

The influence of India on colonial Tasmanian architecture and artefacts

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Background

India has a long history of connections with Australia. Long before Captain Cook set foot on southern shores, cloth from 'the Indies' had traded its way from Gujarat and Coromandel down through the Indonesian archipelago to be traded with Aborigines by Makassar seamen negotiating seasonal camps to collect trepang, fish and pearl.

According to Sharrad in *Convicts, Call Centres and Cochin Kangaroos*¹ it was men like Mitchell and Lang, from the 1820s on, who retired to land grants in Van Diemen's Land and later other parts of Australia, who brought with them the verandahs of the Raj that became part of Australian architecture, and familiarity with India.

As early as 1824, an attempt was made to found an institution for the sons of Anglo-Indians and British men in Van Diemen's Land. Following the Indian mutiny of 1857, there was a rise in the numbers of Anglo-Indians settling in Australia. There were 372 Indian-born registered in 1881². Among them was Dr John Coverdale, born in 1814 in Kedgerree, Bengal, who was a medical practitioner at Richmond for many years.

The term 'Anglo-Indian' was first used by Warren Hastings in the eighteenth century to describe both the British in India and their Indian-born children.³

The first Anglo-Indian to settle in Tasmania was Rowland Walpole Loane in 1809, followed by many others, including Edward Dumaresq, a retired Indian Army officer who bought *Mt Ireh* in 1855 and lived there until his death in 1906 at the age of 104; Charles Swanston, who first came to VDL in 1828 on leave because of ill-health from his position as military paymaster in the provinces of Tranvancore and Tinnevely in India and eventually settled here permanently in 1831 and Michael Fenton, who joined the 13th Light Infantry in 1807 and served in India and Burma until 1828 when he sold his commission and emigrated to Van Diemen's Land.

Tasmanian houses of a certain style and influence

Although it was never a climatic necessity, the verandah became fashionable in Regency Britain. In 1801, the Prince Regent had verandahs built at Brighton Pavilion and soon the verandah began to be used as a means of access from room to room and from room to garden.

In the cooler 'Grecian' or 'Mediterranean' climate of Van Diemen's Land, where very wide verandahs were less common than in Sydney, the functional bungalow style with verandahs was followed, often by studying pattern books.



Kilgour Longford with excellent Regency treillage often common in Tasmania

A great deal has been written on the topic of the trade and social links with Australia and India and inter alia, China, and the Raj legacy of furniture, silver, ceramics, textiles and curiosities, and of course architecture. James Broadbent, our keynote speaker today, is one of a number of experts in this field. In his book *Domestic Architecture in New South Wales*, Broadbent defines the bungalow in early New South Wales as

A single-storey cottage, usually low to the ground, and with a symmetrical dominant hipped roof, fully encompassing the house and encircling verandahs, which may be open or partially enclosed to form minor rooms, particularly at the sides and the back.

Whilst there are competing views on even where the term bungalow derives and whether in fact the form of an all-encompassing roof with verandahs had already appeared in America before India, and that this had been recognised in England as an American type, the word 'bungalow' was used in Australia where there was thought to be a specific connection.⁴

Symmetry was a theme in the early colonial architecture of Australia, but the term bungalow is reserved only for single-storey dwellings, regardless of a direct Indian connection.

Robert Irving, citing Broadbent's *'Early Sydney Houses: examples of pattern book architecture'*, establishes four principle categories of the Australian bungalow.

1. The verandah under the house roof, often on one side only, with end bays enclosed or treated as pavilions.
2. Again, the verandah under the main roof, but without pavilions and sometimes extending round more than one side.
3. This has the verandah continuing from the main roof but at a lesser slope.
4. The verandah roof pitched from a level below the main eaves.⁵



Richmond Park, Richmond, Type 1



Clairville, Evandale, Type 2



Somercotes, Ross, Type 3



Entally, Hadspen, Type 4

Anglo-Indians in Tasmanian Public Life

Many Anglo-Indians influenced Tasmania's early history.

By the 1820s Tasmania had become well-known as a place for recovery and health and also for investment opportunities. Even though it was a failure, interest was excited in 1824 by the first Anglo-Indian scheme, the Indiana Institution, a proposed sanctuary for Englishmen with Indian wives and their descendants. Books espousing the virtues of the island increased the flow. Other Anglo-Indians came to visit and invested in property managed in absentia by agents ...

Anglo-Indians and their descendants have enriched their local communities and the state as a whole. Andrew Crawford, Edward Braddon, Arthur Young, HA Dumbleton, and CJ Makcenzie, all held parliamentary seats, and Braddon became Premier.⁶

Information about the following Anglo-Indians who made significant contributions to Tasmanian public life is taken from the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

Andrew Crawford

Andrew Crawford (1815-1899), army officer and immigration promoter, was born on 23 January 1815 at Devonport, Plymouth, England, the third son of Andrew Crawford, naval officer, and his wife Elizabeth. At eighteen he joined the East India Company as an ensign and for thirty-eight years in India served in various regiments through many campaigns. He was one of ten officers, among them John Nicholson, later the famous hero of Delhi, incarcerated at Ghazni Afghanistan from April to August 1842. It is to Crawford's 'Narrative' published in the *Bombay Courier* that history owes its knowledge of the events of the internment.



Andrew Crawford (1815 -1899), by J. W. Beattie, courtesy of AllportLibrary and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania.
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In the mid-1840s Crawford and his wife came to Van Diemen's Land to spend leave with her relations. He bought land at Richmond and returned to India. Like many others he was disappointed with conditions in the new Indian Army and, always an indefatigable pamphleteer, expressed his dissatisfaction in his *Remarks on the Indian Army* which was privately printed in London in 1857. On 31 December 1861 he retired with the honorary rank of lieutenant colonel; his last position had been assistant adjutant general of the northern division, Bombay Army.

After almost two years in England he emigrated to Tasmania with his family in 1864. Once again he was impressed by the potentialities of the colony as a desirable place for Anglo-Indian settlement and immediately began to write his *Letter to the Officers of H.M. Indian Services, Civil and Military* which was published in Hobart Town on 23 October 1865 and by 1874 in a third edition. In this book he set out his proposals for an association with a hundred shareholders to take up land which he had chosen and named Castra near Ulverstone. Each was to have 320 acres (130 ha) at £2 an acre, double the government price, which after incidental expenses had been met would leave £24,000 to build a church, parsonage, schools and roads.⁷

The original scheme came to nought but the reaction to the *Letter* was considerable. The *Madras Times* claimed that 'nothing has created such a sensation amongst the Indian services as the appearance of Colonel Crawford's now widely circulated and much read Tasmanian pamphlet'.

In October 1867 the Tasmanian parliament passed *An Act to amend the Immigration Act of 1855*, and *An Act to enable the Governor to Reserve Land for Settlement by Persons coming from India*. The latter, to remain in force for three years but later extended, set aside 50,000 acres (20,234 ha) for Indian settlers. A committee known as Castra & Co. was set up in the Bombay Presidency and by 1876 Crawford had chosen for himself and other Anglo-Indians 9700 acres (3925 ha) at Castra. He calculated the aggregate income of the officers would bring to the colony over £10,000 a year.

Few actually settled at Castra, though some did clear their land. Of the forty-one who bought land, twenty were living in Tasmania in 1880. The colony and the north-west in particular was greatly enriched by these people who had more leisure, taste and money than most to devote to community affairs. Three entered the Tasmanian parliament and Crawford held the seat of West Devon in 1876-77.

In April 1866 the Crawford family moved from Richmond to *Mayfield*, New Town, and in 1870 to Hamilton-on-Forth. In 1873 his sons began developing *Deyrah*, the colonel's farm at Castra; there the Crawfords made their home in 1878. One by one the other settlers left until by 1890 only they remained. At *Deyrah*, described by the *Tasmanian Mail*, 12 April 1884, as 'a bijou of elegance and comfort', Crawford spent his last years; a park surrounded the house and the habits of Indian days were retained. He was president of the Devon Agricultural Society, a promoter of the local volunteers and a lay reader in the Church of England. His obituarist in the *North West Post*, 9 February 1899, called him 'the very type model of an English gentleman and soldier'. In all the controversies that had surrounded his name in the Indian and colonial press his integrity was seldom questioned. In addition to his *Letter* he published many pamphlets on the developments at Castra.

Crawford died at *Deyrah* on 7 February 1899. His military funeral, at St Andrew's Church, Sprent, which he had helped to build and loved so well, was a most impressive affair. On 3 October 1840 at Cawnpore, India, he had married Matilda Frederica (1824-

1916), third daughter of Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Samuel George Carter of the 16th Regiment; they had a large family. Their only memorial is an elaborately carved stone font in St Andrew's, Sprent, which was presented by him to mark their golden wedding in 1890.⁸

Today, there is nothing of *Deyrah* remaining at Castra, and there cannot be found any images of the old house.

Thomas Daniel Chapman

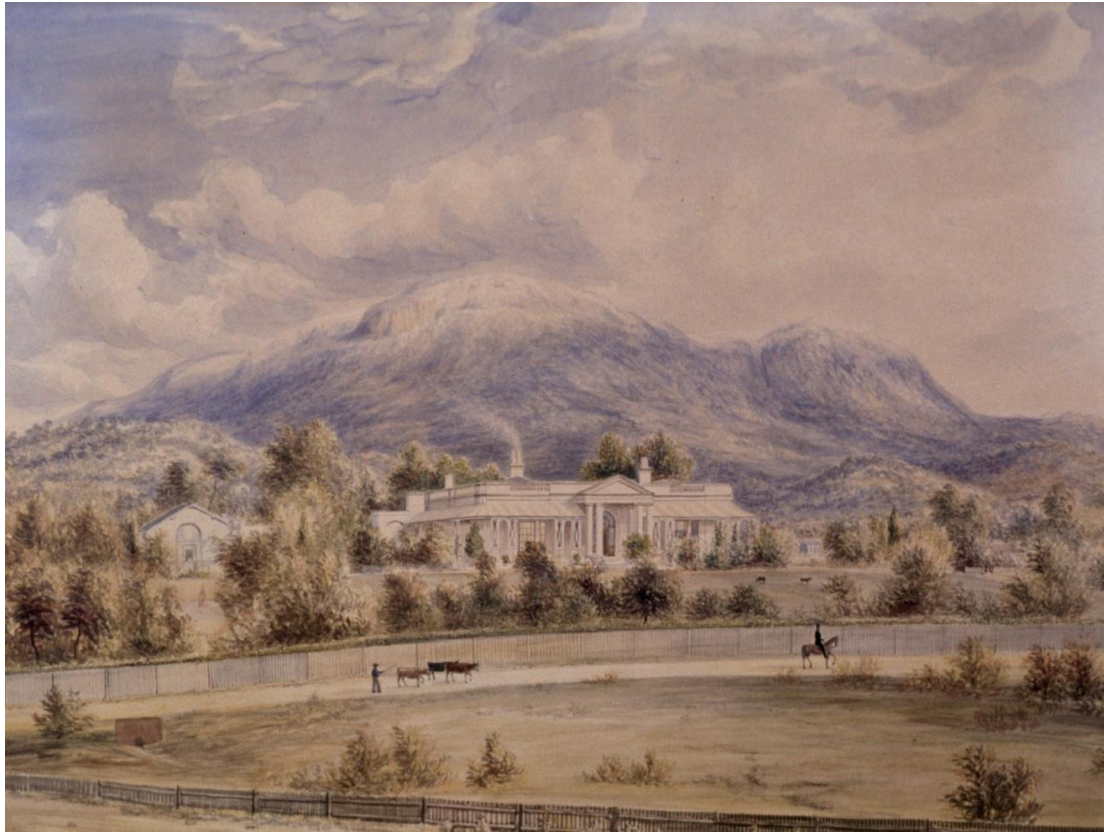
Thomas Daniel Chapman (1815–84) joined the East India Company at the age of fourteen. In 1837 he settled in London as a partner with the general merchants John and Stephen Kennard. It was on their behalf that he took emigrants and stores to Circular Head in north-western Tasmania in 1841. Chapman then moved to Hobart Town to act as an agent for the Kennards, married and, in 1847, established the independent firm TD Chapman & Co. The company exported wool, whale oil and timber. They imported groceries, hardware and clothing from Britain, sugar and corks from Mauritius and tea from Ceylon.

Chapman was first elected to the Tasmanian Legislative Council in 1851 where he agitated for self-government for Tasmania. When the Tasmanian House of Assembly was created in 1856 Chapman became a minister under Tasmania's first responsible government headed by William Champ. He was made colonial treasurer and upon taking the position realised that the estimated budget of the state was not £330,000 but only £250,000. To fix the deficit Chapman proposed increasing taxes and reducing the wages of public servants, a proposal which reduced his popularity. After William Champ's ministry was defeated in 1857, his position as treasurer was given to another member of parliament. Chapman was in opposition during the Gregson, Weston and Smith ministries, from 1857 after Champ's resignation, until 1861.

Chapman became premier after four years out of ministry, on the 2 August 1861. He held office until 20 January 1863, a total of 18 months making him the second longest serving premier after Francis Smith at the time. While premier he also took up his old job of colonial treasurer from November, 1862 until January, 1863.

Although his term as premier ended, he became colonial treasurer again in Richard Dry's ministry from 24 November 1866 until 1869. He also held the position in Wilson's ministry from 1869-1872. In 1873 he resigned from the House of Assembly to become a member of the Legislative Council. In August, 1873 he joined Alfred Kennerley's ministry, holding the position of colonial secretary from 1873 until 1876. After this Chapman served in no more ministries but was President of the Tasmanian Legislative Council from 11 July 1882 until his death. Chapman is noted as being a good public speaker and an excellent financier. During his time in parliament. Chapman served in six electorates, in both chambers. He resigned because of bankruptcy.

Chapman's elegant villa, *Sunnyside*, was built in 1847 at New Town, Hobart. The design is attributed to W. P. Kay, the Tasmanian Director of Public Works. The house was built in the austere Neoclassical style with a single-storey verandah running across the front and sides, and a projecting, central portico with paired columns, entablature and pediment. The corner of the house is turned by a quadrant of curved wall, very much in the manner of JL Archer's Customs House (now Parliament House).



Sunnyside, Hobarton. The seat of Thomas D Chapman.

Creator: Gritten, Henry, c.1818-1873

Description: 1 painting : watercolour on Bristol board.

Source: Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts **Notes:** Attributed to Henry Gritten on stylistic grounds. Unsigned and undated. Title inscribed in unknown hand in ink on a discoloured label stuck on original backing and sent to T.D. Chapman's father, William Chapman, Brooke House, Potton, July 1857.



Sunnyside, Hobart, 1847, attributed to W.P. Kay.



Daniel Chapman's plate

Provenance of plate:

The plate has a handwritten inscription on the back 'Formerly the property of Capt. Thos. D. Chapman of *Sunnyside* New Town 1843'. The plate was purchased by George Eric Totham (died 1970) of Battery Point, an avid collector and exhibitor of ceramics, and inherited by his granddaughter, Meredith Morrell, nee Totham.

Edward Braddon

Edward Nicholas Coventry Braddon was born in Cornwall, England in 1829. Eighteen years later he travelled to India to work in a Calcutta merchant firm that was run by a cousin. He disliked his work, behind a counting desk, so in the early 1850s Braddon left the job and managed a number of indigo factories near Krishnagar, for about five years. His life was rather more exciting than this might suggest as in 1855 he was involved in skirmishes which were the result of the uprising of the Santal people in the Bhagulpur district of West Bengal. Two years later, during the Indian Mutiny, he saw armed service in Purnea after enlisting in a volunteer force led by George Yule, later Sir George Yule, President of the Indian National Congress.

After the Mutiny, Braddon's life changed remarkably. The Santal insurrection had played a part in the creation in 1857 of a new province, the Santal Parganas. George Yule was appointed to head the administration, and it seems that he was responsible for Braddon's joining the Indian Civil Service as Assistant Commissioner in the division of Deoghar.

At the end of their Indian years, most Anglo-Indians returned home to Britain where they lived out their lives in relative obscurity in places like Bournemouth or Brighton. Braddon was different, for he had no desire to retire, and he and his second wife, Alice, chose to move to a new home in the Australian colonies. Why did they come south? It seems that an important factor was the work of Colonel Andrew Crawford. They were

among the number of Anglo-Indians who settled in the Tasmanian North-West in the 1870s and 1880s as a consequence of the publicity of this area sent back to India by Crawford. Crawford's efforts at extolling Tasmanian virtues caused a great deal of interest, and so the Braddons left India in March 1878 for Tasmania, rather than going home to Britain.

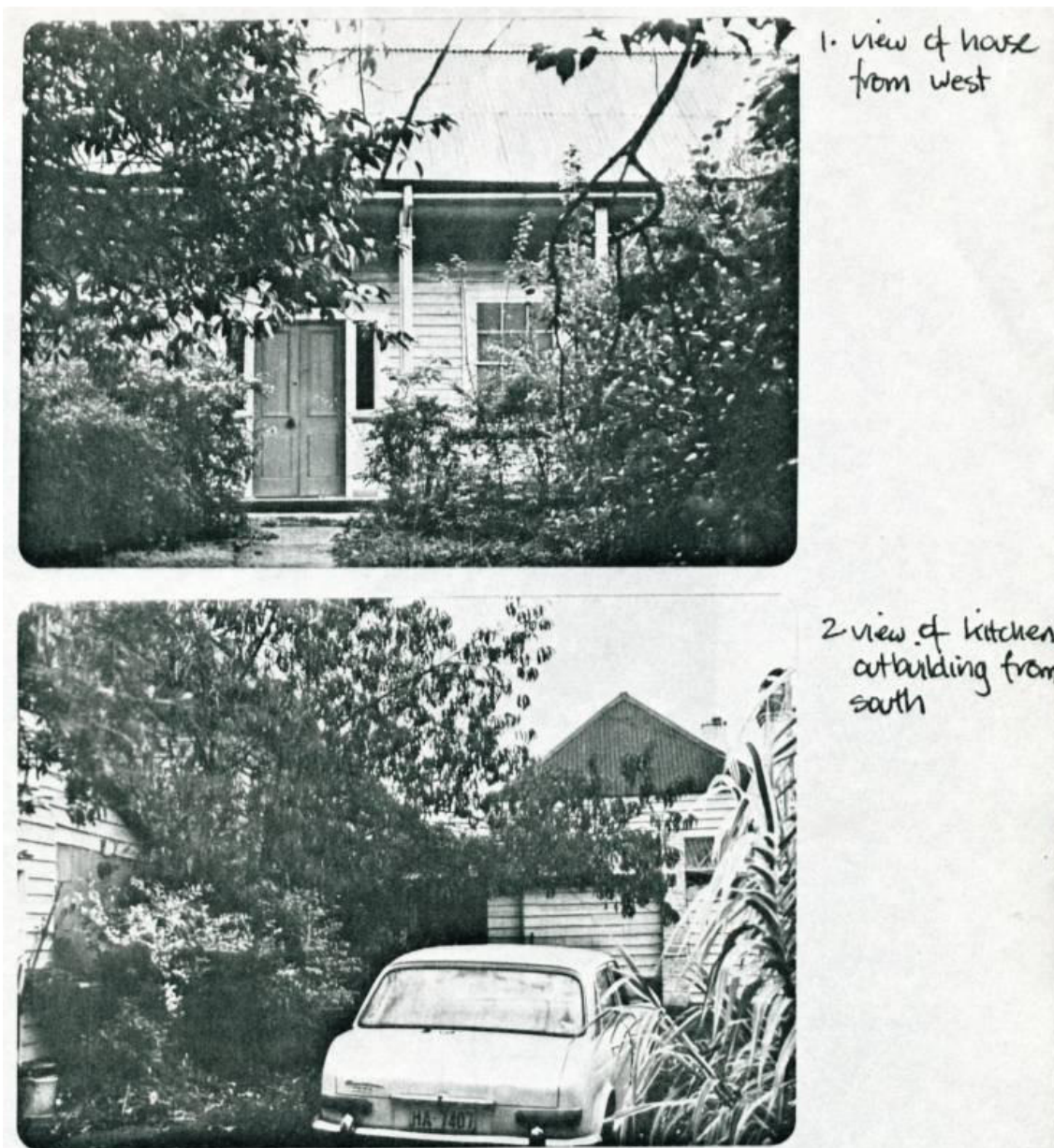
In Tasmania the couple soon purchased a small, rather run-down property at Leith, on the coast road between Devonport and Ulverstone. Tasmania's North-West was sparsely populated at this time and it has been said that the coastal community was greatly enriched by the arrival of Anglo-Indian families – people who brought invaluable skills and money to the colony.



Edward Braddon, Premier of Tasmania, rear left, with five of the premiers in 1899, meeting in Melbourne to discuss in secret, the draft Australian constitution.

Colonel Henry Rooke

Colonel Henry Benjamin Rooke (1809-1884) came to Torquay (now East Devonport) in 1860, as Deputy Clerk and Registrar of the Court of Requests. His home *Mt Pleasant* was erected soon after his arrival, Colonel Rooke having brought with him many fittings and furnishings from India. The National Trust now holds a pair of c.1840 sofas that were purchased from the sale held at the house in the late 1980s for the Trust by the late John Houghton, son of Colonel and Mary Houghton of *Hawley House*, Hawley. Known by Houghton to be brought by Rooke from India, but thought to be teak, it was a grant from the Australian Heritage Commission that enabled the purchase on behalf of the nation, which included importantly a chest of carpentry tools, also via India, used to construct *Mt Pleasant* itself.



1. view of house
from west

2. view of kitchen
outbuilding from
south

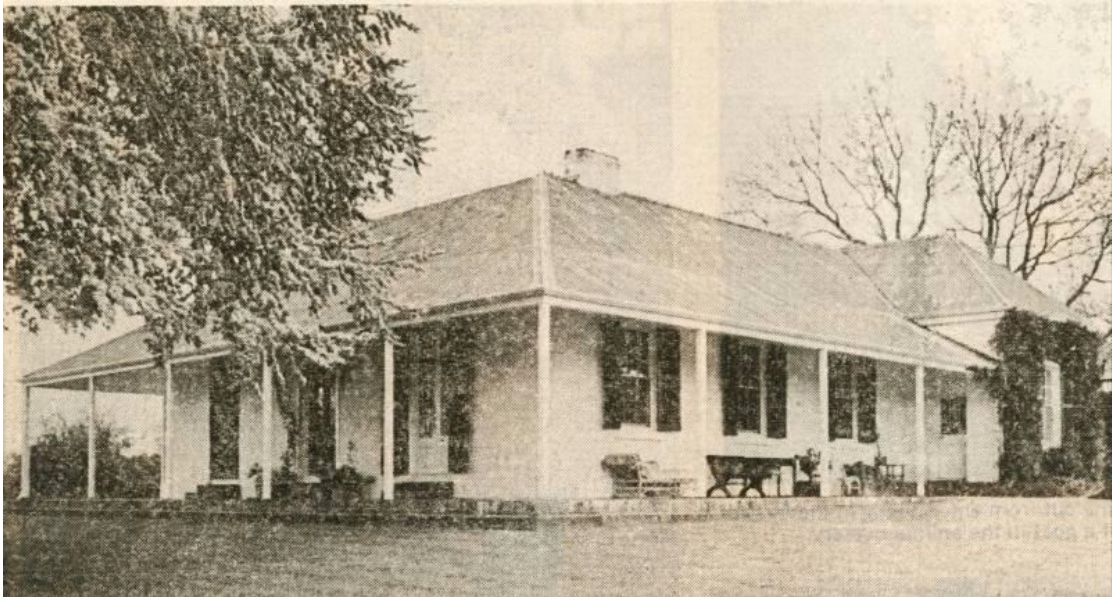
Mt Pleasant, East Devonport



Morton, Carrick



Culzean, Westbury



Freshwater Point, Legana



Plaisance, Kelso

1. P Sharrad, 'Convicts, Call Centres and Cochin Kangaroos': South Asian globalising of the Australian imagination, *Research Online*, University of Wollongong, 2006.
2. Dr Gloria Moore, 'A brief history of the anglo-Indians', in James Jupp (ed.) *The Australian People: an Encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1988.
3. *Statistics of Tasmania*, William Thomas Strutt, Government Printer, Hobart, 1883.
4. James Broadbent, *Aspects of domestic architecture in New South Wales*, Mulgoa, NSW [author's manuscript]
5. Robert Irving 1 Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, Angus and Robertson, 1994.
6. Alison Alexander (ed.), *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 2005, p. 18.
7. Australian Dictionary of Biography website: www.adb.anu.edu.au
8. www.adb.anu.edu.au

Note: This presentation was extensively illustrated in digital format and not all items covered have been reproduced here.

A display and explanation of artefacts belonging to the late GE (Eric) Totham, Battery Point also formed part of this presentation.