

Benjamin DENNIS (1848-1927)

Benjamin was aged 9, the youngest child of the Dennis family migrating to Tasmania in 1858 on the 'Trade Wind'. He was born about 1848 in Eriswell. Benjamin was accompanied by his parents: James (1812-1888) and Frances nee Spinks (1811-1868) and four siblings: Charles (1836-1910), Thomas (1840-?), Maria (1842-1917) and Alfred (1845-1877?). They came from Eriswell in West Suffolk, England. Eriswell is a small village set in the heart of a farming community, located 14 miles from Bury St Edmunds. Eriswell has a rich history; about forty scattered archaeological finds have been made there, including Bronze Age battle axes, palstaves, and rapiers. In the 1841 and 1851 England Census the Dennis family were living at Rake Heath Farm Cottages in Eriswell.

The Dennis family were discharged from the Quarantine Station at Impression Bay to their sponsor, Henry Howe of Launceston, on 7 May 1858. Henry Howe (1803-1878) was a wellknown and much respected auctioneer in Launceston. He was initially in partnership with Mr W T Bell and subsequently by himself. Due to ill health, he relinquished the business and moved to Victoria.

Ten years after arriving in Tasmania, on 5 December 1869, Benjamin fell from the roof of the Perth Hotel and sustained serious injuries.

Benjamin was in a relationship with Elizabeth Emma Waddington (1844-1884) and they had six children, all born in Victoria. Emma was the daughter of James Waddington (1811-1889) and Jane nee Cathcart (1822-1894). She was born on 28 March 1844 at Longford, Tasmania. A marriage registration was not able to be found for Benjamin and Emma and it is uncertain whether they married. Emma may have married Michael Reardon at Longford on 14 June 1860 when she was a minor and Michael was aged 19. Emma died on 21 June 1884, aged 40, and was buried at the Melbourne General Cemetery.

After Emma's death Benjamin married Mary Barnes (1863-1934) in 1885 in Victoria. Mary was fifteen years his junior, the daughter of William Barnes (1831-1908) and Martha Ellen nee Dando (1845-1907); born about 1863 in Shepton Mallet in Somerset, England. Benjamin had a further three children to Mary.

Mary and Dennis both died at their residence, 17 Kangaroo Road, Oakleigh: Dennis, aged 78 on 16 November 1927 and Mary, 71, on 16 July 1934. Benjamin was recorded on his death registration as being previously occupied as an engineer.