

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following are items from Max Ivor Crawford's diary written in 1926. Max was born in 1886 in Hobart.

Max was a typesetter at the Mercury at this time and loved all the early historical background to Hobart, its changing street scape and would write down changes in ownership tenancy of the various buildings as well as street name changes and changes to the numbering in the streets.

These are some sections of the diary relating to the "Brickfields" and the "Anson"

When I was a little boy, living at 313 (now 331) Argyle Street, North Hobart, I used to play with other boys of the same age on the "Brickfields" at North Hobart – which I found out later was situated in New Town – just past "Canty's" paddock, the owner of which was Charles Cantrell.

The "Brickfield" as I first remember it, was full of bumps and hollows, with a large pond some distance down from Argyle Street on the Ryde Street boundary, with a couple of poplar trees and some "gum" trees. ... I remember pieces of brick were scattered about the ground. There was also an old boiler or tank down towards Letitia Street where the creek used to run.

Later, I became desirous of learning the origin of the name "Brickfields". On this ground there used to be a large wooden building, on a brick foundation, in which female convicts brought out in the "Anson" were lodged, also some smaller buildings. Citizens used to call here to choose assigned servants. The buildings were afterwards used as an Invalid Depot, and later, immigrants were domiciled there till they could secure a residence. The buildings were afterwards pulled down, having been condemned.

On Friday, 24th September, 1926 – questioned regarding the name "Brickfields" Mr Richard Noah Pamplin of 23 Hill Street, West Hobart said he understood bricks had been made there. He remembered the building and the invalids and said some of the latter were ticket-of-leave men. Mr William James McWilliams (who was born at "Laburnum cottage, 284 Argyle Street and lived there still in 1926) said that bricks were made there in the very early days. Female convicts who arrived by the "Anson" were housed in the large building on the ground, and were hired out as assigned servants. This building was afterwards used as an Invalid Depot. The Superintendent of the Depot – Mr Withington – lived in the cottage now part of the Institution for the Blind, and Deaf and Dumb.

Mr. William Eli Marshall of Bellevue Parade, New Town, Hobart, born in May 1862 in Warwick Street next to the brick shop on Argyle Street corner said he remembered the "Brickfields" well.

William Eli Marshall said the "Anson" was broken up below Government House Point. Mr William Marshall, William Eli Marshall's uncle, bought the woodwork (cedar) which he used in the houses extending from Brown's Buildings in Argyle Street round the corner and down Warwick Street as far as "Money" Morgan's property. The doors, window sashes, staircase and the counter of the corner properties are all made of this cedar from the "Anson". William Eli Marshall has in his possession the door of a cupboard made from the same wood.

This transcript is kindly provided by Max's granddaughter, Anne Kiely.