

How to hopefully find difficult people!

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This collaborative document was created on the Facebook Page for Newcastle Family History Society inc. (Australia). Links provided here are mainly for NSW. Finding hints are not limited to those listed here and please remember that Google is your friend so use it to search to see if what you need is available.

Unless we are really lucky some ancestor is going to cause us problems. They will not appear anywhere until they marry or perhaps they will completely 'disappear' afterwards. While this is frustrating, finding them will really help with your research skills.

The most important thing to remember is that you need to accept that your problem person may never be found. From this point, your search can't get worse so plod on and try to find clues. Remember to take a break if the search gets too frustrating and do someone who is easier to track..

Think of your problem as a huge jigsaw that you dropped. Every piece helps, so keep every piece until the problem is solved!

No Arrival in Australia (Yes Australia - check every state)

Remember that there were many immigration programs across the states. Also remember that if someone worked their passage, they may not have been recorded at all. Even if they did come under an approved scheme, if the indent/s have not survived then you won't find them listed so hunting in the newspapers might be the only way to locate them. Early death registrations should give you a year of arrival in the country. So check every state. Original records are often available on paid site. Below are links to immigration records that are free.

1. **The National Archives of Australia has records for arrivals to Australia from 1923.** It also has Naturalisations from about 1900 so if your ancestor was not from a Commonwealth country, they may have been naturalised so they could apply for an old age pension. Their ship may be listed there.

<https://www.naa.gov.au/>

2. **NSW:**

<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/immigration-and-shipping>

Australian Agricultural Company (AACo) records are almost all kept in the Noel Butlin centre at the ANU.

http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre?fbclid=IwAR1nh1cQxw09aYkwnL6S2Z8ZcFEY5Cnj1J97Yf5MrozRSIwxXXh6_1Yb37k

although at least one work register from later years is held at the Armidale Archives at UNE.

<https://www.une.edu.au/library/heritage-centre/une-and-regional-archives>

The AACO shipping lists are recorded in *Pure Merinos and Others: the shipping lists of the Australian Agricultural Company* by P. A. Pemberton. This book is available at our library and online and the PDF can be downloaded at:

http://imagedepot.anu.edu.au/sis/archives/publications/pure_merinos_and_others_-pa_-pemberton.pdf

3. **Victoria:**

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/passenger-records-and-immigration>

4. **Queensland**

<https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/assisted-immigration-1848-to-1912>

No Birth Registration:

You do need a record to tell you where your ancestor was born before you assume that it was NSW! You might need to buy a marriage registration here so you know exactly where to look. (Remember that registrations are where you should spend money as this information will rarely be on paid sites.) Check every state! Here are links to birth indexes that are free. My research has uncovered that, especially in the early days after compulsory registration (March 1856), about a quarter of life events were not registered. This is quite a large number so check for registrations for siblings – or potential siblings.

If necessary create a database for your surname and create family groups using what is available. Find, investigate and trace your ancestor's parents and siblings. Use Trove to search for Family Notices that identify family members and match them up with the family you know. Actually ask yourself, "Who is that?" and then find out.

1. **NSW:**

<http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history/family-history.aspx>

2. Queensland:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/family-history-research>

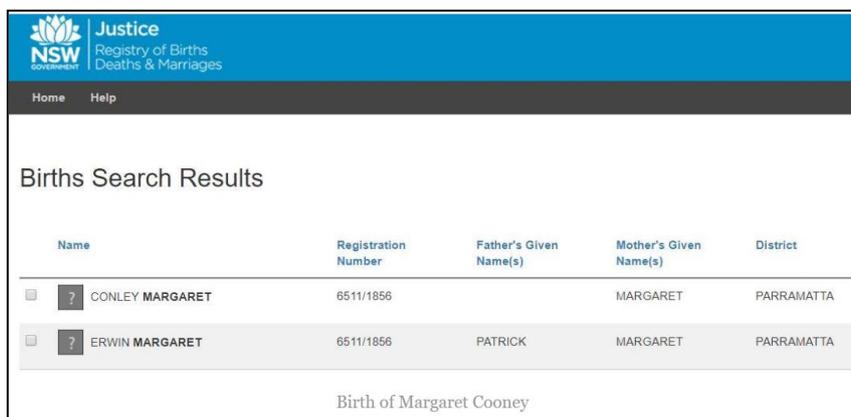
3. Tasmania: (Tasmanian records are online and free to download.)

https://linctas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/search/results?qu=

4. Victoria

<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>

- Whether we like it or not, some of our ancestors used aliases. That means that sometimes children were known by one name but they were registered under another. Finding these children can be difficult and proving that you have the correct record is even harder. All you can do is collect as much information as possible and every so often spend some money and buy a certificate. Make sure that before you do spend your money that you do as much groundwork using the Police Gazettes, gaol records, Trove and as many other resources as you can think of to eliminate people who are clearly wrong and reduce the choices you have to wade through.
- If you have a Sydney birth – especially if you think your family was poor – take a look at the online index of the Sydney Benevolent Asylum. (<http://www.sydneymbenevolentasylum.com/>) This is easier if you know the mother and the surname is not common but it is possible to use these records in conjunction with the NSW BDM Index to see whether a child and/or mother might be yours. Spending money to purchase the original record from the Benevolent Asylum might be worth every cent (and to date their pricing is very reasonable).
- Learn how to use wildcards on every site and be adventurous with spellings of surnames. We often vary endings but might the surname have a letter at the beginning that is causing you grief? (HEAVEN = EVANS; OUGHTON = HORTON; RIGHT = WRIGHT) Sites like Ancestry do not vary surname beginnings well in their default wildcard search and currently you cannot use the wildcard at the beginning of a name. Their searches therefore give poor results for name beginnings so you need to do the thinking.
- Look in institutional records. Even children were put in gaol in the mid-1800s. You did not have to be an orphan to be admitted to an orphanage. Search in the Government institutions of the Randwick Asylum and the Industrial Schools. Early orphan schools were run by the churches but NSW archives now has these incomplete records. There were other institutions that were privately operated or run by churches. *Find and Connect* (<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/>) is a site that will give you names and locations of all institutions over time and over place.
- Did you know that the NSW BDM index can be searched by a specific date? This is fiddly to use but may be useful for you. Knowing a date will tell you if a child was illegitimate but is also useful if you have an actual birthday and want confirmation that it might be yours. Look down the bottom of the search section where it says 'Date of Search Range' and choose 'No'.
- Did you know that NSW BDM records can be searched by REGISTRATION NUMBER ONLY? This will often give you an alternate (not necessarily maiden) surname of the mother if the birth was illegitimate and if you're lucky you may get a father's name. At the top of the search page where you are asked 'Do you know the number ...', choose 'Yes'. Put in the number you have and search. Any number you have can be checked and it is worth checking registration numbers to see if the record has been indexed more than once. The birth of Margaret Cooney (Yes! Cooney – not a version of Connelly) is one example.



The screenshot shows the NSW Justice Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages website. The page title is 'Births Search Results'. It features a table with columns for Name, Registration Number, Father's Given Name(s), Mother's Given Name(s), and District. Two records are displayed, both for 'MARGARET' in the Parramatta district, with registration numbers 6511/1856. The first record lists 'CONLEY MARGARET' and the second lists 'ERWIN MARGARET'. Below the table, the text 'Birth of Margaret Cooney' is visible.

Name	Registration Number	Father's Given Name(s)	Mother's Given Name(s)	District
<input type="checkbox"/> ? CONLEY MARGARET	6511/1856		MARGARET	PARRAMATTA
<input type="checkbox"/> ? ERWIN MARGARET	6511/1856	PATRICK	MARGARET	PARRAMATTA

Birth of Margaret Cooney

The only time this function will not work accurately is if one of the ‘V’ records turns up in the search. Only the top record below is a registration. The rest record a baptism.

Births Search Results				
Name	Registration Number	Father's Given Name(s)	Mother's Given Name(s)	District
<input type="checkbox"/> ? ADAMS FRANCES E	643/1856	THOMAS	ADELINE	SYDNEY
<input type="checkbox"/> ? RYAL JOHN T	643/1856 V1856643 142A	THOMAS E	ELIZABETH	
<input type="checkbox"/> ? CLINT WILLIAM	643/1856 V1856643 144	JAMES	ANN	
<input type="checkbox"/> ? NORTHCOTT JOSPEH	643/1856 V1856643 155	HENRY	MARY A	

Examples of 'V' reels

No Marriage Registration:

- Check spelling variations and use wildcards.
- Don't assume that the marriage occurred before the children were born. There are cases where couples married in later life, often because there had been a previous marriage and the first spouse had eventually died.
- Remember also that a woman may have reverted to her maiden name for her second marriage and either party might have temporarily or permanently assumed a different given name or surname. Remember the pieces of the jigsaw? Using an assumed name is difficult to maintain so collect information and something might eventually become clear.
- Divorce was expensive and difficult to get so if you can't find a marriage, you must consider that your couple never married. This might mean that you're stuck but bigamy must also be considered as an option. Search for an earlier marriage and if necessary buy possible registrations.
- If parents are not recorded on the marriage registration the church where the marriage occurred will be. Find out whether the church record has survived and see if the names are recorded there. I have had success in about half the cases that I have investigated. Unfortunately not every church register has survived. There are complete copies of the Society Of Genealogists (SAG) church records at SAG in Sydney, the Mitchell Library in Sydney and the National Library (NLA). I find that the NLA catalogue is the most useful for finding if a record exists. (<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/>) Use SAG and the name of the church in the search box.

No Death Registration:

- Check other states - especially but not necessarily if your ancestors lived in a border area.
- Use Trove to identify which family members are missing from Family Notices to potentially narrow down a time period when a death may have occurred.
- Has the death become historical or is it still within the privacy period of 30 years? For recent deaths NFHS have created comprehensive books of Funeral Notices from the Newcastle Newspapers from within the last 30 years.
- Check the Ryerson Index for deaths that have occurred within the last 30 years. <http://www.ryersonindex.org/>
- Remember that the Trove OCR scan might mean that the name in the newspaper doesn't appear in a search. If the Ryerson Index says it's there find it! Read the newspaper or Family Notices page by page online as if you are reading a real newspaper.
- Seek out the records of Funeral Directors and cemeteries.
- Remember that WWI and WWII records are not on the NSW BDM Index so search in both the National Archives. (<https://www.naa.gov.au/>) and the Australian War Memorial (<https://www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/service-records>) for servicemen.
- Also remember that Boer War deaths are on the NSW BDM Index. Those who died in South Africa are recorded with the notation 'S A WAR' or 'DIED IN S A WAR' written in the father's name section. (This does not mean South Australia.) To find all these men use the wildcard (*) in the surname section and in the father's name section use the word WAR. Also check the National Archives and other sources for either of the Boer Wars.