

IN SEARCH OF THE PAULSGROVE DIARIST

BY

PETER CUFFLEY

Extracts from the Paulsgrove Diary in the book *Earliest Illawarra* (1966), captured my interest in that they were written at the same time as my great great grandfather Thomas Sweeney (1803-1867) resided in the area. Visiting the Museum in Wollongong in 1995, I was delighted to

be able to obtain the 1988 Illawarra Historical Society publication *The Paulsgrove Diary, Illawarra 1833-1834*. There was great excitement in finding seven entries which mentioned Sweeney including one linking him to the coastal vessel 'Sarah'. Thomas Sweeney was a Ticket of Leave holder formerly assigned to George Brown at Dapto, who from 1832 to 1835 traded between Illawarra and Sydney in the Mary Ann, the Sarah and the Venus.

The transcription of the diary with its introduction and notes by W. G. McDonald was studied with great interest and it soon became clear that the important clues it offered in regard to authorship had not been fully explored. Of primary importance was the entry for Sunday September 1st 1833 which included the statement '...this day twelve month ago was at Newchurch to the funeral sermon on poor mother, there a respectable congregation and a large church - here convict and a barn Another valuable clue was the statement that the diarist's sister, Ann, was a 'Mrs Eveleigh'. The names of other siblings mentioned were also noted, including the detail that sister Mary lived at Portsmouth. The entry for Wednesday 4th September 1833 states: 'PM went to Woolongon found Sweeneys boat had sailed Memo this day twelve month ago left home drank tea at my sister Mary - Portsmouth.' This entry inspired a search for ships arriving in Sydney which had left England after September 4th 1832. The established view that the Isle of Wight was likely to be significant to the story was readily accepted given various references in the diary. Webster as the name of the diarist had long been held as the strongest possibility, but a check of the International Genealogical Index offered no relevant entries for Hampshire or the Isle of Wight. I did, however, spot an entry for the Christening of James Stares Spearing at Portchester, Hampshire dated 10th December 1780.

The logical move was to write to the Isle of Wight County Record Office giving the primary clues. The first question was, who was buried at Newchurch around the 1st of September 1832 who might have been old enough to be the mother of the diarist? Thankfully the County Archivist, Richard Smout, was most helpful and provided a whole page of information on the possibilities. Only two burials of women of sufficient age appeared in the records of Newchurch parish church and **Ann Smith**, aged 68, late of Hillyard, Shanklin, Isle of Wight (buried 30th August 1832) became the key figure following the next stage of the search. This was to find a marriage for Eveleigh with a spouse named Ann. Happily, the records showed that an Ann Smith married a **John Eveleigh** at Brading Isle of Wight in 1816 confirming that **Smith** was likely to be the diarist's name. The archivist also included a list of births to John Smith and his wife Ann which further tallied with names mentioned in the diary. The list included John, born 1790, Edward born 1795, Elizabeth (Betsy?) born 1797, Mary born 1799, and a Charles Roach Smith, baptised at Newchurch in 1806. At this stage there was no record of an Ann Smith being born to John and Ann Smith.

Armed with this information, the next step was to return to the IGI and there was the marriage of **John Smith** to **Ann Roach** on 17th October 1784 at Arreton, Isle of Wight. Having already

noted the shipping arrivals in Sydney for early 1833, the first possibility was the 'Sir Thomas Munro' which left London on the 18th of September 1832 and arrived in Sydney on Monday 18th February, 1833. Lo and behold, there in the passenger list in the Sydney Herald was '**Edward Smith, farmer**' (*Sydney Herald*, Thursday, February 21, 1833, p. 2). Surely this was our "Paulsgrove Diarist", a person of reasonable education and of enough means to purchase his own passage to New South Wales. It then seemed that our man was about 38 years of age, not quite as young as previously suggested.

The reply from the Isle of Wight also offered a list of private family history researchers so I immediately wrote with all the facts to hand to a Mr Peter Edney of Carisbrooke Isle of Wight. For a reasonable fee he soon provided important entries from the 1871 census as well as baptisms of the children of John and Ann Everleigh (Eveleigh). One census entry of 1871 showed that Ann Eveleigh now aged 84 was born at Landguard, Isle of Wight. Perusal of a mid 19th Century directory of the Isle of Wight on microfiche at Bendigo Library provided the next breakthrough where it showed that Languard Farm, Brading, Isle of Wight, was held by a John Smith.

With this information, further questions were sent to Peter Edney and his second letter provided all the evidence, not only to prove that Edward Smith was the Paulsgrove diarist but also to take his ancestry back to the early eighteenth century. A large scale family tree was found to exist in the Isle of Wight records and on it Edward Smith is marked as 'went to Sydney, New South Wales.' Unfortunately nothing of his later life or anything on the suggestion that he drowned has turned up after extensive searching. Oddly, it seems his first cousin George Smith (1774-1837) 'drowned at Sydney' on the 24th of July 1837, so perhaps this was the origin of the story.

Edward Smith's brother Charles Roach Smith (1806-1890), the 'brother Charles' in the Paulsgrove diary is very well recorded, in that he was a noted British antiquarian and was co-founder of the British Archaeological Association (1843). He was a chemist in London when Edward set sail for Sydney and it is likely that it was from his residence that Edward left to board the Sir Thomas Munro in September 1832. A sister Maria, born in 1799 lived with Charles at Stroud in Kent in his latter years. From the family tree we now know that Edward's sister Mary married William Joliffe in 1817 and so this explains the Joliffe references in the diary including the entry for Monday 14th of October 1833: 'Mr A. Osborne drank tea drank W Joliffes health and many happy returns.' Alex Osborne, a former naval surgeon would likely have known William Joliffe because the latter was in the Royal Marines. Edward's eldest brother Henry Smith (1785 - 1868) was also in the Royal Marines A list of Isle of Wight Words, Superstitions, Sports, etc by Charles Roach Smith and his brother Major Henry Smith, R.M., was published by the English Dialect Society.

Edward Smith, the Paulsgrove diarist, was one of ten children from a well-known family on the Isle of Wight. Their coat of arms gives them as being of 'Winston, 1709. Languard, Bembridge Pear Tree, Newport, & C.' The family motto is 'I strive after better things' They are sometimes referred to as the Smiths of Languard Manor, and Edward's mother was the daughter of Henry Roach of Arreton Manor. Languard Farm is close to Sandown Bay and the famous Shanklin Chine, one of the noted beauty spots on the Southern coast of the isle of Wight. Edward Smith would have been in a relatively familiar situation on the Paulsgrove estate at Illawarra in that the farm was close to the sea and there was both farmland and natural landscapes in which to roam. The search is on for the life of Edward Smith after 1834, but as yet no solid evidence has turned up. He may have returned to Illawarra at some stage which could explain the diary being back in the Illawarra in the possession of the Waldron family. The Government Gazette lists an unclaimed letter for an "Edward Smith 'Wollongong'" in February 1850 but this is a frail clue. At least we now know the identity and background of the man who gave us that short but extremely valuable work 'The Paulsgrove Diary.

(Submitted by Peter Cuffley, Cullahill Cottage, P.O Box 278, Castlemaine Victoria. 3450)

Peter Cuffley is a well-known social historian and author with an interest in domestic architecture, art, antiques, traditional gardens and Australiana. The son of a carpenter and builder, he studied for a Diploma of Advertising, Design & Illustration at Swinburne Technical College. In 1970-71 he created the Wedderburn General Store Museum. In 1972 he became the first Curator of History at the famed outdoor Museum at the Sovereign Hill complex in Victoria. He has been a member of the National Trust since 1964 and now works as a consultant on period restoration and as a designer. I can recommend perusal of his Australian Houses of the Twenties and Thirties (Five Mile Press, 1993) but the quality of research which has gone into this amazing discovery of the identity of the Paulsgrove Diarist is its own recommendation to seek out his many other publications. [Ed]

COMMENT: "Mr Cuffley's solution to one of Illawarra's greatest historical mysteries is to be applauded. He has gone to much effort and expense in confirming his initial suspicions. His skills as a genealogist and historical researcher bear comparisons with a namesake - our own Peter Doyle, recently deceased. If anyone needs further convincing of Mr Cuffley's argument, then they can contact me and view some of the papers accompanying his article. [M.O.]