Now&Then 61 - April 2013

In this issue: read the latest online news; Treasures found in the news; the Spotlight on deceased estate records; our Blog and *Flickr* updates and more!

- Online News
  - Notice - Large format digital copies unavailable 15 May - 26 July
  - Chance meeting with the Prime Minister
  - The Crossing Bicentenary - History Council NSW call for event registrations
  - Treasures found in the records
  - Sentenced beyond the Seas Update
  - New State archive repository opens in Bowral
  - Archives Outside blog update
  - *Flickr* update
  - Spotlight on deceased estate files 1880-1958
  - Stay up-to-date with State Records
  - Exhibition
  - Upcoming talks and tours

We hope you all had a lovely and safe Easter!

Online News

New Digital Gallery - Canberra: The contest to become our Federal Capital

To celebrate the centenary of the naming of Canberra in March 2013 State Records NSW is highlighting a record series that tells the story of the efforts of a number of locals, villages and other areas that proudly presented their submissions in the hope of being the capital of the new Commonwealth.

- Browse the Gallery

Notice - Large format digital copies unavailable 15 May - 26 July

Please be aware that digital copy orders for large format items will not be completed between 15th May and 26th July 2013.
Large format items are bound volumes and original items larger than A3 size.
Any large format copy ordered/requested during this period will be completed after the 26th July 2013.
We apologise for any inconvenience.
Please note that **standard size copy orders are not affected** and will continue throughout this period.

- View our copies services page

Chance meeting with the Prime Minister in Penrith

As you are all aware the Prime Minister Julia Gillard was spending some time in Western Sydney, a few weeks back. As part of her visit to Western Sydney she made a stop in Penrith and as chance would have it our Director Jenni Gibson was in the area at the same time and was approached by the Prime Minister and her entourage while visiting the Western Sydney Records Centre. The Prime Minister welcomed the evaluation but did not make any promises.

The Crossing Bicentenary - History Council NSW call for event registrations

The History Council Website is promoting the following:

The year 2013 marks the bicentenary of the first acknowledged crossing of the Blue Mountains by European settlers. The crossing was made by Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson, William Charles Wentworth, a local guide, three convict servants, four pack horses and four dogs in late 1813. After three weeks of trekking through the rugged terrain the party reached Mount Blaxland serving as vanguard of personal terrain for the crossing. A conclusion was reached and it is to the opening up of the western plains of NSW to settlement.

The NCWSW will be running a year long marketing and publicity campaign to encourage and promote community engagement in the bicentenary through locals arranged events.

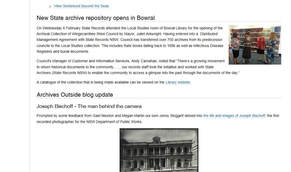
Promote your work to new audiences. The ongoing vitality of the history sector depends on an engaged and appreciative community.

Extension - Register Your Event for History Week 2013!

The deadline for applying to participate in History Week 2013 has been extended to Friday 15 April 2013.

To list your event or for more information visit the History Council website.

The NCWSW will also host a one day seminar to be held in May 2013.



Treasures found in the records

We often say that the records can vary in size and contents and this is surely true of the intestate files. The intestate files are generally small and contain little information. But, as we have found in the past, they can be a treasure trove of pages of pages and sometimes they can be over one hundred and fifty pages long containing more and requesting the record that this can be established. Records one of our regular researchers, Margaret Jones, came across a real find in the intestate series. The file is for a William Sotheran (a well known Argent Jeweller) 1837 (Kindell) no. 171. Along with the information relating to the estate, Margaret also located personal correspondence between William and his wife, as well as many other items of interest. One refer to the way to William Sotheran's wife Mary from her sister Frances. Mary was awaiting transportation to Australia on a hulk ship when Frances wrote the letter. Dated 15 May 1823 it is a very touching letter and provides a rare glimpse into the lives of the convicts.

> Mr Dear Sister May 18th 1823
> My dear Sister forgiveness the esteem which I feel in reading your letter which informs me that perhaps I may never see you anymore.
> Oh Mary to part without seeing you, you that I so dearly love, believe you, I hope my dear sister that this may be your happy lot to be with your husband, I hope you will be happy, I hope you will be happy, I hope you will be happy, I hope I will meet again having that esteem or may the Almighty part you one kind for more humanity than you was to my kind.
> ....My Dear Sister do not for a moment suppose that I could ever forget you. Oh no my sister never shal we should never forget each other. I hope I shall see you once more before I die. I hope I shall see you once more before I die. I hope I shall see you once more before I die. I cou ldn't pay for it and yet it cost Sovereign Fathers my Sister, by changes your hart (sic)....My Dearest sister I could say much more but I fear thou, thy I leave you will suppose (sic) this Mary I hope you will believe me to be your affectionate sister and sincerely wishes you well.
> PS Write as soon as possible and as often as you can. *I have send you a lock of hair and one extremely (sic) happy to receive (sic) one of yours.*

The letter while providing insight into the close relationship the sisters had, also sheds light on the difficulty of having to say goodbye to family and loved ones when facing the reality of transportation. While this particular intestate file is dated 1837 the contents within the file date many years earlier. The particular record in question was established because of the information in the file. Without the information in the file there would be many other interesting letters within the file. The transcript proves the saying that sometimes good things are in the most unexpected places.

- For more information on this series see Archives in Brief 33 - Curator of Intestate Estate Case Papers
- Search the Intestate Index

Sentenced beyond the Seas Update

State Records is always keen to promote its collection to the public. One way it does this is through talks to groups from local and family history societies and libraries. One such talk was given at Newcastle Regional Library for Seniors Week on Wednesday 20 March 2013 by Janette Pelosi, Senior Archivist, Contact and Documentation. Janette's project completed for *Sentenced Beyond the Seas* - Australia's early convict records and her talk featured many stories from these recently digitised convict records.

Have a look at the Blog post featuring Janette's most recent outreach events, articles and radio interviewed

We will keep you posted on future events.

- View *Sentenced beyond the Seas*

New State archive repository opens in Bowral

On Wednesday 6 February State Records attended the Local Studies room of Bowral Library to celebrate the opening of the Archival Collection of Wingecarribee Shire Council by Mayor, Judel Ashwright. Having entered into a Distributed Custodian Agreement with the Council, State Records has transferred over 1000 boxes of records from the predecessor councils to the Local Studies collection. This includes from books dating back to 1858 as well as Horticultural Diseases Registers and burial documents.

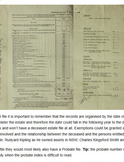
Council's Manager of Customer and Information Services, Andy Carnahan, noted that "There's a growing movement to return historical documents to the community. ..... our records staff took the initiative and worked with State Archives (State Records NSW) to enable the community to access a glimpse into the past through the documents of the day."

A catalogue of the collection that is being made available can be viewed on the Library website.

Archives Outside blog update

Joseph Bischoff - The man behind the camera

Prompted by some feedback from Carl Newton and Megan Mahle our own Jenny Stoppard delved into the life and images of Joseph Bischoff, the first recorded photographer for the NSW Department of Public Works.



> From my experiences with the Public Works Department plan negatives, Bischoff identified his negatives by accentuating a particular feature in the negative. Some negatives were identified by a tree, others by a fence, the Gentoment number one - which looks like a number seven. Thank you to my colleague Anna Grey who pointed this out.

Australia Day 2013 Roundup

This is a blogpost roundup for Australia Day 2013 highlighting some great online archival happenings as well as the response to our *Sentenced beyond the Seas* exhibition.

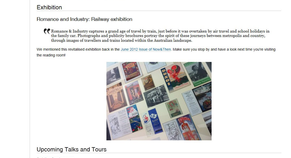
> This Australia Day was a great day for State Records as we had original First Fleet Convict Indents on display at NSW Parliament House in the *Sentenced Beyond the Seas* exhibition which was held in conjunction with Parliamentary open exhibition, *Turning Five Stories from Australia's First Parliament*. It is estimated that there were 5,000 people through the door on Australia Day which is a fantastic result.

Two of our eight over-arching themes which we highlighted in our exhibition were the convict transportation system that spelled the extinction in Parliament House.

> Did you notice that James Squire *[]of note: The convict indent for James Squire]* was immediately across the corridor from portraits of James Squire himself, his grandson and a Premier of NSW *[James squire's own photo taken after the grandfather was used to represent the family dynasty. They were pleased it is not deliberate, very much ill at ease]*.

Moments in Time

The always popular *Moments in Time - Can you date this Photograph?* series has gotten off to a great start this year.



Flickr update

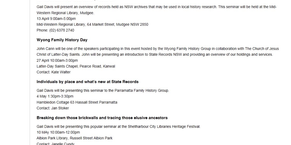
The latest additions include:

If you don't have a Flickr account you can still browse these photos on Flickr, many of which are also available on Photo Investigator.

Spotlight on deceased estates 1880-1958

Family historians will always find death a useful topic for research. It is one of the few events in life guaranteed for every family member and our society has created a range of interesting records related to the management of our dead. Unfortunately, deceased death duties and the administration of the wills. State Records holds several series relating to death including Deceased Estate files, Probate and Intestate files. Deceased estate files document a death duty paid on the estates of deceased NSW tax payers between 1880 and 1958. Under the Stamp Duties Act of 1880 and 1920, the probates or letters of administration could be granted until the death duty was paid. Exemptions where made if you earned under a certain amount and under the 1920 Act, widows and children under the age of 21 only had to pay half of the duty in estates under £1000.

Deceased Estate files can be valuable to the family historian who wants to reconstruct the lifestyle of an individual by viewing detailed lists of their possessions. Jewellery and heirlooms may be mentioned providing insight into the values and properties of the deceased. Land owned by the deceased may be mentioned providing information on the family's property accumulation and movements. Deceased Estate files are a valuable genealogical research, such as conditional purchase records as well as date and valuation records, to name a few. Stocks or a farming property may be fully listed giving insight into the running potential of the land and its productivity. A building may be formally valued and a description of the building supplied in the file. It is important to note that the information provided in a Deceased Estate file will vary in each case as one file may be a list of shares and the next a long list of valuations of family heirlooms.



When looking for a deceased estate file it is important to remember that the records are organised by the date of administration of the tax. It could take several months after death to administer the estate and therefore the date could fall in the following year to the death. It is also possible over family members to administer the estate and therefore the date could fall in the following year to the death. Depending on the estate size, the amount would vary according to the assets involved and the relationship between the deceased and the persons entitled to the estate. Some examples of notable deceased estate files include: Rudyard Kipling as he owned assets in NSW, Charles Kingsford Smith and Carrie Nellie Mellor.

If someone had a deceased estate file they would most likely also have a Probate file. The probate number is often listed on the back of a deceased estate file - the key to family when the probate index is difficult to read.

Deceased Estate files are a useful avenue for the family historian who wants to know more about their ancestors by looking at their possessions.

For more information relating to deceased estates see Archives in Brief 24 - Deceased Estate records.

- Search the Deceased Estate Index

Stay up-to-date with State Records

On our website

Subscribe to our website news - receive an email each time we post a news item.

Our social media channels

Facebook

Like Facebook we post updates, events and much more.

Google+

Join now. You can now find us on Google+

Twitter

If you like to tweet or just read tweets follow us on Twitter where we post news items and links of interest to genealogy and archival resources.

YouTube

On YouTube we have added some in-house videos such as "The Criminal Underworld of Sydney in the 1940s" and "Family History at State Records NSW" and other archival films from our collection.

Exhibition

Romance and Industry: Railway exhibition

Romance & Industry captures a grand age of travel by train, just before it was overtaken by air travel and school holidays in the family car. Photographs and publicity brochures portray the spirit of those journeys between metropolis and country, through images of travellers and towns located within the Australian landscape.

We mentioned this revitalised exhibition back in the June 2012 issue of Now&Then. Make sure you stop by and have a look next time you're visiting the reading room!

Upcoming Talks and Tours

Soldier Settlements

Belanglo Historians will be presenting a session on soldier settlements at the Society of Australian Genealogists.
6 April 1.30pm-3.30pm
Aquaswift Hall, 120 Kent Street Sydney

Sentenced beyond the Seas

Janette Pelosi will be speaking to the Hawkesbury Family History Group about Australia's early convict records in State Records' digitisation project Sentenced Beyond the Seas.
16 April 10.00am-12.00pm
Tebbutt Room, Hawkesbury Library, 300 George Street Windsor
Contact: Jan Kitchener
Phone: (02) 4587-4484

Getting to know State Records NSW

Gail Davis will present an overview of the holdings at State Records NSW at the Mid-Western Regional Library Mudgee.
12 April 9.00am-2.00pm
Mid-Western Regional Library, 84 Market Street, Mudgee NSW 2850
Phone: (02) 6378 2140

Researching at State Records

Jenni Carter will be presenting a session at the Blue Mountains Family History Society Seminar 'Following in their Footsteps'.
13 April 9.00am-4.00pm
Presbyterian Church Hall, 180 Macquarie Road, Springwood
Contact: Jan Kipperberg
Phone: 47 3410 5ab

An introduction to local history research

Gail Davis will present an overview of records held in NSW archives that may be used in local history research. This seminar will be held at the Mid-Western Regional Library, Mudgee.
13 April 9.00am-12.00pm
Lahlan Day Seminar Room, Mudgee
Contact: Kate Walker

Individuals by place and what's new at State Records

Gail Davis will be presenting this seminar to the Parramatta Family History Group.
4 May 1.30pm-3.30pm
Hambledon Cottage 42 Hassall Street Parramatta
Contact: Jan Stokes

Breaking down these brickwalls and tracing those elusive ancestors

Gail Davis will be presenting this popular seminar at the Strathfarrar City Libraries Heritage Festival.
10 May 10.30am-12.30pm
Albion Park Library, Russell Street Albion Park
Contact: Janette Curtis
Phone: (02) 4221-6273

Shipping records and State Records website

Gail Davis will present two seminars on Shipping records and the State Records website at the Port Stephens Family History Society
25 May 10.00am-4.00pm
Club Lemon Tree, Lemon Tree Passage
Contact: Barbara Brewer