

# **The Ribbon Boys' Rebellion 1830**

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## **Certificate of Original Authorship**

I certify that this work has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as a part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the creative work has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the creative work itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the work.

Jeanette M. Thompson

17 May 2014

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### **Disclaimer**

This is a work of fiction. Historical fact, names and events have not been invented, but narrative tools have been used to hypothesise about the characters’ motivations and beliefs. Some scenes are speculative and meant to make the reader question their own historical and cultural assumptions. As much as possible of the original speech and testimony of the convicts is preserved from court trials and newspaper accounts. When the beauty of heart and mind dissolve, only the bones of recorded fact remain. The melding of history and literature is perhaps our last hope of redemption.

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- Baker's Map of the County of Bathurst (<http://nla.map-raa8-s6> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 5)
- A Map of the County Roxburgh (<http://nla.map-raa8-s18> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 17)
- Map of the County of King (<http://nla.map-raa8-s13> Call Number: MAPRaA8 Plate12)
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## **Abstract**

There is a surprising silence in the historical record about Irish convict insurrection from the Castle Hill rebellion of 1804 until the emergence of Ned Kelly in 1869. Robert Hughes suggests that the Castle Hill rebellion was ‘the only concerted uprising of convicts ever to take place on the Australian mainland’ (Hughes 1987, p. 194). However, in October 1830 Governor Darling ordered Captain Walpole to lead a forced march to Bathurst to suppress a convict insurrection of reportedly over eighty government servants from twenty five farms led by a gang of Irish Ribbon Boys. The Governor deployed troops to the stations and ordered detachments to guard the iron and road gangs ‘as should these people rise, who are 1500 in number, the Consequences might prove of the most serious nature’ (Ward & Robertson 1978, p. 228). The insurrection resulted in a public execution of ten Ribbon Boys and the deaths of three mounted police, an overseer and nine convict associates. This exegesis will argue that the Bathurst insurrection has been overlooked due to the way in which the narrative was constructed and passed down. The settlers and officials who first recorded the rebellion preferred to downplay the social and political causes of insurrection and nullified the impact by attributing the revolt to a single convict ‘bushranger’ seeking revenge. No previous accounts have examined the political significance of the ribbons the leader wore in his hat, the sites of insurrection and the patterns of criminal association that flourished in lands beyond the limits of location. The archival research contests Hughes notion that, ‘scattered in threes and fours through the immense bush, living in outback isolation, political prisoners had no social resonance: they were neutralized by geography as much as by law’ (Hughes 1987, p. 194). The narrative research critiques cultural representations of ‘bushrangers’ in print and screen in order to discover ways in which narrative techniques and structures can be used to stimulate the public imagination and disrupt accepted cultural understandings of these events. The creative work is conceptualized as an historic hypothesis that engages the emotions and intellect to evoke an historic sensibility in the reader.



## **Bone and Beauty**

(Creative Work)

All of true blood, bone and beauty... were doomed to Port McQuarie, Toweringabbie,[sic] Norfolk Island or Emu plains and in those places of tyranny and condemnation many a blooming Irishman rather than subdue to the Saxon yoke were flogged to death and bravely died in servile chains but true to the Shamrock and a credit to Paddy Land.

(Ned Kelly, *Jerilderie Letter*, 1879, p.67)





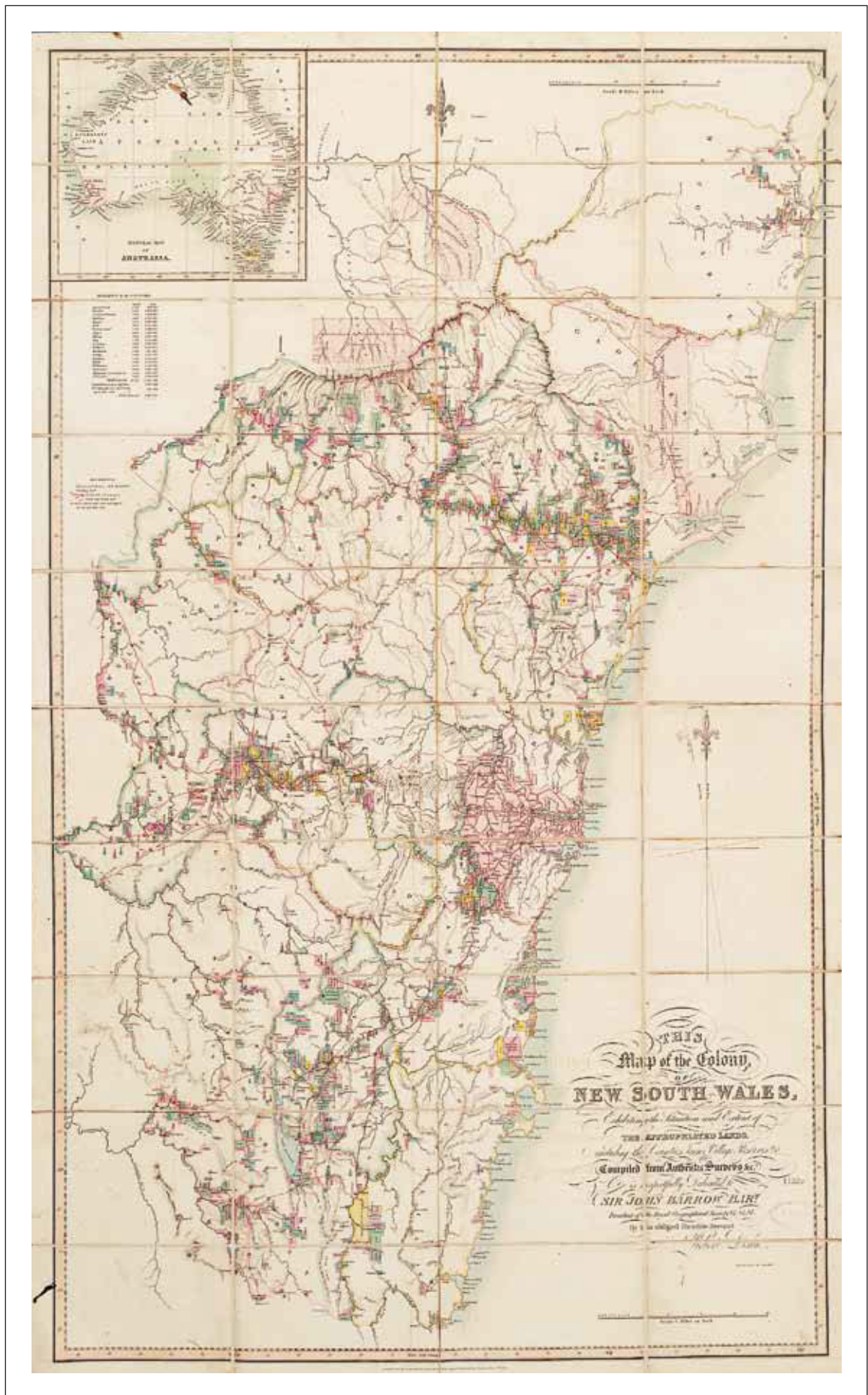
## Prologue

Awake in the night thinking about the manuscript, I am the woman in the Branks Bridle – one of the condemned women in Adrian’s Tower that Ralph Entwistle pitied, despite his own chains. An iron cage holds fast my head like a man’s fingers, and the cold iron spike drives into my tongue when I speak. It is the Bridle of Historiography constructed through the ages to prevent certain ways of speaking about the truth. There are academic sanctions against using female intuition to make sense of the trashy newspapers, court trials, family recollections and whisperings of an age. Without the bridle, I might pass along hearsay, put my store in letters to the editor, treasure the memories of octogenarian settlers’ and surgeons’ wives and draw salacious inferences from the actions of gentlemen. What more is an historian than a sanctified gossip, trading in titbits of information, prying into people’s private lives, casting aspersions on their morals, motivations and beliefs?

A Muster, a Glossary and some Scholar’s Notes are provided so that you may flesh out the history from the recorded facts. I have used only the names of real places and people. No names have been invented. The people named have personalities, speeches and actions that I have inferred from the documentary evidence. As often as possible, the dialogue has been drawn from primary accounts of events in court cases, logs, newspapers and letters in order to capture the mode of expression and vocabulary. A Glossary is included for each chapter for words from nineteenth century collections of Lancashire dialect (Bobbin 1850; Nodal & Milner 1875), from a dictionary of convict slang (Grose 2004) and from a glossary of bushranger terms (Gunn 1980). Some scenes have been invented to further the narrative enquiry but the bridle of history has ever kept my imagination within the bounds of probability.

I am an Australian writer, freeborn of the fifth generation of miners and architects to settle in South Australia. My Wesleyan forebears would not have left Cornwall had not the Quaker, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, abducted a fifteen year old schoolgirl in 1826. Even the free immigrants cannot escape the convict stain. I cannot claim to speak for the Irish or the criminal classes as my ancestors were the enemy of both. My grandparents were Cornish Methodists of the type Thomas Moore, writing as Captain Rock, would lampoon. Another ancestor was Charles Abbott, a wig maker's apprentice who became Lord Tenterden, Chief Justice of the Court in England when Ralph was born. My ancestor sentenced the Cato Street plotters to death and dissection but one of them, John Shaw Strange, became a constable on the streets of Bathurst. The convicts called him 'The Cato Street Chief'. This man, who would have blown up the British Cabinet, was a comfort to the Bathurst settlers.

You see now my predilection for gossip and irony. With a little imagination, I could cast off the constraints of scholarship and entice you, dear reader, to enjoy unbridled history. I have the gift of premonition and hindsight where Ralph is concerned because he has been dead and documented these past one hundred and eighty something years. In these pages, I will speak to Ralph as one who stands on the other side of his veil of tears, one who can see clearly through the glass of time just as our Lord promised. I will visit the cell and bring him news of his fellows, especially those who left a message, a lesson, or a clue on how to cheat the devil and avoid the gallows. I will forecast for him the death of his enemies and bring him news of his friends. I swear I will tell you only God's truth. As for Ralph, I would tell him anything that could lessen his suffering.



Dixon, R. 1837, 'Map of the Colony of New South Wales, exhibiting the situation and extent of the appropriated lands [cartographic material] : including the counties, towns, village reserves, etc. / compiled from authentic surveys etc. by Robert Dixon' National Library of Australia [MAP G8971.G46 1837]

## Chapter 1

### *Bathurst Settlement, New South Wales. Wednesday October 20<sup>th</sup> 1830.*

On this day Captain Horatio Walpole arrives at Bathurst gaol with a wagonload of seven wounded captives from the Lachlan River. He has quelled the most wide spread convict insurrection since the Castle Hill rebellion of 1804. His detachment of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment has executed a forced march from Sydney Town to Bathurst that has astonished the Colony. Now he rides at the head of a cavalcade of veteran soldiers, vigilante settlers and landed magistrates. Governor Ralph Darling will lavish honours upon the returning soldiers, grant tickets of leave to the traitors and informers, pardon a wounded constable and award medals to the aboriginal trackers. The twenty retired veterans, their buttons sparkling like the sharp eyes of dowagers from their mildewed regimentals, will each receive a cow from the government stores.

Other beneficiaries have come in to the settlement to watch the scrag-end of their own perfidity rattle in on the wool wagon. After six days on the road, the wagon still leaks blood. Ralph Entwistle, one of the captives, looks out at the faces swarming like flies around the wounded. Some faces are pained by what they see in the cart, others sneer with forced jollity. Patrick Sullivan, Patrick Burke, and James McNally stand gauping at their bleeding brethren with their mouths open. Martin Grady, riding close up behind Captain Walpole for protection, is unable to meet Ralph's eyes. The boys have been brought in, the infamous Ribbon Boys, and their wounds become them.

Ralph lifts his damaged body onto one buttock against the splintered wood. He cannot find the face of his shipmate. He asks the gaolers hoisting bodies from the cart, but no one has seen the boy. His heart is beating more loudly now than it was at the moment of his own capture. He has no fear of hell and damnation, but for the boy. Back on the hill, in the first orange light of dawn, Ralph told Sergeant Doyle to shoot him dead. He was crawling away from the campfire. Doyle would not have the decency to shoot a wounded animal. The soldier answered, 'I will never shoot a brave man in cold blood.' By this he meant the hunt had turned cold, the capture was over and it was not worth the ball in his carbine to finish off a convict. Rolling onto his back Ralph said, 'M'appen the weight of my hind quarters will break my neck.'

Chief Constable Blackman meets the wagon to take charge of the prisoners. Those still able to walk are herded off to the cells by Constable James Parker, an Irish lifer on his ticket of leave. Gleeson and Gahan start giving him the patter in the hope he will go on one side for them or at least go light. The Protestants, Driver and Webster, are thrown into the general lockup. Constable John Shaw Strange has Ralph carried, on a pallet, to the solitary cell because he is a murderous insurgent. Who better to guard him than a reformed one?

Ralph is a man of twenty five years and five foot eight, were he standing. Three summers in the colony have blistered and toughened his creamy Lancastrian complexion. The red rises high in his cheeks as if he is stung by a perpetual ire or perhaps a deep embarrassment. His brow is broad and his face squarish also in the Lancastrian way. His body seems grotesque in this narrow room. A British bulldog by width and strength, grief has bowed his wide shoulders. He sits upon the trundle bed, looking at his chafed ankles in their iron collars.

I enter the cell at five bells. The iron door clangs as Constable Strange slides the hatch open and thrusts his face against the aperture to check that the prisoner is secure. Where else would you be? How could you, except with the assistance of the Devil, absent yourself from this box? The gaoler slides the bolt, cracks open the door, and slides a bowl of gruel into the cell. The room is lighter than the place where you waited for death in Lancaster Castle. It is not foetid with the air of a dozen Lancashire men breathing fear. Here there are red bricks instead of ancient stones. Bricks are your stock in trade. The bricklayer has set the rows of stretchers and headers in Flemish bond, one atop another for eight feet and then, remembering the way captive creatures crave the light, he has left off three to form a misshapen hole. It is barred with iron rods to strain the summer heat. Thomas Conwell, a free man on the other side of the wall, is shouting out drunken invitations to escape. The dry floor has been swept with a branch of gumtree, the smell of eucalypt lingers. You look at the bowl as if it is a visitor.

What hunger led you to this calamity, Ralph? Magistrate Evernden, that 'martinet of extravagant refinement', accuses you of revenge. Or were you 'seduced by the devil and without the fear of God before your eyes'? Are you the leader of those young men they call the Ribbon Boys? Or are you their dupe? The enraged bulldog they goad into revenge, knowing full well that the fight will prove fatal? I have been trying to snare your spirit within the documentary evidence. I think the truth is far different from what has been written about you.

You hurl the bowl against the wall. The peep hole opens at the clatter and John Shaw Strange surveys the mess. 'Here is the temper that stole your liberty,' he clucks, 'others starve so that you might eat.' You are not so easily shamed. You ask for news of a boy called George Mole



who might have been brought in by Evernden. The constable says James Green is brought in from Glen Logan, but he has no news of any George Mole. ‘A special friend of yours was he?’ the plotter asks. You shrug off the suggestion. The hole closes.

A week ago, George Mole and James Green came whooping through the scrub on a horse they stole from Glen Logan – happy as daft beggars to have found your camp on Ned Ryan’s hill on the Boorowa Plains. They came to join the insurrection in its dying days. Only the remnants of the gang remained – William Gahan, polishing his fowling piece, Patrick Gleeson punching at gnats in the air, old Dom Daley yammering aloud for his four children, John Kenny dangling his wedding ring on a chain to read his future and Webster and Driver dragging pails of water up from the creek. George found you cracking a bit of kindling for the fire. Your blessed isolation on the rocky outcrop felt more and more each day like Elba. The hill had proved to be an island in a dry brown sea of dust that allowed no retreat. George said he had a message from the magistrate. Only then did you notice the purpling mound of skin under the boy’s right eye.

Did Evernden offer you protection if you surrendered peacefully and turned King’s Evidence? I will tell you what happened to George Mole, as far as I know, but in exchange you might give me the nod and say, ‘That is it, you have guessed the essence of me. That is how it was and why I acted as I did’. But first I must establish what kind of man I am dealing with. Are you an honest man? I do not doubt your courage.

It would have taken courage to go abroad at midnight in the Lancashire township of Tyldesley-with-Shakerley. In this parish of poor ironworkers and nail smithies, the two storey house of James Alldred stood out like a sore grey toe. ‘Come out! Come out!’ the hag-winds wailed through the autumn shutters of the Alldred house on the Tyldesley road. Shakerley was the ancient name for ‘the robber’s woodland glade’. No honest man would stir at the witching hour. It was the night of September twenty third in the reign of King George IV, 1826. Andrew Kirkman, a passing acquaintance, bought you a pint of ale at the Old Man and Scythe in Bolton. Kirkman said that nothing could be easier than the lawful entry of the Alldred’s house with keys. The removal of various items of clothing from a hallway cupboard would mean there was no need to go upstairs at all, nor yet disturb the young family. Kirkman said he had seduced a scullery maid into bringing him the keys for a few hours.

Andrew Kirkman was a worldly gentleman of twenty six years. He wore a ten shilling hat and a smart blue coat. Your coat was green, although whether from dye or from verdigris it was hard to determine. It was the only object your father had left behind and its weight came from the copper filings that had burrowed into its fibres. You had worn it in all weathers and the stitches were now loose in their holes. Your lumbering body was too large for the confidential nook into which Kirkman had secreted himself. Hunger had begun to gnaw away at your ribs and the bread and ale, provided by Kirkman, was a welcome gift. Your former drinking friends, Adam Mort, Peter Green and John Marten stood at the bar. They eyed the stranger with suspicion.



Kirkman told you he knew a man at the Manchester markets who could shift items of clothing. He wanted coats and cloth pieces mainly. Winter was clinging onto the spring days by talons of morning frost. The haul from Alldred's property would be too heavy for one man to carry. Kirkman wanted you for your size. He fancied himself a student of Phrenology and in your broad brow he read forethought, in your lobed ears honesty and in your soft mouth a certain type of gullibility. Kirkman, on the other account, had no ear lobes and shrewd small eyes. You were attracted to his aquiline nose and cultured voice. To the barmaid observing your parley, his criminality was as evident as your innocence. After three pints and cheese with the bread, you left the tavern arm in arm like brothers.

It was the deal with Kirkman that took you to Lancaster Castle. Four months later, you were marched in chains from Manchester to the prison to await the spring assizes. It was a bleak January afternoon but there were barouches festooned with ladies and gentlemen in ribbons and laces, military guardsmen in scarlet and mounted dragoons all creating noise and pageant and odour. The rough paving of the road was broken in the centre by a deep channel that carried water and filth downhill to the 'Stinking' where it emptied into the River Lune. This was your first time in the medieval city. You were less awed by the tall ships and cry of gulls than by your own insignificance in such a crowd of people pushing along before and behind you.

The Edinburgh coach, crashing along Market Street, drew up at the Royal King's Arms to disgorge fifteen passengers. Last October all the coach passengers fled from the smell of a box that had been collected from the Bridgewater Arms, Manchester. It was wrapped in white linen and chord, and addressed to "Mr. Archibald Young, Esquire, Edinburgh". When it was

opened in the Coach House, the magistrate found the folded bodies of a tall woman in her forties and a male infant not eight weeks old. They were buried without further inquiry. Perhaps Mr Young was an anatomy student at Edinburgh University.

As your procession climbed past the Judge's Lodging toward the battlements of the castle, the sound of cheering and the rattle of wagons took over your senses. There was a gaiety and tumult you had never before experienced. The whole county had begun gathering for a Divine Service and torchlight procession to mark the interment of the recently deceased Duke of York. To add to the gaiety, at the beginning of this week of mourning, the Claughton poachers were being brought in to the Castle to await the Spring assizes. Two hundred souls lined the sharp slope up to the Castle portcullis to glimpse the murderers.

The crowd parted before the staves of the constables. On the rise ahead of you, the six Claughton poachers hobbled through the gates. One had a peg leg like a veteran of war. The hungry and maimed soldiers had returned in thousands from France and Spain but they could find no work and the meadows, where they used to freely snare rabbits and shoot pheasants, were enclosed by the wealthy landowners. These six poachers had shot the gamekeeper Francis Whitehead, and in the cells they would join two gamekeepers who had killed the poacher William Caton. This man's leg had been crushed by a mantrap at Garstang in the war between poachers and gamekeepers.

The medieval tyrant, John O'Gaunt leaned heavily upon his sword as the prisoners passed beneath his stone feet. You were marched into a vast courtyard where your gaze scoured the

high walls for a way out. The largest structure was the square Castle Keep and around its base was a skirt of Gothic arches used by the debtor's wives to promenade. Their children cast curious eyes over the poachers. There was a well and trough at the centre of this acre of ground. Across the dirt quadrangle, to your left, a dozen female prisoners jeered and gestured through the iron railings of the women's prison.

The men's prison was cut off from the rest by a tall wall overseen by the turnkey's lodge. The spire of the Priory Church of Saint Mary was visible behind castle wall. Once inside the turnkey's gates you were separated from the others and sent into a smaller triangular courtyard. Here your head was shaved and you were doused with a bucket of cold water. Your clothes, filthy from the journey, were burned. Thomas Higgin, the head gaoler, handed you a set of brown woollen trousers, two shirts, a jacket, a waist coat, two nightcaps, a pair of wooden clogs and some under drawers. You told him a man would have no need to burglarise honest citizens if the parish could provide these articles on a regular basis.

At the wide end of the courtyard there stood a four-storey gothic tower. It was twilight when you were escorted through its ancient iron-studded doors. The corridor on each floor was pitted with eight windowless cells, each with a ventilation hole above the door. Not a breath of air stirred along the dank corridors so these holes were useless for light or air. On the tenth floor you were shoved into a cell six feet wide and eight feet long. A perforated iron frame jutted out from one wall to form a long bunk holding two straw-filled mattresses and a tangle of blankets. Four other men were pushed into the cell behind you. You took up a place in the corner so that your sides were guarded by stone. The ceiling was flickering in the gaoler's candlelight about eight feet above your head, but that view too was soon snuffed out. The

heat of the bodies of your cellmates made the air dense and stifling. You could hear the muffled peals of the church bells tolling through the night for Frederick the old Duke of York and you wondered if he would rest in a grave as black and miserable as yours.

Breakfast was porridge, every day at eight thirty, followed by chapel. By March there were still almost five hundred prisoners in the castle, the transportees sentenced at the August Assizes not having yet been sent away. Some took shifts in the workshops making clogs or tailoring to make their keep. Others carved ivory or made parquetry boxes, skills brought into the gaol by the French prisoners of war. The debtors had a supply of spirits and tobacco, from sympathetic visitors, that they traded or gambled with. Others sold their grog rations and paid two thirds of whatever they earned for food and an airy room in the debtor's prison. Ironically, a few of the mill rioters sentenced to hard labour in the August assizes were put to work on the treadmills that powered the looms for weaving calico.

Everyone in the Castle was compelled to attend Anglican chapel for thirty minutes, even though Lancaster had spawned Catholics since the Norman Conquest. During Elizabeth's reign, eleven Catholic priests were tried in the Castle then hanged, drawn and quartered on Lancaster Moor. If you were Catholic, it was best to keep quiet about it.

After the service, work resumed until noon when there were games for exercise – wrestling and quoits. The main meal was served at twelve thirty, a cow shin for every fourteen prisoners boiled to a quart of stew for every man. In October, Thomas Higgin had taken tenders from local farmers for shoulders and necks of beef, cow's heads, split peas, oatmeal

and sixty seven thousand pound of potatoes. He complained that oatmeal had gone up by ten shillings per pound in the past twelve month while wheat had remained the same at thirty eight shillings. Two Lancashire banks had recently broken which put the strain of poor relief upon the friendly societies, despite there being ‘a national subscription for the relief of distressed manufacturers and the unemployed’. There was full employment in the gaol.

You were kept in the men’s prison for six weeks. You know because you went in on January fifteenth with the poachers, and scored a mark into the wall each day until your trial. You had no word of Andrew Kirkman and assumed he had escaped the watchman. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, a Monday, you were moved with a large group of men to the dungeon cells beneath the medieval hall and the courts. These were the darkest holding cells, overcrowded and unchanged since John Howard inspected them in 1776. They had been made from sandstone blocks wedged in the breach between the outer Castle walls of rock, hewn in the twelfth century, and the walls of the remodelled castle of the eighteenth. A fire burned in the grate at one end of the corridor and at the other an opening revealed the bottom floor of the Adrian’s Tower built by King John – the monarch who spawned the legend of Robin Hood.

In the tower, seven women walked in a circle. They were barefoot, chained to each other and tethered by a ring in the flagstone. There was a well in the centre and meagre light struggled in from the high archer’s windows. One walking woman wore the Branks, the scold’s bridle, an iron mask with a spiked mouth piece to depress the tongue and prevent her from gossiping. You had seen that device used before at Bolton-Le-Moors by the ecclesiastical courts. The church saw ‘seduction by the devil’ at every turn but mercifully the Assizes only

dealt with the daily trespasses. The woman's misery seemed worse than your own and you were relieved to turn toward the narrow cells.

An iron grate above the dungeon door admitted light but only from the tunnelled entrance, so that when the black oak door was closed the darkness was complete. This stone box held up to twenty men, all ironed with six pound cuffs so that they could safely be taken up to trial at any time. Some of the men began to panic and cry out in the darkness. You settled in a corner, not knowing that your accomplice Andrew Kirkman was in the next cell. He had been brought in on October fourteenth and so had wintered the snows of December well fed in the relative comfort of the men's prison while you were on the moors.

Twice a year, due to the Assizes, the city of a few hundred swelled to a multitude, creating a crescendo of commerce, politics and crime. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the *Lancaster Gazette* reported that 'The High Sherriff, C. Gibson Esquire, entered the town with more than the usual éclat, nearly thirty carriages having accompanied him from Quernmore Park'. The Assizes were opened with the arrival of Baron Hullock, the King's Bench Judge for the Nisi Prius hearings. His Lordship attended divine service at the Priory of St. Mary. The sermon by Reverend Gibson, brother of the High Sherriff, was delivered within a stone's throw of the hanging corner by the castle wall.

The Nisi Prius court would hear the most scandalous case in a decade, that of the gentleman diplomat Edward Gibbon Wakefield. He was a wealthy Quaker widower with two small children, who served Britain in Paris before deciding to acquire a new wife, a mother for his

children and a fortune, all by one abduction. It had worked for his first marriage. This time his victim was Ellen Turner, the fifteen year old heiress to a silk and manufacturing fortune. He was assisted by his brother, his stepmother and a French servant. Wakefield abducted the child from her private school and took her to Gretna Green where they were married, to save her father from a fictitious debt. William Turner, Sherriff of Chester, was not prepared to acquiesce to the marriage of his daughter even if it meant she would be dragged through a public scandal. So Ellen Turner's uncles, their solicitor Mr. Grimsditch and a Bow Street runner, tracked down the guilty Wakefields in Calais and rescued the child from their clutches.

The turnkey told you that when Edward Gibbon Wakefield was admitted to the Castle in May of the past year, all of the magistrates had been to look at him through the window of his cell in the debtor's wing. The gentleman put his hat on and turned imperiously to them, a gentleman's gesture that required the magistrates to ask the turnkey to formally introduce each of them to him. His solitary cell was a room twenty four feet square with a private courtyard of fifty feet that sprouted a blade of grass to amuse the gaol cat and her kitten. He wrote to his beloved step-mother, 'Air, exercise, water, privacy, and books are all sufficient for any man of common sense and courage.' One wonders how his courage found exercise. He was nevertheless an object of public curiosity and this compelled him to attend chapel each day in the Condemned booth, which prevented him from being seen by the other inmates.

Before men went up for their trial they seemed under pressure to tell their story, as if to get it straight for the judge or receive a reprieve from the listener. Every man was so absorbed in

the detail of his own story that few listened to others. Your story, Ralph, was routine. A burglary gone wrong: the alarm given before you could escape as you were carrying all of the clothing; a watchman doing his rounds at midnight; a lost hat and a torn coat; Kirkman with his hands free to jump the fence and escape.

There were three other burglars in the cells with you, among them John Lee and Henry Paul, young weavers who were caught on their first attempt. John Barrett was a common burglar too, but had the mystique of the road about him. He sat with John Darcy and Amaziah Holland, the highway men. These were warged to hang, just as the highway man, Patrick Rafferty, had swung the previous autumn. There were no murderers in that first cell you shared with twenty four others. Thomas Tomlinson, the gamekeeper, swore he fired at poacher Caton only to wing him. Even so Caton died within a month and the turnkey said Tomlinson must swing for it. There were three forgers and three sheep and cattle stealers, all of whom knew well what they were doing. The other three were honest men – James Shorrock, Benjamin and Robert Walmsley – weavers caught up in the riots of last April. Shorrock had already been sentenced to death for his part in destroying power looms in the Turner's Mill at Bury. He was held over until March for his riotous work at Blackburn in Garsden's Mill.

You befriended James Shorrock as he was your age and you shared his bunk in the men's penitentiary from the first day you arrived. He had been ten months in the goal so he knew a lot of useful information. He taught you the difference between having a sentence of death passed, and having a sentence of death recorded. Rachael Bradley, a young mother who had killed her bastard child, had a sentence of death passed and three days after the Assizes she



was hanged in the corner between the Castle Wall and tower window. Reverend Rowley, prison chaplain, gave the grammar school boys a half day holiday to watch the hanging match. Her body was cut down and dissected by the surgeons.

News of executions always infiltrated the prisons so that the newcomers who had a sentence of death recorded lived in mortal fear. They did not understand that their names had been sent to Mr. Robert Peel, Secretary of State, with the recommendation of the magistrates for Royal Mercy and after three weeks, for signatures and mail to be returned, they might have their Death sentence commuted to a lesser term or to transportation for life to New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land. For some mill workers who had never left their own counties, this was a kind of death. The agony of waiting in detention for papers to arrive was unbearable. Thomas Ashworth, a weaver, receiving news of his reprieve last September died in gaol twenty days later. His sentence had been shortened to six months in Lancaster Castle, but the news came too late to check his despair.

On the day of your trial, manacled and unshaven, you were brought up a narrow winding set of stone stairs from the cells, stepping from the foetid darkness of the tunnels into the dock of the Courtroom. The bright light filtering down from the high windows, buzzed with dust motes and chatter. It was a tall room lined with black wooden panelling, the boxes for the jury and witnesses as well as the railings on the dock before you, were carved from mahogany. It felt to you like a church but without the apprehension of the light of God softening through rose glass. Instead, the sun beat in on rolls of manuscript and ink pots with quills and a scurry of court scribes littering the space between you and the magistrate's bench. There were faces in the witness box you recognised from the public house in Bolton –

Peter Green, John Martin, and Adam Mort. For a moment it surprised you that they had come this far to watch until you realised they would give some sort of evidence. Your mouth went dry. Thomas Owen and Thomas Hill, friends of Andrew Kirkman were there also. Twelve local men sat in the jury box, no one you knew yet they all seemed familiar in their features and aspect. None smiled.

The trapdoor in the floor behind you gave another creak and a gaoler brought up the next prisoners. You were astonished to see Kirkman himself emerge from the dark hole. Your eyes met momentarily but he looked away. That was how it would be. You turned back to the gallery with a clenched jaw. Knitters and weavers had taken up their seats for the day, the stalls were burgeoning with onlookers. These were mostly millworkers and townsfolk, not the gentry that would fill the Shire Hall for the later trial of the Wakefields. One well dressed family were conspicuous in the gallery. These were the Alldreds. James, the head of the family who looked about thirty due to his receding hair, and his wife Alice who wore a gown of lime green muslin that threw the light back up into her auburn locks. You remembered her as a big woman on the stairs, shrieking out the alarm, but she seemed diminutive in this huge open space. A nurse sat with them holding not one but two swaddled infants. Surely you could not be found guilty of an affront to a woman who was with child? In an age where ladies in confinement were cosseted even from the sight of cripples, the thought of her meeting your ugly face on the stairs at midnight sent a pang through your conscience. The court steward banged his staff upon the floorboards and shouted, ‘All rise.’

You looked up to the magistrate’s bench which was a throne covered by a carved canopy, all overshadowed by the massive painting of George III astride a rampant white horse with grey

mane. Sir John Bayley, a red and white meteor of regalia, entered the court and took his chair beneath the portrait of the deceased monarch. There followed a flurry of black ravens in white wigs and a clattering of clerks as the judge ran over the list. You had to show your palm to the judge. Ten years before it was common practice to burn malefactors in the hand and this examination of the palms served to show if you had been a previous offender. Kirkman was thrust to the railing beside you and the charge was read out.

‘Ralph Entwistle, labourer, and Andrew Kirkman, labourer, about the hour of twelve of the night of September 26<sup>th</sup> 1826 with force and arms in the Parish of Leigh did enter the dwelling house of one James Alldred feloniously and burgulariously to steal, take and carry away two coats of the value of one pound, one Great Coat of the value of ten shillings, one other coat of the value of ten shillings, and one gown piece to the value of five shillings, one piece of cotton cloth to the value of five shillings, two pair of trowsers to the value of ten shillings, three shirts to the value of ten shillings, one silk handkerchief of the value of one shilling and two keys to the value of one penny.’ Asked how you would plead, each of you said, ‘Not guilty’ but dared not look one at the other.

First James and then Alice Alldred took the witness stand. Her gown looked remarkably like the cut piece you had once held in your hand. The Alldreds confirmed that you had been found in the house with your arms full of the clothing described. When Mrs Alldred called to you from the stairs, you ran from the open back door into the laneway. The nightwatchman had just called the hour and was still on his rounds. He scuffled with Kirkman in the garden and knocked off his hat, but you were encumbered by a swag of clothing and tripped and fell as the watchman made a grab for you. He caught your pocket and ripped it from your coat.

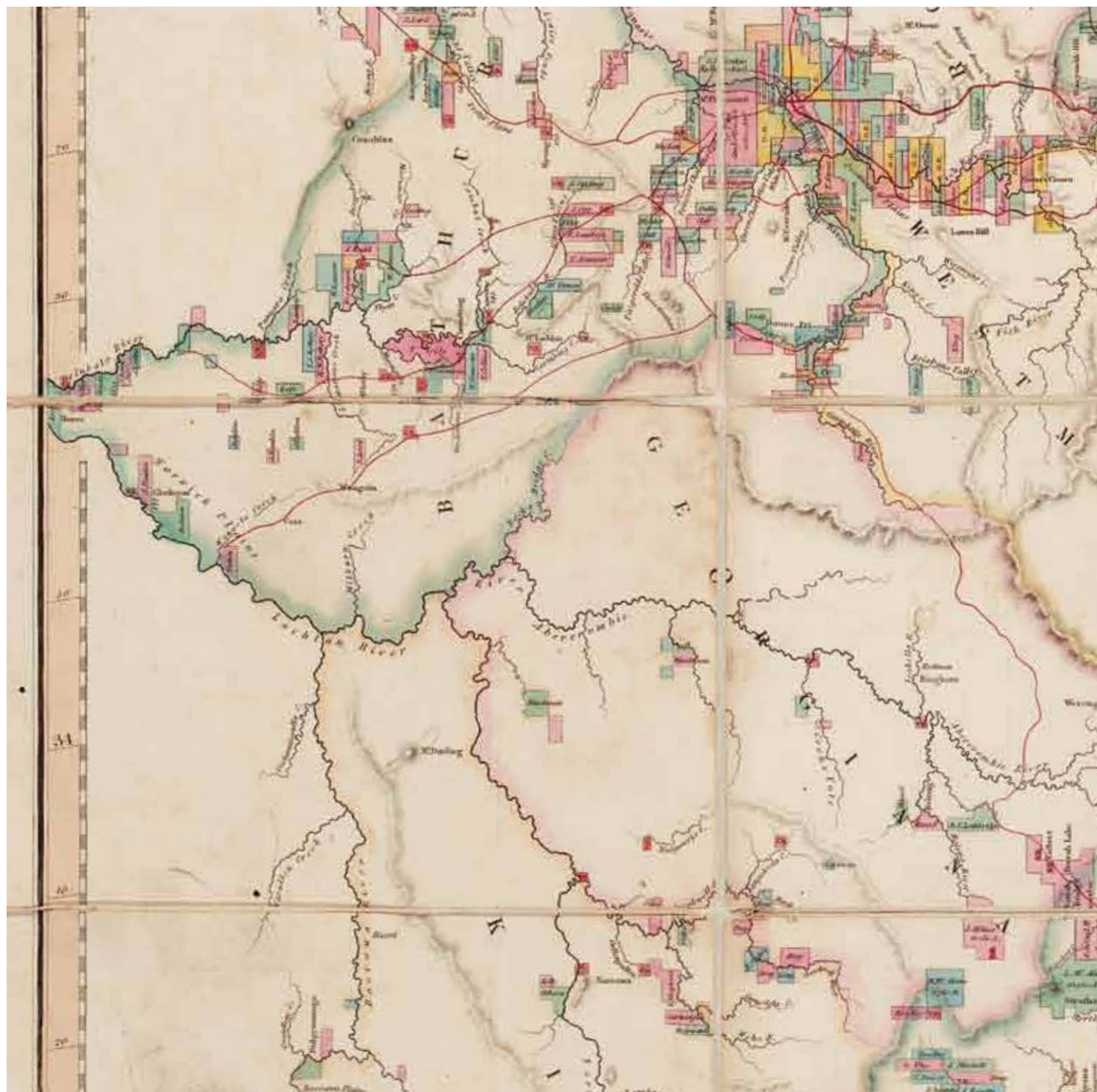
Both of you made away down the lane but the watchman picked up the hat and torn cloth. You were unable to explain your version of events to the judge, of course, because only the witnesses and facts were examined. There was no lawyer for the defence in such courts and you were only allowed to speak when spoken to, and that was only once to say how you would plead.

Examining the evidence, the judge concluded that the case rested upon the positive identification of the items taken by the nightwatchman. The clerk handed the patch of green cloth to you and you nodded at its familiar weight. The clerk next gave Kirkman his hat, which he hastily returned as if it were quicklime. You felt safe because your coat had been burned in the prison courtyard. Then your former drinking friends were called one by one and each attested they had seen you many times in a coat of that material and shade. Weavers were excellent recollectors of cloth, colour and pattern. Kirkman's friends, on the other hand, could not swear that the hat produced was positively Kirkman's, it being similar to many of the light cotton hats worn in the summer. Within thirty minutes, the jury were asked for their verdict and the judge pronounced his judgement, 'Ralph Entwistle to be hanged by the neck until he be dead. Andrew Kirkman, not guilty.'

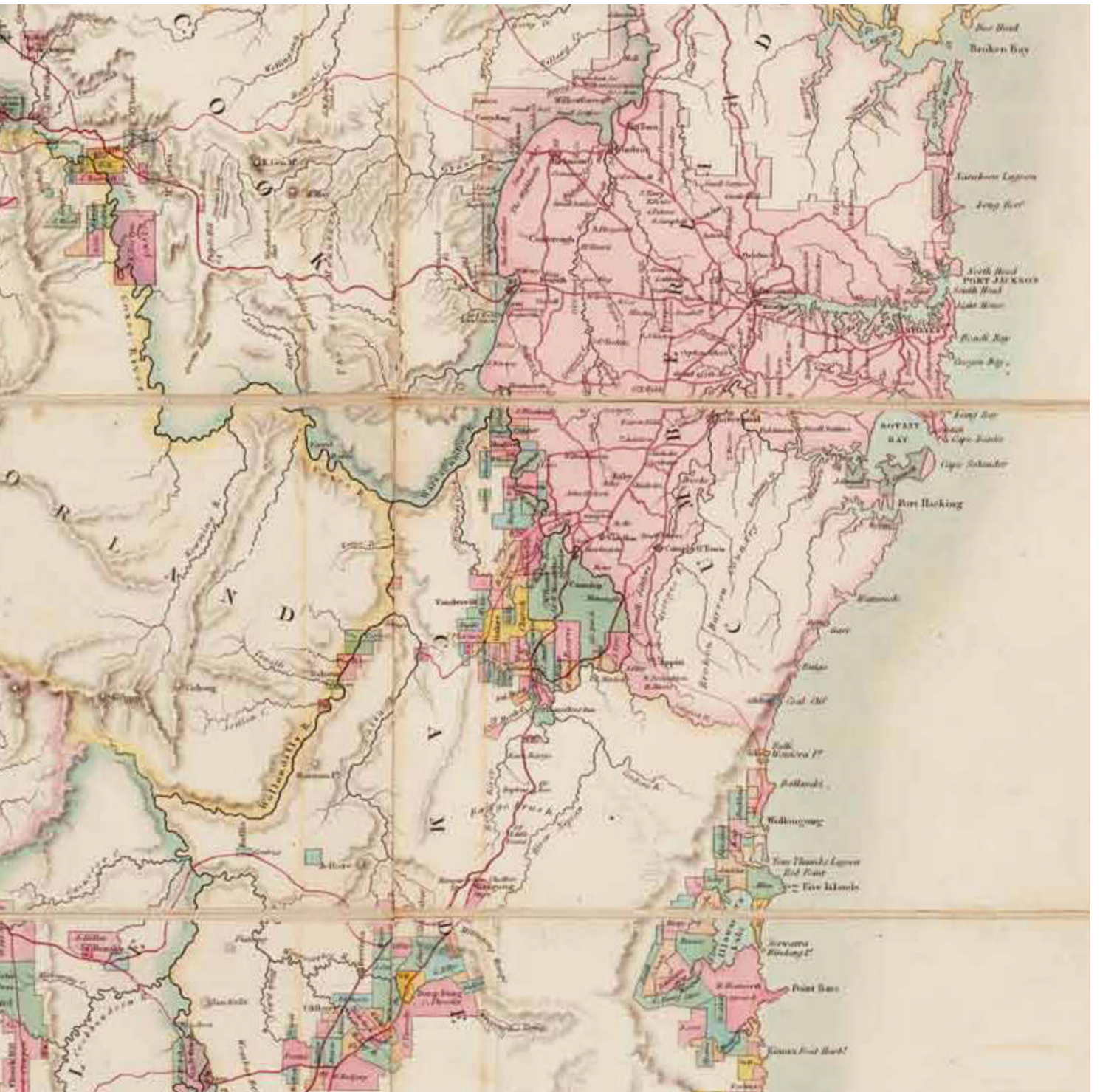
All of the business of the Queen's Bench was concluded by Friday March 23<sup>rd</sup> by which day the swelling crowds gladly turned to the spectacle of Nisi Prius hearings in the gothic and ornate chamber of the Shire Hall. On the first hearing of the case in August, 'the Grand Jury Box and the Ladies Gallery presented the appearance of large beds of lilies, roses and tulips thickly planted and curiosity sparkled among them like the morning dew'. But William Wakefield forfeited his bail to attend the birth of his daughter in Paris and the trial had been

postponed to the Spring Assizes. Now, there were so many ladies overflowing from the gallery into the Dock that Baron Hullock had to ask them to move along ‘in order to make room for persons more guilty than themselves’. In the end the Wakefield trial was disappointingly short. Only Edward and his brother William appeared – their stepmother Frances Wakefield was indisposed by the recent birth of her own baby. The case rested upon the question of whether the abducted girl, Ellen Turner, could give testimony against her husband. The judge was persuaded of the legality of the Gretna Green marriage, but also allowed the young Ellen to take the stand. From that moment the case was closed. The two Wakefields were found guilty and the Turner family successfully lobbied parliament for an annulment of the marriage. Edward Gibbon Wakefield was sentenced by the King’s Bench to three years in Newgate. His brother was sent to Lancaster Castle for a similar term.

Sir John Bayley signed the ‘Commutation of the Death Sentence’ for twenty nine prisoners of Lancaster Castle on April 30<sup>th</sup> 1827. Thomas Higgin delivered the news to each inmate individually in the men’s prison. The turnkey lost his wager as the three highway men and Thomas Tomlinson were all reprieved in this way. Higgin said you were all to be transported for life to New South Wales, and your ship would sail from the Thames. You are certainly a criminal, Ralph. You were no under-aged pickpocket or starving wench with a stolen handkerchief. Was hunger your only motivation? Did Andrew Kirkman lead you to the devil? It is sunset and the summer dark will come languorously over the Bathurst Plains. Thomas Conwell, the town crier, has been threatened by the constables and sent home to his supper. Later in the night you hear the boys singing Jack Donohoe’s rebel song, a concession they have won from the Irish gaoler now that the military are all tucked up nice in their barracks.







Dixon, R. 1837, 'Map of the Colony of New South Wales, exhibiting the situation and extent of the appropriated lands [cartographic material] : including the counties, towns, village reserves, etc. / compiled from authentic surveys etc. by Robert Dixon' National Library of Australia [MAP G8971.G46 1837] (excerpt)

## Chapter 2

### *Court House, Bathurst Settlement, Thursday October 21<sup>st</sup> 1830.*

The *Sydney Gazette* publishes a long list of absconders on the same day Governor Ralph Darling announces ‘the capture of the whole of the insurgents.’ Only seven prisoners have been brought to Bathurst, another three have been taken to Bong Bong. Given that over eighty government servants have absconded from the Bathurst farms and another dozen from the Hunter River, it is optimistic to imagine the ‘whole’ of the insurgents are captured.

Isaac Clements and Edward Jones come to the courthouse early in the morning. They have had to ride twelve miles in the half dark to ensure they are not recognised. Barely has the court clerk, Mr. Liscombe, opened the narrow door, when they appear on the veranda and slip into the cool darkness. Liscombe throws open the shutters to illuminate the papers and quills he has laid out to collect their depositions. Soon Magistrate Evernden will join them to witness the signatures. Both of these men ran with the insurgents, but now claim to have been pressed and offer their evidence as a show of their honesty. Jones returns a stolen musket. They are uncomfortable standing this close to the infamous lockup and uncertain if they can trust the authorities. The Ribbon Boys on the other hand, can be trusted to take their retribution, unless they are hanged.

Isaac Clements, overseer for Mr. Bettington, cannot now recall if he saw anything at Magistrate Evernden’s farm on the first day of the insurrection. He heard three shots, he tells Liscombe, but was standing near the stables quite a distance from the house. He is unsure if



Sheppard and Kearney were armed. Sheppard was, during the course of that first day, arguing with a man over a fowling piece, saying he should have his own weapon.

Edward Jones, Magistrate Evernden's servant, was standing on the garden path with Thomas Dunne and says he didn't see anyone shot but believes Kearney could have done it. He will swear he saw Sheppard wearing the overseer's jacket. The court clerk knows that Sheppard, Kearney and Dunne were among the wounded sent to Bong Bong, County Argyle. They would not even fall within this court's jurisdiction. There is no mention of Liscombe's servant, Ralph Entwistle, so he puts the pen down and sits and waits for the Magistrate to arrive. He will wrinkle the truth out of these convicts.

Meanwhile, I visit the cell. You appear to be sleeping even though hammering from the market square infiltrates every space, every thought. The boys who were not wounded, Patrick Gleeson, Robert Webster, James Driver and Dominic Daley, have been forced to build the gallows. I notice the beads of sweat upon your forehead. Your pulse beats visibly through a vein – a blue snake coiled across your temple. This fever is not good, there must be some infection. You were barely covered on the wagon, jolting along in Walpole's cavalcade over steep mountain tracks. Kenny and Gahan were the other two in your cart, two boys died of their wounds at Boorowa.

At ten o'clock the surgeon, George Busby, arrives. He carries a calico roll, a small case of vials, and a bottle of white wine. You watch him unroll the little swag on the sheet, running his bony fingers across the silver instruments to count them. Busby is a dour Scot and as

frugal with his words as he is with his sympathy. He takes up the slender scissors and cuts through the bandages, dropping them to the floor for the flies to finish their meal. Then he takes long tweezers and pulls back the jellied skin on your wound. You flinch. Small black balls of shot have evaded capture and now he must dig with the scalpel to release them from the pockets of puss. You turn away from his face. He has no compunction in pouring the vinegared wine onto the wound. This makes you roar.

‘Maggots would do as good a job for you,’ he observes. After a tussle with his coat pocket, Busby pulls out a squat jar of leeches and empties the squirming ball onto the bunk. Next he carefully picks out one with the tweezers and places the slim striped body upon your swollen flesh, and then another and then his brother. They fasten on and begin to drain the swelling. Busby will dress the wound again tomorrow, with equivalent care. The job is never properly finished.

This is George Busby, Ralph. I should introduce you to the gentleman. He is here to make you comfortable so that in a few days you may walk up the steps and make a decent death. His attitude in this is no more commendable than Sergeant Doyle’s qualms about killing you in cold blood. These men are committed to the appearance of fair play. More care is given to the prisoners awaiting public execution than to the government servants suffering a slow private one. An assigned servant of William Lawson, who suffered rheumatic pain, walked from O’Connell Plains to Busby’s hospital at settlement. He was taken up by the guard for not having a pass. Busby gave him a double dose of laxative and Evernden gave him fifty lashes.

But you learned about surgeons and insurgents on your first voyage. Did this experience turn you into a rebel? Were you open to seduction? You met George Mole on the ship, *John I*. It was the first ship you had ever sailed aboard. The muster took place with thirty of the military guard shining like new bobbins on the Poop deck. The Captain was William John Moncrief and he had done the convict run before. The convict ships were naught but merchant traders hired by the government to carry human cargo. They took on private passengers and their consignments as well. The surgeon, Mr. McKerrow, was the government authority on the ship and he had charge of every one's health and wellbeing as well as the punishment of convicts.

You noticed a slight tremor shook the thin fingers of the surgeon as he wrote your name in his ledger. He was a strict disciplinarian, especially with the guttersnipes. McKerrow, recorded your trial and date in a ledger and examined the health of each man by looking at a group of six at one time. One was sent back to the hulks as the surgeon would not admit any infectious felons or those too old to make the journey. It was a sort of race to Port Jackson apparently because the Captain said the record was 99 days, set by the *Guildford* in 1822. The Captain would travel direct to attempt the record but the seamen beside you complained privately. Teneriffe was full of charms and trinkets and that other Captains stopped there to sweeten the water they carried in barrels, or to take the sun and buy fruit to cure the scurvy.

The surgeon posted a copy of the Naval Charter between decks, so that all could see their rights – convicts, officers and crew. Then you went single file down the ladders into a wooden hold, through the stanchion barricades, through two padlocked doors and into the men's prison. This was lined each side with double decked sleeping berths, each being the

length of a coffin but six foot square to fit four men. Each convict was given a roll of bedding, a blanket and a sheet tied in sisal twine, a wooden bowl and a spoon. Every man had a wooden box to keep secure all he owned in the world. That first night, even with a dangerous assembly of strangers sleeping and snoring around you and the ship rocking like a fragile cradle on fathoms of water, you thanked God that you had been saved from the dank black dungeon cell of Lancaster Castle and the long drop outside the Castle window.

The next day another one hundred prisoners from the hulks joined the company. George Mole and William Maund were the youngest among them. They had avoided the criminal college of Newgate by being sent straightway to New South Wales. You had seen children as young as eight on the hulks, being kept there until twelve or thirteen and big enough to be useful in the colonies. Below decks there was a separate prison for them but each day they filed up the ladders for the same amount of time in the sun as the other convicts. Men and boys mixed in the hospital and latrines, so there was no keeping them apart really.

That first week the routine was established, all convicts were allowed on deck for the morning muster while the beds were brought up for airing and the prison floors were dry holy-stoned. Breakfast was at eight, with six men forming a mess with their own 'Captain' to keep order and divvy up the rations. That first week, while dropping down the Thames in stages, Captain Moncrief oversaw the loading of immense casks of flour, butter, cheese, raisins and suet. Standing beside you on the deck, George clapped like a school boy at the arrival of more and more casks, but you knew these held the rations for what could be four or nine months upon the sea. They filled you with hunger. The Surgeon, Mr McKerrow, was

responsible for their receipt and opening. He locked the salted pork and beef barrels and pocketed the keys.

William Maund spoke to you on deck. He asked if you could read the labels on the casks, but of course you could read as well as any farm servant or a country boy like him. Maund was a few inches shorter than you and of a sallow complexion with brown hair and eyes. George was even shorter, barely five feet two, being only sixteen. He hopped about as if impatient to get going. His complexion was ruddy and freckled, his hair was chestnut brown and his eyes as grey and speckled as a sparrow's breast. If all the English sparrows that are now hopping about Sydney Town were the spirits of these young transported spritely lads, I would not be surprised.

You watched the two lads that day and the next. George was a farm boy from Beudley but well schooled in his letters. Maund had met him in the cells awaiting the Worcester Assizes. Neither of them had ever been caught before. Maund rankled at their harsh exile, his sallow complexion was the product of his sallow nature. His accent was from Hereford and they shared a common love of breaking into other people's houses. Who can imagine or recall for what purpose, perhaps at some point for the thrill of being able to trespass.

Forgive us our trespasses. Mole and Maund were, naturally, Protestants and they asked Mr Elijah Smith, a chaplain called by God to the colony, for some reading matter. He provided them with some pamphlets he had printed himself, illuminating certain tracts from the bible. This ingratiated them to the chaplain, which had been Maund's plan, but in fact the

pamphlets were used to make a compendium for their cards. It could also be flattened out to make a quick playing surface upon the bales stored on deck. The dice were a pair of knucklebones shaved square.

They reminded you of Kirkman and yourself, he the older streetwise cove working the crowd of hardened men and you the follower, the carrier and shifter. Perhaps that is why you feared for George even then. You saw in him your own youthful folly. If you had not so admired Kirkman, so trusted and depended upon the older man, you would not be on this accursed ship on the way to no man's land while Kirkman took another pint at the John O'Gaunt on Market Street.

You saw how William Maund treated George in the unguarded moments on deck. Noted the way he smacked the boy on the hip or helped him to lift a bucket, like a maid or a child. Saw the way one caught the smile of the other over some remark from the sailors. There were many such friendships among the men on board. It made your chest tight. One day, you woke with what a Beudley farm boy would call a morning glory. It was impossible to conceal in a bunk of four men with only eighteen inches of plank to sleep on per man. You rolled toward the wall, glad of the only privacy the bunk afforded. Because of your size, your right to be alone was uncontested. Of course an erection was a common occurrence with so many men sleeping together and some relieved themselves of the pain of it unashamedly. Others formed attachments, and helped each other out of the discomfort.

The men's prison was separated from the boy's prison to prevent the older men from corrupting the younger ones. From what you had already observed of the thirty youngsters herded into the boy's prison, vice was already among them. Many had been suckled by Gin whores and had seen so much death by their young ages that they held life cheap. A group of four had found a rat while stowing the casks of flour, and they skinned it for sport. Not that you were fond of rats. It would be no different if the children were girls or boys the corruption would seek them out in either case. It was not as if the men were unable to control a sexual urge toward them, it was evil seeking out innocence. Even so, you would wish to be in the boy's prison rather than the men's. You would wish to be innocent and unspoiled again. You wondered if, in the women's transports, the women were separated from the girls. The water of the Thames spread a filthy grey shawl into the pristine sea even miles after you had lost sight of land.

The *John I* left England on July twenty second, four months after the assizes. One hundred and eighty eight convicts were aboard with thirty guards of the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment, a full crew and three paying cuddy passengers, Chaplain Elijah Smith and his wife, Mr. John Gosling and four wives and three children of the military guard. At first the children were given the run of the quarterdeck, because the Boatswain, a big hearty man called John Roberts, would give them permission to catch the last of the summer sun and air.

You could tell it was the Boatswain's first voyage, so careful was he that the sextant was properly stored and handled. He relied upon his skill with charts and numbers to take the ship to Port Jackson, but it was his first journey on a convict transport. There was a steward, William Brigg, to look after the paying passengers. Among the younger sailors were John

Edwards and Henry Wiffin, apprentices, and James Gabbott and Edward Mathews, the ships boys. These lads eyed the convict boys when they came aboard. After a month at sea they spoke and mixed perhaps a little too freely under the boatswain's benevolent eye. Although there were forty three ship's company to man the vessel, the control of the convicts was left to the military guardsmen and the ship's surgeon, when he was able to stand aright on deck.

The weather turned to gales and rain just off Plymouth and worsened the further south the ship ploughed. You had been at sea three weeks and the days slipped into a dull monotony. Mr McKerrow's personal view was that the younger class of convict were worse than their adult counterparts as they had a long career of crime ahead of them. His prejudice was only hardened by eavesdropping each night on the boy convicts through the grate in his cuddy cabin that was directly above the boys' prison. He had ample opportunity to hear the complaints of the adult wretches in hospital, but the cuddy work was more lurid and yielded information more private and therefore he believed, more true. He heard one young lad tell a friend, 'I had been in Prison three times the Compter, three times in Brixton, three times in The Old Horse, Bridwell, once in The Steel and once at Maidstone...thirteen times in all...every time I came out harder than I went in. I saw Manning and his wife hung...I did four shillings and sixpence at the hanging two handkerchiefs and a purse with two shillings in it.'

It was a cutting cold day, with a sky of cold china blue and the sea a knife of steel to the horizon, when McKerrow decided to assert his authority over the convict boys. George Mole and William Maund had engaged the weaver William Burns in a game of cards. Burns, a tailor's boy from Bolton, had been marched down to London with you and the poachers, in chains. He was a broad short boy with fair hair and a broken nose, the cartilage showed white



below his nostrils. This gave him the look of a fighter but he was softly and slowly spoken. You watched them this day at play upon the deck, laughing and oblivious to the Captain's round, not watching the surgeon's eyes pass over them. Perhaps their easy camaraderie offended Mr. McKerrow or perhaps he had some notion that in bleak weather all should be as miserable as himself.

The Surgeon Superintendent spied corrupt use of Chaplain Smith's pamphlets. He swept them up in his fingers and turned to the Captain. The Chaplain's wife was engaged with him in conversation just then but her eyes widened when she perceived the damage to her husband's property. McKerrow suggested George Mole, the youngest boy, be flogged as an example to the others. Two marines seized him and dragged him to his feet. Your palms began to itch for a fight but you were careful to see how the other convicts would respond. The others had stopped their chores and were gathering around, as stirred as you were to see what would happen.

Perceiving Mr. Roberts' popularity with the convict boys, the Captain approached the boatswain on the Poop deck with the cat-of-nine-tails in his hand. He told Roberts to flog the boy. All eyes turned to the jovial Boatswain. 'Drum the guards to the Poop Deck,' crowed Mr. McKerrow, 'you will give the lad twenty five lashes, Mr. Roberts.' Before the drummers moved, the Boatswain sought to pass the matter off with humour, 'But sir, I should hurt the boy if I were to flog him.' Laughter broke out among the crew and convicts alike. This humiliated Mr. McKerrow and he reddened. The Captain also felt the affront and intervened, 'It is your duty to flog the boy, Mr. Roberts, if so ordered.'

A brief silence followed as the Boatswain considered his position. He answered in a low voice, 'With respect Captain Moncrief, it is no part of my duty to flog convicts,' he lowered his eyes but stood firm. 'I am a navigator sir, and did not come aboard for that purpose.' The surgeon issued an audible squeak of surprise. 'You will flog the convict boy, Mr. Roberts,' the Captain insisted, 'immediately.' Roberts tilted his chin up to the Captain, 'I'll be damned if I'll do it,' he said softly. Captain Moncrief raised his voice and ordered, 'Go forward, man. You are no longer my officer.' Roberts went to the front of the ship and the crew and convicts dispersed to their duties. The marines took Mole below to await the pleasure of the Captain. McKerrow followed up swiftly on the Captain's heels to advise him.

You were astonished at Roberts' refusal to obey an order. He had resisted in such a quiet manner, you wanted to see what the outcome would be. Bets were laid on it. The following day George Mole's name was read out on the discipline roll. In Lancashire, masters would flog their servants, husbands their wives and the mill superintendent the little boys who were employed to scuttle under the looms. The military floggings were more ceremonious. They were calculated to scour the conscience of the offender as well as to encourage the piety of the witnesses. Everyone was compelled to watch.

At noon the drums beat and the full military guard assembled the convicts upon the quarter deck. The passengers, Mrs. and Mr. Elijah Smith, Mr Gosling and the military wives and children stood with the Captain and the officers on the Poop Deck. The viewing was cramped

because the Poop was the smallest of decks sitting highest in the ship and in this case containing the caged chickens and ducks brought along for fresh eggs and poultry.

The Captain brought out the lash, a croft of nine greenhide tails each tied at the end with a small knot. First mate, William Reid had been nominated as flogger by the surgeon. He had seen naval service and was used to flogging soldiers and sailors for disobedience. The charges were read out for George Mole. He was stripped bare to the waist and laid across the girth of a wooden powder cask with his arms and legs stretched before and behind as far as possible. A wad of cloth was pressed into this mouth for biting. There was something mesmerising about the spectacle that kept your eyes wide open.

Reid laid on the cat with the drums beating and the second mate calling the count. Reid had rightly judged the boy would require less of his strength and so he flogged him first. George Mole's frame was slight and his skin was pale from lack of light. The lash left a red welt to begin with and the boy cried out, but the fourth and fifth blows broke the skin open like a ripe plum. As the affront to his bones and body became rhythmic he lost consciousness. The blood and loose skin flicked over the spectators as the cat was drawn back and forth through the air. You thanked God for the stiff westerly wind that drew water from the eyes of every man. Reid did not lay on the cat as heavily as he might, but the surgeon showed no leniency insisting upon the full measure even after the lad ceased to know or care where the blows fell. Toward the end the ritual was for the edification of the religious and medical men alone. The convicts were only hardened by the sight of their fellows taking the lash bravely and without a squeak.

Amid the large assembly of men on the deck that day, Maund was taking wagers on which of the convicts would make a sound when flogged. You wanted no profit from their misery. It was Maund's indiscretion with the cards that led to poor George's folly. The boatswain perched upon one of the water casks to witness the proceedings. Contrary to the odds, he had not returned to any of his duties and daily roamed the quarterdeck at his leisure.

There was a vendetta now between the surgeon and the boatswain whose demotion had only increased his esteem among the convict lads. George lay in the hospital with suppurating wounds and every day the surgeon's credit was diminished by his suffering. The Captain was advised by Mr. McKerrow to limit the freedom of Mr. Roberts. Upon the seventh day after the flogging, the Captain approached Roberts on the Quarterdeck and, in earshot of the convict boys, ordered him confined to the Poop Deck. He informed the second Mate, Millwood, that the boatswain would be a prisoner and rationed to a pound of ships biscuit and as much water as he wanted per day until further notice by the surgeon. Francis Northwood, one of the guard, was overheard to say that this was less than a convict's ration for even the boys were fed each day with dried pork or beef, pea soup, and gruel with a dab of butter in it.

When you had been three weeks at sea, the surgeon added lime and sugar water to the ration and the men had four gills of Spanish red wine each day. The wine had sometimes turned to vinegar but it was used as an ascorbic to purge the body of poisons that might accumulate from the poor diet. The wine did not flow freely, nor were the rations served to be bartered. Each mouthful was overseen by the surgeon. He stood at the water barrel to dispense the

cordial and the wine and to watch each man swallow. This was to prevent trafficking in food or grog. He had seen a convict gamble away two weeks of rations on his previous voyage, and gambling with rations always led to pilfering. The men traded their own box stores of tobacco and coffee between one another. This kind of bartering could not be prevented among thieves.

Mr. Roberts had no comforts on the Poop Deck. His bed was brought up and laid between the hen coops. He had no more than twenty feet of unobstructed planking to walk about on, and he was a large man so that his legs became sore and stiff almost immediately from the lack of use. In the cold weather his arms as well as his legs turned blue. He borrowed a brass pricker from Private Sutherland. It is a device that soldiers strap behind their calves to relieve the pressure of long marches. You saw Roberts insert the spike three quarters of an inch into his calf but no blood would flow from it. You understood his ordeal as a sort of test, to see if a man could resist the Captain and outlast his punishment. The Captain sought to break the man.

The surgeon appeared to be afraid of the convicts and of the boatswain's popularity among them. Being a man of slender build and solitary habits the surgeon was not accustomed to being noticed or befriended. His only confidant seemed to be Captain Moncrief. The Chaplain and his wife avoided social intercourse with him and yet, when taking a turn on the Poop Deck in the warmer midafternoon, they frequently spoke with the boatswain. The weather had been rainy and abysmal but to add to the boatswain's misery the ship headed through a squall of hail.

The only protection his bed had was some sailcloth strung between the coops. On the morning when ice had formed on the water barrel, you saw the chaplain give the boatswain a pull of rum from his own flask. This heartened you, with the thought that perhaps God was on the side of mercy and that the boatswain had been right in refusing to flog George Mole. George had been strengthened by the rations of wine in the hospital, where apparently the Surgeon dispensed it freely to the boys in his charge. George came back to his daily duties and daily rations within a fortnight, but the boatswain now had neither.

Each day the prisoners would come up on deck while the prison cells were cleaned by a convict work party. Good service resulted in the leg irons being removed, so many of the convicts had lessened their hardship by electing to help the cook, or swab the decks or empty the latrines each morning. Many of the men from the country assizes were encouraged to practice their trades, some weavers and tailors taken from the Lancashire Mill riots had sewing duties while on deck. One called James Clegg taught you to sew and within six weeks at sea you had both leg irons removed in order to assist the sail maker. You also attended the Anglican Sunday service, as did every other convict and guard, Catholic or not. Chaplain Elijah Smith read the sermon.

You saw the minister's charity first hand but it appeared to wear thin later in the voyage. The Boatswain subsisted on ships biscuits and you saw him eating peas and crusts from the chicken coops. One morning, Roberts approached the Captain on the Poop Deck and complained loudly of his hunger, begging for more food, but Moncrief looked surly and told

the guard, James Brooks, the prisoner 'should have no more'. The crew and convicts well knew Roberts' confinement was due to the vindictiveness of Mr. McKerrow, but also due to the boatswain's pride. He would not serve and therefore could not eat with the officers or the passengers. Chaplain Smith once brought him two slices of pork wrapped in a linen kerchief, but Roberts had become a prisoner of his own principles and neither his conscience nor his stomach could take the rich food. He said a man made himself comfortable and he had everything he wanted. Elijah Smith suspected Roberts of too fond a regard for the convict boys, surely if mercy were to be dispensed on the ship the Chaplain should be the one to have pleaded for it. Although Elijah Smith offered Roberts food and drink, he would not plead his case with the Captain.

This was the worst weather of the voyage and one night the ship was thrown into a violent storm. Like other merchantmen, the *John I* was not a ship that carried a lot of sail and their progress was slow overnight as Captain Moncrief would have the ship 'snugged down'. In the early evening, you would watch the sailors scale the masts to roll up and secure the sails. This night the storm blew up after midnight so the available sailors and guards were busy on the bilge pumps and battening down the hatches, which were the roof grates opening onto the quarterdeck for air and light. For you and the fellow prisoners this also meant the air scuttles along the sides of the ship had to be closed, as these old merchant ships were built like barrels and rolled dreadfully in heavy weather. The smell of vomit from seasickness swirled around in the acrid odour of stale bilge water which only increased the likelihood of further heaving. The lamps burning in the hatchways were extinguished by the howling winds and in the darkness misery was absolute. A prisoner may suffer solitary confinement in the coal hole for four hours due to a misdemeanour, but the storm threw all of you on the mercy of God. The

tempest reminded you that the entire ship's company was confined with you and as likely to perish as the just and good.

This night Ellis, a slight-bodied sailor, could not control the helm and, seeing this, Roberts took up the steering of the ship with him. It took their combined weight to wrestle the ship through the troughs and peaks. No doubt the passengers and surgeon slept snugly in their cabins while the sailors and Roberts were being tossed about above decks. The Captain was indebted to Roberts but he would only convey messages to the prisoner through the Chief Mate, William Reid. The next day Reid asked Roberts to come back to his duties, or even to take up the work of a midshipman. Roberts refused. It was the boatswain's task to manage the crew and, without him, morale among the men declined. This malaise was picked up in the prison and it translated into dissent among the convicts.

Roberts knew, by his own calculations, when the ship was crossing the equator. It was early in September and the weather continued squally and changeable. Private Sutherland asked when they should 'cross the line' but Roberts did not tell because the Captain was evidently keeping the crossing quiet. The crew and guards had experienced the revelry of King Neptune's visit during previous voyages. New chums were sometimes keel hauled, others were plied with spirits and paraded naked in a tub. Men wore women's gowns and mop wigs. Chaplain Elijah Smith concurred with the Captain's judgement in preventing the pagan festival. The crew and convicts were unsettled and hardly in need of the frivolity.



The Captain took the opportunity to advise Chaplain Smith against conversing with Roberts. The crew would take this as endorsing his refusal to work. The boatswain's refusal to work was insubordination, and the Captain had already found some of the sailors slackening off or being tardy in their duties due to the boatswain's example. The Chaplain felt admonished. He had taken pity on Roberts, who appeared exhausted from the drenching he had suffered in the storm. He had given Roberts a plug of tobacco at dusk the previous evening. He knew that to do so in the day might set a bad example to the convicts and offend the Captain. His wife had also favoured the man with her conversation and had given him a loan of her books for amusement and instruction. All this must stop. The boatswain was clearly in error, and the security of the ship, according to Lieutenant James Stefford, depended upon people conversing only with those of appropriate rank or station.

The weather had begun to wear upon the nerves of all on board. Mr McKerrow found the confinement and stench of the cells was hardly relieved by the liberty of his own cabin. Therein, he found only the bottle and familiar demons. By September the ship's water, loaded from the high tide of the Thames, was brackish and left sediment of peat at the bottom of a tin cup. It was far safer to drink wine or rum.

By October sixth the ship was approaching The Cape with the promise of fairer weather. It was a clear navy blue night when the Surgeon braved the quarter deck for a turn of fresh air. When the ship was bedded down at night there were two sentries on the fore and the main hatchways. The ladders were drawn up from the prison deck each night and laid upon the planking. There were four sailors on duty. Sutherland was the sentry on duty on the Poop and he roused Roberts by a whistle, to look to the good doctor. McKerrow was half seas over and

gliding along the bulwark as if he were Nelson's ghost inspecting the guns. From time to time he leaned over the edge apparently to look for boarders. Sutherland remarked how easy it would be for the surgeon to accidentally fall or be thrown overboard from that position.

Roberts could feel no sympathy for the lonely figure. He no more understood the surgeon's mood of sullen pensiveness than the flash of delight that passed across his eyes when overseeing a flogging. The Captain on each occasion took the surgeon's word on how many lashes the body, strung across the barrel, could withstand. It was an educated guess of bodyweight, age and blood flow, but the surgeon's calculations always seemed to Roberts to err on the side of cruelty for pleasure. He was not afraid of the man even if drink could make him violent rather than maudlin. Alone he had not muscle or brawn enough to wield a parasol. This type of effete sadist required a whole government system to give him power. He had none within and was therefore vulnerable to the bottle.

The boatswain watched Surgeon Superintendent James McKerrow mount the rail of the forecastle deck and launch himself over the edge. Roberts could neither think nor speak in that instant. Had his anger willed the man to jump? If McKerrow had launched himself from the stern his death would have passed unremarked, silent in the silver wake that followed along. Sutherland put out the cry of 'man overboard' and all hands ran to the larboard side to see the grey head of Mr McKerrow bobbling beneath the blue satin skin of sea. The cold shock of the water had broken his alcoholic stupor and he shrieked and flailed in the water now. All hell and clatter broke loose on deck once the alarm was raised. The ships company were roused and running over the decks like bull ants, fetching ropes and flotsam to throw over to his aid.

The prisoners heard the commotion, but unable to see the action they went on the ran-tan – grating their tin cups and spoons on the iron bars and thumping their clogs upon the boards. When Northwood shouted that the surgeon had been thrown overboard a shout of approbation went up from the boys' prison. The drummer, inexplicably, began to drum to arms, the chickens woke in such a cluck as to set the rooster crowing as if it were dawn. In this remarkable cacophony, Mr. John Roberts alone had the presence of mind to sacrifice his own bedding to save the drowning man. Roberts gripped the sides of his rotting mattress and threw it overboard to the gasping surgeon.

The surgeon was able to grab Robert's mattress in this thin blue fingers, the impulse to commit suicide having receded with the watery revelation of his imminent destruction. The longboat was launched and John Hunter, third mate, took the apprentices John Edwards and Henry Wiffin aboard to row it to the surgeon. All of the lamps were lit in the passenger cabins and Mrs Smith, two of the guardsmen's wives and four children, crowded the windows to watch the rescue. The women were not dressed to come upstairs but the Chaplain and Captain soon emerged in night attire. By this time the boat had reached the bedding with the doctor clinging to it and the apprentices gaffed it with a grappling hook. Then it was all hands needed to drag the longboat up the side of the ship. Roberts took the rope beside the first mate and attempted to match him in strength. Thomas Sutherland heard him say to William Reid, 'a bread and water pull is better than an able seaman's.' But it was not true, Roberts had been shocked and weakened by this new ordeal.

When Mr. McKerrow was pulled from the mattress his lips were blue and his teeth were clashing about his jaws uncontrollably. Roberts stripped him naked then swaddled him in blankets like a blea baby. Reid forced two slugs of brandy down his gullet to stoke the fire within but hypothermia soon turned him a deathly white. As soon as he was taken below he suffered the tender ministrations of the women folk. Under Mrs Smith's rule the women kept a vigil by the surgeon. He was dosed with brandy hourly, rubbed with camphorated oil, fed and purged alternately, prayed over and cosseted until he died.

James Brooks hoisted Roberts' bed up onto the rigging to dry. It took more than a week for the straw to dry out as the winds of the Cape of Good Hope gained in warmth and strength. On October 16<sup>th</sup> 1827, Surgeon Superintendent McKerrow was sewn into his hammock and slipped back into the sea from whence he had been dragged ten days earlier. All men and passengers were on deck for the commemoration service and the Chaplain spoke very fairly of him, but truth be known the convict boys were glad to see their tyrant off the ship. A deep hum flowed from the breasts of the convicts, an audible hum that ran under the words of the Chaplain reading the final scriptures. It was a dark rejoicing.

Mr. Roberts grew in strength from the encounter for there could not have been a richer spiritual victory than to have heroically, if only temporarily, saved his persecutor. That same afternoon, you overheard William Reid speaking with Roberts. The Captain was offering peace, a return to duties on full pay now that McKerrow had no say in it. Roberts said he was disgusted that the Captain should seek to throw the blame off his own shoulders onto those of a dead man. He sent Reid with an answer for the Captain. He had been a prisoner so long

now that he would wait another month until Sydney Town and see the Master in court for unlawful confinement. This notion passed as gossip among the convicts like a dose of salts.

Toward the end of October the temperatures had been up to ninety degrees Fahrenheit on the deck of the *John I* and Mr. Gosling read the barometer at 76 degrees in his stifling cabin. The body heat in the enclosed berths of the prison raised the temperature below deck by ten degrees. The smell of rotting wood had been overpowered by the odour of molten tar dripping onto the men from the deck above. This heat had persisted for a week with the men in the prison becoming more and more agitated at night due to the poor ventilation and the fact that the windsail machines had not been employed by the surgeon early in the voyage and now sat idle. Now that Captain Moncrief was in charge of military and crew, the floggings continued but there was no attendance to the welfare of health of the convicts. Chaplain Smith continued his ministrations to the few malingerers in the hospital, but the boys that McKerrow had allowed to assist in the hospital were returned to the prison and they missed the extra rations of grog.

George Mole came to you for a bench hook or a seam ripper or some sort of cutter. He no longer associated with Maund, hearing of the profit he had made from the wager on his squealing. Mole was something of a leader among the boys now and he told you they were making an escape tunnel. The notion of tunnelling to freedom on a ship made you laugh. You refused him the sail maker's tools in case he got caught with them and was flogged again. The boy was deadly serious. He accused you of being a coward and said he wanted nothing more to do with sodomites. You did not take offence, but worried for the boy all the more.

Later that same week, the boatswain was sleeping with his head upon the decking, listening to the groaning and sighing of the old bark. A ship could sing a sort of a love song to her swain and in the lowest ebb of the night Roberts could hear the timbers breathing in and out. There was another noise also and he had noticed it over a number of days. Tapping and scraping, very late at night, coming from the hold. Rats made such a clatter, but there were no rats left alive below decks. McKerrow had allowed the apprentices to hunt the rats out of the hold to protect his crates of cheese and bottled wine. Curiosity drew Roberts to the top of the Poop Deck ladder. He had not stepped down onto the quarter deck since he had been called by Reid to help hoist McKerrow out of the briny. Now he could plainly hear singing rising from the hatches – drunken singing and footsteps running below. He told Private Northwood to fetch the Captain and the chief mate William Reid and to tell them to come armed. When the sentry had gone, Roberts went down to the quarter deck and took a cutlass from William Millwood, the second mate, as he emerged from the forward cabins.

There were always three sentries on duty to man the two after guns on the Quarterdeck. These were kept charged with round and grapeshot. The officers had in their cabins a brace of pistols with balls and cutlasses. There were two sailors posted on the main and mizzenmast with a blunderbuss on the former and two muskets on the latter in case of a revolt. By the Captain's order two fires had been kept burning every night at the two main hatchways. James Brooks was on duty at the middle hatchway. Roberts could see no sign of disturbance by the light of the fires. The ladders rested on the deck. Perhaps the revellers were not attempting to take the ship.

Roberts opened the main hatch, slid the ladder down and descended into the darkness. Chief Mate William Reid, Captain Moncrief and the soldier Northwood soon followed him. You saw the Boatswain come down into the men's prison deck before the others, saw his cutlass slashing before him in the half-dark to ward off a surprise attack and then the bright light of the lantern threw Northwood's shadow into relief against the prison stanchion as he followed up on the boatswain's heels. Finding the prison still secure but with the loud sound of juvenile singing in their ears, the men proceeded to the boys' prison. Northwood kept the light as Roberts led the way to the boys' bunks and began stripping back the mattresses.

Beneath George Mole's bunk the wood had been chipped away through the decking to the hold below. The space was sufficient for one small lad to pass through. The men unlocked the hatches and went down into the hold to discover the surgeon's crate had been split apart and half of the wine bottles were missing. The drunken choirboy, William Burns, was grabbed by the scruff of the neck. He still held the bottle in his hand. He claimed the other boys had also been getting out of the prison over a period of days.

The prisoners saw there was no doubting Roberts' courage or his duty to the welfare of the ship. The Chief Mate Reid and Northwood had lagged behind him with the Captain. It remained a mystery how Roberts knew which bunks to search in the boy's prison. His confinement on the Poop deck had weakened him physically but it had not cut him off from the tide of gossip or from keeping a keen observation of the character of the convicts as they went about their tasks and secret deals on the quarterdeck. Two days previous, George Mole had traded with the sailor William Aldwell – a bottle of the surgeon's wine for an awl and hook.

The boys in the prison were double ironed that night and while the blacksmith was about his work, the clanging prevented any on the prison deck from sleeping. After the disturbance was quelled, the first mate Reid brought Roberts a glass of grog but the boatswain said, 'I have been so long on bread and water that I durst not take it' and with that he returned to the Poop deck. With him went the hope of any convict insurrection. The convict boys' desire for the surgeon's wine was stronger than their imaginations, for they could have had the run of the ship had they been inclined to do more evil. The Chaplain later deemed it a blessing that none had spread the news to the men's prison or others would have tried their luck. But you knew about it Ralph, and you did nothing.

The hot weather had broken and the following five weeks at sea slipped into the routine of meals, dragging up, airing and stowing of beds, petty squabbles and the inevitable floggings. Roberts remained on the Poop deck, mostly lying under the tarpaulin which he doubled to counter the rents and holes. True to his word, George Mole would have nothing more to do with you. He saw you sewing up the rents in Robert's tarpaulin and suspected you had told him about the tools you wanted to borrow. How else would the boatswain have known to search his bunk?

There was no more rain, no storms. Just the uninterrupted and inevitable movement across an unchanging swell of blue green glass to an island continent that grew more fantastical and imaginary from the sailor's stories the closer you came to it. Everyone spoke of Crusoe as if they had sailed with him, and of Captain Gulliver who had landed on these shores of New



Holland. You expected cannibals, shrunken heads and mutineers all of which were a reality rather than a fiction of the times.

On November twenty fifth, 1827, seven months after your life was purchased by the mercy of the Crown, you arrived at the settlement. The two headed continent opened into a broad harbour as the *John I*, under full sail, ploughed through to Port Jackson. All hands and convicts were on deck to savour the smell of land and hear the cry of gulls above ‘the broad canal dotted with inlets and sandy beaches leading to Sydney Cove.’

On the left foreshore, where the forest parted, you could see the gables of a grand house, incongruous in the barbarous foliage. James Wearham, who had sailed into the port twenty years previous said it was the mansion of an Irish lord, Sir Henry Browne Hayes transported for abducting a Quaker heiress, and that he had encircled the house with a moat that he filled with Irish bog turf to keep the snakes out. Francis Sells contradicted old Wearham, saying the lord had long since returned to Ireland on a pardon from Captain Bligh. Thomas Howard had been in Sydney Town two year ago and claimed the house was now in the hands of a barrister named Wentworth, the bastard son of a convict girl and a highway man, also of Irish descent, who had made good in the Rum Rebellion. The stories were so outlandish, no one placed store in any of them.

The ship docked beside other smaller craft at Sydney Cove, the passage having taken one hundred and twenty six days. There had been three deaths among the convicts and seven more remained in the hospital due to the lack of care they had received once McKerrow went

overboard. The arrival was an odd business to you and your messmates for the routines did not differ. You could see, hear and smell the ramshackle town but no one was allowed on shore until the Naval Officer had come aboard to fetch the dispatches from England and the ship had been inspected by Customs. King Bungaree, leader of the aboriginal natives came aboard the transport to welcome the gentlemen and receive coins. He was a splendid ebony native who wore a military coat of red and blue and a three cornered hat. He was followed by a flock of giggling wives who wore almost nothing.

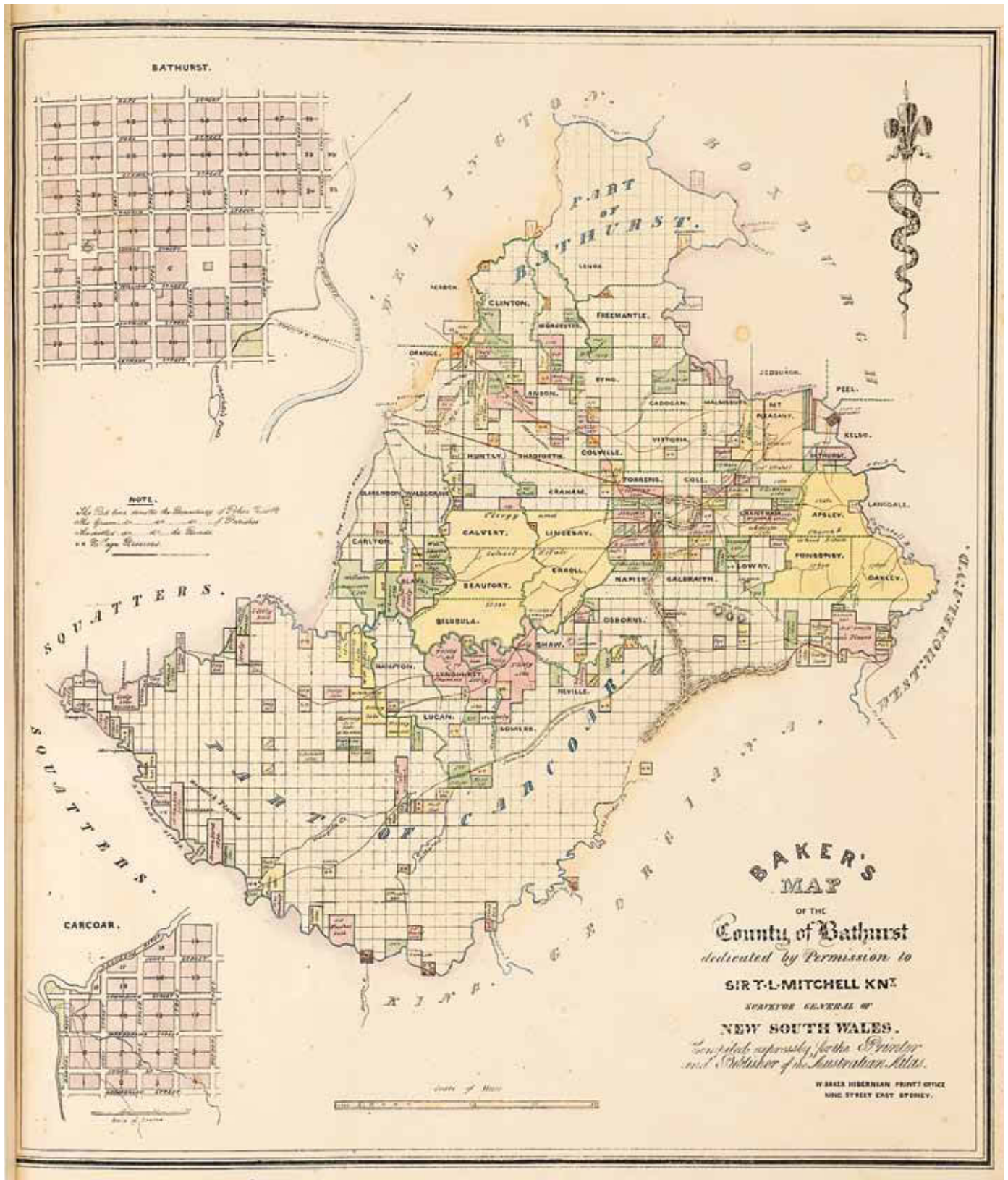
Chaplain and Mrs. Elijah Smith and Mr. Gosling went ashore with the other passengers the next day. The sick were moved to the Rum Hospital and some of the guards and their families were able to leave the following morning. There was a muster of convicts held on the twenty eighth of November, when the Governor's representative came aboard and asked if the convicts had any complaints about their treatment on the voyage. There were none, as most of your fellows wanted no further delay in going ashore and they felt the effort to complain would be futile. Three convicts with the sorest cause for complaint were already dead and buried at sea.

You were marched to Hyde Park Barracks for assignment. Your shipmates were Englishmen all, and the muster clerk recorded their former trades under the column for trial and conviction: cattle theft, murder, larceny, forgery, passing forged notes. All skilled trades that had required a tough apprenticeship of many years, but were no longer sought after. In the new colony one must become a builder of things or a minder of sheep. The clerk poised his quill above the ledger. 'Trade or occupation?' he enquired, noting that you claimed to be able to read. 'Brickmaker' you had replied. The Principal Superintendent of Convicts assigned the

skilled mechanics – sawyers, carpenters, tilers, brickmakers – to work on government projects. This day the gentleman settler, John Liscombe, was at the Barracks looking for a brick tradesman and a farm labourer for his neighbour, Mr. Sturgeon. That afternoon George Mole and yourself were bundled onto a bullock wagon already laden with supplies.

George had regained some of the friendliness and delight he had shown at the loading of casks onto the *John I*. This time he was enchanted. The sun cut shards of light from the diamonds in the jewellers' windows, their shopfronts parading stolen goods fenced from London. There were golden churches and public buildings just emerging from gigantic blocks of sandstone at the point of the craftsman's chisel. The facade of civilisation was soon passed by and you entered the mangrove swamps of the Parramatta River.

You were bound for a town over the mountains that had been named after the dissolute Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl Bathurst. Much of the journey with George Mole was under canvas to escape the heat of the day or beneath the canopy of stars. You were watered and fed along with the horses. The master was as concerned for you as for any other cargo. There was enough time to mend a friendship with George who settled his grievances and made no account of them. The slow wagon drew you through the dark and dawn and bleaching sunlight for seven days until one evening you reached a little valley and a cottage below the silhouette of Fitzgerald's Mount. At John Liscombe's farm, George was roused from sleep and transferred to Mr. Sturgeon's cart. Too stuporous to bid you farewell, George Mole disappeared into the night without looking back.



Baker's Map of the County of Bathurst(<http://nla.map-raa8-s6> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 5)





## Chapter 3

### *Bathurst Gaol, Bathurst Settlement, Friday October 22nd 1830.*

Heavy rain begins to fall. In the night there is the sound of a young boy shrieking. It is not the rhythmic sound of flogging or the grunt and crunch of a street bashing. This is the inhuman sound of a creature being eaten out by terror. You heard it once at the pit bull fights in Manchester, when a punter's child ran into the ring. There you could turn away but here the sound fills every crevice. Someone is using the storm to cover the sound of their evil. If you were unshackled you would run to every cell to find it. You would bash open every locked door. You would punch in the gaoler's mouth to find it. You try to recall the sounds George made when he was flogged. Is it his voice lifted to a higher pitch? You listen to make sure it is a different boy, perhaps James Green. Someone is being tortured for what they know. It is not an unfamiliar sound in this place but the walls stand mute when Mr. Liscombe opens the courthouse doors. The rain has subsided into a monotonous drone.

Mr. George Ranken, settler magistrate from Kelloshiel, stands in the rain. His riding crop taps impatiently at his muddy boots and his other hand holds the scruff of an urchin. He has ridden in from his outstation, Glen Logan, with an absconder, and now the boy says he has a pass and must speak to Mr. Liscombe. Ranken has no patience for this. He has spent too many wet nights hunting bolters and now longs for a warm fire and a bowl of oatmeal. As, no doubt, does the urchin. Liscombe accepts his charge and has no idea what to do with him, or where to put him in the cramped room. He stands him on some copies of the *Sydney Gazette* to catch the drips and wastes some time by setting the fire. The boy speaks as soon as Ranken has left them.

‘I want to turn myself approver,’ he says. Liscombe’s blood freezes at his innocence. He has seen men turned approver, their flesh beaten to jelly in the cells before they will swear depositions against their kin. The boy hops about from foot to foot, eager to spar but he has missed the fight. ‘Magistrate Evernden made such an offer to my friend and now I feel inclined to take it.’

‘Perhaps your friend has taken it already,’ Liscombe smiles and seats himself behind the desk. He is thinking of James Green and how little he knew. ‘Are you one of the notorious Ribbon Boys?’

‘Indeed sir, I am.’

‘Then I shall have you thrown into the cells and hanged along with them.’ Liscombe rings the silver desk bell to summon the constable.

The boy now rushes his words, one ear cocked toward the door to the lockup. ‘If I give evidence against my mates I may go free. That was the message Magistrate Evernden sent to Ralph Entwistle. Never a shot was fired after that. Walpole took them meek as lambs.’

‘Did Entwistle accept the Magistrate’s offer?’ Liscombe’s eyes narrow. The boy looks away but Liscombe presses into the heart of the lad. ‘Were you there at the final capture?’

The boy stays silent.

‘Or were you armed and at large in the bush?’ Liscombe fingers his papers, somewhere he has a charge sheet prepared for that.

‘Ralph said if I was taken to give you this.’ The boy drags a crinkled sleeve of paper from his waist belt and lays it on the blotter.

Liscombe looks at the paper as if it is spider that has crawled out from the shadows. ‘What is it?’ he says.

‘I cannot read,’ says George Mole, which is a lie but he thinks it a safe one.

Liscombe’s face is suddenly a delicious mixture of fear and curiosity. He cautiously unfolds the creased paper. It is a pass. Quick as a fence with a trinket, he slips it into his pocket. He studies the boy with revived interest. ‘Mr Ranken expects you to be flogged, boy. At the very least. For running from his farm.’

The lad remembers what it is to be flogged. He fears it more than being hanged. Liscombe finds the charge sheet for absconders. ‘Constable Parker will escort you to the Convict Barracks. There you will do all that is asked of you as a returned government servant. If you skite about being one of the Ribbon Boys, you will be hanged. If you are silent and of good conduct, your case will be delayed until the end of next month.’ George snarls in disgust but Liscombe sees through his bravado. Constable Parker rattles open the door. The lad is manacled and led away. Then Liscombe closes the court office and takes a lamp and a quire of papers to the cells.

Your visitor today, Ralph, is Mr. John Liscombe of Stowford Farm. You have no need for me to introduce him. He is Court Clerk, Registrar the Court of Appeals, Deputy Postmaster, Coroner and your master. Liscombe draws so many salaries that his combined income is only seventy pounds less than Evernden’s as Superintendent of Police, which is a sore point. Liscombe lives with his wife and two year old son, Thomas, at Kelso.

Stowford is twice as prosperous as Evernden’s farm. On the same amount of land, Liscombe has double the cattle, crops, horses and sheep. His first wool clip, as you know, went on its way to Sydney Town in November last year. At the same time, Reverend Marsden sent his wool wagon from Molong. There he bred from five Saxon ewes, given to him at Kew by



George III, and a ram that was a weak motherless runt brought from Mr. Riley at Raby. In London, twenty wool brokers certified that Marsden's clip was 'the finest wool ever seen'. Liscombe's fleeces did not make it to market. The wagon was turned back by Magistrate Evernden at the ford across the Campbell River.

John Liscombe eyes you nervously as he enters. He is still a young man of thirty and short and stocky of build, as Devonshire men sometimes are. It alarms you to see the distrust now in his eyes. He places the lamp on the bunk to read by. The sodden *Sydney Gazette* he unfolds bears a black margin to commemorate the death of King George the Fourth. The news has only now reached the colony. Liscombe explains that a certain number of prisoners will receive clemency when William IV is Proclaimed King in the Colony on November 6<sup>th</sup>. Your trial is slated for the end of October, which may prove too early for clemency. He seems to show you this chink of hope only to discount it.

The next paper he produces is a charge sheet. 'Two boys have been brought in from Glen Logan, James Green and George Mole,' he says studying your eyes for any flicker of recognition.

'At large with arms,' he reads from the sheet.

'Thou'st acs Magistrate Evernden about his messengers. Them are nought to us.'

'But you know George Mole, was he not one of your boys?'

'Mole was a shipmate.'

'But you would have him protected?'

‘Magistrates, and non-such gentlemen, should fend for the boys they send on errands. M’appen thou couldst do summat for the lad, Mr Liscombe. T’is all.’

Liscombe takes out of his pocket the small ragged note that George Mole has given him. It is a pass, written in Liscombe’s fine hand and certifying the bearer, Ralph Entwistle, has his master’s consent to be absent from Stowford Farm for three weeks to deliver wool to Sydney Town and bring back supplies from the markets. Your description is on the back where you made your mark. Evernden did not see this note when you were taken at the River. It was concealed in the bundle of your clothing that the constables returned to you at the gaol. In the trembling hands of Liscombe now, you hope that it will remind him of his trust in you. You were a good servant, mild in manner, loyal and trustworthy. You were working toward a Ticket of Leave in five years time. Magistrate Evernden had you arrested and flogged and Liscombe did nothing to save you. Your master owes you a favour.

But this pass is much more volatile than a simple reminder of a debt, Ralph. General Order (No. 6) forbids any magistrate or settler from issuing a pass to a Ticket of Leave servant for longer than fourteen days without the permission of the Governor. No Magistrate has the right to ‘grant a pass under any circumstances to other prisoners of the crown except their own servant.’ You were not eligible for a Ticket of Leave, Ralph. The magistrate’s clerk has no right to sign a pass for longer than fourteen days for his own servant. The Governor has proclaimed that the illegal issuing of passes is responsible for the promotion of bushranging. If a settler is found in breach of the regulation, ‘the Name of such a person will be published in the *Gazette* having forfeited his Claim to Indulgence from the government’. Liscombe

stands to lose his position and his right to have any more government servants assigned to Stowford.

Liscombe has lost six of his servants to the insurrection. He understands that you are reminding him of how this trouble began. He places the pass so close to the candle flame as he reads it, that the corner catches and it burns. Now you know that George is here in Bathurst, somewhere in the cells. Liscombe blows away the ash and leaves you to your thoughts.

When you arrived at Stowford the farm was under the care of Mr. William Inns outside the cottage and Mrs Charlotte Inns within it. He was the overseer and she his doxy, the dairymaid. Along with the servant, John Watts, they were free by ticket or by servitude each having been in the colony five or six years already. John Forbes was a labourer and still a government servant after eight years. He was of an age with Watts the shepherd, and John Murray, a stockman who had earned a few cattle of his own. They were all about forty. Patrick Burke, the groom, was only five foot two and of a square and muscular make, like a wrestler. When you came upon him shoeing the mare you thought he was just a boy but when he looked up his eyes were much older, if not wiser. Patrick Byrne, the bullock driver, was the youngest at Stowford. He was a Catholic boy of only twenty years and the only companion you found when you arrived. His job as bullock driver gave him a knowledge of the other farms and countryside. It was Patrick who told you that George Mole had been sent to Woomilla, one of the Ranken properties on the Lachlan River.

At Stowford the land slopes down from the cottage on the ridge toward Fitzgerald's Valley, a wending trail of grey tangled river flats. Liscombe runs a herd of South African horned cattle along the valley and each evening John Murray leads them to the pens calling 'bail up' to quieten and restrain them. It is a useful catchcry that bolters use when they rob travellers on the road. The valley follows the thin line of water that rewards the foot pad with a stone cottage on the bank of the stream called Bettington's Hare Castle. It is as airy and refined a name as ever you will find beside Dick's swampy little Creek. The men laugh about it.

It was the beginning of a drought that sucked the water from the beck at the foot of the cottage and cracked the banks into two thin dry lips. The silvery native grasses turned to straw and the earth itself burned like a kiln. To make a brick one had first to find the water. On this pretext you spent many hours wandering the thin stream, cutting reeds and digging into the soaks along the natural bed of the ancient rivulet. All you remembered from boyhood was that the clag must be mixed with straw and set to bake in the sun. You mixed a trial batch of river mud and reeds but after two weeks the mud loaves just crumbled in your hands.

By this time you had fashioned a brick mould by nailing wood slats into a rectangle and reinforcing the edges with four strips of iron. By candlelight you carved the sign of a cross out of the faceplate and nailed it, bumpy side up, to the workbench in the barn. The next batch of bricks was compressed neatly by the new mould and the frog mark emerged as a dark crisscrossed dent. Your thumb prints, as you pushed the clay through, became your signature. This was the first work you had ever done that made you feel satisfied.

Mr Inns talked of limestone at a place called Lime Kilns on the other side of the Bathurst Plains. The convict Maurice Welsh was the lime burner there. The kilns were inverted conical pits excavated from the mound of a hill, so that the crushed limestone could be loaded in at the wide top end with layers of coal and wood for the fire. This was burned for several days and the powdery quicklime fell to the bottom where it was collected in the ess-hole. Carters on their way to the Lachlan River brought you a sufficient load of quicklime in bags to build with. When the quicklime was heated in a fire pit, you threw in the water to slake it and a violent cloud exploded, leaving a thick sticky residue like white taffy. This was the mortar. You began building two chimneys at either end of the overseer's cottage. By trial and error your bricks had improved and the chimney stacks emerged ramshackled from the earth like the skeletons of two chalky creatures.

In the evenings, Patrick Burke was merry company but his weakness was the grog. He would go boozing and be missing a week at a time. After a year Liscombe had tired of his absences. Mr Inns reported Burke as a good-for-nothing and he was sent to an iron gang for a month. Liscombe went to Sydney Town seeking two more useful servants to replace him. In September 1828, he met *The Countess of Harcourt* and returned with young William Chinn and James Hobbs, a carpenter and a bricklayer.

Now there was enough know-how on the place to correct your early mistakes with the chimneys and to fashion better brick moulds. William Chinn was a dab hand at fixing stools and knocking together cupboards for the kitchen. All hands were employed in splitting palings and erecting huts with cross-poles and slabs of bark. There was already a dairy, a pig pen, a cow yard and a calf pen. With the other men, you constructed a wool shed and a shelter

for the buggy from clam-stave-and-daub. The long drought meant the wheat crops failed for three years. Any stores that were held at the farms had to be returned to the government rather than put into the mouths of the assigned servants. You and the boys lived on maize damper and a bit of mutton on Sundays. You longed for a taste of Jannock made from oats, or even a hunch of the rough flour bread you called Brown Tommy. But despite the absence of the familiar fare of the old country, life could have gone on in this calm fashion for you, Ralph. Following the example of William Inns you could have earned your ticket of leave as there was no mark against you.

A violent hail storm broke the drought in January 1829, but you did not see an improvement in the rations. The price of wheat dropped. Herds of cattle and sheep were seized as loans fell due and were forfeited. John Liscombe was able to pay his debts with his government salaries and bought up more stock at cheap prices. At the end of the month, he went to Sydney Town to meet the *Governor Ready*. He brought back two more Irishmen.

John Kenny was twenty one and left behind a wife and child. He wore a ring on his right middle finger which was too large to allow the band to pass over the knuckle and effect an escape. He was a carter by trade but had robbed a person on the road and his body bore the scars and tattoos of a brash cove. Inside each of his arms he had carved a cross, inked with ashes. Michael Kearney was twenty two and had brown hair, a ruddy complexion and unusual eyes. Around the blue iris were strands of yellow so that when he was happy his eyes appeared blue but when troubled they were green. You had quietly studied them. His crime was robbery, but he spoke of a secret society that imposed their own laws upon the Tipperary

villages and backed up their threatening letters with barn burnings or murder. For the first time you heard whisperings of a sect called the Ribbonmen.

*The Governor Ready* had arrived on the same date as the *Sophia* carrying Thomas Dunne, a thirty two year old shepherd who had left behind a wife in County Kildare when caught robbing a house. The servants bound for Bathurst shared the same wagon and so the shipmates Kearney and Kenny befriended Dunne who was assigned to Charles Thomas Ware of Woodstock – a farm that was within walking distance of Stowford. Come March all three had taken Shanky's pony to see Dominic Daley at Mr. Johnston's farm. Daley was a stubby, thirty one year old farmer from County Armagh who had been done for stealing his own mare. In Ireland, the agents of the landlords often impounded animals for payment of tithes and if the farmers took their property back they were arrested. Dominic Daley would not have willingly left his wife and four children. Michael came to Daley for news of his brother Thomas, as both men had been shipped on the *Ferguson*. Thomas Kearney had been awaiting transportation since 1825, but was kept back due to his youth. Having been taken up in a general sweep of the Dublin ribbon societies, he was charged with Unlawful Pledging. Daley said he remembered the lad, the very marrow of his brother in looks and height. He had been assigned to Solomon Wiseman on the ferry road at the Hawkesbury.

The days were growing short and so the work of the farm was constricted to a few hard hours. There were longer cold evenings to notice the hunger and short rations. Only the Irish boys' company and their home made spirits could blot out your misery once the valley fell dark and still. The *Sydney Gazette* reported tales of Jack Donohoe, a young Irish bushranger, whose exploits ignited the talk like gunpowder. He was said to be supernaturally athletic, able

to make fools of the constables and elude the hangman. He loved to rob toffs on the Sydney Road and 'give them a touch up.' His two companions were Walmsley nicknamed 'Vittles' and Webber called 'the native' for his tanned complexion. They darkened their faces with charcoal.

Rebellion seemed a game the young Irish played as a sport. When William Gahan came in June the whole mood of the group changed. He was a serious pugilist and determined to have a fist fight over any small wager. He showed great interest in the reports of the fighting at Brickfields which drew in a larger crowd than the dogs and more money than the cockfighting in a single week. He was your age and height, Ralph, but with the musculature of a ploughman. He had been transported from Tipperary for burglary and possession of firearms but his life sentence felt like a headlock. Even though, once he arrived on Stowford, he was free to roam over more land than he had ever known in Tipperary, remembering the judge's sentence created for him a mental prison. His anger infected the others.

He arrived at the beginning of winter and the early dark and dank hut in the shadow of the mount sank into a miasma of misery. You were hungry and cold. The ration of salt beef was meagre and of poor quality and Mrs. Inns made maize cake because of the scarcity of wheat. Her loaves were heavy on the bran and mixed with water from the creek which had a salty tang. The skins of potatoes were boiled with hops, ale, salt and sugar to make yeast. The crust smelled and looked delicious on the first day. By the second day the loaves, too thick for a poorly built oven to bake them through, began to ferment. If there was dampness overnight the insides turned mouldy. The *Sydney Monitor* claimed it was fermented maize bread and



salt beef that drove men to turn bushrangers as the ration had ‘an effect on weak bowels quite unsuitable for labouring men.’

The monotony of the winter work of grubbing and stumping and fencing wore the nerves thin. There was not enough ploughing or carting to keep the boys physically tired and arm wrestling often collapsed into rough housing. Arguments and rivalries festered and simmered through the cold months. Gahan tried once to drag you into an argument but you ‘gave him the leg in the Lancashire style’ so that he would give over the bullyragging. He didn’t bother you after that. Patrick Byrne had been the bullock driver for three years but Kenny knew it all. Michael Kearney was the best ploughman of his county but, like Gahan, had failed as a burglar. Gahan was uneducated and Kearney could read and write. If it had been a barnyard the roosters would have been Kearney and Byrne, but Kenny and Gahan tussled for second best. You and the old hands just watched the newcomers settle in.

In August a new cove called John Sheppard arrived. He was not Irish and so seemed more calm when he dipped his lid and came into the hut. The master had fetched him from Bathurst gaol, where a government wagon had brought a load of new labourers for assignment. Kearney eyed him suspiciously trying to size him up – five seven and broad across the shoulders. Was he ploughman or carter? It did not matter if he were a shepherd or stockman as that meant he would be off the place and working for months alone in the scrub like Watts, Murray and Walsh.

It turned out that Sheppard was a house breaker. Not that he said so – people had no need to confess their crimes once they arrived – but he was natty with locks of all descriptions and he had a set of skeleton keys in his box. When he walked his gait seemed to roll. It minded old William Inns of the surgeon Peter Cunningham who had visited Bathurst. The surgeon would take eight steps and then peel off to the right, another eight and he would turn right again. The habit came from pacing his small cabin when at sea. John Sheppard declared himself a Wiltshire boatman, which made the boys roar with laughter. There were no rivers at Stowford, only a thin stream you could jump across.

One howling cold evening in August, Michael read the list of absconders from the *Sydney Gazette* to warm everyone's spirits. Governor Darling had disbanded the Royal Veterans Battalion. As overseers of the road gangs and as mounted police they had proved to be inept and expensive. He replaced them with ex-convict overseers and boasted that he had saved the Colony twelve thousand pounds per annum. But by 1828, every convict on a road or iron gang had run off at least once. Now to cut the number of absconders on the list, the Governor issued an order that settlers should only employ free men as overseers. The boys laughed at the Governor ordering the settlers to shut the barn door after the horse had bolted.

A report from the Liverpool Plains concerned a shipmate of yours Ralph, Edward Bowen. He had run from the Australian Agricultural Company and was caught trying to break into a hut for supplies. He was acquitted by the magistrate, but he took to the bush rather than return to that remote outpost. This report gave Michael Kearney the wanderlust. He decided to cross the mountains to find his brother on the Hawkesbury. He asked you and John Sheppard to do a moonlight flit. His friend Daniel Gleeson, who had been transported for the same robbery in

Tipperary, had been assigned to a settler called John Dickson in Sydney Town. He planned to find food and shelter there and convince Daniel to run with him.

You were not interested in the adventure. You had no kin to seek out and you knew Mr. Liscombe would be looking for a man to accompany Patrick Byrne to market on the wagon. He could not spare the older servants and you hoped the job would fall to you. This way you could get to Sydney Town to sample the delights but also return to regular work, a bed and the promise of earning your ticket of leave. You were not ready to take a risk just to be with Michael – raggotin’ around the country, sleeping rough, cadging food and with the traps always on your trail. So at day-skriek, you and John Sheppard walked with Michael to the bottom of the Valley. You gave him a shovel to use as a frying pan and a horse blanket. Sheppard gave him a pannikin of rum and a lock pick. You both wished him good luck in finding Daniel and Thomas. Mr Inns reported Michael Kearney’s disappearance and on September 14<sup>th</sup> his name appeared on the list of absconders in the *Sydney Gazette*, the sort of notoriety he had long courted.

By the end of September the earth was showing signs of loosening up for the ploughing. Dormant shoots began to declare themselves in the fields and buds appeared on the limbs of the apricot tree beside the kitchen. Liscombe brought the brickmaker, James Driver over from Mr Lambert’s property. He had arrived that year on the *Lord Melville* and was curious to visit the limestone caves near the Belabula River to see if quicklime could be made from some of that stone. Mr. Inns would show him the way, in exchange for his advice on the weakness in the chimneys. Driver said the bricks were well made but when he examined the mortar on the chimneys it was already cracked. He asked in as few words, when the chimneys had been

built. In January and February the direct sun and relentless heat of summer had weakened the mortar as it set. The remedy, he said, was to scour out the worst affected bricks and repoint the chimney with new mortar.

You were ordered to fetch a bag of quicklime which you tipped into a fire pit and slaked with water from the well. Then Driver walked across from the stables with an armful of horse hair and two hessian bags. The hair was mixed into the putty to give it strength and applied as a stiff mixture. He wet the bags in the stream. In summer, Driver said, the wet bags should be used to protect the putty as it dried and to keep the walls at a low temperature. The work took a week and Driver stayed on Stowford and ate and slept with the boys when they came in from the fields. Being a Protestant, he did not at first mix with the Irish but he became more talkative as time passed.

Driver told you he was from Boston, the port town and birthplace of Matthew Flinders, who was from a long line of surgeons, and birthplace of George Bass, a surgeon's apprentice. These were Boston's favourite sons but James said he amounted to nothing more than a Lincolnshire pickpocket. He was as scarred about the eyebrow and lip, making his ruddy face look like an autumn squash, but you found him as lively as the Irish for company. Like you, he was a city lad and unused to the vast empty plains. The Irish were all from farms and rural villages and used to living rough but Driver was happiest in town and in company. After the chimneys were white washed, Mr Inns drove him in a gig to the place where Evans' party of convicts had found the limestone. Driver returned to Mr Lambert with bags of limestone specimens.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, Governor Ralph Darling, his wife and entourage set out on a tour of inspection to Bathurst. They left the narrow band of vegetation that confined most of the population to the east coast and ventured into the tangled haunts of bushrangers and outlaws at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Here Donohoe had already robbed Mrs Fitz and Mrs Melchan, young master Lawson and Reverend Samuel Marsden. The *Australian* newspaper of November 6<sup>th</sup> reported that Jack Donohoe had moved to Mount York and the Fish River and taunted the Governor to take a well armed party with him for protection.

Ralph Darling spent the first night at Regentville on the banks of the Nepean. Sir John Jamieson had served as a surgeon under Nelson at the Battle of Waterloo and had been knighted by the Prince Regent, hence the namesake. The governor was unaware that Walmsley and Donohoe had already robbed the hut of two of Jamieson's elderly tenants, Messieurs Hoe and Dunn, and forced them to drink rum with him.

On Friday morning November 6<sup>th</sup>, Governor Darling's entourage passed through the Vale of Mulgoa and on to 'the overflowing waterfalls and the orange suns ripening in the groves' of the agricultural depot at Emu Plains. Mr John Maxwell was the superintendent of this and two other government farms established by the liberal reformative Governor Macquarie for 'special' convicts – clerks, craftsmen, scribes, forgers and embezzlers.

The Emu Plains convicts were alive to theatre as much as to rebellion and in their spare hours had built a little theatre which had the patronage of some of the wealthiest landholders and

officials in the colony – Messieurs McHenry, Cox, Lawson, Jamieson, Blaxland, Chief Justice Forbes and formerly, Governor Brisbane. They could not charge admittance but donations were given. Some troupes of actors were allowed to visit the farms to stage productions on wagons and in barns. The arrival of Darling in the Colony signalled the final curtain. Captain Wright of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment had been in the Governor's ear about the unhealthy friendship between John Maxwell and four of the principal players. Wright most detested the recently promoted overseer John Matthews, a smooth-faced, high pitched effeminate lad of twenty who played the female roles. Governor Darling's moral priggishness, which led him to remove all females from Norfolk Island and Emu Plains, fostered 'unnatural alliances' in the penal settlements.

There were no performances for the Governor on this occasion. John Maxwell was at the Wellington Valley, an establishment he had been ordered to wind down, and his orders were to transfer to Emu Plains by November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Although he wanted to bring George Stanley, his clerk, with him the man had proved disloyal. The clerk had shared some of Maxwell's private correspondence with John Bushell, a linguistics graduate of Dublin's Trinity College who was one of the famous 'swells' of Wellington. Maxwell's letters to the Colonial Secretary on these matters smacked of jealousy and piqued affection. Governor Darling arrived in time for breakfast with Captain Horatio Walpole, who had been promoted to the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment just two years earlier and was already Superintendent of Police for the district.

After inspections of Springwood and the Weatherboard Hut, the Governor reached Collett's Inn on Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup>. The party were welcomed at a great feast and bonfire. An illuminated address was presented to the Governor by the settlers. The wealthiest settler in

the colony, John Grant of Mount York, was not permitted to sign the address. He was a freed convict and led his many assigned servants to emancipation by servitude. Edward Slingsby, with ten men from Limerick, and John Slingsby, with eleven others from Tipperary, were transported on the *Guildford 3*. All were tried in April of 1817 and convicted of being ‘riotous and disorderly person(s)’. The Slingsby men were assigned to John Grant of Mount York. All new assignees to Bathurst had to pass through Mount York and while the gentry supped at Collett’s Inn, their servants drank with the old hands and learned the mutated codes of conduct and secret signs of the New Country.

For the Governor, Sunday November 8<sup>th</sup> began with a short ride and breakfast with Lieutenant Kirkley at the Cox River Depot. His party then rode on to Raineville, ‘the romantic estate of Thomas Raine Esquire’. This was the same Thomas Raine who captained the *Surrey 2* that transported the Tipperary Whiteboy Ned Ryan and his associates to New South Wales for burning a military dispensary in Ballagh. They arrived in Port Jackson without a single death aboard and ‘cheered repeatedly and expressed the liveliest gratitude for their good treatment’. One of them, Gerard Hope, presented the Captain with a written memorial, not something Thomas Raine would share with Ralph Darling over dinner.

Darling kept his society for his own extended family and a few members of the Legislative Council. When Lieutenant Thomas Evernden, Bathurst Magistrate and Police Superintendent, met the Governor that evening, the men must have seen in each other an exquisite reflection of manners and accoutrement. Both were described by those who knew them as martinets. Evernden had arranged a police escort to supplement the Governor’s private guard of two non-commissioned officers and five soldiers.

The country from Raineville to Bathurst had not changed since the explorer Evans first described it in November 1813. There were '50,000 acres so lightly wooded that half of it was already suitable for cultivation'. The O'Connell Plains were covered with 'fine grass intermingled with white daisies'. Evans had crossed the Campbell River and journeyed northeast to name the Bathurst Plains, but Governor Darling's party crossed the Fish River just near Reverend Thomas Hassall's 'quaint pise cottage' and headed through the Macquarie Plains on the Eastern bank of the river past a scattering of cottages called Kelso.

The roadway, engineered by William Cox, wound through the farms of Thomas and John West, Major West's brothers, and Alexander McKenzie. Ralph Darling's barouche rode over the government reserve that five years before had absorbed the blood of three aboriginal women murdered by a party of convicts and settler's sons. Now the native lands, as far as the eye could see, were promised to or appropriated by the military, the Church of England and a few privileged settlers. Stowford lay another twenty miles to the south west on the wrong side of the river. All you had heard of this country, Ralph, was from Patrick Burke who visited the Dunn Cow Inn.

Two miles from settlement while traversing McKenzie's grant, the Governor was met by a welcoming party. Major McPherson, commanding the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment, Lieutenant Brown, Lieutenant Moore and the mounted police at the head of forty settlers who flanked the road in a guard of honour. The Governor's procession crossed the river at the ford beside the cattle markets and then wound up the hill to the government cottage and domain. Governor Darling's reception in Bathurst was regimental and as cold and formal as any fastidious colonial administrator could have wished.



You would not have been able to miss the spectacle, Ralph, had you been crossing the Macquarie River at the ford that day. But it was only a week after shearing had begun at Stowford. For a fortnight, all hands had been turned to rounding up, counting, washing and shearing the sheep. One of Marsden's shepherds had drowned in the Macquarie River trying to lift a sodden sheep from the swirling waters but at Stowford the water was shallow. Everyone was in the beck with the sheep and the hijinks with the new Catholic lads were worth all the mud and lanolin.

John Watts, an old country shearer, took the fleece off in broad strokes of the blades – all in one piece like a woolly jacket. All among the wool, boys, all among the wool. Mr Liscombe had tacked a copy of the *Sydney Gazette* on the hut wall which stated the buyers in London preferred the sticks and twigs to be removed from the wool before shipping. William Gahan was appointed to remove the dag locks, a job that rewarded his sense of injustice.

Some of the wool was stored for domestic use, and so had to be scoured. Mr Inns had been collecting the boys' urine in harness casks for a fortnight. This lant was mixed with soda ash and water and the wool was scoured by dunking and draining and rinsing it again in barrels of clean water. In Lancaster the piss-pots of lant would be sold to the mills for tuppence each week, but here the master may have it for free. The Mill paid more for the lant from the Methodists as they were teetotallers and produced liquor more pure. On Stowford the Irish were prolific producers of stale urine.

Michael Kearney had just returned from the iron gang and although gaunt and jaded, he was heartened to be back among friends. He had found Mr Dickson's house in Sydney Town only

be informed that Daniel had been sent to Emu Plains. Michael was taken by the constables to Parramatta Barracks for absconding. There he was worked in chains for a month and returned to his master. His failure made you feel relieved that you had not run with him, but guilty for that thought.

The following day, at noon on Tuesday November 10<sup>th</sup>, the Governor received a deputation from the settlers with an address of welcome. John Gosling, who emigrated aboard the *John I*, was now a Bathurst settler on 1200 acres. Mr. Gosling had given evidence in court when the Boatswain Roberts sued Captain Moncrief for unlawful confinement. Gosling swore that he never saw Boatswain Roberts suffer discomfort during the voyage. Roberts' suit against Captain Moncrief was lost. Evidently perjurers were allowed to sign the welcome to the Governor as long as they had property.

The Governor made a public speech in reply to the welcome. He reassured the settlers that their security and personal comfort was his chief concern. He was pleased that the rains had brought welcome relief and the harvest was bolting before their very eyes. He promised a new road across the mountains to deliver grain more cheaply and quickly to Sydney Town than the ships from Van Diemen's Land. Then he said that seeing the native born Australians taking part in his welcome was proof 'that they have not suffered themselves to be misled by the Arts which have been used to prejudice them against the government.' Remarkable.

Was he referring to the white sons of convicts who worked and mingled with the ticket of leave men? Emancipist's sons like John Redmond? Or to the free settlers' sons like John Johnston and William Clarke who had been acquitted of the manslaughter of an elderly

aboriginal woman? Surely he did not refer to the social stalwarts, James and Samuel Hassall or the Suttor brothers, William and Charles? What were ‘the Arts used to prejudice them against the government?’ There were no cultural Arts other than the convict theatre at Emu Plains and the Bathurst Literary Society. The Governor must have meant the Devil’s Black Arts. It was the ‘Old Lad’ who seduced you from the ‘sight of God’. The only men skilled in this type of subversion were the ones with a fierce connection to an ancient spirituality, hell and redemption. The Ribbon Boys. You were not native born, Ralph, but perhaps their Arts were used to seduce you from the Governor’s righteous path?

That week, Governor Ralph Darling’s righteous path took him to visit the farms of all of the wealthiest settlers. Major McPherson held a dinner party each day so that the magistrates and gentry could meet the Governor. During the next four days, he visited the north bank estates of Messieurs Hawkins, Icely, Ranken and Piper. The Governor and his wife also visited their old friend William Lee, his wife and two young boys, at Claremont their recently completed house in Kelso. The Governor’s youngest infant had died in the whooping cough epidemic brought to the colony by the *Morley* one year earlier. The surgeon, Peter Cunningham, had not disclosed the outbreak among the soldier’s children during the voyage and so the ship had not been put into quarantine. I am sure personal matters were as much a part of their conversation as sheep and drought.

The next day, Thursday November 12th, Governor Darling proclaimed as a ‘General Day of Thanksgiving’ for the breaking of the drought. There were prayers and Anglican services across the colony. Pastor Espy Keane read the gospel at the Bathurst service; Isaiah Chapter 46, verse ten, ‘My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure’. This was swiftly

misinterpreted by the assembled convicts and their lewd version could have been your catchcry the following day, Ralph. Bathurst settlers would return to their snug fires and the convicts, marching back to barracks, would turn their felt caps down at the piercing south wind blowing in their faces along William Street. Despite the thanksgiving the farmers could only rue the thunder storms which had already taken fifteen lives through flooding and washed away the topsoil from their parched paddocks.

In celebration of the day, Lieutenant Evernden had planned to accompany the Governor to the farms of settlers south of Bathurst – Captain Brown at Dunn’s Plains, young Mr. Perrier and Mr Street along the Campbell River and Magistrate McKenzie on the Macquarie. After Divine Service, the heavens opened and the rain came down in sheets ‘without a moment’s intermission’. The ill weather prevented the Governor and Mrs Darling from venturing out of the cramped government cottage. Instead they were visited by a succession of damp and muddy supplicants.

Mr Inns feared the creeks would rise if the wool were not soon on its way to market. There were many creeks and rivers to cross. The wool had been bailed and loaded onto the bullock wagon under the wattle bark shelter. In the afternoon, John Liscombe rode out to Stowford with a list of supplies needed from the markets and your passes. He gave you and Patrick Byrne instructions on where to deliver the wool and which bills of lading and notes to bring back. Mr and Mrs Inns opened a bottle of rum to toast the venture. There was some resentment among the others. Unlike Michael, you were going to Sydney Town in comfort and with a pass for protection. On Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay, men had been known to commit murder to get to Sydney Town, even to face trial there.

On Friday, the dawn broke hot and brassy like an egg on a flat iron. William Inns gave you the documents the master had prepared and Charlotte packed some vittles in a box for sharing on the road. There was no other movement in the huts when you left. By mid-morning the heat had once again drawn out thunder heads across the horizon and the air was close and still. It took you twelve hours to reach the Campbell River from Stowford, so slow were the bullocks in the humidity.

Patrick took the crow-gate route past the farms of Lieutenant Evernden at Bartletts, and Captains Brown and Sealy at Dunn's Plains. The sun climbed higher as the team inched up the valley and usual noises of the air, birds and insects seemed to stop as if waiting for something. Once you reached the Campbell River you pressed on northward to find the crossing to the O'Connell Plains where you could connect with Cox's road to Sydney Town.

The Governor's chaise, with the ladies and officers in separate carriages, approached Dunn's Plains from the sweeping vistas of Queen Charlotte's Vale. Their clanking and clashing, chattering and hooves made sufficient noise and merriment to block out any awareness of the day and its forebodings. Captain Brown paid host to the gubernatorial party at Brownlea, a homestead adorned with oriental furnishings, ornaments and trinkets. The intention was to have breakfast at Brownlea, inspect Mr Perrier's flocks on the Campbell River and then take refreshment at Mr Street's near the Lagoon. Then to take the O'Connell track and cross the Fish River to Mr McKenzie's for luncheon.

The bullocks from Stowford Farm kept on at their steady pace. Patrick Byrne was eager to make camp on the other side of the river crossing in case the heat of the day hatched another storm and the waters rose. By noon you made the river and had to whip the thirsty cattle to pull the wagon the few remaining yards across the ford. You made sure that the bales of wool were kept above the water level – so many of Liscombe’s hopes rested on their safe arrival. There was some shade for the animals and a patch of flat ground for your blanket roll and a cooking fire.

Once the bullocks were unhitched, you stood beside the river watching them drink. Light from the brazen sun refracted off the waves and cut your eyes. The slithering shapes of silver bream were milling over the green bearded pebbles. You smiled at the liquid amber of their shapes as they rose to the surface then retreated. Your skin sweltered in its magpie suit of wool and sweat, so you crossed your arms, bunched the fabric at your sides and shucked the government slops like a ten o’clock scholar casting off the books. Your ankles were still purple from the manacles you had discarded at the quay two years before. They were the first part of your body to touch the water.

The thrill of the cold shot up your legs to your scrotum and sent you tumbling, laughing, quivering into the flowing bath. The reeds cracked with the sound of your big body hitting the glassy surface, breaking through, submerging into a fogged other-world of brown and dappled white. Your ear drums swelled to bursting. The blood drummed in your ears. You had that secret sense of being unbeknownst to the shiny world above, burrowing into the bank like the shy paradox. Your lungs pressed against your ribs, wanting to rise, but your limbs longed to sink into the mud and rest eternal. A man could gladly die in this way – drowned

with his life scenes flickering before him. In the afterlife, the priests promise, you will see the old people from home again.

There was an explosion to your left of circles of light and muffled shrieks and suddenly the boy Patrick was there, naked, swimming underwater like a fish beside you. Tiny bubbles of air clustered around the dark hairs on his sex. You released all of the air from your chest and sank like a stone dumb and timeless, settling into the river bed of mossy sticks and among the ancient catfish, their whiskered mouths pouting as they fanned you with their fins. Byrne surfaced, his head cracking through the watery sky then diving back down, his face puffed with air and grimacing into your own. Suddenly he began flailing and yelling like a banshee – his eyes grew wide and wild, he was shouting out huge bubbles like some demented sea creature. His hands were pulling at your arms and an infectious excitement gripped you. You pushed off from your hiding place. Your lungs, to spite your mind, rejoiced as you broke the surface. Patrick broke to the surface beside you at the same time as you heard the sound.

Donohoe's companion, Walmsley always said he could tell the horse police by the clash of their swords as they rode. These were the sounds that rang through the thunder – metal jangling and horses hooves clattering over rocks. Patrick pulled you toward the bank to hole up among the reeds. You felt a surge of guilt and shame, as if you deserved to be caught, naked and vulnerable like a red-shank.

The thumping and jangling grew louder as an apparition came tumbling out of the scrub – a cavalcade of horses and troops in full regalia, a chaise brimming with ladies in peak bonnets and tall-hatted gentlemen, and a barouche carrying Governor Darling and Major McPherson.

Patrick had not released your arm and you felt the pressure of his grasp pulling you further into the reeds. The horses made no mind of the shallow crossing and, as swiftly as they had arrived, the carriages were across the ford and disappearing into the scrub.

The relief broke across your faces like sun after rain. It was preposterous. Amazing. You had seen the Governor as close as an ordinary man could ever get to him. You thumped Patrick in the arm and his relief turned to a headlock and before you knew sky from water the heavens opened and you fell, tumbled, wrestling into the river. He was strong for one so wiry and young but the days of your youth came back into your loins and your muscles remembered the moves to flip him and press your advantage. The rain came crashing down and rods of glizzzen lightening forked the far hillsides.

Through the gloom, the mounted police escort arrived at the river crossing. Only the sudden danger to the open carriages up ahead made Evernden, Police Magistrate, turn his eyes from your indecent spectacle and spur his horse across the ford. You had not seen him bringing up the rear. At the noise of the horses splashing, you both scrambled for the protection of the reeds again and thought yourselves lucky to have escaped the Old Lad twice that day. All your talk that afternoon was of the incredible visitation, the tempest and the lucky escape. The rain lashed down in halyards. You and Patrick crawled under the wagon and back into your sodden clothes. You were unable to start a fire without dry kindling.

Around nine o'clock, in the long November evening, you and Patrick were supping from a pannikin of rum and sharing Mrs Inns' hunch of bread with two thin strips of salted beef. The constables came up as quietly as the darkening. They seized the wagon and the beasts. You



and Patrick were cuffed together and marched behind the horses back to settlement. In the Bathurst lockup, for the first time in two years, six pound irons were put around your ankles. Your heart within your breast was hot with rage and fear. You do not know to this day, if Evernden had acted on the Governor's orders or on his own desires. You know that you had not been seen by the first party across the river. Perhaps the Governor's visit called for some public display of the power of the magistrates. The next morning you were sentenced to fifty lashes and marched to the market square.

Governor Darling was not one to show mercy. Two privates from the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment had stolen several lengths of calico in order to end their military service. They were given seven years transportation but Governor Darling intervened and changed the sentence to hard labour in irons for seven years. He designed two spiked iron collars, worn with chains from the neck to waist and feet which increased their weight to 14 pounds. The soldiers were publically paraded, stripped, dressed as convicts, chained and drummed out of the regiment. Sudds died five days later. Thompson worked in chains at Emu Plains for a week but was released after Chief Justice Forbes ruled that the Governor's actions were illegal. The scandal stuck to the Governor's boots like horse muck. The *Australian* and the *Sydney Monitor* keep the odour fresh in the public mind. He had underestimated the torture of the chains and the effect of shame upon the naked and ridiculed soldiers.

Now Lieutenant Evernden, a man of similar refinement, arranged for a display of his effectiveness as the new police superintendent. It is difficult to know whether the fifty lashes or the shame of the public flogging scarred you more. The police constables and government servants were assembled at the market square. You and Patrick were marched in leg irons

from the holding cells to the triangles. A host of settlers, fetching provisions from the Commissary stores, were drawn into the spectacle. The Governor and his wife, their family and attendants drew up in their carriages.

The wooden triangles stood on the high ground near the court house to provide the best viewing. The military drummers beat time as the constable led you and Patrick Byrne to the spot. You were both stripped to the waist and tied to the frames. It was around eleven on a bright clear Saturday morning, the cobblestones were newly washed from the rains. You could only think of young George Mole and his first flogging. The gossip of your offence circulated among the crowd. It smacked of something lewd and unnatural in the way it was told and passed around.

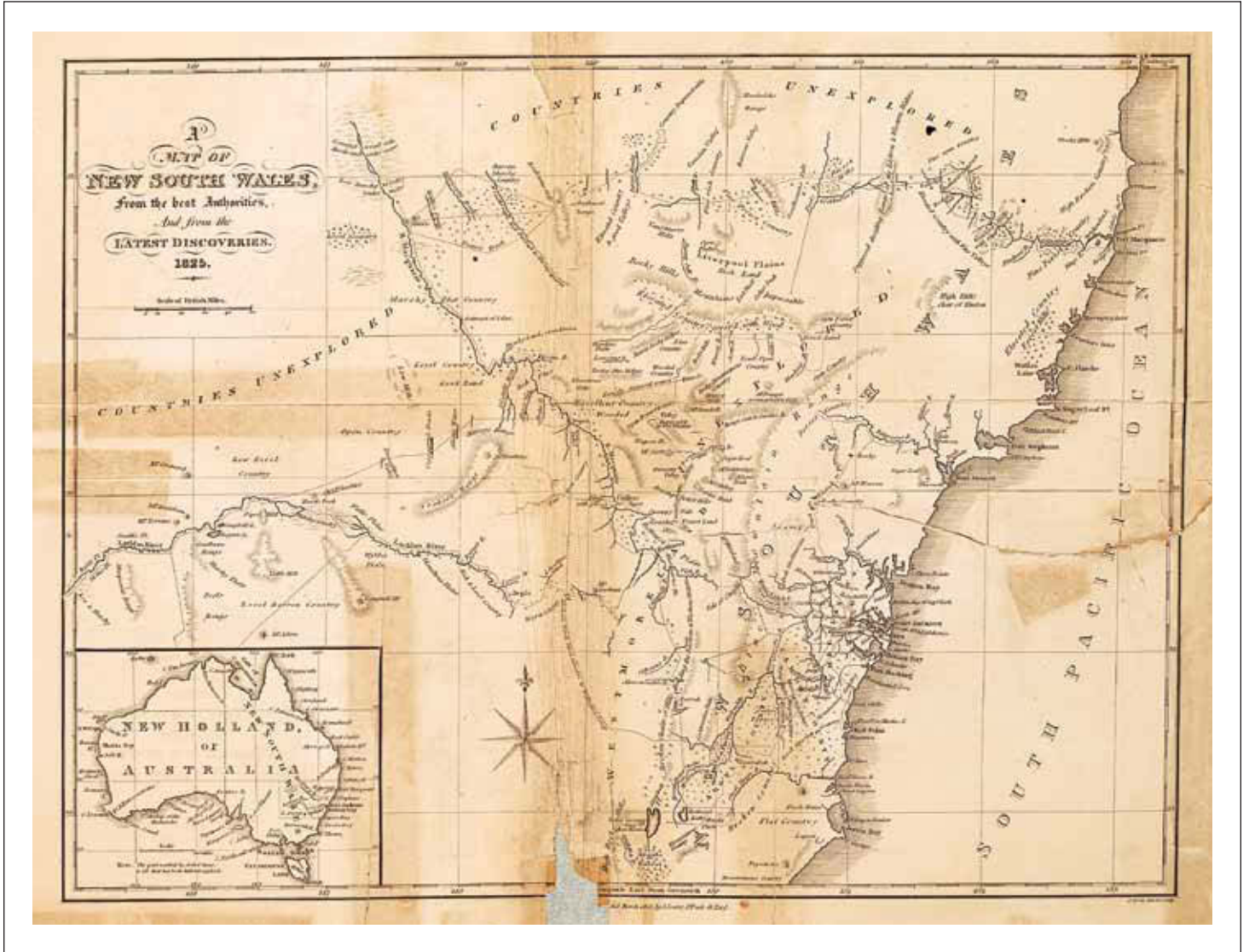
Lord Chief Justice Charles Abbott had presided over a case of bathing in ‘Blundell vs. Catterall’, first tried in Lancaster in 1821. It established the right of all persons to rivers and the banks of rivers for bathing. It was one of the healthy practices of common law handed down from Justinian and the Magna Carta. But magistrates, it was conceded, had the right to ‘bring to punishment such as bathe indecently.’ Here was the crux of the matter for Evernden and the crux of your shame. He had been appalled by the naked joy and abandoned pleasure of two convicted men — the sensual freedom of your ‘infamous display’.

John Kenny and William Gahan appeared in the crowd. They were sent by Liscombe to fetch back the wagon and his men. Gahan tried to bribe the flogger to lay the cat on lightly but some men enjoyed the work. He could only pass you a pebble to bite on. You determined to count each lash, despite the flogger calling it aloud. The first few bit into your shoulders and

ribs and were sharp enough to draw blood. It was only the memory of Maund wagering on the flogging aboard the *John I* that kept you silent. Patrick Byrne did not break on the triangles and you would not be proven a 'soft crawler' either.

After the punishment the military were marched off, the Governor was taken to luncheon and you were cut down. Patrick walked to the wagon but you had to be dragged. Kenny swaddled you in rough cloths to staunch the bleeding and dressed the wounds with strips of linen soaked in salt brine. The pain was searing but your guilt was excoriated. Now you had been punished worse than Michael Kearney, even though you did not run.

William Gahan said it was the first time he had seen a Governor of any description, and Kenny said they seemed quite ordinary English lords and ladies, better dressed than most but also more portly and florid. Kenny and Gahan sang 'The Wearing of the Green' to cheer you as the wagon jolted over the bumps. You will never forget the kindness of those men who ministered to you when our body had been shredded by the lash. It was something beyond your ken and gratitude burned in you as brightly as your hatred.



Tyrer, J.J. 1825, 'Tyrer, J. (James) A map of NSW [cartographic material] from the best authorities and from the latest discoveries, 1825.', National Library of Australia [MP NK 2456/114]





## Chapter 4

### *Kelso, Bathurst Plains, Sunday 24th October 1830.*

It is dusk and the tapers are being lit in the front parlours of the Kelso houses. On the Sabbath the settlers are even more vigilant about keeping evil from their doors. The Ribbon Boys have been locked into their cells but the rumours of their depredations are in full bloom. Some of the gang remain unaccounted for and the Governor has doubled the guard at all of the stations across the mountains. Perhaps the bushrangers will be rescued before the trial. Perhaps you will haunt these settlers in years to come, Ralph. Surgeon Busby will be across the river in the brick cottage on Howick Street. Thomas Evernden and his new wife Mary Jane Hawkins will reside at Littlebourne. His first wife, Elizabeth, died scarcely a year ago of jaundice and his children will all die, except one, in early infancy as if blighted by an invisible disease. But I do not expect your sympathy for the man who is responsible for your demise.

Pastor John Espy Keane pulls shut the front door of Denton Holme and calls to his young wife Mary to bar it from within. He is one of the only settlers to go abroad on this night but feels it his Christian duty. At the morning service, Police Superintendent Evernden asked him to attend to the prisoners. He carries with him the Anglican prayer book, a sword stick and a pistol. Last June he saw a man leap his garden fence and call out to his servant. Taking the intruder to be a bushranger, Keane charged at him with his sword, slashing him three times across the left arm before the man could offer him any violence. He put the barrel of his pistol into the man's ear and marched him to the gate, swearing to blow his brains out and send his soul to the devil if he looked sideways. The man was bleeding profusely and ran to the neighbour, Mr Blackman, the Chief Constable. He was discovered to be a sawyer who

had lost his way and come to Pastor Keane's house for directions. Keane feels exonerated for his 'sanguinary ferocity' toward bolters by the recent insurgency.

The cell is seemingly smaller to you each day, Ralph, now that you are able to stand and walk a few paces. Kenny and Gahan have been calling to you but you will not answer. Now the fear that wracks you is of betrayal. In this cell five years ago, the bolter Patrick Blanchfield was beaten until he revealed a convict plan to escape from the colony. You are afraid that you will betray the other members of your gang if you are tortured. There are at least six Ribbon Boys still hiding in the caves. Evernden promised you freedom for information. Perhaps that is why you have been separated from the others. He has singled you out for some other sort of attack. The solitude weighs heavier and heavier each hour. Then in the early dark, the gaoler draws back the bolt and a thin man in a black turncoat steps in. He is carrying a lamp and a book.

The Pastor has the starved haughtiness of Surgeon McKerrow but without the tremor. You study his hand as he turns the pages of the little worn prayer book. When Jack Donohoe robbed the Hassall farm at Bolong, the only thing he left behind were the Wesleyan bibles. Now Pastor Keane expects to be able to use a few favourite Protestant passages to reach into your soul and wring a confession from a repentant heart. Your indents identify you as Protestant. Is that why you have been separated from the Catholic boys?

'The thief upon the cross beside Jesus,' the Pastor begins, 'cried out in his final agonies, 'The hour's arrived – consigned to death, I own the just decree; Saviour! With my departing

breath, I'll cry – remember me!' Incredibly, he begins to hum the tune and soon repeats the lines, nodding to encourage you to follow his lead.

'I'm not yet consigned to death,' you say to stop his hymn.

'We are all consigned to death,' Keane smiles, 'and only He knows the hour of our taking.'

'Then I'll know it soon enough,' you reply and turn away.

The Pastor begins again and his voice is lifted now to an even higher register. A howling begins in the other cells. By his own admission, Keane's congregation are 'wretched and deficient' in the want of a good singer. Last year he applied for the assignment of John Bushell, who was renowned to be a fine tenor, but Superintendent John Maxwell would not release him from the Wellington Valley. Maxwell claimed that Bushell, a Spaniard by birth, held views 'contrary to the established religion' and spread his atheist sedition among the other men.

The words to the hymn are printed on a slip of paper which Keane now draws out from the leaves of his book. 'Many have found these words a comfort.' He would herd you into Samuel Marsden's flock. You marvel at this soft insidious approach. At least the military are content to have your body, the crowd want a good show at the hanging but the Anglican clergy want to follow you unto the grave and rob your soul. Bile rises into your throat. You will not attend an Anglican chapel in the condemned pew like Edward Gibbon Wakefield.

You take your bowl to the iron grate and begin to clatter it back and forth. The other prisoners, hearing the noise from their cells, join in the bashing and banging. Pastor Keane



raises his voice above the cacophony, singing in ever higher strains. The Boys begin their own chorus, 'I've left the old Ireland's hospitable shores, the land of the Emmets, the Tones and the Moores but liberty o'er me her scalding tear pours, as I think of the manger where he was a Stranger and perished for you.' It is the battle of the Catholic and the Protestant Christs. After ten minutes of wailing and clattering, it is Chief Constable Blackman who next appears at the cells. James Parker, the Catholic gaoler, has fetched him from the Commandant's dinner party. He is in formal dress and red faced from the port. Swiftly he takes in Pastor Keane's predicament. He is ministering to savages. Yet the Pastor has been known to have curses and oaths of his own and Blackman is relieved to find that Keane has not brought his cane sword into the cell. He is wielding his voice as a sabre of the Lord.

Constable Parker punches you in the solar plexus which folds you back down upon the floor. Pastor Keane begins to remonstrate. He has been invited to the cells by Superintendent Evernden to deliver edification to the prisoners. Chief Constable Blackman well remembers the innocent sawyer that Pastor Keane maimed. Blackman asks for your complaint. Why have you begun this riot of sound among the prisoners?

'All of us is Catholic, sir.' You say quite simply. 'We'sh speak to the Commandant about ir own prayers and final rites.'

Pastor Keane's lip curls perceptibly, 'What all Romanish? Every one of you?' He had been less disdainful of John Bushell's atheism, given that he was a scholar with the voice of an angel.

'James Driver and Robert Webster may be Anglican,' Constable Parker offers, but Pastor Keane is clearly disgusted and turns upon his heel. He takes back his copy of the hymn and glides back into the corridor with the Chief Constable. Blackman is not in a mood to admit

Keane to the other cells this evening so he has had a wasted journey. When Parker leaves with the lamp the cell falls dark and silent.

Blackman considers your request as he walks back to the Barracks. An hour later, he prevails upon Commandant McPherson to return with him to the gaol. Donald McPherson is Thomas Evernden's superior in every way. He is a Major, second in command of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment in New South Wales, and a fair man. He shipped out with the regiment from Ireland in 1825 and has first-hand knowledge of Ribbonism from the southern counties. He is acquainted with the violent methods of the Ribbonmen but also with their frailties. To his credit, the Commandant listens to the Irish boys as they make their late night complaints. He recognises their spiritual suffering in facing death without the final blessing of the priest. Their faith is something tangible – for them it is embodied by Father Therry. McPherson goes to Liscombe's office and writes to the Governor requesting that Father Therry be allowed to attend to the Catholic prisoners at Bathurst. He is the first Commandant to have done so. Major Morisset dismissed a petition of soldiers and settlers for Catholic services six years ago.

Yet you cannot sleep. Something is festering in your conscience. It is the thought of Edward Slingsby and the Ribbon Boys left there in the caves. When Kenny and Gahan brought you back to Stowford everything changed. You began to listen to what they were saying about the English and the centuries of hatred the Irish had endured. It was as if the scourger stripped off the flabby top layer of your Lancastrian skin and an Irish carapace of hatred had grown back over it. The boys from Tipperary and Limerick recognised amongst the military the faces of their oppressors. Some were kinsmen. The 39th regiment continued to rule them by corporal punishment, subjugation and starvation.

Michael Kearney's old associates from Tipperary now visited the men's hut and filled the nights with tales of wrongs and revenge. Patrick Gleeson visited Stowford in mid December. He had been assigned to Charles Ware's farm and Tom Dunne brought him to see his countryman, Michael Kearney. A year to the month after Michael Kearney and Daniel Gleeson had appeared in the Clonmel Assizes, Patrick Gleeson was tried there and transported. He had met a young man walking with his sister along the road to Lissenhall and bludgeoned him to death with a two handed wattle. Among those who gave character evidence for Patrick Gleeson was a Michael Ryan and a woman called Honora Murphy. These families were intermarried and that is how Kearney and Gleeson knew the Ryans, Murphys and Corocorans of the Boorowa Plains and connected your boys with the old Whiteboys of the New Country. The Whiteboys were a secret society, the forerunners of the Ribbonmen.

What binds you to these boys, Ralph? Is it religion or another kind of oath? Are you seduced by a darker allegiance? At the end of December a stranger arrived at Stowford who claimed to know the Murphy family. The boys invited him to share their liquor. The out-comer's name was Edward Baldwin. Mr. Inns had treated him with some respect as he appeared to be a settler travelling a large herd of long horns from the Lachlan to Patrick's Plains. He offered to pay Mr Inns for hay and shelter for the night. In fact, Baldwin was an emancipated convict. He had been assigned to Mr. Thomas Hawkins the Stock Superintendent at Bathurst in 1821 and put in charge of a herd of cattle on six thousand acres along the Cudgegong River. There he quickly learned to alter the brand TH into EB. Four years later his ship mate, Patrick Blanchfield, sought him out with a plan to escape the colony. The plan misfired and he was

sent to Port Macquarie on hard labour along with many others who had trusted Blanchfield. Free by servitude, he now gravitated back to his old profession.

In the same week, John and Edward Slingsby rode down from Mount York. Their master, John Grant, was expanding his cattle run at Wollawolla, further west than the limits the Governor had placed upon settlement. The two Slingsby men were middle aged, fair haired and fine featured. Edward was fawn-freckled all across his arms and face. They spoke with the same Tipperary accent as Kearney but Edward's voice was higher and softer. It was the voice of a woman. They were travelling with Michael Lynch, a stockman working for Robert Armstrong at Reedy Swamp Creek. It was dark when they turned up at Stowford on their way to the Lachlan, but Lynch was ginger-topped and the boys recognised him even by candlelight.

That night you and John Kenny, William Gahan, Patrick Burke and Michael Kearney went to the woolshed after old Mr Inns had turned out the lantern in the main cottage. Baldwin was camped in there for shelter from the wind and the fire could be stoked to a sweet under the high roof. John and Edward Slingsby had brought a bag of chat potatoes for roasting, Michael Lynch brought the grog. It was like a Tipperary reunion. You lay upon a split bale of fleeces for the relief the clippings gave your back. As an invalid, the boys usually left you alone on the edge of the darkness but this night Baldwin grew suspicious of your presence. His eyes kept returning to you as the others shared stories and passed the rum. He asked why you were not drinking with them.

‘He has been scourged by Evernden,’ said Michael Kearney, ‘and hasn’t had the strength to lift a pot since then.’ The others laughed. Your eyes burned at the insult but it was true and you had lain useless most of the month. Some days you waited for the scars to knit across your back and some days you wished the wounds would fester so that the others would let you die. Baldwin strode toward you as if to kick you out of his way, but instead he sat down and drew the shirt back from your spine. Edward’s face winced but Baldwin threw the cloth back carelessly. He had seen worse.

‘You cannot stay if you are not drinking with us,’ he said as if it were a rule of his. Edward put his pannikin to your lips and poured the rough brown liquid down your gullet. Your guts burned from it and you were forced to sit up and move your body before it rotted through to your bowels. You came to the fire and when you sat among them Baldwin offered the only kindness he had in him, he said ‘It was Evernden had me up for Cattle stealing,’ and he spat in the fire.

Michael Lynch tried to lift everyone’s spirits. Four years ago he had worked for Robert Lowe at Bringelly and he was full of stories of Jack Donohoe who roamed between Bankstown, Bringelly, Bungendore and Liverpool. ‘Last month,’ he began in a high tone, ‘Donohoe robbed Mr. William Hall and his son on the road to Bringelly.’

‘You would not get much change from a preacher,’ laughed John Slingsby.

‘A watch and silver only,’ admitted Lynch. ‘Ah, but Jack didn’t know it was the preacher himself, until they had exchanged clothes so to speak.’ Here there was a titter among the

men. 'When he saw who it was and remembered his preaching at Bankstown, Jack tossed him a straw hat to cover his nakedness. He gave his son a dump to buy some cakes.'

There was a general mutter that this was fair and a light heartedness about the stripping. 'What other tales do you have to tell on Jack?' said Baldwin gruffly.

Lynch replied, 'That he strips all of his gentleman victims and dons their finery. That he is partial to stealing women's clothing.' The guffawing took on a seedier turn.

'Do you know Jack, then?' challenged Baldwin, 'In person?'

'He knows of him,' said Edward Slingsby, coming to Lynch's rescue. They seemed pretty thick with one another.

'No. I do know him. I know him quite well,' Lynch corrected.

'Then you know he is no sodomite,' said Baldwin and the air felt heavy. Edward Slingsby caught your eye but you looked away. It sent a shiver through you.

'He wears the Kings Evil here,' said Lynch touching his own jaw below the cheek, 'a purple stain.'

'Then you have seen him,' concluded Baldwin, 'but you may not know him as I do.'

'You know him to be a murderer?' asked Kearney checking a rumour he had heard at the Parramatta Barracks.

'So they say,' replied Baldwin scouring the eyes of the men to see if he could tell them more.

'I am told it was not Jack, but his mate Vittels who shot the overseer Clements on account of his knowing him from the Hunter River.'

'They say,' Michael Kearney pressed on to get to the root of it, 'Donohe took William Cook kangaroo hunting and shot him in the back.'

Baldwin grew impatient at his probing. 'Cook was an informer and deserved to roast in hell.' He kicked at the fire and they all fell silent. It was widely known that William Cook had turned in the bush ranger Robert Storey for a pardon. A year later, Cook's charred body was found in the ashes of Donohoe's campfire at Cooke's Vale in the Abercrombie.

Edward Slingsby said he would sing the song Donohoe had taught him at Mount York during the past winter. His voice was a soft sorrowful wail and eerie in the still blue night. 'If Ireland lies groaning a hand at her throat, which foreigners have from the recreants bought, forget not the lessons our fathers have taught 'though our Isle's full of danger and held by the Stranger, be brave and be true.' As the song went on you saw what bound them, in their morose tearfulness when they were drunk and in their reckless courage when they were not. They mourned their country as if she were their lost mother.

You watched Michael Lynch and the other old hands drink in the words like mead. They loved the romance of the song, the injustice and the eternal fight to correct it, but you were more sceptical. The only song your mother ever taught you was 'Over the Hills and Far Away'. She used to say you would make a fine soldier. The boys on Stowford were like babes in the wood compared to these old lags who knew the secret history of the settlement, the deeds and dodges. There was some danger here that you sensed, but you stayed and were drawn in by it, the strangeness and secretiveness of it were mesmerising.

Baldwin said that Robert Storey had a plan to escape the colony that could still work. Storey was given it by a soldier called Percival who knew of another inland route to the coast. When Storey was captured, four years previous, some of the bolters made it to the rendezvous point

and established a camp there. They had cattle and sheep hidden in the ranges and had planted crops. Baldwin was not going to Patricks Plains but would peel off along the Cudgegong River to find their camp in the Warrumbungle Ranges. Donohoe had spent last Christmas there among them.

‘Before we say more, we have to swear to each other to keep what is said here secret,’ said Michael Lynch. Pistols were produced from Baldwin’s saddle bags. Each of you placed your hands upon the crossed pistols and swore. It was no Ribbonman’s oath but a pledge to keep the information secret, and a pledge to each other to remain true and not split upon or cross one another. Even after the oath, Michael Kearney could not believe that such a place existed and that such a plan could work. ‘Why haven’t Evernden and the mounted police found the camp?’ he asked.

‘It is ten days journey from here and you have to know the way.’

‘We would need arms to defend ourselves, for sooner or later they would find us,’ said William Gahan.

Those who had been Ribbonmen in Ireland brightened at the idea of an arms raid. This was familiar business. Michael Kearney had told you that when he bolted last September he had set fire to Thomas West’s hay-moo to settle a score for an old Ribbonman called Croughwell. You knew of that fire because it was a halliblash that incinerated nine hundred bushels of wheat. Twelve calves in the adjoining pen were burned to death. You did not want to bring such disaster upon Stowford. ‘We’st wait a while,’ you said, ‘If there comes news from Wellington Valley, we’sh know that way is safe.’ ‘How will you hear news?’ Baldwin sneered as if your hesitation were weakness.



‘But how would we get a ship to come to us?’ said John Kenny the carter, who had seen nothing of the interior but mile upon mile of dry plains. ‘There are some in the colony who would help us’, said Baldwin, ‘Two years past Evernden arrested me for cattle stealing and sent me to Sydney Gaol to await trial. I was there three months with Michael Power.’ The men had heard of Power because he was notorious as a cattle thief working between Bathurst and the Abercrombie. He had been transported on the *Guildford 3* with the Slingsbys. ‘Michael Power was crooked on the Redmond family for not sending any help to him in prison, and in revenge he said he would lie through an iron pot to have the son, John Redmond arrested. He asked me to perjure against them.’

Edward Redmond was a veteran of the Irish Revolt of ‘98, an old Whiteboy, who looked after his countrymen. John Redmond was a farmer at White Rocks. His sister Mary was married to Roger Murphy, assistant to Judge Advocate Wylde, and a very influential former Whiteboy now working for a solicitor in Sydney Town.

‘And did you perjure against them?’ William Gahan asked. ‘I did not, for these are the people who will help any Catholic lad if he is sent to the gallows or arrested. They are helping to build Father Therry’s Chapel.’ ‘And they would get us a boat?’ said Kenny, with a tremor of disbelief that set Baldwin’s teeth on edge. ‘There are many as would help us.’ Baldwin’s vagueness undermined the enthusiasm and the men began to turn from the fire. This was harstone talk – midnight promises that would be forgotten at daybreak.

‘I will pass through again in six months,’ Baldwin said taking his saddle to his bedroll. ‘Let us see then how you feel. But I tell you this my boys, Jack and I will be eating roast mutton in the ranges as free as birds while you are slaves to the English who throw you a few potatoes to roast.’

The hunger seemed to gnaw at the stomach even more keenly after Baldwin’s visit. But did you know the kind of men you were throwing your lot in with Ralph? Did you know that oath would bind you to darker secrets? I will tell you what I know of Robert Storey and his escape plan. In his story you might learn the reason for your own demise. Betrayal by sworn friends certainly, but also seduction. You were seduced into violence and revenge and these are the methods of the Ribbonmen.

In June 1825, Robert Storey was working, alongside Patrick Blanchfield, for a settler called Richard Thomson. During the drought, the Governor reduced the convict’s rations even further. Darcy Wentworth, the Superintendent of Police in Sydney Town, had warned Governor Brisbane that the shortage of grain would threaten law and order in the Colony. The Governor had called in the wheat from the settlers and sent the *Almorah* to Batavia to fetch grain. Thomson had returned all of his harvest wheat to the Government commissary in Bathurst. Pinched by hunger, Storey and Blanchfield took to the bush. Storey was from County Monaghan, a place where secret gangs of Ribbonmen enjoyed the protection of the farmers, drinking whisky ‘in country barns and meeting in the open air on mountain redoubts’. They took shelter on Mount Ranken where three mighty boulders huddle on the lee of the hill. In the pointy crevasse, where they lean one against another, there is enough room

for three or four men and a small fire. Thomson's remaining servant, John Sullivan, kept them supplied with blankets and food from the farm.

Richard Thomson, a Scotsman, had been in the Colony two years and lived on his grant of 2000 acres alongside the Macquarie River. During his first winter, three prisoners broke into Thomson's hut and stole nine Spanish dollars and all of his clothing. The men bound him by oath on the bible not to reveal their identities. Thomson was haunted by the broken oath even though the judge discounted its power to bind him.

George Ranken at Kelloshiel was Thomson's closest neighbour. Mrs. Janet Ranken, descended from the Whitehill Rankenes, had the knack of making a fine Dunlop cheese. The Irish carters took great wheels of it to the Sydney Town agricultural market where 'the cheese is sold for 9d to 1 shilling per pound making several hundred a year.' George Ranken had established a dwelling, a dairy, convict huts, an orchard and a millrace for the water. He was sworn in as a commissioner of the peace during the period martial law, to drive the natives from their lands.

Ranken's servants, Will Percival and Ben Bishop, often visited John Sullivan at Thomson's hut. On the night of July 24<sup>th</sup>, Thomson was away from the farm and Percival, Bishop and Sullivan met with Robert Storey and Patrick Blanchfield for a drinking session. Will Percival had been a member of the Guards. He argued that life in the army was more of a life sentence than the transportees suffered. A transported convict could apply for a ticket of leave after four, six or eight years, and a conditional pardon after ten. Military service was for twenty

one year. When they came out, they were useless at life on the land even if it had been gifted to them. It was true.

As you know Ralph, Captain Porter had 2000 acres promised him at O'Connell Plains and was too afraid to set foot upon it. Captains Sealy and Brown at Dunn's Plains, Lieutenant Evernden from the Buffs at Bartlett's Farm, Captain Watson Steele, retiring after twenty eight years in Canada, India and Ceylon – they all had to rely upon their convict overseers in the New Country. The overseers starved and maltreated their convict servants.

Storey and Blanchfield wanted to serve warning to all bad masters. The Irish had no hope of owning their own farms. The English forced them to clear land which had been taken by violence from the native inhabitants and given in preferential grants to retired Scottish missionaries, military and sea captains. It was the story of Ireland re-enacted in the New Country. Trouble usually began in this way. Men who had studied the Irish said, 'When turned out of the land they get demoralized and frantic and savage and wild; and they go idle about and congregate together ... and then such and such a person's destruction is determined upon and they prosper by degrees, two or three times, and any man who considers himself aggrieved will join them, and they will meet in the town and speak of such a person and say it is a pity not to do so and so to him, and they will watch him until they have revenge upon some party'. Now Storey, Percival, Blanchfield and Bishop agreed that that some gesture was required to frighten the Scottish settlers both free and military. They felt that Richard Thomson should serve as a scapegoat.

Bishop and Percival could not get away from Ranken's farm the next night but Percival wrote a threatening letter to be pinned upon Richard Thomson's corpse as 'a terror to the neighbourhood and a warning to all Scotchmen.' It was agreed that Storey, Blanchfield and a bolter called Patrick Ryan would set fire to the house and that Sullivan should run into the yard and call to Thomson for help.

Patrick Ryan was nineteen, of an age with Robert Storey, and from the Ribbonman's strong hold of Kilkenny. In his brief age he had witnessed violent atrocities and retributions carried out by ribbon gangs. The young men of Kilkenny styled themselves followers of Captain Rock, originally a young blacksmith called Patrick Dillane who famously stoned a road party in County Limerick. The hired men were working for Lord Courtney's ruthless agent Alexander Hoskins, a Scot and former London lawyer who put the locals out of work and increased their rents. The next day Dillane ambushed and 'put several slugs in Hoskin's steward' and fatally shot Hoskin's teenage son upon the road. These are the type of men who befriended you Ralph.

Throughout the following day Sullivan was unsettled. Thomson found Sullivan's eyes upon him even when doing the most mundane of tasks. At six o'clock, Thomson sat alone in his hut. There was an Edinburgh clock on the mantle and a small snug fire crackling in the fireplace. Thomson was reading while he waited for Sullivan to come back and stir the pot of stew hanging on the hob. It smelled of wood duck and of potatoes and of burning. The smoke gathered about him in the room. Thinking there must have been a change in the wind direction, Thomson went to the window to observe the trees. The she oaks along the river bank were slicing the wind into threads of sound. He heard a high whistle. There was a

glimmer of moonlight upon the rippled water and by it he saw the figure of a man cross the yard.

Suddenly, Sullivan's high-pitched scream of 'mercy!' roused the Scott. Thomson ran unarmed to the door and flung it open. Sullivan was beset by two men in the yard. The trunks of the saplings in the clearing were glowing orange from the flames on the roof. He had only time enough to turn and see the beams aflame. Sullivan was running from the scene calling fire and murder all in the one breath. A musket shot cracked behind Thomson and pelted his back with rocks. His first thoughts flew to a feud among the Irish, but a sudden sharp pain cracked his skull. Robert Storey pursued him with a musket, hitting at him with the butt. Then the pain came again across his back and Thomson knew they meant to kill him by brute force.

'Mercy!' Thomson screamed. 'I would shoot you, even if you were my brother!' Robert Storey replied but he had no more shot and so pursued Thomson to the river. Thomson could swim and Storey could not. He heard the voice of Blanchfield screaming to the other men to shoot him as he swam. The Irishmen waded into the river, batting their fists frantically at the water as Thomson made it to the far shore. He scrambled into the shadows of the scrub. He did not stop running until he reached Ranken's farm and upon his knock, Percival, the secret author of his death note, answered the door.

This was the debacle that led to Robert Storey's plan to escape from the colony – revenge and a bungled murder. There was no glory in it. William Percival had a wider knowledge of the colony than the others and he suggested their best chance was to run to the Wellington

Valley. The former Judge Advocate, John Wylde, had property in the Wellington Valley and his servants would provide food, farming supplies, arms and ammunition.

Blanchfield knew the way. The previous year he and sixteen government servants from different stations had been reassigned to the Wellington Valley to reap wheat for the November harvest. Suspecting that Commandant Morisset would detain them in this isolated area as an additional punishment, they put down their scythes at the end of harvest and walked to Bathurst. They had only pikes to defend themselves with – not unusual armaments for the rural Irish accustomed to making use of rocks and sticks to protect their rights. They were rounded up by Fisher, the overseer of Reverend Thomas Hassall, at O’Connell Plains. To answer for their offences, ‘which some had consciously brought upon themselves merely from their propensity to habits of idleness and vice’, they were each given fifty lashes and returned to their masters. Blanchfield planned to liberate as many of these men as would come and make their way to the coast, there to await a friendly ship. He recruited his shipmate Edward Baldwin to bring up some of Hawkins’ cattle and meet them at the Wellington Valley.

Early in the morning of August 20<sup>th</sup> 1825, a party of eight mounted riders led by Storey, Percival and Bishop arrived at Saltram, the farm of Thomas Icely. They sought out the overseer Mr. Kinghorne. The armed men entered the huts and Percival enlisted the servants to load a wagon with the government rations. They brought out from the house and stores, thirty pounds of tea, one hundred pounds of tobacco, fifty pounds of flour, ten pounds of soap, four gallons of rum and a five gallon flagon of Brandy for the winter nights. Percival

was recognised by his neighbour, Robert Ferrier, who slipped away unnoticed and rode off to the settlement. The loading of supplies and harnessing of the bullocks took valuable time.

Ferrier soon made it across the Macquarie ford and ascended to the Government barracks on the rise above the river. He sought an immediate audience with the Commandant, who was at that time Lieutenant John Fennel. It seemed to take an age for the Commandant to assemble a party of volunteers as the men were engaged in other duties around the settlement. He called upon Lieutenant Le Merchant of the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment, three soldiers, William Christie, the superintendent of stock, Thomas Dawson, the overseer of convicts and two volunteer settlers. The day was drawing on by the time they left the Barracks. Saltram was a short ride from Kellosiel, so they stopped there to collect magistrate George Ranken. He could hardly believe that Percival was involved in the attack on his neighbour as he always had given the man a good character.

By the time they arrived at Saltram, Storey and his gang were long gone. It took over an hour for the hunting party to assess the situation at Saltram. They examined the damage and interviewed Kinghorne and the other servants. The wagon and riders were seen heading toward Mount Ranken but the light was against the pursuing party. They would wait until daybreak to follow the tracks.

Behind the shoulder of Mount Ranken, there is a gully and a freshwater spring that feeds a thin straggly creek. This is where Storey, Ryan, Percival, Bishop, and Shaw met Blanchfield who had not participated in the raid on Saltram. He had made a fire and cooked a damper for the men. There was rejoicing at the load of spoils and the liquor was broken open, but the



celebration was short lived. Just before sunset the lookout, posted on the ridge of the Mountain, scrambled down the gully to warn them of the riders who had come out from settlement. As they expected, there was a mounted party on their trail.

Storey and Ryan set the men to cutting branches to hide the wagon and three of the others drove the bullocks off into the scrub. At daybreak, the group mounted eight horses and made a speedy retreat through the bush land of black pine, wattle and bracken into the deepest reaches of Mount Ranken. Blanchfield stayed behind in Storey's cave to keep watch.

After breakfast, Le Merchant's search party followed the wagon tracks. Soon they were jogging alongside a narrow creek that pinched into a gully. They could hear the sound of running water but the wagon tracks had stopped abruptly and they were seemingly confronted by a steep rise of raw forest. On the eastern rise three massive boulders cast their shadows down the gully. It was a matter of minutes before the hunters detected the broken branches that covered the wagon. A deserted campfire was found further down the little stream, and one of the soldiers placed a set of leg irons at the ready beside the campfire so they could be easily snatched up if needed. The hunting party set about whipping the bracken with their muskets and riding crops but they could flush out no game.

Clearly the men had flown but it was a satisfaction to Ranken to see the wagon emerge from the bushes still laden with the Saltram booty. The wagon was also filled with seeds and hoes, tools for building and bedding for a long journey. George Ranken recognised some items from his own household and Robert Ferrier suggested Percival had been pilfering from Kellosiel for a long period of time. Ranken was relieved that his wagon had not been stolen.

The carters Nathaniel Mitchell and Charles Jubey had taken his wagon to Sydney Town with a firkin of butter and a dozen wheels of cheese. He expected them to return after the Market.

Gradually the hunting party began to trade stories and traces of information to get a better picture of their quarry — eight men led by Robert Storey who had bolted from Thomson's place. Ben Bishop and William Percival were missing from Kellosiel. Ryan and Blanchfield were identified as the assailants Richard Thomson had reported in July. Blanchfield had bolted from the Wellington Valley once before. Then, as if the thought were father to the action, someone spotted Blanchfield fleeing on foot across a distant rise. George Ranken rode him down. Blanchfield turned to fire a musket. The shot narrowly missed Ranken, but the bolter was soon caught. He was manacled and forced to walk behind the wagon back to Saltram. It was midnight before Le Merchant reached the settlement lockup with his captive, but by then Ryan and Storey knew that Blanchfield had been taken and they reckoned that he would split upon his mates and turn approver. They abandoned their plans and it became each man to his own path.

Commandant Fennel soon boasted he had 'fallen in with and dispersed the leading gang'. Blanchfield was beaten and bargained for immunity by turning approver against his fellows. He told Fennel that Charles Jubey and Nathaniel Mitchell were fetching gunpowder from Sydney Town in George Ranken's cart. Fennel sent Constable John Shaw Strange to intercept Jubey and Mitchell. The carters had reached The Lagoon and had just released the bullocks when the Constable appeared out of the owl-light. They knew their wagon was empty but for the gunpowder they were carrying home for Storey and Percival. Nathaniel Mitchell's eyes darted to the barrel and the constable followed his gaze. Charles Jubey made

a run for the bush and was soon covered by darkness. Ironically, Constable John Shaw Strange who planned to blow up the British Cabinet discovered eight pounds of gunpowder and earned his Ticket of Leave.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, the *Sydney Gazette* reported ‘in the neighbourhood of that settlement, the bushrangers amount to hosts – the settlers go out by turns in pursuit of them.’ James Hassall joined Captain Piper, Thomas Icely, WH McKenzie and William Cox in the newly formed Bathurst Hunt Club. Commandant Fennell was the president. Their uniform was a scarlet frockcoat with black velvet facings, a buff waistcoat, white breeches and top boots. Their brass coat buttons bore the impress of the dingo head, but there was no shortage of quarry. Members of the hunt club and their sons were recruited to chase you into the Abercrombie  
Ralph, remember them?

Unexpected heavy falls of snow descended on the mountains that month and the nights were freezing. Unaccustomed to living rough, Percival walked in to settlement to surrender at the end of August. On September 7<sup>th</sup> 1825, a Government Order offered ‘fifty Spanish Dollars for every person apprehending or securing any convict who has committed an outrage while absent without leave from the service of his employer.’ The next day, a public notice appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* establishing a horse patrol in Bathurst and Newcastle in order to suppress bushrangers. Settlers at outstations were ordered to supply the patrols with rations to be paid back by the Chief Commissary in money or property at a price determined by the nearest magistrate. Some sought to turn this arrangement to a profit when you were captured  
Ralph. Governor Brisbane offered a Pardon for any convict bringing in the bushrangers involved in the attack upon Thomson.

Over the following five weeks, twenty one government servants were rounded up. Twelve of these were described as bushrangers and sent to Sydney Town for trial. The others were held in Bathurst for aiding and abetting. Edward Baldwin was one of those sent to Port Macquarie. Ten days later an anonymous ‘Gentleman of Rank’ published a full account of the foiled escape attempt by Robert Storey and William Percival in the *Sydney Gazette*. It aimed to show that the author and his ‘brother magistrates’ had been effective in rounding up the gang, but it also revealed useful details of a plan that would work later – gathering a cache of weapons, procuring gunpowder, recruiting government servants along the way and finding a mountain retreat to raise crops and live in peace until help arrived. Some of the government servants could read the paper as well as any gentleman.

Robert Storey had not headed west. He went the same way, Ralph, as your Ribbon Boys did five years later. The government servants who harboured Robert Storey were assigned to Jonathon Hassall at Bolong in the Abercrombie Ranges. William Cook, per the *Malabar*, had been in the colony six years. He had worked as a shepherd at the head of the Campbell River branding one thousand six hundred sheep on the nose with the initial of a curly J. The three hundred horned cattle were branded with a curly JH. Captain Dumaresq was later to ride through this ‘wild horse country’ where he noted , ‘thinly scattered over a wild and difficult country, the entire population has hitherto only consisted of men in charge of great herds of cattle, seldom visited by their owners and with no leaven of respectable residents to keep them in check, these stockmen have lived hail-fellow-well-met with each other in the utmost gaiety ... the learned leisure and studies of these Bathurst stockmen ... is confined to the alphabet, and all their research and ingenuity is how to alter the brand marks on their neighbours’ property.’

Robert Storey was betrayed for a pardon. However, William Cook's bovine captives – two cows, two heifers, two steers and a bullock branded with the curly JH – joined a herd of over one hundred and thirty seven stolen cattle that made their way to the Warrumbungle Ranges over the following five years.

In Sydney Town on Wednesday November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1825, Patrick Ryan, Robert Storey, Benjamin Bishop, William Percival and Nathaniel Mitchell stood before the Chief Justice. Upon Blanchfield's testimony, Patrick Ryan was convicted as the principal and Robert Storey as aiding and abetting in the arson of Richard Thomson's hut. There was insufficient evidence to convict the other three. Storey, Percival and Mitchell were then indicted under the Black Act (George I) for maliciously shooting at Mr. Thomson. Blanchfield took the stand and explained the purpose of the assault was to punish all bad masters. All three were found guilty.

George Ranken took the stand and attested that Percival, Storey and Bishop were his servants implicated in the affair at Kinghorne's when the property of Mr. Icely was stolen. Robert Ferrier was called to identify Percival whom he had seen in the house and although Blanchfield was not there he had no trouble in condemning the men by saying that he had heard it all planned. The five members of Storey's gang were held in Sydney Goal to await sentencing.

The next month, Colonel William Stewart was sworn in as Lieutenant Governor in the presence of the departing Governor Thomas Brisbane. As the *Mary Hope* cleared the heads at

noon on December 8th, bearing the retiring Governor away to freedom, Patrick Ryan, Robert Storey, William Percival, Ben Bishop and Nathaniel Mitchell stood before the bench in the Supreme Court to receive the sentence of death.

Twelve prisoners awaited execution in Sydney Gaol that Christmas. As convicted felons their bodies would be buried in the sands outside the consecrated graveyard, where a rough cart track passes over the protruding bones. If the prisoners had a copy of the *Sydney Gazette* in the gaol on Thursday, December 12th they would have been heartened to read that Charles Jubey was still on the absconders list from Government employment Bathurst. He ended up on Town Gang 24 at Windsor. That month, Ben Bishop and Nathaniel Mitchell were transported to Moreton Bay for life, and Patrick Ryan was sent with William Percival to Norfolk Island.

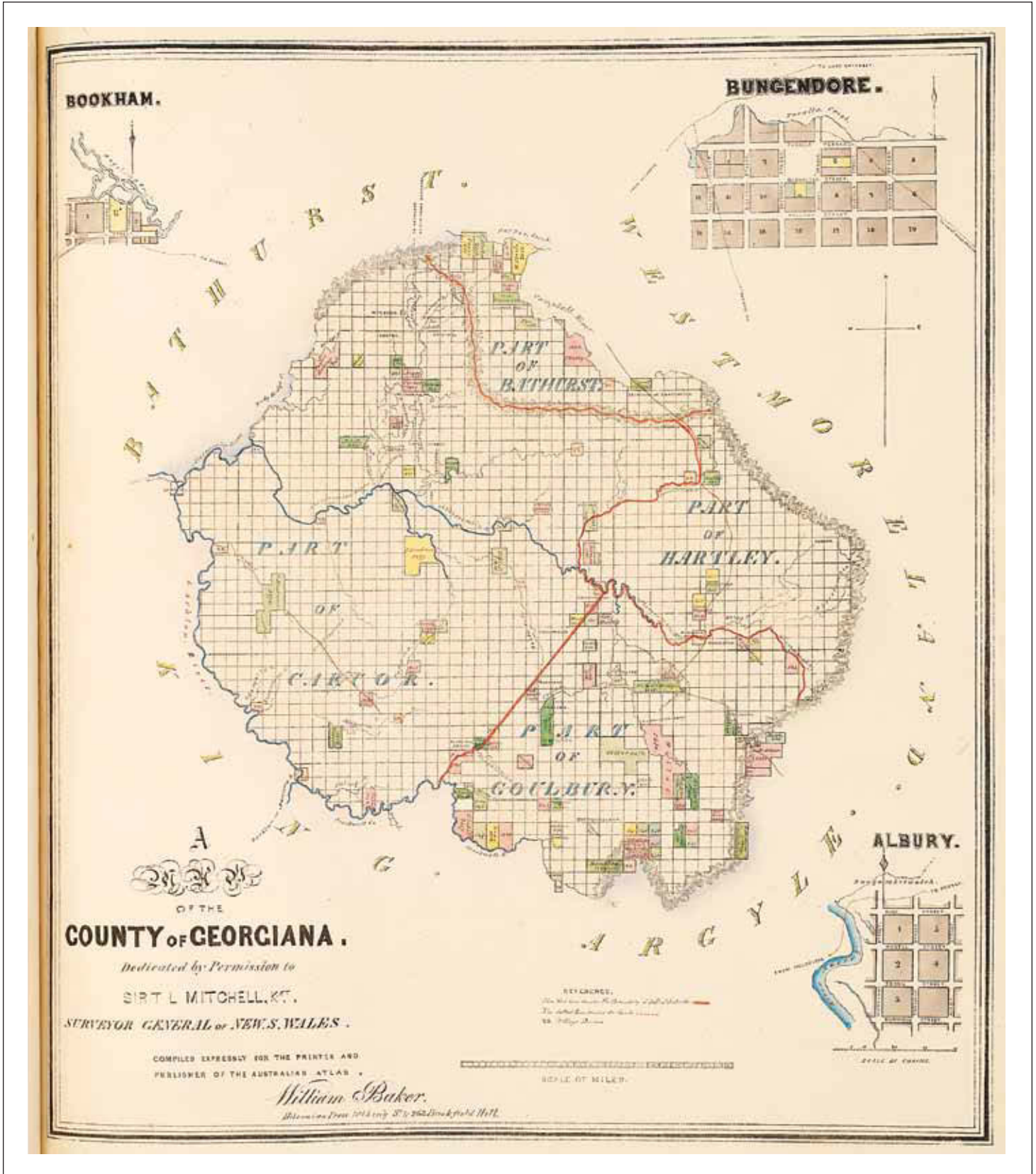
There was not enough time for Robert Storey to organise assistance as he was slated for execution on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Like you Ralph, he faced an anxious wait over the Sabbath. The *Sydney Gazette* reported on Monday that Governor Ralph Darling had arrived in Van Diemen's land on his way to New South Wales, when in fact his ship, the *Catherine Stewart Forbes*, had quietly slipped into Sydney Harbour on Saturday.

At dawn on Monday the clergy came to the cells of the condemned. Three bushrangers from the Hunter River – Lawrence Cleary, Patrick Lynch and Aaron Price – were to swing alongside Robert Storey. The priests and Anglican clergy alike urged confession and repentance on the men. They were described in the newspapers as contrite and penitent. They stood on the wooden scaffold before the assembled inmates, the Sydney Town shop owners

and lifters, the lawyers and solicitors, the ladies and gentlemen, and the chain gang awaiting their next shift on the road works. The clergy were about to ascend the scaffold when a document was delivered to the undersheriff, Mr. James. He ascended the scaffold ahead of the clergy and addressed the four men. Governor Darling had ordered a respite in their sentences to mark his arrival in the colony. James cautioned the men they were not to hope for a reprieve but to spend the remaining time allotted to them in order to live in the best of purposes. The men fell to their knees and were speechless. Robert Storey was sent to the penitentiary on Norfolk Island from whence he ran off into the bush in 1826.

While rounding up runaways, Commandant Fennell had written to the *Sydney Gazette* about the need for systematic inland exploration. In October, a convict had been brought in from Mr. Robert Lowe's farm at Mudgee. He swore on oath that he and three other convicts took some hunting dogs along the river and across a vast plain to a mountain range the natives called 'Waranbungie'. The letter described the river teeming with fish, a forest of tall pines and short trees that ripened with palatable fruit, an abundance of emus, white kangaroos and other game for hunting. The convicts lived peaceably among two different tribes of aborigines who described a large quantity of water to the North which they took to be the ocean. After eight weeks the convict was sick from the diet and surrendered to Mr. Lowe. Unbeknown to Captain Fennell, other bolters had followed Jimmy Meehan's track from the Illawarra along Oxley's line of discovery, to the same Ranges. Captain Charles Sturt, the lauded 'explorer', did not arrive in New South Wales until May 1827. By then the convicts doing hard labour in Port Macquarie and the government slaves on the Coal River were dreaming of an inland escape route to the sea. Edward Baldwin infected the Ribbon Boys with the idea.





A Map of the County of Georgiana (<http://nla.map-raa8-s17> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 16)





## Chapter 5

### *Abercrombie Ranges, Argyle County, Tuesday October 26<sup>th</sup> 1830.*

A horse cart, laden with three prisoners and two soldiers of the Argyle Mounted Police, beetles through the wattle spattered forest. Two mounted constables ride before and aft, each armed with a carbine, a horse pistol and a sword. It has been raining for four days. At the base of the Ranges, the soldiers dismount to ford a swollen river. The prisoners are jostled and swearing fearfully. If the cart overturns in the roaring waters, their leg irons will drown them. The sudden danger passed, the soldiers remount and the cart with its military escort snakes uphill between the monolithic boulders of the Abercrombie Ranges.

The prisoners had let from the hospital at Bong Bong at dawn on the previous day. Doctor Andrew Gibson inspected and bound their wounds. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary that they could be moved without endangering their lives. He was eager to dispatch the men before the river became impassable. The journey would take four days through the rebel-infested forests. Gibson had thought it safer to send the men to Sydney gaol, but his fellow magistrates, Macalister and Evernden, lobbied Chief Justice Forbes to convene the court in Bathurst. The Attorney General and the hangman were already on their way across the Blue Mountains.

Kearney was agitated when the cart left Bong Bong. He harassed the escorts for information but the soldiers would not speak to him. The three captives peered into the nameless bush for a familiar sign or welcome shadow, hour after hour. Nothing but dripping scrub and the monotonous tinkling of birds greeted them. When they reached a place called 'Trial Gang', the soldiers pulled up beside the flogging tree. This was Magistrate Hannibal McArthur's land and the soldiers stopped the night for a change of horses and supper in the magistrate's

hut. Lieutenant Lachlan Macalister, Superintendent of the Mounted Police in Argyle County, strode over to the cart. He checked the soldiers' passes and gave orders for fresh horses. Kearney noticed with some pleasure that he carried his left arm in a sling.

Macalister was proud of his prowess in riding and hunting through the steep hills of the Abercrombie. He had been in Oxley's party – one of the first whites to cross from Argyle through the Abercrombie to Bathurst. He resigned his commission in the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment to take up a grant beside McArthur and named it Strathaird, after his father's estate on the Isle of Skye. Then he left the farming to his relatives, preferring instead to lead volunteer settlers in pursuit of bushrangers. This form of hunting proved at once more dangerous and more rewarding. He was given command of a small contingent of constables and mounted police from the garrison. He handpicked Daniel Geary as his District Constable. Geary was a native born Australian who had been 'a notorious character' serving a colonial sentence in Port Macquarie.

Daniel Geary now lies critically wounded at Bong Bong. His shattered thigh and Macalister's splintered wrist have been dealt them by Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne. Macalister wants his captives tried and hanged by the settlers they have terrorised. Last year he was robbed of the capital punishment of four notorious bushrangers that he had hunted for two years. Tennant, Murphy, Ricks and Cain were severely wounded when he sent them to Sydney Town for trial but while awaiting execution, they were retried and given six months in Sydney Gaol. A furious Lachlan MacAlister wrote to the Governor requesting they be sent to Norfolk Island. He did not send Jack Donohoe to Sydney Town for trial and would not lose these Ribbon Boys either. He left them to sleep in the cart under a wet tarpaulin without rations or blankets.

All the next long day, Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne were jostled through the alien landscape in a rickety cradle of wood. Below the narrow path the stones kicked by the bullocks fall like iron rain onto the tops of the trees. The river winds like a fish-serpent into and out of the mouth of ancient limestone caves. This is where you left Edward Slingsby, Ralph. He and Michael Lynch and Denis O'Brien are camped at the mouth of one of the largest caves. Slingsby is healing from a wound in the leg but is still unable to ride. O'Brien has been clipped in the wing and cannot yet fire a musket. Lynch ferries liquor to them from Nowlan's hut. Martin Donoghue, a servant of Dr. Imlay, brought them a wounded policeman called Stevens who told them of the shootout on the bald hill and that you had escaped to the Lachlan. They are waiting for your return. They shelter from the rain and lick their wounds. Unbeknown to them, the wagon from Bong Bong passes just a few miles east along the ridge and out of sight. Danger once again slips past these last of the Ribbon Boys. Slingsby has led a charmed life compared to yours Ralph.

It is not only the traps who have been hunting for Ribbon Boys. Last Sunday a woman called Winifred Redmond took a carriage from the Brickfields to Father Therry's house in Parramatta. She arrived at twilight, which provided a modicum of decency. He sat at his desk reading a letter from Cork – Thomas Lynch wrote of the death of a young Catholic boy in Wilberforce who had been buried without a priest to bless him. Winifred approached the darkened house by the side entrance. She saw two angels in white smocks fly from the alcoves but realised, too late to still her heart, that it was the Dwyer girls who had been seeking refuge in Therry's home since the death of their father. She regretted having come to see the younger priest at this hour. What would the gossips say of him? 'Cet homme amie l'argent et les femmes.' But his door was always open and he sat there before her as an old friend. She came to beg for the saving of her son and any moral chagrin floated away with the

angels into the night. He welcomed her into his sitting room. She was already wearing the black of mourning and it heightened her pallor in the candlelight. 'I have come about John,' she said gravely. Father Therry closed the door.

'Redmond has gone on to Windsor,' she explained, 'so I have come here unaccompanied to beg for your help. Edward says he can get news of John from the Grants on Mount York. They have servants who know of his whereabouts when he goes inland.' 'Perhaps he is checking on his father's land at Bingham?' the priest tried to settle her agitation. Edward Redmond left the running of his Bathurst property at White Rocks to John, but the boy also visited their lands at Bingham in the Abercrombie. This is land that the Surveyor General sold to Redmond after the Hassall brothers had occupied it for two years and spent 500 pounds on huts and fences. There had been some trouble over this with Hassall's overseer Henry Castles. 'John has been in the Abercrombie these past three months,' Winifred said, 'But now there are rumblings of an insurrection and I think his friends have led him...'

'This is what you fear, Winifred,' Therry said as he moved a chair closer for her to sit upon. 'You have heard there is trouble at Bathurst and imagine that it affects John, way down in the Abercrombie. He is at least forty miles from the danger. In the wilds he has probably not even heard word of the insurrection.'

He saw the flame in her eyes, a glimmer of the girl she must have been in 1804 when she was newly married to Francois Durinault, a soldier of Napoleon. Durinault was paid by Governor King to teach viticulture to the settlers. When the Castle Hill rebellion broke out, Francois was peddling wares between Parramatta, Toongabbie and Castle Hill. Soldiers swept through these settlements arresting and shooting suspects. Francois was transported back to England



within days, leaving Winifred with an infant son. After seven years Durinault was presumed dead and Winifred married Edward Redmond, an emancipated Irish rebel who had an infant daughter. Her son took his stepfather's name, and so John Redmond had the blood of two revolutions in his veins. Winifred was not a fool, she knew how quickly the word of rebellion swept across the country. 'They have called the troops out,' she whispered hoarsely.

'How many troops?' he asked, sounding less like a priest and more like a hedgerow schoolteacher.

'Two dozen in a forced march from Emu Plains. There has already been fighting in the Abercrombie.'

'Are there men taken?'

'Six wounded among the Irish boys and two of the mounted police shot dead.'

Father Therry poured a glass of brandy and held the glass to Winifred's lips until she had taken a draught. When she sat down he took her hands and warmed them in his own. This brief communion between them over, he resumed his seat at the desk. If John Redmond had joined the rebels what could he do? The old vendettas were perpetuated in the young bloods. If there was trouble in the Abercrombie, John Redmond would be in the thick of it.

'So many young men have been sent out this past five years and are now drunk on the old stories of revolution,' he said.

'I must know if he is among those taken.'

'I cannot intercede,' said Therry, 'as you know I am not in the Governor's favour.'

'Then intercede with heaven,' said Winifred. This was the woman who helped Therry build Saint Mary's chapel. She kept the purse strings tight when money flowed like mercury through Therry's fingers.

‘They will be tried in Sydney Town?’

‘In Bathurst. Jack Ketch was sent off to hang them three days ago.’

‘Then they will need the last rites read to them in Bathurst.’

‘You must go for John and for the other Catholic boys,’ she said.

She spoke as an Irish mother not as a wealthy matron. Therry had been her closest friend and confidant. He studied her thoughtfully. An admirer said of her ‘they are not common here, these lovely virtuous women.’ Her hair was jet black like John’s but threaded with white and her eyes were flawless brown garnets. No longer the Irish colleen, she was tempered by the years of her misfortune into a more enduring femininity. Father Therry had already begun writing the letter. ‘If I ask permission the Governor will deny me, so I must inform him that I am going and ask for fresh horses along the way. That way he can only deny me the horses.’

Commandant McPherson’s letter to the Military Secretary on your behalf and the note from Father Therry arrived on the desk of the Colonial Secretary the same day. The Governor minuted the bottom of Therry’s letter, ‘There is no other place than Emu Plains where he can get a horse. Pray inform him so. He must not interfere with the Horses of the Mounted Police.’

It is around midnight on October 28<sup>th</sup> when you are awoken by the sound of horses. All week travellers have been arriving at Bathurst settlement for the trial – military uniforms of all shades and feathers have paraded past the lockup doors – but this arrival creates excitement even in the darkness. Doors are unbolted, torches flare though the corridors. The boys are howling and clattering in their cells. Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne are still alive and swearing at their gaolers like holy terrors. They are thrust into the cells and you hear the

jubilant. It is as if they are come back from the dead. Yet Evernden has you cast off in solitary confinement, unable to see or talk with them or press them to your breast. The boys are still alive. You are beldering into the darkness like a wounded beast.

It was a year ago that Baldwin visited Stowford and set the fire of rebellion within you, but Jack Donohoe's defiance fanned it to a flame through the winter of 1830. He made fools of the constables and cheated death. He made freedom seem possible, but Baldwin did not tell you the whole story. He did not tell you what happened to Donohoe's mates the first time they tried to escape the colony. He didn't warn you of the consequences of going beyond Governor Darling's 'limits of settlement'. In January 1828 Donohoe and two associates, Kilroy and Smith, were arrested on a charge of robbing travellers on the Richmond Road and sent to Sydney Gaol. There, Donohoe first met James Walmsley, a runaway from an iron gang serving twelve months, and William Webber charged with highway robbery. In gaol one made lifelong friends, but also shortened the length of the acquaintance by the friendship. Donohoe was incarcerated with the notorious bushrangers James Murphy, John Ricks, John Tennant and Thomas Cain, who had just been sent up from Goulburn by Lieutenant Macalister. These boys were connected to a wide network of harbourers and cattle stealers on the Yass Plains and beyond. Such an education broadens one's horizons.

Donohoe, Kilroy and Smith appeared before Judge Stephen on February 5<sup>th</sup> 1828 and were convicted of highway robbery. They had to wait a month for sentencing during which time Donohoe's testimony was needed to settle two other cases from Bathurst where he had worked for Samuel Terry and Major West. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Justice Dowling took his seat at the bench as Chief Justice for the first time. It was a Saturday and the official 'swearing in' produced a crowded court. The prisoners convicted of robbery – Webber, Tennant, Murphy,



Cain, Ricks, Kilroy, Smith and Donohoe – were all sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead. The judge ‘cautioned the unhappy men not to entertain any hopes of mercy’. That evening in the Gaol, as the prisoners were being locked down for the night, the head count revealed that Jack Donohoe had not returned from Court. He had escaped his escort somewhere between the Courthouse and Sussex Street.

Donohoe was reported to have robbed a gentleman on the Richmond Road that same evening but he was heading further west. In August 1828, three bolters named Owens, Whisken and Holmes attacked James Hassall’s dwelling at Bathurst. Finding the doors barred, they fired in the windows and threatened the servants within that they would all be murdered and the hut set alight if they did not surrender. The next day they joined up with Donohoe and a large party of banditti travelling down the Campbell River and across the Abercrombie, to rob the Hassall stores at Bolong. When they arrived the slab door was shut against them so they fired into it. For some time, the servants and the bushrangers shot at each other through the thin door. The government servants ran out of ammunition and called for a truce.

The banditti stripped their victims and tied them up. James Phillips, a countryman and shipmate of Donohoe, pleaded for the lives of the servants who had shot at them. He said they were only doing their duty to defend their master’s property. The banditti killed two sheep and released the servants so that they could cook a roast. Then they took with them a packhorse, five bullocks and a wagon loaded with tobacco, flour, sugar, tea, soap, cutlery, guns, saddles, horses, two sheep and all of the books they could find – except the Bibles ‘which they left for the use of the parsons’. Just like Robert Storey, they planned to escape from the colony by heading further west and settling there until help arrived.

A party of Mounted Police and volunteers were dispatched by Magistrate Evernden – Sergeant Wilcox, five mounted police, the three Hassall brothers and their overseers, Henry Castles, James Poplin and James Walker. Ironically, Henry Castles relied upon two aborigines, tribesmen of the elderly woman Castles had ‘pricked’ with his sword, to find the tracks of the banditti through the unmapped hills. By September, the search led them to a tributary of the Lachlan, the natives called it ‘Borooah’. They followed it south past Joseph Roberts’ run to the Hassall run, the natives called it ‘Doongungarra’. Roger Corcoran, a Whiteboy from Clonoughty, was the carter who travelled across these lands. He held a ticket of leave and worked for Samuel Hassall and for Dr. Harris. His team of oxen travelled between Boorowa, the Abercrombie, Bathurst and Cow Pastures. South of the river lay the lands being grazed by the cattle of Jimmy Meehan. His overseer was a cousin of Corcoran named Ned Ryan. The southern border of Meehan and Ryan’s grazing land butted into Dr Harris’ run Kalangan. The search party stopped there for supplies.

Henry O’Brien’s overseer came upon two bushrangers playing cards at a campsite on a rocky hill. He rode them down, shooting one in the heel and one in the calf of the leg. They told him Donohoe and the others had gone to Jimmy Meehan’s property for clothing and provisions. This is about who your friends are Ralph, and if they are worth dying for. Just like Donohoe you and the boys took refuge on these old Whiteboy cattle runs.

The search party split up – four were left to guard the wounded captives and Sergeant Wilcox ordered the others to take up positions around the hill to wait for the bushrangers to return.

Around four o'clock, seven bushrangers and two bullocks emerged from the plains with their plunder. One bushranger was wearing Jimmy Meehan's shirt. He saw Sergeant Wilcox and a corporal and shouted, 'There's the bloody old sergeant!' The corporal galloped off to fetch more help, leaving Wilcox to face the bush rangers alone.

The bushrangers drew up into a line in militia style. They fired twenty one shots at the old Sergeant across the flat. Then the search party arrived and Wilcox formed them into a line and ordered 'Charge'. The bushrangers fired one last volley and took cover among the trees and boulders of the hillside. Owens, Whisken and Holmes were wounded and taken captive. The plunder was retrieved from the wagon. Wilcox formed his troops into a line again and shooting continued constantly but slowly over the darkening two hours. One bush ranger was killed and three wounded, but the search party remained unscathed.

As it was growing cold and dark, Sergeant Wilcox ordered a campfire to be set and they roasted a sheep, calling out to the bushrangers to come and eat with them. Donohoe invited the soldiers to come to their camp but neither party moved. After the meal, Sergeant Wilcox stamped out the fire and ordered his men to take cover behind the trees but not to speak or fall asleep. They were allowed to smoke the tobacco they had retrieved from the bushrangers. If they had opened the spirits and invited Donohoe to drink with them, there may have been a different outcome.

All through the night, the four remaining bushrangers called out and provoked their attackers. Donohoe challenged them, saying "Ha-Hoo! Come on now – we are all ready!" The settlers

and servants and police made no reply. Early the next morning the search party formed a line and marched up the hill. The bushrangers had gone. The trackers were able to follow a trail of blood that led them to one who had been shot through both thighs. He was crawling into a swamp to hide. He was wearing Mr Hassall's coat from the Bolong robbery. A bullet, that killed his comrade, had wrent a hole in the breast pocket. The Sergeant took the captives and the wagon of stolen property back to Hassall's station at Doongungarra.

Two days later, Henry Castles, an aboriginal tracker, Lieutenant Brown and five mounted police scoured the plains for the remaining bushrangers. They were looking for Tinson and Pitts, two runaways from the Mineral Surveyors gang, and Philips and Donohoe. The search party rode as far as the Murrumbidgee River then they split into three parties. Pitts and Tinson were recaptured and sent to Bathurst Gaol. The next morning Corporal Prosser came upon Phillips and Donohoe lying flat on the ground, levelling their muskets at him. He pulled his horse up and aimed at them with his carbine. His shot dropped Phillips instantly but Donohoe ran. Two mounted police gave chase but they took a fork in the road which proved to be a bad turn and Donohoe was able to outrun them. The aboriginal told Prosser he had hit Donohoe in the arm. He saw it drop. The two police and the aboriginal tracker searched all day but did not find a trace of Donohoe. If he was wounded he must have had help to escape. In October 1828, he met up with Walmsley at Mulgoa on Jonathan Hassall's property.

For a year Donohoe, Walmsley and Webber robbed travellers on the Sydney Road. They regularly held up members of the Hassall family and their business associates which led many to speculate that the Hassalls' government servants were supplying Donohoe with sustenance and information. When Donohoe striped and robbed Jonathan Hassall, he kept the

muzzle of his a gun pointed at his head, ‘remembering a battle in which he had been engaged in The New Country’. In order to rob James Hassall and Reverend Walker, Donohoe disguised himself as a soldier and led Walmsley and Webber, dressed as convicts, alongside their cart. This was fair play, as Lieutenant Macalister had taken to dressing his policemen as convicts to deceive harbourers and hutkeepers. You knew about this Ralph because Mr Bettington, on the road to Bathurst, was approached by a disguised policeman. The settler took the policeman for a bushranger and shot him. The news travelled with Mr Bettington’s servants back to Hare Castle.

Reports of Donohoe’s exploits amused you and the boys through the winter but then in the summer of 1829, when Baldwin paid Stowford his first visit, Donohoe was reported to have ‘knocked off work’ and gone ‘to some distant part of the country with a plentiful supply of everything needed to spend a jovial Christmas.’ In the New Year of 1830, the *Sydney Gazette* announced that Donohoe and his confederates had ‘retired from public life and are disposed to spend the remainder of their days – far in the bush.’

If this part of Baldwin’s story were true, Kearney argued, then perhaps you should follow. Perhaps you could walk to the Wellington Valley, collecting arms and supplies along the way. The disaffected government servants at Wellington might join you. In March, Magistrate Evernden brought three Wellington ‘swells’ in to the gaol at Bathurst on suspicion of a felony. They were Reverend Peter Fenn, James Bushell and an unnamed ‘cidevant lieutenant’. Perhaps these men had the intelligence and experience to lead a revolt.

On April 21<sup>st</sup> 1830, Governor Ralph Darling announced the first of his draconian Bushranging Acts. This gave every citizen legal permission to arrest another person on suspicion of being an escaped convict. The onus of proof of innocence was on the accused. They could be marched many miles to the nearest magistrate. When tried and found guilty of robbery, either of a settler or dwelling place, they were to be executed within three days. The Governor closed up the loophole that Donohoe had used to escape. There was no longer time for an appeal or any delay for approvers to give King's Evidence in other cases. There had never been a more dangerous time to take to the bush, but the boys agreed it was a choice between starvation and survival.

The dark of winter closed in around Stowford and your bellies pinched tighter. Kearney knew from experience that he could not run alone and he began working upon a plan to reach Emu Plains and free Daniel Gleeson. But in July, Daniel and a flogger named Roach escaped together. They were crossing the Nepean River on two roughly hewn rafts when an argument broke out. They wrestled in the river and only Roach emerged from the floodwaters alive. Daniel's body was dragged to the bank by two soldiers. Around his neck they found a cord which, they swore in court, proved he was the member of an Irish secret society. Michael Kearney read the notice aloud from the *Sydney Gazette*.

The reward for Donohoe now stood at one hundred and fifty pounds and a ticket of leave. He was reported to be often attired in fine garments taken from the backs of wealthy settlers – ‘a black hat, a superfine blue cloth coat lined with silk surtout fashion, a plaited good quality white shirt, laced boots, snuff coloured trowsers.’ Captain Howey and young Mr. Campbell were asked to swap trowsers with him and, according to the young gentleman, Donohoe ‘was

rather facetious during the performance of the operation.’ Donohe said he enjoyed giving the Sydney Town swells ‘a touch up’. Webber and Walmsley were named as his accomplices and their ships and full descriptions were given.

There were false sightings of Donohoe from Sydney Quay to the Hunter Valley. Contrary to popular opinion, he was not a member of the Hunter River Banditti. These banditti included Edward Bowen, your shipmate from *John I*, a fellow bolter called Daley and five others. In August they robbed an old Scott called Hugh Cameron at Kingdom Ponds. Magistrate Bingle and Dr. Little of Gammon Plains came upon their campfire and a gun battle ensued in which Daley was killed and three bolters were wounded. The wounded prisoners were hand cuffed and walked behind the horses to Wallis Plains but during this seventy mile journey, they were rescued by a band of eight mounted riders leading packhorses. When news reached Maitland, Corporal Thomas Quigley of the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment and five mounted police were sent out in pursuit. A letter to the *Sydney Gazette* in September suggested that the cattle thief Edward Baldwin ‘is supposed to have crossed the country and secreted himself at some secret stock stations beyond Bathurst.’

This was the first you had heard of Baldwin in ten months. The excitement stirred the boys on Stowford. If escape were possible, perhaps the journey had already begun. Your shipmate Bowen and his gang of Duffey, Mason, Westbury, Jones and Feeney separated from their rescuers and went north via the Liverpool Plains. They ransacked the property of John Rotten and loaded the horses with packsaddles. They planned to steal enough farming supplies to travel to ‘a wild sequestered part of the country’ and settle there in peace, growing crops and

farming. Does this sound familiar, Ralph? They took an aboriginal woman from the farm as their guide.

But Jack Donohoe was never to meet up with Baldwin again. Do you know what happened to Jack in those final days? I can tell you more than the Boys knew. Here in this dark tomb where you wait for morning with your eyes wide open, here where you listen for singing or talking from the other cells, here in the silence, I can tell you about the death of Jack Donohoe.

While the Hunter River Banditti robbed the stations, Donohoe, Walmsley and Weber stole valuables that could be fenced. They weren't taking a long journey. They robbed Mr. Begley of a watch, deeds, grants of land and women's clothing. From Mr McQuade's two carts, they took two packs of calico cloth. Donohoe was reported to have been stiff in the right arm, but still able to vault up onto the wagons with ease. He took some rum in a chamber pot and shared a drink with Boyle, Mr McQuade's carter. 'I would rather meet my death by a ball than on the gallows' he said. He carried with him a pocket pistol for that purpose if captured. He was laughing with Walmsley and Webber at Sergeant Hodson's attempts to find them.

This report incensed Lieutenant Macalister. Sergeant William Hodson and his party of constables and mounted police were ordered to scour the bush around Bringelly and camp out until the bushrangers were found. The Irish rebel families of 1798 had intermarried and settled south west of Sydney Town so there were plenty of sympathisers to harbour Donohoe. He roamed freely between Mulgoa, Cabramatta, Bringelly, Raby and Camden. Because of the



increased activity of the horse police, he began to commit robberies in the late afternoon and travel with the spoils during the night.

In the first week of September 1830, Donohoe, Walmsley and Webber were passing across W.C. Wentworth's property Greendale at Cobbitty. The land bordered on Reverend Thomas Hassall's property, Denbeigh. The bushrangers had a packhorse laden with proceeds of the robbery of Mr Begley the previous week. It was dusk. Sergeant Hodson's patrol of three constables and six horse police had camped for the night in a hollow on Greendale. Chief Constable Farley and another constable had gone to fetch provisions. Around five of the evening, the lookout thought he saw them returning. There were three men leading a black packhorse about a mile away. Sergeant Hodson recognised Webber and Walmsley. The police split into two parties to surround them. Constable Henry Gorman from Bargo, Private Muggleston of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment, and another trooper went on one side of the creek and Sergeant Hodson took another man around the other side. Donohoe did not see the police approaching until they were a hundred yards off. Walmsley gave the alarm.

Donohoe leapt to his feet and, waving his hat in the air three times shouted, 'Come on you cowardly rascals, we are ready if there is a dozen of you!' Walmsley and Webber took off their coats and hats and went behind the trees. A conversation about fighting then took place and Donohoe sang his song to the constables. I can imagine Jack singing, 'Then hurl me to crime and brand me with shame but think not about me my spirit to tame for I'll fight to the last in old Ireland's name, though I be a bushranger you still are the stranger and I'm Donohoe.' John Muggleston was a marksman who had Donohoe in his sights. His weapon was loaded with a carbine ball and a pistol ball. One of the horse police fired at Webber and

skinned the bark from the tree behind him. Constable Gorman fired at the same time as one of the bushrangers but both shots missed. Donohoe poked his head from behind the tree and Mugglestone fired. The first ball entered Donohoe's neck and the pistol ball pierced his temple. He was twenty three years old when he died.

The next day, James Samuel Hassall, Reverend Thomas Hassall's seven year old son, saw the body of Donohoe in a cart that passed by Cobbitty Church on its way to Liverpool. The news of Donohoe's death spread like a bushfire through the colony. On Saturday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, large crowds followed the cart to the General Hospital. Here the explorer Thomas Mitchell sketched Donohoe while others came to make a cast of his head. Clay pipes were made in his image. Lieutenant Macalister was lauded in the *Sydney Gazette* as the mastermind behind Donohoe's demise.

At the end of the month, Edward Slingsby and Michael Lynch arrived at Stowford. They had with them a shipmate of Donohoe's named Denis O'Brien. He had been assigned to Reverend Thomas Hassall at Cobbitty and was full of the story. Donohoe's wild free life and even his swift glorious death gave you hope. That night, Donohoe's song rang out on Stowford without censure. Slingsby challenged you all to follow Baldwin and the Hunter River Banditti to the inland hideaway. Patrick Byrne said you should seek out James McNally at Evernden's farm, Barletts. He had been at the Wellington Valley when Storey planned his run and would know the way to the Warrumbungles.

It was September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1830. On the same day, four years earlier, you had robbed James Alldred's house. The boys were up at peep of day but no one in the hut had been sleeping because of the hunger. Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien were in the woolshed cooking emu eggs on the back of a spade and the smell drew you in. 'So Mr Entwistle, my dear,' said Slingsby in a saucy way, 'if McNally says there are friends to harbour us and give us supplies at Wellington...should we go? Will you go?' He had remembered you from the meeting with Baldwin. You had wanted assistance from the government servants at Wellington Valley but did not want to cause trouble at Stowford. Now the others looked to see if you had regained your courage after the flogging. Before you could reply to him Patrick Burke came rolling in.

This was how easily it started. Burke had been getting spirits from John Pedley, an old hand, who always had a supply of liquor from Terry's still on the Winburndale Creek. Burke had been drinking with Pedley in a hut on Mount Pleasant all night. He told him about Baldwin's plan to escape the colony but Pedley was fearful of being returned to Moreton Bay. When Pedley said he wouldn't join you and the boys, Burke tied him to a tree. It was only a matter of time before Evernden would find him and then the game would be up. You needed arms and men.

You took four of the boys with you – Kearney, Gahan, Sheppard and Kenny. You marched along the creek and across the fields to Woodstock. It was a yellow dawn, promising a day as hot as blazes. There were not enough arms at Woodstock but Patrick Gleeson, Tom Dunne and a government man called Thomas Dean came with you. When you got back to Stowford, Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien had already left for Michael Lynch's hut at Reedy Swamp Creek. They did not believe the plan could go ahead now that Pedley knew enough to talk.

Their lack of faith spurred you on. You took a fowling piece from William Inns and he told the boys they could get more arms next door at Bettington's.

When you arrived at Hare Castle it was milking time and you found the servants Thomas Hunter and John Ashley with the overseer, Isaac Clements, in the milking shed. You locked them in the shed but, after an hour of ransacking the farm and shouting questions through the cracks of the door, it seemed that Isaac Clements did not oppose you. He had been a highway man and knew the pull of the road. Thomas Hunter was also willing to come with you. He was a Scotsman who had been in the colony six years and had run twice from Port Macquarie, on which account Evernden had refused his ticket of leave. He had only been at Bettington's a few months. John Ashley was a tall English lad, a pickpocket who would have stood out in a crowd. He wanted to collect James Driver from Lambert's as they had formed a friendship on the *Lord Melville*. They took firearms, slops and spirits for the journey and you all headed back down the creek to Stowford to get the rest of the government men and a musket.

The march was gathering momentum. To Kearney and the Irish boys it felt like they were back in Ireland – marching down Mount Pleasant Hill with Captain Michael Dwyer and two thousand Wicklow rebels. For you, Ralph, it was the legend of four hundred Lancashire loom breakers marching over the tops of the moors to the Causeway Height and down to Haslingden mill. But you also remembered that the Dragoons had fired upon them at Chatterton. When you were fifteen you heard of the massacre called 'Peterloo'. There had to be a Captain to keep the boys safe, to make sure of your escape, or the military would be called out. You were one of the eldest and had been longest in the colony so they looked to

you to lead them but you had to keep them in order. A drunken Patrick Burke could hang the lot of you. Kearney wanted to recruit Patrick Sullivan, an old lifer from County Clare, to point out the farms you should plunder. He had his ticket of leave and was a carter for Mr. Blackett. Michael and the boys collected him from Blackett's and the boys stripped every moveable object from that farm.

By now it was daylight and four of you were mounted at the head of thirty freed servants marching across the hills. Your procession was like a caravan of nomads with all of the booty from four farms. There were two pack horses with all of the arms and ammunition they could carry. The plan just kept getting bigger the more men you collected. Evernden had the horses, carts, arms and ammunition you needed at Bartlett's. His overseer, James Greenwood, was a Ticket of Leave man, and a brewer by trade. Burke thought he would go to one side for you, as Isaac Clements had done. Others said he was Evernden's man and suspected him of passing on information. There was only one way to tell.

At nine o'clock in the morning the combined force of men marched over the hill from the Fitzgerald Valley to Bartlett's farm. The freed servants came into the yard in a single wave pushing the excitement out ahead of them like a flood. The men were armed with pistols, muskets and swords. John Sheppard was empty handed and complaining most of the way. Kearney and you had two five shilling pistols. Gahan had a fowling piece and Gleeson carried a ten shilling pistol. James McNally, recognising Patrick Burke, came up to ask what was happening. The insurrection had a momentum of its own and whether you would be harboured or hunted in the Wellington Valley no longer mattered. The men were drunk on their freedom. Burke thrust a musket into McNally's hands in reply.

As you rode past the stables, a free man, Richard Havilland, was at the sliprails brushing his mare. When Gahan reached him, he demanded his mare of him. Gahan took the reins and placed them in the hands of Patrick Burke. You could hear Burke and Havilland squabbling over the mare as you rode up to the overseer's hut. Sheppard was yelling to all of the government men 'get ready to go!' Clements was told to take a party around to all of the huts and round up all of the men on the farm. You could not leave any behind as Evernden would imprison, beat or starve them for information.

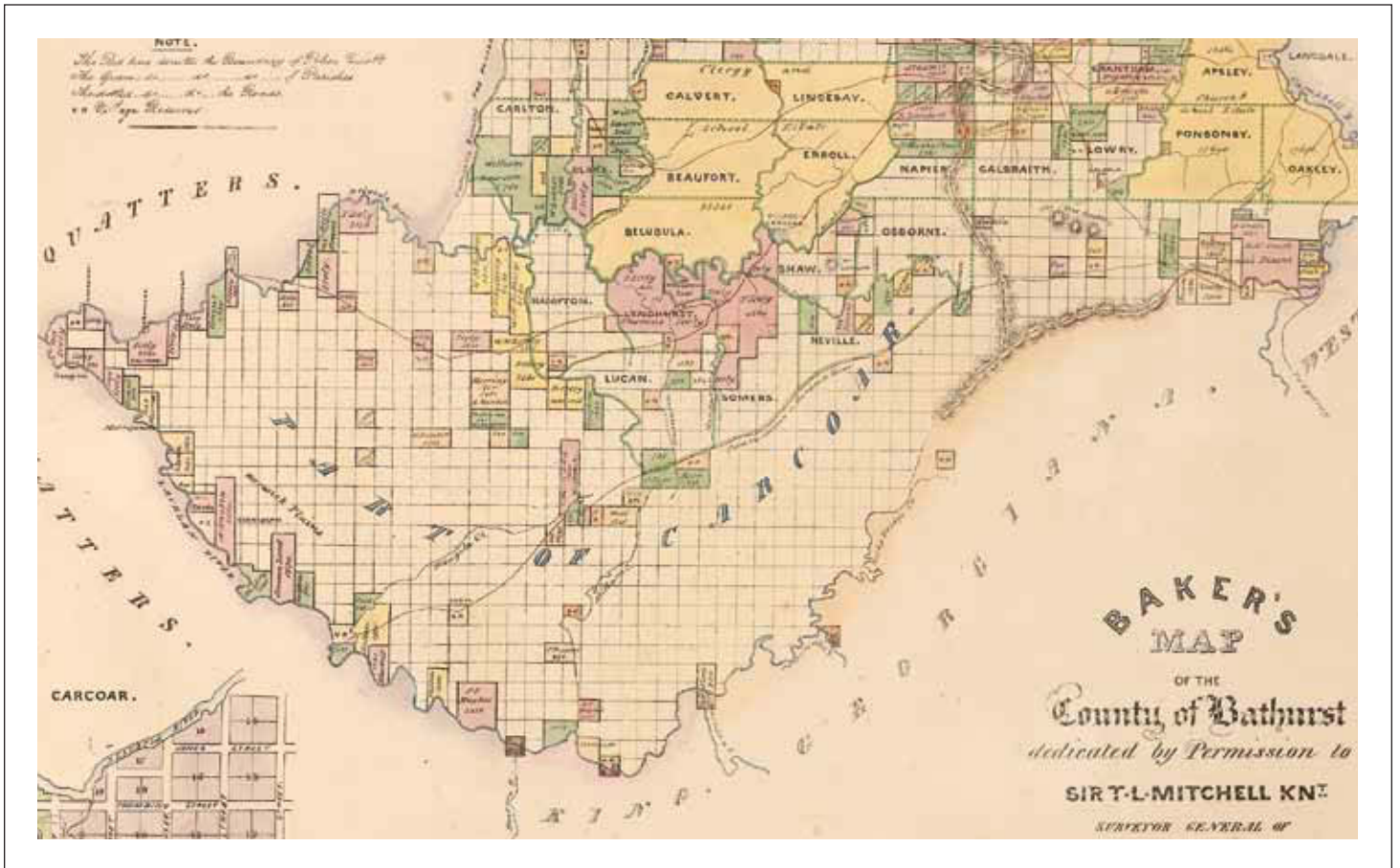
John Ward was standing at the bottom of the garden road, twenty yards from the hut. He held your horses while you went to negotiate with the overseer, Greenwood. Edward Jones followed along the path to see what the answer would be. Thomas Mack was serving the overseer his breakfast in the hut. Patrick Miskelly, the butcher, had just carried up a side of bacon to the kitchen. These men all proved to be soft crawlers for the magistrate.

Greenwood was sitting at his breakfast table when you ducked your head under the low door frame. Gahan and Gleeson followed you in but Kearney kept watch from the steps. Greenwood was a big red man, ginger topped like Lynch and with a nose red as a beet from sniffing hops. He had been in the colony since 1821 and was arrogant about his ticket of leave. He had no need to run. You said boldly to him, 'We are here to take all thy men and arms. All of the men shall turn out and the overseers mun come with us too.' Greenwood laughed and said you had no chance of escape. He refused to go – refused to order his men to go. He remembered you from the flogging and said you had no authority and no respect

among the men. He followed up on your heels right to the door of the hut. Yelling and ordering you about, but you had control of the arms and of the men. You could feel the heat of your wrath flushing your face. Greenwood's frame filled the doorway. He stripped his shirt aside in defiance. 'We will shoot you if you do not come!' Gleeson screamed, but Greenwood thrust his chest at you Ralph and said, 'You wouldn't be game.'

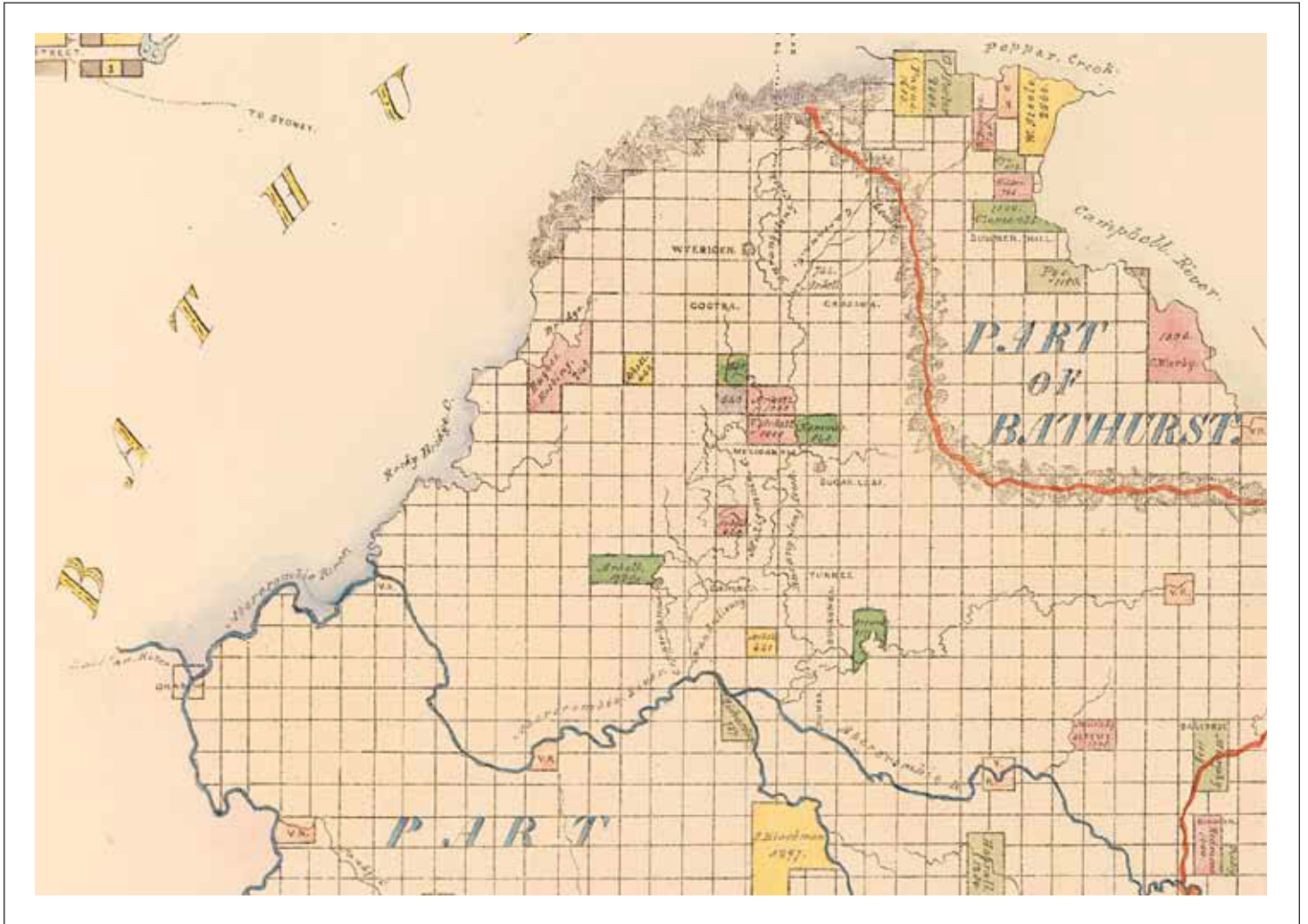
You felt the cold metal of reason in your right hand, raised the barrel and squeezed the trigger. Within the instant, Gahan fired his fowling piece. The shots drove a chunk of flesh two inches wide through Greenwood's pale chest and into his heart. He staggered back, clutching the wound. He turned in at the doorway and cried out pitifully, 'Oh Lord!' Then Kearney fired from the bottom of the steps and the ball lodged in Greenwood's back. He folded back into the small room as if the lead shot had put weights on his limbs, and crumpled onto the mat before the fire. Then the boys were in frenzy.

The report of the shots drew the others from their huts – Robert Webster among them. The shots drew him across the creek with a musket in this hand. He was due for a Ticket of Leave but seeing Greenwood dead upon the hearth, he forsook his ten years of servitude and swore death to all tyrants. McNally said, 'Greenwood had that owing to him these past six months.' He claimed that Greenwood was an informer who sent men to the gallows. Tom Dunne wanted to throw the body in the waterhole, but you would not let him do it. 'Best let him bide there,' was all you said and as your hand had been the first to shoot, you were the leader, the one who had the say. Gahan cleaned and reloaded his fowling piece as the men crowded around the doorway to look at Greenwood. 'Who is the next man to say he will not go?' he said and all the servants joined you after that. John Sheppard reckoned he was the same height and girth as Greenwood so he rushed into the hut and stripped the corpse of its corduroy jacket. He wore it from then on with the powder burns from Kearney's shot in the back. It was a green jacket which to you Ralph, seemed to be an omen of bad luck.



Baker's Map of the County of Bathurst(<http://nla.map-raa8-s6> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 5) (excerpt)





A Map of the County of Georgiana (<http://nla.map-raa8-s17> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 16) (excerpt)

## Chapter 6

### *Court House, Bathurst Settlement, Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 1830.*

Before they open the door to your cell and take you up for trial, let me tell you one thing. Plead 'not guilty'. In those two words is the slim glimmer of hope. There are gentlemen in the colony who decry the starvation and maltreatment of convicts as the cause of all bushranging and mutiny. There are letters in the *Sydney Gazette* that make plain the corruption of the magistrates. Plead 'not guilty' and yours may become a 'cause celebre'. Plead 'not guilty' and God may do his work. If you no longer believe in Providence then believe in luck. Tell the boys this story so that they may plead 'not guilty' also.

Three months after Murphy, Tennant, Cain and Ricks were sentenced alongside Donohoe, they were dragged up before the judge again. Their previous charges were quashed because the statute had been repealed. This time they were charged with larceny – stealing from the hutkeeper James Farrell. Farrell had shot Tennant in the back on a previous occasion so the bushrangers attacked Farrell's hut. Tennant tied Farrell to a post and ordered him flogged by 'the boatswain'. He received fifty three lashes on the breech and thighs with the buckle end of a belt. The gang helped themselves to food and drink after the flogging but left rations for the other government servants.

Mr. Justice Dowling, newly arrived in the colony and keen to sweep the court with a new broom, asked for their plea. Tennant responded 'guilty' in a devil-may-care way. The judge reminded him stealing was a capital offence, to which he replied, 'I don't care, my Lord, I am tired of my life, and as they seem determined on it, I am ready to die. We were tried and

sentenced to death the last Sessions, and have been kept on the chain in the cells ever since, and now we are brought up to be tried again.’ Justice Dowling called for their plea again and Tennant replied, ‘Guilty, my Lord, I am determined to plead guilty to everything that may be said against me in this Court today.’ For a third time the Judge asked Tennant to reconsider his plea, so finally he answered, ‘Very well, not guilty then, if you like.’ Murphy, Cain and Ricks all pleaded ‘not guilty’. After hearing the witnesses, the jury found that the motivation for the attack was not robbery, but revenge upon James Farrell. They were all found ‘not guilty’ and tried a month later for the assault of Farrell for which they were given six months gaol. It pays to plead, ‘not guilty.’ Will they say your attack upon the overseer James Greenwood was motivated by revenge? How could that be true?

At nine thirty the door cracks open and Constable John Shaw Strange hoists you from the bunk. He tugs on your irons to see they have not been ovalled and pats down your limbs and body in case any weapon is concealed about you. When you step into the corridor, the tumult rattles in your ears. It is the sound of horses and gigs, metal clashing and hooves thudding, voices overlapping in the crowd outside of the windows. From the other cell a line of men emerges. Chained one to another they move like a single creature as they shuffle along the narrow passageway to the court buildings. They are battered and lean and hunched together like beggars resigned to their fate. The constable pokes you onto the end of the line, and you see Michael Kearney’s scarred head in front of you. He drags his left leg with his hand clasped white around his thigh, because of the weight of the chains upon his injury. Sheppard, Dunn, Kearney, Gleeson and Gahan. Where are the others? As you shuffle along, linked man to man by an invisible bond, you embody the convicts oath, ‘Hand to hand, in honour or in hell, sick or well, on sea on land, on the square, stiff or in breath, lag or free, you and me, in life, in death, on the cross, never.’ The corridor ends in a side entrance to the court room.

To the Sydney Town travelers who have crowded into settlement this morning from the cramped accommodations at Kelso, the courthouse appears to be a tall plain red brick building. It has none of the grandeur of the Sydney Town sandstone government buildings. The convicts who made these bricks would never have intended them to so strongly uphold the law. The building seemed like a giant's plaything – an odd assortment of blocks – a tall rectangle with a triangular roof atop two cylinders that straddled the square door. Inside it resembled a Masonic Temple rather than a house of Law. Due to this vague association with a clandestine fellowship, many of the wealthy emancipists who crowded the makeshift pews felt comfortable.

The side door splits apart before the gaolers and John Liscombe ushers the prisoners to the dock. With the arrival of George Rogers, Commissioner of the Supreme Court, Liscombe has been demoted to usher and fetcher for the day. You stand crowded with the others, side by side in the rectangular box, having barely enough room to turn your head to survey the crowd seated at your back. The only familiar faces within your gaze are the overseer from Bettington's farm, Isaac Clements, and the men from Evernden's farm, Edward Jones, Thomas Mack and John McNally. They do not meet your eyes. Then Kearney leans into your shoulder and nods toward your old mate Patrick Burke. He is sitting on a bench behind the local magistrates. Kearney spits upon the wooden floorboards, but Liscombe merely steps over the insult to usher a group of ladies to the side gallery. They are Mrs. Hawkins, her young daughter MaryAnn, who has lately become Mrs. Thomas Evernden and Mrs. Janet Ranken. One of the females seated with Mrs. Inns, looks oddly familiar. When the women whisper you notice one voice is a contralto, almost like Slingsby's voice. Your heart does a fillip to the memory of Edward Slingsby.

There are ten empty seats immediately facing you. These are flanked on the left by a witness stand, a draped pedestal bearing Reverend Keane's best bible, and a clerk's desk. On the right of the empty chairs stands a raised altar of several feet that all but conceals the judge's chair. The Union Jack adorns the lime washed wall. One boxed ray of sunlight, from an impossibly high and ineffectually small rectangular window, is admitted to the courtroom. The lamps are lit at ten in the morning to allow the clerk to record the trial.

Ten jurors, appointed by Governor Darling, then enter the room. First seated is the Deputy Assistant Commissary General Henry Boucher Bowerman, who seems to take as much interest in the building materials as he does in the proceedings. His eyes pour over the beams used to construct the remarkable room in which he finds himself. The Quartermaster of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Benjamin Lloyd is seated next to Lieutenant George Eyre of the Royal Navy. Captain Robertson and Lieutenant John Gray from the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Lieutenant Michael Spence of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment are unknown to you but they are army brethren of Private James Stevens who lies mortally wounded in the hospital. A surprising addition to the members of the jury is Lieutenant Moore of the Argyle Mounted Police. He had caught a cold and sandy blight when searching for Tennant, Ricks, Cain and Murphy in 1827. He had proved no more successful in finding you and the boys in 1830. Commandant Major Donald McPherson is the next to enter. You will remember that he wrote to Father Therry about your last rites even before the trial. Then come the familiar faces, men you have faced in battle. Lieutenant Brown of the Bathurst Mounted Police and Captain Horatio Walpole. The regimental splendour of the jury procession is but a dowdy shadow of the opening of the Lancaster Assizes. All of this regimental finery arrayed against a squalid handful of captives seems

ridiculous. You chuckle aloud but the sound unnerves the attendants and you are struck with a baton.

The Attorney General, Alexander McDuff Baxter Esquire, enters the court room. He is listing to the starboard side. Another attorney, W.H.Moore was to have travelled here to prosecute the cases in the absence of the senior prosecutor, but clearly the notorious Attorney General has had more luck in obtaining horses than his junior and has arrived unexpectedly. He is due to take up an appointment in Van Diemen's Land. Last February he disgraced the bar by attacking his wife, a Spanish heiress, with a poker when she gave birth to twin daughters. She defended herself with a carving knife. The Attorney General left the matrimonial mansion with his only son and swiftly applied for a position in the sister colony. The military officers are here to judge the Ribbon Boys but the ladies in the courtroom have come to judge the Attorney General. He casts a snarl toward the accused who appear to him to be disciples of 'that detestable religion' into which his infant daughters have been baptized by Father Therry.

'All rise' is called by the usher and the audience surge to their feet for the entrance of Chief Justice Francis Forbes. He is a little slight bodied man, fine featured with the aquiline nose of a thinker. At ten o'clock, the room is already an oven. The red bricks have stored the heat of the day overnight and the ventilation is not sufficient to disperse their radiant energy. Chief Justice Forbes takes his seat and immediately removes the sheep's fleece from the egg of his head. He rubs his dry itching scalp. Then, in deference to the ladies, he replaces the wig.

The charge is read aloud. It is convoluted English delivered in a Scots accent and entirely unintelligible to the Irish boys. The words you hear are your names and then the phrase, 'Not having the fear of God before their eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of

the devil'. While you are thinking about this, the murder of Greenwood is described in intricate detail that is repeated in every combination of so-and-so shooting and so-and-so aiding and abetting, and for an eternity it seems that the blessed overseer has been shot many times over until, with a noose of words, the boys are gradually and finally ensnared. You hear your own name spoken, 'that the said Ralph Entwistle [with] a certain pistol of the value of five shillings, then and there charged with gunpowder and certain leaden bullets and shot ... in his right hand ... held to against and upon the said John otherwise James Greenwood then and there feloniously, willfully and of his malice aforethought did shoot and discharge upon the left breast of him ... did strike, penetrate and wound giving to the said John otherwise James Greenwood diverse mortal wounds of the length of two inches each and of the depth of one inch each respectively, of which said mortal wounds the said John otherwise James Greenwood then and there did die.' Despite its graphic detail the audience remain stupefied by the language and utterly unable to respond.

You are asked for your plea, and you answer 'Not guilty'. Each of the boys follows your lead. Isaac Clements is then called to the pedestal and sworn as a witness. Faced by Kearney and Sheppard he finds it hard to remember the events. He tells the judge he cannot be sure that Kearney and Sheppard were armed, he thinks Webster and Gleeson followed the boys after the shooting. Clements explains he was at the stable some distance from the hut and heard three shots but did not see the shooting. The next witness, Edward Jones, did not see Greenwood shot. In defiance of the stony glare he receives from the boys, he adds that in his opinion Kearney shot the overseer. He saw Sheppard put on Greenwood's coat afterwards. This robbery of the dead causes a minor commotion in the gallery. The free man, Richard Havilland gives evidence about his stolen horse and identifies Gleeson, Gahan and you as being armed and at large. John Ward, Evernden's servant, saw you fire the shot that killed

Greenwood and he adds that there were more ribbon boys in the party than presently appear before the court. Thomas Mack, the next witness, was in the hut when Greenwood was shot. He provides a full account which condemns each of you in turn but he also adds that some of the boys were saying Greenwood 'had that owing to him for six months', and he thinks that perhaps revenge has been your intention.

I can find no evidence to support this notion, and I have had the luxury of prying into all of the police records, gaol entrance books and newspapers of your day. Commonsense tells me that if you had sought revenge upon Evernden you would have gone to his house at Kelso, you would not have waited nine months and you would not have taken a rabblement of men with you. Every convict hates the magistrate and many owe him for a flogging or cancelling their tickets. I can find no case in which Greenwood, either as witness or bounty hunter, led someone to the gallows. He was no William Cook. I conclude that the words Thomas Mack heard were the braggadocio of revolt. Greenwood had challenged your authority Ralph, tested your manhood with his masculine gesture of defiance. If you had not shot him you would have been diminished in the eyes of your boys. If Greenwood had prevailed, the liberation of the government servants and cooperation of the overseers who held the storeroom keys would have been jeopardised. The proof lies in your subsequent actions. The boys moved on to liberate the servants of every farm they passed through. They freed and feasted. That was your modus operandi, not murder or robbery but liberation and libation. Do you believe you were moved and seduced by the devil, Ralph?

When you rode out from Bartletts, there was no man left standing, just the stripped corpse of Greenwood. You went to Five Mile swamp to redistribute the arms and plan the next move. There was a surge of adrenalin running through the men. Patrick Sullivan was in charge of



the ammunition. Burke was the man for the horses. Thomas Mack organised the lookouts. James McNally, five foot of nothin' but wiry and strong from three years on the road works, kept the pressed men in order. The Irish among them recognised the familiar authority of violent revolt – an armed militia under one Captain, sworn to each other as much as to any cause, who enforces with blood their own reckless expedient laws. The pressed men began calling you the Ribbon Boys.

It made your heart grow strong to be at the head of such a gathering of men. The boys were in their natural element again. You swept north along the Fitzgerald Valley and across to King's Plains. You took the arms, servants and horses from all of the farms you passed and, aside from Greenwood, you met no resistance and so offered no violence. You went to Reeson's, Johnson's and then Belallie. Mr Johnson begged you to leave his farm in peace as his wife lay ill in bed. You left with Dom Daley without disturbing the poor woman. You went to Sir John Jamieson's farm where James Thorn was a regular receiver of stolen property. On this day he gave you the slip because he had a nose for Evernden's government reward. Thorn had been given twenty five lashes the previous year for receiving and so he chose the informer's path.

At Mr. Lambert's farm you took food and drink with James Driver and the overseer, Thomas Daley, who was a shipmate of Gahan. At the same time, some men rose on Ellis's farm which was along the track to Wellington Valley. They crossed the track to meet up with you on Kings Plains. James Green was among them. He was a Catholic hawker's boy from London who had been assigned to Captain Innes. He was a year younger than George Mole and had been transported for stealing a handkerchief worth twenty five shillings. The lad was caught with the linen secreted between his legs. Two years after he arrived in the colony, he found

himself amid your gang of rebels on King's Plains. He brought news that the Mounted Police were already searching the northern farms and along the road to Pretty Plains. James Thorn had made it into settlement on foot to raise the alarm.

The mounted police were eighteen men strong at settlement and commanded by Lieutenant Brown. He was the one who recommended Henry Castles for an absolute pardon for hunting Donohoe. Lieutenant Brown assembled a search party and took John Cronkane as a guide, forgetting that this Cork-born Ticket of Leave man had previously been reprimanded for giving false information to police. They scouted the farms to the north of settlement, Kellosiel, Saltram, Alloway Bank, but these settlers had been unmolested. Lieutenant Evernden took pride in personally hunting for bushrangers. He took two servants, Hugh Loughley and William Croughwell, to Bartlett's to begin collecting witnesses and evidence.

Once you knew the main route to the Wellington Valley was unsafe, you headed back along King's Plains to Robert Smith's farm. By the time you reached his huts, you were eighty men strong. Thomas Marsden, Samuel Marsden's nephew, was the manager of the property. When the Clergy and Schools Corporation failed, Thomas Marsden and Robert Smith, his overseer, brought up huge tracts of reserved land along the Belabula River. Jimmy Meehan's track passed nearby, heading north between Mount Lachlan and the Limestone Creek. You decided to rest here overnight, as the farm was twenty miles from settlement and you felt secure.

By evening, some of the Irish boys thought they had better free John Pedley from his tree. You took Kearney, Kenny, Gleeson, Gahan and Dunne and rode back to the bottom of Mount

Pleasant. When you arrived you could see Lieutenant Brown and the Mounted Police on foot about half way up the hill. Pedley was shouting ‘Halloa’ to them at the top of his lungs. The hill was too steep for their horses, so they had to leave their mounts tethered to some saplings at the bottom. Pedley was crying foul murder as they stumbled in their flashy kit up the slope. It was the easiest thing in the world for you and the boys to circle around the hill, approach the horses from the cover of trees, lift the reigns and lead their horses away. When you got back to Smith’s, the story had grown some legs and sounded much more daring a turn with the horse police than ever it was. Some said a mounted policeman was shot at King’s Plains.

The Ribbon Boys had murdered an overseer and stolen the horses of the mounted police. You had never seen Kearney and Gleeson in higher spirits. The timid and pressed among the eighty men feared Evernden’s retribution. One of the pressed servants, Thomas Dean, had been in good standing with Mr Ware and did not want to follow Gleeson and Dunne on the path of destruction. It was not until night fall, when the boys were well fed and in liquor, that he skulked away in the moonlight. He took a musket with him. Once he was missed, Thomas Mack was posted as sentry to keep the others in order.

Around midnight, three of Evernden’s men approached Mack and made their case for going back to Bartlett’s Farm. They were James McNally, William Stone and Edward Jones and they each took a musket as protection against the aborigines. Through the night the moonlight watch was throwing up ghastly shadows at Thomas Mack. Mr Lambert’s overseer, Thomas Daley, came to sit beside him and keep watch. Daley was from Limerick and Mack from Dublin. Mack, being a coppersmith, was not unlike the craftsmen who led the agrarian ribbon societies from Dublin, but to him the bush of the New Country was as alien and haunted as

any banshee cave in the old country. He could not imagine himself making a life among these men. Thomas Daley, a ploughman, had a wife and two children in Limerick and had ingratiated himself with Mr Lambert in the hopes of bringing them out. He had arrived on the same ship as Gahan and worked on the same farm as Driver, but in a twelve month he had been made overseer. Their conversation was interrupted by the sound of hooves retreating into the scrub. Patrick Burke had decided to return Evernden's gelding and Richard Havilland's mare to settlement for a handsome reward.

Thomas Mack would not fire upon Patrick Burke because he was one of the Ribbon Boys, but the sound of his leaving roused the others. Just then Patrick Sullivan, who must have been holding his own counsel in the dark, rode into the firelight on Mr Blackett's horse. It was laden with saddlebags and ammunition and he took off into the scrub. Thomas Mack mounted a nag to give chase but he soon found he was being shot at by Kearney and Gleeson. About three hundred yards along the track, Sullivan cut the straps and launched three hundred pounds of ammunition into the dust to make his getaway. Mack had no choice now but to follow on his heels. He kept riding until he reached Bartlett's Farm and delivered up a musket and a horse for the reward. Thomas Daley left in the other direction, on foot, with powder, ball and shot.

Sunrise the next morning was the most beautiful spectacle you had ever witnessed. Now that you were out of the shadow of Stowford you saw the ball of sun rise up over the misted mountains and turn back a green shawl across the darkened plains. The drought had broken and the grasses were bolting for hundreds of miles to the south west. Beside the Belabula River, the trees rippled with birdsong on that unfettered morning. It was like waking up on

the first day of the earth because you and the boys were free. Seventy men had stayed with you and were still free. Webster, Driver, Kenny, Sheppard and Dominic Daley stepped in when the others ran. They stayed true to their word.

Michael Palmer's farm was only eight miles from Stowford and about an hour after sunrise he awoke to the sound of your whole mob coming along his track. He was wise enough not to take up arms against you but came forward like a brave man to parley. Michael Kearney said you had come for tobacco, food and some blankets but that you intended him no harm as he was not a bad master. You did not conscript all of his men but left behind one shepherd so that he had someone to watch his sheep.

The Johnsons had headed into the settlement for protection that first night. Not many of the settlers were on their lands. The word was quickly passing from farm to farm. Evernden mustered all of the ticket of leave men which was not difficult once Greenwood's body was brought into settlement on a wagon. The Commandant, Major McPherson, relied upon Evernden for a briefing. A dispatch had come from Lieutenant Aubin of the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Newcastle, that Edward Baldwin, was thought to have crossed the country and to have 'secreted himself at some secret stock stations beyond Bathurst'. Aubin also reported on the depredations of a band of twelve armed banditti, absconders from Hunter River. Corporal Quigley had been out for six weeks on their trail. The Hunter River Banditti had a native woman as their guide and they were proving difficult to apprehend.

Evernden suggested that the rebels who attacked Bartlett's and out foxed the mounted police on Mount Pleasant had shown military cunning. He suspected there was the hand of an officer at work. This was the most appealing and least embarrassing hypothesis. Evernden told McPherson that he suspected the 'specials' at Wellington Valley who were yet to be dispersed to other penal stations. James Bushell spoke several languages and was a graduate of Trinity College Dublin where he picked up an affinity for the Irish. Reverend Peter Fenn, whom the *Sydney Monitor* described as a former army lieutenant, claimed to be from a very distinguished military family on the Isle of Jersey. Frederick Lahrbusch was a Prussian officer of the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment who had seen action in the Peninsular Wars and claimed to have guarded Napoleon on St. Helens. The police and military suspected and feared the intelligence and education of these special convicts. The message that Commandant McPherson sent to Sydney Town that day, was that troops would be needed as the prisoners in Bathurst and the Wellington Valley had risen under the direction of someone who had recently held a commission in the army.

On that second day, you and the boys would have been a very slow moving target for the military. You led a train of seventy men with only a dozen horses. They could barely carry all of the ammunition and firearms and the men were only able to walk as far west as Mr Thomas Icely's property at Mandurama Ponds. There you waited for news to come from Baldwin. Icely had nine and a half thousand acres at Limestone Creek and five hundred cultivated at Mandurama. You rounded up thirty seven government servants, among them a carpenter, a sawyer and a groom. It was like a small town and there were plenty of stores and beef and mutton to roast. The overseer was a free Scott called John Coxon. He was the same age as Kearney but only a slight young gentleman and not able to stand in your way. The men feasted.

The Hunter River Banditti were several days journey behind you. Bowen had robbed John Rotten on Liverpool Plains the same day that your boys walked off Stowford. It would take the Hunter River Banditti several days to reach Bathurst. Meanwhile, the feast at Mandurama was like Christmas dinner but this time the Ribbon Boys did not drink with the pressed men. It was Isaac Clements who suggested that you return to Hare Castle with him. You needed horses and a safe place to camp. There was a brick barn at Hare Castle and Clements said you could keep the men secure overnight there. So you all walked back to the Fitzgerald Valley.

It was a moonlit evening by the time the meandering men reached Hare Castle. Clements made the barn ready and others lit a fire to keep watch. You and the boys were afraid that the pressed government men would run that night as they had the night before. You had not planned on being their gaolers. Plenty had a grievance, but few would take up arms against their masters unless they were pressed. Plenty of them would pillage and eat and drink, but few would to fight. Victor Hugo, commenting upon the uprisings that were happening in Paris in July 1830, said that revolt was a thing of the gut and insurrection was born of the spirit. That was the difference between the Ribbon Boys and the government servants you had pressed. You and the Ribbon Boys could not go back into servitude once you had tasted freedom, but this train of government men were only interested in food, drink and the reward. They were unwieldy to protect on the road and treacherous when resting up. It made you nervous.

While Clements secured the pressed men in the barn, the Ribbon Boys held a counsel. The arguments went well into the night. Kenny, Driver, Webster and Daley wanted to get shut of the pressed men but Kearney and Gleeson feared they would betray you and fetch the police. There were only a few that Gahan said he could trust and his squabbles with the others were beginning to turn into dangerous fights. Thomas Dunne suggested that you should leave the pressed men locked in the barn and split up to confuse the trackers or any who might follow. This was agreed upon at midnight.

The government servants were resting on beds of straw, full of drink and sleeping off the feasting. The barn door was barred. You told Clements not to leave the barn or allow any man to escape before he heard cock crow, but after that they were free to bolt or to wander back to their masters. Thirteen of you boys, all sworn one to another, mounted the best of the horses and took as much of the ammunition and arms as you could carry. Kearney, Dunn and Sheppard rode on to the Campbell River to find out if the servants of Thomas Arkell had any word of the Hunter River boys passing through on their way west. You and the ten remaining rode south west until you reached Armstrong's at Reedy Swamp.

Isaac Clements walked in to settlement the next day with his servants John Ashley and Thomas Hunter. The two servants went straight to the magistrate and accompanied Thomas Evernden on patrol the following day as guides. He was gone from the settlement six days, but never crossed your tracks. The only plans Hunter and Ashley would have overheard on those first days were about travelling to the Wellington Valley. When he arrived there Evernden would have found two of the 'specials' tucked up nice and safe by Mr Maxwell,



and the third, Reverend Peter Fenn missing. He had been removed to Sydney Town on September 14<sup>th</sup> , nine days before the insurrection.

Edward Slingsby, Michael Lynch and Denis O'Brien had been camping at Armstrong's on Reedy Swamp. They had been joined there by Martin Grady a stockman from Evernden's outstation who had gone to work for Magistrate McKenzie. Evernden already had a warrant out on Grady for cattle stealing. Slingsby could not believe that the escape plan was already underway. He underestimated you Ralph and your ability to lead the men. Now he was in a fever to join the party. Michael Lynch was relatively free to roam on a Certificate of Freedom. Denis O'Brien was a bolter and a true ribbonman, always game for retribution. He wanted to free his shipmate John Cronan, who was a shepherd at Brown's property on Dunn's Plains, and had complained about the overseers. O'Brien wanted to serve out justice, just as the Ribbon Boys had served Greenwood.

It was a bright crisp Sunday morning when you arrived at Dunn's Plains. Captain John Brown was living on his property, Brownlea, with his wife and three small children. They had two female servants. Two old Catholic souls, Pat and Mary Hopkins, lived on the farm as tenants. It was a pretty homestead on sixty cleared acres with a small herd of cattle and seven hundred sheep. Nearby was another property, Wallace Farm. It had eighty cleared acres under seed and about the same number of stock. This is where John Cronan had been assigned. It was run by George Brown with two overseers, Rob Oreston and William Goulding. Both were free Protestant men and had been in the colony no longer than you, Ralph. Captain Brown traded men back and forth across the farms so you rode onto Brownlea in search of Oreston and Goulding.

The first hut you came to was the tenant's dwelling. Pat Hopkins told you that the overseers were at Brownlea that morning and he kept you talking while old Mary Hopkins slipped out the back door and walked across the hill to the homestead to warn the Captain. Brown sent his overseers out of harm's way. Then he hid his keg of rum beneath a table cloth in the garden. Old Mary, Mrs. Sarah Brown, a female guest and two female servants settled around the disguised keg with their needlework.

That is where you found them. O'Brien was enraged to discover the overseers had flown. So prepared were the boys to do some violence, they stormed through the homestead smashing the chairs and tables to sticks and blasting the porcelain crockery to smithereens. Their frenzy was a 'terrible gaiety' The boys splintered the wardrobes and threw out the clothes. You donned a fine linen shirt and ordered the ladies to sew ribbons of white India lace around the brim of your hat. It reminded you of a song your mother had been fond of, 'Were I sold on Indian soil, soon as the burning day was closed, I could mock the sultry toil, when on my charmer's breast reposed.' Slingsby knew it from the opera. He ransacked the house to find a gown and squeezed himself into one of royal blue satin. The effect was so alarming that the others followed the style and soon the slightest of the boys were cavorting in women's garments. Gleeson told the Captain 'This is how a fine old time is celebrated in Tipperary!'

Mary Hopkins had seen it before and tried to placate the boys with her smooth Irish brogue but it only encouraged the lads to play the fool. The Captain's stores were bulging with bags of wheat yet the hungry servants had been clemmed. O'Brien dragged the bags into the yard

and split them open with a sword. Kenny and Daley threw the grain across the hard-baked clay for a dance floor. You took Slingsby in your arms and whirled him around as if you were at a country dance. He roared out the song to his heart's content, 'And I would love you all the day, every night would kiss and play, if with me you'd fondly stray ... over the hills and far away!' The womenfolk were mortified as it was Sunday and the pleasure of the dance was obscene to their bulging Protestant eyes.

After the mad frolic, Driver and Webster brought out the Captain's mare, a pistol, a musket and two saddles. Mary Hopkins begged you not to visit her husband Patrick again for such a high time would surely kill him and she had no stimulant in the house for his heart. You promised not go in that direction. Barely moments after you had left, a wagon arrived to fetch Mary Hopkins. She was hoisted up into a nest of straw and handed a dented saucepan, slopping with spirits with which to revive her husband.

Although the Ribbon Boys had done no murder at Brownlea, the dance had freed your anger. O'Brien led you on to Samson Stallwell Sealy's property, which he knew well. Sealy was home at the time and well known to the Catholic boys, so Kenny and Daley relieved him of a saddle, a bridle, some gun powder and a powder flask. You were not pressing the servants but some rode along with you.

At sunset on Sunday evening, you went on to Watson Steele's farm. It was darkening around seven o'clock. Kenny took a horse with its saddle and bridle, and you found in the house a very fancy double barrelled gun. You could afford to be fussy as you had gathered so many

arms. It was a matter of selecting the best. The boys knew that soon they would be fighting the mounted police, and the selection of arms and ammunition became a more serious matter. Evernden would never forgive the murder of Greenwood and the injury to his men. He was a fair ferret for the hunt. A dozen men on horseback could outrun the mounted police once you got beyond Dunn's Plains but Evernden would be hard on your heels until then.

The Ribbon Boys sheltered for the night on McKenzie's farm at Three Brothers along the old Lachlan road. Magistrate McKenzie fed his servants fly blown meat and skimmed on their rations of soap and blankets, so there were plenty of hutkeepers who were willing to harbour you and the boys. McKenzie was not at home when you called, so you broke open the storeroom for the servants and took what you needed.

You thought Evernden and the mounted police were your greatest foes, but on that very day Captain Walpole had received orders to lead a detachment of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment to Bathurst. Until that time the longest forced march in the colony had been from Castle Hill to Toongabbie in the 1804 rebellion. The military set out from Sydney Town on Monday September 27<sup>th</sup>. Early that morning, Sampson Sealy and Watson Steel rode in to the Bathurst settlement from Dunn's Plains. Captain Brown had also arrived with his wife and children.

Commandant McPherson received the settler's petitions but advised them that no military protection could be given so far from settlement. They were told to relocate to Bathurst where, in due time, grants of up to three hundred and twenty acres might be made available to them. This did not solve the Commandant's immediate problem. With a garrison of only

twenty six foot soldiers, McPherson did not have the military strength to defend the settlers. He could not wait for Walpole to arrive. He sent Lieutenant Brown and his party of mounted police to scout the cattle tracks that ran south from the Fitzgerald Valley. A rider with a despatch was sent to Lieutenant Macalister to put the magistrates of Argyle County on their guard.

By Monday afternoon, Evernden had still not returned from patrol with his constables. A call for assistance came in from Magistrate McKenzie's Three Brothers property where the Ribbon Boys had sheltered overnight. Commandant McPherson could not gather enough constables or mounted troopers to send out. He had to call a public meeting. At four o'clock the settlers and ticket of leave men gathered in the court house. Greenwood's corpse lay in the hospital not two hundred yards away and McPherson called for armed volunteers to bring in the Ribbon Boys so they might face justice. The members of the Bathurst Hunt Club, who had been so active against the aborigines during Governor Brisbane's months of martial law, were growing old. They sent along substitutes to form a vigilante posse.

Some of the Australian settlers' sons were among the volunteers. William Henry Suttor was scarcely twenty one, the same age as Kenny. His brother Charles was the same age as Kearney and Sheppard but much less well travelled. These were the bravest men the district could muster against you. John Neville was a convict stockman from John McHenry's farm on the Brisbane Valley, John Fitzsimmons was Reverend Marsden's representative, and Thomas Evans was the servant of James Hassall. These men were drafted convicts and could not lead the expedition. John Pollet was a Ticket of Leave farmer keen to protect his stock at Reedy Creek but already fifty seven years of age and living comfortably on the Bathurst

Plains. John Levingston was a free settler who had been Mr Campbell's overseer, but like George Kable, the Australian born settler, he now raised a young family and would not be leader. George Cheshire and David Leighton were the freeborn sons of convicts and had farms, wives and children that depended upon them. Who would lead the party? The volunteers voted the younger Suttor as their Captain and Commandant McPherson approved the choice.

The riders mounted their horses and bid farewell to their families. William Suttor made promises to the womenfolk that they would all return unharmed. Charles Suttor was carefully draped in his father's great coat as if the oversized cloth had power to deflect bullets. Just as they were about to leave, a rider came in to say the Ribbon Boys were at Charlton on the Campbell River. Thomas Arkell, an old sailor who had arrived in the colony before the last Irish insurrection, lived there with a young Currency Lass and her two little girls. The volunteers set off through Queen Charlotte's Vale.

You did not intend to rob Thomas Arkell who had always been a kind and fair master, nor to molest women or endanger children. The old sea captain had been Government Stockman in the twenties and many of the boys had worked for him on his outstations, Mulgunnia and Copperhania, in the Abercrombie. You went to Charlton to meet up with Michael Kearney, John Sheppard and Thomas Dunn. It was a meeting place for the Ribbon Boys and a handful of Australian born settlers' sons, not of the gentlemanly variety. These were the Australian youths who had been raised with cattle thieves as companions, the boys Governor Darling had referred to as being lured by the Arts. They put you wise to the movements of the Hunter River Banditti. Edward Bowen and his seven men had held up James Walker's property

Wallerawang thirty miles east and were following Baldwin's trail north west to the Cudgegong River.

When you left Charlton, four of the Australians rode with you as guides. You headed along the Campbell River. For the first mile you rode in the river so as to leave no tracks. You reached Arkell's outstation Mulgunnia by early afternoon and stopped to partake of some of Arkell's stores. Then the Australians led you along a small winding creek until you came to a rocky gorge that provided shelter for the horses, fresh water and a place to light a campfire without the smoke being observed. Your group had swelled to twenty men and they took as their leaders you, Kearney, Gleeson and Sheppard. Webster, Dunne and Daley were the older men of the pack but lacked the internal fire to lead such a volatile collection of men.

There were towering grey stone cliffs all around your camp. The creek ran through the breast-heel of a limestone cave. The roof was dimpled like the top of a hag's mouth and a foul breath from bat droppings kept the boys at bay. You came from the shire of the Pendle Witches, Ralph, and believed in the power of the hag stones farmers built beside their barns to prevent the devil riding away with the horses. You enlisted Slingsby and Kenny, Daley and Driver to build two cairns of stones at the mouth of the stone arches beside the main cave. On the top of each you placed a holey dollar and some hollow agate stones you found in the creek. With these protections in place, the horses were settled beneath one stone archway and the boys crawled into the other hollow for shelter against the weather for the night.

Before dawn the next morning, the birds were waking you. You dug your head deeper into a great coat to stop the sound of a creature you called the 'devil brid'. It sang in the dark in this queer place, before the sun warmed it from its nest or croft. You thought it a wicked creature to flaunt the darkness before even God had arrived to bless the place with his first ray of light. There was no lark or cock crow in the eerie emptiness of the Australian bush. Just the 'devil brid' cheeking you, spreading secrets and eavesdropping, daring you to rise before light and risk a dance with Satan in this God forsaken hour. It could wag its tail in your face but nothing would move you and the boys from this burrow.

You had slept at the entrance of the archway covered by a greatcoat you had stolen from Brownlea. A slit of sunlight cut a line across the bottom of your eye lids. You were surrounded by a score of men, snoring in their dreams, and yet you were alone. You wondered what dawn would have felt like to a judge rolling over his fat housekeeper, or to a gentleman teetering on the bones of his porcelain wife, or to the lags at Emu Plains with their tawdry lovers, their faces stiff with theatre paint. In these moments before full light, they all had the secret freedom to embrace another human being. You had nothing. Perhaps that is why you always liked the weight and feel of cloth against your skin. Used clothing always held the smell of someone, a kind of intimacy. You curled into Captain Brown's great coat. His wife's satin gown rested against your breast.

It was not until dawn that Suttor's volunteer cavalry came splashing across the narrow Campbell River and up to the homestead at Charlton. There they took breakfast and quizzed Thomas Arkell about the path you and the boys had taken. Sensing their inexperience, he decided to act as guide and took his ticket of leave man, Yates, along for protection. For the



first couple of hours they could find no tracks, but William Suttor saw two aboriginals he recognised crossing the plain. They had been christened by Reverend Thomas Hassall and understood the King's English. By their arts, the volunteers were able to track you to Arkell's outstation, Mulgunnia. From there the natives followed the Burrangylong River. They knew it to be the home to the lizard fish Gurangatch because the water there was poisoned from tincture of bark and smelled foul. For fear of the creature, they led the volunteers to higher ground along the cliffs that overlooked the creek.

By late afternoon, you had moved camp to a rocky gorge further down the creek leaving the horses safely stabled in the stone arches. Your plan for the morrow was to head across to Copperhania down to the Abercrombie River and then over to the Lachlan River. Some of the boys had served in their county militias and this mountain hideaway seemed like a training camp to them. The Irish and English militias were run by the Protestants so the secret societies ran training of their own. You set up a row of rounded river stones on the wall of the gully to serve as heads for target practice. Gahan was a crack shot and he and Kearney, Gleeson, Sheppard and Kenny gave the others instruction on loading and firing the muskets. You traded your five shilling pistol for Watson Steele's double barrel gun and practiced how to use it.

Meanwhile, Dom Daley was your cook and Tom Dunne the slaughter man. Martin Grady had taken a spring lamb from Mulgunnia but he would not let Dunne have it for the pot. Lynch went riding and brought back a wallaroo. Sophia Millege, Thomas Arkell's housekeeper, had given the boys five loaves of damper the day before. There was a cask of Arkell's rum for after supper but the boys were not yet in liquor. Their ears were sharp to every sound of the

foreign bush around them. The Irish had developed a mortal fear of the lizards which resembled snakes with razor sharp claws. They were plentiful among the rocky crevices. While they took pot shots at these frightful dragons, the kingfishers were cackling overhead like lunatics. Michael took command of the arms. All of the muskets and pistols were counted and stood in the centre of the camp with the ammunition. The air was humid and still. From this narrow gorge, you had no warning of the storm that was about to break upon you.

William Suttor and his party came upon your camp about an hour before sunset. The aboriginal trackers led the party along the ridges. The settlers were none were the wiser about the existence of the caves that the natives feared most. Suttor ordered that the horses be left with the aborigines near the summit of the hill and the volunteers concealed themselves on top of the cliff above the camp. Storm clouds had been gathering from the west and the old hands were afraid of the way the winds turned and buffeted the trees. If it rained their powder would be wet. It took valuable time for the volunteers to discuss the situation and decide on what to do. There were disagreements in the group. Some wanted a frontal attack but the older wiser heads wanted to wait until dark when you would be eating supper and drinking. Others wanted to wait until three o'clock in the morning when all would be asleep. Fortunately for you, these better suggestions came from the government servants and so they were ignored by the gentlemen.

The ticket of leave men could see how well armed you were and had themselves experienced your hunger and desperation. They knew it would not be an easy capture. The young gentlemen thought it would be shooting fish in a barrel. Suttor decided upon an immediate

frontal attack. A show of force. From where he stood, you seemed to be trapped in a deep declivity and the volunteers had the upper hand. Despite the lateness of the hour, William sent his brother Charles, with two men, around behind your camp to cut off a retreat. Spatters of rain had made the stones slick. As the main party were descending through the scrub, one of the men kicked a stone and it tumbled down to the valley floor.

Dominic Daley called ‘Halloa!’ in case it was James Green returning from the stable archway. At the same time, the remaining Ribbon Boys sprang to the trees along the creek to take cover. Yates and Thomas Arkell rushed in upon the camp and seized the ammunition and your stand of arms. No one among the volunteers would follow them into the middle. Arkell yelled to Suttor to join them and entreated the servants to come into the gully and take your saddles, bridles and powder. But none of the dozen vigilantes would venture down any further to face your guns and they could not fire at you without endangering the old man and his servant. Arkell and Yates could not defend their position alone and were forced to retreat, firing randomly at your boys in the scrub to cover their backs.

Slingsby, running along the water back toward the caves, felt a ball burn into this thigh. He raised his hands and a ball took off his right index finger. He dropped in his tracks. His nostrils, accustomed to the smell of eucalypt and gunpowder, flared to the older more familiar scent of his own blood. The smell rose over him like a tide and it was the same river of suffering that ran through his childhood in Limerick, through the rotting timbers of the hulk in Cork Harbour, through the roots of the flogging tree on Mount York. The smell was tart and irresistible, almost like rough red wine. The ground was littered with leaves of russet

brown and grey and soft as a widow's weeds. Slingsby collapsed headlong into them and passed out.

Musket fire spat through the air. The boys reclaimed the camp and took to their arms. Kearney began to shout at them to identify their marks as they had practiced. You counted a dozen tongues of flame as the ribbon boys fired from the shelter of boulders and fallen trees. White gun smoke wreathed the gully. Suttor's volunteers were blasting away at the tree tops, too afraid of ambush to descend deeper into the gully but too far out of range to make their shots count.

Suttor thought he saw the white of cockatoo feathers flittering through the trees. They were not feathers but ribbons. Through the bars of mottled trees he saw you Ralph, with the streamers flying from your hat, leading a charge up the gully. A few hundred yards gained, you took to the shelter of the casuarinas and levelled your gun in the crooked elbow of a tree. Your head was cocked to one side and the white ribbons screeched rebellion. It brought a magic merriment to the edge of your nerves. Not being able to see your assailants, you called the names of the mounted police and baited them to come down into the gully. You called upon magistrate Evernden as you were sure he would be there to lead the attack. 'Tak' thy time and pick 'em off,' you called as the boys took up their new positions.

O'Brien was shot in the arm but Driver helped him to the rear of your line where the less able marksmen reloaded and passed back the muskets. You advanced up the walls of the gully, driving back the attackers. There were twenty ribbon boys to their dozen. Kearney called on

the boys to go 'round and outflank them, but the walls were too steep. The air was filled with the buzzing dots of blackness that presage nightfall. Thunder underscored the explosion of musket fire.

William Suttor and his volunteers were running out of ammunition and his brother was entirely cut off behind the camp. Suttor feigned an attack. He and his men rushed at five of your boys in a sort of charge, waving their guns in the air. The spectacle was enough to drive your boys back from their positions but it was only temporary. Suttor took to his heels and you chased the whole band of them for a hundred yards up the side of the hill. Charles Suttor was the last to escape the gully and he had to scale a steep rise as balls struck fire from the rocks.

James Green, who had ridden pillion with the boys since King's Plains, had been keeping watch on your horses in the stable arch. They were neighing and restless in response to the sound of other horses over the ridge. Green clambered over to where Suttor had hidden the volunteers' horses. He told the aborigines to bring them forward so that Suttor and his band could escape. He told William Suttor that he had been pressed by the bushrangers and that he was afraid of the storm and of the battle. Suttor and the vigilante posse took James Green with them. It was pitch black and pouring rain as they picked their way along the track back to Mulgunnia.

You stumbled along the creek looking for Slingsby in the darkness. Behind you the boys were already celebrating their victory, flashes of lightening glizzen over the treetops and their

mud-spattered heads. They decided to move all of their belongings back over the hill to the stone arches where they had been safe the previous night. Big splotches of rain thudded into Slingsby's prone body. The puddles on his torn trousers were beet red. You prodded him with the butt of your gun and his leg flinched. He slid his foot out of the shadows and you saw the skin was ghostly pale. 'We are bones,' he said to you, 'already bones.' You tore away the cloth from the wound and breathed a sigh to see that it was only flesh deep. No bones protruded, he would live. You bound it with a strip of your linen shirt and hoisted Slingsby up onto his feet. His hand oozed horribly and you had to stop the blood with a wad of padding you had kept for cleaning the muskets. Using your shot gun as a stick, you walked him toward the mouth of the mother cave. The boys could go over the bridge or around the side track to the stable arch, but you needed shelter and Slingsby could not walk far.

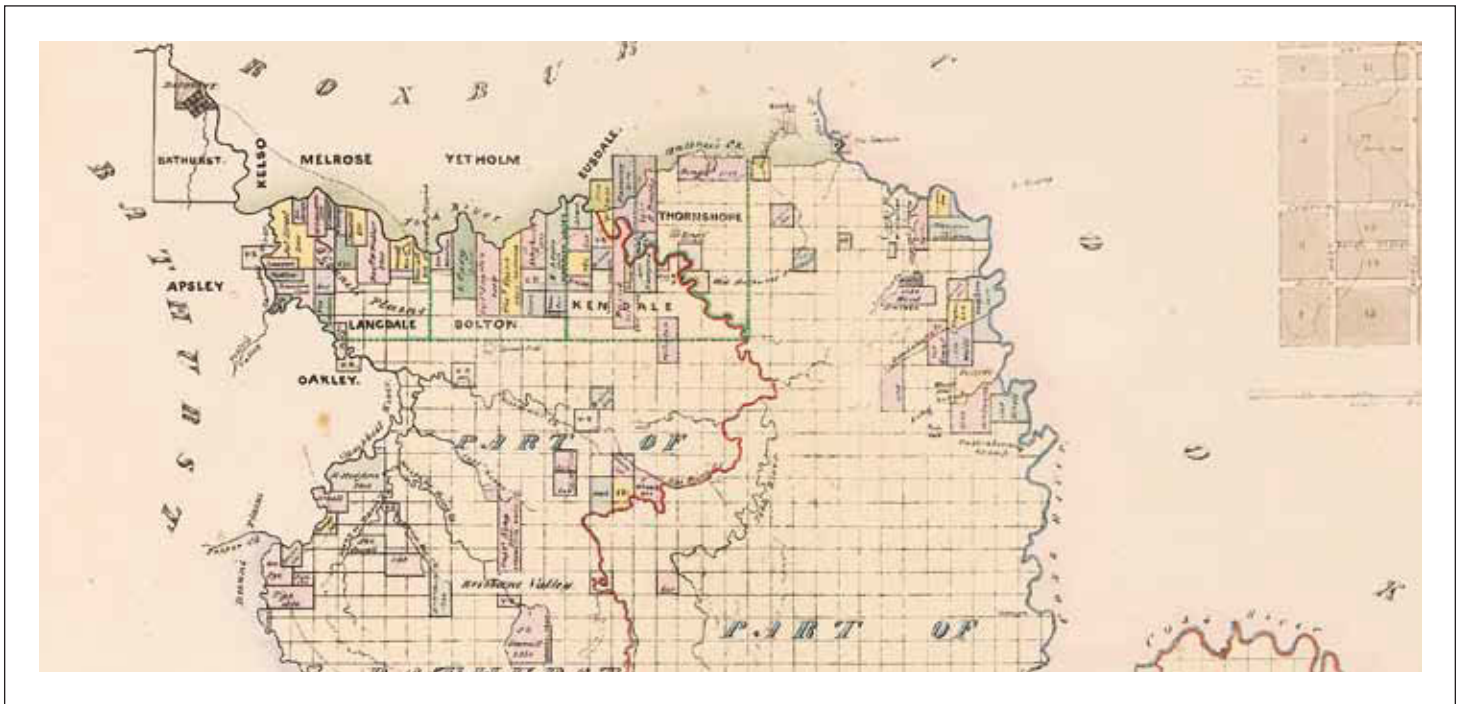
Inside the lip of the cave you could feel your boots sinking into the soft floor. Slingsby rested against a curled crustacean rock that seemed to guard the narrow spit of sand. There an assortment of craybacks, like petrified soldiers, settled in the shadows. You had no thought of the creek rising even though the rain was now teaming down outside. You fetched dry driftwood and leaves and sprinkled the debris with powder from your flask. Then you shot into the pyre to ignite it. The blast filled the cave with a roar as if another monster had awoken. The light cast mighty shadows on the dimpled roof. You took off your hat and boots and sank into the bed of sand. The victory was still running over and over in your head – the shout from Daley that sent iron into your veins, the smell of the gunpowder and flash of fire, the feigned charge from the ridge and even swifter retreat, the sight of Suttor scrambling up the rocks. Only two boys injured, none taken. Slingsby looked pitiful in the flickering light. He was rolling from side to side in the dirt and grasping at his leg. You tore the cloth roughly from his loins. The blood had barely soaked through the bandage but he was shaking and blue

with the cold. The corpse of Surgeon McKerrow presented itself in Slingsby's thin wet body. You dragged him to the fire, stripped him naked, tore off your greatcoat, shirt and trousers and clasped him to your breast. His whimpering had an odd compulsive effect upon your blood. His nakedness raised the blush to your face but your head was suddenly incredibly hot and pounding as if the waters of the cave had risen around you. 'I was running away,' he said, 'when the fight came. They should have shot me in the head.' You gagged his mouth with your blackened hand but you could not bear to see the weakness in his eyes. It was another kind of power, his weakness, it was commanding you, chaining you to him. You thought of Kirkman and of how he chained you by promises and flattery. Slingsby's hand reached down to move your sticky cock from his thigh but you snatched his wrist and twisted him upon his face and thrust your shaft into his buttocks. It was like a punishment for you both this grinding of flesh and bone. He groaned and squealed beneath you but you did not know pleasure from pain as the spirit rushed out of you like a torrent. The howling in your head sucked up a cry from the very soles of your feet and exploded in sound that ricocheted off the cave walls. You did not speak to Slingsby nor look into his face. Through the long night you did this act again and again, flicking aside the blood and cack and semen that were the fluid proof of this bestial thing that had control of you.

The next morning you walked over the bridge to the camp and ordered Grady and Lynch to fetch Slingsby. O'Brien's arm was in a sling. You singled out the three men who would remain in the caves with your plant of ammunition and nurse the injured while you and the boys travelled further west to find a better refuge. You could not face Slingsby, did not wait until he was brought back, but you felt stronger for it.







Map of the County of Westmoreland (<http://nla.map-rra8-s9> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 8) (excerpt)

## Chapter 7

### *Court House, Bathurst Settlement, Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October 1830.*

This is not the first time that the Supreme Court has sat outside of Sydney Town. Justice Dowling has taken the court to Maitland twice. He claims, ‘by thus bringing justice to the very doors of the settlers great loss of time must be saved, a serious expense to the Country averted and a powerful check on local crime established.’ Interesting to note his priorities in this are time, expense and lastly crime restraint. In the interests of time and money, only the charges that led to capital punishments were followed through to trial. In your case Ralph, only one count of murder and a couple of counts of robbery were enough to doom your whole gang. There was no need to call witnesses for each of your transgressions or even table them. Most of the landowners you visited did not prosecute. This led to a myopic view of the causes of your insurrection.

The Supreme Court has such a backlog of felonies that they only hear the substantiated charges that are guaranteed to bring a swift and probably fatal result. On this second day of court, for example, it is only necessary for Driver, Daley, Webster and Kenny to appear to face the outstanding charges of robbery. The last of the witnesses have just given their evidence about the theft of Evernden’s gelding and the seemingly trivial robbery of horses, bridles and saddles from three farms. Private John Connors testified that he took Captain Steele’s double barreled gun from your hands at the final capture. But your sins are much greater than robbery, aren’t they Ralph? This is why the courtroom is filling up at the end of the proceedings with settlers who want to hear the sentencing. The assembled military seek legal retribution for their murdered mounted policemen.

At four o'clock you are brought back into the court room alongside Kearney, Sheppard, Dunne and Gahan. Driver, Daley, Webster and Kenny are already crammed into the dock and so you must stand in front. There are women in the gallery with baskets of fruit and vegetables, as it is market day. This makes you laugh at the prospect of merely being pilloried or put in stocks. The constable smacks you behind the ear. It is disconcerting for the ladies to see a doomed man grinning. In the chairs beside the witness stand, you see Captains Sampson Sealy, Watson Steele and John Brown. They have all spoken about you. Watson Augustus Steele testified that although he was put in bodily fear, no violence was offered to him, no bad language and no bad conduct. He was not the only settler to speak fairly of you and the boys. Your conduct was not mob violence or bushranger bravado. It seems these men recognised that you kept the men in check and sought the arms and supplies you needed without doing violence to any person. Mr Palmer and the Johnsons said the same of you. Perhaps some of the settlers were sympathetic to your cause and knew that their neighbour flogged their men, sold their rations and overworked and underfed them. As if their sympathy could lessen the inevitable sentence or make the noose of satin rather than Kurrajong bark. The judge is wearing a black cloth upon his wig.

William and Charles Suttor enter the courtroom to be seated in the front row. This makes the ladies smile. You will not read it, but the *Sydney Monitor* has published a poem about their ignoble retreat. How does it go? 'Suttor and Suttor strove, but strove in vain – thought on their home, and sigh'd for peace again! Haply then, Minerva thus whisper'd in his ear, "Cease, cease, my son! This motley foe, I fear, has pluck and prowess enough to scar Darling himself, were he inclined for war! Where are the red-coats? Sure, by Mars, they are paid! Besides, your shot's expended I'm afraid.'

The farce began before Suttor made his retreat. It began with Captain Walpole and his forced march. A dozen lobsters, marching in file could not find your tracks. A soldier's kit weighed twenty pounds with his musket, bayonet, powder and shot, flask and knapsack. The brass teeth of the pricker bit into the back of his calf as he trudged. Swaddled in wool and canvas in the early summer heat, his silk kerchief about his neck swelled with sweat and choked him as he panted up the hills and stumbled down the gullies. The regiment looked fine on parade and no one would doubt their courage but this New Country could not be held by foot soldiers. The Governor admitted this within ten days of issuing the order.

The newspapers reported that Captain Walpole and his troops departed from Sydney Town on Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> of September. No doubt the splendid departure was staged for the gratification of the Governor and citizens but the forced march, for which the foot regiments were famous, would have been maintained for only the first two or three days of the journey. It would take them two hundred and thirty eight miles were it to terminate at the Wellington Valley as first intended, but the pace could only be kept up for two or three days at a time. Then rest days were needed for the men and the accompanying horses. A foot soldier carries more weight than the double irons they shackle onto the prisoners. He can average four miles per hour with this weight over one or two days on flat terrain. The 39<sup>th</sup> had first to mount the Blue Mountains, snake around the ridges, ascend the Big Hill then descend the precipice, ford two rivers, defeat the Fish River Hill and cross the eight mile swamp just to reach the Bathurst Plains.

Captain Walpole set the pace at the rate his horse could walk, thirty miles in one day over level ground. This took the troops to Emu Ferry by sunset on the first day. Captain Walpole took on supplies. The next day, marching before light, they climbed for an hour over the flat cobbler's rocks of Lapstone Hill and trudged the stump-riddled six mile road to Springwood. Here the station corporal took care of Captain Walpole's horse while his wife offered the officer breakfast in their bark house. There was no forage under the tall ironbarks, but the horses were given a quart of corn a piece. The soldiers were still in high spirits for the adventure broke the monotony of guard duty and the constricted round of duties they faced in Sydney Town and at Emu Plains.

From Springwood, the atmosphere drew chillier the higher they climbed. They moved from the dappled shade of high ironbark trees to the tangled scrub of honeysuckle, spiky *Telopea* and box eucalypt. Here, at a cairn of large stones where the early botanist, Mr Caley, was repulsed by the impenetrable mountains, a solitary traveller rested by the spring and watered his horse. Captain Walpole did not permit unscheduled stops. It was eighteen miles walk to the Weatherboard hut at the top of Jameson's Valley, and even in summer the mist covered the King's Tableland in white damask. Two miles off the road, Campbell's Cataract falls hundreds of feet to the Valley floor, but the soldiers had no time and no permission to digress. They reached the Weatherboard Hut by nightfall and were rewarded by spirits, roasted mutton and the company of other soldiers. The tents were pitched and the wagon, bringing Captain Walpole's camp bed, desk and papers, arrived hours later in the dark. This was the same day that Commandant McPherson had held the public meeting in Bathurst and Suttor's volunteers set out for Charlton.

The next day, Tuesday September 28<sup>th</sup>, the march began again before sunrise. The troops descended Jameson's Valley and prepared for the final climb of the mountains, the Big Hill they had heard most about. The soil of the valley was wet and peaty. A shower of rain could have bogged the Captain's horse up to the girths, but by sunrise, thin bands of cirrus cloud streamed high above the trees, carrying away the threat of rain. The crispness was better for marching than the heat of the plains and the men made good time to the Pulpit Hill, across Blackheath and to the ridge that is the height of Mount York. The bluff and bravado of the Sydney Town farewell wore thin as the troops trudged in the humid air through the tangled reaches of the mountains.

At a place known as One Tree Hill, a stockade of slab huts had been erected for the road working gangs. The road is as forked as the flogging tree that stands at the intersection. The original path follows Cox's Road down to Collett's Inn, requiring a steep descent and a hazardous river crossing before the troops can rest. Here Number 9 Road Party, under the supervision of the Ticket of Leave overseer, John Skeen, commands the descent. The horses of settlers are frequently frightened when the convicts rattle their chains. This upsets the riders and sometimes the oxen tip their loads over the edge of the narrow path. The goods which fall are reclaimed by the convicts. Cattle and sheep are often found butchered by the work parties. Skeen has erected a dwelling for his wife, Amelia Colletts beside the road and there plays host to drinking and carousing travellers. The other path at the top of One Tree Hill is toward Major Thomas Mitchell's latest venture at a new line of road that he calls the Victoria Pass. Even without official sanction, the work has begun. There were over eighty convicts grubbing stumps and rolling trees off the side of the pass, another forty or so quarrying stone, and five or six masons chiselling the blocks into bridges.

Most of the foot soldiers had not seen the lands west of this range and the vision from Mount York broke upon them as both splendid and terrifying. The descent was perilous and the bones of beasts and scattered ribs of wrecked carts littered the precipice. Captain Walpole chose to take Cox's Road as it was the shortest route for the foot soldiers. His wagon went down Lockyer's descent further to the east. Cox's Road was only wide enough for the soldiers to march two abreast. Rocks overhung the narrow passages and roots and slips of rubble made each footfall treacherous. Mercifully, the descent on foot took less than an hour. A horizontal forest of dead trees had been discarded at the bottom of the mountain over the past fifteen years – each log, having been felled and chained to the back of the oxen cart as a brake during the dreadful descent.

When Captain Walpole reached the Vale of Clywdd, he sent the troops on ahead and cantered two miles further to The Golden Fleece, there to wait while the wagon was brought safely down. The Valley is so steeply bordered by mountains on three sides that one side seems always in darkness either due to the shadow of dawn or dusk and for only an hour each day, when the sun is directly overhead, the sun shines unhampered into the Valley. This was the brief window Captain Walpole set his breakfast table before. The Golden Fleece was renowned for hospitality. Mine Host may have been less welcoming to Major Mitchell as the new Victoria Pass would eventually threaten his livelihood, but Captain Walpole by his stature and the importance of his mission, was feted. The colonial table held everything an Englishman expects of breakfast – bacon, eggs, pancakes, boiled potatoes, porridge and creamy milk, augmented with local produce and game such as dried cod, cold pressed duck, and fried bream fish. Walpole washed it down with quantities of imported tea and sugar. Whatever had caused the insurgency, Walpole was sure, it was not for the want of excellent food in the New Country. Unbeknown to the Captain, he was only ten miles away from

Wallerawang, where Edward Bowen and his gang had just ransacked James Walker's stores and rustled his cattle.

The foot soldiers meanwhile pressed on to Cox's River Depot along the six mile swampy terrain of the Vale where the low rocky flats of the River Lett fall into Cox's River. Crossing at the ford of this small tributary is made dangerous by the unexpected holes that have been scooped out by the granite stones during flooding. The desiccated wreckage of past bridges bears out the treachery of the swollen stream. Two hours later, it proved even more hazardous to the officer's horse and the bullocks with the cart as the wheels jolted and dropped into the invisible hollows beneath the water.

By late afternoon, the Depot was finally reached. It lies between two fords on rich pasture for forage and fresh water. There is a white washed cottage and huts for a dozen soldiers. The troops were pleased that Walpole had delayed the crossing of Cox's River until after their day of rest. Lieutenant Fitzgerald of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment was posted to Cox's River in August, replacing the Surveyor of Roads, Lieutenant Shadforth of the 57<sup>th</sup> regiment. The depot is in a strategic location and Fitzgerald's orders were to monitor the Road Gangs and keep order. Captain Walpole was eager to receive information about runaways and any movement of men and cattle that Fitzgerald had noticed.

That night, a fierce storm blew up. It was the same night that the storm broke over you and the boys on the Abercrombie and it swept up across the plains to the Fish River. Hours after their ignoble defeat, William Suttor and his sodden volunteers reached Mulgunnia. The boy



they had 'taken from the bushrangers', James Green, was trusted to sleep in the barn and take care of the horses. Then at midnight, William Suttor sat down to write a report to Commandant McPherson. He warned that you were better prepared than could be expected and that you had used military tactics against the volunteers. Perhaps there was a cidevant lieutenant among you.

On the morning of September 29<sup>th</sup>, William and Charles Suttor awoke at Mulgunnia to find that James Green had released all of the horses during the storm. Suttor and his volunteers spent the day scouring the countryside on foot to find them. While they were out they met Lieutenant Moore who had just arrived with a small party of mounted police from County Argyle. Lieutenant Moore had discovered a small cache of arms and ammunition abandoned along the banks of one of the creeks but he did not linger there as his damp chest had been susceptible to contagion from miasma which he had suffered when hunting Tennant and Murphy in similar country. Indeed Samuel Otoo Hassall from Bolong had recently died of a weakness brought on by lying out of doors in the pursuit of bushrangers and stolen cattle.

Suttor's report reached McPherson by noon but the news was not conveyed to the settlers. Instead, McPherson went personally to ask for assistance from the magistrates north of the Macquarie. George Ranken and James Walker agreed to go. Captain Piper sent his servant William Long and they also took Dr Imlay's servant, Martin Donaghue. Lieutenant De Laney, Aide-de-Camp to Sir Hudson Lowe, was visiting the settlement and volunteered to lead the party. Even though the men were despatched without delay they could not make it to Charlton on the Campbell River until the following day.

On Thursday September 30<sup>th</sup> Lieutenant De Laney, and magistrates George Ranken and James Walker rode from Charlton to Mulgunnia to meet Suttor's volunteers. Suttor led them to the rocky ridge that overlooked the Burrangylong Creek. The mounted police were disgusted to find that the only injuries, from the three hundred rounds of ammunition fired, had been suffered by the tops of the trees. De Laney and Moore combined forces and decided to scour the western country that Thomas Arkell referred to as Copperhania.

By then, Walpole had crossed Cox's River, almost a hundred miles north of the Abercrombie. This crossing proved more troublesome for the soldiers than the smaller crossing of the Letts. The rock was granite and fine quartz sand and the plates slipped around beneath the soldier's feet as they waded across with their muskets held high above their heads. The current was strong from the recent rains and the supply wagon was submerged up to the running boards. The amused soldiers who remained at Cox's River enjoyed the view from the comfort of their wooden benches in front of Lieutenant Fitzgerald's Hut. Their duties would test a different mettle. Mostly they were employed in fetching runaways from Bathurst to the road gangs or delivering prisoners to the Assizes in Windsor, or even Sydney Gaol.

After Cox's River the road passes up the long steep Fish River Hill. Mrs Hawkins claimed it was the worst hill of her crossing back in 1822 and nothing had been done to improve it. From the summit, Captain Walpole could get his bearings. Evans Crown lay to the north. The sugarloaves named after Wentworth and Lawson lay south west toward Sidmouth Valley. Between these points, the country known as Clarence's Hilly Range was convoluted with steep rises and narrow gullies. He surveyed the land as a military man, not as his brother officer Charles Sturt would have. Sturt's wanderings along the Murrumbidgee to the Hume

River and thence to South Australia had been much in print since his return in May. He had missed the ship sent to collect him and almost died in the effort to return overland. Captain Walpole preferred a direct order, a clear objective and a guaranteed denouement, with every step in between a page turner. It took his soldiers seven hours to arrive at the Fish River depot. After all of these exertions, Captain Walpole calculated, they were one hundred miles from Sydney Town and two days march from Bathurst.

While the detachment of soldiers shared pannikins of post-and-rail tea with the other rank and file men, the officers discussed the treatment of convicts and the childlike treachery of the Irish under their care. In June, three soldiers stationed at the Fish River had been charged with the murder of an iron gang runaway, James O'Brien. The convict had been a servant of the Hassall brothers. Jonathan and James had given him the task of delivering some cattle from Bathurst to Cowpastures. Along the way he sold the cattle, including one of Captain Piper's cows, to a publican for some spirits. He was convicted and sentenced to death but sent instead to an iron gang, from whence he ran. Recaptured in Bathurst, Evernden sent him back to the Fish River to another iron gang. Privates Moran, Quirk and Fitzgibbon were escorting O'Brien from Bathurst but when they reached O'Connell Plains, he begged them for a nail to pick his handcuffs. He said he was sick and would never make it to the Fish River alive. The soldiers ignored the prisoner's complaints, bullying and cajoling O'Brien to keep on marching. Eventually they dragged him by the legs and hit him with their firelocks to make him walk. They were only half a mile from the depot when Fitzgibbon lifted the prisoner O'Brien onto his back to carry him. O'Brien shat himself and the private too, and was flung off in disgust. He landed upon a rock, threw his arms up and died. After a trial lasting ten hours, the soldiers were acquitted. The story is fresh in the minds of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment

stationed at Fish River but they tell it as evidence of the malingering convict. It stands differently in the memory of the O'Briens.

That afternoon Walpole pressed on to the Sidmouth Valley. It was another eight mile march, but thankfully over pasture and hillock, it was level country and sparsely timbered and they made good time. The few huts they passed were made of rammed earth and sod due to lack of timber. The rooves, appearing to be shingled, were seen at closer range to be thatched with reeds. Some settlers had erected two rail fences from stringy bark around their huts in a rumpled attempt at civilization. By nightfall the military detachment was encamped beside a large river eucalypt, possibly the one Mrs Macquarie sheltered beneath on her visit in 1815. Governor Macquarie camped in the same spot on his farewell visit in 1821, but Captain Walpole found no sign of a little writing desk that had tumbled off the Governor's wagon. He sat down to write his diary, it was Thursday night September 30th.

The police magistrate, Lieutenant Thomas Evernden, had returned to Bathurst on that same day. After a fruitless search of the north western plains he was immediately apprised of the fiasco with the volunteers at the Abercrombie. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary to reassure the Governor that everything possible was being done. He sent the dispatch to Sydney Town with a message to be delivered to Captain Walpole enroute. He could at this stage only tell the Captain that the insurgents were heading southwest, rather than to Wellington. The trouble with a forced march is that unless one knows where one is going, double quick time does not ensure a fruitful outcome. Captain Walpole would need to go across the counties of Westmoreland and Georgiana to head off the insurgents.

After the attack by Suttor's volunteers, you took a dozen of the boys who could ride well and headed further into the unmapped reaches of Carraway looking for a high lookout. The weather cleared and you camped on the lee of a bald hill not far from Rocky Bridge Creek that flowed into the Abercrombie River. There you passed a sleepless night as you expected a counter attack and kept a strict rotation of the watch. You were nervous about the watch because of the sentries who had deserted you on Kings Plains, Thomas Mack and Patrick Sullivan. Talk of the other turncoats, McNally, Burke and Thomas Daley kept your wits awake through the night. Martin Grady heard your threats of vengeance and drank with you to their demise. The boys detested these traitors even more than they hated Magistrate Evernden who was bound to do his duty.

About eight o'clock on the morning of September 30th, Webster spotted a solitary troop of Mounted Police, about ten or so in number, snaking along a bush trail with swords rattling and buckles glinting through the trees. It was your old friend Lieutenant Brown, who had ventured into the bush to search for you. You had out-manoeuvred him once before and the memory gave the boys some amusement. Gahan, Daley, Dunne, Kenny, Kearney and Gleeson rode down to the base of the hill where there were a series of thinly wooded outcrops and rises. These farm lads were your best riders but the other boys were from Dublin, Boston and Wopping and were better at cleaning and reloading the weapons. You deployed them among the boulders just over the crest of the hill and put two of the young Australian boys, who were crack shots, in the front line. Your remaining horses were tethered well out of harm's way.

Kearney and his posse were to lead the mounted police toward the ambush. They moved within Lieutenant Brown's line of sight but just a few hills beyond his reach. Thomas Dunn slumped in his saddle to gammon a wounded man and draw on the attack. From the bald hill you could see the boys struggling over the humps of a small series of rises. At first the mounted police hung back so as not to be observed by them, but they were tracking the boys doggedly up and down the rises and dips. Kearney gradually allowed the troopers to close the gap. When he reached the base of the bald hill, he turned in his saddle and gave the cry of Donohoe toward them, 'Come on you cowardly rascals!' Then the boys spurred their horses and rode like thunder up the barefaced slope. Lieutenant Brown drew his sword and the mounted police dashed into the chase. They could smell blood.

Recall the shaking of your hand upon the musket? The hot air buzzing with excitement. The growing rumble of the galloping hooves coming up the side of hill. It was the nearest thing to battle you had ever tasted. You stood upon the highest rock and waved your hat of streamers to give the boys their bearings. Kearney, Gleeson and Gahan crested the hill first and peeled away to the left. Kenny, Dunne and Daley peeled off to the right as the first of the police shots rang out. A private of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment, James Stevens, rode hard on the heels of Daley and Kenny as they disappeared into the ranges.

Then the horse police broke upon you as one body. They were so close as they crested the hill, that you could see their eyes widen with surprise. The clouds of flame licked out from your muskets. The first volley of shots sprayed the chests of their horses and brought them down into the dust. Your next rounds picked off the troopers who scrambled behind the carcasses of their stricken beasts to take cover. Two troopers were wounded. Brown was

screaming orders and on foot with a sword and pistol in hand. He remounted a loose horse and tried to regather his men. Your barrage was relentless, so well were you prepared and armed. The battle echoed round the hills for a quarter of an hour but the Lieutenant could not sustain his attack or find enough cover for his remaining men. He dragged the two wounded police onto the back of his own horse and called the retreat. Three troopers scrambled on to the back of their comrades' mounts as they rode off down the hill. When they were gone you stood amid a cascade of blood and counted five horses that lay dying. It was only mercy to put a bullet through their heads.

Troopers Fitzgerald and Brown were mortally wounded and Private James Stevens had not been accounted for. The depleted force rode back to barracks in deep mourning. That afternoon, Lieutenant De Laney, scouring the Carraway ranges with Ranken and Walker, found Stevens lying wounded beside his horse. Neither George Ranken nor James Walker knew this country. They could not even tell Lieutenant De Laney where they were in relation to Bathurst, although it was forty miles as the crow flies. James Stevens was badly wounded and Martin Donaghue, Dr Imlay's servant, said he could not be moved without a wagon being sent for him. They decided to entrust him to the care of Donaghue and William Long who were given food, arms and powder to last them until help returned. There was fresh water in the creek but the men were left in the wilderness open prey to the wild dogs and bushrangers. They were alone in the bush for five days.

While you were defeating the mounted police, Captain Walpole had been enjoying breakfast in the shade of Macquarie's spreading gum tree in the Sidmouth Valley. He had received a scrawled note from Magistrate Evernden who alerted him to the futile efforts of a party of

volunteers to capture the banditti at a place called Carraway and advised him to cut across country to intercept them. Captain Walpole adhered to his original plan and spent the long day marching across O'Connell Plains to the Lagoon and then on to Bathurst settlement to receive his orders from Commandant McPherson.

Magistrate Evernden's letter to the Colonial Secretary convinced Governor Ralph Darling that the situation was becoming dire. The Governor wrote to Sir George Murray to say that, 'The infantry have no chance of coming up with the bushrangers, who seize on fresh horses whenever they require them.' The newspapers were already speculating that poor rations among the iron gangs had spurred the rebellion, but the penny-pinching Governor never thought to double the rations instead of doubling the guard. He feared, 'If these people should rise, who are fifteen hundred in number, the consequences might prove of a most serious nature.' Most of the 57<sup>th</sup> regiment had recently been sent off to India and Darling had already shipped more troops than he could afford to Van Diemen's Land. Lieutenant-Governor Arthur was conducting the black line march against the aborigines that same month. New South Wales lay exposed. Darling increased the mounted police on the North West and Southern stations from 68 to 100 men. Your small gang of Stowford rebels had hit upon a raw nerve at a time when the government forces were depleted. A superior strategist, perhaps a Lieutenant Lahrbrush, could have turned your rebellion into a revolution.

After the battle on the bald hill, the Ribbon Boys avoided the known trails and took the hazardous journey through the mountain ranges at the western edge of Georgiana County and along the Abercrombie and Lachlan Rivers into King County. The aura of the outlands is embodied in the names that now cling to the creeks – Chicken Creek, Fat Cattle Creek,



Licking Yards, Wild Cattle Creek, Hell's Hole and Pot 'o Tea. There are few trails though this country and the right of way still belongs to tattooed riders, associations of men seeking these same clandestine ranges to settle and grow crops. The unarmed police man still fears to be caught alone in these places, as James Stevens was.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, you and the boys reached Fulton's station at the junction of the Lachlan River and the Waugola Creek, on the lip of the Warwick Plains. There you found the Dubliner, John Coffee – one of the Hunter River Banditti. He told you that your shipmate Edward Bowen and the Hunter River Banditti had passed undetected up the valleys and hills north of the Bathurst settlement via George Cox's place on the Cudgegong River. Mick Lahey, the old Whiteboy, was Cox's overseer, and one of the banditti called John Donovan had worked for him in the past. Coffee and Donovan took two of Lahey's horses and headed for the Lachlan to see some old mates. Coffee had worked at Fulton's station and Donovan had worked at Pye's on the Belabula River. Coffee reckoned that Bowen and the others would have arrived at the Warrumbungles by now. Coffee had planned to collect Donovan from Pye's station on his way west, and he offered to show you the way. News had already reached Fulton that Captain Walpole was bringing troops from Sydney Town. Fulton's station belonged to the emancipated rebel Reverend Henry Fulton but his twenty-two year old son, Matthias, ran the family farms from Bathurst. While Matthias and Frances Fulton watched Captain Walpole and the regiment amassing on the banks of the Macquarie River, they had no inkling the Ribbon Boys were visiting their overseer and roasting their sheep on the banks of the Lachlan. The arrival of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment under Captain Walpole was a social occasion as splendid as Bathurst had ever seen. When Governor Darling disbanded the Veterans, they were offered small grants of land to 'retire' to and many of them had settled around Bathurst. Still alive to the call to arms, a dozen Royal Veterans now volunteered to assist the Captain in

his pursuit of the Ribbon Boys. The settlement teemed with wagons of supplies, armaments and food sent from the settlers. Mr Street, Mr West and Magistrate McKenzie arrived with their overseers and men and horses. Mr Street provided the services of his overseer Thomas Wilcox who brought with him two aboriginals taken from the Belabula River to act as trackers. Thomas West provided a new double rein bridle, a surcingle horse belt, a saddle cloth, two new girths and horses. Mr Lambert sent a horse and bridle, and Messieurs Mathews and Marrion a bridle and a saddle. Magistrate McKenzie generously loaned the Captain a horse and saddle belonging to Mr Pringle of Mudgee. By the end of the escapade all of these generous donations to Captain Walpole and his troops had been pilfered by the government servants who had been sent to supply him with provisions on the road.

Magistrate Evernden provided the military with government servants as guides and carters. Each day they would deliver food and necessaries to the troops along the way. The servants Evernden sent were Hugh Loughley, the Dubliner Thomas Smith and the old victualler, William Croughwell. Transported from Galway in 1810, Croughwell had discovered a major source of limestone just fifteen miles from Bathurst. He was rewarded with a ticket of leave by Governor Macquarie. Ten years later, his master Dr West sent him to Evernden on unsubstantiated charges and he was returned to government service. Evernden was too arrogant to doubt Croughwell's loyalty.

Reports of Lieutenant Brown's casualties came in to settlement at the end of the first week in October. This defeat and the fracas at the Abercrombie steeled the resolve of the military and the mounted police. The honour of the 39<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> regiments was now at stake. Both regiments had fought courageously in the Peninsula Wars, especially at the military debacle known as the Battle of Albuera in 1811. The 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment lost twenty of thirty officers and

422 of 570 troops. When their commander, Colonel Inglis was carried to the front with canister wounds to his left breast and neck he famously told his men to 'Die Hard' and this became their nickname. The 39<sup>th</sup> regiment were nicknamed 'Shankey's Horse' and Walpole's march to the Lachlan River fit the moniker.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, Walpole's troops moved south of the settlement, across Dunn's Plains and along the route to the Lachlan River. Martin Grady left you and the Ribbon Boys on the Lachlan and rode north to join the military entourage. At first he rode with Walpole's servants to send information back to you and the boys and to pilfer food and arms for you. As the days wore on, he stayed for his own profit. War has always attracted such flotsam, 'bat-like creatures, half-ruffian, half-servant, engendered by the twilight of war, wearers of uniform who do no fighting, malingerers, venomous cripples, sutlers riding in small carts, sometimes with their women, who steal what later they sell, beggars offering their services as guides, rogues and vagabonds of all kinds.'

On Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, Coffee led you and the Ribbon Boys to Glen Logan on the Warwick Plains. This was George Ranken's grant of 4000 acres on the Lachlan where he ran seven hundred sheep and five hundred cattle. The overseer was another free Scott, Andrew Kear, but he did not have the force to oppose you. You and the boys were able to water the horses and take food and shelter there. Kearney, Kenny, Gahan, Gleeson, Daley and Dunne went looking for countrymen and news from relatives. There were half a dozen Catholics on Glen Logan. Patrick Waldren was one of the men who rode away with you. He was a Dubliner transported the same year as Donohoe. He came along on the promise of escape to the Warrambungles. George Ranken's brother, Arthur, ran the adjoining property Woomila.

Arthur was twenty three when he arrived with his friend and overseer, James Hoan, in 1826. In four years they had cleared 700 acres and ran a herd of sixty horned cattle and a dozen times as many sheep. Three government servants worked for him as labourers and stockmen. The youngest of them was George Mole. You wanted to see George but the next morning John Coffee guided you and the boys across country to a larger property, Thomas Icely's grant called Boringinees. There were more men and stores for the taking there. Up until this point, you had been steadily heading west by northwest, pressing fewer recruits but still taking on food and supplies for a long journey. You camped overnight and kept on the move between stations, covering twenty to thirty miles each day. That evening you reached Joseph Pye's property on the Belabula River.

Pye lived with his wife and four small children on their Bathurst cattle farm but out on the Belabula he ran sheep, cattle and horses. The horses were of the most interest to the Ribbon Boys. The Irish were particularly interested in fast horses of good breeding. Mick Lahey had a stallion he called Captain Rock. As the Governor had lamented, you could procure fresh horses at every station. John Coffee was told that Baldwin had come through from the Warrumbungles heading for the Murrumbidgee with a herd of long horn cattle. Donovan had gone south with him. There was something uncanny about this and the boys began to feel restless. The evening meal brought the same old boys around the campfire as had assembled at Hare Castle to decide upon the best way to advance. Kearney and Gleeson spoke of the need to find refuge with some of the Irish families they knew from the old country who would surely harbour them. Webster and Driver were less sure of these family ties that seemed to damn a man as surely as they held him fast. Gahan, Daley and Kenny wanted to carry on the old fight and were more excited by the prospect of meeting more troopers than running away from them. Sheppard stood with Kearney and Dunne on all decisions because

they had become close friends. What would you have them do Ralph? The Irish outnumbered the others in the group and you needed them all to stay tight to meet any foe that lay in wait upon the road.

Coffee told you that north of Wylde's Plain there was good flat country and you could cut across behind Croker's Range and Mount Hawkins to intercept the Macquarie River and follow Oxley's track to Mount Harris and the fabled Warrumbungles. The boys had become skittish about that plan. Coffee brought to the campfire a stranger who said he could act as guide. He was a tall Scot draped in the armour of a weathered greatcoat and he wore a cabbage tree hat which was more practical in the bush than the caps prisoners were given as slops. His right hand, as he took the pint pot from Kearney, wanted a thumb and forefinger and his front teeth were missing in the way of the aboriginals who had been through initiation. His name was Alexander Grant. He did not tell you of his past but I know he was free by servitude having been transported for beating a gentleman on the road. In this, he had brutality in common with both Gleeson and Webster. Webster beat a publican against the railing in St. James Square, Gleeson had killed a man on the Lissenthal road. Grant said he knew Edward and John Slingsby and he lived on John Grant's run on the Native Dog Creek. The boys knew of this place from what Lynch and Slingsby had told them but they were back in the caves with Denis O'Brien, mending their wounds, and could not advise the boys now. The plan to go to the Warrumbungles was abandoned. It was decided to go to Wollawolla and then seek shelter with the old Whiteboys who had settled between the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers. Those who disagreed could go it alone and indeed some rode off that night to their own stations. Patrick Waldren returned to Glen Logan. Captain Walpole and the veterans were now travelling through the countryside like a military parade with the supply wagons, settler volunteers and assigned servants following up the rear in a carnivalesque

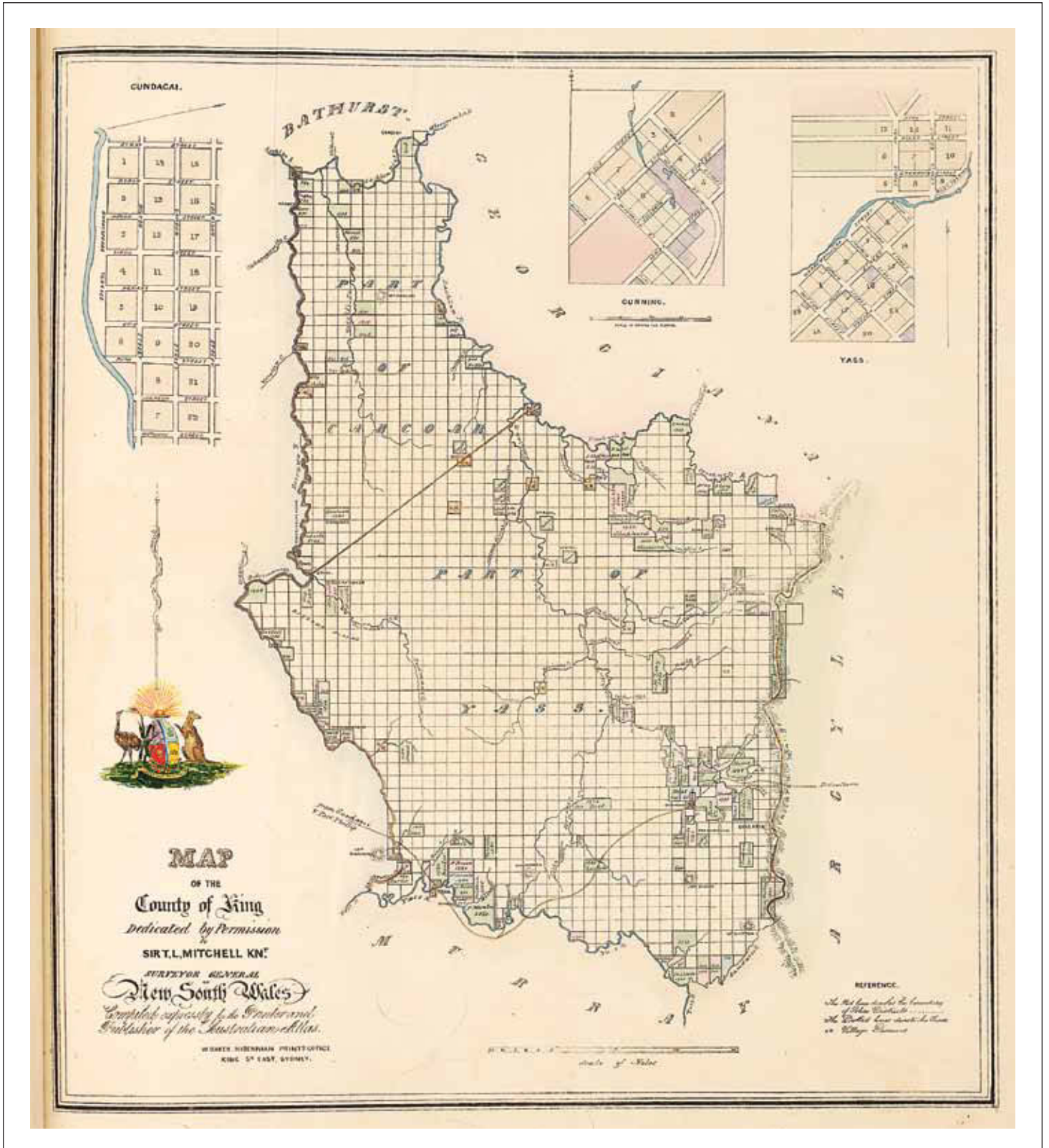
cavalcade. It was fortuitous that the Captain had been assisted by the settler John Street from Woodlands on the Macquarie Plains. Without the assistance of his overseer Thomas Wilcox and the two aboriginal trackers, the military would never have been able to find your Ribbon Boys beyond Mount Icely. The government servants and Veterans knew the way from the Campbell River to Mount Lachlan, but the country after the Limestone Creek was wild and unknown to them. They increasingly relied upon the natives for direction.

In sending Thomas Wilcox with Captain Walpole, John Street was protecting his own investments. John Street arrived as a free settler in 1822 and took 2000 acres beside William Lawson's grant at the junction of the Campbell and Fish Rivers. In 1825 he married and established Woodlands as the family home. He helped to found the Bathurst Hunt Club and he also ran cattle and sheep on his outstation on the Belabula River. This was the new frontier where Reverend Marsden's stockmen had been speared by aborigines at the beginning of the Bathurst wars. Six years later, Street's overseer at the Belabula outstation had developed a cordial relationship with the local tribesmen. At Belabula, there were fourteen young stockmen and hutkeepers. They were mostly catholic men between the ages of 16 and 30 years, many of whom had arrived on the *Albion* in 1827. If the Ribbon Boys were recruiting new arrivals, the loss of workmen was to be as much feared as the loss of stock or ammunition on these pastoral outposts. By the time Captain Walpole and his entourage reached Fulton on October 5<sup>th</sup> you and the Ribbon Boys were already changing direction. This day was a turning point. It was the culmination of eight weeks of tracking and hunting by Corporal Quigley, Mr Hugh MacDonald and five mounted police from Hunter's River. They followed two aboriginal trackers to a camp of three temporary huts in the bush in the Warrumbungle Ranges. There they found four horses in the stock yard and blankets airing on the fences. Quigley walked into the hut and found the beds were neatly made. One of the

Hunter River Banditti, Patrick Feeney was sitting at the table with a loaded firelock. The five mounted police and Mr. Hugh McDonald fanned out across the camp. Edward Bowen rode up on a grey horse and Hugh Duffey followed soon after, on foot with the hems of his trousers bloodied, spurs on his boots and a whip in his hand. He denied he had a horse. Edward Baldwin was not discovered, and the peaceful resignation with which the Hunter Boys allowed Quigley to capture them suggests that Duffey was protecting others secreted in the bush.

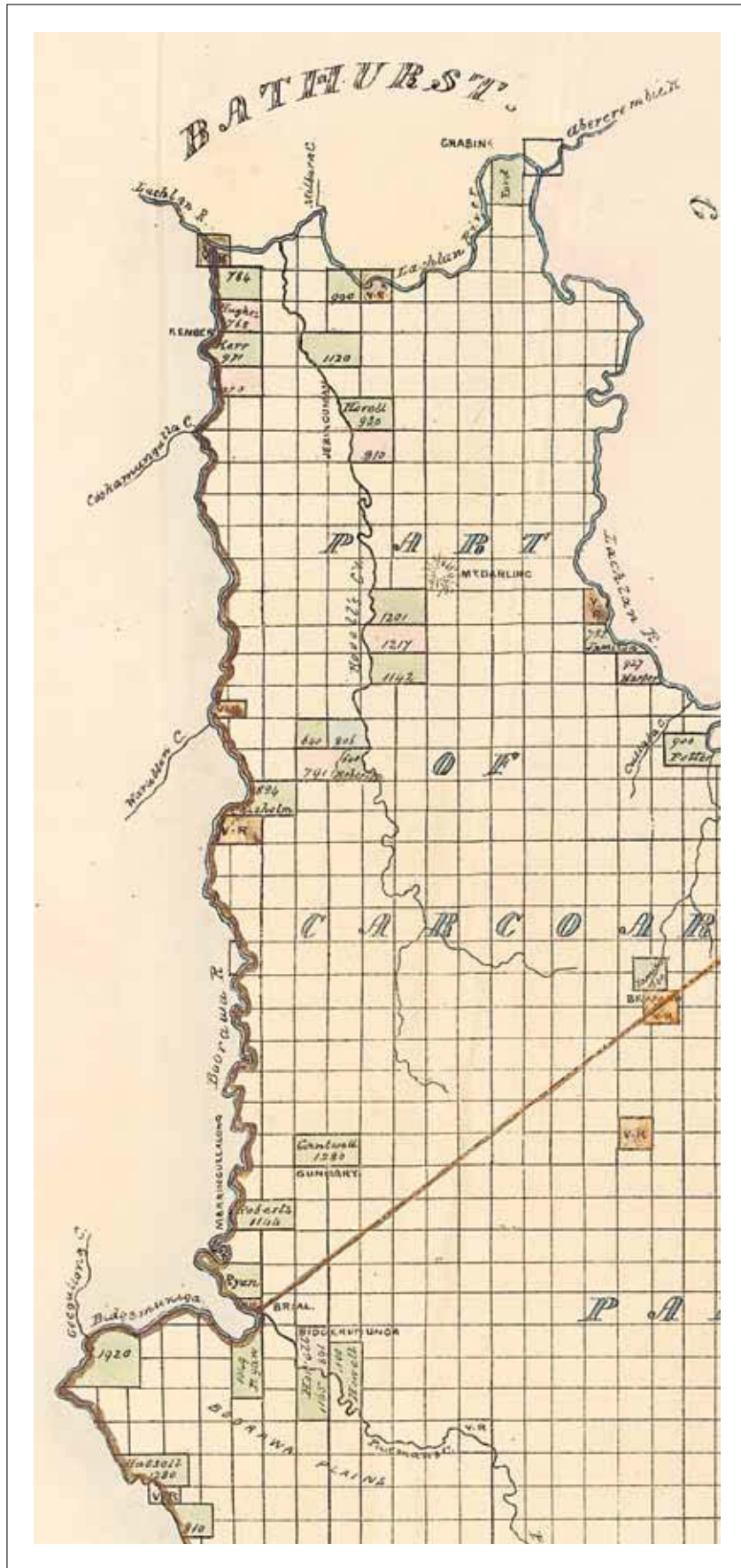
Quigley sent a couple of mounted police to bring in Jones and Mason who returned with three horses. Westbury was found not far off, unarmed and unperturbed. John Jones later told the judge they had only been a couple of days at the camp before Quigley arrived. The huts and horse yards could not have been erected in a couple of days. There were crops in the ground ready to harvest. The amount of cattle, horses and property seized by the mounted police was far more than they could have amassed in their ten day journey. In truth, the Hunter River Banditti had accomplished nothing more than to lead the law to an outlaw's den that had served many bolters for five years. Less than a month later, Captain Walpole sits proudly in the Bathurst Courthouse with his fellow jurors and officers. He has taken the glory for your capture and yet the man who was responsible is missing from the court. The orderly brings the court room to a hushed silence for Chief Justice Forbes to announce the sentences – Entwistle and Kearney, Sheppard, Dunne, Gleeson and Gahan have been found guilty of the murder of Greenwood. On the various charges of stealing from a dwelling house, Driver, Daley, Webster and Kenny are found guilty. You are each sentenced to hang by the neck until dead. The warrant of execution is issued on Saturday October 30<sup>th</sup> and returnable on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1830. You have three days left to live.





Map of the County of King (<http://nla.map-rra8-s13> Call Number: MAPRaA8)





Map of the County of King (<http://nla.map-raa8-s13> Call Number: MAPRaA8 (excerpt))

## Chapter 8

### *Gaol Cell, Bathurst Settlement, Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1830.*

There has been nothing to break the monotony of your detention but the regular bells that order military lives and the sound of soldiers marching off to the ritual of Sunday services. These are held across the river and that is where most of the families and children gather on these long slow days. There are hundreds of children in the colony and yet they remain invisible in the adult order of things. No one asks how these young Australian weeds grow or where they run, or what they make of the suffering they daily witness. There will be children at the hanging. You are sure of it. You have little to remember of your childhood but today when you prayed, 'Our Father, who art in heaven'. The image of your own father kept appearing before you. He is taller than you, almost six foot, and his hair and eyes are grey. Perhaps you are afraid that on the other side you will see him and the violence will continue, but I can lift that burden.

I read the log of the *Malabar (2)* looking for your father. On September 12<sup>th</sup> 1821, Thomas Entwistle was confined to the hospital complaining of pain in his legs from getting wet and of a cough that had settled in his chest. Each day he was given a solution of sulphur and this cured him within five days. He was forty six years old and on a fourteen year sentence for possessing a forged note. The forgers operated a gang from the timber yards for years and your father had been done before. He left behind seven children when he was sent to Van Diemen's Land. Your mother, Ellen, had died when you were six. After your father was transported, you were living with your older brothers at the timber yard off Church Street,

Bolton. You were receiving poor relief the year before your arrest. If you are both bound for hell, you will arrive thirty-three years before your father dies.

Tonight is All Hallows' Eve and as the birds begin to clatter toward sundown the boys get agitated in their cells. The priest has still not come and so they are thrown back to their older superstitions by the impending dark. You can hear them clamouring for their supper. The gaoler, James Parker, is fetching them an empty bowl so that an extra place can be set for the souls who are believed to visit a feast when the doors of hell are open. It will be a feast of gruel. There will be no oaten Thar-cake for their souls either. It seems ironic that the dead may walk free but you cannot.

Your door is unlocked and it grinds open but it is not Parker with your bowl of mess. The hangman Jack Ketch and magistrate Thomas Evernden enter the cell. It is almost a viewing. Remember Edward Gibbon Wakefield? Perhaps you should stand and face them and make them doff their hats. But the hangman's gaze is not familiar. He looks on you as a corporeal animal of a certain height and weight. He feels the muscles of your neck and examines your shoulders. He is calculating the amount of rope and the gauge he will need to crack your spine. This is a science and his reputation depends upon a clean kill. The mistake that happened to Smith was an embarrassment. Donohoe's companions faced the gallows alone after he escaped from Sydney Gaol. Kilroy hanged but Smith's rope broke and he dropped onto his own coffin, only to look up and see Kilroy kicking himself into oblivion. The pastor ran to the Governor for a show of mercy, but Darling denied him any. Smith was hanged after Kilroy was cut down. It is far better to make a clean swift break. In this you both agree.

Evernden eyes you as if you are a dead fish, his nose slightly flared at the odour. Does he recognise the scars across your back as his handiwork? You are dragged to your feet to see if your weight will support you on the gallows. Kearney, you overhear, may need a crutch due to his wounds. In Lancaster Castle, there is a tall chair they built for a girl who murdered her parents. Her shaking legs were too feeble to stand, so she was hanged from the chair.

Evernden does not speak to you. The Governor has ordered an enquiry into the insurrection and Evernden, as police superintendent, has already told the Colonial Secretary that this business has nothing to do with the settlers or the rations the men received. Yet it does. Evernden wants to think that the scars upon your back can account for the insurrection and here he is compromised. As a landowner, among a community of settlers, his livelihood and good name depend upon keeping the enquiry away from how the assigned convicts are managed, clothed and fed. As a magistrate, he stands by his right to flog convicts and keep order by whatever means he feels are necessary. Should he cast blame on his brother settlers or upon his own rough treatment of prisoners?

Magistrate Reverend Samuel Marsden had a similar quandary. Should one act morally as a man of God or maliciously as a magistrate? He had ordered one convict to be flogged over a succession of days until he disclosed information to the police. The man's wounds would just begin to heal before the next flogging. The tally of floggings metered out by the Reverend gentleman was excessive even by colonial standards. Marsden was forced to answer charges of torture and abuse of power, and was stood down in his magisterial capacity. His actions drew criticism even in England.

Evernden is careful not to ask questions that might yield uncomfortable truths. You were unrepentant in the court and the other prisoners deferred to your plea. He is prepared to regard you as their leader, although he thinks you a pitiful one. He can attribute the revolt to your previous flogging. That means he, as an agent of the Crown, can accept some small part of the blame which will then result in a change to government regulations about punishment of prisoners. There were already agitators writing to the papers for such reforms. Someone, Evernden or Liscombe, has taken care to remove the bench books and records of punishment in case an enquiry into them may provide the kind of ammunition that was used against Marsden. Mr. John Liscombe has as much to lose as the magistrate. Weren't six of the ringleaders from the Police Clerk's farm? The records for 1830 have never been found.

Thomas Evernden tells the hangman a joke he has read in the *Sydney Gazette* about six Lancashire men called to an inquest at the local Inn. They were summonsed 'to sit upon the body of John Smith'. The coroner entered the inquiry room to find the six men had arrived early and were struggling up onto the table to sit upon the corpse. Evernden laughs at the stupidity of all Lancashire men. The hangman remains mirthless. He is reviled for his profession. Men shrink from his handshake, yet the law requires him to do it. There is nothing funny about death or the living for Jack Ketch. His business is completed swiftly and Evernden leads him to the other prisoners. This is the first time Jack Ketch has visited Bathurst.

Two years previous, Chief Justice Forbes sentenced a Bathurst aborigine called Tommy to death. Tommy was convicted of murdering a stockman at Georges Plains. Magistrate Evernden wanted him hanged in Bathurst as an example to the other aborigines, but a debate

over his soul went on among the lawyers and clergy so long that he took the drop in Sydney Town. Father Power baptised him a Roman Catholic on the gallows. An anonymous letter to the *Sydney Monitor* of November 1827 supported the execution of Tommy. It said, ‘Such is the general sterility of Argyle, that we do not calculate on churches being built in that county, near enough to each other to collect the scattered population which cover a hundred miles of its surface, for a century to come.’ If justice were not done to Tommy, the correspondent warned, ‘there would have been ... the habit among our boors, of employing their leisure on a Sunday in hunting down the Native Blacks, as it is already customary on those days, to take out the hounds and hunt down the native wolf-dogs which make such havoc among our sheep ... No Missionaries of modern times, we prognosticate, will ever settle on our confines to preach to the adult stockmen, and to baptize and catechize their children.’ But Father Therry will come Ralph. He will come because of you and the boys. And Bishop Polding will come for the ones you left buried on Boorowa Plains and he will bless the Bushranger’s Hill. The Redemptorist missionaries will inherit Ned Ryan’s sterile plains.

Evernden has one last parting gift. When the hangman has gone, the door is opened once again and Parker shoves into your cell the figure of a young woman. Her head is shaved and her face is beaten blue and yellow, but she will not look up at you. She curls herself into the brick wedge of wall that forms the corner of your cell. She is wearing a tattered blue dress, but no shoes or stockings. ‘This is guising for All Hallows’ Eve!’ shouts Evernden as the door is locked and you hear him laughing to the gaoler all the way down the corridor. For a moment it is too dark for you to understand the joke. Then you recognise the figure. It is George Mole.

When James Green released Suttor's horses at Mulgunnia he was ironed by the mounted police and marched back to Bathurst as a runaway. Evernden did not beat him in gaol. The magistrate wanted information about your movements and thought that Green could serve as a spy if he retained your trust. Green was given a fresh horse and sent with a constable to the Lachlan River. His orders from Evernden were to bring back information and if possible to turn any of the gang members into informers by offering them a pardon. He would need to be careful whom he chose to turn because making such an offer to the wrong man could be fatal.

Captain Walpole, within days of arriving at the Lachlan River, had followed Wilcox and his native trackers to Glen Logan. The constable and James Green arrived at noon. As soon as the constable was summoned into Walpole's campaign tent, James Green bolted for the neighbouring property, Woomilla. Inside the tent, preparations were being made for the mid-day meal. As the constable's eyes acclimatised to the change of light, he recognised one of the servants laying out the Captain's cutlery. It was the cattle thief Martin Grady. The constable had an outstanding warrant for his arrest. The constable was informed that Patrick Waldren, a servant of George Ranken, had arrived back from Pye's station that morning. He was being interviewed by Captain Walpole and the overseer, Andrew Kear. Patrick Waldren claimed that he had been pressed by the Ribbon Boys but, if promised a ticket of leave, he could tell the Captain where the Ribbon Boys were headed.

Overhearing Waldren's offer, Martin Grady interrupted the proceedings. Grady knew the constable would take him back to magistrate Evernden unless he had Walpole's protection. He confessed he had formerly associated with the bolters now known as the Ribbon Boys. He offered to furnish the Captain with information on their exact whereabouts in return for a

pardon. He would also need a passage to England, as by his betrayal 'he would render himself obnoxious to them'. Walpole suddenly suffered an embarrassment of riches. Patrick Waldren and Martin Grady were both offering him information, but who could he believe?

He took them both upon their word. Martin Grady was employed by Captain Walpole and offered his protection. Waldren was promised a ticket of leave. The constable was sent back to magistrate Evernden with the information that the Ribbon Boys had raided Icely's and Pye's stations on the Belabula River and were heading for Wollawolla. They would cross the Lachlan River and go south toward the Murrumbidgee. Martin Grady predicted they would seek food and shelter at William McHenry's station enroute to the Boorowa River on their way south. It was a route well known to the cattlemen.

Lieutenant Lachlan Macalister was the next to arrive at Walpole's camp. He was less than beguiled by the Irish entourage Captain Walpole's train had attracted. He had been out searching Argyle and Kings counties with his mounted police for a week. They had crossed the country from Strathaird to Hovell's Creek and followed it north to the Lachlan. He had with him Privates Doyle, McIndoe, Mugglestone and Graham, and Constable Daniel Geary. Most of his men were veterans of bushranger hunting and had accompanied him in pursuit of Donohoe, Tennant, Murphy and Ricks.

When Macalister learned that the Ribbon Boys were seeking shelter in this familiar territory, he proposed to Walpole that he could lead his party back to the junction of the Lachlan and Boorowa Rivers and turn south toward MacHenry's. Captain Walpole proposed a pincer-like



strategy, whereby he and the troops would follow the tracks of your horses to Wollawolla and close in from the west. If Grady were to be trusted the two forces should converge and engage the enemy somewhere between the Boorowa River and the Murrumbidgee. If Waldren and Grady were misleading them, Walpole would be doggedly on the trail with the aboriginal trackers all the way to Wollawolla and any deviation would be evident. They were still uncertain if the tracks from Wollawolla would lead them further west or turn south east.

Lieutenant Macalister's practice was to glean information from the hutkeepers about movement of stock and horses and recent rumours. A long standing squatter on the Boorowa Plains was Ned Ryan, one of the dozen Clonmel whiteboys transported in 1817 for burning a military infirmary. Six years ago, Ned Ryan had been the overseer on Jimmy Meehan's property Carrion on the Goulburn Plains. Ryan's cousin, Roger Corcoran, turned up at Meehan's farm with a bolter who was wanted as principal witness in a murder case. Ned Ryan harboured them but a ship mate recognised the bolter and reported them to Magistrate Reid. The Goulburn Bench Books for October 14<sup>th</sup> 1824 record that Edward Ryan, overseer to James Meehan, paid a bond of twenty pounds which he would forfeit if he employed any runaways or appeared in court. His only appearances in the bench books after that time were to have his servants flogged or reprimanded.

I have seen a document that would make your faint pulse riot. In March of this year, Ned Ryan applied for land. He provided a testimonial from Magistrate Reid that stated, 'While residing in the remote districts of this interior, he has been of essential service...in aiding the police in the suppression of bushranging.' The bushrangers of those years who visited Boorowa and Cunningham's Plains were Jack Donohoe, Owens, Wisikin and Holmes. Robert

Futter, JP of Argyle agreed, 'He has to my knowledge rendered essential service in aiding the police in the suppression of bushranging.' The documents were certified by Lieutenant Lachlan Macalister J.P., commander of the Goulburn Mounted Police.

The Ribbon Boys had reached Grant's run at Wollawolla on October 5<sup>th</sup> and stayed there four days, swimming and feasting. The weather was hot and the food was plentiful. There was even time for fishing and hunting as if old Hibernia were newly discovered on this southern continent. You entertained the boys on the banks of Native Dog Creek with an old game of 'French and English' from your youth. Although, you and your brothers used to practice it on the banks of the canal with opponents from the neighbouring village and the fighting was in earnest. Two opponents waded into the water from the banks on opposite sides. On their shoulders sit the combatants and when they reach the middle they fight until one falls off.

Patrick Gleeson climbed onto Kearney's shoulders for the first contest. The ploughman and the thug, they were a formidable team. John Sheppard waded in from the opposite bank with little John Kenny on his shoulders. There were numerous jokes about Sheppard, the Wiltshire boatman, being the safest man around water. Kenny swung at Gleeson like a carter bailing up cattle. He was terrified of being grabbed and drowned, which only added to the awful merriment of the spectators on the grass. Daley, Dunne and Webster, being the older and wiser men, would not venture into the water. Sheppard's foot hit a stone and he tumbled into the water with his swearing cargo. Gleeson and Kearney were spoiling for another fight.

No one would take Gahan into the fray, fearing that a stoush between him and Gleeson would turn ugly. It only remained for you and Driver to mount an attack, so two English brick makers advanced upon the Irish. You were the bulldog for strength on the bottom and Driver proved as agile on your shoulders as any pickpocket ought to be. He avoided Gleeson's blows until Kearney suddenly released his grasp on Gleeson's thighs in order to make a grab for you. They both crashed into the water just as Driver took a dive. The four of you were thrashing around like eels. Those were good times.

It had been over a week since you had seen any mounted police and you had met no opposition on the stations beyond the Governor's limits of location. Your thoughts were turning to the boys in the cave, still in harm's way. Sheppard, Kearney and Dunne wanted to return to the Abercrombie and bring who ever could travel to freedom on the river. You decided to cross the hilly ranges and camp on the Boorowa Plains where, John Coffee assured you, the Corcorans and Ryans could provide shelter and protection. From there you could send word to the others. On October 9<sup>th</sup>, you and the boys travelled forty miles south east and through a pass in the ranges on a squatter's run called Marengo. You camped there two nights. The hutkeeper told you that the Boorowa River was one day's ride away but that the country beyond was dry and water was scarce. You left before daybreak to beat the heat of the sun.

True to his word, Coffee finds friendly Irishmen as soon as you arrive on the Boorowa River. The carter Roger Corcoran supplies alcohol and food to the hutkeepers as he travels back and forth for the Hassall family at Doongancorah. Ned Ryan claims his run on the Boorowa Plains is the midpoint between Wellington and Yass. It is an ideal location for a tavern so

numerous are the carters and riders passing though on their way to Curio Bay. Hume and Hovell have recently opened up the route. For the rest of the day and well into the night the boys are delayed in the hut of a stockman who brews poteen for the carters.

The following morning, October 12<sup>th</sup>, a cattleman who has seen the horse police further north warns you and the boys to avoid the main route to Yass along the Boorowa River. It is safer to go south west and follow the rivers and creeks across Cunningham's Plains until you reach Jugiong on the Murrumbidgee. You were always being moved on to lands further out. The squatters had their runs staked out, even though the Governor had not yet granted them these lands. They defended their territory with the gun and a party of ten riders would be taken as a threat if they looked like settling for too long.

That day you crossed the Boorowa River and set out across the Boorowa Plain only to find the river bending back across your path again. You crossed it again to the Boorowa Flats and headed for higher ground. The best vantage point was from a hill that proved to be two high undulations with a saddle of turf and shady trees between them. The boys set up a campfire in the saddle out of the wind, Kenny and Driver took the horses down to a thin creek that encircled the hill for some water and green feed.

At sunset, you and Kearney climbed to the top of the rocks to survey the land. From the highest point you could see north east across the Flats towards the Hassall lands on Doongancorah. Further north lay Roberts' station at Meringullalong and beyond that, McHenry's run. To the south west Spring Creek ran to Jugiong Creek which would lead you

in a few days to the Murrumbidgee. A similar bald hill in the Abercrombie had served you well. From that vantage point you had been able to see the mounted police approaching. You had led them into a trap and defeated them. You hoped that ruse would protect you again if needed. Kearney swore he would never again be caught in a blind gully. He was thinking of the boys you left at the Abercrombie.

It was a dry, clear summer night. Somewhere, further south along the shadows of the creek cattle were lowing. They were probably Ned Ryan's cattle as you had perched on the edge of his original run at a place he would call Bushranger's Hill. His hideout in the lea of the rolling hills was called Galong, and that straggling creek, once it left your sight, would wend like a silver snake past his dur-hole. You were in no hurry to reach Cunningham's Plains, believing that the military were still heading northwest to the Wellington Valley while you and the boys had doubled back.

In fact, Lieutenant Macalister had set out from Walpole's camp at Glen Logan on October 8<sup>th</sup>. He took with him the government servant Thomas Smith, judging him to be the only reliable servant among Walpole's entourage. Smith was a Dubliner and able to speak Gaelic which might prove useful. Smith was also an old hand having arrived in the colony in 1818. His ticket of leave had been cancelled in September because Mary Mulligan had run away to live with him in sin. Mary had been returned by the government to her husband Owen. Thomas Smith was eager to earn back his Ticket of Leave and assisting Lieutenant Macalister was a sure way to do it. Captain Walpole had set out for John Grant's property on the Belabula River a day earlier. They travelled at a slower pace due to the two wagons carrying supplies, ammunition and arms.

Macalister was heading to Fulton and then south to McHenry's run that bordered the Boorowa River, north of Joseph Roberts' station. As his information was almost a week out of date he could not be sure where, in the vast expanse of hilly country, he would find the bushranger's camp. Macalister's hunch led him instinctively toward Ned Ryan's run as he knew the stockkeepers there would be a source of more recent information. Meanwhile, Captain Walpole and Thomas Wilcox were able to follow your trail to Thomas Icely's station Boriginees on the Belabula River. The aboriginal trackers then led the military on the long trail to Wollawolla. Walpole was reassured to find that the Ribbon Boys tracks turned south east and appeared to be heading back towards Boorowa.

After supper that first evening on Bushranger's Hill, you go alone to the creek. A warm October has slowed the creek to a trickle but there is enough water to quench the thirst and bathe. All of the colours of summer have been drained by moonlight. You draw off your rough shirt. It is encrusted with dust and sweat from days of riding. You can feel the ridges of flesh running along your back, like sand dunes gathering to the coast. Every shirt you wear rubs across these bars and banks and the rubbing makes you always conscious of the scarring. Your ears fill with the chatter of stones in water and the eerie call of the mopoke. As you stand up you are confronted by an aborigine watching you from the shadows. The first black man you have ever come face to face with. Neither of you look into the others' eyes, but each examines the other by glance and smell. The odour of the other is almost repulsive but curiosity keeps both of you rooted to the rock. You see in him almost a mirror image of yourself – a young man, muscular and short, but of polished ebony. Your skin reeks of pale absence. The scars of your own back, never seen but often imagined, seem to have been

transposed here onto the flesh of the stranger. He bears these raised ridges of flesh, inflicted in pain by other men, on his breast as a trophy of manhood. You wear your scars on your back, an emblem of shame and emasculation. You envy the black man his scarred chest, a breastplate to challenge the oncoming. These marks at your back mean continual flight, a coward's retreat. As quietly as he arrives, he is gone.

On Wednesday October 13<sup>th</sup>, the boys farewell Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne. They have enough water and supplies for a ten day return journey. They plan to return to the caves and collect Slingsby, Lynch, O'Brien and as many of the others who can ride. They set off after daybreak. From the Boorowa River, they will cross overland to Hovell's Creek and follow it north to Mount Darling, then across the mountains to the junction of the Lachlan and the Abercrombie. From there, it is two day's ride to the caves and they have travelled that route before. They decided to ride in a small party to make better time and escape detection.

The further north one travels on that route, the more gothic and sinister the landscape becomes. The mountains are thickly wooded. Jutting unexpectedly from the earth, monolithic boulders block the way or force the riders into narrow paths and crevasses. Mount Darling, at the gateway to the narrow mountain trail, is an unnerving cluster of granite monoliths dumbly watching all riders who stray into the steep mountains from Hovell's Creek. This was part of Jimmy Meehan's original track to the Wellington depot.

Later in the morning, Kenny is perched on the lookout croft. He points to a small cloud of dust to the north. You squint into the bands of mirage to see a single horse coming toward

you. Is it one of the boys returning? Have they met trouble on the Plain? Which rider is it and what is the news? The scrub at the bottom of the hill swallows up the dust cloud but the hooves are still drumming on the earth toward you. Through the dappled shade comes a three headed beast – one horse and two faces. James Green and George Mole are on the one nag! The boys burst into cheering. They could have been shot. Grinning and chattering like parakeets they slide from the grey mare and run up the rise to stir a rowdy Irish greeting. They are cheered for their brave ride, for finding you in the straw stack on this vast plain. Now all hands are cracking twigs and building the pyre with fresh flame for the billy. You share the last of the damper and cold duck from Wollawolla and tap the remaining keg of rum for drinks all round.

James Green tells the assembled party that Martin Grady has turned informer and that Walpole's infantry have marched as far as Marengo. That is only a matter of days away. Their native guides have tracked you from Wollawolla. The boys take the news with solemn resignation. This is as good a hill as any to meet the army and the Abercrombie battles have given you a tenuous bravado. It is a comfort that Kearney and Sheppard and Dunne have slipped away but also a shame they will feel keenly if they miss the battle. After the food has been eaten, you drill the men in taking and reloading the weapons, and pick out the best trees and rocks for protection. They do not pay attention. The languor of the afternoon and the alcohol takes over their drowsy eyes as you speak. John Coffee and the Australian lad wander down to the shade at the bottom of the hill to play cards. Mole and Green lead their mare around to the southern slope by the creek where the other horses are corralled. Webster is fetching water in the billycan. Kenny has fallen asleep on the warm belly of the lookout boulder.



Out of a blue sky afternoon comes the crack of gun fire across the Flats. Kenny rouses from his stupor. Clouds of dust beat his eyes toward three riders heading like quicksilver toward the hill. They are not coming from Marengo or Doongancorah but from the direction of the Boorowa Plains. It is Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne riding hard and about half a mile behind them another cloud with half a dozen riders giving chase. Gahan and Gleeson have barely time to reach the forward positions with their muskets and pistols before the first horses reach the straggle of scrub at the bottom of the hill. Daley joins Kenny on the outcrop and Webster and Driver take the left flank.

Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne slide from their saddles and take to their heels up the slope toward your camp. Your muskets give them covering fire. Coffee and the Australian are forgotten until you see they have gathered the reigns of the exhausted horses and are trying to lead them around the hill. They are unarmed. A volley of shots ring out and they both fall. Coffee is dragging his leg but his companion lies stone dead. The first of the pursuers to arrive is an officer and two police in regimental uniforms. This is Lieutenant Macalister and unlike Lieutenant Brown he is not going to make the mistake of charging up a hill. Other riders come up swiftly. They are wearing grey dust coats and are harder to pick out in the scrub. The element of surprise is all in their favour. Coffee is shot in the head and the horses run off.

Kearney, Dunne and Sheppard are now pinned down behind a cluster of rocks and stunted paperbark trees at the midway rise. As Macalister and his men advance, you step out into

plain sight and open fire. One horse is killed and Macalister's men dismount and run for the boulders. Thomas Smith gathers the reins of the horses of the mounted police. He holds them within range of Kearney's guns but will not run off and will not be shot for he is swearing at the top of his lungs in Gaelic.

Daniel Geary is the first to fall on Macalister's side. He is shot in the thigh and crawls to cover. You shout to the boys to take them steady now that the constable is down, but in reply Macalister wounds Kearney in the leg and Mugglestone picks off Dunne. He is shot in the shoulder. You keep the nerve of your men by shouting orders and the round of firing does not pause. The poorer shots, Daley, Driver and Webster reload the weapons for the others, just as they have been drilled to do. Half way down the hill, Sheppard is winged and Dunne scrambles to his side. With the three forerunners wounded, you retreat to the crest of the hill where the boulders are more numerous. Gahan gets a round of grapeshot in his buttocks but manages to reach shelter. Macalister seems to allow your retreat but when you reach safety, Webster tells you there is no more powder for the flasks to reload the weapons. The ammunition is spent. You call the boys for one last rally, but as you stand and wave your hat, Doyle's musket bursts with a cloud of smoke and you feel searing pain in your shin and tumble down. Kenny picks off two more troopers and one of the horses in Smith's grasp is grazed by a ball. You and the boys fall back to a cathedral of stones that crest the hill.

Macalister moves his men forward in order to reach the wounded Ribbon Boys at the half way point. Neither of you admit that the ammunition is expended but the fire has continued for twenty minutes and you reckon there is only a limited amount that Macalister could have carried on those horses. The catch is who can outlast the other? Macalister has your three

best men and calls to you for a truce so they might be taken down to the creek and have their wounds washed and staunched. You agree on a truce until first light. It takes the mounted police until dusk to take the wounded away, and in the early dark you can smell their campfire. You and the boys make your way to the saddle camp where Mole and Green have cooked up the last of the food. How did those lads find you? Had they broken away from Walpole and Grady at Marengo, or were they with Macalister? Did the carters betray you? These two youngsters could not have discovered your camp alone.

You keep your own counsel on these suspicions, lest the others make scapegoats of them. It has been a fair fight so far. You send Webster and Gleeson to guard the horses corralled in the bend of the creek on the south side. Now, they are as far from you and the other wounded men as the new moon. How can you all get away? Driver picks the shot from Gahan's torn flesh, but he cannot walk unassisted. He can only lay face down and curse into the dirt like a wrestler finally brought to the mat. You order Mole and Green to fetch wood and keep the fire burning through the night. Kenny and Daley are drinking themselves to sleep. You are entirely cut off. Macalister's campfire winks in the pit of the night like a watchful eye.

Around three of the morning, you discover that your left boot has been filling with blood. You had thought the pain was merely a glancing blow. You drag yourself closer to the fire to examine the damage. A round of shot has torn the trousers and peppered your calf. You bind the wound with the torn cloth. Staring into the flames of a fire makes one maudlin. Without ammunition you cannot fight or even shoot enough food to remain long on the hill. You could be easily cut off from the water. There are some, Gleeson and Webster, who would fight hand to hand until the death of all of you. The Australian and Coffee will need to be

buried but the hill is rocky and there will be no priest to bless them in this God forsaken place. The loss of Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne smothers your hopes like a shroud.

Your pitiful companions on the hill are fitfully sleeping when George Mole approaches you at the fire. You ask how he received the bruise to his cheek. He says the butt end of a musket reconnoitred his face when the Constable caught up with James Green. They were both asleep in the barn at Woomilla. James takes up a seat at the fire beside you. George says it had always been his dream to join a mounted banditti like the Ribbon Boys. He had misjudged you, thought you a coward and regretted his treatment of you on the ship. This speech angers you but you let it smoulder within. You have been buttered up before and by a master swindler, so young George's bumbling methods only sadden you. Why would he think you such a fool? He takes your silence as permission to continue. He can see by the bloodied bandage around your shin that you are hobbled. You can do him no harm. He passes you a pannikin of spirits to dull the pain and says softly, 'Magistrate Evernden sends his regards.'

The name spoken in this desolate place makes you shudder. What does Evernden know about it? How could he do anything more to you now? George smiles in his winning way. 'If you turn approver you might expect a reprieve or maybe a pardon.' James Green is watching your expression from the other side of the fire. It does not change and so he speaks up. 'Evernden wants the names and ships. He knows there are other Ribbon Boys, and he wants to arrest those who harbour and feed them. That sort of information.'

‘In a few hours we’st all be dead,’ you whisper, ‘and it will make no odds to anyone.’

‘Except if you split upon your mates,’ says George, ‘get the boys who are still missing to surrender. You may live.’

‘Then who shall I live with?’ You ask him with a smile. You recall Slingsby cavorting with the Ribbon Boys at Brownlea. Singing at the top of his voice, ‘And I shall love you all the day, every night we’ll kiss and play...’

‘Shall I live with thee young George? If tha wert old, tha’dst know I love thee.’ The smile curls your lip.

Which of the Ribbon Boys would be with you for the next shearing season? Who will be having a drink with Mr Inns as the wool wagon rolls off to market? None will survive this. You suddenly realise there is no other path than this. No romance greater. You cannot be thicker with the boys than you are in this fight together. It is a death roll and you are all clasped in its grip. Still you owe the lad something. You take a crumpled note from the band of your hat and push it into George’s palm. ‘If tha’rt taken by the horse police give ut to Mr. Liscombe. John Liscombe, no other.’ The boy nods but he does not understand.

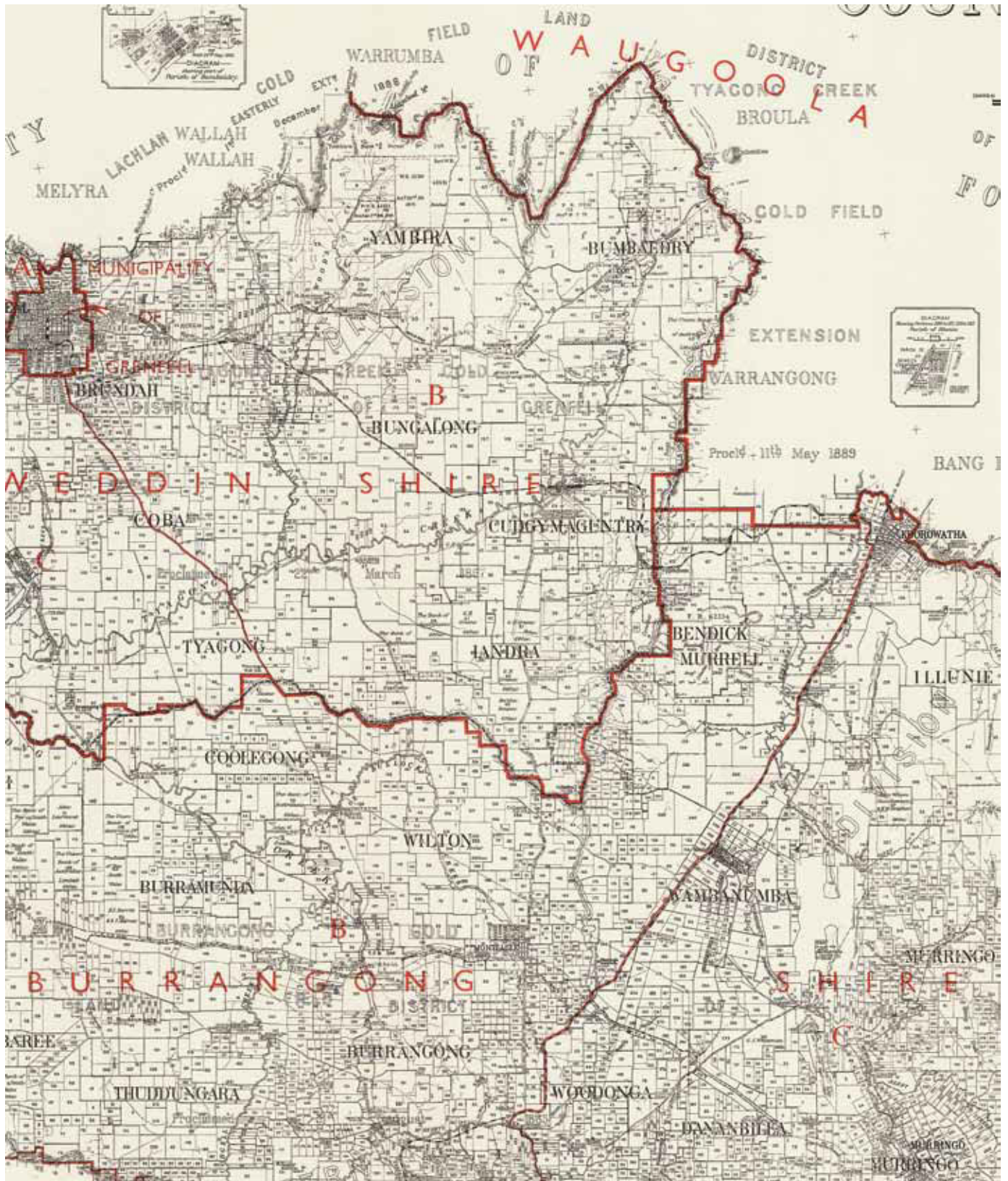
‘Mr. Evernden wants an answer, he says, ‘James Green has been spared only to bring you in.’ His pleading rankles you. His concern for the gormless pickpocket makes you suddenly angry. You turn to look at the face of James Green beside you. His ear is cocked for eavesdropping. You smack him across the side of the head. ‘Take my answer for Mr. Evernden.’ James yelps like a kangaroo dog and scuttles from the fire.

Driver and Kenny awake to the ruckus, not knowing what has passed between you. They step into the light. Now you turn on George with your clenched fists. ‘Get thee gone! For owt I know the Devil hisself sent you here.’ Driver grabs George by the scruff. You look into their frightened faces and tell them, ‘The Ribbon Boys are boun’ by oath one to another. The blood we shed, has boun’ us one to another. Our cut is deawnt. It is finished.’ Kenny takes Green by the arm and twists it behind his shoulder blades. You tell Driver and Kenny to take the boys down to Webster and Gleeson at the creek and give them two fresh horses. You throw the pannikin into the fire and the spirits burst into flame.

This memory stays with you, even here in the cell, even in these last days. You recall the fire flaring under that great black dome of sky. After your anger died down, you were left with the thought that at least George had got away. You stayed to seize the sword, but you took it by the blade end. Now George Mole is thrown to you again by Evernden. He still wants the same information, but now it is in exchange for the boy. It is the price of his redemption. It was a mistake to let Liscombe know that you wanted him protected. You sidle up to George upon the floor. He is shivering with fear. The fear of you? His face is much more beaten than last time. His frame has wasted from the month of prison gruel. You raise your arm and wrap it round him. You slide him, quaking, into the warmth of your chest. All that long night you hold him but you never touch him. This is atonement. Not a word passes between you.

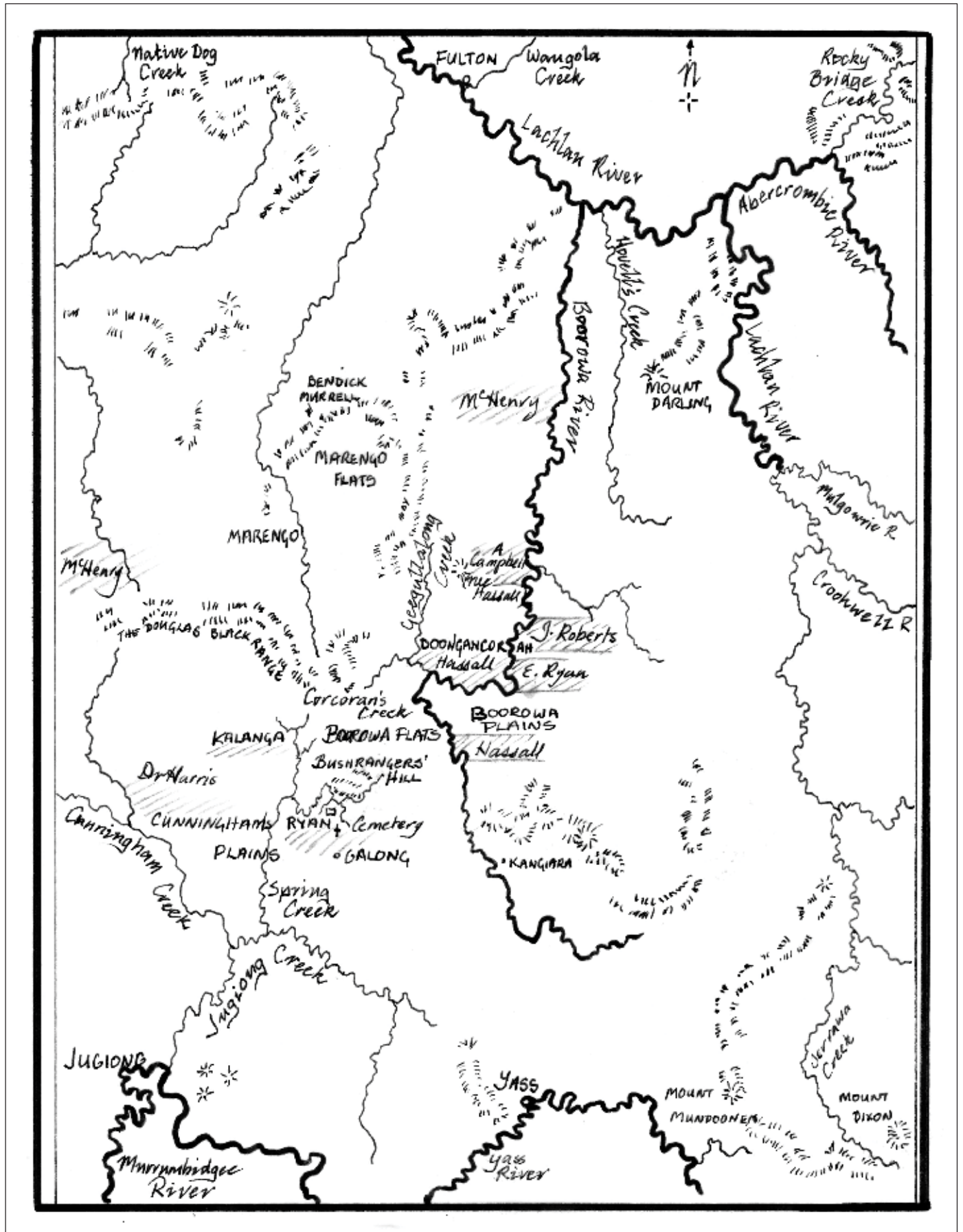






Department of Lands 1939, 'Map of the county of Monteagle, Eastern and Central Divisions, N.S.W.', 4 edn, Dept. of Lands, Sydney [4347874; MAP G8971.G46 svar]





Mud Map of Boorowa District circa 1830

## Chapter 9

### *Gaol Cell, Bathurst Settlement, All Saints' Day, Monday, November 1<sup>st</sup> 1830*

This is the first day of the Irish New Year when the cattle are brought in from summer pasturage and beasts are slain for the winter. In the New Country, all of the seasons and old observances are upside down in the New Country. If you could see beyond these four walls, Ralph, on this day a huge herd of stolen beasts are being driven from the Warrumbungles to Cox's station on the American River. There are 137 head of cattle bearing over a dozen different brands including five bullocks, ten horses and ninety three cows. More cattle than a single gang could rustle in a week. Six bushrangers, twelve stand of arms and nine pack horses have been taken to Maitland. In those packs are the makings of a settlement. Weapons and ammunition certainly, but also hoes and farm implements; a shoemaker's hammer; five pairs of trousers; three checked shirts. There are items that Bowen's victims, Hugh Cameron, John Rotten and John Town, could not claim nor recognise – two waist coats, two pairs of corduroy trousers, a pair of velveteen trousers, two pair of blue trousers and four blue jackets. Just the cut and colour that Jack Donohoe preferred.

It is sunrise and the high square of orange sky brings a reprieve from the black thoughts of the night. Constable Parker comes into the cell and takes George Mole from your arms. The priest is coming, he says, and will hear all of your sins confessed. He handles the boy like a whore but the lad knows nothing and you fear what will become of him when Evernden learns he has nothing to say. George has the look in his eyes of an old man past caring but he is barely nineteen. Donohoe died in the way he would have wanted – not bound down by iron chains, but clean and swift. If Donohoe had confessed before he died and made peace with God for his transgressions, he would be in a state of grace on All Saints Day.

The sudden clank of the iron door makes you start. A long black robe sweeps into the room and your thoughts are scattered by the priest. He shakes the dust of the road from his hem. He is quick and energetic but you cannot match him on this day. He bends over your prone body and lays his hands on your temples, your heart, your leg. He is of compact build and around forty years of age. He moves with a matter-of-factness that suggests he has seen worse, although his brow knits together over those clear eyes. His broad mouth is downturned at the edges. Some remnant of the gentleman's youth sweeps a few auburn hairs around the perimeter of his high bare forehead, but his face is worn with care.

He carries in his breast the burden of many Irish boys and their grieving families. There are letters in his pockets from the Lynches, the Byrnes, the Daleys, the O'Briens and an IOU from Sampson Sealy for a Doctor's bill. For the past four years, he has not received a single shilling from the Government. It is as if Governor Brisbane's parting donation to the Chapel fund was meant to cover the term of Governor Darling's office. Therry has continued to perform all of the duties of Government Chaplain during that time but he is out of favour. He stands personally responsible for the debts of the Chapel to the value of five hundred pounds and supports twenty charity beggars each day.

Father Therry is a Cork man who studied his theology in Dublin and was all set for the fine life of the clergyman in the city when he stood on Cork harbour and saw Christ herded onto a convict transport. He followed him aboard. Now his black garments are frayed on the cuffs and hem and will go without mending. The rent in his charitable heart grows deeper each day. He asks if there were any young Australian born rebels with you on the Abercrombie. At first

you suspect Evernden has taken another tack and sent the priest to interrogate you, softly. Then you notice how nervously the priest fingers his rosary and you repent your silence. You tell him of the two Catholics who died on the Boorowa Flats and were buried without their rites. One was a convict called John Coffee but you will not name the other because he was free born and Evernden has no warrant for him.

‘How many innocent men have these cells held?’ He talks to himself as he surveys the walls, but he hopes to draw out your confidence. ‘A family in my care had a son who was incarcerated here four years ago. An innocent. The warder threw his servant into the cells for nine weeks. He was seventeen days on bread and water.’ Therry picks up your bowl from the floor. ‘The clerk told the servant the magistrates would release him if he swore to his master stealing a tarpaulin. He was not allowed out into the sunshine or to speak to anyone other than the gaoler. Solitary confinement it was.’

You know why Evernden has kept you alone in this cell. Surely the priest is safe. Surely you can trust him with your confession but you will not name others. Then Therry says, ‘His master’s name was John Redmond.’ This catches at your heart but you remain dumb as a pebble. ‘The servant would not speak against him. Redmond was acquitted of the charges and released, but not until after he had been dragged off to Sydney Town to stand trial. It was an attempt by his enemies to disgrace his family.’

You are standing upon the outside edge of a whole woven tapestry of family loyalties, grudges and vendettas. Even though the priest means no harm, there are Irish who would avenge any slight to Father Therry or to the Redmond family. One of their countrymen, John

Shea was asked for a donation to Father Therry's chapel by three whiteboys. He replied that he had already given enough money and the 'poor would never be able to build it.' One of the white boys said, 'if you were dying you would send for Father Therry,' to which Shea replied, 'Father Therry could not save me.' At this, the whiteboys set upon him and he nearly forfeited his life then and there. Later, Shea dropped the charges against Murphy and settled with him. Edward Ryan acted as witness. This was John Murphy, Roger Murphy's cousin. White boys would avenge a slight to Father Therry or to the Murphy and Redmond families, even if the offended parties were unaware of it. You look directly into his eyes, 'I'm sworn. I'st not speak the names of the boys that are not present here with us, be they dead or alive. They'll have no shame from me.'

Nevertheless, your final surrender was not an act of glory. Your fire in the saddle of the hill is kept burning through the long night to warm the boys and hearten Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne who are captives of Macalister in the camp below. The fire light also attracts Captain Walpole and in the dark the boys can hear wagons and hooves rumbling across the Flat. Webster and Gleeson take Mole and Green to the south bend of the creek and give them the two best horses to ride away. Not for love of the youngsters but for love of the horses. According to Webster too many fine horses have already been shot. Yesterday, in the gun battle, Gleeson shot another one of the troopers' mounts. That made seven, including the horses killed in the Abercrombie. Gleeson said the Ribbon Boys could never outrun Walpole's cavalcade and that the horses should not suffer in the attempt. Once Mole and Green had cleared the creek, Webster and Gleeson sent the rest of the horses off in the opposite direction. Then they climbed back up the hill to your campfire.

Kenny, Daley and Driver had come to the fireside with their weapons but there was no ammunition to reload. You kept the double barrelled gun beside you. There was enough kindling to boil the last of the water. Gahan snored fitfully because he was still lying on his face. He woke himself with the noise of it. When the last of the Ribbon Boys had gathered together, you asked them quietly, 'Where shall we make our last stand Boys?'

You surveyed your position. In the silver light the plains stretched out like a moonscape. None of you knew this land. If the Boys won the next battle where could they run? You were betrayed – even in this little Tipperary. Yet you could not contemplate being left to die like John Coffee unblessed in this alien place – as blood and raw bones carrion for the wild dogs. Daley began praying out loud to his wife and four children. Kenny worried at the ring on his middle finger. It still bound him to his colleen in Cork and their infant. Gleeson had lost his brother. Kearney and Sheppard and Dunne may soon be dead. There was one unbroken promise left, one way to see your loved ones again. As Father Therry would have said, 'to make a decent death of it'. You all knew the answer to the question. The last stand would be on the gallows. The Boys put their weapons in a pile and waited for the dawn.

By sunrise, Captain Walpole arrives at Macalister's camp at the bottom of the hill with fresh ammunition. Macalister has made a truce that he will not break before dawn and Captain Walpole will not attack until after breakfast. He has come this far to find the Ribbon Boys and wants to savour the victory. Captain Walpole sets his table in the sunshine and old Croughwell serves him fresh fish. The longer they wait to approach the hill, the weaker you become. Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne could bleed to death but for the fact that Lachlan Macalister is worried about his constable, Daniel Geary. Geary is still a convict on his Ticket

of Leave, having been recommended by Macalister for capturing Murphy and Tennant. Macalister is afraid Geary will not survive to earn his Absolute Pardon. He has a young wife and four children at Goulburn. The Lieutenant asks the Captain for permission to take one wagon with the wounded back to the hospital at Bong Bong. Macalister is nursing a grazed wrist. Captain Walpole agrees to their immediate departure. Being the officer in command, Captain Walpole can claim the final capture as his sole achievement. Martin Grady assures the Captain there can be no more than six or seven of you left.

The Ribbon Boys watch the wagon depart with Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne. Webster and Gleeson wave their hats at them and shout ‘Halloa!’ from the top of the hill. The sight sends the soldiers scrambling around the Flat like red ants. But you and the boys have no fight left in you. There is no food or water and no way to escape. The soldiers are mustered into a regimental formation at noon and march up the hill. Captain Walpole sits upon his horse like the Grand Old Duke of York, commanding from the bottom.

Having no other ammunition Gahan uses his tongue as a weapon. He sings at the top of his lungs, ‘Over the hills and over the Main, To Flanders, Portugal or Spain, King George commands and we’ll obey! Over the hills and far away!’ You all join in the chorus. Gahan is relentless in his taunting of the soldiers, ‘Courage, boys ‘tis one to ten, but we’ll return all gentlemen, while conquering colours we display! Over the hills and far away!’ Kenny and Daley are provoked out of their melancholy by Gleeson who chimes in ‘We all shall lead more happy lives by getting rid of brats and wives that scold and bawl both night and day. Over the hills and far away!’ But the beating drums and awful spectacle of the oncoming force soon over-powers you.

When the soldiers crest your hill, Gahan damns and blasts them, cursing the Irish-born among them in Gaelic until the very last moment when he is hit with a musket butt and silenced. Despite holding their hands up for the irons, Kenny and Driver are beaten by the soldiers and rough handled down the hill. Webster and Gleeson are taken more carefully as they still have fight left in them. As for you Ralph, Sergeant Doyle approaches you warily. You are propped up beside the ashes of the campfire, with Captain Steele's double barrel gun between your legs. You wish you had the courage, as Donohoe planned, to shoot yourself. Sergeant Doyle will not do it for you. You do not want the suicide's grave. He orders Private Conners take the gun from your hands. You are the last one brought down from the hill.

The only concession Captain Walpole granted was to bury the dead. Coffee and the Australian lad were laid in the only yielding patch of stony ground the soldier's spades could find. You tell Father Therry that two Catholic boys rest within sight of the Bushranger's Hill. They were unarmed and they could not be saved. The telling of it unnerves you. It is the first time you have broken down before a priest, or any man.

When they hanged Tommy, the Bathurst aborigine, Father Power stepped up at the last minute and baptized the native. There was outrage among the Protestants. Two of the prisoners hanged that day had entered the gaol Protestants and been converted by the inmates and incessant visits of Father Therry and Father Power. The editor of the *Sydney Monitor* suggested, 'when there is any extremely illiterate Protestant condemned to die, he is immediately assailed by one or other of these constant inmates of the prison, and is told that there is no salvation out [sic] of mother Church. He is told, moreover, of the mystery of



confession, and the clear conscience it leaves one; of the mystery of absolution, and the comfortable state it procures one; of extreme unction, and the safe passage it secures to another and a better world.' Were these the promises Father Therry made to you?

The *Sydney Monitor* complained that the Protestant minister has 'a most dismal and unwelcome tale to tell, when he tells the culprit, that without such repentance as arises from a thorough and entire change of heart, he cannot be saved. In this dilemma, the hardened and ignorant criminal, terrified at the approach of death and the certainty of judgment, and feeling none of that sorrow for sin, or sense of its heinousness which is indispensable in genuine repentance, throws himself into the arms of the Priest, who administers a course of opiates to the conscience of his willing patient, and lulls him asleep in the fatal assurance that all is well.' Perhaps it is simpler than this. Perhaps the Irish priest, feeling the suffering of Mary for her son when he was martyred by the colonizing authorities, stands alongside the guilty man whereas the English Minister judges him. The Protestant ministers, in your experience Ralph, give good character references to murderers and perjurers or act as magistrates and flogging parsons for the government.

Father Therry takes from his vestments a small vial of holy water and wets his fingers as he speaks in a low voice, 'Do you wish to be saved?' In your present state of mind, I doubt you can grasp the question. Like John Shea, you hardly believe it is in his power, but your head nods and the priest proceeds. Making the sign of the cross upon your forehead, he says the same words you have heard in a cathedral, yet never so oddly spoken as in this place, 'In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti'. Your eyes close and water runs down your cheek

but you are still unable to speak. This is not a confession but a baptism. This is as much as they did for Tommy. With an economy of movement that is almost feminine, Father Therry gathers up his rosary and bible and raps upon the cell door. The gaoler, still listening for a confession, opens it immediately. Father Therry says he will return for the last rights on the day of execution.

In the cool darkness of your cell you begin to count your sins. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt honour thy father and mother. These omissions are not the sins that gnaw at your conscience. You have allowed the boys to be taken without a fight. You have brought the fury of the military upon their heads. You have abandoned Slingsby. Shall I tell you what will become of him? I can offer you the absolution of history Ralph.

Edward Slingsby could have remained a free man. His wounds healed although he was wanting a finger. He could ride between Mount York and the Lachlan without being arrested because he was free by servitude and continued to work for John Grant. John Slingsby will receive his certificate of freedom in March of next year but by that time, Edward will have been drawn into the old vendettas and the old ways. He lives in a hut on Native Dog Creek with a shepherd called Patrick Nowlan, whom you met at Henry Fulton's station. They are the same age and quite close but Slingsby is also visited by his friend Michael Lynch. Michael has had his ticket of leave for five years and is still the stockman for Robert Armstrong. He is often stopping by on his way to the Lachlan with cattle. Other men known to the Ribbon Boys have come to Nowlan's hut – Denis O'Brien and the provocateur Alexander Grant.

I call Grant a provocateur because I have studied him through the years. It seems he is often at the centre of a crime but escapes punishment by either acting as an approver, or informer or by having the witnesses against him fail to appear at his trials. He was transported for seven years in 1818 for an assault which was ‘an atrocious crime committed on a person much inferior in strength and without provocation.’ Three months before the Bathurst Wars against the aborigines began he was the servant of Reverend William Walker, the brother-in-law of Reverend Thomas Hassall, at their family property on the Fish River. Let me take you back to that time so that you might know the kind of man that Slingsby and Lynch fell in with.

In May of 1824, a group of about thirty aborigines visited James Hassall’s farm and took all of the provisions from the hutkeepers. John Nicholson, Mrs Hassall’s servant, said that he had seen seven dead stockmen arrive in Bathurst on a cart from Samuel Marsden’s farm. They had been speared. Rumour was that Mr Tyndale, twenty miles from Raineville, had lost three men. Two were burned alive in their huts. The hutkeepers were deserting the properties and leaving the stock, or refusing to leave their huts. Marsden had supplied the government stores with 6,127 pounds of beef that year. Although the Commandant suspected the stockkeepers were the aggressors, he sent soldiers to protect Marsden’s cattle interests. Judge Forbes had written to his friend, Wilmot Horton, saying claims of native hostility were exaggerated and the troubles stemmed from the white’s ‘improvident destruction of kangaroos and wild animals and an abuse of their women.’

Soon afterwards, John Hollingshead, a servant of Mrs. Hassall, went into the bush to retrieve some horses and was ambushed by a group of about thirty aborigines. They chased him to within a mile of Mrs. Hassall's property. He had a spear through his left elbow and another in his thumb bone. Alexander Grant advised the overseer, William Lane, to arm the convict men so they might pursue the natives, 'else they would all be murdered'. Afraid for his family, Lane gave the men horses, four muskets and a cutlass. Alexander Grant led the party. There were three convicts John Nicholson, John Creer and Henry Castles and two Australian-born settler's sons, John Johnston and William Clarke. They went northwest along the main road retracing Hollingshead's retreat. They came back that evening reporting that they had not seen any natives.

On a Tuesday morning two weeks later, Captain Raine's servant Henry Trickey was on his way to grind corn at the Sidmouth Valley. He was near the main road to Bathurst when he saw crows and eaglehawks circling above the Government Reserve. He found the putrefied bodies of three aboriginal women, a lubra and two young girls. He buried them with a spade, but they were soon dug up again on the Commandant's orders and the surgeon Stephen Geary Wilks performed an inquest. One died of a gunshot wound to the skull. There were no marks upon the second and the old lubra had a sword wound which had penetrated the cavity of the abdomen.

Alexander Grant and the men he had led out in search of aborigines were questioned. Clarke and Castles told the overseer they had seen a party of natives and Alexander Grant said he had come across thirty aborigines wielding spears. Grant called the other men, who were far behind him, to come up. A volley of shots were fired and some aborigines fell but he could

not tell the age or sex of them. He said later that they discovered one was an old lubra but he didn't know about the others. Henry Castles admitted that as he passed, he gave the old woman a prick with his sword. Upon this evidence the men were charged and sent for trial.

Before the trial, a memorial signed by land holders William Cox J.P., Reverend Samuel Marsden, George Ranken and George Innis, was sent to the Governor stating that seven of their servants had been barbarously murdered and the huts were being deserted. A meeting with Governor Brisbane took place on July 16<sup>th</sup> at Government House Parramatta. It was chaired by Reverend Samuel Marsden and attended by William Cox, Mr. Lowe, William Lawson, George Blaxland and Mr. Walker. They asked the Governor to increase the number of Bathurst magistrates and send a large force to capture the natives and 'make them inoffensive' while offering a reward of victuals and blankets to any natives who would give up their leaders.

Three weeks later, the trial of Hassall's government servants was held in Sydney Town. The charge was 'an assault upon an aboriginal woman, resulting in death' which had been downgraded to manslaughter because 'there were certain transactions which prevented a capital charge.' Alexander Grant was not charged and in presenting evidence he changed the story he had given to the overseer. He said that he had been separated from the men at Eight Mile Swamp. The accused men were three miles away and he did not know if they had fired during their separation. Reverends Samuel Marsden and Thomas Hassall spoke for John Johnston and William Clarke. Mr. William Cox, J.P. also gave them a good character. John Johnston's father, William, had succeeded Reverend Hassall's father as superintendent of the herds and flocks, so the young free settlers were acquainted since childhood.

Most of the evidence concerned testimonials about aboriginal atrocities on the farms. It was never determined how the women came to receive fatal wounds. After describing the wounds he had noted at the inquest, Surgeon Wilks said he had heard of thirteen men killed by natives and speculated that some were scalped while still alive. He could not swear to this. The Attorney General noted that in the law 'no difference existed between individuals, whether they were black or white' and although the men were afraid, they had been 'unjustifiably rigorous'. Castles was chastised for pricking the old woman with his sword. All of the prisoners were acquitted on Friday August 6<sup>th</sup> 1824.

The following Monday's *Sydney Gazette* contained a letter to the editor that quoted the loss of cattle and sheep at Bathurst and called for men to meet force with force in order to 'stop the effusion of human blood.' Brisbane declared martial law west of Mount York and despatched the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment to help the magistrates. One hundred men in four parties under Major Morisset, William Lawson, Mr Walker and George Ranken were sent against the aborigines. As William Cox put it, 'the natives many now be called at war with the Europeans.' One observer wrote to the *Sydney Gazette*, 'Can it be expected that the untutored heathen will tamely submit to see his parent, brother or friend murdered? Which was the case in the first commencement of hostilities at the Judge's station... those men who went out on horseback to hunt them down, indiscriminately firing at all they could overtake, had no parent, friend or brother's death to revenge.' The effusion of human blood which followed has never been greater.

By December, the slaughter was over. Governor Brisbane wrote to inform the Colonial Secretary that the natives were 'hourly coming in to tender their submission and sue for peace and protection'. One correspondent to the *Sydney Gazette* observed, 'the poor objects often visit Wellington Valley with gunshot wounds, to have them dressed.' Governor Brisbane repealed martial law by the end of the year.

Since that time, Alexander Grant has avoided other punishments. He has been in court on a charge of stealing an ox from Charles Whaylan but the material witness failed to materialise and the charges were dropped. By his own admission, he was once taken up for receiving property stolen from Mr Hassall's stores but never tried for it. In 1831, he lives about fifty miles from Nowlan's hut. Native Dog Creek is in the Brisbane Valley about two days ride north east of the Abercrombie caves. It is 30 miles from Bathurst but only 17 miles from Dunn's Plains across country. Alexander Grant is a friend of Patrick Nowlan and he visits Slingsby and Lynch at the hut. He has lived with them before. Denis O'Brien has been recaptured in the past twelve months and has bolted from Number 6 Iron Gang. In summer he lives in a cave on the Hassall lands near the Fish River but in the winter he visits Slingsby and Lynch when Nowlan is away with the sheep. On Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup> 1831, Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien walk seventeen miles, through the bush, to Sampson Sealy's farm on Dunn's Plains. They have blackened their faces with a burnt cork so it would seem to be a raid. Lynch has a history of cattle theft rather than house robbery. Slingsby knows that Mr. Grimes recently sold a cow for ten pounds but there would not be much else of value in the house. O'Brien says he is looking for the master, but why?

As you recall, Ralph, the Ribbon Boys visited Dunn's Plains for the purpose of robbery before. This time they are on foot and carrying a musket apiece. None of the shepherds come out of the men's hut which is about two hundred yards from the house. Perhaps Alexander Grant has already paid them a visit to keep them quiet? It is sunset. Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien hear a shot and follow the sound to the top of a hill that overlooks a creek. Four ducks fly up from the reeds and return to roost near a sprawling gum tree. The shooter, a gentleman, runs back to the house with his empty gun and returns with a fowling piece. His servant, Edward Grimes, follows him at a long distance.

On the rise, at the back of the house, Slingsby hails the servant. Slingsby asks, 'Who is that down there?' Grimes answers it is his master. O'Brien says, 'That is the very fellow we want.' Do they remember Watson Steele's testimony in Court? If they do they should know that he said the Ribbon Boys used no bad language or violence when they robbed his farm at Dunn's Plains last year. Slingsby puts his musket to the servant's chest and warns him not to watch.

O'Brien and Lynch walk down to the figure in the creek calling for him to lay down his fowling piece. There is a short altercation. The gentleman shoots Michael Lynch in the leg and he falls wounded. The gentleman is shot twice through the chest. This is not Sampson Sealy. He is Captain William Payne, the new owner of Sealy's farm. He is a free settler who has been in the colony less than a year. O'Brien may have mistaken him for Captain John Payne. That rascal had swindled a fellow Irishman and embarrassed the Redmond family by courting their young daughter, Mary, while being pledged to another woman. In any case, whether vendetta or accident, the murder is a shock to Slingsby.



Slingsby tells Grimes, 'That man is shot and I am very sorry for it, if I had been there it should not have happened!' Denis O'Brien is remorseless. When he comes back up the hill, he asks Slingsby if Mr. Grimes is of good character. Slingsby replies, 'Oh, he is pretty good.' O'Brien says to Grimes, 'It is as well for you or we would have served you as we served the cove.' He still believes he is serving some higher cause by bringing justice to all bad masters, but by all accounts, William Payne was a genial host, a fair master, and a progressive farmer.

You told George Mole that the blood you shed binds you to your friends. But Ralph, have you grasped the whole truth? The secret George must employ if he is ever to be free? Violence is a two-edged sword that, just as surely, binds you to your enemies. Vengeance means you can never be free of your victims. This old song plays out in Denis O'Brien's bravado and his delusion of administering justice damns your friend Edward Slingsby.

O'Brien asks Grimes where the arms and ammunition are kept and he leads them to the kitchen which stands a few yards from the main house. This is to disarm them rather than to collect weapons – Captain Payne's fowling piece has been left lying beside him in the water. Not one of Payne's three shepherds stir from their hut, despite the sound of shooting. Another man, who has been covered by the darkness, goes into the house. You would think this is Michael Lynch, but Grimes later swears it is a taller man. Michael Lynch is only five feet seven and he has been wounded in the leg and cannot walk up from the creek unassisted. Mrs Grimes and a servant boy called Brophy are in the kitchen hut. They are ordered to pass out the gun that is kept behind the kitchen door and a lamp. O'Brien guards the two captives in

the kitchen while Grimes is taken to the storeroom. There is no key so Slingsby breaks the door in with an axe and returns to the kitchen with a pot of rum. He makes Mr. Grimes, Mrs. Grimes and Brophy drink the rum to render them harmless. Slingsby asks if they have any victuals as they are raw with the cold. Mrs Grimes makes mugs of tea for the men.

It is dark now and a servant called Shaw comes toward the kitchen with a calf from the barn. O'Brien orders him to go away but Shaw asks 'What shall I do with the calf, sir?' To which O'Brien replies, 'Don't 'Sir' me, I am no more than yourself.' He levels the musket at Shaw's chest but Mrs Grimes cries out, 'Don't shoot him, for God's sake, he is a poor simpleton.' O'Brien orders him to leave the calf and come into the kitchen. Shaw goes directly to a seat by the fire and stares into it without turning around. O'Brien asks the servant boy how his master behaved toward him. The lad says, 'Very well'. O'Brien laughs, 'The blighter is in hell now. He had a beard like a goat, and we have made a goat of him!'

The other servant, Brophy, is ordered to fetch the master's horse with a saddle and bridle. When the mare is brought from the stable, the boy is made to load her with the property stolen from the house. One of the bushrangers tells Brophy not to look at their faces, but then the man laughs and the darkness of his face makes his lack of teeth more striking. Brophy will later tell the judge, 'Upon my solemn oath, the tall man had a vacuum in front.'

Meanwhile, O'Brien has forgotten to disarm the gun that he pointed at Shaw. He moves it from the kitchen door and it goes off half cocked. Mrs Grimes is much upset by it and O'Brien says, 'don't' mind mistress there is no body hurt.' Denis O'Brien was never very

good with guns. They will not let the servants go down to Captain Payne even though Mrs Grimes fears wild dogs will attack the body. He is left lying in the swamp until dawn. Denis O'Brien had stolen the Captain's black trousers. O'Brien said to Mary Grimes, 'I suppose you will be coming to Bathurst one of these days to swear our lives away.' She replied, 'No, there's none of us knows you boys.' O'Brien laughed, 'My own mother would not know me now.' Nor would yours Ralph, had she lived to see it.

Slingsby and O'Brien help Lynch onto the mare and they all head back to Nowlan's hut. It is a bright moonlit night. At three o'clock they reach the hut and hide the spoils in the bush while Michael Lynch strips off and goes to bed. A settler called William Redfern is sleeping at the hut. He arrived the day before to ask Lynch to take him to the Lachlan. Lynch tells him he cannot go because his horse is knocked up. Nowlan makes them tea but he doesn't notice that Lynch is bleeding. He thinks Slingsby's face looks like he has been cleaning smutty wheat. William Redfern leaves the hut early the next morning and comes across Denis O'Brien in the bush, armed only with a pannikin. Redfern later tells the judge that he has been much in the bush since coming to the Colony and that 'a tin pot is quite a common article to find in the possession of a bushranger.'

Nowlan is out with the sheep all of the next day and when he returns at sunset he sees Alexander Grant, Slingsby and Lynch riding off with some bedding and a bag of food. Nowlan says that he does not see Alexander Grant again for four to six weeks. Slingsby returns after a couple of days and asks for any news. He seems melancholy. He takes a bag of flour and sugar and leaves again.

Five days after the murder of Captain Payne, Lieutenant Maule and some Mounted Police come to Nowlan's hut. They ask who lives with Nowlan and they notice that Nowlan's musket has been recently fired. Two hours after the police leave, Slingsby returns. Nowlan quizzes him about firing the musket. Slingsby takes the musket from him and removes the new flint. He goes away but returns that night with a bottle of rum. Slingsby is upset. Nowlan has lived with him for months and they are tight. As they pour the rum, Nowlan asks where Slingsby got the bottle. He says 'from a fair distance' and confesses he was at the murder of Captain Payne with O'Brien and Lynch. Nowlan throws the rum into the fire and the flame almost ignites the shingle bark. Slingsby is remorseful. He tells Nowlan he was guarding the overseer while two men went down to the swamp and in less than a moment three shots were fired. Slingsby said, 'when the pieces went off I would not wish it for the world'. He said he had robbed the house but it was never his intention to kill the Captain. Nowlan comforted him by saying, 'you have no occasion to be alarmed, nobody can hurt or harm you as you had nothing to do with it.'

By the time Slingsby made this confession to his friend, Patrick Nowlan had already told his old master, Reverend Henry Fulton, that three men were involved in killing Captain Payne. He could only have known that from Alexander Grant. Grant told the court he slept in Nowlan's hut on the night Slingsby went to the bush with Lynch. Nowlan swore that Alexander Grant was missing for six weeks, but Grant told the same jury that he slept at Nowlan's hut for three weeks continuous after he heard of the murder.

Slingsby and Lynch were arrested at Native Dog Creek at the start of August. Lynch was lame and the Mounted Police found a plant of stolen goods under a log a quarter of a mile from the hut. Denis O'Brien was discovered at a grass fire in the Brisbane Valley by the dairyman William McGill. He told McGill he was waiting to hear how Slingsby got on at Bathurst. McGill told him Slingsby was charged with the murder of Captain Payne. O'Brien contradicted him and claimed that 'he was the man who shot Payne and gave him his emancipation'. McGill knew O'Brien from having seen him on the Hassall property at Cowpastures. He invited him to Mr King's hut for something to eat. When they arrived McGill and the overseer took O'Brien captive.

O'Brien said he shot Captain Payne. George Busby examined the body at the inquest and reported there were two shots. One fired from the front lodged in the heart, the other came from the back through the heart and out of the groin. It must have been fired from a height. Michael Lynch was already wounded and lying on the ground in front of the Captain. Who fired the second shot? It may have been O'Brien or someone standing on the hill.

Magistrate Evernden rounds up a large number of suspects and approvers. The Gaol records show that in addition to Denis O'Brien, Michael Lynch and Edward Slingsby, the magistrate also arrests John Slingsby and two other shipmates from the *Guildford* – James Hollander and Michael Donohoe. Captain Payne's overseer, Edward Grimes and the shepherd Patrick Browne are also arrested on suspicion of murder. The men listed as approvers are Captain Payne's government servants – James Shaw, Thomas Brophy, Thomas Bradley and John Smith. Patrick Nowlan is brought in for a felony, and a man called David Anderson is arrested for 'being at Nowlan's hut.'

Michael Donohoe, John Culbert and John Buckley, are brought in from John Grant's station on Cox's River. They were in the vicinity of Captain Payne's farm at the time of the murder. Culbert later told the Sydney Town court that they had been brought in on suspicion of the murder but when found innocent, evil minded persons had accused them of robbing Mr Evernden's farm instead. Cuthbert claims he fought with two of Evernden's servants and they swore to get even. He told the court that Magistrate Evernden threatened to flog him if he asked any questions. Michael Donohoe gave evidence at the trial of Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien only to confirm that he knew nothing about it. In the confusion the only person who escaped suspicion was Alexander Grant.

The Supreme Court trial in Sydney Town took fifteen hours. Mr Edward Grimes at first told the shepherds and the police that he could not identify the bushrangers. At the trial, Grimes said he saw Slingsby the night before and knew his face even though it was blackened. He said the man that robbed the house had a finger missing from one hand. Alexander Grant, a witness for the prosecution, was asked to show his hands to the jury and he was missing a finger and a thumb of the right hand. He is also missing some teeth.

Grant was never arrested or even held in gaol as an approver but he gave evidence at the trial. He swore that he learned of the murder the following day, when Slingsby asked him to take Lynch to the bush. He said that Denis O'Brien and Slingsby came to his hut. Slingsby told him Lynch and O'Brien had shot the Captain and they had robbed the house. Before Slingsby made this full confession, Grant claimed, Denis O'Brien took out two pistols, crossed them

and made him swear an oath to secrecy. This is not the way O'Brien behaved when he boasted to McGill about the killing. William McGill was not put on his oath, O'Brien trusted him. After the trial, William McGill was milking Captain Lethbridge's cow. He was visited by some of the boys and beheaded. This is retribution. This is the vengeance that binds you to the dead. Why would Alexander Grant take an oath and then step forward to give evidence against Slingsby? Why would Grant say he had harboured the accused, unless he was deflecting attention from his own role in the crime? Why wasn't he charged with harbouring?

A great deal was made at the trial about the identification of Slingsby. Three witnesses said they knew him by his voice. Edward Grimes said he had seen him the night before the robbery. William Redfern said, 'I know the voice of a woman from that of a man; I think Slingsby has a voice like a woman.' Mrs Grimes identified O'Brien. Lynch was never identified by witnesses and he was absent at the 'confession' but his lame leg sealed his fate. Before a military jury, the judge pronounced Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien guilty of the murder and passed upon them the sentence of death. On the gallows, they were sullen rather than repentant. Slingsby addressed the multitude and said he forgave everyone as he hoped to be forgiven but that he was 'as innocent as the child unborn' of the murder for which he was being executed. Lynch said the Scotsman Alexander Grant had lied throughout the trial. He asked the crowd to take note of his example. He was guilty but he had been led from one crime to a greater one. O'Brien said not a word.

Your friend Slingsby took a heavy fall and died instantly. The other two struggled. After hanging in public for an hour, their bodies were cut down, put in sacks and taken to the hospital for the surgeons to dissect. This practice is a double insult to the Irish. Their bodies

do not go to their families for preparation, they are not laid out for the mourners and they have no coffins. Their bones rise up out of their shallow graves and are licked by the salty winds behind the Sydney Gaol. Are you responsible for the fate of Slingsby and of the Ribbon Boys? In what sense do you imagine you are their leader or that you could save them? Lynch and Slingsby were free. Still, they chose the darker future.

Did your insurrection save any of the government servants from maltreatment and starvation? A dozen will receive their Tickets of Leave and three will have their terms reduced. The Governor's inquiry into the causes of your complaints lead to men being removed from magistrate McKenzie's Three Brothers station where O'Brien commenced his cattle stealing career. By the middle of November, ten government servants will be brought before the bench of magistrates by an overseer. He claims they are justifiably complaining of the poor quality and quantity of their rations. One servant warns the magistrates, 'the treatment I have received from my master, I fear, will one day or other be the means of bringing him to an untimely end'. The master appears and complains that no wheat or flour can be found in the whole country. The bench remind the settler that although there is a shortage of wheat, he should not have sold the men's rations for his own profit. They draw up a schedule of rations for the settler to follow and warn that if the men complain again it will be reported to the Governor and the servants will be removed for reassignment. But the maltreatment continues after you are gone, Ralph. Captain Piper's son writes to his father in May 1831 saying, 'I heard yesterday that the Major and Mr Maule have received orders to investigate the state of Ranken farm, great complaints having been made by the men of the ration they receive. In fact I suspect nothing less than a famine here'.



As the result of the police casualties inflicted by the Ribbon Boys, the management of the Mounted Police is immediately taken from the care of the Commandant. The Regiments are too preoccupied with military matters to be chasing bolters and managing the budget. Captain Forbes of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment is promoted as Commanding Officer of the Mounted Police in New South Wales. In 1832, Thomas Evernden is fined two hundred pounds after he is successfully sued by a servant called Morrison for assault and unlawful confinement. Morrison was able to prove he had been wrongfully arrested, assaulted in the Bathurst Gaol and illegally transported to a place of secondary punishment. The case results in legal changes that diminish the power of the Magistrates to transport prisoners, although they are still able to send them to the iron gangs.

The Governor will soon depart from New South Wales tarnished by the Sudds and Thompson affair. The *Australian* will report little sympathy among the onlookers at the hanging of Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien and observe that although many are driven to rapine by bad treatment, 'how rarely is the crime of murder suffered to pass! Soon or late, by fair means or by foul, the bloody deed is out. So has it been with the above culprits. So may it yet be with General D. for the death of Sudds. We ask only for an impartial trial – fair and above board.' The reform of the summary justice laws will shortly limit the power of magistrates and trial by jury will limit the powers of the Governors.

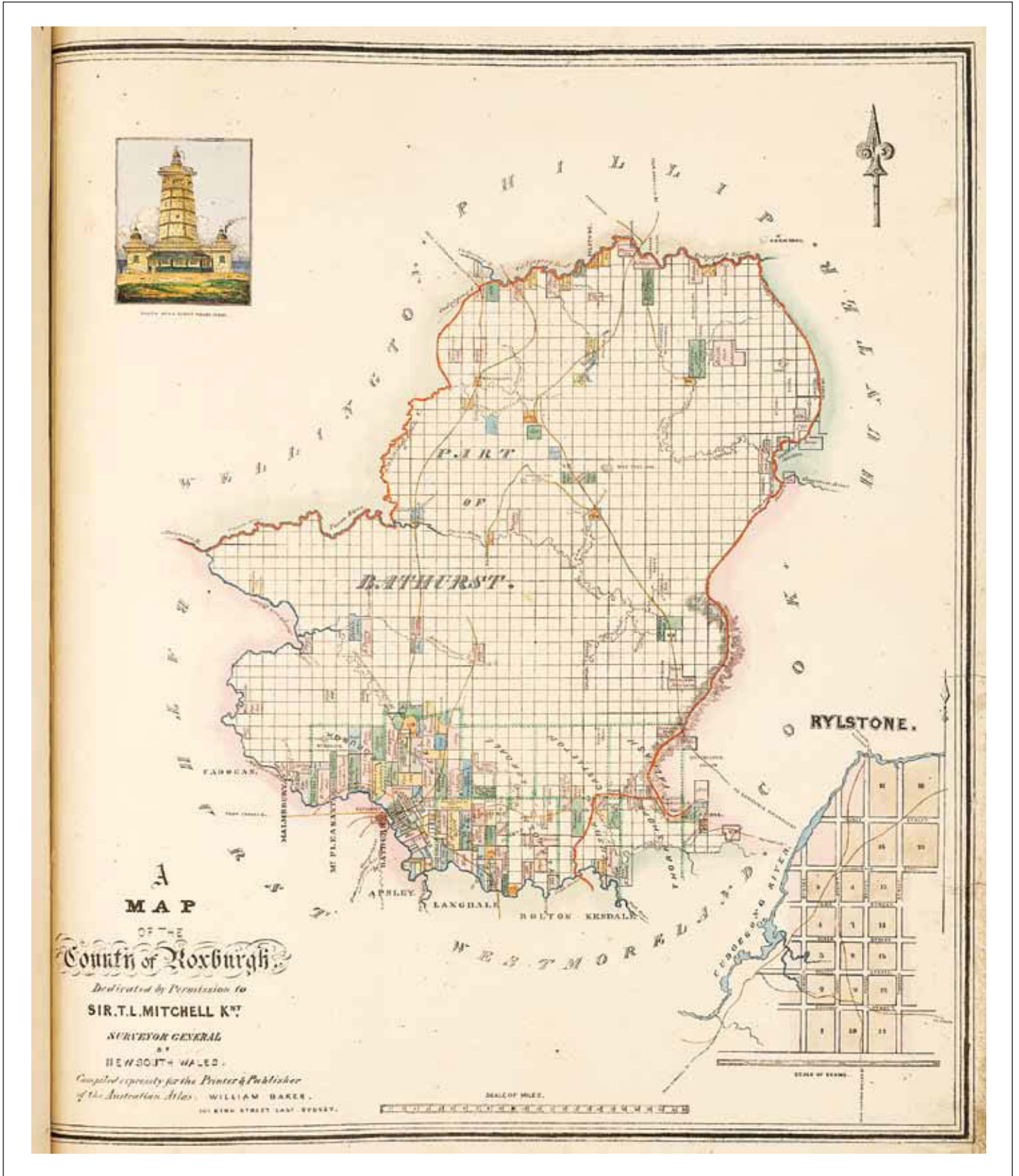
Will the execution of the Ribbon Boys be the end of insurrection and secret societies? Three years from now, the *Sydney Herald* editors report on an upsurge of Rockite activity on the Hunter and in County Argyle. They claim that a threatening letter has been painted on calico and draped on Doctor Gibson's fence. It reads: 'Donohoe is come alive again; ten pounds

reward for the heads of two Scotch tyrants.’ The Governor asks Lieutenant Macalister of the Goulburn Mounted Police to investigate. His report is disdainful of the threatening letter but says there is no other evidence of barn burning or the followers of Captain Rock. Dr Gibson of County Argyle writes to say the threatening letter does not indicate insubordination among his men who mostly need a well organised constabulary and fewer illicit spirits. A huge furore erupts between the newspapers as the “Macquarie street reporters” are accused of planting rumours to intimidate the new Governor. The suspicion is that conservatives are dissatisfied with the new Summary Punishment Act which removes public flogging. The first of these changes were instituted by Governor Darling the same week as your execution Ralph. It was generally believed the unrest at Stowford was triggered by your public flogging at the hands of Magistrate Evernden.

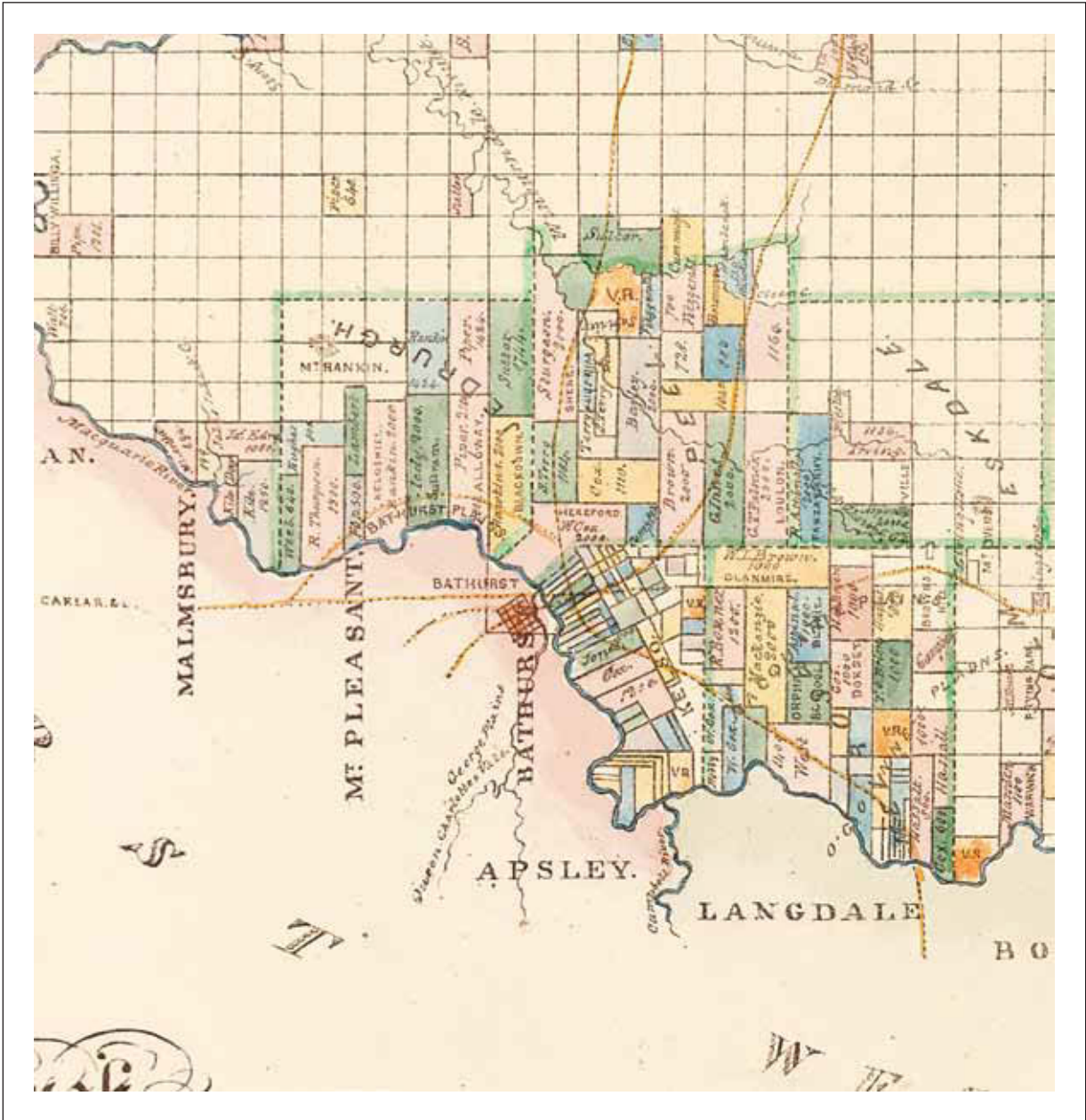
Henry O’Brien from the Murrumbidgee writes to the newspapers in 1833, to complain that his servants are sentenced to fifty lashes but because it has now to be done in an enclosed courtyard privately, the constables do not carry out the punishments and the men return as indolent and insolent as before. The Hunter and Sydney Town conservatives are accused of waving the firebrand of Rockite incendiarism to frighten the populace into retracting the liberal reforms of Governor Bourke.

Some months later it is discovered that Lieutenant Macalister and Doctor Gibson have manufactured the original report. There has been no threatening banner posted in Argyle. When these two men are transferred and replaced in County Argyle, ‘Othello’s occupation’ comes to an end. Do you see how the enemies of peace can use your violence to keep the fight alive? In thirty years’ time, the Irish editor and political activist Alexander Sullivan says

of the Ribbon societies, 'do not join them because by that act a man authorises the enemy to take him off before the moment arises for action. Whether wilfully, or only erringly, the man who helps in the government work of making a 'raw-head-and-bloody-bones' scarecrow of national efforts – of connecting them with midnight plots for midday anarchy – is an enemy of his country and a deadly foe to the cause of her freedom.' Will you make 'a raw-head-and-bloody-bones' scarecrow of yourself tomorrow, Ralph?



A Map of the County Roxburgh (<http://nla.map-raa8-s18> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 17)



A Map of the County Roxburgh (<http://nla.map-raa8-s18> Call Number: MAP RaA8 Plate 17) (excerpt)



## Chapter 10

### *The Commissariat Store, All Souls' Day, Tuesday November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1830.*

Like Mary Magdalene, I come to the cell to find the door ajar and the prisoner taken. This is All Soul's Day. The day when all churches commemorate the souls who have not yet been purified and entered heaven. The day ties the spiritual bond between souls in purgatory, souls in heaven and the living. There may be hope yet for Jack Donohoe. It seems appropriate that all of the Catholic boys, Kearney, Gleeson, Gahan, Kenny, Daley, Dunne and yourself, have been taken to Mass on the day of your execution. This was the one thing you asked for.

This will be the first Mass held west of the Blue Mountains and there are so many Catholic prisoners, convicts, soldiers and settlers that it has to be held in the Commissariat Store. This is on the site where Reverend Samuel Marsden and Rowland Hassall preached in eighteen twenty-two. It is the only public building large enough to take the crowd this day. The bales of straw and bags of wheat have been turned to extra seating and the floor is scattered with the strewn grain of this first fruitful season in three years. It is like Harvest Sunday, but a harvest of souls. The Celts recognise an older magic at work.

You are all sitting on the front pew, a rough pine beam set up on barrels barely strong enough to hold your chains and frames. The guards sit behind the condemned men. Beneath the heavy arches of the granary ceiling, the sunbeams filtering down from the high slat walls sanctify even the motes of dust. There are children with flowers in their hands sitting at the feet of the priest and their prettiness is indescribable. A young mother holds a baby wrapped in a white shawl and it suddenly occurs to you the little girls have all put a clean bishop on

with their crisp peak bonnets for a christening. This, more than any flogging, brings a tear to your eye. What do they see, these children of the regiment, living in the barracks for all of their young lives? What did you see Ralph, from the timberyard? Did you play soldiers with your brothers?

Father Therry has spread a rich brocade cloth upon the makeshift altar and on a nail above it he has placed the image of the crucified Christ. You cannot take your eyes from the Sacre Coeur. You have seen this image before but perhaps today it reveals the heart of James Greenwood. What will the worms make of your body this day and the next and the next? You have carried the boys chattering in your thoughts everyday for the last two years. What will the blackness sound like?

Do you think of the package on the Lancaster coach? The woman and child folded and forwarded to the Edinburgh surgeons. Your own coffin waits alongside nine others at the gallows. Will Surgeon Busby take your corpse for dissection? Dr Imlay is indisposed and cannot attend the hanging. Your nightmares have been of the Bolton charnel house where body parts are sold for a few pence. The gentlemen who require new teeth, from the decay of their rich diets, buy the yellowed teeth of soldiers reaped from the killing fields of France. These have been your thoughts of penitence. Within the coming hours you will be reduced to meat to be harvested or dissected. The horror may drive you to confession. The thought of worms eating your dear boys as they lay beside you in the cold earth is pressing on your mind, as it should be. You have three deaths on your conscience. Soon there will be a fourth.

I can bring you some comfort. By the Act for Better Preventing the Horrid Crime of Murder, Chief Justice Forbes could have sentenced you and Gahan and Gleeson and Kearney to be hanged in chains. He did not. The Act then advises that your body should be anatomised by the surgeons. This is to exorcise the evil. You are outside of the moral compass. Suicides in some counties are still buried with a stake through the hearts upon a cross road so that the evil is scattered in four directions. In four years time, the convicts of Norfolk Island will rise up. James Green and George Mole will witness it. The leaders will plan to murder Major Morisset and disperse his body parts to the four compass points of the island. But these fates will not befall you. They will bury you and the Ribbon Boys at the crossroads on the way to Fitzgerald's Valley. There is some compassion for the suffering of the convicts. Judge Frances Forbes has spared you the indignity of dissection. The atrocities of your times no longer shock me, but these small considerations do. There are letters in the newspapers by citizens who speak out against institutionalised starvation, flogging and slaughter. There are eloquent convicts who express their plight, and missionaries who speak for the voiceless. In your time, as in mine, those who call for justice are not silent they are unheeded.

Thankfully, the fumes of the sensori permeate the granary and the chanting numbs the mind to dreams and fantasies. In this brief pocket of time, convict and settler, free man and chained, are set free by the repetition of beloved phrases and incantations. The ritual, so long withheld, is like manna to the congregation. Father Therry's first reading is from Psalm 24 and seems to be directed at the children, 'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it: for he has founded it on the seas and established it upon the floods.' The children know only of Sydney Cove and the flooding Macquarie River. 'Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord,' Therry raises his voice, 'and who shall stand in this holy place?'



You are suddenly back on the hill at Boorowa, moonlight silvering the plains and the red coal campfires of the enemy glinting along the Flat. A hot west wind howls high above you. Father Therry reads from the book of Revelation, 'After this I saw four angels standing on the corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so that no winds could blow on earth or sea or against any tree. I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God.' Can you recall how the fingers of orange sunlight reached you that last morning, kindled a little fire on your frozen back, bathed the grey boulders hunched in the dark, with golden light? 'And he called out with a loud voice to the four angels,' just as Father Therry calls out, 'Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads.' Three hundred musket balls were fired into the canopy of trees at the Abercrombie. Perhaps the angels had already branded you as servants of another kind.

The wait seems interminable. The people recite the litany of the saints and respond to the priest, 'Lord this is the people that long to see your face.' It is the face of Father Therry they have travelled to see this day, and that will suffice. If all sinners are created equal, then it is not strange when the prisoner's bench joins the chorus, 'We sinners we beseech thee hear us that thou would spare us, pardon us, and bring us to future penance that thou would deliver our souls and the souls of our brethren, relatives and benefactors, from eternal damnation.'

Father Therry's movements are a ballet of blessing. Now the young mother steps forward. She is Susannah Keenan, with two daughters at her skirts and a baby in her in arms. The

officer on duty gives permission for Michael Keenan to step out of the ranks. He joins his wife and family. Father Therry lifts the twelve month old child from the mother's arms and makes the sign of the cross, anointing her head with river water now made holy. The child receives the name of Ann. Father Therry will leave Bathurst early the next morning but two days later Elizabeth Keenan, the three year old standing here beside her mother, will wander off to a swollen creek and drown. She will have to be buried by Reverend Espe Keane. In every fruit, the canker.

Today the people have gathered to see the priest and to witness your execution. Among the papers and rough notes of Therry's sermons, I have found these words in his handwriting, 'Let tears run down like a torrent day and night. Give thyself no rest. Arising, give praise, pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift up thy hands to God.' The crowds spilled out of the Store into the newly washed summer. Yet running like a dark current below the ceremony of light were the muffled drums of mourning. Jolting in a cart past the military barracks, you can see that the union jack and the regimental flags are flying. They are usually only displayed on a Sunday, but today they have been raised to half mast. The Dorsetshire regiment are covering their drums in black crepe. For a moment, it seems the world is in mourning for the wounded and sacrificed Ribbon Boys. Then you hear the church bells tolling in William Street. Perhaps they ring for the two dead horse police. Is Private James Stevens still languishing in the Police Barracks? Do the bells remind you of the peels for old Duke Frederick of York? This time they are mourning the death of King George IV, the profligate regent of your boyhood. The whole colony is in mourning until the new King is proclaimed on Saturday November 6<sup>th</sup>. That is the day after Guy Fawkes Night which was ever a celebration of the King's victory over traitors and Catholics.

Less than an hour later, back in your cell, Father Therry arrives to importune you and the boys to ‘soften your flinty hearts.’ Those are his words. Father Therry does not, despite the Governor’s suspicions, incite rebellion in the Catholics. At the gallows he urges repentance. His higher duty is to the saving of your souls. Next January, he will do the same for James Murphy and John Welsh, murderers from Norfolk Island, and for Hugh Duffey and Edward Bowen, absconders from the Hunter River. Have you prepared a gallows speech to ensure your entry into the sanctuary of the divine? James Murphy prepared a speech.

Remember James Murphy who cheated death with Tennant and Ricks and, by some twist of the law, was sent instead to Norfolk Island in 1829? Two years later, Commandant Morisset sends him back from Norfolk for butchering the overseer Adam Oliver with a reaping hook. Murphy will not give evidence but sits himself down in the dock as a protest at the Commandant not having sent any witnesses who could speak in his favour. The only witness to the crime confesses on the stand that he has been threatened into perjury by the gaolers. But on the scaffold, James Murphy confesses that he murdered the overseer to terminate a life of misery. He begins by relating the barbarity on Norfolk Island. As soon as he mentions starvation, the Sherriff, afraid the words will stir to life the coals of the recent Bathurst insurrection, tells the prisoner to be silent. The *Sydney Monitor* reports that James Murphy is forced to cut short his dying testimony and turn to his brief devotions. In this way, the newspaper said, prisoners ‘will have their mouths stopped by authority’.

John Welsh is turned off in January 1831, a week after Murphy and his conspirators. Welsh was a bushranger from County Argyle who formed an attachment to a convict called John

Cook. They were both sent to Norfolk Island. James Murphy helped Cook to kill the overseer, so the next night Welsh stabbed a fellow prisoner. On the gallows he expressed his regret that he and John Cook could not die together. At least you will swing with your companions Ralph.

The Hunter River Banditti are executed on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1831. Duffey, Bowen, Feeney and Mason are contrite upon the gallows. Hugh Duffey punched the approver John Jones in the eye on his way out of court, but there is no talk of revenge on the scaffold. Moments before the knot is tightened, Duffey asks Father Therry if he might address the crowd. He says, 'I have this morning received the sacraments and do not wish to tell a lie in this, my dying hour. Before I left Ireland, I committed a robbery in the county of Cavan for which a person was taken up, convicted and sentenced to transportation. He is now in this country, his name is...' Lost to all time. The crowd shuffled and the reporter could not hear it. Duffey continues, '... he is a shoemaker by trade and now I believe resides in the district of Bathurst. He is entirely innocent of the offence for which he suffers, it having been committed by me alone. I beg pardon of God and society for all the crimes I have committed. May the Lord have mercy on my precious soul, and I beg all you good people to pray for me. Oh, I entreat you to take warning by my fate, for believe me if I could begin my life anew I would lead a very different one.'

A shoemaker's last was confiscated at the Warrumbungles, so did Duffey take the cobbler with him from Bathurst? Was his gallows confession a final attempt to trick the devil and free a friend? Edward Bowen is the next to speak but instead he sings the hymn that Reverend Cowper gave to Cook the week before. It is the song of the thief upon the cross. 'The hour's

arrived – consigned to death, I own the just decree; Saviour! With my departing breath, I'll cry – remember me!' Under Father Therry's tutelage the hooded men warn the assembled crowd not to follow the wide path to perdition, calling out admonishments even to the final drop. How will you die Ralph - contrite or still fighting?

The priest enters your cell one hour before the execution. He places the bible and rosary on the bed and dons the vestments he will wear to the scaffold. He sits beside you on the blanket and takes one of your hands in his own. This is done to still the shaking, but is it fear or excitement? Does adrenalin have a connotation? So unfamiliar is this touch, this kindness, that you flinch. I close the door behind me and shut myself out. What right have I to listen to or even guess at your last confession?

What could I gain from appropriating the moment? A nod or gesture that would tell me I had guessed the essence of you? I have kept my part of the bargain. I have told you all I know and yet I have told you nothing. You cannot speak. You have not left one word I can rely upon. There is no deathbed confession, no memoir. Could you even put to tongue the complex feelings and forces that worked upon you? Could any of us definitively account for our own actions?

When your naked body broke through the glassy surface of the Campbell River on that hot November afternoon, it is as if the pieces of your story shattered into a million shards of mirror. Not of transparent glass that could be reconstructed, but shards of a mirror. Each piece of a mirror holds an image of the whole. Each historian, picking up one of these

versions of the truth, sees a recreation of the world you lived in but also a reflection of themselves. We have recreated you in our own image. There is no final reassurance, no essence to be guessed at. No unified history to be corrected. No single story is big enough to encapsulate the whole lived experience. Our different worlds, and different 'selves' within the worlds we make, are as fluid and changing as the river. The closest we can come to knowing one another is through that Art the Governor most feared – the Art of imagination.

There is a cloudy sky hanging low over the gallows on the Market Square. In the gathering crowd I see familiar faces – Surgeon Busby with Magistrate Thomas Evernden and Mary Jane Evernden, Messieurs Charles and William Suttor beside old Thomas Arkell. There are other settlers you have robbed, the Johnstons, Browns, Fultons, Rankens and fifty weary convicts who have been marched down from their huts. The hanging crowd is much larger than the congregation although some have evidently walked straight up William Street from one event to the other. There is not the lewd and obscene spectatorship one expects at Margate or Sydney Town. There are no pickpockets working the crowds and the body snatchers are not plentiful in Bathurst. The drums are covered in mourning and they beat out as the military arrive and take up their positions. Few of the jury have remained to see the effect of their sentencing. Judge Forbes, the lawyers and court officials having already scurried back to Sydney Town. There are three faces I am alarmed to see.

Michael Lynch, Edward Slingsby and Denis O'Brien are free as birds and they will remain so another year. If I were free to gossip, I could tell them that in twelve months they will swing on the gallows behind Sydney Gaol. Despite your hanging Ralph, and the deaths of all your friends, there will be Ribbonmen in Australia and Ireland for the next hundred years. There

will be violent retribution beyond your ken. New incantations of Captain Rock and the Ribbonmen will be tried in Lancaster Castle in one hundred and fifty years time. There may be no end to it.

Now the prisoners emerge from the gaol – all of you in magpie suits, some limping, all displaying the hardened features worn at the trial. You are to be turned off in two batches of four and six. It is a calculated punishment – to make the murderers watch their conspirators die before they are turned off. Robert Webster, Dominic Daley, John Kenny and James Driver have been condemned for the robberies and are the first to go. Reverend Espy Keane ministers to the Englishmen. When the pastor approaches James Driver, the convict leans forward and offers to take Keane with him. The pastor recoils and is so shaken by the encounter that later he will not accompany Driver's body to the grave. Prayers are said. None of the condemned men address the crowd. The hoods are lowered and the knots adjusted by Jack Ketch. The lever is pulled and the drop cracks open beneath them. You cannot watch their bodies shudder on the ropes. You stare into the crowd and see there the horror spread out like a miasma.

Father Therry ascends the scaffold with you. Now Kearney, Shepherd, Dunne, Gleeson and Gahan stand beside you. None of your boys have turned approver. None have split upon their mates. George Mole and James Green will be sent to Norfolk Island within the month, but within fifteen years they will both be free men. That is a pebble you can bite down upon when the rope is tightened.

The prayers are said. It is your turn to speak now Ralph. The only hint of what you said comes from the memoir of Mrs Busby. The belle of Kellosiel is an old woman when she writes of this day and her account is based upon hearsay. Agnes Busby claims you cried out, ‘My old mother said I would die like a brave soldier, with my boots on; but I’ll make a liar of her.’ Were these really your last words? According to the folklore of the town – which was ever a rich conflation of events, memory and gossip – you kicked your boots off into the crowd.

This last act of defiance, of pitiful bravado, is the last gesture we have to remember you by. But then, the life of Ralph Entwistle is not a hero’s journey. The rebellion of the Ribbon Boys is a cautionary tale. It is about the loss of young men, be they soldiers or servants, to the rhetoric of battle and the thrall of violence. It is about how we, as a people, respond to injustice. How we survive under the weight of brutality and under the systems that grind down dissent. Do we take the approver’s reward and slink back to our masters? Do we seek justice for the weak and disempowered? We called our rebels ‘bushrangers’. We quarantined ourselves from their suffering and we executed them. Shall we continue to brand those who challenge our systems, distance ourselves from their suffering and justify their deaths?

The hood is lowered over your eyes. The rope weighs heavy on your shoulders. You feel the knot resting in the hollow of your neck. The lever clunks and the board drops away beneath your soles. The weight of your hindquarters breaks your neck.

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## **Muster of People and Properties**

### **Aborigines**

Bungaree, King  
Tommy

### **Administrators, Police and Military**

Aubin, Lieutenant  
Blackman, Chief Constable James  
Bowerman\*, Assistant Commissary General Henry Boucher  
Brown\*, Lieutenant James  
Brown, Trooper  
Christie, Superintendent of Stock, William  
Dawson, Overseer of Convicts, Thomas  
De Laney, Lieutenant  
Doyle, Sergeant Michael  
Dumaresq, Captain William John  
Evans, George William  
Evernden, Lieutenant Thomas  
Eyre\*, Lieutenant George  
Farley, Chief Constable  
Fennell, Commandant (Captain) John  
Fitzgerald, Lieutenant  
Fitzgerald, Trooper  
Fitzgibbon, Private  
Flinders, Captain Matthew  
Forbes, Captain  
Futter JP, Robert  
Geary, District Constable Daniel  
Gorman, Constable Henry  
Graham, Private  
Gray\*, Lieutenant John  
Hodson, Sergeant William  
Howie, Captain  
James, Deputy Sherriff Sydney Town, Mr  
Keenan, Michael  
Keenan, Susannah  
Keenan, Ann  
Keenan, Elizabeth  
Ketch', The Hangman 'Jack  
Kirkley, Lieutenant  
Le Merchant, Lieutenant  
Lloyd\*, Quartermaster Benjamin  
Logan, Captain Patrick  
MacAlister, Lieutenant Lachlan  
Maule, Honorable Lieutenant Lauderdale  
Maxwell, John  
McIndoe, Private  
McPherson\*, Commandant Major Donald  
Mitchell, Surveyor General Major Thomas  
Moore\*, Lieutenant  
Moran, Private  
Morisset, Commandant Major James Thomas  
Muggleston, Private John  
Parker, Constable James  
Prosser, Corporal  
Quigley, Corporal Thomas  
Quirk, Private  
Reid J.P., David  
Roach, Flogger John

Robertson\*, Captain  
Rogers, Commissioner Supreme Court George  
Shadforth, Lieutenant  
Stevens, Private James  
Strange, Constable John Shaw  
Sturt, Captain Charles  
Spence\*, Lieutenant Michael  
Walpole\*, Captain Horatio  
Wilcox, Sergeant John  
Wright, Captain Thomas  
\*Members of the Supreme Court Military Jury

### **Clergy**

Cowper, Reverend William  
Keane, Reverend John Espy  
Marsden, Reverend Samuel  
Polding, Bishop John Bede  
Power, Reverend Father Daniel  
Smith, Chaplain Elijah  
Therry, Reverend Father John Joseph  
Walmsley, Bishop Charles (Pastorini)

### **Governors**

Bligh, Captain William  
Bourke, Sir Richard  
Brisbane, Sir Thomas Makdougall  
Darling, Lieutenant General Ralph  
Macquarie, Major General Lachlan

### **Government Servants and Convicts**

Absolam, John  
Anderson, David  
Ashley, John  
Bishop, Benjamin  
Blanchfield, Patrick  
Boyle, (Carter)  
Bowen, Edward  
Bradley, Thomas  
Brisbane, Thomas  
Brophy, Thomas  
Browne, Patrick  
Buckley, John  
Burke, Patrick  
Bushell, James (John)  
Byrne, Patrick  
Cain, Thomas  
Castles, Henry  
Chinn, William  
Cleary, Lawrence  
Clements, Isaac  
Coffee, John  
Cook, William  
Creer, John  
Cronan, John  
Cronkane, John  
Croughwell, William  
Cuff, Patrick  
Culbert, John  
Daley, Thomas  
Dean, Thomas  
Donaghue, Martin

Donohoe, John (Jack)  
 Donohoe, Michael  
 Donovan, John  
 Dunn,  
 Evans, Thomas  
 Farrell, James  
 Fenn, Reverend Peter  
 Fitzsimmons, John  
 Forbes, John  
 Gleeson, Daniel  
 Gleeson, Patrick  
 Grady, Martin  
 Grant, Alexander  
 Grant, Poet and Chaplain John  
 Green, James  
 Greenwood, Convict Overseer John (James)  
 Grimes, Overseer Edward  
 Grimes, Mrs. Mary  
 Hayes, Sir Henry Browne  
 Hobbs, James  
 Hoe,  
 Hollander, James  
 Hollingshead, John  
 Holmes, James  
 Hopkins, Patrick  
 Hopkins, Mary  
 Inns, Convict Overseer William  
 Inns, Charlotte  
 Jones, Edward  
 Jubey, Charles  
 Kearney, Thomas  
 Keefe, Cornelius  
 Kennedy, Edward  
 Kilroy, George  
 Lahey, Overseer Michael  
 Lahrbush, Lieutenant Frederick  
 Long, William  
 Loughley, Hugh  
 Lynch, Michael  
 Lynch, Patrick  
 Mack, Thomas  
 Maund, William  
 McGill, William  
 McNally, James  
 Millege, Sophia  
 Miskelly, Patrick  
 Mitchell, Nathaniel  
 Mole, George  
 Morrison,  
 Mulligan, Mary  
 Murphy, James  
 Murphy, John  
 Murray, John  
 Neville, John  
 Nicholson, John  
 Nowlan, Patrick  
 O'Brien, Denis  
 Oliver, Overseer Adam  
 Owens, William  
 Pedley, John  
 Percival, William

Phillips, James  
 Pitts, William  
 Power, Michael  
 Price, Aaron  
 Ricks, John  
 Ryan, Patrick  
 Shaw, James  
 Shea, John  
 Skeen, Convict Overseer John  
 Slingsby, Edward  
 Slingsby, John  
 Smith, John  
 Smith, Thomas  
 Smith, William  
 Stanley, George  
 Storey, Robert  
 Sudds, Joseph  
 Sullivan, John  
 Sullivan, Patrick  
 Tennant, John  
 Thompson, Patrick  
 Thorn, James  
 Tinson, Charles  
 Trickey, Henry  
 Varney, William  
 Waldren, Patrick  
 Walker, George  
 Walmsley, James (Vittles)  
 Ward, John  
 Watts, John  
 Webber, William  
 Welsh, John  
 Welsh, Maurice  
 Wilcox, Thomas  
 Wiskin, Thomas (Wiscott sic)  
 Yates,

#### **Hunter River Banditti**

Anderson,  
 Baldwin, Edward  
 Bowen, Edward  
 Browne, Morgan  
 Coffee, John  
 Daley,  
 Donnelly, Patrick  
 Donovan, John  
 Duffey, Hugh  
 Feeney, Patrick  
 Jones, John  
 Mason, John  
 Westbury, Charles

#### **John I: Sailors and Soldiers**

Aldwell\*, William  
 Brigg, Ship Steward William  
 Brooks, James  
 Edwards, Apprentice John  
 Ellis,

Gabbott, Ships Boy James  
 Howard\*, Thomas  
 Hunter, Third Mate John  
 Mathews, Ships Boy Edward  
 Millwood, Second Mate William  
 Moncrief, Captain William John  
 Northwood, Private Francis  
 Philips\*, Robert  
 Reid, Chief Mate William  
 Roberts, Boatswain John  
 Sells\*, Francis  
 Stefford, Lieutenant James  
 Sutherland, Private Thomas  
 Thomson\*, John  
 Wearham\*, James  
 Wiffin, Apprentice Henry  
 Willoughby\*, William  
 \*Punished for disobedience or refusing to work.

**Lancaster Castle Prisoners**

Burns, William  
 Clegg, James  
 Kirkman, Andrew  
 Wakefield, Edward Gibbon

**Legal Professionals, Barristers, Solicitors and Judges**

Abbott, Lord Chief Justice Charles  
 Baxter, Attorney General Alexander McDuff  
 Dowling, Chief Justice James  
 Forbes, Chief Justice Francis  
 Moore, Attorney W.H.  
 Rowe, Barrister Thomas  
 Stephen, Judge Sydney  
 Therry, Justice Roger  
 Wentworth, William Charles  
 Wylde, Judge Advocate

**Properties – Grants of land and occupied runs**

Alloway Bank  
 Bartletts  
 Belabula  
 Bingham  
 Blackett's  
 Bolong  
 Boriginees  
 Brownlea  
 Carrion  
 Charlton  
 Copperhania  
 Denbeigh  
 Denton Holme  
 Doongungarra  
 Ellis's  
 Fulton  
 Glen Logan  
 Greendale  
 Hare Castle  
 Johnson's  
 Kellosiel  
 Lambert's

Littlebourne  
 Mandurama  
 Meringullalong  
 Mulgunnia  
 Palmer's  
 Raineville  
 Reeson's  
 Regentville  
 Saltram  
 Smith's  
 Stowford  
 Strathaird  
 Three Brothers  
 Wallace Farm  
 Wallerawang  
 White Rocks  
 Wollawolla  
 Woodlands  
 Woodstock  
 Woomilla  
 Yarrows

**Ribbon Boys**

Daley, Dominic per Ferguson  
 Driver, James per Governor Ready (2)  
 Dunne, Thomas per Sophia  
 Entwistle, Ralph per John I  
 Gahan, William per Eliza (2)  
 Gleeson, Patrick per Larkins (2)  
 Kearney, Michael per Governor Ready (2)  
 Kenny, John per Governor Ready  
 Sheppard, John per Norfolk II  
 Webster, Robert per Grenada (2)

**Settlers and Free Men**

Adkins, Caleb  
 Arkell, Thomas  
 Armstrong, Robert  
 Bettington, James Brindley  
 Blackett,  
 Blackman, Blacksmith  
 Blaxland, Gregory  
 Brown, George  
 Brown, Captain John  
 Caley, George  
 Cameron, Hugh  
 Campbell, Master  
 Cheshire, George  
 Clarke, William  
 Coates, William  
 Colletts, Amelia  
 Corcoran, Roger  
 Cox, William  
 Coxon, Overseer John  
 Dickson, John  
 Duguid, Leslie  
 Durinault, Francois  
 Dwyer, Michael  
 Farrell, James  
 Ferrier, Robert

Fitz, Mrs.  
 Fulton, Reverend Henry  
 Fulton, Mr & Mrs. Mathias  
 Gardner, Overseer Andrew  
 Gosling, John  
 Goulding, William  
 Grant, John emancipated  
 Hall, William  
 Harris, Doctor  
 Hassall, James  
 Hassall, Jonathan  
 Hassall, Reverend Thomas  
 Hassall, Samuel Otoo  
 Havilland, Richard  
 Hawkins, Thomas  
 Hawkins, Mary Jane  
 Hoan, James  
 Hovell, Captain William  
 Hume, Hamilton  
 Icely, Thomas  
 Innes, George  
 Jamieson, Sir John  
 Johnson, Mr & Mrs William  
 Johnston, John  
 Johnston, William  
 Kable, George  
 Kear, Andrew  
 Kinghorne, Alexander  
 Lambert, Mr.  
 Lawson, William  
 Lawson, Master  
 Leighton, David  
 Levingston, John  
 Liscombe, John  
 Lowe, Robert  
 Marrion, Monsieur  
 Mathews, Monsieur  
 McArthur, Magistrate Hannibal  
 McHenry, William  
 McKenzie, Alexander Kenneth  
 McQuade, Mr.  
 Meehan, Assistant Surveyor James (Jimmy)  
 Melchan, Mr.  
 Marsden, Thomas  
 Murphy, Honora  
 Murphy, Roger  
 Murphy (nee Redmond), Mary  
 O'Brien, Henry  
 Oreston, Robert  
 Pagan, John  
 Palmer, Michael  
 Payne, Captain John  
 Payne, Captain William  
 Perrier, Mr  
 Piper, Captain John  
 Plomer, George  
 Pollet, John  
 Poplin, Overseer James  
 Porter, Captain  
 Pringle, Mr.

Pye, Joseph  
 Raine, Thomas  
 Ranken, Arthur  
 Ranken, George  
 Ranken, Janet  
 Redfern, William  
 Redmond, Edward  
 Redmond (Jean Durinault), John  
 Redmond (Durinault/Dowling), Winifred  
 Reeson,  
 Riley,  
 Roberts, Joseph  
 Rogers, George  
 Rotten, John  
 Ryan, Edward (Ned)  
 Sealy, Captain Sampson Stawell  
 Smith, Robert  
 Steele, Captain Watson Augustus  
 Street, John  
 Sturgeon,  
 Suttor, Charles  
 Suttor, William Henry  
 Terry, Samuel  
 Thomson, Richard  
 Town, John  
 Tyndale, Mr.  
 Walker, James  
 Walker, Reverend William  
 Ware, Charles Thomas  
 West, John  
 West, Thomas  
 Whalan, Charles

#### **Surgeons**

Bass, George  
 Busby, Colonial Surgeon George  
 Cunningham, Surgeon Superintendent Peter  
 Gibson J.P., Dr. Andrew  
 Imlay, Dr.  
 McKerrow, Surgeon Superintendent James

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## Scholar's Notes and Titbits

Here you will find a Glossary for each chapter to remind you of the way Ralph may have spoken in his own dialect and time. Language carries the code of our daily concerns and beliefs, the song of our heart. Some of the words that come easily to mind have travelled to us through time almost unchanged. You will be surprised to find that some of our familiar slang, which defines and carries us, is the vernacular of past centuries. The words that rolled from Ralph's tongue roll onto ours.

The Maps are social and political entities showing not only the geographical locations but also the way white colonisers inscribed British names upon the artificial boundaries of properties and jurisprudential regions. These Notes provide the background research and information that has formed the warp and woof of the fictional tapestry. It is provided here so that you may unpick the threads and sew them into your own pattern of understanding.

### *Chapter 1:*

**Glossary:** Blua/Blea – livid with cold; Eildin' – kindling for fire; Gaup – to stare; Make no account of – don't care; Make – sort/type of man; M'appen – may happen; Peg – to walk or a peg-leg; Yammer – to cry or lament.

- Ralph's words to Sergeant Doyle at the final capture are quoted from *Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South* (MacAlister 1907) p.74.
- John Shaw Strange was one of the Cato Street conspirators who planned to blow up the British Cabinet as they met for dinner at an Inn. Wilson and Harrison were co-conspirators who also settled in Bathurst. Wilson became a tailor and Harrison was the local baker when Ralph arrived. For a description of these men, see Roger Therry's memoir, *Reminiscences of 30 years Residence in New South Wales and Victoria* (Therry 1863) p.96.

- Thomas Conwell appears in the *Bathurst Gaol Records* in 1831 as having been arrested for speaking to prisoners in the gaol (Billie Jacobsen & Kaye Vernon 2010).
- Ralph's robbery of the Alldred home at Shakerley-with-Tyldesley is reported in *The Bolton Chronicle* ('Burglary' 1827). Details of the trial are gathered from the British National Archives from the Lancashire Assize Rolls, Indictments File for March 1827 and Depositions 1826-1835 (National Archives of the United Kingdom).
- For more on the Claughton Poachers see *Life in Georgian Lancaster* (White 2004) which includes the painting, 'The castle with arrival of prisoners, 1827' p.41.
- For accounts of Lancaster at this time see *The Lancaster Gazette* ('Lancaster Assizes' 1826; 'Lancaster Assizes April 23rd' 1827; n.a. 1826) –The newspaper also reports the incident on the Manchester to Edinburgh Coach (October 1<sup>st</sup> 1826) and a visit to the Castle by one of Bonaparte's generals who freed a debtor and his family (May 20<sup>th</sup> 1826).
- News of the Lancashire riots can also be found in *The Blackburn Mail* ('Serious Disturbances' 1826). An insight into the Cotton industry and industrial climate of the time can be garnered from *The Cotton Industry* (Aspin 2004).
- The history of Lancaster Castle is well documented in *Lancaster Castle: A Brief History* (Champness 1993) and this source includes floor plans, pictures and documents. It includes a painting of the execution of the Cato Street conspirators in Newgate, London. Lancaster Castle is currently a penitentiary but it also houses the Lancaster Castle Archives and tours are available of the courts and cells. High security trials of IRA bombers have been held in recent years in the same ornate courtroom as Edward Gibbon Wakefield was tried.
- For the fascinating story of the career of Edward Gibbon Wakefield see Philip Temple's *A Sort of Conscience - The Wakefields* (Temple 2003). A flattering

biography, written from his granddaughter's perspective, is presented in *Edward Gibbon Wakefield* (O'Connor 1928). The abduction scheme was at the heart of three 'socially advantageous' but catastrophic marriages. It is thought that Edward Gibbon Wakefield struck a deal to prevent his stepmother's prosecution but the publicity of her secret marriage ruined his father's prospects in the Reading elections. Frances Wakefield was delivered of a daughter in January 1827 (Nichols 1827), William Wakefield's new bride, Emily Shelley Sidney, died in August 1827 'of a broken heart' leaving their infant daughter in the care of her family (*The Gentleman's Magazine* 1827). Ellen Turner overcame the public scandal to marry a wealthy Cheshire landowner but died in childbirth in 1831 (*The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review* 1862).

- The names and sentences of Ralph's cellmates are drawn from the Commutation of Sentence document provided by Lancashire Records Office (Shuttleworth 1827).
- 'Bold Jack Donohoe' was sung to the tune of 'The Wearing of the Green' and is said to have been composed by the bushranger himself. It is quoted throughout the text from John Meredith's *The Wild Colonial Boy: The Life and Times of Jack Donahoe 1808-1830* (Meredith 1960). The original source is *Told Around the Bushrangers' Fire by Will Jones an Old Bushranger* (Walker 1891). Will Jones claimed to have been taught the song by Walmsley who sang it with Donohoe at his final capture. In a letter to Sir George Murray, Governor Darling said he banned the singing of the song at public houses on pain of loss of license as it was 'an evil influence'. His letter also describes the clay pipes fashioned in memorium to Donohoe (Ward & Robertson 1978) p.288.



## Chapter 2

**Glossary:** *Blual/Blea* – livid with cold; *Booze* – to drink hard; *Brash* – rash; *Brown-Tommy* – bread made of inferior flour; *Bullyrag* – tease; *Cadge* – to beg; *Clag* – to adhere/sticky paste; *Clem-stave-an’-daub* –wattle and daub; *Clap* – to put in place; *Clean* – entirely; *Dab* – clever; *Dank* – dull/depressing; *Doxy* – sweetheart; *Ess-hole* – ash pit; *Give o’er* – cease; *Good-for-nowt* – ne’er do well; *Jannock* – oatcake; *Marrow* – a match or likeness; *Natty* – neat/handy; *Nowt* – nothing; *Raggotin’* – disorderly; *Ran-tan* – loud noise/knocking; *Read* – perceive; *Shank* – to walk as in take Shankey’s Pony; *Stubby* – short/stiff as in hair; *Summat* – something/somewhat.

- For newspaper accounts of the insurrection and capture see *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (‘*The Bushrangers at Bathurst*’ 1830; ‘*Government Order No.15 20 October 1830*’ 1830). Lists of absconders and of runaways apprehended, issued regularly from the Superintendent of Convicts Office, were cross checked against newspaper and gaol records for a more accurate picture of convict movements (‘*List of Runaways Apprehended During the Past Week*’ 1830a).
- The charge sheets and depositions of Isaac Clements and Edward Jones are cited from the original court documents held in the Bathurst District Historical Society archives. The relevant documents have also been reproduced in Stephen Williams’ *Ralph Entwistle and the Bathurst Insurgency* (Williams 1992).
- The characterisation of George Busby is drawn from anecdotes in Greaves’ edited collection of local history (Greaves 1976) and Sloman’s collection of memories and records in *History of Bathurst* (Sloman 1994). In 1833, George Busby married Miss Agnes Thomson. She was the sister of the Presbyterian minister who was staying with the Rankens at Kellosiel in 1831. *The Pioneers of Bathurst* refers to Miss Thompson as ‘The Lass of Kellosiel’ (Oakes 1978). She provides an account of the Ribbon Boys that is flawed with factual errors, but captures the atmosphere of the times (Busby 1905).
- The voyage of *John I* is drawn from the court case, *Roberts vs. Moncrief* reported in Justice Dowling’s *Select Cases* (Kercher 2005) . It does not specify the name of the convict boy nor the reason for his punishment. There is no mention, fair or foul, of Ralph Entwistle or George Mole. The convict transportation registers provide details of Ralph



and his shipmates, their trials, crimes and sentences. Eleven of the convicts walked down to London with Ralph from Lancaster Castle (*Convict Transportation Registers* ; The National Archives of the United Kingdom).

- There is no Medical Journal for the voyage of *John I*. The health practices and description of life on a convict transport is based upon *The Convict Ships 1787-1868* (Bateson 1974) and the medical journal of Surgeon Superintendent John Thompson on the *Malabar (2)* – the ship on which Thomas Entwistle was transported to Hobart (n.a. 1821). This journal gives an excellent insight into a surgeon's role, naval practices and rights of the convicts. Thomas Entwistle, 46 years old, entered the hospital and was treated with sulphur for a cough and aches, after getting wet. He was cured within five days. Many of the Surgeons' Journals are transcribed and searchable at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).
- Descriptions of the entrance to Port Jackson, King Bungaree and George Street are all drawn from *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales* (Therry 1863). Vacluse House did have a succession of colourful owners. Sir Henry Browne Hayes is beautifully drawn in Bob Reece's *Irish Convict Lives* which mentions the use of Irish peat to keep the snakes away from Vacluse House (Reece 1993). William Charles Wentworth was the resident of Vacluse House when Ralph arrived in Sydney. For his biography see *William Charles Wentworth: Australia's Greatest Native Son* (Tink 2009).

### Chapter 3

**Glossary:** Acs – ask (from Old English ‘Acsian’); Crow-gate – direct route; Dag – to shear sheep; Daglocks – wool cut off; Darkenin’ – twilight; Daub – clay and straw; Fend – look out for; Hole – to hide; Lant – urine; M’appen – perhaps; Nonsuch – ironic adjective for a superior/ there’s no one such a gentleman as Mr. Evernden; Owd Lad/ Old Lad – the Devil; Quire – twenty four pages; Redshank – contemptuous name for barelegged person (refers to retreating Scottish Rebels of 1745); Skrike – to scream; Them are – they are; Thou’st – you shall; Was – were (used in all cases).

- Government officers’ appointments and salary records, military stations with personnel and regimental pay records as of 1830 are taken from the *Colonial Secretary’s Returns of the Colony (Blue Books)* (Government n.d.-a).
- The Census of 1828 (*NSW Census 1828*; New South Wales Government 1828; The National Archives of the United Kingdom 2007) has been consulted extensively to obtain details of farms, settlers, government servants and convicts.
- Samuel Marsden describes how he came to breed the finest Australian Fleece in a letter to the Sydney Gazette (‘The Australian Fleece’ 1830). The London Wool Markets were reported in the Sydney Gazette (‘Agricultural Report, For October’ 1829). This issue also describes the Day of Thanksgiving for the Breaking of the Drought on November 12<sup>th</sup> 1829.
- The origin of the bushranger term, ‘Bail Up’ is explained in Boxall’s *History of Australian Bushranging*. Cape Town horned cattle were the first breed used in the Colony and to milk the cows they had to be driven into a bail and have one leg tied. Bullock Drivers also used the term to calm their cattle (Boxall 1916) p.45.
- ‘All among the wool, boys’ is an allusion to the folksong *Flash Jack From Gundagai* penned by the western shearers one hundred years later (Manifold 1984) p.134. It talks of ‘whaling up the Lachlan’, a pastime the Ribbon Boys were soon to discover.
- The General Order regarding the issuing of passes is crucial to Ralph’s story (‘Government Order No.6’ 1830). It has formerly been supposed that Ralph was promised a ticket of leave or had his ticket cancelled. There is no evidence of Ralph

holding or being nominated for a Ticket of Leave and as a 'Lifer' he would not have been eligible for six more years. In 1829, Magistrate Evernden did cancel the Ticket of Leave of another insurgent, John McNally, who was from the Wellington Valley (1825-1828) and had been in the iron gang and road gangs until April 1830. Ralph and Patrick Byrne would have had passes to take the wool to Sydney and these would have been cancelled when they were arrested.

- Patrick Burke does not appear on the Census of 1828 for Stowford Farm. He was assigned to Liscombe in November 1827, sent to an iron gang for drunkenness and abuse in September 1828, and given 25 lashes for neglect of duty in July 1829.
- I am indebted to the Bathurst and District Historical Society for their 'Tour of the Fitzgerald Valley', which allowed me to walk the same ground as Ralph at Stowford (now Stanford Farm).
- For all matters relating to convict bricks see the Fairfield City Museum *Objects Through Time* collection (Tierney 2008).
- Descriptions of the physical characteristics of the Ribbon Boys and other convict characters are taken from the ship indents and transportation records (*Convict indents and associated papers of prisoners transported to NSW c. 1790-1840* ; Archives Authority of New South Wales 1984; Government n.d.-b, n.d.-c; Home Office n.d.)
- The expression 'gave him the leg in the Lancashire style' comes from *Old Convict Days* (Becke 1975) p. 113. This account provides detailed descriptions of flogging, the practices of convict life, the effects of wearing irons, food, and pastimes such as naked swimming called 'bogeying' p.139. The author, whomsoever he may have been, demonstrates detailed local knowledge of Lancashire, Wellington and Bathurst in the period of interest.

- Peter Cunningham's reminiscence of his residency in the colonies touches upon characters and events in the Hunter River and Bathurst. His friend and neighbour Mr Ogilvy was robbed by the Hunter River Banditti. He also comments upon his gait as a surgeon accustomed to living in the cabin of a brig of war (Macmillan 1966) p. 335.
- A review of Governor Darling's correspondence to the Colonial Secretary (*Alphabetical Index of Correspondence* n.d.) during this period reveals him to be more concerned with balancing the accounts and saving money than liberal reforms. He boasts of saving the Colony twelve thousand pound per annum by replacing the Veterans with convict overseers (Letter 7 March 1828) yet regrets the abandonment of the Military Jury system as a concession to popular prejudice (Despatch No.18: 7 April 1830). The pressure to break up the Wellington Valley and disperse the specials was expedited by Mr. Ridley's statement in the House of Commons, June 11<sup>th</sup> 1830, which drew attention to special favours being granted to educated convicts (CO714/18). The Governor's tour of inspection is reported on November 21<sup>st</sup> (CO714/113) but no mention is made of the bathing incident. Floggings were so common place that Ralph's case did not rate a mention. The letter discussed the breaking of drought and cost of carriage of goods. One hundred thousand bushels of wheat had to be imported from abroad between February and November 1829.
- In the popular press, poor convict rations were blamed for the rise in bushranging by absconders from the road and iron gangs ('Bad Provisions and Bushranging' 1830).
- Michael Kearney proved to be elusive in the period 1829 - 1830 because of his similarity to Thomas Kearney. They were twins in age and physical description. Michael was assigned to Mr Liscombe in January 1829 but is listed in September and October as an absconder from the Parramatta Barracks. Hence, he must have been returned for punishment (1829). He is listed under the name of 'Thomas'

but with his own convict number (No. 29-30) and correct ship, the *Governor Ready*. He is not listed as an absconder after October 1829. He must have been returned to Mr. Liscombe because, a year later, alongside the other Ribbon Boys, he is listed as Michael Kearney (No. 29-30) an absconder from the service of Mr. Liscombe ('List of Runaways Apprehended During the Past Week' 1830b). Meanwhile, Thomas Kearney per the *Ferguson* absconded in April of 1830 from Hyde Park Barracks. He was apprehended by May 6<sup>th</sup> but again took to the bush ('Apprehended' 1830). He was convicted of Highway Robbery on November 18<sup>th</sup> 1830. A sentence of death was recorded and he was sent to Moreton Bay from whence he ran ('Supreme Court' 1830).

- A detailed account of the Governor's tour of inspection to Bathurst was published in the Sydney Gazette ('The Governor's Tour' 1829) and reported in the despatches to the Colonial Secretary as noted above. All dates, weather descriptions and incidents are aligned with these primary source accounts. Hitherto, in all secondary accounts the wrong dates have been ascribed to the swimming incident and no accurate information of the Governor's visit has been utilised.
- A lively account of early colonial theatre and the productions at Emu Plains is given in Robert Jordan's *The Convict Theatres of Early Australia 1788-1840* (Jordan 2002).
- Correspondence from John Maxwell regarding George Stanley and James Bushell and other 'swells' at Wellington Valley is among the collection of Moreton Bay documents sourced from the State Records Authority of New South Wales (Maxwell 1830).
- Captain Horatio Walpole was the nephew of Horace Walpole (Walpole 1982), the inventor of the Gothic novel genre.

- The voyage of the *Surrey (2)* and the early career of Captain Raine is related by Max Barrett in *Because of These*. It is the historical account of Ned Ryan and thirteen Whiteboy transportees from Tipperary (Barrett 1992).
- The historian W.H. Suttor describes Lieutenant Evernden as ‘a martinet of extravagant refinement’ (Suttor 1887) (Stewart 1983) p.31.
- The ford crossed by Entwistle en route to Sydney would not have been the one across the Macquarie River below the military settlement described in modern accounts (Stewart 1983) p.28. The wool wagon, travelling east from Fitzgerald’s Valley and Dunns Plains had no need to go north to Bathurst in order to get to Sydney as modern travellers do. Theo Barker describes Cox’s Road between the Campbell River and Bathurst as the original ‘old road to Emu Plains’ (Barker 1992) p.26. It connects with the line of the Carlwood Road to the Fish River. The historian Ida Lee describes Governor Macquarie taking a bridge to Bathurst across the Campbell River and describes its construction by Evans (Lee 1906).
- The slaughter of three aboriginal women by the convicts and sons of free settlers is documented in the court case which preceded Governor Brisbane’s declaration of Martial Law west of the Blue Mountains in 1824 (n.a. 1824b). The events drew public comment and liberal debate at the time (‘However outrageous the aborigines...’ 1824; ‘To the editor of the Sydney Gazette’ 1824; ‘The Aborigines’ 1825; n.a. 1824a).
- Ralph Darling’s speech in reply to the settlers of Bathurst is reported in the Sydney Gazette (‘Advance Australia Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser’ 1829). For biographical details, including Darling’s friendship with William Lee and his family life, see *Ralph Darling: A Governor Maligned* (Fletcher 1984).
- The *Sydney Monitor* had stirred the debate about preferential land grants by suggesting that the Native born Australians were disadvantaged by the system

and that their sympathies were with the croppies. A letter by 'Jack Spratt' to the *Sydney Gazette* in December 1829, 'repelled the aspersions which had been so Artfully cast upon their class' ('Loyalty of the Native Born' 1829). The letter claims that 'lots of acres and grants are flying about in all directions' and that the Australians are now 'as loyal as flint and the Governor knows it' (p.3). The editor comments that the writer has had 'ample opportunities of judging the character and sentiments of this interesting part of the community', which would suggest the writer is a magistrate rather than a free born lad. Nevertheless 'Jack Spratt' ends his letter with a rally that still echoes in the nationalistic rhetoric, 'We are determined to remain true blue, and no croppies.'

- Mackaness notes the death of Governor Darling's son Edward, due to Whooping cough, on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1828 in *A Chronology of Momentous Events in Australian History 1788-1846*. Mackaness also notes the suicide of Charles Throsby, member of the Legislative Council, on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1828. Throsby's financial dealings had been under scrutiny by the Governor who concluded that his self-destruction resulted from 'a depression of spirits occasioned by his having been adjudged by the Supreme Court to pay a sum of four thousand pounds' (Mackaness, Howe & Low 1952). Captain Piper had attempted to put a period to his own existence under similar scrutiny.
- Wool scouring and yeast preparation for cooking and brewing were among the skills of the early settlers (Rawson 1894). The collection of 'pisspots' for the fulling of textiles was common practice in the Lancashire Mills and details of the process and costs for Methodist's urine was provided by the Helmshore Mill Museum, Holcombe Road, Lancashire.
- There is no primary source report of the arrest and flogging of Ralph Entwistle in November 1829. The Bathurst Bench books for the relevant period are missing.

- The case of the punishment of soldiers Sudds and Thompson from the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment has been summarised by CMH Clark (Clark 1968a) pp.71-72, 230. For more information also see the newspapers of the time ('British News to April' 1830; Darling 1831a).
- It is uncertain if the Governor described the naked bathing of these two convicts as 'their infamous exhibition' as claimed in the memoir of Charles MacAlister (MacAlister 1907). If so, there is no mention of it in despatches or newspaper accounts of the visit. Secondary accounts suggest it was the Magistrate rather than the Governor who witnessed the offence (Stewart 1983) p.26. The judgement of Chief Justice Charles Abbott (Macdonell 1885) in the case of Blundell Vs Catterall can be read online (Great Britain. Court of King's Bench 1824).



## Chapter 4

**Glossary:** Beet – to kindle or improve; Chat – small potatoes; Clippin’s – wool shearings; Out-comer/ewt-comer – stranger; Fawn-freckled – freckled; Ginger-topped/toppid – red head; Gumption – nouse; Halliblash – a great blaze; Harstone talk – boastful talk/promises made at night not intended to be kept in morning; Ir – our; I’st – I shall; Scutter – scuttle; Sweel – great fire or blaze; Sweltd – sweating; We’sh – we shall; We’st – we should.

- Reverend John Espy Keane was successfully prosecuted by the sawyer he maimed in the attack described (*Williams v. Keane* 1831).
- The death of Elizabeth Evernden at 36 years of age from jaundice is recorded on March 24<sup>th</sup> 1829 in the Bathurst Burial register kept by Reverend Espy Keane. The record also includes the death of Thomas Fitzherbert Evernden at 9 months of age on February 25<sup>th</sup> 1832. Of the children born to Thomas and Mary Jane Evernden only Sarah Louisa survived until adulthood. The other three died between the ages of seven and nine months (*Bathurst Burial Register; Kelso 1826-1856*).
- The hymn of the ‘thief upon the cross’ is cited from the account of the execution of the Hunter River Banditti. Edward Bowen sang the hymn on the scaffold (‘Execution’ 1831a).
- John Maxwell’s correspondence regarding James (John) Bushell and George Stanley gives a hint of the squabbles that caused Evernden to suspect the insurrection had been incited by malcontents in the Wellington Valley (Maxwell 1830).
- McPherson’s letter to the Military Secretary, requesting the attendance of Father Therry, is dated the day before Father Therry’s letter to the Governor (Williams 1992) pp. 62-63. This evidence suggests that Father Therry made the request before McPherson’s letter arrived in Sydney and days before the priest was given permission to travel. Circumstances had changed since Commandant James Morisset first ignored a petition by Thomas Byrne for Roman Catholic services in Bathurst (State Records Authority of New South Wales 2010b) [Reel 6065; 4/1800] p.103. The Roman

Catholic Relief Act was passed in 1829 and guaranteed emancipation of Catholics in politics and religion. Leading Catholic figures in the Administration and the Judiciary, such as barrister Roger Therry a friend of the Catholic reformer Daniel O'Connell, worked diligently to ensure the reforms were honoured in the Colony (Therry 1863).

- The familial links between the Tipperary convicts are evident in court reports of trials and witness statements quoted in the *Clonmel Advertiser* ('Spring Assizes' 1828). The interconnections through marriage are detailed in Max Barrett's extensive collection of books on the Tipperary whiteboys who settled on the Burrowa Plains (Barrett 1992, 1994, 2006, 2008).
- Governor Ralph Darling's letter to Sir George Murray on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1830 suggested Donohoe was responsible for the unrest in the Colony and names the Hunter River rebels as instigators of the Bathurst insurrection. This predates an official inquiry into the causes for complaint among the Bathurst convicts (Ward & Robertson 1978) pp. 228-9.
- Edward Slingsby had the voice of a woman as testified by three witnesses in the murder trial of Captain Payne ('Execution of Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien for the murder of Captain Payne' 1831; 'Supreme Court ' 1831; 'Supreme Court' 1831b) .
- Jack Donohoe's escapades after 1828 are detailed by John Meredith (Meredith 1960) but his bush ranging career began after a flogging in 1825. We can trace it through numerous court and newspaper accounts ('Police Report' 1825; 'Criminal Court (Wednesday)' 1828b; 'Government Notice' 1828; 'Supreme Criminal Court' 1828a; 'Highway Robbery' 1830). His indents from the *Anne and Amelia* in 1825 provide information on his trial and transportation (Archives Authority of New South Wales 1984). He appears on the 1828 Census as a hutkeeper for Mr. Shelley at Goulburn Plains (New South Wales Government 1828). The Goulburn Bench renewed a

reward for him in June 1830 (Tipping 1994). The rumour of Donohoe murdering William Cook is from an unsubstantiated accusation in the newspaper ('Death of Donahoe' 1830). A William Cook also provided evidence against the bushrangers Tennant and Murphy who served time with Donohoe in Sydney Gaol in 1828 (n.a. 1828d). We have an excellent record of his appearance from the inquest ('Donohoe Coroners' Inquest on his body' 1830) and from his post mortem portrait drawn by Thomas Mitchell (Mitchell 1830).

- The English folksong 'Over the Hills and Far Away' that is quoted throughout the story was well known from *The Beggar's Opera* (Gay 1728). It is referred to in the nursery rhyme, 'Tom he was a Piper's Son'. It was played by an orchestra on the lawns of Vaucluse house as a salvo from W.C. Wentworth to the departing Governor Ralph Darling as his ship sailed out of Sydney Harbour (Clark 1968b) p.36.
- For an understanding of Ribbonism and the Government's attitude toward rebels during this era, examine the Hansard regarding the transportation of Thomas Hughes who claimed to be the leader of over thirteen thousand ribbonmen throughout southern Ireland (*Lord Althorp's motion respecting Ribbon Men and Ribbon Lodges* 1824). The Irish perspective on the role of the English in the emergence of Captain Rock is humorously provided by Sir Thomas Moore in a fictional biography published in 1824 and advertised for sale in the colonial newspapers ('Tipping the Blarney' 1828; Moore 1824). There are a number of excellent secondary sources concerning Irish rebels and their modus operandi (Feeley 1980; Foster 1988; Gallagher 1985; O'Farrell 2000; O'Hegarty 1952; Reece 1993; Whitaker 1994). The most recent comprehensive survey of Ribbonism is provided by Donnelly (Donnelly Jnr 2009).

- Robson provides an excellent quantitative study of the demographics of the entire convict population. In reference to ‘Offences of a Public Nature’ he includes insights into Ribbonism and Whiteboyism and a description of their organisational structures (Robson 1965) pp.56-73. The political and social climate of New South Wales from an Irish perspective is provided by Clark in *The World of Betsy Bandicoot and Bold Jack Donohoe* (Clark 1968b) as well as a number of later historical studies (Shaw 1973; Sheedy 1988; Whitaker 1994).
- Edward Baldwin’s involvement in Michael Power’s perjury against John Redmond came to light in a court case (n.a. 1827a). Michael Power’s note to Baldwin, offering him fifty pounds for colluding in the perjury, was delivered by the Assistant Clerk, Henry Marooney, a countryman of Power ‘who would go on one side’ to help. He read the note to Baldwin who was illiterate. Baldwin warned Marooney not to trust Power but told him to keep the note for blackmail later. Marooney returned the note to Power in a bible but a new guard saw it and confiscated the evidence. The case against Redmond and Donnelly was dropped. Power was tried for perjury.
- The story of the Redmond family is faithfully recorded in ‘Home Was Here’ (Lang 1987). The Colonial Court trial above and family connections with Whiteboys of the Burrowa area (Barrett 1992) p.102, provide the basis for my speculation on the disappearance of John Redmond in the 1830s.
- Richard Thomson suffered gunshot wounds in the attack by Storey and within a year relinquished his grant and returned to England (*Colonial Secretary Letters re Richard Thomson ; Memorial of Richard Thomson* 1825; Government n.d.-d).
- The police would often disguise themselves as bolters in order to approach a hut and flush out the harbourers. This ruse was used during the search for Robert Storey’s gang. Superintendent William Christie sent a disguised constable to ask

for shelter from one of Mr. Iceley's shepherds, James McAuliffe. The old shepherd hid the constable and when the police arrived he was arrested as a harbourer.

Patrick Blanchfield, the 'approver', was in Christie's party and was ordered to handcuff McAuliffe. The old shepherd said to Blanchfield, 'You – rascal, many a time yourself and others have come this way hungry and had your bellies filled and this is the way I am repaid for it' (White 1975) p. 110. By contrast, Charles Jubey was starving in the bush and eventually taken on his way to surrender. He was sentenced to 75 lashes but offered a reprieve if he betrayed the whereabouts of Storey. He took the punishment (White 1975) pp.113-114.

- A sketch of Ribbonmen drinking in a barn in County Monaghan by William Steuart Trench is reproduced by Donnelly (Donnelly Jnr 2009). He observes that agrarian rebels were supported by local farmers and in fair weather would be 'meeting in the open air (hillsides and mountain redoubts)' p.154.
- Peter Cunningham visited Bathurst and described the profitable cheese making at Keloshiel (Macmillan 1966).
- The attack on Richard Thomson and the robbery at Thomas Iceley's farm, Saltram, are described from the court trial and witness statements (1825a; 'Bathurst Bushrangers' 1825; 'Governor Darling' 1825; 'Supreme Criminal Court: Ryan, Storey, Bishop, Percival' 1825). The newspaper accounts of Governor Ralph Darling's arrival in New South Wales include the report of Robert Storey's reprieve ('Governor Darling' 1825).
- Land ownership, distribution and title were key themes in the unrest at this time. Roberts reports that Governor Brisbane had granted 100,000 acres and 200 Tickets of Occupation for unsurveyed and remote runs within a three year period (Roberts 2005) p. 101. The aborigines were being forced out of their traditional hunting grounds which resulted in massacres and the rumour of massacres (n.a. 1824b; Roberts 2003).

The population of Bathurst tripled between 1822 and 1825 but Roberts estimates a travelling population of over a thousand convicts worked or passed through the district (Roberts 2005) p.102. We can see from the early career of Jack Donohoe that he was assigned to various masters but moved in and out of the iron gang, gaol, hutkeeping and 'sheep washing' ('Police Report' 1825; *R. v Walker, Keefe, Cuff, Adkins and Coates* 1828; n.a. 1828a).

- Settlers often loaned and borrowed servants to fit their harvest and pastoral needs, especially on large family estates. The Hassall family sent their servant O'Brien with cattle from Bathurst to Cow Pastures ('Windsor Assizes' 1830) between the farms of Reverend Thomas Hassall and Jonathan Hassall. James and Samuel Otoo Hassall also traded workers.
- The demoralising effect upon the Irish of being turned out of the land is quoted from the Parliamentary Papers of 1845 by Robson (Robson 1965) p.63. Charles Harpur, the first Australian born poet of Irish descent, warned of repeating the mistakes of the Old Country in his poem *The New Land Orders* (Mitchell 1973) p.146. He was raised at Windsor and had personal knowledge of the constables and historical events surrounding the capture of Jack Donohoe which he attempted to fictionalise in his play 'The Tragedy of Donohoe'. Excerpts from the play were serialised in *The Sydney Monitor* in February 1835 (Perkins 1987) .
- For a description of the Wellington Valley at this time see Roberts (Roberts 2000) p.115. The walk-off by convicts sent to the Wellington Valley harvest resulted in their apprehension by Fisher, Reverend Thomas Hassall's overseer (Hope 2010) p.33. Judge Advocate Wylde was complimented on the occasion of his retirement in January 1825 ('Public Address' 1825). On February 17<sup>th</sup>, he sailed for England with Major James Morisset on *The Mangles* (Mackaness, Howe & Low 1952) p.33.

- ‘Pastorini’ was the pen name of a Lancastrian Catholic Bishop, Charles Walmsley. He applied mathematics and astrology to the book of Revelations and predicted the Protestants would be defeated in 1825 (Donnelly Jnr 2009). The evangelical Reverend of St. Mary’s Anglican Church in Kilkenny noted the Catholics would sing ballads at every favourable opportunity to herald the fruition of Pastorini’s prophesy (p.133). For an Irish perspective on the commonalities and differences between Whiteboys and Ribbonmen, see Patrick Feeley (Feeley 1980). The sight of Ericke’s Comet streaking past the Southern Cross that same year must have seemed a celestial sign to many isolated Irish hutkeepers (Olbers 1835).
- In September 1825, a notice appeared in the Sydney Gazette (‘Classified Advertising Public Notice’ 1825) which offered settlers reimbursement for rations supplied to the ‘horse police’. Governor Brisbane was discussing with the Legislative Council the idea of training Australian born youths for a mounted police force but wanted official sanction for the cost of such an undertaking (Government n.d.-a). When Lieutenant Governor Stewart was sworn in as Governor on December 6<sup>th</sup> 1825, he officially established the Mounted Police force. It was known colloquially as ‘Stewart’s Horse Police’. Lieutenant Evernden left the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Buffs to command the Bathurst force in December 1825. The following year Evernden and Sergeant Wilcox captured and killed a number of bushrangers on Major West’s property (1826a). He was also responsible for the destruction of Maurice Connell and his gang who were the remnants of bolters from Keloshiel and Saltram. (The National Archives of the United Kingdom).
- Details of the life, assignment and work of William Cook and similar hutkeepers on the Abercrombie is gleaned from the Census descriptions of stock and properties and a series of letters by Captain William Dumaresq, brother-in-law of Governor Ralph Darling, who took ‘A Ride to Bathurst’ in 1827 (“X.Y.Z” (Captain

William John Dumaesq) 1965). An account of the Bathurst settlement in 1822 is provided by a Judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Barron Field (Field 1965) and an insight into the treatment of the aborigines in 1824 is provided by the French surgeon from the *Astrolabe*, Rene Primavere Lesson (Lesson 1965).

- The arrival of Governor Ralph Darling and the reprieve of Robert Storey were reported in the newspaper of the day ('Governor Darling' 1825).
- Commandant Fennel's letter concerning the need for systematic exploration of the inland provides a detailed account of William Varney's travels (1825b). In 1830, the convict barber George Clarke was arrested. He claimed to have been initiated and scarified by the aborigines and to have lived peaceably among them on the Namoi River where he built stockyards for stolen cattle he would bring over from the Liverpool Plains. Thomas Mitchell used Clarke's information as the basis for his expedition ('Captain Forbes' Expedition: Distressing Intelligence' 1832; 'Narrabri's First Inhabitant' 1933; F.A.Abbottsmith 1933).



## *Chapter 5*

*Glossary:* Belder – to roar; Bide – to stay; Sauce – to scold / speak in a saucy way.

- Documents related to the imprisonment and trial of the Ribbon Boys are available through the State Records Authority of New South Wales (Document n.d.) and are also reproduced in the collection of documents held at the Australian National Library Canberra (Williams 1992).
- For the history of Strathaird and an insight into Lachlan Macalister's character and family connections see Charles MacAlister (MacAlister 1907). An account of Macalister's journey from Camden to the first Melbourne land sales in 1837 is provided by 'one of a party of gentlemen' who travelled with him (Anonymous 1838). Not surprisingly, they had four of their horses stolen while at Henry O'Brien's property in Yass. I have used this original source for insight into the stations, terrain and speed of travel across Argyle to King County at that time.
- The career of Tennant, Murphy, Ricks and Cain provides a good insight into police methods ('Criminal Court (Wednesday)' 1828a). Macalister arrested and held without trial Tennant's common law wife, May Weistardt. In sending her to Sydney Gaol, he recommended 'the severest punishment the law could inflict upon this abandoned woman ... until she informs on the hutkeepers and stockmen who harbour Tennant and enjoy his spoils.' Concerning Tennant he wrote, 'Should Tennant survive his wounds, some of which were inflicted with unparalleled wantonness and cruelty ... it would be most advisable to prevent every direct and indirect intercourse between himself and the above mentioned woman as there can be no doubt his principal aim would be to enjoin her secrecy on this head'. The man who shot Tennant was recommended for a Ticket of Leave (Government 1827).

- Some settlers and emancipists were aware of the desperate conditions that led bolters into bushranging and wrote to the newspapers about their plight ('Bushrangers' 1830b). Such letters document the brutality of the constables in executing warrants ('Hints on the Suppression of Bushranging' 1830) and the futile efforts of some gentlemen who attempted to negotiate with the authorities on behalf of repentant bushrangers seeking to surrender ('Draconian Punishments' 1830).
- The scene between Winifred Redmond and Father John Joseph Therry is invented but based upon a reading of Therry's private letters and sermons A letter Mrs.W.Redmond (Therry) 1841/103-105 p.219-221) re receipts for carriage repairs, mentions her children Mr & Mrs Roger Murphy and Captain and Mrs Scarello. No word of John. Therry did write to the Governor informing him that he would proceed to Bathurst to provide services to the Catholic boys among those condemned to death. The reply of the Governor was handwritten on the document (Williams 1992 p.63). Therry must have had some inside knowledge of the Ribbon Boys as he left before he was sent for by McPherson. Jack Ketch is the proverbial name for the hangman dating back to the barbarous individual who botched a number of public executions during the Monmouth Rebellion 1683-85.
- The details of the Redmond properties are based upon Mary Lang's family history (Lang 1987). However, the family seemed to be unaware of John Redmond's detention in Sydney Gaol on cattle stealing charges (n.a. 1831a) and of the persecution of his servant for information against him (n.a. 1827a). John Redmond was eventually acquitted of the charges but suffered a great deal of harassment by the authorities.
- John Grant, a gentleman convict per the *Coromandel* and friend of Sir Henry Browne Hayes, wrote of Winifred Durinault (nee Dowling), 'they are not common here, these lovely virtuous women' (Lang 1987) p.92. In April 1830, the Bishop of London received a letter from a French Catholic woman in Sydney who described Father Therry as 'Cet homme aime l'argent et les femmes'. After the death of Michael Dwyer, the Wicklow Chief, Mrs Dwyer and her daughters occasionally

lived in Father Therry's house (Reece 1993).

- Information on the properties and stock of the Hassall and Redmond families is verified by the 1828 census. Meryll Hope, in her meticulous record of the Hassall family letters, notes that James Hassall and William Walker had improved and stocked lands on the Binga River in the Abercrombie, but were given orders to quit in 1825 in favour of Messrs Redmond and Davis (Hope 2010) p.48. From 1824 to 1827 the McKenzie brothers enraged Samuel Hassall by taking over some of his improved lands and removing stock. It was not uncommon practice (p.39). Roger and Mary Murphy (nee Redmond) received a 320 acre grant as a marriage portion in the Abercrombie. They occupied Bingham and brought large parcels of land either side of the river during the 1830s (Barrett 1992) pp.102-108.
- *The Bathurst Gaol Register* for 1831 shows many servants were in goal for lodging complaints against their masters. The complaints included 'want of blankets', 'need of slops' (clothing and shoes), 'refusal to work', and 'refusal to eat'. John Martin and John Handley were brought in from Stowford by Mr. Liscombe for 'refusing the rations' (Billie Jacobsen & Kaye Vernon 2010).
- The two court cases that provide an insight into Jack Donohoe's early career of perjury and cattle stealing can be read online (n.a. 1828a); (*R. v Walker, Keefe, Cuff, Adkins and Coates* 1828). For his first capital trial, see ('Supreme Criminal Court' 1828a). Donohoe made a habit of stripping and humiliating his victims (1830b).
- Tennant, Murphy, Ricks and Cain were tried a number of times. The Dublin born James Murphy was transported from Tipperary as a White Boy in 1822. He took to the bush but was captured and sent with Cain to Sydney Gaol on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1828. Tennant and Ricks followed on January 12<sup>th</sup> and were confined in a hospital room with the wards man. When he fell asleep, they up-ended their iron bunks and

broke through the ceiling into the loft. They had just removed the shingles when a sentry discovered them. The wards man was sent to a penal colony for two years ('Police Reports' 1828) and Tennant and Ricks were sent to trial ('Criminal Court (Wednesday)' 1828a).

- The escapades of Owen, Whisken and Holmes were revealed in the court case ('Supreme Criminal Court' 1828b; n.a. 1828b). Donohoe's adventures from Bolong to the Boorowa Plains and his robbery of Jonathan Hassall two years later were reported in the Sydney Monitor in June 1830 ('Highway Robbery' 1830). Henry Castles applied for and obtained a Pardon on the basis of his success at capturing bushrangers. His petition claimed that he had never been before the Bench of Magistrates which is incorrect. In 1824 he was tried for the manslaughter of an aboriginal woman and personally admonished by the judge for 'pricking' the aboriginal elder (The National Archives of the United Kingdom).
- Charles Tinson was only 17 years old when transported for life aboard the *Asia*. He was assigned to the Mineral Surveyor when he arrived in 1828. By September, he had run off with Donohoe and by November, he was in Bathurst Gaol with William Pitts (New South Wales Government 1828). Pitts and Tinson were charged with being 'accessory to murder' and sent to Sydney Goal but the case was not prosecuted and they were released in April 1829. By July 1829, Lieutenant Macalister had Tinson arrested for 'diverse felonies' in Argyle, he was tried in Sydney in September and executed by the end of the month (n.a. 1831a).
- How was Donohoe spirited away from the Murrumbidgee once he had been wounded? Perhaps Donohoe travelled by wagon back to the Hassall property at Mulgoa. According to the Census of 1828, Roger Corcoran was working at that time on the property of Dr. Harris at Kalangan next door to Ned Ryan and Jimmy

Meehan's run at Galong (Barrett 2006) p.47. Donohoe and the bushrangers had gone to Dr. Harris' station and were also caught in possession of Jimmy Meehan's shirt and two Hassall bullocks (Meredith 1960) p.12. It is significant that Henry O'Brien's overseer found the bushrangers. O'Brien had long suspected the carters of harbouring and supplying bushrangers with liquor and he aggressively removed teamsters from his lands. In 1836, the Hassall's carter, Roger Corcoran, applied for a land license but Henry O'Brien of Yass objected on the basis that Corcoran sold illicit spirits on his property. A month later, Corcoran was convicted and fined for harbouring John Dowd, a bolter from Thomas Raine, Bathurst (Barrett 1992) pp.91-92.

- The death of Daniel Gleeson is reported in the records of the Windsor Assizes. The inquest illustrated the soldiers' knowledge of secret signs and sects within the convict population ('Windsor Assizes' 1830).
- The obituary of John Pedley ('Memories of the Past' 1901) was brought to my attention by the Bathurst historian, Christopher Morgan. It states that John Pedley was tied up on Monument Hill for a day by a gang of ten bushrangers for refusing to join them. This may have been the initiating incident for the insurrection as it resulted in the theft of the mounted police horses. My research also shows that Pedley was transported on the *Henry* in 1823 at the age of 18 years for stealing a spade (*Convict indent and associated papers of prisoners transported to NSW c. 1790-1840*). He had red hair and wore a mermaid on his arm and a crucifix heart on his chest. In 1824, he participated in the aboriginal massacre at Limekilns. He was a runaway from Longbottom, listed as a repeat offender and put on bread and milk for twenty one days when recaptured (Government n.d.-e) [Reel 6023; 4/6671.p.95]. He was a brickmaker and carter for George Innis at Yarrows on the Winburndale Creek and probably knew Jack Donohoe who worked there for

Samuel Therry at that time. Pedley ran twice from the iron gang. In January 1828, he was recaptured and sent by the Bathurst General Sessions to Sydney Gaol. He was sent to a penal settlement for two years – first to the Phoenix Hulk at Lavender Bay and then to Moreton Bay. The experience must have addled his head, as on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1830, he was brought down to Sydney on a charge of assault but adjudged to be insane and detained in gaol. His Certificate of Freedom was issued in February. In March 1830 Francis Forbes was ill and the courts were tangled up in the Governor's libel cases against the newspapers, so Pedley and other minor offenders were released on their own recognisance. He appears again on the Sydney Gaol records in 1839 on an iron gang at Woolomoloo (n.a. 1831a). He must have 'retired' to the services of General Stewart with gratitude as he lived to be 96 years of age.

- The case of the Wellington Swells is an interesting sidelight to the Bathurst insurrection and may have preoccupied Evernden at the time. Their imprisonment in Bathurst Gaol in March 1830 on suspicion of a felony was reported by the Sydney Monitor ('Three of the greatest Wellington Valley swells...' 1830). Evernden also applied for the assignment of the Wellington special, George Stanley, as his court clerk. John Maxwell wrote to the Colonial Secretary claiming that Stanley had given information to Evernden to get a favourable posting and avoid transfer to Emu Plains. Maxwell blocked the assignment which he saw as a reward for Stanley's dishonesty and the 'swells' were returned to his care. Nevertheless, Maxwell made plans for Peter Fenn to be sent to Norfolk Island and for James Bushell to be exiled to Moreton Bay. Maxwell recommended no favours for the other six 'specials' he sent to Sydney for reassignment, including Frederick Lahrbush the elderly Prussian officer of the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment (Maxwell 1830).

- The depredations of the Hunter River Banditti began in August 1830 ('Bushrangers' 1830a; 'The Bushrangers at Hunter's River' 1830), although different combinations of gangs formed and reformed as members were captured, released or killed. A large body of Hunter River outlaws were hanged in April 1830 alongside Felix Kearney who said, 'My lord and gentlemen of the jury, it is only five minutes choking' ('Maitland Circuit Court' 1830). The banditti led by Bowen were identified by Governor Darling as the instigators of the Bathurst Insurrection ('Government Order No. 16' 1830; 'Execution' 1831a; 'Supreme Court Tuesday January 11' 1831; n.a. 1831b).
- The death of Donohoe was reported in detail in the *Sydney Monitor* ('Donohoe Coroners' Inquest on his body' 1830) and the *Sydney Gazette* ('Death of Donahoe' 1830; 'Donohoe Coroners' Inquest on his body' 1830). Seven years after Donohoe's death, Chief Constable Hodson of Windsor and his daughter Mrs Payton were found guilty of swindling Michael Power's wife of her husband's savings. They were transported for two years to Newcastle and Hodson had to pay the Queen five hundred pounds before being released from gaol ('Law Intelligence. Supreme Court-Criminal Side' 1838).
- Judge Roger Therry commented upon the effect of 'castigation of the cat' upon the convict, 'Seldom does a man regain a true sentiment of self respect ... it lowers him in his own esteem; it makes him the butt of ridicule and contempt with his associates ... it has been in its excessive inflictions as instrumental as crime itself in multiplying victims for the scaffold' (Therry 1863)p.50. I have based my assumptions of Ralph's character on these observations and have inferred a need to prove himself among his male companions as a motivating force behind his actions. The conversations and actions at Bartlett's are taken from court records of the trial ('Supreme Court Bathurst October 30 Special Commission' 1830; Document n.d.).

- The Ribbon Boys were connected to a tradition of riotous marches both in Ireland and England. For details of the Lancaster Mill rioters see *Riot! The Story of the Eats Lancashire Loom Breakers in 1826* (Turner 1992) and the court records of the trial of Anne Entwistle ('Serious Disturbances' 1826; Clegg 1826). For the story of Michael Dwyer and the Wicklow rebels in Ireland and in the Colony, see *Irish Convict Lives* (Reece 1993). In May 1830, Dr. Doyle warned that the secret societies in Ireland were recruiting both Catholics and Protestants ('Ireland' 1830). The Ribbon Boys were similarly a combination of Catholics and Protestants.



## Chapter 6

**Glossary:** Brid – bird; Cack – shit; Clemp/clemmed – very hungry/starved; Breast-hee – the mouth of a tunnel or collier entrance; Don'd – put on; Glizzen – lightning; Rabblement – a noisy crowd; Ripper – thoughtless daredevil; Settle – to sit down; Shut – to be rid of.

- The retrial of Tennant, Murphy, Cain and Ricks was reported in the *Sydney Gazette* (n.a. 1828d).
- The convict oath is taken from *Tales of the Convict System* (B.G.Andrews 1975) p.81. The author, William Astley, claims to have gathered the material from oral sources. However, the oath is often read in an ironic sense as its use in the tales underscores the treachery among the brotherhood. Treachery bedevilled the Ribbon Boys and ‘where they had been sanguine enough to confide, they experienced perfidity, on all sides they were surrounded by enemies, and treachery stalked in their own ranks’ (‘Letter by ‘An Eyewitness’’ 1830).
- Victor Hugo, reflecting upon the Paris riots he witnessed in 1830, made the distinction between revolt and insurrection (Hugo 1988) p.889. His observations of rebel leaders seem to capture Ralph Entwistle’s actions at Brownlea in this phrase, ‘A chance-comer may place himself at the head of a section of the crowd and lead it where he chooses. This first phase is filled with terror mingled with a sort of terrible gaiety’ p.896.
- Freemasons were active within the colony among the military, settlers and convicts. Sir Henry Browne Hayes held a meeting at his home in Chapel Row. Governor King temporarily exiled Hayes to Norfolk Island and later Van Diemen’s Land upon the suspicion that the Masonic lodges played a role in the 1804 rebellion. The colonial lodges were ‘authorised’ in 1820 (Reece 1993). In August of 1830, the lawyer John Williams, one of the Wellington ‘specials’, prosecuted a man of the same name for stealing a package sent by his wife from England that contained his Masonic garments and documents (‘Domestic Intelligence’ 1830).

- In some secondary accounts of the Hunter River Banditti, Edward Baldwin has been confused with Edwin Baldwin. Both men came from the Hunter River and Patrick's Plains. Edwin Baldwin was born in the colony and convicted at Maitland in September 1829 of selling a bullock he had 'rescued' from the pound (Archives Authority of New South Wales 1978). A ticket of leave was offered for his apprehension in July 1830 ('Colonial Secretary's Office' 1830). Reference to Edward Baldwin is made in the report of the Hunter River Banditti in August 1830. They were rescued from the police by armed banditti mounted on eight horses and driving two pack bullocks ('The Bushrangers at Hunter's River' 1830).

The actions of Corporal Quigley, the volunteers and aboriginal trackers in capturing the Hunter River Banditti are reported in the Sydney Gazette ('Government Order No. 16' 1830). The depredations of Bowen's party are reported in the court cases which followed their capture (n.a. 1831b) and in the newspapers of the day ('Bushrangers' 1830a; 'Domestic Intelligence Supreme Court' 1831; 'Supreme Court Tuesday January 11' 1831).

- The account of the Ribbon Boy's raid on Captain Brown's property Brownlea is drawn from a speech made to the Bathurst and District Historical Society by local historian Mr. Bruce Gunnes (Gunnes 1954). It is not clear why Captain Brown sent his overseers out of the way. I have discovered the names of the overseers and of convicts assigned to them who may have had links to the Ribbon Boys. O'Brien had a shipmate on Brown's property. Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien were described as being members of the original gang even though they were not captured until a year later.

- The quote concerning cross dressing and celebrating ‘a fine old time in Tipperary’ comes from the testimony of Mary Hartigan who was arrested on George Street, Sydney Town dressed as a man(1826b). ‘Miss Hartigan, who seemed to tower above her sex, parading the streets in rather a hearty mood, dressed out, not in silks and satins, but in the good substantial brogues and corduroy inexpressibles, and what not - of an ould croney, one Mr. O’ Rafferty—no, Mr. Montgomery.’ She claimed she was proud to be keeping up a family tradition practiced by her mother and her grandmother and her aunt’s daughter, and all the family of the Hartigans in the county of Limerick in Ireland. The case was dismissed.
- Irish secret societies such as the Ribbonmen and Rockites practiced various rituals of disguise (Donnelly Jnr 2009). On a raid, the men often blackened their faces with burnt cork. The leader would wear a hat with feathers or ribbons, especially when recruiting at sporting events. The leader’s sartorial splendour was often commented upon. This example is reminiscent of the description of Jack Donohoe, ‘The large party that attacked the house ... was commanded by Captain Rock in person, dressed in blue, with sash and captain’s hat.’p.113.
- Transvestite rituals were also practiced in the secret societies and the raiders in women’s clothing were known as ‘The Lady Rocks’, or ‘Molly Maguires’ or ‘Terry Alt’s Mother’ or ‘Lady Clares’. One group of Lady Rocks arrested in 1822, were found to be seven ‘stout young men ... much in liquor’ wearing white shirts with women’s apparel underneath (Donnelly Jnr 2009)p.110-111. The donning of women’s clothing was a carnivalesque practice that celebrated the inversion of hierarchies and rules. Ireland had a long tradition of violent attacks led by men dressed as women, ‘dating back to the 1760s’ (Donnelly Jnr 2009) p.112.

- Rumours of the extent of the uprising beyond the Blue Mountains were causing public panic when Captain Walpole marched out of Sydney Town (1830c). Some apparently believed that five hundred prisoners had risen in a rebellion, killed the Commandant and were approaching the precincts of Sydney. Others believed the convicts of Moreton Bay had overthrown their masters ('Harvest Hands' 1830).
- The Bathurst Hunt Club was formed in 1824. They wore a scarlet frock coat with black velvet facings, a buff waist coat, white breeches and top boots (Barker 1985). William Dumaresq described the members in 1827 as discordant, 'I should hope these private feuds will no longer continue to stain the character of many of our country gentlemen'(Mackaness 1965) p.187.
- Private feuds and rivalry among the gentlemen led to differing accounts of the Volunteer efforts at capturing the Ribbon Boys. A letter to George Suttor from the patriarch of the family described the valiant efforts of Charles and William during the contretemps in the Abercrombie ('The Bushrangers at Bathurst' 1830). A letter from an 'eyewitness' gave a scathing review of the failure of the volunteers to engage the enemy and support Arkell and Yates who had captured the arms ('Letter by 'An Eyewitness'' 1830) . A poem then appeared in the Sydney Monitor lampooning both the two Suttor brothers and Governor Ralph Darling in the bungled attempt to round up the gang ('The Wars of Bathurst 1830' 1830). The truth must lay somewhere between these differing accounts.
- For a description of the Abercrombie Caves and the mythical creature Gurangatch see the Caves Chronicles (Keck & Cubbitt 1991) p.37. There is no historical evidence of the bushrangers sheltering in the caves in 1830. If they did follow a stockman's trail, it was unknown to the settlers and the military. The first mention of caves in relation to the Ribbon Boys occurs during the criminal trial of Michael Donohoe in 1831. A mounted policeman says he found 'a sort of

a cave' on Mr. Maule's farm ten miles from Mr Evernden's dwelling house at Caloonah ('Supreme Court' 1831a). In 1845, William H. Suttor led a party of ladies and gentlemen on a visit to the Abercrombie caves with the surveyor Walker Davidson. The visitors recorded their initials on the walls. Mr. W.H. Suttor toasted Mr. Davidson as the original discoverer of the caves and refuted any other claims to its discovery ('Bathurst. A Trip to the Caves' 1845). He would not have done this if the caves were known to him and if he had been there for the battle against the bushrangers in 1830. Scientific journals of the era credit Surveyor Davidson with the discovery in 1842 during the survey of Grove Creek, formerly known as Burrangylong (Wilkinson 1879).

- George Ranken, James Walker and two parties of mounted police visited the scene of the battle within a day but did not mention caves. In his letter to the Colonial Secretary dated October 7th, Thomas Evernden says the Volunteers engaged the bushrangers forty miles south of Bathurst at 'Carraway'. The next day, they met the Mounted Police 'near the same place' and then went on to Fulton's on the Lachlan River. His previous letter of September 30<sup>th</sup> says they were at the Three Brothers (Colonial Secretary's [Inwards] Correspondence Bathurst Insurrection 1830). The 'rocky glen near the Warragambie River' mentioned in George Suttor's description of the battle ('The Bushrangers at Bathurst' 1830) seems to be a typographical error by the Sydney editors who were translating a handwritten letter. The Warragamba River is in the Blue Mountains and does not connect with the Abercrombie. However, the trail which connects The Three Brothers to Fulton's station on the Lachlan runs alongside the Waugola River and appears on maps in 1848 (Wells, William Dixon Foundation & Library of New South Wales 1970) p.49. By contrast, the Burrangylong Creek ran through the Abercrombie Caves to a precipice. Later, a route was forged to Goulburn but at that time the original road to Argyle was forty miles east through Porter's Retreat.

- Militia training was common in the eighteenth century when many landholders trained labourers for a local militia. I have been unable to find evidence of Ralph Entwistle on the militia rolls for Bolton (Lancashire Records Office 2010). However, Donnelly makes an interesting comment, ‘The pensioner William McDonald, a tailor by trade who spent years in the British Army, was said in 1822 to be constantly conducting military drill for Ribbonmen-Rockites in the mountains above Borrisoleigh in Tipperary, with at times hundreds participating in these exercises’ (Donnelly Jnr 2009) p.183. By coincidence, a William McDonald was one of six army deserters from Tipperary transported aboard the Governor Ready with Michael Kearney. McDonald was assigned to Hannibal McArthur in 1829 and sent to the Abercrombie where he was shot by mounted police in 1834 (Archives Authority of New South Wales 1984). The volunteers and mounted police claimed the Ribbon Boys had military training which was evident in their organisation and tactics, the poorer shots reloading for the marksmen.
- The origin of the term ‘Lobsters,’ used in reference to soldiers, dates from the English Civil War of 1643 and refers to the ‘bright iron shells’ that were worn as armour by a troop of cuirassiers nicknamed the London Lobsters (‘Origin of the term “Lobster”’ 1832).

## *Chapter 7*

*Glossary:* Tight – close knit/bosom friends

- The trial of the government servants, known to their fellow convicts as ‘The Ribbon Boys’, was reported in the newspapers (‘Supreme Court Bathurst October 30 Special Commission’ 1830). Witnesses attested to there being more than ten men in the original group: some said thirteen Ribbon Boys left Hare Castle; others claimed twenty were present at the Abercrombie battle with the volunteers and Mounted Police; twelve Ribbon Boys were taken captive at Boorowa but two died of their wounds (Williams 1992). One year later, Slingsby, Lynch and O’Brien were arrested and thought to be members of the original ‘Ribbon Boys’ (‘Supreme Court ‘ 1831). Freeborn Australian youths were said to be original members of the group but they ‘grew timid in the end’ (White 1975) p.136.
- It is difficult to identify the ‘Leader’ or Captain of the insurrection. For the purposes of this narrative, I have followed Ralph Entwistle and his role in the insurrection. However, Ralph Entwistle was not named as the leader in the court trial, in the newspaper accounts of the armed encounters, or at the execution. In later years, Ralph’s role seems to have been emphasised because the titillating story of his previous flogging provided the authorities with an individual revenge rationale that diverted attention from the starvation and maltreatment of over eighty government men who participated in the insurrection.
- In accounts of the insurrection published at the time, the ‘leader’ was described as wearing ribbons in his hat at Brownlea and the Abercrombie, but this was not mentioned in the later encounters with Macalister and Walpole. Leadership may have changed as men joined and left the group. Charles White noted that the ‘leader’ at the Abercrombie battle called upon his men to shoot Evernden and other policemen, none of whom were in the volunteer party (White 1975) p.138.

Was this because Ralph Entwistle was unable to see his attackers due to the canopy of trees or was the leader at that time someone who was unable to identify the local magistrate and the settlers? The organisational structure of Ribbon societies rested upon the election of a Captain by a group of ten or twelve men who were also directed and supported by a district Guardian (Foster 1988) pp.292-299 . This may have been the case and we may never know who the leader was or if there was one consistent leader across the four armed encounters.

- The poem, ‘A Doggerel Snapping at Suttor’s Heels’ was published in the *Sydney Monitor* just two days before the trial (‘The Wars of Bathurst 1830’ 1830). George Suttor’s letter in the *Sydney Gazette* had claimed that Minerva’s intervention had saved his son from a ball that parted the hairs on his cheek (‘The Bushrangers at Bathurst’ 1830). In December, *The Australian* published an unflattering ‘eyewitness’ account of the battle and dismissed any heroicism on the part of the volunteers. ‘Did you hear that a ball passed thro’ the hair his head? I have made diligent enquiry into this particular, and am informed on all hands that this is an unwarrantable report and the gentleman spoken of, is not a little displeased at asserting such a thing of him... indeed the gentleman referred to has personally assured me that it’s all fudge, and meant as an ‘Ironical rally’ (‘Letter by ‘An Eyewitness’ 1830).
- The march from Sydney Town to Bathurst relies upon observations of travellers collected in *Fourteen Journeys Over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales* (Mackaness 1965). The case of three soldiers charged with the death of their prisoner James O’Brien was reported in the newspapers (‘Windsor Assizes’ 1830).



- The actions of the pressed government servants who escaped from Kings Plains and Hare Castle have been reconstructed from letters sent to the Colonial Secretary seeking rewards. The letter from Lieutenant Oliver De Laney commending the bravery of William Long and Martin Donaghue in staying with the wounded James Stevens gives a good insight into the battle with the mounted police (*Colonial Secretary's [Inwards] Correspondence Bathurst Insurrection 1830*). Donaghue, although previously punished for being drunken 'indolent and insolent', was rewarded with a Ticket of Leave and offer of employment in the 'New' police. William Long, being free, was offered a grant of land. Private Stevens died of his wounds on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1830 (*Bathurst Burial Register, Kelso 1826-1856*).
- Twelve Tickets of Leave were granted to government servants due to the Bathurst Insurrection. Six of these were pressed men who escaped from the Ribbon Boys. The other six acted as guides or carters for the military. Another three Government servants who returned to their farms had their sentences reduced by one to four years. Two servants were offered positions as Constables and three government servants, who were already in possession of a Ticket or Certificate of Freedom, were rewarded with a gift of three cows apiece (Williams 1992).
- Governor Ralph Darling's letter to Sir George Murray on October 5<sup>th</sup> indicates how seriously the military regarded the threat of an insurrection (Ward & Robertson 1978).
- The earliest maps of the colony were used to locate properties and cross checked with the 1828 Census returns for an indication of the stock and names and numbers of government servants at these locations (Baker 1843). Explorers maps were useful for imagining the horse terrain, watering and pasturage (Oxley 1822). Maps of the 'Appropriated lands' indicated the location of settler's grants, although many runs were 'occupied' before 1837 (Dixon 1837).

- Victor Hugo described the camp followers that accompany the military into war (Hugo 1988) p321. Lachlan MacAlister, in requesting a reward for Thomas Smith, denigrated the other convicts assigned to Walpole and MacHenry ‘some of whom, I have little doubt, rendered assistance to the banditti, in loading and distributing ammunition’ (Williams 1992) p.66.
- The role played by Coffee and Donovan is speculative. They were named as members of the Hunter River Banditti and each had previously been assigned to Bathurst properties. Although Coffee was named by the approver as a member of the banditti, he was never arrested and disappears from their depredations after the banditti leave the Liverpool Plains. Another two Banditti were killed before they left the Hunter River (‘The Bushrangers at Hunter’s River’ 1830). One of them named Daley may have been related to Dominic Daley. The bloodless capture of the Hunter River Banditti was reported in the court trial which followed (n.a. 1831b). John Donovan was not captured at the Warrumbungles but he was tried with the others for the robberies at Liverpool Plains and acquitted.
- The essential role of aboriginal trackers was recognised in the newspapers of the day, ‘A few dozen of the more shrewd and athletic aborigines employed as bush constables, and fed and clothed for their services with a scale of rewards held out to them, would more effectually thin the numbers of the bushrangers, and check their depredations, than five times the number of soldiers and police constables’ (1830b). The Governor ordered medals to be struck for the aborigines who assisted Corporal Quigley and Captain Walpole (‘Government Order No. 16’ 1830).

## Chapter 8

**Glossary:** Deawnt – finished. Weavers call their web a ‘cut’ and when it is taken off the loom the expression is that the weaver has ‘deawnt his cut’ or finished; Dur-hole – doorway; Dur-stone – threshold; Gawmless – gormless or stupid; Hissself – himself; Thar-cake – oatmeal,treacle and butter cake. By papist tradition on ‘Tharcake Monday’ (the Monday after hallowe’en) the wealthy give cake to the poor; Thick – friendly.

- Details of Thomas Entwistle are from the Malabar indents (*Ships Indents: Malabar*) and the surgeon’s log (Admiralty Papers 1826; n.a. 1821). His first trial and details of the entrapment of the forgery gang operating from the Timber Yards is reported in the *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser* (‘Bank Prosecutions’ 1821) . His conduct in gaol was described as orderly and quiet (The National Archives of the United Kingdom). In Van Deimen’s Land, Thomas was assigned to a Presbyterian minister, Reverend Mr. Robertson (Archives). He was punished in October 1829 for being drunk and disorderly, in January 1830 for fighting with another servant, and in 1831 for being drunk. Otherwise his conduct was described as good. He was free by servitude in 1835 (Tasmanian Archives). He died aged eighty seven years, in the Pauper and Lunatic Asylum at Port Arthur on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1863 (n.a. 1861) .
- The botched execution of Smith, one of Donohoe’s associates, is reported in the *Australian* (n.a. 1828c).
- Evernden’s letter to the Colonial Secretary on October 20<sup>th</sup> states ‘I am confident that the rising was not caused for the want of rations’ (Williams 1992) p.60. The Governor had been petitioned by Major Druitt and fellow magistrates in Penrith, Bringelly and Cowpastures for over three years to investigate the poor quality and quantity of rations,

Yet all of these reports never had any effect and it was not until the month of August last, after a partial insurrection of the convicts at Bathurst had taken place on account of bad and insufficient food and clothing, that

his Excellency was pleased to institute proceedings whereby to ascertain whether the three years of reports by us of the bad feeling of the convicts were true or false.

(‘Justification of the Sydney Monitor by the General’ 1830)

- Reverend Samuel Marsden’s sins are recounted by Roger Therry (Therry 1863) p.44. His punishments were so severe the *Monitor* accused him of ‘manufacturing bushrangers’. When Hannibal McArthur’s old shepherd absconded due to a lack of rations and was recaptured, he warned the magistrate, ‘It is in the power of the likes of me to have revenge when lambing time comes around.’ Marsden sentenced him to 500 lashes and transportation to a penal settlement for life (‘Friday 22 September 1826’ 1826). In the case of Sudds and Thompson, Darling mounted a defence in England and sought to clear his name (Darling 1831a; Darling 1831b) . Similar scandals did not beset Marsden in New Zealand.
- We do not know the exact site of the capture of the Ribbon Boys, however, there is a specific location. Lieutenant Evernden reports that it took place ‘near Mr. Roberts’ station in the direction of Cunningham’s Plains, Argyle’ (Williams 1992) p.60. Edward Ryan’s hut at Galong lay between these two places. Prior to 1838, a saddle-shaped hill overlooking the Boorowa Flats was known as Bushranger’s Hill (*Beyond the limits of location* 2013).
- The actions of George Mole and James Green have been imagined from the known information. By September 20<sup>th</sup>, James Green was in confinement at Bathurst having been sent in from Glen Logan and George Mole ‘who had returned back to Mr. Rankins station’ [sic] was brought in by Captain Walpole (Williams 1992) p.60. Mole had been assigned to Arthur Ranken at Woomilla. The newspapers reported that the Ribbon Boys were hardened and indifferent to their fate during their execution and trial, ‘with the exception of two whose names we have not heard’ (‘Highway Robberies’ 1830).

On November 10<sup>th</sup> 1830, Mole and Green were found guilty of being illegally at large with arms and sentenced to three years on Norfolk Island (n.a. 1831a). Mole received a conditional pardon in 1846. James Green was free by servitude in 1845(State Records Authority of New South Wales 2009) . They may well have been the only two Ribbon Boys to have survived.

- The court case concerning Tommy the Bathurst aborigine (n.a. 1827b) provides an interesting insight into beliefs about the soul and the aborigines at this time.
- Patrick Waldron was one of six bolters to receive a ticket of leave for returning to his farm. (Williams 1992) p. 72. Captain Walpole does appear to have been ‘taken in’ by Martin Grady. His letter requesting Grady’s pardon and a passage to England was looked upon favourably (p. 68). Magistrate Evernden agreed to overlook Grady’s warrant on charges of cattle stealing but suggested the convict may prefer an appointment as constable (p.70). Captain Walpole took Grady back to Sydney under his protection and finally arranged employment for him as a Sydney Constable. He enrolled as a constable on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1830 but inexplicably resigned on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1830. When the rewards came due, Grady could not be found. Superintendent John Maxwell wrote to the Colonial Secretary that two convicts at Emu Plains claimed Grady had been transported to a penal colony. Rossi discovered that on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1830 Grady had been arrested for bestiality. He was found guilty and given 18 months on the iron gang at Parramatta. Captain Rossi wrote to the Colonial Secretary, ‘nothing can be done for Grady under such circumstances’(Williams 1992) p.86.
- The account of Lieutenant Macalister’s capture of Kearney, Sheppard and Dunne is informed by the memoirs of Charles MacAlister. I have referred to this account for the names of the troopers who accompanied Macalister and for the words of

Sergeant Doyle. However, the year is incorrect, the location is given as Shooters' Hill near Oberon, the number of bushrangers hanged is incorrect and Lieutenant MacAlister was only slightly injured (Williams 1992) rather than shot in the thigh. The account seems to have been embroidered by local oral transmission as Charles MacAlister did not arrive in the colony until 1833 and the facts 'were said to have been verified by the victims', most of whom had died (MacAlister 1907) pp.70-74.

- The story of Ned Ryan harbouring Roger Corcoran and other whiteboys is reported by Max Barrett in his history of the Clonmel whiteboys (Barrett 1992) pp.64-65 . The biography of Ned Ryan includes the letters of application for land attesting to Ryan's cooperation with police (Barrett 2008) pp.41-42.
- The game of 'French and English' the Ribbon Boys played at the river is adapted from the convict's description of life in England in 1819 (Becke 1975) p.3.
- The authorised 'limits of location' were established in 1826 as settlers moved west of the Blue Mountains. In 1829, Governor Ralph Darling refined the limits by establishing nineteen counties as the lawful areas for settlers to occupy (Clark 1968a) p. 69. This was a pragmatic necessity to extend the rule of law. Criminal trials often required that the site of the crimes were specified in the charges. In the case of the Hunter River Banditti, for example, the prisoners were acquitted on the charge of stealing from the dwelling house of John Rotten at Goulburn River. The crime took place at Liverpool Plains and 'the place was the essence of the offence' ('Supreme Court Tuesday January 11' 1831).
- The names of the squatters' runs at this time changed once the land grants of the late 1830s were secured. I have used the native place names given to properties in the early days of settlement. Ann Hassall (nee Marsden) was granted dowry land on Dungengerra Plains that was later called Beverly. The squatter's run at Marengo, which was originally spelled in the same way as the name of Napoleon's

favourite horse and famous victory, was on a creek later named McHenry. This was the location of McHenry's run in 1829 (Lloyd 1990) p.13.

- The location, referred to in Thomas Evernden's letter of 14 October, as 'William Grant's station "Wollawolla" on the Lachlan River' is something of a mystery (Williams 1992) p.57. There is a location near present day Grenfell on Native Dog Creek called Wollah Wollah. We know that John Grant was granted a property on the Belabula River in 1832. In the Census of 1828, Grant named this occupied land Bala Bala, possibly a phonetic spelling of the native name for the river. His overseer was a man called William Grant. I have woven in the connection to Alexander Grant and also the Slingsbys who worked for John Grant on Mount York.
- Spirits were available in the most remote locations. Roger Corcoran was accused by Henry O'Brien of making and distributing illegal liquor (Barrett 1992) p.91. In 1840, Ned Ryan applied for permission to build an Inn on the route from Boorowa Plains to Yass. His application suggests a possible reason why the Ribbon Boys may have camped at Galong,

I am put to considerable expense and inconvenience in entertaining parties so travelling [from Wellington, Bathurst and Liverpool Plains to Port Philip]...It is on all occasions necessary for them to stop at my place in consequence of there being no water, except at Galong, for fifteen miles on the one side and twelve on the other.

(Barrett 2008) p.68.

- The appearance of the aborigine in the story is timed for the anniversary of the death of Captain Logan. On 9 October 1830, the tyrannical commandant of

Moreton Bay was on an exploring expedition to Mount Irwin with his servant and five convicts. They came across a party of aborigines at the Pine Range near Brisbane Mountain. Rather than befriending or employing the natives as guides, Captain Logan frightened them off. Ten days later he was speared to death ('Death of Captain Logan' 1830). This was a significant event in the colony and celebrated by the convicts in the ballad Moreton Bay (Manifold 1984) p. 16-18, 27.

- Were the Australian and John Coffee the two men who died of their wounds at the final capture of the Ribbon Boys? The names were not recorded. I have chosen an Australian to represent the freeborn sons of convicts who joined the Ribbon Boys at the start of their insurrection. An Australian would have no convict record or ship indent and therefore may have remained unknown to the authorities. I have chosen the name of John Coffee because he was a member of the Hunter River Banditti who disappeared from the record and was never captured or tried. Twenty one year old John Coffee had been assigned to Fulton's property on the Lachlan in 1828. Reverend Fulton was an emancipated transportee, having been sent to the colony for his part in the 1798 Irish rebellion. He had been implicated in Governor Bligh's overthrow (Clark 1968a) p. 175.
- There may have been a family connection between John Coffee and early Irish settlers in the area. Joseph Roberts' station was at Coffee's Crossing. One descendent of the Coffee family, Ada Coffee, recollected that outside of the consecrated Galong cemetery (erected half a mile south-east of Ryan's slab hut in the 1850s) there were two fenced but unmarked graves (Barrett 2006) p.14. Bishop Polding visited Ned Ryan in 1838. He climbed the Bushranger's Hill and blessed the site. He left his rosary on the hill and the place was subsequently renamed Rosary Hill. Ned Ryan bequeathed these lands to the Redemptorist missionaries (*Beyond the limits of location* 2013).



- The suggestion that Entwistle was offered a deal for turning approver on his fellows is based upon precedent. Storey's gang were betrayed by Blanchfield. Donohoe turned approver on Atkins and Coates. Webber and Walmsley attempted to turn approver on each other in January 1831 (Meredith 1960).
- Much has been written about homosocial love and the origins of mateship in this era. Moore attributes the development of bush-mateship to the lack of religion and the absence of women which meant 'a concentration in the bush upon the personal relationship of a man and his mate but also the development at times of a certain refinement of feeling'. This 'delicate sensibility', Moore suggests, is gentle and 'almost feminine in touch' (Moore 1965) p.51. He quotes from Harris, a settler mechanic who travels to Bathurst and comments upon life among the shepherds, 'There is a great deal of this mutual regard and trust engendered by two men working thus together in the otherwise solitary bush; habits of mutual helpfulness arise, and these elicit gratitude, and that leads on to regard'(Harris 1852) p.180-181. It is impossible to know about the intimacies among the Ribbon Boys and their sexual orientations. Three of them were married, two had children. It is often assumed that bushrangers were heterosexual by default. However, there is no evidence surrounding the Bathurst Insurrection that suggests the Ribbon Boys were concerned with women. Accounts of other bushrangers of the era mention women: Tennant had a 'wanton woman' in the bush. The Hunter River Banditti took an aboriginal woman from Liverpool Plains. William Percival planned to 'force the women' by abducting Janet Ranken and her serving maid and taking them to the Wellington Valley. There were women at the farms the Ribbon Boys visited, yet no harm was done to them and there was no attempt to press any of the government women or take them along.



## Chapter 9

**Glossary:** Raw-head-and-bloody-bones – a term of horror used to frighten children, possibly related to skull and cross bones; Th'art – you are; Ut – that;

- A large cache of stolen property was brought in from the Warrumbungles ('Government Order No.15 20 October 1830' 1830). It was itemised in the newspaper but only some of the items were claimed by victims of the Hunter River Banditti (1830a).
- Father Therry's financial position, including the IOU for Samson Sealy's doctor's bill, is gathered from his correspondence and a letter from Mrs.W.Redmond (Terry 1841/103-105 p.219-221) concerning receipts for carriage repairs.
- The case of John Redmond (n.a. 1827a) revolved around the theft of a tarpaulin that was said to have been given to him by his father in Sydney. This is the case which brings the characters of Michael Power and Edward Baldwin to light.
- In March 1825, John Shea was attacked by three men called James Dwyer, Owen Bowen and John Murphy. They were convicted and fined in this civil matter. In May, Edward Ryan witnessed a letter from Shea dropping the complaint against John Murphy (Barrett 1992) p.112-113.
- Daniel Geary survived his wounds and was pensioned as an invalid (State Records Authority of New South Wales 1831). He had established himself as a landowner by the age of twenty and was married with two children when he shot and wounded the landholder, Thomas Campbell. For the shooting, Daniel Geary was sentenced to life imprisonment and sent to Port Macquarie (1822). The Governor was petitioned by Geary's wife and his elderly widowed mother. Despite having run from Port Macquarie and having been recaptured he was later released into the service of James Macarthur on the proviso that he stayed in Argyle county (State Records Authority of New South Wales 2010a). He was promoted to District

Constable with the Goulburn Police in 1828 and obtained his Ticket of Leave (State Records Authority of New South Wales 1828).

- Jack Donohoe reportedly sang at his capture and I have imagined the Ribbon Boys singing also. The lyrics are to an early version of the tune ‘Over the Hills and Far Away’ from the popular cross-dressing comedy, *The Recruiting Officer* by the Irish dramatist George Farquhar (Wycherley et al. 1840). It was the first play performed in New South Wales by convicts of the First Fleet (Hughes 1987) .
- The battle between Catholics and Protestants over the souls of the condemned in Sydney Gaol is described in the *Monitor* (‘Execution’ 1828). The case of Tommy can be read online at Macquarie Law Colonial Cases database (n.a. 1827b). Belief in a God capable of punishing a witness for perjury was necessary for a person to bear witness in court (*R. v. Fitzpatrick and Colville* 1824) . This legal view prevented aboriginal testimony from being accepted.
- The story of Slingsby, Lynch and O’Brien has been reconstructed from newspaper reports and the court trial evidence (‘Executed’ 1831; ‘Execution of Slingsby, Lynch and O’Brien for the murder of Captain Payne’ 1831; ‘Supreme Court ‘ 1831; ‘Supreme Court’ 1831b; n.a. 1831a).
- The case of the death of three aboriginal women at Bathurst has been cited earlier (n.a. 1824b). See also reports in the newspapers of the trial (‘Supreme Court Of Criminal Jurisdiction’ 1824), Proclamation of martial law (‘Proclamation’ 1824), the ‘war’ at Bathurst (‘However outrageous the aborigines...’ 1824; ‘To the editor of the Sydney Gazette’ 1824), and the aftermath (‘Supreme Court, Saturday, Oct. 10. ‘ 1824).
- Lynch had been tried for cattle theft in August 1830 but not convicted (‘Windsor Assizes’ 1830) . Slingsby and Lynch had good character references from Robert Lowe when they worked for him in Bringelly (Government n.d.-d; State Records Authority of New South Wales 2010b).

- The inquiry into the causes of the insurrection made the Bathurst magistrates more vigilant of the settlers and the conditions of employment for the Government servants in the following years ('Police Office Bathurst November 16th' 1830). Starvation still continued on the farms in 1831 and in one case the magistrates held Mr. George Ranken to account for a lack of rations for his servants (Eldershaw 1973; Williams 1992).
- Magistrate Thomas Evernden was fined as the result of being successfully sued by Morrison for assault and unlawful confinement (n.a. 1832). Thomas Evernden retired in 1837 and lived out his years in Bathurst ('To Thomas Evernden, Esq, JP' 1837).
- Governor Ralph Darling issued a proclamation on the day the Ribbon Boys were sentenced. It defined the punishments able to be inflicted by Commandants or any two magistrates for non-capital offences. The regulations limited the number of lashes that could be inflicted in one day, and for one offence ('Proclamation' 1830).
- Penal Reform was foreshadowed in the newspaper coverage of the execution of Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien ('Executed' 1831; 'Execution of Captain Payne's murderers' 1831; 'Execution of Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien for the murder of Captain Payne' 1831) .
- Rumours of Rockite activities troubled County Argyle again in 1833('Domestic Intelligence' 1833). A number of correspondents denied the reports of incendiarism and insubordination among the assigned servants of Argyle. ('Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, 15th Oct, 1833 ' 1833; 'To the Editor of the Sydney Monitor from The Inn at Liverpool ' 1833; 'To the Editor of the Sydney Monitor, ' 1833) The reports were found to be a hoax perpetrated by Doctor Gibson and Lieutenant Macalister ('A Pill for the McQuarrie Street reporter' 1833; 'To the editor of the Sydney Monitor' 1833) . It was suggested

the reports ended when Lieutenant MacAlister was transferred to Bathurst and a new surgeon and magistrate were appointed to Argyle (*A voice from the wilds* 1834). The Sydney Herald sued the other newspapers for libellous statements about the veracity of their reporters ('*Law Intelligence*' 1834; '*Supreme Court, Civil Side*' 1834). The conservative authorities preferred to keep the population in fear so that they could control them ('*Letter Summary Punishment Act*' 1833; '*To the Editor*' 1834).

- A.M.Sullivan warns the followers of Captain Rock and the Ribbonmen that violence prevents affirmative political reform (O'Hegarty 1952) p.418-19.

## Chapter 10

**Glossary:** Bishop –a clean pinafore for children to wear.

- Rowland Hassall first preached to the Bathurst inhabitants on August 13, 1815 in a ‘barn on the west bank’ (Hope 2010) p.7. I am assuming it stood where the Commissariat Store was erected. Rowland and Elizabeth Hassall, Methodist missionaries, had fled Tahiti in 1798 with their two small sons, Thomas and Samuel Otoo. Rowland was a lay preacher who first came to Bathurst as Superintendent of Government Stock. There were eight children who survived into adulthood and their pastoral holdings stretched between Bathurst, the Nepean, Cowpastures, Argyle and Boorowa. Reverend Thomas Hassall married Anne Marsden in 1822 and was granted Dowry land on the Boorowa River along with his sister Mrs. Robert Campbell (Hope 2010; Lloyd 1990) .
- The report of the deceased woman and child on the Edinburgh coach is a timely reminder of the state of medical practice at the time. The inquest was primarily an examination of the observable facts. Surgeons resorted to criminal methods to obtain cadavers as autopsy was in its infancy (‘[no title]’ 1826).
- The Act of 1752 (25 Georg.IIc.37,s.5) An Act for Better Preventing the Horrid Crime of Murder, is discussed in the notes to the case of the murder of Kangaroo Jack (‘R. v. Parker and Donavan’ 1829) provided on the Macquarie Law Colonial Case database.
- The rebellion on Norfolk Island is reported over several editions of the *Sydney Gazette* (‘*Norfolk Island*’ 1834b; ‘*Norfolk Island*’ 1834a; ‘*Norfolk Island Part 3*’ 1834). The rule of Commandant Morisset is described in Peter Clarke’s history of the island (Clarke 2007) p.103-109.

- The first Mass at Bathurst was held on Tuesday November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1830, the same day as the execution of the Ribbon Boys (Suttor 1887) p.31. I have drawn some detail from the notes collected by Meagher on the Centenary in 1930. He quotes from Mrs Busby who made the observation that Father Therry christened Ann Keenan after his own sister, ‘It was his custom to call everyone and everything by the names of his own family’ (Meagher 1930).
- For information on Michael and Susannah Keenan, and the fortunes of their soldier settler family visit the excellent website compiled by the family (Downes 2006). The information is well referenced and provides a rare insight into life in the Regiment and on the land in the new colony.
- Father Therry’s words are quoted from one of his sermons on the Gospel of Saint John (Therry)Letter from Mrs.W.Redmond 1841/103-105 p.219-221re receipts [Terry: Speeches 1810/113-115]. Other quotes are from the King James Bible and liturgy for All Souls Day. Ralph’s words at the final capture, ‘It is finished’ are the last words of Christ quoted in John19:30.
- The observances for mourning King George IV were published in the newspapers (‘General Order 190’ 1830).
- The murder case against James Murphy was tried and publicised in Sydney Town (‘Supreme Court’ 1831a). The conservative newspaper reported only the hymn sung at the execution (‘Execution’ 1831b). The radical newspaper published the speech made by Murphy (‘Execution’ 1831c). John Welsh was tried and executed along with the Hunter River Banditti (‘Domestic Intelligence Supreme Court’ 1831) (‘Execution ‘ 1831).
- Burial Records indicate that Father Therry ministered to the Catholic Ribbon Boys. Reverend Espy Keane attended James Driver at the Gallows but did not



accompany his body to the grave. Private James Stevens died of his wounds on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1830 (*Bathurst Burial Register, Kelso 1826-1856* ).

- Ralph Entwistle’s words on the gallows were recorded by Mrs Busby in her memoir seventy years after the event (Busby 1905). Mrs Busby was not at the event, but claims that when the graves were moved to the new cemetery ‘the grave-digger brought back the whole story by telling of the nine skeletons with shoes on their feet and one with the shoes placed on either side of the body’ (p. 15). One verified report of a prisoner kicking his shoes off on the gallows occurred in August 1832 (‘Domestic Intelligence - Execution’ 1832) . Edward Kennedy, executed in Sydney for highway robbery after numerous fruitless appeals for mercy, ran up the steps and violently kicked his shoes into the crowd (‘Execution of Kennedy’ 1832) . Mrs. Busby may have conflated two separate executions and added a quote. Charles White, relying upon the Busby memoir published in 1905, embellishes the famous last words for narrative effect (White 1975) p.140. They are included in the present text to demonstrate the tentative changeable nature of historical ‘knowledge’.
- Ralph Entwistle would have spoken in a Lancashire dialect and his last words would have been couched in that idiom. The *Sydney Gazette* did not report that any last speeches were made but said of the Ribbon Boys, ‘their demeanor ... was to the last marked by the same hardened indifference to their fate as that displayed by them on their trials’(‘Highway Robberies’ 1830) .
- There was some public dismay at the awful examples made of the ten bushrangers, which was expressed by the editors of the *Sydney Monitor*:

If the ration of wholesome beef, flour and maize meal, which the Bathurst convicts are entitled to by law...have indeed been pilfered from them...and if the said convicts of Bathurst have at length been tempted to insurrection in order to obtain that by force which they were not able to obtain by more peaceable means, what sort of law and justice is that which hangs these men?

(‘Justification of the Sydney Monitor by the General’ 1830)

## Who was Ralph Entwistle?

Ruffians as the convicts are, hunger makes even delicate men rough,  
whose nature otherwise may not be a whit less humane or honest than that  
of [Deputy Commissary General] Mr. Laidley's faithful contractors.

(‘Justification of the Sydney Monitor by the General’ 1830)

There are three sets of Protestant parents who christened their sons Ralph in Bolton Le Moors, Holcome and Harwood between 1804 and 1805. One was born to Thomas and Ellen Entwistle (nee Haslam) from Harwood and christened on April 8th 1804 at St. Peter, Bolton (IGI records: batch/film:P007153 serial number: 21916). This date fits the March 10th 1827 trial report (*Assizes: English:Criminal Trials 1559-1971* ; ‘Burglary’ 1827) which says Ralph was from Bolton and 22 yrs old and the November 1828 NSW Census (New South Wales Government 1828) which lists him as 24 yrs but it does not fit his Ship Indents (Home Office n.d.) or Burial register records (*Bathurst Burial Register, Kelso 1826-1856* ). Thomas was a Whitster (Bleacher) and in the 1841 Bolton census there is a Ralph from Harwood who is a bleacher as is his son in 1851. This would seem to be the one family. Ralph the son of William and Mary Entwistle was christened on the 9 September 1804 at Deane by Bolton. The date of christening for this Ralph fits the ages given for him at trial, the ship's indents and NSW Census but not the NSW Convict Deaths Register which lists him as 25yrs (*NSW Australia Convict Deaths Register 1826-1879*). Ann, an older sibling from this family, later has a daughter Catherine who marries in 1861 and her marriage is witnessed by a Ralph Entwistle, possibly her uncle. Ralph, the son of John and Betty Entwistle, was baptised in Emmanuel Church of England, Holcome on April 6th 1805. He would have been 21 years old in March 1827. The dates fit his age at death but not his other records. The exercise proves the impossibility of cross matching records that rely upon religion, self

report and anonymous recorders who may have rounded the ages up or down. If Ralph's family were Catholic his baptism may not have been recorded at all.

Was Ralph Protestant or Catholic? The Ship's muster taken on landing says Protestant (State Records Authority of New South Wales 2008). This declaration would certainly get him a better assignment as would the trade of Brickmaker. Why do we assume convicts tell the truth on these records? By the 1828 Census he is identifying as Catholic and is certainly attended by the Catholic priest at his death, which is when it counts.

The Lancashire census records reveal more Ralphs, born in the same time period, living in Bolton than were recorded in the Protestant Parish registers. There is also a Thomas Entwistle married to Ellen Entwistle (nee Lee) two years before the couple from Harwood. None of their children are recorded but this may be because Catholic marriages had to be registered at a local Protestant Church whereas baptisms did not. The 1811 Bolton census shows a Ralph, Richard, William and Jonothan Entwistle living at Church Gate, Bolton. Thomas and Ellen are living nearby at King Street. Ellen Entwistle dies on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1811. In 1821 there were still a number of male Entwistles at Church Gate. John and William Entwistle are close by at Slater Street. This pattern suggests a number of family members, including Ralph, living in the same neighbourhood over a period of years. Bolton Poor Rate records show Ralph and Richard Entwistle were living at the Timber Yard off Church Gate.

In 1821, a forty six year old labourer named Thomas Entwistle was arrested as part of a criminal gang operating from the Timber Yard. Convicted of uttering a forged note, Thomas was one of twelve men who pleaded guilty and took the transportation option.

He had been convicted once before. Thomas Entwistle was transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1821. He told his gaolers he left seven children in Bolton. This may be Ralph's father. The patterns of family and neighbourhood connections would link Ralph to a criminal network in his early life. This is the most compelling hypothesis about Ralph's identity and formative influences. His first crime was a substantial theft of clothing from an occupied dwelling, a crime with an element of risk that required planning and the ability to fence the merchandise.

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## **The Ribbon Boys' Rebellion 1830**

(Exegesis)



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The current research project is an investigation of how the story of the Ribbon Boys' rebellion has been represented in the popular imagination. It required new research into the historical evidence and the ways in which narrative structures and historiography affect our historical understanding. The Creative Work is put forward as a form of historical argument in relation to my findings. It presents a new way of relating to the audience in order to develop an historical sensibility and stimulate debate by an informed readership.

The popularly accepted story of Ralph Entwistle and the Ribbon Gang attributed the crimes to a simple revenge plot involving one primary protagonist. My research reveals a much wider network of rebellion. Long standing family and criminal networks and patterns of administrative corruption among settlers and magistrates contributed to an insurrection of eighty government servants on twenty four properties over a four week period. This insurrection was linked by Governor Darling to the depredations of Jack Donohoe and the Hunter River Banditti. The military guards were doubled and mounted police were dispatched from the Hunter River to the Warrumbungle Ranges and from Sydney Town to Boorowa. In total, seventeen 'bushrangers' were executed and two died of their wounds. Three mounted policemen and an overseer were also killed. I began to wonder why this rebellion was a blind spot in our colonial history. My belief is that the story has been framed and passed down as a version of the 'bushranger' myth, an individualistic narrative of punishment and revenge.

In the following sections, I will set the 'bushranger myth' in its cultural context, elaborate on the central question emerging from my research, and outline the discoveries I have made in the historical and narrative lines of enquiry. My argument is that the way we regard historical evidence has changed since the first accounts were written. The

way these stories have been related has limited our understanding of the Ribbon Boys' rebellion. Creative Non-fiction is a genre which allows the writer to combine new methods of historiography and narratology to stimulate the historical sensibility of the reader. The Creative Work explores possible ways of writing histories and engages the reader in a conversation that encourages imagination and debate.

### 1.1 The bushranger myth

The title of the Creative Work, 'Bone and Beauty', is taken from Ned Kelly's Jerilderie letter. In the letter, Ned Kelly claims to have a mandate for bushranging from generations of oppressed Irish kinsmen. His rhetoric is reminiscent of the convict ballad *Moreton Bay* (Manifold 1984), which was re-constructed by the folk song collector John Manifold in the nineteen thirties. Both texts suggest that the Irish convicts were passive, long-suffering martyrs waiting for a champion. In fact, many convicts, Irish or otherwise, did not wait to bravely die in servile chains. An estimated five hundred of them bolted for the bush between 1829 and 1831 (Meredith, 1960).

Governor Darling proclaimed the Bushranger Act in April 1830, 'an Act to suppress robbery and housebreaking, and the harbourers of robbers and housebreakers'. The incidents of robbery and housebreaking had 'increased to an alarming degree' but the emergency began much earlier ('Proclamation' 1830). After the Irish rebellion of 1798, large numbers of political prisoners were shipped to Australia from Ireland. They brought with them networks of criminal association and the very practices for which they had been sentenced: 'swearing oaths' and 'riotous and disorderly behaviour'. They were members of secret Irish insurrectionists groups known as the Whiteboys, Ribbonmen and Rockites who were transported in successive waves. Many of these transportees were assigned to farms on the remote edges of the colony where they continued their associations (Barrett 1992, 1994, 2006, 2008). These 'political' transportees were not necessarily bent on



crime. Many of them sought to establish new lives and take up land in the New Country.

Unfortunately, in the new Colony, similar conditions existed to those in Ireland. According to Thomas Moore (Moore 1824), the English had occupied a fertile country, decimated the native inhabitants, coerced their leaders into government service and granted large land holdings to former military officers, churchmen and government favourites. Charles Harpur, Australia's first native-born poet of Irish descent, noted the transplanted evil of this injustice in the New Country. He wrote of it in his poem *The New Land Orders* which he introduced by the following warning,

...all the lands beyond the boundaries will inevitably fall within the grasp of one class alone – the great stockholders, 'to them and to their heirs forever' and in that event, the national future of Australia will be but a bad copy of the national perditions of Europe. Immense irregularities in the proprietorship of its soil are the arch curses of England, giving birth but to two national monsters – a heartless magnificence in the rich and a social hopelessness in the poor, which become in turn the parents of an audacious denial in the one class of the common claims of humanity, and a sullen distrust even of God's Providence in the other.

(Mitchell 1973, p.146)

The large landholdings, as in Ireland, were often managed by middlemen for their absentee landlords. Much of the agrarian unrest and violence in rural Ireland was directed against these agents (Donnelly Jnr 2009). In Australia, the overseers fulfilled a similar role and bore the brunt of rebellion. By Government Order 43 of October 9th 1829, 'Persons, possessing land in the interior, who do not reside thereon, to advert to the condition on which the land was granted... shall employ a free overseer, or superintendant of good character'. This was a measure to disrupt a 'System of Bushranging... promoted by the Protection and Assistance the Bushrangers receive from individuals having charge of some of the remote farms or stock stations' ('Government Order Number 43' 1829, p.3).

One early Irish insurrectionist plot highlights the methods of the secret associations formed among convicts on remote farms. The escape plot of Robert Storey can be seen as a template for the later Ribbon Boys' insurrection. Storey gathered a group of Irish government servants, bound by oaths of secrecy and fidelity, to deal justice to bad masters. When their violent letters and murderous retribution against their master Richard Thomson failed, they robbed a neighbouring property. They stockpiled a wagon of supplies for their escape to the sea via the Wellington Valley. They hoped to free other government servants along the way. The plan was to plant crops and live off the land, until a boat arrived to take them home.

Even by 1830, when the folksong *Moreton Bay* reinforced the myth of the passive long suffering Irish convict, there was evidence of a rebellious Irish subculture in the lands beyond the limits of location. Thomas Mitchell's guides, exploring the lower Murrumbidgee River in 1836, encountered aborigines who spoke Gaelic rather than the King's English (Baker 1993, p.21). Sarah Musgrave (1926) in her pioneer autobiography, *The wayback*, quotes the Wiradjuri word for bushrangers as 'Carapee'. This is possibly a possible derivation of the word 'Croppie' which referred to the Irish political prisoners of 1798 who shaved their heads in solidarity with the French. Gunn and Levy (1980) in their *Word history of bushranging* also note the term 'Karrarpee' for bushranger. In these early colonial days, Irish bolters and bushrangers became synonymous. They were not waiting for Ned Kelly. These early Irish bolters had their own folk hero in the form of 'Bold Jack Donohoe'.

The Australian bushranger myth may have germinated in the deeds of Donohoe. John [aka Jack] Donohoe was eighteen when he arrived in Sydney in January 1825 aboard the *Ann and Amelia* from Dublin. With no previous convictions, he was transported for 'intention to commit a felony'. We know he was assigned to two masters, ran from an iron gang, was convicted of highway robbery and escaped execution by absconding from the escort on his

way back to gaol (Meredith 1960). Witnesses remarked upon his agility and his fondness for fine clothes. He often required his victims to strip naked and sometimes exchanged trousers with them ('Highway Robbery' 1830). Young master Campbell claimed Donohoe, 'was rather facetious during the performance of the operation' ('Advance Australia' 1830, p.2). We know of his exploits around Windsor and Richmond but his 'wild career' actually began in Bathurst in 1826 where he worked for Major West and associated with cattle stealers. He was wounded by the mounted police in 1828 on his way from the Lachlan to the Murrumbidgee River (Kercher 2012a). Bungling attempts to capture him, as he gave the Sydney Toffs 'a touch up' over the next two years, led to his notoriety. He was shot in the temple by Sergeant Muggleston on William Charles Wentworth's property after the Mounted Police had scoured the bush for a fortnight under the direction of Lieutenant Lachlan Macalister ('Death of Donohoe' 1830).

The elements of Jack Donohoe's character which have coloured the bushranger myth are his bravery, verbal wit and eloquence, cheekiness, youth and physical prowess. Although the murder of Cook was attributed to him, he was not wantonly violent. He did use bad language but did not abuse women. He stole clothing and food and drink for subsistence but also targeted wealthy gentlemen and wagons for profit. He always acted in company with two or three associates. These characters changed over the years due to death or apprehension. He distrusted his fellow bandits because he was often betrayed.

After Jack Donohoe was killed and brought to Sydney Hospital for the inquest, the explorer Sir Thomas Mitchell sketched his portrait and inscribed it with a verse from Byron, 'No matter; I have bared my brow, Fair in Death's face – before – and now' (Mitchell 1830; 'Donohoe Coroners' Inquest on his body' 1830). Unfortunately, the romantic myth of the Bushranger as a 'Byronic hero', clouds our understanding of real people caught up in the complex historical events of the times. Charles Harpur attempted to cast Donohoe in the light of a tragic anti-hero for a public catharsis when he wrote *The Tragedy of Donohoe* in

1834 (Perkins 1987). It may be argued that the poet's desire to forge a romantic tragedy subverts a deeper historical understanding of the motives of the 'wild colonial boy'. I will revisit this argument in relation to the ideological function of literary texts in a later chapter, but for the present let us consider how the myth has affected our sympathy for and understanding of the historical characters.

Patrick O'Farrell (2000) rejects the 'bushranger as tragic hero'. He prefers to typify Kelly and Donohoe as adventurers bent on fame. His approach seems to be a reaction against the idolization of Kelly by some sections of the community. O'Farrell suggests the explorer Burke was an Irish fame seeker not unlike the Bathurst Ribbonmen with 'green ribbons in their hats' (p.140). This statement treats Burke and the Bathurst bolters as if they were contemporaries and overlooks their very different political and social contexts. This treatment of the Bathurst 'Ribbonmen' as fame seeking bushrangers obfuscates the causes of the Ribbon Boys' rebellion. My research suggests the Ribbon Boys were representative of another seventy insurrectionists who had been starved by their overseers and cruelly treated.

Donohoe explained to the settler Richard Driver, when he bailed him up in January 1830, 'it was nothing but sheer starvation and maltreatment that drove him to his present pursuits' (Meredith 1960, p.30). *The Australian* claims many runaways were impelled 'as many have expressed themselves upon the gallows, by starvation and ill usage, to take to the bush' ('Bushrangers' 1830, p.2). David Roberts (2005) notes the prevalence of this rationale among the Bathurst absconders during this period. In his analysis of illegal movement of convicts on the Bathurst frontier, Roberts notes that 'Governors Brisbane and Darling applied convict labour more strategically and economically while shoring up the punitive aspects of transportation to reinstate it as an 'Object of Real terror' (p.98). During the drought of 1827-1830, when the government harvests failed and wheat had to be imported, the convict rations were cut. Roberts (2005) observes that 'a dubious nexus between state and

private interests created dysfunctions and corruption within the command structure of local authority, undoubtedly exacerbating convict dissent' (p.105). Responding to poor treatment and injustice, Donohoe explained to Driver that he would 'give masters who starved their government servants ten minutes for prayer, but others treat civilly' (Meredith 1960, p. 30). There was an element of bush justice in Donohoe's depredations not just fame seeking.

Donohoe was reported to have written his own lyrics to 'The Wearing of the Green' in a song called, 'Bold Jack Donohoe'. It is as much about Ireland's plight as it is about his own glory. He sang the song to the horse police moments before he was shot ('Death of Donohoe' 1830). The rhetoric is woven from references to Mother Ireland, Rome, the martyrdom of Christ, and foreign possession of Ireland by the 'Stranger'. It is a defiant political song, 'Then hurl me to crime and brand me with shame but think not about me my spirit to tame for I'll fight for the right in old Ireland's name, though our Isle's full of danger you still are The Stranger and I'm Donohoe' (Department of Education 1978). In 1825, the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment was transferred from southern Ireland to New South Wales. The 'Stranger' had arrived at the same time as Donohoe.

The themes evident in the lyrics of Donohoe's song are also identified in the exhaustive survey of Rockite Bills and threatening letters discussed by Donnelly (2009) in *Captain Rock: the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821-24*. The secret societies of Whiteboys, Ribbonmen and Rockites have many similarities in ritual, organisation and patterns of behaviour. Scholars have hitherto failed to view the life of John Donohoe in anything other than the context of Australian Colonial history. He is seldom regarded as one of the 'boys' formed by the Irish politics and culture of his times and influenced by the Old Lags who passed on this generational knowledge. In order to strip back the myth of the individualistic bushranger it is necessary to look at social and political context of their actions and of the traditional networks of support that were operating among the transportees.

When we dismiss the ‘Bathurst Ribbonmen’ as Irish attention seekers, we overlook the heterogeneous composition of the members of the ‘gang’. Six of the ten ‘Ribbon Boys’ were Catholic Irish. The others were English and some were Protestant. In the accepted secondary accounts of the rebellion, the names of Entwistle’s associates are rarely mentioned. There is no reference to their ships, original convictions or assigned masters. There is no reference to their families or lives as servants before the insurrection. Ten men were executed but only one of them has been written about. Ralph Entwistle’s life story before the flogging incident has not been outlined.

When we strip back the myth surrounding the Ribbon Boys’ Rebellion of 1830 and explore the geographical maps, primary sources and evidence of covert networks among transportees, we begin to understand why the Boorowa Plains provided the setting for the capture of these convict rebels and a seedbed for the national ‘Bushranger’ myth. A subsequent generation of bushrangers, Frank Gardiner, Ben Hall, Johnny Gilbert and Captain Moonlight sprang from these same geographical locations. The Ribbon Boys story has been teleologically recast as a bushranger adventure. My research examined the existing evidence for the insurrection and also the ideological and cultural effects of casting the story in the genre of a romantic bushranger myth.

## **1.2 Scope of the project**

A carefully developed research question is central to the project. Barbara Milech and Ann Schilo (2004), investigating the relationship between research and creative enquiry, suggest that ‘to be research, a Creative Work or production piece... must be practice conceived and reflected upon in the interests of answering a carefully and clearly defined research question framed on the basis of a sound working knowledge of a particular field and in the interests of contributing new understandings to it’ (Milech & Schilo 2004, p.7).

My 'sound working knowledge' of the field began with primary source archival research, site visits to significant locations, and a critical review of secondary accounts of the story. I read extensively in Irish, Lancastrian and Australian colonial history guided by questions emerging from Ralph Entwistle's story and the lives of his associates. Theoretical readings on historical representation in different genres for theatre, film, television and print helped me to refine the central research question; 'How can my Creative Work stimulate the public imagination and challenge the accepted cultural understandings of the Ribbon Boys' rebellion?' By Creative Work I meant a literary work of creative non-fiction either in the medium of print or screen production.

This key research question guided two lines of enquiry, the heuristic and the hermeneutic. The heuristic research led me to reflect upon the phenomenology of 'rebellion', the rhetoric and gestures of resistance, criminal behaviour (Bartol & Bartel 2005), the demographics of Australian convicts (Robson 1965) and the dynamics of groups of young men (Buckbinder 1994; Connell 1995; Pearce 2001). I had to determine how we understand the record now and how events have been transmitted into popular history. I had to learn ethical and careful archival and family history research methods and ways of communicating knowledge to colleagues. The hermeneutic research involved the translation of historical and archival evidence into a form and structure that could invite the reader to construct meaning.

Robin Higgins (1996, p.41), in his guide to writing a dissertation, warns that hermeneutics create a binary between the interpreter and the interpretee that limits the conclusions that are able to be drawn. This led me to an exploration of historiography and narratology and the ways in which form and structure are able to position the reader or audience. Then, I wove my research into a narrative using an original structure, point of view, voice and stance. The writing process itself combined the heuristic and the hermeneutic, and became my principal method of investigation. Through the writing, I was drawn into a

relationship with the people and places. This produced a type of emotional understanding or sensibility which challenged my cultural assumptions and my own role as storyteller.

### **1.3 Methodology and sources**

The methodological framework I selected for the research project was called 'Learning by Design' (Kalantzis, Cope & Fehring 2002). Rather than a stepwise set of procedures, the framework is akin to a cyclical spring in that the enquiry drives and determines the order and repetition of various interactive processes. These interactive processes are Immersion, Overt Instruction, Critical Analysis and Transformed Practice. In this case, Immersion in the documents and literature, language, artefacts and socio-political history of the nineteenth century, Overt Instruction in archival practices, record keeping, analysis, and creative writing, Critical Analysis of different versions of the story, related works of nonfiction, historical fiction and creative non-fiction for screen and in print, and Transformation of this knowledge and experience into an original artistic work (Appendix B Figure 1).

Gray and Malins (2004) propose the development of methodologies or research procedures for artists and designers using the four design elements. I have given examples of how these elements relate to the production of a Creative Work (Appendix B Figure2). The Learning by Design framework informs the method of enquiry. The design elements of form, structure, method and material are mediated by the requirements of industry and critical review by an audience or readership. I have used the metaphor of a fob watch to describe these interactions (Appendix B Figure 3). In the present project, industry and critical audience reviews are not as important because the Creative Work has not been publically produced or reviewed.



A wide variety of sources were used in the historical and narrative lines of enquiry. The historical sources are referenced in the Creative Work under Scholar's Notes and Titbits. The historical sources are summarised in diagrammatic form in Appendix B (Figures 4 – 7). Sources used for the narrative enquiry including films, television programs and literary works are summarised in Appendix B (Figures 8 – 10).

In their survey of exegetical writing for Creative Arts higher degree research across Australia, Nike Bourke and Philip Neilsen (2006) make two key recommendations for developing the discipline. The first is the integration of creative journal entries into the theoretical discussions. By this type of journal work, they mean documentation of 'the ongoing reflective and analytical learning process of being a writer' (Bourke & Neilsen 2006, p.3). Their second recommendation is aimed at developing a unique discourse around creative writing and emphasises articulation of the creative process rather than analysis of the creative product. This distinction was made to elevate and differentiate creative writing from the other disciplines traditionally associated with it such as cultural studies and literary theory. Both of these disciplines analyse a finished product and are more concerned with critical reception than creative process. My Creative Work for the Doctoral program is not a published work. It has not been responded to by a broad audience, nor has it undergone the critical and commercial review of the publishing industry. Therefore, while this exegesis will draw upon cultural and literary theory in crafting the work for an 'implied readership', the focus will be upon the recommended reflexive practice and articulation of process.

#### **1.4 The research journey and emergent themes**

The primary research has taken me from the Fitzgerald Valley to Bathurst, Mount Ranken, Campbell River, Abercrombie Caves, Warragamba Dam, Mount Darling, Boorowa,

Galong, Ned Ryan's Castle, Rosary Hill, the Blue Mountains, Sydney, Maitland, Newcastle, London, Lancaster Castle, rural Lancashire, Preston, Kew, Norfolk Island, the Port Arthur Pauper's Infirmary and the Isle of the Dead. At each of the sites, I took photographs and spoke with local people about their knowledge of the areas (Appendix A Figures 1-5). These site visits and the handling of original documents in the archives at Lancaster, Preston, Kew and Kingswood, instilled in me a sense of the importance of 'place' and the physical artefacts.

Reflecting upon the locations of insurrection – from the mills of Lancashire to the villages of Tipperary, from the aboriginal hunting grounds on O'Connell Plains to the squatters runs on the Boorowa River – a theme that emerged was that of land ownership. Who controls the land and therefore the resources? There seemed to be a triumvirate of power shared between the church, the government and the wealthy settlers. Some powerful men in the Colony represented all three. In tracing the sites of insurrection and the paths taken by the rebels and aboriginal trackers, I became aware of the different way modern readers look at maps and the land. Peeling back what I assumed about highways and roads, to what I observed about river courses and cattle tracks and horses, brought me into a different relationship with the lands I visited. The earliest topographical maps put me in touch with landforms and landscapes that were familiar to the native peoples before whites inscribed county names and property lines upon the landscape. The story touches upon occupation, subjugation and coercion of native populations. These debates continue today.

Contact with the physical artefacts of Ralph's story at the Archives of the United Kingdom in Kew, at the Bathurst museum and at the State Records office in Kingswood, conveyed a sense of the weight of justice and the judicial system upon convicts. The theme of justice was always a part of Ralph's story. Walking in the cells in Bathurst, Lancaster, Port Arthur and Norfolk Island made the research tangible. However, the theme broadened when I examined the Colonial Secretary's correspondence and the *Search for the Forlorn Hope*,

the muster of the 39<sup>th</sup> regiment, at the National Archives of the United Kingdom. It led me to consideration of the mechanics and administration of justice. Given the political and social context of the times, I wondered how a convict servant could obtain justice. I looked for examples of this. Violence did not seem to be the most successful way of obtaining justice. The theme deepened and became a more complex set of issues. How do we as a people obtain justice for the weak and oppressed who are disadvantaged by our systems? Where would we stand among the cast of characters in Ralph's story? As approvers or profiteers? As rebels with a predetermined fate? As part of the establishment? I wondered, in my journal, whether our national failure to become a republic was a product of our colonial subservience.

During the research, it was necessary to keep a creative journal which captured both the new information and my reflections upon the experience. My creative journey was documented alongside my historical research notes (Appendix A, Figure 6). Drafts of the Creative Work were recorded in a number of forms – poetry, sketches, dialogue, short stories and scripts. These drafts were also critiqued in the journal (Appendix A, Figure 7). In reviewing my journal entries I was able to identify points at which the Creative Work changed direction in response to new information and emerging themes (Appendix A, Figure 8). For example, my early reading was on historical representation in film and television. However, my choice of creative medium changed when I realised the limitations imposed by the form.

Film and television seemed to favour a condensed, linear storyline due to time constraints and industry conventions. I reviewed a number of Bushranger films and programs, both fictional and documentary. I wanted to avoid the hero journey narrative as I felt this reinforced the cultural stereotypes of the 'Bushranger'. In television documentaries, the authoritative role of the 'historian narrator' also seemed anachronistic. A novel or printed Creative Work promised more control over the finished artefact. It was within my power

and means to bring the completed Creative Work to production or publication. A script, by comparison, is a roadmap for the actors and director. Much of the positioning is through the eye of the camera and the director's vision. Television programs limit the amount of 'information' and the complexity of the argument due to time and production constraints. It seemed that many of the representations of the bushranger pandered to a general audience and did not disrupt cultural assumptions about their motivations or sexuality.

A theme that emerged from contrasting the narratives of the bushranger films, *Ned Kelly* (Richardson 1970), *Mad Dog Morgan* (Mora 1976), *The Outlaw Michael Howe* (Cowell 2013), and the *Lateline* television treatment of Ralph Entwistle being flogged for naked bathing ('It all started with a skinny dip' 2003) was one of masculinity. This led me to reflect upon the ways in which men could express their masculine and feminine natures in the repressive and isolating environment of colonial New South Wales. I began to question my own assumptions about masculinity and sexuality and how these were being projected onto the historical narrative. How did the homosocial features of mateship become enshrined in our national identity? As Damien Barlow (2007) pointed out in his queer reading of Markus Clarke's novel *His natural life*, most historical narratives avoid openly discussing same-sex relationships. Contrast Robson's approach in discussing the historical basis for the same literary work (Robson 1963). The story of the Ribbon Boys is about fidelity between men. Despite the early defection of the majority of the pressed servants, a dozen Ribbon Boys remained true to one another in the four subsequent armed encounters. Whatever their sexual persuasion, the Ribbon Boys did not molest or 'press' women, they did not turn approver or break faith with one another. After their capture they remained silent. These insights were captured in the creative journal and influenced the direction of the work.

The direction of the work changed when I began to look for a way of writing history that was able to combine the historical and the literary forms into a complex narrative of the

events. My explorations of form and genre led me to a workshop with Lee Gutkind, the American academic who coined the term ‘Creative Nonfiction’ (Gutkind 2005). From the workshop and textbook (Gutkind & Fletcher 2008), I learned about the conventions and flexible boundaries of the genre. The early draft of the Creative Work was a fictional treatment of the story but I was not prepared to conflate events, use composite characters or time shifts – all acceptable conventions of the journalistic genre of creative non-fiction. I made the choice not to change the names or the historical record where a verifiable account of the events existed. However, in the absence of facts, it was necessary to invent some dialogue and certain scenes to further the narrative enquiry.

This experimentation with scenes and characters was part of the research process and raised questions or issues that I then had to investigate further. For example, some court cases provided cameos from which to draw inferences about characters and how they would behave in similar situations. Reverend John Espy Keane is a case in point. His incident with the sawyer informed me about his aggressive attitude toward bushrangers. Further investigation revealed a report of the execution of the Ribbon Boys that claimed the Reverend recoiled from Driver’s offer to take him to the grave (Busby 1905). This seemed to be supported by the burial register that noted Reverend Keane attended Driver on the scaffold but ‘not his body to the grave’ (‘Bathurst Burial Register, Kelso 1826-1856’). I inferred from these different sources that he was afraid and this coloured my interpretation of his character in the scenes. This is an example of the interweaving of fact and fiction based on inferences from evidence.

The Creative Work enabled me to explore the themes of land, justice and masculinity through the characters I created. Initially, I created a ‘character’ to go with each of the names using indent records of physical description, original crime and profession. My readings on Ribbonism, criminality and masculinity helped me to make inferences about their motivations and behaviours. Then I allowed the fictional character or groups of characters to lead me

through the scenes. For example, after the attack by the vigilante posse I knew the characters would seek a refuge. I had one letter that gave a location for the final capture as near Roberts' station and the Cunningham Plains. It was beyond the limits of location and I had no idea where it was or why the area might be culturally significant. I interviewed a nonagenarian in a Cowra nursing home who had lived in the area and was related to the Roberts' family. She told me about the large catholic families of Boorowa. I imagined the 'characters' would seek out harbourers and fellow Irishmen. So on a visit to Boorowa, I visited Ned Ryan's 'Little Tipperary' at St Clements Retreat, Galong. This Redemptorist monastery has an excellent library of local history and Father Barrett had extensively researched Ned Ryan and the related Catholic families. I found a reference to Ned's application for land in March 1830, in which Lieutenant Macalister and Magistrate Reid recommend him for being instrumental in the capture of bushrangers (Barrett 2008, p.42). Knowing ribbonmen were fond of 'mountain redoubts' (Donnelly Jnr 2009), I looked for a bushrangers' hill and found one on Ned Ryan's run between Robert's property and Cunningham's Plains. It was called Bushranger's Hill but renamed by Bishop Polding sometime after 1837 (Barrett 2008, p.126). This seemed like an appropriate site upon which to set the final capture. Once the characters were captured and faced trial, I drew upon my knowledge of other trials and related events to imagine how justice might play out in the lives of these convicts. I wondered if there was room for a moral victory even if they were doomed to execution. The creative process and the research process were interwoven and mutually beneficial. The characters gave me new insights into the historical story. I hoped this would be the case for my readers.

In the following chapters, I will outline the heuristic and hermeneutic lines of enquiry. They are not mutually exclusive categories, but I have simplified them into History and Historiography and Narrative and Narratology for ease of discussion. In the final chapter, I will argue that a literary work of creative non-fiction can combine the evidence and insights from these two lines of enquiry into a narrative that operates as a type of hypothetical argument to hopefully engage and stimulate the reader.

## **Chapter 2: Heuristic enquiry – History and Historiography**

The heuristic research led me to investigate the phenomenology of ‘rebellion’, the rhetoric and gestures of resistance, secret societies, criminal behaviour and the dynamics of groups of young men. I had to determine how we understand the record now and how the events have been transmitted into public history. By questioning the contradictory versions of events, I have been able to trace the sources of these accounts and discover new relevant information and a new way of looking at the rebellion. I conclude with a summary of the ways in which my understanding of the Ribbon Boys rebellion has changed. This new understanding informs the Creative Work.

### **2.1 Immersion – How I first encountered the story**

While visiting Bathurst in 1996, I heard on Visitor Radio (Bathurst Broadcasters 88FM) about a bushranger called Ralph Entwistle, leader of the Ribbon Gang. I thought the name sounded comical. Why would a bushranger called Entwistle swim in the nude and be caught wearing ribbons? I associated the term ‘bushranger’ with dashing macho highway men like Frank Gardiner and Thunderbolt. I could not believe a solitary convict would wait nine months for revenge and then be able to raise a gang of men equally upset by his flogging. I read the *History of Australian Bushranging Volume 1* (White 1975). This volume is a collection of newspaper articles from the turn of the century in which Charles White referred to the events as the ‘Bathurst Insurrection’. He downplayed the role of Entwistle but said eighty convicts were involved. At the Bathurst museum archives, I read the Supreme Court charge sheet which described an overseer being shot by three men. The description of the wounds on James Greenwood’s body shocked me into realising this murder and the related events were not trivial. I returned to the popular account that Visitor Radio had relied upon

for information, the *Abercrombie Caves: caves chronicle* (Keck and Cubitt, 1991).

The tourist bureau stocked copies of the local publication in which Ken Keck and Barry Cubitt (1991) gathered together many of the accounts related to the Ribbon Gang. They claimed the Ribbon Gang stumbled upon the caves as they followed the Grove Creek from Mulgunnia,

After resting at the caves for a while, Entwistle and his men continued to follow Grove Creek until they got to the top of Grove Creek Falls. While they were camped there, looking for a way down, the Troopers and volunteers caught up with them. A battle took place at the top of the falls resulting in injuries on both sides and the gang loosing [sic] their horses. The rebels retreated, on foot back to the caves, possibly hiding in Bushranger's Cave. The attackers followed and on reaching the caves decided to search through the passages and flush out the criminals. It is thought that one of the Troopers who searched Bushranger's Cave, dropped a set of convict leg irons... Having escaped from the caves, the fugitives headed for the hills and at a spot now known as Bushrangers Hill, about 3 kilometres to the West of the caves, they encountered a group of soldiers. Although greatly outnumbered, the gang put up quite a fight, but were finally surrounded and arrested.

(Cubitt 1998, p.1)

I visited the Abercrombie Caves twice and spoke with Mr. Cubitt, the National Parks Ranger. I found Grove Creek Falls, known as Captain Cook's Lookout, is a dead end (Appendix A Figures 2 - 4). I wondered why the gang were making a getaway to a dead end. There was only speculative evidence of their occupation of the caves based on the relatively recent discovery of undated leg irons. I was left with a number of puzzling but intriguing questions. Who was Ralph Entwistle? Was he the leader of an insurrection or of a 'bushranger's gang'? Why did the convicts and settlers call them Ribbon Boys? What did the ribbons in the hat signify? Where did all of this take place?



## 2.2 Critical analysis of how the story has been transmitted into popular history

W.H. Suttor, writing for the *Daily Telegraph* in 1886, named the leader of the ‘gang’ as Robert Entwistle. Suttor’s following description of Entwistle tells us more about the cultural assumptions of the writer than it does about the subject,

The bullock driver, one Robert Entwistle, is a fine, stalwart young Englishman, the early prototype, possibly, of Henry Kendall’s delightful ‘Bullocky Bill’... He has probably been exiled to Australia for some youthful folly. No doubt he was known as ‘Bob,’ with a gratifying adjective descriptive of some personal peculiarity. He was a good servant, and was wholly trusted by his master. His Ticket-of-leave was due, on receipt of which he could work for wages as a free man. No black mark so far stood against him in the record. His ambition was, by honest industry, to wipe out the stain on his character, to obtain a piece of land, to marry a wife, and become altogether a good and reputable colonist.

(Suttor 1886, p.5)

Charles White, a journalist and editor of the *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, was more cautious in his treatment of the story (White 1975, pp. 135-143). He provides a carefully researched account of the Bathurst insurrection but was unable to access court, police and military records at the time. He takes Suttor’s lead in suggesting the rising was initiated as “payout” for a flogging and does not examine other possible causes. He describes the leader as wearing ribbons in his hat but he does not name the leader. He mentions the Abercrombie River but not the caves. He cites only one newspaper account written at the time and is sceptical about the extent of the outbreak reported therein. Some elements of White’s article are rendered in a dramatic style, ‘The wounded lieutenant at once raised his piece and putting his broken and bleeding arm under the barrel as a rest fired and struck the leader, calling out as he did so “That makes number two!”’(p.139-40).

Other popular accounts of the insurrection have relied upon pioneer recollections and autobiographies. These memoirs include W.H. Suttor's *Australian stories retold and sketches of country life* (Suttor 1887 p.46 - 51), Agnes Busby's *Bathurst in the thirties* (Busby 1905), Charles MacAlister's *Old pioneering days in the sunny south* (MacAlister 1907, p.70). These accounts were written by a privileged class of colonial settlers and, in my view, reflect a certain set of cultural assumptions as well being susceptible to the inaccuracies of memory and hearsay. Elements of these versions have been incorporated into other more recent accounts and widely distributed. For example, the *Abercrombie caves: caves chronicle* account, which drew upon these early versions, has been perpetuated through a number of websites and tourist publications (Office of Environment and Heritage 2014; Cubitt 1998). Questionable information regarding the location of the events and emphasis upon the role of Ralph Entwistle has featured in the *Lateline* television program titled, 'It all started with a skinny dip!' (Australian Broadcasting Commission 2003) and the American television series *Cities of the Underworld – Alcatraz Down Under – Abercrombie Caves and the outlaws* (2009).

Alternative versions of the story in the popular press have also contained some errors. Beverly Earnshaw in *The Sun* writes under the heading, 'Army Called to Battle Bushrangers' (Earnshaw 1981). She claims Michael Kearney watched his brother hang at Wallis Plains in April of 1830, crossed the mountains along the Bushranger's Track and moulded a gang called the Ribbon Boys who reached the Bathurst Plains by July 1830. By August they reportedly numbered 134 men 'helping themselves to arms, horses, sometimes women' (p. 28). There are no sources provided. According to my research, Earnshaw overestimates the number of men and there is no indication of women being involved. The most recent version of the story by Henry Bialowas, in his book *Ten dead men: A speculative history of the Ribbon Gang*, takes up Earnshaw's suggestion that 'Michael Kearney may have had a brother who supposedly, was one of those hanged at Wallis Plains' (Bialowas 2010, p.116). Thorough checking of court reports, newspapers

and ship's indents reveals that there was a man named Kearney hanged in April 1830 for a robbery at Wallis Plains. He was Felix Kearney, a thirty one year old convict from Belfast who was transported on the *Martha* in 1818 ('Maitland Circuit Court' 1830). The twenty three year old Michael Kearney was unlikely to have been his brother as he was from Tipperary. Michael Kearney was assigned to Stowford and appeared on the list of runaways from that farm ('List of runaways apprehended during the past week' 1830). It is unlikely that Michael attended the execution of Felix Kearney or crossed the mountains in 1830.

A number of secondary non-fiction texts mention the 'Ribbon Gang' within their wider histories. These include the *Wild colonial boys* (Clune 1982), *Rebels and radicals* (Fry 1983), *The story of Bathurst* (Greaves 1976), *History of the Australian bushrangers* (Boxall 1916), *Pioneers of Bathurst-Kelso, NSW and Bush Memories of the West of NSW* (Oakes 1978) and *The History of Bathurst 1815-1915* (Sloman 1994). These secondary accounts elaborate upon the versions given by Suttor, White and the early autobiographers. Occasionally, spatially or temporally separate events are conflated into one event. For example, Sloman's account is a collection of memories and records first set down in 1938. The author casts a murderous complexion upon the events at Dunn's Plains when he claims the Ribbon Boys beheaded a man who was milking a cow (Sloman 1994, p.6). There is no evidence for this in the police or military reports of 1830. Captain W.A. Steele, from Dunns Plains, testified that the Ribbon Boys 'did not use any bad language or conduct' (Williams 1994, p.87). One year after the execution of the Ribbon Boys, Denis O'Brien, Michael Lynch and Edward Slingsby robbed Dunn's Plains and murdered Captain Payne ('Supreme Court' 1831). Denis O'Brien confessed to an Irish dairyman called William McGill. McGill then captured O'Brien and turned him in. Perhaps McGill was the dairyman referred to by Sloman. I can find no record of a beheading.

Theo Barker (1992) provides a carefully researched account in *A History of Bathurst Volume 1: The early settlement to 1862*. He comes to the conclusion that the Ribbon Boys were insurgents rather than bushrangers. By contrast, the well-known journalist Frank Clune relates the events in the following dramatic style, ‘To prove that he was game the convict shot the overseer through the heart. “One slave-driver the less,” he said, kicking the corpse into a corner’ (Clune 1982, p.3). Although the first sentence is supported by testimony, the quote and the disrespectful action attributed to the convict are contrary to the evidence. Thomas Mack testified at the trial that after the shooting of Greenwood, Ralph Entwistle prevented the others from throwing the body into the well and told them ‘it was better to let him stay where he was’ (Williams 1994, p.91).

Stephen Williams (1992) assembles a copious collection of primary documents related to the depredations and trial of the Ribbon Boys in his self published work *Ralph Entwistle & “the Bathurst insurgency”*. Williams provides two alternative sites for their capture. One is Shooter’s Hill, which is suggested in the memoir of Charles Macalister. However, Macalister was not in the colony at the time. The second is at the Grand Arch campsite of the Abercrombie Caves, which is cited as ‘a more appealing report’ but without verifiable foundation (p.14). In his revised account, *Ralph Entwistle & the Bathurst insurgency: a summary of events and collection of documents*, Williams (1994) provides evidence which clearly identifies the location of the final capture as a site between the Boorowa River and Cunningham’s Plains (p.21). My Creative Work includes a Mud Map of this area showing the land grants and significant sites referred to in the narrative.

### 2.3 New discoveries and new information

During the course of my research, the story has undergone a metamorphosis due to another type of revolution. The digital revolution of the past ten years has given researchers unprecedented access to archival records, documents and literature. The databases I have been able to draw from in Australia, Lancaster and Ireland provide newspaper accounts, gaol entrance books, hulk records, court trials, maps and registers. This has allowed me to cross reference and check facts and opinions across different sources. I have been able to make connections between the Ribbon Boys and the Bathurst events of 1830 to other convicts, insurgencies and outrages across the colony during a thirty year period. I have followed patterns and familial links across sites of insurrection and rebellion in Lancaster, Ireland and New South Wales. The story will continue to unfold as more digital and family history records become available and are taken up by other readers wanting to interpret this event.

I will describe my research discoveries in relation to my initial questions about the story. However, much of the new material is not in the isolated happenings but in the inferences and connections between people, places and events. The Creative Work is the form I have chosen to bring these discoveries forward in their complexity. The Scholar's Notes and Titbits provide the sources and basis of my speculations for the reader of the Creative Work.. The following is a summary of how the historical research has affected my understanding of the story.

Who was Ralph Entwistle? My research establishes that he was a burglar caught in possession of a large haul of clothing from a country house. He was sentenced to death at Lancaster Castle and his sentence was commuted to transportation to New South Wales for Life. As such, he was not eligible for a ticket of leave for eight years. There is no mark against his conduct up until the time of his execution. The flogging was not recorded. The

Bench Books for 1830 are missing and the incident is not mentioned in accounts of the Governor's visit or any of the testimony at his second trial. We only know it from memoir and hearsay. When the overseer Greenwood was shot, it was in response to his refusing to join the insurgency. There was no mention of Ralph Entwistle seeking out the magistrate or taking retribution. The magistrate did not live at Bartletts but at Littlebourne in Kelso.

Was Ralph Entwistle the leader of an insurrection or of a 'bushranger's gang'? Entwistle was not named as the leader at the time of the insurgency and trial. Governor Darling's letter to the Colonial Secretary Sir George Murray on October 5th 1830 describes the disturbances caused by "'Bushrangers" 'who have put on a more formidable appearance than before' (Ward & Robertson 1978, pp. 228-9). The Governor explains that a large party of 12-15 men raided the settlers of Hunters River for horses and arms and crossed the country to Bathurst where 'Men belonging to one of the establishments in that district, about 13 in number, have recently risen and proceeding to the neighbouring farms, plundered them of what was necessary for their Equipment.' The Governor sent military reinforcements to the military stations and put guards on the Iron gangs and road parties, 'as should these people rise, who are 1500 in number the Consequences might prove of the most serious nature' (p.229). Their 'more formidable appearance' was accompanied by the loss of troopers in 'skirmishes' on the Hunter and at Bathurst. The Governor is clearly indicating that the disturbances are uprisings capable of inciting others to 'rise'. Although his letter names Donohoe and McNamarra as bushrangers who have recently been killed, the men at Bathurst are not referred to as 'bushrangers' or members of any individual's gang. There may not have been a consistent leader across the three weeks of the insurgency. The composition of the group changed due to desertions, woundings and deaths. In the Hunter and at Bathurst, there were 12-15 men at the core of the uprisings. They raided settlers for 'what was necessary for their equipment' which suggests they took what they needed for a journey (p.228).

The Colonial Secretary directed the Police Superintendent Lieutenant Thomas Evernden to make inquiries into the cause of the disturbances. Evernden replied on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 'I will communicate with Major McPherson and Lieut. Brown, and report as soon as possible, but I am confident that the rising was not caused by the want of rations' (Williams 1994 p.60). The colony had been in the grip of a three year drought, the crops had failed and wheat had been imported from Van Diemen's Land and France. The *Sydney Monitor* described the effects of fermenting maize cakes and rotten imported meat upon the working servant's body ('Bad provisions and bushranging' 1830). Further articles detail the ineptitude and corruption in the Commissariat Office. Following the execution of the Ribbon Boys, the *Sydney Monitor* squarely laid the blame for their deaths upon their treatment at the hands of the Government ('Justification of the Sydney Monitor by the General' 1830). Even though Hall, the editor of the *Sydney Monitor* had been imprisoned for libel by Governor Darling and was embroiled with the other colonial newspapers in a struggle for the freedom of the press, the claims of starvation and maltreatment ('Draconian punishments' 1830) are supported by other evidence. David Roberts (2000; 2005; 2006) details the harsh conditions in the Wellington Valley and Bathurst through examination of government policy, records of absconding and the Bench punishment records. The enquiry ordered by Governor Darling in October 1830 had demonstrable effects upon the Bathurst Bench of magistrates. ('Police Office Bathurst November 16th' 1830). In May of 1831, John Piper's son wrote to his father from Bathurst,

I heard yesterday that the Major and Maule, have received orders to investigate the state of Ranken Farm, great complaints having been made by the men as to the ration they receive. In fact I suspect nothing less than a famine here for we have had nothing but begging from every farm in the district.

(Eldershaw 1973, p.7)

In January, when the bushranger James Murphy spoke on the gallows about starvation, his final words were cut short. The *Sydney Monitor* suggested it was because his 'talk of starvation and maltreatment has resonance with the recent uprising in Bathurst' ('Execution' 1831). In the case of Ranken's servants mentioned above, Alexander McLeay

wrote to Major McPherson in May 1831 with the Governor's orders to assemble the men at Ranken's farm 'and ascertain what they complain of & whether they have just ground for dissatisfaction reporting fully to me the result of your inquiries' (Williams 1994, p.86). The Governor was closely monitoring the complaints of government servants on the farms after the insurrection.

Collectively, this historical evidence is consistent with Charles White's conclusion that this was a convict insurrection. However, my contention is that the triggering event would have happened much closer to the time of the uprising than Ralph Entwistle's flogging in November 1829. On September 4<sup>th</sup> 1830, Jack Donohoe was shot dead at Bringelly. The Governor banned the singing of his song at taverns on penalty of loss of license as it was an 'evil influence' (Ward & Robertson 1978, pp.228). The Governor's letter to Murray suggests the insurrection began when a party of rebels from the Hunter River 'directed their course across the Country towards Bathurst' (p.288). On September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1830, the same day the Ribbon Boys walked off from Stowford Farm, the cattle thief Edward Baldwin was reported to have crossed the mountains from the Hunter River and 'secreted himself at some distant stock stations beyond Bathurst' ('The Bushranger at Hunter's River' 1830; [No Title] 1830, p.2). Baldwin was a shipmate of Patrick Blanchfield the associate of Robert Storey. Baldwin had been assigned to the Cudgegong River and properties of Bathurst and the Wellington Valley. He had been arrested and punished during the police hunt for Robert Storey and the bolters who planned to escape inland. It is possible that his movements in September 1830 were a catalyst for insurrection.

Why did the convicts and settlers call them Ribbon Boys? This was possibly as a pejorative term to distinguish these young convicts, most of who were aged in their twenties, from the notorious Irish secret society of Ribbon 'Men'. The youngest members of the group were John Kenny (22yrs), James Driver (22yrs), Michael Kearney (23yrs), John Sheppard (24yrs), and William Gahan (24yrs). Ralph Entwistle (25yrs) and Patrick Gleeson (28yrs)



were still in their twenties. 'The Boys' is also used as a term for a fraternity or 'a group of men especially a group of friends' (The FreeDictionary 2014; Shorter Old English Dictionary 1965, p.211). Modern audiences associate the term 'ribbon' with a frivolous feminine adornment, but in 1830 the Ribbon societies were known to be cells of violent political activists. The historian, Michael Beames (Donnelly 2009, p.380) estimates that 4,000 Irish were working in the Manchester Mills in the 1820s and that Ribbon Societies were operating in industrial areas of Britain between 1815 and 1845. In 1830, Doctor Doyle warned that the Ribbon societies were comprised of Catholic and Protestant members ('Ireland' 1830). Three Ribbon Boys were found guilty of shooting the overseer James Greenwood – Michael Kearney, William Gahan and Ralph Entwistle. Entwistle was from Bolton. Kearney and Gahan were from Tipperary. In the 1820s, Tipperary was the most disturbed and heavily militarised county in Ireland (Donnelly, 2009). Foster (1988) describes Clare, Limerick and Tipperary during this period as 'the epicentre of discontent' (p.292). Ribbon societies and Rockite bands sought to impose their own law upon British occupied territory by threatening letters, retribution killings, arms raids and barn burnings. Michael Kearney's first crime of burglary was committed with Daniel Gleeson ('Spring Assizes' 1828). When Daniel Gleeson drowned at Emu Plains in August 1830, he was found wearing a chord around his neck that indicated he was a member of a secret society ('Windsor Assizes 1830'). Bob Reece (1993a), documented the life of Michael Dwyer, the County Wicklow chief, and noted that the secret societies 'favoured recruitment by the exploitation of family networks' (p.18).

What did the ribbons in the hat signify? Among the Ribbonmen, it was customary for the leader to wear ribbons in his hat at sporting events where new members were often recruited (Reece 1993a). According to a convict statement on Ribbonism preserved in the Tasmanian archives, Ribbonmen were organised by delegates who travelled over the countryside passing on new signs and arranging meetings (Robson 1965, p.56). The delegates, the oldest of whom served as a district chairman, were elected by guardians

who led cells of 10-12 men. A similar organisational structure served the Rockites and Whiteboys (Donnelly 2009). There is no evidence that the Ribbon Boys were part of such a highly organised system in the New Country. Such evidence and the identification of the leaders would defeat the purpose of secrecy. However, it is interesting to note that the Hunter River Banditti and the Ribbon Boys were parties of 10 to 12 men. One would expect the eldest of the Ribbon Boys to be the leaders. In this case, Thomas Dunne (33yrs), Dominic Daley (32yrs) and Robert Webster (31yrs) were the eldest. It is interesting that three other men, who were thought to have been members of the original gang, escaped detection for a further twelve months. They were Edward Slingsby (37yrs), Denis O'Brien (30yrs) and Michael Lynch (33yrs). All three had connections to agrarian protest in Ireland in their original convictions. Edward Slingsby from Limerick was transported with his relative John Slingsby and twenty others from Tipperary for being 'Riotous and disorderly persons'. Michael Lynch was a farm labourer transported with seven others for outrages in King's County, Ireland. Denis O'Brien was from Clonmel – the same parish as the Clonoulty Whiteboys Ned Ryan and Roger Corcoran. O'Brien was transported with Jack Donohoe on the *Ann and Amelia* in 1825 (Brown 2013). In November 1831, Slingsby, Lynch and O'Brien suffered the full punishment of the law. They were executed, dissected and anatomised ('Executed' 1831). Perhaps these older men influenced or led the younger Ribbon Boys.

The secret societies took some pride in not disclosing their leaders and fooling the authorities. Thomas Moore, in his novel 'Memoirs of Captain Rock [pseud.] the celebrated Irish chieftain', writes in the guise of a Wesleyan minister who has met Captain Rock (Moore, 1824). The novel concludes with the Captain's escape by transportation,

It appears that there were, in the Court and the Town, at that time a large assemblage of Rockites – any one of whom could have identified our hero, so as to give the going judges the triumph of, at last, hanging the real CAPTAIN ROCK. But the only virtue which the Irish Government has been the means of

producing in the people is fidelity to each other in their Conspiracies against it. Accordingly the Captain – although shrewdly suspected of being the Captain – was, luckily for himself, not known to be such; and being found guilty only of the transportable offence, namely, that of being out by moonlight, is at this moment on his way to those distant shores, where so many lads “who love the moon” have preceded him.

(Moore 1824, p.371)

The existence of Ribbonmen, Whiteboys and Rockites in the colony was well known. Two years after the execution of the Ribbon Boys, their captor Police Magistrate Lieutenant Lachlan MacAlister was embroiled in controversy over Rockite activities in County Argyle. A threatening placard had reportedly been posted on the fence of his fellow magistrate Doctor Gibson. It read: ‘Donohoe is come alive again. Ten pounds reward for the heads of two Scotch Tyrants’ (‘To the editor of the Sydney Monitor’ 1833; ‘Colonial Secretary’s Office, Sydney, 1833; ‘A pill for the McQuarrie Street reporter’ 1833). Donohoe was linked to the leadership of Rockite outrages in the popular imagination. Incendiarism and agrarian outrages in Bathurst and Argyle were recognised by the contemporary public as related to the work of Irish secret societies whose leadership was uncertain, whose methods were violent and whose motives were questionable.

Where did all of this take place? The Abercrombie Caves were not known to white settlers until the surveyor Davidson discovered them in 1842 (Watson 1843; Wells 1970). The first ‘tourist’ party who visited them in 1845 was organised by W.H. Suttor and led by Surveyor W.R. Davidson (‘Bathurst: A trip to the caves’ 1845). It is reported that Suttor and the assembled guests toasted Davidson as the original discoverer of the Caves (Wilkinson 1879). Suttor would not have done so if he had been aware of their existence in 1830. The armed encounter between Suttor’s party and the Ribbon Boys cannot have taken place at the Abercrombie Caves, although it may have occurred in the vicinity.

Police Superintendent Thomas Evernden reported on October 7<sup>th</sup> that ‘a party of inhabitants’ fell in with the bushrangers at “Caraway” about forty miles south from Bathurst’ and again two days later by Lieutenant Brown ‘near the same place’ (Williams 1994, p. 57). The Ribbon Boys had been at Thomas Arkell’s property Charlton on the Campbell River. One of Arkell’s outstations was Mulgunnia near Grove Creek. It has been assumed the Ribbon Boys followed this waterway to discover the caves. However, after Charlton, the Ribbon Boys were reported at Mackenzie’s property, Three Brothers, which is further west than Mulgunnia and on the route to the Lachlan River. After the first two armed encounters, the Ribbon Boys plundered Fulton on the Lachlan River and Glen Logan on Warwick Plains. They headed further west toward Wollawolla (Williams 1992, p.57). This may be the location known as ‘Wollah Wollah’ near present day Grenfell. One week later, Lieutenant Evernden reported that the Ribbon Boys had crossed the Lachlan and were heading to McHenry’s property and on to the Murrumbidgee River. William McHenry had a run at present day Murringo (Lloyd 1990, p.13) near the Boorowa River.

*The Map of New South Wales from the best authorities and the latest discoveries, 1825* describes the trails and landforms marked out by Meehan, Dangar and Oxley (Tyrer 1825). I used these trails as the best indication of the way horses would have been able to travel when distances were measured by grazing land and watering holes. However, it is also a map of the European consciousness of ‘country’ up to that point in time. How different it is to the *Map of the Colony of New South Wales exhibiting the situation and the extent of the Appropriated lands including the counties, towns villages reserves etc. 1837*. In 1829 Governor Darling proclaimed the nineteen counties over which he could exert the rule of law (‘Government Order Number 50’ 1829). Dixon (1837) has inscribed the Governor’s nomenclature upon the landforms. These are not geographical features, nor the names of white explorers or sponsoring officials, but jurisdictions named sentimentally after counties of Scotland and England: Roxburgh, Argyle, and Westmoreland etc. Compare it to the *Map of the county of Monteagle* (Department of Lands 1939) and you find a

renaming of the land in terms of proprietary rights, bank mortgages and parcels of interest in minerals that lay below the earth. The aboriginal language, mangled in translation, is attached to some topographical features. Maps inscribe our commercial, cultural and political priorities on the landscape. These maps are provided in the body of the Creative Work to orient the reader and reflect this process of appropriation.

To document my research, I pinned the sites of insurrection from the Hunter River to Boorowa on Dixon's Map of 1837(Appendix B Figure 11). How could the Governor hope to recapture the insurgents over such a vast area of wilderness? The Ribbon Boys had moved well beyond the limits of settlement and the jurisdiction of the law. Finding a small group of twelve men across this vast area of country would be almost impossible but for an important source of assistance. Mr W.H. Suttor enlisted two natives from the Bella Bulla River to track the Ribbon Boys ('The bushrangers at Bathurst' 1830). In the case of the Hunter River Banditti, the overseer McDonald, 'using his influence over the natives' took along three aboriginal trackers (Bushrangers 1830a). Captain Walpole recruited Martin Grady, a cattle thief from Clonmel, by offering him a pardon and a passage to England. Grady was 'familiar with the haunts' of the bushrangers and led Walpole to them (Williams 1994, p.68, 83, 85, 86). Upon reflection, it seemed that the governance of this vast area relied upon the co-operation of people who had once been hunted by the military.

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, Captain Walpole completed the capture of the insurgents 'near Mr. Roberts' station in the direction of Cunningham Plains, Argyle' (Williams 1994 p.60). Later this region was mapped as County King and County Monteagle, but in 1830 it was under the jurisdiction of the Police Magistrate for County Argyle, Lieutenant Lachlan MacAlister. His beat was the domain of squatters some of whom had been transported as rebels from the 1798 Irish revolt. Others were transported in 1817 for burning a military infirmary. There is a precedent for the Ribbon Boys' retreat to this area. This region was

the site of the capture of Owens, Holmes and Wisken and the wounding of Donohoe in 1828 ('Supreme Criminal Court'1828; Kercher 2012a; 'Highway Robbery' 1830). There were Irishmen who had been transported for Whiteboy activities, like the carter Roger Corcoran who worked for the Hassall family. The first official grants along the Boorowa River were dowry lands given to the Hassall and Marsden families (Hope 2010). Corcoran was willing to harbour runaways in this region (Barrett 1992, p.291-92). An anonymous correspondent to the *Sydney Gazette* suggested that Donohoe eluded capture because he was harboured by government servants living on the Hassall properties ('The Bushrangers' 1830). The family properties were scattered between Cowpastures, Mulgoa, O'Connell Plains, the Abercrombie Ranges and Boorowa.

In some ways, the story of the Ribbon Boys has been written by the settlers and the victors. The rebellion was attributed to a simplistic cause the settlers and magistrates could accept – misdemeanour and necessary punishment followed by revenge, capture and execution. There was no reflection upon the material circumstances of the rebels, or upon their moral justifications or fraternal affiliations. Victor Hugo, in describing the Paris riots of July 1830 observes, 'Most commonly revolt is born of material circumstances; but insurrection is always a moral phenomenon' (Hugo 1862, p.889). In this instance the revolt seems to have been a reaction to starvation and maltreatment but the rhetoric of Ribbonism, echoed in Donohoe's song, gave the rebels a moral purpose. The rebellion failed because the methods were violent and the plan was ill conceived. The Ribbon Boys were betrayed by police informants and the very networks they relied upon to save them in the New Country.

#### **2.4 How has the new information changed my understanding of the story?**

The way I understand the story has changed in four main ways. Firstly, the insurrection can be seen in relation to economic and political conditions in the Colony and patterns

of agrarian protest in England, Ireland and Australia, in the first quarter of the C19. Secondly, a number of precipitating and related incidents combine to trigger the rebellion of government servants which is led by a party of insurrectionists with a moral and political set of beliefs that bind them in solidarity against a military enemy. Thirdly, the participants are linked by patterns of familial association and subjugated by informal (fraternal) and formal (penal) systems of control across culturally significant geographical locations. Finally, convict protest against harsh conditions, famine and poor treatment began long before the execution of ten Ribbon Boys and continued for a number of years afterwards.

The following summary illustrates how these insights are translated into the Creative Work. Ralph Entwistle and the Ribbon Boys are not treated as a 'Bushranger's Gang' but as a heterogeneous assembly of six convict bolters who seem to have initiated an insurrection in response to poor conditions, corporal punishment and bad rations. The Colony was in the grip of a three year drought and administrative policy, as well as economic conditions, were placing stress upon the settlers and their servants. Like Robert Storey and a number of other convicts, including the Hunter River Banditti, the bolters planned to escape from the settled areas with as many other government servants as they could liberate, taking with them arms, horses and supplies. In these efforts they were supported by a criminal and familial network of Irish transportees who carried with them the tropes and methods of secret societies such as the Ribbonmen, Whiteboys and Rockites. Their insurrection may have been triggered by the death of Donohoe and by news of or contact with other bolters from the Hunter River.

In walking off their properties, they repeated a precedent set by sixteen government servants who had walked off from the Wellington Valley following the harvest of 1826. Both Irish and English protesters during the nineteenth century had a history of walking across the hills and raising support as they marched. After overcoming resistance from the overseers, in one case by murder, they were able to amass more arms and men than they

could safely manage. Some of the pressed men deserted taking arms, ammunition and information with them to trade for reduced sentences and government rewards.

A group of twelve or thirteen rebels, known as the Ribbon Boys, rode away from Hare Castle barn, leaving the remaining pressed servants to fend for themselves or return to their masters. The Ribbon Boys, who included the six original bolters from the Fitzgerald Valley, continued to raid properties on Dunn's Plains and the Campbell River. They were pursued by a party of volunteer settlers guided by native trackers. After a brief encounter at a rocky glen, the insurgents escaped with minor injuries. Two days later, they defeated a party of mounted police under Lieutenant Brown causing the deaths of three troopers and five horses. In these encounters they exhibited many of the tropes of Ribbonmen, including military and tactical skills, disguise, adornment and solidarity.

The Ribbon Boys headed west along the Lachlan River and then south to the Murrumbidgee River seeking refuge among the Irish squatters of Boorowa and Cunningham's Plains. In this they were relying upon the same familial and ethnic bonds that drew earlier bushrangers, like Donohoe, Owens and Whisken to the same area. Lieutenant Lachlan MacAlister, the Police Magistrate for Argyle, had covenants with certain squatters that guaranteed his support for their land applications in exchange for information on bushrangers. Under Lieutenant Macalister, the Goulburn Mounted Police engaged, wounded and captured three of the Ribbon Boys on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Macalister and District Constable Geary were also wounded and so accompanied the captives by wagon to Bong Bong hospital. Captain Walpole, who had marched his detachment of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment from Sydney Town, followed Martin Grady to the place where the remaining nine Ribbon Boys were hiding. He peacefully captured the remaining insurgents on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Two of the captives died of their previous wounds.

The wagon journey back to Bathurst took six days. The insurgency raised the alarm, both



in the popular press and among the Colonial administrators, about the harsh conditions endured by government servants. Following a military trial of ten Ribbon Boys, for the murder of Greenwood and the robberies at Dunn's Plains, the insurgents were found guilty and executed on Tuesday November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1830. The event occasioned the first visit by a priest and the first Catholic Mass in Bathurst. Starvation and convict protest continued in Bathurst the following year. Sometimes the concerns were heard by the Bench of Magistrates who now had the power to reassign the servants. In some cases the settlers were given written instructions on the quality and quantity of rations. In a wider movement for reform, changes were made to the law regarding summary punishment and the power of the Magistrates was curbed ('Proclamation' 1830). Rumours of Donohoe and Rockite activity surfaced again in 1833 but were found to be instruments of the conservative forces that resisted these reforms ('Letter Summary Punishment Act' 1833).

### **Chapter 3: Hermeneutic enquiry – Narrative and Narratology**

The desire to express my research discoveries in their complexity drove the narrative enquiry. My reflective journal entry during that time records my response (Appendix A Figure 9). I wanted to find a way for readers to actively participate in the cognitive and emotional processes of engaging with past events. I wanted the Creative Work to reflect the tenuous basis on which we make assumptions and assemble facts into a story. I wanted to allow cognitive space and access to information for the reader to challenge or debate the ‘authority’ of the text. This meant I needed a grounding in narratology.

My narrative research began with immersion in film and literature that dealt with rebellion and provided different representations of life in the historical era in question (Appendix B Figure 8). A critical analysis of these sources allowed me to compare methods of storytelling, structure and audience positioning. I also compared new and past models of historiography (Appendix B Figure 9). I sought further overt instruction in scriptwriting and Creative Non-fiction which was integrated into my practice. These explorations directed me to the critical analysis of genre and the ideological basis of texts (Appendix B Figure 10). Much of my theoretical reading on narratology and historiography had direct bearing upon the transformation of the new knowledge and experience into the Creative Work.

#### **3.1 Cultural representations of bushrangers in literature, film and theatre**

My immersion in the narrative research began with a critical review of representations of history in the form of novels, films, television series and plays (Appendix B Figure 8). Some of the novels and fictional works were written and set in the same era but dealt with social conditions in Ireland, England, Ireland and France. *Memoirs of Captain Rock*

[pseud.] *the celebrated Irish chieftain* (Moore 1824) deals with Ribbonism and Irish history. *Shirley* (Bronte n.d.), a novel first published 1849, is set in the Luddite Riots of 1817. *Middlemarch* (Eliot 1871) examines village and middle class life in rural England. *North and south* (Gaskell 1994), first published in 1855, is set in the industrial mill riots of Lancashire in the 1820s. *Great expectations* (Dickens 1867) begins with a convict who has escaped from the hulks to the moors and who returns to England at the expiration of his sentence in Australia. *Les miserables* (Hugo 1862) chronicles the revolutions in France as his characters survive the uprisings of the 1830s. I studied these works for the social context, language, metaphysical beliefs and narrative techniques they contained.

Other texts, set in the 1800s, were written more recently. These were *The floating brothel* (Rees 2001), *Dancing with strangers* (Clendinnen 2003), *The secret river* (Grenville 2006b), *An irresistible temptation* (Baxter 2006) and *The lieutenant* (Grenville 2008). These demonstrate the ways in which careful historical research can be combined with a compelling storyline and narrative tools to engage the reader in historical non-fiction. An informative example of historical fiction set in the same era, is *Under Capricorn*, a novel by Helen Simpson (Simpson 1937). It paints a well researched picture of colonial society. Set in Sydney Town in the 1830s, it tells the story of a gentleman, a cousin of the new Governor Sir Richard Bourke, who arrives in the colony to take up land. The plot deals with the conflict between the emancipists and exclusives but it is a heart an Irish convict love story. The novel was adapted into the internationally successful film, *Under Capricorn* (Hitchcock 1949), which starred Ingrid Bergman and Michael Wilding.

My exploration of bushranger films included those which were based upon historical and fictional characters – *The story of the Kelly gang* (Tait 1906), *Captain Thunderbolt* (Holmes 1953), *Robbery under arms* (Lee 1957), *Ned Kelly* (Richardson 1970), *Mad Dog Morgan* (Mora 1976), *Ned Kelly* (Jordan 2003) and *The proposition* (Hillcoat 2005). These films have helped to make folk heroes out of criminals from a later era: These representations reinforce the cultural stereotypes of masculinity, revenge and violence.

The few saved frames of Tait's classic *The Life of Ned Kelly* (Tait 1906) depict Ned as avenging the rough treatment of his mother and sister at the hands of the troopers. It thereby establishes a moral purpose for his rebellion.

Theatre provided a number of examples of subversive plays for study and reflection. A classic love story of the highway man that has been enshrined in English literature is *The Beggars' Opera* by John Gay. Written in 1728 and set in Newgate, the play satirises Italian Opera and deals comically with the life and destiny of a highway man. The choice of popular music and folk tunes undercuts the pomp of the conservative opera. It was the most popular play of its time. It premiered at Lincoln's Inn Field Theatre and played to full houses for sixty two consecutive performances. Through satire, the play pairs the crooked values of prostitutes and thieves with the practices of their aristocratic social 'betters'. It subversively pokes fun at conservative Whig politics and priggish moral codes (Gay 1728).

The role of dramatic forms in managing subversive influences in the population became evident in my analysis of Charles Harpur's *The tragedy of Donohoe*. Written in 1834, the melodrama draws upon many of the facts, characters and popular beliefs of the time surrounding the death of Jack Donohoe (Perkins 1987; Mitchell 1973). Hays and Nikolopoulos (1999) demonstrate the ways in which melodrama was used in the rebellious climate at the turn of the nineteenth century to promote the dominant ideology of capitalism. Their review of theatre includes Jerrold's *Mutiny at the Nore*, based upon a naval rebellion in 1797 that was triggered by a flogging and poor rations. The rebellion was recast as a domestic drama that reinforced the message that tough military practices were necessary to defend the nation (Hays & Nikolopoulos 1999, p.xiii).

Jeffrey Cox (1999) traces the ideological development of theatre from Gothic Drama to Nautical Melodrama to Domestic melodrama between the revolutionary 1700s to the mid 1800s. Cox claims 'the domestic ideology asserts as natural male domination of women and pits itself against "unnatural" collectives such as the revolutionary mob and robber band (p.177)'. Charles Harpur performed in *Mutiny at the Nore* in Sydney before penning *The tragedy of Donohoe*. In a similar vein, he has recast the rebellion of Donohoe as a domestic heterosexual romance. Donohoe is depicted as a remorseful murderer who has killed his rival out of sexual jealousy. By this means Harpur (Perkins 1987, postscript) claims 'to idealise with artistic integrity, the abnormalities of any kind, is to turn them to moral account, by eviscerating them as it were of that mere baseness and brutality which were originally in them, and which cannot but remain in them for no good, so long as they only come before us as stubborn historical facts'.

I began to consider whether the ways in which the Ribbon Boys narrative had been constructed and transmitted served an ideological purpose. The conformist ideal of the peaceful domestic life seems to be propagated in W.H. Suttor's speculation on Ralph Entwistle's desires before the flogging; 'His ambition was, by honest industry, to wipe out the stain on his character, to obtain a piece of land, to marry a wife, and become altogether a good and reputable colonist' (Suttor 1886 p.2). More recent versions of the story have built upon this cultural assumption. Henry Biawolas suggests, 'It is not inconceivable that among the two or three hundred women in the Bathurst district, a fine, strong youth like Ralph Entwistle would not have been drawn to, or captivated by a young woman, or conversely, attracted by the attentions of a young woman. It is almost inconceivable that he should not' (Bialowas 2010 p.137).

On the contrary, it is conceivable that Ralph Entwistle was homosexual. The modern audience is more open to recognising same-sex relationships even though these threaten the ideological notion of the progressive nuclear family. Moral sanctions against

homosexuality have been reduced along with the move to a more secular society. Whatever our ideological stance toward homosexuality, it must be conceded that Ralph Entwistle's love for another man could have been a compelling reason for him to join the insurgents. There is no mention in any other accounts of the Ribbon Boys of women being either willing participants, pressed or molested. The Ribbon Boys visited a number of farms where women were available (eg. Johnson's and Brownlea), yet the women were treated with respect and not encouraged to join the group. By contrast, a member of Robert Storey's gang, William Percival, intended to have his way with Janet Ranken and press her and the serving woman to come with them to Wellington Valley ('Supreme Criminal Court: Ryan, Storey, Bishop, Percival' 1825 ). The Hunter River Banditti took an aboriginal woman with them from John Rotten's property (Kercher 2012b). Tennant had a 'wanton woman' in the bush whom Macalister arrested for information (Macalister 1827). The myth of the masculine bushranger and the cultural imperative of a domestic solution to subversive impulses prevents our consideration of the alternatives.

The process of masculine mythmaking is ongoing in our present society. It is evident in the warrior rhetoric that accompanies the media commentary of football matches, state funerals of military 'peacekeepers', and the heroic efforts of bushfire fighters. It is kept alive in the literature endorsed by the school system as suitable for young Australian boys. Sharyn Pearce (2001) reviewed the way in which masculinity was represented in the juvenile delinquent protagonist of John Marsden's novel, *Dear Miffy*. Her analysis points to the underlying assumptions about masculinity that spring from the 'Iron John' movement of Robert Bly, and the writings of Australian psychologist Steven Biddulph. Marsden's own non-fiction guide for adolescent boys, *Secret Men's Business*, echoes an unexamined belief in 'a core personality and character which defines masculinity that all men potentially share ... a kind of repressed cultural memory' (Gilbert & Gilbert cited in Pearce 2001, p.33). Where Bly argues that industrialisation disrupted the father-son bond, Biddulph sees this historical disjunction as the origin of 'father hunger ... the

deep biological need for strong, humorous, hairy, wild, tender, sweet, caring, intelligent, masculine output' (Pearce 2001, p.34). Ralph Entwistle is the perfect test case. By the accounts of Ralph's criminal circumstances and evidence of a possible connection to Thomas Entwistle, a forger and transportee (arguably a victim of rapid industrialisation) who is absent from his young son's life at a crucial period of identity formation, one might expect Ralph to feel this 'father hunger'. Following the 'Iron John' logic, Ralph would 'suffer the condition of ongoing and chronic immaturity, living as an oedipal man incapacitated by guilt and alienated from his own masculinity' (Pearce 2001, p.34). His motivation in joining the insurrection then is not one of revenge, but of seeking out the 'masculine output' Biddulph theorises about.

What I learned by framing Ralph within this discourse, acting as he must within the limitations of factual accounts of the insurrection and subsequent capture, was that retreat to the wild masculine brotherhood in the bush was not as simple and wholesome as the theorists imagined. As Gilbert and Gilbert noted, 'Biddulph forgets that masculine rites in traditional male-dominated societies imposed conformity and control, and involved misogynist myths, the exclusion of women, deference to hierarchical authority and fear, violence and pain' (Gilbert & Gilbert cited in Pearce 2001, p.36). These characteristics are all evident in the unfolding of the Ribbon Boys' rebellion.

We cannot assume that Ralph Entwistle was interested in women or in pursuing a domesticated future. Moore (1965) and Harris (1852), in describing mateship and masculinity, note that many bush men preferred the company of other men. Buckbinder (1994) in recognising that the international Men's Movement 'enabled men to recognise softer, more emotional facets of themselves' also noted 'an underlying separatist current to which many men have responded by affirming vehemently their need to be with other men (not necessarily for sex) and their ability to dispense with their former need for women' (Buckbinder 1994, p.3). Stoltenberg (2002) and Buchbinder (1994) helped me

to gain insight into the more complex relationships that may have been enacted into the group dynamics of the Ribbon Boys. Summarising the political and social writing that emerged from the Gay movement of the 1970s, Buckbinder notes ‘a resistance to the binary notions of masculinity and femininity, whereby individuals must fit into either/or categories of male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, active/passive etc.’ (Buckbinder 1994, p.7). Rather than categorise the character of Ralph Entwistle, I imagined him as a complex individual capable of the brutality attributed to him when his masculinity was challenged by the overseer and of lust and violence in the fictional cave scene but equally able to offer comfort and safety to a young boy when he could easily have sexually exploited him.

In the imaginary scene between Ralph Entwistle and George Mole, the boy is wearing a blue dress. It is interesting that in our contemporary society, as in the society of Ralph Entwistle, cross-dressing is a cultural trope of revelry among groups of men. Australian cultural celebrations are often characterised by the attendance of men in frocks.

Buckbinder points to the ‘radical or gender-fuck drag of the 1970s in which men dressed in women’s clothing but with no attempt to impersonate women, so that obviously male facial hair and body hair remained to contradict the female attire’, as evidence that gender is as much a social and cultural construct as an internal psychological process of identification (Buckbinder 1994, p.7). Perhaps cross-dressing is a type of cultural pressure valve that allows men a release from the strictures of maintaining the masculine myth.

While modern film and television representations of the iconic Australian ‘bushranger’ clothe him in a great coat or metal armour, the Ribbonmen, Rockites and Whiteboys had rituals of cross-dressing and disguise. The English Luddites and Irish rebels were sometimes depicted in women’s clothing (‘The leader of the Luddites an engraving’



1812). Donnelly identifies the symbolic function of transvestitism:

Symbolic meaning as well as the unusual desire for disguise has been seen in the wearing of women's dress, which many Rockites were accustomed to adopt. In one of the earliest reports of this period... February 1822... a band wearing women's clothes attacked a ploughman-caretaker in Rathkeale, shot his horse and ordered him to quit the district. They called themselves "Lady Rock and her Suite". At the same time in North Cork, five men of the eight who raided a gentlemen's house were dressed as women. It became common to refer to agrarian rebels so attired as 'Lady Rocks' and in one case the Lady Rocks who were captured were 'seven stout young men much in liquor and dressed in white shirts with women's apparel underneath.

(Donnelly, 2009, p.110)

When the Ribbon Boys of Bathurst visited Brownlea, they were reported to have dressed up and cavorted in white shirts and fine apparel. The leader had the ladies sew white India lace to his hat and he wore this in the first skirmish with the vigilante posse sent to apprehend them (Busby 1905). When Donohoe was killed, Walmsley and Webber ran off abandoning their cart of booty. It contained calico print from a previous robbery and items of women's clothing. It may have been that transgression of the social norms through cross-dressing had a liberating effect upon the convicts.

Damian Barlow (2007) provides a queer close-reading of Marcus Clarke's *His Natural life*, set in Norfolk Island and Port Arthur at this time. He notes that there is a general critical assumption that the hero 'remains immune to same sex desires and practices' (p.35). Yet one trial report ('Domestic intelligence Supreme Court' 1831), relates the story of two convicts on Norfolk Island. Welsh, upon hearing his 'companion' had been arrested for killing an overseer, stabbed another convict so that he and his companion could be tried and executed together. The police informant, Martin Grady, who was given

the protection of Captain Walpole for informing upon the Ribbon Boys, was arrested the following year on a charge of bestiality (Williams 1994). Practices outside of the sexual and social norms of genteel society have not been reported in existing accounts of the Ribbon Boys' Rebellion. This led me to consider how the structure of the narrative could be used to disrupt the cultural and ideological assumptions of the reader.

The process of immersion and critical analysis of texts written in different narrative forms provided me with new insights into the way Ralph's 'created world' might operate. Language and narrative techniques could evoke an era, mimic manners, capture social mores, and replicate the events, but to what purpose? My focus upon verisimilitude, reproduction of the semblance of truth fashioned from social, psychological and cultural understandings (Appendix B Figure 7), broadened to a perspective on the ideology of texts. I began to look at the ways in which literary genres in the past had been able to act subversively as catalysts for satire and debate. The history of the Ribbon Boys could perhaps also be represented as a narrative that was self-consciously constructed, tentative, affective, performative, participatory and communal rather than individualistic, authoritative and specialized.

### **3.2 Narrative structure**

Questioning the ideologies embedded in different literary forms led me to interrogate the choices I had made about narrative structure. In the initial stages of the research project, I sought overt instruction in screenwriting in order to plot the Ribbon Boys narrative and shape it for film or television. This medium allowed the widest possible audience. However, I soon found that the narrative structures used in film and television such as Aristotle's three act structure and Joseph Campbell's 'Hero Journey' (Campbell 1993),

were leading me down the well-trodden path of a step by step individualist narrative of history. Consider the story plotted as a Hero Journey using Joseph Campbell's parameters and the three act play structure (Appendix A Figure 10). It was easy to conceptualize the events as Ralph Entwistle's story as these individualistic narrative structures are internalized through a lengthy period of enculturation and viewing of 'bushranger' films. Much of the historical complexity would have to be left out of such a story and the structure itself seemed to impose the cause-and-effect linearity that my research had contradicted. I made the creative decision to change the form of the narrative from screen to literature. The genre of creative non-fiction seemed the most appropriate choice.

When Lee Gutkind defined 'creative non-fiction' in 1983, he described the genre as 'the use of literary craft in presenting nonfiction – that is, factually accurate prose about real people and events – in a compelling vivid manner' (Gutkind 2005). We can see literary and historical texts that fit this description predating the coining of the term. These include George Orwell's *Down and out in Paris and London*, Earnest Hemmingway's *Death in the Afternoon* and in the New Journalism of Tom Wolfe and non-fiction works of Norman Mailer. The form has encompassed literary nonfiction, narrative nonfiction, personal essay, memoir, and even oral history.

Rosenstone (2006) has described the critical analysis of the historical film as a field still in the making and the same can be said for the genre of creative non-fiction. Literary critic, Barbara Lounsberry (1990) declares the genre has four constitutive elements: verifiability of the subject matter; credible exhaustive research; transformation of events in scenes; literary prose style. Her definition, more importantly, captures the author's intention in a way that clarified my own approach, 'verifiable subject matter and exhaustive research guarantee the nonfiction side of literary non-fiction; the narrative form and structure disclose the writer's artistry; and finally, its polished language reveals the goal all along has been literature' (Lounsberry, 1990, p.xv). The conventions and exceptions to the genre

are only now being mapped and creative works and controversies arise to test the literary and historical boundaries of this form of hybrid writing.

In searching for an Australian perspective on the genre, Sue Joseph interviewed an eclectic mix of twelve Australian award-winning creative non-fiction authors; journalists, travel writers, memoirists, food writers, novelists, columnists, social commentators, academics, and an indigenous author. She observed that, ‘some of the authors interviewed are not sure of the genre themselves’ and she encountered resistance to theorising the creative process and labelling the creative work (Joseph 2014, pg.40). Janet Burroway, in her seminal textbook *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of craft*, notes that ‘genre’ is used in two different ways. It is used to identify the literary forms of nonfiction, poetry, fiction and drama but also sometimes taken to mean the conventions of certain types of fiction or ‘a set of narrative elements that have less to do with good writing than with the expectations of particular fans’ (Burroway 2011, p.4). She suggests that creative writing teachers and practitioners avoid the latter use of the term because, ‘the tendency of recent literature is in any case to move further away from rigid categories, toward a loosening or crossing of genre in the sense of literary form’ (p.5). This is the case when we hybridize fiction, which is primarily concerned with imagination, and nonfiction, which is centred on the factual. There is some disagreement even among practitioners about where the balance should be found. In responding to Sue Joseph, David Marr the Australian journalist characterised the naming of the creative non-fiction genre as ‘a debate between those who believe storytelling distorts the truth, and those who see narrative as a particularly effective way of conveying the truth.’

It is significant that most of the writers in Joseph’s sample were journalists by training. They had been encouraged by the New Journalism movement toward writing more experimental narratives, but were still obeying the impulse to ‘convey the truth’ or ‘clear up misconceptions’ (Joseph 2014, p. 40-41). If we survey novelists and literary writers their definitions are similarly influenced by their training or experience. Memoirist Kate

Holden suggests the genre has suffered from a lack of recognition because it developed as ‘a cousin of journalism and journalism is not highly recognised literary form’ (Joseph 2014, p.45). She recognised the ‘exploratory nature’ of the endeavour, ‘I mean it’s just a type of non-fiction isn’t it? It’s just that it is a particularly agile and plastic kind. Something that was more related to the embracive part of it, that you can use all sorts of little tit bits of history and poetry and other genres and it’s so much more of a plastic form’ (p.45-46). This discussion harks back to the fifth annual conference of the Australian Association of Writing Programs. A special issue of the literary journal *Text* was produced on the occasion of Lee Gutkind’s first visit to Australia in 2000. Donna Lee Brien said in the introduction,

Creative nonfiction writes a more discursive, more subjective, more organic, less straightforwardly linear nonfiction ... this type of writing is particularly suited to a focus on the personal, on human values and ethical issues, on a sense of the self in action, and on material which deals with emotional content in a way that texts which aim to be totally objective may not be able to. Creative nonfiction is thus the perfect vehicle for the writer who wishes to reveal the impossibility of an immaculate objectivity when it comes to writing nonfiction, and instead wants/needs to revel in a subjective approach.

(Brien 2000, p.2)

Rosenstone (2006) informed my thinking at this point. He suggests that historians assemble the ‘traces’ of history by selecting significant pieces of evidence to present as facts in support of their argument. I realised, the documentary or non-fiction series is as constructed as the historical television drama. Similarly, creative non-fiction writers assemble settings, characters and events to present an historical hypothesis, ‘an argument that is also a kind of vision of the world. One that can retain a certain strength and validity long after the data on which it is based may be superseded’ (Rosenstone, 2006, p.55).

I searched for examples in recent historical writing where the facts and inferences are assembled in new and interesting ways that invite the reader to enter into a constructed world and participate in a particular hypothetical argument.

Inga Clendinnen demonstrates how the creative and historical can successfully fuse to form a new way of relating to history in her book *Dancing with Strangers* (Clendinnen 2003). This 'lifting out of the texts, to a new vision that is both from and beyond them' is described by Peter Cochrane as the 'historical imagination' (Cochrane 2010, p.203). Cochrane discusses Clendinnen's method of creating factually accurate yet vivid and participatory historical works. Her Creative Non-fiction work required the stripping back of the accepted narrative of Governor Philip's meeting with the aborigines at Manly Cove. Through a process of meticulous archival research, cross checking and suspension of judgment, she reduces the encounter to action and a sequence of events. In her 'silent film' strategy she considers the sequence of actions without the accepted colonial narrative. She then feels able to accommodate the viewpoint of the aborigines present at the first encounter and to move the inquiry 'onto a visual plane that carries interpretation through to explanation' (Cochrane 2010, p. 201).

Clendinnen's coining of the term, 'double vision' for this outcome in some ways creates a binary. She has stepped into the shoes of the 'other' in opposition to the dominant discourse of white Australian colonialism. The binary of 'us' and 'them' is nevertheless reinforced as this duality prevents the possibility of multiple viewpoints and outcomes. The encounter could be revisited from the perspective of the aboriginal women, sailors or convicts depending upon the writers' feminist, Marxist or Irish sympathies. The 'visual plane' does not offer a panacea for ideological positioning. Scenes and actions still have to be selected and arranged by the writer and by these choices the audience is positioned. However, Clendinnen's method of separating the historical elements from their narrative foil does enable the writer to explore different perspectives during the creative process.

I had used a similar method to Clendinnen's 'silent film' strategy in determining the location of significant events. I stripped away the contradictory accounts of where the military encounters took place and studied the maps of these locales. To step back into a different time, I had to consider a different way of knowing the landscape and develop a different ontological sensibility. This had ramifications for the historical research as well as for the narrative enquiry. Stephen Muecke (Campbell 2004) suggests that indigenous Australians operate within an 'ontology of space rather than time' (p.7). For white British Australians time, and therefore history, is represented chronologically in a linear fashion. Much of our recorded history is devoted to establishing linking chains of cause and effect in order to understand events.

Liam Campbell (2004), building on Muecke's work, conducted oral history research while living with the Waipiri people of the Northern Territory. He observed that 'while visiting different sites and sitting down and listening to Darby, I was conscious that I did not look at country the same way ... I had a different way of conceptualising space that affected my understanding of a sense of place Darby was communicating' (p.6). Campbell urges historians, writers and publishers to examine their own subjective positions in order to reduce these limitations. When the aboriginal tribesmen dance they are performing their oral stories in a cultural form that transcends current time – the past is being enacted in the present and recreated for the future. I looked for a different way of structuring the story that allowed it to be performative, sometimes occurring in the present tense, and centred around places and people rather than a pre-existing narrative formula. I imagined a narrative that was an interconnected web of people, places and events.

As an analogy, consider the way memory works through networks and layers of interconnected overlapping and intersecting events, associations and emotional responses. Annette Kuhn, in the introduction to *Family Secrets: Acts of memory and imagination*, observes that 'Memory ... has its own modes of expression: these are characterised by the

fragmentary, non-linear quality of moments recalled out of time' (Kuhn 1995, p.3). The emotional significance of some remembered events makes it difficult to place the memory in time or into causal relationship to other memories. Each time we remember, the pathway is a little different. The complexion we place upon events changes with experience. We navigate the pathways differently and some come unbidden. Nevertheless the memory scenes contribute to the gestalt of our lived experience and affect our view of the world, our schemata.

Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 2007), in reviewing the work of Marcel Proust, intimately connects the 'textuality' of the work with the web of memory by highlighting the Latin root of the word, 'text: textum: web'. He then suggests, 'There is yet another sense in which memory issues strict regulations for weaving. Only the *actus purus* of remembrance itself, not the author or the plot, constitutes the unity of the text' (p.200). He is describing Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* but the analysis has resonance with the practice of historiography as elucidated by Paul Ricoeur. Both suggest a textual form that is woven from tentative traces of the past, rather than dominated by an authorial or linear 'explanation' of incontrovertible fact.

Theodore Schatzki (2003; 2006) proposes a new ontology for the Social Sciences which is a site-based schema. He seeks to explain happenings and phenomena as bundles of interconnected associations and relationships that evolve from certain sites. Using Schatzki's (2003) model, I mapped the outrages and incidents of rebellion as if they were nebula in a network of interactions that connected various sites and people (Appendix C Figure 2). For example, Castle Hill connected the Durinault, Redmond, Suttor and Hassall families across time and space to the Abercrombie Ranges and the Corcorans, Ryans, Murphys and Kearneys of Tipperary and Boorowa. Each of these locations were also sites of rebellion.



Ricoeur's notion that 'action is always interaction and therefore a mixture of doing and undergoing, there is no uniquely privileged model for historical accounts' (Dauenhauer & Pellaner 2014), enabled me to seek interconnections between people across places and events rather than look for external causal chains or individualistic motives to explain the rebellion. I drew up a chart of people and places across a thirty year time span (Appendix C Figure 3). Rather than relying upon any of the published narratives to tell me who was a leader or a key player or which events were important, I used the grid to indicate significance based on participation, absence, coincidence and patterns of association. It felt like detective work or social networking. It also allowed me to hold in check my romantic impulses to foreground certain events or characters purely due to their narrative appeal.

My early drafts of the Creative Work were a series of interconnected 'happenings' and events with recurring and connected characters, however, these contained too much information. I needed to create scenes with characters that embodied the issues and enacted the connections. A good example of this is the fictional scene between Father Therry and Mrs Redmond. Rather than pages of narrative exposition on the Boorowa Whiteboys, Castle Hill rebellion, Jacobites, Currency lads and colonial Irish families, this history was embedded in the conversation between an emancipated Irish convict mother and her priest. In a different instance, the scenes from the voyage of *John I*, documented in the trial of Roberts Vs Moncrief (Dowling 2005), were fictionally rendered to enabled the characters to enact the complex relationships between convicts, surgeons, seamen and clergy on the 'site' of a convict transport ship. The dialogue was drawn directly from court testimony.

In writing scenes with dialogue, I reflected upon the differences between the way we tell history and the way we write it. Much family history is passed down orally in snippets and memories and anecdotes. These historical conversations are powerful because they create an intimate relationship between the teller and listener. The teller is not always reliable and the listener has to actively piece together information. The tale is often told

in the present tense and has an immediacy and open-endedness that makes it engaging. Written history obeys formal structures of grammar and argument that reduce these elements. Those who read my early drafts did not make a strong connection with any of the characters as there were too many events and people. They needed to be engaged in a dialogue, a more intimate account that suggested who and what was important.

My original contact with the story was through Ralph Entwistle. My curiosity about him sparked my interest in the story. I reasoned that if I could create a fictional conversation with the historical figure most commonly associated with the rebellion, my readers might be as engaged as I was in the history. The narrator would be able to guide the reader through the significant and interrelated events by making connections and suggesting new ones. This was known as a frame story as it provides a narrative frame from which to tell a number of interrelated stories. It is metafictional in that the narrator is able to sit outside of the action to comment upon it, but also able to enter into the fictional world to communicate with the protagonist. I used the most infamous character and the known sites to encourage familiarity, to invite the reader into the territory, and create a comfortable homeostasis that I could then disrupt.

This narrative structure of the frame story has been used in such films as *Interview with a vampire* (Jordan 1994), *Little Big Man* (Penn 1970) and *Forrest Gump* (Zemeckis 1994). These were all adaptations of novels. In classic literature, the frame story appears in *Frankenstein* (Shelley 1818) and *Wuthering Heights* (Bronte 1847). The metafictional frame foregrounds the constructedness of the text. It calls upon the reader to actively participate in the suspension of disbelief and enter into the 'conceit' of the narrative in order to play and imagine.

The device I use to establish the frame is the 'Prologue' where I conjure a character for the narrator – the woman in the Branks or Scold's Bridle. The bridle is a metaphor for the constrictions of historiography that will not admit gossip or memory or unsubstantiated sources. The narrative has been referenced and cross-checked, but as a scholar and writer I recognise that new material may come to light. In this, I recognise Godel's Theorem that 'no interpretation is timelessly true, correct in itself, completed' (Higgins 1996, p.47). I also acknowledge that I have no right to speak for Ralph or the Ribbon Boys. I am a white middleclass Wesleyan female. My ancestors were not Irish. In fact, one was the judge who sentenced the Cato Street conspirators and therefore 'the enemy'.

The conceptualisation of the Creative Work as a conversation between the narrator and the protagonist imposed a location and timeframe. The encounters took place in Ralph's cell over the final days of his life. This allowed me to manipulate the dramatic tension. When I 'visit' Ralph in his cell, I propose a deal. I will give him hindsight into the past and information from the present and future in exchange for his giving me a sign that I have guessed the essence of him. In other words, that I have understood his story. Each of the chapters then follows the lines of my historical enquiry. I ask Ralph a series of questions and provide information that is pertinent to his case. Sometimes I provide evidence of events he would have experienced and at other times events he could not have been privy to or information on characters he would have known. The information raises the possibility of escape through bribery of the gaolers as in the cases of Michael Power and Jack Donohoe, clemency by turning King's Evidence as happened to Patrick Blanchfield and Alexander Grant, or even by judicial reform as in the quashed conviction of Tennant, Murphy and Cain. A summary of the chapters, guiding questions and sequence of related cases is provided in Appendix C (Figure 4). The narrator's 'deal' ends at the same time as Ralph's execution. Is the 'essence' of the truth to be confirmed or corrected by his last words on the gallows or by a gesture?

### 3.3 Creation of Historical sensibility and imaginative engagement

My objective was to develop an historical sensibility within the reader, mediated by empathy and a taste for historical enquiry. This cannot be stimulated if history is always a foregone conclusion. There needs to be scope for alternative readings and an open-endedness that suggests a number of possibilities for action. In my opinion historians need to develop an audience of riddlers and problem solvers. In creating this type of historical sensibility, Wolfgang Iser's (Berger 1997) theory of reader response can provide insight into how gaps in narrative invite the audience to perform original cognitive work on text. The engagement of the reader in actively problem solving text is crucial to aesthetic experience and response. According to Iser, 'the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic; the artistic refers to the text created by the author and the aesthetic to the aesthetic realization accomplished by the reader' (Berger 1997, p.13). The author, using the juxtaposition of conflicting accounts and documents, can create dynamic tension within the reader. An example of this in the narrative occurs when George Mole's 'note', which is a leave Pass for Ralph, passes between the three different characters. It signifies something different in each of their hands and is finally destroyed. The narrator and the reader share an ironic position, where the ramifications of the note for Evernden and Liscombe are known to the 'privileged' reader but not to the protagonist. The 'epiphany', which James Joyce considered pivotal to a work of fiction (Burroway 1987, p.11), does not need to be the sole province of an imagined character. In a work of non-fiction it may occur within the reader when old knowledge is revealed in a new light. When Liscombe burns the note we realise he is destroying evidence.

In the award-winning novel, *Alias Grace*, Margaret Atwood (1997) demonstrates how the 'gaps' in evidence can be used to call upon the reader to exercise their imagination. The novel is based upon a famous Canadian murder case that occurred in 1843. The work began life as a radio play and its strong internal monologue and imagined scenes identify

it as historical fiction, however, it had many lessons that proved useful to my purpose. An important one was the way in which Atwood used the gaps in evidence,

I have of course fictionalized historical events (as did many commentators on this case who claimed to be writing history). I have not changed any known facts, although the written accounts are so contradictory that few facts emerge as unequivocally 'known'... Where mere hints and outright gaps exist in the records, I have felt free to invent

(Atwood 1997, p.542).

Every writer and reader makes decisions as to how to interpret gaps and how to use them. Thomas Keneally, in creating *Schindler's List*, used quotation marks for reported speech from the archival documented evidence. Where speech was not recorded in the historical record, but was needed for the narrative to continue during key scenes, he did not use the marks. Gutkind uses this example to provide a practical remedy to the problem of signalling parts of dialogue that have been constructed, 'leaving out quotation marks can, paradoxically, signal levels of certainty' (Gutkind & Fletcher 2008, p.131).

The use of direct quotes proved difficult to achieve in the current work, as even the reported speech attributed to Ralph Entwistle would have been a translation of his broad Lancastrian dialect. I have retained the dialogue of all characters as reported in court cases and newspapers of the time. However, with Ralph's dialogue, I have translated the few lines he is reported to have said into the Lancastrian vernacular. This is not a popular literary technique currently, but I use it to foreground the fact that his words have been translated. I also include anachronistic words from a nineteenth century Glossary of the Lancashire dialect within the body of the text. This is again to highlight the disjuncture between the real and the 'represented' worlds. If this were a play, I would cast a person with a broad Lancastrian brogue as Ralph because our modern ears are intrigued by differences in accent and expression.

Not all gaps need to be 'filled in' by the writer or 'signposted' for the historian. Elision may operate within the text as a disruptive element. In the narrative during Ralph's last confession, I shut the door on the conversation. I want the reader to consider whether he has the right to privacy. Does a writer have the right to appropriate this moment? Gaps or silences in the text can also offset a plethora of other voices. Much of the action concerns the ownership of land. When Governor Darling is welcomed to Bathurst by forty mounted settlers, the absence of the aborigines reminds us of the deaths of three aboriginal women on the same site in 1824. When the aborigines appear in the historical record, it is as trackers to be rewarded with slops and medals ('Government Order No.16' 1830) or as objects of controversy as happened with the spearing of Logan ('Death of Captain Logan' 1830) and the conversion of 'Tommy' (Kercher 2014c). Some letters to the newspapers at this time illustrate the vexed question of government policy and the welfare of the aborigines ('However outrageous the aborigines...' 1824; 'To the editor of the Sydney Gazette' 1824; 'The Aborigines' 1825; 'Harvest hands' 1830; 'The Aborigines of Australia (From The Spectator)' 1831). By the arrangement of scenes and information, the writer can foreground some of the gaps and silences in the historical record.

The 'interpreter' of history gathers the often contradictory traces of evidence, places them into historical and social context, and communicates to 'the interpretee' who operates within different historical and cultural contexts (Higgins 1996, p.46). The interpretive dissonance may be greater when the writer insists upon the universality and authority of their own textual interpretation while the reader brings to the reading their own unique background and context. The structure of a frame story allows a number of stories to be related to the audience and juxtaposed in a variety of ways. The use of metafictional devices, gaps and elisions enable the reader to challenge the reliability of the narrator and develop their own interpretations of the events.

### **3.4 Audience and positioning the reader**

An active audience needs access to information and insight into the way it has been used. I have already mentioned the use of Scholar's Notes and Titbits to comment upon the facts, sources and inferences. I have also included a Muster of People and Places. There came a critical point in Kate Grenville's historical research into her own family when she made the choice to change the names and alter the characters (Grenville 2006a). Some may feel this gave the work a greater universality, even objectivity, by distancing the author from the narrative and declaring the work a fiction. However, it also prevents the reader from using the work as a foundation for further research into the historical people. For this reason, I have not changed names or invented characters. The Muster of People and Places, in conjunction with the Index, permits the reader to make connections and delve further. This interconnectedness is a theme of the Creative Work.

In many historical texts, the names of government servants, administrators and convicts become cumbersome. Therefore, names are often reduced and simplified or characters are conglomerated into an everyman character. Yet, it is only by recognising familiar names and seeing the volume of names on the convict musters that we get a true sense of the great Diaspora that was the germination of white settlement in Australia. The names convey a sense of the casting off from the motherland that took place. In the case of aboriginal names and placenames, it is the absence which speaks. We do not know the names of the aboriginal people in the story and their lands are identified by the names of settlers or British counties. When William Grant called out to the aborigines on the O'Connell Plains, prior to the confrontation in 1824, he used the Christian names that they had been baptised with by Reverend Hassall (Kercher 2012d). This tells us something about the way we rename people and land in order to exert control over them. If we change or elide the names we lose the cumulative effect of the detail upon our consciousness. Access to the names invites an informed reader to act outside of the text.

An informed reader arrives with expectations that are framed by their previous experiences with similar texts. The challenge is to select the literary devices that enable experimentation with the narrative conventions, while keeping the audience engaged. The television documentary often employs a narrator who sits outside of the action to comment upon it. The narrator provides expert authority and continuity for the story, however, a number of historical documentaries produced for television reveal a tendency for the ‘authority’ of the text to rest with a white middle class male. This expert narrator disseminates information by direct address to the audience as he wanders through a set of re-enactors in costume. For example, *Rogue nation –* (Matthews & Andrikidis 2009), *Ned Kelly – uncovered* (West 2009) and *The extraordinary tale of William Buckley* (McDonald 2010). The ideological stance of the presenter is uncontested. Although the presenter is outside of the narrative, he is seldom seen as unreliable.

In the theatre, there are examples of a more subversive use of the metafictional narrator. In *The Chapel Perilous* (Hewett 1977), masks and props of gothic proportions and loud speakers are used to foreground the constructedness of the play. The playwright Bertold Brecht has also used direct address and distancing techniques to disrupt the audience passivity in the theatre, ‘stripping the event of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality and creating a sense of astonishment and curiosity’ (Brooker 1994, p.185). My Creative Work attempts to position the audience as active participants by establishing a distance between the reader, the narrator and the character which places the reader in an ironic stance in relation to the work. The words often have an inner meaning for the privileged reader, and an ‘outer’ meaning for the character being addressed.



The Creative Work also allows the writer to position the readers through selection of point of view. Point of view is crucial in determining the focalization of the narrative and eliciting empathy from the reader. However, the different forms of narrative cater to point of view in different ways. For example, the first person interior monologue is not a common convention for screen but is sometimes the dominant feature of written narratives. It is used for autobiography as in *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey (2003) and for fiction, as in *The True History of the Kelly Gang* by Peter Carey (2000). However, this stance is difficult to justify for biography or historical non-fiction as it rests upon the appropriation of a real person's thoughts or motivations which are seldom recorded in the historical record. Readers are outraged by first person narratives that prove to be false autobiographies (Jesseli 2006). Most historical non-fiction is written in third person and it assumes a dispassionate and seemingly objective view of history.

Richardson (2006) suggests that while first and third person narratives occur in both fiction and non-fiction, the only non-fiction corollary to second person fiction occurs in cook books and travel guides because 'its mode of production and reception makes any attempt to speak to its viewer (by direct address) something of a gamble' (Richardson 2006, p.34). However, experimentation with second person narration may allow a postmodern perspective on history. Richardson (2006) provides examples of second person narration which 'radically alters the tone of the work and provides a unique speaking situation for the narrator, one that does not occur in natural narratives and consequently one that continuously de-familiarises the narrative act...The technique simultaneously opens up new possibilities of representing consciousness and provides a site for the contestation of constricting discursive practices' (Richardson 2006, p.28).

When I wrote a scene using the second person, I was intrigued by the ‘slipperiness’ of the perspective when ‘you’ was employed by the narrator. I decided to address Ralph as ‘you’, as is normal in a conversation albeit an overheard conversation. At times the ‘reader’ is able to identify with Ralph and become the ‘you’ who is being addressed. For example,

None of the condemned men address the crowd. The hoods are lowered and the knots adjusted by Jack Ketch. The lever is pulled and the drop cracks open beneath them. You cannot watch their bodies shudder on the ropes. You stare into the crowd and see there the horror spread out like a miasma.

(Bone and Beauty, p.255)

Here the narrator is speaking to Ralph the narratee, but as soon as the words are read the implied reader is implicated in the scene. The ‘You’ also becomes the reader who by force of the narration visualises the bodies shuddering on the ropes, and who is forced to stare into the crowd in order to ‘see there the horror spread out like a miasma’. The second person point of view implicates the reader in the scene. As Richardson notes, ‘in standard second person fiction ... the protagonist/ narratee is quite distinct from the actual or implied reader; nevertheless, one of the more unsettling features of this mode of narration is that this distinction can be collapsed whenever the “you” could refer to the reader as well as the protagonist’ (Richardson 2006,p.20). This is an important technique that I have chosen in order to increase the empathy of the reader for the protagonist, but also to draw the reader’s attention to the voyeurism implicit in observing or investigating a man’s life and death. In this chapter the narrator asks about what role “we” would play, the ‘you’ becomes ‘us’ and ‘we’ as the particular past is drawn into the universal present.

These transformative points of identification occur at different times for different readers. There may also be points at which the intimacy of ‘you’ is drawing the reader into scenes they do not want to engage with. This is also a technique to challenge and disrupt the reader’s cultural assumptions. Contrast, for example, the audience positioning during the scene when Ralph swims at the river with the scene with Slingsby in the cave. Both scenes

use second person but I switch to present tense to increase the sense of immediacy and sensual detail. This break in continuity requires the reader to readjust their response.

Second person narration is usually written in present tense, whereas History is often written in third person that favours past tense. In this instance, just as a second person text allows me to switch between first and third person narration it also permits me to alter the temporal frame by switching between past and present. This fluctuation is saved for important moments and scenes as it can also be disorientating for the reader. This may be why many writing courses caution against changing tense or point of view within the one text. I found, through the writing of the text, second person offered me ‘a playful form, original, transgressive, and illuminating, that is always conscious of its unusual own status and often disguises itself, playing on the boundaries of other narrative voices’ (Richardson 2006, p.23). The techniques had resonance with the themes within the story itself, it gave me the vehicle to handle the complex and contradictory evidence and testimony and the polyphony of voices snagged in the historical record.

In my Creative Work, the persona of the narrator takes on a third person omniscient stance when she is able to relate events in the future or past or tell Ralph what another character is thinking. The third person omniscient is a common perspective for nineteenth century novelists such as Charlotte Bronte. In *Shirley*, Bronte uses the universal ‘we’ to describe how youth affects her protagonist, ‘...at eighteen the true narrative of life has yet to be commenced. Before that time, we sit listening to a tale...’ (Burroway 2011, p.58) but in our century it is more common for the author to use ‘limited omniscience’ and confine the mind-reading to one or two characters. As the narrator, I used third person when I was relating a story to Ralph, however, in the ‘present moment’ of addressing him in the cell, I used second person. This changing point of view is similar to the way a camera is able to zoom in or pull back on the action.

The third person or limited omniscient stance is used to establish the authority of the narrator. Many historians use it without being aware that they are adopting a 'voice' at all. It seems natural. Inga Clendinnen, narrating as an historian, writes, 'I fell in love with Tench, as most of his readers do. He is a Boswell on the page: curious, ardent, gleefully self mocking. He didn't fit my image of a stiff-lipped British imperialist at all' (Clendinnen 2003, p.2). In so doing, she creates a persona – a Jane Austen sort of persona which is reinforced by her use of the 'Dear Reader' address to her audience (p.4). When she notes a party of male aborigines gave a 'very great shout' when Lieutenant King 'lured' an aboriginal girl and put his handkerchief 'where Eve did ye fig', she excuses the behaviour with, 'It seems that, whatever their cultural backgrounds, lads will be laddish.' (p.11) We are not later surprised to see Jane Austen introduced in the text as a sister sharing an emotional connection with the historian;

In her novels she allowed herself to become positively girlish in her effusions of admiration for naval men... and quite lost her characteristic irony when she considered the nobility of their profession. I confess that as I read John Hunter's journal I felt something of the same flutter.'

(Clendinnen 2003, p.37)

If we are what we read, even the most careful historians carry a cultural time-dated code in their language, choice of words, values, assumptions and conclusions. Linguists and social theorists recognise that language is never neutral or value free, 'because the texts, words and other symbols that comprise language cannot be separated from social and cultural practices and are hence inextricably woven with values, beliefs, and ways of thinking'(Emmitt, Komesaroff & Pollock 2009, pp.8-9).

Intertextual references enable the author to create a shared sense of culture and community across texts and across time. Julia Kristeva, the French semiotician, coined the term 'intertextuality' to describe the way in which, 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of

quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another'(Kristeva 1980, p.66). Within the fictional world of Ralph Entwistle, my intertextual references are to folk expressions, popular songs, hymns and bible readings. At the final capture, Ralph describes their 'Cut' as being 'downt,' a Lancashire weaving term for when the woven work is taken down from the loom. His words, 'It is finished' are Christ's last words from the Gospel of John. These phrases are in the cultural vernacular of the character and in the cultural memory of some of the readers. The lyrics of Donohoe's rebel song *Bold Jack Donohoe* (Meredith 1960) have spawned many internationally recognised versions of the *Wild Colonial Boy* (Manifold 1984). *Over the Hills and Far Away* is a folk tune probably known to the modern reader through nursery rhymes and popular media. It was a recruiting song for the British Army, a love song from *The Beggar's Opera* (Gay 1728) and a subversive song in *The Recruiting Officer* – the first convict play performed in the new colony (Jordan 2002). The tune was also Governor Ralph Darling's swan song requested by W.C. Wentworth at the Sydney Turf Club and played from the grounds of Vaucluse House on the occasion of the Governor's departure (Clarke 2002, p.36). It is not necessary for these references to be recognised by every reader, or even explained. They texture the work and provide points of connection for those who do recognise them.

### **3.5 Voice**

If history is not an objective collection of facts but a set of relationships and interconnections that are tentative, relative and changing, on what basis can the writer claim authority to speak? Who is the 'I' of the narrative? Wayne Booth's model of the reading exchange as a relationship between 'the implied author – narrator – narratee – implied reader' (Booth cited in Richardson 2006, p.114), allowed me to explore narration in more complex ways than the simplistic binary between interpreter and interpretee.

The 'implied author' is the figure constructed by the reader of the person who wrote the narrative. Readers construct this figure through material external to the story such as forewords, biographical notes, reputation and previous literary encounters. The 'implied author' is the 'presence' behind the work that selects and arranges the material. The style of writing and the writer's voice carry hints of socioeconomic background, education and values. This figure may bear no resemblance to the 'real' author of the text and is often a stylistic 'persona' projected to the reading public through press releases and interviews. In the present Creative Work, the reader is encouraged to think of the 'implied author' as the scholar who provided the Scholar's Notes and Titbits – the woman who wrote the prologue about her own family history.

The narrator is the speaking voice of the text. In an autobiography, the real author, implied author and narrator are all one. In the present Creative Work, the reader is asked to imagine that the scholar has stepped into the cell with Ralph Entwistle. The scholar and 'implied author' become one narrative voice. Thus, the 'voice' of this text is the voice of the narrator, a female scholar constricted by certain ways of speaking about the past. It is not the voice of the convict.

The present Creative Work makes no claim to capture an authentic convict voice. It does reproduce a number of convict voices from the archival documents. Alan Atkinson encourages historians in the essential task of 'hunting for voices' which he considers are 'the only real medium of the soul' (Atkinson 1999, p.25). These voices often come to us through layers of translation. Wherever possible, the speech of the convicts used in this text has been taken from reports of court trials. These are a translation by editors and court reporters of the verbatim record and susceptible to errors in recording. Names are often misspelled or changed and some information is misheard or missed. Take the example of Duffey's speech on the gallows. He confesses to a crime that was attributed to a fellow transportee. There is

shuffling in the crowd and the reporter fails to hear the name of the innocent Bathurst boot maker. For such reasons the hunt for the authentic voice may be an unattainable goal.

Following Booth's model, the narratee of the Creative Work is Ralph Entwistle. The main events of the story are being narrated to the convict in his cell. This second person point of view gives the text a sense of immediacy and open-endedness. The conversation cannot carry too much information (teaching or preaching) as it assumes a level of language and consciousness that is on an equal plane. The narrative moves between present and past tense and between second person address ('Ralph, you') to the telling of stories to Ralph in third person. The narrator is almost maternal in delivering rationales for the stories she tells. The stories are told to show Ralph the type of people he has trusted or put his faith in. As Richardson (2006) observes, 'In standard second person fiction the protagonist/narratee is quite distinct from the actual or implied reader; nevertheless one of the more unsettling features of this mode of narration is that this distinction can be collapsed whenever the "you" could refer to the reader as well as the protagonist' (p.20). This only happens at moments of identification with the protagonist.

The 'implied reader' is a construct of the author. It is the audience the author is writing for and depends upon the author's perception of demographics, markets for their work, encounters at public readings and through letters and correspondence. In the present Creative Work the audience is imagined as an educated public with an interest in family and Australian history. They may have some connection to the people or places mentioned in the narrative. They are probably of the same social class, educational status and racial background as the author. They are not, within the frame of this Creative Work, the same as the narratee. The conceit they participate in is that the story is a conversation with Ralph Entwistle and they overhear it. Toward the end of the story, it becomes evident that the implied reader takes up the position of the narratee.

The 'epiphany' of the narrative occurs when the 'implied author/narrator' and the 'implied reader' realise that Ralph Entwistle, the narratee, cannot 'speak'. There is nothing in the historical record that captures Ralph's authentic voice, and no sign or gesture that can be relied upon as an indication that any one version of the story is correct. The search for a 'correct', or revised, version of history is illusory. The literary theorist, Matt DelConte observes that 'all second person narration is actually homodiegesis considering that a narrator must be on the same diegetic plane as his/her narratee – protagonist... in order to communicate with that narratee-protagonist'(Richardson 2006 p.21). Trying to communicate with an historical figure makes the failure even more poignant. The 'implied reader' becomes the 'we' of the narrative, as in, 'We called our rebels 'bushrangers'. We quarantined ourselves from their suffering and we executed them. Shall we continue to brand those who challenge our systems, distance ourselves from their suffering and justify their deaths?'



## Chapter 4: Transformations

Kalantzis, Cope & Fehring (2002) describe 'Learning by design' as a process of transformation and synthesis of a new understanding. The distillation of the knowledge and experiences gathered through cyclical and diverse processes of immersion, over instruction, critical analysis and transformation is part of ongoing and evolving practice. There is no definitive account or fixed endpoint to the enquiry, however we do have artefacts and milestones along the way. The Creative Work entitled, '*Bone and Beauty*': is one such artefact. In this final chapter a case is put for the consideration of this work of creative non-fiction as a type of hypothetical argument that may be able to stimulate public engagement, debate and future research. I will discuss the ways in which the exploration of the central research question has influenced the form, structure and execution of the Creative Work. I will reflect upon the research and my intentions as the artist/writer in terms of poetics and the anticipated reader/audience response. The present research suggests ways in which creative works can be valued and developed as artefacts of social science enquiry.

### 4.1 Narrative as hypothetical argument.

In a literary text, it has been demonstrated that the relationship between the implied author and implied reader is central to the making of meaning. Narrative tools can position the reader to experience the characters and situations in new ways. The plot, a careful arrangement of scenes to enhance dramatic tension and resolution, presents a type of historical hypothesis of how events may have unfolded. If historical understanding depends upon the fostering of historical sensibility, empathy and curiosity, then the narrative can stimulate these emotions within the reader. Opdahl (2002) makes a case for the essential role of emotion in developing imagination and critical thought. He refers back to the body of knowledge that informed the Romantics and to the more recent work

of psychologists and philosophers such as Stephen Kosslin, Allan Paivo, PN Johnson-Laird, Wolfgang Iser and Paul Ricoeur. He suggests there is a third code of meaning, beyond words and images. He refers to it as the 'emotional' code. If this is true, then in order to stimulate the imagination and disrupt the cultural assumptions of the audience, it is necessary to engage the emotions.

One field of historical practice which engages the audience emotionally is that of historical re-enactment. Cascardi observes that scholars should 'see re-enactment as one of the indicators of history's recent affective turn, and as signalling an end to what was once regarded as the general neglect of affect within post war scholarship (Cascardi cited in Agnew 2007, p.300). Agnew's review of German and British re-enactment television series leads her to warn of the pitfalls of this type of historic representation. 'As a form of affective history— i.e. historical representation that both takes affect as its object and attempts to elicit affect – re-enactment is less concerned with events, processes and structures than with the individual's physical and psychological experience' (Agnew 2007, p.4). This type of 'sensationalism' underscored the Romantic Movement in the early eighteenth centuries when melodrama and gothic fiction were at the height of their popularity.

The Romantics were seeking the expression and experience of the 'sublime', that emotion, beyond words, that favours imagist literary works such as poetry, film and screen over prose and lyric writing (Austin 1998, p.305). Peter Forgacs' poetic documentary, *El Perro Negro*, demonstrates that historical films can go 'beyond the usual discourse that tries to understand the past and can include the notion of encountering the past as a site for the sublime' (Rosenstone 2006, p.106). I take sublime here to mean the fusion of the self with some greater entity. This also has ramifications for the artistic process.

In 1830, Washington Allston, the American landscape painter, delivered a series of lectures in Boston on art and poetry. This work was the origin of the term ‘objective correlative’ as Allston described the manifestation of an idea in art, ‘hence the presence of some outward object, predetermined to correspond to the pre-existing idea of its living power, is essential to the evolution of its proper end – the pleasurable emotion’ (Dana 1850, p.16). T.S. Eliot expanded upon the notion in an article first published in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on poetry and criticism* in 1921. Although omitting Allston’s core reliance on the Supreme Being, Eliot describes the artist as the catalyst for the fusion of the artistic elements into a Creative Work, ‘the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an ‘objective correlative’; in other words a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion’ (Eliot 1985, p.548). The emotional keynote I was striving for in the present Creative Work is pathos. As a scholar and a writer, I am struck by the futility of the abbreviated lives of the Ribbon Boys. I have arranged various narrative elements as the correlatives for this emotional response – the tone of the language, the interplay of memory, evocations of song and sentiment, the episodes of sensuality juxtaposed with brutality and corruption, the hope and disappointment.

Allston’s application of poetics to art has been extended to literature and history. Peter Cochrane (2010) states that he would like to reinstate some of the aesthetics that history lost when it separated from literature. He refers to Kant’s quest for the sublime moment, when the mind both apprehends and comprehends two levels of detail and totality. The poetics of Aristotle dominate narrative forms that seek a crisis and transcendental epiphany. James Joyce says this epiphany must have a physical manifestation in order to be communicated to the audience (Burroway 1987). In the case of melodrama and tragedy, Charles Harpur hoped to ‘idealise with artistic integrity, abnormalities of any kind’ in the story of Jack Donohoe in order to produce the cathartic effect upon his audience, ‘eviscerating them as it were from that mere baseness and brutality which were originally in them’ (Perkins 1987, p.84.). This quest for ways to express the ineffable, to capture

the sublime in a transformative experience has dominated both the process and form of creative endeavour.

Many contemporary artists have sought to transform the society in which they live rather than the individual audience member. In contrast to Aristotle and Harpur, Berthold Brecht saw catharsis as producing a satiated audience and suggested that for social change to occur, beyond the fourth wall, the audience had to be rational and critical participants rather than emotional sponges (Brooker 1994). Agnew (2007), in taking Walter Benjamin's warning that historical empathy may align the participant with a victor's narrative of history, points to the need for historical writing 'to foreground its own interests rather than claim a kind of universalism that conceals hidden ideologies' (p.309). If no text is neutral, then even these declarative texts will carry hidden influences and ideologies. Perhaps, as Atwood does in her afterword to *Alias Grace*, the author must declare the artifice of the genre so as not 'to claim to be [re] writing history' (Atwood 1997, p.541). This declaration can alert the reader to regard the text as a form of hypothetical argument about the nature of the events and how they unfolded.

Works of Creative Non-fiction, in film or prose, can mount an argument and provide 'independent interpretations of history and thereby make an original contribution to the understanding of past phenomena and their relationship to the present' (Ferro cited in Rosenstone 2006, p.22). This builds upon the arguments of Hayden White and Frank Ankersmit who suggest 'the metaphorical dimension in historiography is ultimately more powerful than the literal or factual dimensions' (Rosenstone 2006, p.36). Ankersmit turns the academy's attention from the gathering of new data, to the analysis of the way language is used in speaking about the past (Ankersmit 2001). Pierre Sorlin, speaking as an historian of documentaries and 'historical' films, insists upon accuracy and truth. However, he places the emphasis for critical evaluation upon the argument the film is making:

So I think that when professional historians wonder about the mistakes made in an historical film, they are worrying about a meaningless question. They would

do better to concentrate on other problems...What facts does the film select?  
How does it develop them? What connections does it show between them?

(Sorlin 2000, p.37).

Although the medium of film carries its own restrictions and conventions, a written work of Creative Non-fiction also allows the writer to use the language, characters, settings and documentation of the past to present an alternative view of history. There is an increasing body of work that can be studied to elucidate the principles used for selection, ethical treatment of documented history and narrative conventions. Rosenstone (2006) suggests for historical films, 'we cannot prescribe the right and wrong way to tell the past, but need to derive theory from practice by analysing how the past has been and is being told.' Lounsberry (1990) makes the same point when describing the development of creative non-fiction.

#### **4.2 Reflections upon the research**

The development of theory from practice relies upon the ability of the artist to articulate their process and creative practices. The current project has the capacity to contribute to the development of creative non-fiction as a genre uniquely positioned to stimulate cultural and historical enquiry. In order to meet the criteria for creative research established by Milech and Schilo (2004), it is important to reflect upon the creative work in terms of its ability to answer the central research question and contribute new understandings to a field of knowledge. The central research question in this project was, 'How can my Creative Work stimulate the public imagination and challenge the accepted cultural understandings of the Ribbon Boys' rebellion?' The emphasis here is upon the word 'How'. Restated the first part of the question asks, 'In what ways could ... ? At the creative stage the artist has no way of knowing 'If' their work can reach, affect or change the intended audience. I can only ask in what ways the story could be structured and written in order to stimulate the imagination and disrupt the cultural assumptions of the readers.

‘Bone and Beauty’, the Creative Work, ventures a number of creative answers to the ‘how’ question. In terms of structure, the story avoids a simple linear hero narrative. I imagine that many of my readers will be familiar with the traditional version of the story and they may expect the rebellion to be all about Ralph. I have used this expectation to establish a relationship with the protagonist and follow him through the final days of his life. Each chapter begins in the present moment in the cell with Ralph, so that the reader is not sure if Ralph will avoid the gallows. It is hoped that this foil will give each chapter a sense of dramatic tension and forward chronology. However, each chapter also involves a ‘flashback’ where the reader learns more about the complex stories behind the events and varied choices leading to the rebellion. My intention is that as the story progresses, the reader becomes less sure that Ralph was the leader or that his flogging was the motivation for the rebellion. The imagination is stimulated because the structure requires the reader to move between time periods and evidence to actively reconstruct the story.

The second creative response to the central question concerned the development of a prose style. The prose of the Creative Work could best be described as a style that Annie Dillard (1982) calls, ‘plain writing’. Hemmingway and Chekhov were masters of this style, but I was drawn to it because, ‘this prose has one supreme function, which is not to call attention to itself, but to refer to the world’ (Dillard 1982, p.116-117). My early drafts of the creative work were in the forms of poetry, scripts and short stories. In each of these the prose style became an elaborate feature of the story and a reflection of my poetic sensibility. However, when I wrote scenes in dialogue, the prose seemed more lean and honest. Dialogue characterises the speaker, moves the plot forward and conveys information. The pace also improves as speech does not accommodate long paragraphs of description or flourishes of metaphor. When writing a ‘conversation’ many of the adjectives and adverbs and clauses fall away and the language has to be pitched at the level of the person addressed.

I cannot say that I was always successful at pitching the conversation at the level Ralph would have been able to understand. We had different dialects, education and life experiences. The glossary provides both a vehicle for translation of some of the dialect Ralph would have been familiar with, as well as a reminder of the distance between our dialects and time periods. In terms of Walter Benjamin's advice, the glossary foregrounds the difference between the reader, narrator and protagonist so that the Australian Standard English of the text cannot 'claim a kind of universalism which conceals hidden ideologies' (Agnew 2002, p.309). The conversation is meant to be overheard as my narrator is also addressing the reader, who is my contemporary. Dillard suggests that 'plain writing' is able to 'build an imaginative world whose parts seem solidly actual and lighted' and she recommends it as the most effective vehicle for writing 'violent and emotional scenes' (p.120). This choice of style grew from the dialogue and the desire to enter into a conversation with Ralph, and through him with the reader. Dillard was correct, 'one does not choose a prose, or a handling of paint, as a fitting tool for a given task, the way one chooses a 5/16 wrench to loosen a 5/16 bolt. Rather – and rather creepily – the prose "secretes" the book' (Dillard 1982, p.124). I found this to be true.

While the structure and style were designed to draw the reader into the imagined world, the selection of point of view aimed to develop an empathic relationship between the reader, the protagonist and the narrator. The kind of emotional relationship that Opdahl (2002) makes a case for. Second person narration brings an intimacy to the exchange, but it also introduces an element of disruption to the relationship. Hopefully, by this means I can avoid the comfortable cathartic experience that Berthold Brecht also sought to disrupt (Brooker 1994). Second person narratives are able to shift from past to present tense and to first and third person perspectives. These choices were very experimental for a work of fiction, even more so for creative non-fiction. If one considers natural speech, there are some precedents for switching tenses and perspectives. In my previous work I have collected oral histories. I have found that some people, when relating events of the past, cast them in present tense.

They use dialogue and voices to bring the stories alive. They tell you what their characters are thinking. We accept this in the casual setting of the home or the hotel, but the written word draws our attention to it. We are less used to switching between the tenses in written texts than we are in the oral conversations of everyday life. This 'slipperiness' was important to destabilise the reading. I wanted the reader to retain the scepticism they exercise when they hear stories or gossip, and to be drawn into active meaning making.

Another way of addressing the research question concerned the choice of point of view. This affects how the reader is positioned by the text. The voice of the narrator becomes their guide. If the narrator 'speaks' to the protagonist, the reader needs to know who the narrator is. This is also unusual in a work of non-fiction where third person narration is most often the norm. In third person narration, the narrator is an authoritative disembodied voice taken to be the author. The reader sometimes is familiar with the author by reputation or by a short biography on the dust jacket. Because of the provisional nature of the historical enquiry and the gaps in the historical record, I wanted the reader to be aware of the speculative nature of the story. I wanted to engage their emotional connection, but at the same time stimulate their intellectual curiosity. I invented a backstory for the narrator. She was different from Ralph in gender, class and religion. She was a self confessed gossip. This unreliable narrator places the reader in a useful ironical stance to the material. She tells a lot of stories, some of them contradictory, many of them contrary to the narrative of the rebellion as it has been told in the past. She acts as a vehicle for the type of historical enquiry that Ankersmit and White advocate and brings a 'metaphorical dimension' (Rosenstone 2006, p.36) that allows the reader to see how past tellings and retellings of stories mesh into a web of meaning.

The voice of the text is not Ralph's voice, it is a female voice. This is intended to disrupt the cultural assumptions of the reader as it is so unusual in bushranger narratives. Sometimes she admonishes Ralph for his choices like a mother might. At other times she gives voice to stories that are often overlooked because they sit on the fringe of the white settler narrative



of Bathurst, as is the case with the murder of the three aboriginal women. The female voice and discursive practices are set in counterpoint to the traditional masculine retelling of this type of folktale. The narrator asks the questions that the author, a contemporary Australian woman of similar background, finds interesting. In some ways it may attract a female reader to what has traditionally been a male dominated topic.

In pursuing the research question, I realised that narrator could not appropriate the voice of the protagonist. This was an important choice. I did not set out to argue this position but writers also grow through the work. Scene by scene, I looked for the piece of vital evidence or quotation that might confirm my speculations about the cause of the rebellion and the roles of the participants. I did not know until I wrote the last chapter that Ralph would not speak on the gallows. I reached a point of choice, where I could accept the quote from Mrs Busby as his last words or invent something and put words into his mouth. I felt that ethically I could not do either. The conversational relationship had helped me to see Ralph as a real person with the right to his own voice. If Ralph's voice had not been recorded or captured, I felt I had no right to make it up. Sifting through the newspaper accounts made me conscious of the register of their language in contrast to the dialect of the Lancashire thief. Tuning my ear to convict cant and dialect in songs, trial transcripts and literature from the period, helped me to realise that Mrs Busby had concocted Ralph's last words in the vernacular of her own class. These last words were fictions constructed for Mrs Busby's particular audience.

In order to draw my audience into an active participation with the story, I experimented with structure, style, point of view and voice. As Rosenstone (2006) would remind us, there is no right or wrong way to tell the past, we can only analyse how it has been told and explore new ways. The cultural understandings regarding bush rangers of this era evolve from the way the story was passed down. Modern readers have lost touch with the language of the colony at that time which described men who lived off the land as bush rangers, without a

pejorative judgement in the term. The Ribbon Boys were government servants who bolted for the bush; they robbed for arms and food in order to escape. Modern Australian audiences have little if any knowledge of nineteenth century Irish secret societies, of Ribbonism or of Ribbonmen. The political and social implications of the name 'Ribbon Boys' have therefore been overlooked. The simplification of the story into a revenge plot, featuring a much later conception of the label 'bushrangers', is a convenient way to distance ourselves from a violent past. The moral of such stories is that rebellion is fruitless. Bushrangers must hang. Those who take life must be punished by the loss of their lives.

The outcome of the rebellion has not changed, but by bringing the political and economic context back into the narrative, I hope that modern audiences may see that violence begets violence both inside and outside of the colonial system. The traditional version of the story has little relevance to modern readers because we no longer have convicts or apply the lash. We have other methods of social control, but the longstanding debate over reform versus punishment still reverberates through our criminal justice system. The criminalising of Irish political rebels is echoed in our ostracism of political refugees in the present day. If we look at the Ribbon Boys' story differently, we can see that it is no longer a parable about one convict's punishment but a story about us and the way we as a society label those who are culturally and politically different. Some cultural understandings are created and perpetuated at the individual level by our own social practices. Masculinity is still enshrined in the hero narratives of our culture, especially in the rhetoric of war and sport. How can a woman participate in these narratives or question them? Unquestioned narratives of revenge and bravado motivate our young men and women for war service but they equally stimulate the disenfranchised to rebellion and terrorism. These are the cultural understandings I seek to unpick and disrupt. Literature allows us the imaginative space to interrogate our history.

The present project has provided a number of possible responses to the 'how' question, but the question that may occur to the resistant reader is 'why'. Once the reader has

been imaginatively engaged and disrupted in regard to the cultural understandings and representations of these events, why has it been necessary? Is this 'affective turn' merely an exercise in 'sensationalism', as suggested by Agnew (2002)? No, that is not my intention. I believe the answer speaks to the need for the research to 'contribute new understandings to a field of knowledge' (Milech & Schilo 2004). The research project has uncovered new historical information and made new connections between people, places and events. These discoveries have the potential to change the way some readers look at the land, bushrangers, native Australians, the Colonial establishment and our inherited methods of social control. The exploration of creative methods to combine narratology and historiography suggest new ways of representing history. While traditional creative historians have experimented with writing scenes and imaginative dialogue (Clendinnen 2003), the present work asks them to consider non-linear structures, voice, point of view and audience participation in exploring the historical world. The result will be a new approach to enquiry in social science and how we regard non-traditional methods of scholarship.

Dr. Filip Sosenko (2012) compares the genre of literary non-fiction with qualitative interpretive social science in terms of writing techniques and methods of inquiry. His investigation of the research methods used by scholars and creative writers reveal differences in theory but similarities in practice. For instance, many qualitative social science researchers of the nineteen eighties, 'recognised that the classic realist, third-person writing style is a sibling of the oppressive relationship between the researcher and the subject and therefore should be abandoned as it gives authority to the writer's voice' (Sosenko 2012,p.42). Denzin (1997) advocated 'more dialogical, multi-vocal or experimental forms of writing up research' which led to recognition 'that writing in itself is a method of inquiry' (Richardson & Elizabeth 2005). Like social science scholars, non-fiction writers are 'interested in the way ordinary people cause, experience, and suffer from the consequences of ... events'. Their aim is to 'expose the general through the particular' (Sosenko 2012, p.46) and by their craft synthesise information from verbal, textual and

non-linguistic sources including sensory details, climate, landscape and weather. The other dimension of enquiry that the scholar and writer share is the effect of holding up the lives of others as a 'mirror' to ourselves. Sosenko (2012) believes 'the point of non-fiction art is also precisely this: to broaden one's knowledge about one's own life, culture and society by looking at other lives, cultures and societies' (p.51). I would agree with this position and apply the lens of time and history to this socio-cultural perspective.

The creative work entitled 'Bone and Beauty' is a fusion of literature and history. The bones of the story are the preserved facts and historical archival accounts of the Bathurst insurrection. This is the corporeal body of the research. The craft of telling the story, of evoking an historical sensibility and engaging the emotions as well as the intellect of the reader is where the beauty of the craft resides. It is intended to be read and experienced as one way of answering the research question. It presents a new demonstration of the way in which a work of creative non-fiction can stimulate the readers' imagination and challenge their cultural understandings of the historical events.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Creative Journal

#### Figures 1-3: Images from site visits



Figure 1. Robert Storey's Cave, Mount Ranken.



Figure 2. Stable Arch, Abercrombie Caves.



Figure 3. Grand Arch, Abercrombie Caves.

**Figures 4- 5: Images from site visits**



Figure 4. View from Captain Cook's Lookout, Abercrombie Ranges, NSW.



Figure 5. View of Ned Ryan's castle from Rosary (Bushranger's) Hill, Galong, NSW.



Figure 6: Notes and Reflections

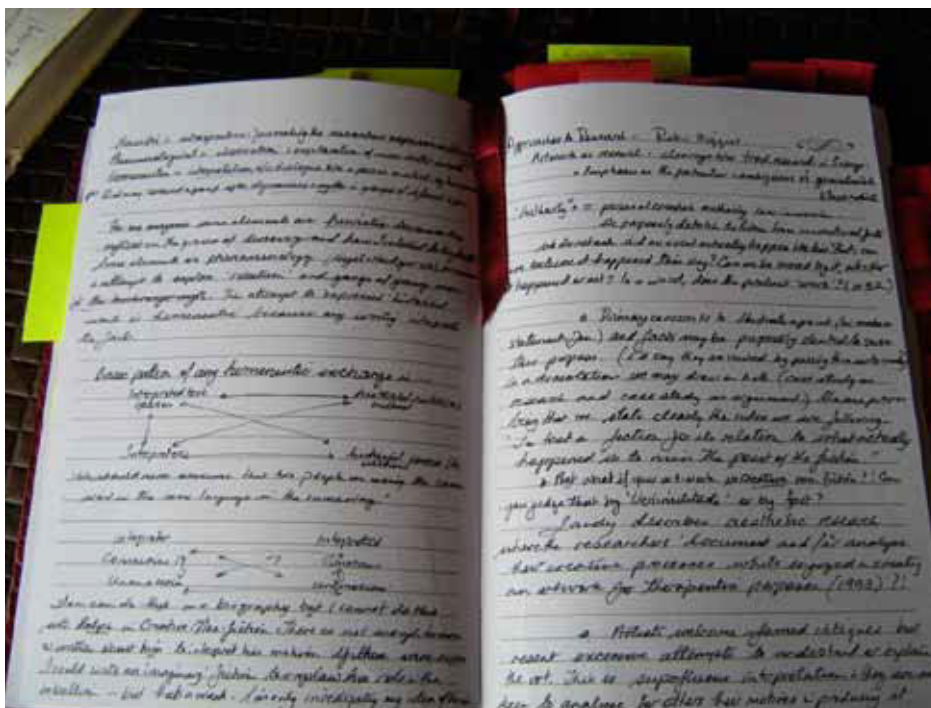


Figure 7: Draft and reflection

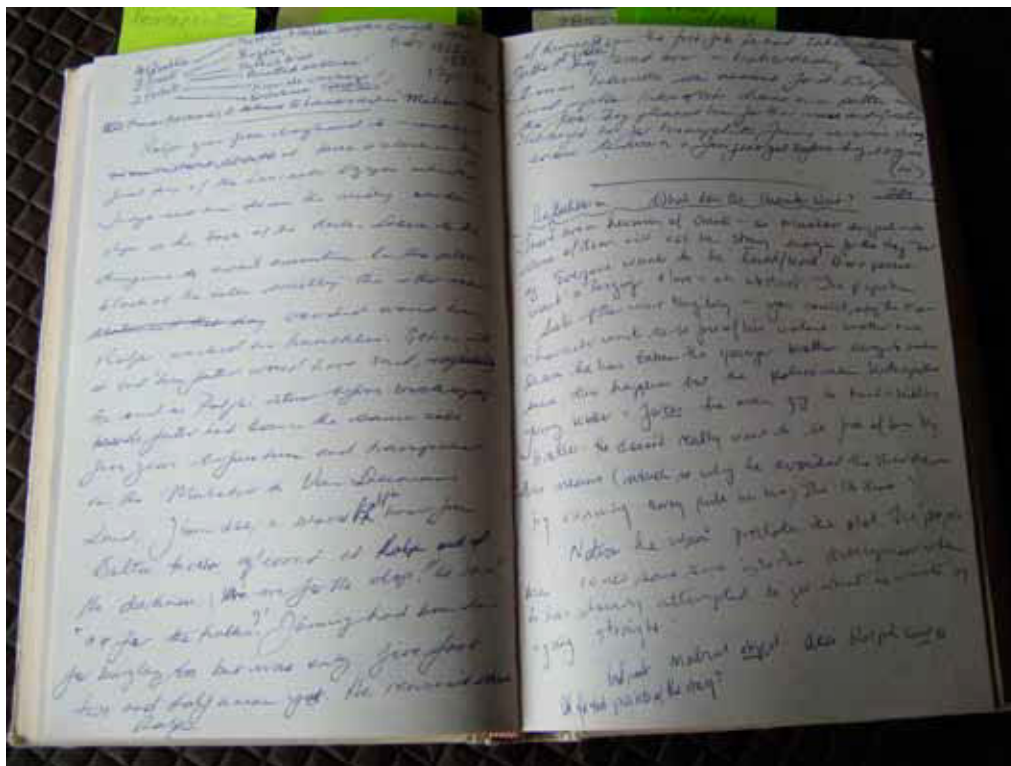


Figure 8: Turning point screen to print

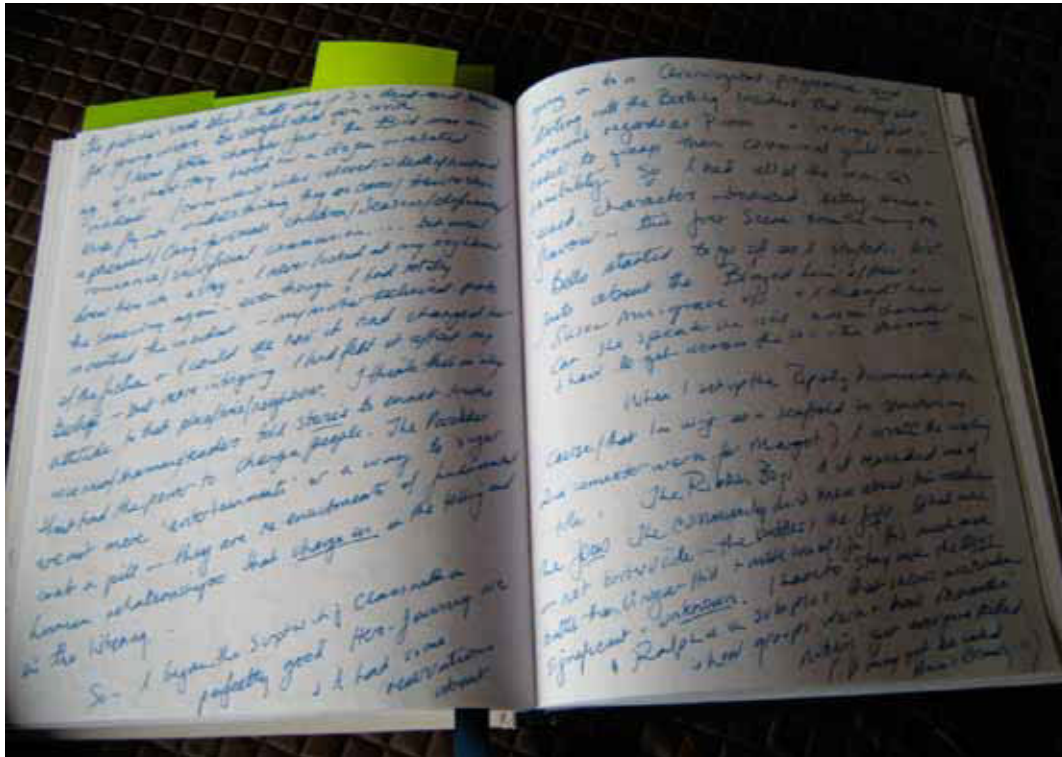


Figure 9: Jen's quarry

Jen's Quarry/Writing Journal:  
Through the process of doing the archival research I felt the need to share the excitement of piecing the clues together. I wanted to recreate for my reader, or audience, the sense of the past that comes from contact with original documents and walking the same paths on the actual locations...to be able to recreate a multimodal experience...set up the conditions for the 'Eureka' moment but let the explosion occur in the mind of my listener.

I became aware of the piecemeal process of finding evidence and the hypothetical nature of my enquiries. The texts themselves demonstrate the contradictions and biases embedded in official and mass media reports. I wanted to convey in some way the process of enquiry and discovery and uncertainty, that is usually elided by an authoritative 'account' or linear 'narrative'.

The research is addictive. It is sensual. It is complex. Why do most narratives simplify and eviscerate the dynamics of enquiry from the reporting of it? The acquisition of knowledge is a cognitive process, understanding is an emotional one.



## Appendix B: Research Process

Figure 1: Learning by Design



Figure 2: Four Elements of Design

# Methodology

The postdoctoral Sculpture process was described using the four design elements. I have given examples of how these elements translate to a screenplay or script.

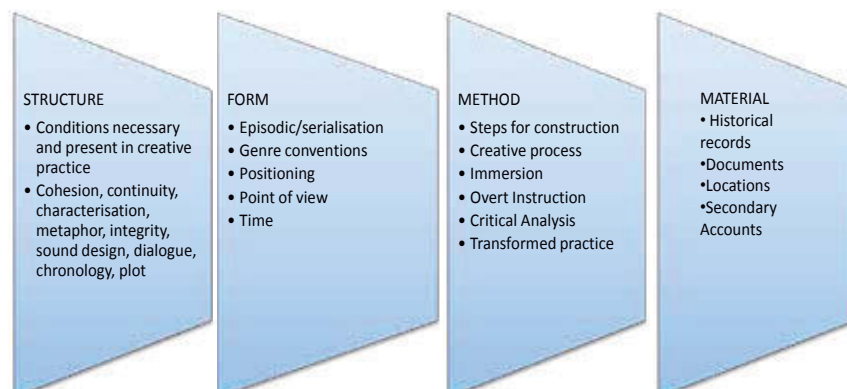


Figure 3: Interrelated aspects of enquiry

## Interrelationship between the Historical, Narrative and Creative enquiries

The fob-watch metaphor illustrates how the different areas of research and practice interact.

A timepiece is an artefact that locates the reader in place and time

The work is evenly divided into scenes or chapters



The clock face embodies the Cultural and Social context of the work

The hands mark the passage of time

The work is aesthetic; its face elides the effort and movement of the cogs

## Research metaphor



• **Method:** like a clock spring, enquiry creates and resolves tension to drive the creative process

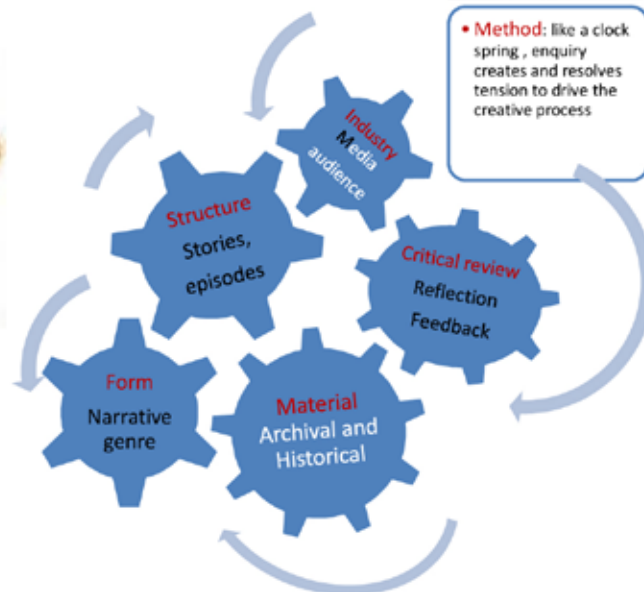


Figure 4: Historical sources

## Sources for the Historical events

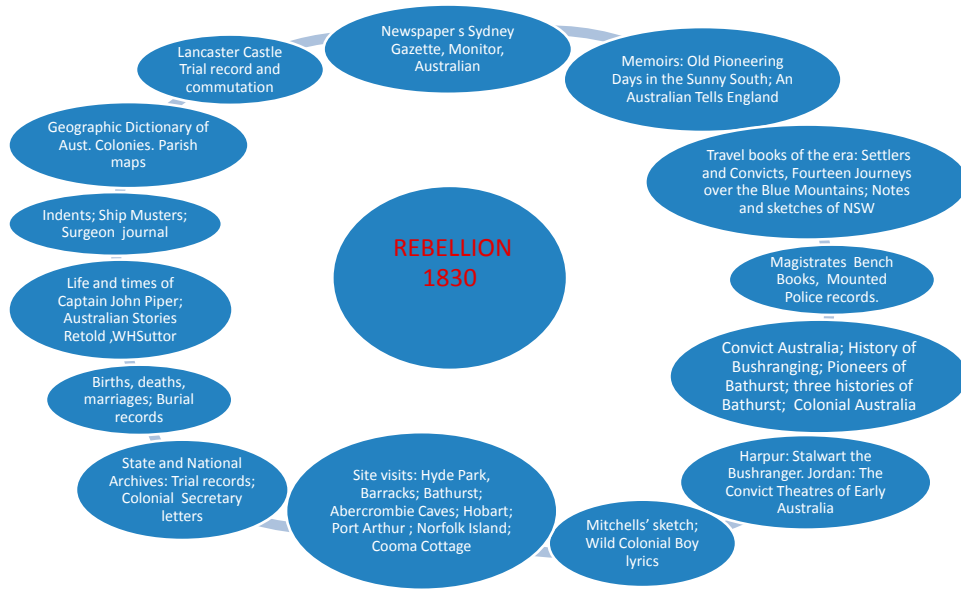


Figure 5: Context

## Sources for Historical context

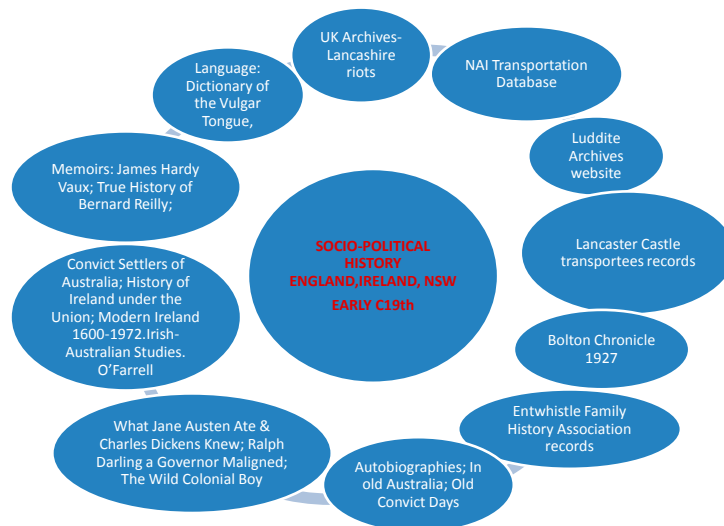


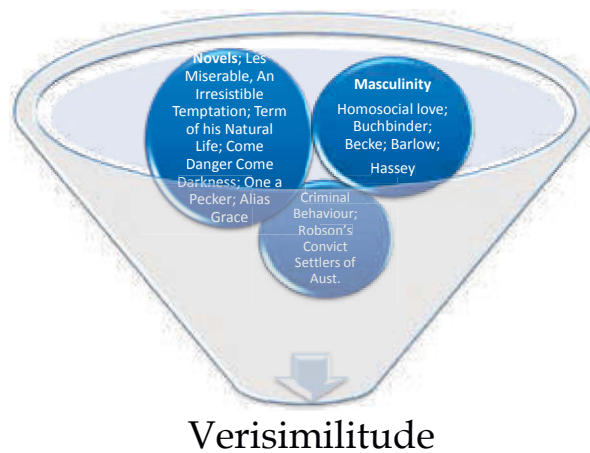
Figure 6:

## Contemporary C20th accounts



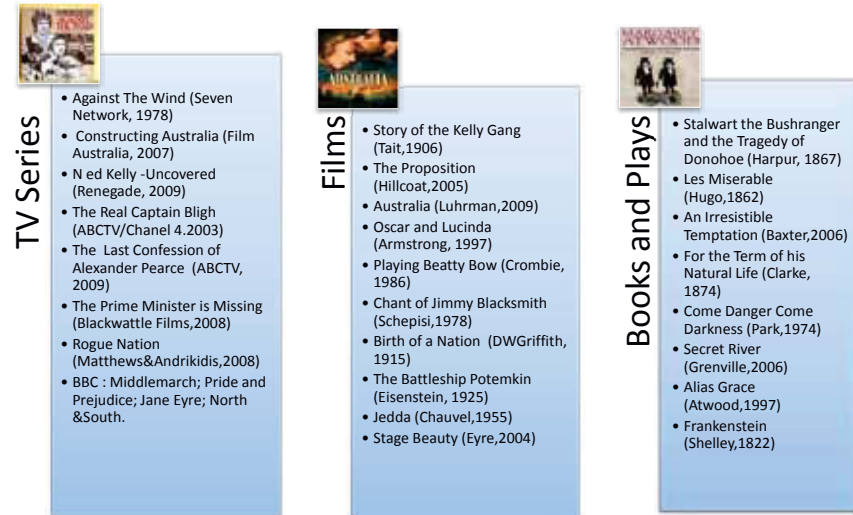
Figure 7:

## Social, Cultural and Psychological Context



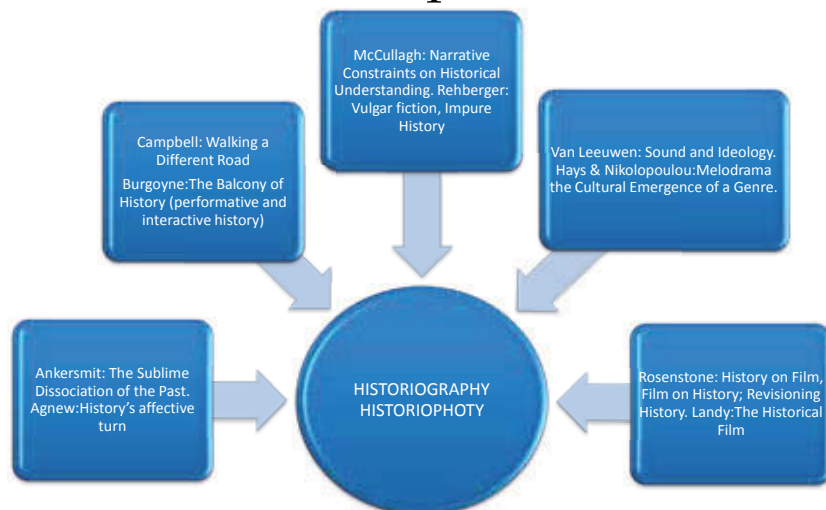
**Figure 8: Critical Review**

Creative work - critical review of historical fiction



**Figure 9: Historiography**

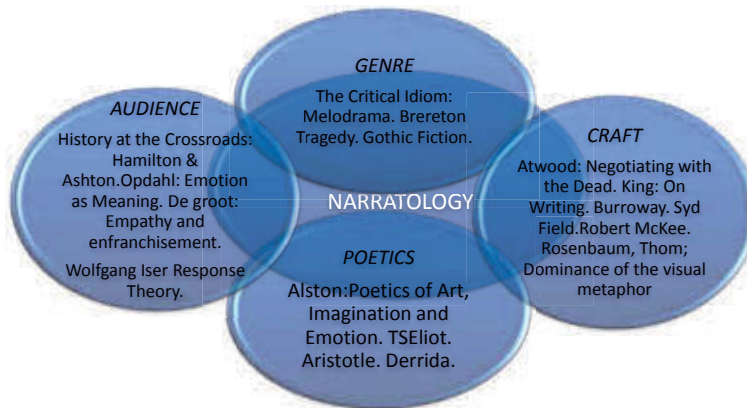
Context and conventions of historical representation





**Figure 10: Narratology**

## Context and conventions of narrative



**Figure 11: Sites of insurrection**



## Appendix C: Creative Process

Figure 1: The Hero Journey

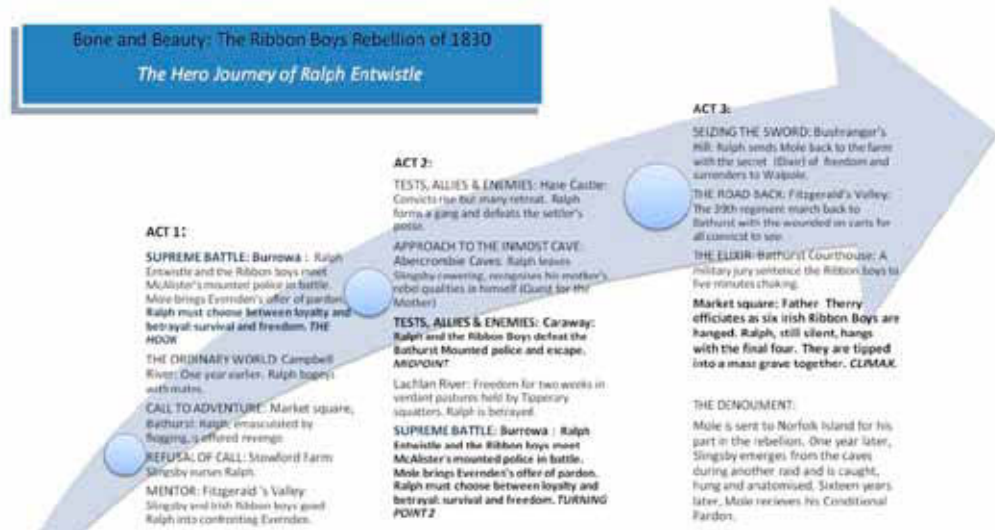


Figure 2: Plotting using Nebula



### Figure 3: Chart of events

Map of events and characters/08.08.11

	1800	1816	1824	1825	1825/6	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832											
<b>Events</b>		1790 NSW REBELLION	Surrey 2 Ballaich 13	3 Women massacre	Breach of Promise	Harbouring Escape Plot	Helmshore Mill	John I Voyage	Ralph's Trial	Approvers Rolone	Darling's Visit	Hunter River Kearney	Death of Donohoe	Peffer and Mounties	Bathampton Brownlea	Mounted Police Villanics	Abercrombie	Burrows	Bathurst Trial	Hunter Trial	Murder of Cpt. Payne	Norfolk Island
<b>Characters</b>																						
Hassalls		X	X			X							X					X	X			
S.Marsdens		X	X																			
F.&W.Duriall		X		X														X				
J. Redmond								X														
Redmonds		X		X		X		X				X										
Rev. Therry						X																
G. Suttor		X																	X			
Cpt. Raine			X					X								X						
Cpt. Payne				X																		X
Cunningham		X										X										X
Cox family			X	X																		
G Ranken			X			X									X	X	X	X	X			
Bath Settlers			X			X			X	X					X	X			X			X
Johnson et al			X												X	X			X			
Fennel			X		X																	

Map of events and characters/08.08.11

Stewart'sMP			X		X								X					X	X	X	X	X	
Evernden						X				X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Chas. Sturt																							
McAlister			X		X													X	X	X	X		
Morrisette			X																				X
Cpt.Walpole 39 <sup>th</sup> Regiment						X			X									X	X	X	X	X	X
Quigley et al												X											X
A.Grant			X								X												X
Castles			X																X				
Ned Ryan		X	X			X																	
Donohoe																							
Walmsley																							X
Storey						X																	
Percival						X																	
Pedley			X										X										
Wakefield																							X
A.Entwistle						X	X																
Ralph E.							X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
George Mole							X																X
Kearney																							
Gahan																							
M. Grady																							X
James Green																							X
Webster																							
Gleeson																							
Daley																							
Kenny																							

Map of events and characters/08.08.11

Driver														X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Dunne														X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
J. Redmond																							
Sheppard														X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Lynch																							X
M. Donohoe																							X
Slingsby																							X
O'Brien																							
Hunter River Banditti						X																	X
Baldwin																							
Power																							
Duffey																							X

**Notes:**

Shading indicates absence from NSW either due to non-arrival or death.  
? indicate connection with the events but not necessarily presence

Columns for Harbouring and Approvers are collections of evidence on a composite of events rather than one occurrence.  
Rows for Families and Regiment are composite occurrences that affect those collections of individuals.



**Figure 4: Chapter summary**

DATE & LOCATION	PLOT POINT	YEAR REVIEWED	RELATED EVENTS
Oct.20 <sup>th</sup> 1830/ Bathurst Market Square	Ralph and prisoners Return with Walpole	1827	Lancaster Gaol. Voyage of John I. Convicts.
October 23 <sup>rd</sup> 1830/ Bathurst Gaol.	Prisoners ask Commandant for a priest.	1825-6	Robert Storey. 3 Aboriginal Women. Bolters.
October 28 <sup>th</sup> 1830/ Bathurst Hospital	Kearney, Shepherd and Dunne arrive from Argyle.	1828	Country Argyle. Murphy and Tennant. Donohoe at Bolong. Military.
October 29 <sup>th</sup> 1830/ Bathurst Court House	Jury and Judge arrive. Trial begins.	1829	Stowford. Arrival of Ribbon Boys. Ralph's Flogging. Settlers.
October 31 <sup>st</sup> 1830/ Bathurst Settlement	All Hallows Eve. Repentance.	1830	The Irish. Hunter River Banditti. Donohoe. MacAlister and the Mounted Police.
November 1 <sup>st</sup> 1830/ Bathurst Gaol	All Saints Day  Confession	1830	The Bathurst insurrection up to the final battle.
November 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1830/ Bathurst Granary/ Bathurst Market Square	All Soul's Day  Mass and execution	1830	The final capture, the execution.

**Questions for Ralph:**

**Chapter 1:** Are you an honest man?

**Chapter 2:** Did your experience on John I turn you into a rebel?

**Chapter 3:** How were you regarded by the men you worked with?

**Chapter 4:** What binds you to the Ribbon Boys?

**Chapter 5:** Who fanned the flame of rebellion?

**Chapter 6:** Were you 'seduced by the devil'?

**Chapter 7:** What are you guilty of?

**Chapter 8:** Who is to blame?

**Chapter 9:** What did the insurrection achieve?

**Chapter 10:** By what words or gesture will you explain yourself?

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