

Croker Prize for Biography

Entry 1510

**My Immigrant –
John Cyril Sydney Hunt
England to Brisbane -
1913**

MY IMMIGRANT - JOHN CYRIL SYDNEY HUNT - ENGLAND TO BRISBANE - 1913

“I WONDER WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LITTLE JACKIE HUNT” was the question my mother often asked over the years from 1930 till her death in the year 2000. She had kept a letter from Marion Hunt written in October 1930ⁱ, part of which I will quote as follows:

“I had Jack’s throat and nose done last Saturday morning. Dad knew nothing about it until after he came home and found it all over, but it was a fearful strain doing it all without letting him know and thought I would never get him out of the house in the morning as I had to have the breakfast room all ready by 8.30. The Dr said my breakfast room made a splendid operating theatre and said he was sure I would not mind him borrowing it occasionally, I don’t think, especially if they leave all the muck behind. Mr. W came over while it was being done and I don’t know whatever I should have done without him. I did not know he was coming and I shudder to think how I would have managed alone. He got there just before the doctor came and stayed all through and then waited till Jack came home and broke the news”..

The prelude to this letter written by Marionⁱⁱ was that her husband John Cyril Sydney Huntⁱⁱⁱ was a second cousin of my mother Eva Marguerite Dempsey^{iv} (nee Bull) both of them being a descendant of Oliver^v and Susannah^{vi} Bull of Fordham Essex England. Oliver^{vii} and Susannah Bull had a number of children, two of them being called Jabez Bull^{viii} (born 1849 – Fordham Essex) and the youngest child Mary Bull^{ix} (born 1858 Lexden Essex).

Jabez Bull married Mary Ann Edith Rolfe^x of Great Baddow on the 21 Dec 1871 and two of their sons Victor Rolfe Bull^{xi} (born Dec 1874 – Braintree) and Ernest Jabez Bull^{xii} (born 22 Dec 1881) both migrated to Australia.

Mary Bull^{xiii} married John Samuel Hunt^{xiv} (born 1859) in September 1882 at Lexden. Their eldest son John Cyril Sydney Hunt was born in 1883 at Lexden , married Marion Davis at West Ham in 1910, and they migrated to Australia in 1913 aboard the SS “Perthshire”^{xv} and settled in Brisbane.

Ernest Jabez Bull^{xvi}, his wife and 2 girls travelled to Australia on the SS “Salamis”^{xvii} departing England 1/10/1910 and arrived in Melbourne - 11/11/1910, with accommodation arranged beforehand. Ernest began work as a carpenter...

Victor Rolfe Bull^{xviii} his wife and 2 children, one of whom was my mother, Eva Bull, came to Australia on the SS “Devon”^{xix} in 1912. They boarded with friends on arrival in Toowoomba, where Victor’s trade as a harness maker had been arranged

Over the following years – the Bulls in Toowoomba and the Hunts in Brisbane had contact, travelling up and down by train. In the mid-twenties, they arrived with a small child, named little Jackie, whose real name was John Francis Hunt, whom they had adopted. Eva was then older and felt that her two relatives did not have many clues on child rearing, they being much older to bring up a small child. From then until she married in 1929, she saw little Jackie a few times and was concerned for his welfare, as she was unimpressed with the way his father was dealing with him. He seemed to resent the little boy, but this was compensated somewhat by the love of his mother Marion.

From the date Eva received that letter from Marion in October, 1930 nothing was ever heard again from the Hunts in Brisbane. .

When I became interested in researching my family history Mum was keen for me to try to find what happened to little Jackie. She had a lasting feeling of affection for him. I then commenced my research. I went off in the wrong direction at first looking for a Marion Hunt in the Qld Electoral Rolls at State Library. I found I had the wrong Marion Hunt.

Now to the BDM's from Qld, which had been computerised. Previously it was a hassle to find fish for Qld and harder to obtain copies of certificates.

The records showed that a Marion Frances Hunt^{xx} had died in December, 1930 and further more that a John Cyril Sydney Hunt^{xxi} died in 1936. Now we knew why Eva and the Bull family had heard no more from the Brisbane relatives.

I then felt compelled to try to find out what happened to little Jackie. At the beginning of last year, I rechecked the Qld system of BDM's and found it had been changed and if a certificate was required, you could apply through the system and pay by Credit Card and a copy of the original certificate would be e mailed to you. The information in the certificates came as a shock to me. Just over 2months following her letter Marion died in the Brisbane General Hospital on the 23rd December 1930^{xxii} from Toxic Nephritis, Toxic Perpura and Haemorrhagic Syncope. She was 41 yrs old, informant was her husband JCS Hunt –She left one child – John Francis Hunt -5 years. She was buried in Toowong Cemetery on 24 Dec 1930^{xxiii}.

The 1936 copy of Death Certificate of John Hunt^{xxiv} showed he died on the 15th March, 1936 from Coronary Heart Disease. The informant of his death was his wife Ethel May Hunt, who lived at Kedron Avenue, Mitchelton, his living children were John Francis Hunt -11 years and Catherine Mary Edith Hunt – 1 year . Realising he had married again ,I purchased a copy of Certificate of Marriage^{xxv}, which showed he married Ethel May Thomas on the 31st December, 1931 at our Lady of Dolour's Church Mitchelton Qld. He was 47 and she was 22 years old. Little Jackie had been left with a step-mother and a half sister, so where could he be?

Then I had a flash of inspiration – in 1943 he would be 18 years old, could he have joined the Defence Force. I entered his name and probable birth date into the computer -National Archives/Nominal Roll^{xxvi} for WW2 and it showed records for a John Francis Hunt which tallied with the information I had already. He had joined the Royal Australian Naval Reserve – his official number B/4114. He commenced duty on the 26 November, 1942 with the Rank of Ordinary Seaman 11 CB (N.T Seniority 30th September, 1942 and was allocated on mobilisation to the HMAS “Cerberus”. He was discharged on the 20th May 1946 with the rank of TELEG 11 from the HMAS “Rushcutter.”

I was progressing, but where did he go after leaving the Navy? Hurstville Library^{xxvii} has access to Ancestry.Com My effort was rewarded almost immediately, as I typed in “John Francis Hunt” and up came a large amount of details of a J.F Hunt whose ancestors were Oliver and Susannah Bull .

My mother's little Jackie Hunt had become Dr. John Francis Hunt. The University of Sydney Medical School Alumni 1955^{xxviii} recorded John Francis Hunt graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

Electoral rolls^{xxix} recorded that he had lived at Miranda and Cronulla and had died at Cronulla on 23 Sept 2006. He was married to Lillian Moss Rougvie at St Josephs Church, Neutral Bay in 1949 .

Sydney Morning Herald Death Notice^{xxx} was as follows:-“HUNT Dr John Francis, September 23rd 2006, late of Cronulla. Loving husband of Moss, Devoted father, father-in-law of Peter, David and Jenny. Beloved grandfather of Catherine, John, Pat, Sarah and Duncan. Dear brother of Joy.”

He was buried at Woronora Cemetery in the General Lawn – Jacaranda Monumental Lawn-0550^{xxxii}. His wife Lillian Moss Hunt died on the 20th February 2009 at the Sir James Nursing Home, Dalmeny, formerly of Cronulla, notice of which I found in The Ryerson Index^{xxxiii}. Her ashes had then been placed in the grave site of her late husband.

I have been able to contact a family member who gave me more information about “little Jackie” in later years, he was a G.P. in the Sutherland Shire region and then did further training to become an anaesthetist and worked at the Sutherland Hospital till he retired.

Earlier this year I visited Toowong Cemetery to search for graves of relatives. Thanks to the assistance of Toowong Cemetery office, my nephew was able to pin point the exact location of the grave site of John and Marion Hunt. It was unmarked and had no borders, but it looked very peaceful as it was covered in a thick carpet of beautiful leaves. The question remains – which relative may be able to erect a plaque to remember them?

With regard to the headstone of their son Dr John Frances Hunt, it mentions his sister Joy, but her Christian name on their father’s death certificate was Catherine Mary Edith. My immigrants’ daughter is yet to be found.

RIP John Hunt, Marion Hunt, Dr John Hunt and Lillian Hunt.

ⁱ Original copy of typed letter from Marion Hunt (nee Davis) to Eva and Bernie Dempsey dated 1st October, 1930 - Address being Cr. Foch & Haig St. Ashgrove, Brisbane.

ⁱⁱ Marion Davis – Free BMD’s – Births September, 1889 – District of West Ham vol.4A Page 226.

ⁱⁱⁱ England and Wales, Birth Registration Index, 1837-2008” John Cyril Sydney Hunt – Births Registered in April, May, June 1883, Lexden, Essex 1883 - Vol 4a Page 428. Marion Davis married John Cyril Sydney Hunt in June 1910 in the District of West Ham Vol 4a Page 540. Free BMD “England and Wales Marriage Registration Index 1837-2005”.

^{iv} Eva Marguerite Bull – Certified copy of an entry of birth, given at the General Register Office Registration District West Ham 1903 – Birth in the Sub-District of North East Ham in the County of Essex. BXBZ 261164 General Register Office, England 17th June, 1992.

^v Oliver Bull – Christening 17th May 1818, Grand Tey, Essex England – “England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975” Familysearch.org

^{vi} Susannah Ratcliffe – birth about 1819, West Bergholt, Essex England. “England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975” Familysearch.org.

^{vii} Oliver and Susannah Bull - M .Oct 1839 – England and Wales Free BMD Marriage Index 1837-1915.

^{viii} Jabez Bull – English and Wales Birth Registration Index – Born 1849 - Fordham, Essex, England “England, Essex Parish Registers 1503 – 1997”

^{ix} Mary Bull – “England and Wales Birth Registration Index 1837 – 2008” born Lexden, Essex England, Jan-Feb-Mar 1858 Vol.4A Page 268 Line number 32.” Family search. Org

^x Jabez Bull – Marriage 21 December, 1871, Great Baddow, Essex England. Spouse - Mary Ann Edith Rolfe –“ England and Wales Birth Registration Index” Born March Qtr 1850 Braintree District 350 Vol 12 Page 21 “ England and Wales Death Registration Index 1837 – 2007” Death 1898 Braintree, Essex, England. “Familysearch.org.

^{xi} Victor Rolfe Bull – born 1st December, 1874 Braintree Essex Vol 4a 393

^{xii} Ernest Jabez Bull was born on 22 Dec 1881, Bocking Essex England. Mar Qtr births 1881 Braintree Free BMD UK Vol 4a P514 Free BMD UK “England and Wales births Registration Index 1837-2005”

^{xiii} Mary Bull married John Samuel Hunt at Lexden, Essex in 1882 – July, Aug, Sept Qtr –Vol 4A Page 575 Line 349 - Free BMD UK “England and Wales Marriage Registration Index 1837-2005”

^{xiv} Her spouse John Samuel Hunt was born in Sept 1859 in the District of Lexden Vol 4a Page 260 Free BMD “England and Wales Birth Registration Index 1837-2008”

^{xv} Immigrants on the SS “Perthshire” The Brisbane Courier (Qld. 1864-1933) Saturday 20 December 1913, page 4 (National Library of Australia) <http://nla.gov.au/au.nla.news-article19920073>

^{xvi} Ernest married Lilian Elizabeth Double in 1906 in the Chelmsford District Vol 4a Page 590 – Free BMD UK “England and Wales Marriage Registration Index 1837-2008” Spouse – Lilian Elizabeth Double was born in Mar 1885 in the District of Chelmsford Vol 4a Page 402 Free BMD Index.

^{xvii} Copy of THE ABERDEEN LINE NO 91 - PASSENGERS CONTRACT TICKET Steam Ship ‘SALAMIS’ OF 4,700 tons Register to take in Passengers at the PORT OF LONDON FOR AUSTRALIA on the 1st October 1910, and shall be landed at the PORT OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA ETC

^{xviii} Victor married Eva Nellie Dow on the 15 April 1899 – Braintree Essex 4a 1204. Free BMD UK “England and Wales Marriage Registration Index 1837-2005” Spouse – Eva Nellie Dow was born 9 April 1875 - Births Jun 1875 in the district of Witham Vol 4a Page383 Free BMD UK “England and Wales Births Registration Index 1837-2005”

^{xix} Copy of Port of BRISBANE (INWARDS) Queensland – Passengers that have arrived on the S.S. DEVON from LONDON - Agents BRITISH INDIA & QUEENSLAND AGENCY CO. LTD arrived on the 27th day of August, 1912.

^{xx} Queensland historical deaths for “Marion Frances Hunt” read as follows: Year 1930 Reg# B 12906 First Name(s) Marion Frances Last Name : HUNT Father: .Davis - Mother – born Essex, England.

^{xxi} Queensland historical deaths for “John Cyril Sydney HUNT” read as follows: Year 1936 Regn#B30921 First Names(s) John Cyril Sydney Last name: HUNT Father : John Mother: Mary BULL

^{xxii} Copy of 1930 – Deaths in the District of BRISBANE in the State of QUEENSLAND, Registered by Register General - 12906 - 23rd December 1930- Brisbane Hospital – Marion Frances HUNT - 41 years.

^{xxiii} Brisbane City Council Online Services Grave Location Search HUNT, John Cyril Sydney and HUNT, Marion Frances - Burial Toowong Cemetery, Portion 27, Section 4, Grave Number 19.

^{xxiv} Copy of 1936 – Deaths in the District of BRISBANE in the State of QUEENSLAND, Registered by Deputy Registrar General – 30921 – 15th March 1936 – Kedron Avenue, Michelton – John Cyril Sydney HUNT - 51 years.

^{xxv} QUEENSLAND - MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE Certified copy Registration No.1932/12181- Name and Surname –John Cyril Sydney Hunt (Bridegroom) and Ethel May Thomas (Bride) –When and where married 31st December, 1931 - Our Lady of Dolour’s Church. Michelton, Qld

^{xxvi} National Archives of Australia -Nominal Roll for WW2 –ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL RESERVE Record of Mobilised Service - HUNT John Francis Official Number B/4114.

^{xxvii} Ancestry.com at Hurstville Library with basic details of a Dr John Francis HUNT whose ancestors were Oliver and Susannah BULL –England.

^{xxviii} THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY – SYDNEY MEDICAL SCHOOL OUR PEOPLE - HUNT JOHN FRANCIS Graduated – Year 1955 with a Degree of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery. Links Graduating class. University of Sydney web site.\

^{xxix} Electoral rolls obtained from Ancestry.com website.

^{xxx} The Sydney Morning Herald – smh.com.au/notices – Sept 26th – Death notice of Dr John Francis HUNT 23 Sept 2006.

^{xxxi} Australian Cemeteries Index – Woronora Cemetery.org.au –Burial General Lawn – Jacaranda Monumental Lawn – 0559 –Dr John Francis HUNT

^{xxxii} The Ryerson Index - Sydney Morning Herald – 24 Feb 2009 - HUNT Lillian Moss (Moss) 20FEB 2009 Death at Sir James Nursing Home, Dalmeny, formerly of Cronulla. Her ashes were interred in the grave of her late husband J F Hunt on 29 April 2009, Woronora Cemetery.