

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Bulletin of Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

(Established March 1977)

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society and
Museum and Galleries Hunter Chapter



John and Harriet Rebecca Wright

Volume 30, Number 1

February 2023

*The Aims of the Society are to
Discover, Record, Preserve, Advise on and Teach the History of Maitland and the
District*

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Cover: The c1871 photograph was supplied by Lawrence Henderson.

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Location: 3 Cathedral Street Maitland (opposite Bishop's House)

Lecture meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm as a forum for lectures, talks and presentations.

Committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of even months from 5:30-7.00pm.

General meetings are held on the third Tuesday of odd months from 5:30-7.00pm.

Members are invited to attend all monthly meetings.

Meetings are held at the Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street Maitland.

Membership fees : \$20 (single) and \$30 (double / family)

The rooms are open between 11 and 3 on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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Editor's Notes:

This edition of the Bulletin has articles from Lawrence Henderson and Val Rudkin on some highly interesting people from Maitland's history who deserve to be remembered.

JOHN WRIGHT: EAST MAITLAND PERSONALITY

By LAWRENCE HENDERSON

John Wright was born on 6 June, 1821, at New Cross, Kent, United Kingdom. He had begun his building career in England, as a plasterer and in February, 1856, he and his wife, Harriett Rebecca, with 3 sons and a daughter left Plymouth on the *Robert Small*, for Sydney. Soon after, the family moved to the Hunter, settling in East Maitland, where John established himself as a builder.

In 1857, he won the contract for ballasting the new railway line between East and West Maitland and the erection of the railway station and goods shed at the Elgin Street crossing. He similarly built the station master's cottage in Steam Street. He was also on the Committee of the Maitland Mechanics Institute when the foundation stone for the building was laid in Banks Street, East Maitland on 28 July, 1859.



West Maitland Railway Station, Elgin Street, circa 1859. Newcastle Herald archives.

Wesleyan Methodism came to Maitland in 1838 and the first Chapel was erected the following year in High Street, West Maitland. The original resident minister was the Rev Jonathan Innes in 1840. On 5 January, 1858, the corner stone of the new Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (on the same site) was laid by Alexander McArthur, Esq, J P, of Sydney. Also present were John Allen Manton, President of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Conference, Stephen Rabone, Chairman of the New South Wales District, Benjamin Chapmann, Josiah G Turner, and William Clarke, minister of the Maitland circuit.

John Wright, a staunch Wesleyan, had designed the Chapel (now the Uniting Church)

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described by the *Mercury* as: Victorian Gothic style, remarkably free from ornamentation. The building was considered to be the largest Wesleyan Chapel in the colony, at 100 feet by 53 feet and the *Mercury* said it was capable of accommodating 820 persons. The stonework was carried out by Messrs Mack and Sherwood and John Wright was responsible for the remainder of the building. The cost of the building was estimated to be between £5000 and £6000. The trustees were: Samuel Owen, Joseph Ede Pearce, William Currey, Joseph Youdale, John Fakliner, James Wolstenholme, Isaac Beckett, William Arnott, John Bowden, Henry Nancarrow, Thomas Cooper and Frederick Currey.



The Methodist Church, now The Uniting Church, in High Street, Maitland. Picture: Janece McDonald.

By 25 August, 1863, John Wright is listed as a member of the church committee along with Messrs Owen, Beckett, Falkiner, Blair, Youdale, Gulley and Dr Spink, with Mr Blair, treasurer and the Rev G Woolnough, secretary.

In April 1862, the proclamation was read to a gathering of about 40 persons, constituting East Maitland as municipality and nominations for aldermen were called. East Maitland became the second town in the Hunter to gain the privilege of self-government. Twenty nine nominations were received, among them was Mr John Wright, proposed by Mr Nainby and seconded by Mr Graney. At the declaration of the poll on Saturday, 26 April, he was seen to be unsuccessful, but was determined to renominate in future elections.

For many years Council meetings were held in the Mechanics Institute in Banks Street.

In February 1863, nominations were called for aspirants to replace three retiring aldermen on the council. Mr A Dodds nominated John Wright saying he was: a gentleman who often attended the Council deliberations and would probably make a good member of Council although he was a little given to making long speeches. His experience also as a councillor in London would no doubt be an advantage to the town if brought to bear upon it through the Council. The nomination was seconded by Mr G F Davidson. Nevertheless, he was, once again, unsuccessful.

The *Mercury* of 18 April, 1863, states that John Wright had been appointed Overseer of

Works to the Municipality of East Maitland. However, his appointment was short lived. He was accused of interrupting the Mayor at an October Council meeting in a most unwarrantable and offensive manner while the Mayor was reading out a report of Mr Mackay, the surveyor, about works proceeding in Banks Street. He was then ordered out of the Council chamber. He denied interrupting the Mayor, stating that he waited until the Mayor had finished reading the report before rising to have his say. He was suspended from his position on 28 October and dismissed at a Council meeting on 2 November. The Mayor had also dismissed the Town Clerk, Mr. Madgwick, in early October.

At the municipal elections of February, 1864, John Wright was successful in gaining a seat on the East Maitland Municipal Council, along with a Mr Cains and a Mr McLaughlin. Alderman Wright said: he had to thank the electors for the high honour which, without any effort or solicitation on his part, they had spontaneously conferred upon him. It showed him that there were some in East Maitland who believed that he could be of value to them in the Municipal Council. He had strong faith in the future of East Maitland, and he would do his best to push on the car of public progress.



Building Chadlington. John Wright on the left.

In 1865, with the help of his three sons, he began to build Chadlington, his own house in East Maitland. It was a substantial slate roofed brick building fronting Newcastle Street, East Maitland, on the hill between Burg and Victoria Streets. The Mercury stated that on 9 January, 1866, the temperature reached 104 degrees (40 C) and no less than twenty bush fires could be counted yesterday afternoon from Mr. Wright's observatory, East Maitland. The tower of Chadlington was obviously used as an observatory.

The family were living in the house in 1865 but misfortune struck in July, 1866, when he was declared insolvent with debts of £1583 and assets of only £1438. He had been elected as an alderman on East Maitland Municipal Council in February, 1864, and now found it necessary to resign his seat due to his indebtedness. His bankruptcy was discharged by April, 1869, but he never regained his seat on Council. After the sale of Chadlington, the family moved into a two story brick house on the East Maitland side of Victoria Bridge.



Chadlington with the family gathered at the gate.



Rear view of Chadlington. Photograph taken by F W Turton in 1918.

He had been one of the original members of the Maitland Mechanics' Institute, established in 1856, and at the AGM in February, 1864, was elected its Vice President. He continued serving on the committee of the Institute for many years. His continued association with the Wesleyan Methodist Church saw him elected to the committee of Wesleyan Missionary Society on 28 May, 1865.

He became Worthy Patriarch, Brother John Wright, at the inauguration of the "Star of the East" (Sons of Temperance) Division, East Maitland on 5 June, 1867 and had become Grand Treasurer of the Division by March, 1869.

The flood of 1867, called a calamitous visitation, by *The Mercury*, caused widespread destruction and loss of life. A public meeting on 29 June, in the rooms of the Mechanics Institute was called for the purpose of taking measures to alleviate the distress caused. This led to the forming of the Flood Relief Committee. The Committee was to consist of the clergymen of the district ; B. Lee, Esq, MLA; Aldermen Cobcroft, Cains, Chambers, McLoughlin, Scholey, Dubber, McGregor, and Paton; also Messrs J O'Meagher, H O'Meagher, E D Day, E V Morisset, C J Smithers, J Thomson, J N Bruncker, F Bell, John Wright, T W Pearse, Alexander Dickson, James Dodds, C Atkinson, John Stewart, James Price, James Mayo, John Eckford, Peter Eckford, E Hughes, R Pethebridge, P

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Bourke, H Smith, J Murphy, A G Cullum, and Dr Wilton, with power to add to their number. It was resolved that any five members could form a quorum, Mr J N Bruncker was to act as convener; the mayor was requested to act as treasurer, and the town clerk as secretary.

Prince Alfred, the fourth child and second son of Queen Victoria, had joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman at 14 years of age and by 1866, he had attained the rank of captain and in the same year, he became Duke of Edinburgh. He had embarked on a world tour in January 1867, in command of HMS *Galatea*, a steam-powered sail-equipped frigate, eventually visiting Australia in late 1867 and early 1868. He was the first member of the Royal family to do so.

After visiting Adelaide, Melbourne and Hobart, the ship docked in Sydney and Prince Alfred continued on to Brisbane. On the return journey, His Royal Highness called in to Newcastle and travelled by train to Singleton for a brief visit on Friday, 6 March, 1868. On returning from Singleton by train the same day, he stopped at East Maitland, where he was welcomed by the Mayor and Aldermen at the Court House.

Among various notables, friendly societies and other organisations welcoming him were The Sons and Daughters of Temperance in the Hunter River district who presented him with: *Our loyalty and attachment to the throne are steadfast and sincere; and we earnestly hope that your visit may be conducive to good, and the diffusion of enlightened views among the rapidly increasing population of the Australian colonies. On behalf of one thousand two hundred Sons and Daughters of Temperance, WILLIAM GIBB, Grand Worthy Patriarch, WM HENRY SMITH, Grand Worthy Associate, TRANTHAM MACKAY, Grand Scribe and JOHN WRIGHT, Grand Treasurer.*

A splendid procession of bands, military personnel, clergy, local government members, lodge members, carriages and the public then proceeded to West Maitland where more welcoming speeches took place and the Prince was taken to the Northumberland Hotel for refreshments. He was invited to open Maitland Agricultural Show and then partake of a sumptuous lunch punctuated with speeches and loyal toasts. After lunch, the Prince and his party returned to Newcastle by train, to then travel back to Sydney by steamer. A few days later, 12 March, a Fenian sympathiser at Clontarf, attempted to assassinate the Prince. He was wounded in the back, but soon recovered. The Sons and Daughters of Temperance in the Hunter River district sent an *Address of Sympathy and Congratulation* to the Prince on his escape from death and his recovery. One of the signatories was John Wright.

The Fenian Henry James O'Farrell, was apprehended on the spot and despite The Prince's plea for clemency, his request was ignored and the assailant was hanged in Darlinghurst Gaol on 21 April, 1868.

In April 1868, John Wright's bankruptcy was discharged. He contested the Municipal Elections of January 1869, but was unsuccessful and he never sat on Council again.

John Wright is responsible for building a number of constructions in the Hunter. Later buildings include Dugald McCallum's store in George Street, Singleton in 1877,

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described as a large well-built store and dwelling. The architect was J W Pender.

The *Mercury* in October, 1878, notes a cottage in East Maitland sold by Messrs Brunker, Wolfe & Badgery on account of Mr John Wright. The buyer was a B Campbell, Esq, for the sum of £245.

In May, 1879, he was building a four-roomed cottage in William Street, East Maitland, for Mr Peter Murphy, of Wallis Creek. The building was constructed of brick, on a stone foundation, with a roof of galvanised iron and was considered to be of a neat character.



St Mary's Parsonage in 2020. Picture: L J Henderson.

In July, 1880, the committee of St Mary's Church decided to accept the tender of Mr John Wright, builder and contractor, East Maitland, for the construction of the Parsonage for St. Mary's, Church Street, West Maitland. The tendered price was £1411 and the work to be completed in seven months from the signing of the contract. Mr George Browne was the architect for the building.



East Maitland Court House in 2022. Picture: Janece McDonald.

The court house buildings at East Maitland required alterations and additions to provide additional accommodation for jurymen and officers of the Court, and separate quarters for the caretaker of the building. By September 1881, substantial progress had been

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made by the contractor, Mr John Wright, with work being carried out in accordance with a recommendation made by the Sheriff.

He spent his later years drawing the Council's attention to state of the footpaths and streets of East Maitland. He constantly wrote to Council suggesting improvements to the Municipality's infrastructure and access.



Chadlington undergoing demolition, 1929.

He died at his home on 16 May, 1888, and is buried at the Glebe cemetery in East Maitland. His death notice in *The Mercury* states: *The late Mr. Wright had been a resident of East Maitland for over thirty years, where he carried on business as a builder and contractor. Many years ago he was an alderman of the Borough, and took an intelligent part in the debates of the Council. He had been ailing for some time.*

Chadlington, after the Wrights moved out, was let to a Mr Smith, a Police Magistrate of the district and it later became a boarding school, kept by a Miss Downing. By 1929, it was in a dilapidated condition and had been the subject of an item in the building report of the East Maitland Municipal Council. Later in the year, demolition of the building began, making way for modern residential buildings. The building had been described as: *made of hand-made bricks of a bright red colour, with roof slates of an ornamental type. Large quantities of cedar were used throughout the interior. The workmanship had been excellent.*

From articles in the *Maitland Mercury* and personal communication with Maurine Osborn, John Wright's great grand-daughter.

From Kent to Vacy – Thomas Jones, William Jones, and the A. A. Company

By Val Rudkin

Thomas and William Jones are on my family tree, William being my 2 great grandfather and his brother Thomas, my 2 great granduncle. They came from Southeast England, the area of The Downs and Channel Coast and I present them because their arrival became part of the much larger story of the establishment of the Australian Agricultural Company.

They were sons of Samuel Jones, a carpenter from Looe in Kent who married Mary Woolgar at Boughton Monchelsea in 1779.

The baptisms of Samuel and Mary's children were recorded at Boughton Monchelsea.

George Jones	14 March 1781
Sarah Jones	19 May 1782
Samuel Jones	10 August 1783
Mary Jones	29 May 1785
Elizabeth Jones	March 1787
John Jones	25 December 1788
Anne Jones	6 March 1791
Thomas Jones	31 March 1793
Henry Jones	10 May 1795
William Jones	14 May 1797

The Jones' story continues with their sons, Thomas and William Jones, who sought a better life in the Colony of New South Wales. Both took the opportunity to emigrate by being employed as indentured servants of the newly formed Australian Agricultural Company. The story of the Australian Agricultural Company has been told through a number of authors and Thomas and William are part of that story.

Extracts from these publications set the scene for the story.

The "Early Days of Port Stephens" compiled by Chas. E. Bennet, B.A., and proprietor of the Dungog "*Chronicle*" provides an insight into the next phase of the Jones brothers lives.

"The Australian Agricultural Company was formed in 1824 in England with a capital of one million pounds for the purpose of "producing articles of export not raised in any other English settlement" and other objects of a colonisation character. It having been agreed by the Imperial Government that a million acres of land in the Colony of New South Wales should be alienated to this company under certain conditions, the capital was readily subscribed, and thus became into being the Australian Agricultural Company which played so great a part in the development of Port Stephens in the early days.

To select the million acres to be utilised for its purpose, the directors of the company in England wrote to Sydney to Messrs. James and H.H. McArthur and James Bowman requesting them to assist Mr. Robert Dawson the agent appointed to the company, with advice and information on his arrival in the colony. It does not appear, that these gentlemen put themselves to any great trouble to chose the most suitable locality. In fact, nothing definite was

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done by the three men until Mr Dawson arrived with stock, plant and equipment for the new settlement, on November 13, 1825."

Dr. P.A. Pemberton provided these details from the Australian Agricultural Company files at the Butlin Archives.

"Robert Dawson was required as the Company Agent to make vast preparations in England for the voyage and subsequent setting up of the settlement in Australia. One of his duties was to secure the services of qualified persons to be employed as indentured servants of the A.A. Company for a period of seven years. Thomas Jones was an experienced ploughman, and William a skilled labourer, both had the qualifications required. Dawson chartered two sailing ships, "York" and "Brothers" to carry the stock of sheep, cattle, horses, pigs and poultry, farming equipment, seeds, animal fodder and other essentials as well as the Company Personnel and hired servants. The two ships sailed from Cowes on June 24, 1825. William and Elizabeth Jones were aboard the "York" and Thomas and Ann Jones were aboard the "Brothers". William Jones aged 27 was hired as a labourer on a salary of 30 pounds per annum. Thomas Jones aged 32 was hired as a ploughman on a salary of 35 pounds per annum. Each man was on a contract for seven years as an indentured servant of the A.A. Company.

Occupations listed on both ships: Agent, Clerk, Surveyor, Overseer, Woolsorter, Gardener, Shepherd (5), Miller, Mason (2), Smith, Butcher, Shoemaker, Ploughman (2), Wheelwright, Dairyman, Groom (2), Carpenter (3).

There were 12 wives, 22 boys and 18 girls altogether. Elizabeth Jones was not listed and this may have been due to their marriage taking place only one month before departure. The stock & cargo consisted of: 517 French merino ewes, 179 Anglo merino ewes, 30 French merino rams, 1 Durham bull, 1 Durham cow, 5 Scotch Highland cows, 1 Scotch bull, 1 Cleveland stallion, 1 Cleveland mare, 1 blood stallion, 3 blood mares".

The Voyage of Henry Townsend -1825 gives an account of part of the voyage on the "York": Story by Dione Columbe, Dover, Kent from letters written by Henry Townsed to his parents.

"The passage from England was not uneventful, at Rio de Janeiro, Mr Thomas Allen, hired as the gardener, left the ship with his family over a dispute with Mr Dawson and returned to England. Mr James Carter, the miller also on the "York" was lost overboard. The "York" was also threatened by a pirate ship, but fortunately the "Brothers" came into sight and the attack was aborted".

The arrival to Sydney for the "York" on November 13, 1825 followed by the "Brothers" two days later was a welcome relief for those on board".

Bairstow, Damaris - A Million Pounds A Million Acres. 2003

"No land had been selected by the Colonial Committee for this vast venture in readiness for their arrival. Temporary accommodation was arranged at Retreat Farm for the servants, some 60 km from Sydney which had been leased by the Colonial Committee as a stock depot. The horses were taken to the Government stables and the cattle to the Sydney Domain to be

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pastured. The sheep and most of the settlers went to Retreat Farm as Dawson had been advised that it was prudent to move the people away from the corrupting influences of Sydney.

A report in the *Sydney Gazette* after their arrival paints and interesting picture:

The King's Wharf and George Street exhibited a novel scene on Friday last. The wharf was covered with baggage, goods, dogs etc., etc., belonging to the Agricultural Company and the street was lined with wagons, that were conveying the property to the interior; two of three of the last of which were laden with women and children. The little farming lads were dressed in breeches, stockings, nail boots, and frocks; these seemed to have charge of the spaniels, bulldogs and hounds. Some of the women attracted our eye from their flowing curls and rosy English cheeks; and the men, at first glance, told the observer, from their manner and dress, that they were of the true English farming breed.

Robert Dawson reported:

About twenty carts were used to transport the new arrivals. The women, not having been previously ashore, were attired in their best clothes, displaying their bonnets and ribbons, in the expectation they said of being conveyed to the Farm in a more respectable style. Great confusion and discontent reigned and with children crying, mothers scolding and weeping, husbands complaining, and the drivers grumbling at being over-loaded it was very chaotic. Eventually the women and smaller children were placed in the vehicles and the drivers told to move on in a line. The carts were accompanied by the men and boys on foot. A mounted rider at the front and another at the rear, the procession began.

The party was obliged to travel all night and whilst the journey began in fine weather, in the evening it began to rain and continued to pour throughout the night making the trip a miserable affair. The following day when Dawson reached the farm he saw a quantity of boxes, trunks and other luggage scattered about and the people themselves asleep on the ground under the eaves. Others had moved into the buildings which being fairly extensive, provided cover for the families.

He had calculated that the change from shipboard life to the shore ... and the appearance of bright sunlight with a warm day would have a favourable effect ... he was not mistaken; for several of them remarked that anything was preferable to being on board of ship; but, had they known what they did then, nobody would have persuaded them to leave home".

The "Early Days of Port Stephens" compiled by Chas. E. Bennet, B.A., and proprietor of the Dugog "Chronicle" :

"Acting upon the advice of the Sydney committee, Mr Dawson entirely inexperienced in Australian conditions, set out with a local party on January 1, 1826 to examine Port Stephens and the adjoining country. After visiting the Hunter about Maitland and Luskintyre, he returned to Newcastle and made northward to Port Stephens to the area of Soldier's Point. Crossing the inlet to where an advance party with horses and equipment were waiting, he then followed up the Karuah River and camped some 14 miles from the harbour. He spent several days examining the country on foot, ultimately determining to fix his headquarters on the left bank of the river close to the harbour.

The schooner having arrived in the meantime, he proceeded with the work of forming the main camp and once it was well under way, he returned to Sydney to bring forward the rest of the settlers and stock. During his absence Messrs. Harrington (secretary of the Company),

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Dangar (Government surveyor), and Armstrong (Company's surveyor), explored the country beyond the harbour and returned after a month with so favourable a report of its character that any doubts Mr Dawson may have harboured as to the general suitability of the district for his purposes were entirely dispelled".

Bairstow, Damaris - "A Million Pounds A Million Acres" 2003

"On February 21, 1826, "the major part of the Company's establishment sailed for Port Stephens aboard, the "Lord Rodney".

[However, records indicate that Elizabeth Jones may still have been at Retreat Farm as their first child, Mary Ann Knight Jones was born on March 12, 1826 at Bringelly. She was baptised on August 6, 1826 at St Lukes Church of England at Liverpool and her parents recorded as residing at Cabramatta].

"By the end of July, 1826 the number of people living at Carrington had risen to 213 and there were 13 horses, 208 head of cattle and 697 sheep on the estate.

Robert Dawson and his assistants made a thorough examination of the neighborhood after they decided upon the site of their historic venture. His first journeys took him up the Karuah River beyond where Stroud now lies and to the place that is now Gloucester. Unfortunately for the success of the company's affairs, he understood nothing of the conditions about him, and judging from his records, appears to have been impressed solely by the magnificence of the scenery. As a result of his investigation the grant was issued to the company embracing the huge area up the Karuah Valley to the Gloucester flats, and to the Manning and including the whole of the northern foreshores of Port Stephens.

He selected for his headquarters, the area known to the aborigines as "Carabeen" which he named Carrington situated beside the bay. Unfortunately under Mr. Dawson's direction the settlement did not prosper. Those of the Sydney committee who visited in 1827 found it over-manned with officers bearing high sounding titles, entirely lacking in discipline, and the convict servants of whom there were said to be far too many with nothing useful to do. The end result of this was that an unhappy Mr. Dawson left the company in 1828 and Mr. James Ebsworth was appointed to carry on until another commissioner was sent out from England.

Although Mr. Dawson left under a cloud it should be noted that in December 1828 there were 17,459 sheep running on the company's estate between Port Stephens and Stroud and sheep washing and shearing were carried out at the Washpool on the Karuah River.

In Dec 1827 the A. A. Company records show Thomas Jones was placed in charge of sheep washing and in 1828 was employed at the shearing sheds and washpool.

Oct. 1828 he was the Overseer and keeper of Store keys at Booral; applied to be discharged. Considered a good man by some - by others a doubtful character - but I believe he is of great service in his present employment and might be valuable, were he given fair encouragement. [JE Ebsworth, 78/9/1 p. 171].

Feb 1829 Thomas Jones was Bailiff at the A..A. Company settlement at Booral at a salary of 55 pounds. [Parry - 1830:]

William Jones acted as Robert Dawson's menial servant from leaving England to November, 1827 when dismissed over the matter of a stolen orange tree [78/1/5, 190] In 1828 his position was the Overseer of Jobbers at Port Stephens.

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The NSW Government 1828 Census lists William Jones, wife Elizabeth and daughter Mary Ann as Servants of the AA Company, Port Stephens - Free. The Census taken in November of that year, listed the following numbers. Males 76, Females 47, Children 91, Emancipists 2, Convicts 270. A small community of 486 people, over half of which were convicts."

William and Elizabeth's second child, Thomas Henry Jones was born at the A.A. Company settlement on February 6, 1829. He was baptised by Lieut. William Bate of 57th Regiment, J.P. on May 17, 1829.

Pemberton, P.A. "Pure Merinos and Others"

"The key to a map of Carrington about 1829 (after a map by John Armstrong) shows at No. 28 the location of William Jones' hut - Overseer of Labourers near the waters edge at Boat Harbour, Tahlee."

Bairstow, Damaris, "A million Pounds A Million Acres" 2003

"A picture published on page 112, from a painting by Lady Parry, shows Tahlee House standing on the hill above the bay and two small huts beside the waters edge adjacent to the boat harbour. The location of those huts today may be found by walking along the foreshore below the Bible College in the direction of Karuah where the stone remains of the boat harbour are still visible".

The next stage in the life of the community of the Australian Agricultural Company began with the arrival of the new commissioner, Sir Edward Parry.

The "Early Days of Port Stephens" compiled by Chas. E. Bennet, B.A., and proprietor of the *Dungog "Chronicle"*

"In 1830 Sir Edward Parry was appointed as commissioner for the company and took up his residence at Port Stephens. An officer who held the rank of captain in the Royal Navy, he had won renown as an intrepid explorer in Arctic regions.

He found the settlement in a state of chaos and immediately placed it under the most strict semi-military regime. He began a period of activity in building, clearing and road-making but decided that the district was entirely unsuitable for sheep raising and arranged for an exchange of 600,000 acres of the Port Stephens grant for a similar area on the Liverpool Plains. In this manner the company acquired its famous stations of Warrah and Goonoo Goonoo which yielded through the years a continual stream of prosperity.

An 1832 almanack published in Sydney by the Government Printer shows:

Capt. R.G. Moffatt, of the 17th Regt. of Foot, in charge of the military establishment at Port Stephens which comprised one sergeant and 13 rank and file. The officers of the company at the time were:

Commissioner, Sir Edward Parry, R.N.; assistant, Mr. J.E. Ebsworth; clerks, Messrs. William Croasdil, J. White and J. Burnel; sheep superintendent, Mr. Charles Hill; assistant do, Mr. George Jenkins; woolstapler, Mr. John Swayne; surgeon, Dr. J.E. Stacy; surveyors, Messrs. John Armstrong and Henry Dangar; store supt., Wm. Wetherman; commander of the cutter, "Lambton," James Corlette; stud supt., Henry Hall; postmaster, A.S. Menon.

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Parry was an able administrator, a careful supervisor, and evinced something of the qualities of statesmanship in his management of the vast enterprise he had found in such confusion at Port Stephens. The most notable features of his regime were the building operations he carried out especially at Stroud.

At Carrington, however, not many traces of the old establishment remain, and nothing that would convey the impression that during the years 1825-1834 there was a busy settlement of nearly 500 souls; or that a school, attended by over 50 children had been in existence. Vanished are the hands that fashioned those ancient edifices; gone are the aborigines that wandered about the shores; and stilled too are the little voices that sung at their lessons in that old-fashioned school house of 1830 when the gracious Lady Parry, like a breath of fragrant English spring, made the neighbourhood the better by her very presence".

(Sir Edward Parry's Journal provides an insight into the daily life of the people on the A.A. Company's Estate and is a valuable source of information on the early days of the settlement. Selected journal entries have been reproduced in the book).

Photos of Carrington, Port Stephens, 21st Century taken by Val Rudkin



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Thomas and Ann Jones left the A.A. Company Estate in 1832 and settled at Vacy on the Paterson River. The Jones family association with the A.A. Company Estate at Port Stephens ended in 1834 when William and Elizabeth Jones and children left Tahlee to settle in the Paterson District.

The birth of William and Elizabeth's next child, Frances Susannah Jones on July 10, 1834 is believed to have been in the Paterson District. The record of her birth from the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages does not state her place of birth. She was baptised on September 11, the following year in the Parish of Maitland. Her parents place of residence was Paterson and William's occupation was gardener.

Thomas JONES and Ann KNIGHT

Thomas Jones and Ann Knight were married on 19 Jul 1812 at Boxley, Kent, England.

As the A. A. Company records show Thomas was placed in charge of sheep washing in 1827 and in 1828 was employed at the shearing sheds and washpool, it appears that they was living at the Booral section of the estate.

In Jan 1832 Thomas and Ann Jones left the A.A. Company and moved to the Paterson District:

He requested his contract be terminated as from 1/1/1832 as he wanted to build a hotel near Mr Cory's property in the area of Gostwyck on the Paterson River. The Commissioner, Sir Edward Parry supported him in his licence application and Thomas Jones held the licence of the Settlers Arms from 1832-1840.

Thomas purchased the 320 acre property "Kilburn" at Gresford in September 1841 for the sum of £430 from John Hill Buchanan. The drought conditions during 1840-1845 brought about his estate being placed under Sequestration on October 25, 1842.

On October 29, 1844 Thomas Jones made a petition to avoid going to gaol.

1.1	Thomas JONES son of Samuel and Mary Jones
Birth:	1791, England
Baptism:	31 Mar 1793 Boughton Monchelsea, England
Death:	9 Jul 1864, Green Creek, Vacy NSW
Burial:	11 Jul 1864, St Pauls Churchyard, Paterson
Occ:	Ploughman And General Labourer A A Company. Hotel Licensee.
Spouse:	Ann KNIGHT
Birth:	1791, Maidstone, Kent, England
Death:	1 Aug 1871, Vacy, NSW
Father:	Beecher KNIGHT (1760-1835)
Mother:	Ann NEAL
Marriage:	19 Jul 1812, Boxley, Kent, England

The Commissioner, Sir Edward Parry described Thomas Jones in a report of 1831 as "a very steady, active and deserving man; and the attention he has paid to the Farm, even before he was was placed under a regular Superintendent, is highly credible to him. I have therefore given him encouragement by a Gratuity to which I consider him the more entitled, as having no children, he is not an extravagant expense to the Company.

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Then in September 1832, Parry wrote: Employing Thomas Jones in new abode at Paterson's River, to have horse 'Prince' to cover in Hunter's River for season. More valuable to the Company in this position. Would be good to have such people in every district but not possible in N.S.W.

Thomas Jones had requested his contract be terminated as from 1 January 1832 as he wanted to build a hotel near Mr. Cory's property in the area of Gostwyck on the Paterson River. Sir Edward Parry supported him in his license application.

Thomas and Ann did not have children.

Mrs Ann Knight was recorded as living at Green Creek., Vacy in the 1872 Greville's Post Office Directory even though she had died the previous year.

William JONES and Elizabeth KNIGHT

The marriage of William and Elizabeth on Twenty third day of May in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Five, and in the Twenty First Year of our Translation was publicly and lawfully solemnized in the Parish Church of Saint Margaret, Lothbury.

1.2	William JONES son of Samuel and Mary Jones
Birth:	1797, Kent England
Baptism:	14 May 1797
Death:	2 Aug 1868, Green Creek, Vacy NSW
Burial:	4 Aug 1868, St Paul's Churchyard, Paterson, NSW
Occ:	Farmer: Green Creek & Kilburn At Vacy.
Reli:	Church of England
Spouse:	Elizabeth KNIGHT
Birth:	1802, Maidstone, Kent, England
Death:	4 Jan 1885, Green Creek, Vacy NSW
Burial:	St Paul's Churchyard, Paterson, NSW
Father:	Beecher KNIGHT (1760-1835)
Mother:	Ann NEAL
Marr:	23 May 1825, St Margaret Church, Lothbury, London
Children:	Mary Ann Knight (1826-1889)
	Thomas Henry (1829-)
	Edward (1830-1898)
	Elizabeth (1832-1896)
	Frances Susannah (1834-1916)
	Sarah Ann (1838-1918)
	Sophia (1840-1923)

Sometime after moving to the Paterson District, William purchased a farm of 22 acres on the Paterson River at Vacy which he named Green Creek. The property developed the reputation of being "one of the prettiest and tastefully well kept orchards on the river.

The Settlers Arms, Vacy

A copy of the License issued on 23 January, 1832 by the Internal Revenue Office, Sydney in Favour of Thomas Jones for the House known by the "Sign of the Settlers Arms" is on the following page.

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Thomas Jones took an unusual gamble becoming a hotelier as a farmer with very little knowledge of how to operate a successful hotel. The building was owned by Edward Gostwyck Cory who had vacated the premises to live on his 2030 acre grant "Gostwyck" he received on 18 September 1823.

Believed to have been erected of stone or brick the building had served as Cory's home and was named "Vineyard Cottage" due to the small vineyard planted alongside.

The license for the "Settlers Arms" was held by Thomas Jones from 1832 to 1840 and he was listed as the leaseholder of land owned by the Cory Family, The Vineyard Estate.

Please note, the copy of the license was provided by another family researcher, and due to the age of the document may not be completely intact.

