

“Oakleigh”

Félicienne A. Marsland

I first came to know and love “Oakleigh” when I was a very small child. It was a familiar and welcome sight to us as we rounded the sharp corner of Sandy Bay Road at Cartwright Point, en route to Kingston, to spend time with our grandmother.

We always stopped at Uncle Bertie’s for afternoon tea, and then had a marvellous run around the dairy farm. “Uncle Bertie”, as I have referred to him, was a very old family friend and a great grandson of William Rumney, who had “Acton” on Mt. Rumney granted to him when he arrived on the “Berwick” in 1823. “Oakleigh” was one of several dairy and mixed farms on Brown’s River Road, as the Channel Highway was known. These farms were not particularly large holdings, but if well looked after and permanent pasture laid their yields were good.

The valley in which “Oakleigh” lay was very green and sunny, with well kept fencing, hawthorn hedges and ornamental, deciduous trees. Especially oak trees were numerous on both sides of the road and one felt a little bit of England had been established.

In the early 1920s the main building was in good repair, as were all the outbuildings. During my uncle’s stay at “Oakleigh”, where he died in 1951, he improved the property greatly. The present farmhouse still has a charm about it, but naturally the owners have made additions to suit their needs.

The original small cottage was built by James Nairne, who received a Location Order from the Governor for 100 acres in 1813. This reached from the Derwent, up into the foothills of Mt. Nelson and part of Cartwright Creek. I presume after clearing the land that Nairne would have built the cottage within six months.

This actual cottage is incorporated into the main building of “Oakleigh”, now 5 Oakleigh Avenue, and is the front gable nearest the Channel Highway. This part of the house is still standing on the roughly hewn tree stumps, which formed its foundations. The original interior and exterior walls have been retained where possible and just faced over to look presentable. The original rough, hand hewn, wide huon pine floor boards are also intact,

although a little uneven in places. The doorways of the early cottage and later additions are very low, but the exterior doorways have been heightened over the years.

Now to the history of “Oakleigh” and some of its various owners and tenants. James Nairne sold his property to George Cartwright in c 1821. In January 1823 Cartwright attempted to rent the property, but it is not known to whom it was leased. According to a survey conducted in March 1876 it was occupied by Edmund Augustus Cartwright.

“Oakleigh” continued to be rented out and leased as a mixed farm to various tenants, including Mr Fenner, who was a delightful gentleman and brought up his family there. I have met Mr Fenner’s son who informed me that they came from Richmond to take over “Oakleigh”. They were the longest tenants on the property, living there from the late nineteenth century until its sale to B.L. Rumney.

“Oakleigh” stayed in the Cartwright family until 1921, when it became the property of Bertrand Lancelot Rumney and his family. He had been renting the “Grange” for many years and was determined to acquire either the “Grange” or “Oakleigh” as he loved the locality and the area was sheltered from frosts for early cropping. They actually moved “lock, stock and barrel” across the Brown’s River Road in 1920 before the property transfer was completed.

After they had settled into “Oakleigh” their main concern was increasing the herd for dairying. The first things that were attended to were the outbuildings because over all the years that the property had been leased they had fallen into disrepair.

The problem on all properties in those early days was a permanent water supply. Uncle Bertie dammed the Cartwright Creek high above the paddocks, near an area called the “Den”. He then ran piping down beside Cartwright Creek, and constructed two more dams so that the farm had permanent water. This scheme of reticulation kept the whole property well irrigated. The many natural springs were also a compensation in water. One large spring was made into a very deep well to service the dairy and cow sheds.

Late in 1925, when Mr J. Nichols bought the “Grange”, a financial arrangement was made so that the lower property had water as

“Taroona House” & Crescent

Richard Walch

well. Another important project was the renewing of a little railway which ran down from Mt. Nelson to the old quarry gate on the Hobart side of Cartwright Creek. This railway had small trucks, into which wood was loaded for fence posts and firewood. Just inside the white gate at the quarry Bertrand Rumney had a saw bench which he and Mr Charlie Butters operated.

The “Den” was a small plateau of land nestled between the foothills of Mt. Nelson. It was well up Cartwright Creek and very protected. Originally there was a three room cottage and an old garden, with a very old mulberry tree. This was part of “Oakleigh”. Except for a row of huts for the milkrun boys near the stable, the cottage on the “Den” was the only other permanent dwelling. Charlie Butters and his family lived there and he was permanently employed by my uncle. He and his wife had a very large family of twelve boys and one girl.

Judging from its appearance and its foundations, the cottage on the “Den” would have been built between 1835 and 1845. It was destroyed by fire in the 1930s. One reached it via a very muddy drive near the quarry. The old gate on this drive stood for many years, but the 1967 fires destroyed it, as well as “Oakleigh’s” gate. The lower section of the walking track through Truganini Park follows the old walkway to the “Den”.

The farm of “Oakleigh” continued quite happily with its well fed herd of friesian cattle, until the third year of the second world war. At that time my uncle was constantly harassed by shortages. Fodder, petrol, fertilizers and employees were all hard to obtain, and becoming more difficult by the month. He was certainly not ready to retire, but realised that the writing was on the wall. “How long would the war last” and then “how long before things became normal again”? This whole situation was one he looked at from every angle. He deliberated on it for eighteen months in all. One matter that forced the issue of selling the property was the fact that his two sons had told him during leave from services that they did not intend to run the farm when the war was over. He then realised that the property would have to go. He was literally broken hearted because everything he had done was in the hope that one of the Rumneys would take over, and so “Oakleigh” was sold.

My wife and I had made the decision to return to Tasmania in May 1954 and retire from my Regular Army life.

We wanted a family home in Hobart and during the week following our decision we were told that “Taroona House” was on the market. We promptly responded, inspected, and purchased two days later, and have enjoyed it ever since.

Earlier school boy recollections of the area were camping as a cub on the verandah of a cottage, on the bank, very close to the present Scout facilities on the edge of the Park. The trip on the Webster Rometch bus was viewed as a major excursion.

What had we purchased? We had to find out what had led to the existence of our new home. As fifth generation Tasmanians our experience of the Island had been in the country and parts of Hobart other than Taroona. In December 1884 certain lands including the land on which “Taroona House” stands were sold by Vernon William Hookey to Sarah Ann Cartwright.

On the 15th January 1885 James William Poynter (Trustee of the Estate of the late V.W. Hookey) with Charlotte Ann Cartwright and Mary Cartwright sold 18 acres and 1 rood of the land to Clarendon James Cox Lord for £450. This land was bounded on the southern side by a creek and a property owned by the Estate of the late Sheila Seal and later owned by Easter; on the western side by the Hobart-Kingston Road; on the northern side by a creek and a property owned by A.D. Watchorn through which a track ran to a beach Reserve on the River Derwent, and on the eastern side by a sandy beach on the banks of the River Derwent.

Lord named the property “Taroona” which is the Aboriginal name of the Chiton shell commonly found on the beach and in the shallow waters in the area.

Taroona lasted as the locality name until the 19th June 1941 when it was proclaimed a Town and gazetted accordingly.

During the period January 1895 - September 1897 the residence now known as “Taroona House” was constructed. Some of our parents’ contemporaries have told us of their

Houses and Properties

happy memories of youthful parties at this house.

C.J.C. Lord sold to Edward Simon Arnett, farmer of Taroona, on the 1st May 1913. Of interest, his daughter is Lady Wright, whose husband, Sir Reginald Wright, is a well known Tasmanian Senator and Barrister.

On the 1st June 1920 Arnett sold to Benjamin John Watkins for £2,200. In the 27 years that followed the Watkins developed their farm and the "Taroona Beach Estate" which today is known as Taroona Crescent, and what a happy and closely knit community it is.

B. J. Watkins and his wife, Mary Jane Watkins, had three children, Harold Benjamin, Gladys and Dorothy Wilhelmina. B.J.Watkins and his son H.B. carried on the business as Drapers in Murray Street, Hobart, and were well known and respected in their field during the first half of the century. Gladys married Williams, is 89 this year and lives at St Ann's, Davey Street. Mrs William's eldest is Mrs Barbara Dando of 25 Yardley Street, Hobart, then Trevor Williams of 3 Impara Drive, Oyster Cove, and her youngest is Mrs Wendy Garwood, (Mrs Roy) of New Norfolk.

Dorothy married Champion, she was called "Doll", and was Post Mistress at Taroona for many years and lived in the building known as the "Taroona Tea House" which was the basis of the Huizing Supermarket in the 1960s and 70s. She ran a General Grocery which developed into a Post Office and Telephone Exchange on the corner of the Main Road and Taroona Crescent. Doll now lives at St Ann's but, sadly, does not enjoy very good health.

"Taroona" as a small farming property was very viable for its size-36 milkers supported the milk round operating in the Sandy Bay area under the name of Watkins. In addition they had pigs, poultry, two apricot orchards, pears and Florence cherries. They also ran some horses and grew and cut hay for feed.

Nostalgic talks with Mrs Williams and her family have covered the front door bell where she, like we, get amusement from the long, complicated wire system and the ultimate clanging where only gravity stops the sprung bell coming to rest. The large sliding doors between the dining and sitting rooms have been well preserved and this was obviously a satisfaction to her. She reminded us

particularly of her family walking to the Sandy Bay Tram Terminus to catch the tram when going to town, the stile at the bottom of the orchard which was climbed when going to the beach, the gate on the main road clearly signed "TAROONA" which led through the avenue of pines to the house, and the flag pole in the front of the house which fulfilled its purpose on appropriate occasions.

During 1946-47-48 the Watkins Family Estate was subdivided and this is known as Taroona Crescent today. The buyers of the lots, the sub-divisional plan, the prices paid and most of the names of the occupiers of the properties since then are shown hereunder.

During the course of the sub-division, "Taroona House" and the accompanying lots were sold to Dr. Charles Robert David Brothers on 31 March 1947. Dr. Brothers moved from New Norfolk with his family bringing a substantial number of shrubs from his well established New Norfolk garden and most of these remain very much larger and well preserved today. He was prominent in the Mental Health Services in Tasmania for many years.

On the 10th September 1951, Dr. Brothers sold to Mrs Nella Kate St. Leger.

On the 3rd May 1954 Mrs St. Leger sold to Richard Fleming Walch and Elizabeth Mary Walch and the property remains in their family Company, Glenperro Pty Ltd, today.





Taroona House c 1930.

PHOTO BY COURTESY MRS G. WILLIAMS.

TAROONA CRESCENT

POSTAL NO/ LOT NO	LAND PURCHASED BY	LAND PURCHASE PRICE £	NAME OF OCCUPIER FROM YEAR	PREVIOUS OCCUPIERS
1/31	G. Williams	400 for lots 28a 30& 31	Presbyterian now Uniting Church since 1950	
2/34	C.Kingston	182	W.A. & H.C. Vermey since June 1967	
3/30	G.Williams	above	R & J Brearton since 1968	Watkins and Champion
4/35	I.C. Cracknell	186	F.G. Kuipers since 1975	I.C. Cracknell & D. Farquhar
5/29	A.R. Dowd	238 for 28 & 29	L.Barker year not known	
6/36	R.B. Shaw	178	Mr and Mrs N.O.W. Birt since June 1948	
7/28	A.R. Dowd	above	R.N.D. Reid since 1973	Henri
8/37	R.B. Shaw	154	Mrs J. Barnett since 1984	R. Kimber and N. McKinnon
9/27	M. Glover	430 for 25 26 & 27	Mrs F. Dickenson Smith since 1956	
10/38	C. Kingston	178	H. Turner since September 1956	A. Henry
11/26	M. Glover	above	F.P. Fister since 1972	Dr. Geoff L. Hurburgh Mr and Mrs Saunders Mr and Mrs M.E. Button
-/39	Frank Shaw	178	THIS IS "BATCHELOR WAY"	

TAROONA CRESCENT (Continued)

POSTAL NO/ LOT NO	LAND PURCHASED BY	LAND PURCHASE PRICE £	NAME OF OCCUPIER FROM YEAR	PREVIOUS OCCUPIERS
13/25	M. Glover	above	C & A.E.Powell since 1982	M. Hodgson Mrs F.G. Downie from 1956-1973 Mr & Mrs F. Allison 1974-81
14/40	A.R. Dowd	162	J. Clark year not known	K. Boss Walker R. Kimber
15/64	Dr. C.R.D. Brothers	2400 for 62, 63, 64 and 65	R.F. & E.M. Walch since May 1954	Included in this article
16/41	L.S. Smith	160	year not known	
17/63	Dr. Brothers	above	see No 15 but 17 used as postal address	
18/42	G.J. Upchurch	160	Mr & Mrs K.R. Short since 1980	A. Gillian Withers for 6 months
19/62	Dr. Brothers	above	see No 15	
20/43	C.S. Hogarth	160	Mrs B.M. Scott-Power since 1967	R. Helm
21/61	G.M. Hope	160	P.K. Rayner year not known	Proctor
22/44	T.W. Graves	160	E.R. Hunt since 1980	T. Graves
23/60	E.M. Morey	150	D. McElligott since 1957	Mrs Lewis, Burns, then Bedford
24/45	W.D. Williams	160	Inmalese Bakker year not known	Mrs Turnbull, Mrs O. Bender
25/59	A.V. Morey	150	Mrs E.J. Lane year not known	
26/46	W.J. Kyle	160	Mr and Mrs M. Woolley since 1979	Mr Kyle, Sutton, H. & A. Peters, N. & M. Skegg, Major & Mrs T. Vincent, Mr & Mrs K. Lawrie

TAROONA CRESCENT (Continued)

POSTAL NO/ LOT NO	LAND PURCHASED BY	LAND PURCHASE PRICE £	NAME OF OCCUPIER FROM YEAR	PREVIOUS OCCUPIERS
27/58	H.W. Trydgett	174	Mrs J. Grant since 1986	G. Ripper, D. Lee
28/47 & half 48	R.M. Ross	310 for 47 and 48	Mrs R.L. Browlie since July 1947	
29/57	J.I. Brown	250	Dr. & Mrs L.B. Holmes since 19 October 1972	Mr & Mrs S.R. Hornsby 1953-72
30/49& half 48	J.P. Quinn	137 & above for 47 & 48	N.J. Bayles since July 1947	
31/74	H.A. Christie	260	Mrs J.A. Jackson since 1964	Mrs N. Jones
32/50	R.I. Smith	125	Mrs A.M. Illingworth since 1984	C. Vicary, F.G. Kuipers, Harrison & E. Wilson
33/73	B. Rogers	206	Mrs M.S. Farmer since 1971	Fuglsang built in 1958, then Nicholson 1966-71
34/51	E.A. Creese	250 for 51 & 52	R. & M. Mouchet since October 1986	P. Lipscombe, A. Munro, Mr Branch then Graeme & Louise Watt
35/72	I.C. Cracknell	206	A.P. & B.A. Dillon since September 1973	R. Varne
36/52	E.A. Creese	above	Mr Allan Steele, purch. 20 July 1980	E.R. Hunt 1950-60, P. & M. Sloane
37/71	S.H. Harrison	245	T. and R. Flonta since March 1983	Fuglsang
38/53	H.N. Creese	250 for 53&54	W. Grene since 1968	Barnes, Knott then L. & D. McGee
39/70	A.W. Cotterill	245	Mr W. Wilkinson since 1971	W. & A. Gaye then Prof. and Mrs Milanov
40/54	H.N. Creese	above	S. Winterbottom since 1981	T. & J. Mathers then Liebia

TAROONA CRESCENT (Continued)

POSTAL NO/ LOT NO	LAND PURCHASED BY	LAND PURCHASE PRICE £	NAME OF OCCUPIER FROM YEAR	PREVIOUS OCCUPIERS
41/69	J.P. Quinn	230	L. & T. Watts year not known	
42/55	J.W. Gillie	125	Mrs D.J. Cameron since 1947	J. & E. Gillie since 1947
43/68	C.S. Hogarth	160		Lewis then J. Harris
44/56	C.E. Travers	110	Mr & Mrs A. Gallia since 1948	
45/67	K.W. Hallam	178	D. Sherman since 1980	G. Walker then C. Roberts
46/75 & 76	G.R. Bester	560 for 75 & 76	G.R. Bester since 1947	
47/66	C. Kingston	155	Mr & Mrs A.C. Blackwood since 1947	
48/77	H.C. Johnson	290	B. Munro year not known	
49/65	Dr. Brothers	above	Mr and Mrs J.F. Lacy since 1974	B. Harvey then B.W. Hogan 65-73
50/78	H.R. Thomas	265	Mrs E.F. Ward since 1953	K. Boss Walker then Le Plastrier

Postal Nos. 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 72, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85 and 87 have NOT been allocated

52/6	K. Boss Walker	275	Mrs E. Ware since 1946	
58/7	S.V. Owen	140	Mrs Kelly since 1976	E. Owen
60/8	H.R.S. Naylor	130	Mr D. and Mrs I.M. McCoull since 1971	
60A/9	W.D. Adams	150	Mr D. and Mrs I.M. McCoull since 1971	
62/10	H.B. Watkins	175	Mr and Mrs J. Willey year not known	

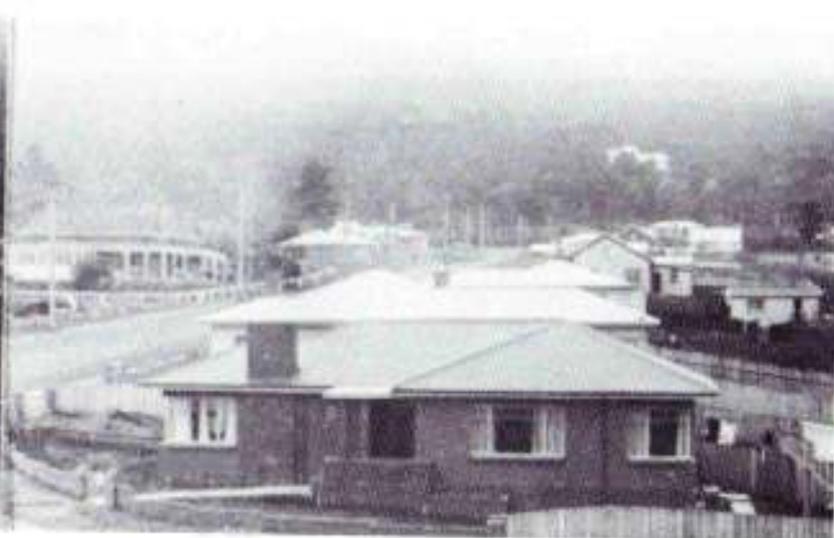
TAROONA CRESCENT (Continued)

POSTAL NO/ LOT NO	LAND PURCHASED BY	LAND PURCHASE PRICE £	NAME OF OCCUPIER FROM YEAR	PREVIOUS OCCUPIERS
62A			Mr & Mrs C. Holloway year not known	Mr and Mrs T. Sharp then Mr & Mrs R. Hurley
64/11	H.W. Beltz	175	Capt. Ford then Dr. P. Hughes year not known	
64A	J. Fullerton		Mr and Mrs C.D. Deeley since 1966	
66/12	W.J. Cotton	165	Mr and Mrs D.J. Bayles since 1985	N. Owen then Wisby then L. Headlam
68/13	B.J. Bateman	320 for 13 and 14	Diana C. Elson since 16 January 1985	S.W. Banks-Smith then Herbert Jones
70/14	B.J. Bateman	above		M. Butler
74/15	P.P. Kelly	130	Mr and Mrs R.I. Latham since 1 July 1976	R. Lehner
76/16	M.J. Shegog	150	C. & V. Margaritis since 1976	Mrs Canaan
78/17	E.J. Cruise	150	K. Hallam since February 1947	W. & B. Wells
80/18 & 19	A.M. Ashton	240 for 18 & 19	Mrs L.M. Ashton and the late Mark Ashton since 1946	
82/20 & 21	C.V. Fooks	210 for 20 and 21	Mr and Mrs C.C. Dear since 1969	C.V. Fooks 1947-48 then Miss Templeton and Mrs Asquith
84/22	N.A. Barker	120	Mr & Mrs N.A. Barker since 1946	
86/23	Frank Shaw	180 for 23 and 23a	B. and W. Dodds since 1983 but land from 1978	
88/24	R.P. Shaw	130	Mr and Mrs A. Shaw since 1947	

DEVON WALK

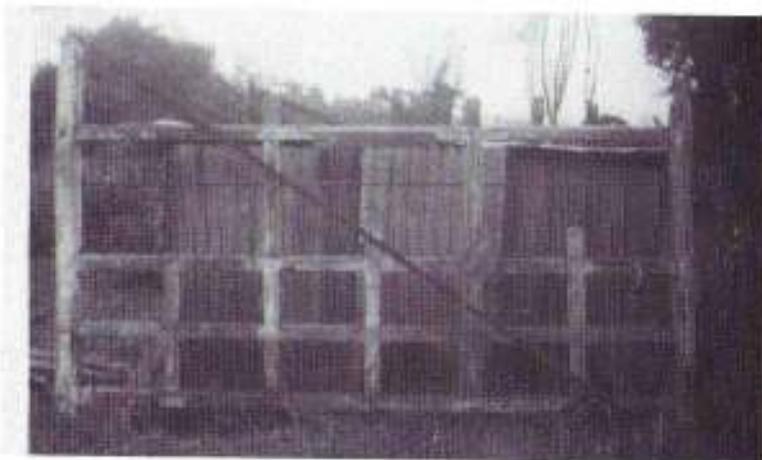
POSTAL NO/ LOT NO	LAND PURCHASED BY	LAND PURCHASE PRICE £	NAME OF OCCUPIER FROM YEAR	PREVIOUS OCCUPIERS
1/PART 7	S.V. Owen	140 for 7	Mr and Mrs G. Colbeck year not known Mr E. Jenkins built the original cottage for his European bride after World War I. The cottage was called "Daisy Dell". Mr Jenkins owned the land now known as Jenkins Street-it was then an apricot orchard through which was a Right of Way used by Devon Walk folk. The existing road "Devon Walk" was then a track for gaining access to the beach, Quarantine Station etc. It was developed to its present state after the property was sub-divided after World War II. Mr and Mrs John Dobson were occupants for a period after 1947.	
2/3	K.V. Harris	280	Mrs I.A. Fraser year not known	K.V. Harris, Mr and Mrs J. Levett then Roman Catholic Home.
3/part 7	S.V. Owen	above	Mrs M.F. McDonald since Easter 1972	Mr and Mrs Donovan Mr Banham Miss F. Greenwood Mr and Mrs Haas
4/2	W.W. Ware	275	Mr F.R. and Mrs D.M. Chappell since 1952	
5/part 7	S.V. Owen	above	Mr and Mrs D. Robinson year not known	Mr S. Owen, Mr and Mrs Raine
6			Mr and Mrs N. Johnson year not known	Mr and Mrs Collins
8	D.H. Fyfe	265	Mr and Mr D.A. Bessell since 1963	Mr and Mrs K. Webster. One of the original cottages.
10/2	R.G. Ware	280	Mr and Mrs C.V. Fooks since 1957	W. Forsythe Mr and Mrs M. Rowe
12/1	Douglas	250	Mrs J. Dawson since 1949	

Postal Nos. 7, 9 and 11 have NOT been allocated.



Panoramic view of Taroona Crescent, looking west towards the Channel Highway, c1948.

PHOTO BOB BESTER.



One of a pair of gates which stood at the entrance to "Taroona House" and the Brown's River Road. Taken 1960.

PHOTO RICHARD LORD.



Entrance to Taroona Crescent, c1958.

PHOTO GRACE DIXON.



"Taroona House", number 17 Taroona Crescent, 1970.

PHOTO AMY ACTON.