

Carnarvon Cemetery 1877- 19..

Just outside Port Arthur's entrance is the cemetery which, with the coming of free settlement to the peninsula after 1877 replaced that of the penal colony on the Isle of the Dead.

While holding cherished memories for descendants, the cemetery is also an historical record of the early phase of Carnarvon, as Port Arthur was then renamed.

The headstones provide a public record of those interred, some carry more detail than most 20th Century memorials. Elizabeth Blackwood (wife of the surveyor Archibald Blackwood) who died on October 21st 1891, aged 63 years, was "Born at New Forest, England".

Cemeteries also contain unmarked graves.

The Carnarvon Cemetery is unique in having a record of all those buried from 1883 to 1906, including a plan of the burial sites. This detail was collated in a "Registrar of Burials" in 1908 by P.C. Prothero, "a gentleman of Carnarvon".¹ A "gentleman", Phillip Protheroe lived at Port Arthur from 1905 to 1916.² Plots and pathways were laid out which "had hitherto been placed irregularly".

The register records for these years those whose graves were only shown by a "mound" and who are not covered by a headstone register,

Athol (Snakey) Wellard, aged 89 years, recalls "Old Man Protheroe" living in the Accountants House, Port Arthur.³

The Wellards lived next door in the Old Post Office, next to the Church⁴ where the family ran a coaching service as well as the Post Office.

The deaths recorded in the register indicate that, although the Tasman Peninsula had moved from prison to free settlement, the underlying causes had not changed.

Timber-getting accidents, drowning, infant deaths (the biggest group), child-birth, consumption and bronchitis plus heart degeneration reveal a sad continuity.

Fisherman, Andrew McArthur, 68 years, August 1888 and T.L. Wall, 41 years, March 1891, worker, and also Geo Chas Cookney.

Timber worker, John Sykes, 28 years, November 1905.

Infant deaths: F.A. Boden, 1 year, May 1887, of Long Bay, diarrhea; Thos Geo Harris, 2 years, July 1893 of Carnarvon of convulsions; Allan McGinnis, infant, January 1903, of Carnarvon, bronchitis, mould only.

Links with old Port Arthur

The interment of Thomas and Janet Ballanie plus Archibald and Elizabeth Blackwood are reminders that some officials of the convict era and some ex-prisoners stayed or returned to the Peninsula, providing a continuity from the penal to the free period.

¹ Register, Tasman Council, Nubeena

² Post Office Directory

³ Now the Education Centre

⁴ Once the Parsonage

Thomas Ballanie, as an official of the Convict Department, remained as caretaker for Port Arthur and other convict sites on the Peninsula. He also acted as Policeman and Registrar of births, etc., and Postmaster.

He purchased land for his family. Archibald Blackwood, a surveyor, originally with the Sappers and Miners, surveyed Tasman Peninsula in 1873 in preparation for the sale of land in 1877. At the sales, Archibald purchased property at and near Port Arthur, including the Junior Medical Officer's House.

Both men, who were both on the Carnarvon Cemetery Board, died within a few months of one another in 1901.

Joseph McGinniss, a farmer (and a great-grandson of a Norfolk Island settler-convict) died in March 1897, aged 63 years, and was buried without a headstone. He had married Mary Ann Spaulding at Carlton in 1857. He later worked for Henry Chesterman, merchant, demolishing the structures Chesterman had purchased at the auction of Port Arthur land and buildings.

Henry Moss had also worked for Chesterman as a labourer and he died in May 1890, aged 71 years.

William McGinniss had originally delivered mail overland for the Convict Department, from Sorell. William McGinniss' family were occupants of the first (wooden) chaplain's house next to the hospital at Port Arthur, which was destroyed in the 1895 bushfire.

George Seaborne, an 82 year old labourer who died in August 1905, was an ex-convict. From Essex, George was transported to Tasmania aged 22 aboard the *Forfarshire* in 1842. Sent to Port Arthur in 1856 for absconding, he returned to the area about 1880 where he lived in a de facto relationship with Annie Lawless. His is an unmarked grave.

Suffer Little Children and Mothers

Advances in medicine screen the dangers childbirth and infancy once held. Recorded in the Civil Register for Tasman Peninsula (but not in the Carnarvon Burial Register) are deaths of the post-convict era.

In June 1879 two infants died at Port Arthur. They were Florence Amelia Smith, the six month old daughter of Constable John Smith, who died from "Teething" at Port Arthur.⁵ Also, an un-named and "Fatherless" female child of Sarah Connors died, a "new-born child, the illegitimate offspring of one Sarah Connors". Only one hour old, the child died from a "want of proper attention caused by the inexperience of one Catherine Grosvenor who was present at the birth".⁶

The detailed notes from an unsympathetic Registrar were added by J.C. Mawle, another ex-Convict Department official who continued to work at Port Arthur into the 1880s.

The records reveal marital and childbirth practices of a group of women living in de-facto relationships with, perhaps, timber-getters as partners.

⁵ RGD 33/54 Tasman Peninsula Births

⁶ RGD 33/45 Tasman Peninsula Births

The Civil Register also records deaths for other parts of the Peninsula. These precede both headstone and local register listing. As shown in the reprint of the Register, the infant deaths are a constant feature.

The earliest surviving headstone to a child is for four year old Samuel Nicholas Wellard, the son of George, who died on 7th May, 1885. He died from "Natural causes". Little Sam's death is not recorded by the Civil Register.

Contemporary Connections

Apart from Blackwood, names of families still associated with the Port Arthur district include Wellard, Frerk, McGinniss, Little, Rogers and Tatnell.

Carnarvon Tourism 1880- 1927

Names associated with early tourist accommodation include Joseph Henry Cowan, "one of the first proprietors of the Carnarvon Hotel", as the Commandants House was renamed.

The Register gives "James. H." Although the register records death from natural causes, his civil record notes "exhaustion because of an operation", aged 55 years in October 1981.

Francis Mason, who died in August 1895 aged 49 years, was the "gentleman" brother of Tom Mason who, with his daughters Heather and Annie, purchased the Visiting Magistrates' House, later *Clougha*.

Tom Mason, among other responsibilities (which included JP. Chairman of the Court of General and Carnarvon Town Board Sessions) was on the Public Cemetery Board. Other members were A. Blackwood, J.H. Cowan, J.H. Trenham and G. Wellard, all to be later buried in the Carnarvon Cemetery.

The Trenham family moved to the renamed Carnarvon in 1886. In 1897 Samuel H. Trenham, Engineer, aged 56 years died of a skull fracture in February.

Henry R. Trenham, aged 75 years, died in the conflagration which enveloped their house *Trentham* during the December bushfires. Henry, a retired teacher, returned to fetch an unknown keepsake; his charred body was found in the ruins, the only victim of any of the many Port Arthur fires.

A Continuing History

Local residents continue to inter their families alongside their relatives, a sacred site which links memories, traditions, experiences and personal traits of the old with the current generations.

Resources

1. Registrar Generals Department, Records for Tasman, State Archives of Tasmania
2. Carnarvon Cemetery, Register of burials, Tasman Council, Nubeena.
3. Assessment Rolls Tasman, S.A.T.
4. Brand, I. The Brand Papers, Vol 21 (?) Extracts from Newspapers, N.P.W.S., 1982

Police District of Carnarvon in the County of Pembroke, 1880⁷

The following list of settlers were on Tasman's Peninsula in 1880 and it is interesting to see how many of these family names are still linked to our community.

Townships – Carnarvon, Fortescue Bay, Nubeena, Saltwater River, Taranna, Wedge Bay.

Blackwood, J.T., Long Bay
 Blackwood, A., Carnarvon
 Bloomfield, William, Newmans Bottom
 Brown, E., Tasmans Peninsula
 Burdon, W. Jnr., farmer, Vy. Valley
 Burdon, H., Farmer, Vy. Valley
 Burdon, Jacob, Coal Mines, Slopen Main
 Burdon, Wm., Saltwater River
 Burdon, Jacob, Vy, Black Jack
 Curran, Peter, Landholder, Carnarvon
 Chesterman, H. Landholder, Carnarvon
 Dear, George, Tasman Peninsula
 Durgess, E., Impression Bay
 Durgess, E.E., Carnarvon
 Evenden, J., Carnarvon
 Gangell, W., Saltwater River
 Gangell, Isaac, Vy, Saltwater River
 Johnson, J.M., Impression Bay
 Kingston, J.W., Vy, Long Bay
 Kingston, J. Newmans Bottom
 Kingston, George, Bream Creek
 Lord, Alfred, Black Jack
 Lowe, James, Tasman Peninsula
 Munday, S., sen., Impression Bay
 Munday, S. jun., Vy, Valley Farm
 Perkins and Steiglitz, Tasman Peninsula
 Paul, G., Long Bay
 Rogers, Alexander, Newmans Bottom
 Spaulding, W., Vy. Valley Farm
 Storey, G.W.B., J.P., Wedge Bay
 Stacey, Robert, Tasman Peninsula
 Stacey, Walter, Tasman Peninsula
 Stacey, James, Tasman Peninsula
 Stacey, John, Tasman Peninsula
 Smith, William, Tasman Peninsula
 Tatnell, W., Impression Bay
 Tatnell, Thomas, Tasman Peninsula
 Tatnell, Vy, Price's Bay
 Tatnell and Riley, Vy, Mt. Communication
 Wellard, G. H. Long Bay
 Williams, Joseph, Vy, Valley Farm
 Worledge, George, Saltwater River
 Woranawich, J. Carnarvon
 Wright, Francis B., Wilmot Vale

⁷ From Walch's Almanac