Railway Passes NSW 1880-1892

This index of 23,899 entries has been compiled from the surviving registers of applications for free Railway Passes. The volumes were transferred from the Chief Secretary's Department to the Mitchell Library in June 1934 and they are now at State Records NSW: *Immigration Agent; NRS 5283, Registers of Applications for free railway passes, 1880-92 [4/4678-85]), 8 vols.* The date ranges of the registers and microfilm reels are:

		New Reel #
4/4678	27 January 1880 to 3 October 1881	1869
4/4679	1 August 1883 to 16 January 1884	1869
4/4680	16 January 1884 to 23 June 1884	1870
4/4681	22 January 1886 to 20 August 1886	1870
4/4682	11 July 1887 to 16 December 1887	1871
4/4683	17 October 1888 to 18, 30 March 1889	1871
4/4684	20 March 1889 to 22 May 1889	3857
4/4685	10 February 1892 to 17 February 1892	3857

Note: The published index has Reel No. 1873 for 4/4684 and 4/4685 but this reel number was changed to 3857 as advised by SRNSW in Feb 2012.

These passes were generally issued to those immigrants to the Colony (the "Colony" being New South Wales) seeking employment in the country or, what would now be, outer metropolitan areas; however, there were also many applications by and passes issued for men, women and children for charitable reasons. The date ranges of the registers is not indicative of how long the applicants were in the Colony as some entries note their arrival as days or weeks while others note years, from a few to many. The passes were also available to those who were native to the Colony or other Australian States. The ages of the recipients range from young pre-teens to the oldest person to receive a pass being aged 92. Most of the entries in the registers note the native place of the applicant, age, whether married or single and how long in the Colony. There is much other detail supplied with the majority of the records, such as the ship of arrival and where the applicant was last so you can get records noting the native place as England and that the applicant
was last in, say, New Zealand, India, Queensland, Victoria or elsewhere. Most of the records for the married men give the number of children and where the wife and children were.

The native place of the majority of the applicants is: England and Wales (over 8,800), Scotland (over 2,000), Ireland (over 5,000) with hundreds more from Germany, Italy, New Zealand, America/USA, Denmark, France and Sweden and small numbers from various other countries including:

Abyssinia, Africa, Arabia, Austria, Batavia, Belgium, C. Verde, Canada, Chili, China, Constantinople, Corsica, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, Gibraltar, Greece, Guernsey, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, India, East & West Indies, Isle of Man, Jamaica, Japan, Jersey, Malta, Mauritius, Newfoundland, Norway, Nova Scotia, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Prussia, Russia, Scandinavia, Shetland, Siberia or Liberia, Singapore, Spain, Sth America, Switzerland, Turkey, Valparaiso and Yemen. The number of passes issued to native-born Australians was much lower with about 2,200 passes for those native to NSW and about 2,300 passes for those born in other Australian States.

Fields: Name, Age, Occupation (where noted), Status (whether Single, Married or Widow/er), Native Place, Event date of entry in the registers, SRNSW# List:Reel (the State Records NSW reference for the original record and the microfilm reel number), Destination and Remarks (where we include a transcription of the other information recorded in the registers). In the Native Place column, for Australian States and other countries, we have used the following Chapman Codes. All other places or countries have been listed as written.

Countries
BEL Belgium
CAN Canada
CH Switzerland
DEN Denmark
ENG England
ESP Spain
FIN Finland
FRA France
GER Germany
GR Greece
HU Hungary
IND India
IOM Isle of Man
IRL Ireland
ITL Italy
NL Holland
NOR Norway
NZ New Zealand
OES Austria
POL Poland
PT Portugal
SCT Scotland
SWE Sweden
USA United States of America
WLS Wales
Australian States
NSW New South Wales
QLD Queensland
SA South Australia
TAS Tasmania
VIC Victoria
WA Western Australia

Abbreviations: W= Wife; Ch/n= child/children; mo= months; wk/s= week/s; yrs= years; Col= Colony; X= his/her mark; sgd= signed.

If we have been in doubt regarding the correct transcription, we have added a "?" or, if we have been unable to decipher any, or part of a, comment, we have used "…?" to show that there is text missing.

Some entries recorded a "per Mr Bruce" or "Mr Bruce" with the recipient's pass having a destination of Hay. Notes in the registers show that Mr Bruce, who was the Inspector of Stock, obtained passes to send men to Hay for the eradication of rabbits.

We have endeavoured to maintain the spelling in the original records even though this has sometimes resulted in names and destinations being obviously misspelt. The first volume has a separate name index and the recipients either signed for or made their mark for the pass. A comparison of these three areas sometimes disclosed two or three different spellings for the one name. In these cases, we have double or triple entered the name to ensure every chance is given to the researcher to find the person they are seeking, although we urge everyone to think of spelling variations when searching any index.

Pastkeys 2005

BDA has not counted the double or triple mentioned names above with the result that there are 23,410 applications. With cross reference entries for other people mentioned, and the variant names indexed, the Dataset has 24,711 entries.

Place names and ship names have been changed to the BDA standard, place names being todays spelling - this is to allow for Advanced Searching. Some places are mentioned in an entry other than the destination and have been included under Places Mentioned.

People like Mr Bruce mentioned in the Pastkeys introduction have only been cross indexed once as they appeared many times.

They are mainly employment agents and are Misters:-

Ardill
Borrowdale
Bruce
Glue
Herbert
Hood
McIntosh
Peele
Simmons, C H
Walker

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Malcolm R Sainty AM - General editing of the Dataset & preparation of this Information page.

Information Page written by Mal Sainty

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