



Harriet Neat

Date of Trial:	13 January 1817
Where Tried:	Bristol Quarter Session
Crime:	Larceny
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1798
Stated Age on Arrival:	20
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Servant
Alias/AKA:	Harriett Neal(e), Harriet(t)/Harriot Davis (m)
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	A good disposition, very ignorant and devoid of reflection
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

'A good disposition very ignorant and void of reflection'. This was the character reference Surgeon Peter Cosgreave conferred on Harriet Neat as she prepared to disembark from the convict ship *Friendship* in January 1818.¹ Her journey was not yet over, as she was one of those *Friendship* women who was removed to the *Duke of Wellington* for transhipment to Van Diemen's Land.²

As Harriott Neat, on 13 January 1817 she had appeared before the Bristol Assizes charged with having stolen five straw bonnets to the value of 25 shillings.³ Found guilty as charged, she was sentenced to seven years transportation.⁴ The records indicate that she was 20 years old when she arrived at Hobart Town.⁵ Nothing has been found to confirm her actual birth or her parentage, but there is a record of a Harriet Neat, born 1 September 1802, in Faringdon, Berkshire, to Richard Neat and his wife Sarah (née Newman). But unless and until this can be verified as relating to 'our' Harriet, it is merely speculative.⁶

Her first name and surname were something of a headache for the record keepers, who referred to her variously as Harriet, Harriett, Harriete, Harriott and Neat, Neal, Neale. It is as Harriet Neale that she is found on the Female Convict and Research Centre (FCRC) database.⁷

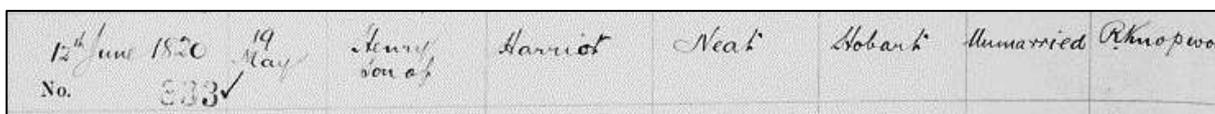
Initially Harriet was assigned to George Gatehouse, an erstwhile convict, but by then a prominent merchant of Macquarie Street, Hobart Town and (until he retired in 1819) the other partner in the successful Kemp and Gatehouse mercantile business.⁸ It was while she was working for Gatehouse, and seemingly out of character, that Harriet committed her first and last recorded offence. In September 1818 she was placed in solitary confinement on bread and water for 14 days for insolence and for disobeying her master's orders.⁹

She would have served her sentence in a tiny room at the Hobart Town Goal, on the corner of Murray and Macquarie Streets.¹⁰ The cramped accommodation is illustrated by the picture of a similar cell at Richmond Gaol.¹¹ Such punishment seems particularly harsh. But was Harriet, supposedly 'void of reflection', one of those scheming assignees who resorted to committing some petty offence so that they could be removed from their master or mistress? Commenting generally on the range of punishments meted out to convicts, one contemporary observer, referring specifically to the English female convict whom he regarded as 'the most depraved of her sex to be found in any country', questioned the efficacy of placing recalcitrant women in solitary confinement. Still, passive fortitude is a portion of her nature. She, therefore, bears with total indifference, solitary confinement, whereas such a person would be governed, without difficulty, through the excitement of fear, or by means of terror, occasioned by the infliction of pain.¹²



For the 1820 and 1821 musters Harriet was in Hobart Town, assigned to/living with James Andrews of the 48th Northamptonshire Regiment which served in Van Diemen's Land from 1817-1824. The soldiers were principally detailed off as prison guards, a somewhat thankless role occasionally enlivened by the chase, capture and return of escapees.¹³

It was during this time that Harriet gave birth to a son on 19 May 1820. He was baptised at Hobart Town by the Rev. Knopwood on 12 June and given the name Henry. It is likely that James Andrews was the father, but no father is recorded on the baptism record.¹⁴



Over the period October to November 1823 the colonial authorities set out to record all female convicts then living in Van Diemen's Land. This muster collected the standard information about date and place of conviction, name of convict ship, and length of sentence. It also specified where the convict was residing and, even more helpfully, the number and gender of any children. Harriet was no longer living at Hobart Town. She was listed as Harriete Neat, the widow of W. Davis, mother of two children, a boy and a girl, residing at Jericho.¹⁵ Where was Jericho? Who was W. Davis, and who was the female child.

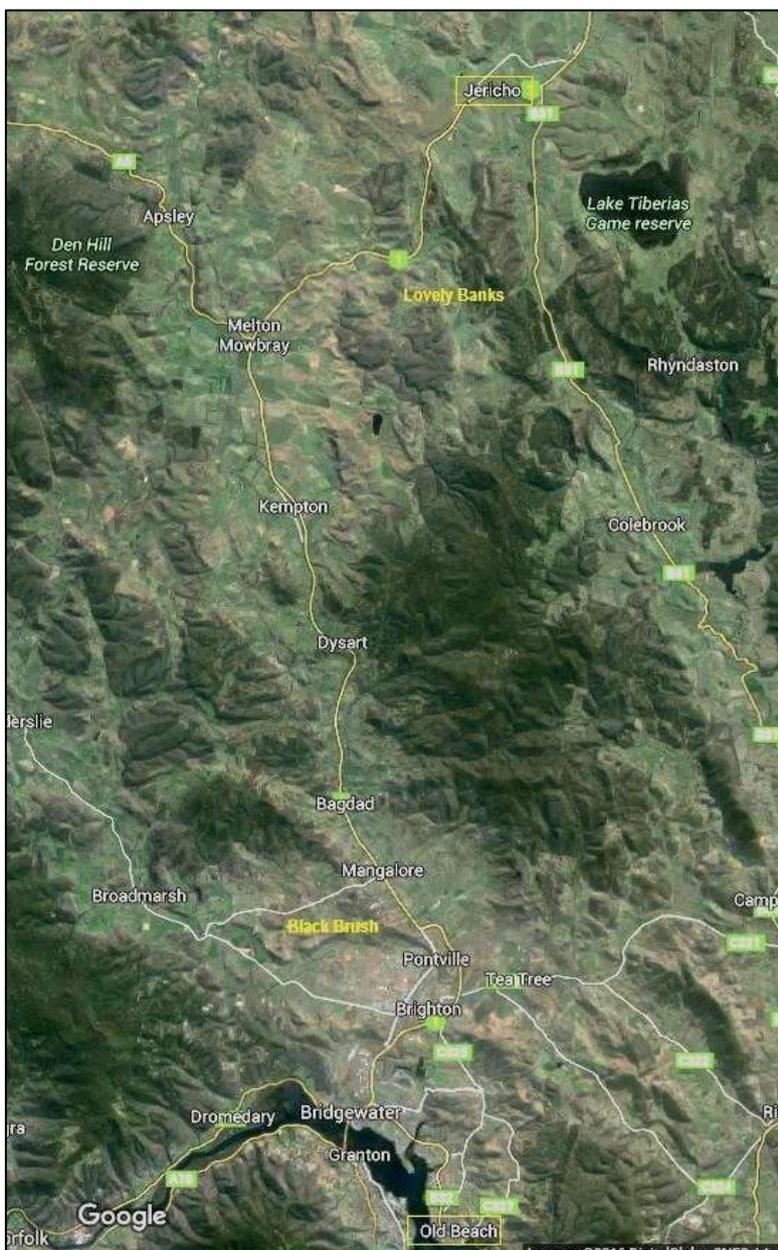
Jericho, located about 44 miles north of Hobart, was one of the earliest settlements in the Southern Midlands, with land grants in the area going back to 1818. In the early 1820s it was the administrative centre of what later became known as the Oatlands district. As early as 1821, Jericho had a 'government hut', a gaol, and a small military detachment, and by the mid-1820s most of the good agricultural land around Jericho has been granted to settlers. At that time it took four days by bullock and cart to travel to Hobart. In 1827, the government stores, military and gaol were transferred to Oatlands and leaving Jericho to serve only as a travellers' rest-stop on the Hobart Town to Launceston road.¹⁶

W. [William] Davis, was the man Harriet Neat married on 9 January 1822, the event being registered at Hobart Town. While the groom was designated 'Free' the bride was a still a 'Convict' and the couple presumably would have sought permission to marry, though no record has been found to confirm this. Harriet's age was given as 23, which tallies with the convict records. William, however, was about ten years older than his stated age of 30. Both were unable to sign their names.¹⁷



William Davis	Free	20 years	9 January	Born
Harriet Neat	Convict	23 years		
Elizabeth Mack				

William Davis, born about 1782, had been tried and convicted at the March 1807 session of the Somerset Assizes. His crime was 'stealing a quantity of silver plate from the dwelling-house of Thomas Corser'.¹⁸ For this he was sentenced to death, but this was subsequently reprieved to seven years' transportation.¹⁹ William Davis had arrived in the colony of New South Wales in December 1808 after a passage of almost six months on board the convict ship *Admiral Gambier* which had sailed from England in July.²⁰ Just over a year later he was included in a list of convicts sent to Van Diemen's Land per the *Union* in January 1810.²¹ This document was subsequently annotated with the dates that some of the *Union's* convicts received their certificate of freedom, but that column entry for William Davis is blank, so the date of his emancipation is also not known. It is from the newspapers that we can glean something about this man between his arrival in Van Diemen's Land and his marriage to Harriet.



Map showing 'Brady' environs

We know that William Davis moved to the Jericho district where he was had purchased from one Thomas Guy an 80 acre grant in Rutland at Black Marsh.²² From 1818 a William Davis was regularly listed as one of those who tendered to supply fresh meat for the government stores at Hobart Town.²³ He may also have been the person referred to in two further newspaper snippets. The notice advertising the sale of the Taylor estate at Black Brush in April 1819 referred to a 'good Skillion and a Barn, which are let to William Davies [sic], a yearly tenant, at £12 per annum'.²⁴ In 1821 William Davies [sic] of Black Brush warned:

All persons found trespassing on the Farm of Doctor Noble, now Let to the undersigned by Mr. James Mitchell, Agent, either by grazing Cattle, cutting down or carrying away Wood, or otherwise, after this public Notice, will be prosecuted according to Law.²⁵

As William Davis was probably illiterate it was perhaps James Mitchell who drafted the notice on his behalf. Indeed being unable to read or write was the norm among so many the early settlers, but it was not necessarily an impediment to success. By the time Harriet married William he definitely had prospects. Perhaps she imagined he would provide the security and stability that up to then had been lacking in her life. But she was to become yet another of the "Bristol Girls" to be widowed prematurely.

If William rarely featured in the newspapers up to 1822, for the next year or so his activities made him a household name. On 2 March 1822 John Cassidy (farmer and soon to be District Constable) put the following notice in the local paper.

Twenty Pounds Reward. – Whereas on Tuesday night last, the 26th ult. one hundred and one Sheep, the property of the undersigned, were drove away from his Flock at the Old Beach by three Men, who, during the time the said depredation was committed, fired twice at my Servants, and then made off. The above reward will be paid to any person giving such information as will be the means of bringing the offenders to conviction; and a Reward of Ten Pounds will also be given to any one who will inform me where the said Sheep may be found.²⁶

Coincidentally, and in response to concern at the increasing incidence of sheep stealing, a public meeting had been held in the Hobart Town Hall on 1 January 1822, the purpose of which was to form an Agricultural Society. The principle aim of the Society was the protection of stock, and to this end the meeting resolved:

That it is the Determination of the Society to prosecute, before a Court of Criminal Jurisdiction, every Person committed for Trial on a Charge of Depredation of Stock; and that proportionate Rewards, of a Value not less than Ten Guineas, be given to the Party my whose Means the Offender shall be detected and convicted.²⁷

At its meeting of 15 April 1822 the Committee resolved that Captain Blythe, having taken measures to apprehend two persons suspected of sheep-stealing, the Special Committee do prosecute these offenders at the expense of the Society.²⁸ Could the two persons in question have been Davis and Churton? Subsequently the Society amended its constitution. It would pay the expenses incurred by a Member in apprehending or prosecuting persons in cases of depredation, provided that:

... the Claimant shall shew, that he has a Yard, Fold, or Inclosure on his Farm or Run (which, if at a Distance from the Homestead, shall be carefully watched), in which he is accustomed to place his Sheep at Night, and to count them out once during the Day.²⁹

Regardless of whether the reward was paid and to whom, two of the suspects referred to by John Cassidy were captured quite quickly. Arrangements were made to escort them to Hobart for trial, but on the way the pair managed to give their guard the slip at Roseneath Ferry, nine miles from Hobart and then the first and only service across the Derwent. One of the escapees was emancipated Ralph Churton, who had arrived per the *Indefatigable* in 1812. The other was newly-wed William Davis. The Hobart Town Police Office issued the following notice on 4 May 1822.

TWENTY POUNDS REWARD – Whereas William Davis and Ralph Churton whose descriptions are underneath, stand charged with stealing, on the night of the 26th February last, One Hundred and Seven Sheep from the Farm of John Cassidy, at the Old Beach; and whereas the said W. Davis and R. Churton, on the night of Sunday last, made their escape from a Guard in whose custody they were at Roseneath Ferry, and are now at large; a



Reward of Ten Pounds each will be paid on their being lodged in his Majesty's Gaol at Hobart Town.

William Davis was described as follows.

W. Davis (xii. free by servitude) – 5ft. 6½ ins. high, brown hair, grey eyes, 38 years of age; was tried at Taunton in 1807, sentenced to be transported for seven years; he arrived at Port Jackson in the ship Admiral Gambier, and here in the Union; was born at Bristol, and lately resided at the Lovely Banks.³⁰

Subsequently further notices of 'missing persons' were published alerting the public that Davis and Churton, and others, were still on the run, having 'absconded from their usual Place of Residence' and now 'at large in the woods'.³¹ And William Davis and his co-accused Ralph Churton remained 'in the Woods' for some considerable time. It was not 11 January 1823 that they were finally caught, and from all accounts William, at least, had not given up without a fight.

Wm. Davis and Ralph Churton, who made their escape in April last from a military guard while being conveyed to town on a charge of sheep-stealing, were apprehended on Saturday last, in company with an absentee named Pearce, by a party of soldiers near Jericho, and were on Monday night brought into town, and lodged in gaol. – Davis was severely wounded.³²

The Pearce referred to was the infamous self-confessed cannibal Alexander Pearce. As recounted by Robert Hughes in his work *The Fatal Shore*, Pearce, together with seven others, had escaped from Macquarie Island and while on the run had taken refuge with some other Irish convict shepherds.

Then he fell in with a pair of bushrangers, Davis and Churton, who armed him; and they skulked about in the bush for two more months. But his new companions had a £10 reward on their heads, and convict solidarity – never a dependable bond – could not hold up forever against that. On January 11, 1823, near the town of Jericho, the three of them were arrested by soldiers of the 48th Regiment acting on the word of informers and were brought to Hobart in chains.³³

Pearce was sent back to Macquarie Island from which he again escaped. At his subsequent trial (for the murder of his co-escapee Thomas Cox) trial Pearce confessed to the acting magistrate, Rev. Robert Knopwood, that during the 1822 escape five of his companions had been killed and eaten by their fellows. This story was transcribed and sealed, and not a word of it was believed.³⁴ If Pearce had, whether from impulse or necessity partaken of human flesh, William Davis and Ralph Churton might have counted their short-lived blessings.

William Davis and Ralph Churton (together with William's brother John Davis and Joseph Martin), were arraigned at the bar on 27 February 1823 duly charged with stealing a flock of sheep (now numbering 106) from John Cassidy. None could provide a satisfactory answer as to how the sheep came into their possession, despite one witness for the Crown swearing that Cassidy's shepherd had faked the theft to hide the fact that he had lost some sheep the day before. Found guilty, the foursome was remanded for sentence.³⁵ The death sentence was passed on William Davis and Ralph Churton; John Davis received a life sentence and Joseph Martin seven years. Reviewing all the cases he had dealt with that day, Judge Wylde, 'in passing the awful sentence of the Law on the prisoners, addressed them at length in a very impressive and pathetic manner', as recorded by the reporter.³⁶

It was lamentable to see such, instead of availing themselves of the means thus munificently bestowed, turning round and becoming the panders of felony, in enticing and combining prisoners of Crown with their own purposes of determined and subtle felony. In truth of the observation, the Judge went on to remark particularly on the cases of Eldridge, Richardson, Davis (William), Smith (James) and Oldham; who have comparatively comfortable establishments of their own, surely ought to have been found beyond the possibility of such criminality.³⁷

William Davis had a few weeks in gaol to heed the advice of the Judge to prepare himself for his inevitable fate and was executed on 14 April 1823.³⁸

William Davis Davis 69	14 th April	14 th April	44 years	Admiral Lambie	Church Executed	Wm. Beyford.
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As an aside, William Davis' brother John Davis was one of five men executed on 18 September 1826 for stealing sheep from David Lord's property at the Coal River.³⁹

Did Harriet share Judge Wylde's bewilderment that William Davis had been prepared to jeopardise his future for the sake of a hundred or so sheep? Even more so, did she question his reckless decision to take flight and disappear into the Tasmanian wilderness for who knows how long and with the inevitable consequences? William was probably unaware that his wife was only just pregnant at the time he committed his crime, and possibly never saw the daughter who was born on 21 December 1822 and baptised Caroline on 15 January 1823 by Rev. Knopwood.⁴⁰

January 1823	21 st December 1822	Caroline.	William and Harriet	Davis.	England.	Knopwood.
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Strangely, 'England' was entered in the column 'Where Married'. Was this a deliberate ploy by Knopwood to 'sanitize' the records as a favour to Harriet and her daughter? But this would seem to be out of character, given his punctiliousness in ensuring accuracy when recording illegitimate births and unmarried mothers. He would have been acquainted with Harriet, having baptised her illegitimate son, and officiated at her marriage to William Davis. As a magistrate, he would have been even more closely associated with her husband having been involved in the criminal proceedings. Further, in his diary Knopwood referred to the execution and to William having considerable property.⁴¹ Perhaps the error could be ascribed to the fact that by early 1823 Knopwood was a very sick man. Although his resignation had actually been accepted in September 1822 it was not until 19 April 1823, five days after William Davis' execution, that he finally retired.⁴²

April 1823 finds Harriet a 23 year old widow with two children - a son approaching his third birthday and a four month old baby daughter. She may also have been responsible for a fourteen year old girl identified by the 1822 Children's Census and perhaps a daughter of William Davis from a previous relationship.⁴³ Harriet was still officially a convict, and did not receive her certificate of freedom (1824/66) until March 1824.⁴⁴ If initially she had been a meek and rather witless person, as suggested by Surgeon Cosgreave, her experiences over the previous five years had toughened her up. Harriet is mentioned in an October 1826 entry in the Journal of the Land Commissioners (1826-1820) as having property.

... when we crossed the Jordan at Guy's farm, now in the possession of Mrs. Davis, whose husband was executed for sheep stealing.⁴⁵

Harriet had claimed her deceased husband's land and had become a cattle farmer in her own right. Straying cattle was a common occurrence, and one with which Harriet had to cope as shown by the following notice which appeared in the papers in May, June and July 1827.

Strayed, from the Black Marsh, 22 Head of Cattle, belonging to Harriet Davis; the original Cattle branded WD on the near hip, and some on the off hip; the increase branded HD on the near hip. Who ever will give information where they may be found, shall receive one Dollar per Head Reward. - Harriet Davis, Black Marsh.⁴⁶

But prior to this, in July 1825, under the guise of 'a woman named Davis', Harriet had appeared in the press in relation to another matter which, fleetingly, gained her some notoriety. Ironically it concerned two men, who like her late husband, had been on the run.

Brady and McCabe made their appearance during the week, at the farm of A.F. Kemp, Esq, up the country. They had previously been robbing some individual; and it is supposed are harboured by a woman named Davis, who lives in the interior.⁴⁷



This report was vehemently denied.

Notice.- The Undersigned conceiving that the Paragraph which appeared in the Hobart Town Gazette of the 8th instant, respecting McCabe and Brady being harboured, *as it was supposed*, by a Woman named DAVIS, in the Interior, has Reference to her, she deems it her Duty to assert, that those Bushrangers have never been harboured either by her or any of her Servants, as she can prove by various Persons in the Neighbourhood. - Harriot Davis.⁴⁸

Her rebuttal was supported by a statement made by James McCabe immediately before he faced the gallows. He, 'as a dying man' declared that the report of Mrs. Davis harbouring the runaways was absolutely false. Indeed, he had never seen Mrs. Davis in his whole life.⁴⁹ If there was any truth to the story there is nothing in the official records to substantiate it, either in the archived correspondence or the Colonial Secretary's papers.⁵⁰

In her response to the insinuation of harbouring bushrangers Harriet referred to her servants. One of these was Robert Jones, an assigned convict. His rather lengthy indictment at his trial at The Old Bailey on 18 September 1816, reads:

...feloniously breaking and entering the dwelling-house of William Griffin, about the hour of four in the forenoon, on the 26th of July ... and stealing therein, eight sheets, value 38s., five waistcoats, value 1l., three pairs of drawers, value 2s., four pillow-cases, value 10s., three petticoats, value 8s., two frocks, value 5s., twelve shifts, value 2l., seven night gowns, value 1l., twelve night caps, value 1l, twelve handkerchiefs, value 2l., and four pairs of stockings, his property.⁵¹

Despite claiming that 'I am very innocent of it' 19 year old Robert Jones was found guilty of making off with a basket of linen and sentenced to death. Quite what he intended to do with his booty was not disclosed. According to his criminal records Robert had been born in 1797, but no birth/baptism has been found for him (from among the many others of that name).⁵² Although he was described as a silk weaver by trade he was, in fact, an educated man.⁵³ 1816 was not a good time to be in the silk trade. At a public meeting held in November 1816 at Mansion House, London, for the relief of the Spitalfields weavers, it was stated that about two-thirds of them were out of work and without any means of support.⁵⁴ Perhaps a new life in the colonies, 'courtesy of the government', offered a better prospect?

The sentence having been commuted to transportation for life, Robert Jones arrived at Port Jackson on board the *Almorah* on 29 August 1817.⁵⁵ The voyage was remarkable in that:

... no single instance of punishment occurred on board the *Almorah*; no discontent prevailed on board the *Almorah*; no suspicion of mutiny was ever apprehended on board the *Almorah*; and no wonder then that the hearts of the prisoners should be alive to a becoming sense of gratitude for the humane and liberal usage they received on board of the *Almorah*.⁵⁶

The majority of the convicts, including Robert, were then sent to Hobart Town on the *Pilot*, under the guard of a detachment of the 48th Regiment, arriving in late September. The *Pilot's* master, Pexton, was provided with a detailed list of his 'passengers' including their 'vital statistics'. Nineteen year old Robert Jones, a native of London, was quite short at 5ft 1in. He had hazel eyes, dark brown hair, and a fair complexion, and was described as being 'well behaved'.⁵⁷ He had received a ticket of leave in September 1819. He had only one infringement recorded in his conduct sheet – being absent from muster and church on 8 April 1822 for which he received a reprimand - and he received a renewed ticket of leave in November 1824.⁵⁸ On arrival Robert was assigned to the service of Mr. Augustus Morris at Tea Tree Brush, and subsequently by Richard W. Fryett also at Tea Tree Brush.⁵⁹ He recounted some time later, in a signed deposition, his early experience with the aborigines.

I never fell in with any of the natives before the 17th of March 1819. On that day I and my fellow servant, James McCaudless were tending Morris' and Stocker's sheep near Stocker's Tier a mile or two from the Macquarie Plains. James Forrest, a servant of Mr. Whitehead ... was with us. In the morning of the 17th March, McCaudless ran into the hut out of breath and told Forrest and me that he had been chased by natives whom he had discovered in the act of spearing our masters' sheep on the plain. McCaudless and I took our guns and went to



look for the Blacks. About 200 yards from the hut we saw a few natives hiding themselves behind some trees. On our near approach they fled and we pursued them. They ran and joined a mob of about 200 men and women. As night was approaching, we returned to our hut without molesting the mob. After day break next morning, it being my turn to tend the sheep, I got up and taking my gun, proceeded to the pasture ground. About 300 yards from the hut I heard a sort of jabbering talk and looking about me I perceived 200 or more of the natives descending the hill behind the hut. Three or four natives, much in advance of the others, were moving downwards on their hands and knees. I ran back to the hut and aroused McCaudless and Forrest. We stood outside the hut with our two guns and the natives remained at a distance shaking their spears at us and making a noise several hours. At length they threw a great number of spears at us but not near enough to do any harm.

Finding our guns would not go off, we resolved to retreat from the hut, when the natives closed in on us. We were pursued by the mob and surrounded by them in a small gully. Here McCaudless' gun went off and by good luck he shot the chief of the mob. Some of the mob picked up the chief and placed him on his feet but he fell down again.

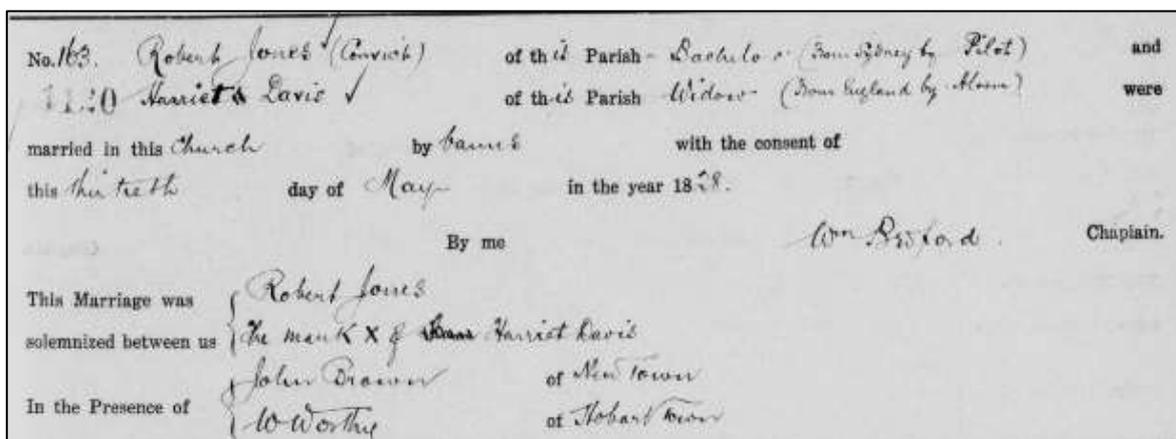
I had by that time received 5 spear wounds and McCaudless two. We moved slowly to the plain. About forty of the blacks followed us for about a quarter of a mile and then they returned to the bush again ... At that moment we perceived our hut in flames.

I was sent in a cart to the Hobarton hospital where I remained under Dr. Lutterell's care between 4 and 5 months.⁶⁰

This experience no doubt influenced his attitude to the Aborigines.

I have never known of any wanton act of hostility committed by the whites against the Blacks. I have known of many kind things done to the Blacks by the whites, but I believe the surest way to get killed by the Blacks is to do them acts of kindness.⁶¹

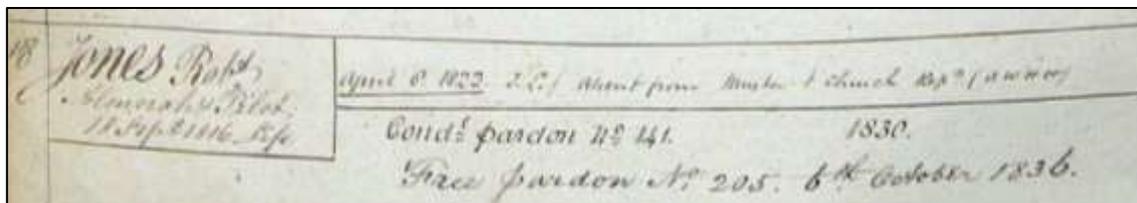
In 1828 Harriet Davis' status changed from widow to married woman. It was on 30 May of that year that she and Robert Jones were married by banns in the parish of Hobart Town, with Rev. Knopwood's replacement, Rev. William Bedford, officiating.⁶²



Robert had been issued with a ticket of leave but as he was still classed as a convict, permission would need to have been given for him to marry, but no such record has been found.⁶³ Officially he was assigned to the woman who was now his wife. Indicating that he had acquired some level of education, Robert was able to sign his name. But Harriet was still unable to do the same. By the time they walked up the aisle they were the proud parents of two sons – Robert and Charles, born respectively about 1825 and 1827.

From 1829 to 1837 they went on to have at least another five children – Frances, George Auber*, William, Thomas, and Harriet.⁶⁴ The Tasmanian Pioneers Index does not include the Bothwell Presbyterian Church birth/baptism registrations for March 1829-18 March 1840. Copies of these records are held in the State Archives and show that George Auber, Harriet, William and Thomas were baptised together on 1 April 1837, but no birth dates or ages were given.

Together Harriet and Robert expanded their property holdings. When they married Harriet already had 100 acres (which may have been in the name of her daughter Caroline Davis – see below) and a weatherboard house valued at £150. In 1828 she applied for 500 acres of land in the Rutland parish. Robert could not apply for a land grant until he had received a conditional pardon. His conduct record shows that this was granted in 1830 and five years later, on 6 October 1836 he was granted a free pardon.⁶⁵



It was on 12 July 1830 that Robert applied for a grant of land. He stated that he had worked for a Mr. Morris, a Mr. Fryett and Mrs. William Davis, whom he had married, and with whom he had lived for the past seven years at Black Marsh where his wife owned 100 acres. He mentioned that they had five children and that he had taught the two eldest children to read (probably Henry Neat and Caroline Davis – whom he ‘adopted’ on his marriage to their mother). He also stated that he rented 500 acres from the Crown. His application was endorsed by his neighbours and others, and he received a grant of 320 acres in the Parish of Rutland. Monmouth, as shown on the map below.⁶⁶



With an eye to diversifying the Jones’ interests, in March 1839 Robert announced in the press that he had opened a hotel which he named the Half-way House.⁶⁷

Notice.

THE undersigned begs leave to inform his friends and the public, that he has opened an Inn, called the ‘Half-way House,’ on the road from Oatlands and Jericho to Bothwell, on the banks of the Jordan, where good accommodations will be found, and liquors of the best quality.

ROBERT JONES.

Pleasant Place, March 4.

This venture took advantage of the fact that the route between Oatlands and Bothwell passed the edge of the Jones' property. There are accounts of people breaking their journey and taking advantage of the no doubt welcome facilities offered to weary travellers. It was also a convenient staging break for soldiers accompanying prisoners, who were locked up overnight in a nearby small stone gaol.

In September 1848 his step-daughter, Caroline Davis, transferred to Robert the 100 acres of land at Pleasant Place that had been acquired by her father William Davis.⁶⁸ By 1858 Robert and Harriet were leasing an additional 1,300 acres of Crown Land.⁶⁹

In keeping with their increasing prosperity and reflecting their upwardly mobile social status, the Jones family soon moved out of the weatherboard house to something much grander – the Georgian-style house at Pleasant Place, at Lower Marshes, snuggled into a hillside and overlooking the River Clyde.⁷⁰ There may have been a setback in the building project because in January 1841 Robert placed a notice in *The Courier* cautioning any persons who were employing or harbouring Henry Archbold, a brickmaker, who had entered into an agreement to make Robert 30,000 bricks.⁷¹



*Jones' Residence, Pleasant Place*⁷²

As the Head and Proprietor, it was Robert who completed the census forms for his household. In 1842 the family was listed as living at Lower Marshes, Jericho, and the full complement of the 'establishment', constructed of stone, was fourteen people. By 1848 Robert Jones stated that he was resident at Jericho, his household consisted of thirteen people plus seven others, including three under the heading 'Gardeners, Stockmen and Farm Servants'.⁷³

Recalling Tasmania's early days, in 1927 *The Mercury* printed an account written in 1830, describing the Melton Mowbray to Bothwell area, written by "Our Travelling Correspondent".

At 36 miles (from Hobart) the traveller enters that beautiful part of the banks of the Jordan called the Blackmarsh ... Here the road diverges from the river, bending to the west up a steep hill called The Den Hill. There are several small farms higher up the Jordan towards the north belonging to Mr. Broadribb, Mr. Fryett, Mr. Bisdee, and others, until we reach Mr. Jones' farm.⁷⁴

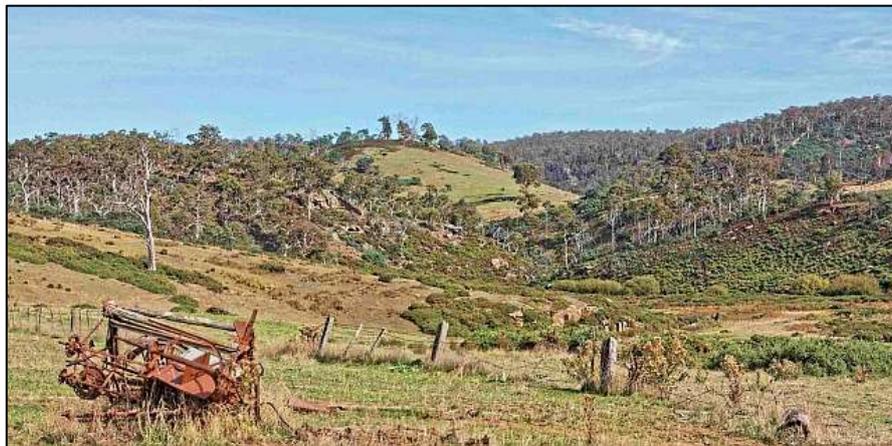
Farming in relatively remote and isolated districts was challenging, made the more so by the 'occupational' additional costs, but no doubt the newspaper editors appreciated the advertising revenue. Thus in September 1843 Robert Jones offered a reward for information leading to the conviction of the offender or offenders who had stolen one of his saddles and repeatedly made away with his poultry.⁷⁵



Black Brush, Lovely Banks Road



Lovely Banks Road



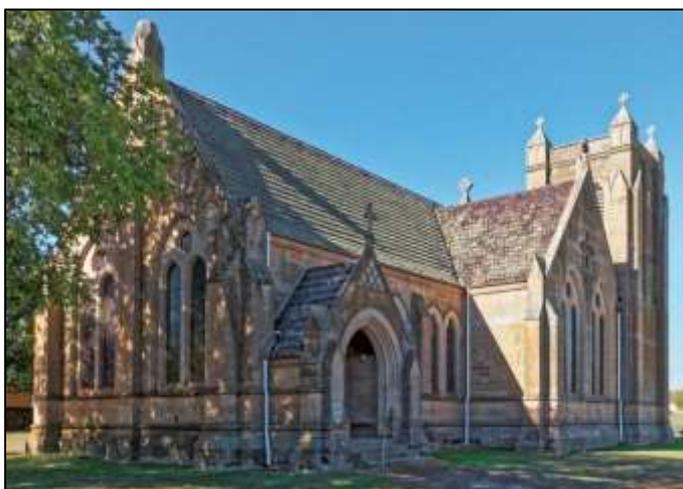
Near Pleasant Place



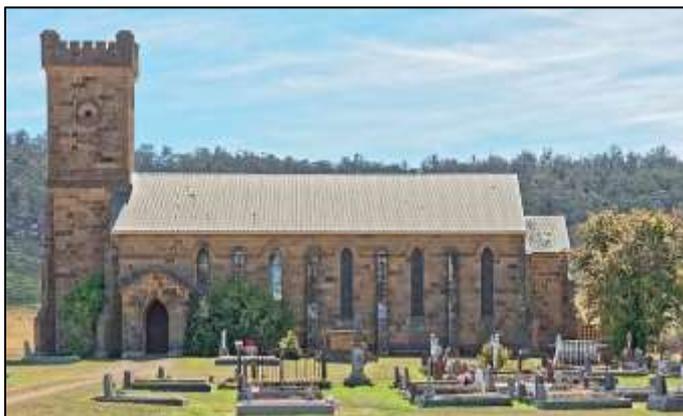
(Photographs, Mike Fretwell, March 2018)

More seriously, 'some evil-disposed person or persons' had, in March 1846, 'maliciously put out an eye' of one of his horses. The blinded horse survived but went missing in September the following year from Mr. Parkinson's stable, at Old Beach. It was a grey and identifiable by the brand 'R.J.' Anyone found in possession of the animal would be 'prosecuted to the utmost rigour of the law'.⁷⁶ As a final example, and one that is rather ironic, in January 1849 Robert Jones advised that one of his shepherds (albeit free by servitude) had absconded from his service at the height of shearing, leaving part of the flock unprotected in the bush.⁷⁷

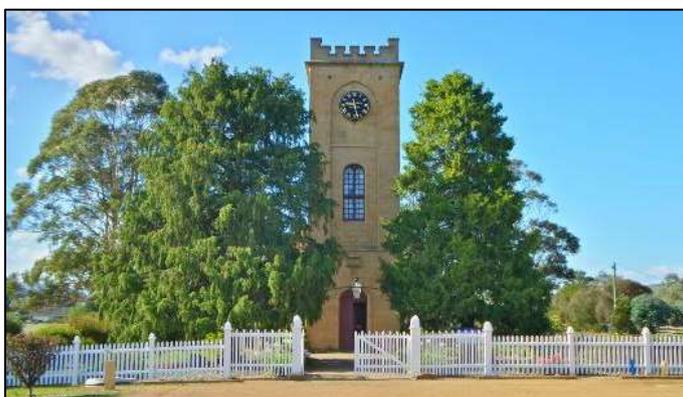
On a more cheerful note, the family enjoyed happier times as Robert and Harriet saw most of their children married off and start families of their own.



St Michael & All Angels Church, Bothwell



St Peter's Church, Oatlands



St Luke's Church Richmond

(Photographs, Mike Fretwell, February and March 2018)

On 2 August 1841, at the Bothwell Parish Church, Henry (Neat) Davis, a farmer, married Catherine Ann Judge, and his step sister, Caroline Davis, married William Barwick, a brewer, on 2 May 1849 at the Oatlands Parish



Church, the latter marriage being announced in *The Cornwall Chronicle*.

By special licence, at Oatlands Church, on the 2nd instant, by the Rev. Mr. Dry, Mr. William Barwick Junior, to Caroline, eldest daughter of Mrs. Robert Jones of Pleasant Place.⁷⁸

The Rev. Dry also officiated at the marriage on 2 April 1848 between Robert Jones junior, farmer, and Ellen Ashton, gentlewoman. The witnesses were Robert's step sister, Caroline Davis, and his brother George. A short notice appeared in *The Courier*.

By special licence, at Oatlands Church, on the 2nd instant, by the Rev. Mr. Dry, Mr. Robert Jones, junior of Pleasant Place, to Miss Ellen Ashton, of Green Ponds.⁷⁹

The elder of the Jones girls, Frances, married James John McRa, a farmer, on 11 July 1852 by which time the Rev. John Leaverack Ison was the incumbent of the Oatlands Parish Church.⁸⁰ Incidentally, James McRa had made a name for himself as one of the most proficient players of the bagpipe in the Australian colonies.

At Oatlands, on the 11th instant, by the Rev. J.L. Ison, Mr. James McRa, of Abyssinia, to Frances Jones, of Pleasant Place.⁸¹

Sons George Auber and William were married respectively on 6 May 1854 and on 6 December 1859, their brides being Hannah Maria Moore and Matilda Nichols. George and Hannah were married at St. John's Church, Richmond, with one of the witnesses being George's sister Harriet. But the services of Rev. Ison were again called upon for William and Matilda, with Thomas Jones and Susannah Nichols witnessing the event at Oatlands. Both marriages were recorded in the press.⁸²

On Saturday last, the 6th instant, at Richmond, by special licence, by the Rev. W. Dunne, George Auber Jones, son of J. Robert Jones, Esq., of Pleasant Place, Jericho, to Hannah Maria, eldest daughter of Mr. John Joseph Moore, proprietor of the Hobart Town Guardian.

On the 1st instant, by special license, at St. Peter's Church, Oatlands, by the Rev J. Ison, Mr. Wm. Jones, of Pleasant Place, to Matilda, second daughter of Mr. Thomas Nichols, Oatlands.

Youngest son Thomas was the last to marry. He and Euphemia Merry were married at the bride's home on 17 September 1864 as reported in *The Mercury*.

JONES-MERRY – By special licence, at the residence of the bride's father, by the Rev. W.M. Hesketh, Thomas, youngest son of Mr. Robert Jones, Pleasant Place, Jericho, to Euphemia, second daughter of Mr. John Merry, Bothwell.⁸³

Younger daughter Harriet Jones, born in 1833, never married.

Just a few months before Thomas' marriage the family would have been deeply shocked by the loss of son and brother Charles in very distressing circumstances. *The Mercury* of 24 June 1864 carried an account of an autopsy.

The inquest upon the body of the late Mr. Charles Jones, was held at the New Inn, Hamilton, on Wednesday, the 22nd instant, before J.F. Sharland, Esq, coroner, and the following jury:- T. Bellenger (foreman), J. Jackson, M. Shaughnessy, M. Ball, J. Francis, T. Wilcox, and W. Langdon.

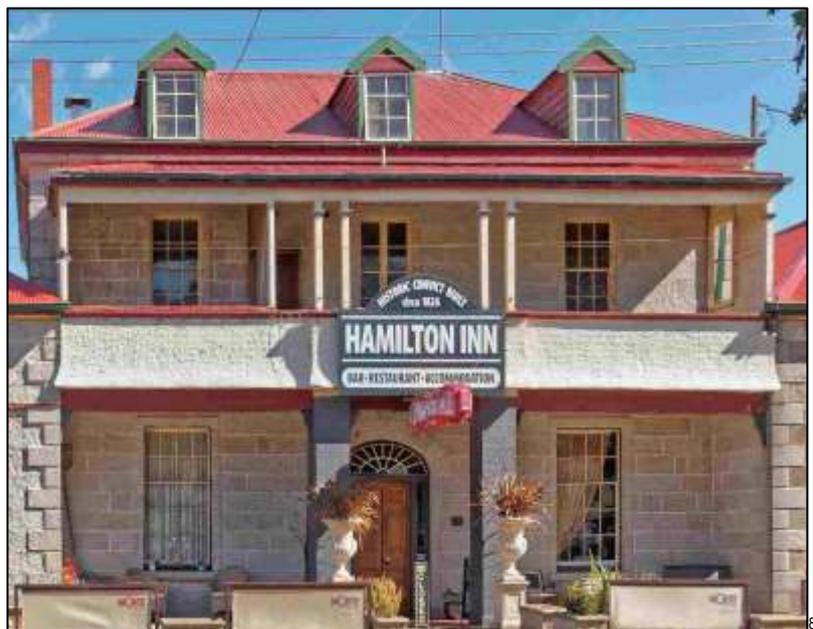
John Burgess, being duly sworn stated: I am a laborer in the service of Mr. Robert Jones [junior], of Emu Bottom, and reside in the new country, near Marlboro'. I have seen the body of Charles Jones, in the presence of the jury. I lived in the same hut with the deceased. I last saw him alive on the 10th instant. He left the hut at about half-past eight in the morning, quite well. He said he was going in pursuit of a tiger, on Johnson's run. As he did not return, I went on Monday the 13th, to enquire of the shepherd for him. The shepherd said he had not been there since 10 o'clock, on Friday morning. I was then afraid some accident had happened to him. We discovered tracks, and followed them up to a bedding hill, where we found a sheep, that had been killed, I suppose by a tiger. I also saw the track of a tiger, and the footprints of a man, following it to the Little River, and back to the same place where the sheep had been killed. I followed the man's tracks through the green timber tier, and over a fence, on to Mr. Johnson's run. The tracks of the man appeared to be backwards and forwards, as if he had lost something. I followed the tracks until it became dark. I shouted several times, but got no answer. I then went

home. The shepherd was with me all the time. The following morning we started again upon the same tracks we had left the day before, and followed them over a rough, rocky country, for the whole of the day, until nearly dark. We had great difficulty in making out the footprints. During the time we were following the tracks, we came where they went into a creek, and followed on into a marsh, where we saw a blind waterhole that the deceased had fallen into, and got out again, the hole was about four feet deep. About one hundred yards beyond this, there was another hole similar to the last. The deceased had fallen into this hole also and got out again. At this spot, his leggings had been cut off. I continued following the tracks across the Marsh, in the direction of the shepherd's hut. I came to a fence where the deceased had got over and in doing so, had fallen. I crossed another marsh in direction of the shepherd's hut. I saw part of a match-box, and a few yards further, the other part, and also saw where a person had been lying down. I called the shepherd who was a little behind me. Immediately afterwards heard a dog bark. I turned round, and a few yards beyond, I saw the body of deceased on the ground, quite dead. He was lying on his right side, with his face in the snow. We gave the dog what rations we had with us; the poor animal seemed almost starved to death. We went home to the hut, leaving the dog with the body; and next morning, at daylight, started to report the circumstances to the authorities.

Thomas Jones, sworn, saith: I am a farmer, and reside at Pleasant Place, Jericho. I am a brother of the deceased. I went, in company with my two other brothers, from Hamilton on Friday the 17th instant, up to the station in the New Country belonging to my brother, Mr. R. Jones. We arrived at his shepherd's hut on Saturday morning at nine o'clock. We proceeded from thence with the last witness and several others to the spot indicated as the place where the body was lying. On arriving there I saw the body of deceased, which appeared to have been dead two or three days. I examined the body in a general way, but did not see any marks of violence whatever. My opinion is that he died from extreme cold, caused by having fallen into the water, and his clothes got frozen. I observed a quantity of matches near the body, with the phosphorous rubbed off, but had not been ignited.

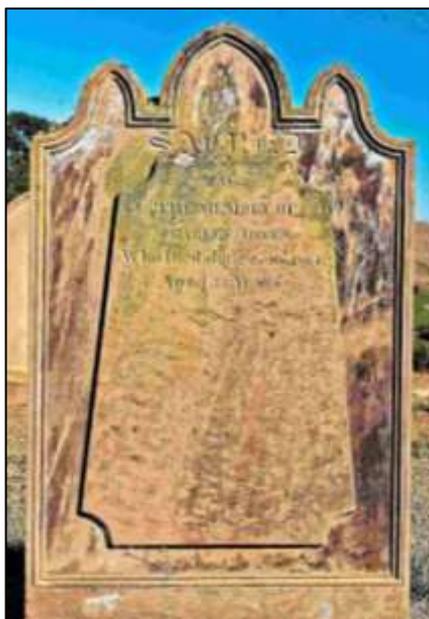
The Coroner, in summing up, stated to the jury that it was quite evident that deceased had been frozen to death. Did they wish for any further evidence? The jury informed the Coroner that they were perfectly satisfied with the straightforward evidence of the witness Burgess, and brought in a verdict of accidental death.

The deceased, who was much respected, was followed to the place of internment by a large number of relatives and friends.⁸⁴

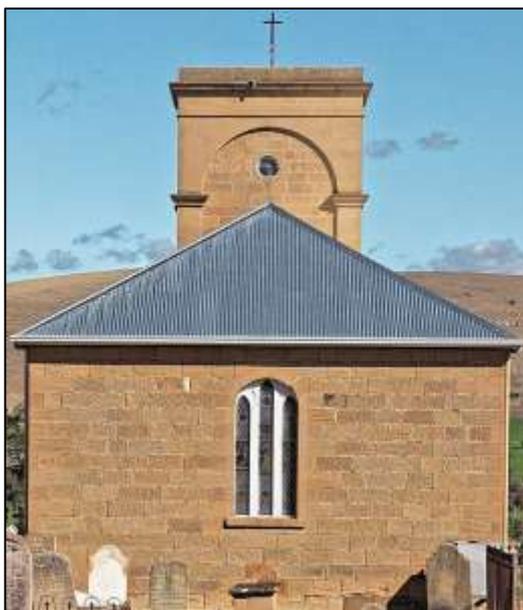


(Photograph, Mike Fretwell, March 2018)

Charles' death certificate refers to him as a 'Sheep Farm Superintendent'. He was an experienced bushman, but probably unfamiliar with the terrain in the 'new country'. It was not unusual for men to be away from their huts for days at a time without arousing any fears for their safety. The weather was fearfully cold, and, while not mentioned at the autopsy, the *Launceston Examiner* noted that Charles had suffered with a heart complaint all his life.⁸⁶



Charles Jones' Grave



St Peter's Anglican Church, Hamilton

(Photographs, Mike Fretwell, March 2018)

The welfare of their daughter Frances would have caused Harriet and Robert some concern. After nine years of an increasingly dismal married life she filed for divorce, which was somewhat unusual for the time. In her sworn deposition, dated 13 October 1868, Frances McRa of Elizabeth Street, Hobart, stated that following their marriage she and her husband lived together for about nine years, mainly in Tasmania but for the later part near Deniliquin in New South Wales where her husband had found work as a Supervisor on a station. She claimed that James McRa had become increasingly violent towards her, was unable to hold down a job because of his intemperance, and eventually they were reduced to living in an open tent in the bush. With no means of support, James told Frances to go home to her parents for a while. She arrived around July 1861. Further, Frances deposed that she had received no support from her husband for six years, and had supported herself and her daughter by her own earnings. Since her husband had deserted her she had acquired some furniture and effects, and she concluded her deposition by stating her concern that her husband might seize and appropriate these for his own purposes unless an order of protection was issued.⁸⁷

Frances was in fact pregnant when she arrived at her parents' home. Her daughter, Harriet Ellen Caroline Margaret, was born on 17 November, and the birth registered (with surname McCrae) at Oatlands by her aunt, Harriet Jones.⁸⁸ (Note: there are at least two Ancestry family trees that ascribe a daughter named Ella Ruby McRa as having been born to Frances and James McRa at Oatlands in 1853. To date I have found no records to support this birth. On the other hand, nothing further has been found for a Harriet Ellen Caroline Margaret McRa, the daughter born in 1861, and for which there is documentation of birth. Frances only refers to one daughter – Ella Ruby. (Were the two girls one and the same?)

For the record, it seems that though he had mastered the bagpipes, John James McRa was not able to manage his finances (or, as we have seen, his temper). In February 1859 he was declared insolvent, and was summonsed to appear for the first meeting of creditors, which having already been delayed, was re-scheduled for 20 April.⁸⁹ By this time it seems that McRa had left Tasmania and he apparently never returned. He moved to New Zealand, having remarried, worked as a carpenter, and died at Helensville in on 19 May 1894.⁹⁰

It was fortunate that her parents were in a position to assist Frances. In 1862 Robert Jones purchased "Prospect Cottage" (later known as "Elm Cottage") in Oatlands. It was from there that Frances and her unmarried sister Harriet ran a small school for young ladies, the fee for tuition and board set at £40 per annum.⁹¹ As advised by a January 1866 notice in *The Mercury*, Frances was also prepared to offer extramural tuition.



Prospect Cottage Oatlands

Mrs. McRa

Begs to inform the parents of her pupils that she will re-open her school on Friday the 20th inst. Mrs. McRa also begs to intimate to the inhabitants of Oatlands that she will give private lessons in Music, French and Drawing.⁹²

Mother Harriet Jones had been unwell for some time before she died on 1 March 1870, at the age of 73, the cause of death being cancer and exhaustion.⁹³ Reports of her death were carried in both the *Launceston Examiner* and *The Mercury*.⁹⁴

Jones – On 1st March, at Pleasant Place, near Jericho, after a long and painful illness, Harriet, the beloved wife of Robert Jones, senr, aged 73 years. The funeral will move from Barwickton House, Oatlands, at 2 p.m., on Saturday 5th inst. Friends are respectfully invited to attend. No circulars will be issued. Melbourne, Sydney, and Gipps Land [sic] papers please copy.

“Barwickton House” would have been the home of her daughter Caroline, now Mrs. William Barwick. At the time of Harriet’s death most of her children were still living in Tasmania but, as the notice suggests, Harriet and Robert had a widespread network of relatives.

Apart from Charles, one other son had predeceased Harriet – eldest son Henry (Neat/Davis). Of note is Robert Jones’ concern for the welfare of his step-children. In July 1840 Robert had written to John Clarke, Esq, of Cluny Estate, to introduce and commend Henry Davis, then in his early 20s and about to commence work as an overseer at Cluny.⁹⁵ After their marriage Henry and his wife Catherine moved to South Australia, presumably with their two children Henry and Caroline, in the mid-1840s where four more children were born. Eldest daughter Caroline and Charles Ezekiah died respectively in 1847 and 1854.⁹⁶ The family returned to Oatlands where two more children were born. They then moved to Geelong in 1858, where their last child was born in 1861, and who never knew his father. Henry was thought to have died around 1860. The following death notice appeared in *The Mercury* of 23 July 1860 relating to one Henry Davis, but no death date is given.

After a long and painful illness, at his residence, in Church-street, Ashley [sic], Geelong, Mr. Henry DAVIS, formerly of Tasmania.⁹⁷

No death registration has been located for Henry Davis (or Henry Neat). However, there is one for a Henry Richardson Davis, born about 1820. Having obtained the death certificate it confirms that this man is ‘our’ Henry Davis. He died on 10 July 1860 at Kildare (which, with Ashby, became absorbed into Geelong West). He was 40 years old and a saddler by ‘Rank or Profession’. (He was alternatively recorded as a saddler or farmer when the births of his children were registered). The cause of death was phthisis. According to the Informant John Judge, a labourer of Kildare and the deceased’s brother-in-law, Henry had been in Victoria for about two years and had been married to Catherine Judge for about 20 years. He was a little hazy when listing Henry Davis’ children, but did name the following - Henry, William, Fred, Emily and Edith.⁹⁸ Henry was buried on 12 July 1860 at the New Town Cemetery (now Geelong Western Public Cemetery).⁹⁹ Records indicate that Henry and Catherine had at least nine children.¹⁰⁰ Henry Thomas (abt 1841-); Caroline (1845-1847); Frederick Augustus (1846-); Charles Hezekiah (1849-1854); George (1851); Emily Victoria (1853-); Ada Ann (1855-); Harriet Jane (1858); Charles Edwin (1861-). I have not located a death record for Catherine Davis.

Widower Robert Jones outlived his wife Harriet by nearly nineteen years, and died three years short of his 100th birthday. Recorded as being then aged 97, and described as a sheep farmer, he died on 14 February 1888 at the home of his daughter Harriet, the cause of death being, not surprisingly, old age.¹⁰¹ His passing was marked by a brief notice in *The Mercury* and a short obituary in *The Colonist*.

On February 14, at his daughter’s residence, High-street, Oatlands, Robert Jones in his 97th year.

A very old identity of the district passed away yesterday afternoon. Mr. Jones, father of Mr. W. Jones, of Bullochungle [sic], and of the late Mr. R. Jones, of Campbell Town, died on [in] the township at the residence of his unmarried daughter, the deceased having reached the phenomenal age of 97. February 15.¹⁰²

Harriet and Robert were buried together in the cemetery of St Peter's Anglican Church at Oatlands.¹⁰³



(Photograph, Mike Fretwell, March 2018)

TO THE MEMORY OF

HARRIET JONES

who departed this life on

1 March 1870 : Aged 73

Come unto me, all ye that labour

and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest.

ALSO

ROBERT JONES

Died 14 Feb 1888 : Age 97 Years

With reference to the obituary, the 'late Mr. R. Jones' was Robert Jones junior who had died on 27 November 1886 from heart disease at his residence at Riccarton, Campbell Town. He had certainly made his mark on the farming and civic life of Tasmania, as recounted by *The Mercury*.

We regret to note in our obituary column the death of Mr. Robert Jones, of Riccarton, who has died on the 27th ult., at the age of 62, after a not very prolonged illness. He was well known throughout the colonies as a successful breeder of sheep, which have made this colony famous, and in the midland district, where he resided, he has long been respected for his earnest attention to municipal and other matters affecting the public welfare. He was one of the judges at the last show of the S.T. and A.P. Society, and had for many years past been a good patron of this and kindred associations. He leaves a widow and large family to mourn their loss.¹⁰⁴

In fact Robert Jones senior outlived a number of his children. Third son, George Auber Jones, spent his early years in Tasmania. On 5 July 1854, with John Davies, he printed and published the first edition of *The Hobart Mercury* (later *The Mercury*).¹⁰⁵ He subsequently moved to Melbourne to study for the Anglican priesthood, but soon realised that he was not cut out to be a man of the cloth. He redirected his 'pastoral' energies elsewhere, first as a manager of a station near Wagga Wagga and then as a property owner in his own right. He died suddenly on 30 December 1887 from a stroke. The *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* devoted a full column to an obituary for the man they knew as Auber George Jones.

It is with very sincere regret that we record the death of Mr. Auber Jones, a gentleman who for many years occupied the foremost position among men of note in the district, and whose memory will be ever associated with the early history, development, and progress of Wagga and the surrounding country, while he will long be remembered as a prominent figure of his time in the commercial and monetary circles of the colony. There are certain men in every community whose strong personal characteristics set them apart, as it were, or lift them above their fellows into positions of prominence and when such men make it their business to take an active part in the onward march of a district or country, and identify themselves with its institutions and its progress generally, their strong personality stands out in still bolder relief, and their departure, whether for a time or for eternity, is more sensibly felt than in the case of the ordinary citizens.¹⁰⁶

The article goes on to detail his outstanding contribution to local affairs and his business achievements, chiefly as a speculator, buying, improving and then selling pastoral properties. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly, and served from 1883-85 as representative of the Murrumbidgee. Such a glowing testimonial may owe something to the fact that Auber George Jones, in partnership with Thomas Darlow, had established *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, but notwithstanding this, he was another of the Jones boys who left a lasting impression. His first wife,

Hannah Maria, died at Wagga on 25 May 1874.¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, on 21 January 1878, he married Mary Milford, the only daughter of Judge Thomas Callaghan.¹⁰⁸ When Auber George Jones died he left an estate valued at £162,418. He expressly stipulated that his second wife was to receive nothing from the estate, nor to have any control or authority over any of Auber's children.¹⁰⁹

Robert Jones' step-daughter Caroline had died nine months before him.

On February 12, at Oatlands, Caroline, wife of William Barwick, aged 64 years. The funeral leaves from Elm Cottage at 4 p.m. on this day, February 14th¹¹⁰

Described as the wife of a farmer, she was another of the family to die from heart disease.¹¹¹ As noted earlier, when she and her husband William Barwick married in 1849 he was a brewer by trade, having taken over the Lake Dulverton Inn. Built in 1834, it was originally named the Lake Frederick Inn, and from 1853 as the White Horse Inn.¹¹² Subsequently William Barwick built an inn of his own – The Midland Hotel – which became a staging post for coaches, and which was given a 'write-up' in *The Hobart Town Daily Mercury*.

MIDLAND HOTEL STABLES – Mr. William Barwick, the enterprising proprietor of the Midland Hotel, has just had his fine range of capacious stables completed, in the rear of the Hotel, and which will house a goodly number of horses. It is refreshing in the apparently stand-still times to witness instances of such progress such as this by the erection of new buildings in our townships, which unfortunately have been of late proverbially dormant.¹¹³

In 1860 the Barwicks extended their holdings with the erection of the two-storey Oatlands Emporium, next door to the Midland Hotel, as announced by William in *The Mercury* in October of that year.

WILLIAM BARWICK

Has the pleasure to acquaint his numerous Friends and the Public that his newly erected Premises being now completed, he has commenced business in a general way, and hopes to merit their patronage and to be favored with their custom.

The "Oatlands Emporium" has been carefully stocked with an extensive and varied assortment of the best qualities and descriptions of Drapery, Hosiery, Dresses, Wearing Apparel, Farming Implements, Domestic Wares, Kitchen Utensils, Groceries, Oilmen's Stores, Patent Medicines, and all other articles and commodities for family use, and in general request.

Ladies' and Gentlemen's Linens in great variety; Baby Linen and Dresses of every description and pattern.

The business of the "Oatlands Emporium" will be transacted at the lowest prices consistent with fair returns.

Orders strictly attended to and executed.

N.B. Grain and other produce purchased at Hobart Town prices, deducting expenses; cash advanced upon grain and produce when required; bags furnished. Grain stored at all times.¹¹⁴

Caroline was responsible for keeping the books and she did so, meticulously, as demonstrated when, in the 1862 case of *Barwick v Jones*** she was able to list every transaction – goods and amounts paid and owing – over a two year period.¹¹⁵ By 1873 son Robert William Barwick had taken over the store, and the hotel had been leased out to William's brother-in-law, leaving William Barwick to concentrate on his farming interests.¹¹⁶ William and Caroline had six children, two of whom - Caroline and Thomas Joseph - died young. William Barwick died on 18 June 1899 at his son's residence, Exe Rivulet. The funeral left from "Elm Collage".¹¹⁷ Incidentally, Robert John Jones' daughter Ellen Margaret married Robert William Barwick, son of William and Caroline. The wedding was held at the home of Robert Jones, Pleasant Place.¹¹⁸

Four of the Jones children outlived their father Robert. Thomas Jones managed to go through life without any fanfare. It was from a 1924 newspaper death notice, his wife Euphemia's death certificate, and clues from Ancestry family trees, that I was able to track him down.

On 23 September at Gleniris [sic], Euphemia, widow of the late Thomas Jones, formerly of Gippsland in her 90th year. (Privately interred) (Tasmanian papers please copy).¹¹⁹

Just after the birth of their third child in 1869 the family moved to the Gippsland district of Victoria where four more

children were born, and where, as related in an obituary for her father John Merry, Euphemia's family had earlier relocated from Tasmania.¹²⁰ We know that Thomas was alive in August 1886, and living at Maffra, because it was at his residence there that his mother-in-law, Euphemia Merry, died, on 22 August.¹²¹ Some Ancestry family trees (without any supporting source or place of death cited) suggest that Thomas died on 13 September 1892. Others give a death year of 1893.¹²² A check on the Victorian BDMs for 1892 and 1893 returned a number of Thomas Jones who had died over that time. But one, citing the mother as Harriet and the father as Robert William Jones, came up trumps and confirms the death date as 3 September 1893. Thomas Jones, an insurance agent, living in Hawthorn, Melbourne, died at the age of 56 having (as had his step-brother Henry Davis/Neat) suffered the previous twelve months from phthisis.¹²³

Two further newspaper references found for Thomas Jones are a 1900 notice of a testamentary – Thomas Jones to Euphemia Jones, £250 - and a probate notice, placed on behalf of Euphemia Jones, in respect of 'certain personal estate within the Colony of Tasmania' to which Thomas Jones was entitled at the time of his death.¹²⁴ Thomas Jones of Hawthorn, Victoria, Insurance Agent, had made out his will on 3 June 1893, leaving all his 'personal and real estate unto my wife Euphemia Jones absolutely' and appointing her as sole Executrix. Probate had been granted in Victoria on 6 October, just a month after Thomas' death. At the end of the document was the notation "Assets in Tasmania £250".¹²⁵

Daughters Frances and Harriet both died in 1900. Frances had moved to Sydney around 1869. The public were notified of her pending departure through an advertisement placed in the Mercury in April of that year announcing the auction of her household effects – 'Superior household furniture, bedding, plated and glassware, pianoforte, etc – the inventory took up almost a whole column. Clearly Frances, the destitute fugitive of 1861, had, in the intervening eight years, become a person of some means. The auctioneer assured prospective buyers that:

... the beds are all new, and particularly clean, the furniture and other effects have been only a short time in use, and the whole are in excellent order.¹²⁶

Frances' death was registered at Newtown.¹²⁷ She died on 19 August 1900, having made out her will four days earlier. In her will she describes herself as Frances Macrae, then residing at Brougham Street, Woolloomooloo, Sydney. Subject to the payment of all her debts and funeral expenses she bequeathed 'to my only daughter Ella Ruby Miller all and everything I may die possessed of, including all rights and title of properties and monies in the Colony of Tasmania or elsewhere'.¹²⁸ As noted in the *Zeehan and Dundas Herald* of 18 September 1900, probate had been issued to Ella Ruby Miller on the estate of Francis [sic] Macrae, valued at £551.¹²⁹ As Ella R MacRae, Frances' daughter married one Richard Miller in Sydney in 1884. Six children were born to the couple, four boys and two girls. Both Richard and Ella died in 1913, their deaths registered at Ryde, New South Wales.¹³⁰

As the only unmarried daughter it is likely that Harriet was relied upon to lend assistance and support to the family. She was probably the primary carer for her parents in their old age, and indeed it was at her home that her father died. When her sister Frances returned home and had her baby in 1861 it was Harriet who had registered the birth. She had also assisted Frances in running of the school for young ladies. Harriet also appeared in the Oatlands Police Court as a witness for her sister Caroline. The first case involved outstanding bills owed by the 'other Jones family' for goods purchased from the Oatlands Emporium. The second case concerned a domestic servant, Margaret Scott who, it was claimed, had quit her job before her contract had ended.¹³¹ Harriet Jones, died at home in Oatlands.

On Friday, January 19, at her late residence, Harriet Jones, youngest daughter of the late Robert Jones, of "Pleasant Place" Jericho.¹³²



Elm Cottage, Oatlands
(Photographs, Mike Fretwell, March 2018)

The Jones sisters, being women, did not attract the attention of the eulogists. But things were different when their brother William died on 11 February 1917. Out came the pens and it is from the following obituary we learn a bit more about him and his family.

Mr. Wm. Jones of Ballochmyle

Another of Tasmania's sturdy and successful yeomen has passed away in the person of Mr. William Jones of Ballochmyle, Tunbridge, in his 83rd year. The deceased, who was one of the most esteemed and prominent men in the Midland districts, was born at Pleasant Place, near Jericho, in 1835, and received his preliminary education at home, under private tutors, and next at a grammar school in Hobart. When 24 years of age, in conjunction with his brother, the late Thomas Jones, he rented his father's farm, and continued to work it for four years, when he married, and decided to enter upon a business career, and bought the general store conducted by Mr. Thos. Nichols [his father-in-law], which was at the time the largest country business in Tasmania. He also went in for raising stock, in which line he was very successful. Subsequently he sold the store to Messrs. P.O. Fysh and Co., and then purchased the Ballochmyle estate from the late Hon. James Maclanachan and resided there till his death. He was also the owner of a number of valuable properties, including Coswele (Swansea), Gowan Brae (in the Lakes country), Hill House (York Plains), Eldergrove Truelands, and Wolf's Craig (Campbell Town), besides several small properties.¹³³

The obituary then lists his chairmanship and/or membership of many local boards and organisations, and concludes by referring to his large family of sons and daughters. William died intestate, but the estimated value of his estate was £48,211. Administration of the estate was granted to his youngest son, Leslie Vincent Jones, also of Ballochmyle.¹³⁴ This son, with provision for another – Charles Auber Jones – was also the Executor of the £484 estate of his mother Matilda Jones. She died on 11 October 1913 at Ballochmyle and, like William, was buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery, Oatlands.¹³⁵

Who could have imagined that Harriet Neat, the woman deemed 'ignorant and devoid of reflection' on arrival at Sydney in 1818, would, after a rather shaky start, make such a success of her life? Initially on her own, and then in partnership with her second husband Robert Jones, she established a thriving farming business. Not having received much if any schooling herself, Harriet was determined that her children received a good education, and the business provided the wherewithal to pay for private tutors and school fees. The boys would also have rounded off their education with 'hands on' training in all aspects of farm work. While little is known about Henry Davis and Thomas Jones, the other sons all did very well in their chosen careers. The girls too were accomplished. Caroline managed the books for husband's business interests; Frances and Harriet were qualified to run a school for young ladies and, in the case of Frances, to offer additional tuition in French, music and drawing. Harriet had arrived in Tasmania as a convict, fit only to be a servant girl. By the time she died, just over fifty years later, through her own initiative and with the support of her husband, she had gained 'respectability' as a well-regarded member of the community. Harriet was one of those transported women who made the very most of their 'second chance.' By the end of her life she could have afforded to buy as many straw bonnets as she pleased.



Notes

* I am not sure of the significance of the name 'Auber', the middle name of George Auber Jones. It may have been given in honour of some earlier family member. Auber is a Huguenot name and perhaps the connection is through Robert Jones, who was trained and worked as a silk weaver in London, where many of the Huguenots settled in the late 1600s. The name was carried through to one of the children of William Jones and his wife Matilda – Charles Auber Jones.

** There were two Jones families living as neighbours at Pleasant Place. The father of the 'other' Jones family was called Robert and a number of the children he had by his wife Margaret 'shared' first names with 'our' Jones' children – e.g. Thomas, Charles and Harriet. It took some time to sort who belonged to whom.



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