

Grand Uncle Ralph and His “Fancy Lady”

by Jennifer Rowe

The name *Fancy Lady* came into being about 1805, it was one of many descriptions for the ladies of the night, but mainly used when referring to a man's mistress.

Since I was a child wherever my mother, Gladys took me to Crow's Nest, North Sydney, NSW she would tell me about her Uncle Ralph's Maud. Mum's vivid memories of Uncle Ralph are not so much of him being a career Naval Officer but of a stunningly beautiful lady, referred to as his *Fancy Lady*, whom he met whilst in England. I heard this story until not long before Mum died in December 2010 at just over 100 years of age.

Maud lived in a flat above the Post Office at Crow's Nest, NSW. Gladys remembers when her mother would take them to Crow's Nest and Ralph's two children, Freddie and Rosie (Maud Melba), would lean out the window and wave to them. They all knew they were cousins. Gladys' mother, Lillian would scowl at her children, Doris and Gladys, telling them not to look up or wave back, but they always did. Lillian obviously didn't approve of her brother's personal life, and as she was very close to his wife (also named Lillian) it made things very difficult.

Then one day sister Lillian was put in an embarrassing position when Maud made a surprise visit to their home at 5 Rhodes Avenue, Naremburn with Ralph's two children. The cousins were all delighted to be in each other's company and it was a memorable day.

Lillian was always very proud of her brother's achievements in the Navy, passing the comment when her son Thomas joined the Royal Australian Air Force and was doing very well, that he was obviously as intelligent as his Uncle Ralph.

So with this knowledge in hand I set out to find more information about them and who was this mysterious woman I had heard about all my life?

Firstly: Ralph Thomas Scott was born on 28th May, 1881 in Surry Hills, NSW, Australia, the son of Thomas Scott and Annie Calvert (Mary Ann). They then moved to Murrumburrah, NSW.

In 1903 Ralph was recorded as a Plumber living in Murrumburrah, and soon after won a scholarship to the Royal Naval College in England for two years.

He married Lillian Violet Scott (not related) on 2nd April, 1907 in Sydney. Lillian was the next of kin recorded on his RAN service records. She was born in 1882 in Mudgee, NSW that is all that we know about her. They didn't have any children.

Ralph was based at the Devonport Naval Barracks, but on the night of the England census on 2 April 1911 he was at Clarence Place, Morice Town, Devonport, Plymouth, Devonshire with Maud Scott recorded as his wife, *married for 8 years* and her son George was recorded as Scott also.

Secondly: Maud was Ada Maud Taylor, born 15th February, 1882, the daughter of Mary Taylor. The name of Henry Taylor is recorded as her father on her birth certificate, but no record exists for a marriage to a Henry Taylor. On 3rd April 1881 Mary was a domestic servant for solicitor Henry Watts 29, his wife and their two year old son. Mary a spinster, married Edward Morgan Steele and he was the father named when Ada Maud married Frank Charles Mabey in 1906, just over two years after their son George Victor Mabey was born in 1903 and registered by his father Frank Mabey.



Photo taken for his mother, Ralph, at Devonport waiting for the HMAS *Australia* to arrive.

Five years after her marriage to Frank Mabey, Ralph and Maud's son Frederick Thomas Ralph Scott was born on 21st September 1911 at 6 Clarence Place, Morice Town, Plymouth, Devonport.

Ralph served in the Royal Navy from about 1904 until he transferred to the London Depot of the Royal Australian Navy on 1st October 1912. He was an Officer, a qualified Mechanician, an engineer skilled in theory and construction of machines. *Capable of taking charge of the entire watch in the engine room department of a large ship underway*, was recorded in his service record when he transferred.

From a post card photo sent to his Mother from Devonport, Ralph said he *was on the "Mars" waiting for the "HMAS Australia" to arrive.*

On completion the *HMAS Melbourne* sailed from Portsmouth and arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia on 10th March 1913. Ralph served on the *HMAS Melbourne* from 18 January 1913 to 7 September 1917.

On Friday 11th April 1913 Mrs. Ada M Scott 30, with her two sons George Scott 9 and Frederick Scott 1, arrived at 8 a.m. at Central Wharf, Miller's Point, Sydney, NSW, Australia via Melbourne on board the *Wilcannia*, from the Port of London, England.

On 4th October 1913, the First Australian Naval Fleet entered Sydney Heads; The Flagship *HMAS Australia*, followed by *HMAS Melbourne*, *Encounter*, *Sydney*, *Warrego*, *Parramatta* and the *Yarra*.

On the same day, Saturday, 4th October 1913, their daughter Maud Melba Scott was born at 123 Foveaux Street, Surry Hills, Sydney. Maud registered her twice, firstly recording Ralph as the father, secondly as *No entry* (with a margin note to *Omit all particulars*). Ralph was still married to Lillian. It was the only record that contained Ada Maud Mary Taylor, as Maud's full maiden name.

Upon the outbreak of World War I the *HMAS Melbourne* was engaged in operations against the German Pacific colonies. She was present at the capture of Samoa and landed a force which took Nauru on 9 September 1914. Returning to Australian waters, she joined the escort of the first troop convoy from Australia to the Middle East, which departed Albany on 1 November 1914. On 9 November, the *Melbourne*, commanding the convoy after the departure of *HMS Minotaur*, ordered *HMAS Sydney* to investigate a strange ship sighted off the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, which led to the destruction of *SMS Emden*.

While it fell to *HMAS Sydney* to bring the *Emden* to action, the *Melbourne* also joined in the pursuit. The Admiralty stated that *A large combined operation by fast cruisers against the "Emden" has been for some time in progress. In this search, which covered an immense area, the British cruisers have been aided by French, Russian, and Japanese vessels working in harmony. HMAS "Melbourne" and "Sydney" were also included in these movements.*

The battle was the first ship against ship engagement for the Royal Australian Navy. The casualties on the *Sydney* were 3 men killed and 8 wounded, on the *Emden* 131 men killed, 65 wounded and the *Emden* was scuttled. The Commander on the *Sydney* was John Glossop, on the *Emden* Karl Von Muller.

The story as told by the family places Ralph on board the *HMAS Sydney*, however this is not reflected in Ralph's Naval records nor is he listed as one of the Officers and Crew on board the *HMAS Sydney* at the time the *Emden* was sunk. He was an Officer on the *HMAS Melbourne*.

To reflect on Ralph's relationship with Maud, maybe Frank refused her a divorce and it's possible that she remained in Ralph's life as the *other woman* until she died in 1940 at age 58. The reason I think this could be, is because his only two children were from his relationship with Maud, and his brother Harry Scott and his wife Gertrude Grace, kept in touch with Maud and the children, as

did their son Clive with Freddie Scott, who worked at his half-brother George Mabey's pub, The Bognor Hotel at 249 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

Ralph was described by his niece Gladys as a very large, gentle, kind hearted man of whom she was very fond.

When Ralph married Margaret (Maggie) Ford Hazell in 1931, he was a widower and she a widow. Maggie had two step-children from her husband's first marriage and two of her own children when she married Ralph.

Maggie was Ralph's death informant on 27th July 1951, and couldn't give any information about his first marriage and didn't appear to know of Maud and his only two children.

Ralph, Senior Commissioned Mechanician, was transferred to the Royal Australian Navy Retirement List on 30 June 1925, then again in June 1933, removed for non-report on both occasions, obviously Navy life ran in his veins.

Frank Mabey remarried in 1931 in Winchester Hampshire, England.

Maude Mabey was buried on 17th October 1940 in the Waverley Church of England Cemetery; her name on the headstone has since been erased by the prevailing salty winds.

I have made contact with Maud's Great Granddaughter Wendy Maude, through the Ancestry Trees, also her brother Victor. They knew very little of their family history and not much about Maud; nothing about Ralph and were always told *not to ask questions*; therefore Great Grandmother Maud had succeeded in keeping her secrets, until now. Unfortunately they don't have any named photos of Maud, but there is one of Freddie Scott with possibly Maud Melba and Maud. Maud Melba married but had no children.

I was able to provide Wendy and Victor with their Mabey and Wormald Family History and we remain in touch.

It was the same story for Ralph's Great Grandson Martin, (Freddie's Grandchild) he knew absolutely nothing, although he had tried to trace his family but failed, going instead with the *cabbage patch* theory. As soon as I made contact with him he came up from NSW. Then on his second visit I was able to give him the Family History and photos of his Great Grandfather, he was overwhelmed. This is indeed the rewarding side of the years spent researching, seeing the emotional effect it has on others, proves it's all worthwhile.



Right front: Ralph Scott on 6 May 1915 in the HMAS Melbourne's engine room, playing cards, as one of the boys after work. The post card was sent to his brother Walter Scott.

The photos were supplied by Leslie Scott, Walter's grandson.

Jennifer M Rowe
jmay@onthenet.com.au

