

**THE  
HOWARD  
FAMILY**

**AT  
SASSAFRAS  
SOUTH ROAD  
AND  
NIETTA**



## INTRODUCTION

**D**uring my late childhood a large hand-tinted photograph hung on the wall of the lounge room of my grandparents' home in Church Street, East Devonport. It was their wedding photo. It always left me a little bemused to see granny Howard standing beside her seated husband: the faithful wife ready to obey her husband's every decree! Among other photos saved over a life-time was one of grandfather's parents, William and Catherine Howard.

Whilst little was ever volunteered about life "in the good old days" I did know that Gran was a Burt before she married grandfather, and that grandfather, Arthur Albert Howard, was the son of William Howard and his wife Catherine, nee Singleton.

Grandfather had been born at Sassafras. There were another seven brothers and one sister in the family, all of whose names were known. So, it was a simple matter to confirm these facts. Then there were stories of his father, my great-grandfather William Howard, emigrating from England on a voyage that took twelve months - an exaggeration, although it did prove to be a lengthy voyage. Did he come alone, or as part of a family? Well, it was whispered that he had been sent out [i.e. transported!] but the timing proved the inaccuracy of this suggestion. Then again perhaps he had come out with a brother! No one seemed to know for sure.

By careful and time-consuming enquiry, great-grandfather Howard's family has been documented and their arrival in the colony confirmed. Arthur Albert Howard was the grandson of an impoverished English farm labourer who had migrated to the colony in 1855.

As bounty immigrants enough information was recorded about the Howards to enable me to obtain the younger William's birth certificate and his parent's marriage certificate.

And so, their story, often a sad one, unfolds.

Helen Anderson.

10 April 2020

## THE SAD VOYAGE OF THE WHIRLWIND

**I**t was an eventful Tuesday afternoon in April 1855 when: “The magnificent clipper ship *Whirlwind* came up to the bar in gallant style, in tow of the *Cobre*.”<sup>1</sup>

The *Whirlwind* was the largest vessel that had ever visited Launceston, and was in consequence “the principal object of attraction and theme of conversation” as she lay moored in the stream.<sup>2</sup>

The shipping correspondent for the *Launceston Examiner* was quick to point out the virtues of the steam tug *Cobre* and the part she played in the safe arrival of this ship of 1000 tons at the bar of the North Esk. “[The *Cobre*]



**Sketch of George Town on the Tamar, by Bishop Nixon 1854.**<sup>3</sup> This would have been one of the first scenes the family would have seen as the *Whirlwind* sailed up the Tamar River towards Launceston.

under the able superintendence of pilot Foster” brought the *Whirlwind* from the white buoy to the bar, he wrote. He notes that the wind on this occasion was southerly and adverse until Mount Direction was reached and from that

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<sup>1</sup> *Examiner* :03 April 1855 p2 “The *Whirlwind*” entered the heads on 31 March.

<sup>2</sup> Many ships stayed at the white buoy and their passengers and cargoes were transferred by smaller boats to the wharves.

<sup>3</sup> Nixon, Francis R., D.D., Bishop of Tasmania 1857: *The Cruise of the Beacon, 1854: a narrative of a visit to the islands of Bass's Straits*. Accessed <http://anglicanhistory.org/aus/nixon/beacon1854/>

time the Cobre was put on half speed, so as to reach the flats at the top of high water. This manoeuvre took seven hours.

This was the end of the epic voyage that began in November 1854 when my great-great-grandparents, William and Ann Howard, together with their nine children, left England for Australia in the immigrant ship *Whirlwind*.

William, a farm labourer, was from the village of Hockham in Norfolk. Ann (nee Stigwood) was born in Wickhambrooke, Suffolk. He was 36 years old and Ann 33 years. Neither he nor Ann could read nor write, but their eldest children could read.

Although the county of Norfolk (their abode at the time) has an extensive sea-board, in all probability it was the first time they had ever travelled in a ship: the first time perhaps that they had ever seen the sea!

Day by day the Examiner newspaper reported the shipping news to the colonists in Launceston: news of events that had taken place months before! The ship *Whirlwind*, which was “loading at London for Launceston”, was expected at any moment the paper announced on 20 January 1855. She was to sail on the 20th November they reported on the 6th February! Then there was news of scarlet fever amongst the immigrants and damage to the ship itself.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst the damage to the *Whirlwind* was of a relatively minor nature the fever contracted by the passengers was not. The *Times* of 04 December 1854 was quoted:

*“Plymouth, Dec 2 - The sickness on board the Government emigrant ship Whirlwind appears to be increasing, and calls for prompt and energetic measures. The Whirlwind registers 1,003 tons, and left Gravesend on Sunday, the 17th of November, with 340 statute adults, equal to 450 souls, bounty ticket passengers for Van Diemen's Land. One child, afflicted with scarlatina, was landed previously to departure, and one died of inflammation of the lungs off Margate on the 18th.”*

The voyage had begun badly. For many the pain and heartache had come before they left sight of England, and perhaps for them the fear of the unknown was outweighed by the numbing feeling of despair that must have already enveloped them.

The *Times* continues:

*“On Tuesday, the 19th, strong contrary winds prevailed, the rudder chains were carried away outside the Wight, and Captain Edgell attempted to get into Portsmouth, but the wind changing to the eastward, he bore up for Plymouth, where he arrived on Friday, the 23rd, and on Saturday the ship was towed into Hamoaze, with the intention of placing her in Keyham Docks, but difficulties arising with the Admiralty, she was detained outside until Tuesday, the 28th, by which time her repairs had been completed afloat. In the interim, however, the sickness— scarlatina, scarlet fever, and diarrhoea —had increased. A child died on Sunday, the 26th, and three others have died since. About 150 of the passengers are now ashore, chiefly in the capacious premises*

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<sup>4</sup> Examiner: 17 February 1855.

*formerly used as a workhouse. They are progressing favourably; but the remainder on board in the Sound are more or less infected, and require removal into a receiving hulk, or some other place, while the ship is thoroughly cleansed and fumigated. Mr Ransom is the medical officer on board. The passengers are now under medical charge of Mr. Eccles, surgeon to the Emigration Commission. Sunday morning —Late last night Port Admiral Sir William Parker granted on application, the use of the Endymion hulk for the passengers on board the Whirlwind.”*<sup>5</sup>

What did a family need to take on the voyage? John Capper provides this list of necessities, dated 1858:<sup>6</sup>

*“For the wife: Three cotton dresses, one pair stays, four petticoats, sixteen chemises, two flannel petticoats, twelve pairs cotton stockings, four pairs black worsted ditto, six night dresses and caps, six pocket-handkerchiefs, four handkerchiefs for the neck, six caps, two bonnets, cloak and shawl, one pair boots, two pairs shoes, eight towels.*

*For the husband: Two fustian jackets, waistcoats and trousers, three pairs canvas trousers, one overcoat, two felt hats, one Scotch cap, sixteen striped shirts, two Guernsey shirts, twelve pairs cotton half-hose, four pairs worsted hose, six handkerchiefs, eight towels, two pairs boots and one pair shoes, strong but not heavy.*

*Children in like proportion. The family will also require a flock mattress and bolster, one pair blankets, one coverlet, six pairs cotton sheets, two or three tablecloths, six pounds yellow soap, three pounds marine soap, metal wash-handbasin, knives and forks, one quart hookpot, comb and brush, besides a supply of string, sewing materials, tape, buttons, etc.”*

All of this sounds more than a simple agricultural labourer with a wife and nine children could afford!

Given the prudishness of the time, it is easy to imagine the daily embarrassment in the simple business of dressing and undressing. A man could pull on a pair of trousers while lying down - provided his spouse afforded him something more than his eighteen inches of bunk space - but with a woman's voluminous clothing, there was no chance of concealment. All were probably thankful for the dimness of the light. And could we expect total sexual abstinence on the voyage!

William and Ann experienced their own personal grief about two months into the voyage when their youngest son, 11-month-old George, died of Anasarca (dropsy of the skin) on 13 January 1855. His elder brother Frederick also died on the voyage from an abscess in the liver.<sup>7</sup> How must their parents have felt as their little bodies, wrapped perhaps only in canvas, were committed to the deep?

The *Whirlwind* experienced strong easterly winds for the last three weeks of the voyage, and sighted Cape Otway nearly a fortnight before arriving at

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<sup>5</sup> Examiner: 17 February 1855.

<sup>6</sup> Charlwood, D.E., *The Long Farewell* (Ringwood : 1981) page 74.

<sup>7</sup> RGD: 1780/1855 & 1794/1855. Registration of deaths by Dr John Ransom, Surgeon. Dropsy is not a disease, but an abnormal accumulation of fluid beneath the skin, or in one or more of the cavities of the body.

Launceston. A week before the end of the voyage one of the seamen fell from aloft and was killed. Forty-four people had died on the voyage and there had been seven births aboard ship.<sup>8</sup>

On 02 April 1855 the *Whirlwind* landed at Launceston and by one o'clock next afternoon the passengers came ashore, and were addressed briefly by their mentor, the Reverend Mr Drake, who was given "six hearty cheers". The Examiner editorialised:<sup>9</sup>

*"The long expected Whirlwind has arrived, and several hundred souls will be added to the population. The emigrants have passed through a fearful ordeal...Twenty three [sic] died on the passage, and although the survivors are healthy and robust, the loss of relatives and friends casts a shade of sorrow on the enterprise. We deeply sympathise with the bereaved, and the painful circumstances in which Mr Drake has been placed must evoke the kindest feelings of his friends. His was no mercenary mission, and though he may not calculate on the gratitude of those he has sought to benefit by a removal from comparative penury to immediate plenty and ultimate affluence, he has earned their respect, and will secure the esteem of the colonists..."*

The passengers on board the *Whirlwind* must have felt that they had killed that proverbial Chinaman. Not only did they suffer from the scourge of endemic disease and the worry of ever actually reaching the "promised land" but there was also the possibility of a mutiny. The Examiner continues:

*"The captain, too, has had his trials: his crew have been in a state of insubordination in consequence of the proper and rigidly enforced rules that excluded the seamen from intercourse with the emigrants, and the sailors have, at the conclusion of the voyage, struck..."*

Just in case the hopes of the immigrant "have not been unduly elated" they are reminded that:

*"The farm labourer and mechanic will not be carried off by force at any wage they may demand: the unmarried females will not be surrounded by sighing lovers, solicitous to make them brides. Australia is a land where privations must be endured, and hard work encountered. At the end of the vista, which is not long, there is settlement and independence to the industrious, the economical, and sober. Every young woman will find a husband in process of time, but before she obtains a good one she must show by her behaviour she deserves him. Everything will be new to the emigrants; they must be surprised at nothing, and become quickly reconciled to the condition of the colony..."*

The hiring of the immigrants commenced at the temporary hiring depot (the stores of Messrs Gilmore, Staunton and Co.) the day after they had been landed and "from the eagerness evinced by employers" there was no doubt that they would be speedily engaged.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Examiner: 03 April 1855 p2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Examiner: 05 April 1855 p3 c1.

## WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND

**T**he Howard family, now reduced to seven children, consisted of sons Charles, aged 17, and William (13), both farm labourers; Elizabeth was the eldest daughter (16) and is listed as a domestic servant; her sisters, Emily (12), Martha (10), and Caroline (3) are too young yet to be working, as was young Henry (7).

In what condition did the family live in their native country? What induced them to immigrate to Van Diemen's Land?

During the 18th century there was a revolution in agriculture which led to increased yields, but mechanisation and the enclosure of common land caused considerable hardship upon rural workers.



### **Holy Trinity Church, Great Hockham.<sup>11</sup>**

The two largest classes in rural society were the farmers and the agricultural labourers. In 1851, there were about 250,000 farmers in England and Wales, and just short of a million labourers.<sup>12</sup> These two classes led very different lives, with the labourers being generally among the poorest in the village.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4290506> 31 March 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Ward, Sadie B., *Life in Victorian and Edwardian England* (London : Allen & Unwin, 1982)

“The labouring class was made up mainly of general labourers engaged in fieldwork, but it also included those with special skills required for work with livestock - shepherds, horse-men, carters, and cow-men - who received higher wages.”<sup>13</sup>

One thing that set the two classes apart was the quality of their housing: a labourers' cottage could be cramped and over-crowded. A report of 1865 showed that 40% of country cottages had only one bedroom, while fewer than 5% had more than two.

Many cottages were damp and ill-ventilated, with no water tap, sink, or washing machine – indeed no water supply at all.

*“In the mid-19th century, labourers' cottages were generally bare and scantily furnished. Many had insufficient chairs for all the family, some did not even have a table, and bolsters were as likely to be slept on as beds.”*<sup>14</sup>

A labourer's wages could vary considerably from region to region. In the mid-19th century the weekly wage paid to ordinary labourers could be as low as seven or eight shillings. The lot of a rural labouring man was not a happy one:

*The law locks up the man or woman  
Who steals the goose off the common  
But leaves the greater villain loose  
Who steals the common from the goose.*<sup>15</sup>

Feeding and clothing a family of two adults and nine children on 8/- a week must have been near impossible. How then was it possible to make the decision to emigrate a reality? There is no reason to suppose that either William or Ann had ever been used to anything but a tenuous hold on life. Nor to suppose that their life had been anything but one of industry, when the season allowed, and economy at all times. So how could they possibly afford to pay back the £151 that it cost to travel to the colony over such a short period of time as two years? How would they have been able to provision and clothe themselves respectably for the voyage? Their belief in the promises of the Reverend Drake must surely have been strong.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Folk poem condemning the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century English Enclosure Acts, by which common land was fenced off and turned into private property, thus depriving the labouring classes of a means of grazing an animal or cultivating a crop that would help supplement their food.

## FARMING AT SASSAFRAS

Under an act passed by the Legislative Council in September 1854 immigrants for whom the government paid full passage money would either have to re-pay this money within 14 days of arrival or become indentured to a “competent employer” for a period of two years, with the employer paying the passage money. The act also provided for the employer to deduct this sum from the immigrants' wages over the two-year period.<sup>16</sup>

The Howard's two-year indenture was served at Newry Mills, Longford where ten months after their arrival Ann gave birth to the first Tasmanian in the family, a son, on 04 February 1856.<sup>17</sup> The boy was named Frederick after the son “lost” on the voyage out.

The Newry Mill property was situated on the South Esk River about a mile from the township of Longford.<sup>18</sup>

A daughter, Sarah Ann, named for her mother, was born at Longford on 11 December of the next year, but died a little over a week later, on the 19<sup>th</sup> December.<sup>19</sup>

Having served out the requisite two years of their indenture William and Ann lost little time in looking for land of their own. Cheap land was not plentiful around Longford, the country having been long settled. Intending farmers were forced to explore the country between Deloraine and Latrobe which had for so many years remained unsettled.

This heavily wooded part of the North West Coast was served by the Devon Road Trust which was formed in 1852. But it was only in 1855 (the year the family arrived in Tasmania) that any concerted attempt was made to open up a public road between Deloraine and the Mersey. In 1856 clearing of the road between Deloraine and Tarleton was completed. From this we can surmise that conditions were primitive indeed.

*Longford farmer Richard Uniacke had purchased 640 acres of land at Sassafras as a speculation and it remained undisturbed for some time, waiting on tenant farmers to undertake the mammoth task of clearing this primeval forest. The density of The Forest had protected it for many years as settlers infiltrated the surrounding district.*

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<sup>16</sup> Guide to the Public Record Office. Records relating to Free Immigration by Ian Pierce & Clare Cowling. AOT 1975.

<sup>17</sup> RGD: 1016/1856 Longford.

<sup>18</sup> Cornwall Chronicle Saturday 5 April 1856 pg 5.

<sup>19</sup> RGD: 1463 and 1466/1857 Longford. The birth of Sarah Ann was registered by her sister Martha on 17 December 1857 and again by her father, William on 21 December 1857.

SC195-1-41-4139: An unnamed infant child of Ann Howard died shortly after Sarah Ann was born and as nothing further is recorded about Sarah I believe that she did die although why she wasn't named I cannot say. From the inquest held on 21 December it was found that the child had been accidentally smothered whilst sleeping. Perhaps the second birth registration was in error and should have been a death registration.



This virgin bushland has been described:

*"In some places where the largest trees grew, 8 to 10 were commonly found to the acre. These measured 8-10 feet in diameter at a height of 10 feet from the ground. Where the trees were thicker they were smaller, but grew to greater heights. Besides the tall trees of stringy bark, white gum, blackwood and myrtle there was a dense growth of ti-tree on low-lying land. They were so thick it was almost impossible for one to penetrate them. Even the ti-trees reached a height of 30 feet. In some places there was a dense undergrowth of manferns, musk, cat-head, stinging nettles, creepers, rushes and sags of all kinds."*<sup>20</sup>

Thirty years onwards William Wells of the River Don Trading Company<sup>21</sup> expounds the virtues of the north-west coast bush:

*"We crossed a splendid fern gully with tree ferns twenty feet high with fronds ten or twelve feet long, the stems about one foot thick and covered with a beautiful filmy fern. I think in its way a fern gully exceeds almost anything in beauty. The cool damp atmosphere, the semi-darkness, just a little light through the splendid fronds overhead, the black decaying vegetation, the little trickling stream, the beautiful moss and little ferns, make it a new and delightful world of itself. One fern is like a hart's tongue with a single branch on the other side of each frond. Another is very like beech fern. Maiden hair is not common here, but I have seen a little of it."*

Beautiful though it may have been, imagine selecting a suitable area of land to clear for the site of a hut to house the family, hemmed in as was most likely by a forest such as this; with the threat of falling trees ever present; the ravages of the native animals foraging amongst the emerging crops and destroying relentlessly that tiny garden of familiar flowers which helped to dispel that feeling of complete despair, isolation, and home-sickness. Imagine too the ever-present fear of bush fire and the insidious presence of poisonous reptiles.

Would there have been time for the young Howards to wander through that bushland to observe and appreciate the splendour of the native flora and fauna? Time to pick a bunch of strange but beautiful flowers to be placed on the makeshift table in that one roomed hut which had to house husband, wife, and children?

What kind of stresses did this place on their marriage? How did they cope with the isolation?

Unable to buy outright they rented 100 acres of land at Sassafras (part of what was then generally termed The Mersey) from Mr Uniacke. The land first appears in the Valuation Roll of 1859<sup>22</sup> in the name of Charles Howard,

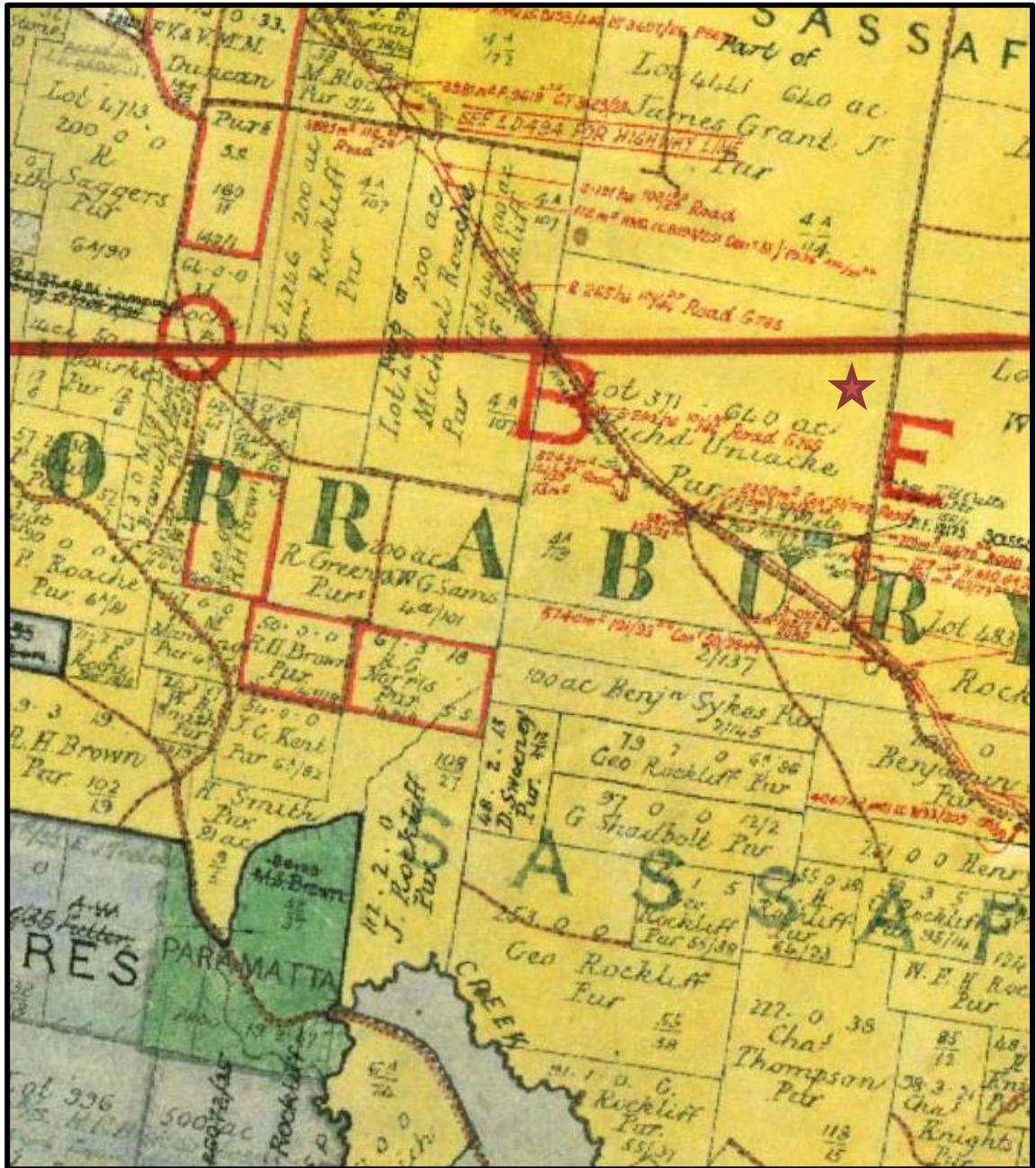
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<sup>20</sup> Sassafras School Parents' and Friends' Association (Collation), *Sassafras. A History of its Settlement & People*: (Sassafras : The Association, 1988). pg 10. Cat's Head fern is a species of *Polystichum*.

<sup>21</sup> Gardam, Faye (ed.), *Immense Enjoyment, The Wells Journals 1884-1888*, (Devonport : Devon Historical Society, 1987).

<sup>22</sup> Hobart Town Gazette: 25 January 1859 p127.

but this is amended in the Roll of 1860<sup>23</sup> with William Howard being the occupier of a “Hut and Land” at Green's Creek<sup>24</sup>, with an annual value £10. The first challenge for the settler was the clearing of the land. Trees of 18 inches or more in diameter were ring-barked rather than felled, and left to



**Land District Chart showing Lot 371 of 640 acres, Forrabury Parish, purchased by Richard Uniacke, indicated by the red star. <sup>25</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> Hobart Town Gazette: 06 March 1860 p434.

<sup>24</sup> Green's Creek is in the adjoining parish of Virginstowe.

<sup>25</sup> Accessed <https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap/app/list/map>.

die; the scrub was felled and left to dry off and was burned during the summer months, often causing damage to a neighbour's boundary fences (or worse). A good burn was essential for the successful beginning of a farm. Some of the refuse timber was used to create makeshift fences until money was available to do the job properly.

William's neighbours included Jupp, Garland, and Singleton: all eventually becoming related by marriage.

Yorkshireman George Rockliff had purchased land at Sassafras in 1857 and settled the district with his brothers Henry, John, and Frances, thus beginning a working connection with the family which did not end until well into the 20th century and involved three generations of Howards: William, William junr., and his son Arthur.

Henry Rockliff built Skelbrook Chapel where William junr. was married. George Ingram who later became William's landlord was also intimately connected to the Rockliffs—seven of his children marrying into the family. All are mentioned in George Rockliff's diaries.

Jane Howard, William and Anne's youngest child, was born at New Ground on 02 March 1861.<sup>26</sup>

By 1863 much hard work had been undertaken: the "Hut and Land" at Sassafras had become a "Farm", with an annual value of £20.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> RGD: 1859/1861 Port Sorell.

<sup>27</sup> Hobart Town Gazette: 27 January 1863 p272.

## “...PRIVATIONS MUST BE ENDURED...”

In September 1864 William purchased on credit (under the provisions of the Waste Lands Act) two Lots of land in the Parish of Forrabury, County of Devon: for one lot of 99 acres he paid (by instalments) the sum of £40/6/7, and for the other lot of 100 acres,<sup>28</sup> he paid off £71/5/0. He was unable to keep up the payments.

His son William junr records:

*“The reason why he failed to complete the purchase was bad crops and low prices for the little he had grown. For five or six years the times were so bad that he could with difficulty grow sufficient grain to pay the rent of the farm and to find food for his family.”<sup>29</sup>*

This land bordered Deep Creek and was inferior land. He managed to clear part of his block while continuing to lease his original tenancy, now owned by George Ingram.<sup>30</sup>

William continues his father's story:

*“Finally, to complete his misfortune, he fell off a straw-stack, injuring him so severely that he never did any work from that day till the day he died, and was compelled to keep to his bed one year before he died. The expenses attending his sickness being so great it took almost all he had, completely preventing him from completing the purchase of the land”<sup>31</sup>*

William's death is noted in George Rockliff's diary: “25 Aug 1874 Tues ....Old Mr Howard died today”. “28 Aug 1874 Fri....Aft[ernoon] All at Howard's funeral”.

William was 62 years old, and cause of death was given as dropsy. No headstone marks his resting place as there was no money to spare for an outward show of grief, nor is it certain where he was buried. A plan of the burial ground surrounding the old Methodist Church at Sassafras shows plots marked "Howard" and "Singleton", side by side, at the rear of the church.

Australia was indeed a “land where privation must be endured, and hard work encountered”.

For Ann who bore the brunt of all this misfortune (for she had to feed and clothe and comfort the family during these years of hardship) there were

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<sup>28</sup> Hobart Town Gazette: 01 Nov 1864 p1956.

<sup>29</sup> House of Assembly Journal: Paper No. 138 05 October 1888. Rents were often paid wholly or partially in kind.

<sup>30</sup> Sassafras: A History of its Settlement & People (1988): p36.

<sup>31</sup> House of Assembly Journal: Paper 138 05 October 1888.

twenty more years in this inhospitable land, 40 years all told. She lived to be 77, the mother of twelve children.

All of the surviving children excepting Frederick had married by the time their father died but each had or was to have his own difficulties. Charles would be widowed in 1883; Elizabeth who started out a little shakily bearing four children before marrying their father Peter Jupp, would have been reasonably comfortable; William had a young family and was battling great odds; Emily had her troubles at the beginning of her adult life; Martha had married a steady man, but had no children, and was able to adopt her motherless nephew Charles; Henry eventually had 12 children, but was just married, with one child, when his father died. Caroline was married with the first of 13 children, and Jane the youngest was 12 when her father died.

**THE CHILDREN  
OF  
WILLIAM  
&  
ANN  
HOWARD**

## **CHARLES HOWARD**

Birth: 25 Jul 1838 Workhouse, Haverhill, Suffolk, England  
Death: 11 Apr 1920 East Devonport  
Burial: 12 Apr 1920 Wesley Vale  
Occupation: Labourer (1878 1880); Farmer (1868 1869 1876)  
Residence: Pardoe (1868); Sassafras; Nook (1876); Formby (1880)  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

Spouse 1: ELIZABETH NIBBS  
Birth: 23 Nov 1847  
Christen: 15 Dec 1847 St Andrew's C.E., Westbury  
Death: 24 Jan 1883 Pardoe  
Occupation: Housekeeper (1868); Domestic Duties  
Residence: Pardoe; Sassafras; Nook; Formby; Torquay.  
Father: WILLIAM NIBBS (-1884)  
Mother: MARY ANN [Ann] TIMONEY [or TUMNEY] (~1828-1867)  
Marriage: 21 May 1868 Pardoe, house of Wm Nibbs, Methodist

Children: HARRIET (1868-)  
EDWARD (1869-)  
HENRY (1870-)  
GEORGE [or GEORGE EDWIN] (1872-1967)  
SARAH ANN (1876-1955)  
THOMAS (1878-1921)  
EMILY (1880-)  
CHARLES (1883-1966)

Spouse 2: MARY CONNORS  
Marriage: 19 Sep 1910 Latrobe

**C**harles Howard was born in mid-summer of the year 1838 in the Workhouse at Haverhill in Suffolk, England. His mother Ann Stigwood gave birth to her illegitimate son on 25 July. Three months later Ann married the man who was to become Charles's father by long association: but was he his natural father? There is quite a distance between Hockham and Wickhambrooke so it would be interesting to know how and where William and Ann met, and how they came to be married.

In the petition of 1888/89 when William Howard junior was applying for his father's forfeited land, he [William] is described as the eldest son! Is this a

correct assumption of the Justices of the Peace, and a family scandal come to light? There would of course be no reason why Charles should not be known as the elder William's step-son, especially if this was actually the truth, but he is referred to as William's son in the 1851 census for Hockham! Perhaps they did not feel the necessity to reveal Charles's lack of a parent; possibly they were telling the truth.

Charles must have felt "at home" in the family as he was 17 years old when he emigrated, certainly old enough to fend for himself at home if he felt any dissatisfaction as to his position in the family. One can only hope he was treated kindly.

For the first 13 years of his life in the colony nothing is known excepting his listing in the 1859 Valuation Roll for East Devon, an entry that soon disappeared. Probably he found employment as a farm labourer and worked on farms in the district, or joined a sawyer's gang and helped to clear the Sassafras forest. He became acquainted with the family of William Nibbs, the overseer of the Pardoe estate and on 21 May 1868 married William's daughter Elizabeth. None too soon either as Elizabeth was well and truly with child; a daughter Harriet being born at "Pardoe" on 15 August.

Three years of married life brought three children in quick succession: Harriet in 1868, Edward in 1869, and Henry in 1870.

Four more followed at lengthier intervals: two sons and two daughters.

There are many addresses for Charles and Elizabeth following their marriage: Pardoe, Forrabury, Nook, and even Formby. Torquay was also a possibility. In 1871 they were farming on the Castra Road in the Leven district but when Elizabeth was pregnant with what was to be her last child she was once more at home at Pardoe. Although this was her eighth confinement it proved fatal. Their son Charles was born on 07 January 1883 and Elizabeth died 17 days later aged 36 years. No cause beyond "childbirth" is given. The baby survived and was "adopted" by his childless aunt, Martha Rawson.

In 1900, when he was 62 (65 on the certificate), Charles married for a second time, a widow, Mary Connors. He gives his residence as Sassafras and states he had 8 children living and 3 deceased!

He died at the age of 83 at his residence at East Devonport and was buried at Wesley Vale.

## **ELIZABETH HOWARD**

Birth: 17 Nov 1839 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Christen: 2 Feb 1840 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Death: 5 May 1889 North Motton, Residence, Woodhall  
Burial: North Motton, Methodist Burial Ground  
Occupation: Spinster (1865); Farmer's wife (1889)  
Residence: Westbury; New Ground; Sassafras; Castra Road; North Motton  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca1819-1895)

Spouses: PETER JUPP  
Birth: abt 1830 Near Lewes, Sussex, England  
Death: 23 Apr 1896 North Motton, residence  
Burial: 26 Apr 1896 North Motton, Methodist Burial Ground  
Occupation: Labourer (1860) Farmer 1861 62 70 73 76 78 81  
Residence: New Ground 1860 1861 Sassafras 1862 66 73 76;  
Marriage: 23 Nov 1865 Torquay, house Rev J. Smithies,  
Wesleyan,

by Lic.

Children: HARRIET CATHERINE (1857-1925)  
SUSAN [or SUSANNA] (1860-1931)  
SARAH ANNE (1861-1927)  
EMMA ELLEN (1864-1938)  
PETER (1866-1954)  
ISABELLA [Bella] (1867-1941)  
MINNIE (1870-1881)  
WILLIAM JOSEPH (1872-1943)  
ELIZABETH LOUISA [Lizzie] (1874-1932)  
HENRY JAMES [Tom] (1876-1950)  
ALICE REBECCA (1878-1946)  
LILLIAN (1880-1972)

**E**lizabeth Howard was born in the late Autumn of 1839 (17 November): the first of six daughters. Her parents, William and Ann, were married at Hockham in October 1838 so for the finger counters there was to be no joy: no accusing finger could be directed Ann's way!

Elizabeth was born in the small village of Hockham, her father's birthplace, and baptised in the parish church in February of the following year.<sup>32</sup>

Almost 16 years old when she left England, Elizabeth had already had to work for the benefit of the family. Domestic service was the lot of this young woman as it was for many. No doubt it was a kind of slavery in which severe standards were set by the employer to be disregarded at one's peril, but in some circumstances, it must have represented security of sorts, regular meals, and clothing.

There are no records to indicate that Elizabeth went to Newry Mill with her parents and younger siblings. It is quite possible that she was employed on arrival to the colony as a domestic servant by a family in the Westbury district.

By November 1856 Elizabeth had met a young man named Peter Jubb or Jupp (they settled on the latter spelling eventually) with whom she became intimate, and perhaps she gave her family cause for concern (for even if Victorian morals hadn't been outraged, another mouth to feed must have been unwelcome) when her daughter Harriet Catherine was born at Westbury in 1857. As three more children were born between 1860 and 1864 it must be assumed that Peter and Elizabeth had set up house together without "benefit of clergy". Between them the children were given the surname Jubb, Jeppe, and Jepp, and later on Jupp.

The couple eventually got around to making everything respectable on 23 November 1865 when the Wesleyan minister married them in his house at Torquay [East Devonport]. Elizabeth was six months pregnant with her first son, Peter, who was born at New Ground in February 1866. In 1867 they were living in Kentishbury but from 1870 to 1878 they were at Sassafras, eventually moving to Castra Road [Sprent] by 1880.

While at Sassafras he was very lucky to avoid death when, with several others, he was riding in to Latrobe, when he met a chaise cart that turned suddenly to avoid a hole in the road and the point of the shaft struck his horse and killed it on the spot.<sup>33</sup>

In February of the same year, he and his children had a lucky escape when carting in grain. While unloading the dray alongside his stack, he found two snakes, that he despatched with great speed. His children were working on the stack at the time and had they not been noticed the consequences may have been serious.<sup>34</sup>

Peter Jupp came to the colony per the *Blenheim* in 1850, having been transported for 7 years for the crime of housebreaking and stealing a watch.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Hockham Parish Register: entry 509.

<sup>33</sup> Weekly Examiner: Saturday 5 January 1878 pg 6.

<sup>34</sup> Examiner: Saturday 23 February 1878 pg 3.

<sup>35</sup> Brighton Gazette Thursday 1 July 1847 pg 8: "Peter Jupp, aged 17, was indicted for having at Wivelsfield, on the 19<sup>th</sup> June, broken and entered the house of Thomas Beale, and stolen a watch and a

He was a farm labourer and ploughman short of stature being 5'4½" tall, with a pimpled sallow complexion, brown hair, hazel eyes, a long nose and chin and a large mouth.<sup>36</sup> He had his ticket of leave in 1852, lost it for a short time when he was absent from muster, and received a Certificate of Freedom on 19 July 1854.



**Photo (private collection): Members of the Jupp family at Woodhall.**

Thomas Hainsworth, writing about his experiences, speaks of his friend:

*Peter Jupp, was addicted to drink in 1872, and owed publicans and storekeepers more than his stock was worth. Within the month in which I write I have had a letter from his wife, saying Peter still keeps his pledge of abstinence from alcoholic drinks, and that she is thankful to God and grateful to me. Peter is now a freeholder, and would not accept £1000 for his interest in land and stock...<sup>37</sup>*

Elizabeth had her first child at the age of 17 and her last when she was 41 years of age, 12 children in all, 9 daughters and 3 sons. All except Minnie survived her. Elizabeth died at her residence, Woodhall, North Motton, from cancer, after a long and painful illness.

Peter Jupp senr died at Woodhall on 23 April 1896 at the age of 66.

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snuff-box belonging to Thomas Beale,—Mr Scott conducted the prosecution.—Seven years' transportation. Another source, *The Sussex Advertiser* 6 July 1847 pg 6 added to the list the theft of half-pound of cake. As he was connected with some very bad characters it was decided to sentence him to transportation.

<sup>36</sup> TAHO: CON33/1/95 image 146.

<sup>37</sup> *Examiner*: Tuesday 4 December 1883 pg 3

**EMILY HOWARD**

Birth: 21 Apr 1843 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Christen: 2 Jul 1843 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Death: 9 May 1906 Newtown, Hobart, Tasmania  
Occupation: Housemaid (1866)  
Residence: New Ground; Sassafras  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

## Spouses:

**PATRICK GARLAND**

Birth: abt 1827 County Monaghan, Ireland  
Death: 22 Apr 1904 Kimberley  
Occupation: Farmer (1872 76 78 1904)  
Residence: Sassafras (1872 76 78)  
Marriage: 19 Dec 1866 Torquay, Catholic, by Banns

## Children:

MICHAEL JOHN (~1860-1924)  
PATRICK (1860-1880)  
THERESA MARY (1867-1922)  
MARY MATILDA (1869-1957)  
FRANK (1871-1871)  
ANNE [or ANNIE MARY] (1872-1952)  
WILLIAM FRANCIS (1874-1943)  
ANGELINA (1876-1959)  
JOSEPH? [UNNAMED MALE] (1878-)  
THOMAS (1879-1947)  
EMILY ROSE (1882-1954)  
MARGARET LOUISA (1883-1951)

**E**mily was almost 12 years old when she arrived in Launceston in 1855, having been born at Hockham in April 1843.

In 1860, when she was 17 years old, she gave birth to her first child, a son Patrick: named after his father Patrick Garland. Here we have another somewhat irregular beginning to family life. Patrick and Emily did not marry until 1866 when they were married by the Catholic priest at Torquay, she a housemaid, he a carpenter.

Patrick Garland was transported to Van Diemen's Land by the ship *London* (2), arriving Hobart Town 19 March 1851. As a deserter from the 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment he committed highway robbery and was sentenced to 7 years

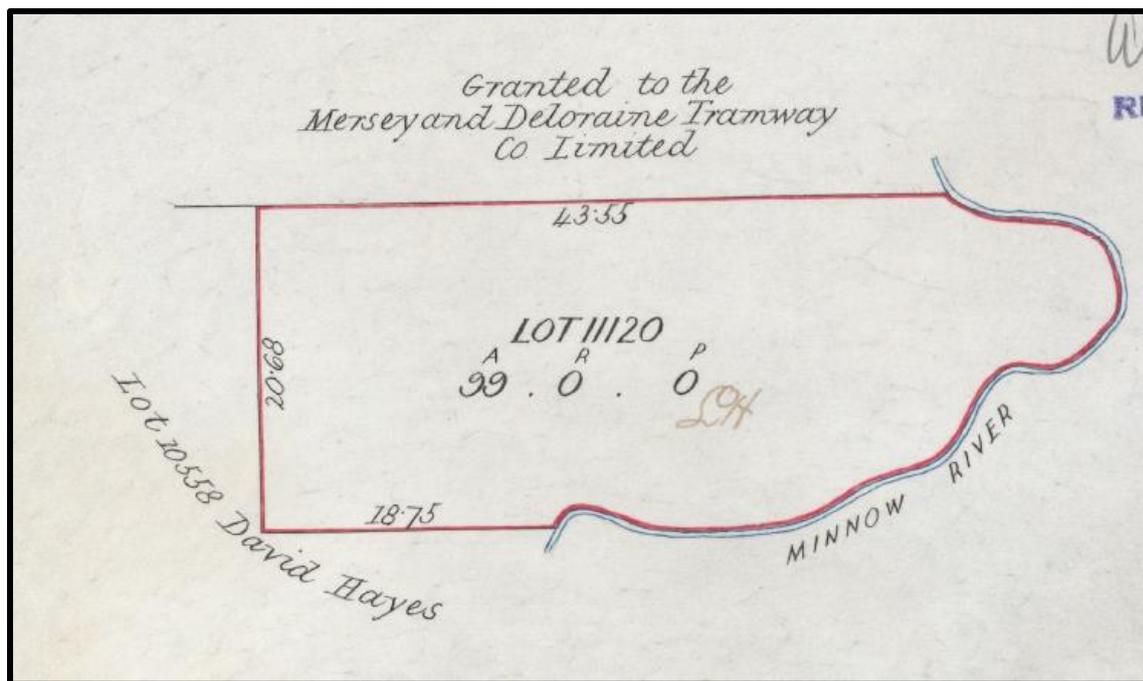
transportation. His occupation was given as mat maker. He received a conditional pardon 28 November 1854.<sup>38</sup>

There was a reason why they could not marry between 1864-1866 — Patrick had been accused of forging and uttering a cheque<sup>39</sup> and had been charged and found guilty and sentenced to two years imprisonment at Port Arthur. He was released in October 1866.<sup>40</sup> Why they couldn't marry prior to this I do not know. Perhaps there was a parental objection to either his religion or the age difference (15 or 16 years).

Their sons Michael and Joseph were born prior to 1865 although there was a failure to register the births.

After their marriage in 1866 the children arrived on the scene regularly, beginning with Theresa in 1867 and ending with Margaret in 1883. They had twelve children in all but one, Frank, died as an infant, and the eldest, Patrick, died when he was 20—drowned while swimming in a waterhole at Sassafras.

Emily and Peter lived at Sassafras for much of their married life. From 1874 onwards Patrick had a farm at Sunnyside whilst also farming the Sassafras property.



In February 1890 his purchase of 99 acres of land (Lot 11120) in the Parish of Roland for £104 15s. was registered.<sup>41</sup> This land with a frontage on the

<sup>38</sup> TAHO: CON33/1/101 image 104.

<sup>39</sup> Cornwall Chronicle: Wednesday 11 January 1865 pg 5.

<sup>40</sup> Report of Crimes (Police Gazette) : Friday 12 October 1866, Pg 153.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.thelist.tas.gov.au/> : Purchase Grant Volume 58 Folio 28.

Minnow River is between what is now Hubbards Road and Bridal Track Road on the Lower Beulah Road on the C159.

Today the area is rich in forestry plantations with a few old homesteads lingering along the extensive road. Which one, if any, might have been built by Patrick Garland I do not know, but I wonder why he went there, how he found his grant in the first place, and how he ever made a living. It would have been a cold and lonely place!

## **MARTHA HOWARD**

Birth: 9 Jun 1845 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Christen: 6 Jul 1845 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Death: 27 Jan 1932 Latrobe, residence  
Burial: 29 Jan 1932 Latrobe, General Cemetery [headstone]  
Occupation: Home duties  
Residence: Sassafras; Latrobe  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

### Spouses:

#### **JOSEPH DEACON RAWSON**

Birth: 26 Jan 1837 Chesterfield, Yorkshire, England  
Death: 14 Oct 1905 Latrobe  
Burial: 17 Oct 1905 Latrobe, General Cemetery [headstone]  
Occupation: Farmer  
Residence: Sassafras; Latrobe  
Marriage: 7 Jun 1866 Sassafras, Skelbrook, Wesleyan Chapel, by  
Lic.

No issue. Adopted Charles Howard.

**M**artha Howard was born at Hockham 09 June 1845 and migrated to Van Diemen's Land with her family in 1855. Eleven years later she married Joseph Deacon (sometimes Deakin) Rawson at Sassafras.<sup>42</sup> The couple were childless and "adopted" Martha's nephew Charles (son of Charles and Elizabeth) after having been married for 17 years.

Joseph Rawson was a careful and particular man and kept a "Ledger" of his financial state which is interspersed with references to his wife's family as well as his own.

The Ledger commences 18 September 1882. One of the early entries (13 May 1883) reads: "Received Charles Howard who was born on the 24th of January 1883".<sup>43</sup>

Charles was well cared for: there are numerous entries referring to the purchase of clothes and to his being sent to school.

Joseph Rawson also helped his brothers-in-law financially: he meticulously records loans and their prompt repayment: "28 June 1883 Sold 6 calves to

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<sup>42</sup> RGD: 07 June 1866 Wesleyan Chapel, Skelbrook.

<sup>43</sup> This is the date of Elizabeth Howard's death. Charles was registered as having been born on 7 January 1883.

Wm. Howard for the sum of £8.10.0”, which William paid back on 3 October. On the same day William had paid his brother-in-law £50 owing from a loan to purchase land plus £7 interest. Joseph advanced the sum of four guineas to William “on account of instalment on his land” 3 January 1888.

George Howard and his brother Henry (Charles’ motherless sons) lived for a time with their aunt and uncle and received 12/- each per week for their labour. So did their cousin Joseph Garland. In 1884 Edward, another of Charles’ sons came (16 June) to work for his uncle – “to receive 5/- per week wages” - one shirt 3/-, waistcoat 7/6, collars 10d. were purchased for him. In January 1885 his wage was increased to 6/- per week. In 1886 he was able to earn £1 per week during harvest at Nook.

The Rawsons’ moved into Latrobe on 4 July 1888 after James had sold his Sassafras farm to his nephew John Spurr for £1300.

From July 1889 the ledger becomes an account book, recording payments made. James is paying out for meat, groceries, butter, cheese, and bread, as well as the Codlin Moth Rate, a pair of boots for Charley at 7/- and his subscription to the Colonist newspaper. Income received comes from a variety of sources: rents, bank interest, gas company shares, and the sale of eggs (and later for apples and other fruit from his orchard).

In November 1889 is the first reference to ill health: “Bottle of Medicine 6/6” – the first indication of his diabetes?

The year 1890 saw 63 fruit trees planted out in his orchard (he was an enthusiastic orchardist, and for some years was a member of the Mersey Fruit Board) and 9/8 per quarter paid out for school fees – young Charley was growing up. Joseph owned a brick-yard which he rented out to Messrs Sheriff & Jarvis from 1889 and subscribed to the Devon Hospital Collection. In the early 1890s he owned shares in mining ventures – New Golden Gate, North Oceana, Silver King, New Pinafore, and Shepherd & Murphy.

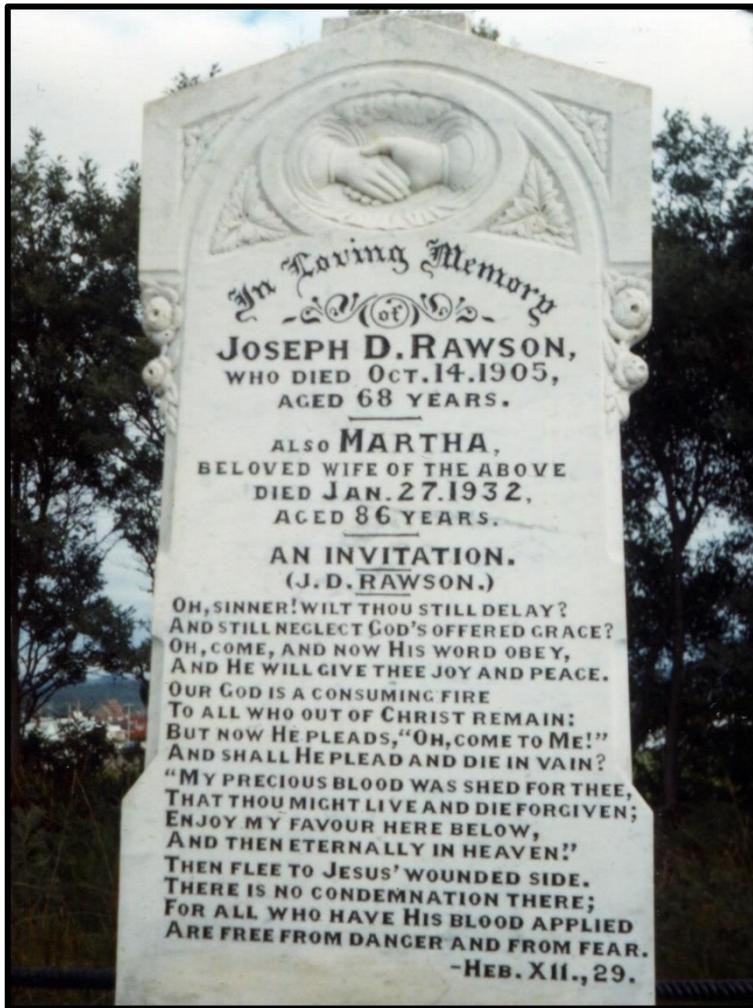
Charley’s school fees were an ongoing expense (7/6 per quarter to Mr Laws in 1893) and he had to be clothed (1891 a suit for Charles cost 19/-). Martha was not demanding - 1892 “dress for Martha etc. £1.8.6.” That year he bought a mare, Bell, from Mr Winspear for 10 guineas.

In October 1892 he was renting a house to William Aherne. (One of the Garland grand-nieces was to marry an Aherne) and the orchard was producing saleable fruit in 1893. This year also saw consistent monthly payments being made for the upkeep of his mother-in-law, Ann Howard: "29 May 1893 “paid C. Howard for mother 10/-". Caroline Nibbs received £1 to help her through hard times. Even so receipts exceeded expenditure in 1893: Expenses £153.17.5½. Receipts £246.6.8.

June 1894 saw the payments for Ann’s upkeep made to William. Alterations were made to the house - brickwork and plastering in November. A year later Joseph wrote: “10 Nov 1895 Wifes mother Ann Howard died”.

The year 1897 saw Charley receiving tuition from Mr Kippax. Joseph and Martha moved into a new house at the corner of Bradshaw and Last Street on 12 April 1900.

His brother-in-law, Henry Howard, received a loan of £500 in 1902. This was for a farm of 101 acres near Sprent. An entry on 1 October 1904 refers to the loan of £5.0.0 “until he gets returns from his horses”. This was repaid 11 April 1905.



Joseph Deacon Rawson died 14 October 1905. He was 68. Previous to this he had undergone a successful operation for gangrene in the leg,<sup>44</sup> the disease being so insidious that the leg had to be amputated. That night his condition was considered “most reassuring” but he died the next afternoon as a result of a paralytic stroke.<sup>45</sup>

He was a religious man, and was a member of the Church of Christ.

In his will<sup>46</sup> the income from £175 was given to his wife for her lifetime and on her death was

divided between his Shimmels nieces and John Spurr. The residue of his estate went to Martha absolutely.

On her death, Martha left a legacy of £50 to her niece Martha Smallbon and the residue of her estate to Charles Howard Rawson.<sup>47</sup> Martha continued to keep up the Ledger after Joseph’s death.

**Photo (Private collection): Rawson headstone, Latrobe Cemetery.**

<sup>44</sup> North West Post: Friday 13 October 1905 pg 2.

<sup>45</sup> Daily Telegraph: Tuesday 17 October 1905 pg 5.

<sup>46</sup> Will of Joseph Deakin Rawson: Book 16B, p439, No. 6801.

<sup>47</sup> Will of Martha Rawson: Book 38, P262, No. 18799.

		Expenditure		£	s	d
1910						
Jan	Expences going down the coast			5		
Feb 11	paid Atkinson & Scott Solicitors labour for Howards lease & my work	8	19			
	gave Charley 12/ for to mend gates		12			
March 1	gave Charley £3 Rent of paddock	3				
	paid Mr Riggins fire insurance	1	11			
April 8	gas bill 7/- dress made 10/ of gas bill 8/8	1	7			
	odments 2/ goods 3/10 paid for shale 2/	1	10			
	Children Coat	2	5			
	Income Tax				6	9
	I gave Charley one pound for manure	1				
	paid one pound to the Shale Company	1				
	paid Wells 16/10 for pipes for the garden	16	10			
May 23	gave Charley £1 out of seven I out him	1				
May 1	Paid Mr Keen for two closets	3	5			
	Charley had	3	10			
	wool 6/ Lade 13/9 fur £1-0-0	2	4			
June 24	2 Babys frocks 12/ Lade 6/		18			
30	rates £5-3-3 Charles rate 6/8	5	9			
July 8	gave Charley 12/ Childs Schür 7/		12			
	gas Bill 12/6 Lade 3/10 Wells 5/1	1	7			
	Sundres 2/10 bag Sugar 15/6		18			
	Boots for self 1/ gave Charley one pound	1	11			
	goods 5/ Babys baskets 6/ son's pay 2/6		13			
Sep 20	gave Charley £1-odments 5/ odments 5/ porter 4/	1	16			
Oct 5	gave Charley £1- lilly 2/ Paid the gas bill	1	18			
	Manure of goods 6/ Charley rate 1/2		16			
	Other rates 16/3 Babys baskets 6/	1	2			
Nov 23	Water rate £9-10 Sugar 14/ flannel 12 set 12/5	4	7			
Dec 13	Shale Call 10/- goods 7/ lilly & Charley £1-	1	17			

## **HENRY HOWARD**

Birth: 11 Jun 1848 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Christen: 6 Aug 1848 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Death: 12 Dec 1924 Latrobe, Devon Hospital  
Burial: 14 Dec 1924 Ulverstone [Headstone]  
Occupation: Labourer (1873 77); Farmer (1887 92) Gardener (1921)  
Residence: R. Don, Sassafra (77) Nook, Dulverton, Sheffield,  
Spreyton,  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

### Spouses:

MARY ANN COYLE

Birth: 20 Jun 1855 Middle Plains, Deloraine  
Christen: 8 Jul 1855 Westbury, Catholic  
Death: 26 Apr 1921 Residence Mrs J. Chilcott, Victoria St.,  
Ulverstone,  
Burial: 28 Apr 1921 Ulverstone [Headstone] [7th day Adventist]  
Occupation: Domestic Servant (1873); Home Duties  
Residence: R. Don, Sassafra, Nook, Dulverton, Sheffield, Spreyton,  
Father: WILLIAM COYLE  
Mother: ELLEN BEHAN  
Marriage: 16 Jun 1873 Latrobe, Wesleyan Parsonage

Children: FLORENCE ELIZABETH [Mary] (1874-1900)  
ELLEN SELINA [Helen Selina] (1877-1908)  
WILLIAM ARTHUR (1879-1946)  
BARTHOLOMEW [Bat] (1881-1959)  
JOHN JOSEPH [Joe] (1883-1955)  
ADA CAROLINE (1885-1903)  
ALICE ELIZABETH (1887-1923)  
EMMA ELIZABETH (1890-1955)  
ALBERT HENRY HAROLD (1892-1969)  
ELSIE LILLIAN (1894-1972)  
LINDA OLIVIA (1897-1975)  
HENRY MERVYN (1899-1986)

**B**orn and baptised in Hockham, Henry Howard was a seven-year-old when his family emigrated in 1855.

He married a young Catholic bred girl, Mary Ann Koyle, in 1873, under the Wesleyan banner. (Considering the family had all been baptised into the Anglican faith the Wesleyans had quite a good conversion rate with the family in the colony.)

Mary Ann, a month off 18 years when she married, had been born at Middle Plains, Westbury in 1855 and her father William Coyle [or sometimes Koyle] had died the following year. Her mother married a second time, a man named John Sweeney, and this explains the uncertainty her children experienced when they had to give their mother's maiden name when they married: sometimes she is Coyle or Koyle; at other times she is Sweeney. Henry and Mary Ann had twelve children between 1874 and 1899, all of whom survived childhood.

He purchased 50 acres of land in the Parish of Dumbleton, which was actually in the Nook district, in 1884, and one of his boundaries was the Don River.<sup>48</sup> There were, on the face of it, many moves in their married life prior to this date: they start out at River Don<sup>49</sup> in 1874; were at Nook in 1875; then Sassafras in 1877. Up until this date he is a labourer, and after that a farmer. By 1879 they are at the Nook again followed by Abbotsham and Dulverton, before returning to Nook in 1885. All of these addresses are probably the same place or close by. Their address is Sheffield between 1887 and 1890, followed again by Nook in 1892.

He sold his 50 acres in 1893 so Spreyton between 1894 and 1899 is probably a move. Eventually they settled at Central Castra.

In September 1902 his brother-in-law, Joseph Rawson, loaned Henry the sum of £500 (at 5% per annum) on a farm of 101 acres near Sprent for a period of seven years. This selection had been sold to Joseph Rawson by William Bonney by a deed dated October 1902 presumably as an investment. It was inherited by Martha in 1905 and in 1909 she extended Henry's lease by another nine years.<sup>50</sup> The property was named *Rockfield*, and was at Central Castra.

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<sup>48</sup> TheList: Purchase Grant Vol. XLII Folio 120. Lot 9321. Sold to Caroline Manley in 1893.

<sup>49</sup> Probably upstream in the back country, and not the township of that name at the mouth of the River.

<sup>50</sup> TheList: Certificate of Title Lot 11142 101 acres Parish of Castra Certificate of Title Vol. CXXX Folio 101

## **CAROLINE HOWARD**

Birth: 2 Jun 1852 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Christen: 6 Feb 1853 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Death: 21 Oct 1928 Marrawah, residence son-in-law, J. Gale  
Occupation: Farmer's daughter  
Residence: Sassafras, Castra Road, Duck River, Torquay, Marrawah  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

### Spouse:

**JOHN NIBBS**

Birth: 23 Mar 1849 Westbury  
Death: 9 Sep 1894 Duck River.  
Occupation: Sawyer 1887 1891 Mill Sawyer 1894  
Residence: Sassafras, Castra Road, Duck River, Torquay, Stanley  
Father: WILLIAM NIBBS (-1884)  
Mother: MARY ANN [Ann] TIMONEY [or TUMNEY] (~1828-1867)  
Marriage: 22 Aug 1872 Latrobe, Wesleyan Parsonage

### Children:

JOHN WILLIAM (1873-)  
MARY ANN (1874-1949)  
FRANCIS JOB [Frank] (1876-1949)  
JOHN HENRY (1878-1960)  
SUSANNAH [Susie And Susan] (1880-1920)  
EMILY ALICE (1882-1969)  
FLORA MATILDA CAROLINE (1884-1956)  
MARTHA JANE (1886-1887)  
SARAH (1888-1889)  
WILLIAM CLAUDE (1889-1955)  
ELLEN MAUD [ELLA MAUDE] (1891-1970)  
HESTER ISABEL (1892-1975)

Caroline arrived in the colony as a three-year old. No doubt the voyage was fraught with danger for one so young, for most small children are oblivious of the dangers surrounding them and the long sea voyage would have been particularly so.

Like her siblings she was born in Hockham (02 June 1852) and baptised in the same parish church.

In 1868 Caroline's brother Charles had married Elizabeth Nibbs: four years later, on 22 August 1872, Caroline married Elizabeth's younger brother John Nibbs. The couple were married by the Wesleyan minister, at his residence in Latrobe, with a friend, John Hickey, as a witness, together with Caroline's married sister, Emily Garland.

John and Caroline had a large family —12 children—although two of their eight daughters died as infants. Their eldest child, a son, John William was born in 1873 at Skelbrook. Mary Ann was born at the Don in 1874, and then there was a seven-year period when they went to live at Castra Road [Sprent] where John worked at the local sawmill as a sawyer.

By 1886 they had moved to Duck River [Smithton] where John continued as a Mill Sawyer until his death from "exhaustion, the result of Malignant disease" [probably a cancer] in 1894, aged 45 years. His youngest child was less than two years old.

*The Late Mr. Nibbs— Our Duck River correspondent writes :— The funeral of the late John Nibbs took place on Tuesday last. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather about 100 people followed the mortal remains to its last resting place. The burial service was conducted by Mr. J. Malle, of Duck River, who in a few well chosen and appropriate words made an earnest appeal to those present to prepare for that change which must sooner or later take place to all. Seldom has a more impressive scene been witnessed than that around the open grave of John Nibbs, so overwhelmed with genuine grief were the bereaved ones as to cause feelings akin to those suggested by those beautiful lines— "Better to weep with those who weep, And share the afflicted's smart, Than mix with fools in giddy joys, That cheat and wound the heart." 51*

Caroline was left with the care of four children under 10 years, and two daughters not yet of marriageable age. Three unmarried sons were capable of caring for their parent and younger siblings if there were jobs available in the district. The Bank of Van Diemen's Land had failed in August 1891 causing widespread hardship throughout the colony and things were no better in the other Australian colonies.

Caroline was a widow for 34 years:

*There passed away at Marrawah on Sunday, October 21, after a week's ill illness with pleurisy, a well known old resident of Circular Head in Mrs Caroline Nibbs Sr. She was 77 years of age and was born in England, coming out with her parents to Tasmania when she was only four years old. For the past forty years she had resided in this municipality, the great part of the time at Smithton, where she was much liked for*

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<sup>51</sup> Wellington Times and Agricultural and Mining Gazette: Tuesday 18 September 1894, page 2

*her kindly disposition. She lived the kind of life that for long remains a memory. During recent years she suffered from rheumatic complaints, but apart from this she did not know what it was to suffer an illness throughout her long life. Her descendants include over thirty grand-children and five great-grandchildren. Of the surviving children Will, the eldest son is in Adelaide, Jack in Melbourne and Mrs. A Powe at Riana. The others, Tom and Frank and Mesdames W Boote, J. Gale, G. Hall and W. Innes, reside in Circular Head. The body was brought to Smithton for interment, and a large cortege left the residence of Mrs G. Hall on Tuesday afternoon for the Scotchtown cemetery where the last rites were performed by Messrs J. Arnold of Marrawah and Rob. Kay Jr of West Forest, Christian Brethren. The pall bearers were Messrs. J. Arnold, R. Kay Jr, D. Lovegrove and Jas Bentley Sr.<sup>52</sup>*

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<sup>52</sup> Circular Head Chronicle: Wednesday 31 October 1928, page 2

## **FREDERICK HOWARD**

Birth: 4 Feb 1856 Newry Mills, Longford  
Christen: 5 Dec 1858 Latrobe, C.E.  
Death: 11 Dec 1931 Latrobe  
Burial: 14 Dec 1931 Latrobe  
Occupation: Farmer; Labourer  
Residence: Reid's Mill, Castra Road, 1884; Trowutta & Ridgley  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

Spouses: MARY ANN SINGLETON  
Birth: 17 Dec 1855 North Down  
Christen: 24 Feb 1858 Latrobe, C.E.  
Death: 11 May 1884 Castra Road  
Occupation: Daughter of a farmer  
Residence: North Down; Sassafra; Nook; Spreyton; Castra Road  
Father: WILLIAM SINGLETON (~1811-1896)  
Mother: ELIZA BRIEN [or BRYAN] (~1824-1890)  
Marriage: 18 Dec 1876 Sassafra, Skelbrook, C.E., by Lic.

Children: JAMES (1877-1955)  
MARY ANN (1879-1949)  
MARTHA (1881-1952)  
MARIA (1883-1940)

**F**rederick Howard was the first of his line to be born in Tasmania. His father William Howard was working at Newry Mills, Longford.

Frederick was born in the summer of 1856<sup>53</sup> probably in a workman's cottage close by the Mill and only a few miles from the long-established town of Longford set in the centre of a district known as Norfolk Plains after the Norfolk Island settlers who were repatriated to Van Diemen's Land in 1808. But this neat little town was to have little bearing on his early life as Frederick and his siblings had removed to the Port Sorell district by December 1858.

With all the family effort being put into eking out an existence on their land at Sassafra there was little time for the education of the younger children even if the opportunity had existed. Frederick never had the advantage of being taught to read and write, or at least he never learnt to write. His parents were illiterate and his elder siblings were only able to read.

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<sup>53</sup> Frederick was born 04 February 1856.

At the age of 20 Frederick took a bride: a young woman slightly older than himself, illiterate like her husband. The couple were married in Mr Henry Rockliff's private chapel at Skelbrook, Sassafras on 18 December 1876. Henry Rockliff who had long known the family signed the register as a witness along with brothers-in-law James Singleton and Patrick Garland. Frederick had married Mary Ann Singleton who was a younger sister of Catherine, his brother William's wife. Mary Ann had been born at North Down in 1855, the daughter of William Singleton and Eliza nee Bryan. Frederick and Mary Ann did not stay with their families at Sassafras but moved to a farm at the Nook where their three eldest children James, Mary Ann, and Martha were born between 1877 and 1881.

Early splitters are credited with naming the place which is walled in by hills on every side. The district consists of a long valley lying directly under the range of hills known locally as the Badgers, although its real boundaries are these hills on one side and the Don River on the other. When the first settlers went there every embryo farm was covered with dense scrub and heavy timber,<sup>54</sup> and probably little had changed when Frederick first took his bride there. There were no roads and the settlers had to make their own tracks through to Latrobe.

Making a living was a heart-breaking business: clearing enough land to plant a crop and bring it to harvest was back-breaking; getting the crop to market was a nightmare.

The track to Latrobe was only the width of a dray and the scrub so dense that the driver could not walk alongside his team: the return journey taking near 24 hours.<sup>55</sup>

Frederick and his ailing wife had moved to Spreyton by 1883 when their youngest child, Maria, was born there in February.

A brother-in-law, John Nibbs, had left the district and settled at Castra Road by 1876 and Frederick joined him there at Reid Bros. sawmill by early 1884. A week after the baptism<sup>56</sup> of the baby, Maria, phthisis, a consumptive disease, carried off Mary Ann, leaving her husband with four young children, the eldest aged six, the youngest 15 months, to provide for.

Frederick's obituary<sup>57</sup> states that he lived in the Sassafras district for about 65 years, moving to Ridgley and then Trowutta (where his son James lived). This does not take into account a short time at Castra Road.

Probably he returned to his home district after Mary Ann's death and resumed farming, only leaving when old age or infirmity prevented him from looking after himself, or that around the year 1923 he joined his only son in a new venture.

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<sup>54</sup> North West Post 23 July 1909.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> C.E. Baptism Register: baptism of Maria Howard 04 May 1884.

<sup>57</sup> Advocate: 15 December 1931, p2.

Frederick did not re-marry and lived to be 75 years of age, dying on 11 December 1931. It is hard to imagine that a 28-year-old man should remain celebrate for the rest of his life or be able to care for four small children in an adequate way without female help (remembering that this is 1884 not 1994). However, no records have come to light to prove otherwise. It is possible that the baby Maria could have been cared for by her mother's childless [?] sister-in-law Margaret Singleton. My only reason for suggesting this is that Maria gave her address as Spreyton when she married Christopher Fox in 1898, and that Margaret Singleton died at South Spreyton in 1903.

Frederick, of course, had a widowed mother to be taken care of by this time and it may be that Ann took on the added responsibility of caring for her motherless grandchildren, as she may have done for Charles' children when their mother died. Charles was receiving money for her upkeep from Joseph Rawson in 1893.

Frederick's obituary goes on to state: "Mr Howard was a noted horseman in his early days, and was well-known as a schooler of young horses to the saddle. He was very competent as a farmer, having a thorough knowledge of the land."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Advocate: Tuesday 15 December 1931 p 2

## **JANE HOWARD**

Birth: 2 Mar 1861 New Ground  
Christen: 19 Aug 1862 Port Sorell Parish, C.E.  
Death: 4 Nov 1922 Launceston, Invalid Home, Mulgrave Street  
Burial: 6 Nov 1922 Launceston, Carr Villa Cemetery  
Occupation: Domestic Duties  
Residence: Fossil Bank; Sassafras; Railton; Forth; Latrobe; Launceston  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

### Spouse:

**JOHN THOMAS BROWN**

Birth: 15 Oct 1852 Westbury  
Death: 26 Nov 1924 Residence of son-in-law Wm Hadley  
Selbourne  
Burial: 28 Nov 1924 Carr Villa Cemetery, Launceston  
Occupation: Dairyman (1884) Labourer (1884 1885) Farmer (1887 89  
1901)  
Residence: Westbury; Sassafras; Railton; Forth; Latrobe; Selbourne  
Father: JOHN BROWN (-1872)  
Mother: CATHERINE [Kitty] BEST (-1874)  
Marriage: 11 Jan 1877 Wesleyan Parsonage, Latrobe

### Children:

JOHN (1877-1911)  
JAMES (1879-1955)  
MARTHA (1881-1951)  
ALFRED (1883-1885)  
GEORGE EDWARD (1885-)  
EMILY (1887-)  
HENRY (~1887-1889)  
ARTHUR (1889-1956)  
ALICE (1891-1962)  
HENRY (1893-1971)  
GRACE (1895-1896)  
ADA (1897-1968)  
SARAH (1901-)

Jane Howard was the youngest of William and Ann's children, and the third to be born in Tasmania. She was born at Newground in 1861.

At the age of 15 she married a young farmer (he was 24), John Thomas Brown, at the Wesleyan Parsonage at Latrobe in January 1877 and their first child, John, was born in October of the same year.

The Brown's lived and farmed in the Sassafras district for most of their married life although Martha and Alfred Brown were born at Railton and River Forth respectively during the early years of the marriage.

John Thomas Brown's maternal ancestors the Best's are credited with bringing Southdown sheep to Tasmania for the Cressy Company. He was one of 12 or 13 children, and his sister Jane married James Singleton, who was a brother of Catherine and Mary Ann, the wives of William and Frederick Howard.

Two of his children died as infants and the rest survived to adulthood but their lives remain elusive.

Jane's sister Martha Rawson mentions her twice in the Ledger which she kept up after her husband's death: once in February 1916 and once in October 1917 when she made a gift of money to her sister.

Despite the dearth of knowledge about Jane it was she who provided a clue to Ann Howard's ancestry. Ann was living at Fossil Bank in 1877 when Jane married. Being under age her parent's permission was required and a note giving this permission survives amongst the records of marriage in the register book of the Wesleyan Methodists. It is signed "Sarah Ann" Howard. At first glimpse I thought that Ann's daughter Sarah Ann had written the note on behalf of her mother (who is allegedly illiterate) and had signed her own name by mistake. This was before I concluded that Sarah Ann had died in infancy.

When searching for Ann's baptism in Wickhambrooke parish registers the only entry that could relate to her was the baptism of a Sarah Ann Stigwood. This letter is the only time I have found her using her full name!

## **WILLIAM HOWARD**

Birth: 11 Jul 1841 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Christen: 3 Oct 1841 Hockham, Norfolk, England  
Death: 24 Feb 1929 South Road, Ulverstone, Tasmania  
Burial: 26 Feb 1929 Ulverstone, Tasmania  
Occupation: Farmer (1867)  
Residence: England; Longford; Sassafras; Nook; South Road  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1812-1874)  
Mother: SARAH ANN [ANN] STIGWOOD (ca 1819-1895)

### Spouses:

CATHERINE [Kate] SINGLETON

Birth: 2 Apr 1850 Launceston  
Christen: 16 Jun 1850 Launceston, St Joseph's, R.C.  
Death: 17 Apr 1928 Ulverstone  
Burial: 19 Apr 1928 Ulverstone [Headstone]  
Occupation: Spinster (1867); Home Duties  
Residence: Launceston; Sassafras; Nook; South Road  
Father: WILLIAM SINGLETON (~1811-1896)  
Mother: ELIZA BRIEN [or BRYAN] (~1824-1890)  
Marriage: 13 Jun 1867 Forrabury, Skelbrook Chapel, Wesleyan

Children: WILLIAM HENRY (1868-1869)  
JOHN JOSEPH (1870-1871)  
GEORGE EDWARD (1871-1951)  
WILLIAM FREDERICK (1874-1962)  
CHARLES EDWARD [CHARLES PETER] (1876-1931)  
ELIZA JANE [or ELIZA ANN?] (1879-1963)  
JAMES ISAAC (1882-1966)  
ARTHUR ALBERT (1885-1975)  
DAVID (1887-1961)  
JOSEPH (1890-1953)

**A**lthough Great-grandfather William Howard was born in mid-summer of 1841 (11 July 1841) I have chosen to deal with him last. Like his younger siblings he too was born in the village of Hockham.

In his book "Norfolk", the author Arthur Mee dismisses Great Hockham as a former market town which "had cottages with thatched and pantiled roofs about its green (for long called Market Hill) and a church hiding in the trees



of the park round the 18th century house". The church where our William was baptised is described in more detail! Dating from the 14th century its tower fell down early in the 18th century and was replaced by a bellcote in 1854: the construction of which may have interested a youngster such as William. Perhaps the family may have attended Sunday services regularly (although their leanings appear to have been more towards the non-conformist faiths). "The view from the fine east window, with its reticulated tracery, is framed by the soaring chancel arch, which has a squint<sup>59</sup> at each side.

### **Baptismal Font, Hockham Church.**

The font<sup>60</sup> is carved with simple window tracery, and a double angle piscina in the chancel has trefoiled arches on pillars and a gable with pinnacles...<sup>61</sup> In the chancel are some 17th century Bacon memorials and over the arch some important wall paintings [restored in 1953]".

At the time the census was taken in 1851 the parish, which included "the village of Great Hockham, Woodcock Hall, Cranny, the Rectory, Hockham Lodge, Fann House and cottages called Little Hockham, Bambridge, the Hall etc etc,"<sup>62</sup> had a population 690.

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<sup>59</sup> A squint is an oblique opening through wall of church, affording view of altar.

<sup>60</sup> Holy Trinity church in Great Hockham-C14 font. Cc-by-sa/2.0-© Evelyn Simak [geograph.org.uk/p/2025025](http://geograph.org.uk/p/2025025).

<sup>61</sup> Norfolk: by Arthur Mee.

<sup>62</sup> Census of Hockham, Norfolk, 1851.

Life revolved around agriculture and we find a preponderance of Agricultural Labourers (108), shepherds (5), shepherd's pages (3), Farm boys, Farmyard men, team men (4), a farming bailiff, a Husbandman (William's father), seven farmers employing men and a land agent and farmer employing 14 men, 3 boys, and 2 girls.

There was a schoolmaster and mistress and one school assistant and 74 scholars! Some men had a trade such as blacksmith, wheelwright, or butcher which they combined with farming. The village had a vicar and a Superintendent of Police, a post office and an ale house. There was a tailor, grocer and draper, grocer and baker, saddler, brickmaker, dressmaker, laundress, boot and shoemaker – all with their attendant apprentices and journeymen. In fact, everyone excepting a sailor and an Indian chief (and of course no-one owned up to being a thief). Justice was dispensed by Henry Partridge Esq.,<sup>63</sup> who lived at the Hall with his wife and seven servants. Nine parishioners were paupers, including young William's widowed grandmother, Mary Howard.

William's sisters, Elizabeth and Emily, were amongst the list of scholars and as a nine-year-old William was almost certainly one too although the census is vague on this point.

As the distinction between husbandman (as William senior was once described) and Agricultural labourer would have been hard to maintain in real life we can assume that young William's schooling would have been of short duration and most likely he would have started out, as many like him have done, scaring crows from the newly sown corn (if such farming activities occurred at Hockham.)<sup>64</sup> This was a long and a lonely job for a young child, out in the fields in all weather, with only the mournful call of the birds and his wooden clapper to break the silence, and little warm clothing to keep out the cold.

*"At 12 a young boy would be eligible for regular employment and to learn the work of a man: the management of horses, the ploughing of a straight furrow, the mowing of wheat and the thatching of hay ricks. The agricultural labourer's day was regulated by the rising and setting of the sun. Long hours in summer, shorter in winter. It was also affected by the employment system. Men who tended animals were usually hired by the year at the annual hiring fairs, all others by the day or the task. It meant that though people didn't move far, they moved quite frequently. Rarely did the labouring poor stay in one parish through several generations as did their more affluent employers who had farms to inherit." 65*

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<sup>63</sup> Strangely Henry Partridge Esq. had a connection with Tasmania in that his daughter Charlotte was the wife of Jocelyn H.C. Thomas of North Down.

<sup>64</sup> Portrait of Norfolk: Much of Breckland which included the parish of Hockham was heathland and sandy waste "with scrubby trees and abundant rabbits."

<sup>65</sup> The Norfolk Ancestor Vol 6 pt 5 December 1991, pp 149-151: The Life of an Agricultural Labourer in the 19th Century, by Rosalie West.

So as the son of a labouring couple young William's childhood would have been neither carefree nor long. Certainly there was hardly time for any schooling as he was working in the fields by the time he was 13.<sup>66</sup> It seems likely that he, as well as his siblings, received some instruction on the long voyage out to Van Diemen's Land, as late in his life when he lived on the South Road he had the mail contract<sup>67</sup> and would have needed to be able to write as well as read; certainly the voyage would have been some respite from the hardships previously endured and for those soon to be.

As one of the elder sons William was responsible for the survival of his family when his father was critically injured from the fall that preceded his death 1874. But the younger William already had family responsibilities of his own.

William was married under the Wesleyan banner at Henry Rockliff's inter-denominational chapel on the Skelbrook property at Sassafras on 13 June 1867 at the age of 25. His wife Catherine Singleton, was the daughter of a sawyer, William Singleton. Both families then lived in the Sassafras district and their menfolk worked from time to time on the Rockliff property,<sup>68</sup> obviously forming a friendship as each family provided a spouse for the other.

The first address for William and Catherine is Deep Creek (present day Parramatta Creek) in the summer of 1868 when their first child was born. This little boy, William Henry, did not thrive and died four months later. From that time until August 1874 the address is simply Sassafras. John Joseph their second child died of a tooth fever when only a year old in 1871. From then on, the family thrived with seven sons and a daughter surviving to adulthood.

Physically Norfolk consists of "a broad wedge of gently undulating country which nowhere attains a height of 350 ft"<sup>69</sup> and is bounded by flat alluvial marshy land to the east – the 'Broads' and to the west – the 'Fens', and although it is not devoid of wooded areas, it has been settled from Neolithic times and so the transition from Norfolk to Sassafras must have been daunting with the dense eucalypt and ti-tree forest to be cleared before farming could begin. There were new skills to be learned.

Not only was the work hard: a man's living could be jeopardised by the loss of his working tools. As you would expect in an erstwhile penal colony thieves abounded (you only have to read the pages of the Police Gazette) and William was a victim when his sawyers tools – cross cut saw (6'6" long),

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<sup>66</sup> Passenger list "Whirlwind" 1855.

<sup>67</sup> Advocate Monday 28 July 1919 pg 2: In July 1919 a new Post Office was to be set up at the School, and William was to carry the mail from Ulverstone on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays. Travelling between Ulverstone and South Road from 11.45 a.m. when he picked up the mail and left Ulverstone to return at 2 o'clock.

<sup>68</sup> Diary of George Rockliff.

<sup>69</sup> The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Norfolk.

stiff plate, and American axe (old) were stolen one night in September 1872.<sup>70</sup>

From 1876 to 1882 the family farmed at the Nook. Charles, Eliza (their only daughter), and James were born during this period. The move to Nook may have involved William's brothers, Henry and Frederick as well, as they both farmed there around the same time and they all quit the district about the same time.

In August 1883 William selected for purchase the two blocks of land that his father had struggled to buy in 1864.<sup>71</sup> and had managed to pay off £79.11.8 in fees and instalments by 1888. In his own words:

"I have laboured long and hard on the said land, which is of an inferior quality and am now, like my father when he defaulted, in straitened circumstances, and unable to pay the accumulating instalments."

*His neighbours John and Henry Rockliff and George Ingram, (JsP) spoke on his behalf: "He is an honest and industrious man, has a wife and large family, and keeps his widowed mother....[we] believe that he is the proper representative of his father's family to receive any consideration... of the moneys paid by his father for the land he now occupies."*<sup>72</sup>

William's petition to the Parliament was granted and he received the benefit of the £129.0.0 paid previously by his father.

Grandfather (Arthur Albert) was born back at Sassafras in 1885, followed by his brothers David and Joseph. Schooling for the children was available, at least at Sassafras where a school was opened in 1871.

William had moved to South Road, west of Ulverstone where he had a Latrobe in 1906. He bought an allotment from his brother-in-law John Singleton and had a cottage built in the same year.<sup>73</sup>

His grand-daughter Pearl remembers him only as an old man with a long white beard sitting in his chair by the fire. Her uncles Charlie and Joe lived

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<sup>70</sup> Crime Report: 20 September 1872, p154.

<sup>71</sup> Journals and Papers of the Parliament of Tasmania: 05 October 1888, Paper 138.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> North West Post: 27 March 1906.



at home with their parents. Neither of these uncles married: Joe, the youngest, was crippled by rheumatism.

William died after a long and arduous life, at the age of 87 years,<sup>74</sup> at the cottage on South Road, on 24 February 1929. Catherine had died the previous April, at the age of 78 years.

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<sup>74</sup> Born in 1841, William was 87 years of age when he died, not 90 as appears on his death certificate, nor as is cited in his obituary, published in the Advocate 28 February 1929.

# A Gaggle of Girls

Arthur & Florrie Howard  
At South Road & Nietta



**ARTHUR ALBERT HOWARD**

Birth: 6 Feb 1885      Sassafras  
Death: 19 Apr 1975      Latrobe, Devon House  
Burial: 22 Apr 1975      Ulverstone, Church of Christ [Headstone]  
Occupation: Farmer (1909) Labourer (1914 1916) Farmer  
Residence: Sassafras; South Road, Ulverstone (1909) Nietta; East Devonport  
Father: WILLIAM HOWARD (1841-1929)  
Mother: CATHERINE [Kate] SINGLETON (1850-1928)

**Spouse:****FLORENCE MAUDE BURT**

Birth: 5 Mar 1889      Gawler  
Christen: 2 Mar 1890      Ulverstone, C.E.  
Death: 8 Nov 1966      Lachlan Park Hospital, New Norfolk  
Burial: 10 Nov 1966      Ulverstone, Church of Christ [Headstone]  
Occupation: Home Duties (1909)  
Residence: Ulverstone (1909); South Road, Nietta; East Devonport  
Father: HENRY BURT (1814-1895)  
Mother: MARY ANN HETHERINGTON (~1852-1931)  
Marriage: 24 Mar 1909      Ulverstone, Holy Trinity, C.E., by Lic.

**Children:**

RUBY FLORENCE (1909-1981)  
RITA MAY (1910-1994)  
DORIS (1912-1997)  
SYLVIA (1914-1988)  
PEARL (1916-2004)  
MAVIS (1919-1978)

**A**rthur was the fifth surviving son of William and Catherine Howard and was born at Sassafras in 1885. He had moved to South Road with his parents and probably worked for his father until his marriage to Florence Burt in 1909.

On Wednesday 24 March 1909, attired in his best suit, his hair carefully combed and oiled, his moustache neatly clipped, and boots polished, Arthur posed in front of Mr G.P. Taylor's camera for the nuptial photograph. Seated on a cane chair beside a matching cane table with a potted indoor plant; the groom looks quite handsome.

The bride who is younger than her husband (she is 19, he is 24) is dressed in white. The skirt of her dress has 12 rows of pintucking; the sleeves are full and also have pintucking above the elbow but are narrow and tight-fitting from elbow to wrist. She wears a bodice with a pretty, high-necked frilled collar, also pintucked. A long, fringed belt is tied in a large bow at her waist and she holds a fashionably large bouquet of flowers which includes daisies and Asparagus fern and a variety of other flowers (some possibly Dahlias) and foliage. Her bridal veil is embellished with a fine soft border of herringbone stitch and the corner motif could be a gum blossom.



The veil is held in place by a coronet of wax orange blossoms.<sup>75</sup> She stands beside her seated husband the very picture of a demure, submissive, Edwardian wife.

Florence was attended by her younger sister Ruby Burt and her niece Ivy Biddle Napier.

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<sup>75</sup> The wreath of orange blossom and the groom's buttonhole still survive but the veil is, sadly, very fragile.

The groom was supported by his brother Fred<sup>76</sup> and his bride's brother-in-law, Logan Napier. It seems to be a very respectable scene!

They were married in the small, timber-clad, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, at Ulverstone (the precursor of the brick-built church which now replaces it), and no doubt the little church would have been decorated with flowers and greenery by the bride's friends as was the fashion. No doubt they were attended by family and friends and it was a joyous day. What a pity The North West Post didn't publish a "Wedding Blossom" paragraph or two.

I don't imagine there was money to waste on a honeymoon for there was a



**Family group: Florence (standing) with her baby daughter, Ruby, together with her mother (left) and her half-sister Mary, Mrs Gillard (right) and her three children.**

house to build and furnish, a farm to buy, and six little girls would make their way into the world in time; two World Wars and the worst economic depression in living memory were not yet looming but would affect their lives in due course.

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<sup>76</sup> William Frederick Howard (1874-1962).

Arthur and Florrie lived at South Road, Ulverstone, just "over the road" from the small South Road school which was next door to William and Catherine's cottage, and a steady stream of small Howard girls attended from 1915 onwards when six year old Ruby was the first of the family to be enrolled.<sup>77</sup> Older Singleton cousins (Allan, Muriel, and Roy) had gone before as had their cousin May Gillard who was for a time in the care of her Uncle Arthur. Rita, Doris, Sylvie, and Pearl followed Ruby to school.

#### ***SOUTH ROAD DISTRICT***

*"This district is situated between the towns of Penguin and Ulverstone, and includes the fertile strip of country between the Dial Range and the Leven River, up as far as what is known as Deep Creek. It commences about a mile back from the sea coast. Rightly belonging to Penguin, the boundary commissioners in their alleged wisdom gave to Ulverstone some of its most valuable properties. Although situated only 2½ miles from Penguin, still the district is practically isolated from that centre by its awful road, much of which is still in a state of nature.... Mr Bishop, after whom the well known Bishop's landing is named, was about the first settler on this road, and together with a Mr Parsons (now dead) was the pioneer of the district, about 51 or 52 years ago. Mr Bishop cut a track through past Penguin, but which followed Myrtle Creek and kept more on the side of the hill than the present road does. After leaving Ulverstone boundary for at least two miles little first class land is seen, and this undoubtedly has given a wrong impression to many visitors to the district. This land, nevertheless, possesses excellent fruit growing qualities, as will be seen by the orchards on the side of the roads, and after lying dormant for many years, much of it is now taken up and is being scrubbed and grassed. After passing through the short stretch of bush land, some splendid farms are to be noticed, those owned by Messrs Medwin, Singleton, Hutton, and Rockliffe being worthy of special mention. These properties give evidence of careful and systematic farming, and even in this year of small yields, crops of six to nine tons of potatoes per acre are being dug. The soil is mostly a rich chocolate, and near the creek a deep black. Just before reaching the properties named, a road branches off to the left. This leads to what is known as Allison and Leven river settlement ... continuing along the main road south, one soon notices a little church, a building which during the last few days has figured very much in print. The people want a State school established here, but the Director says no, and as his word is apparently law, so it must remain. The writer counted 23 children of school age who are not attending any school at all, and the parents are much exercised in mind how they are to be educated... Passing Mr Hutton's property, the good road is left behind, and one has to flounder through mud and slush and blackberries, and occasionally tread on an old corduroy, which sends a shower of mud and water over the unfortunate traveller. The holdings hereabouts, are small, but well cultivated, and have comfortable houses on them, but the blackberry pest is very much in evidence..."<sup>78</sup>*

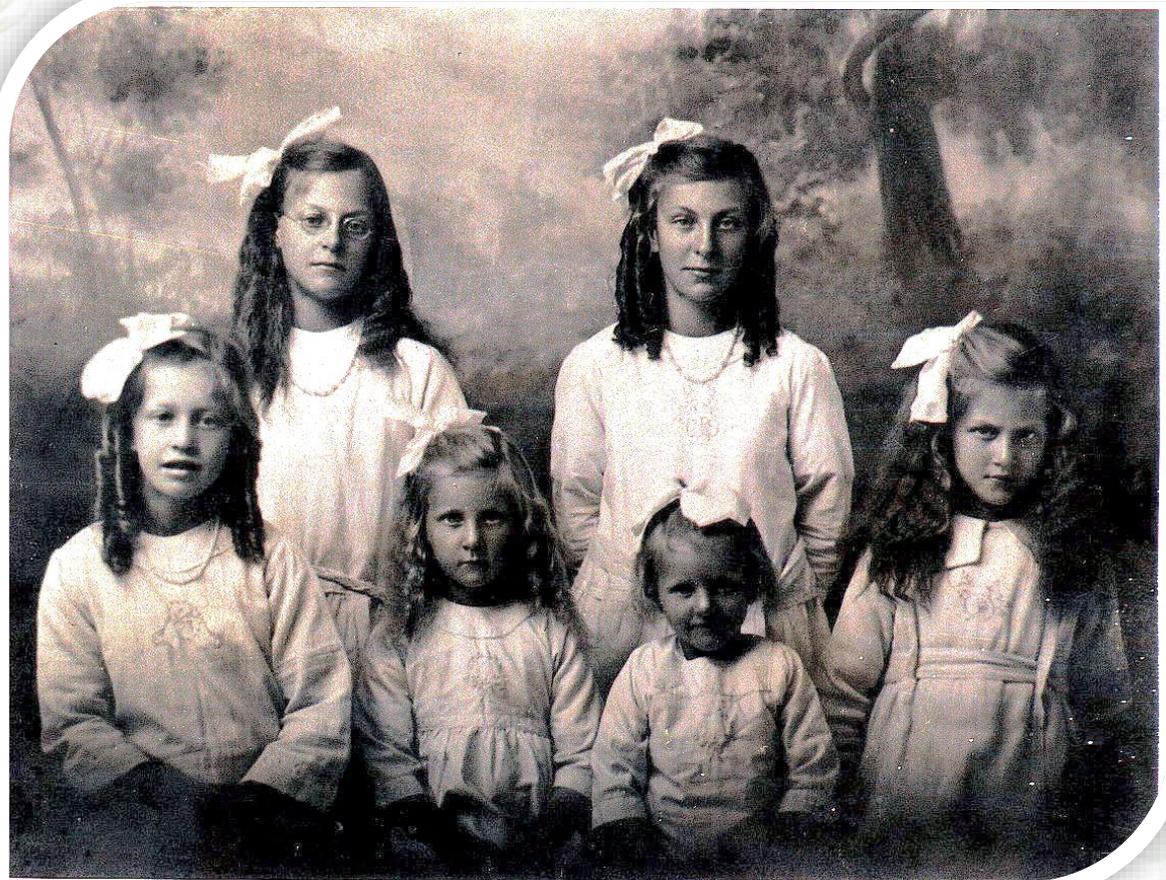
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<sup>77</sup> A.O.T.: South Road School Attendance Register.

<sup>78</sup> The North West Post: 01 June 1908.

Arthur's small four-roomed cottage, on two acres of land was close to Myrtle Creek and he had established a small orchard and garden around it. The house, described as a "box" had a central passage with bedrooms on either side, and a skillion kitchen at the back, and must have been built on a slope as firewood was stacked underneath and six or eight steps led to the backyard and orchard. Two sheep kept the grass down in the yard and terrorised the children by chasing them round and knocking them over.<sup>79</sup>

There is a hand-coloured photograph of the six Howard girls taken by G.P. Taylor of Ulverstone when my mother was about five years old (ca 1921), just before they left South Road for Nietta.



**Photo: G.P. Taylor: Back: Rita and Ruby. Front: Doris, Pearl, Mavis, and Sylvie.**

In the photograph all of the girls are dressed in a white corduroy-like material in what is basically the same pattern but with small individual variations: one dress has a belt; one has a gathered waistline, whilst the

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<sup>79</sup> Hearsay: Pearl Anderson (1994).

others are straight through; some have tucks; all were hand-made and hand-embroidered by their mother. Aunty Ruby (back row right) is the eldest and has the long curls. Next to her is Aunty Rita wearing glasses. Aunty Sylvie (front right) was tall and looked a lot like her Aunty Hannah<sup>80</sup> All the girls have ribbons in their hair: Ruby and Doris's hair was curled, Rita's plaited, Sylvie's and Pearl's was plaited and frizzed out. Nothing was done to Mavis's hair as "she never had enough."<sup>81</sup>

My mother remembers the time as her youngest sister, Mavis, was about three years old and had recently set fire to the small cottage: "I was going to school over the road at the time. She was looking in the wardrobe for something with a candle and set fire to the place. Never did that much damage and we got it out."<sup>82</sup> How easy it is to forget how recent such commonplace things as the electric light are. The candle and the kerosene lamp were second nature only a generation ago.

Ernest Rockliff, of the Sassafras family, farmed at South Road, on the hill above Arthur's place, and Arthur worked for him as his father and grandfather had worked for the Rockliff's at Sassafras. The Rockliff's bought land at Nietta and Arthur went with them to help clear the land for farming. At the end of 1922 Arthur, Florrie, and the six girls moved to their own farm, "Manuka", on Luck's Road, Nietta.<sup>83</sup>

In the pages that follow my mother Pearl's memories of life on the farm at Nietta have been drawn upon to give a glimpse of the life her family led.

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<sup>80</sup> Hannah Napier, half-sister of Florrie.

<sup>81</sup> Hearsay: Pearl Anderson (1994).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Advocate Wednesday 17 January 1923 pg 2: "Mr Howard and family, have moved into their new residence, and Mr Howard intends to take up farming here."

## NIETTA

*“Nietta is undoubtedly the coming pastoral district of the coast, and given the railway will come at once to the fore. The district, which is about twenty miles south of Ulverstone, lies between the Wilmot and Leven Rivers, and consists of an area of country some ten miles long by seven to fourteen broad. On its northern side it joins the well-known Castra district, and to the southward lie Smith’s Plains, the V.D.L. Co.’s Middlesex block, and a large stretch of mineralised country. It is fairly well watered, carries splendid splitting timber, makes good grass land, and is suitable for agricultural purposes in the highest degree. Myrtle forests abound in every direction, and the land, except in the vicinity of the two rivers, is fairly level. The climate is decidedly warmer than that of the adjacent districts, owing to the natural breakwind formed by the range of hills, of which the Black Bluff is the crowning point.*

*There is not one acre left to be selected in the whole of the Nietta parish, and selectors have even pushed their way into the dense bush and scrub that exist over the Leven River.*

*Mr Oswald Button, who still lives at Blackwood Park, was the pioneer of this splendid district, and first cultivated land there about 1881. The Ashton Bros, also have done sterling work in the bush, and between the three of them hold about 1000 acres, nearly all scrubbed and under grass, the latter being s green as if in the spring.*

*The cattle look sleek and well conditioned, and sheep apparently also do well. Messrs Ashton Bros. are also fortunate in having a lot of King William pine scattered through the blocks.*

*Mr George Williams, who has his two boys in charge here, is milking a large herd of cows, the cream being taken away by the butter factory cart from Ulverstone.*

*Messrs H. Williams and R. Munro also have fair-sized dairy herds. Mr Geo. Appleby has opened up his recently acquired property in a remarkable fashion, and many a long hour has been spent with the bullocks. Mr Gaunt’s estate, on which a commodious residence is erected, adjoins “Appleby”, and comprises land which is the pick of Nietta.*

*Smith’s Plains, a large are of flat country at the southern end of Nietta, is owned by the widow of the late Philosopher Smith, the latter discovering it when on his way to Bischoff. These plains are well watered, and consist of rich black soil, which grows luxuriant feed. They are situated 25 miles from Ulverstone. As for roads, one can now drive a buggy and pair right through Nietta. The road is metalled nearly up to H. William’s, and formed to Smith’s Plains. Mining operations are being carried on in the vicinity of Black Bluff, and several shows are being prospected, which only need capital to make them turn out payable.”*

*[North West Post Tuesday 25 February 1908]*

*"Dad [Arthur] helped clear Rockliff's farm [at Nietta] and bought his own land there. I don't know how much there was - there was a nice bit, and [pointing to the map] that big paddock over the corner road. We went right down passed the bottom of the hill - all that flat round there. That was all logs, as big as a house, that he cleared with [his horses] old Wallace and Belle. You never seen such logs. I think Rockliffs did come up and help log a few with the bullocks."*



**Pearl Anderson, nee Howard**

Some of the land had been partly cleared but much work was still to be done clearing the fallen logs into heaps to be fired or pulling them into place as fencing. Myrtle Hill was still bush.

All this work was carried out almost single handed. Arthur's nephews, Donnie and Arthur Simpson, worked on the farm:

*"Don worked for Dad for a good many years. Ten bob a week and his tucker. That was all you could get. Auntie 'Liza [Simpson] was glad to send them up there. Arthur came before him. He had the two of them. There was no work about, they were depression times."*

*"The house "was just four rooms when we went there – three bedrooms and a dining room, and we used to use the hut at the back as the kitchen. The dining room was lined with pine boards and the bedrooms and hall-way were scrim and paper. The main bedroom had a fireplace. We never had a wash-house. [We] used to boil the clothes on the fire in the dining room. We never had no copper. There were two kerosene cans on the fire boiling together and [we] heated the water in the bloody kerosene cans to have a bath."*

From the first settler setting up house in what was to become known as Nietta, the fate of the Tasmanian Tiger was sealed. No doubt the "Tiger" was long gone from the district by the time the young Howards moved to Nietta, in fact by the 1930s it became extinct, but the threat "a tiger will get you" kept them close to home:

*From Nietta comes the news that the pioneer settler in that district has lately been busy among the wild beasts of the earth. Report says that on going to his snares one morning he found a large female native tiger, or hyena, and along-side if a half-grown youngster of the same kind. This made off at Mr Button's approach, and he was unable to catch it, notwithstanding that he gave chase, and followed it some distance. However, he captured the old one, and on going further, found another half-grown young tiger dead in a snare, and strange to say, half eaten. The next morning a young tiger, probably the one chased on the previous day, was captured in a snare and taken home alive as a prize. The next morning Mr Button captured a large native devil, and the following morning a very large badger. The young tiger which was taken home*

*lived some days, but notwithstanding, that it was fed regularly and well, it eventually sickened and died, possibly of a broken heart at having lost the dearest treasure of every living thing — liberty. April 28.<sup>84</sup>*



**Binstead farm, Nietta ca 1915.** <sup>85</sup>

**Fires regularly swept through the district, destroying stock and fences.**

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<sup>84</sup> North West Post: Saturday 3 May 1890, page 3

<sup>85</sup> Public domain image: Museums Victoria

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/765763>. Binstead was owned by the R.B. Winter family in 1953.

**“Manuka” then and now.**



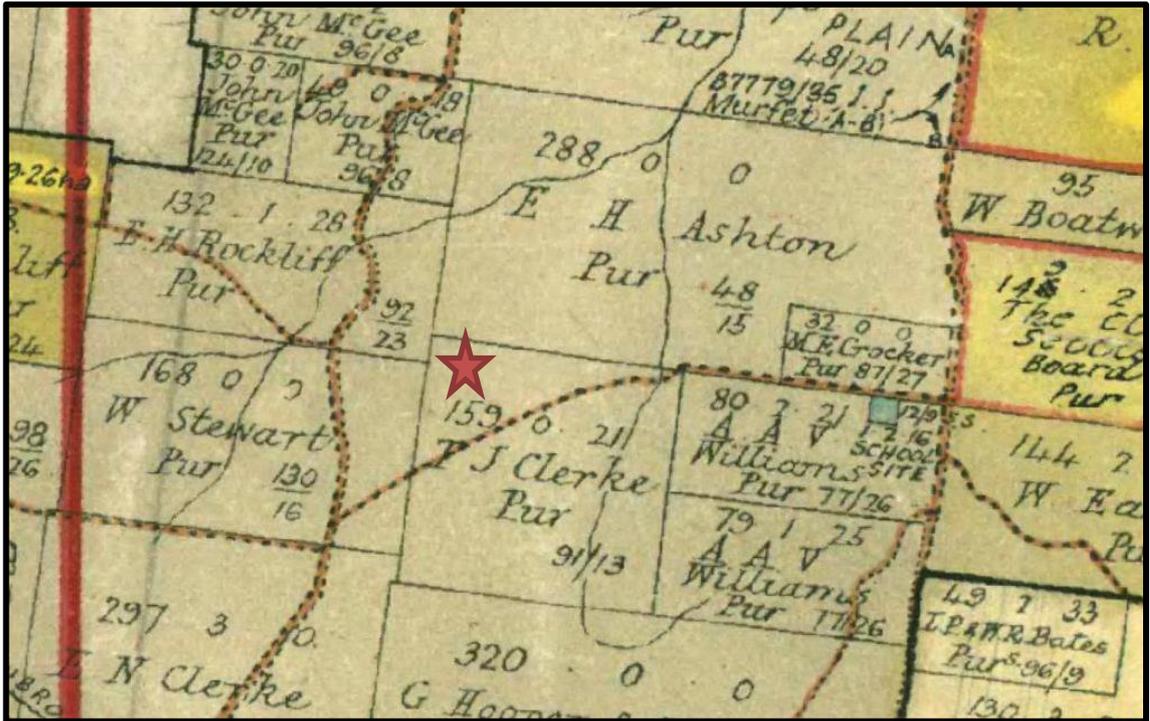
**Manuka, South Nietta probably late 1930s.**



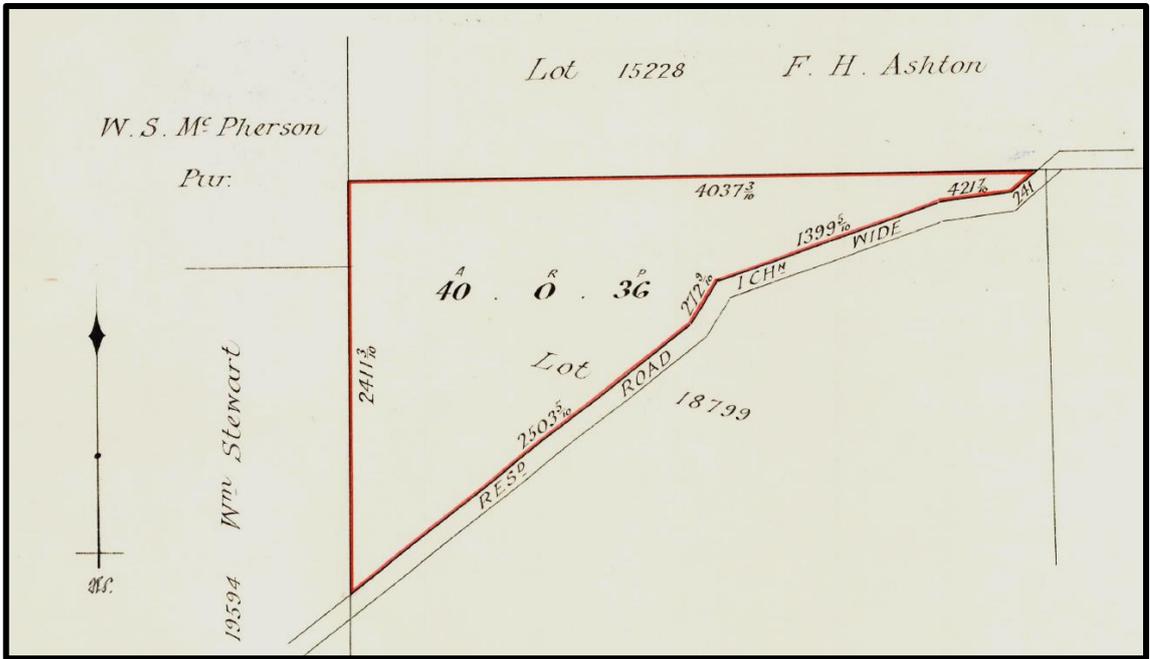
**Manuka, South Nietta, 2010.<sup>86</sup>**

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<sup>86</sup> Google Map: C128, Nietta, March 2010.



**Land District Chart showing area settled by Arthur Howard, indicated by the red star. Note the site of the South Nietta school.<sup>87</sup>**



**Part of Lot 18799 originally purchased by Thomas John Clerke. Purchased by Arthur from John Mervyn Williams 21 July 1939.<sup>88</sup>**

<sup>87</sup> <https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap/app/list/map>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.thelist.tas.gov.au/app/content/property/historical-folios-search>: Certificate of Title Vol. 436 Fol. 55

*[We had our] bath in the passage. Sometimes it used to be a tub in the bedroom when he had pigs killed. The pigs used to be cured in that – a big wooden tub as big as that couch, made out of some kind of pine. It was a big solid thing, it never used to leak or anything. There was a wood sofa behind the dining room table with a bit of a cover on it; no lounge suite until much later."*

*The hut referred to pre-dates the house and was used for accommodating Arthur and his helpers until the house was built. It was about ten feet away from the house and was soon joined to the house by a verandah. There was a water tank behind it [but no water laid on] and it was made into a wash-house<sup>89</sup> and bathroom. A "new big kitchen and pantry" came later, together with a verandah on the front of the house: "it was a primitive turnout".*

A house is not a home until it has a garden and "Manuka" soon had flowers and vegetables in abundance:

We had a nice flower garden around the front – all set out. Christ, we used to have to white-wash the bloody stones every Christmas. She [Florrie] used

to have white carnations - Pinks - in the middle. All around there was the stones. There were Hollyhocks, Canterbury Bells, Scotias, Daisies, and Pentstemons. She never had many Violets. Old Mrs Freddie Maxfield was the one who had the Violets. You've never seen [the likes of] them, they used to come up and you'd get Violets all over the top.<sup>90</sup> We had a few climbing roses. She used to have Bleeding Hearts and Peony Roses down the side and all round these fences here, and Lupins."



**Pearl with her eldest daughter Margaret, ca 1939.**

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<sup>89</sup> Even to this day our laundry is often referred to as "the wash-house".

<sup>90</sup> This is an oft repeated statement, especially when the violets I tried to grow didn't come up to expectations.!

At the back of the house there was a big patch of garden and another garden further on. There was a big patch of raspberries and a few cherry trees; the raspberry patch was fenced off with a pet wallaby to keep the grass down, but the ungrateful creature ran off the first chance it got. The garden was Florrie's responsibility:



**Photo: A Singleton cousin in the famous strawberry patch, the effects of the fire to be seen in the background.**

*"She did it all. Us kids used to have to help. She never used to buy any vegetables except in the winter-time sometimes. We couldn't grow butter beans and peas. We used to grow peas out in the paddock. Dad had a patch in with his spuds. Christmas time was the first [earliest] time we used to get peas up there."*

When Granny and Grandad left Nietta to live at East Devonport Granny continued to tend a flower garden: I remember a beautiful deep pink Peony at the front gate, with Clarkias, California Poppies, and Linarias in profusion. At the back of the house there were masses of wonderfully fragrant cream coloured freesias, Michaelmas Daisies, Violets, Eggs and Bacon, Tiger Lilies, Sweet Peas, and Chrysanthemums in their seasons. Apart from the few cherry trees that they grew, the family depended on the orchard back at the South Road cottage for the bulk of their fruit as it was too frosty to grow apples and pears at Nietta:

*"We grew the Five Crown, a nice big yellow apple with five crowns on the top of it, and beautiful Sturmers and Jonathans and Cox's Orange which kept for months. Two or three trees<sup>91</sup> grew apples as big as footballs."*

My mother's memories of the Strawberry Patch at Nietta has remained vivid, and I've always thought, possibly exaggerated over the years. But documentary evidence belies this:

*"That's down picking strawberries. Yes, that's how we used to get them. Wed get a bucket full off four bushes. Some of them weighed up to two ounces and you could get three pounds off a bush without any trouble whatsoever. She [Florrie] used to send them down to McNamarra's fruiterers at Ulverstone. It was nothing to have to carry two of them boxes out to the mail - out where Addison Hills lived - to catch the bus. Sometimes when we had more than you could carry Young's used to come round and pick them up. It used to cost money to send 'em down. We never got much for them. If you sent them to the factory you got four pence a lb for them I think."*

Much of the land was of a good quality but parts were very stony and infested with rabbits. Black-pelted rabbits were common where the land was covered in fire blackened logs:

*"You could go up to the top of the hill and say "Boo" and hundreds of rabbits would run into their burrows. You could set a few traps and catch so many rabbits you couldn't carry them home. We used to live on rabbits. Sunday dinner was rabbit, and rabbit stew through the week. There was no money to buy meat. I can't cook rabbit now like Mum used to cook them. We used to have them baked."*

During the season there was always plenty for the table: "we'd have a two pint jug full of cream every dinner time when we had strawberries and cream", and there were "gooseberry pies and blackcurrant jam and raspberry jam" but Arthur sometimes worried about how he was going to pay the quarterly grocery bill.

Arthur had pigs (the same that were cured in the family bath tub) which were housed in a sty down the side of the house. This sty was built out of "two great big logs cut about ten feet long and they had been pulled around just outside our garden and it had a top put on it and the pigs used to live in that. That's where we used to feed 'em."

*"There was never any shortage of food [but] we never had any money. Spuds used to be £2/10/- a bloody ton in Sydney. I've seen him [Arthur] get a bill back for them occasionally- [but] we never looked like starving. If anyone had £5 they felt they had a bloody fortune. No, we never looked like starving but a lot of bloody people did."*

*"We killed our own meat occasionally - beef - we didn't have any sheep. You would just kill a beast when you wanted one and everybody would share it. Sometimes Nicolles's and Anderson's and Maxfield's would get a third each or quarter each for 3d. a lb. Threepence a pound mind, then we'd get one off them. There used to be a butcher come around, old Filleul. We didn't have to buy much meat because Mum had beautiful*

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<sup>91</sup> Probably one of the Pearmain varieties.

*ducks, Khaki Campbell's I think. They were beautiful ducks! We used to feed 'em on pollard and rabbits and spuds. She used to boil up the rabbits in the winter-time with spuds and pollard and wheat and they used to be beautiful ducks. And the geese used to be the same. There were fowls too, White Leghorns and those black ones. We never looked like starving."*

Probably my Mother's most vivid memories are of a bushfire that swept through the farm when she was about 17. The fire came in by way of the Leven River:

*"We could see it coming about 11 o'clock. We had water carted over from the spring. We were expecting it. It was in January. It was the day that Mrs Eric Howard had come to see us, she was no relation. They lived out where Joy [Pearce] lives and she was visiting around before she went to England (she never ever came back again). That day it was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon before we had our dinner and we couldn't see in the bloody place. We had to have lights alight." The fire came very close, burning parts of the fences around the house and the old wood heap that was just outside in the cow yard:*

*We couldn't see, Dad and I, when it came night, from the smoke. I think Dad had to go to the doctor next day as he couldn't see. He'd been out in it all day. We had the light on when we eventually had dinner. We couldn't see one another it was that smoky. I don't know how the Howard's got back home that night.*

*It didn't burn the stables down because Dad was watching them; they were only built on a log, but the log was as high as that house! You've never seen such trees and bush around the place. He was throwing water on me at one stage because he reckoned I was alight. I was in among the ferns and that sort of rubbish. It burnt the whole bush. Just down Rockliff's side it left one tree in it - one green tree - an it was water. We were never allowed go in it because you would sink if you went into it and never get out. It was a bog! We never went in more than a couple of bloody feet on a log in there - and it burnt every bloody thing in it and it never grew up. There was a Wattle bush just over the creek where we used to water the cattle - about two acres of it an I reckon it burnt every one of them. They were green! They were just a green mass of wattles. It cleaned them out and they never ever grew again. Nothing grew. The fire ran through the paddocks down round the side of the hill but never burnt the oats. It burn all the fences up. They were only log fences around the corner block. It went clean through the bush down below old Ernie Williams' bush right out as far as where Mrs Anderson lived. It cleaned everything out."*

## **GRIM FIGHT BY SETTLERS IN LEVEN DISTRICT.**

Homesteads Saved by Fire-Fighters.

A GRIM fight was put up by South Nietta and Loongana settlers to save their homes from destruction yesterday afternoon.

ONE family was completely isolated, their home being surrounded by fire for several hours. The menfolk had a strenuous task, but time and again the homestead was threatened. Many homes were surrounded by fire, but fortunately none were destroyed. A small hut at Loongana containing the belongings of Mr. John Keep, was destroyed.

Shortly after 11 a.m. the fire was noticed to have reached alarming proportions, and within a few hours it had spread over hundreds of acres. Apparently it began in the Loongana valley and spread away to the south and east across Smith's Plains and to the north in the direction of South Nietta. When a number of reports, most of which proved to be exaggerated, reached Ulverstone, parties of fire-fighters motored to the back district and were able to do good work.

**LOONGANA REACHED.**

A party of helpers, headed by Trooper W. O. Cartledge, of Sprent, successfully reached Loongana. Their action was very plucky, as in places the fire had spread on both sides of the road. For some hours concern was felt regarding the position of the several families residing at Loongana who could not be reached owing to the fierceness of the flames over the only roadway leading to the valley.

About 4 p.m. the party passed over the road in a motor lorry driven by Mr. S. Pearce. As they were going down the long hill a tree crashed to the ground, parallel with and right close to the road along which they were driving. They visited each holding...

The sawmill of Messrs. Barker and Son, situated near the Leven River, was in the danger zone, and had to be protected for a time, and the home of Mr. E. Barker, in proximity to the mill, was in jeopardy until the wind changed.

The most trying experience was at the residence of Mr. Arthur Howard on Luck's road, South Nietta. For several hours the building was in grave danger, and helpers could not approach it because it was completely surrounded by burning bush.

Mr. Howard had the assistance of a lad, and when the fire subsided the former was almost blind from the effects of the smoke and heat whilst the boy was exhausted.

Fences and sheds became ignited a number of times and the greater portion of a paddock of hay, which was stooked the day previously, was destroyed. It was a great relief when helpers were able to reach the place and find that their fears were unfounded....

**FINE TIMBER BED DESTROYED?**

In the Smith's Plains area there is a fine bed of timber, and it was feared last night that this had been destroyed.

It was also feared that the problems would be accentuated to-day as the fire will already have a good grip by the time the hottest part of the day is reached.

Fortunately the wind was choppy yesterday. Several times when houses were in great danger sudden changes in the direction of the wind helped the fire-fighters in their efforts.

[Advocate (Burnie, Tas. : 1890 - 1954), Wednesday 17 January 1934, page 7]



**Photo: South Nietta School. (Private collection.)**

The old South Nietta school was about two miles from Manuka and the girls had to walk there and back each school day. Some of their school friends rode ponies to school but they lived much further away.

It was a one teacher school and my mother remembers some of the masters — Lesley J. Nibbs<sup>92</sup> who used to board with them; Reg Penn; Johnny Fawkner; and Alan Thorne<sup>93</sup> — who had to teach upwards of 45 children of varying ages. Doris Howard was a monitor at the school for a short time. During school holidays Sylvie and Pearl would scrub out the school room, move the desks, and clean windows. This was done three times a year and they earned £2.

Living next door to a swamp meant lots of snakes;

"There were plenty of snakes there, six footers. I had one or two in the pantry at one stage. I would often look through the window and see a snake out in the yard and I'd go and kill him. We never used to go to bed in the summer time without having a look in our beds ('cause we always used to have the windows open) to see if there was a snake in it. They used to be out the front in the flower garden before we had the verandah put on."

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<sup>92</sup>Advocate: Wednesday 22 December 1926, page 4 Mr L. Nibbs was transferred to the South Nietta school. Mr Nibbs was replaced by Mr Fawkner in 1930. Finding accommodation for the early appointed teachers was a problem, especially for the female teachers.

<sup>93</sup>Examiner (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954), Wednesday 7 January 1931, page 5: A. Thorn was transferred to the South Nietta school. He was replaced by C. Harnett at the end of that year.

A FAMILY  
OF  
GIRLS

**A**t Holy Trinity Church, Ulverstone the Rector (Rev. L. F. Benjafield) officiated at the wedding of Ruby Florence, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs A. A. Howard, South Nietta, to Sgt. Clarence Darby (R.A.A.F.), second son of the late Mr. and Mrs. S. U. O'Grady, of "Carnamah," West Australia. Miss A. Dunham was organist. The bride, who was given away by her father, chose a soft shade of blue crepe romaine with long waistline shirred in front, the skirt being pleated in front. Three quarter length sleeves were gathered at the elbows. Her small blue toque was trimmed with white flowers and veiling and her other accessories were white. The bride carried a bouquet of pink cactus dahlias and carnations. The bridegroom was attended by Mr. David Maxwell as best man. The bride's mother wore a blue floral frock under a brown coat, with brown accessories, and



carried a posy of autumn-tinted flowers. A quiet reception was held at the home of Mrs. G. V. Yaxley, Main street Ulverstone. The two-tiered wedding cake was made by the bride's mother and decorated by Mrs F. Hodgkinson, Ulverstone. Owing to inter-state travelling difficulties the bridegroom's relatives were unable to be present. The bride travelled in a dusty pink suit with white accessories. The honeymoon was spent in Hobart and on the East Coast. [Advocate Tuesday 19 June 1945]

**Photo: Robinson Studio: Ruby and her husband, "Bob" O'Grady.**



**Rita,**  
photographed  
with her third  
husband, Colin  
Whiteroad.

**Top: Sylvia Howard, later Mrs Jack Lane.**

**Middle: Doris Howard and “Ted” Ballard on their wedding day.**

**Bottom: Pearl Howard, Mrs Anderson, pictured with daughter Helen, left, and neighbour Julie Sloane, right. Photo taken at the Devonport Agricultural Show.**



**O**n November 28, at Holy Trinity Church, Ulverstone, the Rector (Rev. L. F. Benjafield) performed the marriage ceremony of Mavis, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Howard, of "Manuka," South Nietta, and David Robert (A.I.F.), third son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Maxwell, of Sprent.

The bride, who was given away by her father, chose a two-piece suit of blue linen. Her headdress was a capette of blue georgette and flowers, with a shoulder-length veil. Other accessories were white, and a shower bouquet (made by Miss M. Stratton, Ulverstone) of white rosebuds, blue love-in-a-mist, pink hydrangea, spirea and fern, tied with white satin ribbon, was carried. A necklet of pearls was worn. The bride was attended by Miss Mona Maxwell, the 'groom's sister, who wore a pale pink suit and matching hat. She carried a bouquet of pink sweet peas and asparagus fern, made by Mrs.

Lindsay Maxwell. The best man was Mr. Nauri Maxwell, brother of the 'groom. Immediate relatives were entertained at "The Orlando," Ulverstone. The two-tiered wedding cake was made by the bride's mother, and decorated at Nolan's Bakery. The bride's mother wore a navy frock, contrasted with white. Her hat was blue, and she carried a posy of blue-tinted sweet peas. The bridegroom's mother wore a navy spotted frock and grey hat, and her posy was of sweet peas. The honeymoon was spent at Launceston.

Prior to her marriage, the bride was entertained by Nietta friends, and presented with a 40-piece dinner service. While her husband is on active service, Mrs. D. R. Maxwell will reside at East Devonport. [Advocate Tuesday 15 December 1942 p6 c4]



**Photo Robinson Studio: Mavis and her husband, Dave Maxwell, on their wedding day:**

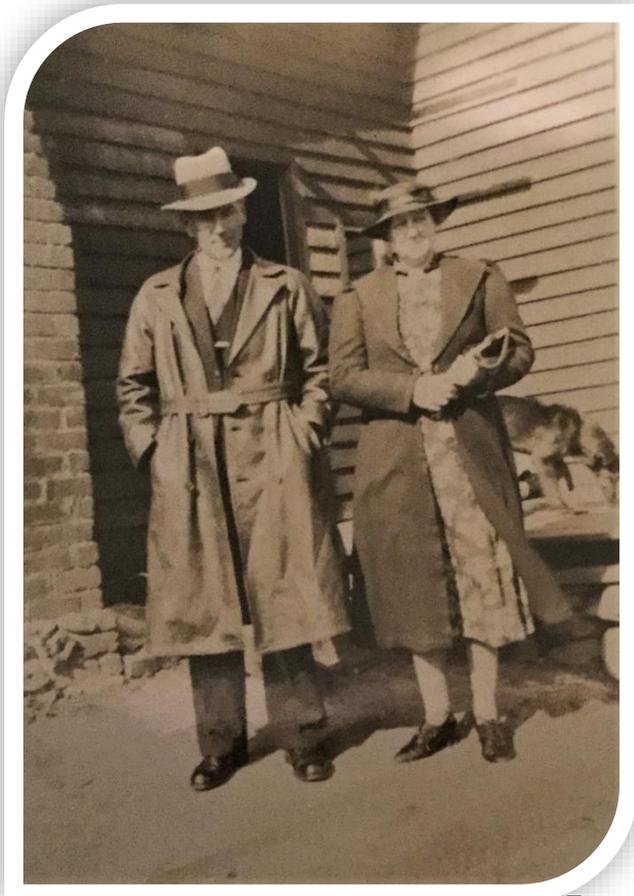


**On the farm and  
at the beach:**

**Left: Pearl and  
Ruby.**

**Below: Arthur &  
Florrie.**

**Right: Mavis aged  
about 15.**





*Above: Sylvie, Roy Pearce, Mr & Mrs Ron Gardiner, Rita*



**More girls: Aunties Mary Gillard, and, Ruby McDonald (sister of Florrie) and Granny Howard, Florence Maude Howard, née Burt.**



**Four daughters at home, Church Street, East Devonport.**

Back row: Carl Brown, Allen Anderson, Arthur Howard

Middle row: Helen Anderson, Rita Tilley, Mavis Maxwell, Florence Howard

Front row: Pearl Anderson, Ruby O'Grady, Margaret Brown, Doreen Maxwell