

Introduction¹

In 1826, John Lakeland, the Principal Superintendent of Convicts at Hobart Town, advised the Engineer how convict sawyers at the Birch's Bay Sawing Establishment were to be motivated. He recommended a well-trying system of incentives known as task work:

As sawyers as well as artificers in general are averse to their trades and occupations being known (and) from not receiving more encouragement than the common labourer, and knowing that being of useful trades is a reason for their being kept by the Government, we beg to recommend that the sawyers be allowed task work ...

In addition, Lakeland suggested, 'their surplus work be taken by Government at a certain price, or be permitted to be sold as an encouragement.' This had the advantage of providing labourers with an incentive as they 'will become sawyers and Government will have the means of punishment in their hands by turning the man of bad habits out of the sawing gang into the labourers.'

Unlike the punishment station of Macquarie Harbour, Lakeland saw the necessity for positive encouragement for skilled workers:

... we beg to recommend ... the necessity of something more than coercion to keep men in orderly and industrious behaviour in so remote a situation, so remote from inspection.

This is a very different station to the well-known Port Arthur Penal Settlement which was established immediately after the closure of Birch's Bay. What caused the change in approach, from financial to punitive motivation in the space of a short few years?

While concentrating on Birch's Bay & North West Bay Sawing Stations however, the full impact of timber production and its effect on Australia's cultural attitudes to forests must be read in the experiences and reputation of Macquarie Harbour, Port Arthur and later the Cascades on the Tasman Peninsula.²

The Neglected Outstations

While the gangs and penal stations of Van Diemen's Land Convict Department are well known, particularly those at Macquarie Harbour, Maria Island and Port Arthur, virtually no attention has been given to government outstations which also employed skilled convicts. These included men at sawing stations plus lime and charcoal burning and brickmaking establishments. Due to the isolated occurrence of raw materials, men worked in small independent groups in often remote and changing locations, yet provided products essential for the building programme for European settlement. In Van Diemen's Land in the mid 1820s this programme was in a boom cycle. These outstations have been ignored by all

¹The author wishes to thank Marie Giblin for assistance in preparation of this paper, and whose bush block overlooks Birch's Bay.

²This inter-relationship was first explored by the author while historian at Port Arthur Historic Site in 1984-90, and outlined to forestry workers at seminars held at Premaydena by Ann McConnell and Fred Duncan. c1987.

major historical studies on the convict system.³ This neglect is perhaps due to their transitory nature which left few visible signs of occupation, and the lesser numbers of prisoners involved. However, the specialist skills needed, the indispensable nature and value of their work is in direct contrast to their small numbers.

The neglect seems to have arisen from the generally held and often simplistic views surrounding Lt Gov. Arthur's penal system. Arthur's seven-tiered punishment regime for the treatment of convicts was promoted by him and is popularly accepted today as reflective of the convict system in Van Diemen's Land. However, this view ignores a strong undercurrent in Arthur's approach to management; that is, whatever it takes, get the job done, - **but** don't tell the Home Office. This approach is exemplified in the role of men who worked in out stations and on special projects such as the Ross Bridge.

This attitude however gave skilled elite workers a privileged bargaining position, and enabled them to take advantage of varying types of task work systems. None appear more 'privileged' than the early sawyers and skilled bush workers at the sawing stations of North West Bay and Birch's Bay.⁴

First Van Diemen's Land Sawing Stations

These were located in south eastern Van Diemen's Land, initially close to Hobart and then in increasingly remote localities, but near the source of the best timber stands. Those chosen were always adjacent to water transport. When Lt Gov. Sorell arrived in April 1817, 'timber fallers' with the 'timber carriage gang' amounted to eight men. These were probably working at the Cascades on the slopes of Mt. Wellington above Hobart Town. The government employed 19 sawyers and four shingle splitters as a specialist workforce. When Major Bell of the 48th Regiment arrived in 1818 he was appointed Acting Engineer and Inspector of Public Works, in addition to being military commander of the garrison at Anglesea Barracks.

On his arrival in 1818, Bell reported:

On my arrival the wood used in common buildings called stringy bark was procured from a place called Cascades about 3 miles [4.8 kilometres] from Town. About a year after, that supply failed and now it is brought by water from North West Bay in D'Entrecasteaux Streights (sic) about 20 miles [32 kilometres] off.

Other smaller stations were situated at Kangaroo Bottom (also situated on the foothills of Mt. Wellington and later renamed Lenah Valley), and at New Norfolk in the Derwent Valley up-river from Hobart, location of a specialised shingle-splitting gang.

Out Station Management

Van Diemen's Land outstations were the responsibility of the Civil Engineers Department, sometimes overseen by a Superintendent of Works, rather than by the later Convict

³Absent, for example, from AGL Shaw's *Convicts & Colonies*, Faber, 1966.

⁴Neither Shaw nor Robson discuss these privileged convict elites. The recent *Convict Workers* (Nicholas, Stephen CUP 1988) appears to focus on a narrow definition of elites, associating it with literacy and urban employment. see p 98 ff.

Department which oversaw the larger penal stations. The Engineering Department was headed by a series of military officers, including Major Bell (48th Regt) from 1817-24 and then Majors Kirkwood and Turton (40th Regt) in 1825 until the arrival of the civilian engineer/architect, John Lee Archer, in late 1827.⁵

On location, Superintendents such as Peter Monro at Birch's Bay had no formal legal status and therefore were unable to punish men under their nominal control. The isolation of gangs such as at North West Bay and Birch's Bay, and the lack of a full penal status probably resulted in a different management relationship between superintendents and the sawyer-prisoners. Major Turton, engineer who corresponded with Monro on the operation of Birch's Bay, believed the Superintendent of this station should have special powers. In evidence to an 1827 inquiry of Lt Gov. George Arthur, Turton proposed that 'the following officers to whom power might be delegated: the Superintendents of Road Parties, who at present are Military Officers; the Superintendent of the Sawing Establishment at Birch's Bay, where there is no magistrate nor any means of punishment.'⁶

Under new Regulations devised by Arthur in 1824, men at out stations were to work from 8 to 12 a.m., and after a one hour dinner break, from 1 to 4 p.m., with work finishing at noon on Saturday. Regulations provided a hut on a plan of 24 feet by 14 feet [7.3 x 7.3 metres] to contain 20 men, supervised by a resident overseer, with a cook for each hut. Correspondence reveals however that the sawyers at Birch's Bay were living in small camps in the forest, with much more freedom than these guidelines suggest. Rather than living in barracks under the watchful eye of constables, the convict workers at outstations appear to have housed themselves in bush huts near the stand of trees to be cut -and without the supervision of constables.

Reward & Punishment - the Task Work System

Prior to the arrival of Lt Gov. George Arthur in 1824, an incentive-based task work system for skilled convicts operated in both VDL and NSW. In evidence to the Bigge Enquiry in 1819, both Major Turton and John Lakeland, the Principal Superintendent of Convicts based in Hobart Town, outlined the system of task work whereby each prisoner was given a set amount of daily work, after which the goods produced were theirs for private sale:

... brick makers, bricklayers and stonemasons could finish their work by 12 o'clock; the carpenters used to gain a day and a half each week... the sawyers would gain two days... sawyers and brickmakers had always regular task work; they in general performed their work by 11 o'clock.⁷

⁵see Australian Dictionary of Biography Vols 1-2. In 1836, Lee Archer and his Civil Engineering Department was replaced by the Royal Engineers who oversaw convict and military ordnance. see MacFie, *The Royal Engineers in Colonial Tasmania*, P&P Engineering Heritage Conference, Melbourne, 1982, Institution of Engineers.

⁶Historical Records of Australia (HRA) 3 v p 642.

⁷A form of 'task work' apparently survived in Australia well into the 20th century. Brick makers at the NSW government brick works were set 'quotas' to fill on a weekly basis until post WWII. pers comm. (anon.), 2002.

Turton felt that mechanics should have the indulgence of task work; as they were working for the government and not assigned to settlers as other prisoners were, and where various benefits were accepted and obtainable.⁸

These tradesmen or artificers could earn from 5 to 7 shillings & 6 pence extra per day in their own time.⁹ Under the system, those workers with the most sought after skills benefited most. This enabled early convicts to establish themselves with financial independence but also led to a high degree of corruption and the use of government property and time for personal benefit.¹⁰ The result as perceived by officials was a high level of as artificers spent their cash after hours.¹¹

In 1824, as well as abolishing the task work system (in theory), Arthur reinforced punishment at Macquarie Harbour and established Maria Island as severe Penal Settlements. In April 1826 he introduced chain gangs in settled districts to overcome the apparent laxity and to reinforce harsh discipline implied by transportation.¹²

However at North West Bay, Birch's Bay and other remote outstations - such as lime burners - two different incentive-based systems operated before being discarded. The task work system operated at North West Bay prior to 1824 when government regulations ordered its suspension. Prior to that, Sydney Cotton, Acting Engineer, explained, '... the government sawyers were in the habit of cutting timber for their own benefit at North West Bay, which was sent to Town by boats, hired by them for that purpose.' Cotton claimed unrealistically that the sawyers now 'had no means of cutting timber for their own benefit.'¹³

The final withdrawal of the incentive system in had repercussions at the newly established Port Arthur Sawing Station a few years later.

Sawing Outstations of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel

The largest sawing stations near Hobart were at North West Bay (1818-25) and at Birch's Bay (1824-31), both situated in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel south of Hobart and facing Bruny Island. These stations employed skilled prisoners but under less harsh sentences than the major penal stations. What selection criteria was used is as yet uncertain.

North West Bay was one of many geographic features originally named by French explorer Bruny D'Entrecasteaux in 1792. After British settlement of VDL in 1803 the forests of the Channel which bears the explorer's name attracted the attention of government-appointed gangs, and later private shipbuilders. According to James Kelly, before 1819 North West Bay

⁸HRA 3 v p 642.

⁹HRA 3 v p 644.

¹⁰MacFie, PH 'Cobbers and Dobbers' - Informers and Mateship Among Convicts, Officials and Settlers on the Grass Tree Hill Road, Richmond, Tasmania. Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings. Sept. 1988.

¹¹Bell to Bigge, HRA 3 iii p 232.

¹²The first chain gang was assembled on 24 April 1826 in Hobart Town and became established under regulation from 9 August that year. Examination of T. Kirkwood, Engineer. HRA 3 v p 640.

¹³Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO) 1/37/659, Engineer to Lt Gov Arthur, 1/37/659, 14 Oct 1824. All colonial government records quoted are held by the Archives Office of Tasmania. (AOT)

(and the banks of the) were occupied by 'natives' until they were driven off onto Bruni Island.¹⁴

Adventure Bay, Bruni Island

A little-known sawing station existed at Adventure Bay, Bruni Island from as early as 1819. The Hobart Town Gazette reported in December 1819 that Matthew Fortune, Overseer of Timber Fallers at Bruni Island and Adventure Bay, was allocated a salary of £8 19s per quarter.¹⁵ His gang was probably there earlier in the year when the *Prince Leopold* arrived to take 'pine already cut', returning in March & July.¹⁶ What type of pine is unclear, as stands of celery and king billy pine were known.¹⁷ However a period newspaper refers to the 'Adventure Bay pine', as if a distinct species.¹⁸ This station was still operating in 1829, as in April that year Monro, wrote of the shortage of men at Birch's Bay which now consisted of '44 prisoners exclusive of those on Bruni Island.'¹⁹

North West Bay

At the same time as the *Prince Leopold* was carrying timber from Bruni Island, she was also freighting sawn timber from North West Bay (and Macquarie Harbour).²⁰ In 1820, Major Bell described the North West Bay establishment which consisted of '7 men and one overseer, who is free by servitude, and 6 to 8 pairs of sawyers during summer.' The men, who were 'huttet', had not tried to escape and Bell had 'never had any complaints of their conduct.'

The timber was 'brought up in Government brig, as it is too heavy to bring up in boats or rafts. When the Brig is employed on other services, it is brought up in boats, being first sawed.'

Bell believed the 'establishment' was 'capable of extension' as the 'supply of timber is very considerable and very accessible (as) the land on which it grows is poor and flat.' Bell felt the timber in this neighbourhood was good for building purposes, as 'there is a sort called Peppermint used for shingles, the best for that purpose.'²¹

In addition to the *Prince Leopold*, the Government also had several smaller vessels used in naval work in the estuary, including the 'Inspectors (of Works) Boat' with coxswain and

¹⁴HRA 3 iii p 461.

¹⁵Pybus, R. South Bruni Island, Tasmania, Hobart, 1988, p10; also HRA 3 iii p 600. Murtagh (sic) Fortune was a pardoned convict who was sentenced in 1789 and arrived in Australia per *Atlas* in 1802. Schaffer, Irene (ed.) Land Musters, Stock Returns and Lists, VDL 1803-1822, p 180.

¹⁶Nicholson, Shipping Arrivals and Departures Tasmania 1803-1833, Vol 1 p 54-5.

¹⁷pers comm, Fred Duncan, botanist, Forestry Tasmania, 2002.

¹⁸Hobart Town Gazette 1 October 1824, p 2v c1.

¹⁹CSO1/217/5215, 8 April 1829.

²⁰The later North West Bay village was renamed Margate c 1850, but the small stream nearby retains the name North West Bay River.

²¹While Macquarie Harbour Huon pine was bought from Mr Birch the merchant at inflated prices, the Engineer reported that ship load of the common cedar 'or what is called pencil wood' was procured from the Huon River.'

crew (all convicts) which was 'used for bringing up timber and taking provisions down the river.'²²

In February 1820 timber at North West Bay was drawn to the pits with a 'timber carriage' pulled by oxen, one of only three in the government's use.²³ The 18 'timber fallers and shingle splitters under an overseer' listed were probably the gang located at North West Bay. John Riddell was listed as Overseer of Sawyers in 1820.²⁴ He was probably John Read Riddell, a carpenter, who advertised in 1824 for specimens of newly discovered Tasmanian timbers.²⁵ By 1822, the Overseer was John Read. In July 1822 two men, Edward Payne and Read, were drowned when their small boat capsized on arrival at North West Bay via Hobart Town and Tinderbox.²⁶

One of the first indicators of sawing at North West Bay is the arrival of the Government shipping to collect Government timber, the first being the 92 ton HM *Prince Leopold* in December 1819.²⁷ Captain Chace reported that in 1820 the ship made 10 voyages from North West Bay to Hobart and return for timber.²⁸ She was also making return trips in May and November of 1822, and February 1823.²⁹

An 1824 Saw Mill

In early 1824 a Hobart Town newspaper refers to a 'sawing machine in progress at North West Bay.' This was probably a steam sawmill, as the paper also reported: 'We can now inform our readers that another machine of a similarly useful kind, is nearly erected within a short distance of this town, and immediately beyond the Cascades.'³⁰ The location and type of mill at North West Bay points to one of - if not the - the earliest sawmill in VDL, just preceding deGrave's water-driven mill at the Cascades, but a decade after the first in NSW.³¹

²²HRA 3 iii p 236-43. Bigge Enquiry, examination of Major Bell.

²³HRA 3 iii p 558. The other two carriages were 'occasionally employed drawing timber to the yard for the sawpits at the lumber yard in Hobart Town.' The timber carriages were probably similar to those used at the Pennant Hills Convict Sawing Establishment near Sydney, which were two wheeled vehicles and carried the butt of the log, allowing the trunk to drag on the ground, churning up the soil. In so doing, the tracks became impassable mud slides in winter. {Mud and inaccessibility was given as a reason for the move from Mt Wellington to North West Bay.} see Hawkins, Ralph *The Convict Timbergetters of Pennant Hills*, Hornsby Historical Soc, 1998.

²⁴HRA 3 iii p 555. 12 February 1820.

²⁵HTG 1 Oct 1824. A pardoned convict, John Read Riddell arrived per *Guildford* in 1811. Schaffer op cit, p 190. Riddell purchased Huon pine from the colonial government in 1823. HRA 3 v p 348.

²⁶Nicholson, p 81.

²⁷Nicholson, p 57.

²⁸HRA 3 iii p 489. Captain Chace claimed she was unable to carry Huon pine from Macquarie Harbour being too deep to cross the bar at the harbour entrance, but by 1822 was used on this route. Nicholson p78. This ship was not ideal for working in shallow waters such as the Channel, as she was built of blue gum making her very heavy and with a 12 ft draft and unable to come close for inshore work.

²⁹Nicholson, pp 78 & 85. North West Bay was also a port of call for small boats. In July 1822 two men, Edward Payne and a Mr Read, were drowned when their boat capsized on arrival via Tinderbox. *ibid*, p 79.

³⁰HTG 9 Jul 1824 p 2 c 1.

³¹O'May, Harry *Hobart River Craft and Sealers of Bass Strait*, n d c 1960. p 22.

News of the mill's location coincided with the closure of North West Bay and the opening of a new sawing station at Birch's Bay in 1824. However, North West Bay continued with its 'Government sawmill' and ship-building centre.

Ship-building Centre

North West Bay became a ship-building centre with a number of shipwrights including the Mitchelmore family.³² Possibly the first construction of a ship there was the 81 ton government schooner *Waterloo* of Huon pine and built by Mr Maycock and launched in August 1822.³³ She immediately began trade under Capt. Kinghorne to Macquarie Harbour, and then to Birch's Bay.³⁴ The *Prince Leopold* was also carrying timber from North West Bay to Port Dalrymple and George Town in northern Tasmania and to Maria Island.

The Birch's Bay Sawing Establishment

Named after T.W. Birch, early Hobart merchant, ship-owner and exporter with a monopoly in Huon pine. Wattle bark had also been cut at Birch's Bay for the tanning industry before 1820. This sawing station followed the wind-down of North West Bay and was operating by late 1824. By November 1826, Birch's Bay was the largest employer of men in the Engineers Department outside Hobart and Launceston. A team of 62 men operated, consisting of 30 sawyers (or 16 pairs), 24 labourers, one blacksmith, one carpenter and two overseers.³⁵ Four 'miscellaneous' workers were probably a saw sharpener, file cutter, tailor and shoemaker. At that date, there were no draught animals in use.

Archival records indicate that structures at Birch's Bay included several on the foreshore. These were a hut occupied by the Superintendent's family, a jetty, and possibly a military guard station, as a button of the 11th Regiment has been found by the current owners of the adjoining property, *Yellow Point*. Inland were a series of sawpits and at least one major 'road' used by the bullock teams to haul timber to the pits in the summer. A semaphore station may have been located there, as 6 constables are referred to as additional to the workforce at Birch's Bay. This may however have referred to the semaphore station at Mt. Royal situated to overlook the Channel and the Huon River. This station acted as a warning base for shipping movements and arrivals, and relayed signals to the signal station on Mt.

The first was steam sawmill in NSW was John Dickson's, imported aboard the *Earl Spencer* in 1813, and launched by Lt Gov Macquarie on 29 May 1815. The one engine also ground grain. (Ellis, MH Lachlan Macquarie, Discovery Press, Penrith, 1972, p 276.) In NSW in 1825, a sawmill powered by bullocks was imported at a cost of £2000 and erected at Cowan Forest on Sydney's North Shore adjacent to the Pennant Hills Convict establishment. Hawkins, Ralph *The Convict Timbergetters of Pennant Hills, Hornsby Shire Historical Society*, 1994, p88-9.

³²Other ships built there were the *Pearl* (February 1834), *Eliza*, (November 1836), *Bussadorah Merchant*, (December 1837), and *Isabella* (June 1840.) Nicholson, 1834-42, vol 2 p 164, ship's index.

During the 1840s Elkanah Mitchelmore and his sons built several coastal traders at North West Bay, starting with the cutter *Gratitude* in 1841, two masted schooner *Mystery* in 1847, 73 ton schooner *Union* also with two masts in 1848. (Mitchelmore Family Records; used with permission.) Assigned convicts were still working there in October 1848, when four prisoners escaped from NW Bay in a boat of Mr Webb. Hobart Town Advertiser 27 Oct 1848 ff.

³³Maycock: possibly early whaler with Maum at Bruni Island. see Nicholson *ibid*.

³⁴Nicholson, p 79.

³⁵CSO 1/17/291 p 13.

Louis further up the Channel toward Hobart. This in turn connected with the Mt. Nelson Station and from there to the major signal mast at Battery Point, Hobart.³⁶

Birch's Bay was an active shipping port of call. In September 1825, gales prevented ships from entering the bay and collecting mail.³⁷ In November that year the government brig *Duke of York* called at Birch's Bay for timber en route from Macquarie Harbour to Hobart Town with 4 prisoners on a murder charge.³⁸ This ship made repeated return voyages to Birch's Bay from Hobart Town. In November 1825 the *Prince Leopold* called at Birch's Bay, then proceeded to Maria Island and Launceston with sandstone for construction of St John's Church.³⁹ In addition to these two ships calling at Birch's Bay, the colonial schooner *Caledonia* called there for a 10 ton blue gum plank to be shipped to England in the *Cape Packet*.⁴⁰

Over the years 1827-29, shipping from Birch's Bay continued but was not recorded in the newspapers with the previous regularity. In February 1829 the Macquarie Harbour-built *Cyprus* called at Birch's Bay on her maiden voyage for timber - before returning to be piratically seized by prisoners. In August the same year, also on her maiden voyage, the new 128 ton government brig *Tamar* under Captain Taw called at Birch's Bay from Macquarie Harbour. In December 1829 the *Prince Leopold* called at Birch's Bay for 4 bullocks.⁴¹ The same month the Government sloop *Opossum* left Hobart Town for Birch's Bay.

A few ship's orders indicate both the quantity of timber cut and the uses to which it was being put. In February 1827 the schooner *Waterloo* carried 200 ridge boards for new Government House (16 x 7 x 2 inches [41 x 18 x 5 centimetres]); 42 flooring boards for a stable at Richmond, 25 coffin boards; boards for a treadmill; quartering for a 'hut in the paddock' and quartering and joists for Government House. In July 1827 the *Derwent* under Captain Taw carried a large order for Government House. These included several 30 x 12 x 9 inches [76 x 30 x 23 centimetres], and 10 x 12 x 9 inch [25 x 30 x 23 centimetre] beams, and joists ranging from 26 inches [66 cm] and 22 x 6 x 3 inches [56 x 15 x 8 centimetres]. Other timber shipped was for the Prisoners Barracks, Soldiers Barracks, and Blacksmiths Shop, and ranged from boards, to beams and battens plus quartering. Both shipping lists are signed by Peter Monro, Superintendent, and countersigned by Captain Welsh, the Hobart Port Officer.⁴²

Timber Operations at Birch's Bay

The first superintendent at North West Bay was a Mr Wise, who was briefly succeeded in December 1824 by Lt William Gunn (of the Bourbon Regiment.) Wise was appointed as Superintendent of the 'Working Gangs employed at North West Bay' on an annual salary of

³⁶Today the village of Woodbridge c 1850 is located near Birch's Bay.

³⁷Nicholson p 107.

³⁸ibid, p 108.

³⁹ibid, p 109.

⁴⁰ibid, p 117.

⁴¹ibid, 164.

⁴²CSO1/17/291, 2 Jul 1827.

£50.⁴³ Gunn was at Birch's Bay and was possibly in charge of both stations during their transitional phase. In late 1825, Gunn was seconded to hunt bush-ranger Matthew Brady.⁴⁴ He was replaced as Superintendent at Birch's Bay by Peter Monro, an apparently unlikely overseer of a gang of sawyers.

Monro had arrived in Hobart Town in 1824 and attempted to set up a hat manufacturing business, only to be out-manipulated by competition from Hobart Town entrepreneur Richard Cleburne.⁴⁵ Desperate for employment, Monro was 'sent down for four weeks to take charge of Birch's Bay until the return of Lt Gunn,'. With the non-return of Gunn after three months, Monro went to Hobart Town to collect his family, re-arrange his business affairs and 'give up my house.' Unable to sell his business, he sent his wife back to Hobart Town to take care of affairs.⁴⁶ However, she later returned to live in their 'hut' and gave birth to two children at Birch's Bay in 1828 and 1830.⁴⁷ A female convict, Elizabeth Satchell (per *Lord Sidmouth*) was assigned to Monro in 1825.⁴⁸

In October 1826 Surveyors Hobbs and Scott visited 'the sawing station Establishment of Birch's Bay', and investigated alternative sites. They reported, 'we have examined all the country from Birch's Bay to Egg Island at the head of the navigation of the Huon River,' and suggested a site already identified by Monro 'in a bay on the north side of that river, where there is as much good timber as would keep the present establishment employed for some years.' The men would need to work 'in detached parties, as at present the timber growing round the head of the Bay extended a little from the water inland and over a space of 4 or 5 miles [6.4 or 8 kilometres] in circumference.' The surveyors however, believed the station hardly needed moving, as 'from our own observations and the account given by Mr Monro (sic) of the quantity of the timber where the men are now working ... there is abundance to keep the present gang for two or three years at work (both) at Birch's Bay, and along the coast for two miles [3.2 kilometres] to the north and south of the Superintendent's house.'

The surveyors noted the men were laboriously moving the heavy logs and suggested some practical approaches:

We beg to observe that as the Superintendent is at present provided with no other means of conveying the trees from where they are cut to the sawpits than the strength of the sawyers to roll them, it often happens that the trees may stand in places where without other assistance they cannot be moved.

⁴³HRA 3 iv p 268; also Gunn's letter to Arthur re remuneration. CSO1/162/3882, 9 May 1826.

⁴⁴HRA 3 v p 372. Gunn was obviously an active and dominating commander, as in September 1825 he was detained from his position by Lt. Lockyer and given command of a party in pursuit of the Brady Gang of bushrangers. During an exchange with the gang at Sorell, Gunn was severely wounded, requiring the amputation of an arm. Henceforth known as 'Wingy' Gunn, he became Superintendent of the Hobart Prisoners' Barracks.

⁴⁵Monro was using 'colonial fur' in his hat manufactory located in Bathurst Street, Hobart. His use of native animals for hat-making suggests he may have made use of the skin trading potential of his new position at Birch's Bay. HTG 29 Oct 1824, p 4 c 1. for Cleburne, see ADB Vol 1 p 229-30.

⁴⁶CSO1/115/ 2883, 23 Apr 1827.

⁴⁷Hobart Town Courier, 2 Feb 1828 p2.

⁴⁸Tardif, Philip *Notorious Strumpets & Dangerous Girls, Convict Women in VDL 1803-1829*, A & R, 1990, p 731; also her records, CON 40/9, AOT.

A couple of steady men, who understand the means of applying tackles would be of a great assistance in getting such trees out of the woods to the sawpits and for a few months in summer, when the ground is dry, two or three horses, might be of much service in getting out the very heavy logs.

Supervision of the scattered parties of bushmen was always a problem:

If the plan is approved of, we beg to observe that it would be necessary for the Superintendent to remove his quarters to where the greater number of the men would be stationed, and put a mile [1.6 kilometres] to the north of Birch's Bay, and that either himself or his free overseer, should every day visit the different parties of detached sawyers and shingle splitters, either by land or in the boat, to muster the men and see they are at work.⁴⁹

The Lakeland Report

A week later, after visiting the 'Birch's Bay Sawing Establishment,' John Lakeland (Principal Superintendent of Convicts) and G.W. Barnard, marine surveyor, made another detailed report to W.H. Hamilton, Acting Colonial Secretary.⁵⁰ They concluded:

1st that their (sic) is sufficient timber for several years consumption at the rate of present demand of good quality and so situated as to be perfectly available but that the mode at present (in) use of obtaining it is objectionable as being only calculated to take the timber in exceedingly favourable situations and short distances, and the pits are erected upon too permanent a manner for such a method of supply.

2nd Before we point out any alteration which we conceive are requisite we beg to explain the present method.

The commentators then described the working sawing station:

The pits are constructed for two, three or four pairs of sawyers and covered in, consequently the side strokes, skids, uprights etc are all necessarily heavy and the erection a matter of considerable labour; so many sawyers upon one pit have soon cut the timber in its immediate neighbourhood which is supplied to the pit as thus:

A road of sufficient width is opened through the scrub and fallen timber, to admit the logs being rolled down upon skids laid in the road to keep the logs up and enable the hand spikes to work: therefore when the timber conveniently situated is used, much labour is required to bring down one log, especially if any inequality of ground intervene, and the men are liable to accidents such as occurred just before we came to the Establishment.

The visitors made recommendations to improve the existing system, relying on temporary sawpits and smaller gangs:

... we recommend that the pits be of temporary, light construction for one pair of sawyers in the neighbourhood of three, four or half a dozen trees

⁴⁹CSO1/17/291, October 1826.

⁵⁰for Lakeland, see ADB, Vol 2 p 69-70; for Barnard, marine surveyor, see McKay Anne (ed.) Journals of the Land Commissioners for VDL 1826-1828, THRA, 1962, p 131.

that may be got to the pit forthwith. When they are done, the pit to be removed and every pair of sawyers to be accommodated the same way.

Four or six trees would employ a pair of sawyers three or four weeks at the least, the erection of the pit would be some two or three hours work. The stuff cut to remain at the pit to be marked, dimensions and quantity when measured by the Superintendent every Friday, re-piled (sic) and covered by the labourers, there to remain until it is to be removed by light carriages to a temporary wharf for shipment...

Lakeland recommended the timber be extracted:

... not by manual labour but by bullocks or horses (that are) brought to the Establishment in dry weather, with hay, corn for their support whilst there; which is supposed to be only a short time as the distance of carriage would be within a mile [1.6 kilometres], as all the pits and their shifting may for a considerable time be within that distance of the Point of shipment.

A road to the pits should be made at a width of 8 feet [2.44 metres]. A wharf running into 10 to 12 feet [3.1 to 3.7 metres] of water was 'to admit one of the colonial vessels taking in her lading with the aid of boats' was recommended.

Two teams of bullocks to haul the timber, plus their fodder, were urged. In the summer months, these would haul six months of timber away:

Any sawing required for unforeseen requisition might be cut from timber left for that purpose expressly near the wharf that much manual labour might not be required for the transport to the wharf, at a time when the cattle could not be used...

The risk for timber left in the bush was acknowledged:

... as the mode recommended supposes the sawed stuff remaining in the bush until the period of removal for shipment, and therefor liable from depredation whilst boats are permitted to go therefor for sawed stuff; we beg to recommend that all boats be prohibited from going there except by the Naval or other office ...

Birch's Bay Incentive System

Lakeland, part of the 'old school' of convict management, agreed with the incentive system, pointing out that the skilled workers, jealous of their craft, could receive higher wages if working for private employers. He recognised the need for incentives for the men:

... the necessity of something more than coercion to keep men in orderly and industrious behaviour in so remote a situation, so remote from inspection.

Lakeland recommended 'frequent inspection by the Officer in whose department it lays, we respectfully represent as a very necessary and useful measure, a measure necessary in any Establishment, more especially in one so situated & circumstanced.' He also urged that the Government 'retain adjoining lands.'

In a footnoted response, Arthur, having supposedly rejected the task system, agreed to its variant:

... considering the distance of this station I shall have no objection to allow the men the advantage of selling to the Government all the wood they cut on their Saturdays provided they actually cut 600 ft [183 metres] (a day sic) ... work (ing sic) for the Government.⁵¹

He also agreed to preventing non-government shipping approaching the settlement.

From late 1826 until 1829 this variation on the task work system was trialled at Birch's Bay. However, in March 1826, Arthur was still anxious about the revised system. The Engineer Department's Kirkwood (bending the truth), replied to a query from Private Secretary Capt. Montagu:

In reply to your letter of the 4th, for His Excellency ... there is no task work allowed at Birch's Bay. I have had the Superintendent before me this day, he says from his sawyers he expects a certain days work - 600 ft [183 metres] cut by each pair - circumstances occur wherein that quantity is some times not cut and other days more - but at that average... the young sawyers he says will not do as much until after being some time in training.

I have decided to reduce that Establishment to the number in the margin (ie 46 men) as the timber will be exhausted for Government purposes in the course of few months, I shall ... submit a plan for removing it to some more ... advantageous place...

Monro was instructed that no task work was to be allowed at Birch's Bay, and the Establishment was to be reduced to 12 sawyers, 3 boatmen, 1 file cutter, one blacksmith, 1 tailor, 1 shoemaker and a saw sharpener plus 20 labourers. Six signalmen who did not assist in the station's operation were included in the total of 46, plus overseers and the superintendent whose salary was increased from £50 to £75 p.a. on 12 December that year.⁵²

The station was affected by a constant change of personnel. Archer continued:

I enclose a statement of the men now employed at the station who strike work at 3 o'clock; from this station, scarcely a week passes but some are selected for outstations many are now under orders for New Norfolk and this body of men will gradually decrease.⁵³

Nine months of debate resulted in the modified system of task work being eventually introduced. Superintendent Monro asked:

... respecting the new mode in which this establishment is in future to be conducted you will ... be pleased to inform me the price which the convicts are to be paid for their surplus labour, also as to what measurement I am to take the account of their extra work, when I will immediately carry your orders into effect.

In the meantime I will make every necessary arrangement for the reception of the bullocks, I have called in all the parties as it will be necessary that all the sawyers are employed at one place or as near to each other as possible.

⁵¹This compared to 700 su ft per week expected from sawyers at the Pennant Hills Sawing Establishment, NSW. see Hawkins, Ralph op cit.

⁵²CSO 1/17/291 p 39. The men's statement is not extant.

John Lakeland suggested prices for timber purchased from men cut in their own time:

I recommend 5/- (5 shillings) per 100 superficial ft [30.5 su metres] measure as a fair (return) for the Sawyers extra work. I conceive that a pair of sawyers to cut battens and light quartering would be one 1000 ft [305 metres] per month, but not more than 800 ft [244 metres] when cutting heavy joists, beams in large quartering - except a few pairs who are expert workmen and industrious men.

In January 1827 Kirkwood alerted Monro that the two teams of bullocks and timber carriages were about to arrive.

Re teams of bullocks for Birch's Bay... Monro to prepare accordingly (delayed due to timber carriage not being ready till tomorrow - schooner delayed accordingly.⁵⁴

In March 1827 the task work system still functioned, as Turton instructed:

... I have arranged that the timber sawed at Birch's Bay by the men in their own time, should be purchased by the Government at the rate of 5 shillings per 1000 ft [305 metres] - ... engineer begs... the following arrangement be adopted without delay.

1st the timber now ready (value £30) be taken account of by Munro (sic) and shipped to Hobart Town without delay

2nd monthly account to be made up by Mr Munro (sic) and amount remitted to him

3rd estimated timber to the value of £50 per month will be supplied in this manner.⁵⁵

Prior to his transfer, Major Kirkwood reported that the Birch's Bay Sawing Establishment's 'situation' had been moved. The station strength consisted of 1 Superintendent, 2 Veteran Overseers, 3 convict overseers and 58 men. 8 bullocks were 'hauling logs to the pits' with one timber carriage. The Engineer believed that 'there is something required to manage (the station) properly, it is too much for one man to superintend...'⁵⁶

Equal Opportunity for Shingle Splitters

Monro wanted to know if shingle splitters were to have access to the same privileges as sawyers:

On entering on the new system, will the labourers still be allowed Saturdays to themselves, if they are, is it the intention of Government to purchase their shingles etc or will they still be allowed the indulgence of sending from the Establishment the produce of their Saturdays labour?⁵⁷

The Engineer requested authority to allow shingle splitters the same price per thousand shingles. Arthur responded; 'under the recommendation of the Committee supported by the

⁵⁴ibid, Memorandum 23 Jan 1827.

⁵⁵ibid, 14 May 1827.

⁵⁶CSO1/37/640, 14 Jan 1827.

⁵⁷ibid, 17 Jan 1827 Monro-Kirkwood.

opinion of the Engineer, I approve of the arrangement,' but he was still sceptical. Arthur responded to suggested rates in a footnote. 'If 5 shillings per 1000 feet [305 metres] is allowed for the timber, the proportion will be 4 shillings per 1000 shingles, which I have no objection to allow...'

Arthur then indicated his motives in agreeing to the system:

... but I beg the Engineer may fully understand that the privilege of working for themselves should only be allowed to men who conduct themselves with propriety - others, at Hobart Town, should be deprived of their Saturdays and labour on it for the Government.

The same system and rate for sawyers and shingle-splitters concluded, 'I should be glad to be informed what course the Engineer recommends for the sawyers and shingle splitters at New Norfolk.'⁵⁸

Arthur was still dubious about the system:

.... but as I am not quite satisfied that it is free from a dangerous innovation upon the system of task work which I entirely disapprove of, I hope the Engineer will carefully mark the result.⁵⁹

Birch's Bay Bush on Fire

Operations at Birch's Bay were stopped by a severe fire in December 1827 which Monro believed deliberately lit by natives. He wrote to John Lee Archer:

I beg leave to inform you that the bush was observed to be on fire yesterday at Birch's Bay and the thick scrub being very dry, the flames spread most rapidly in every direction.

I got all the hands immediately to work to remove the timber, in order to save it from being destroyed, the men were actively employed until night and succeeded in getting the greater part of it removed but the pits being so dispersed and the fire advancing with such fury, it was impossible to save the whole.

Two of the distant covered pits are burned down and about 4 thousand feet [1220 metres] of sawed timber consumed which could not be saved.

The two pits were of little consequence as the timber about them was exhausted and must shortly have been abandoned.

Monro suspected local aborigines:

I suspect the natives to have caused the fire, one of their dogs having been seen about the same time, which leaves no doubt of their being in the neighbourhood.

Arthur saw this as an opportunity to look for a location for a new sawing station on Tasman Peninsula, but another three years passed before Port Arthur Sawing Station was opened:

⁵⁸ibid, 14 May 1827.

⁵⁹ibid, 14 May 1827.

Shingle Splitters Station, Peppermint Bay.

The main shingle-splitters gang was still located at New Norfolk. However in order to meet the demand for shingles for government projects in the colony, in April 1829 Monro wrote of 'a number men employed lately spitting shingles those of an inferior description which the men split in their own hours and I believe secretly sent away in boats, no boat having been at the Establishment lately for timber.' He suggested 5-6 men be sent down exclusively for shingle splitting, as plenty of timber was available for at least three years although a road would be needed to bring them out. Engineer Archer urged concentrating parties of splitters rather than having groups working separately in the bush. Arthur commented:

... arrangements of course must be made for a regular supply of shingles - but has not the Engineer an establishment of this nature at New Norfolk - and would it not be more judicious to concentrate the shingle splitting gang either at New Norfolk or Birch's Bay.

As a result of the discussion, Archer drew Arthur's attention to the:

want of shingle splitters at the Sawing Establishment Birch's Bay, and to request that, as there is a very great demand for shingle splitters for the buildings in progress, the Principal Superintendent may be instructed to attach a convict overseer and five men to the Establishment for the purpose of preparing shingles.⁶⁰

Archer directed a new arrangement for shingle-splitters with a gang to be stationed at Peppermint Hill above Peppermint Bay, just north of Birch's Bay. The name given to the shingling gang's location even today acknowledges the early recognition of this species as being best for shingles due to its durability.

Relative to the concentrating shingle splitters in one gang, I beg to state for the information of His Excellency the Lt Gov that I have fully considered the subject and have received reports from Messrs Turnbull and Monro and of the opinion that a gang of men may be advantageously employed at a place called Peppermint Hill, about one mile [1.6 kilometres] from Birch's Bay and a mile [1.6 kilometres] from the sea beach, where the splitting timber I am informed is good and in great abundance.

After a road was made through the thick scrub, the Engineer believed, '12 men splitting at the rate of 2,000 each or 24,000 weekly may find a supply for at least two years.' Due to their being dispersed in the bush and 'at a considerable distance from the present settlement at Birch's Bay, a confidential overseer will be required. I recommend that the man at present in charge of the gang at New Norfolk be appointed to the situation ...'⁶¹

Mounting Queries & Costs

Arthur became worried over the expenses incurred at Birch's Bay. In addition to timber cut by men in Government time, the public purse was buying a high proportion of sawn timber from the same workers cut in their own time. This was detailed in a return from Monro and affirmed by Archer. In 1827 privately cut timber was in the ratio of a quarter to that sawn in

⁶⁰ibid, 20 Apr 1829 .

⁶¹ibid, 3 Jun 1829.

Government time, while in 1828, the men were producing 'more than half in their own time.' In 1828 the 53 men (assisted by 4 bullocks for 52 weeks) cut 237 529 su feet [72 399 su metres] of timber as their Government work, (valued at £1009 10s), while in their own time the men had cut 134 418 su feet[40 971 su metres], at a value of over £571.

Timber Cut in Government Time (su metres)

	super feet	super metres
1827	280 760	85 576
1828	237 529	72 399
June 1829	<u>113 612</u>	<u>34 629</u>
TOTAL	631 901	192 604

Timber Cut by the Men for Payment (su metres)

	super feet	super metres
1827	121 570	37 055
1828	134 418	40 971
June 1829	5 008	<u>1 526</u>
TOTAL	260 996	79 552

In addition, the price paid to the sawyers and shingle cutters for timber cut in their own time had risen from 5 shillings to 8 shillings & 6 pence per thousand super feet [305 su metres], while the increase for shingles was from 4 shillings to 8 shillings & 6 pence per thousand. Split posts had risen from 3 pence to 1 shilling each, split rails from 2 pence to 6 pence each, split palings from 2 shillings to 10 shillings per hundred, while split spokes had risen from 2 shillings to 9 shillings per hundred.

Archer gave figures for production over a 12 month period showing a '...profit made only £112 16s 2d over and above what the sale material could be purchased for at the present rate of colonial prices.' He insisted, however, that:

... it should be considered that if the Government were to abandon the present Est, and were then to go into the timber market for their materials, a very considerable rise would naturally take place in the price of these articles, so that I conceive the advantage such an Establishment to the Government to be far more considerable than the mere balance as shewn (sic) by this account.⁶²

Earlier in February 1829, apparently concerned over the working of the task work system, Arthur sent Port Officer Samuel Hill to report on operations at Birch's Bay. He compared savings using oxen to haul the timber against manual labour:

In obedience to His Excellency's orders ... I proceeded to Birch's Bay & examined the timber in the vicinity of the settlement where I found

⁶²ibid, 22 Jun 1829

abundance of the very finest quality in situations offering but little difficulty to its removal to the beach and sufficiently near for the sawyers to be under the eye of the Superintendent.

Sawn timber of every size up to 9 by 9 inches [23 x 23 cm] may be conveyed with great advantage by hand; for all above that size, the assistance of bullocks is indispensable, but as the sizes usually required for the public works fall under 9 by 9 inches [23 x 23 cm], two teams only of bullocks would be required and for which forage would be sent, there being no hay whatever in the neighbourhood.

The result of a comparison between carrying the timber by hand and bullocks is as follows: one man will carry 488 ft [149 metres] per diem, taking an average of all kinds and sizes under 9 x 3 inches [23 x 8 centimetres]; a team of bullocks will convey 2440 ft [744 metres], so that the labour of five men is equal to one bullock...⁶³

The Sixths System

The incentive system was succeeding too well - but not in the Government's favour. Civil Engineer Archer believed:

... the men, instead of using their exertion during the 5 days, merely manage to keep themselves employed and just to complete their task in time (i.e. 600 ft [183 metres] per week), reserving their great exertion for their own day. The consequence is, that a much greater proportion of work is done on that day, than any other day in the week.⁶⁴

On 30 June 1829, Minute No. 118 ordered; 'Task Work to be Discontinued at Sawing Establishment at Birch's Bay.' Instead a new incentive of the Sixths' was to be given. In discussing the value of work performed, Arthur commented:

... (it) appears that the Saturday work of which the men receive benefit bears a very undue proportion to that performed by them as their Government labour, and it is desirable to abolish task-work in all cases where practicable, intimate to the Engineer I should wish the experiment should be tried which he had recommended in his letter of the 26, of requiring the sawyers to work the whole of the week on account of the Government and allowing them a sixth part of the value of their earnings, after the rate which has been heretofore been paid to them.

At the expiration of three months the engineer will report how far this arrangement compared with the former system, had been beneficial or otherwise to the Government.⁶⁵

⁶³CSO1/215/1525. 15 Feb 1829.

⁶⁴ibid, JLA - Parramore, 26 Jun 1829. Another form of 'Task work' was reintroduced in VDL during the 1840s as part of the Probation System. Prisoners could 'earn' a reduction in their sentence by productivity and good behaviour. see Thompson, John 'Old Wharf Probation Station', in Tasmanian Historical Research Association P & P, September 2001.

⁶⁵CSO1/17/219, 30 Jun 1829. The timber workers weren't the only prisoners providing essential services who worked on the sixths incentive system. In February 1828, Civil Engineer Lee Archer recommended the lime burning gangs 'be allowed a sixth part of the produce of their labour for their own benefit, instead of the present established system of burning a certain portion of lime every week for the Government, and being

Smuggling or a 'System of Plunder'?

During early months of 1829 and 1830, timber was repeatedly 'stolen' or illegally sold by bush workers from Peppermint and Birch's Bays. Government officials referred to the trade as 'plunder.' Regulation of the timber supply system appeared to be breaking down in a colonial 'free-for all', as Arthur tried to choose between increased productivity gained by offering his convict bush workmen incentives, and preventing them profiteering on the side. Port Officer Hill reported:

... (due to) the nature of the ground, the practice is to carry it (from distant pits) to the nearest beach where it is stacked and left until embarked for Hobart Town, (and) this system offers both opportunity and temptation to plunder and occasions considerable loss of time when the vessel arrives to load,

Due to the tides and shallows,

... the boats are unable to work at all times, and the men from the boats being at a distance are obliged to carry the timber a considerable way through the water which in winter is found to be severe service.

Hill suggested the remedy lay in bringing all timber to a central location:

I beg therefor (sic) to propose the following remedy: that a small punt... be attached to the Establishment Depot at the jetty near the Superintendent's Hut, here the timber would be in a place of security and much time saved when vessels arrived to take in their cargoes, with this aid, ... timber may be supplied at the present rate of consumption (600 ft [183 metres] per week) for several years.⁶⁶

Monro wrote to Mulgrave the Police Magistrate, defending his supervision of the sawn timber:

Re: timber stolen from Peppermint Bay near the Establishment

I beg to inform you that there being no Establishment timber sawn there at present except what the sawyers may have cut in their own hours, which ought to have been delivered to the Government for payment,

Monro blamed the infrequent Government shipping, resulting in the illegal trade:

... the men having difficulty in getting it sent away when cut, the Government Vessels not coming regularly for that purpose, I believe they do frequently smuggle it away, there being several boats employed in this River which I am informed secretly bring men supplies, which is a great temptation to send their timber surreptitiously away.

allowed to burn for themselves in their own time.' Arthur grudgingly agreed: 'I certainly cannot say that this is an arrangement which I think in any way desirable, but I am most desirous that the works should not be impeded from want of lime, I yield...' These gangs were located at Hobart Town, Launceston, New Norfolk and 'Cooley's Shell Lime Party.' Colonial Secretary Burnett suggested that instead of the men selling their sixth, the Government purchase their private output and the proceeds be deposited in the Commissariat until 'such time as a Savings Bank be established.' Whether this last idea was adopted is unclear. CSO1/162/3882, 26 Feb 1828.

⁶⁶CSO1/215/1525. 15 Feb 1829.

I cannot therefore attach much blame to the men but could these boats be prevented from coming it would be the only effective means of preventing the boats coming near the beach (it) being very much exposed to plunder. Boats have frequently been seen but the parties have always escaped with impunity.

The men are sent to Town in charge of Constable Tyler⁶⁷ who has confessed to me to have put the timber on board the boats which the constables secured.⁶⁸

In addition, Monro noted that at least two small schooners were seen around the beaches at Peppermint Bay and Birch's Bay. These were owned by Gwynne, seen leaving with an illicit load in 1828, while a boat of Stephen Gould lay at anchor nearby.⁶⁹ Unable to prove its ownership, Monro had an overseer stay on board until the ship reached Hobart.

Mulgrave reported that government timber was seized from a boat at Oyster Bay - but the prisoners 'considered the sawn and split stuff their own.' Mulgrave asked:

Would not a Government Order prohibiting persons from purchasing timber of convicts without permission from some authority prevent the evil?

Given the isolated state of the station, this was a naive expectation. Port Officer Hill rejected Monro's reason for the disappearance of timber, and provided evidence of the sailing schedule of government vessels, 'by which it will appear that the circumstances arise from some other cause.' The timber it seemed was being 'stolen'. Hill's list of government vessels with their dates of departure from Birch's Bay, includes the *Swallow* (16 ton sloop), *Tamar* (a new ship built at Macquarie Harbour *Rambler* (16 ton sloop), the *Opossum* (30 ton sloop) and the *Clyde* (30 ton cutter.)⁷⁰ The *Swallow* and *Mary* made monthly round trips, with the *Swallow* returning four times in July 1830 for example, out of a total of seven vessels calling at Birch's Bay for the month.⁷¹

Port Arthur - a New Sawing Station Planned

Arthur sought a secure location where his workers could not negotiate with private operators and where small vessels could not approach. The attractive option lay across the Derwent estuary - Tasman Peninsula. On the southern coast was a secure bay, Stewart's Harbour, with huge trees to the water's edge. Arthur needed three years of convincing that the move was right, but in 1830 bushmen from Birch's Bay and Macquarie Harbour were sent to establish the new Sawing Station at Port Arthur.

Correspondence reveals that the move to Port Arthur was instigated as much by the need to prevent theft of and illicit trade in timber, as by the need for a penal station. Principal Superintendent of Convicts, James Gordon on inspection in January 1829 observed:

⁶⁷ Symer Mark Tyler⁶⁷, alias Mark Tyler Tymer, alias William Britton (to NSW per *Guildford*, to VDL per *Ruby*)

⁶⁸CSO1/17/291, 5 Feb 1830.

⁶⁹ibid

⁷⁰These shipping movements are more frequent than those listed in other sources, including Nicholson, Vols 1 & 2.

⁷¹CSO1/17/291, 9 Feb 1830.

... by moving the Establishment to Port Arthur the existing system of plunder will be entirely frustrated. Only inconvenience will be a delay in getting timber.⁷²

His comments were reiterated by Port Officer Hill the following month who commented on the need for security and avoiding the situation at Birch's Bay where 'this system offers both opportunity and temptation to plunder.'⁷³

Meanwhile Monro was preparing demountable huts for the move to Port Arthur. Large amounts of timber still remained on the beaches of Birch's Bay and he was having difficulty clearing the backlog of sawn timber. In addition he wanted more nails to assist in covering the saw-pits, 'and the erection of huts on Bruni Island and at the Signal Stations.'⁷⁴

The first group of sawyers sent to Port Arthur from Birch's Bay were 18 men, trans-shipped aboard the *Derwent* from the *Tamar* which had come from Macquarie Harbour on 7 September 1830.⁷⁵ They were to be followed by a group from Birch's Bay consisting of one overseer, 2 timber fellers, 4 sawyers, 5 shingle splitters, one shoemaker, plus a detachment of one officer and 15 soldiers.⁷⁶

On 22nd September Lt John Russell, the first commandant, reported from Port Arthur, 'the men are housed in comfortable huts and sawyers are at work in the sawpits.' Arthur commented, 'This is very satisfactory indeed - now as soon as you can prudently do so, cause the Birch's Bay Establishment to be altogether abandoned.'⁷⁷

Port Arthur Sawing Establishment - From Incentive to a Punitive System

The Birch's Bay timber workers, accustomed to their privileged position, were at the forefront of a strike at Port Arthur in October 1830 when they confronted Commandant Russell over rations and conditions, believing 'they were all led to accept that they were coming here, not as punishment, but as an indulgence.' Russell argued;

In all respects I have no fault to find with the men... if the above suggestions are carried into effect, the produce of the Settlement will be greater and the necessity for severe punishment or coercion measures far less frequent.'⁷⁸

⁷²ibid, 24 Jan 1829 Pr Supt James Gordon - Colonial Secretary.

⁷³ibid, 15 Feb 1829 Port Officer Hill - Colonial Secretary.

⁷⁴ibid, 21 Jun 1828 Peter Monro - John Lee Archer.

⁷⁵CSO1/483/10748, 9 Sep 1830, in Brand, Ian Penal Peninsula, Hobart n d, p4.

The first 18 were: Robert Ashforth, Joseph Armstrong, Joseph Brown, Richard Brissa, Richard Copperwaite, George Crossland, Jeremiah Crawley (free), William Garrett, William Hornsley, Charles Lea, Crussa Linaphon, Hans Olsen, Joseph Saunders, Richard Somercote, James Taite, Frederick Charles (free), John Taylor, Robert Veitch.

⁷⁶Many of these and others identified as being from Birch's Bay have been identified as having also worked at Macquarie Harbour Penal Settlement as specialist timber workers. (Dr Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, Department of History & Classics, University of Tasmania.)

One boy arrived with the first group of prisoners sent from Birch's Bay Sawing Station to establish Pt Arthur in the heavy forests of Stewart's Bay on 20 Sep 1830. He was 371P John Parry, formerly a 'plasterer's boy' but now a sawyer. CSO 1/483/10749; 1 Mar 1831 Russell-CSO.

⁷⁷CSO1/483/10748, 9 Sep 1830.

⁷⁸CSO1/483/10748, 2 Oct 1830.

Arthur conceded; three weeks later, Col. Sec. Burnett advised all men would receive the same rations as the men at Birch's Bay had, except those from Macquarie Harbour who would receive the same ration as issued there.⁷⁹

However, the cooperative or incentive method did not last at Port Arthur. The change to a fully punitive penal station coincided with a change in official policy, particularly following a visit of Lt Gov. Arthur in December 1832. New harsh regulations were issued and implemented by commandants Lt Gibbons (1832-3), and especially Lt Charles O'Hara Booth (63rd Regt) (1833-42), who was to have the greatest influence on the structure, operations and reputation of Port Arthur Penal Station.

The later introduction of tramways, steam powered sawmills at Port Arthur, and the opening up of another timber station at Cascades Probation Station on the north coast of Tasman Peninsula in 1842 - also with a steam sawmill - added to the timber output and bleak reputation and conditions experienced by the convict bush workers.

However the role of the outstations in the convict system and their influence on colonial culture and the national psyche is yet to be fully assessed.

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⁷⁹CSO1/483/10748, 21 Oct 1830.

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Mt. Wellington.....	2	<i>Derwent</i>	8, 20
Mulgrave, ?.....	18, 19	<i>Duke of York</i>	7
New Norfolk.....	2, 12, 14, 15, 17	<i>Earl Spencer</i>	6
North West Bay.....	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	<i>Eliza</i>	7
North West Bay River.....	5	Government brig.....	5
North West Bay Sawing Station.....	1	<i>Gratitude</i>	7
North West Bay village.....	<i>See Margate</i>	<i>Guildford</i>	6, 18
Olsen, Hans.....	20	Inspectors (of Works) Boat.....	5
Oyster Bay.....	19	<i>Isabella</i>	7
Parry, John.....	20	<i>Lord Sidmouth</i>	9
Payne, Edward.....	6	<i>Mary</i>	19
Peppermint Bay.....	2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18	<i>Mystery</i>	7
Peppermint Hill.....	15	<i>Opossum</i>	8, 19
plunder.....	17, 18, 19	<i>Pearl</i>	7
Port Arthur.....	1, 19, 20	<i>Prince Leopold</i>	5, 6, 7, 8
Port Arthur Sawing Station.....	4	<i>Rambler</i>	19
Principal Superintendent of Convicts.....	1, 3, 10, 19	<i>Ruby</i>	18
properties.....		<i>Swallow</i>	19
<i>Yellow Point</i>	7	<i>Tamar</i>	8, 19, 20
		<i>Union</i>	7

<i>Waterloo</i>	7, 8	blue gum	6, 8
shoemakers	7, 12, 20	celery-top pine.....	5
Signal Stations	20	huon pine	5
signalmen	12	huon pine	6
sixths	17	huon pine	6
Somercote, Richard	20	huon pine	7
Sorell, Lt.Gov. William.....	2	huon pine	7
split palings.....	16	king billy pine.....	5
split posts	16	peppermint	5, 15
split rails	16	pine	5
split spokes.....	16	stringy bark.....	2
Stewart's Harbour	19	timber carriage gangs.....	2
stonemasons.....	3	timber carriages.....	2, 5, 12, 13
strike.....	12, 20	Tinderbox.....	6
Superintendent of Works	2	Turnbull, (John?)	15
tailors	7, 12	Turton, Major Richard.....	3, 13
Taite, James	20	Tyler, Symer Mark	18
task work system.....	3, 4, 11, 13, 16	Tymer, Mark Tyler.. <i>See</i> Symer Mark Tyler	
Tasman Peninsula	1, 14, 19	Van Diemen's Land	2
Tasmania	1	Veitch, Robert	20
Taw, Captain ?	8	wattle bark	7
Taylor, John.....	20	Welsh, Captain John	8
theft of timber	<i>See</i> plunder	Wise, Mr ?	8
timber		Woodbridge	7