

# The Family of Ludwig Weschow/Wishaw

*by Bruce WISHAW (Perth AU)*

In the mid-1990's I pondered the situation that we knew very little about our WISHAW origins.

**1.**What did I know? I knew that my father, John WISHAW. was a Scotsman born at Leith, Edinburgh in 1888, one of five brothers. I had a vague recollection that he told me that his father, named Ludwig, had come from Riga, Latvia, and had worked on fishing boats before settling in Scotland. That was about all and we now know that most of that is not correct.

John WISHAW told us very little about his past or his family origins. Geographic separation meant that we had only very infrequent contact with WISHAW cousins over the years and the pool of knowledge was quite shallow. In particular about the surname WISHAW. It was the name of a small industrial town in Scotland. This seemed to be more likely the source of the family name than eastern Europe.

This document records the slow progress we have made in unravelling the mystery of our family heritage. There is much more to know. An interesting aspect has been to find that at each point of discovering new knowledge, we have had to rewrite some of what had previously been found. This version includes some information just recently to hand which has required making significant changes to the summary which I distributed in October, 2003.

I hope this project will be continued. There is room for more participation. There are questions still to be resolved and there is room for more participation.

## **2. ARE WE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?**

WISHAWS are rare. Those of us who bear this surname are well aware of its rarity. The only WISHAWS in Australia are members of the families of Frederick WISHAW and John WISHAW.

Occasionally there have been reports of another, unrelated WISHAW being sighted in Australia, but no such sightings have been authenticated. There are some close variants on the name such as WILSHAW. WHISHAW. WISHER and many WISHARTS

Similarly in the United Kingdom we believe that the only WISHAWS are the families of Ernest WISHAW and Bernard WISHAW. We are less certain of this but found no others from checking out numerous telephone directories. This is quite surprising, because when she was in England in 1998, Sally McKINNON, Max WISHAW'S daughter, extracted from County Records of births, christenings and marriages a list of about 86 persons named WISHAW, during the years 1698 to 1870. There were also many others whose names were close variants. So the name has been known, if not common, but has apparently run out over time.

Halbert's New World Registry searches for family names in the USA, Canada and Australia. In 1988 they found a small number of WISHAWS in Australia (their estimate 50 persons) and a smaller number in the USA (their estimate 17 persons) but none in Canada. They listed ten names and addresses of Australian WISHAWS, all members of our family.

Four of the five names and addresses of the American WISHAWS listed by Halberts were in the State of Michigan. They are not related to us but their story is quite interesting. One of them contacted Anne WISHAW, Bruce WISHAW'S daughter, by email in 1999 and an exchange of information followed. They are all descendants of Wawrzyniec LYSCZARZ, born about 1845 in Gdansk, Poland. His first name equates readily to Lawrence. In Polish a W is pronounced as an L and an L is pronounced as a W! His surname sounded like WISHA and he

adopted that name for obvious convenience and later it became WISHAW. Thus, the American WISHAWS, who have prospered and spread across the country, have a remarkably similar family history to our own, quite independently.

Looking for other WISHAWS may be interesting but it is quite irrelevant. We know now that we WISHAWS began just 100 years ago when Ludwig WESCHOW changed his and his family's surname to WISHAW. Thus our heritage is of the WESCHOWS, and it appears that WESCHOWS are every bit as rare as WISHAWS.

### **3. THE OBJECT OF THE PROJECT**

As a third generation WISHAW, I wanted to know more about where we had come from, to get some facts and figures about the first two generations.

To begin the search for information, I visited the Eastern States in 1996 with Beryl and had long conversations with cousins in NSW. These were the children and grandchildren of Frederick WISHAW. This was a most enjoyable, interesting and informative time. We made another visit to them in 1997. However, we found that there were similar big gaps in their knowledge, as in ours.

Everybody believed that Ludwig, who spent his last six or seven years in NSW, was of German origin, and had changed his name to WISHAW. But nobody knew what the original surname was, or much else about Ludwig. Even less was known about his first wife, the mother of his sons and our grandmother.

At that time (1996) my father and his brothers were long gone and my mother was the sole survivor of that generation. She was then suffering mild dementia and was not able to be of any help, although she had preserved John's Royal Marines and Royal Navy papers, which were important. I think it unlikely that she would have been able to help much even if her recollections were still clear, because John did not talk much about his past and may indeed have been covering up some of that which we were seeking to discover.

### **4. OUR FIRST TWO GENERATIONS IN BRIEF**

Ludwig WESCHOW, born in Stettin, Germany in 1840, died in Wollongong, NSW, in 1918. Bertha WELL, Ludwig's first wife, was born in 1857. Her place of birth is not established, but possibly Rumia, Poland. Her original surname may have been WIALD. Bertha married Ludwig in 1879 and they had five sons who survived into adulthood and another who lived just one year. Bertha died in childbirth in 1897 and in the absence of any record we assume that this seventh child died at birth.

Ernest WESCHOW was born in 1880 at Leith, Scotland. Date of death believed to be 1947.

Fridrig WESCHOW was born in 1883 at Leith Scotland, and died at Wollongong, NSW in 1954.

The first Bernhard WESCHOW was born in 1886 in Stettin, Germany & died in Stettin in 1887.

Johannes WESCHOW was born in 1888 in Stettin and died in Perth, WA in 1959.

The second Bernhard WESCHOW was born in 1890 in Stettin and died in Derbyshire, England in 1961.

Carl WESCHOW was born in 1893 at Leith, Scotland, and died on the Western Front in 1917.

Daisy MOLLER, born ROWE in Manchester in 1861, married Ludwig in 1898 in Scotland, and died in NSW in 1956.

Prior to 1901 the sons had anglicised their first names. This involved minimal changes to Frederick, John and Bernard, and no change at all for Ernest and Carl.

Sometime later Carl became Charles.

In the 1901 Census, Ludwig's name appears as Louis. This is probably a phonetic take from Lui which is the familiar contraction of Ludwig in Germany.

At some time between 1901 and 1904, Ludwig, his wife Daisy and his sons all changed their surname to WISHAW.

## **5. FROM WESCHOW TO WISHAW**

Why did Ludwig change the family name? We don't know and can only speculate.

Ludwig had lived in Scotland for many years. Perhaps he decided that it was time he had a more British-sounding name.

The change occurred just a few years after his marriage to Daisy. She was English-born, even though she had lived in Germany with her first husband, Gustav MOLLER, who was German. Perhaps Daisy wanted to have a more British-sounding name.

A more sinister reason should also be considered. Through the long and peaceful reign of Queen Victoria, relations between Britain and Germany were good. The much-revered British Royal family were of German stock, the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Although this situation continued generally right up to the very abrupt commencement of World War I, there were some worrying developments during the preceding 20 years.

A confrontation between British gold miners and German and Dutch Boer settlers at Johannesburg in 1896 resulted in the German Kaiser supporting the Boers and taking a hostile position towards Britain over the issue, which developed into the Boer War.

For ten years or more prior to the War tension was rising throughout Europe. Rivalry between nations led to increased arming and the establishment of various alliances.

The Kaiser initiated a major programme of construction of naval ships, recognising that to rank with Britain as a power, Germany needed to have a navy capable of challenging Britain's dominance of the sea.

Thus, although World War I was precipitated out of the blue by an assassination in Sarajevo, the scene was being set for some years prior to that event.

Such an atmosphere may have led Ludwig to decide to discard his German name and make his family thoroughly British.

Certainly, the evidence is that having changed the name, Ludwig and his sons thereafter consciously suppressed all reference to their German origins. Moreover, in the 1901 Census, even before the name change, Ludwig claimed British Subject status for himself and the other German-born members of his family, although no official record of this has been located.

Why WISHAW? Ludwig almost certainly took his new family name from the small Scottish town of Wishaw, near Glasgow. The town itself, by all accounts, is and was then an uninspiring place, but its name is quite similar in structure to WESCHOW, and was for Ludwig, unmistakably British.

## **6. REDISCOVERING THE WISHAWS**

When this project began in the mid-1990's it was generally known in the family that Ludwig had changed his name to WISHAW, but nobody knew the original surname.

It was also generally supposed that Ludwig's five sons had been born in Leith, Edinburgh, as WISHAWS, and had been brought up there. However, when one of John's family tried some years ago to obtain a copy of his birth registration from Edinburgh and from Somerset House in London, no such registration was on record.

Furthermore, there was no record of anyone named WISHAW in that generation. Bernard himself had also had difficulty in applying for an aged pension because there was no record of his birth.

The first major breakthrough came in 2000, with the discovery of Ludwig's original surname, WESCHOW. How did this come about?

In 1954 Beryl and I visited Uncle Bernard and Aunt Fanny at their home in Matlock, Derbyshire, England. Aunt Fanny turned out to be the key person to unlocking the mystery of the WISHAWS. She related bits of information whose importance I hardly recognised at the time. I jotted down a few notes on a scrap of paper and subsequently spelled them out in a letter to my parents. My father John was then alive and well, but I do not recall any response from them, nor any discussion after we returned to Perth. Of course, at that time I was a busy young man, not particularly interested in the family history. The letter I wrote was later lost.

In 2000 I happened to come across my original scrappy notes from the 1954 visit. They included Fanny's belief that the original surname was "VESCHOFF", which is an accurate German phonetic version of WESCHOW I passed this on to my niece, Sally McKINNON, who had recently returned from a year in England during which she had endeavoured to advance the process of rediscovering the WISHAWS. Sally accessed the Scottish data base "Origins". There were no VESCHOFFS to be found but Sally managed to find the WESCHOWS. As a result, Sally located records of:

Ludwig's and Bertha's Marriage	(1879)
Ernest's birth	(1880)
Fridrig's birth	(1883)
Carl's birth	(1893)
Bertha's death	(1897)
Ludwig's and Daisy's Marriage	(1898)

and subsequently purchased copies of the certificates for each of these events except Ernest's birth. See Attachments 1, 3, 10, 11, 12.

A copy of the record of Ernest's birth has subsequently been obtained and is included with the others appended. See Attachment 2.

This was a great leap forward. However, there was no record of birth for John (1888) or Bernard (1890). And strangely, nor was there any record of any of the family being in Scotland at the time of the 1891 Census, the only one for which data was then available on the Origins data base.

***The notes from Fanny included:***

Ludwig VESCHOFF was from Poland.

His wife, Bertha, was Russian. Her gravestone bore the name Bertha WELLS WISHAW, although Fanny did not know where it was.

The sons' names would have been registered as VESCHOFF.

The reason for Bernard's birth registration not being found may have been due to his being born at sea and registered in a foreign port, possibly Stettin.

Ludwig had the same birthday as Queen Victoria (24th May).

A possible interpretation of this pattern of incomplete information was that Ludwig took his family out of Scotland for a few years between Frederick's birth in 1883 and Carl's birth in 1893, including the times when John and Bernard were born and when the 1891 Census was taken.

Where did they go? Fanny's snippets suggest that Stettin may have been the place. Stettin was a Baltic seaport, at that time in Germany. As a result of the rearrangement of boundaries after World War 1I, it is now in Poland and is called Szczecin.

After that great leap discovering the WESCHOWS, the project again slowed down.

Nevertheless, interesting information was being accumulated. Here in Perth, we had John WISHAW'S papers from his service in the Royal Marines (1904-1908), his Royal Navy papers (1908-1921), his marriage certificate (1926) and a few other items. In NSW the family of Frederick WISHAW, particularly Fred WISHAW, Frederick's son, and Anne WYATT, Fred's daughter, gathered various documents and recollections which were useful. In particular Anne WYATT has a collection of memorabilia relating to Carl/Charles WISHAW

In England in 1998 Sally McKINNON re-established contact with Gladys WISHAW, daughter-in-law of Bernard and Fanny WISHAW and widow of their son, Bernard. I also reconnected with Gladys whom I had met in 1953, first by correspondence, then by a visit in 2000. Gladys is actively interested in this project, having made efforts of her own to discover more about the WISHAWs. In general Gladys' contributions confirm and add to what we had from Fanny, which is as we would expect.

Sally also endeavoured to make contact with Ernest WISHAW'S family members in Scotland, with limited success. She was able to visit Ernest's son, Charlie, in Edinburgh. Charlie had been a ship's carpenter and had visited Australia many times, making contact with the WISHAWs in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne.

However for Sally he did not have much to contribute to the family story and indeed what he told Sally is clearly quite wrong. Sally also made unrewarding visits to two other of Ernest's seven children.

Anne WYATT also visited Charlie WISHAW in Edinburgh in 2003, but was no more successful than Sally in increasing our knowledge of our forebears.

## **7. CALLING IN EXPERT HELP**

In 2002 we were again at a standstill and some real expertise seemed to be needed to take this investigation forward. I engaged the services of a professional genealogist, Brian CROKER, and put to him the questions:

- \* When and where was my father, John Albert WISHAW, born?
- \* When and where was his brother, Bernard Henry WISHAW, born?  
adding -
- \* Any further information about their father, Ludwig WESCHOW, and their mother, Bertha WELL, would also be welcome.

The outcome of this request has been to advance usefully our knowledge, but we are a difficult case! A great deal of effort has been expended and slowly the results of this labour have been forthcoming.

My professional friend, Brian, quickly found a rich haul from the British Census data for 1881 and 1901, which had recently become accessible. See Attachment 4.

All the members of Ludwig's family are listed although the three at home in 1881 are not present in 1901.

Relationships are given, each person's age is given and their place of birth.

The surname WESCHOW is misspelt in 1881, but is still the family name in 1901. The given names of the sons have been anglicised by 1901.

The 7-month-old Ernest Ludwig in April 1881 is named Levis. This child was known as Ernest as he grew up, but perhaps when an infant his mother preferred to use the Scottish equivalent of his second given name, his father's name, Ludwig. This would be Lewis, but pronounced by a German speaker as Levis.

Ludwig is absent from home in 1881, presumably at sea.

Ernest is absent from home in 1901, when he was probably already serving in the Royal Navy.

In 1881 Bertha's sister Anna was in the household perhaps visiting or helping Bertha with the baby. Anna's surname is WIALD and she is single. This is then likely to be the sisters' original (Russian?) family name before their parents and Bertha changed it to WELL, perhaps after migrating to Scotland.

But the places of birth are the most interesting of all the Census information.

Bertha and Anna give their place of birth as Rumia Rigo, Russia. We have been unable to identify this location, as will be discussed later in this document.

Daisy was English-born and Dora, her daughter, was born in Hanover, Germany.

As had already been found by Sally, Ernest, Frederick and Carl were born in Leith.

Ludwig, John and Bernard are all listed as born in Germany in Stolten, Stoltin and Stoltin respectively. These are doubtless the same place. There is no town in Germany called Stolten or Stoltin and it is reasonable to assume that these are corruptions of Stettin, which was a major Baltic seaport. This tends to confirm firstly Fanny's belief that Bernard was born in or near Stettin, and secondly the hypothesis that Ludwig returned with his wife and two sons to Stettin after 1883 and was there when his next two sons were born and when the 1891 British Census was taken.

## **8. PROBLEMS!**

**8.1** When looking through the material already presented, it becomes apparent that our search is being made more difficult by one of the major problems encountered in this type of research. This is the occurrence of numerous small variations in the spelling of names of places and people that arise from the oral and handwritten transmission of information. Relocation between countries increases the chances of variations occurring. The problems of different language, accents and handwriting styles virtually guarantee that these will happen.

Thus, in the 1881 Census we have Bertha's surname recorded as WESCHAW. Also, the infant's given name as Levis (Lewis, Ludwig?) In the 1901 Census we have Stolten and Stoltin. These do not sound like Stettin, but could easily arise from copying poor handwriting.

**8.2** In a British Census the information generated is just what is provided by the resident at the doorstep. Errors can arise as noted above, and also if the person providing the information is mistaken in their belief about names, dates and places.

Furthermore, it is still subject to errors arising in the subsequent processing of that information.

None of it has to be validated. For example, Ludwig claims that he and his German-born sons are British Subjects. No documentary evidence of this is required for the Census. Brian has checked records of naturalisation to UK citizenship but no record for Ludwig WESCHOW/WISHAW was found.

Similarly with name changes. Ludwig changed some first names and later the family name. This was probably all quite "unofficial". Brian says it has never been a statutory

requirement in the UK to register a change of name. It can be done for legal and other purposes if needed or desired.

**8.3** It follows from the above that the Census data alone do not provide absolutely reliable information. Useful certainly, but always likely to contain errors.

To be quite sure that Ludwig, John and Bernard were born in Stettin we need to obtain copies of the official registration of their births.

Again, the Census data indicates that Bertha's name at birth was probably WIALD. But this name only occurs once in the documents and its spelling may also have been corrupted.

## **9. STETTIN RECORDS**

Brian then set about trying to access church and civil records for Stettin, to confirm the birth details for Ludwig, John and Bernard. This proved to be difficult, as he expected.

Brian requested the Lutheran Archives in Berlin for a search for a baptism of Ludwig, but they advised that they needed to know the name of the particular parish where he was born. We don't know that and Brian estimated that there were at least seven Lutheran parishes in Stettin at that time.

The International Genealogical Index includes entries from two Lutheran churches in Stettin, Saints Nicholas and Gertrude, covering the period 1835 to 1875. The absence of any WESCHOW entries confirms that Ludwig was not baptised in these parishes.

Brian decided to seek help from an American agency with particular expertise in such problems who eventually struck gold in the LDS archives in Salt Lake City where Stettin records are stored in hard copy, not yet electronically indexed.

They first found a civil registration for the birth of Bernhard Albert WESCHOW, born at Grabow, Stettin, on 3rd June 1886. A corresponding record was found for the baptism of this child in the Friedens Church on 22nd August 1886. However, this record gives the infant's name as Albert Bernhard. Unhappily the civil record carries an annotation that this child died on 24th May 1887. So this was a son of Ludwig and Bertha about whom we had not known previously, and was obviously not Bernard Henry.

Some of the writing is in an obsolete old German script called Suetterlin. I am indebted to my friend Friedrich ULOTH, who recognised the script and kindly translated it into modern German and English.

The civil and baptismal documents, together with F. ULOTH'S translations are appended in Attachments 5, 8 and 9.

It is of interest to note that the witnesses to the baptism included Mrs. Albertina WESCHOW, possibly Ludwig's sister-in-law?

The search then revealed a civil registration for the birth of Johannes Alfred WESCHOW, born on 19th March 1888. This is no doubt my father, with the date of birth exactly as he claimed it. He too was born at Grabow, a suburb of Stettin. A baptismal record from the Friedens Church shows that Johannes Alfred was baptised on 21st May 1888, and one of the witnesses was named W. WESCHOW, possibly Ludwig's brother.

Copies of these documents with translations by F. ULOTH are appended. See Attachments 6, 8 and 9.

This was a great discovery, resolving one of the principal questions addressed by this project. However, I asked Brian to request a further search for Bernard Henry WESCHOW whose date of birth we believed to be 5th May 1890 (from Gladys) and for Ludwig WESCHOW whose year of birth we were confident was 1840 and the possible date 24th May.

In due course a civil registration was found for the birth of Albert Bernhard WESCHOW, born at Grabow, Stettin on 5th May 1890. No baptismal record was sent. See Attachments 7 & 8.

The search for a record of Ludwig's birth continues.

Thus, we have evidence that during the years 1886 - 1890 while resident in Grabow, Stettin, Germany, Bertha gave birth to three more sons for Ludwig. The first, Bernhard Albert, survived for just less than one year.

For reasons which we can only guess at, Ludwig and Bertha subsequently changed the other two boys' names. Nor do we know when.

In the 1901 Census, back in Scotland, Johannes Alfred was John, aged 13. and Albert Bernhard had become Bernard, aged 10.

When John joined the Royal Marines in 1904, he was John Albert.

When Bernard was married in 1912 his name was Barnard Henry

## **10. THE PROFESSIONAL SEARCH**

When I approached Brian in June 2002. I passed on to him a summary of what we had found to that date, notably including the material Sally had uncovered.

He quickly found the 1881 and 1901 British Census data and took up the search in two directions. One was the pursuit of the three men declared to have been born in Stettin, which has been described above. The second was to cast a wider net looking for the names WESCHOW and WIALD.

The target area was still quite wide. Stettin was then in Germany. Bertha's birthplace was given enigmatically as Rumia Rigo, Russia - Rumia suggesting Poland (then West Prussia), Rigo possibly pointing to Latvia, and Russia more broadly.

Brian turned to the LDS Church (Latter Day Saints or Mormons) Family Search website, which includes the International Genealogical Index, searching for any reference to WESCHOW but there was not any entry for this name. He notes that this is most unusual, as this database is so enormous, on a worldwide basis, that it is usually possible to use it to get a clue as to places of origin or occurrence of practically any surname. However Eastern Europe is not yet very well covered. Other searches also failed to find any human WESCHOW, only a pedigree of dog!

This unsuccessful search caused Brian to consider whether the name WESCHOW may have been a variation of a similar name, which was limited to just this one family. He consulted books of German and Polish surnames to find variations or similar names.

None of the books included the name WESCHOW itself, but he found a number of somewhat similar names. These were checked out on Family Search, which turned up some entries, but none that appeared relevant to our subject forebears.

Brian then did an extensive search of possible variations of the name in records connected with Stettin. This resulted in a list of 82 names with the surnames VESCHOFF(!), VIRCHOW, WUSSE, WASCHKE, WIESCHOW, WISCHOW and WUSSOW. Scrutiny of their given names and dates of birth did not suggest any linkage with the known WESCHOW family.

However, the idea that WESCHOW was a variation of another name is given considerable credibility by the occurrence of 35 WISCHOWS and 10 WIESCHOWS in the list of 82 names.

So, despite a very considerable effort in searching, the only persons we have found bearing the surname WESCHOW are:

Ludwig, Bertha and their sons, and Daisy.  
Ludwig's parents Hans and Dorothy.  
The baptismal witnesses in Stettin, W WESCHOW and Albertina WESCHOW  
who were possibly Ludwig's brother and sister-in-law.

### ***A lateral diversion:***

In the searching of British Census data, Brian found entries for three sisters, born in Russia. They were living together in England and their surnames were given, one as WISHAW and the other two as WHISHAW (An illustration of how easily a mistake can enter the records).

Brian then found that there was a number of Russian families named WHISHAW, mainly in the St Petersburg area, over two or three generations, and one of the given names that occurs frequently is Bernard. Is it possible that what happened with the name is the reverse of what we have understood - that WHISHAW was changed to WESCHOW to fit in with the Eastern European scene and that it was later changed in Scotland back to WISHAW? This is an interesting idea but there are some problems with it.

The Family Search and European Vital Records Index were also checked for the name WIALD with no result. Similarly, there were no entries for RICKS (Ludwig's mother's name.)

Gladys WISHAW had suggested that Bertha may have been a Russian Jew. The All-Latvia database produced by Jewish Genealogy Inc. was searched for WIALD (and for WESCHOW) with another negative result.

In the present day, the white pages for Germany include no WESCHOWS. White pages for Poland and Latvia are not accessible on the Internet.

We have to conclude from all this work that the names WESCHOW and WJALD are very rare indeed.

This brief statement does less than justice to the comprehensive searching that Brian has done and has reported to me in a very professional presentation.

## **11. THE FIRST WISHAWS**

This section summarises our present knowledge of the first WISHAW5:

### **11.1 Ludwig WISHAW (aka Louis)**

On both of his marriage certificates Ludwig's parents are named as Hans WESCHOW, a farmer, and Dorothy WESCHOW (born RICKS).

Ludwig gave his place of birth (in the 1901 Census) as Stettin. Since farming people are not often itinerant it is reasonable to assume that his family origins were in the area of Stettin.

His several statements of his age point consistently to his year of birth being 1840. His birthday date may have been 24th May. (Fanny recalled that he had the same birthday as Queen Victoria, 24th May and died a few days before his birthday). He died at Wollongong on 23rd May 1918.

The 1901 Census gives Ludwig's first name as Louis and his descendants in NSW recalled that he was known as Louis. At first, I thought this puzzling, assuming Louis to be a French name. However, on checking it seems that Louis was originally a German name. Furthermore, I recently read a book about the Austrian physicist, Ludwig BOLTZMANN, born in 1845 and thus a contemporary of our Ludwig. When away from home, BOLTZMANN signed his affectionate letters to his wife as Lui. Thus, the familiar contraction Lui is phonetically identical with Louis.

Stettin was a major seaport on the Baltic and Ludwig's occupation became a ship's rigger, when sail had still not given way to steam. We guess that he worked on merchant ships in the Baltic North Sea area.

Ludwig married Bertha WELL at Leith, Edinburgh in 1879 and established his home at Leith. See Attachment 1. Bertha is a German name and it is likely that she was also of German background. Why they settled in Scotland we do not know.

Bertha produced Ludwig's six sons, but died giving birth to their seventh child, in 1897. There is no record of the birth or death of this child.

Ludwig married his second wife, Daisy MOLLER, in 1898. See Attachment 12.

Ludwig and his family lived in Leith from 1879 until sometime between 1904 and 1908 when they moved to MossSide, Manchester. However, there was an interval of at least six years including 1886 - 1891, when the family relocated to Stettin, where three of the sons were born.

In 1911/12 Ludwig migrated to Wollongong, NSW, with his wife Daisy, his stepdaughter/daughter-in-law Dora, her infant daughter Poppy (Daisy Johannah, born 1910), and his son Carl/Charles. This party joined Ludwig's son Frederick, who had migrated in 1911 alone.

Ludwig died in Wollongong in 1918. See Attachment 14. A copy of his death certificate is appended. See Attachment 14.

His step-daughter Dora, who had known him since she was a 12-year-old, was the informant. The entries are interesting: Dora correctly names him as Ludwig, a ship rigger; almost correctly declares that he first married at age 39 at Edinburgh, Scotland, to Bertha WILLS (WILLS should read WELL) and records correctly the Names and ages of his four surviving sons noting one male deceased.

His second marriage also took place at Edinburgh, Scotland, when he was aged 57 (not 54 as recorded) to Dora's mother, named as Daisy ROWE, but actually Daisy MOLLER at her marriage. However, Dora gives his place of birth as Edinburgh, Scotland, which she surely knew was not correct. Dora did not know Ludwig's father's name and occupation, and knew only that his mother's first name was Dorothy.

He was interred in the Congregational cemetery at Wollongong, but family members do not know the grave location.

It would be good to have positive confirmation of Ludwig's date and place of birth.

### **11.2 Bertha WESCHOW**

We have been rather less successful in establishing firm information about Bertha, Ludwig's first wife, the mother of his sons.

Her first name is consistently Bertha on the various documents we have recovered.

Her maiden surname is variously given as WELL, WELLS, WILLS and WERR.

However, the name is given seven times as WELL, including the only three times when Bertha herself was the informant. She also gave her parents' names as Charles WELL and Dinah WELL, nee ROSS. Thus, there seems to be little doubt that WELL is the correct name and the other variants have arisen through communication errors.

However, a complication arises in the 1881 Census, when Bertha's unmarried sister, Anna, gives her surname as WIALD. Perhaps the family emigrated from Europe to Scotland and

changed their name to WELL, which may be a reasonable phonetic equivalent of WIALD. But we have no evidence for this.

Bertha's parents were both recorded as deceased on Bertha's 1879 marriage certificate and Brian has been unable to locate any more information about them.

We have three items of data relating to Bertha's age. These indicate that her date of birth was in the second half of 1857.

Her place of birth is stated only once, in the 1881 Census, as Rumia Rigo, Russia. We have not been able to positively identify this location, as discussed in a later section.

It seems certain that Bertha was a German-speaking Lutheran. Ludwig was a devout Lutheran, German-born and German-speaking. It is highly likely that when taking a wife, he would choose a partner from the same cultural background. Their sons were all given German names. Bertha is a German name. A witness at their marriage was 20 year old Bertha MITELKA whom Brian checked out as being German-born. The birth records of the three sons born in Stettin describe Ludwig and Bertha as both being of the Protestant religion (i.e. Lutheran).

We have no evidence for the suggestion that Bertha may have been of Jewish extraction, although her mother's name, Dinah, and her sister's name, Anna, are names of Hebrew origin.

Bertha was married to Ludwig at Leith on 7th November, 1879, by a Pastor of the German Church. She was 22 years old.

Bertha was the mother of Ludwig's six sons, three born in Leith and three born in Stettin. One of those born in Stettin died at one year.

Bertha died in childbirth at Leith on 27th July, 1897, aged 39 years. We have no record of the birth or death of the child and presume it to have not survived.

### **11.3 Ernest WISHAW**

Ludwig and Bertha's first son, Ernest Ludwig WESCHOW, was born at Leith on 20th August, 1880. See Attachment 2.

Ernest apparently served in the Royal Navy for a long period, probably enlisting as a teenager in the mid-1890's.

He would have been on service with the Navy when the family surname was changed in about 1901-1904. However, he also took on the anglicised name, presumably at about the same time.

*Some of the anecdotes relating to his Navy service were:*

- \* He survived the sinking of HMS Falmouth (no date)
- \* He received a commemorative medal for his participation in an evacuation following an earthquake in southern Italy in December 1908.
- \* He was in a naval guard of honour at the Coronation of King George V, June 1911.
- \* His ship visited Sydney before WWI and he met up with his brother, Frederick.
- \* He served through WWI.

He married and established his family home in Scotland, probably in Edinburgh.

It is related that he lost three children in a house fire before WWII. These were Richard, Janet and Jenny. Nevertheless, he had seven surviving children, viz., Mary, Fred, Helen, Ernest, Douglas, Charles and Roy.

The only one known to us was Charles who was a ship's carpenter in the merchant fleet and visited Australian ports on a number of occasions when he made contact with his Australian relations. In recent years Sally McKINNON and Anne WYATT have visited Charlie, but we do not know much about Ernest or the other members of his family.

Ernest died in 1947.

#### **11.4 Frederick WISHAW**

The second son, Fridrig Wilhelm WESCHOW, was born at Leith on 18th February, 1883. See Attachment 3. Frederick became a skilled carpenter and cabinet maker and later, in Australia, a builder.

He moved from Edinburgh to MossSide, Manchester, with the family at some time between 1904 and 1908, where he exercised his skills while the other members of the family ran a fish and poultry business.

On 8th June, 1908 he married his step-sister, Dora MOLLER, Daisy's daughter, in the MossSide Baptist Church.

In 1911 Frederick migrated alone to Australia, arriving in June and settling at Wollongong. He then arranged for other members of his family at MossSide to follow him out, which they did in 1911/12. This party included his wife Dora, his infant daughter Daisy (Poppy), his father Ludwig, his stepmother Daisy and his brother Carl, who became known as Charles.

One of Daisy's sisters, Minnie GISZ, with her three children, joined the travelling group and also settled at Wollongong.

Frederick established his home at Mr. Drummond (later renamed Coniston) close by Wollongong and lived the rest of his days in that area. He plied his trade successfully as a carpenter builder.

Frederick and Dora had four children:

Daisy (Poppy) born	1910
Fredora (Freda) born	~1913
Vera born	~1915
Fred born	1919

died 1998 died 1940 died 2000

Frederick died at Wollongong in 1954.

The families of Vera and Fred live in NSW and Queensland.

#### **11.5 Bernhard Albert WESCHOW**

We have only recently discovered that Ludwig and Bertha's third son was Bernhard Albert, born in Stettin, Germany on 3rd June, 1886. See Attachments 5, 8.

At his baptism in the Friedens Church at Grabow, Stettin, on 22nd August, 1886, his given names were reversed to Albert Bernhard. See Attachment 9.

Unhappily this child's record of birth carries the annotation that he died on 24th May, 1887 just short of one year old.

#### **11.6 John WISHAW**

The fourth son was born at Grabow, Stettin, on 19th March, 1888, and named Johannes Alfred. See Attachments 6, 8.

This child was duly baptised Johannes Alfred, in the Friedens Church (Lutheran) on 21st May, 1888. See Attachment 9.

The next time we encounter his full name was when he joined the Royal Marines in 1904 when it was John Albert WISHAW. We do not know when or why his parents changed his second given name from Alfred to Albert.

His date of birth is interesting. His Royal Marines papers give his d.o.b. as 8th March, 1887 and he enlisted on 1st July, 1904. His age was then given as 17 years and 3 months, but was actually only 16 years and 3 months. I recall that he told us that he put his age up to join the Marines. Perhaps it was necessary to be 17 years old, but it is not obvious why he changed 19th March to 8th March.

He was discharged from the Marines on 2nd December, 1908 "in consequence of an Admiralty Order for entry into Royal Navy as Telegraphist". His Navy papers show the same incorrect date of birth, 8th March, 1887, but this has been crudely changed to 1889, for no obvious reason.

During his life in Australia, he used his correct date of birth, 19th March, 1888.

Another interesting detail is that John gave his place of birth as North Leith in the County of Midlothian, to the Marines and to the Navy, which was not correct. He maintained this consistently for the rest of his life, including on his marriage certificate.

Our genealogist, Brian, is confident that neither the Royal Marines nor the Royal Navy would have required documentary proof of date and place of birth.

His service papers give us more information.

John gave his religion as Baptist when he joined the Marines and when he joined the Navy. At some time during his Navy service, he changed this to Plymouth Brethren, to which he thereafter remained firmly committed.

When he enlisted in the Marines his parents' (next-of-kin) address was in Edinburgh. At some time between 1904 and 1908 this was altered to 169 Princess Road, MossSide, Manchester.

His Marines papers tell us that prior to enlistment he was a Telegraph Messenger.

He enlisted in the Royal Navy for 12 years and completed that contract. His decorations included the same commemorative medal that Ernest received for participation in the Italian earthquake evacuation in December 1908.

He served through World War I as a Petty Officer Telegraphist. He participated in the great naval battle off Jutland in 1916 on HMS Royal Oak.

After the war he travelled to Australia in a small fleet of ships escorting the Prince of Wales (later, briefly, Edward VIII) who laid a foundation stone on Capitol Hill in Canberra on 21st June, 1920.

John completed his service contract with the Royal Navy in 1920 and transferred to the Royal Australian Navy for a short time in 1920-21 in Sydney, where he gave instruction in telecommunications.

He then travelled to Perth in 1921 and settled there for the rest of his days, working at making and servicing radio receivers.

John married May SIMPSON in 1926. The information which John provided for his Marriage Certificate contains some interesting errors. See Attachment 15.

John and May had four children: Len, Bruce, Rhoda, and Maxwell.

During World War I John again served his country as a member of a team carrying out round-the-clock surveillance of radio signals from ships in the Indian Ocean region.

John died in Perth in 1959.

### **11.7 Bernard WISHAW**

Among the snippets of information from Aunt Fanny in 1954, much of which proved to be reliable, was a belief that Bernard had been born on a ship, out of Stettin. This notion helped to explain why he had not been able to obtain any documentary evidence of his birth.

However, this was not true.

Bernard was born on 5th May, 1890, in his parents' home in Grabow, Stettin, and was named Albert Bernhard WESCHOW See Attachments 7, 8.

This child came to be known as Bernard Henry WISHAW Again we note an unexplained change in the given names. He was the fifth son of Ludwig and Bertha.

Bernard went with the family when they relocated from Leith to MossSide at some time between 1904 and 1908. He worked in the family's fish and poultry business.

Bernard stayed in Manchester when the rest of the family emigrated to Australia in 1911/12. He married Fanny MELVILLE in June 1912. See Attachment 13.

He served in the army in World War I. He trained in the electrical trade and worked as an electrical engineer. During World War II he applied his electrical skills to the war effort.

His 1954 business card offers "Complete electrical installations. Everything electrical repaired."

Bernard lived in Derbyshire where he brought up his family of four: Bernard (Billy), Peggy, Stella and James.

Bernard died in 1961.

His daughter-in-law Gladys has been actively and helpfully interested in this family research.

### **11.8 Charles WISHAW**

Ludwig and Bertha's youngest son, Carl Heinrich WESCHOW, was born at Leith on 22nd July, 1893. See Attachment 10.

Brian made a search of the baptism register of the Edinburgh German Congregation and found a record of Carl's baptism on 18th September, 1893. In this record, Bertha's maiden name was given as WERR, which is undoubtedly an error. A search of the roll of church members from 1864 to 1885 failed to find Ludwig's name.

Carl moved with the family to MossSide and later emigrated to Australia in 1911/12. By this time, he seems to have been known as Charles.

In Wollongong he worked with his father. At the outbreak of World War II, he was aged about 21 and enlisted in the Australian Army, serving in the 20th Battalion. On the 20th September, 1917, he was killed in action near Ypres in Belgium, at age 24 years.

Thus, he was included among the 350,000 British and Empire servicemen who died in the terrible battles fought in the area around Ypres. His name is recorded on the Menin Gate at Ypres, in the National War Memorial in Canberra and on the Wollongong war memorial.

Anne WYATT has a collection of Charles' memorabilia and a special interest in his story.

## **11.9 Daisy WISHAW**

Daisy's maiden name was ROWE and she was born in Manchester in 1861.

Daisy was first married to a German named Gustav MOLLER and lived in Germany at least for some time. MOLLER is believed to have died in 1894 when their only daughter, Dora, was eight years old. Daisy was a tailoress by trade.

Daisy became Ludwig's second wife in 1898 and thus became stepmother to his five surviving sons. It is further believed that the two families were well acquainted before Bertha's untimely death in 1897. Daisy was fluent in German and shared Ludwig's Christian faith.

As noted earlier, Daisy moved from Leith to MossSide and then emigrated to Australia.

Daisy died in Wollongong in 1956.

## **11.10 Dora WISHAW**

Daisy's daughter, Dora MOLLER, was born in Hanover, Germany on 10th March, 1886.

When Daisy married Ludwig in 1898, Dora acquired five stepbrothers.

Dora married Frederick in 1908. See notes on Frederick above.

Dora died in Wollongong in 1980, having lived well into her 90's, as her mother had before her.

## **12. WHERE WAS BERTHA BORN?**

In the 1881 Census, Bertha and her sister both give their place of birth as Rumia. Rigo, Russia. This is the only source we have.

This presents us with a problem: where is Rumia Rigo, Russia?

There would seem to be three possibilities:

- \* Taken at face value, a location of that name in Russia.
- \* Assume that Rigo is meant to be Riga, perhaps a suburb or a village near Riga, Latvia.
- \* A suburb or village near Rumia, Poland.

We need to bear in mind that the Census data may contain spelling errors. Other difficulties may arise in this case from changes in national boundaries over time and consequent changes in place names.

- \* A location in Russia. A search of gazetteers has failed to find any place in Russia with this or a similar name.
- \* A connection with Riga, Latvia, seemed possible because the family mythology had suggested such a connection. However, the Latvian community in Perth have assured me that there is no locality named Rumia in the vicinity of Riga nor indeed anywhere else in Latvia,
- \* Rumia in present-day Poland is the only place in the world with that name. Several Polish people, including one in Poland said to be a "passionate geographer", have been unable to resolve the Rigo problem. Another problem is that Rumia was never a part of Russia.

My conclusion is that, in spite of the difficulties, Bertha was most likely to have been born in the vicinity of Rumia, Poland.

Rumia is a small city in the north of Poland, near the Baltic seaboard, with a present population of about 43,000. Area maps show that just a few kilometres from it is a smaller town called Reda, Could Reda have become Rigo in collecting and processing the Census data?

During the 19th century Poland was non-existent as a nation, its former territory having been partitioned between Russia, Austria and Prussia (Germany). My reading indicates that Rumia was then a part of West Prussia and was never under Russian control. This calls for another spelling error in the Census, Russia for another spelling error in the Census, Russia for Prussia, which is possible.

There is another possible difficulty. During the long Prussian occupancy, many place names changed. The German names for Rumia and Reda were Rahmel and Rheda. To what extent the people retained the use of the Polish names, I do not know.

In the possible birthplace locations in Russia or present-day Latvia, the dominant culture would have included Russian language and Orthodox faith. Only the third option would provide a German speaking Lutheran.

Thus, we have not positively resolved the riddle of Bertha's place of birth, nor how she came to be in Scotland. However, the best guess for the time being would seem to point to the vicinity of Rumia in Poland.

### **13. A FAMILY IN DENIAL?**

From all the information we have obtained, it is clear that Ludwig and his family took a decision to suppress their German origins and they maintained this attitude down through the years.

It began with the Anglicisation of first names in the late 1890's and then with the Anglicisation of WESCHOW to WISHAW in 1901 or shortly thereafter. The motivator was probably English-born Daisy, even though her first marriage was to a German and her daughter, Dora, was born in Germany. Her motivation probably related to the growing political threat posed by Germany, which culminated abruptly in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I.

It would have been difficult for Ludwig, even calling himself Louis, because he apparently had a strong German accent.

The families of Frederick and Dora, John and Bernard all attest that nothing was ever heard from them with reference to German origins.

This determination to deny their origins has resulted in some incorrect information arising both verbally and, in the documentation, e.g.

- \* John's date and place of birth on his entry papers into the Royal Marines and Royal Navy.
- \* John's marriage certificate, as noted.
- \* Ludwig's death certificate entries.

It is difficult to know how effectively this family managed to blot out of their minds the details of their German background, and thus to know whether the errors that that arose were deliberate or in good faith.

*Provided by Bruce Wishaw of Perth in about 2000*