

G.K.E. FAIRHOLME, Gentleman, Scholar and Squatter

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G.K.E. Fairholme was one of those young, early pioneers described by Governor Gipps in 1844:

. . . there are amongst the Squatters and living the life which I have described, great numbers of young men every way entitled to be called gentlemen, young men of Education, and many of good family and connexions in Europe. The presence of young men of this description beyond the boundaries has been highly advantageous; first in lessening the rudeness of Society in what is called the "Bush" and secondly as affording the materials for a local Magistracy. On a former occasion, I remarked how unjust it would be to confound the Squatters of Australia with those who bear the same name in America.¹

George Knight Erskine Fairholme, whom we shall refer to as Fairholme, pronouncing it as "Fairem", left London for New South Wales on the barque *St. George*. The ship travelled down the Thames to Gravesend (where graves end, after that it's burial at sea) and from there sailed on a favourable tide on 7 April 1840. Of his voyage to Australia, we have very little account, all we know is that the ship carried merchandise, and there were four other passengers, Mrs. Scott and three children. Captain Sughrue, Master of the barque *St. George* brought the ship into Sydney Harbour, New South Wales on Friday, 21 August 1840, a one hundred and forty-two day journey.²

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Whilst Governor George Gipps wrote about the young men of Britain and Europe in 1844, he had from 1840 actually been encouraging them to migrate to New South Wales. When Fairholme disembarked he went to Government House apparently to stay as a guest of the Governor.³ Fairholme was born in 1822, the third son of George Fairholme and the Honourable Caroline Elizabeth Forbes, eldest daughter of the Eighteenth Lord Forbes. He was educated at Rugby School. Founded in 1567, the school during his residence there had as its principal one Thomas Arnold. Arnold is credited with giving the school its character in public school education.⁴ Having completed the formal part of his education Fairholme came, as did many other young men, out to one of Britain's Colonies. His eldest brother William was associated with the Pallisers in British Canada. His older brother James joined the Royal Navy.⁵ Fairholme was aged eighteen years when he arrived in New South Wales and became a guest at Government House, Parramatta.

THE EARLY PERIOD

On 24 August 1840, a visitor called at Government House having received a letter sent by his father through the services of Fairholme. The visitor was a Patrick Leslie, then twenty-five years of age and a resident of New South Wales since 1835. His brother George Leslie writing to his mother on that same day, 24 August 1840, mentions the receipt of the letter:

. . . Pat received my dearest Father's by young Fairholme the day before yesterday and called immediately upon him. He is living at Government House and Pat'k says he thinks he is a very nice young fellow. He is very young and of course must wait a year or two before he can do anything for himself and so Pat'k asked him to go up to the Downs with me by which he can be gaining experience and after staying there a while he can commence for himself. We will of course show him every attention we can, both on acc[oun]t of his being a countryman and on Lord Strathallan's recommendation. It will be agreeable for us having sometime after this Fairholme as a neighbour and it will of course be of assistance to him going with us as it will be putting him in the way of getting in a new and good part of the country.

It was in this same letter to his mother that George indicated how ". . . Patrick went to the Governor the other day (i.e. in August 1840) and got a pass from him for us to go from the Downs to Moreton Bay whenever we like, as its being a penal settlement of course no one can go there without permission." The permission

given also included the use of space in Government ships and the use of a store room in the Government Commissariat stores at Moreton Bay. The Leslies had been on the Darling Downs since late June 1840, when Walter on 6 July wrote to his parents what was probably the first letter from the Darling Downs. In his letter he explains that since January 1840 their party had travelled from Carleroi (now Collaroy), their uncle's property on the Krui River about fifty miles nor-nor-west of Muswellbrook inland from Newcastle. They were now settled on their run with Ernest Dalrymple on the run next to theirs. Describing the Leslies' run Walter writes, ". . . fancy about fifty miles of a river with splendid plains and open land on both sides and that is our run for which we pay only £10 per annum".⁶



Portrait of Patrick Leslie on wall of the Warwick (Q.) Historical Museum. (Courtesy of Warwick and District Historical Society).

It was to this situation at the headwaters of the Condamine River that Patrick Leslie invited the young Fairholme. Fairholme indicated his interest but also referred to the presence in New South Wales of the Kinghorn family. Kinghorn whilst in England had acted on occasions as an agent for his father at Berwick-on-Tweed. Fairholme was expected to visit the Kinghorn family and stay for a time with them. Patrick in his first letter after his marriage to Catherine (Kate), a daughter of Hannibal Macarthur, tells his parents how he persuaded Fairholme to accompany the Leslies to the Darling Downs. Writing on 11 September 1840 from Clovelly where he was spending his honeymoon, Patrick two days after his wedding pens a six-page letter to his parents. In it he writes:

. . . I have written to you three times since I came from the bush (i.e. Darling Downs) but since writing the last time, your letter my dear father was sent me by Fairholme who you may be sure I made a point of seeing immediately and giving him all the advice I thought he required - you may assure Lord Strathallan that I have the greatest pleasure in paying Fairholme every attention - he is very young and a fine lad as I have seen for long and his blood unexceptional which is a great thing. I took a great fancy to him as well from his nice gentleman like manners and appearance as from your letter about him and as Mr. Kinghorn who was to have Fairholme with him at some of his stations is (though I have no doubt an honest man) not at all in that society in which a man of Fairholme's birth should be associated as Kinghorn is in a very indifferent society and I told Fairholme of this and said that as Kinghorn had been civil to him it would I thought be right to pay him a weeks visit which he could do without compromising himself as he said there was no understanding between Kinghorn and him how long or short time his visit should be - On this visit having expired I told him he should take a fortnights ride through Argyle where Kinghorns stations are, which would let him see the country a little and then that I would be very glad for him to come and make Dunheved his home for the time that Don will be down with us and that he then could go up to our stations with George and remain with them and learn how things were done as long as he liked. I am very glad to have it in my power to (give) attention to him for the sake of your friend Lord Strathallan and good old Lord Forbes.

Fairholme followed the advice given, went up to Kinghorn's property near Goulburn, stayed for a while and returned to Dunheved, the Leslies' rented property near Penrith, towards the end of October 1840.⁷ It was about a month later on 22 November 1840 that Goerge Leslie, Fairholme and Durno (James Durno, another Aberdonian had arrived in New South Wales by the *North Briton* on 17 July 1840) along with an unnamed stockman and a Blackfellow began their journey to the Darling Downs. The Blackfellow was to be used for finding water and tracking any lost horses or cattle. They had five pack horses and a riding horse each and expected to be on the road for four to five weeks. Also on their journey they would watch out for suitable cattle to purchase on behalf of Fairholme and Durno.⁸ So the party set out, reaching the Darling Downs in late December. The distance they travelled was about six hundred miles. When they arrived they set about

organising affairs around the station, one of the problems being that late-comer-squatters were now moving in. So they had to prevent them from sitting on their run. Fairholme was getting a good “further education”. George Leslie notes the dress of the time on the Darling Downs, hat, shirt, trousers and boots. Also the accommodation, it was either under the stars or, as a little later on, in a very draughty hut. The work with the stock was hot, sweaty and dusty; just as well the Condamine River was close.



G.K.E. Fairholme (Courtesy of Mitchell Library, Sydney).

Fairholme accompanied George Leslie down the range to Moreton Bay in September 1841, it was an occasion for getting away from the dust, the heat and the daily round. On returning they found yet more would-be trespassers trying to move in. George Leslie tells of one man who squatted with 40,000 sheep almost on their old head station hut area. After chasing the Leslie cattle off he then set fire to the grass which really scattered the cattle herd. Their run was a large area to manage with some twelve miles of sheep stations from the head station and below in the other direction down river some fifteen miles of cattle stations.⁹

The Leslies found one way to help alleviate the problem. They sold some of the run, or rather the goodwill of it, for it was all Government land. They disposed of Toolburra, their land towards the lower end, retaining Canning Downs and the land past Killarney. Toolburra came into the possession of William Gordon who paid the Leslies £250 for the use of it. The purchase included the improvements, a few huts and a woodshed along with ten miles of run.¹⁰

On 8 November 1841, Walter Leslie and Fairholme remained to look after the head station Canning Downs whilst the others had

gone “down country”. George Leslie had gone to Dunheved to look after it in Patrick’s absence. Hay, the Downs overseer, had made the journey south to bring his wife back to Canning Downs. At Canning Downs there were about thirty male employees, so that Walter Leslie and Fairholme had plenty of supervising to do, including the shearing. Walter and Fairholme managed the run on their own, until Goerge returned late in May 1842 after closing down the operations at Dunheved. He brought the greater part of the stock back with him, two hundred horses plus cattle and sheep. He also brought implements, drays and household items. Walter and Fairholme had finished the shearing and packed the wool bales ready for shipment. The bales were loaded onto wagons and carted down to Moreton Bay to be shipped out. Around this time Fairholme had acquired some cattle for himself, and was now accommodated with Murray, a brother of Lord Ellibank, about a quarter of a mile away from the Canning Downs homestead. Murray himself had four hundred ewes on the run, paying 4/- per head per annum for grazing privileges and also helping the Leslies to stock the run. Fairholme had ordered and was awaiting delivery of a box of saddlery, which included a new saddle that he had already sold to Walter Leslie. However it had not arrived and apparently came on a later ship. By October 1842 all these minor irritations and upheavals were a thing of the past. Canning Downs was settling into a routine, Patrick was looking after the horses, Walter the sheep and George the cattle. Also Brisbane Town in 1842 was a developing village, the Post Office was now properly regulated and a home letter could now be entrusted to them.¹¹

Fairholme continued building up his own herd and flock. Now aged twenty-one years, he was becoming a “squatter” without real estate but in possession of livestock. He purchased a further 300 head of cattle, paying £2 a head. For an agreed price he ran all his stock on the Leslie property. Records indicate that at this time the Leslies themselves had 420 head of cattle, 2,300 sheep and about 65 horses. Fairholme was not only building up his herd and flock but also he was setting down some of his thoughts concerning Darling Downs, Moreton Bay and New South Wales generally. Like the Leslies he too wrote letters home to his parents. Unfortunately most of this written material was lost in the Irish riots of the 1920s when fire destroyed the Fairholme property. George Fairholme senior, writing to William Leslie, father of the Leslie brothers, tells of receiving a letter from his son, informing of the good health of the Leslies. Though Walter had had a fall during the horse races at Moreton Bay, the injury was slight and he was recovering well. The loss of the Fairholme letters and papers highlights a loss to

Queensland of similar records. For Fairholme wrote about the people, the flora and fauna and the general happenings of the time. Much of our early history and material relevant to our prehistory have been lost. Some things were saved however through previous publication.

In 1844 Fairholme set down his "Observations on the Aborigines of New South Wales", with particular reference to those of the Darling Downs and Moreton Bay. His contribution sheds much light on the way Aboriginal society functioned in these places at the time of settlement. It also shows a tidy scholarly mind, not only describing what was seen but also analysing some of the things he noticed. On Aboriginal languages he comments:

. . . as to the language of the blacks it is well known that it varies in different parts of the country. In these districts (i.e. Darling Downs and Moreton Bay) the language of each tribe 50 or 70 miles apart is very different, but on meeting they have a language in common, a fact of which I have been assured by the natives themselves.

He then comments:

. . . there is a sort of gibberish spoken to the blacks by the lower orders of people which consists of some words of blacks far down the country and other words of corrupted English. The men think this is a black's language and no doubt the blacks consider it as our language.

He goes on:

. . . the language of all our blacks, instead of being harsh, guttural and unmusical are as graceful and elegant when fluently spoken as any language I have ever heard not excepting our most liquid European tongues.

Fairholme also described the Forest Kangaroo and the Red Kangaroo, the habitats they favoured and their attitude to their young when they were pursued. Yet he notes how they could be tamed. He had kept a young one himself in a flannel bag until it was old enough to hop about of itself.¹²

Whilst Fairholme describes what he had observed in an English mode, placing human beings on a comparative scale (a pre-Darwinian view) he recognised the uniqueness of the Aboriginal way of life, he noted their technical ability, their musicalness and prophesied that alcohol would become a future problem for them.

There are extant sketches of life on the Darling Downs drawn by Fairholme around this time of 1844-1845. These were published



Sketch of Canning Downs in the 1840's by G.K.E. Fairholme, photographed by W.R.F. Love from the original in 1984.

later in Sydney under the title "Fifteen Views in New South Wales by G.K.E.F." The publication (hand-coloured) includes some sketches of views in Brisbane Town also. There is a copy in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Some of the sketches used in the publication are still retained at Canning Downs Station. These include sketches of the grounds and the station in the period when Fairholme knew it. So not only was Fairholme contributing to the pastoral life of the Darling Downs but also he was recording the changes he observed taking place there.

Concerning his pastoral activities, by 1845 his cattle were being noted for their fine quality. Patrick Leslie himself was moved to write to his parents in April 1845:

. . . Fairholmes (cattle) were some of the best ever seen and one of them was the best bullock I ever saw in the Colony. He was an aged bullock. You might send a copy of (this) to George's F[ather]'s father - it would gratify him I'm sure.¹³

This was about the time when Patrick Leslie bought the land on which he subsequently built the first Newstead (house), his brother-in-law Captain John Wickham (of H.M.S. *Beagle* fame) buying the land next door up river. George Leslie also refers to Fairholme's pastoral success:

. . . the average weight of tallow per head from Fairholmes animals was 326 lbs per head, this George considered the best average he had heard of in the country.

Along with all these successes the country itself was moving out of its depressed state. The group centred around the Leslies were a

happy lot, occasionally this ebullience bubbled over as George Leslie wrote home:

... I cannot write for the damned noise that is being made in the hut, Patrick, William and James Hay, Farquharson, Fairholme, St. George Gore and Cranky Uhr are kicking up a cursed row and I can scarcely understand what I am writing.¹⁴

Life on the Darling Downs was not always hard work and dullness. It was towards the end of 1845 that Fairholme along with William and James Hay purchased Toolburra from William F. Gordon. The official record held in the Mitchell Library reads:

To Col. Treasurer

22nd December 1845

Hay and Fairholme I do myself the honour to request that you will cause a transfer of the station held by William F. Gordon Esquire known as Toolburra to be made to the persons named in the margin. I transmit to you a form of application for a licence from those gentlemen as I am not aware whether under existing regulations any fee will be demanded for the ensuing year.

I have Yr--

So Fairholme and the Leith Hays became the lessees of Toolburra. They paid Gordon £500 for it, unstocked. George Leslie had already purchased the stock separately paying £590 ostensibly for 590 head of cattle. Actually on a head count it was about 730 beasts.

George Leslie considered Toolburra the second best station on the Downs after Canning Downs. It was during this period in August 1847 that His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales was pleased to appoint George Knight Erskine Fairholme Esquire, of Toolburra, Darling Downs, to be a Magistrate of the Territory and its Dependencies.¹⁵ Fairholme and the Leith Hays held Toolburra until 1851 when with the Land Commissioner's sanction they disposed of the property to Walter and George Leslie. Whilst they occupied Toolburra Fairholme and the Leith Hays not only ran their own stock but also took in stock for agistment. The system worked like this, using Captain John Wickham's sheep as an example: half of the wool and half of the increase to be for Fairholme and the Leith Hays. Wickham had to find the woolpacks and pay all the Government taxes on sheep. The wool was to be landed from the Darling Downs to Moreton Bay by Fairholme and the Leith Hays, and after that at Wickham's risk.¹⁶ In 1848 there was a challenge to the ownership of part of the Toolburra run. A Mr. John Taylor

engaged Mr. John Crowder to contest the right of Messrs. Hay and Fairholme disallowing John Taylor's occupation of a portion of the run.¹⁷ Fairholme acted on behalf of the Leith Hays and himself. The cast was listed as under Caveat in the *New South Wales Government Gazette* on Monday, 5th March 1849. What the outcome was is unclear, but it would appear that Fairholme and the Leith Hays held an undivided interest in Toolburra until they disposed of it to Walter and George Leslie in 1851.

The death of George Fairholme senior in 1847 was an upsetting time for G.K.E. Fairholme and he resolved to make a trip to England as soon as he could. The whole of Moreton Bay at this time was mourning the loss of life occasioned by the sinking of the steamship *Sovereign* wrecked on the north bar of Rous Channel, south of Moreton Island. There were forty-four persons from among the passengers and crew who perished in the tragic shipwreck. Also the season had been wet and bad for stock, but these other happenings made the loss of wool from the wet seem a small thing in comparison. Fairholme went over to England. His absence meant he was not present when George Leslie married Emmeline Macarthur, sister to Kate, the wife of Patrick Leslie. The wedding took place on 2 December 1848.¹⁸ Unfortunately this happy event was mared by a tragedy at Government House, Parramatta. Emmeline was regarded as one of the Fitz Roy family and used to spend a great deal of time at Government House. On 7 December just five days after the wedding, Lady Mary Fitz Roy (nee Lennox) was thrown from her carriage in the driveway at Government House and was killed, the Governor was injured and the A.D.C. Charles Masters also died in the accident.

Fairholme was away until 1849. He returned on the *Johnstone* much to the delight of George Leslie who had now added Coochin Coochin run to the Leslies' holdings. Stock was now being moved from Canning Downs to Coochin Coochin, agisted there and then sold, the butchers preferring to deal with the Moreton Bay region rather than Darling Downs. As George Leslie notes:

. . . the butchers will buy much more from us at Coochin than from here (Darling Downs) as it is only half the distance to come for stock and consequently only half the expense of driving.

George Leslie in 1850 wrote to his parents seeking financial help, not because of difficulties but for further expansion. Goomburra and Coochin Coochin were now paid off. There was an increase of 10,000 sheep for that year at Canning Downs and he wanted another property to hold the increase of stock. He expected stock to

reach 40,000 sheep alone.¹⁹ Also he was looking for more labour to work on the properties already acquired, so was Fairholme. In the *Government Gazette* for 1850, Page 607, we note that Fairholme along with other squatters was among the signatories of a Petition. This Petition sent to the House of Commons sought the sending of further exiles to Moreton Bay. Fairholme by this time had 7,000 sheep, 500 cattle and 23 horses on his shared property.²⁰

George Leslie had, in this same year 1850, discharged George Spencer the manager at Coochin Coochin. Fairholme was asked to help out in the situation, he looking after Coochin Coochin whilst the Leith Hays continued with Toolburra.

In 1853 George Leslie himself made a trip back home to Scotland. Whilst he was over there he arranged finance on behalf of Patrick for the purchase of Gladfield Station from Master. He returned to Australia later in the year. Fairholme was still at Coochin Coochin. During George Leslie's absence one of the Leith Hays was looking after Canning Downs whilst the other brother was still at Toolburra.

A MORETON BAY INTERLUDE

When taking a break from the Pastoral round during 1853 Fairholme and one of the Leith Hays went to Brisbane Town. Their visit there coincided with the arrival of the Lord Henry Scott Montague party. Lord Henry, Lord Schomberg and Henry Stobart (Scott Montague's tutor) were on a "Grand Tour". Stobart was a prolific writer of letters, in fact he made them his journal of their tour. Stobart's Journal tells of happenings in Moreton Bay and on the Darling Downs in 1853. Fairholme, Leith Hays and the Scott Montague party met at Newstead (House) and dined with Captain Wickham. On 14 June 1853, Hay and Fairholme went with Lords Montague and Schomberg on an unsuccessful shooting trip. It was following this trip that Stobart and Fairholme engaged in an anthropological discussion, the main topic being the porpoises of Moreton Bay and their service to the Aborigines on Strakbroke Island. Whilst Stobart notes that he considers Fairholme the most intelligent of the squatters he had met, he could not believe, as Fairholme stated, that the Aborigines of Moreton Bay made use of the porpoises to assist them in catching mullet and other fish. Even when Captain Wickham confirmed the story he was not satisfied.

A few days later Mr. Duncan, the Head of Customs, brought one of the Customs House boats to Newstead. The Scott Montague party, Captain Wickham and Fairholme went on board and they travelled across the bay to Amity Point on Stradbroke Island. They arrived just as the Aborigines were cutting up a dugong, dividing it

ceremoniously and distributing the pieces in some form of rank order. That evening the party witnessed a corroboree though not all the Aborigines took part, due mainly to an over indulgence in dugong meat. The Scott Montague party and the others retired for the night to their tents along the seashore. The next day Stobart was able to see for himself how the porpoises assisted the Stradbroke Islanders to catch fish. He wrote in his journal:

. . . the porpoises bring the fish, mullet in particular, close inshore and the men carrying two semi-circular nets enter the water. The porpoises do not move out of the way nor show any sign of alarm while the fish are netted. Sometimes fish spears are used and again the porpoises remain at ease.

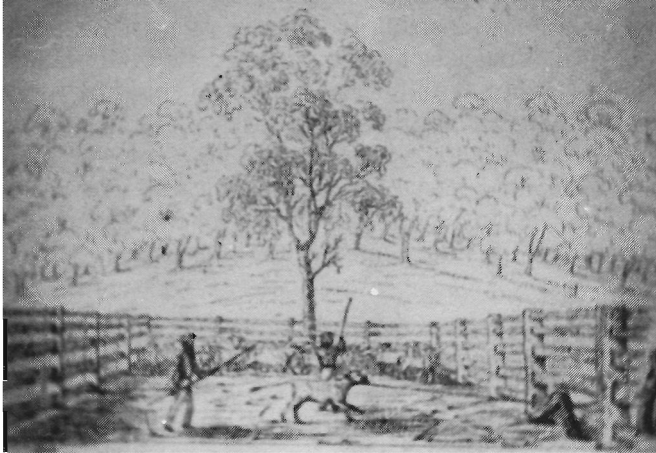
Their second night on the island saw another corroboree with more people taking part this time. It took place in front of their tents in the firelight and with the Stradbroke Island forest as a backdrop. Stobart felt that he had passed through a deep experience when witnessing this corroboree.

Next day the whole group travelled around the Bay. They landed at St. Helena Island, then covered with thick scrub, where they spent about three hours. They were intrigued by the flying fox camp, seeing them sleeping in the trees and moving off in massed flight when some shots had been fired among them. The dead flying foxes were collected and subsequently handed to some Aborigines on Bribie Island where the party also landed after passing Humpy Boang. They set up their camp on the mainland opposite to Bribie Island. Later they travelled down to the southern section of the Bay visiting the Nerang River region.²¹

Fairholme, like Stobart, was visibly impressed with what he saw. In the records of the London Zoological Society's Proceedings for 1856, there are three papers by Fairholme: "Observations on the Pteropus (i.e. Flying Fox) of Australia"; "On the Australian Dugong (*Halicore Australis*)"; and "The Blacks of Moreton Bay and the Porpoises". All of these echo the things observed during the 1853 bay trip with Wickham, Stobart, Scott Montague and Schomberg. Fairholme's papers are among the earliest scientific papers on the fauna as well as being among the earliest anthropological observations from Moreton Bay. Fairholme and Hay returned to Brisbane Town leaving the others to continue their "Grand Tour".

Fairholme had become interested in a station property some thirty miles due east of Coochin Coochin, Bromelton, leased at this time to Thomas L. Murray Prior. Originally looked after by Aickman and

Prior it was now registered in the name of T.L. Murray Prior. Fairholme purchased the leasehold, all sixty square miles of it, the lease being registered in his name in 1853. Today the sixty square miles are reduced to about 365 acres.²²



Fairholme sketch (repaired and re backed) of stockyard branding, photographed from the original by W.R.F. Love.

In January 1854, George Leslie, to everyone's surprise, announced that he had sold Canning Downs, and after clearing all encumbrances, was left with £40,000 hard cash. At first he did not know the name of the buyer and was surprised to find that it was his cousin, Gilbert Davidson.²³ S.S. Mort, who handled the transaction, received £2,000 commission. Mort subsequently acquired Coochin Coochin for himself, becoming the registered lessee in that same year 1854.²⁴ Fairholme received news in 1854 that his uncle Adam Fairholme 4th of Lagate and Old Melrose had died unmarried and that he Fairholme was his successor. His older brother James Fairholme had been expected to succeed to the title but he was lost with other members of the Franklin Expedition in 1845, when H.M.S. *Erebus* disappeared whilst in search of the North West Passage. It was not until some years after the expedition set out that the tragedy (104 men died) was known to the world. James Fairholme was not to succeed his uncle so G.K.E. Fairholme received the estate of Old Melrose along with the title.²⁵ Once again Fairholme had to return to Britain to attend to family matters. He retained his interest in Bromelton, placing a manager there to look after this stock and also the property. On arrival in Britain he attended to the legalities involved with his inheritance. In 1855 Fairholme went over to Paris to see The Great Exhibition being held there. Francis E. Bigge (Commissioner Bigge's nephew), also a

landholder squatter in south-east Queensland, was attending the Paris Exhibition at the same time. Bigge knew he would be late for an appointment in Paris with Fairholme so he enlisted the aid of William Macarthur, another member of the New South Wales Macarthur family who had lodgings in Paris. Bigge directed Fairholme to call at Macarthur lodgings to find out where he, Bigge, would be. For that purpose he had enclosed a note for Macarthur to pass along to Fairholme indicating where he could be found. Bigge notes in his letter that Patrick Leslie was planning to go back to Australia, to New South Wales where living was cheaper than in England. Also he had seen Arthur Hodgson who was now living at Brighton. The pair of them had gone to the Goodwood races together. Presumably Fairholme got the message; history does not record it.²⁶

The Leslies, apparently believing that now Fairholme would want to dispose of his property, Bromelton, sought to have it purchased for Rolleston, their brother-in-law. Christopher Rolleston, former Land Commissioner for the Darling Downs, married Katherine Leslie (Kate) at Foller in Aberdeenshire in 1854. Rolleston in Central Queensland is named after him. The expected price for Bromelton was to be £2,500. After speaking with Fairholme on the matter a satisfactory arrangement was concluded.²⁷ Rolleston however preferred a civil service career and after returning to New South Wales with Kate became private secretary to the Governor-General Sir William Dennison. He followed this with further colonial civil service, dying in Sydney in 1888. Fairholme, now George Knight Erskine Fairholme 5th of Lugate and Old Melrose, continued in 1855 his journeying around Europe. In May of that year he received back the sum of £1,000 which he had loaned to Rolleston. It was paid back by George Leslie.²⁸

THE LATER PERIOD

It was probably around this time that he went to Austria and Germany and that whilst in Bavaria he met Pauline, the eldest daughter of Frederick William Poelnitz-Frankenberg of Bavaria. There is a suggestion that when Ludwig Leichhardt passed through the Darling Downs on his exploration journeys he had discussions with Fairholme on the beauty of the Bavarian and Austrian scenery. Fairholme, it was suggested, should go and see these things for himself. However, when and where Fairholme first met Baroness Pauline, his future wife, is not clear.

In 1856 Fairholme was proposed for membership of the Royal Geographical Society. Founded in 1830, the Society aimed at furthering exploration and the collection of knowledge about the

world. Members were elected on the nomination of someone who would personally speak for them. That Victorian genius and man of science, Francis Galton (later Sir Francis) nominated Fairholme, the nomination being seconded by Gisborne Smith.²⁹ When I was in London last year (1983) I called at the Royal Geographical Society in their building in Kensington Gore opposite Kensington Gardens. There I received a photocopy of Fairholme's candidature application and my attention was drawn by the staff to the calibre of his proposer Francis Galton. Galton wrote a paper titled "Recent Discoveries in Australia", which was printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* of 1862. It is tempting to consider Fairholme as one of his sources. Election entitled Fairholme to the use of F.R.G.S. if he so wished.

In 1857 Fairholme married his Princess, or rather, Baroness Pauline Poelnitz-Frankenberg.³⁰ They set up residence at Wellenau, Bregenz, Vorarlberg, Austria. Fairholme still had Bromelton Station as well as Old Melrose and Wellenau. Apparently he decided to dispose of his New South Wales assets, so he returned to Australia in 1858. Bromelton alongside of Beau Desert Station was sold finally to Messrs. Morehead and Young, the transaction being registered in 1860.³¹ By then Queensland, the newest Colony, had come into being. However, Fairholme had finished with his part in the founding of the new Colony. He had reported on its earliest inhabitants, examined and commented upon its flora and fauna, had shown what fine cattle, sheep and wool it could produce, had sketched its early beginnings and had conducted himself as a scholar and a gentleman. What Fairholme did in going with the Leslies shows through the passage of time how he took part in the setting of a pattern for the development of Queensland. The Leslies came inland to the Darling Downs, yet they saw the importance of a port for the hinterland, a port where the pastoral and agricultural communities could ship out their produce. So they made overtures in the right places and secured their outlet. They all helped establish tracks through at least three mountain passes, Cunningham's Gap, Spicer's Peak Gap and Gorman's Gap. The later developments in Queensland saw the pattern repeated, inland expansion producing both crops and minerals, the output shipped from ports adjacent to the regions of productivity. Whilst Brisbane has remained the Capital, the importance of each of these regions with its port cannot be disregarded in any study of Queensland development.

The squatters recognised the value of cash markets near at hand, so the Darling Downs began progressively to take control of the properties on the eastern side of the Main Divide. They knew there would be rises and falls in prices of their rural products and the wise

ones adjusted accordingly. However, through all of this for many of those who came from Britain the thought of returning “home” to the Mother Country was always there. As George Leslie echoed to his brother William in 1854 (after selling Canning Downs):

. . . I think I have done right and consider myself very fortunate to find myself at the age of 33 an idle man with £40,000.0.0 hard cash . . .when I realise all [my assets] and go home [i.e. to Scotland] I will be reduced to £1200 per annum (through investments). This I think I can live quietly on at home but we must be careful as I have now ceased to make money. Had I not sold I venture to say that I sh[oul]d without entering into any unsafe speculation have cleared out in five years with £200,000.0.0 hard cash but as it is I am very well content.²²

So that the exploitation of the land and its productivity which is still being seen today along with the taking of money out of the country were part of the founding pattern in our State.

There was one noticeable thing in the early colonies and it was this. The early pioneering gentry brought, as Governor Gipps had prophesied, fine qualities to the runs they occupied. They were a group who put much into the Colonies as well as receiving a due reward. People like Fairholme, the Leslies, Wickham, the two Dalrymples, Davidson, Hodgson, Rolleston, Durno, Bigges, Tooth, Scott, Gammie, McAdam, the MacKenzies, the Leith Hays, Gordon, Murray Prior, the Campbells, Deuchar, Bracker, Dix, McLean, McDonald, Smith, Hood, the Morts, Douglas, Boyd, Aickman, along with a host of others who put so much into this founding period. Along with them also were those who served as labourers, first a few convicts, then ticket-of-leave men, then the free settler labourers. The gentry and the lower orders all working together produced the first wealth from the Darling Downs and Moreton Bay, the future Queensland. Fairholme left Queensland around 1859, just when the colonial status he had helped to work for was being achieved. He never returned and passed away in 1888, in the one hundredth year of the first founding of the Colony of New South Wales and the future Australian Commonwealth.

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Notes

1. Governor Gipps to Stanley, 3.4.1844, H.R.A. 1, 23; pp. 510-511.
2. *The Sydney Herald*, Monday, 24.8.1840, p. 2.
3. Leslie Letter No. 192, 24.8.1840 (J.O.L.).
4. Fairholme Family Correspondence, 1982.
5. Fairholme Family Correspondence, 1982.
6. Leslie Letter No. 140, 6.7.1840 (J.O.L.).
7. Leslie Letter No. 194, 28.10.1980 (J.O.L.).
8. Leslie Letter No. 195, 20.11.1840 (J.O.L.).
9. Leslie Letter No. 197, 1.9.1841 (J.O.L.).
10. Leslie Letter No. 143, 8.11.1841 (J.O.L.).
11. Leslie Letters Nos. 199-203, 17.11.1841-2.3.1842 (J.O.L.).
12. Fairholme Manuscript Transcription, W.R.F. Love, 1982.
13. Leslie Letter No. 7, 10.4.1845 (Fryer Library, U. of Qld.).
14. Leslie Letter No. 219, 24.5.1845 (J.O.L.).
15. N.S.W. Government Gazette, August 1847.
16. Leslie Letter No. 226, 16.3.1846 (J.O.L.).
17. Colonial Secretary Correspondence 48/41; 9.3.1848 (M.L.).
18. Leslie Letter No. 233, 5.1.1847 (J.O.L.).
19. Leslie Letter No. 236, 10.7.1850 (J.O.L.).
20. N.S.W. Government Gazette, June 1850.
21. Stobarts Journal, 1853 (A.N.L.).
22. Run Register, CLO/13.Z337, Q.S.A.
23. Leslie Letter No. 259, 10.1.1845 (J.O.L.).

24. Run Register, CLO/13.Z337, Q.S.A.
25. Fairholme Family Correspondence, 1982.
26. Francis E. Bigge, letter to Macarthur, 6.8.1855 (M.L.).
27. Leslie Letter No. 265, 10.5.1855 (J.O.L.).
28. Leslie Letter No. 266, 17.5.1855 (J.O.L.).
29. Archives, Royal Geographical Society, London, England.
30. Fairholme Family Correspondence, 1982.
31. Run Register, CLO/13.Z337, Q.S.A.