

MEASURE OF A NATION

"Show me the manner in which a nation or country cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender sympathies of it's people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals".

William Gladstone 1809-1898

O how small a portion of earth will hold us when we are dead, who ambitiously seek after the whole world while we are living.

Philip II



John Scott

12/6/1797 - 16/4/1877

The Scott Family of Delvine.

by Bruce Evans

Reflections

Underneath a gum tree at Delvine Park, midway between Stratford and Bairnsdale, in East Gippsland, Victoria, stands the old bullock dray used by John Scott on an epic journey in 1845 from the Monaro tablelands of southern New South Wales to the Bairnsdale district. Just to stand and look at it makes one wonder how he could have brought this vehicle through the rugged terrain of East Gippsland.

Even today, most of the route that he followed remains forested and some is officially recognised as pristine wilderness. A number of people have researched his background to try to gain an insight into the reasons why he undertook such a journey.

John Scott and his wife, Margaret, arrived in Van Diemens Land in 1826, leaving behind in Scotland their infant daughter Mary, who they were not to see again for 24 years. During 6 years in Tasmania, Janet, James, Peter, Margaret and John were born.



The family then moved to New South Wales, about 1834, to a property near Camden called Denham Court for that is where Daniel was born in 1835. It is likely they knew James Ruse who died at Denham Court the same year as Daniel was born. James Ruse, a convict, claimed to have been the first person in the First Fleet to set foot in Australia as he carried the first officer ashore on his back.

A couple of years later, he was awarded the first freehold title to land in Australia. He was able to prove to Governor Phillip that he could sustain himself on the land - the authorities in England having neglected to ensure that the First Fleet included anyone with knowledge of farming.

The bullock wagon used by the Scotts in 1845.

Scott was employed at Denham Court by Thomas Valentine Bloomfield who also owned the Coolamatong (Coolamating, Coormaling) run, about 20 miles south west of Cooma on the banks of the Snowy River. Scott was sent south during the late 1830's to manage this property.

No doubt, he gained valuable experience manoeuvring his bullock dray through rugged, trackless country on this journey of almost 400 kms. Margaret had to look after six children aged between 10 and 4 years and probably had to help her husband with the yoking and unyoking of the team each day. The maximum speed a bullock dray is likely to reach is about 4 k.p.h.

The bullock team had to be fed and watered, all meals had to be prepared and shelter had to be erected and dismantled each day, and there was the fear of attack by aborigines or escaped convicts turned outlaw. This was a pioneering journey of epic proportions.

Catherine, Ellen and Agnes, who died as an infant, were born at Coolamatong.

By the 1840's, the Scotts were surely asking themselves why they did not claim some land for themselves instead of always working for someone else. In 1840, a fellow countryman of Scott's, Angus McMillan, had blazed a trail through the very rugged country south-west of the Monaro Tablelands discovering a region he called "Caledonia Australis", later given the name "Gipps Land".

No doubt, McMillan's enthusiasm for this new country was conveyed to Scott but he had the problem of moving his large family over the very difficult terrain that lay between the Monaro and this newly discovered land. The year, 1845, was the year of reckoning because the best land was being taken up rapidly. One choice cattle run remained. Learning that a rival had already left to claim this block, Scott decided on the element of surprise and headed south to cross the Snowy River nearer the coast instead of following the usual route, the one blazed by McMillan, down the Deddick River and over Black Mountain. One can only wonder what went through the minds of each member of the family as they packed their wagon with all their possessions and with sufficient supplies to get them established on the property they hoped to acquire.

Janet 18, the eldest of the children born in Australia already had a two-year-old son, "Jimboy". The others were James, 17; Peter, 15; Margaret, 13; John, 11; Daniel, 9; Catherine, 6 and Ellen, 4. The last two were reputed to have travelled in a kerosene case on each side of a packhorse.

In his book, Providence Ponds, Stanley Porteus wrote that Scott's rival for the prized block was Raymond. The late Dr. Clive Disher, the last owner of Strathfieldsaye, who bequeathed the property to the University of Melbourne, claimed that the prize property was not Delvine but neighbouring Strathfieldsaye and that Raymond won the race. In fact, Raymond, who was a landowner in the Wellington district of New South Wales, learning of Strzelecki's account of Gipps Land, set out with a large mob of sheep. Loughnan and Taylor at Monaro and Frederick Jones at Omeo joined him and the party arrived at the Mitchell River crossing on June 20 1842. A sketch map dated

Later, Thomas's twin was also buried in the little cemetery. It was only about seven years later that Margaret too passed away and was buried at Delvine. In April 1877, 32 years after his epic journey to occupy the run he called Delvine, John Scott was buried in the little cemetery on the property.

Names and Places.

Early maps show names given to the rivers by Strzelecki who travelled through Gippsland only four months after McMillan. However, it was later decided to use the names given by McMillan. The names the squatters gave their runs are not shown. North of the river, Jones gave his run the name Lucknow and to the south of the river in its lower reaches was McLoud's run, Bairnsdale. Loughnan and Taylor's run, Lindenow, extended along the south bank of the river to about Glenaladale and to a line some 6 miles south. References to Bairnsdale, Lucknow and Lindenow, prior to about 1860 referred to these runs, not the communities that now bear the names.

The Electoral Roll prepared for the first election of the Victorian Parliament in 1856 uses the name of the runs as the place of abode for the great majority of the approx. 360 men enrolled for the whole of Gippsland.

In the early 1860's, as the countryside was surveyed and land was made available for closer settlement, names were needed for districts and communities that developed. Some adopted the name of the station from which they grew. The Post Office Directory for 1868 lists residents of Lindenow Flat and the surrounding area under Bairnsdale. In the 1884 - 1885 directory, they were listed under Coongulmerang and Coongulmerang Upper. The use of the names, Lindenow Flat and Lindenow South may have come into general use with the advent of the railway in the late 1880's. In more recent years, the name Coongulmerang has stuck with a small area several miles west of Lindenow and is now almost redundant although it is the name of the parish. This means that records mentioning Coongulmerang could be referring to what is now Lindenow and Lindenow South. The cemetery at Lindenow South still is known officially as the Coongulmerang cemetery.

A family reunited.....

Once the family had reached its final destination at Delvine, Mary, the first born journeyed from Scotland to join them. The infant they left behind in Scotland was a young woman in her early twenties when the family was reunited. She married Edward Saunders and after her death in 1889, was buried in Delvine Cemetery. The inscription on her tombstone, which lies shattered on the ground, reads;

Trusting in Jesus

*Come away for life and thought
Here no longer dwell
But in a city glorious
A great and distant city have brought*

A mansion incorruptible

Would she could have stayed with us.

The list of burials in Delvine Cemetery indicates that the people of the surrounding area looked to the Scott family for support in times of trouble. Although it was a private cemetery, it was made available for general use. Margaret, in particular, would have understood the feelings of the young mothers whose babies and small children are buried there as she, too, endured the sorrow of losing three infants. Family members who had moved on to properties of their own were brought back to Delvine for burial suggesting that there was a deep attachment to Delvine and what it represented.

Obituary Gippsland Times 23 April, 1877

SCOTT, John

The late John Scott Sen., of Delvine, whose decease was notified in our issue of the 18th., was (says the Courier) a native of Dunkeld, Scotland, was born on the 11th. of June 1796, and was in his 80th. year when he died. In 1826 he emigrated to Tasmania, where he followed farming for a period of six years. He then went to New South Wales as superintendent of Captain Bloomfield's estate. Some time after, he removed to Monaro and took full charge of the station known as Coolamating belonging to Captain Bloomfield, where he remained for about six years; and when Gippsland was discovered he removed with his family and took up the station on Tom's Creek, on the 14 July, 1845, which he named Delvine, where he resided until his death. He had a large family, his sons and daughters being all present at his death, - his sons, Messrs. James Scott, Fernbank, and John and Daniel Scott of Delvine, and his daughters, Mesdames Saunders, Hall, Murphy, and Whitbourne, of Lindenow Flat, and Mrs. Connolly of Dargo. He has left behind 80 grand and great grand children. The deceased was a Master Mason in the Freemason's Lodge, Scone, Scotland, and was highly respected by all who knew him



Delvine homestead

In his history of the Shire of Bairnsdale, *Path Among The Years*, John Adams wrote

"The Scott family were anxious to establish a home in Gippsland but the country they chose was difficult to tame, and they never ran many more than 500 cattle on the area in the 1840's, reaching 1020 cattle in 1856.

John and Margaret Scott were earnest, brave people whose stories have been told in a fine novel by Professor Porteus, Providence Ponds.

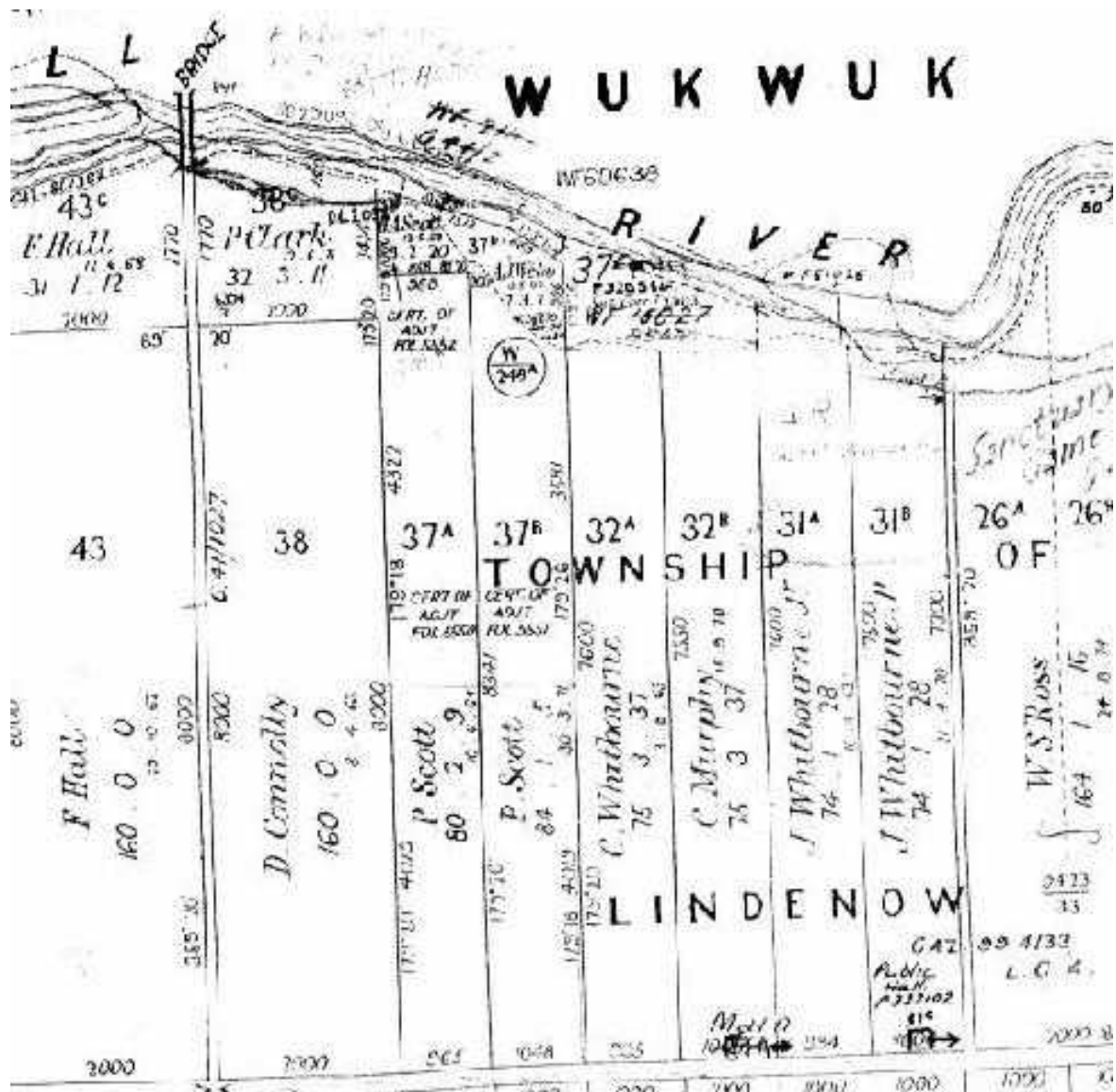
The novel, though essentially fiction, is a graphic account of the difficulties of the pioneers and the hardships they had to face. Scott's determination made Delvine Station one of the most enduring in East Gippsland."

Porteus intended to write an historically accurate account of the Scott's journey into Gippsland and visited Australia from his home in Honolulu in 1949 to do research. He obtained records from the Mitchell library in Sydney together with diaries and other material that he kept at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Whitbourne, where he and his wife made their base during their stay. Unfortunately, the house was totally destroyed by fire during their absence and all this valuable material lost. Despite this setback, he decided that he should put on record the knowledge he had acquired, partly from personal contact with his wife's grandmother, Catherine Scott (Whitbourne, Murphy) and partly from the material he had researched.

Closer Settlement.

In 1860, the Parliament of the Colony of Victoria passed the first of a number of Acts to break up the large runs held by the squatters and made blocks of land available for selection. The land was made available under an Improvement Purchase Lease, which required the successful applicants to fence, build a residence, and to clear portion of their blocks during a seven-year lease period. If they complied and paid a token rent over the period, the selector was granted a freehold title.

The rich alluvial land along the Mitchell River, which was part of the Lindenow run, was made available soon after the Act was passed. The Parish Map shows how members of the Scott family selected adjoining blocks. The map of portion of the Parish of Coongulmerang shows the blocks of F. Hall, Janet's husband; D. Connolly, Margaret's husband; P. Scott (Peter); C. Whitbourne, (Catherine); C. Murphy (possibly also Catherine after her remarriage): and J. Whitbourne, Ellen's husband. On the other side of W. S. Ross was E. Saunders, Mary's husband.



A tragedy.

In January 1862, the family was shocked by the untimely death of Catherine's husband, Henry (Tim) Whitbourne. He was a brother of Peter's wife, Susan and of Ellen's husband John. They were three of eight children who had migrated with their parents to Tasmania in 1843. Their mother, nee Jane Charter, died soon after and their father, John, married a convict girl, Elizabeth Cross who bore him a further twelve children.

The Gippsland Guardian reported on 10 Jan 1862, that at the Lucknow Races:-

"Timothy Whitburn (Henry) was riding round the course with some friends for the purpose of examining the leaps, when his horse suddenly stumbled and fell, rolling over his rider, and causing severe concussion of the brain of the latter. Dr. Simmons was immediately in attendance, but the latest news I am in possession of says but little hope is entertained of the unfortunate man's life being saved."

In the edition of 17 Jan 1862, the Guardian reported Henry's death.

Whatever happened to Peter Scott?

Mystery surrounds the disappearance of Peter Scott. His father's death certificate in 1877 records Peter's age as 47 years although he was aged 34 years when he disappeared suggesting that it was believed at that time he may be still alive. Further complications arose from a death certificate for "Phoebe, daughter of Peter Scott and Susan (nee Whitbourne), born at Lindenow Flat" in 1868.

With the freeing up of access to indexes to birth, death and marriages and other public documents in recent years some of the facts have been established. There is no death certificate for Peter. There was, however an application for letters of administration for Peter's estate in 1880. Pruned of its legalistic phraseology, it reads:

"I. Susan Simmons of Greensborough, wife of James Simmons of the same place, farmer, make oath and say:

1. That in April 1863, I was residing and cohabiting with my then husband, Peter Scott of Delvine, carrier, and had two children issue of my marriage with Peter Scott who resided with us.

2. Peter Scott was a carrier and on the first day of April 1864 left Delvine with a team of bullocks and a dray carrying a load of wheat to Stratford. I am informed and verily believe that on the third day of that month he arrived at a place called Longford on his way to Port Albert and camped near to the hotel there for about two days when he suddenly disappeared leaving the bullocks and dray outside the hotel without leaving any person in charge of them

3. *Immediately upon the news of the disappearance having been brought to me at Delvine a search party consisting of James Scott and John Scott, two brothers of Peter Scott, J. Scott, a nephew of Peter Scott, John Whitbourne my brother, F. Hall, J.M. Murphy and Edward Saunders, three of my brothers-in-law and Mr. Edward Scanlan the Sergeant of Police at Sale and about twenty others started on horseback from the hotel at Longford and searched the country for over seven days but no trace whatever of Peter Scott could be found*

4. *In the commencement of 1866, one Norman R. McLeod of Bairnsdale stated that he had seen Peter Scott in Ballarat and I thereupon obtained from a Justice of the Peace a warrant for the arrest for deserting me his wife and family but although the warrant was at once forwarded to Ballarat for execution no trace whatsoever of Peter Scott could be found and the warrant still remains in the hands of the Police unexecuted although photographs of Peter Scott have been sent to nearly every Police Station in Victoria.*

5. *Save as aforesaid I have not nor has any person to my knowledge seen or heard of Peter Scott since the 5th. day of April, 1864 when he disappeared as described.*

6. *At the time of the disappearance Peter Scott lived and cohabited with me and our children lived with us on the most friendly and affectionate terms and on his departure from his home on his journey to Port Albert he parted from me and bid me and our children "good-bye" in a most affectionate manner and there was no disagreement or quarrel or misunderstanding between me and my husband or any of our children.*

7. *At the time of the disappearance Peter Scott possessed considerable personal property that is to say - cattle, working bullocks, drays, furniture and other articles all of which he left in my possession and he was also occupying under residence and cultivation license from the Board of Land and Works one hundred and sixty acres of land at Coongulmerang to the Crown Grant of which Peter Scott if alive would be entitled.*

8. *That I am seeking to obtain letters of administration to the estate of the above named deceased*

9. *That the deceased left him surviving myself this deponent the widow of the deceased and one son Henry Scott and one daughter Margaret and a posthumous daughter Peteretta was born about eight months after his disappearance who are his only surviving next of kin entitled by law to share in his property.*

10. *That I am the widow of the said deceased and am as I am informed and believe entitled to take out letters of administration to his estate and effects.*

11. *That I have made careful enquiry and search but am unable to find any will*

12. *That Peter Scott left personal property to the value of pound;100 and real property not exceeding value the sum of pound 400.*

This affidavit was supported by one from James Scott and one from James Simmons in which he describes himself as the husband of Susan. The mystery still remains of Phoebe whose wedding and death certificate state that she was a daughter of Peter and Susan. In fact she was born some four years after Peter's disappearance. Susan makes no mention of her in her declaration of 1880.

Neither Henry Whitbourne nor Peter Scott had fulfilled the requirements for obtaining the freehold of their blocks. Their widows were left with very small children. The plight of Susan was sad indeed. She could not prove that her husband was dead and had to contend with all the complications arising from his disappearance.

The mystery of what really happened to Peter Scott still remains.

Research....

These are illustrations of the kind of interesting information that can be found through research at the Public Records Office or through Family History associations. Some people may feel that they are facts which should remain buried but there is probably a greater interest in family history than ever before and governments all around the world are facilitating access to the large amount of information which is in public records. It is this kind of material that establishes a culture of our own. Delvine cemetery is part of the heritage of Gippsland, which we must preserve for generations of Scott descendants to come.

....by yon bonny banks.

In 1990, Lois Banks, great grand daughter of Catherine Scott, researched family history in Scotland. With her son, Michael, Lois spent three days searching records held in the General Register Office, Edinburgh, Scotland.

They obtained copies of-

1 Birth extract of James Scott, son of James of the Boat of Caputh - 26th February 1764

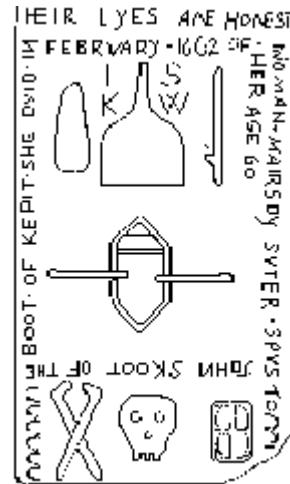
2 Marriage extract of James to Margaret Forbes - 26th April 1790

3 Birth extract of their son John Scott at the Boat of Caputh - 12 June 1797

4 Marriage extract of John Scott {Innkeeper} and Margaret Richardson at Perth, Scotland, 2nd. November, 1825.

Lois was also armed with a sketch of a gravestone that had been in her family since the 1930's.

This sketch was reputed to have some family connection. After much research, they found the same drawing in a book, "Gravestones in Scotland" together with directions on how to find it, in this case, the name of the village, the graveyard and its location in the graveyard. The inscription inscribed clockwise on the stone reads, in modern English, "Here lies an honest woman Mary Suter Spouse to John Scott of the boat of Caputh She died in February 1662 of her age 60".



With her cousin, Mary MacInnes, who at that time was residing in Scotland, and her three children, Lois travelled to Caputh and found the stone, now incorporated in a wall around the graveyard. It is very worn and hard to decipher but unmistakable as the subject of the sketch. The spelling of the name varied over time from Scoot, Skoot, Scot to Scott.

It appears that for many generations, the Scott family lived on the banks of the Tay River in Scotland and operated a rowing boat as a ferry across the river. Like the great majority of early settlers, their families had probably never owned land and migration to a new country was the only way their hopes to do so could be achieved.



The Ferry on the River Tay - from a painting.

Public Service.

A number of Scott descendants have served terms as Councillors of the Shire of Bairnsdale. Daniel Scott was Shire President in 1880-81, and 1893-94. Thomas William Murphy was Shire President in 1916-17, 1924-25, 1932-33, 1936-37 and 1941-42. Maxwell Joseph Evans was Shire President in 1970-71 and 1975-76. Robert Hine was Shire President in 1980-81. Graeme Bruce Evans was Shire President in 1984-85.

State Parliament...

Bruce James Evans represented Gippsland East in the Legislative Assembly from 1961 to 1992, successfully contesting ten elections. For several years, he was "Father of the House" and the second longest sitting Member in any Parliament in Australia. He attended three Constitutional Conventions representing the Victorian Parliament.

...and a State of the Union.

The following article appeared in a Hawaiian newspaper.

"Hebden Porteus

D. Hebden Porteus' last major political act was to run for governor in 1970. He lost a bruising Republican Primary to Samuel P. King, now a Federal Judge.

That contentious election was far from typical of Porteus' three decades of political life as a territorial and state legislator.

Urbane, coolly patrician in appearance, Porteus was a man of firmly held political beliefs that never got in the way of the larger mission of public service. The best testament to that can be found in the years when Porteus, by rights, should have been out of the sphere of political influence.

When the Republicans dominated the territorial Legislature in the 1940's and early 1950's, Hebden Porteus was a leader and key policymaker.

But then in 1954, the Democrats took over and Porteus, fortunate to hold on to his legislative seat, should have moved to the back bench. Yet he remained an active player, respected for his experience and relied on for his advice.

In 1968, Porteus was elected to a Constitutional Convention dominated by Democrats and was chosen president. All factions in that convention recognized that Porteus would lead with fairness and wisdom. He did.

Hebden Porteus' career spanned decades of political change in Hawaii and never failed to leave its mark.

An editorial about Porteus following that 1968 Constitutional Convention was headlined: "An Excellent Servant."

No more need be said."