Eugenia Falleni, alias Harry Crawford, special photograph number 234

My favorite photo blog site, Heading East, today featured some photos from the collection of the Sydney Police Department.Â It seems the Home Office has an archive site which is open to browsing, download, etc.Â Raul Gutierrez of Heading East writes:

I finally dug through the original archive myself at the The Historic Houses Trust site today. It's well worth the visit. The site allows download of full resolution versions of the images and provides context. Many of the descriptions are like that famous 6 word Hemingway short, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn."

"Child unknown, found wandering at large."
"Eugenia Falleni, alias Harry Crawford, special photograph number 234"
"Nudist colony surveillance."
"Film in stolen camera."

The image above is my favorite, so far, from Raul's list:

Description: Special Photograph no. 234. When 'Harry Leon Crawford', hotel cleaner of Stanmore was arrested and charged with wife murder he was revealed to be in fact Eugeni Falleni, a woman and mother, who had been passing as a man since 1899. In 1914, as 'Harry Crawford', Falleni had married the widow Annie Birkett. Three years later, shortly after she announced to a relative that she had found out 'something amazing about Harry', Birkett disappeared. Crawford told neighbours that she had run off with a plumber. In 1919 Birkett's young son, who had remained in Crawford's custody, told an aunt of attempts made on his

life by his drunken stepfather. The aunt contacted police. A charred body which had been found in Lane Cove in 1917 was belatedly identified as Birkett's. 'Crawford's' astonished second wife, when finally convinced of Falleni's true gender remarked, "I always wondered why he was so painfully shy ..."

The photograph shown here shows Falleni in male clothing, probably on the day of her arrest. The negative was found in a paper sleeve inscribed 'Falleni Man/Woman'. It is also possible that Falleni was made to dress in a man's suit for the photograph.