

Early South Australian Pioneer Deaths

Who was the “first white person to die in the Colony” and where was that person buried?

by Brian Stace

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Table of Contents

Referencing Notes.....	4
Overview and Objectives.....	5
<i>How This Project Began.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Defining “In the Colony”.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>The Deaths Considered.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Other First Deaths and Burials Identified.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Third Edition.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Just a Beginning.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Early Deaths at Sea and on Land.....	9
<i>Eliza Stace Records.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Existing Lists of Prior Death.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Early Kangaroo Island Deaths.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Pre Settlement Deaths.....	12
Captain Collet Barker.....	12
Died 30th April 1831.....	12
William Bryant.....	12
Died around 1833.....	12
George Meredith jnr.....	12
Died 1834.....	12
Seamen and Settlers.....	12
James Doine Thompson.....	12
Died 3rd May 1836.....	12
Infant daughter of Lucy Beare?.....	13
May have died 5th May 1836.....	13
Elizabeth Chandler.....	14
Died 1st July 1836.....	14
Joseph Hall.....	14
John Storey.....	15
Harriet Catchlove.....	16
Probably died 8th September to 5th October 1836.....	16
Benjamin Breaker.....	17
Walter Edmunds.....	18
E W Osborne and Dr John Slater.....	19
William Howlett.....	20
Samuel John Hoare & Robert Thompson Younghusband.....	22
Nepean Kingston Neale.....	23
An unnamed man (possibly William Scurr).....	24
John Playford.....	24
An unnamed man at Kangaroo Island?.....	26
Died before the 7th February 1837.....	26
An unnamed child on the <i>Coromandel</i>	27
Eliza Stace.....	28
Jeremiah (John) Calnan.....	29
Luke Broadbent.....	30
died 1837.....	30

SA's First Burial Ground - Reeves Point Cemetery Kingscote	31
Other Names on the Pre-civil Registration Deaths list	33
Who was "the first white person to die in the colony"?	34
<i>The Contenders</i>	34
<i>The Conclusion – Eliza Stace</i>	35
Other Recorded Deaths or Burials Shortly After	35
William Emery	35
Thomas O'Brien?	37
May have died 20th February 1837	37
Unnamed Clay infant	37
George Mungo Langcake	38
Harriett Gouger & her son Henry Hindmarsh Gouger	38
John White - buried 15th March 1837 at Adelaide	39
Others	40
Summary of Deaths	40
<i>Putting These Deaths in Context</i>	41
<i>The Other "Firsts"</i>	42
The Burial of Eliza Stace	43
<i>Contemporary Descriptions</i>	43
<i>Back-drop to Her Burial</i>	44
Where was "the first white person to die in the colony" Buried?	45
<i>Was It West Terrace Cemetery?</i>	45
<i>The Evidence for Glenelg</i>	46
<i>Where in Glenelg?</i>	47
<i>St Peters Church, Torrens Square</i>	47
An Infant's Grave Discovered	47
Contemporary Records	49
Light's 1839 Glenelg Survey and St Peters	50
St Peters Church and Rev. Howard's First Place of Worship	52
An Argument Against St Peters as the Site	53
Were Her Remains Shifted?	54
Other Possible Sites	55
The Independent Chapel, Smith Tce. (now Gordon Street) Glenelg	55
Old Cemetery Opposite the Lady MacDonald Hotel	57
Other Possible Areas	57
Conclusion – St Peter's Church, Torrens Square, Glenelg	58
What else is known about Eliza Stace?	58
Editorial Matters	59
<i>The Author</i>	59
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	59
<i>Copyright</i>	59
References	60
Overview	60
Frequently Cited Websites and Databases	61
Bibliography & Archival Materials	61
Index	64

End Notes..... 66

Referencing Notes

Footnotes are indicated by superscript numerals.

End Notes provide corrections to sources, plus some extra detail and explanation. They are indicated by superscript letters e.g. ^{a. aa}

References are cited in the text, footnotes and end notes in abbreviated form. Full citations are provided in "References" (before the Index at the end).

Front Cover Image:

'Landing at Holdfast Bay 1836' from a painting by John Michael Skipper [SLSA B 455]

Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia

Overview and Objectives

How This Project Began

The obituary of Joseph Stace (my great, great grandfather) includes:

*“Mr Stace was a colonialist of 37 years standing, having arrived in South Australia by the ship Coromandel, the first emigrant ship, in January, 1837, about three weeks after the proclamation of the colony. He lost his first wife shortly after, **she being the first white person who died in the colony.**”¹*

Barry Leadbeater’s Cemeteries Deaths and Burials² lists “*Stace Eliza*” “died 1837-02-09 aged 21 recorded in the Trinity Church burial register place unknown”. His databases S.A. Deaths³ and Colonial South Australian Pioneers⁴ show “*Stace Eliza died 1837-02-09 age 21, buried at Adelaide West Terrace Cemetery*”^a.

With that knowledge I then saw a Memorial at the Kingscote Pioneer Cemetery at Kangaroo Island, erected by the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association which listed deaths that appeared to predate that of Eliza Stace. I then found the Pre-civil Deaths List⁵ which listed other deaths prior to Eliza’s.

So, the question which I posed to myself was “was Eliza Stace really the “*first white person who died in the colony*” and was she buried at West Terrace Cemetery”?

I set out to answer those questions by seeking to identify all deaths at sea and on land before and shortly after her death and seek to answer who was the first to die in the colony. I also sought to identify the likely place of burial of Eliza. In doing so, I have sought to provide any available contemporary descriptions or records relating to those deaths and burials.

Defining “In the Colony”

There is some argument as to the date on which “*the colony*” commenced.

Some date it from the date of the U.K. Act⁶ establishing it in 1834. However, that Act did not establish South Australia; it merely provided the power to the King and Privy Council to do so (i.e., in legal terms, it was an enabling Act only).

The 19th February 1836 is the date of Letters Patent under that Act, which in its own words erected and established the Province⁷. However, at the date of the Letters Patent there were no colonists or any Government representative in S.A. or even on ships about to leave for it.

Another possible commencement date is the date the first colonists arrived on South Australian soil, arriving at Kangaroo Island on the *Duke of York* on 27th July 1836. However,

¹ *South Australian Advertiser* 8 July 1874

² See Frequently Cited Websites and Databases (in “References”)

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ South Australia Act (or Foundation Act) of 1834 (UK) – view at <http://foundingdocs.gov.au/item-sdid-37.html>. This site also provides a brief summary of the circumstances leading to that Act.

⁷ A copy of that document and an explanation of its legal effect and context is in “Letters Patent Erecting and Establishing the Province of South Australia 19/2/1836” published by the Library Board of S.A. 1964.

no-one on board that vessel was given the powers of Acting Governor, all were employees of the South Australian Company, so at that time the venture appeared to be a private, commercial one.

While this raises the argument that the relevant date is either the 19th February 1836 or 27th July 1836, all the early Governors and colonists took the view that S.A. did not become a Province or colony until its Government arrived and was formed on the 28th December 1836. That view was confirmed by Ordinance no 2 of 1843 by which Governor Grey determined that, to remove all doubts, the date of foundation of the State was the 28th December 1836 by Governor Hindmarsh's Proclamation⁸. As the stated purpose for that Ordinance was to establish for certain a date at which time all prior U.K. legislation was automatically operative in S.A. and after which U.K. legislation was only operative if adopted in S.A., this removes doubts as to the date of S.A.'s foundation as a separate legal entity.

Legally there is no doubt. Section 4A of the SA Acts Interpretation Act 1915 has continued the intent of Grey's 1843 Ordinance and provides that "*For the purposes of the law of the State, the State will be taken to have been established on the twenty-eighth day of December, 1836*". (The effect of Ordinance no. 2 of 1843 was carried forward into section 3 Language of Acts Act 1872 because there were doubts as to the continuing validity of the Ordinance.⁹)

That date is also the date firmly fixed in the mind of the public.

All celebrations of the anniversary of S.A.'s founding are based on the Proclamation date of 28th December 1836 – and have done so since the earliest days of the Colony (e.g. 35th Anniversary Dinner on 28th December 1871¹⁰ and 50th celebration on 27th December 1886¹¹).

Even Governor Hindmarsh (and Robert Gouger, the Colonial Secretary) used the Proclamation date as the date of commencement of the colony for the purpose of identifying the first child born in the colony being Gouger's son Henry Hindmarsh Gouger, born on the 29th December 1836, the day after Proclamation. In his diary, Robert Gouger recorded the birth of his son on the 29th December, "*claimed by the Governor as his godson, as being the first child born in the colony*".¹²

Another relevant example is that in August 1838 the Governor ordered a series of reports. One was that the "*Colonial Chaplain*" (Rev. Howard) provide a "*return of the number of Baptisms Marriages and Burial since the establishment of the province*".¹³ While it is not the same document, as will be seen, Rev. Howard's Register of Burials starts with the burial of Eliza Stace on the 9th February 1837, even though there were earlier deaths known to him, and this paper establishes that Eliza Stace was most probably the first person to die in what was then S.A. after Proclamation on the 28th December 1836.

Whatever date is correct in the strict legal sense, the Proclamation date of 28th December 1836 is that generally known and accepted by the public and politically.

⁸ See *South Australian Register* 15 January 1843 p 4 for a copy of the Ordinance.

⁹ SA Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) 1871 p228

¹⁰ "Old Colonists' Banquet" *South Australian Register* 29 December 1871 p 6

¹¹ "The Governor's "At Home" – Old Colonists' Roll Call" *South Australian Register* 28 December 1886 p 5

¹² Hodder, "The Founding of South Australia" p 204

¹³ *S.A. Gazette and Colonial Register* 11 August 1838 p 1

Within the context of the quote from the obituary for Joseph Stace, it must also have used the 28th December 1836 as the start of the colony as it is very likely that the Stace family were aware of two highly publicised deaths on Kangaroo Island prior to that date (Osborne and Slater from the *Africaine*).

The Letters Patent identified the area of land included in S.A., and the area of the sea included was “*every the Bays and Gulfs*” of the land identified. The description of the area of mainland S.A. and adjacent waters in the Letters Patent would have excluded Kangaroo Island except that it then went on to specifically include “*the Island called Kangaroo Island and all and every the Islands adjacent to*” it. The way it was then described excluded the waters between Kangaroo Island and the mouth of St Vincent’s Gulf and even the Bays of Kangaroo Island. (The boundaries of S.A. were subsequently changed, and its territorial waters considerably expanded.)

For a person to die “*in the colony*”, they must therefore have died on mainland S.A., on Kangaroo Island or within the Gulfs and Bays of mainland S.A. (that is, not otherwise at sea, even near Kangaroo Island), and to have died after the time of Proclamation on the 28th December 1836.

The Deaths Considered

I have limited my research and analysis to:

- Mentioning some of the deaths of explorers and sealers prior to the commencement of official settlement. I have not attempted to provide a complete list of all such deaths that may have been recorded or mentioned in contemporary documents. Those I do mention have not been researched beyond my initial discovery of them.
- The deaths at sea of on all vessels in 1836 and up to and including the *John Renwick*, which arrived offshore at Holdfast Bay on the evening of the burial of Eliza Stace on the 9th February 1837, including those of the crew of those vessels.
- The deaths on land after arrival up until mid-April 1837, by which date most colonists at Holdfast Bay had moved to Adelaide.
- The deaths mentioned in the Pre-civil Deaths List as being prior to Eliza’s and all those on the Kingscote Memorial whether or not they were shown in those records, or by my research, to be after mid April 1837.

Other First Deaths and Burials Identified

As well as identifying “*the first white person to die in the colony*” (that is, after Proclamation on the 28th December 1836), this paper also identifies:

- the first intending colonist to die (at sea) after embarkation;
- the first colonist to die on land in what is now South Australia;
- the first child of a colonist to be born in what is now South Australia;
- the first “white person” to die at Holdfast Bay (prior to Proclamation);
- the first “white person” to be buried in the colony (post Proclamation – but who died at sea);
- the first colonist to be buried in Adelaide;
- the first burial ground or cemetery in South Australia.

Third Edition

This is the third edition of this paper.

The first edition was published in 2012 with shorter summaries published as articles in “The Pioneer”, the journal of the Pioneers Association of South Australia in the Autumn, Winter and Summer 2012 editions.

The second edition published in July 2014 included the results of on-going research since the first edition, responses to the first edition and the articles in “The Pioneer”, and information supplied by the Glenelg Historical Society and the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association with which I had not previously been in direct contact.

The second edition did not change the conclusions of the first edition but:

- identified 2 additional deaths of early sealers whose names can be provided, one additional death on the voyages out plus a possible additional death on Kangaroo Island;
- corrected and confirmed details of the deaths of William Howlett and Jeremiah Calnan, provided dates for their deaths and removed them from contention for the title of the “first white person to die in the colony”;
- provided additional detail to the stories on several of the deaths;
- identified the writer of the only contemporary account of the burial of Eliza Stace and added more detail to that description;
- expanded the discussion on the location of the burial place of Eliza Stace, including considering other theories or possibilities.

This third edition is the result of additional information discovered while researching other issues. It does not change any conclusions, but provides confirming evidence of and additional information on:

- the death of Walter Edmunds in Hobart, not on the way to K.I.;
- William Howlett’s burial on K.I. prior to Proclamation;
- the names of the 2 children who died on the *Coromandel* just before its arrival at the Cape of Good Hope;
- the potential of a 3rd child’s death on the *Coromandel* just before the Cape of Good Hope.

Just a Beginning

While this is an attempt to provide a chronological list of all who died at sea on the vessels arriving up to the date of Eliza Stace’s burial (the last of which vessels was the *John Renwick* which arrived offshore on the night of her burial) and on land to the end of April 1837, it should be seen as a beginning, not the end of that process. The research I have undertaken shows that there were deaths which escaped the notice of the compilers of databases of deaths and passengers and which may be only obliquely referred to in a diary, letter or reminiscence of an early colonist, the discovery of which is a matter of chance. It is likely that there were other deaths I have not identified.

Early Deaths at Sea and on Land

Eliza Stace Records

The answer to the question ‘who was the first person who died or was buried in South Australia whose death or burial was recorded in a Register of deaths or burials kept by a Government appointed person’ is easy.

The first such Register was the Register of Burials kept by the Government appointed Colonial Chaplain, Rev. C B Howard¹⁴ and the first entry in it is “*Eliza Stace*” abode “*Glenelg Plains*” date of burial “*1837 February 9th*” age “*21*” the ceremony performed by “*Charles B Howard Chaplain of South Australia*”.^b The Register does not give a cause, date of death or place of burial for any death.

The Register of Applicants for Free Passage¹⁵ shows “*Joseph Stace*” “*brickmaker*” of “*Back St Epping Essex*” aged 24; departing on the *Coromandel* on 3rd September 1836. He is shown as married, his wife’s age 21, and no children^c ^d. (The Register did not show wives’ names.)

While the name of Eliza Stace is not given in either the Register of Applicants for Free Passage or Joseph Stace’s obituary so as to match Rev. Howard’s Register, the description in his obituary of Joseph’s first wife as “*the first white person to die in the colony*” matches Eliza Stace’s no. 1 registration in Rev. Howard’s Register. Both that Register and the Register of Applicants for Free Passage give her age as 21 and no other “*Stace*” is named in any passenger list for any vessel arriving prior to Eliza’s death (and the next “*Stace*” to arrive was in 1842). Joseph Stace had married Eliza Savill (or Saville) in Epping, probably at the Lindsay Street Congregational Church, on 28 February 1835.

The *Coromandel* arrived at Holdfast Bay on the 17th January 1837¹⁶ having arrived at Kangaroo Island on the 12th.

However, despite the claim in her husband’s obituary, there were other deaths in South Australia or as part of its settlement that should be considered.

Existing Lists of Prior Death

The Pre-civil Registration Deaths^{17e} list includes nine deaths prior to Eliza Stace.

A memorial plaque at the Kingscote Pioneer Cemetery¹⁸ at Reeves Point (and otherwise known as the Reeves Point Pioneer Cemetery) erected by the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association in 1996 gives seven names, five of whom are in the Pre-civil list^f.

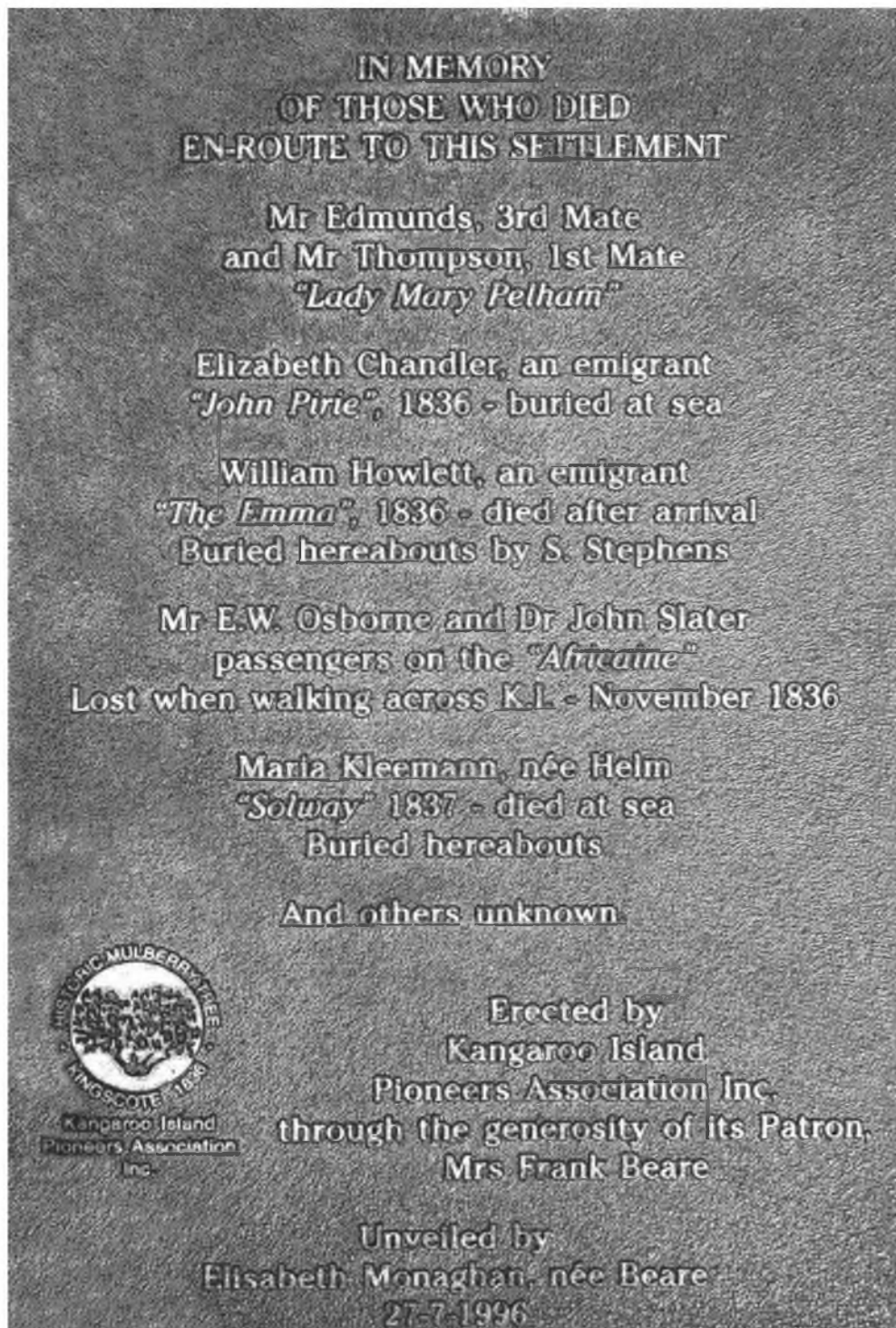
¹⁴ Known as the “Holy Trinity Burial Register”

¹⁵ Colonial Commissioners, “Register of Emigrant Labourers applying for Free Passage to South Australia” Registered no. 550

¹⁶ Journal of George Stevenson; 17 January 1837 (G F Angas Papers: SLSA PRG 174/1) & Bingham-Hutchinson; Diary, 17 January 1837 (SLSA PGR 1013/1/3/18)

¹⁷ See Frequently Cited Websites and Databases (in “References”)

¹⁸ For photos of this memorial and others referred to in this paper see photos by Dean Wiles on www.flickr.com/photos/9190916@N02/sets/72157625002608960/ or through www.advancekingscote.com then work through “projects” to “select images”.



Between them, these two sources provide eleven names for deaths apparently prior to Eliza Stace.

Leadbeater's Deaths or Cemeteries databases do not provide a chronological list of deaths, and do not include any of the deaths listed in the Pre-civil list or on the Kingscote Memorial.

However, two are shown in Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals¹⁹ database as "*d aft arr*" (i.e. "died soon after arrival"^g).

The following is a list of deaths of "white persons" I have identified with respect to South Australia's early settlement. It includes sailors, as many of them were expected to stay as emigrants²⁰. Even if that was not the expectation of their masters, there were several attempted and successful desertions on arrival at both Kangaroo Island²¹ and Holdfast Bay²², so it may have been the original intention of some of those deserting sailors to become emigrants. The list is in chronological order (as far as possible taking into account the uncertainty with respect to some dates of death) and contains a brief description of the circumstances of each death. Those marked with [PC] are in the Pre-civil list and with [KM] are on the Kingscote Memorial. Eleven of the deaths discussed in this paper prior to Eliza Stace's death are not listed in either of those sources and one death listed on each of them is incorrect.

Early Kangaroo Island Deaths

There were sealers on Kangaroo Island for about 20 years before 1836. Their numbers were reduced in 1827 when the most lawless were rounded up. In 1831 it was reported that there were 16 to 18 white men there. When the *Duke of York* (the first of the "first fleet") arrived on 30th July 1836, approximately 8 white men remained with about 16 aboriginal women abducted from the mainland or Tasmania²³.

An 1827 report on the lawless conditions on Kangaroo Island said that it was a "*great scene of villainy...where...a great number of graves are to be seen*"²⁴ inferring that many of the deaths were caused by fights or murders among the sealers and whalers. It is probable that one of these is the first "white person" to die in what was to become South Australia.

One story is that a former slave from America named Antonio spoke out of turn and told secrets best left unsaid and his crew mates decided that an example be made of him. He was collecting seal skins from Scots Cove near Cape Borda, Kangaroo Island an area with sheer cliffs of at least 100m to the sea. The story goes that he was lowered by rope to the seal colony at the base where he dispatched the seals, removing the skins which he sent up the rope to the men above. When the job was done, he returned up the rope which his crewmates cut when he was half way to the top. At this point his crewmates told him why he was being killed. This story was apparently a common story told to new recruits among the sealers to prevent others from telling secrets. This could have occurred sometime after 1810.

The names of most of those who died on Kangaroo Island prior to official settlement have disappeared from history. While the first of these to die on Kangaroo Island might claim the title of the first to die in what was to become South Australia, I have excluded them from the identifiable "first" deaths.

¹⁹ See Frequently Cited Websites and Databases (in "References")

²⁰ "Bound for S.A." passengers-lists (see "References") e.g. for *Duke of York*, *Rapid* and *Lady Mary Pelham*.

²¹ Heinrich, *The Man Who Hunted Whales* p 68-69 refers to five or six attempted desertions from the *Duke of York*. There were also desertions from the *Coromandel* - see *The Observer*, "A Pioneer of '37" 10 December 1898 p 14.

²² E.g. Ten sailors deserted from the *Coromandel* in January 1837. see "Pioneers and Settlers Bound for South Australia". description of *Coromandel* 1837 www.slsa.sa.gov.au/fh/passengerslists/1837Coromandel

²³ Heinrich. *The Man Who Hunted Whales* pp 49-50

²⁴ Major Lockyer as reported in Osterstock, *Time: on Kangaroo Island*, p 27

Pre Settlement Deaths

Captain Collet Barker

Died 30th April 1831 near the River Murray mouth

He was exploring the lower reaches of the Murray for the entrance to Lake Alexandrina when he was speared by aboriginals²⁵. Mt Barker is named after him²⁶.

William Bryant

Died around 1833 at St Peters Island

William Bryant is mentioned in many texts. He arrived on Kangaroo Island about 1820 as a sealer and soon after “married” two Aboriginal women from the Port Lincoln area - Charlotte and Little Sal. In the early 1830's Bryant with his women and children moved to St Peters Island, near Denial Bay. He died in 1833.

(After William Bryant’s death in 1833 his women became the companions of Mason and Jackson (sealers) who both died soon after getting with the women at St Peters Island. Joanne Overton dates this at around 1837 or later because Charlotte travelled to Port Lincoln after Jackson and Mason died and told the story to a white woman living there.)^h

George Meredith jnr

Died 1834 at Yankalilla

He was a sealer based on Kangaroo Island and was speared by aboriginals whom he had captured and used as servants²⁷.

Seamen and Settlers

James Doine Thompson

Died 3rd May 1836ⁱ on the *Lady Mary Pelham* [PC][KM]

He was the ship’s 1st mate and his death is described in detail by Alexander Dawsey, the 2nd mate, who obviously despised both Thompson and the 3rd mate Edmunds. Dawsey claimed in scathing terms that Thompson was continuously drunk from the time they left port until his death. He described four days of illness, and that Thompson believed that “*he was Surrounded by the Most horrid Forms and Wretched Phantoms hurrying him into an eternal world*”.²⁸ The death and cause were also confirmed by Captain Morgan of the *Duke of York*, in his journal entry of the 12th May. He said: “*by hard drinking brought on a brain fever which took (Thompson) off in a most horrid state of mind*”.²⁹

Poignantly, Thompson’s wife was on board as an emigrant (confirming that Thompson was intending to emigrate even though he was signed on as a seaman) and, as Captain Morgan

²⁵ Cumpston, *Kangaroo Island 1800 – 1836* p 114

²⁶ “Bound for S.A.” (search for “Barker”)

²⁷ Jean Nunn, 1989, *This Southern Land: a social history of Kangaroo Island 1800-1890* Investigator Press, Hawthorndene S.A., p 46

²⁸ “Bound for S.A.” Letter from A. Dawsey of *Lady Mary Pelham*, 3 June 1836. (Individual journal entries on this website can be found by using the link to either the vessel or the journal/letter writer and then scrolling down to the date.)

²⁹ “Bound for S.A.” Journal of Captain Morgan of the *Duke of York*, 12 May 1836

wrote, Thompson “*left a widow on board a stranger among a strange people going to a strange land*”.³⁰ This makes Thompson the first intending colonist to die after embarkation.

Infant daughter of Lucy Beare?

May have died 5th May 1836 on the *Duke of York*

On the 5th May 1836 Captain Morgan of the *Duke of York* recorded in his journal “*we had a mother restored to her husband and four children after a hard struggle for life*”.³¹

In “The Man Who Hunted Whales”, Dorothy Heinrich surmises that this was Mrs Beare and that it was the result of a complicated labour. Because there was reference elsewhere to the death of an infant of hers in 1836, “*it is likely that this is the event which occurred on board ship on the 5th May 1836.*”³²

There is no reference to this death on the memorial to Lucy Beare or her headstone in the Kingscote Pioneer Cemetery, but that omission is not conclusive as there is also no mention of her other children who had died.

If the event described by Captain Morgan was a difficult labour, and if the baby survived but died at sea, then the death would be sometime between 5th May and the *Duke of York*'s arrival at Nepean Bay on the 27th July 1836.

There is some independent corroborative evidence of this death. In her article on who was the first born South Australian, Beryl Schahinger says “*Thomas Beare's wife Lucy is believed to have given birth to a daughter who died aboard the Duke of York*”.³³ Beryl Schahinger has advised me that she based that statement on her discussions with descendants of the Beare family who believed that the incident described by Capt. Morgan did involve the death of a newly born female baby.

There is some support for that belief in Mrs Beare's state of mental health when she arrived at Kangaroo Island on the 27th July 1836 which was variously described as “*deranged*” and “*raving mad*”³⁴. That could be consistent with post-natal depression or depression following a still birth or a baby dying shortly after birth.

A family history of the Beare family also refers to this possibility:

*“There is reason to believe that Lucy Beare's condition may have been brought about by the birth and death of a baby girl (unnamed) on the voyage....The birth has not been substantiated but its possibility has been deduced from the fact that Thomas and Lucy had a daughter who was born and died in 1836, and that this child was not in evidence when the family joined the ship in the third week in February”.*³⁵

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid, 5 May 1836

³² Heinrich, *The Man Who Hunted Whales*, p 24

³³ Schahinger, “First Child Born to British Emigrants in South Australia”, *The South Australian Genealogist* Vol 30 No 1 February 2003

³⁴ Morphett, *The Beare Family*, p 3

³⁵ Holmesby, *The First of Many* p 22

Also George Morphett lists the children of Thomas and Lucy Beare as including “*daughter (unnamed), born 1836-6*”³⁶. This looks like the child in question, but, unfortunately, he gave no source for this information. But an “*un-named*” child is consistent with a live birth and a death of that child shortly after.

As will be seen, Mrs Beare died on the 3rd September 1837, and she died “*in childbed*”³⁷.

So, the evidence for the death of an infant of the Beares while on the *Duke of York* is not conclusive, and the evidence for this exact date is weaker still.

Elizabeth Chandler

Died 1st July 1836^j on the *John Pirie* ³⁸ [PC] [KM]

The Kingscote Memorial merely says that Elizabeth Chandler was “*an emigrant ‘John Pirie’ 1836 – buried at sea*”. There is much more to the story than that.

Early on the 2nd June 1836, Elizabeth had an argument with a fellow passenger “*in which the most disgusting and aggravating Language, was made use of by both Parties*”. Shortly afterwards she threw most of her clothes overboard and threatened to throw herself overboard, but the Captain prevented her from doing so. But at 8.00am in “*a terrible rage*” she jumped overboard, in front of her husband. The ship tacked about and recovered her alive. Despite treatment, she remained ill, was “*quite delirious at intervals, and the smell that comes from her Breath is uncommonly strong, and most disagreeably sickening*”. At 8.00am on the 1st July, the very same time as she jumped overboard a month before, she died “*after having endured very much indeed, by severe pain’s, which for the last two or three Days has been principally in her Head and Breast*”. She was buried at sea on 2nd July at 8.00am, “*sew’d up in two or three old Sack’s*” exactly one month after casting herself overboard. She was survived by her husband Charles and four children.³⁹

Captain Martin of the *John Pirie* was not very charitable in his record of the event writing:

*“one of our women passengers jump’t overboard in the heat of passion, ...I ...succeeded in picking her up just as she was going down, she soon recover’d but blam’d me for saving her, she afterwards refused to take any food or nourishment till she became really ill and...leaving a husband and four children one not ween’d, but it was a great blessing to them all, for she was the most horrid wretch”.*⁴⁰

Joseph Hall

Died 30th August 1836, a sailor on the *Buffalo*

George Stevenson on the *Buffalo* recorded on the 30th August 1836 the death of a sailor who “*died this afternoon of consumption. He was perfectly sensible to his last hour, and spoke of*

³⁶ Morphett, *The Beare Family*, p 1

³⁷ Morphett, *The Beare Family*, p 6

³⁸ Full details can be obtained from entries for journal entries on the *John Pirie* for 2nd and 27th June, and 1st and 2nd July on “Bound for S.A.”. Commentary is on the “week 15” page, and there is a “topic” of “Treating Mrs Chandler”.

³⁹ “Bound for S.A.” The Chandler family

⁴⁰ “Bound for S.A.” Letters of Capt. Martin of the *John Pirie*

his death with the calmness and hope of a Christian".⁴¹ Rev. Howard conducted the service by torchlight.⁴²

The *Buffalo* log shows under "Births and Deaths":

*"30/8/36-Joseph Hall, seaman, has this day executed a will in favour of William Noil, his messmate. 1.30 p.m.— Departed this life, Joseph Hall, seaman".*⁴³

Buffalo passenger Y B Hutchinson also briefly referred to this death (in amongst weather observations!^k) without giving a name, indicating death in the morning and burial early evening.⁴⁴

John Storey

Died 16th September 1836 near the equator, a sailor on the *Buffalo*

*"Friday Sep 16. Gloom seems daily becoming more the natural element of the Buffalo. In place of the mirth which last evening promised us, a most melancholy crossing of the line we have had. One of the sailors a young man named Story (sic), the only support of a widowed mother, fell overboard last night while heaving the lead, He was missed in a few minutes ...and a boat was lowered, but he was lost. To add to the misery of his fate the poor fellow was an excellent swimmer, and most probably suffered a horrible and lingering death."*⁴⁵

The *Buffalo* log (under "Births and Deaths") records:

*"6/9/36, 2.40 a.m.— John Storey, seaman, fell overboard. Hove-to and lowered boats. Fired rockets, muskets, &C., as signals. 4.15 a.m.— Boat returned without picking him up."*⁴⁶

A more detailed account of this incident, including the festivities which were cut short and identifying drink as a probable cause of John Storey going overboard was given by John Adams, a passenger on the *Buffalo*:

"On crossing the Line it is customary to be shaved or pay a fine to those who have crossed before; and as shaving was to be the order of the day, grand preparations were going on for a week or so before, such as making huge razors, tin crowns for Neptune and all his train, etc. On the evening of the eventful day the ship was hailed in the usual way from the sea, supposed to be Neptune himself, and a fairy-like figure sprang over the bows with a letter in his hand and darted towards the cabin, and then the usual inquiry of Neptune about his sons, with an intimation of paying us a visit on the following day, and then departed in a burning tar barrel. The decks were washed for his reception, and water came tumbling down in all directions, and those who remained on deck got pretty well drenched. The ladies who assembled on the poop to witness the departure of Neptune got their feet wet, and, finding they could not stand

⁴¹ "Bound for S.A." Journal of George Stevenson on the *Buffalo*, 30 August 1836

⁴² Ewens, *The Establishment of Trinity Church Adelaide*, p 5

⁴³ *The Register* 28 December 1925 p 9 (This article provides many extracts from the log of the *Buffalo*.)

⁴⁴ "Bound for S.A." Journal of Y B Hutchinson on the *Buffalo*, 30 August 1836

⁴⁵ "Bound for S.A." Journal of George Stevenson, 16 September 1836

⁴⁶ *The Register*, 28 December 1925 p 9

against the continual splash, retired below. Notwithstanding the promise of the Governor that they should not be interfered with, for some reason or other on that night the men had orders to heave the lead on both sides of the ship, which afterwards appeared to be necessary. The men took their stations and regularly called out the depth of the water. The fun was over and all had turned in.

About 11 o'clock one of those thrilling sounds from the boatswain's whistle, and the startling cry of a man overboard roused all hands, and five minutes could not have elapsed before a boat was manned and off in the supposed direction of the lost man. The lifebuoy was thrown out and blue lights kept burning (but it was ten minutes before he was missed, and it was known he was the worse for liquor), the boat was absent for more than an hour, and all felt it was an hopeless case, and then fears were entertained for the boat, as there was a nasty sea on. The marines kept firing their muskets, and lights flared all about the tops of the ship.

At last the excitement was so great that the Governor ordered a cannon to be loaded; but before that was done, and as I was standing by the gangway with one of the petty officers, I caught sight of the boat, and the next time she rose on a wave the petty officer saw her and reported her, to the great joy of all. The officer of the boat reported that they had been unsuccessful in their search, and all turned in with heavy hearts: and on the following day, instead of festivities anticipated, there was nothing but sorrow depicted on the countenances of all, and a real mourning among his shipmates, which did them honour.”⁴⁷ m

There is no memorial at the Kingscote cemetery naming either Joseph Hall or John Storey, probably because the *Buffalo* did not visit Kangaroo Island (it was met at Port Lincoln by the *Cygnets* and diverted to Holdfast Bay⁴⁸).

Harriet Catchlove

Probably died 8th September to 5th October 1836 on the *Tam O'Shanter*

Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals shows Harriet Catchlove as a passenger on the *Tam O'Shanter* and that she died at sea. Diane Cummings does likewise.

However, "Bound for SA" does not list the Catchloves as passengers on the *Tam O'Shanter*, nor does it mention any death on its voyage.

According to "Bound For SA", the only journal kept on the *Tam O'Shanter* was that of John White, which ended on Thursday 8th September 1836. While that journal is very brief, cryptic and misspelled, it does not mention any death on board the *Tam O'Shanter* while it records less major events. The entry for the 30th August (while in port on a barren island) does contain the cryptic note "*the rose lost a young woman off from the rocks*". While this was probably a death by drowning, Harriet Catchlove was not a "young woman" (according to Diane Cummings she was 48) and on the 28th he notes "*Barke called the rose*", so it is likely that a young woman from a barque named the *Rose* lost a young woman who probably drowned, but the *Rose* was not a vessel bound for S.A. As there is no mention of Harriet Catchlove's death in this diary, it is likely that (if she did die) she died after the 8th September – the last date of an entry in that diary.

⁴⁷ Adams, *My Early Days in the Colony*, p 1 - 2

⁴⁸ *The Register*, 28 December 1925 p 9

So, a Harriet Catchlove, passenger on the *Tam O'Shanter* probably died sometime after the 8th September and before it arrived at Kangaroo Island on the 5th October 1836.⁴⁹

As Harriet was 48, she may be the oldest colonist to die on the voyage out during this period. She was survived by her husband Edward (aged 51), son Charles (25) and daughters Jane (21) and Harriet (19) and possibly Maria.⁵⁰

Benjamin Breaker

Died 5th October 1836 on the *Buffalo* or on shore at Rio de Janeiro

A reference to this death is in an account of Rev. Howard's voyage on the *Buffalo*. "...when at Rio an infant named Breaker died aboard, the body was boated ashore for burial by Mr Howard".⁵¹

The journal of Y. B. Hutchinson written aboard the *Buffalo* contains this brief comment for the 5th October 1836 (the *Buffalo* arrived at Rio on the 4th) "*Breakers baby died while on shore, but was brought off*".⁵²

The *Buffalo* log recorded: "4/10/36 — In Rio Janeiro harbour. 5/10/36- Died this day, Benjamin Breaker, emigrant. 12/10/36— Sailed from Rio de Janeiro." ⁵³

There is a discrepancy between the first 2 accounts as to whether Benjamin died on board the *Buffalo* or on shore, and the *Buffalo*'s log is silent on the issue. As Hutchinson's diary was written at the time by an eyewitness, and the first account is given in a book many years later, it is more likely that he died on shore.

Rev. Howard confirmed a burial at Rio in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, apparently in response to a request for clarification of the payment by him of a fee relating to that burial. He stated that the fee (probably 8 shillings and 8 pence) was paid to the "*sexton who attended at the burial ground at Rio*" and noted that the English Chaplain at Rio probably received part of the payment, but that his (Rev. Howard's) "*services on the occasion were perfectly gratuitous*"⁵⁴. While the letter itself does not identify the person buried, the cover page of the document states that it is "*respecting fees for burial of an emigrant's child*".

Benjamin Breaker is not on any passenger list, including the original passenger list (accessible on Diane Cummings' website⁵⁵).

Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals passenger list for the *Buffalo* lists Isaac Breaker, his wife Jane and 5 children, one of whom is "*Mary Jane Maria (d aft arr)*". However, his deaths' database shows that death as 13th September 1837 aged 2 years 6 months. Rev. Howard's

⁴⁹ Second Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners Appendix 1

⁵⁰ Diane Cummings

⁵¹ Ewens, *The Establishment of Trinity Church Adelaide*, p 5.

⁵² "Bound for S.A." Journal of Y B Hutchinson on the *Buffalo*, 5 Oct 1836

⁵³ *The Register* 28 December 1925 p 9

⁵⁴ Letter Rev. Howard to Colonial Secretary 8 May 1837 State Records of S.A. GRG 24/1 record 124

⁵⁵ See "Frequently Cited Websites and Databases" (in "References") and for this reference "Pioneers and Settlers Bound for South Australia" passenger lists for the *Buffalo* www.slsa.sa.gov.au/fh/passengerlists/

Register shows the burial of this child on the 13th September 1837ⁿ. No list of passengers shows any of the Breaker children as having died before arrival.

There is no reference to the birth of Benjamin Breaker in the newspaper report of the *Buffalo* log. My assumption is that Benjamin was a very newly born baby when the *Buffalo* set out and for some reason was not listed among the passengers, but it is possible that he was born after they sailed but the event was not noted in the log.

Walter Edmunds

Died 24th October 1836. A sailor from the *Lady Mary Pelham* at Hobart (KM)^o

The Kingscote Memorial "*to those who died en-route*" lists Thomson (from the *Lady Mary Pelham* who died on the 3rd May 1836 on board that vessel) plus "*Mr Edmunds, 3rd mate on the Lady Mary Pelham*".

The reference in that Memorial to Edmunds is an error, at least in inferring that he died on the *Lady Mary Pelham* or on the way to or at Kangaroo Island.

Samuel Stephens reported to the Chairman of the S.A. Company in December 1836 that:

"Mr Edmonds (sic) third mate of the Lady Mary Pelham (had died) at Hobart Town and buried there".⁵⁶

Edmunds is referred to in Dawsey's letter relating to Thompson's death, but in a way that associates him only with Thompson's drinking and other behaviour which Dawsey saw as reprehensible. It may be that the reference to Edmunds in association with Thompson's death misled the person who prepared the list for the Memorial.

The Historical Researcher of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association, Chris Ward, agrees that Edmunds did not die on the way to Kangaroo Island and concludes that he is the Walter Sayers Edmunds who died at Hobart on the 24th October 1836 and whose headstone is at St David's, Hobart.

The Burial Register of St David's shows as no 126 "Walter Edmunds" buried on 27th October 1836 aged 24 a seaman. The headstone in St David's Park reads:

"Sacred to the memory of Walter Sayers Edmunds, fourth son of Mr George Edmunds of Worthing Sussex England who departed this life 24th October 1836 aged 24 years."

The records of St Andrews Parish Church, West Tarring in the district of Worthing, show the christening of 12 children of George and Elizabeth Edmunds. Walter Sayers Edmunds was their 4th son and christened on the 3rd April 1812. A memorial at St Andrews Church says:

"Sacred to the memory of Walter Sayers fourth son of George and Elizabeth Edmunds who died Hobart Town, Van Diemens Land on 4th (sic) of October 1836, aged 24."

⁵⁶ Angas Papers, series 1, p 605-620, letter S Stephens to Angas 23 December 1836

The *Lady Mary Pelham* arrived at Hobart on the 26th September 1836⁵⁷ and departed 15th October⁵⁸. It is likely that Edmunds was ill on arrival at Hobart (or became ill before departure from Hobart) and was left behind there.

Walter had a famous brother – the second son in the family was Rear Admiral Charles Edmunds.⁵⁹

While Walter Edmunds did die, he did not die “en-route” to SA, but after he had left S.A. on a whaling trip, and he died in Hobart.

E W Osborne and Dr John Slater

Died early November 1836 on Kangaroo Island [PC] [KM]

Six passengers on the *Africaine* tried to walk from near Cape Borda (near the north west corner of Kangaroo Island) to Nepean Bay, thinking that it was mainly open country, when instead it was almost impenetrable bush. Four just survived, Osborne and Slater did not. The Memorial in the Kingscote Cemetery to “*those who died en-route*” says “*Passengers on the ‘Africaine’ lost when walking across K.I. – November 1836*”.

They started out on the 2nd November, expecting a walk of two days. They got caught in heavy bush wherever they went, had difficulty finding fresh water and food and became exhausted. Osborne became seriously ill on the first day and said he could go no further, but they persuaded him to keep going. On the 6th November he was again seriously ill; the party heard a gunshot and presumed the *Africaine* to be nearby. Dr Slater, who was a close friend, stayed behind with Osborne and the rest of the party pushed on expecting to be able to get help that day. It was a further 4 days before they reached help at Nepean Bay, so exhausted that one more was left behind (to be found safe the next day). Search parties failed to find Osborne and Slater. It is probable that Osborne died first and Slater some time later as search parties found Slater’s footprints by themselves, the assumption being that he pushed on after Osborne had died. If that assumption is correct, then Osborne is a contender for the title of the first colonist to die on land in what is now South Australia.

The above summary is based on the account of Robert Fisher, one of the survivors. Robert Gouger recorded a much shorter version in his diary⁶⁰, given to him by another survivor, Nantes, which corroborates the essential parts of Fisher’s version. However, Mary Thomas, a passenger on the *Africaine*, thought it was likely that the “*hot-headed*” Dr Slater argued with the rest of the party and his close friend Osborne stayed with him when they split from the rest of the party⁶¹. In her reminiscences of the 1860s Mary Thomas adds mystery to this story saying that she thought that Nantes and Fisher (both of whom were employees of her husband) had been deceptive in their accounts and “*I could not divest myself of the idea that there had been some foul play somewhere, and I think so still*”⁶² and that “*they had a joint oath to keep secret*”⁶³ what had happened.

⁵⁷ *Colonial Times* 27 September 1836 p 4

⁵⁸ *Launceston Examiner* 27 October 1836 p 2

⁵⁹ Memorial at St Andrews Church West Tarring.

⁶⁰ “Bound for S.A.” Diary of Robert Gouger on the *Africaine*, 11 December 1836

⁶¹ “Bound for S.A.” Diary of Mary Thomas on the *Africaine*, 11 December 1836

⁶² Thomas “The Diary and Letters of Mary Thomas” p 88

⁶³ *Ibid* p 90

In her journal Theresa Chauncy (who arrived at Holdfast Bay on the *John Renwick* on the 9th February 1837) wrote for the 11th February 1837 that “*The steart (sic) of the Africaine lost himself in the woods his body has since been discovered*”.⁶⁴ This sounds like a reference to the “surgeon” Dr Slater.^P

However, later discoveries of bodies on Kangaroo Island were reported as being potentially either Osborne or Dr Slater as if his body had not previously been found.^Q I have not found any definitive identification of the body of either Osborne or Dr Slater.

More about this ill-fated expedition.

The full and harrowing account of this desperate attempt to cross Kangaroo Island written as a daily journal by one of the survivors, Robert Fisher, is in *The South Australia Gazette and Colonial Register* 8 July 1837 p 3. The view point of those remaining on board is given in the diary of Mary Thomas, a passenger on the *Africaine*, an extract of which is in *The South Australia Register* 27 December 1886.

There was some controversy as to the actions of the Captain Duff of the *Africaine*. He sailed from Nepean Bay for Holdfast Bay before any of the party made it to Nepean Bay.

Robert Gouger claimed that “*the gentlemen who undertook the unfortunate excursion ... did so contrary to the advice of Captain Duff, who with great reluctance acceded to their wish to land*” and defended Duff’s decision to sail on to Holdfast Bay without waiting for them.

Robert Fisher, one of the survivors, responded that not only did Captain Duff oppose the expedition but that it was Robert Gouger who did “*urge us to the expedition because he wished to obtain some information about the soil of the island.*” He blamed the deaths on the party “*following Mr. Gouger’s own scheme.*”⁶⁵

William Howlett

Died 11th – 13th November 1836 at Kingscote [PC] [KM]^r

The Memorial to “*those who died en-route*” in the Kingscote Cemetery says “*William Howlett, an emigrant ‘The Emma’ 1836 - died after arrival. Buried hereabouts by S Stephens*”. (Samuel Stephens was the colonial manager for the South Australian Company and was a passenger on the *Duke of York*.⁶⁶) The *Emma* arrived at Nepean Bay on 5th October 1836.⁶⁷

Pre-civil Registration Deaths, noting its reliance on that Memorial, says Howlett was a labourer aged 22. The passenger list for the *Emma* on “Bound for S.A.” shows him as an emigrant with no note as to his death, inferring that he reached Nepean Bay alive.

The Register of Labourers Applying for Free Passage shows “*Howlet William*” (i.e. one “t”) aged 22 a labourer from Aston, Middlesex as application no 295, embarkation no. 112 on the *Emma*.

⁶⁴ Chauncy, “Diary of Theresa Walker”

⁶⁵ *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* 12 August 1837 p 6

⁶⁶ E.g. “Bound for S.A.” and search “Samuel Stephen

⁶⁷ E.g. “Bound for S.A.”

On the 23rd December 1836 Samuel Stephens wrote to Angas, the Chairman of the S.A. Company, in which letter he reported those deaths of S.A. Company employees. Included in that list was:

*“William Howlett, one of our emigrants per Emma – at this place and buried by myself – see minutes of Inquest sent to you per Emma.”*⁶⁸

Theresa Chauncey (or Chauncy – the spelling varies in different sources) a passenger on the *John Renwick* wrote from Holdfast Bay that when she was at Nepean Bay on the 7th February 1837 she saw:

“a graveyard, for death had already been among them. There were but two graves, one man who had been drowned; the other has a well cut stone placed at the head and foot with his name, W Howlett, of Acton, painted on it”.⁶⁹

Contemporary records allow us to date William Howlett’s death, and to provide a cause of death. Charles Hare wrote from Kangaroo Island to George Angas on the 15th November 1836, saying:

“Until last Sunday we had nothing like Sabbath services here. The arrival of the Africaine with her settlers has furnished us with some material to build a church.... Last Sunday we had a coroner’s inquest on William Howlett who came out in the Emma – verdict found drowned; leaving it to a future enquiry whether he was drowned by accident, or intention, on the part of his drunken companion Cranfield”.⁷⁰

Hare wrote again to Angas on the 20th December saying:

“3 Sabbaths since we held a coroners inquest upon and buried Wm Howlett verdict “found Drowned” – this was the first fruit of ...” a grog shop.⁷¹

His first letter indicates that a Church service was held “*last Sunday*” after the arrival of the *Africaine* and that the inquest was also held on the same day. The first recorded Church service on Kangaroo Island was conducted on the 13th November 1836 by Samuel East, a Methodist layman who arrived on the *Africaine*.⁷² That fits with 3 Sundays before the 20th.

So the inquest into William Howlett’s death was held on Sunday 13th November 1836. It seems to have been held as soon as possible after his death, as the question as to what caused him to drown was left till later. Given the attitude of the times to working on Sundays (especially that of the Methodists) it is probable that he drowned on the Saturday, the inquest was held after the Church service on the Sunday and that he was then buried on the Sunday or Monday.

⁶⁸ Angas Papers, Series 1 p605-620

⁶⁹ “Was Sixty Years Ago” *The Advertiser* 28 December 1897 p 5

⁷⁰ Hare, letter to Angas, G F Angas Papers

⁷¹ Angas Papers, Series 9 p109

⁷² Haslam, “History of Wesleyan Methodism” p 9

So the date of his death was within the bracket of Friday 11th November 1836 to Sunday 13th and most probably after Osborne and Slater had died lost in the bush (the rest of the party stumbled into Kingscote on the 10th November).

This makes William Howlett the first of the colonists to die and be buried on Kangaroo Island and Osborne the first colonist to die in what was to become South Australia (if one excludes the sealers and whalers who were on Kangaroo Island before official settlement).

Although the Kingscote Memorial refers to Samuel Stephens burying William Howlett, that is not referred to in Stephens' journal which he kept during the voyage out because his last entry in it was in late September 1836.⁷³

William Howlett's "*drunken companion*" at the time of his drowning must have been John Cranfield, a fellow passenger on the *Emma*.⁷⁴ It seems that Hare suspected that Cranfield was actively involved in Howlett's death by drowning, perhaps even intentionally.

Theresa Chauncey refers to two graves. When I was referred to this extract from the journal of Henry Douglas in November 1836, I thought it must be a description of the death of the occupant of the other grave:

*"the first accidental death that I remember occurring on the island was the drowning of one of the emigrants who had come out on our vessel, he had crossed the small arm of the sea which intervenes between Kingscote and the lagoons, when the tide was out, but on returning was drowned in his attempt to cross at full tide. The Africaine passengers, who landed at the western end of the island, thinking to reach the settlement by land, must have met their fate about the same time. I saw one of them shortly after his rescue, he was much exhausted."*⁷⁵

This gives us a date of death within a few days as it says that the *Africaine* passengers (i.e. Osborne and Slater) must have met their death "*about the same time*". This puts this death around the time the survivors of that walk stumbled into Kingscote on the 10th November.

Henry Douglas was a passenger on the *Emma*. He identified the drowned man as having "*come out on our vessel*" which makes the deceased an *Emma* passenger.

There is strong evidence of the death by drowning of William Howlett, an *Emma* passenger, on the 12th November 1836. This is a report of the death by drowning of an *Emma* male passenger who drowned around the 10th November 1836.

There is no reference to the death of a second person around the same time in Hare's letter to Angas which refers to the inquest into Howlett's death through drowning. There is also no reference in Henry Douglas' journal to a second drowning around the same time. So, it is highly like that Henry Douglas is describing the drowning of William Howlett, not a separate person.

Samuel John Hoare & Robert Thompson Youngusband

⁷³ "Bound for S.A." "Week 32 – Visions of the Future"

⁷⁴ Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals

⁷⁵ Mullins, "Happy was our Valley" p 4 or Douglas, diary November 1836(p10)

**Died 15th October & 17th November 1836 respectively at sea
on the *Coromandel* - before Cape Town.**

Johannes Menge referred to these deaths in two letters he wrote while a passenger on the *Coromandel*. The first died between 15th October and 11th November 1836 and the second on the morning of 17th November 1836. He referred to the first as a “small child” (or that is a reasonable English translation of “*kleines Kind*”) and the second as “another child” (“*zweite Kind*”). The deaths are merely noted, but in the context of illness of many on board prior to arriving at Cape Town.⁷⁶

Death notices in a South African newspaper identify these children. “*Samuel John, son of Thomas William Hoare, aged 8 months*” died “*at sea*” on “*Oct 20*” and “*Robert Thompson, son of Robert Younghusband, aged 18 months*” died “*at sea*” on “*Nov 17*”⁷⁷.

These infants would have been buried at sea.

A report written by Cape Town medical authorities on scurvy which had afflicted the *Coromandel* passengers prior to its arrival there, refers to the death of 3 children before its arrival. That report infers that the deaths were due to poor lactation by the mothers due to diet and shipboard conditions and that “*this is not an unusual circumstance in ships bringing out settlers*”.⁷⁸

As Menge only referred to 2 such deaths and the Cape Town newspaper gave death notices for 2, it seems unlikely that there were 3.

Nepean Kingston Neale

Died 18th November 1836 at Holdfast Bay

In a newspaper discussion of who was the first born South Australian^s, W H Neale, an emigrant on the *Cygnets*, wrote that his son was the first and that “*he was born in Nepean Bay on the 13th September 1836 ... and died on the 18th November at what used to be called Holdfast Bay...he was baptized in the names Nepean Kingston*” as his godfather was Kingston (Light’s deputy).^{79 t}

Nepean Neale was born two days after the *Cygnets* arrived at Nepean Bay and his father William Neale was an assistant surveyor.^{80 u}

Nepean Neale, aged 2 months, was therefore the first “*white person*” to die on the Mainland as part of the settlement of South Australia and the first to die at Holdfast Bay, but he died prior to Proclamation.

Beryl Schahinger identified Emma Barbara Green, as the “*first child born to British emigrants in South Australia*”⁸¹. Emma was born on the 9th September 1836 “*on board*

⁷⁶ Menge, “Letters from Johannes Menge”

⁷⁷ South African Commercial Advertiser 30 November 1836 p11 available on www.eggsa.org/newspapers/index.php/south-african-commercial-advertiser/4-sac-1836-oct-dec

⁷⁸ “On Scurvy” *The London Medical Gazette* 8 December 1838 p 367-369

⁷⁹ *South Australian Register*, “The First-Born South Australian”, 20 April 1876 p 5

⁸⁰ Diane Cummings - the *Cygnets*

⁸¹ Schahinger “First child born to British emigrants in South Australia” p 24

Cygnets” off Kangaroo Island⁸², and she died in June 1837. However, regardless of which date one accepts for the commencement of “the colony” or South Australia, the evidence is that Emma Green was born in the waters off Kangaroo Island which, as has been discussed, were not within the legal boundaries of S.A. at that time. Emma Green was not the first such child born in S.A. but she was the first such child born in what did become S.A. (after those waters were brought within the boundaries of S.A.).

If Nepean Neale was born on shore (because the *Cygnets* had arrived two) days earlier, then he was the first born in the colony if an earlier date than Proclamation is used.

Sadly, it appears that the first European child born after the arrival of the colonists was also the first European to die at Holdfast Bay.

An unnamed man (possibly William Scurr)

Died between the 18th October 1836 and 9th February 1837 on the *John Renwick*

See John Playford (next)

John Playford

Died between the 18th October 1836 and 9th February 1837 on the *John Renwick*.

William Finlayson, a passenger on the *John Renwick* recorded that:

*“On the passage out a man fell a victim to drink, and a worthy brother of one of the early preachers of South Australia, the late Mr Thomas Playford, also died.”*⁸³

In his more detailed memoirs, Finlayson (who later became a Pastor and also headed the Temperance movement in S.A.) described the unnamed man as a “*poor drunkard*” and a “*respectable, well-educated man*” and blamed one of the class leaders of the small religious group on board who he said “*bought the emigrants wine and sold it at a profit to a drunkard after the Captain refused to sell him any*”.⁸⁴

Leadbeater’s Shipping Arrivals passenger list for the *John Renwick* shows “*John Playford brother of Hanna & Thos*” as a passenger, but does not refer to his death. Diane Cummings’ passenger list shows “*Playford John 26 labourer possibly died at sea*”. Neither of those sources indicates the death of another passenger (or of a sailor).

Pastor Finlayson gave no indication of the dates of these two deaths, although the context suggests that the “*poor drunkard*” died first and that the deaths were not very close to the end of the voyage. The *John Renwick* left on 18th October 1836 and arrived on 9th February 1837.⁸⁵

Theresa Chauncey (another passenger on the *John Renwick*) wrote a letter from Holdfast Bay on the 15th February 1837 in which she says:

⁸² Schahinger “First child born to British emigrants in South Australia” p 22

⁸³ “Old Time Memories”, *South Australian Register*, 28 December 1898 p 5g

⁸⁴ Finlayson “Finlayson – A Family History” p 5

⁸⁵ *Morning Chronicle* (London) 21 October 1837 or *South Australian Record* 1837 p 2 (letter from Wyatt, surgeon on the *John Renwick*)

*“We have had two very sudden deaths - one during the passage of a man named Shand [or it could be “Stand”] who was a drunkard and dropt down in his cabin, and before the doctor could be called he was dead; another since our arrival named Emery”.*⁸⁶

The first death she referred to is clearly that of the unnamed man Finlayson referred to. Both she and he referred to the deceased as a “*drunkard*”. (Details of Emery’s death on the 14th February 1837 are provided later.)

I cannot find anyone with a name like “Shand” (or possibly “Stand”) in any passenger list for the *John Renwick*. While the newspaper copy itself is indistinct, the journalist made a point of how difficult it was to read Theresa’s original letter, so the name in the newspaper report may be wrong. While the reference to a “cabin” suggests a passenger, it could be that this was a sailor who died in his quarters, which would explain why the name is not included in a passenger list. But Finlayson’s description of him makes him a passenger and Theresa wrote of him in the same manner that she wrote of Emery who was a passenger.

I originally thought that the best fit in the *John Renwick* passenger list was Phillip Thomas Bond, where the “B” could have been confused for an “S” or even “Sh” or “St” and the “o” confused for an “a”, but Jo-anne Overton of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association has told me that she has located a child born of Philip Thomas Bond in 1838, so the unnamed passenger on the *John Renwick* cannot be him.

The best fit now seems to be William Scurr. Still 5 letters in the name, it starts with an “S” and the other letters (if scribbled in tiny writing as Theresa’s was) could be confused with the journalist’s interpretation. Jo-anne Overton has searched deaths, births and marriages after 1842, BISA and the 1841 census and found no reference to him. He is one of only 5 names she suggested on the basis that she was unable to find a subsequent reference to him but the other names are more difficult to confuse with that given in the newspaper article.^v Leabeater’s Colonial South Australian Pioneers data base (which includes births, deaths, marriages and burials) only contains reference to his arrival, and nothing that would establish that he survived the journey (other than it does not show his death on board).

Theresa causes some confusion with respect to this death, because she also wrote a diary in which her entry for the 15th February says; “*Two very sudden deaths occurred (sic) on shore to day (sic), the effect of intemperance*”.⁸⁷

I have not found any other reference to any death on the 15th February. In her diary Theresa did not separately mention Emery’s death the day before, even though he was a fellow passenger on the *John Renwick* and she referred to it in her letter written that day, so it seems clear that one of the deaths referred to in her diary is that of Emery. According to the version in her diary, that still leaves one death unaccounted for, occurring either on the 14th or 15th. However, her letter (which was probably written before the diary) is clear and more detailed—so it is highly likely that the reference in her diary was to the passenger (possibly named Bond) who died during the voyage on the *John Renwick*.

⁸⁶ “Sixty Years Ago” *The Advertiser*” 28 December 1897 p 5

⁸⁷ Chauncey, “Diary of Theresa Walker”

I have not separately listed an un-named male *John Renwick* passenger dying on shore on the 14th or 15th because there is no other record of it (especially as it is not listed in Rev. Howard's Burials Register) and I think that this diary entry made some time later confused this death with the earlier death on board.

However, the discrepancy between 2 contemporary records written around the same time by the same person with similar audiences in mind does raise the issue of reliability of such records with respect to detail. Similarly the discrepancy between Finlayson mentioning John Playford's death, but Theresa Chauncey failing to mention it.

Most sources give the 10th February 1837 as the date of the arrival of the *John Renwick* at Holdfast Bay⁸⁸ but a letter from Wyatt the surgeon on the *John Renwick*⁸⁹ and also the diary of Theresa Chauncey⁹⁰ make it clear that the *John Renwick* anchored in Holdfast Bay on the evening of the 9th and the first passengers went ashore on the 10th. This becomes important when considering the burial of Eliza Stace on the night of the 9th February.

An unnamed man at Kangaroo Island?

Died before the 7th February 1837

Theresa Chauncey's account with respect to Howlett's grave also mentions a second grave on Kangaroo Island of a "*man who had been drowned*".⁹¹

Henry Douglas states that the death by drowning he describes (which I have concluded was William Howlett) was the first death by accident, and the reports of the inquest into William Howlett's death do not mention this drowning. This suggests that either this man drowned after the 13th November (and before Theresa Chauncey's arrival on the 7th February) or that she made a mistake in saying there were 2 graves.

Because we know that William Howlett drowned it is quite possible that Theresa was confused as to what she heard or saw and that there was only one grave, being of a man who had drowned – i.e. William Howlett and not 2 separate graves both of men who had drowned at different times.

Another possibility is that she did see 2 graves and that the second was not a person who had drowned, but that it was the grave of the child from the *Coromandel* referred to next.

If there was a second grave, and it was of a man who was drowned, then this death can be excluded as a death "in the colony" on the very technical basis that as a drowning death it either occurred at sea near Kangaroo Island or in one of the bays of Kangaroo Island. As discussed under the heading "Defining 'In the Colony'", the legal definition of South Australia at the time omitted any part of the sea surrounding Kangaroo Island, including in the bays. (On the same technical basis William Howlett did not die "in the colony" even if a date earlier than Proclamation is accepted, as he died in "*a small arm of the sea*".)

Also, if this death occurred after Rev. Howard's arrival (on the *Buffalo* immediately prior to Proclamation) it is likely that it would have been reported to him and noted in his Register.

⁸⁸ E.g. PASA www.pioneerssa.org.au/1837.html and Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals

⁸⁹ Original Correspondence *South Australian Record* p 3

⁹⁰ Chauncey. "Diary of Theresa Walker"

⁹¹ "Was Sixty Years Ago" *The Advertiser* 28 December 1897 p 5

Theresa Chauncey's comments are more consistent with a death and a grave that was at least a few months old, rather than one within the last month.

An unnamed child on the *Coromandel*

**Probably a child of John and Charlotte Boots
died shortly before 11th January 1837 near Kangaroo Island [PC]**

Mr Marshall, (a deserter from the *Coromandel* at Holdfast Bay) is reported 60 years later as saying (in the context of the voyage out):

*“When nearing Kangaroo Island a child belonging to one of the passengers died, and the father, a cooper by trade, put the body into a cask. The captain hove the ship to for the body to be buried at the place, and two sailors were sent with the father in a boat that came off from the shore. They all decided to stay on shore and desert the ship”*⁹²

This places the death a few days before the *Coromandel's* arrival at Nepean Bay. The *Coromandel* was sighted at Nepean Bay on the 11th but did not come into the bay until the 12th November 1836.

A similar story is given in “The Story of John Parsons” by Wilfred Purches: “owing to the death of a child [on the *Coromandel*] anchored [at Kangaroo Island] to allow the burial to take place, the body being carried ashore in a casket made by the father (a cooper)”⁹³. No source for that is quoted, and the story is subtitled “A not entirely factual account”. The language of this excerpt in that article and of the surrounding sentences makes it likely that the source for the information was the article giving Marshall's account quoted above.

Marshall's reference to the *Coromandel* hoving to suggests that the *Coromandel* stopped before reaching Nepean Bay, and if so that was probably on the south western shore of Kangaroo Island (as it appears that the vessel approached Nepean Bay by sailing along the south coast of the island, north around the eastern end and then turning back into Nepean Bay). However, his statement that a boat “came off from the shore” indicates that the place was where the settlers from the earlier vessels were – i.e. Nepean Bay.

If the *Coromandel* was near Kangaroo Island and the decision was made to sail on so that the body could be buried on land and not at sea, it makes more sense for Captain Chesser to sail on to Nepean Bay, where the other settlers were, and where at that time he anticipated that their voyage would terminate, than to stop especially, just short of Nepean Bay, to bury the child in an uninhabited area. That fits with a boat being rowed out to the *Coromandel* to pick up the body and the father plus 2 sailors. It also fits with the next part of John Marshall's story that those 2 sailors then deserted the *Coromandel* – why desert in the middle of nowhere when the settlement was only a short sail away and there would be plenty of opportunity to desert there?

However, John Marshall's account should not be relied on too literally – especially the fine detail – as this is a story given to a newspaper journalist over 60 years after the event. The time delay, his age and the intervention of a journalist will all have impacted on its reliability.

⁹² *South Australian Register* 28/ December 1898 p 6 or *The Observer* 10 December 1898 p 14

⁹³ Purches, “The Story of John Parsons” p 3

If this body was buried at Nepean Bay, it takes little imagination to see the cask being carried up the hill behind the settlement for interment there – near where the pioneer cemetery now is at Kingscote. However while Theresa Chauncey recorded 2 other graves, she made no mention of a child's grave, so it appears that this child was buried away from the other - or perhaps this was the second grave she saw.

There is no reference to this death in the several different data bases of *Coromandel* passengers that I have searched, nor is there other any reference to a named child dying around this time in any of the resources I have checked. There is no reference to this child in the Kingscote Cemetery memorials.

In earlier editions of this paper I concluded that this child was possibly Louisa Gahagan, a child of Benjamin Gahagan. Louisa Gahagan's father was not a cooper (so as to fit Marshall's story), but, according to his entry in the Register of Applicants for Free Passage, a "shoemaker". Also, in December 1837, in the Baptism Register, he is described as a "bootcloser"⁹⁴ which is part of the bootmaking trade.

While there was no passenger on the *Coromandel* whose occupation was given in the Register of Applicants for Free Passage as "cooper", John Boots was described in a South Australian Company record in May 1837 as a "cooper"⁹⁵ (his occupation given in the Register being "agricultural sawyer"). He also disembarked at KI⁹⁶ which partially fits with Marshalls account (except he did not desert). While the Register shows John Boots and his wife boarding the *Coromandel* without any children, and there is no mention of a child being born on the *Coromandel* who could have been this child, there is no record that excludes the possibility of the Boots having a child born during the voyage. If she was born during the voyage, she would have been only a few months old at the most and would therefore have fitted into a cask.

Whatever the name of this child she was the first white person buried on Kangaroo Island post Proclamation, and therefore the first white person buried "in the colony", but she did not die "in the colony" (i.e. on land) because she died when the *Coromandel* was "nearing" Kangaroo Island.

None of the three children who died on the *Coromandel* are referred to by name on the Kingscote Cemetery Memorial, even though the *Coromandel* did make its first Australian landfall there. They are however remembered in the last line of that Memorial which reads "and others unknown".

Eliza Stace

Died on or shortly before 9th February 1837 at Glenelg^w [PC]

The first entry in Rev. Howard's Register of Burials is "Eliza Stace", abode "Glenelg Plains" buried "1837 February 9th" age "21".

It is possible that Eliza's death was caused by the rigours of the voyage and the heat and conditions on arrival. Up to 70 of the *Coromandel* passengers had been badly affected by

⁹⁴ Holy Trinity Baptism Register entry no 38

⁹⁵ S.A. Co, "List of Servants of S.A. Co at Kingston 16 May 1837

⁹⁶ Haslam, "History of Wesleyan Methodism" p10 & 13

scurvy before arriving at the Cape of Good Hope.⁹⁷ However, on the 14th February, 5 days after her burial, Captain Chesser of the *Coromandel* wrote to Robert Gouger, the Colonial Secretary, requesting help with tracking down 10 deserters from the ship, and said that five of his remaining crew were sick and unable to work – “*because of the great additional labour which the desertions ...have adhered to their duty*”.⁹⁸ There must have been some reason other than just hard work why these sailors became so ill, so the same was disease affecting may have affected Eliza and brought about her death.

Of course, given her age and that she had no children before boarding the *Coromandel*, her death could have been caused by complications in pregnancy or childbirth. However, apart from her age, there is no indication of her having a child at that time who died and no indication of a still birth. Heat exhaustion is also a possible cause or contributor to her death.

It is probable that T. Y. Cotter, the Superintendent Surgeon on the *Coromandel*, attended to Eliza in her illness. ^x

Given the heat and conditions at the time, it is likely that she died no more than two or three days earlier.

Jeremiah (John) Calnan

Died 27th November 1837 at Encounter Bay [PC] [KM]

A memorial plaque in the Kingscote Cemetery states that Jeremiah Calnan, a passenger on the *Africaine* which had arrived at Nepean Bay on the 2nd November 1836 “*died at Encounter Bay (i.e. near Victor Harbour) February 1837, burial place unknown*”. He was “*born in 1797 in County Cork Ireland*” (making him 39 at his death) and survived by his wife Mary and four children. This plaque was erected by his descendants in 1996.



Calnan Memorial, Kingscote Cemetery [Photo by Dean Wiles]

⁹⁷ *Southern Australian* 21 July 1838 p 4 – an open letter by the *Coromandel* passengers in support of Captain Chesser

⁹⁸ Letter of 14 Feb 1837 by Chesser reported in *The Mail* 12 November 1927 p 11 under the heading “Story of Runaway Sailors” or for the original, S.A. State Records GRG24/1 file 38/1837

The generally told story is that he had crossed to the mainland in a whaler owned by one of the original Kangaroo Island sealers to look for better farm land. He died of an illness⁹⁹ and is thought to have been buried in the vicinity of present day Victor Harbour¹⁰⁰.

However, it appears that story was told by his family to obscure a less palatable truth. On the 28th November 1837 Judge Jeffcott held an inquest into the death of John Calnan the previous day. (I am advised by both a descendant of John Calnan and by the Historical Researcher of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association that they are sure that the Jeremiah Calnan listed on the Memorial and the John Calnan the subject of that inquest are the same person. Although the above memorial shows that Jeremiah had a son John, it also shows that the son John drowned in Backstairs Passage in 1853.) The verdict of the inquest was that John Calnan:

*“died of Delirium Tremulous caused by excessive drinking of spirits. He was taken unwell on the passage [from Kingscote to Encounter Bay] had only two glasses of grog and seemed recovering but on landing he got worse and on Sunday was quite insane. Capt. McFarlane gave him medicine and gruel and bled him. Powell and Cranfield attended him and everything was done for him as could. He was quite exhausted on Monday afternoon and died at half past 10 on Monday night.”*¹⁰¹

He was buried on the 28th November at Encounter Bay because his body was already decomposed to a state that it was not feasible to send it to Kingscote by ship.^{102 y}

There is a footnote to this death and inquest. Judge Jeffcott (who held the inquest) died 2 weeks later, on the 12th December 1837. He, Captain Blenkinsop and 2 sailors drowned while attempting to enter the Murray mouth, Governor Hindmarsh's son was one of the 3 survivors of the capsized boat.¹⁰³

This was the death of the first S.A. Judge, the highest ranking death so far and probably the first death by drowning in Australia of a knight. Sir John Jeffcott was somewhat famous (or infamous) for having participated in a duel in England in which he killed his opponent. – which was probably England's last fatal duel.¹⁰⁴

The Cranfield who was present at Calnan's death would be the same Cranfield who was involved in the death of William Howlett.

Luke Broadbent

died 1837 at Kangaroo Island [PC] [KM]

Pre-civil Registration Deaths states Luke died “*aft Dec 1836*” with a note “*arr SA1836 HMS Buffalo [Embark # 230]*”. Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals Passenger List shows Luke and Harriett Broadbent on the *Buffalo*; including Luke “*d aft arr*” (meaning “*died soon after*”

⁹⁹ Osterstock; “Time: on Kangaroo Island” p 65

¹⁰⁰ website of Hope Cottage, Kangaroo Island: www.hopcottagemuseum.com (Hope Cottage was one of 3 cottages built near Kingscote by the Calnan family, called “Faith”, “Hope” and “Charity”.)

¹⁰¹ David McLaren, letter from Encounter Bay to his father 29 November 1837 copy held privately by a descendent of J Calnan.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Hobart Town Courier* 26 January 1838 p 2 and *S.A. Gazette & Colonial Register* 6 January 1838 p 3

¹⁰⁴ *Sydney Gazette & Colonial Register* 6 January 1838 p 3

arrival”). Both of those infer his death at Glenelg or Adelaide shortly after the arrival of the *Buffalo* at Holdfast Bay on the 28th December 1836.



Luke Broadbent Memorial Plaque, Kangaroo Island [Photo by Dean Wiles]

However, the memorial in the Kingscote Cemetery to “*Baby Luke Broadbent 1836 - 1837*” says:

“Baby Luke’s parents, Harriet and Luke Broadbent and their children came to South Australia in the ‘Buffalo’, landing at Holdfast Bay in 1836. They continued on to Kangaroo Island where Luke was employed by the South Australian Company. The family stayed for a year or two before returning to the mainland where Luke squatted at Cherry Gardens, South Australia before being allocated his own block of land at Cherry Gardens.”

That memorial strongly infers that “baby Luke” died on Kangaroo Island after the family arrived in Kangaroo Island and there is no other reason evident as to why the memorial would be erected on Kangaroo Island when his family settled at Cherry Gardens in the Adelaide Hills. The *Buffalo* did not “*continue on*” to Kangaroo Island, so the Broadbents must have spent some time at Holdfast Bay before shifting to Kangaroo Island. The lack of a more precise date indicates that he died more than a few weeks after arriving in Kangaroo Island, which makes it likely that his death was after the 9th February 1837 (the date of Eliza Stace’s burial).

SA’s First Burial Ground - Reeves Point Cemetery Kingscote

Kangaroo Island was the first port of call for most of the “first fleet” and the Kingscote Pioneer Cemetery at Reeves Point is the oldest cemetery there.

The earliest surviving headstone at Reeves Point is for **Lucy Anne Beare** who **died 3rd September 1837**, and it is the oldest headstone anywhere in South Australia.



Plaque on Lucy Beare's Grave, Kangaroo Island [Photo by Dean Wiles]

Lucy Beare was the first white woman buried on Kangaroo Island, although William Howlett, an unnamed man and an infant (probably Louisa Gahagan) were buried before her.

More about Lucy Beare

Lucy Beare's headstone in the Kingscote Cemetery (photo above) says that she "*died in childbirth 3 September 1837 leaving five children under the age of eleven years*". Lucy was ill on arrival at Kangaroo Island (27th July 1836 on the *Duke of York*), had lost 3 or 4 other children in infancy and was in a highly disturbed state of mind on arrival in Kangaroo Island.¹⁰⁵ The child born on the 3rd September was named Mary Anne Beare. She lived until 1906, having married Fred Archer in 1860.¹⁰⁶

Chris Ward, Historical Researcher of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association, considers that there was a burial ground of sorts at Reeves Point prior to Lucy Beare's death, and that makes it South Australia's oldest burial ground or cemetery.¹⁰⁷ He bases his conclusion on the notes in Rev. Howard's Burial Register with respect to Lucy Beare:

"I hereby certify that in the absence of any duly appointed minister or other authority I, being requested to do so by Thomas Hudson Beare the husband of the deceased did bury the body of the late Mrs. Lucy Ann Beare in the burial ground at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island province of South Australia on the seventh day of September one thousand eight hundred and thirty seven before diverse witnesses."

For Lucy to be buried "*in the burial ground at Kingscote*" (before any official designation of it as a burial ground) strongly suggests that it was already recognised as such because one or more bodies had been buried there. Theresa Chauncey saw two graves; they are probably the graves commencing the "*burial ground*" at Reeves Point. It is possible that the Boots' baby (or whoever the child from the *Coromandel* was) was also buried there.

¹⁰⁵ Some details of her illness can be found in Heinrich, "The Man Who Hunted Whales" at pp 24, 44, 45, 54 and 63

¹⁰⁶ Information provided by Chris Ward, Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association Historical Researcher.

¹⁰⁷ Ward, "South Australia's First Cemetery"

If that is the case, this “*burial ground*” predates the burial of Eliza Stace at Holdfast Bay, and therefore constitutes SA’s first burial ground or cemetery.

While outside the date range of this paper, the Kingscote Memorial to “*those who died en-route*” also lists Maria Kleeman as dying in 1837.

A separate memorial in the Kingscote cemetery to Maria Kleeman gives her date of death as “*14th October 1837, two days prior to arriving at Reeves Point*” Kangaroo Island. “*The Kleemans, with their five children aged between 3 months and 8 years left Hamburg on 3rd June 1837. Their youngest child died on the voyage*”.

Leadbeater’s Shipping Arrivals Passenger List for the *Solway* from Hamburg shows Maria as “*died at sea*” but makes no mention of the child.

Other Names on the Pre-civil Registration Deaths list

Pre-civil Registration Deaths lists Thompson, Howlett, Calnan, Chandler, Osborne, Slater, and Broadbent in that order, followed by Ferdinand Kannenberg (not mentioned above), Gahagan and then Eliza Stace.

The reference in Pre-civil Registration Deaths CD to Ferdinand Kannenberg contains no information other than died “*1837*”. However Leadbeater’s Shipping Arrivals Passenger List shows a Mary Wallschlanger “*formerly Mrs Frederick Kannenberg*” together with some other Kannenbergs (but not a “*Ferdinand*”) arriving on the *Solway* from Hamburg on 16th October 1837. Even if a Ferdinand Kannenberg died on the *Solway* or (being a passenger on it) died after its arrival, the *Solway* did not leave Hamburg until 3rd June 1837¹⁰⁸, so this death must have been some time after that.

The Ship List website¹⁰⁹ confirms those departure and arrival dates for the *Solway*, shows Mary Wallschlanger as a passenger but does not indicate any “*Kannenberg*”. Diane Cummings¹¹⁰ also confirms the departure and arrival dates for the *Solway* and that Mary Wallschlanger was “*formerly Kannenberg*” plus supplies the information that there were 3 children of her first marriage with her, whose surnames were Kannenberg, but none of them are “*Ferdinand*”. The only death on board that she notes is that passenger Mrs Kleeman died on board two days before arrival at Kangaroo Island and that she was then buried on shore.

So, whether or not such a person died, their death could not be before June 1837.^z

Jo-anne Overton of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association has told me that “from family sources” she has discovered that Ferdinand Kannenburg died in Germany and his widow Johann Marie Kannenburg married Christian Wallschlanger who was her brother in law and whose wife Maria had just died and they were the couple who came to S.A.

Neither of Leadbeater’s Deaths or Cemeteries databases record any of the deaths listed above (other than Eliza Stace’s) even though two (Louisa Gahagan and Luke Broadbent) are indicated in his Shipping Arrivals database as having died shortly after arrival.

¹⁰⁸ This date is confirmed by the “Second Report of the Colonization Commissioners”, Appendix 1, p 10

¹⁰⁹ www.theshiplist.com

¹¹⁰ See “Frequently Cited Websites and Databases”

Who was “the first white person to die in the colony”?

The Contenders

Clearly there were deaths of colonists or intending colonists at sea or on Kangaroo Island prior to the death of Eliza Stace.

However, those who died before 28th December 1836 (the date of Proclamation) did not die “*in the colony*” (the claim in Joseph Stace’s obituary) because the colony did not exist before then. They have their place in history as deaths of colonists before the legal establishment of the colony, but not as “*the first white person to die in the colony*”. Similarly, those who died at sea did not die “*in the colony*” unless they died within the areas of the sea that were included in South Australia as delineated by the Letters Patent establishing its boundaries. So, deaths at sea (but outside the bays and gulfs of mainland South Australia) after Proclamation should also be excluded from that test.

The Boots’ baby (or whoever was the child on the *Coromandel* who died just before arriving at Kangaroo Island) is therefore excluded by this test, because, although she died after Proclamation, she died “*when nearing Kangaroo Island*”, which means that the *Coromandel* was still at sea, and not within the then limited territorial waters of South Australia.

The most likely possibilities for the “first white person to die in the colony” are Eliza Stace (buried 9th February 1837), with Luke Broadbent being possible but much less likely. Another possibility is the unnamed man whose grave Theresa Chauncey said she saw on Kangaroo Island (if that was not the grave of the Boot’s baby).

If an earlier date than Proclamation day is accepted as the commencement of the colony, it does not matter whether that is the 19th February 1836 Letters Patent or the arrival of the *Duke of York* on the 27th July 1836, as “*in the colony*” requires a death on land or within the then territorial waters of S.A., and no colonists arrived before the 27th July. The most likely candidates for the “*first white person to die in the colony*” with either of these starting dates are the unnamed man on Kangaroo Island whose grave Theresa Chauncey reports seeing (if he did not drown in the sea) and E W Osborne (on the likelihood that Dr Slater survived Osborne). The infant Nepean Neale would then be the first to die on the mainland. He is the first “*white person*” to die at any time at Holdfast Bay and in the vicinity of Adelaide

Rev. Howard did not include any of the prior deaths on Kangaroo Island in his Register. He arrived at Holdfast Bay on the 28th December 1836 on the *Buffalo*. He records Eliza Stace’s burial as the first death, omitting the two deaths at sea he witnessed on the *Buffalo* (Hall and Storey), indicating that his Register was confined to deaths after Proclamation. As “baby Luke” died on Kangaroo Island, it is quite possible that Rev. Howard did not hear of his death until much later (if at all), so his omission from the Register does not assist in determining who died first.

Eliza’s death on or before the 9th February is likely to be earlier than “baby Luke’s” sometime in 1837 and probably mid to late 1837.

The Conclusion – Eliza Stace

Without known dates of death for the unnamed man to whom Theresa Chauncey referred (and with it being quite possible that she mistook the 2nd grave for being that of a drowned man when it was the baby off the Coromandel) or “baby Luke” it is uncertain, but more likely, that Eliza Stace was “*the first white person to die in the colony*” (as defined for the purposes of this paper – i.e. within the territory of S.A. and after Proclamation).

Even if the test is of the first death of a white person in what was to become South Australia, Eliza’s burial is the first officially recorded and the first with an ordained Minister officiating at the burial. Her death was that of first adult female European and the first adult European death in the vicinity of Adelaide (Nepean Neale, a 2 month old was the first at any time in the vicinity of Adelaide). Her death is the earliest known death of a European on land after Proclamation with a verifiable date.

Her husband’s obituary, containing the statement that she was “*the first white person to die in the colony*” supports the conclusion that she was. The statement was made as if it was a fact known and accepted as true by his family and friends. It was published in a newspaper while many of the original colonists were alive and would have known whether it was correct. Other claims of the “first” were often followed by correspondence refuting the claim and putting forward alternative claimants. The following 3 week’s editions of the newspaper in which the obituary was published do not contain any counterclaim (or other reference to the obituary). This suggests that the claim was accepted by early colonists as being true.

Other Recorded Deaths or Burials Shortly After

William Emery

Died 13th February 1837 near “Port Adelaide”^{aa}

Rev. Howard’s Register gives Emery’s age as 33 and his abode as “*passenger from England in the John Renwick*”, indicating that he was still living on-board after the ship’s arrival when he died, presumably one or two days before his burial. Rev. Howard officiated at his burial.

The *John Renwick* arrived at Holdfast Bay on the evening of the 9th February, the night of Eliza’s burial, and passengers went ashore on the 10th. Pre-civil Registration Deaths says Emery was a lime burner, but Diane Cummings’ passenger list shows him as a carpenter.

On the 15th February 1837 John Brown, the Emigration Agent, reported this death to the Colonial Secretary:

*“...I have just received information that one of the Emigrants by the John Renwick (Mr Emery) has been found dead within 2000 yards of Mr Gilles’ stores at Port Adelaide. I understand that a coffin has been prepared and the property found upon his body been taken care of”.*¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Brown, Letter from Emigration Agent to Colonial Secretary on sudden death of Emery 15 February 1837

Pastor Finlayson (a passenger on the *John Renwick*), recorded in his recollections written about 40 years later:

*“One of our shipmates - a respectable man, with a wife and large family on board started for Adelaide a day or two before our party. He got to the site of the town, and left in the heat of the day (February) to walk to the Port, was overpowered by the heat and died on the way, our party having taken another road.”*¹¹²

William Emery was the subject of South Australia’s first “inquest” after Proclamation (William Howlett’s on Kangaroo Island was the first before Proclamation) although it was informal. That concluded that he died of “*apoplexy*”, but from the circumstances described, it appears to have been heat exhaustion which seems to also be Finlayson’s diagnosis.

More on Emery's Inquest
Transcript of 'Inquest' Records.

“Investigation to inquire into the death of William Emery who died about three quarters of a mile from Port Adelaide on the thirteenth day of February 1837.

Mr Clay who was his companion makes the following statement.

I was in the company of the deceased on the morning of his death – walked with him from the Town of Adelaide. Mr Emery was taken ill about three quarters of a mile from the Port where he staggered and said to me “for God's sake don't leave me”. I supported him for some distance when I laid him down & covered his face with a handkerchief. I then ran to the Port for assistance and returned to him in company with a man named Jacques who administered some weak brandy and water when he vomited blood, laid himself back and expired the deceased had previously drank water at the river very heartily. I had no previous acquaintance with the deceased but saw him at a ball given by Captain Chesser of the *Coromandel* to the Emigrants on Saturday evening. I left Adelaide in the company with Mr Emery about 9 o'clock yesterday morning. Mr Emery had ... ?? ... the deceased had no spirits that morning but about a teaspoon of rum by the way. He had no symptoms of illness until he was within three quarters of a mile from the Port.

John Clay

Evidence of Robert Jacques

Mr Clay having arrived & requested assistance I immediately went to the spot where Mr Emery was laying, the man groaned and I lifted him up. Mr Clay wanted to give him some neat Brandy, but I suggested brandy and water, which with the assistance of Mr Clay I administered to him. Mr Emery then vomited blood and appeared to have the rattles in the throat laid himself back and expired.

Robert Jacques

Clay who had witnessed a similar case supposed it to be a fit of apoplexy no marks of violence were seen upon his person.

A silver watch & gold key, a hair guard, Fourteen shillings and seven pence halfpenny, a spirit Flask, Pocket Compass, Tobacco Box, Key Knife and a memorandum of names were found upon the person of the deceased.

Taken before the following list of Gentlemen in the absence of the proper authorities, this fourteenth day of February 1837 who are of the opinion that the deceased died of apoplexy. (7 signatures)¹¹³

¹¹² *South Australian Register* 27 December 1886. See also “Finlayson – A Family History of Scottish Pioneers of South Australia” p 5 for a slightly different version.

¹¹³ Brown, Letter from Emigration Agent to Colonial Secretary on sudden death of Emery 15 February 1837

It seems that no similar inquiry was held into the death of Eliza Stace a few days earlier. Not only is there no similar record of an inquiry in her case, but Dr Cotter subsequently wrote to the Governor referring to the Emery inquest as a reason why he should be appointed as Coroner, but did not refer at all to Eliza's death.¹¹⁴ This suggests that Eliza's death was expected and its cause obvious to those treating her.

Sadly, John Clay, the witness to Emery's death, was to suffer the death of his baby boy only 2 weeks later (see below under "Unnamed Clay Infant") and Emery did not live to see the birth of his son who was baptised on the 4th June 1836.¹¹⁵

Despite the evidence at the inquest that Emery had not been drinking, *John Renwick* passenger Theresa Chauncey considered him a drinker, saying (on the 15th):

*"another [death] since our arrival named Emery, who had a wife and six children wholly dependent on him. He went on shore on Saturday in defiance of orders which had not yet arrived from the Commissioner to land him and next morning he was found quite dead between Glenelg and Port Adelaide. He also drank too much and had on leaving the ship come up to the cuddy door and denied Mr. Wyatt's authority to detain him on board. Mr. Wyatt said 'Recollect you go without my leave.' His poor wife is greatly to be pitied."*¹¹⁶

Thomas O'Brien?

May have died 20th February 1837

Pre-civil Registration Deaths states this with no other information except that he was 33. He is not in Rev. Howard's Register and Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals Passenger List does not include anyone who fits those details. The only O'Briens listed by Leadbeater who would have been in South Australia by that date are James O'Brien, his wife and son and daughter who arrived on the *Coromandel*. Diane Cummings' passenger list for the *Coromandel* says that James O'Brien is 23, so he could not be the father of a 33 year old.

Leadbeater's combined database for early colonialists¹¹⁷ does not have any entry for Thomas O'Brien (but adds that the James O'Brien from the *Coromandel* died on the 17th January 1838 at Adelaide with his 2 year old daughter dying 2 days later). There is no O'Brien listed in any of the passenger lists for the first fleet on the "Bound for South Australia" website.

I have not been able to confirm this death. While passenger lists are not 100% accurate, with no reference to Thomas O'Brien in any passenger list for any vessel arriving before the 20th February^{bb}, I doubt the accuracy of this entry. Of course, if Thomas O'Brien was a sailor, then his name would not be in any passenger list.

Unnamed Clay infant

Buried 26th February 1837 at Glenelg^{cc}

¹¹⁴ Letter from Cotter to Colonial Secretary 15 March 1837

¹¹⁵ Holy Trinity Baptism Register entry no 13

¹¹⁶ "Sixty Years Ago" *The Advertiser* 28 December 1897 p 5

¹¹⁷ www.familyhistorysa.info/colonists.html Colonial South Australian Pioneers – Arrivals, Births Marriages and deaths

Rev. Howard's Register describes him as 8 weeks old and an "*unbaptised child*" of "*Glenelg*" and does not indicate the sex or given name. Pre-civil Registration Deaths adds that he was the child of John and Mary Clay.^{dd} Rev. Howard left the "*by whom the ceremony was performed*" column blank (while those before and most of those after show his name in this column). This suggests that Rev. Howard knew of the burial and recorded it despite not officiating and indicates other burials at which he did not officiate were included in the Register.

The Register of Applicants for Free Passage shows that the Clays had two sons aged 4 and 2 when they applied for passage. Neither of these could have been the 8 week old infant who died.

George Mungo Langcake

Buried 4th March 1837 probably at Adelaide^{ee}

Rev. Howard's Register records that George was 2 years old and his abode was "*Adelaide*". His parents John and Mary arrived on the *John Renwick* on the 10th February 1837 and according to Leadbeater's passenger list, George was their only child. Leadbeater also queries whether Mary also died after arrival.¹¹⁸

As his abode is given as "Adelaide", it is therefore highly likely that little George Langcake was buried in Adelaide, not at Glenelg. As this is the first Adelaide "abode" in Rev. Howard's Register, George is likely to be the first European buried in Adelaide, with the possibility that this was in the area set aside for the West Terrace Cemetery.

Harriett Gouger & her son Henry Hindmarsh Gouger

Died 14th & 15th March 1837 at Glenelg

The only "Family Notices" in the first South Australian newspaper printed after the colonists' arrival¹¹⁹ is sufficiently poignant when quoted in full:

"BIRTH

On December 29th 1836, at Glenelg, Mrs Robert Gouger, of a son.

DEATHS

On March 14th, at Glenelg, of consumption, Harriet, wife of the Honourable Robert Gouger, aged thirty two years; and

On March 15th, their son, Henry Hindmarsh, aged eleven weeks and one day."

While the newspaper says "consumption" caused his wife's death, from the entries in Robert Gouger's diary¹²⁰, it is more likely to be an infection caught during childbirth. In his diary he recorded the birth of his son on the 29th December, "*claimed by the Governor as his godson, as being the first child born in the colony*" but on the 31st December "*My wife taken seriously ill with symptoms of fever*".¹²¹ On the 17th January Drs Everard and Jackson had diagnosed "*pulmonary consumption*". By the 3rd of February "*Every day adds to the weakness of my*

¹¹⁸ Barry Leadbeater, "South Australian Passenger Lists, Shipping arrivals and immigration 1803 – 1854+"; www.familyhistorysa.info/shipping/passengerlists.html

¹¹⁹ *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* 3rd June 1837 p 4

¹²⁰ Hodder, "The Founding of South Australia" pp 204 – 208

¹²¹ *Ibid* p 204

dear wife, and not even hope will soon exist for my solace".¹²² He does not mention anything further about his son.

The notice of the death of Robert Gouger's wife and baby son is the only "death notice" for any of the persons listed in this paper and with the exception of the deaths of Slater and Osborne (the *Africaine* passengers who died trying to cross Kangaroo Island^{ff}) none of the deaths were mentioned in any contemporary newspaper reports.

Rev. Howard's Register records their abode as Glenelg and their burial date as the 25th March. The unusual delay between their deaths and burial dates is explained by the fact that they were not buried at Glenelg, where they died, but in Adelaide on land purchased by Robert Gouger. In 1839 their bodies were transferred to the West Tce Cemetery.¹²³

More on the Gougers' burials

The first lease granted by the newly established Trustees of the West Tce Cemetery was to Robert Gouger¹²⁴, so presumably Harriet and Henry Gouger were buried in that leased plot. In 1891 the memorial on that plot was still there, but the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority has advised me that the brass plate was stolen long ago and it has no record of the inscription. The lease would have been issued shortly after 5th Aug 1839 when the Trustees first met. If Harriett and her infant were buried at West Tce after the lease was granted, that would not be the first burial at West Tce, as the Memorial to James Chambers in West Tce is dated November 1837.

Based on the date of Proclamation as the commencement of the colony, Henry Hindmarsh was the first European baby born in the colony, and he was so acknowledged by the Governor.

John White - buried 15th March 1837 at Adelaide

Dr John Woodforde, the surgeon on the *Rapid*, recorded in his diary on the 17th March 1837:

*"We have had three deaths this week. Mrs Gouger, a child and Mr White who came out to establish a brewery. The latter was a patient of mine and died of exhaustion succeeding a severe attack of pneumonia on a broken constitution."*¹²⁵ gg

According to Rev. Howard's Register, John White, aged 49, with an "abode" of Adelaide was buried on the 15th March 1837.

There were 2 other John Whites in Adelaide at this time. There was John White (full name John Charles Storey White) who was a baker and a free passage labourer on the *Coromandel* who was a leader of the early Wesleyan Methodist Church in South Australia. The other was one of South Australia's earliest builders who came out on the *Tam O'Shanter*.

I do not know what vessel John White the deceased brewer came out on. Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals (which can be searched by passenger name) shows a John White having arrived before 1837 with no vessel shown against the name and the information is based on a

¹²² Ibid p 206

¹²³ *The Advertiser* 17 October 1927 p 91

¹²⁴ *South Australian Register* 12 September 1891 p 5

¹²⁵ Woodforde, "Abstracts of a Voyage to South Australia".

burial record – presumably Rev. Howard’s Register. The “Bound for South Australia” site does not list John White as a passenger on any of the ships with passenger lists on that site.

I assume that this John White was not a free passage emigrant as otherwise his name would be in the Register of Applicants for Free Passage and therefore in Leadbeater’s passenger lists. Also, as a brewer and age 49, he is unlikely to be given free passage on one of the early emigrant vessels when that was for labourers with a preferred age 30 or under. So he must have paid his own passage out, which makes him more difficult to trace or he could have come from Van Diemens Land (i.e. Tasmania) or N.S.W.

Others

By mid April 1837, Rev. Howard had also recorded the deaths of **Joseph Sladden** (buried 16th March, aged 11 months), **Anna Abbott** (buried 11th April, aged 8) and **William Voules Brown** (buried 15th April aged 2). All of these had an “Adelaide” abode. A family history of the W V Brown family says that William Voules Brown was buried at West Tce Cemetery¹²⁶, but as no source is provided for that information it is not clear whether that is an assumption based on the death occurring in Adelaide, a story passed down in the family or some document. His father’s obituary states that this child was buried in “Adelaide” and his body later transferred to the family’s vault in the Brighton Cemetery.¹²⁷

I had originally assumed that Woodforde’s diary entry above referring to 3 deaths “*this week*” of “*Mrs Gouger, a child and Mr White*” was referring to Mrs Gouger, her baby and Mr White. However, as 11 month old Joseph Sladden was buried on the 16th March, it is more likely to have been a reference to him as at 11 months he is more likely to be called “*a child*” than Henry Hindmarsh who was 11 weeks old. Either way, Woodforde seems to have missed the death of one infant – either Henry Hindmarsh or Joseph Sladden. (This again indicates the difficulty in establishing certainty with respect to deaths as even contemporaneous diaries of the surgeons are not completely reliable as sources of information on deaths.)

Summary of Deaths

The tally of the deaths at sea prior to Proclamation and in chronological order is:

Ship	Sailor	Adult Colonist	Child/Infant	Cause of Death
<i>Lady Mary Pelham</i>	Thompson			Drink
<i>Duke of York</i>			Beare?	Child birth?
<i>John Pirie</i>		Chandler		Suicide / drowning
<i>Buffalo</i>	Hall			consumption
<i>Buffalo</i>	Story			Drink / overboard
<i>Tam O’Shanter</i>		Catchlove?		Not known
<i>Buffalo</i>			Breaker	not known
<i>Coromandel</i>			Samuel Hoare, Robert Younghusband, possibly	scurvy?

¹²⁶ Rich, “Gumleaf and Cowhide” p 54

¹²⁷ “Death of a Pioneer” *South Australian Register* 4 February 1893 p 7

			another child?	
<i>Coromandel</i>			Boots' child?	not known
<i>John Renwick</i>		Unknown		Drink
<i>John Renwick</i>		Playford		not known

Those marked “?” above and below are deaths that are possible, but not as certain as the others.

The deaths on land, to mid April 1838 (plus one after that date which was listed on the Kingscote Memorial and which is marked below “#”) were:

Adult	Infant / child	Age	ship	Cause of Death
E Osborne			<i>Africaine</i>	lost in bush
Dr John Slater			<i>Africaine</i>	lost in bush
William Howlett		22	<i>Emma</i>	drowned*
	Nepean Neale	2 mths	<i>Cygnnet</i>	unknown
Un-named?			Not known	drowned
Eliza Stace		21	<i>Coromandel</i>	scurvy?
William Emery		33	<i>John Renwick</i>	Drink/heat exhaustion
Thomas O'Brien?		33		
	Clay	8 weeks	<i>Coromandel</i>	unknown
	George Langcake	2 yrs	<i>John Renwick</i>	unknown
Harriet Gouger		32	<i>Buffalo</i>	Post child-birth
	Henry Gouger	11 weeks	<i>Buffalo</i>	unknown
John White		49	Not known	pneumonia
	Joseph Sladden	11 mths		
	Anna Abbott	8 yrs		
	William Brown	2yrs		
	Luke Broadbent	<1 yr	<i>Buffalo</i>	unknown
Jeremiah Calnan#		39	<i>Africaine</i>	drink

*Drink was implicated, but possibly only with respect to his “companion” with the query whether the companion caused his death accidentally or deliberately.

After arrival (including the two lost on Kangaroo Island) to the last death referred to above in mid-April, 9 adult colonists (but 2 of those are questionable) and 8 children/infants died (and 5 more had died on the voyage out).

It stands out that 3 of the deaths at sea were associated with drinking as were 2 and possibly 3 of the deaths after landing.

Putting These Deaths in Context

However, these deaths should be kept in proportion and context of the times. In their Second Annual Report, the Colonization Commissioners said with pride, and some justification, that 16 vessels and 936 settlers had reached the colony with a further 9 vessels and 1,284 settlers on the way and that “*this extensive emigration has been conducted without the occurrence of*

a single disaster to any of the ships employed: that there is reason to believe that the mortality during the voyage has been less than the average mortality in this country; and that the emigrants have landed safely in the country of their adoption”.¹²⁸

More on mortality comparisons

Of course, what this does not mention is that almost all the colonists (or at least the free passage labourers) were under 30 and fit and healthy, including being certified by a physician as having no “*disease calculated to shorten life, or impair physical or mental energy*”¹²⁹. However, Brown (the Emigration Agent) in a letter to Wakefield dated 10th April 1837 complained that many of those certificates were false.¹³⁰

The mortality rate immediately after arrival was also seen as low. In a letter written on the 28th February 1837 from “Adelaide” John Morphett said: “*As proof of the healthiness of the climate, I may remark that there has been scarcely a case of illness since we landed, notwithstanding the privations and hardships attendant upon the first settlement of a country, and we think nothing of sleeping in the open air*”.¹³¹

In another letter dated the 15th April 1837, J. B. Hack wrote on arriving at Adelaide from Glenelg: “*It seems the very country for children to thrive in, ours are in robust health, and look stout and rosy, very unlike the delicate children they were in England.*”¹³²

These early descriptions of the healthiness of the climate, and the lack of reference to deaths in letters home and in diaries, should be viewed in the light of the natural desire of all the early pioneers to “sell” S.A. as a desirable destination, so that the colony would become a success. The claims of healthiness were no doubt exaggerated.

However, even if insignificant in the context of the times, these deaths do remind us that death was an occupational hazard for the sailors and early colonists, and especially child-bearing women and infants. (Of the first 8 children in Schahinger’s list of the first children born in the colony, 5 died before their first birthday and 1 more aged less than 2.¹³³) It shows the risks that all the early colonists took when committing themselves to establishing the new colony. South Australia is partly built on the bones of these early, and for the most part, ordinary and forgotten people whose passing was often unremarked.

The title of “*the first white person to die in the colony*”, which most likely belongs to Eliza Stace, is merely one way of providing a name to represent these early deaths. Her death was no more or less meaningful or tragic than the deaths of these other ordinary people.

The Other “Firsts”

Based on my research:

- the first intending colonist (and seaman) to die (at sea) after embarkation was James Doine Thompson who died 3rd May 1836;

¹²⁸ “Second Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners” p 2

¹²⁹ Appendix 4 “First Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners”

¹³⁰ Mitchell Library Sydney, microfilm roll CY1189 frame 0403 – or page 442 of that collection.

¹³¹ “Second Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners” p 8

¹³² Letter from J B Hack, in “A Lecture on South Australia”

¹³³ Schahinger “First Child Born of British Emigrants in South Australia” p 24 - 25

- the first colonist to die on land in what is now South Australia was probably E W Osborne who died on Kangaroo Island between the 6th and 10th November 1836;
- the first child of a colonist to be born in what is now South Australia was Emma Barbara Green born on the *Cygnets* off Kangaroo Island on the 9th September 1836;
- the first “white person” to die at Holdfast Bay or on the Mainland (prior to Proclamation) was the baby Nepean Neale who died on the 18th November 1836;
- the first “white person” to be buried in the colony (post Proclamation – but who died at sea) was probably the infant from the *Coromandel* (probably a child of the *Boots*) who was buried in a cask probably near Kingscote;
- the first colonist to be buried in Adelaide was probably the child George Langcake who was buried on the 4th March 1837;
- the Pioneer Cemetery at Reeves Point Kingscote was the first cemetery in South Australia.

The Burial of Eliza Stace

Contemporary Descriptions

“There was a woman buried last night who came in the Coromandel. A party of natives attended and seemed very much affected, putting up their hands, and an old man whom they call Ginykin - their chief we think - wept. Mrs. B. [i.e. Mrs Brown, wife of the Emigration Agent] supposed by their sudden departure during the night that they were afraid of the evil spirit that might come to take the dead.”¹³⁴

This poignant quote comes from a letter written by Theresa Chauncey, a passenger on the *John Renwick* which arrived off shore in Holdfast Bay on the 9th February 1837. The letter is written like a diary with dates for entries, this section was dated the 10th February.^{hh}

Theresa gave a slightly different version in her diary on 11th February:

“A woman who emigrated in the Coromandel having died was brought ashore for interment. Several of the natives attended the funeral and one of the old men was observed to weep. They did not depart till midnight for being very superstitious they were afraid lest the evil spirit should remove the body.”¹³⁵

This “woman” must be Eliza Stace who was a passenger on the *Coromandel* and was buried on the 9th February 1837. The next woman to die was Harriet Gouger who died on the 15th March but was buried on 25th March 1837. Harriet Gouger was not on the *Coromandel*. No other woman from the *Coromandel* died within the first year.

Not only was Eliza most probably “*the first white person to die in the colony*”, but the short and poignant descriptions of her burial record the involvement of “*the natives*” in that ceremony. Eliza’s death was the first on South Australian soil (before or after Proclamation) where an ordained clergyman officiated, and the first attended by the representatives of the first inhabitants.

¹³⁴ “Sixty Years Ago” *The Advertiser* 28 December 1897 p 5

¹³⁵ Chauncey, “Diary of Theresa Walker”

Theresa Chauncey's diary reference to the woman being "*brought on shore for interment*" indicates that Eliza died aboard the *Coromandel*. That seems inconsistent with Rev. Howard noting her "abode" as "*Glenelg Plains*" while a few days later the next entry notes William Emery's burial as "*Passenger aboard the John Renwick*". It is possible that Eliza and Joseph did set up a hut or tent on the shore, but that as Eliza's health deteriorated, she was taken on board where the accommodation was much better than on shore. However, this aspect was not mentioned in Theresa's letter, which was probably written earlier, and she was giving a second hand account, so Eliza may have been on the *Coromandel* when she died.

Whether or not Eliza died on board, she died "*in the colony*" because she died within the Gulf and the Bay which were part of South Australia under the Letters Patent defining that area.

Back-drop to Her Burial

The back-drop to Eliza's burial would have been awe-inspiring. Pastor William Finlayson in his Recollections tells of the night he arrived offshore on the *John Renwick* – which was the 9th February¹³⁶ ii, the night of Eliza's burial.

*"A grand, and to us, mysterious fire began to kindle in the hills, it spread with immense rapidity from one hill to another until the whole range before us seemed a mass of flames, ... It was indeed a grand and fearful sight. I have seen many fires on the hills and plains since but nothing so sublime as this".*¹³⁷

Theresa Chauncey confirms that story. Even though the *John Renwick* was anchored two miles off the shore at Holdfast Bay:

*"we perceived extensive fires on shore ... they continued increasing until the length of the whole coast for a distance of many miles had the appearance of one universal blaze. The flames rose in circles from the plains exhibiting to our view the mountains of the interior which seemed to vie with them in height. It was a beautiful and at the same time grand and awful spectral (sic)."*¹³⁸

The passengers convinced themselves that "*the natives*" were lighting fires to call the tribes together to obliterate the colonists, but later found out that it was the aboriginal practice of burning the country to promote game.¹³⁹

So, Eliza had her own funeral pyre lit by aboriginals blazing in the background, while the local aboriginals, including their chief, mourned with the newly arrived pioneers.

Eliza's burial on the 9th did not dampen the spirits of the *Coromandel* passengers or other pioneers for long. Two nights later, on the 11th February, Captain Chesser of the *Coromandel* organised a dance on shore:

¹³⁶ Letter from Wyatt, surgeon on the *John Renwick*. *The Morning Chronicle* (London) 21 October 1837,

¹³⁷ Finlayson, "Recollections of Pastor Finlayson". Other versions are in Finlayson, "Finlayson: a Family History", *The Register* 28 December 1898 p 5g and Blackett, "History of South Australia" p 74.

¹³⁸ Chauncey, "Diary of Theresa Walker" p 4

¹³⁹ Finlayson, "Recollections of Pastor Finlayson"

“11th February *Went on shore this evening to join a dance of the Coromandelians ... The party was got up by Captain Chesser of the Coromandel; most of the ladies and gentlemen of the colony, with many of the emigrants were present and we kept it up jovially, until it was rather too late to go on board as it also blew fresh.*”¹⁴⁰

Perhaps we could consider this to be Eliza’s wake.

Where was “the first white person to die in the colony” Buried?

Was It West Terrace Cemetery?

Rev. Howard’s Register is silent on the location of Eliza’s burial, but gives her “abode” as “Glenelg Plains”.

Barry Leadbeater’s South Australian Cemeteries Deaths and Burials¹⁴¹ lists “*Stace Eliza*” “*died 1837-02-09, aged 21, recorded in the Trinity Church burial register, place unknown.*” But his database, South Australian Deaths 1836 – 1851¹⁴² shows “*Stace Eliza died 1837-02-09 age 21, buried at Adelaide West Terrace Cemetery*”.

However, a history of West Terrace Cemetery¹⁴³ says:

“There is some doubt as to who was first buried in the Cemetery. The burial of Eliza Stace on the 9th February is recorded in the register kept by the Rev. C B Howard... The oldest memorial known is for James Chambers who died in November 1837 ... The cemetery Burial Register does not commence until the 6th July 1840.”^{jj}

The Adelaide Cemeteries Authority (which now manages West Terrace Cemetery) has confirmed that it had no records for Eliza Stace; there is no “memorial” for her and no record indicating the first burial there. Apart from Rev. Howard’s Register there is no other reference to Eliza by name after her arrival at Holdfast Bay and the only other references to her after her arrival are the above contemporary descriptions of her burial and her husband’s obituary forty years later.^{kk}

It is tempting to exclude Adelaide (and therefore West Terrace Cemetery) as a result of Rev. Howard showing the “place of abode” as “Glenelg Plains”. However, “Glenelg Plains” was at that time a generic term that included Adelaide. The first newspaper published in South Australia¹⁴⁴ says “*The spot fixed upon for the temporary location of the settlers who first arrived, was named by (the Governor) Glenelg, and the fertile tract of country extending from*

¹⁴⁰ *South Australian Record* 1837 p 3, letter from Dr Wyatt of the *John Renwick*

¹⁴¹ Barry and Maureen Leadbeater, “South Australian Cemeteries; Deaths and Burials”; www.familyhistorysa.info/births-marriages-deaths/cemeteries/burials.html

¹⁴² Barry Leadbeater, “South Australian Deaths; 1836 – 1851+”; www.familyhistorysa.info/births-marriages-deaths/deaths.html

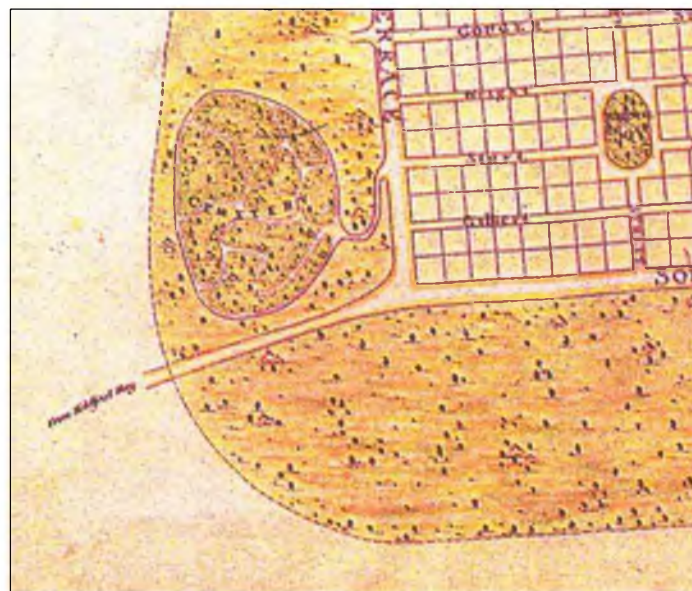
¹⁴³ Peake, “The History and Records of West Terrace Cemetery”

¹⁴⁴ *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* 8 July 1837

the beach to the foot of the Mount Lofty range of hills, Glenelg Plains". The same paragraph refers to the naming of Adelaide & Port Adelaide. So "Glenelg Plains" was an extensive area within which Glenelg, Adelaide and Port Adelaide were all situated. Also, from the 26th February, Rev. Howard used "Glenelg" and not "Glenelg Plains" and he shows "Adelaide" in his Register for the first time on 4th March 1837.

Was Eliza Stace buried in Adelaide (and therefore potentially at West Terrace Cemetery as suggested by Barry Leadbeater) or at Glenelg?

The survey of Adelaide commenced 11th January 1837 and was not completed until the 10th March 1837. That plan shows a "cemetery" in the approximate position of the West Terrace Cemetery. In the absence of any other information, it is possible, but unlikely, that by the 9th February Colonel Light had identified the location of the future West Terrace Cemetery and that Eliza was buried there.



Section - Plan of the City of Adelaide by Colonel William Light 1837 [Courtesy of the Adelaide City Archives]

The Evidence for Glenelg

The only surviving accounts of Eliza's burial are those given by Theresa Chauncey. She was on the *John Renwick* which arrived in Holdfast Bay on the night of the burial. While her accounts are probably second hand (in that it is unlikely that she was ashore that night) her diary entry is dated 2 days later. That is much more consistent with her being told something that happened at Glenelg (where she came ashore) than something that happened in Adelaide several miles away.

Most of the early settlers stayed close to Holdfast Bay during January and early February 1837 until Adelaide was surveyed. They then gradually shifted to "Buffalo Row" near Light's survey camp in the parkland area outside the corner of North Terrace and West Terrace. A public meeting was held at Glenelg the day after Eliza was buried to oppose the

location of Adelaide¹⁴⁵. Such a meeting would be held where the majority of the people were.

In Robert Nicol's book on cemeteries in Australia he says:

*"The first South Australian cemetery was established on Kangaroo Island, and the first burial recorded was that of Lucy Beare ... On 7 September 1837. This and other interments were recorded in a register kept by the Colonial Chaplain, Charles Beaumont Howard. On the mainland, several burials took place before any official cemetery was established. Howard recorded that of Eliza Stace, aged twenty one years, of 'Glenelg Plains' on 9 February 1837, and another burial five days later. No location was given for these early burials on the mainland. They were probably at Glenelg, the site of the first landing."*¹⁴⁶

The *Coromandel* passengers (including Eliza) were even more likely to still be at Holdfast Bay as some of the ship's cargo was still not landed for at least several days after Eliza's burial due to desertions of ten crew and the illness of five more, making the vessel unworkable.¹⁴⁷

Also, the name "Adelaide" was announced at a dinner for all the *Coromandel* passengers immediately prior to its departure from London¹⁴⁸ and so would have been known in South Australia on the *Coromandel's* arrival. Rev. Howard is likely to have used the correct name in his official Register had Eliza died at Adelaide.

So, Eliza died at Glenelg. In the heat of summer, with no carts to carry a body, she would have been buried at Glenelg reasonably near the camp, not several miles away through the bush at a site that may have been identified by Col. Light for the future West Terrace Cemetery.

Where in Glenelg?

It is probable that her burial place was marked with a rough cross bearing her name and while memory of her burial or that cross remained, no-one would have built over or near it. William Emery (whose family were still on board the *John Remwick*) was buried 5 days later and the infant Clay, with an abode of "Glenelg" was buried 17 days later. It is logical that they would have been buried close to Eliza, rather than in some separate spot. That makes a small cemetery known to the early pioneers, which is even less likely to be built over. That then could have become a park, a cemetery or a Church.

St Peters Church, Torrens Square

An Infant's Grave Discovered

Robert Nicol's book follows up his reference to Eliza's burial with:

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Journal of George Stevenson G F Angas Papers PRG174 p 695 and Journal of Y B Hutchinson PRG1013/1/1/ 1& 2

¹⁴⁶ Nicol, "At the End of the Road"; p 2

¹⁴⁷ "Captain Chesser and the Coromandel" *The Pioneer*, Pioneers Association of South Australia Summer 2008 p 2 or the original source is in S.A. State Records GRG 24/1 (letters to and from the Colonial Secretary's Office) no 17, 38, & 44

¹⁴⁸ *Sydney Gazette and News South Wales Advertiser* 26 January 1837 p 4

*“In July 1858, workmen digging post-holes for the Glenelg Anglican Church found a small wooden box which proved to be the coffin of an infant. It had been buried for some years, and a coroner’s enquiry concluded that it had been put there by the early settlers.”*¹⁴⁹

Robert Nicol relied for that statement on a newspaper article¹⁵⁰ which referred to the infant being buried by *“the early settlers who, at the commencement of the colony, were located at Glenelg”*. That terminology indicates the timing of the burial as being part of the initial settlement before the shift to Adelaide, not the subsequent resettlement of Glenelg after its subdivision. It also seems that the Coroner’s decision was made quickly, possibly after discussion with the Mayor of Glenelg. Was this possible because the coroner was quickly told that the location was known by early pioneers as a small graveyard?

More on the newspaper article

The full text of the newspaper report is: *“Glenelg: The workmen in digging post holes for the church-fence a few days ago found a small wooden box which proved to be a coffin of an infant, buried apparently several years ago. The Coroner, having examined it and communicated on the subject with the Mayor of Glenelg, directed its removal to the Cemetery. There seems no reason to doubt that the coffin was placed there by some of the early settlers who, at the commencement of the colony, were located at Glenelg.”*¹⁵¹

I have not been able to locate any other record of that coronial enquiry.

One possibility for that infant whose coffin was found is unnamed Clay infant aged 8 weeks whose “abode” was Glenelg and who was buried on the 26th February 1837, only seventeen days after Eliza. There were few “infant” deaths in the early days with a “Glenelg” place of abode or burial. Pre-civil Registration Deaths identifies Harriet Gouger’s baby, Emily Middleton (aged 21 months, died 24th September 1838) and James Garratt (9 months old, died 15th January 1841) as the next infant burials.

Harriet Gouger’s baby can be excluded from that list, as he and his mother were buried in Adelaide on one of the parcels of land Robert Gouger purchased. The burial dates of Emily Middleton and James Garratt do not fit the timing of *“the early settlers at the commencement of the colony”*, but the unnamed Clay infant’s burial does.

The other possibility is that the infant whose bones were found near the Church was 2 month old Nepean Neale who died mid November 1836. If that is the case, similar logic makes it likely that Eliza was buried where Nepean Neale was buried, rather than in a different place, and that the other subsequent burials were there also.

St Peters Church in Torrens Square Glenelg was the only Anglican Church in Glenelg in 1858.

Work on the first Church on the site started in 1851 and it was opened in March 1852.¹⁵² II
This 1870 photo shows it with a picket fence:

¹⁴⁹ Nicol, “At the End of the Road” p 2-3.

¹⁵⁰ *South Australian Register* 14th July 1858 p 2

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*

¹⁵² “St Peters Church Glenelg 75 years”; Bill Lyne “Explore Glenelg” p13 and Perry “The Place of Waters”



St Peters Church, circa 1870 [Courtesy of State Library of S.A.- SLSA B9458]

St Peters Church is therefore the Church where the infant's bones were found. This makes it likely that there was a small unofficial cemetery there which was started by Eliza's burial.

The St Peters site is less than one kilometre from the southern edge of the old Glenelg Lagoon, so with camping scattered between the lagoon and the sea, it would have been close to or within the pioneers' camp area. It lies only about 200m south of the probable site of the cluster of huts and tents just inside the sand hills at the mouth of the Patawalonga River which welcomed new arrivals.

Contemporary Records

That's the theory behind the conclusion that there probably was a small graveyard at Holdfast Bay where most burials prior to the shift to Adelaide occurred. That theory is supported by contemporary written records. On the 15th September 1837 Rev. Howard wrote to the Colonial Secretary;

*"I have also heard this day a report that some pigs have been rooting up the graves of two or three persons who were buried at the Harbour last summer. Whether that report be true or not it strikes me that some measures ought to be taken for having these closed so as to prevent that revolting occurrence taking place and I beg respectfully to suggest the propriety of such a course being pursued without delay. If duly authorised I would most gladly undertake to see it done."*¹⁵³

"Last summer" technically means December 1836 to February 1837 but could include March 1837. "The Harbour" must mean Holdfast Bay as there is no indication of habitation or deaths at Port Adelaide during that period. So, by the time the shift to Adelaide occurred, there was a group of at least 3 graves known to Rev. Howard at Holdfast Bay. (Rev. Howard had registered the burials of 3 who were most likely buried at Holdfast Bay – Eliza, William Emery and "an unbaptised child named Clay".) It is likely that Rev. Howard fenced them off in late September to October 1837.

¹⁵³ Letter from Rev. Howard to the Colonial Secretary 15 September 1837. S.A. State Records GRG24/1 1837/356

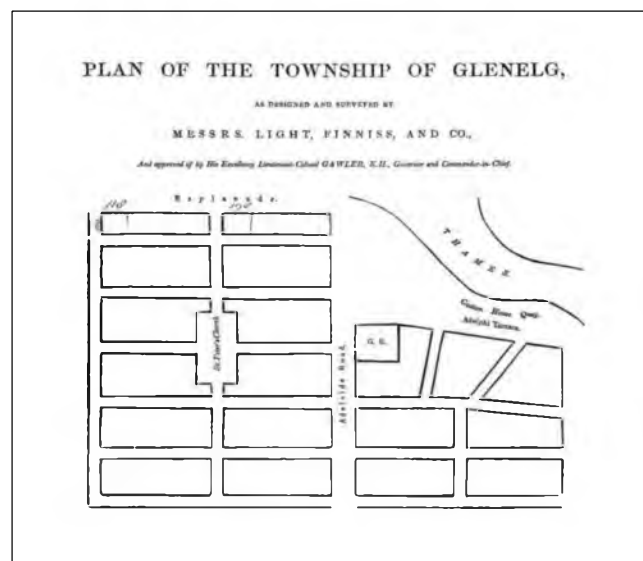
The two reports of pigs rooting up the graves and of an infant's coffin found by workmen digging post holes for the Church fence have something in common – apparently shallow graves.

Sadly, it appears probable that Eliza's grave was disturbed by pigs seven months after her burial.

So, the evidence is for a small graveyard in the Glenelg area near the original encampment, it was probably fenced off in late 1837 and that one burial fitting the known deaths at that time was discovered in 1858 under the fence of St Peters, indicating the high likelihood that St Peters Church is the site of that first graveyard.

Light's 1839 Glenelg Survey and St Peters

But more than that, the original 1839 plan for the subdivision of Glenelg by Light Finnis and Co identified a specific site for the St Peters Church in its own square.



Plan of Glenelg by Messrs Light, Finnis and Co. [The Borrow Collection, Flinders University B072/02/06]

More about the survey plan

The Light Collection held by the Flinders University folder 47 contains 2 versions of the plan. The earliest is likely to be the one without street names (as Light did not apply street names to his surveys) and it is stated to come from a hand bill in the S.A. State Records. That plan shows "St Peters Church" on it while the version with street names on it shows "Torrens Square", but not the Church.

The Borrow Collection also held by the Flinders University also appears to have the most authoritative copy showing "St Peters Church" but no name for the square.

The plan shown above is the earliest version.

There is no obvious reason for setting aside this area for a square for a Church and no area was set aside in Adelaide's plan for any Church^{mm}. The Church site has no obvious

topographic advantage (it is not on a hill) and it is not at the proposed wharves which were intended to be established for a substantial Port. The streets which would otherwise intersect it are diverted around it to form a square. Unlike the squares in Adelaide, which are all parks, this was designated for the Church of England - when the colonists had gone to considerable trouble to avoid having an “established Church” (that is, all denominations were to be treated as equal).

Light’s diary for this period contained only brief weather observations, and I have not been able to find any mention of the Glenelg survey in papers relating to Light or Finniss.^{nm}

While Light’s plan of Glenelg seems to be geometrically balanced, with Torrens Square creating a central point, it is still feasible that the general location of the square was fixed by Light to include Rev. Howard’s original rush shelter place of worship (see below) and a small graveyard somewhere within that comparatively large area (especially if the surrounding roads are also included). The discovery of the infant’s burial under the Church fence indicates that it was situated on the periphery of Torrens Square, not in the centre. The other burials may also have been on the periphery of the site of the square.

Prior to this survey, the whole of the original township of Glenelg was owned by a syndicate which became entitled to purchase it as a result of a ballot among 1,400 interested buyers. They instructed Light Finniss & Co to do the survey of the town and the port, the expectation being that Glenelg would be a major port.¹⁵⁴

More about Glenelg's subdivision

“The Place of Waters” p 21 further states that “*The plan of Glenelg provided for 101 half acre allotments, a Government Reserve of one acre and a square in which Glenelg’s Church of England would stand. The Adelaide Road (now Anzac highway) passed through the centre of town and terminated at the pier site.*” It gives no reason for the Church site.

Also see the website www.historysouthaustralia.net for “The Ballot for Glenelg” which gives a more detailed explanation of the purchase and survey of Glenelg, but without any reference to Torrens Square or St Peters.

The earliest report of the 1839 Glenelg plan says that it had been approved by the Governor and:

*“A large square has been formed in the centre of the town, in which the proposed church is to be erected. Mrs Gawler, at the request of the proprietors, has named the church St Peter’s, and the square in which it is to be situated Torrens Square.”*¹⁵⁵

Again, no explanation as to why the site had been pre-selected for this purpose.

However, even if there were no markers on any of the graves, and even if Rev. Howard did not mention the graves to Col. Light, graves that were only 2 years old at the time of the survey would have been obvious to the surveyors, and, if they were within the area of the survey, the surveyors would no doubt have taken them into account and probably tried to exclude them from streets and lots for private sale.

¹⁵⁴ Perry, “Place of Waters” p 21

¹⁵⁵ *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* 18 May 1839 p 4

St Peters Church and Rev. Howard's First Place of Worship

The report on the opening of St Peters at Glenelg in March 1852 said:

*“It was particularly gratifying to many of our early colonists to witness the opening of a church on the very spot where some sixteen years ago the glad tidings of the Gospel truth were first proclaimed in this colony, then the mere haunt of untutored savages, by the first Colonial Chaplain, the late lamented Mr. Howard. It was pleasing to notice among the congregation some of the earliest settlers.”*¹⁵⁶

The identification of St Peters Church in Torrens Square as the site of Rev. Howard's early services was therefore made by at least several of the early pioneers, and it appears that it was undisputed.

Probably the best known contemporary account of those early days is given by the diary of Mary Thomas. She does not mention Eliza's death, but she *‘witnessed the first christening which took place in the colony. The ceremony was performed in the open air at Glenelg by the late Rev. C. B. Howard...’* and then after praising him, she says *“With rushes he built the first place of worship near his own dwelling. Of course this was small, but it afforded sufficient accommodation for the congregation at that time”*.¹⁵⁷ ^{oo} The inference is that *“the first place of worship near his own dwelling”* was different from the spot where the first christening occurred *“in the open air”*.

This makes it likely that when Eliza died, Rev. Howard buried her at the rear of his rush *“place of worship”* in the nearest he had to consecrated ground at the time. He then buried the next few there in that improvised graveyard. Even if Nepean Neale was buried elsewhere, then it still seems likely that Rev. Howard would have buried Eliza in this “semi-consecrated” ground, and then the others. (Another but less likely possibility is that he located his rush shelter place of worship near Nepean Neale's grave and the other burials would then have followed there.) He would not have needed to worry about long term health issues of creating a small burial ground in the middle of the encampment, because everyone expected to de-camp to Adelaide in a month or so.

Is there any other evidence for the location of that first *“place of worship”*?

The first official Church service after the arrival of the *Buffalo* with Rev. Howard on board was on Sunday 1st January 1837. A contemporary account is given in Robert Gouger's diary¹⁵⁸. He says the service was *“in the Government Hut”*. Three histories relating to the Church of England in South Australia¹⁵⁹ describe it variously as *“in”* or *“near”* *“the Government hut”* or simply *“in the open air”* and that it included the baptism of a baby (which was not mentioned by Gouger, but was mentioned by Mary Thomas).^{pp} Given the small size of all huts at that time and the likely numbers at the first official Church service after the Governor's arrival, the most likely scenario is that the service was held in the open outside the Government hut. That fits Mary Thomas's description of the christening.

¹⁵⁶ *The Observer* 3 April 1852 p 3

¹⁵⁷ Thomas, “The Diary and Letters of Mary Thomas” p 67

¹⁵⁸ Hodder, “The Founding of South Australia” p 204

¹⁵⁹ Edwards, “Rev. Charles Howard: first Colonial Chaplain”; Jose, “The Church of England in S.A.” p 7; Ewens, “The Establishment of Trinity Church Adelaide” p 5

It is possible that the newspaper report of the opening of St Peters was identifying its site with the first service by Rev. Howard on the 1st January 1837 (that is, near the Government hut). However, if only one service was held there, and that was on the 1st January, it is likely that the report would have referred to the first service on the first day of the year, and the location of Torrens Square is further away from the probable location of the Government hut to allow the description "*the very spot*". It is therefore more likely that Torrens Square was designed to encompass the area around Rev. Howard's rush hut, including where he held his services and any small burial ground.

So, about two years after Eliza's burial and a little over a year from when Rev. Howard probably fenced off this small graveyard Colonel Light set out a site for St Peters covering the area where Rev. Howard built his rush shelter "*place of worship*". It is probable that the landowners expected that the small graveyard would devalue the site, so decided to make the best of it by donating the land to the Church of England and instructed Light accordingly.



St Peter's Church, Glenelg
[Photo by Richard Venus]

An Argument Against St Peters as the Site

An argument against St Peters as the site for the burial of at least 2 others in addition to the one infant's grave discovered there in 1858 is that the site is extensively built over (including recent additions) and with the evidence pointing to graves shallow enough for pigs to root over them, surely those other graves would have been discovered during buildings works on the site.

Of course, such an argument applies to the whole of Glenelg that is built over or within people's gardens.

However, a possible answer is that although pigs could smell the decomposing bodies, the graves of the adults could still have been deep enough to avoid detection by all but trained archaeologists unless excavations for foundations dug them up. Rev. Howard's letter about the pigs does not say that the bodies themselves had been rooted up. Therefore, while the infant's body may have been in a shallow grave, those of the adults may have been buried more deeply.

Another possible explanation is that the graves, or some of them, were underneath what is now the roads surrounding Torrens Square and the relatively shallow works for the roads did not cause their discovery.

Were Her Remains Shifted?

A further possible explanation as to why the graves of Eliza Stace and the 2 or 3 others buried at Glenelg that summer have not been discovered either at St Peters or elsewhere at Glenelg is that they were emptied sometime after Rev. Howard's letter of September 1837.

It is possible that after the pioneers moved to Adelaide, and once West Tce. Cemetery was commenced but before the 6th July 1840 (the date of the earliest records there¹⁶⁰), that the remains were removed to West Tce. The "authorities" would presumably have encouraged the aggregation of all graves there (and it may even have been events like those referred to in Rev. Howard's letter of the 15th September 1837 that precipitated such a decision) and the families of the deceased could have also been motivated to have their loved ones within visiting distance of their new homes in Adelaide.

Certainly, Eliza's husband, Joseph Stace, remembered her fondly enough that she was mentioned 37 years later in his obituary¹⁶¹, and he named one of his daughters "Eliza"¹⁶² apparently after her. He also had sufficient funds to pay for her transport as by January 1840 he was listed as a jury man¹⁶³ on the basis of real estate worth at least £50.¹⁶⁴

More on Eliza's possible reburial

Eliza was not reburied in the grave her husband, Joseph, was later buried in. Joseph Stace is buried at Walkerville Cemetery. While his headstone includes his second wife Sarah, it does not include Eliza. However 3 infants by his second wife were buried at West Tce, locations unknown, - Ebenezer (died 1st September 1841) Joseph (died 27th January 1845) and Frederick (died 5th February 1849)¹⁶⁵.

The inscription on Joseph's headstone at Walkerville is:

Joseph Stace
Died July 6 1874
Aged 61 years
Also
Sarah
Wife of the above
Died July 10 1890
Aged 80 years.
Frederick
Grandson of the above
Died Jan 20 1875
Aged 10 months

I have no evidence for the transfer of any of the remains from any of these graves, and it does not explain why the infant's remains, presumably the unnamed Clay infant, were left behind. Even so, it provides a possible explanation why the graves have not been discovered at St

¹⁶⁰ Peake, "The History and Records of West Terrace Cemetery" p 6

¹⁶¹ *South Australian Advertiser* 8 July 1874

¹⁶² Eliza Stace born 25 July 1854 at North Adelaide

¹⁶³ "List of Men Liable to Serve On Juries" *South Australian Gazette* Vol 1 1839 -40 p 9

¹⁶⁴ "An Act for fixing the Qualification of Jurors"; S.A. Act no 2

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.aca.sa.gov.au/recordssearch>

Peters or anywhere else in Glenelg. It would also explain why St Peters has no records of the graves, if they were removed before the Church started organising the building of St Peters. Also, there is some evidence that remains may have been disinterred from another early Glenelg graveyard and transferred to West Tce¹⁶⁶ and there is stronger evidence that the remains of Mrs Gouger and her son were transferred there from land owned by Robert Gouger in Adelaide¹⁶⁷. Also the obituary for William Brown (a passenger on the *Coromandel*) states that the body of his young child who died in Adelaide “soon after landing, and who was buried in Adelaide... was subsequently removed to the family vault in the Brighton Cemetery”.¹⁶⁸ These records provide some support for the proposition that some or all of the graves originally on the site of St Peters were subsequently relocated.

However, the likelihood of this occurring is arguable. The Adelaide Cemeteries Authority “has no record that shows any transfer of bodies from Glenelg to Adelaide” and says that “exhumation and re-interment of recent burials is not pleasant and unless there were health reasons for removing them from Glenelg” could not see a strong enough reason to make it likely.¹⁶⁹ Graham Jaunay,¹⁷⁰ however, has told me that he is confident that some reinterments did occur in S.A.’s early days.

Other Possible Sites

There is now no existing cemetery in or very close to Glenelg but, compelling as the argument appears to be for St Peters Church, Torrens Square, as the site of Eliza Stace’s burial, there is evidence of other early graveyards or cemeteries at or near Glenelg which require consideration.

The Independent Chapel, Smith Tce. (now Gordon Street) Glenelg⁹⁹

A small Independent (i.e. Congregational) Chapel was opened at Glenelg on the 7th March 1848.¹⁷¹ It was the first Chapel or Church built in Glenelg.¹⁷² A newspaper report of its impending first anniversary service was followed by reference to the Independent chapels at “Glenelg, Brighton, Hindmarsh and the Port” and that “cemeteries have been established ...attached to most of the above chapels”.¹⁷³ A history of Glenelg also says that “there is said to have been a small cemetery attached to this chapel”.¹⁷⁴ While not conclusive, that indicates the likelihood of a cemetery at the Glenelg Independent Chapel.

This is supported by the reminiscences of David Shepard, which while undated seems to relate to a period in the late 1800s, possibly 1870 to 1890, in which he refers to a small unused chapel south east of the Berkshire Hotel, “at the back of it, fenced in, was about fifty tombstones over graves”.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁶ See below – “The Independent Chapel Smith Tce.” and reminiscences of David Shepard to that effect.

¹⁶⁷ *The Advertiser* 17 October 1927 p 91

¹⁶⁸ “Death of a Pioneer” *South Australian Register* 4 February 1893 p 7

¹⁶⁹ Email to the author from Peter Skinner, Records Coordinator, Adelaide Cemeteries Authority 30 May 2013

¹⁷⁰ The author of “Pre-civil Registration Deaths” and “Lonely Graves in South Australia”

¹⁷¹ St Andrews by the Sea – Glenelg Uniting Church – History www.glenelg.unitingchurch.org.au/history.php

¹⁷² *South Australian* 10 March 1848 p 2 and “A Chapter of Glenelg History” *South Australian Register* 20 September 1899 p 6 and Jeanes “Glenelg – Birthplace of South Australia” p 113

¹⁷³ *South Australian* 2 March 1849 p 2

¹⁷⁴ Jeanes, “Glenelg – Birthplace of South Australia” p 321

¹⁷⁵ Manning, “The Township of Glenelg 1839-1904” in www.slsa.sa.gov.au/manning

More on the Glenelg Independent Chapel graveyard

The Independent Chapel at Glenelg probably closed around 1859 when a new Congregational Church was opened at Glenelg.¹⁷⁶ The cemetery at the old Chapel does not exist now. David Shepard said “*there came a time when some big horses came down from town and carted those tombstones away and it was rumoured in town that the bodies were taken also and buried in one big hole in West Terrace – whether that was true or not I am not in a position to say*”. This may have been because of regular flooding of the area.¹⁷⁷

The Adelaide Cemeteries Authority has advised me that it has no record of that event, is not aware of this old cemetery, and is not aware of having those tombstones.

The 1899 history of the Chapel indicates that prior to the opening of St Peters Church, the very small congregation of the Chapel was made up of “*all denominations*”. It is therefore likely that that this graveyard of up to 50 graves when it was closed, constituted Glenelg’s de facto public graveyard from around 1848 to its closure, probably by 1859. That 1899 history indicates that during those years the population of Glenelg was very small, and most transferred to Adelaide in winter because the road was impassable to wheeled vehicles.

While David Shepard did not specify it as an Independent Chapel (or Congregational), his description of it, and its location near the Berkshire Hotel (which was on Anzac Parade)¹⁷⁸, fit the history of that Chapel given in a detailed history of the Independent Chapel¹⁷⁸ and the location of that Chapel in “*Smith Terrace, (now Gordon Street) Glenelg*” in the Glenelg Uniting Church website¹⁷⁹ and in “Glenelg – Birthplace of South Australia.”

It is theoretically possible that the Independent Chapel was built in 1848 next to the 1837 graves of Eliza and the two others buried by Rev. Howard at Glenelg.

However, the 1849 reference to a cemetery at the Independent Chapel, Glenelg included reference to cemeteries at similar Independent Chapels as if cemeteries were established at each of them in the same manner – i.e. that all of them were new cemeteries. Also, none of the references I have found to this Chapel or cemetery have given any reason for its location other than that the land was a “*gift of MR H. R. Wigley, Police Magistrate*”,¹⁸⁰

Also, Rev. Howard’s letter to the Colonial Secretary about pigs rooting up graves strongly infers that he knew of only one set of graves in the Glenelg area – otherwise he would have identified to which set of graves he was referring. He also referred to 2 or 3 such graves, when his records indicate 3 graves at Glenelg in 1837. With an infant’s bones found on the St Peters Church site in 1858 confirming one early burial there (and a burial fitting Rev. Howard’s records), it is therefore unlikely that there were other burials of the very early pioneers elsewhere, so as to form the nucleus of a cemetery before the Independent Chapel was opened in 1848.

While Nicol’s book refers to the “*Glenelg Anglican Church*”, the newspaper report on which it is based only refers to “*the church fence*” at Glenelg. Nicol may have leapt to the conclusion that it was the Anglican Church, or he may have relied on some other research to reach that conclusion.

¹⁷⁶ *The Register* 6 December 1859 p 3 and www.glenelg.unitingchurch.org.au/history.php

¹⁷⁷ *South Australian Register* 20 September 1899 p 6

¹⁷⁸ “A Chapter of Glenelg History” *South Australian Register* 20 September 1899 p 6

¹⁷⁹ www.glenelg.unitingchurch.org.au/history.php

¹⁸⁰ *South Australian Register* 20 September 1899 p 6

A circa 1870 photo of the Congregational Church at Glenelg shows the Church as having a post and rail fence¹⁸¹. However, in July 1858 (when the infant's coffin was found) there was only one "Church" at Glenelg, St Peters, plus the very small Independent "Chapel".

The foundation stone of the first Glenelg Congregational Church (the second Church in Glenelg) was laid on the 18th April 1859, so building for that second "Church" in Glenelg did not commence until almost a year after the discovery of the infant's coffin by fence builders for the only then existing Church – St Peters.

However, if Eliza Stace was not buried where Torrens Square now is, then this is a contender for her burial site.

Old Cemetery Opposite the Lady MacDonald Hotel^{ss}

Another old graveyard is similarly a possibility. In a newspaper reference to Dinni MacDonald who was resident at Glenelg before the official settlement commenced (and who claimed to have named the area "Glenelg" after the MacDonald's stronghold in Scotland) it says he was "*buried in an old cemetery, almost opposite the old Lady MacDonald Hotel, on Anzac Highway*".¹⁸² The article indicates that the hotel was "*just out of Glenelg, near the Highway*" (which I take to be a reference to the Anzac Highway).

The only references I can find to the Lady MacDonald Hotel place it on South Road.¹⁸³ The earliest is 1886. No date is given for Dinni's death, but it appears that it was after a hotel was built outside the town of Glenelg and on South Road, being decades later that Eliza's death.

Both the distance of this site from the campsite on the shores of Holdfast Bay of the original pioneers and the large time gap between the 2 events make this an unlikely spot for Eliza's burial.

The Adelaide Cemeteries Authority has no knowledge of a cemetery near this hotel.¹⁸⁴

Other Possible Areas

The above 2 possibilities are based on references to old graveyards or cemeteries in the area. However other possibilities should also be considered.

A respected local historian has suggested to me the theory that some early pioneers were buried in the sand hills near the original encampment but he has not located any contemporary records to confirm that theory.¹⁸⁵

However, I consider the sand hills an unlikely burial site. Digging a grave in loose sand is a very difficult task as the sand keeps sliding in. It seems unlikely that the early colonists, with the task of bring cargo ashore and creating temporary shelter and in the heat of Adelaide's summer, would seek one of the more difficult terrains in which to bury their dead, rather than choosing the easiest.

¹⁸¹ State Library of S.A. pictorial collection B9459

¹⁸² "Name of 'Glenelg' Given By an Old Whaler" *The Advertiser* 31 December 1937 p 20

¹⁸³ E.g. Auction notices *South Australian Register* 21 December 1886 p 8

¹⁸⁴ Email to the author from Peter Skinner, Records Coordinator, Adelaide Cemeteries Authority 30 May 2013

On that basis, marshy or rocky ground should also be excluded. It is also unlikely that they would bury their dead close to their fresh water supplies or close to the (brackish) river which was likely to be the centre of port activity in the near future. So a place within reasonable proximity to their encampment, with easy to dig ground that was not a sand hill, marsh or rocky and not close to the fresh water lagoon or the river seems a likely spot.

While a considerable area of old Glenelg fits that description, the St Peters site does fit it. Also, most of the area of Glenelg that is not built on, and in which a shallow grave could lie undiscovered because the ground has not been dug since, would be within the unlikely areas of sand hills, marsh or adjacent to the river.

Conclusion – St Peter’s Church, Torrens Square, Glenelg

So, St Peters Church remains the best candidate for the location of the burial of Eliza Stace.

Independently (and earlier than my research but not known to me until the 2nd edition of this paper was almost completed) Chris Ward, the Historical Researcher of the Kangaroo Island Pioneer Association, concluded that early burials occurred on the St Peter’s site:

*“There were undoubtedly several early burials in the Glenelg area witnessed partly by the fact that a coffin with a child’s remains was unearthed in 1858 when post holes were being dug for the Glenelg St Peter’s Anglican Church. The first Anglican service was on this site in 1837 so it would be reasonable to assume that some early burials in what may have been considered to be the churchyard.”*¹⁸⁵

While it will probably never be known for certain, the most likely place for Eliza Stace’s burial (and that of the others pioneers who were buried at Holdfast Bay that summer) is in or near St Peters Church in Torrens Square Glenelg, even though that Church has no record of any burials there. That makes it the most likely place of burial of the person who is most likely *“the first white person to die in the colony”* as well as the two subsequent deaths recorded in Rev. Howard’s Register. St Peters deserves to be recognised as such.

St Peters should also be recognised as the location of the first *“place of worship”* erected for that purpose in the colony, even though there were earlier places where worship was held in the open air or in settlers’ huts.

What else is known about Eliza Stace?

Joseph Stace and Eliza Savill or Saville were married on the 28th February 1835 in Epping, almost certainly at the Lindsay Street Congregational Church (which was in the same street as Joseph’s parents’ house).¹⁸⁵ Virtually nothing else is known about Eliza.

Joseph Stace, Eliza’s husband, remarried on 25th December 1837, to Sarah Levett. Five of their children survived to adulthood.

Their last child was named Eliza, apparently in memory of Joseph’s first wife.

¹⁸⁵ Ward, *South Australia’s First Cemetery*

The Biographical Index of South Australians entry for Eliza shows her religion as “*C of E*” (i.e. “Church of England”). The only basis I know of for such a claim is that Rev. Howard officiated at her funeral. Rev. Howard was the only ordained Minister in the Colony at that time, and, as the Colonial Chaplain, the only person authorised to officiate at marriages and funerals. Her husband Joseph was most probably Congregational and they were most probably married in a Congregational Church. Shortly after his arrival he was one of the first 20 people to contribute to the first Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Adelaide. Later he contributed to the first Congregational Church building and to a breakaway Chapel (the Zion Chapel) in Pulteney St. His second wife¹⁸⁶ came out in 1837 as the on-board servant for Rev. Stow (the first Congregational Minister), Joseph & Sarah were members number 24 & 25 of Rev. Stow’s Congregational Church and their children were active in the Brougham Place Congregational Church. It is likely that Eliza was either Congregational or Wesleyan Methodist.

Editorial Matters

The Author

Brian Stace, a descendant of Eliza Stace’s husband Joseph, is member of the Pioneers Association of South Australia and a retired lawyer living in Tasmania. Brian welcomes discussion on or additions to this story. (Email him on brian.stace@bigpond.com or contact him through the [Pioneers Association of South Australia](#).)

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These include:

- members of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association (particularly its Historical Researcher, Chris Ward and also Jo-anne Overton) who gave me important details I had not been able to locate with respect to some key deaths on or near Kangaroo Island;
- the volunteers and staff of Hope Cottage Museum (Kingscote, Kangaroo Island), the Holdfast Bay History Centre and the Glenelg Historical Society, all of whom patiently and helpfully answered my questions;
- the staff of the State Library of South Australia and the State Records of South Australia for their similar help, but also to both past and present staff for maintaining and making available such a magnificent collection of archival material;
- Graham Jaunay for testing me on some of my theories;
- Peter Brinkworth and Susan Coppin from the Pioneers Association of South Australia for their encouragement and detailed proof reading and editing assistance.

Copyright

¹⁸⁶ Sarah Levett, on the *Hartley*

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References

Overview

There are 4 main sources or type of reference material cited:

- Websites and data bases. Where a website or data base is frequently cited, I have used an abbreviation within the text. These are listed below in “Frequently Cited Websites and Databases”.
- Newspaper reports and advertisements, particularly those that are contemporary to the events. While these reports often reflect a strong bias, they are often the best available information on the events, and to the extent that they are biased, reflect the views of some of the early pioneers. (Contemporary diaries and letters have a similar risk of bias.) Most newspaper reports and advertisements cited are available through Trove (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>). Because of the numerous newspaper citations to different editions of the same paper, I have not listed these newspapers in this section.
- Books and similar reference material, which are listed in “Bibliography and Archival Materials” below, with full citation to the publication. Citations in the text, footnotes or end notes are in an abbreviated form.
- Archival material being diaries, journals, letters, records etc. included in “Bibliography and Archival Materials” below. Archival material of a Government nature is generally held by the State Records Office of S.A. (prefix GRG in the record number). Other archival material is held by the State Library of S.A. (usually prefix PRG in the record number). Citations in the text, footnotes or end notes are in an abbreviated form.

Frequently Cited Websites and Databases

Abbreviation used	Full Reference
Leadbeater's Cemeteries Deaths and Burials (or Leadbeater's Cemeteries)	"South Australian Cemeteries; Deaths and Burials" Barry and Maureen Leadbeater www.familyhistorysa.info/births-marriages-deaths/cemeteries/burials.html
Leadbeater's S.A. Deaths (or Leadbeater's Deaths)	"South Australian Deaths; 1836 – 1851+" Barry Leadbeater www.familyhistorysa.info/births-marriages-deaths/deaths.html
Leadbeater's Colonial South Australian Pioneers	"Colonial South Australian Pioneers" Barry Leadbeater www.familyhistorysa.info/colonists.html
Pre-civil Registration Deaths (or 'Pre-civil') [PC]	"Pre-civil registration deaths in South Australian" a CD compiled by Graham Jaunay, Gould Genealogy 2005
Leadbeater's Shipping Arrivals	"South Australian Passenger Lists, Shipping arrivals and immigration 1803 – 1854+" Barry Leadbeater; www.familyhistorysa.info/shipping/passengerlists.html
Bound for S.A.	"Bound for South Australia" www.boundforsouthaustralia.net.au
Diane Cummings	"Pioneers and Settlers Bound for South Australia" Diane Cummings www.slsa.sa.gov.au and for passenger lists www.slsa.sa.gov.au/fh/passengerlists/

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Index

Adelaide, 15, 17, 46, 48, 54

Adelaide Cemeteries Authority, 39, 45, 55, 56, 57

Africaine, 7, 19, 20, 22, 29, 39, 41

Barker, 12

Capt. Collet, 12

Beare

Thomas, Lucy and children, 13, 14, 31, 32, 40, 47, 66

births, 6, 7, 13, 14, 18, 23, 24, 29, 32, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 54

Blenkinsop

Capt., 30

Bond

Phillip, 25

Breaker

Benjamin, 40

Benjamin, 17, 18

Issac, Jane and children, 17

Broadbent

Luke (baby), 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 41

Luke and Harriett, 30, 31

Brown

John, 35, 43

William Voules, 40, 41, 42

Buffalo, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 26, 30, 31, 34, 40, 41, 52

Calnan

Jeremiah (John), 8, 29, 30, 33, 41

Cemeteries and graveyards. See also St Peters Church

Glenelg sandhills, 57

Independent Chapel, Glenelg, 55, 56, near Lady MacDonald Hotel, South Rd Glenelg.

Reeves Point, Kingscote KI, 5, 9, 13, 16, 21, 28, 31, 32, 33, 43

Walkerville, 54

West Terrace, 5, 38, 39, 45, 46, 54, 55, 56, 63

Chambers

James, 39

Chandler

Elizabeth, 14, 33, 40

Chauncey

Theresa, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35, 37, 43, 44

Chesser

Capt., 29, 36, 44

Clay

John, 36, 37

John and Mary, 38

unnamed infant, 37, 41, 47, 48, 49, 54

Coromandel, 5, 9, 11, 23, 27, 28, 29, 34, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 47

Cranfield

John, 21, 22, 30

Cygnnet, 41

Dawsey

Alexander, 12, 18

Douglas

Henry, 22, 26

Duff

Captain, 20

Duke of York, 5, 11, 12, 13, 20, 32, 34

Edmunds

Walter, 12, 18, 19

Eliza Stace, 58

Emery

William, 25, 35, 36, 37, 41, 44, 47, 49

Emma, 20, 21, 22, 41

Everard

Dr, 38

Finlayson

William, 24, 25, 26, 36, 44, 62

Fisher

Robert, 19, 20

Gahagan

Benjamin and Louisa, 28
 Louisa Catherine, 28, 32, 33, 41, 43

Garratt

James, 48

Glenelg, 9, 28, 31, 38, 39, 42, 44, 45, 46,
 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 63

Gouger

Harriett, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 48, 55
 Henry Hindmarsh, 6, 38, 39, 40, 41, 48,
 55
 Robert, 6, 19, 20, 29, 38, 39, 48, 52, 55,
 62

Governor. See Hindmarsh: Governor

Hindmarsh, 16

Green

Emma Barbara, 23, 24, 43

Hall

Joseph, 15, 16, 34, 40

Hindmarsh

Governor, 6, 30, 37, 38, 39, 51, 52

Holdfast Bay, 4, 7, 9, 11, 16, 20, 21, 23,
 24, 26, 27, 31, 33, 34, 35, 43, 44, 45, 46,
 47, 49, 57, 58, 59

Howlett

William, 8, 20, 21, 22, 26, 30, 32, 33,
 34, 36, 41, 62

inquest, 21, 22, 26, 30, 36, 37

Jackson

Dr, 38

Jacques

Robert, 36

John Pirie, 14, 40

John Renwick, 7, 8, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 35,
 36, 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47

Kangaroo Island, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 16, 19,
 20, 22, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 39, 41,
 47, 62, 63

Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association, 5,
 8, 18, 30, 32, 59, 64

Kannenberg

Ferdinand, 33

Kingscote, 9, 11, 31, 32, 33

**Kingscote (Reeves Point) Cemetery. See
 Cemeteries and graveyards**

Kingscote Memorial, 7, 10, 14, 18, 19, 20,
 22, 28, 29, 41

Kleman

Maria, 33

Lady Mary Pelham, 11, 12, 18, 19, 40

Langcake

George Mungo, 38, 41, 43

Levett

Sarah, 58, *See Stace:Sarah*

Marshall

James, 27

Menge

Johannes, 23, 63

Meredith

George jnr, 12

Middleton

Emily, 48

Nantes, 19

natives, 43, 44

Neale

Nepean Kingston, 23, 24, 34, 35, 41, 43,
 48, 52

William, 23

Nepean Bay, 13, 19, 20, 23, 27, 29

O'Brien

Thomas, 37, 41

O'Brien

James and wife, 37

Thomas, 37

Osborne

E. W., 7, 19, 20, 33, 34, 39

E.W., 22, 41, 43

Parsons

John, 27

Playford

John, 24, 26, 41

Rev. Howard, 9, 15, 17, 28, 34, 35, 37, 38,
 40, 44, 45, 47, 49, 52, 53, 56, 58, 59, 66

Rev. Howard's Register, 9, 28, 35, 37, 38,
 45, 58, 66

Scurr

William, 24, 25

Sladden

Joseph, 40, 41

Slater

John, 7, 19, 20, 22, 33, 34, 39, 41

Solway, 33

St Peters Church, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53,
 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 63

Stace

Eliza, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 26, 28, 31, 33,
 34, 35, 37, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47,
 48, 56, 58, 66

Joseph, 5, 7, 9, 34, 54, 58, 59, 66

Sarah, 54, 59, *See Levett:Sarah*

Stephens

Samuel, 20, 22

Storey

John, 15, 16, 34

Thompson

James, 12, 13, 18, 33, 40, 42

Torrens Square, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, See also St Peters Church

unnamed man

on the John Renwick, 24

unnamed child

on Coromandel, 23, 27, 32, 43, *See also*
Gahagan: Louisa

unnamed man

on Kangaroo Island, 26, 32, 34, 35

on the John Renwick, 24, 26

West Terrace Cemetery. See Cemeteries and graveyards

White

John, 39, 40

John Charles Storey, 39

Woodforde

Dr John, 39, 40, 64

Wyatt

Dr., 24, 26, 37, 44, 45

End Notes

These end notes provide further detail or analysis and correct several errors in sources I have considered. Corrections are provided so that others may avoid relying on those errors but are not criticism of the source or its author. Most of those errors are in collations from multiple original sources into major databases. In doing so, the authors will almost inevitably make mistakes because they do not have the time to subject each piece of information to the same degree of cross checking and analysis as I have done for this paper, which concentrates on a few facts and seeks to be definitive within days. Most of those sources contain warnings or disclaimers similar to this one in Pre-civil Registration Deaths “*This list is by no means complete and some records cannot be confirmed. You need to treat some of the entries with caution and attempt to verify using the sources given*”. This paper would not have been possible without their work.

^a A shorter version of this paper was published in 3 instalments in “*The Pioneer*” (the journal of the Pioneers Association of South Australia) Autumn, Winter and Summer 2012 editions. When the first of those articles was published, Leadbeater’s Cemeteries, Deaths & Burials also showed her as buried or memorialised at West Tce. This was updated to ‘Unknown’ after Barry Leadbeater contacted me. These data bases also give the date of burial as the date of death, when the actual date of death is unknown.

^b The typed Register of Deaths for the early years at the State Library of S.A., which includes Rev. Howard’s Register, has the death of Lucy Beare (on 3/9/37) as the first in the list, but then starts the numbering system with Eliza Stace as No 1. This is a compilation from several records. Rev. Howard’s original handwritten Register shows Eliza Stace as the first entry.

^c “The Biographical Index of South Australians” (BISA) erroneously shows Joseph Stace (Eliza’s husband) as having a first wife “*unknown*” (it was Eliza) and 2 sons by his first wife, one being Arthur Hill Stace, the other unknown. Arthur Hill Stace was 9 years younger than Joseph, so could not be his son. (He was the son of Joseph Stace of Southampton, a surgeon who never came to Australia, as the memorials for both that Joseph Stace and Arthur Hill Stace in the Old Cemetery of Southampton in the U.K. show. Arthur Stace is almost certainly the “Stace” shown on passenger lists for the *Blanche* arriving in 1842.) The Register of Applicants for Free Passage shows that Joseph and Eliza had no children and (apart from that BISA reference) I have found nothing to indicate that Joseph and Eliza had any children. Many databases have copied one or more of these errors.

^d Diane Cummings' passenger list for the *Coromandel* refers correctly to the information in the "Register of Applicants for Free Passage" and then adds "*His wife probably died between August 15 (the date of application) and Dec 25th 1837 when he married Sarah Levett in South Australia*". This misses the evidence of Eliza Stace's death in Rev. Howard's Register.

^e Gould Genealogy also have a CD ROM from Graham Jaunay (2002) "Lonely Graves in South Australia" which is a database of confirmed or suspected grave sites that are not in official cemeteries or graveyards. The earliest dated burial in it is for Harriett Gouger on 15/3/1837 and none of the deaths referred to in this paper prior to Harriett Gouger's are included. Another CD ROM database from the same publisher and author "Unregistered Deaths in South Australia" starts with its earliest date as 1842.

^f Of those seven names, there is one that should not be on that Memorial as having died en-route (i.e. Edmunds). As will be seen he died in Hobart after having left S.A.

^g Leadbeater's use of the term "*died soon after arrival*" is not confined to the first few weeks, or even first few months. Two such notations with respect to passengers on the *Buffalo* (Mary Breaker and John Collett) are recorded by him in other databases as having died in September 1837 – almost 9 months after arrival.

^h The information with respect to Antonio, Bryant, Jackson and Mason is all based on information provided to me by Jo-anne Overton, a researcher into deaths related to Kangaroo Island. I have not separately researched or attempted to verify any of this information.

ⁱ The Pre-civil Registration Deaths CD gives the date of death for Thompson as "*aft Jul 1836*" and the unpublished update kindly supplied to me by the author gives the date "1/8/1836". As the letter from A Dawsey is written on the 3rd June and clearly states that the death occurred "*on the 3rd May*", and the death is confirmed in a journal entry of Captain Morgan on the 12th May, any date later than May must be incorrect.

^j Pre-civil Registration Deaths CD erroneously gives Elizabeth Chandler's date of death as "*aft Oct 1836*" and confusingly, while stating that her residence was "*John Pirie*" and that she died at sea on that ship also has a note "*passenger to SA 1836 Africaine*". However, the author of that CD has kindly advised me of the unpublished update to that information, which now reads "*Elizabeth Chandler w/o Charles d. 1/11/1836 at sea on the John Pirie Note Passenger to SA 1836 John Pirie*". Unfortunately the date is still incorrect. Dorothy Heinrich's "The Man Who Hunted Whales" wrongly states that she jumped overboard on the 16th August as the *John Pirie* came into Nepean Bay. (Dorothy Heinrich probably relied on the diary of Capt. Morgan of *The Duke of York* (the subject of her story) who entered into his diary for the 15th August 1836 that "*at 8.00am the John Pirie hove in sight I took a boat and went on board ...all safe with the exception of a whoman (sic) who had on board a husband and four children she jumped over board but was picked up but it caused her death*" and thought that the passage referred to an event that day or the day before.)

^k While this is an apparently callous diary note equating the death of a sailor with weather observations, the range of responses to death at sea is discussed in "Bound for SA" under "Topics" in "Burial at Sea".

^l There is a discrepancy between the 6th & the 16th in these two records. The 16th appears correct as the surrounding material in Hutchinson's diary confirms that date, and the log extract in *The Register* is based on a transcript from an English researcher – leaving more room for error.

^m I am indebted to Lois Knight, a descendant of John Adams, for referring me to this account of John Storey's death.

ⁿ I have not been able to find any other “Breaker” family coming to S.A. in time for a Mary Breaker fitting this description to arrive prior to the given date of death.

^o I had concluded that Edmunds did not die before arriving at KI, or at KI, but it was Chris Ward of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association who provided me with the research I have used to identify his death in Hobart. Diane Cummings website contains the error of showing Edmunds as having died at sea on the *Lady Mary Pelham*.

^p This is the only reference I have found to the discovery of Dr Slater’s body by 1837. Theresa Chauncey makes no mention of Osborne, and gives no indication of when this body was discovered. The reference to the discovery of this body is made immediately after she says that she had visited Mrs Cotter (the wife of the surgeon on the *Coromandel*) and Mrs Brown (the wife of the Emigration Agent), so it is likely that they were the source of this information.

^q The *South Australian Register* 6 April 1866 p 3 gives detail of the discovery of a skeleton on Kangaroo Island on 5/April 1866, initially thought to be Dr Slater’s, and refers to an earlier discovery in 1858 of 2 bodies then thought to be Osborne and Slater. A follow up article in the *Register* 13 July 1866 suggests that this latest body was Osborne’s. Either Theresa Chauncey was wrong in her reference to the discovery of a body, or I am wrong in relating her reference to Dr Slater or, when bodies were found 20 – 30 years later, it was forgotten that Dr Slater’s body had been found earlier. Both those articles indicate that neither hunger nor thirst was the immediate cause of death and that it appeared that the person had lain down in a sheltered place to die.

^r There is some confusion as to whether William Howlett died on Kangaroo Island. A detailed family history of the Howlett family, including William Howlett, gives great detail of his subsequent life up until his death in 1884. That history says that William Howlett returned to England after arriving in S.A. and then returned to Adelaide on the *Anna Robertson* arriving 20th September 1839. It gives significant detail of his life in Adelaide between arriving on the *Emma* and returning to England, and all ages given in it match. However, the age given in that history for the William Howlett on the *Emma* is 17 (matching the age at death in 1884), but the age given in the Register of Labourers Applying for Free Passage is 22. That creates considerable doubt as to whether the William Howlett on the *Emma* is the William Howlett on the *Anna Robertson*. Some Howlett descendants are convinced that there were two William Howletts who were early colonists of S.A. and that one probably died on Kangaroo Island but that the family history confused the two. The contemporary records referred to in this paper put the issue beyond doubt – William Howlett, passenger on the *Emma*, did die on Kangaroo Island and the William Howlett on the *Anna Robertson* was a different person.

^s For an article on the topic of the “First Born”, see “First Child Born to British Emigrants in South Australia” by Beryl Schahinger, *The South Australian Genealogist* Vol 30 No 1 (February 2003). Additional newspaper sources referring to Nepean Kingston Neale are *The South Australian Register* 31 March 1876 p 4, 5 May 1876 p 6 (in which James Hoare says he was aware of Mr Neale’s child “dying in its infancy”) and 9 May 1876 p 5 and *The Advertiser* 22 June 1901 p 8.

^t The Neales’ claim for the first born indicates the care which needs to be taken with respect to such claims to be “the first ...”. Schahinger in her article “First Child Born to British Emigrants in South Australia” identifies Emma Green as the first. Emma was born 4 days before Nepean Neale, on the same vessel, the *Cygnets*, in the waters off Kangaroo Island. The Neales must have known that and their claim could only be correct if they made the legalistic distinction as to the boundaries of S.A. at the time.

^u In the headings on Diane Cummings’ web page for the *Cygnets* she erroneously gives the 11th September as the date of arrival in Holdfast Bay but in the accompanying text correctly states it as being at Nepean Bay on that date.

^v The other names that Jo-anne Scurr has suggested as possible for the unnamed *John Renwick* passenger who died are Samuel Southmill, Richard Smith (a possibility because of the 5 letter name starting with “S” but of course a more difficult name to search reliably), Richard Dines and Philip Oakden.

^w “Pre-civil Registration Deaths” has a note with respect to its entry for Eliza Stace - “*arr SA 1836 Coromandel*”. This is incorrect as the *Coromandel* arrived in January 1837.

^x An article in “The Pioneer” of Summer 2009 (Pioneers Association of SA) at p 2 outlines Dr Cotter’s career. I have not been able to find any reference to Eliza or her death in any material relating to him.

^y I am indebted to Anthea Taylor, a descendant of Jeremiah Calnan and a member of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association for this information.

^z Graham Jaunay, the author of the Pre-civil Registration Deaths CD, has advised me that, in light of this analysis and other research he has undertaken, he has removed the entry for Kannenberg from the current version of this data base.

^{aa} The description that Pastor Finlayson gave of the “Port” made me wonder whether the *John Renwick* was anchored near where Port Adelaide now is, when this death occurred. However, Wyatt’s letter written in 1837 gives February 21 as the date on which the *John Renwick* got underway to its “*final destination*” (the Port) from Holdfast Bay, so this puts Emery’s death before the *John Renwick* left Holdfast Bay. Also Clay, the witness of the death was a *Coromandel* passenger who would have been living at Holdfast Bay, and is unlikely to have been heading to where Port Adelaide now is, but was most likely heading back from Adelaide to the camp at Holdfast Bay. But contrary to that, the letter that John Brown the Emigration Agent sent to the Colonial Secretary, apparently with the inquest papers, is addressed from “Glenelg” but refers twice to “Port Adelaide” suggesting that “Port Adelaide” is not Glenelg or Holdfast Bay. Theresa Chauncey places his death as somewhere between Port Adelaide and Glenelg.

Diane Cummings correctly gives William Emery’s date of death but wrongly states that he died “*on voyage*”. Leadbeater’s data base wrongly shows him as died at sea.

^{bb} In addition to the name search for “O’Brien” on Leadbeater’s data bases, I have searched Diane Cummings’ passenger lists (where there is no search capacity by passenger name across that data base) and there is no “O’Brien” listed as a passenger for any vessel arriving before 20 February 1837 except James O’Brien’s family on the *Coromandel*.

^{cc} In Edition 1, I erroneously named this infant “Samuel”. However, while Samuel Clay did die in the early years of SA’s settlement, he was the 4 year old son of John and Mary Clay who was buried on the 10th March 1838 (Rev. Howard’s Burial Register). I am grateful to Jo-anne Overton of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association for pointing out my error.

^{dd} “Pre-civil Registration Deaths” wrongly says that Rev. Stow (Congregationalist) officiated at Clay’s burial ceremony. Rev. Stow did not arrive until 8 months later – on the *Hartley* in October 1837.

^{ee} Leadbeater’s data base incorrectly applies the burial date as the date of death and says that George Langcake was buried at the West Tce Cemetery. It is possible that George Langcake was buried within the area of West Tce Cemetery but there are no records that I am aware of that justify that conclusion as West Tce Cemetery has no records from that time. Similar statements are made on that data base with respect to other early deaths for which there is no record of their place of burial.

ff Osborne's and Slater's deaths were the subject of considerable newspaper coverage at the time. In addition to the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* of 8th July 1837, accounts of their deaths were reported in the Hobart published *Colonial Times* on 22nd August 1837 p5-6 and the Launceston published *Cornwall Chronicle* on 19th August 1837.

gg Dr Woodforde did not record anything about Eliza, her illness or death, even though her burial was only 8 days before this entry.

hh Blckett, "History of South Australia" p 73 includes part of Theresa Chauncey's letter (which is printed in its entirety in *The Advertiser's* article of 28 December 1897) in a manner that infers that she was present at the funeral and only ascribes the letter to "lady pioneer", giving no clue as to the identity of the letter writer or where a copy of the whole letter could be found. However, when the whole of Theresa's letter is available, it is clear that she was on board the *John Renwick* on the night of the burial and came ashore for the first time on the 10th and that the description given in her letter is one she was given by someone who did attend the funeral – probably Mrs Brown.

ii The letter can also be accessed in the G F Angas Papers (PRG174/13 at p 525). The letter does not mention any death or burial, whether of Eliza or the *John Renwick* passenger (William Emery) a few days later. Theresa Chauncey's journal also confirms the *John Renwick's* arrival off Holdfast Bay on the 9th and anchoring at 4.00pm.

jj Andrew Peake, the author of that book has told Graham Jaunay (author of "Pre-civil Registration Deaths") that there were earlier records but they were destroyed in a fire.

kk Early coronial enquiries, which might have mentioned the death or burial of Eliza (or any of the other pioneer deaths referred to in this paper) did not commence until March 1838. (Pounder, *Death investigation in colonial South Australia*).

ll The 1852 St Peters Church was demolished in 1881 and the first part of the current Church was built, opening in 1883. ("*St Peters Church Glenelg*" p 7.)

mmm According to Ewens, "*The Establishment of Trinity Church*", the eventual site for Holy Trinity in Adelaide was donated by Mr Pascoe to the Church in 1836 prior to the Light survey of Adelaide (as a 1 acre town lot and ½ of a country section) and by general agreement the Church was given first choice when the ballot was held to give those with purchase orders the order of choice.

nn Finnis wrote "Some Early Recollections" which are held by the Flinders University Library in its Borrow Collection. Those Recollections make no mention of this 1839 Glenelg plan.

oo Rev. Howard could not have started building his hut and the temporary place of worship until mid January at the least. "...not until the 13th January were the families on board (the *Buffalo*) boated ashore. By the 16th all had been landed and most were accommodated in temporary huts on the plain." (Ewens, *The Establishment of Trinity Church* p 5.)

pp None of these histories refer to the original source for their statements. It is probable that the diaries of Robert Gouger and Mary Thomas were the original sources.

qq I am indebted to Pioneers Association of S.A member Jenny Carallo for referring me to this possibility after my shorter article was published in *The Pioneer*.

rr Jenny Carallo has advised me that the Berkshire Hotel building still stands and is known as Berkshire Court, probably now 3 flats. Chris Ward of the Kangaroo Island Pioneers Association says it operated as a hotel from 1856 to 1909.

^{ss} I am indebted to Jan Smith, President of the Glenelg Historical Society Inc., for bringing this to my attention after the first article was published.

^{tt} This suggestion was given to me by Graham Jaunay who remembers Dulcie Perry (author of "A Place of Waters" but now deceased) making a comment of that nature to him. He has checked her written records and cannot find anything relevant in them. I am indebted to Graham Jaunay for comments and suggestions he has made on parts of this paper, but no support, or disagreement, with my conclusions should be inferred from that.

^{uu} The information on the marriage of Joseph and Eliza has been provided to me from the transcript a descendant of a brother of Joseph made some time ago of all "Stace" entries in the relevant Parish records. She was unaware that Joseph was in any way related, so did not analyse the information and identify the difference in date between 1835 and 1836 and in the spelling of Eliza's maiden name and she does not have a copy of the original records. The records are still not available on the internet, so I have been unable to check which is correct. The 1836 date is more likely to be correct as the 28th February 1836 was a Sunday while in 1835 it was a Saturday. Sunday was the normal wedding day because most people had to work on Saturdays.