

WAVERLEY COUNCIL

SCOTCH MARY

A Waverley Library Local History Fact Sheet

I believe you went to a herbalist?—Yes; I went to "Scotch Mary," who lived at Bondi.

Did you derive any benefit?—Yes; I was under her treatment only three months, when I got two stone heavier in weight.

Scotch Mary is dead now, is she not?—Yes; unfortunately.

"Did you get further relief," inquired Mr. Want. "Yes," said witness, "when I had been under Scotch Mary 18 months I got quite cured." "Were Scotch Mary's remedies all herbal?" went on Mr. Want. "Oh, yes," said the witness, promptly, "they were all herbal—rum and milk first thing in the morning." (Great laughter.)

Mr. Want: No wonder Scotch Mary's remedies were so effective.

Mr. Wise: No wonder they were so popular.

Witness: I took a spoonful of rum and milk every morning straight from the cow. (Renewed laughter.)

Excerpt from The Australian Star, concerning a legal case where the witness had received a successful cure from Scotch Mary.

13 December, 1899, p. 5.

One of Waverley's earliest healers was a Scottish woman known to locals as 'Scotch Mary' whose real name was Mary Love Tulloch.

Mary was born in 1828-1829 and immigrated to Australia at an unknown date. One report of her life claims she was born in the Falkirk council area, probably in Larbert, a small town which lies in the Forth Valley above the River Carron in the central lowlands of Scotland.

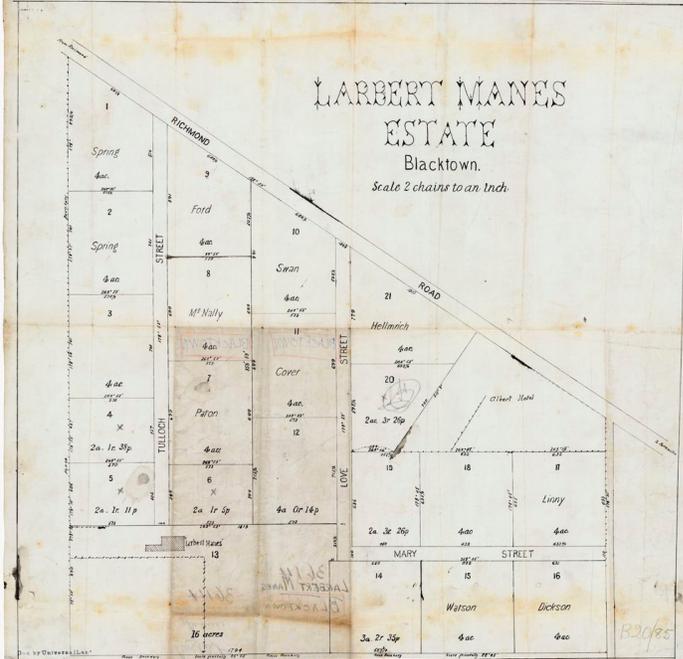
Mary first turns up in Waverley records in 1864 when she is living in Bondi Road (then called Waverley Street) at the corner of Flood Street. By 1869 her profession is listed in local directories as a 'herbalist'. In 1880 her address changes to Flood Street and her house on the eastern side of the street is called Larbert Cottage. By this

time she is actively dispensing herbal medicines and described as enjoying 'a great reputation as a healer'. She last appears in Waverley records in 1883 and it is after this date that she probably left the area, certainly by 1886 a new resident, Mrs Elizabeth Shawe, is living in Larbert Cottage.

Mary kept goats, and the milk from these was a common ingredient in her remedies. Contemporary news reports also indicate that rum was also a cure that she often prescribed. There is as long history of herbalism in Scotland, with many of the remedies and cures typically being passed from mother to daughter down the generations. Every village had a wise woman and healer, the same women who were targeted as 'witches' in earlier centuries by the Inquisition in Western

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“Scotch Mary,” the honest old lady from Caledonia stern and wild, who doctored so many of Sydney’s spinsters with herbs at half-a-crown a pop, is dead, and has left the greater part of her little hoard to charity.

Images from top:

Larbert Manes Estate map, Blacktown. Property owned by Scotch Mary on her death in 1887. Image courtesy of the State Library of NSW.

Death announcement of Scotch Mary in *The Bulletin*, vol.8 no.0387, 2 July 1887.

Europe, leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of women seen as a threat to the church and the medical establishment.

At some stage ‘Scotch Mary’ moved west and when she died on 23 May 1887, aged 58 years, her address was Blacktown Road, Blacktown on a large parcel of land. She named her Western Sydney home ‘Larbert Manes’ giving further credence to the claim that she hailed from Larbet, Scotland.

After her death the *Sydney Morning Herald* advertised the auctioning of nine blocks of land surround the ‘late residence of Miss Tulloch (‘Scotch Mary’)’. Each piece of land was 2.5 acres by 4.5 acres. The papers from her estate are held in the probate packets collection in State Records.

Mary’s fame as a healer even spread interstate and shortly after she died in 1887 *The Brisbane Courier* reported that:

‘By many people she was regarded as being phenomenally clever. Perhaps this belief was due to the fact that the medicines which she administered to her patients exceeded in nauseousness those of the regular fraternity. Amongst the persons who went to Scotch Mary were several doctors and a number of other professional men...According to her Will proved last week she died worth £600; the greater part of this money the testatrix left to charitable institutions.’

There are no records indicating the marriage of Scotch Mary, and her estate was held in her maiden name. Despite this, there is record of her having a daughter. This is likely incorrect, as there are no birth records or other evidence to support the claim. In some ways a secret unregistered illegitimate daughter adds to the romance of Scotch Mary’s tale, as her herbal cures would have been passed on to the next generation.

In one of the greatest compliments that could be

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made by sports mad
Australians a race horse was
named after her, 'Scotch Mary'.
This horse produced a foal,
'Iolaire' which went on to win
several races including
the 1908 Williamstown Cup at
Flemington

Scotch Mary is the first
herbalist that Waverley has
records for, and her infamous
rum and goat's milk remedies
won her great renown
throughout Sydney.