



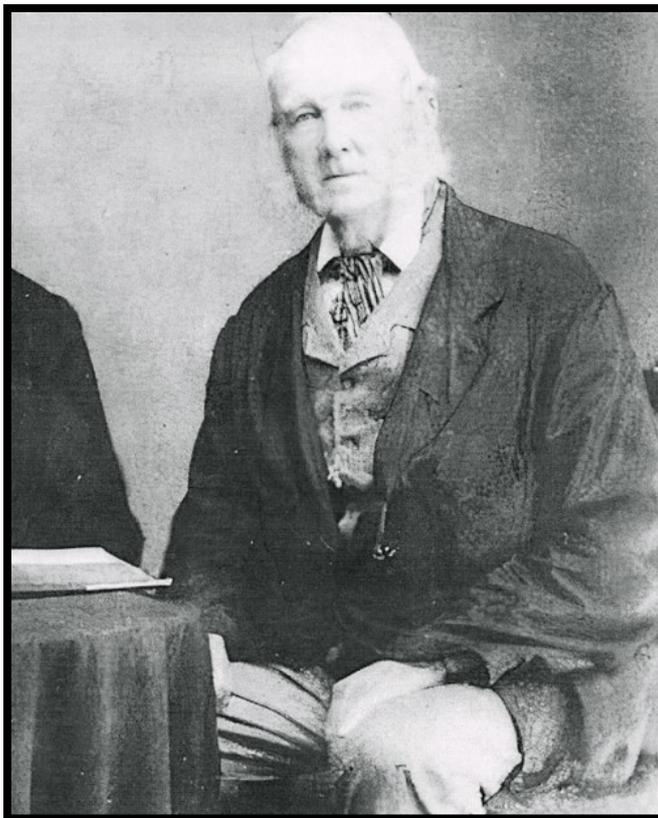
# Settlers Gazette

Newsletter of the Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 Inc.  
An Affiliated Member of the Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc.  
& The Royal WA Historical Society Inc.

Issue No: 109

APRIL– MAY 2022

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## FRANCIS FRASER ARMSTRONG

1813-1897

Francis Fraser Armstrong was born in Edinburgh Scotland on 22 November 1813.

He travelled with his father & siblings to the Swan River Colony in the ship 'Gilmore' arriving 15 December 1829.

His father Adam Pearson Armstrong took up a government land grant on the banks of the Swan River at what is now known as the suburb of Dalkeith (named in honour of Armstrong's father's birthplace).

The Armstrong family were Methodists, and being Scots, they had some sympathy with the experiences of those who had been dispossessed of land and subjugated by the English.

Armstrong published a number of essays outlining his interpretation of Noongar culture and society, as well as lists of translated words. He regularly interpreted and acted as an intermediary between Aboriginal Leaders and Governors of the day:

**'The natives of Yellowgonga's tribe, to which Yagan's has recently been united, have for some time expressed to Mr. F. Armstrong a wish to appear before the Lieutenant Governor; in order to gratify them Migo and Munday, had an audience on Wednesday last, which led to the disclosure of some of the most interesting facts, connected with their habits, which have hitherto been elicited. Mr. F. Armstrong, who appears to have acquired a very considerable knowledge of the native language, acted as their interpreter, and the conversation was carried on with a degree of fluency we could scarcely have anticipated'**

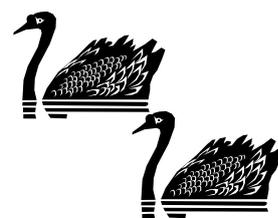
*The Perth Gazette, Sat 7 September 1833.*

Francis married Mary Ann Mews who arrived with family on the ship 'Rockingham' 14 May 1830

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## Your Swan River Pioneers Committee: (Always looking for volunteers)

Email: [swanriverpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:swanriverpioneers@gmail.com)

<b>President /Editor</b>	Lyn Coy	Phone: 08 9296 9520/041 790 8972
<b>Vice President</b>	Helen Jones	Phone: 0431 043 320
<b>Acting Treasurer:</b>	Lyn Coy	Phone: 08 9296 9520
<b>Certificate Registrar:</b>	Maureen Scorer	Phone: 0412 099 018
<b>Social Convenor:</b>	Helen Jones	Email: <a href="mailto:socialconvenorsrp@gmail.com">socialconvenorsrp@gmail.com</a>
<b>Committee Members:</b>	Des & Marie Broad Norman Martin Donna Dean	

**Postal Address:**

**Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 Inc.**  
**PO Box 2672, Ellenbrook WA 6069**

**Email:**

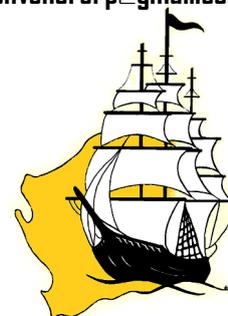
[swanriverpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:swanriverpioneers@gmail.com)

**Website:**

[www.swanriverpioneers.com](http://www.swanriverpioneers.com)

**Online Banking:**

**Swan River Pioneers**  
**BSB: 016 352      Account : 306888364**



© L Evans

## President's Page:

### Lyn Coy - President

(A descendant of the Davis family - ship 'Parmelia')  
Email: swanriverpioneers@gmail.com



*The Parmelia—Painting by Ross Shardlow*

### **G'Day Swannies**

*Well the time has come when I need to stand down and ask for someone else to take over the reins.*

*The past year has not been kind and I am 80 years in a few months and ill health has caught up with me and time to slow down.*

*I am happy to stay on in the back ground as Past President and assist the Committee for the next 12 months but the position of President will be vacant unless a volunteer can be found.*

*I find I am much slower and the motivation I once had is disappearing. I have been extremely enthusiastic over the years but after 27 years on the Committee I think I have done my fair share.*

*It would be a shame to close the Group down if volunteers cannot be found. We have been in existence since 1993—I joined in 1995 and since then we have done 4488 pioneer certificates and several thousand more 'A' certificates for the child you descend from who either arrived on the ship with their parents or was born in the Swan River Colony before 31st December 1838.*

*Maureen Scorer and I who do the Certificates, are happy to continue doing the Certificates, Ann Wheeler has offered to do Membership and Helen Jones will take over the Settlers Gazette.*

*I am enclosing the Nomination Form for Management Committee for 2022/2023.*

*However, all positions will be declared vacant, and nominations will be called for from members willing to serve on the Committee.*

*If you are interested please fill out the form and return to the President by 31st May 2022.*

*With the extreme pressure I faced in 2021 going into 2022 I had to resign from several other Clubs in major Committee roles but just kept trying to keep Swan River Pioneers afloat until we could call for nominations for the next coming year.*

*I hope some of you think about coming onto Committee and make Swan River Pioneers the vibrant group it was back in its heyday. Interest is still there and applications for Certificates are still coming in. It just takes the right people to build the Group back up.*

*Our Pioneer History needs to be kept alive and is part of the history of the Foundation of Western Australia. Unfortunately the past two years Covid has not helped many of our volunteer associations obtaining the support as we self isolated in our homes to avoid getting the dreaded disease.*

*We will definitely get back into the swing of things as soon as the number of cases drop and we can plan functions and meetings without the threat of being cancelled at late notice.*

*Thank you all for your patience and support and the kind cards and notes I have received over the past 12 months. Keep safe and hope you are all looking after your health.*

*Lyn*

## Early transport challenges for Swan River Pioneers



*1*View of Swan River, taken at the commencement of fresh waters. Frederick Garling: 1827: Art Gallery of WA

From their initial departure from their homelands, early European settlers bound for the infant Swan River Settlement had to deal with transport issues. The long and arduous journey was on an often-cramped ship with little privacy and poor provisions, ending with a sometimes-precarious transfer from their ship to a sandy beach. Before jetties could be built, this transfer was by rowboat—with all the risks associated with this process—and in all weathers. Many passengers were drenched by the time they were deposited on land, and goods were often lost or irreparably damaged.

Once the arrivals were able to gain a suitable land grant, they needed to find a way of travelling to it as soon as possible. Enterprising arrivals set up cartage businesses to provide transport for their newer counterparts, but journeys were still a slow and laborious process, through the bush on heavily laden carts that were often bogged in the sandy soil, and often following the existing bush tracks long used by the local Nyoongar Aboriginal people.

Governor Stirling had ensured as many land grants as possible had river frontage, not only to ensure scarce fertile land was shared evenly, but that river access was also available. Until permanent roads could be built, the alternative option of using local rivers as water 'highways' grew in favour. Many that had not brought boats from England quickly constructed their own, with Governor Stirling reporting in 1830 there were already forty boats in use. From *State of the Colony of Swan River, 1st January 1830*.

The river did provide a smoother mode of private transport than the bush tracks, but was not without its own challenges. Apart from the physical labour involved, there were points in the river where travellers, forced to row or sail around sand banks, extended the distance of their trip. One section was near Point Walter, in Melville Water, where in 1837 Alfred Waylen cut a canal through a large sandbar, reducing the trip to Perth by just over three kilometres, although he lessened the positivity of this by charging a toll. The canal eventually silted over.

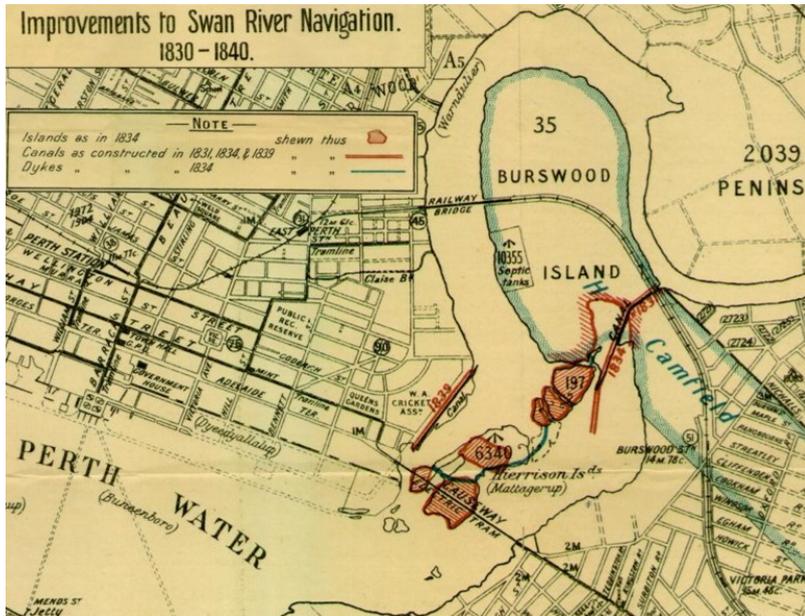
While Perth was located on a wide bay, once boats passed the capital on the way upriver to the agricultural town of Guildford, they were faced with the marshy 'flats' near today's Hierrison Island and Burswood. This area was often impassable due to low water levels, unless goods and passengers were put ashore; the boat pulled over the shallow sandy sections; then goods and passengers loaded back aboard to continue the journey. Again, goods could be lost, or damaged, during this process and passengers risked drowning. Flat-bottomed boats began to be favoured, as advised by settler Henry Camfield in 1829 (the Burswood peninsular was part of Camfield's grant):

*'Between Perth and my grant there is a mud flat of nearly one and a half mile in length. One which a boat must be tracked over even when empty. A flat boat only will carry goods...'*

George Fletcher Moore also wrote:

*'The expense and labour of conveying goods up river, at present is very great; boats in summer must be unloaded and dragged over the flats . . . Every settler should have a boat, and learn how to manage it.'*

As the agricultural population grew and a growing number of settlers and administrators traversing the river experienced these difficulties, Stirling was pressured to find a solution. The issue brought about the first public works in the colony: the cutting of the Burswood Canal across the narrow neck of the Burswood peninsular in 1831. The canal measured 254 metres long, with an average top width of eight metres, and lessened the journey by over five and a half kilometres—but the mudflats were still a problem.



2 Sketch of Burswood Estate and the Peninsula, belonging to H Camfield Esq, Swan River, Western Australia. Battye Library

It was not until 1838 that the deeper Claisebrook Canal was dug on the northern bank of the Swan River, at Clause's lagoon, avoiding the flats but again forcing the full journey around what was now Burswood Island. The only visible remnant of the old Burswood Canal is a culvert near the Goodwood Park boat ramp.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Journal\\_of\\_the\\_Royal\\_Geographical\\_Society\\_of\\_London/Volume\\_1/State\\_of\\_the\\_Colony\\_of\\_Swan\\_River,\\_1st\\_January,\\_1830](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Journal_of_the_Royal_Geographical_Society_of_London/Volume_1/State_of_the_Colony_of_Swan_River,_1st_January,_1830)



3 Black Swans in Clause's Lagoon, Claisebrook

While the Swan River is used by us today for leisure, we can think back to the difficulties our ancestors endured on it, to take themselves and their goods from Guildford to Perth and on to Fremantle.

## The Story of the Ship 'Lotus' and its Captain John Summerson

# The Story of the Ship Lotus and its Captain John Summerson

Sent in by: Ralph Duttson who descended from William Grover passenger on the LOTUS to Swan River 1829.

## John Summerson who was he?

Captain of the **LOTUS** possibly the 8<sup>th</sup> merchant ship arriving at Swan River Colony  
(now known as Western Australia.)  
On 6th October 1829 carrying goods and passengers.

John was born on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 1798 to John Summerson and his wife Ann nee' Caille at their Flowergate Rd. Whitby, North Yorkshire, England residence. He was christened on the 27<sup>th</sup> February of that year in the Anglican church of St. Mary's, Whitby.

His parents John and Ann were well established in the town being people of some means though not of the aristocracy, rather of the merchant class. John snr is listed as a cordwainer (shoemaker) by calling and no doubt knew how to make footwear though he did employ people, as well as holding several properties often referred to as his messuage he also owned the sailing brig BETSEY which he employed on the coastal trade.

John snr is variously listed as paying land tax to His Majesty in 1798 of 3 shillings 4 pence, again 1799 paying 12 shillings indicative of his scale of enterprise. As surety for his attendance in a court case he brought against an Ann Gath 1802 for stealing a pair of shoes valued at 6 pence from him, he would have forfeited £40 should he not attend. He attended!

The Business directory of Whitby for 1807 lists him as a cordwainer of the Ruswarpe area which is a stone's throw from the north bank of the river Esk near the ship building/supplying yards.

He was buried in Whitby on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 1816 aged 53, he had married in St. Mary's Church on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1793 by license, and both signed the register. Ann continued living at their residence until her death on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1823 aged 52.

Children of the marriage are:

Charles b: 6 November 1794

William b: 22 January 1797

John b: 24 February 1798 (herein after referred to as Captain John Summerson)

George b: 30 May 1801

Ann b: 21 January 1803

Eliza b: 8 July 1807

Captain John Summerson would have been 18 when his father died and as records are non-existent regarding training for that era it is reasonable to assume he had already done several years at sea possibly on his father's brig the BETSEY often captained by a Mathew Wood. It is also written in the Cohen Journal that "he did his training before the mast on trips to the East Indies".

Captain John's first recorded captaincy is of the MONARCH a brig of 210 tons, Whitby built with a single deck and beams on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1825 from Cork to Liverpool, Captain Minnett having disembarked at Cork.

As master aboard the LOTUS the first mention in the newspapers of Capt. John Summerson is departing Deal, Kent, England bound for Quebec, Canada on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1827.

/.

# ***The ship LOTUS***

*Launched on 20 July 1826 from the Whitby ship building yard of Thomas Barrick and was owned by a syndicate of shareholders who held differing portions of shares as was the custom. This complicates research as a shareholder might only hold a small percentage of the capital but claim to be a ship owner. In fact could be a small part owner of several ships giving the impression as being a person of substantial wealth.*

*The LOTUS is described as a Ship being of some 397 tons with two decks, sheathed in copper up to the light waterline and copper bolted, had 50 beams across all with iron knees tying to the ribs. She carried Proved Iron Cable as part of her rigging. No mention located of masts but usually 3, square rigged. Later was described as a fast fine ship with excellent accommodation.*

September 24<sup>th</sup> 1826 the LOTUS set off on its maiden voyage under Captain Bowes/Barnes bound for Quebec, Canada and recorded as being at anchor on the 5 December 1826 back in Deal, England inbound from Quebec. Probably carrying timber as that was the volume trade in the 1820-1830s and the LOTUS was a ship available for charter.

Not all voyages can be found in the records or else the ship remained idle for extended periods. For example, there is no indication what the vessel did between December 1826 and May 1827 though perhaps engaged in the coastal trade thereby avoiding the worst of the Atlantic winter storms and ice.

John Summerson as master of the LOTUS was cleared outwards on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1827 though is shown as being at Deal on the 27<sup>th</sup> bound for Quebec then reported off Margate inbound from Quebec on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1827. Next shown at berth in Portsmouth on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1828 unloading a detachment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars returning to barracks at Chichester from a posting at Lisbon, Portugal. Reported as sailed 19<sup>th</sup> May 1828 as an employed transport with timber for Quebec, Canada. Falmouth on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1828 reported that the LOTUS had been spoken to 15 days out from Portsmouth bound for Quebec. All well. Cleared Quebec 5<sup>th</sup> August 1828 bound for England.

Next mention is an advertisement in the London newspaper of the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1829 saying, "LOTUS, Summerson leaving from St Katherine's docks on 21<sup>st</sup> May, Thursday next and call at Portsmouth being the 1<sup>st</sup> conveyance to Swan River and Sydney, having room for only a few persons and goods etc. anyone desirous of availing themselves of this conveyance are requested to make instant application." also in another paper says, "has carriage guns and small arms"

LOTUS arrived at Deal, Kent on the 29<sup>th</sup> and sailed on arriving at Portsmouth on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1829. After resupplying and taking on the remained of the passengers sailed in company with the ATWICK on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1829 with a full cargo of emigrants and husbandry equipment for the new settlement of Swan River. She was low in the water.

After four months sailing arrived off the Swan River on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1829.

An account of the voyage has been located in extracts from the letters of John Hellam a passenger in which he describes sailing through the Bay of Biscay in very bad weather with most being severely seasick. After leaving the bay had a good strong wind from astern pushing them towards the Madeira islands at 9 knots which they bi-passed eventually making land-fall after being becalmed for 6 days in the Cape Verde island of Maio where they replenished their fresh water supply.

Sailed on bi-passing Rio de Janeiro heading for a course around the Cape of Good Hope in the direction of St Paul Island. The LOTUS was spoken to by HMS TWEED on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1829 near St Paul Island a small extinct near submerged volcano located (38' 41 S. 77' 31 E) about 3000 km from any continent. Reported all well. Early in the voyage they lost overboard a passenger who climbed the rigging whilst drunk and fell, he could not be rescued. Cpt John had been ambivalent with the passengers up until this point after which stronger boundaries were set.

After spending about a month unloading passengers and freight all of which had to be rowed ashore the ship set sail for Hobart in Van Diemen's Land. Dropped anchor up the Derwent River on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1829 only staying at anchor briefly before heading north for Sydney.

Newspapers list the LOTUS arriving in Sydney on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1829 with a small part of its original mixed cargo and the Officers from the Cockburn Sound WA wreck of the MARQUIS of ANGLESEY. Capt John placed an advertisement in the newspaper stating, "be cautioned and do not give any of his crew credit as he will not be responsible for any unpaid debts arising."

LOTUS departed Sydney for Batavia on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 1830 where it loaded sugar & spices for an English merchant. Capt John Summerson and the LOTUS are recorded as arriving at Cowes, England fully laden on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1830.

**Please note: Ralph's article is 8 pages long. I will put on our website and happy to send to any member who is interested in this informative article on the ship Lotus and it's Captain. Many thanks Ralph**



# Pioneer Story Competition

**Write your Swan River pioneer family history story and win a cash prize and giving us permission to print in the Settlers Gazette.  
(The pioneer must have arrived in the Swan River Colony between 1829 and 1838.)**

**No more than 3 A4 pages including photos if possible and including sources wherever possible.**

**Closing date: 15th August 2022**

**Email or mail to: The Editor—Settlers Gazette  
PO Box 2672  
Ellenbrook WA 6069**

**Email address: swanriverpioneers@gmail.com**

**1st Prize: \$100                      2nd Prize: \$50  
3rd Prize: \$25**

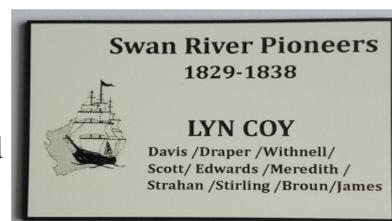
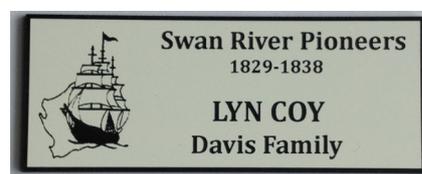


## Certificate Recipients- Congratulations!

SURNAME	GIVEN NAME	PIONEER SURNAME	PIONEER GIVEN NAME	SHIP	ARRIVAL DATE	CERTIFICATE
ROSE	PAUL	JEFFERS	EDWARD & CECILIA	HMS SULPHUR	8/06/1829	4477
ROSE	PAUL	JEFFERS	EDWARD JNR	BORN SRC	04/06/1833	4477A
MCKENZIE	BARBARA	NAIRN	WILLIAM & MARY	MARQUIS OF ANGLESEA	23/08/1829	4478
MCKENZIE	BARBARAA	NAIRN	JAMES	MARQUIS OF ANGLESEA	23/08/1829	4478A
DENHAM	ELSIE	MEWS	THOMAS & MARY	ROCKINGHAM	14/05/1830	4479
DENHAM	ELSIE	MEWS	MARY ANN	ROCKINGHAM	14/05/1830	4479A
DENHAM	ELSIE	ARMSTRONG	ADAM PEARSON	GILMORE	15/12/1829	4480
DENHAM	ELSIE	ARMSTRONG	FRANCIS FRASER	GILMORE	15/12/1829	4480
HEWLETT	VICTORIA	DRAPER	ROBERT & JANE	JAMES	8/05/1830	4481
HEWLETT	VICTORIA	DRAPER	JAMES	JAMES	08/05/1830	4481A
HEWLETT	NOA	DRAPER	ROBERT & JANE	JAMES	8/05/1830	4482
HEWLETT	NOA	DRAPER	JAMES	JAMESW	08/05/1830	4482A
WESTON	REBECCA	WATTS	GEORGE STEDMAN	MEDINA	6/07/1830	4483
WESTON	REBECCA	BLAGG	AMELIA	EGYPTIAN	13/02/1830	4484
SCHEBECI	NATE	WATTS	GEORGE STEDMAN	MEDINA	6/07/1830	4485
SCHEBECI	NATE	BLAGG	AMELIA	EGYPTIAN	13/02/1830	4486
SCHEBECI	MIETTA	WATTS	GEORGE STEDMAN	MEDINA	6/07/1830	4487
SCHEBECI	MIETTA	BLAGG	AMELIA	EGYPTIAN	6/07/1830	4488

## Swan River Pioneers - Name Badges

We are offering name badges for you to wear at our meetings and functions.



Cost is \$7.00 (which includes postage) for the normal size badge 75mm x 30mm. If you have multiple family names then the cost is \$10.00 and of course the badge is a bit bigger to fit in all your family names.

The badge is good quality (we have numerous club badges produced from this supplier).

If you are interested you can email or call me to order.

Please make cheques payable to Swan River Pioneers. Or you can order at a meeting or function from Lyn Coy - Telephone: 041 790 8972 or

email: swanriverpioneers@gmail.com or you can post your order to:

Lyn Coy (Swan River Pioneers) at PO Box 2672, Ellenbrook WA 6069

*Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 Inc.*

**NOMINATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
2022/2023**

In accordance with the Rules and By-Laws of the Society, all positions are declared vacant, and nominations are hereby called for members willing to serve on the Committee in the following positions:

**POSITION:**

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Committee Members - minimum of 3 and maximum of 4

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*Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 Inc.*  
**2022-2023 Management Committee**

**Nomination Form**

I wish to nominate.....

for the position of.....

on the Management Committee of the Society for 2022/2023

NAME:..... (You must be financial to nominate)

NAME:.....

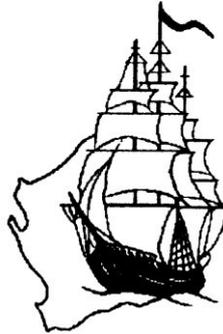
I accept nomination to this position      Signed:.....

Date:.....

This nomination must be returned to the President of the Society by 27th May, 2022 <sup>10</sup>

# Swan River Pioneers Group 1829-1838 (Inc.)

Email: swanriverpioneers@gmail.com  
PO Box 2672, Ellenbrook WA 6069



An Affiliated Member of  
**Family History WA Inc.**

Telephone: Treasurer Lyn Coy 08 9296 9520 /041 7908972  
Certificate Registrar: Maureen Scorer , Membership Secretary: Ann Wheeler

## SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL NOTICE

Please find attached my **2022/2023** Subscription fee for the year ending **31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (Email Copy)** **\$25.00**

**Postage of Gazette can you please assist by paying postage of \$ 5.00**

**OPTIONAL: I/we would like to make a donation to the Interest Group \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Name: *Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms*

Address: .....  
.....

Postcode: ..... Telephone: (0 ) .....

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Cardholders Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Verification Code: \_\_\_\_ (the 3 numbers on the back of your card)

You can also direct debit to our bank account but we need your surname and suburb (town)  
Account Name: Swan River Pioneers BSB: 016 352 Account No: 306888364 (Advise by email you have paid )

Signature: .....

If you are agreeable for your Settlers Gazette to be emailed can you please tick the box

- Tick box if a receipt is required - **(please make cheques payable to: SWAN RIVER PIONEERS**  
Please post cheque to Swan River Pioneers, PO Box 2672, Ellenbrook, WA, 6069

**Thank you for your continued support of the Swan River Pioneers 1829-1838 Inc.**