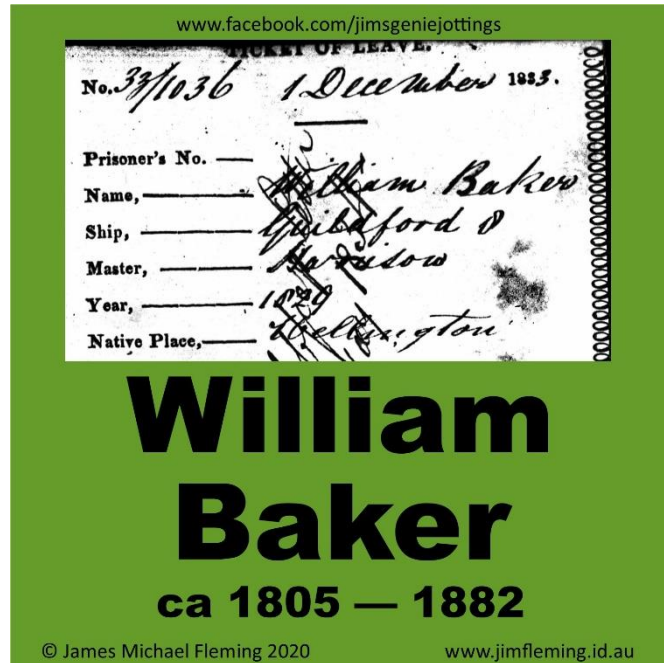


William Baker's arrival

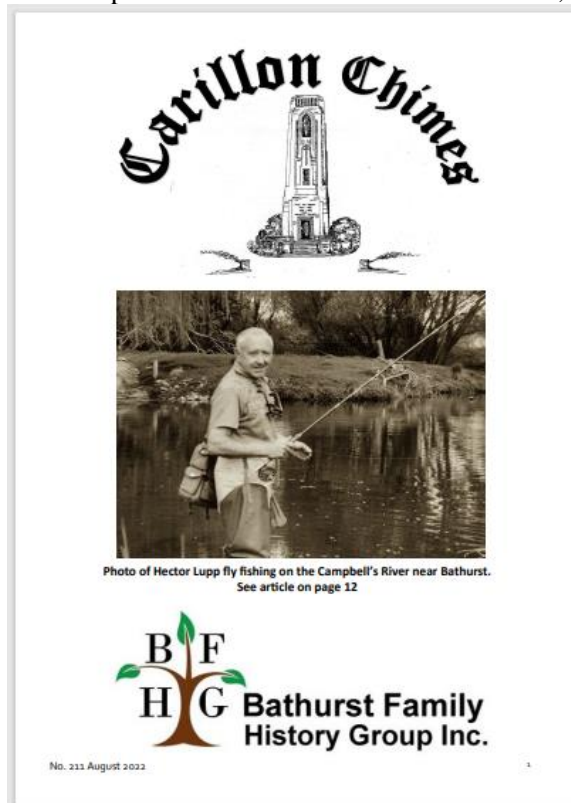


William Baker's arrival

by James Michael Fleming

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The article was first published in Carillon Chimes No. 211, August 2022



This report documents recent research that has finally revealed how and when William Baker (pioneer of Rockley) came to Australia.



Jim Fleming is a retired Customs Manager and lives on Sydney's lower north shore. He began researching his family history in 1983 and has been a member of the Society of Australian Genealogists for 35 years. Aside from genealogy he enjoys travelling and sings baritone in two choirs.

Researching: Bowen, Flowerdew, Gardner, Gordon, Grady, Hanrahan, Jolliffe, Kemp, Kessey, Murphy, Poulton, Press and so many more!

Website: <http://jimfleming.id.au/up/index.htm>

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Rockley pioneer

William Baker was among the first Europeans to settle at Rockley NSW in the 1830s where he later married Eliza Connors and raised a family. He and Eliza share a grave in Rockley's Jumpers Flat cemetery with their son William¹. This article documents for the first time how and when he came to Australia.

Family origins

His brother Isaac Baker joined him at Rockley soon after arriving at Sydney as an assisted immigrant aboard the *Ascendant* with his wife Eliza Shepherd and six children on 21 February 1855². The ship's passenger list records that Isaac was a wheelwright who had been born at Thorne St Margaret in Somerset around 1814 and that he had "*a brother W^m Baker residing at Campbell River near Bathurst*". It also reveals that their parents were the late Samuel Baker and his widow Elizabeth, then residing at Thorne St Margaret.

The church register for Isaac's marriage to Eliza Shepherd at Bedminster (Bristol) on 9 November 1837³ confirms that his father was Samuel Baker, Yeoman.

Samuel's widow, Elizabeth Baker, was recorded on the 1851 census⁴ as a "*pauper, formerly farmer's wife*" living with her son Robert Baker aged 42 at Holywell Lake Hamlet, Wellington (less than 2 miles from Thorne St Margaret). Robert was an agricultural labourer who had been born at Thorne St Margaret, while Elizabeth had been born at Milverton (5 miles away). The 1841 census records her as a washer woman at Blackmore Place in Wellington⁵ along with her son Robert and four lodgers. It was common for widows to take in laundry and lodgers.

Isaac had been baptised at Thorne St Margaret on 6 January 1815⁶. I was unable to find a baptism record for either William or Robert, but I did find those for two sisters. Sarah Baker had been baptised on 23 October 1803⁷ and Ann Baker at Thorne St Margaret on 12 May 1816⁸.

May 12 th	Ann	the late	Bakers	of this	Yeoman	E. Webber
No. 18.	Daughter	Samuel		Parish		
	of	Elizabeth				
		his Widow				

Illustration 1. Baptism record for Ann Baker at Thorne St Margaret on 12 May 1816.

The siblings may have had another brother named Ephraim who was born around 1805 at Thorne St Margaret⁹ and who was to marry Joan Hill at Wellington on 6 July 1837¹⁰. He was then a bachelor husbandman whose father was Samuel Baker, farmer. The marriage was witnessed by Robert Baker (probably his brother, mentioned above).

We know that Ann was the youngest child in the family because her baptism record refers to her father as "*the late Samuel Baker*" (see Illustration 1 above). He had been buried in the same church five months earlier at the age of 74 (implying a birth year of 1741)¹¹.

Samuel Baker	of this Parish	Dec ^r 6 th 74	E. Webber
No. 5.		1815	

Illustration 2. Burial record for Samuel Baker at Thorne St Margaret on 6 December 1815.

Samuel Baker had married Elizabeth Chorley at Thorne St Margaret on 31 March 1793¹². He would have been 52 years old but she was only 14 (based on her stated age on the 1851 census record).

Their son William Baker married Eliza Connors in St Michael's church at Bathurst NSW on 19 July 1844¹³, but Eliza had borne him two children before that. Their daughter Eliza (usually known as Betsey) had been baptised on 15 May 1841 at Peppers Creek (that joins Campbell's River near Rockley) and a second daughter Agnes had been baptised on 28 May 1843 at Campbell's River¹⁴. Eliza's 1876 death certificate¹⁵ also names three younger children: John, Susannah and William. Her husband's 1882 death certificate¹⁶ reveals that he had been born around 1799 in England and that he had come to Australia around 1822, but these dates must be treated with caution because they were estimates supplied by his tenant (Arthur Wilkinson), not by a family member.

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The details of William's arrival in Australia had remained elusive until I recently solved that mystery. I started by identifying all the William Bakers who emigrated to NSW before 1844 and then attempted to identify the right candidate by eliminating as many as possible, one by one. There were 30 convicts and 3 free settlers named William Baker in NSW before 1844 - a total of 33 candidates.

Seven died before 1844, including five convicts who had arrived on the *Charlotte* 1788, *Neptune* 1790, *General Hewett* 1814, *Atlas* 1816 and *Marquis of Hastings* 1828. William Samuel Winsor Harris Baker (*Ruby* 1811) is not recorded on the 1828 census, so he may be the William Baker who had died in 1824 aged 58¹⁷. Another William Baker had died in 1802, but it is not clear how he had arrived in NSW¹⁸.

The 1882 death certificate of Rockley William Baker¹⁶ records that he had been in NSW for "about 60 years". While this was an estimate, it would seem reasonable to eliminate candidates who arrived before 1812 or after 1831. Four convicts arrived before 1812 - on *Albermarle*, *Atlantic*, *Britannia* (all 1791) and *Barwell* 1798. Ten arrived after 1832 - on *Planter*, *Portland*, *Hercules*, *Asia* (all 1832), *Mangles*, *Heroine* (both 1833), *Henry Tanner*, *Hooghley* (both 1834) and *Bengal Merchant* 1835.

Rockley William Baker was married in 1844 without the need to apply for permission to marry, which means that he had, by then, completed his sentence and was now free to marry. Therefore, I eliminated the two candidates who arrived on *Morley* (3) 1829 and *Isabella* 1831 and were still convicts after 1844.

The William Baker who arrived in 1817 aboard *Morley* (1) became a bushranger. He was recaptured and sentenced in September 1844 to transportation for a further ten years¹⁹.

Rockley William Baker was estimated to be 83 years old when he died in 1882¹⁶. The convict who arrived aboard *Champion* 1827 was recorded on the indents as 16 years old, making him about 12 years too young²⁰. The William Baker who was recorded on the 1828 census as a 20-year-old Settler at Mirandadale, Luskentyre²¹ was nearly ten years too young. Another who was too young was recorded on the 1828 census as the 6-year-old son of John Baker who had come Free on the *Frederick* in 1827.

The convict who arrived aboard *Marquis of Huntley* in 1826 was closer to the right age (born circa 1803) but his Native Place was Wicklow, Ireland²², whereas Rockley William Baker was English¹⁶.

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1. A waterman from Worcester who had arrived in the *Baring* in 1819²³. He was about the right age and was last recorded serving four months in Parramatta Gaol in 1836²⁴.
2. A blacksmith from Maidstone who was born circa 1793 and had arrived in the *Morley* 2 in 1818²⁵.
3. A farm servant from Winchester who had arrived in the *Eliza* in 1828²⁶ and was granted a Certificate of Freedom on 25 April 1834²⁷.
4. A carpenter from Bristol who had arrived in the *Claudine* in 1829. He was at Wellington NSW in 1828-1832 before he absconded from Mr J Thorp along with James Bryan, William Christopher and Thomas Connor²⁸. He was given his Certificate of Freedom on 23 May 1836.

While those candidates were all possibilities, the remaining candidate proved to be our man.

***Guildford* William Baker**

This William Baker came from Wellington in Somerset (as did Rockley William Baker). He arrived in NSW as a convict aboard the *Guildford* on 10 July 1829. Both his birth year (1803) and arrival year are reasonably close to the estimates on the Rockley death certificate of 1882.

Furthermore, like Rockley William, *Guildford* William was associated with Hanbury Clements (who established his property, Summerhill, at Rockley in the 1830s).

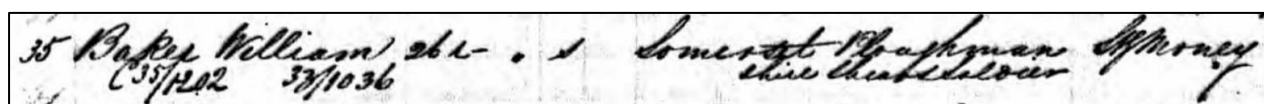


Illustration 3. Extract from the convict indents of the *Guildford*, 1829.

Guildford William was convicted at Dublin on 5 November 1828 of “felony money” and was sentenced to seven years transportation²⁹. Despite being convicted in Ireland, the *Guildford* indents state that his native place was in Somerset³⁰. He was a 26-year-old ploughman, which is consistent with his father being a farmer and his brother Robert an agricultural labourer. The indents also include the words “*shears soldier*” in the occupation space, so he was apparently also a shearer and a soldier. I was unable to find any evidence of his service as a soldier. Nevertheless, this could explain his presence in Ireland (where English regiments were frequently stationed at that time).

The *Guildford* indents note that he was subsequently assigned to “H Clements, Liverpool”, confirmed by a subsequent Convict Muster dated “1828-1832”³¹.

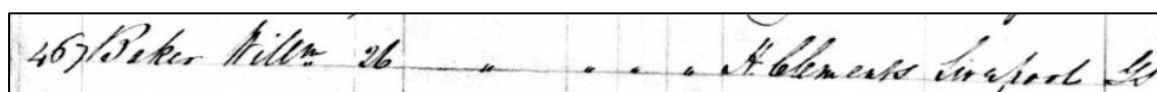


Illustration 4. William Baker on a Convict Muster circa 1829.

He was granted a Ticket of Leave on 1 December 1833, allowing him freedom within the District of Liverpool, NSW. It confirms that his Native Place was Wellington (Somerset) and gives his year of birth as 1805, two years younger than the *Guildford* indents imply.

His parole was cancelled on 15 May 1834³². His reaction to this may be the reason for his arrest on 2 June 1834 on a charge of deserting his assigned station³³. He was returned to his assignment with Lieutenant Hanbury Clements. Upon the expiry of his sentence on 5 November 1835, he was given a Certificate of Freedom³⁴.

TICKET OF LEAVE

No. *37/1036* *1 December 1823.*

Prisoner's No. —

Name, — *William Baker*

Ship, — *Guildford*

Master, — *Harbison*

Year, — *1823*

Native Place, — *Wellington*

Trade or Calling, —

Offence, —

Place of Trial, — *Dublin*

Date of Trial, — *5 November 1820*

Sentence, — *Seven years*

Year of Birth, — *1823*

Height, — *5 feet 9 inches*

Complexion, — *Fair*

Hair, — *Light brown*

Eyes, — *Dark grey*

General Remarks, — *Scar under left eye*

Allowed to remain in the District of *Liverpool*

On recommendation of *do* Bench,

Dated *20 February 1833*

Illustration 5. Ticket of Leave for William Baker (Guildford 1829)

Hanbury Clements

Hanbury (Henry) Clements was an Irish aristocrat, Naval Lieutenant and free settler who arrived in Sydney with his family in February 1829³⁵. He was granted land at Liverpool and provided with convicts to work the land.

Clements was also granted 1500 acres of land on Campbell's River at Rockley on 10 March 1829³⁶. His family eventually settled permanently in this area, naming the property Summerhill after his home in Ireland. It is shown on the earliest map of the Parish of Irene in the County of Westmoreland to be about 5 kilometers from William Baker's farm (allotment 8 of 95 acres and 3 rods in the same parish)³⁷ which was on Campbell's River just downstream from where it is joined by Peppers Creek. The Summerhill Estate Diaries imply that Clements may have provided William Baker with the use of one of his paddocks in return for occasional work.

*The Baker name was regularly used in the Summerhill Estate diaries, mainly in terms of sowing or reaping a crop in the "Baker" paddock.*³⁸

Summary

This research confirms that William Baker of Rockley was a son of Samuel Baker and Elizabeth Chorley of Thorne St Margaret in Somerset and proves that he arrived in NSW aboard the *Guildford* in 1829.

He was born around 1805 and had siblings named Isaac, Sarah, Ann, Robert and possibly Ephraim. His father died in December 1815 but his mother lived for about 40 years more. William was initially a ploughman and shearer before joining the army.

While posted to Ireland in 1828 he stole some money, was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to seven years transportation. On arrival in NSW, he was assigned to Hanbury Clements at Liverpool.

His sentence expired on 5 November 1834. He had probably moved to the Rockley area before that to work on Clements' property, Summerhill. In 1841 his daughter Eliza (known as Betsy) was born at Peppers Creek to his de facto wife Eliza Connors. Another daughter (Agnes) was born in 1842 before he and Eliza married at Bathurst in 1844. John, Susannah and William were added to the family over the next seven years.

Further research

This project has solved the long-standing mystery of William Baker's arrival in Australia and proved that his father died in 1815 (not 1840 as many researchers had previously concluded). More work is needed, however, to provide a complete history of the Baker family. Eliza Connors' arrival details are still obscure and it is unclear how two other daughters fit into the family - Jane Connors Baker (1839 – 1911) who married Francis Press at Bathurst in 1853; and Mary Ann Baker (1834 – 1871) who married James Smith at Carcoar in 1849.

Initial Publication

This article was originally published without illustrations and endnotes on pages 30-33 of the August 2022 edition number 211 of *Carillon Chimes*, the journal of the Bathurst Family History Group – see below.



Photo of Hector Lupp fly fishing on the Campbell's River near Bathurst.
See article on page 12



Bathurst Family History Group Inc Committee 2021/22

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Vice President	Dianne Barnes	barnesatix@gmail.com
Secretary	Joy Richens	secretary@bathurstfhg.asn.au
Treasurer	Mary Fletcher	treasurer@bathurstfhg.asn.au
Members Secretary	Graeme Hill	memsec@bathurstfhg.asn.au
Research sub-committee		research@bathurstfhg.asn.au
Committee:	Wendy Bestwick	Lee Ford
Colleen Davies	Marion Pearce	Anne Huges
Rhonda Flowers	Chris Stewart	Marie Larnach
Kristine Smith	Dianne Vernon	

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James Hardy Vaux

Later it was found that James had escaped to Ireland. What became of his wife, Eleanor, is not known?

In 1830 in Dublin, he was arrested, this time under the alias, James Young, on a charge of passing forged bank notes. James pleaded guilty, and once more, faced transportation, this time for seven years. He arrived in NSW, for the third time, on the "Waterloo" in 1831.

Upon arrival, he was recognised as James Hardy Vaux, and his previous life sentence was revived, and he was sent to the penal settlement at Port Macquarie, where he remained for the next six years.

In 1837, he was allowed to return to Sydney and this time was appointed as a clerk to a wine merchant. Two years later, in May 1839, he faced a serious charge of criminal assault on a young girl. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment and released in 1841.

After his release, it would appear James Hardy Vaux disappeared. No record exists after this period, nor a record of his death can be traced. One source has that James went to work "up country" as a shepherd, but this cannot be confirmed.

William Baker's Arrival

Submitted by James Michael Fleming

Rockley pioneer

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William Baker's Arrival

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The Pillars of Bathurst

Submitted by Jan Page

The Pillars of Bathurst is a cultural heritage garden located in Stanley Street on the bank of the Wambuu/Macquarie River. The garden features an oval walkway between twenty restored cast iron verandah posts from the former Royal Hotel in William Street. On a sandstone plinth at the base of each pillar are four plaques featuring the names of past Bathurstians who have contributed to the story of Bathurst. Begun during the Bathurst Bicentennial Celebrations in 2015, the plaques are now complete with the names of 101 people whose fascinating, and often little known stories, are recorded in a brochure found on <https://yoursay.bathurst.nsw.gov.au/pillars>

As an extension of the project local historian Dr Robin McLachlan OAM, together with Brett van Heekeran of Bathurst's local community radio station 2MCEFM, has created a series of twenty scripted conversations that expand on some of the stories with additional research. The often intriguing stories are readily accessible as free downloadable podcasts on website <https://2mce.org/podcastfilter/bathurst-pillars/> With further podcasts in the making, the first fourteen are available for you to enjoy as you delve into varied aspects of Bathurst's unique story:

Arthur Budden – Pioneer Entrepreneur
William Astley – Federation Activist
Mary Ann Roberts – Mystery Woman
Marie Herzog – Hospital Matron
Selina Anderson – Political Activist
William Tremain – Industrialist
Charles St John Mulholland – Geologist
Joe Yates – Musician
Lewis Lloyd – Copper King
Caroline Keightley – Courageous Woman
Annie Bertha Parry – First Aid Nursing
Dominique & Susannah Popillarie – Innkeepers
Robert Codrington – Police Trooper
Introduction: what are the pillars?



Endnotes

- 1 Baker family gravestone in Jumper's Flat Cemetery near Rockley NSW.
- 2 Assisted Immigrant Passenger Lists 1828-1896, NSW, Ascendant, arrived Sydney 21 February 1855, Isaac Baker and family, Ancestry, https://www.ancestry.com.au/discoveryui-content/view/313973:1204?tid=&pid=&queryId=79edd7470be184aea299e6cf8d68ff4&_phsrc=pvd496&_phstart=successSource
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