

Geelong & District Insolvency Competition

November 2009

Insolvent: Phillipa DONALDSON

Submitted by

Geelong Family History Group team

PHILLIPA DONALDSON

[Compiled by: Geelong Family History Group team]

Miss Phillipa Norris was born in London c.1829. By early 1858 Phillipa had made her way to Geelong where she married on 10 January 1858 to Dr Hugh Donaldson. The marriage notice in the *Geelong Advertiser* stated she was the only daughter of the late Dr Bethel Norris, London.¹

Hugh Donaldson, b.c.1813 Ayreshire Scotland, had gained his medical qualifications in Edinburgh [MD 1837] and [LRCS 1838].

Hugh was first registered in Victoria in 1855; off the register: 1863; re-registered 6 July 1866 to be appointed by the Shire of South Barwon on 12 July 1866 as Public Vaccinator for Duneed and Connewarre. Reported 20 January 1873 in *Geelong Advertiser* as being gazetted under the Medical Practitioners Statute.²

Hugh and Phillipa had four children:³

Sarah Percey b.27 Dec 1858 at Germantown (Grovedale)

Julia b.1861 Chilwell

Emily b.1863 Geelong

David b.1865 Germantown

On 16 August 1876 Hugh had complained to Phillipa about being in great pain so she gave him laudanum and later potash of clona and called the doctor who came four times during the day. The next night Hugh passed away. The inquest held at South Geelong a verdict of an 'overdose of opium and chloral hydrate', was given.⁴ Hugh had practiced in Victoria for 16 years up to his death. He was buried in the Eastern Cemetery, Geelong in the Old Presbyterian section PRSO/C-4/275 – his occupation given as 'surgeon'. The report of his death in the *Geelong Advertiser* 15 Aug 1876 described Hugh as 'well connected in England and had lived at South Geelong for a considerable time'.

Phillipa was left to rear her family – the youngest was aged 11 years at this time and her late husband, at the time of his death, was indebted to many businesses around the Geelong & district area with accounts going back as far as 1871.

By the 8 October 1877 Phillipa declared insolvency having no means of paying her husband's debts (totaling approx £39/16/1) and was now living on 'the voluntary aid of my friends which is insufficient for my support'. The only assets were household furniture worth £5 and the £2 per week that friends had given her.⁵

¹ *Geelong Advertiser* 11/2/1858

² Australian Medical Pioneers website

References: Obituary. *Australian Medical Journal*

Register of Medical Practitioners for 1867. Medical Board of Victoria, 1867

Obituary. *Melb Med Record* 1876;5:149

Obituary *Aust Med J* 1876;21:275

Medical Register 1863

Medical directory for 1873, and general medical register. London : Churchill, 1873

³ Victorian BDM Indexes & Baptismal Records - Wesley Circuit Geelong

⁴ 'No Man Lives Forever' Inquests of Geelong & District 1870-1879 – Geelong Family History Group

⁵ Insolvency Records – PROV – VPRS 815/107/2890

Those named as creditors were:

- Mr Goodall, music instructor – hire of piano
- Thomas Anderson, baker – South Geelong
- Bright & Hitchcock - drapers
- Mr Fynney, butcher, Pakington St
- Stephens – bootmaker, South Geelong
- Andrews' furniture dealer
- Excell & Co – drapers
- Fagg Bros – timber merchants
- Mrs Hobbs, dressmaker – South Geelong
- Mr Sennett – plumber
- Fitzpatrick – baker - South Geelong
- Clarke Bros – grocers
- T Couves – baker
- James Wilson – baker- Pakington St
- Miller – draper
- Water - draper
- Mr Higgins – solicitor
- Hoddart – coal merchants
- Mr Woods – wood merchant
- McDonald – chemist – medicine
- Baliff – crockery shop
- Batten – butcher
- Box – ironmonger
- McCure – bootmaker
- Purnell – dealer
- Mr Murphy – draper
- Matthews Bros - butchers
- Cravem, Hilson, James Scott – grocers
- Wisson, Richardson – bootmakers
- Thacker – printer
- Omand (hotel keeper) & Gray (of Belmont) – money lent

In 1887 Phillipa remarried to a widower, John Gough Gabb.

John, a native of Gloucestershire, was previously married to Eleanor Buckingham. The couple had 5 children, all but one dying in infancy. John was a painter / sign writer living in William Street in 1861.⁶ By 1866 he was living in Myers Street West, the second house along from the Gaelic Church. John was a former leader of the Geelong Philharmonic Society having arrived apparently in 1852.⁷ John was also noted as a violinist.⁸

On 6 September 1875 it was reported that Eleanor, wife of John Gabb, one of Geelong's oldest musician's had been struck with paralysis. The following year Eleanor passed away at their residence off James Street on 16th June 1876 aged 56 and was buried in an unmarked grave in the Eastern Cemetery, Geelong in the old Church of England section.⁹

⁶ Geelong & Western District Directory 1861

⁷ Geelong Advertiser 15/9/1870

⁸ Geelong Advertiser 6/4/1874

⁹ Geelong Cemeteries Trust microfiche Burial Records

In 1873 John was involved with painting one of two banners for St Mary's Total Abstinence Society. On 3rd April 1878 John was severely cut about the legs when he fell from a ladder through a plate glass window he was painting for Shirra & Moodie in Moorabool Street.

In 1880 John was again in trouble having been assaulted by his son Daniel Henry Gabb who appears to have been a sign writer like his father.¹⁰

John died at his residence, James St off Ryrie St on 14/4/1904 aged 81 and was buried in the Eastern Cemetery in the old Church of England section, most possibly with his first wife and children. His death notice described him as a 'colonist of 52 years'.

Phillipa died at her residence, now 6 Elizabeth St Newtown on 10 January 1910 aged 81 and was buried in the Eastern Cemetery Old Presbyterian section (no grave number given) – but most probably with her first husband, Hugh Donaldson and their son, David.¹¹

¹⁰ Geelong Advertiser 7/11/1881

¹¹ Geelong Cemeteries Trust microfiche Burial Records