

*A Brief History  
Of  
213 Soldiers Point Road,  
Salamander Bay  
And the Surrounding Area*



*Researched by Norman Lilley 2025*

*Email: [nalilley@bigpond.com](mailto:nalilley@bigpond.com)*

**I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which I live, the Worimi people and pay my respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside in the Port Stephens area. I extend my respect to elders past and present, and to all future cultural-knowledge holders.**

## **Introduction**

This Brief History is designed to tell the history of the property now identified as 213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay. I have attempted to trace the property's ownership from Pre-European times up to the present. The Port Stephens area has a wonderful history. The specific land studied has had many owners over the years. I have included information about the owners as well as documentary evidence supporting my research. I have endeavoured to be as accurate as possible, however, should anyone notice any errors, omissions, or additions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I must stress that while I have made every effort to be accurate and complete with the research, I may have missed some information. I may also be incorrect with some interpretations of the information gleaned. Many of the old, original documents I have transcribed are written in faint, old, cursive writing and, on occasions, have been extremely difficult to read and/or interrupt. Other people may have additional information that could be included in this research. So rather than this presentation be the "final destination" of the research, I encourage other people to use this as a basis for further fine tuning. If anyone would like to pursue this research further, I am more than happy to provide all of the notes and information I have accumulated as well as a digital copy of this booklet.

My main source of information was the New South Wales Land Registry Service Image Viewer. This is located at <https://nswlrs.com.au> This is an outstanding research tool for anyone researching land transactions in New South Wales from 1788 to the present. The majority of my references in this Research refer to this. Please see Appendix One for a brief explanation of how to use this site to view the numerous documents referred to. A further helpful source of information has been the History Section at Salamander Bay Library. Also very valuable is Trove (<https://trove.nla.gov.au>) which is the site at which historic newspaper articles were sourced.

Measurements referred to in this research are all in Imperial Measurements, as were used at the time. For Conversion Information from Imperial to Metric, please see the notes at the end of this research..

Definitions of words and terminology used in the documents can be found at the end of this research.

Throughout the research included in this project I have indicated the name of the person in possession of the land at that particular time. This may be in complete ownership of the property or under lease of the property from someone else or under mortgage. I hope that you enjoy reading this Brief History of 213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay; My Home.

## The Worimi

Salamander Bay, in the Port Stephens region of New South Wales, is located within the traditional lands of the Worimi people, who are the traditional custodians of the area. The Worimi nation extends from the Hunter River to Forster and as far west as the Barrington Tops. The Worimi people spoke the Gathang language. The Worimi Nation was home to 18 clan groups or 'ngurras', with the Worimi Conservation Lands falling within the area of the Maiangal ngurra.

The local environment was favourable for hunter-gatherer living. Their knowledge of plants and animals has not been surpassed. Canoes were made from the bark of the Stringybark tree (Punnah) *E. obliqua* or She Oak. The ends were plugged with clay and when in use a fire always burned on a bed of clay at the back. Paddles made of seasoned hardwood were shaped like a large spoon and these paddles were used in a kneeling position from the middle of the 4.5m canoe. Fishing lines were made from the inner bark of young Kurrajong trees or Sally Wattle twisted, and rendered watertight by soaking in the sap of the Bloodwood tree.

Fishing spears were made from the flowering stem of the Gynea Lily or the Grass Tree and tipped with 4 prongs of ironbark, the lot was held together with yellowgum (grass tree). Boomerangs were made from wild Myrtle. The young flowering spikes of the Gynea Lily were roasted in the fire after a long soaking in water. The wild Cape Gooseberries that grew on Cabbage Tree Island were highly sought after. Fern root and daisy yam were eaten when fish were scarce.

*The Worimi people lived a hunter and gatherer life. The men hunted the large animals such as kangaroos and emus, whilst the women and children hunted smaller animals and collected fruits, berries and medicinal plants. The local environment provided a variety of food (buwatja) sources during particular seasons. Although there are no major freshwater (ngapuwi) creeks (duumala) or rivers (bami) in the area, this would not have constituted a barrier to occupation as ground water is readily available in low lying areas. The estuarine, marine and terrestrial plant and animal resources are extensive and easily accessible. Their traditional knowledge of plants and animals has not been surpassed. On the coast and in the harbour the Worimi caught fish and collected many types of shellfish including pipis, mussels and oysters. To maintain the fragile environment and because of seasonal variations, the Worimi would only stay in an area for a certain time. This helped make sure they didn't hunt, fish or harvest an area too much so there would be food for the next season. Every part of the animal and plant was eaten or used to make things such as clothing, baskets, tools and weapons.<sup>1</sup>*

Some Worimi people may have several totems which may come from landscape features, plants, animals or even weather. Some examples of these Worimi totems include the grey shark (guyiwan), red kangaroo (waparr barrang) and dolphin (guparr). The Worimi also had gender totems which symbolised the solidarity of the sexes.

The traditional custodians of the Port Stephens area were first encountered by Europeans in late 1790, when a group of escaped Second Fleet convicts were taken in by the Worimi following a sea passage from Sydney Harbour. Four of the five convicts spent almost five years living in the area, with one, John Sutton, dying during that time. In the year 1795, Captain W.R. Broughton (after whom Broughton Island is named) on HM Providence was driven by bad weather past his destination of Port Jackson into Port Stephens for shelter. He

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<sup>1</sup> <https://worimiconservationlands.com/>

was amazed to discover the survivors living among the Worimi and proceeded to recapture them.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of white settlement there was thought to have been a population of about 400 Worimi living around the estuary of Port Stephens. By 1873, only 50 remained and by 1900 there were very few tribal Worimi left.

### **An Outline of the History of European Settlement in Port Stephens**

#### **1770**

11 May 1770, Lieutenant James Cook passes Worimi country and names it Port Stephens after Sir Phillip Stephens, Secretary of the Admiralty. Cook, sailing by on Friday May 11, 1770 noted in his journal;

*"A low rocky point which I named Point Stephens...on the N.side of this point is an inlet which I called Port Stephens ..... that appeared to me from the Masthead to be shelter'd from all winds. At the entrance lay 3 small islands, 2 of which are of tolerable height and on the main near the shore are some round hills that make at a distance like islands...."*

Stephens was one of the secretaries to the Admiralty at that time. North of the port, Cook noticed smoke from Aboriginal campfires on the flat land. This suggested to him that there must be coastal lagoons providing good substance for the Aboriginals.

#### **1788**

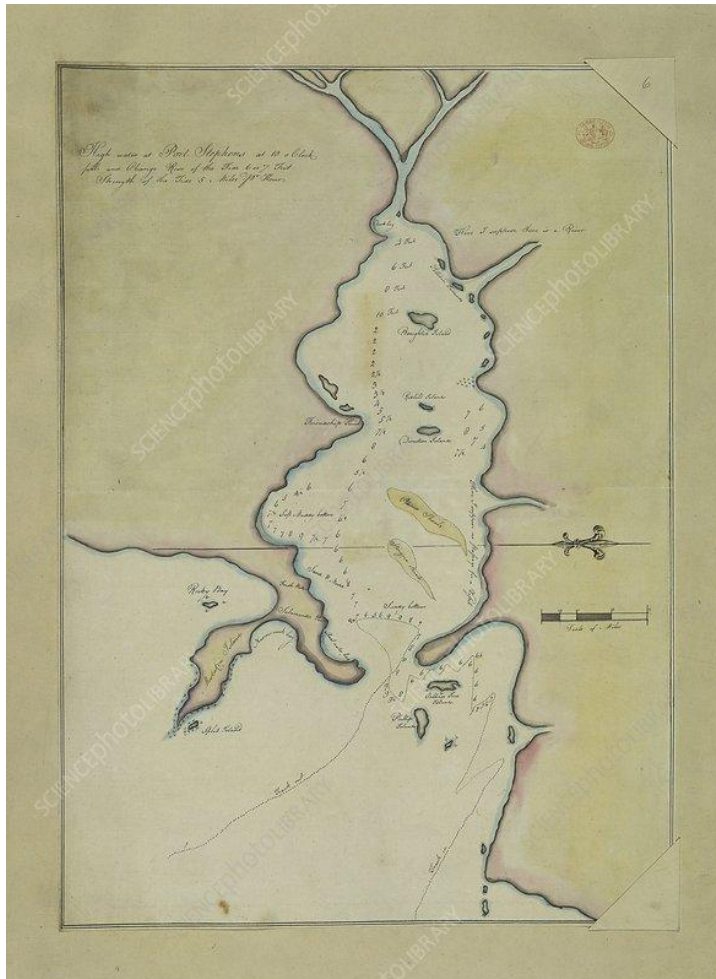
Our area is home to the Worimi people. At the time of European settlement in 1788 there were about 600 Aboriginals living around the estuary of what is now known as Port Stephens.

#### **1790**

In 1790 five escaped convicts, stole a boat from South Head Signal Station after escaping there from Parramatta in a punt. The convicts were: John Tarwood, Joseph Sutton, George Lee, George Connoway, and John Watson. They seized a small boat in Port Jackson and made off to the North. After hugging the coast for some miles, finally being shipwrecked at the area now known as Hawks Nest where they fell in with the Worimi who looked after them and took them on their wanderings.

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<sup>2</sup> Some information has been extracted from an article found at: <https://www.portstephens.org.au/about-port-stephens/history/aboriginal-history/>



Port Stephens, 18th-century map

## 1791

The Convict ship *Salamander* entered Port Stephens on route to Norfolk Island. Our area was named after the adjacent shallow bay, itself named after the *Salamander*, a convict ship from the Third Fleet, which was the first European vessel to enter Port Stephens in 1791. The *Salamander* was a ship rigged vessel of 320 tons, three decks and 16 foot draught when loaded. The *Salamander* sailed from Plymouth with 160 male convicts - on March 27th, 1791. This ship was built in 1776, was used in the Greenland whaling trade but also used to transport convicts to Australia. In 1791 it brought 156 males convicts to Australia with a detachment of New South Wales Corps. Later in the same year it left Sydney purportedly to again go whaling but "more desirous of obtaining a knowledge of harbours on the coast" entered Port Stephens and was able to take an eye sketch of the harbour and some of its arms'. The *Salamander* was the first vessel to enter Port Stephens and give her name to the residential and shopping district

## 1795

Captain Broughton and Charles Grimes, Deputy Surveyor of the Colony, was sent to Port Stephens in the ship the *Francis* to survey the Port and surrounds. The location was thought

to be good for the gathering of cedar for use in the expansion of Sydney. They were surprised to find four white men, the escapees of Parramatta Gaol, living with the Worimi. Charles Grimes names a long narrow piece of land inside the harbour jutting out in a north-west direction "Friendship Point" later to become Soldiers Point. The Worimi called this place; "Thou-Walla" meaning meeting place.

#### **1796**

Charles Grimes fires on a Worimi person, reportedly killing the individual.

#### **1801**

Governor King ordered a survey of the Port by William Paterson in 1801 and it was personally inspected by Governor Macquarie in 1812 who found the port '*good, safe, and capacious*' but abandoned his plans as there were too many shoals and the land was considered too barren to support a colony.

#### **1826**

A small garrison of soldiers from the 57 Regiment was established at Friendship Point to capture escaped convicts from Port Macquarie and Trail Bay Gaol at South West Rocks, on route to Sydney. The garrison was later abandoned and Friendship Point is renamed Soldiers Point.

#### **1845**

Land grant at Salamander Bay to Captain William Cromarty passed to Magnus Manson Cromarty on 30 July 1845. See following section.

#### **1861**

Soldiers Point known as a 'Village Reserve'

#### **1915**

The Aboriginal Protection Board was given power by the Government to 'disperse' all Aboriginals living around the harbour and evicted all to the Karuah Aboriginal Reserve. The Ridgeways are defiant and remain at Soldiers Point.

#### **1916**

The Commonwealth Government took control of a sizeable area of land at Salamander Bay where it was planned to establish a Naval Base.

#### **1920**

During the 1920's and 1930's the number and size of real estate developments grew in scale and marketing became more sophisticated.

#### **1950**

A report in the Newcastle Morning Herald (18th August 1950) quotes the superintendent of the ACC adapted the Aboriginal name "Thou-Walla" for Soldiers Point, which is claimed to mean "meeting place".

#### **1955**

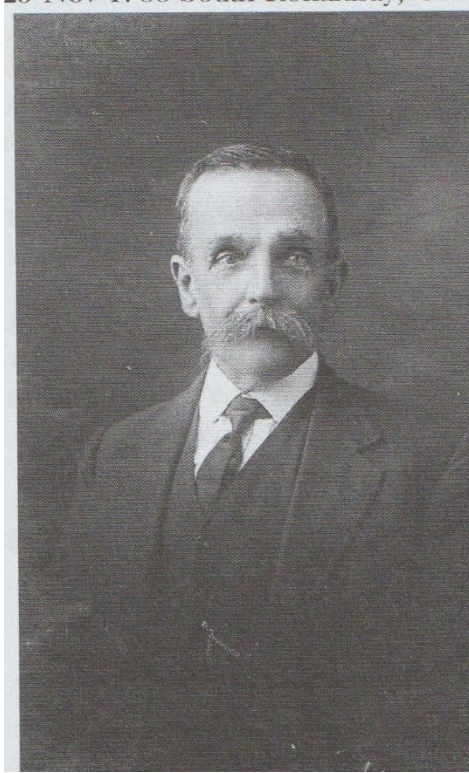
Purchase of Soldiers Point by Port Stephens Council from the Commonwealth for 50,000 pounds.

#### **2016**

Soldiers Point recognised as a culturally significant area for the Worimi, the Minister for Environment and Heritage declares Soldiers Point an 'Aboriginal Place'.

## **Salamander Bay**

**Captain William Cromarty** was born in Ronaldsaye, Orkney Islands, Scotland on 25 November, 1788. He married Cecilia (known as Sissey) Brown in 1815.



Captain William Cromarty

Children of William and Cecilia Cromarty:

- Elizabeth 1816 – 1886
- Nelly 1819 – 1824
- William 1823 – 1838
- Mary Louisa – 1826
- Magnus Mason – 1829 – 1906
- Cecilia – 1831 -1915

He arrived in Australia in 1822 and was employed as 1st Officer on the vessel *Fame* which was owned by merchant Simeon Lord and became well known and highly regarded throughout the colony.

It was not until about March 1823 that William learnt of the birth of his son, William. Less happy news the death of his daughter, Nellie, on 16<sup>th</sup> March that year. She was almost four years old.

His wife Cecilia, son William and daughter Elizabeth arrived in 1824 on the *Phoenix*.

In 1824 Captain William Cromarty was allotted a grant of 300 acres “for efficient services rendered to the Government”, at Hunters River, but later he decided that land on the northern side of Port Stephens was more valuable and transferred his land grant to a site on the Karuah River. By about 1826 the Cromarty family was settled on the northern side of Port Stephens, probably in or near Cromarty’s Hut on the Karuah.<sup>3</sup>

The Australian Agricultural Company was anxious to claim the land stretching northward from the shores of Port Stephens and wanted it without the encumbrances of independent settlers. Thus, another land transfer was effected with Captain Cromarty taking up final permanent residence on “300 acres, more or less” at Salamander Bay on a long finger of land poking north-east into the harbour (Soldiers Point). By the time of the 1828 Census, the property was called Ronaldsha, no doubt a reference to the Cromarty’s former home of South Ronaldsay. According to the Census record, the property consisted of 300 acres, 10 acres of which was cleared, 6 acres were under cultivation, and there were 23 head of cattle. The original home and a shop were said to be situated near the present Cromarty and Mary Streets, overlooking Cromarty’s Bay.<sup>4</sup>

On 9th May, 1829, The *Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser* reported that Cromarty had been given permission to depasture his stock on 2,560 acres adjoining his own land. This suggests he was now running a large number of head of cattle.<sup>5</sup>

Whilst Pilot of Newcastle Port, William Cromarty was seriously injured in an accident at Newcastle port in 1833 and retired from his position to settle on his land at Soldier's Point, Port Stephens.

William Cromarty was appointed to the position of pilot again in October 1834. The *Sydney Herald* reported of his high fitness for the post, being a man of courage and an excellent seaman.

William Cromarty was only 50 on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1838 when, with his sixteen year old son William, and two others, when he perished near Port Stephens while attempting to recover the lifeboat belonging to the King William IV steamer.

A tall headstone in the cemetery at Tahlee commemorates William Cromarty.

Captain Cromarty’s wife left a widow to raise her son and daughters, Elizabeth, Mary and Cecilia, bravely supported her family by running her small store from her homestead to serve the needs of whalers, occasional fisherman and the Aborigines of the area. Mrs Cromarty died in 1862, and was buried at Soldiers Point, as storms prevented the crossing to Carrington where her husband's remains had been taken.

Cromarty’s daughter, Cecilia, married Captain Banks who traded in his ship between Newcastle and Port Stephens. Cecilia successfully managed the small farm at Soldiers Point until about 1916 when the federal government resumed it and other surrounding land, for the purpose of a naval base.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> From “The Elusive Captain William Cromarty.” By Leslie Kilmartin Page 49.

<sup>4</sup> From “The Elusive Captain William Cromarty.” By Leslie Kilmartin Page 61.

<sup>5</sup> From “The Elusive Captain William Cromarty.” By Leslie Kilmartin Page 54.

<sup>6</sup> From “Port Stephens Heritage” by Cynthia Hunter. Page 114.

The grant was not fulfilled by law until July 1845 in the name of the surviving son Magnus. The following is an extract from Captain William Cromarty's Land Grant. Photo of Grant on following page.

### **GRANT OF LAND**

*To all to whom these presents shall come, Greetings: - Know ye, That in order to promote the due settlement of Our Territory of New South Wales, and in fulfillment of a Promise made on or before the Seventh day of July One thousand eight hundred and Seventy Two by his Excellency, Sir Thomas Brisbane as Governor thereof, and in consideration of the Quit-rent hereinafter reserved, and of the price of redemption of the same, We, of Our Special Grace, have Granted, and for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, DO HEREBY GRANT UPON Magnus Cromarty of Port Stephens his Heirs and Assigns, subject to the conditions, Reservations, and Provisos hereinafter mentioned All That Piece or Parcel of Land in Our said Territory, containing by measurement Three Hundred Acres be the same more or less, situated in the County of Gloucester and Parish of Tomaree at Port Stephens Commencing at a Marked Oak tree at the west extreme of the South boundary line of the Crown Reserve of Soldiers Point and bounded on the North by that boundary line bearing East fifty eight chains from Coast line to Coastline on the East by the Waterway of Port Stephens South Easterly (Called Salamander bay) to an old fenced line; on the south by that fenced line bearing west twenty eight degrees South fifty five chains from Coastline to Coastline; and on the west by the coastline North Westerly to the to the West extreme of the south boundary line of the Crown Reserve of Soldiers Point. Being the land promised to William Carmarty on or before the date above mentioned and of which he was authorised by Sir Ralph Darling to take possession on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1827 as a primary Grant but now granted to the said Magnus Carmarty in accordance with the report on case No. 1295 made on the Sixteenth day of June One Thousand eight hundred and forty five by the, to be called.....with all the Rights and Appertures whatsoever thereto belonging to Magnus Cromarty His Heirs and Assigns for ever, YIELDING and paying therefore a yearly unto Us, Our Heirs and Successors, the Quit-rent or Sum of Two Pounds and Ten Shillings Sterling Forever, from the First day of January One Thousand eight hundred and Thirty Five.*

# GRANT OF LAND-A.

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GRANTED, *Magnus Cremarby*  
DATE, *30th July 1875*  
COUNTY, *Gloucester*  
ACRES, *360*

Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, and so forth:

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting.—Know

us, That in order to promote the due settlement of Our Territory of New South Wales, and in fulfilment of a Promise made on or before the *twentieth* day of *July* One thousand eight hundred and *twenty-four* by His Excellency *Sir Thomas Brisbane* as Governor thereof, and in consideration of the Quit-rent hereinafter reserved, and of the price of the redemption of the same, We, of Our Special Grace, HAVE GRANTED, and for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, DO HEREBY GRANT unto *Magnus Cremarby* h. 20 Heirs and Assigns, subject to the Conditions, Reservations, and Provisions hereinafter mentioned, ALL THAT PIECE or Parcel of Land in Our said Territory, containing by admeasurement *Three hundred* Acres, and Parts of *Somerset at Port Stephens* in the County of *Gloucester* *Admeasurement*

Commencing at a marked Oak tree at the west extreme of the South boundary line of the Crown Reserve of Soldier's Point and bounded on the North by that boundary line bearing East fifty eight chains from Coast line to Coast line on the East by the Waters of Port Stephens South Easterly (or as old Salaman Bay) to an old fenced line; on the South by that fenced line bearing West twenty eight degrees South fifty five chains from Coast line to Coast line; and on the West by the Coast line North westerly to the west extreme of the South boundary line of the Crown Reserve of Soldier's Point—Being the Land Promised to William Cremarby on or before the date above mentioned and of which he was authorised by Sir Ralph Darling to take possession on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1827 as a primary grant but now granted to the said Magnus Cremarby in accordance with the report on 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 1825 made on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of June one thousand eight hundred and twenty four, the 10<sup>th</sup> day of June 1825, with all the Rights and Appurtenances whatsoever thereto belonging:

To Have unto the said *Magnus Cremarby* h. 20 Heirs and Assigns for ever, YIELDING and paying thereto yearly unto Us, Our Heirs and Successors, the Quit-rent or Sum of *Three pounds and ten shillings* Sterling for ever, from the First day of January, One thousand eight hundred and *thirty-five* unless the same shall be redeemed by the said Grantee, h. 20 Heirs or Assigns, within twenty years from that date, at the rate of twenty years purchase: *Provided* nevertheless, AND WE DO HEREBY RESERVE unto Us, Our Heirs and Successors, all such parts and so much of the said Land as may hereafter be required for a Public Way or Public Ways, in, over, and through the same, to be set out by the Governor for the time being of Our said Territory, or some person duly authorised in that respect; AND ALSO, all Stone and Gravel, all Indigenous Timber, and all other Materials, the produce of the said Land, which may be required at any time or times hereafter, for the construction and repair of Ways and Bridges, for Naval purposes, and for Public Works, together with the right of taking and removing the same; AND ALSO, the right of full and free ingress, egress, and regress, into, out of, and upon the said Land, for the several purposes aforesaid; AND WE DO FURTHER RESERVE unto Us, Our Heirs and Successors, full power for Us, or Our Successors, or for the Governor for the time being of Our said Territory, to resume and take possession of all or any part of the said Land not hereinbefore reserved, which may be required at any time or times hereafter, for any Public Purpose, the Value of the said Land, not hereinbefore reserved, or for so much thereof as shall be so required, and of any Building standing on the said required Land, being paid by the Government to the Party entitled thereto, at a Valuation fixed by Arbitrators, chosen as hereinafter mentioned; AND WE DO HEREBY DECLARE, that in every case of Arbitration which may arise under and by virtue hereof, One Arbitrator shall be chosen by the Governor for the time being of Our said Territory, and one by the then Owner or Owners of the said Land, which two Arbitrators (before they enter upon the said Arbitration) shall elect a third as Umpire, who shall determine any disagreement between the two said Arbitrators; but if the Owner or Owners of the said Land shall refuse or neglect to choose an Arbitrator on his, her, or their part, within one Calendar Month after being required so to do, by Public Advertisement in the Government Gazette, or otherwise, then both Arbitrators shall be chosen by the Governor for the time being of Our said Territory, which Arbitrators shall also elect an Umpire in the manner above mentioned: *Provided* always, THAT if the aforesaid Quit-rent shall be at any time unpaid for the space of twenty Days after the same shall become due, (although no formal demand shall have been made thereof) it shall be lawful for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, by Our Governor for the time being of Our said Territory, or other person duly authorised in that behalf, to re-enter upon the said Land, or any part thereof, with its Appurtenances, and thence to remove the said Grantee, h. 20 Heirs and Assigns, and to hold the same, and the Rents, Issues, and Profits thereof, to have, receive, and take to and for the use of Us, Our Heirs and Successors, until We or They shall therewith and thereby be fully paid and satisfied, the Quit-rent due thereon and every part thereof, and all Arrears of the same, due at the time of Our said entry, or which shall accrue due during the time of Our possession, by virtue thereof, together with all costs and charges attending the non-payment of the said Quit-rent, and Our entry upon the said Land; *Provided* also, THAT if the Fees payable on this Our Grant be not paid, and the Grant claimed by the said Grantee, or some Person lawfully authorised on h. 20 behalf, within Six Calendar Months after Notice of its being ready for delivery shall be given in the Government Gazette or otherwise; OR, if the Conditions, Reservations, and Provisions herein contained, or any part thereof, be not duly observed by the said Grantee h. 20 Heirs and Assigns, then the said Land shall be forfeited and revert unto Us, Our Heirs and Successors, and these Presents, and every matter and thing herein contained shall cease and determine, and become absolutely void to all intents and purposes, and it shall be lawful for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, by Our Governor for the time being of Our said Territory, or other Person duly authorised in that behalf, to re-enter upon the said Land or any part thereof, and the said Grantee, h. 20 Heirs and Assigns, and all Occupiers thereof, therefrom wholly to remove; In Testimony Whereof, We have caused this Our Grant, to be Sealed with the Seal of Our said Territory.

GIVEN under the Hand of Sir GEORGE GIPPS, Knight, Our Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of Our said Territory and its Dependencies, at Government House, Sydney, in New South Wales aforesaid, this *thirtieth* day of *July*, in the *ninth* year of Our Reign, and in the year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and *seventy-five*

Signed and Sealed in the Presence of

*Edw. Watson Parker*  
(Signed)

L. S. (Signed)

*Geo. Gipps*

ENTERED on Record by me, this *twentieth* day of *August* One thousand eight hundred and *seventy-five*

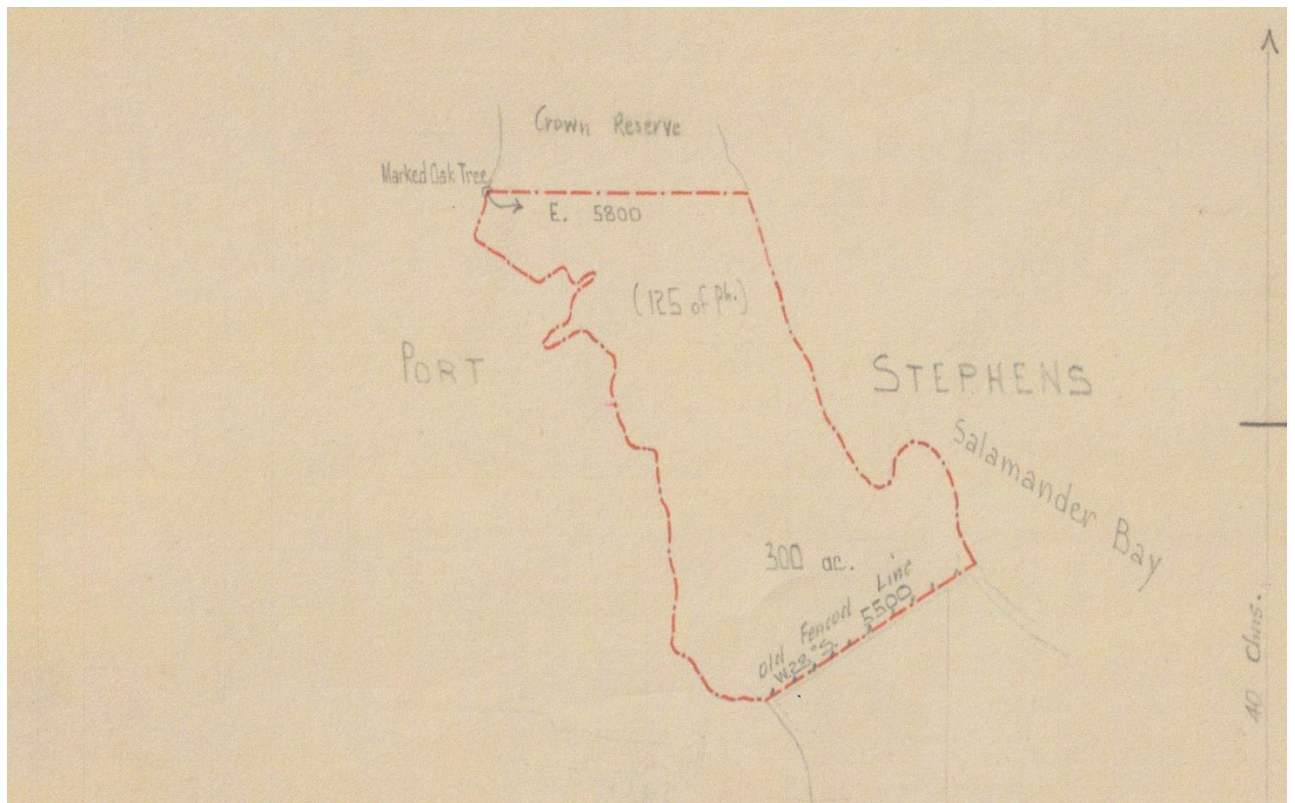
*E. Deas Thomson*  
COLONIAL SECRETARY AND REGISTRAR.

Commissioners appointed under the Act of the House of Representatives, No. 11, 1871.

Extract below from the “Peril at Port Stephens” booklet written by Denise Gaudion for the Heritage Festival ferry trip around Port Stephens.

**1804 Soldiers Camp** Sometime after the establishment of the settlement at Port Hunter (Newcastle) in 1804, trouble was caused by some rebellious convicts who after escaping, made their way north via Port Stephens. To meet that phase of trouble, the commandant at Port Hunter established a small military post of a corporal and five soldiers on the southern shore of Port Stephens. The duty of the military was to capture escaped convicts. The soldiers and supplies from Newcastle arrived either by boat around the coast or overland through the sand hill country. The long march was a hard one, however with the constant use, it did establish a track line/road from Stockton to Port Stephens.

By 1821, the penal colony at Newcastle had been removed to Port Macquarie and the Hunter Valley. The incentive to escape servitude at Port Macquarie once again, led to escapees trying to reach Sydney by overland routes. Crossing the waterways of Port Stephens was yet another obstacle to their escape. In 1825, the Australian Agricultural Company was formed at Carribeen, later renamed Carrington, and by 1828, 180 convicts were assigned to the Company. Convict escapees would steal boats and attempt to make their escape out through the headlands of Port Stephens or to the southern shore of the harbour, only to find the garrison of soldiers waiting to apprehend them. Many of those A.A. Co. convicts once emancipated, became farmers, fishermen or business people in villages of Port Stephens. The area was originally named Friendship Point by Captain William Cromarty the first white settler to the area in 1824, but, was later renamed Soldiers Point after the garrison of soldiers who were camped on the point. Mrs Cecilia Cromarty ran a small store to serve the needs of visiting whalers, fishermen and the local aborigines, she was renowned for her kindness, and, at one time two escaping convicts, intent upon robbing her store and stealing a boat, were treated generously to a meal by Mrs Cromarty who also kindly offered the loan of a boat provided they tied it up at Tenilba (Tanilba), and afterwards they felt so ashamed, they left without attempting the robbery and they did leave the boat tied up at Tenilba.



Outline of Cromarty's 300 acre Grant

For anyone interested in learning more about Captain William Cromarty, I suggest reading "*The Elusive Captain William Cromarty*" by Leslie Kimartin.

**Magnus Manson Cromarty** was born at Soldiers Point on 28 February 1829, his father, Captain William Cromarty, was 42 and his mother, Cecilea Brown, was 36. He was baptised when he was two years old at Christ Church Cathedral in Newcastle. He married Christina McIntosh on 23 February 1859, in Raymond Terrace, New South Wales, Australia. They were the parents of at least 7 sons and 7 daughters:

- William 1859 – 1915
- Margaret – 1861 – 1928
- Cecilia – 1862 - 1945
- Magnus- 1863 – 1874
- Ann – 1865 – 1922
- Christina – 1867 – 1947
- John – 1869 – 1932
- James – 1870 - 1949
- Mary – 1872 – 1872
- Niel – 1873 – 1958
- Magnus – 1875 -1925
- Donald – 1878 - 1925
- Elizabeth – 1880 – 1947
- Effie – 1882 – 1947



Magnus Cromarty

The following extract is from “*Pioneers and Their Descendants 1824-1920*” Volume One. Page 165.

*Magnus left Port Stephens as a young man headed for the Bendigo goldfields. He returned four years later with 800 pound with which he bought a portion of land at Bob's Farm. He kept sheep and poultry on his land also grew wheat and arrowroot. .... He also bought the first wheeled vehicle to the Port Stephens' area – a spring cart that was somehow pulled through miles of virgin and tractless country.*

*In 1903 Magnus is listed as a Farmer at Bob's Farm NSW and his wife, Christina in 1903 and 1906 is listed as Domestic Duties, Anna B*

He died on 11 August 1906, in Port Stephens, New South Wales, Australia, at the age of 77 and is buried at Birubi Point.



Cromarty's Gravestone at Morna Point (now known as Birubi Point) Cemetery, Port Stephens (Anna Bay)



Headstone of Magnus and Christina Cromarty at Birubi Point Cemetery,

Following Magnus Cromarty's death in 1906, the land was bequeathed to his children. The following extract can be found in full at <https://nswlrs.com.au> Book 898, Number 349.

**THIS INDENTURE** made the twenty third day of December in the year of one thousand nine hundred and nine between John Cromarty Tomago near Newcastle in the State of New South Wales, farmer, and Magnus Cromarty of Newcastle aforesaid Shipping Agent Administrator with the Will arranged of Magnus Cromarty the elder late of Anna Bay Port Stephens in the said State, Farmer deceased of the first part **James Cromarty** of Swan Reach Raymond Terrace in the said state Farmer, **Neil Cromarty** of Anna Bay aforesaid Farmer and **Donald Cromarty** of Raymond Terrace aforesaid Farmer of the second part and Harold Gow of Newcastle aforesaid Solicitors Managing Clerk Trustee for the purpose hereinafter mentioned and hereafter called Trustee of the Third part. Whereas the said Magnus Cromarty the Elder was at the date of his death seized in fee simple (inter alia) of the lease mentioned hereinafter described AND WHEREAS the said Magnus Cromarty the Elder died on the eleventh day of August one thousand nine hundred and six having made his will dated the Twenty first day of October one thousand eight hundred and ninety five whereby (inter alia) he devised and bequeathed to his three sons James, Neil and Donald (the parties hereto of the second part) his freehold of Three Hundred Acres at Soldiers Point being a Grant to his late father William Cromarty and numbered 125 of the Parish Map and the Testator appointed John Shiret Macpherson and Donald McQueen Executors of his Will. And Whereas the said John Shiret MacPherson and Donald McQueen duly renounced Probate of the said Will without having any intermeddled in the Estate and effects of the said Testator and Letters of Administration with the said Will annexed hereon the Twenty Seventh day of November one thousand nine hundred and six granted to the said John Cromarty and Magnus Cromarty by the Supreme Court of the said state in its Probate Jurisdiction No. 38329 And whereas all the debts, funeral expenses and Testimony expenses of the said Testator have been paid And Whereas the said James Cromarty, Neil Cromarty and Donald Cromarty have agreed that the land is deserved to them under the said Will and which land is hereunder described shall be conveyed to them As tenants in common and they have requested the said John Cromarty and Magnus Cromarty to join and expect these present which they have consented and agreed to do.....it has now been agreed between the said James Cromarty, Neil Cromarty and Donald Cromarty that such Crown Grant shall be handed over to and be retained by the said Donald Cromarty upon the covenant for production of the same being entered into by him as is thereafter contained which the said Donald Cromarty has agreed to do.....All that piece or parcel of land containing by at measurement Three Hundred acres be the same more or less situated at Port Stephens in the County of Gloucester Parish of Tomaree and State of New South Wales no. 125 on Parish Map....

Thus, the Salamander Bay Land Grant became the property of the three Cromarty brothers: James, Neil and Donald Cromarty.

**James Cromarty** was born 29 August 1870 at Oakfield Reg Raymond Terrace. NSW. He married Catherine Jessie McDonald on 29 November 1906 at Morpeth NSW. They had three children:

Flora (1907 - )

John (1907 - )

Howard (1910 -)

James died 30th September 1949 at Raymond Terrace at the age of 79 years.

**Neil Cromarty** was born 28 September 1873 at Bob's Farm NSW. He married Janet Laurie (Jessie) Ross on 17th June 1908 at Stroud. They had three children:

Donald Ross 1909 - 2007

Effie 1911

Janet Jessie 1913

Neil was listed as a Farmer at Anna Bay NSW in 1903 and 1906. He was 84 years old when he died 18<sup>th</sup> September 1958.

**Donald Cromarty** was born 30<sup>th</sup> March 1878 at Tomago NSW. He married Margaret Jane McKinnon on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1903 at Hexham NSW. They had eight children:

Margaret Cecilia 1904 - 1979

Magnus 1907 - 1995

Florence 1909

James Charles 1911 - 1980

William (Bill) 1913

Alleen 1915

Donald 1917

Archibald Neil 1923 - 2013



Donald Cromarty

Below is a copy documenting Donald Cromarty's Title to the Cromarty Grant. (Vol 2246 Folio 26).

**CERTIFICATE OF TITLE.**

(C.) New South Wales.



REGISTER BOOK, **CANCELLED**  
Vol. **2246** Folio **26**

[App<sup>n</sup> No. **16761**]

*Donald Cromarty* of Anna Bay Farmer Applicant in Primary Application No. 16761 is now the proprietor of an estate in Fee Simple in an undivided one third part or share The entirety being held by him, James Cromarty and Neil Cromarty as Tenants in Common Subject nevertheless to the conditions and covenants of any instrument in the grant hereinafter referred to and also subject to such encumbrances here and there as are referred to in the First Part of the Certificate as follows:—

That the said Donald Cromarty on the date of the above Grant of Licence and Tenancy of the said land containing four hundred and fifty one acres or thereabouts situate on the Anna Bay and Anna Bay and being the land delineated on the sketch map of the said Anna Bay situated on the Government of Lands originally granted to the said Donald Cromarty by Anna Bay dated the twentieth day of July one thousand eight hundred and fifty six

In witness whereof, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed my Seal, this 20th day of April one thousand nine hundred and twelve

Signed the 20th day of April 1912  
In the presence of James Cromarty

*James Cromarty*  
Deputy Registrar General

NOTIFICATION REFERRED TO.

673433 Donald Cromarty of Anna Bay Farmer Applicant in Primary Application No. 16761 is now the proprietor of an estate in Fee Simple in an undivided one third part or share The entirety being held by him, James Cromarty and Neil Cromarty as Tenants in Common Subject nevertheless to the conditions and covenants of any instrument in the grant hereinafter referred to and also subject to such encumbrances here and there as are referred to in the First Part of the Certificate as follows:—

1st to 3 12th August 1912  
2246 2246

673434 Donald Cromarty of Anna Bay Farmer Applicant in Primary Application No. 16761 is now the proprietor of an estate in Fee Simple in an undivided one third part or share The entirety being held by him, James Cromarty and Neil Cromarty as Tenants in Common Subject nevertheless to the conditions and covenants of any instrument in the grant hereinafter referred to and also subject to such encumbrances here and there as are referred to in the First Part of the Certificate as follows:—

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*James Cromarty*  
Deputy Registrar General

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Donald was a member of the Port Stephens Shire Council. He was listed as an oysterman in the 1904 Anna Bay Postal Directory and as a Fisherman at Bob's Farm in 1906.<sup>7</sup>

Donald Cromarty took out a Mortgage (Number 681, Book 865) on the property to William Ferguson. See Book 950, Page 370. It was paid out on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1911. (See Book 950 Folio 370.)

***This Indenture** made this Twenty Fourth day of September in the year of Our Lord One thousand nine hundred and eight between Donald Cromarty of Newline near Raymond Terrace in the State of New South Wales. Farmer (hereinafter called the Mortgagor ) of the one part and William Ferguson of Raymond Terrace in the said state Farmer (hereinafter called Mortgagee) of the other part. **Witnesseth** that in consideration of the sum of One Hundred Pounds now lent by the Mortgagee to the Mortgagor the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged.*

In 1900 the Real Property Act 1900 (NSW) was legislated. It is a piece of legislation that establishes the framework for registering land titles, implementing the Torrens system, and resolving disputes related to land ownership and transfer in New South Wales.

Here's a more detailed explanation:

- **Purpose:**

The Act's primary purpose is to simplify property ownership and transfer by providing a secure and efficient system for registering land titles.

- **Torrens System:**

It establishes the Torrens system of land registration, where the government guarantees the validity of registered titles.

- **Key Features:**

- **Registration of Titles:** The Act outlines the process for registering land titles at the Land Titles Office.
- **Certificate of Title:** It involves receiving a Certificate of Title, which authenticates ownership of the land.
- **Government Guarantee:** The NSW Government guarantees the validity of the registered title.
- **Dispute Resolution:** The Act provides a framework for resolving disputes related to land titles.

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<sup>7</sup> "Pioneers and Their Descendants" Volume One. Tomaree Family History Group. Page 159.

Subsequently, the Cromarty brothers applied for their land to be covered under the real Property Act. The following notice was published in the *Government Gazette of New South Wales* on Wednesday October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1911. Issue No. 143, Page 5555.

**Notice Under Real Property Act**

*Applications having been made to bring lands hereunder described under the provisions of the Real Property Act, Certificates of Indefeasible Title will issue unless caveats be lodged in accordance with the Third Schedule to the said AQct, on or before the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1911.*

*No. 16,761. Applicants – James Cromarty, Hinton, and Neil and Donald Cromarty, both Anna Bay. Land:- County Gloucester, Parish Tomaree, Shire Port Stephens, 457 acres at Soldiers Point, Salamander Bay and Cromarty's Bay, Port Stephens – land originally granted as 300 acres (portion 125 of Parish) to Magnus Cromarty; adjoining Crown Land.*

From 1911 to 1914 the Cromarty brothers sold a great deal of their property at Nelson Bay in small lots. The land at Salamander bay remained mainly untouched.

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 1916 the Commonwealth of Australia acquired a vast quantity of land in Port Stephens, including Cromarty's Grant. Below is an extract from the Government Gazette

**Commonwealth of Australia**

**The Lands Acquisition Act 1906**

**NOTIFICATION OF THE ACQUISITION OF LAND BY THE COMMONWEALTH.**

*It is hereby notified and declared by His Excellency the Governor General, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, that the land hereunder described, together with all buildings and tanks (if any) thereon, has been acquired by the Commonwealth under the Lands Acquisition Act 1906, for the following public purpose, namely, for Defence purposes at Port Stephens, New South Wales.*

*The Lands Acquisition Act 1906.*

IT is hereby notified and declared by His Excellency the Governor-General, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, that the land hereunder described, together with all buildings and tanks (if any) thereon, has been acquired by the Commonwealth under the *Lands Acquisition Act 1900*, for the following public purpose, namely, for Defence purposes at Port Stephens, New South Wales.

R. M. FERGUSON,  
Governor-General.

N. L. 16/1692. KING O'MALLEY,  
Minister of State for Home Affairs.

All that piece or parcel of land at Port Stephens, being part of parish of Tomaree, county of Gloucester, State of New South Wales, Commonwealth of Australia, as sh-wa hachured on plan hereunder: Commencing at a point being the intersection of the western boundary of portion 49, parish of Tomaree, with the high-water mark of Port Stephens; thence southerly by part of that western boundary to a point being a north-east corner of portion 27; thence westerly by the northernmost boundary of portion 27 to the north-western corner thereof; thence southerly by the western boundary of portion 27 before mentioned and its further production southerly to its intersection with the production easterly of the southern boundary of portion 20, parish of Tomaree; thence westerly by the last mentioned production and the southern boundary of portion 20 to a point on the high-water mark of Port Stephens; thence northerly by that high-water mark to Cumbra or Mud Point; thence southerly, easterly, and northerly by the high water mark of Cromarty's Bay; thence northerly by the high-water mark of Port Stephens to Soldier's Point; thence southerly by the high-water mark of Port Stephens to Wanda Wanda or Round Head; thence easterly and northerly by the high-water mark of Salamander Bay to

Map of Stephens Island, New Zealand, showing the coastline, major points, and various numbered survey areas. The map includes labels for 'PORT', 'SOLDIER'S POINT', 'Cromarty's Bay', 'Salamander Bay', 'Sandy Point', and 'Carlette Point'. It also features a scale bar and a north arrow. The map is dated '1899' and 'No. 64 - 28th May, 1896'.

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In 1915 the land was held by the Commonwealth of Australia. Below is an extract from Vol 4440-65.

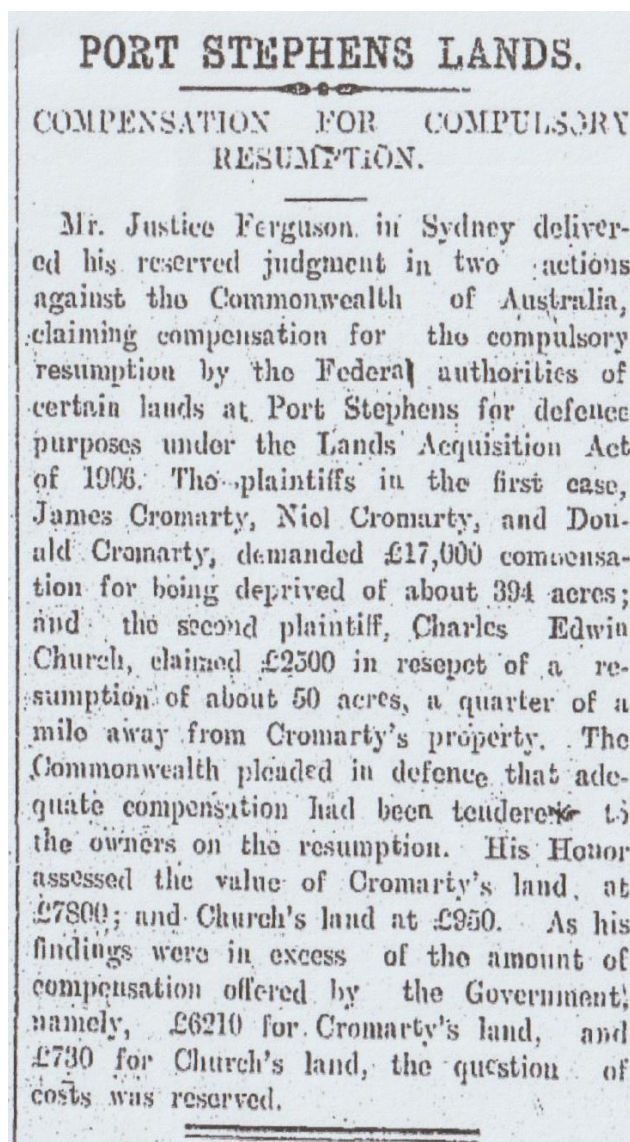
*The Commonwealth of Australia applicant as to part in Primary Application No. 30724 and as to the other part by virtue of the Certificate of Title above referred to now surrendered for consolidation is now the proprietors of an estate in fee simple in Firstly:- That piece of land situated in the Shire of Port Stephens Parish of Tomaree and County of Gloucester containing Four Hundred and fifty one acres or thereabouts being the land originally granted as 300 acres (Portion 125 of Parish) to Magnus Cromarty by Crown Grant dated the 30<sup>th</sup> day of July 1845.....Which said pieces of land are shown in the plan hereon and therein edged red and also shown as to part in the plan lodged with said application No 30724 and which said Grants are delineated in the public map of the said Parish in the Department of Land.*

*In witness whereof I have hereonto to signed my name and affixed my seal this twenty ninth day of September 1930.*

The Cromarty brothers, James, Neil and Donald, were certainly not happy about their land being resumed by the Commonwealth. In fact, they took the Commonwealth to Court over the amount of compensation the Government was prepared to offer them for their land. The Commonwealth's offer was for £6,210. The following extract is from the "Maitland Weekly Mercury" Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1919. (Full Test below).

#### **PORT STEPHENS LANDS COMPENSATION FOR COMPULSORY RESUMPTION**

*Mr Justice Ferguson in Sydney delivered his reserved judgement in two actions against the Commonwealth of Australia, claiming compensation for the compulsory resumption by the Federal authorities of certain lands at Port Stephens for defence purposes under the Lands Acquisition Act of 1906. The plaintiffs in the first case, James Cromarty, Niel Cromarty and Donald Cromarty, demanded seventeen thousand pounds compensation for being deprived of about 394 acres.....The Commonwealth pleaded in defence that adequate compensation had been tendered to the owners on the resumption. His Honor assessed the value of Cromarty's land at £7,800. ....*



Around 1910 to 1913, a huge 1190 hectare Submarine Navy Base as part of the Commonwealth's long term defence strategy was proposed for Port Stephens and work commenced in 1916.

The area included was Salamander Bay from Corlette Point (where the Anchorage Resort is now), the entire Soldiers Point Peninsula and down past Cromarty Bay almost to Taylors Beach. The Commonwealth had gazetted the entirety of the Mambo Wetlands and past where the Salamander Shopping Centre is now located.

Work began in 1916 with 250 unemployed miners from Newcastle used to blast rock from the base of Wanda Wanda Head (and anecdotally destroying Aboriginal Artwork in caves there). Surveyors were hard at work and drainage ditches and roads were constructed as well as a wharf to berth Australia's then two RAN Submarines.

After the finish of the first World War and the loss of our only 2 submarines, work on the base slowed and stopped completely in 1922. The Naval Base land was sold by the Commonwealth to the Port Stephens Shire Council for a bargain £50,000 or about \$1.6 million in today's money.

The following extract is from the Port Stephens Historical Family Society Journal 2, 2020.

**Salamander Submarine Base** As early as 1905, Salamander Bay was recommended for use as a submarine base. Following Federation in 1911, a proposal emerged to make Port Stephens a submarine refitting station for the new Royal Australian Navy and was approved. George King-Hall (British) was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the new Australia Station in 1911, the following is an entry from his diary Dated 14 October 1913: *"Arrived at Port Stephens this morning and anchored outside the entrance. Went in with Drummond in Steam Pinnace and met Henderson and Mr Bale the engineer, landed some miles up at the camp, where Mr Bale has his headquarters. The head man being Morris, an ex-stoker. The clearing is in the midst of the bush, and prettily laid out with flower beds, a regular bush camp. We walked through a made path, through the bush to Salamander Bay, a very fine sheet of water, to be the new submarine base. We all agreed that Port Stephens should be the great naval base and also building yard- not Jervis Bay or Sydney. Port Stephens is a very fine harbour, more extensive in some ways than Port Jackson, but a good deal of dredging is required. We had tea at the camp, and I returned to the ship and left at pm for Western Port in the 'Cambrian'."* The land bordered by Salamander Bay and Cromarty Bay was surveyed and resumed by the Commonwealth in 1916. During WW1, naval ships were known to enter Port Stephens where their boilers were relined on the spot with the local bricks from Port Stephens Fire Brick Co., throwing the old bricks overboard into Swan Bay. David Baker recalls that 'off shore, about 200 metres, looking towards Salamander Bay from Swan Bay, there are about ten piles of brick rubble in the water'. In 1919, following WW1, defence authorities again reviewed Port Stephens as a site for a naval base. At the time, the proposed navy docking facilities and dredging to make the harbour suitable was going to provide real benefit to the farmers in the area, enabling more commercial use of the harbour. The proposals were never implemented. When Admiral Lord Jellicoe visited the port in the 1930's, he declared that Port Stephens should become the base for the "Great Pacific

Fleet” and that Pindimar should become the major base for Australia’s flying boat squadron. It was also the Depression years and his grandiose ideas were all rejected. Due to the drastic cut in the defence budget, insufficient funds were available to develop and continue the base. The naval base at Salamander Bay was demolished and in a SMH newspaper article dated 22nd November 1922, the NSW Director for Commonwealth Dept. of Works and Railways gave instructions to dispose of the expensive plant, buildings, stores and furniture by an auctioneer in Newcastle. In 1942, with Japan’s invasion of South-East Asia and occupation of the Pacific Islands to the north of Australia, it became imperative to establish training camps with the aim of training personnel from the Navy, Army and Air Force to undertake joint operations to retake the captured islands and repel the invaders. In June 1942, following an aerial site survey, Royal Marine Officer, Commander F.N. Cook and Lt. Colonel Hope inspected all the proposed sites along the east coast, Port Stephens was selected because of its defensible port, safe anchorage away from the Japanese subs, and the sparsely settled area. During WW1, at Soldiers Point a concrete gun emplacement was set up at the east end of Ridgeway Ave and underwater demolitions training was conducted at Salamander Bay, but some of the training was also conducted at Winda Woppa and Broughton Island. The north gully of Broughton Island facing Hawks Nest was pocked with small craters from artillery practice, although the Dept. of Defence Historical section says it has no knowledge of the shelling. Proof of the shelling came from a former artillery signalman, Harry Williams of the 9th Field Regiment in 1943, confirming that he had been on board a landing ship off the island when a number of shells were fired at the island. Cabbage Tree Island was also heavily used as a target area from the six-inch coastal guns at Tomaree Head and the naval ships.

During WW2 the wooded headland was used as a campsite for HMAS Assault during World War II and later as a migrant camp.

Port Stephens during World War II suddenly became a focus for military operations, resulting in a shift from the pioneering period into a more progressive stage of development. Immediate improvements were the construction of better access roads, connection of services such as electricity and water.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> From “The Port Stephens Story” Compiled by M.A. Bartlett. Page 47.

After the war, in 1955, the Federal Government allowed Port Stephens Council to buy the priceless site for just £50,000 (\$100,000).



Advertisement for the sale of land at Salamander Bay 1911

**THE COMING PORT AND CITY.**

**PORT STEPHENS.**

ABOUT 4 MILES FROM NELSON'S BAY.

**IMPORTANT SUBDIVISION SALE**

—OF—

Part of Magnus Oromarty's Estate  
(Portion 125 on Parish Map of To-  
marree), abutting upon

**THE DEEP WATERS & MAGNIFI-  
CENT ANCHORAGE**

—OF—

**SALAMANDER BAY,**

Which was quite recently the sub-  
ject of favourable reports by the  
British Naval Authorities and the  
State Government's Engineers.

**M**ESSRS. LANG, WOOD, & CO., in  
conjunction with Mr. E. WIN-  
DEYER, of Raymond Terrace, will  
sell by auction, at the Mart, 19  
Newcomen-street, Newcastle,

**ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18,**

—At 12,—

**67 ALLOTMENTS  
AND ONE 25 ACRE BLOCK.**

—OF—

**ELIGIBLE LAND,**

Adjacent to and including Wanda  
Wanda or Round Head.

**SALAMANDER BAY, PORT  
STEPHENS.**

The Allotments vary in area from  
half an acre to one acre

**16 BLOCKS HAVE ABSOLUTE  
WATER FRONTAGES.**

the balance forming Eligible Sites  
for Business and Residential pur-  
poses, all roads being 66 feet wide.

**STEAMSHIP OWNERS, TIMBER  
MERCHANTS, & STOREKEEPERS**

should secure some of these Blocks  
in anticipation of the great and im-  
portant developments which may be  
expected to take place in the Dis-  
trict and which it is anticipated  
will revolutionise values in the vic-  
inity of the projected wharves and  
Railway line to connect with the  
Maitland Coal Fields.

The property has been surveyed  
by Mr. C. F. Napier North, of New-  
castle, and Lithos, now ready, may  
be had of Messrs. Baker & McKen-  
zie, Raymond Terrace, Solicitors for  
Vendors; at the Sea Breeze Hotel  
Nelson Bay; and of the Auctioneers,  
LANG WOOD & CO., Newcastle, and  
E. WINDEYER, Raymond Terrace.

The *Daily Observer* of 14 June 1918, page 5, reported:

*'Port Stephens, 21 miles north of Newcastle, will be a great, shipping centre for the whole of the rich northern district of New South Wales when a line is built to tap the general railway system. The construction of the line and the building of the city would add immensely to the tax-producing capacity of Northern New South Wales. This prospect has been foreseen by Mr. Henry F. Halloran, planner of Salamander Estate, situated close to the Commonwealth Naval Base in Salamander Bay, and with direct access both to the harbor and the ocean foreshore. The town bears the genial title of 'Salamander,' and it has been mapped out in a cluster of curving roads around a central depression and three hills. The roads follow the contours of the ground; the residential sites occupy the slopes in such a way as to give a magnificent view from each one, and the hilltops and depressions are reserved as parks flanked by allotments.'*

## **Wanda Beach**

The specific area of this research is known as Wanda Beach. The name Wanda is derived from the Worimi language, meaning "beach" or "sand hills. Wanda Beach is a scenic, white sandy bay which is located in Salamander Bay on the way to Soldiers Point . It faces directly to the mouth of Port Stephens, so as you walk along you can enjoy the views out to the peaks of Tomaree and Yacaaba Heads. There are no waves at Wanda Beach, so you can take your time and go for a leisurely swim in the bright blue water, as dolphins silently glide by in the distance. There is native seagrass along the bottom of the bay in some areas, so the best place to swim is right in front of George Reserve BBQ area , in the middle of the bay.

Around 1910 to 1913, a huge 1190 hectare Submarine Navy Base as part of the Commonwealth's long term defence strategy was proposed for Port Stephens and work commenced in 1916. The Commonwealth resumed much of Cromarty's land. In 1916, about 100 men were employed on the site although work was suspended in 1917.

The area included was Salamander Bay from Corlette Point (where the Anchorage Resort is now), the entire Soldiers Point Peninsula and down past Cromarty Bay almost to Taylors Beach. The Commonwealth had gazetted the entirety of the Mambo Wetlands and past where the Salamander Shopping Centre is now located.

Work began in 1916 with 250 unemployed miners from Newcastle used to blast rock from the base of Wanda Wanda Head (and anecdotally destroying Aboriginal Artwork in caves there). Surveyors were hard at work and drainage ditches and roads were constructed as well as a wharf to berth Australia's then two RAN Submarines.

In 1915, another part of the Cromarty Estate was subdivided, providing an extension to the Nelson Bay village area. Advertisements described Nelson Bay as "Australia's Naval base Town".

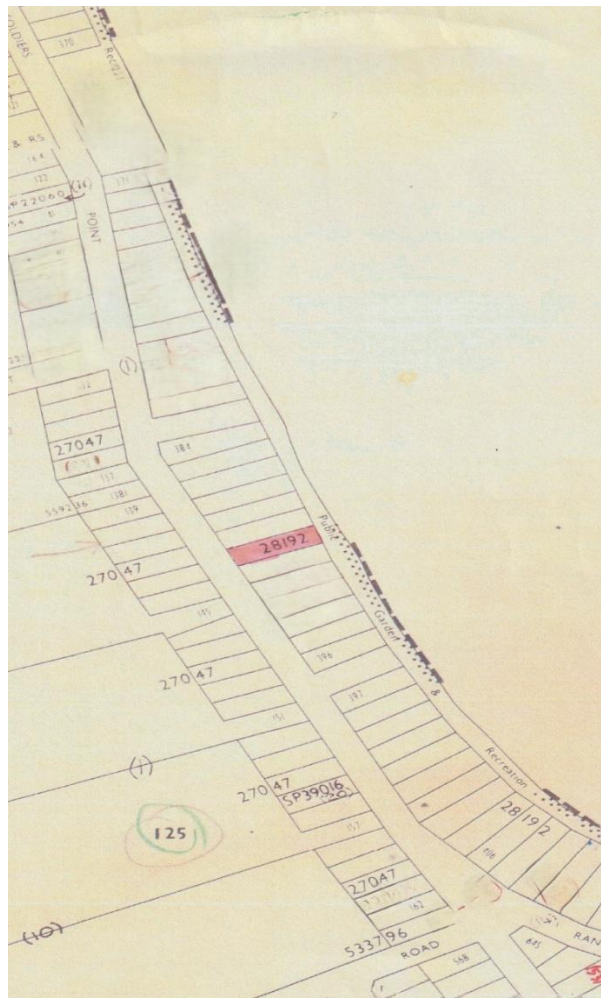
After the finish of the first World War and the loss of our only 2 submarines, work on the base slowed and stopped completely in 1922. About 1955, the Government sold most of the area set aside for the naval base to Port Stephens Council.

The Naval Base land was sold by the Commonwealth to the Port Stephens Shire Council for a bargain £50,000 or about \$1.6 million in today's money.

Now that the Defence Department had sold the land to Port Stephens Shire Council, the land again became available for private purchase.

### **213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Beach.**

The portion of land upon which this research is based is 213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay. Its official description is Lot 390 Plan 28192. In 2025, the lot now known as 213 Soldiers Point Road is a 2 unit duplex semi-detached in **Salamander Bay**. It sits on a **837m<sup>2</sup>** lot. It is located within **Port Stephens Council**, with no bushfire, flood, or heritage overlays detected. It is within the catchment of Soldiers Point Public School and Tomaree High School. It has reliable NBN Fibre to the Premises.<sup>9</sup>



213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay highlighted in red.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.property.com.au](http://www.property.com.au)

Below is a copy of the Ownership of Lot 390 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay, now known as 213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander, from the Commonwealth of Australia to the subsequent owners of the property.

Primary Appln. No. 36763  
Reference to Last Title  
Vol. 7430 Fol. 228

New South Wales.  
  
REGISTER BOOK.  
Vol. 7792 Fol. 140  
EE Issued on Transfer No. K001583

CANCELLED [W] 29c/2812  
ON ISSUE OF NEW TITLE

JOSH GORDON BROWN, of Soldier's Point, via Newcastle, Carpenter, is now the proprietor of an Estate in Fee Simple, subject nevertheless to such encumbrances, liens and interests as are notified herein in that place of land in the Shire of Port Stephens Parish of Cookes Bay County of Gloucester, being Lot 39C in Deposited Plan No. 26192 and being also part of Portion 125 granted to Magnus Crossarty on 30th July 1865.

In witness whereof I have hereunto signed my name and affixed my Seal, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_.

Signed in the presence of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Registrar General.

NOTIFICATION REFERRED TO

*[Handwritten: JHB]*  
*[Handwritten: Josh Gordon Brown, Carpenter of Soldier's Point, via Newcastle, N.S.W.]*  
I hereby certify that the above named person is the registered proprietor of the land within described in Section 94 Application No. 26192 dated 27th September 1963.  
*[Signature: Jonathan]*  
REGISTRAR GENERAL.

The within Certificate No. 7754-117 is hereby withdrawn  
Dated 3rd March 1964  
*[Signature: Jonathan]*  
REGISTRAR GENERAL.

*[Handwritten: JHB]*  
*[Handwritten: Josh Gordon Brown, Carpenter, N.S.W.]*  
Now the registered proprietor of land within described in TRANSFER No. K001583 dated 19th Oct. 1963.  
Dated 3rd March 1964  
*[Signature: Jonathan]*  
REGISTRAR GENERAL.

*[Handwritten: JHB]*  
*[Handwritten: Madras Isaac Brown (alias) Mervyn Joseph Brown and Wendy Katharine Brown, both of whom are the wife of said Madras Isaac Brown]*  
now the registered proprietors of the land within described in TRANSFER No. 9643 Dated 28th April 1963.  
Entered 18th April 1965  
*[Signature: Jonathan]*  
REGISTRAR GENERAL.

CAVEAT by the Registrar General  
Entered 1st January 1964  
*[Signature: Jonathan]*  
REGISTRAR GENERAL.

*[Handwritten: Corrected T10 P1]*  
*[Handwritten: K20598 TR + 7643 R]*

TRANSFER NO. R227035 Nazette Basser of East  
Lindfield and Barbara Anne Wright of Woodstock both  
married WREN as tenants in common etc.

Now the registered proprietor of the land within described

Registered 20-6-1955

REGISTRAR GENERAL

REGISTERED PROPRIETOR Geoffrey Lewis Basser by  
Transfer V772579 Registered 20-6-1955 and  
Nazette Basser as tenants in common in equal shares  
by Transfer V772579 Registered 20-6-1955

NO FURTHER  
 DEALINGS TO BE REGISTERED

The document reads as:

**JOHN GORDON BROWN**, of Soldiers Point, via Newcastle, Carpenter, is now the proprietor of an Estate in Fee Simple, subject nevertheless to such encumbrances, liens and interests as are notified hereon in that piece of land in the Shire of Port Stephens Parish of Tomaree and County of Gloucester, being Lot 390 in Deposited Plan No. 28192 and being also part of Portion 125 granted to Magnus Cromarty on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1845.

Dated Fourth day of November, 1959.

Subsequent ownership of the block are:

**27 August 1963** to **Gordon Ernest Brown** (App J418540)

**6 January 1965** to **Lancelot Charles Willson**, Company Director. (App 8854116)

**3 March 1966** to **Ina Cross**, widow.

**18 April 1968** to **Marcus Ivan Brown**, Clothing Manufacturer and Wendy Katherine Townsend, Manager.

**22 May 1979** to **Nanette Bassar** and **Barbara Anne Wright**. When Nanette Bassar and Barbara Wright purchased the property, the block housed a small one bedroom cottage and a boatshed. A second bedroom was added later. The Bassers (Nanette and Geoffrey) and the Wrights (Barbara and Harvey) utilised the property as a holiday home for themselves and their young families. Later, the two families demolished the hut and built the current duplex building. The Bassers occupying Unit 2 and The Wrights in the smaller Unit 1. The Bassers moved into their duplex permanently in the early 2000's.



Photographs of the original cottage and boatshed.





Nanette Bassar (1939 - ) is a renowned artist. In 1988 she won the Warringah Art Award and in 1990 was a finalist in the prestigious Wynne Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales with her painting *Across the Dividing Range*. Nanette also practised as a book illustrator. Nanette continues to paint today.

**26 June 1985** to **Geoffrey Bassar** and **Nanette Bassar**. In 1985, Nanette Bassar and her husband Geoffrey purchased Unit One from the Wrights for \$85,000. The Bassars are now the proud owners of both Units. For many years the Bassars welcomed guests to Unit 1 as a BnB unit. Unit 1 is now leased to the author of this research, Norman Lilley.

**Geoffrey Lewis Bassar** was born 20<sup>th</sup> December 1929 in Lithgow, NSW. He married Nanette Krupa (born 1939 -) in Sydney in 1959.

Born & educated in Lithgow NSW, Geoffrey spent time in the family retail business before moving to Sydney in 1957 where he worked in sales and marketing primarily in the manufacturing & retail sectors for a number of years, before establishing his own menswear business.

Following this he became involved in the Insurance Industry and Risk Management Practice, once again in Marketing & Sales.

For over 50 years Geoffrey has been involved in Community Service, through Apex Young Men's Service Clubs, and Rotary. For a number of years he was a member of the Board of the Montefiore Homes Aged Care Group in Sydney which was responsible for the lives of 750 residents & 900 staff in four Campuses.

Geoffrey retired from full time employment in 1998 but has continued with some Business Management consultancies. After visiting the Tomaree Peninsula for 45 years, he and his wife Nanette eventually settled at salamander Bay.



Mr Bassar was extremely active in the Port Stephens community. He established Caring for Our Port Stephens Youth which went on to operate Port Stephens' only free youth mental health counselling service, Jupiter. In 2021, he received an OAM in recognition of his enormous contribution to the Port Stephens community. Geoffrey passed away at the age of 95 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

Geoffrey and Nanette have four children:

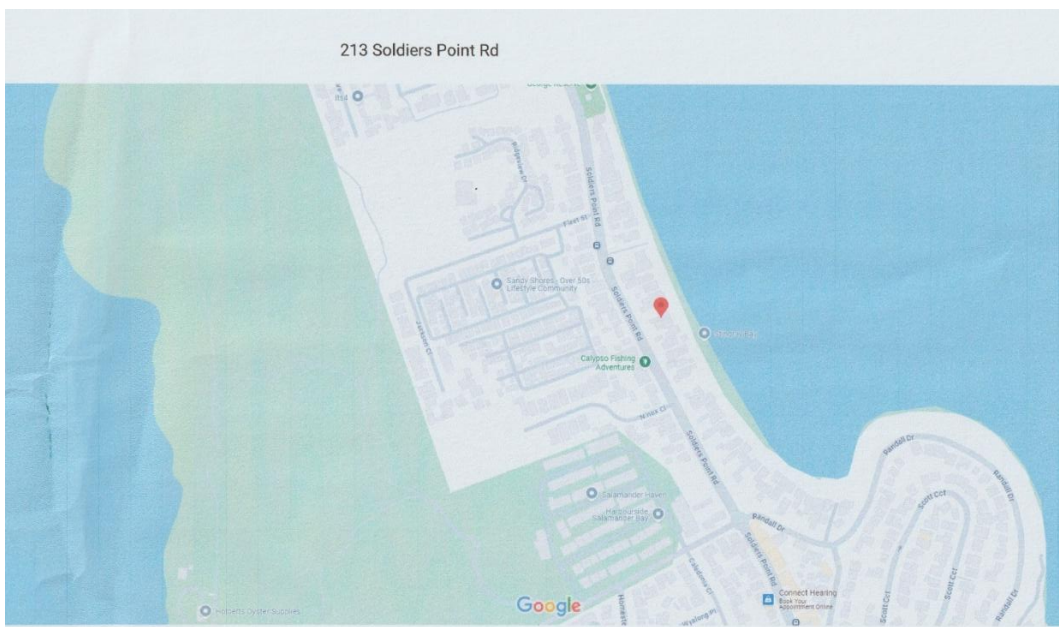
Ian

Elise

Susan and

Pru

Following Geoffrey's death Nanette maintained residence at the Salamander Bay duplex.



Present day Google Map of Salamander Bay with 213 Soldiers Point Road highlighted.



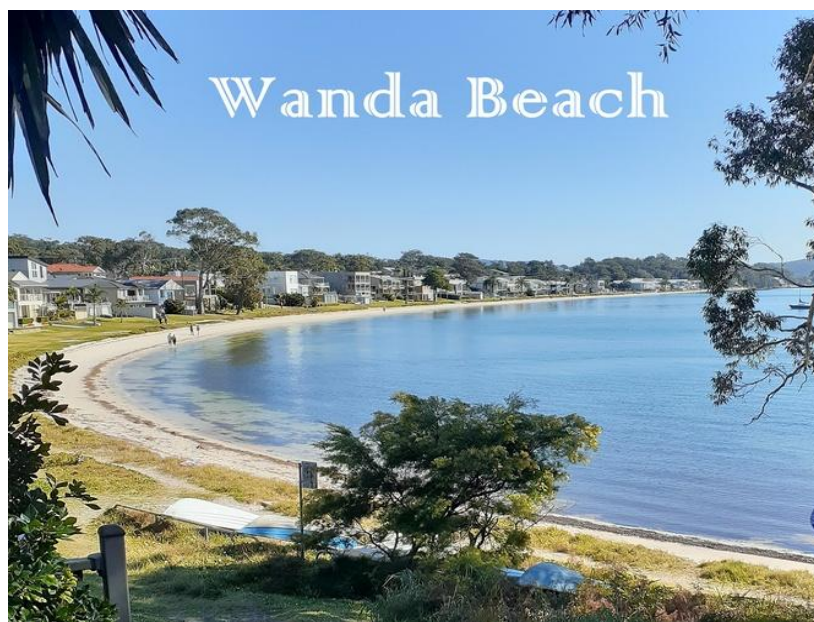
Plan showing current duplex on site.



Aerial view of the duplex at 213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay.



213 Soldiers Point Road, Salamander Bay



Wanda Beach as it is today

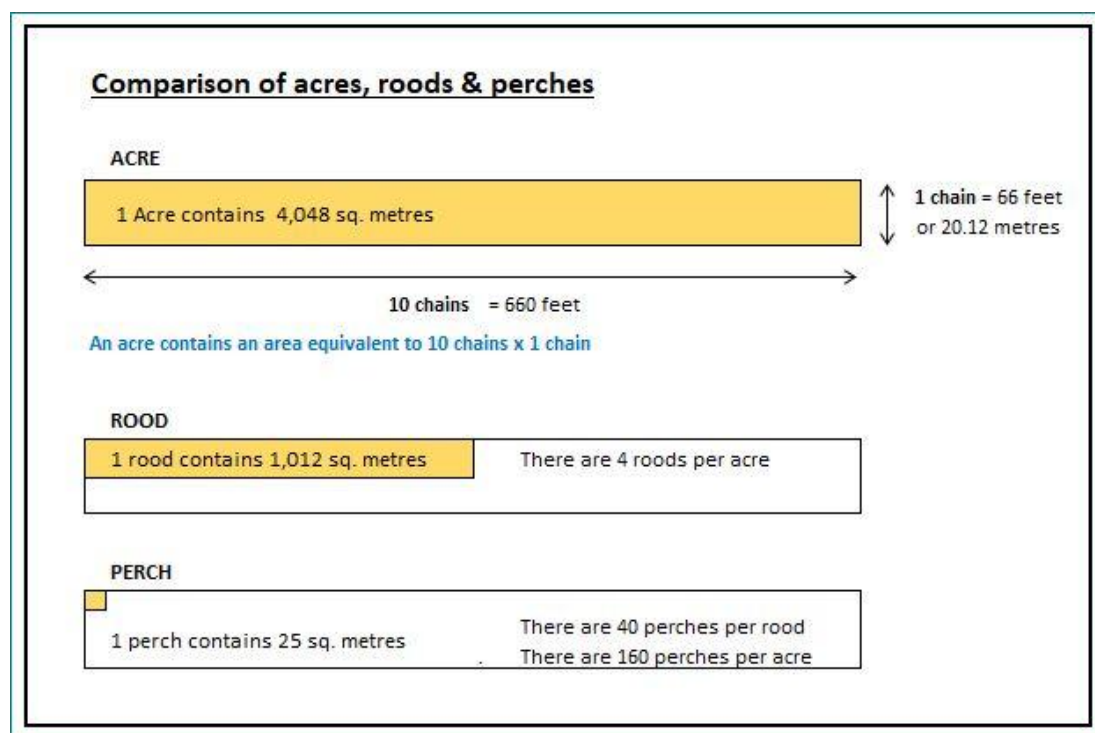
## Measurements:

Measuring land for ownership (and taxation) is a very ancient concept, as is the word ‘acre’, which occurs in many old languages and translates as ‘open field’.

Throughout this Research project, land measurements are described in Imperial Measurements. The following information will assist in calculating these measurements into today’s metric system of measurement.

**Acres.** An acre was more accurately measured as an area which is equivalent to 10 chains by one chain. A chain is now standardised as 66 feet (20.18 m), so the actual area covered by an acre is 660 feet by 66 feet, which (to save you the maths) converts to near enough 4,048 square metres. To visualise this, a professional football (soccer) field covers an area of two acres, so one team’s half is an acre. Thus a hectare, which is approximately 2 1/2 acres, takes up both halves of the playing area, plus the land around it between players and spectators.

**Roods & perches.** These are subdivisions of an acre. There are four roods in an acre, and in turn a rood contains 40 perches. As a rood is a quarter of an acre, it contains 1,012 square metres – about the size of two tennis courts. Each of the 40 perches in a rood thus consists of just over 25 square metres – the size of one of the net-side playing areas of the tennis court.



Some examples of imperial measurements converted to metric measurements from this research:

|            |   |                   |
|------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 acre     | = | 0.404686 hectares |
| 10 acres   | = | 4.04686 hectares  |
| 15 acres   | = | 6.07028 hectares  |
| 25 acres   | = | 10.1171 hectares  |
| 32 acres   | = | 12.9499 hectares  |
| 2560 acres | = | 1036.288 hectares |
| 1 chain    | = | 20.1168 metres    |
| 10 chains  | = | 201.168 metres    |
| 100 chains | = | 2011.68 metres    |
| 1 yard     | = | 0.9144 metres     |

**Pre Decimal Money.** Because New South Wales (Australia) was a colony, in the early years, pre 1910, the British Pound was the accepted form of currency.

Pre-decimal monetary terms Prior to decimalisation in 1966, there were **12 pence (written as 12d) in a shilling (written as 1s or 1/-) and 20 shillings in a pound, written as £1** (occasionally "L" was used instead of the pound sign, £). There were therefore 240 pence in a pound. It wasn't until **1910**, nine years after Federation, that Australia created its own currency – the Australian pound. Even then, its coins were minted by branches of Britain's Royal Mint in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

|                        |   |                       |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1 Pound                | = | Two Dollars (\$2.00)  |
| 1 Shilling             | = | Ten cents (\$0.10)    |
| 1 Pence (penny)        | = | One Cent (\$0.01)     |
| Florin (Two shillings) | = | Twenty cents (\$0.20) |

**NOTE:** If you have any corrections or further information concerning this Research, please contact Norm Lilley [nalilley@bigpond.com](mailto:nalilley@bigpond.com) Thank you.