

**Diss Family History Group
The Lopham Project**



**The year 1848,
a ship the “Berkshire”,
3 families, 3 single people,
one village.**

Nigel Peacock et al.

**Version: 1.01
© Diss Family History Group 2026**

The front-page picture is of a barque but it is not known if it was the “Berkshire”.

A barque is a type of sailing vessel with three or more masts of which the fore mast, mainmast, and any additional masts are rigged square, and only the aftmost mast (mizzen in three-masted barques) is rigged fore and aft. Sometimes, the mizzen is only partly fore-and-aft rigged, bearing a square-rigged sail above.

Contents

Introduction:	1
Assisted passages:.....	2
The Journey:	3
The Lopham emigrants:	5
Simon CARMAN and wife Elizabeth	5
At home in South Lopham:.....	5
Emigration:.....	6
In Australia:	6
James MAYOR, wife Mary and children John	8
Susannah, James and William.....	8
At home in South Lopham:.....	8
Emigration:.....	9
In Australia:	9
Adam RYE, wife Elizabeth and daughter Mary Anne.....	12
At home in South Lopham:.....	12
Emigration:.....	13
In Australia:	13
Mary Ann BLOWERS	16
At home in South Lopham:.....	16
Emigration:.....	16
In Australia:	17
Elias BLOWERS.....	18
At home in South Lopham:.....	18
Emigration:.....	18
In Australia:	19
Charlotte [Frances] VINCENT	21
At home in South Lopham:.....	21
Emigration:.....	21
In Australia:	21
Questions and conclusions:.....	23

Introduction:

The barque, the “Berkshire”, departed London on 30th May, 1848, picked up additional passengers at Plymouth, finally setting sail on 11th June, 1848 for Australia. It safely reached Geelong (Port Phillip District, Victoria) on 2nd October, 1848. The voyage was commanded by Captain John Whyte (or White), with Dr. Samuel B. Shaw serving as the Surgeon-Superintendent. The ship carried roughly 230 assisted passage immigrants (in 38 family groups, 20 single females and 44 single males) mainly from the southern counties of England, including 14 from the village of South Lopham in Norfolk. During the almost 4-month long passage, the passengers became a close-knit community and had five births and two deaths during the voyage.

[There were several slightly differing dates for the departure from London and Plymouth; those given above are the most quoted.]

The Argus (Melbourne, Victoria), Friday, 6 October, 1848, Page 2

Shipping Intelligence.
ARRIVED.

October 2 - Berkshire, ship, 500 tons, John Whyte, commander, from London. (At Geelong.) Passengers—Mr Merry, Religious Instructor, Mrs Merry, Miss Affleck, Mrs Whyte, [Dr.] Shaw, Esq., Surgeon-Superintendent, and 230 immigrants.

When first looking at this event it is surprising that 14 people from a single village emigrated on the same date on the same ship.

Assisted passages:

In the 1850s, assisted passages were most often paid for by colonial governments (especially in Australia), British landlords, and private emigration societies. (In Australia, the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission used proceeds from land sales to subsidize or cover the travel costs of desired labourers, farmers, and single women.) Some local parish and workhouse boards funded the emigration of destitute paupers to relieve local financial burdens. Specific government-backed programs (like the Earl Grey scheme) financed the travel of young female workhouse orphans and paupers to colonies like Australia.

It has not been discovered who financed the migration of any of the Lopham 14.

Much has been written about 'assisted migration packages' and many sources of information can be found on the internet. There is a comprehensive account of this on the National Museum of Australia's website, found here:

<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/assisted-migration>

The Journey:

Perhaps a good way of describing what a journey was like from the U.K. to Australia is to refer to a piece of a blog by David Holford¹. This gives an account of what it was like as a steerage passenger and graphically illustrates the hardships.

“The conditions on board sailing ships in the 1850s were harsh. Most passengers travelled in a part of the ship called “steerage” between the upper deck and the cargo hold. Since these ships were built for cargo and not passengers this ‘tween decks area was not designed for accommodation but was converted for the purpose. However, unlike our experience on the Ellinis, passengers did not have their own cabin, but were all crowded into one large room that acted as dormitory, dining room and common room. Until 1852 men and women were all accommodated together, but later men were accommodated separately from the women and children.

When the sea was stormy and rough the hatches were battened down and passengers could not get up into the open. Toilets were usually on the upper deck, about one for every hundred passengers. In rough conditions they could not easily be accessed and a bucket in steerage had to suffice. These could easily be overturned; the smell could be overpowering, from vomit and human waste. Rats were common. Sea water seeped in through hatches, so it was damp below deck. It was also dark because there were no windows and dim lanterns hanging from the deck beams provided the only light. Ventilation was poor.

¹ Forgotten tales stories of my family, David Holford: <https://holfiesfamilyhistory.blog/about/>

On the voyage to Australia these conditions needed to be endured not for four weeks but for four months. Bunks were stacked on top of one another, each person had an area measuring about 0.5 x 2 metres. There were no tables or chairs, and the aisles were crowded with migrants' luggage. Though German ships provided meals for their steerage passengers (unlike British ships on the transatlantic route), preservation of food was difficult and meals were boring and monotonous. The menu consisted of salt meat and salt bacon, herrings, sauerkraut, potatoes, beans and peas, in various combinations. Passengers had to collect their food from the galley and take it back to steerage to eat.

With such horrendous conditions it is no surprise that sickness was rife. As Maggie Blanck says on her very informative website, "because of the close quarters in which they lived, passengers often suffered from illnesses like trench mouth, body ulcers, and lice. Conditions were frightful. Immigrant ships were recognized by the smell..." Of course illness and premature death were common on land too on those days, so the expectations of travellers was not high, but the hardness of those four months cannot be underestimated, even if people were tougher than they are now. So much for the romance of sail."

The whole of David's blog is worth reading and can be found at:
<https://holfiesfamilyhistory.blog/>

No references have been found that refer specifically to the conditions on board the Berkshire; hopefully for the Lopham 14 they were better than those described above.

The Lopham emigrants:

Simon CARMAN and wife Elizabeth

At home in South Lopham:

Simon CARMAN, son of John (1771 - 1842) and Elizabeth (née Hunt, 1775 - unknown), was born in South Lopham and was privately baptised² there on 6th February 1809.

He married³ Elizabeth CARMAN on 19th October 1832 in St. John's Parish Church in Stanton, Suffolk.

Elizabeth CARMAN, daughter of James (1785 - 1861) and Mary (unknown - 1930, née LONG), was born in Stanton, Suffolk on 27th January, 1811.

Simon's father John and Elizabeth's father James were brothers. so Simon and Elizabeth were first cousins.

[Marrying a first cousin is legal and has been since the 16th century, following a change in law under King Henry VIII.]

The 1841 Census⁴ shows John (40!) and Elizabeth (30) living in South Lopham, with daughter Sarah (4), at Fen Common. He was employed as an agricultural labourer.

² Archdeacon's Transcripts, South Lopham, 1753 - 1812

³ Suffolk Marriage Index, Stanton, St John the Baptist, Suffolk

⁴ 1841 Census, 31 Mar 1841: HO107 Piece 775 Book 9 Folio 6 Page 6 Schedule 1217

Emigration:

The records of their emigration⁵ shows:

- Simon as 38 years old, married, a labourer, born in South Lopham, Wesleyan, could neither read nor write, was to reside in Geelong, and be employed by Henry DEWING for 6 months with a salary of £13 per annum with rations.
- Elizabeth as 37 years old, married, housekeeper, born in South Lopham, Wesleyan, could read a little, was to reside in Geelong.

In Australia:

Simon's wife Elizabeth sadly died in Geelong in 1856, aged 46 years.

On 15th April, 1857, Simon married⁶ Susannah HEWSTONE (1828 - 1909) in Geelong. They had eight children; Sarah (1857 - 1859), John (1859 - 1859), John (1861 - 1934), Sarah Jane (1862 - 1939), Elizabeth (1864 - 1939), Prudence (1866 - 1939), Mary (1869 - 1945) and Adelaide Louisa (1871 - 1937).

Simon died⁷ on 7th March, 1883 in Ballarat, registered in Victoria and was buried there the following day.

The Ballarat Courier, Thursday, 8th March, 1883, Page 2:

⁵ Public Record Office Victoria; Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom.

⁶ FindMyPast: Victoria Marriages 1836-1942

⁷ FindMyPast: Victoria Deaths 1836-1985

Death.

CARMAN.- On the 7th March, at 54 Wills street, Ballarat, Simon Carman, late of Springs, Bangaree; aged sixty-three years. Funeral to take place at four o'clock, this day.

**James MAYOR, wife Mary and children John
Susannah, James and William**

At home in South Lopham:

[The surname MAYOR was sometimes shown as MEAR. MEARS and MAYORS, and became MYORS in Australia.]

James, son of John (1769 – 1853) and Esther (née GARNHAM, 1770 – 1848) was born circa 1808 in South Lopham, Norfolk.

After banns, he married⁸ Mary CLARKE on 25th February 1834 at South Lopham, both were from the parish, and both signed with their mark.

Mary Ann CLARKE, daughter of John (1783 – 1853) and Christiana (née WADE, 1801 – 1873), was born on 10th January 1818 in South Lopham and baptised there soon after on 18th January.

On 6th March 1841, the date of the 1841 Census⁹, James (37, agricultural labourer), his wife Mary A (22) and children John (8), Sarah (3) and Susan (6m), were all living in Diss Road, South Lopham. (The age of James and his wife's name are probably badly interpreted by the enumerator.)

In total they had five children whilst in South Lopham, the four who went to Australia with them, John James (b. 3rd March 1836), Susannah (b. circa 1840), James (b. circa 1845) and William (b. circa 1848), and

⁸ Parish Registers, South Lopham: 6 March 1834

⁹ 1841 Census, 31 Mar 1841: HO107 Piece 775 Book 9 Folio 5 Page 5 Schedule 1207

also Sarah (b. circa 1838, who possibly died before the family emigrated).

Emigration:

The records of their emigration¹⁰ shows:

- James: 39 years old, agricultural labourer, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Episcopalian, could only read, was to be employed by John P FALKNER for 12 months with a salary of £34 per annum with rations.
- Mary: 30 years old, housekeeper, from in South Lopham, Norfolk, Episcopalian, could only read.
- John: 13 years old, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Episcopalian, could only read.
- Susannah: 9 years old, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Episcopalian, could only read.
- James: 3 years old, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Episcopalian.
- William: an infant, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Episcopalian.

In Australia:

Generally the family now went by the surname of MYORS.

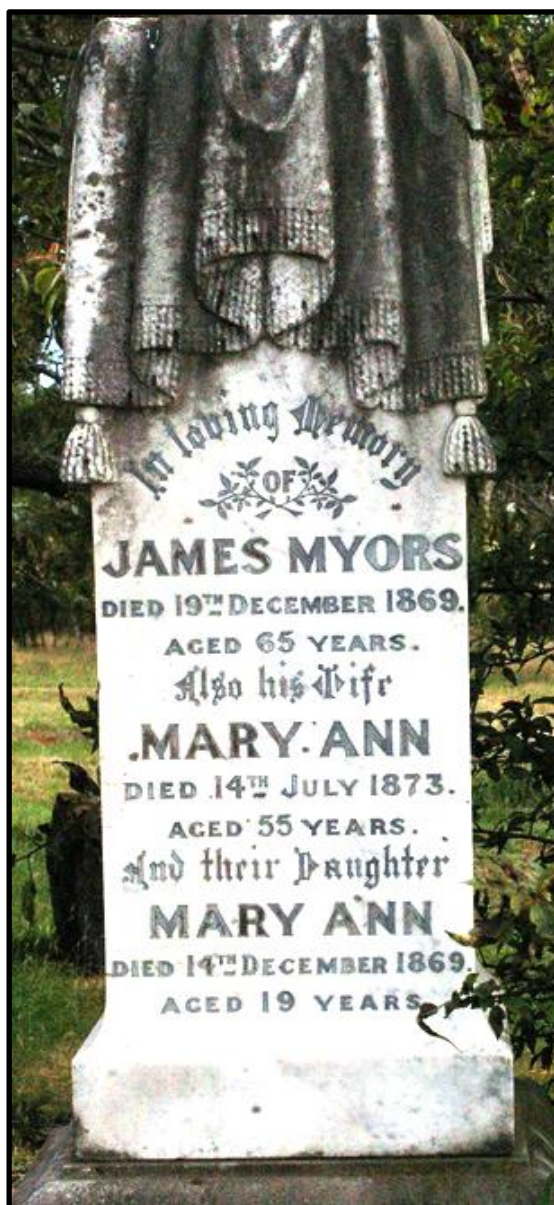
James and Mary had three further children; Mary Ann (b. circa 1851 - 1869), William (1855 - 1928) and Elizabeth (b. circa 1858 - 1858).

James died¹¹ on 19th December, 1869 in Beveridge, Victoria, aged 61 years. His death certificate, dated 20th December, stated he died of

¹⁰ Public Record Office Victoria; Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom.

¹¹ FindMyPast: death records from Victoria, Australia between 1836 and 1985

typhoid fever. He had lived in Australia 21 years. He was buried¹² in Wallan Cemetery.



Wallan Cemetery

James's estate was probated on 1st June 1877.

By the time of his death, three of his daughters had died; Sarah Ann, Mary Ann (d. 14th December 1869) and Elizabeth (d. 1958).

¹² Billion Graves: <http://billiongraves.com/pages/record/James-Myors/19699286>

James's wife Mary died^{13 14} on 14 Jul 1873 in Wallan, Victoria.

¹³ Billion Graves: <http://billiongraves.com/pages/record/Mary-Ann-Myors/19699287>

¹⁴ FindMyPast: Australia, Civil Deaths & Burials 1780-1985

Adam RYE, wife Elizabeth and daughter Mary Anne

At home in South Lopham:

Adam RYE, son of Francis (1783 - 1883, thatcher) and Martha (née GREEN, 1785 - 1848), was born in South Lopham on 30th April, 1820 and baptised¹⁵ there on 4th May, 1823.

At the time of the 1841 Census¹⁶, 31st March, Adam was not living at home in South Lopham, but was possibly residing in Leintwardine in Hertfordshire, a male servant (farm servant?) living in the household of Thomas DAYNES, a farmer.

On 16th November, 1847 Adam married¹⁷ Elizabeth VINCENT in South Lopham.

Elizabeth VINCENT, daughter of John (1790 - 1867, labourer) and Frances (née BROCK, 1792 - 1883), was born in South Lopham in circa 1824, and baptised¹⁸ there on 13th September 1824. At the time of the 1841 Census¹⁹ she was living with her parents John and Frances, and three siblings, Daniel, Charlotte and Sarah, living in The Street, South Lopham.

¹⁵ Parish Baptism Records: South Lopham, Norfolk

¹⁶ 1841 Census: HO107 Piece 428 Book 22 Folio 10 Page 21 Schedule 663

¹⁷ Registered: Q4 1847 Guiltcross Norfolk Vol 13 Page 481.

¹⁸ Parish Baptism Records: South Lopham

¹⁹ 1841 Census, 31 Mar 1841: HO107 Piece 775 Book 9 Folio 14 Page 22 Schedule 1298

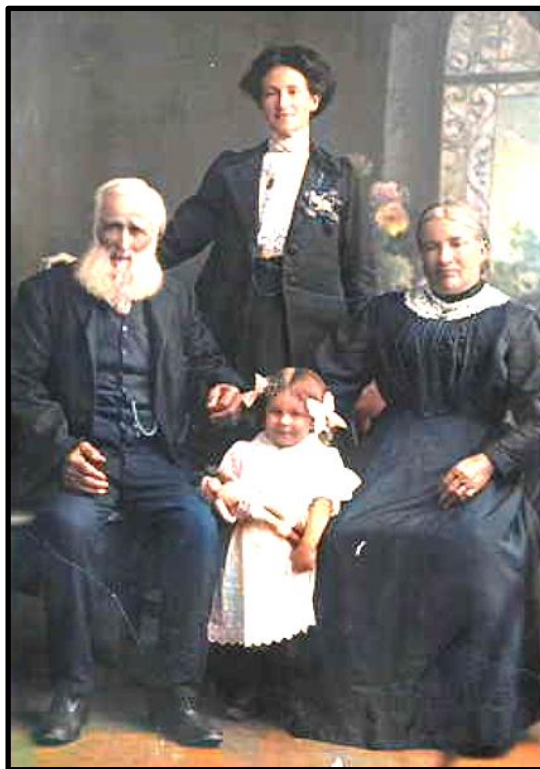
Before Adam and Elizabeth had emigrated they had two children; William born in 1845 but died the following year, and Mary Ann, born on 9th February, 1847 in Kenninghall, who went with them to Australia.

Emigration:

The records of their emigration²⁰ shows:

- Adam: 26 years old, labourer, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Wesleyan, could only read, employment was unreadable and pay rate not given.
- Elizabeth: 24 years old, housekeeper, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Wesleyan, could only read.
- Mary Anne: 1 year old, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Wesleyan.

In Australia:



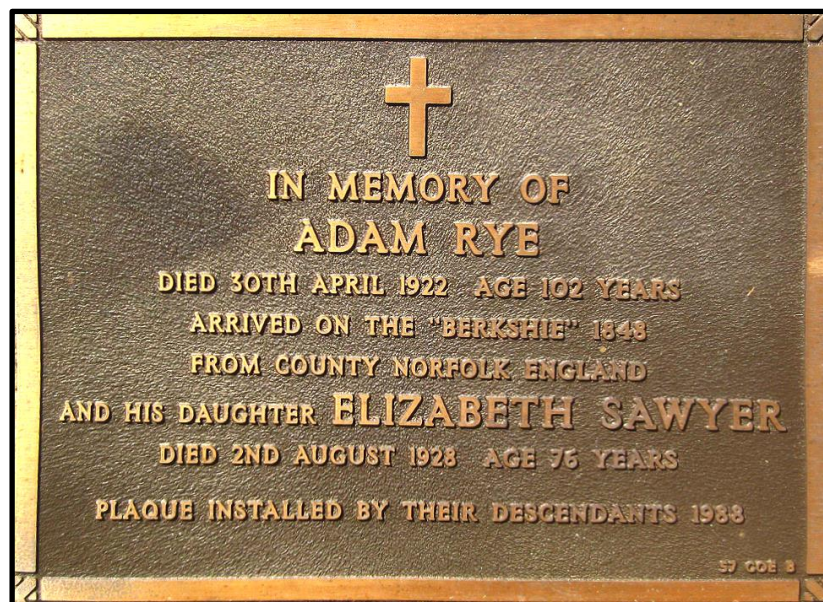
²⁰ Public Record Office Victoria; Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom.

Four generations.

The above photo, believed to be dated about 1914, is of great grandfather Adam Rye (left), grandmother Elizabeth Sawyers (right), Christina Ellis (back), and Evelyn Ellis (front).

Very little has been discovered about Adam's time in Australia. It is believed he lived a long life and was 102 years old when he died in 1922 in Benalla, Victoria.

Elizabeth had died²¹ on 19th May 1901 aged 77 years and was buried in Colac Cemetery, Colac, Victoria.



The daughter Mary Ann's marriages is a little confused. There appears to have been a marriage to a Johann (John) Olsson (1834 - 1897) on 8th January 1864 in Campbellfield, Victoria, Australia, resulting in 14 children, one of which was stillborn. After John's death in 1897, on 3rd September, 1902 she married John George HEYWOOD (1839 - 1919).

²¹ FindMyPast: Australia, Civil Deaths & Burials 1780-1985



Photo above taken in about 1894, Mary Ann aged 51.

[Grant and Co. (also referenced in period directories and notices as Grant & Co., Photographic Artists), were located in Victoria Buildings, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. They are documented as being active around 1890 during the late 19th-century boom era of Melbourne studio portraiture.]

She died on 17th July, 1932 in Queenscliffe, Victoria and was buried in Will Will Rook Cemetery, Broadmeadows, City of Hume, Victoria. Probate²² was granted on 18th August, 1932.

²² FindMyPast: Victoria Wills & Probate

Mary BLOWERS

At home in and around South Lopham:

It has been difficult to identify Mary to any degree of certainty.

At the time of the 1841 Census, 6th March, there were two possible candidates.

The first²³, Mary Ann, aged 10, an inmate in the Guiltcross Union Workhouse, Garboldisham Road, Kenninghall, Norfolk.

The second²⁴, Mary, aged 11, living with parents John (50) and Mary (47) and siblings Martha (20), John (19), Harriet (16), Honor (14), James (9), Emma (6), Ephrain (1) and James (1), living in Cock Street, Diss.

Emigration:

The records of her emigration²⁵ shows:

- Mary: 18 years old, housemaid, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Church of England / Episcopalian, could read and write, emigrated under the protection of Adam Rye.

[No familial connection can be made to Adam RYE.]

²³ 1841 Census, 31 Mar 1841: HO107 Piece 775 Book 7 Folio 40 Page 9 Schedule 1001

²⁴ 1841 Census, 31 Mar 1841: HO107 Piece 758 Book 6 Folio 10 Page 13 Schedule 472

²⁵ Public Record Office Victoria; Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom.

In Australia:

In 1854 she married James HOWLETT.

Elias BLOWERS

[There are three forenames used; Ellis, Elliss and Elias (Ellis used for this record as it was the name on his baptism record).]

At home in South Lopham:

The eldest of 8 children, Ellis, son of Archibald (1803 - 1877) and Elizabeth (née GATES, 1805 - 1862), was born circa 1826 in South Lopham, and baptised²⁶ there on 17th June 1827.

The 1841 Census²⁷, held on 6th March, shows Ellis, aged 15, living with his parents Archibald (35, agricultural labourer) and Elizabeth (35), and four siblings, George (13), John (8), Henry (5) and Will (2), residing in Park Lane, South Lopham.

On 30th June, 1847, aged 20, Ellis was tried at the County Sessions in Norwich accused of larceny²⁸. He was found guilty and was sentenced to 14 days imprisonment.

Emigration:

The records of his emigration²⁹ shows:

- Ellis: 21 years old, farm labourer, from South Lopham, Norfolk, Church of England / Episcopalian, could read but not write, had a

²⁶ Parish Baptism Record: South Lopham.

²⁷ 1841 Census: HO107 Piece 775 Book 9 Folio 4 Page 2 Schedule 1195.

²⁸ FindMyPast: England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935.

²⁹ Public Record Office Victoria; Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom.

five month employment in Geelong District [*employer unreadable*] for £20 per year with rations.

In Australia:

At the Court of Petty Sessions at Glenlyon, on 5th June 1889, Ellis was found guilty of unlawful assault and was fined 10/- with 2/6 costs.

Ellis died³⁰ on 9th May, 1902 in Daylesford Hospital, Daylesford, Victoria aged 74 years.

At the time his death he owned one acre of freehold land in Glenlyon with a two roomed house on it (value £25), furniture, tools, watch and wearing apparel (value £5), a debt to the Police Department of 10s, and 4d cash.³¹

The twist to his estate was that he left all his monies to Daniel John Phillips. A document gives the following:

That by the said Will the said Ellis Blowers deceased bequeathed all his real and personal estate (after payment of his just debts, funeral and testamentary expenses) unto Daniel John Phillips otherwise known as Daniel John Blowers - that the said Daniel John Phillips otherwise known as Daniel John Blowers died at Daylesford previous to the testator namely on the thirty first day of March One Thousand Nine Hundred and One.

³⁰ FindMyPast Australia, Civil Deaths & Burials 1780-1985

³¹ FindMyPast: Victoria Wills & Probate

[No record of any marriage has been found for Elias. How was Daniel related to Elias?]

Probate³² was granted on 21st January 1903. There is no record to show what happened to his estate.

³² FindMyPast: Victoria Wills & Probate

Charlotte [Frances] VINCENT

At home in South Lopham:

Charlotte, daughter of John (1790 - 1857 and Frances (1792 - 1883), was born³³ in South Lopham, Norfolk on the 22nd March, 1830. She was baptised³⁴ there on the 7th February, 1841, at the same time as her sister Sarah.

On the 6th March, 1841, Census Day³⁵, Charlotte, aged 11 years, was living with her parents John (40, hemp worker) and Frances (40), 3 siblings, Daniel (20), Betsey (15) and Sarah (8), residing in The Street, South Lopham.

Emigration:

The records of her emigration³⁶ shows her as 18 years old, single, a housemaid, born in South Lopham, Church of England, and could both read and write, was to reside in Geelong, and be employed by R. FOREST for 6 months with a salary of £20 per annum with rations.

In Australia:

Charlotte married³⁷ John Powell (1811 - 1894) on the 7th January, 1849 in Goolong, Victoria. They had eleven children; Mary Ellen (1850 -

³³ Parish Baptism:07.02.1841, South Lopham, Norfolk.

³⁴ Parish Baptism:07.02.1841, South Lopham, Norfolk.

³⁵ 1841 Census, 31 Mar 1841: HO107 Piece 775 Book 9 Folio 14 Page 22

³⁶ Public Record Office Victoria; Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom.

³⁷ Australia, Marriage Index, 1788-1950

1851), Frances Charlotte (1851 - 1939), John Henry (1853 - 1907), Charles William (1855 - 1919), Elisher (1858 - 1934), Catherine (1859 - 1948), Edward (1861 - 1902), Sarah Ann (1863 - 1880), Daniel Vincent (1865 - 1919) and Rebecca (1868 - 1954).

Charlotte died on 1st September, 1885 in Colac, Victoria, and was buried in Colac Cemetery³⁸.

³⁸ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/272579614/charlotte-frances-powell>

Questions and conclusions:

Was there a reason why 14 people from South Lopham travelled to Australia on the same ship at the same time?

Were they related other than the obvious family groups?

Was there a local initiative to promote emigration?

Was there any form of sponsorship to encourage them to emigrate?

Who was Mary Blowers? Did she have a connection to the Rye family?

Having researched other UK to Australia emigrants, it was noticeable that there was surprisingly little information about the 'lives' of the Lopham 14 having reached Australia, Trove³⁹ supplying little information.

There is much to find out about these people. Very little has been found about their private lives.

Anyone who can fill in any details about their lives, please make contact and all contributions will be fully acknowledged.

³⁹ Trove, a collaboration between the National Library of Australia and hundreds of partner organisations around Australia: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/welcome-to-trove>

Version: 1.03 (10 October 2026)

© Nigel Peacock, Diss Family History Group 2026