

**Ruth and Jane Stephens per *Thomas Arbuthnot* arrived 3 February 1850
and their mother, Eliza Stephens, per *Lismoyne* arrived 29 November 1849**

A story of family reunion during the Famine



Ruth Stephens [pictured, with thanks to descendant, Peter Eley] and Jane Stephens arrived in Sydney on the *Thomas Arbuthnot* on 3 February 1850, shown on the shipping list as simply from Wicklow with no further indication of native place. Ruth was aged 15 and Jane was 14; both were house servants and members of the Church of England who could read and write. The shipping list [see below] noted their parents as John and Eliza, 'parents living in Sydney' [Ref: SRNSW 4/4919 and SRNSW 4/4786 – scanned on Ancestry].

The disposal list for the *Thomas Arbuthnot* [Ref: Governor FitzRoy's Despatch No. 127 of 1850, Mitchell Library, Sydney A1256 CY2056 – see below] shows that after five days on the ship, the sisters were placed in the Immigration Depot at Hyde Park Barracks in Macquarie Street, Sydney, the current site of Australia's National Famine Memorial. Both were

hired after 21 days in the barracks by Mr/Mrs M. Bowerman of Macquarie Street, Sydney. Ruth was indentured for 3 years at a wage of £6 a year; Jane, being younger, was indentured for 4 years at the same rate and both received full board and lodgings as part of their employment arrangement.

1850	Stephens Ruth	14	Housemaid Wicklow	John & Eliza living in Sydney	Q of C	do	parents living in Sydney	good	none
1850	Jane	16	do	do	do	do	do	good	none

Ruth and Jane were in the Rathdrum Workhouse in County Wicklow and the Poor Law Minute book of Rathdrum, 13 October 1849, p.53, unusually, shows their names when recording incoming correspondence:

*of also the several copies of the
Two letters were read from Lieutenant
Henry Government Emigration Officer in reference
to the proposed Emigration from the Workhouse
of the Ruth & Jane Stephens, daughters of Eliza
Stephens, who has been sent out to Australia
as Sub-Master in one of the Government Emi-
gration Vessels in August last.*

The paragraph reads:

Two letters were read from Lieutenant Henry Government Emigration Officer in reference to the proposed Emigration from the Workhouse of Ruth & Jane Stephens, daughters of Eliza Stephens, who has been sent out to Australia as Sub-Matron on one of the Government Emigration Vessels in August last [see page above, with thanks to the Wicklow County Archivist, Catherine Wright]

As this document indicates, Ruth and Jane's mother, Eliza, received a passage as a sub-matron on a previous vessel which was also an orphan ship – the *Lismoyne* which arrived in Sydney late 1849. Note from the list below that although the ship arrived into Sydney on 29 November, the girls were not inspected by the Immigration Board until 3 December, the date on the top of the document below. This also accounts for the five days which the girls spend on the ship before going to the Barracks, which was noted on the disposal list.

Eliza Stephens and her daughters had all been in the Rathdrum Workhouse. Eliza was 37 and the shipping shows she was the daughter of Isaac & James Markes/Marks (both dead). The *Lismoyne* immigrant list proves the additional information that her husband, John Stephens, was living in Van Diemen's Land [Ref: SRNSW 4/4911 and SRNSW 4/4786].

List of Immigrants per Ship " <i>Lismoyne</i> " as inspected by the Immigration Board, on 3 rd Dec									
NAME	AGE	Calling	Native place and Country	Parents names, and if alive their residences	Religion	State or Birth	Relation to the Captain	Date of birth, health, strength, and probable occupation	Any complaints requiring attention on board the ship
Stephens Eliza	37	Housekeeper	Wicklow Wicklow	Isaac & Jane Markes - both dead	C of E	Ireland	Husband John Stephens living in Van Diemen's Land	good	none

The story emerges that the husband and father, John Stephens, had been transported as a convict and was later followed to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) by his wife, Eliza and his daughters. John Stephens arrived at Hobart on 18 March 1847 per *Tory* with a ten year sentence and was 'hired by W Archer, Longford' [Ref: HO 10/40]

No	Name	Ship	Place of Birth	Duration	Position	445
5	Stephens John		Wicklow	10	Sined by W. Archer, Longford,	

His full convict record [see next page] in Tasmania shows that he was tried in Wicklow on 7 July 1846; embarked on 31 October 1846 with a 10 year sentence and arrived in Van Diemen's Land on 18 March 1847. He was Protestant and could read and write. He was transported for stealing John Pearce's cows. John Stephens was a blacksmith, 5'9", aged 34, fresh complexion, large head, brown hair, no whiskers, oval visage, high forehead, brown eyebrows, grey eyes, large nose, large wide mouth and medium chin. He had no distinguishing marks. This description is remarkably like the surviving photo of his daughter, Ruth. Once in Van Diemen's Land he spent two years and six months in a probation gang.

When the Stephen sisters arrived on the *Thomas Arbuthnot* the authorities found that the girls' parents were in Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania] so they spent a short time in Sydney before being re-located to Tasmania. A wonderful story of a free ride to the colony because that is what this Workhouse emigration scheme gave the women involved – a totally free passage. The Poor Law Guardians provided an outfit and got them to the port in Plymouth.

19775

Stephens John

Tried *Nicklow 2 July 1846* Transported for *Station boat put up at your residence*
 Embarked *St. Catherine 10 Jan 46* *6th Nicklow Maria* *Stated this offence at 2 Court for John Pearce*
 Arrived *12 March 1847* *Shingora Report Geo*

Trade	Height	Age	Complex	Head	Hair	Whiskers	Visage	Forehead	Eyebrows	Eyes	Nose	Mouth	Chin	Native Place
<i>Blacksmith</i>	<i>5 1/2</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>Dark</i>	<i>Square</i>	<i>Dark</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Open</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Dark</i>	<i>Grey</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>England</i>

Marks *None*

Period of Gang Probation *Two Year Months*

Station of Gang *Quail St. 2nd Sep 1847*

Class *1st Class*

Offences & Sentences.

26 Aug 1847
30 Aug 1847
15. 7. 1848
7. 6. 50 Conditional Caution Approved

Remarks.

Cast into the sea for 1st offence
17. 10. 1847
21. 11. 1847
23. 1. 1848
23. 3. 52 Recommended for 6/12

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Ruth Stephens

Ruth Stephens married William Eley at Longford, Tasmania on 7 March 1853. Ruth and William had 11 children:

Child's Name	Birth Date & Place	Death Date & Place
Eliza	30 Sept 1854 – Longford	1945 – Longford
Alfred	3 Oct 1857 – Deloraine	1903 – West Australia
Ruth (Rhoda)	7 Oct 1859 – Deloraine	2 Aug 1932 – N.S.W.
Hannah Ruth	9 March 1863 – Longford	20 Aug 1900
Arthur Issac	2 March 1865 – Longford	22 May 1934 – Bangor
Isabella May	9 June 1866 – Longford	
Lucy Ellen	14 June 1869 – Longford	
William John	9 June 1871 – Longford	
Mary Ida	17 July 1873 – Longford	5 March 1884 – Longford
Frederick George	5 Dec 1875 – Longford	18 Jan 1885 – Campbelltown
Matilda Grace	9 March 1878 – Longford	c.1920 – Launceston

Ruth's death is recorded as 6 May 1907, aged 72, wife of William [Tasmanian death index 1907/366] and she is memorialised on a headstone in the Longford Christchurch Anglican Pioneer Cemetery in Tasmania with other members of the Ely family [see below].

Tombstone & Memorial Inscriptions of Tasmania (TAMIOT) 2nd ed. 1999		Alphabetical Index 1541
Genealogical Society of Tasmania Inc.		
ELEY, Elizabeth	D: 03 Jul 1960 - 80yrs - SP: William John - See: Eley, William John. 2 here. Also endowment roll in St Andrews Ang Church - WESTBURY GENERAL (ANGLICAN) CEMETERY - WESTBURY - LAUNCESTON - ME08/L0308	
ELEY, Enoch	D: 22 Oct 1930 - 76yrs - SP: Hannah F A - See: Eley, Gunner G F--Hannah F A. 3 named here - ROSS GENERAL (ANGLICAN) CEMETERY - ROSS - LAUNCESTON - R005/21004	
ELEY, Frederick	D: 18 Jan 1885 - 64yrs - ROSS GENERAL (ANGLICAN) CEMETERY - ROSS - LAUNCESTON - R005/11016	
ELEY, Fredk Cpl	In grateful remembrance of these who also fought in the Great War 1914-1919 - ROSS, CENOTAPH NEAR TOWN HALL - ROSS - LAUNCESTON - R006/00001	
ELEY, G F	D: 02 Nov 1916 - 24yrs - Gunner, 17th Batt, AIF, killed in action, France. See: Eley, Enoch--Hannah. 3 named here - ROSS GENERAL (ANGLICAN) CEMETERY - ROSS - LAUNCESTON - R005/21004	
ELEY, George F Gnr	Memory of men who died in the service of their country. Great War 1914-1919 - ROSS, CENOTAPH NEAR TOWN HALL - ROSS - LAUNCESTON - R006/00001	
ELEY, George	Roll of Honor 1914-1918 - BATTERY POINT ST GEORGES ANGLICAN - HOBART - HOBART - H003/00001	
ELEY, Hannah	D: 20 Aug 1900 - 37yrs - See: Eley, William--Ruth--May. 4 here - LONGFORD CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN (PIONEER CEMETERY) - LONGFORD - LAUNCESTON - L005/B0508	
ELEY, Hannah F A	84yrs - SP: Enoch - See: Eley, Gunner G F--Enoch. 3 named here - ROSS GENERAL (ANGLICAN) CEMETERY - ROSS - LAUNCESTON - R005/21004	
ELEY, Harry George	D: 17 Jan 1920 - 10mths - Pr: E A & M Eley (twin sn) - See: Powell, May Clifton - TUNBRIDGE - OATLANDS - HOBART - OA11/00002	
ELEY, James Isaac	D: 02 Feb 1936 - 28yrs - Pr: Arthur Isaac Eley (yst sn), br: Arthur Alexander - See: Eley, Arthur Isaac--Arthur Alexander. 3 named here - TURNERS MARSH UNITING CEMETERY - LILYDALE - LAUNCESTON - LI04/02016	
ELEY, May	D: 05 Mar 1884 - 11yrs - See: Eley, William--Ruth Eley--Hannah. 4 here - LONGFORD CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN (PIONEER CEMETERY) - LONGFORD - LAUNCESTON - L005/B0508	
ELEY, Ruth	D: 06 May 1907 - 72yrs - SP: William - See: Eley, William--Hannah--May. 4 here - LONGFORD CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN (PIONEER CEMETERY) - LONGFORD - LAUNCESTON - L005/B0508	
ELEY, Terry Allan	D: 10 Jan 1970 - 13yrs - BRIDPORT GENERAL CEMETERY - SCOTSDALE - LAUNCESTON - SC04/A0417	
ELEY, William	D: 17 Jun 1883 - 62yrs - SP: Ruth - See: Eley, Ruth--Hannah--May. 4 here - LONGFORD CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN (PIONEER CEMETERY) - LONGFORD - LAUNCESTON - L005/B0508	
ELEY, William John	D: --- 1927 - Memorial endowment roll in the Church - WESTBURY ST ANDREWS ANGLICAN CHURCH - WESTBURY - LAUNCESTON - ME27/CH004	
ELEY, William John	D: 18 Aug 1927 - 56yrs - SP: Elizabeth - See: Eley, Elizabeth. 2 here - WESTBURY GENERAL (ANGLICAN) CEMETERY - WESTBURY - LAUNCESTON - ME08/L0308	



Eliza Stephens, mother of workhouse immigrant girls, Ruth and Jane

Eliza had also been in the Rathdrum workhouse in County Wicklow came to Sydney as the matron on the orphan ship, *Lismoyne* before her daughters, Ruth and Jane sailed from Plymouth on the Thomas Arbuthnot at the end of October 1848. Soon after she had been reunited with her previously transported, husband John Stephens in Van Diemen's Land where they had at least a few more children as noted in the Tasmanian birth indexes:

Hannah Eliza Stephens born 2 May 1851, Longford [1851/324]

Isaac Marks Stephens born June 1853, Longford [1853/754]

Mary Stephens born 20 Oct 1855, Longford [1855/1066]

Leonard Stephens born 20 Jan 1858, Longford [1858/1285]

Eliza drowned in the Esk River. Her inquest was reported in the *Launceston Examiner*, Tuesday 10 January 1882, the two witnesses were her youngest Australian-born children Leonard and Mary:

An inquest was held at 11 o'clock this morning at the Railway Hotel, before Chas. Arthur, Esq., Coroner, and a respectable jury, of which Mr R. Lee was foreman, on the body of Eliza Stephens, found in the Lake River on Saturday evening. The evidence of Leonard Stephens and Mary Stephens (son and daughter of deceased, Agnes Hannigan (the last person who saw her alive), Frederick Strickland (who found the body), and Dr. Mason, was taken, and the jury brought in a verdict of found drowned. January 9.

The above article noted that Eliza's body was found drowned on Sunday evening, 7 January 1882 in the Lake River and the inquest was held on Tuesday 10 January at the Railway Hotel.

The registration of her death notes her death as 'about 30 December 1881' and her inquest confirmed the details.¹

1882 DEATHS in the DISTRICT of Longford -									
Number.	When died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When registered.	Signature of Deputy Registrar.
219	6 th January 1882	John Williams	Male	71	Labourer	Decay of Nature	R. G. Wright Rathfriland, Longford	7 th January 1882	R. Mason 576
220	about 30 th December 1881	Eliza Stephens	Female	69	Widow	Found Drowned	Women Inquest Leonard Stephens Mary Stephens General Clerk, Longford	12 th January 1882	R. Mason 576

¹ *Launceston Examiner*, 10 January 1882. Death RGD35/1/51 no.376, Inquest SC195/1/62 Inquest 8448

TASMANIA }
(TO WIT.) } **An Inquisition** indented taken for our Sovereign Lady the Queen at the House of *Mr. Clarke* *19 January 1882*

[8448] known by the sign of the *Railway Hotel at Longford* in the County of *Westmoreland* within the Island of Tasmania this *Ninth* day of *January* in the *45* year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady Victoria by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen Defender of the Faith before me *Charles Arthur* Esquire one of the Coroners of our said Lady the Queen for the said Island and its Dependencies on view of the *body of Eliza Stephens* upon the Oaths of *Robert Lee Foreman, James Cooper, John Bound, John Carter, William King, John Corry, William & Justice Fenningworth*

good and lawful men of the said Island and duly chosen and who being then and there duly sworn and charged to enquire for our said Lady the Queen when where how and after what manner the said *Eliza Stephens* came to her death do upon their Oath say THAT *the said Eliza Stephens on the seventh day of January in the year aforesaid in the County aforesaid was found drowned in the Lake River then situate, but how and by what means she became drowned, no evidence being adduced to the Jurors.*

IN WITNESS whereof as well the said Coroner as the Jurors aforesaid have to this Inquisition set their Hands and Seals the day and year and place above mentioned.

Charles Arthur Coroner. () *Robert Lee* Foreman () *William King* ()
James Cooper () *John Corry* ()
John Bound () *J. Fenningworth* ()
John Carter ()

The drowning was also mentioned in the Tasmanian Police Gazette [POL 709/1/19 p.7 (1882)]:

INQUESTS.

AN Inquest was held at Scottsdale, on the 5th instant, before Arthur K. Chapman, Esquire, Coroner, on the body of *George Gibson*, aged 53 years. Verdict:—"Accidental death."

AN Inquest was held at Longford, on the 9th instant, before Charles Arthur, Esquire, Coroner, on the body of *Eliza Stephens*, aged 69 years. Verdict:—"Found drowned in the Lake River."

Grateful thanks for information on this family supplied by descendants Peter Eley, Vicki Pearce and Teri Arico.