they were marooned on Peel Island more died. In total 75 people from the *Dorunda* were treated for the symptoms of cholera and 16 were reported as dying from the disease; although it's likely that all the deaths that occurred after the ship left Batavia were as a result of cholera.

SUPPOSED CHOLERA AT TOWNSVILLE.

THE R.M.S. DORUNDA IN QUARANTINE

SIX DEATHS REPORTED.

[BY TELEGRAPH.]
(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

BRISBANE, FRIDAY.

Considerable excitement was caused in Townsville on Thursday afternoon by the reported outbreak of Asiatic cholera on board the R.M.S. Dorunda, which arrived there at midday. When visited by the Health Officer, it was reported by the ship's doctor, Dr. Hinckley, that an alarming epidemic had broken out since leaving Cooktown, four deaths—one of an adult and three of children —having occurred.

CHOLERA OUTBREAK.

THE steamship Dorunda, piloted by the Pippo, reached Peel Island from the anchorage at the mouth of the river shortly after half-past 8 o'clock yesterday morning, and shortly afterwards the landing of the immigrants in boats began.

The public will learn with satisfaction that the general health of the passengers is now improving. Of the three patients who were reported yesterday to be dangerously ill, two succumbed during the night. One of the bodies was buried at Mud Island, the other

Left: One of the first reports of Cholera onboard the S.S.Dorunda—incorrectly reported as a Royal Mail Ship (RMS)—when it reached Townsville from The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday December 12 1885.

Right: The Brisbane Courier Wednesday December 16 1885 reports the arrival of the S.S.Dorunda at Peel Island quarantine station and the death of two further passengers overnight.

Despite a medical board of enquiry into the outbreak and an investigation into the tragic case of the *S.S.Dorunda* by the esteemed *British Medical Journal*, the source of the epidemic was never accurately traced. None of the saloon passengers who left the ship at Batavia fell ill; but from the incubation period of the disease it was evident the disease had been brought onboard during the ship's stop in Java. It was recommended that future immigrant ships should take on coal and supplies at Singapore instead, a port that had better sanitation. Despite the panic, no cases of cholera were reported on the mainland.

As a coda to the story, in September 1894 the *S.S.Dorunda* was on a return voyage to London laden with cargo from Brisbane when it was wrecked off the Portuguese coast; fortunately all of the passengers and crew on board were saved.

Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives in Runcorn is a great resource for the family historian or anyone interested in Queensland's history. The Archive has more than 50 kilometres of records that trace our history, including records of State Government departments, courts, local government authorities, statutory authorities, commissions of inquiry, Ministerial Offices and Government-owned corporations. All the material is of priceless historical value, some dating back to before Queensland separated from New South Wales.

The State Archives works closely with RBDM and once the register archive in 110 George Street has been fully digitised—a project which is on track to be completed during 2015—the paper records will be stored for posterity in the Queensland State Archives.

You can easily access the State Archives' collection online—like RBDM the Archive has a major digitisation project and more and more records are being made available online—or through the Public Search Room at Runcorn.

For example, in the last issue of the Family History Journal, in the article about the Kenniff brothers, we reproduced mug shots of the brothers courtesy of the State Library of Queensland. It was pointed out to us that these were in fact taken from the brothers' prison records for St Helena Island where they were incarcerated for horse stealing in 1895. These records are held in the State Archive, the records have been digitised and you can view them online as well as a wealth of other information about the notorious outlaws.

The State Archives also helped us out in this issue of the Family History Journal with information about Steele Rudd and his life on the Darling Downs. As well as rare copies of Steele Rudd's work, the Archive has an abundance of material which gives insight into his life and how this shaped his characters and writing.

The land selection files for agricultural and pastoral leases from 1868 to 1885, provide a rich source of information for historians and genealogists because they include selection applications, surveys, leases and even the occasional marriage certificate!

The file for the Davis family's selection contains a letter written in 1879 from Rudd's father, Thomas Davis, to the Minister for Lands which gives a clue to the character that inspired his most famous and enduring character 'Dad'. In the letter Mr Davis expresses his frustration with the tardiness of the public service while waiting for his title deeds in order to secure a loan. He respectfully asks the Minister to use his influence to speed up the bureaucratic process so he can raise the money needed to 'carry on my farming operations, being one of those suffering with the late dry season'.

Great state. Great opportunity.

A memorial flyer seeking funds to improve Arthur Hoey Davis's grave is also digitised and can be found on Image Queensland, Queensland State Archives' photo catalogue. Keen researchers can find more information about the Davis family at Item IDs 58500 and 935749.

Discover more by visiting the State Archive online at www.archives.qld.gov.au; telephone 3131 7777; email info@archives.qld.gov.au; or connect with them on Facebook at qldstatearchives and Twitter @QSArchives.

Great state. Great opportunity.