

*Following is the full text of an imaginary diary, as prepared for a talk at a Wilson family gathering, 25 Feb 2017, by Peter Ward, whose family had common heritage involving the original 640 acre "Pre-emptive Right", part of which still remains as "Tuerong Park"*

*The "diary" is constructed as reflecting known events and historical circumstances. I have made minor edits, and changes to reflect material sent to me by Karen Roe, following my presentation. Entitled "Extract from the Memoirs of Lillian Mary (Wilson) Troedson (Edwin's eldest child)", a careful read indicates the arrival at Tuerong on Aug 3 1863, the date of Arthur's birth at Moorooduc. This would support my assertion that Tuerong was being farmed per arrangement with Vaughn and Wilde, "Mortgagee in Possession". Peter.*

### *Agnes' "Diary"*

Dec 1856 Thank God we are leaving Muddy Plain. Around us are the worst characters of men and women. The winter coldness chilled me unmercifully. Urgent messages go by semaphore, and the track to here is two impassible ruts. John is sure we will do well on the Goldfields. He is a toiler, but now with four children, I hope fortune is quick. The thought of endless shifting haunts me. We are uncertain of our accommodation but John will buy a sturdy tent in Melbourne. I urge him for a wagon, but such are virtually unobtainable.

Dec 1859 Fortune eludes us. We shift yet again, now to Daylesford. By the look, the rush is well past, and reefing now prevails. Everything is available here, but the merchants hugely inflate prices. Our resources will not last forever. Some good country here, and John looks for land as much as he looks for gold. But, Please God, not here. The winters have already taken Agnes, and I fear for the others in such cold and wetness as we have suffered.

May 1863 Our quest for gold has brought no reward, drained our meagre finances, and Daylesford had more severe winters than I could endure. This Tuerong area is the most beautiful place. Ruddell is on the Tuerong PR, in the hands of Trustees, and will be shortly leaving. John is negotiating the use of the property from Vaughn and Wilde, the Trustees in Possession. He has visited, and there is a four room home. I have asked mother for an advance if there is opportunity to purchase. The water is secure, and about fifty acres already clear. The soil here reported to be superior and a source of never failing feed. The hills have trees that will clear easily. For now I have to attend to the children's schooling. Will is thirteen now, and yearns to help about a farm, but our Margaret stands aloof when manual labour is involved

May 1866 The past three years have proved difficult for John. It has remained dry since 1864. The agents cannot sell Tuerong as Ruddell keeps one step ahead of a final insolvency. We now work by agreement with the trustees. The agents rip our profit, pneumonia is rampant in the sheep and we hesitate to stock cattle. The winter frosts are no less severe than those at Daylesford, although the winds mostly less bitter. John and the boys are clearing, and see excellent prospects for crops on the flats. We only get 6d to 1s for our lambs, that is, after the native dogs have finished. The prospect of 8 pounds per ton for oaten hay has excited us, and Connell will lend us his hay binder. WSW has been down. He will take bagged oats and pay cash, but John will have to hire a thresher. I dare not ask in what we may be involving ourselves, but suspect a nefarious intention. Mother will help with our Tuerong purchase if we can negotiate successfully.

Jul 1866 My grief for Agnes would be lost in my busyness, except for Ellen, now just one, whose striking likeness brings her back to me daily. Thankfully the climate is kinder here, and we have a roomy hut. At least the children thrive.  
The Port Phillip Farmer's Society show is coming in October, but John will not enter. The autumn rain failed, and our stock do not impress.

May 1867 For the past two we have lived through drought. At least our stock drink, but the waterholes are but mud puddles. Our oat crop for which John and the boys worked so hard for has not returned seed, so we have lost badly. The soil is sandy and dries so quickly, and now our stock suffer the cripples. No one yet understands this horrible disease. They say we need to improve pastures, but just now we cannot see how.

Dec 1868 We now have purchased Tuerong, with Mother's patronage, but yet another drought is with us. John is sure all we need is a few good seasons. I cannot be quite so confident. Our resources are strained. Our eight children live here in a freedom restricted only by our daily schooling activities. John is affable, and gets on with everyone. He has spent some time over at the diggings, but says they are finished.

Jun 1874 A frightening thing has happened. Moriety, a sheep farmer only three mile from here close to the diggings was brutally murdered. John was one of the party who helped find him. Brutalised with an axe, and, the cash from the flock he sold is gone. They have the suspect, Shannon, and we were interviewed. We ask the oldest not to speak of it in front of the younger, for it is rumoured they have not taken the correct person and the culprit yet among us. There are still forty persons at the Tubbarubba diggings, and John is well known.

Dec 1876 John has selected the 163 acres between us and the Balcombes. It is very poor country, but he has applied for the license.

Dec 1877 Another drought, and severe. Just ten years here, and we have already been thru what our papers say is its the colony's worst drought, back in 1866 .The bank will not make any further advances. John has gone to Thompson for 200 pounds on our 163 acre license. Mother does not understand why we are not yet able to start repayments. Drought is a foreign concept to her. We struggle, and it has taken toll on John. Whatever we try is defeated by the season or the land itself. Everyone remarks on our wonderful position, but that won't feed and clothe us. Our district has a real bond, and I enjoy the constant comings and goings of our neighbours, and suitors. Ellen is grown in much beauty, and she has many admirers. The road is being constantly improved, and travelers are always calling in.  
William has married Emily, and we were all lifted. She appears maternal.

Dec 1878 William has taken the block to the east. 159 acres of rolling country. He has almost finished a fine cottage for Emily. She is with child, and due any day. He plans to expand it as the family grows, set up a woolshed and orchard. His view is amazing, and travelers at night will see his house as a beacon on the hill. I worry because he has no permanent water, but as long as we are on Tuerong he has access to our waterhole on the Balcombe Creek below his house. John is in dispute with the moneylender, Thompson will neither return our certificates or advance the money.

Dec 1879 Our resources are exhausted. The years have not been kind. We have not even a complete a set of stockyards. At shearing time we have to beg our neighbours to use their sheds. Everyone works together, but sometimes we can only get a shed at inconvenient times. We cannot afford shearers, so John and the boys have mastered the shears. Our cattle, do poorly on the native grasses which are so rank in summer. We now live in a single four room cottage. John says liabilities now exceed assets by over 900 pounds, but he is sure we will prevail in our action against Thompson.

WSW has a scheme to finance a continuation, but we will have to be in the background and Edwin will step up as his partner. Our William now has expanded his home to four rooms, and he is building yards and sheds. We are thankful for his enterprise.

Apr 1882 We were declared insolvent two years ago, and with WSW's help Edwin is carrying on. The last six months have again been drought, and but for WSW we would not have a roof over our heads. EW only got five bales to market, less than half a normal year. John finds it hard to accept that after so much effort, nature has crushed us. I comfort him, tell him we have a blessing in our family, if not the land.

Dec 1884 WSW and Edwin decided to put all the clip through WMcD account. I do not quite understand why. We are lost, but this may keep him going. Will has ten acres of orchard now, but he needs to cart water every day and hand water them. John Jr is four now, and goes with him and uses the dipper to help. Will has constructed a sled from a forked tree, and goes daily to the spring on the Balcombe creek to our west. The water is undrinkable, and even too strong for washing. Will favours the sheep, and his shed is the envy of the district. Its his turn to share with others.

Albert has managed to find enough gold for Anne's wedding ring, just over in Gillettes paddock. John says the gold is too fine, and the deposit so small it would not help us, but he looks.

Dec 1886 Second year of drought. It is over for us, and but for WS we would all be out on the street. No wool cheque. The bills still come in. Last year we got 4d for our crossbred, just half what we got in 1880!

William is struggling, as is Edwin, but no more or less than all our neighbours. We were awarded five hundred pounds against Thompson, one hundred and twenty five if he returns the certificates, but John says the lawyers will account for the most, and the trustees may chase the rest. WSW and Ed are applying for a transfer of title. Mother accepts she will never be repaid, and will surrender the encumbrances.

Dec 1888 John and I disagree. He has bought five one pound shares in a crazy mining venture at Tubbarubba with money we needed. It is wasted. They long sought and failed to find a reef over there.

Emily's beautiful Hilda has passed, so young. I understand and comfort her.. We have no money for doctors. William has realised there is no future for them on their block. I think Emily cannot wait to leave. The certificate is being transferred to her, and she has it on the market even before the transfer is complete. I feel relieved for them. I believe they only stayed to keep our dream alive. Now it's over, he will have no trouble finding employment. Will can turn his hand to anything, and with five mouths now to feed, he must.

Jan 1889 Good news. WSW and Edwin finally obtained title, and so the farm will continue for now but even WS is having difficulty finding credit. It is Mother who has lost as much as we, in clearing the encumbrance, and I am ashamed. Edwin works as hard as Will., but I detect a sense of purposeless. Arthur is a strong lad, suitable for manual labor and I think he will easily obtain work with the stone contractor working the Tuerong quarry but 200 yards from our boundary. William and Emily have moved, and I will miss them all. The station has a loneliness, a loss of life almost, a decay. I cannot wait to leave this place.

Dec 1890 William's Elma is lost to that cursed diphtheria. They cannot afford a headstone, and we cannot help. A single rosebush marks her grave. I cry inside, for I have also lost. William has no real work, they say we are in a recession. Our dream is lost, but John does not admit it, and works as hard as ever.

Mar 1893 Dear John passed, and far too young. Our life here has been one of unending struggle and hardship. I record with pride that my children's characters were here forged in hard work and honesty, and such must carry them through the great depression that has now engulfed this colony. I am not well, and rest now, at the end of my journey, and wonder, .....  
..... how else it might have been.

Notes:-

Muddy Plains is mentioned frequently in  
[http://www.ccc.tas.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/FINALClarence\\_03\\_1820-1860.pdf](http://www.ccc.tas.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/FINALClarence_03_1820-1860.pdf)  
which covers farming and small townships in early Tasmania.

Devilbend Creek was earlier Balcombe Creek, as verified on Broadbent's map of the Mornington Peninsula, 1949.

Reading within "Extract from the Memoirs of Lillian Mary (Wilson) Troedson (Edwin's eldest child)" indicates that there was only a four room home at Tuerong on the family's arrival, and that within six weeks, only two rooms had floorboards. These notes also indicate a son born the night of their arrival at Tuerong, this puts the date fairly certainly as Aug 3 1863, the date of Arthur's birth at Moorooduc. My assertion of the "Pleuro" being a factor in the difficulty of farming Tuerong is supported by the notes.

|      | Jan   | Feb  | Mar   | Apr   | May   | Jun   | Jul   | Aug   | Sep   | Oct   | Nov   | Dec   | Annual |                   |
|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------------------|
| 1868 | *     | *    | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | 29.1  | 47.5  | 57.9  | 46.1  |        |                   |
| 1869 | 55.4  | 36.9 | 36    | 43.6  | 62    | 57.5  | 54.9  | 49    | 69.7  | 132.3 | 40.2  | 37    | 674.5  | Fail Autumn break |
| 1870 | 82.5  | 2.8  | 8.9   | 125.5 | 57.9  | 165.1 | 89.5  | 102.7 | 207.3 | 186.7 | 117.5 | 17.3  | 1163.7 | Poor Autumn       |
| 1871 | 63.3  | 72.9 | 45.2  | 42.7  | 57.9  | 54.5  | 76.8  | 69.4  | 96.5  | 51.1  | 97.7  | 54.4  | 782.4  | Fail Autumn break |
| 1872 | 119.9 | 29.5 | 43.5  | 36.7  | 90    | 171.5 | 90    | 120.1 | 31.1  | 114.5 | 114.8 | 131.1 | 1092.7 |                   |
| 1873 | 46.7  | 90.7 | 52.1  | 53.9  | 38.6  | 85.7  | 58.7  | 88.9  | 98.5  | 80.4  | 32.2  | 35    | 761.4  |                   |
| 1874 | 56.1  | 21.4 | 181.4 | 83.3  | 104.2 | 103.7 | 41.8  | 98.1  | 103.5 | 71.3  | 71.5  | 53.5  | 989.8  |                   |
| 1875 | 13.7  | 93.4 | 21.3  | 115.5 | 92.9  | 66.3  | 61.5  | 86.3  | 60.3  | *     | *     | *     | *      |                   |
| 1885 | *     | *    | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | 48.5  | *      |                   |
| 1886 | 129.5 | 75.3 | 32.8  | 39.4  | 58.8  | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *      | Fail Autumn break |
| 1887 | 44.2  | 37.1 | 15.3  | 118.9 | 54    | 88.9  | 109.8 | 26.4  | 100.3 | 75    | 83.8  | 130.5 | 884.2  | Poor Autumn       |
| 1888 | 49.2  | 38.4 | 102.9 | 27.6  | 105.5 | 82.6  | 85    | 43.2  | 31.6  | 32.6  | 30.7  | 20.1  | 649.4  | Fail Spring rain  |
| 1889 | 111.5 | 40.9 | 9.5   | 101   | 72.1  | 132.5 | 77.2  | 96.9  | 65.2  | 90.1  | 79.4  | 41.9  | 918.2  |                   |
| 1890 | 33.4  | 4.4  | 34.6  | 36.8  | 92.6  | 64.2  | 52.9  | 62.4  | 85.2  | 89    | 93.3  | 38.5  | 687.3  | Fail Autumn break |
| 1891 | 43.3  | 4.3  | 46.5  | 62.5  | 120.2 | 99.3  | 129.4 | 66.3  | 70.4  | 70.4  | 112.7 | 55.7  | 881    |                   |
| 1892 | 4.8   | 30.5 | 48.8  | 124.7 | 83.2  | 57.1  | 77.7  | 47.7  | 55.4  | 58.8  | 57.6  | 49.5  | 695.8  |                   |
| 1893 | 4.3   | 13   | 51.8  | 43.9  | 104   | 112.1 | 69.2  | 78    | 101.8 | 89.8  | 75.2  | 61.9  | 805    | Weak Autumn break |

Above: -BOM rainfall figures for Mornington

Data is n/a for 1876-1885, but Wikipedia summary for the State is:-

1864–66 (and 1868). The little data available indicates that this drought period was rather severe in Victoria

1877 All states affected by severe drought

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drought\\_in\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drought_in_Australia)

Extract below from the Memoirs of Lillian Mary (Wilson) Troedson (Edwin's eldest child) who was born at Mornington 16 October 1883 and left with the family for Queensland in 1899 when she was 16.

Kindly supplied by Karen Roe.

"My father recalled that as a child he used to play with his grandfather's cocked hat and telescope. He also remembered the log which he kept on his voyages. It was surely the greatest pity that such things should have been allowed to be destroyed. What a treasure the log would have been to future descendants. My father told me he thought as they lived miles from the township, writing paper might be scarce and he remembered the logbook had unused pages, and in tearing these out the book was lost.

I lost all my grandparents before I was thirteen.

My grandmother had 11 children, my father was the 5th and the 3rd son. When he was 4 ½ his parents shifted to a property called Tuerong, about 8 miles from the township of Mornington. It seems that my Grandfather [John Bowman Wilson] had inherited some land on property of some sort near Melbourne, North Melbourne (I think) and exchanged it for Tuerong. I had no idea what the area was but he went in for sheep and cattle. There were all kinds of bad luck, Pleuro in the animals etc. But in time they were comfortably well off. When they shifted there was no bridge over the Yarra. The wagon had to cross on a ferry. Before the exchange was made, my grandfather went down to inspect Tuerong.

On it there was a separate roomed house with boarded floors – six weeks after on arrival only 2 rooms had floor of boards on them. There were a few ticket-of-leave men living in the district with their families. The night of arrival, my grandmother had another son and my grandfather went to one of these homes to get help. He found people sitting in the dark around a fire and he thought it was a blacks camp. However the woman came and proved a kind friend in need. (She was not married to the ticket-of-leave man and after having several children she cleared off and married a schoolteacher)

Grandfather died at 62 a year after grandma passed away at 61. Although her life must have been a struggle, my father told me they never had a cross word and were devoted to each other."

*Those interested in more of the Tuerong story will find a large PDF to download on my website "excelworks.info", on the Goldfield page.*

*Peter Ward 28/02/2017*