

The "Grange"

Alma D. McKay

Cartwright Creek, marking the boundary between Hobart and Tarroona, together with the point jutting into the river just south of the creek, perpetuates the name of the family most closely associated with the early history of this area.

The Grange Avenue subdivision, on the lower side of the highway, covers much of the original properties of John, George and Sarah Cartwright. They were the builders and most influential occupiers of the old house which gave its name to the avenue and subdivision.

In the early 1820s George Cartwright acquired land from James Nairn and, following application to the Caveat Board in 1836, was granted title deeds in 1839 to 35 of Nairn's original 100 acre location. On the 22nd March 1827 George purchased a further 90 acres from Henry James Emmett. This he sold to Henry Lloyd in 1830, only to be bought back by his brother, John, in 1839.

By 1839 the Cartwright brothers had obtained the title to 280 acres, covering much of present day Tarroona, south to the vicinity of Tarroona Crescent. When John died in India, in 1840, he left his estate to his mother, with a life interest to George, who had acted as his agent.

Following a survey, carried out on the 14th March 1876, the Grange area, corresponding approximately to George's original estate, passed to Robert Gayer. The map of 1876, drawn up as a result of this survey, shows a property of 31 acres, 1 rood and 17 perches. The remainder of the original 35 acres was incorporated into the Brown's River Road, towards which George had contributed £50. This was the largest amount of money given.

This 31 acres, 1 rood and 17 perches now covers the "Keltonlea" property, the Grange Avenue subdivision of 1924, the Mary's Grange Home for the Aged, and the property south of another small intermittent creek, which was formerly owned by Dr. J. Boot. This is now the St. Josephs Family Support Centre and forms the southernmost part of the Grange Estate delineated on the 1876 Survey Plan.

All these properties on the river side of the present Channel Highway formed the mid-

nineteenth century "Grange" house and gardens estate.

The Grange House and Gardens

The original house on the Cartwright's property was reputedly a small, four roomed house. This was subsequently enlarged and replaced by a substantial house, probably of sandstone, which was further enlarged and altered by subsequent owners over a century.

The large house, built by George Cartwright, was almost certainly constructed by convicts. A more recent tenant recalls arrows and thumbmarks on the older bricks.

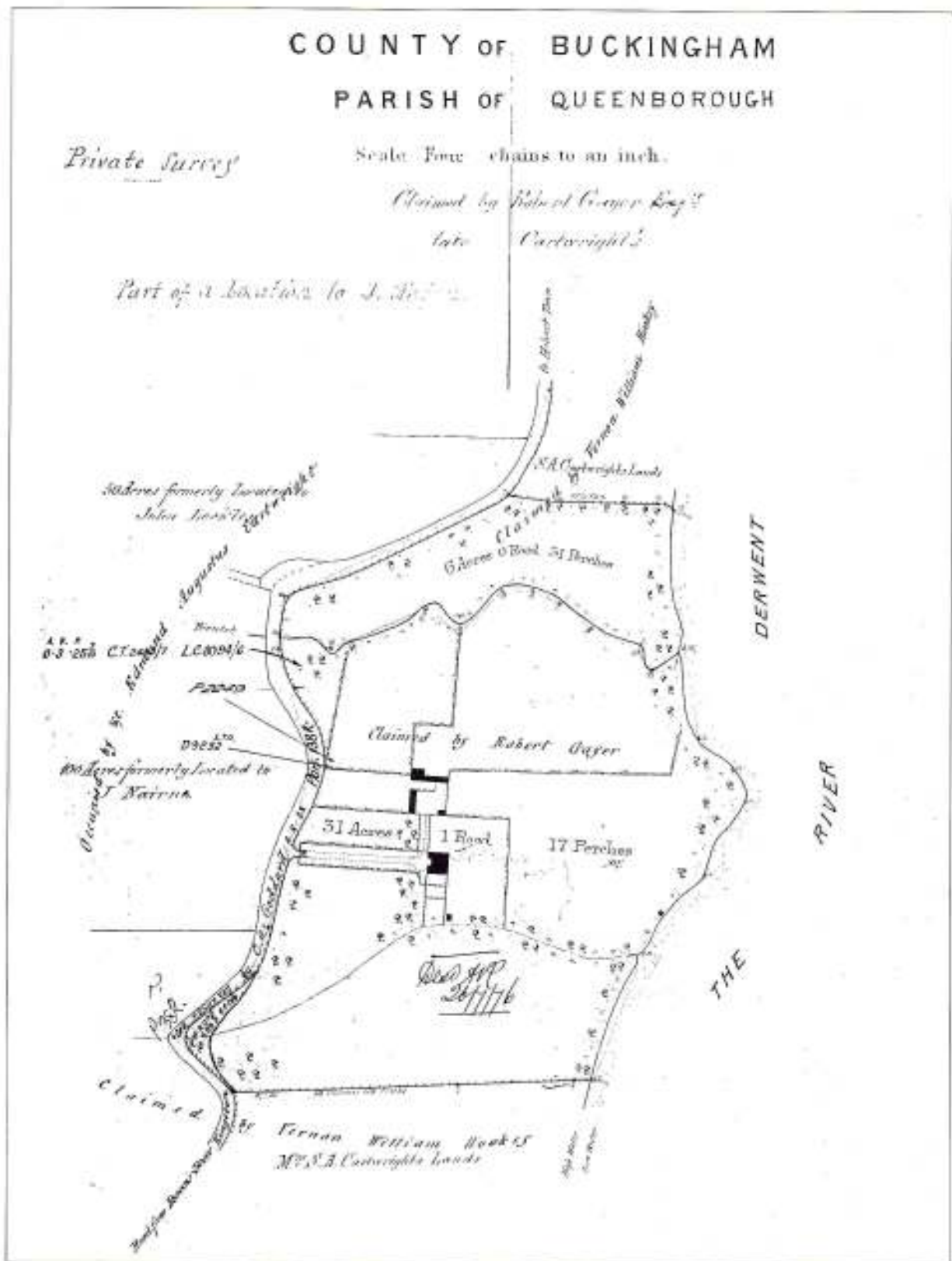
Mr Philip Nichols, who lived in the Grange for many years, claims that the house was twice raided by convicts based at the Brown's River Probation Station. Mr Nichols believes that the first attempt failed as the bells, which were operated by wires, in the menservant's quarters were pulled by the Cartwright family when they discovered the intruders. The second attempt was more successful as the convicts had disconnected the bells and had a hand truck ready to carry away their spoils.

In keeping with colonial mansions of the time, the house faced away from the sun and the view. It had a commodious basement containing a large bakehouse and baker's oven, beer and wine cellars. The large kitchen was also in the cellar, which was innovative for the time. Most kitchens were detached from the back of the house, due to the risk of fire. Unfortunately, this departure from the usual practice of the time did result in the total destruction of the old house in 1868, when "it is conjectured the fire was caused by some joisting communicating with the kitchen flue igniting".

There was also accommodation in the basement for a butler and maids, who, according to Mr Philip Nichols, were brought out from England on a five yearly basis up until 1925. The manservants occupied separate quarters which were later converted into a separate dwelling, but demolished when Grange Avenue was constructed in 1924.

A series of stone archways in the basement of the main house were repeated on the ground floor of the house in attractive cedar. This timber was used throughout the house.

The position of the "Grange" mansion in the social whirl of late nineteenth century Hobart no doubt culminated when the



1876 Survey Plan showing the boundaries of the Grange Estate.

VOL. 19, FOLIO 22, BUCKINGHAM. SURVEY DIVISION. DEPARTMENT LANDS PARKS AND WILDLIFE.

ballroom was added by Mr Becker in the 1870s. This was reputedly a twenty first birthday present for a daughter. It was still used by the Nichols family in the 1920s when they hosted charity balls. However, during the depression this ballroom was divided from the main building when the connecting passages were demolished and it became a separate residence. It was lived in by Mr Fred Mitchell until he moved to "Keltonlea". The original decorative marble fire place is still in existence, in the Sandy Bay unit of Mrs Griggs, but the original chandeliers were apparently destroyed when the fires of 1967 razed "Keltonlea".

When the original house was burnt down on the 23rd December 1868 it was still owned by the Cartwrights, but was being used as a lodging house by a Mr Purkiss. The *Evening Mail* of the 23rd December 1868 describes how

This morning one of the most beautiful of our suburban residences was burned down. It was that of the late Mr. Cartwright, a well known retired barrister. This residence, named the "Grange", was situated about 6 miles from town, on the road to Kingston. It was in a complete state of ignition when the 'Southern Cross' came up the river and intelligence of the fire was conveyed to the keeper of the Insurance Company's engines by Mr. Livingston of Queenborough, but the whole was nearly consumed before the engines could reach the spot. The premises were at present occupied by Mr. Purkiss, formerly of Liverpool St. If not insured it must be a very severe loss to Mrs. Cartwright, the widow of the gentleman who built this handsome mansion. Mr. Morrison, Principal of the Scotch College, Geelong, came by the 'Southern Cross' to take possession of the building, and was just in time to see it in flames.

The *Launceston Examiner* also featured the fire, while the *Mercury* on the 2nd January 1869 described how

Early on the morning of Wednesday, the 23rd ult., a three storied stone dwelling house at Queenborough, belonging to Mr. Cartwright, occupied as a boarding house by Mrs. Purkiss, and known as the Grange, was destroyed by fire. The fire was first discovered by Mrs. Purkiss, who, on opening the door of a room, had enough to do to escape the flames which instantly burst forth. It is conjectured the fire was caused by some joisting communicating with the kitchen flue igniting. The furniture, with the exception of that in the room where the fire originated, was saved, but the house was completely gutted, there being no water available. The

building was insured, but not the furniture.

It would appear that the house was rebuilt soon after the fire, reputedly an exact replica on the same site. The survey plan of 1876 clearly shows the house and stables, together with an adjoining building.

After this rebuilding the stucco finish, evident in a photograph taken in 1949, may have been added, perhaps to cover the blackened original sandstone. The ballroom is also evident in the left of this photograph as a detached dwelling.

As mentioned earlier the property was acquired by Mr Robert Gayer after the survey of the 14th March 1876. Over the next eighty years it was owned and occupied by various families, but always retained its reputation for gracious living, and its importance as a beautiful mansion.

The last owner of the property as a whole was the late J.W. Nichols. Norman, in his book *Pioneer Shipping*, describes one of Mr Nichols' first tasks on entering into possession

was to clear away much of the old and somewhat sombre woodings and commence the planting of more ornamental trees and shrubs along the carriage drives, pathways, terraces and lawns. The object was to recapture the charm of an Old-World garden which the growth of native trees had taken away. Not the least of such improvements are a series of ornamental ponds in free-stone and Tasmanian red granite, the effect being very pleasing.

Mr Nichols next constructed a road down to the small beach and a contemporary writer describes the new road as traversing "old garden walls and winding among hawthorn hedges". Some of these attractive "old-world" features are still evident.

From the beach the original, hand hewn sandstone steps remain. These were used when goods were transported by boat from Hobart Town.

Large sandstone blocks in the creek behind the Grange site are reputedly remnants of a dam which stored surplus winter water for use in the extensive gardens and fountains. The main water supply came in wooden pipes from the Oakleigh estate.

The Cartwright Family

The fortunes of George Cartwright had changed for the worse early in the nineteenth



"Grange House" showing the Ball Room on the far left, 1949.

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Houses and Properties

century. Before the acquisition of the properties in Queenborough, he had been granted land at Sorell and had acquired properties in New Norfolk and Launceston and also on the east coast. He had business and property links with several prominent Hobart citizens, including the legal firm of Allport and Roberts.

However, in 1839 he severed his connection with Joseph Allport, and it appears that there were problems at the Grange property as the estate was assigned to creditors. George was declared insolvent and much of the property was sub-let.

By 1838, 28 acres of the farm adjoining Cartwright Creek were let to F. Lipscombe who established the "Pineapple" Nursery. Extensive advertisements in the *Colonial Times* on the 17th April and 8th May 1838 offer many varieties of fruit and European forest trees, together with vegetables and flower seeds.

The *Hobart Town Gazette* of the 14th and 21st January 1842 advertised the property "without the least reserve". Lot 1 was described as:

That splendid Estate, comprising 280 acres of Land at Cray Fish Point, known as the "Grange", together with the Family Mansion and extensive Garden; the latter is let to Mr. Lipscombe for £80 per annum, on a lease, of which 4½ years are unexpired.

As this Property has for several years excited general admiration, it is only necessary to state that the approach to it by the new Brown's River Road will be complete in a few weeks.

Lot 2 consisted of a "Life Policy of £1,000, assured in the 'Alliance British and Foreign Company' ... [which] has been paid to June last".

The remaining lots, 3 to 6 were described as:

LOTS 3, 4, and 5.

Fifty five acres of Land on this side of the "Grange", fronting on the Derwent, which will be divided into three parcels; the two first bounded by the road, and extending to the Derwent, one containing about seven acres, the other four [acres], the whole of which is in cultivation; the other part comprises forty-four acres, fronting the road on the opposite side, a plan of which may be seen at the Auctioneer's.

Lot 6.

A Life Interest in about six acres of Gardens, below the "Grange", known as Hopwood's, now let for £13 per annum.

The property was not sold and George Cartwright was still living at the Grange in 1853 when his son Henry applied for a clerkship. Another son, John, applied for a position with the Marine department on the 25th May 1855, while also still living at the Grange.

On the 1876 map the nurseries, along with the rest of the Grange property, was claimed by Robert Gayer. This was obviously successful as subsequent title deeds to all areas of the former Grange properties contain Gayer's name and mention the 31 acres, 1 rood and 17 perches, which, with the area taken out for the Brown's River Road, formed the 35 acres of Cartwright's original property.

The nurseries continued beside Cartwright Creek until late in the nineteenth century. They were reborn again briefly in the 1950s when Dr. Firth, then residing at "Keltonlea", let a dutchman develop approximately 10 acres as a market garden, after sheep and cattle had proved inefficient in keeping down the grass. Present residents remember the extensive vegetable gardens and cows in this little oasis, so close to the city.

1967 Bushfires

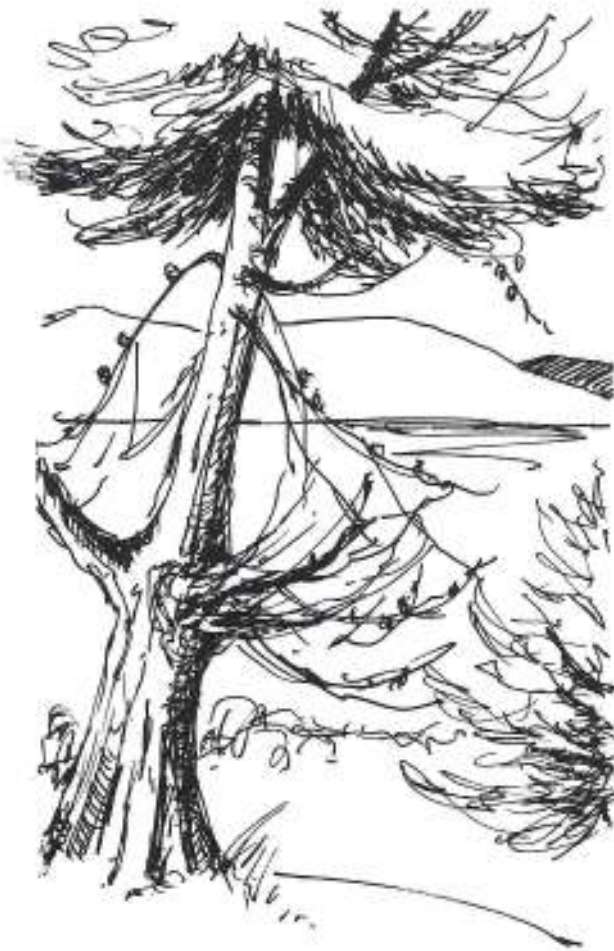
The ideal conditions of soil and aspect, together with an exceptional year climatically, resulted in extreme growth in 1966-67 and the area around Cartwright Creek was devastated in the bushfires of February 1967. The old weatherboard house, "Keltonlea", was razed, together with the more substantial sandstone outbuildings of the "Grange". These had been converted into a comfortable home belonging to the late artist, Rosamund McCulloch. This home was the "charming little rough stone cottage" which was sketched by Fearn Rowntree.

"Keltonlea" was replaced by a modern brick home. The sandstone walls of the old stables were rebuilt into a modern house which still directly abutted the very substantial sandstone and brick wall reputedly built by convicts. This wall separated "Keltonlea", which overlooked the old nursery, from the "Grange" mansion's gardens.

Miss Rowntree hoped "that if extensions [became] necessary to the Grange itself, they [would] be carried out with the same attention to the blending of the new with the old" as the pre-bushfires conversion of the stables.

Unfortunately this was not to be. The stables were reconstructed in a very modern style. After the destruction of the gardens in the 1967 bushfires, the Roman Catholic church decided that the old house, with its later unsympathetic weatherboard extensions, was a fire risk and unsuitable to house the elderly. So the old mansion was demolished, to be replaced by the modern rest home, ideal for its present use, but so out of keeping with the old-world, English atmosphere of the rest of the Avenue.

With the demolition of the old "Grange" homestead the last material link with the Cartwright family was removed. Their name is perpetuated only in the waterfront home, now belonging to Mrs Solomon, and in the geographic features of the Cartwright Creek and Point at the northern end of the small beach.



"Hillgrove"

Rowena and Dan Buckingham

This residence, situated directly opposite the Shot Tower on the Channel Highway, is sited on a small plateau of sandstone in a sheltered position facing north-east and has expansive views of the river Derwent from Tranmere to Opossum Bay, the Iron Pot and Betsey Island. Much of the land is steep and wooded and part was cleared to pasture and orchards.

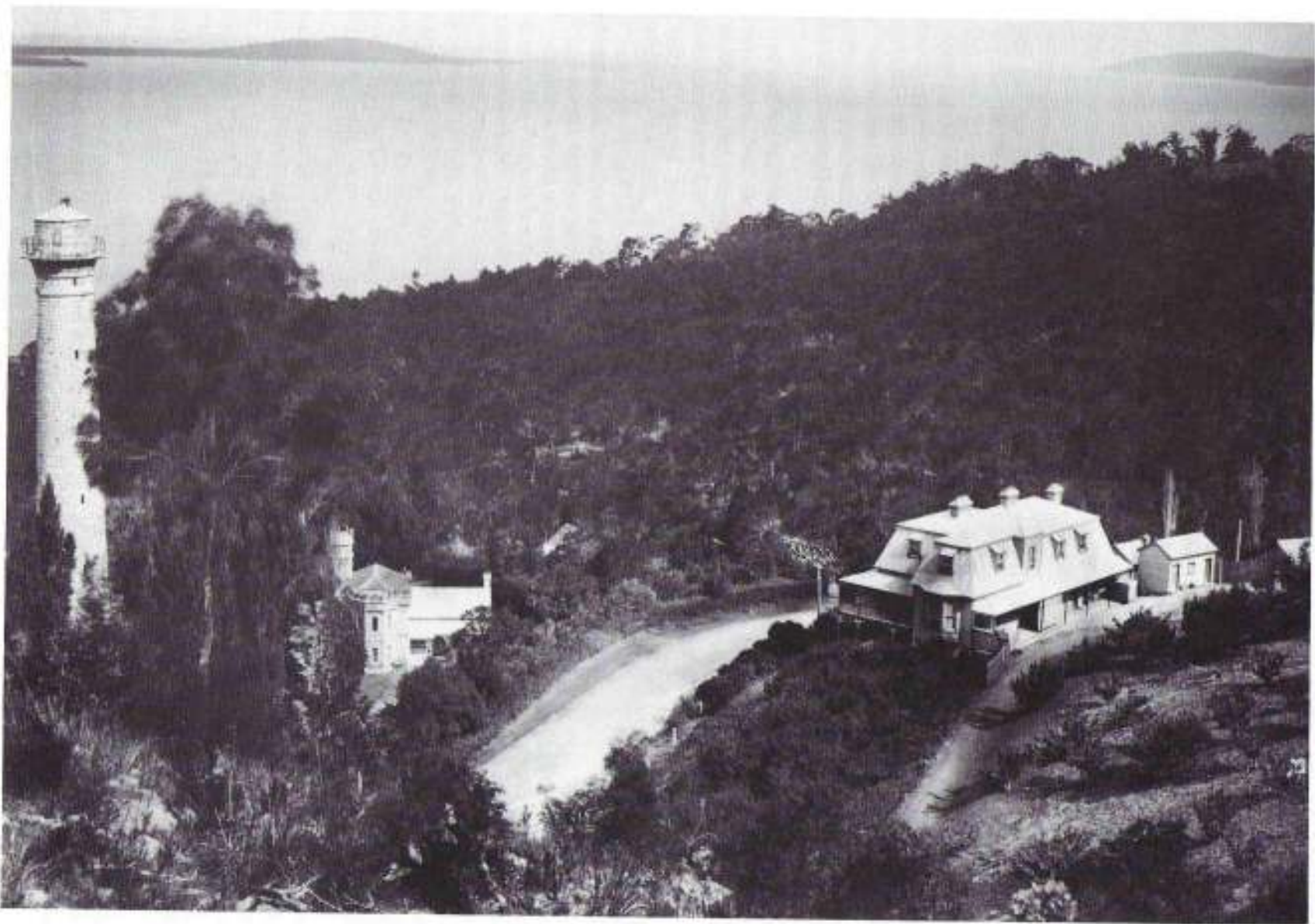
Originally the property comprised 129 acres which were granted to Henry Bilton. On the 29th February 1844¹ it was sold to William Proctor as it adjoined his 1560 acre grant to the north. This 129 acres comprised a narrow strip which ran from the Channel Highway, up and over the hill and down to Proctor's Road, with its northern boundary running parallel to William Proctor's grant of 1560 acres.

On the 16th March 1866² Sarah Proctor the widow of William Proctor, sold the Channel Highway frontage comprising 64 acres to one Andrew Livingstone. As William Proctor was more interested in his land along Proctor's Road it seems unlikely that he developed Henry Bilton's original 129 acres, and so it is assumed that when Andrew Livingstone purchased the 64 acres in 1866 he set out to erect the first dwelling, a brick cottage.

Built upon substantial sandstone foundations from locally made sandstock bricks and sandstone sills and lintels, it remains much the same and is well preserved. Walls and ceilings are lathe and plaster and the restored woodwork is pine and cedar. There are seven open fire places and an original cast iron wood stove remains in a pantry.

On the 9th May 1878³ Andrew Livingstone sold the 64 acre property to Lt. Charles Edward Beddome and it became known as "Hillgrove", the name of the Beddome's property in Queensland, and also the ancestral home in England. Lt. Beddome was educated at Harrow, England, before joining the Royal Navy and later the East India Company. He was for some years prior to coming to Tasmania a resident of Queensland, where for a while he was acting as Government Resident at Somerset, Torres Straits.

During the construction of the huge



View of "Hillgrove" with the Shot Tower and Tower House on the left, c1900.

weatherboard extension onto the original brick cottage and the building of the Mansard roof, the family lived at the "Grange" in Taroona, whilst the owners were holidaying in England. There were seven children, five daughters and two sons, educated by a governess at the house and later at Friends school.

Lt. Beddome was a recognised conchologist and was reported at the time "to have one of the most perfect private collections of shells South of the Line". The Museum of Natural History in London has this collection. He was a fellow of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, Fellow of the Royal Society of Tasmania and contributed many important papers relating to conchology to the above societies. He was also one of the original members of the Fisheries Commission of the Colony and an enthusiastic stamp and coin collector. Interestingly, several rare coins have been found by the present owners during restoration.

Whilst cleaning the original Baltic pine walls of shellac in the present sitting room which faces north-east and has French doors opening onto the verandah, we have found a difference in colouration left by rows and rows of shelves on which Lt. Beddome must have stored his shells.

Lt. Beddome died on the 1st September 1898, aged 59, at "Hillgrove". He and his wife Elizabeth were buried in the Queenborough Cemetery.

The property was conveyed to Richard Brandon Beddome, the eldest son on the 1st April 1891 for £2120⁴. On the 2nd November 1908⁵ the house and 64 acres was purchased by William Dixon who established an extensive orchard. One can assume from a photograph taken at the time that this became a thriving commercial venture, and several large sheds were built to store the fruit produced.

These buildings which were situated on the left hand side of the entrance to "Hillgrove" were also reputedly a jam factory, as an elderly lady remembers in the early 1900s whilst travelling from Hobart to Kettering by pony and trap, stopping to buy jam.

During the Depression and the War years the property changed hands several times and fell into disrepair, although a tea-room operated for several years in a downstairs dining room. Unfortunately, little is known of this period, until in 1950 Mr Rush purchased

the property and converted it to 3 or 4 flats. At this stage there were 10 water tanks, but no septic tank or sewerage. Several bathrooms with skillion roofs were added to the western side of the house, and metal fire escapes. At the time of the 1967 Bush Fires, a resident, Mrs Marie Mouchet, described the fire as "dangerously close". Several outbuildings burned to the ground, and practically all the fruit trees were destroyed. For over thirty years the house remained flats, and became extremely dilapidated, until in 1981 the present owners began the conversion to a family home.

The house is architecturally interesting and unique and although found in a state of "decaying splendour" is responding well to a sympathetic restoration programme. Major work has been completed such as re-wiring, plumbing, installation of a new kitchen, bathrooms, and much restoration of plaster, doors, windows and woodwork. Because of the attractive window areas in the weatherboard (north) wing of the building, the main living areas are situated there. These large rooms are baltic pine lined, and unusual to the style of architecture at that time, there are no connecting corridors, but rather, a series of kauri pine staircases and landings serving this purpose, which are a feature of the house. There are five fire places in this part of the house, four in use. Eighty five feet of verandahs enable uninterrupted views of the River Derwent. There are also four bedrooms situated upstairs in the Mansard roof.

The present owners are pleased to have embarked upon this project, to have preserved a small part of Tasmania's history, and hope to complete it in the near future.

References

1. 2/6940 DO.
2. 5/4006 DO.
3. 6/4081 DO.
4. 8/6154 DO.
5. 11/9055 DO.

