Chapter 12

George Worgan’s Youngest Son, John Parsons, Immigrates to Sydney

During his final years in Wadeland House, George Worgan may, on occasion, have reflected upon his life’s journey, filled as it had been with excitement, adventure and more than a fair share of tribulation. As fate would have it, the life paths of his two sons were also destined to lead in unexpected, testing directions.

In 1828, Worgan petitioned the Secretary of State for the Colonies to provide his youngest son, John Parsons, with employment in New South Wales.\(^1\) He explained ‘that he “had fallen on hard times”’ ([Worgan] … was by then 71 and must surely have given up teaching)\(^2\). Fortunately, his heartfelt request met with a sympathetic response from the authorities.

On Monday, 23 February 1830, the brig Elizabeth arrived at Hobart Town, having departed from Plymouth on Tuesday, 8 September 1829. The Elizabeth carried ‘cargo principally for New South Wales’,\(^3\) as well as passengers travelling to Sydney. The Hobart Town Courier lists one of these passengers as ‘Worgan’.\(^4\) Was this George Worgan’s youngest son, John Parsons? (While this is likely, it is by no means certain.)

John Parsons (?) Worgan’s arrival at Hobart Town may have been attended by an event similar to that experienced eight years earlier (on Saturday, 12 January 1822) by a servant, John Brown (fl. 1821–32), of the Scott family. Having sailed from England to Hobart Town on HMS Britomart, Brown wrote:

\[\text{At 6 Oclock in the evening we came to anchor at Hobart Town which is the principle settlement of Van Deimans Land, we were soon surrounded with canoes full of natives both men and women with fish and oysters which they sold for biscuit, they are of a dark chocolate colour well made with woolley heads the only clothing they wear is a belt round their middle made of hair, which serves them for a kind of pocket for if anything is given them they put it inside the belt.}\(^5\)

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\(^{1}\) See Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan*, p. xii.
\(^{2}\) Edwards, ‘George Bouchier Worgan’, p. 10. That Worgan was experiencing financial difficulties in 1828 makes his ability to fund the building of Wadeland House only eight years later all the more inexplicable.
\(^{4}\) Ibid.
\(^{5}\) J. Brown (attrib.), *Anonymous Diary by a Servant of the Scott Family, 8 Aug. 1821–Mar. 1824 (written after 1825), with Notes, 1832* [Sydney: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Manuscripts, Oral History and Pictures, ca 1825], Image 17 (No. a2852017).
The Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 30 April 1830 identifies the brig Elizabeth—upon which ‘Worgan’ had travelled from Plymouth to Hobart Town—as being one of the ships expected in Sydney. The Elizabeth arrived that same day, carrying 11 male convicts and 28 other passengers. (The Sydney Shipping Arrivals Register dated 30 April 1830 records that the Elizabeth had departed from ‘London and Hobart Town [on, respectively] 8th September [1829 and] 8th April [1830].’ The Sydney Shipping Arrivals Register dated Tuesday, 30 April 1830 lists one of the passengers on board the Elizabeth as ‘Mr. Wm Worgan’, whose ‘Profession, trade, or calling’ is described as ‘settler’.

Was this George Bouchier Worgan’s youngest son, John Parsons, and if so, why is he listed as ‘William’? Perhaps a clerical error was made (three other passengers on board the Elizabeth were also called William). Shipping arrivals information published in the Sydney press eight years later suggests that this ‘Mr. Wm Worgan’ was not George Bouchier Worgan’s eldest son, George William (who arrived in Sydney eight years after ‘Mr. Wm Worgan’, on Friday, 3 August 1838). No other person with the surname Worgan is listed as having arrived in Sydney either during the 1820s or in the year of ‘Mr. Wm’ Worgan’s (John Parsons?) arrival (in 1830).

As John Parsons Worgan sailed through the Heads into Sydney Harbour, his first impressions may have been similar to those expressed by the artist Conrad Martens (1801–78), who, in his journal entry dated Thursday, 9 April 1835, wrote:

   The appearance when off the heads of Port Jackson is that of a wild and ironbound coast and the entrance that of a gigantic gateway. But the scene changes immediately upon entering to the calm and beautiful, islands bays and headlands … covered with wood … and after passing a

9 Ibid. Of the 28 passengers listed, Worgan appears as the twentieth.
11 A watercolour drawing entitled Sydney Heads by Augustus Earle (1793–1838), dated ca 1826, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXC 284; Album ID 824681; Digital order no. a709031).
point about 2 miles within the entrance, the town of Sydney is seen tho’ at a distance of 5 or 6 miles and still further the faint outline of the blue mountains in the interior.\textsuperscript{13}

About four months after John Parsons arrived in Sydney, he began steady employment; between Monday, 13 September 1830 and Saturday, 13 August 1836—that is between his 25th and 31st years—John Parsons was clerk to the Bench of Magistrates at Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney.\textsuperscript{14}

John Parsons, His Father’s Journal and Dr John Lhotsky

The naturalist Dr John Lhotsky (1795?–1866?), in his book \textit{A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps},\textsuperscript{15} testifies to the presence of John Parsons in Sydney:

\begin{quote}
Amongst a collection relating to the history of New South Wales—a collection which I am daily increasing, I possess a very valuable manuscript in 2 vols. under the following title; ‘An account of the first Colonization of New South Wales—also, of that part of the Country colonised, its inhabitants, &c. &c., in a series of letters to a friend, by G. B. Worgan, Esq., surgeon in His Majesty’s Ship Sirius.’ This manuscript communicated to me by the son of the author, (Mr. John P. Worgan,) will, when published, afford much information, and complete the—as it were, primordial narratives of Captains Phillips, Hunter, Collins, &c.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Dr Lhotsky arrived in Sydney from Brazil in 1832. He subsequently left Sydney for Hobart Town in October 1836, departing from there in April 1838 for London on board the \textit{Emu}.\textsuperscript{17} It is reasonable to assume that Lhotsky met

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} C. Martens, \textit{Journal of a Voyage on Board H.M.S. Hyacinth Commenced May. 19. 1833} (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, Manuscripts, Oral History and Pictures, 1833–35), Images 123 (No. a1090124) and 124 (a1090125). A watercolour drawing entitled \textit{A View of Sydney N. S. Wales on Entering the Heads the Distance of Seven Miles}, attributed to George William Evans (1780–1852), dated 1809?, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXC 388; Album ID 823548; Digital order no. a1313026).
\item \textsuperscript{14} See Worgan, \textit{Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon by George B. Worgan}, p. xii. Details concerning the period and place of John Parsons Worgan's employment are found in the ‘Introduction’. The anonymous author of the introduction provides no sources for the information. A hand-coloured lithograph depicting Hyde Park Barracks by John Gardner Austin (?–1842), dated 1836, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXC 581; Album ID 861838; Digital order no. a2398013).
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. 12–13, fn. f.
\end{itemize}
John Parsons Worgan in Sydney between 1832 (the year of Lhotsky’s arrival in Sydney) and 1835 (the year of publication of Lhotsky’s A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps, in which he mentions ‘John P. Worgan’).

It is logical to speculate that in 1830, John Parsons brought a version of his father’s journal with him to Sydney. In the extant version of George Bouchier Worgan’s journal (which takes the form of a long letter to his younger brother Richard), Worgan refers to two other versions of his journal: 1) his ‘rough journal’; and 2) a ‘fuller and more accurate’ version.

The whereabouts of these two versions is unknown. Could it be that either the ‘rough’ or the ‘fuller & more accurate’ version of George Bouchier Worgan’s journal has been lost because it was brought to Sydney by John Parsons?

It is reasonable to suppose that it was the fuller and more accurate version that John Parsons brought to Sydney. George Worgan’s journal was housed in Dr Lhotsky’s ‘collection relating to the history of New South Wales’. Lhotsky writes that Worgan’s journal was ‘communicated to me by the son of the author, (Mr. John P. Worgan)’. From a twenty-first-century perspective, it is not clear exactly what Lhotsky means when he uses the word ‘communicated’. During the early nineteenth century, an archaic meaning associated with the word was ‘to give’. Although this meaning was virtually obsolete by the time Lhotsky used the word ‘communicated’ in his book A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps, it is likely that he intended the reader to understand the following: ‘a very valuable Manuscript [that is, George Worgan’s journal was] … communicated [that is, given] to me by the son of the author, (Mr. John P. Worgan).’

Did Lhotsky regard Worgan’s journal as being ‘very valuable’ because the document was the original manuscript? This is probable. In the extant version of George Bouchier Worgan’s journal, the second-last paragraph includes the following words: ‘I am keeping by me an account of the voyage &c. &c. in a series of letters … They are something fuller & more accurate than this.’ The title of Worgan’s journal in Lhotsky’s possession included the following words: ‘An account … in a series of letters.’ Both the ‘account’ that George Bouchier Worgan admitted to ‘keeping by’ him (which he took home to England from Sydney Cove in 1791) and the manuscript in Lhotsky’s possession were each described as being in the form of a ‘series of letters’. There can be little doubt that these two descriptions apply to one and the same document.

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19 Ibid., p. 58.
20 Lhotsky, A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps, p. 12, fn. ¶.
21 Ibid., p. 13, fn.
22 Ibid., pp. 12–13, fn. ¶.
24 Lhotsky, A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps, p. 13, fn.
George Bouchier’s admission that the version of his journal appearing as ‘a series of letters’ is fuller and more accurate than any other version enables us to posit that it was this version of his father’s journal that John Parsons Worgan brought to Sydney, where, some time between 1832 and 1835, he gave it to Dr Lhotsky. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, one assumes that John Parsons brought the journal to Sydney with his father’s blessing.

Dr Lhotsky writes that George Bouchier Worgan’s journal ‘will, when published, afford much information’. 25 Perhaps Lhotsky intended to publish the manuscript. It seems, however, that much of Lhotsky’s time was spent not only giving public lectures, but also writing newspaper articles (which ‘are too numerous to list’), 26 tracts, pamphlets and contributions to scientific, literary and political journals. 27 These activities, as well as financial considerations, may have diverted Lhotsky away from the task of publishing Worgan’s journal (the version of George Bouchier’s journal in Lhotsky’s possession was never published).

Prior to Lhotsky’s departure from Hobart Town for London in 1838, he found himself burdened by increasing levels of debt. On Tuesday, 3 April 1838, the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser reported: ‘Our old acquaintance Dr. Lhotsky has not left Van Dieman’s Land yet. The Dr. carries on in Hobart Town the same game he practised in Sydney during his four years residence here, getting into debt to every one that will allow him, and libelling such as refuse.’ 28

In order to quit his debts before he departed from Hobart Town, Lhotsky’s ‘collection of natural history … was put up for … sale’. 29 On Monday, 5 February 1858, The Sydney Herald reported that the ‘Mechanic’s Institution’ had purchased Lhotsky’s collection for £20, payable ten days after the sailing of the vessel which is to convey the Doctor from [Tasmanian] … shores. This is one way of getting rid of a trouble-some customer.’ 30

It is not known if George Bouchier’s journal was included in the sale. If it was, perhaps the ‘fuller & more accurate’ version of Worgan’s journal sits somewhere in Tasmania, awaiting discovery. The journal currently rests in the wallet in which time puts alms for oblivion. 31

25 Ibid., p. 13, fn.
26 Whitley, ‘Lhotsky, John (1795–1866)’.
27 See ibid.
29 Whitley, ‘Lhotsky, John (1795–1866)’.
In Hobart Town, Dr Lhotsky’s farewell lecture, entitled ‘Science, Education, and Civilisation’, produced a passionate response from those citizens of the Apple Isle\(^{32}\) who were fortunate enough to attend. On Wednesday, 21 March 1838, *The Colonist* described the event:

> [M]any of the auditory, inspired no doubt by the subject, began to show the effects of the lecture on Civilization and Education, by projecting with considerable force several globular pieces of the *pyrus malus* from different parts of the theatre towards the centre of the stage; or, in vulgar language, they began to throw apples at the lecturer; whereat, the learned gentleman, (like a second Newton,) as the apples fell about him, paused—doubtless to reflect upon the cause of their gravitation towards the centre: nor was his philosophical mind long in discovering the true cause, of which, as soon as he had apparently satisfied himself, he thanked the audience for the honour which they had done him, in listening so attentively to his remarks, and some what abruptly made his bow and his exit. During the performance … two trap-doors upon the stage were opened, and two demons, with forks and flaming torches, ascended—rushed about for a short period—and then descended. This exhibition, for which we were unprepared, we have since been informed, was to be understood allegorically, as representing … evil genius … under the semblance of demons of discord, driving away the little good which might be otherwise effected by civilization and education.\(^{33}\)

The audience’s response may have had as much to do with the fact that attendance at the theatre was often a test of endurance, as it did with Dr Lhotsky’s unsplendid farewell lecture. A patron at the Royal Victoria Theatre in Hobart (which was officially opened on Wednesday, 8 March 1837, one year before Dr Lhotsky presented the fruits of his creative talent) wrote: ‘We were squeezed into impatience by the crowd, and half poisoned by the smell of stale tobacco smoke, foul breath, and unwashed, frowsy bodies, proceeding from a dense mass of vulgar spirit and beer-drinking, oily haired knaves, who pushed upon one another without mercy.’\(^{34}\)

Upon his return to London, Dr Lhotsky ‘sank into dire poverty’.\(^{35}\) Lhotsky had ‘acquired letters’ by the botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer (1760–1826) written during the voyage commanded by Matthew Flinders on HMS *Investigator*.\(^{36}\) In

\(^{32}\) During the mid-twentieth century, Tasmania became known as the ‘Apple Isle’ because, for many years, it was one of the world’s major apple producers. The etymology of the title is also based on the supposed resemblance of the map of Tasmania to the shape of an apple.


\(^{35}\) Whitley, ‘Lhotsky, John (1795–1866)’.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
order (presumably) to improve his situation, Lhotsky presented these letters to
the Linnean Society. If, at the time, Lhotsky still possessed George Bouchier
Worgan’s two-volume journal, he may (for similar reasons) have offered the
manuscript to interested parties. Unfortunately, the fate of the manuscript that
John Parsons ‘communicated’ to Dr Lhotsky remains a mystery.

Perhaps John Parsons had musical skills. On Monday, 21 April 1845—that is,
nine years after John Parsons had ceased employment as clerk to the Bench
of Magistrates at Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney—the Sydney Morning Herald
published the following intriguing corrigendum:

To the Editors of the Sydney Morning Herald.

Gentlemen,—In the Herald of to-day, I am represented as having assisted
the Town Band, on the night of the Jewish Festival. I did no such thing;
but was a guest on that occasion, if you please.

—For the sake of my friends, (I care not), will you kindly give this a
corner in your valuable paper?

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

John Worgan.

April 19 [1845].

In a letter dated Wednesday, 6 July 2007, Alec and Olive Worgan, descendants of
one of George Bouchier Worgan’s brothers, writing to Brian Barrow, an antiques
restorer, fortepiano aficionado and owner of the Longman & Broderip square
piano dated 1785/86 discussed in Appendix B of Volume 2 of this publication,
state: ‘We believe he [John Parsons Worgan] died in 1848 but do not know
where he died or any other details.’ Evidence concerning John Parsons appears
in the form of an entry in the Darlinghurst Gaol Description and Entrance Books
dated Thursday, 9 November 1843.

The Description Book … [reveals] that [the then 38 year old] John …
was 5 feet 5 1/2 inches tall, with a fresh complexion, dark hair and hazel
eyes. According to the Sydney Morning Herald (10 Nov 1843), he was
charged with stealing a £ note. [John Parsons was discharged from the
gaol approximately five weeks later, on Tuesday, 12 December 1843.]

37 Ibid.
39 This information is derived from a conversation held on Saturday, 28 July 2012 between the author and
Brian Barrow. See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
40 I am indebted to Brian Barrow for access to this letter.
Again in 1849, John Worgan is entered at Darlinghurst gaol. The information entered is similar to that above, including the occupation of Clerk, with the addition that he is stout. He was admitted [on Monday,] 26 February 1849 … and discharged [approximately two weeks later, on Wednesday,] 14 March 1849.41

Until further information comes to light, the details of John Parsons Worgan’s final years and the circumstances surrounding his death remain unknown.

Despite the fact that the colony at Sydney Cove was ‘murky with injustice, bigotry, exploitation, long memories and short fuses’,42 it appears that John Parsons Worgan is one of the many ‘modestly born, determined individuals’ who managed to carve out an honourable and productive life in New South Wales; the new colony provided John Parsons with a context that (especially in future years) enabled ‘men of no description [to] … achieve a label, a post, a self-definition’.43

George Worgan’s Eldest Son, George William, Immigrates to Sydney

The life in Sydney of George Worgan’s eldest son, George William, appears to have been much more colourful than that of John Parsons Worgan. It is likely that George William was the ‘Mr Worgan, music-master’ who arrived in Sydney from Plymouth on the barque Forentia on Friday, 3 August 1838—five months after his father, George Bouchier Worgan, had died (George William departed from England in April 1837, one month after his father had died).44 At the time of his arrival in Sydney, George William was 38 years old.

Because of the vagaries of the British economy caused by the ‘technological innovation that changed the balance between rural England and … industry, the British government had been encouraging people—principally from rural regions—to seek their fortunes elsewhere’.45 On Saturday, 21 December 1844, only six years after George William Worgan had arrived in Sydney, the Illustrated London News reported:

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42 Paxman, Empire, p. 2.
43 Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 111.
[E]migration has been progressively going on, not only to the South Seas, but also to the Canadas, and vast numbers of persons have availed themselves of the Government grant to quit their native shores for the purpose of seeking a better subsistence in the land of the stranger; and when we look at the existing condition of a considerable portion of our agricultural and manufacturing population, it excites but little wonder that a feverish restlessness should arise for change.46

There is no evidence that John Parsons Worgan and George William Worgan ever made contact with each other in Sydney (one would like to think they did). There is also no evidence suggesting that either of the two brothers enquired of Elizabeth Macarthur regarding the fate of their father’s piano—an instrument that, as time passed, would have been regarded as being more and more old-fashioned.

Only five days after his arrival, George William placed the following advertisement in The Sydney Herald of Wednesday, 8 August 1838:

Mr. G. W. Worgan,

*Member of the Royal Society of Musicians, London, singing master, and teacher of the pianoforte,* begs respectfully to acquaint the ladies, the gentlemen and inhabitants of Sydney and its neighbourhood, that he has just *arrived from London,* and *intends giving* instruction in the above branches of his profession for terms, &c, apply at Mr. Francis, Prince-street, opposite the Military Hospital. Schools attended. The pianoforte tuned by Mr. G. W. W on an improved principle.47

The Royal Society of Musicians was a charitable organisation—founded in 1738 as the ‘Fund for Decay’d Musicians’—which provided professional musicians and their families with a degree of financial support in times of need. ‘The originator of this fund was’ the violinist Michael Festing (1703–52),48 who, ‘with a feeble hand, little genius for composition, and but a shallow knowledge in counterpoint, by good sense, probity, prudent conduct, and a gentleman-like behaviour, acquired a weight and influence in his profession, at which hardly any musician of his class ever arrived’.49

47 The Sydney Herald, 8 August 1838, Vol. 8, p. 3. This was the first of 22 such advertisements that George William placed in Sydney newspapers between Wednesday, 8 August and Monday, 17 December 1838.
48 Young, The Concert Tradition, p. 87.
Worgan’s mention of his membership of the Royal Society was doubtless a marketing ploy intended to enhance his credibility. George William had been inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians (as a pianist) on Sunday, 4 January 1835, three years prior to his arrival in Sydney.50

One month after George William’s arrival in Sydney, The Australian of Tuesday, 9 October 1838 published the following information:

Mechanics’ School of Arts.—

Amongst the other sources of mutual instruction at this increasing and useful Institution, there will in future be a Weekly Musical Class, on the same principle as the Wednesday Evening Debating Class. The days of meeting are not yet decided on, but we understand, that Mr Worgan has offered his services as leader of the class—and, as that gentleman has acquired a high character for his musical attainments, the class is likely to be of a superior description.51

George William Performs

Two days later, on Thursday, 11 October 1838, The Australian advertised the participation of ‘a celebrated vocal amateur, Mr. Worgan’ at a ‘Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music’ to be given on Wednesday, 17 October in the ‘Saloon of the Royal Hotel.’52 Worgan’s performance received the following critique:

A gentleman named Worgan, who has recently arrived, sang a simple little ballad, accompanying himself on the piano-forte [we do not know who made or owned the instrument]; Mr. W displayed much taste, but his voice is so low and weak that, at the lower end of the room, he was nearly inaudible; but from the way in which he acquitted himself, there can be no doubt of his being an excellent musician.53

Worgan’s career was a busy one. The next month, he participated in yet another ‘Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music’ given in the saloon of the Royal Hotel,54 on Wednesday, 21 November.

52 The Australian, 11 October 1838, (NS), Vol. 5, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia. A hand-coloured lithograph entitled George Street & The Royal Hotel & Commercial Exchange in 1836 by George Roberts (ca 1800–65), dated 1850, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXA 581; Album ID 861838; Digital order no. a2398013).
Two months later, on Wednesday, 23 January, Worgan sang in a concert given in the saloon of the Royal Hotel.55 One month later, The Sydney Herald of Wednesday, 20 February 1839 advertised Worgan’s involvement (as singer) in a concert to be held seven days later in the saloon of the Royal Hotel.56 At this concert, ‘the bass voice of the amateur was too powerful for Mr. Worgan, who … was also a little out in the harmony … Mr. Worgan cannot sing a ballad—his voice is any thing but melodious, and his cadences any thing but tasteful’.57 Because critics ‘who have no respect for the object of their comments feel no compunction about showing off their incendiary wit at the expense of their hapless and more-or-less defenseless victims’,58 and because ‘it is a widely known fact—or, at least, a widely held belief—that negative criticism is more entertaining to read than enthusiastic endorsement’,59 the anonymous critic’s evaluation of George William’s vocal and interpretative skills was ignored by the musical community.

Eight months later, George William Worgan participated—as ‘principal vocal performer’ along with ‘the entire musical talent of Sydney’60—in a ‘Grand Miscellaneous Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music’61 given at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Pitt Street, on Wednesday, 2 October 1839 (at this time, the Royal Victoria Theatre had been open for only one year).62 This concert was indeed a grand affair, ‘comprising upwards of seventy performers’.63

Six weeks later, on Wednesday, 13 November, George William sang two trios—with ‘Mr. and Mrs. Bushell’64—at a ‘Grand Concert’65 held in the saloon of the Royal Hotel. At this concert, ‘the performances were … very creditable, at least to the vocal performers. The instruments being entirely left to themselves, went every one his own way in glorious confusion.’66

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59 Ibid., p. ix.
62 An engraving entitled Interior of the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney by Joseph Fowles (1810–78), dated 1849, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an8329195).
63 Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser, 27 September 1839, p. 3.
64 Australasian Chronicle, 8 November 1839, Vol. 1, No. 29, p. 4, Trove, National Library of Australia.
65 Ibid.
A little more than two weeks later—on Sunday, 1 December 1839—Worgan went on a piano-tuning tour with the musical instrument retailer, publisher and piano tuner Francis Ellard (1798–1854) to Maitland, New South Wales.

Francis Ellard’s Piano-Tuning Tours

Five years earlier, Ellard had made a piano-tuning tour to the Hunter River area and Maitland. In this instance, his advertisement in the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Thursday, 13 November 1834 reveals his intention:

To the inhabitants residing on the Hunter's River.

F. Ellard, musical instrument manufacturer and pianoforte tuner, begs to inform the inhabitants of the above district, that he will be in Maitland on Monday, the 24th Instant.

Any commands left at Mr. Cox’s Hotel, shall be punctually attended to.

In April the next year, Ellard made a piano-tuning tour of the Goulburn district. In the Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 28 March 1835, he advertised:

To the Inhabitants of Bong Bong, Inverary, and Goulburn, &c.

F. Ellard, musical instrument maker, and pianoforte tuner, will be in the above neighbourhood (on or about the 2d of April) any commands left for him at the Post Offices of the above places, shall be punctually attended to.

Music Warehouse, Hunter-street.

It was about this time—that is, 1835—that John Benham (1784?–1845), ‘pianoforte maker’, who arrived in Australia in 1831, designed and produced the first Australian-made piano in his workshop at 5 Liverpool Street East.

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68 In relation to the sale of pianos, Ellard sold both new and second-hand instruments.
72 The only extant piano by John Benham (and probably the earliest surviving Australian-made piano) is in upright form—a ‘cottage’ piano. This instrument is part of the Powerhouse Museum Collection: Registration no. H8405. For details, see ‘Upright Pianoforte by John Benham, 1830–1840’, in Powerhouse Museum Collection Search 2.53 (Sydney: Powerhouse Museum, n.d.).
Sydney. About 1835–38, a square piano was made by the London firm of Collard & Collard expressly for Francis Ellard (Ellard’s piano is currently housed in the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney).⁷⁴

It appears that Francis Ellard did not visit the ‘isolated property named Gilmour, near Lake Bathurst, between Goulburn and Braidwood’,⁷⁵ where the pioneer Ann Gore found it impossible to keep her piano in tune. On Friday, 29 September 1837, Ann, writing to her cousin Ellen Collinson in London, remarked: ‘When we first came up we found great amusement in music but unfortunately our piano is now out of tune so much that we are unable to play and there is no possibility of getting it repaired.’⁷⁶

**W. J. Johnson’s Piano-Tuning Tours**

In January 1836, the arrival in Sydney of ‘Mr. W. J. Johnson, Professor of Music, and Tuner of Organs and Piano-Fortes’,⁷⁷ created Ellard’s only commercial piano-tuning competition. Johnson announced that he had ‘great experience in tuning’.⁷⁸ He claimed that his experience had produced ‘the flattering encomiums he [had] … received from the leading men in the musical profession’.⁷⁹ Johnson located his business establishment in ‘George-street, next door to the Commercial Bank’.⁸⁰ In October 1838, he relocated to ‘Castlereagh-street, between Bathurst and Liverpool-streets’.⁸¹

Competition between Johnson and Ellard was fierce. A year after arriving in Sydney, Johnson advertised—in January 1837—that he would ‘make arrangements, for visiting periodically all the principal towns in the colony, for the purpose of tuning, &c’.⁸² Both Johnson and Ellard regularly made piano-tuning tours of districts beyond Sydney, sometimes offering their services only weeks apart from one another in the same town.


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⁷⁸ Ibid.
⁷⁹ Ibid.
⁸⁰ Ibid.
Ellard’s inclusion of George William Worgan on his piano-tuning tour of December 1839 may have been an attempt to win over clientele from Johnson. Ellard announced his intention to include George William in an advertisement published in The Sydney Herald on Friday, 29 November 1839:

To the Inhabitants of the Hunter and Paterson Rivers.—F. Ellard begs to acquaint the inhabitants of the above districts that he and Mr. George William Worgan, will be in Maitland on or about the 1st of December for the purpose of tuning and repairing piano-fortes. All commands by letter, left at the Post Office, will be punctually attended to.

Music Saloon, George street

Sydney, November 25, 1839

Following the conclusion of this piano-tuning tour, a little more than four months later, on Saturday, 4 April 1840, ‘William Worgan, musician’ was charged with being drunk. The charge, however, was ‘not … fully proved’. George William was not a regular miscreant. ‘The magistrates periodically attempted to control liquor and put down “disorderly houses”, obviously with little success.’ Until 1850, Sydney

constituted a rough, often pretentious, superficially puritanical and often nauseatingly hypocritical society. It is often difficult to determine whether the puritanism was deeper and more real than the hypocrisy …

The isolation, the nostalgia and the sheer boredom of the … [colony] for many … caused them to seek a refuge and relief in intoxication … drink … never ceased … to have a prominent and perhaps dominating place in the society, for the most part behind a façade of prim rectitude and sanctimoniously applauded hard work, abstemiousness and purity.

The next month, on Tuesday, 26 May 1840, George William Worgan again sang in public, at a concert held at the Theatre Royal. That the Theatre Royal existed at all at this time was somewhat of a miracle. The Theatre Royal was located directly behind the Royal Hotel—the saloon of which had been the scene of so many performances in which George William Worgan had participated. Patrons ‘could pass through the hotel going to and from the theatre, spending

83 The Sydney Herald, 29 November 1839, p. 1.
86 Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, pp. 201–3.
their money on refreshments on the way’. Theatregoers were reminded that ‘a cold collation and other refreshments were constantly on the table for their accommodation’. On the night of Tuesday, 17 March 1840,

a ‘drunken carter’ lit both his pipe and some straw in a stable adjoining the [Royal] hotel. Rushing from a St Patrick’s Day Ball at Government House, Lieutenant [Edward] Lugard [b. 1810] ‘levelled several tenements’ but saved the Royal Victoria Theatre, and Colonel [George] Barney [1792–1862] laid a trail of gunpowder to blow up some houses, if need be, to stop the fire spreading. Only ‘the providential lulling of the wind’ removed the danger of a Great Fire of Sydney and the total damage to the Royal Hotel and other buildings was estimated at £20 000.

The saloon of the Royal Hotel, the scene of so many concerts, was a smouldering ruin.

Two more advertisements published in 1841 mention George William as a ‘vocal performer’ in an oratorio performance held at St Mary’s Cathedral.

George William, Organist of St Mary’s Cathedral

*The Sydney Herald* of Saturday, 9 July 1842 describes George William Worgan as ‘the organist of St. Mary’s’ Cathedral, Sydney. In 1838, Worgan had participated in the dedication ceremony. Worgan was employed as the regular organist at St Mary’s Cathedral between 1842 and 1843.
A report published in the *Australasian Chronicle* of Tuesday, 13 December 1842, concerning a Requiem Mass given the previous day at St Mary’s Cathedral for the Duke of Orleans, states that ‘a select choir [was] … accompanied on the organ by Mr. Worgan’.

George William was also ‘involved in the presentation of a *Te Deum* on 19 March 1843 to mark Dr. [John Bede] Polding’s [1794–1877] elevation to Archbishop … Worgan was praised for his organ playing’. No evidence suggests that George William Worgan was Roman Catholic.

The organ that George William played at St Mary’s Cathedral was made by Henry Bevington & Sons, one of the leading organ builders in London, whose workshop was located in Greek Street, Soho. The organ was the colony’s largest, ‘and boasted an independent pedal department instead of an octave or so of pedals permanently coupled to the great’.

According to a description published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Friday, 5 February 1841, the instrument was

> of very excellent quality, [possessing] … considerable power, especially on the pedals …

> The organ at St Mary’s is one of the finest in the world, having one fifth greater compass than that of St Paul’s Cathedral, which goes from CCC (16 feet pipe) to F in alto; one note greater than that of Westminster Abbey, which goes from GGG (24 feet pipe) to D in alto; and within a fifth of the great organs of York Minster and Birmingham (each 32 feet pipe).

Unfortunately, Henry Bevington used ‘unsuitable or unseasoned wood … and the instrument fell into disrepair in a few years. Repairs were effected under the direction of Bishop Charles Henry Davis [1815–54] soon after his arrival in 1848.’ (Bishop Davis ‘excelled as a musician. An accomplished organist, he composed and arranged and sang—and improved the voices of his choir with a generous egg-flip of his own invention.’) ‘This splendid and fascinating instrument was destroyed with the Cathedral in the fire of 29 June 1865.’

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98 Quoted in ibid., p. 35.
101 Rushworth, *Historic Organs of New South Wales*, p. 36.
In the moments of its destruction, the cathedral took on a terrible grandeur: ‘The cold frosty air, blowing on the rafters caused them to glitter with resplendent brilliancy. The flames, like innumerable serpents of fire, hissed and crackled along every part of the building; and as they swept from one interior fitting to another, assumed most singular shapes’. Nothing was insured; the material loss was about £50,000.\footnote{O’Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community in Australia, p. 136.}

That an organ maker of Bevington’s experience and fine reputation used ‘unsuitable or unseasoned wood’ for the organ of St Mary’s Cathedral is inexplicable, and forces one to entertain the notion that he may have held the insufferably ignorant and imbecilic attitude that is still encountered within certain irritating British circles: nothing good can come from the colonies, so why bother?

A proposal was put forward to replace the lost organ with a harmonium, but the public outcry was so vociferous that a smaller replacement organ, made by the Sydney organ builder Thomas V. Bridson, was purchased in 1865. The new instrument was first used on 19 November 1865.\footnote{See advertisement published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 20 December 1845, Vol. 20, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia.} Unfortunately, this short-lived organ was also destroyed by fire, in 1869.

On Wednesday, 31 August 1842, George William Worgan sang in a performance given at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Pitt Street, of Händel’s oratorio ‘Messiah’.\footnote{See advertisement published in The Australasian Chronicle, 23 August 1842, Vol. 4, p. 1, Trove, National Library of Australia.} Two months later, Worgan is again described as the organist of St Mary’s in an advertisement that reveals that he was also at that time employed as a singing teacher at Miss Rennie’s ‘College High School’.\footnote{Sydney Morning Herald, 1 October 1842, Vol. 14, p. 1, Trove, National Library of Australia.}

Miss Rennie, her father, the Scottish naturalist James Rennie (1787–1867), and her brother, Edward Alexander, had arrived in Sydney in 1840. ‘The men opened a College High School at 6 Elizabeth Street while [Miss] Rennie opened a day school for young ladies at the same address.’\footnote{‘Miss Rennie’, in Design & Art Australia Online (2011).} On Thursday, 9 December 1841, she advertised in the Colonial Observer that ‘the greatest attention will be paid to music, drawing, ornamental work, languages, and other Fashionable accomplishments’, and claimed to have ‘received a most expensive education in France, Prussia and England’. A later advertisement promised that ‘on fixed days, the young ladies will be taken out to gardens to learn Botany, and to the fields to draw from nature’.\footnote{Ibid.}
George William began his employment as singing teacher at Miss Rennie’s day school between ca 1841 and August 1842.

On Thursday, 8 December 1842, the Sydney Morning Herald announced ‘the appearance of a cantata composed by George Worgan How Sweet those tuneful bells, published [in Sydney] by Francis Ellard’. The work was ‘[r]espectfully dedicated to the Very Reverend F[rancis] Murphy’ (1795–1858), Catholic vicar-general (with jurisdiction over the whole of Australia) and the first bishop to be consecrated in Australasia (in St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney, on Sunday, 8 September 1844). The cantata is the only surviving work composed by George William Worgan, and was written in aid of the bell appeal at St Mary’s Cathedral. In 1843, ‘archbishop Polding duly returned from Europe with a peal of bells’.

George William is Declared Insolvent

For many during the early 1840s, Sydney was a far from happy place. The landowner Terence Aubrey Murray (1810–73), writing on Thursday, 16 September 1841, described the situation: ‘times are dreadfully bad here, and everyone is afraid of being ruined. Money is so scarce that people do not know what to do. We shall be poor together and that will be some comfort.’ The economic slump that adversely affected Sydney’s economy during the early 1840s caused the bankruptcy of many people, including George William. On Monday, 26 June 1843, ‘George William Worgan, of Pitt Street, Professor of Music’, was declared bankrupt. George William subsequently appeared before Justice Sir James Dowling (1787–1844) on Friday, 14 July 1843, ‘at the Supreme Court House, Sydney … at 10.30, a.m.’, at which time a claim made against George William by ‘J. Clancey, for £12 11s was proved’.

A few weeks before his court appearance, Worgan had been consigned to prison for debt. This explains why the period of his tenure as organist of St Mary’s...
Cathedral—between 1842 and 1843—was so short. ‘No regular organist replaced him.’ Because of the contemporaneous stigma surrounding insolvency, it is probable that in late June 1843, George William’s employment as singing teacher at Miss Rennie’s day school was terminated.

It is not known when Worgan was released from gaol. On Friday, 20 June 1845, however, George William played the piano at the ‘Mayor’s Grand Tea Party’—a teetotal extravaganza—presumably as a free man. On Wednesday, 17 December 1845, at the Royal Hotel, Worgan sang at a concert.

**George William Marries**

Six days later, on Tuesday, 23 December 1845, he sang as one of ‘the whole professional talent of the colony … assisted by a large number of vocal and instrumental amateurs’ at the Royal Victoria Theatre, in a performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s arrangement of Händel’s oratorio ‘Messiah’. The concert was advertised as being of ‘unrivalled grandeur and magnificence’. In this performance, Worgan sang in the company of another principal vocalist, Mary Tuohy. A little more than a year later, on Monday, 4 January 1847, George William Worgan married Mary Tuohy. The marriage, officiated by Chaplain Thomas Wall Bodenham (1818–51), took place at the parish Church of St James, Sydney.

**Further Performances**

On Wednesday, 17 June 1846, George William sang at a ‘grand evening concert … given in the saloon of the Royal Hotel … by all the available musical talent of Sydney’.

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117 Ibid., p. 370.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
123 See ‘IGI Individual Record: Southwest Pacific: George William Worgan’, in *Family Search International Genealogical Index v.5.0* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2008). Mary Tuohy may have made her solo debut at a concert organised by her teacher, Maria T. Hinckesmann (Hincksman) (b. 1803), on Friday, 30 May 1845. (See advertisement in *The Australian*, Thursday, 29 May 1845.) At this event, Mary sang Michael William Balfe’s (1808–70) ballad *The light of other days*. Two months later (in July) she gave her own concert, though no program or later notices appeared. See G. Skinner, ‘Tuohy, Miss’ in *A biographical register of Australian colonial musical personnel–T* in *Austral Harmony* (University of Sydney, 2015) (retrieved 29 May 2015).
124 See *New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages*, No. 64, Vol. 32C.
During the next year, on Wednesday, 11 August 1847, Worgan gave an impromptu performance at the ‘Australian Grand Lodge Hall of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows … on a new instrument called the harmonian, which is far more powerful than the seraphine,’ and its tones considerably sweeter’.127

In 1850, George William Worgan sang at a ‘Grand Concert’ held on Friday, 7 June, in the saloon of the Royal Hotel.128

Scandal and Public Ridicule

Three years after George William’s marriage to Mary Tuohy, the Sydney Morning Herald of Thursday, 3 January 1850 announced: ‘Birth at Woolloomooloo, on Sunday, December 30 [1849], Mrs. George William Worgan, of a daughter.’129

Only a handful of months after the birth of their daughter, the quality of George’s and Mary’s relationship may have deteriorated.

On Thursday, 13 February 1851, disaster struck. The Empire reports:

Family Differences.—Mr. George William Worgan appeared on summons, for neglecting to comply with an order of the Bench, dated 26th August, 1850, at which hearing he was ordered to pay a weekly sum of 15s. for the support of his deserted wife. Mr. Little, who appeared for the defendant, satisfied their worships by the most palpable testimony, that since the making of the order, the parties had been living together as man and wife, therefore, he contended, the complaint was completely absurd. The Bench, after alluding to the unsettled state of the law upon this particular, refused to make an order. Mr. O’Reilly, who had been retained for the prosecution, upon hearing this decision, shook his mane, and winked at Paddy Driscoll.130

On Wednesday, 19 February 1851, the Sydney Morning Herald published the following information concerning ‘Deserted Wives and Children’: ‘George William Worgan, of William-street, Woolloomooloo, was … charged by Mary, his wife, with having deserted her, and refusing to contribute to her maintenance. This defendant was ordered to pay the sum of 15s weekly, for the period of six months.’131

126 A seraphine is a hybrid keyed wind instrument similar to the harmonium, in which the principles of the reed organ are combined with some of those of an accordion. Its sound is produced by air being blown across metal reeds.
129 Sydney Morning Herald, 3 January 1850, Vol. 27, p. 3, Trove, National Library of Australia. George William and Mary named their daughter Mary.
Chapter 12

The State Records of New South Wales reveal that at this time Worgan employed Bridget McWheeney, ‘an orphan ex Lady Peel’. Did Worgan’s affections turn away from his wife and towards McWheeney, or were the unfortunate ‘growlings of connubial thunderstorms’ a recurrent element of Worgan’s married life? Was George William a rogue? Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer was relentless in its mockery:

The Discord-ion.—This new musical instrument, which is found in a vast number of Sydney families, is the invention, we believe, of that celebrated musician, Mr. George William Worgan, who keeps one continually in his own house. Mrs. W. and himself are much used to play duetts upon it; and, at times, he does the fortissimo to such an extent that she is compelled to rush into the cottage of her next door neighbour, Mr. William Richard Smith, to get the din out of her ears. About six months ago she invited the George-street authorities to join in the family concert; they politely accepted her offer, and ordered Mr. Worgan to give her three-fourths of a note, weekly, to enable her to leave his organ-loft and play her own tune in another locality.

That George William so abused his wife (and that he may have become romantically involved with Bridget McWheeney) suggests that his moral character was flawed and weak. If this was indeed his nature, the fact strengthens the speculation that prior to immigrating to Sydney, George William had left Liskeard for London under suspicious circumstances.

‘Grocott’s Dissolving Views’

In April 1851, two months after undergoing this public ridicule, George William provided the background music (most probably on a piano) for ‘Grocotts Dissolving Views’, a cinematic experience similar to a slide show. (By the 1820s,

134 Ibid.
135 George William may have fled from Liskeard because he had fathered an illegitimate child. See ‘Whispers and Rumours: Who Was Charles Parsons Worgan?’, below. Approximately a year and a half before his arrival at Sydney Cove on Friday, 3 August 1838, George William had crossed paths with the law in Liskeard. The Royal Cornwall Gazette published the following account on Friday, 31 March 1837: ‘On Thursday last Messrs Geo. Worgan, jun., Nicholas Clemence, and Joseph Elford were brought before the Liskeard Borough Magistrates charged with committing depredations by breaking various gates &c. on the night of the preceding Saturday. After an investigation of the case, which lasted several hours, the parties were fined 5 pounds each, besides the costs and repairs.’ See M. Hall, ‘2. George William Worgan (1800–1862)’ in Random Genealogy (Friday, 8 August 2014) (retrieved 29 May 2015). It appears that by March 1837 at least, George William had returned to Liskeard from London (approximately two years before, in January 1835, he had been inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians—as a pianist—in London). His illegal actions in Liskeard suggest that not only was his character flawed, but also that his ethics may have been, on occasion, ‘flexible’.
a ‘magic-lantern’ show was called a ‘phantasmagoria’.) On Monday, 21 April, the following advertisement for Grocott’s technological extravaganza appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

These beautiful views were purchased in London, from Carpenter and Westley, by the late Captain Stanley, of H.M.S. Rattlesnake, regardless of expense, and are admitted to be fully equal to the views shown daily in London, at the Polytechnic.

Showing a radius of 15 feet. The Saloon has been fitted up to accommodate 150 persons, and in addition to the above the rooms are full of beautiful pictures. The whole of the views occupy in showing one hour and a half, during which appropriate music is played by Mr. G. W. Worgan.

The following is a list of the principal views:

Holyrood Chapel, showing a radius of 16 feet, dissolving into Netley Abbey.

St. Petersburg, dissolved into a Castle on the Rhine

Lord Nelson, dissolved into the ship Victory

Arch of Peace at Milan, dissolved into the Giant’s Causeway

York Minster on Fire, dissolved into Kilsby Railway Tunnel

Together with a splendid collection of Chromatropes, or illuminated fireworks

The Comic Scenes are also very amusing:—

The only true portraits of the ‘Bunyip,’ in three positions

1. As he appeared

2. Looking for prey.

3. With his eye out.

… New Specimens in the Vegetable Kingdom

… Harlequin, who, like the little dog that fell into the sausage-machine, will appear in several pieces

The Chromatropes, it is to be hoped, will go off well.137

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Grocott’s ‘Dissolving Views’ were based on what was then known as a ‘panorama’. In 1787, as the First Fleet headed towards the Cape of Good Hope,

Robert Barker, an Irishman working in Edinburgh, patented a new kind of theatre. He called it ‘panorama’, from the Greek pan (all) and horama (view). He took his invention to London and by 1793 [only seven months after George Worgan had stepped ashore from the Waaksamheyd at Portsmouth] had opened the Panorama theatre at Leicester Square. On the cylindrical walls of a rotunda, he painted huge 360-degree scenes of exotic places … The panorama was the Imax of the Enlightenment.138

George William Leaves Sydney

George William’s involvement with Grocott’s ‘Dissolving Views’ in late April 1851 was his swan song, after which (it seems) he left Sydney. Perhaps he absconded in order to avoid paying maintenance (‘the sum of 15s weekly, for the period of six months’);139 the court’s ruling was made in February, only two months before Worgan vanished from Sydney. George William is not mentioned in Sydney newspapers for 10 years. What became of him is a mystery; perhaps he went ‘on the road’ as a piano tuner.140

Not unreasonably, ‘Errol Lea-Scarlett assumed that [George William] … must be the same … Worgan … who arrived in New Zealand in 1851 and died there in 1888’.141 On Friday, 21 March 1851, The Southern Cross and New Zealand Guardian announced the arrival in Auckland of the ‘Cresswell, 574 tons’.142 Amongst the passengers listed is ‘Worgan’.143 (Worgan’s first impressions of New Zealand may have been similar to those experienced nine years before by Mary Ann Martin, a young migrant from England: ‘The tall leaves of the flax glittered in the sunlight. To a Londoner born and bred this home seemed like a fairyland. The clear air seemed to quiver and sparkle with light.’)144 It is unlikely that the New Zealand Worgan is Sydney’s George William, because passenger Worgan’s arrival in Auckland occurred one month before the Sydney press advertised George William’s participation in Grocott’s ‘Dissolving Views’.145

139 Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February 1851, p. 2.
140 I am indebted to the eminent historian and emeritus curator of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Elizabeth Ellis OAM, for this suggestion.
143 Ibid., p. 2.
144 Data acquired from an exhibition label, ‘Stories from Young Refugees in New Zealand’, in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, on Friday, 25 November 2011.
The New Zealand Worgan is in fact George Worgan (1802–88), the grandson of Dr John Worgan; his parents were Joseph and Jemima Worgan. ‘He was taught the piano by J. B. Cramer and … gave piano lessons to members of fashionable society, including the daughters of Clementi … after his attempt at sheep farming [in New Zealand] failed, he continued to teach music.’

Sydney’s Prodigal Son Returns

The whereabouts and activities of George William after late April 1851 are not known.

On Saturday, 2 November 1861, The Sydney Herald published the following advertisement: ‘Mr. Worgan, professed tuner of the pianoforte, having returned to Sydney, respectfully requests all orders for him to be left with Mr. William King, Pianoforte Warehouse, Market-street.’

It is reasonable to assume that this ‘Mr. Worgan’ was George William. The advertisement reveals that ‘Mr. Worgan’ had the skills necessary to tune pianos, and George William had, after all, been on a piano-tuning tour to Maitland with the publisher Francis Ellard 22 years before, in November 1839.

If George William departed from Australian shores in 1851, his return to Sydney 10 years later may have been motivated by the prospect of lucrative opportunities associated with gold-rush wealth. (In 1861, a passenger bound for Australia on board the SS Great Britain, ‘then the world’s greatest ocean liner’, wrote: ‘Australia! At the present time, what interest—what excitement—in the very word! In every circle, it is the all-absorbing topic.’) In 1861, however, no mention is made in Sydney newspapers of anyone with the name of Worgan having arrived by ship. When George William left Sydney in 1851, he probably did not leave Australia.

During the 10 years following George William’s departure from Sydney, there are only two instances in which a person who may be construed as being George William is mentioned in the Australian press. Both instances are associated with Adelaide newspapers. As a Cornishman, George William may have been
drawn to Adelaide: ‘South Australia’s Yorke Peninsula [was] … known as “Little Cornwall”. It has been estimated [that] between 1837 and 1840, 15 per cent of all assisted migrants to South Australia were Cornish.’

1. ‘Wm. Worgan’ is listed in the Supplement to the South Australian Register of Wednesday, 21 September 1853 (‘Unclaimed Letters—August 31 1853’).

2. The South Australian Advertiser of Tuesday, 8 February 1859: the ‘Shipping News’ reveals that part of the cargo brought to Adelaide on board ‘the Ballarat, from London’ comprised ‘52 cases, W. Worgan’.

If George William left Sydney for Adelaide in 1851, he may not only have changed his profession (‘52 cases’ of what?), but may also have gone under his second name, William, in order to ensure that his reputation, which had been so publicly tarnished in Sydney, would not precede him.

On Tuesday, 9 February 1869, eight years after ‘Mr. Worgan, professed tuner of the pianoforte … returned to Sydney’, a record of court proceedings at Strathalbyn, 57 kilometres south of Adelaide, describes a defendant, ‘Worgan’, as a publican. It seems unlikely that publican Worgan was George William. It is, however, reasonable to assume that publican Worgan was the ‘W. Worgan’ who, in 1859, imported ‘52 cases’ (of liquor?) to Adelaide on board ‘the Ballarat, from London’. The mystery surrounding George William’s ‘lost’ years remains; he disappeared and reappeared, like a fleeting shadow in the ‘opal-blue bush of the Australian interior’.

George William Worgan died in Sydney on Wednesday, 11 June 1862, only seven months after returning from his mysterious absence. He was 62 years old when he died. His death certificate gives his occupation as ‘organist’; his

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154 The Sydney Herald, 2 November 1861, p. 9.
156 ‘Shipping News’, The South Australian Advertiser, 8 February 1859, p. 2.
159 George William Worgan’s death certificate erroneously gives his age at the time of his death as 65.
place of death is given as ‘Infirmary’—perhaps implying that, at the time, he was a pauper. George William Worgan was buried at Camperdown Cemetery, Sydney, on Monday, 16 June 1862.

George Bouchier Worgan Dies in Liskeard

On Sunday, 4 March 1838, two years after he had built Wandeland House on New Road, Liskeard, George Bouchier Worgan died, aged 81 years (his death certificate gives his age as 80 years). He did not make a will; letters of administration dated Thursday, 6 June 1844, granted to his wife, Mary, indicate that his effects were valued at just ‘under £300’—scarcely riches, and yet, representing the equivalent of a prosperous tradesman’s annual income, and enough money, if needed, to purchase a comfortable house.

Worgan’s death certificate, dated Tuesday, 6 March 1838, describes his occupation as ‘gentleman’. The certificate indicates that he died from ‘apoplexy’ (most likely a stroke); his death may have been presaged by symptoms ranging from prolonged unconsciousness, through partial to complete paralysis. There can be little doubt that, lovingly, Mary’s hands would have caressed George’s cheek ‘as if they were washing it with kindness’.

Worgan’s ‘brief obituary merely says “sudden death”’. Other sources record that he hanged himself. If this is so, perhaps 30 grinding years of financial hardship (beginning ca 1808 after the completion of his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall*) and/or depression (arising from his lack of success as farmer, researcher/author, headmaster and provider for his

160 I am indebted to the eminent historian and emeritus curator of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Elizabeth Ellis OAM, for alerting me to this possibility.

161 I am indebted to Brian Barrow for access to documentation relating to George William Worgan’s burial. Camperdown Cemetery was established in 1849. The interment of George William Worgan was one of ‘15,733 burials in Camperdown Cemetery between 1849 and 1867 when the creation of new grave plots was prohibited and burials were only permitted by license from the Chief Secretary’. M. Martin, ‘Camperdown Cemetery’, in Society of Australian Genealogists’ Primary Records Collection Guide (June 2008).


166 West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, p. 17.


family) drove him to commit such an extreme act. If George Worgan committed suicide, permission would not have been granted for his body to be interred in consecrated ground. The venerable jurist and judge Sir William Blackstone (1723–80) described the grim legal consequences of suicide in his *Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England*:

> [T]he law has … ranked [suicide] … amongst the highest crimes.

> … [W]hat punishment can human laws inflict on one who has withdrawn himself from their reach? They can only act upon what he has left behind him, his reputation and fortune: on the former, by an ignominious burial in the highway, with a stake driven through his body; on the latter, by a forfeiture of all his goods and chattels to the king: hoping that his care for either his own reputation, or the welfare of his family, would be some motive to restrain him from so desperate and wicked an act.¹⁶⁹

That Worgan’s grave is located in the cemetery attached to St Martin’s Church, Liskeard (Plate 115), indicates that he did not commit suicide. He was buried in hallowed ground on Thursday, 8 March 1838.

When George Worgan’s body was interred, the St Martin’s Church burial ground comprised 0.4 hectares of land.¹⁷⁰ George Worgan’s funeral service was taken by the Vicar of St Martin’s, the Reverend John Strode Foot.¹⁷¹ It is not known which men walked behind Worgan’s coffin in the cortège (at the time, women did not usually attend funerals).¹⁷²

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¹⁷⁰ Allen, *The History of the Borough of Liskeard*, p. 74. Half an acre (0.2 hectares) was added in 1849. In 1959, the area of the cemetery was further increased. See Paynter, *The Parish Church of St. Martin Liskeard*, p. 28.


Plate 115 George Worgan’s grave, Church of St Martin, Liskeard: the grave is marked by the headstone third from the left.

Source: Photo by the author.

Worgan’s headstone reads (Plate 116): ‘Sacred / to the memory / of / George Boucher Worgan / late surgeon in the navy. / Who died the 4 March / 1838 / aged 80 years.’ (Worgan was, in fact, 81 years old when he died).

Plate 116 The inscription on George Worgan’s headstone.

Source: Photo by the author.
On Friday, 1 September 1995, a brass plaque was attached to the top centre front of Worgan’s headstone. This was done ‘with the consent of the descendants and the burial place administrators’, and included ‘an unveiling dedication ceremony’ held within ‘the context of a descendants’ family reunion’.173

The plaque—whose proportions have little aesthetic correspondence with those of the headstone—covers some of the exquisite etched scrollwork that both surrounds and embellishes the word ‘Sacred’ (Plate 117). The brass plaque reads (Plate 118): ‘George Bouchier / Worgan / Sailed First Fleet / 13-5-1787 / Died 8-3-1838 / Fellowship of First Fleeters / 1994’.

Plate 117 The brass plaque affixed to George Worgan’s headstone.

Source: Photo by the author.

173 ‘First Fleeter Gravesite Plaque Ceremonies—1976–2010’, in Fellowship of the First Fleeters (n.d.). The plaque on George Worgan’s headstone is the 98th of the 119 plaques that had been attached to the gravestones of First Fleeters until 31 December 2010.
Several inconsistencies leave the visiting pilgrim in a state of quiet confusion and incredulity

1. the date of death given on the plaque (8 March 1838) does not correspond with that given either on Worgan’s headstone or on his death certificate (4 March 1838)

2. the brass plaque’s ‘Bouchier’ (although correct) does not conform with the headstone’s ‘Boucher’

3. the plaque’s inscription includes, as an unexplained final statement: ‘Fellowship of First Fleeters 1994’

4. there is no mention on the plaque of Australia (thereby rendering the plaque ineffective as a medium for increasing the understanding of those who have no knowledge of the First Fleet)

5. the plaque’s broken English is inelegant (it should be remembered that George Worgan was an articulate ‘man of extensive reading’).

Furthermore, the plaque’s date, ‘1994’, does not conform with the online listing provided by the Fellowship of First Fleeters (where ‘1995’ is given as the ‘Date of Plaque’).

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175 See ‘First Fleeter Gravesite Plaque Ceremonies’.
For some, the plaque may encourage reflection on the fact that to ‘drag knowledge of reality over the threshold of [ignorance] … is an exhausting task, whether it is performed by art or by experience’.  

Adjacent to George Worgan’s grave, on the right, Ann Lawry (1774–1845) is buried. Ann was the sister of George’s wife, Mary. Ann was born 10 years before Mary. Ann, who never married, died in 1845 at the age of 71, 18 months before Mary died.

Behind George Worgan’s headstone, and (as one faces the back of George Bouchier’s headstone) adjacent to the left, lies his wife, Mary, and Charles Parsons Worgan. Mary and Charles’s single headstone, which rises slightly higher than George’s, reads (Plates 119 and 120): ‘In Memory of / Mary / The wife of / George Boucher Worgan / late surgeon / in the royal navy, / Who died / December the 14, / 1846. / Aged 82 years. / Also of / Charles Parsons Worgan / who died July the 7, / 1848. / Aged 15 years.’

Burgeoning vines, ‘polished silver in a sudden outpouring of sunshine’, cover part of the word ‘Charles’ with a shadowy chiaroscuro.

Plate 119 Mary Worgan’s headstone.

Source: Photo by the author.

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177 Ibid., p. 437.
Whispers and Rumours: Who was Charles Parsons Worgan?

i) Charles Parsons’ Mother

Charles Parsons Worgan was baptised in Liskeard in 1833,^{178} five years before George Bouchier Worgan died. Charles Parsons’ baptismal record lists his mother as ‘Charlotte’, his father simply as ‘Worgan’.^{179}

Charlotte Sophia Worgan was George Worgan’s sister. Charlotte Sophia was christened at St Andrew’s Church, Holborn, London, on Wednesday, 2 September 1761.^{180} Charlotte Sophia was four years younger than her brother George.

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178 ‘Baptism Record’.
On Saturday, 21 November 1778, at the age of 17, Charlotte Sophia married the then 42-year-old William Parsons, composer, and, from 1786, ‘Master of the King’s Musick’ to King George III. Because Charlotte Sophia was a minor, the marriage record shows that Charlotte married Parsons ‘by Licence & with consent of John Worgan Father’ (during the early nineteenth century, ‘the marriage of a minor without parental consent was illegal in England’). The marriage ceremony took place at St Marylebone’s Church, Westminster, London.

Sir William Parsons was the first English musician ever to be knighted, and was the best singing-master of his day … He was a well-educated, well-informed man, and a perfect gentleman in his conduct and manners … Sir William Parsons had the honour to pass a great deal of time with the royal family, by whom he was much respected for his acquirements, his excellent temper and high character. An illustrious personage once said of him, that he always showed a readiness to further the interest of his professional brethren, but that he never knew him utter a syllable injurious to any one of them.

Sir William Parsons died at his home in 22 Somerset Street, Portman Square (Plate 121), London, on Saturday, 19 July 1817, at the age of 71. According to the records of St Marylebone’s Church, Westminster, Charlotte Sophia died 36 years later, between July and September 1853, at the age of 92.

By 1833—the year of Charles Parsons’ birth—Charlotte Sophia would have been 72 years old, well beyond childbearing age. It is unlikely that George Worgan’s sister Charlotte Sophia is Charles Parsons’ mother.

181 Ibid.
182 ‘Marriage Record No. 515’, St Marylebone Church, Westminster.
183 Murray, An Elegant Madness, p. 148.
The census of 1841—taken on the evening of Sunday, 6 June, three years after George Worgan’s death—lists a 25-year-old ‘Charlotte Worgan’ living with George’s widow, Mary, in Wadeland House, Liskeard.¹⁸⁸ If the census information is correct, Charlotte was born in 1816. Oddly, there is no contemporaneous record plus or minus five years of a Charlotte Worgan being born or baptised in any parish in England.

Perhaps Charlotte was a servant. According to George Worgan’s pronouncements in his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall*, ‘farm servants have 8–12 guineas a year and their board’.¹⁸⁹ Given that Wadeland House was part of a farm, Charlotte, as a servant, most probably received board as part of her remuneration; she would have slept in the servants’ quarters on the first floor of the attached service cottage (Plates 108 and 111).

Then again, perhaps Charlotte was George Bouchier and Mary’s adopted daughter. In 1816, if Charlotte were not adopted, she would have been born to

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¹⁸⁸ The census erroneously gives Mary Worgan’s age as 65 years. Given that Mary was born in 1764, she would have been 77 at the time the census was conducted.
a 52-year-old mother (Mary) and a 59-year-old father (George Bouchier). This of course is not impossible, but age-related issues (and significantly, the absence of a baptismal record) render it unlikely. The 25-year-old ‘Charlotte Worgan’ mentioned in the 1841 census cannot have been George Bouchier’s younger sister Charlotte Sophia (who, at the time of the census, was 80 years old).

The 1841 census also tells us that a six-year-old ‘Charles Worgan’ lived at Wadeland House. As ‘Charles Parsons Worgan’ was baptised in 1833, a two-year discrepancy exists between the date of his birth as implied by his baptismal record (1833), and that implied by his age given as census information (1835); perhaps the information provided by Charlotte for the census was intended to deflect any potential for embarrassment arising from her son’s illegitimacy.

Like George Worgan’s youngest son, John Parsons, the selection of Charles’s middle name, Parsons, may have been inspired by the fact that George’s sister Charlotte Sophia had married Sir William Parsons.

That the Charlotte of Wadeland House was only 17 when she gave birth to Charles Parsons in 1833 would not have been out of keeping with conventions of the time. That she was unmarried when she gave birth, however, was not in keeping with contemporaneous conventions.

In an age when female chastity was of fundamental importance both within a very competitive marriage market and in regard to inheritance, sexual activity outside of marriage was deemed a crime against society itself. What greater and more emphatic evidence of such activity was there than the existence of a child? Abandonment and infanticide were commonplace in such circumstances.

The Worgans, ignoring the opprobrium associated with illegitimacy, neither abandoned nor murdered baby Charles Parsons; they also did not leave him in an orphanage.

ii) Charles Parsons’ Father

The identity of Charles Parsons’ father remains a mystery. Charles Parsons was baptised at St Martin’s Church, Liskeard, on Wednesday, 20 November 1833.

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190 Cornwall Family History Society, Parish Births, Marriages, Deaths Records, Baptism Records (Truro, Cornwall: Cornwall Family History Society, n.d.).
191 See ‘ii) Charles Parsons’ Father’, below.
193 Cornwall Family History Society, Parish Births, Marriages, Deaths Records, Baptism Records.
Charles Parsons’ baptismal record describes his father simply as ‘Worgan’. Mysteriously, the column entitled ‘Father Forename’ has been left blank. This lack of detail raises some unfortunate suspicions.

Every one of the baptismal records of George and Mary Worgan’s five children (including Mary and John, who died in infancy) identify ‘George Boucher’ Worgan as being their father. George and Mary Worgan’s children were baptised at St Wenna’s Church in the Parish of Morval, with the exception of their youngest surviving son, John Parsons, who was baptised at St Martin’s Church, Liskeard. Contemporaneous baptismal records created at both St Wenna’s and St Martin’s consistently and unerringly reveal a detailed approach to the provision of information concerning the father’s forename(s). (‘A clerk in holy orders i.e. a clergymen of the Church of England, was [also] a civil servant (because the C of E is the state religion) and [was] … thus [legally] responsible for the [creation and] safe keeping of official records.’) Disinterest or laziness on the part of the clergymen-clerk at St Martin’s Church, Liskeard, cannot reasonably be used to explain the lack of detail on Charles Parsons’ baptismal record. Perhaps discretion inspired the omission of the forename(s) of Charles’s father.

Given that Charles’s father’s surname is given as ‘Worgan’, one hesitates to posit that the then 76-year-old George Bouchier Worgan fathered Charles Parsons with his 17-year-old servant or adopted daughter; it is reasonable to maintain that this would be contrary to George Bouchier’s character.

According to J. Pigot & Co.’s National Commercial Directory, no banker, manufacturer, merchant, professional gentleman or trader with the surname ‘Worgan’ lived in Liskeard apart from ‘Geo. Boucher”—that is, George Bouchier. Similarly, no Worgan of similar social rank lived in the nearby village of Bodmin, or, in fact, in the whole of Cornwall. The only Worgan in Liskeard apart from George Bouchier who could have been responsible for 17-year-old Charlotte’s pregnancy in 1833 was George Bouchier’s eldest son, George William (George Bouchier’s youngest son, John Parsons, had immigrated to Sydney four years before, in 1829).

If Charlotte were a servant, the intimacy that she would have had with her master’s family would have offered opportunities for both legitimate and...

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194 See ibid.
195 See ibid.
197 See Pigot, ‘Liskeard, Cornwall’, p. 149.
199 In 1838, when Charles Parsons was five years old, George William immigrated to Sydney. See ‘Shipping Intelligence Arrivals’, The Sydney Herald, p. 2.
illicit alliances\textsuperscript{200} (her pregnancy allows us to see some of the temptations and vulnerabilities of servants at the time). If Charlotte was George and Mary’s adopted daughter then George William’s actions were more than untoward. If Charlotte was George and Mary’s biological daughter then the family had become the victim of incest.

George William may have left (fled?) Liskeard for London either shortly after it was discovered that Charlotte was pregnant or just after Charlotte gave birth to Charles Parsons in 1833.

On Sunday, 4 January 1835, George William was inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians in London (Plate 122).

\textbf{Plate 122 The Royal Society of Musicians, London (as it appears today).}

Source: Photo by the author.

The Royal Society described George William as having had success as a ‘piano forte master in schools and private families’. 201 It is reasonable to assume that prior to his admission to the Royal Society in 1835, he must have been professionally active in London for long enough to build a credible reputation as a piano teacher; if he arrived in London in 1833, the ensuing two years would have provided him with more than enough time to establish a reputation for being trustworthy.

Royal Society documentation describes George William as ‘a married man’. 202 No contemporaneous documentation anywhere in England records his marriage. A married man would certainly have been regarded as a ‘safer’ kind of person to give piano lessons to a young lady in her home. Perhaps George William lied about his marital status in order to gain employment (perhaps George William’s ethics were indeed, ‘flexible’).

A conjectural scenario emerges that paints George William in a rather bad light: one is reluctant to hypothesise that, at the age of 33, George William fathered Charles Parsons with the 17-year-old Charlotte.

If George William did compromise Charlotte’s virtue, and if his younger brother, John Parsons, knew about this particular skeleton in the family closet, the circumstance could explain the seeming lack of affection between the two brothers after they had both independently immigrated to Sydney. Men who debauched and abandoned pregnant, unmarried young ladies were below contempt not only because they ‘removed a chaste female from the marriage market (of whatever segment of society)’, but also because they often set ‘in train a tragic descent into vice and prostitution’. 203 In Sydney, John Parsons’ and George William’s apparent disinterest in each other’s lives may also be explained by their age difference (five years); perhaps this gave rise to an icy relationship maintained by the ongoing effects of sibling rivalry. The evident instabilities of George William’s married life in Sydney 204 suggest that the shortcomings of his character 205 may have made him capable of seducing Charlotte.

That George Bouchier Worgan built Wadeland House a good distance from the outskirts of Liskeard may be explained by a desire to escape the prying eyes of the townspeople in relation to the existence of Charles Parsons. Then again, the land upon which he built may have been all that was available within his price range. Given that the land comprised a farm, he may not only have yearned for

203 Riding, Mid-Georgian Britain 1740–69, p. 15.
204 See Sydney Morning Herald, 19 February 1851, p. 2. See also Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer, 15 February 1851, p. 2.
205 See ‘Scandal and Public Ridicule’, above.
the farming life (success at which had eluded him so many years before), but may also have quested after the delights of rural solitude. George Worgan’s decision to locate Wadeland House on a farm, as well as his statement that ‘[m]y very earliest inclinations and propensities led me to the study and pursuit of agriculture’, suggest that he retained a lifelong passion for farming and the rural life.

Some researchers maintain that George Bouchier Worgan hanged himself in 1838 (the year George William migrated to Sydney). If George Bouchier did commit suicide, it is reasonable to assume that one of the reasons that drove him to this act of desperation was the knowledge that either his family was linked with the unwanted pregnancy outside of marriage of a minor or a member of his household had become the victim of incest. On the other hand, his depression may have been the cumulative result of his failures as a farmer, provider, researcher/author and headmaster. That Worgan built Wadeland House only two years before he died suggests, however, that he was not plagued by despair in his old age. Furthermore, given the fact that George Bouchier’s body was interred in hallowed ground (the law of the time ‘enacted vengeance on … [a suicide’s] reputation and fortune’, prescribing ‘ignominious burial in the highway, with a stake driven through his body’), he cannot have committed suicide.

It is reasonable to conjecture that Charles Parsons’ mother, Charlotte, may have been the ‘Charlotte Elizabeth Worgan’ who had a civil marriage ceremony in Liskeard during the October–December quarter of 1842. (After 1837 a couple were able to be married, within a context of civil registration, ‘by the local registrar’.) At the time of her marriage

1. Charlotte was 26 years old
2. her son, Charles Parsons, was nine years old (he had only six more years to live)
3. Charlotte and her son were living in Wadeland House (where, presumably, they had lived for the previous six years—since its completion in 1836)
4. George Bouchier had been dead for four years.

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206 Arthur Young Papers, Ad. MSS 35129 (London: British Library). I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
208 See Worgan, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall …
209 See ‘George Bouchier Worgan Dies in Liskeard’, above.
210 Pembroke, Arthur Phillip, p. 263.
213 Treseder, ‘Marriage Certificates Explained’, p. 29.
Charlotte’s marriage was probably to the then 27-year-old William Murray, jnr (b. 1815). This can be deduced from

1. documentation concerning civil marriages in Liskeard during the October–December quarter of 1842, which indicates that Charlotte married one of the following men
   a) Joseph Bennet
   b) William Murray
   c) John Runnels
   d) Richard Squire
2. the death certificate of a ‘Charlotte Elizabeth Murray’, who died in Liskeard in 1864 (the only contemporaneous death certificate from Liskeard on which the name ‘Charlotte’ appears).

According to J. Pigot & Co.’s National Commercial Directory of 1830, William Murray, of Church Street, Liskeard, was a ‘watch and clock maker’.

That Charlotte’s marriage took place within the context of a civil ceremony may be explained by the church’s refusal to sanction her marriage because she had given birth to Charles Parsons out of wedlock, as a minor, and perhaps because of the haunting spectre of incest. Love, however, conquers all: William Murray must have been so deeply in love with Charlotte that he was both inspired and empowered to ignore the stigma that attended her.

If Charlotte Worgan and the ‘Charlotte Elizabeth Murray’ who died in 1864 are one and the same person then Charlotte was 48 years old when she died. Her husband almost immediately married his former housekeeper, Jane Whitford, with whom he had been co-habiting for several years.

With the spotlight shining on the protagonists of this family drama, the following summary traces significant events.

• 1746: William Parsons, the future husband of Charlotte Sophia (George Bouchier Worgan’s sister) is born.
• 1757: George Bouchier Worgan is born.
• 1761: Charlotte Sophia (George Bouchier’s sister) is born.
• 1778: Charlotte Sophia marries William Parsons, in London.

214 Ibid.
216 Pigot, ’Liskeard, Cornwall’, p. 150. The William Murray listed in Pigot’s Directory may have been either father or son. What is certain, however, is that by 1861, William Murray, jnr, was an auctioneer and the high bailiff of the county court. See M. Hall, Random Genealogy.
• 1793: George Bouchier marries Mary Lawry, in Liskeard.
• 1800: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, is born.
• 1805: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, is born.
• 1815: William Murray, the future husband of Charlotte (George and Mary’s servant or adopted daughter?) is born.
• 1816: Charlotte (the servant or adopted daughter) is born.
• 1817: Sir William Parsons, Charlotte Sophia’s husband, dies, in London.
• 1829: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, immigrates to Australia.
• 1833: Charlotte (the servant or adopted daughter) falls pregnant.
• 1833: Charles Parsons, Charlotte’s son, is born.
• 1833?: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, leaves Liskeard(?).
• 1835: George William is inducted as a member of the Royal Society of Musicians, in London.
• 1836: George Bouchier builds Wadeland House, on the outskirts of Liskeard.
• 1837: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, is in Liskeard, and is in trouble with the law there.
• 1838: George Bouchier dies, in Liskeard, aged 81.
• 1838: George William immigrates to Australia.
• 1842: Charlotte (George and Mary’s servant or adopted daughter) marries William Murray, in Liskeard.
• 1846: Mary, George Bouchier’s wife, dies, in Liskeard, aged 82.
• 1848: Charles Parsons, Charlotte’s son, dies, in Liskeard, aged 15.
• 1853: Charlotte Sophia, George Bouchier’s sister, dies, in London, aged 92.
• 1862: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, dies, in Sydney, aged 62.
• 1864: Charlotte (the servant or adopted daughter) dies, in Liskeard, aged 48 (16 years after the death of her son, Charles Parsons).

The simple mention of ‘Worgan’ on Charles Parsons’ baptismal record implies that his true father either was not known or was not named in order to protect someone’s identity, and that George Bouchier Worgan took on the ‘fatherly’ responsibility of raising and providing for Charles Parsons.

That the truth was so effectively suppressed is miraculous. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, English society (especially the aristocracy) appears to have been obsessed with marriage, sex and property.
One of the crucial ingredients in the success of Edward Cave’s [1691–1754] Gentleman’s Magazine was the monthly column of marriages, which gave the amount of dowry, real or invented, and any piquant garnishings that could be provided. Marriage gossip was the staple fare of many … correspondences, often with considerable detail of the financial arrangements … Nuptual performance was monitored. Horace Walpole was disappointed that he had ‘no anecdotes of the wedding-night’ to pass on after Lord Fitzwilliam’s marriage in 1744 and when Lord Beauchamp in 1768 married a daughter of Viscount Windsor, an Irish peer, George Selwyn reported of the honeymoon that: ‘Beauchamp is seen out so early in a morning that it does not look as if much business was doing.’218

Like the aristocracy, a community as small as Liskeard would have been rife with gossip whenever scandal appeared; after all, ‘entertainment’ (at best) may have been ‘genteel’, but ‘scandal was a drawingroom amusement’.219 And yet, surprisingly, there is not a whisper, not a rumour concerning Charlotte and George William Worgan.

That Charles Parsons is buried next to George Bouchier Worgan and his wife, Mary, strongly suggests that not only is there a close familial connection, but also Charles Parsons was greatly loved. That there is no mention on Charles Parsons’ tombstone either of his parents or of his relationship to George Bouchier or Mary Worgan (let alone to his mother, Charlotte) encourages conjecture. “This is a case in which thoughtful people may reach different conclusions from the same evidence. Any further facts brought forward would certainly be more than welcome.”220 All that can be said with certainty is that the circumstances surrounding Charlotte and her son, Charles Parsons, are replete with mystery (and mysteries once solved are, arguably, not as interesting).

George Bouchier Worgan’s Character and Personality

Edwards regards Worgan as ‘a shadowy figure’, stating that ‘it is difficult to decide what sort of a man he really was’.221 Evidence, however, suggests otherwise; recurring patterns (as well as all-too-human inconsistencies) in George Worgan’s behaviour provide insights into his character and personality.

218 Cannon, Aristocratic Century, p. 73.
219 Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 49.
He appears to have been a perceptive and articulate man, who had sufficient self-confidence, courage and ability to respond with energy and creativity to life’s challenges.

As a conscientious and caring naval surgeon, Worgan appears, throughout the First Fleet voyage, to have been ‘determined to put [his] … professional skills at the disposal’ of the convicts, marines and crew.\textsuperscript{222} His relations with the officers on board the \textit{Sirius} were positive, and he would have found satisfaction in the knowledge that on the voyage to Botany Bay, ‘no cause of complaint was alleged by anyone against’ him.\textsuperscript{223} Following his return from Sydney Cove to Plymouth, he was described in the periodical \textit{The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer} as a ‘young gentleman of approved character and merit’.\textsuperscript{224} Following his retirement from the navy, Worgan ‘mixed with other professional men in Cornwall—lawyers, farmers, clergy; but one wonders how he viewed life and society in rural Cornwall after a London childhood and the excitement and adventure of his naval career’.\textsuperscript{225} Despite the fact that he was not born in Cornwall, Worgan ‘married, settled, lived and worked locally and served his adopted county as best he could’.\textsuperscript{226} There can be little doubt that Worgan was motivated and industrious.

Worgan’s statement that ‘[m]y very earliest inclinations and propensities led me to the study and pursuit of agriculture’\textsuperscript{227} suggests that he retained a lifelong ardour for farming and the rural life. Worgan’s experimental farming methods imply that he was both intrigued and inspired by innovation. At his agricultural best, his proclivity for inventing farm machinery suggests that he had a clear, analytical and creative mind.

Remarks contained in his \textit{General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall} show that he was bewildered and outraged when he encountered inequitable and disadvantaging laws.\textsuperscript{228} And yet, Worgan’s ethics are called into question through his duplicitous and opportunistic involvement in the victualling racket on \textit{Le Caton}. The compassionate side of Worgan’s personality is revealed by the care that he lavished upon his wife and children.

\textsuperscript{222} Brooke and Brandon, \textit{Bound for Botany Bay}, p. 198.
\textsuperscript{223} Thomas Logan, surgeon superintendent on the convict transport ship \textit{Albion}, Logbook entry dated 14 November 1828. Quoted in Pocock, ‘A Voyage with the Sick and Dying’, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{224} \textit{The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer}, [Edinburgh], 16 May 1792, Vol. 9, p. 80. In this source, George Worgan’s surname is incorrectly given; he is described as ‘Mr Morgan, surgeon of his majesty’s ship Sirius, who returns to England in the Dutch vessel’ (p. 80).
\textsuperscript{225} Edwards, ‘George Bouchier Worgan’, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{227} \textit{Arthur Young Papers}, Ad. MSS 35129 (London: British Library). I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for \textit{Working the Forge}.
\textsuperscript{228} See Worgan, \textit{General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall} …, ‘Tenures’, Chapter 2, p. 22; ‘Mode of Occupation, Section 2: Rent’, Chapter 4, p. 32; ‘Mode of Occupation, Section 5: Leases’, Chapter 4, p. 38; ‘Obstacles to Improvements’, Chapter 16, p. 178.
That Worgan successfully trained as a schoolteacher late in life suggests that he possessed not only the humility necessary to learn, but also the intelligence, analytical skills, memory, patience and compassion associated with the professional practice of teaching.

Unfortunately, no matter how ‘enthusiastic he may have been in the various stages of his life, he enjoyed a singular lack of success in nearly every venture which he tried’,\textsuperscript{229} however, ‘far better it is to dare mighty things … even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat’.\textsuperscript{230} George Eliot’s (1819–80)\textsuperscript{231} words seem apposite: ‘the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number that lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.’\textsuperscript{232}

The failures in Worgan’s life were rarely caused by his own inadequacies: the square piano that he took to Sydney Cove was ruined by extremes of weather; he failed as a farmer; his farming inventions were ignored in the long term; his research was publicly ridiculed; he did not establish any connections with ‘the industrial or business organisations which were springing up all over’ Cornwall;\textsuperscript{233} the school at which he was employed as headmaster closed; his financial situation was often precarious; and the mysterious paternity of Charles Parsons Worgan suggests that the virtue of George’s household had been compromised. Even though the last two years of George Worgan’s life were spent in the comfort of Wadeland House, the presence of Charles Parsons there may have been a constant reminder that disorder and turpitude had visited the household.

Because sexual dishonor was universally regarded as so grave, it served widely as metaphor and marker of disarray, dishonesty, and disrepute. Though aimed in the first instance at women, given their vulnerability … sexual insult/innuendo struck at the men who were supposed to be their custodians, guarantors, and sole beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{234}

\textsuperscript{231} George Eliot was the pen name of the Victorian novelist Mary Anne Evans.
Impressively, George Worgan remained resilient in the face of tribulation, and with each setback that beleaguered him appears to have recovered with surprising vitality. Worgan showed that ‘man is not powerless when life goes ill, that he can assemble sounds and colours and actions into patterns’, embodying an ‘antidote’ to life’s ‘poison’.235

That Worgan could afford to purchase a Beck piano, and to build Wadeland House, shows that he was capable of thrift. (It also shows that he had good taste, especially in relation to pianos.)

In 1829, the poet, literary scholar and essayist Robert Southey (1774–1843) described the ideals of service that should be pursued by a ‘good and wise man’. Southey’s description rings true in relation to Worgan’s character and personality:

To do his duty first to his family, then to his neighbours, lastly to his country and kind; to promote the welfare and happiness of those who are in any degree dependant upon him, or whom he has the means of assisting, and never wantonly to injure the meanest thing that lives; to encourage, as far as he may have the power, whatever is useful and ornamental in society, whatever tends to refine and elevate humanity; to store his mind with such knowledge as it is fitted to receive, and he is able to attain; and so to employ the talents committed to his charge, that when the account is required, he may hope to have his stewardship approved.236

Some researchers have suggested that George Worgan may have ‘considered himself to have been “a success only at failure”’.237 Others have suggested that his ‘long Calvary of … misfortune’238 broke his spirit and drove him to commit suicide239 (Worgan cannot have committed suicide, for he was buried in hallowed ground).240 Such assessments unfairly malign him, for despite the difficulties Worgan endured, despondence failed to conquer. He appears, overall, to have maintained an optimistic attitude to life as an independent and engaging individual who remained maturely vulnerable and dependably giving to those around him. He was, in the words of his navy colleague Arthur Bowes Smyth, ‘a very sensible good kind of man’.241

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240 See ‘George Bouchier Worgan Dies in Liskeard’ above.
The following summary traces some of the significant events in the life of George Bouchier Worgan.

- 3 May 1757: George Bouchier Worgan is christened at St Andrew’s, Holborn.
- 1775: George Bouchier joins the British Navy, and serves as a Surgeon’s Mate on the hospital ship Tiger.
- 1778–79: George Bouchier serves as a Surgeon’s Second Mate.
- 1779: George Bouchier is certified as a Surgeon Fifth Rate.
- 1780–82: George Bouchier serves on board the hospital ship Pilote.
- 1783–85: George Bouchier is unaccounted for; perhaps he worked as a naval surgeon (on the Portsmouth guardship Ganges) or was on some sort of detached list.²⁴²
- 1783: George Bouchier purchases a square piano by John Broadwood;²⁴³ or
- 1780–86: George Bouchier purchases a square piano by Frederick Beck; or
- 1785–86: George Bouchier purchases a square piano by Longman & Broderip.²⁴⁴
- 1786: George Bouchier serves on the Portsmouth guardship Ganges.
- 30 October 1786: George Bouchier is discharged from the Ganges to the Sirius.²⁴⁵
- 1 November 1786: George Bouchier joins the Sirius.
- 13 May 1787: George Bouchier departs Portsmouth for Botany Bay on board the Sirius.
- 20 August 1787: George Bouchier plays his Beck(?) square piano for fellow officers on board the Sirius in Rio de Janeiro.
- 19 January 1788: George Bouchier arrives at Botany Bay.
- 26 January 1788, approximately 3 pm: George Bouchier departs Botany Bay for Port Jackson on board the Sirius.
- 26 January 1788, approximately 7 pm: George Bouchier arrives at Port Jackson.

²⁴² I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
²⁴³ See Appendix C, Volume 2 of this publication.
²⁴⁴ See Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
²⁴⁵ See Gillen, The Founders of Australia, p. 393.
• Between 27 January and 2 October 1788: George Bouchier takes his Beck(?) square piano ashore at Port Jackson before his departure on the Sirius for the Cape of Good Hope(?).
• 2 October 1788: George Bouchier departs Port Jackson for the Cape of Good Hope on board the Sirius.
• 9 May 1789: George Bouchier arrives at Port Jackson from the Cape of Good Hope (having circumnavigated the globe).
• By 6 March 1790: George Bouchier’s Beck(?) square piano is permanently located ashore at Sydney Cove.
• Between January and 7 March 1791: George Bouchier moves his Beck(?) square piano into John and Elizabeth Macarthur’s new thatched wattle-and-daub hut.
• Between January and 7 March 1791: George Bouchier gives his Beck(?) square piano to Elizabeth Macarthur.
• 27 April 1791: George Bouchier departs Sydney Cove for England on board the Dutch ship Waaksamheyd.
• 22 April 1792: George Bouchier arrives at Portsmouth from Sydney Cove.
• 4 May 1792: George Bouchier is discharged from any duties associated with the colony at Sydney Cove.
• 1793: George Bouchier marries Mary Lawry, in Liskeard, Cornwall.
• 1793–98: George Bouchier serves as surgeon’s first mate on the hospital ship Le Caton.
• 1 March 1794: Samuel Keast, Purser on Le Caton, relinquishes his victualling contract to George Worgan.
• Late January?/early February? 1798: Immediately prior to the Le Caton being converted into a prison ship, George Bouchier retires, because of ill health, on a half-pay navy pension.
• 1798: George Bouchier is the leaseholder of two farms, one at Bray, and one at Hendra, in the Parish of Morval, Cornwall.
• 1800: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, is born.
• 1801: Mary, George and Mary’s daughter, is born.
• 8 November 1803: George Bouchier testifies at a naval inquiry in relation to his involvement with corrupt victualling practices during his period of service on board Le Caton.
• 1804: George Bouchier takes up the lease of a farm at Glynn, in the Parish of Cardinham, Cornwall.
• 1805: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, is born.
• 1806: George Bouchier experiences financial hardship.
• May 1806: The Cornwall Agricultural Society awards George Bouchier a £3 prize for his farming machinery inventions.
• 1806: Two years after moving his family to the leased farm at Glynn, George Bouchier breaks the lease and leaves the farm owing two years’ rent.
• November 1808: At the behest of the Board of Agriculture, George Bouchier researches and writes his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall*.
• 1809–10?: The Board of Agriculture engages the Reverend Robert Walker, the Reverend Jeremiah Trist and Vice-Admiral Charles Penrose to rewrite George Bouchier’s *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall*.
• 1809–12: George Bouchier experiences financial hardship.
• 1809–12?: George Bouchier takes up employment as a schoolteacher in Liskeard(?).
• 1811: George Bouchier’s *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* is first published in London.
• 1812: George Bouchier trains at the Central Schools, Truro, Cornwall, as a schoolteacher.
• 1813: George Bouchier is employed as headmaster of the National Society Boys School, Liskeard.
• 1815: The second edition of George Bouchier’s *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* is published.
• 1815?: The National Society Boys School, Liskeard, closes.
• 1815? – early 1830s?: George Bouchier is employed as a schoolteacher in Liskeard(?).
• 1822: George Bouchier lives in Dean Street, Liskeard.
• 1828: George Bouchier experiences financial hardship.
• 1829: John Parsons, George and Mary’s youngest son, immigrates to Australia.
• 1830: George Bouchier lives in West Street, Liskeard.
• 1833: Charlotte, George and Mary’s servant(?) or adopted(?) daughter, falls pregnant.
• 1833: Charles Parsons, Charlotte’s son, is born.
• 1833?: George William, George and Mary’s eldest son, leaves Liskeard(?).
• 1836: George Bouchier builds Wadeland House, on the outskirts of Liskeard.
• 1838: George Bouchier dies, in Liskeard, aged 81.