

The 12th Apostle from Maria Island Located in Taroona

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That the Eleven Apostles from Maria Island were transferred to Maria Street, New Town, is well known, but how the Twelfth found its way to Taroona has never been documented.

Maria Island has a long history, firstly as a penal settlement for convicts and later as an industrial base in the growing of grapes and in the production of cement. In the first industrial venture of growing grapes in 1884 by Signor Bernacchi, amongst other buildings erected at this time were twelve identical cottages. These were in a row on land to the east of the old Penitentiary buildings at Darlington and were built to house the workers in the vineyard and became known as the Twelve Apostles¹. With the failure of the wine industry, the cottages were once again pressed into service as housing for those who were employed at the cement works which opened in May 1920 and, owing to financial difficulties, closed in December 1929.

In 1928 or 1929 Mr John Lawrence dissolved the partnership of Lawrence and Saunders, Motor Mechanics, 104 Main Rd., New Town, Hobart, and he and his wife took up sheep farming at Chinamans Bay, Maria Island. In March 1929 he purchased one of the twelve workmen's cottages at Darlington, dismantled it and re-erected it at Chinamans Bay². When it was seen that it was practical to move the buildings, the remaining eleven were brought to Hobart and re-erected by persons unknown at New Town in a street which is now called Maria Street.

On the 20th October 1937 Mr Lawrence died and his widow decided to give up farming and moved back to Hobart. On the 25th March 1938 she purchased Lot 8, Seaview Avenue (now No. 4), from Francis John Bennett³. Mrs Lawrence had her cottage dismantled by a Mr Haigh, shipped in sections to Hobart aboard the S.S. "Kooomeela"⁴, and re-erected on her new property at Taroona⁵.

The house consisted of one large lounge-room with one bedroom off it and under the same roof at the back was a bathroom on the right and the kitchen on the left. The sunroom on the right hand side, as seen in the picture taken in 1969, was added later. In Mrs

Lawrence's time the grounds at the back were used for a vegetable garden and the front consisted of native she-oaks, daffodils in springtime, with a path leading from the picket fence to the front door. This path was edged with grape hyacinths and flanked by lilac bushes.

After Mrs Lawrence's death on the 10th October 1959 the property passed through two other people's hands⁶ until 1969, when owing to its dilapidated condition it was condemned as a habitation by the Kingborough Council and privately demolished.

References

1. Pretzman, E.R., *Some Notes on Maria Island and its Penal Settlements*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, April 1970.
2. Mrs J.T. (Sue) Lawrence, verbal history.
3. Title Deeds to the Property, DO.
4. O'May, D.G., *Song of Steam*, 1976. S.S. Kooomeela, East Coast Shipping Co., 191 tons gross, 116 feet length, built in Sydney 1912.
5. Mrs J.T. (Sue) Lawrence, verbal history.
6. Title Deeds to the Property, DO.



Mrs Lawrence's house, Chinaman's Bay, South Maria Island, 30th March, 1929.

PHOTO SUE LAWRENCE.



The Twelve Apostles, Maria Island, c1928.

CED PRETYMAN.



The Twelfth Apostle at Chinaman's Bay, Maria Island, 30th December 1929.

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The Twelfth Apostle at Number 4 Seaview Avenue, Taroona, before demolition, May 1969.

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