

Survivors of Quetta

Fred Ridley & family
Port Melbourne 1935
on board SS Maloja

Note: Honor's age is stated incorrectly.
She is actually 17.

Survivors of Quetta Horror Arrive Here



MR FRED RIDLEY (right) and members of his family who arrived in Melbourne today aboard the Maloja. They were in Quetta, capital of British Baluchistan, when the city was devastated by the recent earthquake. Mrs Ridley's father, who met them at Port Melbourne, is seen standing beside her.

Hardly a day has passed since the hours in the darkness following the Quetta earthquake, and the horrors of the three following days when friends and relatives were dragged dead and injured from the ruins were related today by Mr F. Ridley, father of a family of eight, who escaped serious injury, although their home crashed about them. He and his family are passengers to Sydney in the Maloja.

Because of a presentiment, Mr Ridley, who was employed at Quetta as a locomotive driver, rushed four of his daughters, Mary 8, Cynthia 14, Marie 13, and Honor 11, out of the house before the collapse.

But Mrs Ridley was buried beneath fallen masonry and a heavy linen chest. She was rescued by her son, Douglas.

Another daughter, Iris, was nursemaid at the Alexander Hotel. She, and the child of whom she had charge, escaped injury, but 20 others perished in the ruins of the building.

The following day Mr Ridley and his son assisted in the rescue work, and, among the dead, found Mr Ridley's life-long friend, Mr George Thackeray. Mrs Thackeray lay beside her husband, critically injured, but an 11-months-old baby, in the same bed, was unharmed.

"The scenes during the three days following the quake were appalling," said Mr Ridley. "The dead had to be buried in batches of 26 to a trench, the only distinction for Europeans being that they were buried apart from the natives."

"Many of the corpses were unrecognisable; for others there was no one to identify them, so they were buried nameless and unknown."

For three weeks after the disaster, Mr Ridley and his family lived in tents, being dependent for sustenance on the rations issued by the military authorities.

Mr Ridley had been in India for 33 years, and Mrs Ridley was born there 53 years ago. They will now make their home in Sydney.