

Schouten Island
An Historical Survey
1800-1967

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1991 & 2017

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Research and an Overview

Background

This survey was completed in a six week period. Archival material was drawn from the State Library Collections and the History Room, Northern Regional Library and Launceston Maritime Museum. A three day field trip included a one-day excursion to Schouten Island, and two days in Swansea, interviewing local residents and checking local documents and a cemetery.

Function

Once remote, Schouten Island is becoming accessible to an increasing number of boating enthusiasts. The survey is intended to provide evidence of places of significance on the island to enable future planting and conservation. A broader understanding of the island's historical significance is now possible. Two interpretation trails are proposed as part of an interpretation proposal.

Aims

The report gives an overview of the main uses since settlement with reference to earlier Aboriginal occupation. Using maps and documents the report details physical evidence both extant and original which relate to phases of use of the island. Surviving physical evidence is collated on a map.

A necessarily brief overview tries to put Schouten Island in the context of colonial and local history. Future research is suggested also.

Schouten Island: An overview

The main phases of human occupancy reflect the broader picture of economic and social change in the south eastern Pacific colonies. From the use and abandonment by Aborigines, the exploitation of whaling and sealing, followed by the industrial mining and sheep grazing, the island nearly encapsulates the principal economic phases evident in Tasmania and S E Australia. Growing use by yachtsmen and continued use by fishermen of the island also reflect similar changes in contemporary culture and the economy.

The principal phases of commercial exploitation fit Schouten Island into the mainstream of the developing colonial and world economy. The island was another port of call for the sealing and whaling parties, and saw the destruction of the right whale in the final phase of bay whaling around 1840. The change from sealing to whaling also reflected a growing sophistication in the oil gathering trade, the indigenous, nomadic sealing crews living outside legal constraints, to the highly organised seasonal whaling parties of Henty, Griffiths, Kerr and others calling regularly at Launceston to replenish. The latter were

instrumental in developing the Victorian coastline. Their ventures were based in the trading houses of Launceston, rather than Hobart. The oil of the right whale formed the economic foundation for the settlement of Victoria.

The whale industry was connected to the world-wide oil gathering system centred on the increased industrialisation of Britain and Europe.

Exploitation of the coal reserves on Schouten Island also reflected a broader change in technology whose source was Europe. Instructions by the British Admiralty to Lt. Governor Denison in 1848 to report on the coastal coal reserves for the British Navy are a graphic indicator of the international implications and significance of the importance of the island at the time.

The proposal by the Australasian Smelting Company (with an Adelaide-Hobart directorship) to establish an iron-works on the Derwent River using Schouten Island coal and South Australian iron ore further exemplifies the gradual industrialisation of the Australian colonies. Despite the failure of this venture the proposal initiated other changes in the local economy, (including the establishment of the Schouten Island mine). (The proposal also bears remarkable resemblance to the later South Australia-Tasmania Zinc Works operation).

Locally, the coal mine allowed and encouraged better communication between Swansea and other east coast settlements, with Hobart, Launceston and thus overseas. The establishment of the first coastal and stream-based shipping company in Tasmania serving the east coast, indicates the (former) significance of the service. The coaling facilities at Schouten Island, (despite their later failure) facilitated the service to a formerly isolated community. Falmouth, St Helens and Tomahawk were new isolated settlements assisted by the coastal service.

The development of coastal steamers replaced unpredictable sailing ships, allowing access to markets and reflecting in microcosm the local impact of a dramatic change in world technology.

The hiring by the Schouten Island Coal Company of pass-holder convicts is a further example of the impact of British policy on local events. Socially and economically, the mine assisted the local economy via direct employment and plus goods and services purchased e.g. from Morey's Store, Swansea. Although not documented, the addition of new families to the district probably allowed inter-marriage breaking the early patriarchal settler-assigned servant nexus.

Sheep grazing after 1870 also typifies local commerce being developed for export. Many isolated Tasmanian islands were used for this purpose, provided a valuable income for sheep farmers who were more adventurous than usual.

Lastly, the use of the island for leisure represents a current phase which however has a history of over 100 years precedence. The 1854 visit by B Stoney (whose lithograph is used on the cover) was that of period travel-writer whose publication was read by fellow genteel travellers of the Victorian era. Visits by the Cottons and other local families and Tasmanian yachtsmen for holidays continued this usage. (This tradition persists among some Swansea residents). Today, a more affluent society allows increased access.

Hopefully this report will allow for future sensitive use of the island.

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Photographs

SCHOUTEN ISLAND COAL-MINE

(Coal-Mine Jetty and Tram-way Terminus

Crokitt's Bay, Schouten Island)¹

(N.B. Lithograph in London edition only. Out-of-place "sugar-loaf" hill appears to have been added by a different artist)

SCHOUTEN ISLAND COAL-MINE

Convict Hiring List 1849-1855²

THE BEAR HILL FROM OLD COAL-MINES

Beattie Hobart c. 1920³

(The original clearly shows the first adit off Morey Beach (1843) and tram-way cutting from the second mine (c. 1854)).

SCHOUTEN PASSAGE AND FREYCINET PENINSULA

FROM SCHOUTEN ISLAND

Beattie c. 1920⁴

(The view from Bear Hill clearly shows the sparse vegetation on the granite section)

SWIMMING CATTLE OFF SCHOUTEN ISLAND TO *MV NARACOOPA*, 1960s⁵

MR FERGUSON AND HIS SHEEPDOGS, SCHOUTEN ISLAND (c. 1920)⁶

COOKS COTTAGE, SCHOUTEN ISLAND c. 1940⁷

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¹ From H.B. Stoney *A Residence in Tasmania*, 1857, P. 181

² CON 30/2 F137, T.S.A.

³ Beattie Studios

⁴ Beattie Studios

⁵ from P. Adam-Smith: *There was a Ship*, Hobart 1967, P. 89

⁶ photograph courtesy of Ruth Amos, Swansea

⁷ Courtesy of Ruth Amos

1 - Aboriginal Occupation and Significance

Published and unpublished sources held by N.J.B. Plomley appear to attribute a special significance to the Schoutens and Schouten Island in particular. All early detailed knowledge derives from the journal and notes of G.A. Robinson. A local tribe inhabiting Freycinet and Schouten Island is implied. Robinson appears not to have landed on Schouten Island.

1. "Name for Schouten Island" : ROW WER RER NER⁸
2. "Tribe inhabiting the country at the Schouten Island who fed partly on seal"⁹
 - a) Name No. 1, TOO RER NO MAIR RE ME NER
 - b) Name No. 2, POO RER NO MAIR RE ME NER¹⁰.
4. Pt. Geographe (Bluff Pt. next to Schouten Is) KIRK KE WOL LING EN NER.
5. Cape Sonnerat (Country at the end of Schoutens) MAY LOW WER RER NER.
6. Aboriginal Place-name and Significance: GA Robinson 1820

"I conversed with the natives MAY LOW WER RER NER the name of the country at the point of the Schoutens and MAY YER LOW ER and MAY YER MAIR RER NER PAIR RER NER the name of the nation or people and LARK UM PINE RUNG ER NER a big man the chief in 1820"¹¹.

Additional Robinson references¹². Tribe occupying Schouten Island "TOO: RER NO MAIR RE ME NER - Tribe inhabiting the country at the Schouten Island who fed partly on seal"¹³.

Aboriginal Name for Schouten Island : ROW WER RER NER

The importance of the "point of the Schoutens" defining both the geographical point and "the name of the nation or people" conveys a heightened significance and sense of identification for the Schoutens in Aboriginal culture. (Were the Schouten main and/or Island the focus of rituals)?

⁸ Plomley MSS, QVM

⁹ R/A 196 (c. 1831)

¹⁰ R/A 187, C. 1831

¹¹ Plomley, F.M., P. 310

¹² Source: Plomley, MSS, Queen Victoria Museum

¹³ R/A 196 C. 1831

Early European Observations

Pre Settlement

1. Abel Tasman passed Schouten Island in 1642, naming the island after a member of the Council of the Dutch East India Company who sponsored the voyage.
2. Baudin Expedition 1803. The first recorded landing by Europeans on the island is by a party led by Faure from the Baudin expedition. When approaching a small island from the south (Isle de Phoque), he noticed a strong stench which was found to be from a massive colony of seals on the rocky ledges. The party surveyed Schouten Is., spending the night on a beach¹⁴.

The island was sketched in profile and mapped.

Post Settlement

3. Early Visits by Sealers Joseph Stacey, 1809. The existence of seals in large numbers and the visit by sealer Joseph Stacey in 1809 indicates that the island was visited by sealing and/or whaling parties. Stacey claimed to have been forced ashore on Schouten Island when he reported its coal potential.¹⁵ He also reported that 500-700 acres were suitable for cultivation.
4. Natives Observed James Kelly's Party Lands 1816 - on January 26, 1816 the exploring whale boat commanded by Capt. James Kelly stayed over-night on Schouten Island.

Kelly's (brief) record of the voyage records -

"At sunset hauled up for the night on the north side of Schouten Island in a boat harbour. Saw a large number of natives on the island and kept a watch during the night for fear of attack"¹⁶.

The following day the party landed at White Rock (Isle de Phoque) to kill seals.

"29th Jan. At daylight a fine breeze from the northward, launched and stored round the west end of the island. At 8 p.m. landed on the White Rock at Oyster Bay and killed 6 seals. Put their skins into the boat saw several natives on Maria Island".

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¹⁴ Plomley, Baudin, P. 69

¹⁵ GO 39/4/P.29

¹⁶ Bowden, p. 43-4

2 - Sealing

Background

Prior to an 1835 gazetted order and the *Tasmanian Whaling Act 1838* which formalised the registration of whaling stations, whaling and particularly bay-whaling - was something of a free-for-all. Consequently pre 1835-6 records are very scarce. The *Tasmanian Whaling Act 1838*, specified rules of the sea, and the relationship between employer and employee, including the provision that the agreement must be signed by all concerned¹⁷.

Effect on Extant Records

Resulting from the 1838 Act is the organised listing of leasees of stations now held by the old Land Survey Dept. records. However the uncontrolled situation prior to 1838 means that these records are scanty. Sources for this period, and the later, include newspaper shipping records. These are distinctly more numerous post 1838, perhaps because the secrecy surrounding the location of stations was annulled by the registration system.

Sealing

Records of sealing ventures are traditionally rare. Sealing around the Schoutens is suggested in early records e.g. Stacey's presence in 1809. Harvesting appears to have centred on White Rock (Isle de Phoque) (see separate report). George Meredith (senior) was a central figure. In May 1826 he is reported building a 50 ton vessel in the "North western end of Fleurier or Oyster Bay", for sealing out of Swanport¹⁸. In April-May of that year the sloop *Recovery* was sealing in Oyster Bay in 1825-26 and delivering "whaling apparatus" to George Meredith.¹⁹

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¹⁷ Dakin, P. 33

¹⁸ Nicholson Vol. 1., Tas., P. 116

¹⁹ *ibid.*, P. 115

3 - Barilla Collection

A few references are made to the collection of barilla, including a cargo to be collected by the colonial sloop *Ellen* in 1827²⁰. This is mentioned in relation to the seizure of the Colonial Government's cutter, which...

... that morning sailed down the Derwent on her way to Schouten Island, on the eastern side of Van Diemen's Land, for a cargo of Barilla.²¹

Barilla is a collective term for a range of salt resistant plants found on tidal foreshores. Of special interest was 'Botany Bay Greens', which is a type of saltbush (*Atriplex halimus*) and sometimes known as the 'Barilla bush'²². These were gathered and burnt to be used in the manufacture of soap²³. Barilla was sourced from many areas, including Preservation Island, Cape Barren Island and Schouten Island – any area without grazing animals to eat it. They also used kelp.

Barilla soap was advertised till at least 1933.²⁴

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²⁰ *ibid*, P. 124

²¹ Sydney Sportsman (Surry Hills NSW): 'Australian Bushrangers', p3, 14 June 1911

²² The Hobart Town Courier: Some Remarks. 25 Apr 1834, p4

²³ see Winray, pp. 281-296

²⁴ Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 29 May 1933, P1.

4 - Escape Route

Escape Venue

Schouten Island features in at least 2 successful escape attempts by convict escapees or bushrangers:

1. 1825 - Matthew Brady's gang of thirteen plus lived for a short period on the islands off the east coast, including the Schoutens. In November 1825, they seized the *Blue Eyed Maid*, a whaleboat normally operating between Maria Island and Spring Bay. They captured a sloop of Campbells, captained by Peter Stewart, off Schouten Island, and scuttled it, apparently on the island²⁵.
2. In 1827 the colonial sloop *Helen* (Capt. M Purdon) (en-route to Launceston and Circular Head) called at Schouten for "barella" (i.e. barilla) for ballast. This was later seized in the Derwent River (?) (sic) by convicts en-route to Swanport and was last seen "off Schouten Island". (Her crew were picked up ship-wrecked on Tucopia Is., Santa Cruz Group and the crew picked up by a whaler).²⁶

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²⁵ Nicholson, op cit P. 110

²⁶ Nicholson, Vol 1 Tasmanian 1803-1833 Shipping Arrivals and Departures, p. 124

5 - Bay Whaling: Part of a Pattern

Background

Fishing from Schouten Island was part of a chain of harvesting stations situated mainly on Tasmanian East Coast, Bruny Island and Recherche Bay in the south, Portland Bay and Port Fairy in Victoria and Kangaroo Bay and Encounter Bay, South Australia²⁷.

East Coast Stations

The peak years for bay whaling here appears to have been 1839 to 1841. During this period there were 7 stations registered on Schouten Island, 8 at Waubs Boat Harbour (later Bicheno), 5 at Eddystone Point and one each at Long Point, St Helens Island and the Gardens, Bay of Fires on the north east corner of Tasmania, totalling at least 25 stations²⁸. In addition there were several stations in the Spring Bay region.

The Economics of Whaling

The system has not been fully documented but began with registration of station leases, preparation, landing and victualling of crews, whaling and trying out, casking and finally collection from the many stations by ships owned by the syndicate.

Chief ship-owners - the station leasees are also the main Hobart (9) and Launceston (1) whaling firms. These shipping/whaling firms continually changed their relationship with partners, other ship-owners and/or masters. These changes make finding records of the earlier years difficult to trace.

International Connections

The merchant Bogle-Kerr-Alexander were connected to a Glasgow-based company²⁹. The broader economic picture, including the distribution and use of whale oil in Britain, apart from giving greater understanding of the industry, should also uncover further records.

Oil Collection System Documented

A rare letter in the Launceston History Room records the collection system used by Goble, Kerr and Co., of Launceston but was probably typical of the activity between the whaling stations belonging to the one company. The letter from John Bogle to an un-named headman or local agent, possibly at Spring Bay (Triabunna), issues instructions on collection of oil and warns of competitors moving into the island.

²⁷ see Nicholson, Vols 1 and 2

²⁸ LSD 1/72/35 T.S.A

²⁹ Morris-Nunn and Tassell, P. 383

“... I expect to get either the *Amity* or ketch to go to the Schoutens with casks where she can get what oil there is and if you have left Spring Bay you can send one boats crew back to Spring Bay along with her to get off oil. I have not yet completed the arrangements as neither vessel has yet arrived. You may however, depend on a speedy supply of cask oil to the Schoutens.

.... I have applied for a station on the South side of Schoutens but as yet have no reply. I rather think Young has applied for one there also, if so I hope it is not the one marked off by you.

I annex a note of the no. of fish caught at the various stations by our last report (missing!). Watson and Garrett party at Adventure Bay is broken up. Two headsman go along with the *Wallaby* to oppose you at the Schoutens - the other 2 have been discharged - Young has I believe also left Adventure Bay. So you will have plenty of opposition. I think however, you are a match for them. Never (sic) mind the boat for Mr Bailey, I have one in town now which I will send him” yours truly John Bogle.”

The Launceston Fishing Company

During 1835 the Launceston based merchants united in one company to compete with the Hobart-based firms in the Launceston Fishing Company³⁰. A strong sense of rivalry existed between Launceston and Hobart, the locals boasting of spearing 36 fish (at Portland) to the 25 of Kelly and Hewitt from Hobart³¹.

First Whaling Station

One report claims that before Meredith and other settlers arrived on the East Coast in 1821, a whaling station was in operation on Schouten Island. Located on the north east corner of Schouten Island “in the vicinity of Trumpeter Bay” the operator is not given.³²

This station may have belonged to Captain Richard Hazard, as his whaler *Thalia* (200 tons) was fishing in Oyster Bay in 1823 and 1824³³. Hazard is also thought to have used the Wine Glass Bay station although only as an adjunct to deep sea whaling.

George Meredith. His “Fishery” on the Schouten Main which still bears that name gave Meredith access to the Island also. (He was also given permission to seal on White Rock.) In 1828 the *Wanstead* called at Oyster Bay collecting from Mr Meredith’s Fisher which “was at Schouten Island”.³⁴

³⁰ Carroll, P. 67

³¹ Carroll, P. 64

³² GM Parker MSS “The Story of Great Swanport and its People 1821-1908” in University of Tasmania, Historical Manuscripts Report No. 6, P. 9, 1967

³³ Nicholson, Vol. 1, P. 88, 91 and 96

³⁴ *ibid*, P. 146

Later Whaling in the Schoutens

The first exploitation of the seal and whale grounds of the Bass Strait islands, Portland Bay and the south Australian coastline were initiated by Tasmanian based companies and individuals. However by 1837-8 the position was gradually being reversed; ships and crews from the newly settled Port Fairy and Portland Bay area and from South Australia were returning to fish for whale off the Schoutens. Many of these were Launceston-based family firms.

These companies used the commercial and berthing facilities at Launceston, while the key operators were developing the economic potential of southern Victoria. They included Griffiths-Connolly, Campbell, the Henty and Mills brothers. The largest Tasmanian shipping company Kerr, Alexander and Co. was based in Hobart and Launceston and took out many leases for whaling stations³⁵.

Why these whaling grounds on the East Coast were ignored until then is uncertain. But the new Victorian-based parties regarded the Schoutens as a "gold-mine". Captain H.V. Hopwood recalled that "a hundred (whales) were taken in a week around the Schoutens"³⁶. Similarly, E.O. Cotton recalled "an almost continuous stream of whales going through Schouten Passage during the months of August and September "like pigs through a gate".³⁷

In 1838 Launceston saw the arrival of the *Elizabeth, Mary* (500 ton), *Sally Sun* (63 tons), *Socrates* (153 tons), from Portland following the end of the season there. All were heading for the Schouten Islands which "were becoming known as a haunt of the black whale", then on to Reserche Bay³⁸. From 1838-40 the Henty's *Lady Mary Pelham* (186 tons) arrived - she and the other ships belonged to partnerships which included the Mills brothers who helped found Port Fairy (see detail below).

Registered Schouten Island Whaling Station Leases

Introduction of the crown lease system resulted in a rental of stations with 5 and then 3 chain frontages on relevant beaches, with a 3 acre hinterland. A recommendation during the 1837 season resulted in lease being for 3 months unless taken up. However, the frequency of renewals seem to indicate that the bigger firms (e.g. Kerr, Alexander) renewed leases on a quarterly basis probably to avoid competition and loss of leases.

³⁵ see Nicholson

³⁶ H. O'May, *Wooden Hookers and Whalers*, Part 2, P. 33, 1978

³⁷ G M Parker (MSS) P. 9

³⁸ Carroll, P. 108

1836

1. Messrs Kerr, Alexander and Co. Three acres of the north end thereof opposite Freycinet Peninsula including a small creek and low sandy beach [i.e. probably Moreys Beach and creek].³⁹
2. D McPherson⁴⁰ - Lease of Whaling Station on Schouten Island listed only.⁴¹

1837

1. 17.1.37 Richard Griffiths (1) seeks whaling station on "the North East part of Schouten Is. A small bay on the east side of Schouten Island".
2. (2) 17.1.37 "At a pebbly beach in a small bay on the east side of Schouten Island" (also held leases at Spring Bay, Green and Lachlan Islands off Maria Island and Wanks Boat Harbour)⁴².
3. 25.1.37 Chas. McLachlan, Thomas Browne and William Young. "Seeks rent for three years on a small bay with a fresh water creek on the north side of Schouten Island, adjoining that rented by Kerr, Alexander and Co."
4. 14.4.37 & 19.11.37? Messrs Kerr, Alexander and Co.

"Schouten Island: 3 acres at the north end thereof opposite Freycinet Peninsula, including a small creek and low sandy beach" (also held leases at Spring Bay)⁴³.

1838

1. 19.11.38 Schouten Island (James Henty) - on a small beach about a quarter of a mile to the westward of a piece of land in the occupation of Messrs Kerr and Co., the eastern boundary to be a fresh water creek. (Approved)⁴⁴.
2. Duncan McPherson (n/d 1838) "Schouten Island in a bight adjoining and to the south west of Kerr and Co"⁴⁵.

³⁹ LSD 1/88/17063, 26.12.1836

⁴⁰ n/pl 1836

⁴¹ LSD 1/72/35

⁴² LSD 1.97/28

⁴³ LSD1/88/17063

⁴⁴ LSD 1/72/35

⁴⁵ ibid

1839

1. Kerr & Co. - as for 1837⁴⁶ plus "on the south side of Schouten Island, already marked off by (my) chief headsman at Spring Bay"⁴⁷.
2. McLachlan & Young - as for 1837⁴⁸
3. Richard Griffiths - as for 1837⁴⁹.
- 4(1) Duncan McPherson (4.3.39) seeks ground at Schouten Island "situated in the Bight adjoining to the SW of Messrs Ken Alexander & Co's whaling station".⁵⁰
- 4(2) "Seeks 3 acres as a whaling station in a small bay on the southern side of Schouten Island and about 3 miles from the south east point of the island fronting 3 chains" (n/d).⁵¹
5. Samuel Britte ("Piermont", Great Swanport) (Nov. 1839) "Seeks whale fishery on Schouten Is near Henty's fishery called Lagoon Beach"⁵².
6. Kerr Alexander & Co. Seek ground on south side of Schouten Island. This was "already marked off by the chief headsman at Spring Bay"⁵³.

1840-43

1. William Clues (or Clewes) 1840-43 - 1.7.43

Seeks lease for two whaling stations (1) one at the south west side of a small creek on the west side of the island, (2) another at (the bay opposite?) the Hen and Chickens on the eastern shore. This station was "now far advanced" and asked if he could send boats down that week"⁵⁴.

2. 1841 Kerr & Co.: renews leases at Schouten Island, Adventure Bay, South Port, Wineglass Bay⁵⁵.

Whaling Stations

We have much pleasure in stating that most of the whaling parties on the coast are doing well. Mr Clewe's party at Schuten (sic) Island, took a whale on the 16th of July, (after being

⁴⁶ LSD 1/72/35

⁴⁷ LSD1/97/28

⁴⁸ LSD1/72

⁴⁹ ibid

⁵⁰ ibid

⁵¹ ibid

⁵² LSD 1/97/28

⁵³ LSD 1/97/80

⁵⁴ LSD 1/33/151 1.7. 1843

⁵⁵ LSD1/3/171, 28/7/41

out only four days) and another on the 22nd. These have been tried out, and the oil, twelve and a half tons, was landed on the city wharf yesterday⁵⁶.

Whaling Stations - Documentary Evidence

The temporary nature of these stations is highlighted by the claims for compensation by William Clues. In August 1843 Clues leased 2 stations on Schouten Island for 3 years (and funded the first coal-mining venture - see over). His claim for compensation lists huts, garden and whaling equipment.

Huts: "(I) erected one slab, one solid and one weatherboarded hut ..." (location not given).

Whaling equipment: "... tryworks, shears, blubberways and stage etc.(sic)"

Garden: 3 men were employed for 12 months "in breaking up and cropping ... between 3 and 4 acres ... cropped with potatoes".

Clues removed the whaling equipment but received £120 compensation for the 3 huts (considered useful for housing convicts in the proposed probation station) and the loss of income⁵⁷.

The seasonal and transitory nature of bay-whaling and the portability of equipment suggest that physical evidence is hard to detect. Ms Cynthia Mitchell claims to have filmed tryputs in Hen and Chicken Bay.⁵⁸

Map of Stations: Although no historical plans were found, the above detail should allow a plan of whaling stations on Schouten Island.

Recorded Whale-Shipping Visits to Schouten Island 1837-43

Following the registration of whaling stations, newspaper reports list at least twelve visits by ships removing black oil casks from Schouten Island and Main between 1837 and 1841⁵⁹. The *Cornwall Chronicle* in February 1840 for example reported Henty's *Lady Mary Pelham* again ready for sail. She did not return until 26 October with a cargo of 1600 barrels (more than 200 tuns) of black oil (got from the right whale, 50 barrels of the more valuable sperm oil, and 7 tons of whale bone. The cargo was described as "from the Schoutens", where most of the black oil was thought to be taken⁶⁰. As noted, the Henty's station was located on Schouten Island.

⁵⁶ *Launceston Examiner* August 5th 1843

⁵⁷ *Comp. Gen.* 1/27/2197, Sept. 30th 1844 STA

⁵⁸ *Conversation*, May 1991

⁵⁹ *Nicholson*, 1826-42 Index P. 187

⁶⁰ *Carroll*, P. 114

1837

Elizabeth, schooner of Launceston, 51 tons, owner Campbell (of Port Fairy), skipper J. Brown. On a whaling and supply voyage, from Port Adelaide and on to St Vincents Gulf and Port Fairy. Had visited Schouten Island with casks (i.e. empty) for the *Socrates*, also Recherche Bay. The latter was a barque of 200 tons and worked in tandem with the smaller *Elizabeth*⁶¹.

The *Socrates* return was noted in the Launceston newspaper without direct reference to Schouten Island; having been to "Recherche Bay, the whaling ground and fishery" for oil⁶². Many other general references probably included Schouten Island as part of a whaling voyage.

1838

During November both the *Socrates* and *Mary* - Mills 56 ton cutter - were at the island. The *Socrates* proceeded to Adelaide with additional cargo from Launceston. She was captained by William Dutton first whaler and settler at Port Fairy⁶³. Her cargo from Schouten Island appears to have included tobacco. The *Mary*, acting as supply ship, had 33 whalers returning to Portland Bay.

In October, the British registered barque *Thomas Laurie* (304 tons) had loaded 109 tons of black oil from Schouten Island and Recherche Bay stopping at Launceston en-route to Portland Bay and then London⁶⁴.

1839-40

The *Lady Mary Pelham* (brig 186 tons) was bought by James and Charles Henty and registration changed from London to Launceston in August 1839. Skipped by John Mills of Port Fairy, it arrived with 20 whalers and gear from Portland Bay. The ship took oil and bone at Schouten Island in October, assisted by the Henty's cutter *Mary*, before the latter headed for Portland Bay with whaling gear and a party of whalers⁶⁵. Mills returned to Launceston with oil and whalebone⁶⁶.

Both ships returned to the island in August and October 1840. Leaving in March the ship did not return to Launceston until October. On board were 1,600 barrels of black oil and 7 tons of whale-bone "from the Schoutens"⁶⁷.

⁶¹ Nicholson, 1826-42, P. 93 and P. 95

⁶² Nicholson, op.cit. P. 96

⁶³ op.cit., P. 121

⁶⁴ op. cit., 25/10/1838

⁶⁵ Nicholson, Vol. 2, pp 147-8

⁶⁶ C.C. 2.11.39

⁶⁷ Carroll, P. 111

Earlier in June, a new schooner the *Isabella* (69 tons) and owned by Thomas Johnson and Captain Robert Gardiner voyaged to Schouten Island but was driven aground. She was later successfully salvaged. The partners also shared a lease in Wineglass Bay.

.oOo.

6 - Coal Mining on Schouten Island

By 1842 bay whaling was apparently in decline around the Schoutens and attention turned to the coal mining potential of Schouten Island.

Background

Coal was first reported in 1809, by sealer John Stacey when forced ashore on Schouten Island. He also noted that 500-700 acres were suitable for cultivation and that a railway could be built from the coal to a secure inlet.⁶⁸

In 1824, Busby, a Scottish engineer, reported on Schouten Island Coal and claimed that “convicts might be profitably employed working there”⁶⁹.

The first application for a coal mining lease in 1840, by John Graves was refused⁷⁰.

Coal Extraction Begins

Mining for coal began in 1842 and continued intermittently until c. 1892, the seams being worked by three different operators. A fourth tried exploration in the 1920s. Each worked different shafts, extended the tramway and jetty system. Some constructed dwellings. The coal was put to variable uses.

Coal Mining Phases

- | | | |
|----|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | 1842 - 1844 | Garland Brothers - Leasee and miners |
| 2. | 1849 - 1873 | Australasian Smelting Company |
| | | 1) Active 1849-58 |
| | | 2) Passive 1869-1873 |
| 3. | 1888-1892 | A.G.D. Bernacchi & Partners |
| 4. | 1922-5 (?) | A. L. Luttrell and Bernacchi |

Phase 1 - 1843-44 – Garland Brothers

Background

Ex-convicts and experienced coal miners Isaac and Jesse Garland petitioned for compensation for coal discoveries at Douglas River, Apsley River and Schouten Island in 1842. Their request for permission to work the Douglas was not responded to (reasons unspecified) and their offer to work Schouten Island accepted despite their reservation that

⁶⁸ G.O. 39/4/P29

⁶⁹ Bacon and Banks, P. 144

⁷⁰ Land Surveys Department 1/46, 23.7.1840

although there was very good coal “it would be difficult to work from the appearance of the rocks”.⁷¹

Permission was granted on 16 September 1843 and a year later, 200 ton of coal was on sale in Hobart⁷².

The scope of the mine-workings and equipment used and possible accommodation is indicated by the following:

Mining Equipment

A contract between the Garland Brothers and William Clues (leasee of two Schouten Island whaling stations) lists equipment and the size of the venture (see appendix for full transcript). Hardware included :

- 60 yards Railroad
- 2 Trains (wagons)
- 2 carts (two wheeled barrows)
- 15 picks
- 4 shovels
- 3 bars

Other hardware included:

- tools and bars
- iron work, nails, bolts etc. for the rail road
- sawed timber, bags.

Workings

The extent of the workings can be gathered from petitions by the Garlands, protesting the impending closure of their mine to make way for a proposed convict probation station. The Garlands complained of their:

“situation, expense and loss (in) working the coal mines at the Schouten Island, for exceeding the value of the coal they have yet been able to obtain from the pit. Amongst the losses (is) the wharf being destroyed by a storm, which must be repaired”⁷³.

In a separate petition from Jesse Garland, he explained that:

“during the last 12 months (he had been) opening and working the coal shaft on the Schouten Island from which with the aid of 6 men, he has been

⁷¹ Colonial Secretary’s Office, 22.4.1807, p 149

⁷² *Colonial Times*, 27.8.1844, in Bacon and Corbett, the Schouten Island Coalfield, Mines Department, 1984 pp 1-5

⁷³ (C.S.O. 22/84/1807, 4 Sept. 1844

unable to realise more than about 350 tons; which after paying freight and shipping expenses will yield little more than £100⁷⁴.

(Assuming a 6 day working week the extraction rate is equivalent to approximately 2 1/2 tons per day).

No. 1 Coal Shaft and Tram-lines: The Garlands refer to a single shaft - "a coal shaft". The length of the tram-line (60 yards) indicates the shaft was only that distance from the jetty. Destruction of the wharf by storm indicates an exposed position, possibly below the shafts shown on Burgess' 1857 map⁷⁵. Milligan's 1848 report (see over) in fact indicates the shaft (an adit) was prone to flooding at high tide and a tramway was used along the tunnel to convey away the coal.

Other Earlier Structures

William Clues, licensee of Schouten Island whaling stations also claimed compensation for the loss of income with the proposed coming of a probation station. Clues' whaling station appears to have run at the same time as the first coal mine.

£120 compensation was paid to Clues for "the loss of the buildings, crops, tryworks etc.". The Committee of Officers believed that Clues 'huts' would be useful to house the convicts intended to open the Coal Mine⁷⁶. The committee also felt the station 'will be productive to the British Treasury'.

Jones Report 1844

Before deciding on the fate of the Garlands, Colonial Secretary Bicheno instructed William Jones, a Welsh miner, to report on the workings⁷⁷. The mine was working through a 6 foot vein of which only 3 feet was "of good blazing coal". Jones gives a detailed written description of the mine workings. The mine headed "about 60 yards inwards and had an air-course and air-pit to carry the air with them", with 3 top holes or workings now open". The men had a temporary wharf to load their coal into, only 50 yards from the mouth of the mine.

Jones recommended the mine be leased by the Government to a private company, rather than take on another establishment on top of the Peninsula mines. He also notes that the miners were receiving 7 shillings and 6 pence on the spot and recommended a royalty of one shilling per ton.

⁷⁴ C.S.O. 22/113/2385 P. 88-90

⁷⁵ Glamorgan 17, Tas. Mapping

⁷⁶ Committee of Officers, 3.12.1844

⁷⁷ (CS) 24/58/2076, STA

Dr Milligan's Survey 1848

Milligan was a surgeon in the VDL convict department, amateur naturalist botanist, geologist and recorder of Tasmanian tribal dialects. He was the secretary of the newly founded Royal Society and in this role, produced the 1849 report on Tasmanian coal fields. In 1855 Milligan became chairman of the Douglas Coal Company (for the strategic significance of the report, see over).⁷⁸ Milligan's geological report on Tasmanian coal deposits included a chapter on the prospects for Schouten Island. He noted the extent of the "considerable coal workings" (see appendix). He saw two seams, a thin upper seam which had not been worked, and the lower main seam approximately 2m thick. The coal was extracted by 2 drifts or adits which "had been driven in on this seam one 100 yards and the other 500 yards, long"⁷⁹. The roof had collapsed in places in these workings.

Milligan reported:

The old workings are of the following nature and extent:

One main drift begun a little above high water-mark, and nearly 6 feet x 6 feet, has been carried in the direction (SSW and WSW) or range of the seam more than 100 yards. From this, two branch galleries have been worked towards the crop, so as to communicate round a massive square pillar. A narrow air-course had been carried thence to the surface of the bank.

The main drift has a slight rise inwards, so that when the floor is clear from obstruction, water finds its way to the beach at the entrance. There is a tramway along the bottom upon which trucks have been used to convey away the coal. Water stood nearly a foot deep in a great part of the draft at the time I inspected it, in consequence of its being dammed in by rubbish fallen from the roof and sides. There was a continual dripping from the roof in some parts of the drift; and at its termination the drops fell so that it was difficult to maintain a light.

The drift ended abruptly, and apparently in massive clay, having its surface worn and smoothed by the perpetual flow of water over it.

To me, in the imperfect light which I could command, it looked like a fault or shift of the strata; and I was disposed to consider the coal-seam as suddenly broken off at or near that point by the greenstone⁸⁰

He also noted "a second drift (or tunnel) 30 yards to the westward and about 15 feet higher up the bank, and "followed the same direction as the former for about 50 yards". Sections of the roof and walls had fallen in however. Other openings had been tried and abandoned⁸¹.

⁷⁸ ed. Pike, Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 2

⁷⁹ Milligan, P

⁸⁰ Milligan, P. 8-9

⁸¹ op cit P. 9

Extant Remains: Stone footings at the entrance to the first adit (now collapsed) are visible at Moreys Beach.⁸²

Other works

Milligan's report describes workings of a greater extent than described by the Garlands. Were they being modest, or did extra work continue during the time of the 'probation station' proposal? (see over)

Interlude : 1844-48 - A Probation Station?

Despite the government's acquisition of Schouten Island for a probation station, no such operation appears to have been established. Hobart Commissariat Officer McLean refused to provide funds in 1844 "until the decision of the Home Government is made known"⁸³.

During 1846 and possibly other years - two constables were stationed on the island. The journal of Francis Cotton describes their attempted capture of two Port Arthur escapees who landed on the island in September 1846.

Being tackled by two constables who had been sent to apprehend them, the bushrangers managed to knock them out and then stripped them naked. They stole the policemen's stores from a nearby hut, and were watched all the while by a party of whalers who stood around "to see foul play". Evidently the whalers had been more than friendly to the runaway prisoners already and afterwards made it easy for them to make their escape in a whaleboat⁸⁴.

The existence of sealers on the island - (probably illegally) - indicates a continued exploitation of the seal colony.

Phase 2: Part 1 - The Australasian Smelting Company

Background

The British Empire Connection

The significance of the Schouten Island coal mine, the relationship between other mines of the period and the Tasmanian economy have been ignored by researchers. The Schouten Island mine is often confused with either mines of the period⁸⁵. The only published account

⁸² Conversation, with Ian Marmion, May 1991

⁸³ Comptroller General, 1/27/2197, 21 Sept 1844 TSA

⁸⁴ Steiglitz, pp 92-3

⁸⁵ e.g. Royal Society of Tasmania, East Coast Excursion, 1968 (T.L.)

of early 19th century economic development claims (incorrectly) that attempts to mine coal at Schouten Island were "unsuccessful"⁸⁶.

Coal Destination

The first mine at Schouten Island (1842) shipped coal to Hobart for sale, but other events, including unprofitability, forced its closure (1844). The prime reason for aroused interest in this mine appears to have been the interest in coal shown by the British Navy, resulting in Milligans 1847 survey, and the formation of the Australian Smelting Company in 1848. The A.S.C. formed the Schouten Island Coal Company with the aim of providing coal for smelting.

The failure of the smelting venture was off-set (temporarily) by the use in coastal steamships. The formation of the Swanport Steam Navigation Company - later the East Coast Steam Navigation Company - made use of the coaling facilities at Schouten Island but with competition from the newly opened mines at Douglas River and the Tasman Peninsula.

Contemporary Mines

The Schouten Island venture coincided with the disastrous 1840 Southport coal mine, whose chairman, Charles Swanston, was also on the Board of the 1848 Schouten Island mine⁸⁷. That year saw the establishment of the Douglas River Mine by Dr Milligan (who had reported on coal-mining prospect in Tasmania) and the lease to Alexander Clarke of the Peninsula Coal Mines. Interest in mining coincides with directions from the British Admiralty and the Milligans survey instigated by Lt. Gov. Denison.

As noted, Lt. Gov. William Denison, R.E., commissioned Dr Milligan to provide an extensive report on coal in Tasmania. This followed a request by the Lords of the Admiralty to "obtain a report on coal in Tasmania so that coal supplies for bunkering the increased number of steam-driver vessels in the British Navy could be ensured"⁸⁸.

Schouten Island Coal - Its strategic significance

The detailed report so quickly presented by Milligan indicates the urgency of the request. The position of his Schouten Island report as number one in the 1849 publication of The Royal Society implies its significance; the location of the coal on the coast, giving ready access to naval and other vessels, further indicates the strategic priority of the Schouten Island mine. This aspect of the island requires further documentation.

⁸⁶ Hartwell, p. 154

⁸⁷ Bacon and Banks, p. 159

⁸⁸ *Despatch* 67, 18th May 1849, in Bacon and Banks, P. 143

Part One - Active 1849-1859

The Australasian Smelting Company formed in September 1848 with a capital of £20,000 the ASC directors were the investment leaders of Tasmania and Adelaide. They were J. Dunn MLC, H. Hopkins (wool merchant), A.H. Manning, Askin Morrison (merchant/farmer), Joseph Allport (solicitor/merchant), S. Addison, T. Tooth and G. Whitcomb (later mine manager on Schouten Island). Adelaide directors included A.E. Elden, J. Hagen, B. Neale, C.S. Penny and G. Whitcombe.

Following Milligan's favourable report, the ASC leased the Schouten Island Coal Mine from the government and established the Schouten Island Coal Company⁸⁹.

The Company leased the island for 21 years with a lease covering all minerals and a possible smelting works⁹⁰.

Schouten Island Coal Company and Copper Smelting

Preliminary Workings

The Company employed one of the former leasees, W. Garland, to "carry on his former workings and several cargoes of coal of fair quality were obtained and forwarded to Hobart Town".

The Company's Hobart-Adelaide connections aimed at smelting copper ore "at the works now carrying on in Adelaide", with a view to establishing a smelting works on Schouten Island⁹¹. However, Linge reports that the ASC "built a smelting works at Bellerive on the Derwent River, although "it probably never came into operation"⁹².

The directors proposed producing 3 tons of copper per day (requiring 30 tons of ore) and to melt each ton of ore needed 3 ton of coal or 90 tons daily⁹³. Via royalties on coal the Government stood to gain substantially. The grand plan failed to materialise. On 22 November 1848, the A.S.Co. landed over 49 tons of Schouten Island coal on the wharf at Hobart Town, before the lease was finalised. The terms of the lease provided for a royalty of two pence per ton.

Mine Operation: Hired Pass Holder Convicts

Following this successful preliminary work, a mine manager and engineer, Edward Crockitt, was selected in Adelaide by company manager George Whitcomb.

⁸⁹ *The Guardian*, July 3rd, 1850, P2. C5. TSA

⁹⁰ ASC Shareholder's Report 18 September 1850, Tasmanian Library, Hobart

⁹¹ 1850 Report P. 2

⁹² Linge, p. 126

⁹³ CSO 24/58/2076 letter dated 26/8/1848

Crockitt (and son) arrived at Hobart from Adelaide on 15 March 1849⁹⁴. One month later, the first of upwards of 60 hire convicts were contracted to work at the Schouten Island mine, over a 6 year period under the direction of Edward Crockitt (sic)⁹⁵. The surviving registrar of contracts cover the years 1849 to 1855. From these records 10 to 15 workers appear to have been employed in the peak years 1850 to 1852 (see appendix). The basic wage per worker was £9 per annum. Most workers were contracted for 12 months.

Gold-rush Impact

By 1852 the Company had sublet the mine to Crockitt for so much per ton on the coal raised. Only a small amount of coal was being produced as most miners "prefer gold digging to coal digging". Coal could not be got off the island as no ships were available - probably a further impact of the gold discoveries in Victoria.

Victualling the Ex-Convict Miners

Surviving records from Morey's Store, Swansea, give an indication of the diet of the staff during the 1850s. Only a limited series of volumes held by the Local History Room and Bark Mill were researched. The Morey family hold further records but as permission is needed, research on these records was not carried out in the time available.

Two entries from Morey's 1858 ledger book are as follows:

P. 11 Edward Crockitt		
2.2.58	600 lb tin flour	6.12.0
	170 lb sugar	3.0.3
	2 gallon rum	2
	30 lb candles	1
	Pins	1
	1 cwt salt	9
	2lb coffee	4
	12 lb 4 inch nails	4.6
	1 pair blankets and rug	1.2
	-??	10
	9 bag? butter	18
	1 bag potatoes	10
	5 lb shoe nails	2.11
		£16.13.8
10.7.58	Miss Crockitt (sic)	ret 7/6 not charged?
	1 hat	

⁹⁴ Arrivals Index TSA

⁹⁵ CON 30/2, F. 137, 133, 134, TSA

14.7.58 E. Crockitt		
3 bags flour	6.12	
130 lb candles	2.6.0	
6 lb crystals		1
1/4 lb blue		
4 lb soda		
12 nails		4.0
7 knife	2.9	
5 nails	2.11	
1/2 oz. bristles	15/-	
postage on letter to England	6	
1 box gills (?)	6	
20 leather soles		1.10
		£14.11.0

20 July

2 gall rum
 cash ? Green
 Do 3/March order
 includes:
 3 lb crystals
 60 lb sugar
 56 lb salt
 2 lb calico
 pepper salt snuff
 60 lb sugar
 8 lb tea

Victualling the Ex-Convict Miners

Contracted Women: The hiring list reveals three women contracted in the period, at the same wage as the men. They were:

Name	Ship	Date Hired	Duration
Jane Gileson	<i>Baretto</i>	1 Sept. 1850	12 months
Mary Roe	<i>Cadet</i>	9 Jan 1851	12 months
Mary O'Brien	<i>Wm Friar</i>	4 March	

Mine Workings 1849-1857

1850 Shareholder Reports

The 1850 Report details Crockitt's attempts to find a profitable shaft (see appendix for full report).

Summary of Coal Mine Working

Shafts

1. The Garland adit continued to be worked by the ASC.
2. Four shafts were sunk in-land from the old shaft and “opposite the proposed shipping place”.
3. Crockitt then tested a seam “a mile to the westward of the shaft by which coal is now obtained”⁹⁶. Here a shaft was sunk “near the shore” with successful results. “This coal is now reached by one pair of shafts, from which 120 to 130 tons per week may be raised”.
4. A third shaft in the same vicinity as (No. 3) was then being sunk “further to the west of those now in operation” to increase production.

5. *Jetties*

Initially the ASC continued to use No. 1 jetty. With the development of new shafts a new wharf was proposed.

Lt Gov Denison Inspects Shaft, 1851: A member of the Royal Engineers and promoter of coal and industry, Denison (briefly) records a visit to Schouten Island and Douglas River. “We landed and walked to a farm-house at about a mile from the landing place, where I got a horse and guide to take me to the coal mines. I went down the shaft and inspected the workings and then returned, killing two snakes. I inspected the harbour which is sufficient for the craft likely to use it”⁹⁷. Denison was apparently inspecting one of the unsuccessful explanatory shaft then being sunk.

6. *Tramway and Jetty No. 2*

Initially Crockitt continued to load by Garlands jetty using boats (lighters) which “then conveyed (the coal) to ships taking in cargo. Due to time wasting in loading, the directors approved the construction of a wharf, and “to form a tram-road from the shafts now at work to such wharf”.

The tram-road and wharf and new shaft were to be completed in 4 months(!). The directors anticipated at least 250 tons of coal per week, delivered to ships with a 16 feet draw. The survey of 1889 (authorising Bernacchi’s lease) indicates the tram-way terminus is further to the west, and closer to the lagoon.⁹⁸ The old tramway is indicated by “H to X” and the new

⁹⁶ P. 2

⁹⁷ Denison, P. 153-4

⁹⁸ Schouten Is survey, AGD Bernacchi lease no. A2, 1889, Mines Dept., Hobart

(1889), "G to X". An adjacent lease let to Thomas Bower (partner of Bernacchi) displays an "old coal shaft" which coincides with the end of the second tram-way.⁹⁹

7. *Extant Workings*

Hughes describes the working seen in 1957:

Near the house several shafts have been put down in the dolerite. Fifteen chains north-west of the woolshed, two shafts, very close together, have penetrated the dolerite and finished in the Ross Sandstone. The elevation of the collars of the shafts is 70 feet above sea level and they appear to be about 50 feet deep. There are dark grey shales on the dump but, naturally, no coal. Twenty chains south of the woolshed is a shaft, also at an elevation of 70 feet, which shows nothing but fresh blue dolerite. By the dump size the depth is estimated to be over 50 feet. The dolerite intrusion seems to be in the form of a sill near the 2 shafts, and the southern one was put down in the hope of striking the supposed coal further inland¹⁰⁰. These shafts may relate to either the first company shafts or the 1922 exploratory shafts.

8. *Jetty Timber-Order 1854*

A detailed timber order from Morey's store was found among Morey's documents held by the Bark Mill (The majority of entries in this ledger are "to order" only). However, the March 1854 timber order is given in some detail:

E. Crockitt	
- March 1854	£260/17/1
- Detail only	Sept 5th 1854
70 spans	1000 ft 25
74 per timber	11.15.9
553 H bolts	(5)11.105
Coat	2.10.0
??? A/C	9.15.0
labour men loading spars for jetty	3.10.0
labour men pine spars	1.10.0
ACC due	258.13.0
	£324.4.12
25.5.55 By return of powder	2.11.6

Whether this is an extension or a re-furbishing of the new jetty is unclear.

Blasting Powder: The 'return of powder' is the only reference found to this item.

⁹⁹ Schouten Island, lease Bower, No. 41 1889, Mines Dept

¹⁰⁰ Hughes, 1956, P. 86-7

9. *Jetty Lithography c. 1856*

19 Century travel - writer Butler Stoney visited the island and published a lithograph of the wharf with Bear Hill as a back-drop.¹⁰¹ The view is the only drawing found which depicts the mine operation.

Ship-loading system

The lithograph appears to show a hand-operated windlass-type composed of 3 elements, 1) hand-winding mechanism, 2) rope driven, 3) pulley system (visible on the jetty end).

The pulley-system may relate to the lowering of timber into awaiting ships which caused damage to the *SS Duncan Hoyle* (see over). Further comparison with similar wharves is necessary.

10. *Tram-way System Operation*

No records were found to indicate the method used to power the tram-way, nor the full layout. Although the incline may have been shallow enough to carry loaded trucks to the jetty, the return of these would have required considerable energy also.

No references were found to draft animals (e.g. stables) so the motive power may have been human. The existence of a permanent shoe-maker on the island (see Crockitt inquest) and the purchase of "20 leather soles" and "5 pounds of shoe nails" suggests considerable damage to foot-wear - although not inconsistent with the needs of miners.

Coal Production and the Eastern Coast Steam Navigation Company

As noted, the life of the mine was extended by the formation of the E.C.S.N. Co. Company records give an indication of the importance of the service to the East Coast community, the goods carried, the route taken and problems encountered. They also indicate the inter-reliance of the mine and the bunkering steamers. Correspondence to the E.C.S.N. Co., including an agreement to supply coal to steamers run by the Company from 1854-7 reveal the operations of the mine.

Mine manager Crockitt claimed that "having a jetty" he could "load 25 tons per hour of either coal or wood" and that he was "now driving into the coal under the hills where it is in regular formation, it (sic) will be of superior quality to what as (sic) been".¹⁰² (The phrase "under the hills" seems to indicate that Crockitt was working an adit, possibly an extension of the Garlands workings). He also claimed his coal "yealds (sic) quite as little slag and great a heat as my neighbours further up" (i.e. the coast - Douglas River).¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Lithograph in British edition only, drawn by "Lane".

¹⁰² Crockitt to Mather, 24 Sept. 1854, Allport Library

¹⁰³ op.cit.

(Crockitt also listed extensive coal-mining experience in Britain, Prussia, Belgium, France and predicted that coal would supercede sail in shipping.)

An undated agreement between Crockitt, John McLachlan (captain of *SS Mimosa*, paddle steamer) and the ECSN Co., agreed to supply 24 tons of fuel, two thirds coal at 15 shillings and one third wood at 13 shillings per ton “put on board every 10 days.”¹⁰⁴ Less than a year later Crockitt was defending criticism of the poor quality of the coal, but claimed that the *Mimosa* had mistakenly collected “uncleaned coal full of rubbish (by) coming as usual after work time at night”¹⁰⁵. (Accounts reveal the *Mimosa* was also using coal from England and Port Arthur).

Other vessels were also off-loading coal, including supply of the Hobart market.

Other problems with the mine’s operation emerged in complaints to company secretary Mather from Captain McLachlan.

I took in 454 boxes apples Swansea and from passengers in Launceston, steamed away that night to Schouten for shelter, took in 54 bags coals and was lying off as there was a sell laying at the schute (i.e. shute?). They were lowering wood in a very careless manner to my boat and were warned by me when a piece fell and knocked a small hole in the boat which Mr Crockitt will have to pay for. (I) Nailed a patch of lead on..... for Bicheno and got there at 3 pm blowing hard from NE here I took in 35 ton coal (sic) I was agreeably surprised to also to see from 20 to 2? passengers. I left next then for Long Point¹⁰⁶.

Earlier McLachlan had complained of the delay caused by coaling at Schouten Island at night en-route to Falmouth and return. The loading method was inadequate he explained, and -

Until Mr Crockitt’s appliances are more adopted for steamer coaling, and keep up (sic) the sample of his coal and is more disposed to facilitate our departure, it will always be so. On an average it takes over an hour and a half to moor and if it blows from the NW I must run,... McLachlan also claimed “they are very dear coals”¹⁰⁷.

McLachlan (this time aboard the company’s other steamer the *Duncan Hoyle*) also complained of the poor quality of Bicheno coal (“they are neither stones or coals”, and loaded by a “villainous lot of 5 men”)¹⁰⁸. Another company steamer the *Fenella* also used “Schouten Island, coal alone and no grumbling from engineers¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁴ ECSN Co. correspondence, Vol. 3, c. 1854

¹⁰⁵ Company correspondence, 11 June 1855

¹⁰⁶ McLachlan to Mather, 8/3/1856

¹⁰⁷ op cit 31/1/1856

¹⁰⁸ op.cit. 10/12/1855

¹⁰⁹ op.cit. 8/8/1855

The use of bags to load the coal is recorded several times - "Instructions to Captain of the *Fenella* 4/9/1855 Schouten Island. Take in coal but see that they are good quality"

28.9.55 Schouten Island coal and leave bags for steamer. 100 sent by cutter and one hundred now sent to be charged to E. Crockitt.

By February 1856 the *Duncan Hoyle's* schedule had been extended to Launceston, using Schouten Island coal¹¹⁰.

Failure of ECSN Co.: Although unrecorded, the closure of the steamer service to the East Coast must have been a severe blow to the Schouten Island mine. Whether the mine also ceased operation there is unclear, although the mine was still working on the death of Crockitt in July 1858.

Domestic Life 1849-60. The Crockitt Family

Edward Crockitt's family on Schouten Island consisted of his first wife Catherine and at least two of their children Henry and Lucy. Their family headstone in Swansea's Church of England cemetery reveals a tragic family history.

Catherine Crockitt of Schouten (sic) Island died on 12th May 1852, aged 60 years. Edward re-married Eliza Egan at Swanport on 28th March 1854 in the home of John Amos- who with Harriet Hepburn, were witnesses. On the inquest into Edward's death in 1858, no mention is made of Eliza, so she may not have been living on the island. (Eliza, a governess of "*Glen Heriot*" survived Edward and lived for many years in a small cottage opposite "*Blas Newydd*")¹¹¹. Eliza Crockitt ('widow born England') died in Hobart Town in 1873 aged 81.¹¹²

The above appears to indicate a family of at least 4 lived in the mine-manager's house or 'homestead'.

Crockitt's first family in Adelaide also consisted of 3 mature women who died in tragic circumstances. Thurza and Nancy aged 25 and 27 years were "Lost in the *Lady Denison* on their passage from Adelaide to Hobart Town (Headstone) i.e. 1850, and Elizabeth Crockitt, wife of master mariner H.F. Irwine who died at sea on 12th May 1851 on her passage from Hobart Town to California" aged 24 years (Headstone). (The latitude, longitude of place of death is recorded on the headstone).

E.O. Cotton's reminiscences (c. 1900) refer to an earlier visit to Schouten Island, with "the view is very good from the spot where Crockitt's house was (sic)..."¹¹³

¹¹⁰ op.cit. 28.2.1856

¹¹¹ Parker, East Coast Biographies, Uni of Tas. Archives

¹¹² RGD35/1/8 no 1558.

¹¹³ (Parker MSS, T.U.A.).

Death of mine manager Crockitt– the death of Edward Crockitt , ‘civil engineer’, was recorded in July 1858. An inquest into the sudden death on Schouten Island of Edward Crockitt supplies detail about the manager’s house and family life with comments on (un-named) staff. These come from the 2 chief witnesses at the inquest, Crockitt’s son Henry and daughter Lucy (see appendix for full transcript).

Structures Related to the Schouten Island Mine - (No.2)

1. **Habitation:** The main area occupied appears to have been adjacent to the creek entering Morey’s Bay. Both Burgess (1857) and Mayson (1889) survey document this area. Documented are:
2. **Huts:** These ‘huts’ are shown in Burgess, inland on the eastern bank of the creek. Were these the three huts referred to by Clues having been built for his whalers?
3. **Homestead / House :** Burgess identifies a large dwelling as house; by Maynson’s 1889 survey, the structure is no longer standing and referred to as “site of former homestead”.

Inquest Evidence: The layout of the house is indicated by evidence given by the Crockitt children at the time of the inquest into their father’s death. The inquest refers to a bedroom of Crockitt senior, as the children did not find their father until the morning, the 2 children (young adults Henry and Lucy) presumably had separate bedrooms. Crockitt’s (snr) body was found in the store/office, this room was attached to the house, having a door into the house and another.

(Henry Crockitt was “employed in the stores issuing rations to the men upon the Establishment and during the evening I occasionally went into the (living?) room were the deceased was sitting with my sister.”¹¹⁴ The Crockitts also employed a “women servant in the kitchen”. Office furniture included a shelf (where medicine was kept); spirits and beer were also kept in the office. Miners also were allowed to drink (“ some of the miners (were) in that evening to my knowledge (and) came and asked my father for drinks”).

A shoemaker (un-named) was with Crockitt the night of his death.

4. **Cottage:** a dwelling is shown below the homestead site in 1889 (shoe-maker’s residence?).
5. **Shed/wool-shed:** alongside the creek estuary is shown a “wool-shed”.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Supreme Court Inquest No. 4282, 31 July 1858

¹¹⁵ 1889 field notes only

6. **Garden:** to the SW of the house and cottage is a small fenced garden (1857 and 1889) along a small creek.
7. **Miners Barracks/Huts:** no specific record was found of the miners' quarters; the three huts located in the fault gully **may** have been used by them as proximity to fresh water would have been an essential factor for 10-15 men.

Workings

1. **Coal shaft:** (see earlier detail) the 1857 map shows 3 coal shafts at the end of the tram-line. The 1889 survey describes only one "old coal shaft" here.
2. **Jetty No. 2:** both the 1857 and 1889 maps indicate a jetty at the end of the railway near the deep cutting (1857 - "jetty"; 1889 - "old jetty"¹¹⁶ is the only extant drawing of the jetty found to date. Although the scenery and perspective has been compressed in artistic licence, the jetty is shown in some detail.

A windlass system is shown on the jetty's edge; its workings need closer examination and analysis. The operation of a chute is referred to by Captain McLachlan in correspondence quoted earlier, when he complains of the inefficient coal-delivery system]
3. **Paddock:** a large fenced paddock is shown on the 1857 map, and possibly relates to either Clues 3 acre potato crop or sheep grazing.

Phase 2: Part Two: 1859-73

Following the death of Edward Crockitt in 1858 the valuation rolls to 1860 indicate that his son Henry continued to occupy house and land on the island. From 1862 to 1873, the occupant is listed as George Whitcomb for the Australian Smelting Company. Whitcombe, confidante of G.A. Robinson and industrialist (e.g. director of the Hobart Gas Company) was General Manager of the A.S.C. Whether he actually occupied the island is uncertain.¹¹⁷

Phase 3: Coal Mining - A.G.D. Bernacchi : 1888-1892

From 1888-1892 (approx) Bernacchi tried unsuccessfully developing the coal fields. With his partner Thomas Bower he extended the tram line as mentioned from the end of the 1850s line to a new shaft sunk on the south on a creek halfway between the end of the new tramway and Cape Faure, possibly an exploration shaft.

No new dwelling relating to the third phase of coal-mining appear to have been constructed.

¹¹⁶ Schouten Island lithograph c. 1855 - A 19th C lithograph by Lane

¹¹⁷ Plomley, P. 1046

The extent of Bernacchi's involvement has not been fully researched.

Jetty No. 3: The jetty for Phase 3 appears to by-pass the Phase 2 cutting and was more inside the headland on Crockitt's Bay.¹¹⁸

Phase 4: 1922-4

(1) Two leases by A. L. Luttrell (covering 320 and 420 acres) were being applied for in 1922 with prospecting shafts already sunk (Hill, Section iii). The extent and location of these workings has not been ascertained in the time available.

(2) Bernacchi and McRae - A coal lease at the end of Bernacchi's tram-way, and opposite Black Reef was taken out in 1925, although works seem to have been undertaken.¹¹⁹ The lease contained "abandoned prospecting holes".

Coal Shafts in Summary

First Phase (1843)

Adit with two branches of Moreys Beach.

Second Phase (1848-60)

A need to distinguish between 1) exploration, 2) air and 3) working shafts.

Exploration

Four shafts were sunk - inland from the old shaft and "opposite the proposed shipping place" (possibly includes the 2 shafts found along the fault line).

Working (1850)

A pair of shafts "a mile to the westward of 1st adit"¹²⁰

Airshaft

Extended 100 yards inland from 1st adit.

Four Shafts

The first pair were sunk "at some distance from the shore but opposite the shipping place". After passing through four seams of coal the seam ran out, and a third larger shaft was begun about "four hundred yards to the westward of those first sunk" before coming to a halt in hard basalt. A fourth shaft was then sunk nearby, again going through four seams

¹¹⁸ Plan S.I. c. 1900

¹¹⁹ (4/36, 1925, Glamorgan, Mine's Department)

¹²⁰ 1850 Report

of coal and after going down 50 yards and then run a tunnel 110 yards “in the direction of the larger shaft” but again the coal disappeared under basalt.

As stated, these shafts appear to relate to the fault-line region. N.B. The twin-shafts adjacent to the old homestead site are not shown on maps up to and including Maysons detailed 1889 survey.

(1857) At least one other shaft in this vicinity (i.e. end of tram-way) and another (possibly exploratory) on the creek running into Moreys Beach near Sandspit Point.¹²¹

Third Phase

Working: (1859)

Shaft (1) halfway between Sandspit Point and Sandstone Bluff, at the end of extended tramway¹²².

“A shaft was sunk by Signor Bernacchi on the right bank of a small creek emptying into the sea north of Black Reef. This shaft, which is 72 ft deep, did not penetrate any (productive) seams”.¹²³

Shaft (2) the twin shafts adjacent to the old homestead site do not appear until maps post 1890 and therefore appear to relate to Bernacchi’s coal works.

Shaft (3) a shaft is identified inland on Western Gully c. 1900. (Mining Tenement Map 132 Freycinet and Schouten Island, c. 1900). However, this may be an incorrect siting later of the No. 1 Bernacchi shaft.

Fourth Phase

(1922) Exploratory shafts only.

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¹²¹ 1857 Burgess Map

¹²² Mayson Survey

¹²³ Reid, P. 64.

7 - Tin Mining (1875-c. 1940)

Archival records of tin mining on Schouten Island are hard to trace due to their occurring before the formalising of records under the 1883 Act which established the Mines Department.¹²⁴

Time limitations prevented full research into this aspect of the island's history. The field work of Mines Department geologist Keith Corbett, plus some newspaper and archive records give an indication of the extent of the tin workings (see Corbett map).

The Schoutens: The similar geological structure of both Schouten Island and Main necessitate the two being treated as one for research purposes.

1875 First Reported Mining

A detailed description is contained in an 1876 report on the *Cornwall Chronicle*. Two mines - Eureka and Exclusion - had produced samples of 'ruby tin ore' by October, 12 months after the arrival of the first party. This team intended to search for tin "near and on the Schoutens"¹²⁵.

1876 Mining Partners - Schouten Main

The initial leasees appear to have been H & A Koglin and J W King and others and later A Graham (Warden of Glamorgan)¹²⁶

Schouten Island

Messrs Castle, Lucas and others were applicants for five mineral leases on Schouten Island.¹²⁷

Partners Dispute

Surveyor Threlkald Mayson (son of the Rev. Mayson of Swansea) had a dispute with his partners who he blamed for the failure of the "Schouten Tin Prospecting Speculation".¹²⁸ His partners - "this most stupid and blundering party" - had cost him financially on the "prospecting of the best sections of Schouten Main and Island", which had now been lost. Mayson severed his relations with the party. (He later completed Bernacchi's Coal Survey leases).

¹²⁴ Wettenhall, P. 57

¹²⁵ C.C. 11th Oct. 1876, p. 2.c.5

¹²⁶ Mines Dept. M4/201 - M4/1300, 20/11/76

¹²⁷ *ibid* N/C 4/283, 9/12/76

¹²⁸ *ibid*, NC 4/283, 13/2/76

Tin Leases: (see map)

Four areas are shown under lease to F. Gill, J.W. Mullins and J. King. These appear to coincide with the main areas of disturbance identified by Corbett (Gill was the son-in-law of J.P. King of "Piermont"). Frank Gill was engaged in "a great deal of prospecting".¹²⁹

1930s Prospecting

Keith Cook (son of Athol Cook, leasee of Schouten Island during the 1930s) claimed his father engaged in occasional but regular prospecting for tin.¹³⁰

Chinese Tin - Mines (?)

Anecdotal evidence has up to 50 Chinese tin miners working on Schouten Island.¹³¹ To date no written evidence has been found to substantiate this claim; however, documented evidence of the Chinese workers is traditionally very hard to find. Mrs Cynthia Mitchell has interviewed miners who claimed to have worked with Chinese miners on Schouten Main.¹³²

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¹²⁹ Parker, MSS

¹³⁰ Conversation, April 1991

¹³¹ Hughes, 1957, P. 87

¹³² C. Mitchell is preparing a (home) video documentary on Freycinet-Swanport and has interviewed old residents on film. She declined to help with current research until her project was complete, believing she had covered most areas.

8 – Gold Mining c. 1881?

A prospectus for an Association to “Prospect Schouten Island”, and Schouten for gold was issued in 1881. Although the associates were among the more substantial east coast residents, there is no apparent record of the activity coming to fruition.¹³³

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¹³³ University of Tas., Historical Manuscripts No.6, P.20

9 – Sheep Grazing: 1840(?) - 1960

In 1848 Milligan noted that 200 to 300 sheep were at one time run in an “improved condition upon the Island”¹³⁴ ie. prior to the A.S.C. mining.

Sheep were run in the 1850s, (possibly for meat?) as Crockitt report one stolen in 1855.¹³⁵

Leasees 1879 - 1960

Due to time constraints only an incomplete list of grazing leasees is available. These are gleaned from Assessment Rolls, Lands Department files.

Leasee

1879-80	occupant	Edgar Luttrell
1882-84	occupant	Francis Gill
1900s	occupant	Albert Morey
c. 1920	occupant	Bernacchi
c. 1925	occupant	Fergusson
1927	occupant	Thomas Fergusson
1930s	occupant	Athol Cook
1955-69	occupant	J W Howells
1960s	occupant	P McConnen

Structures

The 1889 survey shows 2 structures then standing, the “woolshed’ and “cottage”. This cottage is further up-hill from the existing cottages on Moreys Beach.

Extant cottages: The 2 Moreys Beach cottages are considerably different in age. The smaller derelict structure to the rear of “Cooks cottage” appears to be c. 1880, judging from a cursory inspection of materials. The nails used are early machine-made examples with a rosette-head. Further examination is needed. A photograph (c. 1920) of Mr Fergusson and his sheepdogs outside the smaller cottage indicate that this was his home, and then, the only building there¹³⁶.

The larger ‘Cook cottage’ appears to date from the 1920s at the time of the late Athol Cook, his wife and family. Mr Keith Cook of Swansea recalled helping his father with shearing during the 1930s after the latter moved to the island. Keith and his wife occupied the small cottage during these annual visits to the island. (Newspaper used to line the internal wall

¹³⁴ Milligan p. 2

¹³⁵ Glamorgan Police Records, POL 239, 27 May 1855

¹³⁶ Davenport, P. 129

on this cottage was dated 1930). Keith Cook maintained his father built the newer cottage but did not know the date of the older building.

Leases Post War: Athol Cook left the island c. 1940 and the lease went into other hands. Cook appears to have been the last leasee to occupy the island on a permanent basis. The later leasees appear to have run cattle, the last - Pat McConnen of Triabunna - is mentioned in 'There Is a Ship' by Patsy Adam-Smith. Cattle were swum ashore from and to the coastal trading ship "*MV Maracoopa*" (see photo).

Preliminary archaeological recording (see over).

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10 - Shipwrecks

1. 1850 - The *Sir Eardley Wilmot*, a small cutter of 21 ton sank while loading coal (i.e. from the old No. 1 jetty).¹³⁷
2. 1893 - *Sarah Ann*, 45 ton ketch lost with all hands on voyage from Hobart - Launceston, April 1893. A small bay to the west bears the name of her demise.

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¹³⁷ *Hobart Town Advertiser* 20.12.1850

11 - Archaeological Recordings of Site

The following is a reference list in the Parks, Wildlife and Heritage site register of sites recorded on Schouten Island. Most include a sketch plan of the structure/site. (1: 10, 000)¹³⁸

Site No.	Recorded by	Site Name	Grid ref
007	Steve Brown	Huts, Schouten Is	6053 3159
008	"Shed, Schouten Is		6052 3157
009	"Sheep dip, Schouten Is		6053 3158
010	"Tramway, Schouten Is		6040 3165 to 6057 3161
011	"Foundations, Schouten Is		6040 3164
012	"Mine shafts, Schouten Is		6050 3158

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¹³⁸ S. Brown, Schouten Island, Parks, Wildlife and Heritage. Unpublished site report

12 – Vegetation and Timber Consumption

Flora: Some reports describe (in passing) the type of vegetation on the island.

1848: On the more gentle slopes of the greenstone (dolerite) hills, and their varied undulations, there is besides a forest of gum trees (Eucalypts of various species) many stately specimens of Oyster Bay pine (*Callistras australis*), with a good deal of grass and other herbage fit for sheep¹³⁹. Milligan noted the granite section carried only “a scanty show of scrubby and stunted plants.

1850s: Supply by the coal mine of timber to passing steamers in the proportion of 1/3 coal to 2/3 timber indicates the island was gradually being cleared.

1854: The 1854 jetty timber order seems to indicate that large sawn timbers and pine (piers?) - probably Oyster Bay pines) needed to be brought from Swansea.

1860: Crew from the whaling barque ‘Isabella’ were cutting firewood on the island in 1860 when two of the crew deserted.¹⁴⁰

The native flora of the island was probably considerably altered by the timber-cutting and the introduction of sheep grazing over a 130 year period.

Exotic Plants: The domestic garden of the whalers included 3 acres of potatoes. Near the 1850s mine Manager’s house periwinkle creeper survives. Spring bulbs **may** be evident. The Cook’s domestic garden included prolific crops of strawberries and cape gooseberries which were sold in Swansea.¹⁴¹

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¹³⁹ Milligan P. 2

¹⁴⁰ POL 239 Vol. 2, 29/10/1860 TSA

¹⁴¹ conversation with Keith Cook, April 1991

13 – Schouten Island Nomenclature

Schouten Island named by Tasman for a member of the Council of Batavia (former Dutch colony, present Indonesia) who signed Tasman's 1642 despatch.

Coastal Features

Moreys Bay: leasee Albert Morey who grazed sheep on Schouten Island c. 1890-1910.

Crockitt's Bay: manager of Australasian Smelting Company coal mine from 1849 to his death in 1859. Buried with his first wife in Swansea's Anglican cemetery. Known locally as Gravelly Beach.

Masons Downfall: Lookout for a whaling party, Mason fell, was severely injured and later died.

Trumpeter Bay: Exact source unknown, possibly fishing ground.

Cape Baudin: Leader of French scientific and exploration expedition commanding the *Geographe* and *Naturalist*, in Tasmanian waters 1802.

Chain Locker Bay: Source unknown.

Cape Sonnerat: After Peter Sonnerat possibly by Baudin expedition.

Taillifer Rocks: Second surgeon on the Baudin expedition.

Hen and Chickens Bay: Geological feature and resemblance.

Sarah Ann Bay: Sight of shipwreck for 47 ton ketch *Sarah Ann* which disappeared with all hands on a voyage from Hobart to Launceston in 1851.

Cape Faure : Marine Surveyor with Baudin's expedition who led a party which surveyed Schouten Island and Passage and were the first Europeans to land overnight on the island.

Sandstone Bluff: Area of sand dunes and lagoon.

Inland Features

Bear Hill: The animal-like stones which appear to be 'climbing' the flank of the granite mountain.

Milligans Hill: Convict Department surveyor and naturalist who reported to Lt Gov Denison on the coal deposits of Schouten Island and other Tasmanian sites in 1848. Later Chairman of the Douglas River Coal Co.

Mt Storey (formerly Flagstaff Hill): Once dominated by a huge flagpole, the function of the flagstaff is uncertain but may have related to the whaling era, or alternatively the later mine. Re-named Mt Storey (when the Hazards were named) about 1900 after Dr George F Storey, first doctor on the East Coast who lived at Kelvedon.

Mt Daedulus: Suggested by John Manning after the legendary Greek figure.

Chinese Creek: From the Chinese tin miners who reputedly worked the creeks on leases of Gill and King during the 1880s, damming the creek.

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14 - Leisure History

130 Years of Recreation : H.B. Stoney's visit in 1857 marks the start of a purely recreational use of the island.

The Schouten Islands appear stretching along the coast and a view/such beauty and extent embracing hills and dale and outspread sea, repays the wanderer for the toils and difficulties of the way.¹⁴²

Visiting yachtsmen, local fishermen and parties, particularly from Swansea, have continued to use the island's beaches and fishing grounds continuing a tradition referred to by Louisa Ann Meredith, and E.O. Cotton in *My Home in Tasmania* and *MSS Reminiscences* respectively. Before and after World War I, the Royal Society of Tasmania camped on Schouten Island (and Wineglass Bay) hiring a steamer from Hobart for the trip.¹⁴³ A 1941 panoramic view of the island and Schouten Passage from Bear Hill is held by State Archives; four yachts are anchored in the bay.

The Royal Society reports indicate that a number of walks were popular, including Aboriginal middens at the sand-spit, mine-working, and a climb to the top of Bear Hill. Others ventured in to Flagstaff Hill.

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¹⁴² Stoney, P. 181

¹⁴³ see annual reports Tasmaniana Library

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