

# **Submission to the Legislative Council re the Eddystone Lighthouse and Rebecca Creek Land Grants**

*John Coulson, Dilston*

## **Introduction**

First up I wish to thank the Committee for this opportunity to express my opinion on matters surrounding land grants to the TALC. It underlines the important role the Legislative Council, with most members independent, plays in legislative review. This is something I wholeheartedly support and I will fiercely oppose suggestions that the Council is obstructive and Tasmania only needs one House of Government.

## **My Background**

To put my views in perspective, here is a brief outline my background. I am a 77 year old descendent of Captain George Coulson who landed in Tasmania in the early 1800s, was given a land grant where I live, and named it Dilston. The family has lived in this area ever since and, to our best knowledge, never had any conflict with Tasmanian Aborigines. I have no personal antipathy to the present Tasmanian Aborigines but object strongly to the activism being employed by a few in the TAC.

I am a trained mathematics and science teacher who instructed in both the State and private school systems. At the same time I have been involved in dairying, then beef production at the family farm so have a background as both an employer of labour and someone skilled in small business. In the 1960's and 1970s I was involved in a number of producer organizations and was active in State and Federal dairy politics. I retired from teaching in 1992 to be involved in tourism for a number of years both as an operator and administrator of groups of independent tourism businesses but sold the family property in 2000 and am now completely retired.

## **My Reason for Making this Submission**

I have travelled widely and experienced many different cultures. I am keenly interested in archeology and ancient sites but am disturbed at the secrecy surrounding the heritage of Tasmanian Aborigines. *(See Appendix 1 page 4 showing the position of known archeology which is being kept from public display – something directly opposed to concepts of reconciliation).*

Even more upsetting to me is what appears to be unnecessary division being generated within the Tasmanian community by activism on the part of some members of the TAC. There was no hint of this before 1975 when the descendents of Aborigines appeared fully integrated into the community.

So this submission is being made as an effort to persuade the Legislative Council to draw a line in the sand as I believe making more land grants is detrimental to Tasmanian society and is generating further division. The fundamental objective in the 1995 Aboriginal Lands Bill was to promote reconciliation, a concept which needs closer objective scrutiny to determine if it will indeed accomplish it.

## **Why Reconciliation in Tasmania ?**

One should question why there should be any reason for reconciliation in the first place. We are a peaceful group of around 500,000 people living in one of the more beautiful places on earth. We have a standard of living and general well being far better than many other countries. So how has discontent arisen to create division in our community?

There appeared to be no problems in the 1960's and early 1970s. Tasmanians lived together without rancor until the 1980's when a group of activists started to lobby Government with stories of atrocities and demands for recognition for their Aboriginal Heritage. This met a sympathetic response from government,

so in 1995 land was granted to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TALC) at Risdon Cove, something that should not have occurred because originally it was donated to the public "for ALL Tasmanian's FOREVER".

The basis for this land grant was that in the early 1800s it was claimed there was a massacre by the army of a hundred or so Tasmanian Aboriginal men, women and children at the site. Versions of this event were reported in a number of quarters and were accepted as correct. However subsequent closer analysis has demonstrated that there was no real recorded evidence of such atrocity and it appears at most 2 adult males and one female Aborigine died in a situation where a settler family was threatened and a couple of armed soldiers came to their aid. *(See Appendix 2 page 5 for one research paper concluding there was no massacre).*

Many similar stories of atrocities do not withstand close scrutiny but are believed as being true. Unsubstantiated and exaggerated tales of genocide etc are being inculcated into 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> generation descendents, creating hostility and anti social attitudes in the young members of the TAC. This is developing social apartheid in our Tasmanian community and fuelling demands for compensation, something I feel is unjustified. The situation of the Tasmanian Aboriginals bears no relevant comparison to the indigenous Aboriginals on the mainland. The circumstances of TAC members is no different to that of any other Tasmanian and their calls for sympathy over alleged events which occurred 200 years ago is political bribery, unhealthy and unnecessary and offers no rational reason for land grants or any other special consideration.

### **Using Land Grants for Tourism**

The TAC has made frequent claims it would use the land granted to the TALC to promote tourism. But what is the likelihood of that happening in the light of –

1. Nothing has ever been done at Risdon, despite the pyramid tourism information centre that was already established as a tourism site to communicate early settlement history to the public. But since that grant to the TALC in 1995 the centre has not been maintained nor was any effort made to use it as a tool for communicating Aboriginal culture to the rest of the community. This opportunity for reconciliation was not taken nor has there been any indication since that granting that land has assisted it in any way. Worse than that hostility is shown to any non TAC Tasmanian who ventures near TALC Risdon Cove land.
2. There is secrecy surrounding all known Aboriginal artifacts with no moves to use them for tourism or for any type of communication with the rest of the community
3. An offer by Government to fund an information centre at the Jordon River site was refused, even after claims by the TAC it was one of the most important finds of Aboriginal heritage in Australia
4. The general attitude of the TAC is that what has been given to them is then their property and no one else is welcomed. *(See Appendix 3 page 14 showing correspondence in "The Examiner" which illustrates the hostile attitude of the TAC).*

Sadly this situation appears to be repeated at all land now owned by the TALC. It is regarded as their property and is not something to be shared with other Tasmanians. It is therefore apparent that land grants are exacerbating division between the TAC and the rest of our community and is thus contrary to any concept of reconciliation. Reconcile is defined in the dictionary as "make friendly after estrangement", "harmonise". Make compatible" but land grants to the TALC appear to be achieving the exact opposite.

The TAC's refusal to open up communication between them and the rest of the community in tourism or any other activity suggests insincerity in wanting reconciliation at all.

## **Stolen Land Should be Returned**

One thesis is that Tasmanian land has been stolen from their ancestors so should be returned to them. This is difficult to accept when one compares the living situations now to those of 200 years ago. Then the Aborigines free roamed and hunted on the land while now their descendents are urbanised and enjoy extensive free medical, educational and other advantages. TAC members are not a disadvantaged segment of our community so it is hard to see why they should receive special treatment or land grants.

## **Political Correctness Hampering Public Debate**

Unfortunately the current climate of “political correctness” is working against wide public discussion on issues surrounding the TAC. This is occurring at all levels from that of Government, to the media down to individuals. The media is very wary of what it can publish. Government, or individuals who oppose the views of the TAC are in fear of being labeled as “racist” yet activists appear free to condemn the attitudes of “whites” who dare to disagree them. This is ironic when viewed at the ancestry of our population, which, excluding recent immigrants, generally has a European heritage of at least 95%.

In this atmosphere of political correctness Government cowers to TAC demands for land and other compensation and loses sight that it is elected to serve all Tasmanians and should not be favouring a few activists because of Aboriginal ancestry. It is hard to escape the notion that the Government is itself guilty of racism by following its present policies of appeasement.

## **The Result of TAC Activism**

The result of activism in Tasmania is that many members of the TAC do not show they feel reconciliation is any closer. They still appear aggrieved at the rest of the community, quite unjustifiably in my opinion, and continue to demand compensation to perceived wrongs committed on their ancestors. These beliefs in “genocide”, “stolen land” etc have become entrenched and are held with religious conviction so rational discussion about these concepts has become impossible.

## **Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage**

Present Government policies such as further land grants are encouraging division and the situation will get much worse with new Aboriginal Heritage legislation due before Parliament soon. The claim is that this follows moves for similar legislation on the mainland but ignores the fundamental fact that Tasmanian Aborigines are already urbanised and integrated into the Tasmanian Community. This is a completely different scenario to that on the mainland where there are still full blood Aborigines living in quite different situations.

There is no question that aboriginal heritage should be protected but this could be just as easily achieved under the one Tasmanian Heritage Act. Having a separate Act, administered by the TAC with the definition of anything of “significance to Tasmanian Aborigines” to be of heritage value is divisive, encouraging social apartheid and is contrary to any notions of reconciliation. Worse, the TAC is not interested in sharing its heritage and keeps it locked up and/or away from the public. Unfortunately this situation seems to have repeated itself with all land granted to the TAC, land which was previously public and open for anyone to use. It is now regarded as their property and so no one else is welcomed

Ironically those who claim Aboriginal ancestry also share our European heritage so should respect and honor it with us while especially acknowledging their own unique heritage. We should all be celebrating this European heritage while a few can also celebrate their special Aboriginal and other heritage. It should be something to bring people together rather than artificially divide them.

## Conclusion

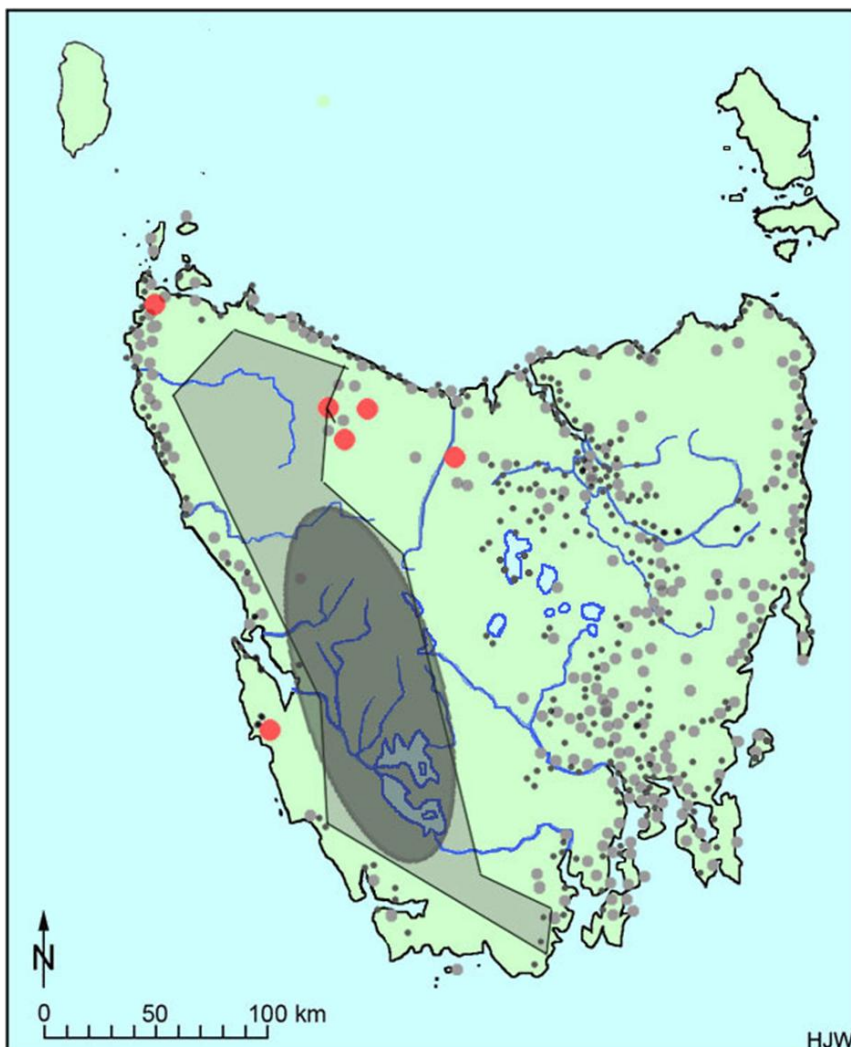
Sadly, 18 years after the Risdon land grant, and despite other grants and concessions, we seem no closer to a harmonious relationship than in 1995. Disturbingly the TAC appears intent on creating more division with further land and other demands. And our present Government, in fear of the Aboriginal community, is developing policies that are working against any notions of reconciliation while the TAC demonstrates no sincerity in wanting to achieve it anyway.

In conclusion I feel the Legislative Council should reject the amendment to the bill which grants more land to the TALC at Eddystone Point and Rebecca Creek. Rather than assist with reconciliation as Minister O'Connor claims, it will further divide the community by excluding most of us from those areas which are presently public land. There are no compelling reasons to justify land grants like this. It should remain public land for all Tasmanians, Aboriginal or not, to enjoy and use.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Archaeological Overview <http://www.andaman.org/BOOK/chapter52/8-Tasmania-ancient/archaeology.htm>

The map below of prehistoric tool and other material finds gives an rough overview of population concentrations in Tasmanian prehistory. No comparable data is available for the northern King island and the Furneaux group of islands.gives an overview of prehistoric finds in Tasmania showing finds predating the year 1800. The distribution of such finds gives a rough-and-ready indication of population distribution over the past 30,000 years. It is adapted from Jones Rhys, 1966, "A Speculative Archaeological Sequence for North-West Tasmania", *Records of the Queen Victoria Museum Launceston*, Launceston, Tasmania, p. 4.



**Large red dots:** ochre mines (to which all tribes seem to have had access to)

Medium-sized grey dots: Archaeological finds and sites of all kinds except surface stone tools

**Small black dots:** surface finds of stone tools. These are unfortunately often impossible to date directly. Style differences over time are few in Tasmania so the tools cannot be dated by type and style. Still, the distribution and density of the tools found give an idea of pre-1800 population densities.

**Light gray area:** parts not inhabited or visited often by Tasmanian aborigines at the time of or shortly before the European arrival around 1800. Groups on their wandering are known to have passed through the area but they did not set up camps there. There are few finds of surface tools in the area so it may not have been used for hunting or gathering for a long time. The unique "silent rainforest" that still exists in parts of the area today may well have been unproductive for hunter-gatherers.

**Dark grey oval area:** What is remarkable is that most of the major ceremonial caves and sites found are close to or in the "deserted" area. No convincing explanation for this apparently very ancient and strict separation has been given yet. Could the ceremonial caves have been "cathedrals in the wilderness" and the area used only for ceremonies?

## **Appendix 2 : An analytical approach to the events at Risdon Cove on 3 May 1804.**

**Vol 93, pt 1 (June 2007 issue)** <http://www.rahs.org.au/jrahs.htm> From: [Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society](#) Date: [June 1, 2007](#) Author: [Refshauge, W. F.](#)

Risdon Cove was the first English settlement in Tasmania, established in September 1803 by Lieutenant John Bowen, RN. In February 1804 David Collins relocated his own settlement from Port Phillip. He chose to settle nearly eight kilometres down the Derwent from Bowen, and on the other (western) shore, at Sullivans Cove. Collins, the Lieutenant Governor, was the senior officer and from June 1804 onwards he progressively closed down Bowen's settlement. But Risdon Cove was not just the first settlement, it possesses the more dubious distinction of being the site of the first conflict between the **Tasmanian** Aborigines and the newly arrived English. It is a place that is important in understanding the early development of Australia, especially of Tasmania. In recent years the nature of these events and their import has been hotly contested. (1) The renewed interest in the events has not been reflected in the management of the site, which is now run down and neglected. (2)

This article offers a new direction for understanding these events by drawing out evidence implicit in the documentary records and reconsidering the topography of the site. Its focus is upon that first conflict when the **Tasmanian** Aborigines collided with the English settlement on 3 May 1804, nearly eight months after the settlers' arrival. That event has generally been regarded as of some significance because it was the first of the many conflicts that characterised early Tasmania. As the first conflict it cannot follow, but may set, the participants' expectations of each other. It is then of some interest to examine just what did happen at Risdon Cove.

The broad outline of what happened is well known. A very large number of Aborigines, variously estimated to number three hundred, or as many as five or six hundred, appeared unexpectedly on the fringe of the little settlement, itself numbering perhaps eighty. By chance, this occurred when Bowen was absent, leaving in charge Lieutenant William Moore, commander of the local detachment of the NSW Corps. By the actions of taking a killed kangaroo from one of the settlement's hunters, and reportedly threatening and perhaps using violence against the farmer William Birt and his wife, the Aborigines alarmed Moore. He sent two soldiers to assist Birt, and those soldiers killed two Aborigines. In order to disperse the Aborigines, said Moore, he ordered a carronade to be fired, whereupon the Aborigines retreated up a valley, leaving a two-year-old boy behind. The discharge of the carronade was heard at Sullivans Cove and the disturbance was investigated immediately. That evening, having been called to Sullivans Cove, Moore was interviewed by Collins. But beyond this brief account, little seems to be agreed.

There is not much direct evidence relating to the events. There is a short letter from Jacob Mountgarrett, sometime surgeon to the new settlement but now simply a settler. He had been present and wrote the same day to Reverend Robert Knopwood at Sullivans Cove. The letter and additional comments are in Knopwood's diary. (3) A few days after the audience with Collins, Moore completed his own account. It was enclosed, with Collins' gloss, in the next report by Collins to Governor Philip King. (4) Also important is McGowan's work on the archaeology of the site. (5)

Other reports from contemporaries emerged over the years. Of these, the most important are in the 1831 report Military Operations against the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land: notably the evidence given by Edward White who had been a convict at Risdon Cove. (6) Evidence was given orally and written down by the Committee's scribe. There are several consequences, importantly that details of each witness's speech may be lost. A likely candidate is the date of the conflict, given always as 3 May 1804, whereas in one or perhaps two instances it was wrongly described by the witnesses as having been about three or four months after the arrival of Bowen's party (evidence of James Kelly and perhaps of White). On the other hand, there are instances where the words used by the witness seem to have been deliberately preserved as the note-taker enclosed an unusually vivid phrase in quotes. For example, when the Aborigines first saw White, they were plainly astonished, or, as the scribe reported White's speech, 'they looked at me with all their eyes'. The key figure in the events was Moore. After all, he had authorised his soldiers to fire, thereby making himself responsible for killing and injuring Aborigines. His actions have often been presented as irresponsible, with hints or explicit claims that he was drunk, that he panicked, or that he shot the Aborigines as sport. (7) Moore does appear to have been a difficult man, whom Bowen was unable to control. That he successfully stared down Bowen suggests that he did have a certain strength of character even if his principles appear dubious.

What was thought of Moore has in turn influenced assessment of the evidence. For example, where his report conflicts with evidence from the convict eye-witness, Edward White, the latter's account has almost universally been preferred. Yet this is unwise on at least two grounds. First, Moore's report was written for the Lieutenant Governor, following the interview on the evening of the events. Moore may have been less than candid in his written report but Collins knew of the events from Moore's mouth and had had the opportunity to test his responses. Collins was unhappy with the course of events but not obviously with the report. Second, conflicting records are sometimes clues for a more inclusive reconciliation. By using a rather more analytical approach to such evidence as there is, this essay takes a first step towards such a result.

Before considering Moore's actions, the situation in which the participants found themselves needs to be clarified. The topography of the settlement is a useful starting point: indeed one that has been much neglected. Risdon Cove is on the eastern side of the Derwent River, near the top of an irregular tongue of land separating the Derwent from Pitt Water, and Ralphs Bay from Frederick Henry Bay, running down to South Arm Peninsula about 25 km south. The settlement itself was placed on a plateau which is about thirty metres above Risdon Brook, in turn leading up to higher country and thence to Mount Direction. There are a number of drainage lines tributary to the Brook, extending some distance inland from the Cove. A number of these drain lines converge just outside the eastern edge of the original settlement, through a small area of relatively flat country. Risdon Brook skirts the southern side of the settlement, and penetrates up into a steep sided but short valley separating this side of the plateau into two lobes. South of the Brook the land rises steeply, in places by more than 1:1.

In his first despatch to Governor King, on 20 September 1803, Bowen wrote that:

*we are situated on a Hill commanding a perfect view of the River and the land, with fresh Water at the foot of it ... The Banks are more like a Nobleman's Park in England than an uncultivated Country; every part is beautifully Green and very little trouble might clear every Valley I have seen in a Month.*

He drew up the first plan of his settlement shortly after this, sending it back to Sydney with his next despatch, dated 27 September. (8) It is a simple, imprecise sketch, but apt for its purpose. He wrote: 'I have not yet drawn any lines for the Town, waiting till I can cut down the large Timber about the Hill, when my view will not be so obstructed'. His settlement was on relatively open, park-like country with the higher ground behind it more heavily timbered--sufficiently so to obstruct his view through it.

Bowen's plan had shown the bulk of the settlement towards the west, with the settler Richard (or William) Clark's farm some hundreds of yards to the east and Birt's farm further east again. Beyond them, at the far eastern edge of the settlement was Mountgarrett's hut. In November 1803 James Meehan took measurements for a survey plan of the settlement, but it seems that he did not draw it up. McGowan completed this task and also provided a brief account of the difficulties, and uncertainties, in doing so. (9) Meehan's work is much more detailed than Bowen's sketch but it does not locate the settlement relative to Risdon Brook (although there is a reference to Mount Direction). His work is 'somewhat ambiguous', says McGowan, and 'It is not sufficiently reliable for predictive purposes, nor can it be relied upon to provide accurate descriptions of individual buildings. However, it can be used to identify some of the remains on the site'. (10) Her archaeological site map locates other, later structures, but not those structures in Meehan's survey that she could not find. Because of the neglect of the site, even some of the structures described by McGowan can now be located only with increased uncertainty. To create a general-purpose map, McGowan's site plan has been used, selecting from it those sites relevant to Bowen's settlement, adding some of the sites surveyed by Meehan but not located (separately identified), all superimposed on a topographical map. (11)

White was apparently the first to see the approaching Aborigines. He pointed them out to two nearby soldiers who in turn seem to have alerted Moore. When White gave his evidence he tied it to his location at the time: 'near a creek' where he was working. Two queries immediately arise: why the indefinite article, and where is the creek? It is conceivable that the Committee's scribe wrote 'a' rather than 'the' but not likely--the meanings are too different. If we take White at his (transcribed) word, we have to identify one creek among others from his other comments.

Here we must make a linguistic excursion. A creek was originally 'a narrow recess or inlet in the coast-line of the sea, or the tidal estuary of a river', from which developed extended senses, says the Oxford English Dictionary. (12) Among these are wholly land-based uses, paralleling the original sense. It also notes that 'creek' in North America, New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere acquired the meaning of 'A branch of a main river, a tributary river, a rivulet, brook, small stream, or run', a sense which was 'entirely unknown in Great Britain'. This leap in meaning seems most plausibly to have come about when convicts--or more generally poorly educated people--sought to use the word as their masters did, but missed its less obvious nuances. That Australian creeks, taken in the primary sense, had different characteristics from English creeks facilitated the process.

In Australia the new sense can be found in quite early documents, perhaps as early as 1798. The first truly unequivocal mention of the new use is in an 1805 despatch in which King explained it thus: 'A Creek--It's locally applied to all brooks and small Rills that are deeply seated in the Ground and the Sides or Banks very Steep'. (13)

However, the stream upon whose banks Bowen settled is and seems always to have been known as 'Risdon Brook'. This is its official name. It was so called in the Woodward map of 1829. (14) Certainly, four years after Woodward's map, Thomas Scott sketches 'Risdon Creek' on a visit there but he applies the word to the stream's debouchement into the River Derwent. (15) As a happy complement, Woodward's map labels the stream 'Risdon Brook' above the fresh-water line. Earlier instances clearly use the primary sense, so in 1799 the word 'creek' was used in that sense when Collins reported Bass as

saying that: 'The land at the head of Risdon creek, on the east side, seems preferable to any other on the banks of the Derwent'. (16)

White had been transported to Sydney in 1802 and after sixteen months there had been sent on to Risdon Cove. (17) He had had little opportunity to be exposed to the new sense for 'creek' and he was now living in a small, hierarchical, isolated settlement where linguistic conservatism was to be expected. He later spent a few years as a shepherd, alone in the bush. In view of his background and the history of the word, it seems most probable that White was using 'creek' in its older sense, and was therefore not giving his location by reference to Risdon Brook.

In his evidence White said that he had been assigned to the settler Clark, and 'was hoeing new ground near a creek', furthermore 'Clark's house was near where I was at work, and Burke's [Birt's] house near Clark's house'. Looking at the integrated map of the settlement shows a land-based 'creek'--the steep-sided valley cutting into the plateau on which the settlement was spread--roughly south of about where to expect Clark's hut. This valley fits White's descriptions of his creek. It also makes sense of his otherwise confusing reference to Birt's location given later in his evidence: 'Mr Clark was there; the Natives were close to his house; they were not on Burke's side of the creek'. That is, from where White was at work (he's told us he was on the western side of this creek), one had to cross the creek to the east to get to Birt's hut.

The report of the Committee inquiring into the Military Operations against the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land added to the confusion by saying that in May 1804 Birt's 'habitation was considerably advanced beyond the rest'. (18) How they came up with this statement is wholly obscure. The evidence tendered does not support it and a site inspection would not have helped as by 1829 most of the physical remains of the Risdon Cove settlement had disappeared as Woodward's map shows. Perhaps it derives from the same misunderstanding of White's testimony that has affected historical writing since then, especially his comments about the Aborigines not being 'within half a quarter of a mile' of Birt's hut, and the unintentionally ambiguous statement that Birt's hut was on the other side of the creek. The creek, so obvious, so critical to understanding the events, yet so obscurely described, deserves to be known as 'Whites Creek'. (19)

While White's precise position is not known, it was somewhere on the western lip of his now eponymous creek, perhaps near the western end of the 'stone-based hedge line'. Even leaving aside vegetation, what White could see from there is limited by his being in a small valley off a larger one, and the proximate ridges severely restrict the direction from which the Aborigines could have approached the settlement in full view of White. There are only three possibilities: from the south, across the Brook--but the land there is too steep for herding a mob of kangaroos; along the line of Risdon Brook--but then the Aborigines were closer to Bin's than to Clark's hut, contrary to the sense of White's evidence; or down from the north. And the latter would bring them out of the timber and right on to the settlement before either they or the bulk of the English knew what was happening. White's notional position is about 'half a quarter of a mile' from Birt's farm. Allowing a little latitude, the Aborigines descended upon the settlement between Whites Creek and the soldiers' encampment, perhaps even spilling over towards Bowen's hut. They truly came out of the timber and were immediately within the English camp.

They were apparently heading for the low-lying alluvial land alongside Risdon Brook, as White observed that 'they were hunting and came down into a bottom'. Their objective seems to have been the flats enclosed within the banks of Whites Creek, as White also said that 'the soldiers came down from their own camp to the creek to attack the Natives'.

The number of Aborigines reportedly at Risdon Cove seems not to have been tested, but was very high. Estimates of the total number of Aborigines in Tasmania at the time have varied. Lyndall Ryan accepted four thousand in her first edition. In the new introduction to the second edition of her book she points to more recent evidence of a higher total, but not one that had been quantified. (20) Because of the inter-relations of components of that total, changing from her figures may create further inconsistencies, so no attempt to develop a more current estimate of the total or of sub-populations is made here. If we take 4000 as the total then 300 is 7 1/2 per cent and 600 is 15 per cent of the total. These are very large proportions whose implications ought to be considered.

It was Rhys Jones who made estimates of the numbers and distribution of Aborigines in Tasmania, drawing his information primarily from the diaries of George Augustus Robinson, Tasmania's Protector of Aborigines. Lyndall Ryan reported Jones' work, following it closely. (21) The following summary of Aboriginal numbers, social structures and distribution, is largely a precis of Jones mediated through Ryan.

**Tasmanian** Aborigines lived in small family units of between 2 and perhaps 8 or so people. These units aggregated into bands of perhaps 40 to 50 people, the basic structural unit. Jones estimated there had been 70 to 85 bands, but only 48 were known. 'The band was the basic "landowning" group; it had foraging rights to a particular territory, to which it could admit or deny other bands'. (22) Movement, usually seasonal, into the territory of other bands or tribes for trade or reciprocal foraging rights, was routinely undertaken, but carefully governed by protocol. These moves followed established routes, generally near territorial boundaries to minimise the trespass. Unsanctioned intrusions could lead to warfare. The most common invasive actions were fights over women, or raids to kidnap women. Bands were aggregated into tribes, of which there were 9. Tribes comprised 5 to 15 bands, populations ranging in number from 250 to over 700. How stable these numbers, proportions and structures were through time is not known, and Robinson's diaries described a later period. Notwithstanding these uncertainties, Jones' structures as presented by Ryan are used here.

The Oyster Bay tribe occupied the east coast territory from the north-east bank of the Derwent inland to and along the Jordan, and thence north to St Patrick's Head. Inland from them was the Big River tribe; across the Derwent was the South East tribe. The Oyster Bay and Big River tribes enjoyed generally cordial relations and there was reciprocal seasonal movement through each other's territory. However, the South East tribe had no such arrangements with Oyster Bay bands,



and made hostile voyages to the Tasman peninsula (within the Oyster Bay territory), frequently to kidnap women. The South East tribe seems not to have had any agreed access to Oyster Bay territory. (23)

The Oyster Bay tribe had 10 known bands and a total population of perhaps 800. The band whose territory included Risdon Cove was the Moomairremener, based to the south of Pitt Water. The seasonal movements of this band were undertaken without joining up with other Oyster Bay bands. They tended to move inland later than other bands, leaving about September or even October. They returned in February or March, being back on the coast by June. Not all members would make these trips, depending on such factors as the quality of the season and personal inclination. (24) For their part, the Big River people made trips into Oyster Bay territory. In fact, 4 of their 5 known bands did so by moving along the Derwent and into the Moomairremener lands on the south of Pitt Water. The Big River tribe is supposed to have numbered about 400 to 500. (25) Nothing is known of the seasonal pattern of their movements but travel in May would make sense because the kangaroos would be in good condition, and their hosts would mostly already have returned. We can now see that these four Big River bands would have been the Aborigines at Risdon Cove. First, they weren't from the South East tribe who would not be in the Oyster Bay territory; second, there weren't enough Moomairremener; third, there were enough Big River people; and fourth, the conflict at Risdon Cove took place on a Moomairremener-Big River inter-territorial route. The general direction of movement of these seasonal travellers was along the Derwent, broadly from the north and northwest, finally moving across country with Pitt Water as their destination.

The written record also supports the idea that the Aborigines who were at Risdon Cove on 3 May were travelling. They descended upon the settlement 'in a circular form' said White, 'a flock of kangaroos hemmed in between them; there were men, women and children'. So they were not a standard hunting party. Sex differentiation in food collecting occurred in Tasmania as on the mainland, although the Tasmanians' dependence on, or use of, plant foods was markedly less. Consonant with this qualification, Clark stated that:

*Men hunted animals such as wallaby and wombat with spears, and caught birds in snares. Women captured small animals such as possums and rats by climbing trees or digging out burrows. Women also collected shellfish and plant foods, and did most of the cooking.* (26)

The significance is that hunters return to the camp with their kill whereas the Aborigines at Risdon Cove brought their entire menage with them. That is, they were on the move. (27)

It has sometimes been explicitly claimed that the Aborigines' intentions were pacific when they first tumbled into the English settlement on 3 May 1804, (28) although more generally this has been tacitly assumed. Such a view actually begs a further question, for the Aborigines could not have been peacefully disposed towards the English until they became aware of their presence. Equally, they could not have had any hostile intent--they had to consider the English first before they could form any intentions towards them. As the Aborigines appear to have been undertaking a seasonal migration, they were most unlikely to have had any prior knowledge of the English or of their settlement. Attitudes towards the intruders had to be developed on the spot. Among so many people, with several incidents occurring at much the same time, different expressions would be possible: anger towards the hunter and vigorous assertion of rights of possession regarding his kill by some; indignation or worse with Birt or his wife for trespass by others; but mostly, to start with, astonishment, a reactive feeling devoid of intentions. What this was going to lead to, we will never know.

#### Conflict

On the other side, Lieutenant Moore had good grounds for concern. Hundreds of Aborigines had just arrived at his camp and probably more were still emerging from the timber. Some were evidently upset by the actions of the settlers. He could not ignore them, as, for aught he knew, their displeasure may have spread and escalated rapidly and he and his dozen or so soldiers would not be able to protect the settlement from an angry mob of such size; but up to that moment there had been no widespread aggression. (29) He had to find a way to assert control in a situation full of uncertainties. According to the report he prepared for Collins, his actions were three-fold. He wrote:

*I went towards them with five Soldiers, their appearance and numbers I thought very far from friendly; during this time I was informed that a party of them was beating Birt, the Settler, at his farm. I then dispatched Two Soldiers to his assistance ...*

*But at this time a great party was in Camp, and on a proposal from Mr Mountgarrett to fire one of the Carronades to intimidate them they dispersed.*

The sequence of events seems clear. First, Moore with five soldiers advanced on the Aborigines. Insofar as the soldiers were moving, they were not shooting. While so engaged he sent two soldiers to Birt's aid. Whether these were drawn from his party of five is not known. Further but unstated actions followed, when Moore and his soldiers moved to the site of the carronade, and readied it for action. Finally that carronade was fired. Before considering each of these actions individually, the capabilities of the weapons available to Moore need to be understood.

Carronades were a short naval gun developed by the Carron Iron Works in Scotland from the 1770s, following suggestions by artillery theorists for lighter ordnance of relatively larger calibre. The carronade achieved this by being shorter, and better engineered (required also of its round shot) to reduce the windage: the annulus between the shot and the internal surface of the barrel. A smaller charge had to be used and the shot would hit the enemy ship with less momentum than a ball fired from a comparable cannon. Instead of punching a neat hole straight through the wooden hull, the ball smashed its way in, causing large jagged splinters to fly around and kill or injure the enemy crew. One further characteristic of carronades is that



they were very loud when discharged. The Royal Navy was reluctant to adopt them, but there were savings in reduced weight as well as lower costs of the guns and the powder, and of fewer men to serve each gun. They could also be served more quickly: a potentially decisive advantage in battle. On the other hand, a consequence of their design was that the range was less than that of a conventional cannon and once opponents realised that, they stood out of range and battered to bits any carronade equipped ship. Hence carronades began to lose their appeal from about the end of the Napoleonic wars. (30)

The carronades at Risdon Cove were twelve-pounders, taken 'with Shot and their other Materials' from the Investigator. (31) They seem to have been intended for internal as well as external defence so their use against the convicts, were there to be an insurrection, seems to have been contemplated. They would have been the short version--less than 70 cm long and weighing about 300 kg. (32) Their range, at 5 degrees elevation, was around 800 metres and they took a one pound (454 g) powder charge. They were probably fitted with a screw for gun-laying, like field artillery but unlike other naval guns which still used quoins (wedges). The breech was stepped because the powder charge was smaller, necessitating use of a ladle to place the powder cartridge in position.

The disadvantages of carronades firing solid shot for land use are obvious. For a twelve pound cannon ball under the above conditions only the first 20 metres and the final 15 are at an effective height. The practice of solid-shot field gunnery was like bowling, to skittle the enemy. To achieve this goal, the trajectory had to be relatively flat, and as much as possible of it stretching from ground level to as tall as a human (or cavalryman, if needed) but no more. A flat flight path was achieved by high velocities, in turn achieved by high powder charges and a barrel length long relative to its calibre. All are absent from carronades.

As for case shot, the anti-personnel load, the naval version was a separate entity from the army's. (33) Each ball was twice the weight of the land equivalent and the canister held only half as many balls. The 12-pound naval case shot comprised 42 balls each of 4-ounce (115 g) weight. (34) Each ball would be about 31 mm in diameter. The same issues which made carronades less useful with solid shot also affect their performance with case shot: if the angle of projection is too great, too few of the shot are at effective height; worse, if the angle is reduced, many will go almost immediately into the ground (on firm ground, some may ricochet, although with reduced momentum, but on 1 May 1804 Knopwood recorded that it had rained all morning). The problem of the projectiles rattling around the barrel is more acute, too. For present purposes the resultant scatter of shot is arbitrarily presumed to be half the calibre divided by barrel length, which is about 5 degrees radius. Probably the most effective angle for the carronade to fire on land was between 1 and 2 degrees elevation--fine tuning which is a bit of an ask for inexperienced gunners. Even at 2 degrees, basic trigonometry shows that about a quarter of the scattering shot would 'go to ground' (around 10 or 11 shot at Risdon Cove) and most of the remainder would be too high within about 60 metres. All that said, at short range, one discharge of one carronade loaded with case shot would have caused casualties among the Aborigines at Risdon Cove. (35)

English military muskets from about 1728 finally began to be standardised into what became the famous 'Brown Bess'. The NSW Corps was issued with them, probably with the Short Land pattern. (36) Its key specifications were: barrel length of 42 inches (1067mm) and nominal bore of 3/4 inch (19mm) diameter. It fired a round lead ball of slightly smaller diameter--around 1/20th of an inch (1.27mm) smaller--than the musket's nominal calibre. (37) On the first shot the ball bounced down the barrel and went in the direction in which it was last deflected. Slag from the burnt black powder was deposited inside the barrel so that subsequent shots were affected by the pattern of deposits, modified by the action of the ramrod. Partly for this reason, accuracy was quite limited so that at 50 metres they would not consistently hit a man aimed at. They were not likely to cause fatal injury beyond 100 metres. (38) These deficiencies were less important in formal battles, where massed firepower at close range (around 50 to 60 metres) averaged out problems of accuracy. The soldiers were expected to load and fire extraordinarily rapidly, up to 4 times a minute, propelling a large amount of lead in a short time. Not a lot of it caused damage: one American civil war general noted that in one battle his men had fired some 2 million rounds of musketry causing injury or death to 13,832 men--an average of 145 musket balls per casualty. (39) The killings at Risdon Cove were hardly a battle, being wholly one-sided, and Moore presumably rather hoped that the Aborigines would run off. The circumstances would have differed in other ways too, notably that the Aborigines had no experience of European military capability, so initially they may have been more vulnerable.

Returning now to Moore's actions, his party first 'went towards' the Aborigines, so, as pointed out above, they would not have been shooting. This advance upon the Aborigines with 5 muskets was an act of extraordinary bravery. Even had he ordered fire Moore would not be likely to have achieved much. His troops were not as well drilled as soldiers of line regiments and would not manage 4 rounds each per minute, so the 5 could not discharge anything like 20 rounds per minute; large numbers of those balls would miss altogether and about one shot in ten would misfire so they would inflict vastly fewer than 20 casualties in a minute and of these, some would be wounded rather than killed. It is unlikely that the Aborigines would have hung around waiting to be shot after the first volleys, so these figures have to be further reduced to that fraction of a minute during which they remained within range. Alternatively, they may have retaliated against Moore's little troop, which, given its limited effective firepower, would quickly have been destroyed. Moore's strategic withdrawal to the carronade was prudent. He would not have had far to go.

White twice said that Birt's house was not attacked; Moore both wrote in his report, and on the evening of 3 May told Knopwood, that Birt was attacked on his farm. It remains possible that Birt and his wife were on their farm elsewhere than at their hut. The important point is that Moore had supposed they were in danger. Sending off two soldiers to assist them is an interesting priority. Birt was important as a free man and as an intending food producer for the settlement. On the other hand, Moore divided his small force and sent off two of his few soldiers, perhaps even across the front of a potential enemy.

We can draw from this that Moore did not believe that at that moment the settlement was facing immediate and overwhelming threat. Whatever else they achieved, these two soldiers killed one Aborigine outright, and may also have shot another, who was at some stage mortally wounded, and later found dead in a valley.

It would not have been possible just to 'pull the trigger' to fire the carronade. Certainly, King had told Bowen to keep the carronades close by: 'the more you have everything under your immediate Eye, the better'. But the powder charge would not have been permanently in the breech because black powder causes corrosion and if it became damp would be useless. Given the difficulties in obtaining a charge (presumably from the store where such things would be secure, but some two hundred metres away), loading it, adding the projectile, setting the firing mechanism (probably a flintlock, by then, and hated for its unreliability by the sailors who had to use it (40)), and laying the gun probably mounted on a naval gun carriage and using goodness knows what sights, no-one was going to use this weapon in a hurry; not in under three minutes, and possibly far longer. One result of the likely delay is that any undue alarm among the senior members of the settlement would have had time to subside. That is, firing the carronade without making a considered judgement of the situation seems quite unlikely. Note too that why Moore fired only one carronade remains unknown but it may be observed that had he wanted to kill large numbers of Aborigines, firing two carronades would have served better. Mountgarrett's suggestion to fire one of them would have appealed to Moore. For all its shortcomings it could propel many more balls than the muskets could, and would be very noisy and smoky in doing so. It could thus reasonably be expected at least to assist him to gain control with limited loss of life (and all the losses would be among the Aborigines).

This conclusion clarifies another question: Why did the Aborigines disperse after the carronade was fired? It is unconvincing to say that it was on account of the sound alone, no matter how loud. The experience of William Dampier in 1699 seems to make more sense. When he fired upon Aborigines, but without injuring any of them, they briefly retreated. When they realised that no harm ensued they came on again and he had to fire at them with intent. He injured one and they all ran away. Something similar happened with the French in Tasmania in March 1772. (41) Such an outcome has intuitive appeal: a previously unknown and seemingly ineffective technology might create temporary alarm, but only when its potential is understood or actualised will its targets be able to respond more appropriately to it. Firing a can of case shot from the carronade, as an indicator of what the English were able to do, may well have been sufficiently effective for Moore's purposes. Again there is a crumb of evidence to work with: Moore recorded that 'Mr. Mountgarrett with Some Soldiers and Prisoners followed them [the departing Aborigines] Some distance up the Valley, and had reason to Suppose more were wounded, as one was seen to be taken away bleeding'. This injury does not sound like a wound due to solid shot from a carronade, which would carry away parts of bodies, not punch bleeding holes in them. Moore's choice of words also implies that others may have been wounded, but he could not be sure. Yet if there were to be any possibility of multiple cases of injury, there had to be gunfire commensurate with the upper limit of these possible injuries. The implication--Moore's admission--is that there was more shooting with intent at the Aborigines additional to the fire in Birt's defence.

It is obvious enough that if there were many casualties some would have been injured rather than killed outright. White had mentioned that there were 'a great many of the Natives slaughtered and wounded' but just how many he did not know. Moore's sole comment on this issue has just been quoted. Significantly, there is no mention of injured Aborigines being left behind after the shootings yet among large numbers of wounded there would be some severely injured. (42) The young child who was left behind is mentioned several times in the records, but there are no reports of severely wounded Aborigines being taken into the settlement for attention. It is inconceivable that numbers of desperately injured people would be left within the settlement to die of their wounds, or of thirst, while the settlers went about their business over the following day or so. Insofar as such casualties would require resources in short supply in the English camp some record, formal or informal, of their presence would be expected. Not one record mentions any injured Aborigines being tended by the English after the shooting.

The apparently small number of injured Aborigines also supports the idea that (apart from the shooting at Birt's) only the carronade fired. Among battle casualties in the age of the musket, wounded usually outnumbered those killed outright or dying on the field by a factor of at least two or three to one (43). The larger the total number of casualties, the closer such a ratio is likely to be approximated, although special circumstances could have a dramatic effect. For example, the ratio of wounded to killed depended on how close to each other the combatants were, and on how many injuries were caused by which weapons. Naval case shot is a different matter. Being pierced or shot through by a 15g iron ball, 31 millimetres across, would cause enormous shock to the nervous system, making such an injury more than otherwise likely to be fatal. Anyone shot at short range would have very little chance of survival. (44)

Whether there was any further authorised firing at the time, apart from the muskets in Birt's aid and the carronade, seems unlikely. There would have been little point, as Moore's main object, of driving off the Aborigines, seemingly was achieved by firing the carronade. Of course it cannot be ruled out that ill-disciplined or rattled soldiers may have sent a musket ball in pursuit.

Claims that large numbers of Aborigines were killed can now be laid to rest. To take Kelly's claim as an example, that '40 or 50 were killed at Risdon', (45) suggests that anywhere from 80 to 150 wounded, more or less, would be expected to litter the field as well. Allowing also for ineffective shots, several hundred musket balls would need to be fired. Even with the carronade, Moore's detachment simply would not have had the capacity to fire to this effect before the Aborigines fled.

The result then is that Moore had time to assess the situation, and his firing the carronade was a measured response. His decision was at least consistent with and possibly influenced by the idea that the musket fire initially available would be inadequate, to the point that it may even have provoked retaliation. We can judge, relying on the experiences of Dampier

and of others, that the carronade did kill or injure Aborigines. There could not have been wholesale slaughter, but there certainly were more casualties than the two dead and one injured mentioned by Moore. Saying much more than this is essentially speculation.

What is not speculative but relatively secure, is that we know roughly where Edward White was when the Aborigines approached the settlement and where they entered. We also know the tribal affiliation of the Aborigines, that they were passing through Risdon Cove on 3 May 1804, and that they knew nothing of the English settlement. They emerged from the timber, heading towards the flats at the bottom of Whites Creek, and instantly were upon the settlement. This background allows us to see Lieutenant Moore's actions in a fuller context. He has too often been regarded as responding inappropriately, but re-examining those responses, informed by an understanding of the technology available to him and of the circumstances, shows him acting more reasonably in what could have appeared to him a potentially catastrophic situation. It may even be argued that he exercised some restraint, as the shooting seems to have been confined to that in Birt's defence plus one carronade, once. By themselves these actions would not produce large numbers of dead while yet being likely to achieve the result Moore sought, of dispersing the Aborigines. To condemn Moore for these actions is to miss the point. He may have been better advised to exercise more forbearance but he could justly reply that many forbearing men died prematurely by supposing the natives they had just met would not attack or behave in unexpected ways. It will always remain a possibility that Moore saved his settlement from an attack that was not going to happen. His retort would be that the settlement did survive.

## Notes

- (1) The public debate began with a series of three articles by Keith Windschuttle in **Quadrant** in 2000. He elaborated these articles into *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, vol. 1: *Van Diemen's Land 1803-1847*, Sydney, 2002. The first chapter of the book, 'The Killing Fields at Risdon Cove', has immediate relevance. The first reaction to the book was a barrage of unfavourable reviews. There have been many later exchanges, often in the daily newspapers. A useful compilation of views opposed to Windschuttle, but without any responses by him, is Robert Manne (ed) *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's fabrication of Aboriginal history*, Melbourne, 2003, pp. 218-224. It contains one article directed specifically at Windschuttle's first chapter: Phillip Tardif, 'Risdon Cove'. A response to the issues raised by Manne's collection is John Dawson, *Washout: On the Academic Response to the Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, Sydney, 2004. A unified account, but unsympathetic to Windschuttle, is Bain Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History*, Sydney, 2005.
- (2) The centenary of the first settlement at the site was commemorated by a monument erected there in 1903 and further work was done for its sesquicentenary. Since then the site and the events that took place there have largely been ignored. The site itself was transferred to the **Tasmanian** Aboriginal Land Council in 1995 under the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 (Tas) and was not thereafter managed by the **Tasmanian** Parks and Wildlife Service. The State Government now takes no part in its management. The local Council, Clarence, does not even list the site in its visitor information. The **Tasmanian** tourism signs were removed some time ago and there are now no signs directing visitors to the site.
- (3) Mary Nicholls (ed.), *Diary of the Reverend Robert Knopwood, 1803-1838* Launceston, 1977, p. 51.
- (4) Collins to King, 15 May 1804, *Historical Records of Australia* (HRA), series III vol. I, pp. 237-243.
- (5) Angela McGowan, *Archaeological Investigations at Risdon Cove Historic Site: 1978-1980*, National Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania, Occasional Paper No. 10, Hobart, 1985.
- (6) A.G.L. Shaw (ed.), *Military Operations against the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land*, House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers No.259 of 1831. Reprinted Hobart, 1971. White's evidence is at pp. 53-4. White's evidence, Knopwood's diary entry and Moore's report are all reprinted in Phillip Tardif, *John Bowen's Hobart*, Hobart, 2003, pp. 219-221.
- (7) The claims of drunkenness and of wanton killing seem to derive from James Bonwick, *Last of the Tasmanians*, London, 1870, p. 35; those for panic from Fawcner as reported by Hugh Anderson, *Out of the Shadows: The Career of John Pascoe Fawcner*, Melbourne, 1962, p. 23 and by C. P. Billot, *The Life and Times of John Pascoe Fawcner*, Melbourne, 1985, p. 36, and seemingly independently from James Backhouse Walker, 'The Risdon Settlement' in *Early Tasmania: Papers Read before the Royal Society of Tasmania*, Hobart, 1902, p. 50.
- (8) The sketch can be found at *Historical Records of NSW*, vol. V, following p. 226. The despatches are: Bowen to King, 20 September 1803, HRA, series III vol. I, pp. 197-98, and Bowen to King, 27 September 1803, HRA, series III vol. I, pp. 198-99.
- (9) McGowan, Fig. 3 and pp. 14-15, and references therein.
- (10) McGowan, pp. 11 and 91.
- (11) The locations and identifications are straightforward except for identifying the half-acre farm as Birt's, which McGowan calls 'Clark's or Birt's'. Its distance from the Governor's new house and from Mountgarrett's house correspond better with Bin's location in Meehan's survey, hence the identification adopted here.
- (12) *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, Oxford, vol. 3, 1989, p. 1142.
- (13) King to Camden, 1 Nov 1805, HRA, series I vol. V, p. 586. See also note 189 to that text (p. 839). The *Oxford English Dictionary* cited John Hunter as the first to use 'creek' in this sense, in *An historical journal of the transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island, 1793*, chapter xxi, p. 516, but in context the reference seems more like the primary usage.
- (14) Woodward's map Lands Department, Tasmania, Map No.9. Attributed to George Woodward, probably drawn in 1829. The map was redrawn for McGowan's work (her fig. 4), but errors crept in. It is map 9 as on her reproduced map, not 6 as in the text; l'Anson's farm was 500 acres, not 300 as shown; and the map 'provides the only known evidence for a structure on the south bank

of Risdon Cove' (McGowan, p. 14) but it was not shown--it was across the Brook from where the l'Anson/Sharp property boundary meets the Brook.

(15) Thomas Scott, Sketch No. 42: 'Sketch taken when on a Visit to Mr [T?] Gregson--on the Morning of the 15th July 1833 on a walk before breakft.' Sketches, PXB216, State Library of NSW.

(16) David Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 2, 1802. Reprinted Sydney, 1975, p. 133. See also HRA, series III vol. I, pp. 222 and 223.

(17) Tardif, p. 214.

(18) Shaw, p.37.

(19) 'Creek' is not the only word whose interpretation has obscured geographical questions in Australian history. Chris Cunningham, *The Blue Mountains Rediscovered*, Sydney, 1996, pp. 26 and 101, shows how changed usage of 'waterfall' had confused writers trying to make sense of some attempts on the Blue Mountains.

(20) Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, (1st ed. 1981) second edition, Sydney, 1996, pp. xx-xxii.

(21) Ryan mostly refers to a seminar paper by Jones; but see Rhys Jones, '**Tasmanian** Tribes' in Norman B. Tindale, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, Canberra, 1974.

(22) Julia Clark, *The Aboriginal People of Tasmania*, Hobart, second edition, 1986, p. 24.

(23) Ryan, pp. 41-44.

(24) Ryan, pp. 17, 19.

(25) Ryan, pp. 26-29.

(26) Clark, p. 19.

(27) Another possibly relevant factor here is the time that the Aborigines appeared. Knopwood recorded that at Sullivans Cove, downriver from Risdon Cove, he heard the carronade fire 'At 2 p.m.'. In his evidence White was reported as saying that 'the firing commenced about 11 o'clock'. At least they agree that it was in the middle part of the day.

(28) For example Walker, p. 51 and Tardif, p. 145.

(29) In both the earliest reports more is claimed. Mountgarrett's letter to Knopwood talks of 'an attack the natives made' and Moore of their 'hostile Appearance' and that it appeared 'that their design was to attack us'. White denied that they attacked the soldiers: 'they would not have molested them'. As the hunter whose kill was taken from him was a soldier, White's claim needs some qualification.

(30) Ian Hogg and John Batchelor, *Naval Gun, Poole (UK)*, 1978, pp. 17, 20-21, 24.

(31) HRA, series III vol. I, p. 204.

(32) According to the Royal Australian Artillery National Museum 'the short 12-pounder was replaced by along model about 1800': Extract material (chapter on carronades) supplied by RAANM, Sydney, in May 2006, p. 109. Most of Investigator's guns were replaced with carronades in May 1801 (K. A. Austin, *The Voyage of the Investigator*, Sydney 1968, p. 40), so these replacements would most likely have been the earlier models.

(33) It does seem likely that Investigator carried case shot. Flinders preferred carronades 'which guns,' he wrote, 'I consider to be sufficient to repel the attack of any Indians with whom we are likely to meet ...' (Austin, p. 40), so he would seem to be arming against attack by men rather than warships. Such armament is to be expected given his instructions.

(34) Adrian B. Caruana, 'Tin-Case Shot in the 18th Century', *Arms Collecting*, vol. 28 no. 1, 1990, pp. 11-17.

(35) McGowan found one steel cannonball at the Risdon Cove site. It was in the rubble of Mountgarret's house, and was described as 'weighing 5.41kg. (12 pounds), diameter 11.5cm. The cannonball is approximately spherical' (McGowan, p. 135). Nothing resembling grape or case shot was recovered from Risdon Cove (author's discussion with McGowan, 25 October 2006).

(36) Ian D. Skennerton, *Australian Service Longarms*, Margate, Queensland, 1976, p. 5 and also p. 67.

(37) Useful brief accounts of the 'Brown Bess' musket are in George C. Neumann, 'The Redcoat's Brown Bess', *American Rifleman*, April 2001, pp. 49ff. and D. W. Bailey, *British Military Longarms 1715-1815*, London, 1971.

(38) These are the traditional figures but today's users of smoothbore muzzle-loaders claim better results.

(39) General Rosecrans, in his report on the battle of Stones River. Recorded in William E Fox, 'The Chances of Being Shot in Battle', *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, vol. 36 no. 1, 1888, p. 104.

(40) The very considerable deficiencies of the flintlocks are described by Denholm within the broader context of the changing nature of the conflict between Aborigines and European settlers throughout the nineteenth century: David Denholm, *The Colonial Australians*, Melbourne, 1979, ch. 3, especially pp. 32-36.

(41) William Dampier, *A Voyage to New Holland, 1703*, reprinted Gloucester (UK), 1981, p. 122; Le Dez in E. Duyker (ed.) *The Discovery of Tasmania*, Hobart, 1992, pp. 31-33. See too John Bingle's report of meeting with Aborigines at Moreton Bay in 1822: 'The noise of the report of the gun did not in the least alarm them, as they were not aware of its powers to kill'. George Mackaness, *The Discovery and Exploration of Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River*, reprinted Dubbo, 1979, Part I p. 50.

(42) Fawknor's memoirs do mention some 'crawling away to die in the bush' -just 'a few' according to Anderson (p. 23); 'many' according to Billot (p. 36)--but, bearing in mind Bowen's descriptions of the site, crawling into the bush would have entailed improbably protracted journeys across the settlement for anyone who was mortally injured.

(43) See, for example, A. G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-18*, vol. 3, Canberra, 1943, ch. XVII, and William E Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War*, Albany (NY), 1902.

(44) The absence of injured Aborigines left behind suggests an argument against an informal load being discharged from the carronade. Anderson (p. 23) reports Fawcner saying that the gun was loaded with pieces of iron and broken bottles, which is unlikely as the settlement was chronically short of iron. Other debris had to be collected up and brought to the carronade. Any such informal load would require that the charge be wadded. As neither case shot nor solid shot needed it, even the wadding may have had to be improvised. A load imperfectly wadded would be propelled at a lower velocity, and the damage caused would be correspondingly lighter. All in all, official case shot seems to fit the evidence better.

(45) Shaw, p. 51.

**FOOTNOTE:** Further research is now casting doubt on the account given by convict Edward White about the incident as there is a strong possibility that his evidence was fictitious because he was not there at all! This highlights how misguided and incorrect present Government policies are when inaccurate historical records are being used as a basis for sympathetic land grants and other concessions to the TAC.

### **Appendix 3 Letters to the Editor “The Examiner”**

#### **Letter from JAC published December 10 2012:**

Thank you to Clyde Mansell for the correction (Examiner December 4) re Aboriginal ownership of land.

However his letter implies that land granted to the TAC is available for access by the general public. This is not the case. For example, although the public has access to some of the Risdon Cove site, the pyramids, which were once visited by schools and others, is not.

All this raises the question as to why Crown land should be granted to one group of Tasmanians as private property to give them control to exclude others. It is hardly in the interests of reconciliation and encourages division in our community.

Everyone has access to most heritage items in the State but the TAC seems intent on locking the rest of us out of appreciating Aboriginal heritage. This is a pity because many of us are interested in this heritage and culture but the present attitude of some is that it is none of our business.

Aborigines in this State are Tasmanians and are not doing themselves any favour by dissociating themselves from the rest of us. They share facilities etc available to everyone and in addition receive funding and other considerations that others do not. It is time they acted to positively engage the whole community instead of deliberately increasing division.

Can we please see a more friendly and positive approach by some in the Aboriginal community? There is no justification for the present divisive attitudes.

John Coulson, Dilston

#### **Reply from Nana Mansell Examiner December 19:**

John Coulson (Letters December 10) complains that Aborigines have control over public access to the land that has been returned to them.

I wonder if Mr Coulson provides public access to his privately owned land?

Or are white people the only ones who have the right to do so?

Submission to the Legislative Council re Land Grants at Eddystone Point and Rebecca Creek – John Coulson

Judging by Mr Coulson's comments, reconciliation is about assimilation and Aborigines doing things the way white people want them done.

To Aborigines, reconciliation is about Aboriginal sovereignty and self-determination.

It is obvious we still have a long way to go.

- Nana Mansell, cultural promotions worker, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre