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NB – we do not have ready access to official Divorce files, If you require further information then please send in a research request.

Lookups for Non-Members - before you ask for a lookup please remember that fields displaying the wording "(members only)" **doesn't necessarily mean that it contains information for that field in that database.** You can request one of our researchers to research further for you which may/may not produce further information. For this you will need to ask for a research request - [click here](#)

Lookups for Members - before you ask for a lookup please remember that if a displayed field is **BLANK it means that there is no further information available for that field in that database.** You can request one of our researchers to research further for you which may/may not produce further information. For this you will need to ask for a research request - [click here](#)

1. Introduction

This document describes the Newspaper Divorces dataset.

2. Newspaper Divorces

2.1 Summary

This database contains records relating to divorces. Data is sourced from combination of Public Notices in Adelaide based newspapers as well as from State Record Divorce petitions. The database contains information on the Plaintiff, the Respondent and, where recorded a Co-Respondent.

2.2 Coverage

Coverage varies depending on the source. Records transcribed from Adelaide newspapers cover 1859 to 1954 while State Records cover 1859 to 1893.

2.3 Sources

1. Adelaide newspaper notices were collated by David W. Gibson and also by Frank and Elaine Hall from various newspapers published in Adelaide, South Australia.
2. Matrimonial Petitions and related documents from State Records were collated by David W. Gibson from:
 - i. Divorce Petitions GRG 36/51
 - ii. Divorce Petition Document GRG 36/23

2.4 Additional information

Fields

- *Surname* and *Given Names* refers to the Plaintiff, most often the person requesting the divorce.
- *Resp. Given Names* refers to the Respondent. The Respondent's Surname is assumed to be the same as the Plaintiff.
- *MaidenName* of the female, where recorded. Can be Plaintiff or Respondent.
- *Co-Resp. Surname* and *Co-Resp. Given Names* refer to the co-respondent, if any.
- *EventDate* may be the date of the decision, or the reporting date. Where full date is not known the year is provided.

Notes

- Notices in the Adelaide newspapers are generally only the final decision.
- Legislation in 1928 expanded the grounds for divorce.
- Adultery was termed as misconduct prior to 1930.
- Cruelty invariably equated to physical violence.
- Desertion needed to be continuous for 5 years before 1938, then 3 years.
- Frequent imprisonment required 3 years in last 5 years, or sentence over 3 years.
- Decree Nisi converted into Absolute by application after 6 months (unless judge decreed a shorter time).
- After 1 July 1919 the presiding Judge alone could decree a decree nisi. Prior to this the Judge was bound to refer his finding to the Full Court where his initial finding was normally accepted. Hence "Nisi App" means the judges initial finding prior to Full Court finding.
- Cost of a divorce in 1942: £25 -30 for an undefended action, £10 -15 extra for evidence of adultery. Basic Wage - £4 13s pw.

3. Versions

A number of updates have been made to the Newspaper Divorces dataset since it was first created. These are outlined below and the action taken, where available, is provided for each update.

1. 07/12/2023: Added additional Adelaide Newspaper entries, expanding coverage from 1859 to 1954.
2. 11/12/2017: Added Matrimonial Petitions and related documents 1859-1893. General cosmetic and normalisation changes to existing dataset.
3. 07/11/2016: New import and correction of records from Excel master.

3.1 Version M-20231207

Table T_Divorce: records 14,744.

- Merged records from David W Gibson collection with Frank and Elaine Hall collection. Where record existed in both collections, data was merged.
- Added additional Adelaide Newspaper entries, expanding coverage from 1859 to 1954.

3.2 Version M-20171211

Table T_Divorce: records 12,920.

- Added Matrimonial Petitions and related documents 1859-1893.
- General cosmetic and normalisation changes to existing dataset.

3.3 Version M-20161107

Table T_Divorce: records 496,792.

- New import and correction of records from Excel master.