

Historical Tasmania Series

**Prize Fights,
Poker Games
&
Profanities
to
Ploughing Matches
&
Other Games**

Making Pastimes Acceptable

in 19th Century Tasmania

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Making Pastimes Respectable in 19th Century Tasmania

Peter H. MacFie

The nineteenth century saw the gradual stifling of working class past times and activities.

Some of these were aggressive and violent and not exclusively working class, and included boxing or pugilism as it was then known, dog and cock fighting, card playing and pigeon shooting - all combined with some form of gambling. Gambling also included the use of thimbles and the tossing of coins - in the precursor to the later national past-time of two-up.

As will be seen by the evidence, these activities occurred in association with the sometimes excessive consumption of alcohol and liberal use of swearing. As the Victorian era progressed, the more serious middle and upper class values which had helped abolish slavery gradually became critical of these overt working class activities, perhaps because they were associated in Tasmania with transportation and convictism.

In the early Georgian period, three forms of 'sport'/entertainment were acceptable to Whig and worker alike - horse and boat racing - especially at regattas- and pugilism, especially as prize fighting. While boat-racing held on the Derwent River offered a chance for the skilled to show their talents on a 'free' surface, horse racing required a greater expense, and the permission of a large land-holder to run the meeting.

In VDL, convicts under sentence and assignment were theoretically prevented from indulging in these and other past times. However, around Richmond in 1834:

Illicit recreation available to convicts included card-playing (for which David Hillyard and Edward Desmond received, respectively, two months and a reprimand), visiting the Richmond races, an apparently popular venue with assigned and gang prisoners, as was visiting a brothel at Richmond.

Two bricklayers, who enjoyed singing, were later arrested at Antill Ponds and received 6 months, Hulk Gang, Hobart.¹

The free who behaved riotously in public were also controlled, but less violently than convicts. On New Year's Day 1834, Richard Sant (free) was charged with being Drunk & Disorderly, and Riotous at the Richmond Races.

Chief District Constable John Jewel. On my coming on the course about 1 o'clock yesterday I saw this man drunk on horseback and hallooing and making a great noise to the annoyance of everyone.

About an hour afterwards I was called on by Mr Gunning to take him in charge.... He refused to go and attempted to pull me off my horse and lifted

¹MacFie, PH 'Dobbers & Cobbers - Informers & Mateship Among Convicts, Settlers & Officials on the Grass Tree Hill Road Station, Tasmania, 1830-1850', Tasmanian Historical Research Association P&P, 1988, p 119.

his hand against me ... I cannot say whether his first was clenched. Mr Gage and Mr Gunning the magistrate was present... he said he'd be damned if he would be taken by any magistrate.. when we got him down to handcuff he hallowed murder and a mob collected round him and rescued him ... when he was out of the mob Mr Gunning told me again to take him and I did so.

In self-defence Sant said, 'I was not drunk, I was merely huzzaring the Coal River horses and Mr Gunning said I was annoying the people...' He was bound over to Keep the Peace.²

Prize Fights

Fighting had a dominant part in the social and sporting life of colonial Hobart Town - and the Eastern Shore settlements at Clarence Plains and the Coal River Valley. Due to their illegal status, reporting on them was increasingly guarded.³ These altercations sometimes occurred in organised matches, or as tribal fights or melees, apparently based on religious/ethnic rivalry. A Sandy Bay resident, whose relatives who once lived at Richmond, recently recalled the regular brawls which occurred in the village, with the Catholics meeting the 'Others' half way across the sandstone Bridge.⁴ Similar stories were remembered by Alf and George King around 1914, who indicated that the former *Bridge Inn* was the Catholic pub and one where strangers could find themselves in a fight very quickly. Around 1900, two of the regulars - both elderly emancipated convicts - Pat Keady and Tommy Shaw, (known as 'Tommy the Roundhead') were was 'always fighting', as Alf recalled, especially at Richmond.⁵

Fights at Richmond had a long history, and were used to intimidate even the most established members of society. In 1827 an altercation in the streets of Richmond involving G W Gunning, land owner and magistrate, in an affray during which he was unceremoniously 'unshingled' or had his hat knocked off.⁶

Fights were not always random. Prize fights, in which the combatants battled for a cash prize were common on both sides of the Derwent River. In February 1827 the *Hobart Town Courier* reported that there had been an invasion of 'thieves and blackguard at Clarence Plains to witness a fight between two men for £20 on a farm adjoining *The Glebe*.'⁷

This match, like other fights of the period, were bare-knuckled, a practice which continued until the introduction of boxing gloves under the Queensbury Rules around 1880. Around 1810, boxing had a number of sporting euphemisms, and was also referred to as 'milling,' and a fighter as a 'Milling Cove.'⁸ These and other period terms use in early newspaper descriptions of fights alluding to the pre-1800 language of popular English culture.

²MM110/2 10/12/1833, 3/1/1834. AOT.

³This middle-class and rather superior attitude continued until the end of 20th century. The Tasmanian State Library, for example, has no copies of the defunct *Sporting Globe* or *Truth* newspapers, both of which carried Tasmanian reports.

⁴A anon member, Sandy Bay Historical Soc, October 2001.

⁵MacFie, PH At 'That Time a' Day' - A Social History of the Richmond District, Draft text, 2000.

⁶Hobart Town Courier 10/11/27 p1.

⁷Hobart Town Courier 27/10/27 P3 C2. *The Glebe* was located at Pass Road, Rokeby.

⁸A boxer/pugilist - 'How the milling cove beat the cull out.' How the boxer beat the fellow;' in, 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, reprinted with foreword by Max Harris, Bibliophile Books, Adelaide, 1971. also see McLachlan, Noel, *The Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux*, Heinemann, London, 1964, p252.

Organised fighting, Peter Corris argues, is a phenomena of urbanisation.⁹ However, in the colonies, as fighting was technically illegal, 'Arenas' were usually located away from heavily populated areas. During the early years of settlement in VDL, bare-knuckle boxing matches were held around the Knocklofty-Landsdowne Crescent area in the hills above Hobart Town, on a site known in 1817 as *Stanley's Farm*. The arena later moved to the vicinity of the Cascade Brewery, then returned to a piece of ground at the foot of Mount Knocklofty called the Sugar Loaf Flat. Here was a mud hut where the contestants stripped for battle. 'This was a favourite convincing ground until the 1860s when the sport of bare knuckle boxing died out.' In the 1860s the arena was on Landsdowne Crescent 'on a piece of spare land next to Murdoch's Rope Walk.'¹⁰

In May 1817, the *Hobart Town Gazette* reported the first recorded fight at Hobart Town:

The vigilance of the Police in preventing the disorderly assembly of persons, whatever be the occasion, was on Monday last eluded, to the no small satisfaction of the pugilist *amateurs*. Two Champions who lately arrived in the Colony, having high words and exulting on each other's manhood, met in a field about half a mile from Town. The combatants were William Allcock and Joseph Ibbotson. They fought for twenty minutes, when Ibbotson was obliged to yield, although possessed of a greater science & activity than his antagonist, who gained the victory by strength only.¹¹

In 1817 William Allcock was appointed as 'Superintendent of Streets' in Hobart Town, attached to the Survey Department. Macquarie thought him 'paid far beyond his merit and services.'¹² Joseph Ibbotson had shipped to VDL per *Kangaroo* in July 1816, arriving in NSW per *Fortune* in 1812.¹³ He left Hobart Town for Port Jackson in July 1818 on the schooner, *Derwent*.¹⁴

Fighting between pugilists had been popularised in Britain in the latter half of the 18th century by some prominent fighters, particularly Samuel Mendoza, a Jew from the Sephardic community in London's East End. Mendoza gave fighting and the Jewish immigrants a sense of pride, as his skills grew from a need to protect the Jewish community from bullying. Mendoza took advantage of the growing popularity of boxing, developing an 'industry' based on his skills and wide following. He introduced 'science' to boxing which involved developing a system of defence with parrying and foot-work. These tactics were designed to outwit an opponent, rather than being a pure slugging match where boxers exchanged blows until one succumbed.¹⁵

Due to this culture perhaps not surprisingly, two Jewish fighters, Moses Moses and Samuel Lyons were described competing near Hobart Town in October 1817.

⁹Corris, Peter *Lords of the Ring*, Cassell, Sydney, 1980, p 5.

¹⁰NS 21/26/2 p235. AOT. [Newspaper extract of 8/3/1918.]

¹¹Hobart Town Gazette 24/5/1817, p2.

¹²Historical Records of Australia, Vol 3 ii pp 343, 354.

¹³HRA, Vol 3 ii p.348.

¹⁴Hobart Town Gazette 18/7/1818 p2b.

¹⁵Adams, Jad 'Fighting with faith, Daniel Mendoza', BBC History Magazine, June 2001, *passim*.

On Monday last the amateurs of the fist had a grand field-day on a spot of ground called Stanley's Farm, near this town, amidst a numerous concourse of spectators. The first battle was between an Hibernian of the name of Scott, and an Israelite named Moses Moses. After a deal of fighting, in which paddy appeared to be the champion, the jew was declared beat - So great were the odds, that farms to a *pig-stye* were bet in favour of the Hibernian!

Usually two or more bouts were staged on such occasions. The *Gazette* continued:

The next battle was between (William) Daniels a Londoner, and (Robert) Lee, a knight of the last; the former having long been in the settlement (to use the cant phrase) as a milling cove! Much science and activity were displayed on both sides; and they were pronounced by all the *fisty-cuffs* present, in the language of the turf, as game chickens!

The third and last battle was between (Andrew) Stewart, another Hibernian, and (Samuel) Lyons a tailor of the Jewish persuasion. Both stood well to each other for a long time, till the tailor's seams were completely flattened, and pat was declared victor, who retired with his face well black-balled.

The presence of women at the arena roused the chauvinistic ire of the writer.

We regret to state that at a scene so disgraceful and indelicate, several females were present, whose time might have been occupied to much better advantage in the pursuit of domestic affairs...¹⁶

On 19 April 1817 Andrew Stewart had his Ticket of Leave granted.¹⁷

In April 1817 two combatants referred to earlier -Daniels & Lee - were recorded in a 're-match', this time for a prize of 60 sheep. Daniels was referred to as a 'game chicken', a pseudonym used by a famous English boxer around 1800.

On Monday last another battle was fought on a spot of ground near Stanley's Farm, between William Daniels and Robert Lee (the two combatants who engaged a few weeks ago) for 60 ewes, amidst the greatest concourse of spectators ever assembled together in this Colony. At setting to, Daniels was the favourite, and continued so until within the last two or three rounds, when he became totally blind; and at length was compelled much against his heart, to give up the contest, after fighting 84 rounds, which lasted nearly two hours of the hardest milling that was ever witnessed in any part of New South Wales. Daniels was may now be truly termed a *game chicken*; but Lee had considerable advantage in length of arm. Much money was betted on the occasion.¹⁸

¹⁶Hobart Town Gazette S4/10/1817.

¹⁷Hobart Town Gazette 19/4/1817 P2b. [In May 1817 an Andrew Stewart per *Guildford* to Pt Jackson and per *Ruby* to VDL sought a certificate of freedom. Historical Records of Australia, Vol 3 ii, p239.]

¹⁸Hobart Town Gazette 1/11/1817 p2a.

Robert Lee had arrived in VDL from Sydney on the *Kangaroo* on 16 October 1816. In March 1817 he absconded. Lee had been tried at Spithead and transported for life to NSW on the *General Hewitt*. He was born at Liverpool, and was 23 years old, 5 ft 7 ins tall, with brown hair and hazel eyes. He was tattooed on the right arm with a crucifix and anchor, and the figure of a man and 'several other marks' on his left arm.¹⁹

In 1818 another contest is described in detail, this time between Lyons and Williams, 'cross-legged gentlemen' a euphemism for tailors:

On Thursday last several grand *Milling* matches took place in a private field about a mile from the town, now called the Waterloo of *fisty-cuffs*.

The first battle was between two of the *cross-legged* gentlemen named Lyons and Williams; the former we stated in a late report of this nature to have had his seams flattened, but on this occasion he was more fortunate; for, after a long contest, in which there were many rounds fought with the most determined bravery, and great doubts as to who would be champion, Lyons beat his antagonist; and to the no small gratification of the spectators present, they both retired from the *shopboard of action* with their faces well *patched*.

Williams, was perhaps a soldier, Lance Corp Thomas Williams of the 46th Regt who was tried for killing a settler, Alexander Seaton at *Herdsmen's Cove House* in November 1818.²⁰

Another fight followed:

The second battle was between Greenwood and Brown, and we understand a bet previously made; the latter was unable to stand before his adversary, who at every blow hit him to the ground.

During the last contest a dispute between the seconds caused an unexpected encounter between two persons of the name of Murphy and Stanley; but the milling was only of a second rate, and from the long continuance, rather tired the by-standers, till at length they parted; it was evident that neither possessed the requisite article - science.²¹

A third fight arose between another boxer and a well-known Kangaroo Point ferryman, Urias Allender:

¹⁹Hobart Town Gazette 15/3/1817 p1 c1.

²⁰Hobart Town Gazette 22/11/1817 p2. Williams had arrived at the Cove from the Interior in charge of a party of three other soldiers. A quarrel took place and Seaton and Williams boxed and afterwards fought with sticks, the dispute being over a female 'lately sent from Hobart Town to Port Dalrymple.' She was permitted to return and was at the Cove when the party became drunk and a fight broke out. Seaton pointed a gun at Williams who fired his musket in return, killed his opponent. Williams was convicted of manslaughter but given only a two month sentence.

²¹Possibly Patrick Murphy, a cooper, assigned to RW Loane, 17/9/1819. Historical Records of Australia, Vol 3 ii p735. The other perhaps William Stan(d)ley, a Marine settler from Norfolk Is who John Scott, sheep stealer, alleged was in charge of Scott's hut at Tea Tree Brush, on 30/4/1815. (Historical Records of Australia, Vol 3 ii p 106-8.) However, his 50 acre grant was at Clarence Plains. see Given, John W The 1787/1788 First Fleet Marines at Port Jackson, On Norfolk Island and in Van Diemen's Land, Hobart First Settlers Assoc, 2001, p49.

Another set-too took place between one (Richard) Herring and (Urias) Allender, who although much inferior in years, is a rough customer in the ring; after fighting a few rounds the contest was dropped.

An unexpected fourth bout arose between Herring and Allender's second, Greenwood:

The last battle, which from the manhood displayed in it will stand high on record, arose from Herring challenging Greenwood, who was second to Allender; many blows were exchanged. Herring was knocked down several times by a *lugger* (a blow under the ear). High odds were in vain offered on Greenwood. None of the *trusty-breed* ever shewed more bottom than this hero, who was more tired of hitting than receiving, when Herring gave in.

A numerous concourse of people attended, all apparently much delighted with their afternoon's entertainment.²²

The Jewish boxers of Hobart Town had a chequered career. In May 1817 Moses Moses and Samuel Lyons & two other men, William Hudson and Henry Topping, were found on board the ship *Kangaroo* en route from Sydney to London, (commanded by the bullying Capt Jeffreys), attempting to escape from the colony, having gone on board in the *Kangaroo's* boats.²³ The overseer of Moses, Lyons and Topping, who had employed them for nine months spoke of their good character. Their treatment was relatively mild, having to work the same hours as the government gang for one month and to be confined at night through that period.²⁴

In January 1818, Moses Moses again tried to escape on the *Pilot a* and was sentenced to 6 Months Hard Labour.²⁵ In 1821, Moses Moses per *Marquis of Hastings* married Sarah Brown, convict per *Morley* at Hobart Town.²⁶

In June 1819, a Samuel Lyons advertised building materials for sale including stone, bricks and timber, available from 'S. Lyons at the *Plough Inn*, Argyle St.' A month later Lyons (and John Morris) were convicted of robbing His Majesty's Store and sentenced to 200 lashes each with 4 years at the Newcastle Coal Mines.²⁷

During the 1820 to 1830s, there is a dearth of reporting boxing matches, perhaps due to the watchful regimes of Arthur and Franklin, which probably drove matches 'underground.' By the 1840s a new generation of boxing champions had arisen in the UK - and in VDL.

Boxing reappears in the late 1840s, but at increasingly remote locations. The ferry crossings at Kangaroo Point and (East) Risdon appeared popular locations for organised fights, perhaps due to a relative speed of access. In February 1848, six men were charged with being Absent Without Leave from various locations, and, after crossing the ferry, had attended a

²²Hobart Town Gazette 14/3/1818, p2a.

²³Pike, D (ed.) Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 2. p 15-16. Jeffreys was suspected of another attempt at smuggling spirits, possibly with Edward Lord's collusion.

²⁴Historical Records of Australia, Vol 3 ii p 227.

²⁵Hobart Town Gazette 10/1/1818, p2a.

²⁶Tardif, Phillip Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1990, p 427.

²⁷Hobart Town Gazette 12 June 1818, p2c; Hobart Town Gazette 24 July 1819, p1b.

'prize fight' at Risdon on Tuesday.²⁸ Two were identified as 'principals' - that is - boxers - in the fight. They were John Henshaw /Inshaw, in the service of Mr Holmes and Charles Morris in the service of Mr Rayner, both transported on the *Lady Raffles*.²⁹ Inshaw was transported in 1841 for stealing from the person at Lichfield. He was then a 19 year old blacksmith from Birmingham, 5 ft 5 'tall and with a double chin.'³⁰ His opponent Charles Morris was transported as an 18 year old labourer from Liverpool for stealing a handkerchief, and described as a 'notorious bad character (with) bad connexions' who had been imprisoned 10 times before - for vagrancy. His conduct record describes him as a labourer, however his indent gives his occupation as a tobacconist. This may explain why he and several of the same party were convicted of having pipes and tobacco in their possession. Each received a penalty of 6 Months Hard Labour for the prize-fight offence.

The other four men were assigned in the Glenorchy area. They were Richard Jeffrey, (*Isabella 2 /7 TL*); William Scott, (*Emily 1/7*) a butcher,³¹ and Henry Dudley, (*Surrey 4/7*) (blacksmith & farrier).³² They were charged by DC McArthur with being away from the authorised place of residence, pleaded guilty, and received 21 days Imprisonment. A fourth man, William Heaton, (*Barossa 1/14*) (described as a 'silk packer') was in the service of Mr Hertam and received 2 Months Hard Labour penalty.³³

At a later date, a brawl erupted also at an inn near the Risdon Ferry.

George Brooks, Free, assaulting Mary Ann Bennett at Risdon

Bennett: on Tuesday evening Mr Brooks & his shepherd came down to the Risdon Ferry- there was a fight between Mr Bennett and the shepherds at the *Risdon Inn* -Mr Bennett was knocked over & I went to pick him up - Mr Brooks hit me on the back of the head & called me a bloody whore- I called the constable- he ordered Brooks home...

William Williams: saw Brooke strike Mr Bennett - Brooks, pushed Mrs Bennett aside and called her a 'dirty arsed whore' & strike her...

James Hodges: heard bad language at the *Risdon Inn*...

Fined 10 shillings.³⁴

Being a ferrying terminal, Kangaroo Point was also a popular destination - and with its four pubs, a scene of several recorded fights. On 28 February 1850 James Jessop, (*Maitland*, 21 years) aged 23, was charged by Constable Grogan with being a second in a fight on the 25 instant at Kangaroo Point. He pleaded Not Guilty. Patrick Robertson gave evidence:

²⁸LC 104/1 Clarence Plains, Court of Petty Sessions, 22/2/1848. These examples were uncovered by the author using Clarence Plains Lower Court Records (held in State Archives) as part of current research seeking information for a history trail for the Clarence Council. [PM 2001.]

²⁹LC 104, 25/2/1848. AOT.

³⁰CON 33/6. AOT.

³¹CON 33/31. AOT.

³²CON 33/27. AOT.

³³CON 33/16. AOT.

³⁴LC 104/3, 26/4/1855.

I did not see David Rodwell fighting I saw the prisoner at the boat- the prisoner went with me into Charles Nash's.

Thomas Dazely: I saw the prisonerat the Jetty I did not see him second his master that day at a fight - I heard a few words about some tools - I went for a plane.' Discharged.³⁵

Religious rivalry parallel to that experienced at Richmond was seen further up the Coal River Valley at Jerusalem in the 1850s. Two major prize fights occurred near former road and probation station, which, by 1850, was the home of a strong Irish Catholic community. One fight ended in the death of an honoured opponent. The two protagonists represented the two sides of Irish -British racial prejudice 'which ran high in Jerusalem in those days.' They were local pugilist Keady Leary (and Catholic) known locally as 'The Flower of the Wheat', and his challenger, a visiting English fighter (and Protestant) who scorned the Irish opposition, James Barry. Local police were kept away with a ruse; meanwhile the fight proceeded at Flat Top Hill, later called Rhyndaston. 'There were over 700 men looking on.' The boxers stripped for the fight, both were 'perfect specimens of stalwart vigorous manhood.' After the fight had gone for two hours, Keady's fist knocked the visitor down and he remained unconscious for fifteen minutes. Early the next day Barry died, and Leary was charged with manslaughter, but eventually acquitted by a jury in the Hobart Supreme Court. Leary regretted the death of his foe, going to his funeral, and re-telling the saga for the rest of his life.³⁶

Cricket

By contrast, the game of cricket in VDL experienced the opposite movement in status. Seen as a formal game for 'gentlemen players', in Australia cricket's increasing popularity over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the sport taken away from its elite origins to become an egalitarian game. One of the first cricket matches in Hobart Town which refers to a playing field is in early 1825, when a match was held at 'Stanley's Field', suggesting the arena was on the same location as the earlier boxing matches.³⁷ Page argues that the game was spread by the military regiments, and supported by the social elite of Hobart - and Launceston. While this is partly true, other references suggest the game was broadly popular. Knopwood records that from the first years of settlement, cricket was a part of festivities on Christmas and Easter 'holydays,' including the Decembers of 1814 and 1816, when he was living near St David's Park on the Hobart waterfront;

³⁵LC 104/1 Clarence Plains, Court of Petty Sessions. 25/2/1848. AOT

³⁶Darcey, MF in Tasmanian Police Record, 1923, quoted in Housego, Fiona "Jerusalem to Colebrook", 1988, p 6-8. The story was recounted to M.F. Darcey, then Flat-top Hill (later Rhyndaston) schoolmaster, from the recollections of Pat Doolan of Brandy Bottom. (The author has tried to locate the original Police Record, including via the Police Academy Library, but without success.)

³⁷Page, Roger, A History of Tasmania Cricket, Hobart, 1957, p 15. Page gives the location as 'an enclosure in Elisabeth Street, between Liverpool and Bathurst Streets', which, while in the general locality, conflicts with the stated location of the boxing arena. Page is quoting the Daily Telegraph 11 Nov 1905, p5, Our Hobart Letter. "The ground was described as rough and the sport good but no scores were published."

Mon 26 Dec. Being Xmas holidays, the people were playing cricket and other games. The weather very hot...³⁸

By the time of Knopwood's next reference, he was living at Rokeby. On Easter Monday, 1836, he describes how he 'married a couple at Clarence Plains and rode to see them play cricket there.'³⁹ The next year he notes that, after Divine Service on Easter Friday at Clarence Plains, 'a party came from Hobart Town to play cricket,' suggesting a local team was in existence at that date.⁴⁰ Eventually the Clarence Plains-Rokeby area became noted for its cricketers. They included descendants of former convicts William Richardson, a *Calcutta* man, and

Joseph Pedder transported per *Southworth* in 1830. At the time of his death, the emancipist Pedder was 'well known as a champion slow bowler for the Tradesmen's Union Club.'⁴¹

In Richmond, one of the first references to the game occurs in October 1840 when Philip Jacobs, free, Henry Bradshaw, Charles Moran together with William Wilson (*Lord Goderich*, 7 TL) were charged by Nichols with 'Playing at Cricket on the township of Richmond on Sunday.' All were fined 10 shillings and 10 shillings costs by Magistrate Schaw. After remaining dormant due to the California and Port Phillip gold discoveries, in February 1855 the Richmond Cricket Club revived the 'good old English game' The team competed as Europeans vs Natives. A large concourse of 'the most respectable people were at the game.' The Natives were beaten by 65 runs. The Richmond Cricket Club travelled, playing the Union Club at (Lower) Domain Ground. Richmond was beaten by 8 runs.⁴²

Gambling

Gambling on cricket, horse and boat racing were permitted. However, assigned servants gambling with cards or other forms, such as thimbles and coin-tossing, were liable to arrest. Despite this, card packs appear to have been popularly available as the following incident indicates. At Richmond in June 1838, William Gale (*Phoenix 1*, life) was charged by David Neil with pilfering a pack of cards value 2/6, the property of Mr McPhail, tap-room keeper at the Bridge Inn.

John McPhail: I have lost a pack of cards.... I believe I saw them last on Thurs night- I am positive cards now produced are my property... I was informed they were on the mantelpiece just before I saw the prisoner in the house yesterday evening but not in the parlour. Mr Neil took the cards out of the pocket of the prisoner.⁴³

Gambling was also carried on by convicts while working as road gang members. In May 1839, Martin Kelly, (*Asia 4*), John Farmer (*Red Rover*) and Thomas Price (*Arab 2*) of the

³⁸Nicholls, Mary (ed.) *The Diary of Rev Robert Knopwood*, Tasmanian Historical Research Association P&P, Hobart 1977, p193.

³⁹Nicholls, p 646.

⁴⁰ibid, p 679.

⁴¹MacFie, PH - *A History of Rosny Farm & Kangaroo Bay 1803-1998*, Clarence City Council, 2002, p 39. Others in the club were 'Messrs Lipscombe, Alford, Brown, Marshall, Martin, Ware and Green.'

⁴²MacFie, PH *At That Time a' Day*, ibid.

⁴³MM 110/2, 2/6/1838.

Malcolm Huts Road Party were charged by Overseer Thomas Pitchford with misconduct in gambling. Pitchford found the two prisoner tossing up half pieces and gambling - 'I took part of the copper money'- All three were given a one month extension to their sentences.⁴⁴

Assigned convicts were also vulnerable to the charge. William Hurley, (*Emperor Alexander*, 7 TL), was charged with 'Gambling at Richmond' in 1839.

Constable Cahill '... saw the prisoner last night between 7-8 o'clock I went into Buscombe's tap room (that is, in the *Lennox Arms*) which is kept by a man named Stuart- I saw the prisoner sitting at a table drinking, near were some other men who were gambling,' Hurley, was merely admonished.⁴⁵

In May 1847 at Kangaroo Point, Samuel Wickens, (*Asia 5*, 10 years), in service of Mr Pitfield, quarry owner, was charged by Constable Iron with being in a public house and playing cards. Constable Irons:

... looked into the taproom at Mr Dawson's. The prisoner rushed out the back way ... I called him to stop and he stopped near the blacksmith's shop. When I looked through the window I saw the prisoner with cards in his hands. On my way to the Watch House the prisoner said 'I had better give you each half a crown as you will only get me on the roads.'

This case was dismissed. Wickens was then charged with 'offering a bribe' 1 Month Hard Labour.⁴⁶

In May 1849 at Kangaroo Point, John Thompson (*Josiah Soames*, 10 years) and James Taylor (*Governor Ready*, Life), assigned to entrepreneur John Petchey, were charged with misconduct in 'playing cards on Saturday night last and using abusive language....'

Constable James Austin: ... With Constable Grogan, went to Mr Petchey's house. There was a light on where Mr Petchey's passholder servant sleeps...

I listened and heard a voice ... another voice said, 'That would not be fair.'

I looked in the window and saw the prisoner Thompson and Taylor round a bed in the room playing cards - both ... had cards in their hands....

Thompson came out to the landing place in front of the house and said,

'Oh you bloody dogs! If I had a loaded gun I would blow your heads off.'

The prisoner Taylor challenged me to go upstairs... Taylor said he would break all the bones in our body & throw us down off the ladder. Taylor told his master in my presence he would play cards in spite of him.....

Constable Grogan confirmed Austin's: statement, and added that someone had said, 'Look out my lads here is the bloody dogs about..' Taylor then came out to the landing (then went) into Mr Petchey's garden to take the ladder out of it... then Taylor threatened, 'You bloody vagabond how dare you come in my presence...'

⁴⁴MM 110/2, 20/5/1839.

⁴⁵MM 110/2, 6/6/1839.

⁴⁶LC 104/1, 1846 ff, 12/7/1847.

John Petchey was alerted by a constable knocking at his window between 10 & 11 o'clock over men playing cards, and he agreed, 'The prisoner are in my employ,' and adding that he did not allow his servants to play cards.

The sense of identity and implied status that playing cards assigned men is indicated by Grogan's further evidence:

Taylor came to the window and asked me if I allowed these bloody dogs and blue skins to come about the place peeping in at the windows. He said he would play at cards despite all the constables and magistrates in the country in his own room. Taylor said he would not stop with any bloody master who would not let him play cards.... Sentence 3 Months Hard Labour.⁴⁷

On another occasion one of Pitfield's quarry workers Thomas King (*Kinnear* TL) aged 41, was charged by Constable Reis with drunkenness at Kangaroo Point, and another form of gambling.

Reis: ... I received information that the prisoner was at Mr Pitfield's quarry hut playing cards- I went to the hut & found him drunk- I searched him & found thimbles in his pocket. 6 Months Hard Labour.⁴⁸

Card playing and gambling was still an illicit game well until the twentieth century. At Bellerive in October 1923, three men, Swan, Free and Jackson, (all 'Free'), were charged with 'Betting by way of wagering on a game of cards.' They were fined £1 each plus 2/6 costs.⁴⁹ During the 1950s, Ted Lane, green keeper for the Royal Hobart Golf Club at Rosny, ran an illegal gambling club known as the 'Hotel De Ville' in the outbuildings behind his home at *Rosny Cottage* on the golf links. The 'night club' was a method of raising funds for the Clarence Football Club of which Lane family were staunch members.⁵⁰

Profanities

The contrast between middle-class attitudes toward profanities and sexual mores is strongly evident in the nineteenth convict, court & other records. Colloquialisms including swearing are often hidden from nineteenth century records or disguised. In the jargon of the convict record clerks, swearing was usually described in the general term of 'indecent or obscene language.' The Clarence Plains Lower Court records around 1850 are unusual, as they report in evidence apparently verbatim language from a number of locals living at Kangaroo Point. This evidence is given by constables against the accused, and although the reporting of the profanities was probably done to denigrate the accused by the constables, the use of the language is vividly direct, apparently uncensored, even 'modern' and still able to offend.⁵¹

In December 1833, Mary Browning (*Mermaid*, 7) the wife of Thomas Chance was charged with 'very disorderly conduct being found in a house of ill-fame last night between 11 & 12

⁴⁷LC 104/1, 1846 ff, 15/5/1849.

⁴⁸LC 104/3, 20/10 /1856.

⁴⁹ LC 104/4, 25/10/1923.

⁵⁰MacFie, PH Stock Thieves and Golfers, *ibid*.

⁵¹For much of the time, the magistrates were Edward Abbott and Rev Grange Burrows. Whether the recording of the colloquial language reflects a tolerant or condemnatory attitude from the bench is unclear.

o'clock.' Mary pleaded Not Guilty, but received 6 Months Hard Labour in the Female House of Correction.⁵²

Several examples of colloquial language arose from Kangaroo Point being a ferrying terminal, with boatmen and locals intermixing near the inns and shops of 'The Point.'

In April 1855, John Thomas (*Blenheim 1. FS*) aged 47, charged with 'indecent language in the township of Bellerive ... and resisting arrest.'

Constable Cunningham: I am a constable in the township of Bellerive- between 10 & 11 o'clock the defendant came out of Mr 's kitchen door - the *Steam Packet Tavern*- & stood against the door- He said

'Damn his bloody eyes he would knock his bloody head off if he was interfered with again'

- we then took him in charge-

Defendant wanted to know - what the hell he was going to do with him-

Mr Curie told him he was going to take him to the Watch House - he said he'd be damned if he'd go with him and made a blow at him with his fist.

Mr Cure tripped him and he said he could get hold of a piece of timber he would knock his bloody head off with it. Fined £5.⁵³

Stronger language still was used at the Government Jetty at Kangaroo Point by two boatmen trying to bring a vessel alongside. In July 1849, William Williams, (*Duke of Northumberland*, 10 years) and John Lewis (*Maitland*, Life) were charged with using indecent language.

Constable Peter Shield: I was standing at the Government Jetty; the two prisoners - Williams & Lewis - were coming alongside in a boat. The prisoner Lewis said, 'Don't pull the bloody boat so hard.'

The other said 'Fuck (sic) yourself. Get out of the boat and do it yourself.'

William kept swearing himself every few minutes. They kept on using very bad language. When I remonstrated with him Williams said in reply to the free man 'He could go bugger himself.'

Both were sentenced to 3 Months Hard Labour.⁵⁴

Constables were also considered fair game for over-confident assigned servants -especially those working for John Petchey.

In August 1849, Thomas Conner (*Lord Auckland*, 7 years), aged 33, charged with indecent exposure.

Constable O'Brien: On Saturday night last I was standing at Mr Petchey's. window- there are several broken panes in the window - I asked the prisoner to open the door for the District Constable - and he made water into

⁵²MM 110/3.

⁵³LC 104 7/4/1855.

⁵⁴LC104/1, 12/7/1849.

my face. He exposed his private parts through broken pane of glass. Not Guilty. Sentence 3 Months Hard Labour.⁵⁵

Work at Pitfield's Quarry was obviously strenuous. On 1 February 1851, James Reynolds, (*Mt Stewart Elphinstone*, 7 years) aged 33, was charged by Joseph Lancaster, overseer to Mr Pitfield, with Disobedience of Orders.

The prisoner is a passholder in employ of Pitfield- since Tuesday the prisoner had load in the quarry and would not work- he said he would see Mr Pitfield buggered before he would see work any more for him - the prisoner loaded a few stones yesterday and went home as soon as the cart was done. 3 Months Hard Labour.

The overseer was himself a prisoner and involved in a fray. Joseph Lancaster (*Moffat*) aged 44 was charged by Constable Williams with assaulting a constable in the execution of his duty.

Constable Joseph Payne: I am a constable stationed in the township of Bellerive. I saw defendant come out of Mr Dawson's last night at 9 o'clock - I asked him who he was - he said 'it was me you bugger' & he up fist & knocked me over - Constable Murphy & Williams were present. Defendant pleads Guilty. Fined 5 shillings etc⁵⁶

The most colourful language comes from a long time resident of Kangaroo Point, known in the court records as 'Norah Sheen' but who was transported as Honora Sheehan on the *Hope* from Dublin in August 1842. A native of Cork City, Norah was sentenced to 14 years transportation for stealing money and described as having been '5 years on the Town.' Just over 5ft 1 inch tall, she was described both as a 'farm hand' and a 'servant of all work and laundress.' On the voyage out she was 'quiet & orderly.' Honora was no man's fool, and - despite receiving a 'Temperance Medal' - in VDL was a heavy drinker and a fighter. Her record reveals that in Cork City she was 'on the town', a euphemism indicating she was a prostitute. In 1847 Norah Sheen was charged with having sexual intercourse in a public street in Hobart Town.

By 1849 Honora/Norah was aged 35, 'Free By Servitude' and living at Kangaroo Point. Appearing before Magistrate George Harrison Esq JP, Honora and her partner, Jeremiah Crook (*Sir George Seymour* aged 32), were charged by Constable Grogan with drunk and using 'Indecent Language in the township of Bellerive.' Norah pleaded Guilty and Jeremiah Not Guilty.

Witness O'Brien: Yesterday afternoon about half past 2 as the people were going into divine service I head a woman shouting 'Murder' in the Public House called the *Golden Fleece*; Mrs Morgan the mistress of the house put her head out of the window and called the constables. I went in and found the defendant holding the woman Norah Sheen and the landlord Mr Morgan.

⁵⁵ibid, 7/8/1849.

⁵⁶LC 104/3, 1/2/1851.

When Sheen resisted going with Crook he took the prisoner in his arms and said, 'You bloody whore, won't you come on?' She began swearing also. They both fell together. Crook was 'taking the woman home'. Fined 5 shillings.

In April 1850 she was charged by Constable Grogan 'in the township of Bellerive' with indecent language. Plea: Not Guilty.

Edward Bannan: Constable at Kangaroo Point. I know the defendant; at half past 10 o'clock on Saturday night the defendant came out of Mr Luttrell's Public House [ie *Waterman's Arms*] and fell down - the defendant said to the Jeremiah Bush, 'Did he want to fuck her' - she further said to the same person he could, 'Kiss her bloody arse.'

Bush knows defendant; she was tipsy but not drunk.

Fined 5 shillings.⁵⁷

Over the next few years, Norah was frequently charged with being drunk and disorderly.⁵⁸ In April 1854 she tried to intervene in the arrest of a fellow female assigned servant, Ann Roberts (*Richard Webb*). Ann, aged 40, was charged with disturbing the peace in the township of Bellerive. Plea: Guilty. Fined 5 shillings. Nora Sheen came to her defence, but was also charged herself with 'using indecent language.' In evidence a constable said:

... the defendant came to the constable's hut with Mr Roberts & when I locked Mrs Roberts up she said I had no business to do so - Constable Cunningham told her to leave the hut and she said in reply - 'go & fuck yourself.' (sic) Fined 5 shillings.⁵⁹

Abusive, drunken language spanned all sections of society. In April 1857, Thomas Kearney - the former landowner of *Laburnum Park* near Richmond - arrived from Hobart Town with two fellow revellers, only to be arrested by constables. The court evidence modifies their language, using unconvincing terms instead.

Thomas Kearney (Native Born) aged 32, drunk and using indecent language in the township of Bellerive.

Constable Madden: I know the defendant Mr Kearney. On Saturday I heard someone calling in a Boat from Hobart Town - there was a great noise- the defendant came ashore drunk - he made use of indecent language -saying 'blast' & 'bloody my eyes'- I took him into custody-...

Constable William Williams: ... our attention was drawn to persons calling in a Boat who were cursing and swearing- on their arrival at Thorne's Wharf the defendant made use of indecent language - he was very drunk -there were two men in his company

⁵⁷ibid 23/4/1850.

⁵⁸LC 104/1, 1846 ff, eg, 15/10/1849, and 16/11/1849.

⁵⁹ibid, 11/4/1854.

Kearney's mate, William Stewart, came to his defence.

I remember landing with the defendant on Saturday night - the defendant did not say damn & bugger your eyes- the defendant said 'damn it all we'll have a glass of grog to keep us warm' - I had several glasses of grog.'

Fined £1 for being drunk and 5 shillings for indecent language.

In the Watch House, Kearney became aggressive.

Constable Madden: I brought him to the Watch House and when in the act of counting his money, the defendant rushed at me and struck me several times- the defendant seized me by the handkerchief - I struck him to induce him to let go his hold.⁶⁰

The alternative way to cross the Derwent to Hobart Town was for a passenger to barter for the cheapest fare.

5/1/1857 William Gasgoyne (*Salween*) aged 46 charged with being drunk in the township of Bellerive.- he was damming and bugging the boatmen, saying he would get a boat to take him for a shilling.

Fined £1 and five shillings.⁶¹

Church Attendance

Compulsory church attendance at Anglican 'divine services' was apparently resented by assigned farm workers. In 1847, being drunk was a way of rebelling but the punishment was lenient.

George Burrow (*Westmoreland*- 14) assigned D Stanfield, drunk going to divine service at Clarence Plains on Sunday last.

James Berry (*Duke of Northumberland*/10); (In service of G Stokell);

Benjamin Eyers (sic) (*Maria Soames*/7) and James Chipman (*David Clark* /15) (both in service of Joseph Chipman Esq,) were charged with disorderly conduct in church at Clarence Plains during divine service.

(All were cautioned and discharged.)⁶²

In April 1849, George King (*Surrey* 1/15), was also charged by District Constable McArthur with misconduct in going toward a public house during the time of divine service on the 8th inst. Guilty. Reprimanded.⁶³

Coinciding with the labour drain to the Victorian goldfields and the cessation of transportation, a new 'morality' appeared to be in the wind during the 1850s. At Bellerive a

⁶⁰ibid, 20/4/1857.

⁶¹ibid, 20/4/1857.

⁶²LC 104/1, 1846 ff, 20/9/1847.

⁶³LC 104/1, 1846 ff, 10/4/1849.

non-conformist chapel was built, and the first Anglican St Marks-at-Ease erected also. (Prior to that, services at Kangaroo Point were usually held in a barn.)⁶⁴

Attitudes were changing. A community associated with the new church-goers was fostered, and appeared to distance itself from 'the convict past.' The gradual change toward respectability came with a community aspiring to middle class norms, and a gentrification of the future - and of the past. In 1857, even the turbulent Honora Sheehan was married to her long term partner Jeremiah Crook, and both disappeared from Tasmanian records.⁶⁵

The transition was painful and divisive. Those attending chapel stood the risk of being vilified or even attacked by their former friends and neighbours.

Caroline Riley, native born, aged 21, charged by Edith Burton with assaulting Burtons on way from chapel- (the path) led through the defendant's premises:

- the defendant said 'my husband was welcome to come that way' - the defendant struck me on the face three times - on that occasion with her fist- she said 'you damned bitch, for two pins I'll knock your brains out' - my face was marked - I did not strike the defendant. 10 shillings + costs.⁶⁶

Sports

New forms of entertainment which had the effect of 'gluing' the fractured society together developed in popularity, particularly ploughing and cricket matches, giving the post convict period the gloss of respectability. Horse racing continued while, with the end of the fear of a convict uprising, most men had access to guns, and shooting matches - usually using live pigeons as targets - were held at Richmond's inns during the 1860s. Cricket was becoming another social 'bonding' agent. After the start of Municipal Government in 1863:

A noticeable feature was the increased popularity of cricket. In Richmond ... not a day passes, but may be seen on the ground so liberally set apart by W. R. Allison Esq, (ie on *Richmond Park*) the game of cricket being carried on by tiny urchins and mature youth. A feeling of friendship latterly appears to have usurped the place of that discord with which once the locality was haunted.⁶⁷

Ploughing matches

Ploughing Matches which waxed and waned in popularity were always dominated in southern Tasmania by local landowners, with the ploughmen from their farms competing against one another, and if winning, reflecting positively on their employer.⁶⁸ The Richmond Agricultural Society which was formed in 1836 held ploughing matches as part of their

⁶⁴See MacFie, *Stock Thieves and Golfers*, *ibid*.

⁶⁵RGD 37/78, 24/8/1857.

⁶⁶LC 104/3, 22/10/1856

⁶⁷MacFie, "At That Time 'a Day", *ibid*.

⁶⁸A similar reflection occurred when horse drawn teams and vehicles were exhibited at agricultural shows. In districts settled later such as the NE and NW Coast of Tasmania, the management and competition at ploughing matches -like the size of the properties - was more egalitarian.

annual competition.. The committee consisted of two local magistrates - James Gordon and GW Gunning - plus land owners, de Gillern of *Glen Ayr*, Gilbert Robertson of *Woodburn*, David Lord of *Richmond Park*, Alexander Goldie (manager of *Orielton* and *Lawrenny*, later owner of *Laburnum Park*), Burn of *Weston Park*, *Weston Lodge*, *Roslyn*, and later *Nugent*, Frederick Brock, William Kearney of *Laburnum Park* and George Marshall.⁶⁹ As an advertisement for the 1839 ploughing match reveals, these events were only open to 'Members of the Society and their sons, and wards under the age of 21.'⁷⁰

In 1846 the Clarence Ploughing Match Committee was headed by local landowner, employer, magistrate and epicurean, Edward Abbott. Like Gordon and Gunning, Abbott was able to sit as magistrate and adjudicate on local offences, including offences affecting 'their' ploughing matches. In 1846, he and Rev Burrows Grange heard a charge against Charles Dixon (*Duke of Richmond 2*, 14yrs) aged 30 TL, who was charged by Constable Edward Murray with feloniously stealing a silk handkerchief the property of Isaac Smith of the value of 3 shillings at the Clarence Plains Ploughing Match.

Isaac Smith: I reside at Clarence Plains and and a passholder in Mrs Holmes employ. I was at the ploughing match yesterday and laid down in the booth of Mr Dawson's. I (was) waked by handkerchief being pulled from my neck, as I awoke I saw the prisoner turning his face from me. I asked him to give me the handkerchief. He said he had not got it and struck me in the mouth. I was sober. The handkerchief produced is the one I lost. It is worth 3 shillings.

Prisoner : claims handkerchief got for two pots of beer.

Constable Murray of Clarence Plains: Yesterday afternoon between 3 & 4 o'clock I was in Mr Dawson's Booth at the Clarence Plains at the ploughing match. I saw the witnesses Isaac Smith lying on the ground and the prisoner sitting in a form close to him. I saw the prisoner working with his hands under his own coat towards witness Smith's body he drew his hand from under his coat and put it in his own pocket - Smith got up & accused the prisoner of stealing his handkerchief... he said he had lost a white and blue bird eye. I then searched the prisoner (found) the handkerchief in his pocket, now produced..... on the way to Watch House he told me he had been committed for a similar offence at Launceston. Sentence 6 Months Hard Labour.⁷¹

In October 1859, the Richmond Ploughing Match at the Coal River, attracted '23 ploughs on the ground,' but from then on faded in popularity.⁷² However, they grew more frequently at nearby Cambridge, the new, respectable name for 'Hollow Tree', once the haunt of sheep-thieves.

⁶⁹Jones, Elisabeth Richmond- a Crossing Place, Richmond Preservation and Development Trust, Hobart, 1973, p 56. Annual meetings were held at the Lennox Arms, Richmond, whose owner, JK Buscombe, later became Society treasurer.

⁷⁰Colonial Times, 1/10 1839, p 315.

⁷¹LC 104/1, 20/10/1846.

⁷²Cornwall Chronicle 31/10/1850 p 75.

The first ploughing match at Cambridge was reported in 1850. The 1854 Match was held on McRorie's farm (ie *La Belle Alliance*) about two miles from the *Horse Shoe Inn*, and had the entertainment and atmosphere of country fair. The committee consisted of the leading lights of the district, T.G. Gregson, Richard Cleburne, Dawson, Cassidy and Lewis. In the committee booth were 'A cold collation and an unlimited supply of wines.' A German band and the visiting Osbourne Troupe were on the ground. In addition there was 'foot-racing, wrestling, skittles and other good old English sports.' Prizes make a contrast to later events as the committee saw themselves as 'English.' These were awarded to 'Europeans, Native Youth, and Youths Under 16 Years of Age.' In the booth, toasts were drunk to the Queen, Governor Denison, 3 by 3 plus one (vociferous cheering), and the band played 'He's a jolly Good Fellow.' for the Army and the Navy. The atmosphere was partly spoilt when AGE Maum refused 4th prize and walked off the ground.

Cambridge Ploughing Matches were taken over by a Non-Conformist committee of local farmers. In 1860 a meeting was held at the Independent (later Congregational) Chapel, Cambridge, to arrange the next match, chaired by Robert Murdoch (son of Dr James Murdoch of *Craigow*) and Charles McRorie. They accepted the offer of a prize by the Tasmanian Temperance Alliance if there was no alcohol on the ground. This followed the Temperance Gala held on Bignell's in October, when concern was shown at the effect of drink, and a Match was proposed for people of teetotal principles. The subsequent Ploughing Match, held on McKay's farm *Uplands*, featured 21 teams, and a German band for entertainment.

The gentrification of the late nineteenth century Tasmania ran parallel with a rejection of convictism (now the 'hated stain') and a growth in popularity of 'Temperance' or teetotalism. At the above ploughing match, Benjamin Hanslow of Dulcot, the home of several elderly, inebriated emancipists, was given a special prize by the Temperance Alliance because of his teetotalism. Unlike the Catholic dominated Richmond district with its eight inns and street fights, Cambridge was 'respectable' with only one inn.

The 1862 Cambridge Ploughing Match was held on the farm of Richard Lewis' *Abernant*, leased by William Neill. (Conflict occurred in the planning. As another indication of changing mores, some men wanted to give more recognition to the ladies for the contribution, as men were only instruments, the women ensured success, but was over-ruled.) Ploughmen competed in three classes according to experience, with 16 in the first and most experienced contest. Visitors at the central tent included Governor Gore-Brown and large landowners. These included three MLC's (Gregson, Cleburne, and Whyte), the new Warden of Richmond, Dr Coverdale, John and Robert Murdoch, Richard Strachan, George and William Bignell, and at least three former convicts who'd made good -William McKay, Samuel Evans, sen and Samson Johnson. Behind the official chair, the Royal Crown and initials were formed in flowers. Locally made wooden ploughs were entered by E. Nichols, and John Reilly of the *Three Trunks*, and harrows by E. Nichols and Rowley of Clarence Plains, and William Yule of Richmond, plus an iron plough from Hobson and Hanson's *Albion Foundry*, Hobart, was on display. John Reilly was presented with a silver medallion inscribed 'Speed the Plough.'

Thomas Pullen of Pittwater was champion ploughmen. Charles McRorie won the Warden's Purse and much praise as 'a native born on the spot, a young man of impeccable character and integrity.' In the evening a dance was held at Mr Eady's house, *Cilwen*, where the ladies

changed from dress into 'evening crinolines.' Then, 'the plaintiff notes of a German two step, waltz, the quadrille and the song (were) going until long after daylight.

The journalist reporting the rapturous night's pleasure was obviously in love.

The district lays charm to many good looking persons of the fairer gender,
but there was one present on this occasion that eclipsed her compeers - a
veritable Grecian style countenance - a dark eye and a raven lock, and the
toilet was of the most simple kind;

'Heart on her lips, and souls in her eyes

Soft as her clime and sunny as her skies.'⁷³

The crinolines, the German band and the language of the love-struck poet were from a different world to that of the ploughmen and their families who worked on the farms.

With the move to local government in 1863, Edward Abbott became Warden of Clarence and member of Parliament. In his book, *The English Australian Cookery Book*, Abbott quoted a poem from the *Hobart Town Advertiser*, taken from 'the 'Revels of Rokeby' ... on the occasion of the annual ploughing match at Clarence in Tasmania, under the patronage of the Warden (the author holding that office) and Municipal Council in 1863, at which the Governor and Mrs Gore Brown were present.'⁷⁴ The revival in ploughing matches began in the 1890's as a response to the depression then effecting Tasmania, and aimed to encourage pride in productivity and workmanship. Similar ploughing - and cricket- matches were held through-out the island, including at Sorell.

In 1893 the first Inter-colonial Ploughing Match since 1872 was held at Cambridge on the *La Belle Alliance* property of Charles McRorie, giving the community the national (and pre-Federation) 'stamp of approval.' Displays of the manufacture of butter and other dairy products aimed at export to Mainland colonies was also a feature of such days. The second Inter-Colonial Match was also held at Cambridge in 1906, were the main event was won by Arthur Hibberd, ploughman on Hon James Murdoch's immaculately kept property, *Craigow*.⁷⁵

The convict past was 'buried' under productivity and the furrow of the plough, the sheen of well-cared for farms and the respectful regard for new wealth and an invented past.

Meanwhile the rise of Australian-rules football in the 1870s and 1880s - and in Tasmania, of competitive wood chopping and cycle racing - marked a resurgence in egalitarian 'male' sport, and in a direct contrast to the gentrification of leisure. In rural areas, small farmers organised their own 'carnivals', such as the Grass Tree Hill Sports, where foot-races and chopping matches replaced horse and ploughs.⁷⁶

⁷³MacFie, 'At That Time a' Day', *ibid*.

⁷⁴Abbott, Edward: *The English Australian Cookery Book*, London 1964, p 226. TL. As Abbott was once proprietor of the HTA, he was probably the author of the poem. (see Bennett & Bennett, *Biographical Register of Tasmanian Parliament 1851-1960*, ANU, 1980, p1.)

⁷⁵MacFie, PH 'Oral History and the Demise of Folk Culture in the Richmond District', Tasmania. Tasmanian Historical Research Association, P & P, Nov. 1982, p 99.

⁷⁶MacFie, 1982, p102.

With the impact of WWI, ploughing matches and sports days fell into decline, replaced by urban racing clubs and the growing popularity of football, cricket, cycle and wood-chopping competition.

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