THE MAN FROM MOUSE HOLE:

The Society’s fame is spreading. The IHS received a request from Mr. W. Harvey of Mousehole, U.K. Apart from having an amazing name, the town has a famous male voice choir of which Mr. Harvey is a longstanding member. Mr. Harvey is interested in things nautical and was hoping to obtain copies of the IHS publication Two Towers, relating the history of Wollongong’s Lighthouses.

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION MEETING:

The next meeting of the Regional Chapter will be held on Sunday 21st October at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre, The Oaks at 9.30 a.m.

The main discussion will be on Funding for Museums and Historical Societies.

Cost for lunch, morning and afternoon tea will be $12.00.

Please make cheques payable to: Museums Association of Australia and forward to Fran Whalan, P.O. Box 215 Kiama, 2533. Phone (042) 32 3009 for further details.

THANKS TO BEN MEEK:

The IHS wishes to record its sincere thanks to Ben Meek for his invaluable assistance in our Society’s attempts to become incorporated. Many hours of work have been saved because of Ben’s efforts and generosity.

THE BROWNES & O’BRIENS & THOSE NEAR THEM

Some erroneous material has been published about Cornelius O’Brien in N.S. King’s book. This is an attempt to correct those errors and amplify the story. It also includes a little bit of the later history of “Athanlin”.

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Captain John Browne m. Sudrun Nisa Begum
Honourable East India Company

William Browne b. Lucknow, India
m. Sophia Louisa Forbes

Catherine Browne
b. Lucknow m. 1st Henry O’Brien of Hollymount, Co. Mayo
m. 2nd John Ward

Henry O’Brien
m. Mary Ward

Thomas

William c1793

Cornelius c1796

Anne 1796 Louisa 1798 John Wm 1801 Frances Sophia 1804 Philadelphia 1808

Catherine 1797 Frances 1800 Richard Hy 1802 Eleanor 1806

Thomas Lindsey 1809 Rebecca 1810 Margaret 1813
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A letter\(^2\) to Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State, dated 12th January 1814 starts the story

My Lord,

I humbly beg Your Lordship's favourable attention to the following brief statement and request.

I have resided many years in Bengal and lately came to this my native country in the hope that the climate would have a favourable effect on my health which has been greatly impaired in India, but my complaint (an asthma) has been rather increased than relieved here and I am now desirous of spending the rest of my life in New South Wales a country recommended to me by my physician and by several of my friends who have been there as extremely favourable to constitution impaired in hot climates generally and particularly to those labouring under pulmonic complaints.

I have therefore to pray your lordship for a grant of land as near the town of Sydney as may be for myself and five male labourers and four female labourers whom I wish to take out and have agreed to go to assist me in my plans at cultivation and also for such assistance in stock, seed grain and labour as it is usual for new settlers to get from the liberality of the Governor.

It is my intention to proceed to N.S.W. via Bengal (where my family and property are) at my own expense. I have humbly to solicit Your Lordship for a passage for the labourers above mentioned on one of H.M. Store or transport ships free of expense.

It being intimated to me that persons soliciting grants of land in N.S.W. must possess property to a certain amount, I am ready to give affidavit that I am worth 12,000 pounds sterling and upwards of which 15,000 pounds is at present in N.S.W.

It being also intimated to me that it is necessary for respectable settlers in N.S.W. to be in His Majesty's Commission of the Peace, I beg leave humbly to solicit your Lordship that I may be in the Commission of Peace in the Colony of N.S.W.

I have the honour to be Your Lordship's
Most humble obedient servant
(Sgd) William Browne

A note on the back, the contents of which were passed to him on the 19th January, states that he has permission to proceed and that the Governor would be instructed to comply with his request as far as possible.

The above letter was followed by another dated merely "Jan 1814" written from 44 Theobalds Road: in this William Browne listed those people whom he wished to take to the Colony with him as labourers vis. John Ward, his wife, his mother - in - law, his niece and one female child & William O'Brien, Henry O'Brien, Thomas O'Brien and Neil O'Brien, sons of Mrs. Ward.

He goes on "The above persons being five men and their four female relations form the one family residing now near Hollymount in Ireland. They wish to embark at Cork and it would be a great favour to them to have a few weeks notice to repair to that Port."

A further letter and list followed on 7 Feb 1814 from the same address:

"My Lord,

I beg leave to state to Your Lordship that on further consideration
of my plans respecting a settlement in N.S.W., I am desirous that my labourers instead of waiting to sail on a ship to that country from Cork should proceed to Port Jackson as soon as possible. I therefore humbly request Your Lordship to assign them a passage in the first ship proceeding to that port after the Broxbournburg now under despatch.

I have the honour to be, etc.

Wm. Browne

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Names of labourers engaged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Ward</th>
<th>Overseer</th>
<th>Catherine Ward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William O'Brien</td>
<td></td>
<td>Catherine Sweeney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas O'Brien</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Sweeney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil O'Brien</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Ward &amp; child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Moran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

William, sometimes known as "Merchant" Browne, was extremely canny, not to say down right mean. Note that when requesting a free passage for his labourers he cunningly disguises the fact that his labourers were actually his mother, his sister Catherine Ward & her husband, and her children by two marriages.

I wonder what Begum 3 thought of her very rich son, who could well have afforded to look after her in the grand style, describing her as a labourer in order to avoid paying her fare. Nor do I think the Begum would take kindly to William referring to her as his "brother - in - law's mother". William also carefully avoids stating that he has visited the Colony in 1810 and that he had purchased "Abbotsbury" at Appin from Edward Abbott at that time.

Not all those listed appear to have arrived in Australia. We know that Cornelius (Neil) arrived per Marquis of Wellington\textsuperscript{4}ex Calcutta/London\textsuperscript{5} in January 1815 and Henry followed in April of that year on the Frederick ex Java/Calcutta.

Cornelius was apparently accompanied by his half sister Mary Ward for the 1828 Census shows her, by this time Mrs. William Henry Boughton, as 23 per Marquis of Wellington, 1815. This makes her age on arrival as 10 which is strange as she could hardly have a child on departure as shown in Browne’s letter above.

Thomas Moran also travelled on the Marquis of Wellington and was at Bathurst in 1822\textsuperscript{6}. John Ward is shown in the same muster as having arrived free on the Frederick and employed by O'Brien at Liverpool while Mrs. Ward free per Wellington as wife of J. Ward, Liverpool. The same muster shows Henry and Cornelious O'Brien as landholders at Liverpool and Appin respectively. Thomas O'Brien also came out, it is believed on the Marquis of Wellington, for in July 1820 both he and Cornelious applied for land grants and each application was notated 300 acres\textsuperscript{7}.

William O'Brien does not appear to have come to Australia. J.F.R. Browne in his book\textsuperscript{8} mentions that in 1800 William Browne went to Ireland to bring his widowed sister and Henry, Cornelius and Thomas O'Brien back to India. He does not mention William. I can find no record of William in Australia nor is he listed in J.F.R. Browne's biographical notes of members of the Browne family.

In a letter from Gosport dated 4th April 1814 to his agent, Thomas O'Brien wrote:
Sir,

I am sorry to find that there is no room for us on the Somersetshire. How to act I do not know. The money I received from my uncle to convey the family to the ship is now spent in consequence of which I am placed in a very awkward situation. Perhaps something could be done in regard of having provisions delivered out to us should such a circumstance take place we would be saved from being reduced to the great inconvenience.

It would be satisfactory to us to know what time the ship will be ready so if we might be taken on board on her arrival here. As you are the only friend I have to depend on I hope you will pardon me for the liberty I take in claiming your friendship.

Accept my best thanks for the money and obligations you have conferred on me and believe me,

Your very obliged obedient servant

Thomas O'Brien.

* * *

To sum up then we have:

Per Marquis of Wellington from London via Calcutta, January 1815: Cornelious O'Brien, Catherine Ward, Mary Ward, Thomas Moran and, I believe, the Begum and Thomas: per Frederick from India April 1815. Henry O'Brien and John Ward.

Noticeably absent from our list of arrivals are William Browne and his wife Sophia. The 1828 Census shows William as aged 66 and having arrived on the Mary in 1816 and Sophia as 47 per Mary 1818. However, the details of the register entry for her second marriage shows her arrival as per Lusitania. This would have been in either 1821 or 1823, the only years in which the Lusitania came to Australia. As she made numerous visits to her daughters in India she could probably claim to have arrived on any number of ships.

Poor Thomas O'Brien did not survive long in Australia. In 1820 William Browne had received permission for his son John and his nephew Thomas O'Brien to take sheep to Bathurst. Consequently there was much to-ing and fro-ing between the Bathurst and Appin properties. In 1823, while on one of these trips. Thomas either became lost or was murdered. His horse returned but neither Thomas or his body was ever found.

* * *

N S King's most heinous crime was to saddle the O'Briens with an Uncle Charles Browne. Cornelius O'Brien's Memorial applying for land runs much as stated by King except that Cornelious does not refer to his uncle as Mr Charles Browne but as plain Mr Browne: The O'Briens had no Uncle Charles Browne.

On page 14 of his book King, talking about signatories to various petitions, makes the following strange statements

and an Edmund Bourke who, of course, was not the famous English parliamentarian as he had died in 1797 and did not have an "o" in his name. . .

and

a similar petition was forwarded to Governor Bourke, also including a C O'Brian, but not the one from Bulli as his (this man's) name had an "a" instead of an "e". . .
Edmund Bourke would have been Edmund Burke, convict per Tellichery who is well documented in various histories of Wollongong. Further it is almost certain that C O'Brien was Cornelius O'Brien of Bulli. Elsewhere in his book King refers to a B O'Brien saying that because his name was O'Brien it did not make him a brother of Cornelius. How right he was, this was Dr Bartholomew O'Brien of Wollongong and, as far as is known, no relation to Cornelius.

Sophia Louisa Browne nee Forbes.

Not long after the death of William Browne in 1833 Sophia received permission to marry one of their assigned convicts, William McDonald. They were married at Maitland on November 25 1835. Details of the marriage register show them as Lucy Brown, Came Free, per Lucitania and William McDonald, "Hooghley", life, T/L.

Sophia died at Wollombi Brook, near Wollombi NSW on 22nd October 1861. Her death certificate shows her as Sophia Louisa McDonald, daughter of Colonel Forbes of the East Indian Army. Her age on the death certificate is shown as 99.

"Athanlin"

Another small correction to N S King's book: William Browne did not change the name of his Illawarra property from "Athanlin" to Yallah. It was still designated as "Athanlin", Yallah in 1847 when the final settlement of the estate appears to have taken place as shown below.

In 1831 William Browne mortgaged the property to Thomas Walker who, on Browne's death in October 1833, was appointed administrator of his estate. John William Browne, the eldest son, inherited the mortgaged property but died within six months of his father. The property, still mortgaged, then passed to James William Browne, the nine year old son of John William Browne and Mary Doyle.

In 1841 Thomas Walker assigned his interest in the mortgage to Alexander Imlay who held it till 1844 when he transferred to James Walker of Wallerawang. The upshot of the whole business is not clear but similar exchanges of ownership of the mortgage continued till 1847.

The 1841 Census shows seven people living at "Wolingary" in houses owned by Alexander Imlay. Presumably "Wolingary" is Wollingurry Creek which formed part of "Athanlin". The seven house holders were Joseph Pike, Edward Dow, Patrick Gorman, George Baker, Dennis McNamara, James Hilder and Richard Dennis.

Peter Doyle with help from Carol Browne.

2. Extract from Colonial Office Pro London.
3. A Moslem princess or lady of high rank.
4. Colonial Secretary's Papers 1788 - 1825.
6. General Muster & Land and Stock Muster of NSW 1822 ABGR.