

TASMANIA — HOME FOR IRELAND'S FORGOTTEN REBELS OF 1848 WHO BECAME SETTLERS

Their Lives in the Huon, Cygnet and Franklin, plus Hobart Town and other Tasmanian places

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Prior to leaving Tasmania in 1854, John Martin, an idealistic leader in the Young Ireland Movement, wrote a "valedictory letter" to the *Examiner* newspaper which had supported their cause. Martin, like Smith O'Brien and O'Donoghue, had stayed in Tasmania to complete his sentence for involvement in the 1848 insurrection, rather than escape as Mitchell and Meagher had done. After giving thanks for the attention received from "all the respectable families in whose neighbourhood he was detained" and to the "frank and generous native youths (and) fair and gentle girls," the romantic John Martin listed "'48" men who were still in the island prison.^[1] They included rebels, WP Dowling, John Walsh, James Lyons, Richard Bryan, Thomas Donovan, Thomas Wall, James Casey, and Edward Tobin, while other research indicates that Cornelius Keeffe and Edmund Sheafy were also sentenced for related crimes: nine neglected rebels from those tumultuous times.

Some of these men stayed in Tasmania while the fate of others is uncertain. Interest in their fate continued into the late Victoria period. In 1895, a visiting Irish Home Rule delegation visited Tasmania led by Michael Davitt. At a public meeting in Hobart, another touring member, Quaker Home Rule MP, Alfred Webb 'wished to learn about the 1848 rebels.'^[2] What he discovered is uncertain. The first contemporary scholars to raise questions of their fate were, Tasmanian historian John Williams in 1972, (dec.), followed by Prof George Rudé, then more recently, Dr Richard Davis.^[3] Although two of these men were known to have remained in Tasmania, what became of these and their fellow Irishmen has been a mystery.^[4] Now, 110 years further on, this is an attempt to find what became of some of these forgotten rebels.

The seven leaders of the Young Ireland movement, including William O'Brien, Kevin O'Dogherty and Thomas Meagher, came to their island prison of Van Diemen's Land or Tasmania for a few brief but eventful years. In 1848-9 O'Brien and Lalor were joined by

illiterate sympathisers, mostly farm labourers, caught in the fervour and anguish of the Famine years. These attackers were gradually rounded up by the British, and, like their leaders, transported to the Australian colony of Van Diemen's Land. Unlike O'Brien and his peers who either escaped or were Pardoned, these men of '48 were left in the island colony, and although not initially forgotten by their leaders, they gradually became overlooked. The neglect is indicative of their lack of communication skills and social influence. By contrast, the seven ring-leader's colonial experiences were widely publicised. They also wrote letters profusely, kept journals, and were supported by strategically placed leaders in British, Irish and colonial society.

Tasmania, the island state of Australia, was colonized by the British in 1803. First known as Van Diemen's Land, the colony became home to an increasing population of convicts. Until transportation ceased in 1854, nearly 70,000 prisoners, including 15,000 women (just under half the Australian intake) made Tasmania a temporary - and at times a permanent - home. Included in that number were Irish social rebels transported for overtly political crimes, participants in the 1798 rebellion, White-boys and Ribbon-men, British Chartists, and those involved in the Young Ireland Movement of the 1840's.

Hobart, the capital, is in the south, and situated on the Derwent River, with a back-drop of low mountains. Here the prison ships unloaded their cargo. Today the population of the city is 200,000, but in 1850 it was only 30,000, and the total island population was less than 100,000, while the current figure stands at 450,000. The northern town of Launceston houses over 60,000, and is the centre of the island's agricultural industries. Then, as now, this was based on fine wool and mixed farming. Timber milling, fishing and, more recently, mining, also provide employment. Relatively unspoilt today, many of the districts and towns known to the Young Irishmen and other Irish prisoners, appear little changed from the 1850's.

Their Crimes

Seven of the men sailed on the *Hyderabad 3*. Six of these – Bryan, Casey, Lyons, Tobin, Wall and Walsh, all from County Waterford – were charged with the same offence, documented (with slight variations) on each of their conduct records. All were tried at Waterford on 13 July 1850. They were charged with "attacking the police barracks," and 'soliciting to attack or 'persuading others to attack.' [5] However, in addition, Donovan's offence is specified as 'soliciting to attack (the) Police Barracks.. Stated this offence, Attacking the Police with Smith O'Brien,' suggesting he was the ring-leader.' Dr Davis disputes this, as, at the time the Waterford men were charged in July 1850, O'Brien and the other leaders were on their way to Van Diemen's Land. However, is it not possible that the lower ranks were on the run, and able to hide from authorities for a longer time? Others, like Edward Tobin, was accused of "persuading others to attack the police ... with Brian (sic) and Walsh, on board," with no barracks specified. Richard Bryan (tried with Walsh, Tobin and Donovan and others on board) in defence claimed, "I do not know what it was for [the attack on the police barracks] a policeman was killed". [6] Thomas Wall was "tried with Casey, & Lyons" at Waterford on 17/7/1850. Casey and Wall were transported for 14 years, and Donovan for 7 years.

Edward Sheafy, who arrived separately in October 1851 on the *Blenheim 4*, had actually been convicted earlier (7 January 1849)., suggesting he was held for a longer period than the other men, being a Pass holder when he arrived. Sheafy has a record which specifies that he was involved in 'Attacking a police barracks on September 12 1848 with Smith O'Brien, property

(of the) Government.’ [7] Richard Davis suggests these men attacked another police barracks at Cappoquin in Co Waterford, perhaps inspired by O’Brien’s example, and they may have also been involved in the affray led by O’Brien. [8]

The other rebels, Davis believes, were involved in an extended conspiracy involving James Fintan Lalor, whose brother was later a leader in the Eureka Rebellion in the goldfields of Victoria. Cornelius Keeffe, the last rebel supporter to be tried, admitted on arrival in Hobart Town on the *Lord Dalhousie* in August 1852, to ‘Being under arms under Smith O’Brien.’ [9] Davis is again doubtful of this claim, as Keeffe’s Irish record refers to his ‘appearing under arms and perpetrating a theft.’

Convict Records Reveal Personal Detail

The convict records of the colonial government held by State Archives, Hobart, give detailed personal descriptions, in addition to a record of their movements in Tasmania. Apart from James Casey – who was from Co Tipperary - all were from Co Waterford.

- Richard Bryan, aged 25, labourer, five foot three inches, of sallow appearance with dark brown hair, and like Lyons with matching whiskers. Married.
- James Casey, aged 30, labourer, five feet one inches tall, with fair complexion, reddish whiskers, a high forehead, "small" nose, "medium" mouth, and "double" chin. Married.
- Thomas Donovan, aged 24, farm labourer, five feet one and a half inches tall, with fair complexion, brown hair, grey eyes and large mouth, and with a small scar over his right eye-brow. Single.
- Cornelius Keeffe's, aged 44, waterman, stood five foot five inches tall, had blue eyes surrounded by black hair and whiskers. His habit of squinting (suggesting poor eye-sight) was noted. [10] Married (Hannah).
- James Lyons, aged 22, farm labourer, slightly over six feet tall, had fair complexion and hazel eyes and dark brown hair. Single.
- Sheafy, Edmond/Edward, aged 31, painter, five foot eight inches tall, with brown hair and whiskers surrounding his blue eyes, and a vaccination mark on his right arm. Married. Mary.
- Edward Tobin, aged 29, farm labourer, was five foot six and a half inches tall, with grey eyes which peered from below a high forehead and narrow face at the waterfront scene that greeted them. Married. Ellen.
- Thomas Wall, aged 25, top sawyer, described as five feet six and a quarter inches tall, of fresh complexion, with brown hair and whiskers, oval face, and blue eyes. Marks included a mole on his upper lip. A ring on his "ring finger left hand" suggests he may have been married or perhaps betrothed although this is not recorded. Single .
- John Walsh, aged 22, farm labourer, stood five foot, nine and a half inches, with a long chin and oval face topped with dark hair. Single.

Arrival in Tasmania

After their arrival on 13 July 1850, Bryan, Tobin, Walsh, Casey, Wall and Donovan were compelled to work for three years seven months under the Probation System of enforced gang-labour. For the first two years they worked on the "Old Wharf" on the eastern side of Hobart Town’s harbour, assigned there on December 23rd 1850. Less than two years elapsed before they were assigned to work from the Hobart Prisoners' Barracks, apparently for good

behaviour. Tobin and Wall were "allowed two days per month for zealous attendance at school". Sheafy had arrived in the penal island, and was allocated fifteen months in the "Factory Gang". Sheafy had two periods at the nearby hospital, covering the years 1851 to 1855. The conduct records of Walsh and Bryan give little hint at later movements.

During this time, Donovan was hired by I.G. (Isaac) Reeves of Elizabeth Street, Hobart in August 1852. Reeves was a leather merchant and tanner with premises at Wellington Bridge in Elizabeth Street Hobart (now a pedestrians Mall), also operating a hat manufacturing business. Reeves signed a petition in sympathy with the Irish Exiles, and, as a member of the new Hobart Council, chaired a public meeting opposing the Anti transportation League.[\[11\]](#) Wall later worked for two other unidentified employers, Devonport at the Cascades near Hobart, and 'J. Boyd.'

The assignment of Donovan to Isaac Reeves was perhaps not entirely accidental, but part of a network of support for expatriates, free or prisoner. In *Irish Traces on Tasmanian History 1803-2004*, Richard Davis points out that Smith O'Brien was a confused conservative with a radical streak. 'Despite his hatred for Denison, O'Brien was close to several of the Denison (pro-Transportation) faction, such as William Carter, the first Mayor of Hobart, and IG Reeves.'[\[12\]](#) The leaders of the Young Ireland movement had a divided local Irish community to contend with. However, O'Brien's dealings with Reeves were also pragmatic. In September 1850, shortly after arriving in Van Diemen's Land, O'Brien purchased a hat from 'Mr Reeves of Hobart Town.'[\[13\]](#) Later, when O'Brien was under siege at Port Arthur, Reeves organised and forwarded a petition of 500 residents to Lt Gov Denison. Reeves, O'Brien wrote, 'has been extremely kind and anxious with regard to my well being.' When he was finally released from Port Arthur, a party of well-wishers met O'Brien at the Hobart Town wharf and he was driven by Reeves to the Freemason's Hotel. O'Brien recorded, 'Mr Reeves, a prosperous merchant, entertained me at dinner on the day of my arrival and accompanied me on the next day on my promenade throughout the town.' Reeves later dined with O'Brien at New Norfolk. [\[14\]](#)

During May 1853, rebel supporters Walsh and Wall were assigned to John Regan of Liverpool Street, Hobart, who owned a range of properties in the centre of the town, including stables and stores which backed onto the Hobart Town Rivulet.[\[15\]](#) Regan arrived as an assisted immigrant with his wife on the *Sarah* in October 1832, with an occupation of tanner and currier, and listed as a Roman Catholic.[\[16\]](#) In 1857, along with neighbouring owners, he sought permission to build a platform over the stream.[\[17\]](#)

In January 1854, John Regan came to the rescue of a nearby drapery business operated by Mrs Neilson, on the corner of Liverpool and Elizabeth Streets, Hobart Town. The centre of the town had been damaged by a fire which began in a stable, apparently caused by gunpowder exploding.[\[18\]](#) In a public notice, Mrs Nelson returned thanks to 'numerous friends ... who saved from destruction' a greater portion of her property. She particularly thanked 'Mr John Regan who so promptly and generously placed the cottage, lately occupied by Mr JA Thomson, at the disposal of herself and family.'[\[19\]](#) The site is (still) occupied by Webster's building which c 1900 'swept out of existence a good brick pile,' the former British Hotel - and also 'John Regan's garden and house,' once occupied by (emancipist architect), J A Thomson.[\[20\]](#)

As local businessmen, Reeves and Regan also risked government sanction by not only backing O'Brien and his supporters, but also advertising in the *Irish Exile and Freedom's Advocate*, the newspaper of radical Young Irelander, Patrick O'Donoghue. [21]

In June 1852, Edward Tobin (whose gang work period was extended three months for 'laziness,') went to Oatlands, a township surrounded by farms in the centre of the island, where he worked for John Bacon. Here he would have met fellow Young Irelander Kevin O'Dogherty, who was allocated this town to serve his Ticket of Leave. [22] Lyons cannot have endeared himself to his friends by becoming a constable at Ross, a village further north of Oatlands, a position from which he was dismissed two years later. (Thomas Meagher another Irish Exile, had been recently based there.) Casey meanwhile was given an (un-named) position at the Cascades (Female) Factory or House of Correction.

As in the case of IG Reeves, networks of support within the island's Irish community are revealed in the involvement of Robin Lloyd Hood in support of two of the Young Ireland exiles. A gallery owner, picture framer and guildler of Liverpool Street, Hobart Town, the Catholic supporter Hood immigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1833 with his wife and young son. In December 1849, Hood hired Young Irelander and Chartist rebel who stayed, William Paul Dowling. Recently published letters of Dowling record how on arrival in Hobart Town.

After dinner I was sent for to the hiring depot. A gentlemanly little man asked me if I was an artist & could lithograph. I said yes. He then offered me £12 year and my board and to engage me for a month on trial.'

As a 'gentleman convict,' Dowling had privileged treatment, as the other men on the ship were sent into the forest to drag timber in a cart. He was treated warmly by Hood, who 'kept (him) eating at his own table like one of his sons.' Hood allowed Dowling to establish his own artistic practice at a separate address, at 9 Liverpool Street on the Campbell Street corner, where he became a curiosity as the 'new artist,' 'one of the 'Irish Exiles.' [23] The friendship grew, so much so that on 3 May 1850, Robin L Hood and his wife Sarah were witnesses to the marriage of Dowling and his wife, Juliana de Veux, at St Joseph's, Hobart. [24] A year later, Edward Sheafy, the painter from Waterford, was also assigned to Robin Lloyd Hood of 'Somerset House', Liverpool Street, Hobart Town, and we can imagine a similar process of hiring as that outlined by Dowling – but without Dowling's success. The selection of Sheafy by Hood as a hired servant, suggests that, like Dowling, the prisoner was held in some regard by leaders of Hobart's Irish community. Sheafy was then assigned to 'Horne' of Sandy Bay, probably the Tasmanian judge and MLC, then DACG George Bishop, in Cascade Rd, then 'J. Boyd,' but appeared to suffer from periods of illness, being confined to the hospital. [25]

Behaviour Under Sentence

All nine -men behaved quietly while under sentence. Donovan committed three minor offences, one for being "out after hours" (three days solitary confinement). A more serious offence (talking to witnesses under examination) resulted in six months hard labour, in August 1854. This sentence was served on Impression Bay (now Premaydena), not far from Port Arthur on Tasman Peninsula. Following this, Donovan received his Ticket-of-Leave, which entitled him to seek work. Thomas Wall, meanwhile, had served 461 days remission of sentence for "task work", and in February 1854 received his Ticket-of-Leave early for "meritorious conduct at the recent Huon Fires", a heavily-timbered area to the south of

Hobart. Casey had become a Passholder and then Ticket of Leave man, and in August 1853 was at "*Cora Lynn*" near Evandale, in the north of Tasmania, and was still there a year later.

Edward Tobin lived at Oatlands for three years. On December 27, 1852, he received three days solitary confinement for "Being on the township without a Pass". Two years on, for "enticing a female passholder from her service", three months additional hard labour was added to his sentence, while his final charge in 1855, "Drunk", drew only a 1 pound fine. The same year he received his Conditional Pardon. The last record indicates he was near Evandale in 1857, perhaps joining Casey. All compatriots except Tobin, received their Conditional Passes by mid 1855 or earlier.

Meanwhile Cornelius Keeffe, the last of the forgotten forty-eighters, arrived in August 1852, already eligible to be a Passholder. By trade a waterman, in 1852 and 1853, Keeffe worked in the Huon for timber merchant Rev J Andrewartha, perhaps crewing one of his ships bringing sawn timber to Hobart Town, and then with the Colonial Marine Department. Keeffe received a Conditional Pardon in 1854.[\[26\]](#) Keeffe was therefore in the Huon area when O'Dogherty had his medical practice.

Families Named in Tasmanian Records

On arrival in Hobart Town from 1840, prisoners were recorded alphabetically by ship in three indexes. Apart from personal statistics, the unwilling emigrants gave the names of their immediate family left at home, a practice introduced exclusively in the Probation System convict records. Richard Bryan, gave his father as Rodger (sic), mother Kathleen, and brother Mick. James Casey's father was James, his mother is not given, but sisters were Biddy and Kathleen, with brothers Phillip and James. Cornelius Keeffe's record lists his wife Hannah and brother Thomas. James Lyons gives a mother, Mary, brothers Michael and John and sister Mary. A note indicates Mary jnr. was in America. Edmund Sheafy refers only to his wife Mary. Martin Tobin's kin were mother Ellen, brother Michael, and sisters Nancy, Mary and Kathleen, while Thomas Wall's were father Mike, mother Colleen, brother James, plus sisters Ellen, Bridget, Mary and Nora. Bridget is noted as being in Sydney (Australia). Jane was the mother of John Walsh, (father not given), while siblings were Andrew, Joseph, Richard, Nan and, Ellen.[\[27\]](#)

Unfree to Free Settlers

Once pardoned, the emancipated prisoners were dropped from Convict Department records, and from here on, tracing their movements is much more difficult, with the birth of children the best indicator of location.

A clue to the whereabouts of Wall was contained in reference to his fighting bush-fires in the Huon district in January 1854. A heavily timbered district south of Hobart, Wall's listed trade as 'Top Sawyer' would have made him highly employable. Hobart newspapers carried detailed reports on severe bush fires. Davis guesses that Wall had moved to the mainland as 'gold rushes and other opportunities beckoned.'[\[28\]](#) However, a search of marriage and birth registers revealed the following. On April 30th 1857 (less than two years after receiving his Pardon), Thomas Wall, by now a "farmer", married Honora Dwyer aged 20, at Franklin in the Huon Valley, in a Roman Catholic service by the hardworking Fr John Murphy. She arrived from Tipperary, aged 17, with her mother, Honora senior. The mother, aged fifty, and her family arrived aboard the "*Northumberland*" on 25 July 1854, aiming to join her convict son

William, already in the colony. In addition to Honora jnr, on board were her sister, Margaret, (who witnessed Honora's marriage), plus brothers Patrick and Timothy.[\[29\]](#)

Honora's brother, William Dwyer, already in the colony, had been sentenced at Newcastle-on-Lyne in February 1840, to 15 years transportation for manslaughter. He was then aged 20 and was an anchor-smith, but a native of Cork. He arrived on the ship *Asia (5)*. Unlike his future brother-in-law, William accumulated over 20 offences - two of them referring to using government iron for private use and sale, (including a partly made knife), and two for encounters with the opposite sex, including "being in bed with a female Ticket-of-Leave holder and violently resisting a constable" and "having sexual intercourse with a woman in a yard." [\[30\]](#) Despite his rebellious ways, William Dwyer later acquired fifty acres in the Huon district.[\[31\]](#)

The forested hills around the Huon River attracted a small, but concentrated population of Irish settlers, and Honora (junior) and Thomas Wall followed this pattern, remaining in the Huon districts, living near Port Cygnet (now simply Cygnet.) Cygnet had also been the centre of several convict stations with a predominantly Irish population.[\[32\]](#) The existence today of a Catholic school and convent at Cygnet testifies to this settlement's cultural origins. Thomas and Honora Wall produced twelve children: Catherine 1859; Charles (1859), un-named female 1860; Thomas 1865; un-named male child 1867; un-named male child 1869 (at which time the family was at Long Bay); Arthur Thomas 1871; Richard 1874; Francis 1876; twins Joseph and Mary Ellen in 1879, when the family were at Port Cygnet, and Marthan 1881.[\[33\]](#)

The Cygnet area became a concentration of elite and working class Young Irelanders, as, in September 1853, the Van Diemen's Land Board of Medical Examiners gave O'Dogherty permission to practise medicine at Port Cygnet, 40 miles or 64 kms south of Hobart. Dr Doherty would also have experienced the Huon bush-fires of January 1854 which led to Wall's remission. With its predominantly impoverished Irish emancipist population, 'it is not surprising that the young Irishman told O'Brien in a letter written in early 1854 that his practice was by no means thriving. He was existing on money sent from Ireland.' Writing to Martin who was himself struggling financially, O'Dogherty referred to 'the prospects of a position supervising a timber mill' in one letter, and enclosing £15 in another. Martin refused the suggestion that he supervise the mill, claiming he knew nothing about the industry and doubting his ability to control the convicts to be employed. But on second thoughts, he asked O'Dogherty for further details which were furnished after diligent enquiries.'[\[34\]](#) This is probably the same mill operated by Fitzpatrick who employed so many former convicts- including Wall- at his sawmill. In November 1853, Martin wrote from Bothwell to O'Dogherty, sending two copies of *The Nation* to him, 'on the romantic banks of the Huon,' as Martin theorised.[\[35\]](#) Smith O'Brien also wrote to O'Dogherty at Port Cygnet from his new address at Richmond. It was in the latter place, in an Irish colonial community, that O'Brien heard of his pardon in May 1854. Similarly, Kevin Izod O'Dogherty heard the news of his pardon in a letter from Eva, apparently when still at Port Cygnet, in May 1854.[\[36\]](#)

The Cygnet and Huon areas were supported by priests appointed by the English-born Catholic Bishop Willson. According to his biographer, Father WT Southerwood, Father James Holehan 'transformed the turbulent Cygnet area with a pastoral; solicitude which was largely responsible for the rapid decline in drunkenness, violence and immoral

behaviour.’ [37] Former convicts in the Cygnet area were employed by a Catholic free settler, Matthew Fitzpatrick, who immigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1834. He provided work for 500 men as splitters of timber. Most of these belonged to the ‘very numerous and at the same time very poor’ Catholic community.’ [38] Fitzpatrick donated £50 toward the design of the Henry Hunter timber church at Cygnet, completed in 1868. (later demolished.) [39] As a local ‘top sawyer’, Thomas Wall may have hewn the timbers for this structure. His occupation perhaps explains his death in 1894, aged 69, of ‘rheumatic gout.’ [40]

Within living memory, the Cygnet area retained a distinctly Irish character. A settlement over four miles from the village was labelled ‘Irishtown.’ A former resident, whose uncle owned a grocery shop in Cygnet in the 1960s, recalled two shy, elderly brothers who only came to Cygnet for supplies. Despite being fifth generation farmers, they still spoke with broad Irish accents, barely intelligible to teenage ears. [41]

Thomas Donovan had also moved into the Huon Valley, living at or near Franklin, where he acquired a small holding of twenty acres. Aged thirty and a labourer, Donovan married Bridget Lynch, a servant, aged twenty-one, in 1856. The marriage and their first child (Mary) were registered with St. Josephs Catholic Church, Hobart. By 1858, their next child's birth (Peter) was registered at Castle Forbes Bay south of Franklin, followed by two un-named brothers and a sister. (Castle Forbes Bay is named after an Irish female immigrant ship which accidentally landed there in 1836, giving the area a distinctly Irish character. [42]) Only one slight misdemeanour blemished Donovan’s later years - a fine of one pound for assaulting a constable at Franklin.

Like Cygnet, the Franklin area was known for its turbulent Irish population. According to Catholic church historian, Fr Terry Southerwood, the ‘low and depraved character of Huon Catholicism,’ was noted in letters of the time. In letters to her priest brother in December 1868, Jane Therry described events surrounding the opening of St Mary’s Catholic Church at Franklin:

the day was not precipitous when Bishop Willson., Father Hall, Father Hunter and ... several other clergyman and members of the laity, including the convert, Mr Charles Wilmot’ boarded the little steamer for the Huon. With incessant rain, all on board were drenched exclusively, (and) had to leave the steamer and go in an open boat to Franklin....

The people of that district are half savage, and most of them were quite drunk and quarrelled in the presence of the Bishop and clergy. They carried it so far as to break each others heads. It must have not been very edifying to Mr Wilmot.’

Southerwood observes: ‘A close study of Jane Therry’s 80 extant letters on the Mitchell Library shows that she was not wont to exaggerate.’ [43]

The Donovans were part of this turbulent Irish community – perhaps not such a far cry from Waterford? A Bridget Donovan, ‘born Ireland’ aged 60 died of hepatitis in the General Hospital, Hobart the proceeding year, and was presumably Donovan's spouse. Thomas Donovan died at Franklin in 1884, of cancer of the tongue - probably indicating a heavy smoker, and possibly a pipe - smoker. [44]

The presence of at least two of the lesser followers of the Young Ireland movement in the Huon has implications for the wider interpretation of events in the surrounding era. This is

particularly true with one of the leaders of the transported Young Irishmen, Kevin O'Dogherty, practised as a doctor there.[\[45\]](#) In addition, the traitor of the Young Irishmen, JD Balfe also lived in the Huon Valley, later representing Franklin in the Tasmanian Legislative Council.[\[46\]](#)

As noted, James Casey had moved to the north of the island near Evandale, and was assigned to 'A. Rock' at Corra Lynn. The only marriage of James Casey in Launceston is to Ann Harrison at the Baptist Chapel in October 1862. Casey's age at marriage (42) tallies with his convict record.[\[47\]](#) They do not appear to have had any children in Tasmania, suggesting a move to mainland Australia. Casey's prison record annotates an enquiry made in 1872, by Catherine Johnson ("a relative by marriage") from County Waterford, sent care of "John Cullerane Square, Dungavin, Co. Waterford." Whether Casey ever received the letter is unknown.[\[48\]](#)

In 1876 Edward Tobin, widower, farmer and pensioner, married Anne Fogarty aged 45, widow, in St Patrick's Church at Latrobe.[\[49\]](#) Edward Tobin's situation as "widower" indicates he had been married. In the 1850s, two 'Mrs Tobins' arrived as free immigrants to Tasmania. Which was Edward's wife is uncertain at this stage. When Tobin died at *Sherwood* near Latrobe in 1897, his death certificate identifies him as aged 80, born in Ireland.[\[50\]](#)

Fate of other followers.

By the mid 1850's the Gold Rushes in Victoria were attracting free and emancipist across the water to mainland Australia and may have lured some of these rebels also. Current research, however, suggests the fate of the following supporters of the Young Irishman leaders.

- James Casey. A person of that name, aged 42, married Anne Harrison at Launceston in 1862. Casey's age at the time of sentence was 30, and this appears to be the person in question.[\[51\]](#) This couple had no children registered in Tasmania, and appear to have moved to the mainland.
- Edmund Sheafy. An Edward Sheafy, aged 33, labourer, died at the Hobart General Hospital, Hobart Town in March 1856 of phthisis. This approximates the age of Edmund Sheafy, who was aged 31 when sentenced in 1849.[\[52\]](#)
- James Lyons, born Ireland, died in Launceston in 1896.[\[53\]](#)
- Cornelius Keeffe's appears to have moved to the mainland, as a 'Cornelius Keeffe, born Ireland,' died in Victoria in 1859.[\[54\]](#)

Whatever their fate, these little known supporters of the Young Ireland Movement, perhaps following leaders out of frustration, or loyalty or ignorance, have been as neglected by historians as they appear to have been by their erstwhile leaders following their transportation.

The new Irish settlers in the Huon Valley apparently weren't very interested in the divisions of old mother Ireland, perhaps too poor or more interested in being Tasmanians. When John J. Walshe, cousin to Michael Davitt, arrived in 1885 to canvas for donations for Home Rule, organisers had difficulty booking halls or schoolrooms in the Cygnet region.[\[55\]](#) A few years earlier, Tasmania's Catholic (and Irish) Bishop Murphy appealed, 'Let bygone of history be bygones, let the ... party tunes of the old country be forgotten here, and let us adopt a new one of 'Australia for Australians.'[\[56\]](#) Many Tasmanians agreed.

Some Tasmanians and Australians may yet have ancestry reaching to the Young Ireland Movement.[\[57\]](#)

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[\[1\]](#)Launceston Examiner, 25/7/1854, p. 2 c. 4.

[\[2\]](#)Davis, Richard Irish Traces on Tasmanian History 1803-2004, Hobart, 2005, p. 76.

[\[3\]](#)Davis, Richard Unpublicised Young Ireland Prisoners in Van Diemen's Land, in P&P Tasmanian Historical Research Association, December 1991, pp. 131-137.

[\[4\]](#)Williams, John Irish Convicts and Van Diemen's Land, in P&P, Tasmanian Historical Research Association, September 1972; Rudé, George Protest and Punishment, Oxford, 1978. (An edited version of Williams ground-breaking thesis on the Irish in Tasmania has been published posthumously by Dr Richard Davis and the University of Tasmania. Williams, John Ordered to the Island, Centre for Tasmanian Studies, University of Tasmania, 2004.)

[\[5\]](#)Con 77/10, Archives Office of Tasmania.

[\[6\]](#)Con 14/43.

[\[7\]](#)Con 14/42, Archives Office of Tasmania.

[\[8\]](#)Davis, Richard, 1991, p. 134ff.

[\[9\]](#)Con 14/45, Archives Office of Tasmania.

[\[10\]](#) Con 33/109. Archives Office of Tasmania.

[\[11\]](#) Wayn Index, Archives Office of Tasmania.

[\[12\]](#)Davis, 2005, p. 50.

[\[13\]](#) Davis, R. (ed.) To Solitude Confines; The Tasmanian Journal of William Smith O'Brien, Sydney, 1985, pp. 152, 187, 192, 410.

[\[14\]](#) Ibid, p.180.

[\[15\]](#) 1858 Hobart Valuation Roll.

[\[16\]](#)By 1848, Regan had 6 children and owned the cottage he had previously rented from David Lord. He sponsored several other Irish families to immigrate. Regan accidentally drowned at the Hobart Town Wharf in 1868. Correspondence File, Archives Office of Tasmania.

[\[17\]](#) MacFie, Peter, Underground Hobart, Hobart City Council, Hobart, 2007. Forthcoming publication.

[\[18\]](#) Hobart Town Courier, 31/1/1854, p. 2.

- [19] Colonial Times, 31/1/1854, p. 3.
- [20] Robertson's Hobart Streets, 1919, Archives Office of Tasmania., p. 25.
- [21] See for example, 16 November 1850, pp. 1 & 7.
- [22] Touhill, Blanche M. William Smith O'Brien and his Irish Revolutionary Companions in Penal Exile, University of Missouri, London, 1981, p. 40.
- [23] Glover and MacLochlainn, (eds.) Letters of an Irish Patriot, William Paul Dowling, Hobart, 2005, pp 54 ff.
- [24] Brown, George Deas William Paul Dowling, and Irish Confederate in England and Tasmania, in Davis et al (ed.) Irish Australian Studies, P&P 8th Australian History Conference, Hobart , July 1995, p. 509.
- [25] Horne owned a large mansion in Fitzroy Place, Hobart. Wayn Index, Archives Office of Tasmania.; (Pike, D. ed.) Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 4, p 424-5. (DACG = 'Deputy Assistant Commissariat General' or government stores accountant.)
- [26] Conn 33/109. Archives Office of Tasmania.
- [27] These records are now lodged in the State Archives Office, Hobart, and provide a unique genealogical source.
- [28] Davis, 2005, p.26.
- [29] CB7/12/1 P.132. Archives Office of Tasmania.
- [30] CON 33/2 . Archives Office of Tasmania.
- [31] LSD 1/80, P.266.
- [32] These prison stations were located at Nicholl's Rivulet, Lymington and Port Cygnet.
- [33] RGD records, Archives Office of Tasmania.
- [34]
- [35] Cullen, T J The Irish Exiles in Australia, Melbourne, 1954, p. 129.
- [36] Patrick, Ross and Heather Exiles Undaunted; the Irish Rebels Kevin and Ea O'Doherty, QUP 1989, pp. 84-5.
- [37] Southerwood, W. T. The Convict's Friend (Bishop R. W. Willson, George Town, 1989, p. 283.
- [38] Southerwood, op cit, p. 233.
- [39] Southerwood, Planting a Faith: the Country Parishes, n.d. c 1980, Hobart, p. 145.

[40] RGD/62/584/1894.

[41] Pers comm., Malcolm Brooks, 2006.

[42] Davis, 2005, p. 68.

[43] Southerwood, *Planting a Faith: the Country Parishes*, pp. 141-2; *Tasmanian Catholic Standard* July 1867; Mitchell Library Mss 1810/8 (14), Jane Therry to Therry, December 6 1856.

[44] RGD 635/1883.

[45] Touhill, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[46] Petrow, Stefan Judas in Tasmania: Jonathon Doneellan Balfe 1850-1880, in Davis, R. et al, *Irish –Australian Studies*, papers delivered at the Eighth Irish -Australian Conference, Hobart July 1995, pp. 462-474.

[47] RGD 472/1862.

[48] Apart from the two families who immigrated to join their Irish political prisoners husbands, whether contact was made by other rebels with relatives in Ireland is uncertain at this stage.

[49] RGD 37/35/1876/660.

[50] RGD 35/66/ 1898/ 644.

[51] RGD 37/ 472/1862.

[52] RGD 35/743/1856.

[53] Colonial Tasmanian Family Links site, Archives Office of Tasmania.

[54] Victorian Pioneer Index, Reg no. 9268. A Cornelius Keefe/O’Keeffe born 1809, died at Westbury, Tasmania in 1893. However, he had married Ellen Hartnett in 1852, when Keefe was still in Hobart. Colonial Tasmanian Family Links, Archives Office of Tasmania.

[55] Davis, 2005, p. 74.

[56] Davis, 2005, p. 73.

[57] The author acknowledges the research assistance of Irene Schaffer for initial research for this study in 1986.

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