

## THE PARENTAGE OF JANE AYLIFFE (NÉE BELL)

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This is an analysis of the parentage of my ancestor<sup>1</sup> Jane Ayliffe (née Bell).

Jane Bell married Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe on 23 July 1845 at Trinity Church in Adelaide, South Australia. She and Thomas had 11 children between 1846 and 1869.<sup>2</sup> Jane died on 9 August 1911 in Hamley Bridge, South Australia.

There have been differing opinions among researchers of Jane's family as to the identity of her parents and what became of her parents after the family's arrival in Australia.



A photograph of Jane Ayliffe reproduced in *The Observer* on 19 August 1911 at page 35

### Identification of Jane Ayliffe's parents

An obituary for Jane Ayliffe in *The Register* on 12 August 1911 at page 12 (see also *The Observer* on 19 August 1911 at page 41) stated:

Mrs. Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe died at Hamley Bridge on Wednesday at the age of 83 years. She arrived in South Australia with her parents in 1839, and was a daughter of the late Mr. Bell, who conducted a maltster's business at the Sturt, near Marion, for a number of years.

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<sup>1</sup> Jane was my great-grandmother's great-grandmother. The line from Jane to me is as follows: Jane Bell, John Hamilton Ayliffe, Cora Alice Elizabeth Ayliffe, Cora Catherine Sarah Shepherd, Norman Allen Masters, Geofferey Norman Masters, Jeremy Brooks Masters.

<sup>2</sup> The children of Thomas and Jane were John Hamilton (born on 14 April 1846), Alfred (born on 14 March 1848), Walter Courtney (born on 15 May 1850), Mary Jane (born on 26 June 1852), Alice (born on 20 May 1854), Edmund (born on 13 October 1856), Arthur (born on 23 October 1859), Hubert (born on 21 March 1862), Florence (born on 21 August 1864), Maud (born on 25 March 1867) and Alice Rose (born on 20 November 1869).

Mr. Ayliffe farmed for some time at Ayliffe's Hill, near Darlington, and then removed to Stockport where for many years he contended against drought and other difficulties. Mrs. Ayliffe lived at Hamley Bridge for about 20 years. The sons and daughters who survive are:— Messrs. John Ayliffe, of Western Australia; Arthur and Alfred, of Balaklava; Edmund of Hamley Bridge, and Hubert, of Adelaide; Mesdames John Martin, of Glastone; George Martin, R. Pillar, and J. T. Quinn, of Hamley Bridge.

An obituary in *The Wooroora Producer* on 17 August 1911 at page 1 stated:

Mrs. Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe, a resident of Hamley Bridge for over 20 years passed away on Wednesday morning. The old lady who was 83 years of age, had been enjoying remarkably good health for one of her age, until she was struck down with paralysis on Monday. She was a colonist of over 70 years, having arrived in South Australia with her parents in 1839.

Jane's death certificate, which was registered on 18 August 1911, records that she died at the age of 82 years (whereas the obituaries referred to above stated that she was aged 83 years). The death certificate also records that she married at the age of 17.

These obituaries and the death certificate suggest that Jane was born in 1827, 1828 or 1829, that she arrived in South Australia with her parents in 1839, and that her father conducted a maltster's business at the Sturt, near Marion, for a number of years.

Although the obituaries record that Jane's father lived in South Australia, they do not record his first name or that he died in South Australia.

However, the record of Jane's marriage to Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe in 1845 states that one of the witnesses to the marriage was George Bell and that she was a minor at the time of the marriage. This suggests that Jane's father may have been named George Bell.

Of the persons named George Bell who died beyond infancy in South Australia before 1900, the following years of death and recorded ages at death indicate or establish that they were not Jane's father: 1854 aged 40 (born in 1813 or 1814), 1888 aged 73 (born in 1814 or 1815), 1879 aged 63 (born in 1815 or 1816), 1890 aged 73 (born in 1816 or 1817),<sup>3</sup> 1852 aged 15 (born in 1836 or 1837), 1879 aged 39 (born in 1839 or 1840), 1884 aged 32 (born in 1851 or 1852). That is, assuming that their ages of death were correctly recorded, it is likely that none of those persons was the father of Jane.

The only person named George Bell who died in South Australia before 1900, and whose recorded age at death indicates that he could have been Jane's father, died on

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<sup>3</sup> There is a photograph of this man, who died on 21 February 1890 in Alberton, South Australia aged 73 years, standing in a garden with a boy and two women. It has been suggested that the man in the photograph may have been Jane's father. However, I am informed by another researcher of the family that the original of the photograph is owned by a person who is related to Daniel Bell (a son of George Bell of Alberton). That researcher also informs me that she understands that the older woman in the photograph is Grace Bell (the wife of George Bell of Alberton) and that the boy is Alfred Bell (another son of George Bell of Alberton). It therefore appears that the man pictured in the photograph is not Jane's father.

15 November 1878 aged 73 or 74 years<sup>4</sup> (that is, born in 1803, 1804 or 1805). This man would have been aged in his early to mid 20s when Jane was born.

A notice in *The South Australian Advertiser* on 16 November 1878 at page 4, *The South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail* on 16 November 1878 at page 4 and *The Express and Telegraph* on 16 November 1878 at page 2 stated:

DIED.

...

BELL—On the 15th November, at his residence, Hanson-street, George Bell, aged 73, a colonist of 39 years, honored and respected by all with whom he came into contact, and deeply regretted by over forty descendants, now resident colonists.

That is, the notice recorded that he arrived in South Australia in about 1839.

A notice in *The South Australian Advertiser* on 7 September 1877 at page 4, *The Express and Telegraph* on 7 September 1877 at page 2 and *The South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail* on 8 September 1877 at page 4 stated:

DIED.

BELL.—On the 5th September, at her residence, Hanson-street, Elizabeth, the beloved wife of George Bell, after a long illness, borne with Christian fortitude.

Both George Bell and Elizabeth Bell were buried at West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide.

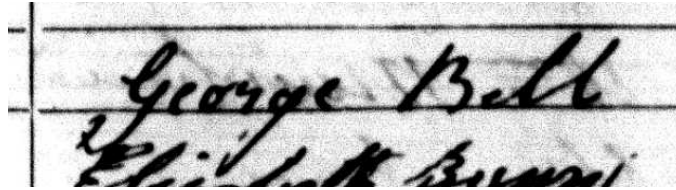
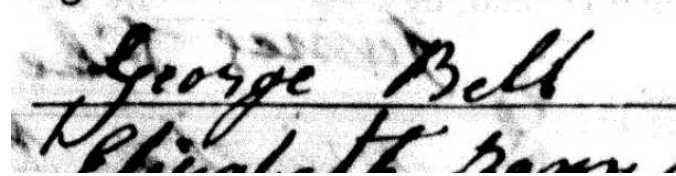
Although these notices do not record that George and Elizabeth Bell were married in South Australia, it is to be noted that the only man named George Bell who married a woman named Elizabeth in South Australia before 1878 married Elizabeth Burn on 18 June 1843 at Trinity Church in Adelaide.

The record of that marriage states that George Bell was a laborer and a widower, and that Elizabeth Burn was a spinster.

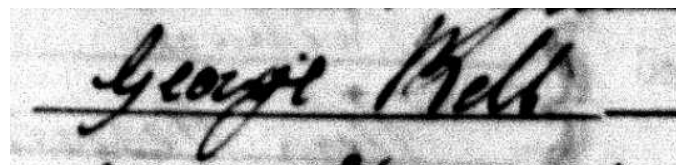
Below is the signature of George Bell as it appears twice in the record of the marriage of George Bell and Elizabeth Burn in the register of Trinity Church dated 18 June 1843.

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<sup>4</sup> The death certificate of this man records that he died on 15 November 1878 in Pulteney Street, Adelaide aged 74 years. A notice in *The South Australian Advertiser* on 16 November 1878 at page 4, *The South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail* on 16 November 1878 at page 4 and *The Express and Telegraph* on 16 November 1878 at page 2 recorded that he died on 15 November 1878 in Hanson Street, Adelaide aged 73 years. The southern section of Pulteney Street, between Wakefield Street and South Terrace, was formerly called Hanson Street.

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature 'George Bell' in cursive, written on a document with horizontal lines. The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored paper.A second close-up photograph of a handwritten signature 'George Bell' in cursive, very similar to the first one, also written on a document with horizontal lines.

Below is the signature of George Bell as it appears in the record of the marriage of Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe and Jane Bell in the register of Trinity Church dated 23 July 1845.

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature 'George Bell' in cursive, written on a document with horizontal lines, identified as being from a marriage register.

It is in my view apparent that these signatures are by the same hand.

In an application for emigration to South Australia dated 16 August 1838, George Bell of Mereworth, Kent, aged 29<sup>5</sup> and a timber cutter, was recorded as having a wife aged 30, three daughters aged 9, 5 and 1, and two sons aged 7 and 5.<sup>6</sup> The passenger list in the manifest of the *Resource*, which arrived at Port Adelaide, South Australia on 23 January 1839, refers to George Bell and his 'Wife & 5 children'.

George Bell married Jane Hunt on 25 December 1827 in Mereworth. George and Jane Bell had the following children who were all baptised in Mereworth: Jane who was baptised on 1 October 1828, John who was baptised on 5 September 1830, Mary who was baptised on 9 September 1832, George who was baptised on 23 November 1834, and Anne who was baptised on 1 February 1837. These records are generally consistent with the details provided in George Bell's application for emigration dated 16 August 1838.<sup>7</sup>

It is therefore apparent that the eldest daughter of the man named George Bell who arrived in South Australia in 1839 on board the *Resource* was named Jane. These

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<sup>5</sup> This would mean that George Bell was born in 1808 or 1809. As referred to above, the man named George Bell who died on 15 November 1878 in Hanson Street, Adelaide was recorded as aged 73 or 74 years at the time of the death (that is, born in 1803, 1804 or 1805).

<sup>6</sup> *Index to Register of Emigrant Labourers Applying for a Free Passage from England to South Australia 1836-41* (State Library of South Australia), number 2858 (embarkation number 1593).

<sup>7</sup> The ages of the three daughters (9, 5 and 1) and the elder son (7) referred to in the application for emigration dated 16 August 1838 are consistent with the baptism records of Jane, John, Mary and Anne in Mereworth. Assuming that the younger son referred to in the application was the child named George who was baptised on 23 November 1834 in Mereworth, it appears likely that he was in fact aged about 3 years (rather than 5 years) at the time of the request for emigration.

facts are consistent with the statement in the obituary of Jane Ayliffe that '[s]he arrived in South Australia with her parents in 1839'.

If Jane was indeed 9 years old at the time of the family's request for emigration on 16 August 1838,<sup>8</sup> and assuming that she was the child who was baptised on 1 October 1828 in Mereworth, then she would have been born between 17 August 1828 and 1 October 1828. If that is correct, then she would have been aged 16 when she married and 82 when she died.<sup>9</sup>

The following children are recorded as having been born to George Bell and Elizabeth Bell (née Burn) in South Australia: Sarah Ann (born on 13 October 1846 in Adelaide), Edward (born on 6 October 1848 in Sturt), Rebecca (born on 6 September 1851 in Sturt), Cecilia (born on 6 November 1852 in Sturt). The couple also had another daughter, Elenor (whose birth does not appear to have been recorded), who was born in about 1853 or 1854,<sup>10</sup> and another son, Robert Thomas, who was born in 1854 in Avoca, Victoria.

A notice in *The News* on 20 January 1931 at page 6 stated:

MR. R. T. BELL DEAD

Farmed for 21 Years at Tarlee

Mr. Robert Thomas Bell died this morning at 27 High street, Glenelg, at the age of 76 years. Born in Victoria, he came from Melbourne to Adelaide when 11 with his parents, who made their home in Hanson street. The trip was made in a bullock dray. Members of the family were marooned for a long time owing to their oxen having been stolen by aborigines. They camped in the bush until rescued.

Mr. Bell went to Stockport, where he was apprenticed as a saddler and also worked on a farm. When 21 he went farming in the north for several years. He returned to Adelaide, and at the age of 28 married Miss Roseanna Badman, of Unley. He was employed at the Adelaide Co-operative Stores for eight years. Later he took up farming on his own account Tarlee, where he stayed for 21 years.

With his sons he then established a farm at Salisbury. After 10 years he moved to Glenelg in 1920. Mr. Bell was a worker for Moseley Street Methodist Church.

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<sup>8</sup> As referred to above, the application for emigration of George Bell of Mereworth recorded that his eldest daughter was aged 9. See *Index to Register of Emigrant Labourers Applying for a Free Passage from England to South Australia 1836–41* (State Library of South Australia), number 2858 (embarkation number 1593). The baptism records referred to above record that his eldest daughter was named Jane.

<sup>9</sup> As referred to above, Jane's death certificate records that she died at the age of 82 years and that she married at the age of 17.

<sup>10</sup> Elenor Bell married William Thurlow on 9 January 1882 in Adelaide, South Australia. A notice in *The Advertiser* on 17 July 1944 at page 8 stated: 'DEATHS ... THURLOW.—On July 14, at 14 Argyle street, Moonee Ponds, Melbourne, Ellean [sic], dearly loved wife of the late William Fitzroy Thurlow, loving mother of William (dec.), George, Henry, Percy, Arthur (dec.), Bert, aged 90 years.' A notice in *The Argus* on 3 January 1935 at page 1 stated: 'DEATHS. BELL. — On the 2nd January, at 17 Rosa street, Coburg, Edward, beloved husband of Clara Glenora Bell, loving father of Albert (deceased), Robert, and William, loving step-father of Archie, Glenora (Mrs. Bolch), William, Esther (deceased), and George, loving brother of Elenor (Mrs. Thurlow), aged 86 years.'

In addition to a widow he has left three sons and two daughters—Messrs. Percy A. (St. Leonards), Clifford G. (Smithfield), and Arnold Bell, Mrs. D. Karran, and Miss. I. H. Bell (Glenelg).

The statement in this notice that the parents of Robert Thomas Bell ‘made their home in Hanson street’ indicates that his parents were the George and Elizabeth Bell who died in Hanson Street, Adelaide in 1878 and 1877, respectively.

In summary, the man named George Bell who died in Hanson Street, Adelaide in 1878 arrived in South Australia in about 1839, was a widower when he married Elizabeth Burn in Adelaide in 1843 and had three children who were born in Sturt between 1848 and 1852. These facts are consistent with the statement in the obituary of Jane Ayliffe that ‘[s]he arrived in South Australia with her parents in 1839, and was a daughter of the late Mr. Bell, who conducted a maltster’s business at the Sturt, near Marion, for a number of years’. Further, as referred to above, it is apparent that George Bell, who married Elizabeth Burn in 1843, was a witness to the marriage of Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe and Jane Bell in 1845.

In my view, these facts establish that Jane’s father was the man named George Bell who married Elizabeth Burn in 1843 and died in Hanson Street, Adelaide in 1878.

George Bell of Mereworth, Kent arrived in South Australia in 1839 with his wife and five children. The parish records of Mereworth record that his wife’s maiden name was Jane Hunt and that his five children’s names were Jane, John, Mary, George and Ann. His eldest daughter was aged 9 at the time of the family’s application for emigration in 1838, which is consistent with the age of death given on Jane’s death certificate.

In my view, these facts establish that Jane’s parents were George Bell and Jane Bell (née Hunt) who emigrated from Mereworth, Kent to South Australia in 1839.

### **Additional information about the life of George Bell**

The certificate of the marriage of William John Toman and Sarah Ann Bell at Shicer Gully, Victoria on 10 September 1866 records that Sarah’s parents were George Bell and Elizabeth Bell (née Burn) and that her father was a butcher.

The following notice appeared in *The South Australian Register* on 15 March 1850 at page 3 (reproduced in *The Supplement to the “Adelaide Observer”* on 16 March 1850 at page 4; see also *The Adelaide Times* on 15 March 1850 at page 3 and *The South Australian* on 19 March 1850 at page 3):

BENCH OF MAGISTRATES.

*Thursday, March 14.*

SLAUGHTERING LICENCES.

...

George Bell, Sturt-bridge. Granted.

The following notice appeared in *The South Australian Register* on 10 September 1852 at page 2:

INSOLVENCY NOTICES.

[From Thursday's *Government Gazette*.]

IMPRISONED DEBTORS.

The undermentioned prisoners, confined in gaol for debt will be heard on their petitions, at the Court-house, Adelaide, at the times appointed below : —

...

George Bell, of the Sturt, near Adelaide, in the Province of South Australia, butcher, on Thursday, 16th September, at 1.

Similar notices appeared in *The South Australian Register* in relation to 'George Bell, of the Sturt, near Adelaide, butcher', with dates for the hearing of his petition, as follows: 25 September 1852 at page 3 and 28 September 1852 at page 2 (hearing on 30 September 1852), 9 October 1852 at page 3 (hearing on 14 October 1852).

The following notice appeared in *The South Australian Register* on 3 June 1853 at page 3:

INSOLVENCY NOTICES.

FIATS ANNULLED.

...

George Bell, of the Sturt, near Adelaide, butcher.

Given that George Bell was recorded as a butcher in the certificate of marriage of his daughter Sarah Ann Bell, and given that he had three children born in Sturt between 1848 and 1852, it appears likely that these references to George Bell, a butcher of the 'Sturt-bridge' or 'of the Sturt', were to Jane Ayliffe's father.

The following notice appeared in *The Argus* on 23 July 1864 at page 7 (reproduced in *The Bendigo Advertiser* on 25 July 1864 at page 3, *The Mount Alexander Mail* on 25 July 1864 at page 3 and *The Star* on 25 July 1864 at page 3; see also *The Geelong Advertiser* on 27 July 1864 at page 2):

REWARDS FOR THE DISCOVERY OF NEW GOLD-FIELDS.

The board appointed on the 11th of January last, consisting of Messrs. Fraser, Macgregor, Orr, Richardson, Thomson, and Wright, to consider applications for rewards for the discovery of new gold-fields, made their report on the 15th ult. ; and it, together with the minutes of evidence and appendices, was issued yesterday. The following are the principal points of the report :—

...

One hundred and sixty distinct applications for rewards were sent in to the board — some with concurrent, others with opposing claims. Amongst so large a number of claims, as might not unreasonably have been expected, some have been found to be trivial ; and others for the

discovery of gold-fields the prospectors or alleged prospectors of which have already been rewarded. ...

The board further finally report, that it is of opinion that rewards should be given in the following cases, and to the amounts specified :— ... Avoca, £400, equally divided between Daniel Burn, George Bell, senior, George Bell, junior, and John Cox.

The following appeared in *The Age* on 23 July 1864 at page 5 (reproduced in *The Leader* on 30 July 1864 at page 18):

We have received a copy of the report of the board appointed to consider the applications for rewards for the discovery of new gold-fields. The board recommend the granting of the following sums— ... £400, to be equally divided between Daniel Burn, Geo. Bell, sen., Geo. Bell, jun., and Jn. Core [sic], for Avoca ...

An article in *The Age* on 22 October 1936 at page 14 stated:

#### THE CENTENARY OF AVOCA.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

...

Gold was first discovered at Avoca on 1st June, 1853 by Daniel Burn, Richard Cox and William Bell [sic]. This was at Surface Hill, about a mile from the town. Burn and party were each given £100 by the Government as the discoverers of the gold diggings. Sensational finds followed, and soon there were 30,000 people of all nationalities on the field.

An article in *The Horsham Times* on 31 January 1941 at page 8 stated:

#### HISTORY OF THE WIMMERA

#### FIRST DISCOVERY OF GOLD

...

(By Wm. McL. CRERAR.—Part 6.)

...

#### **Gold Found on Avoca.**

E. W. Webb, in his reminiscences of the early days of Victoria, relates an account of the overlanding from South Australia to the diggings. He referred to a party of three families going from South Australia to Bendigo. They arrived at Bordertown and followed the road through Nine Creeks to Glenorchy. When they arrived at Avoca they halted for a time, and their son, George Burn, was born in June 1853, so they decided to stay and prospect for gold. Daniel Burn, the father, built a home and it was the first house in Avoca. Soon afterwards many thousands of miners settled on the field and the party was recognised as the original prospectors of Avoca, and the Government awarded each of them £100. George Burn in later life was Mayor of Ararat.

An article in *The News* on 1 September 1943 at page 2 stated:

#### **Birth of a Goldfield**

HISTORY has been repeating itself at Avoca, Victoria, where I am told a fossicker picked up a nice nugget of gold valued at £50.



It was also only a stroke of luck that caused the Avoca field to be opened up away back in 1853.

Daniel Burn and a party of South Australians, with two drays, were making their way overland from Adelaide to Bendigo. One night they camped at the Avoca River, near the present town site, and there, under the stars, Mrs. Daniel Burn gave birth to a son. There was no going on the next day, so the men of the party scattered about the gullies with picks and dishes.

It was Daniel Burn who, almost at his first prospect, drove his pick into the nicest little nugget imaginable—something about the size of a pigeon's egg. The party did not bother to go on to Bendigo, so on that memorable two things were born—the Avoca goldfield and young George Burn, who thrived and lived to a good old age.

It appears that these references to George Burn having been born at Avoca in 1853 are incorrect. George Burn, a son of Daniel and Elizabeth Burn, was born in 1845 in New South Wales. He died in Ararat in 1921 at the age of 75. The death of John Burn, a son of George and Elizabeth Burn, and aged 12, was registered in Victoria 1865. It therefore appears likely that it was John Burn, rather than George Burn, who was born at Avoca in 1853.

As referred to above, Robert Thomas Bell, a son of George Bell and Elizabeth Bell (née Burn), was born in Avoca in 1854. It appears likely that George Bell, the father of Jane Ayliffe, was one of the party of 'Daniel Burn, George Bell, senior, George Bell, junior, and John Cox' who were rewarded for the discovery of gold at Avoca in 1853.

The reference to 'George Bell, senior' and 'George Bell, junior' in the notice in *The Argus* on 23 July 1864 suggests that these men were father and son. However, there is no known record of a son George having been born to George Bell and Elizabeth Bell (née Burn). Further, given that it appears that the men discovered gold at Avoca in 1853, any son of George Bell born after his marriage to Elizabeth Burn in 1843 would likely have been too young to have been attributed with involvement in the discovery. Therefore, the reference to 'George Bell, junior' suggests that George Bell had a son named George who was born before his marriage to Elizabeth Burn. This is consistent with the record of baptism of George Bell, a son of George and Jane Bell, in Mereworth, Kent on 23 November 1834.

The following notice appeared in *The South Australian* on 2 October 1846 at page 6:

DISTRESSING ACCIDENT—Last evening the child of Mr Twaite [sic], tinsmith, aged eighteen months, was run over in Rundle-street, by a bullock dray loaded with flour. The child was taken into Messrs Büttner & Co., chemists shop, next the Suffolk Arms, and Mr Nash was sent for, but life was found to be extinct. It appears that the driver was a boy about fourteen years of age, named Thomas Ayliffe. The child was knocked down by the off leading bullock, and the two pole bullocks passed on each side of it. Ayliffe having then only observed the child, attempted to stop the bullocks, but they swerved and brought the dray wheel over the unfortunate child's neck.

The following notice appeared in *The Adelaide Observer* on 3 October 1846 at page 5:

On Thursday last a bullock dray, passing down Rundle-street, and driven by Thomas Ailiff [sic], a lad of 14 years, ran over Emily Thwaite, the daughter of Thomas Thwaite, tin-smith, aged 18 months. The child was taken to a neighbouring chemist's shop, but soon after expired.

Dr Smith, who was in attendance, is of opinion that the wheel of the dray must have passed over the chest from the right side, causing extensive contusion and extravasation of blood into the chest, as on raising the body considerable effusion of blood from the mouth and nose ensued, and the external symptoms of contusion were manifest.

The following notice appeared in *The South Australian Register* on 3 October 1846 at page 3:

On Thursday last as the child of Mr Thwaite, tinman, of Rundle-street, was accidentally [sic] run over by the wheel of a dray in charge of a young lad named Thomas Ayliffe. The neck of the unfortunate child having been crushed, life was found to be extinct when the body was carried into the shop of Messrs Büttner & Co., chemists. Our humane Coroner has often felt it his duty to speak in terms of reproof, of parents who have carelessly tolerated the dangerous exposure of children of tender age to the chance of accident in the streets, and we feel it our duty to add a word of condemnation to his, in inveighing against the practice of sending bullock teams into town in charge of boys of such tender age that they cannot be termed "youths," having scarcely passed the period of childhood.

The following notice appeared in *The South Australian* on 6 October 1846 at page 5:

INQUEST.—On Saturday last, the adjourned inquest on the body of Julia Thwaite terminated in a verdict of accidental death. The child, who was only eighteen months old, but remarkably active for her age, was run over in Rundle-street after sunset on Thursday night, while attempting to cross, unconscious of the danger. Mr Charles Adelberg who was on that side of the street, saw the child the same moment when the pole bullock on the off side took her on his horns and threw her backwards ; when she fell on her face before the off wheel, which instantly passed over her before he could reach it. He cried out to the driver who was on the near side, but was not heard. The driver was a boy of eleven years, who had been in the habit for rather more than a year of driving for Mr Ayliffe, of Wyndham farm. He gave his evidence with much propriety, although he was so illiterate that he could neither read nor write his name. It went to show that he did not see the child till it was taken up lifeless. Mr Ayliffe stated to the Coroner and Jury, that he was very sorry to have followed the practice of entrusting to young boys (which is but too general) the care of loaded teams in the crowded thoroughfares in town. The dray, it appears, had been halting just before, and was but slowly driving on when the accident occurred. A nominal deodand was found on the team and load.

The following letter appeared in *The South Australian* on 6 October 1846 at page 7:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN.

SIR—I wish, through the favor of your columns, to correct an error which appeared in the last publication of the *Observer*, relative to the late melancholy accident which took place on the 1st instant, in Rundle-street ; it being said in the above-named paper, that my nephew was driving the dray, and the fact being, that it was driven by a lad named George Bell. It appears from all the information I can gather on the subject, the unfortunate child was in the middle of the street without any body to protect it, and on the off-side of the dray ; neither the lad driving, or my nephew, seeing the child—the bullocks and dray completely obscuring her from their sight. The dray passed over the shoulder, and, shocking to relate, broke in the great part of the thorax of the infant, causing immediate death. My brother, in his evidence at the inquest, condemned the practice of suffering boys to drive drays in, or to, or from Adelaide ; and while I coincide with his opinion, yet I call the attention of the public to the fact, that boys, in a great number of instances, drive better, and are more to be depended on than men, who commonly (as professional bullock drivers) indulge to a beastly degree in excessive libations of spirituous liquors ; neglect their teams, which may then meet with any accident, and commit any injury, while the drivers roll about the streets in a disgusting state of intoxication. In cases like these, I maintain bullock drays are safer in the hands of boys, who are accustomed to drive them. Nor can I drop the subject, without calling the attention of the local government to a consideration of this nuisance. What, if every bullock driver over sixteen years of age, found in a state of intoxication, and unfit to manage his team—were not

only severely punished, but were also compelled to make good to his employer, not only his own loss of time, but that also of team and dray? Why, I presume the answer would be, that we should have few accidents similar to the one under consideration ; that our ears would not be so often offended with the low and vile swearing with which they are so continually greeted ; nor would our eyes so frequently witness the abuse of human strength in drunken contest ; and the employers would find their men and teams return on the morrow, in a fit state for work. I trust this will be an everlasting warning to parents in this colony, against suffering their INFANT CHILDREN to wander unattended in public thoroughfares.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Yours obediently,

H. AYLIFFE.

Adelaide, Oct. 5, 1846.

The person referred to in the notice on 6 October 1846 as ‘Mr Ayliffe, of Wyndham farm’ was Jane’s husband Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe. The author of the letter dated 5 October 1846 was Thomas’s only surviving brother Henry Ayliffe. The 14 year old boy referred to, also named Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe, was a son of Thomas and Henry’s deceased brother George.

The driver of the dray, George Bell, was said to be ‘a boy of eleven years, who had been in the habit for rather more than a year of driving for Mr Ayliffe, of Wyndham farm’. As referred to above, Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe and Jane married on 23 July 1845. It seems plausible that the boy named George Bell was Jane’s brother and that he had been driving for his brother-in-law Thomas Hamilton Ayliffe since around the time of Thomas and Jane’s marriage.<sup>11</sup> The age of the boy is consistent with the record of baptism of Jane’s brother George in Mereworth, Kent on 23 November 1834. The first child of George Bell and Elizabeth Bell (née Burn), Sarah Ann Bell, was born on 13 October 1846, which was less than two weeks after the accident.

## **Conclusion**

It is apparent that my ancestor, Jane Ayliffe (née Bell), was a daughter of George Bell and Jane Bell (née Hunt) and was baptised on 1 October 1828 in Mereworth, Kent.

George Bell and Jane Hunt married on 25 December 1827 in Mereworth. They also had the following children who were baptised in Mereworth: John who was baptised on 5 September 1830, Mary who was baptised on 9 September 1832, George who was baptised on 23 November 1834, and Anne who was baptised on 1 February 1837.

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<sup>11</sup> Although a boy named George Bell (a son of Joseph Bell) died in Sturt on 29 November 1852, he was aged 15 when he died. It therefore appears that he was not the boy named George Bell who was recorded as aged 11 in October 1846. Joseph and Ann Bell, who were the parents of the boy who died in 1852, had a number of children born in Sturt in the 1840s. Joseph Bell died on 22 August 1879 in Hamley Bridge, and his son, Joseph Bell, died on 13 October 1913 in Hamley Bridge. Remarkably, these Bells do not appear to have been related to Jane, even though they also lived in both Sturt and Hamley Bridge.

George Bell was a timber cutter of Mereworth when he applied for emigration to South Australia on 16 August 1838. He emigrated with his wife and five children to South Australia on board the *Resource*, which arrived at Port Adelaide, South Australia on 23 January 1839.

He was a laborer and widower when he married Elizabeth Burn on 18 June 1843 at Trinity Church in Adelaide, South Australia.

George and Elizabeth Bell had the following children: Sarah Ann who was born on 13 October 1846 in Adelaide, Edward who was born on 6 October 1848 in Sturt, Rebecca who was born on 6 September 1851 in Sturt, Cecilia who was born on 6 November 1852 in Sturt, Elenor who was born in about 1853 or 1854, and Robert Thomas who was born in 1854 in Avoca, Victoria.

George Bell was a butcher in Sturt during the period from 1850 to 1852. He was also recorded as a butcher on the record of marriage of his daughter, Sarah Ann Bell, in 1866. He was imprisoned for debt in 1852.

In about 1853, George and Elizabeth Bell travelled to Victoria. In June 1853, George was one of a group who discovered gold at Avoca, Victoria. The group also included George's son George, Daniel Burn and John Cox. It was later recounted that the party of three families travelled with two drays from Adelaide towards Bendigo, that they arrived at Bordertown and followed the road through Nine Creeks (now Dimboola) to Glenorchy, and that they discovered gold one night while camped at the Avoca River.

In about 1865, George and Elizabeth Bell and their children returned to South Australia from Victoria. A later account recalled that the trip was made in a bullock dray, that members of the family were marooned for a long time owing to their oxen having been stolen by aborigines, and that they camped in the bush until rescued.

George and Elizabeth Bell subsequently lived in Hanson Street (now part of Pulteney Street), Adelaide, where Elizabeth died on 5 September 1877 and George died on 15 November 1878. Both George and Elizabeth Bell were buried at West Terrace Cemetery in Adelaide.