

Exodus from Asfordby



a short
summary of the
arrival of
Asfordby
Heazlewoods in
Van Diemen's
Land
1823 - 1842

Prepared by Miriam Heazlewood-Peck
for the launch of
Tree of Hazel Wood, Revised Edition
March 9th 2014 at Longford, Tasmania

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Our story begins in
Leicestershire, England
around 1820.

The whole country was
suffering badly from the
effects of the Industrial
Revolution.



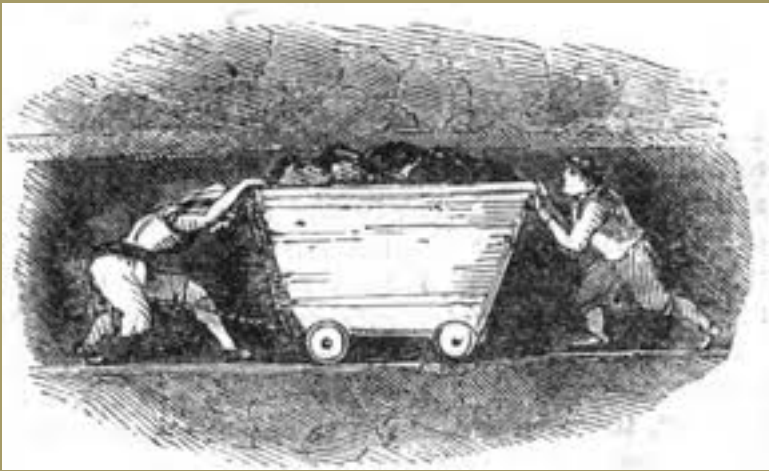
Cities were choked with smoke-belching factories.



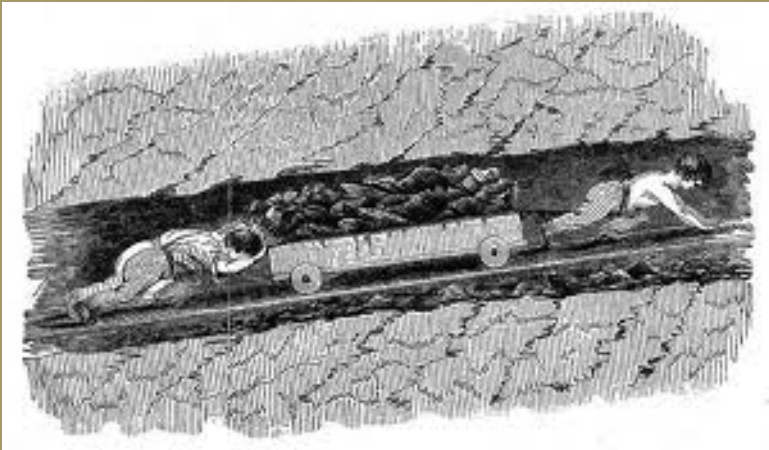


Streetdemocracy.wordpress.com

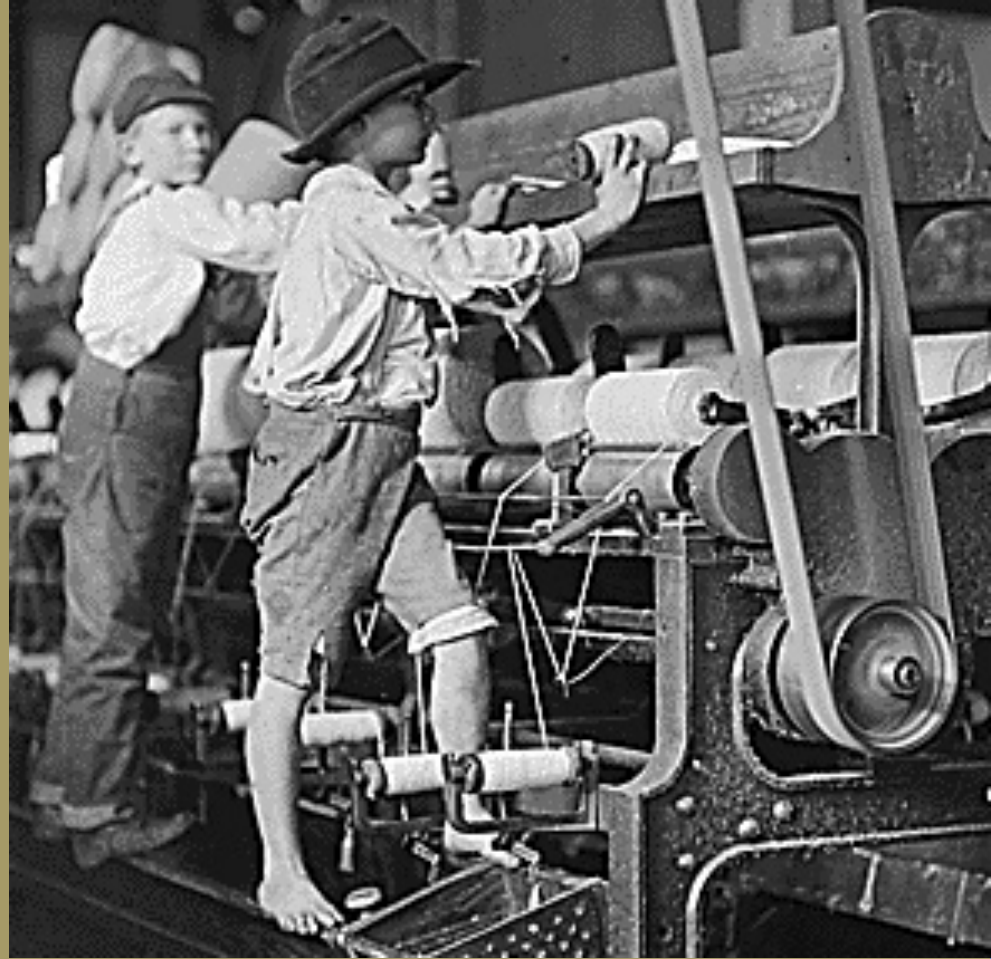
Workers were paid a pittance and lived in poverty. They worked long hours, six days a week. After long days of labouring they returned to their wretched homes for a few brief hours before they had to do it all over again.



writingwomenshistory.blogspot.com



suewilkes.blogspot.com



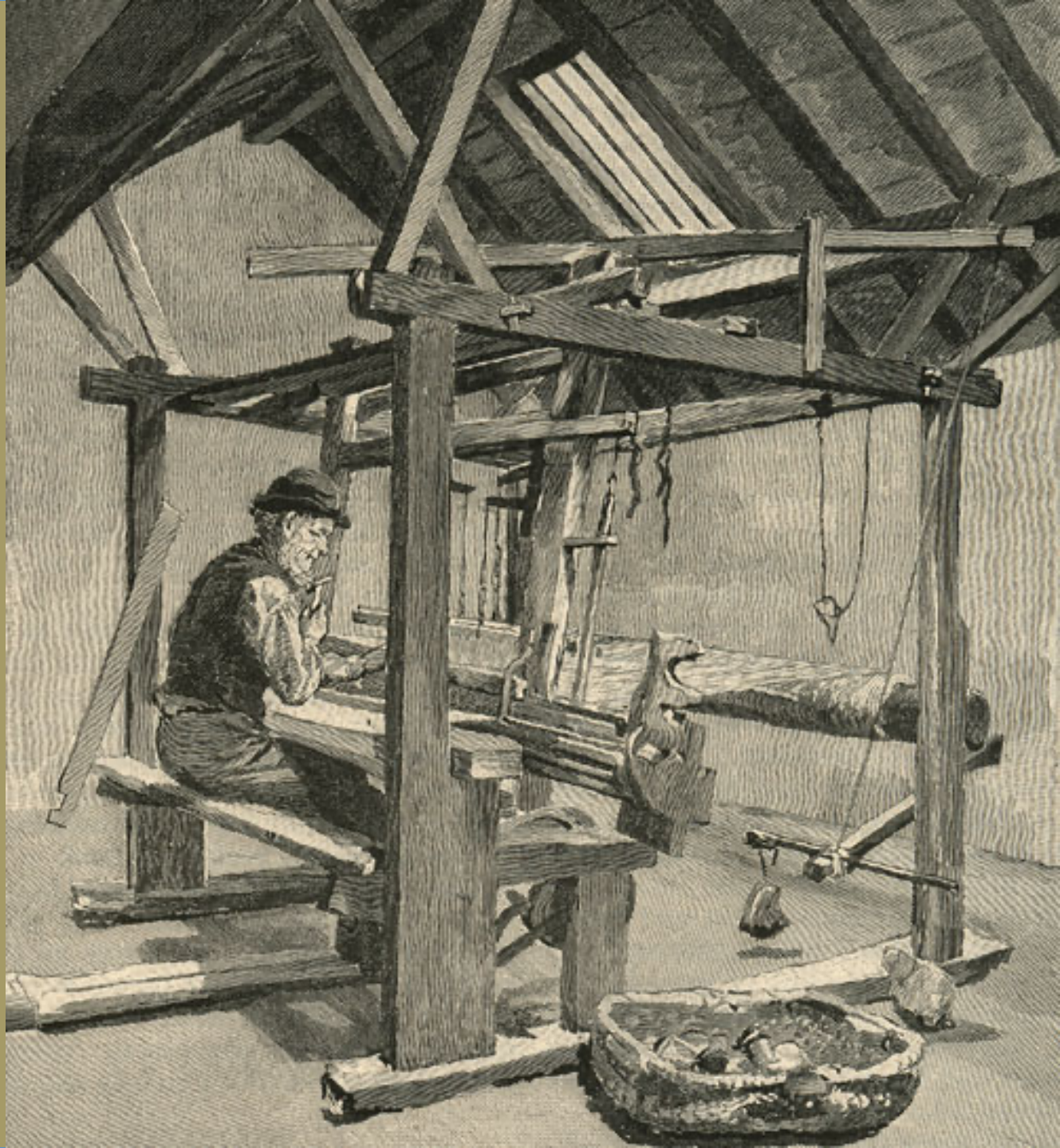
www.slideshare.net

Unscrupulous employers exploited children, taking them as young as nine years old to work down the mines or in their filthy, unsafe factories.



In the countryside, conditions were hardly any better. Labourers had forsaken their posts, flocking to the cities in search of income.

Traditional
craftsmen
eeked out a
living,
desperate to
feed their
families and
pay their bills.





Henry Heazlewood, village carpenter of Asfordby was one such tradesman. Aged in his early fifties, he had recently buried his wife, Elizabeth (nee Egglestone) and soon after had married Jane (nee Marriott).



Also living in Asfordby at the time was James, Henry's father.

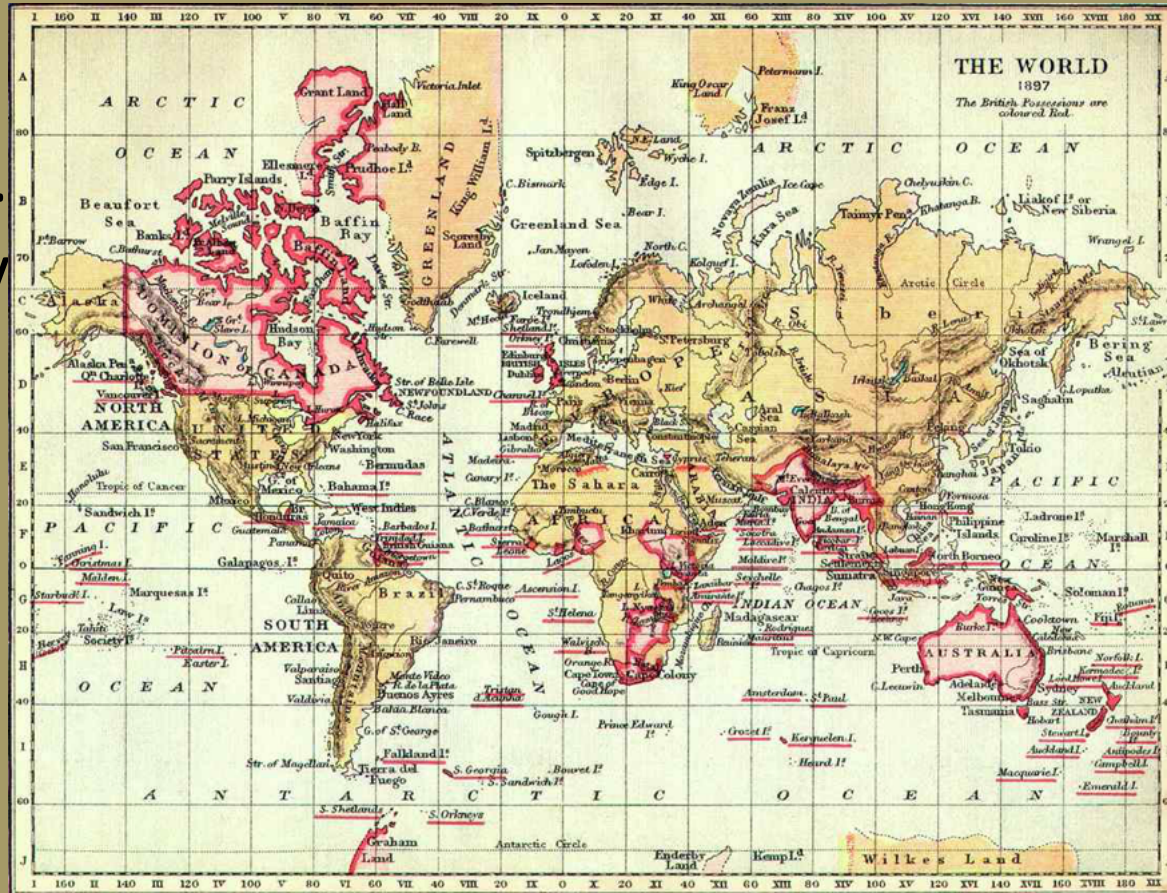
Also a carpenter, he was now in his eighties. James learned the family trade from his father James, who learned from his father James before him. James' grandfather had been a carpenter in Asfordby way back in the late 1600s.





Here lieth
the body of James Mease
of Wood who departed
this life nouember 2
1742 and in the 65 year
of his age

With life in England being so difficult, word had spread about hope of a different life. Thousands had already taken dangerous voyages across treacherous seas to start new lives in Britannia's colonies: some to Canada, others to India, to South Africa, the West Indies and even to the great southland, Australia.



His marriage to Jane soon started a second family for 'Old' Henry. He had nine children by Elizabeth, eight of whom survived to be adults. The oldest of these, James and Joseph, had reached their twenties when their father remarried.



James was
born in
1801....



....Joseph in 1803.

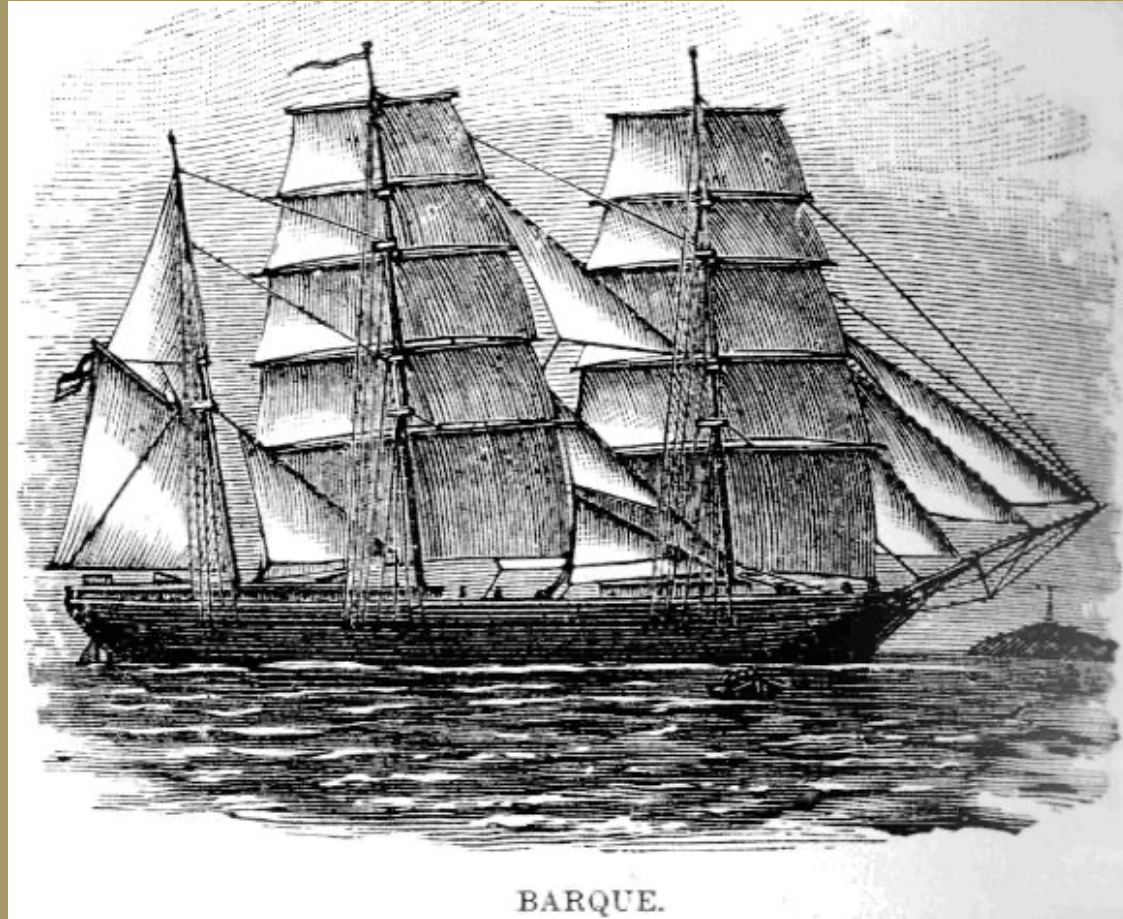


With the economic and social climate as it was, and with the family home required to hold more and more little ones, James and Joseph decided it was time to leave Asfordby. On July 10th, 1823, they left the family home and travelled to London in search of a better life, maybe hoping to earn a passage on an outbound ship.

Maybe they put their names on the books of a broker who matched up tradesmen with potential employers.



However it happened, just six days after leaving Asfordby, James and Joseph found themselves indentured to Richard Willis, a wealthy businessman who had chartered a ship, the 'Courier' to take him and his family to Van Diemen's Land, where free settlers with money to contribute to the young colony were being encouraged to establish themselves.



One acre of land was offered for every £1 the settler contributed to the colony. Willis was granted a substantial 3000 acres of land near Campbell Town, about one hundred miles north of Hobart Town.

For the next five or so years, James and Joseph worked out their indenture to Willis, working alongside dozens of other tradesmen and labourers both free men and convicts, to build his stately home, 'Wanstead Park' near Campbell Town.



We assume that they worked as carpenters or as blacksmiths – possibly both.





Wanstead Park, home of Richard Willis and his family

Two of the daughters of a large Baptist family in the area, Sophia and Mary Diprose, caught the attention of the brothers. On occasions when they were granted a day off, the brothers rode to the Diprose home a few miles north, there to court their sweethearts.



In November 1828, at St John's Anglican church Launceston, James and Sophia married, followed eleven months later by Joseph and Mary.



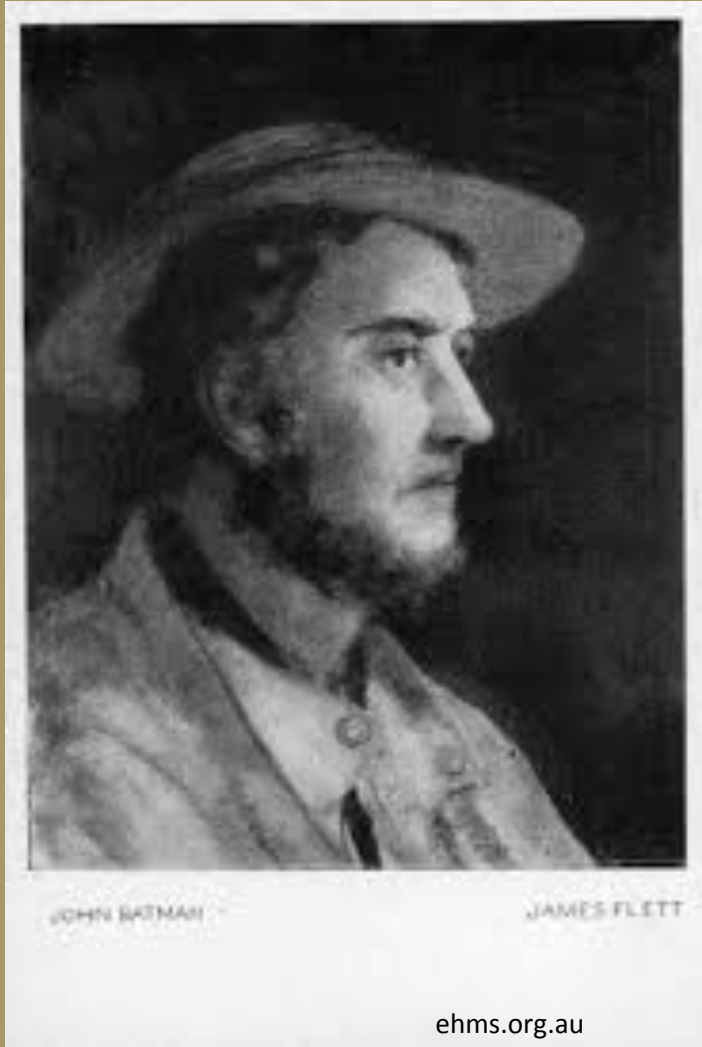
Industriously the brothers worked hard to establish themselves in and around Launceston. As they accumulated money, so too did they accumulate several parcels of land and they both established businesses.



In Launceston, James established his business as a carpenter and builder and Joseph as a blacksmith.



We believe that it was near the brothers' land parcels in the foothills of Ben Lomond that the brothers entered into a business arrangement with John Batman, the founder of Melbourne. The story of that business venture, its twists and turns is one of considerable interest.





‘Beulah’, original oil painting by B.F.Heazlewood

Possibly the year before his marriage to Mary, Joseph had been granted property at Longford. It was here that they lived in the substantial brick home in Wellington Street. They named their new home ‘Beulah’ – God’s promised land.



www.examiner.com.au

Did Joseph build Beulah? That is unknown but there is evidence to suggest that it had possibly been built previous to his ownership.



Joseph's assets were obviously considerable, to the extent that he donated part of the Beulah land in order that a Wesleyan Chapel could be built in Longford. Mary laid the foundation stone for that chapel, which still exists in Wellington Street.

Meanwhile back in Leicestershire, the family's third brother, Henry, had married Sarah Clarke. Henry and Sarah established a home at the nearby village of Welby.



Here Sarah gave birth to two little boys, Joseph and William. In Welby, Henry continued the traditional family trade of village carpenter.

The family of 'Old Henry' and his second wife Jane grew annually. By 1833, Jane had given birth to eight more children to Henry. It appears that only three of these children lived to adult years.



With James and Joseph obviously doing so well in Van Diemen's Land and the young family of Henry and Jane expanding, it was time for other family members to find a new home. Could they too consider leaving England for ever and follow their brothers to Van Diemen's Land?

The decision was made and passage was found on board the ship 'Norval' owned by Methodist philanthropist, Henry Reed.



'Norval', original oil painting by B.F.Heazlewood

This family party numbered seven: Henry and Sarah and their two little toddlers and Henry's younger siblings, twenty-two year old Frances (Fanny), nineteen year old Elizabeth.....



The Emigrants

By Edmund Walker

Source: www.austhistmuseum.mq.edu.au

.....and fifteen year old Robert Henry. None of them were ever to return to their homeland.



Source: Chater, front cover



Only sisters Ann and Jane remained at home with 'Old' Henry, his second wife Jane and their young family, aged between 10 and 1.

Source: www.experimentalwifery.com

What joy there would have been when, safely through their five-month voyage, the travellers arrived at Beulah. A cottage in the gardens had been made ready for Henry, Sarah and their little boys and the younger siblings would most likely have been accommodated With Joseph and Mary in the main house.

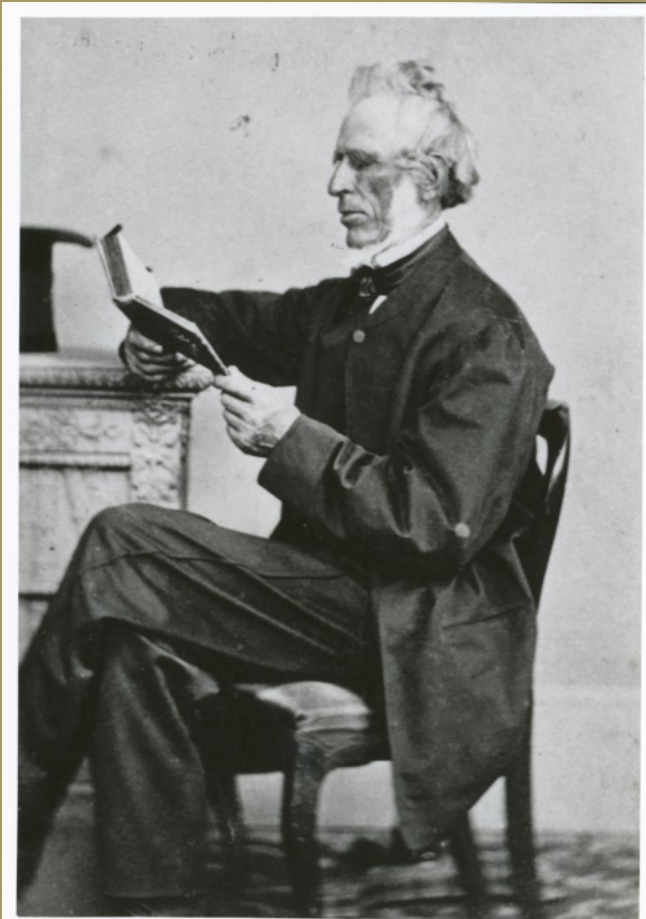


But the joy of family reunion was to be marred just twelve months later by the early death of James. He died at only 34 years. The cause of death is unknown but was obviously not unexpected as his will was signed a week prior to his demise.

Three days before James died, Rev. W.H.Browne, who had married James and Sophia, wrote in his journal that he had visited a very sick man. Later he was to write that he had buried Mr Heazlewood.



Sisters Fanny and Elizabeth found themselves husbands in the area. Within about a year of her arrival, Elizabeth married William Mason, owner of the next door property 'Goodlands'.



Eventually they established the property 'Norwich' close to Longford. This was the Mason family home for several generations.

Fanny married Launceston carpenter, Alexander Kidd. She may have been in charge of Launceston's Frederick St Kindergarten, which is still in operation today. Fanny lived more than half of her life a widow and was the matriarch of a huge family of descendants.



Just five years after James' death, in 1839, Joseph too died at an early age. He was only 37, and what wonderful achievements he had made in those few years. He died leaving Mary with four young children between eight and three years old.





Three years later, Ann, the last of 'Old' Henry's family to migrate, came to Van Diemen's Land to help Joseph's widow, Mary, with her young family. Four years later, she married Benjamin Mason, presumably the brother of William Mason who had been her sponsor for the voyage.

Ann and Benjamin were to die tragically after only a few months of marriage. They were thrown from their carriage and drowned when their horse reared while crossing a river on the way to the afternoon church service.



When he was just nineteen and she eighteen, youngest brother Robert Henry who, like his two older brothers was then working as a blacksmith, married Mary Ann Gurr. Robert was to be the father of the largest Heazlewood family.



They started married life in Longford but in 1843 joined the pioneers of Portland Victoria, soon after the Henty brothers had established this settlement.



View of Portland Bay, Watercolour by George William Jackson, 1836

<http://gallery.slv.vic.gov.au>

Tragedy was to strike Robert and Mary Ann time and time again.

Their ultimate tragedy, the disappearance of their little four year old son Freddie and the subsequent death of his young mother, is a well known family story. Mary Ann died just two weeks after the birth of her ninth child, Jabez with whom she was heavily pregnant at the time of Freddie's disappearance .



'Lost' by Frederick McCubbin, 1907

Robert married a second time, to Henrietta Shacklock, who we believe was the daughter of a convict. To Henrietta, he was to have another nine children!



But it was in Robert Henry's corner that we have discovered a skeleton emerging from the family closet. The interesting circumstances under which he moved his young family to Portland makes riveting reading for all branches of our vast Heazlewood family.





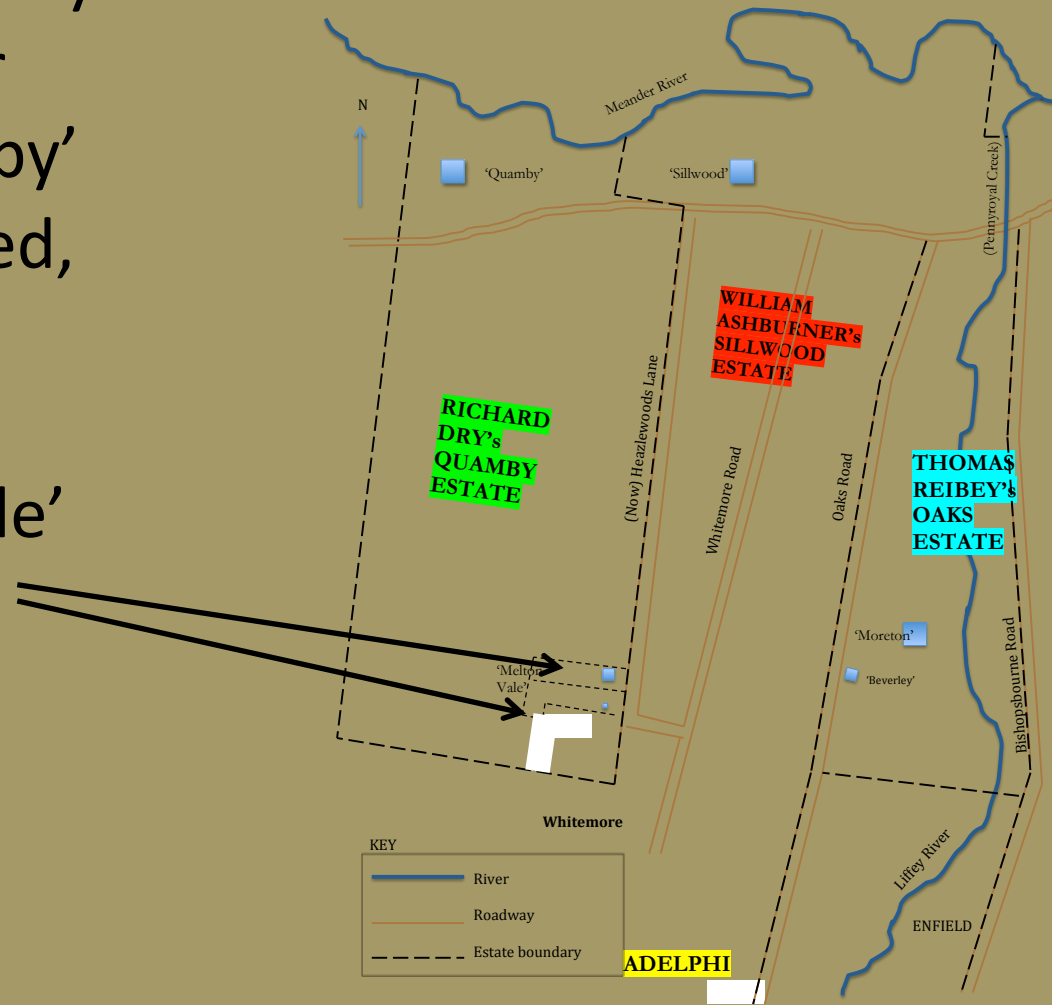
victorianweb.org

Finally, we come to Henry, the brother who had migrated with his wife and two small boys. For fifteen years he worked at Longford as a carpenter and blacksmith.

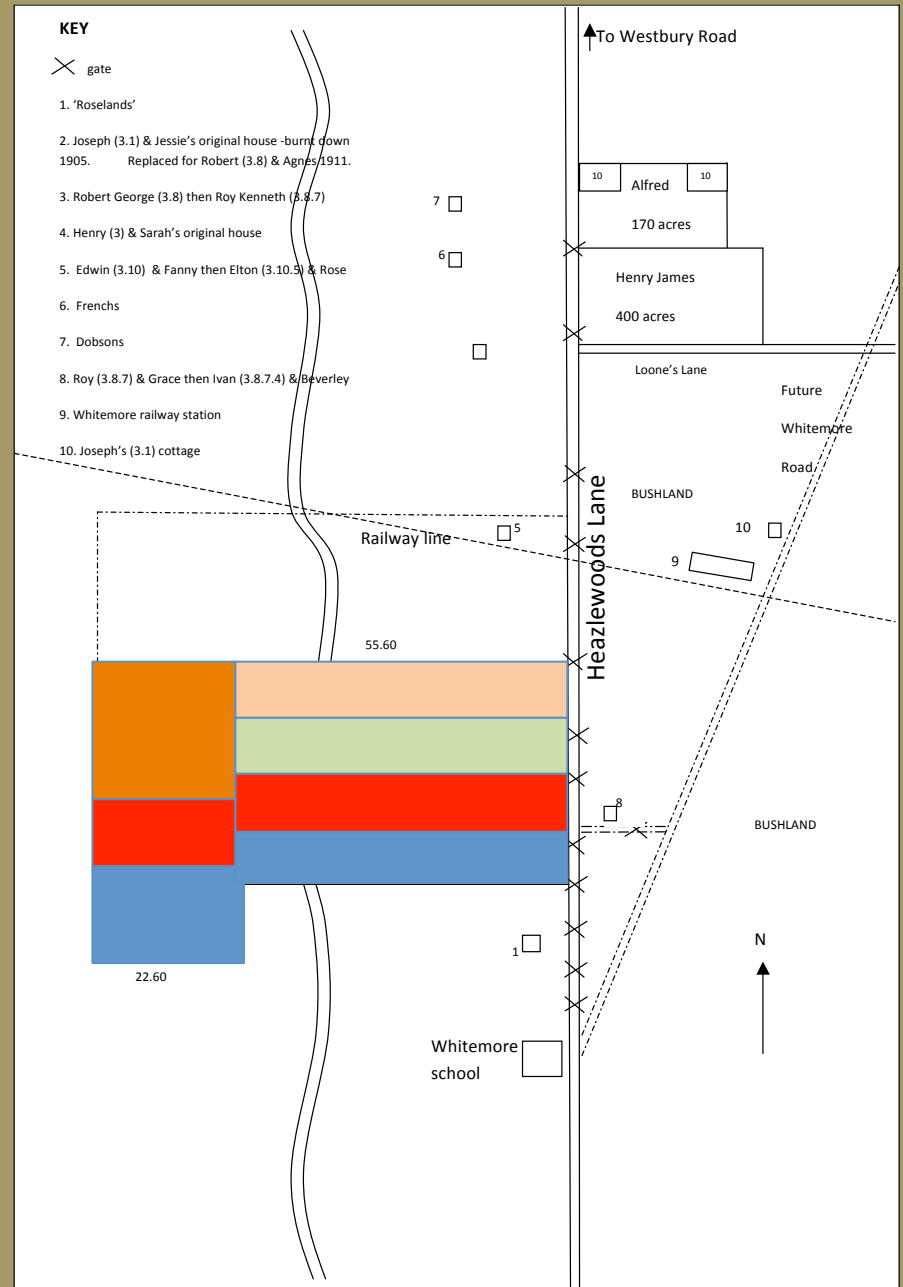
Henry obviously had a hankering to try farming as in 1849 he took up a farming tenancy at Moreton Estate on the Oaks Road.



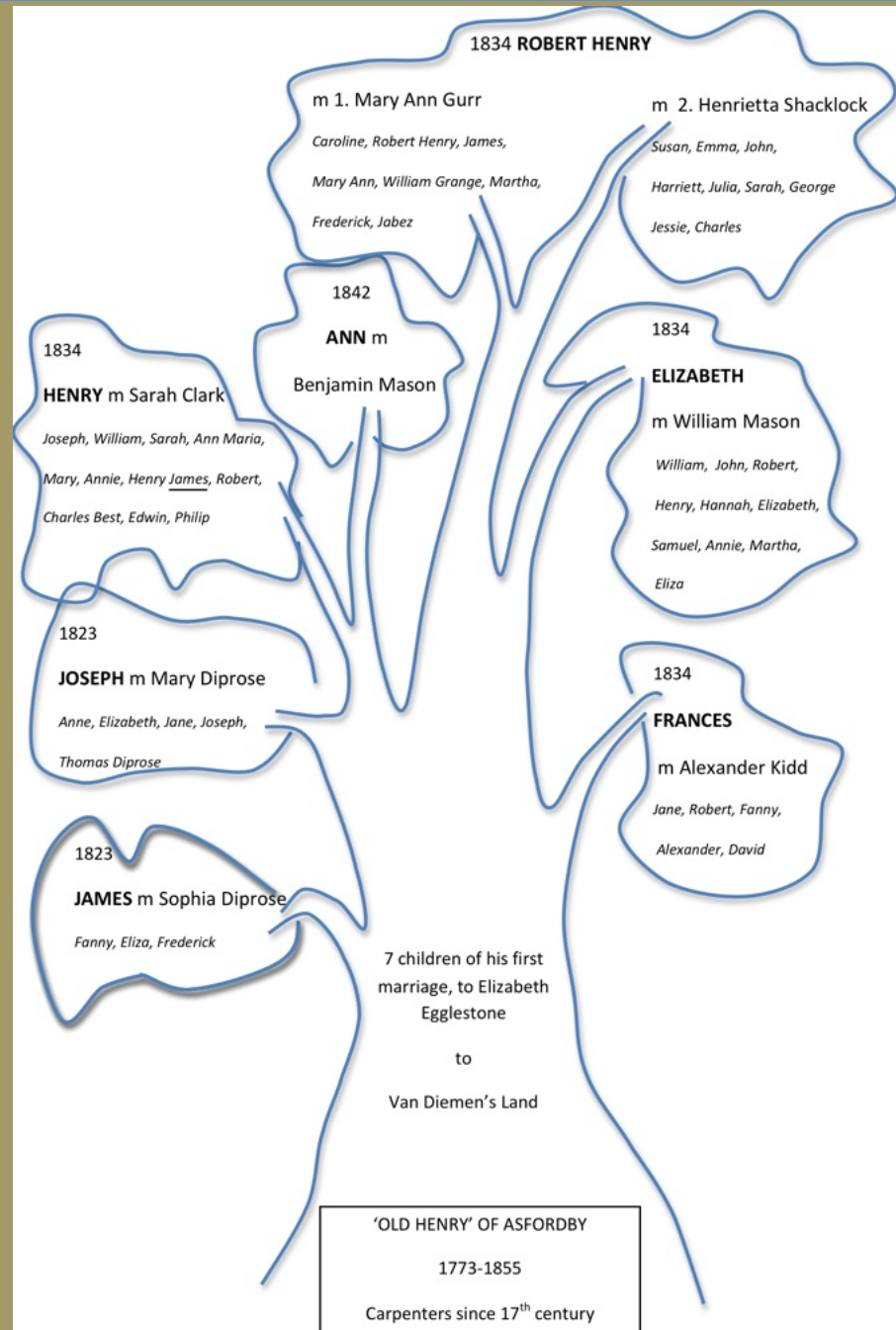
Within five years, Henry seized the opportunity to buy his own farm and when Sir Richard Dry's huge 'Quamby' estate was being subdivided, Henry bought two of the adjoining allotments and called his farm 'Melton Vale' in memory of Melton Mowbray back in Leicestershire.



So successful was his venture, that Henry had repaid half the loan for this land within three years. On his death, Melton Vale was divided into separate farms for five of his seven sons. Most of it is still in the hands of his descendants to this day.



So today, on March 9th 2014, we have at last rejoined members of this large Leicestershire family, who were prepared to leave their homeland and risk all in search of a better life.



As far as we know, not since late in 1843, when Robert and Mary Ann moved their young family from Longford to Portland has the family been reunited.

We honour their memory.

We salute their tenacity, their pioneering spirit and their faith in God to sustain them through all adversities.

As Heazlewoods from all over the world, we are proud to claim our ancestors James, Joseph, Henry, Jane, Fanny, Elizabeth, Ann and Robert.

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The source of images from the internet have been acknowledged underneath.