

John's story now continues, and following that, are copies of documents extracted, and photographs taken, by John.

From that lucky beginning that took me to the State Archives I became enthusiastic for finding out more about convict Richard Briginshaw. In some respects luck was on our side, because being a convict there was more written about him than if he had been a free colonist. There are five recorded documents with his name on and possibly more. At the time of writing I am searching the records on assigned convicts.

Not all convicts were in chains. Some were assigned and the person in their charge had to look after the prisoner, feed, clothe and pay them a small quantity of cash. This research has caused me to become increasingly interested in the life and times of early Tasmania.

White man first came and settled in Tasmania in 1803, under the direction of Lt. Bower with some soldiers and convicts who set up camp at Risdon. However, this was a poor choice, maybe because of Bowen's youth (23 years). Under Lt Gov David Collins, Hobart Town was started at Sullivans Cove under the brooding presence of Mt Wellington

The first seventeen years, until Richard's time, the town grew slowly. The convicts were set to work to grow grain for Sydney and New South Wales and for their own use. This supply of cheap or maybe 'slave labour' was used to build public works, such as St David's Cathedral, Commissariat Store Buildings, which still stand to-day, and Wharves for the ships.

Lt Gov William Sorrell took over control of the Colony on 9th April 1817 and was in command at our Richard's time. The Lt Gov was under direct orders from Gov Lachlan Macquarie in Sydney. When Gov Macquarie travelled aboard the 'Lady Nelson' to Hobart he was not happy with Lt Gov Sorrell's poor administration by allowing St David's Church to be built East-West as per usual tradition. Gov Macquarie had laid down the street plans for Hobart and wanted the church to run South-North to suit the street plan and established buildings.

Lt Gov Sorrell was quite a character, having abandoned his wife in London and taken a defacto wife with him from Capetown to Hobart.

The early days of Tasmania were full of graft and corruption, in to-day's terms and practices. In one instance farmers were selling wheat at 10 to 12 shillings a bushel to the Government Stores and buying large tracts of land back from the government of the day. The larger cattle farmers were paying off the army officers to make life difficult for the smaller land owners, by falsly moving boundaries.

Anyway back to our Richard, he was quite a lad judging by his conviction in the United Kingdom. However, his convict record is surprisingly short of further crimes committed here. It is interesting to note that Convict Record 1 Vol 31/1 shows other convicts of his era were not so apparently good. I would like to think he either changed his ways or he was taken in as an assigned convict, fed, clothed and housed. His convict record shows that he was not a disciplinary problem aboard hulk or ship. He may have been sick, but I think not, because he would not have survived for the 2 or 3 years left to him on this earth.

To date I cannot find any record to show if he was assigned to any particular person or where he may have worked. This may have been in Hobart. Convicts not assigned were given  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of land and a one-roomed hut. For this privilege, they were expected to work the soil of the  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre growing vegetables in their spare time and work for the government during the day on public works. I'm not sure of the capabilities of a 16 to 18 years old youth, he may have been quite incompetent or quite able to fend for himself. He was of average height for the early nineteenth century, had brown hair and a scar on his forehead. From what I have read they were