

PASSAGE FROM POVERTY by Roger Hall

Some descendants of John Drakeford of Bedworth (c1799-1870)

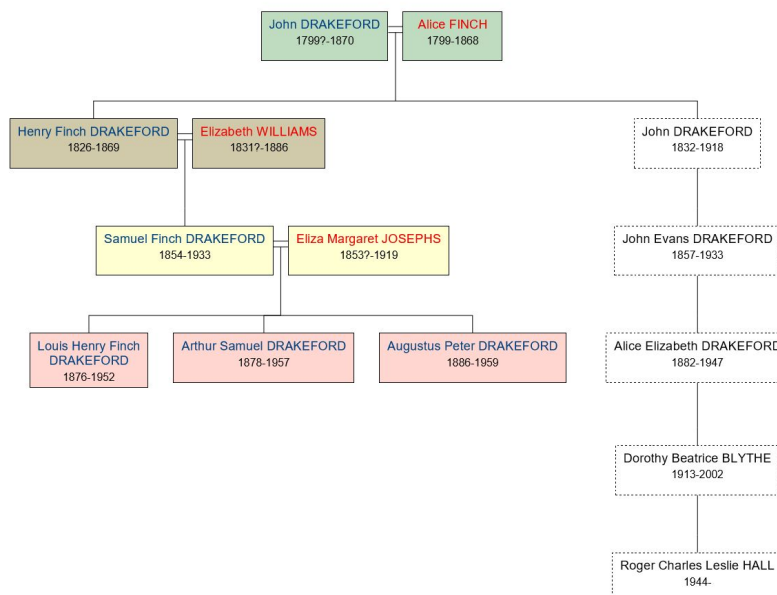
A lecture presented at the 2013 Drakeford gathering in Congleton on 6th June 2013

This is going to be a bit like ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ except that I’ll be going forwards in time rather than backwards. Here below is a ‘tree’ showing the people I’ll talk about and how they are related to me. I’ll start with my great-great-great grandfather John Drakeford.

It’s Tuesday 20th January 1829, and John Drakeford, 30 years old and unemployed, is being questioned under oath by two of His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the County of Warwickshire. The parish officials for Nuneaton have made a complaint: John and his family have just arrived in the town with no jobs and no money and will have to be supported at parish expense if they stay.

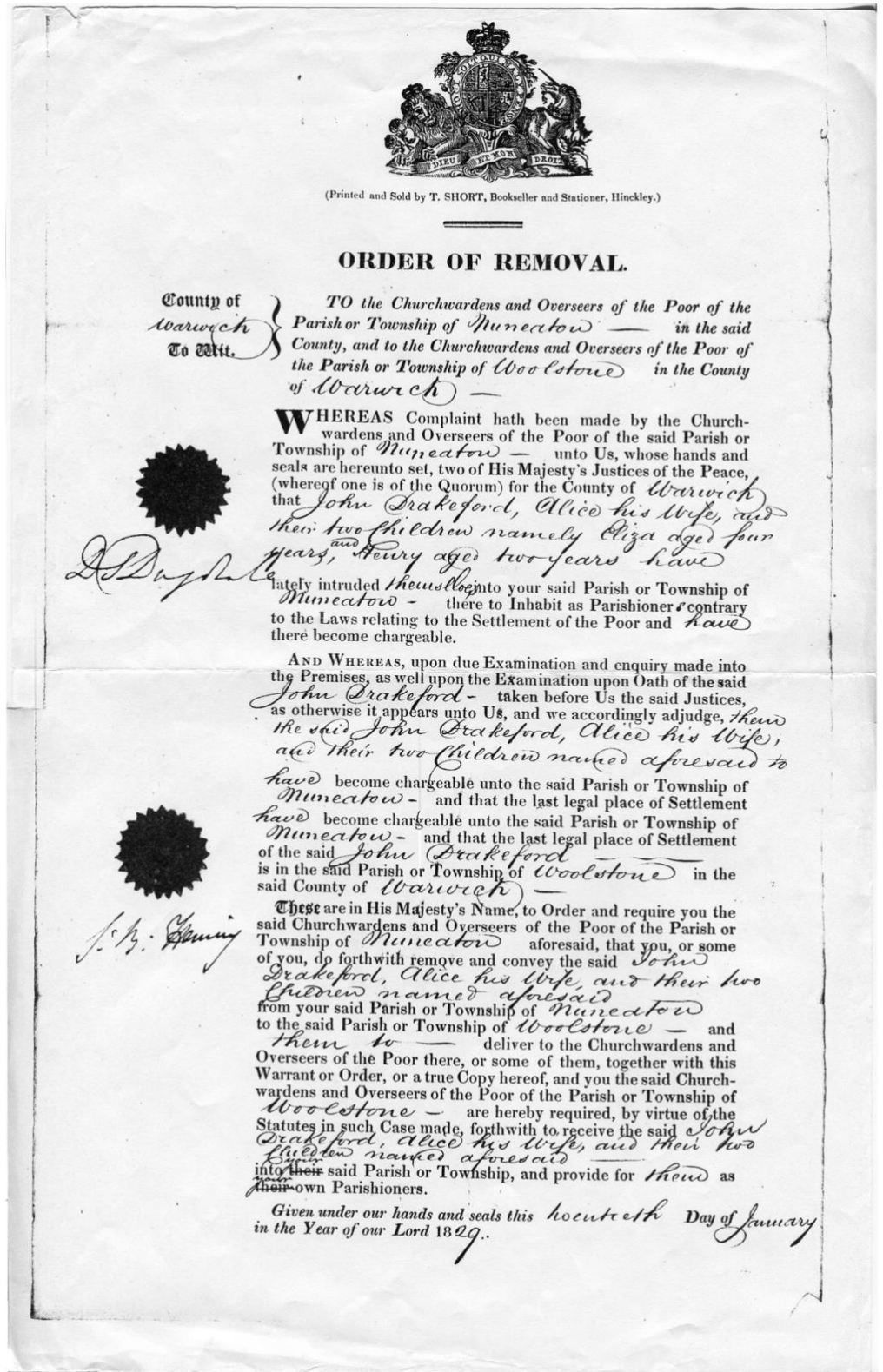
John tells the magistrates that he has a wife Alice and children Eliza (4) and Henry (2), and that they have come from Wolston parish, where John had been working until he lost his job. Alice was born in Nuneaton, but because John had a job in Wolston the law says that Wolston is the parish which has to support him and his family if they fall on hard times. The magistrates order the Nuneaton officials to “forthwith remove and convey” John and his family back to Wolston parish and order the Wolston parish officials to “provide for them as your own parishioners”.

PASSAGE FROM POVERTY
Some descendants of John Drakeford
of Bedworth (c1799-1870)



Here is the removal order, which had been kept in the parish chest in Nuneaton and is now in the Warwickshire County Record Office.

So John was sent back, from a place where he'd come to look for work to a place where he couldn't find it, but he did eventually get a job, in fact he had a succession of them, including ribbon weaver, patent medicine vendor, coal sorter and farm labourer. He and Alice settled in Bedworth and had 5 more children, of whom one died young. John and Alice were illiterate, but they sent their children to Sunday School, and there the children learnt to read and write – one of the original functions of Sunday Schools was to teach these skills to the poor.



This John died in Bedworth in 1870: Alice had died there 2 years earlier. They had led ordinary lives, and had never been more than a day's walk away from where they had been born. Many of their descendants also led ordinary lives, and continued to live in the same area – there are some there even now - but a few went on to lead very different lives in very different places, and it's their story I'm going to tell.

--oOo--

Henry Finch Drakeford

When John's eldest son Henry was 16, a Wolston charity paid for him to be apprenticed to a Bedworth rope maker for 5 years. After his training he moved to Birmingham, and there, in 1852, he married Elizabeth Williams. They had a son, Samuel, a daughter who died in infancy, and another son, Matthew.

The government of the day was actively encouraging emigration to the Australian colonies. There were official pamphlets and lectures promoting the benefits of a new life there, and newspaper advertisements giving details of regular sailings from England to Australia. On 20 September 1858 Henry and Elizabeth, Samuel (4) and Matthew (1) set sail from Liverpool with more than 300 other passengers on the White Star Line's clipper ship 'Mermaid', and 82 days later they arrived in Victoria.

This advertisement for the voyage appeared on 20 Aug 1858 in the Coventry Herald & Observer, one of Henry's local newspapers – I wonder if he saw it!

In Victoria, Henry made good use of his rope making skills. He was said to have been the first man to use New Zealand hemp to make ropes in Australia. Henry and Elizabeth had 4 more children. Then, in the spring of 1869 he fell ill, and he died that August aged only 41. He was buried in the Old Melbourne Cemetery (now under a car park – a bit like Richard III!).

Samuel Finch Drakeford

Henry and Elizabeth's eldest son Samuel was only 15 when his father died, so he had to grow up fast. He trained and worked as a jeweller and eventually opened his own watchmaker's and jeweller's shop. It was the time of the Australian Gold Rush. He married Eliza Josephs, who was born in a tent at the gold diggings, and they had five sons and five daughters.

PASSAGE MONEY £14 AND UPWARDS.

**“ WHITE STAR ” LINE
OF BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN EX-ROYAL
MAIL PACKETS,**
Sailing
Between Liverpool and Melbourne,
On the 20th and 27th of every Month,
And forwarding Passengers by Steamers at Through
Rates to all Parts of Australia.
To the Consignment of H. T. Wilson and Co., Melbourne.

Ship.	Captain.	Reg.	Tons.	Bar.	To Sail.
MERMAID	J. White	1320	4500	...	Sep. 20.
TASMANIA	Nourse	1198	4000	...	Sep. 27.
SHALIMAR	J. R. Brown	1432	4500	...	Oct. 20.
RED JACKET, M.H. O'Halloran		2460	5000	...	
WHITE STAR	T. C. C. Kerr	2360	5000	...	

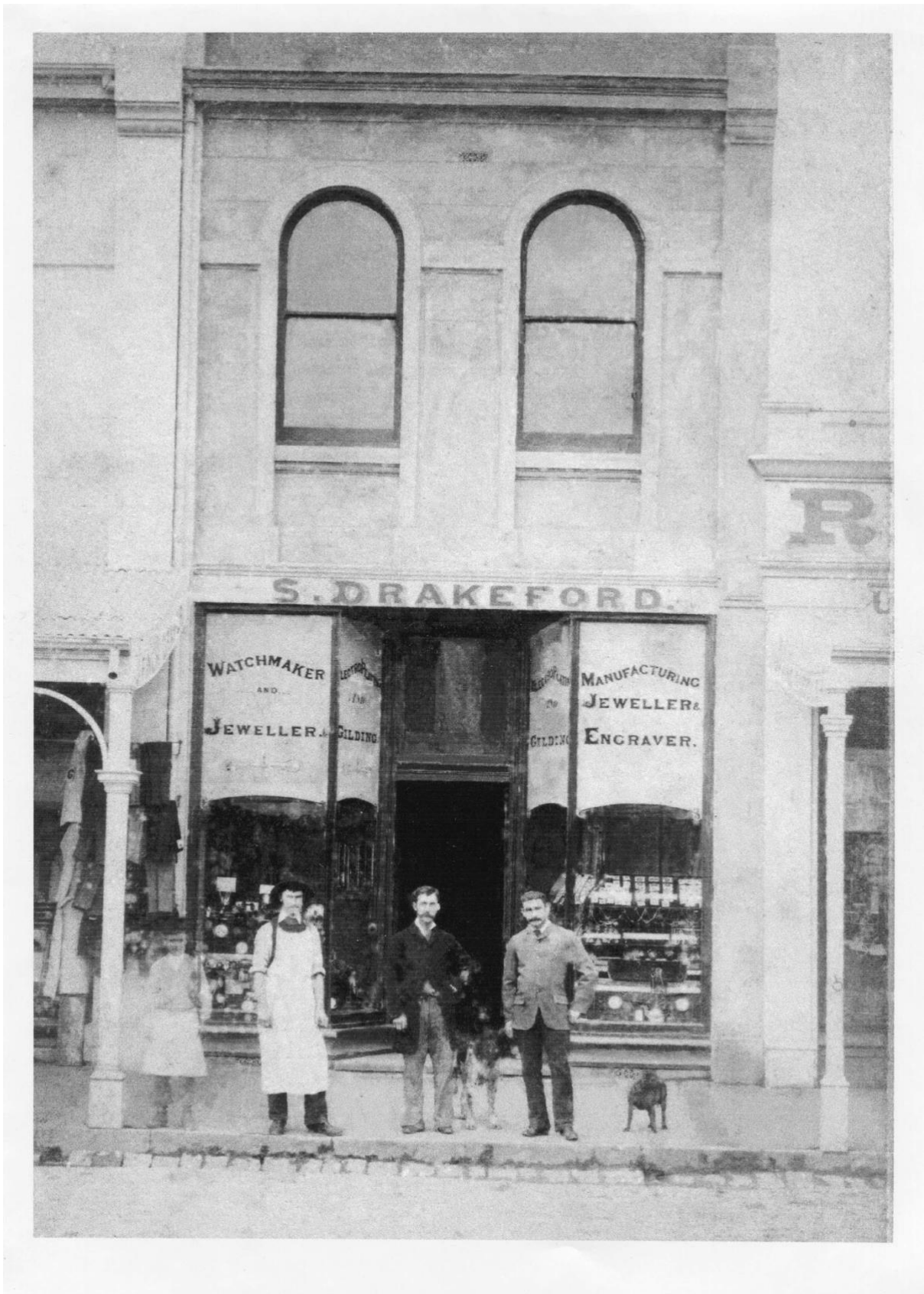
The famous Clipper Ship *Mermaid*, Captain James White, late Chief Officer of the *White Star*, will be despatched as the Packet of the 20th of September, with Mails, Cargo, and Passengers. She has made some of the quickest Passages on record, and has sailed the extraordinary distance of 3,740 geographical miles in 13 successive days. Her outward Passages have been made in 72, 75, and 77 days, and from Melbourne to Liverpool in 75 and 77 days. Her Saloons are handsome and elegantly furnished.

The magnificent Packet Ship *Tasmania* is remarkably fast, and is now on her second voyage in this line. Her Saloons are spacious and handsomely furnished. Bed, Bedding, and Necessaries for Saloon Passengers in all the Ships. Passengers embark on the 19th of every Month.

For Freight or Passage apply to H. T. WILSON and CHAMBERS, 21, Water-Street, Liverpool, or to

W. TAUNTON,
Auctioneer, Agent for Coventry.

Here's a photo of Samuel's shop which was sent to me by an Australian descendant. Samuel is standing in front of the shop doorway, and one of his brothers, Fred, is on the right.



Samuel moved to Walhalla, a gold mining town, and became involved in local politics, being

instrumental in improving the water supply and getting the railway built. He was also manager of a gold mining syndicate, a freemason and a Methodist church choirmaster. There's an entry about him, with a photograph, in 'The Cyclopedia of Victoria' (1905). [Here it is](#)

a long and diversified career in mining. He worked for two years in the Peak Hill mine, in the State, and, after trying his luck on the goldfields at Parkes, returned to Walhalla, and commenced prospecting there. This last venture proved a successful one. Mr. Hannon covering no less than three mines which were afterwards floated into companies, including the Great Walhalla and the Long Tunnel, to the management of which he acted as manager. Hannon is at present manager of the West Long Tunnel mine, situated on the Longfellow line of reef, running parallel with that wonderful reef. He is also manager of the Cohen mine. The output of the West Long Tunnel shaft is 100 feet, and stone won for a ton crushing yielded three ounces of gold, while a second trial of the mine gave two ounces to the ton. The mine is equipped with a winding engine, 16-h.p. boiler, etc., complete, and a ten-head battery. Mr. Hannon is a patriotic interest in the affairs of the Commonwealth. A politician, with broad democratic views, he is a recognised leader in Walhalla. He was elected a seat in the Walhalla Shire Council in August, 1901, and serves as chairman of Works Committee, member of the Finance Committee of the Railway Trust. Mr. Hannon is a son of Mr. Lawrence Hannon, one of the early pioneers of the district, and is a member of the Committee of the Walhalla Roman Catholic Church.

MR. WILLIAM HENRY VALE, Mining Manager, Walhalla, was born in Wandiligong, Victoria, on the 10th of May, 1875, and received his education in the public schools. At sixteen years of age he commenced work on the Zeehan (Tasmania) silver fields, and subsequently worked various mining fields in Victoria and New South Wales. His managership was that of the London and Redruth Company, Wandiligong, in 1896. Since then he held positions as accountant and manager, United Bros. Gold Mine, Wills (Vic.); amalgamator,

West Sunlight Mines (N.S.W.); mine manager, King Golden Gate (Tas.), and Duke of York, Meredith (Vic.). He was appointed manager of the North Long Tunnel, Walhalla, on 4th November, 1902, since when he has been steadily pushing forward developments, and endeavouring, by economical work, to make low grade ore pay working expenses. However, expecting to increase the output to 550 loads per month, the prospect of making a substantial profit is brightening. Stone averages from 6 dwts. to 12 dwts. No. 2, or Consols shaft, down to 2,500 feet; now working at from 800 to 900 feet in S. shaft. Although most of the gold from Cohen's line of reef has been won at the south end by the Long Tunnel and the Long Tunnel Extended Companies, there is every probability of payable shoots of gold being come on north of the Consols shaft. The mine is well equipped. North shaft, two boilers, powerful single cylinder link motion engine, and air compressor. Consols shaft, three boilers, pair 22-inch first motion winding engines, by Roberts and Sons, Bendigo, and a sinking engine. Ten-head battery, with 900-lbs. stamps. Mr. Vale takes a great interest in the extension of railway facilities to the Walhalla mines, and advocates a narrow gauge line, worked by an electric station on the Thomson River.

MR. SAMUEL FINCH DRAKEFORD, Practical Watchmaker and Goldsmith, Walhalla, was born in Birmingham, England, on the 8th of March, 1856, and arrived in Melbourne in the year 1860. He was educated at St. Peter's School, Eastern Hill, Melbourne, and served his apprenticeship with Mr. Philip Wing, the first gold chain maker working in the colony. After having been employed as a journeyman by Messrs. Rosenthal and Aaronson, he started business in Fitzroy, subsequently removing to Sale. He first arrived in Walhalla in 1886, when the mines were at the height of their prosperity. Breaking away for five years, he returned to the field, and,

joining the Walhalla Shire Council in 1899, he formulated a vigorous progressive policy, which included a reticulation scheme, and as a result the Government reserved and surveyed an area of about 14,000 acres for water conservation. Mr. Drakeford also started the agitation which brought about the Moe and Walhalla Railway Construction Trust, gazetted 28th August, 1901; its forerunner, the Railway League, having been inaugurated on his lead-



W. D. Thrower

Walhalla

MR. SAMUEL FINCH DRAKEFORD.

ing motion at a public meeting held at Walhalla on 14th July, 1899, Mr. Wm. Haughton, then secretary of the shire, seconding his efforts. Upon receiving his appointment of secretary of the Railway Trust he resigned from the Shire Council. Mr. Drakeford's interest in friendly societies takes a practical shape, and he has for the last three years filled the position of secretary to the Loyal Gippsland Lodge, No. 40, I.O.O.F. He is likewise a Freemason, and acts as choirmaster of the local Methodist Church. On Christmas Day, 1902, the cantata, "Esther," was produced in aid of the Methodist Church, under Mr. Drakeford's baton, with great success. His family are all musical, and his eldest son is a professional musician of some reputation.

Three of his sons moved to Shanghai, China, and he spent the last part of his life there.

Arthur Samuel Drakeford

Samuel's second son Arthur stayed in Victoria. He had a basic education, and then got a job as a railway engine cleaner. He worked his way up the career ladder until he was an engine driver, and did likewise in the railwaymen's trade union and the Labor Party, becoming national president of the union and president of the Labor Party's Victorian central executive. At a meeting in 1935 his casting vote secured John Curtin's election as party leader and led ultimately to Curtin's becoming Prime Minister of Australia. Arthur became a Member of the House of Representatives and was Minister for Air and Civil Aviation during World War II. After the war he laid the foundation for the expansion of Australian civil aviation and in 1947 he was president of the first assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization. He loved sport, and helped with Melbourne's successful bid for the 1956 Olympic Games. He died the following year, and was given a state funeral. He has an entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (1996), and a major road in Canberra is named Drakeford Drive.

Drakeford, Arthur Samuel (1878–1957)

by **Frank Bongiorno**

This article was published in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 14, (MUP), 1996

Arthur Samuel **Drakeford** (1878-1957), engine driver, trade unionist and politician, was born on 26 April 1878 at Fitzroy, Melbourne, second son of Samuel Finch **Drakeford**, a jeweller from England, and his Victorian-born wife Elizabeth Margaret, née Josephs. On leaving school, Arthur found work as a railway-engine cleaner at Benalla. At the local Presbyterian manse on 9 May 1902 he married a widow Ellen Tyrie, née Warrington (d.1906). In 1903 he participated in the Victorian railway strike and became secretary of the Benalla branch of the Locomotive Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association. He also joined the Labor Party.

Having qualified as an engine driver, in 1908 **Drakeford** transferred to Melbourne. On 19 April 1911 he married Ellen Unger at the office of the government statist, Queen Street. Elected to the State executive of the L.E.D.F.A., he was its vice-president (1914-15), president (1916-17) and general secretary (from 1918). On the formation of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen in 1920, he was chosen as federal secretary. He made arrangements for the union's registration with the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, and expertly argued its case for a Federal award in 1924-25. An energetic organizer, he was national president (1929-48) and a life-member (from 1929) of the A.F.U.L.E. **Drakeford** had been a founder of the Commonwealth Council of Federated Unions in 1923 and was senior vice-president when it was superseded by the Australasian Council of Trade Unions in 1927. He was a consistent advocate of the standard railway gauge.

After his union affiliated with the Australian Labor Party, **Drakeford** became senior vice-president (1928) and president (1929) of the Labor Party's Victorian central executive. He represented Essendon in the Legislative Assembly from 1927 until he was defeated in 1932, mainly as a result of his opposition to the Premiers' Plan. In 1934 he won the Federal seat of Maribyrnong from the Labor renegade **J. E. Fenton**. **Maurice Blackburn**'s decision to give **Drakeford** his proxy secured **John Curtin**'s election to the party leadership next year. The **Menzies** government made **Drakeford** a member of the Manpower and Resources Survey Committee in 1941.

In October **Drakeford** was appointed minister for air and for civil aviation in the new Labor government; he was to hold both portfolios until 1949. Initially, he relied on the guidance of senior departmental and Royal Australian Air Force officers. He endeavoured to resolve the R.A.A.F.'s higher command problems, did not feign expertise on air strategy, and generally confined his attention to budgetary matters and to the allocation of manpower and resources. Airmen admired him for advancing their interests. A member of the War Cabinet in 1941-46, he was briefly minister for the navy in 1946. He stood unsuccessfully for the deputy-leadership of the Labor Party that year.

Drakeford's most enduring achievement was in laying the foundation for the expansion of Australian civil aviation after the war. He had long favoured the nationalization of the domestic airline industry. In 1945 he introduced the Australian national airlines bill which, when enacted, empowered the Australian National Airlines Commission to take over interstate services. Next year the commission established Trans-Australia Airlines. A decision by the High Court of Australia invalidated **Drakeford**'s attempt to create a government monopoly and T.A.A. was forced to compete against private companies. In 1946-47 he oversaw the government's purchase of Qantas Empire Airways Ltd, Australia's major overseas carrier. Vice-president (1946) of the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization's conference at Montreal, Canada, he was president of the first assembly of the permanent body in 1947.

Although he was a moderate socialist, **Drakeford** campaigned vigorously against the 1951 referendum proposal to ban the Communist Party of Australia. He narrowly lost his seat in 1955, a casualty of Labor's split. Small and bespectacled, he was an energetic man who carried into political life the qualities of honesty and loyalty which had characterized his trade-union career. He was clear minded rather than brilliant, and won respect for his 'obvious personal integrity'. Devoted to his family, **Drakeford** read widely and loved sport, especially horse-racing and Australian Rules football. His support aided Melbourne's successful bid for the 1956 Olympic Games.

Drakeford died on 9 June 1957 at his Moonee Ponds home; following a state funeral, he was cremated. His wife and their four daughters survived him, as did the son of his first marriage, Arthur Harold Finch **Drakeford**, who represented Essendon (1945-47) and Pascoe Vale (1955-58) in the Legislative Assembly.

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Citation details

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Arthur Samuel Drakeford (1878-1957), by Ronald Esler, 1940s
National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an23609281

And here is a road sign on the approach to Drakeford Drive, courtesy of Google Street View.



Louis Henry Finch Drakeford

Two of Samuel's other sons are also worth a mention. His eldest son Louis spent many years in China, firstly in Shanghai, where he was a journalist and secretary of the Astor House Hotel Company, and later in various provinces as a member of the Chinese Government's Chief Inspectorate of the Salt Revenue Department. In 1929 the Beijing government was overthrown and Louis returned to Australia. The following year he was commissioned by the Victorian Minister of Education to go to the USA to report on the education system there. He remained there for the rest of his life, holding a senior position in the Australian Embassy in Washington during World War II. Louis was also a talented musician, both performing and composing songs, and several of his compositions were published. He died in New York In 1952.

Here's a piece of his music.

The image displays two pages of sheet music for the song "The Invincibles". The left page is the title page, featuring the title "THE INVINCIBLES" in large, bold, serif capital letters. Below the title, it says "SONG" in a smaller font, followed by "WORDS BY WILLIAM TAINSH" and "MUSIC BY LOUIS DRAKEFORD". At the bottom, it lists "ALLAN & Co. Pty. Ltd. MELBOURNE - ADELAIDE - BENDIGO" and "PRICE 2/- NET". A library sticker in the top right corner of the left page reads "MUSEN No. 610 784.71942 D762". The right page is the first page of the musical score, starting with the title "THE INVINCIBLES" and "Music by LOUIS DRAKEFORD". It includes the tempo marking "Moderato marziale, con moto" and the instrument "PIANO". The score consists of piano accompaniment and vocal lines with lyrics. The lyrics are: "O men and wo-men of Eng-land, Salt of a strick-en earth, How shall we fith-en your spir-it, How shall we count your-worth? See-ing no tears in your trew-all, Hear-ing no cry in your pain,". The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (piano, forte, crescendo, decrescendo), articulation (staccato, ben marcato), and performance instructions (proudly, risoluto, poco rit.).

Augustus Peter Drakeford

Samuel's youngest son Augustus Peter (known as Peter) also spent some time in Shanghai, then moved on to the Philippines, where he managed the Standard Vacuum Oil Company. He married a judge's daughter and got to know General Douglas MacArthur, then Military Advisor to the Philippines government. I guess oil must have been important, because Peter used to be chauffeur driven around Manila, being saluted by policemen as he passed, and when the Japanese occupied the Philippines in 1942 General MacArthur, by then Commander of US Armed Forces in the Far East, arranged for Peter and a few others to be flown to Australia in a 'Flying Fortress' bomber. Back in Australia he acted as a special advisor to his brother Arthur, and eventually he emigrated from Australia to San Francisco, where his wife and children had gone when the Japanese entered the war. He died there in 1959.

--oOo--

So there we have it – from Warwickshire to Australia, China, the Philippines and the USA; from removal order to state funeral; from poverty to plenty in three generations.

--oOo--

This is meant to be a short talk, so I can't say a lot about the rest of the Australian Drakefords, but they're still going strong. The Ancestry website has Australian electoral rolls online for all the states except South Australia, and in 1980, the most recent year available, there were around 70 Drakefords listed. At least half of those were descendants of the Bedworth Drakefords or their wives.

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