

EARLY BRIGHTON AND SANDGATE

(Read at a meeting of the Society on August 23, 1956.)

I. The Brighton Hotel (Sandgate) and Captain Townsend

[By E. V. STEVENS, Hon. Life Member of the
Historical Society of Queensland.]

This paper relates the story of the Brighton Hotel at Sandgate, Queensland, a landmark in Brighton Terrace, and although the hotel licence has not been continuous, the hotel site is one of the earliest reserved for that purpose in Queensland. The site is included in Portion 57, Parish of Nundah. A Proclamation in the New South Wales Government Gazette dated October 12, 1858, lists land which was to be offered for sale at the Police Court, Brisbane, to be held on December 14, 1858, County Stanley, Parish of Nundah. The land is described as "Lying on and near the shores of Moreton Bay, and between the waters of the Pine River and Sandgate." Forty-four lots were offered, the price ranging from £1 to £3 per acre. Lot No. 17 was Portion 57, Parish of Nundah.

The first purchaser of Portion 57 was Daniel Rowntree Somerset of Brisbane, who was given a Deed of Grant (No. 949) of 37 acres for £37. This original Deed of Grant can be seen in the Titles Office, Brisbane, Vol. 2A, Folio 2. The land was purchased on August 29, 1859. As a matter of interest, the next Deed of Grant, for land adjacent to Portion 57, was issued to Joshua Jeays.

Nehemiah Bartley in "Opals and Agates" (page 93) relates a story which shows D. R. Somerset to be one of the most gullible of men. Near the Customs House, Brisbane, was Richardson's (later Brights') wharf, where D. R. Somerset had the upper floor. Bartley describes him as "a kindly honest simple-hearted gentleman, all too easily imposed upon," and relates this story.

"Captain John Murphy, of the barque 'Bella Vista,' was a bluff, bold seaman, and never 'stood on repairs' much . . . One day Murphy brought the barque up the

river, all sail set, with such a vigorous rush, that her flying jibboom went through the roof of Somerset's wharf shed. Murphy hauled off clear, anchored, and was ashore in his boat instanter, and in the upper office. 'Come out on the wharf for a moment, Mr. Somerset,' said he, and Mr. Somerset did so. 'Do you see those goats on the roof of the shed, and those loose shingles?' said Murphy. 'Indeed, I do, Captain Murphy, and I had no idea, till now, they were such destructive animals; I am much obliged to you for telling me of it, and I will see that it does not happen again'."

The Survey Office and the Titles Office possess plan 29109, showing a survey of Portion 57, by L. LeGould on December 20, 1865. This plan records, between Subdivisions 65 and 66, a "Reserve for Hotel Purposes" on the site where the Brighton Hotel now stands. What appear to represent buildings are marked on this reserve.

The first person to obtain a free-holding title to this site was Patrick Dunne—Certificate of Title No. 10147, Book LXXXI, Folio 167. The memo of request for a free-hold title was signed by Patrick Dunne on January 31, 1866, for one acre, being Subdivision 66A of Portion 57. It will be noticed that when this reserve, lying between Subdivisions 65 and 66, was free-held, the number 66A was given to the subdivision.

The property passed from Patrick Dunne to William Townsend on March 22, 1867, at a purchase price of £1,154. This sale was registered at the Titles Office on April 29, 1867. The next transfer is from William Townsend to William Williams on May 8, 1882, and from Williams to Samuel Hamilton on September 4, 1882; on November 24, 1888, a transfer was made to Tom Coward, and on the same day to Boyd Morehead and John Stevenson.

The Government Gazette for 1864 lists William Rae as Licensee of The Brighton Hotel, Brisbane District. The same licensee is given in the Gazette for 1865, and also James John Tubbs. The Gazette for 1866 gives the names of William Denver as transferring to James Hartley. There is no reference to a hotel licence in the year 1867, which is the year the property was bought by Captain Townsend. The next year in

which a hotel licence is listed is the year 1883 (Government Gazette page 472) when the licensee of the Royal Hotel (Brighton) is given as S. Hamilton. The Titles' Office records a sale on September 4, 1882, to Samuel Hamilton, who had previously been the licensee of the Hamilton Hotel at Hamilton.

The hotel building has had many occupants, but the most unusual were orphan children. The "Week" for March 10, 1893, reports the following:

"In view of the serious difficulties which have arisen at the Goodna Lunatic Asylum through the floods, the Minister for Education arranged to transfer mild lunatics to the Diamantina Orphanage Buildings. It was first intended to remove the orphans to Peel Island, but on Saturday, March 4, 1893, forty orphans were removed to the old Brighton Hotel, Sandgate. Mrs. May, the Matron, was absent on leave, but was recalled to take part in the work of removal."

The Inspector of Orphanages in his report for the year 1893, referring to the Receiving Depot at Brighton, states that "as the children are all boarded-out the maintenance accounts are not a quarter what they used to be." The Receiving Depot was termed, "A most useful and necessary institution, and as it was at present situated at the seaside it comes in handy as a sanatorium for sickly children who have been up country and need a change."

What was locally known as "Mrs. May's Orphanage" occupied the Brighton Hotel until January 1910, when the orphanage was transferred to "Rowallan" at Wooloowin. At this time, Mrs. May was still Matron, and Mrs. Holmes Sub-Matron. After the removal of the orphan children, the first hotel licence granted was to Charles E. Sauzier.

Captain William Townsend, a retired sea captain⁽¹⁾, left London, England, on March 31, 1866, for Moreton Bay in one of the Black Ball line of clipper packets—the "Netherby" of 944 tons, under the command of Captain Owens. During the voyage, the day by day life of the ship was printed, and published later as "The Netherby Gazette," a copy of which is in the Oxley

1. "The Week," 18th August, 1893.

Memorial Library. The editors of this gazette were H. D. Vincent and Captain Townsend.

The clipper was bound for Moreton Bay, but the passengers were not destined to reach this district without being exposed to serious danger. The vessel became a total wreck against the western side of King's Island, Bass Strait, on July 14, 1866. By good fortune, all the passengers and crew were saved and brought to Melbourne by H.M.S. "Victoria" and "Pharos."

Some idea of Captain Townsend can be gleaned when one reads in the Gazette: "It was found that a few of the first-class passengers were still on shore, upon which a message was sent requesting them to come aboard as quickly as possible, to which an answer was returned by a Mr. Townsend to the effect that he had not packed his luggage."

A testimonial was given to Captain Owens by the passengers, published in the "Netherby Gazette," and the list of signatures include Wm. Townsend, T.R., G.R., M.C., and E. J. Townsend.

The Moreton Bay District lost some settlers for the Gazette records that "the majority of the passengers expressed a determination to take up their abode in Victoria in preference to proceeding to their original destination in Queensland." Captain Townsend, however, decided to come to Moreton Bay, and according to information supplied by the Registrar-General (Vol. 15/251) arrived in Brisbane by S.S. "City of Melbourne" on August 6, 1866. The same source gives the names of Captain Townsend's children as Isabella 4, Victor 10, Mary 12, George 16, and Edwin 17.

After a short residence in Brisbane, Captain Townsend, as previously stated, purchased in 1867 the building known as the Brighton Hotel, where he and his family resided for ten years⁽²⁾, removing then to his villa at Shorncliffe, where his death took place.

Captain Townsend took a prominent part in public affairs, and it is evident that his property occupied far more land than that now occupied by the Brighton Hotel. As proof of this it is only necessary to quote

2. "The Week," 18th August, 1893.

Victor Drury, who in a series of articles published in the Brisbane "Telegraph," commencing in May 1939, has this to say of Captain Townsend.

"When I first remember Sandgate, Captain Townsend occupied Brighton House—the grounds running down to what is now Flinders Parade. It was a beautiful property planted with fruit trees and flowering shrubs. When Captain Townsend left Brighton to reside in Sandgate, the old house became an hotel, Mr. Samuel Hamilton being the licensee. Mr. Hamilton for years had the Hamilton Hotel at the corner of the river and Racecourse Roads, Brisbane."

In Pugh's Almanac for 1870, recording up to December 1869, Brighton is listed as a Station. The census of 1871, published in Votes and Proceedings, includes Brighton in the census district of Caboolture. Two squatters at Brighton are recorded in this census.

The Government Gazette of February 25, 1873, announces that "W. Townsend to be a member of the Marine Board vice Alexander Raff." The Post Office Directory of 1874 informs us that W. Townsend, Brighton, was a Justice of the Peace, and a squatter. Pugh's Almanac for 1869 confirms the fact that W. Townsend was a Justice of the Peace.

An excellent booklet, commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the Sandgate State School, 1873-1953, is in the possession of the Society. This booklet states that the "State School at Sandgate was opened in a temporary building on September 15, 1873. The building was the first Baptist Church which was situated behind the Osbourne Hotel in Loudon Street. It had an opening enrolment of forty-seven pupils . . .

"The first School Committee consisted of William Deagon (Secretary), Captain W. Townsend (Treasurer), Rev. B. G. Wilson (Baptist Minister), and Messrs. Cowsley, Cookesley, and A. Slaughter. At the first triennial election thereafter, Mr. R. Board replaced Mr. Cookesley."

The Queensland National Bank opened for business on June 3, 1872. Captain Townsend was prominently connected with the initiation of this bank, and was one of these who signed the prospectus for its establishment. At a meeting on February 27, 1873, F. O. Darvall

and Captain Townsend were elected auditors of this bank.

The "Week," June 5, 1880, contains this report on the first municipal elections for Sandgate: "The election of six councillors for the new Sandgate municipality took place on Tuesday at Sandgate. There were seven candidates and the following is the result of the poll: R. Board 31, George Bott 31, Robert Kift 31, Edward B. Southerden 29, William Townsend 28, William Deagon 25, William Feuerriegel 14. The first six-named were declared by the Returning Officer, Mr. W. T. Blakeney, duly elected.

Captain Townsend was forced to relinquish his public positions owing to a serious affection of his eyes, which culminated in total blindness. His death occurred on August 11, 1893, at the age of eighty-three years.

II. ⁽³⁾Sandgate

Despite the fact that persons living at Sandgate, so close to Brisbane, must have had a decided influence on the growth of Brisbane, very little has been published on the early history of Sandgate. The Oxley Memorial Library have in their possession the valuable Dowse papers. Nehemiah Bartley and Mr. Victor Drury have mentioned Sandgate in their reminiscences, but a connected history has yet to be published.

According to the Sandgate State School booklet, the first survey of Sandgate was completed by Surveyor J. C. Burnett, and his plan of Sandgate was forwarded to Sydney on September 9, 1852. The first sale of land took place a year later on November 9 and 10, 1853. The aborigines called the district "Warra," meaning "An open sheet of water."

Agitation for a settlement at Sandgate is said to be due to the loss of lives after the shipwreck "The Thomas King"⁽⁴⁾. This ship was wrecked on Cato's Banks in Torres Strait on April 17, 1852, and six persons, including the captain, decided to try to reach Brisbane in the ship's boat. They landed in the Wide

3. *Additional notes on Sandgate compiled by C. G. Austin (Hon. Librarian).*

4. See J. J. Knight, "In the Early Days," pp. 314-5.

Bay area, and decided to continue the journey overland to Brisbane. Only two eventually arrived on May 17. Four others lost their lives in skirmishes with the aboriginals in the Caloundra-Bribie area. According to the statement of Captain Walker he and the other survivor had been hiding in the neighbourhood of Cabbage Tree Creek for several days, and it was thought that had there been a settlement there, the lives of at least two of the seamen might possibly have been saved. An agitation was thereupon started for the establishment of a village on the coast in the vicinity of Cabbage Tree Creek.

The first settlement consisted of blocks lying roughly between the present Yundah Street and the sea. One of the first purchasers of land at Sandgate was Tom Dowse, who went there with his two sons in November 1853. On December 3 a party of aboriginals tried to steal tobacco and other supplies from Mr. Dowse's hut, but were driven off. Mr. Dowse determined to return to Brisbane by boat, but a larger party of aboriginals attacked before they could leave. Mr. Dowse with his sons managed to escape with their lives, and in one boat reached the mouth of the Brisbane River. Tom Dowse received a head wound and a son was speared in the leg during the affray. Fortunately the Oxley Memorial Library have acquired the Dowse papers.

Nehemiah Bartley in his book "Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences" (edited by J. J. Knight, pp. 262 et seq.) describes his first visit to Sandgate. "I first went there in September 1858 in company with Dr. Hobbs and the Reverend George Wight. I remember how Lieut. Williams, of the Native Police, and I threw spears over the fork of a high gumtree near the Ein Bunpin Lagoon. The population of Sandgate was then, I should estimate, about twenty-five souls. The 'hotel' was kept by one, Charles F. Davie, who came there to try and prolong his days on earth by the soft sea air. Butchers and bakers and shops there were none, so all the fare was salt beef and damper; bottled beer, wine and spirits were procurable."

Bartley, however, continues, "Months after this, again, the blacks from the north end of the Bay (Bribie

way) came down and made the place uncomfortable. They bailed Tom Dowse up in a slab hut, which, fortunately for him, had no glass windows . . . This was spear-proof, and he escaped, and after this Lieut. Wheeler, of the Native Police, cleared out the aboriginals, who never again troubled Sandgate . . .”

Bartley is apparently astray in assigning the year 1858 as the date of the attack on Tom Dowse, for other references give the year as 1853.

Further recollections of Sandgate by Bartley state that “Cabbage Tree Creek was a ‘teazer’ to cross at high water, but after 1861 it got a bridge . . . ‘Jordan Cottage’ was built about 1860, Loudon’s about the same time, McConnel’s house (‘Morven’) (in 1896 D. L. Brown’s) was put up in 1866.” Bartley returned to Sandgate in 1872 and stayed at the “Sandgate” hotel kept by Frank Raymond.

Mr. Victor Drury’s articles in the “Telegraph” of 1939 contain further references to Sandgate.

“Our family went to Sandgate for the Christmas holidays. We travelled down in a hired landau and the luggage was taken down by furniture van. After passing Newstead we drove over the Albion Hill down the old Sandgate Road to the German Station where Mrs. Schattling kept what we called the Halfway House. There the horses had a spell and a bucket of water . . .

“After leaving German Station we drove over the big hill on towards Sandgate. The first residence after getting over the big hill and coming towards Cabbage Tree Creek was occupied by an ex-officer of the Police Department, Mr. Stephenson. We then crossed Cabbage Tree Creek Bridge and on to Sandgate. The lock-up was at the foot of the hill leading into Sandgate. On the rise we came to the Osbourne Hotel, Dover Cottage, Bayswater Terrace, and then the Post Office in charge of Mr. Charles Slaughter. Mr. Deagon had two cottages, Barnstable and Devonshire Cottage. He also had a large hotel, The Sandgate, facing the Upper Esplanade where Cobb and Co. coaches put up.

“ ‘Morven’ in those days belonged to Mr. McConnel, later purchased by Mr. D. L. Brown. Mr. Chancellor of the Customs had a cottage on the corner opposite where

the pier now is, and Mr. Thompson of the Union Bank occupied the opposite corner. Messrs. Graham Hart and E. R. Drury built 'Saltwood' on the Shorncliffe end of the town, and adjoining on the upper esplanade were the well-known Shorncliffe cottages of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kift.

"Going down to Cabbage Tree Creek you came to John Baxter's Oyster Saloon. The leading tradespeople of Sandgate at the time were Messrs Buck, George Walker, and George Mockridge. Mrs. Tempest was the draper. Later Mr. Griggs, a draper, built a two-storied brick shop and dwelling. The hotels were the 'Osbourne' kept by Mr. L. Drouyn and 'Sandgate' by Mr. Tom Coward, who was formerly in the native police.

"Cobb and Co.'s coaches ran between Brisbane and Sandgate meeting at the German Station (Nundah). The Sandgate pier was built about 1884, but as there was not sufficient water at low tide, it was lengthened as at present.

"In later years Mr. Robert J. Gray, Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Office, and later Commissioner for Railways, lived near Cabbage Tree Creek. A builder, Mr. Young, near Cabbage Tree Creek, prepared a wonderful mixture called 'Young's Mineral Oil' which we used for cuts and scratches. Mr. Tom Persse of the Lands Department had a house next to Mr. Gray's. Mr. George Wilkie Gray (Quinlan Gray and Co.) also had a house near 'Saltwood.' William Street, of white-ant fame, also lived in Sandgate, and was a builder and contractor. Dr. John Thomson built 'Clutha' at Shorncliffe

"Another well-known family I must not omit to mention was the Bests. One had a bus and he used to drive us to the train . . ."

The opening of the railway on May 11, 1882, undoubtedly led to a rapid expansion in the growth of Sandgate. Legend has it that when the first sod was turned, a high public official, in attempting to wheel away the first barrow-full of earth, found to his dismay that a practical joker had wired the wheel to the barrow so that he could not shift it.

A sensation was caused in 1890 when it was learnt

that Gervaise Dubroca, known as the "French Basket-maker," was found murdered in the Brighton Paddock on Good Friday, April 4. Dubroca was said to have been a jeweller, and to have resided previously at Rockhampton, but lived a hermit-like existence at Brighton, earning a living by making baskets.

Captain Townsend died in the year 1893, and a survey of Sandgate at that time, taken from Pugh's Almanac for 1894, includes the names of many well-known families.

The Mayor of the Municipal Council was Alderman J. A. Hayes. Captain Townsend, after leaving Brighton, lived at "Mango Cottage" adjacent to Moora Park. This cottage was next to "Goonan Goonan," the home of Alderman J. A. Hayes. It is worthy of mention that Alderman J. A. Hayes was a foundation member of the Historical Society of Queensland. He presented to the Brisbane City Council an excellent map of Brisbane in 1861, which is now in the possession of this Society.

Other Aldermen were G. Prentice, W. A. Field, J. W. Todd, R. W. Kingsford, J. Joyce, M. Quinlan, G. T. Lightbody, and J. Potts. Overseer of Roads was H. Shepherd. The Auditors were R. Board and W. R. Barfoot. Mr. W. Webber was the ganger. Mr. E. B. Southerden was Chairman of Trustees of the cemetery. The clergy were represented by the Rev. Canon Matthews (Church of England), Rev. W. P. Cairns (Wesleyan), Rev. J. B. Sneyd (Baptist), and Revs. J. P. M. Connolly and J. Power (Roman Catholic). The Matron of the Convalescent Home was Mrs. Hutchinson, with Mrs. Nesbitt, the Matron of the Lady Musgrave Sanatorium. Miss Darcy conducted a private boarding school, and she and Miss Suter taught music.

The Head Teacher of the State School was William J. Bevington, and assistants were William G. Patterson, Miss McDermott, Miss Frances C. Roper and one pupil teacher. The average attendance at the school was 295. The President of the School of Arts was Mr. C. B. Fox. The trustees were G. Agnew, W. Barham, the committee members being Dr. Girdlestone, J. A. Hayes, J. H. Bean, W. H. Bell, T. Dinsdale, Dr. Paul, A. W.

Field, and W. J. Bevington, with W. Smellie as Treasurer and Miss Turbayne as Secretary.

In the sporting field, M. Quinlan was Secretary of the Racing Club, G. Agnew was President of the Cricket Club, of which E. S. Hale was Hon. Secretary and Treasurer. Public positions were filled by Sergeant H. Primrose as Clerk of Petty Sessions, W. Shapcott as Railway Stationmaster, and C. Slaughter as Postmaster, Telegraph Officer, and Savings Bank Manager.

Drs. Girdlestone and Paul have already been mentioned. A. W. Field is recorded as Chemist and Druggist. Under "Trades and Professions" are found S. Hale and H. Mahaupt, Booksellers; G. Bott, P. H. Churton, James Gardner, Bakers; John Best, P. Peppler, Coach Proprietors; M. Robinson, W. Street, and J. C. Thomson, Builders.

The Banking profession was represented by Mr. F. E. Matthews, Acting Manager of the Queensland National Bank. Other names mentioned are Prosser, Taylor and Coy., C. C. Braun, C. Cohrs, C. Prackart, H. Darragh, J. J. Spalding, J. Gilpin, and W. Webber.

Last but not least, the newspaper was the "Moreton Mail," published at Nundah, and established on January 9, 1886.

Acknowledgement is made for information supplied by the Oxley Memorial Library.