

- JANET BOWMAN (NEE CRAIG)
- ALEXANDER WATT BOWMAN

1858

Crown allotments 5 and 6 of section XIII remain unsold on an 1858 plan of the Township of Dandenong. This land is where Laurel Lodge stands today.

Churches, schools and the police had already taken up the surrounding allotments.



Allotments 5 and 6 of section XIII, where Laurel Lodge is today, remains unsold. This image is a detail from the 1858 plan 'Township of suburban allotments at Dandenong parishes of Dandenong and Flemming's, parishes of Bourke and Mornington' by M. Gällman, Assis. Surveyor.
Image source: State Library of Victoria

1861



Mrs Janet Bowman, date unknown.
Due to the laws of the time, Janet Bowman was prevented from having her own property separate to her husband. This meant that her husband Alexander Watt Bowman was a co-owner of the land.
Image source: Dandenong and District Historical Society



Mr Alexander Watt Bowman, date unknown.
Image source: Dandenong and District Historical Society



J Bowman now appears as the owner of the land alongside the date, 5-Ad. The image is a detail from the plan 'Township of Dandenong, Parishes of Dandenong and Flemming's, Counties of Bourke and Mornington', date unknown.
Image source: 1857.



Detail from the New South Wales Australia, Assisted Immigrant Passenger Lists 1848-1861, showing eight year old Janet listed alongside her widowed mother. They arrived on 17 April 1840. Passenger diaries from this time tell us that travel conditions were terrible. Poor hygiene and crowded conditions allowed for the high incidence of disease, and storms were a common occurrence during the voyage.
Image source: State Records Authority of New South Wales (via Ancestry.com)

Mrs Janet Bowman purchased crown allotments 5 and 6 of section XIII for a sum of £17.

Mrs Janet Bowman and her husband Mr Alexander Watt Bowman were both of Scottish descent. They, like many early settlers to the area, braved a long and dangerous journey to Australia by ship.

Young Janet Bowman (nee Craig) departed Greenock, Scotland on December 1839 and travelled with her family on the Glen Huntly. There was an outbreak of disease on their ship and her father and younger sister died during the four month voyage.

Alexander Watt Bowman arrived in Port Phillip at age 10 as an unassisted emigrant with his family. At this time unassisted passengers often travelled cheaply in 'steerage', meaning the lower deck of the ship where the cargo is stored.

Alexander Watt Bowman was an innovative businessman and owned numerous corner blocks in early Dandenong. He is known for opening Dandenong's first store and also for establishing the first Royal Hotel.

1867

In 1867 Alexander Watt Bowman came into financial difficulty. He was declared insolvent and the family sold their vacant land to clear their debts.



Alexander Watt Bowman is listed under 'New Insolvency' in the Friday 25th October 1867 edition of the Age newspaper.
Image source: National Library of Australia



Robert Huckson, c. 1880 by W. McCullis & Co. Hobart.
Image source: East Melbourne Historical Society



Postcard titled 'View from the Old Stone Bridge, Dandenong', date unknown.
This bridge was believed to have been constructed by Robert Huckson. This bridge was later replaced.
Image source: State Library of Victoria

On 30 July 1867 Englishman Robert Huckson purchased the land from Janet Bowman for a sum of £40. It is believed Huckson was already known to the Bowman family as the contracted builder for the Royal Hotel.

Huckson, like Bowman, was also a new arrival to Australia. Huckson, his wife Sarah (nee Ballinger) and eight month old son Herman left London aboard the 'Eliza' in May 1849. They arrived in Adelaide on 23 August 1849. Sadly, their son died at sea during the long voyage and was buried at sea.

Huckson is variously referred to as an architect, stonemason, carpenter, contractor and builder throughout historic material. Huckson was a noted building contractor of the era and was involved in many prominent construction projects including the Old Treasury Building in Spring Street, Melbourne, and also Gabo Island lighthouse. Locally, he was responsible for the construction of Dandenong's old Stone Bridge.

Huckson played an active role on the Dandenong Roads Board and worked alongside their Chairman, William Keys to propose a restructure of local government in the area.

1884 Women Could Own property.