

Early Means of Transport

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Some of my earliest memories would be of my Grandfather, Dr Edward Lodewyk Crowther, who retired in the 1920s and moved to his small country house at Oyster Cove. He had lived a full and wonderful life and was much loved and revered by both his old patients and of course, his family. Even in the early thirties I guess there must have been a "rat race", otherwise I cannot understand why he would have left his comfortable home in Hobart and be content instead with a much smaller, and more isolated, humble dwelling. He did, however, and his trips to town, which were not very frequent, were always a day for us children to become excited and spruce ourselves up, because "Grandpa Doc is coming to town".

I guess that my mother would have been notified by telephone. It was my mother's job to notify Mr Broughton, who ran the livery stables somewhere in Macquarie Street. Mr Broughton would polish up a landau and his best black horses and set off early to be at Tarooma when my Grandfather would arrive in his trap. Grandfather had a rather old and unsophisticated horse, who over the years must have been quite used to the routine and headed for Tarooma where he knew the horse trough stood. This would always quench his thirst and, with a good feed of oats and a long rest, he would be ready for the return journey the next day.

In those days the road, as windy as ever, with its beautiful views of the Derwent Estuary, must have provided a tranquil and lovely journey with the gum trees shading parts of the narrow road.

They would have passed the few scattered farms, where I have no doubt exchanges were passed with the farmers about the weather and the state of the country. Then clip, clop, on to the meeting point, where the transfers were made and Mr Broughton took over.

With fresh horses and the coachman up front the spanking landau would set off to town and to our house in upper Davey Street.

For the return journey Mr Broughton would be back, probably with the same immaculate landau, and we would all wave him off, back down to Tarooma. There his own horse and

trap would be waiting, refreshed and ready for the return journey.

In those days there were farms and a few holiday cottages dotted around the sandy coves, with cherry and apricot orchards. A certain amount was still rough bush, but there were patches of fields where house cows or horses grazed. There were patches of hawthorn, no doubt planted by nostalgic English immigrants, roadside clumps of cow parsley and clover, and, of course, the old horse trough, placed there for travellers like my Grandfather.

At some stage a deal must have been struck with the owners of "Acton", because the fine old blackwood framed carriage driveway gate from that house came down to Oyster Cove, where it hangs today. It survived the bushfires of 1967 that burnt right up to the posts upon which it hung.

To other country people coming to town from the south, Tarooma must have served the same purpose, where the homeliness of the country was exchanged for the trappings of the city, and a haven for the tired horses.

