



A.N.D.F.H.G. Inc. News Sheet

Issue 71 – Sept. 2015

ELECTED COMMITTEE 2015-2016

PRESIDENT	Peter Applebee
VICE PRESIDENT	Ivan Randall
SECRETARY	Margaret Flaiban
TREASURER	Suzanne Smith

APPOINTMENTS

LIBRARIAN	Gillian Swansson
DOCUMENT SCANNER	Sharon Norman

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MINUTE SECRETARY	Tammy Martin
	Helen Stein
	Jeff Cook
	Ian Cowley

FAMILY TREE MAKER CONVENER	Peter Applebee
LEGACY USERS GROUP CONVENER	Shirley Bulley

From the Committee

Hello Members,

August National Family History Month is now behind us, which has been successful across South Australia, from the feedback we have received from other family history groups. Our contribution of two Open Days, a special visit to the South Australian State Records at Gepps Cross and a Research Day at the Dublin History Group were all well attended and thoroughly enjoyable. See our Facebook page for photos.

Recently, one of our members had cause to have his computer repaired, thinking it was a hard drive problem. Three weeks later without the problems being sorted, it was found to be a motherboard problem. Without his backup plans, he would have lost most of the many years of vital information. Scary, don't you think? Don't let it happen to you. In saying that, we all have such a lot of family history information, photographs, contacts, emails and documents in one form or another, so we need to be a little more organised by backing up everything onto an external hard drive, CD or USBs.

Our User Groups continue to be well attended and new members signing up. If you have any queries on either of these groups, please speak to a committee member, or better still, come along and see for yourself.

We have some interesting articles to read in this month's edition, so get yourself a cuppa and have a good read. We hope to see you at our film afternoon, so just turn to the back page for more details.

Good hunting everyone!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				3rd Sept. Mid-Week Research Day 10 am – 4 pm		
	7th Sept. 			10th Sept. Mid-Week Research Day 10 am – 4 pm		12th Sept. Research and Networking Day 1 pm – 4 pm Committee Meeting 2 pm
				17th Sept. Mid-Week Research Day 10 am – 4 pm		19th Sept. 
				24th Sept. Mid-Week Research Day 10 am – 4 pm		26th Sept. Who Do You Think You Are Film Afternoon 1.30 pm

Online volunteers unearth details from Merchant Navy Crew Lists for 1915



Today marks the completion of an online volunteer project between The National Maritime Museum and The National Archives and the Crew List Index Project (CLIP). For the first time you can [search online](#) for details from all the surviving First World War Merchant Navy crew lists for 1915. The crew lists contain particulars for 36,000 voyages, including the names and personal details of 750,000 seamen.

As part of their commemorations for the First World War centenary, The National Maritime Museum and The National Archives began a four year long project in 2012, attracting the help of over 400 volunteers from as far afield as Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, as well as locations a little closer to home in Italy, Ireland and the UK. They transcribed the 39,000 crew lists from electronic copies of the documents. The span of the volunteers demonstrates the international interest and significance of these documents in highlighting the vital contribution made by the Merchant Navy during the First World War. No records for individual merchant seamen from this period exist, so the crew lists are the only surviving documents to showcase the efforts of these somewhat forgotten fighters.

Father and son heroism on 4 July 1915 earned the first Victoria Cross for the Merchant Navy

In researching the documents, the volunteers and staff working on the project unearthed untold stories, showcasing the often-overlooked bravery of the Merchant Navy during the First World War. One such story is that of Frederick Daniel Parslow, the first individual in the Mercantile Marine to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Parslow had been master of the cargo vessel Anglo-Californian (1912) and contracted by the Admiralty to transport horses. On 4 July 1915, a German U-boat was spotted about 90 miles from the Irish Coast. Parslow stood his ground heroically against the enemy for hours, but despite the submarine having used the last of her torpedoes prior to the encounter, the Germans were still able to mount a furious attack on the Anglo-Californian with their remaining weaponry. Parslow was killed by one of the numerous shells that were aimed at the bridge of the ship. The second mate was forced to lie down amongst the wreckage to continue navigating, until assistance could reach the ship and escort her in to Queenstown. The second mate happened to be Parslow's eldest son, bearing the same name.

For his gallantry, Parslow was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously and he became the first individual in the Merchant Navy to receive this honour, although he had to be made a lieutenant in the Royal Navy Reserve to bypass the rules in place at the time. His eldest son, who had also acted courageously during the attack, received the Distinguished Service Cross for his efforts.

NEVER SELL YOUR ANCESTORS SHORT

**By Willie O’Kane, Irish World Heritage Centre, Co Tyrone, Ireland
and published in the RootsIreland e-CLANN Magazine**

Family history research can sometimes unearth a forebear we would prefer not to have, but there are ways of getting around such problems. Genealogy is a bit like archaeology; it is about digging up the past, albeit in a figurative rather than a literal sense. But, whereas archaeology is generalised and the common ancestors it examines are comfortably remote in time from us, genealogy is much more person specific. It is our very own bloodline we are talking about here, and if the quest for information brings to light some unsavoury details we just have to make the best of it. Some twigs on the family tree are best glossed over, or even snipped off, and some of us have a forebear or two who, if mentioned in conversation, provoke a polite cough and a change of subject.

Genealogists, not surprisingly, sometimes encounter these lesser celebrated specimens of a family’s past, and it has been known for researchers to go to elaborate lengths to present the facts as palatably as possible. Whilst genealogists as a rule confine themselves to the unadorned facts, it has been known for some to embellish certain awkward details that might get in the way of a good story, as the following case illustrates.

An eminent American businessman, after making it big in stocks and bonds in the 1940s, decided to have his family tree researched and framed for public display in his office. However, a certain great-uncle on his mother’s side proved particularly elusive. Family friends and professional researchers alike could get no farther than his year of birth, in 1842. However, convinced that his ancestor must have been, like himself, a particularly gifted individual, the businessman offered \$10,000 to anyone who could come up with the goods.

Eventually an intrepid genealogist, after two years digging in every conceivable source, discovered that the great-uncle in question had been a thoroughly unpleasant piece of work, who formal education had ended at age seven after he had poisoned six dogs and knifed two teachers in a school in Maryland. He soon graduated to a life of robbery and formed his own gang at the age of twelve, robbing shops and blowing up several buildings in Virginia and the Carolinas. He joined the Confederate Army on the outbreak of the Civil War, and then switched sides in 1864 prior to Union victory. Afterwards, he moved further west and resumed his career of robbery and murder, concentrating on banks and railways. Finally, he was captured and eventually executed by electric chair in San Quentin Prison, California, at age 58, after ten years incarceration on Death Row.

Knowing that such deflating revelations would scupper any chance of the promised large fee, the genealogist decided that, in this case, presentation must take precedence over the facts. Accordingly, and without actually going into specific detail, he presented his client with a short, but glowing report that neatly summed up his findings.

“Dear Sir,

I am extremely happy to report that, after many difficulties, my research has established that your great-uncle was indeed a man of exceptional achievements, whose character was marked by a commendable reticence that courted no publicity or praise for anything he did. After completing his education at an early age, he devoted most of his adult life to the noble cause of more equitably distributing wealth in our society, a path which involved him in direct dealings with most of our leading finance and transportation companies in several states. When war threatened our nation, he was quick to offer his services, showing favour to no one clique or cause, but in the interests of all. Later he undertook a long term of public office in one of our foremost law-enforcement establishments, before finally accepting the distinction offered him of occupying a chair in applied electricity. He maintained his position until, like many illustrious

predecessors, he died in harness. All who were with him at the end remember that he was possessed of great energy and drive, and confirm that he left his life in a blaze of glory.”

All of which proves, once again, that it's not what you say but how you say it that really counts.

Who was Alexander Tolmer?



Many historians credit him with being singlehandedly responsible for saving South Australia from bankruptcy in the 1850's, but today, most people don't even know his name.

Alexander Tolmer was born in London in 1815 to French parents. At the age of 17 he joined the 16th Lancers in the British Cavalry, and served in the Portuguese Civil war, being twice wounded and decorated by the Emperor, Don Pedro.

After his return to England, his relationship with his father was very strained. This encouraged him to emigrate to South Australia in 1839 with his wife Mary Dunning (nee CARTER) and their son Alexander Henry Dunning TOLMER, arriving at Port Adelaide on February 4th, 1840.

Alexander had a fiery temperament, and after repeated altercations with sailors aboard the *Brakenmoor*, he gained the reputation as a brawler. He was hasty tempered, quarrelsome and would not

suffer fools gladly, and these traits made him many enemies in his lifetime.

After his arrival in South Australia, thanks to a glowing letter of introduction from his regimental Colonel Brotherton, he was appointed Sub-Inspector of Police and established a much-needed Mounted Police Branch. He and his men energetically hunted down cattle thieves, bushrangers and sly-grog makers. They also settled land disputes between the new settlers and the Aborigines. His Mounted Branch was so successful, that in 1852 he was appointed Commissioner of Police.

By then, however, the colony was in deep financial trouble. After the discovery of gold in Victoria, 20,000 men, most of the male population of the state, abandoned their businesses, mines and farms, and travelled east to the enticing goldfields in the hope of making their fortunes. They drained their bank accounts, hung signs saying "Gone to the Diggings" on the doors of their homes and businesses and abandoned the city. Crime was rife, and mortgages and business loans were not repaid, causing a collapse of the banks. Adelaide was described as "a ghost town resembling the cities of Southern Europe during siesta". The Kapunda and Burra mines were closed, and business came to a virtual standstill.

Commissioner Tolmer proposed that a "Gold Escort" service be established, to bring the gold that was found by the South Australians back to Adelaide under Police protection, instead of it being deposited into banks in Victoria. This would help to revitalize the South Australian economy. The proposal was met with enthusiasm by the Governor, Sir Henry Young, and Tolmer, together with a party of mounted troopers, set off for the diggings at Mt. Alexander outside Bendigo, in March 1852.

Between March 1852 and December 1853, a total of eighteen gold escorts brought an incredible amount of 328,509 ounces of gold from Bendigo back to Adelaide, valued at over £2,000,000. These trips between Bendigo and Adelaide were fraught with danger, and he

documented many of these adventures in his book "Reminiscences of an Adventurous and Chequered Career at Home and at the Antipodes" in 1882.

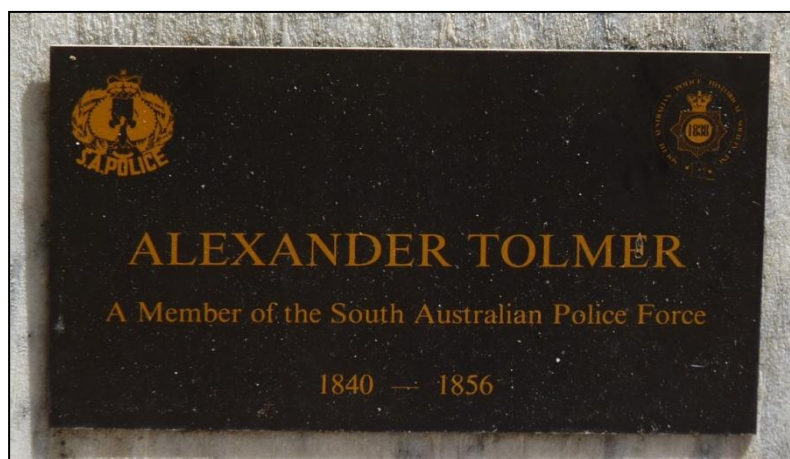
In November 1852, the South Australian Government established its own 'mint' at the Government Assay Office, and struck Australia's first (unofficial) gold coin, the 1852 Adelaide Pound. This operation was short-lived, and limited to twelve months.



Although Inspector Tolmer's ingenious scheme was successful, and saved the city from bankruptcy, his long absences leading the first few gold escorts were criticised. The Police Force had collapsed into disarray in his absence, and his fiery temper caused him to have a number of public disputes with his subordinates. An official inquiry was held, and he was demoted in November 1853, accused of neglect of duty. He remained in the police force, first as an inspector and then a superintendent, until he was dismissed in March 1856 by Commissioner P. Egerton Warburton, with whom he frequently clashed.

Subsequently Tolmer took on several other government appointments, including Crown Lands Ranger and Sub-Inspector of Credit Lands, all at hugely reduced salaries.

Alexander Tolmer died at Mitcham of uraemia on 7 March, 1890, and was buried in the Mitcham Anglican Cemetery.



GenScriber – a FREE Transcription Tool for Genealogy Research



One of the best tools for transcribing old handwritten documents is called **GenScriber**, a FREE program for Windows and Linux created by Les Hardy. A Macintosh version is also available although it operates as a Windows version packaged inside a wineskin wrapper. While not ideal, the “pseudo-Windows” version is still a reasonable solution for Macintosh users.

GenScriber is a transcription editor for census records, church records, birth, marriage, baptisms, burials, index records, and more. GenScriber is useful for transcribing both free-form text as well as columns of data, such as U.S. census records. It is designed to be used for easily transcribing digital images of old, handwritten documents.

GenScriber is simple to use. First, store the image of the document you wish to transcribe someplace on your hard drive or on external media, such as a flash drive or external hard drive. Launch GenScriber and point it to the folder that holds the document images you want to transcribe, click on the file and then start transcribing. GenScriber displays a “split screen” with the top half of the screen showing the image and the lower half is your worksheet for transcription. Images may be rotated, zoomed and various filters applied.

Unlike the more common method of transcribing to spreadsheets, The GenScriber worksheet is not a spreadsheet. It will not change dates or numerical input. All cell inputs are alphanumeric. No assumptions are made about the data type. Dates and values remain exactly as you entered them.

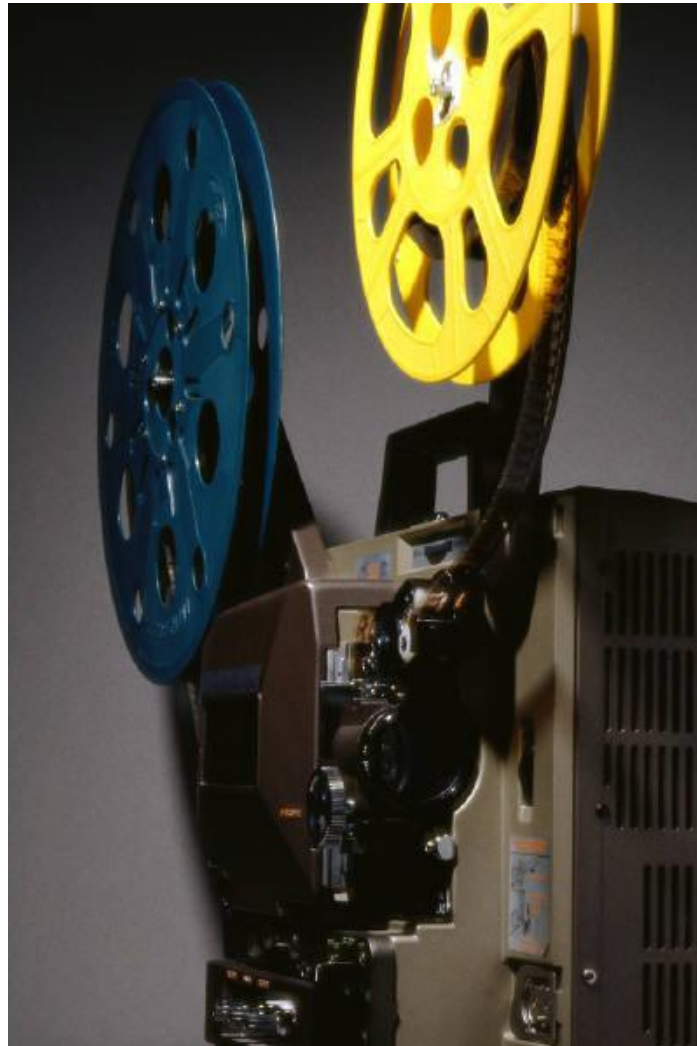
Of course, any data entry program is only as good as its ability to import from and export to other applications. GenScriber will import and export several different formats. It can import a GEDCOM file. Imported files are always converted to CSV files. Exported files may be in CSV, ODS, XML or GEDCOM formats.

GenScriber is free for non-commercial use. GenScriber may be found at: <http://genscriber.com/genapps>.

Source: Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter

1.30 pm Saturday 26th September.

**Who Do You Think You Are
– Film Afternoon.**



**Program will be one Australian and one UK
Personality.**



Adelaide Northern Districts Family History Group Inc.
Committed in Promoting Family History Research.