

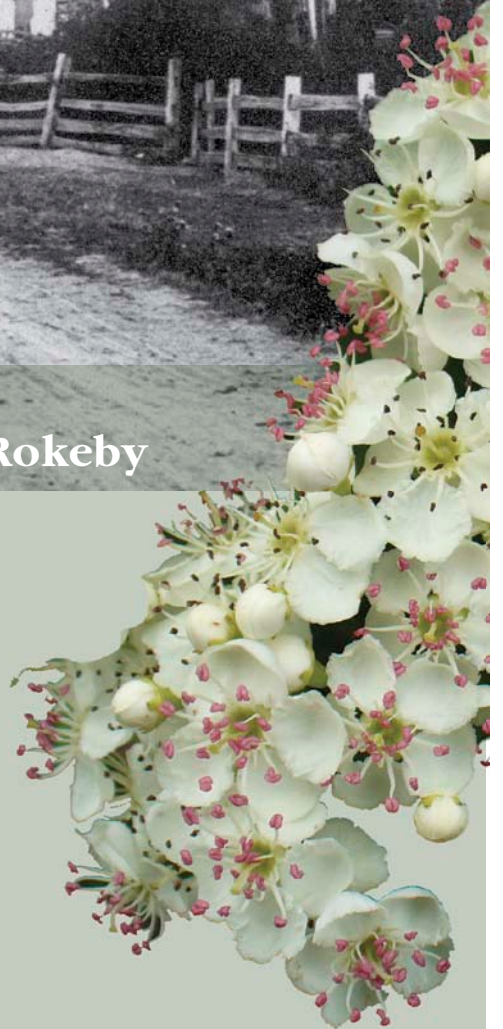


Footprints

The People and Places of
Early Clarence Plains and Rokeby

Wendy Andrew

Tranmere-Clarence Plains Land & Coastcare Inc.



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WENDY ANDREW

TRANMERE-CLARENCE PLAINS LAND & COASTCARE INC.

Hobart, Tasmania

2008

Cover Photograph.

Main Road Rokeby c. 1910.

From left to right: Hawthorne Cottage; Rokeby Watch House; Free's Cottage; 'Bayview' and the 1860s Schoolhouse next to the Clarence Plains Rivulet.

Of these, only the Watch House and the Schoolhouse building remain.

Hawthorn in flower. Photograph: Bruce Andrew.

Inside Cover.

Section: Van Diemen's Land Sidney Hall TLMAP 880fb 1828 Map of Police Districts.

Footprints

The People and Places of Early Clarence Plains and Rokeby

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

'A Psalm of Life' (1838)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 1807-1882

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This work has been in progress one way or another for 8 years, so having reached the age of three score years and ten, I am bound to have forgotten the name of someone who has been important to this project. For that I beg forgiveness and offer thanks to all of you for keeping the story of Clarence Plains and Rokeby alive.

Wendy E. Andrew

March 2008

Measurements

For those who do not know or remember our system of currency, weights and measures before the decimal age, it is handy to know that there were twelve inches in a foot, three feet in a yard which is a little less than a metre (39.37 inches); there were 4 roods in an acre, 40 perches in a rood and 2.47 acres in a hectare. 1 chain was 66 feet or the length between the stumps of a cricket pitch, and there were 100 links in a chain, and 10 chains in a furlong. The origin of these last terms comes from the 100 links in a Gunter's chain, the surveyor's measure, designed by a British mathematician c.1620.

There were 16 ounces in a pound weight (lb.), and 1 bushel of grain weighed 32 pounds. A ton equalled 2240 pounds. Beer and other liquids were measured in pints, of which there were eight in a gallon, which was equivalent to just over 4.5 litres.

Another sort of Pound could be spent on goods. It contained 20 shillings, each composed of 12 pence, and in 1966 that Pound (£) was equal to two Australian Dollars (\$). A Guinea was twenty-one shillings.

There were other strange measures such as firkins, kilderkins and hogsheads (cask measure) and coins referred to as sovereigns, (British) crowns, florins, and farthings, and the colloquial terms - bobs, tanners, fivers and tenners, but these terms need not worry us. Over one hundred degrees was getting darned hot and 32 degrees was freezing!

Abbreviations in Endnotes

Full titles of all books and articles are given in the list of Resources.

Nicholls, M. (ed.) *The Diary of Revd. Robert Knopwood* entries are shown as RK

ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
AOT	Archives Office of Tasmania
CT	<i>Colonial Times</i>
EB	Encyclopædia Britannica
HRA	Historical Records of Australia
HTA	<i>Hobart Town Advertiser</i>
HTC	<i>Hobart Town Courier</i>
HTG	<i>Hobart Town Gazette</i>
Merc.	<i>The Mercury</i> (Hobart)
TACPLACI	Tranmere-Clarence Plains Land & Coastcare Inc.
TM	<i>Tasmanian Mail</i>

Introduction

This book has been undertaken on behalf of Tranmere-Clarence Plains Land & Coastcare Inc., to record and expand upon the history of Rokeby (Clarence Plains, Tasmania) beyond that of the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail* brochure.

Two land and coastcare groups combined in 1997. Their joint interest covered the Rokeby Hills, and the catchment of the Clarence Plains Rivulet which filters through a saltmarsh into Ralph's Bay and thence to the Derwent River. The area is on the eastern shore of that river, almost directly opposite Tasmania's capital Hobart. Amongst those interests the group aims to identify and preserve the heritage of the area; natural and historic.

Tranmere-Clarence Plains Land & Coastcare Inc. wishes to pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, who are the traditional and original owners of this land on which we live and work, and acknowledge their continued custodianship.

One of the group's first actions was to commission, with Natural Heritage Funding, the Clarence Plains Catchment Management Plan. The Plan vision was the *integration of urban development with the natural and historic values of the catchment for the enjoyment and well being of the area.*

Clarence Plains was an early and important settlement in Tasmania; its early history being intertwined with that of the Hobart region. It encompassed almost all of the area of the present day City of Clarence with the exception of Richmond. Our study singled out the old township of Rokeby as an area where the important history should be recognised.

In late 1998, a successful Centenary of Federation Community Projects grant enabled the research and development of the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail*, telling its story through interpretation and street signage, and brochures.

To enable this, archival and anecdotal research delved into the early buildings of the area and thus introduced the story of some of its well-known residents. The information gathered in the research period was far and away beyond that that could be used in the brochures or signage, and the group felt confident that a book encompassing this information should be produced and thus add value to the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail*.

The fires of 1967, the continued Housing developments in the '70's, and the lack of employment for the youth of the area caused a feeling of despondency and lack of pride to descend on much of the area. Our continuing objective is to restore

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and enhance the values of the area, creating both a tangible link with the past and engendering a greater sense of pride and community.

Today we see the regularly used Trail extended through a once badly degraded riparian area of the Clarence Plains Rivulet, opening up a nature walk through one of the earliest settled properties in the region. It has proved to be a recreational and educational asset.

Our aim is to increase the knowledge of the area and to further record its history. This book has been made possible through a grant for the Promotion and Conservation of Tasmania's Cultural Heritage from the Tasmanian Community Fund Board, as well as financial assistance from Clarence City Council and Clarence Plains Historical Society Inc. This is much appreciated.

This book is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the settlement of the Eastern Shore, but it is important to set the direction of the explorers, the settlements, and the prominent people who rose out of these efforts and were important to the history of Clarence Plains in general and Rokeby in particular.

It is hoped that readers will enjoy this book and will develop a greater sense of understanding and appreciation of this beautiful area of Clarence.



Logo of the Old Rokeby Historic Trail

Chapter 1

Aboriginal Heritage

Tasmanian Aboriginal People have lived on this island for at least 35,000 years. Their heritage is a valuable part of Tasmanian history and of great importance to the Aboriginal community today.

The Clarence Plains area was originally part of the territory of the Moomairemener people who called the area Nannyeleebata.¹ Their homeland comprised the eastern shore of the River Derwent, extending from the Jordan River to South Arm, and eastwards from the Derwent to Pitt Water and Coal River.²

The Droughty Point area is believed to have been called Trum.mer.ner Pine.ne.³ Middens, quarries and other heritage places are to be found here. Some shell middens are visually impressive such as the expansive one between Rokeby Beach and Mill Point.

The area was valued greatly by its traditional owners for the land itself; its birds, animals, the natural vegetation, the shoreline with its major harvests of seafood, the landscape within which all this was held, and the plants, animal and marine life which provided sustenance for the people.

Today, we acknowledge those traditional owners and land carers, who carefully carried out the original resource management of this island. Using fire to clear areas of vegetation to allow free passage, as well as to promote new growth of plant foods, they maintained the plant foods for themselves and the animals, which in turn also formed part of their diet.

Food supplies were carefully managed; groups moving on before the available food resources were totally eaten out. This way there would be sufficient regeneration to provide food for the groups' next visit.

The animal and marine foods included wallaby, possum, wombat, and echidna; seals, crabs and lobsters; shellfish such as abalone, mussel and oyster; and birds such as swan, pelican, penguin, mutton bird and emu. Bird and reptile eggs, and lizards were also eaten.

Food plants were drawn from wet and dry forest areas and the coast - ferns, native pigface, ice plants, grass tree, gums, kelp and certain types of roots. Whilst men hunted wallaby and snared birds, women scaled trees for the smaller animals such

as possums; dug out burrows, collected shellfish and plant food and did most of the cooking.⁴

An interesting example is that of the Hop Bush, readily available in the Clarence Plains area. This evergreen shrub was known to the traditional owners as the 'Oyster' bush. Its colourful winged seed capsules indicated the best time to collect the bounty of native oysters from the nearby rocky foreshore. For the Aboriginals, chewing the leaves provided relief from the toothache caused by years of grinding fibrous diets. The chewed pulp was put on rashes, bruises and stings. Pain-killing plants were called 'Pitori'.

The juice obtained from chewing was collected and used as an antiseptic, and the smoke from burning the leafy branches helped in relieving the symptoms of fever. Generations later our colonists realised the value of these plants. The name Native Hops came about because of the similarity the seed capsule had to the look and taste of European hops and colonists managed to brew a bitter but acceptable alternative to beer.⁵

Rushes such as *Juncus* were used to make carrying or collecting baskets. Woods like *Leptospermum* (teatree) and *Melaleuca* (paperbark) were used for clubs and spears. Bone, seaweed, bark, grasses and animal sinew were all used for tools and containers. Stone tools such as knives and scrapers were made as throw-away items from the never ending supply of suitable stone.

Clothing was minimal; only the women wearing cloaks from kangaroo or other skins, and ornaments made from shells, ochred kangaroo sinews and strips of animal fur. Bodies were protected with mixtures of fat, ochre and charcoal.

Where shelters were built, flexible branches, bark and grasses were used, together with linings of feathers. Bark watercraft, tied with reeds or grass, enabled the people to journey up to 25 km from the Tasmanian mainland, crossing dangerous and often stormy seas.⁶

In 1642, across the seas from the west, came the first recorded European explorer, from the Dutch East India Company, Abel Janszoon Tasman. He made landfall on the East Coast, collected some 'pot herbs', saw tracks of a Tasmanian tiger and hoisted the Dutch flag, not a whit disconcerted by the knowledge that the original inhabitants were observing them. Ultimately he sailed due east to New Zealand.

The Aboriginal inhabitants continued to make good, but careful, use of their land, but the coming of European settlement in 1803 was to change their life and traditional land usage.

With the settlement of Clarence Plains, Aborigines traded regularly with the

Europeans and also worked as farmhands and servants on the newly established farms. However they were to suffer from this tolerance.

By 1820, the Moomairemener peoples had suffered random attacks and dispossession of their traditional lands, European diseases such as smallpox, and had dispersed amongst other clans. Many middens were used by the new settlers to supply the lime needed for building, thus depriving archaeologists and anthropologists of information about the inhabitants of that area.

With the subsequent removal of Aborigines to the Bass Strait Islands in 1830, historians have been unable to reconstruct the last years of the original inhabitants of Clarence Plains.⁷

- 1 Taylor, JA. *A Study of Palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal) Place Names*, p.19.
- 2 Sinclair Knight Merz. *Clarence Plains Catchment Management Plan: final report*, p.18.
- 3 Taylor, JA. p.32.
- 4 Information sourced from the Aboriginal Education Resource Centre, Elizabeth College, Hobart; Alexander, A. (ed.) *Companion to Tasmanian History*, pp.3-6.
- 5 Watson, P. *Native Hopbush*.
- 6 Information sourced from the Aboriginal Resource Centre, Elizabeth College LRC; Alexander, A. (ed.) *Companion to Tasmanian History*, pp.3-6.
- 7 Sinclair Knight Merz. *Clarence Plains Catchment Management Plan: final report*, pp.18,19.

Chapter 2

The Explorers 1642-1802

Abel Janszoon Tasman's ships *Heemskirk* and *Zeehan*, came to anchor on our East Coast on 1 December 1642, at Blackman (then called Fredrik Hendrik) Bay. On the next day boats went ashore searching for wood, water and food. The huge trees were noted, as were the notched toe-holds, over a metre apart, cut by the unseen local inhabitants.

On 3 December the ship's carpenter, Pieter Jacobsz, swam through the surf, planting the Dutch flag on shore and took formal possession of this newly-discovered country. Tasman called this new land '*Anthony Van Diemen's Land, in honour of the Governor General, our master, who sent us out to make discoveries*'.

A memorial '*to Posterity and to the Inhabitants of this Country*' was erected, by the Tasmanian Royal Society, in 1923, where the carpenter swam ashore. Later, in 1942, a more accessible monument, near the Dunalley town jetty, was erected by the Tasmanian Government to celebrate the tercentenary of the discovery of this island.¹

In spite of the formal Dutch claim, it was not until 1772 that the Frenchman Marion Dufresne landed on the beach of modern day North Bay and made the first known contact with the original inhabitants. Unfortunately one was killed and others wounded in resisting the landing.²

Then the English came to Van Diemen's Land in the form of Tobias Furneaux, the first to circumnavigate the globe in both directions - westerly on Captain Samuel Wallis' circumnavigation in the Royal Navy Ship *Dolphin* (1766-68), then eastward, taking part in Cook's second voyage to the Pacific (1771-75).

As James Cook's second in command he captained the *Adventure*, and named his 1773 anchorage off Bruny Island after his ship. He remained there for several days before heading north as far as the Furneaux group, and then sailed for New Zealand to rejoin Cook who was on board the *Resolution*.³

The outbreak of scurvy was always a major concern in long sea voyages.⁴ Bruni D'Entrecasteaux was later to die of it. During Cook's 1768 voyage to observe the transit of Venus the crew's need for fresh 'greens' had been assuaged by harvesting native plants along the New Zealand shoreline.

The discovery of similar 'pot herbs' - which we now call Ice Plants, Warrigal or

Botany Bay greens, Bower or New Zealand Spinach - along the Australian coastline by Cook and other explorers, was to have an interesting consequence back in England.

Cook's naturalist Joseph Banks had sent seeds of the Ice Plants to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, where he later became Honorary Director. The plant itself gained great favour in society as a summer spinach.

By 1779 the House of Commons was inquiring into the relative suitability of Australia for a convict-based colony compared to West Africa; America being no longer suitable because of its Revolution. Banks' fondness for the Ice Plant's ability to provide nutritious greens in quantity may well have tilted the debate in favour of Australia. Did these small plants help to determine the future of our forbears?⁵

Cook, in 1777, also came to Adventure Bay, followed by Cox (1789) and William Bligh (1788 and 1792), but it was a Frenchman Bruni D'Entrecasteaux who, searching for the missing La Pérouse, made the first survey of the approaches to the Derwent.

La Pérouse had instructions to investigate the extreme southern-most point of New Holland, and had written a letter on leaving Botany Bay on 7 February 1788, indicating that he would proceed to do this. He was of course not seen again, however Bent's Almanac of 1827 states that in 1809 Captain Bunker of the ship *Venus* found, on the shore of Adventure Bay, a bottle containing letters from La Pérouse dated one month after leaving Port Jackson.⁶ The debate will continue as to whether La Pérouse discovered the Derwent.

With his ships *Recherche* and *Esperance*, D'Entrecasteaux carried out surveys in the autumn of 1792 and in early 1793, reaching as far as 26 miles up the Derwent. These surveys were invaluable both for their navigational information and for the work of the naturalist and expedition historian, Labillardière.

Through an error of his pilot Raoul, D'Entrecasteaux finally cast anchor at the entrance of Storm Bay Passage (the English name). Today we fittingly call it D'Entrecasteaux Channel. They remained for some time in the safe harbour we know as Recherche Bay; the seamen doing surveys of the various inlets, whilst the naturalists revelled in the discovery of new flora and fauna.⁷

On the 1793 expedition, the cartographer, Beautemps-Beaupré, and Lt. Willaumez, exploring in the ship's boat the estuary of the river now named Derwent, camped at Tryworks Point. They named this site Pointe L'Aignel after a junior officer on the *Esperance*.⁸

Other names such as Bruny Island, Cape Raoul, Recherche Bay and Esperance; Huon River after Huon De Kermandec, Commander of the *Esperance*; Cygnet, as

well as plant names like Huon Pine and the silver tussock grass *Poa labillardierei*, today reflect the visits of these Frenchmen.

Shortly, the Derwent became the subject of investigation by more English explorers. The first of these was an officer of the Bombay Marine, who, during an interval of peace, was permitted to undertake a voyage of exploration and discovery. This was sponsored by a group of merchant adventurers whose object was to establish the spice trade with New Guinea.

This was the 25 year old Captain John Hayes, and the date was 25 April 1793. He sailed from Calcutta with the East India Company's ships, the 250 ton *Duke of Clarence* and the 100 ton two masted snow *Duchess*. Both were armed.

They were headed for New Guinea, seeking new supplies of spices, but were prevented by the south-east monsoons from progress through the Timor Sea. Also chartered to explore the coasts and safe harbours of New Holland, he chose to complete this before proceeding to New Guinea from the east.

He ultimately rounded the southern shore of Van Diemen's Land, then believed to be part of the Australian continent, although Hayes was not convinced - no doubt of interest later to Matthew Flinders.

Unaware of D'Entrecasteaux' recent visit, he fully explored the Channel and the Derwent itself. He was proud to discover that Adventure Bay was situated on an island (Bruny), rather than the mainland, a fact not believed to have been discovered by men like Cook and Furneaux.

Ralph's Bay was explored on the way up the river to an anchorage near a cove and a creek we call Risdon. Every aspect of the river, its banks, mountain slopes, vegetation, birds and animals, impressed him.

After sighting Mount Direction he continued to New Norfolk in one of the ships' boats. An original chart of his survey, probably drawn in Calcutta from his data, was presented to Sir John Shore, Governor General of the Company in Bengal. Sadly the whereabouts of his journal is unknown, but charts remain, as do descendants in Tasmania.

Hayes was prolific both in his investigation of landmarks, and in the naming of them; not knowing that the French had named some before him. He named the river 'Derwent' and the overlooking mountain 'Skiddaw', after the mountain that overlooks Derwentwater in the English Lakes District.⁹

Skiddaw is now Mount Wellington, but was previously known as Bur.nang.ye, Gur.nang.ye, Pooranettere, Unghanyahletta, Montagne du plateau, Table Mountain and Mt. Collins.¹⁰

Nevertheless, many of his names remain, including Mount Direction, Cornelian Bay, Prince of Wales Bay, and Relph's Bay now Ralph's Bay, after William Relph, commander of the *Duchess*. Risdon, after William Bellamy Risdon, Second Officer of the *Duke of Clarence*, was a name to feature prominently in the future.

Of particular interest also is the name *Clarence*, a name common in English history. It is assumed that the ship *Duke of Clarence* was named after Prince William Henry, Duke of Clarence, later to become (June 1830) William IV, the 'Sailor King'.

A close friend of naval hero Horatio Nelson, William had entered the Royal Navy at age 13. Father of 10 illegitimate children to the Irish comedienne Dorothea Jordan, but with no legitimate heirs, William was succeeded on the English throne by his niece Victoria.¹¹

The name Clarence was given to Clarence Point (now Howrah Point),¹² Clarence Hills (now the Rokeby Hills), Clarence Plains and the Clarence Plains Rivulet, all important to this book, and now to the City of Clarence.



Clarence Point. 43 Clarence Point, 44 Ralphs Bay, 45 Betsys Island, 46 South Arm, 47 River Derwent, 48 Chain Gang at work, 49 Cray Fish Point, 50 Sandy Bay, 51 Mount Nelson, 52 Group of Natives.

'From this point and behind Ralph's Bay, is a large tract of open and excellent country, which was originally divided into small grants amongst the settlers from Norfolk Island; the hills in the vicinity are chiefly covered with oak, the best kind of firewood'. (R.Burford)¹³

And so John Hayes, 25, became Commodore Sir John Hayes and spent his final days on the Cocos Islands, where he died in 1831.

On Norfolk Island, a place that was to figure largely in the history of Clarence Plains,

the 25-ton sloop *Norfolk* was built, and in October 1798, Naval Surgeon George Bass and Lieutenant Matthew Flinders, sailed in her from Port Jackson, Sydney.

These two intrepid gentlemen had explored much together before, and were keen to carry out their new orders. These were to find the strait between Van Diemen's Land and the mainland, and then circumnavigate the south island.

By December they had proven the existence of the strait; made down the west coast and turned eastwards towards the Derwent.

Flinders carried a copy of Hayes' sketch chart of the Derwent, but was unaware of the discoveries of D'Entrecasteaux, six years earlier. George Bass stated that '*This island, the Derwent, and Storm Bay Passage, were the discovery of Mr. Hayes, of which he made a chart*'.¹⁴

Matthew Flinders and Dr. George Bass then surveyed the Derwent from the Iron Pot to a point some 5 miles above Bridgewater.¹⁵

Bass in particular made observations of the neighbouring country, its soil, vegetation and suitability for agriculture. Much of his journal was published in 1802, by Collins, in the second volume of his *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*:

'The hills to the eastward arise immediately from the banks... all the hills are very thinly set with light timber, chiefly short she-oaks, but are admirably covered with thick nutritious grass, in general free from brush or patches of shrubs'.

He went on to report that many large tracts of land appeared suitable for maize, wheat and pasture, and mentioned the chains of small ponds or occasional drains which emptied via a cove or creek into the Derwent.¹⁶

Bass was enthusiastic about the land at Risdon as a place for a settlement, although Flinders had reservations about the water supply, as their ship's small boat could not navigate the creek up high enough to get fresh water.

French Captain Nicolas Baudin now appears briefly in this history, not because he recorded anything new about the Clarence Plains area, but because he was indirectly responsible for the settlement of Van Diemen's Land.

His purpose, in 1800 - 1802, was to complete the French cartographic survey of the coast of Australia, and to conduct scientific investigations. He is largely remembered for this work and that of naturalist François Péron and cartographer surveyor Freycinet, in Western Australia, and the detailed surveys of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel.¹⁷

His close contacts with the Aboriginal people led to the most sensitive drawings, but the expedition itself was not harmonious.

His was a scientific not a political expedition and he was received well by Governor King in Sydney, despite the war with France still persisting. Nevertheless, news of this and other French explorations spurred the English into investigating the settlement of the island.¹⁸

- 1 Tasman material sourced from Walker, J.B. *Early Tasmania*, pp.132-4, 210-2, 230, 232-236; Tardif, P, *John Bowen's Hobart*, pp.5-6; EB: *Tasman, Abel Janszoon*; Royal Society Annual Report 1923; 'Tasman Memorial'.
- 2 Duffresne material sourced from Walker, J.B. pp.7,139; Tardif, pp.9-10.
- 3 Furneaux material sourced from Walker, J.B. pp.139-140,142; Tardif, p.11; EB: *Furneaux, Tobias*.
- 4 Walker, J.B. p.12 Notes 25-27; Tardif, pp.24, 37; EB: *Cook, James*.
- 5 Cook and Banks material sourced from Ward, R. *Finding Australia*, p.183; Low T. *Bush Tucker; Australia's Wild Food Harvest*, pp 134-5; Somerville, J. *Botanical History of Tasmania*; Watson, P. *Warming up to Ice Plants*.
- 6 Walker, J.B. p.7.
- 7 D'Entrecasteaux material sourced from Walker, J.B. pp.7-8,140-141; Tardif, pp.14-18.
- 8 Hudspeth, A., Scripps, L., MacFie, P., *Clarence Historic Site Survey Part I* p.42.
- 9 Hayes material sourced from Lee, I. *Commodore Sir John Hayes; his voyage and life*, pp.1-5,16,19-20,23-26,29-30,33-34,37-38,41-42,46; *Cyclopedia of Tasmania*, p.591; Walker, J.B. pp.8-9,31-34,141; Tardif, pp.18-19; Pers.comm.: Mrs. Lindsay Luddington, Flinders Island; EB: *East India Company*.
- 10 Taylor, J.A. p.7,9,24,33.
- 11 EB. *William IV*.
- 12 Burford, R. *Description of a view of Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land*.
- 13 Burford, R. *Description of a view of Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land*. 1831 p.10.
- 14 Collins, D. *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales...* Vol. II p.183.
- 15 Bass and Flinders material sourced from Walker, J.B. pp.34-37; Tardif, pp.19-20.
- 16 Collins, D. Vol. II p.183.
- 17 EB: *Freycinet, Louis-Claude de Saulces de*; EB: *Freycinet Peninsula*.
- 18 Baudin material sourced from Marchant, L.R., Reynolds, J.H., *Baudin, Nicolas Thomas (1754-1803)*, ADB Vol. 1. pp.71-73; Walker, J.B. pp.9-13; Tardif, pp.21-22.

Chapter 3

Arrival at the Eastern Shore of the Derwent

In 1802, Phillip Gidley King, the Governor of the Colony of New South Wales (which then included the island of Van Diemen's Land), expressed apprehension about France's designs on that small territory. Lord Hobart, the Secretary for War and Minister for the Colonies, instructed King to remove part of the establishment at Norfolk Island to Port Dalrymple, later the site of Launceston. This order was given on 24 June 1803.

On 28 March 1803, King had already directed Lt. John Bowen to choose a suitable place to establish His Majesty's right to Van Diemen's Land, and appointed him Commandant and Superintendent of the settlement.¹ In August, after many delays, largely due to the condition of the available ships, John Bowen, together with a small military force, convicts, free settlers, numbering in total forty-nine, six months provisions and some livestock, set out from Sydney for Risdon to form a settlement.

The small brig *Lady Nelson* with her convicts aboard had arrived on 8 September, after reasonably fair weather. The whaler *Albion* with Bowen aboard was delayed by a severe storm, but the weather calmed enough to allow the taking of three sperm whales. It made anchorage in Risdon Cove on 11 September.

This first settlement, in the area we know today as Risdon, was ordered by Governor King to be known as Hobart. The name was first officially used on 27 September 1803.²

Previously King had also recommended that a settlement be formed at Port Phillip, and David Collins, then in England, was appointed Lt. Governor.³ He found that Port Phillip was an unfit place and with King's permission left on Friday 27 January 1804. King gave Collins the choice between Port Dalrymple and the Derwent, however if it was to be the Derwent he was to take command of the settlement already there.

King supplied Collins with a letter to be given to Bowen, should the two meet, which repeated this point. The letter, dated 26 November 1803, read as follows:

'This letter will be Delivered by His Honor David Collins Esqr. His Majesty's Lieutenant Governor of a Settlement Intended to have been formed at Port Phillip; but, from that place not being found fit for a Settlement, that Gentleman has Received my Directions to make Choice of Port Dalrymple or Hobart to fix it. Should he Determine on Hobart, you will immediately resign the Command of the Settlement to him. And direct the Storekeeper to give you a return of the remaining Stores, Provisions, Civil, Military, Settlers and Convicts, under your Command, which you will present to the Lieut't Governor together with Copies of all Instructions you have Received from me respecting your Command.

As a Medical Establishment goes with the Lieut. Governor, I presume Mr. Mountgarrett, will return to this Place; And as Mr. Wilson the Storekeeper is on the Establishment of this Colony, I have requested the Lieut. Governor to permit him to return here after having Delivered his Charge to the Deputy Commissary.

I have also Signified my Wish that the Officer and Detachment from the New South Wales Corp may be sent here, And have Requested Captain Woodriffe to give you all a Passage hither, in Case Hobart is fixed on by the Lieut. Governor, with a just Sense of your Exertions and Perseverence'.⁴

Governor King's letter did not reach Bowen before he left the settlement on 9 January 1804, to return to Sydney with a soldier implicated in robbing the stores.

Collins chose the Derwent, and proceeded in the *Ocean* with the *Lady Nelson* again in company, towards Risdon Cove. As fate would have it, as his ship entered Storm Bay, a north-west gale blew up, prohibiting passage up the river. Shelter was sought in Frederick Henry Bay, anchoring off Pipe Clay Head, on Saturday 11 February 1804.

Leaving the *Ocean*, the great diarist Robert Knopwood noted both a salt water and a fresh water lagoon, and a great number of birds, quail, bronze-wing pigeons, parrots and one emu. The armed party collected many oysters. He commented in his diary:

'It appeared to me that the natives were much better supplied with fish and birds than those at Port Phillip. The trees are very large and a great deal of underwood. Near the fresh lagoon which was very large, more that 12 or 14 miles around, was a great quantity of flax and very fine. Besides ducks and teals were snipes and I think a woodcock was flushed'.⁵

Barely an hour after dropping anchor, a party of 6 volunteers struck out overland to Risdon to inform Bowen of Collins' impending arrival. The party consisted of

Adolarius W.H. Humphrey, His Majesty's mineralogist, Lt. Edward Lord of the Marines, their two body servants and two trusted convicts.

Adolarius Humphrey was employed as Mineralogist by the British Government in 1803 at a salary of £50 per year plus rations. He was just 21 years of age. He had assisted in the survey of the Port Dalrymple area with William Collins and, whilst there, is reputed to have carved his initials, A.H.1804, deeply on a rock as a marker.⁶

Perhaps, if we regard Abel Tasman, for his 'pot herbs' collecting, to be the first European 'bush tucker' man in Tasmania, we should credit Humphrey with being our first European 'rock artist'.

Surveyor G.P. Harris, on board the *Ocean*, thought the country as beautiful as any he had seen but, because it was so mountainous and thickly wooded, he thought the walk would be more difficult than they imagined.

Armed with a map of the bay and the Derwent drawn by Flinders, they set off for Risdon Cove, estimated by Humphrey to be about twenty-five miles in a direct line. The country to be traversed was quite mountainous and they encountered several saltwater inlets.

The fresh water and provisions were divided amongst the men and just before dark the party crossed the neck of land dividing the river from Frederick Henry Bay.

They walked around a large bay, even then called Ralph's Bay, which opened into the river. At nine at night, it being very dark, they stopped at a large tree, lit a fire, refreshed themselves and lay down to sleep till morning.

Arising at 4am, they travelled over some very high hills, and then stopped to breakfast. Still not having found fresh water but depending on finding some later, they ate heartily of salt pork, drank the last of their water and walked on. By 10am they were very thirsty, the sun was powerful, and the places in which fresh water was expected were found to be dry.

At noon they passed some steep high hills and the men were tempted to drink at a salt-water inlet. Humphrey suffered from want of drink and was almost unable to walk. His servant was unable to go further. Leaving him and another ill man behind, they walked on, passing over hills from which they could see Mt. Direction. They were so fatigued and thirsty that they decided to walk around the coast rather than attempt another steep hill.

Halfway around the bay a boat was seen, so they fired their guns and were taken aboard and on to Risdon. They were met by Lieutenant Moore, then Commandant of the settlement, as Bowen had taken a prisoner to Sydney in the ship *Ferret*.

Earlier, by the end of November 1803, the little settlement had increased to around one hundred. The ships *Dart* and *Endeavour* brought more stores, provisions, soldiers, prisoners, and livestock. Bowen's second in command Moore was also on the *Dart*.

Now we must meet another *Dart* arrival, an important character in the form of James Meehan, surveyor, explorer and ultimately a settler.

Meehan, an Irishman, was sentenced to transportation for a small part in the Irish rebellion of 1798. A petition for his release, whilst he was still confined in a prison ship at Dublin Bay is of interest:

'An exact account of the different crimes for which James Meehan, School teacher and Surveyor from Shinrone is now confined at Dublin Bay, first became a sworn United Irishman, afterwards refused to swear true allegiance to his Majesty, was appointed a sergeant of militia men, had first sworn six men and attested twenty-one to the United Oath, but had never had either pike or any sort of weapon, nor was at the taking or robbing for arms. Nor either had a hand in any plot or conspiracy in his life, but seeing the error of United business, declined it totally and took the Oath of Allegiance, and from that hour has never had anything to do with United men, until he was taken and sent where he is now confined, on board one of his majesties ships now in Dublin Bay... (State Prisoners Petitions, 1799 SPP 418/99)'.⁷

James Meehan arrived in Sydney in the *Friendship* in February 1800. A shortage of surveyors to measure new farms saw his skills quickly in demand and, by April that year, he had been assigned as assistant to Charles Grimes, the acting surveyor-general.

In the next few years he gained considerable departmental and field experience, capably carrying out his duties with impartiality. He received a conditional pardon, and ultimately became the deputy-surveyor of lands.

He surveyed in Van Diemen's Land in 1803-4, 1806-7, 1811 and 1812-13, but it was his first visit that is of most interest to Clarence Plains.

Surveying the areas to the north of Risdon and as far as the Prosser River in November and December of 1803, he then turned his attention to the south.

Commencing on 4 January 1804, from the southernmost point he had reached on 3 November, he walked through the deep valley he had previously seen, and then followed a creek south into Geilston Bay. From there he followed the coast to Lindisfarne Bay, then inland to the east of Gordon's Hill and then to Kangaroo Bay.

Once again he followed the coast round Kangaroo Bluff, to Bellerive beach,

Footprints

Second Bluff and Howrah beach, as we call them today. He then struck inland to the Clarence Plains Rivulet. By the next day he had reached the shores of Ralph's Bay at Rokeby Beach and followed the coastline to Mill Point, and across the neck at Lauderdale, to Frederick Henry Bay. He remarked on the 'flat salt water marsh – bad'.⁸

Heading north along the coast he reached Seven Mile Beach, although he did not survey all of the Peninsula. Then he headed to Pitt Water Bluff and Barilla Bay and returned to Risdon via Craigow on 7 January 1804.⁹

Here, fate took a quirky step. The party from Collins' ship *Ocean* also,



Meehan's path through Clarence Plains 4-7 January
Adapted from 'Meehan explores to the South of Risdon' P.Tardif.

unknowingly, crossed part of this Clarence Plains route, including Mill Point, on 11 and 12 February 1804. Adolarius Humphrey became the first Superintendent of the Tasmanian Police Force and Mill Point land now hosts the Tasmania Police Academy.

As it happened, Meehan returned from his survey of the western shore just before Collins arrived at Risdon. In this group of new arrivals, the Chaplain Robert Knopwood, of whom more will be told later, gave the following succinct opinion of the settlement, in his diary entry of 16 February:

'After examining the camp, gardens, water etc. it was the general opinion to be not calculated for a town... and further... The watering place is by no means good'.

And so the western shore, where Meehan had surveyed at the end of January, was examined the next day. Meehan had found an extensive plain and a stream flowing down from Mount Wellington. The small cove provided good anchorage. Knopwood recorded good land and excellent trees and a much better area for the landing of stores.

In the words of George Harris in a letter home: *'we have pitched on a small Bay farther down the river where there is a run of capital water and every other convenience and where we shall shortly lay out the foundation of Hobart Town'*.¹⁰

During the next three days the *Ocean* and *Lady Nelson* moved to the place Collins now named Sullivan's Cove, honouring John Sullivan, the British Under-Secretary for War and the Colonies, as he had at Sullivan Bay, Sorrento, Victoria. All Collins' people, other than twelve who were ill, were transferred, together with stores, and tents were erected. Progress was smooth.

Collins recorded that he and Meehan met and discussed the surveyor's findings. Whilst Meehan's name is remembered in the Meehan range on the Eastern Shore, his part in the settlement of Hobart is largely forgotten.

Meehan returned to Sydney in the *Lady Nelson* on 6 March 1804 but was back in Van Diemen's Land, in 1811 and 1812, measuring grants and resurveying land. His reputation grew, and there was little of NSW that he had not surveyed by the time he retired in 1821.

He was officially granted 1140 acres at Ingleburn NSW, and named this farm *Macquarie Field*. Today it is part of the suburb of ever-growing Sydney known as Macquarie Fields.

Footprints

Meehan justified Governor Macquarie's belief that, with good conduct and application, a convict should be able to regain his place in society. Meehan died in April 1826.¹¹

On 26 February 1804, the Rev. Robert Knopwood conducted the first Divine Service at Sullivan's Cove, the sermon being '*upon the prosperity of the new settlement, and for God's blessing upon the increase of it*'. Knopwood did 'duty again to all the convicts etc. etc'. in the afternoon for those at Risdon Cove.¹²

1 HRA 3,1, pp.189-190, HRA 1,4, p.338.

2 HRA 3,1, p.198, Note 38 pp.791-2.

3 HRA 1,4, p.10.

4 HRA 3,1, p.206.

5 RK pp.42,43. 12.2.1804.

6 Stancombe, G.H. *Humphrey, Adolarius William Henry*, ADB Vol.1. pp.565-566.

7 Offaly Historical and Archæological Society '*James Meehan*'.

8 Tardif, p.105.

9 Map: *Meehan explores to the south of Risdon*, 4-7.1.1804.

10 Tardif, p.119.

11 Perry, T.M. '*Meehan, James (1774-1826)*', ADB Vol.2. pp.219-220.

12 RK p.45. 26.2.1804.

Chapter 4

One Name – Two Settlements

Collins' new settlement made progress. It numbered 262 souls, including 178 convicts and 31 settlers, military, officials and three others including the naturalist Robert Brown.

Hunting and fishing augmented the food supplies. The native black swan, bronze wing pigeons, even the Tasmanian 'emew' were fair game, as were native duck and kangaroo.

Rev. Robert Knopwood later kept a serious account of kangaroo killed by his dogs between 24 August and the end of December 1804. The tally was 42 kangaroo and 6 'emews' one of which weighed 60 pounds. One kangaroo was measured at 150 pound weight. All were recorded in Knopwood's diary. The kangaroo sold at eight pence per pound. 1 pound of fish caught saved using half a pound of salt beef, no doubt helpful to those in charge of stores and more acceptable to the diner!

Excursions by Robert Brown gained botanical specimens and the geology of the land was investigated, as was the fauna. Adolarius Humphrey is credited with finding coal. The course of the Derwent was followed as far as possible, as well as the Huon River and Hobart Rivulet. The *Ocean* returned to Port Phillip to bring the remainder of people from that settlement, at Sullivan Bay (Sorrento, Victoria). Knopwood's diary refers to that settlement as 'Hobert' Camp.¹

On 10 March, Bowen returned from Port Jackson. Little progress had been made at his 'Hobart' – lack of rations, poor agricultural progress and a mutiny amongst the soldiers did nothing but increase his unhappiness. He felt the circumstances that had taken place at Risdon 'quite disagreeable'.

Equally unimpressed was Collins, who, although he had not interfered in Bowen's settlement, pleaded to Governor King that it should be abandoned and the residents removed to Sydney.

Worse was yet to come. On 3 May 1804, whilst Bowen was away on excursion in the Huon, there was a fatal clash with the Aborigines.

There were discrepancies in the various accounts of this encounter. Today three written accounts survive:

Footprints

- A diary entry by Robert Knopwood, which includes a note from the surgeon Jacob Mountgarrett, as well as a visit by Lieutenant Moore to give an account of the day.²

- A letter from Lieutenant Moore written to Governor Collins, at his behest. This was dated 7 May 1804.³

- Testimony before the Committee for the Affairs of the Aborigines, Hobart on 16 March 1830 by a witness to these events, Edward White.⁴

Estimates of those killed ranged between two and fifty. Maybe the truth will never be discovered, but it was a shameful date in our history.

Not only did Surgeon Mountgarrett have an Aboriginal corpse to dissect; the bones being later removed to Sydney, but he had an orphan child to show the Governor. On 11 May Knopwood's diary records '*Ixtiand a young native boy whose name was Robert Hobert May*'.⁵ This name reflected the names of the clergyman, the settlement and the month when, to use the words of the press of the times, the boy was '*rescued from a state of barbaric insignificance*'.⁶

Little further is recorded of this child, apart from a smallpox vaccination in November 1805.⁷

There were other more peaceful encounters with the traditional owners, but it was apparent that the intruders were there to stay, and the Aboriginals were thus deprived of much of their land and food.

Strange and inexplicable sounds were heard, their traditional landscape was changing, and the newcomers had different lifestyles and customs – unease prevailed.

On 8 May, following King's agreement, Collins took charge of the Risdon settlement but left Bowen in charge there whilst the settlement was disbanded. Meanwhile a much delayed *Ocean* had returned again from Port Phillip with the remainder of Collins' expedition.⁸

Knopwood's diary entries from 19 May 1804 onwards refer to 'Hobert' Town Camp, River Derwent, instead of Sullivan's Cove, River Derwent. Collins, determined to honour his patron, was using 'Hobart Town' as the address on his correspondence, and it first appeared in a General Order on 15 June 1804.⁹ It remained the official name until 1881 when the word 'Town' was officially dropped. In order to avoid confusion, this book uses the name Hobart from this point onwards, unless 'Hobart Town' is used in a direct quote or reference.

It was eventually on 9 August that Bowen finally left for Sydney on the *Ocean* with most of his original group. Ultimately Bowen returned to England with passage

paid by Governor King, who believed that he had done his utmost to perform the service he had undertaken. King also wrote to Lord Hobart expressing a hope that a way might be opened for Bowen's promotion.

The settler Richard Clark, who had been made superintendent of stone masons, remained in that position in the new Hobart. Eleven male and two female convicts, whom Collins approved as being useful, remained. Bowen's mistress Martha Hayes, already settled at Stainforth Cove with her daughter, also stayed.

Collins ordered the wooden houses at Risdon to be pulled down, for re-use in Hobart; surely one of our earliest recycling examples. The stone warehouse remained as did the fourteen acres under cultivation, with wheat provided on Collins arrival.¹⁰

There was a hiatus in major activities on the eastern shore, whilst at the western shore settlement many of the free settlers took up land for farms at New Town. Sullivan's Cove was kept for convicts and the marine guard. There was work for all in clearing land and building.

A Government Farm was started where we now see the Cornelian Bay Cemetery and wattle and daub huts were built. Gardens were created and fenced and prisoners could work for officers and settlers in their spare time.

Prices for labour were set - two shillings and sixpence a 10 hour day for labourers - three shillings and sixpence for mechanics. Food prices were also set as workmen were often paid in food equivalent, or the demon spirits. A bottle of rum was worth £1. As yet there was no hard currency.

By July, a Return of the Civil Establishment at Hobart Town was made and from this we are able to learn of the appointments of several people who became influential in the development of Clarence Plains in general and Rokeby in particular.¹¹

Apart from Knopwood the Chaplain, William Collins was appointed Harbour Master on 2 April 1804; William Nichols, free settler, Superintendent of Carpenters on 21 January 1804 and Richard Clark, free settler, Superintendent of Masons on 1 June 1804.

After the discovery of fur and elephant seal colonies along the coast of New South Wales, approval was given for small vessels to hunt them in the territorial seas. Next year, in 1798, English whalers came from South American fishing grounds. During the passage on the whaler *Albion* to the Derwent in 1803 three sperm whales were taken near Oyster Bay.

Sealing operations had begun early in the Bass Strait, often the preserve of escaped convicts. The horrifying total of 22,000 skins and 110 tons of elephant seal oil had been taken to Sydney by 1803. The hunting extended as far as Macquarie Island,

and finally even penguins were harvested.

In partly justifying his move from Port Phillip to the Derwent, David Collins drew attention to the qualities of Hobart as a base for the whaling industry. Robert Knopwood in his diary makes numerous mentions of whales and whaling, noting on 1 July 1804: '*We passed so many whales that it was dangerous for the boat to go up the river unless you kept very near the shore*'. At that time of the year hundreds of Right whales were sighted in the south-eastern waters of the island.

David Collins had an ally whilst trying to promote this industry, seaman William Collins, who had latterly been paid off, with other members of the crew, from the *Nereide*, serving in the West Indies.¹²

William Collins had a great interest in the prospect of whale fisheries, and had joined David Collins (no relation) on the Port Phillip expedition as a settler. He was an energetic adventurous man.

Born around 1760, William, with good naval qualifications, was an asset to David Collins' expedition. Not only did he assist in the survey of Port Phillip, but he was charged with taking dispatches and letters to Governor King at Port Jackson. With 6 men in a large boat, he sailed from Port Phillip, in November 1803 and ultimately arrived after being overtaken by the *Ocean*.

This story is oft briefly told in our history, but is best described in Knopwood's diary entry of 22 January 1806:

'The General Order, Jan 21, 1806: - His Excellency the Governor in Chief has been pleased at the recommendation of the Lieut. Govnr, to grant a conditional emancipation bearing date of 18 day of Dec. 1805 to each of the five following persons, viz: - John Ronaldson, Urias Allender, Christopher Forsha, David Wakefield, Wm. Thomas. In consideration of their good conduct and for volunteering their services by going in a six oared cutter from Port Phillip to Port Jackson to announce the arrival of H.M. ship Calcutta from England with an establishment to form a settlement at that place under the direction of the Lt. Govnr.

N.B.- Mr. William Collins had the command of the latter and when he was out some distance from Port Phillip he coasted it and ran into every place for shelter he could. When the boat was out and not with a strong breeze he turned too and got very drunk, leaving the boat to the care of the prisoners, and about 80 or 100 mile from Pt. Jackson he got on board the Ocean transport, which sailed from Pt. Phillip for that place'.¹³

On his return to Port Phillip, William Collins went to survey Port Dalrymple with

Adolarius Humphrey. They found it suitable for a settlement, but by that time Lieutenant Governor Collins had decided to move to the Derwent.

As mentioned earlier, William was appointed Harbour Master, whereupon he surveyed the Derwent and the Huon, set a look-out on Betsy Island and constructed a wharf on Hunter Island, where the stores were kept. He then, at the request of David Collins, set his mind to the commerce and the formation of the whale fishery.

David Collins had used the favourable position of Hobart for the whaling industry as a justification for transferring to the Derwent from Port Phillip. It had been noted that whilst the sperm whales were best pursued in the open seas between December and April, the Black, or Southern Right Whale was plentiful along the Tasmanian coast from July to September.

Indeed Robert Knopwood in his diary often remarked on ‘a great many whales in the river’ and hearing them from his house at *Cottage Green*.

William’s plan for an integrated whaling and sealing industry based on Hobart was the first Tasmanian fisheries development proposal. From this comprehensive report, approval was given to establish a Government Licensed bay whaling station on Ralph’s Bay.

Point Eliza, so shown on Hayes’ map, was selected. It was called, first Tryway and then Tryworks or Trywork Point. The process of ‘trying out’ - the purification of metal, fat or oil, by melting or boiling - gave rise to the name Trywork, and was a reflection of the activity carried out there. This name remains today.

It must have been operating at least by 27 September 1805 as the redoubtable Knopwood notes in his diary: ‘*At 9 I went across the river to see the trywork. They had a great quantity of oil in casks*’.¹⁴

The General Orders, Hobart Town for 10 March 1806, informed us that a group of people from Sydney would be employed in this River during the ensuing Fishing Season, and a part had already arrived and taken a station at Relph’s Bay (sic) under the direction of Mr. William Collins.

The General orders also stated that: ‘*The Coxswains of the Government Boats and the people employed in burning shells in Relph’s Bay are equally prohibited from having communication with the people employed in the Fishing, and Mr. Collins will not fail to inform the Lt. Governor of all those who may be guilty of a Breach of this Order*’.¹⁵

Whaling was not for the faint-hearted. The whale having been spotted and the signal given, crews launched the whaleboat and gave chase. These boats were

generally clinker-built light longboats of about 30 feet; oarsmen, helmsman and the harpoon thrower were all important; strength, agility and the ability to instantly follow orders were essential. Sails were often used in the original approach.

Ultimately the whale was harpooned; the seriously dangerous part began, the whale threshing the water with its great tail, attempting to dive, often successfully, or towing the boat at great speed. If the whale dived deeper than the length of the harpoon line, the line had to be instantly severed to prevent boat and occupants from being pulled under.¹⁶

Deaths from these events were not unknown. Exhaustive hours were spent bringing the whale close enough to kill, and then the final tow.

In deep sea whaling the catch would be taken to the mother ship. In bay whaling it was hauled back to the more basic shore-based whaling station, in a sheltered area of the bay.

Clarence Plains resident William Maum Jnr. told, in his diary, of going to the North Sea and Bering Strait in the northern winter of 1852; deep sea whaling in the brig *Marianne*. Having seen a whale's breach, four boats were lowered and sailed into the school fast: '*we, that is the Captain's boat of which I was midship oarsman, chanced to have our whale run under the mates line which had come athwart (across) our chocks, he had to cut, his boat was split down the garboard strake*'. (the plank next to the keel). It was indeed a very dangerous occupation!¹⁷

Bay whaling stations generally needed a good lookout point, several well equipped whale boats, a scaffold or tripod for the flensing, or blubber removal process, and a platform on which to 'land' the dead whale for cutting up. Trywork Point was near a sheltered sandy beach, adjacent to a sloping rock shelf which could take the place of both scaffold and platform. It had the basic ingredients. Last but not least, came the try-pots.

Try-pots, generally large circular cauldrons, sometimes containing up to 250 gallons, were used to reduce the cut up pieces of blubber to oil. Once cooled, the oil was ladled into casks for storage. Trypots may be seen today in Salamanca Square, Hobart, in museums and art galleries, and occasionally on farms where they were reused for water containers or



Trypot

gardens.

The Southern Right Whale was so called because it was the ‘right’ whale to hunt; being relatively easy to catch, and as it floated, when killed, because of its large blubber content. Its oil, in the early days of machinery use, was a lubricant, and used in lamps. Baleen was used in corsetry, bones and teeth for inlaid furniture, jewellery and architectural features, and the highly valued spermaceti, used for perfumes, ointments, cosmetics and candles, a necessary item of every day life. The meat, in early days, was fed to the pigs, despite the food shortages in Hobart.

The official station at Trywork Point was followed by others set up along the south-east coast by private individuals. Clarence Plains identities such as brothers Joseph and William Mawle, Henry Mortimer, his partner William Gellibrand, John Petchey and Alexander McLeod were amongst those entrepreneurs.

A list of expenses¹⁸ incurred by George Meredith to establish a station at Freycinet in 1824 read as follows:

	£ /	s /	d
2 Boats, 30 pounds each	60		
2 coil whale line 145 fathoms each	16		
2 Trypots 105 gallons each gross weight	35/	5/	-
18 Harpoons at 10/- each	9		
18 Lances at 10/- each	9		
6 Blubber spades at 10/- each	3		
2 Blubber Hooks at 7/6 each		15/	-
2 Blubber Forks at 7/6 each		15/	-
6 Garf hooks at 5/- each	1/	10/	-
6 Boat hooks at 5/- each	1/	10/	-
2 Boat (?)	1		
2 Boat Anchors at 40/- each	4		
1 Skimmer and ladle at 40/-	2		
2 Blocks 20" threefold	2/	10/	-
2 Blocks 20" twofold	1/	10/	-
1 Block 16" threefold	1		
1 Block 16" twofold		15/	-
Fathoms of strong rope for carting Fish	5		
Huts – timber and framing etc. Blubber tank	20		
20 casks at 50/ per ton	50		
Coopers, carpenters, smith's works	20		
Total	244/	10/	-

With 1 pound (£) equalling \$2 this would be \$489. The station crew numbered 16 men.

Ropes used varied in length, up to 300 fathoms in America, and until 1840 were made of hemp. Correct attachment was necessary to make sure that the whale always towed the boat bow first. Harpoons, lances, hooks and hatchets were used in the killing, or in the releasing of a boat in danger.

Tasmanian place names such as Whale Point or Whale Rock reflect a past whaling connection, be it a station, or a stranding.

Heavy duties and shipping restrictions limited shore-based whaling until they were lifted in the 1850s. Figures of the number of whales taken were scant before 1831, but Hobart processing figures from 1831 to 1843 indicate a total of 3699 black (Right) whales from all sources. The numbers diminished with only 802 being processed between 1844 and 1850.

Whale oil and rum were two of the most important items in Hobartian life in the early days of the colony. The first public house was opened by Hopkins, a servant of Lt. Governor Collins. Knopwood's diary entry of 25 July 1807 tells of an inaugural supper, chaired by him, at 8pm at *The Sign of the Whale Fishery*. The last entry bears the news that Mr. Collins house was robbed of property to the amount of £250 or £300.¹⁹

The industry bred wealthy and competitive men. Whale-boats from rival whaling establishments raced either for private wagers or big purses. The Hobart Regatta, by 1839 a society event, was initiated from these exciting spectacles on the Derwent.

The whaling industry was vitally important to Van Diemen's Land. If Hobart Town had not proved to be the natural headquarters of the whale fishery, the island might have remained nothing but a convict settlement for many years longer'.²⁰

The Trywork Point bay whaling station was the first of its kind in the Australian Colony. Knopwood records two trips to the station in late 1806, but by 1813, it seems, grants of land were made here.

In March 1817 the ship *Harriet* called at Hobart, with 5 London Missionary Society workers on board. Their stay in Van Diemen's Land was five weeks. They preached publicly, only at Ralph's Bay whaling station, and in a house in Macquarie St.

The latter caused the preachers great unease as the owner was considered to have deserted his religion and the London Missionary Society.²¹

In 2006 during a television program 'American Antiques Roadshow', a piece of Scrimshaw, etching on whale's tooth, dated 24 December 1821, was shown. This

came from the same ship *Harriet*, Captain Jones, of London, whaling off the coast of Chile.

In 1818 Governor Sorell reported:

'I am informed that Mr. Collins made some attempt at a Fishery Establishment on a point of Land on the opposite side of the River called Triwork Point; but no buildings were erected there and no vestige now remains there. Two Grants of small farms have been made on the spot to persons by the name of Garth'.²²

The importance of *William Collins Bay Whaling Station* to our State heritage is recognised by its listing on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

On the eastern shore, Robert Knopwood and friends continued to visit Risdon, mainly, it seems, for the purpose of killing kangaroo, a valuable and saleable commodity. For a while the area was used as a government farm, capitalising on the previous cultivation. Convicts were banished there as punishment.

The farm experiment failed. The land was free to be allocated and 500 acres of it was granted to William I'Anson²³, Surgeon with David Collins. It is interesting to note the salaries of the day – I'Anson, Knopwood and Bate, the Deputy Judge Advocate, received £182/10/- per annum. It was twice the amount paid to G.P. Harris, Deputy Surveyor and A.W.H. Humphrey, Mineralogist, and £50 more than that paid to Lt. Edward Lord.

The Risdon land was ultimately purchased by Colonel Andrew Geils in 1812, Acting Lieutenant Governor from 1812-1813. He built a two storey brick house and a stone wharf near Bowen's original landing place; gardens, orchards and other appurtenances that unfortunately he built on land owned by George Guest.

George Guest or Gess was tried at Gloucester, Gloucestershire, England on 24 March 1784 for stealing livestock (10 pigs and 1 horse) with a value of 140 shillings. He was sentenced to transportation for 7 years, having originally been sentenced to death; leaving England on the *Alexander*, aged about 20 at that time (1787). His occupation was listed as labourer.

The marriage of George Guest, First Fleeter, to Mary Bateman, Second Fleeter, who came on the 'Brothel Ship' *Lady Juliana*, took place on Norfolk Island. Their six children were born there. This ex-convict and settler was the first Norfolk Islander to voluntarily ship to the Derwent in October 1805. Sarah Island is named after his daughter Sarah, who married Dr. Thomas Birch, employer of Captain James Kelly.

A thorn in the side of both Governors Macquarie and Sorell for his land claims, George is reputed to have been the first to introduce sheep into Van Diemen's Land.

On Norfolk Island he had amassed the largest private flock of sheep and 250 acres of land over which to graze them. 265 of the 390 sheep Guest brought to Hobart survived. Instructions had been given to take any surplus of his sheep, at \$2/2/- per head, however private sales made \$3/3/- .²⁴

The injection of this new stock, which thrived on the lush feed, helped to improve the mediocre and sickly small local population. So much was the increase and standard that Tasmanian sheep helped to found the flocks in Victoria and other states.

George Guest's grant at Risdon Cove was three hundred acres.

Restdown House, as Geils home was called, was occupied by a series of tenants from 1814, when Geils and his regiment were sent to Ceylon. An individual named Potaskie rented these farms in 1816 and grew more corn on them than was required by the government for one year's consumption for the military, settlers and convicts.²⁵ In 1820, Sarah, the wife of a tenant Alfred Thrupp, was raped during a break-in and theft. Four men were hanged for the crime. One was Potaskie's son.

The estate was in bad repair when, in 1829, it was purchased by Thomas Gregson, politician, sportsman, newspaper proprietor and good friend of Robert Knopwood.²⁶ He had migrated, with his wife, to Hobart, in the *Emerald* in 1821, and had built a home, *Northumbria*, after a region in his home county of Northumberland, on a 2500 acre grant at Jericho, before he purchased *Restdown*.

The house was restored and became the scene of many social occasions and hunts. He even engaged in a duel with one of Arthur's supporters, and won, although he was prosecuted for criminal assault. An artist in his own right, his participation in the painting of Robert Knopwood on horseback is well known.

This painting, known as 'Bob, Pincher and Pony', is believed to have been a joint effort, probably done in the 1860s. The figure of Knopwood is credited to Gregson, the pony to J.W. Graves, author of the hunting song *D'ye ken John Peel*, and the landscape (Risdon Cove across to the site of the Bowen Bridge) to a friend, F. Dunnett. It was agreed by those who knew Knopwood that he was instantly recognisable.²⁷ A companion poem was penned by Graves who was known as Old Boomer.

Gregson was a colourful character. As a parliamentarian, in 1857, he moved a resolution that all government salaries be reduced, a move which resulted in the resignation of the Premier of the time. The Governor called upon Gregson to form a Government and he was sworn in as Colonial Secretary and Registrar of Records on 26 February 1857. Gregson's agreement with the Governor was historic because he openly declared that he was forming a 'Cabinet of which I shall be Premier'. In other Australian jurisdictions such as NSW, the term 'Prime Minister' was still in use.

Gregson's tenure as Premier lasted only until 24 April 1857, but he continued his parliamentary career until 1872.²⁸ He had been involved in the cessation of transportation and in the achievement of self-rule for Tasmania in 1856.²⁹ He preserved what remained of Bowen's settlement but, with his death in 1874, Risdon Cove became largely a historical memory for many years.

A later owner, G.B. Alberry, gifted the Risdon site to the state, and, to mark Tasmania's Centenary, a stone obelisk was unveiled at Bowen's landing place. Archaeological work was carried out, and more land added to the site which, on 6 December 1995, was returned to its original owners, the Aboriginal people.³⁰

- 1 RK pp.25-6. 17.10.1803.
- 2 RK p.51. 3.5.1804.
- 3 HRA 3,1, pp.242-43.
- 4 *British Parliamentary Papers 1831* Vol 19, pp.53-54; Details of these accounts can be found in Tardif - Appendix 3. pp.219-21.
- 5 RK p.51. 11.5.1804.
- 6 *Sydney Gazette* Sept. 1804 as quoted in Tardif, p.148.
- 7 AOT: CO 201/43 p.117 - list of vaccinated children.
- 8 RK p.55. 25.6.1804.
- 9 HRA 3.1. Note 142 p.810.
- 10 Tardif, p.160.
- 11 Schaffer, I. (ed.) *Land Musters, Stock Returns and Lists: Van Diemen's Land 1803-1822*, p.24.
- 12 Pretyman, E. *Collins, William (1760? – 1819)*, ADB Vol.1. p.240.
- 13 RK p.100. 21.1.1806.
- 14 RK p.92. 27.9.1803.
- 15 Collins, D. *General & Garrison Orders 1803-1808*, p.228. 10.3.1806.
- 16 EB. (second Edition 1777- 1784) *Whale Fishery*.
- 17 McKay, T. (ed.), *The Maum Diaries 1863 -1901*, p.5.
- 18 AOT: NS 123/7.
- 19 RK p.139. 25.7.1807.
- 20 Murray L.C. 1927 *An Account of the Whaling and Sealing Industries of VDL to 1850*, p.10 as quoted in Hudspeth et al, *Part 1*, Site Appendix – Droughty Point.
- 21 Sharples T. *Congregationalism in Tasmania 1830-1977*.
- 22 HRA 3,7, p.306.
- 23 Pronounced 'eye-Anson'.
- 24 Pretyman, E.R. *Guest, George (1767-1841)* ADB Vol. 1. pp. 491-2; HRA 3,1, p.339; Wright, R. *The Forgotten Generation*, p.127.
- 25 Burford, R. *Description of a view of Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land*. 1831 p.11
- 26 Tardif, p.193.
- 27 Stephens, G. *Robert Knopwood, Patron Saint of Rokeby*, Knopwood Historical Lecture 1981, p.71.
- 28 Newman, T. *Parliamentary History Project: Gregson and Governor's Salary* 2007.
- 29 Lindsifarne Historical Society Newsletter, September 2003, p.6.
- 30 Tardif, p.194.

Chapter 5

Knopwood – His Life

In Hobart Town, in 1805, the Governor and inhabitants were eagerly awaiting overdue supplies from Norfolk Island. Harvests had often failed and the kangaroos had largely been hunted out from nearby areas. Food allowances had been decreased in August and there were no spirits, used often as currency, in the colony.

Knopwood summed the situation up in his diary. By October, some relief arrived in the form of: *'582 bushels of wheat and pork, to the very great comfort for the colony, the prisoners having been five weeks upon 2 lbs. 10 oz. of pork and 4 lbs of bread, the whole allowance of which might be eat up in one day and a half'*.¹

Later in the month, still watching for ships and for provisions, he notes the distress in everyone's face. Relief was to hand shortly with the arrival of the *Sydney* from Norfolk Island and Port Jackson with more provisions and the sheep of George Guest.

Collins knew that he couldn't produce sufficient food for the inhabitants without regular supplies to feed the workers, but he pressed on, requesting the materials for a watermill from England to grind the grain the colony hoped to produce. This was to be set up by ex- harbour-master William Collins and Edward Lord on the Hobart Rivulet.

By early 1806 good wheat was produced at the government farms at New Town and Risdon, but success was short lived. Knopwood was a determined fisherman, possibly the first in the colony. The inhabitants were often fed from his regular fishing trips in these days of food crisis. He caught crayfish and noted a huge haul of jack mackerel taken in a seine opposite his cottage, and collected oysters as well.

He also grew a prodigious quantity of fruit and vegetables on his 30 acres at *Cottage Green*, including beans, peas, asparagus, potatoes, cabbages, pumpkins, turnips, corn, and later nectarines, peaches, apples, strawberries and lettuce. He kept pigeons and had owned hogs, and kept a heifer and later its calf at the Government Farm. He continued to supply meats from his hunting expeditions.²

By October 1806 he commented:

'It is truly lamentable to see the distress that people are in. Not a man able to do any work, what few there employd in unloading the 'King George'. The Lt. Govnr is obliged to give them pork and beef, 4 lbs a man. All our poultry are dying having nothing to give them.

The poor piggs etc.etc. are all dying and at this season we should have young ducks and chicklings. My poor pigeons are all most dead for want of provisions – only 4 remaining out of 16'.³

It was against this background that the British government decided to enforce an earlier decision to remove the remaining convicts, settlers and stock from Norfolk Island where there had been yet another bad harvest.

In spite of all the difficulties, such as bans on Sunday crossings, whales and weather, Knopwood and others had often criss-crossed the Derwent. He had made many trips to Ralphs Bay; generally by boat, sometimes walking across Ralph's Neck to Frederick Henry Bay and often continuing on by another boat.

Many of these trips were for fishing, and hunting, especially the black swan and the very fine ducks, sometimes with mixed success.

He reported whales in Ralph's Bay; searching for Commissary Fosbrook's party when they were lost in the bush,⁴ visiting lime burners at Ralph's Bay, chasing bushrangers, missing convicts or just plain exploring.⁵

Old Bobby knew the area well, and recorded his visits in his diary, as well as the more mundane aspects of his life, and his official duties too. Perhaps it is time to learn more of this man and his history.

Robert (Bobby) Knopwood, this first chaplain in Tasmania, was born on 2 June 1763, in the remote rural village of Threxton, Norfolk. Threxton is listed in the 1086 Domesday Book.

The name Robert Knopwood was carried by four generations, all of whom lived in the Threxton area. The first Robert Knopwood was a yeoman, who leased land there in 1707.

The second, a respected landowner, kept meticulous farm records, was a man of firm opinions on rights and obligations, and rose to become High Sheriff of Norfolk. His son, the Reverend Robert Knopwood's father, allowed the prosperous estate to fall into debt, and left a will that caused financial chaos and argument for years to come.

Robert Knopwood, Chaplain, then aged 8, was affected by this all his life. This boy was educated first at boarding schools and then, aided by a scholarship, at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. His Master of Arts degree encompassed studies in

mathematics, natural religion, philosophy, astronomy, drawing and Greek, as well as public speeches.

His sheltered university existence did little to equip him for the outside world. His financial position was disastrous, necessitating the mortgage and sale of parts of the family property, Threxton Hall. It has been suggested that his friendship with the Prince Regent's extravagant set may have contributed to his large expenses of nearly £1000 per year.

He was ordained as a Deacon on 21 December 1788, in Norwich Cathedral, and as Priest a year later. Still greatly in debt, he became a private chaplain to various wealthy friends from his Cambridge days. His acquaintance with Earl Spencer, then First Lord of the Admiralty, eased his way to a naval appointment.

Knopwood joined the crew of HMS *Resolution* on 1 January 1801, during a hiatus in the Napoleonic Wars, and left her in July 1802, when she was paid off. After preaching in the Salisbury region for some time, he joined the crew of the *Calcutta*, bound for Port Phillip Bay. The wage of a naval chaplain was then £120 per year.

On 28 April 1803, Knopwood embarked with David Collins to form a settlement at Port Phillip in Victoria. He was never to return to England. Both Port Phillip Bay and Risdon Cove were declared unsuitable for permanent settlement; the party was transferred to a more favourable location, which Collins named Sullivan's Cove.

Knopwood's first church service in the new colony was held on 26 February 1804. This is commemorated by a plaque on the Hobart Town Hall portico.

By 1808 he had marked out a 400 acre Chaplain's Glebe⁶ at Clarence Plains. This was used as valuable farmland until the late 1900s.

The Rev. Knopwood was an outdoorsman whose leisure pursuits included gardening, hunting, fishing and shooting. This parson contributed to the larder of the new settlers both with the products of his hunt, and from his substantial garden *Cottage Green* in the Salamanca Place area, where he settled after 17 months in his marquee.

He, like many educated gentlemen of the period, kept faithful records of his plantings, harvest, hunting exploits as well as of his official duties.

He was also a popular figure, fond of good company, good dinner, a pipe and a good glass of wine. An animal lover and an ardent sportsman, he had a keen interest in horse racing, and cricket. He enthusiastically promoted the use of music in church, as well as at secular events.

There are many recorded examples of Knopwood's generosity of spirit, his kindly nature and readiness to help any one in need. He did not neglect his priestly role

nor fail in his pastoral care. He would never marry, but generously adopted the little orphan child, Elizabeth (Betsy) Mack.

His diaries record snippets of Betsy Mack's life, her schooling, friends, marriage to Henry Morrisby of Clarence Plains, his devotion to her and his devastation on her sudden death in 1830, after giving birth to her daughter Elizabeth Sarah. He cared deeply for her son and daughter, and made them beneficiaries of his estate. To the last entry in his diary he shows concern for all children.⁷

As parson he officiated at baptisms, marriages, funerals and executions. As magistrate he was responsible for punishments, including floggings. He bore the load of being the only Anglican cleric in the colony, travelling far afield on horseback, until John Youl's arrival to serve in the new northern parish in 1819.

His sermons, reports and correspondence were composed with care as to content and language – his diary entries, where speed was of the essence, are less polished. These documents are now a significant record of the colony's earliest years.

In 1823, middle aged and in poor health, he was replaced in his role as Colonial Chaplain by William Bedford and he then undertook casual duties at New Norfolk. In 1826 he happily accepted the appointment to clerical duties at Clarence Plains, and almost immediately started agitating for a church and burial ground. He had held the first service there on 22 April 1821.⁸ During these days, services were conducted in barns, private homes, in schoolhouses or under gum trees.

One such home where services were regularly held was that of William and Elizabeth Rumney, at the Hollow Tree, now called Cambridge.

The site for this church and burial ground was selected in November 1826 and the first burial here took place in December 1827. In spite of the efforts of Knopwood and his community, St. Matthew's Church was not erected until after his death.

Death came to Robert Knopwood on 18 September 1838, in his cottage at Clarence Plains near where Howrah Primary school stands. He had moved there in 1830 and, though in poor health, he continued to serve the parish. He asked to be buried at Clarence Plains, in a plain coffin, with no plate, and he was placed in a common grave. His funeral was 'numerously and respectfully attended'.

Financial justice came to this parson, who had lived with debt throughout his life, only after his death, when outstanding moneys from his English inheritance were paid to his estate.

Some thought him a failure as a chaplain but that he would have been valuable in a secular calling. As a diarist of his times, even though the entries are meagre and misspelt, he has given those who followed an insight into the early days of the Colony.

Footprints

Elizabeth Sarah Stanfield (née Morrisby), daughter of his ward Betsy Mack, was a beneficiary of his estate, and, in later years, she erected an obelisk on the former Colonial Chaplain's grave. These words inscribed on the monument provide a lasting testimonial to Robert Knopwood:

'He was a steady and affectionate friend, a man of strict integrity and active benevolence, ever ready to relieve the distressed and ameliorate the condition of the afflicted. This monument was erected by an obliged and grateful friend as a mark of her respect'.⁹

1 RK p.94. 23.10.1805.

2 RK p.143. September 1807; p.474. February 1826.

3 RK p.117. 13.10.1806.

4 RK p.70. 15.12.1804.

5 RK p.137. 9.6.1807.

6 The term Glebe is explained at the end of 'Kangaroo Point to Pitt Water' chapter.

7 RK p.681. 9.7.1838, re widow Radcliffe's children.

8 HTG 28.4.1821.

9 Andrew W. *The Tomb of Reverend Robert Knopwood - Colonial Chaplain* brochure for Clarence Plains Historical Society Inc.2004.

Chapter 6

Norfolk Island

‘Situated in seas where perpetual summer reigns, endowed with great natural beauty, rich in the fruits of the tropics...’¹

This tiny, then uninhabited, volcanic Pacific Island was abundantly rich in all things natural, from its coral reefs and beaches, rugged cliffs and subtropical rainforests. James Cook had discovered the island in 1774 and with his party noted the rich soils, the parrots, pigeons, gulls, gannets, boobies, and scarlet robins; cabbage trees, flax and sturdy pines, and the ‘greens’ of native spinach and ice plants so needed to prevent scurvy.

Earlier the Frenchman, Captain de La Pérouse had written in his journal that it was *‘only a place fit for angels and eagles to reside in’* – no doubt because he was unable to find a safe landing place.²

Nevertheless a founding party under the command of Lt. Philip Gidley King (as Superintendent and Commandant), volunteer settlers and convicts, set out from Port Jackson. It was en route to Norfolk Island aboard the sloop *Supply* that Lord Howe Island was discovered. The spectacular tall rock, Ball’s Pyramid, was named after the sloop’s commander.

Again no safe landing place was immediately evident but eventually an entrance to Sydney Bay was found. Provisions and passengers were landed. On 6 March 1788 British possession of the Island, named Norfolk by Cook, was officially celebrated. Two days later the *Supply* left for Port Jackson. The convict group, controlled by two marines and two seamen, numbered 6 females and 9 males, hand picked for their good behaviour.

This was a mere six weeks after the landing of the First Fleet at Port Jackson. It was hoped that the fertile soils of Norfolk Island would enable the production of crops to feed the mainland settlement. The flax for sails, and the tall straight pines, later called Norfolk Island Pines, for main masts, were an attraction.

Even though the timber proved not resilient enough for masts and the development of flax weaving was overtaken by the Sydney settlement, the island still continued to struggle in the hope of becoming prosperous and self-supporting.

More convicts were sent, and crops suffered the ravages of salty winds, rats and

grubs. The lack of a safe harbour, evident to both the French and the founding party, hindered transport of supplies. Nevertheless, the first harvest (wheat) was reaped in December 1789.

The food crisis in Sydney led to many convicts and marines being sent to Norfolk Island in March 1790 on the *Sirius*. The lack of a safe landing place saw the wreck of this ship, fortunately with no loss of life, some loss of stores and the marooning of the Island and its occupants for ten months.

Even more convicts were sent from Sydney, while those already on the Island who had completed their sentences largely chose to remain as free settlers. The population by 1792 was 1115.³

In the main the convicts and settlers worked hard, clearing the dense growth from the land, growing grain crops, fruit and vegetables, raising poultry and pigs. Those who were industrious and honest were granted land of their own.

It was observed that *'at first the convicts behaved well, but as more arrived from Sydney Cove, they renewed their wicked practices'*. These remained *'idle and miserable wretches'*.⁴

By 1803, the viability of the island being brought into question due to its great expenses and the difficulties in communication with Sydney, the Secretary of State Lord Hobart called for the removal of part of the settlement to Van Diemen's Land.

Many settlers, understandably reluctant to leave this land where they had endured hardships such as famine, and invested so much of their efforts, saw the need for compensation for loss of stock and buildings.

Commandant Major Joseph Foveaux showed his understanding when he wrote:

*'It might be imagined that the settlers, under all these circumstances, would be desirous of moving to some of the new settlements; but as many of them came in the first expedition, they are acquainted with the difficulties and hardships they must encounter at any infant settlement before they could fix their families in any tolerable degree of comfort. They therefore feel but little inclination to remove from habitations and other little enjoyments which they actually possess, to an unknown country, where they will have to provide themselves, and begin the world again'.*⁵

So, while only four settlers moved willingly in 1805, the major resettlement took place, as ordered between November 1807 and September 1808. Collins had been given notice by Governor Bligh to receive 120 settlers and their families who had chosen the Derwent rather than Port Dalrymple. He was sent supplies for seven months.

In all 554 Norfolk Islanders arrived between November 1807 and October 1808.⁶ The Derwent settlement had now more than doubled in size and for the next year or so it was a real struggle for existence and the people were near starvation.⁷

Historian James Backhouse Walker had a low opinion of these emancipist settlers and thought they

'... did not add much to the welfare and progress of the settlement at the Derwent... The great majority, idle and improvident in their old home, did not improve by removal. They were content to draw their rations from the stores so long as that privilege was allowed them, and then bartered away their grants for a trifle, to sink out of sight in poverty and wretchedness'.⁸

John Pascoe Fawkner⁹ had a different opinion:

'This accession to our numbers gave us that accession of skill required in the opening up of a new country – The finest of axemen to cut down our timber, the best of workmen to split the timber, clear the land and erect rude but strong huts and farm buildings of wood.

These were men used to work hard and skilfully, men used to the hoe, the preparation of soil for grain, and the chipping or covering it with soil. As reapers they were invaluable.

They brought with them good seeds of useful garden produce and began the cultivation of vegetables so invaluable to man's health.

They brought with them many young lads and maidens, these last so eagerly sought in a community where there were 8 men to every woman.

The Norfolk ladies were soon in marriage, as were the girls who came out from England in the first two ships. The Norfolk girls seemed mature at fourteen and many of them were married at that age or younger. They were used to an open-air life and were fed in a land of prodigal richness ...

The example and advice of these older and more capable men – freemen working for themselves and exercising their utmost skill – did much to improve the husbandry of Van Diemen's Land'.

Some 200 people remained on Norfolk Island, to slaughter abandoned stock and destroy all buildings. Sixty three of these people were taken, in 1813, by the ships *Lady Nelson* and *Minstrel* to Port Dalrymple.¹⁰ When Superintendent Hutchinson returned to Port Jackson in March 1814 he informed Governor Macquarie:

'The buildings of every description were Set fire to, and so Completely destroyed, that I have much pleasure in assuring Your Excellency that there remains no inducement for human beings of any kind to visit that place'.¹¹

Footprints

After 25 years as a British penal colony the Island thus lay abandoned until 6 June 1825. In time the newcomers to Van Diemen's Land were given grants of land at New Norfolk, Pitt Water, Sandy Bay and Clarence Plains in the South.¹²

This however was not the last of this Island's connection with Van Diemen's Land. The Island was reoccupied by the British in 1825 and used as a penal station to house convicts sent from Tasmania and New South Wales. The Island formed part of New South Wales until 1844 and then part of Van Diemen's Land until 1856. From 1844 until 1855 ships were continually transferring convicts from Norfolk Island to Van Diemen's Land, some being brought to complete sentences, others on expiration of sentence. The final transfer of convicts, personnel, families and stores was completed by 11 June 1855.¹³ The Island was then unoccupied except for a small caretaker presence and was separated from Van Diemen's Land on 24 June 1856.¹⁴

1 Walker, J.B. p.145.

2 As quoted in Nobbs' *Norfolk Island and its first settlement 1788-1814*, p.33.

3 Cathcart, M. *Manning Clark's History Of Australia*, (abridged). p.19.

4 Clark, Manning. *History of Australia Vol. I*, p. 115 (quoting Hunters Journal).

5 Nobbs p.111 ref: HRNSW Vol. IV. p.583.

6 AOT: CSO 1/177/4306 pp.219-223; Walker, J.B. p.173.

7 Walker, J.B. p.171.

8 Walker, J.B. p.172.

9 Fawkner, J.P. as quoted in Wright, R. 1986, p.116.

10 AOT: CSO 1/177/4306 pp.219-223.

11 Nobbs p.125; HRA 1,8, p.164.

12 Walker, J.B. p.172.

13 A.E. Browning, Acting State Librarian, Query No. 995. 23.9.1957; MB 2/39/17-19.

14 <http://www.ag.gov.au>. Search: Norfolk Island Historical Events.

Chapter 7

Kangaroo Point to Pitt Water

Why the name Kangaroo? This strange animal and its close relatives were described by Dampier in 1699 as *'a Sort of Racoons, different from those of the West-Indies, chiefly as to their legs: for these have very short Fore-legs; but go jumping upon them as the others do, (and like them are very good Meat!).'*¹

The 'starving time' for settlers in Van Diemen's Land continued for many years, and during that time 'kangaroo' formed a large percentage of the meat in the government store. So references to supply of meat do not necessarily mean mutton, beef or pork. Bushrangers were happy to assist in the supply of kangaroo meat, and also were able to dress in clothes, moccasins and caps made from the skins. They sold kangaroo to government officials and settlers alike, and cheerfully ate beef and mutton stolen from richer settlers.²

Knopwood's diary records many hunting trips for kangaroo as part of the early settlers' never ending search for food, and mentions the name Kangaroo Bay first on 5 March 1807.³

By this time, settlement was beginning in this obvious crossing place for the Derwent. Possessed of a fine point, sheltered behind a bluff to the south and a bay protected from southerly winds providing a good and safe anchorage, it was an ideal location. The presence of kangaroo indicates there were considerable grasslands and the rocky bluffs and points were likely 'thinly set with light timber, chiefly short she-oaks' as described by George Bass.

First Fleeter Richard Morgan, sentenced for theft in 1785, was transported on the *Alexander*, and sent from Sydney to Norfolk Island in 1790. A willing transferee from this place, he returned to Sydney in 1804. He was assigned to an employer in Windsor NSW where he killed two children in a tree felling accident.⁴

Subsequently sentenced to 500 lashes, he arrived in Hobart in October 1806, a free settler. He was given 175 acres of land at Kangaroo Bay, Clarence Plains (on the site of Rosny Golf Course), in compensation for that surrendered at Norfolk Island.⁵

He received a visit at the farm by Robert Knopwood and Mr. and Mrs. McCauley on 26 August 1807.⁶ This was possibly the first large farm in the Clarence Plains area. Later his two sons Richard and William would also receive grants.

Morgan was followed by Richard Clark, now Superintendent of Stonemasons, Brickmakers and Limeburners. He had taught his trade to younger men and had built the Stone Store House on Hunter Island as well as the one at Risdon. His initial grant was at Sullivan's Cove, but in the 1809 muster he was shown as having 195½ acres at Risdon/Clarence Plains. His land was on the opposite side of Kangaroo Bay Rivulet to that of Richard Morgan.

The general muster of Proprietors of Land and Stock 1819 at Port Dalrymple, shows Richard Clark farming a small grant (35 acres) from Governor Macquarie. It is not yet proven that he built the *Rosny Barn* but it is similar to his earlier work.⁷

John Potaskie, a Pole, was a *Calcutta* convict who had arrived with his wife Catherine Sullivan and their son Joseph. Their daughter Catherine was born on 17 February 1804, aboard the *Ocean* as it lay in Risdon Cove. Catherine, in 1819, farmed a small grant, given by Governor Davey, in her own right, whilst John rented farms at Kangaroo Point and the Geilston farm near Risdon. He grew more corn than was needed for the whole colony in a year. Their tragedy was that Joseph, their son, was part of a gang who burgled the household of Thrupp, the Geilston agent, and raped Sarah, his wife. Joseph was executed on 19 May 1821.⁸

Reprieved from hanging in England for stealing, Humphrey Lynch, a First Fleeter, came free from Norfolk Island to a grant on the Kangaroo Bay Rivulet. He and his wife Ann were amongst the 34 souls who arrived via the *Lady Nelson* on 28 December 1807. The deportation from Norfolk Island had begun in earnest. Sadly Ann died in February 1817 and Humphrey committed suicide, by hanging, in December.⁹

The arrival of the *Porpoise* on 17 January 1808 brought First Fleeters Richard Brown and his wife Mary Pinder to Kangaroo Point. Initially transported for seven years, they proved on Norfolk Island to be industrious 'without misdemeanours or punishments'. They were childless. Leaving behind land and buildings, Richard was granted 80 acres on the Kangaroo Bay Rivulet adjacent to that of Humphrey Lynch. Mary died in 1817 but Richard survived until 1831, 'generally respected'.¹⁰

Other settlers, such as First Fleeter George Plyer (Player), a private marine who had been court martialled, and Thomas Fisk, arrived from Norfolk Island on the *City of Edinburgh* on 2 October 1808. The presence of these two is known from G.P. Harris' 1813 re-survey of the already settled land.¹¹

The Morgan farms were doing well, producing good pasture, cattle, sheep, horses, wheat, barley, potatoes and beans. They were supplying meat to the Government stores and grazed their livestock far and wide. The assigned convicts still committed

offences and were brought before magistrates, who meted out punishment ranging from lashes to increased sentences.

Shifty practices were alleged to occur amongst both senior officials and settlers. Profiteering from government, dealing in illicit spirits and trading in land was not uncommon. In 1814 spirit smuggling by such as the schooner *Derwent* was balanced by exporting illegally slaughtered carcasses. This livestock could also have been illegally obtained. These activities were not unknown at Kangaroo Point. Norfolk Islanders were both culprits and victims.

From the first days of European settlement, the river was crossed at this point in boats and ketches, probably as the traditional owners did in their bark canoes. The first official ferry license was issued in 1816 and James McCormack, owner of *The Plough Inn*, and Urias Allender were the first licensees.

These two were also granted land on Kangaroo Bay. Urias was a sailor who claimed 18 years of service in the Royal Navy and had been sentenced to 14 years transportation for receiving stolen goods (clothing).¹² He continued as a sailor, without irons, on the voyage out in the *Calcutta* and was amongst those who volunteered to go with William Collins with despatches for Sydney. For his services and good conduct he received a conditional pardon in 1806.

After a trip to Sydney in 1810 as a trial witness, and a sealing adventure to Macquarie Island, he settled down to farm a 30 acre grant. By 1819 he owned 150 sheep and 14 cattle, employing one government servant and three free men.¹³

It is likely that he used other land to graze this number of livestock. He supplied wheat and meat to the Commissariat whilst supporting a wife and four children and ran his ferry service between Kangaroo Point and Hobart for many years. Allender died in 1842, at Kangaroo Point, and was buried in St. Matthew's Churchyard, Rokeby, Clarence Plains.¹⁴

Two of his boatmen, George Hatton and John Ambridge, were drowned with Benjamin Briscoe of Clarence Plains when Allender's ferry capsized in September 1819.¹⁵ Briscoe, formerly an umbrella maker, was yet another *Calcutta* convict. His story, like that of many others, is told in the book *Convicts Unbound* by Dr. Marjorie Tipping.

James McCormack was also ideally situated; his grant ran from the Bay to the sandy beach now called Bellerive Beach. He also operated the *Golden Fleece Inn*, a business that went well with the ferry trade. Along the Rivulet was another Inn, James Ballance's *Freemason's Arms*, where the charges for meals, lodging and stabling were one shilling each. James held his licence between 1818 and 1825.¹⁶ James was a *Calcutta* man, and was one of five prisoners who were missing with

some dogs they took from Hobart Town.¹⁷ On 18 June 1805, upon examination by Knopwood, the men claimed to have seen a 'large tiger', (Thylacine).¹⁸

Another early ferryman, Thomas Florance, was granted land on Canadian (later Rosny) Point. A surveyor who spent some years in Canada, he was referred to as an 'American speculator' by the Land Commissioners. His open ferry carried livestock from Morgan's Farm in the bay to Hobart. He was given the sole right to ferry cattle and goods across in 1818.¹⁹ The Hobart Town Gazette 14 August 1819 listed his rules and costs for this service. e.g. '*Two horses or oxen with a cart or two wheeled carriage 15s.; with a four wheeled ditto 20s.*'

Charlie Dillon, was another colourful identity, well known on the waterfront. Originally from England he was on the pilot boat at Recherche, then a waterman, running trim-built wherries on the Derwent. He competed in the second Hobart Regatta and retired in 1906, the oldest ferryman in Tasmania. He died twelve months later, aged 87 years. He owned property in the street that now bears his name.²⁰

Charlie did well, but being a boatman really was a hard way to earn a living. Thomas Heath drowned in 1814 with 2 men whilst transporting a bullock from Kangaroo Bay.²¹ In 1830, Robert Dudlow, boatman to Mr. Aylwin, was drowned in what Robert Knopwood described as a '*dreadful gale of wind and a very bad sea*'.²²

He noted on 27 December that '*many boats have been upset with in these last three days and supposed 13 or 14 men have been drowned*'. And boats were lost too.²³ In 1826 he became licensed to cross in his boat *Eliza*. He was not to interfere with the Licensed Ferrymen, and his license did not transfer if he sold the boat.²⁴

Robert Knopwood was not without his adventures crossing the Derwent, when at times the wind was so strong, or the weather so bad, he could not cross to attend to his flock. The Land Commissioner's trip to Clarence Plains was abandoned after the boat nearly swamped.²⁵ Nevertheless the river traffic continued.

John Petchey was convicted in England in 1810 of receiving stolen goods, and landed here from the *Indefatigable* on 9 May 1812. He was appointed keeper at Hobart Goal 1816 - 1823; was granted various areas of land at Clarence Plains including a large grant at Cambridge, and established his house and farm.

Whilst he became involved in various enterprises such as promoting the wattle bark industry (for tanning leather), it is for his seafaring activities that he is best known. He owned and operated three of the Kangaroo Bay to Sullivan's Cove ferries, and a licensed victualling and cartage venture at Kangaroo Point. From 1832 to 1839 he was a prominent bay whaler with three shore stations at Recherche Bay. In 1838 at Kangaroo Point he launched his square rigged barque *Sir George Arthur*; then

the largest ship (389 tons) built in the colony. He died whilst competing in the Hobart Regatta in 1850 and his name is remembered in Petchey St. Bellerive.²⁶

Boat races and regattas developed at Kangaroo Bay, as did a ship building industry; and livestock slaughtering, both legal and illegal, took place prior to delivery to Hobart Town.

The days of the steam ferry began with the building of the *Surprise*, in Sydney, her purchase by Dr. Alexander Thompson and her appearance on the Derwent, in 1832.

Scotsman Walter Angus Bethune, merchant and sheep grazier, had visited Van Diemen's Land in 1820, returning to settle in the following year. He developed interests in whaling and whale products, and the exporting of wheat and wool.²⁷ He gave his property the name *Rosny* in memory of his ancestor the Marquis De Rosny, trusted minister of Henry IV of France.²⁸

Rosny was expanded by Hobart merchant and secretary of the Derwent Steam Navigation Company, John Lord, one of the early proponents of steam ferries.²⁹ The property was described as being laid down with English Grasses, '*a beautiful and commodious Cottage residence has been erected at great expense with Lawns and Gardens tastefully sloping towards the Derwent..... a large orchard*'. It was also suggested it could become an '*Establishment for the prosecution of the Sperm and Whale Fishery*'.³⁰

Judge Algernon Montagu, Attorney General for Van Diemen's Land, purchased Morgan's farm and in 1832, *Rosny*. He then owned most of the land, together with Gregson, between the Kangaroo Bay Rivulet and Risdon. Strapped for cash due to lavish spending, Montagu put the property on the market in early 1844, mentioning the '*GREAT OUTLAY of the barn*'.³¹ Presumably the *Rosny Barn* we know today.

By 1855, *Rosny*, the Morgan Farm buildings and other land were owned by Askin Morrison, at a cost of £5100.³² Morrison, then involved in the whaling industry, did not live on the property, but leased it to various tenants; by 1870, to Joseph Pedder (qv).

Morrison had been born in County Tyrone, Ireland, and had arrived in Van Diemen's Land in the *Orelia*, in 1829, with merchandise for sale. He owned and chartered ships for whaling and exporting wool and oil, importing tea and sugar and operated several shore based whaling stations.³³

Askin Morrison was a partner of Captain Charles Bayley, master of the deep sea whaler *Wallaby*. In 1849 a ship, which Charles called *Runnymede* after Morrison's East Coast estate, was built, and later captained by Bayley. The Bayley family later purchased *Bishopstowe*, home of Francis Russell Nixon, first Anglican Bishop

of Van Diemen's Land. The Bayleys renamed the house *Runnymede* after their favourite ship. *Runnymede* is the National Trust House at New Town.³⁴

And so, as river traffic increased, so did the number of Inns at Kangaroo Point. The settlement, described by a travelling Englishman, Widdowson, in 1829 as '*but few houses on the point, and these principally belong to the various boatmen who are constantly employed taking people over*'³⁵, was becoming a place of leisure and pleasure as well. Woods Almanac of 1863 called the district a '*favoured and coveted resort during the summer months*' and referred to '*its magnificent beaches and promenades*'.

On Wednesday 20 June 1821, Governor Macquarie noted in his Journal that his party had '*ferried from Hobart Town to Kangaroo Bay (dis^{ce}. 2 miles) where we found our Horses ready waiting for us*'. They had travelled on to Pitt Water, named Sorell and visited '*Orielton Park*', Edward Lord's farm. They came back through the Coal River area and arrived back at Kangaroo-Bay, 'the Ferrying Place'. Kangaroo Point had come a long way in such a few years.³⁶

In 1833, the Hobart Town Gazette of 2 March advertised that the Surveyor General was directed to survey for the village of Bellerive at Kangaroo Point. And so Bellerive slowly came into being and the name Kangaroo Point was eventually dropped.

It was Kangaroo Point's strategic importance to the other settlements on the Eastern Shore, as the centre of communications, commerce and transport, that led to more development. Roads connected Kangaroo Bay through Cambridge to Sorell, Pitt Water and Seven Mile Beach; to what would later become Lindisfarne and through the main Clarence Plains area to South Arm.

North east of Kangaroo Point the shoreline curls around Frederick Henry Bay to Seven Mile Beach. The spit here is the biggest sandspit in southeast Tasmania.³⁷

This area of Clarence Plains was the subject of extremely large grants to Richard Lewis, who arrived in Tasmania in 1815 on the *Francis and Eliza*. In 1816 he was appointed Government Auctioneer, and later Secretary for the Bank of Van Diemen's Land. His homesteads included *Milford*, *Abernant*, *Llanherne* and *Cilwen*. Whilst the district was Cambridge, it was still shown as partly in Clarence Plains at least until maps in 1842.

These properties, with the exception of *Abernant*, together with *Uplands* and its stables, originally the 1500 acre farm of John Petchey, and Dr. James Murdoch's *Craigow* are all recognised for their historic significance.³⁸

Dr. Murdoch arrived to practice in Hobart in 1822. An experimental agriculturalist, he had a holding at Risdon where he grew herbs and opium for the production of

medicines. He then moved to *Craigow*, where he had a good orchard, grew barley and had nine workers' cottages, a fulltime smithy and a carpenters shop. He had a farm store where goods could be purchased and ran sheep and cattle and sold some meat for his workers.³⁹

This land was rich agricultural land and the already well off settlers made the most of it. William Rumney, his wife Elizabeth and their five children arrived in the *Berwick* in 1823 and were most important in the early days of Clarence Plains. William acted as a poundkeeper and constable and held almost 3000 acres. His land included a large area of the Meehan Range and included the dominant feature named Mount Rumney after the family.

He resided initially in a small cottage in the area known as Hollow Tree (Cambridge) whilst his eventual home *Acton* was built in the 1830s with convict labour.

It was at the Rumney home that the Colonial Chaplain Robert Knopwood held regular services. His diary entry of 5 December 1830 records: '*this morn early I went to the Hollow Tree and performed D.V. Service at Mr. Romleys*'. He went on to Muddy Plains and preached again in the afternoon. As there were no built churches, services were held wherever and whenever possible. Not noted for the correct spelling of Rumney, the diary records many such occasions, the last being 5 March 1837. His social visits to these friends are also recorded, including payment of his butcher bill of £2.⁴⁰

From the beginning of the colony it was important to have rules established for the settlement of individuals on the farms necessary for the colony's livelihood. These rules were quite clear; neither Bowen, nor Collins had the power to grant land; the right rested solely with the Governor in New South Wales. However they could recommend settlers for grants and would advise people to locate land pending a decision from Port Jackson. Because of the delays, many settlers had already become established on their selected land before this final grant was made.

Grants were available to free settlers, marines, military officers and convicts with expired sentences, under varying conditions. Labour on the agricultural properties was provided in many cases by the settler's family and/or by convicts. Landowners were assigned one convict per one hundred acres, and this was in most cases totally unskilled labour; the convict having no previous experience in this kind of work. They were paid little in cash, or kind, and worked very long hours. Life was a daily struggle for many ordinary people.

In the 1830s convicts caught up in the rural depression in England arrived, bringing rural expertise, and later still, after the cessation of transportation in 1853, immigration schemes were designed to attract suitable skilled workers. After 1831,

all land had to be purchased, and the colony was divided into counties, hundreds (100 square miles) and parishes. Townships were laid out, each with ‘glebes’ for the support of a schoolmaster and clergy of the various persuasions.⁴¹

*‘Glebe land was the land bequeathed to a parish so that its rental or income from crops could be used to supplement the income of the incumbent. Originally every parish was entitled to a house and glebe and without them the church could not be consecrated’.*⁴²

- 1 Ward, R. *Finding Australia* p.160.
- 2 ibid. p.314; HRA 3,1, pp.668, 691.
- 3 RK p.128. 5.3.1807.
- 4 Gillen, M. *The Founders of Australia*, p.250; MacFie, *Stock Thieves and Golfers*, p.4: *Sydney Gazette* 21.9.1806
- 5 MacFie, pp.4-5.
- 6 RK p.142. 26.8.1807.
- 7 MacFie, pp.32-33; Schaffer, *Land Masters, Stock Returns and Lists* p.148.
- 8 Tipping, p.301.
- 9 Gillen, p.226.
- 10 Gillen, p.289.
- 11 MacFie, pp.5,6.
- 12 Tipping, p.249.
- 13 Schaffer, *Land Masters* p.130.
- 14 Tipping, p.249.
- 15 MacFie, p.2.
- 16 Tipping, p.182.
- 17 RK p.80. 25.3.1805.
- 18 RK p.85. 18.6.1805.
- 19 MacFie, p.2.
- 20 *Merc.* 5.10.1907 – Obituary.
- 21 RK p.187. 15.9.1814.
- 22 RK p.568. 26.12.1830⁷⁶.
- 23 RK p.568. 27.12.1830.
- 24 RK p.480. 14.5.1826.
- 25 RK p.489. 23.10.1826.
- 26 Goodhand, W.E. *Petchey, John (-1850)*, ADB Vol. 2. p.325.
- 27 Chapman, G.P.R. *Bethune, Walter Angus* (1794-1885), ADB Vol.1. pp.95-6.
- 28 EB: Sully, *Maximilien de Béthune, Duke de. also called Marquis De Rosny*.
- 29 Alexander, A. *The Eastern Shore – A History of Clarence*, p.39.
- 30 CT 23.4.1828 p.3 Supplement.
- 31 CT 15.2.1845 p.2.
- 32 MacFie, p.29.
- 33 Evans, K. *Shore-Based Whaling in Tasmania. Vol.1.* p.28
- 34 Peter Mercer, *A Most Dangerous Occupation*, pp.48,51
- 35 Widdowson, H. *Van Diemen's Land*, pp.101-2
- 36 L.Macquarie, *Journal of a Voyage and Tour of Inspection to Van Diemen's Land 1821*, Macquarie University. 2006-7
- 37 De Gryse, J., Duncan, D., Duncan, F., Sharples, C., and Ritchley, L. *City of Clarence Natural Assets Inventory* 1995, p.59.
- 38 *Draft Clarence Planning Scheme* 2007 - Heritage Register.

- 39 Murdoch, T. *Craigow 1823-1945* in Hudspeth et al, Part 1. pp.121-122.
- 40 RK p.672. 10.3.1838.
- 41 Wedge, J.H. *Diary of John Helder Wedge, 1824-35*, Land Settlement, p.xxviii.
- 42 Information supplied by W.Haas, then Registrar of the Anglican Diocese.

Chapter 8

Chaplain's Glebe – Convicts and Tenant Farmers

In Clarence Plains an early grant was that of the Chaplain's Glebe.

This was granted in these words:

'UNTO THE CHAPLAIN for the time being of His Majesty's Settlement of Hobart town on the River Derwent, Van Dieman's Land and unto his successors the Chaplains for the time being to have and to hold forever FOUR HUNDRED ACRES of Glebe Land on Clarence Plains, bounded on the North by a roadway one chain broad dividing it from the Reverend ... Knopwood's Farm, on the South by a Roadway one chain broad for a space of forty chains by Atkin's farm and the remainder by unallotted ground, on the East by a chain of ponds, reserving a roadway one chain broad and on the West by unappropriated ground...'

The Governor was Lachlan Macquarie. The Chaplain was Robert Knopwood. The document was dated 15 June 1810.¹

The process of obtaining this grant had taken some time. *'Early this morn I took my boat and went over to Ralph's Plain where I had 400 acres of Glebe marked out by Mr. Shipman, and in the eve I returned home'*. So wrote Robert Knopwood on Wednesday 13 July 1808.²

A convict embezzler sentenced to transportation for seven years, not to be confused with the ex-convict Joseph Chipman of Clarendon Vale, Francis Shipman embarked on the *Calcutta*, ultimately arriving in Van Diemen's Land. In Hobart, he was appointed a clerk by Collins. He assisted Surveyor Harris with the measuring of land. He returned to London in 1810, and was ultimately publicly executed, for reasons unknown, in 1813.³

From 1788 until at least 1836, remunerating Anglican Clergy posed a problem. To solve it, a glebe on 400 acres was granted to each clergyman to allow him to earn income over and above his stipend.⁴ This practice was modelled on the 'Squarson' system in England, where the recipient could become both 'squire' and 'parson' in one.⁵

Magistracies, surplice fees and land grants were also part of the remuneration system, which explains why Knopwood had personal land grants and sat as a Magistrate. Not only was the Glebe at Clarence Plains the first Glebe in Van Diemen's Land, then governed from the Colony of New South Wales, but it became known as the Chaplain's Glebe.

With the arrival of the first Bishop in Van Diemen's Land, a Glebe, known as the Bishop's Glebe, was created at New Town in 1843.⁶

Nevertheless, by 1819 the Chaplain's Glebe land was being farmed by a series of tenant farmers, who whilst fulfilling the intentions of glebe grants, also aspired to make a good living for themselves in this new land. On 30 April 1823, Robert Knopwood handed over the Church Plate, and, as required by the original document, the grant of the Glebe land to his successor as Chaplain, the Reverend William Bedford.⁷

One of the early farmers on the Chaplain's Glebe was William Cooper, sentenced to death at the Southampton Summer Assizes for stealing a sheep, but reprieved and transported in 1803 on *HMS Calcutta*, aged 19.

A servant to a gunner on the voyage, he was given a conditional pardon in 1814 and by 1819 had a grazing licence at Herdsman's Cove, purchased 10 acres at Clarence Plains and rented the 400 acre Glebe. He raised crops and had 56 head of cattle, 132 rams and 300 ewes, and regularly supplied large quantities of meat to the Commissariat. A supporter and benefactor of the Auxiliary Bible Society, he became a prosperous farmer in the Rokeby area. He gave surety to William Atkins for *Chequers Inn* at Clarence Plains.⁸

In his will dated 23 December 1819 he left his entire property, including cattle, sheep, lands or otherwise to '*Elizabeth Thomas, at present living with me and her 2 children by me, also the child of which Elizabeth Thomas is now pregnant*' after paying all lawful debts.

He gave her the entire charge of his children to support and educate, and named Elizabeth and her brother William Waterson as his executors. He did however declare he had paid William Atkins the full amount for the 10 acres purchased being part of Atkins estate, but not registered, although Mr. Atkins was frequently requested to do so.⁹

On Christmas Eve 1819 Knopwood and his ward Betsy Mack crossed the river and walked to Clarence Plains to see William who was very ill. William Cooper died on 6 January 1820 and his son William Thomas was born on January 26.

Later that year, on 3 November, the ship *Emerald* left Gravesend, London, sailing via Teneriffe, the Cape of Good Hope and Valparaiso. It carried farming equipment

and 35 fine young merino rams and ewes and was privately chartered by Joseph Archer of Longford.¹⁰

Indirectly, it was another step in the history of the Chaplain's Glebe at Clarence Plains.

Archer, T.G. Gregson and George Meredith were partners in a farming venture planned for the east coast of Van Diemen's Land. These men and their families were joined on the *Emerald* by other free settlers including Dr. Francis Desailly and family.¹¹

George Meredith had pursued a successful career in the British Armed Forces and in 1806 retired on half-pay. When the 1819 rural depression hit, he became interested in emigration. As was the custom of the time, emigrants received free grants of land in proportion to the amount of capital they brought to the colony. George had £1500 plus a similar amount on loan from friends so his original land grant was considerable.¹²

Francis Desailly had purchased an Ensigncy in the 4th Regiment of Foot and similarly retired on half-pay, commencing a Diploma in Medicine and Surgery which he completed in 1806. Records show that he spent until July 1821¹³ with the status and pay of a Colonial Assistant Surgeon, an office that was given to those in general practice, chosen for colonial service.

In July 1829 Francis offered his half pay of £50 per annum in return for an additional grant of land; his first being in the Jericho area. The voluminous correspondence in this matter shows his eventual failure to achieve this aim, as the Lt. Governor simply did not have the power to grant his request.¹⁴

He continued to be involved in land dealings in the south-east, looking for land to depasture (to feed stock on), and is believed to have farmed the Chaplain's Glebe from at least 1827. In 1831 he complained that, though a track had been surveyed on the southern boundary of the Glebe, old tracks through the property centre were still being used.¹⁵

Melville's Almanack of 1833 noted

'The Glebe land at Clarence Plains (selected by Knopwood and Shipman in 1808, is a very fine picturesque farm, most eligibly situated, has very rich alluvial soil and produces under the able management of its present occupier, Dr. Desailly, a very large crop of grain and every other product'.

The Desailly family are reputed to have lived in the Glebe house built by William Hance c.1827.¹⁶ An unsigned painting on wood, attributed to Mabel Hookey (1871-1953), shows the house and farm land and was used on signage for the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail*.¹⁷

There is a more romantic version of the Desailly life: that they were not recorded anywhere as settlers or convicts; they received mysterious payments; possibly even a royal connection, but this is not borne out by Desailly's own letters, and the historical records.

Assigned to Dr. Desailly was a 21 year old convict, William Martin, who arrived on the *Asia* (3) in December 1827. Transported for stealing 'above 40/-', he had been reported as 'Bad, many times in prison', 'Good' in Hulks and in ship 'Orderly'. He had also been involved in house breaking and assault.

Over his years with Desailly, he spent a total of 24 days on the Tread Wheel on two occasions, 2 months on a chain gang, as well as several admonitions for bad conduct, and was sentenced to 50 lashes. He however obtained a conditional pardon (No. 2173) on 26 August 1839 and a free pardon (No. 791) on 21 October 1841.¹⁸

On 29 August 1837 Robert Knopwood recorded that he called on Mr. Martin the shoemaker, who explained he had an exemption from Church. He was also believed to be a tanner and currier. This occupation is borne out in the farm accounts of George Stokell of *Rokeby House*. From 1 July 1839 to 20 October 1840 there are numerous mentions of supplies of ox hides and one bull's hide to William Martin of Rokeby.¹⁹

William also developed an interest in hotels and after 10 years in the trade he took over the licence of the *Horse and Jockey Inn* at Clarence Plains on 29 September 1850.²⁰

He had married Hannah Braim in 1842 in St. Matthew's Church, Clarence Plains, where their two sons were baptised. William remained at the *Horse and Jockey* until 1856 when he returned to England, with substantial capital. Unfortunately a bad investment saw his return to Tasmania with substantially reduced funds and the family took over *The Plough Inn* at Bellerive in 1860.

Hannah died that year, and in the next, William married the seventeen year old Sarah Leake. In 1870 William built the *Clarence Hotel* at Bellerive where the family prospered. William and Sarah added four more living children to the family and William was able to indulge his interest in cricket and horse racing, owning some fine animals.²¹

He had a reputation for honesty and industry and the community was shocked when this formerly 'Bad' convict died suddenly on 30 July 1878, aged 72 years.²²

By the time William Martin had his conditional pardon; his master Desailly was practising as a doctor on the Tasman Peninsula and shortly afterwards travelled with his sons Francis and George to the mainland in 1839 in the *Britannia*, which was wrecked in Port Phillip Bay.

The doctor could be found farming at *Ticehurst*, Richmond, Van Diemen's Land by 1845. The Desaillys spent their later years at Bellerive in the house opposite the Chapel of Ease in Queen St. He died in 1864, pre-deceased by his wife Ann in 1861.

The Glebe, by now known as St. David's Glebe, had a succession of tenant farmers, perhaps a little less colourful than Francis Desailly, but nevertheless earnest contributors to the life and community of Clarence Plains.

The Tollard family trace their time in Clarence Plains back to John Tollard (1807-1876), a Hampshire man who arrived in Hobart on the *Proteus* in 1831.

That year 475 persons, sometimes called 'machine breakers' or 'swing rioters' had been convicted for destroying agricultural or paper making machines, rioting, receiving or arson. Many of these were ploughmen who traditionally were employed as thrashers during the winter months and were now replaced due to mechanisation.

Not only was the countryside enduring severe winters and poor harvest, but mechanisation was blamed for the rural depression. 328 male convicts and 1 female came to Hobart during 1831-33.

John Tollard was believed to be a ploughman. He married, brought up a large family, one of whom was James Tollard who was known to be farming the Glebe in 1882. The Tollard family still live in the Rokeby area.²³

David Lumsden and family came in 1901 to Clarence Plains to farm the Glebe, and stayed for at least 10 years. Diocesan records note the usual problems of keeping fencing in good condition and record lease agreements.²⁴

They show that a year before the end of his lease in 1905 Lumsden was uncertain about eventually renewing his lease, but asked permission for his neighbour Pearsall to work part of the farm. As a result Council Assessment Rolls show Lumsden leasing 18 acres of house and land, and Pearsall 372 acres of land only.

In October 1905 the Diocesan report states that the house (c.1827) was '*well cared for but being a very old building it was scarcely wise to spend money on repairs. The oven was worn out and the kitchen chimney smoked badly, something ought to be done to give the tenant and family a little comfort*'. Again fencing was needed and the Californian thistles were very bad.

By January 1906 the lease was again up for tender. Mr. T.J. White tendered at £107 p.a. but then withdrew, several others made enquiries, but fresh tenders saw Charles Ernest Goodwin a successful tenderer at £100 p.a. less rates and taxes.

The Glebe was let from 1 April 1906, the commencement of almost 100 years in

Goodwin hands. On 30 June 1909 a request for £250 for building a new cottage at the Glebe was approved.

The story of the Goodwins and their time on *Glebe Farm* was recorded in an interview with the late Marjorie Goodwin in 1999.

David Lumsden was Miss Goodwin's maternal grandfather, and Charles Goodwin her father. The Goodwin family came from Kempton and leased the Glebe property until 1923 when it was purchased from the church at a cost of £3500. The capital value of the property in 1911 was £2500.

Initially it was a mixed farm - cereal, apricots and sheep, but it finally grew only wool. They milked their own cows and made butter; grew their own vegetables, had home killed meat, and their own poultry. They had little or no farm machinery in the early days.

Glebe Farm had the first horse drawn header in the district. Drawn by a team of eight horses in endless chains, four in front, four at the back. Spare horses were needed for a full day's work. These horses (Clydesdales) were bred on the farm. There were ponies to ride, and for the trap, and also cart horses.

Charles Goodwin had his first car in 1929. After his death in 1939, his widow Pearl and 5 children worked the farm through the war years and beyond. They witnessed the coming of electricity (1942), the sealing of Rokeby Road (early 1950s), the 1967 bushfires and in 1969, a reticulated water supply.

The old house, unoccupied since 1910, was finally pulled down in 1954 and Miss Goodwin opined that you would never get away with that these days (1999). Some bricks from the old house were kept in her plant house. Mrs. Pearl Goodwin, David Lumsden's daughter, died in 1989, aged 95.

Over the years small areas of the property were disposed of and in 1970 the Government compulsorily acquired all the balance except for the house and 10 acres. The property was rented back until 1994 when Miss Goodwin had an option to renew. Ultimately the property was sold.

A subdivision of the land was approved in 2006 and the street names reflect some of the interesting contributors to the history of the Chaplain's Glebe.²⁵

Of the Norfolk Islanders who arrived in 1807/08, over a quarter came to the eastern shore of the Derwent, mostly to Clarence Plains.²⁶

The Clarence Plains district, we are reminded, in those days included all the land from South Arm north to Risdon Cove, and east to Frederick Henry Bay, and Norfolk Islanders went to all those areas.

Footprints

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- 2 RK p.163. 13.07.1808.
- 3 Tipping, M. *Convicts Unbound*, p.310.
- 4 Roach, Brian, *Neither Bread Enough or to Spare: Paying the Anglican Parson in Early Colonial New South Wales*, RAHS Vol 90, Part 1 June 2004 - Abstract.
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- 10 Nicholson, I. *Shipping Arrivals and Departures* Tasmania 1803-1833, p. 69.
- 11 Hodgson, D. *George Meredith*. ADB Vol. 2. pp.224-6.
- 12 Rae-Ellis Vivienne, *A Tigress in Exile*, p.27.
- 13 HRA 3,4, p.405; HRA 3,7, pp 359 and note 382, p.696.
- 14 AOT: LSD 1/3/11 p.33ff.
- 15 AOT: LSD 1/77/136. Desailly to Arthur.
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- 17 TACPLACI 2001.
- 18 AOT: CON 31/29 p.609.
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- 23 Sharman G. *Ships Eliza, Proteus and Others. Swing Rioters to Van Diemen's Land*. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~austas/proteus.htm>; *Clarence Assessment Rolls*.
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- 25 eg. Hance, Desailly etc.
- 26 Wright, R. p.118.

Chapter 9

South Arm and Muddy Plains

The South Arm Peninsula includes all land south from Ralph's Neck (Lauderdale). Muddy Plains (Sandford), Lagoon District, South Arm, Maria Point and Ralph's Bay were amongst the names given to various areas on this peninsula.

Geologically the peninsula is very interesting with a diverse array of coastal features - sand sheets, lagoons, shingle beaches, sand spits and fossil dunes, tucked in behind the frontal dunes and beaches. Ralph's Neck has its origin in the joining of two land spits formed in the post-glacial period.¹

There are salt marshes (Pipe Clay Lagoon and Ralph's Bay), wetlands (Rushy and Calverts Lagoon), inland sandstone seacliffs at Cape Direction, and abundant marine life. Large midden sites are known at South Arm and Pipe Clay Lagoon. At settlement there were extensive and important vegetation communities, and, at Muddy Plains, notoriously poor soil.²

A Norfolk Island settler, ex-convict John McCloud, embarked on the *Lady Nelson* on 9 November 1807. He was listed as married with a wife and five children, but that number was to increase. His Sandy Bay grant of 36 acres³ was seized by the sheriff and sold.

He is recorded as living at Clarence Plains, 20 September 1813 and was resident at Maria Point for eight years. This unfortunate man was a lime burner, reared 8 children, lost his 18 year old daughter dreadfully burned by a fire she was standing near,⁴ and finally this land promised to him was claimed by Thomas Dixon.⁵ He wrote to Governor Arthur in 1825 and was finally granted 50 acres of land on the south side of Hugh Germain's 24 acres, on Pipe Clay Lagoon in April 1826. The record states 'fees not paid'.⁶

Lime burning had been an occupation in the Ralph's Bay district for some time.⁷ Knopwood⁸ records that on 9 June 1807 bushrangers at the lime burners robbed the contents of a boat and put it afloat. During our geological history shell beds had accumulated on the shores of Ralph's Bay, providing in the early days of European settlement the only source of lime for making mortar for more than a decade. Charles Darwin was to visit these shell beds in February 1836.⁹

An example of shell use is to be seen in the exposed piece of foundation of the *Congregational Chapel* at Rokeby (1866). A shell layer and lime cement was also found during rehabilitation works on the Morrisby grave complex adjacent to Knopwood's tomb in St. Matthew's Churchyard.

It is believed John McCloud was accidentally drowned in April 1833 and his wife Mary died in April 1837.¹⁰

In 1812 Thomas Dixon arrived in Hobart Town on *HMS Indefatigable* to complete 14 years transportation for 'having forged banknotes in his possession without lawful excuse'.¹¹

His wife Charlotte Sarah (Phelps) and two daughters, Ellen (Eleanor) aged 7 and Mary aged 4, followed as free settlers on *HMS Northampton* leaving Portsmouth on 18 June 1815.¹² About the same time Thomas was also joined by his father, the free settler John Dixon.

By 1822 seven of their 8 children had been born and by 1823 both Thomas and his father had received land grants; John's passing to Thomas on his death in 1825. Ultimately Thomas owned 800 acres on the eastern shore of Ralph's Bay, at Maria and Dixon Points. Seven of the children survived to between 69 and 90 years of age - a remarkable feat in that era.

Sadly, disaster struck on Sunday 25 September 1842. Whilst returning by boat from visiting Eleanor and her husband at their country home at *Wentworth*, Clarence Plains, Mr. and Mrs. Dixon drowned. Their small schooner of about 7 tons had been overturned by a heavy gust of wind.

The tragedy was witnessed by Eleanor and another sister. On the Tuesday, Eleanor's two sons, who had been searching the promontory '*Troywork (sic) Point*', discovered Mrs. Dixon's body, washed by the night tide into a cleft of a rock. Her remains were conveyed to the nearest house, Mr. Shuttle's *Harrow Inn* at Clarence Plains. Neither Mr. Dixon nor his servant, were recovered in spite of assiduously searching the whole coast including that of Mr. Gellibrand at South Arm.¹³

Eleanor's husband was Robert William Felton Lathrop Murray, landowner, soldier, convict and journalist, who claimed descent from Sir William Murray, baronet, of Dunerne, Fife, Scotland. He was transported for bigamy, and was pardoned in 1816 in Sydney. Coming to Hobart in 1821, he was given large land grants to the south, which later became Dynnyrne, after his house of that name.

He wrote to the press under the pseudonym 'A Colonist' and in time became the editor of the *Hobart Town Gazette* and then the *Colonial Times* during 1826. In 1828 he commenced the *Austral-Asiatic Review*, sometimes published within *The Tasmanian*. In the words of Tasmanian Historian R.W.Giblin: '*At a time when*

public opinion in England was still engaged in the strife, he was the man who put up the stoutest fight for Freedom of the Press in the island colony'.¹⁴

The most notable early settler in the South Arm area was William Gellibrand. He sailed from the port of Deptford in 1823, with his son Joseph Tice Gellibrand, a successful London lawyer who had sought a position in a warmer climate. Joseph's wife and children accompanied them on the *Hibernia* when he arrived to take up the post of the first Attorney General to Van Diemen's Land.

Several other family members joined them later. William received an initial grant of 2000 acres plus the use of 10 convicts, and finally owned all of South Arm to Collins Springs and across to Ralph's Bay.

This estate was described in a Public Auction Notice¹⁵ as '*1500 acres, the whole of which is comprised of a rich alluvial soil, and adapted for agricultural purposes. 400 acres are divided into paddocks and about 80 acres are under cultivation..... The Garden is in a high state of cultivation. The vinery, the very best in the island, about 2 acres, is in full bearing. Part of the Estate is thickly covered with she-oak, which of itself would render a certain income*'.

Joseph, dismissed from his position in 1826 without right of appeal, continued to practise as a barrister and pursued various business ventures with William, but by 1837 was killed by natives whilst exploring the Barwon River in Victoria. His name is reflected there in the Otway Ranges township of Gellibrand.¹⁶

In the 21st century a popular walk is to Gellibrand Point at Arm End and as you pass through the reserve you may note the Gellibrand Vault, the burial site of William Gellibrand, the original grantee.¹⁷

Pioneer families on South Arm included Edmund Musk, a ploughman for Gellibrand, the Alomes, and the Calverts, and later the Potters, Griffiths, Padmans, Roses, Coopers and Bezzants. The names are still familiar there today. Together with various members of the Gellibrand family, the convicts, farm labourers and orchard hands, they all helped to develop the farmlands of South Arm.¹⁸

The early settlers must have struggled. It was not an easy place to visit. Robert Knopwood, visiting the home of Francis Barnes, described it as '*the worst road I ever travell'd in Van Diemen's Land*'.¹⁹ Nevertheless they persisted.

The name Calvert is associated not only with South Arm but also with Muddy Plains (Sandford) where today it is well known through their properties and the place names of Calverts Hill, Beach and Lagoon, and Farnaby Place.

William Calvert, an apprentice gun-maker, married Hannah Farnaby in the Leeds

district in 1800. They were to have eight children, three of whom died young. Their eldest daughter Hannah married in 1829, and therefore did not accompany her parents, three sisters and brother Christopher on their long journey to Van Diemen's Land on the ship *John Woodall*. Tragically the mother Hannah died on that voyage. William in 1836 could be found in Murray St. Hobart, where he had set up business as a gun maker.

On 16 January 1837 Christopher married Hannah Watson, daughter of a Yorkshire family who had arrived as steerage passengers on the *Harvey* in May 1825. They had been eleven long months on their voyage, and shortly received a grant for an allotment at Muddy Plains (Sandford) which they called *York Grove*.

Hannah and Christopher moved to Geelong, Victoria where the first two of their children, Hannah and William were born, in 1838 and 1840. Hannah and the children made a visit to Hobart Town in 1841 and in 1843 another son John was born.²⁰

Christopher was established as a gun maker in Geelong when the weatherboard cottage on a small allotment in North Geelong was advertised for Auction on 7 October 1843.²¹ A subsequent advertisement in the same paper requests those persons who had left guns for repair, prior to his leaving Corio, to come forward to claim and pay for their repairs.²²

The family had returned to Van Diemen's Land, where in 1847 they leased a farm at Cambridge. It is believed that the home was formerly a bacon factory (1823) and converted to a home, later occupied by the Dunbabins and the Hobdens.

Then in 1851 the family leased land from Gellibrand at South Arm, the property later called *Seacroft*, which they later purchased. In 1855 Hannah, their eldest child, aged 17, died suddenly, as a result of 'inflammation of the stomach caused by drinking cold water' according to the inquest held in the Rokeby *Watch House*, before a jury of seven South Arm men.

Christopher, through a combination of leases and purchases increased the size of his farm which included grains and orchard fruits. He and Hannah raised eight sons and three daughters, including a second Hannah, known as 'Cis'.

Bad seasons saw many farm properties mortgaged and in 1874 this was the fate of Christopher's properties.

Christopher had a reputation of being rather fond of the amber liquid and was supposed to have had an elegant sufficiency whilst waiting for his grain to be ground at the *Rokeby Mill*, early in July 1876.

When the boat returned to *Seacroft* across Ralph's Bay with women and children

present, it is thought he had a need to relieve himself and he jumped into the shallow water. Several days later he died of a burst bladder 'after a short and painful illness'.²³ His date of death, confirmed by St. Matthew's Church records, was 8 July 1876.

The Calvert family prospered and continued as farmers and orchardists in the South Arm area. They provided land for Calverton Hall (1890) and were actively involved in the building of St. Barnabas Church.

Family members were associated with the South Arm Post Office, Roads Trust, sporting, especially sailing, cricket and horse racing, public service organizations, local, state and federal government, and their early interest in small transport boats was well known.

Earlier, Sergeant James McCauley from Galway, Ireland enlisted in the Royal Marines in 1796, aged 27. His occupation was given as labourer. He was one of the three sergeants in the detachment of marines who came with Lt. Governor Collins in 1804.

The role of the marines included the enforcement of obedience amongst the settlers and the defence of the settlement against incursions of the natives.²⁴ Supervision of the convicts was not a role that the Marines enjoyed.²⁵

These marines had made a journey to a world where they knew not what to expect. Although fed and clothed, they were not permitted to trade. They had been on this journey 12 months before they finally came to settle on the shores of the Derwent, via the settlement at Port Phillip.

James, like a few other of the marines, was able to bring his wife Maria, when the detachment, by then known as the Colonial Royal Marines, sailed from Portsmouth,

From the numerous Knopwood diary references we can assume that the three became close friends; James accompanying Knopwood on many of his hunting and fishing forays, and in turn Knopwood himself giving James and Maria 4 acres and 2 acres respectively to cultivate. When their house was under repair they lived with the clergyman at *Cottage Green*.²⁶

Knopwood also had a close relationship with his ward Betsy Mack and this story weaves throughout his diary.

The volumes for the years July 1808 to December 1813 are missing; however we are able to conclude that she was born on 30 August 1808, and that Maria McCauley assisted in much of her early rearing. However Knopwood himself was generally responsible for arranging her schooling and supervising her girlhood friendships.

The entry of 20 October 1824, Betsy's wedding day, is worth noting:

'Elizabeth Mary Morrisby, late E.M.Mack, my dear orphan girl, which I brought up when only 8 or 9 months old. Her mother died and her father left the colony. She was last August 16 years old. She married Mr. Henry Morrisby jnr. of Clarence Plains, a young man of very excellent character. After breakfast I went across the water with them in my boat. They went to Mrs. McAuley's where they are to stay a little while... many gents called upon me to congratulate upon the marriage'.²⁷

In his General and garrison orders of 16 June 1806, David Collins encouraged military settlers by offering an allotment of 130 acres of land to every single non-commissioned Officer and 150 acres if he was married. To any Private Soldier, 80 acres if single, 100 if married, and 10 acres per child, at the time of the allotment taking place. This was free of Fees, Taxes, Quit Rents for 5 years and included clothing, one year's provisions, seed, tools and agricultural implements. Convicts would be assigned for labour if the settlers could maintain, feed and clothe them.²⁸

The Land and Stock Muster of 1819²⁹ lists James McCauley, on 400 acres made up of both a purchase and an early grant by Governor Macquarie (200 acres), farming 46 acres of wheat, one of barley, 2 of beans and 4 of potatoes. 347 acres in pasture, 28 cattle and 356 sheep were also listed together with grain storage of 100 bushels.

James had the use of servants - 2 Government (assigned convicts) and one free, and was constable of the Lagoon District. The grant was amongst others given to marines who had completed their time of service. Although referred to as 'York' the grants were in the Muddy Plains area of Clarence Plains.

On 29 September 1819, licenses for Grazing Occupations were renewed and granted for the next 12 months. These required the licensee to

'cause to be erected and kept in Repair a Stockyard, or Fenced Place, of Dimensions convenient to contain the Whole of his Cattle and Sheep, or the Cattle and Sheep in his Charge, to be grazed on the said Land, and, at all Times, shall keep such Stock regularly Marked and subject them to the Inspections required... '

There were four such licenses granted in Clarence Plains that year – to William Parsons on Signal (sic) Hill, William and James Waterson between 7 Miles (sic) Beach and Bluff Lagoon, Revd. Robert Knopwood at Maria Point and his friend James McAuley (sic) at Muddy Plains, in the Lagoon District.³⁰

On 7 March 1822 *'Poor James McAuley died at Muddy Plains – a man very highly respected by his numerous friends'.³¹*

Surveyor John Helder Wedge, whilst surveying the Clarence Plains district in September 1826, had pitched his tent at Mrs. McCauley's. Returning because of heavy showers in the middle of the day, he wrote:

*'Mrs. McAuley – a fat round faced widow about 38 years of age – a round face a small round ended nose, a round and round altogether – A more hearty welcome, or a more plentifully fil'd table no one ever met with – it was about 5 pm. when I arrived and in about 5 minutes I saw before me a large cold round of Beef and one of the largest Legs of Pork I ever beheld (sic) a bottle of wine & a Bottle of brandy – What more could a man wish for?–'.*³²

Maria McCauley married Edward Busby, one of her workmen,³³ in 1828, and they continued to exchange visits to and from Muddy Plains with Robert Knopwood. She also kept in touch with John McCloud's wife Mary. Edward died 30 January 1856, aged 55 whilst Maria lived until 3 June 1865. She was then 85. Both are buried at St. Matthew's Rokeby.

James' particular grant was at Cremorne, in the region of Pipe Clay Lagoon. The property became that of *Waterloo* which was later divided by the Morrisby family to form the property *Cremorne* which gave the suburb its name.³⁴ It was on *Waterloo* that the now endangered species of *Eucalyptus morrisbyi*, named for landowner Alan Morrisby, was first found.³⁵

Another Sergeant of Marines who came with Collins, Samuel Thorne, was given a 200 acre grant at Muddy Plains, but by 1819 was listed as farming a grant/purchase of 250 acres at Pitt Water, where he continued to live.

Samuel and his wife Ann had left their first born son John behind when they sailed into the future in 1803. They entered our history when, on 25 November 1803, Ann gave birth to their son, the first born of English parents in the new Colony (at Sorrento).

In the time honoured fashion of the day, the child was given a significant name and was baptised William James Port Phillip Thorne, which happily was later changed to William James Hobart Thorne.³⁶

Interestingly he was inoculated for Smallpox³⁷ together with his sister, with children of notable families, and Robert Hobart May, the aboriginal child from Risdon 'xtiand' by Robert Knopwood.³⁸

After a successful second career of farming and hotel interests, Samuel died 28 years after Ann, on 6 August 1848 – the cause was '*decay of nature*'.

The *Calcutta* convict William Richardson, a private soldier, tried at Middlesex in 1802 for stealing money and a canvas bag, was sentenced to death. An eventual

reprieve saw him sentenced to transportation for life. Referred to as 'my man', Richardson accompanied Robert Knopwood on explorations along the Derwent and on hunting expeditions.³⁹

William is listed in the 1811-1823 musters and received his conditional pardon, shortly afterwards made absolute, in 1813.

He purchased 50 acres at Muddy Plains from William Hoskins. He had a timber house, stockyards, barn and pig sties. He unwittingly also cultivated 10 adjoining acres owned by Robert Mather. Because of his industrious nature and good character he was later granted this land.⁴⁰

William and his wife Elizabeth Winrow, had many descendants who continued to farm and live in the area. Their name is reflected in Richardsons Hill and Beach in the Muddy Plains (Sandford) area.

Amongst other early settlers at Muddy Plains were Henry Morrisby and his wife, Knopwood's ward Betsy Mack. She was only 16 when she married Henry and bore two children Robert and Elizabeth. On 23 October 1830, at home preparing for her funeral, after giving birth to her second child, the old cleric reminisced in his diary:

'my dear and ever regretted Elizabeth Mary Mack and orphan child which I took in the year (blank) and married to Mr. Henry Morrisby of Hobart Town. They, some little time after their marriage lived upon the farm at Muddy Plains which I got His Honor Lt. Governor Sorell to give her and I gave them cattle and sheep etc. In fact my sole comfort'.⁴¹

On 18 June 1831 Henry married Christina Smith who bore him thirteen more children. They continued to live at the property, called *Woodlands*. This property came into the Calvert family when David Calvert, husband of Henry's daughter Eliza, purchased it in the 1880s.

After the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo on 18 June 1815, the battle weary Englishmen returned home and encountered a country in recession. Those who could find jobs as labourers or road workers were paid a pittance for their work, and the staple foods continued to rise in price. Men were demanding more money just to stay alive and disturbances took place in many villages.

Notorious amongst these were the riots in the Littleport/Ely area where 80 people were charged with various crimes. The trial took place in Ely where three judges presided, including the brother of Fletcher Christian of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame. A man of opposite character from his brother, Edward Christian Esq. often gave out the death penalty, so it was not too surprising when 24 sentences of death were passed.

Fortunately for John Easy, he was given a revised sentence of seven years deportation to that far off colony of New South Wales. For the rest, 8 others were deported, including Richard Jessop and Joseph Easy to Clarence Plains, 5 executed and the balance were to spend a year in gaol. These latter sentences were also revised, upwards, to 7 years transportation!

The inevitable hanging took place, the dead being buried in a single grave in St. Mary's Churchyard, Ely. A plaque tells the story. Legend has it that the burial was upright, either to save space or so that they could never 'lie at rest'. Who knows? ⁴²

On the May property, settled by the family in 1874, whaling artefacts were found. The land was granted to the whaler Alexander McLeod in 1853, following an interest in the land by other whalers - Hewitt and McLachlan c.1832. ⁴³

Of course there were many other settlers in the Muddy Plains area; a marvellous mix of convicts, soldiers and free settlers who, in the main, struggled against poverty on their marginal soils to create farms, raise sheep and cattle, vegetable crops and apple, pear and apricot orchards.

They raised their children, got involved as families in sport and community life and would probably be surprised today to find their area a sought-after residential seaside suburb. Amongst the delights are the summer gathering of many hundreds of shorebirds – pied oystercatchers, plovers, stints, sandpipers, godwits, terns and gulls – at the beaches, the various lagoons and saltmarshes and the intertidal flats of Ralph's Bay, including Lauderdale. ⁴⁴

During the 1750s, a family called Mather lived in the eastern part of Scotland. They were lowland Scots, either small farmers or mechanics, and lived somewhere on the borders of the Highlands. One son, Andrew, chose the trade of blacksmith and, after his marriage to Ann Hamilton, migrated from the old home and settled down in the royal burgh of Lauder, not far from the ancient town of Berwick on Tweed. Here, at a village at Lauder, 7 miles from Kelso, their son Robert was born, on 1 May 1780. The couple had two other sons, and two daughters.

Robert, aged 14, went alone to London to seek his fortune, apprenticing himself to a fellow Scot who was a hosier and a freeman of the city. Robert spent seven years in the apprenticeship, impressing his master to the extent that the business was left in his care. Robert himself became a member of the Weavers Company, a freeman of the city and quite prosperous.

Attracted to the Wesleyan persuasion, and to the daughter of the Rev. Joseph Benson, a teacher at the Methodist Sunday School, romance entered Robert's life and he married this delicate, refined, well-educated girl, Ann Benson. He was then 33 and Ann 26.

By 1821, with their three children, daughter Sarah and two sons Joseph and Robert Andrew, the Mathers had decided to join a party of Friends, and settle in Van Diemen's Land. As Wesleyan Methodist Society members, they wished to help establish Sunday Schools and improve the people's morals. The books of Wentworth and Jeffrey about the new colony had just been published. They described a better climate and a land of opportunity for new settlers. In the hope of improving Ann's health and situation Robert resolved to immigrate.

Ann's family and friends counselled against this move, but Robert, who had looked deeply into the matter, was resolute. The death of her father, and the knowledge of Robert's determination, decided Ann to at last agree. They set upon the task of preparing for the unknown land, the purchasing of goods and chattels that they would need 'in the bush', and the inevitable sadness of parting from friends and family.

Their journey to Van Diemen's Land was not without its trials. After boarding Peter Degraives' and partner Major Hugh McIntosh's barque *Hope*, it was 10 days before they put to sea, then they encountered a violent storm and narrowly escaped shipwreck. The seaworthiness of the vessel was questioned, and there were too many aboard. It was six more months before another vessel was found for them by the Government.⁴⁵

The *Hope* did come to our shores in 1824, carrying more convicts, then finally, on 29 April 1827, when she ran ashore, on South Arm, on the long sandy stretch of beach that now bears her name. Sailing from Storm Bay, the Pilot steered between Iron Pot and Betsy Island mistaking this for the entrance to the Derwent and ran ashore on the low lying and obscured land. This became well known as *Hope Beach*, not so much for the disaster as for the legend of the missing coinage supposedly on board. Tantalisingly, it has never been found.⁴⁶

Fortunately there was no loss of life except for that of Captain Laughton, who had purchased the wreck. *'this eve we had the melancholy intelligence of Capt. Laughton, who was drowned in getting the anchor of the Hope which was lost near Iron Pott Island'*.⁴⁷ After long agitation for a light on Iron Pot, a stone tower lighthouse was completed and operational in 1833, replacing a temporary lamp maintained by a keeper and two convicts. Officially called the Derwent Light, the Iron Pot light tower is the oldest in Australia.⁴⁸

After an arduous journey on the *Heroine*, the Mather family arrived in the Derwent on 10 September 1822, and first lived at Potter's Hill, later known as Langloh's Hill (Brisbane St.) Hobart. Robert purchased land on the corner of Liverpool and Elizabeth St. and pursued his goal of settling on the land, preferably, for the sake of Ann's health, by the sea.

Eventually Robert was given an order for 1200 acres of land at Muddy Plains. He had sufficient capital to justify this acreage which eventually grew to 2500 and included the land known as Ralph's Bay Neck which Governor Macquarie walked across on 23 November 1811.⁴⁹ He took up the land in March 1825 and called the property *Lauderdale*.

All the profits from the business were put to improving his land. It was not fertile productive land and large amounts of cash went to improvements and a large drainage scheme. Works included ditching, banking and reclaiming the extensive area of marsh land from the sea. This was not successful. When the land was eventually sold, it comprised 2922½ acres of which 409 acres was described as open saltmarsh.⁵⁰

In her extremely informative memories of life in Hobart Town, recorded in 1884,⁵¹ Sarah Benson Walker recalls that her mother moved to the farm in 1824 or 1825. She took the youngest child Samuel (born 1823) with her, leaving the young Sarah to care for the rest of the family in Hobart.

With Ann's health worsening, Sarah left school, aged about 15 or 16, to care for her and manage the household at the farm. Ann died suddenly on 27 August 1831.

The business in town suffered a heavy loss and was wound up and Robert, who had moved to the farm in 1831 to be with Ann, devoted all his energies to saving the farm. However, it was advertised for sale by Public Auction on 25 November 1834.⁵² The new owner Louis Beauvais rented out farms to other settlers.⁵³

The town business was started up again, the debts repaid, and after a farm visit by the Society of Friends (Quaker) missionaries James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, the family joined their Society. Sarah was later to marry George.

On 18 August 1842 Robert was to marry again, this time to Esther, the sister of Captain James Dixon of the *Skelton*, trader and author of one of the first books in the colony.⁵⁴ The marriage proved a happy one, with Esther a much loved step-mother. Robert, this man of strong principles and integrity, died in March 1855, predeceasing Esther by 17 years.

Sarah's reminiscences include the mention of Mary Ely, who in 1824 had arrived in Van Diemen's Land as housekeeper to the surveyor David Wedge, brother of John Helder Wedge. She was accompanied by a niece and her own young child Jane Ely who was to marry John Murdoch.

As Mary 'couldn't go into the country on account of the natives and bushrangers',⁵⁵ she became a live-in housekeeper for the Mathers for some time. There she met

Footprints

Hugh Germain, a private in the Calcutta Royal Marines, who came with Lt. Gov. David Collins. This man, though apparently illiterate, was credited by some as having named Van Diemen's Land's Jericho and the Jordan River. Whilst this is not mentioned by Sarah, she claimed 'He used to drink all the time, but she (Mary) was a managing woman and reformed him'.

Mary married Hugh on 25 November 1826. The Lands Department map, Monmouth 3, shows her as having several land grants in the Muddy Plains area.

The land that Robert Mather originally owned at Ralph's Bay Neck would occupy the minds of both the Tasmanian Government and the people for many years to come.

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- 6 AOT: LSD 409/1, p.80.
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- 17 Clarence City Council, *Popular Walks in Clarence*, p.32.
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- 26 RK p.134. 9.5.1807; p.135 19.5.1807; p.148. 11.11.1807.
- 27 RK p.168. 18.2.1814; p.432. 20.10.1824.
- 28 Collins, D, *General and Garrison Orders* 1803-1808, p.225. 10.6.1806.
- 29 Schaffer, *Land Musters* p.140.
- 30 HRA 3,3, pp.575,576.
- 31 RK p.356. 7.3.1822.
- 32 Wedge, J.H. *Diary*, Memorandum Book pp.29-30.
- 33 RK p.516. 23.3.1828; p.518. 20.5.1828; Gray, F. *A Seamless Web* 2005, p.170.
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- 36 Tipping, p.75

- 37 Schaffer, *Land Musters*, p.38
- 38 RK p.51. 11.5.1804.
- 39 RK p.132 19.5.1807.
- 40 Tipping, pp.176,177,305.
- 41 RK p.564. 23.10.1830.
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- 50 Mather, Rt.Hon. R. *Robert Mather*; Knopwood Historical Lecture 1983 p.65.
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Chapter 10

Crossing Ralph's Bay Neck

Many of the early South Arm settlers had built jetties on their waterside land. Using whale or 'passage' boats to transport their goods to market in Hobart was preferable in some ways to the long land route. Others further away found it necessary to make a long and sometimes dangerous crossing of Frederick Henry Bay, through the aptly named Storm Bay, and up the Derwent Estuary to reach Hobart, and this depended so much on the weather conditions.

It was James Gordon of Forcett who in 1820 suggested to Commissioner Bigge that the digging of a canal across the narrow isthmus of Ralph's Bay would help communication in the south-east of Van Diemen's Land.

Several conflicting versions exist in relation to the original crossing methods that came into use. These range from a tramway or railway in Robert Mather's day, to a bullock team pulling a boat on a large dray or sledge. An advertisement headed 'Boatmen and Others' in the *True Colonist* notified them that a strong team of oxen was kept at Ralph's Bay Neck to haul boats across the neck on a sledge. Charges for any boat not larger than a five oared whaleboat or cartage of luggage was 5/-. Charges for any larger boats were in proportion. The notice was signed 'Richard Larson, Lexington Cottage, 6 April 1836'

This is given credence by a petition from Robert Mather to Colonel Arthur on 27 January 1836, as a result of his financial hardships which led to his property *Lauderdale* being sold:

*'... the petitioner has ever been ready to serve the Government in this way and affording to use his own bullocks and servant, although the team used on such occasions was rendered unfit for further service on the day...'*¹

In 1838 Charles O'Hara Booth, the livewire Commandant of Tasman Peninsula recommended the construction of a Railway across the Neck, a project that he subsequently supervised. After a few management problems -

'... a Tram-road extending a distance of about 1 mile and a half, including the flat... a substantial 'four-railed fence' inclosing the rail road, has also been completed across the neck, about ¾ of a mile in length in conformity with the Instructions contained in your letter of the 22nd. May last... the

Whaling Season is fast approaching, and the road will afford the Whalers great facility in crossing and recrossing... '2

There is little more to tell of the railway's story. It was not the first in Australia - the 1833 Port Arthur railway holds that honour. A letter from Louis Beauvais, who purchased the Mather property refers to his jetty in correspondence with the Colonial Secretary, 14 September 1843 - '*... by far the longest in the bay... planned to sit almost at the commencement of the Government Railroad ...*'³

Surveyor Calder describes the mechanics of a crossing in February 1848:

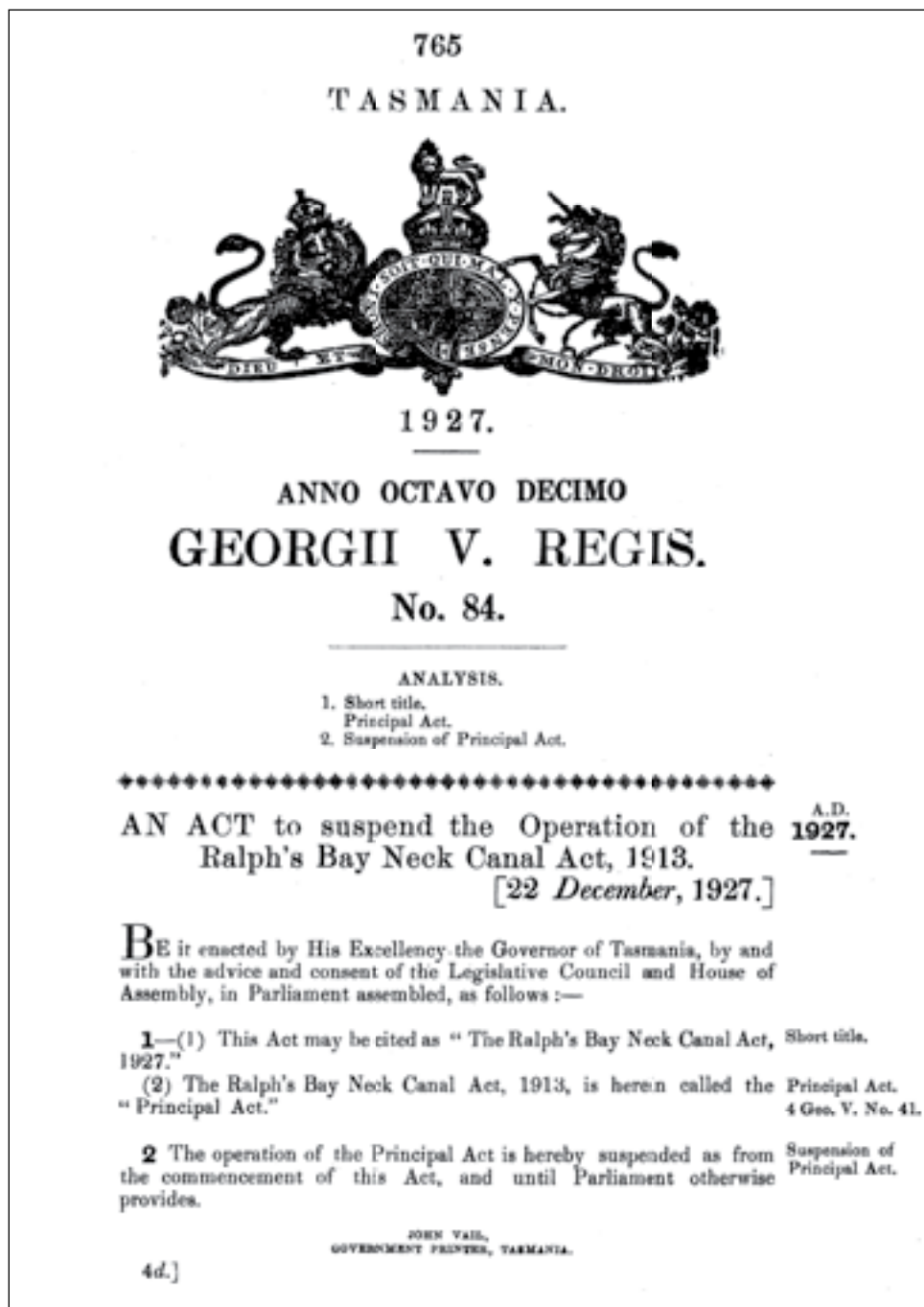
*'we... crossed by the tramway, putting the boat on a truck. The wind was now harder than ever, so at the suggestion of one of the men in charge we put up the canvas sail again and actually sailed over the isthmus, no manual force being used except to steady the boat as she moved slowly along it, half of us walking either side with our hands over the gunwales'*⁴

In 1854, Governor Denison put forward a proposal to cut a canal through Ralph's Bay Neck, and so connect Ralph's Bay with Frederick Henry Bay. The question was revived by petition to the Minister for Lands and Works in 1910. The petition was signed by residents of South Arm, Rokeby, Forcett, Carlton, Bream Creek, Dunalley, Murdunna, Tasman's Peninsula, Orford, Triabunna, Little Swanport, Swansea and Maria Island. The Hobart Marine Board urged the Government to give consideration to the proposal.

Deputations urging construction took place in the following three years, and at the same time surveys and estimates were prepared. Finally the Minister concerned suggested that the Government bear half the estimated costs of £20,000 and that the Marine Board, Hobart Corporation and the five municipalities concerned accept the interest liability on the balance. Parliament in December 1913 passed two Acts - 4. Geo. V. Nos 14 & 23 - providing a total of £15,000, conditional on the provisions of 'The Ralph's Bay Neck Canal Act'.⁵

This provided for the control of the canal being vested in the jurisdiction of the Hobart Marine Board and the annual fees to be paid, including those paid by the Municipalities, including Clarence, of £20 per annum for 40 years. The standing committee took evidence as to likely canal usage, tourist traffic, canal construction details, benefits and costs, now considered to be £18,020 in toto. Of the original amount voted there was available £13,630, so an additional £5000 was recommended for appropriation: 4 December 1919.

The amounts proved insufficient but by July 1924 the contract for the actual cutting of the canal was let, for a sum of £22,127, to Armstrong Whitworth P/L. This did not include the cost of the bridge nearing completion (estimated cost £3000) nor the recommended groynes and breakwaters at the Frederick Henry Bay



Act of Parliament. Courtesy: Parliamentary Library.

end. Many unforeseen difficulties ensued, owing to the nature of the excavation being harder and heavier than anticipated. Work proceeded and, the contractors having cut almost to high-water mark at the Frederick Henry end, a storm occurred driving almost 4000 cubic yards of sand from the sea into the mouth of the canal. Again they cut, and at nearly full depth, and at the low-water mark, another much heavier storm deposited a further 700 cubic yards of sand in the canal. At this point permission was given for the works to stop temporarily.

A further hearing of the standing committee (27 July 1927) was called to deal with the matter of construction of groynes and training walls. Designs were put up and engineering reports considered, and the varying costs estimated. The Committee considered that a large amount of construction work had been done, involving a heavy expenditure of public money, for which there had been no return. There had been great changes in methods of transport since the canal was first considered by Parliament and much of the passenger and tourist traffic was now by car, and fruit and other goods conveyed by steamer. The Committee also inspected the canal and developed the opinion that two training walls would be necessary and that it would be unwise to spend any further money at that time.

Although further evidence was given to another hearing in November 1927, the view of the Committee remained unaltered. On 22 December 1927, The Ralph's Bay Neck Canal Act, 18 Geo. V. No. 84 suspended the operation of the Ralph's Bay Neck Canal Act of 1913.⁶

The Peninsula residents were reported as '*being up in arms against the turning down of a project of cutting a canal through Ralph's Bay Neck*'. Rokeby was reported as '*practically gone into mourning... Rokeby built its future on the prospects of the canal which was going to make it one of the people's playgrounds*'.⁷

In 1955 the Ralph's Bay Canal Progress Association was formed to develop a sense of pride in the area and its beaches, amongst the residents and shack owners. Members of Parliament and the Municipal Council were declared ineligible to be on the Executive Committee and the Association made the unusual rule that the Committee was to comprise both sexes.⁸

1 As quoted by R. Gillam in Lauderdale Primary School, *The Ralph's Bay Canal*, p.9

2 Booth to Lt. Governor 2.March 1840 - requoted in Hudspeth p.63

3 LSD 1/97 p.339 quoted in Hudspeth Part 1 p.63

4 Mather, Rt.Hon.R. *Robert Mather*, Knopwood Historical Lecture 1983 p.64.

5 4 Geo.V. No.41: The Ralph's Bay Neck Canal Act 1913.

6 *Journals and Papers of the Parliament of Tasmania* Vol. LXXXI 1919-20 Nos. 7A, 61. VOL. XCVII 1927 Nos. 17, 37 and associated Acts.

7 *The Critic* 14.4.1923.

8 Constitution of the Ralph's Bay Canal Progress Association.

Chapter 11

Ralph's Bay Shoreline

And so we have briefly visited areas of the original Clarence Plains District, and now must focus on that area which today remains Clarence Plains, with its central town of Rokeby. Much of the Clarence Plains land granted to Norfolk Islanders was along the shoreline of Ralph's Bay and the Derwent River and either side of the Clarence Plains Rivulet.

One of the earliest settlers along the Ralph's Bay shoreline was a First Fleeter, ex-convict James Morrisby, who in virtue of his endeavours on Norfolk Island was granted 80 acres of waterside land. His crime in England was not great - he was accused of theft of an iron bar, value 10 pence, and for wrenching it from the window it secured. He claimed he was a blacksmith, ex-Guardsman, with a wife and 5 children.



A view of Ralph's Bay

Nevertheless his sentence was 7 years transportation. From September 1784, he spent almost two and a half years on the *Censor* prison hulk, followed by the voyage on the *Scarborough* to Port Jackson, and in March 1790 by *Sirius* to Norfolk Island. There he met Ann Brooks (aka Lavender) a convict mother of one child, William. From 1794 he lived with Ann, who with five children accompanied him to Van Diemen's Land on the *Porpoise* arriving 7 January 1808. William and Richard (later known as Larsom) Brooks were not aboard.¹

James' allocated grant of 80 acres, abutting the western boundary of Edward Kimberley's Farm, was later named *Belmont Lawn*, and it was here that John Chipman (23) was married to Sophia Morrisby (26) in 1863 by the Rev. Robert Wilson of Rokeby Parsonage.² James acquired a large amount of land in Clarence Plains, married three times and outlived all his wives. He was not only a successful farmer but also the forefather of an extensive family of descendants both here and on the mainland.

Edward Kimberley was prominent amongst the settlers from Norfolk Island and his story cannot be told without including that of Daniel Stanfield, Marine. On 13 May 1787 a fleet of 11 ships left Portsmouth, England heading for Port Jackson in New South Wales. This First Fleet landed at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788. Aboard the *Sirius* was a detachment of Marines, one of whom was the 22 year old Daniel Stanfield.

Amongst the convicts with this fleet was one Edward Kimberley, on the *Scarborough*, sentenced in 1783 to 7 years transportation for grand larceny.

During 1789 Daniel developed a relationship with Alice Harmsworth (aka Ellis Armsworth), a widow and mother of 2 small children, Ann and John. Alice's third child, Thomas, had died on 24 February 1788. Daniel was sent to Norfolk Island on the *Supply* in March 1790 and on 25 April 1790 his son, born to Alice, was baptised. This boy became known as Daniel Stanfield Jnr.

When the *Lady Juliana* of the Second Fleet arrived in Port Jackson on 3 June 1790, she had on board a young convict girl Mary Cavenor (Cavanaugh) of London, also transported for 7 years.

It is believed that Mary married Edward Kimberley in 1791, and that this marriage was solemnised by Rev. Richard Johnson in St. Phillips Church, Sydney on 20 October of that year. The witnesses were John Small and Sarah Bartlett.³

Daniel Stanfield, now back in Port Jackson, married his Alice on 15 October in the same church and left Sydney in late 1791 for a term of duty on Norfolk Island. He was accompanied by Alice, her children and their son, Daniel Jnr. In 1792 their second son Thomas was born. Both the Kimberley and the Stanfield families travelled on board the *Atlantic*, which also carried Lt. Governor King.

The Stanfield family returned to Sydney, on 23 August 1794, on the *Daedalus* when Daniel completed his term of duty. Daniel almost immediately re-enlisted, but an important event would take place before reshipping to Norfolk Island. On 25 January 1795 their third child, William, was born. They all returned to the island on the *Supply* (2) arriving back on 20 November. Part of the ship's cargo was a windmill. Daniel was discharged on 24 December 1799.⁴

In 1796 he was listed as the Proprietor of Lots 1 and 2, totalling 120 acres, and by 1804 was the second largest landholder on the island.⁵ He had become a man of some substance.

Now legally a free man, Edward Kimberley could also expect to receive a portion of farm land, though somewhat smaller, up to fifteen acres, and a position of trust over convicts. He was ready to capitalise on this opportunity and he was settled on 12 acres at Mt. Pitt Path, Queenborough by early December 1791. By September

1792 there were food shortages, but Edward was able to sell grain to Government stores.

As time passed he became a constable and a flogger, although he 'did not flog women'. He was by no means a model of perfection. The gaoler Robert Jones wrote about him as follows:

'Women in his estimation were born for the convenience of men. The amusements consisted mainly of dancing in the barrack room on Thursday evenings when all the women would join in the dances of the mermaids, Each one being naked with a number painted on her back to be recognised by their admirers who would then clap their hands on seeing their favourite perform some grotesque action'.⁶

Notwithstanding this opinion, he cultivated his land, raised a family and in 1806 as a First Class settler had 72 acres in crops and pasture and substantial numbers of livestock. He left all this, two houses and several outbuildings behind when he embarked for the Derwent on the *City of Edinburgh*.

Edward was paid £90 and held a stock entitlement of £87.⁷ He was accompanied to Van Diemen's Land by his wife Mary and children Mary, Hannah, and William.

The younger Stanfield, Daniel Jnr., had become enamoured of Edward Kimberley's eldest daughter Maria and they were married in a civil ceremony, and came as a couple on the *City Of Edinburgh*. Shortly after their arrival in Hobart they were married in St. David's Church by the Reverend Robert Knopwood.

Daniel Stanfield I, with his wife Alice, and children Thomas, Sarah, William and Mary, also came to Hobart on the *City of Edinburgh*. and selected 310 acres, which he called *Green Point*, near the mouth of the Jordan River. His two step-children Ann and John remained on Norfolk Island.

And so, on the abandonment of the settlement and the removal to Van Diemen's Land, the Kimberleys and the two Stanfield families, arrived in the Derwent on 2 October 1808. Daniel Jnr. was then 18 years old. Promises had been given in relation to compensation of land, buildings to be erected and convict labour to be given to these settlers. In reality much of it did not come to fruition.

However, as Surveyor John Oxley wrote in 1810, land on the eastern side of the river was, in general:

'good and not difficult to clear, all parts afford excellent pasturage, though the want of water is sometimes felt in a dry season, particularly by those settled in Ralph's Bay'. – this of course is where Edward Kimberley and Daniel Stanfield Jnr. had taken up residence.⁸

These two gentlemen were later to have a lasting impact on the formation of the area known as Rokeby, Clarence Plains.

Edward Kimberley was granted 2 areas in Clarence Plains, 140 acres and 40 acres.⁹ He and Mary lived on and farmed the larger grant, on the shores of Ralph's Bay. The Tasmania Police Academy, c.1975, now occupies part of this grant, with the expanding residential area of Oakdowns on the balance. Part of his 40 acre grant was to become the village of Rokeby.

By 1817, Kimberley was District Constable and the muster for Kangaroo Pt., the Lagoon District, and Clarence Plains was held at his Clarence Plains home. He and his son William were soon large scale suppliers of wheat and meat to the Commissariat and had holdings in three different areas.

The family had by now moved into the respectable class of landholders who had convict servants of their own. He was asked to give evidence to the Bigge Enquiry in 1820.

This enquiry had been set up initially to investigate the efficacy of convict transportation as a deterrent or means of reformation. It resulted in the independence of Van Diemen's Land from New South Wales in 1825, as well as tighter control of convicts.¹⁰

His evidence was interesting. Apart from his land he had not received any indulgences that the settlers were to receive. The rations for his wife and three children, which had been promised for two years, were never given. All his children were now married and lived in the district of Clarence Plains.

At that time, he only had 160 sheep as he had lost 500 by the natives some three years earlier, and had had a great many stolen from time to time. He thought the natives were acting through mischief rather than malice as the sheep were killed but not eaten.

Kimberley's grazing licenses, together with those of his son William and son-in-law Daniel, in the York Plains District, were renewed in 1820.¹¹ They are believed to have formed a liaison with nearby licensee William Nichols Snr.

Kimberley took musters weekly at his house, making sure that every man was in his proper district. When asked by Bigge where his assigned servants lived he replied:

'Mine usually sleep in my barn; they are generally lodged in huts by themselves. They eat and drink with my family and so do working for my sons. By this plan they are constantly under our eyes and it saves a double expense of cooking'.¹²

He stated there was a Public House in the area, and when asked if the mustered convicts did not go there, he stated that they may - *'but the price at which the landlord sells his Rum is too dear for them to drink much at 16s. a bottle'*.

Edward Kimberley had two convict labourers and had, with his son William, applied himself to techniques to improving the productivity of his land. He seemed to be supportive of his convicts in that he allowed them food and drink much the same as himself, and gave small indulgences such as tea and sugar, and rewards such as clothing.¹³

Hard working though he was, Kimberley did not ignore social and community occasions. A race meeting in May 1826 saw his roan horse *Ball* pitted against his son-in-law's stallion *Paddy*. An exciting match finished in a further challenge.

Spurred on by Robert Knopwood, Clarence Plains parishioners resolved to build a church and in early 1828 Kimberley was amongst those who pledged materials to that end. The story of St. Matthew's is found in that chapter.

In Edward's Will, dated 1 October 1829, he bequeathed to his wife Mary the yearly sum of fifty pounds during her life with the use of a house and garden and a team of oxen. He also left his 140 acres to his son William with one notable and important exception - that of two acres on which Daniel Stanfield Jnr. had previously 'erected a windmill' was bequeathed to Daniel.¹⁴

On Friday 27 November 1829 Robert Knopwood recorded:

'At 9 I went across the water to Clarence Plains to bury old Mr. Kimberley. They detained me till past 4 before they came. A great many people attended the funeral'.

On Norfolk Island Daniel Stanfield Jnr. held 60 acres – bestowed on this young man by his father 'being part of his claim which he held under promise of a grant'.¹⁵

His grant at Clarence Plains was 160 acres on the north-east corner of Ralph's Bay, adjacent to his father-in-law's grant. He had a further grant of 50 acres to the east of this land. These were only the first of his land acquisitions at Clarence Plains and elsewhere.

By August 1819 he had purchased the adjacent property of Single Hill¹⁶ from the First Fleet ex-convict William Vickery who had arrived in July 1808 on the *Lady Nelson*.¹⁷ A further 225 acres was added to the Stanfield holdings from Robert Mather's original grant to include the area known today as Ralph's Bay Canal.¹⁸

Daniel and Maria Stanfield were parents of 9 living children, seven of whom were girls. The girls all married, significantly into the Chipman, Stokell, Vigar, Dawson and Desailly families. Their two sons William and Daniel married into the Nichols

and Morrisby families respectively. All were stalwarts of Clarence Plains.

Daniel soon cleared his property for crops and erected a two storey wooden house known as *Clarendon*. Governor Macquarie, on his 1811 visit to Van Diemen's Land had cause to call at the Stanfield Farm. Like David Collins in 1804, the group on the *Lady Nelson* struck squally weather and were unable to enter the Derwent River. After persisting for a long time they elected to sail to Frederick Henry Bay and anchor there.

The wind was still contrary the next day so James Meehan was sent overland to Hobart to organise the Government Barge to come to Ralph's Bay to take both party and baggage to Hobart Town. The Governor spent the night on the *Lady Nelson*.

He recorded in his diary note¹⁹ that he and Mrs. Macquarie left the Lady Nelson at 6.30am by the ships boat which landed them to where they could walk across the neck of land dividing Frederick Henry from Ralph's Bay to 'Mr. Stanfield's farm in the District of Clarence Plains'.

'By 8.20am the barge Derwent had left the farm, landing at 11am at Hobart after a 'very pleasant Rowe (sic) of ten miles from Ralph's Bay and up the River Derwent; the lofty beautiful Hilly Banks of which are extremely grand and picturesque – the Breadth of the River being nowhere less than two miles all the way up to the Town'.²⁰

Daniel was a thoughtful and successful farmer. The Land and Stock Muster, Van Diemen's Land, 1819 shows that in Clarence Plains he farmed 240 acres of land of which 36 were in wheat, 4 in barley, 1 in beans, 2 in potatoes and 197 in pasture. He had 4 horses, 120 cattle, 100 sheep and 90 bushels of grain in hand. He and Maria then had 3 children and there were 2 government servants.²¹

Problems with the flour supply for the settlement caused Daniel Jnr. to decide to erect a windmill, known to have been substantially completed June 1816. It was not the first to operate in Van Diemen's Land, but after mill stones were obtained it commenced to grind in March 1818, the third windmill to do so.

As the southern settlements grew, the need for more flour had also grown. It was no longer practicable to hand-mill grain, so this mill proved a boon to the local farmers and their families.

The mill was an outstanding landmark in the area and features in many photographs, paintings and sketches. A curious story is told about the whaler *Addison*, skippered by a Captain Sinclair, who was given the following directions as to how best to navigate the Derwent:

'keep the land on your portside until you reach the lighthouse. After passing the light, keep the land on your starboard side until you see a red windmill, then bear away from that and you'll let your anchor down in twelve fathoms'.

It was said that the *Addison* ran aground on the sandy bottom in Ralph's Bay and that the ketches *Meteor* and *Ann Watt* went to her aid, removing the cargo of whale oil. Later the *Kangaroo* was able to tow her off unharmed.²²

The mill must have been a formidable sight, standing about 10 metres high to the ridgeline with its sails above. A real landmark - but not the red brick mill (on Battery Point on Hobart's western shore), to which he had been directed.

This Rokeby Mill, on 2 acres of land, subsequently bequeathed to Daniel by his father-in-law Edward Kimberley, was such an important part of the early history of both Clarence Plains and Hobart that its true story deserves to have a place of its own in this book.

Daniel was not without trouble from bushrangers, and was required to go to Sydney twice to give evidence. The land commissioners reported that the Stanfields, *'a large Clan altogether, have had immense Herds of Wild Cattle roaming over a quarter of the island'*. This may be so, but he did have grazing licenses.²³

Daniel continued to work hard and enjoy life. At the before-mentioned horse races on Frederick Henry Bay Beach in 1826, Michael Lackey's *Favourite* and Daniel's chestnut *Paddy* were the final heat winners over two miles. After this the 'numerous and respectable Party' went to Stanfield's house where a splendid ball and supper were held.²⁴ It seems that Edward Kimberley concluded the evening by challenging his son-in-law to hold a further race.

The case of *Stocker v. Stanfield* in the Supreme Court of Van Diemen's Land before Chief Justice Pedder (no relation to Joseph) shows the seriousness of Daniel's horse interests. The plaintiff was represented by Joseph Tice Gellibrand.

The action was for the services of Mr. Stocker's stallion *Sam* for four mares at £5 each, and a set off for £2.8s. for board and lodging of groom and £6.0.0 for the stabling of the horse.

The defendant was represented by the Solicitor-General. The ultimate verdict for the Plaintiff was £16.15s. The hearing is also interesting because John Williamson, Stanfield's groom, gave evidence of Daniel Stanfield's presence at 'the expedition against the blacks' (1830).

Edmund Hobson, like Daniel, a recipient of a grant for land in Prince's Buildings, Rokeby, had resided with Daniel that year and also gave evidence.

Evidence was heard from John Ainsworth (Aimsworth, Harmsworth), Daniel's

half-brother, who was a drummer with the NSW Corps.²⁵ John enlisted in late 1794, presumably at the age of 9. He is believed to have fathered a child by Sarah Wheeler in 1805, and mother and child are believed to have left with him for Van Diemen's Land when he transferred to the 73rd Regiment in 1810. He left for Ceylon with the regiment in April 1814 and ultimately was discharged and returned to Hobart in September 1820.

In spite of his good army record and an established breeding herd of cattle, he was unable to obtain a land grant. He did not marry but spent his life with Daniel Stanfield Jnr., dying at Clarence Plains on 21 September 1860.²⁶

The Harmsworth name is important to the historical record of Australia. Thomas Harmsworth (1787-1788) was the first recorded male child death in the Colony, whilst his brother John was the last known male survivor of the First Fleet in Australia. Both were born of free parents.²⁷

John is believed to have been buried in St. Matthew's Churchyard, Rokeby. Sadly, there is no headstone.²⁸

At the 1828 meeting of Clarence Plains parishioners where the resolution to build a church was made, Daniel Stanfield made a pledge to 'supply a team whenever his farming affairs are not urgent'.

Ten years later he again made a similar pledge and donated a contribution in cash. The church was finally opened in 1843, the Stanfield family having donated the interior roofing timber.²⁹

Fruit trees were sent out from the Colonial Office and in December 1828 the Horticultural Society of Edinburgh reported that seedling apples raised by Mr. D. Stanfield of Clarence Plains (one of the first free settlers of Van Diemen's Land) had been transmitted to the Committee in early September.

It seems these apples, of beautiful appearance, some with the circumference of a foot, being picked on 15 April, had passed through the tropics and were too much decayed to assess. Daniel was the first person to export apples from Van Diemen's Land.³⁰

At the end of 1830 he was assigned a convict gardener at *Clarendon House*. This was Joseph Pedder who had arrived on the *Southworth* having been sentenced to life imprisonment and transportation, for assisting in a highway robbery.³¹ He remained at *Clarendon* for a considerable time.

In 1839 Joseph received his 'ticket of leave' and in August of that year requested permission to marry Ann Brimmer, a free person. Marry they did, on 10 September.

On 22 December 1841 he was pardoned on condition that he was not to return to England. Joseph and Ann farmed at Muddy Plains, now known as Sandford, in the 1840s and as their family grew to ten children he leased, from Askin Morrison in the 1870s, a property of 600 acres known as *Rosny Farm*. His sons Walter and Charles continued to run the Rosny property until the turn of the century.

During Joseph's life at Kangaroo Bay he established himself as a respected citizen, a staunch member of the Trade Union Club, an avid supporter of ploughing matches, a champion slow bowler in cricket and strongly followed the Liberal Government.

He became ill and hospitalised and after treatment returned home, where despite the greatest care he passed away on 13 April 1883. Joseph was buried in St. Matthew's Churchyard, Rokeby.

His *Mercury* obituary read:

'he was one of the oldest and most respected residents in the Clarence district ... all business men in Hobart during the last Century knew and respected the deceased who by frugality, industry and perseverance overcame the difficulties a pioneer settler has to contend with during critical times'.³²

Joseph was typical of many in the early days of Clarence Plains, arriving as a convict, working hard, bettering themselves as they moved from district to district and ending their lives as valued members of the settlement.

Daniel Stanfield sold his 2 acres with 'mill and right of road' to Thomas Garrett and finally moved from his corner of Ralph's Bay to the tip of the promontory of Droughty Point.

An advertisement dated 10 April 1853 in the name of J. Chipman, Clarence Plains read:

'To be let, WITH IMMEDIATE POSSESSION - That delightfully situated Cottage. THE PRESENT RESIDENCE of D. Stanfield Esq, with 150 acres of the most fertile land, situated at the extreme end of Drouthy Point, within 6 miles of Hobart Town... This little farm cannot be surpassed in the production of onions, potatoes and all kinds of vegetables. The present tenant took upwards of five hundred pounds worth of onions off 4 acres of land last year... The farm has the advantage of water carriage from the spot'.³³

Daniel died in 1856, a far-sighted and energetic early settler and a good farmer. His estate was valued at \$ 5,500. He is buried in St. Matthew's Churchyard Rokeby, along with his wife Maria who died, at Droughty Point, in 1851.

What of *Clarendon*, his property? Daniel's son, his second son with the name Daniel, the first having died in infancy, had married Elizabeth Sarah Morrisby, daughter of Knopwood's ward Betsy Morrisby (née Mack). They remained to work and live at *Clarendon* and, like Daniel Jnr., added to it. Daniel died in 1902, and his wife in 1909, and both are buried in St. Matthew's Cemetery.

When Joseph H. Reynolds, great great grandson of Daniel Stanfield I, purchased *Clarendon* in 1912 it contained 1040 acres. The property became noted for its fat lambs, its 20 acre apricot orchards, as well as 9 acres of apples and pears, whilst it produced 100-200 tons of chaff annually.³⁴ Joseph Reynolds died in July 1965, whilst the home *Clarendon* was totally destroyed in the 1967 bushfires.

- 1 Gillen, p.253.
- 2 Chipman family documents.
- 3 D.V.Webster et al. *Stanfield Saga*, p.20.
- 4 No. 48 ZF 318 PRO London.
- 5 Nobbs p.123.
- 6 Quoted in Nobbs p.88.
- 7 Evans, J. *One Acre of Van Diemen's Land: Mark Carter and Henry Selwyn, convict farmers of Clarence Plains in the early 1800s*, p.21.
- 8 HRA 3,1, p.573.
- 9 AOT: LSD 354: Vol. 2. p. 38 (140 acres); LSD 354: Vol. 2. p. 430 (40 acres).
- 10 Alexander, A. (ed.) *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, p.82.
- 11 HRA 3,3, pp.576-7.
- 12 HRA 3,3, p.358.
- 13 HRA 3,3, pp.361-2, 598.
- 14 AOT: AD 960/1/1 No. 36 p.64
- 15 Schaffer, and McKay, T. *Exiled! Three Times Over*; Appendix II. p.223.
- 16 HTG 21.8.1819.
- 17 Gillen, p.367.
- 18 HTG 9.8.1844 p.931; HTG 24.12.1844 pp.1490,1549.
- 19 Macquarie, L. *Journal to and from Van Diemen's Land to Sydney in New South Wales. 4 November 1811- 6 January 1812*, Saturday 23.11.1811.
- 20 Macquarie, L. *Journal*, 23.11.1811.
- 21 Schaffer, *Land Musters*, p.145.
- 22 Clarence (Tas.) Council. *Spirit of Clarence: a Tasmanian Community*, p.42.
- 23 Anon., *Daniel Stanfield (-1826)*, ADB Vol. 2. pp.469-470; HRA 3,3, p.576.
- 24 CT 19.5.1826
- 25 Wright, R. *Forgotten Generation*, p.163.
- 26 Gillen, p.160.
- 27 Gillen, *Founder's*, Appendix 9, p.449.
- 28 D.V.Webster et al. *Stanfield Saga*, p.17.
- 29 Arnold, F. V. R. *St. Matthew's of Clarence Plains, 1843-1993*, p.22.
- 30 CT 3.7.1829.
- 31 AOT: CON 31/35.
- 32 Material sourced from Graeme Pedder records, 2007; MacFie, *Stock Thieves....*
- 33 HT Advertiser 18.4.1853.
- 34 *Cyclopedia of Tasmania* 1931, 'Joseph.H.Reynolds' p.257.

Chapter 12

The Rokeby Mill

Flour milling is regarded as civilisation's oldest known industry. The technique of grinding the grain between two stone surfaces removed the fibrous skin and ground the remainder into a fine powder. Saddle stones, or pestles and mortars were used.¹ These methods were used by our traditional owners, selecting natural stones, and by our early settlers. Stone hand mills were called querns and were of various designs. 40 steel hand mills were thoughtfully brought out from Britain with the First Fleet.

From these simple implements the use of rotary stone mills developed. As the size of the mill stones increased, animal, water and wind power was harnessed. William the Conqueror's *Domesday Book* in 1086 listed over 5,600 watermills, and by 1300 the number of mills was about 12,000, including windmills. For our new settlement no such luxuries were immediately available. The inadequacy of the hand methods for producing the amount of flour for this growing settlement did not escape the eyes of both Government and enterprising settlers.

As early as 18 December 1805, Governor Collins had written to Earl Camden, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, demanding materials for a watermill, to be executed at Hobart – and pointing out that he had 2 people, one a prisoner, who were capable of constructing it. He received no reply and no materials.²

There should be no real mystery about our settlers' knowledge of mill building; no past memories of milling neighbours in England were needed. Lt. Governor King in his account of the settlement on Norfolk Island on his departure in 1796 reported that the water mill was grinding 20 bushels of wheat daily and 'two well-finished windmills had also been erected by settlers'.³

One of the builders of these mills was Robert Nash, a convict carpenter who came from generations of millers in Kent, England. He arrived from Norfolk Island on the *City Of Edinburgh* in 1808. He is assumed to have brought a pair of millstones (each weighing 1.5 tons) with him. Early after his arrival he commenced to erect a watermill on the New Town Rivulet. Unfortunately the almost completed mill was washed away in 1809 in a large flood.⁴

Nash had been promised 10 acres on the Hobart Rivulet, above Molle St, so once again he commenced a watermill, with the assistance this time of two contracted

carpenters. This mill became known as the 'Old Mill'. This mill was sold in 1814 to Arnold Fisk, another miller, and Nash moved to his 200 acre grant at Pitt Water (Sorell).

Van Diemen's Land's first windmill was built on this grant, in 1815. Lieutenant Colonel Davey, in May 1815, had written to Governor Macquarie asking for 'millstones for Robert Nash's post windmill, already built at Sorell'. The millstones were sent down in December 1816. The only payment was for Nash to grind wheat for the government, when required, at not more than 1 shilling per bushel, until his debt was liquidated.⁵

It should be noted that the words 'built', 'complete' and 'readiness', do not indicate a working mill. The crucial term in this chronology is the date of commencement 'to grind'.

The Hobart Town Gazette of 8 June 1816 noted: '*Much Credit is due to Mr. Robert Nash, Settler, at Pitt Water, also to Mr. Daniel Stanfield, Settler, at Clarence Plains, for having in progress and in a state of forwardness a Windmill each on their respective farms, for the accommodation of their own families and their neighbours...*'⁶

By February 1817 it was announced that Robert Nash's mill, 'the first windmill erected in this Settlement' had started to grind.⁷ The mill fittings had arrived in January 1817.

The *Sydney Gazette* revealed in May 1817 that the first windmill in Van Diemen's Land had been completed by Mr. Robert Nash, at Pitt Water and was 'likely to fulfil every expectation that had been formed of its utility'. Sadly Robert Nash died on 19 March 1819. There is no evidence to suggest his mill was used past this date, although it may have been dismantled and used by Richard Downward who had erected a post mill in The Circle at Sorell by 1830.

A post windmill built by William and Nathaniel Lucas, sons of the convict Nathaniel Lucas, one of the Landing party on Norfolk Island, at Port Dalrymple was reported about to grind the first bushel on Whit Monday, 1817, and that 'the steel mills and hand stones will have a respite from their laborious exercise'.⁸

In Clarence Plains, Daniel Stanfield's post windmill, built on the 2 acres provided by his father-in-law Edward Kimberley, started to grind in March 1818.⁹ This was not the first mill to operate as is often quoted, but the third.

The windmill was sorely needed, as previously the farmer was obliged to take large quantities of grain to Hobart for milling. The food shortages on the western shore and the influx of settlers to the eastern shore encouraged the development of a prosperous and established farming community, often referred to as the 'hay-loft of Hobart Town'.

Footprints

A muster of the inhabitants of the Clarence Plains region in 1823 revealed there were 468 inhabitants comprising convicts and assigned servants, free settlers and individuals who had been fully or conditionally pardoned. At this time nearly 9,000 acres were being farmed, and the produce recorded for the area included wheat, barley, potatoes, peas, beans, oats, orchard fruits, cattle, sheep and swine. During 1823 and 1824 the district provided many thousands of bushels of wheat to the NSW colony that was suffering an acute grain shortage.¹⁰ Grain was even exported to the new colony at the Swan River W.A. A good working windmill was indeed an asset to the community.

By 1827, Daniel Stanfield announced:

*‘that having just completed the construction of a Windmill upon his farm at Clarence Plains, he is prepared to grind wheat for individuals at one shilling, or twelve pounds of wheat per bushel. The mechanism of the work has been planned and executed by Mr. Peter Ferguson, and flour of the best character has already been produced’.*¹¹

This Millwright had arrived in the colony on 20 January 1824 on the ship *Triton*, from Leith, Scotland, via Tenneriffe.¹²

From an examination of photographs of the mill, it is apparent that extensive alterations were carried out at the same time, including the installation of a second set of millstones.¹³



Rokeby Mill and Millhouse c.1900

On the death of Edward Kimberley in 1829, Daniel inherited the 2 acre site containing the mill and millhouse together with a 'Right of Road' over Kimberley's land.¹⁴

In 1847 Daniel sold his Mill. Thomas Garrett, miller, purchased the two acre site containing the mill and millhouse for £200. He paid an extra five shillings to William Kimberley for the 'Right of Road' over his land.¹⁵

After Thomas Garrett died, on 22 April 1853, his executors, who included William McRobie, miller of McRobie's Gully, and Moses Linton, sold the property to another miller Frederick Vigar, for £700. Frederick owned the Albion Mill on New Town Rivulet. The advertisement for the 18 July 1854 auction, reminded the public that John Barker Insley held a 14 year lease on the windmill dated 26 July 1850.¹⁶ The rental was £45 per year.¹⁷

Far away in place and time, a prosperous builder and brickmaker, John Collins, born 1735, purchased a property in Gosport, on the western side of Portsmouth Harbour, England. Possibly because of much earlier monastic connections it was called the *Hermitage*.

Of his three children, it is a daughter Mary, born in 1771 who is part of our story. Mary married William Vigar, the miller at the local Brockhurst Mill in 1789. Her father died in 1818 and it is thought probable that Mary and William moved in with Mary's mother, also called Mary. By that time Mary and William had 12 children, the youngest being only two. Four months after John, William died.

In April 1824, their fifth son Uriah, then aged 18 and apprenticed to a local surgeon, was tried at Portsmouth Quarter Session, for stealing a large quantity of silks, sarsnets etc. He pled guilty, and was transported to Van Diemen's Land for seven years. His older brothers William and Thomas were also indicted, but were acquitted on a technical issue.¹⁸

Uriah served his term and became a Government clerk in the Engineers Barracks, Hobart. He then settled in a property at Pitt Water, *Hampden Park*. By 1840 three of his brothers, James, Frederick and Thomas, had arrived as free settlers. In 1843 Uriah had met and married Maria Stanfield, the second daughter of Daniel Stanfield Jnr. Their daughter Mary was born in 1844. Uriah died in 1846 and his widow Maria married his brother Frederick, owner of *Woodside* farm near Pitt Water.¹⁹ He was described as elector of New Town, freeholder, miller.

Thomas, a miller like his father William, operated the Cascade Flour Mills on Hobart Rivulet and died in 1850, whilst James was involved with the Waterloo Mill in Collins Street on the Hobart Rivulet, and owned acreage at Kingston.

Back in Gosport, brother John, following his father as miller at Brockhurst Mill, became a man of some importance in the town, owning not only the mill, its shop, bakeries, piggeries and stables but also Vigar's Cottages in Mill Rd. and a shop in the High Street. Mary Vigar died in 1854, leaving her property to her daughter Maria, and after that to her son George.

Maria and her brother George lived on at the *Hermitage* for another 30 years. In the Census of 1861 two households occupy the *Hermitage*; in one Frederick Vigar, aged 55, land proprietor, is shown as head of the household and his wife is Maria, née Stanfield, aged 43, born in Tasmania. The other household consists of Frederick's sister Maria and her brother George, and a 13 year old domestic servant.²⁰

The Burial Register of the Parish of Alverstoke, County of Southampton, shows the burial of Maria Vigar of the *Hermitage* on 23 September 1861, whilst her husband Frederick died on 8 February 1865 at Ardra, Knockane, Kerry, Eire. His personal property, consisting of five shares in the Derwent and Tamar Assurance Company was left to his step-daughter Mary Elizabeth O'Callaghan.²¹

Although his name was recorded as owning the mill for many years after his death, this seems to have severed the connection of the Stanfields with the *Rokeby Mill*.

The mill, according to the report of the death of Christopher Calvert of South Arm was still operating in July 1876.²² The millhouse had several occupants, but was destroyed by fire in 1900 and the stripped and deteriorating mill blew down in heavy winds in 1908.²³ The nearby point is now known as Mill Point.

This story shows the interesting connection of the English Vigar family, from the early days of Tasmania with mills at Gosport, England, the Cascade, Waterloo and Rokeby Flour Mills in Van Diemen's Land.

The post mill, which derives its name by being supported on top of a vertical post, on which the mill can be turned to face the wind, was not, and still is not uncommon in European countries. It was intended to be demountable, although that exercise, not uncommon, must have been a huge task. The *Rokeby Mill*, like Nash's Mill at Pitt Water, was a boon to both the farmers and the population in general, thanks to the far sightedness of our early colonists.

The only obvious trace of this important part of Hobart's history remains in the Jardinelle pear trees which exist on the property. These were known as Regatta pears, as their fruit matured at the time that the local regatta was then held. It is believed that the pear wood was useful in maintaining the mill.

Daniel was a successful and far-sighted farmer who contributed greatly to the area of Clarence Plains and the town of Hobart. Without his endeavours it is doubtful

whether the settlement could have continued and ultimately the township of Rokeby develop. His Mill is the logo for the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail*.

- 1 Historical Development of Flour Milling, Australian Wheat Board – Website.
- 2 HRA 3,1, pp.343-344.
- 3 D. Collins Vol.1. pp.510-511.
- 4 Green, F.C. *Nash, Robert (1771-1819)*, ADB Vol. 2. pp.278-279.
- 5 HRA 3, 2, p.171 (19): Green. F.C. ADB Vol. 2. pp.278-9.
- 6 HTG 8.6.1816.
- 7 HTG 8.2.1817.
- 8 HTG 17.5.1817.
- 9 HTG 7.3.1818.
- 10 Sinclair Knight Merz. *Clarence Plains Catchment Management Plan: final report*.
- 11 HTC 24.11.1827.
- 12 HTG 23.10 1824.
- 13 Bruce Andrew 2002.
- 14 AOT: AD 960/1/1 No. 36 p.64 (Kimberley).
- 15 AOT: R.D. 3/3772.
- 16 H.T.C 3.7.1854; RD 4/168.
- 17 Cassidy, J & Preston, K. *Thematic Study of the Tasmanian Flour Milling Industry*.
- 18 *Hampshire Telegraph, U.K.* 11.4.1825.
- 19 HTC 13.3.45.
- 20 Information on *Vigar* Family – Pat Edwards, The Hermitage, Gosport, U.K.
- 21 AOT:AD 960/1/17 No. 3357 p.182 (Vigar).
- 22 Robb, E. *Christopher Calvert (1809-1876)*, p.102
- 23 Cassidy, & Preston, *Thematic Study*....

Chapter 13

Rokeby Hills

Formerly called Clarence Hills, these hills were at one stage completely, but lightly, forested. The southern end is the Droughty Promontory, shown as Point Eliza in Hayes chart of 1798, the headland for the south-western extension of the Meehan Range. The highest point is Droughty Hill at 152m.

The word ‘drought’ or its archaic form ‘drouth’ means dryness, lack of moisture, and is descriptive of the climate of what is called Droughty Point today. The prevailing winds are from the south west, hence the predominance of the devastating agricultural weed, serrated tussock, along the ridgeline.

Winds and erosion have undoubtedly helped shape this prominence which is far steeper on the eastern side than on the west and the land over the years has been largely denuded of its original vegetation but still maintains some native vegetation in remnants of she-oak and eucalypt stands, prickly box, blackwoods, wallaby and spear grass, and native tussock grasses.

The discerning eye will discover sun orchids, sundew, native cranberry, buzzy, woodruff and pussy tail. The threatened New Holland Daisies can also be found. And unfortunately the European agricultural weeds such as Boneseed, Horehound, Boxthorn, Sweet Briar and the dread Serrated Tussock also abound. Droughty Point is not without its native fauna and avifauna. Here eagles fly, using the thermals high above the bald hills. The grasslands support ground nesting birds as well as swallows, raptors, magpies and raven; whilst insectivores are to be found in the she-oak forest. The spring fed dams are a breeding ground for water-fowl, and the beaches support birds such as gulls, cormorants, oystercatchers, sea eagles and little penguin. Eastern-barred bandicoot, mountain dragon, skinks and snakes are known here.

The area contains items of significance at a state level, in the three volcanic plugs on the ridgeline. It is prone to tunnel erosion, eroded gullies, landslip and soil creep.

Notwithstanding its problems, the promontory of Droughty Point is considered a place of meaningful natural and cultural values, the most obvious being the dramatic landform. It is a prominent landmark in the Derwent Estuary because it is now almost treeless, which attracts the attention and curiosity of visitors. It is

assumed that this is a result not only of the Tryworks (qv), but also the long term agricultural and pastoral pursuits, wood collecting for the early steamers and the known weekend wood gatherers who boated across the Derwent.¹

Governor Macquarie made 2 grants of land in 1813, and a further in 1820 to members of the Garth family. A brief description of the grant to Edward Garth Jnr. follows:

'Bounded on the East by John Garth's Farm, bearing North 26 Chains 50 links, on the North by a West line of 20 chains to the Derwent River, and on the West and South sides by the river and entrance to Ralph's Bay'.

The middle grant to John Garth was followed on the Ralph's Bay side by a grant to Edward Snr. These three grants are listed with the Tasmanian Heritage Council, and have not been altered from the original grants.

From 1813 grants on the promontory were also made to Edward Westlake, John Gibson, and in 1823, William Garth and Richard Westlake. Michael Lackey, stepson of Joseph Chipman, obtained Crown grants, the last in 1838.

Michael Lackey obviously had a vision. Over the years between 1820 and 1843 he managed to lease, then purchase, all of the land held by these grantees. He acquired a total of 575 acres including at least one dwelling house, 'erections and buildings', enclosures and crops at a cost of £3045. His holding totalled 788 acres but after bounding and fencing measured more like 880 acres. It was common for government surveyors pegging out grants to allow an extra 10% to ensure the correct entitlement.

His biggest purchase, that of the Gibson land, had the following settlement terms - £500 paid as part consideration and the balance £2000 + interest of 10% - the term one thousand years! The purchase was finalised after Gibson's death on 1 January 1839, and just before Lackey's own in 1843.

All these grantees came from Norfolk Island and the standard Macquarie grant included the following conditions:

'... that the Grantee..... shall in no wise either directly or indirectly Sell, Alienate, or Transfer any part or Parcel of the Land hereby granted, within the said term of Five Years; And, also provided always, that the said..... shall Clear and Cultivate, or cause to be Cleared and Cultivated within the said term of Five Years, the quantity of..... Acres of the said Land hereby Granted; Otherwise the Whole of the said Land shall revert to the Crown, and the Grant hereby made thereof shall be held and deemed NULL and VOID), and saving and reserving to Government the Right of making a Public Road through such part of the said land, as may at any time be

required; such timber as may be growing, or that may grow hereafter upon the said Lands, which may be deemed fit for Naval Purposes to be Reserved for the Use of the Crown...

The grants of John Gibson and others from Norfolk Island bore a hand written note rescinding the 'Clauses in relation to Selling, Alienating, Cultivating or Clearing' in compensation for lands relinquished on Norfolk Island.²

John Gibson was a Scottish convict transported on the *Pitt* in 1792. After his time on Norfolk Island he embarked for Van Diemen's Land on the *City Of Edinburgh* and was listed on the manifest as a third class settler with a wife, and having 16 acres of cleared and 14 of uncleared land on the island. He was granted 100 acres in both the years 1813 and 1823, and in the 1819 muster he is listed as holding 100 acres, with 67 in pasture, 30 in wheat, 2 in beans and 1 in potatoes. He had 20 cattle, 140 sheep, no wife or child, but had 2 government servants. He received his pardon in December 1816³ and died on 1 January 1839.

Edward Garth was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey in December 1784 for the theft of two live cows. Subsequently reprieved, he was transported to Port Jackson on the First Fleet ship *Scarborough*. Shortly afterwards he was selected as part of the group of convicts of the 'most tractable' nature, to commence another settlement.

And so, the orders of Governor Phillip having been carried out, selections having been made, and provisions loaded, Lieutenant Philip Gidley King with his small band set out on 14 February 1788 for Norfolk Island.

In the same group was Susannah Garth (aka Grah, Grates, Gough) born the same year as Edward, 1763. She came to the island via the *Mercury* transport to Torby, England in 1784, then after a convict mutiny to the *Dunkirk* prison hulk, then to the First Fleet ship *Friendship*. She was later transferred to another ship of that fleet, the *Charlotte* at Rio, described as one of the '*Six Very best Women we have in the Ship....the(y) are the only Women that can wash amongst them*'.⁴ The fifteen convicts in the settling party also included Edward Westlake who had been found guilty of the theft of mutton and also transported on the *Charlotte*.

Susannah and Edward Garth reared a large family together and when they embarked for Van Diemen's Land on the *Porpoise*, they left behind buildings, livestock and crops, as did Edward Westlake who came on the *City of Edinburgh* with his wife Ann Wood and their six children.⁵

Both Edwards served as members of the night watch in their area and in 1804 Edward Garth was acting gaoler at the settlement. In this role he was accosted by John Morris who repeatedly stabbed him with a six-inch blade then attempted to

cut the throat of his lady Sarah Bird. Constable Joseph Symonds (aka Simmonds; Chipman) came to Garth's aid and finally captured Morris. Both Garth and Bird survived.

Morris, under the supervision of the acting Governor of the Island, was cruelly flogged, dowsed in salt water, beaten in the face breaking his jaw, and had irons with red hot rivets placed on his legs. He was 6 years later sentenced to three years hard labour and was to remain in NSW for the rest of his life.⁶ Morris is shown on the *City of Edinburgh* manifest, having been sentenced to death three different times - 'a turbulent bad character'.⁷

The grants at Clarence Plains were made to Edward and his sons, Edward, John, William and James, but the family settled in the Queenborough (now the Sandy Bay) area. Today, from the Eastern Shore looking over the Derwent we can see the John Garrow light, on a rocky outcrop, near the spot that used to be called 'Garth's Bank' - a fishing bank. Blinking Billy Point, originally 'Garth's Point', was part of Edward Garth's 33 acres grant.⁸

Edward Westlake and his son Richard had the other grants, later owned by Michael Lackey. There is no evidence of any buildings other than those of Edward and Richard Westlake. Edward Garth died in 1823 aged 55, Susannah in 1841 aged 78 and Edward Westlake in 1818 aged 77.⁹

Michael Lackey, who purchased all this land, came to Van Diemen's Land from Norfolk Island on the *City of Edinburgh*. He is shown on the embarkation list Michael Burn/Chipman¹⁰ as a child of Catherine Burns¹¹ who was also known as Burn/Byrne. Whilst Catherine is listed as 'wife' to Joseph Chipman, the latter was not Michael's father. It is not known when or why Michael took the name Lackey but his 30 acres (1813) grant on the Clarence Plains Rivulet was under that name.

Michael married Mary Kimberley, the third daughter of Edward Kimberley and his wife Mary, on 2 September 1816. They were aged 19 and 18 years respectively. In 1843, by his Will, he was known to have land at Bagdad, Blackman's River, Eastern Marshes, a dwelling and land in Hamden Road, Hobart Town and real estate in Macquarie St. next to the Stone Buildings.¹² Lackey's Mill at Bagdad was nominated as forming one end of portion of the notorious Black Line devised for 'the purpose of capturing those hostile tribes of Natives'.¹³

The Clarence Plains property was inherited by his son William, who died in September 1846 at the then Melbourne home of Doctor Francis Desailly. The property eventually passed to Michael's step-brother Joseph Chipman, and over 100 years of Chipman ownership commenced.¹⁴

It is not known who built the farmhouse on the area called *Droughty Point Farm*, but by 1924 the property was in the hands of Donald Chipman, great grandson of Joseph Chipman II. Donald's son Basil, an inveterate letter writer, who contributed so much to our knowledge of Rokeby in the 1940s, recorded some of his memories of the Droughty property during 17 years of living there.¹⁵

It was an idyllic but hard farming life, rearing and shearing up to 2800 sheep and baling the wool, using the 'leg stomping' method. There was relief from the latter when in 1944 a shearing machine and wool press were purchased. Basil remembered the crops – wheat, oats, barley, tomatoes, onions, pumpkins, mangles and blue peas. The 'three horse' plough, pulled by *Punch*, *Nugget* and *Jack* compared most favourably with earlier times when ploughs were pulled by convict labour. [The author in 1992 saw ploughs pulled by up to three women on farms in China]. Harvest time was a busy time, everyone lent a hand. Ted Chipman would arrive in his steam traction engine to thresh the wheat and press the oat hay into bales. The family income was dependent totally on the sale of wool and wheat crops, and cash sales of produce at the Hobart markets.

The mangle crops were chopped up and fed to the cows, and there was plenty of work for the children with milking, cream and butter making, feeding the horses, dogs and chooks – not for them the luxury of a milking shed. Up to 250 eggs laid each week certainly assisted the budget, as did the sales of fowl and duck at Christmas. Poultry was in those days a very expensive item. The four children trapped the many rabbits, ate the meat, and the skins were sold along with those of the possums. Fishing off Gypsy Shoal was a regular event.

They watched the seals basking on Trywork Point and the fairy penguins in the Ralph's Bay side colony. They had the excitement of seeing the hired rubber tyred tractor heading home after heavy rain and learned it had slid down a track onto Ralph's Bay Beach, driver and all. The tractor that Don later purchased did not have rubber tyres!

During World War II the family made plans for their own defence, and the defence department checked out the area too. The rumour was that they were surveying Ralph's Bay for a flying boat base. Basil had started school at Rokeby Public School and stayed with his grandparents in Rokeby Village.

A rotary hoe had arrived in 1943, and in 1944 the farm was producing 3000 bushels, the largest wheat producer in Tasmania. The farm had at stages employed farm hands but in 1943 two Italian Prisoners of War arrived, Rosario Chianchello (sic) and Enrico Barone. Basil recalled the excellent singing of Rosario who claimed to have been a chef in Cairo. He took over the role of cook when Mrs. Chipman had a severe stroke. Prisoner of War records do not list this man but a Rosario Chiarello,

a former Italian labourer. Enrico Barone, on the other hand was previously a farmer of Italian origin, captured in the Middle East in 1941 and interned at Brighton, Tasmania. He had told Basil he was a Calabrian. A great help on the farm, and, for Basil, friends that he missed in later years.¹⁶

Prisoners of war were brought out to Tasmania because of the wartime labour shortage. They were reputedly clad in red to be easily seen if they absconded.¹⁷

In 1947 the farm was leased to Archibald Logan Wise of Mt. Rumney and eventually purchased. On 3 October 1950 during a protracted claim for an application for a Grant of portion of this land, a report by the Staff Surveyor Land & Survey Department stated, in relation to an access road to the land concerned, 'if present local trends continue such a road would be used as frontage for sub-division of building allotments'.¹⁸

The land use over the years did not change from the original pastoral and agricultural pursuits, and remained for many years in its original grant titles.

The three southernmost ones, still intact, were permanently entered on the Tasmanian Heritage Register in 2001. *Droughty Point Farm* where the farmhouse and outbuildings were on the eastern side is of historical significance because of its long association with the Chipman family – a prominent family in the region, and *William Collins Bay Whaling Station* [at Trywork Point on the western side] because it represents the first bay whaling station established in Tasmania and probably Australasia.¹⁹ There are also extensive midden sites around the shoreline and on the edges of the promontory itself.

An early reference to the name 'Droughty' is found in Robert Knopwood's diary entry of 31 July 1833: '*I rode to Muddy Plains. See Mr. Seymore on the way by Stanfield's. He was going to Droughty Point*'. Mr. Seymore was a surveyor.²⁰ An agreement, dated 26 June 1843, between William Lackey and Joseph Chipman, refers to the estate at Droughty Point, to be leased for 5 years at £200 per annum.²¹ In 1898, valuation documents used both 'Drouthy' and 'Droughty' Point. However the *Cyclopedia of Tasmania* 1900 p.166 refers to Drouthy Point. Today we compromise by spelling the area as Droughty and pronouncing the name as Drouthy.

By the 1990s the farm had a new owner, Bert Carr, and the development of Droughty Point would shortly commence. Bert Carr was once a station manager for Sidney Kidman (later Sir Sidney), the 'Cattle King'.

Kidman (1857-1935) ran away from home as a barely literate thirteen year old and worked as an odd job boy in a grog shanty in outback Australia. He became Australia's greatest pastoral holder, and obtained wealth, power and honours.

He remained a homespun, gregarious bushman for whom his men showed fierce loyalty in his vision for the remote arid areas of the inland. Bert Carr was one of these men, manager at Nundoorra, between Wilcannia and Innaminka. He was much respected and mentioned in Les Daley's poem *Kidman's Boys 1932*.²²

From 2000 the coastal land on the western side of Drouthy commenced to fulfil man's ever-increasing thirst for house and land with a grand water and mountain view.

The flats and lower slopes of the Rokeby Hills north of the farm were largely cleared for agricultural purposes by our early settlers but upper slopes were characterised by intact, weed-free native forests - grassy White Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) and Black Peppermint (*E.amygdalina*) forest with significant stands of the rare Risdon Peppermint (*E.risdonii*) and large areas of Blue Gum (*E.globulus*), habitat for the threatened Swift Parrot. These wooded hills form part of the skyline of Hobart.²³ On the eastern side of the hills is Skillion Hill, another landscape feature of great significance.²⁴

Small grants were made to Norfolk Islanders such as Atkins and Proctor, Waterson, Phillimore, Pillinger, Maum, Joseph, Carter, Harris and Cham, along the banks of the Clarence Plains Rivulet, then called the 'Chain of Ponds', and to Ralph Dodge, whose name is reflected in Dodge's Ferry. James Garth and Andrew Goodwin had land in the area of the Rokeby Hills near the Saltmarsh at the mouth of the Rivulet, but they did not work it. The land eventually became part of a 200 acre farm drawn from grants to Bedell, Munday, Fowles and Parrott. A two roomed timber cottage of unknown age received a late Victorian extension when the land was owned by John and Margaret Smith of Dulcot, grandparents of Mrs. Keith Luckman. The kitchen and wash-house were external and even in the 1950s, when occupied by John and Irene Greatbatch (née Free), there was no electricity or running water. This dairying property known as *Rosehill* was ravaged in the 1967 bushfires.²⁵ Only a large sheep dip remains, near a walking track on the Rokeby Hills ridgeline.

William Atkins, who held no land on Norfolk Island and was not therefore entitled to a grant in compensation, was described in the *Estramina* embarkation report as: '*A very honest deserving character having served the Government many years in the character of constable, recommended for a grant of land and indulgences for his fidelity*'.

On 16 July 1810 William, a widower, married Mary Proctor (aka Allen/Connor), a widow with whom he had lived on Norfolk Island. She had obtained a Clarence Plains grant in her own right, adjacent to that of William.²⁶ Atkins was appointed poundkeeper for the district in 1816.²⁷ The 1819 Land and Stock Muster shows William farming 60 acres with 15 in wheat, 1 of barley, 44 in pasture, 2 cattle, 120 sheep.

Atkins also held a license in 1818-22 for the keeping of a Public House and vending of wines, spirits and beer. The house was known as *Chequers*.²⁸ There is no formal record after 1822.²⁹ 10 acres of the Atkins land was part of an agreement with William Cooper who cohabited with Elizabeth Thomas. (qv)

Lower on the Rivulet, near its mouth, was another Public House, the *Brown Cow Inn* c.1820, its builder unknown. Foundations of this building still exist under a horse stable on land farmed for many years by the Tollard family.

*‘In compensation for land relinquished by the grantee at Norfolk Island William Harris received Fifty five acres lying and situate in the district of Clarence Plains Van Diemen’s Land Bounded on the east by seven chains of Morrisby’s farm bearing north ten degrees east – on the north side by Chaffey’s farm bearing west ten degrees north forty four chains fifty links – on the west side by a salt water creek and on the south side by Ralph’s Bay’.*³⁰

Different maps have attributed this land to others from time to time; nevertheless the description includes the Tollard land. The late Athol Tollard gave a piece of the foundation of the *Brown Cow Inn* to this Landcare group to preserve in a seat on Crown land further upstream on the Rivulet. The Inn was reputed to have been visited by early seamen from ships anchored in Ralph’s Bay, when the rivulet was navigable for small boats.

The saltmarsh which borders the Rivulet at this point forms a unique habitat that supports both freshwater and marine plants and animals. It plays an important part in cleansing the waterway and provides food for birds such as white faced heron, egrets, pied oystercatchers and red necked stints. The occasional pelican or visiting black swan may be seen.³¹

Not all of the Norfolk Islanders remained on their grants; some were consolidated with others, some relocated or sold over the years. One who managed a huge consolidation of land in Clarence Plains was William Maum.

William James Maum (1780-1850) was an Irish political prisoner who arrived in the *Minerva* in January 1800. He was believed to be a teacher of Latin and Greek, educated at Trinity College, Dublin. As a Protestant he became involved in the Wicklow Rising of 1798; he was transported to NSW where he was allowed to farm until 1804. After falling foul of Governor King he was sent to Norfolk Island where he was initially treated as a convict. After submissions to Viscount Castlereagh in May 1806 he was eventually allowed to leave Norfolk on 26 December 1807 although he was not allowed to return to Port Jackson.³²

Arriving on the *Porpoise* on 17 January 1808, in famine stricken Hobart, Maum shortly wrote to his 'dear friend' Robert Nash of the hardships endured on the voyage, particularly by the stock

He commented on the smooth voyage, and the cramped conditions for the numbers on board, and delivered a warning about the water rations for both humans and stock. The settlers were divided into watches, which would not be pleasant in the winter, however this enabled the women and children to use the rooms of those on watch. Some 75 sheep were placed in the long boat, and each owner looked after his own. Maum had obtained a sufficient supply of water which his 16 sheep drank competently from a bottle. Of the others, less than half survived.

He had made friends with Manby, the stockkeeper in Hobart, who had the shell of a good house, which, when finished, could be available to Nash for £150. Manby also suggested that Nash bring down 12 young ewes (more would be overcrowded), 4-5 sows, in pig if possible, his millstones and mill works, hoes and other tools. Meanwhile they would look for a good fall of water, for a watermill, possibly at Herdsman's Cove.³³

Resettled in Hobart Town, William Maum is not shown in the 1809 General Muster Returns, but in 1810 he was made assistant in the commissariat in Hobart Town. Granted a conditional pardon by Governor Macquarie in 1813, he paid a brief visit to NSW and returned to Hobart and was government store-keeper for two years from 1814 to 1816.³⁴

The Land and Stock Muster Van Diemen's Land of 1819 shows Maum with grants totalling 450 acres, growing some wheat, beans and potatoes, with 395 acres of pasture, 4 horses, 75 cattle, 300 sheep. He also has a wife, 2 children and 2 government servants.³⁵ He seems to have acquired neighbouring grants not taken up, including James Garth's 80 acres near the rivulet mouth. He had an agreement with Edwin Boulton, Chief Constable for Clarence Plains District, and poundkeeper, in relation to this land which Boulton farmed.³⁶ However in 1829 Boulton and family moved to St. Paul's River. To the north Maum's land included the Phillimore grant. He warned trespassers not to pass through his farm at Clarence Plains 'particularly on the farm called Phillimore's as the King's Road is open'.³⁷

Maum's life was not without a bit of excitement – in 1816 he was involved, together with Lt. Edward Lord and the Deputy Assistant Commissary General Patrick Hogan, in a profitable plan to alter the food issue records. The scheme was exposed by Hogan's replacement William Broughton, but the trial did not proceed. Broughton gives us an insight into the corruption rife in the settlement in a letter to Macquarie just after his arrival:

*'The roguery, which has been carried on at this ill-fated Settlement, is beyond all calculation, and were there but six honest Men to be found in it, I have no doubt but such a scene of villainy would develop as would astonish the most hardened and depraved... but, how can it be expected otherwise, when the very heads, with but few exceptions, set the very worst examples'.*³⁸

The same year Maum had an encounter with bushrangers, and in 1817, when his farming was underway, his haystacks were destroyed by fire and he was involved in a fracas with Richard Lewis.³⁹ Later that year he faced the threat of his three farms, dwelling, barn and wheat, together with his crops and household furniture, being sold up unless his debts were liquidated, but he obviously survived.⁴⁰

It was reputed that, on the night of Governor Collins' sudden death, two of the leading officers went to his office and destroyed by fire all the official records.⁴¹ In 1835 William Maum was heard to testify to this event.⁴² Maum was regularly visited by Robert Knopwood, and, an Irishman through and through, enjoyed the thrill of racing his horses.

Later, at the northern end of the Rokeby Hills and along the Derwent coastline, other free settlers would arrive who would provide their own contributions to the story of Clarence Plains. These would be regularly visited by the Reverend Robert Knopwood who found the shore at the Chaplain's Glebe a convenient landing place.⁴³

When Commissioner Bigge passed through the Clarence Plains area in 1819 he remarked

*'The soil consists of a sandy loam... the timber hardly exceeds the proportion that would be requisite for ornament... the farms are here of a larger extent than in other districts of Van Diemen's Land. And the appearance of five or six of the farmhouses indicated attention to domestic comfort and agricultural improvement'.*⁴⁴

Sheltered between the two arms of the Meehan Range, the land in the middle and upper regions of the Rivulet was soon extensively cleared for agriculture. Native forest remnants were left in isolated stands along the flats and creek-lines, although some was soon replaced by European vegetation providing an interesting cultural landscape.

Norfolk Islanders Hugh McGuiness and Charlotte Simpson with their six children, John Boyle and his wife, Debra Davis and John Broughton, who married, like the McGuinesses, in Hobart in 1810, came on the *Estramina*. Another family, on the *City of Edinburgh* was to make its mark in Clarence for 200 more years. This was the family of convict Joseph Chipman, alias Simmonds, transported for life. His

wife was the convict Catherine Burn, also known as Burns, Byrne or Byrnes. She was listed on Norfolk Island in 1805 with children Michael and Joseph Burn, who was born in 1803 in Port Jackson. Another son John was born in 1808.

It is clear from the embarkation lists and the ship's manifest that young Joseph, aged little more than 5, was entitled to compensation for land relinquished at Norfolk Island and that his father was an individual holding no land there.⁴⁵ The family settled on a 75 acre grant on the bank of the Clarence Plains Rivulet opposite the Chaplain's Glebe.

The returns of the General Muster 1809⁴⁶ show the settler Joseph Chipman with a wife and three children on 75 acres with 4 in wheat, 1 in barley and 2 cattle. His last son Francis was also born that year. Joseph was granted a Free Pardon on 18 May 1813.⁴⁷ The day before his premature death on 7 March 1816, Joseph signed his Will acknowledging both his alias Simmonds, and his 'dear stepson' Michael Lackey, and leaving his sheep, bullocks, harness tackle etc. to his three natural sons to continue the work on the farm. Michael was to be given 30 ewes from the stock on his marriage, which took place later that year. Joseph Jnr. was bequeathed the farm on his maturity and John, the second son, the recently acquired adjoining farm of Debra Davis and John Broughton. Almost as an afterthought he left a portion to his wife. The will was witnessed by Frances Barnes the printer, Edward Kimberley and Hugh Magginis (sic).⁴⁸ The cost of John's new farm was £27/10/-.⁴⁹

By the Land and Stock Muster of 1819, Catherine held no land but 500 sheep; Joseph held the grant of 75 acres, and John and Francis had purchased land of 50 and 110 acres respectively. On their total holdings they had 177 acres in pasture, 56 in wheat, 1 in beans, 1 in that staple food, potatoes, 14 cattle, a further 1500 sheep. Joseph had 200 bushels of grain in hand and Catherine listed 2 children, John 11 and Francis 10; by now Joseph Jnr. was 16.⁵⁰

Of course, when the family commenced to settle on the block, there was clearing and building to be done. It is part of the family story that the bricks for the original house were made in a kiln on Daniel Stanfield's property *Clarendon*. Whilst the two families were obviously friends and later related, it is interesting to muse why Daniel should have a brick kiln and construct his own home out of timber.

The Chipman's may well have followed the normal pattern of other early settlers, living first on the land in a tent, then constructing a house of wattle and daub, with a rush thatch. Wall frames were interwoven with wattle, leaving openings for the door and windows. The mortar made from clay and loam - a ready commodity in the Clarence Plains area, as were the silver wattles - was mixed with chopped native grass and dabbed and plastered over the wattles both inside and out of the building. A chimney was made of stones or turf, and the earthen floor levelled. The

original name was 'wattle-and-dab'.⁵¹

Whilst the original dwelling for this settling family is not known it is apparent that *'an excellent well finished brick Cottage, containing 4 well proportioned Rooms on the ground Floor, and a Commodious and safe Granary and Store on the upper, ready without any species of repair, for the reception of a respectable family'* had been built on the property, now measured at 80 acres, by April 1827. The farm with its arable cultivated land, all agricultural implements, trained Oxen, barn and Stockyard, was available ... Immediate Possession. Apply: Mr. J. Chipman.⁵²

An old cottage separate from the current house is shown on an October 1974 survey plan proposing alterations and restoration. This was later demolished. The dormer windows are also not present in this plan but were added by the owner of the time.⁵³

Clarendon Vale House is now entered on the Tasmanian Heritage Register on a permanent basis (Ref: R666). It is described as

*'a two storey brick and stone Georgian House with a single storey rear wing. A five bay front façade, central entry with portico, two pane windows, a string course, parapet and cornice. The rear of the house is brick. There is a single storey brick and stucco wing at the rear, with one twelve paned window, a handsome six panelled door with casing and radial fanlight and with iron hipped roofs'.*⁵⁴

It appears from photographic evidence that the parapet was added after 1931⁵⁵ and has now been removed.

It is believed that the two storey sandstone extension was built no later than 1842⁵⁶ from local stone, whilst the slate and Lebanon cedar panelling arrived in the colony as ship's ballast.⁵⁷ The building itself is of historic heritage significance because its townscape associations are regarded as important to the community's sense of place, and it demonstrates the characteristics of a two storey Old Colonial Georgian domestic building.⁵⁸

Whilst the single storey section probably dates from 1812-1814 the building 'may be the oldest still-occupied residence in Australia'.⁵⁹



Clarendon Vale House c.2001

The Chipmans farmed their property well and their 10 acre orchard is believed to have been the first in Clarence Plains. By the time a relative Joseph H. Reynolds purchased the property from the late John Chipman's Estate in 1927 it totalled 268 acres, mostly under cultivation, including 25 acres of fruit, mostly pears.⁶⁰ Wildings of these trees exist along the Rivulet banks today.

The property was occupied by Joseph Reynold's son Doug, when the 1967 bushfires struck. Miraculously the house survived. *Clarendon Vale House* faced the old road, called Reynolds Rd., which led down to the Rivulet crossing and onto East Grange Road.⁶¹ This name, like many others, developed the way people referred to it, that is the road to Reynold's (property). The back of the house is towards Goodwins Road, which led to the Goodwin's family house on the Chaplain's Glebe. Following the sale of the property to Housing Division and the development of the public housing estate, the area then called Rokeby acquired the name Clarendon Vale (1978) after the old house.

A substantial area of land was set aside for the large reserve which is now Clarence City Council's Recreation Area. Housing Division planted trees there in 1979 and Tranmere-Clarence Plains Land & Coastcare Inc. took over the rehabilitation of the degraded bushland along the Rivulet in April 2001 and constructed a walking track to connect Goodwins Road with Reynolds Road. Much of the work was done by local youth as part of a Work for the Dole program.

Clarendon Vale House, long back in private ownership, remains an enduring reminder of a family who started in this land with the most humble of beginnings, who suffered loss, worked hard, and made their mark for generations to come, in fact for over 200 years.

1 Andrew, W. Resource Planning and Development Commission ESPS A/2003-13.

2 Chipman family papers (original grant documents).

3 Reel 6005.4/3495 p.384 Pardoned on 16.12.1816 NSW Colonial Secretary's Index.

4 Ralph Clark quoted in Gillen p.140.

5 Gillen, pp.139,140,141,377.

6 Mason, *From Chains to Freedom*. Vol.1. p.26.

7 Schaffer and McKay, *Exiled!*, p.225.

8 Pers. Comm. Wayne Smith.

9 Chipman family papers (original grant documents).

10 Wright, *Forgotten Generation*, p.113 No. 198.

11 Wright, *Forgotten Generation*, p.113 No. 196.

12 Will of Michael Lackey- Courtesy Chipman Family.

13 HTG 25.9.1830; Government Order No. 11. 22.9.1830.

14 Abstract of title of Joseph Ernest Chipman -Courtesy Chipman Family.

15 Information from Basil Chipman - Droughty Point 2004.

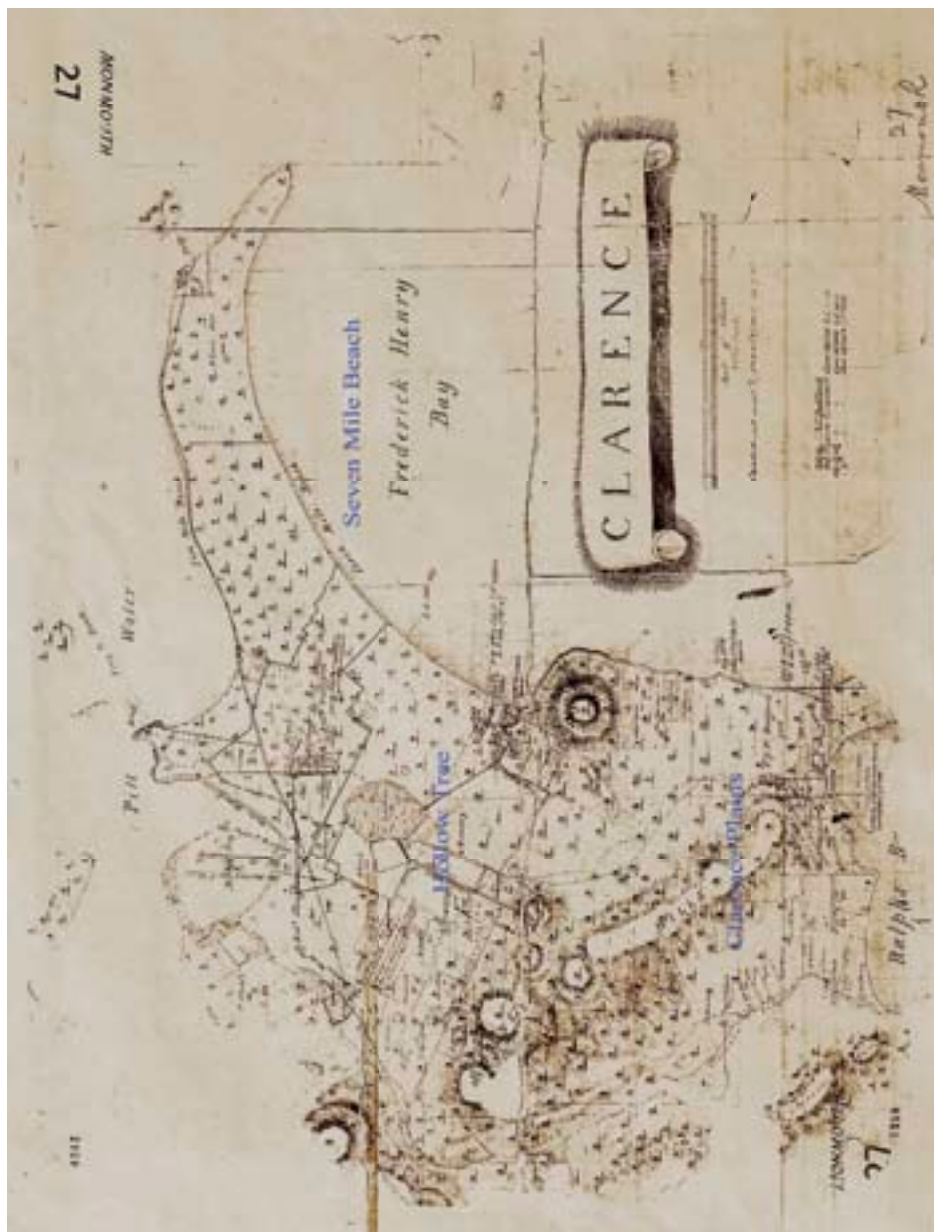
16 Information from Basil Chipman; National Archives of Australia PWI.

17 Information from Maurice Connor.

- 18 Correspondence file – Chipman family papers .
- 19 Tasmanian Heritage Council Ref: C558.
- 20 RK p.600. 24.6.1832: p.617. 31.7.1833.
- 21 Chipman family papers.
- 22 Bowen, J. *Kidman, the Forgotten King: the true story of the greatest pastoral landholder in modern history*, pp.4,11,15,457-8; Ward, R. *Kidman, Sir Sidney (1857-1935)*, ADB Vol.9. pp.585-585.
- 23 Sinclair Knight Merz. *Clarence Plains Catchment Management Plan: final report*. p.39.
- 24 De Gryse, et al, *City of Clarence Natural Assets Inventory*, p.38 App. A14. Rokeby volcanic vent. This is called Skillion Hill because of its shape.
- 25 Information from Julie Davidson; Adnum, V *A Verbal History of Rokeby in the Twentieth Century with an Emphasis on the 1967 Bushfires*, p.234.
- 26 Gillen, p.5.
- 27 HTG 26.10.1816.
- 28 *Southern Reporter* 3.10.1818.
- 29 Bryce, D. *Pubs in Hobart from 1807*. p.31.
- 30 Evans, *One Acre of Van Diemen's Land*, p.25.
- 31 TACPLACI *So you live near a Saltmarsh*, brochure.
- 32 Nobbs, R.(ed.) *Norfolk Island and its first settlement 1788-1814*. p.197; Wright, R. *The Youngs of Rokeby*, pp.202-203.
- 33 AOT NS1195/1 pp.15,31. *Notes by the Way*.
- 34 Robson, L.L. *Maum, William James (1780-1850)*, ADB Vol. 2. pp.216-7.
- 35 Schaffer, *Land Musters*, p.40.
- 36 AOT: LSD 1/82 /174-81.
- 37 HTG 17.1.1818.
- 38 HRA 3,2, p.592.
- 39 HTG 4.1.1817.
- 40 HTG 23.8.1817.
- 41 Bonwick, *The Last of the Tasmanians*, p.39, as quoted in Hudspeth Memorial Volume p.86.
- 42 Hookey, as quoted in Hudspeth Memorial Volume, p.86.
- 43 RK p.362. 4.6.22.
- 44 Commissioner John Bigge, 1823 Facsim ed. 1966 , *Report of the Commissioner of inquiry on the State of Agriculture and Trade in the Colony of New South Wales*, Libraries Board of South Australia, Adelaide p.25.
- 45 Wright, R. *Forgotten Generation*, pp.112-3; Schaffer, and McKay, *Exiled!* pp.223.226.
- 46 Schaffer, *Land Musters*, p.53.
- 47 Information from Doug Chipman.
- 48 Will of Joseph Chipman 6.3.1816 – Chipman family papers.
- 49 Information from Doug Chipman.
- 50 Schaffer, *Land Musters*, p.132.
- 51 Walker, J.B. p.71.
- 52 CT 4.5.1827.
- 53 Information from Greg Skinner.
- 54 Australian Heritage Places Inventory ID 1145, *Clarendon Vale House*.
- 55 *Cyclopedia of Tasmania*, 1931 p.257.
- 56 1842 Census Richmond p.7.
- 57 Information from Doug Chipman.
- 58 Tasmanian Heritage Council Data Sheet Ref. R 666.
- 59 Quote - Doug Chipman.
- 60 *Cyclopedia of Tasmania* 1931 p.258.
- 61 Hobart Atlas: Howrah and Rokeby 1962.



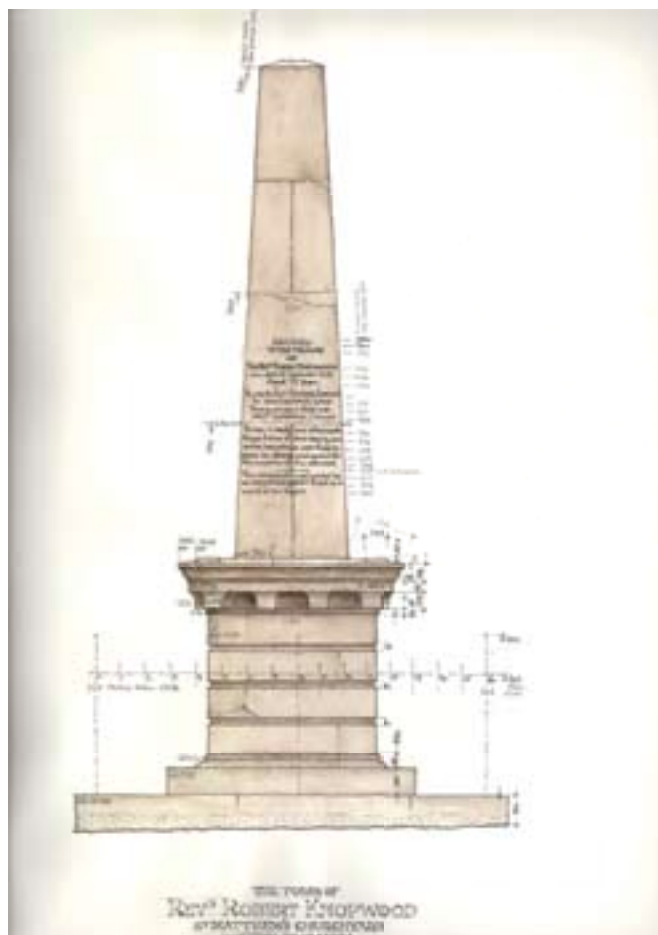
Rokeby Aerial View c. 1940 AOT: LSD353-1-14-11273.



LTO: Monmouth 27. 3 March 1827. Arthur to Bathurst (HRA 3.5, p.569) states that the 1814 Plan of Clarence Plains is required to accompany the report on the state of the Survey Department under date January 1827. It is believed that Monmouth 27 is that plan.



Section of Mommouth 27. Section of Mommouth 27 showing original grant locations along the lower Clarence Plains Rivulet.



Tomb of Revd. Robert Knopwood in St. Matthew's Churchyard, Rokeby. *see page 38*



St. Matthew's Church, Rokeby c. 2001. *see page 37*



The John Gray (1824) Organ in St. Matthew's Church, Rokeby. *see page 177*



Bob, Pincher and Pony Courtesy of the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania. see page 32



Account for the Interment of Mrs. Morrisby 1830. see page 149



Chaplain's Glebe, original house and farmland - attributed to Mabel Hookey. *see page 54*



Clarence Plains Rivulet Saltmarsh. *see page 98*



Rokeby Watch House c. 2001. *see page 166*



Aerial view of Rokeby township c. 1940. Section of AOT: LSD353-1-14-11273.



1. Clarence Plains Board of Education School 1860. *see page 144*

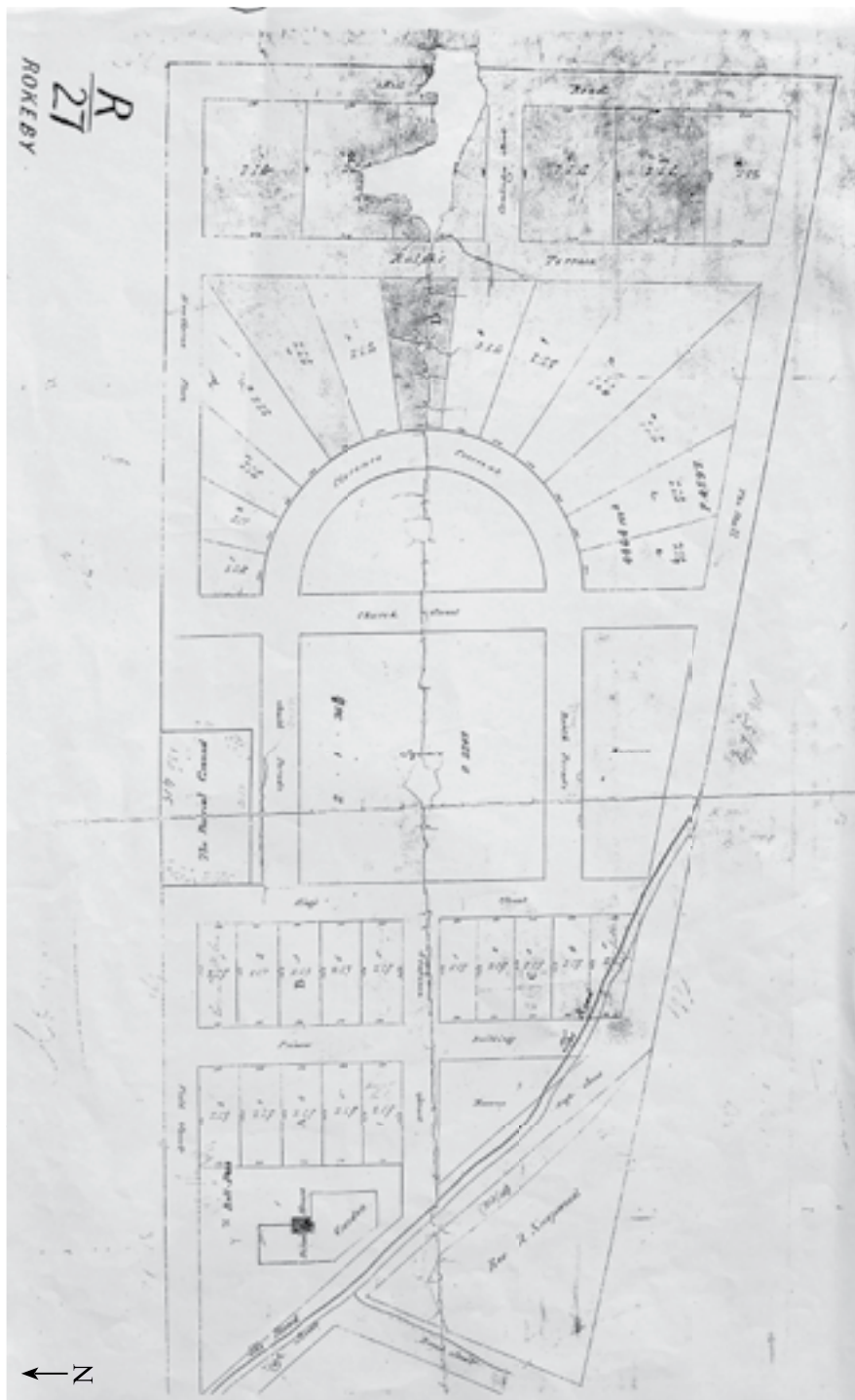


2. House - Main Road - Rokeby c.1910 (Beard's Cottage)
Collection: Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.



3. The building in 1993

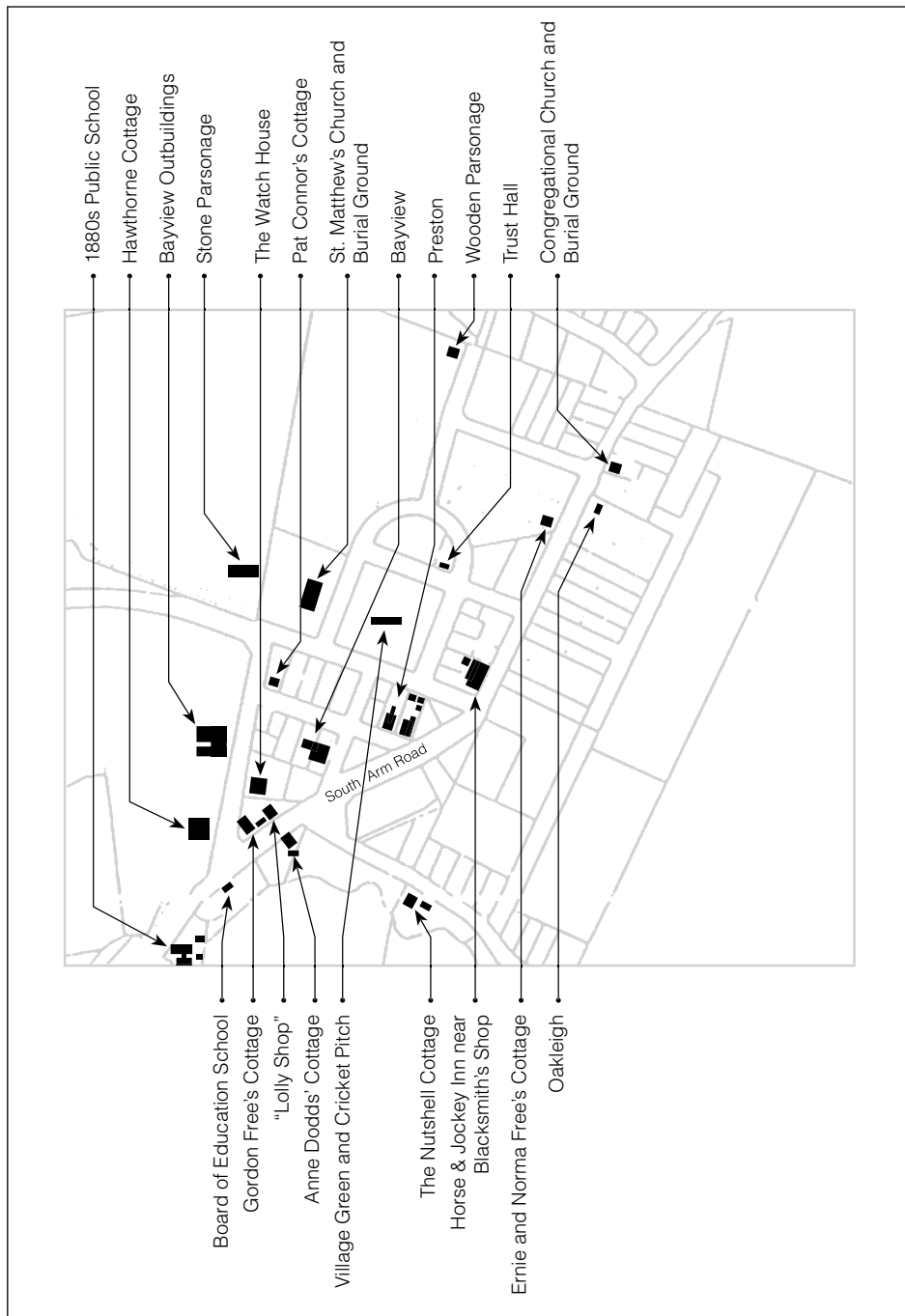
The above images show the changes to this building over almost 140 years.



LTO Rokeby R/27. Rokeby Town Survey. see page 129



Original grant locations superimposed on modern Rokeby.



Properties in the Rokeby Village area c. 1940

Chapter 14

Upstream along the Clarence Plains Rivulet

Upstream along the Rivulet from the property *Clarendon Vale* and to the north of the Chaplain's Glebe, land was granted to a carpenter named William Nichols by Governor Macquarie in 1813.

On 29 July 1802 William Nichols had made his first attempt to come to this land. In a letter from London on that date to Sir Joseph Banks he evinced a '*desire of trying his fortune in the Distant regions of Botoney Bay and understanding that you have the Direction of this Business under the Authority of Government I have presume to Solicit and Interview*'. He wished to acquaint Banks with details of his Trade and Family and the motives that induced him to form such a resolution and to request knowledge of the terms Government treats with Tradesmen etc.¹

Whilst there were others named William Nichols who came to the colony, the signature on the document matches that on an account to Robert Knopwood some 28 years later. According to family research, petitions were made in August 1802 and January 1803 on behalf of his wife and three surviving children. He duly arrived with his wife Frances Davis, and their three children, William aged approximately 10, Maria 7, and John 2, on the *Ocean* as a free settler.²

General Orders Sullivan Bay 21 January 1804 by David Collins state: '*Mr. William Nicholls is appointed a Superintendent of Convicts and is to be observed as such, he will take upon him the direction of Carpenters belonging to the Colony*'.

With the move to Sullivans Cove, Van Diemens Land, this role was continued:

'the direction of the Carpenters having been left with Mr. Nicholls the Superintendent, no person whatsoever is to cut down any Timber, whether young or old, near the Encampment but with his knowledge. As there is an abundance of wood for Fire every where about the Settlement there can be no pretext for disobeying this order'. General Orders 27 February 1804.

And so with poor tools supplied by the Government contractors, and hard eucalypts to be cut down, a lot of laborious work ensued, and the first wooden Government House was built within three weeks of landing, on the spot where the Hobart Town Hall main entrance now is.³

William received an early grant of 160 acres at Clarence Plains on the western side of the Clarence Plains Rivulet and by 1823 the family landholdings here totalled 960 acres.⁴ By 1819 William and his sons were intensively farming their own land and held grazing licenses; William Snr. between York Plains and Blackman's River, and his son from Salt Pan Sugar Loaf to runs at Tin Dish Holes, on the Port Dalrymple Road.⁵ They had two government servants each.

Two hundred sheep, the property of Daniel Stanfield Jnr., William and Edward Kimberley and William Nichols Jnr. were 'feloniously taken' and driven away from their Grazing Ground at Tin Dish Holes on the Night of 16 February 1819. A reward of £25 for the apprehension of the suspects William Morgan and John Oliver, was offered,⁶ and Morgan was eventually captured and committed for trial. Morgan, his wife and child, and an array of witnesses, were conveyed by ship to Sydney. Petitions from some 30 sympathisers as to his honesty and respectability were lodged on his behalf but William was found guilty and sentenced to death, although a further petition saw him pardoned in 1821.⁷

Amongst the 1828 advertisements for lost and stolen livestock and impounded animals was a small notice of the theft from their house of a Grant for 60 acres to John Nichols with a transfer to George Nichols and a caution against anyone using such documents.⁸ Life was not straightforward.

William Snr. maintained his position of Superintendent of Convicts for some time⁹ and in 1825 and 26 was a Carpenter and Undertaker in Liverpool St. Hobart.¹⁰ He constructed the coffin for Knopwood's ward Betsy, and, as undertaker, attended her interment.¹¹

There are many references to the Nichols family in Knopwood's diary; the christening of children, burials and shared visits, mostly after 1829. It is believed, although not confirmed, that William Snr. supervised the building of *Clarence House* for his son William Melmer Nichols and that the building was completed in 1830 at a cost of £1000.¹²

He had in the meantime provided for the family by erecting a substantial stone store house, barn and stable.¹³ The 1842 Census for Richmond shows that William Nichols, Clarence Plains, was living in a completed stone house with 22 other persons, including a number of servants.

The house was built on the eastern side of the rivulet – on another grant, possibly William Jnr.'s. Monica De Salis, niece of Owen Chipman, a later owner, has written her recollections of the stories told by her uncle: '*William Nichols who built Clarence House decided to erect a mill on his property and borrowed money for that purpose from Daniel Stanfield*'.¹⁴

Footprints

A reference in the Colonial Secretary's Index 1788-1825, in 1814, alludes to William Nichols being 'formerly in possession of a corn mill in Van Diemen's Land'.¹⁵ Details of the mill and its whereabouts are unknown.

In 1842 the *Clarence House* mill was rented by miller, William Tetley, who had previously been miller at the new Waterloo Mill. Less than 12 months later he was replaced by George Vincent, and by October 1843,¹⁶ with Nichols in occupation, the house and mill 'with from 50-500 acres of land adjoining as may be agreed' was offered for sale and later purchased by Robert White.¹⁷



Clarence House

The auction notice read as follows: The valuable property – '*on which the Town has been dependent for its supplies for the last twenty years, and from the system pursued by the late proprietor of expending more than its return, the present purchaser will secure the golden harvest anticipated by its late proprietor*'.

And further: '*Contiguous to the homestead is a windmill which alone would pay the expenses of the establishment*'. A blacksmith's shop was also on the property.¹⁸

In 1846-7 the mill and land was for sale by the assignee of the bankrupt Robert White's estate.

The property always enjoyed a great reputation for providing Hobart with hay, green fodder, vegetables and fruit. The hill on which the mill stood was between

Pass Road and Clarendon Vale, and it became known subsequently as Mill Hill. The flat paddock below on Pass Road was called the Hop Gardens because in those days hops were grown there.

At the 1847 auction Joseph Chipman acquired the entire property for £1200. He remained resident at *Clarendon Vale House* and eventually his son Charles became the master of *Clarence House*. In 1848 Joseph tried again to sell the mill or even the machinery and millstones, 4 ft. diameter French Burrs, but by 1851, with no buyer, the 'shell' of the windmill was advertised for sale.¹⁹ The 2000 acre property was then advertised for rental in 1853.²⁰

By 1866 Charles Chipman, son of Joseph, was at *Clarence House*, keeping a comprehensive diary of his times. And so the property remained in the Chipman family for over 100 years, until Charles' son, Charles Owen, died in 1955. The Chipman's were progressive farmers; they were the first in the district to import traction engines and continued to operate them into the 1950s. Another son, Ted Chipman's mobile threshing and chaff-cutting plant, with straw press, saw-bench and badger (caravan) for his foremen, is well remembered.

The house was severely damaged by fire in the mid 1970s; then suffered the indignity of the presence of squatters, and livestock wandering through the open walls. It has been fortunate to enjoy several owners since, who were committed to restoring it to its present condition.²¹ The house is now prominent for its vineyard, producing '*Clarence House*' wines.

Frances Nichols died in 1823, and her William then married the school teacher Mary Agnes Fitzgerald in 1829. Mary Agnes was formerly the widow of a surgeon in the Royal Navy, and came free to Hobart and married Thomas Fitzgerald, an ex-convict and now government schoolmaster, on 14 August 1815. She was 37 years of age. She and Thomas had two children, Matilda, born in 1817, and Thomas in 1818. In spite of his bouts of drunkenness, neglect and absence, Thomas Snr. received the support of Governor Davey. He and Mary continued to teach and he introduced evening school for the benefit of those employed during the day. Mary was paid a salary for teaching the colony's young women. After Thomas died in 1818, Mary opened a day academy for young ladies in Campbell St. before marrying William. She died in July 1831.²² William died in 1858.

Mary Agnes, although spending little of her life in Clarence Plains is important to our story, mostly through her daughter Matilda, also a school teacher, who later had a great deal of influence in the field of education in Clarence Plains.

William and Frances' children did well too. In 1816 Maria married John Pearsall, a nailer by trade, transported for life. He received a 35 acre grant at Clarence Plains

by 1819 and productively farmed the land, employing a government servant. By 1825 he had a house with 6 good rooms, barns and outhouses, and a five acre garden. By further grant and purchase, his property eventually totalled 308 acres and by 1842 he employed 3 single men as gardeners, stockmen and agricultural labourers. He worked as a nailer from early times and kept a forge at Clarence Plains.²³ His land adjoined Nichols and the Glebe.

Charles Chipman diligently kept diaries of his life at *Clarence House*, and his romance with Corbetta Lord, granddaughter of Lt. Edward Lord. He meticulously recorded the daily farm events, his social calendar, his crops, farm workers, cricket, visits to other farm properties, church and community matters, road planning, family illnesses and the constant visits to the Vale (*Clarendon Vale* – his father's house) and *Droughty* (his brother's farm).

From diaries such as this we are able to tell a lot about the life of the area that by now was called Rokeby.

Entered permanently on the Tasmanian Heritage Register *Clarence House* is described as '*a two storey sandstone house with a hipped roof, narrow boxed eaves, a central door and flanking double hung windows. The building features quoins and dormer windows. There is also a stable on site*'. And it is significant because, like *Clarendon Vale House*, it displays the characteristics of an Old Colonial Georgian building, with townscape associations important to the community's sense of place.²⁴

Old photos show that the fire-damaged roof has been replaced to incorporate two dormer windows, the view from which still retains the rural tranquillity of previous years. The surrounding European and native gardens add to this vision.

By 1820 the settlements of Clarence Plains, Risdon and Cambridge numbered 34 free men, 23 free women with 35 children. After 1816, when settlers began to arrive direct from Britain, the granting of land became general. These settlers would be required to make a declaration of money, goods or personal affects in order to qualify for a grant. One sent a list of items to be devoted to agriculture and building thus: '*Pencils £40, cottage cabinet pianofortes £144, brown stout and pale ale £292/15/-*'. It was granted.²⁵ There were 36 men and 17 women free by pardon or expiration of sentence with 18 children; and 137 male convicts, 13 female convicts and three children.²⁶

This small number of people, in many cases coped with poor tools, bad soils, drought, and bushrangers, yet managed to clear and farm their land, producing grains, fruit and vegetables, hay, dairy products, wood, timber for all sorts of construction, sheep, cattle, horses, hams and bacons, bricks, shell lime, stone, clay, poultry and eggs.

They hunted bird, fish and kangaroo, supplemented their diet with a few oysters, and used the by-products of the whaling industry. They developed saw-pits, brick kilns, boat services, a windmill and Inns – quite an incredible feat. Transport for their goods became a necessary part of their existence, although many operated on the barter system; there being a shortage of hard currency. They managed in the main to feed and clothe their families.

Many who were near water access in Clarence Plains were able to transport their goods by passage boat, believed to be an evolution from the whaleboats. Early road routes between Kangaroo Bay and Cambridge, Sorell and Richmond, or through the Clarence Plains area to the South Arm peninsula, soon developed.

- 1 Banks Papers Section 6. Series 29.07 CY 3008/421, Nichols to Sir Joseph Banks.
- 2 Tipping, p.330.
- 3 Walker, J.B. p.70.
- 4 McKay, *Early Land Grants*, p.20.
- 5 HRA 3, 3, p.577.
- 6 HTG 13.3.1819.
- 7 MacFie, *Stock Thieves...* pp.16-18
- 8 HTC 2.2.1828.
- 9 HRA 3,2, p.4.
- 10 Tasmanian Almanack, 1825, 1826.
- 11 Adrian Collins - Original Knopwood Notebook p.100 25.10.1830.
- 12 Wright, *The Youngs of Rokeby*, p.184.
- 13 Holiday, A. *Mansions & Cottages* Text, p.164.
- 14 Wright, *The Youngs of Rokeby*, pp.184, 185.
- 15 Colonial Secretary's Index: Fiche 3261; 4/433 p.315 Oct. 20 1814.
- 16 HTC 13.10.1843.
- 17 Cassidy and Preston, *Thematic Study*.
- 18 HTC 13.3.1845.
- 19 Cassidy and Preston, *Thematic Study* .
- 20 HT Advertiser 18.4.1853.
- 21 Information supplied by National Trust 1999.
- 22 Tipping, p.274.
- 23 Tipping, p.298.
- 24 Tasmanian Heritage Council: Ref: R.670.
- 25 AOT: NS1195/1 pp.24, 26.
- 26 HRA 3, 20, as quoted in Hudspeth, et al. *Part 1* p.50.

Chapter 15

The Education of Children

Little was done officially to provide for the education of children. Where the mother had some education she was the teacher of her children, the father being too well occupied working. Children of illiterate mothers had very little chance to become literate. In Hobart, grants of money were given by the administration to teachers such as the former convict Thomas Fitzgerald.

In 1817 this was £25 per year, whilst his wife Mary Agnes, managing a girl's school, in 1818, was granted £15. In 1818 Lieutenant Governor Sorell had '*given some trifling assistance from Government to establish a small school at Clarence Plains and New Norfolk, when the settlers afford Houses for the purpose*'.¹

When Robert Knopwood gave his evidence on education to the Bigge enquiry in 1820, Jno. (sic) Keeves was already teaching 25 pupils at Clarence Plains. Knopwood and his ward Betsy Mack had visited the Clarence Plains school in September 1819. Keeves was followed shortly afterwards by C.E.H. Cox; each being paid £20 per annum from the Colonial fund. Children were being taught reading, writing and arithmetic and the girls sewing, needlework and reading. Teachers were given some government funds in addition to fees from parents.²



Main Road c.1910.

Following this enquiry Peter Mulgrave, London trained in the Dr. Bell's National System, arrived as Superintendent of Government Schools. This system was intended to not only educate and create a good work ethic but to implant in the students minds '*the Principles of the Established Church*'.³ The education of the poor, orphaned, neglected or those with dissolute parents, was considered the most urgent. Churches and schools would combine to prevent the youth inheriting the 'immorality' of the settlement, even if the morals of the older generation could not be reclaimed.

On 28 November 1820, the ship *Skelton* arrived at Hobart. Amongst the 85 settlers were Colonel Speed and daughter, an event observed by Knopwood in his diary, with a margin comment '*the noted Col. Speed*'.⁴ Certainly there was reason for this man to be noted. The Earl of Liverpool, in his 12 May 1812 letter to Governor Macquarie, transmitted an application from Admiral Hunter concerning Mr. W.J. Speed, a convict who had been in NSW for three years, and begged indulgence for him.

It seems that Mr Speed, formerly of the Marines, then quit to follow a Military Career where he rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. He was transported to NSW because, after separating from his wife for several years, he '*imprudently*' remarried. After a considerable time the friends of his first wife saw him prosecuted for bigamy, and, this proved, he was transported for seven years. Hunter was requesting a Conditional Emancipation for Speed, whom he believed had his wife and family with him.⁵ Speed, now free, was returned to England on HM Colonial Brig *Kangaroo*, on 9 April 1817.⁶

On 7 March 1820 a request was made on behalf of Mr. Speed, having signified his intention of returning to the colony, for an additional grant of land as he was about to bring out considerable property.⁷ And so began Speed's career in Van Diemen's Land.

It is thought that Speed and his wife Eliza conducted both a boys' and a girls' school in Hobart before moving to Clarence Plains. The Return of the State of Education 14 December 1821 shows at Clarence Plains, W.J. Speed, schoolmaster, with a salary of £20 with probable attendance for the following year of 35 children and an expected weekly parent contribution of £1/4/-. Mrs. Speed, schoolmistress's salary was £15.⁸ The school was called *Rose Vale* boarding school.

Mrs. Eliza Speed gave birth, at *Rose Vale*, to a daughter Emily Esther on 7 December 1821 and to a son on 10 November 1823.⁹

Although Knopwood's diary for 1821 is missing, we can see from his 1822 entries that there were many contacts between Mr. and Mrs. Speed, Knopwood and Betsy

Mack, who commenced school after the holidays in January 1822.¹⁰ Betsy appeared to have a coterie of friends at the school, including friends such as Eliza Collins, and the Misses Field, Lord and Watts. Another friend was Miss Speed – Isabella Mary, the daughter who arrived with Speed on the *Skelton*. Similar in ages, the girls were part of the growing society in Hobart.

In October 1822, during Lt Governor Sorell's visit to Clarence Plains, Mrs. Sorell visited Betsy at Mrs. Speed's. Mrs. Sorell was '*much delighted at Mrs. Speed's manner and the neatness of the beds and rooms*'. Unfortunately, towards the end of 1822, Betsy suffered several bouts of illness which encouraged Knopwood to remove her from the school.¹¹

The career of W.J. Speed as schoolmaster came to a fairly abrupt end when on 27 January 1823 he was notified that the '*Lt. Governor has requested the Revd. Knopwood to communicate to you that the system of Dr. Bell must be adhered to or the school's continuance in your charge will be impracticable*'. Parents at the General Muster had stated they had withdrawn their children from his school because they had not derived any instruction.¹²

Speed went on to become the poundkeeper at Richmond and, in February 1826, the first gaoler appointed to *Richmond Gaol*, with a welcome increase in salary. On 10 April 1827, his daughter Isabella Mary married James Dow in St. David's Church.¹³ By the start of 1828, Speed was in trouble.¹⁴ After charges in relation to food supplies; his various personal problems, and boasting before Dr. Bedford and Magistrate Gordon of his immorality and depravity, Lt. Governor Sorell decided that Speed was 'a very improper person to have charge of the jail, he should be removed from it'.¹⁵

By 12 September 1830 he had been removed both as Assistant Commissariat Storekeeper and Gaol Keeper at Richmond leaving him only as poundkeeper. Complaining bitterly that he could not even gain subsistence income from this role, he asked permission to resign. A suitable replacement was found by November and Speed was granted his wish.¹⁶ He was aged 70.

A Return of the Juvenile Population requiring Education was taken during the Bigge enquiry. In Clarence Plains 38 children are recorded – 24 males between the ages of 4 and 24; 14 females between 4 and 13, plus 2 children of unknown status. Michael Lackey listed: 3 boys aged 19, 15 and 10, possibly the sons of Joseph Chipman Snr.; John Gibson: 'a coloured girl by a native woman' and for W. J. Speed, the schoolmaster: two boys aged 13 and 11 and one girl aged 5!¹⁷

An objection to the use of convicts as schoolmasters was made by Archdeacon Broughton, but, allowing if this was necessary, it would need watchful care that

their habits and character were not likely to contaminate the rising offspring committed to their care.¹⁸ The habit of using convicts was to change with the arrival of free settlers in the Clarence Plains area.

- 1 HRA 3, 2, p.359.
- 2 HRA 3, 3, p.367; HRA 3, 4, p.640; RK p.313. 15.9.1819.
- 3 Robson, L.L. *Mulgrave, Peter Archer (1778?-1847)*, ADB Vol. 2. pp.267-268.
- 4 RK p.343. 28.11.1820.
- 5 HRA 1, 7, pp.484-5.
- 6 HRA 1, 9, p.373.
- 7 HRA 1, 10, pp.293-4; p.823 Note 75 p.293.
- 8 HRA 3, 4, p.40.
- 9 HTG 15.12.1821, HTG 15.11.1823, Hbt CofE 32/1: 1183, Ric CSO1/122A p.129
- 10 RK p.353. 27.1.1822.
- 11 RK p.371, 23.10.1822; 374,381,382 – 20.12.1822, 1.1.1823, 29.1.1823. re illness.
- 12 HRA 3, 4 p.463.
- 13 C.T. 27.4.1827; HTG 29.4.1827.
- 14 HTC 26.1.1828 p.3.c.4 ; 2.2.1828 p.3.c.4: 16.2.1828 p.2.c.2.
- 15 AOT: CSO 1/455.10171 1830
- 16 AOT: CSO 1/98/4724/2 pp.168-172; Lennox, G. *Richmond Gaol*, p.17.
- 17 McKay, *Juveniles Requiring Education*, Clarence Plains.
- 18 HRA 3, 9, p.526 19.8.1830.

Chapter 16

Developing an Identity

The small settlements had consolidated; Cambridge, Kangaroo Bay and Clarence Plains had developed their own identities. All had shared the visits of the Reverend Robert Knopwood who, by 1823, had been replaced as Chaplain by William Bedford, reputed to have been a staymaker patronised by Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer and Quaker. With his wife, two sons and one daughter, he arrived at Hobart in the *Caledonia* in January 1823. Known somewhat derogatorily as ‘Holy Willie’, his extreme devotion to the cause of religion in the colony was, nevertheless, sincere.¹

‘The Revd. Bedford came to me and I deliverd up to him the church plate and the grant of the glebe and everything else, after which I waited upon His Honer the Lt. Govnr’. This was 30 April 1823 and Robert Knopwood was completing his last action as Chaplain. But he was only freed from his clerical and pastoral duties, so he continued to devote even more time to the duties of magistrate, his social obligations, and of course his beloved Betsy Mack.

With the support of the New Norfolk community, he agitated from early 1824 to become the Chaplain there, and he regularly conducted services. He stayed at the Government Cottage with Sorell and his family whilst awaiting the repair of Cullen’s cottage as a permanent home. His diary shows regular ministry both at New Norfolk and Hobart Gaol, and in May 1825, when Bedford was unable to officiate at St. David’s after a fall from his horse, Knopwood stepped willingly into the breach.

Later in the month he preached on the day the new *John Gray organ* was first played; then returned to services at New Norfolk.

Informed in July 1825 that the recently arrived Rev. Robinson would be appointed to New Norfolk, he nevertheless continued his duties. He had a joyous occasion in November 1825, when his ward Betsy, married twelve months earlier to Henry Morrisby, gave birth to their first child on 14 November 1825. Their home was on the Eastern Shore. Knopwood would soon follow. On 3 March 1826 the Lt. Governor approved the Rev. Robert Knopwood performing the clerical duties in the District of Clarence Plains.² Knopwood was satisfied.

Knopwood immediately returned to his routine of inspecting schools, holding services and generally getting involved with the community, especially in Clarence Plains. There were occasions when it was dangerous to cross the river because of a gale so he would conduct a service at the gaol. At times he was unable to take his pony across in the boat, and so had to walk. It was six miles to Clarence Plains from Kangaroo Point.³ In April 1826 Lt. Governor Arthur had made recommendations to Governor Bathurst on various church matters, from the arrangement of Pews at St. David's, to the situation and sizes of houses for chaplains; the appointment of church officers and organists and their salary. He also acknowledged His Majesty's order that 'in each parish twenty acres be reserved for the Church Burial Ground, Glebe House and School' and recommended that half an Acre be fenced-in immediately at, amongst other areas, Clarence Plains.

He recommended that the same rule apply as in England - that no brick grave or tomb be made without permission; high valuation to be put on soil, by the square or cubic foot, otherwise in a populous parish there would be no possibility of appropriating a sufficient space for a future increase. If a Superfices (the surface) of 6 feet by 2½ feet be allowed for each corpse, an acre would contain not more than 900, and it 'may require 12 years before the same Grave can be reopened'. And - that the Public school should be near the Church, together with a residence for the Master and his family.⁴

It was no doubt with these in mind that Robert Knopwood began a series of meetings on the position of those places.⁵ After a further appeal to Arthur in July, he was allowed to erect a small temporary fence around a graveyard, near Mr. Nichol's.⁶ It is not known whether this area was used.

His diary records the successful visit of the Land Commissioners on 9 November; and with Surveyor Wedge finally 'marked off two burial grounds, one near Kangaroo Point, the other near the Schoolhouse at Clarence Plains'.⁷ Both the burial ground and schoolhouse are shown on the earliest plan of Rokeby, R/27. It was this land for which William Kimberley had tendered a grant hoping to exchange it for an addition to his Bagdad land. Lt. Governor Sorell had rightly assumed it would be desirable for the Crown to acquire this for a suitable place of Divine Worship, School etc. on 11 August 1821.⁸

In September 1826 Surveyor Wedge was 'surveying the Coast from the Glebe to the Mouth of the River that runs up Clarence Plains'. He also marked up the grants of Mr. Stokell, young Mr. Bedford, Cormick, Harris, Morrisby, Breedon and others.⁹ He had stayed at Peter Robert's, just south of the area on which the Fielder family would settle during the 1830s. James Fielder was a retired Indian Army officer, who married Louise in 1833. Their four children were born over the next

four years up to James' death at 50 in 1839.¹⁰ He is reputed to have called his 56 acre property '*Howrah*' after the city on the west bank of the Hoogly River in West Bengal, India.

The Fielders and their Dawson neighbours were paid regular visits by Knopwood, their houses being on the route to the Glebe from Knopwood's favourite little landing place on the nearby beach.¹¹ After James' death the property was taken over by Louise, James Kelly and Samuel R. Dawson. After Louise's death in 1852 the *Howrah* estate was advertised for auction on 19 December 1862, occupied by tenant R. W. Nutt until 1 March 1863 – in a well sheltered nook on the eastern bank of the river with 50 acres in cultivation.¹²

In August 1878 the handsome 14 roomed brick and stone house, with a shingle roof and wooden conservatories at either end, burnt to the ground within an hour. Despite the efforts of neighbour William Young and other locals, little was saved, and the property was not fully insured. The owner Mr. Edwards had only recently bought the property. The glare of the fire was seen from the city.¹³

The property was purchased c. 1880 by Captain Henry Morgan Murphy. His daughter Blanche (1891-1944) was, along with Mabel Hookey of *Rokeby House*, Louisa Swan and Isobel Oldham, a significant figurative and landscape painter of the first half of the 20th Century.¹⁴

Father Philip Conolly, the first Roman Catholic priest in Van Diemen's Land, continued to visit with Knopwood. As senior priest he had arrived in Sydney on the *Janus*, with Father John Therry, from Cork, in May 1820. Conolly became dissatisfied with the prospects there and in March 1821 came to Van Diemen's Land to establish the work of his church. Like Knopwood, with Youl in 1819, he had to wait until 1833 before he saw a fellow priest. He became a great companion of Knopwood's, sharing walks and talks, and crossing the river to each other's homes; hail, rain or shine.¹⁵

The two shared Christian values and with tolerance and friendship were able to appreciate each other's faith whilst staunchly remaining with their own. Together with other friends Stokell and Gregson, these two remained constant friends up to the time of Knopwood's death. Philip Conolly was to follow Knopwood on 3 August 1839, aged 53.

When emancipists Samuel Free and Elizabeth Smith arrived on the *Porpoise* in January 1808 they took up a grant of 70 acres, from the Derwent River bank to the slopes of Mount Nelson. Together for thirteen years, they had had five children together on Norfolk Island. Only 8 of the 23 families took up the grants allotted to them at Queenborough. The Free family was one of these. Samuel supplied meat

to the Commissariat, grew fruit trees and raised poultry, but sadly, by June 1819, this worthy Samuel died aged 49. Elizabeth continued to run the farm, without any outside assistance. That year the three boys were 15, 13 and 7 years old.

Land in the area had become quite valuable so Elizabeth sold the Sandy Bay farm in two portions and moved the family to the more productive land at Clarence Plains in 1826. Two daughters Mary and Sarah were already married to George Munday and James Joseph, whilst the oldest boy Samuel appears to have gone to sea.¹⁶ Thomas married the widow Mary Anne Waterson in the schoolhouse on 27 November 1826. *'The first couple ever married at Clarence Plains'*.¹⁷

In 1822, George Evans, the Deputy-Surveyor General reported:

'On the east side of the river, in the vicinity of Ralph's Bay, is an open space of country called Clarence Plains, The soil is good, and is divided into small grants, which are bestowed on several of the most respectable of the persons who were removed to this settlement from Norfolk Island in 1808'.¹⁸

The Free family continued to live and work at Clarence Plains. Industrious, solid citizens, they contributed to the area as farmers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, innkeepers and carriers. They were ordinary people who by hard work and persistence over many years made an extraordinary contribution to the area that was soon to become the village of Rokeby.

In late 1826 John Helder Wedge saw something unusual whilst visiting the 2000 acre Clarence Plains grant of Richard Strahan - *Bonnington* near Cambridge:

*'I observed that the Garden was surrounded with a young Hawthorn fence, and on enquiry I was surprised to learn that they were sent out from England, and that they were Eight Months on the voyage - they were shipped in March - put into bundles and packed in a dry cask and put down in the hold of the Ship - Query would they not be better shipped in October ?-'*¹⁹

Then in April 1827, Quick Hedges were advertised:

'about 25000 young Hawthorn trees will be ready for delivery at Humphreyville in the month of June next, to persons desirous of having live fences. Notice is given this early that land may be prepared for their reception, The price and other particulars may be known on application to Mr. Boyd - Bathurst St'.²⁰

The importation of these 'live hedges' was to influence the landscape of Clarence Plains for many years.

Many old Land Titles in the area feature 'hawthorn hedges' in the description of the property. Under General Law system properties were identified by natural

features rather than measurements. These features, termed 'monuments', could be hawthorn hedges, trees, buildings and in some early descriptions, gullies.

Most of the hawthorn hedges about Rokeby were planted by George Stokell's men and watered from the *Rokeby House* well. The hedges were planted inside the Rokeby Boundary with enough room between fence and hedge to allow the young thorns to be cultivated.²¹ Remnant hedges on *Rokeby House* are covered by the Tasmanian Heritage Registered entry of the whole property. These, together with the magnificent untrimmed trees along the Clarence Plains Rivulet, are part of the cultural heritage landscape of the area. It is also interesting to note that gardeners of the day, for example a Mr. Scott, had over many years sent indigenous seeds to England where they grew luxuriantly, and Scott was getting a very ample return!²²

The year 1827 ended with the first burial in the new Clarence Plains Burial Ground, as yet unconsecrated. It had been a quiet year for diary entries and Knopwood was ill for the latter half of the year, even on occasions unable to attend church. His last entry for the year, read: '*Early this morn though very unwell I breakfasted at W. A. Bethune Esqr., rode to Clarence Plains and buried Mrs. Chipman in the new burial ground, attended by all Mr. Stanfield's family and many others*'.²³

Archdeacon Scott requested the resignation of all clergymen who also held the position of magistrate. Knopwood complied, not very happily, since he had held that position since March 1804, but nine days later, on 13 February, he called upon the same Archdeacon respecting the church at Clarence Plains, a matter he was to pursue with some vigour. He must have been somewhat annoyed when the consecration of the churches at New Norfolk and Sorell Town took place in April.²⁴ He was still conducting services for 70 or more people at the schoolhouse, and now burials in the new Ground.

The first recorded meeting of the inhabitants of Clarence Plains, with a view to expediting the longed-for church, took place in the schoolhouse on 31 January 1828. The memorandum and a list of those wishing to contribute money, altogether £121.16s and other assistance by way of workmen, carts and bullocks, when possible, was conveyed to the Government.²⁵ The newspaper report of the day ended with the assurance of: '*in a few months... seeing the spire of the Clarence Plains Church arising above the trees*'.²⁶

Another meeting, held in 1831 and chaired by Robert Knopwood, is indicative of his enthusiasm. The resolutions encouraged local residents to promote the idea of a church, set up a Committee, authorised them to collect funds to be deposited in the Derwent Bank, and further, that all subscribers of two pounds be entitled to the privilege of one seat in the Church; five pounds – two seats and ten pounds – three

seats ... all seats to be hereditary ... and the names to be published in each of the Hobart papers.²⁷

Apart from the standard of mathematics in these calculations, as there are many descendants of the original 'pew holders' still in the area, one wonders how they could all be seated in the small 80 seat church today. Names that spring to mind are Chipman, Free, Joseph, Lord, Mather, Morrisby, Nichols, Rumney, Stokell, and Stanfield.

Tenders had been called by John Lee Archer for construction of a church 36 feet by 24 feet in 1828,²⁸ but sadly nothing of substance eventuated and the matter was left to lie until 1838.²⁹ These meetings, including free settlers, emancipists, a schoolmaster, surgeon, and others from Clarence Plains and the York district (Sandford) formed the basis of what was to become a tight knit community.

1828 was an important year for another reason. The name *Rokeby* appeared for the first time in Hall's 1828 Police District map. 'Rokeby' is a name that has appeared over the centuries - Rokeby in Yorkshire, UK, is recorded in the Domesday Book as *Rochebi*, or *Rokeby* 1204 in the Feet of Fines. According to Ekwall, the same name is *Rookby* in what was the county of Westmorland. He gives the meaning as either 'by where rooks were plentiful' or 'the By of some man called Hroca (or the like)'.³⁰ 'By' means the 'region or district of'.³¹ The *Rokeby Venus*, a painting by the Spanish painter Diego Velazquez, is assumed to have been painted in Italy c. 1651.

Rokeby, UK, is a Parish of some 222 people, near Barnard Castle in the county of Durham. *Rokeby Hall*, a mansion built in 1724 by Sir Thomas Robinson, was the residence of the Yorkshire Rokeby family in their adversity, and was built in the Palladian style, so called after the great Italian architect Andrea Palladio. Sir Thomas was the first Baronet of Rokeby, a Baronetage of Great Britain created for him in 1731. In 1790 Armagh University was founded by Archbishop Richard Robinson, Baron Rokeby; an Irish Peerage created for him in 1771. This small parish was the inspiration for men of literature such as Sir Walter Scott who wrote the poem *Rokeby* in 1813.³² Incidentally Sir Walter was also a Tory impressario with great influence over George IV and some believe that this was the reason for naming the town Rokeby.

The name *Rokeby* exists in streets, roads, parks and towns in Victoria, Far North Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia, Wiltshire UK and Vermont USA. It is credited here as being named after George Stokell's *Rokeby House*; however this seems illogical as the house was not built until 1834 and the land, though acquired in 1827, was referred to by its owner as Clarence Plains until 1839.³³

In 1829 the ship *Pyramus* arrived with Samuel Robinson Dawson, his wife Octavia and three children.³⁴ Mr. Dawson was soon to purchase the property *Claremont*, and became a neighbour to both the Fielders and the Chaplains Glebe. The 800 acre property had been advertised in the Hobart Town Courier of 7 February 1829, and was significantly covered with very valuable firewood, and 50 acres which had been ploughed. It was transferred by E. Morgan to Samuel Dawson in June 1829 and by September of that year the Dawson family had been introduced to Knopwood; attended his services and had begun a visiting friendship. Dawson regularly had occasion to try Knopwood's servants for insolence, neglect of duty, drunkenness or theft of wine etc.³⁵ Samuel became involved in local roads issues as well as the push for a legislative Council.³⁶ He died at *Claremont* in 1842, aged 49.³⁷

So this impressive brick and stone homestead, called Dutch Colonial style, was advertised for sale, complete with barns, stables, store-rooms, men's huts, cattle sheds, stockyards, dairy, piggeries and an excellent orchard, subject to two mortgages of £1000 and £400, with interest of 12½ percent, both now due. Stock and farming implements were also available at the Auction in 1843. It was not sold. It was advertised again in 1847, and again in 1867 when it was let on improving terms for five years, as it had been for the previous 10 years. This time the sale was successful and it was conveyed from the estate to Louis J. Smith, then shortly to Francis Butler, an architect, who had arrived in the colony with his family in 1843, and Justin McCarty Browne.

The estate was measured at 775 acres and a pencil note on the Land Title drawing indicated that the *Claremont* property comprised locations originally held by John Parrott, Ralph Dodge, James Garth, John McKay and part of the locations to William Atkins and his wife Mary Proctor. The land had frontage to the Derwent and to Ralph's Bay at the mouth of the Clarence Plains Rivulet. It was conveyed in July 1882 to Edgar Wing, and three months later to William Young.

Relative Reg Wright considered that the property must have deteriorated while in Young's hands – no elaborate gardens or groves of fruit trees remained by the 1930s; the formerly well-fenced paddocks were bare, dusty, treeless expanses covered lightly with short brown grass. The valuable stands of timber could no longer be visualised.³⁸ Whilst the homestead still appeared impressive in 1937, the property struggled on with a series of mortgages and finally passed into the ownership of R.B. Calvert. In 1829 it had been suggested as an ideal site for villas; with its views of the Derwent and Mt. Wellington. Latterly much of it has been subdivided but not into the 200 acre lots thought then to be a reasonable sized building block.

William and his father James Young were well known settlers in the area; James having arrived with his wife, Isobella, and two children, William, almost 3, and Isobella, 4, on the ship *Thomas* in 1833.³⁹ The family spent some time in the Bothwell area, then the Bridgewater area before purchasing the *Tranmuir* property from Parson Rochford Grange in 1850.⁴⁰ Grange had arrived in Hobart Town on the



Claremont

Agenorie on 8 July 1841. He served as Rector from 1843 to 1850 during which time St. Matthew's Church was opened.⁴¹ The property at Tranmere covered 115 acres that included the 40 acres granted to James Pillenger, 50 acres granted to Charles Cox (hence the nearby Cox beach) and the balance unknown. An exact description is given in the Caveat Board notice of 22 January 1856.⁴² It is reputed⁴³ that a painting of *Tranmuir* Cottage was made about 1825 prior to enlarging the building. The restored cottage still stands.

Isobella died in June 1878 when James was 71 years, and he then married Elizabeth Belbin, the 49 year old spinster daughter of James Belbin Jnr. in October 1878. She unfortunately died after sustaining serious burns. It was assumed she had had some sort of fit and fallen into the fireplace. James at the time was a Councillor of the district of Clarence, a role his son William also fulfilled. Another son, Lewis, was proprietor of the Bellerive Hotel. James took a third wife at 73 marrying the 64 year old widow Ann Currey in early 1881. She survived James who died at his New Town residence on 7 October 1891, a well respected colonist.⁴⁴

William Young married a younger daughter of James Belbin Jnr. Their 11 children married into the several local families. Isobella, Elizabeth and James are buried together in the old *Congregational Cemetery* on the main road at Rokeby, as are William and Eliza Jane Young, and Eliza and James Belbin of Cambridge. *Eliza Way* in Tranmere was named by this author for Eliza Jane Young, being on part of the *Claremont* Property.

William told the story that there was once a ferry across from Howrah to Hobart. He had heard his father-in-law, James Belbin Jnr. refer to it as Maul's Ferry, so called from one Mawle (aka Maul, Maule), who kept the Inn and also ferry boats at Howrah. Starting from Mawle's Ferry, the road to Launceston would cross the hills somewhere near the present road and turn down the road known as the Old Pass Road into the Coal River Valley and north via Richmond.

William Mawle and his brother Joseph arrived in Hobart in the *Orelia* as free settlers on 6 October 1827.⁴⁵ They quickly applied for a grant for an allotment at Sullivan's Cove to be used for a merchant store and outbuildings, and were granted a licence 1828/9 for the *Commercial Inn* (Tavern) on the Old Wharf, Hobart.⁴⁶ As well as their whaling interests, J. & W. Mawle ran a daily passage boat from Hobart at 8am to Clarence and Muddy Plains, returning at 6pm.⁴⁷ The Inn was most likely the *Clarence Arms* (qv).⁴⁸

James Belbin Jnr. was son of the 'perpetual petitioner', James Snr., a convict and settler who spent time on Norfolk Island and arrived in Van Diemen's Land a widower with five daughters and a son, James. His story has been told in the writings of J.E. Calder, who, after arriving in Van Diemen's Land from England in 1829, spent until 1851 surveying the south and south west of the island. His comprehensive reports led to the foundation of the present survey system in Tasmania. He served as Surveyor-General from 1859 to 1870 when the position was abolished. He was a prolific writer and was well known for his historical and topographical sketches which he contributed to the press until his death in 1882.⁴⁹

Young James Belbin spent some time travelling to Port Jackson and England with his father, acquired a step-mother and returned to settle on a farm in the Cambridge area. He married Caroline Nichols, daughter of William Nichols of *Clarence House* in 1824. The Tasmanian Almanac of 1825 lists him as a carpenter of Liverpool St., as was William Nichols. It is possible he worked for Nichols. The couple had at least 9 children, again marrying into local families. His death in 1884 was notified in the *Mercury*: 'At his residence, Cambridge, in the 82nd year of his age, James Belbin. The funeral will leave the 'Horse and Jockey' Rokeby at 2 pm. on Sunday July 12'.⁵⁰

Before we leave the properties on the Rokeby Hills we should take a step back in time to Thomas Free and his wife Mary Ann Waterson. In 1828, Thomas and Mary acquired 40 acres adjoining the Clarence Plains Rivulet for £200. This land had originally been granted to John Boyle by Macquarie in 1813. Mary had inherited the 60 acres of land on the other side of the rivulet when her husband, James Waterson, had died but she and Thomas sold it for £110 to pay James's debts in 1828.⁵¹

Boyle's land was owned by the Free children after Thomas' death in 1838 although only William Henry occupied and farmed it. In 1874, whilst under mortgage it was sold to John Chipman for £330.⁵² Known then as *Free's Field* it eventually became part of Stokell's *Rokeby House* land.

Lower on the rivulet was a 125 acre property owned by David Lord, son of the very smart and very rich convict James Lord⁵³ who came with David Collins. His small

town allotment known as Lord's Corner is now occupied by the Hobart G.P.O. David Lord and his family arrived in Hobart in 1815 and engaged in pastoral and business interests, building the original *Richmond Park* residence, and acquired the Clarence Plains land in 1829.

Lord's grant overlayed the original Phillimore and Gunning's grants and was bordered to the south by W. Shirley's grant and to the north by J. Waterson. 1946 aerial images clearly show traces of a substantial farm complex. This was a weatherboard house, with servant's rooms, barns etc, and a large garden with 60 acres cleared.⁵⁴ The location would be present day Stokell Street at Rokeby. David's sister Anne married Charles Wilcock in Halifax UK in 1807 and came as free settlers to Hobart in May 1830. Anne had been left £1000 in her fathers will, one fiftieth of his fortune.⁵⁵ The Wilcock family with four daughters and a son James moved out to farm the Rokeby land. James later married into the Nichols family. The property was worked by the family for the next 32 years.⁵⁶

In 1847 a Sale advertisement appeared for the 'desirable well known farm, measuring 100 acres and upwards... in the occupation of Mr. Wilcox (sic)'. This was purchased by Wilcock for himself for £700.⁵⁷

Both the Lord/Wilcock farm and the James Waterson property, later owned by Richard and Sarah Holmes, are connected to the development of education in the Rokeby area.

1 Anon., *Bedford, William (1781?-1852)*, ADB Vol. 1. pp.77-78.

2 HTG 10.3.1826.

3 RK p.476. 24.3.1826.

4 HRA 3, 5. Notes 16,17 p.175.

5 RK p.481. 30. 5.1826; p.489. 23.10.1826; p.490. 9.11.1826.

6 Stephens, G, *Knopwood: A Biography*, p.144.

7 Wedge, *Memorandum Book*, p.33 19.12.1826; RK p.492. 19.12.1826.

8 HRA 3, 4, p.29.

9 Wedge, *Memorandum Book*, p.30.

10 AOT: Name Index Reg. Nos. TASP 129776; 131713.

11 RK pp.543-664 passim.

12 *Merc.* 14.10.1862.

13 *Merc.* 9.8.1878.

14 Information supplied by Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

15 Archdiocese of Sydney, *Father J.J. Therry 1790-1864*; W.C.Southerwood, *Lonely Shepherd in Van Diemen's Isle (A biography of Father Philip Conolly)*, pp.67-69.

16 Davidson, J. *Norfolk Islanders of Clarence Plains. The Free family..* pp.6-11.

17 RK p.491 27.11.1826.

18 Evans, G. W. 1822 p. 64.

19 Wedge, *Memorandum Book*, p.29 20.8.1826.

20 CT 13.4.1827.

21 AOT: NS 1197 p.38.

22 CT 25.5.1827.

Footprints

- 23 RK p.512 18.12.1827.
- 24 RK p.517. 30.4.1828; p 518. 7.5.1828.
- 25 CSO1/241/5826.
- 26 HTC 9.2.1828.
- 27 HTG 5.3.1831.
- 28 HTC 16.2.1828
- 29 AOT Correspondence File, St. Matthew's, Rokeby.
- 30 Information from Joyce Miles VP, Placenames Australia Inc.
- 31 Fowler's *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.
- 32 Information drawn from various geographical and historical sources on Rokeby UK. Barons and Baronets of Rokeby UK, *Rokeby Park*, Sir Walter Scott and Palladian architecture.
- 33 Stokell farm documents – courtesy Adrian Collins.
- 34 HTC 4.4.1829.
- 35 RK pp.543- 665 passim.
- 36 AOT: LSD 1/77/111;123;128;133;143;184; Wright, *Youngs of Rokeby* p.242.
- 37 HTC 18.2.1842.
- 38 Wright, *Youngs of Rokeby*, pp.242-245.
- 39 *ibid.* pp.3. 5.
- 40 *ibid.* p.2, 6.
- 41 Arnold, F. V. R. *St. Matthew's of Clarence Plains*, p.47.
- 42 *Merc.* 23.1.1856
- 43 Wright, *Youngs of Rokeby*, p.7; Information from Theo Sharples.
- 44 Wright, *Youngs of Rokeby*, p.7
- 45 CT 12.10.1827
- 46 LSD 1/23/550: Bryce, p.37
- 47 Press article (not identifiable); John Sargent *Mystery, History and Intrigue*. p.36.
- 48 HTC 26.3.1831
- 49 Thwaites, J.B. *Calder, James Erskine (1808-1882)*, ADB Vol. I. p.193-4.
- 50 *Merc.* 12.7.1884
- 51 RD 3/2076 (Davidson, p.14)
- 52 Information from Julie Davidson.
- 53 Tipping, pp. 290-91
- 54 Information from R.Tuffin (Austral Archeology).
- 55 RK p.429 5.8.1824.
- 56 Gray, F. A *Seamless Web*, 1803-2004, pp.279.280.
- 57 HTC 14.8.1847.

Chapter 17

Schools in Rokeby

From the early official schools of the 1820s, other small independent schools arose. There are few records as some schools were quite transitory and of a low standard, but they also gave educated persons a chance to earn a living. Wealthier people often preferred to hire a tutor or governess as did the Stokell family with Miss Morris,¹ but these were also in short supply. Our early Lt. Governors all encouraged the establishment of primary schools, and by early 1840 there were 30 of these schools, privately conducted, but under the watchful supervision of the Anglican Church, although some Catholic schools had existed from 1822.

Sarah Holmes and her husband Richard had both been appointed as Mistress and Master of Clarence Plains Public School in 1824² and Richard appointed Schoolmaster and Clerk in 1828. Richard had been recommended as a settler in 1822³ and it is believed that he arrived on the *Francis* on 19 August 1823.⁴ He is recorded as living in an apartment in the 'respective schoolhouse'⁵ and by 1829 this Clerk Schoolmaster received a salary of £50 per annum.⁶ Robert Knopwood first mentions Richard in 1831 when the schoolmaster called upon him, and a few days later remarks '*no church at Clarence Plains Mrs. Holmes being confined*'.⁷ Church services were generally held at the schoolhouse, and as yet there was no government schoolhouse, although the site had been selected for one in November 1826.

Robert Knopwood's relationship with Holmes deteriorated badly. He visited the school regularly and heard the children read but in May 1831 he recorded only 9 children present, four of which were Holmes own. He continued his regular visits but in July he wrote that he had been '*grossly insulted by Mr. Holmes the schoolmaster*'. It appears he was dissatisfied with the attendance, the conduct of the school and the accuracy of the returns. The Rural Dean backed up Knopwood's claim.⁸ Holmes was dismissed in October 1833 and replaced by John Holder as both schoolmaster and parish clerk.⁹

The Holmes family remained in Clarence Plains. Like his neighbour Samuel Dawson he took a strong interest in roads and in August 1833 strongly but unsuccessfully objected to the Kangaroo Pt. to Ralph's Bay Road passing though his farm, and again to the number of roads on his property in 1837. Today the

Rokeby Road goes straight through the old property. Richard died on 12 October 1840 but Sarah continued to raise her children, farm, build stone fences, and get involved with her community. A progressive woman of her day. A line of gum trees marked the site of her cottage. She has been credited as being the collector of seeds for the road planting as well as that around St. Matthew's Church. Remnants of these plantings remain. She died in July 1864.¹⁰

During September 1832 the two Quaker missionaries James Backhouse and George Washington Walker visited Clarence Plains. They thought the settlers were '*for the most part, though with notable exceptions, not a desirable class of colonist, often drunken and vicious*'.¹¹ Knopwood had been asked on 13 September whether the two Friends could have a meeting in the Government Schoolhouse, but had said it was forbidden by the Archdeacon. Next day, the Friends called on Samuel Dawson who walked with them to a schoolhouse on his premises. It was a day school run by the well-educated Edward Hobson, who attended private pupils. The meeting went ahead there on the 16th, with about 50 inhabitants of Clarence Plains. This is indicative of the case that two schools were operating in the same area, one presumably the new Government School and the other a private school on private property.¹²

John Holder, the replacement schoolmaster for Richard Holmes was soon to be replaced himself. On 21 October 1834 John Orson Oldfield McArdell was appointed the Schoolmaster at Clarence Plains, and shortly afterwards Schoolmaster, Schools Department.¹³ He had also been appointed the Ecclesiastical Clerk for Clarence Plains. His wife Matilda, daughter of Mary Agnes Nichols, formerly Fitzgerald, was appointed Schoolmistress.

Arriving on 3 November 1833 on the ship *Eliza* with his mother Mrs. Margaret McArdell and brother Philip Harris, John Orson Oldfield McArdell was an educated man and a scholar. His mother was a daughter of Rev. Harris Oldfield, Chaplain to the Earl of Grandison and sister of the Venerable Archdeacon Oldfield. His father was John Orson McArdell, Surgeon, R.N.. John Orson Oldfield was born in 1810 and married Matilda, aged 17, in 1835.¹⁴

The Government School, and its bell post, are clearly shown, facing what is now Hawthorne Place, on Crown land, in Plan R/27. It is most likely that, as McArdell was appointed to the Government School in 1834, he ran this school until such time as *McArdell College* was built in the street called Prince's Buildings as a private school.

Plan R/27 also shows small vacant allotments facing Prince's Buildings, now unfortunately called Prince's Buildings Parade. This street was laid out in quarter acre lots facing Prince's Buildings. From documents lodged on 31 January 1958

with the Registrar of Deeds, in the matter of the late A.R. Percy, it can be seen that in November 1840 James Wood received a grant of 1 lot; in December 1840 Joseph Chipman was granted 2 lots, and in December 1842 John O.O McArdell was also granted 2 lots. These five grants, amounting to a little over 1 acre, were taken up by McArdell to establish the property we knew as *Bayview*, facing Prince's Buildings. McArdell also acquired the triangular lot, now known as Percy Park, at the main road end of Prince's Buildings.

By 1838 a Board of Education had been established with ecclesiastical representation, and later local School boards were introduced. The system was without great resources and parents were loath to send the children to school when they could be working on the farm or with domestic chores. However John McArdell made a success of his school.

John McArdell had strong ties to the Church and aspired to make his school the 'Champion school for learning in New Holland'. A stern disciplinarian, he was nevertheless respected and indeed fondly referred to by his students, many of whom later rose to prominence in the field of law, medicine and the church.

The school was initially a boys' school, becoming a residential school with pupils from Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. Later, young ladies attended.¹⁵

The Critic 14/11/1919 quoted a letter from F. Pedder, Town Clerk of Clarence in 1875, who refers to John Orson Oldfield McArdell in the early 1840s and mentions trips in the holidays with his 'dear and respected master' to the area later proposed for Ralph's Bay Canal, and comments on the 'gay parakeet and the wattle bird'.

George Stokell, grandson of the builder of *Rokeby House*, wrote to his 'Dear Mama' in May 1855 telling her of the 'fearful hurricane' which blew down two chimneys, one of which fell on the school-room roof doing serious damage, and frightening Mrs. McArdell who was ill in bed.¹⁶

There has been much confusion over the years about 'the Speeds' and where they taught school, often quoted as being at *Bayview*, even as late as 1839. This is not possible. Mr. Speed was dismissed as schoolmaster at the end of January 1823, and they left Clarence Plains. By early 1826 they were at Richmond where he was the gaoler. In fact a letter dated 25 May 1830 to the Lt. Governor from no less a personage than Chaplain William Bedford tells how he had known Mrs. Speed since 1823; the loss of her son Henry in 1827, the distress of the mind suffered by her, and the casting out of her by her husband. He was recommending that she be admitted to the Colonial Hospital where she could be restored to health and soundness of mind.¹⁷

Walch's *Literary Intelligencer* of 1864 shows the end of *Bayview* as McArdell's college:

'Lately occupied by Mr. McArdell. Mrs and Miss Barber desire to draw the attention of their Friends and the Public generally by stating they have taken these extensive premises with the hope of increasing the number of their Pupils. The house commands a fine view of the Bay, and the locality is particularly healthy and salubrious, and of easy access, 5 miles from town, a good road and daily communication... For Terms apply to Messrs Walch; or Mr.Dawson, Bellerive, Kangaroo Pt. 1 July 1864'.¹⁸

On 17 November 1885, John Orson Oldfield McArdell died at 'Mornington', the building in Balcumbi St. to where he had moved his school, now in the suburb of Mornington.¹⁹ He had contributed greatly to the education of young people and had taken an interest in community affairs such as the Roads Trust.

From 1867, the building became *Bayview Hotel* under the ownership of Peter Archibald Buchanan,²⁰ an experienced hotelkeeper and dedicated yachtsman from Bellerive. He was a founding director of the Kangaroo Point Steam Navigation Company, 1854.²¹ Charles Chipman of *Clarence House*, in his 1866 diary, lists visits to *Bayview* for readings and meetings, especially that which concerned the debt on St. Matthew's Parsonage. Two of his employees got drunk there and he had cause to speak to Buchanan 'who got in a scot and then cried about it' but he still attended the dance there two days later. Assessment rolls show Buchanan as the owner of *Bayview* until 1873 and that he occupied it himself until 1870. The only other occupier was a Mrs. Munro in 1872.

Mrs. Eliza Percy is then listed as owner/ occupier from 1874 until at least 1882. Her first application for land, in 1875, was not granted but in 1876 she was granted 110 acres.²² Assessment rolls show that in 1874 she also owned another cottage and some land. It is believed²³ that the family at first occupied the cottage 'under the lea' of Skillion Hill, mentioned in the writing of Mabel Hookey. The Percy family is reputed to have had their own coat of arms and to be descended from the Dukes of Northumberland, Whatever their story, the Percy's chose to put their heritage behind them and to work hard in their new land.²⁴ By 1882 Eliza owned 262 acres of land in the area, including the area now known as Percy Park, reputed to have been purchased in order to protect the ambience of *Bayview*.²⁵

The brothers Cecil Frederick Percy and Herbert Arthur Percy came to Tasmania from England, via New Zealand, where, from 1872 they engaged in railway construction, and controlled some of the first toll gates in Lyttleton.²⁶

Cecil settled in at Rokeby with his mother Eliza, whilst Herbert and his wife

Eleanor raised a large family in the Ringarooma area.

The origins and relationships of the Percy family are difficult to trace. Suffice it to say for our purposes Cecil and his wife, also named Eleanor, married in February 1876²⁷ and had 8 children, including two who were midwives. None married. The life of Evelyn Constance, who died in 1926, is remembered in a brass plaque in St. Matthew's Church, Rokeby, in the community in which she served. Dulcie's life is remembered by the number of elderly ladies in the area, named for Dulcie, who delivered them; some extremely small by today's standards; swaddled them and cared for them until they were out of danger. Eliza died in late 1908, her funeral notice stating *'relict of the late Frederick Percy, in her 89th. year – St. Matthew's Monday 10th October'*.²⁸

Cecil died in May 1929, predeceasing Eleanor by 3 months. By 1930, the two surviving sons, Cyril and Raymond, had bought out Dulcie's share of the estate for £250, thus, after Cyril's death in 1948, Raymond was the sole owner of the properties.²⁹ It is believed that Dulcie then held title to what is now known as Percy Park, a never built on part of the *Bayview* land, and gave it to Clarence Council with the proviso that it remained a children's park, fenced from the main road.³⁰ And so it is today. The huge farming property was gradually broken up, and much is now residential land.

This was not the end of *Bayview* as a school, albeit a different type of school. Mr. Allan Wicks purchased much of the Percy land and sold 17 acres, along Hawthorne Place, to the Education Department for the future Rokeby High School. This, together with sheds, stables and wells, was leased in the late 1950s for a riding school. This well remembered establishment, with its indoor school for beginners, and regular shows, was based at *Bayview*, and residential schools were held at the grand house during school holidays. Many lasting friendships were made there.

Bryan Connolly, now of 'Hopfields', Kingston, and Max James were the co-owners. The extensive outbuilding of *Bayview* became stables, an indoor arena, tack rooms, dispensary, and stalls for the school ponies. Four large paddocks, where Rokeby High School now stands, were used for hacking, jumping, dressage and learners.³¹

The beautiful house, its great stairway leading to the huge school room which had served as a ballroom when it was a hotel and more recently for parties and dances, was totally destroyed in the 1967 bushfires. It was just over 100 years from the date of its opening as the *Bayview Hotel*. The riding school and many of its ponies were also burnt in the fire which raced across the fields. In 1981 a lass who worked with the riding school pupils wrote *'Fancy that a bushfire can erase every vestige*



Riding School Equestriennes outside Bayview

*of such an establishment, and all that's left are the many memories of the people who loved 'Bayview Riding School'.*³²

By 1868 education was made compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 12 who lived within 1 mile of a school in settled districts. Later the upper age was 14 and the distance increased to 2 miles.³³ We know that the Clarence Plains Board of Education School building still exists at 3 South Arm Rd. Rokeby. The well known image of this wooden schoolhouse is dated by its text as 1860. At the time the one teacher school had 28 pupils, some of whom are shown in the image.

The original school teacher was Duncan Chisholm assisted by his sister. They taught at this school until 1872, followed by Miss Snowden (1873-4). It was notified as vacant in the list of Public schools in 1875.³⁴ The school was governed by a Local Education Board which in 1870 had the following members - J. Chipman, D. Stanfield, W. Young, the Rev. Robert Wilson, and the Very Rev. W. Dunne V.G., thus maintaining a balance of ecclesiastical and community representatives. The original building was earth floored, shingle roofed and surrounded by a picket fence, with roses.

Charles Chipman of *Clarence House* recorded in his diary of Friday 13 September

1867: *'In the evening we went to the Plains to hear Chisholm's lecture. I had the honour of being chairman'.*

By 1887 the building was occupied (and was later purchased) by James Beard. The owner was William Young, trustee for Henry Sellings of Victoria.

Photographic evidence of the early 1900s shows that the building had started to subside on its southern side, so this part was subsequently removed. The foundations were very visible in the year 2001. Three photographs in the possession of Tranmere-Clarence Plains Land & Coastcare Inc. show the changes from 1860 to the late 1990s. These include the removal of the chimney and covering the shingle roof with corrugated iron. It is believed to date from possibly much earlier than 1860.

The cottage retains its original charming character with a picket fence and roses, and old trees, some estimated at over 100 years of age. This property was still using the night soil collection service up until early 2000, and is still a private home.

Directly next door, over the other side of the rivulet, at 6 Grange Rd., is the former Rokeby Public School building. By this time an attendance of three days per week was a requirement.³⁵ In 1897 a newspaper article appeared telling of breaking up for the Jubilee holidays, and the annual prize giving. The school had been managed for some 20 years by the recently retired Mrs. Bilton. She was replaced by Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne.

The Rector of St. Matthew's Church gave out the prizes and gave a short address whereupon the children, specially trained for the occasion, sang the National Anthem. They then retired to Mr. Percy's field for the sports competition. Prizes were cricket balls, drawing outfits, skipping ropes etc. The National Anthem was sung again, and three cheers given for the Queen, three for the teachers, and three for the visitors. Mr. Percy's field was the area now occupied by Rokeby High School. This information dates the school from 1878, and fits in with the information on the Board of Education schoolhouse.³⁶

At another celebration on Empire Day 1937 the format was much the same. The children, about eighteen in number, stood in line, saluted whilst the Union Jack was raised, and sang 'God Save the King'. The Warden of Clarence gave an address, distributed small bags of boiled lollies to each student, and proclaimed the rest of the day a school holiday! When the last teacher was transferred to Sandford Primary about 1944, real heartache was suffered by some pupils, who considered her a 'grouse sort'.³⁷

The building is now permanently listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register (Ref 10587) and the data sheet is very interesting in that it states in part:

'The Rivulet and adjoining open space is significant for its association with the initial pastoral-based settlement of the area along the river flats, and for its association with the development of educational institutions at Rokeby'.

The property is an outstanding landmark on the route along the South Arm Highway. The building is described as a simple weatherboard Victorian Carpenter Gothic structure constructed in two distinct gable-roofed wings, reflecting the separate historical functions of school room and teachers residence.³⁸ An internal door was formed between the door wings enabling the schoolteacher to access the schoolroom without exiting the building, and a small kitchen area has been included internally in recent years. The graffiti art Mural on the rear toilet block was a National Youth Week project in 2001.

The building has transferred through three owners, both secular and religious. In 1948 it served as a Catholic Mass Centre and in 1963 the Roman Catholic Church purchased the land for £250. This former Rokeby Public School and the neighbouring Clarence Plains Board of Education building are the only two remaining nineteenth century wooden structures in the area. Bush fires, demolition for other uses and vandalism have taken care of the others.

This building is of historic cultural heritage significance not only because it demonstrates the provision of education infrastructure in rural communities during



c. 2001



Students at Rokeby Public School c. 1890s

the late nineteenth century, but also the importance of Rokeby as a population centre during that century. It demonstrates the late 19th to early 20th century rural schooling practice of accommodating the teacher onsite at the school, and it has special meaning to the community through 125 years of use as an educational and community facility. In October 1984 the building was transferred to Clarence City Council and today is the well-loved and maintained Clarence Plains Youth Centre.

Pupils of the State School recalled some happy features of 1940s schooldays... the regular trip to Mrs. Free's lolly shop, on one corner of Hawthorne Place, and the boys' regular entertainment as they overlooked the elderly resident of *Hawthorne cottage* on the other corner 'watering' his vegetable garden, oblivious to the onlookers. There was of course no sewerage or septic tank system! Another before-school occupation was setting snares to catch the 'chooks' that wandered in from Beard's cottage next door, and the rapid exits from classroom when a raucous sound indicated a successful capture. And, over sixty years later, they remember the air raid shelter and wonder if it is still there.³⁹ Boys will still be boys!

- 1 AOT: NS 1197 Hookey, M. Family Reminiscences, typed transcript. pp.31-2.
- 2 AOT: CSO 50/1.
- 3 HRA 3, 4, p.46 15.1.1822.
- 4 HTG 23.8.1823.
- 5 HRA 3, 7, p.70.
- 6 HRA 3, 8, p.1312 30.6.1829.
- 7 RK p.576. 16.1.1831.
- 8 RK pp.614 – 20.
- 9 Stephens, *Knopwood*, p.177; RK pp.629-30.
- 10 Hookey, *The Chaplain*, p.172.
- 11 Walker, P. *All That We Inherit*, pp.21-22.
- 12 Backhouse, *A narrative of a visit to the Australian Colonies*, p.48.
- 13 AOT: CSO 50/9-11.
- 14 AOT: NS 373/8.
- 15 AOT: NS 1195/1 p.5 c.3.
- 16 Copy of letter provided by Mary McKinlay.
- 17 AOT: CSO 1/455/10171 1830.
- 18 Walch's Literary Intelligencer 1.7.1864 p. 126.
- 19 *Merc.* 6.1.1860, 20.11.1855.
- 20 HTG 5.2.1867.
- 21 Clarence Council, *Spirit of Clarence*, p.64.
- 22 CB 7/24 pp.16,24.
- 23 Information from Zena Stanfield.
- 24 Information from Zena Stanfield.
- 25 Assessment Roll 21.2.1882 Hobart Gazette p.388; Information from Zena Stanfield.
- 26 *Cyclopaedia of Tasmania*, 1931 p.256.
- 27 AOT: name Index – Registered No. 258128.
- 28 *Merc.* 10.10.1908 ; Whitton's & O'Shea's Index to the *Mercury*.
- 29 Supreme Court Registered Number 38/5647 20.1.1956.
- 30 Information from Zena Stanfield.

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- 31 Information from Sylvia Berner.
- 32 Quote from Sylvia Berner.
- 33 Phillips, D. *Making More Adequate Provision: State Education in Tasmania 1839-1985*, p.60.
- 34 Walch's Almanac of 1875.
- 35 Alexander, A. (ed.) *The Companion to Tasmanian History*,. p.115
- 36 AOT NS 1195/1 Cutting - 'Rokeby' 1897.
- 37 Information from Basil Chipman.
- 38 Tasmanian Heritage Council Data sheet Ref: 10567.
- 39 2001 recollections of their schooldays from Basil Chipman and Maurice Connor.

Chapter 18

Knopwood, Stokell and St. Matthew's

It is now time to turn back to the 1830s again. Robert Knopwood by now has sadly left his home at *Cottage Green* for the last time and has come to live in a small cottage at Clarence Plains, on Mr. Sam's Lagoon Farm.¹ Over time these lagoons became a tip site and later were filled in and today are the Wentworth Park sports fields. Knopwood's cottage was adjacent to the Glebe Land and visible into the 1950s.² In those days Chandler's private horse training track was on the corner of Wentworth St. and Rokeby Rd. (Clarence St.) and the area was still called Rokeby.



Knopwood's Cottage, Lagoon Farm, Rokeby

Betsy Morrisby, Knopwood's beloved ward had died, on the anniversary of her wedding day, 20 October, after giving birth to her daughter Elizabeth Sarah. Knopwood engaged his friend William Nichols as undertaker and to provide Betsy's cedar coffin, engraved plate, shroud and pall and to attend the interment.³ His many friends comforted him as best they could and Colonial Chaplain William

Bedford officiated at the funeral service, but he was inconsolable.⁴ On 7 November, at Clarence Plains, Knopwood preached a funeral sermon for Betsy.

'Terrible are the afflictions of the friend who reared this young woman and whom he had seen grow up in virtue as in years, whom he had flattered himself would be the Prop, the Comfort and Support to his declining years, (which cannot long continue) is suddenly taken away by death, which he had great reason to hope would first happen to him'.⁵

'My dear and ever lamented late E. Morrisby' was never forgotten in his diary entries.

His somewhat strained relationship with Betsy's husband, Henry Morrisby, was not improved when, in June 1831, Henry approached him to remarry him to Christina Smith, and was refused. Nevertheless they married and commenced to attend Knopwood's services.⁶ Knopwood in turn then took over the care of the two children, and especially young Robert's education.⁷

In March 1831 he marked out his own place in the burial ground.⁸ He battled out the year in poor health, being regularly bled as was the practice of the time, and pondered on his own mortality, and the loss of Betsy.

Earlier he had had the foresight to think about some land closer to the Village of Rokeby. On Wednesday 4 February 1830 his diary entry reads '*Wed. 3. Mr. Wilkinson breakfasted with me and we went to Clarence Plains where he measured me some land in the township, 2 acres and a half. He dined with me on my return.*'

This land measuring 3 acres, surveyors of the day always allowing 10% at least over, is described in his diary as: '*Village of Rokeby. Bounded on the South West by a south easterly line of 9 chains 15 links, north east by High Street, north west by Beach Street.*'⁹

In November 1834, referring to Lt. Governor Arthur and Surveyor General Frankland, he wrote: '*Thurs. 20 I rode with them to the schoolhouse at Clarence Plains and ask His Excellency for grant of my allotment there. He said he would give it to me.*'¹⁰

The land was granted to Knopwood, in his own right. Originally part of a 40 acre location to Edward Kimberley, who had died in 1829 so the land was available. It now includes the Rokeby Village shopping centre and amusingly the Knopwood Shopping Centre is further south on the opposite side of the road, named in ignorance of the historic grant.

In December 1830 an insignificant entry in Knopwood's diary introduced George Stokell, a man who became most influential in the Clarence Plains district. Born

in Sadberge UK in 1787, George Stokell was to marry his first wife Margaret Pattinson on 5 April 1807. Margaret and their children, Maria, William, Anne and John, were all later to come to Australia. George and his second 'wife' Hannah Wastel and a child arrived in Hobart on 30 December 1822. As his granddaughter Mabel Hookey described it, Hobart consisted of a few houses on a rise, centred about the lower part of Macquarie Street, with the tide coming up to the site of the present day City Hall and the receding waters depositing the carcasses of dead dogs and cats.¹¹

By the February of 1823 George had set himself up in business selling clothes, haberdashery, tools, tea, sugar, tobacco, butter and cheese, and winnowing and threshing machines. His occupation was given as house carpenter and joiner.

From 1825 to 1837 he was listed in Tasmanian Directories as a wheelwright, general dealer and timber merchant in various localities in Hobart, originally at 25 Macquarie St. then at the new market place area. He set up his timber yard in Macquarie Street opposite the Government Store, and proceeded to purchase land. His first house was built near the site of the City Hall and he is believed to have owned the Cascades property before De Graves; erecting a saw mill there. George is also believed to have issued handwritten currency notes in various denominations in 1825-6.¹²

George Stokell bought his first 300 acres in the Clarence Plains area in 1827,¹³ and he continued to acquire land through grant and purchase. Again Knopwood's diary is a source of information as he mentions his meetings with Stokell and his visits to the Stokell house in Hobart.¹⁴ Although not listed on the 1828 list of contributors toward the building of a church in Clarence Plains, George Stokell was one of the three tenderers for the work in March of that year. On 20 November 1834 Knopwood went to Mr. Stokell's to see his house, the first mention of it in his diary.¹⁵

A series of advertisements inform us as to George's next movements. On 23 May 1834 he requested inhabitants of Clarence and Muddy Plains to use the road pegged out by the Surveyor General, a straight line from the Schoolhouse, passing the south angles of McGuinness' grant and Holmes' garden, as his land, previously trespassed upon, would be put into crop.¹⁶ This not only gives an approximate site of the schoolhouse but we know George is actively about to farm his Clarence Plains property.

He then advertised, on 10 January 1835, for 'two good QUARRYMEN' ¹⁷ and finally for a Gardener or Gardener/Overseer – someone who was married, steady, active and who came free to the colony. The address is given as Clarence Plains.¹⁸ Whether or not *Rokeby House* was then completed or the small cottage purchased

with the land was in use¹⁹ is unknown, but there was certainly plenty of stone work to be done over the years at *Rokeby House*.

Next George decided to auction his business premises on the corner of Macquarie and Campbell Streets, a lucrative site it seems, comprising 3 allotments which were to be subdivided into five, giving each a front and back entrance. Not only this but George proposed to sell his two tenanted cottages in Brisbane Street, near Trinity Church, both of which had large areas of land. This resulted from an unsavoury episode when the trusting George gave his well-regarded store manager, William John Parrott, authority to sign cheques.

William, aka John, had reputedly been gambling heavily, with George's funds. He escaped prosecution when George, again trusting, gave him an opportunity to destroy the evidence. George was now in debt for some £100,000, hence the sales of land and goods which took place in the latter part of 1840. John Parrot had 800 acres on the Rokeby Hills which later formed part of the *Claremont* estate of Samuel Dawson. George continued to sell his assets, and work hard especially at clearing and building at his farm sites.

Whilst there is no 1835 diary for Knopwood, George's farm records still exist. He employed large numbers of both free workers and convicts at properties in the Lagoon District (Pipe Clay area) and Rokeby in Clarence Plains, as well as properties near the old main road to Launceston, in the area between Lake Tiberius and Campania. The properties *Stockdale* and *Darlington* were rented to son George at £225 and £120 per annum respectively, between 1862 and 1868. *Stokell Inn*,²⁰ was also rented out.

His account books show the employees' duties and their wages, balanced against the cost of boots, clothes, sugar, tobacco, eggs and soap, blankets and utensils provided to them during their employment. Richard Read who arrived on the *Barossa* in 1842 was paid £12 per annum from which cash and bedding was deducted whilst the Passholder Thomas Wainwright who started on 22 August 1857 and 'turned in on 20



Dipping sheep at Rokeby House

October with sore eyes', received no cash on termination as he had already received spending money, 2 pairs of boots and a pound of soap! ²¹

Some have thought this to be Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, the popular artist, suspected triple murderer and convicted forger transported here in 1837, but he died in 1847. ²²

George's farm records were equally meticulous recording sheep on each property, movements between properties, their breeding, shearing, dipping, washing and counting. He employed, over time, many tens of people for all manner of farm and housework.

By the 1860s he was employing women to wash or cook, and occasionally feed a lamb or calf, at a wage of 4 shillings per week. Women were supplied hair nets (ninepence), stockings at one shilling a pair, stays four shilling and tenpence and a dress ten shillings! By 1879 the wages had risen to seven shillings a week.

Of course well before that, *Rokeby House*, the central residence from which Stokell managed his other properties, was completed and today is entered on the Tasmanian Heritage Register (Ref. R.667). A splendid farm-house, built with two contrasting tones of local sandstone, *Rokeby House* has not only a unique feature in its carriage-wash, but also extensive convict built outbuildings including a blacksmith's shop, cobblestone lanes, and stone walls. The hawthorn hedges on this land beside the Churchyard are of historic value, being originally planted to define both the internal fields and the outer boundaries of the *Rokeby House* property. Names such as Free's Field, Mangold, High and Low Moor, The Strip, and Long Lane were given, and later, one was given the significant name of Rectory or Parsonage Field. ²³

Although the building was seriously damaged during the 1967 bushfires, it was skilfully restored, much as it was formerly, by the Cuthbertson family who owned it at that time. ²⁴

Knopwood's diary recorded the visits of Gregson's hunting party in 1836, and dining there with both Mr. and Mrs Stokell in 1837. ²⁵ This friendship strengthened as Knopwood reached the final year of his life, continuing his pastoral care, attending the schools, doing his duty and meeting friends. He died on 12 September 1838 in the presence of his old friends Stokell, Gregson and Philip Conolly. ²⁶

Almost as if to create a suitable memorial to Knopwood, the project of a church for Clarence Plains was resurrected. By 15 June 1839 a letter was sent from Archdeacon Hutchins to the Colonial Secretary, requesting assistance toward the erection of the Church and Clergyman's House in the Village of Rokeby, enclosing a copy of subscription lists, and testimonials to the validity of the petition – only

signed by those over 14 years old and living within 10 miles of the proposed church site. The petition with 82 signatures was enclosed. Subscriptions promised amounted to upwards of £400 from 57 contributors.²⁷

Plans were prepared by the convict architect, James Blackburn. Born in Essex, UK, he had been employed as an inspector for the commissioners of sewers for the London districts of Holborn and Finsbury, when extreme financial distress led to his conviction for the forgery of a cheque for £600. Sentenced to transportation for life on 20 May 1833, he arrived at Hobart in November and was immediately employed by the Department of Roads and Bridges, later Public Works. Blackburn was given a free pardon 3 May 1841. His Early Gothic work included Holy Trinity (Hobart) and St. Matthew's (Rokeby) Churches. He also designed in Norman (Scots Presbyterian Church, Sorell) and Greco-Egyptian (St. Georges Church, Battery Point, vestries and tower) styles.

After private commissions in the Campbelltown area, he and his family moved to Melbourne in 1849 and set up practice as an engineer and architect. Appointed City Surveyor later that year, he went on to produce the basic design of the Melbourne water supply from the Yan Yean reservoir. Injured in a fall from his horse in 1852, he died of typhoid in 1854 in Brunswick St. Collingwood. He was survived by only five of his 10 children, and his eldest son followed his profession. He was considered a great engineer of his time and an advanced and original architect.²⁸

Messrs. Samuel Dawson and Geo Stokell having the contract to erect the church, various payments were made up to 21 December 1841 when the church building was completed at a total cost of £1443.²⁹

The subscribers included local inhabitants as well as from the wider Clarence Plains areas such as Ralph's Neck, Muddy Plains, Cambridge and Kangaroo Point. Knopwood himself had contributed.

The Foundation Stone had been laid on 30 June 1840 by Archdeacon Hutchins, who died in June 1841. The first bishop of Van Diemen's Land, Francis Russell Nixon, would dedicate St. Matthew's a little over two months after his arrival. The ceremony would take place on 24 September 1843. On 12 September a letter from Stokell and Dawson, Church Wardens, pointed out that the church was still without seats. The Lord Bishop advised the trustees to seek Government assistance for forms to accommodate up to 100 convicts, and before the opening date. This brought a reply from the Colonial Secretary as to whether prisoners would occupy more than the 3/16th of the seating reserved by the Church Act.³⁰

The Bishop undertook to supply seats for the interior at his own expense, and devoted funds both from his private resources and funds placed at his disposal for

liquidating the debt. Neighbours lent seats for the occasion and the Official party, including the Governor and Lady Franklin and the Lord Bishop, and visitors were brought from Hobart on the paddle steamer *Native Youth*, Cabin fare 5/-, and were received by the Rev. Mr. Grange and the local inhabitants. Afterwards the official party took refreshments at Mr. Dawson's.³¹

St. Matthew's was to wait until 26 July 1855 before it was consecrated. The Tasmanian Church Chronicle reported the occasion:

'On Thursday 26 July, this pretty little village Church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Tasmania. A little after nine o'clock in the morning the Government steamer left the Commissariat Wharf with the Governor and Lady Young, the Lord Bishop, Archdeacon Davies, Revds. Drew, Davenport and Seaman, the Mayor of Hobart Town and family, and many other friends of the Church. About half-past ten the steamer entered Ralph's Bay, when they landed in boats and were received on shore by the Rev. R. Wilson, the chaplain of the district and the church wardens, with a large body of the parishioners.

The Bishop and Clergy then proceeded to the residence of J.O.O. McArdell, Esq. where they robed, and from thence to the Church. At the door they were met by the chaplain, churchwardens and a large number of parishioners, when the usual Petition praying His Lordship to consecrate the Church was read, and the service for the day proceeded.

The prayers were read by the Rev. R. Wilson; the communion service by His Lordship and the Ven. Archdeacon Davies. The Bishop preached, and the Holy Communion was administered. The offertory amounted to £32/9s, that is to be devoted to the purchase of a small organ for the Church. The Governor, Lady Young, the Bishop, and friends from Hobart Town then adjourned to the residence of Mr. J.O.O. McArdell, where a most sumptuous luncheon was provided'.³²

The petition presented by the Rev. R. Wilson was signed by the following:

R. Wilson Chaplain		Sarah Holmes
S.R. Dawson]	Edward Maum
J.O.O. McArdell] Churchwardens	George Dawson
Henry G. Fielder]	J.R. Morrisby
W. Stanfield		E. Morrisby
Geo. Stokell		S. Morrisby
J. Chipman		W. Martin
E. Hobson		Geo. Wise

M.A.Chipman
J.Chipman Jnr.
Jonas Farrer

C.Chipman
D.Stanfield Jnr
Emily Stanfield

The petition noted that the building to be called the Church of Saint Matthew had been erected and enclosed land set apart for the Churchyard Cemetery or Burial Ground for the Dead Bodies of the Christian Residents and Inhabitants of the Parish of Clarence; and that the said Church and Burial ground had not yet been consecrated.³³

The Petition was then received and the sentence of consecration of the Church of Saint Matthew was pronounced. The party then proceeded to the Burial Ground where the sentence of dedication and consecration of it was pronounced by the Bishop.³⁴

The Church Chronicle continued its description:

‘Through the indefatigable exertions of the chaplain of the district, this neat village Church which was fast falling to pieces, has been thoroughly fitted up, and the greatest praise is due to the parishioners for their zeal and liberality. The Church is fitted up with open benches, stained and varnished black oak; the roof is coloured a pale blue; the open timbers stained and varnished black oak; the chancel walls are covered with a rich ruby coloured paper, the arch being finished with a gold bead; around the arch of the chancel window is beautifully emblazoned in gold, picked out in crimson, the words, in Old English characters, “This do in remembrance of me”.

*The coverings of the pulpit, altar and reading desk are of rich dark crimson velvet, the sacred monogram being embroidered in gold coloured silk, edged with gold cord, the work of several ladies of the district; in the chancel are two elaborately carved chairs, the gift of a father and daughter residing in the district; the aisle and part of the nave adjoining the chancel covered with neat matting, also the gift of a lady parishioner’.*³⁵

Many more renovations have since taken place, notably repairs to plastering, and painting, recorded in both the Church News of 1866³⁶ and in 1867 by Charles Chipman of *Clarence House*.³⁷ The original shingle roof was later replaced or covered with galvanised iron, as was the custom. A pre-1950 image by R.C. Harvey shows a dado on walls which today are a plain white plaster, so different from the 1855 richness. External repairs have taken place but the integrity of the building remains.

Miss Liz Wise married Don Cordell on 17 March 1956; it was the first wedding in the Church for 15 years. The organist was Miss Jean Jackson, the officiating

Minister Rev. Thomas Cloudesdale. The service was by candlelight and kerosene lamps and Don Goodwin, the Warden, played the organ. The kerosene lamps and organ were later converted to electricity, a great relief to the young lads who pumped the organ bellows.³⁸

It is believed that the roofing timber was donated by the Stanfield family.³⁹ The Chancel chairs, one of which was made from the wood of HMS *Anson*, formerly of Nelson's Fleet, are believed to have been carved by Messrs. Whiteside & Son. The *Anson* arrived in Hobart in February 1844, and later that year, when fitted out as a reformatory hulk, had 519 female convicts on board. These were mainly employed in garment making and domestic duties – the charge for washing ordinary family articles was one shilling and sixpence per dozen.⁴⁰ It was closed in 1849 and the vessel broken up in September 1851.⁴¹ The Blackwood Reredos and Honour Roll were carved by Dora Hookey of *Rokeby House*. Other plaques, hymn boards, vases, plates and boxes are treasured memories of parishioners.⁴²

Both Church and Churchyard were listed on the Register of the National Estate in 1992⁴³ and more recently on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.⁴⁴ Much of its heritage has been well documented. The Church is briefly described as an ashlar sandstone church with a corrugated iron gable roof. The side walls and square tower are parapeted and castellated, whilst the arched windows have simple stone hood mouldings.

This wonderful sandstone church dominates the small village area of Rokeby. For many years it has been the centre of the community and social life in the growing village, later Town of Rokeby. It has withstood the trials and tribulations of depression, World Wars and devastating bushfires. It was the rock on which this early farming community anchored itself and grew to the large area it is today. Its association with Robert Knopwood, John Lee Archer and James Blackburn, all with significant places in the history of Colonial Tasmania, adds to its historic heritage significance.

Predating the above heritage listing was that of Knopwood's Tomb, entered on the Register of the National Estate 21 March 1978. (ID 10874).

The number of burials in Clarence Plains prior to Knopwood's interment would have approached 80 – today only thirteen headstones record these deaths.

Most graves would have originally had a plain wooden marker, and as time went by the more affluent of society would have created family vaults, or engraved markers, mostly of sandstone. A burial in a 'vault' was recorded in 1833. Many headstones bear multiple inscriptions and some, for various reasons, have been relocated to the area behind St. Matthew's Centre.

Knopwood's diary records many of these burials in the then unconsecrated ground; those of free settlers, emancipists, convicts, babies, drownings, accidental deaths and natural deaths; the baptised and the unbaptised. 'Buried a corpse' was not an uncommon entry in the Knopwood diary.⁴⁵

The sad story of Susannah Bellette (née Free) in 1833 is a reminder of the harshness of the times. Susannah was the second wife of Jacob Bellette Jnr, married by Knopwood on 16 April 1827. She succumbed to consumption and was buried in a brick and wood vault on 6 January 1833. Knopwood was no doubt shocked to be informed by his steward Ready on Sunday 27 January that 'he went to the Church yard and found the body of the late Mrs. Billett had been taken out of the vault'.⁴⁶

The following notice was placed in the February Hobart Town Gazette:

*'Hobart Police Office. Whereas the body of the late Susannah Billett (sic) was disinterred in the burial ground of Clarence Plains, on the night of 26th January past and most shamefully mutilated, I hereby offer on behalf of certain inhabitants of that neighbourhood, whose names can be known at the Police Office, a reward of one hundred Pounds, to be paid to any person who may be the means of bringing any offender or offenders to conviction. And I am authorised by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor to offer the further reward of a Ticket of Leave should a convict give the required information. M.Forster C.P.M. '*⁴⁷

Photographs taken circa 1900 show many graves surrounded by wooden cots, and large blue gums, a popular Tasmanian cemetery plant, believed to have been planted around the churchyard boundary by early settlers.

Outstanding in the Churchyard is the imposing obelisk which is the memorial to the Colonial Chaplain Robert Knopwood M.A. The monument consists of a sandstone obelisk on a pedestal which is mounted on a stepped, square platform. The cast iron perimeter fence is of a design believed to date to circa 1850. Separating the pedestal and obelisk is a moulded cornice on which were once stone balls or urns, located at each corner. These elements, long missing, would have been consistent with the Neo-Classical architectural style of this tomb.⁴⁸ The tomb lies between the vault of the family at whose house Knopwood preached so often – the Rumneys, and that of his ward Betsy Morrisby.

By 1900, a parishioner, who as a child knew Knopwood, thought the occupants of the then tranquil village took no interest or pride in the preservation of his tomb.⁴⁹ And so, from time to time, repairs have been made to the monument, as well as the major works undertaken to correct a 'lean to the north' noted in the press in 1930. The stone appears to have originally been lime-washed in white, and changed to a

stone colour during this time. The Latin and English inscriptions, re-painted from time to time, have a number of errors one of which is Knopwood's age at death. He died aged 75 years.

Whilst the donor of this memorial is known, its date is not, although it is assumed to be between Elizabeth Sarah Morrisby's marriage date (12 August 1852) and that recorded on the earliest known visual record of the tomb (22 February 1866) – a pencil and chinese white sketch by Louisa Anne Meredith.⁵⁰ The occasion was the first Harvest Festival in Clarence Plains.

Time, weather, vandals and the 1967 bushfires have taken their toll, but a walk through St. Matthew's Burial Ground hints at the many stories of hardship, achievements and local history. It is a tangible reminder of the First Fleeters, Norfolk Islanders, early settlers and other founders of the Clarence Plains area.

- 1 RK p.557-558 16.6.1830 to 29.6.1830.
- 2 Lands & Surveys Dept. Mapping Branch Hobart 1948 Map 26.
- 3 Knopwood's Notebook p.100.
- 4 RK p.565. 31.10.1830.
- 5 Stephens, *Knopwood*, p.161; RK p.565. 7.11.1830.
- 6 RK p.583, 14.6.1831; p.584 3.7.1831.
- 7 RK p.600. 18.6.1832.
- 8 RK p.579. 25.3.1831.
- 9 RK p.575. Copy of Printed description of Land.
- 10 RK p.640. 20.11.1834.
- 11 AOT: NS 1197 p.18.
- 12 Aust. Stamp and Coin P/L website.
- 13 Pers.comm. Mary McKinlay.
- 14 RK pp.567 – 637 passim.
- 15 RK p.640. 20.11.1834.
- 16 TC 17.6.1834.
- 17 TC 15.1.1835.
- 18 TC 4.11.1835.
- 19 AOT: NS 1197 p.22.
- 20 Shown on Hall's Police District Map of 1828, as is Rokeby.
- 21 Adrian Collins records
- 22 Hodgman, V.W. *Wainewright, Thomas Griffiths (1794-1847)*, ADB Vol. 2. pp 558-559
- 23 Pers. Comm. J. Saward.
- 24 Adrian Collins in Adnum, p.17.
- 25 RK p.642 – 680 passim.
- 26 Hookey, *The Chaplain* p.117.
- 27 AOT: CSO 5/194/4646.
- 28 Harley Preston *Blackburn, James* (1803-1854), ADB Vol. 1. pp. 109-110.
- 29 AOT: CSO 5/200/4834; CSO 8/40/855.
- 30 AOT: CSO 8/40/855.
- 31 HTA 26.9.1843.
- 32 TCC 1.9.1855.
- 33 Diocesan Register Vol. 2. Fol. 295.
- 34 Diocesan Register Vol. 2. Fol. 293-297.
- 35 *Tasmanian Church Chronicle* September 1855.
- 36 *Tasmanian Church News* March p.232.

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- 37 *Chipman Diaries*.
- 38 Information from Liz Cordell.
- 39 Information from Zena Stanfield.
- 40 Wood, J. *Tasmanian Royal Kalendar. Colonial Register and Almanac*, 1849 p.94.
- 41 Bateson, C. *Bowden, Edmund (1801-1847)*, ADB Vol. 1. p.134.
- 42 Arnold, F. *Memorials. Anglican Parish of Sandford*, p.22, 28.
- 43 Australian Heritage Database ID 10872 File No. 6/01/002/0004, *St. Matthews*.
- 44 Tasmanian Heritage Council Ref: R669.
- 45 Sourced from *RK Diary*; AOT: NS 373/ 12 , Church registers and extant headstones.
- 46 RK p.608-609 Mrs. Billet.
- 47 Mason Thais, *From Chains to Freedom*, Vol. 2. pp.40-41
- 48 Information from Ian Boersma, Brendan Lennard.
- 49 AOT: NS1195/2 p.19.
- 50 Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Collection.

Chapter 19

A Tale of Two Parsonages

On Tuesday, 21 August 1855, a meeting was held at the police office (*Watch house*) Rokeby, for the purpose of discussing steps to be taken to provide a house for the clergyman of the district, his present house having been sold, and no others available in the neighbourhood. A Committee was formed and a subscription list opened with a view to building a parsonage house on an acre of ground adjoining the church, to be purchased from Mr. Stokell and to be vested in trustees. A considerable sum was subscribed and J. Chipman Esq. appointed Treasurer of the fund.¹

The clergyman was the Reverend Robert Wilson, who had arrived, not yet ordained, with his wife Martha Jane on the *Bengali* in 1843. Bishop Nixon's wife found him a 'very pleasing young man' and the Bishop himself found him work as a catechist. He was a Religious Instructor on the hulk *Anson* in August 1843² and was appointed as Anglican Chaplain to Bothwell on 4 July 1846.³ Resident ministers here had to rent a house in the township, where few were available. The young and enthusiastic Wilson began planning for a parsonage and received support from prominent Anglicans.⁴ The result would be a well-known, Tudoresque style landmark in Bothwell, and the cause of quite a scandal. Wilson's application for Government aid to build a Parsonage⁵ was refused. He collected subscriptions himself and commenced to build *Clifton Priory*.

Before it was finished he ran out of money, mortgaged the property and completed the house, which he then sold. By this time subscribers, lenders and tradesmen were all unhappy as Bothwell still had no Parsonage. Complaints were made to the Bishop⁶ and after an enquiry Wilson was 'moved on'. He was appointed the Church of England Chaplain to Hobart Town Gaols Department on 3 December 1852.⁷

On 4 September 1853, Bishop Nixon, in the Cathedral Church of St. David, ordained Robert Wilson, Clerk, Priest,⁸ and on 4 October 1853, granted him a Licence to perform the Office of Curate in the Cathedral.⁹

After a brief sojourn in Trinity Parish,¹⁰ Wilson was totally rehabilitated when he was appointed Chaplain in the united Parishes of Clarence Plains and Kangaroo Point¹¹ on 1 December 1854.

Now Wilson was to embark on 27 years of service to the parishioners of Clarence Plains, as a well respected Rector. One of his first actions, on the occasion of the Festival of the Nativity 1854, was the presentation of a Bible and several books of 'order of service' which are still in existence. And of course there was the matter of a parsonage. George Stokell's one acre, later called the Parsonage or Rectory Field was the answer.

Solicitors Nutt and Butler gave advice to both the Trustees of St. Matthew's Church and the Rev. Wilson in relation to the Draft Conveyance, Drawing and Engrossing the Memorial and Registering the same, with fees - cost £7.15.8.¹² George Stokell's Memorial of 13 February 1856 shows the Trustees to be Joseph Chipman and Daniel Stanfield the younger, of Clarence Plains, and Henry Morrisby of Muddy Plains, all farmers. The consideration to be paid for this one acre for the Minister's Dwelling was to be £30. Conveyance No. 3676 on 8.11.1856 confirmed the transfer.

A fine stone parsonage was the result of these endeavours and records show it was occupied by the Wilson family until about 1870. Certified copies of Marriage Certificates,¹³ and the record of a birth of a daughter there,¹⁴ give the lie to the urban myth that the building was not lived in for long because of the convict graves nearby. Nevertheless Wilson did move into Bellerive eventually. The church, known as St. Mark's Chapel of Ease, in Queen St. Bellerive also came under the care of the Rector of Clarence Plains.

Wilson was farewelled at a tea meeting in the Bellerive Institute in 1880 and presented with an address and a purse of sovereigns. His intention was to return to England where he died in 1897. Martha Jane died in Sandy Bay in 1890, apparently not joining him in Yorkshire.¹⁵

The parsonage remained unoccupied, and fell into a state of disrepair. It must have been unavailable to the Parish well before 1886 when a new wooden parsonage was built on another site. The right side of the roof collapsed carrying away the first floor. This is clearly shown in the Williamson photo.¹⁶

Our next information on this land and building comes from the Diocese of Tasmania Trustees Minute Books, 1897-1903. On 18 July 1898 a letter from Butler, McIntyre and Butler,



Stone Parsonage

Solicitors, relating to this land, was dealt with. Miss Stokell, daughter of George Stokell, had offered to purchase this but the title deed did not appear to be in the solicitor's hands. Mr. McIntyre had a search in hand and would report back. It took until the meeting of 4 October 1910 for the Trustees to resolve that, in relation to the Rokeby Parsonage (old dilapidated building), they ascertain whether the land was ever transferred to the Church and offer to sell the land and building to Miss Hookey (George Stokell's granddaughter).¹⁷ The sale was completed on 3 June 1932 with the consideration of £25.¹⁸ The land was back on the *Rokeby House* title.

A letter from the Diocese to P. Dutton, Parish Secretary, in 1979 confirms that a sum of \$459.24 was held from the Rokeby Endowment - land sale to Miss Hookey.¹⁹ The trees shown near the house in the Williamson image still stand 100 years later, as do remnants of the hawthorn hedges, and the one acre is proposed as public open space.²⁰

George Stokell continued to buy, sell and hold mortgages against land, particularly in Rokeby. Boyle's grant which had been purchased by the Chipman's, was later bought by him for his daughter Henrietta, and became known as *Free's Field*. It is claimed he once owned 29,000 acres of farm land.²¹ George died on 2 December 1874 and is buried in the family vault in St. Matthew's Churchyard.

In the latter part of the 20th century, standing in the burial ground and looking toward the Rokeby Tavern, the vacant land of the Clergyman's Glebe, the 10 acre benefice for the incumbent clergy of the Church of Saint Matthew, could be seen. And of course, for those who knew its purpose, to wonder why the Minister's parsonage had not been built there.

Although approved by the Colonial Secretary in 1840, it seems not to have been claimed. A survey of the land, claimed for the Diocese by Messrs. Tarleton, Lovett and W.C. Sharland, was completed in early 1880. The land was separated from *Rokeby House* property by a long hawthorn hedge. The land having been granted, it was then several years later before a large article headed 'The New Rokeby Parsonage' appeared in the Mercury. The cornerstone of the new parsonage for the incumbent Priest in the Parish of Clarence, the Reverend Julian Rowsell, was laid by the Bishop Right Reverend Daniel Fox Sandford on Saturday 17 July 1886.



Wooden Parsonage

Mr. Rowsell and the Church Committee had at that time no parsonage, and the congregation had worked hard to remedy the situation. The sum of £600 was raised, all but £100 - £200 from a bazaar at Kangaroo Point; and £300 by mortgaging the Glebe at Rokeby, with the permission of the Diocesan Synod. The architect was Mr. R. Huckson, who is today well known for designing the 17 metre high tower and three residences for the Maatsuyker Island Light. He prepared the parsonage plans and specifications at no costs.

The builder was Mr. J. Burton Jnr. The weatherboard building, in the English Style, contained 8 rooms as well as the larder, kitchen and dining room. The drawing room on the ground floor had a large bow window underneath which the foundation stone was laid. Upstairs was the minister's study, five bedrooms and a servant's room.²² Later occupants of the house remarked about the room that could only be entered by an external ladder... yes, it was the servant's room.²³ The house also boasted a large underground water tank for year round water.

Rev. Rousell remained the incumbent Rector until 1890 and was followed in that role by C. Rhodes Hall until 1898. Assessment rolls for Clarence then show Mr. Hall as the occupier of the building. It was unoccupied by 1898. That year there was some consternation evident in the Diocesan Trustees Minute books. It appears that the mortgage for £300 had included the Church, burial ground and the Clergyman's Glebe as security, and the blame lay with the Bishop and Churchwardens who signed the consent and not with the solicitors whose only duty was to make sure the mortgage document was drawn up correctly.

In order to avoid a claim for this security by the mortgagor it was decided to seek a Caveat preventing any dealings, a sensible move as a notice of foreclosure was soon forthcoming. The debt was now £324/10/-. The Rokeby Churchwardens could not pay and eventually the Diocese took on the payment. £290 was accepted in settlement of the debt and the Wardens of Rokeby were informed that they would be charged 5% per annum for the money invested until a purchaser could be found for the property.

The Minute books indicate a series of repairs, and vacillation between selling and renting out, over a period until March 1904 when the Parsonage was let to a Mr. Bone. He indicated in the September that his mother might buy the Parsonage if it was for sale, although this offer was not made good. A further series of tenancies occurred and it was not until May 1911 that the Glebe land and parsonage were sold for £380, with a £50 deposit and balance on mortgage at 5%. In May 1904, Bellerive became the parish centre when the Rector, the Rev. F.B. Sharland, moved from Rokeby to what had become the main town in Clarence.²⁴

The Parsonage became known as the *Pines* and was occupied over the years by Eric and Myrtle Stanfield, Esther and Dick Hutchins, and finally, when destroyed by the 1967 bushfires, owned by the Freeman family.

- 1 *Tasmanian Church Chronicle*. September 1855.
- 2 AOT: CSO 50/20.
- 3 AOT: CSO 50/21.
- 4 Information from M. Ramsay, *Ratho*.
- 5 AOT: CSO 24/28/730.
- 6 AOT: CSO 24/10/3420.
- 7 AOT: CSO 50/29.
- 8 Diocesan Register Vol. 2. Fol. 230.
- 9 *ibid.* Fol.231-2.
- 10 *Tasmanian Church Chronicle*, 1.4.1854.
- 11 Diocesan Register Vol. 2 Fols. 233-4.
- 12 Chipman family papers.
- 13 Chipman marriage certificates (copy) 1863 and 1867 – Courtesy Doug Chipman.
- 14 *Merc.* 23.3.1861. Notice of birth at Rokeby parsonage.
- 15 Information from M. Ramsay, *Ratho*.
- 16 T.M. 16.6.1911.
- 17 Diocesan Minute Book 1909 onwards.
- 18 Information from M. McKinlay
- 19 9.4.1979.
- 20 Resource Planning and Development Commission decision : ESPS Area 1 1963 Amendment A-2006/1 S/D permit condition 7 6.12.2006.
- 21 Collins, A. *George Stokell Pioneer Settler at Clarence Plains* – Knopwood Historical Lecture 1982 p.48.
- 22 *Merc.* 19.7.1886.
- 23 Information from Esther Hutchins.
- 24 Information sourced from the Minute Books of the Anglican Diocese, 1897-1903, 1903-1909, 1909-1912.

Chapter 20

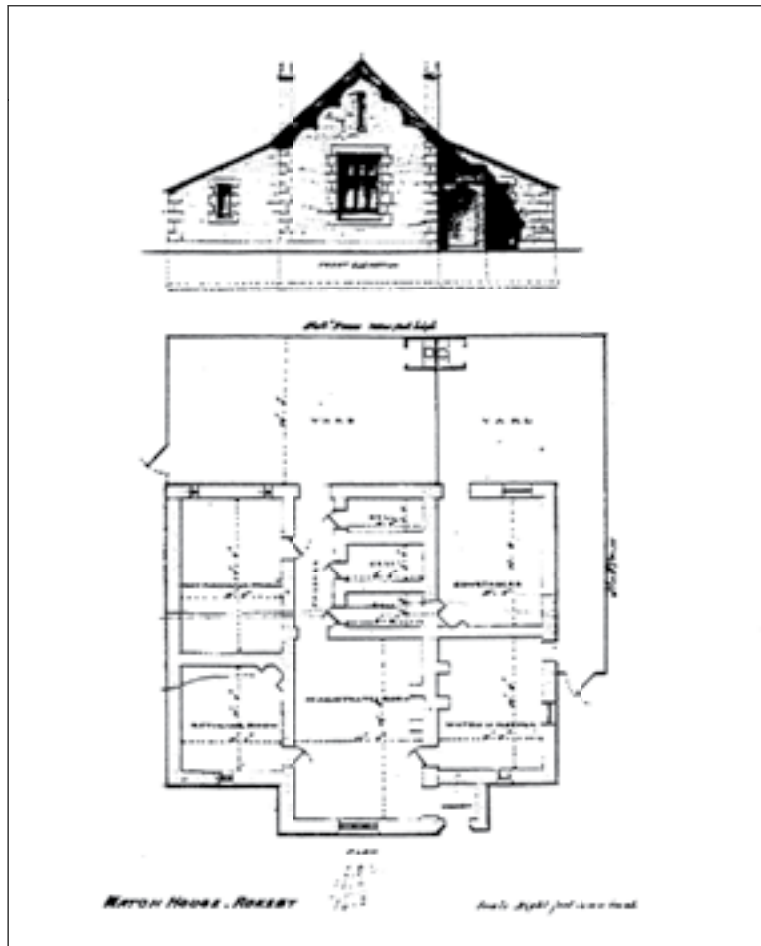
The Rokeby Watch House

This is the building in which the meeting of 21 August 1855 was held to discuss a parsonage for Rokeby, properly called the *Watch House*. The name ‘Rokeby Court’ used in the latter part of the twentieth century unfortunately caused confusion with other heritage listings. The address is 24 Hawthorne Place.

The land on which the *Watch House* stands was originally the corner lot and had frontages to Field Street, now Hawthorne Place, and Clarence, now Knopwood Street, and High Street, now South Arm Road. Plan R/27 shows a schoolhouse surrounded by a large garden with a bell-post on this land. The history of schoolhouses in the area is covered earlier in this book. In the plan of Rokeby R/28 c. 1849 the schoolhouse has gone and the lot is designated ‘Pound hereabouts’ and ‘*About one acre two roods and twenty perches to be occupied for the present by the Police. See. Col. Sec. Minutes 8th June 1849 also Papers SC 4166*’. By this time a redesigned Field Street had become Hawthorne Place. Adjoining this land on the east was the McArdeell property.

There were 2 important watch houses established, one at Rokeby and one at Kangaroo Point. The former, with its early stone houses and prosperous respectable settlers was still a cut above Bellerive with its generous supply of pubs.¹ The plan of the *Rokeby Watch House* 1850² signed W.P. Kay, with its accompanying sketch of the building, is clearly identifiable as the sandstone building we see today. The original plan shows rooms for a watch house keeper, Constables, Magistrate, Day room for Prisoners, Retiring room, three 8 x 3’6 cells, and a porch facing the main road. Two exercise yards attached to the building were surrounded by a nine foot high Slab fence with a privy in each yard. The porch was the main entrance, accessed by a roadway approximately 20 feet wide, thus permitting carriages. This was eventually subsumed into the house lot.

A typical use for the *Watch House* was the holding of inquests, much the same as that described in a letter to the Colonial Times of 31 January 1854 signed ‘An Old Colonist’ of Muddy Plains. This told the story of Anne Larson, aged about 80, with numerous respectable children and grandchildren. She had a life interest in the land she lived on. She was found dying at the house by a neighbour but expired before medical attention could be found. She had recently sustained three broken ribs, a



From Plan of Rokeby Watch House 1850 AOT: PWD 266/1674

black eye and told her son-in-law she had been ill-used at the hands of a person named Carter. At the inquest there was no medical person present, he having to attend 'to the living before the dead'. There was thus no *post-mortem* examination and delicacy prevented the jury from examining the body. And so they concluded, on the evidence produced by one witness, that she had had some drink, therefore she must have died through excessive drinking.

It is hard to imagine such a situation occurring today, but a worse situation was to follow. The Rev. Murray informed some of her relatives that he would not allow the body to come into the church prior to burial as he was determined to make an example of her as a means of stopping excessive drinking. The family attempted to

gain the support of the Bishop, who left the matter up to Murray. When the body arrived at the churchyard, the cleric again refused entry and shut the church door. He read a few sentences from the Bible and with that she was buried.

There was a swift follow up to this letter, questioning the use of a Bishop, and the need for an Independent or Wesleyan minister, in the area. This correspondent's wish was to be fulfilled in 1866.

In October 1932, Lot 7 in the Town of Rokeby was advertised for sale. This was a subdivided portion of the previous piece of Crown land on which the *Watch House* stood. It was sold to Celena Brunt Naylor that month for £250, then even later subdivided into two further lots (5 & 6), the *Watch House* facing Hawthorne place and the Lot 6 facing Clarence Street, by then called Stanfield Street.

Peter Mercer, former Curator of History at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, recalled staying in the cottage, now owned by Erna and Albert Foot, during his 1952 school holidays

'We virtually camped in the little building with some of the floors up and the cells still intact. It was draughty and just liveable amongst the mess and felt spooky at night. But, if ever a place gave me a sense of early Tasmanian history it was this quaint little Gothic revival building with its large central room for the magistrate to preside in, the three cells behind and the little rooms with low ceilings in the skillions on each side. Rokeby in those days was a sleepy little rural village well away from suburban Hobart, its gravel streets bordered by little farm labourer's and artisan's cottages'.

In 1955 Mrs. Foot wrote down her recollections of the old stone cottage. She may have incorrectly assumed its ownership by Robert Knopwood and thus its age, but the restoration of this building has preserved one of Clarence's most historic places. The couple's aim, to create a typically English home, became a labour of love.

They lifted the floorboards which were laid directly on the ground, then sieved the earth to discover old coins, tokens, hand-made knives and forks. The rough-hewn joists proved sound, as were the hand-made nails. The old rooms were converted into a kitchen, dining and lounge room, bathroom and den. The three convict cells presented a weightier problem, as they were to be converted into a large and airy bedroom. Blocks of stone weighing up to 150 pounds were taken out, the heavy doors removed, and windows enlarged. Surplus stone was removed and used in the garden walls, and sturdy blue gum lining timbers were recycled for fencing.³

That wasn't the only recycling on the property. The *Watch House* was lucky enough to escape the bushfires. Neighbour Jack Van Dongen, purchased the destroyed

Bayview and cleaned up some of the sandstone blocks, using them to build a fence along the boundary adjacent to the *Watch House* – the sole visible remains of ‘Bayview’.⁴ Esther Hutchins had lost her house *Seaview* on Chipman’s Road, near the Rivulet. She used some of the old convict bricks from it for a garden in her new home, but decided to barrow them up to Erna’s house where they too went into a garden wall.⁵

Today the property, still a private home, is permanently entered on the Tasmanian Heritage Register. Not only is it significant for its ability to demonstrate the development of justice at the local level in Van Diemen’s Land, but it is a rare surviving example of a purpose-built watch house to provide summary justice. There are four identified predominantly intact, all demonstrating Old Colonial Georgian Architecture. There are no others identified as dating from the mid-nineteenth century period – demonstrating the Victorian Rustic Gothic style.⁶ It is indeed one of the rare treasures in Rokeby.

The vacant land to the west of the *Watch House*, granted to William Joseph, was the site of *Free’s Cottage*, bus service, petrol bowser and garage, and important lolly shop of Gordon and Irene Free. Gordon (1885-1942) was also the mail contractor. The age of this cottage is unknown but from photographs of the time it is assumed to be c. 1900. Clarence Assessment rolls of 1906 show William George Free, carter, as the owner/occupier of cottage and land. His son Gordon inherited the role of mail contractor. The Charitable Grants Department in November 1929 arranged for Master Mervyn Hill to ‘Go to the service of Mr. C.H. Padman of South Arm per Gordon Free’s motor (mail bus) leaving Bellerive at 9 am on Tuesday next, the 12th. instant’. Payment, by Postal Note was 2 shillings.⁷

The Bellerive to South Arm bus service grew out of this mail service and the description of a ‘door for every seat’ is well known amongst the older residents of Rokeby. Gordon was succeeded, in 1942, by his son Gordon Rex, known as Rex.⁸ The service was taken over by Gray’s bus service. The house was demolished when the road was widened in the 1970s.⁹ In 2001 the Crown transferred the land to be Public Open Space, partly to protect the visual ambience of the historic *Watch House*. This land became a starting point for the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail* in 2001.

On the opposite corner, in Hawthorne Place, was a late nineteenth century 4 room weatherboard cottage with lean-to bathroom, wash house and back porch, and steep stairs to two bedrooms in the attic. This was known as *Hawthorne Cottage* and was on that part of the Percy property *Bayview* purchased, after the fires, by the Education Department. It, like the 1860s Board of Education schoolhouse was unoccupied the day of the 1967 fires but survived, to be pulled down when the

Footprints

land became owned by the Department of Education and Rokeby High School was developed.¹⁰

- 1 Hudspeth, et al. *Clarence Historic Site Survey Part 1*. pp.77,95.
- 2 AOT: PWD 266/1674.
- 3 Recollections of Erna Foot 27.7.1955.
- 4 Information from Jack Van Dongen.
- 5 Information from Esther Hutchins.
- 6 Tasmanian Heritage Council, Ref: C668.
- 7 Charitable Grants Dept. No. 2584 19.11.1929.
- 8 PO Directories 1899-1946.
- 9 Information from Trevor Chipman, Jeff Essen, Bernie Cook, Peter Mercer.
- 10 Information from Trevor Chipman. Jeff Essen.

Chapter 21

Cricket and other Entertainments

In the early days of no cars, radios, newspapers; and hard demanding farm work for the whole family, some breaks and entertainments were truly necessary. Over the years these took the form of hunting, fishing, sailing, horse racing, foot and bicycle races, prize fights, gambling, ploughing matches, wood chopping, church activities, sports days, shooting matches, pigeon shoots, music, dances, and, with the advent of the motor car, in 1911 the Rokeby Hill climb on Skillion Hill, and, notably in Clarence Plains, cricket.



Hill climb on Skillion Hill 1911

Hunting and fishing arose out of the need for food, and indirectly so did the boat races, arising from whaling industry. Early horse racing in Clarence Plains was confined to the free settlers, although, like pugilism, it had the capacity to attract gambling. In March 1874 the Clarence and Muddy Plains Races saw an entry of 20 horses in 5 stakes, in distances from one to two miles, and in the case of the Hurdles, 8 leaps. One mare only was entered. In the Selling Stakes, horses carried penalties or allowances dependent on the asking price at nomination, as well as being handicapped by weight for age. The winner was to be sold directly after the race and any price above that nominated would go to the race funds. The sixth race was a post entry Hack race. A far cry from the 1826 race. Amongst the officials were the familiar names of Maum, Morrisby, Pedder and Stanfield.¹

Fighting was also part of the social and sporting life in Clarence Plains, though illegal, and prize fights or organised matches were not uncommon. In February 1827 there was an 'invasion of thieves and blackguards at Clarence Plains to witness a fight between two men for £20 on a farm adjoining the Glebe'.²

Card playing, coin-tossing, and pea and thimble, were popular in the 1830s, at the Inns and in the road gangs, but gambling on them could lead to arrest for the assigned servants. Ploughing matches were promoted by local landowners, particularly in the Richmond and Cambridge districts, although Clarence Plains farmers were happy to compete. In 1846 Isaac Smith, a Passholder employed by Sarah Holmes, was accused of stealing a silk handkerchief at the Clarence Plains Ploughing Match.³

By 1860 Cambridge matches were held at *La Belle Alliance* and became more like a village fair. They waned in the late sixties and during the depression in the 1890s were revived. The Intercolonial Match in 1893 was a two-day grand affair.⁴ Charles Chipman of *Clarence House* was the Chairman and presided over a luncheon with Champagne Toasts to the Queen, Governor and to Agriculture, whilst the guests dined on joints of beef, sucking pig, hams, poultry such as turkey, duck and chicken; salads and vegetable and a selection of sweets. Wines, liquors and Draught Cascade Ale! Charles Chipman won the prize for the best made plough at the 1863 Clarence Ploughing Match.⁵ Workers and settlers alike could be involved in these affairs, thus assisting in the social bonding of the settlement.

A poem was even penned to celebrate this particular occasion. Entitled *The Revels of Rokeby*, it included such lines as:

The stalwart Clarence yeomen
To all the country told
That on a certain day meant they
A ploughing match would hold
And prizes give to them who best
And straightest turned the mould

Rokeby women developed a reputation, in print, for their beauty and were said to be the fairest in the land. No doubt this vision was aided by the following lines:

Anon, the country folk began
From hill and vale to muster
The wealthy squires with four-in-ha'
Baronches, phaetons, quite a clan
Brengh't ladies, fairest in the lan'⁶

Australian Rules football appeared in the 1870s and clubs formed in Clarence

Plains from 1884 onwards. William Martin's *Clarence Hotel* c. 1872 in Bellerive boasted a skittle alley;⁷ unfortunately we do not know whether one was included when he owned the *Horse and Jockey Inn*.

Dances were often an aftermath of these big events, and they had over a period of time in the Rokeby area become popular in several venues – the *Horse and Jockey Inn*, Buchanan's Hotel (*Bayview*) and in large private homes such as *Clarence House*. In 1914 the newly built *Rokeby Trust Hall* and the *Village Green* became the centre of community activities, even acting as the local picture theatre.⁸



The New Hall – Trust Hall at Rokeby 1914

Church activities, such as the first Harvest Festival on 22 February 1866, helped draw the social bonds together. The thanksgiving service was held first. The Church, sadly wanting repairs, the plastering in several places having fallen from the roof and walls, was decorated with wreaths of flowers, interwoven with bunches of wheat, oats and barley, and sheaves of wheat at the entrance, pulpit and reading desk.⁹ The church was full to overflowing. The formal service then proceeded with the well known Frederick A. Packer R.A.M.¹⁰ at the organ and the choir augmented by ladies from St. David's and All Saints choirs. After the service which included the collection of £16 towards the repairs, the congregation took refreshments in the tent, then moved to the *Village Green* where games and other amusements took place.

The Meredith sketch of this date portrays the decorated church and tent. It was proposed to continue a successful event such as this in the future, and indeed in April 2001 the 'Knopwood Festival' was commenced as a community event. Whilst the weekly visit to church was a social occasion for our early settlers, it did not do to arrive drunk or somewhat disorderly as George Burrow, assigned to

Daniel Stanfield, did in 1847. Church services were compulsory, but he was dealt with leniently and cautioned.¹¹

The Reverend Robert Knopwood in his diary entry of 26 December 1814 recorded the people playing at 'crickett' and other games.¹² Twelve months to the day later, his entry reads 'Being Xms. Holydays the people playing at cricket etc.'¹³

On Easter Monday 1836 he mentioned in his own inimitable style 'I married a couple at Clarence Plains and rode to see them play at cricket there',¹⁴ then on Robert Morrisby's birthday in 1837 'the young boys playd at cricket'.¹⁵ On Good Friday 1838 he performed Divine Service at Clarence Plains, which was followed by a party from Hobart coming to play cricket.¹⁶

The sport of cricket was a dominant factor on all the agricultural properties here, and in the early 1820s convicts and free settlers played matches at the settlement. It might be as well here to reflect on a small portion of the early game, which was played with a bat more like a golf stick and the wicket was a hole in the ground, into which the fieldsman put the ball in order to 'runout' a batsman. Up until 1750 all bowling was 'grubbers' along the ground, then the invention of stumps, or rather 1 stump, 12 inches high, was increased to two and the phrase 'bowled out' had arrived... that is of course if the ball did not slip through the gap between the stumps. So to assist the bowler the stumps were moved closer together and a third one added.

Pitches, as we know them, didn't exist, but as the grounds became smoother, the 'grubber' was not so influential, and underhand pitch bowling came into play, and the bat became more like the style of today. As batsmen gained the ascendancy



Spectators and Players at a cricket match - Rokeby v. East Hobart 1912

again, the height and width of the wicket (stumps) was altered to even things up a bit. By 1796 the stump height was 14 inches, and by 1817 they were 27 inches high and the width again adjusted to aid the poor bowler. Strangely enough the pitch seems to have been 22 yards long for at least 300 years.

And this is what cricket was like when it was first played in our fair land. Round arm bowling, introduced in 1828, was finally permitted 16 years later, and finally, in 1864, the over arm. This latter followed an ungentlemanly incident when a well known bowler was 'no-balled' for bowling with his arm above the shoulder and a riot was narrowly averted at Kensington Oval.¹⁷

On 1 October 1859, John Chipman, the 19 year old Club Secretary, recorded the Rules 'adopted as necessary for the management of the Rokeby Cricket Club' - the subscription being 2 shillings and sixpence for a new member and one shilling per month during the season.

The secretary had full power to act as regards the game, refreshments, care of the ground and other matters. Every member who absented himself from practice for four consecutive practice days was fined One Shilling for the first offence; and up to Two Shillings thereafter unless he had good reason for his absence. No smoking or anything inconsistent with the game of cricket was permitted - and fines could be levied. No sledging here!¹⁸

The Club teams played on the Municipal Reserve, known locally as the 'Green', regarded as one of the best country grounds in Southern Tasmania, larger in area than usual and perfectly level. The ground was between 'Heaven and Hell' - St. Matthew's Church and its great gum trees on one side, and the long de-licensed *Horse and Jockey Inn* on the other.¹⁹

In the middle nineteen twenties there were family teams that played against local and interstate families. On the farm on a warm summer day, cricket was a common lunchtime activity, on a 18 yard dirt pitch with a tennis ball and 'local rules' - 'over the fence and hit on the trousers is out (without argument !!!), and two apple boxes on end for a wicket'.²⁰

In the early 1900s the Cameron Shield competition was a Perpetual Challenge Shield - the team that held it was challenged by other teams, by advertisement in the daily press.

Rokeby, Craigow and clubs such as Margate, Colebrook, Bagdad and Grove provided hot competition.²¹ Rokeby won it often and it was finally passed on to Miss Norma Free, postmistress at Rokeby, whose father Ernie Free was a very prominent local and State wicket keeper, and occupant of the blacksmith's shop near the *Horse and Jockey Inn*. Sadly the shield was another victim of the 1967 bushfires.²²

There were some remarkable scores – one 546 runs for two wickets by Rokeby, with brothers Les, 197 not out, and ‘Ab’ (Alvira) Richardson, 202 runs. As well as other Richardson’s, players from the Free, Suckling, Chipman, Pearsall, Ward and Young families were prominent.

And there were other great, hard fought competitions such as the A.V. Richardson Shield, the Hood Trophy, the competition for the Shield donated by the Chipman Family to recognise the Centenary of the Club, and more recently the L.L. Richardson and Family Trophy in the 1980s.

The women played their part in all the early days of cricket, whether it be scoring, making up an eleven for practice matches, cleaning and whitening the boots, packing the lunches and afternoon teas, or preparing the ‘creams’, and preserving the colour with Saffron.²³

Visiting teams often arrived by steamer or sailing ships, which tied up at the old Rokeby jetty.²⁴ It is claimed that Rokeby Cricket Club has the longest continuous history of any cricket club in Australia; a record Sandford Cricket Club denies. It was only in comparatively recent years, when houses were built over three of the adjacent roads, that the cricket club moved from the ‘Green’ to grounds where ‘sixes’ did not break a neighbourhood window.

For all its strange terminology and the inability of the average citizen to explain the game, cricket arouses passion wherever these flannelled fools play.

A British Conservative politician, Lord Mancroft, felt that the English, not being a deeply spiritual people, invented the game in order to give themselves some conception of eternity.²⁵

Basil Chipman, living on Droughty Point, recalled his fishing adventures, especially his regular excursions to fish off Gypsy Shoal, and he bemoaned the size of this bank and that they had to share the shoal with another boat. Years later, when researching the name of the shoal, the story of the yacht *Gypsy* came to light. Built in 1914 by William Tatnell and William Ball at Taranna on the Tasman Peninsula, she was bought in 1919 by Sid and Jack Knight and in turn handed down the family until she came to Steve Knight aged 17 after the death of his father Barry. Very early in the piece, private Sunday trips down the river to fish off the shoal, once called Beddome’s bank, were very productive. The shoal was gazetted as Gypsy Shoal in 1967 in recognition of this passionate yachting family.²⁶ After hearing this story in 2005 Basil realised that this was the other family fishing on the shoal.

From the early days the residents of Clarence Plains took part in water based entertainments, either participating or viewing. The eastern hills and shores of the

Derwent provided a grandstand view of water movements on the lower Derwent, whale boat races, regattas, yacht races, fireworks, visiting liners and troop ships, and, from 1945, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. Residents tell of another entertaining time during World War II when sirens alerted them that a 10,000 ton liberty ship, with a skipper on his first trip to Hobart, and without a pilot, turned into Ralph's Bay and ran aground in thick fog. The pilot launches from Hobart were already engaged. The ferry *Lurgurena* from Bellerive took several hours to float the ship,²⁷ during which time there were some exchanges of cartons of cigarettes for some good Aussie whisky.²⁸

In 1847 a Bathing Association had been established in Hobart, with the view 'to encourage the healthy, and invigorating habit of sea bathing, and the useful and necessary art of swimming'. A row of 9 dressing rooms and a platform to plunge from, in the formerly 'inconvenient and execrable place' in the government domain, had been converted into a comfortable and safe bay. Annual subscription: 5 shillings.²⁹ One doubts whether the citizens of Clarence Plains bothered when they had a good beach already at Rokeby, and other spots in Ralph's Bay to visit and enjoy.

But perhaps the most lasting and tangible evidence of entertainment in the Clarence Plains district is the story of the *John Gray Organ*:

'For an organ to reach 180 years of continuous use is an event to celebrate. Australia can proudly boast to possess a very large number of unaltered 19th century English organs. Moreover, a fair share of these is contained within Tasmania. One might even go so far as to say that Tasmania is a veritable time capsule with its wealth of heritage items be they fine stone buildings, bridges or pipe-organs.

The instrument which resides at St Matthew's Anglican Church is significant in more than one way. The church, completed in 1843, possesses the first church organ imported to Australia. This instrument, by the well-known organ builder John Gray, was made in 1824 and was initially installed in St David's Church – later cathedral – Hobart'.³⁰ Pastor de Lasala

During the tenure of the first Colonial Chaplain, Robert Knopwood, the foundation stone of St. David's Church, Hobart, had been laid in February 1817, and the consecration took place 6 years later. Knopwood had encouraged the use of music, both vocal and instrumental, in Church; even devoting £5 towards a violin cello for use in St. David's, but it was his successor William Bedford who was finally responsible for the advent of this particular piece of colonial heritage.³¹

In the order book of the builder of this organ, dating from 1824, the following small entry is on page 43: 'To Mr. Bedford, Fleet Market. To a new organ as per

contract shipped to Van Dieman's Land, Hobart Town, costing £300'. Payment was made in cash by Mr. Jones in October 1824. The builder, John Gray of Fitzroy Square, London, came from a well-respected family firm of organ builders who carried on this business for almost 200 years until the 1970s. The organ was built under the 'inspection' of George Cooper, organist of St. Sepulchre's London. A very faint inscription by Bedford on the outside of the sound board testified to this. George Cooper had followed his father as organist at St. Sepulchre's in 1799.³²

The '*Hobart Town Gazette*' of the day described in detail the arrival, after almost 4 months, of the ship *Lady East* on Saturday 9 April 1825, with its cargo of private passengers, regimental guards, convicts and government stores, and not one mention of an organ. It was left to a brief and separate statement to inform us the 'organ for St. David's' had arrived.³³

By an interesting quirk of fate, Bedford suffered an accident that prevented him from officiating at Divine Service on Sunday 15 May. This day, the organ, having been 'set up' by William Hance, an organist who was paid 25 pounds for his labours,³⁴ was played by the said Hance. The organ is inscribed to this effect.

No trace is to be found in the British Organ Archives to indicate that William Hance was an organ builder or apprentice. In those days organists were trained how to tune their own instruments. Organs imported to Australia and New Zealand, were 'flat-packed' into crates and although many were lost to storms in transit, those that did arrive were assembled by a carpenter such as William.

William Hance arrived in Hobart Town in the *Mariner* on 26 September 1823, together with 56 other passengers and 41-44 Merinos. Some sheep were drowned en route as they were kept on deck, rather than the common practice of keeping them in the ship's long boat.³⁵ He served as organist in St. David's Church until c. May 1826, and was also employed as a public schoolmaster. He is believed to have erected the house on the Chaplain's Glebe in Clarence Plains. On 22 May 1826 he received a 300 acre grant in the York district of Clarence Plains, which he farmed. In 1830 he was the proprietor of *Clarence House*, later called the *Clarence Inn*, near the corner of Cambridge and Clarence St. Bellerive³⁶ and c. 1837 the *Macquarie Hotel* in Victoria St. Hobart. He failed to renew his licence and was reported insolvent.³⁷ Hance was reported in April 1832 as 'engaged in building an organ for a Freemason's Lodge',³⁸ and a further report at the end of June 1832 when the original Tasmanian Lodge celebrated the anniversary of the Nativity of John the Baptist at the *Macquarie Hotel*, 'the splendid organ building (sic) by Mr. Hance for the Brotherly Union is, we are glad to see, in an advanced state'.³⁹ A man of many occupations, William was at one time Assistant Superintendent, Prisoner Barracks, Hobart – his pay was 4s per day.⁴⁰ William Hance died in Hobart on 10

October 1842 aged 50 years, his occupation then being that of postmaster.⁴¹

As Robert Knopwood records in his diary on Saturday 14 May: '*Mrs. Morrisby and Miss Chase who was staying with her and self went to hear the new church organ playd*'. - No doubt a sneak preview.⁴²

Knopwood was requested to preach in Bedford's place, and pointed out the use of church organs since the 7th Century, and, in Britain, as early as 758.⁴³ He modestly stated 'the sermon was very much liked'.⁴⁴ The Gazette the next day published *An Ode - addressed to the Organ of St. David's Church*.⁴⁵

Appointed in early 1826 to the Clarence Plains parish, Knopwood agitated for a church to be built. Although built after his death, St. Matthew's Church, Rokeby, was the result. In 1858, superseded by a larger organ at St. David's Church, the *John Gray Organ* followed in the footsteps of Knopwood and came to the church at Rokeby. St. David's Church was pulled down in 1874 and the present Cathedral erected.

Outlasting its original home, the *John Gray Organ* underwent a major restoration in 1968, retaining its original character and charm. It has been lovingly maintained ever since.

It is somewhat appropriate that this piece of priceless heritage, and Knopwood himself, have both come to rest at St. Matthew's, and that his view on the special place of music in life and worship has been perpetuated by the use of the *John Gray Organ* for both church and secular music, involving the community, whether parishioners or not.⁴⁶

An ODE - Addressed to the Organ of St David's Church

Ave Tasmania! the long expected sail,
 Favoured at length by some auspicious gale,
 Arrives: - at length the Lady East appears,
 And of her safety now are hushed all fears,
 From Antipodean realms late news she brings
 And full two hundred men sent here for sins!
 Nor is this all, - but stop! The heav'nly nine
 Must be invoked, before another line
 Is penn'd, - Oh muses, heav'nly sacred throng!
 To whom the powers of verse belong:
 On thee I call to aid my feeble song -
 On thee I call to lend thy pow'rful aid:
 (Thanks to the muse, 'tis sooner done than said)
 How in the ship, then sacred nine repeat
 What merchandize, and stores, and salted meat,
 What pickled pork, and tripe, and other things
 She, in her spacious hold, together brings,
 And now, O muse! Once more I call on thee,
 To say what else came in her o'er the sea:
 What else! - ah now's the glorious theme!
 The 'Organ' has arrived, and's to be seen
 In David's Church; - and there in awful state
 It stands majestic, - this, the will of fate!
 Inexorable fate has doomed it there to stand
 The Organ metropolit' of this land,
 For ever and for ever! - ah - but whence
 Has come this mighty far-famed Organ hence,
 From London it hath come, from Fitzroy-square
 And live (the names I do forget) the makers there,
 No sooner was the barque in sight of shore,
 Than mountains whistled,* never known before -
 Inspired by music, all Tasmania danced,
 The women sung, - and all the horses pranced!
 The billows heav'd (as usual) and the sun
 Its usual course throughout the heavens ran.
 Nature, it seemed, upon that awful day
 Had clad herself in all her bright array.
 The 'Organ' came paced up and stowed in hemp,
 Immortal be the name of far fam'd Kemp! -
 I've done, - The muse departs, - enough is said -
 The Organ's up, and yes - the money's paid!!

* The Tune is not precisely known ⁴⁷

- 1 Race Program 1874 'Mercury' Steam Press Office.
- 2 HTC 27.10.27.
- 3 as quoted in Peter MacFie, *Prize Fights, Profanities and Ploughing*, p.147.
- 4 AOT: NS 544/2 p.33.
- 5 Menu- Ploughing Match October 1893; McKay, *Maum Diaries*, p. 13.
- 6 *Walch's Tasmanian Guide*, 1871.
- 7 Bryce p.33.
- 8 Information from Basil Chipman.
- 9 Tasmanian Church News March 1866. p.232.: Merc. 23.2.1866.
- 10 HTG 11.2.1854.
- 11 MacFie, *Prize Fights etc.* p.146.
- 12 RK p.193. 26.12.1814.
- 13 RK p.220. 26.12.1816.
- 14 RK p.646. 4.4.1836.
- 15 RK p.670. 16.10.1837.
- 16 RK p.679. 13.4.1838.
- 17 Information sourced from E.Z. 'The Electrode', Vol. 6. No.3. June 1930 pp.69-70.
- 18 Chipman family papers.
- 19 Kevin Connor in *Merc.* 3.10.1959.
- 20 LL Richardson & Family Trophy notes.
- 21 Kevin Connor in *Merc.* 3.10.1959..
- 22 Information from Dulcie Bowden.
- 23 L.L. Richardson & Family Trophy.
- 24 Kevin Connor in *Merc.* 3.10.1959.
- 25 Oxford Dictionary of Quotations p.444.
- 26 Information from Steve Knight, 'Gypsy'.
- 27 Notes of Monica De Salis.
- 28 Information from Basil Chipman.
- 29 *Tas Royal Kalendar* 1849 p.121.
- 30 Pastor de Lasala, NSW representative; Director of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia. 2005. *Excerpt from a review of the John Gray Organ CD CPHS 2004 printed in the OHTA magazine.*
- 31 Stephens. *Knopwood*, p.123,135
- 32 Leffler Manuscript – Information from Chris Kearn, British Organ Archive.
- 33 HTG 15.4.1825.
- 34 HTG 25.2.1826. Supplement.
- 35 Nicholson, I. 1803-1823 p.91.
- 36 Bryce p.34.
- 37 Bryce p.104.
- 38 Rushworth, G.D. *Historic Organs of New South Wales* p.30.
- 39 HTC 29.6.1832.
- 40 *Tas Royal Kalendar*, 1949 p.91.
- 41 Tas.Pioneer Index 1803-1899; Extract from register of Deaths in the District of Hobart.
- 42 RK p.450. 14.5.1825.
- 43 Stephens, *Knopwood*, p.135.
- 44 RK p.450. 14.5.1825.
- 45 HTG 13.5.1825
- 46 Andrew, W. Text prepared for John Gray CD recording.
- 47 HTG 13.5.1825

Chapter 22

The Growth of a Village

From the early farm settlements, and the need for a burial ground and school house, came a plan for the prospective township of Rokeby. A detailed survey incorporated small allotments for future cottages or cottage industries, a square formed within four streets, bearing the names of North and South Parades, Church and King streets. A minor error on the plan had the names North and South reversed. The plan showed a Georgian style crescent for up to 13 allotments and areas of Reserve, a schoolhouse and bell-post in Field Street, and the main road, almost as the South Arm Road is today, and Beach Street (Droughty Point Road). Tentative names of High Street and the Mall were given to the main road. The undated plan is numbered R/27 and is the earliest known plan of the village.¹ It bears the inscription '*Plan of the Township of Rokeby by Henry Wilkinson Assistant Surveyor*'. Wilkinson fulfilled that position during periods from 1826 to 1829.

In the time of Governor Macquarie a town centre consisted of a Great Square, Burial Ground, principal streets with the intended Church facing the north face of the Great Square, rather much like Rokeby. Macquarie had a great programme of buildings, roads and towns to encourage convicts and former convicts to integrate into society. His name and that of his wife Elizabeth is reflected in many parts of the former colony of New South Wales, which at that time included Van Diemen's Land. His custom was to inspect the area, have the streets, square and burying ground marked out, and a Post with the name of the Town nailed to it, and erect it in the centre of the Square.²

Prince's Buildings, parallel to King's Street, was to the west. This was a street of small allotments for buildings, not farms. The eastern lots ran though to King's Street and were approximately 1280 sq. ft. in area. Edmund Hobson applied for his corner lot in 1834. He was required to promise that within 6 months he would make a footpath nine feet wide along his 3 street boundaries and enclose the lot with a good paling fence; to commence building a brick or stone house, with a frontage of at least 15 feet, spending at least £200 and completing the exterior within 12 months, and not selling the allotment within that time.³

In February 1832 Regulations had been published in the Hobart Town Gazette in regards to the sale of Crown Lands, and then, in 1838 a chart of the Township of

Rokeby 'being now ready for inspection' several lots of Land were to be put up for Sale by Public Auction on 8 December. These small lots were between one quarter and three-quarters of an acre in size and the indicative price was £3 per acre. The lots were between Prince's Buildings and King Street, and Ralph's Terrace and the parallel Hill Street, which no longer exists. Several already located lots to Edmund Hobson, Daniel Stanfield, William Stanfield Jnr. and Thomas Risby helped in the identifying descriptions of the land. The proclamation was dated 5 September 1838 - Sir John Franklin.⁴

Over time as the area developed, changes had been made to the streets and whilst the crescent remained as a street the allotments around it disappeared to make way for the Clergyman's Glebe. An area was set aside for those of the Wesleyan persuasion and land within the crescent was reserved for John McArdell, the Ecclesiastical Clerk and Schoolmaster.

The Anglican Church was built in the area of the burial ground, and the schoolhouse with its bell-post made way for the *Watch House*. Some lots on the east side of Prince's Buildings were consolidated into the property *Bayview*, bringing a new and prominent private school to the village area. The five lots on the western side would be owned by Pat Connor, the unofficial Mayor of Rokeby in the 20th century. The square was now called the Public Square; Prince's Buildings now France's Buildings. Field Street became Hawthorne Place and the original Hawthorne Place made way for the Clergyman's Glebe. The Parades got their directions corrected. A new Rokeby plan R/28 showed these changes.

Van Diemen's Land was renamed Tasmania in 1855 to help counter the 'evil reputation' attached to convict transportation, although a close community in this district had developed irrespective of origin. Perhaps the intermingling due to marriage was responsible. Arriving with self-government, the new name became effective on 1 January 1856. A Grand Tasmanian Regatta was held.⁵

As a result Clarence was able to be declared a Municipality on 5 October 1860. Elections were called for the 6 positions of councillor, with 21 candidates. Those elected were Samuel Dawson, James Young and Daniel Stanfield, son of Daniel Jnr., all of Clarence Plains; Richard Strahan of Cambridge, George Morrisby of Sandford, all farmers, and Edward Abbott of Bellerive, magistrate, who became the Warden. Clarence Plains was the traditional centre of the area, and by this time Sandford, South Arm and Cambridge were small townships. There was discussion on where the administrative centre should be – Bellerive, the most populous, or Rokeby, the more central. Bellerive won.⁶

Strangely, an area called Clarence, on the south western slope of Tunnel Hill, had been surveyed for a village in 1850. This was proposed to house military

pensioners from England. The scheme was a total failure and Clarence as a village did not eventuate.

And so the Public Square was gazetted as the Municipal Reserve.⁷ The official address of the square is 10 Church Street Rokeby. Over the years its area has remained unchanged at 2 acres 1 rood and 36 8/10 perches, and the various confusing street name changes over the years have largely been rectified. The shape of the village plan remains much as it was in plan R/28. On 3 July 1866 Rokeby became a Proclaimed Town.⁸

The 'Square' has been a public place of assembly since the earliest days of settlement in Clarence Plains, providing the area for public functions, gatherings and ceremonies as well as for sports. Later its position adjacent to the new *Rokeby Trust Hall* enhanced the use of the area. Schools had no large playing fields as they have today, so school sports went to the area which by the cricket fans was known as the 'green', and by the youngsters of the area as the 'Rec', short for the Recreation ground.

By 1959 the Square was being called the *Village Green* and the name *Rokeby Village Green* was recently Gazetted by the Nomenclature Board.⁹

In the Adnum interviews in 1987,¹⁰ residents often referred to the community and social values of the *Village Green*, and the English Village setting. '*The Christmas Party, little fairs to raise money, children's races, Father Christmas*'.

Rokeby suffered greatly in the 1967 bushfires; the Hall was burnt, but rebuilt. In time, normality returned to the village. Sports continued at the *Village Green*, Milo Cricket and soccer was introduced for the local boys and girls. The Knopwood Festival also held activities on the *Village Green*. And so its community use continues today.

1 Information from W.Reid, LTO.

2 *Macquarie Journal*, see 11.1.1811 entry.

3 AOT: LSD 1/114 p.61 - Hobson Letter to Survey Office 2 May 1834.

4 HTG 21.9.1838 pp.789-790.

5 Alexander, A. (ed.) *The Companion to Tasmanian History*. p.353.

6 Alexander, A. (ed.) *The Eastern Shore*, p.57.

7 Nomenclature Board. Gazetted 29.5.1866.

8 Nomenclature Board. Gazetted 3.7.1866.

9 Nomenclature Board. Decision No. 21500 Reg.No.41067K.

10 Adnum, *A Verbal History of Rokeby*, passim.

Chapter 23

Pubs of Clarence Plains

Publicans were important members of the colonial society. Many became rich as they acted as money-lenders to their intemperate clientele. Loans by mortgages often earned high rates of interest, or led to the acquisition of property at low cost.

From early days in the settlement, annual licences were granted, at the end of September, by a bench of magistrates for persons in the settlement to keep Common Inns, Ale houses or Victualling houses. Their premises were no less important for the community in Clarence Plains. Some premises were licensed, some have no such record but each has a story to tell. William Atkins *Chequers* c. 1818, the oddly named *Brown Cow Inn* c. 1820s, James Shuttle's *Harrow Inn* 1841-1849, and Peter Buchanan's *Bayview* 1867-1873, are referred to earlier in this book. No site has been located for the *Harrow Inn*, except that it was within reach of Droughty Point. The possibility that it was another name for the *Brown Cow Inn* should be considered.

Changing the sign (the name under which it was licensed) of any early pub can lead to confusion as to which Inn is being referred to, and in many cases the actual whereabouts of the Inn is unknown.

Clarence Arms was advertised¹ as a Licensed Public House, known as the sign of the *Clarence Arms*, occupying some sixty acres of land, situated at Clarence Bay, three miles from Hobart. The property was described as being at the head of a fine sheltered bay, with an excellent wharf, and licensed boats for the conveyance of produce and passengers from Clarence Plains and its neighbourhood to Hobart. Enquiries were to be made to William Mawle who had premises at the Old Wharf Hobart.

Where was Clarence Bay? This has been interpreted by some as meaning the already named Ralph's Bay, but there was an early and prominent Inn there. It is more likely that Clarence Bay was adjacent to Clarence, now Howrah Point, on similar acreage later owned by the Fielders. The area was once known as Mawle's Ferry (qv).

The *Currier and His Beam* on the adjoining Morrisby property may well have been the Inn referred to by Edward Kimberley in his 1820 evidence to the Bigge Enquiry. Possibly in existence from as early as 1819, it is known that Jacob Bellette

Jnr. (1833/4), John Morrisby (1835/6) and his brother Henry (1837/9), were listed as licensees.² Henry's first wife was Knopwood's ward, Betsy Mack.

This Inn is often erroneously referred to as the *Courier and His Team*, probably because the correct name is a curious one. Clarence Plains in general, and *Rokeby House* in particular, contributed to the tanning process by supplying wattle bark. A Currier cured or tanned hides. The beam was part of the equipment.³ The Inn is thought to be the original *Belmont Lawn House* where Sophia Morrisby and John Chipman were married in 1863.⁴ The house burnt down, and later was replaced by the second *Belmont Lawn* which was destroyed in the 1967 bushfires.⁵ A round brick well with a conical roof in a paddock to the right of the current *Belmont Lawn* house was built by Bill Wiltshire in 1935 from bricks believed to have come from stables of the old Inn.⁶ The building is not only a reminder of the early Inns of Van Diemen's Land, but also of one of the earliest industries, after whaling, on the Eastern Shore.

Also on the property are descendants of the early Jardinelle pear trees, some up to 100 years old. Because of their fruiting time they were known as Regatta pears, and not only provided large crops, but the dead wood was excellent for woodwork, and may well have been used for mill repairs on the Rokeby Mill built next door on Kimberley land.



The Currier and His Beam Inn
Photograph: Courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. D. Calvert of 'Belmont Lawn'

The most prominent and the longest licensed Inn, was in the old village of Rokeby. This was the *Horse and Jockey*, also occasionally known as the *Horse and Groom*; first licensed in 1833 to Edward Maum.⁷ Edward had married Mary Joseph (née Free), a Norfolk Island born daughter of Samuel Free. Later records show William Martin (1850-56), Hubert Medley (1862), and Joseph Green (1870-74) as licensees. Joseph arrived from England as a free settler, married Jane Larsom and settled at Clarence Plains, where he first tried the business of a tannery.⁸ His son Joseph Richard, educated at McArdeell's school, became headmaster at Port Cygnet State School. In 1879 the wheelwright William Henry Free, son of Thomas and Mary Ann Free (née Waterson) borrowed £400

to purchase the *Horse and Jockey Inn*.⁹ His son William George Free shared the ownership of the Inn from 1882, when he married Isabella Young, to 1890 when his father died. William George later that year sold to Albert and Frederick Ward for £500.¹⁰

In 1858 the Inn was described as excellent,¹¹ but in 1861 William Archer, an entomologist, left Hobart in the morning, crossed to Kangaroo Point on the log boat and proceeded along the beaches to Rokeby, collecting beetles. On reaching the *Horse and Jockey* at half past 12, he thought he would take lunch and look at accommodation for his family. He changed his mind after getting a scrappy piece of bread and a rock-like piece of cheese! A request for ginger-beer brought the comment that 'they kept no teetotaller's stuff'.¹²



Horse & Jockey Inn

The wooden single storey section of the Inn had been used as a dance hall and this continued until the *Trust Hall* was built in Rokeby in 1914. And in the 1930s a small shop was built on the other end. The complex became a Post Office, General Store and private residence, and was being refurbished when burnt in the 1967 fires.¹³ To the right of the building was the blacksmith's shop run by Ernie Free, son of William Henry.

Ernie had married a daughter of William Martin, and, as the late Basil Chipman described his memories of him, 'he was an elderly man, a Blacksmith, Wheelwright, Farrier and a Gentleman'. He was also a great Tasmanian wicketkeeper.

'He always welcomed me to his forge near the Steel's store on my way home from school. He even allowed me to pump up the great leather bellows that forced air into the tuyere (pipe) causing the burning of the heating fuel.

I watched him make shoes for draught horses and racehorses, and then, as a Farrier, attach them. On another occasion I watched fascinated as he restored a broken cartwheel over several days. The Blacksmith made a steel ring to become the wheel rim. Behind the workshop was a wooden platform on which sat the wooden wheel. Nearby the steel rim was set on bricks covered with small pieces of firewood, set alight and heated to cherry red. On the word of Ernie, his six assistants placed the red-hot steel on the wooden wheel, using lifters of course. Flames shot everywhere, but Ernie knew his game, his six assistants grabbed nearby buckets of water and the rim contracted. That wheel is probably still rotating'.¹⁴— Basil Chipman



The Blacksmith Shop, Rokeby c 1925

L to R: Ernie Free, Viv Tollard, George (Goodie) Free of Rokeby & Harold May of Sandford

Ernie died on 9 July 1946 but, as we shall see, this was not the end of the Free family's involvement in the community of Rokeby.

William George Free, in 1890, purchased a property in Prince's Buildings for £75 from Joseph Green, an earlier licensee of the *Horse and Jockey Inn*. The house *Preston* was built here by Alan George Free, his son to whom the land was deeded in 1923. Alan continued the family tradition as carpenter, farmer and carrier, and was a great supporter of the Rokeby Cricket Club. He repaired their equipment, slashed the ground; the outer being native grasses, the pitch alone was clover; gave the kids a bat and bowl after Sunday afternoon practice session, and a beer for the players, then all went to *Preston* for a salad tea.¹⁵

1 HTC 26.3.1831.

2 Bryce p.43.

3 Fowler, *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1964.

4 Chipman Family papers.

5 Information from Derreck & Phyllis Calvert.

6 Information from Betty Free (née Wiltshire).

7 Bryce, p.84.

8 Mason, *From Chains to Freedom*, Vol. 1. pp 149-50.

9 AOT: LSD 6/5644.

10 Davidson, *Norfolk Islanders of Clarence Plains*, p.16.

11 *Merc.* 11.9.1858.

12 *Diary of William Archer*, 24.12.1861.

13 Information from Gwen Cook and Esther Hutchins.

14 Information from Basil Chipman.

15 Davidson, *Norfolk Islanders of Clarence Plains*, pp.17-18.

Chapter 24

Cham, Carter and the Congregationalists

On 3 September 1808 James Cham and Mark Carter set out from Norfolk Island on the *City of Edinburgh* to start yet another stage of their lives in Van Diemen's land. Both were free from their convict status. James Cham and his wife settled on 33 acres at Clarence Plains.¹ This grant neatly fitted between Steel's farm on the south, Morrisby's on Ralph's Bay shore to the east, Kimberley's, later to become the Rokeby village area on the north, and the Clarence Plains Rivulet or the 'Chain of Ponds' to the west. S.R. Dawson as Trustee is the name on later maps.² At some time in the 1820s Mark Carter bought this land for £105. Carter also had 100 acre grant south of Single Hill which was productive. He also had a housekeeper Mary Bacon with two children Thomas and Ann.

In England Henry Selwyn, (aka Sullivan, Sullwyn and Sellings) born in 1811, was in trouble with the law, again, and in due course arrived as a convict on 9 November 1828. One month later James Cham died; his occupation at the time: 'salt boiler'.

Mark Carter, in September 1833, deeded the Cham land by gift to his housekeeper, Mary Bacon and her son Thomas Bacon, and she in turn deeded one acre to her daughter Ann's ne'er-do-well husband Henry Selwyn in 1840. Their son Thomas Carter Sellings (Selwyn) would eventually inherit this.³

Mark Carter died in July 1846, the informant being William Martin, who also owned land at Rokeby on the east side of Ralph's Terrace.

William Maum inherited the farm of his father in 1855, the year he married Maria Bellette. Earlier he had been crew on the barque *Harriet Nathan* to San Francisco, and whaling in the North Sea and Bering Strait. He commenced a diary of his day-to-day farm work in 1863. William's story is peopled with characters such as his relatives, the Garths, Bellettes, and Josephs, the miller Foster (H. Brabin Forster) and trips to the mill, Rumney who supplied wood, Tom Sellings, the chapel and his friends. He records paying his subscription of 10/- for repairs of St. Matthew's (1865). Most of all he recorded the details of the *Congregational Chapel* and burial ground.⁴

In August 1865 a meeting was held about building a Chapel in Rokeby. £37 was taken in subscriptions.⁵ On the eighteenth day of November in the same year a Memorialising Indenture noted that Thomas Carter, farmer of Clarence Plains, was desirous of Conveying land to Richard Edward Dear, Secretary to the Colonial Missionary Society, Basil Rout, draper of Hobart, Joseph Holmes, Esquire of Clarence Plains, John Tollard and William Maum, farmers of Clarence Plains, and the said Thomas Carter as Trustees, for the purpose of erecting on the land, a Chapel for the *'Public Worship of Almighty God- according to the usages of the Protestants of the Congregational Denomination, commonly called Independents...*

On the North by a line of one chain and twenty five links along the road from Clarence Plains to Bellerive commencing at the North-west angle of an allotment of Land, heretofore sold by the said Thomas Carter to Thomas Sellings. On the West by a line of Two Chains along other part of the said thirty-five acres belonging to the said Thomas Carter. On the South by one chain and twenty -five links along other part of the said land and extending to the said allotment heretofore sold to the said Thomas Sellings and on the East by a line of Two Chains along the last mentioned allotment to the point of commencement'.

If not required for other purposes, part could be used as a 'Burial Ground for the interment of deceased persons'. The 'one acre' of Thomas Sellings' land is on the eastern side of the cemetery land.⁶

The ground was measured out for the Chapel by the following March⁷ and construction was underway in May.⁸ On 2 September 1866 a service was held in the new Chapel and by November spars for the tent for the official opening of the Chapel were being organised.⁹

On 9 November, in showery weather, about 250 people attended the Opening.¹⁰ This commenced at 11am led by the Rev. Mr. Nesbit with hymns, scriptures, prayers, and singing by the Brisbane & Davey St. choirs. The Rev. G. Clarke gave the sermon at the Chapel entrance since not all those present could fit inside, and when the rain came, those outside went into the marquee where the Rev. W.C. Robinson gave a second sermon.

Henry Bastow, architect of the former chapel, now *Playhouse Theatre*, in Hobart, designed the Rokeby chapel. It was not quite finished inside, awaiting painting, seating, a platform and fencing, and the 12 pounds collected would help in this. A sumptuous spread of joints of poultry, hams, pigs, pastry, tea and coffee was enjoyed by the visitors and a committee meeting was held afterwards.¹¹ In April 1867, 30 posts were obtained, probably for the fence.¹²

The Reverends Nesbit, Clarke and Robinson went on to be influential in

Congregationalism in Tasmania, all at some time serving terms as Chairman of the Congregational Union. George Clarke was also prominent in education, the University and the Royal Society. He was the son-in-law of the well known Congregationalist and benefactor Henry Hopkins, who had given £50 donation on the day of the opening.¹³



Congregational Chapel

Unfortunately, after such an auspicious beginning, the Chapel was destroyed just over 100 years later in the February 1967 bushfires.

The *Old Congregational Cemetery*, 73 South Arm Rd. Rokeby, is now permanently listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register. The headstones, ranging from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are of sandstone, concrete or granite. Some are very plain; others more elaborate with figurative carvings.¹⁴ Several recorded burials are in unknown places.

A walk through this small cemetery evokes memories of some of the prominent families in Clarence Plains – names such as Belbin, Haynes, Howard, Lazenby, Young, Pearsall, Pedder, Reardon, Wise and Tollard. The late Athol Tollard helped to identify a grave with no marker, when he remembered how, as a teenager, he helped his father construct the concrete surround. The earliest known burial on the site is Emmaline Tollard, buried in July 1872.¹⁵ The earliest headstone is that of Arthur McBean Young dated from 1876. Alfred Tollard, buried in 1951, is the last known burial at the site.

Like many old cemeteries it has its mysteries. Amongst the Tollard headstones is that of Carmine M.B. Riley, died 15 February 1896, aged 14. Other than her death date the family has no knowledge of who she was or how she came to have a memorial in this grave. The cemetery is now owned by the Uniting Church and has been closed since the 1967 bushfires. A plaque placed in November 2001 recognizes the importance of volunteers past and present and tells part of the site's history. The cemetery provides a linkage with early settlement in the area of Clarence Plains which was so important to the survival of Hobart and the early colony.¹⁶

The balance of Thomas Carter's land became the property of George Stokell Jnr., eldest son of the builder of *Rokeby House* and his second wife Hannah Wastel. He

farmed at *Darlington* and *Stockdale*, went to the gold rush and was the Member for Richmond in the House of Assembly in 1886. He retired to Rokeby, built the late Victorian house *Oakleigh* to the west of the *Congregational Chapel* land, and lived there until his death in 1898.¹⁷

George had been engaged to Elizabeth Sarah Morrisby, daughter of Betsy Morrisby (née Mack). This young lady had a propensity, it seems, for eavesdropping. Just before the wedding she overheard her fiancé and her father discussing what they would do with her money after the marriage. As there was no Married Women's Property Act at the time, her



Oakleigh

property would become her husband's, absolutely, upon marriage.¹⁸ As she stood to inherit part of Knopwood's estate, George had to go! George then took the 16 years old Alice Stanfield to wife, in August 1848. Two sons were born before Alice died on 1 October 1850. Four years later, on 22 June 1854, George married Mary Ann Chipman and a further 14 children were born up to 1876.

In 1910, Albert and Kate Chipman of *Droughty Point Farm* purchased *Oakleigh* and its surrounding land. Their only son Donald needed easier access to educational facilities and this is possibly the reason for the purchase. Later his own children were also nurtured at *Oakleigh*, from 1929 to 1943, whilst attending school.

Their grandson Basil takes up the story

'It was built of weatherboard with high ceilings, many fireplaces and contained 4 bedrooms, 2 in the attic with Dormer windows, large family kitchen, dining room, drawing room (complete with organ, harp, grand piano and violin) together with appurtenances such as scullery, pantry and dairy. Outside were extensive outbuildings



Kate and Albert Chipman

including some obviously built as servants' quarters. The two hole dunny was 30m. from the back door.

My great grandmother, Corbetta Eliza Chipman (Lord), died at Oakleigh on 2nd. April 1933. Seeing her laid out with penny coins on her eyelids and a linen serviette tied from under her jaw over the top of her head, was my first experience of death. That memory, as a three year old, is my first memory of life and shall remain so forever.

During my school term, five day a week sojourns at Oakleigh, my grandparents had a great influence on my upbringing. To them I am still grateful. Albert taught me how to: use hand tools, plant rhubarb, grow vegetables, prune berry fruit, chip weeds, play Crib and Draughts, read books, read books, etc. etc. Kate, an accomplished musician, tried hard to teach me piano and gave up. Being frugally minded, she taught me how to thin peel vegetables, count halfpennies, share time on a two hole dunny, read books, play Patience and Crib, milk the cows and cut and carry firewood.

Albert was a cripple throughout my memory of him, but with a walking stick to supplement his useless, stiff, left leg, he was able to get around. He died in his sleep, at Oakleigh on 3rd. April 1941. Kate, his first cousin, joined him on 7th. August 1944. Both are buried at St. Matthew's. My father, Donald inherited both the Droughty Point and Oakleigh properties and in 1947 both were sold'.¹⁹

This much loved and admired house, with its large pine trees, was destroyed in the 1967 bush fires.

- 1 McKay, *Early Land Grants*, p.5.
- 2 Evans, J. *One Acre of Van Diemen's Land*, p.36.
- 3 *ibid.*, pp.36,38.
- 4 McKay, *The Maum Diaries*, *passim*
- 5 *ibid.*, p.20.
- 6 Conveyance 5/3810 Copy in possession of author
- 7 McKay, *The Maum Diaries*, p.23.
- 8 *ibid.*, p.23
- 9 *ibid.*, p.25.
- 10 *ibid.*, p.26.
- 11 AOT NS 179/1/41 Monks.
- 12 McKay, *The Maum Diaries*, p.27.
- 13 Sharples, T. *Congregationalism in Tasmania, 1830-1977*
- 14 Tasmanian Heritage Council data sheet Ref: 10947
- 15 McKay, *The Maum Diaries*, p.43
- 16 Andrew, W. Research for the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail* 2001.
- 17 AOT: NS 1197 Hookey pp.35-36.
- 18 D.V.Webster et al. *Stanfield Saga*, p.33
- 19 Information from Basil Chipman, 29.4.2000.

Chapter 25

Cottages, a Hall and a Bit of Confrontation

To the west, Thomas Carter's land was bounded by the Clarence Plains Rivulet. The late 1820s Rokeby Town survey plan R/27 showed a road branching off to Droughty Point, and it is now called Droughty Point Road, rather than the earlier Beach St. A small area of Crown land lies between the road and the Rivulet.

This is 22 Droughty Point Road, the site of *The Nutshell*. This small iron roofed weatherboard cottage was believed to be owned c. 1925 by lady artist Mabel Hookey, granddaughter of George Stokell. It was thought to have been used as a studio by her painter friends when visiting Rokeby. Later c. 1945 it became part of the farm of John and Mary Ann Britton.

There was a small wooden bridge across the Rivulet to the acreage and barn on the other side. The cottage, with its sunroom with 2 chaise lounges, and living room with green uncut moquette lounge suite, was completely destroyed in the 1967 bushfires.¹



The Nutshell

The site was included in the *Old Rokeby Historic Trail* to recognise the loss of life and property in the Rokeby area, during the disastrous bushfires of 1967. It contains portion of the heritage of the area in that here there are peppercorns and lilacs from *Clarendon House*, also destroyed in the fires, Daffodils from *Rokeby House*; Peruvian Scilla from the Congregational land, and a stone seat that contains stone from *Clarendon Vale House*, the *Brown Cow Inn* and *The Nutshell* itself.²

Mabel's sister Dora also owned a nearby property known as *Anne Dodds'* or Knopwood's *Cottage*, about which more than one myth has been told. It

was generally known by passers-by as the house with the gnomes. It was not Knopwood's cottage; that was in Rokeby which in those days extended as far towards Bellerive as Wentworth Street where the 'Rokeby' signpost was on the corner of Clarence Street.

George Stokell's first family, including his wife Margaret Pattinson, came to Tasmania over time. The last to arrive on 24 January 1853, on the *Union* from London, were his daughter Anne, now Mrs. William Dodds, her husband, their children Anne Marie and John William, both under 14. Margaret Stokell (née Pattinson) was part of this group.³

Mrs. Dodds is the subject of one of the urban myths. Apparently she was walking along the road when a sudden storm sprang up. She accepted a lift from a passing vehicle that had already picked up Robert Knopwood. As both were drenched he decided to stop at a nearby Inn for a glass of spirits, and on being offered one also, she declined, much to the old parson's chagrin. As she arrived in 1853, and he died in 1838, this appears either to have been a true spirit, a case of mistaken identity, or just a myth.

Mrs. Margaret Stokell died in 1857, which may account for the late marriage of George to Hannah in 1869. The interesting Dodds family lived mainly in Hobart. The father was a gardener and seedsman who later went to Melbourne during the Gold Rush. He is reputed to have died there from a cut throat. Young John William was provided with a good education by his Uncle John and changed his name to John Stokell-Dodds. He purchased the property *Stoke* in New Town, part of Josiah Spode's grant. Dodds knocked down the two Spode houses and built the late Victorian-Revival two storey mansion *Stoke House*.⁴ He wrote his last Will and Testament as the Honourable John Stokell-Dodds, Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George, Knight Bachelor Lieutenant Governor of Tasmania and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Tasmania. His estate was valued at less than £26,986. His sister Anne Marie was left a lifetime annuity of £50.⁵

Anne Marie grew up in Hobart and is believed to have acquired her Rokeby cottage as a country house as an adult. It was not let when she was not in residence. Assessment rolls for 1891-2 show Henrietta Stokell as the owner and Anne Dodds as the occupier. By 1905, when she was 59 years of age, Anne Marie owned the cottage.

There seems to be no substance to the story that her mother ran a school, or a public house there, especially as her mother lived in Hobart. The post office directory shows Anne Marie as owning property at 268 Macquarie St. and at Lindisfarne at various times, but she was listed as the owner of the Rokeby cottage until the 1932-

3 edition.⁶ Older citizens of Rokeby remember Miss Dodds, and being rewarded for running messages for her. The late Keith Luckman credits her with introducing him to lollies, giving him the first one he ever tasted for taking her letter to the Post Office.⁷ She was quite a local identity.

In her Will she left the cottage to her grand-nephew John Stokell-Dodds, radio engineer. Her estate was valued at not more than £1389.⁸ Miss Dodds' cottage, on land less than a half acre in size,⁹ was purchased from John by Dora Hookey, for the sum of £100.¹⁰ Maurice Connor believed that this cottage was on Knopwood's grant, although the size and description in his diary does not bear this out.¹¹ Dora Hookey, in 1952, paid £300 for land, the grant as described in the diary, from the Percy Estate. This was on the opposite corner of Beach Street. This may explain the confusion.



Anne Dodds' Cottage c.1996

Anne Dodds' Cottage was left to Pat Connor in Dora's will (1960) together with a sum of £1000. The cottage, of unknown age, was made of hand-sawn boards, butted together, with pressed tin dados and ceiling inside. For sale at \$16,000 in April 1986, it boasted 3 bedrooms, lounge kit-dining room with sloping ceiling, and a bathroom-washhouse with bath and basin. Other selling points were the outside lavatory with weekly night-cart service, outbuildings and a prospering orchard. And a renovator's dream! The apple trees remain – the cottage sadly destroyed by man whilst tenanted. A replacement house has been 'lifted in'.

Pat Connor was a local identity often referred to as the Mayor of Rokeby. He lived on the five lots opposite *Bayview*, in Prince's Buildings and over the road from St. Matthew's. The cottage that he moved into on his marriage was quite old and used to be a bootmaker's shop. On the edges of the fireplace there were marks where the cobbler sharpened his knives on the stone. Pat was the son-in-law of Ernie Peardon Free, the blacksmith who lived on the corner of Ralph's Terrace opposite *Oakleigh* with his daughter Norma who was the Postmistress.¹²

The Free family had a 91 year association with the Rokeby Post Office, with Norma as postmistress for 47 years since she was 17 years old. Her great grandmother, Mrs. Peardon, arrived in Hobart in 1837 as lady-in-waiting to Lady Franklin, wife of the new Lt. Governor.

The Rokeby office was originally known as 'Clarence Plains' and is first mentioned in historical documents as being a 'receiving station' in 1852. The first postmaster was probably a Mr. G. Ware who officiated until 11 January 1883. That date saw the beginning of a tradition of family service with the appointment of Miss Emily Augusta Free as postmistress. She and other members of the family ran the Post Office until 1931 when a crisis arose. The only possible family successor was Norma, but she was only 17 years old.

Norma Free was nevertheless well qualified in commercial subjects and in order to preserve the 'Free tradition', she was appointed despite her age. In 43 years she was never absent through sickness and never took leave outside of the public holidays. On Black Tuesday, Tasmania's day of fire disaster in 1967, Miss Free lost all but the clothes she was wearing - Post Office, home, and possessions went. But she managed to have an office open at 9am next day.¹³ Although the Post Office at Rokeby had been open for many years, the last known use of the postmark 'Clarence Plains' was in 1903 and the earliest known use of the postmark Rokeby was 1905.¹⁴

Pat Connor, brother-in-law of Norma, had a long association with the Rokeby community. He worked at *Rokeby House* as farm manager; he had a deep



Pat Connor and Tree Planting group 1919

connection with the Rokeby Cricket Club, as did other members of the Connor and Free families and, as an extant photograph shows, they all got involved in Rokeby Tree Planting Day in 1919. There was a very special tree planting in Rokeby that year.

Out of its very small population, the little district of Rokeby contributed nineteen men to the fighting forces of the Empire during the Great War, and on the Saturday afternoon an avenue of trees was planted in the township as a memorial to the men who answered their country's call. The trees, American planes, were planted on either side of the roadway leading from the main road through the township to St. Matthew's Church, and along one side of the recreation ground.¹⁵

The ceremony was performed in the presence of most of the local residents, the Vicar, Councillors and Warden of Clarence. There had been some consternation about the choice of deciduous trees but it was thought the coming to life in spring would be a reminder of a better life after death. The trees were planted by the relatives, the cost defrayed by public subscription. Posts and guards were made and the residents dug the holes.¹⁶

The exact route of this *Avenue of Honour* has been a mystery until recently because of the several streets that lead to St. Matthew's Church and the *Village Green* from the main road. However the Rokeby Aerial View shows that even by 1940 there was only one possible route. This was from Clarence Street (now cut off and called Knopwood St.), then left along King Street to the Church. Some remaining plantings are just discernible in the photograph.¹⁷

On the other side of the *Village Green*, all the land bounded by Clarence Crescent and Church Street, measuring one acre, had been granted to John McArdell, Schoolmaster and Ecclesiastical Clerk, in 1856. This land was purchased from his estate by William George Free in April 1913 for £25.00.¹⁸

For about 10 years the good citizens of Rokeby had struggled over the position for the proposed *Rokeby Hall*. The Government had earlier offered



Rokeby Village Aerial View c.1940 AOT: LSD 353-1-14-11273

a 90 year lease on land adjoining the *Watch House*, but this satisfied no-one and the matter ended. Two rival sites near the 'Green' were now promoted. Disputes in Rokeby, it was said, were not uncommon, and when the inhabitants took sides, as they did here, and the issue reached a serious stage, the Council was asked to intervene.

This was a serious matter that the Council could not resolve. Perhaps William George bought the land as he then, on 30 January 1914, donated a portion on the southern end of this land to a Hall Trust consisting of John Smith, Vernon Alfred Chipman and Joseph Henry Reynolds.¹⁹ The gaily decorated New Hall was opened on 21 March 1914, with due pomp and ceremony. A fund raising fair was held which included the added attraction of an evening dance. The hall was large, 50 feet in length, 30 feet in breadth, and featured a special floor for dancing, and had cost £200, with an extra £50 for the piano. Funds had been collected for the Hall for some seven years and a loan through mortgage had been obtained for £150.²⁰ Stalls on the day raised £30. In the afternoon the old 'enemies', Sandford and Rokeby, played a cricket match, and the dance was so well attended by people from Clarence Plains, Wedge Bay, Glen Huon and Hobart that it was considered that the hall was not too large at all.²¹

All was still not sweetness and light, though, as one of the supporters of the rival site decided to have one last word and circulated a verse entitled *To Commemorate the Opening of Rokeby Hall* to be sung to the Air: Little Johnnie Jones' in a somewhat derogatory vein. This was published in the Hobart Town Advocate.

The hall however was a boon to the community. Here was a meeting hall, a place for concerts, dances, school speech nights, and fetes. Its water tank was also used for the cool storage of after cricket match refreshments. Basil Chipman said:

'The Village Green and the Hall now called the Trust Hall were the centre of community activities including cricket, football, bonfire night, monthly dance and end of school concert and prize night.

Bonfire night was a highlight with local adults erecting a high pyramid of gumtree boughs. Mrs. Steel and Mrs. Free would have benefited from the sale of fireworks. There being no electricity in the area, night activities in the hall were illuminated by Coleman lamps. I remember Alan Steel, the hall keeper, lighting the lamps and chipping candle wax onto the dance floor'.²²

A later recollection by a resident was of the *Hall* that had been used as the local cinema, standing unused for many years. The local residents then got together, stripped out the stage, painted it and put down a badminton court. The Rokeby team won quite a few pennants. All this was missed when, after the fires, a replacement hall was built, but not big enough for badminton, or for the Church fairs.²³

Footprints

- 1 Information from former resident of Droughty Point Road, Leo Cripps.
- 2 TACPLACI site rehabilitation.
- 3 AOT: MB 2/39/16 p.77.
- 4 Holiday, *Mansions & Cottages*, p.116.
- 5 SC 9633 26.11.1914, Information from Mary McKinlay.
- 6 Clarence Assessment Rolls.
- 7 Adnum, *A Verbal History of Rokeby*, p.235.
- 8 Will 38/460/18932 28.6.1932, Information from Mary McKinlay.
- 9 Information from Clarence Council – size 1722m².
- 10 Reg.No 18/9356 20.2.1933, Information from Mary McKinlay
- 11 RK p.575. Description of grant of his land at Rokeby.
- 12 Information from his son Maurice Connor.
- 13 Excerpt *Australian Post Office News*, August -September 1974.
- 14 Campbell, et al. *Tasmania: the postal history.*, p.129.
- 15 *Merc.* 4.8.1919.
- 16 *Merc.* 4.8.1919.
- 17 AOT: LSD 353/1/14/11273.
- 18 AOT: LSD 13/8, Information from Julie Davidson.
- 19 Conveyance RD 13/2370.
- 20 Mortgage 13/2700.
- 21 *Merc.* 23.3.1914.
- 22 Recollections of Basil Chipman, pupil at Rokeby P.S. 1939-45. December 2001.
- 23 Adnum, *A Verbal History of Rokeby*, pp.80, 86.

Chapter 26

Pests, Problems and Progress

The colonisation of Van Diemen's Land brought many changes, not only to the day to day lives of the people concerned. With the Europeans came many of the land pests and problems of the Mother country, some of which still cause problems today.

Rabbits, which are still prevalent today in spite of attempts to remove them with viruses, have been here since before 1816, when Robert Knopwood killed his first. Later Mr. T.W. Birch presented him with a pair.¹ Dr. William Crowther introduced grey rabbits in 1824, and later applied for an extension to his land grant for a rabbit warren. This was denied. Silver rabbits were introduced onto Betsy Island in the Derwent and it was noted in the 1837 *Colonial Times* that 'they were running about in their thousands on large estates'. Rabbits were considered economical to keep and a pair would ultimately provide regular food for the table.

Hares on the other hand had been set at liberty, reputedly for the first time in Tasmania,² on Mr. Chipman's property, and had increased so rapidly that there were now a large number, notwithstanding that a good many had been killed. There was a penalty of £20 per head for game found in a breeding place or enclosure and Messrs. Chipman, Young, Joseph and Smith were trying to protect their hares. Both rabbits and hares did and still do untold damage in bushland, damaging plants and causing erosion by their warren digging. They are particularly prevalent in the areas once owned by the above gentlemen – the Rokeby Hills.

Rats, spreaders of the disease leptospirosis, were not planned immigrants but escapees from ships, together with mice and cats. These, with their prolific breeding ability, were common throughout the area in the 1850s. And to satisfy the desire for the songbirds of their native land, the Europeans brought their favourites to Van Diemen's Land. All eventually made their way into our bushland.

Not all pests were imported. As well as the 'tiger' reported by Knopwood in 1805, the native 'hyena-tiger' allegedly came close to Clarence Plains in August 1829 when a large thylacine was found in the sheepfold of Mr. Gunning of Coal River. When four kangaroo dogs refused to fight the tiger which had seized a lamb, a small terrier was put in which, after a severe fight, killed the tiger.³

Sparrows were deliberately introduced by Edward Wilson in 1862 because farmers

needed soft beaked birds to destroy insects being nourished in crops, and starlings followed shortly after, brought in by a grandson of William Crowther.

European bees arrived in a hive on the ship *Mary* as a present for the Lt. Governor⁴ and remained to compete with the native bees. The snakes inhabiting the hills and reedy marshes of the Clarence Plains area were native, little consolation to the recipient of their poisonous venom.

Colonists introduced new plants such as blackberries, a marvellous fruit and a terrible weed. It started with Philip Oakden of Launceston importing one plant in 1843. One has only to look along our rivulets to see the remarkable increase, spread by birds and fruit collectors. James Gordon was accused of introducing the Scotch thistle for sentimental reasons, although it is likely that most thistles came in as seeds with imported grasses. Californian and Slender thistle are still prevalent in the Clarence Plains areas. Knopwood was another blamed for its import as a curiosity as he also was with the Furze or Gorse, a hedging plant that he purchased from New Town in 1815, and actively grew.⁵ There are stories of women 'broadcasting the seeds on social visits'. It is now widespread in Tasmania.

The introduction of Boneseed into the country has been dated as 1858, when it was recorded as a 'pretty, yellow, long flowering garden plant for shrub borders in estate gardens'. This together with Sweet Briar, for its flowers, and Boxthorn, for hedges for fencing and windbreaks, was introduced into the Clarence Plains area by farmers and even today remain a large problem. All are destructive of native bushland and some, like Boxthorn, are dangerous, but all can be removed with effort.

Worst of all is the Serrated Tussock, easily mistaken by the individual for a native grass, a serious agricultural weed. Infestations can result in significant livestock losses because of its high fibre, low protein content, and its ability to dominate native grasslands and to create a fire hazard. It was believed to have been first introduced into the Sandford area with some Greenfeast pea seed from New Zealand.⁶ Whatever its origin it is now dominant on the old Chipman property on the Droughty Promontory and other areas of Clarence Plains.

Unfortunately, on this and other agricultural properties the settlers began early to replace the native grass species. Augustus Prinsep wrote:

'Our fields, alas! Do not boast of the verdure of old England, for except after a great deal of rain, they are always brown, from this reason that the indigenous grasses of which the kangaroo grass is the most abundant, grow thinly, and very short. Farmers sow pasture land with English grass and clover for the cattle; the latter flourishes most luxuriantly'.⁷

Although the abundant natural grasses were preferred by the stock, the settlers continued to replace them, and given better conditions in which to grow, the English plants proliferated.

Horehound, another interloper on the Rokeby Hills, is believed to have been introduced to NSW in a shipment of specimens on the *Porpoise* 11 October 1798 by Sir Joseph Banks. It was used as a garden herb and in beer brewing, and was no doubt appreciated by the early settlers of Clarence Plains.⁸

There are many European imported plants that are evident in our gardens today, and give delight to the senses. Some are notable garden escapees, but we are now used to the glorious autumn colours, the floral displays and the combinations with native plants and trees in our home gardens. Both are now acceptable to the residents of our fair state.

A more unsavoury problem was the disposal of nightsoil. In 1897 the Huon Ketch Company took sewage down to a 'farm' on Maria Point, a place described as 'admirably situated being isolated and away from human habitation'. The night soil from Hobart was transported by boat in the householders' pans and when 'carefully treated and cleaned' was used as manure. By 1905, 30,000 cans of nightsoil from Hobart and surrounding suburbs were being taken to Maria Point. Later Shag Bay was used. Mrs. Dulcie Bowden was a neighbour who recalled the bagging up of the manure.⁹ A voluntary 'user pays' service dumped nightsoil from sixty homes into the river at Howrah.¹⁰ Miss Marjorie Goodwin of *Glebe Farm* was brought up in the depression. She remembered the days when there was no water, no electricity, no sealed roads and no night soil collection. Farmers disposed of their own by burial, as no doubt they had done since early settlement. A barge called *The Violet*, until 1953-4, ferried full pans from a jetty next to the Lindisfarne Rowing Club jetty down river to near Droughty Point whereupon the content were dumped overboard.¹¹

The ill health caused by the lack of sanitation in Hobart was not as prevalent in Clarence Plains, because of the open-air lifestyle and the aforementioned disposal of nightsoil by this agricultural community. In 1822 with a smallpox scare, the inhabitants were encouraged to be vaccinated with cowpox.

There were other epidemics - a viral catarrh, scarlet fever, diphtheria, tuberculosis and influenza as well as the recurring dysentery, and much later polio, but again in Clarence Plains suffering was limited. Our early settlers suffered drought and extremes of heat and cold. Snow came as early as July, complete with gales, according to Knopwood, whilst Charles Chipman, in 1866, recorded snow covering the *Clarence House* property on 29 July and another fall on 7 September.

Still our settlers pursued their goals, in spite of a severe depression in 1840. Added to their pastoral and agricultural pursuits had come secondary industries such as bark extraction for tanning, which had become a huge industry in the 1850s, with 80 tanneries operating on the island. Farm workers at the *Rokeby House* property of George Stokell were also employed in stripping the wattle bark.¹²

The introduction of the steam ferries as early as 1832 with the *Surprise*, *Governor Arthur*; the paddle steamers *Native Youth* (1843), which ran a weekly Hobart to Ralph's Bay service, and later the *Kangaroo* which ran for 70 more years after its introduction in 1855, was of great importance.¹³

*'It was a common sight until the 1880s to see bullock wagons loaded with wattle bark or wood drawn by eight or ten oxen slowly winding their way to the ferry to cross the river by the 'Kangaroo' and to see the picturesque drivers with their long whips manoeuvring the docile animals on board'.*¹⁴

Stone quarrying, on a small scale, in the Rokeby area; timber felling for firewood and fence making, fruit picking, blacksmithing, milling either of grain or timber, soap making at Barilla Creek, sand mining at Sandford, even salt production on the Clarence side of Pitt Water, provided work. Threshing, reaping and binding became mechanised as did ploughing. Workers were needed both to operate and maintain the machinery. The horses used for transport provided work for farriers, saddlers, and wheelwrights. Stonemasons, brick layers, shingle makers, tilers and carpenters – all had a role to play. Inns and later small stores provided food and refreshments for all.

Water was always a problem – tanks including underground tanks, hand pumped to drinking troughs for animals; wells and natural springs were all used to supply the daily needs but droughts were frequent. Roads and jetties became important for the transport of goods. Mr. Keith Luckman (1987) explained that the original jetty for the township supplies was nearer to the head of Ralph's bay but the water was often too shallow, so a new jetty was built near deeper water. There were Ralph's Bay jetties near Luckman's, Tollard's orchard, towards the canal, and another on Doran's Road.¹⁵

Over time, a road had been established between Kangaroo Point and South Arm. There had been many roads traversing properties and much argument over the years as to which of the informal roads should continue. In the description of Lt. Governor William Patterson's 1809 grants in the present Pass Rd. area, the land was bounded by 'a roadway one chain broad' thus separating it from the neighbouring grant. By the time of Governor Macquarie, the 1813 grants bore the common condition, 'reserving to Government the right of making a public road through the same'.

By 1832 Clarence Plains had a Road Committee that recommended the adoption of certain bye-roads in the Parishes of Cambridge and Clarence. The road from Kangaroo Point to Ralph's Bay would pass through the Glebe land, Dawson's, Atkin's, and Waterson's grants, then through that of Holmes, where it crossed the rivulet, passing along the boundary of Boyle's and Lackey's grants, recross the rivulet and eventually pass through land of McGuiness, Kimberley (the township area), Morrisby, Kimberley (the grant) and Stanfield.

Passing through that of Bedford Jnr. it would then proceed over Ralph's Neck. A connecting road to Richmond would commence on Mr. Bedford's grant.¹⁶ The advertisement invited any opposing views, and these certainly seem to have come forward from Messrs. Dawson and Holmes. A connection to Seven Mile Beach was authorised by the Surveyor General.¹⁷ The present road route is not dissimilar except that there is only one crossing of the rivulet, that at the junction of McGuiness and Kimberley land on the northern edge of the township.

In late 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the Calvert property known as *Pleasant View* was acquired by the Commonwealth for defence purposes and the Army moved in. In short order the road from South Arm was improved, Hydro power was brought to the area, gun emplacements were constructed, huts for the camp, for it was a training camp, were erected, and the beaches and hill of South Arm protected with barb wire entanglement. The base became known as Fort Direction.¹⁸

The war brought employment, ration books and blackouts, but it also brought road improvements and electric power to Rokeby. The church organ became electrified, the old kerosene lamps were put in the cupboard in case of electricity failure, some homes were able to use electrical pumps to bring up water from their tanks, and housewives were able to experience the joy of an electric iron instead of a flat iron, and a refrigerator instead of the ice-box.

Communications in the earliest days of settlement were difficult. It was important to receive news of vessels approaching in Storm Bay. Various methods and signals were used. There was a signal gun on Hunter Island¹⁹ and observation points on Betsy's Island, the mountain and later from the whaling fleets in the river.

It was that ever-energetic Port Arthur Commandant O'Hara Booth who was responsible for the chain of semaphore communication from Port Arthur to Hobart. An integral part of that system was the Mt. Augustus semaphore erected in 1862-3. Previously the semaphore was located at Hope Beach in the south, but this vital communication chain for the convict system ceased operation in 1849. It was re-established in 1861 and the station re-erected on Mt. Augustus. The signalman James Bowden operated the signal station from at least 1872 to its closure in 1877.

The one storey thatched signalman's cottage remained for many years after the station closure.²⁰

Telephones came to Tasmania in 1878 and the first exchanges were set up in 1883. Clarence Plains was an important area, but the good people of South Arm missed out, on both the phone and a daily mail service. In 1892 they registered an official complaint.²¹ Because of the expense, few people had phones until the 1930s.

On Old Coach Road is the heritage listed *Bellerive to Sorell Railway Tunnel*.²² This railway would have greatly assisted the regular transit of goods and people from several outlying agricultural areas to Bellerive, and thence to Hobart by a much more efficient and less dangerous method than by road and water. Unfortunately for the Rokeby area the two proposed routes through Rokeby were ultimately abandoned and the final route went through Cambridge, Shark Point, Penna to Sorell, and 'served mainly the interests of Cambridge landowners and weekend excursionists'.²³ The tunnel, approximately 164 metres long, has sandstone arched openings at both ends with a flat top and pediment above. The date 1891 is clearly shown. This tangible remnant of the ultimately financially unviable railway is now, with the expansion of each postal district, classified as being in Cambridge.

Aviation came to the Clarence Plains district early, when, in 1868, the first recorded attempt at flight was made by Richard Strahan of *Bonnington*. There is disagreement on whether the attempt was made from a small hill or the roof of a shed, or whether he broke a leg, or two! All agree however that the 'too small' wings were covered in green silk.²⁴

Cambridge aerodrome site was selected in 1935 and flights soon followed. Ted Chipman and his son Frank had the huge task of clearing the land with their steam traction engines. With the increase of plane size, flight frequency and interstate travel, Hobart/Llanherne airport opened in 1956 with Cambridge being retained for light aircraft. Rokeby had once again missed out – this time on an airport, but the very flat land of Cambridge was a tremendous asset.

On the *Belmont Lawn* property Mr. Vern Reid's hangar accommodated a sea plane and a Tiger Moth in the 1950s. He took private flights, and aerial photographs. His hangar and planes destroyed in the 1967 bush fires, he too moved to Cambridge.²⁵

Infrastructure improvements were slow. In 1922 a proposal to replace the rivulet bridge was considered, the old bridge stated as being 45 years old; that is c. 1877, and badly deteriorated.²⁶ The new bridge was to be constructed of timber log framing and planking, and would last for some decades.²⁷ In 1958 however, the bridge was being described as concrete.

Clarence had become a municipality in 1860, and better access to markets was essential. A floating bridge connected both sides of the Derwent in 1943, to be replaced in 1964 by the larger Tasman Bridge, fated later to collapse.

The main Rokeby road was sealed in the 1950s, with Pass Road many years later.²⁸ At the time of the 1967 bushfires, all the roads within the town were either grass, dirt or gravel.²⁹ Maurice Connor, late of Prince's Buildings, remembered it as 'not a street, it was just a lane'. The formation of a Progress Association after the 1967 bushfires agitated successfully for a reticulated water supply to Rokeby. The scene was set for greater progress.

- 1 RK p.230. 18.4.1816; P.294. 3.12.1818.
- 2 Adnum, p.235.
- 3 Clarence Council, *Spirit of Clarence*, p.45.
- 4 HTG 7.4.1821.
- 5 RK p.210, 211. August 1815.
- 6 Notes of Monica de Salis.
- 7 Prinsep, *Journal* p.69, quoted in Morgan, *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania*, p.121.
- 8 *CRC Weed Management Systems*.
- 9 Hudspeth et al. *Clarence Historic Sites Survey, Part 1*, pp.136-7.
- 10 Alexander, A. (ed.) *The Eastern Shore*, p.72.
- 11 Lindsifarne Historical Society Newsletter September 2007, p.4.
- 12 Information from Maurice Connor.
- 13 J.Sargeant archives.
- 14 O'May *Ferries of the Derwent* p.93.
- 15 Adnum. *A Verbal History of Rokeby*, pp.92, 234.
- 16 HTG 7.12.1832.
- 17 AOT: LSD 1/77/169.
- 18 Maurice Potter South Arm History talk for CPHS.
- 19 RK p.54 June 1804.
- 20 Hudspeth, et al. *Clarence Historic Site Survey Part 1*, pp.80-83.
- 21 *Merc.* 3.5.92
- 22 Tasmanian Heritage Council. Ref. R 555.
- 23 Cooley T. *Railroading in Tasmania*, Chapter 4 as quoted in Hudspeth p.110.
- 24 *Mercury Centenary Magazine* 5.7.1954 p.42.
- 25 Information from Phyllis Calvert.
- 26 AOT: PWD 35/7/29 *Clarence Bridges* 'Clarence Rivulet, Rokeby' 9.12.1922 - Inspector Hobden to Secretary, Public Works.
- 27 Main Rd. Photo c. 1910.
- 28 Information from Marjory Goodwin.
- 29 AOT: TC 22/1/777, 1978, *Rokeby Traffic Surveys and Traffic Planning* 'Rokeby Township, Existing Road Conditions': AOT: LSD 353-1-14-11273 (Rokeby Village Section)

Chapter 27

Rokeby Aflame!

In 1808, the area named by John Hayes in his expedition of 1794 was to get a new type of land manager. Settlers from Norfolk Island, some of whom had been ‘freed from servitude’ after their comparatively small crimes in England, were granted land in what was thought to be, correctly, a rich agricultural area.

All were to make their mark, both in the provision of food for the new colony, and in developing a community that has lasted and grown over the years. The early influence of the Church in the person of the gregarious Colonial Chaplain Robert Knopwood meant that schools came to the area as early as 1818.

In this open area of country, sheltered by wooded hills, with ready access to Ralph’s Bay, with what was, at that time, a permanent rivulet, Rokeby village grew. By 1866 there were 180 inhabitants in the township, surrounded by pastoral and agricultural properties.

With grand mansions, working farms, humble cottages, schools, Inns and places of worship, outdoor activities of cricket, horse races and ploughing matches, Rokeby continued its pleasant and peaceful existence. The semaphore and steam ferries had improved the links with Hobart, and life was good.

On 31 December 1879, James E. Calder penned a letter to the editor of the Mercury. He mused over which of the contiguous districts, Clarence Plains or Cambridge, he should recommend to a traveller wishing to enjoy a quiet ride or stroll in peaceful surroundings. Calder talked about the fair roads, and fertile cultivated land breaking the sameness of the bush, and the possibility, not always present, of good views from the highways en route to both places. He went on:

‘Many a year has run off the reel of time since I wandered through the district of Clarence Plains, and nothing but a general recollection of it remains, but I fancy I can see it still, through the gathering mists and obscurities of four or five vanished decades, some very pleasant and cheery places within it, that cannot have passed away with one’s own youth, but must still exist for nature changes but little, ‘Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair’.

These pleasant spots first flash upon you, when – after leaving Kangaroo Bay, and the estate called in my younger days Claremont, behind you – you

descend towards the vale and village of Rokeby. Further on also, where the highway approaches pretty closely to the sea margin, the landscape is still very attractive; for the southern shores of Tasmania, with their wide-spreading bays, are never otherwise; and here, if I remember rightly a handsome lake-like bay before you, forming an agreeable counterpoise to the woody heights on the land. From here, after passing Stanfield's windmill, I should recommend the traveller to cross the isthmus called Muddy Plains Neck, and, after a ride or a stroll along the sandy beach, and a long look over the glorious expanse of Norfolk Bay, to retrace his steps homewards and I think he will hardly account the day to be misspent. The distance out is about 8 miles'.¹

Calder was not to know the changes that would take place, the growth of the village, the schools, the industries and the community in general. Nor would he know about the devastating bushfires of 1967.

The wet conditions in the spring leading up to the fires had promoted prolific grass growth, and the exceptionally dry November had led to an accumulation of flammable grass and forest litter. By 7 February 1967, a record temperature of 102.9 °F (39.4 °C), low humidity and fierce wind gusts set the perfect conditions for bush fires, and several fires were already burning. By 9am Hobart Fire Brigade was receiving calls, and by 11am the city was covered with thick smoke.

The fire rapidly spread on the Derwent's western shore. Snug, Electrona, Kingston, Taroonna, parts of Bruny Island, West Hobart, even Dromedary were amongst the affected areas. Evacuations of patients in the greater Hobart area were commenced. This dreadful occasion was given much publicity in the local press; and the interstate press, somewhat carried away, announced the evacuation of Tasmania by aircraft carrier.

On the western shore a mother abseiled, with her own and other children, trip after trip, down a doubled garden hose to the beach below for safety. An ex-pat Englishwoman, she was surprised to find out years later, that her home county press had listed her amongst the dead. An even greater surprise to her compatriots when she arrived, alive, for a visit! These were two lighter moments in a dreadful experience.

Little noticed in the daily paper were the fires at Rokeby, Bridgewater and Old Beach on the Eastern shore. Property and stock losses in the Clarence municipality through Tuesday's fires have been estimated at 31, possibly 32 houses, 5000 sheep, cattle and horses and at least 1500 fowls. Council Clerk (Mr. Dudgeon) said that eight houses were destroyed at Cremorne, eight at Lauderdale, 5 at Rokeby and on the Pass Rd. Of the 32 homes lost, 12 were weekenders.²

Three people in the Rokeby area were to tragically lose their lives. Mary Britton, aged 63 years, of the *Nutshell* was burnt to death. It is believed she returned to the house in order to save her newly bought refrigerator. At the *Pines*, the former wooden parsonage for St. Matthew's, were Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, their two daughters and Mrs. Freeman Snr. The 88 year old Mrs. Freeman Snr. was found dead that day. Escaping from the burning building she had collapsed in the nearby gutter, whether from suffocation or injuries remains unclear. A third person Mr. Don Jackson³ was building a luxury yacht for Dr. J. Cannon on Glebe Hill. He was told to leave quickly and ended up in the sheep dip and died from poisoning as well as severe burns.

'Dehydrated' of Rokeby was moved to write to the *Mercury* (9.2.1967) apropos an earlier letter on 'worms' in New Norfolk's water supply, and stated

'these people living 20 miles from Hobart should be thankful they have a supply with adequate facilities for gardens.etc. We are only 7½ miles from Hobart and have been waiting since 1961 for the fulfilment of vague promises for a supply, and even now we still have no definite date for water connection'.

In the 'Vigilant' column of the same paper it was claimed that Old Moore's Almanac issue printed in London before November 1966 forecast bush fires in Southern Tasmania in February 1967.⁴

The winds, the fire racing through the wheat fields, the burning hawthorn hedges, terrified animals and concerned parents wondering how and where their children were – a picture almost too much to bear! The next day, all the grass and those gravestones, on the right as you go through Rokeby, were just standing like sentinels, and everything else was burnt, commented a resident.

The trees around St. Matthew's and those on the main road near the old Holmes property were burning and some falling. Bernie Cook, who worked for the Department of Main Roads, got permission to fell the dangerous ones. The remaining ones still stand today amongst younger trees in the road reserve along East Grange Road. The community banded together for there was plenty of cleaning up, fencing and other work to do. Some damaged buildings were quickly bulldozed down; others were saved by the quick action of their owners. Many thought the survival of the church was a good omen and after the initial shock life continued much as before.

As a result of these devastating fires the *Rokeby Fire Station* was built on the Skillion Hill side of Rokeby Road. The building is made up of five gabled bays of painted blockwork, two of which are fully glazed and wholly transparent, displaying the



Rokeby House - Before and after the fires

fire engines to the street, the other set of paired gables are sleeping quarters for the fire officers. The building won the 1979 RAlA (Tasmanian Division) Triennial Design award. It is listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register partly for its ability to demonstrate the principal characteristics of a Late Twentieth-Century Post-Modern building.⁵

Fire losses in Southern Tasmania ran into millions of dollars and it was believed that the value of the 300 homes known to have been destroyed would conservatively reach \$5,000,000.

After these disastrous bushfires, mains water, sewerage, public telephones and a Rural Fire Brigade came along. In the 1970s the Department of Housing added to the small private housing estates, by developing the Rokeby Grange and Clarendon Vale Estates, introducing the interactive Radburn design in Rokeby. Schools expanded with the suburbs, as did the facilities of shops, churches, medical and community centres, and parklands. Rokeby was rising from the ashes, but in a vastly different form... but that is another story.

The early settlers of Clarence Plains have all left their footprints on the sands of time and we must remember them for all that we have inherited.

1 *Merc.* 2.4. 1880.

2 *Merc.* Saturday 11.2.1967.

3 *Adnum*, V. p.68.

4 *Merc.* 10.2.1967.

5 Tasmanian Heritage Council, Ref. R 6445.

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Old Rokeby Historic Trail

Interpretation Signs can be found in the following places in Rokeby:

Pedestal at Trail Start: Cnr. Hawthorne Place and South Arm Rd.

Princes Buildings Parade

St. Matthew's Church

Clergyman's Glebe in Clarence Crescent

Trust Hall: Church Street

Village Green: Church St,

Congregational Cemetery: South Arm Road

Tasmania Police Academy Memorial Garden : South Arm Road

22 Droughty Point Rd.

Rokeby Supermarket: Cnr. South Arm Rd. and Church St.

Goodwins Road near Recreation area

Pass Road near Clarence House

Rokeby Road, below Pass Road opposite Fire Station