

The History
of the
Coxs Family Hotel
Barkly Arms Hotel
Oriental Hotel.

Brian Haynes July/ October 2013

The Full History of the Cox Family/ Barkly Arms/ Oriental Hotel (according to Brian)

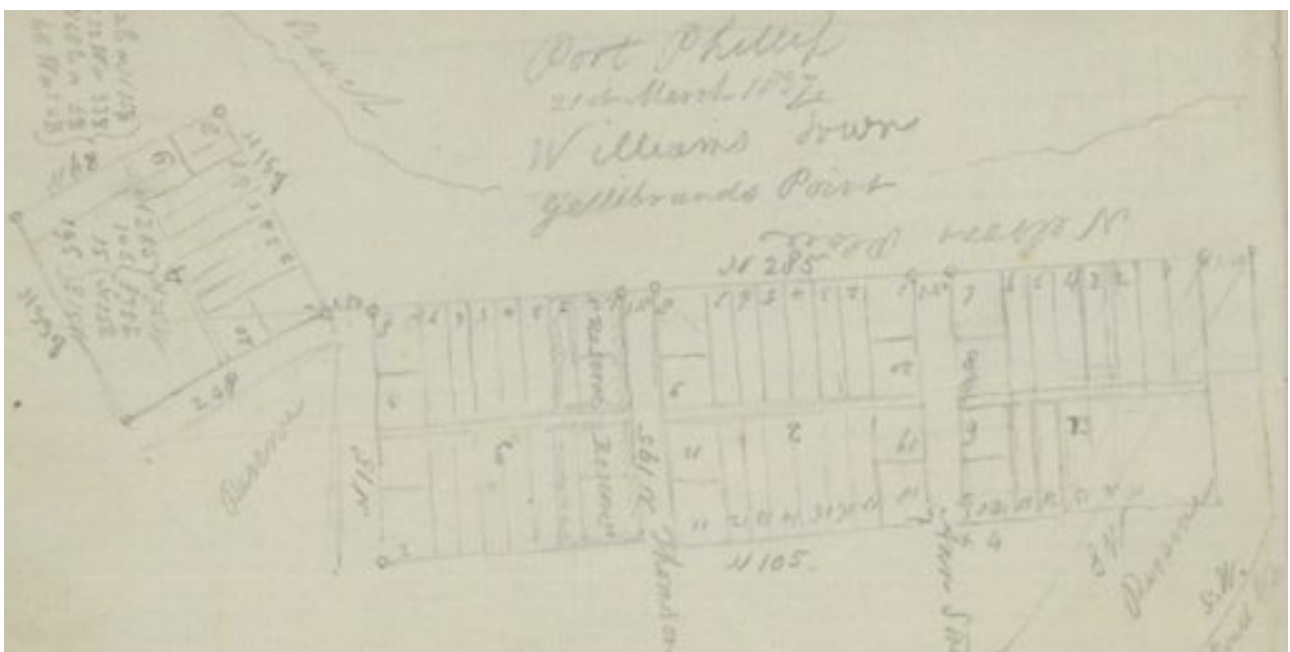
In early 2012 I sat down with a professional historian appointed by Hobsons Bay Council to investigate the site of the Oriental Hotel. In this meeting I was provided with some information from the title search on the early history of the site. During that meeting I determined that the hotel was originally known as the Cox Family Hotel and this had major ramifications as to the history of the building and past history writings. In all historical books and reports the whereabouts of the Cox Family Hotel was unknown save to say its whereabouts was lower Ann Street. This tied in nicely with the R. Quarrill & CO. lithograph of 1854. I then provided details and supporting photos that proved beyond all doubt that the current building was the original building dating from 1854 and changed significantly the heritage of the site. The Hobsons Bay also involved Helen Lardner in the heritage investigation.

Five blocks make up Nelson Place and creates a unique history that goes back just over 175 years and, as such, straddles nearly the whole of Williamstown's European settlement time line from first settlement in mid 1835 until today and traces the history of Williamstown in its economic and social ebbs and flows

The first block sold from the Crown was in Section Three, Nelson Place bounded by Thompson and Cole Streets, in 1837, which coincided with the first land sales in Melbourne, or for that fact, the first Crown land sales in the future Victoria

The second sale was Section Four a few months later, (Nelson Place bounded by Parker Street and Pasco Streets) followed by Section Two in 1840 (bounded by Ann and Thompson Streets). The very first survey plan of the area was by surveyor Robert Huddle on the 21st March 1837. (source SLV) where block one to block four is drawn and this handwritten plan was the basis for future plans.

The first sales of Section One, where the subject hotel stands, occurred in August 1849, before the impact of the gold rush, when only four of the blocks were sold.



Alot	Sec.	Name	Size	Date	street frontage	Title deeds
						available
1	1	Sim James		15/5/1851	Nelson Place/ Morris St	
2	1	Bunbury Richard H		15/5/1851	Nelson Place	
3	1	Langhorne Alfred		15/5/1851	Nelson Place	
4	1	Langhorne Alfred		15/5/1851	Nelson Place	
5	1	Langhorne Alfred		15/5/1851	Nelson Place	
6	1	Crawford & Lindsey	1 rd 36p	1849?	Nelson Place	30/08/1849
7	1	Hudson Charles	1 rd 36p	1849?	Nelson Place	30/08/1849
8		Skelton B	1 rd 36p	1849 Aug	Nelson Place/ Ann Street	30/8/1949
9	1	Jones W	1 rd 36p	1849?	Ann Street / Lt Nelson St	30/08/1849



verandah.

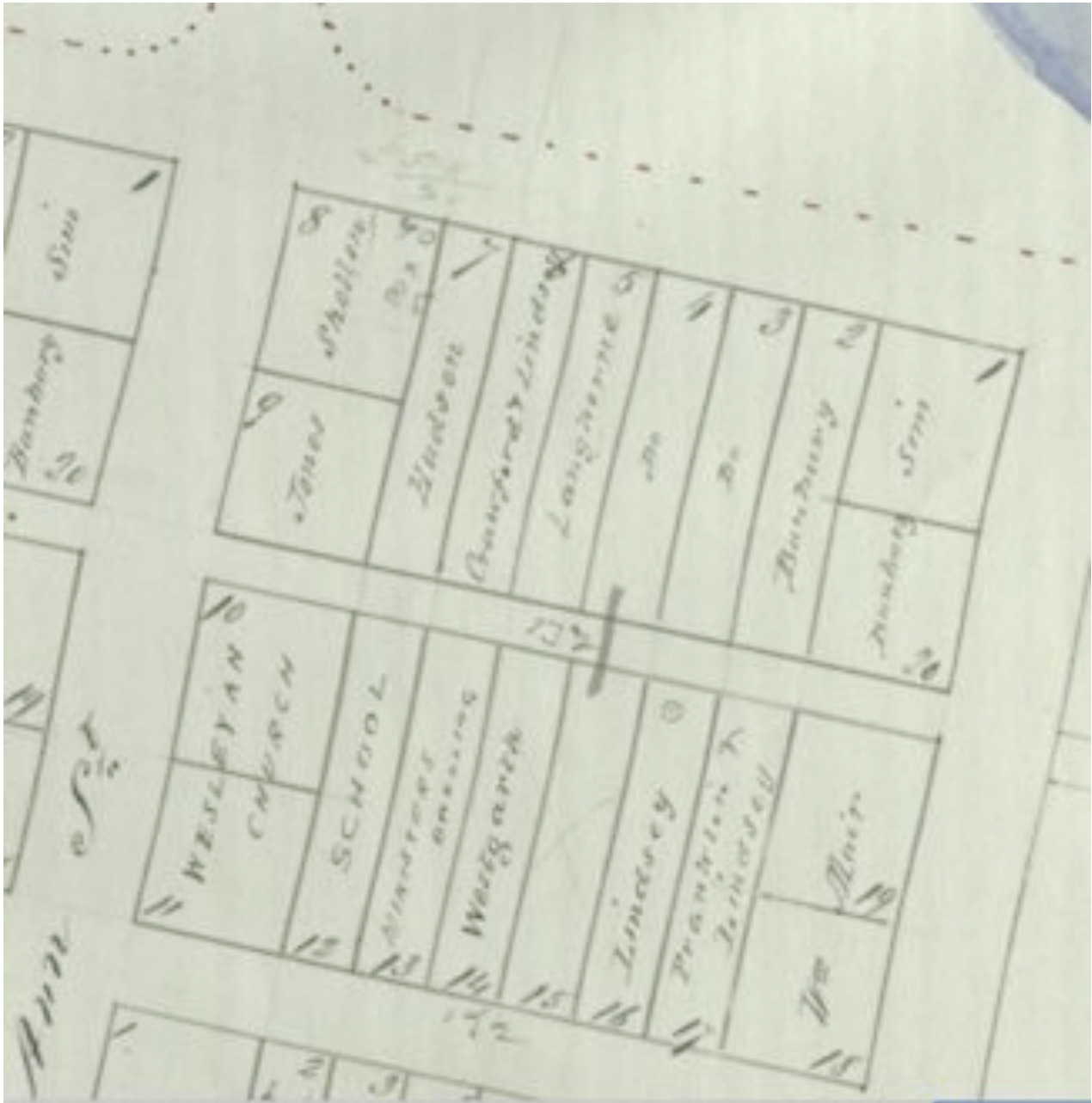
These four blocks 6, 7, 8, 9 of Section One included the site of the current Oriental Hotel allotment and both allotments 7 & 8 sold for £23 15/- each, and the balance of remaining land in Section One were sold two years later in May 1851.

Allotment 6 was sold to William Crawford and Algernon Lindsey and for many years remained vacant land. Both were early Williamstown pioneers, in particular, Lindsey.

However there had been building development in Section One prior to the Crown land sales of 1849/51. Harbour Master Richard Hanmer Bunbury who, without permission and a law unto himself, constructed a two storey stone house c1846/7 on allotment 2, the same allotment that he would purchase in 1851. (Per Ada Ackerly- retired naval officers were entitled to a discounted price) The house, stone and of 9 rooms, was positioned on the centre of the block and on a slight angle, said so he could watch both Port Phillip and Hobsons Bay from the second storey

Whilst being possibly the first significant structure in Section One, it is also significant in that it remained there until the mid 1930's. **and foundations or part of the structure may exist today** , nearly 170 years later.

Bunbury had stables backing onto Lt Nelson Street for his gig and there was also a well behind the house and had a significant garden where he entered various produce in garden shows in Melbourne.



1/ **The land sold in Aug 1849 to Benjamin Skelton**, a customs boatman, (1 rood 36 perch lot 21 for a miserly figure of £ 23 15/- . This purchase was at a time of when Williamstown was still trying to get over the early recession of the early 1840's.

Skelton arrived in Williamstown sometime between 1846 and September 1848 .
A. B. Skelton arrived on the barque Mary from Greenock 30th March 1846. Is this our Skelton. Skelton was present in Williams Town to sign a cemetery (burial) petition Oct. 1848)

He is also mentioned in the 1847 directory as a customs boatman and also as a waterman in 1851

Benjamin Skelton married Sarah Conroy 26/10/1846 Holy Trinity, Sydney.
A Mr and Mrs Skelton was aboard the Ariel in October 1847 bound for Port Phillip.



In March 1850 Benjamin Skelton was a jury member on the inquest of drowned George Bedford

In the 1851 Electoral roll Skelton, Benjamin freehold W'town
Where else did he own property?. Had he built already on the block that he bought in 1849

On the 7th March 1853 Benjamin Skelton died having made a will on the 5th June 1852. Probate was granted the next month April 1853 with an estate not exceeding £800. (goods, chattels and credits). Unfortunately cannot determine what property/s make up the £800. so I am guessing all property on the allotment, whatever that could be

A

This is the last will and testament of the
Benjamin Skelton of the town of Williams Town
(near Melbourne) in the County of Bourke in
the Colony of Victoria Notman I give and
devise all my real and personal estate and
effects whatsoever and wheresoever unto my
dear wife Sarah her heirs Executors admini-
strators and assigns (according to the nature
and quality thereof respectively) absolutely and
I appoint my said wife Executrix of this my
Will In witness whereof I have hereunto set
my hand this fifth day of June in the
year of our Lord One thousand eight
hundred and fifty two

Benjamin Skelton

Witness
John Durbin
W. Melbourne.

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WILLIAM
Town Clerk.

Town Clerk's Office,
11th March, 1853 25219

In the will of Benjamin Skelton, of the town of Williamstown, near Melbourne, in the county of Bourke, in the Colony of Victoria, Boatman, deceased

NOTICE is hereby given, that after the expiration of fourteen days from the day of the publication of this advertisement, an application will be made to the Supreme Court of the Colony of Victoria in its Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, in behalf of Sarah Skelton, of the town of Williamstown, aforesaid, widow of the said deceased, the executrix named in his will, that probate of the said will of the said Benjamin Skelton may be granted to the said Sarah Skelton as such executrix as aforesaid.

Dated the eleventh day of March, 1853.
JOHN DUERLIN,
Proctor for the said Sarah Skelton.

25128

Sarah Skelton married Henry Cox (also widowed) on the 25th April 1853 at St James Church Melbourne, Benjamin Skelton had only been dead a little over a month. At this stage have not found any children to this and previous marriage.

Henry Cox, "Australia, Marriages, 1810-1980"



name: Henry Cox
 birth date:
 birthplace:
 age:
 spouse's name: Sarah Skelton
 spouse's birth date:
 spouse's birthplace:
 spouse's age:
 event date: 25 Apr 1853
 event place: St. James, West Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
 father's name:
 mother's name:
 spouse's father's name:
 spouse's mother's name:
 race:
 marital status: Widowed
 previous wife's name:
 spouse's race:
 spouse's marital status: Widowed
 spouse's previous husband's name:
 indexing project (batch) number: M00378-7
 system origin: Australia
 gs film number: 993777
 reference id: b2 p184 rn2135

Search collection

About this collection

It is possible that Henry Cox had been previously married to a Mary Cox and

they arrived on the Midas in early January 1849.

From the report of Lesley Avery, submitted to Hobsons Bay council. Lesley reported

“2.2 History of Oriental Hotel (Former), Williamstown

*The site of the hotel, Williamstown Town allotment 8 of Section 1 Parish of Cut Paw Paw, comprising almost a quarter of an acre (approximately 0.2 hectare), was sold at auction to Benjamin Skelton for 23 pounds 15 shillings at the third sale of Town land on 27 June 1849.¹⁷ Skelton was a boatman, but nothing further is known about his connection to Williamstown. Skelton died on 7 March 1853 and probate of his estate, including Allotment 8 Section 1 was granted to his wife, Sarah Skelton.¹⁸ On 25 April 1853 Sarah Skelton married mariner Henry Cox.¹⁹ Property transactions relating to Allotment 8 Section 1 following the marriage of Sarah Skelton and Henry Cox suggest that the land was part of a marriage settlement between Henry and Sarah and that the couple subsequently mortgaged the land.²⁰ On 25 April 1854 a mortgage agreement was made between Henry and Sarah Cox with George Thomas “in respect of the erection of a certain Hotel or House upon the said land” an **equity of mortgage** George Thomas was a local timber merchant up until around 1857 but in 1856 he took Henry Cox to court in regards to a dispute with property down the bay.)*

General development on the block of Section ONE had started by 1852/3 with the creation of Spider Alley and Thomas’s Yard. In February 1853 two vacant blocks, possibly those owned by Alfred Langhorne, allotments 4 & 5, near to Bunburys house were put up for sale .

General development on the block of Section ONE had started by 1852/3 with the creation of Spider Alley and Thomas’s Yard. In February 1853 two vacant blocks, possibly those owned by Alfred Langhorne, allotments 4 & 5, near to Bunburys house were put up for sale .

Was there already a hotel on the site?. It was clearly present by July/August when Quarrill’s sketch was completed.

Richard Quarrill & Co had first set up in Sydney and arrived in Melbourne in the early June 1852 after selling the equipment and stock of his business.

He departed on the brig Spencer . setting up in Melbourne firstly at 214 Kings Street in January 1853 and the at 74 Collins Street West by 1854

In late November 1853 Quarrill advertised in the Geelong Advertiser - THE FINE ARTS - A tinted lithograph of Hobsons Bay, from a drawing by Mr Edmund Thomas has been published by Mr R Quarrill of Melbourne. A specimen copy is now on view at Mr Thomas Brown’s Moorabool street. A twin picture of Corio Bay, is to be the next of the series.

He also put one of his lithographs into the Melbourne Exhibition of 1854 and wond a bronze medal. Could it be the above works. Soon after, in early 1855, he filed for insolvency



The first map record that shows the development of Section One was the creation of the Darbyshire Plan of 1854. (George Darbyshire- local surveyor- railways. A survey office was set up in Williamstown in 1850 in Morris Street, South Williamstown, now long gone. This map shows the structures in place in 1854. It is a guide as the main aim to as the survey triangulations of the bay.



George Darbyshire map of 1854 shows a faint outline of the footprint of the hotel structure. The original map shows it a little bit clearer. However it would have taken months to complete the survey map. On the same title block there was marked a smaller building to the Nelson place side and this is confirmed in the 1858 Windsor plan as well as two timber houses at the back of the hotel. This side structure was a bluestone two storey structure of 10 rooms and came up for sale in 1857.

The above Darbyshire map 1854 shows the density of buildings in block two (land sold from the Crown in 1840 (check)). What is of importance is the site of the Pier Hotel and the structure footprints next door. Was this after the October 1854 fire and how does it compare to the Qurrill lithograph of mid late 1854.

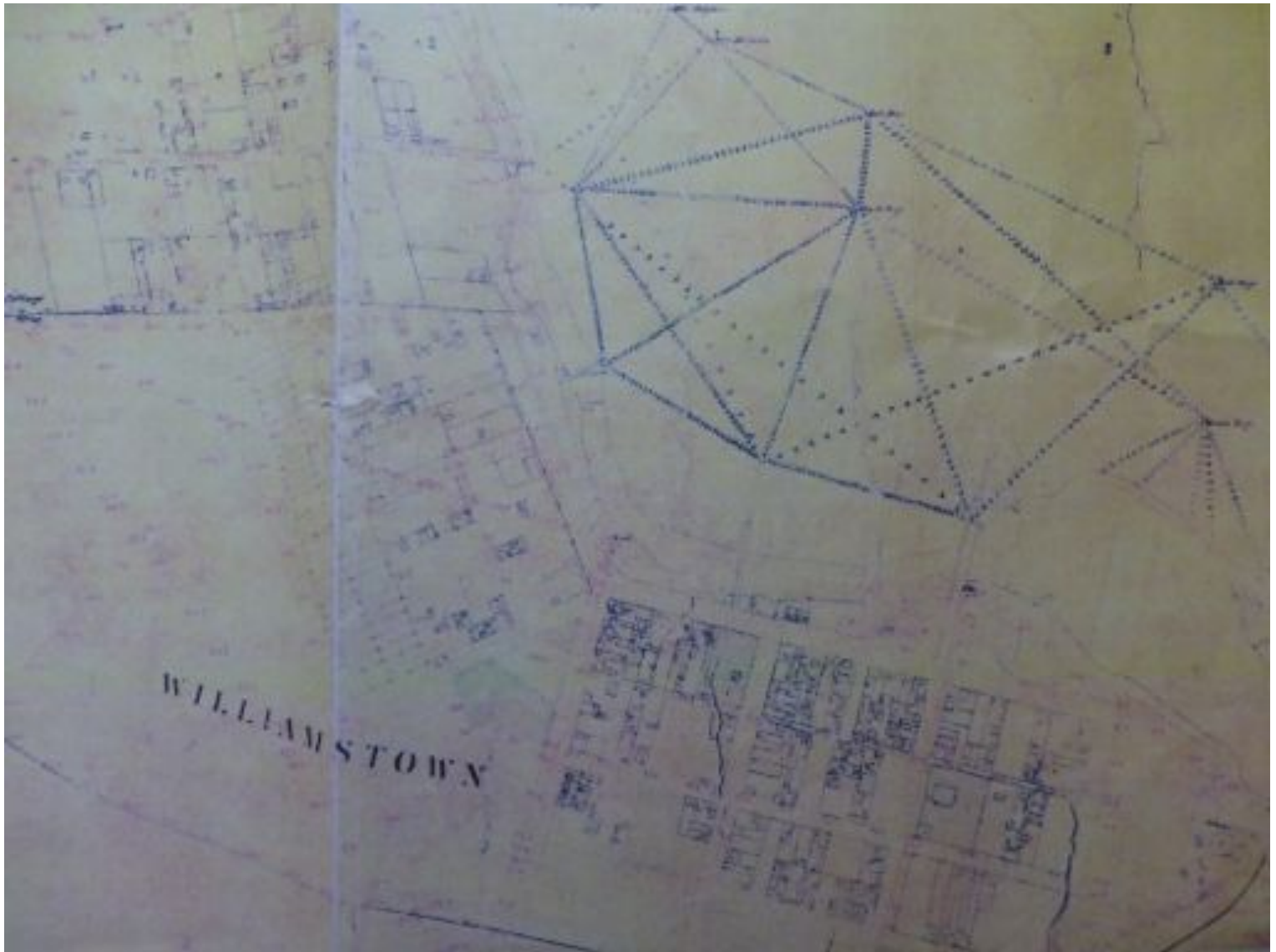


This map shows more of Williamstown and clearly shows that the development of Williamstown up to 1854 had been around the first three blocks of Nelson Place and in the blocks immediately behind Nelson Place. The land in Cecil and Electra Streets would not be sold until late December 1854. North Williamstown, or known as Newtown at this time, was sparsely developed with nucleus structures in Stevedore Street and surrounds.

So in essence the building was, in 1854, in the same basic form as now save for the pediment, some of the string courses and removed window features.

And proof that it was operating . On the 1st Sept 1854 and advert appeared in the Argus “ Wanted for Cox’s Hotel, Williamstown, a good Female Cook. None need apply but an efficient person. Liberal salary.





WANTED a Groom and Coachman of steady and sober habits to take charge of a pair of horses. Apply to X., office of this paper. 343 y

WANTED for Cox's Hotel, Williamstown, a good Female Cook. None need apply but an efficient person. Liberal salary. 27 64 sep 4

WANTED a colonial Brewer of experience. Apply to

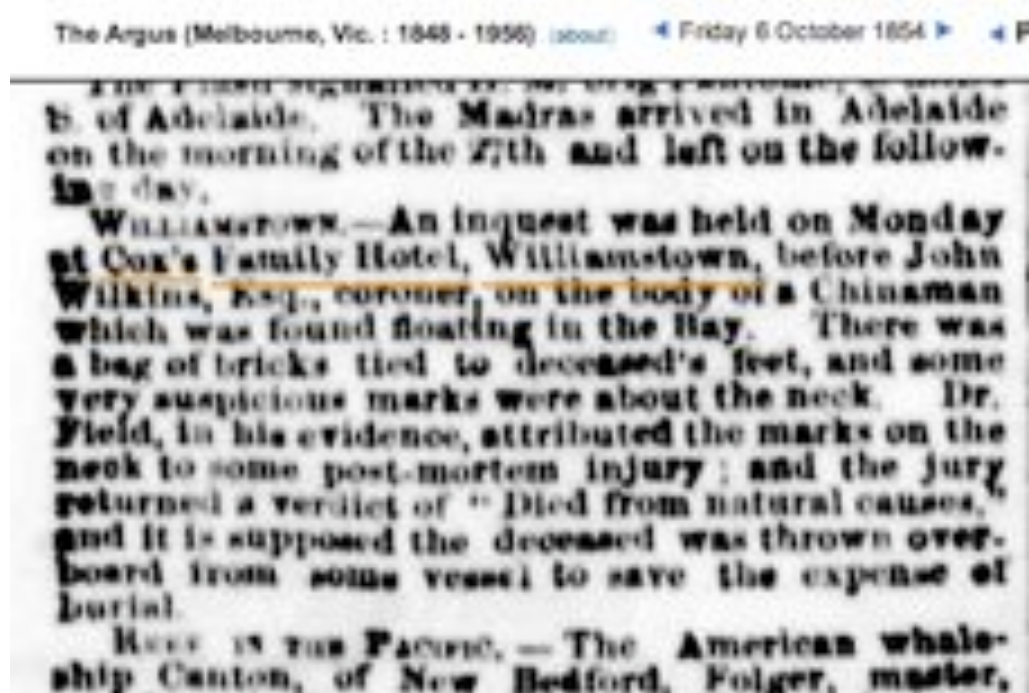
In the 18th September 1854 an inquest was held at the Cox Family Hotel by local doctor, Dr John Wilkins, on the body of James Dempster, a 50 year old father of seven children from Cambden NSW, who was a passenger on the Yarra River steamer, a habitual drinker. The jury, returned a verdict of "the deceased died from apoplexy resulting from the effects of drink" Apoplexy is nowadays referred to a stroke or originally bleeding from an organ. Again proof that the hotel structure was up and running. Henry Cox was actually a juryman for this inquest. Until the 1860's jury members were not paid and were roped into the jury. Well Henry Cox would have been present operating the hotel.

tion and repulsion much surpasses, it is said, the force of our greatest steam engines.—*Empire.*

CORONER'S INQUEST.—Dr. Wilkins, J.P., held an inquest on Monday, at Cox's Family Hotel, Williamstown, on the body of James Dempsey, a passenger per Yarra Yarra, steamer. It appeared that the man had been an habitual drunkard, and at the coroner's suggestion the jury returned a verdict, that "the deceased died from apoplexy, resulting from the effects of drink."

THE MISSING STEAMER CITY OF GLASGOW.—The

On the first day October 1854 another inquest was held at the Cox Family Hotel by local doctor John Wilkins on a chinaman who had bricks tied to his feet. No. it was not a murder but the crew endeavouring to save the cost of a funeral.



In total I can locate six inquests where the "Cox Family Hotel" was used for the carrying out of inquests.

18th September 1854 the inquest for James Dempsey as mentioned above.

2nd October 1854 on the Chinaman with bricks tied to his feet as also mentioned above

23rd May 1855 inquest on an unknown Chinese passenger on the "Venetia"

21st June 1855 the body of William Nicholson was taken to the Cox Family Hotel. Specific proof that the hotel was used to store the body and the actual autopsy carried out there.

30th July 1855 inquest held on Charles King, mate on lighter "Eureka"

21st January 1856 inquest into the death of Edwin Weston, 8 year old son of local butcher. This was the last inquest held under the Cox Family Hotel name.

The name Cox family Hotel continued until 1857

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957) (about) 4 Monday 15 October 1855

sub- tion ber,	is cases in fine brown cotton full-hose, very superior. 1443
erty	TUESDAY 16th OCTOBER. By order of the Mortgagees.
t be at a	A. BLISS and CO., will sell by public auc- tion, on the premises on Tuesday 16th inst., at twelve o'clock.
0 in	All that substantial and well-built stone premises known as the Clifton Hotel, situated in Derby-street, Collingwood.
d at	Terms at Sale.
han- dor, f at	For further particulars apply to the auc- tioners. 4 oct 16
ther obe, re.	THIS DAY. Cox's Family Hotel, Williamstown. To Hotelkeepers and Others.
out rest.	A. BLISS and CO. have been favored with instructions to sell by public auction, on the premises known as Cox's Family Hotel, on Monday, 15th inst., at twelve o'clock.
	The whole of the stock, furniture, fixtures, and effects now in and upon the above-named hotel, consisting of— Tables, chairs, bedsteads, bedding, linen, plate, glass, &c.
	Terms—Cash. 013

Barkly Arms	9 Apr. 1858	Inquest held on William Sefton, Cook on "Empress Eugenie"
Barkly Arms	29 May 1858	Inquest held on German seaman, Joseph Sumner
Barkly Arms	11 Apr. 1859	Inquest held on drowned seaman, John Nichol.
Barkly Arms	23 June 1859	Inquest held into death of William Edgar, apprentice seaman
Barkly Arms	28 Apr. 1860	Inquest held on 10yr old Henry Fisher

Henry Cox was a juryman on a number of inquests, the last I can find was in 1864.

It would appear the couple hit hard times as an advert appeared mid October 1855 putting up for sale *"the whole of the stock, furniture, fixtures and effects now in and upon the above named hotel consisting of- Tables, chairs, bedsteads, bedding, linen, plate, glass &c."*

Clearly their occupation and operation of the hotel was coming to an end just 13 or 14 months after commencing the hotel business in July/August 1854

It was with the change of name to Barkly Arms Hotel in 1856 that a new publican was appointed.

In 1856 the Victorian Electoral reveals

Henry Cox, innkeeper, Nelson Place, freehold , hotel in Nelson Place. The roll was for a period of July 1856 and the elector was to have had the assets for the past 6 months.

It would appear that Henry Cox was under huge financial pressures or was being forced to sell off sections of the block , taken to court and his financial viability was tested

In early May 1856 in the Supreme Court of Victoria between Henry Cox, plaintiff and George Thomas, defendant. In the Government Gazette

*In the Supreme Court of the } Fl. Fu. for Defendant's Costs.
Colony of Victoria. }*

Between HENRY COX, Plaintiff,
and
GEORGE THOMAS, Defendant.

NOTICE is hereby given that the Sheriff for the Colony of Victoria will cause to be sold by public auction, at the Supreme Court Hotel, corner of Russell-street and La Trobe-street, in the city of Melbourne, at the hour of One o'clock in the afternoon, on Monday, the 26th day of May next, under the above writ, all the right, title, and interest of the above-named plaintiff, Henry Cox, in and to all that piece or parcel of land, being part of portion No. 25, and forming lots 28, 29, 30, and 31, of block A, containing about one rood (more or less) together with all houses, buildings, and erections, &c., thereon, situate at Picnic Point, Brighton, in the parish of Moorabbin, in the county of Bourke, in the Colony of Victoria, unless this execution be previously satisfied.

Terms—Cash on the fall of the hammer.
Dated the 24th day of April, 1856.

ANTHONY BRADY,
Sheriff's Officer.

No. 633.

*"Notice is hereby given that the Sheriff for the Colony of Victoria will cause to be sold by public auction, at the Supreme Court Hotel, corner of Russell street and La Trobe street in the City of Melbourne at the hour of One o'clock in the afternoon, on Monday, the 26th day of May next, under the above writ, all the right, title and interest of the above named plaintiff Henry Cox, in and all that piece or parcel of land being part of portion No. 25 and forming lots 28, 29, 30, 31, of Block A, containing about one rood (more or less) together with all houses, buildings and erections &c thereon situate at Picnic Point, Brighton, in the parish of Moorabbin, in the county of Bourke unless this execution be previously satisfied. Terms- Cash on the fall of the hammer .
Dated 24th April 1856- Anthony Brady- Sheriffs Office"*

What was this about? George Thomas was the party involved in the mortgage of Cox's Family Hotel in May 1854. He was also a trustee for the local cemetery
17/8/54 Williamstown Public Cemetery

Trustees appointed-

Mr. Robert McKay,
Mr Charles Ferguson,
Mr John O'Neil,
Mr. James Conroy,
Mr. George Thomas,
Mr. Thomas Mason.

Dr. William Story,
Mr Crawford A D Pasco R N.

The 1856 Electoral shows George Thomas freehold house and timber yard in Nelson Place

1st November 1856

Valuable Freehold Property in Ann Street Williamstown WILLIAMSTOWN

To Marine Storekeepers, Ship Chandlers, General Dealers and Others. SYMONS and PERRY are instructed by the owner to submit to public competition, at the Commercial Slaes Rooms on Wednesday 5th November, at twelve o'clock. All that piece or parcel of land having a frontage of 31 feet to Ann Street Williamstown, by a depth of 132 feet being allotment No 9 section No 1 parish of Cut Paw Paw. Title Unexceptionable. The above property is centrally situated, adjoining Cox's family Hotel, in the most improving part of Williamstown, and as a stand for general business is quite equal to any now attainable in this rapidly improving township, being equidistant from the various landing places, public offices and the site of the proposed new dock.

3rd January 1857

NOTICE. It is reported that a certain party in Williamstown has a claim on Cox's Family Hotel. I beg to say it is false for he assigned whatever claim he had to a gentleman in Hobart Town. Ann Street January 2 1857 H.Cox

Williamstown Chronicle (Vic. : 1856 - 1954) (2002) ← Saturday 3 January 1857 →

NOTICE.—It is reported that a certain party in Williamstown has a claim on Cox's Family Hotel. I beg to say it is false, for he assigned whatever claim he had to a gentleman in Hobart Town.
Ann-street, Jan. 2, 1857. H. COX.

NOTICE.—A **Meeting** will be held on Monday next, 5th inst., at Half-past Seven, p.m., at the Commercial Hotel, Williamstown, for the purpose of forming a Committee to act in conjunction with the Central Committee of "The Working Man's Fund," towards the erection of a **New Wing** to the Melbourne Hospital.

In 1863 Andrew Rider took a photograph of the hotel which clearly shows the subject hotel. On the side wall "Barkly Arms Hotel" and on the roof pediment Adams, the owner publican



NELSON PLACE 1863



In 1867 with the upcoming visit by Prince Alfred Reuben Adams was advertising the flat roof of the hotel as a great viewing point for the impending arrival. He greatly embellished its capacity and height.

By

the

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957) (front) 4 Saturday 23 November 1867

with boxes' level towards Lakeside-street, take up towards Burke-street.

ARRIVAL of HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS the DUKE of EDINBURGH.
 The best view to be had of the arrival and departure of the Galatea and Scylla is from the highly finished flat roof of the

BARKLY ARMS HOTEL.

It is commodious and capable of accommodating 400 persons, who will be able to see the first approach of His Royal Highness. The hotel being 50ft. high, it is consequently the most elevated situation in the colony, and commands the most extensive view of the Harbour and Bay.

Retiring rooms for ladies and attendance.
 Reserved seats can be secured by letter or otherwise.

Barkly Arms Hotel, Williamstown.
 R. T. ADAMS, Proprietor.

1873's the morgue had been moved to lower Ann Street and the hotel was still called to carry out inquests, a job shared by a number of local hotels. The Oriental was the closest hotel to the morgue.

In late 1873 the below picture was taken. The original is in the State Library of NSW



A close up of this photograph. reveals the same structure, including the multi paned side window as today.

