



## BILLING Nathaniel

**Parents:** William Billing and Mary

**Birth:** 5 March 1821 Brightwell, Oxfordshire, England

**Death:** 29 January 1910 *Whileu* Westbury Street St Kilda

**Marriage:**

1. 17 July 1850 at Hillingdon, Middlesex, England Henrietta Heybourne. Henrietta's parents Will Heybourne and Henrietta Rolfe. Born or christened on 18 June 1826 at Buck, England. Henrietta died at Peel-street, Windsor, 6 June 1867, age 41

2. 27 June 1868 at St Johns', Camberwell, Mary Anne Hooke b 1834 Dorsetshire d 1922 St Kilda. Mary Anne's parents were John Swaine Hooke and Mary Anne England

**Immigration:** Nathaniel, Henrietta and Emma Jane travelled to Victoria on the *Strathfieldsaye*, arriving in April 1853

**Children:**

- 1.1 Emma Jane bap 25 August 1852 at Upton cum Chalvey, Buckingham d 1940 Kew, Victoria, m 1874 Robert Poynder b1835 Kent England d 1924
- 1.2 Samuel Fletcher b 23 July 1853 Prahran
- 1.3 Mary Evangeline b 1855 Belfast d 1933 m 1884 Frederick Garnsey Hooke b 1856 Wollombo NSW d 1942
- 1.4 William Urban b 2 March 1857 Warrnambool d 1896 Surrey Hills m 1884 Edith Sarah Bulstrode b 1861 Belfast d 1956
- 1.5 Alfred Osbert b 1859 St Kilda d 1859
- 1.6 Henrietta Frances b 1860 St Kilda d 1922
- 1.7 Alice Isabel b 1861 St Kilda d 1893 Hawthorn
- 1.8 Miriam Gertrude b 1864 d 1955
- 1.9 Nathaniel Edward b 1865 Mulgrave d 23 December 1865 at 12 weeks

**Place of Residence:** Children born Belfast (Port Fairy) 1855 and Warrnambool 1857. Others in Prahran in 1853, and St Kilda in 1859, 1860, 1861. When Henrietta died in 1867, they were living at Peel Street, Windsor. On 11 December 1855, Mrs Billing advertised in *The Warrnambool Examiner* for a 'girl nurse' at Henna Street, Warrnambool. In October 1857, he advertised for sale a house & goods in Timor Street, opposite the Post Office, as he was leaving the district. The next month, he advertised his business at 33 Swanston Street, Melbourne *Whileu*, Westbury-street, E. St Kilda.

**Education:** Articled to Sir George Gilbert Scott in London. Scott was a Royal Academician, and was a prolific English Gothic Revival architect, responsible for a vast range of buildings, from workhouses to the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, St Mary's Cathedral (Glasgow & Edinburgh), the Chapel at King's College (London), Reading Prison, Christchurch Cathedral (New Zealand).

**Death and Burial:**

*The Argus*, Tuesday 1 February 1910

**DEATHS**

**BILLING-** On the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1910, at Whileu, Westbury-street, E. St Kilda (suddenly), Nathaniel Billing, architect, dearly beloved husband of Mary Anne Billing, aged 89 years. (Interred privately 31<sup>st</sup> January, St Kilda Cemetery) Peace, perfect peace.

The same notice appeared in *The Prahran Telegraph*, Saturday 5 February, 1910

**Obituary:** *Journal of Proceedings of the Victoria Chapter of the Institute of Architects*, March 1910

The Late Nathaniel Billing

(Life Fellow of the R.V.I.A.)

The late Mr. Nathaniel Billing was born at Brightwell, in Oxfordshire, on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1821, consequently at the time of his death he was within a few days of entering upon his ninetieth year. He was articled in London to the late Sir Gilbert Scott, and subsequently practised as an architect in Slough. In 1853 he emigrated to Australia. On his arrival in Victoria he entered the Government service in the branch which afterwards crystallised into our present Public Works Department. His sphere of duty lay in the Warrnambool and Belfast district, where he resided until 1857, when he left the Public Service, and commenced practice in Melbourne.

Mr. Billing, from the outset of his career in Victoria, took a lively interest in upholding the status of the architectural profession. As early as 1856 his name appears as a member of the Institute of Architects for the Colony of Victoria, which was inaugurated on July 9<sup>th</sup> of that year. In 1858 he was appointed auditor of the accounts of the Institute, and was elected a member of Council. Subsequently, when the Institute had attained a more solid footing, his name appears as a member of Council for a great number of years. He was vice-president in 1879-80, during which period the late Sir Redmond Barry was president, and was elected president in 1884.

In the later years of his practice he was associated with his son, Mr. W. U. Billing, who also was distinguished for the enthusiasm with which he supported the interests of the Institute of Architects. He filled the office of hon. secretary of the Institute from 1885 until 1896, when his failing health and subsequent death, rendered the office vacant.

During Mr. W U Billing's term of office, the Institute developed from being merely an unregistered society into its present permanent form, as the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (Incorporated), and Mr. Nathaniel Billing, for his eminent services in the interests of the profession and of the Institute, was appointed a life fellow. It would be well if the early history of the successive movements which culminated in the incorporation of our present Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, could be collated and placed as a permanent record in our proceedings. The present article can, of course, only deal with the late Mr. Billing's association therewith.

Born in Oxfordshire, and trained in Sir Gilbert Scott's office, it is not surprising that Mr. Billing's training and predilections tended to specialise in Gothic architecture, and that of an ecclesiastical type. For many years, in the time of the late Bishop Perry, he filled the office of Anglican Church Architect. The following are some of the principal churches designed by him:-All Saints' Church, St. Kilda; St. Paul's Church, Sale; St. Matthias' Church, Richmond; also churches in Geelong, Belfast, Warrnambool, and many other country towns. He also had a large practice in city buildings, and in suburban residences and mansions. He belonged to a school which is now partly superseded, in which faithfulness to style was considered an essential. His work was, like his character, distinguished by conscientious observance of correctness in detail.

In these latter days, where more freedom is claimed in design, architects are enabled to profit by the emancipation thus allowed them, but we could sometimes wish, when criticising the details of designs otherwise meritorious, that a little more of the careful study and faithful adherence to correctness of detail observable in the works of Mr. Billing's period could be attained.

**Life:**

- Arrived 1853 having been articled to Sir George Gilbert Scott, Architect, in London
- Entered Government service as an architect with what would become the Public Works Department
- Responsibilities in Belfast & Warrnambool areas

- Associated with the building of the St John's Anglican Church, Bank of Australasia, and Catholic Church in Port Fairy
- Likewise Christ Church and St Joseph's in Warrnambool
- Specialist in ecclesiastical architecture
- Many churches including All Saints, St Kilda; All Saints, Northcote; St Paul's, Sale; St Matthias, Richmond; St George's, Geelong; St Thomas', Winchelsea; St John's, Camberwell
- Institute of Architects
  - President 1884-1885
  - Secretary 1885-1896
- Oakleigh Councillor in 1873