

## Kresen Kernow guide to sources related to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands

This guide is part of a project to identify key collections and items in our collections relating to Black histories and Cornwall's links to the British Empire and colonialism. This is a significant piece of work, designed to make it easier to find items and to reveal previously hidden histories. The project is wide ranging, and has already considered what our collections reveal about Cornish connections to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Caribbean, and Cornwall's interactions with Africa (find out more here: <https://kresenkernow.org/our-collections/collections-guides/black-histories/>).

This guide highlights sources relating to Cornwall's connections with Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. This document is designed to be an introduction to the types of sources we hold which may be of use in your research. It is not a comprehensive list. We strongly recommend searching our catalogues using the key terms below in order to discover the full range of documents.

**Key search terms: Australia; New Zealand; Pacific; migration; mining; colonialism; transportation; missionaries**

Records tagged with these terms are those with the greatest relevance to the history of these places and themes. We have also included key published sources in this introductory guide.

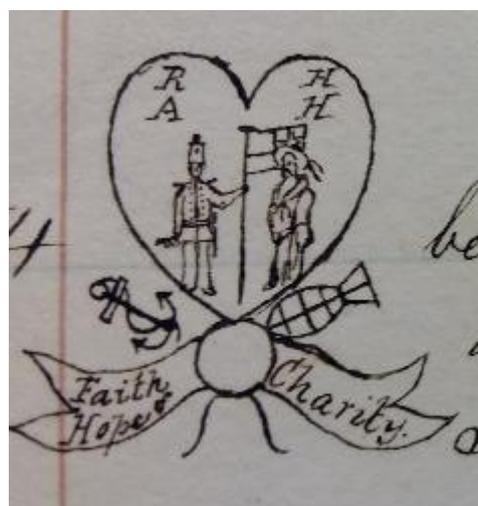
Please note: We recognise that our catalogue contains some terms which are offensive, and some whose meaning has changed over time. Such terms exist within some original records and have been retained to inform users of the nature and content of the sources concerned. They do not reflect the views of the Archives and Cornish Studies Service. We apologise for any offence that our inclusion of these words may cause.

### Transportation of prisoners

The transportation of convicts to Australia began in 1788 and ended in 1868. The names of Cornish men and women who were sentenced for transportation, often for minor crimes, can be found in the records relating to crime and punishment.

AD1676/4/1-9 - Registers from Bodmin Gaol. These fascinating volumes provide detailed information on convicts' occupations, family, health and physical appearance (including sketches of tattoos!), they also give details of the hulks to which prisoners were sent to await transportation.

QS/1/5-16 - Quarter Sessions order books. These give the names, occupations, crimes and sentences of those brought to trial. Transcriptions of the order books are available on our online catalogue. The examples below give an indication of the information they hold:



*Nicholas Crews, late of Gorran, labourer; convicted of taking 3 yards of flannel and 3 yards of swanskin [a thick kind of flannel], the property of John Pearce, value 6d.: to be transported for 7 years to New South Wales or an island adjacent. 14 Jan 1790 (QS/1/6/99)*

*Elizabeth Trenerry of St Erth, spinster, indicted for taking clothing, property of Ann Tregenza; transported for seven years. 19 Oct 1824 (QS/1/10/600)*

*Australia bound!: the story of West Country connections, 1688 -1888* by Martin Brown, 1988

*The first convict fleet to carry convicts to Australia 1787-1788 and those convicted in Cornwall and transported on the second and third fleets, 1789-1791,* by W.A.M., 2000 (typescript)

## Migration

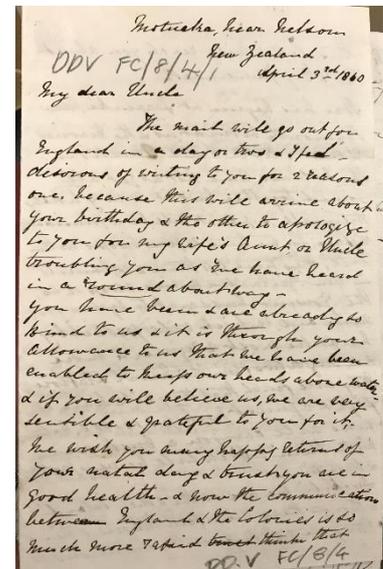
A few free settlers arrived in Australia and New Zealand in the early 1790s but the biggest waves of migration occurred in the 19th century. The discovery of gold in both countries in the 1850s attracted many migrants, particularly those with mining skills and experience, and the numbers were further boosted by the assisted migration scheme, under which the British and Australian colonial governments paid for thousands of people, mainly poor, to move to Australia. Many settlers found life in these countries harsh and unrewarding, while others flourished and prospered, and this is reflected in letters and diaries held in our collections.

V/FC/8/1-8 – Letters from Thomas Henry Vyvyan to Sir Richard Rawlinson Vyvyan, 1857-1864. Describes life in New Zealand, the hardships of farming, discovery of gold nearby and the 'Maori War'.

AD1158/5-3 - Letters from various members of the May family in New South Wales to relatives in England, 1876-1916, describing farming and family life.

EN/2632 – Letters from Claude Rogers to his family, 1888-1890. Detailed descriptions of life in New Zealand including his work as a carpenter, social life and geography.

FS/3/1033/1-115 – facsimile copies of letters held at other institutions or in private hands, written by emigrants in Australia.



PU series – minute books of the Boards of Guardians for the Poor, giving the names of people in Cornwall who have been given assistance to emigrate to Australia or New Zealand.

*Of toffs and toilers: from Cornwall to New Zealand: fragments of the past* by Geoffrey Charles Buckley, 1983

*The Cornish farmer in Australia* by Philip Payton, 1987

*The Echunga diaries: London to New Zealand by sailing ship, 1862* by James Groves, 2003. Diaries of the travels of two Cornishmen, William Henry Rule and William Jewell.

*Making of Moonta: the invention of Australia's little Cornwall* by Philip Payton, 2007

## Mining

The combination of the discovery of large deposits of gold in Australia in 1851 and the collapse of the Cornish mining industry in the mid to late 19th century led to the migration of thousands of Cornish people to Australia. Their skills and experience gained from tin and copper mining in Cornwall were influential in the expansion of the mining industry in Australia. Many also migrated to New Zealand during the gold rushes there in the 1860s. Although so many Cornish people took their mining skills to Australia in particular, they are not well represented in our archive collections.

AD966/2 – Photo showing ‘The Welcome Nugget’ found in Australia by miners from St Just, 1862

X116/61 - Report, Shotover and Skippers District Goldfield, New Zealand, 1887

FS/3/1033/1-115 – facsimiles of letters held at other institutions or in private hands, written by emigrants in Australia. Many of these give details of mining life.

*Mining in Western Australia* by Rex T. Prider, 1979

*Cornish heritage: a miner’s story* by Jim Faull, 1980

*The Cornish miner in Australia* by Philip Payton, 1984

*South Australia’s mining heritage* edited by Jonathan Selby, 1987

*Cornish beam engines in South Australian mines* by G.J. Drew, 1993



## Travel and Exploration

European exploration of Australasia and the Pacific Islands is likely to have begun in the 16th century and continued well into the 19th century. Well-known explorers with Cornish connections include Samuel Wallis, (born in Lanteglos-by-Camelford in 1728) who was captain of the first European ship to reach Tahiti and other Pacific islands, and Captain William Bligh. Several diaries in our collections describe the long journey to Australasia, and printed accounts give details of the exploration of the southern hemisphere in the 18th and 19th centuries. The interest in plants and plant-collecting in the 19th century is also reflected in the collections at Kresen Kernow.

BTRU/530 - Includes a description of the journey from Melbourne to Liverpool, via Cape Horn, 1858

AD2969/2/2 - Journal of Victor Jones describing voyages aboard various merchant ships around the world, 1879-1885

AD2547/1 – Report by the Gardens History Project: Imports of Exotic Plants into Falmouth 1750-1900, 2018

*An account of the voyages undertaken by the order of His Majesty for making discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere and successively performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carnet and Captain Cook in the Dolphin, the Swallow and the Endeavour drawn up from the journals*

*which were kept by the several commanders and from the papers of Joseph Banks* by John Hawksworth, 1785

*Observations of a naturalist in the Pacific between 1896 and 1899 volume 1 and 2* by Henry Brougham Guppy, 1903 and 1906

*William Colenso: his life and journeys: printer, missionary, botanist, explorer, politician* by A.G. Bagnall, 1948

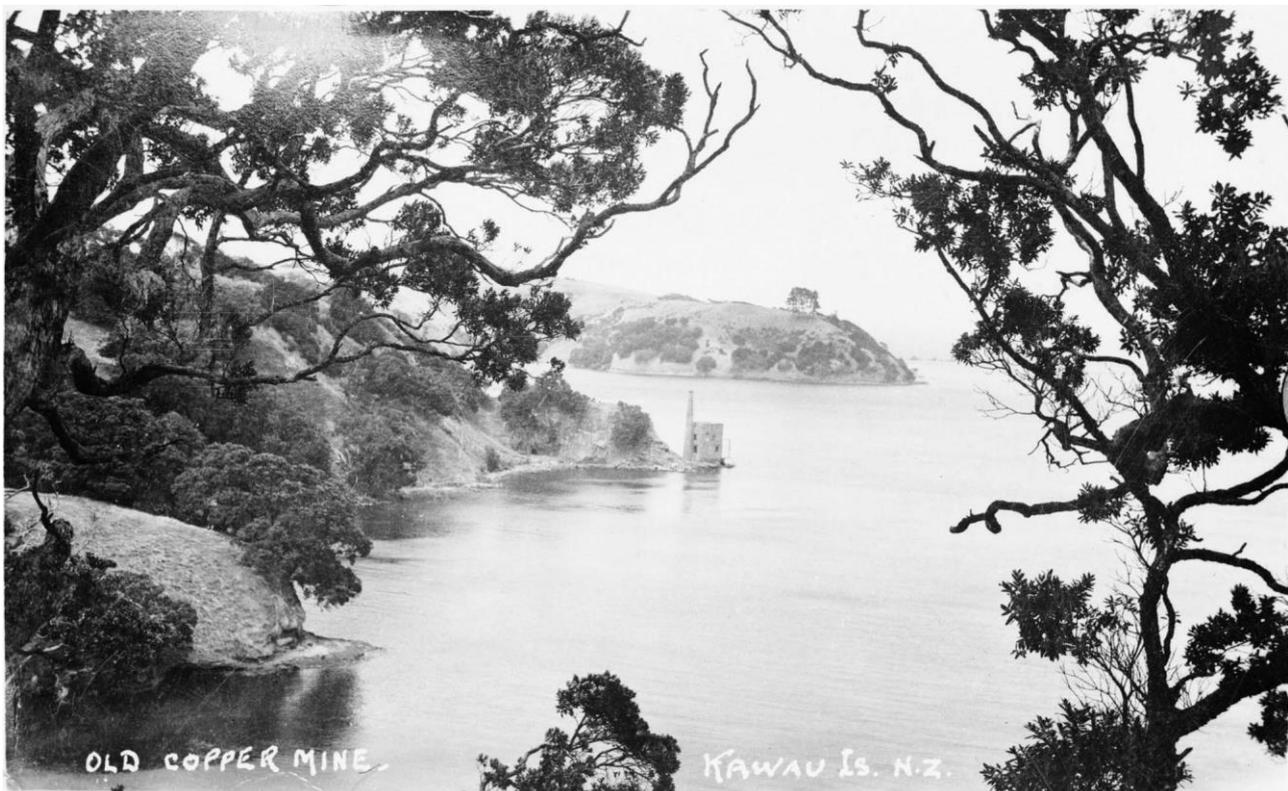
*Samuel Wallis: Camelford's circumnavigator* by Arthur Trevena, 1964. A series of articles published in the Launceston Post and Weekly News.

### Captain William Bligh, 1754-1817

Linked to Cornwall through family in St Tudy, William Bligh is most famous for the mutiny of his crew on board HMS Bounty in 1789. His excellent navigation skills, perfected while employed by Captain James Cook, enabled him to bring his loyal crew safely ashore after a 47-day voyage across the Pacific Ocean. Bligh later became the Governor of New South Wales.

*A voyage to the South Sea, undertaken by command of His Majesty: for the purpose of conveying the bread-fruit tree to the West Indies in His Majesty's ship the Bounty, commanded by Lieutenant William Bligh : including an account of the mutiny on board the said ship, and the subsequent voyage of part of the crew...from Tofoa...to Timor* by William Bligh, 1792

*Captain Bligh: the man and his mutinies* by Gavin Kennedy, 1989



## Missionaries

Missionaries are sent from religious groups and organisations to promote their faith and perform “ministries of service”, such as education. They also helped further colonial projects and the expansion of the British Empire.

FS/3/1033/54, 60, 61 - Copies of letters from Thomas Curnow in Fiji to his brother, 1871-1878, describing his work with the Wesleyan mission.

AD872/10 - Diary of Miss Kitty Austin of Falmouth, 1972, Australia to Papua New Guinea. Kitty Austin was a member of the Congregational Church, later the United Reformed Church, in Falmouth and spent a year as a lay worker on a mission station in Papua New Guinea.

*Walter Lawry and the Wesleyan mission in the South Seas* by E.W. Hames, 1967

*Cornish Methodist preachers in New Zealand* by Donald Phillips, 2011

## Colonialism

The colonisation of Australia and New Zealand could be deemed as a success for Britain and its empire, but it inevitably had a negative impact on the indigenous peoples in those areas. The prevailing attitudes towards Aboriginal Australians and Maoris can be found in these books.

*The southern districts of New Zealand: a journal with passing notices of the customs of the Aborigines* by Edward Shortland, 1851

*An Australian parsonage: or the settler and the savage in Western Australia* by Mrs Edward Millet, 1872

*Forty years in New Zealand: including a personal narrative on account of Maoridom and of the Christianization and colonisation of the country* by James Buller, 1878

*Give your thoughts life: William Colenso's letters to the editor* by Ian St. George, 2011

*Australian migration and empire: immigrants in a globalised world* edited by Philip Payton, 2020

## Cornish connections today

Today, connections between Cornwall and parts of Australia thrive. Several towns in Cornwall and Australia are “twinned” and Women’s Institutes in Cornwall have formed links with similar organisations in Australia. The Cornish-themed Kernewek Lowender festival is held every two years in the towns of Kadina, Moonta and Wallaroo in South Australia and Cornish heritage is evident around the country.

WI/LEED/6/16 Correspondence, Wirrabara Forest Branch, Country Women's Association, South Australia, 1967-1999

Oswald Pryor’s collections of cartoons e.g. ‘*Cousin Jacks and Jennys*’, 1966

*Cornish carols from Australia: new edition of 'The Cornish Welcome'* compiled by Philip Payton, 1984

*Cornets on the copper fields: a history of brass bands in the copper triangle* by Keith Bailey, 1998