

**Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc.**



**Aboriginal Cultural Heritage  
of the proposed  
Mangalore-Pontville Heritage Landscape Precinct**



## ***milaythina pakana nayri* - Aboriginal Landscape Values in Mangalore-Pontville country**

The precinct was owned and shaped by Aboriginal people since time began and the landscape reflects their knowledge, beliefs and traditions. Hundreds of generations of Aboriginal families hunted, gathered, corroborated, camped and traded here. This was an ancient Aboriginal modified and developed area of valuable resources carefully nurtured by its traditional owners. Today's precinct area contains a valuable record of Aboriginal society, and connects Aborigines with the larger cultural landscape of the entire Bagdad valley and Brighton plain and beyond, through a constellation of associated places situated through and beyond the valleys and surrounding hills.

This Aboriginal presence is not obvious to the European eye. It does not reveal itself by impositions on the land (such as buildings, roads, bridges etc ) nor by major interventions to the natural features of the land (such as removal and replacement of native vegetation, agricultural practices, rerouting and damming of water sources, fencing, tunneling etc). It is marked by the less pronounced signs of Aboriginal interaction with the landscape, taken place over thousands of years as an integral element of the Aboriginal relationship with country. Many of these signs have been hidden, built over, removed, destroyed and otherwise degraded and obscured by the European presence and extensive farming use of the last 200 years.

Nonetheless, much still can be seen, retained in the natural features of this landscape, which still speak of the close association and complex traditional interactions between this piece of country and its original Aboriginal owners.

These signs remain on the land in the landforms which give indications of Aboriginal activity: the worked seams in the stone quarry now on the golf course; the formations of tool-making stone and tool working sites; the swampy areas along the waterways with rushes for basket making and other raw material sources; the remnant original grasslands and wooded hills. The signs remain too in the patterns of occupation and movement shown by the networks of open campsites along the Bagdad and Strathallan rivulets and their many tributaries; the living grounds on what is now Rifle Range Road, and the pathways of travel into, through and beyond the precinct area,

Today's Aboriginal community have fought to preserve and understand this history as part of a struggle to rebuild and reconnect after invasion and attempted genocide severed the intimate cultural ties with much of the country in Tasmania. The Aboriginal community holds great importance to landscapes, places, life forms and materials which nurture connection with the ancestors and the ancestral way of life. This Aboriginal experience and understanding of "country" as a living entity through which all places and creatures are related in a universal collective and in which everything has an essential function and meaning, is a complex and deeply spiritual belief and practice.

Every year that passes more and more of the places containing Aboriginal heritage are lost or diminished. In many cases these places and their cultural values are destroyed without us ever knowing what we have lost; in other cases, where the heritage and its values are clearly known, the loss is even more deeply felt.

The Pontville Mangalore Heritage precinct presents a rare opportunity to co-operatively re-establish the known presence and story of the Aboriginal heritage on this landscape where two histories have radically overlapped. The precinct concept is itself an important symbolic and progressive step towards the wider understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal heritage and the diversity of values it contains. To preserve the natural landscape form and aesthetic integrity of this precinct, as well as the materials, objects and places within the landscape, is essential to maintaining its Aboriginal heritage values. From these physical remains, valuable stories and knowledge can be gained, developing appreciation of the intangible values of the heritage. This heritage is the story of

how we came to exist, and who we are. It grounds our identity, explains our cultural links, and forms our relationship with the past that we inherit. Our heritage gives us our sense of worth, our sense of belonging and hope for the future.

## **The Mumirimina people – their traditional life, cultural resources and practices**

The Mumirimina people held the ownership, rights and cultural responsibility for the country within the Pontville Mangalore Heritage precinct. This landscape formed a part of their home, although their territory and lives spread far beyond the precinct boundaries. The people were related directly to their country through ancestral systems of kinship, naming, spiritual and cultural practice, in place for very long generations. They were the specific traditional owners with responsibility for this tract of country, including but not limited to management of its physical resources. Rights to territory derived from the fact that their ancestral spirits dwelt in these parts, and belonged to the whole group collectively; individuals did not exercise ownership of land. These cultural systems were expressed, preserved and passed on through song, dance, naming and ceremony to maintain the mythology of place, local education about country, and the special places where historical events shaped the land, waterways and “all-life”.<sup>1</sup>

The Mumirimina were one of the ten bands comprising the ‘Oyster Bay’ tribe. This was the largest tribe in Tasmania, with an estimated population of 800 people at the time of invasion. They covered 8,000 square kilometres of country along the east coast - from St Patricks Head in the north to the Derwent estuary and Tasman Peninsula in the south, inland across the Eastern Tiers to St Peters Pass in the midlands, down the Jordan River to the Derwent Estuary. Oyster Bay, Big River and Northern Midlands tribes all shared a border at St Peter’s Pass.

The territory of the Mumirimina band extended from Pittwater and Risdon northwards through the valleys of the Jordan and Coal Rivers. Kotalayna<sup>2</sup>, the Jordan River, formed the border between the Big River tribe on its western side, and the Oyster Bay tribe on the east.<sup>3</sup>

The precinct landscape still captures a keyhole view of the country as the Mumirimina knew it. Between the surrounding tiers, the flat lower valley slopes and floodplains of the Bagdad valley supported an environment conducive to camping, travel, hunting, gathering and procuring mineral resources. The basalt ridgelines dissected by the Strathallan and Bagdad Rivulets and Lower Jordan River, forming the steep-sided cliffs on the valley sides, and the extensive silcrete outcrops which emerge from beneath ancient sand deposits on the upper valley sides of the Bagdad Rivulet behind Pontville carry rich veins of raw materials.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> As described by Tasmanian Aboriginal elder Jim Everett.

<sup>2</sup> Say: ku tah lie nah.

<sup>3</sup> Ryan, Lyndall: *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*. UQP.1996:17; Plomley, NJB: *The Tasmanian Tribes & Circatricses as Tribal Indicators among the Tasmanian Aborigines*.1992: 25; Jones, Rhys: *Tasmanian Tribes*. in N.B .Tindale: *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*. 1974: 339

<sup>4</sup> Stone, T and Everett, A. Jan 2009: *An Aboriginal Site Survey of the Proposed Brighton Bypass Northern section, Southern Tasmania*. A report to GHD Pty. Ltd. pp 9-14.

## milaythina-ta                      On the land

Cultural material still contained within the landscape reveals much of the lives and long occupation of the Mumirimina. Many places show marks of different activities, attesting to their diverse associations with the land. Some areas were used extensively to quarry stone for tool making. At other places, the people spent time reducing quarried stone into smaller pieces to be refined into useful tools. Extensive surface deposits of cultural material left by this activity are, remarkably, still visible after two hundred years of agriculture: silcrete, chert, chalcedony, agate, soapstone, quartzite, siltstone, mudstone and porcelanite were all worked to produce tools in this precinct.<sup>5</sup>

Other locations show the remains of campsites where family groups resided on well drained sandy soils. Here are still seen the range of tools they made and used - for grinding, cutting, and scraping - indicating a variety of daily and specialised activities. The diversity and size of these campsites and the signs of many daily activities undertaken there indicate these were established camps, occupied for extended periods.

## kani-ti                                      In language

The rich diversity of the resources available to the Mumirimina within this landscape is revealed in words still remaining of their Oyster Bay language.<sup>6</sup> There are their words for foods such as the large forester kangaroo (*tara*) and the smaller wallaby (*lokarngerner*), hunted by the men through the grasslands in the valley; possums (*nuelangertar*), for which the women climbed trees with ropes they plied from a long grass; bandicoots (*linira*) and kangaroo rats (*nienyennah*); wombats (*drometehenner*) dug out from their burrows (*lorelingenner*) along the rivulets; echnida (*mungyenna*) on the dry lower slopes of the hills; pigeons (*mongalonerya*) and crows (*lietah*); emu (*punnunener*), plentiful in this dry sclerophyll forest with open grassland clearings and constant sources of fresh water (*layna*), and still sung about by the last of the Mumirimina in their later imprisonment on Finders Island, but extinct by 1840; ferns and their roots (*lakri*, *nairrekomenyer*, *lawitta*); native bread (*turila*) and other fungi (*drinyer*, *lirwityer*, *puckarner*, *woollerkerpityer*) which grew on the roots of the peppermint trees (*meeterner*) and other gum trees (*lutha*); mushrooms (*neatyranna*, *moonterranner*) and toadstools (*murkumener*); the big white edible tree grubs (*wakara*); roots of many bulbous plants (*lanapuna*, *lubebrener*, *noweegerporner*, *parerer*); grass tree bread (*yamina*), a great favourite; kangaroo apples (*myeterwinner*), native cherries (*trymoteteyanner*) and other seasonal fruits, berries and seeds (*leebunner*, *murerleener*, *pooner*, *tumememoretinner*).

Their words also still remain for the cultural materials they gathered here and the items they made from them – iris, rush and sedges (*plangennar*, *tranennar*) for the twined baskets (*tuebrenner*) the women wove to carry food and tools, currajong (*murgener*) and grasses (*trounniner*, *ninneener*) for plying string (*laritja*) and ropes (*pathana*). Women strung shells (*rina*) collected from the east coast onto the fine string they had plied and traded those necklaces (*kanalaritja*) for ochre (*pulawini*) with their neighbours, the Big River people, an inland people with no coastal territory of their own.<sup>7</sup> Sinew drawn from the tails of kangaroos were twisted into necklets (*tryerrerner*).

<sup>5</sup> Stone and Everett 2009 op cit pp16, 26,29,30-33, 53,54.

<sup>6</sup> *palawa kani* Languages Program, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre; Plomley, NJB (ed): *A Word-list of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages*. 1976. Most of the Oyster Bay language words in this section are shown in the spellings of George Augustus Robinson and other recorders, who tried to capture unfamiliar Aboriginal sounds in their own European – mostly English – spellings. Some words in this section are shown in *palawa kani* spelling, an alphabet devised specifically to show the original sounds of Tasmanian Aboriginal language. Permission to use Aboriginal language can be obtained by application to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre.

<sup>7</sup> George Augustus Robinson journal 25 October 1830, in Plomley 2008:292

Branches (*mumara*), boughs (*poruttye*) and bark (*poora*) from the eucalypts (*lutha*) and she-oaks (*limuna*) clustered here and there in the grassland (*nimina*) and massed on the slopes of the rising hills (*poimena*) were used to build shelters (*leprena*) when the people paused in their transit of their country to sleep, to eat, to spend a few days or weeks. Words remain too for many songs (*liyini*) and dances (*kanaplila*) performed in ceremony for ritual occasions, to celebrate the land and its creatures, and to portray both ancestral and contemporary events.

Their words describe the stones (*luyni*) that built the hearths for the fires (*patrula*) at the open campsites, still to be seen along the ridges and gentle slopes adjacent to the rivulets and tributaries; for the stones of specific types and for particular uses - the quartz (*keeka*), the flints (*tronener*, *truetter*), the stone for mixing ochre (*lonunghelibbenne*), for sharpening spears and cutting kangaroo (*nallerware*), stone with a smoothed edge (*panninya*), stones for throwing as a weapon (*packener*)<sup>8</sup>. These were cut from the silcrete at the large quarry at Pony Hill and the other stone formations within the precinct and taken to the camps to be worked into tools. Often finished tools have been left at some of these campsites, perhaps dropped or forgotten; mostly what's left are the waste flakes from the making of the tools. The stone for mixing ochre on the other hand, was a highly valued and much used item, part of the household kit which the women carried,<sup>9</sup> and not likely to be forgotten or left behind in the normal course of events. One of these *pulawini* stones has only been recently rediscovered, built into a wall in the oldest section of Shene homestead in 1822<sup>10</sup>; it was most likely picked up with the other stones in the wall in the course of clearing the land for farming, and would not have been recognised.

The presence of small scatters or single tools dispersed here and there throughout the precinct mark places where Mumirimina families briefly visited as they traversed their territory on these well-defined routes. Paths also followed creeks and little rivers (*minanya kitina*) such as the Bagdad Rivulet, which was an established north-south travel route through the valley precinct, and the Strathallan Rivulet which led onto the Jordan River (*Kutalayna*).

Major native roads (*makuminya*) skirted the precinct and its environs, the larger Bagdad valley and Brighton plains. These took the people northward within the Midland valley; through St Peter's Pass to Blackman River and then to the high country to the west, or round the Blue Hill to Miles Opening and on to the Clyde and Ouse River valleys in Big River country. On another road they could travel from the lagoons on the Tasman Peninsula through Pittwater along up the Prosser and Little Swanport rivers to the coast. Another linked the central plateau in the west to the east coast at Swanport along the east bank of the Clyde River, Bothwell to Jericho and Parattah across the Eastern Tiers.<sup>11</sup>

The Mumirimina travelled these roads to procure seasonal and fluctuating supplies of food and cultural resources both within and outside their tribal territory. They went to the east coast for shellfish, coastal birds and eggs (muttonbird, penguin, gull) and marine vegetables, seaweeds, *kanikung* (pigface), and other coastal plants; inland and westward to the marshes and lagoons for swans, ducks and their eggs. And to meet with other Oyster Bay bands, themselves moving from place to place, for purposes of marriage, for social and kinship gatherings, to perform burials, to jointly manage country and traditional resources, to exchange gifts and trade for ochre and other commodities, and to take care of ritual ceremonial and spiritual obligations.

<sup>8</sup> As experienced often by kangaroo hunters outside the early settlements in Mumirimina country; for instance Knopwood, Monday, 2 March 1807: "My man Richardson came in from kangarooing ... he and Earl were out with the dogs and ... natives to the number of 60 came down to them throwing stones and shaking their spears at them...The natives have been very troublesome for a long time but not so desperate as lately... [they] endeavour to keep the men and dogs in the vallies that they may throw stones at them which they do with great force and exactness." [Nicholls 1977: 128]

<sup>9</sup> George Augustus Robinson MS journal, 26 November 1831.

<sup>10</sup> Pers comm, David Kernke, Shene owner, August 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Jones: *Tasmanian Tribes*. in Tindale 1974:339

They travelled further westward as well, into the country of their allies, the Big River tribe; although one of the favoured hunting grounds where the Oyster Bay and Big River tribes gathered was much nearer to home. At the large gathering place at Kutalayna on the Jordan River at Brighton, large numbers of Aboriginal families are now known to have congregated for long periods for almost 42,000 years. This was a major focus of occupation and activity with tool manufacture and day to day living as well as a hub for social and trading contacts.<sup>12</sup>

### **Maintaining and adapting the landscape - burning**

Remnant native grasslands and woodlands within the precinct are significant surviving character elements of the cultural landscape which the Mumirimina occupied. Inside the Pontville Small Arms Complex (PSARC), the native vegetation remains virtually intact from the valley floor to the crown of the hill,<sup>13</sup> a snapshot of how the whole Bagdad valley would have appeared when the Mumirimina lived here. Blue and white gum forests still crown the west-facing hill, the north-west facing slopes carry grassy woodlands of gums and she-oaks which become more open as they descend to the grassland on the valley floor and river flats. The original kangaroo grass, spear grass and wallaby grass predominate in the grasslands<sup>14</sup> and a small area of poa tussock grassland persists on the southern side of Rifle Range Road, on the fringe of the precinct.<sup>15</sup>

Such grasslands and open forests provided habitat for a high diversity of flora and fauna species important in Aboriginal subsistence and culture. A few vestiges of the natural lifeforms once cultivated and enjoyed by the Mumirimina survive in the conservation listed PSARC. The nationally vulnerable eastern barred bandicoot and the uncommon tussock grass skink still have habitat here, with the only known remaining populations of the endangered greenhood orchid, the vulnerable native soy-bean and at least eighteen other rare and threatened plant species. Among these are a dianella lily, a traditional material for basket making. Beyond the PSARC, wedgetail eagles still nest in the eastern hills, and there are some active wombat dens in the valley floor.<sup>16</sup>

This terrain of open wooded hills and grassy plains dotted here and there with small copses of trees was developed by the Mumirimina throughout the precinct. They burnt the land in a deliberate system to maintain these different forms of country, to influence and diversify plant and animal species by regulating vegetation growth and providing accessible habitats for wildlife, which in turn enabled more efficient hunting, and to keep flat areas open for ease of travelling.

This modification of the landscape by fire can also still be seen in the valley flats in other areas within Mumirimina country. The plains from the Derwent estuary through to the Bagdad Tiers were systematically burnt in patches over thousands of years. Managing resources through burning to allow hunting and gathering is an important aspect of the set of interlinked cultural responsibilities for country and its people practised by the Mumirimina.

---

<sup>12</sup> Paton, R: *Draft Final Archaeological Report on the Test Excavations of the Jordan River Levee Site, Southern Tasmania*. August 2010; Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre : *Mumirimina people of the Lower Jordan River Valley Levee*, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Because this 170 hectare Commonwealth owned Defence Department property was set aside from 1914 solely for military training, it has not been subject to the agricultural use, stock grazing, construction of extensive buildings, urban clearing and development which has characterised the remainder of the precinct.

<sup>14</sup> Australian Heritage Place Listed Pontville Small Arms Range Grassland Site, <http://www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi/search.html>

<sup>15</sup> NorthBarker Ecosystem Services (A. North & P. Barker): *Midland Highway-Bagdad Bypass Vegetation Survey and Fauna Habitat Assessment*. Pitt and Sherry. April 2011: 7.

<sup>16</sup> NorthBarker op cit pp8; 30;31, 46,47; Australian Heritage Place Listed PSARC op cit.

Joseph Lycett's painting 'View from near the Top of Constitution Hill, Van Diemen's Land', c.1821, shows a landscape of alternating belts of forest and plains, indicative of the terrain which at that time stretched to Bagdad and beyond, encompassing the Pontville and Mangalore areas.<sup>17</sup>



From Lycett's *Drawings of the Natives and Scenery of Van Diemens Land*, London 1830, PIC R5689, NLA.

This aspect of the land made it also very attractive to Europeans, who, with no understanding of its function, compared it to "a Gentleman's Park in England"<sup>18</sup> and enthusiastically described the "open country" through which in 1804 "by land from Hobart's Town to Launceston, a loaded cart was drawn without the necessity of felling a tree...In general a very rich pasturage."<sup>19</sup>

This and similar statements from the earliest Europeans who experienced the Aboriginal landscape of Tasmania encapsulate the vast cultural difference between Aboriginal and European concepts of land ownership and use, which so quickly led to disastrous and tragic results for the Mumirimina.

<sup>17</sup> While Lycett is not known to have visited Tasmania, this painting presents recognisable aspects of the countryside it claims to depict. Gammage 2008: 246 reminds us Lycett was a forger and suggests he may have copied drawings made by Surveyor George Evans or James Taylor who accompanied Macquarie on his 1821 visit to Tasmania. [B. Gammage, B: *Plain Facts: Tasmania under Aboriginal Management*. Landscape Research, Vol 33, No.2, April 2008. pp241-254]. See also J. Hoorn: *The Lycett Album*, Canberra, 1990.pp:1-3,19.

<sup>18</sup> John Glover 1836, cited in Gammage 2008: 243

<sup>19</sup> Edward Lord 1812, cited in Gammage 2008: 243



## Invasion, resistance, war and dispossession

### Colonisation and conflict

Close to the early settlement at Hobart, and the fertility of their country making it desirable agricultural land, the Mumirimina were drastically affected by colonisation almost immediately. The first recorded massacre took place in the country of the Mumirimina at Risdon Cove in 1804, when soldiers fired on a large group, including many women and children, who were hunting kangaroo. An orphaned boy was kidnapped after the massacre, one of the first known children to be stolen by whites. An eye witness reported “...*the natives were driven from their homes afterwards and their women and children were taken from them by stock keepers..*”<sup>20</sup> Other contemporaries noted that the Aborigines virtually never came back to hunt in these areas and their fires were not seen in the area after 1808.<sup>21</sup>

The best southern kangaroo hunting grounds were in Mumirimina territory, from the hills north of Risdon Cove through the Jordan River Valley, the Brighton plain and Bagdad valley and into the southern midlands. With severe food shortages in the early colony, Europeans hunted kangaroo and emu in increasing competition with Aborigines.

Physical evidence of this early European penetration into the Bagdad valley can still be seen in the rubble foundations of a small building on an unnamed tributary of the Bagdad rivulet, slightly beyond the northern border of the precinct, on land that became part of the Sayes Court property of John Espie in the 1820s. Oral tradition records three huts originally in that location, two of which are remembered as old hunters’ huts.<sup>22</sup> The author of the heritage report which discusses the huts notes “*The drought of 1806-07 pushed hunting into the Bagdad Valley with convicts being provided with guns and dogs in search of game.*” Whether this ruin is in fact a hunter’s hut, or a shepherd’s hut, given the cropping and grazing also occurring at that time, the effect of the permanent presence of three such huts (at least three that are known of) and their armed occupants, upon the Mumirimina families in the wider area would have been disruptive and threatening at the very least.

“...*the quantities of kangaroos, emus and wild ducks we saw and killed were incredible*” wrote G.P.Harris, surveyor of the new colony, of his “*march of ten days*” in 1808, from Hobart Town to Port Dalrymple through the extensive grassy woodlands of the south and midlands.<sup>23</sup> Imbued with ancestral awareness of the need to regulate food sources to allow permanent supply and maintain the health of country, and in alarm at the unrestrained slaughter of kangaroo, wallaby and the flightless emu by the Europeans and their hunting dogs, the Mumirimina harrassed and attacked kangaroo hunters.<sup>24</sup> Kangaroo numbers were nonetheless quickly depleted, and with the rapid expansion of the pastoral industry, emu were driven from Mumirimina territory into the midlands by the late 1820s, and then to the far north east. The degradation of the land and its life forms had already begun.

At the same time, the Mumirimina became obliged to defend their territory and families against the incursions of convicts absconding into the bush and squatters appropriating land beyond the bounds of the infant settlement. Settlers had spread out from Hobart Town to Pittwater and along the Jordan and Coal Rivers by 1808. Pastoral grants in the Brighton to Bagdad area were

<sup>20</sup> Edward White’s evidence to the Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, held on 10th March 1830, in Historical Records of Australia, 3, i: 242-3.

<sup>21</sup> Rayner, T: *Historical Report regarding Tasmanian Aborigines and the Brighton Plain*. Produced for The State of Tasmania, Department of Energy, Infrastructure and Resources, August 2010. no page numbers.

<sup>22</sup> This is Site 85 listed in Austral Tasmania’s *Bagdad Bypass - Additional Histories of Five Sites*. Final report for Pitt & Sherry, 2010, pp 32-35; 43-44.

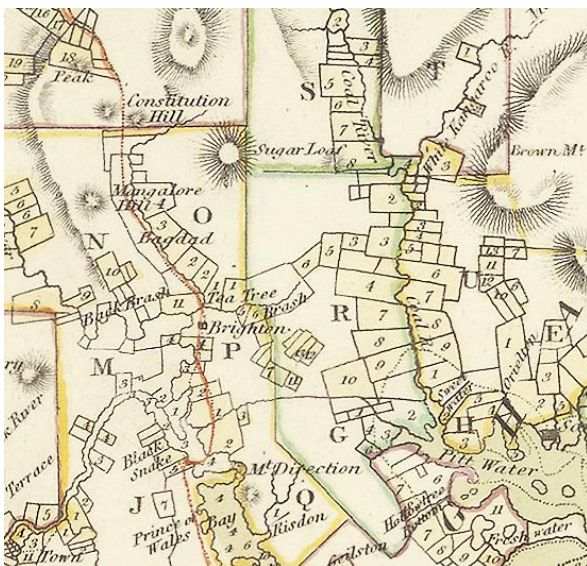
<sup>23</sup> cited in Boyce, J: *Van Diemens Land: A History*. Black Inc. Victoria. 2008: p63.

<sup>24</sup> Knopwood diary February to May 1807; Boyce 2008:45-47, 53-55; Ryan 1996:75,77.

allocated as early as 1809, and the first grants were recorded in the Bagdad valley from 1813; sheep and cattle had been run in the valley since 1810, with convict shepherds in attendance. Substantial land holdings were established by 1816, clustered along the course of the Bagdad Rivulet, and cropping of wheat and other grains from at least 1826.<sup>25</sup> The earliest grants in the Bagdad valley straddled the creeks and rivulets; this pattern was redefined in the late 1820s to a rectangular shape, with one part fronting the rivulet and three parts extending across the valley grasslands back into the hills.<sup>26</sup> Both patterns had maximum impact on Mumirimina occupation of their campsites along the waterways and ridgelines. The open nature of the landscape meant that any Aboriginal movement through the grassed plain and on the customary routes along the rivulets was clearly visible, and inviting swift response. The Hobart Town to Launceston track, and then road, also dissected the Bagdad valley. Roving convict gangs working on the road were more interlopers present in the precinct; and in the 1820s a permanent road work camp was established in nearby Bagdad.

From 1821 to 1830, rapid increases in the European population saw land grants spread along the rivers on the Eastern Midland Plain between Hobart and Launceston, from Launceston north along the Tamar and west along the Meander River, and along the East Coast at Oyster Bay. These “Settled Districts” coincided with the territories of the Oyster Bay, Big River, Ben Lomond and northern tribes.<sup>27</sup> The Jordan River formed the spine of the southern Settled Districts, flanked by the Derwent and Coal rivers, encircling the Mumirimina.

Assistant Surveyor General Thomas Scott’s chart of 1824 shows extensive landholdings along the Coal and Jordan Rivers, and a continuous line of grants on the eastern side along the course of the Hobart to Launceston Road from Tea Tree to Mangalore Hill. The whole of the precinct territory was taken up by white settlers.



A section from *Chart of Van Diemen's Land from the best authorities and from actual surveys and measurements*, by Thomas Scott Assistant Surveyor General. London, 1824.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Boyce 2008: 146-7; Alexander 2006:5; Gwenda Sheridan: *Brighton Tasmania and the Jordan River levee*. Submission to the Australian Heritage Council 2011:17; Austral Tasmania: *Bagdad Bypass: Final Site Specific Histories*. Prepared for Pitt & Sherry. March 2010: 8-9

<sup>26</sup> Sheridan op cit: 18, 19; Gwenda Sheridan: *The Historic Landscape Values of the Proposed Shene Precinct*. Part 1. 2012. p7.

<sup>27</sup> Ryan 1996:83; Boyce 2008:146-7.

<sup>28</sup> Tasmanian Heritage and Archive Office online catalogue.

## Resistance and war

Aboriginal resistance to occupation of their lands, decimation of their hunting grounds, and the kidnapping and abuse of women and children began among the bands of the Oyster Bay tribe. Kidnapping Aboriginal children for labour was so prevalent in the Oyster Bay territories that Governor Davey issued a Proclamation abhorring the practice in 1814. This seemed to have had limited effect, as in 1819 Governor Sorell was obliged to proclaim again against the “*cruelty ... of depriving the natives of their children*”. Sorell specifically referred to this happening in the Pittwater area of the Mumirimina and the adjacent Coal River. On the outskirts of the precinct, Mumirimina children were abducted from Carlton, Cross Marsh and Melton Mowbray, and a child had been taken after the massacre at Risdon Cove.<sup>29</sup>

Colonial accounts report rapidly escalating series of confrontations and reprisals throughout the “settled districts”. By 1820 the Oyster Bay and Midlands tribes had already been depleted and dislocated from their traditional lands. They were forced to abandon the seasonal harvesting of foods and cultural raw materials which had always been their mainstay and custom. Travel on the usual routes and access to their established hunting grounds, campsites and other gathering places, such as the Kutalyana levee, was dangerous if not impossible. As a result, cultural and ceremonial responsibilities could not be met, country could not be cared for in accordance with traditional ways, social protocols with other groups for exchange and trading could not be maintained. The entire complex of Aboriginal spiritual and physical association with country, the defining element of kinship and social structure, was fractured. The people themselves were brutalised and traumatised.<sup>30</sup> The whole precinct area had been seized by the invaders, who now were also taking over the wider Mumirimina territory, the east coast and midland areas. They had nowhere to go.

Some Mumirimina and other displaced Aborigines associated with the Oyster Bay tribe congregated on the outskirts of Hobart. About twenty or thirty men and women were there in June 1823,<sup>31</sup>; and over sixty of them ventured into Hobart Town to beg in November 1824.<sup>32</sup> The impossibility of relying upon traditional food sourcing routes had reduced the Mumirimina to beggars in their own country.

George Augustus Robinson witnessed two such visits. In 1824, his journal describes:

*November 3: At ½ 3pm 64 black natives came into town. They were naked. Under the protection of the government. Went to see them. At 8pm they were placed in the market in the market house. They were formed into 3 circles with a fire in the middle of each. On one side of the circle elevated about 3 feet above the rest sat a person whom I supposed was their chief. One out of the 3 of these chiefs could speak broken English. They were all committed to the care of Mr Mansfield the Wesleyan missionary. One of them had a white feather stuck in his ear...*

*November 4: Tribe of aborigines (the Oyster bay tribe) went out of town to a hut 3 miles out. Saw them begging for bread and dancing &c. Naked except about the shoulder which was a kangaroo skin over the shoulder. Very tall and straight some 6ft. but scabby...<sup>33</sup>*

<sup>29</sup> Boyce op cit, 84-89; Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre: *Mumirimina people of the Lower Jordan River Valley levee*, 2010.p13

<sup>30</sup> For a fuller account see Boyce 2008:186-202

<sup>31</sup> Seen there by Reverend Horton, who called the group the “so-called *Tame Mob*”, cited by Bonwick, in Calder, G: *Levee, Line and Martial Law: A History of the Dispossession of the Mairremmener people of Van Diemen’s Land*. 2010 p151.

<sup>32</sup> Plomley, NJB (ed): *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson, 1829-1834*.

Queen Victoria Museum + Art Gallery + Quintus Publishing. 2008. p118

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

William Parramore, private secretary to Governor Arthur, reported another visit by the same group in the following week:

*On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November we were visited by a tribe of 66 natives...3 of them with long coats, but neither a particle of covering before...The Lt.Gov. on their arrival had them immediately provided with food and old clothes – and the second night they were conducted to the road men’s hut four miles from town...The third day they were rather sullen and refused to sing the Kangaroo song<sup>34</sup> and moved off early the next morning.* <sup>35</sup>

Of a visit in 1825, Robinson says only “October 22: a tribe of 50 abg came into H.T. this morning”.<sup>36</sup>

Two of this group, “Black Jack”<sup>37</sup> and “Musquito” (an Aborigine from New South Wales) were hanged in 1825. Another two Aboriginal men were hung in late 1826. Fourteen more were killed in an attack on a mob of Aborigines seen in Pittwater in December 1826 (according to testimony given to the Aboriginal Committee in 1830 by the district constable present at the attack) and ten others were captured, including Oyster Bay warrior Kikatapula.<sup>38</sup> After this, the remaining Mumirimina and other Oyster Bay people retreated to the further borders of their territory.

A few later sightings were reported. In the winter of 1827, “a party of tame Blacks sixteen in number”, of men, women and children, stayed for about four weeks at the Dulverton Rivulet near Oatlands; after robbing two settler work parties of food, bedding and tools, they retreated to Table Mountain.<sup>39</sup> Boyce suggests that the killing of ten of a group of twenty Aborigines near Toombs Lake in December 1828 by an armed roving party may have been the destruction of this “last surviving inter-generational clan of the Oyster Bay people”.<sup>40</sup> Earlier that year, in May 1828, seventeen blacks had been shot on the upper reaches of the Jordan River by a party of armed colonists.<sup>41</sup>

Any attempts by the Mumirimina to enter the precinct or any other part of their territory in a group for customary purposes were blocked by the series of military actions implemented with the express purpose of removing all Aborigines from anywhere within the Settled Districts.

---

<sup>34</sup> Mumirimina who were taken to Wybalenna after their capture in late 1831 continued to corroborate their kangaroo song and dance there. An observer described it: “One is called the kangaroo dance, and is, along with others, most violent: in this the party ... commence walking round the fire slowly, singing in a low monotonous tone. After this has continued for some time, they begin to get excited, singing in a higher key, walking faster, striking their hands upon the ground and leaping high in the air. By degrees their walk becomes a run; their solitary leap, a series; their singing, perfect shrieking: they close upon the fire, the women piling fresh branches upon it. Still leaping in a circle, and striking the ground with their hands at every bound, they will spring a clear five feet high, so near to the fire, so completely in the flames that you fancy they must be burnt. Excited to frenzy, they sing, shriek and jump, until their frames can stand it no longer, and they give up in the uttermost states of exhaustion.” [RH Davies: *On the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land* in *Tasmanian Journal of Natural History* 1846 : 416] James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, two Quaker missionaries visiting Wybalenna in 1832, both recorded the Aboriginal words and English translation of the song [in Plomley 1976: 44, 54-55]

<sup>35</sup> cited in Boyce:2008:186-7

<sup>36</sup> Plomley op cit:118.

<sup>37</sup> Black Jack, Aboriginal name unknown, was from the same band as Tukulunginta, the Oyster Bay chief. He was tried twice for murder in 1824 and convicted although there was no evidence of his guilt. Henry Melville, then editor of *The Colonial Times*, noted “Jack” had no chance to defend himself since he could barely understand English, and described him as “a legitimate prisoner of war”. He was hung with Musquito on 25 February 1825 in the Hobart gaol which was then on Murray Street at the corner of Macquarie Street. A cast of Black Jack’s face was found in the Allport Collection of the State Library of Tasmania and returned to Tasmanian Aborigines in 2007. [Plomley 1991:Jorgenson 96; Melville 1835: 31-33; TAC Repatriation documents]

<sup>38</sup> Ryan, L: *List of multiple killings of Aborigines in Tasmania: 1804-1835*, Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence, 5 March 2008.p13; Robert Cox, *The Mercury*, March 2006

<sup>39</sup> Plomley 1991 Jorgenson:71; Plomley 1992 Aboriginal /Settler Clash: 64]

<sup>40</sup> Boyce op cit, 199-200.

<sup>41</sup> George Augustus Robinson journal 5 November 1831, in Plomley 2008: 537; Bonwick, J: *The Last of the Tasmanians*. London. 1870: 67.

Military posts were established on the borders of settled districts in 1828 and soldiers based at Brighton, Hamilton and Bothwell patrolled the Brighton and Bagdad plains. To enforce Governor Arthur's proclamation issued in April 1828 banning Aborigines from the police districts, "roving parties" were created with powers to hunt and capture Aborigines. The declaration of martial law in those districts against Aborigines later that year gave greater legal freedom for roving parties to kill rather than simply capture the blacks. In September 1830, martial law against Aborigines was extended to all parts of the island and the "Black Line" began - a large military operation in which a human chain made up of 550 troops, 700 convicts and 950 settlers swept south and east through the settled districts with the aim of driving any Aborigines encountered into the Tasman Peninsula. Arms of the line swept southwest from Lake Echo, through Oatlands and Bothwell, and down through the Bagdad valley and Brighton plains.<sup>42</sup>

Although the line failed to produce the anticipated capture of Aborigines, it did succeed in driving them further away from the rapidly growing areas of settlement. For this, it earned Arthur messages of congratulations from the settlers of Bothwell and Brighton.<sup>43</sup> The roving parties were more effective in actually killing and routing any Aborigines still venturing into the settled districts. This was a "a war in which the appalling level of Aboriginal casualties will never be known".<sup>44</sup>

Between 1803 and 1831 the estimated population of Aborigines in eastern Tasmania was reduced from more than 2,000 to fewer than 100, mostly young men.<sup>45</sup> The surviving Mumirimina moved westward to the inland country of their Big River neighbours and allies and joined forces with them to maintain resistance on the outskirts of the settled areas.

## Dispossession

The dispossession of the Mumirimina from the precinct and surrounding areas was early, rapid and extensive.<sup>46</sup> As a corollary, almost no account of their original lifestyle in their traditional country has yet been found in colonial records of any type - for such things as having a corroboree, camping, hunting, burning off, eggging and birding or even walking through in a large group.

Small groups and individuals did pass through the area at different times, and tools made of dark green bottle glass found with stone tools on the Bagdad Rivulet between Shene and the Rifle Range Road show Aboriginal presence after the arrival of Europeans; bottle glass tools were also found nearby in the Kotalayna levee at Brighton and at Crooked Billet.<sup>47</sup> But from about 1805 until January 1832, no readily available archival historical sources show Aborigines managing to conduct any of their traditional activities anywhere in the Brighton Plain and Bagdad Valley or any of the nearer surrounding areas of Tea Tree, Broadmarsh, Native Corners, nearer Campania Area, Risdon Vale, Old Beach, Herdsmans Cove, Bridgewater and Granton Marshes.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>42</sup> McMahon, J: *The Black Line: Military Operations in Van Diemen's Land, October to November 1830*. THRA. Vol 55, no3. Dec 2008: 175-7; Plomley 1991 Jorgenson 19-21; Ryan 1996:112

<sup>43</sup> Ryan 1996:112

<sup>44</sup> McMahon 2008:176

<sup>45</sup> Ryan 1996:86ff; Ryan 2008; Boyce 2008: 191-3; Bonwick 1870:67; Felton, H (ed): *Living with the Land*. Tasmanian Dept of Education + Arts. 1990:Book 2:23

<sup>46</sup> Alison Alexander, cited in Rayner 2010 op cit.

<sup>47</sup> CHMA: Bagdad Byass Planning Study Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment. Report for Pitt and Sherry. June 2009.p 2; 48-51; Paton 2010 op cit:pp99, 100, 107, 26

<sup>48</sup> Rayner 2010, op cit. To conduct this research Rayner "...used maps, Archival resources including a complete and close reading of all the "Aboriginal Volumes" of the Colonial Secretary's Office and a wide reading of printed and published primary resources and well as a broad spectrum of published secondary sources and spoke to a number of sources as well... The areas of specific focus included the Brighton Plain itself to Herdsmans Cove including Gagebrook, the Jordan estuary, the Bridgewater wetlands and marshes, Dromedary, nearer Broadmarsh, Black Brush, the Bagdad Rivulet and valley to nearer Bagdad, the Strathallan Rivulet to nearer Tea Tree, the potential corridors to Risdon and the whole of Risdon Vale and Cove. An outer area of more peripheral interest included Granton and nearby wetlands, the far side of

Several reports from about 1816 into the early 1830s show they continued to travel on the periphery of these areas – usually quietly, quickly, nocturnally and with great subterfuge. In some of these instances, a single Aborigine was seen near Old Beach; attacks were made on farmers and stock at the farther end of Tea Tree in 1816 and 1817; an identified group comprising "a tame mob" were seen and involved in the occasional robbery and killing towards the far end of Bagdad in the mid 1820s; a large group of about 150 passed from Richmond to Tea Tree Brush around June 1826; a mob heading towards the area but still on the other side of Mount Dromedary towards New Norfolk; and a few other sightings and events at Broadmarsh, Green Ponds (Kempton), Lovely Banks, Cross Marsh. Some were likely attempts to continue customary activities and movements; others were certainly attempts to drive livestock from their lands and make hit-and-run attacks on settlers.<sup>49</sup>

For many years the Mumirimina stayed constantly within the areas on the periphery immediately to the east, north and west of Brighton to Bagdad. From 1826 to 1832 they waged war against farmers, hut keepers, and white travellers, mostly eastward of Parattah and to the west of Bothwell.<sup>50</sup> Not only was the Bagdad to Brighton area extensively settled but it also lay on the (white) road that ran only between other settled areas, and on which soldiers and increasing numbers of settlers travelled. Aborigines bypassed the settled areas by taking a safer and more direct route from the east coast to the high inland country through the areas surrounding Jericho, Oatlands and St Peters Pass. They travelled from the east coast first through to the Oatlands - Parattah plain, in which the Jordan, Coal and Little Swanport Rivers all have their chief source, and then down the rivers and across and up to the lower highlands near Bothwell. Being less settled and with bushy areas that they could slip through, this was for those fifteen years or so the main access route for both the Oyster Bay and Big River peoples from the coast to the high country for the summer and back to the coast for the winter.<sup>51</sup> Smokes from their fires was only seen in the west – in the "*Western Bluff... to the Shannon Tier ... "a considerable distance from the settlements."*"<sup>52</sup>

### **The last journey of the Mumirimina on their country**

The next time the Mumirimina are mentioned in written records is when George Augustus Robinson wrote on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1832 to inform the Colonial Secretary of his capture of the remainder of the Oyster Bay and Big River people who had formed a resistance group in the Central Highlands. Robinson had located them at the end of December 1831 somewhere near Lake Echo. They were reduced to sixteen men, nine women and one infant child, led by Oyster Bay chief Tukulunginta and Big River chief Montpeilliater.

*Letter: George Augustus Robinson, Constitution Hill, 6 Jan 1831[actually 1832] 4am, to Colonial Secretary*

*"I beg to inform you for the information of the Lieutenant Gov[ernor]. That I arrived here last night accompanied by the whole of the Big River and Oyster Bay tribe of Aborigines and proceed immediately to H[obart] Town. I expect to reach H Town either to night or early to morrow morning and wish in the first instance to proceed direct to Gov[ernment] House with those people. "<sup>53</sup>*

---

Mount Dromedary, Abyssinia, the Jordan Valley from Broadmarsh to Oatlands; Spring Hill and Kempton; through to the Coal Valley and Richmond and the Meehan Range beyond Risdon."

<sup>49</sup> Rayner op cit; *Colonial Times* 16 June 1826, cited in Robert Cox: *Steps to the Scaffold*, Cornhill, 2004:74; T Rayner email to TAC 27 March 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Tony Rayner, email to TAC, 20 August 2010

<sup>51</sup> Rayner 2010, op cit.

<sup>52</sup> Jorgenson to Anstey, 1831, cited in Calder 2010:193.

<sup>53</sup> Tas Archives CSO1 v329 f237

Tukalunginta told Robinson that the “*reason for their outrages upon the white inhabitants [was] that they and their forefathers had been cruelly abused, that their country had been taken away from them, their wives and daughters had been violated and taken away, and that they had experienced a multitude of wrongs from a variety of sources. They were willing to accept the offers of the government...*” “*...who Mr Robinson promised would readily comply with all their wishes and supply all their wants*”.<sup>54</sup>

They believed the white man owed them compensation for the loss of their land. They travelled with Robinson to Bothwell and hunted that night on Den Hill.<sup>55</sup> They danced a corroboree in front of John Vincent’s inn at Bothwell (now the Castle Hotel) on 5<sup>th</sup> January before walking on to Hobart to be removed to Flinders Island.<sup>56</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> January 1832 was the last day the Mumirimina people travelled through their own country. They walked through today’s proposed precinct, either on the road, or along their own track along the Bagdad Rivulet. From there, they could have gone along the Strathallan Rivulet to the location of John Glover’s *Bath of Diana* painting at Tea Tree, then back to the Jordan River and by the Jordan back across to the Northwestern slopes of Cove Hill. Here they probably climbed the lower slopes of Honeywood to avoid the Horse’s Neck, crossing the Jordan just up from the (now) Cove Hill Bridge, where it is easy to ford to the campsite depicted in Glover’s *Last Muster of the Tasmanian Aborigines*. The next morning they would have been taken on the ferry from Green Point across to Granton/Austins Ferry.<sup>57</sup>

Three of Glover’s major paintings - *The Bath of Diana*, Van Diemens Land, 1837; *Aborigines Dancing at Brighton*, 1835, and *The Last Muster of the Tasmanian Aborigines at Risdon*, 1836<sup>58</sup> - depict this combined Oyster Bay and Big River group, together with other Aborigines who had accompanied Robinson on his mission to capture them. In 1832 Glover lived at Tea Tree and had recently shown great interest in drawing the Aborigines. He had already made portraits of those held in the Campbell Town gaol in August 1831 and the Launceston gaol in September 1831. Historian Tony Rayner believes John Glover accompanied the group of Aborigines for some part of that final day in their country and made his original sketches of them from life in the actual locations of the completed paintings.<sup>59</sup> Whatever further research reveals about this, there is no doubt that these paintings of Glover representing Aborigines in their own country in the southern Bagdad Valley and Brighton Plains are significant (and not only for the tragic irony) representations of a way of life made at the very time when it was almost completely destroyed.

<sup>54</sup> Robinson to Aborigines Committee, 25 January 1832, TSA CSO 1/332, in Plomley 2008: 601-5

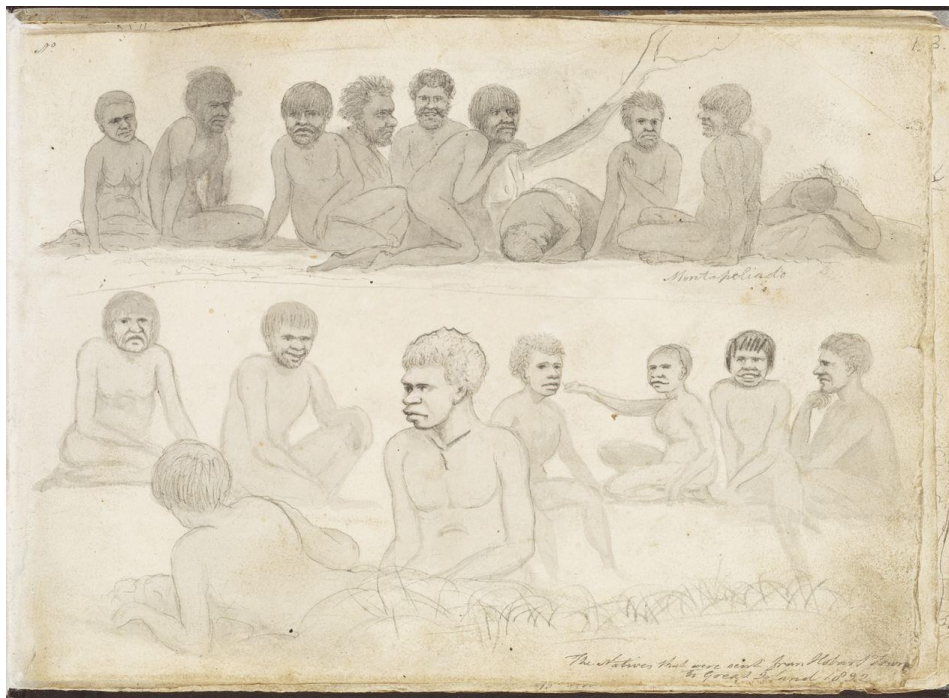
<sup>55</sup> *ibid*

<sup>56</sup> P.L.Brown: *Clyde Company Papers, Prologue 1821-35*. OUP, London 1941.p81; Plomley, NJB (ed): *Weep in Silence: A History of the Flinders Island Aboriginal Settlement*. 1987.p43 n.33; *Hobart Town Courier*, 14 January 1832; Ryan 1996:121-2.

<sup>57</sup> T. Rayner email to TAC, 27 March 2012

<sup>58</sup> T Rayner email to TAC 24 April 2012 : ‘David Hansen is sceptical regarding the incident being at Risdon but says that: “the painting has long been thought to represent the encampment of the last of the free Big River and Oyster Bay Aborigines the day before they entered Hobart Town on January 7, 1832”. [Hansen, 2003: 220] It was first pointed out by me in my report that this last painting was not a representation of Risdon but in fact was “*Mount Wellington, and the River Derwent taken from near Brighton, at a distance of near 15 miles. The natives are portraits.*” which is known as ‘the lost Glover’. Formerly only known from Glover’s catalogue notes it was either renamed or misnamed around 1900 when it was given to the QVMAG in Launceston.’

<sup>59</sup> Rayner 2010 op cit; T Rayner email to TAC 24 April 2012.



John Glover sketchbook No.98, 1831-1832

State Library of New South Wales

Among these faces of the Oyster Bay and Big River people sketched by Glover in the days immediately following their capture in 1832 are some of the last of the Mumirimina; although we cannot identify anyone since Glover only recorded one name. *"The natives that were sent from Hobart Town to Great Island 1832"* is written at the bottom of the sheet and *"Montipoliado"* is written beneath one figure, the second from the right in the top group; this is Montpeilliater, the Big River chief.

The *Hobart Town Courier* breathlessly reported that the residents of Hobart turned out to watch *"with...delight"* as Robinson paraded his captives into Hobart on 7<sup>th</sup> January, and enthused that :

*"The removal of these blacks will be of essential benefit both to themselves and the colony. The large tracts of pasture that have been long deserted owing to their murderous attacks on the shepherds and stockhuts will now be available, and a very sensible relief will be afforded to the flocks of sheep that had been withdrawn from them and pent up on inadequate ranges of pasture ...which..has tended materially to impoverish the flocks and keep up the price of butcher's meat.."* <sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Hobart Town Courier*, 14 January 1832, 7 January 1832; Robinson's official report of 25 January 1832, in Plomley 2008: p602-6



## Some Mumirimina life stories

While there is little in the historical record about the traditional life of the Mumirimina in their own country, several accounts exist of the later activities of individual Mumirimina. Much of this is in military, police and other reports about tribesmen who fought the whites after they had been driven from their own country. Other information was given later to George Augustus Robinson by the individuals themselves and other Aborigines who knew them, when they were imprisoned at Wybalenna and Oyster Cove.

Portraits of some Mumirimina and other Oyster Bay people were sketched and painted by several contemporary artists. As well as Glover's sketches and paintings, portraits of named people were also produced in the mid 1830s, and others over a decade later at Wybalenna (by Bock, Duterreau, Prout). In 1858 Mumirimina warrior Kalamaruwinya and his wife Pilunimina were photographed several times by Bishop Nixon at Oyster Cove, two years before they both died. These photographs show them individually, as a couple and in small groups with those few other Aborigines who were still alive there.

**Tukalunginta** [say: Tu kah lung een tah] (Tongerlongeter; King William)<sup>61</sup>



Tukalunginta was chief of the Oyster Bay tribe, a very tall man who had part of one arm cut off. During the Black Line he had passed through the soldier's fires, evading capture. He told Robinson of a time when

*"...he was with his tribe in the neighbourhood of the Den Hill and that there was men cutting wood. The men were frightened and run away. At night they came back with plenty of white men (it was moonlight), and they looked and saw our fires. Then they shot at us, shot my arm, killed two men and three women. The women they beat on the head and killed them. They then burnt them in the fire. Said that the white men at another time came near to them at night; then stopped till morning and that when it was little day light came*

*and fired at them. Took away his wife, also Drometehenner. This was near the Lakes. On this occasion they shot Drometehenner's husband through the head; his name was Martrolibenner, belonged to the district of Pittwater or Coal River. Drometehenner's country is Oyster Bay"*<sup>62</sup>

He was captured with his people near Lake Echo in late 1831. During his later years at Wybalenna, Tukalunginta constantly urged Robinson to allow the people to leave, saying *"What, do you mean to stay till all the black men are dead?"* Tukalunginta died at Wybalenna in 1837.<sup>63</sup>

Image of Tukalunginta (Togerlongerter). T. Bock, early 1832. British Museum.

<sup>61</sup> People's names are given in *palawa kani* where possible, and pronunciation shown in smaller font. Names shown in square brackets following are European spellings – ways the whites tried to reproduce the sounds of the Aboriginal name, and English names given to the people by Robinson and others.

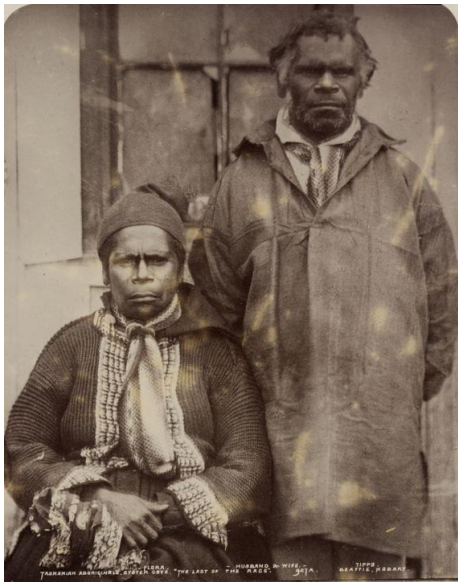
<sup>62</sup> GA Robinson journal 19 December 1835, in Plomley 1987: 325

<sup>63</sup> Bonwick 1870:111, cited in Plomley 2008:618; GA Robinson journal 3 July 1832, 19 December 1835, 21 March 1837; Plomley 1996: 584; Plomley 1987:908, 929; Plomley 1991: Jorgenson 91-3

### Paparamina [Say Pah pah rah mee nah]

Paparamina, the infant son of Tukulunginta, was the one child captured with the Oyster Bay and Big River people. He died a few weeks after they were taken to Flinders Island. His mother Rumatimitja took the skull from his body and wore it constantly “*on her bosom*” until she “gave” it to Robinson in 1837. This was one of several such ceremonial amulets worn by the people for protection against sickness and misery. Robinson collected this skull, the jawbone of Tatiyana, the brother of Kalamaruwinya, a bone of the brother of Rrumathapana, and several other amulet bones, although the people were reluctant to give them up. They were later sold to the Royal College of Surgeons in London and some were eventually returned to Tasmanian Aborigines in 2002 and 2009.<sup>64</sup>

### Kalamaruwinya [Say: Kah lah mah ru ween yah] (Calamarowenye; Tippo)



Kalamaruwinya, a Mumirimina man, was born about 1812 at Kangaroo Point. The presence of soldiers drove his tribe further north on the Jordan River to Lovely Banks (Melton Mowbray) but when the settlers reached there, he saw many of his people killed and the tribe again fled.

A renowned fighter, Kalamaruwinya participated in several guerilla attacks with the Big River people, and travelled with them to fight alongside the Port Sorell people against the invading whites. He was captured at Port Sorell in 1832 with four others. Until it was taken by Robinson, he wore as a protective amulet the jawbone of his brother Taytiyana who had been killed at Captain Clark’s farm between the Jordan and Clyde rivers, northeast of Bothwell. Kalamaruwinya died at Oyster Cove in 1860.<sup>65</sup>

Image of Kalamaruwinya & Pilunimina in 1858 at Oyster Cove [Nixon/Beattie. State Library of NSW]

### Kikatapula [Say: Kee kah tah pu lah] (Kickerterpoller; Black Tom; Tom Birch)

Kikatapula and his tribe had seen the “*first ship*” off their coast – probably the Baudin expedition which visited Oyster Bay and Maria Island in 1802. Kikatapula was stolen by whites when about nine years old, living with the Birch family who owned farms in Richmond, Jericho and Lovely Banks. He escaped and rejoined the Oyster Bay tribes in about 1822, taking part in the fighting immediately.

<sup>64</sup> GA Robinson journal 27 February 1832, 1 July 1832, 18 February 1836, 20 February 1836, 20 October 1837, 28 October 1837, 4 November 1837, 15 November 1837; Plomley 1987: 874; Melville 1835 Pt 2:128, cited in Plomey 1987:892; J Backhouse journal 12 October 1832, in Plomley 1987: 229; Walker 1897: 98 (?); TAC Repatriation research documents

<sup>65</sup> GA Robinson journal 9 December 1836, 17 November 1837, 26 March 1832; Plomley 1987: 800, 850-1,87; Plomley 2008: 510 n280; 611 n36; Notes given to Prout in 1845 by Robert Clark, Catechist at Wybalenna (contained in Ethdoc 915) British Museum website; Felton 1999: 4:38; 3:19 map; Plomley 1991:Jorgenson:71-2,145-6

In 1824 he was arrested for murder with Black Jack, Musquito and two others but he was released without trial, possibly because he could implicate the local constable in a massacre of fourteen blacks. Because Kikatapula spoke English as well as several Aboriginal languages, Robinson recruited him as a guide and promised him some land in return for his services; Kikatapula chose one of the islands in the lagoons near the Arthur Ranges. He was never given the land. He died at Emu Bay in May 1832 and was buried there, his grave marked with a log fence.<sup>66</sup>

**Rrumathapana** [say: Rru mah dthah pah nah] (Druemerterpunner; Alexander)



Rrumathapana was kidnapped as a child with his sister Tipilungita. He escaped later and joined the fighting; he was captured with the Oyster Bay people in 1831.

His name is an Oyster Bay word for wombat and another name given for him (Moomereriner) is in fact the name of the Mumirimina band itself. Rrumathapana wore a bone from his dead brother as an amulet against sickness and misfortune, until Robinson took it in 1837 at Wybalenna.

When painted at Oyster Cove in 1845 he wore white feathers in his hair, as had one of the men seen by Robinson among the “tame mob” of Mumirimina near Hobart in 1824. The year before that, in 1823, a man wearing two cockatoo feathers was seen among a big group camped at Lake Echo; this large campsite was very near the place where Robinson captured Rrumathapana and the other Oyster Bay people at the end of 1831.

He died at Oyster Cove, the date not known but probably before 1855.<sup>67</sup>

Image of Rrumathapana (Alexander). JS Prout. 1845 Wybalenna. British Museum.

**Shiney** (John Shinall) [Aboriginal name unknown]

Shiney was born about 1809 in the Carlton area of the Mumirimina. He lived a tribal life with his family until land grants were given in that area after 1812, after which he lived with a white family; it is not known what happened to his own family.

He worked as a farm labourer and was unique among the Mumirimina of his time in being able to live peaceably in the area of his birth all his life – although this was only possible at the cost of losing his traditional way of life among his own people. That benign acceptance by white society was based entirely on his usefulness as a labourer – after his death in 1839 his body was mutilated because of his race and his severed head preserved in alcohol was only eventually returned from Dublin University to Aborigines in 1990.

<sup>66</sup> Plomley 1991:Jorgenson 75; Felton 1991:5:11-13; GA Robinson journal 13 March 1830, 19 November 1831; Plomley 2008: 121 n42; 126 n64; 612 n49; Plomley 1987: 801; 851; Cox 2006

<sup>67</sup> Plomley 1987:189, 874, 909, 944-5; GA Robinson journal 14 November 1837; Ross, J: 'Recollections of a short excursion to Lake Echo in March 1823', Hobart Town Almanack, Hobart, Tasmania.1830 pp99-101.

## The Aboriginal landscape today – its fabric, meanings and associations

This landscape still evokes the earliest times when Mumirimina people lived here. The last 200 years of farming practices, although disruptive, have not been as destructive as residential, commercial or industrial developments on any scale would have been. The effect of large infrastructure has been mostly confined to the roadway, which, though prominent and dividing the valley, has remained stable for most of that period. Of course, the imminent Bagdad Bypass will impose upon and dominate this landscape in a most drastic way, visually and aurally, by both day and night, and destroy several of the most important elements of its values, both Aboriginal and European, which contribute to the peaceful, natural atmosphere within the valley and its almost untouched long vista. The detrimental effect of this upon the perception and appreciation of the landscape by all who experience it will be comparable to Kutalyana where the bridge has been built over the National Heritage listed ancient Aboriginal meeting place.

For the moment however, it is possible to stand in places on the hills of the precinct and look across the valley and see almost no houses or any other European interventions. The physical fabric of the place and its wider settings and the associations which accompany these enable us to imagine how it must have originally been.

However, Aboriginal meanings of this place derive not only from those thousands of years of traditional prosperity, but also from the later destruction of that life and the Mumirimina themselves. Because that happened within more recent times, the so-called “historical” past, of which written records exist, it is that history of which Aborigines today are most conscious, and which forms a fundamental part of our response to this and many other cultural landscapes within Tasmania.

The earliest European settlements were made through the Brighton and Bagdad plains and here the ancient Aboriginal and invading European cultures first overlapped. Aboriginal ownership and occupation of the precinct territory was disrupted with violent dispossession from the land and Aboriginal rights to land, resources and control of heritage were denied. The continuity of Aboriginal interaction with the precinct landscape was broken. That dispossession was entrenched in the institutions of the state through the system of settlement, land grants and purchases, and legislation, and continues so into the present day.

Since that time, Tasmanian Aborigines suffered under an official government policy of denial of Aboriginal existence for 100 years. The myth of the extinction of Tasmanian Aborigines became an established part of Australian and world-wide folk lore. Opportunities to maintain close links with oral traditions and cultural continuity was severely restricted through having to literally hide from mainstream Tasmanian society to avoid racial discrimination and government assimilation programs. The cost to Aboriginal people during this time was to have helplessly stood by while Aboriginal heritage was destroyed on an enormous scale. Official policies of disdain for anything Aboriginal resulted in Aboriginal people being denied knowledge of our past and fractured the relationship with our ancestors’ cultural ways, with fewer and fewer physical signs of heritage surviving to relate to.

Access by the Aboriginal community to the Bagdad valley lands has been very restricted as most of it remains as private large long-held holdings of rural activity. Aborigines have been unable to freely enjoy the aesthetic and natural beauty still prevailing within the precinct, nor to gain full knowledge and appreciation of the cultural knowledge this land still holds. Currently only scattered information has been compiled about the presence and locations of tangible cultural resources and places within the precinct. This has derived from opportunistic assessments related to the planning and management of specific infrastructure – the Brighton and Bagdad bypasses in particular - and private property development. Yet even through this piece-meal approach much has become known about Aboriginal use of the area, and interesting questions raised for further research.

Nonetheless, the knowledge and understandings formed by experiences in other places outside the precinct, and from the physical cultural evidence left by the ancestors on the land, gives rise to powerful emotional and spiritual responses and connections.

The sparse recorded history for this place is itself an important part of its story. Enough is known of the history of invasion and colonisation, both within and beyond the precinct, and throughout all Tasmania, for us all to realise what happened here. Inevitably then, the story of the Mumirimina and their country evokes very painful associations for Aborigines, with deep feelings of loss and accompanying grief. It is necessary when acknowledging the richness of that ancestral past to lament also the shattering of that life and the people themselves.

This grief is felt by Aborigines not just for the loss of the land itself, the physical matter, but the meanings it carries, integral to Aboriginal being. Aboriginal experience and expression of those intangible elements of heritage which link generations of Aboriginal people over time have been blocked here. Unable to move through the precinct and read the country in all its aspects and care for it, Aborigines have not had opportunity to re-engage with the spirits of the ancestors of this place, nor to “possess” the landscape by means of imprinting it again with memory, traditions and attachments formed through personal and community experiences of later visitation or use.

Such rekindling of such social, emotional and spiritual bonds became a prevailing element in the Aboriginal community’s reconnection with Kutalayna at Brighton in 2010. Dozens of statements from Aborigines of all ages expressing this accompanied the application for permanent National Heritage listing of the area, which was granted in recognition that the place “...provide[s] a connection to their collective ancestors, to their way of living and to their traditional cultural practices” and is of “outstanding heritage value to the nation because of its special cultural association with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and its exceptional symbolic importance arising from their collective defence of their identity in the face of the threats to their heritage”.<sup>68</sup>

Aboriginal people are born into the responsibility to care for their land, today and for future generations. For Aborigines, “country” is not at all like the European concept of land, as a commodity which is assigned a monetary value and can be bought and sold as an asset for exclusive individual use and profit. Europeans considered land could be seized if they considered it to be vacant (“terra nullius”) or deemed it to be not exploited enough (“wasteland” and “wilderness”). “Country” to Aboriginal people is “all-life”,<sup>69</sup> a living entity through which people are inextricably related to the landscape, the spirits who formed it, and all the creatures and life forms within it – ancient and living, tangible and intangible - as kin through a set of obligations and cultural practices that ensure the conservation of the world. Territorial rights to specific areas of land are endowed through ancestral connections as a sacred trust by which the whole community hold communal ownership and cultural responsibility.

This meaning is integral to Aborigines’ associations today even with areas of country to which they have been denied access and cultural links fractured. A strong understanding exists among Aborigines that ownership of the land was never ceded, and while the physical connections may have been broken, the relationship with and responsibility for all the traditional lands remains. According to Aboriginal law and custom, the lands of tribes decimated by whites passed to other tribes. This was evident during the ‘survival’ wars of the 1820s where the tribes joined together against the common enemy. Today’s Aborigines, as one people, inherit all traditional lands, with the relationships, responsibilities and associations that entails. Rich Aboriginal cultural heritage endures

---

<sup>68</sup> Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. S349, 23 December 2011. Jordan River Levee site.

<sup>69</sup> As described by Tasmanian Aboriginal elder Jim Everett.

in the landscape and evokes strong meanings and associations to Aborigines today, because of the history of dispossession and not despite it.

Statements by Aborigines conveying these feelings about Katalayna are relevant also to the precinct. Three are reproduced here:

*“ ... knowing that not one person from the Mumirimina people survived the coming of white people to Tasmania makes my responsibility to keep that land’s special places as close as I can to what it was like for the people who once lived there. Having now seen the actual places at Katalayna where the Mumirimina people travelled and camped for over 42,000 years helps me to reconnect with my past. It strengthens me and it enables me to talk to my children and grandchildren about their heritage. It is very important in supporting them to be proud Aboriginal people who have a place in this country...a place they can say with pride their people cared for over thousands of generations ..teaching their children a way of life that is now forever lost but which we can only do our best to preserve what precious little of it remains. It remains in the land itself and in the beauty of the river and the plain, in the trees and the grass..... and in the tools that were carried and used by thousands of Aboriginal hands....by parents and children, grandparents and aunties and uncles. It is important for us to keep as much of this landscape as is possible safe .... to try to preserve what we can of our past to strengthen our future. ” J. Sculthorpe.*

*“I once lived in Ford Road, Pontville and I had a feeling that our people roamed the land behind my house. It is a part of our old people’s pathway... ” E. Everett.*

*“Having spent some considerable time searching for a place to take my children from the city to live, where they had a chance of growing up away from the pressures of the city, I could never really understand why I chose the Jordan River area as a place to come to.*

*However, now it all comes into place, now I have had the opportunity to spend time at Katalayna and gaining an understanding of the significance of this amazing place and its cultural value to my family and community. I now understand why my children felt so comfortable and connect to such this whole wider area, a luxury that I never had time to appreciate till more recently. Now living in the area for over 12 years and watching my sons grow up to feel connected, to settle themselves as young men in the area, to see them go hunting and fishing every other weekend along the Jordan up around Bothwell, to the Lakes, gives me such warmth to know that they are being guided by our old fellas, to carry on a tradition that was born into them, without them fully aware of the changes and paths that life has given them to carry through to their children and my grandchildren. Katalayna is so rich and powerful and given our community the opportunity to flourish and come together, it’s a place that holds us strong as a people and loyal to our ancestors.” R. Foster, Dysart*

Two very different forms of heritage and two distinct sets of meanings and cultural values lie in this landscape. While these cannot be integrated with each other, the development of the dual heritage precinct model provides a rare opportunity to work towards a way in which the complex and conflicting meanings of this place are revealed and acknowledged. This landscape remains colonised land. Like Katalayna, it is under threat from massive infrastructure which will shatter its integrity. Nonetheless, the essential nature and character of the precinct can in large part be preserved and all its stories investigated further so all Tasmanians can experience, understand and be informed and moved by the knowledge of all the lives that mingled here to make this place what it is.

The intention to create the Mangalore Pontville Heritage Landscape precinct and to have it included in future planning schemes represents an important step forward for Tasmanian local governments and planning authorities. Both European and Aboriginal heritage are for the first time to be given equal acknowledgment and protection within the precinct. As important also is the fact that this is the first time in Tasmania that Aborigines have been involved from the very beginning of a heritage and planning project, and the Aboriginal perspective and input respected and valued and given equal weight. Both the concept and the process are admirable models of progressive practical reconciliation which have created a benchmark in Tasmanian public planning.

### **Bibliography of source materials**

Alexander, A: *Brighton and surrounds*. Hobart. Brighton Council, 2006.

Austral Tasmania Pty Ltd: *Bagdad Bypass - Additional Histories of Five Sites* report, November 2010. Final Report for Pitt and Sherry.

Austral Tasmania: *Bagdad Bypass: Final Site Specific Histories*. Prepared for Pitt & Sherry March 2010.

Bonwick, J: *The Last of the Tasmanians*. London. 1870.

Boyce, J: *Van Diemens Land: A History*. Black Inc. Victoria. 2008.

Brown, P.L: *Clyde Company Papers, Prologue 1821-35*. OUP, London 1941.

Calder, G: *Levee, Line and Martial Law: a history of the dispossession of the Mairremmener people of Van Diemen's Land*. Launceston. 201.

Calder, JE: *An Account of the Wars, Extirpation, Habits etc of the Native Tribes of Tasmania*. Hobart. 1875.

CHMA (Stuart Huys): *Bagdad Byass Planning Study Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment*. Report for Pitt and Sherry. June 2009.

Cox, Robert, cited in *The Mercury* March 26, 2006, "*Haunted by an uneasy past*", Simon Bevilacqua reporting.

Cox, Robert: *Steps to the Scaffold*, Cornhill, 2004.

Davies, Richard Henry: *On the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land*. *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science*. No 2. 1846.

Dawson, Tony : *James Meehan: a most excellent surveyor*. Crossing Press, Sydney, 2004

Fels , Marie: *Culture Contact in the County of Buckinghamshire, Van Diemens Land 1803-11*. Tasmanian Historical Research Association. June 1982.

Felton, H (ed): *Living with the Land*. Tasmanian Dept of Education + Arts. 1990. Set of 7 books.

Gammage, B: Plain Facts: *Tasmania under Aboriginal Management*. Landscape Research, Vol 33, No.2, April 2008. pp241-254.

Hansen, David: *John Glover and the colonial picturesque*. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart 2003

*Hobart Town Courier*, Saturday 7 January 1832, Saturday 14 January 1832.

Hoorn J: *The Lycett Album*, Canberra, 1990,

<http://www.nla.gov.au/pub/ebooks/pdf/The%20Lycett%20Album/pdf.>, accessed 18 May 2012.

Jones, Rhys: *Tasmanian Tribes*. in N.B .Tindale: *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*. Berkeley, USA. 1974.

McMahon, J: *The Black Line: Military Operations in Van Diemen's Land, October to November 1830*. Tasmanian Historical Research Association. Vol 55, no3. December 2008.

Melville, Henry. *The History of Van Diemen's Land from the Year 1824 to 1835*. Australian Historical Monographs. Vol XXV. Part 1.

Nicholls, Mary (ed). *The Diary of the Reverend Robert Knopwood, 1803-1838, first chaplain of Van Diemen's Land*. THRA, Hobart, 1977

NorthBarker Ecosystem Services (A. North & P. Barker): *Midland Highway-Bagdad Bypass Vegetation Survey and Fauna Habitat Assessment*. Pitt and Sherry. April 2011.

Officer, Iain: *Survey of Derwent River Aboriginal Midden and Quarry Sites*. Tasmanian College of Advanced Education. 1980.

Parry, Naomi: 'Hanging no good for blackfellow': looking into the life of Musquito. 2003a, at [http://epress.anu.edu.au/aborig\\_history/transgressions/mobile\\_devices/ch07.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/aborig_history/transgressions/mobile_devices/ch07.html) at 8.5.09.

Paton, R: *Draft Final Archaeological Report on the Test Excavations of the Jordan River Levee Site, Southern Tasmania*. August 2010

Plomley, NJB (ed): *A Word-list of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages*. Govt of Tasmania. 1976

Plomley, NJB: *The Aboriginal/Settler Clash in Van Diemen's Land 1803-1831*. Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston. Occasional paper No. 6. 1992.

Plomley, NJB (ed): *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson, 1829-1834*. Tasmanian Historical Research Association. 1996

Plomley, NJB (ed): *Friendly Mission: The Tasmanian Journals and Papers of George Augustus Robinson, 1829-1834*. Queen Victoria Museum + Art Gallery + Quintus Publishing. 2008.

Plomley, NJB (ed): *Jorgen Jorgenson and the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land*. Hobart. 1991

Plomley, NJB: *The Tasmanian Tribes & Circatrices as Tribal Indicators among the Tasmanian Aborigines*. Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston. Occasional paper No. 5. 1992.

Plomley, NJB (ed): *Weep in Silence: A History of the Flinders Island Aboriginal Settlement*, Blubber Head Press. Hobart. 1987.

Rayner, T: *Historical Report regarding Tasmanian Aborigines and the Brighton Plain*. Produced for The State of Tasmania, Department of Energy, Infrastructure and Resources, August 2010. [www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.../BB\\_Rayner\\_Historical\\_Aug2010.pdf](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.../BB_Rayner_Historical_Aug2010.pdf)

Roth, H. Ling : *The Aborigines of Tasmania*. London. 2nd ed. 1899.



Ryan, L: *List of multiple killings of Aborigines in Tasmania: 1804-1835*, Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence, 5 March 2008, accessed 29 June 2012, URL : <http://www.massviolence.org/List-of-multiple-killings-of-Aborigines-in-Tasmania-1804>, ISSN 1961-9898

Ryan, L . *Massacre in Tasmania? How Can We Know?* Australia and New Zealand Law and History Society Conference. [www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial\\_downloads/Paper\\_6\\_Ryan.pdf](http://www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial_downloads/Paper_6_Ryan.pdf), accessed April 2012.

Ryan, Lyndall: *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*. UQP. 2nd ed. 1996.

Sheridan, Gwenda: *Brighton Tasmania and the Jordan River levee*, Submission to the Australian Heritage Council. 2011

Sheridan, Gwenda: *The Historic Landscape Values of the Proposed Shene Precinct*. Part 1. 2012

Stone, T: *Review of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values of Defence CSIG Properties in Tasmania*. A report to GHD Pty. Ltd. Nov 2003

Stone, T and Everett, A: *An Aboriginal Site Survey of the Proposed Brighton Bypass Northern section, Southern Tasmania*. A report to GHD Pty. Ltd. Jan 2009

Stone, T and Everett, A. June 2009 : *Brighton Bypass Northern Section Additional Areas: Aboriginal site survey*. A report to GHD Pty. Ltd.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre : *Mumirimina people of the Lower Jordan River Valley levee*, 2010.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre *palawa kani* Language Program research materials.

White, E: *Edward White's evidence to the Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, held on 10th March 1830*, in Historical Records of Australia, 3, i: 242-3.