

Initial Upload 19 May 2013

## EDITH MARGARET ANNE GILMER

**Edith Margaret Anne Gilmer** was born in 1878 at Reefton, the only child of Sam and Mary Gilmer. The birth would have been relatively early in the year because Gilmer Brothers had sold their Reefton hotel back to John Dawson and on 5 March Sam and John Dawson were at the Reefton Licensing Court for the transfer of the license. Very soon afterwards Sam and his family went to Wellington where Sam was to manage the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel.

Edith's early childhood and schooling was in Wellington. When John Hamilton's daughter, Dorothea, came to Wellington in early March 1879 she stayed with Sam and his family.

*"We are here since Sam Gilmer keeps the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel here. He is married with one child. They do not live in the hotel, but in a nice cottage a short distance from the hotel. I have seen none of the others yet."*<sup>1</sup>

Dorothea obviously got on very well with Mary and she used to go to Wellington in her school holidays. She would have seen quite a bit of Edith as a young child. Her letters reveal some of the details:

*Dollie (Hamilton's daughter) and Maggie (Henry's daughter) are coming to Wellington shortly. I expect Mrs. Sam Gilmer, Edie and the other two girls up here to stay a month about October. Then I shall be going down to spend my summer holidays. I am nearly a year up here now.*

*This time two years I was on the wide wide ocean. I forgot all about it till Mrs. Gilmer said to me on the 12th July morning "Is this not the anniversary of your leaving Ireland?". How soon time flies.*<sup>2</sup>

*Our Christmas holidays will soon be now. I am going to Wellington then. I shall have a month. I expect Mrs. Gilmer and her little girl up to see me and stay a while before that they were coming about three weeks past only the weather turned so wet and unpleasant she thought it better to not come till the weather mended. I expect her soon now as we are having beautiful weather just at present.*<sup>3</sup>

When she was a little older in 1886, Edith wrote a letter to her Uncle William in Ireland dated 9 December. It was from Greymouth<sup>4</sup>. She mentions going Mrs. Val Moss' school. She was eight years old at the time and wrote very well. This letter was written at a time when the licensee of the Gilmer Hotel Greymouth was James Cornish who while a long serving employee did not have Sam's knowledge and experience. Clearly, Sam felt he needed to be in Greymouth and at the time he was also doing additions to the Royal Oak Hotel so there was no hotel for him to run in Wellington. While issues may have been arisen with the new building Sam would have expected his architect to resolve them.

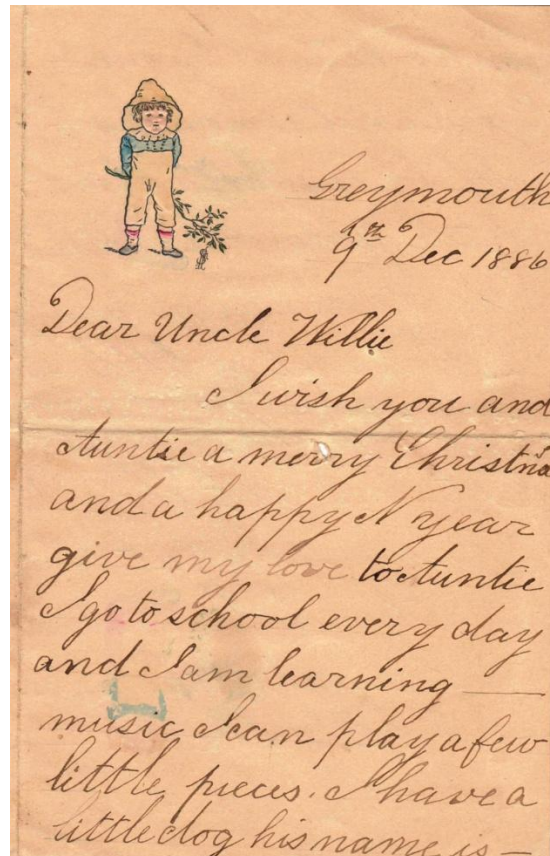
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<sup>1</sup> Letter to her uncle John Rainey in Ireland 24 March 1879

<sup>2</sup> Letter to her sister Sarah Jane July 1880

<sup>3</sup> Letter to her sister Sarah Jane 16 November 1880

<sup>4</sup> Copy obtained from Anne Scott a descendant of William Gilmer and Ann Smith.



Enko he is only one —  
year and 11 months —  
old he is such a dear  
little fellow we still  
have Lobben and pussy —  
I have got a little —  
goldfinch it does  
not sing yet. How do  
you like being at home  
all the children in  
the brig have the meas-  
les had to close the  
school. I have not  
taken them yet I —  
go to Mrs. Val Moss  
school. I sent you  
a card for dear pa —  
their love to you and  
tuntie with love from  
Edith Helmer

P.S. Please excuse  
me for I cannot write  
very well —

Letter to Uncle William in Ireland 9 December 1886.

Edith's engagement to **Peter Stanley Lawrie** was announced on 25 April 1903.<sup>5</sup> They were married later that year in Sydney, New South Wales.<sup>6</sup> Peter was the son of Peter and Ann Lawrie. His father had been born in about 1821 at West Calder near Edinburgh, Scotland. He married his wife, Ann, who was born in the District of Minster, Kent, about 1855. They had six children<sup>7</sup>:

**James** born about 1856

**Philip Peter** born about 1861, Married Martha Mary Murphy 1884 at Sheppey, Kent.

**Rosetta** born about 1863. Married William Harnden 1897 at Sheppey, Kent.

**Peter Stanley** born 1865 Sheerness, England. Married Edith Gilmer 1903 Sydney, NSW.

**Margaret** born about 1868. Married Robert Derry 1896 at Sheppey, Kent.

**Eliza** born about 1870

**Ada** born about 1874

Peter's father was an Engine Fitter and he worked as a Millwright and at the time of his death in the Naval Dockyards. He started all of his sons James, Philip and Peter Jr. as apprentice Engine Fitter's.<sup>8</sup>

The family lived at Sheerness, Kent with three addresses shown on different Census returns:

1871: 92 Chapel Street, Mile Town, Sheerness

1881: 92 Russell Street, Sheerness

1891 & 1901: 113 Alma Road, Sheerness

Peter Jr. was not shown living at home in the 1891 Census and had obviously left. He would have been 26 years old. His mother died in October 1896 at about age 63 and his father died on 13 September 1904 at the age of 83. The Probate record shows:

***Peter Lawrie*** of 113 Alma Road Sheerness Kent, engine fitter in HM Dockyard died 13 September 1904 Probate Canterbury 16 December to Rosetta Harnden (wife of William Harnden). Effects L1253/4/6<sup>9</sup>.

While not excessively wealthy this was a reasonable value for an estate in those times.

Peter went to live and work in Penang, Malaya, as a Marine Engineer for a shipping company. He had visited New Zealand to buy ships from the Union Steam Company for trade in the East. He met Edith and they married in Sydney in 1903. She then returned to Penang with him. Shortly afterwards, Mary Gilmer paid them a visit in Penang.

**Mrs. S. Gilmer has returned to Wellington after a long visit to her daughter, Mrs. Stanley Lawrie, in Penang. She spent a week or two in Calcutta and Singapore on her way back.**

**Evening Post 17 January 1905**

<sup>5</sup> Freelance 25 April 1903

<sup>6</sup> Ancestry.com.au, Australian Marriage Index 1788-1950 Registration No. 1903/7551

<sup>7</sup> England Census Returns 1871 to 1901

<sup>8</sup> England Census Returns 1871 & 1881

<sup>9</sup> England & Wales National Probate Calendar Index of Wills 1904

Later in October 1905, Edith and Peter returned to New Zealand to spend some time with Sam and Mary at the Royal Oak<sup>10</sup>. At the time Peter was described as the Manager of the Koeguan Company of Penang. Peter was interviewed by the newspapers about business conditions and the situation with Chinese in the Far East.

The next year Mary Gilmer died on 22 October 1906 at her home, the Royal Oak Hotel. While she had visited Edith and Peter the previous year, she died prior to the birth of her only grandchild.

**GILMER.**—On the 22nd October, 1906, at her residence, Royal Oak Hotel, Cuba-street, Mary Isabell, beloved wife of Samuel Gilmer, aged 62 years. Private interment. No flowers, by request.

**Evening Post 22 October 1906**

Edith and Peter had a daughter **Edith Mary Ada** who was born at 22 Cumberland Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, England<sup>11</sup> on 15 November 1907.

23/	22 November 1907	Edith Mary Ada	Edith	Peter	Edith	Margaret	Marino	Edith Laurie	Bocher	Twenty	Fredrick
	22 Cumberland Road Kew		Edith	Stanley	Annie	Laurie	Superintendent	22 Cumberland Road Kew	Bocher	Seventh	Hampton
	MD		Ada	Laurie	Laurie	Formerly Gilmer				December 1907	Registrar

**Birth Certificate Edith Mary Ada**

We believe they returned to Penang from England where Peter settled his affairs before the family returned to New Zealand to live. They arrived on the *Maheno* on 25 March 1908.

Mr. Laurie, a superintendent engineer of a shipping company which has its headquarters at Penang, is on board the *Maheno*, now on her way from Sydney to Wellington. He is accompanied by Mrs. Laurie, daughter of Mr. S. Gilmer, of the Royal Oak Hotel.

Mr. Laurie, superintendent engineer of the Koo Guam Steamship Company, of Penang, and Mrs. Laurie (a daughter of Mr. Samuel Gilmer, of the Royal Oak Hotel) are passengers by the *Maheno*, due to arrive from Sydney to-morrow.

**Evening Post 23 March 1908**

**Dominion 25 March 1908**

In 1909, Edith advertised for a General Servant and Housemaid. The address given in the advertisement was 24 Hobson Street, Thorndon.<sup>12</sup> They were shown on later Electoral Rolls for 1911, 1914 and 1919 with this address.

<sup>10</sup> Evening Post 5 October 1905

<sup>11</sup> Today Kew is a part of Greater London

<sup>12</sup> Evening Post 29 January 1909

In subsequent years, Peter was identified in newspapers confirming that the family had remained in Wellington. For example, he was named among others on a list of Hospital Fund subscribers. He was also a successful tenderer:

The tender of Messrs. John Duthie and Co. at £3568 7s 3d, for the supply of cast-iron waterpipes, and that of Mr. P. S. Lawrie, for the supply of valves at £791 5s, have been accepted by the Miramar Borough Council.

**Dominion 11 November 1910**

A few months later he was also an unsuccessful tenderer for the supply and delivery of galvanized wire to the government and also for the supply and delivery of hard drawn copper wire<sup>13</sup>.

In August 1912 Sam's friend, brewer T.G. Macarthy died leaving an estate valued for probate at 500,000 Pounds. He left Edith a legacy of 1,000 pounds. At that time, Edith and Peter were on an extensive trip to Europe via Honolulu, the USA and Ireland. They sailed First Class on the steamer Zealandia leaving Auckland on 8 June 1912.

**PASSENGERS BY THE ZEALANDIA.**

The R.M.S. Zealandia, sailing for Suva, via ports, to-day, takes the following passengers from New Zealand:—First-class: Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. May, Mr. and Mrs. Carter, Capt. and Mrs. Jaggard, Mr. and Mrs. Brook, Mrs. Webster, Mrs. H. C. Crapp, Mr. Williamson, Miss David, Mr. Jacob, Mr. and Mrs. P. S. Lawrie and child, Viscount and Viscountess Nasserene Ferrard, Mr. Cowles, Mr. and

**Auckland Star 7 June 1912**

They arrived in Honolulu on 18 June 1912 with the passenger record showing Edith's name as Mary Edith and her age as 34. This seems strange as Edith's other names are definitely Margaret Anne. They returned home on the ship *Malwa* which left from Marseilles on 8 November.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrie (Wellington) and their child arrived via Honolulu, San Francisco, the States, and Ireland, and left again on Thursday for a trip through Brussels, Cologne, Lucerne, Venice, Florence, and Rome. They left for New Zealand by the *Malwa*, from Marseilles, on November 8.

**Dominion 22 November 1912**

<sup>13</sup> Evening Post 20 January 1911

<sup>14</sup> Dominion 22 November 1912



<sup>16</sup> Evening Post 3 May 1917

Peter, Edith and Mary travelled to Vancouver and then crossed into the USA at Seattle. They went across the USA and on to London. In London they stayed at the Hotel Victoria, Northumberland Ave, WC 1.<sup>17</sup>

On 8 October 1926 they left London on the P & O Liner "*Cathay*" arriving in Sydney on 18 November 1926. They stayed in Sydney for about six weeks leaving on 31 December on the "*Maunganui*". They were reported as returning on the ship *Maunganui* on 4 January 1927<sup>18</sup> making it an eighteen month trip.

Later in 1927 the family again returned to London and stayed at the Hotel Victoria where it appears they continued to live after that time. On the 16 September 1927, they sailed from London to Marseilles on the P & O Liner *Kaisar-I-Hind* for we believe to be a holiday on the French Riviera.

On 15 March 1929, Peter died in Nice. We are not aware of the circumstances of his death but it seems they were again there on a holiday.

**LAWRIE.**—On the 15th March, 1929, at Nice,  
Peter Stanley, beloved husband of Edith  
Lawrie.

**Evening Post 18 March 1929**

Peter was buried in the Protestant Section of the English Cemetery at Nice. We believe this is called "*Cimetière des Anglais, Caucade, Nice*". We have a shipping record dated 12 April 1929 for Edith and Mary travelling from London to Marseilles. This appears to be a return trip to visit Peter's grave at Nice.

Peter was about 64 years old. His Obituary was published in the Evening Post on 20 March 1929:

There died at Nice, on the 15th instant, Mr. Peter Stanley Lawrie, son-in-law of the late Mr. Sam Gilmer, proprietor of the Royal Oak Hotel, Wellington. Mr. Lawrie, who was a marine engineer by profession, first came out to New Zealand some twenty-five years ago to buy a number of vessels for the Chinese Shipping Company from the U.S.S. Co. He then met and married Edith, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Gilmer. He took her back with him to the Old Country, but later returned to New Zealand, settled in Wellington, and entered into business. After the late Mr. Gilmer died, Mr. Lawrie sold his business and went Home on an extended trip with Mrs. Lawrie, and their only daughter, who was recently presented at Court.

**Evening Post 20 March 1929**

<sup>17</sup> Shipping Record "*Cathay*"

<sup>18</sup> Evening Post 4 January 1927

Peter left an estate in England valued at L918/11/3 with Edith as Executrix.<sup>19</sup> In New Zealand his Probate File indicates he left an estate valued at L5914/16/-. Edith was named as his Executrix and Probate payable was notified to the estate on 6 May 1930.

Peter's Will was made in Wellington and dated 20 March 1925. This was after Sam Gilmer died and prior to their leaving on their overseas voyage. The witnesses to the Will were Samuel Henry Gilmer (Hamilton Gilmer's son), Solicitor, and Alf Lulham the Manager of the Royal Oak Hotel.

Peter's Probate file contains a deposition by Edith that Peter had died at Nice and that she had been present at his funeral. This also indicated that she left London for New Zealand on 5 October 1929 in order to apply for Probate of Peter's Will. However, she proceeded as far as Egypt where on medical advice she was "obliged" to return to England. She was hoping go to New Zealand as soon as she was fit to travel. We do not believe she ever made the trip.

Peter left his estate to Edith as his Trustee to sell his assets and convert them into money which she was to invest. After paying his debts, funeral and testamentary expenses and any death duties, Edith was to receive the income of the estate during her life.

After Edith's death, the capital and income of Peter's estate was to be paid to their daughter, Mary. If Edith was to die before Mary turned twenty one, David Aitken, the Manager of the Union Steamship Co. of New Zealand, and his wife were to be appointed as Mary's guardians. However, this did not occur. Mary would have received from Peter's estate about 6,830 Pounds when Edith died in 1935.

After Peter's death Edith and Mary continued to travel. Some of these voyages were to exotic places where they were able to relax in a warm climate and avoid at least some of the English winter. For example, Madeira, an island off the coast of Portugal, was visited in July 1930. Both Edith and Mary sailed from Southampton on 18 July on the *Arlanza* for Madeira. They remained there until 4 August when they returned to London on the *Edinburgh Castle*.

This was followed in 1931 with a trip to Bombay, India. We only have the return trip details of the P & O Liner *Ranpura* arriving in London on 9 April 1931. It appears to have been a round trip voyage. Mary must have really enjoyed the trip because she repeated it again by herself later in the year arriving back in London on 19 February 1932. In April Mary went to the French Riviera town of Toulon leaving London on 30 April on the Orient Line ship *Otranto*.

Mary had a further long trip by herself in 1932. This was a round trip from London to Australia on the *Port Brisbane* of the Commonwealth & Dominion Line. The ship had a large cargo and was visiting a number of ports dropping off and picking up. Among other items it carried was a lot of pedigree cattle. The ship left London on 31 May and arrived in Melbourne on 6 July. It left the next day for Sydney and from there it went to Newcastle, Hobart and Beauty Point (Launceston). Mary would have seen some great sights of these places from the water. All have very good harbours.

On 7 October 1932 both Edith and Mary sailed on the P & O Liner, *Strathnaver*, from London to Brisbane. They arrived there on 21 November 1932 and they were named in the newspaper as among the *Strathnaver's* passengers:

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<sup>19</sup> England & Wales National Probate Calendar Index of Wills 1930



# **STRATHNAVER'S PASSENGERS.**

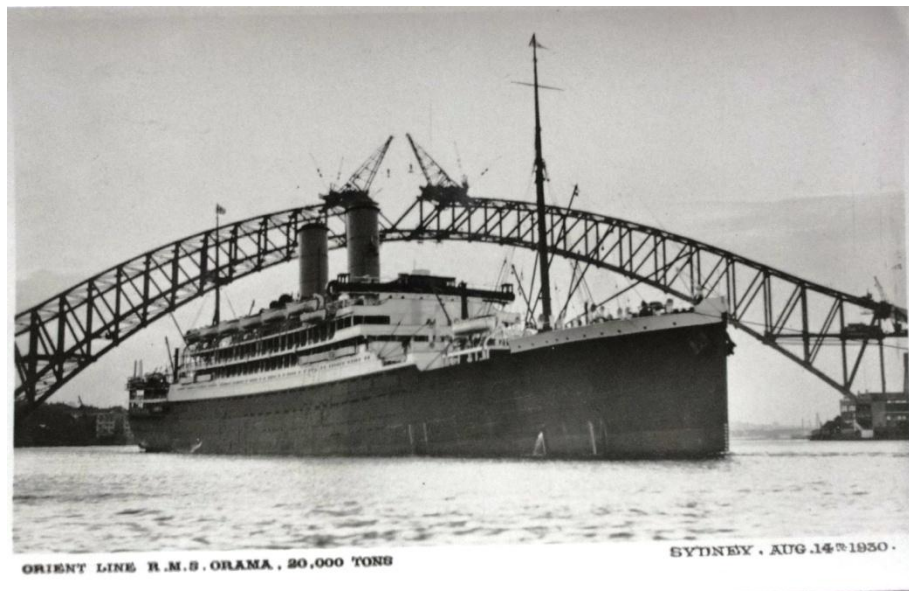
The following are the passengers by the *Strathnaver*, which is due to berth at New Farm Wharf about 1 p.m. on Monday:—  
Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Hocker, Miss K. Ryan,  
Mrs. E. Lawrie, Miss M. Lawrie Mr. H.  
Dawson, Mr. and Mrs. G. Batt, Mr. W.  
M'Gregor, Mr. F. J. Robinson, Mr. C.

Brisbane Courier 19 November 1932

The ship returned to London on 23 November and initially we believed that only Mary returned on the *Strathnaver* because Edith's name was ruled out on the Shipping Record. However, the newspaper indicated that both of them had sailed on the *Strathnaver*.<sup>20</sup> Edith was recorded as arriving at London (Tilbury) on 8 February 1933 on the *Orama*. The shipping record reveals that Edith joined the *Orama* at Columbo so it appears she sailed from Brisbane to Columbo on the *Strathnaver* where she remained for a short time.

On 7 February 1933, the day before Edith arrived in London, Mary left by herself on the *Port Auckland* for a round trip to Sydney. By this time Mary had turned twenty five and her address in London, for the first time, was a hotel different from her mother's. This was the Grosvenor Hotel at Victoria Station. Whether there was a falling out between them we do not know but after the trip from Brisbane we have no record of Edith and Mary travelling together and neither do we have any record of Edith travelling alone until 20 July 1935 when she sailed from London to Columbo.

Edith sailed to Columbo on the S.S. *Orama* arriving there on 10 August 1935. She travelled with her friend, Kathryn Robinson, who had been Edith's nurse and travelling companion before her marriage. Kathryn was married to Major Peter Wilberforce Robinson who had a plantation in Ceylon. In Columbo, Edith was staying at the Galle Face Hotel.



**RMS Orama Sydney 1930**

<sup>20</sup> Brisbane Courier 24 November 1932



**Galle Face Hotel Colombo**

Edith died in the General Hospital, Maradana South, Colombo on 20 August 1935. Her Death Certificate reveals that she died of a Pulmonary Embolism (a blood clot in the lung) following the fracture of a Femur (Thigh Bone) indicating that she had a fall after arriving in the country.

**LAWRIE.**—On August 20, 1935, at Colombo  
Edith, widow of the late P. S. Lawrie, and  
daughter of the late Samuel Gilmer, of Wel-  
lington.

**Evening Post 22 August 1935**

Mary had not seen her mother since early June 1935 because she had made a voyage to South Africa on the *SS Gloucester Castle*. On the return voyage from Cape Town on 22 August Mary received a wireless message from the Manager of the National Bank in London advising of Edith's death. The ship did not reach London until 3 September. Mary then went to Colombo from Liverpool on 13 September 1935 of the ship *Gloustershire*. Mary was accompanied by her first cousin Rosemary Derry who also lived at the Grosvenor Hotel.

Rosemary was the daughter of Robert Derry and Margaret Lawrie a sister of Peter Stanley Lawrie. Robert was a Civil Servant in the Straits Settlement Penang where Peter ran a shipping company trading in South East Asia.

Robert and Margaret married at Sheppey, Kent in 1896. Rosemary was born on 7 September 1903 at 7 Queen's Road, Kingston, Surrey, England so was four years older than Mary. The 1911 Census showed the family had two older children Dorothy Margaret born about 1897 and Robert Lawrie born about 1899. Both children had been born in the Federated States of Malaya. Rosemary later married William B. Rose in the September quarter of 1944 at Surrey NE which covers the former districts of Kingston and Richmond. Rosemary had a daughter in the June quarter of 1945 who was called Mary.

Arriving in Columbo in October, Mary met with Peter Robinson who told her of the circumstances of her mother's death and also gave her Edith's jewellery and personal effects.<sup>21</sup>

Edith left assets in England valued at L1043/15/8.<sup>22</sup> She left substantially more in New Zealand where the certified amount on which Probate was payable was 32,463 Pounds 9 Shillings. Edith appointed as her Executors two solicitors, Philip Cooke and Gordon Watson, and a Wellington accountant George Harden.

Edith left all her clothing and attire, watches, jewelry, trinkets and furniture and effects to her daughter Mary. After payment of her debts, funeral and testamentary expenses the income of the residual estate was to be paid to Mary during her life. Her Will also contained clauses relating to the possibility of Mary dying leaving children but these circumstances did not arise. If Mary was to have no children (as was to be the case), the Trustees would stand possessed of the residuary estate for the benefit of "*such person or persons as my said daughter shall by deed or Will appoint.*"

With the death of Edith, Mary also benefitted from Sam Gilmer's Will. She had been left a legacy of 1000 Pounds by Sam which she was to receive on attaining the age of 21. This was on 15 November 1928. With Edith's death, Mary was now the sole beneficiary of Sam Gilmer's residuary estate and as such the sole beneficiary of the Royal Oak Hotel, Sam's major asset.

There is no doubt that Edith had a charmed and relaxed life. She never worked and her days were full of holidays to exotic places all around the world thanks to money provided by her hard working father, Sam Gilmer. Her daughter now was in the position to continue doing the same.

Following her return from Brisbane and Sydney in 1933, Mary made a trip to Columbo by herself on the Orient Line ship *Orontes* leaving London on 16 September. She arrived back at Plymouth on the P & O Liner *Chitral* on 4 January 1934. This ship was returning from Yokohama, Japan and the record shows that Mary's port of embarkation was Yokohama. The conclusion we have drawn is that Mary joined the *Chitral* at Columbo as the ship was on its outward leg of the round trip to Yokohama.

We have also located number of records which show Rosemary Derry travelling to Marseilles. She returned from there on 15 February 1934 on the *Yorkshire* giving her address as 14 Lion Gate Gardens, Richmond, Surrey.

On 9 June 1934 Mary arrived in London from Columbo on the *Shropshire*. Rosemary was with her having joined the ship at Marseilles. Two weeks later on 22 June 1934 both Mary and Rosemary travelled on the *Yorkshire* from Liverpool to Marseilles. Rosemary returned to London on the *Mantua* 6 July 1934. Mary appears to have gone to Columbo again because she returned from there on the *Comorin* on 22 November.

The next year on 1 March 1935 Mary travelled to Columbo from Liverpool on the *Gloustershire* by herself. She returned to London on 24 May 1935 on the *Worstershire*.

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<sup>21</sup> Probate File. NZ Archives.

<sup>22</sup> England & Wales National Probate Calendar Index of Wills 1935



From about 1934 Shipping Records consistently showed Mary's address as The Grosvenor Hotel at Victoria Station, London. From mid 1934 this was also the address shown for her cousin Rosemary Derry.



**Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria Station, London**



**Grosvenor Hotel Lobby**

On 23 December 1935 Mary and Rosemary arrived in Sydney on the ship *Marella*.

**PASSENGERS BY THE MARELLA.**  
 The following passengers arrived yesterday by the *Marella*, from Java ports and Singapore:—  
 Lord and Lady Bridport, Mr. and Mrs. Willy Costello, Mr. A. Bragg, Miss R. Derry, Miss M. Barham, Mr. R. Boyd, Mr. S. F. Cherry, Mr. T. F. Fairbrother, Miss B. A. Fairbrother, Miss A. E. Fraser, Mr. W. S. Grieve, Miss A. V. Haig, Mr. G. A. Hay, Mr. W. S. Jackson, Miss L. Job, Miss M. Lawrie, Mr. E. I. McCrea, Mr. and Mrs. D. J. McGowan, Mr. F. M. Pace, Mr. and Mrs. S. W.

**Sydney Morning Herald 23 December 1935**

They spent about ten days there and then sailed on the ship *Aorangi* which was bound for Vancouver. They were reported as arriving at Auckland on 6 January 1936 where they landed and made their way to Wellington. They were reported as staying at the Royal Oak Hotel.<sup>23</sup>

Mary and Rosemary left Wellington on 16 January on the New Zealand Shipping Co. Ltd's *MV Rangitane*. They sailed across the Pacific Ocean to Panama and after a stop at Kingston, Jamaica, they arrived at London on 19 February 1936.

#### PASSENGERS FOR LONDON.

The following passengers are booked to leave Wellington today for London by the *Rangitane*, sailing at 3 p.m.:-

Mrs. M. M. J. Barrett, Mr. F. M. Dennehy, Mrs. Dennehy, Master T. F. Dennehy, Master E. J. Dennehy, Miss M. C. Dennehy, Mr. J. S. Edstrom, Mrs. Edstrom, Mrs. E. Graham, Mrs. A. J. S. Mackinnon, Mr. S. McHenry, Mrs. McHenry, Dr. T. Mill, C.M.G., C.B.E., Mrs. Mill, Mrs. C. Nathan, Mr. F. W. Slattery, Miss M. Lawrie, Miss R. Derry, Mrs. M. Anderson, Mr. W. Armstrong, Miss B.

Evening Post 16 January 1936

Strangely, we have not identified any trips later in 1936 for either Mary or Rosemary. This does not mean they did not occur but simply that the searches did not yield any results.

In 1937 Mary made a trip to South Africa by herself. She returned from Durban to London on 19 July 1937 on the Union Castle Lines *Edinburgh Castle*. Later in the year both Mary and Rosemary sailed to Marseilles on the P & O Liner *Chitral*. Mary returned to London by herself on the *Dunluce Castle* arriving on 22 December 1937.

### 1938 Marriage

Mary married **Richard Edward Starr** on 14 March 1938 at the Registry Office, Westminster, Middlesex, England.

1938 Marriage solemnized at <u>the Registry Office</u> in the <u>CITY OF WESTMINSTER</u>								
District of <u>CITY OF WESTMINSTER</u> in the <u>METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
166	Fourteenth March 1938	Richard Edward Starr	31 years	Bachelor	Independent means	Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria, ..	Edward Starr (deceased)	Company Director
		Edith Mary Lawrie	29 years	Spinster	-	Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria, ..	Peter Stanley Lawrie (deceased)	Shipping Manager
Married in the <u>Registry Office</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Church of England</u> by <u>License</u> before by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<u>Richard E. Starr</u>		in the Presence of us,		<u>M. Panton</u>		
		<u>Mary Lawrie</u>				<u>Rosemary Terry</u>		
						<u>Joseph P. Bond</u>		
						<u>Superintendent Registrar</u>		

#### Marriage Certificate Mary & Richard Starr

Richard was born in June 1906 in the district of Croydon which covers part of Greater London, Kent and Surrey. His father was Edward Starr. Given Mary's continuing travel, it is hard to see that they had a serious marriage. Richard was believed to be a Ship Steward but we have not

<sup>23</sup> Evening Post 9 January 1936

been able to confirm this. The marriage certificate does not help and indicates that he was in fact not working or indeed did not need to work. He may have been supported by Mary at the time. Rosemary Derry was witness. If Richard was a Ship Steward as we have been told they may well have been travelling in different directions. Alternatively, Mary may have arranged voyages on ships that her husband was working on. We will never know.

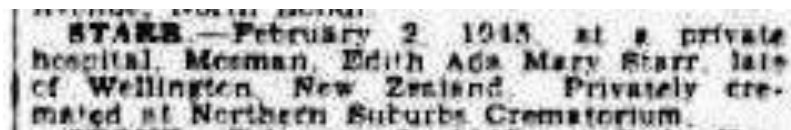
About nine months after their marriage, Mary made a return trip from Cape Town to Southampton on the Union Castle Line ship *Cape Town Castle* arriving on 23 December 1938. We have no record of her husband being on the ship. This trip could have taken eight weeks.

Shortly afterwards on 21 January 1939, Mary sailed on the Blue Funnel Line ship *Antenor* from Liverpool on a round trip to Japan. Her cousin, Rosemary, was also on the ship and but she landed at Marseilles rather than making the trip to Japan. This trip would have taken about four or five weeks to get to Japan. Mary returned to London on 12 May 1939 on the P & O ship *Mooltan* which she had joined at Aden. Rosemary also returned to London from Marseilles on the same ship.

On 26 May 1940, Mary travelled to Adelaide on the ship *Waipawa*. On the shipping record she indicated that Australia was to be the place of her intended future permanent residence. We have no further records of her travel and we presume she remained in Australia.

The Second World War had broken out and ships were being used to transport troops and supplies. As well, the seas were now quite dangerous with German and Japanese ships raiding and destroying these supply ships so it seems clear that Mary had made up her mind up to remain in Australia.

Mary died at Mosman, New South Wales on 2 February 1945 at the age of 37. The cause of death was "*Cirrhosis of the Liver*". She had it for about a year. This is a disease is most commonly caused by the excessive consumption of alcohol and has been termed "the disease of the wealthy". Mary was cremated at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium at North Ryde.



**Sydney Morning Herald 5 February 1945**

## **Will**

Mary made a Will dated 28 March 1940 which was signed and witnessed in London. She appointed as Executors and Trustees Leonard Tripp and Gordon Watson, Wellington Solicitors, David William Madden, Chairman of New Zealand Breweries and George Harden, an Accountant. Tripp and Madden were Trustees of her grandfather's estate and Harden was a Trustee of her mother's estate.

The value of her estate for probate purposes was one hundred and sixty six thousand two hundred and thirty five Pounds eight shillings and four pence. ( L166,235/8/4).

Mary provided an annual remuneration of 50 Pounds per annum for each Trustee in addition to a legacy of 500 Pounds. She also provided a number of other specific and pecuniary legacies:



Specific legacies:

- Mrs. Kathryn Robinson of 3 Bagatelle Road, Columbo. Mary left her pair of long pear shaped diamond ear rings in recognition to her on the *Strathnaver*.
- Mrs. Pierce Taylor of 24 Ember Gardens Esher, Surrey, was left Mary's "catseye" set in diamonds now in the form of a ring.
- Mrs. Alison Cornelius was left her large diamond ring with a single yellow diamond.
- Mr Gurney, Porter of the Grosvenor Hotel, who had frequently had charge of her dog, Mary left the dog on condition that he took care of it for the remainder of its life. If he accepted the gift he was also to be left 100 Pounds. If he did not accept the gift of the dog she requested her trustees to find a good home for it for the remainder of its life and any expenses were to be paid from her residuary estate.

Pecuniary Legacies:

- Jean Gilmer of Wellington the sum of 500 Pounds.
- Mary Gilmer (Jerram) Jean's sister the sum of 1000 Pounds. If Mary was to predecease her the money was to go to her daughter Elizabeth Mary on attaining the age of 21. This did not occur.
- Gwen and Molly Chinchin, the daughters of Frank Chinchin, Manager of the National Bank of New Zealand in London were left 500 Pounds each in recognition to their father's kindness to Mary.
- Dr John Douglas Thompson residing at the Hotel Victoria, Northumberland Ave London was left 500 Pounds in recognition "of his attendance on me."
- To the child of Mr and Mrs. Pierce Taylor of 24 Ember Gardens Esher, Surrey, the sum of 5,000 Pounds on such child attaining the age of 21.

Where a legacy was payable to an infant the trustees were directed to invest the legacy during infancy and at their discretion, pay the parent or guardian the income received for the child's maintenance, education or benefit.

The trustees were to pay all funeral, testamentary expenses and death duties and legacies arising from the Will and invest the residue of Mary's "residuary estate." The income was to be used to pay a number of Annuities free of New Zealand income tax and death duties to:

- Miss Alice Dunn of Wellington 100 Pounds per annum during her life.
- Miss Yvonne Ahearn of Wellington 100 Pounds per annum during her life.
- Miss Rosemary Derry, her first cousin, 375 Pounds per annum during her life.

After the payment of these annuities The Trustees to pay “*the **income***<sup>24</sup> of my residuary estate to such charitable institution or institutions in New Zealand whose main object provides for the welfare of seafaring men or their families as my trustees in their absolute discretion think fit.”

Mary also expressed the wish “*but without making it a binding trust*” that the trustees would make it a condition of the payment that some part of the income the institutions receive would be available for the maintenance of the graves and gravestones of Edith in Columbo, Peter in Nice and Sam Gilmer at Karori so they would be kept “*in a good and tidy condition and clearly engraved.*”

Mary added that the trustees could hand over the whole or part of the **capital**<sup>25</sup> of her residuary estate not required for the payment of annuities to any of the charitable institutions on condition that “*such capital shall not be spent as income but shall be invested and the income used for the purposes of the work of the institutions.*” However, she qualified this by stating that her trustees had power to settle the hand over terms including if necessary varying the forgoing constraint on the way the institutions spent the money.

As a further potential qualification she expressed the wish that should the trustees vary from the terms she stated in the Will that they “*make provision or cause provision to be made in some permanent way for the maintenance of the graves and gravestones aforesaid.*” However, Mary also qualified this wish as “*without making it a binding trust.*”

We are aware that the grave of Sam Gilmer is in excellent condition but we are not aware of the condition of Edith and Peter’s graves. However, we are aware that the English Cemetery in Nice has been heavily vandalized and appeals are being made for its preservation. A link to a youtube video demonstrates the nature of problem. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImO-A8xYwuc>

Mary may have been somewhat naïve to think that she could expect to permanently manage to maintain these graves over time. This was especially difficult because of their locations remote from New Zealand and the absence of any siblings who might have had the same interest.

We cannot say precisely what happened to Sam’s money but there was plenty to go around when Mary died. We have been told the major beneficiary was the Seaman’s Mission in Auckland but as to the truth of this we cannot say.

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<sup>24</sup> Author’s emphasis

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