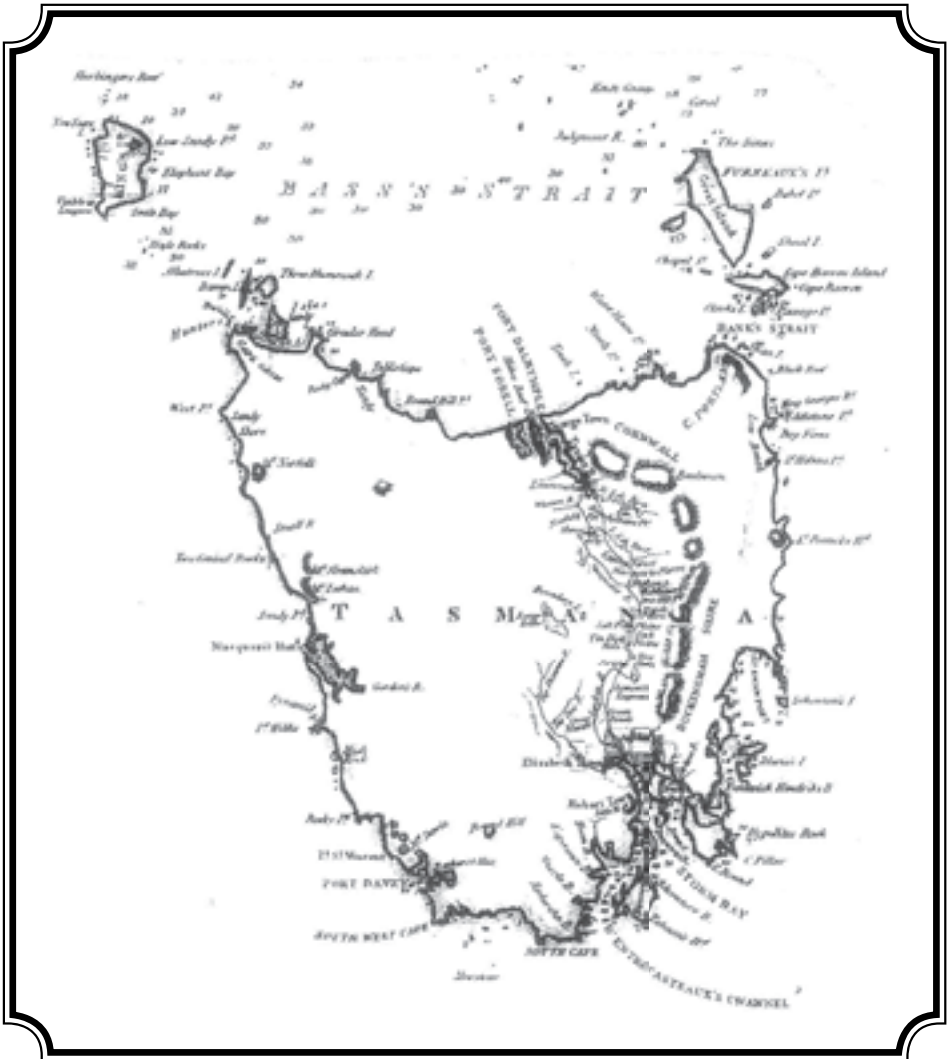


Tasmanian Historical Research Association

(Incorporated)

PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS



TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION Inc.

COMMITTEE

President: Alison Alexander

Vice President: Ian Terry

Hon Secretary: Andrew McKinlay

Hon Treasurer: Ross Kelly

Hon Editor: Heather Felton

Members: Michael Roe, Robyn Eastley, Margaret Glover,
Margaret Kent, Ian Morrison, Stefan Petrow

Annual Subscription

Individual: \$35 Household: \$40 Student: \$30
Life Members: \$30 for Papers and Proceedings

These prices include 10 per cent GST

Overseas Asia–Pacific: \$40 Rest of World: \$50

Address all communications to:
PO Box 441
Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006

THRA Website – www.thra.tascom.net

The Association meets at 8.00 pm on the second Tuesday of each month, from February to December (inclusive), in the Royal Society Room, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.
The Annual General Meeting is held in February.

The Association has published indexes to its first 50 volumes.

Index to the Papers and Proceedings:
Volumes 1–30, 1951–1983
Volumes 31–40, 1984–1993
Volumes 41–50, 1994–2003

The indexes are available from the Association.
Price \$20.50 per index or \$50.00 for all indexes, post free.

The *Papers and Proceedings* are indexed in the Australian Public Affairs Information Service, which is readily available in large public libraries.

Contributors' opinions are not necessarily those of the Association.

Publication is assisted by the Minister for the Arts through Arts Tasmania

Cover illustration: detail from the map in Godwin's
Emigrants' Guide to Van Diemen's Land ... (1823)

ISSN 0039–9809

TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2006

In 2006 a highlight of the Association's activities was the publication of the third volume of the valuable *Index to the Papers and Proceedings*, which covered volumes 41 to 50. We thank Sally Rackham for spending many hours indexing the various issues and bringing the project to an end under the supervision of an Indexing Sub-committee of Alison Alexander, Michael Roe and Stefan Petrow. All members will find this index essential to opening up the riches found in the articles published in *Papers and Proceedings*. The index was made possible by a donation from Lindsay Whitham, whose generosity we greatly appreciate. Lindsay has contributed to the Association in many ways over many years and the Committee recognised his contribution by making him a Life Member, which was warmly endorsed by the membership at a monthly meeting. After years of expectation and frustrating legal proceedings we were fortunate to be a beneficiary of a small fraction of the estate of Donald Munro Armstrong and received a cheque for \$36,418.75 in November.

The lecture programme proved to be an attractive one with good attendances at nearly all monthly meetings. We thank the staff of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Kath Sinkora and Phillipa Foster, for their help in setting up the Royal Society Room for speakers. The programme was as follows:

14 February	Joanna Richardson	Introducing Mary Morton Allport
14 March	Ian Terry	'The transformation of a wilderness': Tarraleah Power Station 1934–1951
11 April	Nic Haygarth	Wilderness photographers
9 May	Andrew Richardson	Experiences of repatriation and return in Tasmania after World War I
13 June	Margaret Mason-Cox	Robert Walker of Kilburn Grange: a life compressed
11 July	Roberta Julian	The legacy of Abel Tasman: post-war Dutch settlement in Tasmania
8 August	Richard Tuffin	The evolution of convict labour management in Van Diemen's Land: placing the 'Penal Peninsula' in a colonial context
12 September	Eric Ratcliff	Here I raise my Ebenezer: two transient architects in Van Diemen's Land
10 October	Heather Gaunt	William Walker and the development of the Public Library in Tasmania in the Early 20 th Century
14 November	Mavis Brinckman and Lyell Beven	Tasmanian lives
12 December	John McMahon	Why an undivided Continent? Discoveries, wars, and other threats, 1606–1829

Michael Roe continued his sterling work in summarising lectures and reminding us of the key points and arguments in his inimitable fashion. Michael was also our representative on the Joint Archives Consultative Forum and handled sales of our publications. Alison Alexander harnessed her organisational skills to make the excursions so popular and successful. This year our major excursion was to Burnie on 18–19 March, hosted by Lloyd Harris and other members of the Burnie Historical Society, especially Brian Rollins, an expert on Henry Hellyer. On 16 July John Sargent hosted an excursion through his Bellerive maritime and local history museum and Trevor Webb guided us around the Kangaroo Bluff Battery. On 14 October Alison Alexander herself led an excursion From Old Beach to Elderslie based on knowledge she had acquired from writing a history of the area for the Brighton Council. Our warm appreciation to all those members and non-members who helped Alison to ensure the smooth running of the excursions. Alison was also our representative on the Federation of Historical Societies' executive and acted as Secretary for part of the year. Bronwyn Meikle was awarded the THRA MD McRae Memorial Prize for the student with greatest proficiency in Australian History at the University of Tasmania in 2006.

This year will mark the end of an era as our joint editors of the *Papers and Proceedings*, David Dilger and Hugh Campbell, are retiring from this onerous task. We thank them both for all the hard and careful work they have given to making the *Papers and Proceedings* such a wonderful publication. Another era is also ending as our Treasurer, Beth McLeod, has decided to retire. Beth has done a marvellous job in the extremely difficult business of handling our accounts and overseeing the membership list and, with her husband Lyndsay, has been a terrific host of our committee meetings. She hands over a well organised system to her successor. Also retiring are Diane Snowden, who was our Secretary for most of 2006, Tony Marshall, who was our representative on the Australia on the Map project, and Robin Scharaschkin, who acted as our Public Officer. We thank them for their efforts during 2006. Ian Terry was our Web Manager. I thank the other members of the committee for their help during the year. Malcolm Groom gave dependable advice in preparing our financial statements. We look forward to another vigorous year of achievement in 2007 and thank all members for their continued support and participation in our activities.

Stefan Petrow, President

AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS OF TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (INC.)

SCOPE

I have audited the financial statements of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association (Inc.) for the year ended 31 December 2006 as set out in the Financial Report.

The Association's Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and information contained therein. I have performed an audit on these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to members of the Association.

The audit has been planned and performed to provide a reasonable level of assurance as to whether the Financial statements are free of material misstatement.

My procedures included examination of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements and the evaluation of Accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Concepts and Standards and statutory requirements so as to present a view of the Association which is consistent with my understanding of its operations.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

AUDIT OPINION

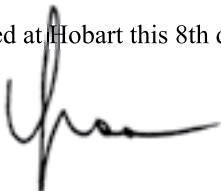
In my opinion, the accompanying accounts are properly drawn up:

- (1) So as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association as at 31 December 2006 and the results of the Association for the year ended on that date,

and

- (2) in accordance with Statements of Accounting Concepts.

Dated at Hobart this 8th day of February 2007.



Malcolm Groom FCA
Auditor

**TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED**

**STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2006**

INCOME	2006	2005
GENERAL		
Members subscriptions	12,350	12,125
Arts Tasmania grant	1,500	1,500
Donald Munro Armstrong Bequest	36,418	-
Interest received - general funds	3,014	2,955
Interest received - Eldershaw fund	712	852
Excursions & conferences	3,901	3,272
Donations - sundry	57	20
Donation - L Whitham	1,000	-
PUBLICATIONS (Note 1)		
Publication sales (Note 2)	5,264	6,244
Sale of Papers & Proceedings	857	364
TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$65,073</u>	<u>\$27,332</u>

EXPENDITURE	2006	2005
GENERAL		
Papers & Proceedings	12,670	10,308
Newsletter	157	574
Administration of the Association (note 3)	3,386	3,434
Excursions & Conference expenditure	3,573	2,639
MD McRae Prize	100	100
PUBLICATIONS		
<i>Companion to Tasmanian History</i>	-	750
<i>Letters of an Irish Patriot William Paul Dowling in Tasmania</i>	-	6,876
<i>Index No 3</i>	9,602	712
<i>Railways, Mines, Pubs and People</i>	3,234	-
ELDERSHAW MEMORIAL FUND		
Expenses	60	1,122
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$32,782	\$26,515
NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	\$32,292	\$817

Notes to and forming part of the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2006

Note 1: A stock of Publications is held, the value of which does not appear in the balance sheet. This is consistent with past practice which recognises such value as and when the publications are sold.

Note 2: Publication sales

<i>Varieties of Vice-Regal Life by Sir William & Lady Denison</i>	417	1,703
<i>Letters of an Irish Patriot William Paul Dowling in Tasmania</i>	2,173	1,531
<i>Railways, Mines, Pubs & People</i>	905	1,028
<i>Index No.3</i>	1,280	-
<i>John Bowen's Hobart</i>	-	1,584
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	489	398
	5,264	6,244

Note 3: Administration costs include room hire, insurance, audit, printing & stationery, fees, taxes, FAHS affiliation & petty cash.

**TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2006**

CURRENT ASSETS	2006	2005
Connect Credit Union (S1)	4,335	2,614
Tasmanian Perpetual Trustees - Reserve Fund	88,805	52,386
- Eldershaw Memorial Fund	13,117	12,405
Interest accrued	1,004	940
GST Input tax credits	182	1,219
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>\$107,442</u></u>	<u><u>\$69,564</u></u>
 Less: CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Excursions in advance	-	891
Sundry creditors	7,058	480
GST payable	198	299
Subscriptions in advance	595	595
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u><u>\$7,851</u></u>	<u><u>\$2,265</u></u>
NET MEMBERS EQUITY	<u><u>\$99,591</u></u>	<u><u>\$67,299</u></u>
 ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
	\$	\$
Balance at 1 January 2006	67,299	66,482
Operating Surplus (Deficit) for the year	(4,126)	817
Donald Munro Armstrong Bequest	36,418	-
Surplus for the year	32,292	817
Balance at 31 December 2006	<u><u>\$99,591</u></u>	<u><u>\$67,299</u></u>

**TASMANIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED**

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

In the opinion of the committee, the accompanying financial statements:


- (1) fairly present the financial position of the Association at 31 December 2006, and of its results for the year ended on that date; and
- (2) have been prepared in accordance with the applicable accounting standards.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:

Chairman: Signed by Dr Stefan Petrow



Treasurer: Signed by E A McLeod



Date: 5 February 2007

REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN TASMANIA

This register lists historical research being undertaken by members of THRA who had replied to a circular by 31 January 2007. It was compiled by Stefan Petrow.

- Adkins, Keith, 66 Cameron Street, Launceston 7250: Probation Station Libraries in colonial Tasmania; publication, personal, exhibition.
- Amos, JA, 27 Canterbury Street, Arnaud, Victoria 3478: Amos families 1821+ in Swansea/Cranbrook area; Pioneer settlers on East Coast of Van Diemen's Land 1821+; personal, family tree.
- Cassidy, Jill, 418 Deviot Road, Deviot 7275: Tasmanian Flour Mills; publication.
- Chambers, Coral, GPO Box 276, Hobart 7001: History of the Glebe, Hobart; publication, personal.
- Dent, John, 37 Bald Hill Road, Trevallyn 7250: York Town and early history of Launceston; publication.
- Felton, Heather, 269 Nelson Road, Mt Nelson, Tasmania 7007: Hydro Tasmania; the history of early Hobart; historic buildings in Hobart's CBD; publication.
- Gibson, Kay J, 60 Meakin Street, Watsonia North, Victoria 3087: Bushrangers William Westwood, Jacky Jacky, Lawrence Kavanagh; publication.
- Harrison, AJ, 19 Firth Road, Lenah Valley 7008: Fisheries History; TT Flynn; publication.
- Hodgson, David Neil, 26/99 McCabe Street, Mosman Park, Western Australia 6012: George Meredith and descendants; publication.
- Hollingway, Joan, School of English, Media Studies and Art History, University of Queensland: William Legrand (1818?–1902); thesis.
- Marshall, Tony, 98 Cascade Road, South Hobart 7004: Nathaniel Lipscomb Kentish—his life, times and publications; Tasmanian collectors, especially Sir William Crowther; publication.
- McConnell, Anne, GPO Box 234, Hobart 7001: Industrial and rural history of Tasmania; Aboriginal history Tasmania; Military history in twentieth century Tasmania; place based histories for cultural heritage assessment purposes, business, work.
- McMahon, Anne, 2 Knibbs Street, Turner, ACT 2612: Irish Famine: Irish convict voyages 1841–1853; publication, personal.
- Mickleborough, Leonie, 6 Wentworth Street, South Hobart 7004: Sir John Eardley-Wilmot: Lt-Governor of VDL 1843–46; thesis.
- Morrison, Ian, Heritage Collections, State Library of Tasmania: Book History (printing, publishing, libraries and reading) of Walch and Sons; publication, thesis.
- Parkes, Elizabeth, 37 Loatta Road, Lindisfarne 7015: Family history—Diproses; local history/land settlement/pioneering in northern Tasmania; publication, personal.
- Petrow, Stefan, School of History and Classics, University of Tasmania, Private Bag 81, Hobart 7001: Policing in Tasmania 1899–1999; Governor William Denison; publication.

- Ramsay, Kate, 8 Diamond Drive, Blackmans Bay 7052: History of the Law Society Tasmania; History of the legal profession; personal, web site.
- Ramsay, Mary, 'Ratho', Bothwell 7030: Eliza Forlong (1784–1859); Bothwell Literary Society; Bothwell local history; personal.
- Roe, Michael, 34 View Street, Sandy Bay 7005: Michael Sharland; Albert Ogilvie and JF Gaha's international interests; publication.
- Rollins, Brian, 15 Malonga Drive, Burnie 7320: Early Van Diemen's Land history; early surveyors and land settlement; publication, personal.
- Walker, Marian, 53 Bain Terrace, Trevallyn 7250: Tourism in Tasmania; images of Tasmania; thesis.
- Whitham, Lindsay, 49B Pirie Street, New Town 7008: Granville Tram (Zeehan area)—particularly a group of "volunteers" carting firewood for unemployed residents c.1930; publication, personal.
- Wilson, John W, PO Box 2078, Lower Sandy Bay 7005: Tasmanian History; publication.

TASMANIANA LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF TASMANIA NEW ACQUISITIONS

This is a select list of books on history, biography and genealogy which have been added to the Tasmaniana Library in 2006. They are mostly, but not all, new publications; the Tasmaniana Library often acquires older works which relate to Tasmania and which it does not already hold. The list has been kept as brief as possible; normally only author, title and the Tasmaniana Library's reference number are given.

If you would like further information about any of the books listed, please contact:

Tasmaniana Library;

91 Murray Street, Hobart 7000

Telephone on (03) 6233 7474

Fax on (03) 6231 0927

Email at Heritage.Collections@education.tas.gov.au.

Further information is also available on TALIS, the State Library's on-line information system. TALIS is available in city and branch libraries throughout Tasmania and through the World Wide Web; its URL is <http://www.talis.tas.gov.au:8000/>.

Please note that, while all of these books are available for reference in the Tasmaniana Library, **they are not available for loan** (although reference and/or lending copies of some of them may be available at city and branch libraries).

Allen, J.M., *From fetters to freedom: the story of the Allen family of Tasmania and New Zealand*. (TLQ 929.2 ALL)

Alliance Française de Hobart, *The Alliance Française de Hobart*. (TLP 448 ALL)

Ames, Russ, *The Tasmania Police Pipe Band: a history*. (TLQ 784.83 AME)

Ames, Russ, *To well and truly serve: the recollections of Russell Stanford Ames and his career in the Tasmania Police 1964–1992 and of subsequent events*. (TLQ 363.2 AME)

Angus, Max, *Watercolour in Tasmania 1895–1995: a painter's view of the medium and its history over the past century*. (TLPQ 751.422 ANG)

Archives Office of Tasmania, *Tasmanian Pioneer Index 1803–1899*. (TLCDROMS 929.3946 TAS)

Ashby, Ted, *Blackie: a story of the old-time bushmen*. [The story of Andrew Black] (TL 920 BLA)

Atkinson, Alan, *The Europeans in Australia: a history. Volume two: democracy*. (TL 994 ATK)

Atkinson, Joe, *They call him "Uncle Joe"*. [The story of Joe Atkinson] (TL 287.93 ATK)

Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies Inc, *Early Australian electoral rolls, Volume 1: New South Wales —1903, Tasmania —1903, Western Australia — 1901*. (TLCDROMS 324.64 AUS v.1)

- Australian Speleological Federation, *Cave Mania 2005 proceedings: Downunder at Dover: 25th biennial conference of the Australian Speleological Federation, 2nd-9th January 2005*. [Includes articles about Tasmanian caves] (TLQ 796.5250994 AUS)
- Badcock, Stewart B, *Follow the furrows, 1835 to 2005*. [History of ploughing competitions] (TLQ 631.509946 BAD)
- Barker, Pauline, *A netball history in Tasmania: the first bounce, 1900–2005*. (TLQ 796.324 BAR)
- Baxter, Carol, *An irresistible temptation: the true story of Jane New and a colonial scandal*. (TL 364.3740994 BAX)
- Bennett, Richard, *Seeing is believing: regenerating Tasmanian forests*. (TLQ 634.9209946 BEN)
- Berriedale/Chigwell Community Precinct (Tas.), *Chigwell history trail*. (TLP 996.662 CHI)
- Beswick, John, *Goninans, Goninens, Goninons: around the world*. (TLQ 929.2 GON)
- Bevan, Kathy, *In celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Lenah Valley Garden Club*. (TLQ 635.0994661 INC)
- Bingham, Mike, *The spirit never dies: Sandy Bay Football Club 1945–1997*. (TL 796.336 BIN)
- Black, Lesley, *Survivor*. 2nd ed. [Story of Joyce Cummings, the last survivor of a 1938 shipwreck on Three Hummock Island] (TL 910.45 BLA)
- Boniwell, Robert R., *The Allison Story*. (TLQ 929.2 ALL)
- Bothwell Lodge centenary, 1904–2004, The*. (TLP 366.11099467 BOT)
- Brennan, Sharon, *Crossing the seas to build a future: twelve generations of the Seabrook family*. (TLQ 929.2 SEA)
- Broadbent, Margaret, *A colonial tapestry: the strands woven into the pioneer Ferguson family of North West Tasmania*. (TLQ 929.2 FER)
- Broinowski, L (ed), *Tasmanians in the Transvaal War*. [CDROM version of previously published work] (TLCDROMS 968.048 BUF)
- Bromby, Robin, *Ghost railways of Australia*. (TLQ 385.20994 BRO)
- Brooke, Alan and David Brandon, *Bound for Botany Bay: British convict voyages to Australia*. (TL 994.02 BRO)
- Brown, Caroline, *Remembering, reaching out, recognition: Tasmanian Women in Agriculture*. (TLPQ 630.8209946 TAS)
- Browne, Terry, *The descendants of Richard Sydes*. (TLQ 929.2 SYD)
- Burnett, Rob, *Comalco Bell Bay: 50 years of aluminium production in Tasmania* (TL 338.47669722 COM)
- Calendar of the University of Tasmania 1916–17*. [CDROM version of previously published work] (TLCDROMS 378.946 UNI)
- Carolan, Jane Mayo, *No run-of-the mill: a biography of Henry Beaufort Somerset*. (TLQ 338.092 SOM)
- Chalmers, Geoff, *History of Sayes Court*. (TL 994.626 CHA)
- Channel Enterprise (Inc), *An historical tour of Woodbridge*. (TLP 994.652 HIS)
- Charlwood, Don, *The wreck of the sailing ship 'Netherby': a miracle of survival*. (TLPQ 994.692 CHA)
- Chugg, Bill, *Old places of interest at Campbell Town (Tas.): recollections and images 1950–2004*. (TLP 994.623 CHU)

- Clayton, Mike, *Barnbougale Dunes: the beginnings*. (TLQ 796.352 CLA)
- Collins, Paul, *Burn: the epic story of bushfire in Australia*. (TL 363.3790994 COL)
- Coombes, John L, *Tall ships: the sixteen square riggers of Australia and New Zealand*. [Includes *Alma Doepel*, *James Craig*, *Lady Nelson* and *Windeward Bound*.] (TLQ 387.2043 COO)
- Cooper, Ian G, *Launceston municipal transport 1911–1955*. (TLQ 388.4099461 COO)
- Corbett, Bruce, *Ninety years on: a history of the Wynyard Fire Brigade from 1914*. (TLQ 363.3780994637 NIN)
- Cox, Terry, *Boots and a billycan*. [Stories of Circular Head people of Aboriginal descent] (TL 305.89915094638 COX)
- Cree, Mary, *Summer Reminiscences 1825–2005: the story of two families*. (TLQ 929.2 CRE)
- Crocker, Dorothy, *Ellenor & Joseph & Robert Rowe, Brooks Bay: a collection of facts, photographs, memories and related stories*. (TLQ 929.2 ROW)
- Cunneen, Christopher (ed), *Australian dictionary of biography: supplement 1580–1980*. (TLR 920.094 AUS supp 1580–1980)
- Daniel, Gwyneth, *A Tasmanian in England*. (TL 914 2 DAN)
- Daniel, Gwyneth, *Thomas Henry Lello, 1936–1996: his career in the Tasmania Police Force*. (TLP 363.209946 LEL)
- Dargavel, John (ed), *Australia's ever-changing forests III: proceedings of the Third National Conference on Australian Forest History*. (TLQ 333.750994 NAT)
- Dargavel, John and Brenda Libbis (eds), *Australia's ever-changing forests IV: proceedings of the Fourth National Conference on Australian Forest History*. [Includes “Maydena, the logging town in a colonised valley” by Peter MacFie and, “Species trials and arboreta in Tasmania” by Denise Gaughwin] (TLQ 333.750994 NAT)
- Dargavel, John and Sue Feary, (eds), *Australia's ever-changing forests II: proceedings of the Second National Conference on Australian Forest History*. [Includes “Effect of settlement on the forests of the Central Plateau, Tasmania” by RC Ellis] (TLQ 333.750994 NAT)
- Dargavel, John, Denise Gaughwin and Brenda Libbis (eds), *Australia's ever-changing forests V: proceedings of the Fifth National Conference on Australian Forest History*. [Includes “Joseph Dalton Hooker and Tasmanian flora” by Sybil Jack, “Government sawing establishments in Van Diemen's Land, 1817–1832” by Peter MacFie, “Wattle bark in Van Diemen's Land, 1803–1830” by Kaye McPherson, “Life in a lost Tasmanian rainforest, winter 1827” by Brian Rollins, “Save the Forests: forest reform in Tasmania, 1912–1920” by Stefan Petrow, “A land reborn: Lorinna over the bridge” by Robert Onfray, “Old forests and Tasmania's early national parks movement” by Debbie Quarmby, “Conservation, timber and perceived values at Mt Field, Tasmania” by Kevin Kiernan and “Hard work to starve: a Tasmanian play” by John Dargavel] (TLQ 333.750994 NAT)
- Davey, Emily, *Secrets of the island: an oral history of Tasmanian surfing*. (TLQ 797.32 DAV)
- Dawson, Tony, *James Meehan: a most excellent surveyor*. (TL 526.9092 MEE)
- De La Roche, John, *Longford Tasmania: heritage and gardens entwined*. (TLP 919.4621)
- Deacon, LA, *Mt. Paris Dam*. (TLP 627.80994683 DEA)
- Dee, David, *Australian art pottery, 1900–1950*. (TLQ 738.0994 AUS)

- Dimmick, Leonard W, *London to Lismore: the Roskell family in Australia*. (TLQ 929.2 ROS)
- Dodson, Tineke, *The Van der Woude's migration story*. (TLQ 305.83931094 VAN)
- Doherty, Kath, *90 years of an interesting life*. (TL 920 DOH)
- Donnelly, Patricia, *Migrant journeys or "What the hell have we done?"* (TLQ 325.2410994 DON)
- Dunmore, John, *Pacific journeys: essays in honour of John Dunmore*. [Includes "A French Garden in Tasmania: the legacy of Félix Delahaye(1767–1829)" by Edward Duyker] (TL 995 PAC)
- Dunphey, Kirsty, *Advance to go — collect \$1 million*. [Autobiography] (TL 332.6324092)
- Duyker, Edward, *François Peron: an impetuous life: naturalist and voyager*. (TL 919.4042 PER)
- Effecting a cure: aspects of health and medicine in Launceston*. Edited by Paul AC Richards, Barbara Valentine & Tom Dunning. (TLQ 362.10994611 EFF)
- Ellis, Peter, *The merry country dance: a description and social history of colonial and old time dance and music*. (TLQ 796.31994 MER)
- Eric Thomas Galley Museum, Queenstown, Tasmania, *The North Lyell mining disaster*. (TLQ 363.1190994642 NOR)
- Evans, Brian and Garry Smith, *Batted balls: 100 years of Tasmanian table tennis*. (TLQ 796.346 BAT)
- Examiner (Launceston, Tas), *200 great Tasmanians: the people who have shaped our state over the past 200 years*. [Examiner extra supplement] (TLPE 994.6 EXA)
- Examiner (Launceston, Tas), *Defining moments: 20 events that shaped our city over 200 years*. [Examiner extra supplement] (TLPE 994.611 DEF)
- Fagg, Christopher M, *Australian recipients of the Volunteer Officers Decoration and Volunteer Long Service Medal, 1894–1901*. (TLQ 355.1342 FAG)
- Fagg, Christopher M, *In the line of duty: bravery medals to Tasmania Police, 1898 -2004*. (TLQ 363.209946 FAG)
- Fahy, Moira, *Black Tuesday*. [DVD] TLDVD 363.3790946 BLA
- Fawdry, Merlene and Michael Pugh, *The hidden risks: a story of concealment and loss of a family name*. [Story of the Risk and Pugh families] (TL 920 PUG)
- Flood, Josephine, *The original Australians: story of the Aboriginal people*. (TL 994.0049915 FLO)
- Forsyth, Holly Kerr, *Remembered gardens: eight women & their visions of an Australian landscape*. [Includes Louisa Anne Meredith] (TLQ 635.0994 FOR)
- Freeman Thorne Consultant Team, *The City Hall axis, Hobart: urban design concepts and parameters*. (TLQ 711.50994661 FRE)
- Fysh, John Hudson, *Lines of descent from the pioneering Fysh, Reed, Dove, Canning families of English settlement in 19th century Australia to John Hudson Fysh in the 21st*. (TLQ 929.2 FYS)
- Gardam, Faye, *Annie Cocker: colonial artist and historian, 1857–1939*. (TLQ 759.9946 COC)
- Gardam, Faye, *Centenary of the Marconi wireless telegraphy experiments at East Devonport, Tasmania & Queenscliff, Victoria 12 July 1906*. (TLP 384.5209946 GAR)

- Gardam, Julie, *The Oyster Coves: a history of the Kettering–Oyster Cove area*. (TL 994.654 GAR)
- Geeveston History Circle, *Geeveston history almanac year 2000 calendar*. (TLPQ 994.653 GEE)
- Gibson, Heather B, *Surveillance of iodine deficiency disorders in Tasmania 1949 to 1984*. (TL 616.396 GIG)
- Glover, Margaret and Alf MacLochlainn, *Letters of an Irish Patriot: William Paul Dowling in Tasmania*. (TL 994.604 DOW)
- Gowlland, Ralph and Kathleen Gowlland, *Trampled wilderness: history of south west Tasmania: Volume 2*. [Reprint of part of the work first published in 1976] (TL 994.65 GOW)
- Grey-Smith, Donald, *Boat people of the Empire: Australian history from a family perspective*. (TLQ 929.2 GRE)
- Haines, Robin, *Doctors at sea: emigrant voyages to colonial Australia*. (TL 362.10994 HAI)
- Hales, Ruby Clarence and Kelvin Hales, *Magnet around 1930*. (TLDVD 622.099466 MAG)
- Hamilton, Jann Thornton, and Jill Muriel Sharp, *The Robert Parkinson family history*. (TLQ 929.2 PAR)
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THE GRANVILLE TRAM

Lindsay Whitham

On Saturday 8 November 1913, Edward Mulcahy, Minister of Lands, Works and Mines, sent this eagerly awaited telegram to the Warden of Zeehan, W. Fisher.

Instructed Engineer-in-Chief¹ to proceed construction wooden tram beginning point near Western Tram capable connection thereto or direct continuation to Zeehan. Employment will be given preferentially to Zeehan married residents with families and not now at work. Hope to put men on Monday.

Further details specified that the tram was ‘towards Granville’.² There had been so many months of discussion that presumably Mulcahy considered the inclusion of the word ‘Granville’ in the initial paragraph superfluous. It was freely acknowledged that the tram was basically an unemployment-relief project with little prospect of ever being economically viable — so, what had happened to the glittering silver-lead mines of Zeehan and what and where was Granville?

The collapse of the Zeehan mining field

The Zeehan silver-lead field was comparatively shallow — only four mines were sunk below three hundred feet. As intensive mining had been carried on since the early 1880s, production was already slowing by 1900 when the Western mine, the deepest and second richest, closed. It was later bought by its neighbour, the Zeehan-Montana, renamed the Zeehan-Western and reopened, although its concentrating mill was not. In 1908 the directors of all the English-owned mines issued a joint statement in London that they considered any further deep-sinking at Zeehan to be a waste of money. Then a stand-off over smelting charges between the owners of the Hercules mine at Mt Read and the German Smelters at Austral resulted in a two-year closure of the smelters.³ Many of the smaller mines, deprived of a market for their ore, were forced to close with domino effects on other trades. Although some mining continued, many families left Zeehan. After the Government, alarmed at the serious economic effect of the closure, intervened to broker an agreement⁴ the smelters resumed operation in June 1911. The renewed activity only lasted a little over two years until the smelters finally closed in October 1913 and despair settled upon Zeehan again.

Granville

Granville was a township reserve, about half-a-square-mile in area, on the Tasman River twelve miles west-north-west from the Zeehan Railway Station.⁵ The surrounding area had been prospected intermittently over the preceding thirty years and actively mined since 1912. The Heemskirk Tin Syndicate was vigorously prosecuting sluicing operations in the reserve area, with water brought to the site in a six-mile-long race from the upper reaches of the Heemskirk River. Except for some timber leases along the line of the proposed tram, the Heemskirk mine, with a forecast life of six years’

1 Head of the Public Works Department.

2 Although officially the Granville Tram ran from the Zeehan Railway Station to Granville, in most printed references the term ‘Granville Tram’ refers only to the wooden-railed section. For simplicity I will divide it into the ‘Zeehan Section’ and the ‘Granville Section’.

3 The English-owned mines sent their ore to European smelters under long-term contracts.

4 Tasmania, Parliament, *The Zeehan Smelters: Report of the Select Committee*, 1910, Parliamentary Paper 40, Hobart.

5 See Figure 1.

sluicing and dredging, was the only foreseeable major source of traffic for the tram. There was constant local agitation for the proposed tramway to be extended another five miles westward to the Granville Harbour pastoral and agricultural areas. Some three thousand acres had been partially cleared and were in use for fattening cattle on their way from the north-west via the Pieman Heads to the Zeehan abattoirs, but the cattle walked out and the distance to any market, other than the moribund Zeehan, would preclude the development of the agricultural areas for many decades. The question arises — why spend unemployed relief money on a new tramway when the mine obviously must have had a practicable access already?

An Alternative Route

Until 1891, the only major track or road into Zeehan was from Remine at Trial Harbour, the town and port built for the South Heemskirk tin-mining boom of 1880 to 1884. At that time, a good road had been built northward from Remine almost to the Tasman River, branching there into two well-formed tracks, one to Corinna for the mailman and telegraph line, the other a cattle track to the Pieman Heads.⁶ In 1891, the cattle track was diverted through Granville, direct to Zeehan, shortening the distance from the Pieman Heads and Corinna by fifteen miles⁷ and providing Zeehan with a well-built structure with several substantial bridges, as its first northern outlet.⁸ After the railway from Strahan reached Zeehan in February 1892, the Trial Harbour and Coast Roads were virtually abandoned except for minor repairs for occasional mining works, such as the Federation Mine's initial attempts to establish a large mill, and fell into disrepair. When the predecessors of the Heemskirk Tin Syndicate started up in 1912, the Government provided £1,000 for repairs to the Corinna Road (formerly the Trial Harbour and Coast Roads) to enable them to take in heavy mining machinery. The vote was in two items of £500 each: for the road from Zeehan to the Federation Mine turn off, and from there to the mine.⁹ An advantage of this route, compared with the projected tram, was that the infrastructure was already in place. Its disadvantages were the greater distance and the many steep gradients.

Authorisation

The statement of 'Proposals for Public Works' in the ensuing year that was presented to Parliament on 27 August 1913 by the Minister, Edward Mulcahy, included an item — '[Tramways] No. 995 Zeehan Railway Station towards Granville — £20,000'.¹⁰ It was intended that this should be a 2 feet 0 inch-gauge steel-railed tramway designed for steam traction¹¹ starting from the station and, where possible, running on existing tracks to the end of the original Western steel-railed tram and thence on a newly constructed line for about thirteen miles to Granville. The Bill was passed by the House of Assembly but in the Legislative Council on 5 November 1913. Mr CH Hall, the Member for Russell and a mining investor by profession, immediately moved that the Bill be withdrawn because the prospects for the Heemskirk Tin Syndicate's mine were too low to ever make a tramway profitable. He withdrew his motion when the main purpose of the tram was explained, although, along with other Members, he campaigned vigorously to reduce the

6 Lindsay Whitham, 'Where the Four Roads Meet', *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, Vol. 29, No. 4 December 1982.

7 *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 9 November 1891.

8 This track was used in 1891 for the carriage from Zeehan of cast-iron pipes weighing up to 1¼ tons, for an uncompleted hydro-electric power plant on the Heemskirk Falls, *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 6 September 1893.

9 *The Public Works Execution Act (No. 1), 1912* (Tas), 3 Geo. v No. 6, Schedule items 852 and 853; *Tasmanian Mail*, 4 July 1912, p.19.

10 Tasmania, Parliament, *Parliamentary Paper No. 15*, Hobart, 1913.

11 7-ton Krauss engines were contemplated.

vote. The Government finally succeeded in winning approval for £10,000, sufficient for a wooden-railed line¹² built to standards which would permit conversion to steam traction. The Act¹³ prudently specified ‘*towards Granville*’ (my italics) because only sufficient reconnaissance for a feasible route and preliminary estimate had been carried out.

Acquisition, design and construction: the Zeehan (steel railed) section

Late in 1912 the Public Works Department asked the Zeehan Municipal Council if, using its local knowledge and contacts, it would report on possible routes from the station to the end of the Western tram. The preferred route, subsequently adopted although not without some hiccups, was along one-quarter-of-a-mile of the Tasmanian Government Railway’s line north of the station to the junction with the Zeehan Tramway Company’s line; along Wilson and Main Streets by the Zeehan Tramway Company’s line to the junction with the Zeehan-Montana tram; six chains of the Zeehan-Montana double-track loop and thence along the Western tram for two miles; a total of almost four miles. The Council reported that the Zeehan Tramway Company was unwilling to make a firm commitment to granting running rights over its line and that John Craze, manager of both the Zeehan-Montana and Zeehan-Western companies, when first approached in January 1913 was unwilling to sell. Several alternative routes using existing Government and private tramways, where possible, were proposed but eventually not needed.

The Public Works Department opened negotiations with the Zeehan Tramway Company in February 1914 by wielding a big stick — an offer to buy out the company was made together with a reminder that the Company’s Act¹⁴ provided for compulsory acquisition at an agreed price or at a price fixed by an arbitrator, if necessary. The Public Works Department considered the Company’s asking price of £7,000¹⁵ too high, in view of its downturn in revenue consequent upon the closure of the smelters and their current prospects, and obtained an independent valuation. This, though not disclosed, was so much lower that the Public Works Department warned the Zeehan Tramway Company that an arbitrator would almost certainly award them much less than they had asked. It was agreed to drop the proposed purchase and the parties negotiated charges for running rights.

The acquisition of the Western Tram should have been a simple commercial transaction which could have been finalised quickly, but bureaucratic bungling in the Public Works Department, from the Minister down, stretched it out for over two years. The story is summarised here.

In October 1913 John Craze, doubtless influenced by the imminent closure of his Zeehan-Montana mine — the richest on the field — offered to sell to the Government what became known as the Western Tram, although it included a short length of the Zeehan-Montana tram. After the usual bargaining with Mulcahy and the Public Works Department staff, in mid-January 1914 Craze made a formal offer to sell the tram for £1,700. On 6 May the new Minister, John Belton,¹⁶ notified him that this offer had been accepted. The £1,700 covered two items — £200 for six chains of the double-track Montana Loop and £1,500 for one mile of track, with rails in good order, about one mile of track where the rails had been pulled up but with the formation in good order, and forty-five tons of used rails. Craze was also guaranteed running rights over the lines purchased to enable him to despatch ore from the Zeehan-Western mine to the Zeehan-Montana mill and £1 per week rent for the lines until receipt of the purchase price.

12 *Mercury*, 6 November 1913, pp. 4 and 11.

13 *The Public Works Execution Act, 1913* (Tas) 4 Geo. v No. 14, Schedule item 1082.

14 *The Zeehan Tramway Act 1891* (Vic), 55, Private, clauses 66–86.

15 Zeehan Tramway Company assets included two Krauss locomotives, two passenger cars, thirty two goods wagons, two-and-a-half miles of track and sundry buildings.

16 Appointed Minister for Lands, Works and Agriculture on 6 April 1914.



Archives Office of Tasmania
Granville tram, 1924.

Craze, perhaps naively, believed that he would be paid promptly and submitted his account, only to be informed that he could not be paid until the money was voted by Parliament. Someone had expressed doubt as to whether this sum could be charged to the £10,000 allocated to the tramway, but left the question unresolved. From then on Craze submitted monthly accounts-rendered, accompanied by letters expressing increasing frustration. Six months after his offer had been accepted, the Public Works Department sought an expression of opinion from the Solicitor-General. He could have simply said ‘No’, but instead produced this gem:

I think it is abundantly clear that the purchase of the Western Tramway (a line already constructed) and the stock of rails ... cannot, without an unwarranted straining of the language, be brought within the purpose of that Vote. ... Parliament should be asked to make provision for the necessary expenditure.

The £1,700 was hastily placed in *Supplementary Public Works Proposals, 1914*¹⁷ as Item 37 ‘Purchase of Western Tram’ and approved in the *Public Works Execution Act (No. 3) 1914*,¹⁸ signed on 6 February 1915. Craze must have expected payment there and then, but there was still one more piece of red tape which even Craze had overlooked. He could not sell the tramways until he returned the lease documents to the Department of Mines, together with any outstanding charges. When requested to do so in November 1915, he returned them promptly accompanied by a terse note, ‘I expect a cheque in a few days’. This time he was not disappointed!

Even so, the saga was not over. Craze, who by now had left Zeehan to manage a mine at Moina near Sheffield, had not received one penny of the rent for the use of the line. A verbal promise had not been confirmed in writing. Craze now claimed that Public Works Department Inspector Grubb had made the promise, which Grubb vehemently denied. In November 1915, Craze submitted an account for two years’ rent, of £104, with a threat of legal action if it was not paid. It is possible that this stirred the memory of the Secretary for Public Works, for he recollected that on 22 February 1916 the former Minister, Edward Mulcahy, had told him that it was he who had made the promise. Craze’s cheque was mailed within a week.

Acquisition, design and construction: The Granville (wooden-railed) section

The Public Works Department District Inspector, Robert Grubb, was appointed to take overall charge of the field work. Because of his extensive local experience,¹⁹ he was given the task of selecting the route of the tramway. A senior-ranking engineer, Alex McIntosh Reid, was allotted the task of setting out the line within the corridor chosen by Grubb, an arrangement which not unnaturally caused some friction between the two men. In June 1914, Grubb was transferred to another unemployment-relief project — the Government extension of Dunkley’s Tram towards Crimson Creek. Reid took full charge of the wooden-railed section until work stopped in December 1914 when funds ran out. Reid was then transferred to railway construction in the north west. When money was made available early in 1915, Grubb was recalled. The formal Public Works Proposal for completion was not made until October 1915²⁰ and £4,800 was approved in January 1916²¹ — a procedure markedly different from that which applied to the purchase of the Western Tram. Overall design criteria were set to ensure that, if upgrading to steam

17 A single undated sheet bound with the *Ministerial Statement on Public Works for 1914*, Parliamentary Paper 24, Hobart.

18 *The Public Works Execution Act (No. 3) 1914* (Tas) 5 Geo v, No. 40.

19 Obituaries, *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 11 and 15 June 1921.

20 Tasmania, Parliament, *Ministerial Statement on Public Works for 1915–16*, Parliamentary Paper 25, Schedule item 898, Hobart.

21 *Public Works Execution Act 1915* (Tas), 6 Geo. V. No. 53, Schedule item 982.

traction became warranted, no alteration to the formation or strengthening of the bridges would be required. The rails were to be four inches by three inches first-grade myrtle in twelve feet lengths nailed to split sleepers, with steel rails on the sharpest curves and steepest grades.

A priority for Reid was to run a line of levels along the nominated line and send each profile sheet to Hobart as soon as it was completed to enable bridge design to proceed. Drawings for all bridges reached Zeehan in time for them all to be built ahead of track-laying. The thirteen bridges totalled 1,130 ft in length, the largest being those over Pine Creek, which was one-hundred-and-thirty feet long by thirty feet high, and the Heemskirk River, one-hundred-and-fifty-five feet by thirty feet high. As a cost-saving measure, the line was set out directly on to the ground. No written record was kept and thus no detailed plan of the line, nor any detailed profile sheets of the gradients and vertical curves, was ever produced. A survey traverse of the completed line was run, and the drawing — a series of straight lines — was reproduced on relevant Mines and County charts,²² at the same scale, to show the location of the tramway relative to mineral leases, private land, forestry reserves and so on.²³

Grubb made a prompt start, putting men to work on Monday, less than two days after the instruction to begin. An early job would have been to relay the rails on the last mile of the Western Tram so that material from the Railway Station and from Zeehan merchants could be carried on to the Granville Tram without any unloading and reloading. Progress on the first few miles of open country was rapid until the only significant engineering difficulty was reached — the steep sided Pine Creek²⁴ gorge where heavy rock work was required, including an 18 feet 6 inch deep cut. In the interests of economy, some relaxation of grades and curvature was made, although not irrevocably. The first trucks crossed the Pine Creek Bridge in early June 1914, and by mid-year a work force of eighty men had laid the rails to the five-mile peg.²⁵ In a ‘fast-tracking’ move, one bridge on the climb out of the gorge was changed to a culvert and embankment when a shortage of bridge carpenters threatened to delay rail-laying beyond this point. The value of this unemployment-relief project was starkly emphasised when the Zeehan-Montana mine and mill closed in March, causing more than 200 men to lose their jobs, either directly or indirectly. Dense scrub and abnormally wet weather slowed progress and, by 30 November, when the Heemskirk River Bridge had been completed, the £10,000 vote had been expended and only essential work was permitted. At the end of 1914, when all bridges had been built, formation completed to the 11½ mile peg and rails laid to the 10¾M peg, the work was closed down and one-hundred-and-five men were paid off.

When extra funds were made available, construction resumed in February 1915 with thirty men working under Grubb to finish the line at the 13M peg (seventeen miles from Zeehan). This was still half-a-mile short of the Heemskirk Tin Syndicate’s workings. In his Ministerial Statement on 22 October 1915,²⁶ John Belton reported that ‘the Zeehan-Granville had been carried a sufficient distance to provide for the requirements of the mines for which it was primarily constructed’. In the Department of Lands and Surveys Report for 1918–19,²⁷ District Inspector Wilson commented, baldly, that ‘the Granville Tram was unwisely ‘dead-ended’ in a bog instead of continuing to Granville Harbour as intended’. When in 1921 the Heemskirk Tin Syndicate ceased work, leaving the Granville Tram with little but domestic traffic, the possibility of a Government

22 For example, North Heemskirk Mineral Chart 1937 issue, and Zeehan (County of Montagu) County Chart 1923 issue, both 20 chains per inch.

23 Surviving drawings are held by the National Archives of Australia in Hobart.

24 Now Piney Creek.

25 Chainages were measured from zero at the end of the Western Tram.

26 Tasmania, Parliament, *Ministerial Statement of the Minister of Lands, Works and Agriculture for 1915–1916*, Parliamentary Paper 25, Hobart.

27 Tasmania, Parliament, Parliamentary Paper 34, 1919–1920, Hobart.

extension towards the Granville Harbour estates was raised once more. When the proposal came to nought, some unidentified person or group built a two-mile extension, but either the materials or workmanship were so poor that it was unserviceable after less than two years of use. Fred Smithies mentioned that it was still in place in March 1924.²⁸

Service history 1915–1933: operation

After two years of fruitless negotiation with the Zeehan Municipal Council for them to take over the running and maintenance of the tram, on 10 June 1916 the Public Works Department called tenders for the lease of the tramway, a full year after the line had been completed. The lease documents specified a twice-weekly service, gave a list of charges for a wide range of goods and services — from passengers at threepence per mile to tin ore at two shillings for thirteen or more miles, and a charge of £1 for the use of a tarpaulin — and that the lessee should keep the line in good order and condition. By the closing date, no tenders had been received but a late tender from Dunkley Bros was accepted. It is a matter for speculation as to whether George Dunkley, the manager, volunteered or was persuaded. With a long history of tramway construction and operation, he would have been under no illusion as to the extent and cost of maintaining wooden structures in that high rainfall area. He started his day-return service on 4 November 1916, the tram leaving his mill at 7 am on Tuesdays and Fridays. In 1920 the service was reduced to Wednesdays only.

There is no record of any service, official or otherwise, before Dunkley started but there was a culture in Zeehan that rail tracks were there for all to use. For example, in one of his many letters John Craze told the Public Works Department that, as soon as it became known that he had sold the Western Tram, members of the public started using it, causing ‘ware and tare’ and later on, even the Electrolytic Zinc Company bought a rail-motor and without permission operated it on the Tasmanian Government Railway line to the Zeehan smelter. The inclusion in Dunkley’s advertisements of a stern warning against trespassing with hand trolleys suggests that this practice had been common on the Granville Tram. Dunkley was frequently and loudly criticised for not maintaining the track adequately but when he asked to be released from his contract, at the end of 1923, he defended himself against the accusation by stating that the tram had never been a viable undertaking. He moved his sawmilling enterprises to the Smithton area in 1924, leaving his affairs in the hands of an agent, J O’Brien. O’Brien was persuaded to continue the Wednesday service, for which he was paid a pittance of £4 per trip, and permitted to set his own charges for what little traffic remained. Passengers were charged at eight shillings for a return journey, and tin at three shillings a bag plus threepence per bag when taken to the station for onward consignment. O’Brien was plagued by trespassers using trolleys, trucks and even drays, dragging firewood across and along the track and droving cattle. Even the famous Smithies²⁹ and King were trespassers, contributing to the damage yet criticising the state of the track, ‘Our crushing, jarring and bumping journey was continued over the remaining sixteen miles [into Zeehan] ... a most gruelling and trying ride’. When the last of the individual miners left Heemskirk in 1931, there was no goods traffic left and O’Brien ceased operating the service early in 1933.

Service history 1915 to 1933: traffic

No official records were kept of the passengers and goods carried, and the Granville Tram was not even listed in the tramways register in the Statistics of Tasmania. At the

28 FW Smithies, *Through the Wilds of Tasmania's West Coast by Motor Cycle, 1924*, Archives Office of Tasmania, NS 573/1/23.

29 Smithies NS573/1/23.

mine there was a small village that supported a store, possibly a branch of a Zeehan business. For some years, Dunkley had carried letters free but, when he proposed charging for the service, the residents objected. When Dunkley asked the Postmaster General's Department for some payment, the response was that as there was no evidence of a contract, therefore there was no payment. Perhaps as an outcome of this request, a Post Office named Heemskirk operated there from 1 June 1920 to 31 December 1930 offering very limited facilities,³⁰ with a weekly inwards and outwards mail service on Wednesdays.³¹ The principal freight would, of course, have been the tin from the Heemskirk mine. The Syndicate had produced a total of 237 tons of tin ore from 1913 to 1920, only some of which would have been carried out on the Granville Tram. A very small amount was produced later by a small group of miners, giving O'Brien a little freight until this group gave up in 1931. In the late 1920s a party of miners produced a small quantity of silver-lead ore from an area about half a mile north west of the start of the wooden rails. This area was later — from 1930 to 1950 — worked successfully by the Montana Silver Lead³² Company, providing some freight for O'Brien.

Tourist traffic was probably negligible, although the spectacular Heemskirk Falls were close to the tramline. I am aware of two trips — one to a picnic at Granville Harbour where one of the party was the wife of Oliphant White, a Zeehan bank manager,³³ and another by my uncle, Charles Whitham, in the course of a mid-winter holiday.³⁴ Some excerpts from his description of his experience, in Charles's inimitable style, show that it was not a very pleasant trip.

Once a week, on Wednesdays, the all-pervasive firm of Dunkley Bros. run a truck from Zeehan to North Heemskirk, and I shall remember that trip for a very long time, as we encountered the worst weather I have ever seen. Not for one moment of the four hours did the blizzard of fine, driving, icy rain let up on us. I have often been wet through while facing the weather on foot, but never before while sitting in a covered truck, protected by two overcoats. It was not surprising to learn afterwards that nearly 2 in of rain fell that day.

You may not have noticed it for yourselves, but the reason why ordinary railway travelling is fairly smooth is because where one rail leaves off, another begins. This is not always the case on the North Heemskirk tramway, for the wooden rails are neither parallel nor continuous. It takes a deal of skill to drive a truck out there, and the whoosh, whoosh, bump, squash and dives of our conveyance gracefully punctuated the Rabelaisian anecdotes that embroidered the gaiety of our progress.

The road bed of the tramway, and what engineers call its location, are excellent, so are the bridges, and it is quite ready for steel rails if they were justified. It is very serpentine, and in one place, at Pine Creek, you look across a deep gorge, only 50 yards or so, to the place you will not reach for another half mile.³⁵ Most of the way is over open button-grass country, but there are belts of fine timber. Believe me, brothers, we preferred the timber, as the rain there was only just rain, whereas on the moorlands it was a perpetual flagellation by myriads of stinging shot.

30 *The Post Office in Tasmania*, Magpie Publications, nd.

31 Walch's Tasmanian Almanacs, 1920 to 1930.

32 Not to be confused with the Zeehan-Montana.

33 Personal communication from Margaret Gould, grand-daughter of Mrs White.

34 'The West Coast in Winter', *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, 28 November 1921. The article was published under the nom-de-plume 'Oddman'.

35 See Figure 2.

Service history 1915–1933: decay and closure

Without routine maintenance in the heavy-rainfall climate of Zeehan, rapid deterioration and decay of timber structures was inevitable. The Government, having built the tram as an unemployment relief project, had ‘done its duty’ and made no money available for maintenance other than for major unpredictable problems, such as the collapse of an embankment in the Pine Creek Gorge, the lengthening of the Heemskirk River bridge when an abutment collapsed, and replacement of bridges burnt by bushfires. The Zeehan Municipal Council steadfastly declined over the twenty-year life of the tramway to accept responsibility for maintenance. Dunkley must have adopted a tongue-in-cheek attitude when he signed his contract. The track was in an appalling condition by the end of 1923 when he gave up. He tacitly admitted that he had failed to keep the line in good working order by complaining that one recent trip had taken fifteen hours and that he was having difficulty finding drivers prepared to undertake the arduous and dangerous work!

Serious consideration was then given to closing the line. A joint Public Works Department-Zeehan Municipal Council committee, asked to report on the social benefits of retaining the line, stated that there were forty people along the tram who were dependent upon it for their stores and providing a little revenue by their tin and silver-lead mining. John Ahrberg, ferryman at the Pieman Heads, was also dependent on the tram for his stores.³⁶ The Government decided to retain the tram, the Public Works Department spending another £50 on repairs sufficient only to keep the line open,³⁷ and paying O’Brien for his weekly trips.

During O’Brien’s eight years of operating the tram with virtually no maintenance, the tramway continued to deteriorate apace. He reported that regrowth of scrub and trees was encroaching on and rendering bridges liable to bushfire damage. In October 1932, the Sergeant of Police at Zeehan took the unusual step of informing his Superintendent in Burnie about the appalling condition of the Granville Tram: ‘the bridges are a menace to



Archives Office of Tasmania

Bridge carrying the Granville tramline.

³⁶ Smithies, NS 573/1/23.

³⁷ Tasmania, Parliament, *Secretary for Public Works Report for 1923–24*, Parliamentary Paper 34, 1924–25, Hobart.

life ... sooner or later a fatality will occur'. Possibly as a result, Public Works Department Inspector Hardstaff was authorised to spend £400 on essential repairs. But instead his recommendation that the money would be better spent on repairs to the bridge handrails, cutting back the scrub and pulling up the rails and sleepers to convert the tramway into a path suitable for pedestrians and horse-riders, was accepted. In September 1933, a policeman at Zeehan reported that the contractor had done an excellent job and that the whole length of seventeen miles from Zeehan 'could be driven without much worry by any motor cyclist'.

So ended the life of the Granville Tramway. But its legacy lived on.

Subsequent history

The notes that follow, while not rigorously researched, give some indication of how the Granville Tram served a useful purpose after its closure.

1. The first change would have been to abandon the circuitous Western Tram in favour of a road straight up the Zeehan-Montana valley to serve the Montana Silver-Lead mine.
2. Under the *Commonwealth and State Roads Agreement Act, 1926*³⁸ the Commonwealth agreed to contribute to the cost of upgrading or constructing selected major existing or new roads. One such new road was from Waratah to Zeehan, via Corinna, with the first £3,000 voted in 1929 for work on the Waratah-Corinna section.³⁹ In the financial year 1934–35, the road-bed of the Granville Tram was widened and gravelled from Zeehan to the eastern edge of the Pine Creek gorge, but not otherwise improved. Work was stopped there and the construction team relocated to the higher priority Queenstown-Zeehan Road. The Smithton sheet of a military map compiled in 1942 shows the Waratah Highway as a gravelled road extending from Waratah to Corinna, with a gap to the Zeehan side of Pine Creek, then the route of the Granville Tram to Zeehan and on towards Queenstown.
3. A report on the geology of the Zeehan quadrangle, issued by the Department of Mines in 1962, commented that the route to North Heemskirk was a good gravelled-road for eight miles, and beyond that a rutted and muddy track. A former resident of Granville Harbour told me that, as late as 1979, the twenty-mile journey to Zeehan took two arduous hours.
4. Starting in the late 1970s, the Government built the Heemskirk Road from Zeehan to the Reece Dam on the Lower Pieman, using money from the Gordon Stage Two Compensation Fund. This road followed the general line of the Granville Tram as far as the Heemskirk River and had originally been designed by the Hydro-Electric Commission to provide access from a construction camp in Zeehan. However, the Hydro-Electric Commission had later abandoned it as an access route in favour of a road from Tullah. A branch of the road to Granville Harbour was built in about 1980 and the missing link to Corinna, in the 'round the State' road system, was completed in the mid-1990s.

38 *The Commonwealth and State Roads Agreement Act, 1926* (Tas), 17 Geo. V. No. 4, Schedule item 34.

39 *The Public Works Execution (Federal Aid Roads) Act (No. 2), 1929* (Tas), 20 Geo. v. No. 62.

Conclusion

Several senior Public Works Department engineers complained that the Granville Tram was a ‘white elephant’, costing the Department a total of about £25,000 for an insignificant return. The phrase they sought had not then been invented — it was a ‘black hole’, expensive but far from useless. The Granville Tram put thousands of pounds into the pockets of the unemployed miners, and indirectly Zeehan shopkeepers, provided a means of transport, for miners and others, from 1915 to 1933, and, albeit derelict and rough, it served as a lifeline to North Heemskirk, Granville Harbour and the Hydro-Electric Commission’s investigation camp at the Pieman dam site until about 1980.

Author’s Note

The greater part of this paper was derived from the voluminous Public Works Department files held by the Archives Office of Tasmania, specifically Public Works Department 243/120 and Public Works Department 243/121. I have not referenced every individual item, as the footnotes would probably then have occupied more space than the paper itself.

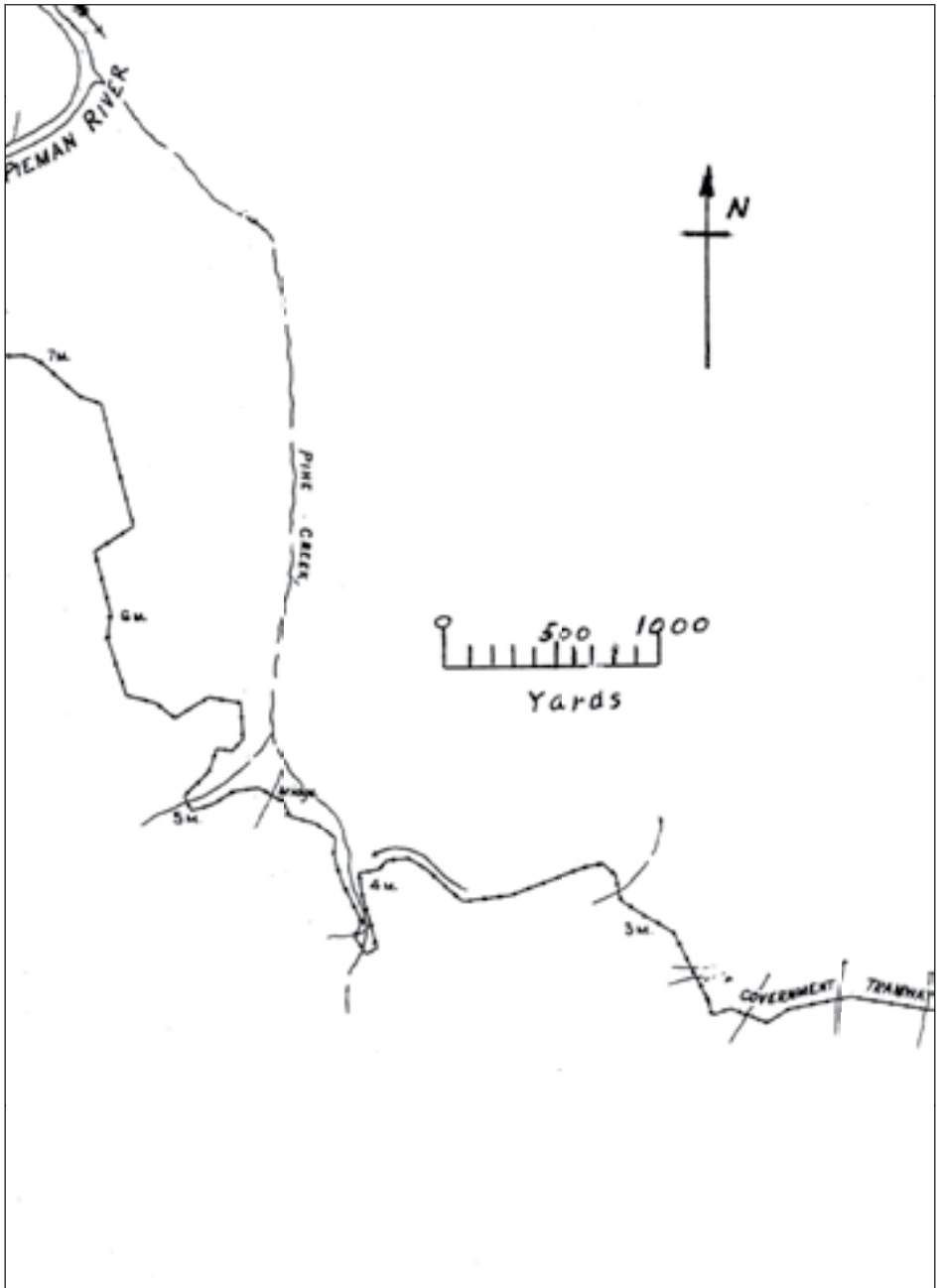


Figure 2. Survey traverse of completed line at Pine Creek.

INTRODUCING MARY MORTON ALLPORT AND HER JOURNALS

Joanna Richardson

This paper was presented at a meeting of THRA held on 14 February 2006.

In 1832 Mary Morton Allport, a newly arrived immigrant from Staffordshire, England, began a journal in Van Diemen's Land.¹ It continued for just six months while she was living with her family, first in a bush hut in Broadmarsh and then in rented rooms in Macquarie Street, Hobart Town. The journal concludes in February 1833, which coincided with the family's purchase of *Fairy Knowe*, a cottage in Liverpool Street, Hobart Town. The termination of the writing implies that, having moved into a permanent residence, the journal had lost its place in Mary's daily routine. Twenty years later, after her eldest son, Morton, departed for England in November 1852, Mary again took up her pen, her first entry in this second journal beginning with Morton's ship sailing down the Derwent River. She kept this journal for the next two years, stopping just prior to Morton's return home. Although Mary Morton Allport was well-known during the twentieth century for her art, her writing has largely been ignored. My annotated edition of her two journals is the first critical study of her work as a writer.²

In the introduction to *Marriage Lines*, an annotated edition of Henry Handel Richardson's family letters, Meg Probyn says that reading personal documents from another period is fascinating, but not straightforward.

The distance of time tempers the feeling of intrusion into intimate relationships and private details and yet that distance also necessitates analysis or commentary if we are to understand them fully.³

Even if understanding them 'fully' seems an impossible goal, Probyn is right to claim that through their personal writing 'much is revealed of writers and their society'.⁴ While Mary Allport's reflections are apparent primarily in her ordering of events, there are also moments of deep introspection. On 12 April 1854 she wrote morosely of longing to 'wander into the mountain and be lost' and in the next entry chastises herself, 'I am ashamed of having written the above'. Yet she does not strike out her words or remove the page they are written on, she simply begins the entry for 13 April 1854 by explaining that she had been 'low spirited all day'.

As the wife of a solicitor with a legal practice that was flourishing by the 1850s, Mary moved within influential social circles. Penny Russell, in *A Wish of Distinction*, points out that in Victoria there were distinct groups in society who 'had a strong interest in establishing a genteel code and asserting their own claims to gentility'.⁵ The first

1 I use the term 'journal' throughout, rather than 'diary' because Mary herself used the term: 'Writing my journal' (13 January 1833). On the frontispiece of her second text is written, '1852 Journal of Mary Morton Allport. For her son Morton'.

2 For my doctoral thesis I transcribed the unpublished journals to produce an accessible text, informed by an appropriate critical apparatus.

3 M Probyn, ed. *Marriage Lines: The Richardson Family Letters 1854-1877*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne 2000, p. xiii.

4 Probyn, *Marriage Lines*, p. xiii.

5 P Russell, *A Wish for Distinction: Colonial Gentility and Femininity*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1994, p. 7.

group claimed ties with the landed gentry of England, Ireland and Scotland, while the second group

consisted of those who identified with the British gentry because of the nature of their colonial occupation ... Law in particular was a prestigious occupation in Melbourne, providing increased social status'.⁶

Although Russell's study is based on Victorian society, the situation in Van Diemen's Land was similar. Much of Mary's second journal described the social comings and goings of Hobart during the early 1850s. While Joseph Allport never held high public office, he was sufficiently prominent for his name to appear often in the local newspapers. He fought vigorously for the end of convict transportation and his wife's journal recorded his struggles and devotion to the cause until its success in 1853. Unlike Emily Childers, the wife of Hugh Culling Eardley Childers, the Auditor-General, Collector of Customs and an elected member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, Mary did not write of her husband's affairs as the central narrative of her journal. His legal work and political activities are sandwiched in her daily account of domestic life. Her record is significant for the way it allows the outside world to enter into her domestic sphere, although this happened less frequently in the far shorter first journal than in the second. On 24 March 1853, for example, Mary wrote:

Mrs Compton and her mother called while we were out; I'm so sorry I did not see them, but Evett and Margery gave them a little fruit. Louis Napoleon is Emperor of France and there is rumour of a war.

Mary may have encountered the rumour in the local newspapers, which she read avidly. She sometimes incorporated the language of the papers into her own journal entries.

As a family, the Allports were comfortably well-off by 1850, but they never amassed great wealth. The journal reveals parents whose time and attention was focused on raising their four surviving children to adulthood. The three sons remained in Tasmania and ensured the family's continuing prominence. These sons, and the two generations that followed, had a keen sense of family. Seventy years separated Mary Morton Allport's death in 1895 and the formation of the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts in 1965.⁷ The array of domestic items that were retained and handed down through the family makes the Allport Collection much more than an aesthetic endeavour.

Life in Staffordshire, England

The early part of Mary Morton Allport's life has proved difficult to reconstruct with any certainty. My account has been drawn from primary research carried out in 2004 during my visit to *Cedar Court* and the village of Aldridge, and in the Staffordshire Public Records Office. The documentation I gathered came from records of baptism, marriage certificates, public records and gravestones. In addition, I analysed Mary's paintings, poems and journals. Although there are few facts available about Mary's pre-journal life, we do know that she spent many of her early years at *Cedar Court* and that it became the central site in the development of her early life. It was the place where, as Mary Morton Chapman, she went to school and was later employed as a teacher; it became the place where she was 'at home' after she became a member of the Allport family through her marriage to Joseph. Prior to my visit in 2004, I had encountered this house through two pencil sketches in the Allport Collection, one by Mary and the other by her sister-in-law Mary Ann Allport.

6 Russell, *A Wish for Distinction*, p. 7.

7 The Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts is housed within the State Library of Tasmania.

From the sketches, the house appeared to be settled into a pastoral landscape, sheltered by tall trees and with cows grazing nearby. The Georgian building was neat and large but in no way ostentatious. It looked sensible, a reliable place to send your daughter to school. The top-storey attic, with its windows overlooking the fields, was probably the girls' dormitory bedroom. It is possible to imagine them waking in the morning and looking out over the green fields before going downstairs to attend class. In tracing the life of young Mary Morton Chapman, I found that *Cedar Court* itself provided information that was absent from Mary's textual and visual narratives.



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania
View of our house 1812 by John Allport

Mary Morton Chapman was the daughter of William Chapman and his wife Ann Floyd, née Evett. Her parents were married at St Phillips Church, Birmingham, on 20 January 1799 and had at least five children, all of whom were christened in St Phillips: James Evett Chapman on 20 April 1804, Mary Evett Chapman, who possibly died in infancy, on 16 May 1805, and Mary Morton Chapman on 19 September 1806. After a gap of nine years, William Floyd Chapman was christened on 4 March 1815 and, ten days later, Humphrey Evett Chapman on 14 March. These christening records, and some passing comments in her journals, are the only documented evidence of Mary's family. In her journals, she did not write fondly of childhood, or of her parents or siblings, although there is a passing reference to her brother, Humphrey. The only member of the Chapman family who featured regularly in the first journal was her brother James, who came with them to Van Diemen's Land, but in the second journal there is no reference to him. Her mother is mentioned seven times in both journals and her father only once. Mary's most numerous references are to her aunt: she even describes having dreamt about her aunt sending a box of European flowers. A poem in one of Mary's albums seems to be addressed to this Aunt:

When first with lisping accent loe
I uttered sounds of grief or woe
Who smiling pleasure could bestow?
My Auntie
Who taught my infant steps to stray

Through learning's dark and rugged way
Yet guided me by Wisdom's ray?
My Auntie
I cannot be her darling still
Nor work her good – nor shield from ill
But I can love her and I will
My Auntie

The suggestion that Mary lived with her aunt from early childhood, well before she could walk or talk, is reinforced by a comment in the second journal, 'when I was a young thing and lived with my Aunt' (13 April 1854). This may explain why she rarely mentioned her mother in her journal but often spoke of her Aunt Evett and Aunt Chapman. One or other of these aunts may have lived near her parents' home because, in the second journal, Mary refers to St Phillips as 'my old church' and remembers it as the place where the Birmingham Oratorios were held every three years: 'I was always at school when it took place' (13 April 1854). According to the late Geoffrey Stilwell, former curator of the Allport Collection, Mary's father kept the Castle Inn at 41 High Street in the centre of Birmingham.⁸ The only clue to indicate when young Mary went to *Cedar Court* is a pen-and-ink sketch of Aldridge Church that is now in the Allport Collection. Dated 1818, this is Mary's earliest surviving drawing. It is sufficiently accomplished to suggest that the twelve-year-old had been taught drawing for some time. At *Cedar Court*, young Mary Chapman and the other schoolgirls were under the care of schoolmistress Mrs Hannah Allport, née Curzon, and her husband William Allport. The schoolhouse was the Allports' family residence. Jim Gould, in his history *Men of Aldridge*, describes the school and its curriculum:

Cedar Court was a young ladies' seminary, built by Mr and Mrs Allport, who previously had a school in Mill Green. This was a select and flourishing concern with at one time, as many as fifty boarders. The fees were high, £26 per annum for ordinary boarders, or fifty guineas per annum for parlour boarders. All scholars had to engage for one year and give a quarter's notice before leaving. No deductions were allowed for absence in winter. Each pupil was expected to provide two sheets, six towels and a silver tablespoon and teaspoon. The Syllabus included grammar and needlework, but there were a number of extra subjects which could be taken on the payment of the following extra fees per quarter: Geography with globes, 10/6; French 21/-; Drawing 21/-; Dancing 21/-; Music 21/-. Further payments had also to be made for washing, whilst pens, etc., cost 10/6 per quarter.⁹

We do not know whether it was her aunts or her parents who paid Mary's school fees, but there was sufficient money for her to be able to take at least three of the 'extra' subjects - drawing, music, and French. The epigraph for her 1852 journal is a quotation from Voltaire's *Henriade*, 'La simplicité, est sa seule éloquence' [Simplicity, is its own eloquence]. Snippets of schoolgirl French recur throughout the second journal, often to embellish a sentiment or cast a barbed remark. Allusions to Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's immensely popular novel *Paul et Virginie*, published in 1788, were incorporated in her miniatures of Alfred Stephen and his wife Virginia.¹⁰ Music, too, remained important to her long after her school days were over. The second journal

8 J Kerr, ed. *Dictionary of Australian Artists, Painters, Sketchers, Photographers and Engravers to 1870*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992, p. 14.

9 J Gould, *Men of Aldridge: a local history of the area now included in the urban district of Aldridge*, A. Sutton, Gloucester, 1983, p. 98.

10 For a full discussion of the importance of the novel to these paintings, see Ian Henderson's 'Portrait of a lady: Mary Morton Allport's Paul and Virginia,' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public/Non-Public Art*, volume 1, number 2, 2000, pp. 61–79.

is punctuated with references to playing the piano and harp, talents of which she was obviously very proud. Above all, it was the education in art which was to affect Mary profoundly. This is demonstrated by her early pen-and-ink sketching, her later water colours, and her lithographs and miniatures. William and Hannah Allport's elder children, Henry Curzon (1788–1854) and Mary Anne (1790–1865), also trained as painters and later taught at the school. Both had been pupils of the painter John Glover (1767–1849). Henry Curzon Allport later travelled through Europe with Glover and worked as a professional artist before migrating to New South Wales. It is probable that both Mary Anne and Henry Curzon instructed young Mary Morton Chapman.

Geoffrey Stilwell believed that after Mary finished her own schooling, she 'appears to have stayed on at *Cedar Court* as a pupil-teacher'.¹¹ The transition from pupil to staff member would have been a significant shift in status within the house. However, we can only speculate about her role as a pupil-teacher and the subjects that she taught. Mary Chapman's status changed radically on 20 December 1826 when she married Joseph Allport, the youngest son of her employers. She was twenty and he was twenty-six. A qualified solicitor, his place of residence was listed on the parish register as West Bromwich, while she was recorded as a member of the Aldridge parish, the location of *Cedar Court*. The officiating minister, the Reverend Samuel Galls, married them in the Anglican Church that Mary had sketched eight years earlier as a twelve-year-old drawing pupil. In the church register, the bride and groom signed their names alongside those of the witnesses — Mary's younger brother Humphrey Chapman and Joseph's older sister Mary Anne Allport.

At some point after their marriage Mary and Joseph lived at *Emerald Cottage*, West Bromwich, which was not far from Birmingham and was approximately ten miles from Aldridge. Their first son, William, was probably born at *Emerald Cottage* and may have died there soon after. There is no entry for his birth or death in the parish records. However brief his life, his mother never forgot him. On 10 August 1853 she wrote in the journal she was keeping for Morton, 'This was your brother William's birthday'. In one of her scrapbooks there is a poem dated 27 August (but without a year) mourning the loss of a child. If this was written on or near the day William died, it appears that he lived less than three weeks.

27th August

My little faded blossom! Whose soft leaves
 Thou could'st not to this blighting world unfold,
 Thou little dreamst what web thy mother weaves
 Around thy lonely pillow, dark and cold!
 They say thou can'st not reach the happy shore
 Thy father and thy mother hope to head:
 But when they journey this bleak world no more,
 Thou will forgotten be in thy lone bed —
 Yet hope will picture thee in radiant guise,
 With glittering ringlets; far away to Rome,
 A sportive happy wanderer of the skies,
 Till on thy mother's breast again thou
 Findst home.

Her eldest surviving son, Morton, was born on 4 December 1830. Stilwell presumes he was born at *Emerald Cottage*¹² but his baptism is recorded in the Aldridge parish register for 11 May 1831 and his parents' 'abode' is given as Aldridge rather than West Bromwich.

¹¹ Kerr, *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, p. 14.

¹² Kerr, *Dictionary of Australian Artists*, p. 14.

As they were only a month from their departure to Van Diemen's Land, it is likely that they had returned to *Cedar Court*. It seems fitting that Mary Morton Allport should have left her homeland from the house where she had spent much of her childhood and more than half her adult life. The house she first entered as a child had become the home she was leaving as a mother and wife within the Allport family. It is not clear why Joseph and Mary decided to leave England to sail to Van Diemen's Land with their seven-month-old baby. Perhaps as a younger son with no prospect of an inheritance, Joseph imagined he could make his fortune in a new colony. The *Platina*, the ship on which they sailed, was a 350 ton vessel that carried passengers and general cargo. After having left London on 30 July 1831 and sailing round the Cape of Good Hope, Mary stepped ashore in Hobart Town on 11 December, in time to celebrate Christmas as a summer holiday. Six years later the *Platina* would make the same journey south with a human cargo of 113 women compelled to serve their sentences in a land as foreign to twenty-five year old Mary as it would be to them.

The first journal

It is impossible to know what Mary Morton Allport thought when she arrived in the Broadmarsh district and saw the land that her husband had purchased. The area was purely agricultural and had been settled for only about ten years. After travelling twenty-five miles from Hobart Town and crossing the Derwent River by ferry, the Allports would have walked or come by cart through Brighton Plains and then turned northwest towards Broadmarsh, which is overshadowed by the looming Mount Dromedary. The landscape would have seemed alien to Mary after the leafy, rolling countryside near Aldridge that she had enjoyed painting. No European trees in sight: only eucalypts, grass, rocky outcrops, and craggy cliffs with caves among the orange rocks. It is not even possible to know what the weather was like the day she arrived at Black Brush, as she did not begin her first journal until August 1832, more than nine months after her arrival in Tasmania. We can assume that she may have wondered at the name, Black Brush, as we know from the journals that she was fond of quaint titles.

Mary and Joseph were accompanied to Van Diemen's Land by 'four partners connected ... either by marriage, or long-standing friendship'.¹³ In her journal, Mary refers to this group as 'the firm'. It included Mary's older brother James Evett Chapman, his wife Eliza, and their young daughter Anne; William Ward, the brother of John Allport's wife Anne; Alfred Betts, the brother of Henry Curzon Allport's second wife Bertha; and Charles Sherratt, whose connection to the others is not known. On 30 January 1832, Joseph and three of the four men formed a cooperative to purchase land at Black Brush, although Joseph and possibly all the others had no previous farming experience. On 16 August 1832, seven months after the purchase of the land, Mary began her journal with the lines, 'We removed from the huts to our new house — I was ill with a violent cold and toothache.' Her pencil sketch of the huts, entitled 'Our Winter Quarters 1832', demonstrated their lifestyle in a way her words did not, revealing just how rudimentary the huts would have been during a cold winter in Broadmarsh. Mary's sketches of Broadmarsh and Black Brush add another layer of meaning to her journal. However, none of the sketches were included in the journal, as she did not intend them to complement her words in the way that they now do.

Mary's first journal spanned a six-month period of the family's life, which included three months while they were at Black Brush, and three months in Hobart Town. On the surface, the first journal appears to be a simple daily account of Mary's domestic tasks around the hut; cooking, cleaning and caring for her young son Morton, who was aged

13 G Stülwell, *Mary Morton Allport Commemorative Exhibition 1831–1981. Catalogue*, Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Hobart, 1981, p. 2.



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania
Our Winter quarters 1832 by Mary Morton Allport



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania
Log House 1832 by Mary Morton Allport

twenty-one months at the time of her first entry. As the journal unfolded, she included specifics about her health and Joseph's, as well as descriptions of their surroundings and of sunsets and animals. She provided meticulous detail about her domestic life, including accounts of cooking and of the types of food they ate. Mary recorded her attempts to replicate food that she would have prepared and eaten in England, such as Bath buns, teacakes, gingerbread and pork pies. When presented with foreign animals such as wallaby and echidna, she cooked them in a traditional English manner: 'roasted a Wallabee [sic] hare fashion' (27 August 1832); and 'Stuffed the Porcupine with sage and onions, and roasted it — it tasted very like sucking pig, but looked like a large toad' (3 September 1832). Her accounts of food indicated the restrictions on their diet: 'our eatables and drinkables have consisted entirely of Meat, Potatoes, Rice, Flour, Sugar, Tea, Rum and Water, with a very slight sprinkling of eggs' (26 September 1832). To compensate for their lack of fresh produce, Joseph planted cabbages and also walked into Hobart Town and to bring back seedlings from the Government Garden.

She unknowingly highlighted her ingenuity, when she described turning many of her old dresses and petticoats into clothes for her young son. 'Began to make a frock for Morton of my old black bombazine' (12 September 1832). In another example, 'made Morton a nice morning dress and trousers with part of my mother's scarlet chintz gown' (20 November 1832). She also attempted to keep her own clothes up-to-date, 'Unpicked my blue muslin dress to wash and modernize it' (5 September 1832).

In her fifth journal entry Mary noted, 'Worked at Mrs Meredith's miniature' (20 August 1832). The full meaning of this comment becomes clear when it is considered in relation to an advertisement in the *Hobart Town Courier* of 20 July 1832 in which Mary announces her 'intention to visit Hobart town occasionally' to paint miniatures or 'to make copies of existing miniatures'. She intended to charge 10 guineas for originals and 5 guineas for copies. This indicates that Mary was trying to supplement the family income. It reminds the reader that she had been accustomed to working for a living in her previous role as pupil teacher at *Cedar Court*. In a penal colony where the few free settlers were highly sensitive to class markers, there are not many other instances in which married women of her class advertised their services. Even unmarried governesses worried that, by working for money, they would forfeit their social status. For Mary to position herself so publicly as a professional painter, not as a lady amateur, betokens an independence of spirit, and a limited concern for what others might think.

What worried Mary was her family. She recounted days when she waited for Joseph to return from town, worrying when he did not appear after injuring his leg. Her young son's health and her lack of resources also caused her great concern.

Morton very restless all night, and voided two little thread worms this morning; he has had too much meat lately — gave him some Magnesia — I believe Castor Oil to be the only efficient remedy, but my bottle is empty' (22 September 1832).

While they were at Black Brush, Mary's fears were well warranted. The closest doctor would have been in Hobart, at least half-a-day's journey away. Joseph suffered from a range of illnesses and, at the close of the journal, he was 'very ill with a quinsy' (8 February 1833), an acutely painful abscess that formed around the tonsil as the result of an infected throat. Four days after Mary first mentioned that he was ill, Joseph's friend Mr Clare called, finding Joseph 'still very ill and dreadfully lowspirited' (12 February 1833). Over the course of the evening, Joseph 'gradually joined in the conversation and by ten o'clock was astonished to find himself nearly well, the abscess having discharged itself imperceptibly' (12 February 1833).

As well as her son's illnesses, Mary wrote about his behaviour: 'Morton had an obstinate fit and would not put up his playthings when he had done with them, but I conquered at last' (2 October 1832). She compared him with other children:

A woman came to buy something at the store with a child seven months old, whose arms measured farther round than mine, and whose legs were half as thick again as Morton's neck (4 September 1832).

She also reflected on Morton's development. One day she took Morton and her niece Anne

up the hill with me when I went sketching — It is wonderful how far they walk without being tired, and Mortie is only twenty-one months old — he can run almost as fast as I can (29 September 1832).

The journal is a mixture of her concerns and her enjoyment at being a mother. On 21 September 1832, she proudly wrote, 'Morton stuck my large pincushion full of pins'. The entry for 29 August records a potentially frightening occasion: 'Morton yesterday evening swallowed a button mould covered with green silk, which I recovered this morning'. These entries reveal the private nature of her journal. It is where she documents her discoveries as a mother, writes her personal thoughts and recounts intimate events, while living in an isolated place where there are no other women she can turn to or consult.

Another journal held in the Allport Collection elaborates on the Allports' time at Black Brush. This journal belonged to John Roberts, born in 1813, who became a life-long friend of the Allport family. He was mentioned in Mary's journal when he first visited Black Brush and also after the Allports had moved to Hobart. By the time of Mary's second journal, he had become a respected friend and confidante. His first appearance in the journal is on 7 September 1832 when Joseph returned from Hobart 'bringing with him a Mr Roberts'. Roberts's journal provides another perspective on the Allports' demanding life as settlers in the bush.

I left ... with Allport and Chapman on the 7th for the Black Brush — took coach to the ferry — walked the remainder about 8 miles — found a jovial set — bushing or roughing it in the full sense of the Word — nothing but salt meat and Kangeroo [sic] occasionally — plenty of Tea in 'Panikins' — and some Rum — no regular Bedsteads — only boards or doors on Benches — House not finished, but will soon be comfortable — no Glass of any kind either to keep out the weather or keep in the Grog — Mr A. and Chapman bear it cheerfully in fact surprisingly — tho' I know Mrs A. to be a very superior Woman.¹⁴

The next evening Mary wrote that she 'Made tea-cakes, & fried pancakes for dinner — Played Chess with Mr Roberts and won; he seems a very quiet gentlemanlike young man'. John Roberts's entry for 8 September reflects on the same evening in the log hut: 'At night they went opossuming [sic] and were more successful — killed near a dozen — went to meet them when coming home (was engaged at chess with Mrs A. when they started)'. His preceding entry described an unsuccessful hunt from the day before, so perhaps he was disappointed to have missed the 'opossuming'. He failed to comment on the outcome of the chess game. On 26 September Mary stated only that Joseph went to town, while John Roberts's journal entry for that day contained at least some details about what he was doing:

the rough of the letter on Saturday morning I showed to Allport who called upon me and he said it was "very well worded", — and read it twice — I was so well pleased I lent him £20 determined if possible to make one friend against the day of my adversity which is fast approaching.

14 J Roberts' diary is in the Allport Manuscript Collection, Box 42 Folder 10. This and all subsequent references are from the un-paginated manuscript.

Once the Allports had moved to Hobart, Mr Roberts became a frequent dinner guest, and was happy to repay their hospitality: 'Mr Roberts made out a Catalogue of our slender library' (25 October 1832). The closeness of their friendship was confirmed a fortnight later when Mary wrote:

Mr Roberts dined with us — Joseph has procured him the situation of Accountant at their Office, just as he was going on to Sydney in despair at not being able to get employment (6 November 1832).

Mary had not exaggerated their friend's 'despair. Roberts records in his journal's final entry:

On Saturday wrote mother per *Henry* saying I was still out of place — Yesterday Mr Allport called and as usual asked if still unemployed — Said oh yes but intend 'cutting' very soon which was the case — Oh ye Powers what was my delight when he told me he was come to agree with me about a place at his office — Expect to go sometime this week — my predecessor was drunk two days last week — its an ill wind that blows no person good (5 November 1832).

Joseph himself had only recently abandoned life on the land and returned to the indoor work of a lawyer. In September, Mary wrote:

Joseph and James went to town, Joseph thinking the walk would do him good, and being anxious to get entered as an attorney tomorrow morning, otherwise he must wait two terms before he can act in his profession (2 September 1832).

Perhaps Joseph was reactivating connections he had made while practising as a solicitor in Birmingham. On 19 September, Mary wrote that Joseph had 'received a letter to summon him to town on business for Mr Meredith' who was also from Staffordshire. Four days later Joseph returned and Mary delightedly wrote:

He has been offered a partnership in the most respectable office in Hobart Town which I hope he will be able to accept as it is at least a certainty.

But she had to wait until the 28 September before her hope was confirmed: 'Joseph writes to me that he has settled with Mr Cartwright quite to his satisfaction, and will engage our lodgings to-day'. The 'firm' at Black Brush was moving in different directions. On 16 September, while Joseph was negotiating his way into a legal firm, Mary recorded that, 'James and Mr Ward went to town about the licence they are going to take out for this house'. On 26 September, while Joseph was away, Mary was invited by Mr Sherratt 'to lunch in his work-shop on Cheese and Porter, the stores having arrived for their new occupation'. Within two years their 'house' was on a proper legal footing as the Turk's Head Inn, with Charles Sherratt and Alfred Betts its licensees.¹⁵ Joseph explained the split in the Black Brush firm in a letter to a family friend in Staffordshire dated January 1833:

You will probably have heard that Messers Ward, Chapman, Betts and Sherratt had determined on opening a store and Inn, (alias a Pot House) on our land situate on a bye road ... it became evident that we would not go on unless we could borrow money ... it seemed doubtful if we could ever redeem ourselves — Under these circumstances it was proposed that I should come to Hobart Town to practise, I found that, to mix myself up with Inn keeping would ever exclude me not only from respectable society, but from good professional connections. I determined to come here at once, take lodgings and try to make ends meet.

¹⁵ *Hobart Town Gazette*, 2 October 1834; 8 October 1835; 7 October 1836.

The dissolution of the firm was rapid. Only a week after Mary reported that Joseph had settled his new partnership with George Cartwright, a notice appeared in the *Hobart Town Courier*.

Notice is hereby given, that the partnership heretofore subsisting between as the undersigned Joseph Allport, William Ward, and James Evett Chapman, as farmers, at the Black brush, was on the first day of September instant, dissolved by mutual consent, and that the same business will in future be carried on by the said William Ward and James Chapman, on their separate account. JOSEPH ALLPORT, WM. WARD. JAS. EVETT CHAPMAN, WITNESS — RICHARD LUCAS'.¹⁶

If there was any acrimony among the men who had sailed from Staffordshire to share in a bush dream, Mary says nothing about it.

Moving to Hobart

The Allports' rented accommodation in Hobart was far more pleasant than the log hut in Broadmarsh. It consisted of two furnished rooms, a sitting room, and bed room/servant's room, and the use of a kitchen that they shared with their landlady, Mrs Laughton. Mary wrote joyously of their move into Hobart:

It seems to me a little paradise after my late windowless, chairless abode; but the bed is the grand comfort ... We have been sleeping hitherto on our ship mattress which will now do for our servant' (4 October 1832).

She also described their new furnishings:

In our bed room are two nice ranges of drawers and cupboards, where I have arranged the few things we have brought with us — The sitting room contains a sofa, a book-case with cupboard under, six chairs[,] a good sized table[,] a little work table with drawers, and a slab for glasses [,] plate, tea-chest &c (5 October 1832).

Life in the town was very different from the country. It provided opportunities for Mary and Joseph to spend time together, taking walks in the evening while Morton was at home sleeping in the care of the landlady.

On their second day in town, their first assigned servant arrived. In her journal, Mary supplied vivid details and engaging stories about her convict servants. They all came from the Female Factory at Cascades, which was within walking distance of where the Allports lived. In the journal, Mary provided details, not only about the running of her Hobart household but also about the workings of the convict assignment system from the perspective of a relatively sympathetic employer. In just over six months, the Allports employed four different convict women as servants — three were Scottish and one was English. Each woman had to be disciplined and was ultimately replaced. Mary's journal provides an important source of information on convict women.¹⁷

Mary's journal records visits from far fewer females than males. Apart from her friend Mrs Sarah Ann Cartwright, the only other woman who visited frequently came for a specific purpose that at first was not identified. In her entry for 19 October 1832, Mary noted, 'Mrs MacTavish called'. The next time she was mentioned she still appeared to be a social caller, but a very different purpose was implied by the context.

¹⁶ *Hobart Town Courier*, 6 October 1832, p. 1.

¹⁷ A detailed analysis of Mary's relationship with her assigned servants entitled, 'A Hobart mistress and her convict servants', has been published in *Tasmanian Historical Studies* volume 10, 2005, pp. 85–95.

Sent an apology for not attending the Bachelor's Ball this evening, Joseph being still very lame and I not feeling very well — Mrs MacTavish called. (2 November 1832)

Without reading ahead, it was not apparent that Mary was eight months pregnant, as there is no overt mention of it in her journal. Mrs MacTavish had arrived in Van Diemen's Land from Scotland in 1824, accompanied by her daughter Janet and son-in-law Thomas Young. She was a midwife and advertised her services in the Hobart newspapers.¹⁸ Mrs MacTavish called on Mary each fortnight during the final two months of her pregnancy. On 15 December Mary declined to go on an outing with Mrs Cartwright, 'for I think I am better at home', another indirect indication that she was close to having the child. In her journal she wrote up the birth, retrospectively, on 3 January 1833.

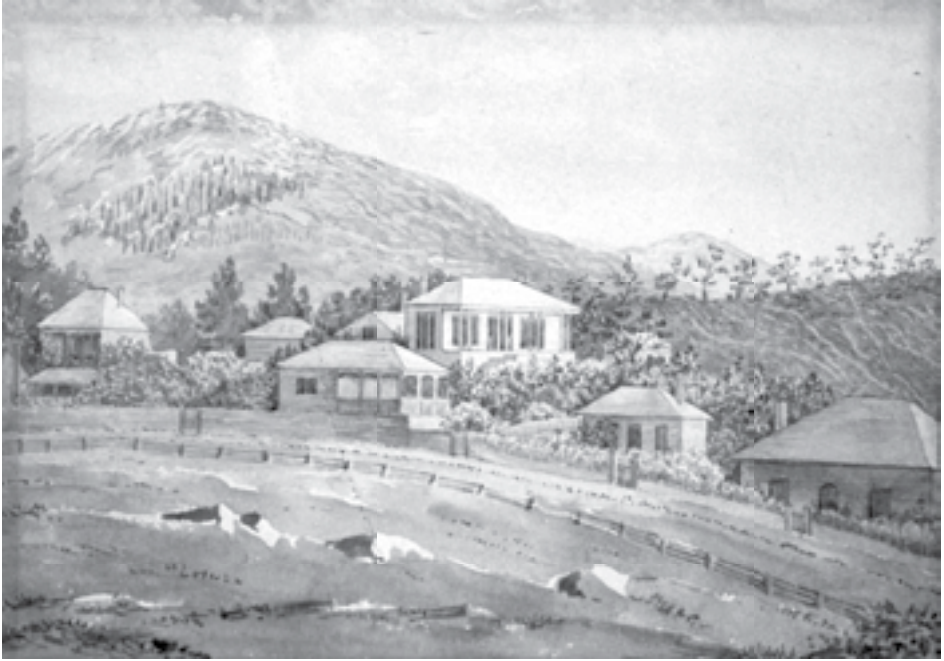
I sat up for Joseph till 1/2 past eleven, and then went to bed perfectly well — at twenty minutes' before seven a dear little girl was added to our family — Joseph went to fetch my nurse about three o'clock, and then went on for Mrs Mactavish [sic] who was to attend me.

The daughter, christened Mary Louise but known as Minnie, arrived on 26 December. The only other event Mary referred to in her entry on 3 January — sending her servant Agnes to the watch house — also occurred on 26 December. Presumably Mrs MacTavish continued visiting daily after the birth, as nine days later on 4 January Mary wrote, 'The baby grows nicely, I washed and dressed her for the first time this morning — Mrs MacTavish has done it hitherto'. On 9 January she commented, 'Mrs MacTavish only calls now and then' and, after that, the midwife was not mentioned again.

With two small children and a servant, the rented rooms were no doubt becoming crowded. On 11 January, a fortnight after Minnie's birth, Joseph agreed to purchase a cottage in upper Liverpool Street from Frederick Schultze. Mary noted, 'Mr Schultze's cottage and garden ... is on the top of the hill just opposite to where we are now lodging'. It is most likely that they moved there early in April or in May 1833, although the sale was not officially completed until March 1834.

Mary's first journal concluded on 13 February 1833, with an entry about Joseph's recent illness, details of the furniture being taken to the new house and a description of her new servant, a man called William who was 'a famous nurse', and who took Morton to collect the new wheelbarrow and returned with the little boy riding in it. With the words 'a ride in My Lord Mayor's coach could not have made Mortie prouder or happier' the entries stop. The reason is not clear from the journal. Perhaps with two children to care for, and a new house to furnish and set to rights, Mary simply did not have the time to write each day. On the verso of the page following the last entry, is the heading April 19, leaving us to wonder at the break in time and the reason Mary took up her pen but made no entry. Perhaps this was the date they moved into their new home and she had planned to mark the occasion. Their new cottage was given the name *Fairy Knowe*. It later became the home of John Roberts and remains a family home to this day. Just over six years later, in August 1839, Joseph Allport bought *Belvidere* in Davey Street from Joseph Henry Moore who was in financial difficulties. The Allports renamed this house *Aldridge Lodge*.

18 Thomas Bock's crayon and chalk portrait of Mrs MacTavish is held in a private collection. A reproduction of the image was included in Diane Dunbar, *Thomas Bock, Convict Engraver, Society Portraitist*.



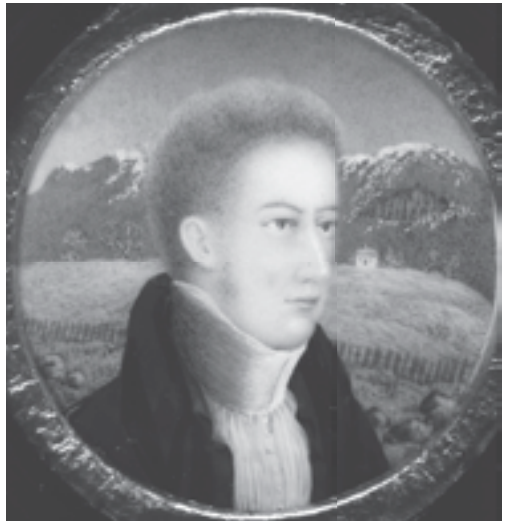
Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania

Houses in upper Liverpool Street showing Fairy Knowe by Mary Morton Allport.



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts,
State Library of Tasmania

Portrait of Mary Morton Allport by
Thomas Bock.



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts,
State Library of Tasmania

Morton Allport by Mary Morton Allport.

The second journal

On 4 November 1852, Mary Morton Allport took up her pen again and this second journal continued until 11 September 1854. During the twenty-year break, significant changes had occurred, four more sons had been born and two had died. While there is no writing available from the intervening years, Mary's paintings and sketches from that period have survived; by using these, and information from other sources, it is possible to piece together details about the family's life in Hobart. *Aldridge Lodge* was a far cry from both the bush hut and the rented rooms described in the first journal. The house was large, with plenty of room for Morton, his sister Minnie, brothers Curzon and Evett and his parents. As well as servants, there were long-term guests such as Fanny Richardson. Living on such a different scale, supported by servants whose help bought her time for her own pursuits, had a significant impact on Mary's personal circumstances. With her young family growing up, she had more time to write and paint, as well as to teach painting to her children and other pupils.

A significant difference between Mary Morton Allport's first and second journals is the personal and social circumstances in which they were produced. The second journal is written for her eldest son Morton and is inscribed '1852 Journal of Mary Morton Allport For her son Morton'. Mary kept this journal while Morton was travelling in England and it began with a description of his ship sailing down the Derwent River. Throughout the journal she fondly recorded events and outings that he would have enjoyed, and provided details about the Allport family's experiences and exploits. The second journal has a much stronger narrative than the first. While not intended for publication, it was intended to be read by at least one other person. As she wrote, Mary addressed Morton, particularly when referring to things that he would understand, 'I gave Miss Pitcairn your box of Ferns when she came to paint' (5 November 1852). On her birthday she wrote, 'I had hoped darling to get a letter from you to-day' (17 May 1853).

The sense of loss experienced by the Allport family when Morton departed is demonstrated by the reaction of Mary's youngest son, Evett. On discovering that Morton's ship would not come back when it got 'To that narrow place among the Hills', he 'burst into tears and cried bitterly for some time, and at last shut himself up in his room' (4 November 1852). Eight-year-old Evett's grief at his brother's departure was perfectly understandable but it was also informed by an event that had occurred in 1850, when Evett was only six. On 14 November 1850, the *Cornwall Chronicle* recorded in the local section, 'Melancholy accident — Master Gordon Allport, son of Joseph Allport, Esq., of Hobart Town, was accidentally drowned on Sunday last, in a pond of water near his residence'. Gordon was the second-last child of Mary and Joseph. He was born on 16 August 1845 and was christened in September. The inquest into his death, on 10 November 1850, included witness statements from the Allports' housemaid, Phoebe Seymour, from John Pincher, a local brick-layer and from Dr Samuel Pickard Bedford. Each statement described the child being discovered drowned in the garden pond. Pincher recalled walking past the Allports' gardener's cottage and hearing Joseph Allport asking the gardener's wife whether she had seen Gordon. Moments after that, Pincher saw Mr Allport run down to the fishpond in his garden and take the body of the child out of the water. They carried the body to the gardener's cottage and Pincher went for the doctor. When Dr Bedford arrived the body was wrapped in warm blankets and 'the deceased's mother and his sister [Minnie] and a woman servant were rubbing his body'.¹⁹ According to Bedford,

19 Archives Office of Tasmania, SC 195/28.

artificial respiration was kept up for three-quarters-of-an-hour, but without any beneficial result — the action of the heart had ceased when I first saw the deceased — I believe the deceased to have died from suffocation by drowning²⁰

Phoebe Seymour recalled that Gordon had ‘a little boat given to him on Saturday last’. When Pincher went back to the pond after the body had been taken to the house, he found a child’s cap floating on the water. He also noted, ‘I saw a small pine boat such as children have to play with floating on the pond’.²¹

Annie Baxter, another journal writer who was living in Hobart in 1850, wrote an account of this event.

10th Sunday. Louis & I went to church this morning; it was very warm: and upon leaving, we heard that the youngest of Mr Allport’s children, had just been drowned. Poor little fellow! he appears to have gone down with his boat, (altho’ forbidden to do so,) to a pond in their garden; and upon his being missed from breakfast, his Papa went to look for him: he saw the child’s cap on the water, but still never thought of the little wearer, being below. When he returned to the house, he happened to ask the eldest what cap his brother had on? and when he was told the one, the whole truth flashed across his mind; & he rushed down to the water, followed by Mrs and Miss Allport. He jumped into the pond, and soon found the dead body of his child; & Mrs Allport received it from him. What different sensations must have been caused in the Mother, between the first & the last time that child had been placed in her arms! It must indeed be a sad thing to see a loved Object unable to answer our caress at any time; yet how much more so, when we think ~~th~~ it never will do so again!²²

Annie Baxter was not an associate of Mrs Allport’s, but her writing demonstrated a strong empathy for the grieving mother. Her version of the story, which was passed on by word-of-mouth at church, seems consistent with the details recorded at the inquest.

Two years later on 10 November 1852, the second anniversary of the death, while Mary did not comment directly on the actual drowning, she wrote, ‘On this fatal day two years ago we lost poor Gordon — I don’t know whether Papa remembered it or not’. She then included ‘an old memorandum dated Nov. 14th 1850’ which said, ‘Yesterday they carried my little darling to his grave’. She went on to describe her reaction to having thought she had heard Gordon’s voice ‘with such a mournful sound, not like a little happy spirit going home’ that she had begun to wonder on ‘the possible truth of the old stories of Fairyland, and that my lost darling had been stolen only for a time’.

Although Joseph’s failure to comment on the anniversary was implicitly criticised by Mary, she does record another situation where Joseph had been clearly affected by the loss of Gordon. After the departure of their relatives, the Becks, ‘Papa went to his room, and could not repress his sobs’ because their son Freddy reminded him of Gordon, ‘he said “The face of that boy kills me, it has caused me an aching heart many a time since they have been with us”’ (28 April 1853). Seven months later, Mary

put on a black dress, and went the Crescent way to my poor darling’s grave, to take a rose, and bring back one of his flowers to wear on this most miserable anniversary. No one mentioned his name, I wonder if they have forgotten; there was the mark of a kiss on the glass of his picture (10 November 1853).

20 Archives Office of Tasmania, SC 195/28.

21 Archives Office of Tasmania, SC 195/28.

22 Annie Maria Dawbin, Diary (4 August 1850–17 April 1851), Dixson Manuscript Collection, MS Q182 item 3, pp. 81–83.

Although Mary wondered whether everyone had forgotten, she did register the ‘kiss on the glass’, probably Minnie’s unspoken commemoration of her brother.

The family had suffered an earlier loss in 1850, five months before Gordon was drowned. On 28 June 1850 Mary, aged forty-four, had given birth to her youngest child, Dudley Ferneyhough, and he had died three weeks later. In 1853, Mary wrote, ‘I could not go to my darlings’ graves to-day (17th July) because they keep the gates locked on Sundays’. Apart from his death notice in the *Hobart Town Courier*, the only other trace that remains of Dudley is a sketch by his mother dated 18 July 1850, one day after his death. It is possible that Mary had been aware of her pregnancy at the beginning of 1850. At that time she could not possibly have known that, by the end of the year, she would have lost two sons. These two events must have had a significant impact on the whole family and probably made the departure of Morton in 1852, although only for two years, harder to bear. Perhaps by keeping a journal the mother felt closer to her absent son. Even though there is never a suggestion that Mary intended to send the journal to Morton while he was away, its existence does seem to bind him to the social and family world he had left behind.

Unlike the first journal, the second was filled with a detailed commentary on colonial society. The Allports’ social and political circumstances can be identified from the way Mary aligned her family with particular factions: they had supported a previous Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Franklin, and disliked the current one, Sir William Denison. Mary faithfully referred to Joseph Allport’s commitment to the anti-transportation movement. Along with a number of other prominent men in Hobart, Joseph fought against Denison and his supporters in order to end transportation. Mary followed current events as they were recorded in the newspapers and, in the journal, confided to Morton, ‘I wish you were back to watch over Papa’ (13 December 1852). Many of Mary’s brief comments condensed lengthy articles in the local papers. It is possible that she learnt more from the *Hobart Town Courier* and the *Colonial Times* than she did from Joseph himself, as she often recorded stories almost word for word from the papers. The cessation of transportation was celebrated in August 1853 and Mary described the church services, children’s feasts, fireworks, church bells and dances that were held on the day of celebration.

Contained within her prose are hints of Mary’s personality as a writer, such as when she talked about the pen she used, or the colour of the ink. Perhaps the most evocative moment came during the entry for 22 May 1853 when her youngest son, Evett, was sick. He had ‘gone to bed with a bad head ache and burning hot’, but ‘I dare not give him more medicine and suppose it is of no use sending for Mr Bedford’. Mary described this event as it happened, rather than in retrospect. She included the time of night, and thus provided a picture of herself as writer: ‘11 o’clock; Evett is fast asleep. No he is awake again, head still aching.’ This sentence, flowing along the faint blue lines in her journal, demonstrated in a simple way the colour and movement of Mary’s life. She had sat up late at night, writing to one son while worrying about the other. In the midst of a sentence she had stopped and gone to Evett and yet there was no sign of it in her handwriting. In the second journal, as in the first, the tug of love for her children centred Mary’s life.

REALITY AND REPUTATION: CONVICTS AND TASMANIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Alison Alexander

This paper was presented at a meeting of THRA held on 13 February 2007.

There is a tendency in Tasmania to take the convict system for granted: there it was, a neat fifty-year period that came to a conclusion in 1853. But it is an unusual beginning for a society. With a total of 75,000 convicts in a population which never exceeded 65,000, criminals and their descendants formed a majority of the population throughout those fifty years.¹ World-wide only a handful of civil societies began in this way. No other began with such a large percentage of criminals in its population as Tasmania.²

While there were huge differences among the individual convicts who were sent to the island, they shared many things in common. All were convicted of a crime, separated from family, friends and country and transported across the ocean on a long and dangerous voyage, then spent years in an often harsh system where they were treated as inferior and sometimes brutalised. Even after they were pardoned, the convict stigma remained.

The impact of convicts and the convict system on the development of a civil society in Van Diemen's Land was considerable. Convicts were the reason for the colony's existence, and during the transportation period the convict system was its distinguishing feature. Convicts and their offspring provided the construction force for buildings, roads and bridges. This low-cost labour meant free settlers could establish agricultural and pastoral industries. The British Government had to pour money in to pay for the system, which led to a mostly prosperous economy. As far as society as a whole was concerned, these were all positive effects.

On the negative side, the presence of so many convicts led to a high crime rate. In Brighton, for example, in 1847 a third of the population was found guilty of a crime, and 82 percent of them were convicts. With only one-sixth of the convicts being women, most were single men, and the authorities at the time knew what this meant: living alone with no family, often at the pub, often drunk, violent and prone to theft. A violent masculine society with a high crime rate.³

This is how historians see the impact of the convict system. How does it compare with the opinions of those people who experienced the convict system first hand? These are readily available, in books and articles, letters and diaries, some written for publication and others not.⁴ Why did these people write? This is an important question, as people's reasons for writing influence what they said. Those who desired to make money from their books could have written for the market, often dramatically praising or criticising. Those who expressed positive views could have wished to impress or soothe family back home, or entice emigrants to the new land. Those most vehement in their criticisms were often among the group campaigning to stop transportation. It was easy to exaggerate, or ignore what the writer did not want to see, what was at odds with the picture he or she was

1 In New South Wales, free settlers formed a higher proportion of the population, and in Western Australia, convicts did not arrive until forty years after first settlement.

2 For example, New South Wales; Western Australia, to some extent Siberia; the Andaman Islands; various colonies in South America; and in earlier times, some Greek settlements.

3 A Alexander, *Brighton and Surrounds*, Brighton, 2006, p. 30.

4 The operation of the convict system changed during the fifty years of its existence. These changes, say from assignment to probation in 1842, do not appear to have had any significant influence on the recorded views of the system. My research seems to indicate that the proportion of people, favourable and unfavourable, remained fairly stable over time, irrespective of when these views were expressed.

drawing. Many writers described both positive and negative impacts. Some expressed no opinion, merely keeping a record, writing matter-of-fact accounts of life in the colony with the presence of convicts taken for granted. The writers themselves varied. Hardly any had been convicts; some remained long-term in the colony, others were paying brief visits. The opinion of visitors is sometimes seen as less valuable than that of long-term residents because their knowledge can be superficial, but it was probably formed in discussions with locals, and often encapsulated general opinion at a particular time, or at least represented the opinions of the people the author met.

Astonishingly, some writers took little or no notice of the convict system. Almost nothing was published about this new, small and remote colony until about 1820, when three books appeared.⁵ Each author, Charles Jeffreys, James Dixon and George Evans, had been living in the colony for some years and so wrote from first-hand experience. All aimed at encouraging emigrants to the colony, and all barely mentioned convicts, and then only in passing — Jeffreys and Evans three times each, Dixon once. A reader who was not aware that Tasmania was a convict colony would not pick it up from these books. There is nothing new in spin-doctoring. The colony was ‘this delightful island’, an ‘abode of peace, plenty, and rural happiness’.⁶ At the same time, another settler was describing widespread drunkenness, theft so frequent no one took any notice and officials so corrupt that no one’s word could be depended on.⁷

A few books praised the impact of convicts or else saw Tasmania’s society as normal and convicts a not-too-objectionable feature. Hugh Hull, who was born in 1818 and arrived in Tasmania as a toddler, barely mentioned convicts in his memoirs.⁸ Nehemiah Bartley lived in Tasmania during the 1840s. ‘Convict servants were great as smashers of crockery’, he said humorously, but this was his only criticism. All farm-hands were convicts, but in his sixteen pages on Tasmania he depicted a pleasant life in Bagdad, similar to that in any other western society. Some writers, such as James Calder, presented convicts as individuals with ordinary human characteristics, good and bad, but this approach was rare.⁹



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania

A sympathetic view of convicts: Peter Fraser’s undated painting of an unnamed convict.

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- 5 C Jeffreys, *Van Diemen’s Land*, London, 1820, pp. 68, 131, 135; J Dixon, *Narrative of a voyage to New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land in 1822*, facsimile, Hobart, 1984, p. 45; G Evans, *A geographical, historical, and topographical description of Van Diemen’s Land ...*, London, 1822; facsimile, Hobart, 1967, pp. 9, 98, 121.
- 6 Evans, pp. 111, 122.
- 7 WH Hudspeth, ‘Experiences of a settler in the early days of VDL’, *Royal Society of Tasmania Papers and Proceedings* 1935, pp. 143–46.
- 8 For example, CM Goodridge, *Narrative of a voyage to the South Sea...*, Exeter, 1832; Crawford Pasco RN, *A Roving Commission*, Melbourne, 1897 (about his trip in 1842); H Keppel, *A sailor’s life under four sovereigns*, London, 1899 vol 2 (about his trip in 1850). H Hull, *Clerk of the House*, ed L Andel, Melbourne, 1984.
- 9 N Bartley, *Opals and Agates*, Brisbane, 1892, pp. 5–11, 43–48, 169–74; J Calder, *Rambles on Betsy’s Island, Tasman’s Peninsula, and Forestier’s Peninsula in February 1848*, first published 1876, Sullivan’s Cove, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 10–13.

Writers who praised the convict system and its effect argued that convicts were treated well, better than workers in Britain or, indeed, free emigrants in Tasmania, and were given every encouragement to improve. There was even the argument that the presence of convicts made the free population behave better; that helping convicts was a privilege which, it was implied, assisted one's passage to Heaven. As workers, convicts were described as careful and diligent, better than free labourers since the master had more control, and cleverer than country bumpkins since they had the enterprise to steal. Above all, they were cheap. Many convicts were reformed and they could do well once free. To one commentator this 'land of regenerated thieves' appeared the same as Home (Britain), since there was no outward distinction between ex-convicts and others. Another writer claimed that Van Diemen's Land was better than Home, since there were no poor people. Since some convicts were even transported on purpose, claimed a third, transportation must be beneficial.¹⁰

Those who disapproved of the convict system disagreed strongly. They described convicts as thieves, drunk and insolent. With no character to maintain, they were 'desperate in crime'. They were poor labourers, unskilled — 'pick pockets who knew nothing of agriculture' — unwilling, unproductive. Though free labourers cost more, they produced far better results. The women were worse than the men, quite incorrigible. The system was cruel, no better than slavery, degrading and harsh, and the sight of convict gangs was sickening. Ex-convicts were dreadful. Reform was rare, and because of convicts, drunkenness, theft and sodomy were rampant. Convicts were 'void of every good quality'. In sum, having convicts made Tasmanian society depraved, and convictism was the worst possible basis for a new colony. 'Never ... has society existed in so depraved a state as I have witnessed in the penal colonies.'¹¹ It is amazing that the same country could produce such different opinions, but this can be explained by saying that just as convicts themselves differed greatly, authors had widely different experiences and attitudes, as well as aims in writing.

Overall during this early period, there was far more criticism than praise of the convict system. There was certainly more criticism in Britain, where Tasmania had 'a very bad name' as 'an infernal country of torments'. These opinions were based not only on reports of what was happening but also on what logically should have been happening. The home of convicts could only be a desert, a country of thieves. Everything connected with the island had to be tainted. A woman on a visit to England found her

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- 10 M Roe, 'H. P. Fry: Four letters from Hobart Town, 1839–1845', *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, 11/1, 4; A Russell, *A tour through the Australian Colonies in 1839*, Glasgow, 1840, pp. 6, 108; GC Mundy, *Our Antipodes*, London, 1852, pp. 159, 160; Mrs A Prinsep, *The Journal of a Voyage from Calcutta to Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1833, p. 105, 112; T Betts, *An Account of the colony of Van Diemen's Land...*, Calcutta, 1830, pp. 43, 47; J Fenton, *Bush Life in Tasmania*, London, 1891, p. 45; H Widowson, *Present State of Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1829, pp. vi, viii, 56, 61–64; J Starke (ed), *Journal of a Rambler, the journal of John Boulton*, Auckland, 1986, p. xxxiii; J Dean, *A trip to ... California with chapters on South-Sea Islands ... and beautiful Tasmania*, Hobart, [1905], p. 99; WC Wentworth, *Statistical, historical, and political Description of the colonies of New South Wales and its dependent settlements in Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1824, pp. 38, 39, 55, 56; H Melville, *Australasia and prison discipline*, London, 1851, p. 90.
- 11 E Fenton, *The journal of Mrs Fenton*, Adelaide, 1986, p. 35; WH Hudspeth, 'Experiences of a settler in the early days of VDL', *Royal Society of Tasmania Papers and Proceedings* 1935, pp. 144–45; S Guy, *A Van Diemen's Land Settler in 1823*, Sydney, 1991, p. 16; H Button, *Flotsam and Jetsam*, Launceston, 1909, pp. 48–49; J Dixon, *The condition and capabilities of Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1839, pp. 43, 77, 81, 86; JC Byrne, *Twelve years' wanderings in the British Colonies*, London, 1848, pp. 27, 77, 78; [ed their eldest daughter], *Travels of Robert and Sarah Lindsey*, London, 1886, pp. 60, 65; J Syme, *Nine years in Van Diemen's Land*, Dundee, 1848, pp. 14, 21, 133, 144–46, 213, 282; RE Malone, *Three Years' Cruise in the Australasian Colonies*, London, 1854, p. 45, 46; W Howitt, *Land, labour and Gold*, [1855], facsimile 1972, p. 443; R Elwes, *A Sketcher's Tour Round the World*, London 1854, p. 263; Prinsep, p. 113; GT Lloyd, *Thirty-three Years in Tasmania and Victoria*, London, 1862, p. 15; J Roberts, *Two Years at Sea*, London, 1834, pp. 112, 127; E Curr, *An Account of the colony of Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1824, facsimile Launceston 1967, pp. 10, 11, 39–40; J Henderson, *Observations in the colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, Calcutta, 1832, pp. 5, 6; WH Breton, *Excursions in ... Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1833, p. 462; Rev T Atkins, *The Wanderings of the Clerical Eulyssees*, Greenwich, 1859, p. 16; *The Times*, 3 April 1826; Mundy, p. 161; Starke, p. 11; J Frost, *The Horrors of Convict Life*, Adelaide, 1973 (public lectures given by Frost in 1856), p. 16.

aunt hinting that it was better not to talk of Van Diemen's Land, and 'perhaps [she is] not sure my father was not sent there at the Queen's expense'. A hotel landlord asked another visitor not to admit that he came from the island 'or I will be ruined'. The servants of a third visitor claimed the household came from India, not Tasmania. An English writer of a children's book published in 1856 summed it up: 'This island is as cool as Great Britain; yet it is not a pleasant land to live in, for it is filled with convicts.'¹²

During the 1820s and 1830s, most free inhabitants were either in favour of the system or prepared to put up with it, since it provided the great advantage of cheap labour. But under the new probation system of the 1840s, settlers lost this advantage, at a time when the number of convicts arriving each year was increasing rapidly. There had been calls to end the system before this, but from 1844 those calls became a fully-fledged movement, with anti-transportationists arguing forcefully that transportation to the island had to be stopped. Their main reasons, summed up a visitor, were that transportation caused social contamination and corruption: "the beautiful land of our adoption made a moral cesspool!" "moral pollution!" "moral scabies!!" "moral leprosy!!!" Anti-transportationists also pointed out that the system encouraged homosexuality, a persuasive argument in the moral climate of the day. Their view was that the probation system not working well, and that the probation stations were nothing but schools of crime. The pro-transportation lobby was neither as large nor as effective, on the whole having weaker arguments. In 1853 the British government abolished transportation to Tasmania, perhaps partly because of the anti-transportation movement's arguments, and surely also because the discovery of gold in Victoria meant it would merely be sending criminals nearer El Dorado. At much the same time, Tasmania gained self-government.¹³

There was a great deal of rejoicing when the convict colony of Van Diemen's Land was transformed into the self-governing colony of Tasmania. To distance it from the stigma of convictism, the Government changed the name of the island and its most notorious towns, such as Port Arthur. It was hoped, reported a visitor, that this would efface the possibility of the very memory of the island's identity and existence as a convict colony. For many years after this, the convict system was mentioned in publications as seldom as possible, and always as well in the past, while no one was ever publicly described as an ex-convict. The historian, John West, even said in 1852 that few convicts remained in Tasmania, because thousands had died in chains and tens of thousands had died of drink. Due to vice they had had few children, so that convicts 'die away like a mournful dream in the world they dishonoured'. So no convict had been any good; after they had gone, their influence was gone; as the country no longer had anything to do with them the place could start afresh. Tasmania 'will be one of the most delightful countries in the world' and, with no more convicts, 'will get over that stain on it, and gradually become free of its incubus'.¹⁴

It was true that in 1853 many convicts were no longer in Tasmania. Many had died, and many more had left the island. There were good reasons for them to go. They could escape the place where they were known as convicts, with the stigma of this reputation, and start afresh. Tasmania had never been a rich society, and there were better economic opportunities on the mainland, especially after the settlement of Victoria from 1835. Even before the gold rush, labourers' wages in Victoria had been twice as high as their equivalent in Tasmania, while once gold was discovered, Victoria was extremely appealing. One Tasmanian who went to the diggings wrote that it was easy for convicts to escape, as many boats took timber to Victoria and could land passengers in bays and

12 Prinsep, pp. 45, 63; [Hordern Melville], *The adventures of a Griffin*, London, 1867, p. 48; PL Brown (ed), *Clyde Company Papers*, vol VI, p. 262; J West, *History of Tasmania*, Launceston, 1852, p. 282; HB Stoney, *A residence in Tasmania...* Hobart, 1854, p. v; Mrs FL Mortimer, *Far off; or, Asia and Australia described*, London, 1856, p. 313.

13 M Roe, 'Anti-transportation (of convicts)', in Alexander (ed), *Companion to Tasmanian History*, Hobart, 2005, pp. 19–20; Byrne, pp. 59, 77–78; *Examiner*, 8 May 1847; Mundy, p. 253.

14 J Martineau, *Letters from Australia*, London, 1869, pp. 62–63; West, p. 330; Malone, pp. 29, 58.

creeks.¹⁵ Convicts even returned to Britain, though they were not meant to unless they had a free pardon, which only a minority achieved. It could be difficult for women to leave, but not impossible, as sometimes they could get jobs as servants for families returning to England. For men it was much easier, since ships were often short of crew and many captains welcomed recruits, particularly those with sailing experience.¹⁶ Ships' captains could be paid to take passengers, and some, notably Americans, were sympathetic to convicts. A visiting American, working as a cook on a local ship, was asked by an American convict for help in stowing away on an American vessel. Even though the ship was guarded to prevent such escapes, the visitor succeeded in aiding the convict.¹⁷ Stories were told of local people helping convicts to leave. A policeman recalled that many prisoners escaped, ship's captains made 'piles of money', and a doctor helped three convicts get away. There were suggestions that the Tasmanian authorities connived at the escape of convicts to the mainland, especially the most notorious criminals. Statistics show that, overall, about 43 per cent of all ex-convicts had left Tasmania by 1853.¹⁸ The number was probably higher: a visitor quoted the 1851 census as revealing that only 15,903 ex-convicts remained in the colony, under 30 percent of those who had been pardoned by that stage.¹⁹

Those convicts who remained in Tasmania lived under a stigma, and for the next century their descendants also were tainted, as criminality was widely believed to be hereditary. Most societies stigmatise those who have been found guilty of crimes, especially if they have been in gaol. While this remains the case today, it was even more so in the early nineteenth century, when convicts were held to have come from a criminal class. In theory, a convict's family could never lose its criminal status, and never regain (or gain) respectability. These 'painful class distinctions' were evident early in Tasmania. In 1834, there was drama when Mrs Pedder took a Miss Lakeland to a ball at Government House. Miss Lakeland's grandfather and stepfather were both ex-convicts, and some of the guests took great offence at 'the intrusion of the young person'. Eliza Arthur, the governor's wife, sided with Miss Lakeland, and this created such a schism in vice-regal circles that neither of Arthur's nephews would attend the next Government House dinner.²⁰ A storm in a teacup to the modern reader, but it demonstrated how some people were not prepared to accept anyone who had convict connections.

The sort of thing ex-convicts had to put up with is illustrated by a story told to Godfrey Mundy, a visitor to Tasmania in 1850. A lady told him she had to — note the 'had to' — employ an ex-convict to teach her daughter art. She always sat in on the lessons, as one did when one's daughter was alone with a man, let alone a convict. During one session the mother was alarmed to see the teacher rise with an open knife in his hand. She started from her chair in fright, only to be told by the teacher that he wanted to sharpen his pencil, not cut her throat.²¹ It is understandable that a mother would have fears when her daughter was taught by a former convicted criminal — but those criminals could never escape it. No wonder so many went to Victoria.

In 1876, John Whitehead told a friend the dreadful story of John Foster, a prosperous grazier of Fosterville, Campbell Town. He had married Ann Dinham, a former convict. The gossip went — not necessarily accurately, but it was what people were saying — that Ann was a former prostitute, transported for ten years, who had

15 JC Byrne, *Twelve years' wanderings in the British Colonies*, London, 1848, p. 64; Fenton, p. 45; Butler, p. 150; CE Walch, *The Story of the Life of Charles Edward Walch*, Hobart, 1908, p. xxxi.

16 Sir C Du Cane, *Tasmania – Past and Present*, Colchester, 1877, p. 17; Martineau, p. 68.

17 JG Williams, *Adventures of a seventeen-year-old lad*, Boston, 1894, pp. 105–07.

18 'The Vet' [Mr Hornsby], *Old Time Echoes of Tasmania*, Tasmania, 1896, pp. 10, 14; Walch, p. xxxi; *Statistics of Tasmania 1840–1853*, detailed statistics available on request.

19 Malone, p. 28; *Statistics of Tasmania 1853*, no 1.

20 A Alexander, *Obligated to Submit*, Hobart, 1999, p. 121.

21 Mundy, p. 158.

arrived in 1852 with a husband and two children. When Foster was ill, she became his nurse, and married him after the suspicious death of her husband. Even though married to a major landowner, as an ex-convict Ann was definitely not respectable. Mentions of prostitution, and possible murder, made her reputation even worse. 'If you have not made the acquaintance of Mrs John Foster, *don't* if you have, *drop it*', urged Whitehead.²²

It was not until the 1870s that authors began commenting on whether or not ex-convicts were accepted in the community. The general opinion was that they were not. 'The community is largely permeated with this element, and they are a distinct class from persons of more spotless pedigree, a strong but imperceptible barrier.' The 'free' population, as it was called, despised convicts and the children of convicts. 'Even now', wrote a visitor in 1886, 'the descendants of convicts are sometimes secretly looked down on, and a great many have, on that account, left the island.' Even families that had become highly respected could not escape from 'this bar sinister on their escutcheon'. Anthony Trollope visited in 1874 and reported that no convict was received into society. People did not choose to 'herd' with convicts, and were on guard lest it be supposed that they had a convict ancestor.²³

Some ex-convicts were not too worried about not being received into society, and a few, secure in the positions they had established for themselves, spoke freely about it, enjoying shocking new arrivals. In 1874, Henry Nesfield asked the landlord of a pub in the midlands about convicts. 'Some of our biggest nobs could tell you about that', replied the landlord. 'I'm a lifer.' Clearly taken by surprise, Nesfield said politely that in those days men were sent out for next to nothing. 'So they were, so they were, young man', said the landlord. 'But mind you (with a confidential wink) I wasn't sent out for nothing.' Nesfield found this 'honest pride ... most refreshing and novel'. A second visitor reported a similar attitude when he was at a country inn and saw men affectionately teasing an elderly, rough-dressed fellow, an 'old hand' (meaning ex-convict), about being a bushranger.²⁴ This same tourist asked an old, blind man, 'Have you been here long?' 'I'm a ten-yearer', came the reply. The man told his story: transported for theft, he had been forced to leave his fiancée behind, but, thirty years later he felt he was doing all right, as he and his dog got a meal a day. 'This poor waif of humanity', commented the tourist.²⁵

This was the stereotype of the ex-convict — the poor waif, the derelict vagabond. Many tourists believed that they could spot an ex-convict by his look. The 'dark, fierce faces, which seemed branded with their too illustrious origin', nearly drove some French tourists back to Melbourne. With their 'unmistakable convict stamp', such men formed a distinct class — old men who hung round the stables of pubs, redolent of government discipline, with a hangdog cringing look, prison gait and close-shaven cheeks, all telling of the convict gang. 'Poor old fellows', said one visitor.²⁶ Others were less sympathetic. One visitor reported that the available servants were 'a poor dirty lot ... mostly thieves, degenerate families of convicts'. A settler commented that 'old hands' would work for a spell and then go to a town to 'knock it off' — drinking till their pay was spent. They would buy new clothes, pawn them to buy drink, and go home to work with only the shirt and trousers that they had started out in.²⁷

22 M Sprod (ed), *The Whitehead Letters*, Hobart, 1991, pp. 110, 242.

23 D Kennedy, *Kennedy's Colonial Travel*, London, 1876, p. 124; RC Seaton, *Letters from the colonies*, Hull, 1886, p. 64; 'Petrel', *In Southern Seas*, Edinburgh, 1888, p. 49; A Trollope, *Victoria and Tasmania*, London, 1874, pp. 143-44.

24 H Nesfield, *A Chequered Career*, London, 1887, p. 216; Kennedy, p. 139.

25 Kennedy, p. 142.

26 Marquis de Beauvoir, *A voyage round the world*, vol I, London, 1870, p. 193; Kennedy, p. 124; Nesfield, p. 217; J Hughes, *Australia Revisited*, London, 1891, p. 248.

27 H Cornish, *Under the Southern Cross*, Madras, 1880, p. 326; C Furlong, *The Settler in Tasmania 1873-1879*, Hobart, 1982, p. 14.

There were many men and women who fitted this stereotype, eking out a living as labourers, with no family, no money, no possessions and no home of their own. West was right when he claimed that many male convicts did not have children, though the reason was not so much vice as the shortage of women. With women in a small minority — the ratio was as low as one to every seven men — it was not possible for most male convicts to set up an establishment, married or de facto. Not all women did, either. With no family, no children to provide a purpose for working and saving, and none of the assistance that children could provide, it is no wonder that these women and men often ended up as homeless paupers.

Such ex-convicts appear in the records for sixty years after 1853. Between 1890 and 1892 the police records for Brighton show ten elderly people arrested for having no fixed address, sleeping in a shed or in the open, and having no means of support. Nearly all were former convicts, a fact that continued to be recorded on the charge sheet. For example, in 1892 an eighty-nine year old ex-convict was given eight days in gaol for being idle and disorderly, having been found in a shed and unable to give a good account of himself. Another former convict, aged seventy eight, stole two loaves of bread from a farmer's house. He was sentenced to two months in gaol.²⁸ A third example of the stereotype was Grace Anderson, born in Glasgow in about 1830 and transported, aged nineteen, after her third conviction for theft. She was described as a prostitute. In Tasmania, she was assigned as a domestic servant, spent nine months in prison for being drunk and absent from her work, gave birth to a child in 1851 and received her ticket-of-leave the following year. She did not reappear on the records until 1883 when, as Grace Adams, she was again described as a prostitute. She spent several spells in



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts,
State Library of Tasmania

Bill Thompson, former prisoner, dressed up in convict outfit at Port Arthur in the 1870s.



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts,
State Library of Tasmania

Bill Thompson in his usual clothing.

²⁸ AC 427/1/1, Police Charge Book, 1892–1894, *passim*.

gaol for offences such as being drunk and incapable, disturbing the peace and insulting passers-by. In 1911, aged eighty-three, she was charged with wandering abroad with no fixed place of abode. Like many another poor ex-convict, she was sent to the New Town Charitable Institution, where she died in 1920, aged about ninety.²⁹ With the two aged, homeless men mentioned earlier, Grace was typical of ex-convicts who had not succeeded in life in a material sense.

But the stereotype of the ex-convict meant that if people did not behave like this, had no hangdog look or convict cringe, wore respectable clothes and worked hard, went to church and educated their children — in short, lived respectably — they could avoid being classed as ex-convicts. As one author noted, there was no physical difference between them and the rest of society. This was particularly the case for women. After 1853 it seems that everyone assumed all convicts had been men. Women were never mentioned, so it was easier for them to distance themselves from the taint.

Of great assistance to many ex-convicts was the fact that there were always some people who were sympathetic towards them. An early example was the first chaplain, the Reverend Robert Knopwood, whose friends included both convicts and ex-convicts, such as Andrew Whitehead and James Grove. In Bagdad, settler George Armytage discussed his governess's morals with his convict servant, and there are many other such stories. It was early noted that it was not good manners to use the word convict, as the people we are discussing did not like it, preferring terms like 'servants of the crown', 'prisoners' or 'government people'. From all accounts, the population went along with this, even new arrivals quickly picking up the politically correct terminology. It was also not done



Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania

The very picture of a successful man in top hat and smart carriage: Charles Davis, former convict but now prosperous business man, returning home from work in the 1880s.

29 CON 41/21, 15/5, 19/7; CSO 13/6/45; LC 247 29 August 1881, 25 September, 20 October 1882, 21 February 1883; HSD 274.

to ask why a convict had been sent out — so people did not ask. Such information was ‘hushed up’. This shows a desire not to emphasise their social degradation, and also to ignore the fact that the population included such people. As early as 1848, a writer noted that if a prisoner was well-conducted and steady, ‘he has little to apprehend from the free people by way of making him feel his situation’. There were no taunts or insults, no prejudice from authority, no ‘mean and pitiful spite’. This was an exaggeration — there were occasional examples of taunts — but there must have been sufficient evidence for this author to come to this conclusion, and he lived in Tasmania for nine years.³⁰

It was also considered taboo to ask people about their past in more general terms, for fear of upsetting them. In 1861, a visitor found that he had ‘to be careful not to make too close enquiry’, and another found that ‘it is not safe to ask a stranger *why* he left home — you can ask *where* he left from’. It was not even ‘good form’ to use the term Van Diemen’s Land, with its too close connection with the old convict days, nor to say anything about transportation, ‘as one never knew whose feelings might be wounded’. ‘The general motto seemed to be, “Forget the past”’, commented a third writer. But when the person concerned could not hear, people gossiped. An old man crossing the street could be pointed out as a ‘lifer’, commented this visitor. Another wrote that when he saw a fine house and asked who lived there, the reply was ‘Mr —, a “lag”’, which he explained was the term for an ex-convict.³¹

But this was private talk. In public, it quickly became taboo to mention anyone’s connection with convicts, even in general terms. In 1848, Mrs Rennie, who taught at the Anglican school at Pontville, complained that Thomas Hodgins had withdrawn his children, after saying in a ‘raging passion’ that his were the only respectable children there, as the others were ‘blackguards’, the children of prisoners. To the magistrate, Hodgins denied this, admitting only to mentioning ‘blackguard children’. So it was acceptable to call children blackguards, but not to mention that they were the children of prisoners — prisoners, note, not convicts. In 1873, the Brighton Council was asked for a monthly return of all former prisoners convicted at the police office. Councillors refused, ‘as the questions that would have to be put ... would be highly objectionable and offensive’ — even to people convicted of a crime, whose feelings were not usually considered.³² This response seems to be a combination of not wanting to hurt the feelings of individuals, and also, by not mentioning convicts, pretending that the new Tasmanian society had nothing to do with them. This lack of public discussion enabled many ex-convicts to bury their past and live as members of respectable society.

Despite so many authors noting the stereotype and claiming that they always knew an ex-convict, others commented on how many worked hard and prospered, became decent members of society, and brought up their children respectably. A former bushranger was a prosperous grower of apples, and many ex-convicts became well-to-do shopkeepers and hotel-owners.³³ In Pontville, a settled, decent society, almost all the businessmen — blacksmiths, shop-owners, carpenters and so on — had been convicts or were the children of convicts. The blacksmiths, James Halley and James Undy, had both been transported. James Crawn, the son of convicts, was in and out of gaol until he married. He and his wife settled in Pontville, where James supplied firewood for the police office and gaol and later became licensee of the Crown Inn. William Lythgo, transported for theft, became a constable, brickmaker, hotelier, and then shopkeeper, and married a convict, described as a ‘bad character’. They had at least five children and lived quite

30 J Holman, *A voyage round the world*, London, 1835, p. 395; Roberts, p. 125; W Stones, *My First Voyage*, London, 1858, p. 157; Prinsep, p. 52; Button, p. 45; Syme, p. 107; ‘The Vet’ [Mr Hornsby], p. 70.

31 FJ Jobson, *Australia*, London, 1862, p. 122; Martineau, p. 86; H Nisbet, *A Colonial Tramp*, London, 1891, vol 2, p. 272; ‘Petrel’, p. 49; Kennedy, pp. 124, 133; J Dale, *Round the World by Doctors’ Orders*, London, 1894, p. 57.

32 AOT POL 16, St Mark’s School Pontville, 1 May 1848; Brighton Council Minutes, 3 April 1873.

33 JF Mortlock, *Experiences of a Convict*, first published 1864–65, ed. GA Wilkes and AG Mitchell, Sydney, 1965, p. 88; Trollope, p. 137; Kennedy, pp. 124, 133; Rev R Young, *The Southern World*, London, 1858, p. 173; Du Cane, p. 15.

respectably, owning not just the shop, but five cottages. As a tattooed nineteen-year-old, Thomas Sidney was transported for theft and committed various misdemeanours in the colony. He married and settled down as a baker. When municipalities were set up in the 1860s, only a few years after transportation ceased, in each of Clarence and Brighton two men with convict connections were elected councillors, ahead of many free settlers.³⁴

Some former convicts really prospered. Thomas Burbury, transported for taking part in the Luddite riots, became a constable at Oatlands. After he was pardoned, he acquired extensive land holdings, notably the property *Inglewood*. He took part in every public movement in the district and was elected a municipal councillor. The family became well-known pastoralists, and descendants still farm *Inglewood*. Similarly John Dunbabin, who was transported in 1830, married a fellow convict and became a landowner at Dunalley. In 1917, one of his descendants was appointed Professor of Classics at the University of Tasmania.³⁵ Several convicts became well-known artists (William Buelow Gould, Thomas Wainwright, Thomas Bock, Knut Bull), architects (James Blackburn) and writers (Henry Savery). The list could go on. Today both our Premier and our Governor are descended from convicts, as are many other eminent Tasmanians.

It is difficult to say how many ex-convicts fell into each category, degraded and respectable. Because most of the stories told are of ex-convicts who prospered, and family historians tend to be descended from such ex-convicts since they were generally the ones who had children, we tend to assume that the majority did at least reasonably well. Yet historians who study what happened to shiploads of convicts find that many lived a hand-to-mouth poverty-stricken existence. There is not yet enough evidence to state what the ratio was, except that there are many examples of both.

How many convicts remained in Tasmania? This too is difficult to say — but there was a considerable number, especially in a small population. It has been estimated that in 1866, convicts and ex-convicts formed about 35 percent of adult men, considerably fewer than earlier but still quite a large percentage.³⁶ By this time, however, the youngest would have been in his thirties, and most would have been older. With the average age of death in the forties, they would rapidly die out. Their descendants however did not.

In the 1860s and 1870s the composite picture from authors was that the convict system had been dreadful, with stories told of the bad old days — floggings, cannibalism and murder. But many convicts had left Tasmania — ‘the great majority left the country as soon as their sentences expired’, ‘the convict element has drifted away to the goldfields’, ‘the convict element, with all its disagreeable reminiscences, is very nearly obliterated’. Ex-convicts, either pathetic old derelicts or respectable members of society, were no trouble to anyone. Tasmania was quickly becoming respectable. As early as 1861, a Wesleyan visitor found that ‘the order and reverence for religion are surprising’. Considering its origins, said another writer, Tasmania was a ‘wonderfully decent and orderly colony’, with Hobart society highly respectable — the taboo about discussing people’s pasts even meant that there was less gossip than usual. When the last traces of the system had gone, which would be when all former convicts had died, all would be forgotten. There would be no lasting trace of ‘the poison so long administered’. ‘The convict element having passed away ... Tasmania of to-day [about 1875] is bright and fair.’³⁷

Few of the writers of this period went as far as this. Most discerned that the

34 I Schaffer, *Exiled! Three times over*, pp. 154–158; MacFie, Morris-Nunn and Dudley, ‘A Social history of Pontville’, *The Pontville historic environment study*, Part I, Hobart, 1995, pp. 20, 48–49, 52–53, 60; Alexander, *Brighton and Surrounds*, p. 91; A Alexander, *The Eastern Shore*, Clarence, 2003, p. 57.

35 A Alexander, ‘Burbury, Thomas’, in *Companion to Tasmanian History*, p. 57; T Dunbabin, ‘The Dunbabin Family’, *Companion to Tasmanian History* p. 110.

36 D Young, *Making Crime Pay*, Hobart, 1996, p. 15.

37 Martineau, p. 66; Du Cane, p. 17; *The Times*, 14 September 1869, 3 January 1870; Jobson, p. 123; Kennedy, pp. 147, 133; FJ Cockburn, *Letters from the Southern Hemisphere*, Calcutta, 1856, p. 124; FT Chapman, *Sketches over 50,000 miles*, c 1875, p. 42.

convict system had had some negative effects on the island. There were some mentions of moral ruin, but the main disadvantage was seen to be that relying on the ‘deadly shade of slave labour’, and on imperial spending, had enervated citizens, leading to dependency and lack of initiative. This was a blight on the island, causing it to stagnate. Visitor after visitor pointed out Tasmanians’ ‘want of go’, ‘the slowest-going people I ever came in contact with’, ‘somnolence and languor ... like an enervating miasma’. The island was dull, quiet, a ‘sleepy hollow’. In Victorian times, progress was considered a wonderful thing, and Tasmanians were not progressing. Various writers suggested that it would be decades before this bad effect wore off, or commented that Tasmania ‘has seen the best of its best days’. Several saw the only cure as annexation to Victoria.³⁸ Writers claimed or hinted that this lack of enterprise was due to the enervating effect of the convict system, but almost all also pointed out that many Tasmanians, especially young men, migrated to Victoria for the better opportunities there, and to escape the convict taint.³⁹ No one suggested that the lack of ‘go’ in Tasmania might be connected to a lack of young men, but this could well have been part of the reason. However, escaping the taint was just as much an effect of the convict system as was the over-dependence on British money and reliance on assigned labour.

A few writers began pointing out the benefits of the convict system. Convicts had been fed and clothed and not overworked, while for settlers they provided cheap labour — Anthony Trollope summed it up well: convicts had been useful but disgraceful. Some settlers expressed regret at the loss of the convict system with its cheap labour and outpouring of British money. ‘All say cessation has been their ruin.’ At a time when Tasmania was not particularly prosperous, a romantic gloss about the convict days was beginning to appear. The ladies, in particular, regretted the absence of their convict servants, now remembered as ‘good and faithful’. Several authors commented that many convicts had been sent out for trivial offences, such as poaching, and were in fact ‘able-bodied and industrious labourers’. Later, in 1885, a writer even claimed that ‘it is said that convicts had a very good time of it in former years’.⁴⁰ Some Tasmanians could even joke about it. At a party, a man kept on his hat (not the done thing) and a young lady said, ‘Mr So-and-so has probably heard a very bad account of this colony, but I think you might venture to assure him that he might leave his hat in the hall with perfect safety!’⁴¹ By the late 1870s, the convict system was seen as so much in the past that some visitors did not even mention it, a stance unthinkable over the previous twenty years.

So it seemed that Tasmanians were well on the way to putting the convict system in the past and being allowed to forget it, when a major event happened: the publication of Marcus Clarke’s novel, *For the term of his natural life*.

A precursor was the first guidebook to Tasmania, published in 1869 by a Victorian, Henry Thomas. As an outsider, Thomas did not mind mentioning convicts, and described ‘poor prisoners’ enduring forced labour and harsh discipline among ‘boundless sullen mountains’. (The next guidebook, written two years later by a Tasmanian, Louisa Anne Meredith, stayed on the true Tasmanian track: the word convict did not appear, even in

38 Sir C Dilke MP, *Greater Britain*, London, 1869, p. 354, 358, 361; Rev J Milner and O Brierly, *Cruise of H.M.S. Galatea*, London, 1869, p. 349; de Beauvoir, p. 216; Trollope, pp. 128, 142, 178–79; Du Cane, p. 18; Trollope quoted in D Young, *Making Crime Pay*, Hobart, 1996, p. 13; Seaton, p. 65; J A Ackermann, *The world through a woman’s eyes*, Chicago, 1896, p. 15; Nesfield, p. 212; J Coutts, *Vacation tours in New Zealand and Tasmania*, Melbourne, 1880, p. 50; E K Bates, *Kaleidoscope*, London, 1889, pp. 15–16; Robert Walker, *The Five Threes – 33,333 miles by land and sea*, London, 1884, p. 153.

39 Martineau, p. 64; Nesfield, p. 214; Trollope, p. 158; A Guillemard, *Over land and sea*, London, 1875, p. 104; Kennedy, p. 133; W Senior, *Travel and Trout in the Antipodes*, London, 1880, p. 49; Cornish, p. 324; J Coutts Crawford, *Recollections of travel in New Zealand and Australia*, London, 1880, p. 274; Rev E Vetromile, *A Tour in both hemispheres*, New York, 1880, p. 127; Walker, p. 153; Seaton, p. 66; Nisbet, p. 274; RW Dale, *Impressions of Australia*, London, 1889, p. 38; RP Yates, *My Tour round the World*, Leamington Spa, 1899, p. 150.

40 Trollope, pp. 138–39, 128, 130; Guillemard, p. 97; Milner and Brierly, p. 349; Du Cane, pp. 14–15; Kennedy, p. 133; P Clarke, *The “New Chum” in Australia*, London, 1886, p. 322; DE Bandmann, *An Actor’s Tour*, Boston, 1885, p. 75.

41 Cockburn, p. 51.

her brief history of the island. She did mention ‘the detested burden of the transportation system’ and several ‘ex-prisoner bushrangers’ — they had romantic connotations, and she could escape using the actual word ‘convict’.⁴²)

Before the publication of *For the term of his natural life*, the only major novel to describe the convict system in Tasmania had been *The broad arrow: being passages from the history of Maida Gwynnham, a lifer* by Caroline Leakey, which was published in London in 1859. Leakey had lived in Tasmania from 1845 to 1853, and had learned a great deal about Tasmanian society. Her novel depicts Tasmania during this period, giving several points of view. Like many of the writers of the 1860s and 1870s, she discusses intelligently the pros and cons of a convict society. The novel was moderately successful.⁴³

For the term of his natural life was quite different. Clarke, a twenty-three-year old journalist, was about to write a series of articles on the convict system for the Melbourne *Argus* and visited Tasmania briefly in 1870 to investigate the background. Perhaps he read Thomas’s guide. He went to Port Arthur where he asked to see the prisoners’ records — but not those of ordinary prisoners, only those of the most notorious of the criminals. For two days he took notes from these records.⁴⁴ This visit inspired his novel, which was serialised, starting in 1870, and was published as a book in 1874. It told a dramatic and exciting story, contrasting the wonderfully wild, Gothic beauty of Tasmania, ‘like the curious forms assumed by molten lead spilt in water’, with the cruelty, horror and injustice of an absolutely appalling convict system. In particular, Clarke depicted the torture and hideousness of Port Arthur where his hero suffered horribly, unjustly. The novel was a runaway bestseller, and is still probably the most famous novel about Tasmania. It has been turned into stage shows and films,⁴⁵ and has influenced attitudes to the convict system and the whole island ever since it was published. As soon as the book appeared, there were complaints from Tasmania that Clarke was pandering to sensationalism with his offensive and untrue book. Clarke replied that his work was based on fact, but critics responded that this made it worse — he should not have used documents in this way. They claimed that the English already thought poorly enough of Tasmania’s moral tone, and his book would only make things worse.⁴⁶

It did. Until 1870, visitors had been interested in convicts but showed no enthusiasm for convict sites. Interest emerged soon after. In 1873, Rosamond and Florence Hill from London said they wanted to see convict places,⁴⁷ and in the previous year Anthony Trollope, a much more perceptive tourist, had visited Port Arthur.

Port Arthur, where so much of Clarke’s misery, cruelty and injustice had taken place, was the major convict site. Until 1877 it remained a prison. People could visit it, but few did. If they did they admired it, in the 1850s as ‘first rate’, ‘exceedingly pretty’, with ‘nothing penally repulsive’. No one else mentioned it until Anthony Trollope in 1872. No spot on the globe in the previous sixty years had seen greater suffering or guiltier thoughts, he wrote. At the prison he found 506 men and 97 guards, all in admirable order, but the prisoners were about to be transferred to Hobart. Trollope predicted that Port Arthur would then ‘fall into dust’.⁴⁸ Not so. Only three months after the last prisoner was removed in December 1877, the first steamer excursion took tourists from Hobart to Port Arthur.⁴⁹ Tourists have been visiting ever since.

42 D Young, pp. 15–16.

43 J Mead, ‘Leakey, Caroline Woolmer’, in *Companion to Tasmanian History*, p. 212; J Duckworth, *A trip round the world*, Rochdale, 1890, p. 45.

44 D Young, p. 19.

45 P Pierce, ‘Clarke, Marcus Andrew Hislop’, in *Companion to Tasmanian History*, p. 78; D Young, pp. 18–20.

46 D Young, p. 21.

47 R and F Hill, *What we saw in Australia*, London, 1875, p. 417.

48 Cockburn, p. 68; D Young, pp. 25, 26; Trollope, pp. 140, 146, 153.

49 D Young, p. 32.

The first book about Tasmania influenced by *For the term of his natural life* (in that the author claimed this) appeared in 1880: William Senior's *Travel and trout in the Antipodes*. It was quite different from earlier books. Senior had not only read but also absorbed *For the term of his natural life*. He found Hobart gloomy because of its historical connections, but Port Arthur was worse — so awe-inspiring that it 'oppresses you into silence', the walls 'raised with the blood of convicts'. Senior found that 'the execrable doings described with such painfully vivid power by Marcus Clarke ... are founded on facts'. 'Such dreadful scenes, one wonders that the very stones do not cry out.' He wrote of fetters, compulsory labour, merciless punishment, and could not bear to enter the model prison. The whole of his visit to Tasmania, and much of his writing, was coloured by *For the term of his natural life*; he asked questions about it constantly and found much in Tasmania gloomy and depressed.⁵⁰ It seems strange for a book entitled *Travel and trout*.

Senior's approach was typical of *Term*-influenced writers — and it is clear who they were, as they commented on it. They visited convict sites: 'of course the principal interest in Tasmania centres in its old convict history'. 'I wanted to see convict places, ancient prisoners, convict jailers, places where victims were driven mad.' The main site was Port Arthur, where their guides, mostly former convicts, told them what they wanted to hear. 'One feels a thrill of horror as the entrance to Port Arthur is pointed out.' There was proof of the most horrid stories, such as the marks of blood from the floggings on the ceiling of the chapel. 'One's flesh creeps to look at photographs of the cart, the commandant's house, prison, cells, the Blow Hole.' They heard stories of hardened villains dying under the lash or the heat of the sun, risking starvation or cannibalism by attempting to escape, and being eaten by sharks. Having read *Term*, they saw all convict experience through its lens. And they knew it was all true: hadn't many Tasmanians (that is, the tourist operators) assured them it was, and couldn't they see the blood on the chapel ceiling which proved it all?⁵¹

Even guidebooks published in Tasmania gave in and mentioned convicts, though clearly unwillingly. Garnet Walch, Tasmanian born and bred, wrote a *Guide to Tasmania* in 1890. Everyone who had read *Term* wanted to see Port Arthur, he acknowledged. It was now called Carnarvon because of its disagreeable associations, which were better relegated to the past: its old-time horrors, where once reigned darkness and despair — 'the clank of chains, curses of brutalised, lash-driven, hopeless men — enough!'⁵² Soon, not only Port Arthur was being seen in this light, but all Tasmania, 'a land of hell, the whole place seemed to reek of abominations and cruelties'. 'The curse still hangs over the country.' Convictism was 'darker, more loathsome, more hellish' than either 'Negro or Russian slavery'. 'Every hundred yards of the main road between Hobart and Launceston cost a man's life.' Another visitor had heard that while this road was being made, twenty-one prisoners had once been hanged together before breakfast. In short,

the shadow of the nameless wickedness and agony of those times and its embalment in that prince of novels, Marcus Clarke's "The term of his natural life" hang like a pall over Hobart, over Tasmania, and indeed, I think, over its people and paralyse its progress.⁵³

Tasmania meant convicts. Before 1856, thought these writers, its history was 'purely the history of the convict establishment', and nothing much else had happened since. One writer (admittedly Irish — there had been many Irish convicts) was interested in

50 Senior, pp. 71–74.

51 E Reeves, *Homeward Bound after thirty years*, London, 1892, pp. 55–58; Nisbet, p. 271; Seaton, p. 63; Clarke, p. 322; G Walch, *Guide to Tasmania*, Melbourne, 1890, p. 92.

52 G Walch, pp. 91–92.

53 Reeves, p. 55.

Tasmania only because of the sad and tragic story of transportation. Another wrote that just about everything in Tasmania was about convicts. ‘Lovely land of pathetic, tragic, and historic memories!’⁵⁴ So, though Clarke had set his novel in convict times and had not himself said that Tasmania would never lose the curse, readers interpreted it in this way; it was as if the convict system had been so unjust, so appalling, and so cruel, that the whole island had become tainted forever. Tasmania could never leave its convict past behind.

Some writers changed their opinion of the whole system. Instead of deserved, even humane, punishment for criminals, with relatively benign assignment as the typical experience, they saw a wicked system where brutal gaolers treated with unjust harshness and villainy unfortunate victims of the law who had often committed only trivial offences. Port Arthur was now seen as the typical experience, where reasonably innocent victims had been turned into abandoned wretches, brutal members of an underclass, just as Clarke had depicted almost all his convicts except his hero.⁵⁵

Not everyone was influenced by *Term*, and there was a great difference in books written by *Term* enthusiasts and those who had not read it, or perhaps had read it but did not take up its views.⁵⁶ Many writers continued to see Tasmania as visitors of the 1860s and 1870s had done — a place that was leaving its convict days behind. In the 1890s, when the system was even further in the past, one wrote that convicts ‘have left little or no trace behind them, for, in all the world, there is not a better class of people to be found than in Tasmania’. In 1894 another visitor wrote that since the convict system had been abandoned forty years before, the island ‘has gone well ahead, and luckily all signs and traces of its earlier days have disappeared’. ‘Now the system is very little more than a memory.’ So many free people had arrived, and so many prisoners had left, that the convict taint had been almost completely obliterated. It was impossible to detect any difference between Tasmania and other places as far as religion and morality went, ‘and when the last of these decrepit old men dies, the last vestige of the old penal settlement will disappear’.⁵⁷

Many Tasmanians agreed with this view and tried to combat the Clarke influence, denying that the convict days had any effect on the present. In later editions of Thomas’ guidebook, the views expressed were moderated — had he listened to criticism from Tasmania? He added a brief history of the island which, in the Tasmanian tradition, mentioned ‘prisoners’ only once, and commented that, although ‘absurd prejudice’ existed due to the antecedents of the colony, even a brief visit would dispel it, since ‘there is an entire absence of anything likely to recall the fearful ordeal through which the colony has passed’.⁵⁸ Note again the verbal convolutions adopted so as not to have to include the dread word ‘convict’. In 1881 a letter to the august *Times* in London stressed Tasmania’s distance from its past. Despite the early convict system, ‘society now retains no appreciable marks of moral degradation’, wrote Robert Duffy, clergyman at Evandale. There was little crime, and a high level of security, domestic tone and virtue. ‘Practically there is nothing to remind one that he lives in a land that was once a penal settlement.’ Had not Imperial Rome been founded by thieves — what a great precedent! ran another letter three years later.⁵⁹

So the presence and impact of the convict system has always given rise to differing opinions, sometimes completely different. For two decades after the system

54 Nisbet, p. 271; Clarke, p. 322; Sir TH Grattan Esmonde, *Round the world with the Irish Delegates*, Dublin, 1893, pp. 57–58; Reeves, p. 55; Du Cane, p. 7; Trollope, p. 133; M Davitt MP, *Life and Progress in Australasia*, London, 1898, p. 332–34.

55 Seaton, p. 64; Clarke, p. 322; Grattan, p. 58; Young, pp. 18, 20.

56 Only one writer commented that he had read it, but did not see Tasmania through Clarke’s eyes (‘thank God the “good old days” are gone’). Perhaps he was more influenced by having also read *The Broad Arrow*; Duckworth, p. 34.

57 Duckworth, p. 50; Bandmann, p. 75; TR Dewar, *A ramble round the globe*, London, 1894, p. 174; NL Doss, *Reminiscences, Europe and Australia*, Calcutta, 1893, p. 145; Furlong, p. 14; Hughes, p. 248; J Dale, p. 57.

58 Young, p. 17.

59 *The Times*, 19 October 1881, 4 September 1884.

ceased, commentators tended to agree that its influence was waning. But then came *For the Term of his Natural Life*. Since then there have been two strands of thought.

The more romantic, soulful people saw Tasmania through *Term*-coloured glasses — a place of horror, forever tainted by cruelties. This view was taken up by outsiders — almost all of those influenced by *Term* have come from elsewhere, either as visitors or emigrants, or they were fiction writers. They wrote their books and others read them, while people kept on reading *Term*, which has rarely been out of print since 1874, and in 1914 won a poll as Australia's most popular novel. The line of *Term*-influenced works continues to this day, stretching through Roy Bridges to current writers such as Richard Bladel, Richard Flanagan and Christopher Koch ('the convict past is like a wound').⁶⁰ Others have been influenced by Clarke's ideas. The poet Margaret Scott arrived in Tasmania in 1961. In 2000, she described how she found Hobartians 'inwardly wracked ... by terrible fears', of the wild bush, of previous inhabitants who seemed to have disappeared (Aborigines), and of 'the convict past, of tales of sadistic overseers and cannibal runaways', as well as of what might be discovered in the family tree. Growing up in Hobart at this time, I saw none of this whatsoever, though I have since heard of fear of what might be found in the family tree — but no one in Tasmania was looking up family history at the time. A friend commented to me that she read *Term* when she arrived in Tasmania in the 1970s, and that it had changed her opinion of the island — 'not much, but a bit'. In 2006 the Senior Curator of Art at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, when discussing a painting, commented that, 'there is a darkness to Tasmania, and a darkness to the Tasmanian spirit' that comes from the convict past.⁶¹ All three were emigrants to Tasmania.

But most born and bred Tasmanians took little notice of a novel — after all, it's the business of fiction writers to imagine things — and continued to think of the convict system as influencing the island only while the system was in operation and for a few decades after. Once most of the convicts had died, and Tasmanian society had become outwardly law-abiding, church-going, orderly and well-behaved like other contemporary western societies, the convict influence was, for all intents and purposes, over. I incline to this view. As Dervla Murphy wrote about Siberia, on this very topic, 'much has been written about "the spirit of place", some of it tiresomely fanciful'.⁶²

To round off the story, here is a poem written in the latter part of the nineteenth century by Charles Walch, who grew up in the island and was thankful that 'Van Diemen's Land has passed away with many of its evil associations, and in its place there has risen Tasmania, a fairer and more prosperous land, bright with promise'. He makes no references whatsoever to convicts.⁶³

60 By the late twentieth century such writers were also influenced by newly-published books about the horrific treatment of the Aborigines, another aspect of Tasmania's history where there are several distinct strands of opinion.

61 Young, p. 22; P Pierce, 'Literature', in *Companion to Tasmanian History*, p. 218; Murphy, p. 215; M Scott, *Changing countries*, Sydney, 2000, pp. 159–61; information from Caroline Evans, 6 January 2007; Craig Judd, Senior Curator of Art, Trustees' Meeting, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 18 October 2006.

62 Murphy, p. 215.

63 C Walch, pp. xxxi, 52.

All hail, Tasmania! Beauteous southern isle,
Where broad-based, glorious mountains, pile on pile,
Their summits to the azure heavens uprear,
Glancing in summer sunlight, bright and clear; ...
Where nature's giants in serried ranks upstand,
The wealth and pride of this our native land; ...

Al hail, Tasmania! Blest beyond compare
With genial clime, and health-restoring air.
All hail, Tasmania! O had I the power
Of grand old Milton, e'en for one short hour,
Then would I raise my voice in glorious song,
And sing with rapture, and the notes prolong,
Till the whole world, to earth's remotest bound,
Should cry exulting — Paradise is found!

Sweet island home! while such thy children be,
How great the future in reserve for thee!

Book Review

Dan Sprod, *Leichhardt's Expeditioners: in the Australian Wilderness 1844–1845*, Sandy Bay: Blubber Head Press, 2006 (x, 138, hardback). RRP \$50.00.

As founder of Blubber Head Press, and as an author in his own right, Dan Sprod has made a major contribution to Tasmanian and Australian history. His own books show a preference for larger-than-life characters who did extraordinary things: Alexander Pearce, Edward Tregurtha, and Jorgen Jorgenson, to name a few. Sprod has also written an admirable book on the German scientist and explorer Ludwig Leichhardt called *Proud Intrepid Heart: Leichhardt's First Attempt to the Swan River, 1846–1847* (1989). In his new book, published in a limited edition of 750 copies, Sprod deals with Leichhardt's first successful expedition which left from Sydney on 1 October 1844 for Moreton Bay, the Darling Downs and ending with the garrison of Victoria Settlement, Port Essington, now part of the Northern Territory. The journey of about 3,000 miles from the Darling Downs to Victoria Settlement, took Leichhardt's party a long fourteen-and-a-half months, ending on 17 December 1845. The soldiers at Victoria Settlement were astonished to find that the men had not perished in the wilderness.

Using his field journal, Leichhardt published his own account of the journey in 1847. Another expeditioner, John Gilbert, kept a journal of the first eight months of the journey, which was not published. Sprod draws on the journals of Leichhardt and Gilbert in *Leichhardt's Expeditioners*. It also reproduces, for the first time the full text of journals kept by two of Leichhardt's companions, John Murphy and William Phillips. Both journals are held in the Mitchell Library. John Murphy was by a young lad whose family Leichhardt had befriended on his sea voyage to Australia in 1841. Murphy had artistic talent and, by sketching the progress of the expedition, Leichhardt thought he would be a useful member of the party. Murphy's sketches are included in this book. Murphy's journal deals with the first six months of the party's travels and some scholars believe that Murphy copied entries from Gilbert's journal. Sprod assesses the evidence and finds that it is inadequate to support the view that Murphy's journal was an adaptation of Gilbert's. While there are 'insignificant' similarities, Murphy provided 'many original observations'.

William Phillips, a solicitor who had been convicted of forgery in London, claimed to have joined the party 'from a habitual love of enterprise and adventure', but in reality joined in the hope of receiving a pardon. He might well not have joined at all if he had known how long the journey would take. His animosity towards Leichhardt comes through in his journal. It appears that Phillips did not compile field notes and wrote his journal some years after the expedition, and certainly after Leichhardt's disappearance and death in 1848. Exposing Phillips' journal to close scrutiny, Sprod disagrees with those scholars who believe it was a fabrication. Noting the existence of 'many original facts' and certain textual differences, he believes that the journal was based on Phillips' own observations, not those of Leichhardt's. Whatever the case, this journal is better written and easier to read than Murphy's. Sprod assesses the value of each journal and writes a commentary to introduce each one. He ends the book with chapters on the expeditioners' relations with Aborigines (more could perhaps have been made of this topic) and the relations between the expeditioners themselves. The latter chapter assesses the contribution of each member of the party to the success of the expedition, how Leichhardt reacted to his charges and how well Leichhardt led the expedition.

The journals reveal the arduous nature of the journey: sleeping rough in difficult weather, spending valuable time in rounding up their horses and bullocks before beginning the next leg, struggling through often rugged bush, especially brigalow scrub,

and down dangerous escarpments, encountering Aborigines and not knowing whether they would be hostile or friendly, and often desperately short of food and water, this was an exhausting and stressful episode for men with little experience or talent for exploring the unknown. Although Murphy and Phillips provide passable descriptions of the landscape and sometimes the geology, their repeated descriptions of the killing of native birds and animals was riveting. Ducks, pigeons, flying foxes, emus, kangaroo rats, kangaroos, and more, were killed with no sense of remorse and recorded in a matter-of-fact way, reinforcing the injunction in Genesis that man had dominion over other creatures and could kill at will. For example, Phillips records the shooting of 50 ducks on at least two occasions. On another occasion he noted that Leichhardt determined to have 'a good blow-out' of flying foxes and killed over 55 of them. Murphy recorded the killing of a huge kangaroo 7 feet 9 inches in height with a tail 3 feet 9 inches long, with a circumference of 15 inches. Although he admired the hawk as 'the finest bird of prey he ever saw', Murphy had no qualms about killing one. The party also ate their own bullocks and wild buffaloes. Worse than lack of food was lack of water, which caused Phillips' tongue to swell out of his mouth and turn 'completely black'.

Although Leichhardt seems to have found Murphy's insolence increasingly hard to take, Murphy makes fewer criticisms of him than did Phillips, who thought the expedition unnecessarily delayed by the leader's dithering. When food was short, Leichhardt ordered his men to eat 'putrid' emu meat, which Phillips claimed 'nearly killed two of us by producing violent vomiting and excruciating pains in the stomach'. After his men suffered a second bout of illness Leichhardt finally relented and gave the emu meat to the dog. Earlier Leichhardt cut up the body of a dead horse. Phillips, sarcastically referring to his leader's 'usual attention to economy', considered it fortunate that the rider had not died 'as there is little doubt but the poor fellow would have been converted into food'.

Both journals provide useful descriptions of encounters with Aborigines. Despite the failure to understand each other, usually these encounters were friendly if noisy. Often the Aborigines would run away and watch from a distance, rather than confront the party. Phillips agreed with Murphy that the Aborigines were 'frightened at our cattle and horses'. Gifts were sometimes exchanged. Sometimes the two Aborigines on the party, Harry Brown and Charley Fisher, would mediate, but nearly always the gesticulations of the Aborigines showed that they wished Leichhardt's party to move on. Charley's 'great sense of locality' proved helpful, but when he fell out with Leichhardt and hit him twice in the face, Leichhardt ordered him out of the camp. Brown followed him but, after growing 'tired of bushing it', both soon returned. Charley also blamed other Aborigines for spearing a horse, but the injuries seemed caused by his tomahawk. The journals also describe Aboriginal camps and practices (men from one tribe seemed to have been circumcised) and generally paint the tribes met along the way in favourable terms. Phillips described one group as 'beyond comparison the finest set of Aborigines we have yet seen' and Leichhardt named one creek Kooembong, the Aboriginal word for moonlight. Phillips even showed understanding for an incident that occurred on the night of 28 June 1845 when, in the absence of a night watch, Aborigines attacked and killed Gilbert. Phillips accused Charley and Harry of interfering with one of the women of the tribe and described the attack as a 'natural retaliation' for the 'insult'.

The helpfully annotated text is enhanced by well-chosen photographs and a good index. The whole enterprise demonstrates, once again, the careful scholarship for which Dan Sprod is renowned. Anyone interested in the exploration of early Australia, and Aboriginal history, cannot fail to benefit from reading this book.

Stefan Petrow

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Vol 54, no 1

April 2007

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