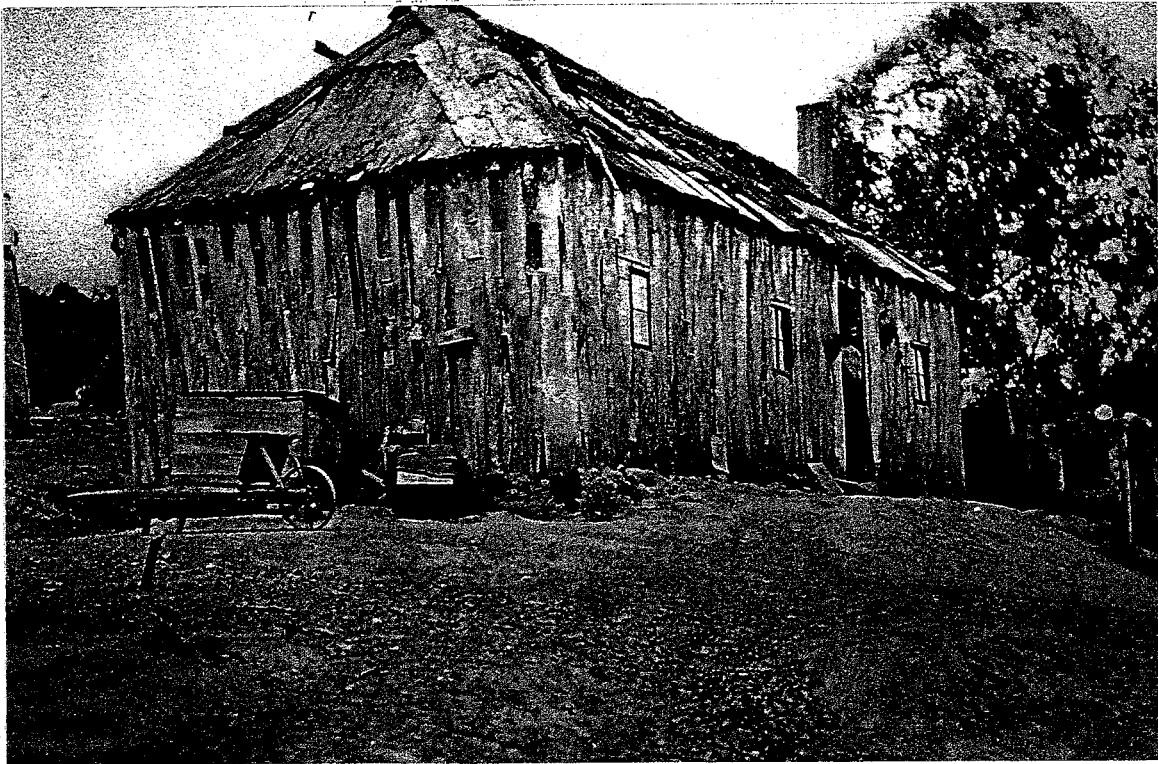


**HAPPY HOLLOW FARM COMPLEX,
HAPPY HOLLOW DRIVE, GREENSBOROUGH**

EXCERPTS FROM THE
CONSERVATION STRATEGY

**PREPARED FOR
MELBOURNE PARKS & WATERWAYS**



JULY 1996

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL

This conservation strategy for the Happy Hollow Farm Complex, Happy Hollow Drive, Greensborough, prepared by Halina Eckersley, Architect & Conservation Planner was commissioned by Melbourne Parks and Waterways on 29 April 1996. The funding for the project was made available from the Government Heritage Restoration Programme, administered by Heritage Victoria. The brief for the project required the consultant to :-

- Collate and evaluate the existing historic photographs, plans and drawings.
- Analyse the significance of the homestead and gardens.
- Prepare a statement of cultural significance for the complex.
- Survey the existing garden and make recommendations for its restoration.
- Prepare a prioritised schedule of conservation works for the building.
- Prepare sketch documentation of required conservation works to the building.

The report has been prepared in two sections, the first dealing with the history of the place and the building, and the second dealing specifically with the garden and landscape features. The Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance covers all aspects of Happy Hollow.

The personnel and sub consultants involved in the preparation of the strategy were:-

- Halina Eckersley B.Arch.
- Mark Whitby B.Arch.
- Dr Miles Lewis B. Arch. (Hon.), B.A., Ph.D., F.A.H.A., F.R.S.A.
- Francine Gilfedder M. Land. Arch., Dip. App. Sci. of Francine Gilfedder & Associates.

The investigations were limited by a number of factors including the recent death of the previous owner and occupant since 1943, Mrs Betty Bell, the departure for Dublin of her son Dr Christopher Bell, who was brought up at Happy Hollow, as well as the death of Doris McLaughlin, the grand daughter of Emmett Whatmough who occupied (and probably built) the slab hut in c.1893, and John Cully McLaughlin, who owned the property at that time. The accurate and exhaustive identification of plant material contained in the garden was not possible because of the tight time frame for the completion of the study and the time of the year in which the survey was undertaken. Ideally, additional identification should take place in spring and again in summer.

The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) formed the philosophical basis for this document.

This report is based on site inspections of the property by all personnel and consultants, and research carried out by Dr Miles Lewis, Halina Eckersley, and Philippa Watt (for the HBC in 1994). Copies of photographs, family papers and family histories relating to the Whatmough occupation of Happy Hollow used in this report were supplied by Alan Partington, Nancy and

Eric Whatmough, Steve Whatmough, Denise Anderson, Dieter and Pam Retz, and Kevin Rowe. Information relating to the Bell family was provided to Dr Lewis by Dr Christopher Bell in 1994. A copy of the early photograph of Happy Hollow, previously in the possession of Doris McLaughlin, and currently held by Nancy and Eric Whatmough was kindly supplied by Jock Ryan of the Nillumbik Historical Society. Joanne Davies of Melbourne Parks and Waterways provided all relevant material available to the Authority, as well as supervising and supporting the project.

1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current research into the Happy Hollow complex has confirmed the importance of the place at the local level, demonstrating its eligibility for the Register of the National Estate, and reinforcing the need for Planning Scheme listing. This research was limited by both time and seasonal constraints. If funding is available in the future, further detailed research is recommended to establish the 1893 depression credentials of the property, and to complete the plant identification work. Such additional research may well upgrade the cultural heritage significance of both the building and the garden sufficiently to merit its re consideration for the Victorian Heritage Register.

The statement of conservation policy recommends that the property be conserved and interpreted essentially to the Bell (post 1943) period of occupation, with the Whatmough era (turn of the century) features being revealed and interpreted wherever possible. Conservation work is recommended for both the building (which is in a very precarious condition because of termite attack) and the garden.

More specifically, the short term use of the Happy Hollow structure by the CSIRO as a termite research station is recommended, such use actually serving to conserve the building fabric. The medium to long term use of the property should be dependant on MPW needs and requirements in the region, provided the conservation needs of the place are met.

2. HERITAGE STATUS

An application was made to the Historic Buildings Council to have the building registered in 1994. The HBC found the structure to be of local rather than statewide importance and therefore resolved not to recommend the addition of the building to the Register. It also resolved to recommend to the then Shire of Diamond Valley that Happy Hollow be protected pursuant to the provisions of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. It is understood that thus far Planning Scheme protection has not been implemented.

An application has also been made by Melbourne Parks and Waterways to the Australian Heritage Commission to have the property listed in the Register of the National Estate. This application has not been considered by the AHC as yet.

As a result of the findings of this study, it is recommended that Melbourne Parks and Waterways:-

1. Supplement and amend the information forwarded to the Australian Heritage Commission as part of the application to have the Happy Hollow complex listed on the Register of the National Estate.
2. Write to the Shire of Nillumbik supporting the former Historic Buildings Council's (now Heritage Council) recommendation to have the Happy Hollow property listed as culturally significant, pursuant to the provisions of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

The research carried out as part of this study has revealed material, unavailable to the HBC in 1994, which indicates that Happy Hollow might be a place constructed c. 1893, which graphically illustrates a 1890s depression lifestyle. If further research confirms this status it might be appropriate for Happy Hollow to be re examined for inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register.

SECTION ONE –THE BUILDING AND THE SITE

3. CONSERVATION ANALYSIS

3.1 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The following advertisement appeared in the Port Phillip Gazette on 31 July 1839¹.

"Agricultural land on the Plenty

For sale (as soon as surveyed) several farms from one hundred to three hundred acres of the very best land, without exception in the Colony, it is within about 10 miles from Melbourne. Credit will be given. Particulars may be learned of Mr Charles Williams or the undersigned.

P W Welsh

There are several Mill Sites with a never failing supply of water on its front."

The government advertised the land for sale again on the 5 November 1839, presumably after the surveys were completed² (see fig 1).

The land on which Happy Hollow now stands, part of Crown Portion 14 (originally mis-noted in the Crown Grant as Portion 4³), Parish of Nillumbik, County of Bourke, was one of the Plenty River allotments offered for sale in 1839. The land was described as being 'good pasture timbered with Gum and Box, Sandy Soil'⁴. Francis Dawe Wickham of Melbourne bought the land, comprising 1060 acres on the 5 February 1840, at public auction paying £1 per acre. The

¹ J W Payne *The Plenty - A Centenary History of the Whittlesea Shire, Kilmore*, 1975, p.135.

² Original land purchase deed, dated 9/9/1840.

³ Certificate of adjustment in Crown Grant, issued by the Surveyor General 1 May 1888.

⁴ Parish Plan P/A N62 Central Plan Office.

purchaser of Crown Portion 13, directly south of Wickham's land was John Alison (more often spelt Allison) of Allison and Knight, pioneer flour milling firm which has been credited with building and operating the first commercial flour mill in Melbourne in c. 1840-41⁵. Allison and Knight bought part of Portion 14 from Wickham within days of his Crown Grant Deed being issued. Wickham made a handsome profit on the transaction, receiving £318 'in the hand' and £1,272 'to be secured in mortgage'⁶. In the same year, Wickham sold the north western section of Portion 14, which eventually became part of the Janefield colony for the Treatment of Mental Defectives to George Coulstock, who already owned land on the western bank of the river⁷, and was to erect a flour mill there in c. 1842⁸.

It would appear that all the millers were looking for the best mill site they could find, with Allison and Knight finally opting for central Melbourne and Coulstock choosing the Plenty. In March 1844 John Allison and Andrew Halley Knight sold the bulk of Crown Portion 14 to Edward Theodore Flintoff, Frederick Nevins Flintoff and William Verner⁹, (Verner being Commissioner in Insolvency¹⁰). Coulstock's mill (see fig 5) closed in 1862¹¹, but its shell (including water wheel), was apparently still standing at the beginning of this century¹².

Frederick Nevins Flintoff sold several sections of Crown Portion 14, either near or containing the Happy Hollow site to Michael McLaughlin between December 1849 and February 1854, the property eventually passing to John Cully McLaughlin in 1875¹³. The remainder of Flintoff's land was variously held and occupied by him, sold off, or leased to several farmer tenants, including Robert Whatmough, and Charles Partington¹⁴, who were brothers-in-law and by all accounts experienced and capable horticulturalists¹⁵.

Robert Whatmough arrived in Melbourne in 1841 and is said to have lived in a hut at the corner of Spencer Street and Flinders Lane, where his son Robert Emmett was born in 1842¹⁶. Later that year the family apparently moved to Greensborough¹⁷. By 1845 Robert Whatmough was

⁵ L & P Jones, *The Flour Mills of Victoria 1840-1990*, The Flour Millers Council of Victoria, 1990, p.27

⁶ Old Law Memorial Sydney no 1073 dated 14 & 15 August 1840.

⁷ D H Edwards, *The Diamond Valley Story*, 1979 p 31.

⁸ L & P Jones, op. cit. p. 96. & J W Payne, op. cit. p. 135-136.

⁹ Old Law Memorial, B 957, 4 March, 1844.

¹⁰ Information supplied by Dr Miles Lewis.

¹¹ J W Payne op cit. p. 136, information taken from *Report of the Board appointed on 8 June 1866 by Hon. the President of the Board of Land and Works to investigate the claim of Abraham Willis*.

¹² Alan Partington, a local resident related to the Whatmough family remembers taking regular walks to the Janefield Mill after (Wesleyan) Sunday School, some time during the 1910s or early 20s.

¹³ Old Law Memorial application notes 30722 and 23887.

¹⁴ Greensborough District Road Board Rate Books VPRS 2870, 1863-1871, show Robert Whatmough renting a house and garden from N Flintoff between 1863 and 1865, and Charles Partington renting the same property in 1865. From 1866 the property is jointly rented by Partington and Samuel Scoffield.

¹⁵ D H Edwards op. cit. p. 70, including quote from the *Horticultural Gazette* 1859.

¹⁶ The Whatmough family have not been able to find any record of his birth at the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages.

¹⁷ Information supplied by Alan Partington.

leasing a garden on the Plenty from Flintoff¹⁸, and in the 1860s¹⁹ he was in residence at Willis Vale, an estate he rented from Edwin Willis Mayger. He also leased another garden and land from Mayger at this time. Whatmough appears to have been a person of some substance, a member of the Greensborough District Road Board²⁰ who regularly exhibited his prize winning produce at the Horticultural Society of Victoria exhibitions²¹, yet he does not seem to have purchased any land in the area.

The family tradition of leasing rather than buying in the Greensborough district continued with Robert Emmett Whatmough, who rented a house and garden (gross annual value of £14) at East Bourke, Darebin from George Poulter in 1866²². Emmett, as he was known, married in 1867²³. His name then disappears from the district's rate books until 1893, (family oral tradition has it that he lived for some years in Geelong), when he is shown paying rates on a house and 1 acre of land, on Portion 14, Parish of Nillumbik, owned by John Cully McLaughlin, and valued (N A V) at £2. Two years later the rate book description of the house is more precise – it is a slab hut, and in all probability, Happy Hollow.

J C McLaughlin's property in 1892 is described as a house and 221 acres, valued at £100. A year later the rate book description changes to a house and 220 acres, valued at £90²⁴. The fact that the slab hut is not mentioned in the 1892 rate records does not mean that it did not already exist. The photograph of Happy Hollow (see fig 8) shows a second hut roughly north of the residence, and a third (and apparently earlier) hut which was destroyed by fire in modern times stood on a stretch of flat land near an alleged early ford on the river²⁵, yet neither of these structures is mentioned in the rate books. More probably, however, c.1893 is the likely date of Happy Hollow's actual construction.

In 1898 and 1899 the rate books include information on the number of people occupying each rated property. In the case of Happy Hollow it is 3, presumably Emmett, his son, James Robert, and youngest daughter, Sue, – another daughter, Rosalie Ellen having married the son of J C

¹⁸ A wooden box in the possession of one of the descendants of Robert Whatmough bears the following inscription:-

"Greensborough, East Bourke, Victoria, Australia

This box is made from the wood of an apple tree named Devonshire Red Streak raised and grown by Mr Robert Whatmough in the garden on the River Plenty, the property of T V (F N?) Flintoff esq. leased to Mr Robert Whatmough, known as Point Lookout, in the year 1845 and remained in the above garden until the great flood of March 1878 when it was washed down the river, full of fruit, for a distance of 1 mile (to?) Mr Robert Whatmough(s?) then residence Willis Vale where (it?) lodged on the banks of the river. It was picked up by Mr Robert Whatmough who had it cut up and converted to this box, as stated above in the year 1880.

Mr Edward Wiggins, maker E3 "

(Information supplied by Nancy Whatmough.)

¹⁹ Heidelberg Rate Books, PRO VPRS 2870, which survive for 1863 to 1871, and then from 1892 onwards.

²⁰ Greensborough District Road Board Rate Book, 1866 - 1871, PRO VPRS 2870.

²¹ *Horticultural Gazette* 1859, quoted in D H Edwards op. cit. p. 70.

²² Greensborough District Road Board Rate Book, 1866, PRO VPRS 2870.

²³ Family information from Denise Anderson.

²⁴ Shire of Heidelberg - Greensborough Riding Rate Books, PRO VPRS 2870.

²⁵ Information from Dr Christopher Bell related to Dr Miles Lewis (see Dr Lewis' report on Happy Hollow, dated 15 April 1994), also information from Alan Partington.

McLaughlin in 1898, and his wife, Phoebe having died in November that year²⁶. Sue, born in 1881, is the person standing in the doorway of Happy Hollow in the photograph of the house held by the family²⁷. Judging by her appearance, this photo could date from approximately the late 1890s to about 1910. This date range is further confirmed by the find of a thick wad of 1909 newspapers (see fig 9 & 10), just under the level of the roof gutter of the house, at the south western junction of the original slab hut and the asbestos cement clad wing. The papers were probably used as packing for the uneven bark roof when it was first covered with corrugated galvanised iron, and approximately date the work.

Later Greensborough rate books have not been checked, but it is assumed that Emmett Whatmough continued to occupy Happy Hollow until some time before his death in 1924, at the residence of Mrs Pill, one of his daughters at Cottles Bridge²⁸. Members of his family still hold objects and tools which are said to have come from the house²⁹.

It might be interesting to speculate why Emmett Whatmough, now in his fifties, and still supporting at least part of his family, would have moved into, or built the rather humble bark roofed slab hut at Greensborough. It certainly appeared to provide much more spartan accommodation than did his parents' house, Willis Vale, or the house he first rented from George Poulter in 1866. The date of the move probably holds the key to the question. 1893 was the year Victoria's major banks crashed and the state was plunged into a serious depression, the effects of which were to be felt by the population for many years to come. Emmett might simply have had no other choices open to him³⁰.

The Happy Hollow property now contains approximately 6 acres (2.4 ha) of land. The current title was issued in 1936 to May Elizabeth Daymond of Happy Hollow. Daymond died in 1940 and the property was sold to Earl Leslie Moser, company director, and Lois Livingston Moser, married woman both of 15 Widford St, Hawthorn. In 1948 it was sold to Arthur Cruse Bell and Betty Bell, whose address was given as Happy Hollow. In 1967 the right of way leading into the property was re-routed to its current configuration³¹.

The Bells moved to Happy Hollow as tenants in 1943, with their one-year-old son, Christopher³². By that time both the eastern and western wings had been added to the house³³, and it is assumed that the original hut had been (partially?) sheeted with asbestos cement. Apparently the move was made for lifestyle reasons, to enable the family to lead a simple, unpolluted existence, in an idyllic bushland setting, with the constant sound of bellbirds in the background and with kangaroos hopping by. The river provided swimming and boating opportunities (there is a small boat still stored in the roof space of the eastern wing of the house), as well as serving as a source of trout

²⁶ Information supplied by Nancy Whatmough and Denise Anderson.

²⁷ Information given to Nancy Whatmough, together with the photograph of Happy Hollow by Doris McLaughlin, Rosalie Ellen Whatmough's daughter, before her death.

²⁸ Information given by Alan Partington.

²⁹ Steve Whatmough has an enamelled decorative plaque which hung on the walls of Happy Hollow. Eric Whatmough has some tools which were given to him by Doris McLaughlin.

³⁰ No documentary research has been carried out into Emmett Whatmough's financial affairs.

³¹ Certificate of title, vol 6084 folio 1216609, 2 November 1936.

³² John Lahey, 'Lahey at large', in *The Age*, 4/3/1994.

³³ Information supplied to Dr Miles Lewis by Dr Christopher Bell.

and blackfish. The family grew their own vegetables and fruit, and bottled some for winter, (both empty and full jars and bottles are still stored in the house), they shot their own rabbits and Mrs Bell baked her own bread. The family relied on water pumped from the river, as well as tank water, used a wood stove for cooking and kerosene and bottled LP gas for illumination. Christopher Bell did not go to school until he was 12, his mother taught him at home³⁴. The property was never connected to the electricity grid, nor did the owners operate a generator. Some of the most recently introduced services did provide a degree of modern comfort to Happy Hollow in the last years of the Bell occupation – a LP gas fuelled instantaneous gas heater supplied hot water at the turn of the tap, and the solar power panels operated rudimentary illumination, as well as enabling Mrs Bell to watch television. Mrs Bell left the house in 1994³⁵.

Happy Hollow was acquired by Melbourne Parks and Waterways on 21 November 1994.

3.2 THE BUILDING

The turn of the century photograph of Happy Hollow shows the structure from the south west, prior to the extensions at either end. It is rectangular, with walls of rough vertical slabs driven directly into the ground, while the corner posts and those framing the transverse internal wall are round. The west wall is blank, while the south wall is divided, as it still is, with two windows, a door to the right of centre, and a further window. The slab hut shows a considerable amount of weathering and repairs. The western elevation, which was likely to be subject to the worst prevailing weather shows extensive areas of random timber board or paling patching, nailed over the dislodged mud infill between the vertical slabs. The base of the south western corner post appears to be rot affected, as are the bases of the slabs on the southern elevation, some of which show repairs carried out using pieces of flat metal. (One of those patches is still in place on the building - see fig 12.) The southern hip of the roof appears to include cladding material which is much smoother and more level than bark sheeting, although it is not entirely flat (perhaps second hand metal sheet, or wide slabs of timber?). The cladding on this hip is held down by rather unusually rough, twisted and branching poles. The chimney, made of, or clad with corrugated iron is located on the eastern side of the hut.

Local legend has it that Happy Hollow dates from the 1840s. Current research has virtually eliminated this period as a credible dating possibility. Miles Lewis has found that the nails used in the structure, with the possible exception of one, are wire nails and therefore post 1870. The front door latch bears a patent number (13512) which has so far proved untraceable³⁶, and in any case the lock has been relocated on the door, and the door may well have been moved to the house from elsewhere. No other datable components which might be thought original have been found. The historical evidence found in the rate records, the physical evidence of the building fabric, the state of wear on the structure visible in the surviving early photograph combined with the likely sequence of the application of repair/waterproofing work such as the corrugated iron

³⁴ John Lahey, 'Lahey at large', in *The Age*, 4/3/1994.

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ State Library of Victoria records of both British and Victorian patents were checked for the relevant periods, as were their fragmentary holdings of U S patent records.

roof cladding, the patching of openings between the slabs with timber, metal and mud, all point to c. 1893 being the most likely date of the hut's construction.

A contemporary examination of the central wing of Happy Hollow reveals that the wall structure consists of round posts at intervals, with vertically placed slabs of between 120 and 230mm wide in between, more or less flush with the outer face of the posts. The laths and mud, as well as other layers of timber and metal patching and waterproofing obviously post-date the turn of the century photo, and may also post date the corrugated iron roof cladding of circa 1909. The inside surface (both wall and ceiling) of the hut has been white painted, indicating that it was once exposed. There is also evidence of fragments of hessian wall lining, so that the interior may have been papered at some stage. The stove is relatively modern and located away from the chimney visible in the early photo. Currently the interior is sheeted over with ply. The roof structure has one tie, consisting of a round pole, which has subsequently been boxed in with sheeting, and forms the head of the transverse partition wall.

Extensions of basically one room each were made to the east and west ends prior to the Bell occupation of the property. The west extension is a self contained gable-roofed unit which incorporates a bathroom and porch, and which may have been custom-built, but which was apparently completely fabricated off site, as it has an asbestos cement clad wall facing and abutting the original west wall of the hut, such that the asbestos cement sheeting could not possibly have been applied *in situ*. The roof is clad with "Vincent (crown) Best" corrugated galvanized steel (see fig 22), and the profile of the internal KDH joinery is typical of the 1930s. The doors are considerably earlier, and reused from other structure(s) – see fig 37.

The eastern extension was later, and the working drawings for it are in Dr Bell's possession³⁷, having just been found in Dublin. This wing, which is also gable roofed includes a basement storage room, as well as a large walled verandah, or sunroom at the main level of the house. Its external walls are weatherboard clad, and the corrugated galvanised steel roof sheeting is Lysaght Orb brand. The doors and windows are much earlier, and obviously relocated from another building(s). The windows are arranged in a very "modern" corner configuration. The walls and ceiling are sheeted in unpainted caneite. The fireplace mantle appears to postdate the extension, as it oversails the window frame, and is of extremely crude construction (see fig 29). The basement walls are lined with odd pieces of cladding including flat galvanised "Baldwins Ltd, (crown) Phoenix" sheet and a board advising that it is the property of McAlpin Bros (see fig 31)

3.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Bark roofed slab huts and farm buildings, as well as other examples of vernacular construction, were built in Victoria from the earliest days of European settlement, and continued to be built well into the twentieth century. The Plenty district appears to have been well endowed with such structures from the early 1840s onwards³⁸. In Melbourne in the 1840s, an observer reported that:-

³⁷ Information from Dr Miles Lewis 23/7/1996. (It is understood Dr Bell will post a copy of the drawings to Dr Lewis).

³⁸ For a random selection see Edwards op. cit. p.12, 30, 39, 64, 69, 81, 91, 113 and 114.

"Slabs are the most common material for building. These are a kind of planking generally about two inches thick, and varying in width from eight inches to a foot: they are obtained by splitting with wedges the gum tree, the stringy bark and the iron bark."³⁹

Bark was used for both roof and wall cladding, and various fixing systems were devised to overcome the material's tendency to shrink and curl. Roofs were commonly overlaid with interconnected poles which prevented the bark from lifting under wind loading⁴⁰. Primitive methods of construction continued to be used into the twentieth century, especially for farm buildings and sheds.

Vernacular buildings which can be dated with certainty to the 1840s are extremely rare and important. Examples of the 1850s, are still fairly rare and of some interest, but those of the selection period, from about 1860, are not exceptional⁴¹. Thus the degree of cultural significance of surviving primitive structures is to a great extent dependant on their age and technical interest, however, their value as historical artefacts is beyond dispute⁴², and each and every one of the surviving examples should be preserved.

The slab hut at Happy Hollow appears to date from c. 1893, and may be a product of the 1890s depression. It is somewhat unusual to find such a primitive structure built close to Melbourne at so late a date, and somewhat unusual to find it surviving so close to Melbourne well into the 1990s. The building is obviously significant in the local context, but given the current information, does not rate as important on a State, or even a metropolitan basis. Further research to firmly establish its depression credentials may greatly elevate the building's (and garden's) cultural heritage status.

A comprehensive comparison of surviving slab huts will not be attempted here. But a comparative assessment would include the earlier slab hut discovered in recent years within a later structure at Warrandyte, the very early homestead 'Pontville', at Templestowe, probably of the 1850s, portions of Gulf Station at Yarra Glen and parts of 'Friedensruh', Doncaster, a house of the 1850s which includes sections of wattle and daub construction. This is only an arbitrary selection, but each of these buildings is earlier and each is of greater technical interest than Happy Hollow⁴³.

3.4 STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The place known as Happy Hollow, Happy Hollow Drive, Greensborough, which is bordered to the south by the Plenty River, and to the north by a tributary creek, and which includes a house consisting of a bark roofed slab hut probably dating from circa 1893, and two 1930s wings, as

³⁹ C J Griffith, *The Present State and Prospects of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales*. Dublin 1845, quoted in M Lewis *Victorian Primitive*, 1977 p. 25.

⁴⁰ M Lewis, *Victorian Primitive*, 1977 p. 13 - 18.

⁴¹ Dr Miles Lewis, Reports on Happy Hollow dated 15 April 1994 and 24 June 1996.

⁴² M Lewis, *Victorian Primitive*, 1977 p. 72.

⁴³ Dr Miles Lewis, Report on Happy Hollow dated 24 June 1996.

well as a subsistence/ornamental garden, adjacent bushland, various works, and possibly archaeological remnants of an early hut and ford, is of cultural heritage significance, on a local basis.

The place has social and historical significance because:-

- It is likely to be an example of the housing and lifestyle conditions of people affected by the 1890s depression.
- It contains a surprisingly late example of a slab hut to be built so close to Melbourne.
- It contains a rare example of a slab hut still surviving so close to Melbourne.
- It is an example of a simple building, garden and domestic scale orchard in an idyllic bushland setting on the Plenty River which enabled the Bell family to lead a subsistence based lifestyle for fifty years in the midst of the encroaching late twentieth century Melbourne suburbia.
- It contains a collection of plants, some of which are mature, which demonstrate a subsistence garden within a metropolitan context.

The place has architectural significance because:-

- It is an example of vernacular construction with a sequence of applied vernacular weatherproofing and repair techniques.

The place has potential archaeological significance because :-

- It is likely to contain archaeological remnants of the early hut located on the river flat, adjacent to an alleged early ford over the Plenty River.

The place has aesthetic significance because:-

- It displays idyllic bushland/river course landscape and environmental qualities within metropolitan Melbourne.

(Australian Heritage Commission's National Estate Register criteria C2 and D2.)

4. CONSERVATION POLICY

4.1 BASIS FOR CONSERVATION POLICY

The conservation policy for the Happy Hollow is based on the following factors:-

- the requirements and constraints arising from the statement of significance,
- the physical condition of the place,
- Melbourne Parks and Waterways' requirements, constraints and resources.

It is recommended that Melbourne Parks and Waterways adopt the outlined conservation policy, which will constitute the basis for the future management of the place. The document is based on the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter), and should be subject to review, as circumstances affecting the site alter to any significant degree.

4.2 STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION POLICY

The statement of cultural heritage significance has established that the Happy Hollow complex is a place of local significance. This significance essentially relates to the vernacular character of the original hut and to the nineteenth and twentieth century depression/subsistence characteristics of both the building and the garden.

It is therefore recommended that:-

- The place be conserved and interpreted essentially to the Bell period of occupation, but without interference or damage to the earlier fabric, and that wherever possible, the Whatmough era occupation features be revealed as display/educational items, and interpreted accordingly.

Both the garden and the building are in poor condition and in need of immediate conservation work. The condition of the building is especially perilous because it is subject to termite attack.

It is therefore recommended that:-

- The conservation measures outlined in this report for both the building and the garden be implemented as soon as practicable.

The consideration of Melbourne Parks and Waterways' requirements, constraints and resources relating to Happy Hollow did not form part of the brief for this project, therefore only very general comments will be offered relating to this aspect of the future management of the property:-

- The use of Happy Hollow in the short to medium term as a CSIRO termite research station would be of great benefit to Melbourne Parks and Waterways, Heritage Victoria, and the community in general, assisting in the development of the most environmentally friendly termite eradication techniques, improving soil and water quality, dealing with termite damage to existing buildings in general and historic structures in particular.
- Following the eradication of the termites and the conservation of the place, the long term use of the complex should be considered within the broader context of the existing and planned MPW parks in the area, their natural and historical attributes and gaps.

Themes which could be explored include:-

- The early historic connection of the eastern bank of the Plenty River with the western bank Janefield site in the search for the best location for the first flour mill in the wider Melbourne region.
- Vernacular building construction and repair methods.
- Following further detailed research, the history of orcharding and horticulture on the Plenty.
- Following further detailed research, depression/subsistence accommodation, gardening and lifestyles.

Alternatively Happy Hollow could be used for passive natural/recreational purposes, for accommodation/research needs of MPW, or a combination of any of the above. Other uses may also be appropriate, provided the conservation needs of the place are respected and met.

- Following the addition of Happy Hollow to the Register of the National Estate, the complex would become potentially eligible for National Estate Grant funding.

SECTION TWO – THE GARDEN

5. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report contains the Conservation Analysis and Management Plan for the garden at Happy Hollow. The area covered by this report is the immediate garden surrounds of the main house. The place is featured in the Plenty Gorge Management Plan.

5.1. GARDEN HERITAGE LISTINGS

- Australian Heritage Commission:- currently under consideration.
- Victorian Heritage Register (Heritage Council Victoria):-nil.
- Shire of Nillumbik (formerly Shire of Diamond Valley):-was recommended for listing by the Historic Buildings Council in 1994.
- National Trust of Australia (Victoria):-nil.
- Victorian Gardens Inventory (C Johnston 1988):-no listing.

6 GARDEN ASSESSMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 Agricultural and Horticultural (Orcharding) History in the Plenty district

Settlement of the Diamond Valley by pastoralists from Van Diemen's Land and overlanders from New South Wales took place from 1836 with each squatter being allowed to occupy as much land as they could obtain for a yearly payment of £10. However the licensing regulations and the official survey along the west bank of the Plenty restricted the occupation of the land and restricted the boundaries of leaseholding. Typically fertile river flats and rich grasslands were cleared and occupied for grazing purposes. By the end of 1839 the survey of the Nillumbik area had been completed and the land to the east of the Plenty was offered for private sale⁴⁴.

The original large land holdings were fairly quickly subdivided or subleased, and the land which had plentiful water supply was put to intensive agriculture⁴⁵. The land in the vicinity of the current Happy Hollow appears to have been mainly used for orchards.

Edward Theodore and his son Frederick Nevins Flintoff planted a garden and orchard of about 3 hectares on the slopes above their first homestead, which was built in the 1840s on the river flat. (Charles Partington is said to have worked as a gardener on the estate in 1858, Robert Whatmough having apparently arranged the job for him)⁴⁶. The garden Robert Whatmough leased from Flintoff (Point Lookout?) is said to have contained a large number of trees brought over from Van Diemen's Land by John Batman, which were replanted in Melbourne and subsequently sold following Batman's death⁴⁷. Andrew Ross, a local school teacher reminiscing about the 1850s, commented:-

"It gave me interest and pleasure to see Mr (Robert) Whatmough's garden laid out on the banks of the river...to see Mr Flintoff's finely situated place with its orangery and grounds and lastly at Astley Hill, the hospitable abode of Mr McLaughlin and family, busily employed in clearing land." ⁴⁸

⁴⁴ D H Edwards, op. cit., p 10.

⁴⁵ ibid. p.30

⁴⁶ ibid p 35

⁴⁷ ibid p 35

⁴⁸ Andrew Ross commenting in the Evelyn Observer, 30 August 1889, see ibid p. 36.

Another observer W Howitt, wrote of Bakewell's orchard on the Lower Plenty:-

"..the bank descends steeply to a flat of from four to five acres, which is laid out in a garden, orchard and vineyard. The fruit trees were nearly all in blossom and the vineyards were well dressed and kept...they grow grapes chiefly for market...the apples, pears, and plums flourish and bear immensely...They have plenty of gooseberries...the English stamp and English character are on all their settlements. They are English houses, English enclosures...English farms and English gardens..."⁴⁹

The presence of a reputedly early hut on the river bank below Happy Hollow tends to suggest that some horticultural activity might have been conducted on the site prior to Emmett Whatmough's occupation circa 1893. Emmett certainly had a garden and an orchard⁵⁰ there which he cultivated at the beginning of this century.

Despite the quantity of literature in the nineteenth century describing some of the existing orchards and practical manuals, little was written describing the day to day life and people connected with these properties. Research into the history and development of individual farms and horticultural operations in the vicinity of Melbourne is very sparse, as is research into depression induced subsistence horticulture.

Family papers, photographs and oral history are held by the descendants of the Whatmough and Partington families, however, a large portion of these were not available to the writer due to the time constraints of the garden study. A source of oral history also exists with some of the Parks and Waterways staff, many of whom worked in the Plenty River area, and met with the Happy Hollow owners (Bells) before their death, however contact was only made with one employee due to the limitation of time. Dr Christopher Bell who currently lives in Dublin is also likely to have considerable information relating to the Bell occupancy of Happy Hollow. Further research into all these sources could clarify both the wider horticultural context of the Plenty region, as well as the depression/subsistence aspects of the Happy Hollow property.

The close associations between the fruit growing and agricultural families around Eltham/Plenty helped to form a close-knit community and, by way of their various professional/industry associations, they formed a strong connection with the horticultural and orchard communities in other parts of Victoria and interstate.

Without further research into the Happy Hollow families personal lives, it is not possible to say how typical they were of Victorian horticultural families, nor how closely involved they were in their immediate environment.

Much of the history connected to the orchard families such as the Whatmoughs, forms part of a much bigger story of the development of orchards throughout Victoria, which is an important

⁴⁹ Edwards op. cit. p. 67

⁵⁰ Verbal information from Eric Whatmough, Emmett's grandson, who remembers being taken to Happy Hollow as a child and seeing an apple orchard.

component of the history of orchards in Australia. Other than a few mainly industrial buildings (storage sheds, packing rooms) and a number of mature trees, very little remains of the physical fabric of the industry, in particular the domestic components such as the houses and gardens of owners or workers. However, strong memories of the industry and lifestyle are retained by the older Victorian community and provide an ideal opportunity for documentation by oral and other means. Documentation exists in the form of industry records, prizes at various horticultural shows, local history collections, and family papers. Newspaper accounts and reports of meetings such as the Horticultural Society, date from the mid nineteenth century. Other published works which document the growth of the industry, such as government papers and early civil servants' records, provide accounts of the types of fruit crops grown, the business owners, the area committed to orchards, the number of various fruits produced and other relevant industry statistics.

6.1.1 Analysis of the Cultural Heritage Significance (Garden)

The 'garden' surveyed and referred to in this report is the exotic plantings immediately around the house and does not include the (non original) long drive, paddocks, entrance, or surrounding native vegetation.

As documentation on the development of orchards and gardens, and the history of orchardists in the Melbourne and Plenty environs is scarce, a comparative analysis cannot readily be made. In terms of the significance of the garden, the few references which provide an historical account of gardens in Victoria, tend to focus on the grander gardens associated with notable houses.

It would appear that the current garden at Happy Hollow is in poor condition, and is not particularly old (mainly post 1943) nor unique, mainly dating from the post 1943 Bell period of occupation. There are other gardens of a similar age throughout Victoria. Its informal style and simple nature are reminiscent of typical depression-period gardens devoted to subsistence living, from which it could have evolved, retaining the subsistence/ornamental characteristics. The rarity of these garden types, particularly within metropolitan Melbourne, is not clearly known as they are not often documented or studied.

The garden surrounding the cottage could be compared with many examples of early farmhouse gardens and in this sense is not unique nor of high cultural significance for its intactness. It does, however, demonstrate a development integrity with the occupation and development of the house. Some of the planting, such as the pear tree, is quite mature, and may date from an earlier phase of the garden/orchard's development.

The current main drive down to the cottage off Gellibrand Place and Happy Hollow Drive, has been re routed for part of the way in 1967.

The present garden surrounding the house is a garden that was developed by the Bell family, but may have incorporated an earlier garden and orchard planted by Emmett Whatmough,

McLaughlin, or previous occupants of the site⁵¹. However, the majority of mature plantings that remain today were probably planted by the Bells with additions made over time, particularly the smaller herbaceous plants such as the agapanthus and campanula.

⁵¹ The quality of the 1945 areal photograph (VicImage Quasco, 1945, run 39, frame no.60785, film no.197, project 5) is such that an enlargement is not likely to provide a clear resolution of this question.

LAND PURCHASE. W. 10 Page 190

GRANTEE Francis Dawe Wickham
DATE 9th September, 1840
COUNTY Bourke
ACRES 1000
VICTORIA by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Ireland Queen Defender of
the Faith and so forth.

23290

To all to whom these Presents shall come Erecting WHEREAS at a Public Auction held in conformity with the Regulations made for the sale of Crown Lands in Our Territory of New South Wales Francis Dawe Wickham of Melbourne has become the Purchaser of the Land hereinafter described for the Sum of

one thousand and sixty pounds Sterling Now Know Ye
THAT for and in consideration of the said Sum of one thousand and sixty pounds Sterling by the said Francis Dawe Wickham

to the Colonial Treasurer of Our said Territory for and on Our behalf well and truly paid before these Presents are issued And in further consideration of the Quit-Rent hereinafter reserved WE HAVE GRANTED And for Us Our Heirs and Successors DO HEREBY GRANT unto the said Francis Dawe Wickham his Heirs and Assigns subject to the Conditions Reservations and Provisos hereinafter mentioned ALL THAT Piece or Parcel of Land in Our said Territory containing by admeasurement

one thousand and sixty Acres be the same more or less situated in the County of Bourke and Parish of Nillumbik portion number four, and bounded on the South by a measured portion of six hundred and forty acres being a line bearing East one hundred and thirty chains; on the East by a section line bearing North eighty chains; on the West by a section line bearing West one hundred and sixty one chains; and on the West by Carris Creek. Being the Land sold as at in pursuance of the advertisement of 5th November, 1837

with all the Rights and Appurtenances whatsoever thereto belonging To Hold unto the said Francis Dawe Wickham his Heirs and Assigns for ever YIELDING and Paying therefore yearly unto Us Our Heirs and Successors the Quit Rent or Sum of One Farthing for ever if demanded Prohibited Ejectments: AND WE DO HEREBY Reserve unto Us Our Heirs and Successors all such parts and so much of the said Land as may hereafter be required for a Public Way or Public Ways in over and through the same to be set out by Our Governor for the time being of Our said Territory or some person duly authorised in that respect AND ALSO all Stone and Gravel all Indigenous Timber and all other Materials the produce of the said Land which may be required at any time or times hereafter for the construction and repair of Ways and Bridges for Naval purposes and for Public Works together with the right of taking and removing the same AND ALSO all Land within One hundred feet of high water mark on the Sea Coast and on every Creek Harbour and Inlet AND ALSO all Mines of Gold of Silver and of Coals with full and free liberty and power to search for dig and take away the same AND ALSO the Right of full and free ingress egress and regress into out of and upon the said Land for the several purposes aforesaid AND WE DO FURTHER RESERVE unto Us Our Heirs and Successors full power for Us or Our Successors or for the Governor for the time being of Our said Territory, to resume and take possession of all or any part of the said Land not hereinbefore reserved which may be required at any time or times hereafter for any public purpose the Value of the said Land not hereinbefore reserved or of so much thereof as shall be so required and of any Building standing on the said required Land being paid by the Government to the Party entitled thereto at a Valuation fixed by Arbitrators chosen as hereinafter mentioned AND WE DO HEREBY DECLARE that in every case of Arbitration which may arise under and by virtue hereof One Arbitrator shall be chosen by the Governor for the time being of Our said Territory and One by the then Owner or Owners of the said Land which two Arbitrators (before they enter upon the said Arbitration) shall elect a Third as Umpire who shall determine any disagreement between the Two said Arbitrators But if the Owner or Owners of the said Land shall refuse or neglect to choose an Arbitrator on his her or their part within One Calendar Month after being required so to do by Public Advertisement in the Government Gazette or otherwise then both Arbitrators shall be chosen by the Governor for the time being of Our said Territory which Arbitrators shall also elect an Umpire in the manner above mentioned Prohibited always That if the Conditions Reservations and Provisos herein contained or any part thereof be not duly observed and performed by the said Grantee his Heirs and Assigns then the said Land shall be forfeited and revert unto Us, Our Heirs and Successors and these Presents and every matter and thing herein contained shall cease and determine, and become absolutely void to all intents and purposes and it shall be lawful for Us Our Heirs and Successors by Our Governor for the time being of Our said Territory or other Person duly authorised on that behalf to re-enter upon the said Land or any part thereof and the said Grantee his Heirs and Assigns and all Occupiers thereof therefrom wholly to remove In Testimony Whereof We have caused this Our Grant to be sealed with the Seal of our said Territory.

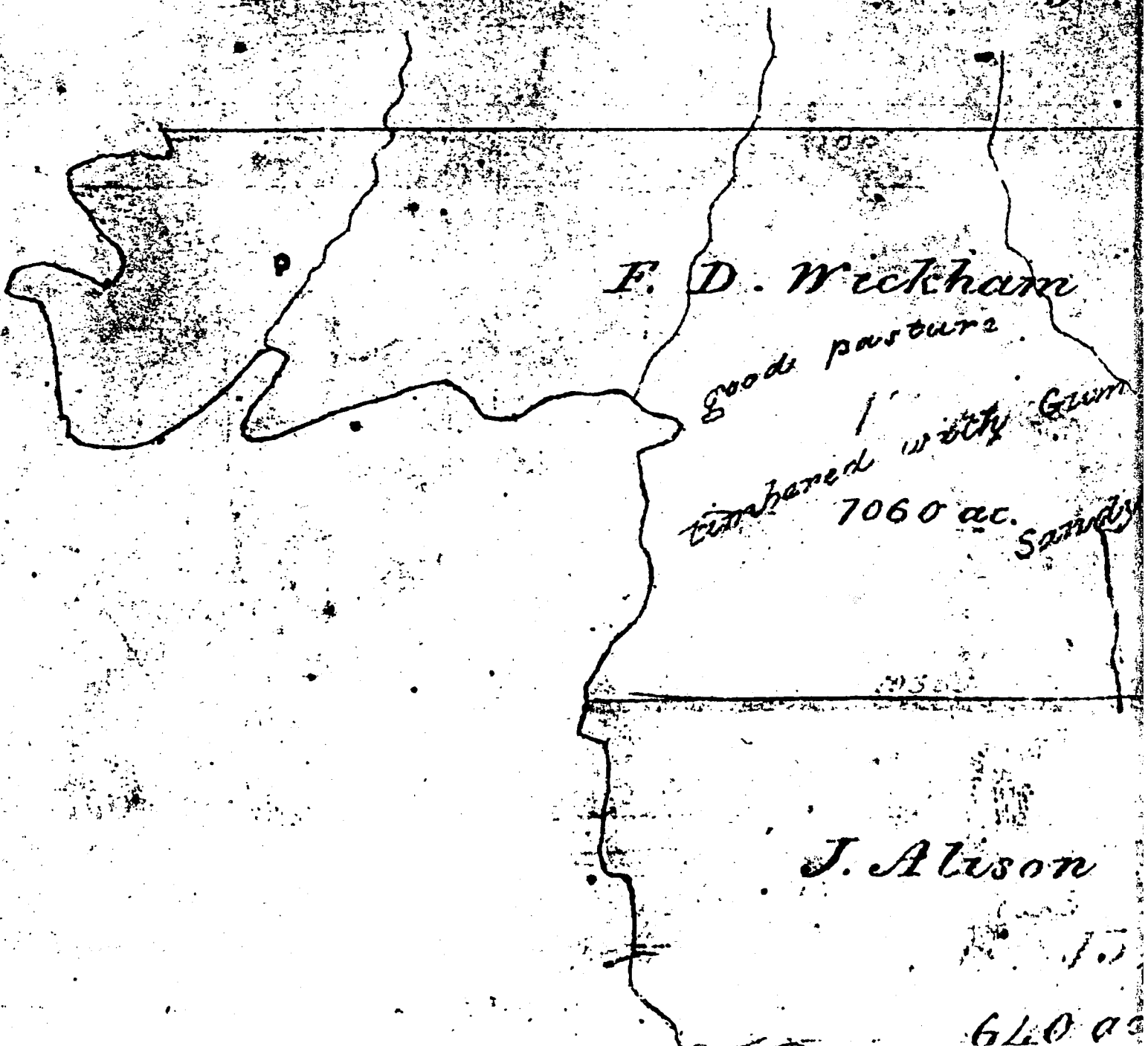
WITNESS Our Trusty and well beloved Sir George Gipps Knight Our Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of Our said Territory and its Dependencies at Government House Sydney in New South Wales foresaid this 9th day of September in the fourth year of Our Reign And in the year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and forty

L. S. (Signature)

Fig 1 Crown Grant Deed for Portion 14 Parish of Nillumbik, County of Bourke issued to Francis Dawe Wickham on 9 September 1840.

NOTE. All the portions for sale
are tinted pink.

Parish of Morang



F. D. Wickham

Good pasture

timbered with Gum

7060 ac. Sandy

J. Alison

640 ac

TOWNSHIP OF
MILLUMBIN

Selected No 1 by
W. R. Belcher July 9. 1852
160 Acres

f Box

Selected No 2 by
W. R. Belcher July 11. 1852
160 Acres

Box

Sail

Selected No 3
160 Acres Sandy
Joseph Garthwaite

String

640

No 4
John Lindsay
160 Acres

A

B

triber... with Gum
160.0.0
John Graves
600

f Box
Selected by
158.0.0
Jakob Arretzen

Selected by

Fig 2 Parish Plan P/A N 62. Central Plan Office

N I (L)

M O R

(16100)

90°0' 4336
14^B CP111677

JANEFIELD COLONY FOR THE
TREATMENT OF MENTAL DEFECTIVES
RESERVE - Exd Act
(PERMANENT) 77/1991

(216 . 4 . 10)

826 . 3 . 30
Gaz. 32.1839

RS 4218
O.P. 35441

17612
183°17'
183°46'
630
183°28'

105
(191)

NATURAL
INTEREST RESERVE (PERMT)
(Deemed to be reserved)
Act 77/1991

156.9 ha ± (Inc area in
Ph. of Keelbundora)

PLENTY

1/4
Ramsay E
11.
2.5
CP/6
G.75

30722s.

ROAD PROCL.
LII-3846 Gaz. 1934-3924

NIC

RIVER



N6(10). TLA 1898 THE
2687 325

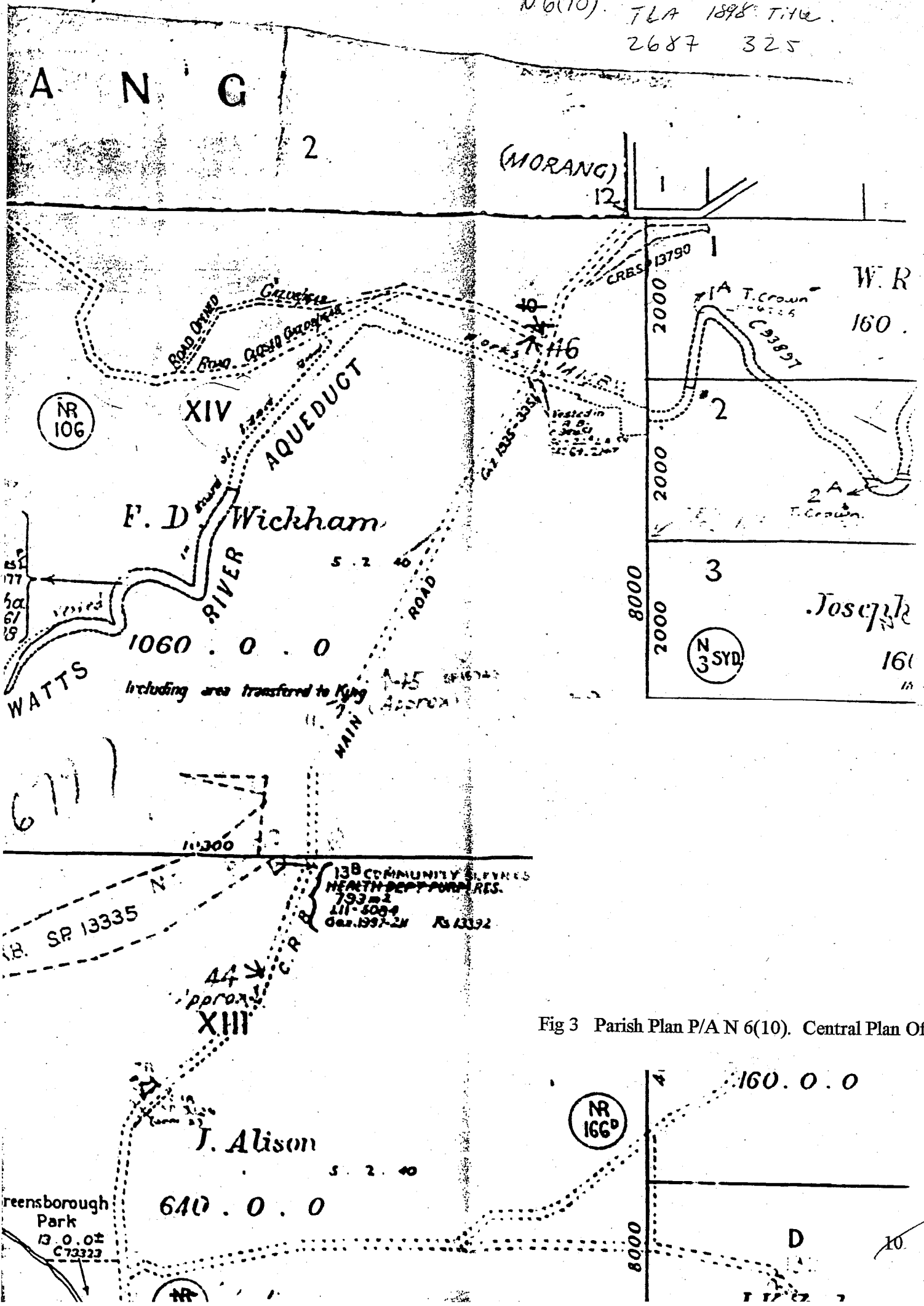


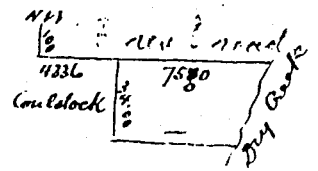
Fig 3 Parish Plan P/A N 6(10). Central Plan Office

vide. 23887

X
H 835 31 Dec. 49 Con. 29 Jan. 50

F. M. Flintoff
£300

Mr. McLaughlin²
771.7

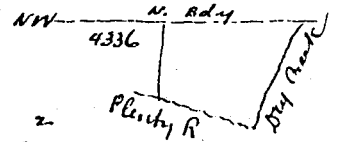


58. 539 1 Mar. 66 Lease 26 " " for 7 yrs from date

Mr. McLaughlin¹
£60

John Polley²
11.11.7
1.1.7

Astley Hill Farm



X
48. 582 8 Apr. 75 Settled. 27 " " 23319

Mr. McLaughlin¹

Mrs. Cully McLaughlin
& Mrs. McLaughlin
Mr. McLaughlin²
To the use of his son
Mr. McLaughlin

Inter alia
same as H 835
(3rd parcel
herein)
Also
Plenty R. Dry Gange

X
37. 489 7 Feb. 87 Con. 1 Apr. 87 by way of Exchange
15319

Mrs. Cully McLaughlin
Mr. McLaughlin²

Mr. McLaughlin²
& Mrs. McLaughlin

Inter alia
same as
H 835

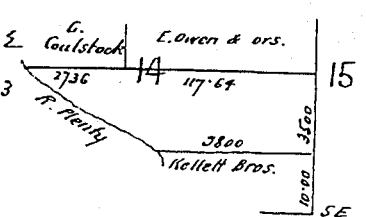
Area land conveyed to
Mrs. Cully McLaughlin

vide. 1173.

X
957 4. Mar. 44 Rele. 22 " " 1173

Mrs. Allison¹
& A. H. Knight
£1272

Edw. Geo. Flintoff¹
Geo. Nevins Flintoff³
Wm. Warner⁴
J. A.



113 4. Mar. 44 Rele. 1 July 44 Confirm. 1173

Same parties
£1272 p. 1 by 2 & 3

E. J. J.

Same

Re. reg^d in consequence of actⁿ of Sec. 11. 6. 44

X
958 5. Mar. 44 Rele. 22 " " by way of Mortgage. 1173

Edw. Geo. Flintoff¹
£675

Geo. Sinclair Brodie²
E. J. J.

Same.

114 5. Mar. 44 Confirm. 1 July 44 1173

Same¹
£675

Same²
E. J. J.

Same.

X
959 6. Mar. 44 Rele. 22 " " by way of Mortgage. 1173

Ed. J. Flintoff¹
£2000 due & 10% p. d.

Geo. Nevins Flintoff²
E. J. J.

Same.

115 6. Mar. 44 Rele. 1 July 44 by way of Mortgage. (Confirmed) 1173

Same¹
£2000 due
10% p. d.

Same²
E. J. J.

Same.

X
617 20 Aug. 46 Transfer 11. Nov. 46 of Mortgage in trust 1173

Geo. S. Brodie¹
Constrⁿ vide above

Mrs. Ritchie²
Andⁿ Rose Cruikshank³
S. R. by atty. J. D. Mickham

Same.

X
712 11. Mar. 47 Con. 12 " " of Equity 1173

E. J. Flintoff¹
£2000 + int.

F. M. Flintoff²
E. J. J.

Same.

X
930 10. Mar. 47 Recon. 15 " " 1173

Mrs. Ritchie¹
£800. 1/4

E. J. Flintoff²
S. R. No. 10711

Same.

Figka

- 282 25 Aug. 47 Mortgage. J. N. Flintoff¹ Hy. Moor² Same as
 1173 30 " " } £500 J.N.F. 73-957
- 185 7 Jan 52 Transfer Hy. Moor¹ Geo. Sterbrooke Airey² Same.
 1173 7 " " } of Mortgage. £500 M.L.
- 99 27 July 54 Recon. G. S. Airey¹ Octavian Browne² Same.
 1173 28 " " } £500 p. 1673 J. N. Flintoff³ SA by atty. Browne
- 10 13 Dec. 54 Con. J. N. Flintoff¹ Michl. MacLaughlin² MacLaughlin Brook
 16 " " } £100 M.L. by atty. M. Baley R. Henry 50 acres ± Dry Creek
- 577 1 July 54 Lease J. N. Flintoff¹ Robt. Whatmough² 2 flats on R. Henry
 16 May 55 } (no term) £21 R.L. pt. of Lot. 14
 7 acres ±
- 937 29 Apr. 56 Releas. J. N. Flintoff¹ Michl. MacLaughlin²⁺³ Same as
 14 Aug. 56 } Confum. 10/- M.M. 21-10
- 353 19 Aug. 74 Equit. Same¹ Edmund Saml. Parkes² Int. al.
 24 " " } Mortgage. £500 + Geo. Bristow Docker M.L. Same as
 B-957
- 31 12 Jan. 76 Rele. Ed. Parkes¹ J. N. Flintoff²
 20 " " } of Equit. + G. B. Docker Ed. P. 3 B.S.
- 333 62 26 Jan. 83 Bill of J. N. Flintoff
 6 Aug. 86 } Prob. to Francis Flintoff
- 242 16 May 87 Con. Francis Flintoff¹ B² of Land + Works² Vide Meml.
 27 June 87 } £325 F.S. Cannot plot from
 descrip.
- 574 24 July 88 Con. Same¹ Same² Same.
 25 " " } £75 F.S. (?)

30970

26. 577 1 July 54 Lease Fred¹ Nevins Flintoff Robt² Whatmough 2 flats on
4 affd⁷ 16 May 55 (no term) £21 R.W. R. Flensby conty.
7 acc. ± pt. of
301. 114

242 / 353 19 Aug. 74 Equit. Same¹ Edmund Saml Parkes³ Ind. al.
24 " " Mortgage. £500 + Mrs. Bristow Docker J. N. F. Same as
15. 99

255 / 31 12 Jan. 76 Rele. Ed. Saml. Parkes¹ Fred² Nev² Flintoff²
20 " " of Equit Mortgage. + J. B. Docker E. J. F. Same.
J. B. D.

333 - 62 26 Jan. 83 Bill of Fred¹ Nevins Flintoff
30970 6 Aug. 88 Prob. to Francis Flintoff

339 / 242 16 May 87 Con. Francis Flintoff¹ The Board of L. + W.²
27 June 87 Exec² +. £325 J. J. } vide Merul.
348 / 514 24 July 88 Con. Same¹ Same² } Cannot plot
25 " " £75 J. J. } from descrip.