



# Bulleid News



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## George Jones Senior 1817 - 1897

*The November newsletter contained an account of James John Bulleid's arrival in Australia in 1849, when he followed the gold rush in Victoria, and the December issue described John and William Bulleid's emigration to New Zealand in 1874. The following is a fascinating account of the life of George Jones which, in a sense, links the two in that George emigrated to New Zealand, but spent several years in Australia during the gold rush, before returning to New Zealand. The link to the Bulleid family is that George was the great grandfather of Victor Bulleid of Dunedin, who has kindly authorised me to reproduce this extract from his book 'Reflections on the Bulleids of Oamaru'. The original account was over the signature of George L Jones son of Irvine.*

To understand the life of George Jones Senior we have to go back to life in Shropshire, England, east of Wales and back to the early 1800's. A young woman Mary Wilkinson had been born in late 1795 in Much Wenlock. She was 21 when she became pregnant - conception would have been about her 21st birthday. The father of her baby, 33 year old bootmaker George Jones 'did the right thing' and married her a few months later, before the baby was born. They married on 19 May 1817 in a nearby village church, Buildwas, presumably in an attempt to keep the secret of her pregnancy from the Much Wenlock townsfolk.

We know little of the early life of the young George, christened in August 1817, except that he had a sister and a brother, both of whom later came out to New Zealand. Because his father was a bootmaker and he became one, it is reasonable to assume that they had a reasonably settled life.

Life in Shropshire was changing fast. The town had a good brewery, a thriving artisan community, a mental asylum, a monastery and a church. The land was swampy, and the health of the community was not good because of it. But this was the cradle of the industrial revolution. Factories started to be built, industrial pollution increased massively. Because of the factories the local artisans, who could not compete, started to drift away.

We next hear about George when he married in London - 1 April 1839. He married Ann Eliza Adams, the youngest of eight children of Thomas and Susanna Adams of London. She was tiny, and he also was lightly built. Eliza was christened in January 1822, so would have been 17 and he 21 at their wedding. George presumably took over his father's business when he died, was struggling, and he and Eliza eventually decided to answer the ads for settlement in the new colony of New Zealand.

He was an accomplished violinist and a keen follower of the brand of Christianity that eventually became known as Methodist. He followed the teachings of John Wesley of a century before - a Wesleyan. The philosophy was essentially that of puritanism, no alcohol, no frivolous activity. A good citizen, he was a good craftsman, and he and Eliza had no children at that time. He was an ideal candidate for the new colony, especially because he had sufficient money to weather the possible difficulties in a new life.

They set sail from London in a brand new sailing ship, the "*Arab*", in June 1841. They had disaster almost immediately as the main mast broke in the English Channel. After repairs at Portsmouth they travelled south and then west. There was a near mutiny off the coast of Africa. After four and a half months they arrived in Port Nicholson, New Zealand on 16 October 1841.

It was usual to land at Petone, but he settled in Willis Street, Wellington initially, then nearly a year later to a section on the Hutt riverbank in what is now known as Alicetown, Lower Hutt. The Hutt valley was heavily wooded from just south of his section all the way up the valley. From the edge of the forest south to the Petone foreshore was an area of flax swamps and sand dunes. Ships could sail past his house to the settlement on the other side of the river called River Hutt (now central Lower Hutt). His section was wooded at the back, and he found karaka, rangiora and tutu there, so it was not full mature podocarp forest at this point. Well behind his section was a straight path that went from the area north of River Hutt to the coastal track round the harbour to Wellington. This path continued up the valley to past where the hospital is now to Boulcott's farm and beyond. There was a bridge not far upstream from his house that crossed the Hutt River at right angles, made of kahikatea and totara. They knew little of the properties of these two timbers, and found that the kahikatea had rotted within two years. However the river was prone to flooding and the bridge had to be replaced about that time.

George had set up as a boot-maker on his own - he had taken employment only during his first months in Wellington. Of course boots were of paramount importance to the settlers, and he did well. Their first born, Eliza Ann, was born in 1842, and in 1844 their first son, George, was born.

During this time the Maori had a problem with the pakeha. All to do with their understanding of the deal made with the New Zealand Company about the land.

The chief at Kaiwharawhara, just north of Wellington had agreed that the pakeha could own nine tenths of the land in the Wellington District, in return for some trinkets, axes, blankets etc. However the concept of exclusive ownership did not exist within the Maori community, only kaitiaki or governorship. Caring for the land. It is very like the pakeha attitude to the sea - a bay cannot be owned by a person, there are no pegs or boundaries possible. The community in the bay collectively may have some concept of 'our bay' and be unhappy if another bay's inhabitants come to fish in 'their' bay. So it is with the Maori concept of both the land and the sea. An irate settler at Waiwhetu, across the valley to the east, had the following spring (1841) found the same chief from Kaiwharawhara digging up the settler's garden to plant kumara - his traditional spot for the previous ten years. The settler chased him away - he thought that he had exclusive rights to his section - the Maori had assumed that he was sharing the district with the new settlers, neither had exclusive rights. They felt that they had been swindled, tricked out of possession.

The Maori talked of retaliation. This was happening throughout the country, where new settlements were farming. An English man was sent from Australia to take charge of the pending war - George Grey (later Sir George). Some Hutt Maori tried to disrupt the lives of the settlers, and Grey asked the settlers to chase them away. George Jones was part of this militia group, who chased them up country, but only so far as to relieve their concerns about their hearth and home. Grey had asked them to continue to push the Maori right back to Taranaki, but the militia came home instead. You can imagine the trauma that George would have had in this - he would never have held a gun, but felt that he needed to protect his family - wife and two small children.

After this and the Boulcott farm incident when the Maori burned the grain crop on the farm, George decided to get out to the only place in the southern hemisphere that had no 'native problem' - Tasmania. Ten years before, the white man had shot all aborigines on sight like dogs. The genocide was complete, so there were no further problems on Tasmania.

George and his family did not stay very long in Hobart, the conditions for business being very poor. They moved to Port Phillip, now known as Melbourne. He set up a shop on the south-west corner of the town, and did well, and his expanding family was being well looked after.

However the New South Wales government - Victoria was not yet formed - had decided to use just where his house and shop was to place the new railway line and station - Spencer Street. He got no compensation for it. There was another town, Geelong, to the south-west that was about the same size as Port Phillip - ten thousand population. George decided to try there, reasoning that the first port of call for ships would be at Geelong, and that therefore the town

and he would prosper better there.

He opened a boot shop close to one corner of the large town square in 1850. He was doing okay a year later when he heard that gold had been discovered inland at Ballarat. He then realised that he had made the right choice - the diggings were 50 miles inland from Geelong, about 80 from Melbourne on a much worse route. Later he and other shopkeepers in Geelong were pretty irate when they found an incorrect map put out by the Port Phillip shop-keepers had placed Ballarat further north than it really was and it appeared that the shortest route was through Port Phillip.

Large numbers of men came off the ships at Geelong and immediately headed west to the diggings. Only a few came into the town, and he quickly realised that he needed to open another shop on the road to the goldfields. A hotel opened at the end of the street, and he was only a few feet along the road from the pub. He built a substantial shop with a metal front - 'no expense spared' he later stated when he was selling the place. It was a two-story brick place with eight rooms, and he moved his growing family into the top floor, with a beautiful view of Curio Bay, with the many sailing ships dropping passengers and general cargo.

One morning, 6 February 1852, he saw a huge grey cloud in the west. It had been very hot and dry for quite a while and there were reports of many fires throughout the south east of Australia. The wind rose violently and they were enveloped in dust. The temperature rose dramatically to well over a hundred degrees. George closed his shop door - everybody in the town ducked for cover. Out in the country the wind fanned the flames, and fire raced across the countryside. Animals and humans were trapped in the raging fires - many animals lost their lives, and many farmers lost their houses and possessions as they raced for shelter in horse and cart. The following day the reports started coming in and a new phrase was born - Black Thursday. It had been a day of panic - a painting hangs in the public library in Melbourne to this day.

George thrived - the prices of everything tripled, but he could therefore earn plenty from the boots. Not only that, he was getting the business from the miners who came back with gold. Some wanted top class dress boots as well as bluchers, brogues and boots. He would have been importing boots from London - his brother in London was probably of assistance here - as well as making and repairing them himself. He opened a third shop in the town - of course having staff to handle the business. He bought a large suburban section. He made several trips to the diggings, mainly to sell boots, but he tried his hand while there at looking for gold, without much success.

The government introduced a miner's license in 1855 that would have cost most miners much more per month, 30 shillings, than they were getting from the gold.

There was rebellion at Ballarat and other goldfields. The police, such as they were, were called in to enforce the new fee. The original police having left to become miners had been replaced by the better behaved of the convicts in New South Wales. They ambushed the miners, who had quickly built a stockade at Eureka in Ballarat. There were many deaths, the only white man against white man massacre in the southern hemisphere. George would have read about it in the papers, and heard about it direct from his customers.

The peak of the business life in Geelong was 1854, when the population was 25,000. It slowly decreased as the easy gold became more difficult to find and companies with employees replaced the individual miners. Also Ballarat became a town with an increasing number of shops opening there. There were 10,000 people in Geelong by 1862.

He did not like the hotel close by - remember his religious convictions. However he found it very good for business - like all shops he was open all hours. So if a drunk belted on the door at three in the morning he would come down to open up the shop and sell the man the best boots he had.

A considerable number of women had a very hard time of it - being left at home with many children as their husbands took off to look for gold. A considerable number prostituted themselves to keep the family fed.

There was an alley at the back of George's house and the pub, and it was there that the less good looking women would have gathered and waited for the drunks to pay them for services rendered. But some of the better looking women insisted on a full 'wedding' ceremony before they would sleep with the men. Married for a day or until the gold ran out. [*One wonders whether this might account for the marriage in Melbourne in 1854 between James John Bulleid and Emma Toe - Ed*]. George would have profited from this - all the best clothing and of course boots.

The alcohol was cheap brandy, the pubs never closed. So you can imagine the environment - mud or dust on the road, mixed with urine and vomit. The noise, the raucous singing, all night. But the profit! - he made a fortune!

So this was the life of young George Junior and his brothers and sisters, growing up next to a pub at the time of the worst abuse of alcohol in the southern hemisphere. No wonder that young George in particular became such a strong prohibitionist in later life. He was ten at the peak, eighteen when they left in 1862.

There was a printer in the town that young George probably worked for. They printed business documents mostly. His brother Fred became interested in bootmaking, probably helping out after school in the shop. There were eight children in the family by 1862.

George Senior had seen the miners come back from the diggings empty-handed

by the late 50's. He was probably part of a delegation that went to Melbourne to join a peaceful protest rally to lobby the Victorian government to allow the miners to settle on the land. It turned into a riot as mounted police galloped through a large crowd in the parliament grounds. A lot of people were hurt. The government was mostly formed by or sympathetic to the squatters, so were reluctant to chop up the large runs into manageable farms. Eventually the cries were heard, but the squatters got around the new rules as they put up front men to acquire the land on their behalf. George became a strong advocate for land reform and settlement throughout the rest of his life.

The Jones's stayed too long. George lost most of the value in his properties. There were over seventy boot-shops all competing for the business of 10 thousand people - mostly ex-miners trying to think of something to earn money from. He needed to get out - fast. He lost most of his fortune in the sale of his properties. Ghost town economics.

He had heard that the next gold discovery area was likely to be Rockhampton in Queensland. Five years before there had been a gold rush of sorts, but there was no gold, maybe there would be this time. He took his family and his boot stocks to Queensland in late 1862, probably by ship. The frontier town was pretty primitive and it rained. It was very hot and humid. The town on the banks of the river was thriving - he opened a shop. A year later the rains came again, it was especially hot and humid in summer. No gold. Cloying, sticky mud through the town. It had been bad enough in Geelong, with the ladies having to take a coach ride across the village square when dressed in their Sunday best on their way to church. But this!

Disaster struck. Their youngest child Margaretta had been born on 27 September 1861 and died on 9 May 1863. Just nineteen and a half months. Just learning to talk. The croup, the poor wee thing coughing and gasping. They buried her the following day in the cemetery beside the river. They weren't to know that a year later the whole cemetery was to be swept away in a flood. With a heavy heart the nine of them decided what to do. There was George 46 and Eliza 42, then young Eliza 21, George Junior 19, Fred 16, Mary 12, Charles 9, Susy 7 and Eva 4. Within a few weeks they were on their way to George and Eliza's country of first choice, back this time to Christchurch.

George bought a shop on the southern town belt, now known as Moorhouse Avenue and thrived. His brother Thomas William was in New Zealand around 1870, and the two brothers were living in the same household and running Jones Brothers boot importing and warehousing business across the road from BNZ on Colombo Street at the corner of the Square.

He decided to open a shop in Timaru and his son Charles became its manager for a time. He worked between Timaru and Christchurch and eventually moved the remainder of his family to Timaru in 1877. George Junior had married Dorothy

Tweedy in 1865 and Eliza had married John Bent in 1866. Fred had married Rea Costley in 1868 and moved to Wellington. Mary married William Hood and Susy married Joseph Booth in late 1877 - a double wedding in Timaru. Eva married Edwin Best in 1881 and Charles married Jane Barnes in 1882 - both these in Oamaru.

George Junior had been to Auckland, Ngaruawahia, Auckland again, then Dunedin and finally settled in Oamaru in 1877. Most of the family settled in Oamaru, all the men working for George Junior in the Oamaru Mail newspaper. Fred was the only one not involved - he was working for Hannahs in Wellington - surgical boots were his speciality. His aunt, George's sister Margaret, had come from England and lived with his family.

But back to George Senior in Timaru who had bought a shop just north of the pub at the north end of the town. Unfortunately, the town expanded south after that, so he moved to the south end of the shops right next to a pub. He knew the value of foot traffic and being next to a hotel. He retained ownership at least of the Christchurch shop till he died, but decided to retire in 1881 to Oamaru, presumably to be near his children and ever-growing number of grandchildren. Eventually he saw two of his great grandchildren, before he died in 1897 at the age of 80. In Oamaru, he became involved in local body affairs, with a special interest in land settlement. His widow Eliza survived for another ten years living in the Humber Street house that they had bought when George retired.

### [Jessie Augusta Widger Bulled and the Man They Couldn't Hang](#)

Jessie was the granddaughter of William Bulled of Witheridge in Devon and, although it has not yet proved possible to connect the Bulleds to the main Bulleid tree, there is no doubt that they are of the same family. William, born about 1811, was a Greenwich Pensioner living at Collaton, Malborough, Devon in 1861, and a Naval Pensioner living in Compton Gifford in 1881. He was a widower living at 38 Providence Street, Plymouth, in 1891.

William's son, John, was born about 1835, and in 1871 was Coastguard in Southchurch, Essex. In 1881, he was the Chief Officer, Coastguard, in St Margaret's at Cliffe, Kent, but his wife, Caroline, was in the Kent County Lunatic Asylum in Chatham. Jessie was their third daughter, born in Harwich in 1875.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1909, Jessie married John Henry George Lee, the proprietor of a general store in the Devon village of Abbotskerswell, near Newton Abbot. Jessie was a Head Attendant in Female Mental Wards living in Newton Abbot.



John Lee

Her spouse, known as John 'Babbacombe' Lee, came with an interesting past, to put it mildly. He had been released from Portland Prison on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1907 despite having been sentenced to life imprisonment, without limit, for the murder of Miss Emma Ann Whitehead Keyse at her home in Babbacombe, Torquay. She was brutally murdered and her home, 'The Glen', was set on fire. John and his half sister Elizabeth Harris were among her servants. The murder took place on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1884 when she was bludgeoned with an axe and had her throat slashed with a knife.

[Printed by authority of the Registrar General.]

**CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH**  
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

HC 448363

D. Cert. S.R.

Registration District		NEWTON ABBOT		in the County of Devon:					
1884. Death in the Sub-district of		Torquay		in the County of Devon:					
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
481	15 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1884 The Glen, Babbacombe, D.S.O., St. Mary Church.	EMMA ANN Whitehead KEYSE.	Female	68 years.	Spinster.	Violent murder by John Lee.	Autopsy performed from 2nd by Medical Officer for Torquay District Devon. Inquest held on 11 <sup>th</sup> 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov 21 <sup>st</sup> December and on 1 <sup>st</sup> December 1884.	1884.	Charles Arrest Tozas.  Registrar.

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

*[Signature]* Superintendent Registrar.  
11. 5. 1949. Date.

CAUTION: It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

John, one of three servants in the house at the time (his half sister was the cook), had recently been in prison and was under notice to quit Miss Keyse' service. His behaviour and appearance following the murder were described as very suspicious and he was arrested and charged.

The trial took place in February 1885 when John was represented in court by an MP who had earlier prosecuted him when he was convicted of theft from Colonel Brownlow. The defence was poorly prepared, it did not cross examine some witnesses for the prosecution, nor did they call any witnesses on John's behalf. Throughout the trial John Lee made constant claims of innocence.

The judge in his summation to the jury suggested that they must approach the case with an assumption in favour of innocence of the prisoner, and, whatever might be the result, he had never met a case where the evidence had been more fairly given, or its conduct had been more efficient.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty within 40 minutes and the Judge then passed the formal sentence of death.

The date for the hanging was set for the 23rd February 1885 at Exeter Prison. This was spectacularly unsuccessful due to the failure of the trap to release - **not just once, but three times**. Amid the confusion of these botched attempts John was returned to his cell and at some later time the Home Secretary reduced his sentence to life imprisonment with the recommendation that he never be released.

John and Jessie's marriage was by license with only the Minister, Registrar and Caretaker present to avoid publicity. News of the event soon spread, however, and a large crowd gathered as they emerged. They were cheered and showered with confetti.

Their first child, John, was born the year after their marriage in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where John was a barman. He disappeared from public view before the birth of their second child, Eveline, on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1911. When the birth was registered, the family's address was given as 88 Lansdowne Road, South Lambeth, London, and John was described as a barman. In fact, he had sailed for America the previous February with another woman, leaving Jessie pregnant and with an infant in Lambeth Workhouse. We do not know what became of the family subsequently.

In 1939, John took the first step towards becoming an American citizen. In his Declaration of Intention, he stated that he and his 'wife' had arrived in New York on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1911. She was Adelina Gibbs, a former barmaid, who had married William Jones at St. Michael's Church, Litchfield, just three months before leaving for America with John. His application was never processed and the 'man they couldn't hang' died in Milwaukee on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1945.

With acknowledgements to: -

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~alanelliott/Lee%20Family.HTML> and [www.murderresearch.com/intro](http://www.murderresearch.com/intro)

### Bulleid Web

A warm welcome to cousins whom I met at our family gathering in Wangaratta, Australia, in November and who are now users of the family website: -

[Brad Bulleid](#), [Cheryl Bottomley](#) and [Debra Todd](#) son and daughters of Lancelot and Marjorie Bulleid. Brad lives in Bendigo and is Quality Assurance Manager with Thales Land systems.

[Denise Fisher](#), [David Edgar](#) and [Sue Cooper](#), daughters and son of Gerald and Isobel Edgar

[Shirley Mason](#), daughter of William and Lillian Edgar

[Adrian Kelleher](#), son of Denis and Brigita Kelleher

[Sarah Coldham](#), daughter of Dr Humfrey and Margaret Bulleid

In her Christmas message, [Liz Gross](#) reported the birth of her grandson, [Tevy Tidmarsh](#) on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2009 and granddaughter, [Maeve Ellie Tidmarsh](#) on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009. Liz is still recovering from the shattered shoulder she suffered in May and recently had surgery, which seems to be helping.

Fortunately, she has been able to travel, including a business trip to Beijing. She and Grant have now finalised the purchase of a cottage in a retirement community in Maryland, USA. Best wishes to you both for many happy years.

The photographic competition, which we held on the Bulleid Family Worldwide page on Facebook, has now closed. The idea was to get an idea of the area in which family members live, but the response was disappointing as only seven people took part. Congratulations to the winner, Suzanne Hellyer, for the photos she posted of home in Spain.

I have now posted two more videos on our Facebook page: one of the family gathering in Australia and the other of a similar gathering in New Zealand. The latter also contains footage of Pen-Y-Bryn, the house built in 1889 by John and Fanny Bulleid. The video shows Vic Bulleid, who lived in the house until he was 4 years of age, his wife Marion, their daughters Gill and Debbie, and nephew Jeremy. We enjoyed a nostalgic Sunday lunch together at the house.

Best wishes,  
Geoff.

### Family Internet Sites

[www.bulliedfamily.com](http://www.bulliedfamily.com) - private family site (tree, photos, documents, recordings, newsletters etc.)

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) - Bulleid Family Worldwide (private group with up-to-date photos and videos)

[www.devonheritage.org](http://www.devonheritage.org) - See Geoff Ledden's Bulleid Family Pages

