

Cataraqui's Tackley drowned and where they lived

Deep in the picturesque Oxfordshire countryside, nestled in the Cherwell Valley, lies the rural village of Tackley, with drystone walled streets. Where quaint stone houses, wreathed in wisteria line the village green with some cottages still rented out by the local squire.

One hundred and seventy five years ago, the church vestry committee of Tackley, unknowingly sent 42 of its poorest residents to their death on King Island, on board the shipwrecked 'Cataraqui'.

Those 42 people, in 1845 represented around 10% of Tackley's population.

These figures and the reasons why the villagers were 'packed off' to Australia, were discussed over coffee, with Tackley residents Neil and Rachel Wilson and King Island historian and Historical Society president, Luke Agati.

Neil and Rachel explained how the villagers of Tackley knew nothing about their history until the 1970's when a King Islander visited Tackley and contacted the village historical society.

Since then Tackley has made amends, with a memorial plaque for its people who died on the 'Cataraqui' installed in the village church.

St Nicholas church stands high on a hill overlooking the village of Tackley. The village lies on the route of a Roman road, and the hillside site has been used for worship since the Saxon period.

Ironically St Nicholas is the patron saint of seafarers.

Today, an ornate carved door to the sacramental wine alcove, is dedicated to the 42 Tackley villagers who died on the shores of King Island in the Cataraqui shipwreck.

Carved from a solid piece of oak the one



Above: Neil and Rachel Wilson of Tackley at the King Island Museum
Right: The oak relief installed a few years ago in Tackley church commemorating those from Tackley who lost their lives on KI from the shipwreck.

Back in Tackley, the news was received some six months later and perhaps, feeling guilty, the vestry committee made no mention of their deaths, it remained a secret until that King Islander's 1970 visit to the village.

Neil and Rachel Wilson have returned to Tackley, inspired by King Island and with a poster of this years' 175th Cataraqui commemoration which they have placed on display in St Nicholas church.



metre high door depicts the ship stranded and breaking up, with people clinging to wreckage and children drowning beneath the swirling waves.

This recognition is a fitting commemoration of Tackley's dead, but who they were and how they came to be aboard the emigration ship bound for the other side of the world, was revealed by Neil and Rachel Wilson.

Members of the Tackley historical society the Wilsons are researching to give a talk

Liverpool must have been the furthest they had ever ventured in thier lives.

Five months onboard the Cataraqui was spent mostly below decks in cramped and squalid conditions.

Just days from their Port Phillip destination, after weeks of screaming gales, the Cataraqui collided with the jagged black rocks of King Island's central western shores and sunk, with the loss of 399 lives.

Tackley's Cataraqui passengers

James	Cook	(27)
Anne	Cook	(23)
Mary	Cook	(5)
Jane	Cook	(2)
John	Cook	(14 months)

William	Cook	(39)
Anne	Cook	(36)
M Anne	Cook	(15)
Sarah	Cook	(11)
Francis	Cook	(6)
Richard	Cook	(5)
John	Cook	(3)
Williams	Cook	(3 months)

Stephen	Floyd	(26) labourer
Hanna	Floyd	(25)
Anne	Floyd	(2)
William	Floyd	(2 months)

Robert	Hoare	(26) labourer
Emma	Hoare	(23)
Thomas	Hoare	(2)
Millicent	Hoare	(9 months)

Anthony	Merry	(37) labourer
Edith	Merry	(36)
Martha	Merry	(16)
Joseph	Merry	(14)
John	Merry	(13)
William	Merry	(10)
James	Merry	(9)
Emma	Merry	(7)
Rhoda	Merry	(5)
Mathew	Merry	(3)
Susan	Merry	(11 months)

John	Ryman	(29) labourer
Hannah	Ryman	(26)
James	Harwood	(8)
Joseph	Ryman	(5)
M Jane	Ryman	(1)
John	Savings	(33) labourer
Sarah	Savings	(35)
Elizabeth	Savings	(5)
Frederick	Savings	(5)
Phillip	Savings	(9 months)



Spindleberry Cottage
The home of "widow" Floyd. The Floyds had not been residents of Tackley for many years. In 1841 Stephen Floyd was a manservant, by 1844 he was a farm labourer, married with 2 children. It is possible the Floyds lived with Stephen's mother.



Green Cottages
In one of this row of small 18th Century cottages lived Richard Harwood, Robert Hoare's father-in-law. It is possible the Hoares may, therefore have lived there.



No 4, The Street, Nethercott
The home of Anthony Merry, his wife and 9 children. The left-hand half of this cottage, measuring some 19 by 14 feet, housed the large Merry family.



Former cottage, The Street, Nethercott
The home of John Ryman, his wife and 3 children. The actual cottage occupied by the Ryman's was demolished several years ago, this photograph shows the adjacent plot where a similar building now functions as a tool shed.



Medcroft Road
Possibly the home of John Savings, who together with his wife, child and 2 step-children, probably lived with his eldest brother Thomas Savings.

about the 'Cataraqui', their exploration of King Island, the wreck site and many hours spent at the King Island Museum, with Luke Agati has added immeasurably to their research.

Over coffee they explained the vestry committee records from 1840's revealed the committee's members were called upon to pay for the poorest villagers, a blanket here, a dress there, the poor were costing the church management money, so when the call for emigrants to the colonies in Australia arose, they seized the opportunity and 'encouraged' the poor to go and paid for their passage. Problem solved.

It's impossible to know how the Tackley men, women and children felt, but the Wilsons presumed they had never left their village and the cart journey to the port of

CATARAQUI

AUSTRALIA'S WORST CIVIL MARITIME DISASTER

4th August 1845 399 Dead

On the West Coast of King Island

a

COMMEMORATION

by grand events



The Cataraqui Shipwreck Site - King Island. Photo Credit - Bob Brown AM

Here on KING ISLAND in the BASS STRAIT

1st - 5th August 2020



KING ISLAND COUNCIL

For all event information contact: cataraqui175@gmail.com
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Cataraqui 175 Commemoration



Australian Government
Festivals Australia

Berkshire - calligrapher: Cataraqui by Dianne Blake