

FOR MARK

In 1853, the sailing ship "ELIZA" left London for Australia, a six month voyage.

On board was great great Grandfather George Witham and great great -randmother Sara Bricknell.

During the long voyage, due mostly to becalming, many babies were being born. An old midwife, attending to the births and needing help, called on the strongest girl aboard to help. So 16 year old Sara Bricknell became an experienced midwife, which was to stand her in good stead.

Already in Australia, her brother George travelled to the port of Sydney, NSW where the "ELIZA" was expected to dock. Instead, due to the lack of fresh water, bad food, combined with bad weather the ship docked in Melbourne, Victoria. Not knowing where her brother was, or what had happened to him, Sara Bricknell and George Witham, who had fallen in love during the long sea voyage, asked the ships captain to marry them.

Their first home was a tent (not known where) They then moved to a town named Beechworth, Victoria, again living in a tent where the first 4 or 5 children were born without the aid of a doctor, nurse or women friends.

Great Grandmother (Elizebeth) was the first born of these children.

The family stayed in Beechworth for about 15 years - then trekked hundreds of miles to the town of Omeo, in the Grampios Mountains, Victoria, where there was a gold rush. The Witham family lived for many years in Omeo, prospecting for gold, and when they struck gold, retired to Melbourne, Victoria, and finally settled!

By then, there were 7 sons and 3 daughters.

George Witham died at the age of 84- Sara Witham, nee Bricknell died aged 89.

Great Grandmother Elizebeth married George Thorburn, who was the son of William Thorburn and either a Miss Polson or a Miss Davies. Not known which of the 2 wives was the mother of George. He was one of 5 children- 3 boys and 2 girls.

Great Grandfather George William Thorburn and Great Grandmother Elizebeth Thorburn nee Witham had 10 children- 8 girls and 2 boys. Elizebeth died at the age of 97 and William aged 84.

Grandmother Elsie Married Arthur Thomas Harkness and had 3 children- Ann Elizebeth (Betty), Nanine Margaret, and Margaret Lillian (Aunt Peggy.) Grandmother died aged 75 in 1961 in Brookton, W. Australia.

Betty married Duncan Mackenzie and had 2 boys, Malcolm and Thian. Peggy married Nathaniel Lieberman and had 3 children, Rachael, Julie and Samuel.

Nanine married F.A. Gurney and had one child, Mark Ian Gurney.