



The Butler Society Southern Cross Region

Newsletter No 42 - April 2022



SOUTHERN CROSS BUTLER GATHERING JUBILEE CELEBRATION 1972 - 2022 *Friday 25th March to Monday 28th March*

Celebrating History.....

The 26th March 2022 was the 50th Anniversary of the launch of the Southern Cross Region as a Branch of The Butler Society, and this Jubilee Gathering attracted members from all over Victoria and also interstate. We were very pleased to have Gladys Butler, one of our original founding members join us. It was great to meet up with friends we hadn't seen for a while, and to also welcome people who up to then had only been a voice on the phone.

.... and Making History

This was the first time that some speakers at a Rally in Australia gave their talks live via computer, using the Zoom technology. Last year the UK Committee broadcast an isolated talk by Turtle Bunbury from Ireland to members, but the technology has not yet been used at a Kilkenny Rally nor any International Rally. So yet again the Southern Cross Region has led the way, and created a world first experience!

We could not have done this without the expertise of our Webmaster, **Bruce Butler**, and we owe him a very big vote of thanks for all his hard work, and the time he spent liaising with our speakers beforehand. **Kerry Butler Phillips** did a great job helping to set up the display, and was kept busy at the registration table. And **Karyn Bugeja** persuaded people to spend money at the merchandise table. Bruce and Karyn provided the photos shown here. My thanks to everyone who took part and made this celebration such a success.

Abigail Butler, President

FRIDAY EVENING RECEPTION

The conference room was in a separate building from the main hotel, which was perhaps a good thing, as the noise level rose as people mingled and met each other! Many items from our Archive were on display on a large table, and there were 18 large panels of display material on freestanding screens, covering a variety of subjects including Butler Coats of Arms from around the world; family trees for the Dukes of Ormond, Viscount Mountgarret and Lord Dunboyne Butler families, possible Viking connections; the Butler DNA Project; and reports on the 2013, 2016 and 2019 Gatherings.



Unhappily the floods in eastern Australia meant that a number of people from NSW and Queensland had to cancel their trips in order to help friends or family members “mop up” as floodwaters receded. And problems with international travel prevented some New Zealand members from joining us.

In her opening remarks, Abigail reminded everyone that The Butler Society was formed in Ireland in 1967 and its aims were to bring together the diverse and scattered branches of the Butler family and its associated families; to preserve family records and histories; and to strengthen and preserve inter-family friendships through gatherings such as the one we were holding. As Abigail pointed out, these aims are still as valid today as they were in 1967. After the Second World War, it took time for borders to re-open, trade to recover, and people to re-establish contact with friends and family members in other countries. And here we are 50 years later, going through similar processes as we recover from the covid pandemic.



Over the years we have regularly been uncovering stories of Butler men and women who have made significant contributions to the development of our country in a variety of capacities. The Region aims to give due recognition to these people, and has established a “Butlers of Note” series. (We welcome further contributions.)



Abigail then gave a brief summary of some of these Butlers of Note, including **William Butler** who managed Kilcoy Station in QLD and was involved in the establishment of the township of Kilcoy; **Captain Harry Butler** a WW1 ace pilot; **Cecil Arthur Butler** who established Butler Airlines which became the largest intrastate airline in Australia in its day; **Hildred Mary Butler** whose ground-breaking work in bacteriology saved the lives of thousands of new-born babies and their mothers; **Sir Richard Butler** who began as a farmer, became involved in politics and then had a long and influential parliamentary career in SA; **The Honourable Mark Butler** who has successfully held a number of key portfolios in federal parliament; **Richard Butler** the author of many books including several historic novels based on early Australian historical events which have been adapted for television; **Susan Butler** the editor of the Macquarie Dictionary and the Dinkum Dictionary; **Kevin and Rhonda Butler** who established Blaze Aid which has grown to be a large interstate organisation providing much-needed support to communities recovering from natural disasters; and **John Butler** a WA musician who has an international reputation.

Tasty food was served, drinks obtained from the bar, and lively conversations continued. The evening passed very quickly.

SATURDAY FORUM

The first talk was presented by **Tony Butler**, speaking from NSW via Zoom. Tony spoke about the family of **Alexander Bishop Butler**. Alexander was born in Birmingham in 1805, the son of Edward Butler and Elizabeth Hammond Bishop. In 1820, at the age of 15, Alexander was apprenticed to Henry William Mortimer in London, along with his cousin Austin Butler. He must have shown promise in his career and impressed his master, as, on the completion of his apprenticeship, Alexander married his master's daughter, Charlotte Selina Mortimer.

Alexander worked as a gunsmith in London and then in Cheltenham. In 1838 he and Charlotte with their six children emigrated to Tasmania. Charlotte's brother, Henry Mortimer, had already settled in Tasmania in 1825 and a nephew, John Blanch, had arrived in 1836.

At the end of 1839 Alexander and Charlotte and their children, and Henry Mortimer and his wife and children relocated to Port Phillip. Soon after the ship left port, it was driven on to a reef. It was unloaded, which enabled the ship to be re-floated, loaded up again, and continued on its voyage, arriving 12 days after it had set out. Charlotte was heavily pregnant at the time (!), giving birth 10 days after their arrival to their seventh child. Alexander set up a store in Melbourne.

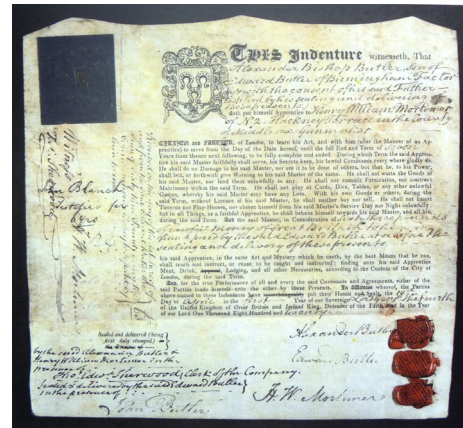
Roger Butler is also a descendant of this family. More details of Tony's talk will be in the next Newsletter.

Abigail then drew attention to another descendant of Alexander Bishop Butler – **Princess Shirley of the Hutt River Province**. Her father, Sidney Butler, was a great grandson of Alexander. Shirley Butler, as she then was, married Leonard Casley in 1947, and they began farming near Merriden in WA, before moving further north to a farm outside Northampton where they grew wheat. The Australian Wheat Board then, as now, sets quotas on how much wheat will be bought from each farmer each year. Leonard argued that his quota did not provide sufficient income for his family. When the Wheat Board refused to increase his quota, Leonard took steps to secede from the Commonwealth of Australia and to form his own Principality, which he named the Hutt River Province.

The full might of the Commonwealth Government was brought to bear on the matter, but Leonard was able to win the legal battle! (The Constitution was subsequently amended to prevent this happening again!) Leonard became Prince Leonard and his wife Princess Shirley. A cluster of buildings was erected on the property which became a tourist attraction and has been visited by many people from overseas. The Hutt River Province has its own stamps and currency (which are only valid within the Province), and also issues passport stamps.



Tony Butler (on screen) conversing with Abigail and Karyn.



Indenture for Alexander, apprentice to Henry William Mortimer.



Typical gun made by the Mortimer firm.



Princess Shirley & Prince Leonard.

Lynne Marks then told the sad story of **Edward Henry Butler** who was transported for stealing. He was born in 1803, the son of William and Jane Butler. At 14 Edward was apprenticed as a wheelwright, and then for some reason in 1819 when he was 16, he was caught stealing two gold seals in the company of a friend, John Perry. They were both sentenced to 7 years transportation, spending several months on a prison hulk, before being transferred to the "Neptune" for the voyage to NSW, arriving on 28 July 1820.

Edward was initially employed at the Old Lumber Yard as a wheelwright's apprentice. In 1822 he was assigned to a Mr Bell in Windsor, then, in 1823, to William Widget in Windsor. Between each private assignment he was returned to barracks and employed by the Colonial Government. On 19 May 1825 he received a Ticket of Leave which was followed by his Certificate of Freedom on 26 October 1826.

In 1830 Edward was living in lodgings in Phillip Street, Sydney, when he was accused of receiving stolen property, a watch worth 10 pounds. Also living in the lodging house was Elizabeth Humphries and they planned to get married. Edward was framed by another young man whose advances Elizabeth had rejected. Edward was charged, but he broke bail to go to Maitland for 6 months to earn enough money to hire a legal representative to plead his case. He then returned to Sydney and surrendered himself for trial. It is obvious from the records of the trial that the witnesses brought to testify against Edward were hostile, and even the Judge queried their trustworthiness. However the jury brought in a verdict of guilty, and Edward was sentenced to be hanged! The sentence was then amended to 7 year's penal servitude on the notorious Norfolk Island.

Edward served the full seven years of his sentence, receiving his second Ticket of Leave on 9 October 1837. Sometime after this he moved to Victoria. A brother, John Sedgfield Butler, had emigrated as a free settler to Tasmania in 1832, and another brother, James, arrived in Tasmania in 1843, also as a free settler. John Sedgfield and James subsequently relocated to Victoria and made contact with Edward. James Butler, who had been a tailor in Hobart, settled on a land grant at Newstead near Castlemaine, worked hard, and flourished. At some unknown date Edward joined James at Newstead, and worked in the township as a carter, carpenter and wheelwright. He died there on 24 September 1882.

After lunch Abigail provided a summary of the **history of the Southern Cross Region**, which was originally launched as an Australian Branch of The Butler Society following a picnic held in a park at Kyneton on 26 March 1972. An estimated 360 people attended!

After the success of this event, Bob Butler (from Bacchus Marsh), Bert Butler and Noel Butler began to organise a program of regular meetings and activities in and around Melbourne. Cousins and interested Butlers in New Zealand also became involved and membership numbers grew in both countries.

In 1976 it was decided to rename the Branch the "Southern Cross Region" in order to cover both Australia and New Zealand. In 1986 another Gathering was held in the park at Kyneton, and this time 520 people turned up! A booklet is being prepared which provides the full story.

Some of the group at Saturday's Forum.



Lynne giving her talk. (Note the equipment used for Zoom connections on left.)



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We then took a break for afternoon tea, during which **Gladys Butler** cut the birthday cake. Gladys and her husband Murray Butler were two of the original group of members who established the Branch in 1972.

Gladys with Bruce Butler & Rosie Bushnell, son & daughter of Noel Butler, one of our Founders & first President.



Marney Butler Jones then presented a talk on a topic which affects all our family histories – the First World War. Marney first started researching the records to uncover information about her grandfather, **Sydney Howard Butler**. We tend to think that most of the men who enlisted were young, and certainly there were boys as young as 16 or 17 who lied about their age to enlist. However, Marney discovered that Sydney was 35 when he enlisted, and his brothers were in their 40s. So Marney enlarged her researches to put her grandfather's experience in context. A total of 416,809 Australians enlisted, 25% of whom were over the age of 30. 216,000 were killed, wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. The impact on Australian families, and the country as a whole, was felt for decades after. Obviously the task of investigating the background of every Australian who enlisted is too great, so Marney has focused on every Butler. Her Register of 458 Butlers, with enlistment details, war records, photographs, and other miscellaneous information, represents hundreds of hours of work, and we are grateful to have access to such a valuable record.

In compiling her Register, Marney has also uncovered some fascinating stories about Butler women who played a part in the War. She provided details of 20 of the men and women included in her records as a sample.

Photo from Aust War Memorial

• THE 14TH AND 15TH AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE REGIMENTS EMBARKING FOR AUSTRALIA ON THE TROOPSHIP "DONGOLA" AT KANTARA. (DONATED BY COLONEL A.J. MILLS, DSO., VD.)



Conversation hummed around the bar before dinner that evening, and continued while we ate our delicious 3 course meal.



SUNDAY FORUM

Our first talk for the day was presented by **Catherine Goodyear, from New Zealand**. Catherine had hoped to be able to join us in person, but unfortunately was prevented from doing this, so, with the help of her daughter Elizabeth, she spoke to us via Zoom.

Catherine is descended from **John and Frances Butler** who emigrated from Gorey in County Wexford, Ireland, arriving at Lyttelton in New Zealand in January 1875. John and Frances were both 50 years old at the time, and travelled with their 10 offspring, 4 sons and 6 daughters, whose ages ranged from 25 to 12 years old. The family first settled on a farm in the Canterbury area, before acquiring land at Waimea Plains. Each of the four sons went on to acquire land in the area and establish themselves as farmers, and the daughters married local men. At the last count there were 375 descendants from this first couple in New Zealand.



Catherine & Elizabeth speaking from NZ.

Then **Michael Paul Butler** joined us from NSW, also via Zoom. Michael has done an amazing amount of research on his family history, tracking down an incredible amount of information, including the fact that his ancestor, **Sir John Butler**, was interred in a tomb in St Bride's Church, Glamorganshire in Wales, about 1285!

The family were involved in many historic events in Wales over the years. For instance, Michael has found records describing the part various family members played in the Civil Wars between King Charles and Parliament. Subsequently a branch of the family established itself in Antigua, in the West Indies! **William and Elizabeth Butler** lived in Antigua in the late 1700s. William was a merchant and also had business interests in America. The family owned sugar plantations and had slaves to work the plantations. The banning of slave trading in 1807 and the abolition of slavery by the English Government in 1832 had a big impact on the economy of the West Indies.



Tomb of Sir John Butler, St Bride's Church, Glamorganshire.

Of William and Elizabeth's 4 surviving children, John was sent to England to work in a bank; William Henry joined the British Army and saw service in India; and their daughter Margaret inherited her mother's slaves and remained in Antigua. The youngest son Lewis remained in Antigua for some years, then he also moved to London.



Painting of a sugar mill Antigua 1823

A brother of William Butler, another John, married Elizabeth Willock in Liverpool. Two of John and Elizabeth's sons, John (another one!) and Archibald, purchased a ship called the "Skerne" and used it to transport their families, with servants, household goods and livestock, to the Swan River Colony, arriving in January 1830. This is the only record we have, so far, of a "first Butler" arriving in such style!

Among other land grants, John acquired 10 acres next to a seasonal lake which became known as "Butler's Swamp". The Colonial Office later established a village nearby for pensioner soldiers, and when the railway line was constructed between Fremantle and Perth, a stopping point was provided here, also called "Butler's Swamp".

After lunch **Jenny Baulis** spoke about her family history. Her first Butler in Australia was the unusually named **Gamaliel Butler**, who was born in 1783 in Heston. Gamaliel's parents were John George Butler and Ann nee Venables. Gamaliel's grandparents were George and Elizabeth Butler. A family tomb for both parents and grandparents is in the churchyard of St Leonard's Church, Heston. Gamaliel studied law and was admitted to the Bar in November 1808. He married Sarah Paine in 1810, and between 1811 and 1833, Sarah bore 16 children!

Following the death of his brother-in-law in Hobart in 1822, Gamaliel sailed to Tasmania to sort out family affairs. On his arrival, he recognised that the Colony offered good business opportunities and decided to settle there. He wasted no time in having himself registered as an Attorney, Solicitor and Proctor with the Hobart Supreme Court and setting up an office.

Gamaliel obtained an initial grant of 2000 acres of land and then applied for a further 1000 acres. As the years passed, he also acquired blocks of land in Hobart and by 1847 had 23 which he rented out, as well as having his own house and grounds in Hampden Road. His practice expanded, with succeeding generations of Butlers joining the firm. The firm Butler, McIntyre and Butler is still operating today, although there is no longer a Butler partner. It is believed to be the oldest continually operating law firm in Australia.

Jenny provided a lot of interesting information about Gamaliel's business activities, and the part he played in the developing Colony. Gamaliel and Sarah's children also made their mark in various capacities. Further information about this man and his family will be provided in a future Newsletter.

The Annual General Meeting was held after Jenny's talk. (See page 10.)

We then watched a recording from the TV program "Who Do You Think You Are?" about **John Butler**, a musician who lives in WA and performs worldwide. John is descended from Elizabeth Gudgeon Butler who emigrated to Victoria when she was 16. She became pregnant and bore a son, Joseph Elijah Butler, when she was 17. The baby's father deserted her. She subsequently married a Chinese gold miner in Castlemaine, George Ah Kew, and they had 7 children. John had had no previous knowledge of this second family. The TV program managed to track down some descendants of these children.

Unfortunately George Ah Kew also disappeared, and Elizabeth was left destitute. Her eldest son, Joseph, became the breadwinner for the family at the age of 15. And Elizabeth sang in pubs and on street corners to get earn money. John Butler found this of great interest, as he admitted that he had started his own musical career by busking on the streets. For all the hardship, Elizabeth managed to raise her children to be able to get work, and saw them become established. Life gradually improved, and Elizabeth spent her last years living comfortably with one of her married children. All this history related to John's father's line. Interestingly, John's mother is also a Butler, part of an American family. Unfortunately the program did not investigate her family.



MONDAY DAY TRIP

We boarded the coach promptly for the drive to the city centre. It was pleasant to sit back, look at the scenery and engage in lively conversation, leaving our driver to cope with Melbourne's traffic. Our first stop was the Mission to Seafarers building in Flinders Street.

The Mission was designed by the Melbourne architect **Walter Richmond Butler**, and built in 1916. It is one of a network of Missions around the world which provide support for ships' crews regardless of their nationality. Mission staff help crew members with shopping, contacting family members back home, accessing medical facilities if needed, etc, as well as acting as a social club to help combat the loneliness of life at sea.



Our tour of the building started in the main hall, which has a stage and is often used for dances or amateur theatricals, and offers coffee shop and bar facilities during the day. Other rooms house an interesting collection of historical items. There is a large chapel in the complex, and an apartment upstairs used to be the residence of a live-in chaplain and his family. A domed space was originally used as a gymnasium, where crew members could keep fit between voyages. This was especially important during the years of sailing vessels. The building complex is a classic example of the Arts and Crafts period of architecture, and the tour was very interesting.



Abigail provided details of the life of Walter Richmond Butler, who was born in 1864 in Somerset, the son of Henry Butler and Mary Yeoman Harding. After he qualified as an architect, Walter moved to London to work and met Beverley Ussher, a Melbourne architect who was visiting England. Walter emigrated to Australia in 1888, and the two men set up in practice together.

Apparently Walter danced well, played a good game of bridge, dressed well and had impeccable manners. With those talents he was a favourite with Melbourne's society ladies. Their husbands, prominent businessmen, commissioned him to design their houses, office buildings, and country homes. He became the preferred architect to the Anglican church, designing alterations to the residence of the Archbishop, and also various churches. Through attending musical soirees arranged by the society ladies, Walter met prominent musicians and singers such as Dame Nellie Melba. He designed the lodge and gatehouse at her residence, Coombe Cottage.



We then had lunch in a private dining room, cooked and served by volunteers. The money we paid went towards the running of the Mission. The Mission relies on donations and fund-raising activities such as these tours to operate.



From the Mission we travelled to Williamstown, which was the original site of the settlement that became Melbourne. A lack of sufficient fresh water led to the Colonial Government moving the town centre to the banks of the Yarra River, but Williamstown still operated as a dockyard, and the area between there and the city centre continues to function as such today. On our arrival we toured the Seaworks Maritime Museum, a building full of interesting exhibits, and with a team of knowledgeable volunteers to give information about the various items on display.

The first item we looked at was a display of beautifully crafted ships models of all the ships in the First Fleet. Our particular interest was on the "Scarborough". The very first Butler to arrive in Australia was **William Butler**, a convict on this ship. Abigail gave a brief history of his crime and his life in Australia. (See our next Newsletter.) We also viewed a model of the Floating Dock. In 1852 a meeting was held at a local pub owned by **Walter Butler**, at which it was proposed to establish a hospital for seaman. There were delays in getting a building built and in the meantime an old ship was moored next to the floating dock, for this purpose. A chaplain was also accommodated on board to see to the spiritual welfare of the seamen, and no doubt conduct burial services from time to time.



Another model we looked at was that of a barque called "Archibald Russell". This was the same type and size of ship which **Captain Thomas Butler** sailed regularly between Liverpool and Melbourne in the 1840s, bringing out passengers and taking back cargo, mainly bales of wool. The model of the schooner "Enterprise" was also of interest, as a similar schooner called "Emergency", captained by **Captain Charles Butler**,



sailed up and down the east coast in the 1850s between Sydney and Melbourne, carrying passengers and cargo. Another schooner, with **Captain Henry Butler** sailed between Melbourne and Launceston. The final ship's model we looked at was that of the "Sydney" a battleship. As a result of a battle off the WA coast with a German Raider, the "Kormoran" during the Second World War, the "Sydney" sank taking all of her 645 crew members with her. One of the crew was **Ken Butler**.

Over afternoon tea in the adjoining Pirate's Tavern, Abigail spoke further about **Walter Butler**, the early publican. (He was no relation to the architect of the Mission to Seafarers.) This Walter was the son of Laurence Butler, a convict who had been transported to Sydney in 1802 for taking part in the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. After Laurence had served his sentence, he established a successful business as a cabinet maker.

Laurence died when Walter was only about 14 years old. Four years later Walter married Margaret Dunn and they had two children. Then he abandoned his wife and children to run off with another woman, Eliza. Walter and Eliza first went to Launceston. After four years, and with four children, in 1841 they moved to Geelong and then Williamstown, where Walter acquired one of the first buildings to be licensed as a hotel, which he named the "Ship Inn". Over the years he developed other business interests and became one of Williamstown's leading citizens. After Walter's wife, Margaret, died in Sydney in 1840 Walter married Frances Edwards, but continued his relationship with Eliza and with whom he had more children. A complete copy of the talk Abigail gave about this man will be provided in the next Newsletter.

All too soon it was time to get back on the coach and return to Eltham where the group dispersed after four days of interesting talks, good food, catching up with existing friends and making new, sharing family histories, and conversing on a wide range of subjects.

Annual General Meeting - 27 March 2022

This was held at the Eltham Gateway Hotel as part of our Jubilee Gathering. Abigail welcomed everyone, especially Jenny & Ralph Baulis from TAS, Roger Butler, Carole Osborne, Tiiu Butler & Donald Butler from NSW, and Greg & Robyn Butler from QLD.



1. Canadian Rally

This Rally was to have been held in August, but has again been postponed. It is now to be held in 2023.

2. Kilkenny Rally

The Triennial International Rally which was to have been held in Kilkenny in 2021 was cancelled due to covid. It had been planned to hold a modified version in conjunction with the Canadian Rally this year, but it will now take place in 2024.

3. Summary of President's Annual Review

The year started well with a crowd of people at our March meeting in Castlemaine, but then covid restrictions were again implemented. We then experimented with Zoom at subsequent meetings. My thanks to Webmaster Bruce for his patience while training me to use the technology. Newsletters continued to be issued, keeping members informed and connected. Kerry exchanged emails with members, while I replied to posted letters and had lovely chats with people by phone.



4. Summary of Secretary's Report

As Abigail said, meetings in person were interrupted, but we managed with Zoom. My thanks to all the members who have emailed me with their subscription payments, changes to their contact details, their Gathering registrations, and items for the newsletters.



6. Financial Report

Abigail presented the Financial Report for 2021. Overall income didn't quite cover operating costs for the year, due mainly to the higher exchange rate for dollars to euros which applied to subscriptions sent to Ireland. Our loss for the year amounted to \$70.72. The full report is attached to this Newsletter.

If you would like to receive a full copy of the Minutes of the Meeting, please contact a Committee member (see below).

Next Meeting - 19 June

Will be at 13 Wilgra Avenue, Ashburton, VIC 3147.

We gather from noon, for a chat, and to view Archive material, etc. Please bring your own lunch, tea and coffee is provided. The formal meeting commences at 2:00 pm. Afternoon tea is served afterwards. Any interstate members who are visiting Victoria around this date, please join us!

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