

B.O.O.K R.E.V.I.E.W

Colony

Strange Origins of One of the Earliest Modern Democracies

By Reg Hamilton

Reviewed by Alan Lee

The author Reg Hamilton is the direct descendant of Richard Hamilton who in 1797-98 rented a house in Last Lane, Dover for £3 a year. In 1816-17 his son, also Richard lived at 119 Snargate Street. This rent was £7 a year. By 1826 the family had moved to Ewell. Richard, like his father, was a tailor but his brother John became a solicitor. These three and many more of his family were Freemen of Dover.

Reg writes in depth about the old Dover Corporation and the corruption in the town. There are many interesting and amusing tales of crime and punishment; it is worth reading just for that chapter. Many unusual facts emerge. A Dover man, William Huskisson MP for Liverpool, was the first passenger killed by a train, Stephenson's Rocket, on the 15th September 1830, the opening day of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. In 1835 the family saw the birth of the Dover Chronicle, the town's first newspaper.

He details how Richard and his family were some of first people to emigrate to Australia in 1837 going with his wife Ann and their

seven children. They purchased a plot at Holdfast Bay, cleared the land and built a house. Within a few years he established the very successful Hamilton's Ewell Vineyards and winery. They took part in the first free democratic elections for all, at Adelaide, Australia in 1840, years before they arrived in Dover.

This review is slightly unusual as the book is published in Australia. That said it contains a great many interesting facts and much about Dover. I found this a fascinating and amusing story of one family's journey from Dover, and the old country, to the birth and early years of sweeping change and social upheaval in South Australia.

This book contains many illustrations of Dover and Adelaide
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