

CAPTAIN WILLIAM RUSSELL OF RAVENSWORTH

Which William is Ours ?

This started as a bit of a challenge when we questioned a recent publication and the NSW Parliamentary Archives records on Captain William Russell, our first local Member of the Legislative Assembly of NSW. Both the publication and archives record appeared to include misinformation that has been perpetuated over the years in various publications. Confidently we proclaimed "How difficult would it be to show the errors and pass on the correct information these days with better resources". To start with we had a plaque in the fire damaged St. Clements Church at Camberwell which read *'In Memory of Capt. W. Russell of Ravensworth, Formerly of HM 28th Regt who died 24th March 1866, also of John W. Russell of Wallangra, Late Lieutenant Rifle Brigade who died 15th May 1871 Aged 32.'* At the time we had no idea that the Memorial was also wrong.

What happened over the next nine months has taken us around the world and back again on more than one occasion. Each week we would huddle together to fossick over our latest finds; we gathered all manner of data from Overseas Records, Colonial Records, Land and Parish Records, Shipping Records, Army Records, Birth Death Marriage Wills and Probate Records, Newspaper Articles, Notices and Advertisements, Census Records, Electoral Rolls, Archives Offices, State Records, various books and oral information as well as corresponding with the Nepean Family History Society and Inverell District Family History Group to complete a rather comprehensive study on one man Captain William Lloyd Russell of 'Ravensworth' and his family.

Our biggest challenge to begin with was evaluating and differentiating the prolific number of references to various William Russell's of the time but three main characters stood out; a Major William Russell 20th Regiment, a Captain William Russell and a Lieutenant William Russell both of the 28th Regiment but arriving in the Colony at different times. All had a military background, all served the Government and all had land holdings. Just to add to the can of worms the Lieutenant just happened to die in 1866 the same year as our Captain and appears to have been promoted to or became known as Captain. This could be one of the reasons why some of the Parliamentary Records along with past historians and author's efforts have been confused and mistakes perpetuated. Having research sufficiently to make sure they were all not one and the same, we have come to know them as 'the Major' associated with 'Toobimba' Fullerton Cove in the Raymond Terrace area, 'the Lieutenant' son in law of Sir John Jamison of 'Regentville' associated with the Nepean District of Penrith and 'the Captain' our man from 'Ravensworth', Sydney and the Gwydir area.

As if these three were not enough to keep us occupied we add sons with the same names followed by a few other William Russell's who just wanted to poke their noses in the door for a while and throw us off the trail. On top of all this we were continually being drawn into taking sideways glances into our William's associations with others whose surnames just happened to be Russell; such as ships Captain Bourn Russell of Maitland and the Russell's at nearby Oaklands Estate. Coincidence or connection? Lots of effort but nothing to date proves one way or the other so we have decided to put them in another box for the time being and will let them out when we are good and ready.

Discovering our William's second name was definitely Lloyd was a significant breakthrough, although not often used it certainly helped make clearer to us which 'William Russell' was ours. We say ours because we've formed rather a fond friendship with our William over the past months. Perhaps friendship sounds strange when it relates to someone who last trod the grounds at 'Ravensworth' homestead, some twenty kilometers north of Singleton in the Parish of Vane, County of Durham New South Wales over one hundred and thirty seven years ago; but some of you will know what we mean.

So to Our William's Story; Captain William Lloyd Russell we believe may have been born in Ireland about 1796. Army records show he was from 'Ireland' and commissioned as an Ensign with the 84th Foot Regiment on January 17th 1816 and from July 9th 1818 he was a member of the 73rd Regiment with whom he served for over twenty years and included a period in India. It was as a Lieutenant that he married Eliza Martin in Malta on May 2nd 1832. The British ruled Malta and the seven islands of Corfu, Paxos, Leucadia, Ithaca, Cephalonia, Zante and Cerigo that made up the Ionian Islands at the time and many births, deaths and marriages of Military personnel were recorded there during that time. Records reveal there may have been other children born to William and Eliza while in the Ionian Islands but it was surviving sons William James born

1835, Baker Creed born 11th January 1837, and John William born September 1838 who made the trip back to England with their parents in 1839.

After a stint on half pay William was attached to the 28th Regiment on December 20th 1839. A daughter Bessie Alice was born in 1840 in Ireland; noted on Census Records as Dublin. Perhaps the 28th Regiment were serving in Ireland at the time or Bessie's birth coincided with a trip home to family before they made the journey to Australia. As Assistant Engineer to the largest contingent of the 28th Regiment to come to the colony, William and his family arrived on aboard the 'Palmyra/Palmira' on January 18th 1841 having departed from London August 1st 1840.

Arriving in Sydney was actually a return to William's wife Eliza's birthplace. Eliza had been born in the Colony on January 30th 1811 to Surgeon George Martin and his wife Elizabeth, she was baptised at St Phillips on February 11th 1811. Her father and mother had arrived with the 73rd Regiment in December 1809 under the command of the then Lieutenant Colonel Lachlan Macquarie who was proclaimed Governor January 1st 1810. George Martin remained until Governor Macquarie's request for the 73rd Regiment to be replaced was granted. The 46th Regiment replaced the 73rd Regiment who departed for India January 14th 1814. George and his family travelled on the HMS Earl Spencer to India and after serving there eventually moved on to the Ionian Islands and it was here George died September 23rd 1837. Not much has been ascertained about his wife Elizabeth or a son George born June 6th 1813 in Sydney. Surgeon George Martin did receive a land grant which Eliza later made a claim to in 1841; it is unclear if it was granted.

William parted company with the 28th Regiment when he opted to stay in Sydney as the Regiment moved on to India in June 1842. A farewell was arranged at the Royal Victorian Theatre in honour of the Regiment before its departure. The 28th had made a significant impact on the Colony and it seems we have them to thank for the Australian Jockey Club [AJC] which was founded from race meetings they organised from 1840, the AJC is officially recognised as being established in January 1842. William sold his commission on January 20th 1843.

One can imagine William as man who recognised the advantages and opportunities this developing Colony presented. For the next twenty one years William's fortune grew from business sense, ambition and just plain luck. He was quick to establish himself with people of influence in the Colony. On January 28th 1841 he is noted as Assistant Engineer for the District of Sydney and appointed a Magistrate of the Territory and its Dependencies; the Magistrate appointment was reaffirmed in May 1843. By September 1st 1843 we know William was now living at 'Maryville' in the Parish of Ravensworth across the river from Jerry's Plains as daughter Rachel Eliza came into the world on this day and was baptised by the Rev. Francis Cameron on December 6th 1843. A move to the 'Glenridding Estate' by 1845 is confirmed by the birth of another son George Brown there on July 20th and he was baptised on August 22nd 1845 also by the Rev. Cameron.

William's land acquisitions continued to grow acquiring part of the 'Glenridding Estate', the purchase of 100 acres of Church and School Land in 1844 and Sydney Town allotments and more in partnership with Donald McPhee in 1845. In 1848 he purchased 'Cheshunt Park' from original grantee William Sims Bell. This same year he acquired 'Ravensworth' the estate of Dr. James Bowman purchasing it from Dr. Bowman's son Edward Macarthur Bowman. William later obtained four properties in the Gwydir District; 'Eena', 'Tucka Tucka', 'Blue Nobby' and the largest 'Wallangra' became the head station in the area. Eena had been part of Benjamin Singleton's unnamed Macintyre River Run and was acquired when Benjamin Singleton became bankrupt in 1842.

Obviously William and Eliza did not move to 'Ravensworth' straight away as daughter Sarah Justina was born on December 10th 1848 and her baptism records her parents abode as 'Cheshunt Park'. Sarah was also baptised by the Rev. Cameron however his parish was now Marsfield. We can confirm that Baker Creed and John William were attending Kings School at Parramatta at this time and did so from 1848 to 1853. We believe the William Russell noted in attendance at Kings School during the same time may be William James.

The papers of the day such as the *Maitland Mercury* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* liberally record the events, sales, hiring of labour and William's contributions as a valued participant in Society as well as his roll as a Magistrate. These references establish our William as 'Captain William Russell of Ravensworth' a

tag that remains for the rest of his life. One article records William favoured transportation when a petition in support of transportation was produced in 1850.

Another article confirms that William James was the eldest son. The article reports on the findings of a Coroners Inquest into the death of fifteen year old Mary Stewart who drowned in a waterhole at Ravensworth in December 1851. The Coroner commended the sixteen year old William for his efforts in trying to revive Mary. We have found William James referred to as just William, William Jnr. and other articles refer to him as James; the use of his second name when he was young may have avoided confusion with his father.

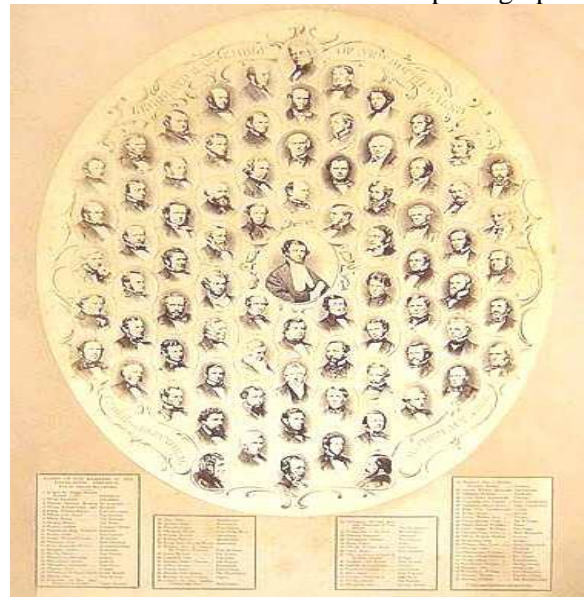
James Frederick Love was born at Ravensworth on March 31st 1853 and baptised on July 17th by the Rev. Joseph Cooper. Later the name Charles was thrown in for good measure and adding more to the confusion. Like most women of her time there is little evidence that Eliza even exists that is until a child is born. Life continues with the eldest boys taking steps to Military careers. Whilst William James and John William's military experiences appear rather short lived, Baker Creed Russell was commissioned as an Ensign to the 6th Dragoon Guards on November 2nd 1855 and transferred to the 13th Hussars in 1862. Baker excelled himself and became a hero of his time eventually becoming General Sir Baker Creed Russell GCB, KCMG. There is a road within Kings School named Russell Road in his honour. Baker was Baden Powell's first commanding officer.



Photo from C. R. B. Barrett, *History of the XIII Hussars*, 1911

At first we could only speculate as to the reason why William and Eliza's last child Edmund Harry/Henry Somerset is recorded as being born in Duppe, France in 1857. The answer was found in a newspaper article that William and Eliza had made a visit to England and Europe in 1857 and while in Germany William had purchased Merino rams to improve his own flock. We believe William returned to Sydney in March 1858, but it is unclear if Eliza and the children returned to Australia or remained in England as we find no reference to them until she and children from Betsy down are recorded in the 1861 census as living at Dover.

William becomes our first Legislative Assembly Member in June 30th 1859 and remains so until January 10th 1861. It is our good fortune to have a sketch of William, one provided for a composite photograph of Legislative Assembly Members in 1859. While the Parliamentary Archives have this sketch identified as our William, we were able to confirm this by finding an advertisement for sales of the photograph with a specific reference to him as being one of two images in the composite who were sketched rather than photographed.



Computer Generated Photo Captain William Russell of Ravensworth. A copy of the composite photograph NSW Legislative Assembly 1858 seen right is held in the Parliamentary Archives NSW. Photographer Edward Dalton

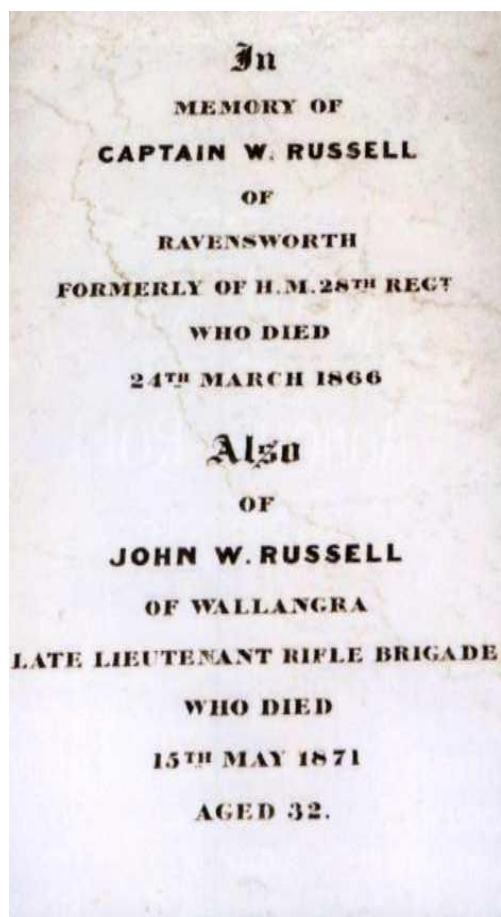
From this time it certainly becomes evident that things are about to change. On August 1st 1861 brothers William James and John William form a partnership as stockholders in the Gwydir District properties 'Wallangra', 'Eena' and 'Blue Nobby'; 'Tucka Tucka' had been long since sold off. As William James' name appears as just William Russell or W. Russell in documentation relating to the partnership, people could misinterpret that this partnership was between father and son instead of between the brothers. Captain William Russell puts his 'Roslyn Hall' mansion in Macleay Street Darlinghurst up for auction. One only has to read the extensive advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald* from June 28th 1862 until July 14th to appreciate its size and splendour.

By 1863 our William has returned to England leaving behind sons William James and John William to manage affairs. James E. Davys continues to act as William's Agent. There are events such as the 'Ravensworth Cup' held on September 1st 1864 that indicates William's strong connection is maintained. The race was for the progeny of Purston, Planet and Stepping Stone; a one off event over one mile. Over seven hundred people watch Francis Squire's bay gelding Dartford take the Cup and the Fifty Sovereign purse.

Little changes until word is received at 'Ravensworth' in August 1866 that William Lloyd Russell Esq., late Captain of the 73rd and 28th Regiments died at 12 Queens' Gate, Kensington London on June 7th 1866. His death was recorded in the London Times on June 11th 1866. It is also indicated that he had suffered a long and painful illness. His Will leaves his estate to his wife Eliza with some other personal provisions made for his family including a sister Ellen whose surname is hard to decipher in the Will. We have no other information about Ellen as yet but have managed to find another sister Mary Jane Russell who as widow Greenhill married Edward Fowler Satterthwaite, a stockbroker on April 23rd 1853. It is from Mary Jane's marriage records that we their father's name, James John Russell and he is noted to be a 'Gentleman'.

Over the next fifteen years until her death on March 14th 1881 at 40 Clariges Street, London Eliza manages the Australian holdings from the other side of the world with the help of her sons and agents. While retaining most of the holdings she does sell Cheshunt Park in 1869. During this time Eliza however has lost two sons firstly John William who died on May 15th 1871 in Sydney and then 16 year old Harry, her youngest boy died on March 8th 1873 at Harrow on the Hill. She sees her daughters Bessie, Maria and Rachel married and grandchildren born. All three daughters marry men with military backgrounds however, Sarah remains unmarried and died at the age of forty in 1888.

We believe the Memorial Plaque mentioned earlier and another more elaborate one in St. James' Sydney were erected after John William's death in 1871, to date there is no record of who presented the plaques to both Church's. There has been some confusion over the years with a Memorial said to have been in St James' Morpeth, we can verify that the Memorials are in St. Clements Camberwell and St. James' Sydney. We would be interested to know if there is possibly a third one in the Gwydir area because of the connection there. We now know that both mistakenly identify Captain William Lloyd Russell's death as the 24th March 1866 instead of correctly 7th June 1866. They also mention John William's rank as Late Lieutenant Rifle Brigade; to date we have not found any further information about this statement, except John William's death notice in the London Times says "Late of 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade". One other dilemma was that John William's death is registered as William John Russell.



Saint Clements' Anglican Church Camberwell



Saint James' Church Sydney

NB: The death date appears to be rubbed out

James E. Davys was manager and Agent for the Russell's from the 1850s. He had a long connection to the family, 'Ravensworth' and their other properties. In 1871 he and his family returned to Ireland. He returned alone to Australia in 1876 where he progressed the sale of the 'Ravensworth Estate' in totality. George Wyndham was a Manager at Ravensworth first known reference in 1866 and last 1871, his brother Francis managed 'Wallangra' from 1871 to 1876 during the time of James E. Davys' absence. Sales of Ravensworth advertised in 1873 and 1875 were unsuccessful due to drought conditions. On March 22nd 1882 most of the estate was put up for auction in lots, 'Ashton', 'Wellers' Flat', 'Pikes Gully', 'Longreach' and 'Bayswater' and the remaining 'Ravensworth'. It was finalised by private sale later in March with purchases of 'Ashton' to Mrs. George Pearce Bowman, 'Bayswater' to Alexander Bowman of 'Arrowfield' and William Bowman of 'Balmoral' and the largest remaining portion including the 'Ravensworth' homestead to Duncan Forbes Mackay of 'Dulcalmah'.

William James passed away in England on December 1st 1885, all associated documentation refers to him as 'William James Russell of Wallangra' similar to his father's name being tagged with 'Ravensworth' and others of their time. We can only speculate when he went to England; or whether it was to be a visit or a permanent arrangement. What we do know is William James' Will clearly states his belief that even though he was residing in England at the time of writing his Will, 'Wallangra' was his home. His Will indicates he had married a "Winifred" and further research reveals she is much younger; born c.1855 in Wolverhampton England. When and where they were married has not been discovered nor has Winifred's maiden name. According to William James' Will, Winifred was taken care of financially during their life together so there is no further mention of her and his remaining legacy goes to other family members.

The 1881 British Census records indicate George Brown Russell's occupation as 'formerly Army' and married to Julia but not much is found after that until a mention in John Williams' Will. We have some reason to believe that perhaps George Brown passed away between 1886 and 1891 but we concede there is no substantial proof to date. Apart from his birth and Census information that his occupation was a stockbroker, no further information has yet been found on younger son Frederick Charles Love or Charles

Frederick Love or James Frederick Love or Charles to date. You would think with such a combination of Christian names 'Charlie' would have easily been discovered.

Throughout our research we have found constants such as the names of two of William and Eliza's sons-in-law, Thomas Bowyer Bower and George Ernest James Blunt acting as executors on several occasions. We found that family members who made their home in England made trips back to Australia for periods of time. Bessie Alice arrived in 1880 aboard the 'Potosi' with her youngest son George and nurse Margaret Chatten, who was still with the family in 1911 as the housekeeper. Also on board was Bessie's eldest son aged 18 year old Thomas Henry Bowyer Bower. Whilst Bessie, son George and Margaret Chatten returned to England, Thomas an Ornithologist became Curator of Ornithology of the Western Australian Museum, he died in Darwin in 1886; the Bower's Shrike Thrush is named after him.

We have identified something on most of William and Eliza's ten children and some of their grandchildren. We have looked at the anomalies and coincidences and have acquired hundreds and hundreds of interesting pieces of information; too many to document within these pages but we are happy to give references if requested. Many have suggested a book would put it all to good use and that is something worth contemplating in the near future. For now we have smiles on our faces and can correct the misinformation because we really know which William is ours.

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Compiled by Lyn MacBain

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Information and references used to write this article came from the sources such as BDM NSW, NSW Probate Records, Cemetery Records, Colonial Secretary's Papers, Government Gazettes, Parish Maps, Passenger and Shipping Records, State Records NSW, National Archives of Australia, National Library of Australia, Army Records, NSW Parliamentary Records, Kings School Records and the Records of the Family History Society of Singleton. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, *The Maitland Mercury*, and *The Singleton Argus*, *BDM NT*, www.diggerhistory.com.au, BDM England, English Census' from 1841-1911, Army Returns & Records, Parish Records, Probate, Ancestry, National Archives London, *The London Times*.

Books Reviewed.

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Some Northern Homes, G. Nesta Griffiths 1954.
B Over Wallangra, John Richard Black 1988.