

8 Carolyn Close  
KARIONG.  
NSW. 2250  
AUSTRALIA

Mr Bill Dawson  
Secretary  
Bridge & District History Society  
Nailford House  
Brewery Lane  
BRIDGE.

7 February 2001

Dear Mr Dawson,

RE; FAMILY HISTORY – WILLIAM & ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

I have recently been to Kent and spent a few days in the Bridge area to see where my Geat Great Grandfather was born. He was ROBERT WILLIAMS, son of William & Elizabeth Williams.

I did some research at Canterbury Cathedral Archives as well as Canterbury Library. I only had a few hours to find out as much as possible. The History Section of the Library was kind enough to give me your name and address.

The 1851 Census gave me information on William & Elizabeth - not an address, just that he was a brewer and coal merchant in Bridge and at the time there was a daughter Ellen and son Frederick living with them. Robert actually arrived in Sydney Australia in 1851 so was not on the Census.

The family was Wesleyan Methodist so some records are not easily found, such as birth and burial records. The Internet does not have many Wesleyan records.

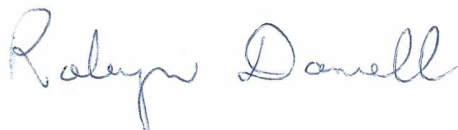
If there is any information your society could send to me or suggestions of who to write to regarding this family and any costs, I would be so grateful.

It was so wonderful to actually walk through your lovely village and know that my ancestors lived and worked there.

Thank you for your time,

Yours faithfully

ROBYN DANIELL (Williams)





14 February, 2001

Robyn Daniell  
8 Carolyn Close  
Kariong  
New South Wales 2250  
Australia

Dear Robyn

Thank you for your letter of 7 February which arrived a couple of days ago. I am glad you enjoyed your visit to Bridge.

You must indeed have been disappointed that there was so little time for research on your greet-great-grandfather Robert Williams. In the hope that he may be able to help you have passed your letter to the head of Research and Archive committee, Dr Maurice Raraty.

Yours sincerely

Bill Dawson  
Secretary

41 Bridge Down  
Bridge  
Canterbury  
Kent CT 4 5 BA

19 February 2001

Dear Mrs Daniell,

Your letter to Bill Dawson has now reached me. His description in his reply of my status and abilities strike me as ludicrously over the top, but putting that aside I am able to add a little to your information. The 1851 census lists 12 people of the name Williams (a not uncommon name, after all). They can be ascribed to five groups.

1. Matthew, aged 66, unmarried, born in Elham, now blind, a pauper in the workhouse. (Bridge Union Workhouse was built in 1835 to serve 22 parishes in all; converted in the 1930's into an old people's hospital and subsequently rest home, in the 1970's again into private residences.)
2. Susan, aged 55, a widow, pauper, born in Wingham  
Susan, aged 13, pauper, born in Kingston (probably a daughter) - both in the workhouse.
3. Daniel, aged 57, wattle weaver, born in Petham, resident in Brewhouse Lane (now Brewery Lane)  
Anne, his wife aged 58, fruiterer, born in Ospringe.
4. William, aged 58, brewer and coal merchant, employing 3 men, born in Petham;  
Elizabeth, his wife, aged 58, born in Barham  
Ellen, aged 17, daughter  
Frederick, aged 13, son.
5. John, aged 28, brewer, born in Bishopsbourne  
Elizabeth Ann, his wife, aged 24, born in Bridge  
Elizabeth, aged 6 months, daughter.  
They also have a 14 year-old servant girl.

William was in fact the publican of the Plough and Harrow, of which I enclose a modern photo. This is the most recent of the three pubs in the village, licenced to sell beer only in 1832 (more on this below). It stands on the corner of the High Street and Brewery (or Brewhouse aka Brandy) Lane which gets its name of course from the beer house.

I guess also that Daniel was William's brother, as they were both born in Petham.

The 1841 census clarifies things a little further. Here there are four groups: ages are normally given only to the next lowest multiple of five years, except for children under 15. No places of birth.

1. Matthew, aged 60, agricultural labourer, now a pauper in the workhouse (as no. 1 above)
2. Elizabeth, aged 75, of independent means, living alone. I would not be at all surprised to find that she is William's (and Daniel's) mother.
3. Thomas, aged 25, agricultural labourer  
Charlotte, his wife aged 20.
4. William, aged 45, your ancestor, brewer  
Elizabeth, his wife, aged 45, plus children:  
John, aged 17: this is the brewer in (4) of 1851  
Emma, aged 15  
Robert, aged 14  
Walter, aged 13  
Ellen, aged 6  
Frederick, aged 4

John's wife Elizabeth Ann appears in this census as Elizabeth Colgate, aged 14, whose father Frederick was a builder. This identification is confirmed by the 1861 census, which lists the following 2 groups only:

1. Daniel, aged 66, Agricultural labourer, born Petham, living in Brewhouse Lane (as above)  
Ann, his wife, 67 (as above)
2. William, aged 68, born Petham, now described as a builder (?in partnership with Frederick Colegate).  
Elizabeth, aged 69, born Barham.  
They now have 3 lodgers, to replace the departed children.  
Elizabeth their granddaughter (daughter of John) is aged 10, living in the house of Frederick Colegate.

I have not so far examined 1871.

1881 however adds a little.

1. John, aged 67, unmarried, miller, born Ickham, now in the Workhouse. No relation, I think.
2. Elizabeth, aged 30, unmarried, 'scholastic profession', helping her aunt Jane Colegate to run a private school (6 pupils) in Alexandra House in Bridge High Street: photo enclosed.

Information about the Plough and Harrow:

"The building was erected in 1692 as two dwelling houses. In 1785 they were sold to Thomas Williams, maltster of Bridge, who between 1785 and 1789 turned them into a malthouse and dwelling. He had 11 children, of whom, in 1811, six were alive and living here. Thomas died here in 1830, and the malting business passed to his son William who by 1831 was brewing ale here. In 1832 he obtained a beer house licence under the 1830 act. In April 1832 ale was sold here for the first time. The house bore no title at this date other than that of a beer house at Bridge. . . he sold his home-brewed beverages from here until 1858 when in that year he sold the business to Joseph Burch, an ale and porter brewer. By 1863 the house had come to be commonly called the Plough and Harrow. It is quite possible that it was given this title because there was a blacksmiths nearby run by Thomas Fagg, who forged farming implements and probably displayed them outside his shop."

(In fact Fagge the blacksmith worked from his forge next to the White Horse Inn.)

I do hope you found this interesting and useful. It is quite enjoyable following up leads, and only frustrating when they come to a stop!

Best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

Maurice Raraty

Mrs Robyn Daniell  
8 Carolyn Close  
Kariang  
NSW 2250  
Australia

41 Bridge Down  
Bridge  
Canterbury  
Kent CT4 5BA  
6 March 2001  
Email <mmr@cwcom.net>

Dear Mrs Daniell,

As a follow-up to my letter to you of 19<sup>th</sup> February apropos Williams, I have a little more information for you.

In the 1871 census Elizabeth Williams (aged 20) is still living with her grandfather Frederick Colegate (described as a retired builder). His daughter Jane (43) is also still resident there. By 1881, as I have indicated, the two women are running a little school together. By 1891 Elizabeth, now 40 and still unmarried, is running the school on her own. She is the only person with that surname remaining in the village. The 1901 census details will be published in the next year or so.

1871 records some familiar names, only ten years on from 1861:

Daniel and Anne, now 77 and 76;

Also Thomas, 72, born in Wickhambreux, now in the Workhouse. A remotely possible relation?

An agricultural labourer, Henry (51) born in Lower Hardres, his wife Sarah (43) and 5 children, all born in Bridge: James(22), Henry(17), Eliza(16), Catherine(12), William(4). Since they do not figure either in 1861 or 1851, they were evidently peripatetic, though living in Bridge for much of that period.

Also Jane (26) a servant, but born in Wales: no relation.

You mention Wesleyan Methodist connections. The Wesleyans established a Chapel in Bridge in 1825, and were sufficiently wealthy to erect a substantial brick building soon after. Some years later, however, their numbers seem to have diminished. Methodism in these years was highly schismatic, and the chapel was taken over by a group of Primitive Methodists, otherwise known as 'Ranters'. Their services and loud (evangelical?) behaviour in and outside the chapel seem to have disturbed the local population so much that a petition was got up and sent to the Marchioness Conyngham of Bifrons in Patricbourne (a considerable local landowner), who was persuaded to purchase the chapel in 1854 and convert it into a (presumably quieter) 'Reading Room'. This was later in the century extended, and is now the Village Hall.

I must apologise for failing to sign my last letter, in my haste to get the reply into the mail!

Yours sincerely,

Maurice M Raraty

Mrs Robyn Daniell  
8 Carolyn Close  
Kariong  
NSW 2250  
Australia

8 CarolynClose  
Kariong NSW 2250  
Australia.

4 March 2001

Mr Maurice Raraty  
41 Bridge Down  
Bridge. Canterbury UK

Dear Mr Raraty,

RE: Family History - Williams

Thank you so much for your wonderful and informative reply to my family history enquiry. I definitely think you deserve the title Chief Executive Officer in charge of Research and Archives!

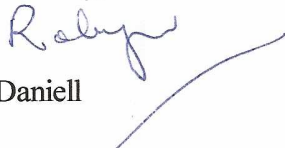
To have all this family story, complete with photos, is just incredible. While I was visiting Bridge last November for a few hours, I had lunch at the White Horse Inn and if I had only known about the family connection to the Plough & Harrow, I might have had a free lunch!!

Robert Williams (mentioned as 14 yr in 1841 census), my great great grandfather, arrived in Australia in 1851, and went to work in a brewery in Bathurst, NSW. His first son Edward was actually born in the brewery, but after this, brewing beer was not carried on in the family. But it does explain where my son gets his taste for a beer or two.

I am chasing up all the names and places mentioned in your letter and gradually getting a whole story for the family here. It is so enjoyable and absorbing putting it all together, although as you say, at times very frustrating when those leads come to a halt.

Please thank Mr Bill Dawson for passing on my letter and my sincere thanks to the Bridge & District History Society for all the help.

Yours faithfully,



Robyn Daniell

15 March 2001

8 Carolyn Close  
Kariang NSW 2250  
Australia.

Mr Maurice Raraty  
41 Bridge Down  
BRIDGE. CANTERBURY  
Kent CT4 5BA

Dear Mr Raraty

Your follow-up letter with extra information on the Williams family was a lovely surprise and thanks so much for taking the time to look up the records.

I have become the family historian and the different branches of the Williams in NSW are enjoying my history updates (and of course I thoroughly enjoy the whole procedure!)

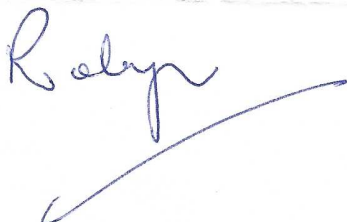
The Wesleyan Methodists must have been quite a noisy bunch in Bridge. My Great Grandfather who was born in the Kellosiel Brewery in Bathurst NSW became a fairly strict Methodist and his brother became a Minister. But for all his church going and severe ways at home (according to my father) he apparently used to sneak off to the local horse races on Saturday afternoon. He probably didn't realise that his grandchildren had seen him wander off to this ungodly place!

I was curious to know if the Wesleyans were buried in the Church cemetery at the end of Bridge village (Church of England?), which is the only cemetery I remember seeing, or were they in a separate Methodist graveyard somewhere else?

Thanks again for your time and effort and if you know of anyone who would be willing to do some further research on the Williams family tree, i.e. Thomas born 1767 and his father James born 1737, could you let me know details of costs etc?

Yours sincerely,

Robyn Daniell

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robyn Daniell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the typed name.