

NORTON NOTES

JAMES I

Dr. James Norton (Law & Literature) He refused a title.

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James Norton (27 July 1795 – 31 August 1862) was a solicitor and public figure in early colonial New South Wales. Admitted to practise in England, he arrived in Sydney in September 1818 where only four other attorneys were then practising. He was the founder of the first law firm in Sydney. He was a member of the first Legislative Council under responsible government in New South Wales in 1856 and drafted numerous laws. He held land at [Mulgoa](#) which was farmed and owned *Elswick*, a 30 ha estate in what is now [Leichhardt](#) where he grew prize flowers and plants. He was a leading Sydney member of the [Anti-Transportation League](#) and a [protectionist](#) in whose cause he published a series of pamphlets.^{[1][2][3][4]}

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From Sussex to Sydney

James Norton was born on 27 July 1795 in Hastings, Sussex, England.^[3] After legal training, he was admitted as an attorney. Signing on as captain's clerk, he arrived at Port Jackson in September 1818 per the *Maria* with capital of £800. He joined a small legal profession in Sydney: the list of the attorneys of the colony in the New South Wales Pocket Almanac for 1819 read "[Thomas Wylde Esq](#), W H Moore Esq, [Frederic Garling Esq](#), T S Amos Esq, and James Norton Esq."^[2]

[edit]Mulgoa farmer

His father, John, a brother, Nathaniel, and three sisters joined him in Sydney. On 6 April 1821, three large land grants were made at [Mulgoa](#) to the Norton family: John Norton was granted 800 acres (320 ha) which he called *Goves*; Nathaniel Norton, 800 acres (320 ha), *Fairlight*; and James Norton, 950 acres (380 ha), *Northend* which he farmed.^{[1][3]} His youngest sister, Emma (1798–1885), married the explorer [John Oxley](#) in August 1822.^[5]

[edit]Legal practice

Norton created Australia's first law firm in 1826 when he formed the partnership, Norton and Barker with William Barker.^{[1][4][6]} Before the legal profession in New South Wales was divided in 1829,^[7] he appeared as counsel for the Crown in a number of significant cases.

Honours and awards

The [main street of Leichhardt](#) is named in his honour.^[4] The 30 hectare Elswick estate was bounded by Parramatta Road, Norton Street, Marion Street and Elswick Street, Leichhardt; in 1882, it was sub-divided and offered as 600 lots.^[8]

	James Norton
Born	27 July 1795 Hastings , Sussex, England
Died	31 August 1862 (aged 67) Leichhardt, New South Wales

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Cause of death	lupus
Residence	"Elswick", Leichhardt
Occupation	Attorney, solicitor, farmer, horticulturist, legislator
Years active	1818-1860
Known for	Founding first law firm in Australia
Political party	Protectionist
Religion	Christian
Denomination	Church of England in Australia

JAMES II

[Life Summary \[details\]](#)

Birth

[5 December 1824](#)

[Sydney, New South Wales, Australia](#)

Death

[18 July 1906](#)

[Ecclesbourne, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia](#)

Religious Influence

- [Anglican](#)

Occupation

- [botanist](#)
- [company director](#)
- [horticulturist](#)
- [landowner](#)
- [local government councillor](#)
- [Member of Upper House](#)
- [notary](#)
- [solicitor](#)

JAMES II

James Norton, 1824-1906 Norton died at Ecclesbourne on 18 July 1906 and was buried in the Anglican section of Rookwood

“Ecclesbourne”, Double Bay, Sydney, NSW

He was a member of the House of Representatives

Company – Norton Smith & Co.

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James Norton (1824-1906), by unknown photographer

[State Library of New South Wales, PX*D 624](#)

Norton, James (1824–1906)

by [K. G. Allars](#)

James Norton (1824-1906), solicitor, was born on 5 December 1824 in Sydney, eldest son of [James Norton](#) and his first wife Jane, née Mackenzie. He was educated at [W. and W. T. Cape's](#) schools, Sydney College in 1835-39, by Rev. J. F. Walpole as tutor in 1840 and under [Rev. Robert Forrest](#) at Campbelltown in 1841. In 1842 he was articled to his father, admitted a solicitor on 2 July 1848 and joined his father as Norton & Son, later Norton, Son & Barker. On 1 June 1854 at Longford, Tasmania, he married Harriet Mary (d.1860), daughter of deputy commissary general [Thomas Walker](#), and in 1859 bought Ecclesbourne, Double Bay. On 31 December 1862 he married Isabella, sister of [Professor W. J. Stephens](#). A notary public from 1860, Norton became senior partner of his firm, Norton, Smith & Co., and solicitor to the University of Sydney from 1886. His clients included [Sir Edward Macarthur](#). Norton was also a director of the Australian Gaslight Co., the North Shore Gas Co. and the Australian Joint Stock Bank, a fellow of St Paul's College in the University of Sydney from 1869, an alderman of Double Bay from 1873, an elected trustee of the Australian Museum in 1874-1906, and a trustee of Hyde, Phillip and Cook Parks from 1878 and chairman in 1894-1904. A trustee of the Free Public Library from 1878, he was its chairman in 1890-1906 and as [D. S. Mitchell's](#) legal adviser was greatly interested in the building of the Mitchell Library. In 1879 he became a trustee of the Zoological Station, Watson's Bay, and was president of the royal commission on the working of the Real Property Acts and on 7 October was nominated to the Legislative Council. A strong critic of the purity of Sydney's water supply, he advocated its filtering. On 2 May 1884 he became postmaster-general in [Alexander Stuart's](#) ministry, but [Governor Loftus](#) reported that although Norton was highly 'esteemed his appointment has not been favourably received by public opinion'. When the ministry fell in October 1885 he was criticized by the *Daily Telegraph* as a 'respectable incapable'.

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A member of the Royal Society of New South Wales from 1873, Norton became a founder of the Linnean Society of New South Wales in 1875 and served on its council in 1878-79 and 1881-1906, as treasurer in 1882-97 and president in 1899 and 1900. An 'observer rather than a writer', he studied the indigenous flora and was an ardent horticulturist and vice-president of the Horticultural Society of New South Wales in the 1870s. He met informally with Stephens, [R. D. FitzGerald](#) and Edwin Daintree to compare their botanical collections. Norton was very proud of the 'trees and shrubs, especially those of indigenous species, which he cultivated in his fine old garden'. Each spring when his South African bulbs flowered at Ecclesbourne he had a garden party and delighted in his country estate at Springwood where he safeguarded the native plants and compiled a census of its flora. In June 1890 he read a paper on *Australian Birds. Useful and Noxious* to the conference of fruit-growers and vine-growers, which was published in its report. Earlier that year St Andrews University awarded him an honorary doctorate of laws. In 1891 he was elected a member of the Royal Geographical Society of Australia. He had a fine collection of Australian books and was a committee member of the Union Club.

Norton died at Ecclesbourne on 18 July 1906 and was buried in the Anglican section of Rookwood cemetery. He was survived by a son and two daughters of his first wife, and by his second wife and their son and daughter. His estate was sworn for probate at £43,000. FitzGerald named a rare Blue Mountain orchid *Adenochilus nortoni* after him.