

FAMILY HISTORY CONTACTS

1. Thomas Potton of Soldotna Alaska.

Our web site is looked at around the world. Our first Alaskan contacted us in late August:-

“My name is Thomas Sartell Potton. I live in Alaska. I am the youngest of, 5 left. I just turned 60. I am a retired oil field production operator and a missionary pilot. 2 sons and 2 daughters, and 34 nieces and nephews living in Portland, Ore, Vancouver, Wa., Stevensville and Missoula, Mont., Plainfield Wisconsin, and Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.”

Thomas S. Potton, po box 627, Soldotna, Alaska. tspotton@acsalaska.net

2. Charles Brown of Potton, Publican.

Our monthly meetings occasionally attract visitors from outside the town. Julian Hitchen dropped in on our Sun & Blackbird Street evening in July as he had discovered that his Great Grandfather, Charles Brown, had been a publican in Blackbird Street.

“My name is Julian Hitchen from Truro (julianhitchen@gmail.com). I wanted to thank you for the interesting talk about Sun Street and Blackbird Street which I attended when I was in the area doing some background research on my family history.

I spoke to you both about my Great Grandfather, Charles Brown, who appears in the 1891 census as a publican in Blackbird Street. Since the meeting I found a reference to Charles Brown being the licensee of The Three Blackbirds in 1890 on the Bedfordshire .gov.uk archive.

I was thrilled to find the photograph of the Brown family in the Pictures of Potton vol 2. The bearded patriarch in the picture is John Brown, a brother of my grandfather David Brown and son of the above Charles Brown. John seems to have lived in Islington for a short time after leaving home and then lived in Deepdale appearing in the 1891, 1901 and 1911 census returns close to The Locomotive Inn. In 1891, another brother, Charles Brown is living in Deepdale close to The Pick and Shovel. Before the 1901 census, Charles had died and his widow was living in Hepworth, Holmfirth, Yorkshire very near my Grandfather.

I have been putting together some notes of my ancestors in Sutton and Potton which I would be very happy to send if you would be interested in them.

I am currently researching the "Catarqui" an emigrant ship which was wrecked in 1845. On board were 369 emigrants of whom, 21 were from Sutton, 10 from Eyeworth and 23 from Guildern Morden. The only emigrant to survive was Solomon Brown from Sutton, the older brother of Charles Brown [the senior Charles Brown above]. I have attached some draft notes I have made on Solomon Brown.

Again, many thanks for the interesting talk and I hope to be able to visit Potton again soon.”

Best wishes
Julian Hitchen

3. Solomon Brown of Sutton:- Sole survivor of Australia’s worst shipwreck.

We now have many people who have contacted us from overseas whose ancestors set off from their poverty stricken lives to find themselves a new life in far-off places such as Australia. Four families from Sutton left our shores on 20th April 1845. Solomon Brown and his family left Liverpool bound for Melbourne on the emigrant ship “Cataraque” or “Cataraque” which was wrecked on rocks off King Island near Melbourne in 1845. On board were 369 emigrants of whom, 21 were from Sutton, 10 from Eyeworth and 23 from Guilden Morden. The only emigrant to survive was Solomon Brown from Sutton, the older brother of Charles Brown. Also on board were three other families from Sutton: Gilbert and Anne Daisley with 2 children, George and Ruth Daisley and William and Maria Waldock with 7 children.

Julian Hitchen of Truro sends us the following:-

“Some twelve years ago I started researching my family history, trying to trace the story of my grandfather, David Brown. With very little information other than his name and his wife’s maiden name to go on, I had no success.

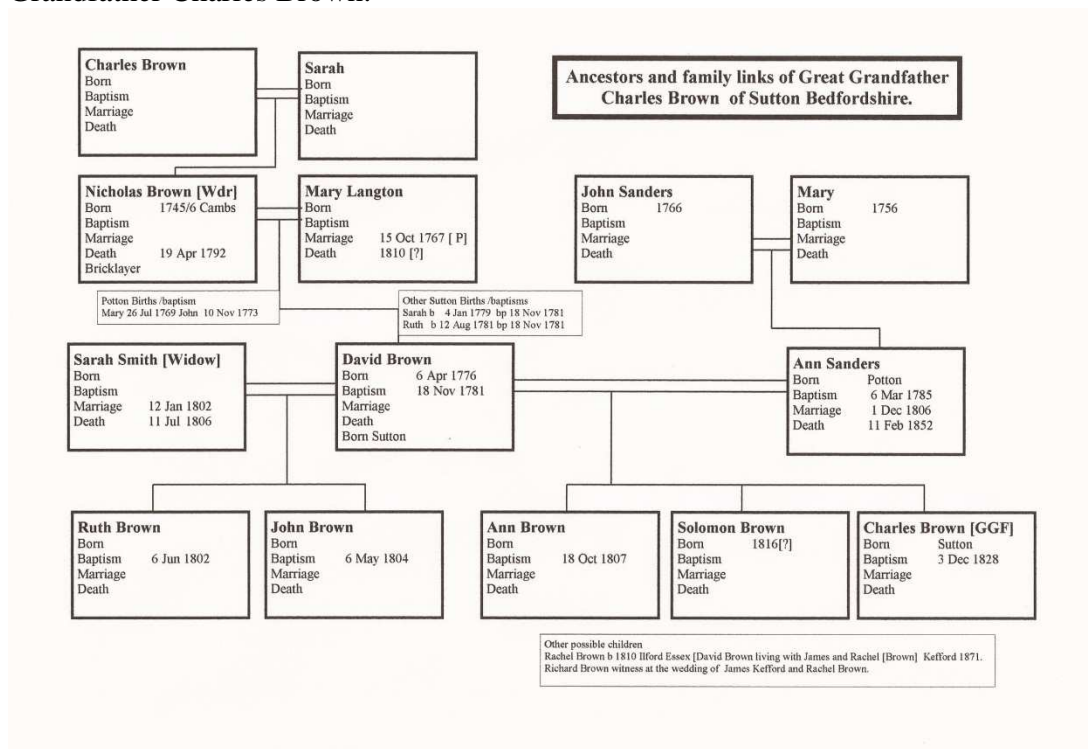
In January 2011 I decided to start again and subscribed to Ancestry.co.uk and again my early searches proved fruitless. I then tried Googling my grandmother’s maiden name, Fairholme, and explored a site called Fairholm Family Worldwide and bingo! There was my mother’s name with all her brothers and sisters and my grandmother’s family back to the 1740’s!

Of greater importance to the search for my grandfather, who had died 20 years before I was born, was the information that opened my access to his history and his World War 1 records, the fact that he was born in Sutton, Bedfordshire in 1863. My search narrowed from hundreds of thousands of families down to three families!

In the course of the next few months I came across the following story. It is the sort of story that you would expect to be handed down through the generations but this was the first I had heard of it. It concerns my grandfather’s uncle, Solomon Brown and Australia’s worst civil disaster.”

Julian Hitchen
Truro
August 2011

Chart showing the relationship and ancestors of Solomon Brown and my Great Grandfather Charles Brown.



No record has yet been found for the birth or baptism of Solomon.

The entry gives the following information:

David Brown	Age 60	Agricultural Labourer	Born Bedfordshire
Ann Brown	Age 50		ditto
Solomon Brown	Age 20		ditto
Charles Brown	Age 10		ditto

It was customary to round down the ages of the adults recorded in the 1841 Census and so Solomon's age appears as 20. In this census there were only 3 family groups recorded in Sutton with the surname Brown and no other individual Brown with the name Solomon. The census date was 6th June 1841.

Another household in Sutton at the same time records the name of Solomon's future wife and stepdaughters.

Phoebe Smith	60	Agricultural Labourer
Mary Smith	20	
Isac Smith	19	
George Smith	5	
Eliza Smith	1	
Hannah Smith	30	
Ellen Smith	10	
Phoebe Smith	5	
Elizabeth Smith	2	

It is possible that Hannah Smith had already made an application for an assisted passage to Australia.

In the final quarter of 1843 Solomon Brown and Hannah Smith marry. The marriage reference is Biggleswade 6 page 133.

On the 7th July 1844 Ruth, the daughter of Solomon and Hannah Brown is baptised in Sutton.

01/03/1839	BREED	Sarah	d	Thomas	Mary	labourer	All Saints
06/02/1848	BREED	Thomas	s	Amos	Ann	labourer	All Saints
07/09/1851	BREED	William	s	Amos	Ann	labourer	All Saints
05/06/1825	BREED	William		Edward	Charlotte	labourer	All Saints
10/08/1843	BROWN	Ann	d	Robert	Elizabeth	farmer	All Saints
03/12/1828	BROWN	Charles		David	Ann	labourer	All Saints
Notes: Privately baptized							
09/10/1842	BROWN	David	s	William	Frances	labourer	All Saints
18/03/1849	BROWN	Elizabeth	d	Robert	Elizabeth	farmer	All Saints
22/09/1822	BROWN	Elizabeth		Thomas	Ann	farmer	All Saints
18/03/1849	BROWN	Henry	s	Robert	Elizabeth	farmer	All Saints
29/11/1825	BROWN	James		David	Mary	labourer	All Saints
Notes: Privately baptized pd							
12/03/1823	BROWN	James		David	Mary	labourer	All Saints
Notes: Privately baptized							
22/09/1822	BROWN	Robert		Thomas	Ann	farmer	All Saints
18/03/1849	BROWN	Robert	s	Robert	Elizabeth	farmer	All Saints
07/07/1844	BROWN	Ruth	d	Solomon	Hannah	labourer	All Saints
22/09/1822	BROWN	Sarah		Thomas	Ann	farmer	All Saints
06/04/1851	BROWN	Solomon	s	Charles	Hannah	labourer	All Saints
22/09/1822	BROWN	Thomas		Thomas	Ann	farmer	All Saints

Bedfordshire FHS Baptisms Database – Sutton

The above extract shows that Solomon's younger brother Charles gives his first child his brother's name in 1851 [6th April]. Charles also names his second child Ruth.

On 20th April 1845 Solomon and family leave Liverpool bound for Melbourne on the emigrant ship “Cataraqui” or “Cataraque”. Also on board were three other families from Sutton: Gilbert and Anne Daisley with 2 children, George and Ruth Daisley and William and Maria Waldock with 7 children.

Below is an extract from the passenger list:

36	Black, James	3	son	ditto
37	Brady, John	36	labourer	Cam.
38	Brady, Mary	38	wife	ditto
39	Brown, Solomon	30	labourer	Sutton, Bedfordshire, the only survivor of all the emigrants.
40	Brown, Hanna	40	wife	Sutton
41	Brown, Ellen	14	daughter	ditto
42	Brown, Phoebe	8	ditto	ditto
43	Brown, Elizabeth	5	ditto	ditto
44	Brown, Ruth	9 months	ditto	ditto
45	Buck, Edward	31	labourer	Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Derbyshire
46	Buck, Elizabeth	30	wife	ditto
47	Rowbottam[sic], John	10	stepson (supposed)	ditto
48	Rowbottom[sic], William	4	ditto	ditto
49	Rowbottom, James	2	ditto	ditto
50	Bushby, Beecher	45	labourer	Colinworth
51	Bushby, Elizabeth	43	wife	ditto
52	Bushby, Emma	20	daughter	ditto
53	Bushby, William	17	son	ditto
54	Bushby, John	14	ditto	ditto
55	Bushby, Hanna	12	daughter	ditto
56	Bushby, George	6	son	ditto
57	Bushby, Sarah	8 months	daughter	ditto

Source and further information <http://www.theshipslist.com/accounts/cataraque.html>

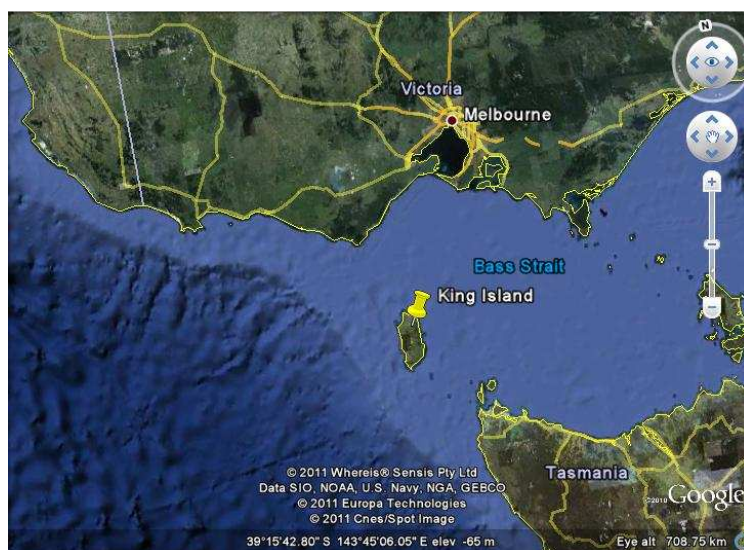
Below is an extract of the New South Wales ledger recording the passengers on the “Cataraqui”.

Passengers on the ship Cataraqui - Arrived 4 Aug 1845 Shipwrecked

NO.	NAME	AGE	NATIVE PLACE	RELIGION	HEAD OR WIFE	CALLING	OCCUPY					REMARKS
							£	s	d	£	s	
10	Bishop	Sarah	18	Astoria		daughter						
		Elizabeth	13	do		do						
	Black	Patrick	46	Emohian		Solomon						
		John	37	do		wife						
		Ellen	14	do		daughter						
11		Patrick	19	do		son						
		May	9	do		daughter						
	Brady	James	3	do		son						
		John	36	Conn		Solomon						
		May	35	do		wife						
12	Brown	Thomas	30	Wales		Solomon						
		Thomas	40	do		wife						
		Ellen	16	do		daughter						
		John	5	do		do						
		Elizabeth	5	do		do						
13	Bush	John	31	Wales		Solomon						
		Elizabeth	30	do		wife						
	Rowbottom	John	10	do		Stephen						
		William	4	do		do						
		Thomas	3	do		do						
14	Bush	John	15	Wales		Solomon						
		Elizabeth	13	do		wife						
		Thomas	20	do		daughter						
		William	17	do		son						
		John	12	do		daughter						

Source nsw.gov.au

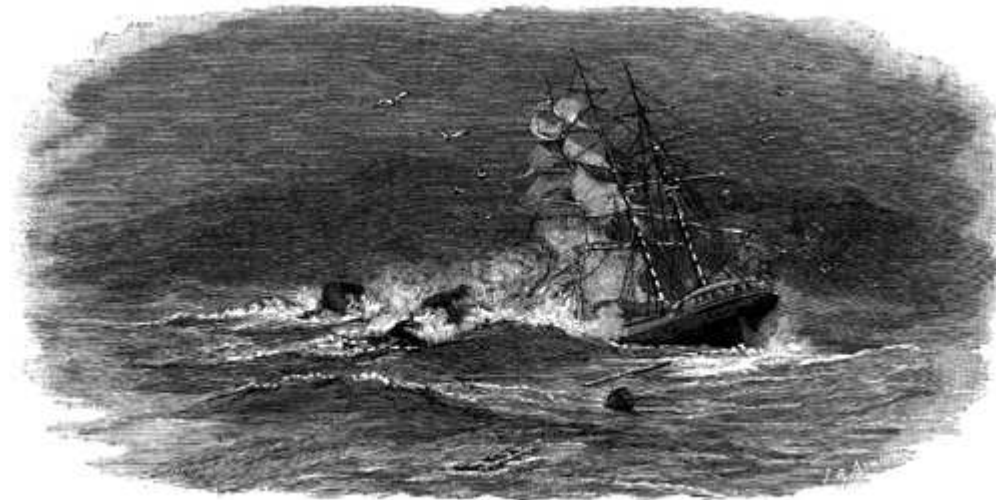
On the 4th August 1845 the “Cataraqui” struck rocks on the west coast of King Island. All but eight crew members and all but one of the passengers died, the sole passenger to survive being Solomon Brown.



Below is an extract from the King Island website which gives a graphic description of the wreck of the “Cataraqi”.

Australia's worst civil disaster was that of the barque *Cataraqi*, wrecked on the West Coast of King Island on 4 August 1845 with the loss of 400 lives.

[King
Island
Online](#)



WRECK OF THE EMIGRANT SHIP "CATARAQUI" ON KING'S ISLAND, 1845.

"Wreck of the emigrant ship *Cataraqi* on King's Island, 1845"

The *Cataraqi* sailed from Liverpool for Melbourne on 20 April 1845 with 367 assisted emigrants under the care of surgeons Charles and Edward Carpenter, and 41 crew, under the command of Captain Christopher William Finlay. The passage was generally uneventful apart from the loss of one of the crew overboard, and by the time the ship approached the Australian coastline, five babies had been born and six others had died. Consequently there were four hundred and nine persons on board when at 3 a.m. on 4 August, on getting underway again after having hove-to in a howling gale, the master calculated he was sixty or seventy miles north-west of King Island. Just 90 minutes later, the *Cataraqi* crashed without warning on the jagged rocks about a 150 yards offshore north of Fitzmaurice Bay and four kilometres north of the point that now bears her name, between Currie Harbour and Stokes Point. Immediately after striking there was four feet of water in the hold, and despite the ladders leading below decks being knocked away, the crew managed to get most of the emigrants on deck. It proved of little use as huge seas swept the decks and washed scores overboard, to be battered to death on the rocks by the surf. At about 5 a.m. the ship rolled onto her beam ends, and more were thorn into the raging waters. The masts were cut away to ease her, but being full of water she did not respond.

Daylight found some 200 survivors still clinging to the wreck. At about 10 a.m. the last remaining boat was launched, but immediately capsized, drowning its five or six occupants.

Sometime afterwards the hull parted amidships and the stern began to collapse, throwing perhaps 70 to 100 into the water. Around 5 a.m. the hull parted again, near the foremast, and the stern completely disintegrated, leaving perhaps 70 survivors crowded onto the forecastle. Lines were strung along what remained of the wreck to give the survivors something to cling to, and an attempt was made to drift a barrel attached to a line ashore, but it stopped 20 yards out, caught up in the kelp. By daybreak on the 5th just 30 survivors remained, and Captain Finlay made an attempt to swim ashore, but was forced back by the currents. Finally it was decided that the only chance of survival was to try to swim ashore on floating wreckage, and the lines were cut. Chief Officer Thomas Guthrie crawled along the sprit-sail yard and was washed out to the bow-sprit, from where he reached shore clinging to two planks. Here he found an emigrant, Samuel Brown, who had come ashore at about 2 a.m. the previous night, clinging to a piece of wreckage, and a seaman who had got ashore earlier in the morning. The forecastle broke up soon afterwards, throwing the handful of remaining survivors into the water, and of them six crewmen managed to get ashore safely. They were the last to reach shore alive. The nine castaways were lucky to be found on the following day by the "Straits Policeman," David Howie, who had been attracted to the scene by the large amount of wreckage drifting about. He had been trapped on the island since his own boat had been wrecked there some time earlier, and the party was forced to remain there for five weeks before being rescued by the cutter Midge on 7 September and taken to Melbourne. In the meantime they buried 342 bodies that had been washed ashore in four mass graves, one holding 200. News of the wreck caused a sensation in Melbourne, where the emigrants were headed. Several public events were organized to raise funds to assist the survivors and reward their rescuers, and an iron memorial was fabricated and erected at the scene of the wreck in 1846. It eventually rusted away, but was replaced by a stone cairn in 1956. The wreck itself was sold to builder Alexander Sutherland for 86 pounds, and a considerable amount of material was recovered, although unfortunately not enough to prevent his insolvency in June 1846. It was later sold for another six pounds, still more spars, deals, and other wreckage being salvaged. The wreck, of which no timber now remains, has been extensively dived over the years and many artefacts including cannon and anchors have been recovered.

Cataraqui was a ship of 802 tons, 138.0 x 30.0 x 22.0ft., built at Quebec in 1840 by Williams Lampson, and was registered at Liverpool in the name of William Smith & Sons.

REFERENCE: Lemon & Morgan, *Poor Souls, They Perished*.

Source www.kingisland.net.au/~maritime/cataraqui.htm

It is unfortunate that Lemon and Morgan above gave the sole passenger to survive the wrong Christian name and there seems no doubt that it was in fact Solomon Brown on that ship.

www.scribd.com records the following:

A Melbourne meeting voted Solomon Brown a sum of money for the ordeal he had undergone. Edmund Finn in "Memories of Early Melbourne" thought Solomon Brown had drowned in a creek north of Melbourne in 1848. There is the vexing death certificate from the Ballarat gold diggings on 21 Dec 1874 that says a Solomon Brown, correct age, from Bedfordshire, died of cancer in the Benevolent Asylum. There was no family to support him.

From contacts I have had with researchers in Australia through Ancestry.co.uk, it is known that Solomon Brown married an Ann Reid in Australia and it is their descendants currently researching his background. Further work needs to be done to confirm the circumstances surrounding his death but the year given above seems correct.

Sources

Bedfordshire Family History Society

Parish records for Sutton and Potton on CD ROM.

Ancestry.co.uk

Powerful search tool but currently lacking a searchable 1911 Census [August 2011].

The Ships List

The link in the text has the full passenger list as well as some correspondence associated with the enquiry into the shipwreck.

King Island Online

Responded to my contact and passed on information to the King Island Museum.

New South Wales Archive