

PORT GREGORY

The first record of Port Gregory came from Commander D. Dring in 1841, of H. M. Colonial Schooner 'Champion', who had been sent to the area to map the mouth of the Hutt River, previously discovered by George Grey. The commander made for the River entrance but found it impossible to enter, due to surf and shallow sand banks, so sailed North and found safe anchorage behind a reef, thus being the first colonial ship to enter Port Gregory. In 1847 surveyors J.S. Roe, Dr Von Sommer, F.T. Gregory, C. Sholl and Mr. Simpson explored the area as the possible site for a harbour for the Geraldine Mine, to the north on the Murchison River. It was reported that on June 13th, 1847, the party explored the upper branches of the Hutt River, circled the Hutt Lagoon and noted good quality agricultural and pastoral land. Lieutenant Helpman, in December 1849, made further examination of the boat harbour to be used by the Mining Company to export the lead ore. Salt was also sent to Fremantle. The shipping of salt from the lagoon continued well into the 1930's

F. H. Broomhall's account of the transfer of **Enrolled Pensioners** to Port Gregory states the detachment as embarking on the coaster "William Pope" on the 26th April 1853. The detachment consisted of **Corporal (later Sergeant) Reddin (61st Regt)**, and three men, three wives, and three children. This was followed three months later to eight men.

The usual land grants were made to the Pensioners and by 31st December 1853, nine three acre blocks had been allocated to the following:

M. Reddin,	J. Buckley,	J. Connolly,	J. Hayes,	J. Foran,	J. Brown,
J. Ward,	J. Gallagher,	R. Gladstone.			

Sergeant Reddin was accidentally shot by a Corporal of the Royal Sappers and Miners on Monday 27th June 1853. Whether a result of the wounding it is not known, but many months later on 6th July 1854, aged 44, **Michael Reddin** died.

The men were located in tents over a large salt lake or estuary in a situation not conducive to good health, and it remained a sore point with the Pensioners that the delay in erecting housing was contrary to the promises made as an inducement to serve in this outpost. The accommodation provided for the Sappers and Miners at Port Gregory stirred Bruce to protest to the Governor that the Pensioners should be due equal consideration. They were still in the same situation in December of 1854, and Bruce on visiting them, took action and moved the Pensioner Village to Lynton townsite. However, their accommodation did not improve, and in late 1855 they were still living in tents, which prompted Bruce in 1856 to write to the Governor urging him to improve conditions or withdraw the families. They were exposed to the extremes of climate.

Late January 1858 the detachment was transferred in the *Le Trois Amis* to Champion Bay for eventual movement to the Greenough district.

Lynton was named after Henry Sanford 's home in Lynton near Devon, England. He had arrived in the Colony in November 1851, was posted to Toodyay in 1852 after being appointed Assistant Superintendent of Convicts by the Colonial Government, and built roads, bridges, churches, jails and dwellings in that district.

He arrived in Port Gregory in 1853 ready to settle on the land, with intentions to farm and 'open an export' (the lead from the Geraldine Mine).

Convict Hiring Depot

The actual date that the Convict Hiring Depot began is not definite, but a report to the Comptroller General of Convicts for the half year 1853, lists the Depot, 'Port Hiring Station nil, only just started Sixty men'.

On May 22nd 1853, a party of 60 men accompanied by Sergeant Reddin, a Pensioner Guard, were transported to Port Gregory on the 'Leander'. The men and gear were taken ashore in small boats, Bullockies had broken a rough track six miles down to the bend in the Hutt River where a townsite was to be set out. They lived in tents and set to work to quarry limestone from the surrounding hills to build the depot. As there was a shortage of timber and roofing materials, rush thatching was used to make the buildings habitable.

On April 28th, 1854, eight buildings were reported completed. Still to be built were the depot out-houses, hospital and lock-up. In 1855, the walls of the prison were completed and all were reported finished by June 10th 1856. Due to much sickness and scurvy, because of the lack of fresh vegetables, Governor Kennedy sent the Colonial Secretary, the Acting Comptroller General and the Principal Medical Officer on a tour of inspection to the district. Costs of food, transport and shortage of water

were all reasons that the decision was made to close the Depot. Nine convicts were living in the Depot at the time. The remaining Pensioner Guards were offered allotments on the Greenough Flats, and on Jan3rd 1857, Les Trois Ami sailed to Port Gregory to transfer the convicts and remaining Pensioner soldiers, guards and their families to Champion Bay.

Cemetery at Lynton

Situated near the Depot ruins, three graves are the only reminder that this was the cemetery for the townsite. The reported deaths at Lynton and Port Gregory were:

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| 1854 | Reported at the Depot; J.Hayes; M. Reddin,Pensioner Guard
At. Port Gregory; JJ.Butcher, T.L. |
| 1854 | J. Henshaw, 11months, and |
| 1855 | Mary Jane, children of Sp. R. Henshaw, Pensioner Guard, who erected a
tombstone in their memory. |
| 1855 | W.Drake, son of the Pilot at Port Gregory, died of convulsions and buried in the
sandhills |
| 1856 | Farrell Cornelly;Pensioner Guard, at Lynton |
| 1857 | Samuel Doran (Dornan?), infant son of Frances and James, buried at Lynton
Frances Doran (Dornan?), died after childbirth, wife of James Doran,
Pensioner Guard |
| | J. Duffy, C.P. drowned at Port Gregory |
| | G. Brown, Whaler, drowned at Port Gregory |
| 1861 | Headstone "Sacred Memory of (SARA?SAM), could be the daughter of
Henry Sanford, or son of James Doran. |

Lynton Heritage Site Restoration In 1992, the Lynton Heritage Site, consisting of Sanford's Homestead, The Convict Hiring Depot and land adjoining the sites, were vested in the Northampton Shire Council by R.W. and S.F. Simkin. The site had previously been classified by the National Trust of Australia and so the Northampton Historical Society began a Restoration Project.

Much of this article is derived from information provided by the Northampton Historical Society in the brochure prepared and written by S.Simkin, for the Society, the proceeds of sales going towards the restoration of the Lynton Historic Site.
