Charles Edward Broadhurst  
(1826-1905)  
a remarkable nineteenth century failure  

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Declaration

I declare that all sources consulted have been acknowledged in the text or in footnotes and in a bibliography appearing at the end of the thesis itself. The composition is my own, as is the interpretation of the information, which was gleaned by interview, historical research or archaeological analysis. This thesis contains as its main content, work which has not previously been submitted at any University.

..............................................................
Mike McCarthy
December 1989

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Abstract

This study began in 1983 with my archaeological investigations at the wreck of the SS Xantho (1848-1872), the first steamship to be operated out of the Colony of Western Australia. The excavation revealed, among other things, that the vessel was poorly and inefficiently engineered, and that to drive the vessel forward the engines had to be run in reverse. The historical records showed that the SS Xantho had a very short existence as the colony's pioneering steamship. The records also showed that it was operated in a remarkable and almost innovative fashion, firstly as a transport in the pearling industry, and secondly as a 'tramp' steamer.

These considerations prompted me to take a close look at Broadhurst, a man about whom little has been written. He has since proved to be an extraordinary and poorly understood colonial entrepreneur who was involved in many activities central to the development of the North of Western Australia. Broadhurst was described by his peers as "a capitalist and trader who would go out of the ordinary grooves in search of wealth", and when he died in 1905, he was eulogized in the local press as one of the 'most indefatigable and persevering exploiters of the infant industries of Western Australia in his day'. Despite this, a striking feature of Broadhurst was the 'grand' and almost naive approach he had to his business ventures, one that led him to fail in almost everything he attempted. Like many others in Western Australia, he was a man whose decisions were based on imperfect information and who suffered greatly from the problems of effective decision making at a distance. He was also a complex man, and was described in the press on the one hand, as 'a man out of 10,000', and on the other, as a villain and perpetrator of dark deeds and injustices.

This examination of Broadhurst's career will lead to a better understanding of him and of the ventures and industries in which he was involved. Many of these have aspects which are poorly understood. One of these was the settlement of the North of Western Australia by Victorian interests, such as the ill-fated Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. Another little understood development in which he was involved was the pearling industry out of Nickol Bay (Cossack), where he introduced 'diving apparatus' and used 'Malay' labour and 'volunteer' Aboriginal convicts in the pursuit of shell. At one time Broadhurst was also the leading pearler at Shark Bay. He was a pioneering steamship owner, a Member of the Legislative Council, a Justice of the Peace, an acting Resident Magistrate and was involved in fish canning and in other pursuits, such as coconut growing, shopkeeping and guano mining.

During his life in Western Australia, Broadhurst was embroiled in many controversies and was considered by the Colonial Administration to be a man 'most unfortunate in all his enterprises'. It is possibly for these reasons that he has not been previously studied in any depth.

Despite his business failures, Broadhurst was one of Western Australia's most intriguing, influential and poorly understood nineteenth century entrepreneurs. A study of him, not only leads to a greater appreciation of the ventures in which he was involved, but also to an appreciation of the value of examining the careers of those who failed.
Figure One
Charles Edward Broadhurst in 1891

Family Photograph of Charles Edward Broadhurst from the 'deed box' of family photographs and reminiscences in the possession of Mrs J Davies, copy in Battye Library (280/1) and at the Maritime Archaeology Department, W.A. Maritime Museum. Reproduced by kind permission of the Battye Library and the Broadhurst Family.
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The SS Xantho Maritime Archaeological Project, of which this thesis is one element, received very generous support, not only from the W.A Museum, but also from many sponsors and groups. Their assistance is now bearing fruit and will be acknowledged, along with that of the rest of my team, in numerous technical reports and publications and in a substantial display which is now being developed at the W.A. Maritime Museum, Fremantle.

In investigating Charles Edward Broadhurst, the unfortunate owner of the SS Xantho, I have a different group to thank.

I owe a special debt to Dr Malcolm Tull, my supervisor, to whom I owe a great deal for his encouragement and assistance. Recognition must also be made of the WA Museum's decision to allow me to use the results of my excavation and research into the SS Xantho and C.E. Broadhurst for the purposes of this thesis. To that end I thank the Director of the Museum Mr John Bannister and Dr Ian Crawford, Head of the Museum's Division of Human Studies, under whose auspices the Department of Maritime Archaeology, of which I am a member functions. I thank also my colleagues Jeremy Green, Graeme Henderson, Pat Baker, Fairlie Sawday, Brian Richards and Myra Stanbury for their support and encouragement. Graeme Henderson and Myra Stanbury, especially must be thanked as they kindly allowed me access to their notes on Guano and the SS Xantho. My Victorian colleagues Peter Harvey and Leonie Foster also provided me with assistance in those specifically Victorian aspects of my work. Susan Cox, our Departmental Secretary typed the core of my technical report on the SS Xantho project 1983-1985 and with Jeremy Green advised me in relation to the technical aspects of the presentation of this thesis.

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I thank Debbie McCarthy, my wife and partner, David Kilpatrick friend and accountant, Dr. Ian Crawford head of Division and adviser and Mrs Judy Hamersley, historian and relative of Charles Harper, Leonie Foster, Howard Pedersen, Myra Stanbury, Tom Gollop and Pat Baker for reading the text and commenting in such a constructive manner.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Tom and Irene Gollop, my parents, who sacrificed a lot to see me through. They also assisted in this project in translation of French books and documents and in the provision of an interest free loan to purchase the Macintosh 'Plus' Computer with Hard Disc and Star Printer systems use to store and print this data in draft form with a Microsoft Word processing program.
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<td>Btb</td>
<td>Believed to be</td>
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<td>CEB</td>
<td>Charles Edward Broadhurst</td>
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<td>CHPA</td>
<td>Camden Harbour Pastoral Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Col. Sec.</td>
<td>The Colonial Secretary (W.A.)</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Colonial Secretaries Office (WA)</td>
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<td>CTC</td>
<td>Claremont Teachers College</td>
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<td>DPPC</td>
<td>Denison Plains Pastoral Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRO</td>
<td>Government Resident Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMSO</td>
<td>Her Majesty's Stationary Office</td>
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<td>HP</td>
<td>Horse Power</td>
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<td>HRA</td>
<td>Historical Records of Australia</td>
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<td>Indicated Horse Power</td>
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<td>JP</td>
<td>Justice of the Peace</td>
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<td>The State Library of Victoria. La Trobe Library</td>
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<td>NHP</td>
<td>Nominal Horse Power</td>
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<td>OUP</td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
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<td>PRO</td>
<td>Public Records Office, London</td>
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<td>PS</td>
<td>Paddle Steamer</td>
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<td>The Queensland Museum</td>
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<td>RM</td>
<td>Resident Magistrate</td>
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<td>RWAHSJ</td>
<td>The Royal Western Australian Historical Society Journal</td>
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<td>SS</td>
<td>Screw (propeller driven) Steamship</td>
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<td>TCS</td>
<td>Diaries of T.C. Sholl</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

This study began in 1983 with my investigations into Western Australia’s pioneering steamship the SS Xantho which was lost at Port Gregory on the Western Australian coast in November 1872. The evidence gleaned from my excavation of the stern section of the wreck, showed that it was ill suited for the tasks that the owner Charles Edward Broadhurst had in mind when operating the vessel on this coast. The excavation and subsequent historical research also revealed that the SS Xantho was worn out and poorly engineered when it came to Western Australia. The engines, though in their time a technological breakthrough, and an acknowledged ‘masterpiece of marine engineering,’ were an anachronism when fitted to the vessel and were found to be running in reverse in order to propel the Xantho forward. This strange fact, allied to the other engineering anomalies that also became apparent in the excavation, decreased the efficiency of the SS Xantho and markedly added to component wear, thus shortening the expected life of the engine considerably.

All this presented a strange scene indeed and posed a number of unanswered questions about the competence of Broadhurst, who at the time that his vessel was being excavated was a man about whom little was known. From those considerations grew the material and rationale for this thesis which attempts to combine some of the results of my maritime archaeological examination at the wreck of the SS Xantho with the results of my associated historical enquiry, in order to understand Broadhurst and his remarkable business dealings.

3 Inquirer and Commercial News, 25/1/1873. (Inquirer in following references) See Chapter 5, SS Xantho, in which the engines are described, following.
It has been said that,

the study of shipwrecks can both alter and augment our historical understanding. Maritime Archaeologists and historians, using their own specialist skills, asking their own questions of the evidence, and pooling their knowledge, can together make a substantial contribution to both scientific knowledge and of the human past... an archaeologist engaged in historical research will concentrate more on the technical aspects of a vessel... an historian will want to put all this fact gathering into a broader contextual and interpretive framework.4

In placing the SS Xanthe into a broader context, a better understanding of Broadhurst and of the wide range of activities in which he was involved has resulted. Some of these enterprises were major elements in the development of Western Australia and Broadhurst will be seen to have been an important, and largely underestimated, influence in them all. Studies that have been undertaken on the early pioneers have tended to centre on the successful and the famous and rarely are the efforts of the unsuccessful analysed in any detail. Broadhurst was one man who failed in all, but a few, of his business ventures and this is probably part of the reason why he has not previously been analysed in any detail.

In saying that little attention has been given to him, it must be noted that Broadhurst has received public recognition in the form of a commemorative plaque inset into the foot-paths of Perth, the Capital city of Western Australia, during the the State of Western Australia’s 150th. anniversary celebrations.5 There were 151 such plaques commissioned and this particular one indicates that in 1870 Broadhurst was the most organized of the pearlers then operating in Western Australia.6


5 The plaque found inset into the footpath of St Georges Tce., Perth, in front of the Trustees Building reads : 1870 Charles Edward Broadhurst. Pearler.

6 The background to plaque was published in the form of a broadsheet by the Commerce Committee for the 150th. Anniversary Celebrations (Perth City Council).
The background to the plaque reads thus:

1870. Charles Edward Broadhurst. Pearler. The first really organised pearler in Nichol Bay [sic] was Charles Broadhurst. He bought a schooner in 1870 and used Aboriginal prisoners as divers; later he employed Malays.

Though Broadhurst richly deserves some honour for his efforts in pearling, and in many other areas besides, the accolades above, were applied in ignorance of the actual situation in 1870. He actually failed in his endeavours in that year and the technology he used in pearling was too far advanced, or too impractical, to prove successful. His failure in the pearling industry at this time is in direct contrast to the successful efforts of many who were in command of far less resources and capital than he.

In addition to the commemorative plaque inset into the pavements of Perth, Broadhurst also appears in a number of short, published and private, resumes. Though they have captured the essence of the man, these resumes, by virtue of their brevity leave much unsaid, and in all he has not been adequately assessed. Throughout them all, Broadhurst appears, as an enigmatic, hard and occasionally unsavoury man. He was clearly a mixture of good and bad and was, as his grand-daughter, Mrs Marjorie Darling has described him, a ‘pepper and salt’ personality.

Broadhurst was, along with many others, a victim of what has become known as a common problem and theme in the settlement of Australia, the ‘tyranny of distance.’ In 1865, when Broadhurst arrived on the Western Australian coast,
the voyage and receipt of mail from Europe to Fremantle took, on average, 96
days. It took an average of 21 days for a vessel to make the voyage from there
to Melbourne in Victoria, Broadhurst’s base. The mails from Fremantle to
the North of Western Australia, where he first settled after he migrated here,
were rarely less than 14 days in transit. To compound these problems, the
Swan River settlement was, in 1865, at the time he made his decision to go to
the North-West, the administrative centre for a European population of around
20,000 and an area in excess of 1,000,000 square Kilometres. The Colony
also had a coastline of around 4,350 nautical miles (8066 Kilometres) in length
with few safe or reliable harbours. Passengers travelling on steamers for
Fremantle from the Eastern States and overseas were forced to disembark at
King George Sound (Albany) on the South coast. From there they were forced
to proceed to their destination via a small coastal trader under sail, or to make
the overland journey on a road still not completely made in 1870. Thus,
communications and conditions in the Colony were very primitive when
Broadhurst arrived in Western Australia.

When Broadhurst came to Western Australia, European settlement of the vast
area north of the Murchison River, called the ‘North District’ had just begun. The European population there was less than 100 and was reducing rapidly due
to the failure of a large Victorian settlement company, the Camden Harbour
Pastoral Association. Conditions in the ‘North District’ were even more
primitive and communication was much more irregular than in the south.

In this context, Broadhurst was like many of his contemporaries, forced to
spend a great deal of time in travel, or in waiting for replies to his requests for
information or instruction. An examination of his achievements and the
difficulties under which he laboured, helps illustrate the problems of all the

11 See chapter three on Denison Plains Pastoral Company.
12 The European population in 1859 was 14,837 and in 1869 was 24,785. 1870 Census. Census of the Colony of Western Australia, taken on 31, March 1870 and also the general statistics of the Colony for the ten years ending 31/12/1869. W Knight, Comp. (Perth, Government Print, 1870) & Kerr, A., Australia’s North West. (UWA, Press, Nedlands, 1975).
13 The 'North District encompassed the entire area of the State of Western Australia, as it is known today, stretching north from the Murchison River and east to the Northern Territory border.
European pioneers and of all those who attempted to exploit the natural resources of the North-West. It also leads to a greater understanding of the processes involved in these industries and of the difficulty in making informed decisions at a distance. Such considerations characterized the migration of European people to the Swan River Colony (Western Australia) in the late 1820s and it was a feature of the influx of the Victorians and others into the North District of Western Australia, a generation later, in the 1860s.

Figure 2

Western Australia, showing the ‘North District’ and those areas relevant to Broadhurst.
It will be shown, that by not giving due attention to Charles Edward Broadhurst, one of Western Australia's most unsuccessful entrepreneurs, historians have passed over one of the Colony's most active and interesting men.\textsuperscript{14}

He was a pastoralist, pearler, Member of the Legislative Council, fish canner, coconut grower, steamship owner, employer of 'Malays'\textsuperscript{15} and Aboriginal Convicts and a large scale 'guano'\textsuperscript{16} collector. He employed 'volunteer' aboriginal convicts in the pearling industry and introduced 'diving apparatus' or the 'Hard Hat'\textsuperscript{17} to the industry in Australia. He was however, remarkably unsuccessful in most of these enterprises.

Unfortunately Broadhurst did not keep a diary and his personal letters were not kept after his death. In order to follow him through his various business enterprises, it has been necessary to rely on the diaries and reminiscences of others, on official correspondence and notes, on the press, and on the archaeological analyses conducted at the wreck of his steamship.

It will be shown in the study of these sources that Broadhurst was remarkably naive and, as a result, came to make many economically unjustifiable decisions and to embark on many impractical or unnecessarily 'grand' schemes. His naivety and his impractical approach may have been a direct result of his privileged background and upbringing as the younger son of a very rich cotton manufacturing family of high social standing. This combined with his Eton or Harrow education,\textsuperscript{18} and life as a gentleman farmer in

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Entrepreneur}: There are many definitions. Payne, P.L., 'British Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth Century', \textit{Studies in Economic History}, (Macmillan, London, 1986), pp.13,14., claims that in defining the term, 'economists have stressed innovation, risk-bearing, organisation and leadership' and that 'few students of economic history would fail to recognise' that the entrepreneur 'organised production...brought together the capital (his or somebody elses) and the labour force, selected the most appropriate site for operations, chose the particular technologies of production to be employed...bargained for raw materials and found outlets for the finished product.'

\textsuperscript{15} 'Malays', a term, variously though incorrectly, used in the 19th. century to generally describe those people inhabiting the islands to the North of Australia. It clearly encompasses, Malaysians, Singaporese, Timorese 'Kupangers, Coepangers' [sic], Indonesians, often 'Manillamen' (sic) or Phillipinos. Used here in the nineteenth Century context except where there is a direct reference to the origin of the person under consideration, e.g., Manillamen, Kupangers, Solorese, etc.

\textsuperscript{16} Guano: a form of fertilizer harvested from bird droppings and their remains. For a short general account see. Stanbury, M., 'Guano - A Forgotten Fertiliser', \textit{Our Land.} (CSBP & Farmers 1982), September, pp.7-10.

\textsuperscript{17} 'Hard Hat'. A colloquial term to describe a form of 'Diving Apparatus' in vogue up until the 1960s. This involved the use of a helmet into which compressed air was pumped to the diver from the surface. The diver also usually wore a suit and heavy boots. Described and illustrated in background to pearling. Cha. 4.

Victoria, to give him a poor grounding in his chosen fields of activity in Western Australia. In this context, he continually failed with ‘grand’ impractical schemes and on a ‘grand’ scale, when others with a more pragmatic approach succeeded. The contrasts between him and his successful contemporaries in the north such as the locally born and bred Charles Harper, the very successful Walter Padbury, who was virtually orphaned as a young boy, L.C Burges, a controversial but successful pastoralist, his fellow Victorian pastoralists E.T Hooley, a member of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, and the diarist A. R. Richardson, are striking in this regard.

Under the tutelage of his elder brother, Broadhurst became a successful ‘squatter’ in Victoria. In this capacity he was attracted, as were many other Victorians at the time, to the the ‘North District’ of Western Australia. This was a vast area, then encompassing the entire region of Western Australia northwards from the Murchison River. He initially joined the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association but elected to stay in Victoria when that Company left for Western Australia. A short while later, in 1865, he departed Victoria with his six months pregnant wife, Eliza and their two young boys, as a member of one of many Western Australian settlement schemes, the disastrous Denison Plains Pastoral Company, in which he was a Director, shareholder and manager. Broadhurst’s involvement with this Company was to be his first major business failure in Western Australia.

Little is known of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, either in Western Australia to where it was bound, or in Victoria from whence it came. When the Denison Plains Pastoral Company collapsed, it was quickly forgotten in

23 (i) Richardson, A.R., *Diary Written in Connection With the Early DeGrey Company Doings*, (1864-66) Typescript, 310a, Battye Lib. (after wards Richardson Diary, BL).
24 From 1836, the term ‘squatter’ came to designate a 'stockman who settled on crown lands without any of it passing into his ownership...the progressive stock owner beyond the boundaries...a member of a class including practically every man of means in the colony.', Roberts, S.H., *The Squatting Age in Australia. 1835-1847*, 1935, (Melbourne University Press, 1970 repr.), pp. 66-68.
Victoria and has not been examined in that State. The real leaders of the Company in Melbourne quietly disappeared from the limelight when the venture failed, and their part in the debacle has hitherto been forgotten. On the other hand Broadhurst, as the chief visible representative of the Company in Western Australia, received much of the blame for the collapse. The Denison Plains Pastoral Company has been, and still is, severely criticized and ridiculed by the Western Australian historians who, almost without exception, have relied on the word of others for their material on the Company.²⁵

This study, though centring on Broadhurst, will be the first known attempt at analysing, the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. In doing so, Broadhurst’s involvement in the Company will be analysed and will add to the available knowledge on him and on the subject of European settlement of North-West of Western Australia.

Broadhurst’s second major failure, that in pearling out of Nickol Bay,²⁶ will be shown to have been due to a number of wide ranging factors, most of which were due to his peculiar make up which caused him to experiment with unproven methods. The use of the ‘diving apparatus’ in the industry is an indication of Broadhurst’s creativity and of his innovative, and often impractical, approach to the labour and other problems which then beset the North-West pearling industry. Further evidence of this almost unique approach appears in his employment of ‘volunteer’ Aboriginal convict labour, from the Rottnest Island Establishment. He used them in the pearling industry when European convicts were prohibited,²⁷ and when others were beginning to

²⁵ See Chapter three, section on ‘Western Australian Attitudes to the Victorian Companies’, following. Modern historians have not conducted their own research on the Company and have come to rely on secondary sources. Part of the reason is that the records in Victoria contain little on such events. This is due to fact that the move to Western Australia was only one small part of a much larger movement throughout Australia and overseas to New Zealand. Part of the reason also lies in the lack of an index to the Victorian newspapers of the time such as that existing in W.A. at the Battye Library. This has led scholars to baulk at the need to sift through the Victorian papers themselves.

²⁶ Called Nickol's Bay by the explorer P.P. King on 4/3/1818 and Nickol Bay on modern Admiralty Charts. King, P. P., Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western coasts of Australia Performed between the years 1818 and 1822., 1827, (Australian Facsimile editions No.3., Adelaide Library Board of S.A. 1969), p. 52. The area also appears as Nichol and Nicol Bay in contemporary and modern accounts.

²⁷ Regulations for the Disposal of Waste Lands in the Northern District of Western Australia. No. 26 BL: 'No convict or person holding a ticket of leave or person under sentence or order of transportation ...shall be introduced or allowed to remain in the North District.' Though clearly applying to 'convicts' in general, the use of Aboriginal convicts was allowed albeit with some reservations and concern. See section on Denison Plains Pastoral Company following.
resort to violence to obtain the services of the local Aborigines. He was also one of the first to use indentured 'Malay' labour in the pearling industry, when the use of the 'volunteer' Aboriginal convicts proved unsuccessful. He lost many golden opportunities through his willingness (or need) to experiment with such men as divers, rather than to round up the local Aborigines, as was the prevailing custom. His reasons for not utilizing the 'local' Aborigines in any number, are not known and there are enough indications to the contrary, not to categorize him as a philanthropist in this regard. Further to this ambivalent aspect of his character, he was to complain of the mistreatment of Aboriginal women and to display acts of kindness to some of the Aborigines under his control.

The SS Xan thro, his third major failure, was the first steamship to be operated out of the colony and was a failure, not in the idea behind the 'speculation', but in the actual choice of vessel. He made a capital outlay in excess of £4500 in purchasing the vessel and in doing so took a completely different economic tack to all the others involved in the pearling industry and coastal trade at the time. The SS Xan thro was used, not only in pearling, as a transport for 'Malay' workers, and as a link to his interests in the North and at Shark bay, but for the purposes of transporting shell to Batavia (Jakarta) and as a powerful, and successful political lever with which to wrest concessions from a very sympathetic colonial government. His pioneering attempts to utilize the vessel in the pearling industry and in the coastal trade are worthy of note, despite being dismissed in most accounts. The SS Xan thro was nevertheless, another of his business failures, and was a direct result of his 'grand' and impractical approach.

By virtue of his failures with the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, in pearling with the 'Diving Apparatus,' Aboriginal convicts and 'Malays' and

29 An indication of the magnitude of that capital outlay in modern and contemporary terms appears in Appendix One. This is a compilation of wages paid in the 1870s such that a comparison with modern equivalents can be had. The use of modern monetary equivalents such as the dollar is not considered a suitable substitute.
then with the SS *Xanths*, Broadhurst came to be seen by his contemporaries as a dubious character and business failure.

After these losses he commenced pearling at Shark Bay and there he was to receive the greatest public acclaim for his spectacular successes. In like manner to the public clamour that greeted the arrival of his steamship a few years earlier, he was eulogized in the press as a 'man out of 10,000'30 and was appointed to the Legislative Council by the retiring Governor in recognition of his capacities and knowledge of the North.

Soon after this much publicized success, he was again brought down to the depths of another failure. His humiliation on this occasion, was due to his failure to pay the 'Malay' labourers in his employ. He was made an example on the express orders of the new Governor, who was keen to appease his superiors in London in the light of the general labour problems in the pearling industry. It will be argued that Broadhurst was, in effect, a scapegoat. Though deserving of criticism, he was, in comparison with others, much less of a villain than indicated by this particular incident. On the available evidence he does not deserve to have been associated, as he was, with those who actually committed atrocities in the pastoral industry and in the pursuit of shell.

He was a man of the times and clearly saw that people with a dark skin were inferior beings. Despite this he treated all of his men well in regards to their housing and food, but often found difficulty paying his dues to men of all races and from all stations in life and was continually being sued in court by them and his creditors. Such an apparently hard outlook could probably be traced to his privileged background, or to the the harrowing time he spent as Director and manager of the Denison Plains Company at Nickol Bay.31 There he held the company together for almost a year, despite the threats of physical violence, undisguised hatred and almost total isolation which he and his suffering wife Eliza and family endured at the time. The strength of his resolve

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30 *Inquirer*, 29/1874.
31Nickol Bay is the term used here to refer, not only to the Bay carrying that name on the Admiralty Charts, but also of the hinterland in the the region of present day Port Walcott, Roebourne, Karratha, Dampier, Wickham, Cossack and adjoining stations. This mirrors contemporary usage. Other references to the area appear in the contemporary local press under the headings Port Walcott, Cossack and Roebourne. See Figure 12.
and his ability to influence others, surfaces in this instance and his powers of persuasion, charm and social graces will be shown to have been substantial.

Broadhurst went on to try many other activities with varying degrees of success, both during and after, the failures above. He finally achieved a good measure of success, at the age of sixty, soon after he obtained sole rights to the very lucrative Abrolhos Islands guano trade. Possibly as a result of his age, but more likely as a result of the realization that, though he had the entrepreneurial flair required to establish such a venture, he was not necessarily the best person to be responsible for the day to day running of the concern, he left the management of the guano industry to his son Florance and his partner, A. MacNeil. His son then developed the business into an extremely profitable venture and within a very short time far surpassed his father as a successful businessman. Broadhurst, and his wife Eliza, departed the state in 1895 and retired to Bournemouth, England in relative comfort, with their large family safely provided for by a number of Family Trusts that illustrate Broadhurst's care for his family and desire to see them well provided for.

One of the complicating factors in assessing Broadhurst, was the changes that occurred in him as he learned to make the transition from the accepted mould of the early entrepreneur who handled the functions of capitalist, financier, works manager and salesman, to one who successfully devolved responsibility. In learning to effectively devolve responsibility he came to rely in an inordinate amount on his managers and yet seemed unable to ensure that they were always of sufficient quality, or that they had the necessary skills, required to succeed. He then failed to monitor or modify the behaviour of those who were unsuitable, partly due to the distances over which he operated, but also due to his apparent lack of sensitivity on such matter.

All of this leads to a greater understanding of early days in the North-West and to a greater appreciation of the processes leading to the utilization of the natural resources of Western Australia. It also highlights the value of

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analysing, not only the careers of the famous and successful, but also those of the relative failures amongst us.
Chapter Two

Broadhurst's Life in England and Victoria

The aim of this chapter is to examine Broadhurst's background and social standing before he came to Western Australia. In showing that it was by no means a poor one and that he was also quite successful in Victoria, it raises the question why he and others like him went to the North of Western Australia in the early 1860s.

In the light of Broadhurst's move to Western Australia and in his subsequent expenditure of relatively large amounts of capital there, the following will show that, should it have been necessary, Broadhurst was in a position to receive financial backing from a very well established extended family group.

This chapter will also show that Broadhurst had quite a different background to many of his colleagues who ventured to the north of Western Australia. Such a privileged background, may indeed, have been a major cause in Broadhurst's inability to succeed in business and may have caused him to rely inordinately on his managers some of whom were poorly chosen. It also appears to have been the reason why he was to develop 'grand' and impractical schemes in the North-West and to become easy prey for the unscrupulous. His position and background as a well educated, gentleman in the colonies may have also been the source of the attitude he was to display towards his creditors of all races when in 'straightened' circumstances and his frequent appearances in court for non payment of debt.1

In order to illustrate these points, the chapter is divided into three sections,

(i) a brief examination of Broadhurst's family background,

(ii) a short analysis of Broadhurst's life as a farmer, squatter and horse breeder in Victoria and

(iii) a background to Eliza Broadhurst who he later married.

1 An account of Broadhurst's court appearances or uncontested summons appears in appendix two.
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(i) Broadhurst’s Family Background and Life in England

The known history of the Broadhurst family dates back to an Irishman, one John Broadhurst, an Irish linen merchant. In 1816, he married the widow of a business partner Elizabeth Henson and together they had four children, another John, Daniel, Margaret and Sarah. John Broadhurst Snr. based his business in Cannon Street Manchester and resided in the family seat at nearby Swinton House.2

Figure 3

The Broadhurst’s family home at Swinton.3

John Snr. died in 1826 and his second son Daniel, by then noted in the local business directories as a ‘Textile Merchant,’ moved into the family home by

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3From Brummitt, op. cit.
right of succession, as his elder brother had apparently died. An indication of the relative success of the Tootal/Broadhursts at this stage can be gauged from an examination of the extent of the family home Swinton House and the surrounding grounds. 4 (figure 3).

Daniel Broadhurst, the new incumbent at Swinton, married Sarah Tootal of a noted Yorkshire farming family and they had seven children. One of these was Charles Edward Broadhurst the subject of this study. The already strong Tootal/Broadhurst family ties were further enhanced by business partnerships such as that between Sarah’s brother, Edward Tootal, with one of her sons, Henry in the well known Manchester firm of Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee in 1851. The process continued after members of the two families migrated to Australia and throughout the history of the Tootal/Broadhurst family, there is a continuing thread, of assistance being lent to the various junior members, in the form of business and other arrangements. Charles Edward was one to benefit from such arrangements and was to continue the process in his own right.

The Broadhurst family tree is reproduced in figure 4.5 From this it can be seen that Charles Edward Broadhurst was born on 26 April 1826 in Manchester, the sixth of 7 children. From the family reminiscences it appears that Charles and the other children received a good education at the leading schools of the time, possibly Eton or Harrow and were not lacking in social position or the social graces as their various future activities and marriages show. The eldest child, John (1812-1904), for example, became a silk buyer and eventually came to Australia for his health. The next Robert Henson (1814-1897), migrated to Victoria in 1834 and squatted near Kilmore, a small town just north of Melbourne, where he proved most successful. Elizabeth the next child, (b.1817) married a banker and went to live in India. The next child, Francis Marris (1820-1871) married a cotton spinner of Glasgow at the age of forty two. From an illustration of her family home, ‘Killamont’, (See Section

4 Ibid., p.2. Swinton House has since been demolished and an illustration not found.
5 Literary Cuttings... From all Sources. By Eliza Broadhurst, wife of Charles Edward; also containing a family tree produced by Jane Brummitt of the Broadhurst family in 1985. Reproduced with permission of the Broadhurst family.
on SS Xantho following, page 259), she was in a very good financial and social position. The next child, Harry Tootal Broadhurst, (b. 1822), managed the family textile factory, Tootal, Broadhurst Lee and Company in Manchester. Charles, the subject of this study, followed, and the last born was Mary Louisa. She was born in 1828 and was married in 1871 to Sir Joseph Whitworth. He is a man, remembered, even today, as the engineer, who in 1841 proposed a standard for screw threads and who in 1850 was recognized as a leading engineer and Britain’s leading tool-maker. His fortune and social standing, by the time he married Mary Louisa Broadhurst were very substantial, and further illustrate the social standing of the Tootal/Broadhursts in England.

Like many younger sons of the post ‘Napoleonic War’ period, with no prospects of an inheritance or of a commission in the services, consideration was given to the possibility of the young Charles Edward Broadhurst migrating to the new colonies when his formal schooling had finished. Many younger sons in this situation were sent to join older relatives in the colonies in order to further their education and their prospects. This is also a common thread throughout the history of the Tootal/Broadhursts in the nineteenth century.

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6 This is of relevance to the purchase of the SS Xantho in that she died while Broadhurst was in England and that he may have been a beneficiary of her will. See chapter 5 on SS Xantho.
John (M. 1786) Elizabeth
Pedlar of Merchandise

John

Daniel = Sarah Tootal
M. 1811
Died 6/1859

Margaret

Sarah = Henry Tootal
N. 1818
Died 10/1865

3 children

Alfred Dowley

Robert = Elizabeth Beveridge (1814-1897)

Elizabeth (1817-1861) married Alex Patteson
banker in India

Harry Tootal (1820-1871) managed cotton firm
W. Manchester

Francis Morris died at Glasgow
1/10/1871

7 children

Daniel

John 1812-1904
Silk buyer; came to Australia for health reasons

Mary Louise (1828-1896) Married Joseph Whitworth (later Sir) on 12/4/1871

Charles Edward = Eliza Howes (1826-1905) (1839-1899)
M. 22/6/1860

(From: Brummitt, J. Broadhurst family tracings)

Florence Constantine (1861-1909) b. Kilmore, 7/7/61

Charles Henson (1862-1899) b. Kilmore, 1/9/1862

Sarah Eleanor (1865-1948) b. Matilond, R., WA 16/7/65

Percival Henry (1867-1945) b. Roebourne, WA, 4/2/1867


Ernest Edward (1871-1872) b. Perth

Reginald Arthur (1876-1953) b. Perth 2/5/1876

Figure 4

The Broadhurst-Henson Family Tree
(ii) Broadhurst, Victorian Farmer, Squatter and Horse Breeder

The Broadhurst family records show, that at 17 years of age, Charles Edward emigrated to Victoria in 1843 aboard the vessel *Amiga*. There he joined his 29 year old brother, Robert Henson Broadhurst and his cousin Alfred Dowley Tootal at Kilmore, 50 kilometres north of Melbourne.

About this time, Robert married an Eliza Beveridge, who was presented a few years after the marriage, with the lease of her father’s station, *The Dean Run*. This was large by any standards, having an area of 5961 Hectares, on which ran 500 head of cattle and 3000 sheep. In 1848, around the time Eliza Beveridge was given the ‘Dean Run,’ her husband, Robert Henson Broadhurst and his cousin Alfred Dowley Tootal, purchased the lease to the adjoining *Long Hills* station. This was 67 square Kilometres in area and consisted of ‘the usual buildings of station homesteads in those days, huts, sheds, sheepyards etc.’ The station was renamed *Bellvue* and later renamed *Swinton* after the family home in England. In September 1850, the cousins purchased in joint names, an area of 259 Hectares (640 acres) in the south east corner of the Station by ‘pre-emptive right’, indicating that they had some access to capital at that time.

This area appears in figure five, alongside the Dean Run, which also has an area clearly marked ‘Broadhurst’s pre-emptive right’. The purchase of this ‘right’, indicates further the family’s access to capital at this stage. As the ‘pre-emptive rights’ shown in figure five were only a small fraction of the ‘Dean Run’ and ‘Swinton’ combined, the stations were clearly substantial and occupied a large portion of the country in the vicinity of Kilmore and the hamlet of Wallan, near the ‘Big Hill’, (Figure 6).

The Tootall/Broadhurst’s were then major landowners in the district and their situation was described in 1855 in glowing terms.

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10 Weldon, op. cit., p.1.
11 The various records disagree on the date.
13 Pre-emptive right. The right to purchase land held on lease.
The house...stands on a lofty mount. Within were books and other signs of a refined life... two gentlemen, a lady, children, and men and women servants\(^14\).

Charles Edward Broadhurst lived with his older relatives and also worked hard at establishing himself at Swinton. By the time he was thirty years of age he was the owner of a ‘freehold’ block of land situated on the border of the Kilmore and Dalhousie land divisions through which the family station ran.\(^15\) The source of his funds is not known. He turned 21 years of age in 1847, his father died in April 1859 and his mother expired in October 1865. Broadhurst may have also found himself a beneficiary of these estates and thus acquired enough capital to purchase the land. Alternatively he may have worked his way into a financial position after nearly thirteen years working on his relative’s holding.

Thus, though the family and other records, including those of the Kilmore Historical Society, differ on specific details of the extent of the land, it is clear that, by the late 1850s Charles Edward was a landowner in his own right and may have purchased a substantial share of the family station. The following excerpt from a Kilmore newspaper adds credence to that belief and attests to the hard work and money that the Broadhurst’s put into developing the family station.

Messrs. R.H. and C.E. Broadhurst owners of Swinton and The Dean stations Bylands who at great expense cleared a greater portion of the former property 50 years ago and who subsequently disposed of the estates......\(^16\)

After 13 years as a pastoralist and grazier, Charles Edward Broadhurst would have been well versed as a ‘gentleman farmer.’ In this calling he was apparently hard working and well respected, as indicated by his being asked to be chairman at a dinner following the Kilmore Farmer’s Show in April 1865.


\(^{15}\) 1856/7, *Victorian Electoral Roll*, State Library of Victoria, Latrobe University.

\(^{16}\) Excerpt supplied by the Kilmore historical Society from an undated and unnamed newspaper clipping dated in their estimate to the 1890s. This reference cannot be checked due to the lack of an index to the Victorian papers.
On this particular occasion he was toasted for his 'exertions in promoting the interests' of the Kilmore Agricultural Association,17 and at the inaugural meeting of the Kilmore Agricultural Society in May 1858, he was one of the Committee Members.18

Figure 5
One of the Broadhurst's 640 acre Pre-emptive rights showing Kilmore and the 'Big Hill' where Weena is situated.19

17 Kilmore Examiner, 18/4/1856.
19From the Kilmore Historical Society & Brummitt, op. cit.
Figure 6

Those areas of the Dean Run and Swinton purchased by the Broadhurst Family. 20

20 ibid.
(iii) Eliza Broadhurst, Nee Howes

It was in this period that Charles Edward met Eliza Howes, (figure 18), who was born on 31 October 1839, the ninth child of fourteen born to Irish School Master, Florance Howes and his second wife Eliza, (Nee. Graham, a direct descendant of William the third Earl of Inchiquin).21

Eliza Howes, descendant of nobility, unfortunately expired at Londonderry in November 1850, just two weeks after the birth of her fourteenth child.22 Howes, with six surviving children, married again, this time to Mary T.S. Flemming, the eldest daughter of Beecher Flemming, Esq., of New Court, Skilbourne, County of Cork Ireland.23

In the meantime, Dilmond John, Howes’ eldest son, graduated as a Civil Engineer from Trinity College Dublin and had later married. Some time around 1850, he and his close friend and medical student, John Singleton and their young families, followed Singleton’s brother William, who was the founding Vicar of the Kilmore Parish, to Victoria. Dilmond Howes then tried his hand as an Engineer on the gold fields, before establishing himself as a surveyor, bridge and road builder in the Warrnambool and Port Fairy region. His friend, Dr Singleton, opened a pioneering practice in the region and was soon in a good financial position. Dilmond Howes was apparently in a similar fortunate situation, and his two storied, bluestone, family home, Talara, which still stands at Port Fairy, bears ample testimony to the success and standing of his family. (Figure 7) When Dilmond Howes’ first wife, died in 1860, leaving him with two children, he married his friend Singleton’s youngest daughter, thus further strengthening the family ties between the Howes’ and the Singletons.

21 Brummitt, op. cit.
22 Howes’ first wife died two months after giving birth in 1822, and his second wife, ibid.
23 Ibid.
Some time around 1860, Florance Howes brought the rest of his children, including Eliza and his third wife from Ireland to Victoria where they joined this well established, financially successful and supportive extended family group. They occupied a house in Gipps Street, Belfast (now Port Fairy) and later the family was accused of benefiting from Dilmond Howes powerful position as engineer. It was claimed that 'shire funds were spent in supporting Mr Howes relatives and subsidizing his dependants.'

Florance Howes then continued in his career as a teacher. Advertisements appear in the local paper in early 1866 for a school named *Belfast Grammar School* situated in James Street. Howes was the principal and is noted in the advertisement as 'formerly Master of an Endowed School in the Home

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24 From a postcard supplied by Jane Brummitt, op. cit.
25 *Banner of Belfast*, 21/2/1866.
Country'. Instruction at the school was designed to prepare the students for entry to Melbourne University, the Civil Service, or Public life. Included in the curriculum were, instruction in the scriptures, French, German, English, writing, arithmetic, bookkeeping, philosophy, Classical history, geometry, algebra and geography. Both boarding and day scholars, were catered for.

In 1867 Howes, who was also the Secretary of the Belfast Hospital and Benevolent Fund, took the part-time position of Librarian to the Port Fairy Mechanics Institute at a salary of £50 per annum, beating five other applicants to the post. In July of 1868, (the year his third wife, Mary, died) he resigned. In July 1869, he contracted bronchitis and died, aged 71.

From the indications above Eliza Howes was well educated, and is known to have been a talented musician. As such, she would have easily fitted into an eminent circle of clergy, doctors, civil engineers, teachers, society ladies and landed gentry, such as that commanded by her well positioned extended family group.

She and Charles Edward Broadhurst, 34 year old ‘farmer’ and ‘settler’, were married on 22 June 1860 at Woodford a small village north of Warrnambool. They then moved back to the Kilmore region and resided at Weena near Wallan-Wallan, at the ‘Big Hill’ adjoining the family station Swinton. (See Figure 6)

26 Banner of Belfast, 10/1/1866.
27 Belfast Gazette, 12/1/1866 and letter from Ms P. Egan (Port Fairy Historical Society), quoting local papers of 23/2/66.
28 Ibid.
29 Howes was advised that the library committee decided it was necessary to have someone full time on the premises, due to the loss of a number of publications from the shelves. They advised him of their intention to seek applications for the position in the new year. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of the Port Fairy Mechanics Institute Library, 28/7/1868 & 29/12/1868, supplied by the Port Fairy Historical Society.
30 This surfaces in the diaries of R.J. & T.C. Sholl at Roebourne Western Australia, see chapter on Denison Plains in establishing a school.
31 Victorian Electoral Roll of 1856/1857, LaTrobe Library, Melbourne.
33 A letter from Mr Hugh Guthrie of ‘Weena’, Kent River, W.A. to the Broadhurst family historian, Jane Brummitt of 26/10/1986 however, shows that his family owned the property from 1856-1906 and that he believes that the Broadhurts leased ‘Weena’ in Victoria. Ms. Brummitt and the author have been collaborating in an exchange of information.
Family records indicate that the Broadhursts travelled to India in the early 1860s, where they had relatives.\textsuperscript{34} There, there they engaged in the potentially profitable trade in Army ‘remounts.’ According to family records, they also returned with an ‘Indian’ servant, who spent the rest of his life in their employ.\textsuperscript{35}

Little further has been found on this chapter of Broadhurst’s business life, though in 1865, Broadhurst took a pure bred ‘Arab’ stallion, ‘Kochlani’, that he had imported the previous year with him to Western Australia.\textsuperscript{36} Thus it appears that the Broadhursts were in India in 1864 and that Broadhurst would have had a notion of commencing, or continuing, a horse stud with ‘Kochlani’ in Victoria. All indications are that the land on which he was based at Weena was, and is, admirably suited to the task.\textsuperscript{37}

As indicated, he later took the horse to Western Australia and may have had thoughts of entering the horse trade there. Indications from Western Australia are that the horse trade in that State grew from a nil return in 1870 to the export of 427 horses at £12 each to a total of £5124 in 1872. The trade was worth almost twice that figure in 1876.\textsuperscript{38} Despite the potentially lucrative returns, it appears that Broadhurst did not try his hand in serious horse breeding in Western Australia. It is recorded in 1880 for example, that Maitland Brown was the only colonist there to make breeding of horses for the Indian market a speciality, having stables near Geraldton housing 6 sires and 200 mares.\textsuperscript{39} These were landed in India at a contract price of £45 each. Broadhurst’s reasons for not entering the horse trade in Western Australia are not known. Broadhurst apparently paid £500 for ‘Kochlani’, but may have misjudged or inflated the worth of his stallion. One of his colleagues in

\textsuperscript{34} Brummitt, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{35} The servant appears more ‘Malay’ than Indian in appearance, and may have joined the Broadhurst’s during the pearling phase of their activities rather than at this period.
\textsuperscript{36} The horse, an Arab ‘entire’ (stallion) named ‘Kochlani’ was purchased by Broadhurst in India at a cost ‘upwards of £500’. W. Harvey, Agent to the Denison Plains Pastoral Company Ltd., to the Editor, Perth Gazette and W.A. Times, published 16/11/1866. In following references, Perth Gazette.
\textsuperscript{37} The land was recently purchased by Robert Holmes a’ Court, a man acknowledged in 1988 as one of Australia’s richest men, for use as a horse stud.
\textsuperscript{38} Nicolay, G., \textit{The Handbook of Western Australia}. (Government Print, Perth, 1880), pp. 26,111.
\textsuperscript{39} ibid.
Western Australia Dr. Baynton, was to later claim that it had an ‘intrinsic value’ of a figure of around £60. The figure of £500 is not inconsistent with the prices paid for similar animals however. 40

Thus, Broadhurst’s (or Baynton’s) capacity as a judge of horseflesh is bought into question, especially as Broadhurst does not appear to have made a huge success of the horse breeding trade out of Victoria. Had he been successful, he may have been less inclined to make the move from the family station in Victoria to the wilds of North Western Australia especially as the gold-rushes of the 1850s initially bought ‘boom’ conditions for the Victorian squatters.41

Conclusion

It is clear from the above that Charles Edward Broadhurst had a privileged background and that he, and his wife Eliza Howes, had a good social standing in Victoria. The indications from his purchase of land in Victoria and in the purchase of the pure bred Arab stallion ‘Kochlani’ are, that the Broadhurst’s themselves were reasonably ‘well off’. Further evidence of his good financial position is the possibility that he kept a ‘town house’ in Melbourne.42 Broadhurst was also a well respected member of the Kilmore community and showed evidence, in his efforts in forming the local Agricultural Society, of the flair and entrepreneurial ability he was to display in Western Australia.

An illustration of Kilmore in the period appears in figure 8 and in viewing it, one is left to ponder on the Broadhurst’s decision to leave green fields, fine society and family group for the wilds of North-West Australia.

40 Baynton to his father from the Nicol River station, N.W Australia, 20/2/1866, published in the Perth Gazette 8/6/1866. The price William Harvey claimed that Broadhurst paid for the horse is not unrealistic. The Withnell’s, a well known family in North-west Australia, paid £300 for a Clydesdale stallion in the same period. See Section on Denison Plains Pastoral Company following.
41 Monie, J., (Victorian History and Politics. European Settlement to 1939; a Survey of the Literature, (La Trobe University, Melbourne, 1982), p.231.
42 The addresses given for him in his application for permission to proceed to the North-West as a part of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, show that in 1864/5, at least, the Broadhurst’s also resided at Saltwater River, Flemington (Maribynong) in Melbourne itself. See section on Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and Denison Plains Pastoral Company following.
The decision is made the more remarkable when it is considered that they had two young sons and that Eliza was six months pregnant when they left. The indications from the composition of the many settlement schemes and family groups formed to take up land in Western Australia are that the latter was a product of the times, when women followed their men irrespective of the problems caused by their advanced pregnancy or the difficulties of having children at foot.

The reasons why the Broadhurst's made the apparently strange move from Victoria to the West will become evident in the following chapter and they will be seen to be directly related to the post goldrush ‘push’ for new land to the detriment of the Victorian ‘squatting’ families.

43From a tourist brochure promoting Kilmore and the surrounding country.
Chapter 3

Broadhurst a Controversial Pastoralist in the North of Western Australia

Central to an understanding of Broadhurst and his later activities, is an analysis of his involvement in the process of European settlement in the north of Western Australia and, more specifically, of his role in the little known, Melbourne based, Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the controversial Camden Harbour Pastoral Association.

He became a shareholder in both of these 'large', and poorly understood, Victorian companies in an attempt to take advantage of the generous provisions of the 1862 Regulations pertaining to European settlement of the north of Western Australia.¹ There has, however, been very little written on the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, which Broadhurst joined as a shareholder and in which he became a Director and 'Manager' or 'Superintendent of Stock and Stations'.² Little appears on the Company in Western Australia and even less is recorded in Victoria, where the Company has been largely forgotten and is dismissed in a few words in all commentaries. That which has been written on the Company in Western Australia, is limited and will be seen to have been affected by a parochial attitude that has resulted in the efforts of the Company members being unfairly derided and, subsequently, inadequately assessed. For this reason, the Denison Plains Company will be examined in detail in an attempt to provide the groundwork for an objective assessment of Broadhurst and his involvement in the Company. In an attempt to understand the Company, it is also necessary to trace it from the very beginnings. In doing so, it becomes necessary to examine the process of European settlement of the

¹ Government Gazette. 23/12/1862, No., 53.
² William Harvey to Col. Sec. 24/6/1865, CSR, Acc. 36, Vol., 566/83. BL. (In following references CSR, 566/83, BL).
North of Western Australia and to ascertain why Broadhurst made the decision to migrate there from the relative security and comfort of Victoria. In the process, some understanding will be had of the reason why, one notable feature of the ‘rush’ to the North-West of Western Australia in the 1860s, was that the ‘majority’ of the Europeans who went there, were from Victoria.³

Though severely criticized by contemporary and modern Western Australian historians for venturing there, the shareholders of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, such as Broadhurst, will be seen to have had very good reason to do so and that their decisions were based on good exploration data and sound reasoning. The exploration data on which they based their decision, will be shown to have been superior to that which saw the foundation of the Swan River Colony, (Western Australia) and in this context, it will be shown that much of the criticism that the Victorians have received from the Western Australian historians for venturing to the North has been unfairly applied. This bias will become especially evident, when it is shown that those pioneers who were highly praised by the Western Australian historians ventured to the North on precisely the same evidence as that relied upon by Broadhurst and his colleagues.

In studying the two companies and their antecedents, a William Harvey of Melbourne, will be shown to be the agent and chief promoter of both.⁴ He will be shown to have had a vision, not unlike that of the founder of the Swan River Colony, Captain James Stirling. Harvey saw Camden Harbour and the Denison Plains settlements as part of his plans for a new self governing pastoral and agricultural empire in the North of Western Australia. Camden Harbour was to become the ‘new’ gateway to Australia after the failure of earlier attempts to settle the region near present day Darwin. Telegraphic, mail and steamer links


⁴ The historians do not mention him by name and his part in the matter has not hitherto been appreciated. The only modern reference found connecting William Harvey to the two companies has been Riatti, H. J., A History of the Development of the NW, of WA., (Teacher's Higher Certificate Thesis, ND) p. 24.
and steamer links were to be established to other ports such as Batavia (Jakarta), Singapore, Surabaya and ultimately Europe. The Denison Plains settlement further inland, was to be the beginnings of a chain of overland pastoral and telegraphic links between Camden Harbour, Adelaide and ultimately Melbourne and Sydney.

Figure 9

A contemporary illustration of Australia and the settlements to the North showing the geographical advantages of Camden Harbour.5

There has been a complete lack of understanding of Harvey’s role in the settlement of the ‘North District’ of Western Australia and of the lengths to

5Description of Camden Harbour, its Climate and Adjoining Country. With Map. Including a Prospectus of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association. (Fergusson and Moore. Melbourne, 1864), University of Melbourne Archive.
which he was prepared to go to secure his dreams of establishing and possibly
controlling a ‘North Australian’ colony. The lies he was prepared to perpetrate
to achieve those ends will be seen to make the efforts of other similar
‘charlatans’ pale into insignificance. It will be shown however, that those
deceived by William Harvey and his associates were clearly gullible. For this
failing, Broadhurst and his many Victorian colleagues must accept full
personal responsibility and bear the often voiced contempt of their
contemporaries and the criticism of the historians. It must be remembered,
however, that they had no easy means of checking on the claims made by the
‘promoters’. In this context, it should be noted that the exploration data used as
the basis on which the ‘North District’ was opened up for settlement and which
led to Harvey’s schemes and the decision of Broadhurst and many others to
venture there, was not only superior to that which saw the formation of most
other settlement schemes in Western Australia, but it appeared in highly
complimentary accounts from apparently impeccable sources. These accounts
were synthesized in the local press and further summarized in the various
pamphlets and Company prospectuses into an even more attractive form. These
served, by their language and what appeared to be Government backing, to
lure those in distant Victoria to the hooks of the visionaries and the, sometimes
unscrupulous, promoters who relied on a public float to realize their dreams.

In the light of the generally negative assessment of Broadhurst that is held
by the historians, his peers and his fellow shareholders in the Company
following the eventual failure and collapse, Broadhurst will be shown to be
deserving of both praise and condemnation for his actions in venturing to the
north of Western Australia and for his conduct as a Director and Manager of
the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. The opinions held on the subject by the
apparently objective Resident Magistrate in the North, R.J. Sholl, will be
examined and will be shown to differ from those generally held. An
examination of these will show that Sholl held Broadhurst in high regard for

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6See section on Western Australian attitudes to the Victorian Settlers following.
his efforts in holding the Company together in very difficult circumstances and that he appointed Broadhurst a Justice of the Peace and Acting Resident Magistrate, both positions of significance, and normally ones afforded only to a man of integrity and standing.

Broadhurst and his wife Eliza, will also be seen to have eventually become a focus of the social life at the newly developing centre for the North-West, the town of Roebourne. This aspect of the development of the North casts a positive light on them both and also forces some re-assessment of prevailing attitudes to Broadhurst.

It has also not been generally realized that, the members of the much maligned Denison Plains Pastoral Company had a considerable impact in the early years of the settlement of the North-West by Europeans. At least thirteen of the nineteen shareholders who landed at Nickol Bay will be shown to have had a significant role as pastoralists, pearlers or in the service industries. The men, women and children will be shown to have constituted around half of the European population of the North-West, albeit for a short time, and their role in the development of the town of Roebourne, will be seen to have been worthy of note.

In order to illustrate all of these points, this chapter is divided into four main sections

(i) : a background to Broadhurst’s arrival in the North of Western Australia and an examination of the attitudes of the Western Australian historians towards him and his colleagues,

(ii) : an examination of the process of settlement from the point of view of the various European groups involved,

(iii) : an investigation of Broadhurst’s role in the formation, arrival and subsequent collapse of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company

(iv) : A analysis of of his activities as a pastoralist, Justice of the Peace and Acting Resident Magistrate after the collapse of the Company, and

(v) : an analysis of the reasons why Europeans such as Broadhurst and his Victorian colleagues initially succeeded in settling only one area of the North,
i.e. that at Nickol Bay, in contrast to the failure to settle other areas such as Camden Harbour, Roebuck Bay, and the Ashburton River. A major reason for their success will be seen to have been the attitude and capacities of the local Aborigines.

(i) Background to Broadhurst's Arrival in the North of Western Australia

This section attempts to set the scene for Broadhurst's arrival here and to explain why he made the decision to venture to the North initially as a part of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and then later as a shareholder in the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. It also attempts to explain the reason why Broadhurst and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company have been inadequately, and in some cases unfairly, assessed by their contemporaries and by the historians. In order to do so it is divided into three parts, an examination of the early exploration of the area to which Broadhurst and his fellow Victorians were attracted, an analysis of the reasons why the Victorians would want to leave Victoria for the North of Western Australia in the first place, and an examination of the attitudes of contemporary and modern Western Australians to the Victorian settlers.

The Early Exploration of the North of Western Australia

Up until 1862, European settlement in Western Australia was limited to the area south of the Murchison River; leaving the vast areas to the north virtually unexplored and in the hands of their traditional occupants, the Aborigines.

The area became known as the 'North District' (Figure 2) and lies within the Tropical and Subtropical zones of the Southern Hemisphere. It has three 'conspicuous aspects' of climatic pattern. The Northern part, or Kimberley region, benefits from monsoonal rains which favour the growth of woodlands and savannah grasslands. Much of the remainder of the area experiences an arid or semi arid climate, though tropical cyclones in the period November through to March serve to make a part of this land useful pastoral country. In the nineteenth century, the 'North District' encompassed what is now known as
the Murchison, Gascoyne North-West, Kimberley and Pilbara regions. It was in excess of one million square kilometres in area and had a very low population density. Even as late as 1965, for example, it was as low as 3.5 people per 260 square kilometres. One reason for such a low density is the harsh, very hot and often debilitating climate. It is only with the advent of the airconditioned mining towns in the last few decades that families have been willing to venture to the area, resulting in an increase in the population of the north.

Some exploration of the ‘North District’ occurred prior to 1860, but partly due to earlier generally poor reports, the extreme isolation of the region and the huge costs involved in transport to the region, little interest and some scepticism greeted the results.

Despite the good reports, there was no flood of enquiry from potential immigrants to what is now the Kimberley region when in 1837-1838, the explorer Grey, described the Camden Harbour region as a ‘luxuriant country of a very rich and fertile character.’ The climate was judged as one of the finest in the world with a mean temperature of between 77°-94° Fahrenheit (26-35° Celsius) recorded, in the shade, with consistent rain. The nearby Glenelg River region was considered as ‘verdant and fertile a country as the eye of man ever rested upon’. In summing up Grey wrote, that the country was best adapted for the production of cotton, sugar, indigo and rice with a species of wild cotton in evidence that could, if a colony was established, be substituted by ‘the proper cotton plant.’ He noted that the area contained three, of what he claimed were, the ‘finest harbours in the world’.

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8 Kimberley, op. cit., p.203.
10 ibid., pp. 161-6, 274.
Figure 10

Grey's chart of the Camden Harbour and Glenelg River Regions

[Map accompanying the Camden Harbour Prospectus, op. cit.]
Grey visualized that if the area were to be settled, England would have in the potential North Australian Colony, a cotton producing entrepot with the possibility of a manufactured cotton export to the Indian Archipelago, where printed cottons were in great demand.\textsuperscript{12}

One Henry Bull, then applied to the Colonial Secretary asking to be appointed Government Resident in the event of a future settlement in the Camden Sound.\textsuperscript{13} Despite this display of ambition on the part of Bull, the glowing exploration reports of the North of Western Australia, were initially treated with caution and scepticism by intending settlers.\textsuperscript{14} The Colonial Government was also not inclined to extend settlement at the time, due in part, to the prohibitive administrative costs involved.\textsuperscript{15}

Twenty years later, a similar lack of action greeted the results of the lengthy exploration of the Victoria River and its hinterland in 1855-56 by the brothers A.C. and F.T. Gregory. They traced the River to its source and found an inland water course they named Sturt’s Creek. In following this creek they noted that sections of the country ‘showed the effects of long continued drought’, but that in another area found a few days later, there was a vast expanse of waving grassing plains from five to sixteen kilometres wide stretching to the horizon. These they called the Denison Plains. From their detailed accounts they were ‘vast level plains of rich soil covered with beautiful grass.’\textsuperscript{16} The team followed the creek west towards central Australia to around 20°20’ South Latitude, 127°35’ East Longitude, (on their estimate) and then returned eastward along the opposite bank of the creek. On the return journey they located a pool of apparently ‘permanent water’ 100 metres wide by 300 metres long, with water a metre deep close to the banks.

\textsuperscript{12}Grey, op. cit., p.274.
\textsuperscript{13} Letters from Settlers, 24/12/1839, COD 1839, Despatches 117, p.165, reproduced in PR 640, BL.
\textsuperscript{14} Kimberley, op. cit., p. 203., and Battye (1924) op. cit., p.260, citing the Perth Gazette and W.A. Times of 14/2/1862. In references following, Perth Gazette.
\textsuperscript{15} Battye, (1915), op. cit. p.15.
Figure 11

A map appearing with the Denison Plains Company pamphlet, showing the Denison Plains and their relationship to Camden Harbour, Roebuck Bay, the De Grey River, Nickol Bay and Stuart’s route to Adelaide. 17

17 North Western Australia, its Soil, Climate and Capacity for Pastoral Enterprise, with map. (Robert Mackay, Glasgow Book Warehouse, Melbourne, 1864), BL, Q 3337; NOR.
They also confirmed the extent of the plains discovered on the outward journey and reported that they were not able to see their limit towards the north-west. The weather in the region was noted as cool and amenable. The Denison Plains is the area to which Broadhurst and his party were to eventually attempt to proceed.

The stimulus for European settlement of the North District did not come until F.T. Gregory conducted further explorations, in what is now known as the North-West of Western Australia. These took place in the period from May to October 1861. His report appeared in the *Perth Gazette* of 14 February 1862 and was received with great interest in Western Australia and further afield in both Victoria and South Australia.

In April 1861, he landed with substantial provisions and a large exploring party at Hearson’s Cove, in the Nickol Bay Region. From there he moved west and then south towards the upper Gascoyne River and then back north, finding good pastures and numerous rivers, including the Harding, Maitland, Fortesque, Ashburton, Oakover and De Grey, all of which he named. He reported that a number of them flowed fresh and that 200,000 acres was suitable for tropical agriculture with 2,000,000 acres suitable for grazing. Gregory considered the Harbour at Nickol Bay the equivalent of any he had seen on the coast, except for King George Sound, (Albany).

Gregory also noted beds of pearl oysters at Nickol Bay and believed that they were potentially of immediate commercial importance. The crew of his vessel, the *Dolphin*, recovered pearl shells worth £500-600 and a pearl worth £25 whilst waiting his return. Gregory noted that though the beds were ‘not defined,’ ships with ‘proper apparatus’ (presumably diving gear), could soon locate and exploit them.\(^{18}\) He noted a most amenable temperature range of 54°-92° Fahrenheit (12°-33° Celsius) in the six months he was in the country.

\(^{18}\) Gregory, op. cit., p.176.
Figure 12
The Nickol Bay area, showing Port Walcott and the Harding, Maitland and Nickol Rivers. 19
In concluding a glowing report, he stated that the country, especially that around the De Grey and Sherlock Rivers, appeared 'more highly qualified' than than anything else for the growing of cotton.\(^{20}\)

All this was noted by the very successful Colonial entrepreneur Walter Padbury, who had a hand in organizing the Gregory expedition. He then decided to settle the region and sent to Victoria for suitable stock. In the meantime, others expressed their interest and pressure began to mount on the Western Australian Government to the extent that new land regulations were promulgated in November 1862 and published in the Government Gazette of 23 December 1862. (Appendix Three) These regulations allowed European settlement of the ‘North District’, which at that time, housed not one known, European inhabitant.

The land regulations, were effective from 1 January 1863 and included two classes of land, Class A and Class C. Up to a total of 100,000 acres of Class C land in 20,000 Acre lots could be selected by the payment of a licence fee of £5 by ‘any one establishment’ landing stock.\(^{21}\) Provision was made for free pasturage for twelve months and a further three years free of rent on the land selected, together with the right of selection of an area not exceeding 20,000 acres.\(^{22}\) Class A land, including islands, and all land up to 2 miles back from the coast, required an annual licence. The day after the regulations were promulgated, applications to proceed to the North, were received from Walter Padbury and Charles Nairn, his brother-in-law.\(^{23}\)

The 14 February 1862 edition of the *Perth Gazette* carried Gregory’s report and spurred interest in the North District of Western Australia as far afield as Victoria. On 25 November 1862, just as the new regulations allowing settlement of the North District were being promulgated, William Harvey,

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\(^{20}\) Gregory, op. cit., p. 176.

\(^{21}\) A point vital to the understanding of the problems that beset the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, which was, as indicated here, entitled to only 100,000 acres under item 4 of the Rules allowing the selection of land in the 'North District' and not 5,000,000 as promised by the Company prospectus. Government Gazette, 23/12/1862, no 53. See also footnote 206, p.106.

\(^{22}\) ibid.

\(^{23}\) *Book of Applications to Proceed to the North or East District of WA under the new land regulations of 23/12/1862.* Battye Library, Red. No., 1266, ACC No. 660, BL.
wrote to the Colonial Secretary in Perth, stating that he had been requested to join a body of colonists to the North District of Western Australia and that he needed to know what were the limits of the district and the extent, if any, of the Government protection to be afforded such a settlement. In enquiring whether the existing regulations would permit the use of appropriate land for cotton and sugar production, Harvey stated that the object of the proposed settlement were, ‘primarily the growth of cotton on the coast and pastoral pursuits in the more elevated interior’.

He continued, in a revealing paragraph, thus,

I have been informed that your Government might, to save expense in the event of a settlement... feel inclined to place several of the more respectable members of it, on the commission of the [indecipherable] for the purposes of self government.

Harvey was soon to shy away from any further hint of personal ambition, but like Bull and Stirling before him, the opportunity had been seen and was quickly seized.

Harvey’s interests lay not just in what is now known as the North West, which was the object of Padbury’s interest, but also in the far north, now called the Kimberley region. His ideas probably sprang from the very promising exploration data of Grey of 1848 in the Camden Harbour region and from the reports of the Gregory brothers in 1855-1856, in the hinterland of the Victoria River on the Western Australian and Northern Territory border. His plans would have also been born of the ideas behind earlier unsuccessful attempts to establish a link to Kupang, Jakarta, Surabaya and the ‘Straits Settlements’ from a trading base in Northern Australia. These attempts began in 1824 at Fort Dundas on Melville Island (1824-29); were resurrected on the Coburg Peninsula at Fort Wellington on Raffles Bay (1827-1829) and were resumed, in a final unsuccessful attempt, at Port Essington (1838-1841).

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24 CSR, 513/44, BL.
25 ibid.
26 See Grey, op. cit., and Gregory op. cit.
Interest in forming an overland link with the ‘North Coast of New South Wales,’ as the area was called, dates from these attempts to settle at Port Essington. Calls were made for the further exploration of this region and of the land lying between there and Sydney in the period between 1840 and 1843. In December 1845, the explorer Ludwig Leichardt, finally succeeded in reaching Port Essington overland. The deprivations and suffering experienced by Leichardt and his men, were so great as to destroy any further hopes of an overland route from the Eastern Seaboard of Australia, to Port Essington. The settlement there was soon abandoned and the charter creating the new Colony of ‘Northern Australia’ was revoked in December 1847.

Interest continued in the region despite this, and it lead directly to the September 1855 explorations of the Gregory brothers. They sailed up the Victoria River and then moved south west into Western Australia along Sturt’s Creek, through the Denison Plains. They retraced their steps and then travelled back east, along the Gulf Of Carpentaria, finishing at Brisbane in December 1856. The explorers spoke highly of the region considering it, in comparison to Western Australia, ‘far superior’ in every way, except in climate, for those with settlement in mind.

Other explorers were sent to the region by the South Australian Government, including J.M. Stuart. They were successful in traversing the country from Adelaide to the area near present day Darwin which lies south west of the abandoned Port Essington. This eventually led to thoughts of a transcontinental stock route and a connection with the existing England to India telegraph through North Australia and on to Adelaide. Squatters were also moving west into the Gulf of Carpentaria from Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales in 1861. In 1862 the South Australian Government, which was yet to annex the Northern Territory, as the area eventually became known, received a number of enquiries for land mainly in the Victoria River area.

29 Powell, op., cit., p.71.
30 ibid. p.73.
Despite the growing interest, the questions about which Eastern States Colonial Government was responsible for the vast lands in what is now the Northern Territory were not resolved until July 1863. In the meantime, the proclamation of the December 1862 regulations for the settlement of the ‘North District’ of Western Australia swung interest in that direction.

The Camden Harbour Region, to the west of the Northern Territory, with apparently superb harbours and rich hinterland, was to be the natural focus for attention. On 20 January 1863, only a month after the promulgation of the regulations permitting settlement of the North District of Western Australia and two months after his initial inquiry, William Harvey, Cyril Autard and Messrs Robert McMaikin, W. Murray, G. Buzzard and Edmond Tarrant all applied for permission to proceed with stock to Camden Harbour, for the purpose of selecting grazing land. Western Australian interest in the area was not lacking either. Three brothers, K., A., and the well known Maitland, Brown of Champion Bay, and four other men from Newcastle (Toodyay) and York, applied three months later, for permission to proceed to the mouth of the nearby Prince Regent or Glenelg Rivers. By the end of 1863 there were seventeen applications to proceed to the ‘North District’ of Western Australia. Thirteen of these were to proceed to the Camden Harbour area and only four, those from Padbury, Nairn and a John Wellard, were for the Nickol Bay, or De Grey River regions in what is now known as the North-West.31

In May 1863, a party including K. & A. Brown and the naturalist Dr Martin, chartered the vessel *Flying Foam* to re-examine the Glenelg River and Camden Harbour region. Their glowing reports were published in the *Inquirer* of 2 September 1863.

This visit was followed in January 1864 by the celebrated ‘Wildman’ gold seeking voyage, which also went to Camden Harbour under the leadership of

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31 Applications to proceed to the North. op. cit., It is interesting to note that the first applicants listed to proceed north are Cyril Autard and William Harvey, together with, Robert Micking [McMaikin?], Wm. Murray, G Buzzard and Edward Tarrant, and that though this application is dated 20/1/1863 it preceeds that of Padbury and Nairn, dated 24/12/1862 in the register.
an Inspector Panter and a Dr. Martin. Though originally searching for gold allegedly discovered there by Wildman, they conducted further explorations. Their report of the Camden Harbour region and of the Roebuck Bay region further south, was published in the *Inquirer* on 22 June 1864. This report confirmed Grey’s analysis of the Camden Harbour and Glenelg River regions and also spoke of excellent pasture, good underground water, luxuriant vegetation, abundant game, pearl shell in quantity and millions of acres of pastoral country, near Cape Villaret at Roebuck Bay.

July and August 1864 proved to be a watershed in the development of the North. The reports of Grey, Martin and Panter appeared in such Victorian papers as the *Portland Guardian*, and left no doubt in the mind of the reader as to the ‘extent and fertility’ of the land in the North of Western Australia. One such report noted that Dr Martin had estimated that 1,000,000 sheep could be supported by the areas explored. The Melbourne based *Argus*, carried similar accounts. One contained a letter to the editor from a W.A. Taylor of Guildford in Western Australia. This gave an account of five months spent in the North-West area during the period between June and November 1863. He referred, not only to many of the country’s disadvantages, but also to ‘rich brown loam up to 20 feet thick without stick or stone in it’. He also noted that, of the animals landed by the early settlers, he ‘never saw stock in finer condition’ and concluded that the explorer Gregory gave a ‘very truthful account of the country’. In that period also, the Western Australian press published the 1862 Land Regulations for the North District, the prospectus of Wiliam Harvey and associate’s newly formed Company called the *Camden Harbour Pastoral Association*, the prospectus of the Perth based, *Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association*, which had similar intentions, and ‘a well-arranged’ pamphlet by the Government Surveyor General, Captain J.S. Roe. This document also contained the land regulations, Stokes’, Grey’s,  

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33 *Taylor to the editor, Argus*, 29/8/1864.  
34 *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 2/7/1864, (Hereafter, Inquirer)  
35 ibid. 31/8/1864.
Gregory’s and Panter’s descriptions of the North District and a catalogue of possible fruits and exports available in the region e.g. timber, mother-of-pearl, whale, dugong oil, wool and cotton and livestock.

To the historian Kimberley, writing some thirty years later, there was no doubt

that this pamphlet together with news from private sources determined many wavering minds in Victoria and South Australia to take North Western land. 36

The Victorian desire for Western Australian Land

Part of the reason for Victorians such as Broadhurst to be attracted to the North-West of Western Australia and to other areas such as New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand, in the late 1850s and 1860s, was a distinct unease amongst the ranks of the ‘squatters’. 37 This was caused when the goldrush excitement died and there developed a desire for land amongst the displaced miners and other members of the community. In 1856 the first Victorian Parliament was elected. This comprised an indissoluble Legislative Council of 30 elected for a period of 10 years with a property qualification of £5,000 and a popularly elected Legislative Assembly. ‘Squatters’ controlled the Upper House, but it was not long before the question of ownership of the vast areas of land occupied by such men began to result in, what has been described as, noisy agitation from the lower house which contained a majority in favour of land reform. 38 Public meetings were held to discuss the ‘land question’ and agitation to open the land to small farmers centred in Melbourne. 39 In 1857 a ‘radical program’ was adopted in which it was resolved that all exclusive occupation of ‘unalienated’ land as a free pasturage right be abolished and that

36 Kimberley, op. cit., p.206.
39 Kiddle, op. cit., p.221.
acres at a cost of 10 shillings to £1 per acre. Various selection acts were passed in the early 1860s and the balance of political power eventually transferred from the squatters and wealthy land owners to the middle class business and professional men in the cities. The slogan ‘unlock the lands’ served to unite many who sought to release the strangle hold that the squatters held on the land. In reply to the perceived threat, a ‘Pastoral Protection Association’ was formed. Despite this, it became clear to all those who looked far enough ahead that, the introduction of selection was inevitable and unless they could secure their freehold in the lands that they already occupied, they would have to move elsewhere. Pastoralists such as the Broadhursts occupying prime land near Kilmore not far from Melbourne and others, from the rich Western districts of Victoria, would have found such calls very threatening.

It was not only the squatters and their relatives who sought land in other areas. Many disappointed selectors were similarly attracted, for in attempting to find blocks for selection, they found themselves prevented by the stalling of the pastoral lobby, who dominated the upper house in the Victorian Legislature.

In considering the possibilities of venturing to other States or to New Zealand in search of land in the late 1850s and early 1860s, these two groups would have found the ‘highly coloured’ descriptions of broad rivers and green pastures and the very ‘liberal’ regulations promulgated in order to encourage settlement of the North district of Western Australia very attractive indeed.

It must be noted however, that some were drawn as much by the ‘excitement of adventuring into an unknown country’ as they were by ‘the
economic necessity for finding new runs'. The diarist, A.R. Richardson, was one such person. He was a part of a relatively large group of Victorians from the Western Districts area who ventured to the North of Western Australia. In his estimate, it was due in 'large measure' to the 'deep impression' with which the journals of the explorer F.T. Gregory were received, that many Victorian family groups, companies and private concerns, were launched in order 'to translate into reality... youthful dreams of acquiring sheep stations in this promised land'.

Thus the 'North District' of Western Australia, proved one very attractive outlet, not only to those Victorians already holding land and frightened of being dispossessed, but also to those unable to acquire land at all. Charles Edward Broadhurst fell into both categories. He held land in his own name in Victoria and was a part of a very large family group of squatters and landowners under the leadership of his elder brother Robert Henson Broadhurst. He needed more land for himself and yet was part of a threatened family of squatters who were frightened of one day being dispossessed of all the land which they occupied but had not actually purchased. Thus, like many of his Victorian colleagues in comfortable circumstances, he saw opportunity in the beckoning North of Western Australia which were described in one account as 'this reported pastoralist Eldorado'.

Western Australian Attitudes to the Victorians

From the start, the Western Australians were sceptical of the Victorian based, Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, which with a 'flourish of trumpets' aimed to settle the North. At the time however, those aspects of the Camden Harbour scheme that William Harvey and his associates made known to the Western Australian
Colonial Government, appealed enough and had a perceived chance of success so real, as to convince the government to send a Resident Magistrate, doctor, constabulary, surveyor and other trappings of officialdom, at a cost of £5,000 to Camden Harbour.49

Despite this, the efforts of the Victorians, such as Broadhurst, who joined the Camden Harbour Association, have been roundly criticized by all Western Australian historians as singular examples of bad planning and stupidity. The nineteenth century historian W.B. Kimberley and his associates, for example, have stated that in 'an instance of the unwholesome effect of excitement', the promoters and shareholders of the Denison Plains Company displayed a 'lamentable want of prudence',

for without acquiring knowledge of the country proposed to be settled, its members invested in stock, chartered vessels, broke up homes and sailed for what was practically an unknown region and doubtful at best.50

The noted Western Australian historian J.S. Battye, writing some twenty years later in the context of the failure of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, commented with equal scorn and with some factual inaccuracies on the Denison Plains Company.

The next attempt - equally unsuccessful - to settle a portion of the far north from Victoria was that of the Denison Plains Association, formed to land settlers at the head waters of the Victoria River and send them forward to the Denison Plains. The scheme was even worse than the Camden Harbour idea, for neither the promoters nor possible settlers seem to have had any idea of the exact location of Denison Plains or the kind of country to be found there.51... To break up their homes, spend large sums of money in stock and equipment, and sail for an unknown territory are not qualifications that give evidence of the foresight

50 Kimberley, op cit., p. 209.
necessary in those who would be successful pioneers... Those who were competent and saw a chance of success... were not prepared to be bound by co-operative conditions.\textsuperscript{52}

Battye, in making the claims above, was apparently not aware of all the facts, nor of the quality of the exploration data on which the Victorian Companies were formed. A chart showing the precise location of Camden Harbour and the Denison plains was part of each Company prospectus, as were the explorers accounts of each region. (Figures 10 & 11). Kimberley and Battye have also missed the link between the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and in doing so have failed to realize that the collapse of one caused the failure of the other, both in Melbourne and in the North. They were also apparently unaware that far greater sums of money were spent in settling the ‘North District’ by the successful and much praised pioneers, such as the Western Australians, Padbury, Wellard, Withnell and the Victorians Richardson, Edgar and others. Battye and Kimberley have also forgotten that many of these people also broke up their homes and sailed for unknown territories on exactly the same evidence as those they severely criticize. Forgotten by the critics was the involvement of the Government at Camden Harbour and the interest of some highly placed Western Australians and Government officials including the Colonial Secretary in a similar venture, the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association. This was formed on precisely the same sort of exploration data as that used to form the two Victorian Companies.\textsuperscript{53} Forgotten also was the need of all intending settlers, (Victorian and Western Australian alike) and even the planners and politicians in Western Australia, to rely on the information of others and to make decisions at a considerable distance from the actual scene.

In the absence of a detailed analysis of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral company, the analyses of

\textsuperscript{52} Battye, J.S., (1924) op. cit. p. 270.
\textsuperscript{53} Lt. Col. Bruce, R.J. Sholl, Wittenoom, Shenton, F.P. Barlee (the Colonial Secretary of W.A.) were all on the Provisional Committee of the Company. Sholl was the Secretary and Barlee was one of the Association Directors. Richardson, op. cit., p. 74-81.
Kimberley and Battye have become the accepted word and are reflected in all of the modern day accounts. In 1957 for example, R.D. Sturkey in examining the North-West pastoral industry, was to claim that the Companies were formed ‘without sufficient knowledge of the country’ and that in the case of the Denison Plains Company, the knowledge of the area they intended to settle was ‘not so much inaccurate as non-existent’. It was also claimed that none of the members ‘had any idea of the location of the plains’. In 1960, F.K. Crowley, claimed, (with factual inaccuracy), that the intending settlers for the ‘paper colony on the Denison Plains... got no further than Perth’. Withnell Taylor, writing of the Withnell family, who preceded the Company to the ‘North District’, continued the trend by claiming in 1980 that the Denison Plains Company people ‘had no idea where the Denison Plains were’ and that they had a ‘complete lack of prudence’ and were ‘not prepared for the type of country they intended settling’. De La Rue, writing on the history of the Cossack area of the North-West, where the Company finally settled, suggested that a ‘larger proportion’ of the people who bought into the Companies ‘lacked the driving determination to succeed...[that was]...essential’ for the successful pioneer. She also claimed that with ‘less capital behind them’ they may have been ‘more prone to panic’ when the returns were less than those promised.

None of this will stand up in an examination of the available evidence. The economist, Lourens, in examining the ‘History of Commerce and Industry in Western Australia’ in 1979, was of all the modern historians, closest to the mark in stating that the members of the Company ‘possessed more enthusiasm than preparation’.

57 De La Rue, K., Pearl Shell and Pastures. The story of Cossack and Roebourne, and their place in the history of the North West, from the earliest explorations to 1910. (The Cossack Project Committee, Roebourne, 1979), p.19.
Even in this there is an element of bias. Far from being poorly prepared, ignorant and vastly inferior to those who eventually succeeded, as claimed or inferred by the Western Australian historians, the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, were in sending their staff ahead under the leadership of Broadhurst, well prepared and well equipped. They had intentions of landing at a previously settled and landlocked harbour that was much praised by the explorers before they were to proceed further to equally highly praised grasslands. There, they expected a logistical back-up from goods and people intending to follow in their wake. On the personal level, the vanguard of the Company under Broadhurst included a surveyor, doctor and other experienced staff who were the equal of any other group that had left distant shores to settle in Western Australia. Though there was contemporary opinion to the contrary after the eventual collapse of the Company, they were considered, in hindsight, by one station owner and commentator as ‘the most enterprising and useful body of men I ever came across’.59 The same could be said for such members of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association as E.T. Hooley, A. McRae and Jacob Hindaugh.

On the other hand, it is clear that part of the reason for the failure of the two Victorian companies was the company structure and the managerial and other mistakes made. Again, despite the inferences to the contrary, in this they were not alone and even the respected and much praised pioneers made equally bad mistakes, and would have left the north if they could. Forgotten in the condescending criticism of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association is the fact that similar mistakes occurred in the formation of the Swan River Colony itself.

In this context, it will now be very briefly shown that the Camden Harbour Pastoral and Agricultural Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, had many aspects in common with other schemes that go right back to the formation of the State of Western Australia itself. In this manner, those

Western Australians who have highlighted the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association as singular examples of stupidity and poor preparation in the settlement of Western Australia will be seen to be biased and to have unfairly assessed the Victorian companies.

It is now generally accepted, for example, that in his vigorous promotion of the Swan River Colony, Captain Stirling, (the founder of Western Australia), was as much concerned for the further of his own career and personal fortune as he was for the strategic good of England. There is ample evidence that personal ambition and self interest influenced Stirling in his own land dealings whilst in office. The professional errors and omissions of his 1827 marine survey and report on the anchorage at Swan River also appear to have been influenced by a bias on his part that saw the prospective ‘port’ quite wrongly praised as a safe haven. Hundreds were enticed to emigrate from England on the basis of his reports, which with hindsight, can be seen as the result of his subjective and poorly conducted explorations.

As a direct result of the failings of Stirling’s inadequate explorations and false claims, five of the first half dozen vessels into the Port of Fremantle, became maritime casualties of varying degrees of severity. The ensuing litany of accidents and losses on our shores bears testimony to Stirling’s failures as a marine surveyor at least. The Colony was fortunate in surviving the stagnation wrought by these maritime incidents. The land also initially failed to live up to the expectations of the enthusiastic Government Botanist, Charles Fraser who accompanied Stirling and who reported with equal enthusiasm to that shown by his leader.

Stirling’s capable and vigorous promotion of the Colony quickly led to the involvement of others in nearby areas such as the Leschenault and Vasse regions near present day Bunbury and Busselton. Nathanial Ogle, author of A

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62 Battye, (1924), op cit p. 66.
Manual for Emigrants to the Colony of Western Australia, for example, recorded for posterity his ‘great and lasting regret’ that he had been unable to emigrate to Western Australia in 1828-1829 and to settle the Leschenault and La Vasse areas of the South West. His 1000 colleagues would have been supplied with labour, stock and provisions over three years. The vessel Ogle proposed using as a transport was rejected by the authorities, on the basis that it was ‘foreign built’, and was therefore unsuitable.\(^63\) Ogle abandoned his plans and was saved from having to test his confident assertions, which were based on ‘private information’, that the area selected was ‘a place where capital can be securely advanced and where judgement and industry must secure great returns’.\(^64\)

Such an escape from reality was not afforded the Peel Association who were originally a group of wealthy investors headed by Thomas Peel, cousin to the powerful English politician Robert Peel. This group planned to sink a large amount of capital, stock, provisions and around 10,000 people, into the Colony in return for huge land grants and concessions. In their memorial to the British Government on the matter, they stated that the soil of the Swan River was ‘better adapted to the cultivation of tobacco and cotton than any other part of Australia’, and that it was also intended to cultivate sugar and flax there.\(^65\)

Such crops are unknown in the region today. In a reply to Peel, the English Government indicated that they were keen to ensure the ‘experiment’ should not be made on too large a scale initially, ‘on account of the extensive distress which would be occasioned by a failure’. They felt bound to limit the grant to 1,000,000 acres instead of the 4,000,000 sought.\(^66\) In order to obtain the same

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63 Despite the good condition of foreign built vessels, they were often rejected as unsuitable for ‘British’ purposes.
64 Ogle, N., The Colony of Western Australia: A Manual for Emigrants, (Fraser, London, 1839). Though the area has proved rich today, there is little doubt that Ogle and his colleagues were basing their judgements on scant evidence and that they would have suffered in similar fashion to all the other settlement schemes had they disembarked for the area.
65 Swan River Settlement, Return to an Address of the Hon. the House of Commons, 7/5/1829. Copies of the Correspondence of the Colonial Department with Certain Gentlemen proposing to form a settlement in the Neighbourhood of the Swan River in Western Australia, (Melbourne University, Baillieu Library), AX F 994.1 E 58.
66 Hay to Peel, 6/12/1828. ibid.
priority of choice as that allowed Stirling in consideration for his explorations. Peel and his associates were to land by 1 November 1829. They arrived a month late and received a lesser quantity and quality of land just south of Fremantle. They then faced immediate disappointment and confusion and were hastened into ruin and a well-publicized ridicule; partly through the managerial and other failings of their leader Peel.67

A decade later, in 1839, the Western Australian Company, was formed with the purposes of settling land on the Leschenault Estuary, at Australind, near Bunbury.68 The first settlers arrived in 1841, but the scheme failed within 3 years. In Battye’s analysis the failure was due to misrepresentation, the difficulty of communicating logically with Company Directors in London, the methods adopted by promoters and the unsuitability of many of the investors themselves.

The gullibility of those involved in the schemes above, differs little from the blind faith in the written and spoken word shown by the members of the Denison Plains and Camden Harbour Companies. The problems of making decisions at a distance and the absolute need to rely on the word of others, are common elements in all of these examples.

With the advantage of hindsight, it can be seen that the decision to settle the areas in the south-west of Western Australia was not based on convincing exploration data. Stirling and Fraser’s analysis of the capacities of the Swan River area that led to such schemes was conducted over too short a period and was clearly deficient, for example. This is in direct contrast to the quality of the data that led to the Denison Plains and Camden Harbour schemes.

In contrast with the above, the decision of those who ventured to the newly opened lands in the ‘North District’ of Western Australia in the early 1860s will be shown to have been a justifiable one indeed and well worth the potential risks.

68 Battye, (1924.) op. cit., p.154.
(ii) An examination of the process of European settlement.

There were three quite distinct groups amongst those who were attracted to the newly opened lands in the North District. There were the 'Small Groups', those who formed small family concerns, loose associations, or tiny companies with a handful of shareholders and then chartered vessels and transported themselves, their stock and stores to the north at great personal expense. Others, such as the Broadhursts, joined very large companies with many shareholders such as the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company at a relatively small and affordable outlay of around £100-£200 per share. Others not intending to venture north, but nevertheless keen to profit from the new lands, joined the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association as shareholders for the relatively tiny outlay of £10 per share. They appointed a manager and staff to look after their interests and confidently awaited the results of their investment. These four groups will now be examined as a necessary background and preliminary to an examination of Broadhurst's role in the settlement of the North-West.

The 'Small' Groups

In April 1863, following hard on the decision to open the North District, Walter Padbury sent his 16 ton cutter Mystery north and followed himself in the chartered 250 ton barque Tien Tsin with stock and the remainder of his fifteen man team (ten European and five Aboriginal). These men were to establish a run on the De Grey River, an area which had been recorded by the explorer F.T. Gregory in glowing terms.69 Unable to land at the De Grey due to the hazards of the river mouth there, they were forced south to the Nickol Bay region where they disembarked at what became known as Tien Tsin Harbour (Now called Port Walcott). Padbury dispatched most of his men under his manager Charles Nairn and the majority of his stock and effects, overland to the De Grey, leaving a small party at a staging post at Butcher's

69 Gregory, op. cit., p.176.
Inlet (now Cossack) which lies within Tien Tsin Harbour itself. (Figures 12 & 15). Leaving his manager in charge, he then returned to Fremantle to load his vessel and give heed to his many other enterprises. On his return to Perth, he was greeted with great enthusiasm and accolades as the pioneer of what was seen as a land of great promise.

Padbury was quickly followed into the region by John Wellard’s party, under his manager, W.S. Hall. They landed safely at Butcher Inlet and proceeded upstream along the Harding River to establish their ‘run’ ‘Andover’. In March 1864, John Withnell, accompanied by his pregnant wife, Emma, their family of two young children, three relatives, and servants left Fremantle for the north. They originally intended to land east of Tien Tsin Harbour, near the present Port Hedland. Unfortunately, they suffered near shipwreck en route and lost much of their stock and gear including a Clydesdale stallion worth £300. They were lucky to be able to limp back to Tien Tsin Harbour where Hall and some of Padbury’s team were situated. After landing they immediately proceeded inland along the Harding River to settle their remaining stock and to obtain water at ‘Yeera Muk A Doo’, a permanent pool on the Harding River. On their return, they found that the goods which had been left too close to the high water mark, had become inundated and only a few items remained of use. Despite this they persevered and established Mt Welcome Station, and were highly praised for their efforts and for the assistance given to those, including the Broadhurst’s, who followed in their wake.

In December 1864, the tiny Victorian Portland West Australian Squatting Company Ltd., consisting of only seven shareholders, applied, for permission to proceed, not specifically to Camden Harbour, as had the majority of intending settlers up till that time, but for ‘Nickol Bay or other part of North

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71 Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., Cha. 7.
72 ibid. p.41
West Australia'. Their group consisted of five of the seven shareholders under A.E. Anderson (Manager) and McKenzie Grant (sub-Manager). It also included the seventeen year old diarist A.R. Richardson, whose accounts of the early days in the North-West have proved most valuable. They left Portland, Victoria, on 6 March 1865 and proceeded to Tien Tsin Harbour in the vessel Maria Ross. They arrived after a one month voyage, and progressed to the Withnell’s station, which later became the township of Roebourne, sixteen kilometres from the coast on the Harding River, at Mount Welcome, (Figure 12). Wellard’s party were a further sixteen kilometres upstream. They then selected a block later called Pyramid Station on the George River, some 25 miles from Withnell’s. Other blocks were selected by them on the Ashburton and on the Fortescue rivers later in the year.

By November 1864, permission to proceed to Nickol Bay had also been granted to similar small concerns such as that of Messrs Viveash, Middleton and Wilkerson, who arrived a week after the ‘Portland’ Group and who established ‘Indernoona’ station. They were followed by Messrs Lockyer and Taylor who established ‘Cooya Pooya’, and a number of small Victorian concerns of between three and six men each, under Messrs Knight, Orkney, Smith, Magnus MacLeod and J.N. MacLeod respectively.

All these groups were small concerns with paid shepherds and with their owners experienced and actually ‘on the ground’. Their Capital outlay was, in contrast with their numbers, very large and in the vicinity of £1,500- £2,500, at least. These were the group for whom failure meant a high financial loss and in some cases complete ruin. They were also a group easy to manage, in that they had a definite and indisputable chain of command and were comprised solely of tried and capable people, many of whom were paid staff. Some were born and bred in the bush and others were raised in the country,

73 Richardson, A. R., Copy of a diary Written by Mr A. R. Richardson, In connection with Early De Grey Company Doings, BL, Acc. 310a, p. 2.
74 As an indication of the magnitude of their expenditure, this has, where possible been estimated and appears in Appendix 4.
with Aboriginal children as their constant companions. The ensuing advantages of such a company structure and personal background were to be a major factor in their eventual success, though the financial incentive to stay in the face of the ensuing hardships was also very great indeed.

The climate and the problems of the North were most unexpected and sorely tried all who landed there. A crippling drought had beset the land making a mockery of the glowing explorer’s reports of just a few years earlier. This ensured that the settlers landed to a country far different than that which they had eagerly expected.76

When the four year contract between the members of the ‘Portland’ group expired, for example, two members Anderson and Grant, left the Company station with their stock with the intention of heading south, where they could live in some kind of tolerable climate, and where droughts and other North-West experiences would not trouble them.77

Paradoxically, only a prolonged drought prevented them from doing so, and they eventually returned to Pyramid station and then proceeded further north to take up the De Grey Station that had been abandoned by Padbury’s men some three years earlier. The Withnells also considered selling out, but could not find a buyer.78

Success was to eventually come to most of these numerically small, but financially heavily committed groups, though it appears likely that many, if not the majority, would have left the north if they could have obtained buyers for their stations in the early years of settlement. In this context, Richardson was

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76 The Gregory brothers on whom so many depended for the exploration data were not blind to the possibilities of drought. They noted in their Murchison river Explorations of 1857 the difference between a tract of land ‘barely capable’ of supporting the explorer Austen and his small team in November 1854 being during their visit ‘in some parts most luxuriant.’ A few day before they recorded the Denison plains they also noted that some parts of the country there ‘showed the effects of continual drought.’ Gregory, op. cit., pp. 34, 35, 134.
77 Richardson, op. cit., p. 44.
78 They considered selling for £1400 but could not find a buyer. Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p.92.
to note that failure was a common theme amongst all, including these ‘small’
groups in the north-west

The majority of the northern pastoralists at that
time...were not at all satisfied with their prospects or at
all hopeful of the of the ultimate commercial outcome of
their pioneer ventures. If many of them had been
offered the actual capital embarked in them they would
have left without much persuasion, and many others if
they could have seen how else or where else to make a
better start would not have hesitated.79

In contrast to these ‘small’ groups, there were three ‘large’ concerns each
with capital in excess of £20,000 involved in the early attempts to settle the
North District. These were, the Western Australian-based Roebuck Bay
Pastoral and Agricultural Association, and the Victorian-based companies, the
Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral
Company. The two Victorian companies catered for those, such as Broadhurst
who were unwilling, or unable, to take such a large financial risk as that taken
by the ‘small’ groups. They could still obtain a stake in the new lands with
stock, supplies and a free passage, by travelling there as shareholders of a
much larger group at a cost of around £100-200 per share. Once there, they
could with good seasons, natural increase of stock, hard work and luck expect
to expand and take full benefit of the experience gained under the umbrella of
a much larger and better equipped enterprise than they could possibly hope to
mount or organize themselves. For people with nothing but two or three years
wages, to lose in the venture, the attractions of these companies will be seen to
be great indeed and the gamble well worth while. For a family group such as
the Tootal-Broadhurst’s, the idea was doubly attractive. Without completely
selling up their existing holdings and thereby being totally committed to the
Northern venture, only one branch of the Tootal-Broadhurst family, i.e C.E.
Broadhurst and his family, eventually took the gamble and the others
apparently awaited developments. Considering the almost total ruin that befell

79Richardson, op. cit, p. 44.
the small groups such as the Withnells, such a move could be seen, on the broader scale, to have been a prudent one.80

The Western Australian based Roebuck Bay Company, in comparison to the two equivalent Victorian companies, catered for the investors, who at £10 per share had no intention of venturing North. These people wished to profit from the landing of stock and the acquisition of land by a team of experienced shepherds and their equally experienced manager.

These three ‘large’ Companies and Padbury’s ‘De Grey’ station all failed. Wellard, another with a manager on the ground, sold out soon after his arrival. In the ‘De Grey’ case, though the station was a great drain on Padbury’s finances,81 the failure can be traced partly to the tragic death of the manager, Charles Nairn, a relative of Padbury.82 Despite this, it is worth noting here that, the majority, if not all, of those concerns with managers, as opposed to actual owners on the ground failed in the North. Again it illustrates the difference between those totally committed to staying and those who could get out at a relatively small loss, when the harsh realities of the situation became obvious.

It is now clear that, probably the most crippling of the failings of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the Camden Harbour Association groups that landed in the North was not that they showed any less sense in venturing North, or that they were stupid, lazy or ill-prepared, as has been claimed. The major failing was because those who actually landed in the north from both Companies, were shareholders or their agents and representatives. When things got tough, it proved very difficult to maintain any order amongst those with equal powers but with different priorities and to then fight out of the troubles with a united will or under an accepted leader. They both failed as a

80 When wrecked near Port Hedland the Withnells lost a great deal of their gear and stock. On their arrival at Nickol Bay they left much of their provisions and equipment on the beach and made their way up the Harding River to their eventual home at Mt. Welcome. On John Withnell’s return to the beach he found that the tide and a strong gale had washed most of the provisions away, leaving them with some harnesses, flour, sugar, less than 100 sheep and a few cattle and horses. De La Rue, op. cit., p.16, & Withnell-Taylor, op cit., p. 41.
81 Richardson, op cit., p.32.
82 Nairn, op. cit, pp. 183-6.
consequence. The Resident Magistrate in the ‘North District’, R.J. Sholl became involved in sorting out the problems of both companies and in doing so developed a jaundiced view of the shareholders. He commented that:

‘A shareholder on the spot is less than useless.’ 83

Having set the background and context for Broadhurst’s arrival in the North of Western Australia, the reasons for the respective failures of the ‘large’ companies will now be examined, in as much as they relate to the failure of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the efforts of Broadhurst himself. In analysing, not just the troubles and failure of the two Victorian based Companies, but also those of the Western Australian based Roebuck Bay Association, the failure of the Companies that Broadhurst joined can be better understood.

The Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association

In the prospectus of the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association, it was stated that Roebuck Bay, had been selected by the promoters of the Company, because it was admirably adapted to sheep, had a suitable landing, water and because the country inland was good.84 It was also noted that, in the well grassed and well watered area further north, ‘there are several recognised harbours, one receiving the waters of the Glenelg’. There was, as far as the promoters of the Association were concerned, ‘no difficulty in extending the runs of the Association in a northerly direction’. There is, in this excerpt and in other statements appearing in the prospectus, evidence in the thinking of the Roebuck Bay people, of a potential link with the Camden Harbour Region to the north and most likely with the Denison Plains to the east as areas of possible future expansion, or as centres with which to establish ties.

Capital for the Roebuck Bay Association was set at £20,000 in £10 shares. A profit over three years of between seven and a half and eighteen and three

83 CSR, 581/99-120, BL.
quarter percent was estimated. The provisional committee comprised such well known names as R.J. Sholl (secretary), Lt. Col. Bruce, and Messrs Crampton, Wittenoom, Shenton, amongst others, including F.P. Barlee, the Colonial Secretary. Some of these well respected and highly placed men, including Barlee, also formed the board of Directors.

As an indication of the indecent speed with which all such ventures proceeded and of the attitude then prevailing to the newly opened lands in the North, all the shares were taken up by the end of August and soon after tenders were called for stock and vessels. The three company vessels then set out on October 1864, with Inspector Panter along to point out the good locations. Panter advised by return mail to Perth, that the chosen country at Cape Villaret was excellent and L.C. Burges, second in charge and later manager of the Company, vowed the station would be one of the best in the Colony. Tragedy soon struck. Though Panter’s journal shows that his first contact with the Aborigines there was friendly and that in his estimate they were a ‘quiet harmless race’, three men, Panter, Harding the manager, and Goldwyer were later killed by the local Aborigines. A memorial to the dead men and to Maitland Brown, the leader of an expedition in search of the victims and their killers, was erected on the Esplanade at Fremantle. An impressive ceremony, and a large crowd bore testimony to the effect of this incident on the local populace.

The Roebuck Bay Association had a large staff consisting of twelve employees, two policemen and six pensioners at the station and they succeeded in sinking a number of wells and in making many improvements. Despite this, the new manager Burges decided not to stay at Roebuck Bay and later purchased Andover, Wellard’s station at Roebourne. The Association was left in the care of a Mr Logue assisted by Mr McRae, one of the Camden

Harbour settlers. They were relatively experienced men. Despite this, drought, problems with communications and further problems with the Aboriginal people, who fiercely opposed the settlement, (even after the terrible punitive expedition to avenge the deaths of Panter and his colleagues), was enough to force the Company to quit the area in 1866. The stock was sent on to Burges at Andover and the Company was disbanded.

What is relevant here, in the light of this examination of Broadhurst, is that many respected and highly placed Western Australians were attracted to the Roebuck Bay Company on precisely the same sort of evidence as that used to attract the Victorians to Western Australia. It is also evident that the Directors of this Company had their eyes set on expansion further north to Camden Harbour and possibly further east to the Denison Plains.

Burges, the former manager went on to display his capabilities as a competent though very controversial pastoralist and pearler. McRae and Logue became well known and very successful. The capacities of the remainder of the staff of the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association unfortunately cannot be assessed. In the light of Burges' success at Andover however, it appears that, had the Company originally gone to Nickol Bay where the Aborigines were initially quite amenable, they may have achieved eventual success despite the problems, and would not have sustained the losses in people, stock and equipment that resulted in their settling at Roebuck Bay. The same could be said of the Camden Harbour people had they landed at Nickol Bay instead of Camden Harbour.

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The Camden Harbour Pastoral Association

This Association is of importance because Broadhurst initially joined it and because it sheds more light on William Harvey, who formed both this and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. It is also important because the Denison Plains Company people planned to land at Camden Harbour before proceeding overland and because Camden Harbour was to be the port for all their future activities and trading links. The fate of the Camden Harbour Association is also of interest because, had Broadhurst left with this group as originally planned, he would have suffered the same fate as that about to unfold. The Association is also of significance in this particular study, because a number of its members such as Charles Cane also joined the Denison Plains Company after the settlement at Camden Harbour collapsed. Such a willingness to try again in the face of the disaster at Camden Harbour again highlights one of the underlying reasons behind the lure of these large settlement companies, i.e. the 'little' man could realize the dream of land ownership for the relatively small sum of between £100-£200. This was about one or two years wages for the thrifty and hard working middle class.89

Of considerable importance also is the delay before news of the collapse at Camden Harbour reached Melbourne. This is a significant factor and it was sufficient to see Broadhurst and his colleagues leave for the Denison Plains via Camden Harbour after the settlement there had been virtually abandoned and on the very day the first untoward news of events at Camden Harbour appeared in the Melbourne press.

As indicated earlier, Harvey and his associates Messrs Autard, McMaikin, Murray, Buzzard and Tarrant, applied in January 1863, for permission to proceed to Camden Harbour each with a party of three men and stock. This application followed hard on the heels of the December 1862 Regulations opening the North District of Western Australia for the purposes of settlement.

89See Appendix one.
Their plans evolved during the ensuing year to the extent that a major company the "Camden Harbour Pastoral Association" was formed. A prospectus was issued on 15 June 1864 and was published in the Melbourne and Western Australian press. It also contained a pamphlet entitled, *Description of Camden Harbour, its Climate and Adjoining Country, with Map.*

The prospectus of the Association stated, albeit falsely at that stage, that the promoters had been empowered to settle 'the very superior well water pastoral and agricultural country around Camden Harbour' and this area was described as being 'without equal on the Continent of Australia'. It also contained a glowing description of the Harbour and the adjoining country including a section 400 Kilometres inland. The description was amply sprinkled with quotes from seemingly impeccable and high ranking sources. The men quoted, and the appellations attached to their names, (in order to convince the uncertain of the quality of the sources), were 'Sir' George Grey, A.C. Gregory 'now Surveyor General of Queensland', Captains Wickham, Stokes and King 'afterwards Admiral' and J.R. Elsey 'Surgeon to Gregory's North Australia Expedition of 1857'. Under the heading 'Communication and Markets,' it was correctly stated that Kupang, with a monthly Dutch government steamer link to the P&O steamers at Singapore, lay only 280 Nautical Miles away. Postal communications between those ports and Camden Harbour were envisaged. Surabaya, which lay 840 Nautical Miles distant was claimed to be able to supply

all the wants of civilised life... extensive wet and dry docks, iron foundries...engine works, and tonnage for the purposes of trade.

The company was to be established with a capital of £26,000 with 100 shares set at £100 each for single applicants and a further 100 at £160 per share for two applicants applying as a pair. With that and 4,000 head of cattle to be obtained from islands of Madura and Timor, the promoters hoped to

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90 *The Inquirer and Commercial News, 20/7/1864, (After this Inquirer) & Description of Camden Harbour, its Climate and Adjoining Country. With Map, op. cit.*
secure 4,000,000 acres of land. One share entitled the holder to a free passage, one year's rations, and a lease and pre-emptive right to 20,000 acres of land for 12 years rent free for the first four years. The Association was to be managed on site by a Superintendent, nominated by the promoters assisted by two elected members of the Association.\textsuperscript{91}

In commenting on the Association, the editors of the \textit{Inquirer} newspaper in Western Australia, noted some anomalies between the promises of a pre-emptive right to land and the provisions of the Land Regulations; but concluded in the hope and belief that the error would be rectified. The rules of the Association (which gave, under Rule 11, priority of land and stock to William Harvey and Cyrus Autard) were presented on 29 July to a meeting of 100 people held in Melbourne.\textsuperscript{92} The Western Australian press then noted with barely disguised alarm that the listeners at the meeting were,

somewhat deficient in information with respect to the locality as well as with respect to land regulations.. and ... whether the arrangements are of such a nature as to conduce to the welfare of the immigrants is open to speculation.\textsuperscript{93}

It appears from the account in the Inquirer that, at the meeting, the distance from Perth to Camden Harbour and from Camden Harbour to Adelaide was given as 280 miles (450 Kilometres) instead of a figure closer to five times that distance, and a range of hills which are close to the shore were apparently,

removed for the convenience of the adventurers some 40 miles inland ... the principal promoter of the scheme appears to be a Mr William Harvey who fills the combined offices of Secretary and Treasurer and who is with another gentleman (Autard) entitled according to the rules to priority of choice in selecting the land .... he (Harvey) talks of separating that part of the colony of Western Australia

\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Description of Camden Harbour, it's Climate and Adjoining Country}, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{Inquirer}, 14/9/1864.
\textsuperscript{93} ibid.
proper upon the strength of 4,000 head of cattle and a few ... all of yet are to be obtained.94

The map accompanying the prospectus appears in figure 10 along with an inset chart showing the whole of Australia and the islands to the North. Despite the gross understatement of distance and the misrepresentation of the meaning of sections of the 1862 Land Regulations at the public meeting, the map and chart presents an accurate picture and clearly shows the offending range of mountains close to the shore. A scale is provided in both and those who perused this material and the attached explorer’s accounts would have had no doubts in regard to the distances and of the description and location of the country in which they were interested.

Despite the lies and discrepancies propounded at the meeting, Harvey had 119 applicants for shares by 2 September, of which 55 subscriptions were paid up and a further 52 promised.95 The preamble and rules of the Association were confirmed at a meeting chaired by a Mr Hugh Murray in Melbourne on 20 September. In fairness to Harvey, Murray and their associates, it is evident from their private correspondence of the preceding month, that they were as dependent as their unfortunate shareholders in their absolute reliance on the word of others. It appears that some of Murray’s faith in the country was based on the word of an ‘old colonialist’ a Mr Barker who, he believed, had accompanied Grey in his explorations and who claimed to know a ‘good deal about Camden Harbour from good authority’. Barker claimed that he was ‘quite sure’ that ‘no person can do wrong’ in going to Camden Harbour and that it was ‘as fine a country as Victoria’.96

Harvey, who attempted to control the Association and to ‘have all the buying of the sheep and everything connected with the Company’ in his own hands was, apparently for these reasons, forced from the helm of the

94 My emphasis. At least some of the cattle were to be buffalo from Madura and Timor. *Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, Melbourne University Archives, BBUR 07/S1*. Here also is further evidence of Harvey’s desire to make the region self governing.
95 Andrew Murray to Hugh (White) 2/9/1864, (Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, Melbourne University Archives, BBUR 07/S1). James Hugh White was a Director of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company.
96 ibid.
Association on 6 October. Though he remained a shareholder, he then set about the formation of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, thereby ensuring that he would maintain a strong personal influence in the North and keep his dreams alive.

A circular was issued on 31 October, after Harvey had been debunked, indicating that arrangements had almost been finalized for the despatch of 3 vessels, the Stag with 10 shareholders, Helvetia with 20 and the Calliance with 40, to Camden Harbour. All the shareholders were required to feed, water and care for the stock and to 'take the part allotted to him and be subject to proper discipline'. In noting that they had not received a satisfactory answer from the Western Australian Government 'to the extent some anticipated' (presumably the extent of the land sought and the pre-emptive right issue), it was stated that land could still be had at the rate of 1000 Acres per two sheep landed.

With such obvious attractions, all the shares in the Association were taken up by the end of November. Seventy four applications (including those of Harvey, Autard and their four associates) were received at the offices of the Western Australian Government by 1 November 1864. By the end of the month, the Government had received a further 41 applications. To these names was added the note that 'a competent person would be named in charge when the expedition sails'. Among the number, under the leadership of this unnamed 'competent person', and therefore clearly not one of the Association's chief men, was C.E. Broadhurst of Saltwater River, Flemington (now Maribyrnong). His stated intention at the time of applying was to 'import stock if the country proved suitable'.

97 Notes from the Reminiscences of Mrs John McManus concerning her girlhood experiences at the Camden Harbour Settlement, 1864-5. (Latrobe Library, Melbourne. MS 6819, p.11) & Harvey to Editor, Geelong Advertiser 19/5/1865.
98 Copy of a Circular put out by the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, 31/10/1864, (Latrobe Library, Melbourne, MS 9594/74).
99 ibid.
100 Letters Forwarded to Settlers, CSO, 39/49, BL., and Applications to proceed to the North or East Districts of W.A. under the New Land Regulations of 23/12/1862, BL., Red. No. 1266, Acc 660.
In the meantime, on 16 November 1864, the first of the Company vessels, the \textit{Stag}, left Melbourne and was followed two days later by the, \textit{Calliance} and the \textit{Helvetia}. \textsuperscript{101}

In December 1864 a further 9 people applied for permission to travel to the Camden Harbour region including Robert Henson Broadhurst of Oakwood Park, Dandenong who was noted as being in charge of 3 men, 2 women and 8 boys. On the basis of numbers alone these people appear to have been immediate family of the brothers Robert Henson Broadhurst and Charles Edward Broadhurst together with their cousin A.D. Tootal whose name also appears on the application. On the basis of this evidence, it appears that R.H. Broadhurst was the leader of the family group in the venture to the North of Western Australia. Further evidence of this appears in the application of Simeon Müller who is noted as ‘one of R.H. Broadhurst’s group’. \textsuperscript{102}

As an indication of the speed with which these speculative ventures proceeded, the Colonial Secretary in Western Australia wrote on 24 December, in reply to Harvey (after the first vessels had left for Camden Harbour and after Harvey had been removed from office), giving permission for the applicants above, to proceed to Camden Harbour and to take up land as per the regulations. He also stated that he intended to appoint a Resident Magistrate to the area. \textsuperscript{103} How much this decision was a response to the threat presented by Harvey’s plans to ‘separate that part of the colony of Western Australia’ proper is not known. \textsuperscript{104}

In this letter permission was also given to C.E. Broadhurst, Lucas Simpson and Malcolm MacIntosh to travel to Camden Sound and to take up land as part of the Camden Harbour Pastoral and Agricultural Association. They did not do so however, and later joined the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. \textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Argus}, 16/11/1864,18/11/1864.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Applications to Proceed to the North District}, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{103} ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Inquirer}, 14/9/1864.
\textsuperscript{105} The name Lucas is believed to be in error unless it was a relative of David Simpson of the DPPC.
Harvey later forwarded letters of application for a further 29 Shareholders in the Camden Harbour venture, and on 23 February wrote again this time concerning his efforts to despatch ‘5 or 6 vessels of the Denison Plains Company’.\(^{106}\) In the letter, he enquired, whether the Government would be ‘inclined in any way’ to subsidize a steamer to operate as a trader between Perth, Camden Harbour and Surabaya.\(^{107}\) He also enquired whether the Governor would see fit to direct that his and Autard’s claims for priority of choice of land and stock at Camden Harbour in accordance with Rule 11 of the Association Rules, would be respected. The Colonial Secretary politely informed him that, though there was ‘little doubt’ that there would be profitable employment for a steamer, the government did not see fit to subsidize it. He also advised that they could not allow the import of cattle from islands, such as Madura and Timor, as proposed in the prospectus of the Association. A less polite inter office memo, on the subject of Autard’s and Harvey’s claim for priority of stock and land at Camden Harbour, read that ‘the writer or any of his friends will have opportunities of doing this on arrival at Port Camden’.\(^{108}\) This raises the question whether the Colonial Office were by then aware that Harvey and his associates had little intention of actually hazarding themselves in the North at this early stage and that their schemes were based on risks being taken solely by others.

The Association vessels subsequently arrived at Camden Harbour and deposited stock, people and stores, in the searing and almost unbearable heat of mid December. Almost immediately there were deaths from sunstroke and the Calliance was wrecked soon after arrival, adding further to the despair.\(^{109}\) What transpired appears in a number of accounts, including one by a Mary Field (later Mrs MacManus) whose father ‘badly wanted land at the time but could not get it in Victoria’ and so joined the ill fated company.\(^{110}\) She

\(^{106}\) CSR, 566/18-20, BL.
\(^{107}\) ibid.
\(^{108}\) ibid.
\(^{110}\) *Notes from the Reminiscences of Mrs John McManus*, op. cit.
recorded that though the Aborigines initially brought in supplies of fresh fish, relations soon turned sour and there were a number of attacks, one resulting in the death of a European, Constable Gee. Another account, that of Jacob Hindaugh, also indicated that, though the Aborigines on nearby Augustus Island were friendly and showed them running water, there were attacks by the mainland Aborigines.\textsuperscript{111} The temperature was measured at 128° Fahrenheit (53° Celsius) even during a heavy rainstorm in early January. The long awaited showers initially served to alleviate the settler’s discomfort, but it soon added to it by inundating everything and being followed by swarms of mosquitoes and sandflies. It was soon realized that the country was not suitable and many settlers left on the vessels by which they came. Hindaugh noted that ‘the Association is thoroughly mismanaged, everyone does as he likes’. Stock losses mounted and in an atmosphere of growing despair and extreme discomfort, many people left by return vessel or within a few months of their arrival. One man sold two of his shares in the Association, along with his horse, saddle and some flour, all for £8. and then departed.\textsuperscript{112} Those intending to stay on purchased the effects of those leaving at very low prices and some went exploring. A store was built of boards and galvanized iron by those remaining and some ‘fine runs’ were selected. Despite this, they also eventually realised that their cause was hopeless. After attending a meeting, at which the Reverend Tanner read Captain Jarman’s account of Nickol Bay and Tien Tsin Harbour, they resolved to go there.\textsuperscript{113}

When the newly appointed Resident Magistrate, R.J Sholl, arrived on 17 February 1865, only 1354 sheep of the original 4,500 landed, were alive.\textsuperscript{114} He was most surprised to find on landing, that there were only 99 people left at the settlement. As indicated, many of the settlers had left in the same vessels on which they came, despite having to proceed to ports such as Surabaya and to

\textsuperscript{111}\textit{Diary of Jacob Hindaugh, Nov 1864-March 1865. Voyage from Williamstown to Camden Harbour, Western Australia, on the Barque Stag, with a Shipment of live stock, attempts to establish runs.} (Latrobe Library, Melbourne, MS: 9573/74).
\textsuperscript{112}\textit{Diary of T.C. Sholl.}, Battye Library (TCS, QB Sho), 4/3/1865. TCS, 4/3/1865, BL in future references.
\textsuperscript{113}\textit{Hindaugh Diary}, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Argus}, 19/5/1865.
abandon their belongings in order to do so. Fifty three of those settlers remaining, were arranging to return by the Sholl’s own transport the *Tien Tsin*. On Sholl’s arrival, Tanner, who represented the group informed him that it was the intention of the majority to quit the region. He also inquired whether the entitlements to land gained by landing stock at Camden Harbour could be transferred to Nickol Bay or to other parts of the North District.\footnote{Rev. Tanner to R. J. Sholl, 24/2/1865, PR. 640, BL.} Within a short time the settlement that had such promise as to attract not only the shareholders, but a government party consisting of a Magistrate, surveyors, clerk, storekeeper, pensioners, police and artisans to a cost of £5000, was abandoned.\footnote{Battye, (1924), op. cit., p. 270.} An illustration of the location and of the Government Camp appears in figure 13. From an examination of these it can be seen that the Government Camp was substantial and well laid out with at least two ‘permanent’ buildings. Somewhat surprisingly, the settlers and Sholl’s party were separated by a considerable distance, though both were on fresh water streams.

By way of some explanation on behalf of those explorers who helped contribute to the rush to Camden Harbour, it should be noted that when Sholl first arrived in the harbour, he described from the deck ‘bold headlands clothed to the summit with grass and herbage of a most vivid green.’\footnote{Inquirer, 26/4/1865, & Diary of Robert Sholl, Resident Magistrate Camden Harbour, Battye Library, Acc 194, to 24/11/1865, the date of his arrival at Nickol Bay. (In following references, RJS, BL).} Sholl was also to declare on his arrival on shore that ‘the appearance of the place is very deceptive. I do not wonder at the description of the former explorers’.\footnote{ibid.} It appears that the very height of the grass, served to hide underfoot, a country so stony, as to defy any attempts to utilize it.

In examining the human aspects of the disaster, Sholl reported that the shareholders were a ‘good class’ of people and that most were in the trades, farming small homesteads, or were squatters or connected with ‘squatting establishments’.
Figure 13 (a)

*Camden Harbour showing the Government Camp, the Association Camp and the wreck of the Calliance.*

Figure 13 (b)

*The Government Camp at Camden Harbour, showing ‘permanent’ buildings and evidence of considerable official expense in establishing a presence there.*

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119 Contained in a letter from Richard Daly a member of the Government party with Sholl. Reproduced with permission of the family. WAM photo-file, MA. 805.

120 ibid.
Sholl believed that, to a large extent, the shareholders must have been 'thrifty and industrious' due to the need to raise £100 per share. In agreeing with Hindaugh however, Sholl stated that the shareholders were, 'without unity', that they had no leaders and were without definite arrangements made prior to embarkation. In the confusion and the lack of direction, stores and provisions were damaged by an exceptionally high tide, and were left rotting on the beach.

It appears that, as the majority of the Association people were shareholders, the appointed leaders, who were also shareholders, had difficulty in establishing a chain of command and the 'system' required to get the venture going and to help those in need to fight through the problems that began to beset the group. In the light of Sholl's comments one can only assume that the effect on the majority on landing at Camden Harbour was one of immediate disillusion. This apparently resulted, in a complete breakdown in morale and an immediate desire, on the part of the majority, to cut their losses and return as fast as they could. When Sholl arrived, he was to blame those remaining for what he saw as laziness in not salvaging the goods left on the beach.

When, in his official capacity, he was beset with the trials and tribulations of those remaining, he came to see them all in a less than positive light. From the diaries of Hindaugh and Mary Field who were there before Sholl, there appears evidence of mismanagement, though there was also order for a period, a desire to fight it out on the part of those such as Hindaugh, McRae and Hooley and a very good explanation for the chaos wrought by the decision of the majority to abandon the area as soon as possible. Because the costs of freight and a return passage were high and because many of the vessels were not returning direct to Melbourne, but were proceeding North to the nearby islands or the 'Straits Settlements', few shareholders were in a position to salvage much from the disaster and subsequently abandoned their property. They then left their goods and the Association stock and stores to those remaining. When the Sholls themselves finally left for example, they also were
forced to abandon stores, buildings and stock. Space was so limited on their vessel that Sholl was forced to lash some of his effects to the outside of the ship’s gunwhale.121

While all this was happening others were gearing up to leave Melbourne for Camden Harbour. Even as late as April 1865, when the settlement had been abandoned, there were advertisements in the Melbourne press for intending shareholders wishing to secure the first choice of town and suburban lots at the ‘Government township of Elliot now under survey’ at Camden Harbour.122 The delay in the mails ensured that news of the collapse at Camden Harbour was slow in filtering to Melbourne.123 An example of the length and of the effect of these delays can be seen in the letters Tanner wrote to the press condemning the first letters from Camden Harbour, which emanated from a Mr Wilson. These were dated 24 December 1864 and spoke of splendid water and grassy plains. They were published in the Melbourne Leader of 25 March 1865 further adding to the resolve of those in Melbourne, such as Broadhurst who left in the following month, to migrate to Western Australia. Tanner, whose contradictory letters of mid February were published in the Melbourne Argus on 19 May 1865, described Wilson’s letter as ‘a fabrication of falsehoods ...[the]... fertile imagination of his own creative brain’.124 A disastrous three month delay in the receipt of news from Camden Harbour in Melbourne is illustrated here and was to be a crucial factor in Broadhurst’s decision to migrate to Western Australia. Had this irrefutable news of the problems at Camden Harbour reached Melbourne earlier, Broadhurst and his colleagues

121TCS, 24/10/1865, BL
122 Argus, 1/4/1865.
123 It took a month to six weeks to get news from the North to Melbourne via Fremantle under favourable circumstances. In unfavourable circumstances the delays were much longer. The reply to the letters from the north took a similar length of time to return from Melbourne. For information sent via the mail, to become general knowledge, often took longer. Wilson wrote on 24 December 1864 praising Camden Harbour for example, and his account was not published in Melbourne until 25 March. Sholl’s account of the disaster at Camden Harbour was not published until 26 April in Perth and even later in Melbourne. The delays here are inordinate, however. More representative of the delays after settlement are those experienced when Broadhurst wrote to Harvey on 5 May from Nickol Bay. This letter was received in Melbourne on 15 June. See section on the Denison Plains Company at Nickol Bay.
124 Tanner to Editor, the Inquirer, 3/5/1865.
may have had time to reconsider their decision to migrate and may have refused to sail.

The eventual publication of Sholl’s and Tanner’s accounts of the debacle at Camden Harbour in Western Australia, and in the Melbourne press destroyed the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association in Melbourne however.\(^{125}\) Other articles followed, one stating that the venture ‘promises to benefit no one but the projectors’, and that the land selected was very poor, ‘nothing but a rocky desert’.\(^{126}\) Another account, appearing in the *Argus* was doubly discouraging, for under the heading ‘Camden Harbour a Failure’ it related the fate of Panter, Harding and Goldwyer, the three men killed by the Aborigines near Roebuck Bay and gave an account of the wreck of the *Calliance*.

Broadhurst and his family were thus very fortunate in avoiding the Camden Harbour tragedy, though their reasons for not leaving with the Association and for opting to join the Denison Plains Company are not known. One reason may be that the Denison Plains Pastoral Company also offered the opportunity of employment as a means of offsetting the initial costs of the shares necessary to secure a passage and the allocation of stock and lands. To the frugal or less well off, such a prospect would have been very attractive indeed.

**The Denison Plains Pastoral Company**

Thus the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association died, though it will be seen that Harvey clung to his ideas of a settlement at Camden Harbour for almost a decade after the failure of settlement there.

Harvey lost control of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association on 6 October 1864 and immediately set about the formation of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company.\(^{127}\) A prospectus was drawn up and published, presumably late, in 1864 and the Company itself was registered on 27 January 1865.\(^{128}\)

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126 *Argus*, 22/5/1865.
127 *Harvey to Editor, The Geelong Advertiser*, 19/5/1865.
128 *North Western Australia, its Soil, Climate and Capacity for Pastoral Enterprise, with map*. (Robert Mackay, Glasgow Book Warehouse, Melbourne, 1864), BL, Q 333.7, NOR., contains the prospectus of the Company and other information.
Company prospectus was published in the Melbourne press the following
day. The advertisement containing the document stated that the Company
would occupy the 'first class pastoral country' extending between Sturt Creek
(on which the Denison Plains lay) and the Camden Harbour settlement.
Interested persons were invited to obtain a 'full description' of the venture and
of the country and climate (with map) and to secure one of the 500 shares at
£100 each with a deposit of £5. The agent was William Harvey.

Those who enquired further of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, or
who paid the £5 deposit required to secure their share, received the 'full
description' in the form of a pamphlet entitled *North Western Australia, its
Soil, Climate, and Capacity for Pastoral Enterprise*. See Appendix three.
Under the heading Denison Plains Pastoral Company, appeared a reprint of the
regulations appearing on the 23 December 1862 in the Western Australian
Government Gazette. Also included were application forms to take up 'runs', a
description of Camden Harbour, the report of Dr Martin of the Roebuck Bay
and of the Camden Harbour Regions, Stokes' analysis of Camden Harbour
itself and a description of the Glenelg river region. The Prince Regent River
area was also described. Grey's analysis of Camden Harbour and the Glenelg
River was included, along with positive comments on the suitability of the area
for cotton and other crops. There followed an analysis, based on Gregory's
This included, amongst other things, a description of the climate and country
in the Denison Plains area which were described as 'vast level plains of rich
soil covered with beautiful grass'.

Battye's claim that the Denison Plains Company people did not even know
where the Plains lay, nor the class of country there, is not correct. The
pamphlet is quite specific on those points and it also contains a map clearly
showing the position of the Plains and their relationship to other areas and

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129 *The Age*, 28/1865.
130 See footnote 128 above.
131 Battye (1924), op. cit., p. 270-1.
features of importance. The pamphlet also contains an analysis by the botanist Dr F. Mueller who accompanied the Gregorys’ on their explorations in 1855-1856 and who was, according to the Broadhurst family, a personal friend of Charles Edward Broadhurst. In Mueller’s account appear statements supporting Gregory’s analyses and some of the co-ordinates in Latitude and Longitude of the explorations undertaken.

In the document there also appears a chapter headed ‘The Advantages of the Geographical Position of North West Australia.’ In this section, it was noted that, there was a monthly mail steam communication run by the Dutch Government based at Kupang in Timor which was accurately estimated at only 280 nautical miles distant from Camden Harbour. It was noted, again quite accurately, that Surabaya was only 840 Nautical miles distant and that labour of a ‘good class’ was available at Calcutta, Singapore or China. The North West coast, in the opinion of the pamphleteer, commanded a shorter and cheaper transit to and from Europe than any other part of the Australian continent. This indisputable advantage was made further evident on the accompanying chart. The possible construction of a telegraphic link across the Australian continent through Camden Harbour and on to Timor, Java, India and Britain was also mentioned.

In publicizing these advantages, and in commending the Denison Plains region further inland, the pamphleteer noted that the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association had just left Melbourne and stated that the Association and the Denison Plains Company would be the ‘precursors of many more enterprises’ until the whole of the ‘first class’ pastoral land in the north-west was taken up.

Included in the pamphlet was the Denison Plains Pastoral Company prospectus. The purchase of two shares entitled the holder to a free passage with one ton of goods, four year’s rations, 20 cows or 40 ewes, a lease for 12 years of 20,000 acres with no rent for the first four years and a prior right of purchase of the allocated land. A scale of weekly rations was given and a

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132 Pers. Com., Jane Brummitt to the author, 15/10/1989, based on the reminiscences of Mrs Marjorie Darling, Broadhurst’s granddaughter.
balance sheet also appeared. The possibility of the purchase of a small steamer for £3,000 in order to link Camden Harbour with the north was also mentioned. It was noted in the pamphlet that the Company's enterprise would be managed for four years after the landing of the first stock under the auspices of the Company. After that time, the Company's leases, assets and stock would be distributed among the shareholders *pro rata*. The Company was then to be dissolved with each lease holder in possession of property to the value of £818 for an outlay of only £200. An increase of 70% of all stock landed was expected by June 1869 and an 80% increase was expected in the horses landed.

Lies and exaggerations were as much a part of this venture as they were of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and to a lesser extent the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association. The Company prospectus appearing in the *Geelong Advertiser* of 8 April for example, claimed that the Company had obtained 'final permission',

> to proceed to and occupy 5,000,000 acres of the first rate pastoral and agricultural country in the rear of and extending from the Camden Harbour settlement to Sturt Creek including the Denison Plains.

The Company was actually entitled, as a single entity, to only 100,000 acres, and this was clearly stated in the Western Australian Government's Regulations which accompanied the Company prospectus. It appears, from this and other evidence that, a similar disregard for the truth such as that shown in the public meetings held to form the Camden Harbour venture, was apparent in the meetings that led to the formation of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. Other, more serious, evidence for this surfaces some years after the eventual collapse of the Company, in the very acrimonious public debate that was to rage in the Perth press between one staff member and shareholder of the Denison Plains Company, Dr Thomas Baynton and the Company agent, William Harvey.
The question whether stock could actually make the untried journey from Camden Harbour to the Denison Plains, was one instance of deception cited by Baynton. At no stage does the question appear to have been raised by the trusting and gullible settlers before they departed Melbourne. Baynton claimed that in February 1865, Harvey had even suppressed information he had received from Kenneth Brown who had visited Camden Harbour two years earlier. Brown had apparently written warning the Company that it was inadvisable, if not impossible, to attempt to move stock overland from there. Baynton claimed that this information had been received by the Directors before the first of the Denison Plains vessels had even been chartered.\textsuperscript{133}

Harvey replied to Baynton, to the effect that, he had received Brown’s letter in February 1865 \textsuperscript{134} and that he had tabled the Document at the Company meeting held that month. As further evidence of some impropriety in the formation of the Company, there had never been, according to Baynton, a meeting of shareholders. As far as he was concerned, ‘everything in fact was studiously kept secret from the shareholders’. \textsuperscript{135}

On sailing from Melbourne all of us were under the impression full half of the shares were actually sold..... if we had known that only about forty of five hundred shares had been sold - we should have refused to sail. Our true position was kept a profound secret. No meeting of shareholders was ever called, no accounts produced...\textsuperscript{136}

By this time, news of the collapse at Camden Harbour had still not filtered through to Melbourne, and the advertisements for the new Company continued in an aura of optimism in the Victorian press.

\textsuperscript{133}Baynton to the Editor, Perth Gazette and W.A. Times, 16/11/1866, published 23/11/1866. In following references, Perth Gazette.

\textsuperscript{134}Harvey to the Editor, 26/1/1867. Published in the Perth Gazette, 22/3/1867.

\textsuperscript{135}Baynton to the Editor, Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{136}Baynton to his Father, 20/2/1866, published in the Perth Gazette, 8/6/1866.
In March, with reference to the impending settlement of the North-West, the *Geelong Advertiser* quoted the Western Australian newspaper, the *Inquirer*, stating that

we do expect that it will be a territory where sugar and cotton can be raised in abundance and with ease...with admirable harbours...proximity to the labour markets of China...[there was]...every inducement for an investment of large amounts of capital.137

In late March, there appeared a note that advice had been received by the *Stag* which had proceeded on to Surabaya from Camden Harbour that the country was 'quite as fine' as has been represented, that the pasture was 'very grand [and the] natives... friendly'.138

Thus, due to the delays and inaccuracies with the early mails, Harvey himself was unaware of the developments in the North-West and immediately he received notice of Wilson's glowing letter of the conditions at Camden Harbour, wrote to the Colonial Secretary noting,

the settlers [at Camden Harbour] according to my advice seemed well satisfied and speak in high terms of the locality in which they have been resident about 12 days. The return of the *Tien Tsin* to Perth will no doubt give us later intelligence on arrival of the next mail... instead of two vessels of about 500 ton each, the Denison Plains Company have charted the *Warrior* of 1,065 tons registered to sail on 3 April ex Hobsons Bay.139

Broadhurst, who was clearly not one of the 'key' figures in the Camden Harbour venture, was however, a key figure in Harvey's new scheme as a Director and Manager or 'Superintendent of Stock and Stations'. His involvement in the Company as a Manager and Director, and his conduct in the formation and subsequent collapse of the Company will now be examined.

137 *Geelong Advertiser*, 17/3/1865
139 *William Harvey to Col. Sec.*, 25/3/1865, CSR 566/29, BL.
(iii) Broadhurst and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company

In early February 1865, the Denison Plains Company prospectus which had appeared in the local press, was amended and for the first time, a list of the Directors of the Company also appeared. In order of appearance in the advertisement they were:

Charles Edward Broadhurst of Marybynong [sic],
Charles Wedge of Dandenong,
James Hugh White of Melbourne,
William Harvey of Melbourne, and
John Sinclair Campbell of Mortchup.

The Bankers, were the Oriental Bank and the solicitors O.L. Hanbury.140

Broadhurst's position at the head of the list is an indication of his standing in the community and of the manner in which his involvement was expected to influence others to join the concern. Charles Wedge was a former 'Magistrate' in Victoria adding further to an aura of respectability.141

The part Broadhurst played in the deception surrounding the formation of the Denison Plains Company is not known. He was however one of what was later described as a 'self elected and irresponsible' Board of Directors, and came to make a number of questionable decisions.142 Kenneth Brown's letter casting doubts on the ability of stock to make the journey between Camden Harbour and the Denison Plains for example, was apparently considered at a meeting of the Board of Directors.143 Though the discussion and subsequent decision of the Directors is not known, Broadhurst as a Director of the Company must be held responsible, at least in part, for the decision to disregard the contents of the letter and to carry on to Camden Harbour. Another example is the leasing arrangement by which he was able to avoid having to pay for the four shares required to transport his family and goods to

140 The Age, 20/2/1865-14/3/1865, and the Geelong Advertiser, 8/3/1865.
141 TCS, 12/12/1865, BL.
142 Baynton to his Father, op. cit.,
143 Harvey to the Editor Perth Gazette and W.A. Times, 26/1/1867, published 22/3/1867.
the North of Western Australia. It appears that, on 17 March 1865, just before the projected departure for Western Australia, Broadhurst offered his Arab 'entire' (stallion), Kochlani, that he had purchased in India for 'around £500' for use by the Company in lieu of four fully paid up shares. He also added the rider that the horse should revert to his ownership after four years for the sum of £200 payable by the Company.144 By this means, he avoided paying for the four shares required to transport his family. The offer was accepted by the other Directors. Baynton avoided using Broadhurst's name and referred to him instead as 'one of the Directors', but saw this as clear evidence of impropriety, and valued the stallion, which he later described as 'worthless' at £60.145 On the other hand, the £500 Broadhurst claimed to have paid for the pure bred Arab stallion, compares favourably with the sum of £300 paid by the North-West pioneers John and Emma Withnell for a thoroughbred Clydesdale stallion in the same era.146 From Broadhurst's point of view, the leasing of his stallion in lieu of four shares was a logical move to make. From the Directors point of view, such a horse would have proved a valuable asset in servicing the 'well bred' mares the Company was to take to the North-West. For Broadhurst, the transaction was to prove a great financial saving for a man having to transport his family to the North.

Despite the lies and the impropriety, and the unanswered questions relating to Broadhurst's part in the deception, the Directors and promoters of the Company did quite well in gearing up the Company. By April there were 300 applicants for shares of which 45 were paid for and 20 were allocated free of charge.147

144 ibid., 16/11/1866.
145 Baynton to his Father, 8/6/1866.
146 Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p. 33.
147 William Harvey to the Editor Perth Gazette, 22/9/1866, Published in the Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866.
An advertisement for the Denison Plains Pastoral Company showing, for the first time, a list of Directors with Broadhurst's name at the head.148

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Public Companies.

THE DENISON PLAINS PASTORAL COMPANY

(Limited).

Registered on 27th January, 1865, under "The Companies Statute, 1864."

Capital £50,000, in 500 Shares of £100 each.

Deposit, £25 per Share.

DIRECTORS:

Charles Edward Broadhurst, Esq., Maribyrnong.
Charles Wedge, Esq., J.P., Dandenong.
James Hugh White, Esq., Melbourne.
William Harvey, Esq., do.
John Sinclair Campbell, Esq., Mortchup.

BANKERS:

The Oriental Banking Corporation.

SOLICITOR:

O. L. Hanbury, Esq.

This Company has obtained final permission from the West Australian Government under their liberal Land Regulations to proceed to and occupy 5,000,000 acres of the first-rate pastoral and agricultural country in the rear of and extending from the Camden Harbor Settlement to Sturt Creek, including Denison Plains.

The holder or holders of two shares in the Denison Plains Pastoral Company (Limited), will be entitled to one free passage, with one ton of goods, by a first-class vessel to the Company's settlement, to four years' rations there, and to the occupation for twelve years of twenty thousand acres of land, with forty head of oves, or their equivalent in cattle, to stock the same, at no rent for the first four years, five pounds per annum for the second four years, and ten pounds per annum for the last four years; including in the lease a prior right of purchase over any portion of the land leased, above forty acres, at the fixed price of 10s per acre, during the first five years of the occupation of the land.

The company's enterprise will be under one general management for four years from the date of the first landing of the company's expedition. At the end of fifteen months from landing, the leasehold of 20,000 acres will be distributed by lot among the shareholders, who may then reside on, improve and stock them; and, at the close of the fourth year, they will be legally transferred in tenure of the Land Regulations of Western Australia, along with the live stock and other assets of the company.

The arrangement of the company being now nearly matured, their vessels will SAIL from Hobson's Bay for the Government township of ELHURST, Port Camden, Camden Harbor, as follows, namely:—

Two Vessels on or about 20th MARCH, 1865
Two do 16th APRIL, do
Two do 16th MAY., do

Members proceeding at each date must pay the amount of their shares, in full, before sailing; and the share-list will be open at par until all the shares are taken up.

Every particular, with blank letters of application for shares, may be obtained from the undersigned on forwarding six fourpenny postage stamps; and all such applications must be addressed, accompanied by a remittance of £5 per share, to WILLIAM HARVEY, Agent for the Denison Plains Pastoral Company (Limited), at the offices of the company, 60 Bourke street west, Melbourne.

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148 The Age, 14/3/1865.
The Departure for the North-West

In April 1865, the first Company vessel, the 1065 ton Ship, Warrior, began loading at Port Phillip for the Denison Plains via Camden Harbour with the intention of transporting a small group comprising the 'staff' of the Company under the leadership of Dr Baynton and the Directors Broadhurst and Wedge. Their purpose was to prepare the way for those following.

The group has been referred to by most commentators as shareholders in the Company, but was noted by the press in Western Australia as 'staff'. Their contemporary L.C. Burges, the manager at Roebuck Bay, stated that they were 'chiefly employees of the company', though it is now clear that many, if not the majority, were both. Thus, not only were they staff sent to establish the Company before the others arrived, but many were also shareholders or their representatives.

It appears that Broadhurst and Wedge, by virtue of having taken employment in the Company (Broadhurst as manager and Wedge as surveyor), may have had to resign as Directors. No 'hard' evidence has been found for this, though the reasons for this belief will become apparent in the following.

A list of the Company members that boarded the Warrior is reproduced below in the order of their accommodation on board as an indication of their apparent social or economic status. The names of the shareholders are underlined. W.F. Tays, (apparently a Nova Scotian), is known to be a shareholder in the company but does not appear on this list. He apparently followed the group out on another vessel and appears to have been the only one to do so.

149 Inquirer, 10/5/1865.
150 Burges, op. cit., p.4.
151 The list is a compilation of sources, notably Camden Harbour, Names of Settlers and Others, PR 640, BL., the diary of RJ Sholl containing on the flyleaf a list of people in the district, RJS, BL., and a list of shareholders appearing in a petition to Broadhurst, CSR 603/119, BL.
152 RJS, 13/12/1865, BL.
Staff and Shareholders of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company on board Warrior

First cabin:

Matilda Anderson, 20, (single), English, (servant to the Wedges).
Dr. Thomas Baynton, 34, (single), English.
Charles Edward Broadhurst, 35, English.
Eliza Broadhurst, 25, Irish.
Florance Constantine Broadhurst, 4.
Charles Henson Broadhurst, 3.
J.C. Brodie, 32, (single), English.
Robert Edmonstone, 35, (single), English.
George Hodgkinson, 20, (single), English.
Bridget Hinchley, 22, (single), Irish, (servant to the Broadhurst's).
W.I. Sayer, 43, (single), English. (See W.F. Sayer, below).
Harry Whitall Venn, 23, (single), English.
Charles Wedge, 55, English.
Frances B. Wedge, 30, English.
Frederick Wedge, 9.
John Wedge, 7.
Charles Wedge, 5.
Fanny Wedge, 4.
Jessie Wedge, 1.

Third Cabin:

George Bush, (Bushe?), 35, (married), English.
Charles Cane, 23, English.
Robert Frazer, (Fraser?) 33, (single), Scotch.
S. Fillchey (Filchy?), 28, (single), English.
John Graham, 28, (single), Scotch.
W. Gardiner, 25, (single), English.
Benjamin Hanlon, (single), English.
Henry Horace Hicks, 32, (single), English.
William Jeffrey, 30, (married), Scotch.
Roderick Louden McKay, 29, (single), Scotch.
Malcolm Macintosh, 29, (single), Scotch.
Simeon Müller, 35, German.
Mrs. Müller, 33, German.
Eda Müller, 8.
Harry Müller, 7.
Bertha Müller, 2.
Carnot Müller, 1, (boy).
David Simpson, 25, (single), Scotch.
Mr.W.F. Sayer, 50, (single), English (Sawyer, Sawer, Sayers or Sayes?).
Of the twenty-three adult males on the list, nineteen were shareholders. Some like Broadhurst, Müller, Wedge and Baynton had at least four shares each. Only four of the men were not shareholders, and two of the women were servants, one to the Broadhurst’s and the other to the Wedges. Of the five women three were married to shareholders and they had eleven children between them, ranging from nine years of age to one year. One woman, Eliza Broadhurst, was six months pregnant. The careers of each of the members of the Company will be briefly outlined in Appendix five so that Broadhurst’s achievements can be placed in a ‘Company’ perspective and for those interested in the Company itself.

An interesting feature of the Denison Plains venture is that few of the Denison Plains contingent received permission to proceed North at all. Before they left, for example, only Broadhurst, Macintosh and Simpson had received permission to land before they left Melbourne and then only under the auspices of the Camden Harbour venture. In April 1865, for example, the application of Denison Plains Company members, Alexander Cane and J.C. Brodie were received in Perth and accordingly lodged in the register.153 No mention of the Denison Plains is made on their application. It appears also that no application was forwarded on behalf of the Company itself or for any of the members, in any context other than the Camden Harbour scheme.154 An indication of the confusion that reigned in Government circles over the actual membership of the Camden Harbour Association and Denison Plains Company can be seen in the case of Cane. After the collapse at Camden Harbour, he retreated to Fremantle and re-applied on 27 April 1865 to proceed back north, this time in charge of 138 sheep and three men. The authorities noted upon receipt of his application, that Cane was a ‘returned settler from Port Camden where he has landed stock without permission’. Cane and others of the Denison Plains Company, such as Simeon Müller, David Simpson and Thomas Baynton left

154CSR, 603/132, BL.
Melbourne before they received their permission to land in the North. Whether the rest of the ‘staff’ and shareholders in the Company were aware that applications on their behalf had not been forwarded on to the Western Australian Government by Harvey, their agent, is not known. The evidence suggests that they did not know this or that they were unaware of the ramifications and proceeded on board the Warrior in ignorance of the situation.

Joining the ‘staff’ on board the Warrior were 2,200, supposedly ‘two tooth’, pure bred Merino ewes, 14 Hereford cows, two bulls, 34 ‘well bred’ mares and Broadhurst’s ‘pure Arab sire’ Kochlani. Also on-board were 80 tons fodder, and quantity of Company stores together with a general cargo, specie and other passengers for Fremantle. The sheep were purchased from a Mr Colin Campbell and Broadhurst apparently selected the mares, cows and bulls.

On 13 April, the day they were due to leave, the first hint of problems at Camden Harbour reached the Melbourne based newspaper, the Argus and appeared in the form of a letter from a Captain Dow. He cautioned his fellow Victorians against ‘needlessly embarking’ on the venture. In his letter, he explained that, a number of disillusioned shareholders, had left Camden Harbour on board the Stag in November 1864 soon after their arrival. Though returning to Melbourne, they were forced to proceed first to Surabaya where they were met by Dow in his vessel. Dow noted that their account of the new settlement was ‘anything but flattering’, and that though most were forced to abandon all their possessions, they expressed their relief at escaping from the place. Dow also noted that the stock were dying through lack of rain. He advised that as the Stag had left Surabaya before him and was expected at any

155 ibid.
156 Baynton claimed that they were ‘nothing but weaned lambs’ in his correspondence with his father of 20/2/1866, op. cit.
157 Argus, 27/5/1865. The details of the stock differ from that recorded in the Perth based Inquirer, 10/5/1865 and Harvey’s letter to the editor of the Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866.
158 Harvey to Editor Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866, op. cit., It is not known if Colin Campbell was related to the DPPC Director, John Sinclair Campbell.
time in Melbourne, those intending to depart for Camden Harbour should at least await her arrival ‘before finally making up their minds’. He went on to add that,

The parties, I conversed with may or may not be croakers...but a few days will decide the matter, during which it is better to wait patiently, and save perhaps hereafter a deal of regret for taking a rash step.\textsuperscript{159}

Harvey claims to have distributed three copies of the paper amongst the shareholders just prior to their departure, so that they might have the ‘very latest intelligence.’\textsuperscript{160} Again Broadhurst and Wedge must be taken to task for not enforcing a delay and in failing to inquire into Dow’s claims. As Manager and as the Director whose names headed those of the Company in advertisements, Broadhurst was clearly a powerful and well respected man and was in a position to call a halt, at least for a few days, until more definite ‘intelligence’ about Camden Harbour could be had from those aboard the \textit{Stag}. Wedge as a former Magistrate in Victoria was in a similar position of influence and could have exerted it here in an effort to enforce a delay.\textsuperscript{161}

Despite Dow’s letter, the \textit{Warrior} left Hobson’s Bay on 13 April and while they were \textit{en route} and only a few days out of Fremantle, Sholl’s and Tanner’s accounts of the debacle at Camden Harbour were published in the Western Australian press.\textsuperscript{162} There, the hope was expressed that, if the \textit{Warrior} called at Fremantle ‘a change of destination may be effected’ to Roebuck Bay, Nickol Bay or the De Grey River where the ‘settlers are not displeased with the country’.

Thus, while Broadhurst and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company on board the \textit{Warrior} were on route for their destination via Camden Harbour, fears were being publicly voiced about their future welfare.

\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Argus}, 12/4/1865.
\textsuperscript{160} Harvey to Editor \textit{Perth Gazette}, 16/11/1866, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{TCS}, 12/12/1865, BL.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Inquirer}, 26/4/1865.
When the vessel finally arrived at Fremantle on 2 May, it was to an expectant and concerned local populace. Governor Hampton was keen to make the situation at Camden Sound known and sent the Colonial Secretary, F.P. Barlee, on board immediately the Warrior anchored. According to the press, which allocated quite a deal of space to the new arrivals, 'the bare facts were stated and no advice given.' Broadhurst then went to Perth for interviews with the Governor and Surveyor General. According to the press, when Broadhurst realized that Camden Harbour was unsuitable, he then made up his mind to go to Roebuck Bay and, if it were suitable, to stay there. Broadhurst was then given a police express to Albany such that letters of advice to his Directors in Melbourne could be speedily despatched. In those letters, he apparently suggested that no further ships be sent by the Company until he was able to ascertain the quality of land in the Roebuck Bay region. It was also noted in the press that, should the country between Roebuck Bay and the Denison Plains prove passable, they expected that a settlement would still be made there. The opinion was offered by the correspondent that Broadhurst and Company might find easier access to the Denison Plains from Roebuck Bay where the press believed that the country was 'an undulating well watered and well grassed park... passable for travellers'.

Battye claims that at this stage,

the party seems to have practically abandoned there and then any intention of seeking the Denison Plains.

Though there is clearly confusion on this matter in the local press, Battye again appears to have been in error. Indications of an intention to proceed from Roebuck Bay to the Denison Plains are seen in an article carrying a public letter of thanks from the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, for the assistance rendered by the Western Australians. This was signed by Broadhurst, Wedge and Dr Baynton. In publishing this letter, the editors of the

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163 Inquirer, 10/5/1865.
164 Harvey to Col. Sec., 25/5/1865, Published in the Inquirer of 14/6/1865.
165 Battye (1915), op. cit., p. 24.
Inquirer noted that, a portion of the stock from the Warrior would be removed from Roebuck Bay to the Denison Plains as soon as time allowed a proper examination of the country. 166

Whilst in Perth, Broadhurst obtained the services of a convicted 'Swan River Native' called 'Harry' and returned back on board with his new labourer to resume the voyage north.

In the meantime, news of the collapse at Camden Harbour appeared in the supplement to the Melbourne Argus on 19 May, and this not only destroyed the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association in Melbourne, but also spelt the end of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company there. The Geelong Advertiser of 17 May for example, stated that, the readers may attach 'some importance' to the opinion of Rev. Tanner whose letters of 21 April were appended. One of these read,

...many I fear will be induced to sell out their properties and pleasant homes to join Mr Harvey's new Denison Plains scheme, when as surely as I write this letter many will die and leave their bones bleaching on the fiery heated rocks, long before their destination is reached. 168

Harvey was quick to counter the negative accounts and wrote to the editor of the Geelong Advertiser on 19 May 1865 laying the blame for the collapse of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association on Tanner and the eight other members of the 'Camden Harbour Pastoral Association Committee' on site.

To Mr Tanner and the other eight Members of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and not to me is due the failure of that Association. They endeavoured in October last to...my plans for its success and I, in consequence, cease to have any connection with it on 6 October 1864.... all the errors of the committee of the late Camden Harbour Pastoral Association have been

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166 Inquirer, 10/5/1865.  
167 CSR, 603/214. Only occasionally are the true names of the Aboriginal people recorded and recourse must be given here to the names by which they were known as in the case of 'Harry' above.  
168 Geelong Advertiser, 18/5/1865.
avoided in the building up of the Denison Plains Company Ltd.\textsuperscript{169}

Despite his disclaimer the collapse of the Company was, after the receipt of these negative reports, only a matter of time.

**The Arrival of the Company at Nickol Bay**

After calling at Fremantle and effecting the change of destination, the *Warrior* then headed for Roebuck Bay, experiencing favourable winds as far as North West Cape (Exmouth). Adverse conditions were then encountered and they were unable to sail directly into the Bay. Very high temperatures, lack of water and stock losses en route forced them to abandon the attempt and to land further south at Nickol Bay where other groups, from Victoria and the Swan River Colony, were known to be in residence. The Perth press then voiced their relief that, as a result, the group would, most likely, be then forced to abandon the attempt to get to the Denison Plains.

They commented that ‘this accident may prove most fortuitous for the interests of all’.\textsuperscript{170}

The *Warrior* dropped anchor on 19 May. As a consequence of a shortage of water, 600 of the 2200 sheep died. For these losses they were greatly criticized by the young diarist A.R. Richardson, a member of the ‘Portland’ company. He recorded that the Company failed to water the stock on the whole voyage, resorting instead to only dampening the animal’s hay.\textsuperscript{171} In explanation of the state of affairs on board *Warrior*, Broadhurst noted that they were forced in the adverse conditions to sail ‘200 miles north of Camden Harbour hoping to get a wind to take us into Roebuck Bay’, but even then the vessel was unable to beat back into the bay.\textsuperscript{172} They then turned back, hoping to enter the bay from the south-west on the other tack. In doing so, they proceeded almost to Nickol Bay and with only five days of water left on board they decided to land there.

\textsuperscript{169}William Harvey to Editor Geelong Advertiser, 19/5/1865. Reproduced in the *Inquirer*, 14/6/1865.

\textsuperscript{170} *Inquirer*, 26/7/1865.

\textsuperscript{171} Richardson Diary, op. cit., 19/5/1865.

\textsuperscript{172} Broadhurst to his Directors in Melbourne 27/5/1865, reproduced in the *Perth Gazette*, 1/9/1865. This need to sail almost to the latitude of Timor to beat back into Roebuck Bay sounds quite amazing in today’s engine driven world and Broadhurst could be accused of exaggerating to ease his mind over the stock losses. Square rigged sailing vessels, such as the ship rigged, *Warrior* often experienced great difficulty in sailing closer than 70° to the wind. See Villiers, A., *Voyaging With the Wind*. (HMSO, London 1975), p. 17.
Broadhurst as ‘Superintendent of Stock and Stations’, was responsible for this state of affairs and appears on the surface, to have not managed the situation well. On the other hand, the Company was not alone in experiencing such losses. On board MacLeod’s vessel *Douglas* which arrived only ten days earlier out of Portland Victoria after a six week long passage, the losses were similar. Of 1250 sheep, 550 were lost en route, there was a complete lack of hay and water over the final 2 days of the voyage.\(^{173}\) Given the extra time spent in endeavouring to make Roebuck Bay and the situation on board the *Douglas*, it would perhaps be unfair to see the loss of the stock on board *Warrior* an example of any negligence or incapacity on Broadhurst’s part as manager. Richardson also appears to have forgotten that his own group used dampened hay throughout their voyage and only resorted to giving water to the sheep when they entered a belt of calms 500 nautical miles north of Fremantle.\(^ {174}\)

The Denison Plains Pastoral Company were the seventh group to arrive in the Nickol Bay area.\(^ {175}\) Soon after the Company landed at Nickol Bay on 19 May 1865, Broadhurst wrote to the Directors in Melbourne, stating that they landed all of the remaining stock comprising 1565 sheep, 35 mares, one Arab ‘entire’ and 17 Hereford cattle.\(^ {176}\) He expressed the ‘extreme disappointment’ that the second change in destination caused him, ‘as it must change the basis of our operation at all events for the present’. Broadhurst was indicating here the clear intention to attempt to eventually proceed to the Denison Plains from Nickol Bay. He may also have been indicating that the chances of the Company establishing itself at Nickol Bay before proceeding to the Denison Plains, were much better than if they went to Camden Harbour. He continued on to say that the sheep were on a fine plain 6 Kilometres from the beach, with plenty of

\(^ {173}\) ibid, 10/5/1865.
\(^ {174}\) Richardson, op. cit., p.16. On one occasion, the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association lost nearly 2000 sheep through overcrowding. Sturkey, op. cit, Cha. 3. As further indication that such losses were reasonably common see the account of the losses on board the *Johanna Maria* in the section on Baynton Appendix five.
\(^ {175}\) They were in order of arrival, Padbury (De Grey), Wellard (Andover), Withnell (Mt Welcome), The Portland West Australian Squatting Company (Pyramid), Viveash, Middleton and Wilkerson (Indernoona), Lockyer and Taylor (Cooya Pooya), and the DPPC. Richardson, op. cit, p. 41.
\(^ {176}\) Broadhurst to the Directors, 27/5/1865, op. cit. The number of animals landed differs in the various accounts.
grass and salt-bush. The horses and cattle were agisted at Withnells place, and were in fine condition, ‘the admiration of everyone who has seen them’. He also spoke highly of the area and claimed this mirrored the opinion of those settlers already there. Broadhurst noted that the existing settlers had an 80-90% average increase in stock and that the country abounded in game, ducks, pigeon, turkey and fish. He noted that wild dogs (dingoes) were plentiful, snakes and insects scarce, but ‘the small house fly is rather numerous’. He went on to note that the natives were a ‘quiet, harmless, lot of people...and are a very good lot of fellows to work’. Though there had been no rain for several months previous, with recent heavy falls of rain, the creeks were running and the grass was springing fast. Tien Tsin Harbour was, according to Broadhurst, suitable for vessels as large as 500 tons and even ones as large as the Warrior for ten months of the year. He noted that there was no suitable place for a town on the coast but believed that Port Hedland, the mouth of the DeGrey River and the Exmouth Gulf region could be best suited for town sites. He added that he hoped to devote six months to exploration of the De Grey and Ashburton regions and continued on a happy note commenting that the shareholders were, on the whole ‘a really good lot of men...[with] three or four less useful than the others’ and that, he ‘would never ask a better set of men to travel the world with or to take possession of a new country’. Broadhurst also requested that a team of bullocks, a few light ‘American’ wagons and various supplies including hops, sugar, dried apples and preserved fruit be sent on the next Company vessel to depart Melbourne. Broadhurst sought the approbation of Directors for the change of destination and hoped that his letter would help counter the adverse effect of the Camden Harbour failure and that the Directors would ‘soon be able to work the company up to the required amount of capital’. 177 Whether he was aware that only 45 shares in the Company had been actually paid for when they left Melbourne is not known.

177 ibid.
Broadhurst, in requesting more stores on the next vessel, was clearly confident that Company was in good shape and that there were other shareholders ready to depart for the North-West, despite the failure at Camden Harbour and despite the change of destination. There is little doubt, however, that Broadhurst’s letter was designed in its optimistic description of the region to help prevent his group suffering the same fate as their associates at Camden Harbour once the news of the poor land and difficulties encountered there became known. Broadhurst was well aware that an adverse report would rapidly undermine public confidence in the Company and a collapse would follow soon after.\textsuperscript{178} With this in mind, he was optimistic in his descriptions, though clearly not at odds with the truth as the following comments from others pertaining to the situation at the time show.

Mr Orkney was much pleased with all he saw and the sheep quite surprised and pleased him as they could not look better.\textsuperscript{179}

Hadn’t been any rain for 11 months …. the black fellows say they don’t remember seeing such a drought before …. it is surprising to see stock that have been here any length of time. They are in such good condition, not withstanding the dry weather …. the natives about here are very quiet and peaceable.
Rained most of last night …. was very much surprised upon going into the river today to find it actually running strong...Plenty of water everywhere.\textsuperscript{180}

Broadhurst’s colleague Dr Baynton, was somewhat less enthusiastic, but in agreement on all points, except the quality of the harbour, which he saw as unfit for large vessels.\textsuperscript{181} In this he differed with the others and his description possibly hinged on the definition of a large vessel.

\textsuperscript{178}In letters to his father, Baynton expressed his concern at this time. He felt that if the shares in the Company were not taken up it would be dissolved. Baynton to his father 23/5/1866, Quoted in William Harvey to the Editor Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866 which was published on 22/9/1866.
\textsuperscript{179} Diary of W. S. Hall, 5/8/1863-9/12/1865, manager of Wellard’s Station, on the arrival of Mr Orkney in the Aurifera on 20/12/1864. BL, 2237A.
\textsuperscript{180} Richardson Diary, 21/4/1865-26/4/1865, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{181} Baynton to his father, 20/2/1866, reproduced in the Perth Gazette, 8/6/1866.
Captain Jarman of the *Tien Tsin* claimed, on the basis of his survey notes, (Figure 15) that there was a 'fine little harbour at Port Walcott', suitable for vessels drawing up to 13 feet (four metres) and sheltered from all but easterly winds. Butcher Inlet was, in his estimate, suitable for small craft up to 7 feet (two metres) in draft. Thus, apart from the disagreement on the quality of the harbour, there was general agreement on the other points raised by Broadhurst. He does not appear then to have been prone to lies or exaggeration in order to improve his situation and that of the Company.

**Figure 15**

*Plan of Tien Tsin Harbour (Port Walcott) 1863*

*showing Butcher Inlet, the beginnings of the settlement at Cossack and the harbour between Point Samson and Jarman Island.*

(State Archive)

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182 'The Tien Tsin Track to Harding River', *Exploration Diaries Vol. 5, 1858-1865*, p.57, BL.

183 North-West Australia, Plan of Tien Tsin Harbour, by C.C. Hunt in Cutter Mystery, P. Hedland, Conn., May 1863. Department of Land Administration and Exploration, Plan Series, No. 6, State Archive.
By landing at Nickol Bay, the Denison Plains people were in a much better position than their colleagues at Camden Harbour and Roebuck Bay who were without the benefits of an existing European settlement, good land and ‘docile’ aborigines on whom to depend for labour and assistance. The hinterland of Nickol Bay was also to prove much more easily traversible than that around Camden Harbour and there was stiff competition for good land. The following entry from Richardson’s diary casts light on the nature of the ‘rush’ for land at that time.

Ted Anderson, Mount, Murray and Hooley returned today... Ted succeeded in selecting one run of 100,000 acres on the George River about 25 miles from here, all those who saw it say it is the best run they have seen in the country. Mount is very much vexed with himself at missing it. He was over one corner of it that happened to be all spinifex. He was not aware it was so well watered. The George (River) runs right through the middle of it, and there are plenty of permanent holes and springs in the many creeks all over it. Mount says he would willingly give up his three runs on the De Grey for that one. It seems to have been missed by the merest chance. We are just waiting for rain to shift the sheep there.\(^{184}\)

The contrast with Camden Harbour is striking in this regard, as good land was readily available in the hinterland of Nickol Bay in this early stage, despite the fierce competition. By the end of the month, for example, the Denison Plains Company moved west to the Nickol River and there they established their first ‘run.’\(^{185}\) A few months later, in searching for horses that had strayed during the night from the Nickol River Station, they also came across a ‘large and deep pool’ called Miaree on the Maitland River 37 kilometres further west. See figures 12 and 16.

\(^{184}\) Richardson Diary, 2/5/1865, op. cit.
\(^{185}\) ibid., 30/5/1865.
Figure 16
The Maitland River,
showing the ‘runs’ occupied by the Denison Plains Pastoral Company people
in the period 1865-1872.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶From Dampier, 1:100,000, sheet, National Topographic Series.
They then established a second ‘run’ there.\textsuperscript{187} Thus the Company split into two groups. The Company ‘store’ was situated on the Nickol river, six kilometres upstream and 21 kilometres, or a two and a half hour run in the ‘Waggonette’, from the Withnell’s place (later Roebourne) on the Harding River. The leaders of the group at the Nickol River were Doctor Baynton and Charles Wedge. Two wooden buildings, constructed of saplings and roofed with canvas, were eventually erected for the store and to house the company goods. Five hours travel (on a good day) to the west, at the Maitland River, was ‘the principal run’ of the Company under Broadhurst. The ‘run’ which was situated on Miaree pool itself was considered to be ‘superior’ to the Nickol River Run. Broadhurst and his group established sheds and huts consisting of white gum saplings with a thatch of reeds for the Company goods and effects.\textsuperscript{188} One Company member, Müller, did not go to the Company runs on the Maitland and the Nickol Rivers at all. He bought about £300 worth of liquor and opened what was described as a ‘sort of public house’ near John and Emma Withnell’s Station, Mt Welcome, on the Harding River.\textsuperscript{189}

On 16 July, in the midst of these events, Sarah Eleanor, the first European girl to be born in the North District, was born to the Broadhurst’s. In noting this, one is left to marvel that Mesdames Broadhurst, Wedge, Müller, Withnell and Woodhouse, all with small children, travelled to the North-West and adapted to the conditions there.\textsuperscript{190}

The new arrivals all anxiously awaited the arrival of mail, support vessels and other shareholders from Melbourne. The first mail to the area following their own arrival on 19 May 1865, came on the cutter \textit{Mystery}, on 24 June. The vessel had experienced head winds all the way and was subsequently a month en route. It had departed Fremantle too early to have on board letters from Melbourne in response to Broadhurst’s notification of the change of

\begin{notes}
\textsuperscript{187} They began operating the Maitland River ‘run’ on 29/7/1865. CSR 566/106, BL.
\textsuperscript{188} CSR. 581/99, BL.
\textsuperscript{189} Richardson Diary, 30/6/1865, op. cit.
\end{notes}
destination from Camden Harbour. The Mystery then went on from Tien Tsin Harbour to the De Grey Station further east and did not call back at Nickol Bay en route to Fremantle till 11 August. When he saw her in the bay, the diarist Richardson, predicted, that because of the problems all the settlers were then having that, 'there will be quite a clearing out of people from Tien Tsin when the Mystery goes away'. Few, if any of the passengers boarding the Mystery for Fremantle, were of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company as nine of the eleven available berths were taken by others.\textsuperscript{191}

In the meantime, Harvey, in receipt of Broadhurst's earlier letters from Fremantle about the change of plans and the decision to find an alternative route to the Denison Plains, wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 25 May 1865.\textsuperscript{192} He described the decision not to proceed to Camden Harbour as 'unauthorised' and stated that due to the 'indeterminate nature' as to the ultimate destination of the Warrior, (Roebuck Bay or Nickol Bay in place of Camden Harbour), it was impossible for the Company to forward more stock or passengers. Harvey registered the 'considerable disappointment' that the Directors of the Company felt in knowing of the change and considered that the results were mainly attributable to the conduct of the parties themselves i.e Broadhurst, Wedge and Baynton. Harvey then also laid upon them the blame for the failure of the remaining 300 applicants for shares in the Denison Plains Pastoral Company to pay for them. He wrote that,

\begin{quote}
all payment of any sort was refused as soon as it was known that Thomas Baynton Jun. and those with him in the Warrior broke all their engagements and the Articles of the Company on leaving Perth not for Camden Harbour but for Roebuck Bay, and eventually landed at Nickol Bay.\textsuperscript{193}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{191} Richardson Diary, 11/8/1865 et seq., op. cit.
\textsuperscript{192} Letters From Settlers, 566/93, BL & the Inquirer, 14/6/1865.
\textsuperscript{193} Harvey to Editor Perth Gazette, 22/9/1866, reproduced Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866.
Here is evidence that Broadhurst and Wedge were subservient to their fellow Directors in Melbourne either by democratic process, in the way that Harvey had structured the Company, or because they had resigned when they accepted a paid position as Company staff. Such a state of affairs is not surprising given Harvey’s experience with the Camden Harbour Association and it appears that, he may have structured the Company, to ensure that the power remained in Melbourne. Harvey went on to praise those few still remaining at Camden Harbour and added that whilst his Directors were waiting for advice of the destination of the Warrior that,

their confidence is in no way shaken as to the fact of Camden Harbour being the proper place for a maritime settlement on that coast either for the purposes of trade or for access to the interior..... should fortuitous circumstance cause the first occupation of the Denison Plains from some other point it will be the determination of the management at the earliest to force a communication from these plains to Camden Harbour.194

Harvey, in another letter to the Colonial Secretary, hedged his bets should the move to Nickol Bay eventually prove profitable.195 He stated that they (the Directors) had to ‘accept the facts’ and wrote to request that the rights derived from landing of livestock at Camden Harbour be made available for the selection of land at Tien Tsin or at any other port in the North District to which the future Company vessels may be directed.

Thus, while the Denison Plains Pastoral Company was collapsing in Melbourne, Harvey continued with his plans consumed with a burning desire to succeed without due regard to the sufferings of others.

The Collapse of the Denison Plains Company at Nickol Bay

News of the collapse of the parent Company in Melbourne was slow to filter through to the North of Western Australia. When it did, Broadhurst

195 Letters from Settlers, op. cit., 24/6/1865.
resisted winding up the Company there and attempted to ensure that the goods and flocks under his control were not dispersed or used for food in the apparent hope that the Company, as it stood in the North-West, could be saved.

This, and the belief that Broadhurst was responsible for the debacle, engendered considerable ill feeling towards him in the North and it migrated south with the first members of the failed Company to land there. This was to be the beginning of the Swan River Colony’s general suspicion of Broadhurst, who as a Director and Manager was the only visible and public figure involved in the Company failure. To many in the south, he appeared, not unreasonably, given the lack of information about the Company, to be the man responsible for the debacle. The following excerpts from an exchange between the local merchants Barker and Gull on the subject of an impending partnership with Broadhurst some years after the collapse illustrate this point.

Mr Broadhurst is certainly a smart man ... but if success be the test of ability he has certainly not proved himself superior having made a pretty mess of the Denison Plains Company... there is certainly a great distrust of him here 196

Rather than having made a ‘mess’ of the concern, Broadhurst will be seen, after his culpably poor decision to continue in the light of the Brown and Dow letters, to have dealt with a very difficult situation with a brand of courage and integrity that was to earn him the official praise of R.J Sholl, the Resident Magistrate in the North. Broadhurst’s conduct under mounting pressure, led him to be eventually selected as a Justice of the Peace and later Acting Resident Magistrate responsible, albeit for a short time, for the entire ‘North District.’ Sholl’s apparently objective reaction to the manner in which Broadhurst conducted himself, conflicts markedly with all other opinions then and now.

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196 Letters to and from Barker and Gull. Barker and Gull Papers, 2423a, BL, Reproduced in Erickson, op. cit, cha.3.
Having examined his role in the formation of the Company, Broadhurst's performance as Manager of a dying Company and as a pioneer pastoralist in the North District now comes under our scrutiny.

In the absence of mail, Broadhurst and those at Nickol bay were unaware that the Company had been placed in the insolvency court in Melbourne and went about their business setting up in complete ignorance and with the expectation of relief. Concerns about the Company structure began to surface at this time however as settlers arriving after the Denison Plains Company brought snippets of information that caused great concern amongst the members.

Some months after arriving here, news from private sources began to arrive that the Company was in debt to value of the stock and effects landed........ about this time we realised we had been humbugged.

In August Broadhurst was petitioned by the shareholders to take up country, in the name of the largest shareholders rather than in the name of the Company, so that the maximum amount of land might be better secured. It had become evident to the members, that according to the regulations, the Company itself was only entitled to 100,000 acres even though the stock landed entitled them, as individuals, to 700,000 acres. In petitioning Broadhurst, they stated that they undertook to ‘lay no claim as individuals to any run’ granted in their name. Broadhurst and Wedge, were with Baynton, some of the largest shareholders having four shares each, but were omitted from the list of those to have the land in their name. In noting this and in expressing his disappointment, Broadhurst agreed to the request and wrote accordingly to the Directors in Melbourne for their decision on the matter. While awaiting their reply, he stipulated that if further applications for land be required, then the

197 CSR, 603/117, BL.
198 Baynton to his father 20/2/1866, op. cit.
199 'We the undersigned members of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company' were David Simpson, George Hodgkinson, H.H. Hicks, Thos. Baynton, Harry. W. Venn, Robert Edmonstone, Robert Fraser, W.F. Tays, J.C. Brodie, R.L. McKay, Chas. Cane, Wm. Gardiner, John Graham, Benjamin Hanlon, Geo. M. Bushe and Malcolm McIntosh. Missing were Miller, Broadhurst and Wedge. CSR, 603/119, BL.
200 CSR, 603/121, BL.
names in which the blocks would be registered should be subject to a ballot. He
also noted his sorrow at ‘such feeling of petty jealousy exhibited by the
shareholders on such a trivial question.’\footnote{Apart from Broadhurst, Müller and Wedge, the shareholder’s list omitted the names of W.I. & W.F. Sayer, W. Jeffrey, S. Filchev, Matilda Anderson and Bridget Hinchley. They do not appear to have been shareholders and were apparently paid servants of the shareholders or representatives of other shareholders.} What he is referring to as a trivial question is not known, but the reply from Broadhurst does not appear to have helped in lessening the concerns of his colleagues and is an indication of his attitude to his subordinates.

As agreed, Broadhurst then applied to the Surveyor General for 3 ‘runs,’
two on the Maitland and one on the Nickol Rivers in the name of Company
members Thomas Baynton, David Simpson and Simeon Müller.\footnote{CSR. 603/114, BL.} Baynton, explained this move to his father in a letter written some time later. He stated that upon realizing that the Company was not in fact entitled to the land promised in the prospectus, a meeting of the Company was held and they explored all the avenues open for applying for land in order to obtain the largest amount possible.

Various propositions were made. There appeared no other course open to us than to take up land in the names of individuals composing the Company....we have been completely misled and deceived in this matter and never contemplated meeting with this difficulty.\footnote{Baynton to his father, 20/2/1866, op. cit.}

When the \textit{Mystery} left Nickol Bay for Fremantle, on 14 August, Broadhurst also placed on board a letter to the Colonial Secretary, commenting on the excellent health of his party since leaving Melbourne.\footnote{Broadhurst to Col. Sec. 14/8/1865, CSR 566/106, BL.} He noted that there had been a very dry season and that he was subsequently unable to explore as much as he would have liked. As Norman MacLeod, a fellow Victorian who had arrived earlier, was on board and intended applying for parts of the ‘run’ on the Maitland sought for the Company, Broadhurst attempted to pre-empt his claim in writing. He wrote of his Company’s actions
in placing their sheep on the Maitland and requested the appointment of an
officer at Nickol Bay with similar powers to a Victorian Land Commissioner
to help avoid such conflicts.

When Broadhurst’s application on behalf of the three men was received at
the office of the Surveyor General in Perth, it was noted that none of the three
mentioned in the application had received permission to ‘depasture’ stock in the
region or had apparently even landed stock in their own name. With this in
mind, the Surveyor General noted that, though they had been running
Company stock on the Maitland River since 29 July, MacLeod’s application of
9 September (the date he arrived in Fremantle) was ‘in every respect qualified’
and should therefore take precedence over that of the Denison Plains group.
Some doubt existed however, and the matter was sent to the Colonial Secretary
for comment. He advised in reply, that the Denison Plains Company should
receive the same privileges and rights applicable for the landing of stock at
Nickol Bay as it would have been entitled to had they landed at Camden
Harbour. In accepting this and in ascertaining that Broadhurst had forwarded
the required certificate of having landed stock on behalf of the Company, and
that Baynton, Müller and Simpson were Company members, it was decided
that each was entitled to 100,000 Acres. The Company dispute with MacLeod
was then settled, by revising the boundaries by mutual consent, and with the
approval of the Executive Council. 205

After the settlement of the dispute with Macleod, the Denison Plains
Pastoral Company in the names of Müller, Baynton and Simpson, took
possession of 220,000 acres of land and not only 100,000 as allowed in the
regulations. 206 In an explanatory note on one of the Resident Magistrate’s
letters to the Colonial Secretary on the question of the ownership and disposal
of the land taken up by the Denison Plains Company, the following note
appears.

205 Notes on correspondence received from Broadhurst at the Office of the Surveyor General 25/9/1865, SDUR
635, BL.
206 2 blocks of 100,000 acres each on the Maitland and one of 20,000 on the Nickol River, CSR, 603/123, BL.
Only one selection of 100,000 Acres... [is allowed] any one establishment or company or to any separate individual who may not have already claimed land as a member of any such establishment... There is nothing on record in the survey office to shew that the Denison Plains Company is entitled as a company to make any selection of a free run. Several persons who were understood to be members of that Association have received runs on account of stock imported by the company, but nothing is known by me of the quantity of stock imported by said company, or who are the parties, if any, entitled to claim land for it. 207

The shareholders were by virtue of having landed in excess of 1500 sheep, actually entitled to around 700,000 acres, but even this was still a long way short of the 5,000,000 acres of land promised in the Company prospectus. This further confirms that Harvey never actually applied for land on behalf of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company itself and that he apparently did not forward on the shareholder’s applications for permission to proceed north and occupy the land. The reason is obscure. It may be related to Harvey’s vision of the Company as part of the Camden Harbour venture, for which more than adequate individual permissions had been received and enough stock had been landed, to acquire huge acreages of land in the North for Company purposes. It may also be related to Harvey’s being dumped from the Camden Harbour Association. In this context, he may have wished to maintain his grip on the Denison Plains Company by ensuring that none of the shareholders, except those who applied under the auspices of the Camden Harbour venture, received permission to proceed North and occupy land in their own names. Perhaps Harvey also realized that if all the members received permission in their own name to take up land, he would, if things went wrong, then have had no further hold on them once they landed; and the Company lands would soon be carved up into individual holdings.

207 Lands and Surveys Dept., Letters forwarded to Officials 1872-77, Red. Nos. 44/43, 508/9, 1290, 20/4/1866, BL.
The *Mystery* eventually arrived back at Nickol Bay from Fremantle on 11 October 1865, and only then did Broadhurst and his companions receive the newspapers and private mail to the effect that the Company had completely folded in Melbourne.

On 13 October a meeting of ten of the nineteen shareholders in the Company was held.208 Though a majority of the members, they did not necessarily have a majority of the votes as Broadhurst, Wedge and Baynton, who were not present at the meeting, held 4 shares each. Müller who was away at his ‘public house’, would have held a similar amount. Why the other four shareholders did not attend is not known. Two of the absent shareholders, Graham and Edmonstone would have voted with the ten if they had been present as both had a poor opinion of Broadhurst, as will be seen from the following. The ten informed Broadhurst in a letter that as the Company had ceased to exist, the Company goods were the property of the Company creditors. As there was now no hope of their wages being paid, they represented a large percentage of the Company’s indebtedness and in view of the bleak prospects of payment, they also decided to restrict their activities to what was ‘absolutely necessary’ for the protection of the stock. They also indicated their intention to conduct explorations individually for their own benefit and that they refused to conduct any explorations on behalf of the Company itself. At this stage no move was made to break up the Company flocks and sell the stores and goods to pay for the wages. There was some pressure on Broadhurst to release animals for slaughtering for food however.209

Broadhurst and his associates at Nickol Bay would also have received per *Mystery*, a copy of the Denison Plains Company Director’s Report, dated 26 July 1865 as part of their mail from home. In it appear amazing statements very distant from the realities at Nickol Bay.

208 They were, McIntosh, McKay, Edmonstone, Bush, Venn, Fraser, Hanlon, Simpson, Hicks and Gardiner.
209 CSR, 603/117-140, BL.
The Company...are finally secured in the pastoral leasehold (including pre-emptive right of purchase of the entire area) for 12 years on the most favourable terms of 900,000 acres of pastoral and agricultural land of the best class. This extensive area without any further shipment of stock will be doubled in a few months by the natural increase of the livestock landed.²¹⁰

The report indicated that of the 500 shares in the Company, 45 were fully paid up and a further 20 ‘given off’ free and considered paid in full. The assets of the company based on the value of property in the North west were given as £10,215-0s-0d, liabilities were £1,569-0s-7d. The money received was £5,090-12s-2d, giving a profit according to the Directors, (not counting the increase in stock) on 3 July 1865, of £3,521-11s-7d.

The ten shareholders who attended the meeting stated that the report was a ‘network of mis-statements and fallacies’ and expressed their disgust that their wages were not included in the statement of the Company’s liabilities. They stated that the Company could not be ‘successfully worked by Directors as distant as Melbourne’ and noted that as all the power vested in them, those at Nickol Bay, were powerless to act.²¹¹ Broadhurst and Wedge, were clearly unable to act independently in Company matters and as employees of the Company, may not have been Directors at this time.

Harvey claimed, that after the ‘unauthorised’ change of destination from Camden Harbour, the ‘consequent liquidation of the [Denison Plains] Company became necessary and that he he wrote to Broadhurst on 23 October 1865, instructing him to call a meeting of shareholders at Nickol Bay. At the meeting Broadhurst was to state the particulars of Harvey’s proposed reconstruction of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company as the Nicol Bay Company [sic] with 1000 shares at £100 each. He went on to note that he received no reply from Broadhurst on the matter.²¹² He then wrote to the Colonial Secretary concerning the possibilities of opening telegraphic communication between

²¹⁰Reproduced in the Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866.
²¹¹ CSR, 603/123, BL.
²¹² Harvey to Editor Perth Gazette, 26/1/1867. Published in the Perth Gazette, 3/3/1867.
Europe and Australia via Java and the North District. He hoped to establish a telegraphic company based on land areas of 40,000 acres each at a distance of less than 50 miles apart from the South Australian border to Nickol Bay. The Colonial Secretary indicated interest in the project, but declined Harvey’s invitation for the Government to guarantee the loan required to establish the company. In a letter to the Surveyor General and to the Perth Gazette, Dr Baynton attempted to prevent the gearing up of the new Company by publicly denouncing the scheme. He referred to Harvey as a ‘crafty charlatan’ and produced ample evidence in the press to support his claim. There, with the help of Dr. Baynton, the proposed Nicol Bay Company died.

The shareholders at the meeting of 13 October had apparently become aware of Harvey’s desire to resurrect the Company and indicated that any attempt to rebuild the Denison Plains Pastoral Company was a ‘moral impossibility’.

To make matters worse, Broadhurst had received no company money from the Directors in Melbourne with which to pay wages and find provisions. He then took an advance of between £60-£70 from Müller the publican (who was clearly doing well) on Company wool which had been forwarded to Fremantle. With these funds he then paid the shareholders Simpson and McIntosh who had successfully tendered to look after the Company sheep at £2 per week. By December 1865 the money had been spent and Broadhurst, as Company representative, was in arrears to the men. With no further credit available, the country in the grip of a severe drought and with rations totally exhausted the Company members, like all the other settlers at Nickol Bay, were reduced to living on ‘half a pound of flour’ per day. Their position was exacerbated by the knowledge that the Company had contracted to supply

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213 Col. Sec. to Harvey, 18/12/1865, in reply to Harvey’s letter of 23 November. CSO Letters Forwarded to Settlers, Vol 39 Acc 49, BL.
214 ibid.
215 Baynton to the Editor, Perth Gazette 16/11/1866, op. cit.
216 Baynton to his father, 20/2/1866, op. cit.
217CSR, 581/100. This was twice the rates then being paid. See footnote 322 and appendix one.
218 ibid.
rations for four years as part of the cost of their shares and the hatred of Broadhurst was made worse as he would not relinquish the Company stock for food. Some of the group left to settle near Withnell’s homestead at the permanent fresh water pool on the Harding River. By virtue of being the first stopping place for settlers arriving at Nickol Bay with permanent water it was a logical focus and was to become the township of Roebourne late in the following year. Richardson noted that the ‘publican’ Müller had shipped some boots up for sale per the Mystery in October. In doing so, he probably set up the ‘shoemaker’ Graham, another former company member in business. On 10 November Richardson records one of his associates riding over to the Withnells to get two horses shod as ‘one of the Denison Plains Company... [probably Tays]... is about setting up as a blacksmith. There is also a shoemaker [apparently Graham] there’. Some of the servants and a few of the shareholders in the Company may have left at this time as ten unnamed passengers left on 14 November in the Mystery.

The pressure to break up the Company and distribute the stock and effects was mounting on Broadhurst as the drought deepened and the shareholders hardened in their resolve.

Broadhurst stayed at Miari, most likely Miaree Pool on the Maitland River, figure 16 and while anxiously awaiting further advice from the South, was keen to bring his family in from the troubled station to the growing settlement near Withnell’s. He was also keen to establish a ‘run’ on his own account and to act as agent for others in acquiring land. With this in mind, he placed a letter on board the Mystery applying for leases to land at the Ashburton River under the names R.H. Broadhurst, his elder brother, F. & C. Broadhurst (his sons), E. Harley and C.S. Holmes. The area chosen was adjacent to land selected by T.C. Murray who had earlier accompanied Hooley, Mount and Anderson on an exploration of the area. On 29 November he wrote, again from Miari, requesting that his earlier application for land on the Ashburton be held in

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219 The town of Roebourne was proclaimed in the Government Gazette of 21 August 1866, No 34.
220 SDUR, 646b, BL.
abeyance until he was able to provide further details. He then purchased ‘about 20 rams’ from Mr Macleod in the following month, further indicating his desire to set up on his own and giving clear evidence that he had access to personal funds.

The Resident Magistrate R.J. Sholl, who arrived from Camden Harbour on 24 November 1865, while all this was happening, noted in his despatches to Perth that Broadhurst was ‘anxiously awaiting the receipt of more decisive intelligence from Victoria’ and that ‘the Shareholders now work on their own account, and the last of the rations have been divided.’ Sholl had sent a note to Broadhurst and to Withnell seeking assistance on his arrival at Nickol Bay. He was assisted in his landing by Broadhurst and others and thus began an association with Broadhurst that was to last many years. He also accepted the hospitality of two Company members, Tays and Hicks, who had established a temporary camp at the Mystery Landing in Butchers Inlet. They were salvaging a ‘punt’ belonging to the Company for the purposes of establishing themselves in maritime pursuits. Sholl and his son Trevarton, later moved to Withnell’s Station on the Harding River where they occupied a wooden house without floors or roof. It had been erected earlier by Broadhurst for use on his visits to the growing settlement. Sholl also noted that there were two houses near Withnell’s, one occupied by Company members Simeon Müller and his family and the other by John Graham. Within days of his landing Sholl was beset with the problems of the dying Company. Brodie who was not one of the ten shareholders at the October meeting invited him to the Nickol Station, possibly to explain the situation, and the Wedges were summoned to appear before him by their servant girl Matilda Anderson, for non payment of wages. They had thrown her out in August and she was then staying at Graham’s house. Robert Edmonstone, who according to Sholl ‘appears to bear some ill-

221 SDUR, 635, 646c., BL.
222 Richardson Diary, 5/12/1865 & Harvey to the Editor Perth Gazette, 26/1/1867 op. cit.
223 Punt: a term ‘formerly applied in a generic sense to various craft used as ferries, barges and lighters. de Kerchove, op. cit., p. 616.
224 TCS, 9/12/1865, BL.
will towards Mr Broadhurst’ summoned him (Broadhurst) over a matter arising on board the *Warrior*. Müller was becoming concerned about the possibilities of being repaid the money he lent Broadhurst on the Company wool sent to Fremantle and subsequently sought Sholl’s advice. To add to the uncertainty about the Company, Sholl declined to advise him on the matter.225

While able to attend to everyday matters, such as the non payment of personal debt and so on, Sholl believed that he had no jurisdiction in the matter of the Company collapse. He was pleased to receive advice from the Attorney General to that effect and noted in his journal that it was ‘lucky for Broadhurst’, that such was the case.226

In the face of the continuing severe drought that was causing hardship all around, Sholl did a tour of the stations in the vicinity and did a quick count. He found that there were 77 white people, including children, in the area and on the outlying stations, excluding the eleven who were of the ‘Government party’ from Camden Harbour. Thirty nine of the 77 were from the Denison Plains Company.227

Sholl also commented at length on the position of the Company after the news of the collapse. At the Nickol River, he noted that there was only Baynton, Wedge and family, Brodie, Venn and Gardiner remaining. The Wedges were housed in a small tent and all ‘were badly off for food’. At the Maitland, where the stock were in a better state, but where the fresh water pool had receded in the drought, he found the Broadhurst’s ‘pinched for food’ and housed in ‘a small tent completely surrounded by and covered in with a screen thatched with reeds.’ In addition to the Broadhursts and their female servant Bridget Hinckley [sic], there were Messrs Cane, Bush, McKay, Hanlow [sic], Hodgkinson, Simpson and MacIntosh, They were housed in the bough sheds erected nearby. All those remaining at the two stations were noted

225 *RJS*, 24/11/1865-23/12/1865, BL.
226 *CSR*, 581/128, BL.
227 A list appears on the flyleaf of his diary, RJS, BL., The total of 77 people and 11 of the ‘Government Party’ appears in *CSR*, 581/142, 17/2/1866, BL.
as ‘formerly servants as well as shareholders of their representatives’.\textsuperscript{228} Sholl ‘dined’ with the Broadhurst’s and noted that,

Broadhurst complained bitterly of the system of shareholders labour which appears to combine superiority of price with inferiority of qualifications. Such labourers are as much masters as servants...He does the best he can under the circumstances and keeps the property of the Company well together. The delay in the arrival of a ship complicates matters.\textsuperscript{229}

Thus, though they had received notice of the Company collapse in Melbourne and its demise in the Insolvency Court, there is a clear indication that Broadhurst attempted to keep the Company together in the hope that something could be salvaged of the corporate body. Broadhurst was in a very difficult situation indeed. On his return to his temporary quarters at Broadhurst’s hut near the Withnell’s homestead at Mt Welcome, Sholl wrote to his superiors painting a harrowing picture of the atmosphere at the Nickol River and Maitland River Stations and of Broadhurst’s position.

His is no easy task, with shareholders who have, or assume to have power over the property while he is invested with sole power by the Directors, at least he says he is...there is a matter, of course, of complete antagonism...the contract between the Directors and the shareholders has been completely violated and the manager is equally a sufferer with the others. They, however, do not choose to see this, consider him to be the author of their misfortunes and annoy and thwart him in every way. He has hither to acted discreetly only once breaking bounds, being engaged in a fisticuff encounter with Edmonstone, but every allowance must be made for a man continuously worried by insubordinate subordinates...These swindling Companies are calculated to do much mischief. At Camden Harbour and this place the shareholders have been deceived, disappointed, robbed and in some cases ruined. They do not contain in them 1 in 50 calculated to make good settlers...the only Companies likely to succeed are those under the care of a responsible manager like the

\textsuperscript{228} CSR, 581/99-120, BL.
\textsuperscript{229} ibid.
Roebuck Bay Association. A shareholder on the spot is less than useless.\textsuperscript{230}

Sholl, who was a key figure in the Roebuck Bay Company, noted that the Denison Plains Company settlers were ‘litigiously inclined’ and he was afraid of a ‘disturbance’ in the face of threats to seize the stock. Broadhurst, who claimed he had received a threat on his life, applied to Sholl for police protection. Sholl who officially recognized Broadhurst as the ‘custodian of the Company property until he is removed in court of law’ dismissed this as a ‘mere threat’.\textsuperscript{231} In investigating this and the other matters, Sholl viewed Harvey’s correspondence and concluded that Harvey sought to ‘get everything into his own hands’ and noted that Broadhurst ‘regrets the hour he first met Harvey’.\textsuperscript{232} Here is further evidence that Broadhurst and Wedge had no real decision making power.\textsuperscript{233}

A meeting of the Company shareholders at Nickol bay was held on 20 February 1866 about the division of stock and in doing so, concluded there that the whole affair was a major swindle and they then placed the matters in the hands of a solicitor. In direct contrast with Battye’s claims that the Company folded quickly in the North-West, only two shareholders urged that the Company property and stock be sold to pay the wages owing and to settle with the outstanding creditors at this stage.\textsuperscript{234} Robert Edmonstone, with whom Broadhurst had the violent clash, and who may have been behind the threats on Broadhurst’s life, departed soon after for Fremantle easing the pressure on him. According to Sholl, Broadhurst then wrote to the editors of the \textit{Argus} in Melbourne with the intention of warning off further intending settlers. Sholl then expressed the hope that matters could now be settled peaceably.\textsuperscript{235} Here is some indication that Broadhurst may have been at odds with some of his

\textsuperscript{230} CSR, 581/132-2, BL., Sholl was a shareholder and Secretary of the Roebuck Bay Pastoral and Agricultural Association.
\textsuperscript{231} CSR, 581/131-132, BL.
\textsuperscript{232} ibid.
\textsuperscript{233} Mary Field (Mrs McManus), of the Camden Harbour Association was to comment in a similar vein on Harvey’s attempts to keep sole control of ‘his’ Companies. \textit{Notes from the Reminiscences of Mrs John McManus}, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{234} RJS, 19/4/1865, & CSR, 581/132, BL.
\textsuperscript{235} CSR, 581/132, BL.
colleagues in not wishing to warn others from joining the Company or in being a part of any Company restructuring. Whether he was in agreement with Harvey on the proposed restructuring of the Company as The Nicol Bay Company is not known. It appears unlikely however, as Broadhurst failed to reply to Harvey’s letter of 23 October 1865 instructing him to call a meeting on the proposed reconstruction of the Company,236 and Sholl noted Broadhurst’s disenchantment with Harvey during his visit in the previous month. Broadhurst may have had other ideas in mind and though he was not in favour of continuing with Harvey’s schemes, he may have had other reasons, for keeping the Company together.

Sholl refused to hear complaints against Broadhurst as Manager of the Company while he was awaiting advice on the legal status of the concern, for example and refused to attend to Müllér’s request that Broadhurst be summoned for non payment of the advance he made to the Company on the wool sent to Fremantle. He recorded that, had he done otherwise, ‘there would be no end to litigation and the Company’s property sacrificed’. Sholl was also concerned that in the worsening drought and ensuing shortage of food, some of the shareholders were about to seize the stock. On the other hand despite his own and his family’s suffering, Broadhurst was doing all he could to keep the sheep and cattle intact.237 Sholl found the situation increasingly difficult and asked for advice from the Government in Perth on the possibility of acceding to the shareholders’ wishes to disband the Company. In commenting on projected disbursement of Company property and the possible re-allocation of land, the Surveyor General in Perth advised Sholl, that he was unable to apply a general principle to the granting of land on the basis of claims that might arise out of the sale of the Denison Plains Company stock. Thus Sholl was left to attempt to try and sort out the problem on his own. 238

236 Harvey to Editor Perth Gazette, 26/1/1867, op. cit.
237 CSR, 581/117, BL.
238 Lands and Surveys Dept., Letters to Officials, 18/5/1866 & CSR, 508/9, BL.
The matter was further complicated by Harvey’s actions in not applying for permission for the Company and the shareholders in person to land and take up ‘runs.’ Sholl later noted that there was ‘nothing in the records’ to show that the Company was entitled to a ‘run’, that there had been no selection in its name, no return of stock had been lodged and thus the Company could not be recognized by him.239

In the face of this impasse, former Company men, Venn, McKay, Cane and Frazer, added to their successful joint exploration efforts of January and February 1866 by exploring the country around the Ashburton River. There they found good country, a broad running river, high trees and an open roadstead.240 Upon their return to the Harding River settlement on 16 April, they immediately asked the Resident Magistrate, whether land could be taken up on the transfer of stock from the defunct Company. To add to their annoyance, as they were not listed by Harvey as having landed, they were informed by Sholl that they could not acquire the land they sought until their names appeared in the register of those having been given permission to proceed to the North. To add even further to their disenchantment with the Company, Sholl replied that he could only give his approval for such an application on the actual landing of stock in their name. 241 A similar response was made to Broadhurst’s applications for land at the Ashburton River in the names of F. and C. Broadhurst (Broadhurst’s children) and Messrs Hartley and Holmes, two men for whom Broadhurst may have been acting as agent. Apparently they did not appear on the list of those with permission to proceed north, and only those who have received permission and were expecting stock could obtain runs.

This may have been the catalyst that saw the final dispersal of the Company. It appears that the members then urged Broadhurst and the other leaders to facilitate the sale of the Company stock and effects in order to pay the

239 Sholl to Baynton, 5/10/1866, CSR, 603/132, BL.
240 Recent Explorations in the Roebuck Bay and Nickol Bay districts. Explorations by Mr Assistant Surveyor Cowle and Messrs Venn, McKay, Cane and Frazer [sic], Exploration Diaries, Vol 6, pp 66-97, BL.
241 RJS, 16/4/1866, BL.
Company creditors. On 19 April, exactly eleven months after the Company arrived in the North-West, a further meeting of the Company decided on the appropriation of the Company stock to pay wages and salaries. Broadhurst and Baynton were to receive each twelve months entitlement of salary and Wedge six months. The reason for the difference is not known. Broadhurst was not allocated stock by the disgruntled shareholders and elected to purchase sheep and stock as valued by three persons who were not members of the Company.\textsuperscript{242} Broadhurst then wrote to the Surveyor General in Perth stating that the Company had ‘broken up at this end’. He then resubmitted his claim for the run ‘standing’ in the name of his sons Florance and Charles Broadhurst on the Ashburton river.\textsuperscript{243}

On 21 May 1866, Sholl noted that the ‘Denison Plains Company establishment at this place has been broken up’ and that the claims for wages and salaries took all the sheep and some of the cattle and horses.\textsuperscript{244} The remainder were kept to pay the outstanding creditors. This, according to Sholl, ‘settled all local difficulties’.\textsuperscript{245} Some of the Shareholders retained their stock and remained in the area, others sold their allocation of sheep and of those seven members left on board the \textit{Emma}.\textsuperscript{246}

In the meantime, after months of waiting the outcome of the collapse, Broadhurst bought his family in from Miaree Pool. The team and cart were badly overloaded and articles lay strewn along the track as Broadhurst, his wife and children made a hurried dash along rough waterless tracks in the appalling heat of late March. Sholl who followed in their tracks recorded the trip.

The original load had been too heavy and had been dropped here and there,...saw a frying pan...some distance on a chest of drawers and a box. Still further on

\textsuperscript{242} \textit{RJS}, 19/4/1866, BL. The sheep were sold at 22/6d. per head (CSR, 581/232) having cost around 12s. per head at Ballarat. Harvey to Editor \textit{Perth Gazette}, 16/11/1866, op. cit. Baynton estimated that the costs of purchase and transport of the sheep was around £1 per head. \textit{Perth Gazette}, 23/11/1866.
\textsuperscript{243} Broadhurst to Surveyor General, 4/11/1865, SDUR, BL.
\textsuperscript{244} CSR, 581/227-240, BL.
\textsuperscript{245} ibid.
\textsuperscript{246} \textit{TCS}, 21/4/1866, BL.
boxes, baskets and other things. Going on there was a tray in a gully...it was like the results of a disastrous retreat...[they] had to travel all Saturday night and part of Sunday...They all suffered from want of water.247

The Broadhursts then occupied their house at the settlement and Sholl, forced to vacate the premises, set about constructing his official residence with the assistance of Tays and others. The Wedges soon followed the others into the settlement and though things were still tough all round, the drought had broken.

There is no doubt that Broadhurst, and all those other Europeans in the north, suffered terribly from the effects of the prolonged drought that greeted their arrival in the north in 1865. As the drought eased, things began to improve. The settler's lives were made more bearable by the gradual development of a township at the cluster of huts surrounding Withnell's homestead, Mt. Welcome at the permanent pool on the Harding River. By the end of the year the place known to the Aborigines as Yeera-Muk-A-Doo became the township of Roebourne and the Broadhursts became a central part of it all. It was around this time that Broadhurst would have received news of the death of his mother in the October of the previous year. (See Family tree, p. 17). Whether Broadhurst was beneficiary of her estate and used the money in the pastoral industry is not known.

247 RJ S, 26/6/1866, BL.
(iv) Broadhurst’s Activities after the Collapse

Despite the collapse of the Company, Broadhurst was one of those who elected to stay in the North, as did Wedge, his Co-director. Sholl had indicated that he thought Broadhurst intended returning to Victoria, but what enticed him to remain in the light of the fine society that the family left behind in Victoria is not known. Perhaps he and Wedge thought it advisable to remain in the North and avoid the possibility of litigation in Melbourne. Perhaps he had seen an opportunity real enough to entice him to stay with his young family in tow.

Wedge joined the Government payroll as assistant Surveyor and Tays went into the employ of the Resident Magistrate and set to work on the construction of Sholl’s official residence and other official works. Other Company members such as Broadhurst, Baynton, Fraser, Venn, McKay, Simpson, MacIntosh and Hicks then went about their business as pastoralists with the former Company sheep. Initially many, if not all of them, would have centred on the Maitland River between Miaree and Cheratta Pools on the former Company land. (Figure 16). Graham, Müller, Tays and others continued in the service industries at the growing township. Broadhurst though based at the settlement, commuted back and forth between there and the Maitland River in order to monitor progress with his flocks and to check on his shepherds. He informed Sholl of the need to have a ‘scab’ inspector in the district and also informed him that he expected to augment his stock from the East in the following year.248

On 18 May, the explorers, Venn, Cane, Frazer and McKay were finally registered in the ‘Book of Applications for Permission to Proceed North’.249 Venn and Frazer then obtained land on the Fortescue River, some of which was allocated free to them by a government grateful for their services in conducting much needed explorations.250

248 ibid. Scab is a disease affecting sheep, Sturkey, op. cit., Cha 3, pp. 21-22.
249 Book of Applications to Proceed North, op. cit.,
250 CSR, 582/47, BL.
On 21 June, Broadhurst was part of a four man exploring team, including T.C. Sholl, that went exploring to the Exmouth region and the Ashburton River. Though they failed to find a suitable location for a town-site, they noted rich fine land there and a permanent pool. They also survived an attack by a large group of between thirty and forty Aboriginals in the vicinity of the Ashburton River. While he was away, Eliza Broadhurst received notification that his application for land in the names of their sons on the Ashburton River was still unsuccessful. On his return, Broadhurst indicated to Sholl that he intended to ‘speculate in runs and with stock’ and informed him that he wished to become the ‘agent of others’.

After the collapse of the Company and the dispersal of the stock, the settlement at Withnell’s Station grew steadily. In residence at the settlement during the year, were the families Withnell, Broadhurst, Müller, Wedge, and Woodhouse, all with many children. Of the single men, Doctor Baynton came in from the Nickol in May, joining Sholl and his son Trevarton, the police contingent of Aboriginal and European men, Graham the ‘chainer’ from Camden Harbour, Graham the ‘shoemaker’ from the Denison Plains Company, Smith and Byfield the blacksmiths, Tays the jack of all trades, Filcher and Duboulay. Others from the outlying stations dropped in from time to time to attend to business. Some like Hooley went to the Ashburton but most were based in the hinterland of Nickol Bay.

Life was difficult however and more of the Company people left at this time, possibly including the Broadhurst’s serving girl. After suffering badly from scurvy and seeing the erection of an ‘opposition’ hotel, the Müller’s also left for Fremantle. There they had intentions of setting up as butchers. See appendix 5.

Despite the loss of families such as the Müllers, and the death of some, such as Mrs Woodhouse and her new born child, the settlement grew and became

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251 Expedition to Exmouth gulf, Exploration Diaries, Vol.6, pp 120-130, BL.
252 CSR, 582/10, BL.
253 CSR, 582/52, BL.
The social structure was cemented by church services conducted each Sunday by Sholl, Queens Birthday sports, picnics and swimming in the pool on the Harding. Social events were commonplace and Broadhurst's house with Eliza's piano and hospitality was a social centre for the educated 'gentlefolk' such as the Sholls, Baynton, DuBoulay and others. Eliza Broadhurst entertained on her piano and sang to the delight of her listeners. The diaries of R.J. and T.C. Sholl shine with the accounts of the social whirl centring on their official residence and the Broadhursts house at this time. There were backgammon, whist, cribbage, vingt et un, (Twenty one) and chess evenings at Broadhurst's. There was much hilarity, picnics, strolls through the growing town, and even champagne on the combined occasion of the young Sholl's twenty first birthday party and the Broadhurst's sixth wedding anniversary. The hilarity and bonhomie of this period served to make bearable what was, in reality, a very difficult existence. The Broadhursts were central to this social whirl, but Charles Broadhurst's popularity was not universal amongst those he once led. The Denison Plains Company affair did not end with the disbursement of the stock to pay staff and creditors in the North. The Colonial Secretary, F.P. Barlee, in reply to Sholl's reports on the matter, indicated that there was 'difficulty in store' and that he did not 'envy' Sholl's task in satisfying the outstanding land claims. The animosity that many of the remaining shareholders still felt towards Broadhurst surfaced when he was summoned by Graham and when he and Filcher were served with a counter summons by Broadhurst for offensive language. Broadhurst also summoned Graham for keeping, and refusing to pay for, former Company goods. Broadhurst clearly could not easily relinquish responsibility for the company. Withnell, summoned Broadhurst, as agent for the Company, on a matter relating to cattle for example.

254 The Woodhouses with their 4 children survived Camden Harbour. Her new born baby died on Christmas Day 1865, and she died three months later. As an example of the hardships and lack of facilities the floorboards of the Broadhurst's cottage at Roebourne was used to make her coffin. See RJS & TCS Diaries for the period and Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p. 89.
255 RJS, 6/6/1866, BL.
In September 1866, Broadhurst and his family purchased four blocks numbers 13-16 at the newly proclaimed township of Roebourne at a cost of £5 each.256 (Figure 17).

**Figure 17**

Roebourne C. 1890,

*showing the blocks nos., 13-16 purchased by Broadhurst.*257

Though he and the remaining shareholders were occupying the former Company ‘runs’ on the Maitland and Nicol Rivers, Broadhurst succeeded in acquiring land in his own right in the same month by securing leases to three 20,000 acre blocks, numbers 63-65, on the Ashburton River from January 1866 for a period of four years.258 The timing was rather fortuitous, for in the previous month, E.T. Hooley had succeeded in forging a stock route from

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256 In the names of Charles (1 block), Eliza (2) and Florance (1), CSR 582/157, BL. Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p.100
257 Townsite of Roebourne, State Archive.
258 CSR, 624/46, 582/153 & RJS 29/9/1866, BL.
Newcastle (Toodyay) near Perth to his selections on the Ashburton River through to the Fortescue River. This was not far from the Maitland River where Broadhurst was operating his ‘run’. Hooley and others, possibly including Broadhurst, then attempted to establish themselves on the Ashburton. Though Broadhurst successfully established himself on the Maitland River and at Roebourne, it is doubtful that he succeeded with the ‘runs’ on the Ashburton. This belief is partly due to the fierce attitudes of the local Aborigines who, a few years later, killed a European shepherd and an Aboriginal convict from Rottnest Island. Despite the ensuing punitive battle, they were not subdued and forced the Europeans to abandon the area for a number of years. 259 Another reason was the relatively small size of the ‘run’ selected by Broadhurst. The noted pastoralist, A.R. Richardson noted, with the benefit of hindsight, that the minimum size required to make a sheep station viable in the North-West was in the 150,000 to 350,000 acre range. 260

Broadhurst was a part of an exploring party to the upper Sherlock and the Fortescue Rivers and supplied six horses for another sortie which he had intended joining but could not. 261 He was an accepted leader of the community at Roebourne, where he lived with his family and headed a petition from those with children in the district for a schoolmaster and became the secretary of the Roebourne school building fund. 262 When there was another near famine in the district, due to the failure of the cutter Mystery to arrive with stores as expected, Broadhurst was part of a committee formed to discuss the options open to the White community. 263

In this period, when Sholl was considering the appointment of a Justice of the Peace he noted that of all those there only Broadhurst, Wedge and Baynton

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260 Richardson, op. cit., p. 70.
261 Exploration Diaries, Vol 6, op cit., p 103, BL.
262 CSR, 603/38, BL.
263 Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p.91.
were qualified by virtue of their ‘age, experience and education’ for the office.\footnote{264 CSR, 581/128, BL.}

In August, 1866, he finally appointed Broadhurst noting that,

Mr Broadhurst seems to have satisfactorily arranged his own and the Company affairs and intends remaining. He is in every respect fitted for the office.\footnote{265 CSR, 581/235, 23/4/1866, BL.}

Because Broadhurst had indicated his desire to ‘speculate’ in runs and with stock and because he sought to to be an agent for others,\footnote{266 CSR, 582/52, BL.} Sholl was in a quandary whether Broadhurst should act as Resident Magistrate in his forthcoming absence. The prospect was also met with some alarm by those with conflicting interests.

There was another compelling reason for concern. Despite the acrimony that such a move was bound to cause, Broadhurst had submitted a tender of £150 for the defunct Denison Plains Company. In December 1866, a William Cameron wrote to Broadhurst to the effect that his offer had been accepted, subject to the payment of the money. He also noted that all the sheep and stock which had been divided amongst the partners still belonged to the Company and that Broadhurst, if he so desired, could recover them if possible.\footnote{267 CSR, 603/127, BL.} Most notable amongst those opposing Broadhurst’s appointment was Dr Baynton’s brother who began managing his brother’s ‘run’ after he left and who had the misfortune to be ordered off by Broadhurst in the belief that he (Broadhurst) was now the owner of all the Denison Plains Company property.\footnote{268 CSR, 603/117, BL.}

Despite this obvious conflict of interests, Sholl, who needed to go to Perth, had Broadhurst sworn in as Acting Resident Magistrate, with Wedge in charge of the camp and his son Trevarton doing the daily business. Broadhurst took on the position in October at the rate of 10 shillings per day.\footnote{269 CSR, 582/241 &170, BL.} Apparently there was little to cause Broadhurst further problems in his official capacity
and he was ably supported by Trevarton Sholl who, from an examination of the handwriting on the official reports of the period, prepared them for Broadhurst to sign. One of these reports refers to Tays who had left the employ of the government to go pearling. He petitioned Broadhurst, as acting Resident Magistrate for protection for the estimated 9 tons of shell that he had hidden in heaps on the beaches between Port Hedland and a position 50 miles east of the De Grey.270

On his return to the North in February 1867, Sholl noted that there were ‘rumoured’ complaints against Broadhurst and that though a strong personal feeling existed against Mr. Broadhurst partly on account of some supposed delinquency as manager of the Denison Plains Company... nothing has yet transpired to justify my adopting the views of these people...Broadhurst acquitted himself discreetly at a period of some embarrassment.271

The existing ill-feeling towards Broadhurst was apparently exacerbated by his tender for the company and the fear that such a move would have caused.

Such fear was well-founded for Broadhurst’s tender for the Company was eventually accepted and in June 1867, he placed his claim as the purchaser of the defunct Denison Plains Company before the Resident Magistrate.272 He not only claimed the stock and effects but also formally claimed the blocks of land allocated to Simpson, Müller and Baynton on behalf of the Company. These were the former Company ‘runs’ on the Maitland and Nickol Rivers.273 Sholl was clearly in a quandary when presented with Broadhurst’s petition and with the written evidence that Baynton, Müller and Simpson had not intended in taking up land for themselves and that it was in fact intended for the Company that Broadhurst had since purchased.274

270 TCS, 17/11/1866, BL.
271 CSR, 603/8-24, BL.
272 RJS, 27/6/1867, BL.
273 Baynton and Simpson held two blocks of 100,000 acres each on the Maitland River including Miaree Pool. The 20,000 acres taken up in Müller’s name on the Nickol River was later resumed by Sholl as a crown reserve despite Broadhurst’s claims for ownership. RJS, 29/6/1967 & CSR, 603/117, BL.
274 CSR, 603/121.
Sholl decided that the dispute over the stock was one for private litigation. In relation to the dispute over the land, he noted that there was nothing in the records to indicate that the Company itself was entitled to land, that there was no selection by it, no return of stock imported by it and that the time allowed for selection had expired. Sholl effectively sidestepped the problem and Broadhurst was advised that, if he had the required documentation, he should take the matter to court as a private individual. Broadhurst appears to have realized that his cause was hopeless and though he obtained the remaining Company stores and other effects such as the waggons, equipment and the like he does not appear to have succeeded in either his claims for the land or the stock.

Though such pecuniary interests clearly clashed with Broadhurst’s position as a Justice of the Peace and acting Resident Magistrate, it appears that he did not abuse his position nor did he receive any favours in the matter of land dealings from Sholl. Sholl’s assessment that Broadhurst acquitted himself ‘discreetly’ at this time in this difficult period appears to be the only objective analysis available to us and should be given some credence, despite the fact that the two were to become good friends.

As Sholl’s assistant in the judiciary, Broadhurst signed pay sheets and other documents and, on a number of occasions, sat with Sholl in judgement on mainly trivial offences. On occasion, however they sentenced Aboriginal men to Rottnest for three years with hard labour for horse theft and other misdemeanours. By today’s standards, these are unpardonably harsh sentences, biased towards establishing and maintaining European superiority. Though he handed down what are now considered very harsh sentences, Broadhurst was reflecting the prevailing European attitudes of the time. The sentences reflected the majority attitude towards the unfortunate Aboriginals, in an era when many dissenters such as Gribble, Giustiniani and Lyons faced ostracism and were even abandoned even by the church some of them

275 CSR, 603/132, BL.
276 RJS, 18/2/1867 & 15/8/1867, BL., See also Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p.150.
represented. 277 Those such as the correspondent *Vigilans* who also dared speak out against such matters were forced to adopt pseudonyms in order to maintain their position within European society. 278

The South-West Aboriginal, ‘Harry’ who was ‘lent’ to Broadhurst when he arrived at Fremantle on board *Warrior*, died on 2 December 1866 at the Maitland River. Sholl wrote in his report about the death and on the subject in general, stating that, their employers should not only be required to provide food and medicine, but also to transport them to medical aid in the case of severe illness. He also stated that ‘great care should be exercised in assigning these men otherwise they will be in effect slaves’. 279 On a note appended to this report, Governor Hampton agreed entirely, deploring the practice and he indicated that, in future, Aborigines would not be placed in the charge of ‘private persons’. 280 Whether this is an indication that Broadhurst had treated the man badly is not known, though the inference that he failed to seek medical aid when ‘Harry’ was sick is clearly there. On the other hand, Broadhurst was noted as having ‘much praised’ his ‘employee’ and was successful in obtaining the services of other South-West Aborigines. 281 Further to this, on the same day that he wrote to the Colonial Secretary advising him of the demise of ‘Harry’, Sholl also informed him of Broadhurst’s resignation as a JP and praised his magisterial colleague highly. 282

On 4 February 1867 the Broadhurst’s fourth child, Percival Henry, was born. In the following March, the schooner *Emma* left Nickol Bay with 32 passengers and 9 crew on board. The vessel’s complement constituted over one third of the European population of the north and included the remnants of the recently failed Roebuck Bay Association, Nairn the manager at the De Grey,

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278 See Chapter four Pearling, on Broadhurst’s use of Aboriginal convicts from the Rottnest establishment.

279 CSR, 603/217, BL.

280 Ibid.

281 GRO, Port Walcott, 15/2/1866. *Exploration Diaries*, Vol. 6, p.55. See also Broadhurst’s use of Aboriginal convicts on-board the *Adur* in the following chapter.

282 CSR, 603/217-221, BL.
the Resident’s Magistrate’s son, T.C. Sholl, Duboulay from Camden Harbour, and Tays with part of his ‘catch’ of pearl shell. The vessel disappeared without trace, and a state of semi starvation hit the new town.\textsuperscript{283} All suffered badly until the situation was relieved, especially the distraught Sholl.

With four children from ranging from 7 years of age to only a few months old months, and possibly with the \textit{Emma} tragedy in mind, the Broadhurst family eventually decided to leave Roebourne for Fremantle. Sholl expected them to leave in August, though this was postponed.\textsuperscript{284} When Broadhurst did leave with his family on 21 December on board \textit{Clarence Packet}, Sholl indicated in passing on Broadhurst’s resignation as Justice of the Peace to the Governor, that he was,

\begin{quote}
\small
sorry to lose a colleague who would have proved an able assistant in cases of doubt and difficulty...the departure of Mr. Broadhurst and family will cause a great and I fear irreplaceable social loss to this newly formed district... much regret that I should this early lose the assistance and companionship.\textsuperscript{285}
\end{quote}

Though they left the area and did not establish a permanent residence in the north again, Broadhurst maintained a close association and involvement in the pastoral industry and kept flocks in the north for many years, probably at the Maitland River with H.W. Venn as his agent.\textsuperscript{286} It is again through the publicity that surrounded the controversies in which Broadhurst was seemingly always involved, that we learn that he maintained a flock in the district till at least January 1871. Notice of this comes in the form of an official complaint in that month to the Resident Magistrate from a Mr. Atting who stated that Broadhurst would not pay his wages. Broadhurst, who was by then busy

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[283]{CSR, 603/67, BL & Henderson (1988), op. cit., p. 67-71. & Burges, op cit., pp. 29-30, The population of the North District at that time was between 82- 142 people. RJS, January 1866, CSR, 624/51 and the 1870 census, op. cit.
}\footnotetext[284]{CSR, 603/111, BL.
}\footnotetext[285]{CSR, 603/220-228, BL
}\footnotetext[286]{Whenever Broadhurst called in to town he invariably went to, or had come from, the Maitland up to the time he left to purchase the SS \textit{Xanthe} in early 1871. When he lay close to death in 1869 at Roebourne, Venn, who was at the Maitland River as Baynton’s agent, was sent for by the Resident Magistrate to attend to him. On the basis of this evidence, Venn also appears to have been Broadhurst’s agent. RJS, 7/5/1869- 31/8/1869.
}\end{footnotes}
pearling, countered with the claim that Atting had left his sheep without permission and was apparently not at his post when Broadhurst made one of his unscheduled visits to the 'run.'\textsuperscript{287}

Broadhurst left Western Australia for England in mid 1871 and returned with the SS \textit{Xan thro} which he had purchased and fitted out for for £4500. There is a possibility that Broadhurst sold his flocks and the former Denison Plains Company equipment to finance the deal.\textsuperscript{288} Nothing is heard of him in the context of the pastoral industry after the Atting incident and this points to the possibility that he sold out after 1871. On the other hand he may have maintained an interest in the pastoral industry until much later, though evidence of this has not been found in any but a list of his son, Florance's, possessions that include a number of blocks of town land at Roebourne in addition to those mentioned above.\textsuperscript{289}

It is doubtful that Broadhurst would have succeeded pastoral industry had he remained. The reason for this assumption lies in the many references to his general failure in the north west and in the severe down-turn in wool growing after 1876. After staying at 5 and a half pence per pound for a number of years, wool prices jumped around 1869 due to methods then found to clean the dirt from the fleeces. They rose to 21 pence per pound in 1870 and then slowly dropped back to 14 cents per pound in 1876 to herald a depression in the North West pastoral industry that was to last for two decades.\textsuperscript{290}

Despite this, he was one of those who remained viable as a pastoralist throughout the early years from 1866 to 1871 at least and for this he deserves considerable credit.

\textsuperscript{287} RJS, 30/1/1871, BL
\textsuperscript{288} He may have sold his flocks at the Maitland River to help finance the deal, but no evidence of this has been found. Two stations sold in 1865 and 1866 for £2400 and £1400 respectively when the wool price was five and a half pence per pound and 'runs' would have been worth far more than that in 1871 when the price had more than trebled. Sturkey, op. cit., Cha. 3., p.7.
\textsuperscript{289} Will of Florance Constantine Broadhurst. In possession of Mrs M Brinsden, grand-daughter of Florance Broadhurst.
\textsuperscript{290} Sturkey, op. cit., Cha 3. pp. 13-17.
(iv) Why the Europeans succeeded at Nickol Bay and failed elsewhere in the north

It remains now to examine why those members of the defunct Denison Plains Company, such as Broadhurst, were able to stay on and make a relative success of their endeavours at Nickol Bay in comparison with attempts that failed in every other part of the north at that time.

Those settlers who had landed earlier certainly were a factor in the survival of the individual Company members at Nickol Bay. Most of these earlier settlers, if not all, at one time or other wished themselves out of the place, and would have left if they could have recovered their substantial outlay. They did not leave and thereby made it easier for those who followed. The part played by those such as John and Emma Withnell, W.S. Hall, the ‘Portland Group’ and others in this regard cannot be underrated.

In comparison to the Camden Harbour group, many of those in the vanguard of the Denison Plains Company were ‘staff’, apparently selected for their skills and sent to pave the way. A perusal of Appendix five will show that the majority of the shareholders of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company remained in the area and had a significant effect on European settlement of the North-West. Thus, those of the Denison Plains Company who ventured north under Broadhurst such as Venn, Fraser Macintosh, Simpson, Hicks and McKay were well suited for the tasks ahead, despite both Broadhurst’s and Sholl’s remarks to the contrary when the Company began to collapse. Broadhurst’s actions in keeping the Company stock and goods together, so that a substantial amount remained to be purchased when the collapse came, indirectly ensured that these remaining members of the Company had a good start. These factors and the presence of an existing settlement based on permanent water, served by a reasonably safe harbour, all combined to see those of the Company who stayed on after the collapse, through the very difficult seasons and on to eventual success as pastoralists and pearlers.
The quality of the land was another significant factor which finally swung the balance towards the settlers and those of the Denison Plains Company who became pastoralists and pearlers at Nickol Bay.

The Resident Magistrate RJ Sholl travelled the district during the severe drought of the summer of 1866 and in quizzing his many experienced settlers on the surprising quality of the stock in the harsh conditions noted that, ‘in no part of Australia would stock be in the condition they are in this district after such a season’. The ability of the country to carry stock in the most severe drought was the marvel of all in the District, as was the land’s capacity to regenerate within days of the first rains.

The Aborigines were another major factor in the success of Broadhurst and the other ‘White’ settlers who landed at Nickol Bay.

It has been claimed in an analysis of settlement by outsiders in such countries as Australia, Africa, Argentina, South America, North America and Siberia, that one ‘arresting similarity’ between these settlements was the destruction of the nomadic societies that the European and other societies displaced and that,

it is the quality of the indigenous society which profoundly influenced the kind of settler society which could be superimposed upon it or which might entirely replace it.

In support of this argument it appears that the Aborigines in the Nickol Bay region were a key to white success there and that from that tiny outpost, European dominance in the North spread. Their particular ‘qualities’ allowed the Europeans to gain a toe-hold in the harsh land and allowed them to assist the new arrivals willingly until they established a supremacy that was then maintained with force. This is in stark contrast to the other tribes of the North District, such as those of Camden Harbour and Roebuck Bay. The Ashburton

291 Mr Sholl’s Despatches, 17/2/1866. Exploration Diaries, Vol. 6, op. cit., p.59, BL.
River area, where Broadhurst and Company were attacked, and where the first settlers, E.T. Hooley and his wife, found themselves under siege is another example of the ferocious attitude of the Aborigines at areas other than Nickol Bay. 293

Part of the reason for the fierce attitudes to strangers in the areas to the North of Nickol Bay may be related to the activities of Macassan or 'Malay' trepangers294 who began frequenting the North of Australia some time between 1650 and 1750.295 They left their homes with the North-West Monsoon in December or January and returned with the South East Trades in April. The Macassans apparently tended to head for what is now Arnhem Land, or Marega, in the Northern Territory and to the Kimberleys or Kayu Djawa.296 A fleet of between 24 and 26 prahus297 was seen in 1803 by the French under Baudin. He was warned by the Macassans of the hostility of the Aborigines who were described as extremely fierce.298 Sholl observed the visit of a fleet of seven Macassan Prahus with around 300 men on board at Camden Sound in 1864.299 He believed that they made kidnapping raids and ranged not only in that region but as far south as Roebuck Bay where were ‘quite a fleet was seen around 1866.300

In examining the evidence, it is clear that in their annual forays to Marege and Kayu Djawa regions, which began sometime around the mid eighteenth century, the Macassans engaged in trade, but on occasions treated the

293 Hasluck, op. cit., p.31, mentions attacks on Dampier (1699) at Roebuck Bay, on King (1819) at Vansittart and Hanover Bays, on Grey (1838), on Martin (1863) at the Glenelg and on Panter et al. (1865) at LaGrange Bay, but points out that Stokes managed to allay suspicion and prevent attacks in the same region in 1837.


295 'b'd 97

296 M' K. 33 ac mc t, op. Clt., p.

297fia1La generic name given to Asian, Malay, Indonesian or Singaporean vessels. Used in the Western Australian context more in the Indonesian context.


300 Burges, op. cit., p. 12.
Aborigines badly sometimes taking slaves.\textsuperscript{301} The subsequent hostility necessitated the erection of barricades by the Macassans and the carrying of arms.\textsuperscript{302} Some of the fighting has been attributed to the Aboriginal practice of stealing provisions and canoes rather than the taking of slaves and women as indicated above.\textsuperscript{303}

Sholl believed that they did not venture into Nickol Bay due to the absence of Trepang there. In contrast, he believed that the first visitors to the area such as the American Whalers treated the Aborigines well.\textsuperscript{304} This, he felt, made the Nickol Bay Aborigines more tolerant of the white interlopers.\textsuperscript{305} Part of the explanation may also lie with the approach of the explorer Phillip Parker King who visited the Nickol Bay area before the Americans in February 1818. He noted that the Aborigines that he encountered near Lewis island were ‘much alarmed’ by the presence of his men and that when he seized one of their number ‘by the hair [he] resisted stoutly [and the] whole party appeared to be overcome with grief’ at the fracas. When the unfortunate captive saw Boongaree, a South Western Aboriginal, who had accompanied King, he calmed down and when given sugar consumed the offering. He was later released with an axe and a bag of biscuits and was put ashore where he was treated initially with some suspicion by his people, until they were satisfied with his condition. After a number of other contacts which featured Boongaree, a good relationship was established and this also manifested itself in later contacts in the region that began with threatening gestures but which entailed no actual violence. King appeared to understand that the local Aborigines meant no harm, but indicated in their unmistakable gestures of hostility that the presence of the whites was not welcome and he acted

\textsuperscript{301}F. McRae noted that the seafarer Tuckey went to Macassar and saw ‘three or four aborigines from these parts removed by Malays employed in the pearl and Bèche-de-Mer fisheries and sold at Macassar as slaves. He also noted that it had been done before. CSR, 782/123, BL.
\textsuperscript{302}Anderson, op cit, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{303}Dr. Ian Crawford, (Pers. Com.).
\textsuperscript{304}Sholl to Col. Sec., CSR, 581/126 16/2/1866, BL. The first known incursions of American whaleships into the Indian Ocean began in the 1830s. Starbuck, A., \textit{History of the American Whale Fishery from its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876}. Vol 1, 1878. (Argosy Antiquarian, Ltd. NY, 1964), p.274 et seq.
\textsuperscript{305}CSR, 581/126, BL.
accordingly without violence. He was to become so impressed with the eventual racial harmony and positive contact made that, as a ‘consequence of the communication we had with these natives’, he named an island group in the region the ‘Intercourse Islands’.  

Possibly as a result of such happenings, the explorer Gregory, on his visit to the region in 1861, recorded that two Aboriginal men paddled out to his vessel, the Dolphin, on ‘logs of wood shaped like canoes’ and came on board with little more assurance of their personal safety than ‘friendly signs’. They also knew the use of both biscuit and tobacco and were pleased to receive and consume any offered. Some of those who lived on the western side of Nickol Bay even assisted the whites in the transport of wood and water though an apparent attack or show of force by Aboriginals from the eastern side of the bay was repulsed with a warning shot. Thus the whalers and the early explorers in the region appear to have established a firm, powerful, but friendly and non threatening presence.

Other causes for the hostile attitude of the Northern Aborigines and the comparatively friendly attitude of the Nickol Bay tribes have also been suggested.

On the whole, Indonesian treatment of Aborigines followed a well understood pattern and Aborigines in Arnhem Land contrast it with the aggressive and ruthless exploitation of them and their land by Europeans....Where Aborigines had been in contact with Indonesians, they rapidly identified the Europeans as another race of people, and they responded accordingly. Outside the contact zone, Aborigines were confused by the whites for much longer and were overwhelmed by the time they realised what was going on. Hence the explorers found the Aborigines in the North to be ‘treacherous’ etc., but really they were responding to invasion and trespass more rapidly than their southern brethren.

307 Gregory, op. cit., pp. 56, 73.
308 ibid.
A positive approach from the explorers may have led to the initial ‘confusion’ mentioned by Crawford that allowed the white settlers to gain a friendly toe-hold in other areas such as Albany. This is contrasted with the aggressive reaction to Stirling’s explorations of the Swan River due, it is believed, to the earlier depredations of a white sealer. 310

This does not explain the initial reaction of the Aborigines to the first visits of the Europeans in other parts of the country near Nickol Bay, such as the Ashburton region further west. Here, the white interlopers were initially attacked, harassed and forced out through death, fear and stock losses. 311 In the Coral Bay region further south for example, the Aborigines also proved ferocious. The survivors of a wreck believed to be the *Emma* in 1867 were apparently killed and eaten by the Aborigines living in the Coral Bay region.312

There may have also been regional and personal differences in initial attitude to the ‘Whites’ even within each tribe in the area. In 1876 for example, the survivors from the *Stephano*, for example, passed through the same region in which the *Emma* was lost, were saved by a group of Aborigines who resisted the demands of others in the tribe to kill them.313 The same ambivalent behaviour was displayed in the instance of a wreck at Eyre in the Great Australian Bight around 1800. Here the Aboriginals killed one of the two remaining survivors of the wreck ‘because he was no good’ leaving the other because he had fair hair. 314

For whatever reason, there are few recorded instances of the Aboriginal people causing fear for the personal safety of the white settlers, including Broadhurst and his colleagues, in the Nickol Bay region in the early years of

310 *Green*, op. cit., p. 75-77.
311 Journals of Explorations from Nickol Bay to the Ashburton River and to Exmouth Gulf by Denison Plains Company personnel Venn, McKay, Fraser, Cane, and in one instance Broadhurst. *Exploration Diaries 1865-1871*, Vol. 6., BL, op. cit. & Burges, op. cit., p. 32 & RJS 10/4/1869, recording the killing of a European shepherd, reprisals and forcing out of E.T. Hooley and his wife due to Aboriginal attacks.
313 ibid., pp. 175-183.
settlement. One incident that could have resulted in bloodshed occurred at Wellard's place on the upper Harding in early 1864 and the unrest as a result continued till the spring of the same year.\textsuperscript{315} Despite this, there was unanimous agreement however, that apart from this isolated incident, the Aborigines of the region were, in the early phases of European settlement, at least docile, tractable, ... work for a very trifling remuneration\textsuperscript{316} (and were) a fine race of men... broad muscular very intelligent\textsuperscript{317}... quiet, peaceable... in no part of the colony perhaps in no part of Australia have the early settlers been so secure from plunder or attack as in this district... not a horse not a head of cattle not a sheep has been touched while shepherds miles from assistance sleep in the midst of their flocks in safety and with confidence.\textsuperscript{318}

Thus, the Aboriginal people at Nickol Bay, in exchange for a trifling recompense quite gladly provided the white settlers with the benefits of their labour, companionship, experience and good humour in the first years of settlement.

Irrespective of the reasons behind their actions, their initial attitude in comparison with that found elsewhere in the North, was a key factor in the success of the whites including the Denison Plains people at Nickol Bay. The availability of cheap, compliant labour in the early years of the pastoral industry was crucial factor. Without the Aborigines, the white settlers and pearlers of the north could not have succeeded, especially as they were not allowed to bring white convict labour into the region.

Aboriginal labour came in another form, that of the convict. Padbury was the first to utilize the Aboriginal convict force on Rottnest Island as a source of labour in the North, and his lead was soon to be followed by others such as Broadhurst.\textsuperscript{319} The dependence of the white people on Aboriginal labour in

\textsuperscript{315} Hasluck (1928), op. cit., p.268.
\textsuperscript{316} RJ Sholl, GRO Report, 21/4/1866 & 29/9/1866, Exploration Diaries, Vol 6, p.61.
\textsuperscript{317} Mr Cowle's Journal, 2/4/1866, Exploration Diaries, Vol 6, op. cit., p.80, BL.
\textsuperscript{318} GRO Report, op cit., p. 100, reproduced in the Perth Gazette, 18/5/1866 & 11/11/ 1866. My emphasis.
\textsuperscript{319} Hasluck, op. cit., p.264.
the pastoral industries was absolute. Fences were not introduced in the North before 1878, and the sheep from Victoria were used to being penned. Shepherds and labourers were essential in the first decade of white settlement in the North and the Aborigines were a very much cheaper source of labour than their European counterparts.

All of this raises questions about the possible fate of the Denison Plains Company people and the Broadhursts had they landed elsewhere as intended. Despite the relative strengths and weakness of the group, it is doubtful if they would have made a better fist of it in comparison with their colleagues at Roebuck Bay, the Ashburton, and at Camden Harbour where the land and the ferocious attitude of the local Aboriginals initially combined to defeat them all.

In 1868, after nearly six years of a permanent European presence in their land, the Nickol Bay Aborigines finally resorted to violence and killed a number of Whites involved in the capture of an Aboriginal alleged to have stolen flour. The reaction from the white community was swift and from the Aboriginal accounts clearly excessive. The estimated number of Aboriginal men women and children killed was in the region of 30-60. The event was conclusive in establishing the power of the white settlers by demonstrating to the Aborigines that the Europeans had not come to their tribal lands on equal terms and that Aboriginal law was now subservient to that of the Whites.

From that time on, in maintaining their dominance over the unfortunate Aborigines on the land and in the search for pearl divers, many of the white settlers were to resort to violent means and threats to obtain their ends.

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320 Richardson, op. cit., p.46.
321 ibid., p. 17.
322 A shepherd’s wages varied from 25-30 shillings a month as paid by Padbury to £3 by Hall. (See Hasluck (1979) op. cit. and Baynton to his father 20/2/1866. The Aborigines on the other hand were merely supplied with food, some clothing and occasionally stores in return for their labour.
324 For some further instances of this see:
(i) Williams, A., (1977) Interview with Mr. R Lukis. Re the murder of an Aboriginal man by the pastoralist D. Mackay in the 1870s. WAM Typescript.
The Aborigines who had allowed them virtually a free foothold in their territory, had no means of redress and were virtually powerless to retaliate. The landing of the Europeans at Nickol Bay was, for them and their culture, an unmitigated disaster and the beginnings of generations of subjugation and sorrow.

On the other hand, for the members of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, the accidental landing by the Company at Nickol Bay rather than at Camden Harbour or at Roebuck Bay was, as the correspondent at the Inquirer stated, ‘most fortuitous for all concerned’.325

**Conclusion**

The discussion above, has shown that it was not without good reason that Broadhurst and the other members of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company came to Western Australia.

On the other hand, it also shows that had they proceeded as intended to Camden Harbour and attempted to progress from there to the Denison Plains, against advice, they would have suffered the same fate that befell all those Europeans who ventured to the region in that period.

The Camden Harbour people, the shareholders of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and Broadhurst as one of the Company Directors, were all seduced by the detailed and very positive accounts of the exploration of the regions they intended settling. These accounts came from very well respected sources and were used by unscrupulous men such as William Harvey in order to float the Companies they formed.

Glowing and optimistic in the extreme, the presentation of the prospectuses of the Camden Harbour and Denison Plains Companies was very persuasive and further added to the aura of respectability and official sanction surrounding them. In similar fashion to all the schemes formed to settle Western Australia, their veracity could not be checked at a distance and the

325 *Inquirer*, 26/7/1865.
intending settlers were all at the mercy of the pamphleteers and the promoters of the various companies.

In this context, the Victorians who aimed to settle the 'North District' as part of the Camden Harbour Association and the Denison Plains Company, had on paper a quite logical and feasible plan, that would, if successful, open a new gateway to Australia. The plans to have a small government subsidized coasting steamer as the link with countries to the north pre-empts the arrival of the SS Xantho, a vessel that Broadhurst himself was to buy only a few years after the failure of the Denison Plains Company.

The Denison Plains and Camden Harbour Company prospectuses also contained accurate maps, and the people who bought into the two companies knew exactly where their destinations lay. From the explorers' accounts, they also thought they knew what to expect when they arrived. Thus the decision, of Broadhurst and his colleagues, to travel to the 'North district' of Western Australia was, as far as was possible in those times, not an unreasonable one. The claims of Kimberley, Battye and later historians, to the contrary, are shown to have been based on the lies, exaggerations and misunderstandings propounded at the public meetings called to found the companies and not on a perusal of the explorer's accounts and the Company pamphlets. They also failed to recognize that the much praised pioneers such as the Withnell's, Richardson, Edgar, Hall, Padbury and many others left for the 'North District' on precisely the same sort of evidence as those they criticize, and in most cases expended far greater sums in doing so.

The Denison Plains Company was linked through William Harvey with the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association. The collapse of one clearly caused the collapse of the other, but in the light of the 'tyranny of distance', news was not received by Broadhurst and his colleagues until the day of their departure for the North. Even then the news was not sufficient to cause the project to be delayed, though Broadhurst, and Wedge his fellow Director, should in hindsight, have forced a delay until the situation was resolved.
It was Harvey, and not Broadhurst, who was the chief ‘promoter’ of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. Harvey’s burning ambition to establish a self governing gateway to Australia at Camden Harbour was so strong as to continue long after the events described above. Throughout 1873, and as late as March 1874, he was still indicating his desire to form a Company and go there.\(^{326}\) He finally gave up, and in May 1874 in his final letter he stated that there had,

> not been much progress in dissipating the ignorance of the general public as to the advantages of the locality, an ignorance shared in a pretty large degree by the Colonial Office.\(^{327}\)

The people who ventured North as part of Harvey’s Denison Plains scheme and eventually left the North of Western Australia, when the Company collapsed did so, not at the first opportunity as has been inferred by the historians but after a considerable length of time. This is a credit to their tenacity in the face of a crippling drought and near famine, and debunks the suggestion that they were personally any more ill-prepared or un-suited for the tasks ahead than their much praised counterparts. The same could be said of some of the former members of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association, such as E.T. Hooley, Alex McRae, Jacob Hindaugh and others, who later proved their worth at Nickol Bay. The failure of the Camden Harbour Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company was not, as Battye has suggested, a disastrous rout bought about by stupidity and poor planning. The causes of the failure lay elsewhere and can be found in the structure of the Company, the mistakes of the explorer’s, the lies and misunderstandings of the promoters and in the mistake made in having employees who were also shareholders.

Those of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company that stayed at Nickol Bay, had a significant effect on the North-West and for a period formed a majority of the Europeans there. Significant explorations were conducted by the

\(^{326}\text{Harvey to Col. Sec., 1/7/1873, CSR, 733, reproduced in PR 640, BL.}\)

\(^{327}\text{Harvey to Col. Sec., 15/5/1874, CSR, 733, ibid.}\)
Company members, and a surprisingly high 13 of the 19 shareholders are known to have succeeded in some recognizable way in the North-West. This is amply demonstrated in Appendix five. Nine of these successful men were Broadhurst, Baynton, Wedge, Simpson, Macintosh, Venn, McKay, Frazer and Hicks. They established many well known pastoral settlements, after those at the Maitland and the Nickol Rivers. Tays was the acknowledged leader in the pearling industry before his untimely death and almost all those nine who succeeded as pastoralists went pearling with some measure of success. Others such as Brodie, Wedge, Tays, Graham and Müller succeeded in the service industries. The careers of Cane and Bush have not been documented and they are not included in the 13 above. Both are believed to have had some measure of success in the north however. A George Bush is recorded as an ‘important Gascoyne pastoralist in 1887, and Cane was a member of the four man exploration team lead by H. W. Venn that received Government recognition for their efforts.

Of the five women in the Company, Eliza Broadhurst, Mrs Müller and Frances Wedge had a significant effect in the north, and with the men played a major supportive role in the career of their men and in development of the township of Roebourne. (See Appendix five). A number of the Denison Plains Company children, notably Florance Broadhurst, and the Wedge’s sons, returned to the North-West and had a significant impact there. The Company people, at one time, also formed a majority of the Europeans in the North District.

It is argued then, that the Denison Plains Pastoral Company was a significant and hitherto unrecognized force in the process of European settlement in the North-West.

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329 Exploration Diaries, Vol, 6, op. cit.
One of the issues arising from an analysis of Broadhurst and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company is the widely held belief that he was a ‘promoter’ of the company and that he was possibly in league with Harvey. \(^{330}\)

These thoughts are strengthened by the fact that he was a Director and by some of the decisions he made. Most notable of these is the reaction to Brown’s letter informing the Directors that it was impossible to transport stock on the untried, and apparently un-explored, route from Camden Harbour to the Denison Plains. Further evidence is found in Broadhurst’s failure to delay the departure of the \textit{Warrior} on the day Captain Dow’s letters were received. The leasing of his stallion \textit{Kochlani} in exchange for four shares in the Company, and Broadhurst’s reluctance to wind up the company at Nickol Bay are other indications in support of this idea. Thus, the notion, that Broadhurst promoted the Company is supported by the evidence.

The notion that he was in league with William Harvey is not as clear cut. The possibility of collusion between the two was examined at length in Dr Baynton’s public correspondence with Harvey and in a reading of Sholl’s diaries, reports and official letters. In his acrimonious public correspondence with Harvey on the Company, Baynton, though querying the propriety of the leasing arrangement of the stallion, Kochlani, between the Company and Broadhurst, does not mention him by name yet had ample reason to do so. Though clearly critical of the Directors as a group, he was obviously sympathetic to the Manager himself. Broadhurst though not named in Baynton’s letters, was at various times both a Director and the Manager. On this evidence, it appears that Baynton had an ambivalent attitude towards him. Had there been any suspicion that Broadhurst was in league with the Directors in Melbourne and had contributed knowingly to the suffering of those who landed at Nickol Bay, the matter would have arisen in Baynton’s correspondence on this matter and in Sholl’s official records on the Company.

In this context, Sholl has nothing but praise for Broadhurst in a period when they had just met and which was too early for their well known friendship to have developed. As further evidence, Baynton stated in his letters that the Shareholders looked upon Harvey as ‘the chief author’ of the scheme and, in vilifying him, lumped Broadhurst in with the aggrieved, thus belaying the suspicion raised by Broadhurst’s personal business dealings. Sholl’s diaries and letters also support the notion that Broadhurst, though once a Director, was as much aggrieved as his fellow shareholders by the actions of William Harvey. Sholl’s diaries show that Broadhurst and his family suffered with the rest, were an integral part of the ‘accepted’ society at Roebourne, and that they amicably entertained the Sholl’s, Baynton and his brother and the Wedges after the Company collapse. The Broadhurst’s could not have hoped to have done this had Charles Broadhurst himself been patently and culpably responsible for the suffering that they all endured at the hands of the Company.

On the other hand, after the decision of his older brother and cousin to remain in Victoria and not venture to Western Australia as part of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association as planned, Broadhurst left their apparently positive influence. When he did so, he was immediately involved in suspicious dealings and poor decisions as a Director of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and in many altercations and court cases. Though most of these in the period before, and immediately after, the Denison Plains Company collapse can be directly attributed to the problems of the Company itself, the indications are, that once he was out on his own, Broadhurst had a marked propensity for involving himself in controversy.

He clearly could have handled the collapse of the Company better, could have been more sympathetic to the other Shareholders and certainly did not do his reputation any good by tendering for the defunct Company. Despite this, he

[331 Baynton to the Editor, Perth Gazette, 16/11/1866, op cit.]
appears, on the objective assessment of the Resident Magistrate, to have acted correctly in his dealings relating to the Company in the North-West.

Thus the claim arising in the correspondence between Barker and Gull that Broadhurst had ‘made a pretty mess’ of the Company in Western Australia, is partly but not fully supported by the evidence.\(^{332}\) In this context, it is argued that, as the only visible leader of the Company in Western Australia, Broadhurst was to unfairly receive the brunt of the criticism for its failure from his contemporaries and from the historians.

How much the privations suffered by Eliza Broadhurst and their children affected Broadhurst and led to the decision of the family to depart the North will never be known. Mary and Robert Sholl’s struggle with the situation and their own domestic situation is graphically illustrated in the pages of R. J. Sholl’s diary and adds further insights into the personal troubles that beset the settlers in the North. Though Sholl’s personal records are virtually indecipherable, and have been little used as a consequence, they are one of the most important social and historical documents relative to the European settlement of the North-West. They provide a wealth of information and are but a hint of the very private and ‘intimate’ struggles that occurred. The difficulties of mentally and physically coping with the intense debilitating heat, the ‘bush’, insects, with pregnancy, discomfort and with ailments that in the modern day have the populace streaming through the doors of the medical profession were daunting in the least. The difficulties overcome by the Europeans in working and in raising young children in the intense heat to which they were not then inured also bear consideration. What occurred in the mind of Eliza Broadhurst as she struggled with four young children away from her family in Victoria has not been recorded and can only be surmised. Her place as one of the pioneer European women of the North, has been noted, but is certainly worthy of further study.\(^{333}\) She was a striking and talented woman, and through her graces and obvious hospitality, the Broadhurst’s

\(^{332}\) Barker and Gull letters, op. cit.
\(^{333}\) Hunt, op. cit., features a photograph of Eliza Broadhurst on the front cover and gives brief details within.
house became the social centre of early Roebourne in its formative year. She was always ready to entertain others, despite the demands on her time as a mother who spent much of her time in the North expecting more children. Such was the accepted role of women in those times, but it needs to be noted that Broadhurst’s acceptance amongst the ‘gentlefolk’ in the community was as much a reflection of Eliza as of himself.

Figure 18

Eliza Broadhurst and the family circa 1872.

334 Eliza Broadhurst arrived 7 months pregnant in May 1865 with two boys aged four & three years old. She gave birth to her daughter Sarah in July of the same year, a son Percival was born in February 1867 nineteen months later at Roebourne, and she left the district in December 1867 to give birth in November the following year to Katherine.

335 The sombre tone may have been due to the recent loss of their one year old son Ernest Edward, 1871-1872. The servant appears to have been 'Malay'. Reproduced with permission of the Battye Library and Broadhurst family, notably Mrs M. Darling and Ms Jenny Davies.
Finally it may be that the trauma and isolation experienced as the Manager of the Company, hardened Broadhurst’s attitudes to his labour force. In the light of this failure, and the comforts foregone in Victoria, his resolve to succeed appears to be so singular and apparently possessed him to such an extent, that his attitude to his creditors of all races came to leave much to be desired.

Despite this, he was to show evidence of a tenacity, entrepreneurial flair, remarkable creativity and an attitude to his Aboriginal labour that, with the possible, and to some extent doubtful, exception of the ‘Harry’ case above, appears, at times, almost exemplary in the light of attitudes then prevailing. These indications will be examined further in the following chapter when Broadhurst, at the age of 41, was attracted to the possibility of making greater profits, in the pearling industry in the North-West.
CHARLES EDWARD BROADHURST
(1826-1905)
a remarkable nineteenth century failure

Volume 2

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Chapter Four
Pioneer Pearler in the North-West and at Shark Bay

Charles Edward Broadhurst was one of Western Australia’s leading pearlers and helped pioneer the industry at both Nickol Bay and Shark Bay where pearling in Australia began.

The story of the pearling industry unfolds in contemporary accounts in the local press and in various diaries and reminiscences such as those of R.J. and T.C. Sholl, A.R Richardson, L.C. Burges, Charles Harper, the McCrae brothers, and others.\(^1\) E.W. Streeter’s account of ‘Pearls and Pearling Life’ which was published in 1886 gives a first hand and most useful coverage of many aspects of the industry.\(^2\) The subject has also been covered in recent times by de La Rue,\(^3\) Albertus Bain,\(^4\) and in numerous unpublished accounts.\(^5\) In all of these, little attention, if any, has been paid to Broadhurst mainly because he left few records and was only one of many pearlers operating at the time.

It will be shown that Broadhurst was a key figure in the pearling industry and that he had a significant role in the development of the industry both at Nickol Bay and at Shark Bay. In pearling out of Nickol Bay and Shark Bay where he became notorious for his ill-treatment of Malay divers, he will be seen to have been an innovative, courageous and hardworking, but ultimately unsuccessful, entrepreneur. His eventual failure was due to his need or desire

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1 All housed at the Battye Library, (BL), Perth and referred to following.
3 de La Rue, K., *Pearl Shell and Pastures*, (Cossack Project Committee, Roebourne, 1979).
to experiment with 'diving apparatus,' with 'volunteer' Aboriginal convict labour, with the use of 'Malay' divers and with the SS *Xantho*, the first coastal steamship in Western Australia. He pioneered the use of the 'diving apparatus' and the application of steam power to an industry long noted in academic circles, and only very recently in the press, for the atrocities committed in the pursuit of shell.6

Though he clearly failed in the pursuit of shell and pearls, Broadhurst will be seen to be well deserving of some recognition as a pioneer pearler. One of the 151 memorial plaques inset into the streets of Perth commemorates him as a pioneer pearler for the year 1870.7 It reads thus,

1870
Charles Edward Broadhurst, Pearler.

The supplementary information sheet notes that Broadhurst was the 'first really organised' pearler at Nickol Bay and that he used a schooner, and employed Aboriginal prisoners and indentured 'Malays' at that time.

He should be given recognition for his overall efforts rather than for his activities in 1870 however, because he was not in fact the 'first really organised pearler' and was most unsuccessful with the men and machines that he employed at that time. In this context, he does not appear to have recognized the need for experience in locating shell with or without 'diving apparatus' and spent a great deal of time and money on complex, untried and even 'grand' schemes when others around him were succeeding with simple methods.

Though quite good at seeing the possibilities of a particular venture, Broadhurst was apparently not very practical or skilled in the management of

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6 Giving vent to such hitherto unheard of, but on the evidence much understated, headlines as 'White Lies' followed by two full illustrated pages documenting the destruction of the Aboriginal Tribes in a leading Western Australian Newspaper, the *West Australian*, 10/6/1989.
7 Background to the plaques appears in the *West Australian* 4/6/1982 and reads 'There are 151 inlaid bronze plaques set into the pavement to mark the names of people and the years in which they made notable contributions to the growth of our state.'
the day to day affairs involved in a business enterprise. Once he established his businesses, he almost immediately turned his attention to other ventures and because of the distances over which he was spread, came to rely inordinately on his managers in order to keep his enterprises afloat. His reliance on these men will be seen to have been another major explanation not only for his successes but also his failures. Evidence for this proposition is presented here and in the section on Shark Bay.

Because little has been written about him and as there is little real understanding of many of those aspects of the industry crucial to an appreciation of Broadhurst’s actions and decisions, it is necessary to put the industry itself into a context and to examine the methods in vogue when he commenced his activities. Some of these are abhorrent to this society, but were accepted in an era when dark skinned people were considered inferior beings and those who believed otherwise were held to ridicule and contempt. In this context, it will be shown that, Broadhurst was one, who in the context of his times, showed a strange ambivalence to his ‘coloured’ work-force. What will surface are some indications of a caring attitude for the physical well being of his labour force, strangely combined with an apparent inability or lack of desire to pay their dues regardless of their race. With the growing consciousness today of the depredations of the pastoralists and pearlers on the local Aboriginal population, these indications and Broadhurst’s decision to attempt to employ other means to gather shell such as ‘diving apparatus’, ‘volunteer’ Aboriginal convicts, and ‘Malays’, are of significance and bear a detailed analysis.

The effect of the Denison Plains fiasco on Broadhurst’s reputation in Western Australia will be seen in exchanges between the well known Colonial identities, Dempster, Barker and Gull, on the subject of an impending

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8 See the treatment given to Justiniani, Gribble and Lyons, in Green, op cit. & in Gribble, op cit. The noted and much respected pioneer and M.P., A. R. Richardson noted in his memoirs that the Europeans were in his estimate ‘intellectually and morally superior to the savage tribes’. This is a reflection of the majority European view at the time. Richardson, op. cit., p. 20.
9 For further information on this deplorable aspect of the pearling industry, see Bain, op. cit., Streeter, op. cit., and Anderson, op. cit., Gribble op. cit., & Hunt op cit., to name a few.
partnership with him in the pearling industry.\textsuperscript{10} These show Broadhurst to be the object of not inconsiderable suspicion before he joined them in the venture. Then, when things eventually did go wrong for Broadhurst in this enterprise and in the pearling industry in general, they added to an already jaundiced opinion of him and added further to his reputation as a ‘failure’. In this context, Broadhurst’s ability to forge business partnerships, despite the suspicion held of him in relation to the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, become readily apparent and attest to his powers of persuasion.

In conducting the background reading required in order to understand Broadhurst’s decisions as a pearler, it became clear that almost all modern accounts of the pearling industry have been written by historians with little or no actual diving experience or appreciation of diving and of the capacities of humans underwater. Because of this, many of them have failed to understand some of the developments that took place in the pearling industry and have failed to adequately account for the various forms of pearling that were employed by men such as Broadhurst.

Because a knowledge of these various forms is crucial to an appreciation of the development of the industry and the decisions that Broadhurst made, some time has been spent in their analysis, both in the field and in the archives.\textsuperscript{11}

The results of this enquiry are presented below as a necessary background to the understanding of Broadhurst and the industry in Western Australia.

(i) **Background to the Pearling Industry**

Pearls have long been prized for purposes of decoration and their use for such purposes is still evident today. Pearl oysters `are widely distributed’ and found in the seas surrounding all of the six continents, in many rivers, and in


\textsuperscript{11} The author is a Maritime Archaeologist and former diving instructor with contacts in the pearling industry. In attempting to understand the developments that have taken place in the industry, the methods used and Broadhurst’s decisions, I have tried to emulate diving methods in vogue in the early days of pearling. In doing so I have attempted to dispense with flippers (fins) and the face mask or ‘goggles’ used today and have dived with indigenous shell fishers from Indonesia as the group, who are today, closest to the Aborigines of the North-West in the techniques used. See McCarthy, M., *The Flamingo Bay Voyage*, (W.A. Museum Report, in prep)
the waters surrounding many of the world’s islands.12 There are two distinct
groups of pearl oyster sought; those fished solely for the pearls contained
within the shell and those whose shell, called Mother of Pearl, is of such
thickness and value to be of intrinsic worth. Into the first group of pearl
oysters, fall those of Ceylon, Venezuela, the Persian Gulf and Shark Bay in
Western Australia. Within the second group, those of the Malay Archipelago
and those of the Northern Australian waters, such as the Nickol Bay and
Broome regions, are considered to be the ‘most prominent members’.13 The
pearl shell, or Mother of Pearl, has also long been in great demand for
decorative and functional uses. In the nineteenth century for example, the shell
appeared in the form of handles for cutlery, on side arms, as cigarette and card
boxes, ash trays, brooches, buckles, fans, as inlays on folding screens,
furniture and walls and especially in the form of buttons. ‘Mother of Pearl’
was noted for its durability, lustre and non staining qualities.14 In buttons these
were an added attraction due to the rigours of the washing processes then in
use. With such a wide variety of ornamental and practical uses, Mother of
Pearl was much sought after and often fetched high prices. In the late 1860s
and early 1870s for example, pearl shell was fetching between £100-200 per
ton landed in London, a figure which made the pursuit of shell a potentially
very attractive occupation.15

With these factors in mind it comes as little surprise to find that, accounts of
the use and search for pearls can be traced to antiquity.16 Much of the activity
throughout the world before the sixteenth century has not been documented,
though pearl shell beds are known to have been worked in such areas as the
Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, off the coasts of China, Japan,

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12 Goldie, L. J., The Mother of Pearl Industry and Pearls, (Unpublished paper delivered to the Royal W.A.
13 ibid.
14 Bain, M.A., op. cit., pp. 18& 46. She also records that in the early 1870s, 3,000 tons of mother of pearl
(MOP) were imported annually into Britain from Manila alone.
15 It is interesting to note that Indonesian fishermen now operating off the coast of Western Australia are
willing to risk their lives and the loss of their vessels and possible imprisonment for a return of $3,000 per ton
for trochus shell. On the basis of today’s wages in Australia this does not appear as good return, but to the
Korea and Thailand, and in some river systems throughout the world. It was not till the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when many fisheries such as those of India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the Gulf of Mexico and the China Sea were well established, that reasonably accurate records of the processes involved in the industry begin to appear. Even then, many accounts were based on oral tradition rather than actual observation, and those who compiled the accounts in the early days of diving, 'were not immune from the grossest ignorance where the sea was concerned'. Even today, accounts of the conditions and methods used underwater contain many errors or omissions, especially where the writer has no diving experience.

A little understood factor of importance in the understanding of the development of pearl shell fisheries, is the progression from 'dry shelling' in very shallow water, or at low 'spring' tide, to wading for shells and then to actual diving. This is an important element in the Australian case, where the high tidal range in many areas saw vast areas of usually inundated seabed briefly exposed, and where the labourers in the first few years merely walked out on to the banks and collected the 'dry' shell. When the tide was 'in', the shells were often difficult to see on the sea bed. Some lay covered or hidden in marine growth and others were virtually buried in the sediment with only the 'lip' visible. With the beds exposed at low tide, the harvesters became very proficient at recognizing the shapes of the camouflaged or buried shell and the 'ground' that the shells preferred. As the 'dry' beds became depleted, they then progressed into deeper water often wading up to their armpits, loosening the shells from the bottom with their feet or with implements such as that shown in figure 19. In this illustration they are shown bending down to loosen the shell by hand or to pick it up, and would have eventually opened their eyes underwater in order to do so. Thus they would have learnt to recognize the shell and the preferred 'ground' even with the severely impaired vision that

17 Goldie, op. cit., cha. 2.
19 ibid., p.196.
results from attempting to ‘see’ underwater without visual aids such as masks or ‘goggles’. From there they progressed to actual diving.

The experience gained in recognizing the often camouflaged or buried shell in ‘dry’ shelling and wading was sufficient to ensure that the shell could be found without visual aids such as masks or ‘goggles’ when they made the progression to deeper water.

Figure 19
Wading for Shell in the 17th century.

Note the use of the feet and implements and the men in the middle of the illustration. One has located the shell with his foot and his partner has been guided down to it. \(^{20}\)

\[4\] *Piscationum Modi Margaritarum*

In some areas visual aids may have been used from the outset, or if not, by the time the activities of the diver’s was recorded, the fishery was quite mature and comparatively sophisticated methods were in use. The sixteenth century

\(^{20}\) ibid., p.218.
Moslem traveller, Ibn Batuta, for example described the methods used at the pearl fishery in the Persian Gulf near Bahrein thus:

> When the months of April and May come, numerous boats arrive on the spot carrying pearl fishers and merchants... The divers put a shield of tortoise shell in front of their faces whilst an object of the same material, something like a pair of scissors serves to clip their nostrils. When they are ready the divers attach a cord to their waists and dive into the sea... the diver finds oyster shells amongst the stones. He picks them up with his hand, or prises them looses with the knife he carries with him, putting them into a leather bag suspended from his neck.²¹

Because the tidal range is not great in this region, dry shelling may not have been a feature of the industry and thus the divers may not have learnt the art of ‘seeing’ shell without visual aids such as the tortoise shell shield. On the other hand, the Bahrein fishery was, by this time, apparently quite mature and had been in progress for generations. The relatively specialized methods and the equipment used probably reflect this feature.

In contrast, the transition from wading to diving occurred in the Australian fishery in the 1860s when Broadhurst was involved in the industry. Though it was a major element in his decision making and was crucial to the understanding of the way the local Aborigines developed their diving skills and learned to ‘see’ shell underwater without visual aids, detailed accounts of the process of change rarely appear in the literature. As a result, those historians and researchers without actual diving experience tend to be unaware of the ramifications of the change. They are also often unaware of the need for the gaining of experience in ‘seeing’ shell underwater without visual aids regardless of the relative capacity to dive or the equipment used. For this reason, even a diver with ‘diving apparatus’, could have great difficulty finding camouflaged or buried shell on the sea bed.²²

²¹ibid., p. 193.
²²Even in the industry today despite the benefits of sophisticated diving gear, the ability to ‘see’ shell is not easily learnt and requires an ‘innate’ capacity or considerable experience before a diver is considered expert. Pers. Com. from Brad Duncan diver employed in the industry 1989.
Broadhurst does not appear to have realized this and attempted to utilize Aborigines, Malays’ and European divers without this necessary experience. In order to further illustrate this point and to put the decisions Broadhurst made into their proper context, the developments in ‘naked’ and ‘apparatus’ diving in general will be briefly examined.

In the mid seventeenth century, dives of up to 8 or 9 fathoms (16-18 metres) were recorded by ‘naked divers’ ‘in both Indies’. The depth claimed is supported in the account of the voyages of the French traveller, J.B. Tavernier, who visited Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and stated that in this period,

Fishing goes on at depths of between 4 and 12 fathoms and it takes place on beds over which there are up to 250 boats at a time.

An early nineteenth Century account at the same fishery records the use of stones by which the diver speeds up his descent to the bottom and credits the dive as lasting ‘usually about two minutes’. The author, an officer of the Royal Navy, also recorded that on being brought on board, the divers,

...discharge water from their mouths ears and nostrils, and frequently even blood. But this does not hinder them...They will often make from 40 to 50 plunges in one day.

Remarkable, (almost unbelievable), feats of diving in terms of duration and the depths dived were noted in the eighteenth century in Java and published in the well respected *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. In mitigation of what appear to be extravagant claims, it needs to be noted that, divers without the use of an ‘apparatus’ supplying air, have been recorded descending and working to extreme depths in excess of 200 feet (61 metres) and in remaining submerged in ‘controlled conditions’ for as much as four and

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23 de Latil and Rivoire, op. cit., p.192. A fathom is six feet or approximately two metres.
24 ibid., p.196.
25 ibid., p.197.
26 ibid., p. 199.
a half minutes. Divers in the field however, did not generally emulate such feats though those from Ceylon and other areas, used stones to hasten their descent, thus giving them more time on the bottom. Divers in the Sooloo Archipelago, on the North side of Borneo, were timed underwater for periods of 60-80 seconds to depths of 15 fathoms (about 28 metres) in the late nineteenth century. These times are longer than those noted in the Ceylon fishery in 1869 where the 'ordinary period' for each dive was 30 seconds to depths around 12-15 metres. Though dives to around 22 metres and times of around 80 seconds were recorded there, they were considered the 'very utmost' attainable, and add credence to the statement that 'as a rule the naked diver does not stay underwater more than a minute and a half, or go lower than 75 feet', (23 metres). Where the diver is required to make many descents over a short period however, the times spent underwater and the depths attained are often considerably reduced. This author joined naked divers in the trochus shell fishery off the Western Australian coast in 1989 for example, and noted their endurance and the depths dived. The men were comfortably operating in depths of around ten metres for times between 30-45 seconds and could, if necessary exceed those. They then required a slightly longer recovery time. In diving, as in most physical activity, 'training' or continual activity of the same nature often results in greater endurance and improved performance. Thus one would expect to see such times and depths exceeded in other circumstances.

Women were also involved in diving and have some physiological advantages over men, notably a greater resistance to cold. One group of female divers, the 'Ama', in Japan dive to the exclusion of their men and were noted catching fish in 8 fathoms (15 metres) in the eighteenth century. One woman

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27 ibid. p. 203.
29 Streeter, op. cit., p.127.
30 Figuier, op. cit., p.356.
31 Davis, op. cit., p. 547. The times are also consistent with those produced by good spearfishermen and women today.
was recorded in 1971 diving to the same depth, and beyond, over 50 dives conducted in one afternoon. Each dive lasted for around 60 seconds and the only aids she had were goggles and a weight to hasten the diver's descent. Despite official denials, there are also claims that, before and after 1871, when legislation was enacted prohibiting the employ of female Aborigines in the North-West Australian pearling industry, Aboriginal women were very effectively employed as pearl divers and were at least the equal of the men.

The powers of the natives in diving, especially the females, are spoken of as something wonderful. They go down to depths of 7 fathoms and remain below a time that astonishes their white employers.

There were common physiological problems to be overcome by all the 'naked' divers both male and female. Pressure in the ears and other air spaces, notably the sinuses, caused severe pain in depths exceeding around two metres. This required 'compensation' or the forcing of air through the nasal passages to the inner ear to counteract the acute pain produced by the increased pressure. It was common practice in early diving not to do so and to continue on downwards, despite the pain, until the eardrums were burst. This allowed the ingress of water into the inner ear and released the pressure on the ear drum, thereby easing the pain but also opening the inner ear for infection. Streeter in his account of pearling life in the late nineteenth century for example, noted that men from the island of Sooloo, following a 'lay off', experienced 'great pain' in the ears which was slightly alleviated by 'oil and laudanum' but once their 'ears were broken', the men did 'fairly well'. Streeter also recorded the efforts of 'Malay' and Aboriginal divers on the North-West coast of Australia in late nineteenth century. They were diving in

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34 Bartlett, N., The Pearl Seekers, (Melrose, London, 1954), p.85. R. J. Sholl, the Resident Magistrate in the North-West of Western Australia claimed in 1871 that 'Native Women, as a rule are not employed as divers'. CSR 646/165. The use of the phrase 'as a rule', and the need for legislation prohibiting the employment of Aboriginal women on pearling craft, indicates that the women were used in that capacity however. The act prohibiting their employ was entitled An Act to Regulate the hiring and service of Aboriginal Natives in the pearl shell fishery and the prohibition of the employment of women therein. 34 Vict. No. XV, 2/1/1871.
36 Streeter, op. cit., p 177.
the period between November to March each year, from dinghies containing six to eight divers and often out of sight of land. Each dinghy was under the control of one white man and was part of a fleet of three to six boats operating from a larger vessel. The men awoke at dawn and scraped opened and stowed the ‘catch’ from the previous day. After breakfast, often of an indifferent quality, they dived between seven o’clock in the morning and six at night, according to the state of the tide. The divers went overboard and the white man stood in the stern of the dinghy ‘sculling’ against the tide and drifting until good beds were found. These were often located up to 10 kilometres from the ‘mother boat’ to which they had to return at the end of the day. The divers went down in groups ‘partly for the sake of frightening the sharks but also to more systematically search’. They did not use stones to speed up their descent, nor did they use ‘goggles’ or ‘face masks’ of any sort as was the practice in other parts of the world. They usually entered the water feet first, turning as they progressed towards the bottom. According to Streeter, a ‘fair days work’ for a ‘naked diver’ at this particular stage in this fishery was considered to be the recovery of 10-25 pairs at a general rate of one ‘pair’ of shells in eight dives. Two to three pairs were frequently bought up in the one dive however.

It is important to note in the light of Broadhurst’s experimentation with Aborigines from other areas than the North-West and with ‘Malays’ that Streeter believed that a non swimming Aboriginal could, after two seasons become a ‘first class diver’. He also noted that though those engaged in the Australian fishery did not attain ‘excessive depths’ they were considered ‘unequalled in the world [for] powers of endurance’ and for their ability to find the shell underwater. Similar methods as those described above, with similar medical consequences, were witnessed in this year (1989), in the Indonesian trochus shell fishery. There were some variations, notably the use

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37 It is believed that the early ‘naked’ divers on the North-West Australian pearl shell fishery did not wear goggles, nor did their contemporaries the Macassan Trepangers whose activities and methods were well known to the pearlring masters. Cambell Macknight author of a number of works on the Macassans and Ian Crawford author of a number of works on the Aborigines of the Kimberley region agree, pers. com. to the author, 1988.

38 Streeter, op. cit., pp.151,160. This description is supported by that of R. J. Sholl, Resident Magistrate at Nickol Bay in Western Australia, when he visited the pearl fishery there in 1873, see following.
of hand carved wooden 'goggles,' and the chief diver towed a canoe by a rope looped over his shoulder. The returns in this instance were poor as a possibly consequence of over-fishing of the area being dived.39

Given these capacities and the apparent willingness, or coercion, of divers to suffer in the pursuit of shell, it is not surprising to note that, by the mid nineteenth century many of the rich pearl shell beds in the known world were 'fished out' in those regions accessible to the naked diver. In 1870 for example, prices for shell on the London market were noticeably high due to a fall in the supply of high quality shell from Ceylon.40

The use of 'diving apparatus' then became necessary in order to 'fish' those beds which lay out of the reach of those using traditional means. Known attempts to increase the ability to remain and work underwater for the purposes of salvage and fishing date back to Aristotle.41 It is not until the commercial availability of the metal helmet or 'hard hat' in the 1830s that such efforts proved possible.42 Air was pumped into the helmet by a hand operated pump from the surface and though successful, further development was required. As a result, it was not until the mid nineteenth century that the 'standard dress' comprising a 'closed suit' with a metal helmet or 'hard hat' became commonplace for salvage purposes in the oceans of the world. The best known forms of 'standard dress' in vogue when Broadhurst became involved in pearling, were the English 'Siebe Gorman', the German 'Heincke' and the French 'Cabirol' and 'Denayrouze' systems, all based on the same principle.

Once proved in other applications, the use of the 'standard dress' in the sponge, coral and pearl fisheries became a commercial possibility.43

Despite this, the long tradition of 'naked diving,' ensured that the use of 'diving apparatus' in the pearl and sponge fishing industries was resisted for

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39 A number of the divers at Cartier Island near Timor, came to the author's vessel seeking medical attention for perforated eardrums, ear infections and acute sinus problems caused by continual diving at pressure with the inner ear open to the sea. See McCarthy, M., *The Flamingo Bay Voyage*, op. cit.
41 Davis, op. cit., p.550.
43 Davis, op. cit., p.564.
many years, and not without good reason. The use of the ‘apparatus’ presented a distinct threat to those unwilling or unable to use it and its use resulted in many deaths and injuries in this early period. In 1867 for example, of 24 men involved in the sponge fishery in the Aegean sea using Siebe type suits, 10 died.\textsuperscript{44} It is not surprising to find in the light of the deaths and the conservatism of the traditional ‘naked divers,’ that there were instances of the wilful destruction of ‘diving apparatus’ by the sponge divers of Rhodes, Calimnos and Symi in the 1860s.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{Figure 20}

\textit{An advertisement of 1874 for ‘diving apparatus’ for use in the sponge, amber, coral and pearl fisheries.}\textsuperscript{46}

\begin{center}
\textbf{PARIS, 3, BOULEVARD VOLTAIRE}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{THE DENAYROUZE DIVING APPARATUS}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Patented throughout Europe and America}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{CONTRACTORS FOR SPONGE, AMBER, CORAL, AND PEARL FISHERIES}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{SUB-MARINE WORKS}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{PARIS, IMPRIMERIE GAUTHERD-VILARUS}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{1874}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
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\begin{center}
\textbf{deLatil and Rivoire, op. cit., p. 203.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{ibid.}
\end{center}
In this period there was also opposition to a radical new design of diving apparatus, the *Aérophore* of the Frenchmen Rouquayrol and Denayrouze. This system which was invented in 1865, allowed unprecedented underwater freedom and even allowed the diver to disconnect from the surface and operate with a ‘tank’ of compressed air in a similar fashion to Scuba divers today.\(^{47}\)

*Figure 21*

*The Aérophore, fore-runner to the SCUBA apparatus used today allowing unprecedented freedom underwater.*\(^{48}\)

As indicated earlier, the opposition to the ‘diving apparatus’ was not just a reaction to change. Many of the deaths occurred with the ‘apparatus’ as a result of the lack of understanding of the dangers of nitrogen ‘narcosis’ at depths in excess of 30 metres and of the dangers of the progressively greater retention of dissolved nitrogen in the blood at depths in excess of 10 metres. On ascending rapidly to the surface, after a long deep dive, the gas was released as bubbles into the blood stream. These bubbles of nitrogen could, if large enough, occlude blood vessels and cause pulmonary and respiratory disorders.

\(^{47}\) Michel, op. cit., cha. v.

\(^{48}\) ibid.
that often resulted in paralysis and death. The cause of the problem was not recognized until the experiments of Paul Bert in the 1870s and was not solved until the promulgation of Haldane’s Table allowing for ‘staging’ or ‘decompression stops’ during the ascent in 1907. Even that did not totally eliminate the problem, and in many cases ‘recompression’, or the return of the diver to depth, either in water or in a ‘recompression’ chamber and his slow return to surface pressures, was required. It has been claimed that ‘in 1908 and right through until the adoption of staging and recompression (around 1915 in Broome) fully 10% of divers died annually from divers paralysis.’

In the period 1905-1957, of a total of 274 deaths recorded in the pearling industry out of Broome, 158 men died of ‘divers paralysis’, 33 of heart failure, 24 of asphyxiation and 59 of Beri Beri. Thus from the safety aspect alone there was good reason to avoid ‘diving apparatus’.

There were also economic and practical reasons for doing so. It was expensive and bulky, requiring not only the diver, but an attendant to ‘tender’ the air hose and a hand operated pump with at least one operator. All this took a good deal of space on board the vessels used to operate and transport it. This contrasts markedly with the ability to deploy 3 or more naked divers from small boats.

There were other disadvantages. A diver using all forms of ‘diving apparatus,’ bar the Aérophore, was necessarily tethered to the boat by the air and safety lines and could only move slowly on the seabed. Though blessed with the ability to see more clearly underwater and to stay on the bottom for greater lengths of time, the area that could be covered by the diver was limited by the length of the lines, unless the boat itself was slowly moving at the diver’s pace and in the direction he wished to proceed. Any speed greater than that capable of by the diver would clearly cause severe problems especially as communication between the diver and the boat was rudimentary. If a strong tide was flowing the diver also had trouble in staying upright on the bottom.

49 Davis, op. cit., pp. 4-9, & deLatil and Rivoire, op. cit., Cha.viii.
50 Goldie, op. cit., Cha.10.
due to the drag on himself and his lines. This contrasted with the naked divers, who though limited of vision and in the time that could be spent on the bottom, were free to move wherever they pleased and could even cover greater ‘ground’ by using the tidal currents to advantage. Until the technique of allowing the boat to drift with the diver in a tide-flow became accepted practice in the late nineteenth century, the use of most types of the ‘apparatus’ was to prove less efficient, in shallow ‘diveable’ water, than the operation of many naked divers over the same area.

Figure 22

The ‘standard dress’ with pump, illustrating the bulky nature of the apparatus.\textsuperscript{52}

Thus there were many good reasons, to avoid ‘diving apparatus’ where a viable alternative in the recovery of pearls existed. Such a situation was

\textsuperscript{52}Michel, op. cit., p.77.
generally the case in Australia up until around the 1880s. There the ‘shallow’ pearling beds were not worked until the mid 1860s and were considered ‘as regards area of distribution, the most extensive Mother of Pearl shell grounds of the world’. It was not until the shallow beds in this extensive and rich pearling ground were ‘worked out,’ that the efforts of those without the means to operate diving apparatus became uneconomic.

With regard to the ‘Human’ aspects of the industry, it is clear from the above, that pearling was, and still is, an endeavour in which human concerns and even life was not held in high regard. Thus the following comments about the industry in 1875, can be seen to have had a relevance throughout the world and in this country well into this century.

The thirst for shells, for pearls for success, brutalises...the pearling speculator or diver...no day is respected, no dark man's life is valued...but the utmost of diving must be sucked out of them, killing them or not.55

It needs to be noted, that the commentator was referring to the industry out of Nickol Bay where Broadhurst made his start and that the words were penned in 1875 in the same period in which he was operating.

(ii) Pearling at Nickol Bay

(a) Early efforts at Pearling

The trade in pearl shell gathered off the Northern Coast of Australia began with the Aborigine and ‘patterns of distribution’ have been traced throughout the whole of Australia. Overseas trade began with the visits of the Makassan trepangers in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and resulted in

53 Goldie, op. cit., Cha : 3.
55 Inquirer, 28/4/1875.
the exchange of women, trepang, turtles and pearl shell for tobacco, rice and axes.\textsuperscript{57} Pearl shell was found at Shark Bay in Western Australia by European explorers such as the Englishmen Dampier in 1699 and by the Frenchman Hamelin in 1801.\textsuperscript{58} The presence of shell in other parts of the coast was also confirmed by the explorers, such as Stokes and Grey in the 1840s.

There is other evidence of an awareness of the extent of the pearl beds on the Western Australian coast. The wreck of the American whaling barque \textit{Cervantes} lost 120 nautical miles north of Fremantle in 1844, for example, was found to contain a small quantity of what appears to be North-West shell.\textsuperscript{59} This is an indication of the possibility of trade with the Aborigines or of a visit to North-West region in the period before the vessel was lost.\textsuperscript{60} In 1850 shell was again noted at Shark Bay, this time by Daniel Scott of Fremantle.\textsuperscript{61} In 1861, shell was recorded by the explorer F.T. Gregory, in apparent abundance, at Nickol Bay in the North West of Australia. The crew of Gregory’s vessel the \textit{Dolphin} recovered £500-600 of shell and a pearl to the value of £25 while he was exploring inland, on what was to prove the catalyst for European settlement in the North of Western Australia.\textsuperscript{62} On the other side of Australia in 1870, a Captain Banner, whilst searching for trepang in the Torres Strait, engaged in trade with Torres Strait islanders and noted ‘gleaming crescent shaped shields’, and breast-plates with Mother of Pearl inlay. Thus it was in the Torres Strait that ‘Mother of Pearl’ was first discovered in the Eastern Colonies of Australia.\textsuperscript{63}

Though mindful of their prime purpose in landing at Nickol Bay, Broadhurst and the other European settlers who landed in the North District in the early 1860s, would have been aware of the explorer Gregory’s comments

\textsuperscript{57} Macknight, op. cit., p. 84.
\textsuperscript{58} Sheperd, op. cit., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{60} American Whalers were frequent visitors to Nickol Bay after the Europeans arrived and are believed to have preceded all but the first explorers there. See Discussion on the reasons for the success of the Europeans at Nickol Bay in the chapter on the Denison Plains Pastoral Company.
\textsuperscript{61} Carmody, op. cit., p.23.
\textsuperscript{63} Bain, op. cit., p. 39.
on the possibilities of the ‘immediate commercial importance’ of the pearling beds. The apparent ease in which the crew of Gregory’s vessel *Dolphin* gleaned £500-£600 of shell and a pearl worth £25 in their leisure time, was also not lost on the settlers who used Gregory’s journal as a ‘bible’ during the formative years.

There would have been some scepticism however and the pastoral industry clearly took first precedence. The reason was most probably the failure of J. W. Bateman who, within a month of Gregory’s return in 1861, sent his vessel *Flying Foam* from Fremantle to Nickol Bay. They found to their disappointment that the beds were too scattered to be commercially viable and returned disappointed. The export of shell for the year 1862 was valued at only £250, poor returns for sending a vessel and crew the vast distances from Fremantle to the North-West. As a result ‘interest in pearls temporarily collapsed’. The development of the industry was to await the inevitable pursuit of shell once the settlers were able to turn their attention from the land. The process was relatively slow however. In July 1865, just as Broadhurst and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company were setting up at Nickol Bay, Mr Darling, the first Mate of the Portland West Australian Squatting Company vessel *Maria Ross* and a man called Andrews, who were both then employed at the Pyramid Station east of Roebourne, went to Nickol Bay ‘to try their luck at pearl fishing’. They were successful in finding around one hundred ‘pearls’ (most likely shell) in two days, but failed to find the ‘right bed’. As an indication of the nature and extent of the industry at this time, only £6 worth of ‘pearls’ were exported in the period. The efforts of Darling and Andrews were recorded by the diarist Richardson at whose station they were based. He expressed the belief that, ‘there are plenty of pearl oysters to be got there if the proper bed was found’. Apparently not convinced of the merits of the industry, Andrews left the district in the following August, unsure of his future plans. Darling anxiously awaited the arrival of Padbury’s vessel

64 Kimberley, op. cit., p. 214.
65 ibid.
66 Richardson Diary, 13/7/1865.
Bridgetown, having been promised a berth as first mate.\(^\text{67}\) As an indication of the nature of the industry at this time, he obviously thought that a sea-borne life had more to offer than pearling. He was to be disappointed, as the vessel did not arrive at Nickol Bay as expected. In the following November, he again tried his hand at pearling and took the old Denison Plains Company boat with two other men to Depuch Island, in the Forestier Island group, in search of good beds. Figure 24.\(^\text{68}\) The search appears to have been unsuccessful. The boat was also in very poor shape and they were forced in the rough seas to use ropes to keep the boat together and were fortunate to survive. The incident not only highlights the risks being taken at this time but also the willingness to travel considerable distances in search of shell. Darling continued on undaunted and in March of the following year, his boat was seen moored in Butcher Inlet (figure 15) in preparation for pearl fishing. A fortnight later Darling’s men and the boat were noticed at the head of Nickol Bay, where they had a ‘a good heap of pearls on the beach’.\(^\text{69}\) These successes would not have passed unnoticed by those around, especially the Denison Plains Company people at the Nickol River, which was only a few kilometres and two hours walk away.

The Resident Magistrate R.J Sholl’s report for the following July was published in the Perth press.\(^\text{70}\) In an apparently direct reference to the efforts of Darling, he noted that a group who had ‘fitted out a boat for the pearl fishery’ failed in discovering a ‘defined bank’ but had obtained a ton and a half of good shell.

At this early stage all that was required was a labour force of friendly or compliant Aboriginals who were required to walk into the shallows at low tide and to recover the visible ‘pair’ of shell.

\(^{67}\) He generally spent his time shepherding and working at the Pyramid station, while he was not pearling.

\(^{68}\) One of assistants was a Joe McKay. To add to the confusion, there appear to have been Roderic Mackay (DPPC) his elder brother D.D. Mackay, A.R. McKay, D. M. McKay and Joe McKay in the district around this time.

\(^{69}\) TCS, 12/3/1866-25/3/1866, BL.

\(^{70}\) Inquirer, 3/8/1866.
Accounts of these early attempts vary, but the evidence shows that what was known as 'dry' pearling (or harvesting by beach-combing or wading in the shallows) was the fashion at Nickol Bay.71 By this means, the shallow beds adjacent to the shore were exploited at low tide.72 A boat, such as that used by Darling, provided transport for personnel and shell to and from remote beds, or across deeper water to ‘drying’ reefs, rather than be used as a diving platform as became the norm a few years later.

Figure 23

A large ‘pair’ of North-West shell

The Denison Plains Company was disintegrating at this stage and Broadhurst clearly had his hands full attempting to enforce a Company unity and keep the

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71 The transition appears to have been made to actual diving in the beginning of 1868. Perth Gazette, 31/1/1868 & Herald, 6/6/1868.

72 Estimates vary on the extent of the shore uncovered at low tide and would obviously be greatest in spring tides. Estimates vary though the maximum range at Port Walcott was recorded as 5.8 metres in the Australian National Tide Tables 1989, (Aust. Govt. Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988), p. 192.
Company stock intact. Once the Company disbanded, some of the staff and shareholders left the Company stations for other pursuits. Those who wished to set up ‘runs’ were fully committed, for a time, to this activity. Others such as Tays went to the growing settlement at Roebourne to enter the service industries. He then entered the employ of the Resident Magistrate as a general labourer and artisan. In June or July of 1866, he left Government employ and went pearling as the news of Darling’s successes became too great to resist. He was to prove successful from the outset. Many of those Company men like Broadhurst, McKay, MacIntosh, Simpson, Fraser and Venn followed suit once they could find some time from their commitments to devote to pearling. Those with some free time to devote to pearling soon found that without easy access to boats, they were very much shore based and at the mercy of the tides in comparison to Darling with his boat. In the following September, for example, the young Sholl went on horseback with Samuel Viveash in order to recover shells by beach-combing, but was unsuccessful due to the tide.

Tays, and his partner Augustus Seubert, soon obtained a boat by entering a partnership with L.C. Burges who had obtained the vessel in exchange for fresh meat from an American whaleship. Tays and Seubert had also located productive beds in shallow water close to shore, apparently with the aid of Aborigines. The two elements, a boat and compliant Aboriginals, were to prove a crucial factor in their success. Walter Padbury, whose men pioneered the De Grey station, also realized the need for a boat at this time and he is recorded in November 1866 sending a ‘large boat’ via his coastal

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73 See Sholl Diaries and Occurrence books for the period (RJS) and CSR, 582/22, BL., which indicates that Tays left the employ of the resident Magistrate in late June or early July of 1866.
74 TCS, 28/9/1866, BL.
75 There were a number of American whalers in over the years. These visits, such as that of the New Bedford Whaler ‘Cox’s Troop’ on 12/11/1870, are recorded in Sholl’s diaries and Occurrence books. RJS, BL.
76 Burges states that Tays and Hicks were erecting a shearing shed at his station, ‘Andover’, when Aboriginal men wearing pearl shell ornaments arrived. Tays and Hicks persuaded them to show the whereabouts of the beds in return for a trifling remuneration. They recovered 2 tons of shell by beachcombing. Burges then supplied a boat he had exchanged with a visiting American Whaleship for fresh beef, and within 3 months they obtained a further 9 tons of shell. Burges, op. cit., p. 4.
schooner, the *Emma*, for use in ‘prosecuting more vigorously’ the pearl fishery.\textsuperscript{77}

The record is very incomplete and a great deal of the activity at Nickol Bay at this time, would not have been recorded, as all the officials, diarists and commentators, such as the Sholls and Richardson, were stationed some kilometres inland. It also needs to be noted that many pearlers would have been secretive, desirous of anonymity or keen to establish a commercial advantage at this time.

Tays, in comparison, was always in the public eye at this stage and called in to Roebourne on 17 November to inform the authorities, one of whom was Broadhurst, that he had 9 tons\textsuperscript{78} of shell hidden on the coast between Port Hedland and 80 kilometres to the east of the De Grey River. The shell was worth in his estimate £100 per ton and represented a substantial return for the efforts of two men in a small boat. Tays and Seubert apparently had a distinct advantage not just with the boat and in the use of Aboriginal experience, but also with a prior knowledge of the pearling industry.\textsuperscript{79}

Though based at Nickol Bay, Tays and company ranged from there to Mt Blaze (Cape Keraudren), a distance of nearly 150 Nautical miles (240 kilometres). See Figure 24. In an official report of 29 November signed by Broadhurst, who was then the Acting Resident Magistrate, it was recorded that Tays and his unnamed assistant nearly lost their lives when their boat was stove in on a sand bank at the mouth of the Sherlock river.\textsuperscript{80} They were lucky to strike the inevitable misfortune so close to the settlement.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{77} Local and General News, 9/1/1867, RN 64, BL. There is also a possibility that Padbury was trying diving apparatus out of the *Emma* at this time, see footnote 123.

\textsuperscript{78} As the ton and tonne are within .02 of each other, the contemporary ton will be used.

\textsuperscript{79} Bain, op. cit., p.15, claims that Tays must have had a prior knowledge of the industry as practised in other regions such as Ceylon. He is recorded in a report penned by T.C. Sholl and signed by Broadhurst as acting RM (CSR, 582/242, published in the *Inquirer* of 23/1/1867), estimating that his catch was worth £100 per ton. This apparently 'inside' knowledge supports Bain's analysis.

\textsuperscript{80} GRO report of 29/11/1866, RN 64, BL.

\textsuperscript{81} CSR, 603/20, BL.
Figure 24

The area frequented by Tays and later, Broadhurst from Nickol Bay east to Mt Blaze at Cape Keraudren. 82
Whilst recovering from the ordeal, Tays informed the young Sholl, and possibly Broadhurst, that he had thoughts of going to Victoria to purchase a small craft and form a pearl fishing company. He then returned to the fishery.

Tays shell was laid in substantial heaps somewhere along the coast in the areas shown below, and he was concerned that a large vessel could be used to take them. Here Tays is alluding to the interest of other unnamed parties in his activities, or even to their actual involvement in the industry. Withnell was in partnership, possibly with McCourt and others around this time for example, and obtained nearly four tons of shell 'procured by means of a boat sent to the party per Emma'.

Those with access to boats such as Darling, Tays and Withnell, to name only those known, were clearly a step ahead of their contemporaries in regards to pearling. Though shell could be obtained by anyone 'beach-combing' from the shore and utilizing the huge rise and fall of the tide in the region, boats were clearly the answer for the transport of men and the shell between tides and to the off-shore reefs. They enabled the harvesters to move around the vast areas of shallows exposed by the receding tide either towing the laden boat or rowing with their catch on board. Boats also obviated the need to walk or wade the often long distances between the beds and the high water mark carrying a bag of shell, to deposit it in a retrievable heap and to then return for another load. Those with access to a boat were at a clear advantage in this regard and in the ability to exploit the ‘drying’ reefs off-shore.

In March of 1867, while trying to expand his operation by forming a company and purchasing a ‘large’ boat to remove the vulnerable shell stacked in heaps along the coast, Tays took passage on board the defective Emma. The vessel left Tien Tsin Harbour with 6 tons of his shell on board and with 42

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83 TCS, 17/11/1866, BL.
84 RIS, 28/4/67, BL.
85 GRO report 26/7/1867, published in the Inquirer, 28/8/1867. The Emma was said to have had a defective mainmast, to have been 'very lightly ballasted for her tonnage' with 25 tons of iron ballast. GRO report of May 28 1867, RN 64, BL. It also had on board a compass from the wrecked Calliance at Camden Harbour and this may have proved unsuitable on the much smaller Emma. Burges, op. cit., p. 29.
souls including Tays and the Resident Magistrate's son T. C. Sholl. Possibly as a consequence of the defects, the *Emma* disappeared with all hands. This left the struggling settlement at Nickol Bay despondent at the loss of over a quarter of their number, near to starvation and without communications.

Others beside Tays had seen the benefits of using 'large' vessels in the pearling industry and quickly sent them into the area. In April 1867 only a month after the departure of Tays, the first of these, the *Morning Star*, began preparations to sail out of Butcher Inlet for the purposes of harvesting shell. Success was not immediate as the necessary experience was lacking however. In May Sholl noted that, since the departure of the *Emma* 'the fisheries have not been so successful'. He also noted that that the *Morning Star* which arrived back from a 'pearling cruise' to areas including the De Grey, had also been unsuccessful.

Despite the early failures, large boats such as the *Morning Star* were to prove the next step in the developing industry. Not only could they act as a mother vessel to their smaller counterparts and as a transport and storage medium for the shell, but they also could accommodate the shell gatherers themselves. They were the next step up from a small land based open boat and were obviously needed in the efficient pursuit of the shell. By June 1867, the two masted schooner, *Mary Ann*, was in operation on the pearling beds at the De Grey. It was 13 metres in length and 5.5 metres broad and the 'catch' was recorded at 4 tons of shell. In the following month, the pastoralists Withnell, Hall and McCourt joined a Mr Tuckey, who was an experienced seaman, in a partnership in the *Morning Star*. They were to prove successful
and in the following September, the vessel arrived back from the pearling banks with five tons of shell which was then loaded onto another vessel for Fremantle. Another four tons were on board the Mary Ann and a further 15 tons were deposited along the coast to be collected and despatched when the occasion allowed. Much of this was Tays and Seubert's shell. Realizing that Tays was now dead in the wreck of the Emma, Seubert arranged for the collection of their 'catch' from the heaps hidden on beaches and used the profits to set himself up as a publican in the wreck of the New Perseverance which lay as a hulk at Butcher Inlet. This became a logical centre for the growing number of pearlers and was soon noted as a place where 'drunkenness and disorder were the order of the day'.

As an indication of the sudden growth of the industry, the catch for the twelve months up to 30 October 1867 was 32 tons, which at an estimated £80 per ton realized £2560. As a result, boat-building proceeded apace, both in the North, where a Mr Cooper of the New Perseverance built a 10 ton boat for the fishery, and in Fremantle where pearlers were gearing up for the onset of warm weather in the following year. The pearlers also had ideas of examining the 'ground' elsewhere, even in these early times. The Morning Star for example, cleared for Camden Harbour in November 1867 but stayed at the De Grey grounds.

Broadhurst also became involved in this period, and on 29 November, Sholl saw the Morning Star, Sophia Jane and 'Broadhurst's ... [indecipherable] coming in to the landing from Nickol Bay where they had been pearling. This is the first known reference to Broadhurst as a pearler and indicates that he had been pearling in the district out of a boat and probably with Aboriginal assistance, for at least the last few months of 1867.

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92 Inquirer, 28/8/1867 & CSR, 603/140. BL.
93 Perth Gazette, 20/9/1867.
94 Though they suffered greatly at the hands of the pearlers, it would be wrong to infer that only the Aborigines were abused by the pearlers after the formative and relatively 'friendly' period in the industry. Many of the pearlers were a bad lot with little respect for life and property. Cooper who lived in the New Perseverance, for example refused to pay a young white boy in his employ and sexually assaulted him. Sholl's Diary and Occurrence books refer to these and other activities as does his official reports.
95 CSR, 603/167, BL.
96 RJS, 20/11/1867, BL.
Broadhurst was acting Resident Magistrate from November 1866 to February 1867. Once freed from his duties as acting Resident Magistrate, and with his intimate knowledge of Tays' successes in mind, he would have geared up as soon as he was able for the industry, unless he was able to send trusted men out pearling in his stead.

This singular mention of his activities comes just as Broadhurst announced his intention of taking his family from the district however. November saw the onset of the hot weather. This, together with the collapse of the Denison Plains Company, the \textit{Emma} tragedy and the deprivations suffered by all at Nickol Bay during the drought of 1866 may have weighed heavily on his and Eliza Broadhurst's mind, especially as they now had four children, the youngest only nine months old. Broadhurst may also have seen the need to set himself up in a larger scale and took the opportunity to seek to enter a business partnership with his relatives in Victoria, or with other persons.

Whether he left his boat in the hands of an employee, as he did the pastoral 'run' on the Maitland is not known. For whatever reason he went south on board the \textit{Clarence Packet} on 21 December 1867 and proceeded with his family to Melbourne. By doing so, he left just as a significant change came over the nature of the industry, and the transition was being made from 'dry shelling' to actual 'naked diving'.

The Resident Magistrate's report of the successes in the industry while Broadhurst was away was published in the Perth press in January 1868. He noted that 'at present the profits are great and the expenses small'.\textsuperscript{97} It was noted elsewhere that the 'news from Nickol Bay was causing quite a commotion' and that in January between 8 and 10 craft had left Fremantle for the fishery, and another two or three were in the process of being fitted out.\textsuperscript{98} Advertisements, such as that for the 17 ton cutter \textit{Gazelle} which was claimed to be 'well adapted for the pearl fishery' also appeared in the press.\textsuperscript{99} Such vessels were capable of carrying five or six open boats, accommodating their crew.

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Inquirer}, 22/1/1868.
\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Inquirer}, 22/4/1868.
\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Inquirer}, 29/1/1868 & 1/1/ 1868.
and storing the shell. These advantages were becoming obvious to all, though the returns for the small investor were still very good. In the following month for example, it was claimed that 2 or 3 men in a single open boat could, over the space of one tide, gather ‘over one ton’ of shell and that it was fetching £80-100 per ton at Perth and £120-160 landed at London.¹⁰⁰

Given such news, there is little surprise at this flurry of activity, and as expected, ‘large’ boats then began to appear on the scene in great number. In December of 1867 and in January 1868, Sholl noted the arrival of the vessels Nautilus, Lone Star, Little Eastern, Pearl, Sophia Jane and the Saucy Lass at Butcher Inlet and the departure of the Mary Ann and Morning Star for Kings Sound.¹⁰¹ On 25 January 1868 the pearling vessel Ariel was lost near the Ashburton River with all hands and around a ton of shell.¹⁰² This was the first recorded tragedy on the pearling grounds of Western Australia and though it was an indication of the risks associated with the industry it did not deter the rest of the pearlers. Other boats arrived in this busy period, including the Medora, Albert, Fairy and Charon.¹⁰³ In apparent reference to the small open boats operated from these larger vessels, and to the number of small investors involved, there were, according to one commentator, ‘swarms of small boats on the coast’ at this time. Returns (apparently in London) were remaining high at around £180 per ton, and one pearler/pastoralist, A.R. McKay, received ‘£800 for shells collected in a small boat that did not cost him £50’.¹⁰⁴ Thus even those who could not afford the larger vessels and who were still forced to operate individually were doing well, despite the disadvantages.

As the fleet expanded, the requests for assistance from the once compliant Aboriginals turned, in many cases, to demands and coercion.¹⁰⁵ Incidents such

¹⁰⁰ Inquirer, 2/1868. A later report in the same paper of 6/5/1868 notes that the Nickol bay trade was opening up just as that based in Ceylon was in the decline and gave a range of prices from £140-180 per ton for the best and largest class down to £35-45 per ton for the smallest class of shell, with an intermediately priced variety worth £45-50 per ton.
¹⁰¹ RJS, December 1867 and January 1868, also CSR, 623/108, BL.
¹⁰² RJS, 25/1/1868, BL.
¹⁰³ RJS, 19/2/1868 & CSO, 623/107, BL.
¹⁰⁴ A. McRae to his sister, 24/2/1868, BL.
¹⁰⁵ The vessels are Morning Star (Hall), Industry (Tuckey), Pearl (Charles), Fairy (Saw), Little Eastern (Herbert), Charon (Watson), Lone Star, Saucy Lass (Cooper), Mary (Anthony), Medora (Symons) and Herald 6/6/1868
as the massacre of four Aborigines on board the *Little Eastern* near Port Hedland became almost commonplace occurrences.\(^{106}\) Thus, almost as soon as the number of boats on the coast increased and the subsequent demand for Aboriginal labour increased, the atrocities began.

There were exceptions. Blurton of the *Medora*, for example, recovered a 'magnificent pearl'\(^ {107}\) and was apparently the most successful of all in this period, due to the good relationships he established with a tribe of island Aboriginals. These people had been defended by his crew from a marauding mainland tribe and in return,

> they became 'pickers up' and as one black fellow is worth 20 white men in this occupation, they did well.\(^ {108}\)

With the advantage of a willing labour force, the crew of the *Medora* were able to best utilize the short time and few days allowed by the tides.

> The best shells are those not exposed...great secret is to gather those in the water... [to do this it was] necessary to wade up to the armpits. As the shell were most often covered by a layer of sand or mud the aboriginals were also able to apply their knowledge of the 'fishes habits' to the task.\(^ {109}\)

The Press in Perth also noted the better success of Blurton who, in using 'conciliation instead of Colt's revolver or short rations has enlisted their [the Aborigines] services and done better'.\(^ {110}\)

Local knowledge, sympathetically applied, was clearly one of the keys to success. Charles Harper and his partner, Samuel Viveash, had with the aid of Aboriginal guides for example, examined the coast from the Ashburton to the De Grey Rivers and found good beds. Harper and Viveash's reliance on local knowledge and their subsequent successes did not stop there. They realized that a suitable boat was required to exploit the area and built the 11 metre,

\(^{106}\) CSR, 623/149, BL.
\(^{107}\) *Perth Gazette*, 4/12/1868 & CSR, 623/133, BL
\(^{108}\) *Herald*, 6/6/1868
\(^{109}\) ibid.
\(^{110}\) *Inquirer*, 2/12/1868.
Amateur from local timbers at their station. The hull was of 'Mahogany' and the knees and timbers of Cadjeput (Paperbark) and the vessel was considered 'a favourable specimen of local industry and ingenuity'. Like Blurton, Harper also treated his divers well and found himself suffering in consequence. The Resident Magistrate's son apparently engaged him in 'fisticuffs', over the desire of his Aborigines to work for Harper and he subsequently received 'an awful face'.

Despite these and other instances of co-operation, the reference to the use of 'Colt's revolver' above, is a clear indication that at this time other men felt justified in abducting and coercing the Aborigines especially as their population at the time was recorded as 'scant' and willing labour was difficult to obtain.

To make matters worse for the unfortunate Aborigines, the Resident Magistrate himself, attempted to enter the industry. In April 1868, finding the smaller boats 'too slight and small for the service', he attempted to purchase a share in the *Morning Star*. On arrival he found that he had been beaten to the sale, but soon entered the trade on his own account as owner of the 7.5 ton, 9.4 metre, cutter, *Pilot* which he purchased in December 1868 for £130. By being thus engaged in the industry, Sholl found that in matters involving the Aborigines and in disputes over their welfare, such as that involving Harper and his own son Robert, or more seriously in the occasion of the 'Flying Foam Massacre' of 1868, he was unable to act totally in accordance with his brief as Resident Magistrate. He was however, reflecting the prevailing European attitudes of the times and was much praised (often with great justification in

112 Mercer, op. cit., p. 36 & RJS, 10/2/1869, BL.
114 Register of British Ships at the Port of Fremanle. Now housed in Canberra. Hand-written transcript in the collection of Richard McKenna, Book 1 No 16, Register of British Ships. 1/1856-5/1882. Sholl purchased the vessel in December 1868 and went into partnership with his sons a few years later. RJS, 29/12/1868, BL.
other matters) by his European colleagues for his wisdom and for his untiring efforts in the North. 116

Thus, the growth of the pearling industry, the shortage of willing or 'compliant' Aboriginals and Sholl's attitude, which was a clear reflection of the general European opinion on the subject, produced growing problems in the light of the forcible acquisition of Aboriginal labour.

By leaving in November 1867 for Victoria, Broadhurst was to miss out on the very valuable experiences to be gained in this formative period in the pearling industry. Those who stayed learnt valuable lessons about the location of beds and the most efficient (though not necessarily the most humane) means of utilizing the 'available' Aboriginal labour. On the other hand, by leaving, Broadhurst was to follow the lead of Tays in seeking a business partnership to enable him to apply the services of a much larger vessel to the fishery than he then had at his disposal. Though the idea was good, his timing in doing so was poor. Not only did he miss out on seven months of pearling 'time', but he left at a time when the 'diving' was more properly characterized as 'wading' and when others who stayed were learning at a rapid rate and were making the transition into 'naked diving' proper. By the middle of 1868, when he arrived back on the pearling grounds, the Aborigines had learnt to dive and by the end of the year, they had progressed into depths of around 10 metres. 117

In hindsight, despite the pressures on his family and the intense heat of November, Broadhurst's business interests may have been better served had he stayed on, at least for a while, so that he could have learnt of such things rather than opt for the expensive and relatively inefficient 'diving apparatus' he was to help introduce to the industry.

116 Richardson, op. cit., p.17.
117 The transition appears to have been made around the middle to the end of 1868. Perth Gazette, 31/1/1868, Herald 6/6/1868 The Inquirer, 31/3/1869 notes that the Aborigines were then diving to 5 fathoms.
(b) Broadhurst and the premature introduction of 'Diving Apparatus' to the pearling industry

Broadhurst returned to Western Australia in April 1868, soon after seeing his family back to their relatives in Victoria. What transpired back at the family stronghold at Kilmore is not known. As he retained his flocks at Nickol Bay till around 1871, it appears that he went to Victoria with the intention to return to the West.\textsuperscript{118} If he had sold part of his stock or his Victorian land while he was away, or had he received family backing for the continuation of his activities in the North-West, he may then have had at his disposal a reasonable financial stake with which to re-commence pearling on a larger scale.\textsuperscript{119}

The successful use of large boats to transport people and shell in the first months of 1868 raised the question of the possibility of effectively using 'diving apparatus' at Nickol Bay. The application of such technology to under water work was by then well established elsewhere in the world and it was an expected and most logical development in Western Australia given the most successful use of the equipment elsewhere.\textsuperscript{120}

The use of diving apparatus was not unknown in Western Australia when the pearling industry started. It had been applied to harbour works and to the salvage of the Barque Eglinton which was wrecked near Perth in 1852.\textsuperscript{121} In 1861, the explorer Gregory had suggested that diving apparatus be used in Nickol Bay and in January 1868 the \textit{Perth Gazette} wrote to the effect that

\begin{quote}
At present it can scarcely be called a fishery as at best all that is done is to prowl along the coast and gather as many as can be seen at low water... It is evident that a vessel fitted with proper diving apparatus would make a
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{118} See Chapter on Denison Plains Pastoral Company previous.
\textsuperscript{119} This possibility could not be adequately assessed, due to the absence of the records in Victoria and the lack of an index to the various newspapers of the period.
\textsuperscript{120} Diving Apparatus was in general use by the mid 19th. century. Davis, op. cit., p. 645.
good thing of this fishery as it is said very large shells are to be seen lying in deep water. A vessel so fitted was expected at Nicol bay.122

It appears that others may have been quietly experimenting with the ‘apparatus’ around this time. In 1988 for example, I inspected a wreck believed to be Padbury’s ill-fated Emma which was lost early in 1867. Somewhat surprisingly a diving helmet was found on board, and from the position in which the wreck lay appears to have been on-board at the time of wrecking.123 Such secrecy is to be expected in an industry where gaining access to hitherto unharvested beds would prove a distinct financial advantage and it is expected that much of the activity in the industry has gone un-recorded. As further indications of this, two large Sydney boats, possibly the Melanie and Kate Kearney, were also noted as fitting out with apparatus in April 1868 for use in the North-West fishery.124

Despite this, it was to be Broadhurst, in partnership with James Dempster and the firm of Barker and Gull of Guildford who are the accepted pioneers of the use of diving apparatus in the Australian pearl diving industry.125

In March 1868, Gull who had been convinced by Dempster of the value of the ‘speculation’ at the pearling grounds attempted to convince his more sceptical partner, Barker, in the following terms,

Mr Dempster has fully determined upon going into the pearl fishing and came to ask if I was in a position and felt inclined to join him in the enterprise... I have agreed to do so and I hope you will.... The pearl and the shells which have been secured up to the present have been only, so it seems, those which could be had by wading on the banks at low tide. If such are worth the price quoted - those on the real bed could doubtless be much more valuable and there seems no doubt that there are considerable on that coast. The

122 Perth Gazette, 31/1/1868. My emphasis indicating that at this time ‘dry shelling’ was still the vogue..
123 McCarthy, M., Wreck Inspection Report, Coral Bay Unidentified, believed to be the Emma, 1867. W.A. Museum, Department of Maritime Archaeology, file no., 60/88. The remains of a diving helmet were found on this wreck which is believed to be Padbury’s Emma lost in March 1867. From the position of the object, it does not appear to have been associated with a later salvage attempt.
125 Not withstanding the inconclusive evidence indicated in footnote 123 above, the evidence that they were the pioneers is found in the Barker and Gull letters, 2423a, BL, Reproduced in Erickson, (1978), op. cit., Chapter 8 The Mary Ann and Pearling and in the local press, see following.
demand at home seems to be very great and I think a properly equipped party could scarcely fail of success.\textsuperscript{126}

Dempster planned to go to Adelaide or Melbourne to acquire a suitable vessel, and Gull assured Barker that such a transaction, even without the gains to be had pearling, would realize a profit on the cargo and the resale value of the vessel alone. There followed a revealing exchange on the subject of a possible business arrangement with Broadhurst, who met the Barkers either en route or at Albany and accepted their offer of transport to Perth.

From Gull to Barker in May:

Mr Broadhurst is certainly a smart man (he comes from your side remember) but if success be the test of ability he has certainly not proved himself superior having made a pretty mess of the Denison Plains Company.\textsuperscript{127}

From Barker to Gull in May:

I can scarcely tell you how much pleased I was to hear that the pearling expedition had been entered into. You say however that you wish that only ourselves and Mr Dempster were concerned in the venture. This is exactly what I wished when I first mentioned the subject to you... All I have further to say is that I sincerely hope Mr. Broadhurst has not been taken into the venture as I find upon enquiry that he is not at all well thought of here.\textsuperscript{128}

From Mrs Barker to Gull (undated):

Of Mr. Broadhurst there seemed to be some prejudice but neither your uncle nor Mr Dempster could find anything against him here he seems much respected. I can only say on our journey from Perth we found him a very pleasant as well as useful companion- he fetched wood, lighted fires, harnessed horses. \textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{126} ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} ibid, My emphasis.
\textsuperscript{128} ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} ibid.
Broadhurst’s persuasive capacity or charm held sway over the prevailing suspicion of him, and he became a partner in the venture to Gull’s disgust. Barker was to provide the vessel and the others were to contribute £200 each to the costs. On behalf of Barker, Dempster purchased the Tasmanian built, two masted schooner, *Mary Ann* in Melbourne. It was quite large being 25.6 metres long with a single deck and though twenty years old when purchased was, according to Dempster, admirably suited for their purposes.

When *Mary Ann* arrived at Fremantle on June 4 1868, en route the Pearling grounds, Gull hurried to Garden Island, where it was anchored, to see the vessel and view the ‘diving apparatus’, that was on board.

His comments which are reproduced below reflect further on the prevailing attitude to Broadhurst and the pioneering nature and scale of the enterprise into which they had entered. It also casts further light on Broadhurst’s attitude to money or to his ‘straightened’ circumstances at the time.

About the speculation. I can only say that there is a great promise of it being successful. No other parties have gone into it in the same way, and the party all well found in every respect. I am very glad to read that after all you wish it had been between ourselves only, because such was my opinion. I have not myself any knowledge of Mr Broadhurst, I never met him till you were about starting... there is certainly a great distrust of him here...I still think we should have been better without Mr. Broadhurst, who if he has no other disqualification was not able to pay his proportion, either on your side or on this, as I understand he was only able to pay you £150 instead of £200.130

On 30 June, the vessel then left Fremantle and went to the ‘Flying Foam Passage’. The passage, shown on figure 25, is 10 kilometres long by 2-5 Kilometres in breadth with a depth of 5 and a half to 7 fathoms (10-15 metres). It was, and still is, a rich source of shell, but was also subject to very strong currents.131 From there, Broadhurst sailed across to the mainland in a

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130 Ibid., my emphasis.
131 *The Australia Pilot North, North-West and West Coasts of Australia*. Vol. 5, (Hydrographer of the Navy, Taunton, Somerset, 1972), p.136 records that the passage is difficult due to the strong currents which at spring tides can reach 3-4 knots. This is totally un-swimmable and so strong as to make it impossible to send a diver down when the tide is running. Unless so heavily weighted as to be almost immobile on the bottom, the diver...
whaleboat and arrived unexpectedly at Sholl's residence on the evening of 13 August where he dined and slept overnight. Sholl noted from their discussions, that the diving venture on board *Mary Ann* had not been successful up till then.\footnote{RJS, 13/8/1868, BL.}

*Figure 25*

The Flying Foam Passage, Dixon Island, and Nickol Bay.\footnote{Australia, NW Coast, Approaches to Dampier Archipelago, AUS 741.}

sent down in such tides would be 'streamed out' astern of the vessel to which s/he were tethered rendering work impossible and very dangerous. An example of the problem can be seen in the case of the loss of the *Nellie* in 1872, where the diver could not get down to the wreck in the current. Henderson, (1989), op. cit. p.110.
whaleboat and arrived unexpectedly at Sholl’s residence on the evening of 13 August where he dined and slept overnight. Sholl noted from their discussions, that the diving venture on board Mary Ann had not been successful up till then.132

Figure 25
The Flying Foam Passage, Dixon Island, and Nickol Bay.133

132 Rus., 13/8/1868, BL.
133 Australia, NW Coast, Approaches to Dampier Archipelago, AUS 741.
The reports on the attempt to use the ‘apparatus’ there vary considerably. One claimed that the ‘strong currents created danger for divers’ and that as the apparatus was designed for ‘still water’, it was unsuited for use in the North especially at the Flying Foam Passage, and could not be adapted to handle the conditions.

The diver was, in the opinion of the correspondent, in constant danger of ‘being thrown off his legs’ in the strong currents. Despite adding further weights to reduce his buoyancy the diver still could not maintain an upright posture on the sea bed or in the water and the chances of an accident were subsequently very great. These dangers must have caused quite some consternation on-board and it was apparently due to the ‘insubordination’ of the crew the Captain had ‘no chance of finding any bank’. Following these abortive attempts, it was noted that the diver, somewhat understandably, ‘did not appear up to his work’, and he was subsequently replaced.

On the other hand, Sholl’s official report of the venture noted that there was a size limitation to the vessels considered suitable to engage in the fishery that in his estimate was exceeded by the Mary Ann.

The cruise of the Mary Ann has, I regret to say, been very unsuccessful and I believe the charterers are convinced that a vessel of her tonnage is not adapted to the work. There was no chance of testing the utility of the diving apparatus for the simple reason that no shell bank was discovered in deep water during the cruise.

The need for experience in locating the submerged shell banks and the dangers in attempting to use diving gear from such a large vessel in strong currents or when the tide was running were effectively brought home to Broadhurst and his associates. In the light of the dangers and with apparently considerable opposition from on board, the attempt was soon abandoned.

134 If the diver falls over or is held in a similar position by the tide, the air in the helmet can run through the suit to the legs causing the diver to invert and totally lose control.
Having failed in the attempt to use the diving gear, the vessel returned to the mainland on 25 September to load wool, passengers and shell.\textsuperscript{138} While it was being loaded, Broadhurst went pearling in one of the ship’s boats and returned ten days later after recovering 14 hundredweight of shell (c.711 kilograms).\textsuperscript{139} Thus the results of the first known attempt with the diving apparatus on the North-West coast were very poor, especially given the costs and scale of the enterprise. The \textit{Mary Ann} then left for Fremantle with Broadhurst onboard.\textsuperscript{140}

Broadhurst and his partners had failed where others were to prove successful using Aboriginal ‘divers’.

In August 1868 for example, the vessels \textit{Pearl}, \textit{Fairy}, \textit{Industry}, \textit{Nautilus}, \textit{Albert} and Chapman’s \textit{Mary Ann} arrived back at Butcher Inlet. All apparently used ‘naked diving’ or ‘wading’ techniques with successful results. They were joined by the \textit{Liberty} and \textit{Pilots} and by the Sydney vessels \textit{Kate Kearney} and \textit{Coquette} which had arrived at the fishery via Torres Strait and had been collecting trepang en-route.\textsuperscript{141}

Broadhurst’s efforts were made doubly unnecessary as fresh beds could still be found if one was prepared to travel and in these circumstances the relatively very efficient ‘dry shelling’ methods could be applied. McCourt in the \textit{Argo} sailed as far north as Camden harbour with Aborigines from the Robe River area for example. Though reporting good beds there, he was unable to exploit the find due to nine of their number ‘absconding’ at Camden Harbour in the apparently mistaken belief that they were able to make their way home.\textsuperscript{142}

Despite the failure of this, the first known attempt to use diving apparatus on the Australian pearl fishery, Broadhurst realized that the gear had possibilities. He left the partnership with Dempster, Barker and Gull and was soon on his way back north, having ‘bought down a boat and two hands’ to undertake

\textsuperscript{138} Erickson, op. cit., p. 117 and RJS, 25/9/1868.
\textsuperscript{139} RJS, 5/10/1868, BL.
\textsuperscript{140} ibid., 16/10/1868 and Erickson, op. cit., p. 117.
\textsuperscript{141} CSR 624/4., BL. Trepang, the sea slug or Béche-de-Mer was a much sought after delicacy.
\textsuperscript{142} CSR, 646/173, BL.
pearling with the diving apparatus he had on board the *Mary Ann*. The gear was apparently a ‘Heincke’ system, a common form of ‘standard dress’ or ‘hard hat’, which was similar in principle and operation to the English, French and other forms then being produced.

Broadhurst called back in to Sholl’s on 12 December 1868 and dined and stayed with him over two days before going on his way. A few days later Sholl went to the Mystery Landing at Cossack to go aboard the newly arrived schooner *Pilots*,

for the purpose of inspecting the ‘diving apparatus’ in the possession of Mr Hughan... a French arrangement.

The Captain had gone pearling in one of the vessels small boats and Hughan, who had his wife and two children on board, showed the apparatus to Sholl, Broadhurst and Withnell who were also on board. The ‘gear’ was of a French manufacture and Sholl spent a morning ‘attempting to translate Hughan’s French instructions for use of the diving apparatus’.144

In the context of the types of equipment being used at the time and Broadhurst’s decision to use the *Heincke* system, this comment is of significance. Sholl’s need to spend a morning translating the instructions, and the comment that the ‘French arrangement’ though ‘differing somewhat from Broadhurst’s’ proved ‘in every way adapted for the designed purpose’ is of importance in the context of the development of diving apparatus and the use of the various forms in the Australian fishery.

There is, on the basis of this evidence, a possibility that the gear was not Cabirol’s and Denayrouze’s apparatus shown in figures 20, 22 and 26 which was the French equivalent of the Heincke system used by Broadhurst.

Hughan’s system may have actually been the *Aérophore*, a device invented between 1859-1865 by the Frenchmen Rouquayrol and Denayrouze and shown in figures 21 and 26.

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143 *Inquirer*, 14/9/1870.
144 *Inquirer*, 24/2/1869 & RJS, 15/12/1868 & 22/12/1868, BL. This does not appear to be his own vessel. This is the schooner *Pilots* and his was the cutter *Pilot*. 
All this is of interest in the context of Broadhurst’s decision to use the Heincke gear which, though similar to the Siebe Gorman gear and the ‘Scaphandre’ of Cabirol, differed markedly from the Aérophore. The latter apparatus took the form of a metal canister containing around 30-40 litres of air under 25-40 atmospheres pressure which was carried on the divers back. It was kept charged by the use of a compressor operated from on board the ‘tender’ but could be disconnected allowing unparalleled freedom to the diver until the supply in the canister was exhausted. A regulator similar in principal to that used on Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (or SCUBA) today was also employed. It was claimed by the makers that a diver kitted, with

what was in effect the forerunner to the Aqualung that is now in common use, could remain submerged for more than thirty minutes at a depth of ten metres and thus he was able to explore a large area of the seabed. In 1865, 45 sets of the apparatus were ordered for the French fleet and other Navies including the English Admiralty. It was also used to advantage in the sponge, coral and pearl fisheries in the Mediterranean. The makers claimed that, in those areas, the apparatus was considered superior in that it made the work easier, resulting in the collection of three times the usual take of sponges, less illnesses, less shark attacks, and increased the time able to be spent underwater. Not only were these advantages offered by the diving apparatus on each dive, but because the diver was encased in a protective suit, diving in the more inclement months was possible. In 1867, 1868 and 1872 the apparatus won a gold medal for its class at the Exposition Universelle, and a Company was formed for the purposes of utilizing the apparatus in sponge fishing. Though it failed due to resistance from the sponge fishers themselves and their masters there is a possibility that the Aérophore was being used by Hughan alongside Broadhurst's Heincke system in late 1868. Rather surprisingly, the Aérophore had a short underwater career and had virtually ceased being used by the mid 1870s. For reasons unknown, the principle was not resurrected until the Aqualung of Cousteau and Gagnan some 40 years ago.

It can be seen from the above that, Broadhurst's choice of diving gear is a reasonable one, though he may have had little choice in the matter at the time and simply took the gear on-board Mary Ann with little thought to design or relative advantages.

His decision to attempt to continue with the diving apparatus, despite the failure at the Flying Foam Passage was justifiable even in the context of the success that others were having with the local Aborigines.

One advantage, common in most cases, to all forms of apparatus, and one which may have attracted both Broadhurst and Hughan in the first place, was

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146 Michel, op. cit., Cha 5.
the protective suit. An analysis of sea and ambient temperatures in the region appear below, and it can be seen that in the colder winter months from April to July, ‘naked divers’ would have rapidly succumbed to hypothermia and the pearling season in the North-West became effectively limited to the period between the August of one year and the April of the next.\textsuperscript{148} The protective suit that was common, or could be used, with all forms of ‘diving apparatus’ obviated the need to work only in the warmer months and could have proved a distinct advantage when the transition was made from ‘dry shelling’ or wading to actual ‘naked diving’.

As the cyclone season which fell between November and March, also fell within the pearling season itself it presented a grave danger and there was another good reason to prove the practicability of the ‘diving apparatus’ with their protective suits. If the apparatus with the protective suits had been proved practical, diving could have continued throughout the winter months and the hot cyclone season could have been avoided as is the case today. The dangerous months could then have been used for the lay-up when boats and gear were repaired and the men rested.

Despite the advantages and the possibilities of extending the season and avoiding the cyclones, both Hughan and Broadhurst proved unsuccessful in the application of the diving gear to the industry.\textsuperscript{149} Given the concerns about cyclones that today see the months from November to March avoided by the pearlers, their failure comes as some surprise. On reflection it appears that cyclones were not the problem in this period that they were to become after the Aborigines left the industry around the turn of the century. In this early period the boats were working close to land and with local Aboriginals on

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{148} The average sea temperatures for the Dampier region do not vary much more than 6°C. over the year. In summer they are around 29° and in winter they drop to around 23°. Pearce, A., ‘Sea Temperatures of Western Australia’, in Fins Magazine, (Vol.,19 No. 2, March 1986), pp.6-9. Combine this effect with the marked drop in ambient temperature from a mean average (over the 12 years 1881-1899, night and day) at Cossack of around 87°F (30° C), in summer to around 67°F (19°C) in winter. Cooke, W.E. (Comp), The Climate of Western Australia from Meteorological Observations made during the Years 1876-1899. (Government Print Perth, 1901) From this evidence, it can be seen that the onset of hypothermia would have been rapid on those months in winter where the ambient temperature was low.
  \item \textsuperscript{149} RJS, 18/1/1869 & 2/2/1869. Hughan was to claim that though he did not recover a great deal of shell with it, he was successful in using the apparatus.
\end{itemize}
board who were noted for their skill in predicting the weather, would have had a prior warning of any cyclone.\textsuperscript{150} This was sufficient to enable them to make for the nearest haven, and by this means diving in the cyclone season did not present too much of a hazard in the 1860s and 1870s. Because Broadhurst and Hughan were unsuccessful in introducing the diving gear with its protective clothing, diving generally ceased over the cooler months and no one was disadvantaged by the ‘lay-up’.

In hindsight, it can now be seen that, their attempts with the apparatus were unnecessary at this time especially as the Aborigines were by then diving without assistance to 5 fathoms (10 metres) with good results.\textsuperscript{151} The \emph{Pearl} for example, using traditional means in the same months Broadhurst and Hughan were experimenting with the apparatus, arrived in port with 6 tons of shell of a total of 48 tons recovered in this period.\textsuperscript{152}

It is argued then, that by leaving in November 1867 and in not returning until June 1868, Broadhurst missed a crucial learning period in the industry. By failing to learn of such things he made what was on paper a justifiable decision with regards to the apparatus, but which was in reality an unnecessary and impractical scheme. At the time, the returns were much better in employing many unpaid naked divers (even without ‘goggles’), in comparison to the fully equipped \emph{European} divers in the years when the shallow or ‘dry’ beds were still to be found.

Though the apparatus allowed a clear look underwater, provided the protective suit and allowed a longer period underwater, it also had many disadvantages. It was expensive to purchase and to operate and required a number of men, some European and on a wage.\textsuperscript{153} It was bulky and restricted

\textsuperscript{150} The Aborigines demonstrated their forecasting skills on a number of occasions in the North-West. Withnell-Taylor op. cit., Cha.xxi.
\textsuperscript{151} \emph{Inquirer}, 31/3/1869.
\textsuperscript{152} CSR, 624/51, BL.
\textsuperscript{153} It was not until the apparatus was used on a large scale in the late 19th. century that the European divers were replaced by ‘Malay’s and then by Japanese. It is evident from the advertisements for diving apparatus that regularly appeared in the Western Australian press \textit{e.g} \emph{Inquirer}, 19/11/1876 and from the numerous references to the use of the apparatus in isolated instances with European divers before then that the gear was in use albeit on a small scale in the pearling industry for many years after 1868. The mid 1880s appear to be the time when diving apparatus began to be used on a ‘large scale’ in Western Australian waters. \emph{West Australian}, 30/6/1886.
the movement of the diver underwater and the boat above. In strong tides, it proved especially impractical and even dangerous especially when compared with the ability of the naked divers to use the current to advantage and to enable them to cover large areas of seabed with ease. Almost all these problems can be seen from a close examination of the following illustration, showing a diver, the tender, two men operating the air pump and the subsequent lack of space on board. In the early phase of the pearling industry these disadvantages proved its downfall.

Figure 27

The deck of a small vessel with diver below showing the space occupied by the equipment and the men operating the gear. 154

154 Michel, op. cit., p99. The hoses can be seen in the 'tender's' hands, there are two operators on the pumps and one at the bow seeing to the vessel which is underway. In the early stage of diving at Nickol Bay there would have been a great deal of difficulty in learning the skills required to manage the boat and diver together. Naked diving was obviously a much easier and more efficient proposition at this time.
Broadhurst also apparently realized this, and in March 1869 obtained half a ton of shell without the diving apparatus. In the following month the Pilots returned with Hughan on-board to report that they had ‘not been very successful’, obtaining only 4 hundredweight of shell (200 kilos) and that it had become ‘too cold for the natives to work’. This signals that Hughan was also using naked divers and is further evidence of the limits to the season due to the onset of colder weather. Hughan was by then operating on quite a large scale, with 14 small boats each containing three European and six Aboriginal men.155

Thus Hughan and Broadhurst appear to have realized that the use of the diving apparatus in the shallow waters in which the Aboriginals were able to dive was inefficient, and reverted to more traditional means as the season closed. On the other hand, they may have actually been using the two methods together, deploying the naked Aboriginal divers and the apparatus as the occasion demanded. Hughan certainly appears to have done so and Broadhurst, though he appears to have been on a smaller scale, is expected to have followed suit.

If such was the case then they are to be applauded for their attempts to bring efficiency to the industry by maximizing the time that could be spent underwater. Rather than be limited by the seasons or themselves on a bed that was only diveable without apparatus at low water springs and therefore unattainable once the tide came in, they could continue work with the apparatus untrammelled by time or tide.156

In the context of the possibility that Broadhurst may have seen the diving apparatus as a means of avoiding the abhorrent task of rounding up local Aborigines, it must be noted that it is doubtful that his decision was motivated by any other than monetary considerations and that the use of diving gear did not solve his labour problems.

On 18 January 1869 for example, one of Broadhurst’s sailors, a Mr. Ashwick left their camp on Dixon Island near Cape Lambert, (figure 12 & 25)

155 Inquirer, 31/3/1869.
156 The maximum tidal range in the area is 5-6 metres. See footnote 68.
and was reported missing en route for Roebourne. On reporting his disappearance at Roebourne, Broadhurst’s South-West Aboriginal assistant ‘Jimmy’, was sent back to the location by Police Constable Francisco with two bottles of water. He found Ashwick’s tracks and noted that he had become delirious, shed his clothing and finished up walking around in circles till he expired. The body was brought in for a funeral which Broadhurst did not attend. Sholl took Broadhurst’s and Jimmy’s statements and in his statement on the death, and Broadhurst noted that Ashwick who was ‘on trial as a sailor’ had a difference of opinion with J. McLaughlin, Broadhurst’s diver. Ashwick subsequently left the island to walk over the shallows to the mainland where he set up camp for the night. Broadhurst twice requested him to return, but he refused and stayed on with the intention of walking the next morning towards Cossack. According to Broadhurst, Ashwick was of ‘sulky morose disposition and apparently deficient in intellect’. He was informed that it was dangerous to attempt the journey, and though offered food and water refused to receive it and left. 157 The matter did not end there, for a petition of 22 local pearlers was presented to the Resident Magistrate. The petitioners complained in the interests of ‘justice and for the security of life in the district’ at the lack of an inquiry over the Ashwick business and inferred, very strongly, that the ‘real cause’ of the man’s death was not known and that there was some serious wrongdoing in the incident. Broadhurst’s part in the supposed wrong-doing is not known, as nothing was stated in the petition on the matter. 158

The Ashwick incident, when combined with Sholl’s comments on the demise of Broadhurst’s ‘Swan River Native, Harry’ two years earlier, does engender an unsubstantiated suspicion of Broadhurst. 159 Also adding to this is the fact that a ‘Swan River Native’ in his ‘employ’ absconded in February 1869. 160 It is not known whether the Aboriginal man was with Broadhurst in the pearling industry or at the Maitland River with his shepherds and flocks. Again, though

157 CSR, 646/141, BL.
158 CSR, 647/102, BL.
159 See page, 127.
160 Inquirer, 24/2/1869.
there is an element of doubt in the incident, Broadhurst’s labour relations again come under scrutiny as deficient in some regard. On the other hand, there are other substantiated indications that he was not one to physically abuse people and that he actually cared for the plight of the Aborigines.

In the context of his inquiry on the Ashwick case, for example, Sholl had noted that

Broadhurst told me that some of the pearlers were in the habit of taking native women away and he named Coppido as the principal offender. He said the natives were so exasperated that loss of life would be the result...

The situation worsened as time went by and as the pearling boats increased in size and number. By late August 1869, the comparatively huge Sydney boats, the 72 ton Coquette and the 133 ton Melanie with a crew of 60 were noted with their ‘Kanaker’ (sic) crews scattered along the coast apparently in smaller boats as far east as Roebuck Bay.161 Their crews were causing mayhem amongst the local Aboriginal tribes, prompting further calls for the licensing of vessels involved in the fishery and to put the pearling ‘on a proper footing’.162

The 1868/1869 season in which these depredations were occurring, closed around April, and Broadhurst who remained in the area, then attended to his pastoral interests on the Maitland River. In June 1869, he became very ill with fever and was expected to die. After six weeks of illness, he recovered partly through the ministrations of Dr Mayhew, Sholl and his wife Mary.163

Broadhurst recovered by August 1869 in time for the next season but worked away from the eyes of the diarists and officials. As a result little is known of his activities in this season, though he apparently worked east of Nickol Bay near Condon and the DeGrey River as concerns were held for his ‘boat’ in a storm that hit the region in February 1870.164 This was to be the

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161 RJS, June-August 1869, BL.
163RJS, June 1869, BL.
164RJS, 13/2/1870.
first of many instances in his career that his life was in jeopardy and it highlights the personal risks taken by men such as Broadhurst in those times. The fears for his safety were unfounded however and by March his boat, possibly the Mermaid, and another belonging to a Mr Paterson, off-loaded two tons of shell at Butcher Inlet.\footnote{By deduction from Sholl’s diaries and his Occurrence Books of 23/4/1870 & 25/4/1870 respectively, RJS, BL.}

This was the largest ‘catch’ known to have been recovered by Broadhurst, and may have been most welcome as his finances were in a bad way at this time. Evidence of this surfaces immediately after Broadhurst’s near fatal illness which lasted through June and July of 1869, and in which Sholl and his wife played no small part in his salvation. After he recovered, Broadhurst called on Sholl at the end of August to inform him he could not repay £12 he had previously borrowed. It is inconceivable that Broadhurst would have deceived his long standing friend Sholl in these circumstances and it is also significant that he was not able to repay him until late October 1869.\footnote{RJS, 31/8/1869 & 20/10/1869.}

Further evidence of his inability or unwillingness to pay his dues appears in an unspecified summons against him in mid December indicating that he was still working in the area and still being sought for payment by others.

Broadhurst also located extensive and rich pearl beds near Condon at this time, and with this and his two ton ‘catch’ he would have finished the season on an optimistic note.\footnote{Broadhurst to Sholl?, 14/4/1871, CSR, 697/110.}

The season ended in April or May as usual and Broadhurst, who would have been attending to his sheep in the layover, left the district by Waterlily on 22 June 1870 for Fremantle. Whether the season was good for Broadhurst is not known, though indications apart from his two ton ‘catch’ are to the contrary.
(c) Broadhurst with the *Adur* and the ‘Volunteer’ Aboriginal Convict Divers

The new season of 1870/1871 opened around August 1870 with 'around 20 vessels under eight tons' at work. The pearlers were by now finding it more difficult to acquire Aboriginal labour due to the number of boats in competition for their services and due to the ravages of smallpox which was now having its tragic effect throughout the district. To make matters worse, there were 30 boats operating by the following November and each required at least three Aborigines to help make up the crew.\(^{168}\)

The pearler F. McRae in writing to his sister noted that

> Almost everyone has gone out pearling... satisfactory wool prices but the cost of getting it out eats up the profit... The pearl shell fishery looks much better now than it ever did before as pearlers have got the natives to dive in deeper water for the shells.\(^{169}\)

In the context of his rich find of the previous season, Broadhurst decided to operate the diving equipment for the third year in succession. He realized the need to operate in conjunction with the naked divers in the previous season, but in the belief that the local Aborigines 'lacked courage and energy',\(^{170}\) he applied to interview Aboriginal prisoners from the Rottnest establishment with a view to enticing them to volunteer for service in the pearl fishery. He visited the Island on 23 August 1870 and was successful in obtaining 18 volunteers despite the fact that a number of them were 'perfectly aware' that their sentence would expire during the season.\(^{171}\) Two other prisoners also joined for service in Grant's schooner *Dawn* making a total of 20 prisoners to board the small 16.3 metre, 25 ton, two masted schooner, *Adur* which Broadhurst had leased,\(^{172}\) possibly in partnership with the vessel's master a Mr Christie.\(^{173}\)

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169 F. McRae to his Sisters 2/10/1870 & 2/8/1870, BL Acc. 289a.
170 CSR, 697/110, BL.
171 CSR, 678/54, BL
172 Broadhurst is noted in the local press as owning the vessel, but an examination of the Register Documents show that it was never in his hands and was owned at this time by a J.S. Spurling. *Register of British Ships at the Port of Fremantle*, op. cit. Calling the charterer the owner was not an uncommon practice, McKenna, pers. com.
There was at the time a prohibition on the use of ‘white’ convict labour in the ‘North District’, and to seek the services of their Aboriginal counterparts was a logical progression. The precedent had long since been set. Padbury and others, including Broadhurst, had used Aboriginal convicts in their earlier pastoral pursuits. Broadhurst had also secured the services of the Swan River Aboriginal ‘Jimmy’ for use in the pearling industry in the previous season. Though a logical progression in view of the negative attitude toward the use of ‘white’ convicts and in the light of the belief in the superior capacity of Aborigines to ‘see’ shell, the development was not received with unanimous approval. A correspondent to the Inquirer, writing under the pseudonym Vigilans attacked the venture in the strongest terms, denouncing the venture as ‘heartless... unjust, [and] illegal’. Fears were expressed for the safety of the prisoners under ‘Broadhurst and Company’ who as members of the pearling fraternity were considered to be a pretty bad lot. It was also stated that the situation was made doubly dangerous for, if the Aborigines were to stray from their employ, they would have found themselves in potentially very dangerous areas amongst hostile tribes with little chance of survival.

Despite the outcry, the venture went ahead unimpeded, and the Adur cleared Rottnest on 21 September for the pearl fishery. The vessel called in at Champion Bay (Geraldton) twelve days later, and there, five aboriginals ‘belonging to’ Broadhurst and one of Grant’s men escaped. All were originally from the area. The Adur proceeded on to Nickol Bay and arrived on 9 October where a further four Aborigines absconded and ‘asked the way to Champion Bay’. They created quite a stir at the settlement, stealing sheep and otherwise creating havoc till apprehended. One man ‘Billy’ when charged with

173When Broadhurst refused to pay his shepherd, Mr Atting, his wages, after he found him absent from his post at the Maitland River, Sholl advised Atting to proceed against Christie the master of the Adur. As further indication of some business partnership between Broadhurst and Christie, when the pastoralist Malcolm MacIntosh proceeded against Christie for failing to deliver a ton of flour as agreed, Broadhurst contributed towards the master’s costs. RJS, 5/4/1870 & 11/10/1870. BL.
174
175 Inquirer, 5/10/1870.
176 ibid., 678/93.
177 RJS, 10/10/1870, BL.
absconding, stated that he did so ‘because he had not enough to eat’. Broadhurst, who indicated that he would prefer not to bring charges against the escapees, then saw two of his potential labour force brought to trial and ‘transported’ back south to twelve months hard labour.

Despite these set-backs, Broadhurst moved off to the pearling grounds at Bannangarra which lies just east of Mt. Blaze, near Cape Keraudren which is shown on figures 24 and 28. There he employed both the Aboriginals and a European ‘apparatus’ diver named Edward Thompson, together or individually, as the conditions suited.

Figure 28

Broadhurst’s base at Bannangarra, which lies between Mt Blaze and Cape Keraudren.

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178 ibid., 12/12/1870.
179 Spelt in many ways in the records: Barangarah, Barringgarrah, Banningarra, Banangara, Barrangarist, Bannangarra, etc. The word is most probably Aboriginal and the variety in the spelling is an indication of this. Bannangara is used here in text as it is the spelling most used by R.J. ShiLL e.g. CSR, 714/158, 714/37.
180 The Australia Pilot, op cit., p. 130, notes the following under the heading of MOUNT BLAZE: A Sandhill 18 Metres high is situated on a rocky point having two rocky islets on either side... immediately west of Mt. Blaze there is a sandy bay which appears to be shoal. The west entrance point of this bay, 12 miles west of Mt. Blaze forms the North entrance point of Condon Creek... a landing place... another... at Condini in Mangrove Creek 6 miles west.
181 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., CSO 727/33, BL.
182 Australia, NW Coast, WA. Lacepedes to Bedout Island. Western Sheet. AUS 325.
Thus Broadhurst was to attempt use the diving apparatus for the third time. Despite his previous failures, the press voiced their confidence in him, and stated that he had earlier introduced ‘one of Heincke’s patent diving apparatus to fish in parts unaffected by tide’, and though he had found ‘difficulties in working it to advantage, it was no means a failure’. They concluded on the optimistic note that, as he had a knowledge of large areas of the coast ‘yet untouched’ by other pearlers, a well suited vessel and a good opportunity to prove the worth of the apparatus, he had a ‘good prospect’ of success. 183

Unfortunately the weather conditions proved difficult during this season for Broadhurst and his men. The heavy rains of December saw an outpouring of discoloured water from the rivers rendering the water very dirty. A storm on Christmas day saw the loss of one vessel with two men on board, and the grounding of four other vessels at Butcher Inlet. The storm was of such a force that the infamous hotel in the hulk of the New Perseverance was pushed further up the creek by the seas, obstructing traffic. Further to the east at Mt Blaze, further destruction was noted, including the loss of 2 dinghies owned by Withnell and the grounding of a cutter.

Broadhurst noted at the end of the season in April 1871, that it was,

the most unfavourable one ever known on this pearl fishery, being little else but a series of gales from the commencement.184

To make matters worse, while the Adur was at Bannangarra, five more Aboriginals, three of whom featured in the fracas at Roebourne, staged another escape attempt. The Resident Magistrate then conducted an examination of the causes of their discontent. The police conducting the investigation found from the Aboriginal’s Warder, a Mr Dawson that, they were ‘determined on escaping...the cause of their absconding is fear of the water’. On the other hand, the Aborigines said that they left because they ‘did

183 Inquirer. 14/9/1870.
184 CSR, 697/110, BL.
not have enough to eat and did not like their occupation’. When asked if the wished to return to the Rottnest prison however, they stated that they preferred to stay on board the *Adur*.

The evidence is conflictory, but when considered in the light of the Kenman case following and Broadhurst’s comments on the value of the convicts as divers, it appears that Broadhurst was quite humane in comparison to many others. When the *Adur* called back at Butcher Inlet in late January, Broadhurst called in the evening on Sholl to borrow a cart in which to transport Kenman or ‘Blackie’, one of his sick convicts, for medical attention. He took tea and left Sholl’s residence before dawn to bring the man in from the vessel. Kenman was in intense pain suffering from an unspecified disease and the aftermath of a gunshot wound inflicted in a skirmish with the police that occurred before he was imprisoned at Rottnest Island. At 7.30 pm, Broadhurst arrived back with the stricken man, who after rallying for a brief period after Sholl’s ministrations, died the following evening.

When questioned by Sholl on the desire of the other convicts to escape, Broadhurst stated that they had received more than the ‘rations scale and as much as they could eat’ and placed part of the blame on the inability of the warden to control the men. This statement was confirmed by the police and it appeared that the warden had been assaulted and had complained that the conduct of the convicts was very bad. Broadhurst was later to write to the Colonial Secretary recording his ‘deep regret’ that the volunteer Aboriginal convicts had,

> turned out perfectly useless as far as diving for shell goes. I have tried every plan that kindness or ingenuity could suggest but all to no purpose...some of them can dive well enough. They appear to be thoroughly frightened of salt water. I must say, I am sorely disappointed for having found them so useful on shore

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185 The Man’s Aboriginal name was spelt Kenman by the European officials, ‘Blackie’ or ‘Blakey’ was the name used by the Europeans in preference to his actual name.
186 RJS, 28-31/1/1870, BL.
and believing them to have more courage and energy in
them than the natives of this coast I had great hopes.\(^{187}\)

Broadhurst also tried to shame them by working them together with six local
Aborigines from the same boat. Though the Southerners were severely
ridiculed by the locals, and thereby encouraged to prove their worth, the
stratagem failed. Broadhurst’s use of Aboriginal Convict labour was, in his
own estimate, not a success, though his treatment of the Aborigines, and his
attempts to entice them to work when they failed, seemed moderate in the
context of the times. The claim that he did not feed his assigned convict
labourers was not substantiated. The convicts desire to leave his employ appear
to have emanated from an understandable desire by Southern people not used
to the sea to avoid the water. His attempts to shame ‘his’ convicts into diving
and to ‘use every plan that kindness and ingenuity could suggest’ are a stark
contrast to the violent and reprehensible efforts of many others. The failure of
the convicts on-board *Adur* and Broadhurst’s statement that, in his opinion, the
local Aborigines, lacked ‘courage and energy’ may be directly related to the
methods he used in a season when others were clearly succeeding in the areas
in which he had been.

As the season began to close for example, the other boats such as the *Dugout*,
*Fortescue*, *Morning Star*, *Aurora* and *Amateur* came in, reporting good
results from the newly opened stretch of pearling ground between Condini
Creek (near Condon) and Bannangarra where Broadhurst had been. Around 20
tons were obtained in the ‘last two tides’ leading up to 27 April, i.e just as the
unsuccessful Broadhurst was leaving.\(^{188}\) Much of this ‘catch’ was loaded on
board the *Mary* which left the North on 10 May with a cargo of 39-40 tons of
shell, which at £170-£210 per ton represented a return of £6-7000. Also on-
board were £1-1500 worth of pearls.\(^{189}\)

\(^{187}\) CSR 697/110, BL. According to Dr Ian Crawford of the W.A. Museum, ‘There is debate about the extent to
which the Aborigines of the South took to the water and on the whole it seems that it was not part of their

\(^{188}\) Here indicating that the ‘divers’ were still using the relatively large fall of tide to their advantage and that
‘shallow’ beds were still available.

\(^{189}\) RJS April/May 1871, BL & Inquirer 31/5/1871.
On 28 April 1871, having failed in his endeavours with the *Adur*, the ‘diving apparatus’, and with the Aboriginal Convicts, Broadhurst sailed south for Fremantle. Soon after arrival, *Adur* was sold by her owner, Selby Spurling, signalling the end of Broadhurst’s lease and leaving him without a vessel.190

In commenting on the season with the *Adur* and the Rottnest Island convicts, Broadhurst indicated that, though it had been a failure it further confirmed his belief that the beds, he found in the previous season were ‘very extensive and very rich’. He also stated that it was only a question of ‘labour and capital’ to develop these rich beds.191

In that context, he then left for Europe after spending a short time with his family.

As an indication of his own realization of the failure of his efforts as a pearler up to that time, Broadhurst was to state in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, while returning from Europe to the pearl beds, ‘I hope we shall make it successful this time. I think I am entitled to it.’ 192

(d) Pearling and the SS *Xantho*

Secure in the knowledge of the ‘very rich’ and ‘very extensive’ beds he had found and convinced that ‘labour and capital’ were the keys to their successful exploitation, Broadhurst arrived in England around September 1871, just as the 1871/1872 pearling season at Nickol Bay commenced.

The 1871/1872 season, was in his absence, to prove a very good season. The tonnage of ‘boats’ and of the returns was steadily increasing and shell was fetching an unprecedented £125 per ton at Port Walcott.193 The returns to the end of January 1872, about half way through the season, showed that 31 vessels averaging about 10 tons and ranging from 1 to 56 tons were in operation. Also in operation were 52 ‘boats or dinghies’. In all, 127 tons of shell were estimated to have been collected in the season to that time, to an estimated

190 *Adur*, Register of British Ships, McKenna Notes, op. cit.
191 Broadhurst to Sholl?, 14/4/1871, CSR, 697/110.
192 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 25/10/1871, op. cit.
193 CSR, 714/18, BL. Sholl records that it was difficult to obtain the quantity of the shell recovered and as they were not always weighed estimates only were obtained.
value of £15,875. It is likely that Broadhurst would have had men working in the industry while he was absent, though no supporting evidence has been found.

While overseas, Broadhurst went to Glasgow and there he purchased a second hand, iron screw steamer, the *Xantho* and fitted it out to a cost of £4,500.

It appears that he had plans to capture the trade in shell from the North-west to London via Batavia and Singapore. According to his letters, which are reproduced in part following, he had acquired the services of agents who were connected to his family at both Singapore and Batavia and had a buyer in England willing to purchase any shell he could land in Singapore. With this and the newly found beds in mind, the purchase of a steamship capable of navigating around the waters of the north-West with its difficult harbours and notorious tides, seemed a sound notion indeed. 194

Broadhurst then sailed in the vessel from Glasgow via Queenstown (Cobh) in Ireland, with Captain Ernest Denicke as Master. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary from that Port dated October 25 1871, he stated that he

> I have gone to a heavy expense already £4500 and it will cost a good deal more before I reach my destination... You know my opinions on your pearl fishery well enough. I have often said it was only a question of capital and labour. The first I have put into it the second I will find before I reach Port Walcott. My Captain is a thorough concologist [sic]...takes great interest in expeditions of this sort I have good agents in Singapore and Batavia(connections of my own family)...One of the largest shell buyers in England will buy every shell I can get by telegraph from Singapore, so I think I have done my part pretty well and thank God. I am entirely on my own account....I would never have entered into a heavy speculation like this by myself. 195

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194 Port Hedland, where he established one of his pearling bases for example, was considered a ‘beautiful harbour, completely land-locked’, but was not suitable for sailing vessels in anything but perfect conditions. Hasluck, (1928), op. cit., p. 264.

195 CSO, 1185, 1182/527, BL.
The decision to employ Denicke, as both master and an experienced conchologist was a sound move. In doing so, Broadhurst was no doubt attempting to avoid the earlier he mistakes made in the industry by employing Denicke and in using his expertise. Denicke also may have influenced Broadhurst in his decision to apply from Ireland for a lease to Shark Bay for the purposes of harvesting the shell there.

By applying for leases as far afield as Shark Bay, and in carrying five boats and whaling gear, Broadhurst indicated that he was intending to expand his activities with the SS *Xanlho* in the pearling and other fisheries. A large labour force was obviously required for this undertaking. In the light of his attitude towards the local labour force, the failure of the Rottnest Island Aborigines and their propensity for escape, Broadhurst decided to actually employ indentured ‘Malay’ labourers who were not only to be paid a wage, but were also to be transported home at the expiration of their contract. The idea may have come from a Captain Cadell who was then using ‘Malay’ labour for pearling out of Shark Bay and in the North-West pearl fishery. Whatever lead him to the decision, Broadhurst was to follow suit and take many ‘Malays’ into his employ. He was for a time to become the chief employer of ‘Malays’ on the coast. He planned to use the *Xanlho* as the connecting link between his bases at Shark Bay, Bannangarra and Port Hedland and as a transport for the indentured ‘Malay’ labour between the two fisheries and their homes. He also intended to use the vessel to carry shell to Batavia (Jakarta) for forwarding on to Singapore and Europe. Not only did he intend using the vessel in this manner, but when not required, he intended to use it as a trading vessel as the occasion allowed. Thus, the relatively high costs of operating the SS *Xanlho* could be recouped.

The source of Broadhurst’s capital in making the purchase and in the fitting out of the vessel is not known. Some indication that it was not from the profits of the pearling industry appear in the closing of his letter to the Colonial

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196 *Conchology*: The science or study of shells and shellfish.
197 CSO, 1185, op. cit.
Secretary asking for the lease to Shark Bay and to islands in the Nickol Bay region. Broadhurst wrote that he ‘had a long kicking about’, that his wife Eliza ‘has had hard times of it’ and that he hoped to see the Colonial Secretary again ‘in better circumstances than when I saw you last’. Here are clear indications of the personal impact of Broadhurst’s previous failures and of their financial repercussions. This analysis is supported by the many references to his failure in the industry.\textsuperscript{198}

Whilst en route for Fremantle in the newly purchased vessel, Broadhurst called in to Singapore where one of his ‘agents’ was situated and then proceeded on to Batavia to the other agents. There he engaged an unspecified number of ‘Malay’ divers and continued onto the pearling grounds at Bannangarra. Here was a safe harbour, with two and a half fathoms of water at low tide, sufficient even for the SS \textit{Xantho}, arguably the largest vessel to be employed in the pearling industry up to that time. The bay, was ‘all but landlocked’, and was an ideal location, protected from all but northerly winds and with fresh water obtainable from a ‘strong’ spring in the inter-tidal zone.\textsuperscript{199} There, on a sandy patch about five kilometres south east of Mt Blaze itself, Broadhurst established a camp with a house. He later planted about 300 coconut plants in order to feed his ‘Malay’ divers. The plantation was situated near a small fresh water lagoon within a kilometre from the landing.\textsuperscript{200} The area was considered a far better port than nearby Condon where a town-site was planned and to where the Resident Magistrate was urged to go and set up in residence during the pearling season.\textsuperscript{201}

The SS \textit{Xantho} remained at the pearling beds for about a month, during which the stores that were carried for the camp were off-loaded and the ‘Malays’ would have been sent diving under Broadhurst’s managers, a Mr. Wood at Bannangarra and a Mr Letchford at Port Hedland.\textsuperscript{202} Whether

\textsuperscript{198} As his father died in April 1859 and his mother died in October 1865 they do not seem to have been the source of his money. His source of finance has been discussed in the earlier section on the DPPC and is examined again in the section devoted to the SS \textit{Xantho}, following.

\textsuperscript{199} CSR, 714/98, BL.

\textsuperscript{200} CSR, 714/70.

\textsuperscript{201} CSR, 714/57 & SDUR, B8/797a, BL.

\textsuperscript{202} See section on ‘Malay’ and Aboriginal divers, following.
Broadhurst had his managers in operation before he arrived back on the coast and whether he actually employed the SS Xantho as a ‘mother boat’ for the smaller boats, housing the divers and carrying shell, is not known, but is highly likely. In April, towards the end of the pearling season, the SS Xantho with Broadhurst aboard, left for Fremantle.

While there, Broadhurst indicated that the Xantho would be used for general work in the coastal trade and on the pearling beds as the occasion demanded. The vessel returned laden with cargo and passengers to the North arriving at Nickol Bay in July. They then apparently went on to Bannangarra for shell and from there proceeded to Batavia where Broadhurst had his ‘agents’. Before he left, Broadhurst would have tried to cram his holds with his shell and any other that he could obtain for sale through his connections. He also went to Batavia for more ‘Malay’ labourers, alterations to the vessel’s accommodation and for coal. They then returned to the North-West coast around August, carrying not only ‘Malay’ labourers and ‘Malay seamen, but also stores and goods for sale in the colony. Apparently, the Xantho then worked out of Broadhurst’s stations at Bannangarra and Port Hedland, servicing the needs of his work-force for around a month after the season began before returning to Port Walcott in early October. On his arrival, as some indication of his standing in the local pearling community, Broadhurst headed a petition of the pearlers for a more efficient postal service out of the newly named town of Cossack in Butcher Inlet. He also informed Sholl that ‘none of the pearl boats had done anything’, indicating that his efforts were suffering along with the rest.

On 19 October, the Xantho left Nickol Bay for Fremantle via ports. En route, they called in to the Flying Foam Passage where his men were working

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203 Broadhurst to Col. Sec. 1/7/1872, CSO 727/76, BL.
204 RJS, 22/61871 & 14/7/1871, BL. 
205 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 25/10/1871, op. cit.
206 Broadhurst eventually imported 140 'Malays' to Western Australia, all for the pearling industry. CSR, 752/31, BL.
207 CSR, 714/131, BL.
208 RJS, 14 & 16/10/1872, BL.
some newly found pearl beds. When the tide was ‘out’ it sat on the sea bottom, as was the custom in the region, and remained in that state, possibly high and dry, till the next high tide.\textsuperscript{209} This may have strained the ageing vessel.

Up to this point, Broadhurst had done well with a speculation that would, if all went well, would have given him a major stake in the cartage of shell from the north to Batavia and from there to Singapore. He was also in an excellent position to utilize the vessel in the cartage of men and goods for the pearling industry to and from the islands to the north. In addition, the \textit{Xantho} would have also proved a vital link between Broadhurst’s own interests in Nickol Bay, at Bannangarra, Port Hedland and at the Shark Bay fishery. He had the confidence of the Resident Magistrate at Roebourne and of the officials in Perth. With his steamer, a link and transport to the North, there were clearly opportunities for the development of lucrative partnerships in all the associated industries, especially pearling. He had apparently overcome the problems concerning the supply of coal and with agents in Batavia and Singapore prepared to take his shell he appeared set to succeed. When not needed for his own purposes, Broadhurst was in a good position to utilize the vessel in the coastal trade between Geraldton and Busselton, and to and from the northern ports and the Straits Settlements.

Disaster struck soon after however. In a run of ill fortune, following hard on his failures with the ‘diving apparatus’ and with the Aboriginal convicts, the \textit{Xantho} abruptly sank in November 1872 whilst on a trading voyage out of Port Gregory. Thus Broadhurst’s bold speculation with the SS \textit{Xantho} in the pearling industry came to a premature and very costly end.

Broadhurst then went south to attend to business. He returned north on 31 January and left with Sholl to examine activities at the rich pearling bed recently discovered at the Flying Foam Passage where their divers were operating.\textsuperscript{210}

\textsuperscript{209} Report of Enquiry into the loss of the \textit{Xantho}. (See Following Chapter).
\textsuperscript{210} RJS, 29/1/1873-6/2/1873, BL.
Broadhurst had two groups of divers, ‘Malays’ and Aboriginals, at work together in the rich and difficult Flying Foam Passage. There, others including Sholl’s men were doing remarkably well. Despite this, Broadhurst’s men were failing dismally.

(e) Broadhurst and the use of Indentured ‘Malay’ Labour

Before closing this section on the pearling at Nickol Bay where Broadhurst is noted for his unsuccessful experimentation with men and machines, an analysis of his use of indentured ‘Malay’ labour at considerable expense is required because it is with this group that he was to later prove so spectacularly successful in Shark Bay despite their failure as divers in the north. In examining, Broadhurst’s use of indentured ‘Malays’ in the industry out of Nickol Bay, some understanding will be had of the reasons for his failure with them and of his dependence on his managers in such ventures.

It has been said that, ...

...wherever nomadic societies crumbled or were destroyed, an immediate consequence was a severe and chronic labour shortage, leading to the importation of labourers from abroad, often in servile conditions.

In this context, a Mr Howlett of the Venus was to experiment with ‘Malay’ divers brought from Batavia in early 1871 just before Broadhurst arrived in the SS Xantheo. Howlett had earlier travelled to Batavia selling stock, and in seeing diving in progress, was led to bring back eight ‘Malays’ on his second trip. At around the same time the notorious ‘blackbirder’ Captain Cadell left in the Water Lily to Macassar for the same purpose. Cadell on his return from the north in 1872, established 44 ‘Malay’ men at Condon and an unknown

211 As an indication of the costs involved as opposed to using Aborigines, in February 1874, Broadhurst obtained the services of a Mr Amedi a ‘Malay’ at 20 guilders a month with rations supplied for one year. CSR, 809/44. The guilder at the time was considered the equivalent of a florin or two shillings (24 pence) and there were 10 guilders to the pound. Streeter, op cit, p. 162. On the other hand, a contemporary report indicates that 200 guilders was worth £16-13-4, or one guilder was worth 20 pence. Inquirer, 17/1/1876. Thus Broadhurst appears to have been paying his ‘Malays’ £20-£24 per year plus food and lodging and a trip home at the end of their employ.

212 Denoon, op. cit., p.27.

213 Praagh, L.V., The Great North West and it’s Resources, (Praagh and Lloyd, Perth, 1904)
number at Shark Bay. The results of the experiment with imported ‘Malay’ labour were ‘anxiously awaited’ by those at Roebourne. Opinion was clearly divided on the matter though it was generally expected that they would ‘not equal our natives’.214

Broadhurst’s failure with the diving apparatus and with the Rottnest Island ‘volunteer’ Aboriginal convicts saw him abandon these two avenues in favour of ‘Malays.’ He was not on his own in seeking to do so, for around this time it was claimed that the ‘general opinion’ was that ‘native labour must be supplemented by Malay labour’.215 The idea may have come from the successes of the ‘Kanackers’ or Pacific Islanders used on-board the Sydney boats Coquette, Melanie, Kate Kearney in 1869-70. They were noted as having proved successful, though the Aborigines were acknowledged as the ‘best shellers’ as they were more ‘keensighted’.216 As evidence of their ready adaptability to these waters, by April 1871, it was noted that those ‘Malays’ that had been imported after this period were doing well.217

On his return in the Xantho, Broadhurst obtained a number of ‘Malays’ in the ‘Straits Settlements’ and left 40 of them in the care of a manager to continue shelling and to establish the camp at Bannangarra. Howlett, in the Clarice of only 15 tons, also brought 22 Malays to the pearling grounds. Such was their desire to avail themselves of the opportunity for employment, they apparently raised no complaint about the obviously cramped voyage.218

In an attempt to provide his men with a reasonable diet, and no doubt to profit from the supply of the fruit, Broadhurst successfully applied for land at Bannangarra on which to establish the coconut plantation mentioned earlier. In allowing his request, a nominal annual rental of £1.0.0 was to be set with a pre-emptive right of selection. As an incentive, he was to be entitled, at the end of 10 years, to the free grant of as many 50 acre lots of land as he had by then

214 Inquirer, 8/3/1871.
215 de la Rue, op. cit., p.77.
216 Perth Gazette, 29/9/1869.
217 Inquirer, 26/4/1871.
218 ibid.
planted with trees in ‘good condition’ of at least 5 years of age, provided they covered the area to the extent of 20 trees to the acre.

By which a great benefit may accrue to the district generally, this being entirely a new industry and one peculiarly and particularly essential now so many Malays are being imported for pearl shell diving. 219

As an indication of Broadhurst’s expected return from the venture, a Captain Tucker operating on the Eastern seaboard of Australia hoped to secure a return of £6000 per annum from a plantation of 40,000 trees in the late 1880s.220

Despite this, problems were to surface with Broadhurst’s and other ‘Malays’ from the beginning.221

Soon after arriving in the SS Xantho, one of Broadhurst’s ‘Malays’ was seized with cramp while in the water at Bannangarra and subsequently drowned. Denicke, the master of the Xantho, claimed that the ‘Malay’ who drowned was in the company of others in the water and though he could swim well was apparently ‘seized with a cramp’ and sank without trace.222 Seven of Captain Cadell’s men died of scurvy at this time. On 30 April, Broadhurst and a Mr Anderson registered their disquiet about Cadell’s methods to the Resident Magistrate. Broadhurst declared that Cadell’s ‘Malays’ were insufficiently clad. Though most of the ‘Malays’ were fed enough to sate their hunger, fruit and vegetables were not supplied and scurvy soon manifested itself. To complete a very sorry picture of events at this stage, a further six of Cadell’s men were lost, presumed drowned, whilst attempting to sail, with their equally famished European manager, in four boats to Port Walcott. They had left their camp in search of provisions when 50 kilos of rice that had been supplied to them by Broadhurst, to help tide them over, was consumed. The missing men later

219 SDUR, B8/797b, BL.
220 Bain, op. cit., P. 66.
221 CSR, 714/57-9, BL.
222 ibid.
turned up at Broadhurst’s camp where they were ‘received and rationed’ by his manager.

In investigating the problems at the ‘Malay’ camps, Sholl reported that those in the employ of Mr. Howlett were all well clad and well fed, though three had rheumatism and scurvy. Cadell’s men were thinly clad, but on the whole looked healthy, having access to sufficient rice but their supplies of other foodstuffs was considered inadequate. Sholl was advised by the Colonial Secretary to hold an enquiry into the death of each ‘Malay’ and, as much as was in his power, to ensure that they were carefully treated, well housed, adequately fed and clothed. The matter proved difficult to pursue however, as it was only under the Shipping Act of 1854, that a master of a ship was bound to ensure that his men had sufficient medicines or provisions. The provision of food and clothing was not covered in the Master and Servants legislation unless a breach of Contract could be shown. To complicate matters, in many cases, the agreements made between the ‘Malays’ and their masters could not be produced.

The answer clearly lay in the full time presence of officialdom on the pearling grounds as a deterrent to the poor treatment at least. Though requested to establish himself at Condon during the season, Sholl successfully resisted and the excesses continued unabated in the many isolated areas away from his influence.223

Broadhurst also had his share of the problems with the ‘Malays’. In November while he was en route Fremantle in the Xantho, a party of seven of his ‘Malays’ stole one of his boats and left their base at Port Hedland.224 They departed, according to their manager, a Mr. W. Letchford, without rations or stores. A similar number of Broadhurst’s men stole a boat from the Flying Foam Passage and departed for home.

More seriously, a party of 36 men, not connected to Broadhurst, stole the schooner Gift with violence and sailed for home raising fears for the personal

223 CSR, 714/57, 89, 98, 101, BL.
224 ibid., p.168.
safety and for the property of the Europeans on the coast.\(^{225}\) This led to even
greater concerns in official and other circles and a visit from the police to the
various camps was made in November 1872. Broadhurst was on board the SS
*Xantho* at this time en route to Fremantle and the subsequent report of a
Constable Glover casts light on operations at Bannangarra under his manager
and on the prevailing opinion of Broadhurst’s ‘Malays’ as divers.

On my arrival at Barrangarrah [sic], I visited
Broadhurst’s Malays at their camp...I looked through the
various rooms and found them very clean. There were
several Malays in the sick bay mostly bad with the VD.
The manager Mr. Wood seems to perfectly understand
their cases...disease brought from Batavia.

The Malays have not the slightest idea of either
swimming or diving being completely out of their
element in the water. I witnessed a specimen of their
diving on board *Albert* in 2 and a half fathoms of
water...not the least surprised at their getting drowned. I
shall not be surprised to see the whole of the Malays
thrown on the hands of the government before long as
the pearling cannot keep them in rations.\(^{226}\)

Broadhurst had by this time on his own account landed 140 ‘Malays’ on the
coast at a cost of over £10 per head.\(^{227}\) Many would have been for other
pearlers, though at least half were for his purposes. As indicated, they were
housed at Bannangarra under his manager Mr Wood, and at Port Hedland
where their manager was a Mr Letchford. If they were as bad as the report
above indicates, the costs of transportation and their wages were to be a large
outlay for such poor results, and Broadhurst’s decision to employ them without
first ensuring that they could dive appears very naive and ill-considered. What
also emerges from this is the apparent difference in the treatment meted out by
Mr. Letchford, Broadhurst’s manager at Port Hedland and Mr. Wood at
Bannangarra. At the one place there were clean rooms, a sick bay and
apparently no desire to leave, while at the other there was clear evidence of
some problem as evidenced by the number making their escape. Similar

\(^{225}\) Ibid., pp. 99-159.
\(^{226}\) Ibid., p.168. The *Albert* was not one of Broadhurst’s vessels.
\(^{227}\) CSR, 752/31, BL.
evidence of discontent manifested itself at the 'Flying Foam Passage', though few details of the incident are known. The apparent difference in the various situations raises the question whether Broadhurst allowed his Managers a free hand and to what extent he involved himself in their affairs. Such considerations later arose at Shark Bay in the vastly differing treatment of the 'Malays' by Broadhurst's nephew Daniel and the previous manager, a Mr Smith.228

Despite the problems Broadhurst was having with them, the use of 'Malays' grew dramatically and reached its peak around August 1875. At the beginning of the 1875/6 season, Sholl boarded 22 large vessels which were mainly from Kupang and Macassar. On board the vessels were around 75 white men, about 770 'Malays,' an unspecified number of Port Essington Aboriginals, 17 'Chinamen', 24 women and a few children.229

The much publicized activities of Captain Cadell then began to cause problems for all the employers. In September 1874, for example, the Flower of Yarrow was forced back to Singapore finding it impossible to obtain divers in the 'neighbouring islands'. Similar problems were encountered on board the Pearl, Twilight and Mazeppa at Solor and Alor. Cadell was held to blame for the fact that English vessels were being 'shunned' in the islands. Amongst other dark deeds he left 27 men on Barrow island while he went back for more and word of his activities was 'abroad over the whole archipelago'.230 Sholl promised to examine the station on Barrow Island where he understood Cadell had a boat, white men and 'Malays.'231 Calls were made for the apprehension of Cadell, but by then he was firmly ensconced at Shark Bay which was according to Sholl 'out of my reach if not out of my jurisdiction'. The abuse of the 'Malay' labourers was eventually resolved not by the Colonial Government, but by the Dutch Governor General at Batavia. In August 1875, he enacted legislation that effectively put an end to the importation of 'Malays' for a

228 See section on Shark Bay following, where Broadhurst was accused of mis-treating his 'Malays' in this period.
229 CSR, 809/183, BL.
230 CSR, 782/98, BL.
231 ibid., p.100.
number of years. The legislation required the signing of an agreement by both parties before the Harbour Master, and provided for a penalty of 200 florins, the equivalent of £16-13-4, in case of a failure to return of any one man to his home.\textsuperscript{232} As security, a deposit of 200 florins per man, was required, before they would be allowed to embark for the voyage to Australia.\textsuperscript{233} The legislation was promulgated without warning and some pearlers found themselves in the islands without the necessary security and were forced to return empty handed. Despite the inconvenience, the regulations were considered 'wise and humane' regulations by the Governor in Western Australia. They also led to the near abandonment of the use of 'Malays' on the North coast. In 1874 there were 225 'Malays' employed in the fishery, in 1875 there were 989, in the following year none, and in 1876 there were only 24 in the industry.\textsuperscript{234}

(f) \textit{Broadhurst's Divers Compared with their Peers}

In the light of Broadhurst's decision to experiment with the 'Malays' after the failure of his experiment with the Aboriginal convicts from the south, it is interesting to contrast his results with other pearlers in the area. Given that his men were working on beds where others were also diving and given that they were using the same techniques from similar boats, it is reasonable then to discount such variables from this analysis and to compare Broadhurst's men directly with the others around. Because he failed with his divers without any apparently extenuating circumstances, such as having too large a vessel, as was the case with the \textit{Mary Ann}, or because he was wasting valuable time and space with the diving apparatus, or because he was experimenting with Aboriginal convicts from the South, questions are then raised as to why Broadhurst's men were to consistently prove unsuccessful. Maybe he was too harsh and did not

\textsuperscript{232} \textit{Inquirer}, 19/1/1876. See also Section on Shark Bay following.
\textsuperscript{233} \textit{Votes \& Proceedings (V\&P) of the Legislative Council (1975), Correspondence Relative to the State of Affairs on the North West Coast and the Treatment of the Malay and other Labourers employed in the Pearl Fishery}, BL.
\textsuperscript{234} \textit{V\&P} (1880), \textit{Report by the Government Resident at Roebourne on the Pearl Shell Fishery of the North-West Coast}, BL, p.471-2.
feed or treat them well enough, as Streeter claimed was the cause of some instances of poor results in the fishery. The desire of some of Broadhurst's Aboriginal and 'Malay' men to abscond supports this notion. On the other hand, other evidence tends to indicate that this was not the case, and that perhaps he was too 'soft' by contemporary standards and his men attempted to abscond through fear of the water and other causes. The author leans towards the latter conclusion, but without firm indications either way, the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved and the matter is clearly open to debate and interpretation.

In the context of this analysis of Broadhurst's decision to hire 'Malays' in the first place, there is general agreement, on the relative superiority of the local Aboriginals over the 'Malays' as divers. Streeter was to note some years later that though the 'Malays' were 'tractable...quick to learn...pleasant,' they were not the equal of the aborigines who 'cannot be beaten' for finding shell and who were 'unequalled in the world' for 'powers of endurance.' Broadhurst's failure to capitalize on the 'find' at Flying Foam Passage in early 1873 appears largely due to the unsuitability of his 'Malays'. Thus Broadhurst's decision to use them as divers was to prove another costly mistake and added to his failure with the diving apparatus, the Aboriginal convicts and the SS Xantho in a growing list of business failures.

The failure of Broadhurst's 'Malays' at the Flying Foam passage is documented by Sholl who was to pay his first official visit to the fishery there. The account makes interesting reading not only in the light of Broadhurst's failure, but also as an insight into the pursuit of the fishery up till that time.

When Sholl and Broadhurst were abreast Delambre island en route Port Walcott for the Flying Foam Passage, Sholl recorded in his personal diary that

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236 ibid.
237 This account appears in Sholl's diary and occurrence books. RJS 6/2/1873-9/2/1873, and in his official report of 28/3/1873 as Government Resident. CSR 752/58-63, BL.
238 ibid.
many boats were sighted on the western side of the passage, figure 25.\textsuperscript{239} Broadhurst’s and Brown’s ‘Malays’ were seen diving out of other boats nearby. Further down on the east side of the passage were other boats such as the \textit{Adur}, with 28 Aboriginals who had recently been brought on board, and the \textit{Amateur} with 13 of Scott’s ‘Malays’ on-board. The ‘Malays’ had apparently been brought over on the \textit{Xantho} during its last voyage. As the tide was out, most of the large vessels were lying aground. According to Sholl most of the diving was being conducted in ‘about 6 and a half fathoms’ (12 metres). Sholl counted 24 ‘large boats’, 47 smaller boats, 291 Aboriginals and 134 ‘Malays’ at work and then went ashore to inspect the land encampments. There he found about 50 ‘followers’ which gave a total population of around 550 at work in the Flying Foam Passage when they arrived. A Mr Nicolai was ashore attempting to cure the flesh of the oyster for the Batavia market, which at an anticipated price of £40 per ton, Sholl did not think would prove a viable return. Also ashore was a Mr. Clifford awaiting the return of his boat that had been stolen by 7 of Broadhurst’s ‘Malays’ in a bid to return home.

The returns were good for some, with \textit{Pilots} returning 134 ‘pairs’ in 4 hours. Robert, the elder of Sholl’s two sons was commanding a dinghy which normally operated with six Aboriginals, but was reduced to diving with five as one had a ‘headache.’ Despite being shorthanded, they still recovered 173 ‘pairs’. Horace Sholl was also successful with a return of 129 ‘pairs’ which at an average of 2 and a half pounds (about one kilo) weight per ‘pair’ made a total for one morning of 755 pounds (340 kilos) weight. In The elder Sholl’s estimate, this was worth £37.15s, and at that price was ‘not a bad mornings work’.\textsuperscript{240}

According to Sholl, those six ‘Malays’ operating in the service of Mr. Brown were doing ‘fairly well’ and those employed by Scott ‘did well’. In contrast, Broadhurst’s men ‘had not got a single shell after several hours diving’ on the day Sholl and Broadhurst arrived. On the next day Broadhurst’s divers were

\textsuperscript{239} The personal diary provides more information than his official report.
\textsuperscript{240} RJS, 6/2/1873-9/2/1873.
more successful, recovering 30 ‘pairs’, though 25 of these were credited to the Aborigines on board leaving the ‘Malays’ with a disastrous take of five ‘pairs’ of shell. This compares very badly with the returns above, though *Clarice’s* return for the same day was 60 ‘pairs’ and the *Albert* returned 24 ‘pairs’ of shell. These are more in line with the returns of Broadhurst’s men, though as an indication of their almost singular inability to dive, Sholl was to preface his remarks on the successes all round with the words ‘even Broadhurst’s Malays’ got 30 pairs’.241

The total being removed daily was estimated by Sholl to be around 3 tons. The ‘Malay’ and Aboriginal divers were reported as,

...kindly treated, well fed...healthy... active and cheerful...with few invalids...no disease of a serious nature (except) influenza and rheumatism.242

Sholl noted in his official report, that there were usually six native divers in each dinghy alternating above and below water with an occasional rest period. They worked for about four hours and most of the divers entered the water feet first, though ‘two or three plunge head first’. As they rose from the bottom, the dinghy was rowed across to them and they were taken on board, ‘not at all distressed’ and willing to ‘chaff’ the ‘Malays’ with whom they apparently worked well together though the Aborigines considered the ‘Malays’ an ‘inferior people’.

There were some good divers among the Malays but many of them either could not or would not bring up shells. On the whole the natives were superior. Their eyesight is more keen, their knowledge of the ground is better, they are better swimmers and are more cool and collected. 243

Here is further evidence of the experience required in order to ‘see’ shell underwater without visual aids. It is also indicative of the time those without it

241ibid.
242CSR, 752/58-63, BL.
243ibid.
had to spend in becoming familiar with the techniques and with the water. The same problem occurred with Broadhurst’s use of the Aboriginal convicts from the south.

Once diving finished, the smaller boats returned to the larger vessels where those ‘lads’ too young to dive cleaned the outside of the shell with a tomahawk. The contents were then inspected and the shell was packed on deck to dry. Once ashore the ‘coloured’ men carted the shell to the ‘whites’ who prepared the shell by trimming the edges and packed them in alternate layers of ‘flat’ and ‘convex’ shells in ‘hogsheads’ which took an average of 5 hundredweight (254 kilos) and sometimes more when well packed.

This visit by Sholl to Flying Foam Passage occurred in the first week of February when ‘the yield was good’. By the time of the writing of his official report at the end of March 1873 the supply had ‘diminished’ indicating the rapidity with which beds were abandoned. Several boats had moved elsewhere, some to the west of Nickol Bay or further still to the Exmouth Gulf, and others east to Condon or to Peedamurra near Port Hedland and a few went much further.

The 1872/3 season finished around April 1873 and for Broadhurst it was clearly a disastrous one. The Xantho was lost and the ‘Malays’ had proved useless as divers at the Flying Foam Passage and at his base at Bannangarra.244 This combined with his failure in the Mary Ann and Adur, with ‘diving apparatus’, with the ‘Malays’ and the Aboriginal ‘volunteer’ convicts to cause him to abandon the Northern grounds and his coconut plantation, and to concentrate completely on Shark Bay.245 Here pearls could be had in a place where diving skills in the work force were useful but not essential to success.

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244 See Chapter on ‘Malays’ above.
245 Inquirer, 8/10/1873.
(iii) Pearling at Shark Bay

The possibilities offered by the Pearl Fishery at Shark Bay were noticed by the early explorers such as William Dampier who named the Bay in 1699 and by others at the beginning of the nineteenth century such as the Frenchman Hamelin who recovered large quantities of the pearl oysters and a small pearl. In 1850 a Lt. Helpman was requested by the colonial government to examine the beds and to obtain samples 'either by dredging or otherwise.' He reported that most of the shallow banks he searched contained shell and that more were 'procured by dredges in deep water,' though not one pearl was found in the 500 shells opened. At Cape Leschenault where the shell was larger and cleaner, Helpman noted that the beds lay in 2 feet of water and in less than two hours they had obtained 3000 pairs by hand without deploying the dredge. The findings were noted in the local press. Lt. Elliot, the officer commanding the detachment of soldiers sent to protect the beds and the guano deposits lying nearby, was instructed to prevent any unauthorized removal of the shell. Samples were then sent to London for valuation and Elliot continued assessing the extent of the deposits and succeeded in recovering one pearl about the size of a pea. The oyster there was noted for the quantity of pearls contained within, rather than for the size and thickness of the shell as was the case at Nickol Bay. The pearls were small and of varying shades of gold or of a dark hue rather than white, or nearly so as was the case further north. They were seen to have some commercial value at the time and Captain Scott, who applied for the lease of the nearby Guano deposits, indicated that the firm of Gibson, Murray, Dyett and Company with whom he was involved were willing

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246 Sheperd, op. cit., p. 9.
247 CSO Letterbook 1850, Vol 30, no. 24, BL.
248 Extracts from the Official Reports and Proceedings of Lt. Helpman RN commanding HMS Champion at Shark Bay. 5/11/1850, Exploration Diaries, Vol. 4, BL.
249 Inquirer, 15/1/1851, 6/2/1851 and the Perth Gazette, 20/6/1851, 21/10/1851.
250 CSO Letterbook Forwarded, Vol. 30/114 &Vol. 31/217, BL.
to enter into an agreement with the government to lease ‘one or more banks’ of the pearl oysters.\textsuperscript{251}

\textit{Figure 29}

\textit{A Shark Bay pearl oyster and a quantity of pearls.}\textsuperscript{252}

(full size)

A lease for the whole of Shark Bay was granted to the group for two years with an eighth of the proceeds to go to the government on the proviso that once they ceased operations the lease would expire. A lease had by then been granted in London by Earl Grey, British Secretary for the Colonies, to the firm of Cottesworth, Wynne and Company.

After some hiatus the Shark Bay pearl fisheries were declared open to the public and it was decreed that no duty or royalty could be paid except by ordinance.\textsuperscript{253}

Elliot reported that he had received a number of requests from masters to work the grounds and noted that a boat (believed to be the \textit{Pelsaert} of Gibson

\textsuperscript{251} Sheperd, op. cit., p.11.
\textsuperscript{252} From Taylor, M.L. \textit{The Pearling Industry of W.A., 1850-1985}, (Fisheries Education Publication, No.3, 1985)
\textsuperscript{253} Battye, (1924), op. cit., p.220.
Murray and Dyett) was on its way to commence work. The 'Blue Book' of statistics for the Colony in 1851 shows that only one boat was working the grounds in 1851, but the returns were nil. As the shell was not in great demand and the pearls suffered a similar fate little was heard of the fishery, though it appears that it was occasionally worked on a small scale by others such as Captain Cadell who introduced dredging as an efficient means of harvesting the shell in 1870.

(a) Broadhurst and the Shark Bay Pearl Fishery

On 25 October 1871, whilst en route Fremantle in the newly purchased SS Xantho, Broadhurst applied for the lease to the Shark Bay pearl fishery. In the application, Ernest Denicke, the master of the ill fated SS Xantho, is described as a 'thorough concologist' (sic) and may have influenced Broadhurst in the decision to apply for Shark Bay and to harvest the 'famed oriental pearl.'

I beg to apply for the lease of Sharks Bay for the term of seven years under any regulations that your government may think fit to grant it. I want the lease for the purpose of getting pearls from the Sharks Bay pearl oyster. This fishery as far as I know is lying undeveloped and uncared for. From the information I have received here and from what I know of Sharks Bay, I believe the place is worth a good trial and if your Government will grant me a lease on any fair terms, I will give it one. My idea is to take it subject to a royalty of [unspecified] percent on its gross net proceeds. ... I am not going to the expense of developing it and then having other people coming to get the benefit of it.

255 The 'Blue Book', op. cit., 1851, BL.
256 Inquirer, 8/10/1873.
257 Ibid. 31/12/1873. The shell, species Pinctada albina albina is smaller than that obtainable further north, larger specimens only 113mm-126mm., pearls varying from a pin head size to 3mm. diameter. Though smaller in shell and pearl size, a greater proportion of shell contained pearls. Taylor (1985) op. cit., p.6. The West Australian, 21 November 1988 notes that a company, 'W.A. Pearls', was hoping to multiply (x5) the value of each of its cultured pearls at Monkey Mia in Shark Bay by chemically changing them from yellow to white indicating that the 'oriental' pearl is not favoured by buyers today.
258 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 25/10/1871, CSR 1185/1182, Acc 527, BL.
In an inter office memo, Malcolm Fraser the Surveyor General made the following comment on Broadhurst’s letter seeking the lease of Shark Bay

I think some concessions might be advantageously made by His Excellency here,...I would give Broadhurst easy terms until the industry is started. The shell is inferior to that from farther North, being almost unsaleable. The pearls alone are valuable.259

The Colonial Secretary then apprised the Governor of the situation and handed him Broadhurst's letters in the hope of facilitating an interview between Broadhurst and the Governor on his visit to the North-West in HMS Cossack.

The proposed meeting did not take place due to a misunderstanding over the expected time of arrival of the Xan thro at Nickol Bay and Barlee, the Colonial secretary, wrote to Broadhurst in explanation during February 1872.260 The sympathetic tone of the letter reveals the prevailing official attitude to Broadhurst.

Your venture is a large one and deserves success and I shall be greatly disappointed if it does not turn out to be such in every sense. You have had a hard struggle but I have seldom known one who has persevered as you have and not succeeded in the long run. The Governor has desired me to assure you that he is prepared to further your views in every legitimate way that he can and to render you any assistance in his power....At Sharks Bay some concessions may advantageously be made to you and his Excellency is prepared favorably [sic] to consider your application...At present Mr. Von Bibra is the only person in its vicinity. I presume you are aware that shell is inferior to that farther North, the pearls however are valuable.

259 ibid.
260 Ibid. Containing a copy of CSR, 50/1529. Barlee to Broadhurst 5/2/1872, BL.
Figure 30
Shark Bay
showing the guano islands, Faure Island and Useless Inlet 261

261 Australia, West Coast. Cape Cuvier to Champion bay, including Shark Bay. BA 1056.
Broadhurst clearly intended to open the Shark Bay fishery in conjunction with his pearling and pastoral interests at Nickol Bay, for in applying for Shark Bay he applied at the same time for the lease to three islands in the Nickol Bay region. The SS Xantho was to be the link between these centres but it sank in November 1872, leaving him again in a difficult financial position and without the means to link his widespread endeavours. He clearly did not have the funds to purchase another vessel with which to re-establish himself in the pearling industry on the scale that he was operating with the SS Xantho. He was unable or unwilling to pay the crew of his sunken vessel the £600 owing as their arrears in wages for example, and received a great deal of public approbation for having failed to do so.\textsuperscript{262} To compound his problems, the prices being asked for vessels suited for the pearling industry were then quite high. The schooner Flying Squirrel for example, fetched £1000 at Fremantle in expectation of being involved in the pearl fishery. Such a sum, though only a fraction of the outlay with the steamer, was apparently well out of the seemingly impecunious Broadhurst’s reach after his disastrous losses.

Broadhurst was in a difficult position. His European, Aboriginal and ‘Malay’ divers had all failed in their endeavours and he did not have the capital required to obtain a vessel suitable to service his interests in the Nickol Bay area. He also had a large work-force of ‘Malays’ at his disposal. The answer lay, in his estimate, in concentrating on Shark Bay where Captain Cadell, a known importer of ‘Malay’ labour for the purposes of pearl fishing, was operating.\textsuperscript{263}

Cadell was busy working the pearl grounds, probably at Useless Inlet, in Shark Bay to advantage as the following excerpt from the Inquirer of October 1873 shows.

\textsuperscript{262}See Section on SS Xantho, following.
\textsuperscript{263}See Following. Cadell was involved in many activities from the Murray River in South Australia along the East coast, across the top and in the North-West. He was a remarkable and very controversial man. Bain, op. cit., p. 28-9 contains a brief resume of his career.
It is true that for a few years previously one or two individuals had in a desultory manner worked this fishery without considerable outlay, and therefore obtaining proportionately small returns; but we may date the era of its prosperity from the arrival of Captain Cadell in Sharks Bay in the Water Lily about three years since from Melbourne. He it was who introduced dredging, which had hitherto been a failure; and one or two good parcels of pearls from Sharks Bay having realised a fair price in London about this time attention was excited; Malays were brought into the bay, the coast natives of the vicinity, who were qualified as divers being few; dredging became the fashion.  

Broadhurst subsequently proved very successful and, as a result, the Shark Bay Pearl fishery and he were to receive a great deal of attention in the local press in the latter part of 1873. Broadhurst and his manager a Mr Smith, a mariner who he brought with him on-board the SS Xantho from Batavia, were virtually eulogized in language reminiscent of the effusive tones used to describe the heroes of a gold rush.

and now we are startled by the announcement of one gentleman-Mr. Broadhurst- receiving as the proceeds of one month’s fishing, no less than one hundred ounces of pearls worth at least £2500. Than Mr. Broadhurst no man better deserves his present success. He has been an energetic speculator, undaunted by adverse results. He failed to make his exertions profitable at the North-West Pearl fishery but was not thereby deterred from proceeding to England and purchasing the steamer Xantho, which...founndered. Once more indomitable perseverance gained its reward; he removed all his Malays to Useless Harbour, and now the results of patient determination appears to have been attained.

Another correspondent recorded that the fishery was astonishingly productive, and that in the time he was there 320 ounces of pearls had been harvested. The prices for the ‘famed oriental pearl’ ranged from £10-£15 per ounce, and with that price it was noted that ‘almost everyone has done

264 Inquirer, 8/10/1873.
265 Inquirer, 8/10/1873, My emphasis.
266 ibid.
well'. Broadhurst with a return of around £2500 was doing best of all as would be expected from the man with the most men and boats at his disposal. Of the 46 vessels operating in the fishery at the time, there were 39 cutters, two schooners, three luggers, one whaleboat and one junk. The largest vessels were John Watson’s 15 ton Charon, the four ton junk Saupau, owned by W. Holmes, and a six ton cutter. The others ranged from five tons down to three quarters of a ton. Von Bibra had four cutters and a whaleboat ranging from three quarters of a ton to two tons, Aubrey Brown had four cutters ranging from one to five tons, Captain Cadell had the three luggers which ranged from four and a half to three tons, and most of the others had one vessel each. One of these was a Charles Wedge (presumably Broadhurst’s colleague) who owned a two ton cutter. Broadhurst in contrast owned the largest fleet which comprised seven cutters. They were all relatively small, the largest at two tons was the Shenandoah and the others Alabama, Florida, Talahassy, Stonewall, General Lee, Jefferson Davis, were each of one ton. He also had two other vessels operating as pearling vessels, the dinghies Xantho and Pearler.

It appears that at this stage diving was undertaken, where possible, from November to March and at other times dredges were used. The boats apparently dredged under sail when conditions allowed. When conditions were adverse they would anchor and the dredges were hauled in by hand. The dredges of the period were described as,

of a triangular shape, the frame of which is of iron over which is loosely spread a strong net fastened to a scraper on the bottom. With this the beds are dragged.

Those Europeans employing the Aboriginals and Malays generally sent them out in the boats alone preferring to remain on shore, though a number of boats were worked solely by Europeans. In regards to crew numbers it was noted that ‘three being the usual complement for a cutter’. The local Aborigines ‘equally with the Malays became good divers’, but the ‘Malays’ were

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267 ibid, 31/12/1873.
268 CSR, 751/197-208.
269 Inquirer, 27/8/1873.
considered 'more industrious' and better employees.\textsuperscript{270} Here are indications that diving was practised in the industry at this time. As the beds were often shallow and not subject to the sort of currents and problems that were encountered in the North-West, even Broadhurst's 'Malays' may have proved a success underwater.

Broadhurst with the largest fleet and as the chief employer in the region with about 75\% of the total number of 'Malays' at Shark Bay at his disposal, was subsequently the most successful in an enterprise which required more hard work than skill. He subsequently received his share of the adulation this time from the special correspondent to the \textit{Inquirer}:

One person -Mr Broadhurst- will receive 100 ounces to increase his 130 by the Dawn; and I cannot pass this extraordinary take of 230 ounces in so short a time without saying a few words of the able management of Mr Smith (Mr Broadhurst's representative here), at Wilyah Miah. At this spot he wisely concentrates his whole force of about 70 Malays besides whites and natives...treated very kindly...have plenty of cooks to wait on them and have vastly improved in appearance since coming here, as I learn.\textsuperscript{271}

In another account of the achievements of Smith, Broadhurst's 'enterprising and indefatigable' manager, it was noted that a small jetty and stone breakwater had been established at Broadhurst's 'station' and that he (Smith) spared 'neither labour nor trouble in improving the condition of the Malays' in regards their housing, health and in lessening their work. The 'substantial wooden houses' that he had, or was in the process of erecting for them, were contrasted with 'the dirty low hovel termed a Malay hut'.\textsuperscript{272} This situation mirrors that at Broadhurst's former base at Bannangarra under his manager Mr Wood. In doing so, it raises the question whether Broadhurst himself had a hand in such matters as he was clearly willing to pay the costs of such superior accommodation.

\textsuperscript{270} \textit{Inquirer}, 29/10/1873.  
\textsuperscript{271} \textit{Inquirer}, 8/10/1873.  
\textsuperscript{272} \textit{Inquirer}, 29/10/1873. Following Laurence's report.
While the press was eulogizing Broadhurst, his manager Mr Smith and the
successful returns from the pearls, they also expressed the hope for the
successful continuation of the speculation with the shell. In July, while all this
was going on the Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Act of 1873 had been
promulgated in an effort to restrict the abuses of the Aborigines employed in
the pearling industry as a whole.\textsuperscript{273} In September, at the request of his
superiors, E.M. Laurence, the Resident Magistrate for the Greenough region
visited the Bay to examine the conditions and to rectify any problems there.

Policing was required to enforce such an Act, and in the same month, the
Northern District Special Revenue Act, 1873 was promulgated.\textsuperscript{274} This allowed
for the imposition of an export duty of £2 per ton on all shell except that from
Shark Bay. It also required the licensing of vessels engaged in the industry in
order to cover the costs of an inspector.\textsuperscript{275}

In his report, the Resident Magistrate noted that there were 50 Europeans,
80 Aborigines and 110 ‘Malays’, based in tents and wooden huts at four camps
on an eight kilometre stretch, called Wilyah Miah, on the eastern shores of
Useless Harbour near its mouth. There was no natural water there and it had to
be transported from a source nine kilometres away. The pearlers activities
were, at the time of the report, largely confined to Useless Harbour on a bank
extending about sixteen kilometres north from the mouth of the inlet. The
results there proving so good that the exploration of other banks reported by
the local Aborigines was not envisaged until a drop in the catch required a
reassessment. Though he expressed the opinion that it would be ‘rash’ to
speculate on the future of the industry, Laurence expressed the hope that other
banks of shell existed elsewhere in the bay.\textsuperscript{276}

He also issued licences to the pearling boats under the terms of the newly
proclaimed Special Revenue Act. A total of £263 was raised from the licensing
of the vessels. This was strongly opposed by the pearlers as the fees were fixed

\textsuperscript{273} Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Act of 1873, 37 Victoriae, No. XI, 24/7/1873,.
\textsuperscript{274} Northern Districts Special Revenue Act, 37 Victoriae No. X, 24/7/1873.
\textsuperscript{275} Carmody, op. cit., p.28.
at £1 per ton to a minimum of £5 if the vessels were under 5 tons. Broadhurst with seven cutters and two dinghies was liable for £45 in licence fees, a not inconsiderable sum for the time. Von Bibra, the owner of a station on nearby Dirk Hartog Island (and in his absence his son), was appointed to act on the government’s behalf.

In the meantime, the ‘glowing’ press reports were widely read and a population explosion of additional 600 or 800 people was expected after the end of the North West Pearling season. Many pearlers worked both Shark Bay and the Northern fields. Sholl’s own sons, Robert and Horace for example, engaged 25 ‘Malays’ some of whom were working at Shark Bay and the others out of Cossack.277

By the end of the year it was to be stated that, ‘pearling as pursued here is unquestionably more easy and I will say far more profitable than a gold field’.278 Vessels began to arrive in considerable number and even an English vessel Flower of Yarrow, which was operating on the North-West coast, also appeared on the scene.

Broadhurst was very busy in the industry. By February 1874 he had established a well stocked store, one of only two in the fishery.279

There is also evidence of the growth of his fleet at this time, and his near demise whilst out pearling. This comes in the form of a report of March 1874 indicating that his previously unrecorded cutter, Rover, sank in South passage and another of his fleet, the similarly unrecorded cutter, Amelia, capsized almost drowning Broadhurst and his assistant. Broadhurst was lucky to survive this incident and was reported to be still suffering from the accident some weeks later. The vessel had apparently capsized some time previous drowning both men on board.280

277 Kimberley, op cit, p. 49. The settlement in Butcher Inlet at Tien Tsin Harbour (Port Walcott) had since been named Cossack, and the name Tien Tsin has regrettably dissappeared from the maps and charts.
278 Inquirer, 3/12/1873.
279 Inquirer, 8/10/1873, 3/12/1873, Herald, 1/2/1874, 28/2/1874.
280 Inquirer, 13/5/1874. Henderson (1988), op. cit., p.263, also claims that he was operating the ‘Smack’ Cock of the North at this time.
As with the case of the SS Xantho, it can be seen that Broadhurst took the same risks as his men. Indications of his ability to see opportunities also arise here. It has often been said in the context of the goldfields, that shops and hotels ultimately provided the most lucrative return. The Shark Bay fishery was likened to a goldfield and Broadhurst saw the potential in the supply of merchandise and food.

A further indication of his flair is the speculation he made with the 'worthless' shell lying abandoned in heaps. In comparison to the situation further north, vast quantities, 'quite a thousand tons', of seemingly valueless shell lay in mounds throughout the camps. Broadhurst sent a trial shipment of this shell soon after his arrival in 1873 and the results were awaited with interest.281

Figure 31
Shell at the Shark Bay Fishery.282

282 From Taylor, op. cit.
The future appeared quite promising for all, but with the huge influx of pearlers to Wilyah Miah, the nearby beds were soon worked out and explorations to seemingly attractive areas such as Freycinet Harbour proved fruitless. Soon the euphoria began to dissipate. Outbreaks of fever and dysentery combined with reduced catches and the ‘obnoxious’ licensing fees, served to produce a general ‘exodus’ from the area.283 Boat loads of men left by the earliest opportunity. Tuckey of the *Lapwing* arrived on 24 April 1874 for example and left the same day after ‘learning pearls were not to be picked up by the hatful as some imagine’. Many remained and 40 boats, including Broadhurst’s, were re-licensed in the August of 1874.284

Broadhurst’s mode of operation, was apparently to establish the venture, appoint a manager and then set of in search of other enterprises and activities. His manager, Mr Smith, apparently left Shark Bay in the general exodus and Broadhurst’s nephew, Daniel, who arrived at Fremantle on 1 May 1874 replaced him there.285 Broadhurst Snr. apparently left the Bay after his nephew took over.

He maintained his involvement in the fishery however. In August 1874 following advice of ‘satisfactory prices’ on the cargo of shell sent in 1873, he chartered the Barque *Ivy* to take an entire cargo of around 500 tons of shell direct from Shark Bay to London.286 The vessel left in January of the following year accompanied by the following optimistic comments in the press.

The speculation is a bold one ...and on Mr Broadhurst’s account alone who for enterprise and determination is a man out of 10,000, we sincerely hope the venture will turn out as profitable as Mr Broadhurst could desire and make up in some measure for the heavy losses he has sustained in other undertakings- undertakings which it may be noted were embarked upon as much if not more in the interests of the colony as for his own personal benefit. 287

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283 *Inquirer*, 13/5/1874.
284 *Inquirer*, 15/8/1874.
285 *Arrivals and Departures*. Daniel Broadhurst. Card Index, BL.
287 *Inquirer*, 2/9/1874, my emphasis.
The shell sent on board *Ivy* was apparently purchased by another 'speculator who realized a 'very handsome amount'. Due to problems with the actual charter arrangements and the storage and condition of the shell, Broadhurst 'made nothing out of the transaction, [but] paid all expenses' and he was confident that 'with careful management a profit may be realised'.

While he was in Perth attending to such matters, Broadhurst was approached to sit in Parliament and was appointed by the Governor to the Legislative Council to represent the North and first sat as a member in October 1874.

He appears to have made another voyage possibly with shell at the end of 1875 and arrived back in the Colony in April 1876. In August, of the same year he left for London on board the *Phillipine* with a cargo of shell and apparently remained there until late 1877.

Part of the reason for his prolonged absences from the Colony at this time may have been the down-turn in the industry that began around May 1874 and continued on for a number of years. This apparently caused Broadhurst some problems and helped cause the controversy that descended upon him over his failure to pay the 'Malays' in his employ.

Labour was as much a contentious issue in the pearling industry at Shark Bay as it was out of Nickol Bay. A few years before Broadhurst went to Shark Bay, an Act to 'Regulate the Hiring and Service of Aboriginal Natives in the Pearl Shell Fishery and to prohibit the employment of Women therein' of 1871 had been promulgated in an attempt to curb the abuse of Aboriginal men and women in the industry in the North-West. The Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Act of 1873, which replaced it in June of that year, and which

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289 Mosely and Bolton, op. cit., p. & Blue Books 1874-5.
290 *Arrivals and Departures*, card index, BL quoting the *Inquirer*, 5/4/1876.
291 *Herald*, 17/6/1876. The *Phillipine* left around August 1876 and Broadhurst returned from London on board the *Charlotte Padbury* on 31 October 1877. *Arrivals and Departures*, Card Index, BL.
292 The *Inquirer*, 13/5/1874, records the down-turn at Shark Bay at that time. F. McRae in a letter to his sister of 4/3/1876, Acc No. 289a, BL., records that 1876 in general, was 'not a very good season for pearls'.
293 34 *Victoriae*, No. xiv, 1871.
applied to the industry at Shark Bay as well, is considered to have 'expressed the best principles of Colonial native legislation at that time', and required a written contract subject to endorsement by the parties involved, and required the employee be physically fit, amongst other things. It also provided a penalty of up to £50 if the Aboriginals employed were not returned to their homes as clear indication that such abuses were still occurring in the industry.295

The decision to tax the pearling fleet under the terms of the Northern Districts Special Revenue Act in order to pay for the policing, predictably brought a series of complaints from the pearlers. At Shark Bay demands such as a monthly mail service out of a 'mainland' office convenient to the camps, the stationing of a permanent police constable, the sinking of wells and a repeal of the prohibition of the employment of women in the pearling industry were made. The last of these was due to the relative efficiency of the women in shore based work and, as they were in the company of their menfolk and lived nearby, it was seen as a waste of willing labour not to employ them. As they did not venture out onto the boats without their men and largely confined themselves to the shore based work, it was considered by the pearlers that the Act restricting their employ was not relevant. On the whole, in September 1873, the Resident Magistrate was satisfied that the Aboriginal labourers at Shark Bay were 'as a rule' well treated by their employers and were 'liberally dealt with' as regards food and clothing such that they made their own way to the fishery and freely participated in it.

All was not well however. A Mr Gill was also empowered to keep a register of deaths indicating that a number of men had expired while employed in the industry, some in dubious circumstances. As further indication of the problems, a number of Malays registered complaints about being held 'beyond their lawful term and against their will'.296

The complaint of six 'Malays' against their employer Captain Cadell, was also heard by Resident Magistrate Laurence on his visit in September 1873.

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They had been employed at Ellore in 1871 for the Shark Bay fishery, but were left pearling out of a boat in the North when Cadell finally came to Shark Bay. They expected him to call for them on his next visit North and to return them to their homes. He apparently did look for them, but in the meantime their boat had capsized and they did not keep the rendezvous. Cadell gave them up as lost and went on to the islands. The ‘Malays’ went to Broadhurst’s camp which was then at Bannangarra where he engaged them to work for six months. At the end of this time, he was to required to send them home. When Cadell returned to the North-West, he claimed the men as his and took them back. They were then retaken by Broadhurst but finally given up to Cadell who brought them to Shark Bay around May 1873. They had not been repatriated and to make matters worse Broadhurst Snr. had not paid them for the time they spent in his service. 297

In early May 1874, around the time Daniel Broadhurst arrived on the fishery, thirty seven of Broadhurst’s ‘Malays’ went on strike indicating that their ‘time was up’ and that they required being taken home as per their agreements. 298 Nothing further was heard of this incident except that it coincided with a similar strike at Nickol Bay. 299

In March 1875, a Lt Suckling was requested to visit the fishery and to report on the situation there. He noted that with one or two exceptions he was satisfied with the manner in which the fishery was being conducted.:

I found the pearler on the North-West coast to be respectable hard working class of men who treated their labour well, the original hard drinking indifferent class of men having almost entirely disappeared. 300

The exceptions were the notorious ‘blackbirder’ Francis Cadell and Broadhurst. As a result of his report and the aftermath, Charles Edward

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297 CSR, 751/197-214, BL.
298 Inquirer, 13/5/1874.
299 ibid.
300 Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1875-1876, Correspondence relative to the State of Affairs on the North west Coast and the treatment of Malay and other labourers employed in the Pearl fishery, p.250.
Broadhurst has become associated with the 'hard drinking indifferent class of men' known to have frequented the industry.

Broadhurst does not appear to have been such a man as indicated from the evidence presented in the section on his pearling activities out of Nickol Bay. While there, he even commented on the rowdy behaviour of a Mrs Mayhew, the wife of the local doctor, at a hotel in Roebourne. Broadhurst was not at the fishery when Suckling made his observations, and the pearling was being conducted on his behalf by his nephew Daniel. With the benefit of hindsight and a close examination of the reports and the chronology it is now clear that there has been a great and lasting confusion about which Broadhurst was under scrutiny at the time, to the detriment of the elder of the two.

Suckling noted that Broadhurst had 25 'Malay' men in his employ who had served their time in 1874, but would not pay them and kept telling them their time was not up. They had applied in that year to the police constable stationed at the camps, but Broadhurst would not show their agreements. This left the officer with no evidence with which to act and the matter was not resolved. The men then went on strike again and as a result received little food other than that supplied by the other pearlers from 4 September to 12 October 1874. The men then engaged themselves to a Mr. Hill until May 1876 with whom they were most satisfied but, quite naturally, still required their payment in arrears from Broadhurst. It appears that the men made no threats and did not resort to violence. The possibility of them doing so and enticing others to murder and mayhem was noted by Suckling, thereby stirring official reaction in the light of other incidents that had occurred on the North-West coast.

In another case heard by Suckling, Daniel Broadhurst was named as the transgressor in an incident that occurred as a result of a party of 'Malays' being mis-treated by another man, a Mr McKay. In early 1874, they ran off from his employ and after two months of near starvation and hiding in the bush, the men entered Daniel Broadhurst's employ. Wages from an even earlier period of employ, on board the *Wild Wave*, were later secured by a Mr

301RJS, 13/5/1869, BL.
Abdullah who then gave them (‘a good sum’) to Daniel Broadhurst for safekeeping. Abdullah subsequently died and a representative of the unfortunate ‘Malays’, on enquiring of Daniel Broadhurst about the money he was told that it had not been received from Abdullah.\textsuperscript{302}

Suckling noted that there was,

\begin{quote}
a great want of system more especially in seeing the men regularly paid and sent home. The whole system of engaging Malay labour in Shark Bay requires looking into.
\end{quote}

He also noted that all the ‘Malays’ then employed had been over two to three years away from home and that few were working for their original employers and that the cost of transporting the ‘Malays’ home was at £4 per head. There were few records of how the men were engaged, and that as none had been employed since the constable had arrived, there was no apparent means of finding out. Despite this there was, in his opinion, a ‘very good feeling between whites, Malays and in Shark Bay’.\textsuperscript{303}

The matter of the mis-treatment of the ‘Malays’ was then raised in the official despatches of 14 May 1875 to London. On 22 July, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Carnarvon, wrote in reply expecting that such abuses be stamped out. At the same time, Corporal Mainland who was stationed at Shark Bay wrote to his superior officer at Geraldton to the effect that four ‘Malays’ in the employ of C. E. Broadhurst whose agreement had expired three months previously could not obtain their wages, had insufficient clothing, were without money and could not obtain goods. Seventeen of their colleagues in the employ of Captain Cadell who was absent and had appointed a manager, a Mr. Hill, were also in dire straits and had insufficient food. The matter was passed on to the Resident Magistrate at Geraldton and on to Perth. There the Governor wrote on 7 August to the Earl of Carnarvon stating that he would send the Acting Greenough Resident Magistrate, Mr Fairbaim, to the

\textsuperscript{302} As an example of the confusion between which Broadhurst is at fault at Shark Bay, Henderson (1988), op. cit., p.134, attributes the blame in this particular incident to Charles Broadhurst.
\textsuperscript{303} Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1875-1876, op. cit., pp. 247-255, BL.
Bay and added that the action taken would clearly show ‘that outrages such as these will not be tolerated by the government’. A telegram sent on 4 August to the Resident Magistrate at Geraldton exhorted him to ‘explain fully to Mr Fairbairn the cause and object of his mission’ and advising him to take action under the Breaches of Contract Legislation and to ensure that any evidence be taken in a proper and legal fashion under the acts then applying. It concluded thus:

The Governor hopes that if matters are as represented a vigorous enforcement of the law will serve to check such shameful proceedings in the future. Time and expense are of less consequence than a thorough investigation of the case.\(^{304}\)

Fairbairn departed on 9 August and began his investigations. He found that Charles Edward Broadhurst was not at the fishery having left with ‘no intention’ of returning, leaving Daniel Broadhurst with ‘full power to act for him in reference to the Malays’. Captain Cadell had also left with no indications of a return, leaving his men in the care of his manager, Mr Hill. \(^{305}\)

On 21 August 1875, six Surabaya men proceeded against the absent Broadhurst Snr. for the non payment of the balance of their wages and for breach of agreement. From a statement of the complainant representing the group of six, a Mr Amedi, it appears that under an agreement dated 14 February 1874 at Shark Bay, Broadhurst employed each of the men at 20 guilders per month for one year with rations provided and travel home. Amedi stated that though Broadhurst ‘always treated me well. I always had enough to eat’ he and the others received no money and that when their time was up they were cast adrift. The Surang (or headman) lodged a complaint with the local constable and they were fed for a time but then went to the employ of Mr. Hill.

In reply, Daniel Broadhurst stated that when the ‘Malay’ plaintiff’s time was up, he wished to go to Fremantle, but as there was no vessel then available he

\(^{304}\) CSR, 803/41.

\(^{305}\) ibid.
was kept on until one arrived. Broadhurst Snr. had an agreement with the master of the *Rosette* to take the ‘Malays’ to Fremantle apparently for the purpose of transferring them to another vessel for the voyage home. An unsuccessful attempt was later made by Broadhurst Jr. to place the man and the others aboard the *Rosette*, but this had proved unsuccessful in the prevailing weather conditions. Daniel Broadhurst whose attempts to convey the ‘Malays’ to the vessel were criticized as inadequate, then went on to state that ‘if the man has been without food it is his own fault’.

Though it was agreed that Broadhurst’s men were ‘always...well housed and provisioned’, the case was found against Broadhurst Snr., to the amount owing to the ‘Malays’ of £115-6-1. With the Governor’s relayed exhortations to make an example of the case in mind, and under the powers conferred on him under the Master and Servants Act, Fairbairn caused Cadell’s and Charles Edward Broadhurst’s goods to be ‘sold by distress at a public auction’.

In the light of the success of this action, some ten days later, a Mr. Moellett brought on behalf of himself and 15 others a similar case against Broadhurst Snr. Moellet stated in his deposition that he was a native of Java and had entered the employ of C.E. Broadhurst in the previous year as ‘Mandore’ in charge of ‘Malays’ for a term of twelve months.306 His wages were set at £3 per month, with rations (rice tea and sugar) provided and a free passage back to Batavia at the expiration of the agreement. The agreement between them was witnessed by E.W. Landor J.P.

From Moellet’s deposition it appears that shortly after the case above, Daniel Broadhurst discharged all the remaining 15 ‘Malays’ in his service without paying their wages. Broadhurst stated that he had no further money or food to give the men especially as his uncle had not sent him the money with which to do so. Moellet went on to say that he ‘never had any fault to find with regard to the food. Mr Broadhurst always gave me enough to eat’. It was also noted that the other 15 men ‘expressed themselves as always being well housed and provisioned’. Daniel Broadhurst, though present in court declined to answer

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306 He was employed on 24 September 1874.
for his uncle saying that he ‘had been as badly treated by his uncle as the Malays’. 307

The case was again found against C.E. Broadhurst and the judgement was given for the plaintiff and those he represented to a total of £183-4-2. Having already sold much of Broadhurst’s property in the earlier sale at bargain prices, the Acting Resident Magistrate found that he could only raise a further £11-12-5, for the 16 men. Before he left he was able to satisfy himself that the men were in suitable employ. Another group of ‘about 18 Malays’ then lodged a complaint to the effect that they had once been in the service of Broadhurst, but had never been able to recover their dues some of which were ‘considerable amounts’. Broadhurst (Jr. or Snr?) had instead given them ‘worthless’ orders on store-keepers. Fairbairn found that he was powerless to act under the legislation by which their case was covered, and advised them to seek litigation. 308

He was severely critical of Broadhurst Snr. in his official report stating the ‘credulous Malays whom he had brought to the colony were turned adrift penniless 300 miles from the nearest port’.

As indicated in the section on pearling out of Nickol Bay, the ‘Malay’ problem was virtually resolved before Fairbairn’s report on the situation at Shark Bay, of 14 September 1875, even reached the Colonial Secretary in Perth. On 28 August of the same year, Governor Robinson wrote to Earl Carnarvon, to the effect that, an act had been passed by his Dutch counterpart, the Governor of Batavia, requiring the lodging of a security of 200 guilders for each man recruited in the islands. 309 He noted that this move would go further to ensuring the proper treatment of the Malays on the coast than by ‘the utmost vigilance on our part’. The effect of the edict was startling as

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307 CSR, 809/41-49.
indicated earlier, and the numbers of ‘Malays’ employed in the industry dropped from 989 in 1875 to none by 1877.\textsuperscript{310}

Part of the reason for the drop in numbers can also be traced to the ‘very bad’ sales of pearl shell in London at the time.\textsuperscript{311} This is reflected in that, when the ‘Malay’ numbers dropped so dramatically, there was not a subsequent increase in the numbers of Aborigines employed in the industry, and in 1876 the number actually dropped from 493 to 344.\textsuperscript{312}

On 15 October 1875, in receipt of Fairbairn’s report the Governor at Perth wrote again lauding the ‘zealous’ actions and the ‘prompt’ response of Mr. Fairbairn. It was also noted that it was ‘not improbable that further legal proceedings will arise out of this case’.

Such publicity was to cost Broadhurst dearly. As Suckling’s report was to be tabled at the next sitting of the Legislative Council he apparently resigned from the Council during the recess. Though he succeeded through his solicitor in appealing and removing the cases to the Supreme Court on 12 January 1876 with a view to them being quashed, he had received a severe social and financial set-back.\textsuperscript{313} An indication of the magnitude of the social stigma appears in the report of the visit of a deputation of ‘pearlers’, including H.W. Sholl, who met with the Governor in the attempt to have the security of 200 guilders removed. They were quoted in the same newspaper carrying notice of Broadhurst’s appeal, as being aware that though ‘one or two unprincipled persons’ had acted ‘unkindly’ towards their ‘Malay’ divers and had neglected to

\textsuperscript{310} Sholl, R.J., \textit{Report by the Government Resident at Roebourne on the Pearl Shell Fisheries of the North-West Coast}, 25/8/1880. Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1880. This conflicts with a comment appearing in the \textit{Inquirer}, 9/2/1876 which records that there were 1200 divers employed in the fishery, 88 of which were ‘Malays’. It appears that the \textit{Inquirer} may have been referring to the situation at the end of 1875.

\textsuperscript{311} Diary of Charles Harper, 4/7/1875, In the possession of Mrs. Judy Hammersley of Guildford. & \textit{Herald} 6/5/1876

\textsuperscript{312} V&P, 1880, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{313} Broadhurst took out a writ of ‘\textit{Certiorari}’ \textit{Inquirer}, 1/3/1876 & 19/1/1876

‘\textit{Certiorari}’. A writ directed to an inferior court of record commanding it to “certify” to the Queens and the High Court of Justice (Supreme Court of W.A.) some matter of a Judicial character. It is used to remove civil cases or indictments from inferior courts of record into the High Court (Supreme Court of W.A.) that they may be better tried, or if there has been an abuse or error, re-tried. Osborne, A., \textit{A Concise Law Dictionary}, 5th. ed. (Sweet, Maxwell, London, 1964), p. 64.
return them to their homes as agreed, they were satisfied that 'such a state of things does not now exist'.

In analysing Charles Edward Broadhurst’s failure to send the money to pay the ‘Malays’ in his employ it needs to be noted that he was also summoned six times in the period April 1874-September 1875 in the Supreme Court in Perth for non payment of sums ranging from £13-£110. These particular cases constituted the majority of all his cases for non payment from 1865, when he arrived, to when he left the Colony in 1895, and that they occurred during the downturn in the Shark Bay Pearl Fishery. From a perusal of the cases which appear in Appendix two, it can be seen that his debtors at the time of the Shark Bay inquiries were not just the unfortunate ‘Malays’, but a fair representation of the European merchants in the Colony.

The cases are an indication that Charles Broadhurst was experiencing some severe monetary difficulties, despite having succeeded so well in the early stages of the Shark Bay fishery.

The influential historian Rica Erickson has noted that Broadhurst was ‘notorious for his ill treatment of Malay divers’, and that is the generally accepted view of him today. Whether that assessment is fully deserved in the light of the evidence presented above is now debatable.

Though the young Broadhurst appears to have been at fault in much of the above, the blame was rightly laid at the feet of his uncle and employer Charles Edward Broadhurst by the officials. Though the pearling industry was experiencing a down-turn at the time Daniel arrived, for Charles Edward Broadhurst to have left his nephew in sole charge of his boats, plant and men at such a difficult time and when many of their work-force were desirous of leaving for home is evidence of bad management and poor decision making indeed.

Where the mistake appears to have been made by the officials is in the excessive nature of their reaction, in making Broadhurst Snr. a virtual

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314 Inquirer, 19/1/1876.
315 Record of Judgements of the W.A. Supreme Court, Vol. 8, 1865-1888, ACC 3542, WAS 131, BL.
316 Erickson, (1978), op. cit., p.117.
scapegoat for the sins of the industry in general. In the same report as that carrying the evidence of Broadhurst’s failure to pay his men for example, Fairbairn noted that a number of Shark Bay pearlers, including Von Bibra, had held Aborigines against their will at Faure Island. Broadhurst was not one of these men and nothing was done about the incident due to lack of concrete evidence. 317

From the list of effects sold by Fairbairn at Shark Bay and from the prices obtained for example, it appears Broadhurst was effectively ruined as a pearler in that district and would have had to make a substantial outlay to rebuild. The materials sold range from pearling boats and cutters, through to the ‘Malay’ huts, stores equipment, pearls and shell. 318 The prices were clearly a sacrifice with a cutter going for only £10 and three large boats fetching only £7-£5. The ‘Malay’ huts sold for ten shillings each and one old boat for six shillings for example. The total for such a wide variety of goods, vessels, equipment and buildings was only £126-18-6. 319

Despite sustaining severe losses including his entire fleet of a cutter, three pearling boats, two dinghies and two small boats, and most of his plant and effects ashore, Broadhurst Snr. did not completely abandon his interests in the Bay as the cargoes of shell he sent overseas in the Ivy and the Phillipine show. 320

He did eventually abandon it however. In May 1876, possibly as a result of the down-turn in the pearl fishery that lasted into 1877, 321 and his failure to

317 V&P, 1875, op. cit.
318 They and the prices paid were, two hand saws, a case of tumblers, a compass, wire, and a dinghy (15 shillings) bags and a keg, salt, tent, kettles and saucepan, ovens, boiler and kegs, 5 Malay huts (10 shillings), 3 casks, the Cutter Amy (£10-10-0), piece timber, pair oars, case oatmeal, 3 jars, table, oil, 2 anchors (6/6d.), 150 bags, set of scales, an old boat (6 shillings), a whale boat (£1-10-0), a lot of pearls, (£20-5-0), 2 heaps of shell (£7-10-0), 4 partly filled tubs of fish (£3-15-0), trough, dredging line, sundries, brushes, pots, 2 zinc buckets (6/6d.), 5 augers, case of boots, brooms, lamps, 2 compasses, hats, a box of brads (nails), epsom salts, castor oil, cutlery, lamps, a case of baking powder cases of pipes, twine and corn flour, scales and weights, coffee mills, medicine chest, case castor oil, a pearling dredge (10 shillings), rope, and 3 pearling boats (£7-0-0, £10-0-0 & £5-10-0). CSR 809/41-49, BL.
319 CSR, 809/41-49, BL.
320 Inquirer, 17/6/1876 & 9/8/1876, quoted in the Arrivals and departures, Card index BL.
obtain permission to recover guano from the islands in Shark Bay, he applied for permission to enter the guano industry in the Houtman Abrolhos.

As a result, he received permission to ship a load of the manure in order to test the deposit. He arrived back in the Colony on 1 October 1877 on board the *Charlotte Padbury* from London, and may have remained overseas until then. Soon after, in 1878 Broadhurst commenced fish canning at Mandurah.

His nephew Daniel continued in the Shark Bay pearl industry on his own account well into the twentieth century. Charles Edward Broadhurst's interest in the Shark Bay pearl fishery was re-awakened much later when he was considering relinquishing control of the family Guano business to his son Florance. On 23 March 1885, almost a decade after abandoning the pearling industry he re-applied for the lease at £1000 per annum to 'un-opened portions' of the pearling banks. His letter of application followed the 1884 Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council upon the Expediency of opening the Closed Pearling Grounds at Sharks Bay which called for the reopening of the 'closed area'. His application was unsuccessful on the grounds that it was not felt to be fair to lease the grounds without calling for tenders, and that his application of 13 years previous for the entire fishery was no longer valid, due to the elapsed time since it was lodged.

Thus Broadhurst was to fail in pearling out of Shark Bay. How much of the failure can be attributed to his nephew Daniel is debatable, though his particular problems could be traced to a general down-turn in the industry and his uncle's failure to supply him with the necessary cash with which to pay the 'Malays'.

What is clear about Broadhurst Snr's activities in the Shark Bay pearling industry, as elsewhere is that he showed entrepreneurial flair, courage and tenacity and a continued inability, or lack of desire, to pay his creditors of all

322 *Arrivals and Departures, BL*.
324 See Section on the Guano industry following.
325 *V&P, 5/9/1884, op. cit.*
326 *CSO, 1182: 527, BL.*
races and of all stations in life. Also surfacing at Shark Bay is the evidence of
the dependence of his fortune on the qualities of the managers who took over
his ventures once he got them running.

**Conclusion: Broadhurst as a pearler**

In the light of the poor results produced by his ‘Malays,’ the fear of water
shown by the ‘volunteer’ Aboriginal convicts, the loss of the SS *Xantho*, and
the failure of the ‘diving apparatus,’ Broadhurst is is understandably recorded
as having ‘failed to make his exertions profitable’ at Nickol Bay, though Many
with less capital and expensive gear than Broadhurst were to succeed. In
January 1875 for example, only two years after Broadhurst left Nickol Bay, 48
licences had been issued to boats ranging from 5-94 tons employing an
estimated 1500-2000 divers and in which there were ‘very few unlucky
speculators’.

Others with Broadhurst’s resources were succeeding all around using his
men and his vessels, so why did he fail?

The failure in the pearling industry out of Nickol Bay lay with Broadhurst
himself and manifests itself in his continuously unrealistic and ‘grand’
approach which served to make reasonably simple things difficult.

In this context, he failed at Nickol Bay in his choice of diving method, in his
chosen labourers and in the speculation with *Xantho* at a price of £4,500 plus
coaling and other operating costs. He experimented with machinery when
simple methods were proving successful and at a time when the complex, bulky
and expensive diving apparatus was unnecessary and was only to prove
economically viable, twenty years later, when the shallow beds became
depleted.

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327 *Inquirer*, 8/10/1873.
328 CSR, 809/74, BL.
Broadhurst like many others, at the time when the Aborigines were making the transition from wading to ‘naked diving’ proper, clearly thought that if his divers could see clearly underwater they would be more efficient. It seems strange to recount to those who do not dive that, on the shallow pearling beds in the early days, the ability to see clearly was not one of the factors crucial to success.\textsuperscript{329} Broadhurst apparently did not realize that this ‘local’ knowledge in actually ‘seeing’ the shell underwater and in locating pearl beds from the surface were skills that came from the experience gained by the Aborigines in their wading and early naked diving activities.\textsuperscript{330} Once these skills were available in the work-force, numbers became the key in order to cover the maximum amount of ground. It was not until the ‘shallow’ beds were worked out that it became necessary or cost efficient to use the ‘hard hat’ or ‘diving apparatus’. Thus, Broadhurst’s attempts to utilize the apparatus were not only ahead of their time but completely unnecessary. He was slow in coming to this realization and his attempts to use the gear were spread over three seasons and were to cost him dearly in lost time, capital costs and diver’s wages. His efforts with the apparatus apparently also failed because he did not use the tides to advantage or to utilize the method of allowing the vessel to drift with the divers that came into vogue in the late nineteenth century. When the shallow waters of the Torres Strait became depleted in 1873 for example, diving apparatus was introduced and the ‘mistakes made earlier on the west coast were avoided by diving at low and ebb tide’.\textsuperscript{331}

All that one needed to do to succeed at the time Broadhurst made his abortive attempts, was to copy the methods employed by the rest, go where everyone else went, and send down as many experienced or ‘local’ naked divers as one could muster in as many boats as possible.

\textsuperscript{329} I attempted this recently in the waters of Exmouth Gulf and could see the ‘open’ pair on the sea floor without a mask, though it must be noted that the conditions were ideal and I had located the shell earlier with a mask. There was clearly an element of learning and the inexperienced even with a mask could easily miss the shell. The evidence from this experience is supported by pearl divers operating today. B. Duncan, Pers Com. November 1989.

\textsuperscript{330} One of the last of the ‘old’ pearlers indicated the methods they used in an article appearing in the \textit{West Australian} 18/8/1989. Experience was clearly a major factor and was a ‘key’ difference between success and failure.

\textsuperscript{331} Bain, op. cit., p. 63.
In his perception that they lacked energy and courage, Broadhurst was to make another mistake in searching for alternatives to the local Aboriginal people. When sufficiently motivated they were clearly superior to the ‘Malays’ and to their southern counterparts in locating the shell as beachcombers, waders and divers. They also took to the deeper water quite readily when the pearlers moved off-shore and could apply their innate skills, good eyesight, and knowledge of how the shell was disguised in the sediment or by marine growth, to the underwater world. On the other hand, the Rottnest convicts were mainly ‘southern’ men who had no liking for the waters of the North and the entire season on board the Adur appears to have been lost by Broadhurst in gaining this understanding. The ‘Malays’ that he imported fell into the same category, though those that he imported seemed a little worse than their colleagues. For what reason they appeared to be less able it is difficult to say as he fed and housed his men well at Bannangarra at least. Positive motivation such as that practised by Harper and Blurton was as successful as coercion and violence in effectively deploying the local Aborigines as divers. Though there is no ‘hard’ evidence, the indications are that Broadhurst was unable to satisfactorily motivate his men, and having failed in that capacity was then ‘too soft’ by contemporary standards to obtain satisfactory results from them.

In his application of capital to the industry, Broadhurst was also to prove a failure. The SS Xantho at a cost of £4,500 was to be his most, and probably the most, expensive failure in the industry. The outlay associated with the SS Xantho, could have seen him into quite a number of very suitable sailing vessels eminently suitable for pearling. The 18 Metre wooden pearling schooner Liberty was, for example, on sale at around £500 in 1870 when Broadhurst brought the Xantho. Larger wooden sailing vessels of the size of the Xantho such as the 40 metre long Spinaway and the similar sized Bridgetown could be had for £1000 around the same time. These could have served as transports, coasting traders or potential carriers for the shell, and yet still left Broadhurst with a very large sum that would have been sufficient to

332 Register of British Ships op. cit., Book 1.
see him into a large number of smaller boats manned with the best European masters and 'coloured' crews available.

Thus, the *Xantho* was a costly mistake, as far as pearling was concerned. When it sank the loss as a single capital investment was huge, not just in the capital outlay, but in the opportunities foregone in the purchase. Broadhurst had always maintained that 'capital and labour' were the keys to success in the industry. In the use of the *Xantho*, the diving gear, the *Adur*, the Aboriginal Convicts and the 'Malays' he tried to apply both, albeit unsuccessfully.

Thus Broadhurst was unsuccessful in the 'grand' nature of his attempts, but was not alone. Well backed concerns, such as The *English Pearling Company* with large vessels *Flower of Yarrow* and *Enchantress* and their 4 small attendant cutters *Louisa, Adelia, Gertrude* and *Florence* arrived on the coast just as Broadhurst was departing. According to the contemporary pearler, E.W. Streeter, the venture was a disastrous one with the prospectus claiming that each diver could bring up 100 shell per hour at a yield of 8 ton per diver per year when just over 1 ton was the best then observed 'and then under extraordinarily favourable circumstances'. He finished his commentary on the enterprise with a statement that echoes those made of other concerns involving Broadhurst such as the Denison Plains Pastoral Company and the Camden Harbour Pastoral and Agricultural Association. i.e. 'The whole proceedings was a fiasco and ludicrous to all except the shareholders'.

In summary, it was Broadhurst's penchant for 'grand' schemes and his failure to 'efficiently' utilize the services of the 'local' Aborigines in any number that was to prove his downfall at Nickol Bay.

Shark Bay was to prove to be Broadhurst's economic salvation in the light of the failures out of Nickol Bay. His initial success at Shark Bay appears to have been due in no small part to the efforts and wisdom of his manager Mr. Smith

333 *Broadhurst to Col. Sec.*, 25/10/1871, op. cit.
334 He noted that in 1882 in the best take recorded, 37 men out of the *Dawn* recovering 2320 pairs and in the following year 42 men recovered 840 pairs as the highest total with 350 the lowest. Streeter, op. cit., p. 152.
335 *ibid.*, p.160.
who was much praised for the manner in which he motivated and cared for the workers under his care.\footnote{Inquirer, 8/10/1873.} That Broadhurst was prepared to pay for the accommodation and good food here and at Bannangarra is to his lasting credit even though the ideas may have been his managers.

Some time around April 1874, when disease and poor results started a general exodus, Smith appears to have left and was replaced with Broadhurst's nephew Daniel Broadhurst. At that time Charles Edward Broadhurst began to experience financial problems and experienced difficulty in paying his dues to his creditors in Perth and to his men at Shark Bay. His apparent failure to send money to his nephew in order to pay the 'Malays' in his employ was the catalyst that saw his eventual ruin at Shark Bay and in Parliament. On the other hand, Broadhurst's eventual failure at Shark Bay also appears to have been associated with the attitudes of his nephew, and with his failure, as his uncle and employer, to modify them.\footnote{See Court cases above and the complaint of the 'Malays' about the money stolen by Daniel Broadhurst.}

The extent to which Charles Edward Broadhurst himself was actually, as opposed to morally, responsible for the mis-treatment of the 'Malays' in his employ is not known. The comparisons between Daniel Broadhurst and Mr Smith, and the fact that Broadhurst Snr. had an agreement with the master of the Rosette to transport the 'Malays' to Fremantle at the end of their service, despite Daniel's failure to avail himself of it, are further indications that he was not one to physically mis-treat people.

Broadhurst continually failed to pay his creditors regardless of race or religion when he was in 'straightened circumstances' or when there was any hint of a misdemeanour on their part. There are however, enough documented instances of his concern for the Aborigines and in the efforts of his managers on behalf of the 'Malays' in his employ, to avoid classing him as one of the 'indifferent class' of men who frequented the industry as was done in the Shark Bay incident.
The noted pearling commentator E.W. Streeter commented in 1886, long after Broadhurst had left the industry that

Nowhere in the world is the 'native policy' a more vexed question than in Australia. In that Continent the gradual extinction of the natives before the usurping white race appears to be inevitable. 338

Specific instances of maltreatment and violence abound, both during and long after, the period Broadhurst was involved in the industry. These have been covered by other authors in what is only the tip of the iceberg in a sorry era that is only now becoming known outside academic circles in Western Australia today. 339 To his credit, or good fortune, though Broadhurst used Aboriginal labour, he appears to have cared for the men assigned to him and does not appear to have been involved in the violence.

338 Streeter, op. cit., p159.
339 See 'White Lies' A two page illustrated article on the destruction by the Aboriginal people in the pearlers and pastoralists of the late 18th and early 20th centuries. West Australian. Weekend Supplement. 10/6/1989.
Chapter Five

SS Xantho : Western Australia's First Coastal Steamer

Introduction:

SS Xantho was, not only one of Broadhurst’s most short lived business ventures, but it was also his most capital intensive. Though the period in which he operated the vessel represents but a small part of his business career, the SS Xantho assumes a wider significance due to the impact it had on Broadhurst’s activities in the North-West and as the Colony’s first coastal steamer. For this reason it will be discussed in some detail despite having been briefly mentioned in the previous section on pearling.

The SS Xantho did not arrive on the Western Australian coast until 1872, almost half a century after the advent of the steam ship in other areas of the world. The Swan River Colony, which became Western Australia, stagnated for many years and failed to grow in population or in volume of trade sufficient to justify the considerable expense of operating a steamship on the vast and sparsely populated coast. For this reason the coastal trade in Western Australia was still awaiting the advent of steam propulsion twenty years after steamships had captured over 30% of the traffic around Europe.

F. J. A. Broeze, in his analysis of the maritime trades in Western Australia just prior to Broadhurst’s purchase of the SS Xantho, indicates that there were a number of sound economic reasons, notably a ‘critical’ shortage of capital, why there was an inordinate delay in the development of the Western Australian merchant fleet.

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As a result experienced ship-owners such as Walter Padbury found themselves unwilling to enter the relatively expensive and complex business of steamship owning without Governmental and logistical support. Though it has been claimed that others ‘may have shown sound business sense’ in not becoming involved in the industry, it will be shown that such considerations would have been lost on Broadhurst who appears to have had little prior knowledge of the complexities of ship-owning.

Despite his naivete, it appears that he was set to succeed with the vessel and could have very effectively and efficiently operated it in the pearling industry and as a ‘tramp’ steamer picking up cargoes on an opportunistic basis.

When it arrived on the coast, the SS Xantho heralded a new and long awaited era, but it abruptly sank within a year. For this reason Broadhurst’s bold attempt to utilize the vessel has been largely forgotten and many commentators and historians have failed to recognize that the vessel even existed. When it has been mentioned, the SS Xantho has been analysed in the context of attempts to establish a ‘commercially successful steam service’, on the coast and little significance has been attached to the venture as will be seen from that following.:

Little need be said about the operations of the SS Xantho. Charles Broadhurst, the owner was more interested in his many other coastal enterprises (including pearling, fishing and guano collecting) than in carrying freight for others. During the Xantho’s brief tenure of the coastal trade, Broadhurst continually vacillated as to his long term intentions for the vessel and it is doubtful whether it would have markedly altered the coastal trade if she had not sunk.

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5 *Tramp*: A freight vessel that does not run in any regular line but takes cargo wherever shippers desire. De Kerchove, op. cit., p.853.
In the context of attempts to establish a regular steam service on the coast, this analysis is undoubtedly correct and Broadhurst was certainly more interested in his 'many other coastal enterprises' than his vessel. He envisaged instead, that the SS Xantho was to be a link between his business enterprises and that it was to be used in the coastal trade only when it was not required for his own purposes. As a result, it became an integral part of his business structure. For this reason Broadhurst's attempts to utilize it as a link in his remote business ventures, should not be dismissed without a deeper analysis.

It needs also to be noted that, had the SS Xantho not sunk, it would have effectively linked Broadhurst's many and varied interests in the Nickol Bay and Shark Bay regions with Batavia, Champion Bay and Fremantle. After it was lost, such a steamship service, however irregular it may have been, was not to be afforded the North of Western Australia until over a decade later.

There is another element associated with Broadhurst’s operation of the vessel, that of the influence it had on the Government of the day. As a result of having a steamer at his disposal, and with the option of transporting stock, goods and pearl shell from the North-West either direct to Batavia or through Fremantle, Broadhurst’s political position became temporarily very strong in a Colony fearful of an independent 'North District'. As a result, the government appeared willing to grant him every possible concession.

He failed dismally with the Xantho however, and the mistake Broadhurst made in becoming involved in the steam trade, will be shown to have had two major elements. One was a particularly poor choice of vessel and the other can be seen in the benefits foregone in its purchase.

With all this in mind, it will be shown, that the cause of Broadhurst’s failure as a steamship owner lies not in his decision to purchase an iron screw steamer in general, but in the purchase of the SS Xantho itself.

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8 Broadhurst's pearling base and 'Malay' camp at Bannangarra with its coconut plantation was the centre of his activities in the period during which the vessel was afloat.
9 The attempt of William Harvey and Associates to 'separate' the North with the Camden Harbour scheme, apparently led to the sending of a Resident Magistrate there at great expense. There were also fears expressed in the local press of such a possibility. *Inquirer*, 26/4/1871.
10 Evidence of the sympathetic attitude appears in the letters reproduced following.
To understand this notion, it is now necessary to briefly examine, not only the vessel before it was purchased by Broadhurst, but also the state of iron shipbuilding, marine engineering and the Western Australian coastal trade when Broadhurst made his decision.

(i) The Construction and Early Career of SS Xantho

The reasons for Broadhurst’s interest in an iron vessel like the SS Xantho rather than a similar sized wooden vessel can be seen in the following analysis of his contemporary, the well known proponent of iron shipbuilding, John Grantham. In 1859, in a chapter headed ‘iron vessels considered as a commercial question’ Grantham listed 8 objects most desired by a merchant in the choices of a ship. They were, strength combined with lightness, great capacity for stowage, safety, speed, durability, economy in repairs and cost and draught of water.

Having enumerated the advantages, Grantham concluded, (as an ardent enthusiast), that,

experience proves that iron vessels possess advantages under all the heads above in so eminent a degree as to render them superior to wooden vessels.\(^{11}\)

Grantham’s contemporary John Fincham, also enumerated the benefits of iron ships, and claimed that they were, of superior strength, greater safety, thinner and lighter hulls (providing greater capacity for stowage), economy at building, less damage when aground, cheaper repairs, probably a longer life, and an abundant supply (in Britain) of materials.\(^{12}\)

Despite these advantages, the iron vessel was not quick to find favour or to receive official sanction. In August 1843, almost half a century after the appearance of the first iron vessels\(^{13}\), and only 5 years before the Xantho was built, the underwriters, Lloyds of London, began to collect information from

\(^{13}\) Grantham, op. cit., p. 5-18.
their surveyors on iron ships. By 1855, seven years after the Xan thro was built, Lloyds had still not seen fit to specify actual modes of construction as they considered that iron shipbuilding was ‘as yet in its infancy and that there are no well understood rules for building iron ships’. As a direct result of this, and a lack of understanding of the strength and qualities of wrought iron plate, iron vessels built before the advent of Lloyds rules in 1855 often had a relatively long service life, the result of the inordinate thickness of the hull plates.

Very detailed records of Xan thro have been located and will be presented elsewhere as they are outside the scope of this analysis of Broadhurst. For the purposes of this particular study it suffices to note that the vessel was built by the well known Denny Company as an iron paddle steamer in 1848 in a similar fashion to methods then in vogue. When launched, the vessel was 106.8 ft (32.5m.) long x 16.8 ft (5.1m.) Breadth x 8.4 ft (2.6m.) deep. It was schooner rigged with two masts, had one deck and was powered by a 60 HP steeple engine with tubular boiler. The engine room took 9.6m of the overall length of the vessel and was located amidships requiring the provision of two holds each served by separate winches and other machinery. Illustrations of the vessel have not been found, though the 110 feet long (33.5m.), PS Loch Lomond which was built in 1845 by the same Company and is mentioned in the specifications of the SS Xan thro, is expected to bear a family and temporal

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15 ibid., p.78.
16 The iron barge Vulcan built in 1818 was still in operation in 1875 and the iron paddle-steamer Marquis Wellesley built in 1823 was still afloat 34 years later, for example. See McCarthy, M., The Iron Hull, A Brief History of Iron Shipbuilding. In McCarthy, M., (ed) Iron Ships and Steam Shipwrecks. Papers from the first Australian Seminar on the Management of Iron Vessels and Steam Shipwrecks. (W.A. Museum, Perth, (1988a), pp. 219, 220. The iron Barque Santiago which lies as an intact hulk in South Australian waters was built in 1855 and was still afloat in 1945 after 90 years of service. Newsletter of the Society for Underwater Historical Research. (Nov. 1988) pp.7-10. Thus at 23 years of age the SS Xan thro was not of necessity worn out.
19 SS Xan thro, Certificate of British Registry. (Steamers), 4/1848, Port of Anstruther, 1/11/1848, PRO: BT 107/453. Copy on file 9/79, WA Maritime Museum. Fractions of a foot were expressed in tenths or decimals and not inches in these registers, as one would expect.
resemblance. An illustration of the PS *Loch Lomond* appears in figure 32 as an indication of the possible appearance of the SS *Xantho*.

*Figure 32*

*PS Loch Lomond, a vessel of the same size, period and from the same shipyard as the SS Xantho.*

The hull of the PS *Xantho* cost £1,570 to construct and the machinery cost £1,700. The whole venture returned a total profit of £279-12-0 to the builders.20

PS *Xantho* was given the official number of 7802 and the first owners were the elected trustees of a joint stock company called the Anstruther & Leith Steamshipping Company. In this period *Xantho* is recorded in the Mercantile Navy List as allowed for use on rivers and partly smooth waters only.21 In August 1860, it was sold and transferred from the port of Anstruther to Scarborough.22 In July 1864, after nearly 20 years of operation in sheltered waters, the register was transferred to Wick and the vessel is recorded in the

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20 Lyon, op. cit., p.118.
Mercantile Navy list of that year as being allowed on excursions to sea, and under this licence it completed a number of successful coasting voyages.

Thus PS Xantho had a successful career operating as a paddle steamer around ‘sheltered’ Scottish waters until transferred to Wick where it again proved successful on a number of voyages to the open sea. Then after a total of 23 years of service in Scottish waters, it was sold to a Mr Robert Stewart a ‘Metal Merchant’ (or scrap dealer) of Glasgow.23 Stewart had the stern altered and the vessel refitted and lengthened to 116.3 feet (35.44 metres). The paddle engines and machinery were removed from their position amidships and were replaced with a new boiler, a three bladed propeller, new pumps, and a 60 Horse Power, horizontal engine which had been built in 1861 by John Penn & Son, one of Britain’s best known engineering firms.24 In shifting the engine room aft and in utilizing the compact horizontal engine, the machinery space was reduced from 9.6 metres. in length to 7 metres. By this means the cargo space was increased and relocated forward and could be serviced by one deck winch, (see wreck site plan, figure 35). A comparison of this configuration with that of the early paddle-steamers such as the PS Loch Lomond with the cargo space fore and aft of the machinery is quite interesting, from the point of view of the efficiencies to be had with such an arrangement.

Being built of iron, newly refitted, with a large carrying capacity, with new pumps and boiler and powered by one of John Penn’s engines that was almost unused and was acknowledged as a ‘masterpiece of workmanship’,25 the SS Xantho would have appeared an attractive proposition to one such as Broadhurst without any real knowledge of the industry. As a result the vessel was subsequently purchased by him. The impending arrival of the SS Xantho was a matter of great interest to a Colony long awaiting the advent of steam transport in the coastal trade.

24 Certificate of Registry, 1871, op. cit. For easily understood definitions of the various indicators of Horsepower used in the period. (HP, IHP, NHP) see Rivett, N., The Naval Steam Reciprocating Engine. (The Naval Historical Society of Australia, Sydney, ND) pp. 52-55.
25 Inquirer, 25/1/1873.
(ii) Steamships in Colonial Western Australia.

Broadhurst’s decision to purchase a steamer for the Western Australian coast was certainly timely and not an unrealistic notion.

Steam was not an entirely new phenomenon on the waters of Western Australia when Broadhurst purchased the *Xantho*. Small paddle steamers were operating on the Swan River as early as 1854 and large wooden steamers had called into port on route to distant shores around the same time.\(^{26}\) Steam was a common feature in much of the rest of the world and in the Eastern States of Australia. By 1871, when the *Xantho* left for Western Australia, the first steamers were over half a century old.\(^{27}\) The populace of Western Australia, were therefore not ignorant of steam power, especially as such technology was common on the land and in industry, as well as on the river. There was also a general dissatisfaction with the existing mode of transport via small coastal sailing traders.

Part of the reason for the discontent with existing circumstances can be traced to the peculiar circumstances then in operation that saw Fremantle and Perth without a regular steam connection with the Eastern States. As a result of a feasibility survey by the P. & O. Company, which had just been awarded an eight year contract to conduct a regular run from Southampton to Australia, Fremantle was considered to be an unsuitable port and was abandoned in favour of King George Sound (Albany). Mails and passengers from the Eastern States and overseas were then conveyed between Albany and Fremantle by sailing coaster or by carriage overland from Albany.

With steam a regular feature of overseas routes and with a general dissatisfaction with the need to travel via small coasting steamers, there was clearly a need for steam communication between the various ports on the Western Australian coast by the time Broadhurst made his decision to purchase

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the SS Xantho. Despite this, though the government had been in favour of supporting the establishment of steam communication for many years, it was not in a position to assist those willing to set up in the industry. William Harvey's request for a subsidy required to run a steamer out of Camden Harbour, for example, received encouragement but a polite refusal in 1862.28 The prospectuses of both the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company were published in 1864 and both referred to the intention of purchasing a steamer at £3000 to ply between Camden Harbour and the Straits Settlements. In 1867, following an enquiry from the manager of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, the Government indicated that it recognized the 'great advantages' that would result from the establishment of coasting steamers. It was also indicated that it was 'prepared to offer every assistance' to those intending to do so, but despite this it was still unable to offer the subsidy required to make such a venture profitable.29 In February 1869, L.C. Burges publicly indicated his desire to float a steamship company, and in June 1870, a prospectus was issued by a group of unnamed businessmen for a company wishing to operate one or two steamships on the coast.30 The matter was raised in the debates of the Legislative Council and there was a concern in the light of the isolation of the Nickol Bay settlement and its proximity to the Straits Settlements that the area could 'become virtually separated' from the south by being forced to deal entirely with those areas.31 In August 1871, the Legislative Council proposed a subsidy of £2000 pounds per annum, for a steamer to run between Albany and Champion Bay (Geraldton) on a monthly basis.32 In April 1872, just as Broadhurst and the SS Xantho arrived on this coast, Messrs Connor and McKay of New Zealand submitted a proposal to the government for a monthly mail service between Albany and

28 See Prospectus of the Camden Harbour Pastoral and Agricultural Association in Chapter 3.
30 Inquirer, 24/2/1869 & 29/6/1870.
31 ibid., 26/4/1871.
32 ibid., 16/8/1871.
Champion Bay via Bunbury and Fremantle.\textsuperscript{33} From the figures supplied to them by the government it was estimated that once a steamer link was established, one third of the coastal trade would be carried by steam over the period 1873-5. The potential income from the coastal steamer trade was estimated at £4899 for the first year, reaching £7080 by 1875. Costs were estimated at £12030 per annum, which with a government subsidy of £4000 per annum still represented a loss for the first three years at least. Despite the projected losses, Connor and Mackay decided to embark on the venture and in September 1872, after Broadhurst had arrived with the SS \textit{Xantho}, they entered into a contract with the Government to establish a fixed steamer service on the South coast. They then expended £14,000 on the purchase of a near new 211 ton, 46 metre long iron screw steamer \textit{Georgette}, which arrived on the coast in September 1873.\textsuperscript{34} The figures help put the relatively small costs of around £4,500 for the 23 year old, 35 metre long, 110 ton, iron screw steamer \textit{Xantho} into some perspective. They also help explain why a subsidy was needed to profitably operate a regular service to a fixed timetable over a long coastline offering relatively limited cargoes. In contrast, the receipt of a subsidy was not a requirement in Broadhurst’s operation of the much smaller \textit{Xantho}. Unlike the owners of the \textit{Georgette} who were prepared to be bound to a fixed timetable, Broadhurst wanted to service his own requirements as a major priority. In not being bound to a timetable he was able to opt for a comparatively old, small and relatively cheap, ostensibly well engineered vessel, one that could be more appropriately categorized as a general purpose ‘tramp’ steamer.

\textit{(iii) Broadhurst and the SS Xantho}

Thus, Broadhurst’s decision to purchase an iron vessel as opposed to a wooden hull can then be seen to have had some logic. The wisdom of choosing

\textsuperscript{34} ibid.
the SS Xantho in 1871 when it was already 23 years old is debatable, though it will be shown that the decision was not entirely without merit.

Despite the relatively large capital outlay of £4500 for an individual businessman, Broadhurst does not appear to have made public any prior intention of purchasing a steamer when he left for England in 1871.35 Nothing appears in the official records or in family notes and reminiscences on the matter. In the light of the failure Broadhurst was then having in the pearling industry, questions also arise as to his source of funds. He claimed, in a letter to the Colonial Secretary which was penned on the voyage from Scotland to Fremantle that he was entirely on his own account in the purchase and fitting out of the Xantho.36

As he appears to have failed in pearling up to 1871 when he left for England, that industry does not appear to be the source of his funds and attention must be paid to the other potential sources. One distinct possibility is the sale of his flocks and pastoral leases in the North-West as indicated in the section on Broadhurst and the pastoral industry. As no mention of him operating as a pastoralist appears after 1871, there is a distinct possibility that this may have occurred and that the sale of his flocks and interests at the Maitland River at Nickol Bay may have part financed the purchase of the vessel. Another source of funds may have been the sale of his stock and land in Victoria.

On the other hand, his family in England may have assisted.37 While in England in 1871, the year he purchased the vessel, he would have visited his newly married sister Mary Louisa who was wed earlier in the same year to Sir Joseph Whitworth, the noted and financially very well positioned engineer.38 He then went to Glasgow, either to purchase a vessel or to attend the funeral of his sister Frances Marris Higginbotham who died there on 1 October 1871.39

35 Broadhurst indicates in his letters that the outlay was his own. Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 25/10/1871, CSO 527, 1885/1182, Acc 527, BL.
36 ibid.
37 As his parents had both died some time previous they are not expected to have been the source of his funds.
38 Lee, op. cit., p.169.
39 Brummitt, Broadhurst Family Tree, reproduced earlier in text.
Which of the two was his prime purpose for visiting Glasgow is not known. Of particular interest is the death of his sister. An illustration of her home is shown in figure 33, and she was clearly in a good financial situation when she died. Broadhurst may have been one of the beneficiaries of her will, but in similar fashion to the other potential sources mentioned above, whether this avenue proved one of the sources of his funds for the purchase of the vessel is not known.

*Figure 33*

*Broadhurst's sister's home 'Killamont' in Glasgow*  

Whatever the reason for being in Glasgow and whatever his source of funds, it was there that he purchased the SS *Xantho*. The first master of the newly fitted screw steamer was a D. Colquhonne, but soon after on 11 October 1871, the time when Broadhurst was about to sail, Ernest Denicke was appointed master.

Broadhurst then sailed in it from Glasgow via Queenstown (Cobh), Ireland. There on 25 October 1871 he wrote a letter to the Colonial Secretary stating:

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[40From Brummitt, (in Prep), op. cit.]
We had bad weather across the channel and have had a fair trial of the Xantho. I am well pleased with her she is a first rate sea boat and works well every way... I have gone to a heavy expense already £4500 and it will cost a good deal more before I reach my destination...I sincerely hope that we shall make it successful this time, I think I am entitled to it. I carry five boats on deck and 120 tons of coal, thirty tons of stores, whaling gear and everything that my experience would suggest...I have good agents in Singapore and Batavia (connections of my own family)...One of the largest shell buyers in England will buy every shell I can get by telegraph from Singapore. I think I have done my part so far pretty well and thank God. I am entirely on my own account. I rely on your government for any moral support they can give me; they at all events have always been as liberal to me as they could else, I would never have entered into a heavy speculation like this by myself.41

Broadhurst applied the same day from Queenstown for a lease to the Shark Bay pearl fishery and to Delambre, Bedout and Malus Islands at Nickol Bay. (Figures 12 & 24). Though Broadhurst's applications were favoured by the Colonial Secretary and he soon began work in Shark Bay, he was unsuccessful in obtaining a lease to any of the small islands. At the time they were leased by others and could not be handed over. Broadhurst's reason for obtaining the requested leases were (by the indications of the gear carried on the Xantho) for the purposes of pursuing the pearling, turtle shell and whaling industries out of Nickol Bay and the pearling industry out of Shark Bay at the same time. By this means, the high costs of operating the Xantho could be recouped by using it not only to carry shell, boats and men to and from the pearling grounds, but in the whaling and turtle shelling industries and as a trading vessel for the coastal and straits settlements as the occasion allowed.

As indicated in the section on pearling earlier, Broadhurst held a favoured position with the government and was held in high regard for his continuing efforts in developing the North-West. The arrival of the SS Xantho strengthened that position and in the context of his application for the lease to

41 Broadhurst to Col. Sec. 25/10/1871, op. cit.
the islands above it was stated by the Surveyor General that a 'preference will always be shown to him if he occupies the island in any way that is beneficial to the progress of settlement'.

Having despatched the mail to the Colonial Government from Ireland, the SS Xantho itself proceeded there. They travelled via Gibraltar, Malta, the Suez Canal, and Galle (in Sri Lanka) leaving there on 24 January. The news of the steamer's impending arrival preceded the vessel and the expectant local press gave vent to their feelings in a short notice headed 'a steamer at last.' The vessel then went on to Singapore, Surabaya and Batavia (now Jakarta) where they arrived in late March. After coaling and engaging 'Malay' divers there, the vessel continued onto the pearling grounds of Western Australia and onto Broadhurst's pearling station at Bannangarra where he established a camp and coconut plantation. Figures 24 & 28. There the divers and other goods were off-loaded. The vessel finally called at Port Walcott around April 1872 where the Governor, on a visit to the area on board HMS Cossack, had hoped to meet Broadhurst and to convey to him personally news of his applications for the Shark Bay Fishery and the off shore islands. Confusion over the expected arrival time of the Xantho prevented the proposed meeting and the Governor departed after renaming the harbour in Butcher's inlet at Nickol Bay, Cossack.

Broadhurst progressed on down to Champion Bay arriving there on 11 May at the close of the Pearling season. The local populace and the Geraldton Correspondent were suitably impressed with the vessel as the following will indicate.

The Xantho a small steamer recently purchased by Mr C.E. Broadhurst and intended for the Pearl Fishery, called at the Bay Saturday morning, on her way to Fremantle. Such a novelty as a veritable steamer in our waters attracted crowds to the Jetty, and as the little vessel lay alongside for several hours, the curious had ample time to inspect her.

42 Malcolm Fraser, the Surveyor General, L&S, Letters Forwarded to Officials, 1872-1187, RN, 44/43, BL
43 Inquirer, 14/2/1872.
44 CSO, 1885/1182, Acc 527, BL.
45 Inquirer, 22/5/1872.
Broadhurst had difficulty obtaining coal at a reasonable price and the only fuel available was offered at £4 per ton, a figure which was sarcastically attacked in the local press. Despite the problems with the supplies of coal, it was considered that, ‘one or even two steamboats would pay well on our coast’ Broadhurst and the SS Xantho proceeded on down and arrived at Fremantle on 14 May to be greeted in the local press as,

a smart little steamer...owned by our enterprising speculator Mr Broadhurst who has brought her from England for employment in the pearl fishery and, I suppose, in the general coast trade as well.46

Some confusion is evident in the press understanding of the capacities and suitability of the vessel and in regard to Broadhurst’s intentions for the vessel.47 Pearling and ‘coasting purposes’ were the two purposes most mentioned in the press and it was also noted that Broadhurst had accepted an offer from Mr Padbury to convey live stock to the ‘Straits Settlements’.48 The pearlimg industry was Broadhurst’s prime concern however and the comment was made that, as the vessel had been purchased for the purpose of carting shell via Singapore, there were concerns that the shell would ‘go there direct’ and thus be of no benefit to the Colony.49

The Xantho was then ‘shown off’ to the expectant colony and travelled to Mangles Bay at Rockingham on unspecified business.50 It then left Fremantle on June 10 for Batavia via Champion Bay and Port Walcott, with 16 passengers, a police constable, his Aboriginal aide, four Aboriginal prisoners and an assorted cargo of spirits, tobacco, rams, potatoes, timber and shingles.51

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46 Inquirer, 15/5/1872.
47 The Inquirer on the arrival of the vessel highly praised it, (15/5/1872) but on it's demise was less effusive, (25/1/1873).
48 Inquirer, 15/5/1872, 14/2/1872 & the Herald, 4/5/1872, state that the vessel was intended for the pearl shell fishery & the Inquirer of 22/5/1872 refers to the vessel's use in the general coasting trade and in the transport of livestock to the 'Straits Settlements'.
49 Inquirer, 14/2/1872.
51 Inquirer, 12/6/1872.
They struck bad weather soon after arriving at Champion Bay however, and a copy of the vessel’s log shows that Broadhurst stated that he considered himself ‘fortunate in having saved the vessel at all, twice I gave her up for lost’. The storm was of such force as to drive the other vessels then in port ashore.

Without the aid of secure government moorings, Xantho was forced, during the storm, which began on 14 June, to steam at half speed with two anchors set to prevent it going ashore. It appeared that the anchors continued to drag despite this and the vessel was forced to continually run ahead and reset them. In the process of doing so the engines consumed over £100 pounds worth of coal. On 22 June, it was noted that the pawl bits on the vessels capstan had gone, as had the stock of the best anchor. On the next day the starboard chain parted and full steam was required to save the situation. In a letter on the matter, Broadhurst urged the government to attend to the question of a mooring at Champion Bay and to extend the jetty, which was in his opinion too small. Broadhurst also offered to pay his share of the improvements. As evidence that he was operating the vessel to a plan, he also indicated that, when they returned from Batavia some time around August, it would ‘stay on the pearl fishery’ and would remain there till the end of September when it would be placed on the coast between Champion Bay, Fremantle, Bunbury and ‘The Vasse’ (Busselton).

By 26 June, the storm had abated and on 2 July, they proceeded on north to Batavia via the pearling grounds. There, they would have loaded the vessel with every available shell that had been collected in the season for consignment via Singapore to Broadhurst’s buyer in London. At Batavia, Broadhurst also improved the vessel’s accommodation, replenished his coal supplies and loaded with ‘Malays’ and saleable goods including what was later classed as contraband.

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52 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 1/7/1872, CSO, 727/76, BL.
53 ibid.
54 Inquirer, 23/10/1872.
55 CSR, 752/29-34, BL.
They returned from there to Broadhurst’s pearling bases at Bannangarra, east of Nickol Bay and at Port Hedland. After a period servicing his needs there, they proceeded on down to Port Walcott where Broadhurst sold cigars and brandy to his friend Sholl. Broadhurst was exempt from duty for necessary stores landed at Bannangarra in accordance to a letter he had received from the Governor. In typical fashion, however Broadhurst personally extended the exemption to a case of ‘bonded’ tobacco liable to £82 customs duty, creating great problems for Sholl, who was told the duty would be paid at Fremantle. The issue became a great embarrassment to Sholl, who claimed he was acting under a policy stating that ‘every latitude must be allowed in such cases’. Sholl was fortunate not to have had the irate Collector of Customs in Perth debit the loss to his own account. The incident was likened to ‘a case of smuggling’ by the ‘Collector’ who called for the removal of the ‘indulgence’ granted to Broadhurst and noted the potential for ill feeling from those less well favoured. Broadhurst then proceeded down the coast after offering to transport Sholl’s wife Mary, free of charge and en route called in to the Flying Foam Passage where his men were working some newly found pearl beds. There, like all the other vessels in the vicinity, SS Xancho was allowed to rest on the bottom at low tide and possibly remained in that position until the next high tide.

Xancho then departed in September for Geraldton, as planned. The vessel’s agents for the Geraldton area were H. Gray and Company, and while awaiting its arrival, they advertised that she was under ‘positive engagement’ to call at the Champion Bay Sea Jetty and would leave there for Fremantle. They stated that the vessel was suited for the transport of sheep and the vessel would be ‘kept constantly in the trade between Fremantle and Champion bay if sufficient inducement offers.’ Broadhurst also indicated that the vessel would call at the Pelsart Fishery indicating his interest in either establishing or servicing a

56 CSR, 752/34, BL.
57 CSR, 752/33, BL.
58 Report of Enquiry into the loss of the Xancho, (See Following).
59 Inquirer, 2/10/1872.
fishery there. At Geraldton, the Xantho received orders to proceed back to nearby Port Gregory to load a cargo of lead ore for the Barque Zephyr.

Though an outport for the lead mines, bay whaling, and pastoral industries in the area, Port Gregory was narrow, experienced a very strong current and was notoriously dangerous for sailing vessels. It was however, admirably suited for use by a small steamer such as the SS Xantho. 60

On the basis of the trends becoming apparent in the evidence above, it appears that Broadhurst operated the vessel to a plan. It was to be primarily used to service Broadhurst’s pearling establishments and to transport shell and was to be utilized secondarily and when not needed to service his other interests on the coast. Broadhurst had also indicated his desire to enter the Shark Bay pearl fishery and was in operation in early 1873. Though the movements summarized above are over too short a period to firmly establish a pattern, the indications are that at the end of the pearling season i.e somewhere around June of 1873 he would have sent the vessel from Fremantle to the pearl beds at Shark Bay and on to his base at Bannangarra. The purposes of such a voyage would have been, to carry any available pearls and shell from both Shark Bay and the Nickol Bay region to his agents for transhipment to Singapore and England. On the same voyage he would return his labourers to their homes. At Batavia he would have obtained more coal, conducted repairs, and obtained more men, stores, and saleable goods for the return the voyage home. In doing so he would also have picked up any freight offering.

It also appears that the short run between Port Gregory and Geraldton in the carriage of goods to large sailing vessels waiting at Geraldton may have proved a very useful sideline for Broadhurst if the SS Xantho had not sunk on the first voyage from that port.

(iv) The Loss of the Steamship Xantho

On the afternoon of 13 November the vessel left Geraldton for Port Gregory on the first of these ‘irregular’ coasting voyages. Xantho had on board

a crew of 15, these included the Master Captain Denicke, Joseph Taquer, late Master of the Arabian acting as pilot, and a William Smith, also a Master Mariner, acting as second mate. At Port Gregory, they were chartered to load a cargo of 100 tons of lead ore from the Geraldine Mine at 15 shillings per ton and to return it to the barque Zephyr which was then lying back at Geraldton.61 Once the cargo was off-loaded there and (most likely) replaced with another the intention was to then proceed on down to Fremantle. Eighty three of the intended 100 tons of lead ore were loaded and this was topped with wool and whale oil from the nearby district and bay whaling establishments.62 The vessel left Port Gregory for Champion Bay at 9.40 p.m. on the night of 16 November heading into a strong South Easterly breeze and a heavy sea. When it left port, it was about 20 centimetres down by the bow despite part of the cargo having been re-positioned aft and the remaining 17 tons of ore having been left behind. It appears that the decks leaked a good deal throughout the vessel’s Western Australian career. This, the head-wind, heavy seas, and the fact that the vessel was down by the head, all combined to place the vessel in a precarious position three hours after it left Port Gregory. To make matters worse, as it was originally down by the bow when it left Port Gregory, the progressive influx of water served to make the Xantheo push even more bow down into the waves and also served to raise the stern where the pumps were located. The vessel had supposedly watertight bulkheads, however and the situation apparently did not serve to greatly alarm the crew.63 The first mate, Augustus Thistleton described the events that followed at the inquiry into the loss of the vessel and at which the Master, Captain Ernest Denicke, was charged with a neglect of duty and incompetence. Thistleton’s evidence indicates that the intake of water was initially a slow process of little consequence until sudden hull failure occurred and the vessel began to sink.

61 Habgood Papers, 12/11/1872, 813/A, BL.
62 Heppingstone, I.D. Whaling at Port Gregory, PR 7666, BL.
63 SS Xantheo specifications, op. cit.
It was my watch until twelve that night. During my watch the vessel was not taking in water more than I had before seen her do in a head sea. I was down in the fore compartment about half past eleven I did not notice any water in the fore-compartment. The Xantho's decks leaked a good deal .... I did not consider it excessive. I had before seen her taking as much water. I am clear there was no noticeable difference in the vessel’s trim at twelve to what it was when leaving Port Gregory. I went to my berth (at 12) on being relieved. At five minutes past I was called by the Captain... On going forward I found the whole of the forepart of the ship under water it being level with the combings of the fore hatch, there was as near as possible a difference of elevation between the stem and the stern of 7 feet. Part of the lead was thrown overboard to lighten the vessel. The engine pumps were going but were of no use, the water being all forward. There were no pumps in the forepart of the ship. We reached Port Gregory at a quarter to four on the 17th. We went in the Hero Passage. She took the ground about 10 minutes after entering the passage when abreast the Gold Digger Passage. The water then began to go aft. It was not more than 15 or 20 minutes after the water began to run aft that the fires in the engine room were put out by it. The vessel then settled down. The pumps were then useless... The Xantho was ashore in the Flying Foam passage on the voyage from Point Walcott, I did not think she received injury there to account for leakage On the night of the 16th. We had a very heavy head sea while rounding the West Cape she then had about 18 inches in her fore-compartment It was bailed out at the time. The fore-compartment was sound. The bulkhead of the fore-compartment was about 15 ft. from the stem.\textsuperscript{64}

Alexander Maquis, first engineer, had examined the hull on an earlier occasion when the vessel was on the beach at Port Walcott, and noted that rivets had ‘gone amidships’ about a metre from the keel. He replaced those that he found to be faulty and indicated to the court, that as far as he could see the plates were in good order. Taquer stated that he would not have taken the vessel to sea in the trim that it was in as it had no chance to ‘rise’ to the sea. The vessel’s design may also have been unsuitable. As it was originally designed and licensed for use in inland waters it may have had the very ‘fine’ bows

\textsuperscript{64}Correspondence relating to the loss of the steamship Xantho, and evidence at the court of enquiry. CSO, 727/233-275, BL.
common to river and lake steamers and subsequently could not adequately 'rise' to a strong head sea. Though Broadhurst stated that they 'had a good trial' of the vessel out of Scotland, the heavy cargo taken on at Port Gregory may have helped exacerbate the failings inherent in a vessel which was not only leaking badly, but was also originally designed for use in sheltered waters.

Denicke in his defence explained that the method of stowage of the ore was not at fault and stated Broadhurst stopped him throwing any more from the vessel on the way back to Port Gregory as he apparently preferred to 'save the cargo rather than the ship'.

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65 Port Gregory, 1: 20,000, AUS 741.
66 CSO, 727/252, BL.
Batavia (Jakarta), three of the plates in the fore part of the hull were scraped through and required replacement. On the basis of the evidence, the Court found that the steamer was not lost by any default, neglect of duty or incompetence on the part of the master and that his certificate was duly returned.

Following the wreck, Denicke and his crew went to Geraldton apparently with orders to advertise the sale of the vessel. Broadhurst followed and there wrote to the Colonial Secretary, asking for the provision of diving apparatus as soon as possible.67 This indicates that Broadhurst himself had by then dispensed with the idea of using 'diving apparatus' in the pearling industry and did not have any equipment, or men experienced with the gear, aboard the Xantho or at his bases in the North. Broadhurst also requested that Edward Thompson, the diver who he had working in the Adur, be sent from Fremantle. He also secured the services of another diver at Geraldton and asked the government for the loan of labour in the form of prisoners. He added that the loss of the vessel was a heavy blow especially as he felt that the insurance policy on the vessel that he had taken out in England had lapsed. He realized that this may have occurred about a fortnight before the loss of the vessel and had sent an urgent letter home to rectify the situation.68

An examination of the wreck was made from the surface, on 25 November, on 10 December, and between 18-22 December. The fore deck was 3-4 metres underwater and the afterdeck lay about 1 metre below the surface. The engine room, cabin, skylights and cabin companion had been washed overboard. The main deck had partly broken up and had washed away as had the bulwarks. The reports concluded that the vessel was a total wreck and should be sold.69 By December diving apparatus had been obtained and Broadhurst had got a diver from the Victoria. He also hired the Arabian for use at the site. They would have then been set to work salvaging the lead ore and gear from the wreck though a Mr Mitchell advised against entering into any salvage arrangement.

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67 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 20/11/1872, CSO, 727/33, BL.
68 ibid.
69 CSO, 727/268, BL.
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with Broadhurst on the basis that it might be ‘misconstrued’.\textsuperscript{70} In January 1873, Mitchell indicated that he also had the services of a competent diver and that if his suit could be kept watertight, there would not be too much difficulty in recovering the ore. There was some urgency in the matter as the wreck was slowly filling with sand. Despite this the divers appear to have performed their tasks well. The list of the gear landed on the beach and later sold at auction was quite substantial,\textsuperscript{71} and the excavations which were conducted in 1985 also showed that the wreck was almost totally devoid of artefacts. This indicates that the divers performed their tasks very satisfactorily though considerable quantities of the ore remain. Broadhurst then sought tenders for the raising of the vessel in March of 1873 but nothing eventuated due possibly to the ingress of sand.\textsuperscript{72}

Little is known about events (if any) that followed and it appears that the SS Xantho was quickly forgotten by all except those navigating the narrow channel in which it lay.\textsuperscript{73} In 1875, for example, Commander W.E. Archdeacon, Royal Navy marked the site on a chart of the area that he was preparing with the notation, ‘submerged wreck’. Archdeacon does not name the vessel in his notes but describes the location exactly and expressed the belief that as a sand-bar was encroaching over the site, that it would soon be engulfed.\textsuperscript{74} It is clear that by then the wreck had been abandoned by all, including Broadhurst, and soon became lost to living memory.

Thus on the basis of the historical evidence alone, it appears that the SS Xantho was lost through old age, hull failure, and incorrect loading. In purchasing this particular vessel, Broadhurst had made a very costly error.

\textsuperscript{70} Mitchell to Habgood, 16/1/1873, Habgood papers, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{71} This included, a complete set of sails with running gear, anchors, 81 fathoms of chain, boat davits, lifebuoys, a barometer, thermometers, salinometers, navigation lights, fenders, a large ships bell, portable forge, three compasses, a patent log, engine room tools, 2 clocks, lamps, a telescope, and a 13’ dinghy. Inquirer, 5/2/1873.
\textsuperscript{72} Herald, 5/4/1873.
\textsuperscript{73} The master of the salt ship SS Kurnalpi requested the removal of the wreck with explosives in 1911 as it was obstructing the passage. It appears somewhat fortuitously that his request was ignored as the engine has since been raised and will become a major exhibit by the W.A. Museum.
\textsuperscript{74} Archdeacon, Cmdr., W. E., RN, Australia West Coast, Shoal Point 28° South to Flinder’s Bay, 1879), p.6 & on Admiralty Chart No. 2. Western Australian coast.
This assessment matches that of the correspondent of the Herald newspaper who claimed

her hull is weather beaten and worn out... The vessel was simply swamped through her unfitness from age, service and other causes to carry the freight with which she was laden.75

(v) The Abandonment of the crew of the SS Xantho

Broadhurst is claimed by the contemporary press to have abandoned his crew to their own devices when the vessel was lost. In fairness it needs to be noted, that there appears to have been considerable confusion leading up to the claims and Broadhurst was also acting in ‘straightened circumstances’ having lost his uninsured vessel and its contents. He may not have had the resources necessary to pay his men the relatively large sum of around £600 owing, or to attend to their needs.76 Despite the mitigating circumstances, his behaviour in the light of the loss of his vessel casts considerable doubt on his integrity and his attitude to his employees. This apparently deplorable aspect of Broadhurst’s business dealings will now be examined.

It appears that Broadhurst directed Denicke to advertise the steamer for sale immediately on his arrival at Champion Bay, but when he arrived, the Master found that he had ‘no means of advertising there’. Broadhurst arrived a few days later around 20 November, but in realizing that he would not receive a good price for the vessel at Geraldton, he ‘took no steps to sell the vessel’.77 This is quite understandable from his point of view, but by doing so, Broadhurst apparently had little funds at his disposal and could not, or would not pay the arrears of wages. When summoned by the Chief Mate for payment, it was stated that Broadhurst quietly quitted Geraldton the day before the case was to be heard, leaving his men without money or instructions. On the

75 Herald, 25/1/1873.
76 Herald, 8/2/1873.
77 Wrecks sold at remote locations or at poorly attended sale often went for ridiculously low prices. The Inquirer 25/1/1873 estimated that the engines and machinery alone cost in excess of £1500. Broadhurst could not have hoped to have got a buyer at anywhere near that price in Fremantle let alone Geraldton with a much smaller population.
advice of the Resident Magistrate at Champion Bay, Denicke and all of his crew, bar four ‘Malay’ seamen, then followed Broadhurst to Fremantle. In the meantime, Broadhurst had arrived in Fremantle, and on 9 December Broadhurst wrote to the Colonial Secretary and advised him of his intention to go back to Port Gregory via Champion Bay. He also asked that the enquiry into the loss of the vessel be held there to ensure a proper hearing of the case. 78 He then departed for the stricken vessel and, on the day he left, his crew arrived in Fremantle in search of him. Probably unaware of their actions and in the expectation of finding them at Geraldton, Broadhurst left no money or instructions for them. In the confusion, Denicke understandably concluded ‘surely we are justified in the supposition that he was trying to elude us’. Denicke then claimed to have a legal right to sell the vessel and claimed that he could, give a legal title for it when sold. 79 The local press got to hear of the plight of the men and in taking up their case, the correspondent brought to the attention of the readers the vastly differing treatment of survivors from the barque Hoki Tika which was lost off Cape Leeuwin at the same time and those from the steamship Xantho. 80 The crew appealed to various Colonial Offices for assistance, and when this was refused they followed Broadhurst and the four ‘Malays’ left at Champion Bay were left to wander about hungry and penniless. The whole affair was denounced in the press as ‘a barbarous outrage on humanity’. That criticism was repeated in the following edition and Broadhurst, who was not mentioned by name, was accused of failing to discharge the men from his service and to pay them their dues. 81 The correspondent, who had clearly taken up the issue with a vengeance, then went on to urge that the Master sell the vessel by public auction. He also added, that there was no reason why the wreck should not fetch a good price as the Xantho should be ‘worth something for old iron’ and that the engines could bring at a public auction as much as would pay the arrears in wages. Denicke decided to

78 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 9/12/1872. CSR, 727/235, BL.
79 Inquirer, 8/2/1873.
80 Herald, 11/1/1873.
81 Herald, 11/1/1873 & 25/1/1873. See also Inquirer, 25/1/1873.
follow the advice and a notice advertising the sale of the *Xantho* together with
the fittings and gear at auction was subsequently published in the press.

In the absence of her husband, Mrs Broadhurst countered the notice, stating
that Denicke was attempting to sell the vessel ‘without any authority’. She then
publicly advised that Denicke could not give legal title to the vessel and
protested his actions especially as Broadhurst was still in the Colony and was
‘employed in the interests of the master and crew as well as his own’.82 Captain
Denicke countered Mrs Broadhurst claiming that she was unaware of the true
state of affairs and that his authority for advertising the sale was ‘indisputable’.

In examining the evidence from the papers, letters and the various government
offices, it appears that Broadhurst did not pay his men off in the belief that as
the vessel was salvageable they were still in his employ. Denicke and the crew on
the other hand believed that as the vessel had sunk they were entitled to be
discharged and to be paid their dues. There was doubt in official circles where
the rights in the matter lay as the issue hinged on whether the vessel was a ‘total
wreck’ or not. If it was a total wreck then Broadhurst was liable to discharge
and pay his men, and if it were not then the men were still in his employ and
were required to complete their terms of service. Despite having received
advice from a diver and a competent seaman that the vessel was a ‘total wreck’,
the officials at Champion Bay were initially unable to formally concur.83 In
attempting to clarify the matter they found that ‘none of the books in this office
give any information as to what constitutes a wreck’. They then wrote to their
head office in Perth for advice.84 In the meantime Broadhurst was either back
in the area or at sea being followed by his master and crew, and there were
four ‘Malay’ seamen wandering destitute around the streets of Geraldton. They
were all causing great embarrassment to the local government who were
understandably not keen to pay for their succour.

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82 *Inquirer*, 5/2/1873.
83 *CSR*, 727/268-269, BL, contains the reports of 25/11/1872 & 30/12/1872 to the effect that the
vessel was a total loss.
84 *GRO Geraldton to Col. Sec.*, 31/12/1872, CSR, 727/254, BL.
Eventually it was decided that the *Xantho* was a total wreck and Denicke proceeded with the sale. It was slow however, and was adversely affected by the absence of many potential buyers at another sale and the confusion regarding the Captain's right to sell the vessel. It was described as a 'complete sacrifice', with items such as the dinghy on the beach at Port Gregory fetching only £1. As a result, the total sum raised was only £180 and was expected to account for less than a third of the wages due.\(^8^5\) The hull and engines were also eventually sold as one lot, fetching only £110, though the purchaser would 'not accept delivery' pending the settlement of the question of the validity of title.\(^8^6\) As far as Broadhurst was concerned, the matter was clearly not resolved, for in March and April 1873 he was calling for tenders for the raising of the steamer.\(^8^7\)

Despite having originally advised Denicke to do so, Broadhurst's decision not to sell the wreck at Geraldton is vindicated by his belief that the wreck was salvable. He can also be excused for having refused to sell the vessel at a place where there were no means to advertise and the population was too small to ensure a good crowd for the auction.

By March 1873, he had repaid the Government the £13 owing for the accommodation and feeding of the four 'Malays' left at Geraldton, though whether Broadhurst finally paid his men their dues is not known. With the benefit of hindsight, and with the understanding that we now have of his character, it appears that he would not have done so however. In selling the vessel without his authority while they still in his employ and while he still had an interest in raising it, the crew would in Broadhurst's eyes, have given him just cause to totally ignore any further demands.

From the business management point of view, the sum of around £600 that was owing to the crew is a relatively large one. It indicates that Broadhurst may have preferred to pay his men at the end of their service rather than at intervals thus ensuring their loyalty, but in doing so he set the scene for such problems as those with the SS *Xantho*. Broadhurst also may not have been able

\(^8^5\) *Herald*, 8/2/1873.
\(^8^6\) *Inquirer*, 12/3/1873.
to raise such a large sum and possibly would have been forced into debt or bankruptcy had he attempted to do so.88

Whatever the extenuating circumstances, the total abandonment of the crew without explanation, money directions or word is in-excusable, and led to the problems over the enforced sale of the vessel in the first place. For this mismanagement Broadhurst is totally at fault and the incident is an indication of poor management skills on his part.

The magnitude of the mistakes Broadhurst made with the vessel and in the management of his crew are made even greater in the face of the technical evidence that comes from the archaeological investigations which I conducted in the period 1983-1988 at the wreck of the SS Xantho.

As it is essential to any understanding of the magnitude of Broadhurst’s error in purchasing the vessel, and as there are indications that the machinery would have proved eminently suitable for his purposes had it not been forced to run in reverse, this evidence will be now be examined in brief.89

(vi) The Evidence from the Excavation of the Wreck

The wreck of the SS Xantho was found in 1979.90 In 1983, I assessed the site as part of the W.A. Museum’s Colonial Wreck Program and found evidence that the wreck warranted further detailed attention and analysis.91 Subsequent excavations conducted under my direction showed, that the engines were of an outmoded and inefficient type for 1872, when the vessel sank and that they were not fitted with a condenser.92 This was most unexpected in a vessel like the SS Xantho, which had travelled halfway round the world to

88He does not appear to have ever become bankrupt. Bankruptcy Records Pre 1892. WAS 53/54, BL.
90By members of the Maritime Archaeology Association of Western Australia, an amateur body associated with the W.A. Museum who conducted a search for the wreck on the request of the Curator of Colonial Wrecks, G. Henderson. It was then inspected by Scott Sledge of the W.A. Museum. Sledge, S., Wreck Inspection Report. SS Xantho. W. A. Museum Department of Maritime Archaeology, File 9/79.
92Ibid.
operate along one of the world’s longest, most remote and sparsely populated coastlines.

The condenser recycled exhaust steam for further use in the boiler. Without it, the boiler has to use salt water to produce steam instead of ‘fresh’ recycled water. The use of salt water causes salt encrustations in the boiler which served to insulate the heating surfaces and thus require more heat to attain boiling point. In order to remove this encrustation, the boiler needed to be regularly ‘shut down,’ possibly once every four to seven days and the deposit removed from the interior. As a result of the depositing of this insulating layer, coal consumption in such non condensing engines was inordinately high. Given that the vessel had travelled to the Colony from Scotland and was then operating on such a long coastline as Western Australia without support or coaling facilities, these engineering anomalies were doubly of interest.93

Figure 35
The wreck of the SS Xantho showing the lack of a condenser, the location of all the machinery (including the pumps) aft, and the cargo spaces served by a single deck winch.94

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93 A ‘non condensing engine... occupies less room than the condensing engine... [but] will only be used where fuel is readily obtained and it is important to save space and weight...[they] are serviceable for very short voyages in steamers...especially river navigation... (the) condensing engine is more economical...the first cost of condensers is however considerable, they have great weight and occupy considerable space’. Maw, T.J., and Brown, T., The Marine Steam Engine. Designed chiefly for the use of the officers of Her Majesty’s Navy, 3rd ed., (Longman, London. 1855), pp. 50, 67.

94 An isometric projection of the wrecksite, by John Riley.
The engine was also examined and was found, to be a Horizontal Trunk Engine, a type normally fitted with a condenser, that was designed almost solely for use by the Royal Navy. In their day the type was acknowledged as an excellent engine, well suited for Naval purposes.95

It was a real surprise on the wreck of this small merchant steamer however. Of all the 230 sets of Trunk Engines ever built, only one merchant ship the SS Himalaya which was built in 1854 is known to have been originally fitted with the Horizontal Trunk Engine.96 The main reason why these engines did not find favour with merchant ship owners was that being a simple expansion engine experiencing large heat losses through the exposed trunk surfaces, they had a voracious appetite for coal. Even the Himalaya was only in service for one year with the Peninsular and Orient Company before being sold to the British Government for use as a troopship.

From an examination of the SS Xan thro register it was found that the engine found on the wreck had been built in 1861, ten years previous to the refit in which it was placed in the vessel. Despite being ten years old, the contemporary press stated that the engines were designed for a Royal Navy gunboat, were as 'good as new', and had seen little service when fitted to the Xan thro.97 From the available historical evidence, it appears likely that the engine was originally from one of the Crimean war type of Royal Navy gunboats that were ordered in great number before and after that conflict. Because of this many were built of 'green' timbers and some even rotted or fell apart on the stocks.98 Thus, the

95 The Trunk Engine type was claimed by one contemporary source to be the 'lightest and most compact of all the forms of marine screw engines' The engineer, Burgh writing in 1869 agreed and stated that the type combined 'simplicity of connection and access for repair, with superlative design and arrangement. Burgh, N.P. Modern Engineering Illustrated, (E & FN Spon, London, 1869) p. 41 Such an analysis was supported thirty years later by the compilers of 'The Engineer,' a prestigious journal, which stated that the type was, 'universally admitted to be the most simple and compact and had fewness and accessibility of parts and efficiency in operation. 'The Engineer, 11/2/1898. Such readily acknowledged features would have proved very attractive to Broadhurst.
97 Inquirer, 25/1/1873.
98 The SS Xan thro engine appears to have come from a 'Britomart' class of single engined, 60HP, gunboat cancelled on the stocks in the early 1860s due to dry rot. Preston and Majors, op. cit., p.93. A list and description of the many gunboats rotting on the stocks in the navy dockyards appears in the The Engineer of 31/1/1862. This matter will be examined in considerable detail in my technical report. An illustration of the type appears in Archibald, E. H. H., The Wooden fighting Ship in the Royal Navy AD 897-1860, (Blanford Press London,1968), p. 89.
claim that the engine fitted to the SS Xantho was almost new appears to be substantiated. These particular Trunk Engines were found to have been non-condensing, and rotated at 190 RPM and at 90 PSI pressure. Thus they were very high speed and high pressure engines for their time. These high revolutions and high boiler pressures, coupled with other problems to force the Royal Navy to keep a floating workshop on the China Station to service these engines. Despite this, there is little doubt that, in its time, the relatively tiny 60 HP Trunk Engine such as that fitted to the SS Xantho, was an excellent naval engine. Some units remained in service for many years and a number lasted into the late nineteenth century and beyond. Despite this, the combined problems of heat losses from the internal and external surfaces of the exposed trunks, the dangers of ash and other abrasive substances coming in contact with the trunks, power losses caused by friction at the large trunk packing glands and the associated large appetite for coal even when fitted with a condenser all served to see the type, no matter how well engineered, uneconomic in comparison to the Compound Engine that was developed in the 1860s.

At first glance, the decision a vessel fitted with such machinery appears to have been a very poor one indeed. With the benefit of hindsight, and in the light of Broadhurst’s successful operations in the pearling industry and in utilizing the Xantho as a ‘tramp’ steamer, the decision can be seen to have had some merit.

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99 It was claimed by the contemporary press, that the SS Xantho engines had little work and were as ‘good as new’. Inquirer, 25/1/1873.

100 The engines were listed as the 60hp class. They had 2 cylinders of 21 inch diameter, with a stroke of 12 inches. They developed 270 HP giving a maximum speed of around 7 kts. Preston and Majors, op. cit., p.107.

101 ibid., p. 108. & The Engineer, 11/2/1898, op. cit.

102 The gunboats and their engines and boilers ‘fully answered the expectations that were formed of them.’ The Engineer, (1897), op. cit.


104 Osbon, op. cit., pp 103-116. The Pacific Steamship Company and the Peninsula and Orient Navigation Company and the Ocean Steamship Company (Blue Funnel Line) in using Compound engines in that period, were able not only to show greater efficiency of coal consumed, but also to obtain higher speed with less machinery weight and less space. The ‘Compound Engines’ effectively re-used exhaust steam from the high pressure cylinders in powering the low pressure cylinders. The compound engine and its two cylinder, three cylinder and quadruple forms of the late 19th century, was comparatively very efficient and took the age of marine steam propulsion into the twentieth century. Guthrie, J., A History of Marine Engineering, (Hutchinson, London, 1971), pp. 112-115.
When Broadhurst purchased the vessel, the ‘compound’ engine which successfully re-used exhaust steam was a relatively new phenomenon. A new engine, no matter how efficient was also expensive as were condensers however.\textsuperscript{105} To fit such machinery into an old hull like the SS Xantho may have made the exercise prohibitive or beyond the reach of the market at which the refit at the hands of the ‘metal merchant’ Robert Stewart was aimed.

Apart from the cost factor, there were other advantages for a man such as Broadhurst who was contemplating purchasing the vessel as a general ‘work-horse’. Broadhurst planned to operate the SS Xantho on a very remote and poorly serviced coastline. Simplicity, ease of operation and repair would have been key considerations. A photograph of a model of the SS Xantho engine appears in figure 36 and the acknowledged simplicity and compact nature of the engine becomes immediately apparent. All the parts were easily accessible, and the engine was one of the first mass produced marine engines made.\textsuperscript{106} There were a number of units unused or nearly new in the Royal Navy shipyards, and the availability of cheap interchangeable parts would have been an attractive element to the purchase.\textsuperscript{107} This, the acknowledged simplicity, comparatively few working hours and excellent pedigree of the engine, may have combined with the relatively low price to attract Broadhurst to the vessel in the first place.\textsuperscript{108}

In addition to these advantages, it is now known that, at this time, Broadhurst centred his activities in the North of Western Australia at Bannangarra east of Nickol Bay. This was relatively close to the Batavia, Surabaya and the ‘Straits Settlements’. Coaling and ship repair facilities were

\textsuperscript{105}See footnote 90.
\textsuperscript{106}Penn and son resorted to ‘some kind of subcontracting’ and only completed the final installation of the engine themselves. Preston, A., and Major, J., Send a Gunboat, (Longmans, London, 1967), p. 29. It has been claimed that this was probably the ‘first recorded instance of mass production techniques being applied to marine engineering.’ Osbon, G.A., The Crimean War Gunboats. Part 1 (Mariner’s Mirror, Vol. 51,1965), p.106.
\textsuperscript{107}The Engineer, 3/1/1862, lists a large number of discarded or rotten boats containing such engines. It was from one of these that the SS Xantho engine was believed to have originated.
\textsuperscript{108}It was claimed by the contemporary press, that though the engine was ten year old that the engines had little work and were as ‘good as new’. Inquirer, 25/1/1873.
available at Surabaya and coal was possibly available at Batavia (Jakarta) and Timor to where a Dutch government steamer had a regular run.109

Figure 36

*A model of the SS Xantho engine, showing the simplicity and ease of operation that would have attracted Broadhurst.*110

It may have been that Broadhurst was aware of these geographical advantages, and when he weighed them up with the advantages inherent in the vessel, they outweighed the disadvantage of the greater coal consumption caused by the design of the engine and the lack of a condenser. In this context it

109 Communications and Markets, in *Description of Camden Harbour, its Climate and Adjoining Country*, op cit.
110A wooden 'mock up' built by Mr Bob Burgess as a preliminary to producing a working scale model. From drawings of the SS Xantho engine itself by Geoff Kimpton and Noel Miller.
also needs to be borne in mind that the SS Xantho was schooner rigged with two masts when purchased by Broadhurst, and that he may also have intended to operate the vessel under sail when conditions and circumstances allowed.\textsuperscript{111} Most of the early sea-going steamers carried provision for sail. The presence of a crew of 15 on board out of Port Gregory indicates, from the numbers alone, that the sails may have been used where possible. In this way Broadhurst would have been able to keep the engine hours down and thus keep the coal consumption, the need for maintenance and the need to continually clean the boilers in the absence of a condenser down to a minimum. With a beam to length ratio of 1: 6, the SS Xantho may have matched the best sailing vessels in this regard, provided the drag caused by the propeller could be minimized.\textsuperscript{112} In support of this possibility, what appears to have been a device for disconnecting the propeller, was noted during the excavation on the propeller shaft. This would have allowed the screw to freely rotate and cause less drag when under sail. Until this section is raised and more closely examined however, it cannot be conclusively proved to be such a device. The answer to this question and an analysis of the vessel’s handling characteristics under sail and its general efficiency as a hull will have to await the production of lines drawings and the results of other technical research based on further underwater measurement and excavation.

Even with these unanswered questions in mind, the SS Xantho may have eventually proved an outstanding success; had it not been fitted with a propeller that required the engine to be run in reverse in order to propel the vessel forward.

\textsuperscript{111}SS Xantho, certificate of registry, 1871, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{112}‘Most of the iron clippers had a proportion of six beams to length and upwards... though a high ratio of beams to length is not necessarily a sign of a clipper’. Analysis of the sailing qualities of the SS Xantho will have to wait the production and analysis of lines from the remainder of the excavation of the vessel and these combined with other factors will give a reasonably useful guide in this regard. MacGregor, D.R., \textit{Fast Sailing Ships Their Design and Construction}, 1775-1875, (Nautical Publishing, Lymington, 1973), pp. 173,177.

It also needs to be borne in mind in this context that many steamers were converted to sailing vessels at some time in their career and performed very well. The iron hulled, SS Les Trois Amis, SS Omeo and SS Great Britain are three ex steamers used solely as sailing vessels in their later career in Western Australian or in Australian waters that spring immediately to mind.
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The engineer John Penn designed the type of Horizontal Trunk Engine fitted to the SS Xantho to rotate anti-clockwise when the vessel was going forward, in order to minimise the extra wear caused by the weight of the piston. A ‘left-handed’ screw, or propeller, which also rotated anti-clockwise was then fitted to accommodate this motion. Somewhat amazingly, a ‘right handed’ screw (or one that rotates clockwise when the vessel is propelled forward), rather than the correct ‘left handed’ type was found to be fitted to the SS Xantho. Thus the engine had to be operated in reverse to enable the vessel to progress forwards. This markedly increased the wear on the engine and was obviously a prelude to severe engineering problems. A more detailed explanation of this rather amazing circumstance appears in Appendix Six.

Also of significance in this very brief analysis of the engineering failings of the SS Xantho was the placement of the pumps aft with no provision for the clearing of the cargo spaces foreward. Being an integral part of the engine, the pumps were located in the stern of the vessel and could not be easily deployed to clear water from the bows or cargo spaces which were separated from the engine room by three supposedly watertight bulkheads. On the other hand, these supposedly water tight bulkheads allowed water in from the bows to rush aft and extinguish the boiler fires when the vessel struck a sand-bar at Port Gregory. Thus it was realized from the archaeological evidence that the vessel was old and ill suited for such a taxing colonial role and that total hull and engine failure was only a matter of time. Such considerations may have been the reason for Broadhurst to state, in the race for safety as the vessel sank beneath him at Port Gregory, that he would rather save the cargo than the ship.

In the final analysis, despite any apparent advantages he may have thought the vessel had, Broadhurst’s decision to purchase the Xantho appears to have been poorly made indeed.

114 The Specifications for the SS Xantho required three watertight bulkheads.
115 Capt. Denicke at the Court of Inquiry into the loss of the SS Xantho.
Figure 37

An illustration of the stern section of the SS Xantho showing the right handed propeller.\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure37.png}
\end{center}

\section*{Conclusion}

It is now evident that the decision, in general, to purchase an iron hulled screw steamer for use on the coast of Western Australia and in particular in the pearling industry on the North-West coast was not an unreasonable one for Broadhurst to make, despite the problems involved.

From the historical and archaeological evidence gleaned during investigations at the wreck of the SS \textit{Xantho}, however, it is clear that the

\textsuperscript{116}From an illustration of the intended display of the engine and stern, by Chris Buhagiar. Maritime Archaeological Association of Western Australia.
particular vessel that he chose was worn out, badly engineered, and poorly suited for its colonial role. 117

Whether Broadhurst had previously considered such problems as a reliable source of coal and the need to travel to Batavia, Surabaya, Adelaide or Melbourne to conduct repairs and refits on the vessel in the absence of suitable facilities for such work in the colony is not known. 118 On the other hand, because his base at Bannangarra was closer to the support facilities and coaling station at Batavia and Surabaya than to Fremantle and the Eastern Australian ports, those very considerations may have lead him into the purchase of the vessel in the first place. He may also have been strongly influenced by the reputation of John Penn, a contemporary of his brother-in-law, the engineer Joseph Whitworth, who also would have been well aware of Penn’s capabilities and the worth of his engines. Broadhurst may have seen the war surplus Royal Navy Horizontal Trunk Engine, with available spares, as the most simple and reliable unit available on his relatively small budget. Despite the fact that it was inefficient and outmoded when fitted to the former paddle steamer, the engine may have have appeared the answer to Broadhurst’s financial and engineering problems. As many early steamers were noted for their performance under sail, this may also have been a factor in Broadhurst’s decision to purchase the SS Xantho. Being designed for sheltered waters, it appears to have had good ‘clean’ lines and had a length to breadth ratio reminiscent of the best sailing vessels. Like many similar steamships, the SS Xantho may have handled well under sail, and Broadhurst may have intended using the vessel under sail when speed was not a concern, in order to conserve fuel. At first glance, the newly fitted out vessel with new boiler, near new engine and new pumps would have appeared a very attractive proposition indeed.

Despite this, in purchasing this particular vessel, Broadhurst made a colossal error of judgement and one that he was probably well aware, if not immediately he left Scotland, then soon after. The evidence for this lies in the

118 Parsons, (1980), op. cit., p.18.
narrative of the race for safety at Port Gregory as the Xantho slowly sank beneath Broadhurst and his unfortunate crew. Broadhurst, thinking that he was insured, prevented the distraught Master, (who was recorded, somewhat understandably, as having ‘lost his presence of mind’), from casting sacks of lead ore overboard; saying that ‘he would rather save the lead than the ship’.

To compound the problem, when the SS Xantho sank uninsured, the loss as a single capital investment at £4500, together with the loss of the cargo and the returns expected from the voyage on which it was lost, was for a man like Broadhurst very large indeed. This is evidence that Broadhurst paid little attention to the detail required to succeed in business and as a result was almost ruined in this instance. There were also benefits foregone in the pearling industry and in shipowning in general by purchasing the SS Xantho. By focussing all of his financial resources into one vessel, when at that price he could have had a veritable fleet, Broadhurst lost on these potential benefits and un-wittingly developed an ‘Achilles heel’ for his far-flung interests.

In closing and noting that in the final analysis, Broadhurst certainly failed dismally with the vessel, it should be noted that it is perhaps unkind to have analysed it in the context of the subsidized steamers that followed on the coastal run as Henderson has done.

SS Xantho was used primarily for Broadhurst’s personal purposes in pearling, in the carriage of ‘Malays’ and as an independent link between his enterprises. When not required in those capacities, it was utilized as a ‘tramp’ steamer in the coastal trade and in the trade between Western Australia and the ‘Straits Settlements’ notably Batavia, (now Jakarta). Subsequent steamers stayed south of Geraldton, and on the coastal trade for another decade; whereas Xantho was virtually based in the North and was a link from there to the nearby overseas settlements. This fact, the vessel’s place in the pearling industry, in the opening of the North West, and as the intended link in Broadhurst’s far flung ‘empire’ is missed altogether by the historians. It was to

119 Evidence from the enquiry into the loss of the Xantho. See earlier.
120 Henderson, (1977) op. cit.
121 ibid., p.199.
be almost another 10 years after the loss of the *Xantho* before another steamer regularly operated to the north of Western Australia and another 20 years before the auxiliary steam yacht *Sunbeam* was used in the pearling industry. It was claimed that, if it had not been lost, the *Sunbeam* ‘might well have set the pace and led to earlier mechanisation of the industry’.  

Broadhurst’s speculation with the SS *Xantho* is made the more remarkable if it is remembered that all other efforts in the use of steam in the coastal trade centred on the carriage of freight and passengers to a timetable and with a subsidy. All, were ‘big concerns’ and in most cases Eastern States enterprises until the advent of the State Shipping service in 1912.  

When the two pioneer vessels the SS *Xantho* and its successor the SS *Georgette* sank, the possibilities of returning to sailing coaster or overland communications between the colony's various ports was looked on with some concern in the local press  

To revert to the old mode of transit per coaster, in ill ventilated, bile provoking dirty vessels, with all its personal inconveniences and defects - to be tossed about for an indefinite period in what is little better than a cockle-shell - or if travelling overland, to be jolted and cramped up for days together in a rickety conveyance on bad roads, exposed to all weather, and with the incertitude of ever reaching one’s destination safe and sound in circumstances the bare mention of which will cause the hardiest amongst us to cry out - oh, give us back the steamer at any cost.  

Thus despite the failures and mistakes associated with the purchase of the vessel, it is an undeniable fact, that one of Broadhurst’s major achievements, was the single-handed introduction of steam to the coastal trade of the Swan  

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124 *Inquirer*, 11/10/1876.
River Colony in the form of the SS *Xantho*. It should also be noted that he operated the vessel successfully before it sank, despite the problems of a lack of coaling and engineering facilities on the Western Australian coast. In doing so he gave the populace from Nickol Bay to Fremantle a taste for what they had long been denied and for what they had desired for such a long time, i.e. a link with the outside world in the form of a steamer until it abruptly sank underneath him and his unfortunate crew at Port Gregory.125

Despite these positive considerations, the purchase of the *Xantho* appears a great mistake and a product of Broadhurst’s peculiar naivety especially in view of the complexities of steamship owning and operation. In the context of his involvement with the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, his experimentation with ‘diving apparatus,’ his use of ‘Malays’ and the volunteer Aboriginal convicts, it appears another of Broadhurst’s ‘grand’ ideas made complex when the ‘simple’ methods would have sufficed.

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125 It was not until 1881 that a contract for a steamer to call at Shark Bay and Cossack was agreed to. Henderson, (1977) op. cit., pp 78-79, 191-203.
Chapter Six

Broadhurst Guano Merchant and his Miscellaneous Business Activities

In addition to his major ventures, Broadhurst was involved in a number of interests of a smaller scale including fishing, fish preserving and Parliament before he went on at the age of 60 to finally achieve a measure of success in the guano industry. It will be seen, that in them all, he was to have a mixed fortune, with none of his enterprises including guano mining, proving as successful for him as he would have hoped.

(i) Broadhurst Member of the Legislative Council

Before 1890, the colony was controlled by the Governor assisted by an Executive and a Legislative Council. In 1870, the Council consisted of 12 elected members, returned by ten districts, three official nominees, and three non official nominees. The Governor presided over the Council which elected its own speaker. In 1874 the total membership was 21, two thirds of whom were elected and the remainder were nominated by the government. The members were predominantly landowners or pastoralists with some merchants included in their number.¹

In 1874, after he had returned from his initial outstanding successes in the Shark Bay pearl fishery, Broadhurst was nominated to the Legislative Council by the governor. In nominating him, Governor Weld, cited Broadhurst’s first hand knowledge of the North-West coast and the settlers there. Weld claimed that he was ‘the only person in the position who has the abilities and leisure to represent them.’²

¹ Hasluck, op. cit., p. 36.
² Drake Brockman, op. cit., p. 234.
Broadhurst accepted the nomination and sat in the chamber for the first time on 24 October. In the short time he spent as a member, Broadhurst voted with the establishment represented by the Surveyor General Malcolm Fraser and the Colonial Secretary, F.P. Barlee on most of the issues under consideration.

Governor Weld’s position was taken by Governor Robinson in the new year and, as indicated in the section on pearling in Shark Bay, it was while Broadhurst was in Perth that the new Governor ordered the investigations into his failure to pay the ‘Malays’ in his service. Robinson was keen to appease his superiors in London and indicated to his representative at Shark Bay that the incident was to be used in an effort to deter others committing similar and worse crimes in the industry. The correspondence relating to the incident in which Broadhurst was charged and severely criticized was tabled at a meeting of the Legislative Council on 30 November 1875. Broadhurst’s name does not appear in the list of Members at that Council meeting or at an others following. Apparently he had resigned prior to the tabling of the documents. Though he was to successfully challenge the court which was held at Shark Bay by having the case sent to the Supreme Court with a view to the conviction being quashed, he did not sit in Parliament again. Thus Broadhurst’s foray into the Parliament was short-lived, controversial and another of his many failures.

(ii) Whaling, Fishing, Fish Preserving and Turtle Shelling

On 25 October 1871 Broadhurst applied from Ireland for a seven year lease to Delambre, Bedout and Malus Islands. He was unsuccessful in his application, for Pearse and Marmion had the lease to Malus Island for a period of 8 years from May 1870, and both Bedout and Delambre Islands were also occupied for the year. Broadhurst was advised in the following

4 *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1874-1876*, op. cit. BL.
5 ibid.
6 *Broadhurst to Col. Sec., 20/10/1871*, op. cit.
month however, that should they be not profitably occupied then he would be considered the 'best claimant for occupancy'. In advising Broadhurst of this, the Colonial Secretary also suggested that the Dugong and Turtle shell fisheries were of possible commercial value. Broadhurst was already aware of the possibilities of the dugong fishery. In 1866, he saw the seafarer and pioneer pearler, Mr Darling, capture a dugong and recover about 100 litres of oil. He apparently did not pursue this avenue and was more interested in the whaling being then carried out at Malus Island. When the SS Xantho was en route Scotland for Western Australia, he signalled his intention to become involved in the fishery stating that he carried five boats on deck together with whaling gear. Broadhurst was also interested in the possibilities of harvesting turtles for the 'tortoise shell' industry. In his interest in the simultaneous pursuit of a number of fisheries he was not unique. A group consisting of Pearse, Marmion and Tappa employed the Argo whaling and pearling in November 1868 and sent 8 tons of shell and 3 tons of oil from the Malus Island base in July 1870. On 13 July 1872, Broadhurst again applied for Delambre Island 'for a Malay camp for the purposes of getting Turtle Shell’. Again he was unsuccessful as it was then occupied by a Mr. Best, who had applied for the island in June 1871 for the purposes of establishing a ‘trade in whaling and turtle fishing’. It was noted however that Broadhurst was to receive the lease should it lapse.

There are three varieties of large marine Turtle, the Green or 'edible turtle,' the Hawksbill, from which the 'tortoise shell' is obtained and the Loggerhead. According to contemporary accounts the Loggerhead was practically useless. At the 1870 census it was noted that the Hawksbill

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7 CSO, Acc 527, 1885/1182, BL.
8 RJS Diary, 9/5/1866, BL.
9 Broadhurst to Col. Sec., op. cit. The boats may also have been intended for pearling.
10 SDUR, B7/692 & B8/814a., BL.
11 Praagh, L.V., The Great North West and it's Resources, the undeveloped heritage of Western Australia: A description of the country and settlements between. Roebourne and Broome, (Praagh and Lloyd, Perth, 1904).
Turtle, which was the basis of the ‘Tortoise Shell’ industry, was to be found in an ‘immense number’ on the coast, but that no extensive or systematic collection has been hitherto attempted in consequence of a want of knowledge of the marketable value of the shell.\textsuperscript{12}

Though the shell landed in England was fetching between sixteen and eighteen shillings per pound (half a kilo) and the government fully expected the harvesting of the creature to assume economic proportions, the industry was never a major one. By January 1871 when Broadhurst was away purchasing the \textit{Xantho}, only one cask of turtle shell had been shipped and in 1880 it was noted that, even then, the trade was ‘inconsiderable’.\textsuperscript{13} The only ‘take’ of note in this period was in 1869 when exports to the value £483 were recorded.\textsuperscript{14}

Broadhurst also showed signs of wanting to enter the fishing and fish preserving industry at this time. In indicating that he was to put the SS \textit{Xantho} on the coastal trade during the unsuccessful 1872 season, he stated that the vessel was to call at the Pelsaert Island fishery in the Houtman Abrolhos, three distinct groups of islands off Geraldton. (Figure 38) On 4 May 1873, Broadhurst enquired of the Surveyor General whether Von Bibra’s lease of Dirk Hartog Island prevented him (Broadhurst) from erecting a fish curing establishment on the beach to be managed by a white man with a labour force of five ‘Malays’. Though it was a logical progression in view of the number of ‘Malays’ he had in his service at Shark Bay, again the idea was not a new one, for a Mr. Curtis proceeded to the Abrolhos in July 1844 for the purposes of salting seal skins and fish for export.

Broadhurst also had his eyes on Faure Island in Shark Bay possibly for fishing and as a camp for his ‘Malays’. In the letter, above, he was to note that his application for it had gone unanswered, though appended to the

\textsuperscript{12} 1870 Census, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{13} CSR, 714/18, BL.
\textsuperscript{14} Nicolay, op. cit, p.114.
letter is a Governmental memo note to the effect that £5 per annum was payable for the lease. This indicates that he was eventually successful in obtaining the island though nothing further has been found on this venture. Given the successes that he had at Wilyah Miah in Useless Inlet in 1873-1874 and given that he had a store and ‘Malay’ camp there, it appears that he may not have needed the island and did not occupy it before, or after, he left Shark Bay in 1874.

On 1 May 1876, whilst stationed in Perth and engaged in the cartage of pearl shell from Shark Bay, Broadhurst again indicated his interest in the Abrolhos and applied for the lease to East Wallabi Island for a ‘fishing station’. The conditions set by the Government were that the industry be ‘steadily carried on’ and that an annual rental of £25 be paid for each island occupied. It was noted at the surveyor’s office that a Mr Levy, who had the lease, had forfeited his rights there as he had ‘never worked the concern’. It is not known whether Broadhurst was successful in his application. A fish canning industry was later established in the Abrolhos Islands it appears to have been a twentieth century phenomenon.

(iii) Fish Canning at Mandurah

After the events above, Broadhurst spent some time in England and returned in October 1877 with a fish preserving works, having obtained financial backing from the local firm of W. & D. Moore in order to purchase the equipment and to established the venture. In 1878, he began a fish and fruit canning industry under the name of the Mandurah Fish Canning and Preserving Company which was situated at Mandurah, about 50 kilometres south of Fremantle. W. & D. Moore and Company not only had ‘a prominent part in the investment’, but also assisted in the setting up of the machinery. This included a guillotine, a shearing machine for

15 SDUR, B8/857, BL.
16 While he was away in Perth a number of men were using the island as a prison on which to ‘hold’ captive Aborigines. Broadhurst was not implicated in the incident, and the miscreants were mentioned by name. V&P, 1874-5. Report of Magistrate Fairbairn, op. cit.
17 SDUR, B10/1071c, d, BL.
clipping sheets of tin, a stamping machine and iron baths. The building was erected under the ‘instruction’ of Broadhurst and a stone walled shingled roofed building with a concrete floor measuring 18 metres x 7.6 metres was established about 50 metres from the water’s edge. A jetty was erected along with a cleaning shed with an interconnecting tram line. By January of the the following year the works were nearing completion and by mid year about 2000 tins were being processed daily with all hands. When at full capacity, the works employed about 50 people of a total population in the town of around 200.\textsuperscript{19} Thus Broadhurst’s impact on the town was considerable and the Cannery was anticipated to be a great success as fish, mainly ‘sea mullet’, which proved suitable for canning were plentiful.\textsuperscript{20}

The Western Australian goldfields, India and the Eastern Colonies, especially were considered ready markets for the product.\textsuperscript{21} The overseas trade did not amount to much however and it was noted in 1880, that though small quantities of fish were being ‘cured’ at the time, the amount was of ‘no importance’ to the trade of the colony.\textsuperscript{22} On the other hand, the local trade appeared to have been lucrative, and in January 1880 Eliza and Charles Broadhurst left the Colony for London and did not return until the following October.\textsuperscript{23} This is an indication of good returns and also indicates that Broadhurst employed a manager and was following his usual trend of setting up a venture and then leaving it in his care.

In early 1882, the business changed hands and passed to the ownership of Mr. A. Forbes. Under his guidance it apparently thrived eventually covering over half a hectare of ground and preserving not only fish but also fruit to a quality that saw it awarded a gold medal for preserving.

\textsuperscript{19} Smart, W. C., Mandurah and Pinjarra. (Paterson, Brokensha, Perth, ND), & Kay, M., \textit{The Development of Mandurah as a Holiday Resort}. (History Major Option, C.T.C., ND).
\textsuperscript{20} Kimberley, op. cit., p. 97.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Inquirer}, 1/1/1879.
\textsuperscript{22} Nicolay, op. cit., p. 114.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Arrivals and Departures}, Card Index, BL.
Later on the Tuckey Brothers and J. & W. Bateman were to establish their own canneries at Mandurah.24

Of importance in the overall analysis of Broadhurst’s business interests, and as an indication of his financial position in 1878 when he entered the fish canning, is the need to take W. D. Moore on as financial backers. This is a clear indication that Broadhurst was not in a strong financial position following the down-turn of the pearl fishery and his losses at Shark Bay in the period 1874-1876. He also had serious trouble paying all of his creditors from April 1874 to September 1875 and as possible indication of his financial position, his wife Eliza, opened a school and was running it in 1876.25 On the positive side is further evidence of Broadhurst’s ability to obtain commercial backing and to interest very highly respected and capable merchants in his schemes.

None of Broadhurst’s seven known ‘lesser’ activities, coconut growing, shop owning, whaling, turtle shelling, fishing, fish preserving and Parliament gave to him the expected returns or social benefits he may have expected however. The failure in the first four activities listed can be directly related to his decision to depart the North-West to concentrate on Shark Bay as a result of the failure in pearling and the loss of the SS Xantho. The failure in the Legislative Council is a direct result of the Shark Bay incident. The fish canning venture at Mandurah effectively occupied Broadhurst from 1878 to 1882, and though he appears to have done reasonably well, the industry did not flourish until it passed into the hands of Forbes, Tuckey and Bateman.

The variety of these activities, despite their respective failures, point to an entrepreneurial flair on the part of Broadhurst and to his propensity to ‘go out of the ordinary grooves in search of wealth’.26 He was in fact the instigator of many very worthwhile enterprises, but consistently failed to capitalize on his hard work and ingenuity. The remarkable capacity to

24 Herald, 13/2/1882.
25 Inquirer, 28/6/1876 & West Australian, 4/3/1884.
26 Kimberley, op. cit., p. 97.
rebound after set-backs surfaces again in these instances, as does a capacity for work and a willingness to travel in order to further his enterprises. All this becomes evident again when Broadhurst began to gear up for the Abrolhos Islands guano industry.

After the sale of the Mandurah fish cannery in early 1882, he proceeded to the Abrolhos Islands to examine the possibilities of establishing a 'fishing station' there. He returned to the mainland indicating only to the inquisitive press that he was 'favourably impressed' with the 'promising resources'.27 His reasons for secrecy, and for not pursuing his interest in the fishing industry, are now obvious. In the last week of December 1882, he wrote to the Government about his discovery of previously unknown guano beds of great significance.

(iv) Broadhurst and the guano trade.

'Guano' is a rich organic substance consisting of the remains of birds, their droppings, and other materials. Once its properties were recognized it replaced bone as a fertilizer and is accepted as the first of the highly concentrated manures.28 It had some advantages over its competitors. It was soluble, performed well on both heavy and light soils and some varieties had the distinct advantage of smelling like natural farmyard manure.29 As such, it was a much sought after commodity throughout the world.

Guano is present on islands throughout Australia, and the use of the substance began almost as soon as the deposits were recognized by the European settlers. A John Grace from Queenscliffe on Port Phillip Bay discovered guano on nearby Flat Island in 1858, for example.30 He had an analysis done which indicated that it possessed 'excellent qualities' and within a short time he was able to ship some hundreds of tons to Melbourne. It was claimed at the time that guano was, 'strongly

27West Australian, 26/12/1882.
29ibid., p.68.
30The Age, 21/3/1865.
recommended by the men of science for its fertilizing and invigorating power.\textsuperscript{31}

These finds, ‘set merchants astir’\textsuperscript{32} Not only did they represent an opportunity for profit in the sale of the commodity itself within the colony, but the guano enabled them to fill the holds of vessels returning to Europe after bringing out emigrants and goods for Australia. The returns from the fertilizer in the form of royalties were also good for the Government, and the Melbourne press stressed the valuable returns to the colony that the ‘profitable commercial enterprise’ represented.\textsuperscript{33}

All this occurred while Broadhurst was in Victoria and just prior to his departure for the sparsely populated west coast where similar deposits were noticed on the Houtman Abrolhos near Geraldton.

By the mid 1840s, small, locally-owned vessels were bringing down shipments of guano and it was regularly offered for sale by January of 1847.\textsuperscript{34} This was intended for the local market, though it is believed that a shipment of three tons was sent overseas, probably to America.\textsuperscript{35} The guano at the Abrolhos appeared as ‘live’ or fresh deposits and as ‘dead guano’ or ‘rock phosphate’, a limestone, converted in part to tri-calcic phosphates which required some experience in judging if it was of marketable quality or not.\textsuperscript{36} Though little is known about the activities there in this early period, it is known that shipments from the Abrolhos were usually made in small quantities, as an adjunct to other activities such as fishing.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{31} ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Perth Gazette}, 9/1/1847, 6/11/1847 & in some intervening issues.
\textsuperscript{36} ibid. p.14.
Interest in other beds of guano on the many islands off the coast of Western Australia also developed. In early 1850, substantial deposits were reported in Shark Bay and the news was received with some enthusiasm in the local press. The finder of the guano beds was given a one year lease, to Egg Island, a very rich deposit lying on a tiny island at the south-east end of Dirk Hartog Island in Shark Bay. He then chartered vessels from Mauritius for the purpose of removing the guano. After some disagreements with the authorities in London, the Colonial Government set

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38 Australia, West Coast, Geraldton to Cape Leeuwin, 1:1,000,000. AUS 417.  
39 Perth Gazette, 29/3/1850.  
a levy of £2 per ton to provide revenue and to pay for a military establishment to protect the deposits and other natural resources in the region.\textsuperscript{41} By the following year the guano prices on the English market were being quoted in the local press and the news of the Shark Bay find caused some interest on the London Stock Exchange.\textsuperscript{42} In November 1851, in response to dissatisfaction with the levy and other problems, the Colonial Office in London ordered that the duty be reduced and it was later fixed at £1 per ton. Further local and overseas shipments were made out of Shark Bay,\textsuperscript{43} though as supplies began to dwindle, the shippers began to voice their discontent and to complain that they had been misled by the Colonial Government into believing there was a much larger deposit. It was claimed that the required steps had not been taken to properly examine and quantify the resource. To compound the problems, some cargoes remained unsold at Mauritius due to their inferior quality and some doubts were cast on whether a number of cargoes were guano at all.\textsuperscript{44} By the end of the year, the industry out of Shark Bay was considerably reduced.

The nineteenth century historian, W.B. Kimberley’s analysis of this formative period in the Western Australian guano industry reads thus:

\begin{quote}
Since the hurried and unsuccessful exploitation of the Guano deposits on the North West coast in 1850 and subsequent years, interest in the trade had quite lapsed. Little was heard of Guano till 1876. \textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

Kimberley’s assessment, apparently mirrors official understanding of events rather than the actual situation. It is now clear that a large amount of unauthorized harvesting of guano occurred on remote islands before 1876. It is claimed that guano was ‘worked’ on the Lacepede Islands, Browse

\textsuperscript{42} Perth Gazette, 24/10/1851.
\textsuperscript{43} Bain, op. cit., p. 64-5 & Woodward, op. cit., p.11, records shipments in 1855, 1865 and 1872.
\textsuperscript{44} Perth Gazette, 15/8/1851.
\textsuperscript{45} Kimberley, op. cit., p.
Island, Ashmore reef, Jones Island (in Napier Broome Bay), Leseur Island, the Montebello Islands and Barrow Island. American vessels, especially, searched for unoccupied islands throughout the world. They operated in the belief that their law entitled them, as private citizens on behalf of their government, to take possession of uninhabited islands more than three miles off-shore, provided they had not been formally claimed. Such powers were not delegated to individual British subjects. The matter was complicated by British legal opinion to the effect that, in order to annex off-shore rocks and islands, the Western Australian Government was required not only to indicate such an intent but also to physically occupy them.

Broadhurst and others were also interested in exploiting the guano deposits in Shark Bay and in the Houtman Abrolhos before 1876. On 30 January 1867, for example, F.L. Von Bibra, who held pastoral leases in the Shark Bay district, wrote to the Colonial Government requesting permission to harvest guano from the islands in the Bay. In March of that year he was granted exclusive permission to do so provided that he guaranteed that those people employed in the collection and removal of the guano be prevented from landing on the 'islets' except at the time appointed, to protect the birds, and that he would not sub-let or raise the price of the commodity.

On 4 May 1873, whilst attempting to secure a section of Barrow Island for the purposes of establishing a fish-preserving works, Broadhurst wrote to the Surveyor General from Fremantle enquiring whether Von Bibra had an exclusive right to the guano beds in Shark Bay. Von Bibra was then advertising Shark Bay guano for sale at £6 per ton. Broadhurst would have been well aware of the potential that the latent guano industry

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48 Surveyor General to Von Bibra, 7/3/1867, Letters forwarded to Settlers, Acc 49, VOL. 39, BL.
49 SDUR, B8/857, BL.
50 Inquirer, 15/5/1872.
afforded a man such as he with a large labour force and with access to pearling vessels and other shipping. Apparently the reply to his letter about Von Bibra's monopoly at Shark Bay was in the affirmative, for Broadhurst then abandoned the idea of harvesting guano at Shark Bay and concentrated on his pearling interests.

With the down-turn in the Shark Bay pearling industry around 1874-5 he turned his attention elsewhere and focussed for a while on the guano deposits on the Abrolhos Islands. He subsequently wrote from Perth on 1 May 1876 asking to be allowed to collect guano from the Houtman Abrolhos on the same terms as those allowed to Von Bibra at Shark Bay.51 His interest was apparently aroused 'by a perusal of Captain Stokes reports issued after his 1840 survey'.52 He wrote again a week later stating that, it had just come to his notice that W. Bateman had been offered and had accepted the rights for the Easter Group of islands in the Abrolhos.53 Broadhurst then gave notice that he wished to alter his application to apply to the 'Southern' or Pelsaert Group.54

In reply to Broadhurst, Malcolm Fraser, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, advised that careful consideration would be given to his application for a monopoly to ship guano. To enable him to test the deposits he was, in the meantime, authorized to remove a shipload of guano from the Pelsaert Group.55 In June, the firm of L.A. Manning and Company, applied for permission to lease the Northern or Wallabi Group of islands for the purposes of mining guano, indicating that they had boats and a number of 'Malays' with which to prosecute the industry. Their request was granted, and they eventually obtained a two year lease with a levy set at 10 shillings per ton from July 1 1876.56 In this manner the three groups of islands that

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51 SDUR, B10/1071c, BL.
52 Kimberley, op. cit., p. 290.
53 SDUR, B10/1071 d., BL.
54 ibid., B10/1071 b., BL.
55 ibid., B10/1071a., BL.
56 ibid., 795 a-i.
constitute the Abrolhos (Wallabi, Easter, and Pelsaert Groups) were occupied for the purposes of collecting guano for 1876 at least.

In June of the same year, Fraser penned a memo to the Governor on the question of monopolies in the guano industry. He supported the idea in principle with some reservations. He reasoned that a monopoly encouraged the outlay of the capital required to ensure the collection and the shipping of the guano. This, in his opinion would ensure that it was carried out in an efficient manner and would result in a greater return to the government in the form of royalties. There were clear disadvantages however, and other ideas were mooted. The difficulties of enforcing any levy on guano removed by occasional visitors and in preventing the illegal removal of guano from islands spread over such a large coastline as Western Australia, led Fraser to opt for the granting of annual leases to specific individuals or companies.\textsuperscript{57} The Governor agreed.

The wisdom of granting monopolies and thereby making the holder of the concession responsible for the exploitation of the resource to the exclusion of others was amply demonstrated in the same year at the Lacepede Islands.

Here there was a rich source of guano to which the colonial government had given sole rights at a levy of 10 shillings per ton to the Melbourne firm of Poole, Picken and Company. An American, a Mr Roberts acting on advice from his consul in Melbourne, landed there in a French barque and having planted an American flag, claimed that they were not British territory and that he was entitled to load guano. A political storm erupted over the incident and it was not resolved without the payment of the required levy of 10 shillings per ton, the payment of a fine of £100, a withdrawal by the American consul and the enactment of protective legislation by the Western Australian Government.\textsuperscript{58} This Act which was passed in September of 1876, required the licensing of those involved and

\textsuperscript{57} SDUR, M 679e, 12/6/1876, BL.
\textsuperscript{58} Kimberley, op. cit., pp. 242-3.
allowed for severe penalties and the temporary seizure of vessels and their contents in the case of transgressions. Despite this, the situation was not satisfactorily resolved. In the following year, of the ten vessels collecting guano at the Lacepedes, only three had the required licences. The Colonial Government subsequently sought tenders for the sole rights of removing the estimated deposit of 40,000 tons of guano from the Lacepedes. One of the conditions set, was that the whole of the guano on the islands be removed at a rate of 20,000 tons per annum with a surety of £2000 in advance. Another condition was to the effect that the guano should be removed in accordance with the wishes and advice of a duly appointed resident government representative, and this clearly required a survey of the available deposits. The Lacepedes trade flourished over the next two years and then died, not without great criticism of the government’s role in the management of the resource, and a very expensive claim against the government for compensation. A select Commission investigating the claim also found against the government. They came to the damning conclusion that ‘the loss which the colony sustained... was caused by a total absence of business capacity on the part of the government’.

All this is an indication of the mood prevailing in the light of the Lacepedes incident, and it is in this context that Broadhurst eventually became involved in the guano industry. Though he was authorized to remove one cargo of guano from the ‘Southern Group’ in May 1876, he does not seem to have followed up on the concession on a large scale. Part of the reason may have been his ailing social and financial position as a result of the ‘Malay’ incident and down-turn at Shark Bay and the difficulties associated with shipping out of the Southern Group in the

59 Statutes of W.A. 40 Victoriae. No ix., 1876.
61 Government Gazette, 1878, Nos 22 & 37, 20/8/1878.
62 A contract had been taken out by Beaver and Company for 6 vessels to take out the guano there and was not fulfilled due to the inferior quality of the deposit remaining. A compensation case for £6968 went against the government. Kimberley, op. cit., p. 290.
Abrolhos. In support of this notion, he left for London in August 1876, with a cargo of Shark Bay shell and did not return to the Colony until October 1877.63

Thus Broadhurst’s first attempt to become involved in the Abrolhos Islands guano industry appears to have been a failure and in the following year 1878, he commenced fish canning at Mandurah. Another reason why Broadhurst did not capitalize on his monopoly over the deposits to the Southern Group may have been his initial failure to find potentially lucrative beds. In this failure he was not alone. In April 1879 while the Lacepedes trade was flourishing, the then Deputy Surveyor General, John Forrest visited the Houtman Abrolhos and reported somewhat unfavourably on the deposits.64 He found stone huts and water on West Wallabi Island and on the Middle Islands in the Southern Group. In this group he also found a small quantity of guano on Gun island ‘heaped up by someone’, possibly Broadhurst. An unworked deposit, estimated at 3,000 tons, was found on Rat Island and another estimated at 2,000 tons was found on Pelsaert Island. (Figure 39).

In the following year 1880, tenders were called for the sole rights to mine guano on all the Houtman Abrolhos islands together or separately.65 All vessels involved were to be licensed and royalties were to be calculated on the ‘register tonnage’ of the vessel.66 This was a measure of the cubic capacity based on a number of key measurements such as length, breadth and depth. Given that the royalties were based on this measure of volume and not the actual weight of the cargo, a well loaded vessel was able to carry more tons of guano than the register tonnage of the vessel itself and thereby profit.

63Arrivals and Departures, card index, BL.
64 Forrest, J., Report on an Examination of Houtman’s Abrolhos for Guano Deposits, 10/4/1879. CSO, ACC 223, 126/17, BL.
65 Government Gazette, 22/6/1880, No. 28.
66MacGregor, op. cit., p. 284, defines the various tonnage measurements in vogue in the 18th. and 19th. centuries and explains the complex series of measurements used in this period to obtain a vessel’s tonnage.
A deposit was to be lodged with the government and contractors were permitted to build on any or all of the islands the required buildings, jetties and tramways and to remove them at the expiration of the lease. The guano was to be removed in a ‘regular and systematic manner, in accordance with instructions that may from time to time be issued by the government’. Forfeiture clauses were included in the case of any breach of the conditions. An analysis of three samples of the guano removed from the area appeared in the edition of the Government Gazette carrying the call for tenders. This indicated that the deposit contained from 54-72% Phosphates, 2-4% Carbonate of Lime, 10-24% Organic Matter, 0.8-4% sand and 12-17% moisture. The third sample from a small island nearby contained 72% Phosphates and 10% organic matter indicating that the beds varied considerably in their quality.

None of this was sufficient to attract the capital and commitment necessary to ensure success. As an indication of the lack of interest in the Abrolhos deposits on the part of all including Broadhurst at this time, only three tenders were received. These were from Beaver and Company, William Owston and Von Bibra. Beaver offered £750 flat, for the entire Abrolhos, Owston offered £100 flat for the Abrolhos or 5 shillings per ton for two years and £150 flat for Shark Bay or 7 shillings per ton for 3 years. Von Bibra offered £1-5-0 per ton for ‘live’ guano from Shark Bay and wished to recover only 80-100 tons per annum. He also offered 10 shillings per ton for ‘dead’ or old deposits. All of these tenders were rejected as being unsuitable to the Government. According to Kimberley, there were no exports of guano recorded for the years 1881-2, and ‘it was believed by some that the industry was at an end’.

In the apparent belief that such was the case, Broadhurst visited the Houtman Abrolhos in December 1882 with the intention of establishing a

67 Government Gazette, 1880, op. cit.
68 Schedule of Tenders Received, Lands & Surveys file (L&S), Acc 527, 1880/1324, BL. (Afterwards, L&S, 1324/8, BL.
69 Kimberley, op. cit., 290.
ishing station. He arrived at nesting time and by doing so noted millions of
birds on the ground and in the air above their nests.

Figure 39
Houtman Abrolhos
showing Rat Island, Gun Island and Pelsart Island.
Thus, he was able to find guano beds of a size previously unknown. He reported that there were two considerable sized deposits on Pelsaert Island in addition to that found by Forrest. A major guano bed was also located on nearby Rat Island, but the quality and the depth of the deposit varied considerably. He believed that there were 20,000 tons, or four times Forrest's estimate, to be had.

He also indicated that, despite there being a good anchorage near Rat Island, the situation at Pelsart Island was less promising. Though there were plenty of deep channels near Pelsart Island, coral reefs were in evidence all around and he doubted if the deposit could be worked without a small steam tug to bring the large sailing vessels into the channel. He noted the possibility, that when the place became better known, a good channel might be found. He indicated that wells had to be sunk through solid rock, two or three sheds would have to be erected to hold a cargo of guano, horses and carts would be required and ‘chinamen’ imported. In requesting sole rights to the deposit, Broadhurst noted the potentially large expenditure required to mine the resource and requested security of tenure as a result.\textsuperscript{71} The conditions mooted for his lease were that he be required to recover 1000 tons of ‘dead’ guano per annum at a royalty of 13 shillings per registered ton of the vessels used with a security of £500.\textsuperscript{72}

Broadhurst initially rejected the government’s offer and requested that the royalty be assessed on the actual value of the guano discharged at Fremantle or Geraldton rather on the tonnage of the vessels involved.

In April 1883 Broadhurst went to Albany probably with the intention of travelling overseas or to Melbourne.\textsuperscript{73} In the meantime he had samples of the guano evaluated at a cost of £150. The results were not promising. It was stated that it would ‘never pay’ to export to Mauritius, that it was considered ‘valueless’ for the British market and that the farmers in South Australia were ‘not yet sufficiently advanced in horticultural science’ to

\textsuperscript{71}Broadhurst to Surveyor General, 26/12/1882 & 27/12/1882. L&S, 1324/8, BL, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{72}L&S office 11/1/1883, L&S, 1324/8, BL, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{73}Arrivals and Departures, card index, BL.
recognize the advantages of using the substance. The guano worked well in trials at Guildford in Western Australia however, and Broadhurst elected to take out a lease on the Government’s terms. He also applied for a pastoral lease to the Wallabi Islands at the Abrolhos. By December 1883, at the age of 57, he had settled at the Abrolhos in order to work the deposits, albeit in a ‘very small way’. In order to encourage him to expand, it was suggested by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, that he be issued a special licence, so that if any vessel employed in the trade did not fill its holds, a refund would be allowed. As an indication that money was tight at those times (or as further proof of his attitude towards his creditors), in January of the following year, he was summoned for non payment of debt by W.D. Moore, his former backers in the fish canning industry. Further indications of his lack of finance appear in Broadhurst’s note to the Surveyor General that, though he was able to obtain two bondsmen to guarantee £250 for his operations, he was having difficulty finding the £500 required.

He was achieving some success however and in January 1884, Broadhurst wrote that they had loaded three vessels of 60 tons in the previous two weeks.

In March 1884, as further incentive to proceed with the guano industry, he was granted exclusive right to collect and remove the whole of the guano in the Houtman Abrolhos for the term of five years’. By July he had established a residence, storeroom and accommodation for his ‘agent’ and seven ‘Chinamen’ on Rat Island. He also built a stone landing from

74 Broadhurst to Surveyor General, 12/12/1883. L&S, 1324/8, BL, op. cit.
75 Ibid., 17/1/1883.
76 Commissioner Crown Lands to Col. Sec., 13/12/1883 L&S, 1324, BL, op. cit.
77 Moore vs. Broadhurst, 5/1/1884, for £81 plus interests and court costs. Supreme Court of W.A., Record of Judgements. Vol 8 & Index. Acc 3546 & 3557, WAS 130-131, BL.
78 Broadhurst to Surveyor General, 9/1/1884. L&S, 1324/8, op. cit.
79 Ibid., 31/1/1884.
80 Indenture 13/7/1885, between Broadhurst (Mortgagor) and John Bateman of Fremantle (Mortgagee), Broadhurst Papers, BL. As these have yet to be accessioned by the library their full details cannot be given. Copies also with the author and the Broadhurst family.
which to load the 'lighters' used to ship the guano in sacks to the much larger vessels waiting off-shore.\textsuperscript{81}

\textit{Figure 40}

\textit{Men at work on the guano beds, showing the primitive methods used and the need for a substantial labour force.}\textsuperscript{82}

Broadhurst then found himself in need of further capital and other logistical assistance in order to pursue the industry on any scale. In November 1884, he entered into an agreement with John Wesley Bateman of Fremantle such that Bateman would 'assist' in the working and removal of the guano. Broadhurst then went to Mauritius possibly to establish a market there and to obtain more backing.\textsuperscript{83} By the following June, Bateman had expended the sum of £1986-2-2d in helping develop the

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{West Australian}, 29/7/1884.
\textsuperscript{82} Maritime Archaeology Department, photo-file 1038/34.
\textsuperscript{83} Arrivals and Departures, op. cit.
industry. On 5 January 1885 Broadhurst received further capital by taking in a partner William Brown MacNeil, and so the firm of Broadhurst, MacNeil and Company was formed. The agreement was valid until the end of February 1889 and was subject to a number of conditions, most notably that the profits, losses (if any) and costs be divided between Broadhurst and MacNeil in the ratio of three quarters to one quarter. In the year following March 1, 1884, Broadhurst had succeeded in sending twelve cargos to a total of 942 tons of the 1000 tons of guano required to be shipped by his agreement. The cargos were mainly despatched in small vessels and ranged from 16 tons in the Una to 206 tons in the Iris.

Unlike MacNeil, Bateman did not join the Company as a partner responsible for any losses that may be incurred. He elected to enter into an alternative arrangement in order to secure his financial outlay, and on 13 July 1885, Broadhurst mortgaged his share and all the goods, chattels and improvements to Bateman at the rate of 8% per annum. The goods mentioned in the mortgage document give some indication of the scale of the enterprise at the time. They were, one bay mare, one set of tramway harness, fifty goats, sundry shovels, wheelbarrows, picks and other excavating gear, four tons of galvanised iron, tramway line of an unmentioned length and one, five ton cutter and two, one ton cutters, to act as lighters and transports. In July 1885 Broadhurst also purchased the 22 ton, 14 metre cutter Neptune for use in the trade. As further indication of his reliance on Bateman at this stage, Broadhurst was forced to mortgage the vessel to him for £500 at 8% in the following September. As security, the lease to the Islands was also transferred to Bateman’s name, producing a set of circumstances where Bateman had to be advised by the Government of all the dealings they had with Broadhurst, MacNeil and Company.

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84 Inquirer, 2/5/1890.
85 Broadhurst MacNeil and Co., Articles of Partnership, Broadhurst Papers, op. cit., BL.
86 L&S, 1324/8, op. cit.
87 Transcript of the Register of British Ships at the Port of Fremantle, McKenna Collection, op. cit., p.74.
88 Commissioner of Crown Lands to Col. Sec., 15/7/1885. L&S, 1324/8, op. cit.
By the middle of 1886, the Company had succeeded in constructing huts to house 35 men and a stone enclosure (‘still unroofed’) to hold 1500 tons of guano. Tramways totalling around 1400 metres in length, and a stone jetty 77 metres long with a depth of two metres of water at its extremity were also constructed.\(^89\) There was 15 fathoms of water within 100 metres of the stone jetty and all was in readiness for an expansion of the shipping aspect of the enterprise. In March 1885, always in search of other ventures, and possibly concerned at his growing indebtedness to Bateman, Broadhurst applied, for the lease to the newly opened parts of the Shark Bay Pearl fishery at £1000 per annum.\(^90\) The request was refused. Broadhurst then turned his attention solely to the guano industry.

There were many problems for Broadhurst in the early years of the guano industry that may have prompted him to look elsewhere. They were, ‘under great disadvantages’ in the period. They could not make contracts and were initially ‘financed very heavily’ in London, Fremantle and in Mauritius. The shipments that they made were under consignment and they had to export 1500 tons of guano per annum as a part of their lease agreement.\(^91\) Due to a ‘lack of experience’, the first two cargoes shipped to Mauritius in 1884 yielded 30-40% tri-calcic phosphate as opposed to the required 68-70% and were still unsold in June 1886. To make matters worse, a vessel carrying a cargo of their guano to Hamburg developed a leak off the Cape of Good Hope and after putting in for repairs was condemned and sold. Because the vessel was refloated and was not declared a total wreck, this resulted in the loss of £835 in insurance money payable to the Company. \(^92\)

\(^{89}\) The jetty is clearly shown on Good Friday Bay, 1:37,500, AUS
\(^{90}\) CSO, 1182/527, BL.
Broadhurst used these instances to show that the royalties of thirteen shillings per ton were considered to be excessive and placed the Company under severe strain. A figure of £1645 in royalties were paid in 1886 on four cargos in the vessels in the vessels Atlantic (which loaded 825 tons for Hamburg) Goatfell, Euterpe and Kornuno. Despite the tonnage loaded, there was little margin for profit in the business and Broadhurst indicated to the authorities that he had no chance of recouping his expenses by March 1 1889, the time his lease was due to expire. As a result he again sought an extension to his lease. His personal finances were also in disarray and Broadhurst himself was again summoned for non payment of debt at this time.

On 5 October 1886 Broadhurst’s son, Florance Constantine Broadhurst, was brought into the partnership taking a one third part of his father’s share of the business. He and MacNeil were then one quarter shareholders and Charles Edward Broadhurst held a half share. Broadhurst senior apparently recognized his own deficiencies and saw that his son, who had received a mercantile education and was noted for his ‘clear sighted methods and organising power’, was to be the key to the future success of the business. Under article 9 of the agreement under which Florance was bought into the Company, it was stated that:

The management of the firm shall be exclusively in the hands of the said William Brown MacNeil and Florance Constantine Broadhurst as joint managers and they shall both of them devote their whole time and attention to the partnership business...neither of them shall engage themselves or himself directly or indirectly in any other business and the said Charles Edward Broadhurst shall in no way interfere in the management of the said partnership business.

93 V&P, 1901-2, op. cit.
95 Broadhurst to Commissioner Crown Lands, 29/6/1886, L&S, op. cit.
96 Supreme Court Records, ibid.
97 Kimberley, op. cit., p.98.
98 Broadhurst, MacNeil and Co. Articles of Partnership, op. cit., BL. My emphasis.
The concluding statement is worded in a very strong fashion, and is a clear indication of some deficiency in the way Broadhurst Snr. was conducting the business. As some further indication of this, the Articles which numbered 19 in total also required that proper books were to be kept, and a general account was to be made at the end of each calendar year. Florance Broadhurst then entered into a £1000 bond with the family solicitor S.H. Parker, to the effect that he was to secure an annuity of £150 per year to his mother so long as the partnership earned at least £600.\textsuperscript{99} This arrangement and the associated documents have been examined by Mr David Kilpatrick, an accountant specializing in modern day insolvency and business rationalization.\textsuperscript{100} It is his belief that the figure of £150 is significant in that it represents one quarter of the minimum profit of £600 mentioned in the article above. As Florance Broadhurst’s share in the business was one quarter, he was by this clause, set to lose all bar his salary if the profits did not exceed £600. This was then an incentive to achieve profits beyond that figure, for only then would he have begun to realize a return for his quarter share. Mr Kilpatrick also indicated that to leave the business under the management of Florance and MacNeil under those terms, is a reasonable thing for a man such as Broadhurst, who was then 60 years old, to do. On the other hand, the clause that he shall ‘in no way interfere’ in the running of the business is an indication that though he had shown flair in setting it up and in obtaining backing from men such as Bateman and MacNeil, Broadhurst was in some way deficient in management skills.

In the following year, 5,900 tons of guano valued at £4-10-0 per ton were shipped to Europe, most to Hamburg and some to Antwerp.\textsuperscript{101} The total royalties paid on the four cargoes sent in the \textit{Ullock, Electra, Miako}

\textsuperscript{99} Bond to Secure an Annuity to Mrs Eliza Broadhurst, 16/11/1886, Broadhurst papers, op. cit., BL.
\textsuperscript{100} Mr Kilpatrick is an accountant also specializing in matters relating to business problems and insolvency. Kilpatrick’s Pty. Ltd. of Beverley, W.A.
\textsuperscript{101} Woodward, op. cit.
and Lothair were £1717.\textsuperscript{102} By 1887 it was claimed that 7,000 tons of Abrolhos guano had already been used by German farmers.\textsuperscript{103}

On 8 June 1888 MacNeil retired from the Company, taking his share at its net worth £900, giving a total implied value of the concern at the time of £3,600. With MacNeil’s departure, Florance Broadhurst stood to gain a greater percentage of the profit above £600. Though Charles Edward’s share was accordingly altered to five eighths of the business on the departure of MacNeil, that of his son rose from one quarter to three eighths.\textsuperscript{104}

Part of MacNeil and Florance Broadhurst’s success in working the guano fields was their good management skills and the fact that their sub-managers were also of a high standard. They treated their men well and had a significant effect on the success of the concern.

\textit{Figure 41}

\textit{Broadhurst’s men at work on the rich deposits at Gun Island.}\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{102}L&S, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{103}West, Australian, 24/10/1887.
\textsuperscript{104}Broadhurst, MacNeil and Co., Dissolution of Partnership as Regards William Brown MacNeil, Broadhurst papers, op. cit., BL.
\textsuperscript{105}MA, Photo-file W. 122. It is on this Island that the relics of the Dutch East India Company ship Zeewijk were discovered and subsequently found their way to display at the W. A. Museum through Florance Broadhurst.
At the time, they employed 30 European men who were employed for 8 hours per day, and a ‘working manager’, Mr Beddoes who was described as a ‘skilful pilot.’ A Mr Groom was the ‘manager of fieldwork’ and together they appear to have done very well and paid due attention to the welfare of their men. It was noted, for example, that the labourers who were, at that particular time, all European, had a ‘splendid bathing place and good beach for other sports’. The good results reflect Broadhurst’s successes under his manager Mr Smith at Shark Bay who was also noted for his attention to the needs of his men.

The business began to flourish under the influence of Florance Broadhurst with his ‘mercantile training’. Soon after he assumed control from his father, the Company wrote to John Forrest, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, on a matter which had long vexed Broadhurst Snr., the question of royalties. The Company stated that the royalty of 13 shillings per register ton, was applied by the Government in the mistaken belief that they were actually able to load ‘100% over’ (or twice) the registered tonnage of any particular vessel. It was indicated that 45% over the register tonnage was closer to the mark and they were only able to obtain £3-17-6 per ton weight on the guano and then only on that which rated above 70% phosphates. Florance Broadhurst then produced a table based on the royalty payable, showing that the Company’s expenses for each ton of guano were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royalty</td>
<td>9s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loading expenses</td>
<td>16s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>3s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freight</td>
<td>£1-10-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents Fees, Germany</td>
<td>8s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents Fees, Fremantle</td>
<td>2s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents Fees, London</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>£3-10-0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

106 ibid.
107 Had the Company been able to load twice the register tonnage, the royalty would have been half 13s or 6/6d.
Having outlayed £3000 in establishing the operation up to that time, it was claimed that the margin of 7s-6d per ton weight was unsatisfactory, despite having netted £1190 on the cargos of the Lothair and Miako. The submission was unsuccessful but paved the way for another approach to the Governor himself a short while later.

By August 1888, twenty-two large vessels had loaded for the United Kingdom, Mauritius and the Continent, and on 2 May 1890 the Barque Gazelle took the first shipment of guano to New Zealand. By the end of 1890 a total of around 30,000 tons of guano had been shipped.

Florance Broadhurst stepped up his pressure on the Colonial Government to reduce the royalty, and in September 1888 he had a personal interview with the Governor on the matter. He indicated that compared with the loss that the Government had sustained at the Lacepedes in providing a revenue cutter, Resident commissioner and police, the Abrolhos guano industry had cost the Government very little indeed. He also indicated, that because of the small profit margin, the Company could not ship cargoes under 70% phosphates. There was, he claimed, stiff competition from other Companies in the Eastern Colonies and Pacific Islands who were not paying the same high royalties and who were at a distinct advantage as a result. He also indicated that there were many potential cargoes of guano comprising 50-65% phosphates, but that unless the royalties were reduced they could not be profitably sent. He appended to his submission a table of expenses per ton weight of guano shipped over the last 12 shipments made by the Company to a total of £3-3-5 and pointed out that it did not include wear and tear on the plant and equipment.

In realizing the potential benefits to the Government, the royalty was duly reduced to 10 shillings per register ton of the vessels loading the guano.

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109 Inquirer, 2/5/1890 & L&S, op. cit.
On 7 May 1890, Florance Broadhurst and Mr Beddoes arrived in Geraldton when it was revealed that, though the arrival of winter heralded the suspension of shipping operations, a number of men had been retained for the purpose of transferring the plant from Rat Island to Pelsaert Island. Accommodation and shipping facilities including wharves and a jetty were also to be constructed on the island from which they expected to obtain between 8,000-10,000 tons of guano. On 9 May Broadhurst wrote to the Colonial Government informing them that the transfer was a ‘long and costly business’ involving a 4,000 ton shed, a jarrah jetty of 100 metres length, three kilometres of tramway, houses and offices. By the time he wrote much of it was complete, and by the end of the following September he expected to have expended in the vicinity of £3,000 in the improvements and had paid £8565 in royalties on the guano shipped.

On 15 May 1890, at the age of 64, Charles Broadhurst gave formal notice of his retirement from the firm of Broadhurst, MacNeil and Company, keeping his five eighths share of the business. A family trust was then formed in order to secure the future of his wife and their other children and his share was assigned to the care of two Trustees, one Bateman and the other his son Florance. As Charles Edward Broadhurst was indebted to the sum of £2,242-12-10, presumably to Batemen, Florance Broadhurst was authorized to pay his debts from the trust funds in order to protect the trusts. Florance Constantine Broadhurst was then given sole ‘power to pledge the credit of the firm’. This inferred that, despite remaining the major partner in the firm, Charles Edward Broadhurst had no further power to enter into debt on behalf of the Company. The notice duly appeared in the local press. A few months later his son offered the government, £4000 in exchange for the Company.

111 West Australian, 7/5/1890.
113 C. E. Broadhurst and F.C. Broadhurst, Deed of Dissolution of Partnership, Broadhurst Family Papers, op. cit.
114 Notice of Retirement of C.E. Broadhurst. Broadhurst Family Papers, op. cit., BL.
115 West Australian, 24/5/1890
being granted sole rights to the deposits. Having calculated that the Company was expected to remove 3000 tons of guano per annum at ten shillings per ton for the next five years, the offer was understandably refused.\footnote{Broadhurst, MacNeil and Co., to Commissioner of Crown Lands, 16/8/1890, L&S, 1324/8, BL, op. cit. & Fraser to Col. Sec., 21/8/1890, L&S, op. cit.}

In attempting to keep the pressure on the government to keep the royalties in line with the phosphate content of the guano and not the register tonnage of the vessels loaded, and as an indication that the business was still a risky one, Florance Broadhurst wrote to the informing them of the heavy losses incurred in 1890. The losses were due in part to the inundation of a cargo before it was loaded on-board the vessel *Cooleen* resulting in it arriving in London with 23% moisture content or, in terms of weight, 200 tons of water.\footnote{Marden to Broadhurst MacNeil and Co., 13/12/1890, L&S, 1324/8, BL, op. cit.}

On 5 December 1891, Florance Broadhurst wrote his parents from the Abrolhos Islands offering to purchase Charles Edward’s share in the business for a total of £10,000.\footnote{Florance Broadhurst to Charles and Eliza Broadhurst, 5/12/1891. Broadhurst Family Papers, op. cit.} At the end of the month, Bateman withdrew from the Trusteeship agreement, leaving Florance Broadhurst as the sole trustee.

Though his parents did not immediately accept his offer, Florance Broadhurst kept it before them and then continued about the business in his own right. In seeking further rationalization, the Europeans were laid off and forty ‘Malays’ were employed in a move that was severely criticized by the local press. The criticism apparently had the desired effect, for by 1902, only Europeans were being employed in the Company. Despite doing well, Florance Broadhurst did not discharge his father’s mortgage to Bateman on the *Neptune*, until May 1893, and at the same time he purchased a two thirds share of Bateman’s 25 ton schooner *Ione* and his 16 ton cutter *Zebra*.\footnote{Transcript of Register of British Ships at the Port of Fremantle. McKenna Collection, op. cit., pp. 41, 74, 103.} In the following month Bateman transferred his rights
and title to the lease for the Abrolhos Islands guano to Florance Broadhurst for the nominal sum of ten shillings.

Eventually his parents agreed to his request to buy them out, and on 31 May 1894, it was agreed that the partnership between the two Broadhurst’s be dissolved.  

By the end of that year, it was reported that around 46,000 tons of guano had been exported by the firm and that the royalty that accrued to the government from this amounted to £16,000. This suffices to indicate the important position which the Abrolhos Islands guano industry occupied as a source of revenue to the state.

In 1895, having established the industry and having left it in the capable hands of his son, Charles Edward Broadhurst and his wife Eliza left the State to live in Bournemouth, England. There, they were comfortably provided for by two family trusts to a total of £10,000 which were sufficient to see all of the family, including Florance Broadhurst’s brothers and sisters, very comfortably provided for.

On 5 May of the same year, the government was urged to purchase Broadhurst, MacNeil and Company’s lease of the Abrolhos due to fears that the whole of the resource would be sold overseas and denied to the local farmers. This action was favoured by the Bureau of Agriculture. Florance Broadhurst objected strongly, but later unsuccessfully offered the concession to the Bureau for £7,000.

In a report compiled by Surveyor A.J. Wells, it was estimated that there were still areas of guano deposits on 17 islands on the Abrolhos. There were an estimated 32,000 tons remaining on the West Wallabi Island, 25,000 tons on Pelsaert Island, 8,500 tons on Gun Island with smaller amounts on ‘over a dozen’ of the other islands to a total of 101,500 tons.

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120 C. E. Broadhurst and F. C. Broadhurst, Deed of Dissolution of Partnership, Broadhurst Family Papers, op. cit., BL.
121 Saville Kent, op. cit., p.137.
122 C. E. Broadhurst and F. C. Broadhurst, Deed of Dissolution of Partnership, Broadhurst Family Papers, op. cit.
123 V&P, 1901-2. op. cit.
The improvements erected by Broadhurst, MacNeil and Company included ‘strongly constructed’ timber and iron houses, jetties and tramways. There were quarters for 40 men on Rat, Gun and Pelsaert Islands. On Gun and Pelsaert there were jarrah jetties and on Rat Island, a stone jetty. There were, after the loss of the *Orpheus* in February of 1897 three lighters in the employ of the Company, *Ione*, *Zebra* and *Neptune*. A fourth, the *Nautilus*, was lost during Wells’ visit to Gun Island. Wells estimated that the total value of the improvements and plant erected by the firm was in the vicinity of £7,500.

The remarkable turnover in this period was followed by a down-turn in the overseas trade with no guano being loaded for the European trade in 1900 due to the high costs of freight and poor prices resulting in a very poor profit margin. Prices for guano were also dropping due to the opening of very rich deposits at Christmas Island. The Abrolhos Islands guano was considered over-priced and of uncertain quality and supply. This led agriculturalists, even local farmers, to look closely at the prospects of obtaining their supplies elsewhere. The request of Cumming, Smith and Company of Melbourne for governmental support in the establishment of a chemical and artificial manure plant in the State, prompted the formation of a Select Committee to enquire into the question of the renewal of the leases to mine the guano. They also examined the notion that overseas export should be stopped in favour of improving the supply to the local farmers and to upgrade the quality of the fertilizer. Florance Broadhurst indicated that the £15,000 required to purchase and install equipment designed to upgrade the guano mined to superphosphate, was impractical. He also fought strongly against the proposed ban on exports.

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124 *Geraldton Express*, 19/2/1897.
125 ibid., 7/1/1897 & Wells. A.J. *Examination of the Abrolhos Islands*, 17/8/1897, BL.
126 ibid.
127 Stanbury and Brown, op. cit., cha. 2.
128 ibid.
He lost the fight and forfeited his lease when it expired in the following year, 1904.

Charles Edward Broadhurst in the meantime was residing reasonably comfortably with his family in Bournemouth, England. Eliza Broadhurst, died in 1899 with few personal possessions other than a handful of shares in a gas company to hand on. Broadhurst, himself died in England on 26 April 1905.\textsuperscript{129} Despite there being £7,403 remaining in the trust funds, his executors found themselves unable to execute the conditions of his will in the manner Broadhurst specified, indicating again his lack of attention to detail in such matters.\textsuperscript{130}

Florance Broadhurst died four years later in 1909, a very wealthy man.\textsuperscript{131} He was found drowned in his fishing dinghy after spending an afternoon on the Swan River.\textsuperscript{132} Apparently he suffered badly from an injury sustained when he fell while searching for guano on the islands of the Recherche Archipelago near Esperance. He was taking strong medication for the injury and his family believe that this led to his untimely demise.\textsuperscript{133}

**Conclusion**

Charles Edward Broadhurst must be credited for having begun the Abrolhos Islands guano industry by following on the discoveries of the early explorers and proving those such as the explorer John Forrest wrong in their estimates of the extent of the guano beds.

Though he was the one with the flair and capacity to get the venture off the ground, its successful continuation was the result of the managerial and negotiating skills of his son and on infusion of funds from many sources

\textsuperscript{129}Obituary appearing in the *West Australian*, 1/5/1905.
\textsuperscript{130} *F. Marden Ranger to Florance Broadhurst*, 5/5/1905, L&S, 1324/8, BL, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{131} *Probate Jurisdiction in the Will and two Codicils of Florance Constantine Broadhurst*, in the possession of his granddaughter Mrs. M Brinsden. This shows that he left a house in Peppermint Grove, 15 cottages or houses in Perth and Geraldton, 12 blocks at Southern Cross, Derby and Roebourne, and other goods and chattels to a total value of £34,010.
\textsuperscript{132} *West Australian*, 4/3/1909 & 22/2/1909.
\textsuperscript{133} Pers. Com., Mrs Marjorie Darling his daughter to the author, 1987.
including Bateman and MacNeil who both had a significant effect on the management of the business in the early stages.

Though his son Florance, controlled the business aspects of the huge expansion that took place after Charles Edward retired, and very capably attended to the operation of the business, it appears that much of the credit in the successful operation of the guano mining itself lies with Mr Beddoes the engineer. The evidence for this surfaces in a letter of 16 May 1896 to the Colonial Secretary from Maitland Brown, recommending the services of Mr Beddoes. In this it was stated that Beddoes had controlled the operations at the Abrolhos and had had 'practical control ever since his arrival in the colony a few years ago.' Beddoes was a 'skilled surveyor and engineer' who had previously provided 'good services' on the Natal Harbour works. Broadhurst MacNeil and Company were considered fortunate in securing his services.

This, and the speed and manner in which Florance Broadhurst took the struggling guano mining industry to its acknowledged heights as veritable 'gold mine', is further indication of Charles Edward Broadhurst's reliance on his managers.

Broadhurst, then had the flair, drive, persuasion and capacity to get an enterprise going, but ultimately relied on his managers to develop it to the full potential. This was evident throughout his career but it can be documented and shown without doubt in this instance.

134 CSO, 3546/95, BL.
135 Bunbury Herald, 16/10/1897.
136 Kimberley, op. cit., p.97.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

The original aim of this thesis was to examine the career of Charles Edward Broadhurst so that the strange decisions he made, especially in relation to the purchase and operation of the SS Xanths, could be better understood.

The career of Broadhurst has assumed a wider significance. Though he proved to be a failure in almost everything he attempted and was very controversial, Broadhurst was a key figure in the development of the North-West of Western Australia. He was one of the leaders in the pastoral industry in the region and a leading pearler at Nickol Bay and Shark Bay. He instigated the very lucrative Abrolhos Islands guano industry and was the first to operate a steamship in the Western Australian coastal trade.

This study of his innovative, though mainly unsuccessful attempts to utilize men and machines in those industries, though unsuccessful, has led to greater understanding of him, the industries themselves, and the men and machines that he employed.

Another indirect result of this enquiry into Broadhurst has been a greater appreciation of the process of European settlement of the ‘North district’ of Western Australia and of the impact it had on the North and its original inhabitants, the Aborigines. The important part that the land and the Aborigines of the Nickol Bay area played in assisting European settlement has also been examined.

An unexpected result of the enquiry into Broadhurst has been the realization of the importance to the historian of those, such as he who failed in their endeavours. Payne, in his analysis of British entrepreneurship in the nineteenth century, has indicated that the ‘eulogistic aura enveloping the pioneers’ in general, is a reflection of a ‘biased sample’ in historical data; in
that those concerns that were successful have ‘created conditions’ that led to a survival of their archives.¹

This, it has been argued, has been a major factor in the assessment of the groups and the individual Europeans who settled the North-West of Western Australia. In comparison to those such as the Withnell’s, Padbury and Richardson, there has been little written on Broadhurst and the Denison Plains Pastoral Company partly because they were considered failures. Not only have many of the records been destroyed, but those that have survived appear under vague or misleading titles, and have proved difficult to locate both in Western Australia and Victoria. In line with Payne’s analysis, this has led to the development of a ‘biased sample’, in the analysis of European settlement of the North-West where, success appeared to be the norm and failure the premise of a poorly prepared and foolish immigrant few.

Despite the loss of these records, the personal diaries of Richardson, T.C Sholl and especially R.J. Sholl have proved a valuable source of information on Broadhurst’s career. Despite being almost indecipherable, the elder Sholl’s Diaries and Occurrence books have served to help fill some of the gaps left by the destruction of Broadhurst’s and the Denison Plains Company archives.

There is much that can be learnt from failures such as Broadhurst, and the study of them can cast useful light on the process of European colonization of the vast continent of Australia.

Background

Broadhurst was from a very rich family based in Manchester, England and emigrated at 17 years of age to Victoria in Australia where he joined his cousin and elder brother. There, under their tutelage, he established himself, became a well respected land-owner and ‘gentleman’ farmer and showed his capacity as a promoter and organiser in the local Agricultural Society. At 34 years of age he married well. His 21 year old wife, Eliza was well educated, a

¹Payne, op. cit., p.31.
talented musician and though not rich, was part of a well established and very successful extended family group.

As squatters holding vast areas of land in the Kilmore region, the Broadhurst family became concerned at the possibility of losing these to the growing band of ‘selectors’ in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Like many other Victorians in search of land at the time, they were quite understandably attracted to the newly opened ‘North District’ of Western Australia which at the time housed not one European inhabitant. It had been the subject of exploration by respected and experienced men and the data collected was clearly of a superior nature to that which saw the formation of other colonies especially the ‘Swan River Colony’. The reports indicated that there was little chance of failure in the new lands and the regulations drafted to allow for settlement were very liberal. Respected and very successful local men such as Walter Padbury and high ranking Western Australian government officials such as the Colonial Secretary became involved and this led to an increased confidence in the area.

The publication of well produced pamphlets which included supportive comment from very capable, well known and practical men, combined with glowing accounts of the area, also served to allay any fears the prospective settlers, such as the Broadhurst’s, may have had.

Being in Victoria, almost as far away in terms of communications as those who were led to settle the Swan River Colony itself in 1829, Broadhurst and his fellow Victorians were forced to rely on the accounts of the explorers which appeared, without exception, in glowing terms in the press and in the Company prospectuses.

Charles Edward Broadhurst then began an extraordinary run of personal failures by becoming embroiled in the Denison Plains Pastoral Company as a shareholder, Director and Manager.
The Denison Plains Pastoral Company

The Denison Plains, to which the Company was bound, was the subject of an exploration conducted by experienced men who were not blind to the prospect of drought. The country and climate in the region were described at length and in glowing terms by them. The Company formed to settle the region and the Camden Harbour Association were inextricably linked as an integral part of William Harvey's scheme to establish a self-governing Colony in the north and to open a new gateway to Australia at Camden Harbour. Once settlement was established there, telegraph and other links were to be established from Adelaide along Stuart's route across to the Denison Plains through to Camden Harbour and thence to Batavia, Singapore and Europe. An accurate map, based on the explorations, was produced showing the location of the Denison Plains, their proximity to other settlements and to the explorer Stuart's route from Port Essington to Adelaide.

The Denison Plains Pastoral Company prospectus was, like the Camden Harbour document, truthful in all respects (excepting the promises of a pre-emptive right and in the predictions of profit and stock increase). Despite this, lies and exaggerations were apparently a part of the public meetings held to promote the Company, and they appear to have further fostered the Victorian's belief in the qualities of the land.

In this context, Broadhurst and the intending settlers were clearly gullible. The explorers had journeyed to the Denison Plains westwards from the Victoria River in the Northern Territory. Despite this, Harvey apparently convinced Broadhurst and his colleagues of the possibility of travelling eastwards, on an un-proven route, to the plains from Camden Harbour. Due to the lack of documentary evidence, it has not been possible to adequately assess the part Broadhurst played as a Director in this plan, which with the benefit of hindsight was obviously hopeless. The few decisions he is known to have made as one of an 'irresponsible and self-elected' board of Directors are worthy of criticism. One of the most notable is his failure to act on receipt of
the opinion that it would be almost impossible to make the journey from Camden Harbour overland to the Denison Plains with stock. The other is his failure as the chief Company representative on-board to enforce a delay when the first adverse account of events at Camden Harbour were published. This information was received on the very day they were due to depart Melbourne for the Denison Plains on-board the Warrior. William Harvey claims to have placed three copies of the newspaper carrying this adverse account on board the Company vessel at the dock, though there is some doubt that he did so, or that if he did that they got to the shareholders.

Broadhurst, his Company colleagues and fellow shareholders appear to have been deceived by William Harvey and by his own unshakeable belief in the Camden Harbour/Denison Plains. The Company prospectus, containing the explorer’s accounts, and the comments of Broadhurst’s friend Dr Mueller who accompanied the explorers to the Denison Plains, were enough to convince Broadhurst of the value of the scheme. His conviction was such as to see him hazard his own life and those of his pregnant wife and small children in the venture. That his fellow Director Charles Wedge and the Shareholder Simeon Müller did likewise and that the three families took eleven children with them, is an indication of their combined faith in the explorer’s reports, and in their faith in their ability to force a safe path through to the Denison Plains.

Such risks and blind faith in the possibility of settling the ‘North District’ were not just the premise of the Denison Plains Company people. Similar indications are also evident in the relatively large financial outlay of the Western Australian settlers such as Padbury, Wellard, Lockyer, Taylor, Viveash, Middleton and Wilkerson. It is also amply demonstrated in John Withnell and his pregnant wife Emma’s decision to completely sell up in the south, and to proceed with their children and family north to Port Hedland at great cost, and with near disastrous results. The expensive odyssey of many Victorians such as A.R. Richardson and his colleagues and the expense of
chartering vessels such as the *Maria Ross* also highlights the faith shown in the explorers accounts at the time, and the lure of the newly opened North District.

Clearly Broadhurst and his unfortunate colleagues were not the only ones to succumb to the lure of the North and to place their faith in the explorer's accounts.

The large financial outlay of those such as the Withnell's, Padbury, Wellard and Richardson's group were a major factor in their decision to remain in the 'North District' when drought served to make a mockery of the explorers' accounts. Their outlay contrasts markedly with the outlay of those, such as Broadhurst, who joined the Camden Harbour and Denison Plains Pastoral Companies. In this context, Broadhurst's decision to join both the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association and the Denison plains Pastoral Company at a relatively small capital outlay was, to some extent, a wise one. Having made the decision to proceed to the North of Western Australia, and having taken a paid position in the company as Superintendent of Stock and Stations, Broadhurst kept his costs in venturing to the North very low indeed. He reduced them even further by the somewhat doubtful leasing arrangement he made with his fellow Directors over his 'Arab' stallion, Kochlani.

As a Director and Manager, he was with his fellow leaders, Charles Wedge and Dr Baynton, to make the decision to abandon Camden Harbour and attempt to land at Roebuck Bay and if possible to strike overland for the Denison Plains from there. Purely by good fortune they were forced to land at Nickol Bay where the land and the local Aborigines served to present an exceptional set of circumstances conducive to European settlement. It has been argued that had Broadhurst and his colleagues landed anywhere but at Nickol Bay they would have been forced out by the nature of the land and by the local Aborigines.

In the absence of much information on the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, most historians have relied upon Battye and Kimberley and have
come to discount the impact that it actually had on the North-West. It is not generally realized that under Broadhurst’s leadership, the Denison Plains Pastoral Company established successful ‘runs’ or ‘stations’ at the Nickol and Maitland Rivers whilst awaiting for further information on the state of the Company. The Company collapsed in Melbourne in August 1865 and news of this reached Nickol Bay in the following October. Whilst awaiting ‘decisive intelligence’, Broadhurst was instrumental in keeping the Company and its stock and effects together in the face of the inordinate delays in the mails which characterized this early stage in the settlement of the North-West until April 1866. His efforts in this regard are deserving of praise, for he was able to do so in the face of dissension, ostracism, violence, a severe drought, near starvation and great suffering for almost a year. Under his leadership, the Company erected bough sheds, stockyards and other buildings. The stock thrived and they succeeded in shearing and in sending wool south. Regardless of his motives for enforcing as Company unity and for refusing to disperse the stock and effects, as Manager and Superintendent of Stock and Stations, Broadhurst deserves much of the credit for the success. Sholl’s is the only first hand account and opinion on the propriety of Broadhurst’s behaviour as Manager of the Company at Nickol Bay that has survived. His opinion should be given some credence as such, despite becoming a good friend of the Broadhurst’s and despite the opinions of Broadhurst’s less objective colleagues to the contrary.

A great and lasting suspicion of Broadhurst as the only visible leader of the Company surfaces in the Barker and Gull letters and would not have been allayed by Broadhurst’s successful tendering for the Company or by his somewhat autocratic attitude towards his fellow shareholders. These are clear indications of his failings in the field of personnel management.

The general criticism of him as a former Director in the Company has also been shown to have been justifiable, though because he was (and has been to
this day) the only known 'high profile' leader, he has come to bear more than his share of the blame for the collapse of the Company.

By virtue of his position as a Director and Manager, Broadhurst has been shown to have been a promoter of the Company and therefore partly to blame for the eventual failure, though William Harvey has been shown to have been the real force behind the Company. Broadhurst, with his hunger for land and a penchant for 'grand' schemes appears to have been one of his naive pawns. As a result of his faith in Harvey, Broadhurst’s involvement in the Denison Plains Pastoral Company was to be his first known failure and his involvement with it, somewhat justifiably, severely tarnished his reputation throughout the Colony.

Despite having ample justification to leave and with little to lose financially after the collapse of the Company at Nickol Bay and the dispersal of the Company stock and goods in April 1866, Broadhurst and his family stayed on in the North-West. He then successfully tendered for the defunct Company creating further discontent amongst those he once led. In this way he came to be one of the best equipped pastoralists in the region, and on a number of occasions lent his horses and four horse wagons to the Resident Magistrate for Government use.² He then successfully maintained his own flocks under the care of agents and shepherds at the Maitland River to around 1871, and this is a credit to him. When compared to the failure of many others in the North-West pastoral industry between the years 1865-1870, Broadhurst’s modest success as a pastoralist after the collapse of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company is worthy of note.

As a group, the former Company people as a group also proved successful in the North-West after the final collapse of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company at Nickol Bay. At least 13 of a total of 19 shareholders in the Denison Plains Pastoral Company who landed in the ‘North district’ had some measure of success in the service industries or as pastoralists and pearlers.

²CSR, 603/28, BL.
The oft quoted opinion of the Resident Magistrate that not one in fifty of the Camden Harbour and Denison Plains people would make good settlers was proven wrong. As Sholl is the source of most of the ‘objective’ opinion about events in the North at that time, his words have been partly responsible for the pre-emptory dismissal of the Denison Plains Company and its people. When he wrote the words however, Sholl who had just come down from the disaster at Camden Harbour, and who was immediately beset by the problems of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, clearly had a jaundiced opinion of any shareholders in the field. The high opinions of the Company men held by Broadhurst before the collapse, and those held, in hindsight, by their fellow pastoralist and the former manager of the Roebuck Bay Association, L.C. Burges to the effect that they were a ‘most enterprising and useful body’ of men are clearly nearer to the mark.

Contrary to the opinions of Kimberley, Battye, and those who have accepted their analyses without question, the men and women of the Denison Plains Company at Nickol Bay were a remarkable, well suited and well equipped body. The percentage of those shareholders in the Denison Plains company who succeeded in the North-West is remarkable. The census for 1870 indicates that there were 20 ‘farmers’ and 30 ‘pearl fishers’ in the district at that time for example. At least seven of those fifty, Broadhurst, Simpson, Mckay, Venn, McIntosh, Hicks and Frazer were from the former Denison Plains Pastoral Company. Four years after their Company had failed they were still a significant 14% of those involved in these two industries in the North-West. The men and women of the Company were also a significant force in the formation of the township of Roebourne and constituted over 50% of the European population of the area and were for at least a year a clear majority of the European women and children on the land.

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3Census, 1870, op. cit.
Broadhurst, Pastoralist and Justice of the Peace

After the collapse of the Company, Broadhurst and his wife Eliza were prominent members of the community at Roebourne, the administrative centre for the entire ‘North District’. He led petitions to the government to establish a school and headed a committee formed to send a party overland to relieve the situation in the town when the Emma disappeared. He was also appointed Justice of the Peace in August 1866, and two months later was appointed Acting Resident Magistrate until February 1867. In that capacity, he displayed qualities that were again to earn him the official praise of his friend Resident Magistrate R.J. Sholl. Though the few sentences he was to hand down in his official capacity as a magistrate were harsh by today’s standards, they reflected the attitudes of a time when the ‘hostility and treachery’ of the local Aborigines was a great concern. His contemporary, and future MP, A.R. Richardson for example noted that at the time the Europeans generally considered themselves ‘intellectually and morally superior to the savage tribes’. Another contemporary, Charles Harper who was noted for his positive treatment of Aborigines in the pearling industry, later also entered Parliament and established the West Australian newspaper. In that capacity he was to represent the conservative element in society and to become fiercely critical of the Reverend Gribble who in 1886 almost single-handedly went against his society and church in deploiring the disintegration of Aboriginal society.

Pearling

Given the controversy that surrounded him over the collapse of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company Broadhurst must have been a persuasive man because of his ability to forge business partnerships such as that in the pearling industry between himself and Dempster, Barker and Gull. In doing so, he was forced to overcome considerable suspicion in joining with them in

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4CSR, 603/59, BL.
5Richardson, op. cit., p. 20.
the abortive attempt to introduce 'diving apparatus' to the pearling industry. His ability to secure the services of the 'volunteer' Aboriginal convicts from Rottnest Island and to enter partnerships with, Christie and Spurling of the Adur, with W.D. Moore in the Mandurah fish canning industry, with Bateman and MacNeil in the guano industry, are also evidence of his considerable flair for involving others to his advantage. His excellent relationship with the Colonial Government, their extraordinarily sympathetic attitude towards him and their desire to further his cause in 'everyway' is further evidence of his pursuasiveness and the high regard in which he was held, despite the controversies in which he was continually embroiled.

On the other hand, Broadhurst’s background as the son of very rich parents and his English public school education may not have prepared him well for a business career. He continued after his involvement with the Denison Plains Pastoral Company to develop equally ‘grand’, and for the time, impractical and unnecessary schemes, such as the introduction of ‘diving apparatus’, the use of the ‘volunteer’ Aboriginal convicts as divers and the SS Xantho.

He spent three seasons attempting to use the newly introduced ‘diving apparatus’, despite it being unnecessary, impractical and in-efficient at the time. The failure of his European, Aboriginal and ‘Malay’ divers was a major reason for Broadhurst’s failure in the North. His failure with each of these diverse groups of men, who appeared exceptionally bad in comparison with those around, occurred when others were succeeding. It has been argued that, Broadhurst failed to realise the need for experience in the art of ‘seeing’ shell underwater, and as a result appears to have made some very poor decisions in his choice of divers. Having made this fundamental mistake, he then proved unsuccessful in his efforts to motivate his men to overcome their natural fears of the water and to learn the necessary skills. Having also failed in this regard, he then may have actually been too ‘soft’ by contemporary standards in order to obtain the necessary results by coercion, or lacked the necessary skills required for the adequate supervision of them and their managers.
The SS Xantho

His involvement in the SS Xantho, the first steamship to be employed on the Western Australian coast has been shown to have been the result of a similar 'grand' approach to the problems of the North-West. Broadhurst's involvement with steam in the pearling industry and the coastal trade has been shown to be not so much a failure in the idea behind the enterprise but in the choice of vessel and in the benefits foregone in the purchase. Had Broadhurst used the £4,500 he expended in the purchase and fitting out of the SS Xantho in a fleet of wooden craft suitable for pearling and in servicing his overseas and other interests, his needs may have been better met and his risk would have been suitably spread. Others such as Walter Padbury lost vessels such as the Emma with disastrous loss of life in the North-West but with little effect on their business empires, because they were but part of a larger fleet. Broadhurst on the other hand was not only virtually ruined by the loss of his steamer, but also lost the vital link between his far-flung business enterprises. Despite having found £4,500 to finance the SS Xantho venture, Broadhurst was unable to personally acquire such a sum for fish canning, and for guano mining, the industries that were eventually to provide him with a modicum of financial security. His ability to involve others such as W.D. Moore, Bateman and MacNeil in order to raise the capital comes as no real surprise given his persuasiveness, but his need to do so indicates that after the losses in the pearling industry at Nickol Bay and with the SS Xantho, he never really recovered financially and did not do so until his son came on the scene. His long years of indebtedness in the Guano industry and his reliance on the funds of others in order to satisfactorily develop the 'gold-mine' that it represented attest to the magnitude of the mistake Broadhurst made in putting so much capital into the SS Xantho.
Labour Relations

Just as Broadhurst's failure to get the best out of his men of all races became apparent while Broadhurst was pearling at the Flying Foam Passage, his relations with his men come into focus in the varying accounts of his treatment of the 'volunteer' aboriginal convicts, in the abandonment of the crew of his steamer and in his treatment of the 'Malays' in his employ.

The accommodation provided for his 'Malays' at both Banangara and Shark Bay was undeniably good, and his men were unanimous in their praise of the manner in which he housed and fed them. His complaint about the treatment of Aboriginal women in the pearling industry, the concern shown for the Aboriginal diver Kenman, ('Blackie') and his attempts to shame his other 'volunteer' Aboriginal convict divers into diving in the unfamiliar waters of the North-West, rather than to resort to violence as was common, are other indications of concern in an era noted for very poor treatment of coloured people. On the negative side, are the many 'escapes' from his employ, his failure to pay the 'Malays' at Shark bay, the abandonment of the destitute multi-racial crew of his vessel, and the deaths of his Aboriginal servant 'Harry' and the trainee seaman Ashwick. There are unanswered questions about all these incidents, though Broadhurst has not been mentioned as a transgressor in the last two and cannot necessarily be implicated in any untoward way. It also needs to be borne in mind that perhaps the complaints about the treatment of the Aboriginal women and the concern shown for Kenman were attempts to avoid the repercussions of other less savoury incidents.

What is indisputable about Broadhurst in all of the above is a proven care for the housing and feeding of all of his men strangely combined with an obvious dislike of paying his dues.

Broadhurst was summoned for payment on 15 occasions from 1865, when he landed in the Colony, until 1887, three years before he left, by men of all races and from all stations in life. The amounts owing ranged from £13 to an
estimated £600. Many such cases can be traced to some business problem then besetting him, such as the failure of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, the down-turn in the pearling industry and the very heavy financial loss at the wreck of the SS Xantho. Equally many instances, such as his failure to pay in full for his share in the ‘diving’ partnership with Dempster, Barker and Gull partnership, the case involving W. D. Moore, his former partners in the Mandurah fish canning industry, and the delay in the payment of £12 to his friend Sholl are, together with the many other cases of non-payment, evidence of either a continuing lack of money or a very poor attitude to his creditors indeed. Other instances such as his failure to pay his shepherd Mr Atting can be traced to a perception on Broadhurst’s part of some real or imagined transgression on the part of his employees.

In some mitigation of Broadhurst, as was noted in the case of the appearance in court of his colleague E. T. Hooley for non payment of debt, ‘insolvency amongst the pioneers was common at the time’.6 Others such as the pioneer pastoralist Wellard, appeared in the Supreme court on a number of occasions for non payment of equal or much greater sums. Walter Padbury and W.S. Hall also appeared.7

The evidence is contradictory, but leads to the belief that Broadhurst did not physically maltreat his men. It has been argued that, apart from his ‘grand’ and impractical approach to the problems of the North, his chief visible failing was his poor attitude towards his creditors of all races and from all walks of life.

In this context, it has been shown that for him to have been singled out in the Shark Bay incident was perhaps unfair, and that he was by virtue of his high position made a scapegoat. For the historians to have concentrated on his undeniable failure to pay the ‘Malays’ in his employ, and to infer that this was

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6A McRae, 4/3/1876, Acc 289a, BL.
7Wellard, owner of Andover Station on the Harding River, was summoned in the Perth Supreme court late 1865 on four occasions, once for £2200, Padbury was summoned in September 1866 for £451, Hall in 1869, 1877 and 1878 for £472, £43 and £20, Hooley in February 1870 for £42, Seubert in August 1870 for £181, and Blurton was summoned in December 1867 for £679.
indicative of his attitude to coloured people, is again somewhat unfair as at that time he was having difficulty paying all his creditors. Further to this incident, the cause of the failure to pay the ‘Malays’ in his employ at Shark Bay and his subsequent resignation from the Legislative Council is not as clear cut as once thought. The part played by his nephew and manager Daniel Broadhurst in the matter is debatable. Despite having an arrangement with the master of the *Rosette* for the return of the ‘Malays’, Broadhurst Snr. is not blameless in the incident. In the general down-turn being experienced in the industry and in the light of the problems he was having at the time in paying all of his creditors, Broadhurst does not appear to have forwarded on to his young and in-experienced nephew sufficient funds to continue the enterprise or with which to pay the men.

The evolution of Broadhurst as a business man

At Shark Bay, Bannangarra, and in the other instances, evidence of the fact that Broadhurst relied inordinately on his managers, and appeared unable to modify their behaviour when it was deficient, surfaces. The contrasts between Broadhurst’s successes at Shark Bay when Mr. Smith was his manager and the failure under Daniel Broadhurst are stark indeed. Similar evidence comes from a comparison of the results at Banangara under Mr Wood and the desire of his ‘Malays to escape from Mr Letchford his manager at Port Hedland and from the unknown manager Broadhurst had at the Flying Foam Passage. Broadhurst appeared to depend greatly on the quality of his managers and was apparently a poor manager himself. Despite the courageous stance he made at Nickol Bay in keeping the company together, the virtual ostracism he suffered there, the successes of his son Florance in the guano trade and the clause set into their business agreement that Charles Edward shall ‘in no way interfere’ in the running of the business highlight Broadhurst’s failure as a manager. He was a undeniably a hard-working man who took the same risks as his men,
and he appears to have been better 'in the field' than he was in the administration of his affairs.

It appears that though he had the flair to set up an enterprise, Broadhurst did not have the attention to detail required to see it achieve its full potential, and he then tended to became distracted by the lure of more promising enterprises. Broadhurst's apparent inability to modify the behaviour of his poor managers or to further capitalize on the skills of the good ones such as Captain Denicke, the conchologist and master of his pioneering steamer, or Mr Smith at Shark Bay, could be attributed to the fact that Broadhurst was himself caught in the process of personal development as an entrepreneur and was himself learning the necessary skills and attention to detail. In the Denison Plains context for example, he was both the source of capital (in leasing his stallion in lieu of the shares necessary to transport him and his family), Manager, and a Director. After he left the Company, he than employed his own managers to care for the ventures he began and then sought capital and outlets for further markets and a wider range of business activities. Initially, he did not learn to devolve his responsibility in an effective and consistent fashion and found himself unable to effectively link his far flung enterprises and various managers. Thus while he was embroiled in ventures in other parts of the colony or overseas, he found himself in ignorance of, or unable to resolve, problems occurring elsewhere. The profit made by the middle man in the shipment of shell he made from Shark Bay on the Ivy in 1874, and the fact that Broadhurst barely broke even is an example of this. The problems occurring at Shark Bay while he was away in Europe or in Perth in Parliament are similar indications. The loss of the SS Xantho, an 'at call' link to his many enterprises, source of a speculative cash flow as a 'tramp' steamer and transport for the 'Malays' to and from the islands to the North, can be seen to have been an indirect cause of such problems. Because the role he intended for the steamer has not previously been fully appreciated,
its loss can be seen to have had much broader ramifications for him than has hitherto been realized.

It is significant that in 1885, even when he approaching 60 years of age, Broadhurst’s attention was turned away from the guano industry which he was in the process of building into as viable concern back to the Shark Bay pearl fishery. He was apparently driven to keep looking elsewhere and was thereby unable to fully capitalize on his many schemes. With this in mind, it is fortuitous for Broadhurst and his family that the Government did not accede to his request for a monopoly to the remaining beds at Shark Bay and that, as a result, he was forced to concentrate on the Guano trade and to involve his son Florance.

The guano trade certainly did repay Broadhurst for his previous failures and for his efforts in pioneering techniques and industries that later proved very successful. Even in that he was not the success he would have hoped to have been and it was not until his son took over the venture that the real potential of the venture was realized.

Independent of the nature of his successes and failures is the hard working and ‘indefatigable’ nature of the man and the fact that he initiated many enterprises and used equipment that was later to prove undeniably successful. The comment made by the local press on the eve of his entering the Abrolhos Islands guano industry perhaps sums Broadhurst up in the most concise and effective manner:

Mr Broadhurst deserves success for his enterprising spirit and for the initiating steps he has taken in many projects of which others now reap the fruits. Let us hope that his latest venture will repay him for his past misfortune.8

Broadhurst was indeed a remarkable failure.

8 *West Australian*, 26/12/1882.
Appendix One

Wages and Salaries 1872

As an indication of the magnitude of Broadhurst's expenditure at the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>£2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Secretary</td>
<td>£800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor General</td>
<td>£600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>£550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Surgeon</td>
<td>£400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident Magistrate (Roebourne)</td>
<td>£350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Master General</td>
<td>£350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Clerk</td>
<td>£300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbour Master (Fremantle)</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Solicitor</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headmaster (Perth Boys)</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draughtsman</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor (Roebourne)</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspector of Sheep (J.C. Brodie)</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbour Master (Albany)</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor (Roebourne) 1868&amp;1875</td>
<td>£150 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper and Warehouse Keeper</td>
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<td>Clerk to the Crown Solicitor</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd. Master (Perth Boys)</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher, Girls School</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Master (Albany)</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk to R.M. (Albany)</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd (Denison Plains Company)</td>
<td>£91-5-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk to R.M. (Greenough)</td>
<td>£75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolmistress (Guildford)</td>
<td>£70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker of the Public Gardens</td>
<td>£70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk to R.M. (Roebourne)</td>
<td>£65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackeroo</td>
<td>£60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer and Messenger</td>
<td>£60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Matron</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Servant</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Cook</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeon (Albany)</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplain (Fremantle)</td>
<td>£46-10-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolmaster (Rockingham)</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd (for Wellard at Roebourne)</td>
<td>£36 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shepherd (Roebourne)</td>
<td>£36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher (Busselton)</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>£18 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General House Servant (Mary Sands)</td>
<td>£16 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 W.A. Blue Book, 1870-1871), op. cit. Except where otherwise noted.
2 Withnell Taylor, op cit., pp. 133, 137.
3 Baynton to his father, 22/2/1866, op. cit.
4 Hasluck, (1928), op. cit., p. 268.
5 ibid.
6 Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p. 152.
Appendix Two

Court Cases and inquiries against Broadhurst as an overall indication of his financial state and attitude towards his creditors.

The study of Broadhurst indicates that he seemed to surround himself with controversy and was continually involved in court cases and official inquiries. Though his early life in Victoria appears to be free of such matters, the situation was to dramatically change once he became involved in the Denison Plains Pastoral Company. Those occurring when he was involved with the Company have been mentioned in that section and in Appendix five.

Following is a list of those controversies and court cases in which he was involved following after the collapse of the Company in 1866 and before his departure from the Colony in 1895. 1874-1875 are seen to have been particularly bad years for Broadhurst in financial terms.

1866


1868

June. Broadhurst unable to pay £50 of the £200 owing to Dempster Barker and Gull in the partnership with the ‘diving apparatus’ on-board Mary Ann. Page 183.

1869

February. Aboriginal from the Swan River escapes from his employ and is recaptured. Page 194.
March. Broadhurst was summonsed to pay for goods bought from the government store. Page 194.

1870

September/October. Rottnest Island Aboriginal convicts escape from Adur. Page 198 et seq.

1871

January. Mr Atting, who was one of Broadhurst’s shepherds, proceeded against him for the wages due. Broadhurst countered by claiming that Atting had left his flock. Page 128.
January. Kenman one of the Rottnest Aboriginal convicts from the Adur dies. Page 201.
April. More Aboriginal convicts from Rottnest escape. Page 198 et seq.
April. Formal complaint lodged that the Adur was on the North-West coast without a chronometer and thereby placing the passengers and cargo at risk.

7RJS January-March 1869, & CSR, 647, BL.
8RJS, 6/5/1869, BL.
9RJS, 28/4/1871, BL.
1872

October Broadhurst was accused of smuggling by the Collector of customs over goods and tobacco landed at his pearlimg camp at Bannangarra.  

November ‘Malays’ abscond from Broadhurst’s managers at Port Hedland and the Flying Foam Passage. Page 212.  

November The crew of the SS Xantho proceed against Broadhurst for the non-payment of their wages owing. Four ‘Malays’ allowed to wander penniless around Geraldton. Page 274. Amount owing estimated at £600.

1873

June Cadell’s ‘Malays’ who escaped from him and went to Broadhurst were not paid for the time spent in Broadhurst’s employ. Page 235.  

September RM Laurence’s visit. Broadhurst criticized for non payment of Cadell’s men. Page 235 et. seq.  

December, McRae, Pearse and Stone Vs CEB, (18/12/1873) £59-4-10 11

1874

April McRae, Pearse & Stone case finalized, 29/4/1874 + Costs & Interest £80-16-1  

May Broadhurst’s ‘Malays’ strike Shark Bay, saying their time was up. Page 235. Broadhurst leaves Shark Bay around this time.  

June G. Leake Vs CEB, Promissory note, 11/6/1874. £50-7-0  

September L. Sampson Vs CEB, Guarantee of payment, 14/9/1874. £36-5-6  

October, Crouch, Crouch & Howlett Vs CEB, 5/10/1874. £97-9-0

1875

March Lt. Suckling’s visit to Shark Bay. C.E. Broadhurst criticized for non-payment of 25 ‘Malays’ whose time was up. Page 236.  

May W. S. Hall Vs CEB, Dishonoured cheque, 31/5/1875. £13-7-10  

August, Magistrate Fairbairn’s visit. Various groups of ‘Malays’ proceed against the absent C.E. Broadhurst at Shark Bay, sale by distress of Broadhurst’s equipment and stores. Page 238 et seq Total amount owing in wages to the ‘Malays’. £298-3-10  

September H. Gray, Vs CEB, Bill of Exchange, 23/9/1875. £74-15-10  

Circa October Broadhurst resigns from Parliament.

1880

11/11/1880 G. Thompson, Vs CEB dishonoured acceptance £27-10-0

1884

5/1/1884 W.D. Moore, Vs CEB £81-11-0

1886

1/10/1886 D Simpson, Vs CEB £30-10-7

1887

22/12/1887 J.H. Monger, VS CEB £50-13-6

10CSR, 752/34, BL.  
11 Supreme Court of Western Australia Records of Judgement, Book 2, Vol 8, 1865-1888, op. cit. The only case where Broadhurst was the plaintiff was CEB Vs H. Bateman, 6/8/1874 for £21-2-0.
Appendix Three
The Denison Plains Pastoral Company prospectus and the 1862 Land Regulations

NORTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA;
ITS SOIL, CLIMATE,
AND
CAPACITY FOR PASTORAL ENTERPRISE.

WITH MAP.

Melbourne:
ROBERT MACKAY, GLASGOW BOOK WAREHOUSE,
ELIZABETH STREET, (OPPOSITE THE "AGE" OFFICE.)
1861.
Jenison Plains Pastoral Company.

FORMS ON WHICH THE NEW TERRITORIES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ARE OPEN FOR OCCUPATION.

(Reprinted from the West Australian Government Gazette.)

Colonial Secretary's Office.

Perth, 23rd December, 1862.

It is hereby notified that, from and after the 1st January, 1863, new portions of the territory of Western Australia will be open to general selection for lease and purchase under the following regulations, which will be more fully explained in a future notice:

1. The portions of territory affected by these regulations will be designated —
   First — The North District, bounded on the west and north by the sea coast, including the islands adjacent to it, and on the south by the River Arelaise, and by a true base line through the summit of Mount Mitchell.
   Second — The East District, comprised between the longitudes 121 and 129 deg. east, and between the latitude 30 deg. south and the north coast, including the adjacent islands.

2. The land in these districts will be divided into Classes A and C: — Class A lands being for annual licence, and those in Class C for more extended occupation. Class A will comprise all land within two miles of the sea coast, including the adjacent islands; and Class C will be the remainder.

3. Permission to proceed to the north or east district, for the purpose of occupying land under these regulations, may be obtained
by application in the form S in the Appendix hereto. Such permission will be valid for twelve months from its date.

6. Free pasture for the stock enumerated in an application, and in their natural increase, will be allowed on the unappropriated lands of the districts referred to, for the space of twelve months from the date of their arrival therein; and within this period, runs not exceeding (100,000) one hundred thousand acres for any one establishment, may be selected in one uniform shape, and be reported in the form T, for approval.

7. A licence (not transferable) will thereupon be issued for the occupation of any such approved selection for the space of three years, five of rent; such three years to commence from the end of the twelve months last mentioned.

8. Any such selections of Class C land will, on approval, be granted on pastoral lease for eight years, to commence from the 1st of January next following the date of application; and similar selections of Class A land within a run will be granted on annual lease, subject to renewal from year to year, at the option of the Government.

9. Class C leases will be chargeable with one fee of £5 each at their commencement, together with five shillings per 1000 for the acreage therein, for the first four years, and ten shillings per thousand acres for each of the second four years. Class A licences will be charged at the same rate for acreage, but no licence fee.

All payments to be in advance.

10. Leases and Licences will be transferable while chargeable with rent, on its being shown to the satisfaction of the Governor that they have been properly stocked.

11. Runs or Leases may be resumed either wholly or in part, for public purposes; or for sale, on giving twelve months' notice; but compensation in such cases will be given, according to valuation or agreement, for any lawful improvements effected on a lease chargeable with rent previous to such notice.

12. During the free occupation of a run, and during the first year of a lease, the lawful occupant of the same will be allowed a right to cultivate; but no claim for damages by trespass of stock will be admissible, unless the land trespassed upon shall be properly fenced.

13. In all other respects, the disposal and tenure of the Crown Lands in the north and east districts will be governed by the provisions of the existing land regulations.

14. No protection or government establishment will be guaranteed to the public, until deemed expedient by the Government.

By His Excellency's command,

FRED. P. BARLEE,
Colonial Secretary.

THE NORTH DISTRICT.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
PERTH, 20th July, 1864.

It is hereby notified for general information that, with a view to establish a practicable overland route between the settled districts of this colony and the newly discovered lands on the north-west coast, the first person who may drive stock from any part of Western Australia, not within its north district, to any other part of the same, situable to the north of the tropic of Capricorn, will be entitled to a commission of all rents which may accrue to any lands he may take up for pastoral purposes in such district, under the regulations of 23rd December, 1862, to an extent not exceeding 100,000 acres.

No person to be entitled to this privilege, unless he actually drives to the country indicated at least 100 head of horses or cattle, or 200 sheep, or a due proportion of each, prior to the 1st August, 1863.

Any further information required will be afforded on application to the Hon. the Surveyor-General.

By His Excellency's command,

FRED. P. BARLEE,
Colonial Secretary.

DESCRIPTION OF CAMDEN HARBOUR.

On a highly valuable point, commercially speaking, on the coast of north-west Australia, a settlement is now being formed at Camden Harbour, which, as time progresses, must command the attention of all interested in the progress of Australia. Camden Harbour adjoins a very rich and well watered agricultural country of basaltic formation. It is situated in 13 deg. 30 min. of south latitude, and 124 deg. 30 min. of east longitude from Greenwich, which is the exact geographical position of its west entrance; and it is a spot affording magnificent facilities for shipping.
Cumberland Harbour was six miles deep, extending gradually from a width of one and three-quarter miles at the entrance, to five at the head, and had a depth of water varying from five to seven fathoms, with a soft muddy bottom. The few observations on the tide only slight affect the time of high water on full and change, between the half-hour before new, when the rise is nearly thirty feet, and the strength in the entrance about two knots, with a deposit of mud from thirteen to six fathoms.

The report of Dr. James Martin, who was despatched by the Government of Western Australia, in March of this year (1864.), and dated at Perth, Western Australia, 16th June, 1864, describes Cumberland Harbour in paragraphs thirty-one and thirty-two, as follows:

"Cumberland Harbour is a semi-twelve square miles, is so thoroughly land-locked that a ship once at anchor need fear no wind. The coast line within the harbor is everywhere indented with beautiful bays. There are several picturesque islands, on nearly all of which there is fresh water, and every valley of the mainland has its rippling brook of the purest water running down to the beach. Ships entering from Cumberland Bay have but two dangers to avoid: one is the bank extending northwards from the Pinnacle island, this being a rocky bar between Carnemg Island and the Channel Reef. Vessels should steer well clear of this bank, and with a fair wind. The rocks to the south-west of New Island, to be seen at all times, may be passed in mid-channel, but on sighting the Pinnacle, which is close to the southern shore, a course of about one-eighth of a mile distant from New Island will contain the deepest water, running from thirteen to fourteen fathoms at the narrowest part of the entrance. When the Pinnacle bears south a course east, 10 deg. north may be sailed for two and a-half miles, when the northern entrance opens out into Cumberland Bay, bearing north-west, all bearings true. Thence a course east-north-east by south, and entrance to Carnemg Island, may find a perfectly secure anchorage anywhere in mid-channel, as far as the entrance to the Inner Harbour, with not less than three and four fathoms water; all these soundings are at low tide. For beaching a vessel on a soft bottom, it would be difficult to find a better spot than the sand patch on Carnemg Island. The time of high water within

and the stream was perceived to continue and form a very beautiful fresh-water river about two or three hundred yards wide. As our means did not allow of our persevering any further, we gave up our examination. At seventeen miles above St. George's Basin, on the south shore, we found a cascade of fresh water falling in a considerable quantity from the height of one hundred and forty feet; and this in the rainy season must be a very large fall, for its breadth is at least fifty yards, and at the time of our visit it was near the end of the dry season."

Sir George Grey, who surveyed the country on the whaling voyage on Cumberland Harbour, describes it as mainly consisting of trap soil of the most fertile character, similar to that at the best pastoral country in Victoria, and the best sugarcane districts in Mauritius. He, in his account of that survey, on 27th February, 1838, vol. i., pp. 101-2, thus writes:

"About two p.m. we reached this extremity of the sandstone ridge, and a magnificent view burst upon us. From the summit of the hill on which we stood an almost precipitous descent led into a fertile plain below, and from this far away to the southward for thirty to forty miles stretched a low, luxuriant country, broken by conical peaks and rounded hills, which were richly graced to their very summits. The plains and hills were both thinly wooded, and curving lines of shady trees marked out the course of numerous streams. Since I have visited this spot I have traversed large portions of Australia, but have seen no land, no scenery equal to it."

Again, vol. i., pp. 104-5—March 2nd, 1838. We started at dawn, crossing a series of low ridges which ran out from a chain of hills to the eastward of us, and increased in elevation as we proceeded to the south. We passed numerous streams, and the country generally continued of a very rich and fertile character. At last, from the top of one of these ridges there burst upon the view a river, running through a beautiful country, and where we saw it, at least three or four miles across, and studded with numerous islands. I have since seen many Australian rivers, but none equal to this in magnitude or elegance.

"The peak we had ascended afforded us a very beautiful view; to the north lay Prince Regent River, and the good country we were upon extended as far as the inlet which communicated with this great navigable stream. To the south-eastward ran the Glenelg River, meandering through a district as verdant and fertile a district as the eye of man ever rested on—the luxuriance of tropical vegetation was now seen to the greatest advantage. The renown of native fives rises in various directions from the country, which lay like a map on our feet; and when I recollected that all these natural riches of soil and climate lay between two navigable rivers,
July 15.—En route, steering a general course of west 20° east. After travelling an eighth of a mile we entered what we may well call ‘the happy valley’: this was a valley running to the southward, and we steered nearly south, and this was the only sign of non-tropical vegetation—that is to say, green plants, with here and there a small clump of trees, clothed with a very green of grassy grasses. The first plants we had seen were our trees of Australia. The old red sandstone walls bounding the valley on either side, picturesque cliffs of naked sand-stones, intermingled with palms, acacias, eucalyptus, and melaleuca, with the evergreen vegetation of the Country. A delicious cool and clear stream of water flowed everywhere copiously along the valley. We disturbed birds of varied hue, but mostly of brilliant colours; one or two rose bushes were particularly beautiful—their red and tall of bright green, the wings of a silvery grey hue: pigeons were numerous. Just before the end of the valley five degrees of saddle emerged, at different intervals, gave us first an inspecting and suspicious examination, and then in turn afforded us an opportunity of observing the Different parts of returning. 'The happy valley' was inclosed in a happier circular plain of about half-a-mile diameter, covered with the most luxuriant grass, not less than three feet in height, the plain was bounded by rough, broken and levelled, the different kinds and a wall, broken here and there, of old sandstone behind it which we were not aware of yet grown here. From the plain we ran up a creek bounded by rocky walls to its source in the dividing range, the route being over a chocolate-coloured soil, over, well watered and grassed, and abundance of fine timber. Our afternoon course was over exceedingly difficult country for twenty-quarters of a mile, then branching westward to a fully running parallel to that of the morning, we continued our course over a similar country until we arrived at a large flat, where we camped for the night. Just before making camp we saw extraordinary woods of the recent presence of some very large, and I should say from the trees, dark coloured, amusing animal; during the day we saw a large stone-coloured snake, black rockoats, and numerous kangaroos.

The 'extent of the known portion of the Greaten district, that is, from the meridian of 121° 46' east to the coast, and from the parallel of latitude 30° south, the eastern edge of the country, to the coast of Coogee Harbour, includes only 2925 square miles; of which area, deducting one-third for rocky ridges, an excessive amount, and the sea inlets, Doubtful Bay, George Water, & c., 1,000,000 acres are suited to the pasture of sheep. Of these million acres, about 100,000 acres are adapted to the cultivation of wheat and similar grain; 250,000 acres are especially favourable to the growth of spices, sugar, tea, and coffee, even cereals, at high altitudes and at certain seasons of the year, might be grown, at any rate, in sufficient quantities to meet the requirements of a pastoral and agricultural population. It is essentially a wool-growing country; it would be difficult to conceive

the exception of the sea-coast range of sand-hills and three little homesteads near Cape Willard, no spot traversed eastern of the depot exceeds fifty feet in altitude. Of these 2,112,000 acres, perfectly level, well-grassed, and almost treeless plains occupy 90,000 acres, the rest of which lies round the south and east shores of Barren Bay, and the remainder inland from or east of Launceton Bay. These plains possess chiefly an inferior soil, capable of growing many tropical productions; they are fringed with belts of moderately large cajuput trees. In the native wattle, which are found in such numbers of not more than a mile, water is obtainable within a distance of six or more feet, whilst within the belt of cajuput trees it is found plentifully within four or five feet of the surface. Across the plains the weather consists of grassy plains, with shrubs and small timber, not growing so thickly as to impede rapid riding, except where thistles occur. These thistles are rather difficult to traverse, on account of the mass of dead wood, the accumulation of years, not because of the density of the vegetation; once their thorns at the roots of which were removed they would disappear. The grass is fine, sweet, and plentiful; our route crossed no sand-plains or barren plains; in May the grass averages one foot in height, and it is quite green. A distinguishing feature between this grass of the Glenelg district and that found here must be mentioned, as upon it is based the comparatively low estimate of sheep-grazing capacities. It is called "bush grass." (This is also the case in certain highly valued parts of the already settled districts of Western Australia.) Yet this, as it is as well to under-estimate the carrying capacity of a newly discovered country, a deduction of one-half is supposed carrying power is now made, although it is more than probable that the experience of the future settler will declare the amount to be greatly under-rated. This premonished, the known parts of the Barren Bay district, within the limits already mentioned, may be safely asserted to be capable of carrying upwards of one million sheep.

The climate of the coast, Sir George Grey states, vol. i, pp. 124

...to conceive the climate of North-Western Australia to be one of the finest in the world, and my reasons for thus thinking are grounded upon the following circumstances. I was resident there from the beginning of the month of December, 1847, to the middle of the month of April, 1848, a period of four months and a-half, and during the whole of this time the men under my command were exposed to great hardships and privations. On one occasion three of us slept in the open air without any covering or warm clothing for five successive nights, during three of which we had constant showers of heavy rain, and yet did not in any way suffer from that exposure.

The opinion of Captain Wickham, R.N., commanding H.M. ship Beagle, is perfectly in accordance with my own. He was

a more luxuriantly grassed and watered territory. At the very lowest estimate it would carry a sheep to an acre, but in some picked spots there would be no risk in quadrupling the number of stock per average-had he practised with such intelligence as may be found in the tropical and subtropical districts of the eastern colonies and Mauritius.

*The courseresult in the eastward of Rocky Bay, between the 17th and 18th deg. of south latitude, and along the south coast for about 30° of longitude, the whole coast approximately 200 miles, although but 50 miles to the southward of the Glenelg district, offers a remarkable contrast in point of climate phenomena. The day heat and night tranches are far higher—yet, notwithstanding, the amount of humidity in the atmosphere is here very greatly decreased. In May and June the weather is very clear. July, clear cloudless days and nights prevailed, and only such winds, a few miles inland, as serve to keep the air in a perceptible motion; so that the days, although the thermometers real high, are not so warm that a man can walk twenty or thirty miles without inconvenience from the heat; on one occasion, indeed, our exploring party walked forty-five miles, of course between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. The dryness of the atmosphere was like that of September or October or early in November, when a man can work eight or ten hours a day in the open air without suffering on account of heat. May seems to be an early spring month; the trees are just coming into flower, and the grass is everywhere green; the natives take considerable trouble to burn the grassy grounds, so as to cut it at a large flat, where we camped for the night. Just before making camp we saw extraordinary proofs of the recent presence of some very large, and I should say from the trees, dark coloured, amusing animal; during the day we saw a large stone-coloured snake, black rockoats, and numerous kangaroos.

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upon the same time that we were, and in letter being written, this upon the same time that we were, and in letter being written, this...
River, in south latitude 15 deg. 34 min., east longitude 120 deg. 22 min., thus writes—

"The climate of north-west Australia is much more regular than that of the districts hitherto settled in the extra-tropical part of the continent. It is remarkable for the absence of that humidity which is so prominent a feature of intertropical climates. The scarcity of insect life was also remarkable. As far as our observations went, there seem to be three seasons in north-west Australia, viz., the wet season, commencing about December and lasting to February; the spring, or early season, from March to July; and the dry or hot season, from August to November. The rains commenced towards the end of November, and by the end of December had fairly set in. On the 18th the freshest had raised the Victoria River some four or five feet. From the 25th to the end of December the wind was incessant, and on the 7th January the river was being drawn every half hour by the average level. There were, however, indications of its being a very dry season. By the end of January there had been almost entirely ceased, and at the end of February the air had assumed its usual dryness. From March to July there was a constant succession of beautiful weather. The moodiness effect seldom existed more than a day, and was tempered by a delicious south-east breeze, which blew uninterruptedly for five weeks, and with slight intervals for four months. The days were bright and cloudless; the nights clear and cold; the thermometer generally below 50 deg. at midnight, sometimes below 40 deg. From September to end of November the gauge of the thermometer was high, especially the minimum, which was seldom below 80 deg. The climate of the table-land in the interior was much cooler, a difference of two and a half months having been observed by Mr. Augustus Gregory to take place between the flowering of the same plants on the Victoria and the elevated interior." This account of the soil and climate on and within a short distance of the coast of northwest Australia may be applied to a close by the following extant from Dr. James Martin's exploration of the neighbourhood of Cundin Harbour in 1863—

"July 29.—The period of sunshine here is a daily fact; a cloudless sky, not a single stir among the clouds, with sufficient force to shelter the smallest object, and a temperature perfectly enjoyable, even clad in boots, trousers, and outer Crimson shirt, a light handkerchief, which serves as a cap at night, a light cloth cap, with circles cover, cut after the Indian mode, with a well projecting peak to protect the eyes from the noon-day sun, and a veil about ten inches square rolled round the cap, except when flies and mosquitoes are troublesome; these, through the open windows, only worn on state occasions, such as breaking a roast through prickly bush vine, maccoba, or palms, complete our toilet of every day and Sunday."  

The sandstone by its decomposition usually forms a poor sandy soil, but occasionally fine gravel plains. The limestones, which occupy a large extent of the valleys are generally covered by a thin light loamy soil producing abundance of grass. But the richest soil results from the trap rocks, which are so largely developed.  

"That the country is suited for stock is shown by the excellent condition of our horses and sheep, which recovered rapidly from a state of extreme exhaustion consequent on the protected sea voyage, while there is reason to believe that the large tracts of good country extend to the south-west as far as the Fitzroy (including some seven degrees of longitude and four of latitude), beyond which the desert appears to come down to the coast. This conjecture of Mr. Gregory has so far been proved in the present year (1864) by the result of the exploration into the interior from Broich Bay. The following extracts from Mr. Gregory's journal give in detail what he shortly expresses in his report—

"February 22nd, 1864.—At 11.30 a.m. camped at a fine pool of water in a small creek from the south, close to its junction with the principal creek, which I now named Stuart Creek, after Captain Sturt, whose researches in Australia are too well known to need comment. The gravel plains extended from these to ten miles on each side of the creek, which has a more definite channel than hitherto, three large pools of sufficient size to retain water throughout the year."

"February 23rd.—Resumed our journey down the creek, the general course first south-west, and then south-west. The hills are of low height, and the whole country is so level that little is to be seen but the distant horizon scarcely rising above the vast expanse of waving grass."

"February 24th.—At 11.50 a.m., encamped at a place appeared to be the termination of the pool of water, as the channel was again lost in a level flat. Great numbers of snakes, cockatoos, cranes, and crabs frequented the banks of the creek above the camp. To the north-west and west the gravel plain extended to the horizon; scarcely a break in interrupt the even surface of waving grass."

RETURN JOURNEY.

"March 12th.—The pool at which we now camped appears to be permanent. It is 160 yards wide, with water three feet deep close to the bank. Nearing an average bank of the creek, traced the wide gravel plains on the right side only. The creek which we first named 'Denison Plains' was given. Our course this day showed the great extent of the gravel plains to the north-west, and we did not see their limit at any point. Good breeze from west with thin clouds all day."
organizing to follow in their steps; and these will only be the precursors of many more such enterprises until the whole first-class pastoral area of North-West Australia is filled up.

PROSPECTUS OF THE

Demin Platau Pastoral Company, Limited.

To be formed under the "Companies' Statute, 1864."

CAPITAL £20,000, IN 500 SHARES OF £100 EACH.

DEPOSIT OF APPLICANTION FOR SHARES, £5 PER SHARE.

This Company will occupy, under the very liberal Land Regulations of Western Australia, a portion of the first-class pastoral country extending between Sturt Creek and the settlement now being formed at Camden Harbour, in North-West Australia.

The country is described by its discoverer, Mr. Augustus Gregory, Surveyor-General of Queensland, in his report to the Government of New South Wales in 1864, as follows:—Paragraph 34, "For the first hundred miles the country on the right bank of Sturt Creek consisted of vast level plains of rich soil, covered with beautiful grass. These I call Demin Plains."

The holder or holders of two Shares in the Demin Plains Pastoral Company will be entitled to one free passage, with one ton of goods by a first-class ship to the company’s settlement, to four years’ rations there, and to a lease for twelve years of twenty thousand acres of land, with twenty head of cows, or forty head of ewes to stock the same, at no rent for the first four years, five pounds per annum for the second four years, and ten pounds per annum for the last four years; including a prior right of purchase over any portion of the land leased above forty acres, at the fixed price of ten shillings per acre during the first five years of the occupation of the land.

22

STATEMENT OF CAPITAL, EXPENDITURE, AND RETURNS IN STOCK AND WOOL.

Capital, 500 Shares of £100 each, Clip of 23,900 Sheep at 1st June, 1866, per stock statement at £6. each net. £30,000 0 0

EXPENDITURE TO 1st JUNE, 1866—

15,000 four-tooth Ewes in lamb, including cost, freight, fitting, and keep on board ship for 40 days, at 30s. each £22,500 0 0

300 Rams, at £15 each 450 0 0

200 Mares, at £15 each 3,000 0 0

2 Estables, at £100 each 0 0 0

Freight, fittings, and keep on board for 402 horses, for 40 days … 2,810 0 0

Tools, Hens, arms, implements, ammunition and seeds 2,200 0 0

Rations for 250 men, one year, at £200 each £2,000 0 0

Expenses of management one year Incidental and unforeseen expenses, first year £2,000 0 0

Small steamer purchased … 3,000 0 0

£43,583 0 0

£29,933 0 0

£14,651 16 0

EXPENDITURE FROM 1st JUNE, 1866, TO 1st JUNE, 1867—

Expenses of management, one year One year’s rations for 250 men, at £200 each £30,000 0 0 £6,400 0 0

£6,400 0 0

£14,651 16 0

21

The company’s enterprise will be under one general management for four years from the date of the first landing of the company’s expedition, at the end of which time the company’s leases and live stock will be distributed by lot among the shareholders, the other assets of the company be divided among them pro rata, and the company itself be dissolved.

The company’s expedition will sail from Hobson’s Bay about 1st March, 1865, and will convey the first lot of stock to be taken, consisting of 15,000 ewes, 200 mares, and the necessary male stock.

The dividend from these alone (reducing the increase of hams at seventy per cent. per annum, and allowing six per cent. for deaths among the sheep, and eighty per cent. per annum interest for the horses,) will amount, 5½ each household of 20,000 acres, to upwards of 200 sheep and 4 horses at the end of four years; besides which there will be the clip during that period of 150,000 sheep, amounting, at £5 per fleece, to £22,500.

A full description of the company’s enterprise, and the nature of the country and climate, with map, will be forwarded by post, if application is made by letter, addressed to the Agent of the Company, as under, enclosing six fourpenny postage stamps, and on or after 16th December.

Blank letters of application for shares may be obtained from, and all such applications must be addressed, accompanied by a post office order or bank draft, remitting a deposit of £5 per share to

WILLIAM HARVEY,

Agent for the Demin Plains Pastoral Company, (Limited.)

* At the offices of the Company, 69 Bourke-street west, Melbourne.

23

Brought forward … … … … £14,651 16 0

Expenses of management, one year One year’s rations for 250 men, at £200 each £30,000 0 0 £6,400 0 0

£6,400 0 0

£14,651 16 0

£7,931 8 0

£35,939 8 0

£15,500 12 0

£15,600 12 0

£7,931 8 0

£20,000 0 0

£2,000 0 0

£138,628 0 0

£37,240 0 0

£8,000 12 0

£204,468 12 0

In other words, each household of 20,000 acres will, at the end of four years, for his original investment of £200, be in possession of property of a salable value of £318; but which, if he chooses to hold, it will be a certain fortune to him before the termination of his lease.

STATEMENT OF STOCK AND INCREASE.

SHEEP.

Original stock. Ducks at £0 per each. 15,000 Ewes 900 14,100 to lamb 1st June, 1865.

Lambs at 70 per cent. 1st June, 1865 9,800

Clipped, 1st June, 1866 22,900
## THE CASE OF ENGLAND AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA IN RESPECT TO TRANSPORTATION.

**By H. R. Grellet.**

**London:** Edward Stanford, G, Charing Cross.

1861.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CASE</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENGLAND</strong></td>
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<td><strong>AND</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IN RESPECT TO TRANSPORTATION.</strong></td>
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### HORSES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Original Stock</th>
<th>80% Royalty, Net Increase, 80% Royalty, Gross Increase.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>200 in foal</td>
<td>80 80 112 432</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Mares in Foal.

- 1865: 80 (80)
- 1866: 80 (80)
- 1867: 80 (80)
- 1868: 80 (80)
- 1869: 112 (112)

Total: 432

**1084.**
EXTRA

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

[Published by Authority.]

Tuesday, December 23rd, 1862.

6. At any time within the three years named, the lawful occupant of any run, will be permitted to select within such run, lots of land not exceeding twenty thousand acres each. Any such selections of Class C land will, on approval, be granted on pastoral lease for 8 years, to commence from the 1st January next following the date of application: and similar selections of Class A land within a run will be granted on annual license, subject to renewal from year to year, at the option of the Government.

7. Class C leases will be chargeable with one fee of £5 each at their commencement, together with five shillings per 1000 acres on the acreage therein, for each of the first four years, and ten shillings per thousand acres for each of the second four years. Class A licenses will be charged at the same rates for acreage, but no license fee. All payments to be in advance.

8. Leases and Licenses will be transferable without charge with rent, on its being shown to the satisfaction of the Governor that they have been properly stocked.

9. Runs or Leases may be resumed either wholly or in part, for public purposes, or for sale, on giving twelve months notice; but compensation will in such case be given, according to valuation or agreement, for any lawful improvements effected on a lease chargeable with rent previous to such notice.

10. During the free occupation of a run, and during the first year of a lease, the lawful occupant of the same will be allowed a right to cultivate; but no claim for damages by trespass upon such land trespased upon shall have been properly fenced.

11. In all other respects, the disposal and tenure of the Crown Lands in the North and East Districts, will be governed by the provisions of the existing Land Regulations.

12. No protection or government establishment will be guaranteed to the public, until deemed expedient by the Government.

By His Excellency's command,

FRED. P. BARLIEE,
Colonial Secretary.
Appendix Four

The stock, equipment and known outlay of the small Companies and family concerns which settled the North-West as a comparison with the costs of one share (£100-160) in joining the Camden Harbour and Denison Plains schemes

Withnell

Charter *Sea Ripple* £650 12
650 sheep @ about 10 shillings each £300
Other Stock draught and saddle horses, cows, sheep dogs
Clydesdale Stallion £300 13
provisions
firearms
building materials
household goods

‘Would have sold out if they could for £1400’.14

Wellard 15
Staff Costs 5 European men and 2 Aboriginal men.
Manager’s costs
Shepherd’s costs @ £3-0-0 per month
370 sheep
26 Cattle
9 Horses
Charter costs

Sold out to L.C Burges for between £2000-£2400. 16

The Portland West Australian Squatting Company 17

Six Chambered Revolver £3-3-0
30 tons hay @£5-5-0 per ton £157-10-0
Charter *Maria Ross* £1000
Fitting out *Maria Ross* £100
1600-1700 sheep at 10 shillings each at least £80018

---

12 Withnell-Taylor, op cit, p. 33.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid, p. 92.
15 Hasluck, op. cit., p 268 and De La Rue, op. cit., p. 15.
16 Withnell-Taylor, op. cit, p. 108, & De La Rue, op. cit., p.15.
17 Richardson Diary, op cit.
18 In 1865, sheep landed at Ballarat cost 12s per head. *Harvey to Editor, Perth Gazette*, 22/9/1866, op cit.
The Portland West Australian Squatting Company 17

Six Chambered Revolver £3-3-0
30 tons hay @£5-5-0 per ton £157-10-0
Charter Maria Ross £1000
Fitting out Maria Ross £100
1600-1700 sheep at 10 shillings each at least £80018
8 horses
stores e.g flour, rice, potatoes
tools

Estimated Minimum costs £2,500

Padbury 19 Actual Costs unknown

Running costs on his Barque Tien Tsin
Ditto cutter Mystery
11 horses
6 working bullocks
540 sheep
provisions
iron house
timber house
Staff Costs 7 White men and 5 Aborigines, (4 from Rottnest Island).
Managers costs
Shepherd's costs @ 25-30 shillings per month.

Abandoned his station and buildings.20

17 Richardson Diary, op cit.
18 In 1865, sheep landed at Ballarat cost 12s per head. Harvey to Editor, Perth Gazette, 22/9/1866, op cit.
19 Hasluck, op. cit., pp. 263-5.
20 Nairn op. cit., p.183. Padbury was very successful in moving his stock south despite the loss of the station.
Appendix Five

The career of the various Shareholders and staff of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company examined as a comparison with that of Broadhurst

Broadhurst’s Denison Plains Company colleagues have received little attention, yet for almost a year they constituted around 50% of the European population of the North and thus represent a very useful group for study purposes.

In studying this one group of twenty two men and five women, all members of a defunct Company and all freed at the same time to pursue their own ends or leave the District, there is a unique opportunity to analyse a known un-attached percentage of the European population of the North District. They are a useful social and economic group in their own right and their progress, with a few exceptions, could be monitored until around 1867-1870 when the reasonably small European population began to swell with itinerant pearlers.21 Given that the members were in the main the ‘staff’ of the Company and after the collapse were not bound to any employer, and given that they ranged (in monetary terms) from shepherds and serving girls, wives and mothers through to professional people and landed gentry, they also provide an interesting representation of the community at large. In briefly analysing their contribution, we can put Broadhurst’s own achievements into a perspective.

A list of the Company members that landed under Broadhurst appears in the section on the Denison Plains Pastoral Company, and is reproduced in brief here minus the children. The names of the shareholders are underlined. The rest were purely staff or the agents of other shareholders.22

First cabin:

Matilda Anderson, 20, (single), English, (Servant to the Wedges)
Dr. Thomas Baynton, 34, (Single), English.
Charles Edward Broadhurst, 35, English.
Eliza Broadhurst, 25, Irish.
I. C. Brodie, 32, (single), English.
Robert Edmonstone, 35, (single), English.
George Hodgkinson, 20, (single), English.

21 The census of 1870, op. cit.
22 From a number of sources quoted in the section on the DPPC. Most important is a petition beginning ‘we the undersigned members of the Denison Plains Pastoral company’. CSR, 603/119, BL.
Bridget Hinchley, 22, (single), Irish, (servant to the Broadhurst’s).
W.I. Sayer, 43, (single), English.
Harry Whitall Venn, 23, (single), English.
Charles Wedge, 55, English.
Frances B. Wedge, 30, English.

Third Cabin:

George Bush, 35, (married), English.
Charles Cane, 23, English.
Robert Frazer, 33, (single), Scotch.
S. Filchey (Filchy?), 28, (single), English.
John Graham, 28, (single), Scotch.
W. Gardiner 25, (single), English.
Benjamin Hanlon, (single), English.
Henry Horace Hicks, 32, (single), English.
William Jeffrey, 30, (Married), Scotch.
Roderick Louden McKay, 29, (single), Scotch.
Malcolm Macintosh, 29, (single), Scotch.
Simeon Müller, 35, German.
Mrs. Müller, 33, German.
David Simpson, 25, (single), Scotch.
Mr. W.F. Sayer, 50, (single), English (Sawyer, Sawer, Sayers or Sayes?)

W.F. Tays, (apparently a Nova Scotian) proceeded independently to Nickol Bay.

The average age of the men was 32.5 years (range 20-55 years) and the women 26 (range 20-33 years). Broadhurst at 35 and his wife Eliza at 25 years of age, can be seen to have fitted into the mid range. Broadhurst, Müller (35), Wedge (55), Bush (35) and Jeffery (30) were the only men known to be married. The last two apparently had left their families in Victoria.

Three of the women, Eliza Broadhurst (24), Frances Wedge (30) and Mrs Müller (33) were married with large families. The Wedge’s had five children aged from nine years old to a baby of one year. The Broadhurst’s had two boys aged three and four years old, and when she arrived with her piano at Nickol Bay, Eliza was seven months pregnant. Her daughter, Sarah Eleanor, the first European girl to be born in the North District. The Müller’s had four children aged from eight years to one year. Given the numbers and age of their children and the role of women in those days, there is little surprise that the women featured little in the explorations and business matters of the Company. Their accepted place was in the home and they had their hands full dealing with their families. That they accompanied their husbands and their families to the North in the first

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23 The age for some of the settlers is not known and they have been excluded from the count.
place and endured the suffering in the manner that they did, is a constant source of amazement today.24

There were three distinct groups amongst those who sailed on-board the Warrior with Broadhurst, those who were purely paid staff, those who were both shareholders and staff and those who were purely shareholders. As it is not known with any certainty which of their number, apart from Broadhurst, Wedge and Baynton, who were paid members of staff, the group are divided here into Shareholders and non-shareholders.

Those shareholders who left fairly quickly after news of the collapse of the Company reached the North in October 1865 appear to be George Hodgkinson, Benjamin Hanlon and Robert Edmonstone, (with whom Broadhurst engaged in fisticuffs). All those who were purely staff bar S. Filchey also left soon after the Company collapsed. They were Bridget Hickley, the Broadhurst’s servant girl, William Jeffrey and Messrs, W.I. and W.F. Sayer. All of these people appear to have gone by May 1866 at the latest.25 They probably realized the extent suffering that was in store for them and with nothing to lose they left as soon as possible.

The others stayed and suffered, in the terrible drought of the summer of 1865/1866. All of the remaining shareholders are known to have eventually become pastoralists in the North-West. On the basis of McRae’s comment in 1870 that almost everyone had gone pearling, and Richardson’s comment that in the first five or six years until the sheep ‘got into good number’, pearling paid better than the stations, most, with the possible exception of Dr Baynton, are expected to have also become pearlers.26

The careers of those who stayed will now be briefly analysed.

Matilda Anderson:

Matilda Anderson was a serving girl to the Wedge’s, and was unsuitable for the rigours of the North. She was ‘turned out’ by them and was later described by Sholl as,

\[
\text{a half witted girl. She cannot or will not work... as a needle woman or washer woman and no one will employ her as a domestic servant.}^{27}\]

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24 Eliza Broadhurst is the best known. See, Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., Cha xi. She also appears on the cover and within Hunt, op. cit., pp 52, 64-65. She also features in an unpublished family history typescript, Weldon op. cit., and in biographical references to her husband. See Drake-Brockman, op. cit.

25 They do not appear in any reference consulted and may be the 7 who left on 21 April 1866, and a part of the unnamed ten who left a short while later. Erickson (1988), op. cit., pp. 412, 1498, records that Hodgkinson, McKay and Bush left from Fremantle for Melbourne in David and Jesse on 4/6/1866. There were a number of McKay’s and Mackays in the North at this time, however. One McKay is noted by the diarist Richardson as the manager for LL Mount. Richardson Diary 7/7/1865.

26 Richardson, op. cit., p.35, & F McRae to his sister, 2/8/1870, 2/10/1870, Acc 289a , BL.

27 CSR, 581/131, BL.
She was taken in by Graham who assisted her in a case against her employers (the Wedge's) but when he could no longer keep her she was 'turned adrift as a pauper' and sent to the poor home at Fremantle. 28

**Dr. Thomas Baynton: Doctor and Pastoralist**

Doctor Baynton is described by the young Sholl as a ‘quiet reserved man’ and by his father as a ‘skilful man well spoken of by the settlers’. 29 He was with Broadhurst and Wedge, one the leaders of the Company, co-signing a letter of thanks to the people and government of Western Australia that was reproduced in the *Inquirer* of May 10 1865.

According to Richardson, he attended to various patients in his capacity as the Denison Plains Pastoral Company Doctor before the Resident Magistrate, who was a former medical student arrived in the area.

In May 1866 he followed Broadhurst and Wedge into the settlement at Withnell’s and erected a small bough hut on the government reserve. 30 It was described as ‘a small cottage of brushwood’ and had a canvas or calico roof. He does not seem to have been in practice there however and Sholl appears to have performed many of the day to day medical task at this time.

When concerns were mounting over the arrival of the cutter *Mystery*, it was considered sending down a ‘good punt’ made of materials from a larger one wrecked previously. Baynton of all those then at Roebourne was considered ‘the only one’ who could command and head the expedition, indicating that he possessed capacities as leader and possibly had some knowledge of boating. 31 He understandably refused to be a part of the scheme.

Baynton was very much a part of a vibrant and very active social group of families, absentee pastoralists, government people, and visiting pastoralists who centred at Roebourne in 1866.

Baynton was one of the three men who succeeded in having land registered in their name when it was realized that the Company was only entitled as a single entity to 100,000 acres. Baynton and Simpson had 100,000 acres of land on the Maitland river allocated to them and Müller had 20,000 acres on the Nickol River. The three formally agreed that they had no actual claim to the land which apparently stretched from the Company base at Miaree Pool (Figure 16), through Karatha Pool further upstream to Whyjabby Pool, and beyond. 32

After the Company collapsed, Baynton then began to establish *Karratha Station* on the Maitland River at Karratha pool. *Baynton Hill*, a landmark on the property bears the family name. 33 A glance at the map of the area (figure 16) shows that *Karratha pool* lies only 5 kilometres upstream from *Miaree Pool*, the site of the former Company base. Karratha pool also lies

28CSR, 581/131,117, BL.
29 TCS, 31/6/1866 & CSR 581/112, BL.
31CSR 581/116, BL.
32CSR, 603/116, BL.
33 RJS, 5/10/1867, BL.
only a few kilometres from Whyjabby [sic] and Cherratta Pools which were occupied in January by Company members McKay and Venn respectively.

Broadhurst apparently kept his stock at the Company base at Miaree pool and became involved with Baynton in an altercation in early October 1866 about the ownership of the Karatha and Miaree Pool areas which were apparently in Baynton’s name on behalf of the Company. This led Baynton to ask the Resident Magistrate whether Broadhurst could warn people off ‘his’ (Broadhurst’s run on the Maitland. Sholl replied in the negative and indicated that despite his earlier disclaimer, Baynton had the rights to the land to the exclusion of the Company and its future owner Broadhurst.34 Satisfied in the security of his lease, Baynton left in October 1866, leaving his flocks in the care of an agent and shepherds. His place was taken in he following year by his brother and wife.35 Baynton and his brother were part owners with McKay in the shipment of 3500 sheep on board Johanna Maria in July 1867. Unfortunately only 700 survived. As a result, he was also described by Sholl as ‘one of the most active and intelligent memberof the Denison Plains Association, in which he lost heavily’.36 Even before this loss at around £400, Baynton estimated his losses in the Company to be in the region of £1000. 37

The Karatha ‘run’ was obviously well chosen, for the well known identity Maitland Brown, applied for the lease only to be disappointed when Baynton’s brother arrived. Neither of the Baynton brothers appears to have lived permanently at Karratha Pool however, and they most likely employed shepherds (as did Broadhurst). On landing at Nickol Bay for example, the latter Baynton immediately requested permission to add to a residence on the Government reserve. His arrival and the presence of his wife helped fill the gap left by the departure of his brother in the social life of the town, taking walks, playing cards and the like.

Baynton and his wife left the North along with the Broadhurst’s on board the Clarence Packet. They then left Fremantle for Melbourne on board the Gem on 23 November 1867, just a month before the Broadhurst’s themselves followed suit.38

The Baynton’s do not appear to have returned to the North-West and they soon became absentee pastoralists like the Broadhurst’s. They maintained Venn as their agent in the North for Sholl records receiving an application from Venn as agent for Baynton for blocks on Baynton’s run.39 Venn later purchased the Station.

34 RJS, 5/10/1866, BL.
35 CSR, 603/118, BL.
36 CSR, 603/225, BL.
37 Baynton to his father, 20/2/1866, op. cit., he estimated that his losses in money and time were in the vicinity of £1000. He brought four shares in the Company. He also lost heavily in the speculation with his brother and McKay in the sheep on-board Johanna Maria.
38 Erickson, (1988), op. cit., p. 171.
39 RJS, 17/4/1869 and CSR, 624/49, 29/10/1868, BL.
J.C. Brodie: Government Official

Brodie is noted in the Book of Applications to proceed to the North District in charge of a number of fellow settlers including Müller and would therefore have been one of the more capable Company members. He is noted by Sholl on his January 1866 inspection as the 'late storekeeper' at the Company's Nickol River base where he was residing there along with Baynton, Venn, Gardiner and Wedge. In October 1866 he applied to be the Inspector of Sheep (scab inspector) and in 1868 accepted the position of Clerk to the Resident Magistrate at Greenough, holding it till 1876.40

George Bush: Pastoralist?

Little record had been found of George M. Bush, (Bushe?), though a George Bush was noted in 1887 as an 'important pastoralist' employing around 40 Aboriginals on the Gascoyne River.41 This is most likely the same man as he would have been 57 years old by then, and any sons carrying the same name would have been too young to have established themselves.

Charles Cane: Explorer

Cane was a former member of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association who joined the Denison Plains Pastoral Company with a flock of sheep to try again. He was a part of the group on the Maitland River and was, with Venn, McKay and Frazer, prominent in the exploration of the area around Nickol Bay and the Ashburton in early 1866. The Cane River bears his name and he applied for a lease at the Ashburton in the period 1866/7.42 A record of his activities has not been found.

S. Filchey:

A man called Ficher is recorded as contesting two unspecified court cases against Broadhurst. This man is believed to be Filchey, the one remaining staff member who did not take up shares in the Company. He appears in cases in August 1866 and September of the same year.43 On this basis it appears that he may have continued for a time as a shepherd, stockman or labourer in the North.

Robert Frazer: Explorer and Pastoralist

Frazer made a name for himself as a part of the four man Company exploration team that included Cane, McKay and Venn. He was awarded 100,000 Acres of land by the Government in recognition for his services.

40 Erickson, (1988), op. cit., p.326 & CSR, 581/100, BL.
42 ibid., p.459.
43 RJS, 5/9/1866, BL.
during these explorations.\textsuperscript{44} His application for a ‘run’ on the Fortescue River adjoining Venn’s was approved in July 1866 on the basis of stock he landed in that year.\textsuperscript{45} He, or a Duncan Frazer, is recorded applying for 10,000 Acres on the Ashburton, November 1866, but finding it unsuitable unsuccessfully applied for another run. That particular Frazer is also noted as a stock owner on the Maitland in the period 1867-1876.\textsuperscript{46} Frazer is later noted as having established Balmoral Station on the Fortescue River.\textsuperscript{47}

On 25 June 1869, Sholl records Messrs Frazer, Hicks and MacIntosh calling on him, while Broadhurst lay ill and was not expected to live in order to discuss the long defunct Denison Plains Company. The content of the discussion was not disclosed, but it is believed to have revolved around the question of the ownership of the Company. (See Hicks and MacIntosh following).

\textbf{William Gardiner, Sadlier}:

Little is known of Gardiner’s activities except that he was part of the group at the Nickol River Station. On 18 November 1872 a William Gardiner purchased at a cost of £5.0.0, Lot 20 at the township of Roebourne. The same man was a saddler at Roebourne from 1873-1886. He visited Victoria and returned to the North on 21/2/1887.\textsuperscript{48} It is presumed that this is the same William Gardiner.

\textbf{John Graham: Shoemaker}

A Mr Graham set up shop as a shoemaker soon after the news of the Company collapse reached the North.\textsuperscript{49} The Resident Magistrate arrived at Nickol Bay in November 1865 along with another John Graham, a ‘chainer’ in his Camden Harbour party. He noted on arrival that there were two houses besides Withnell’s at Yeera-Muk-A-Doo, the permanent pool on the Harding which was soon to be the site of the town of Roebourne. These were, ‘a small affair occupied by Graham .... and the other by Mullen’.\textsuperscript{50} Thus it is the Denison Plains Company Graham who was the shoemaker. It is possibly because Graham had set up in business and needed cash, that he and Broadhurst, the Company Manager (and holder of the empty Company purse) strings, were at odds from the beginning. They often clashed and conducted a running battle through the local court. On 6 August 1866, Broadhurst summoned Graham, successfully, ‘for detaining and refusing to pay for goods of the Denison Plains Pastoral Company’ to the value of £1.7.0. In the following August, Broadhurst lost an unspecified case bought by Graham to a cost of 5 shillings plus court costs of 8/6d. In the next month Broadhurst was successful in a case against Graham for abusive language.

\textsuperscript{44} RJS, 9/7/1866, BL.
\textsuperscript{45}CSR 582/47, BL.
\textsuperscript{46}Erickson, (1988), op. cit., p. 1120.
\textsuperscript{47}PR 9251, p.7, BL.
\textsuperscript{48}Erickson, (1988), op. cit., p.1155.
\textsuperscript{49} Not Graham the ‘Chainer ’ in Sholl’s team at Camden Harbour.
\textsuperscript{50} RJS, 29/11/1865, BL.
As far as business went, Graham was apparently successful. In August 1866, Sholl paid nine shillings to Graham for the repair of some 'official' boots. The Diarist A.R. Richardson of the Portland West Australian Squatting Company was to note that

I think if a shoemaker was to commence business, it would be more likely to pay, as this is a fearful country for wearing boots, the ground is so stoney.51

If Richardson's predictions were to prove correct then Graham was to make a reasonable living. Further evidence of this success is indicated by his purchase of town lots 2 and 3 at Roebourne on 3 September 1866.52 One of these at least would have been the location of his hut.

He has, along with the Müller's and the Broadhurst's, the distinction of being the first white people to build homes alongside the Withnell's and thus to lay the foundations for the new town of Roebourne.

**H. H. Hicks: Pearler and Pastoralist**

Henry Horace Hicks like many others of the Company, left the bases on the Maitland and the Nickol soon after the receipt of news concerning the collapse of the Company arrived in October 1865. He combined with the enterprising pearler W.F. Tays and occupied a tent near the shore at Tien Tsin Harbour. From this base they were to engage for a period in mainly maritime enterprises. Their first recorded sortie was to recover a 'large punt' belonging to the Company which lay wrecked on Jarman Island. With this vessel they planned to provide a stevedoring service by 'despatching cargo from ships on arrival'.53 This attempt apparently involved their floating out to the island on a raft along with a number of Aboriginal helpers. On one occasion, due to adverse winds, they required a tow from a boat which soon filled with water in the choppy seas. Abandoning the attempt they left their native helpers and the raft on the island and rowed home. They were later followed by the unfortunate Aborigines who swam ashore when the provisions, which were already spoiled by immersion, were consumed.54 Hicks and Tays soon parted company. Hicks departed for Melbourne with a D. Hicks on 17/2/1866 and returned soon after.55 On 16 October 1866, Hicks left with E.T. Hooley and Alexander McRae to retrace the stock route Hooley had just pioneered from Newcastle (Toodyay). Hooley apparently also planned to deliver the

51 Richardson Diary, op. cit., 30/6/1865, BL.
53 TCS, 6/12/1865, BL.
54 Possibly the DPPC or the CHPA boat mentioned earlier as a 'crazy old boat kept together by pieces of wood nailed athwart the gunwhale...McCleod and Green pulling...Broadhurst bailing and Tays steering...apology for a sail'. RJS 25/11/1865, BL.
55 Erickson, (1988), op. cit, p.1467.
first overland mail from the North back to Perth thus ending the reliance of the tiny outpost on the vagaries of sea communications. 56

Hicks found employ with L.C. Burges in October 1866,57 and stayed in the pastoral industry. He acted as a sheperd for six partners on the Ashburton and did not take up land for himself at this stage. He was a prominent and apparently conscientious figure.58 He was elected to the Roebourne Road Board in July 1871 and was well thought of in the district, and was afforded a public dinner on the eve of one of his journeys south. In January 1887 he took shares in the 29 ton fore and aft schooner Willie with a J. Isdell. He died in the district on 30 January 1888.59 Richardson records that he founded the ‘Springs Station’ on the upper Harding River.60

Malcolm MacIntosh and David Simpson: Pastoralists and pearlers

These two men were with Broadhurst at the Company base on the Maitland River in January 1866. There, following the collapse of the Company they successfully tendered to sheperd the Company sheep at £2-0-0 per week.61 MacIntosh was a part of an exploration team to the Fortescue in October 1865. They subsequently teamed up to establish Mardie Station on the lower reaches of the Fortescue.62 They were there in September 1867, when Sholl records that Simpson shot an Aboriginal man for stealing flour.63

Macintosh was to have discussions with Sholl concerning the defunct Denison Plains Company along with Hicks and Frazer as late as June 1869. These discussions occurred as Broadhurst lay gravely ill and was not expected to live and cast some doubts as to whether the trio believed that the Company property or land that Broadhurst then held as the successful tenderer for the defunct company was actually his. The content of the discussions will never be known for Broadhurst was soon to recover.

MacIntosh died at Mardie on 19 December 1875 and his grave was apparently once visible there near the shearing shed.64 Simpson, a Mr Morton, and a Captain Tapper took shares in the 48 ton pearling schooner Nautilus on 18/6/1879.65

Simpson then moved to the Ashburton founding Towera Station in 1883 and then leased Kooline Station where he died on 26/8/1886. His grave is still visible.66

57CSR, 582/179, BL.
58RJS, 21/8/1869, BL.
60Richardson, op. cit., p. 29.
61CSR, 581/100, BL.
62PR 9251, p. 7, BL.
63RJS, 9/9/1867, BL.
64PR 9251, p. 7, BL.
65Uren, op. cit.
Roderick Louden McKay: Explorer, Pastoralist and Pearler

McKay was with Broadhurst on the Maitland River in January 1866. He appears to have attempted to establish himself there and was a part owner, with the Bayntons, of a shipment of 3500 sheep carried on board the *Johanna Maria*. This shipment had declined in number to around 700 by the time they were delivered in July 1867, and constituted a great loss to the partners when sheep cost 10 shillings a head at Ballarat, and when it is considered that freight had to be added to that figure. This excerpt from Sholl's diary written during his official visit there on 18 February 1870 shows that McKay established *Cherittah* Station on the Maitland River after his colleague Venn departed further up-river. See Figure 16.

Rode to *Cherittah*, 7 miles further up the river where Mr. McKay is stationed...not in very comfortable quarters... bush hut formerly built by Venn...clay floor...better place in the course of construction 13' by 10' with verandah.

After being flooded out and losing 1500 sheep, the house and its contents in a cyclone of 20 March 1872, he and his brother, Donald McDonald McKay who had joined him around 1869, apparently abandoned the run and went to the Yule River where they successfully establish *Mundabullangana Station*. They were joined there by a brother Donald. Another McKay, Dugin, is also recorded adding further to the confusion. Another Mr McKay is recorded by Richardson as the Manager for L.L. Mount's team and as there were a number of Mackay's there may be some confusion here.

The McKay's, Roderick and D McKay, entered into partnership with J. Tuckey in the 12 ton ketch, *Victoria*, in 1874. They also owned, as equal partners in their own right, the 17 ton Cutter *Yule* which they purchased on 27/7/1875. R.L. McKay also had an interest in the schooner *Myra* and was lost in a cyclone whilst on board the *Ariel* in 1880.

Simeon Müller: Publican

Simeon Müller was described by the Resident Magistrate as 'a well conducted and respectable man'. He set up shop as a publican with £300 worth of liquor almost as soon as the family with four children (aged from eight years to one year old) arrived at Nickol Bay. The Müller's premises were apparently well patronized by people of all stations in life, for only

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67 *Inquirer*, 10/7/1867.
68 Venn's 'run' was 8 kilometres upstream from Miari.
69 Withnell, J., *Early Days at Roebourne*, PR 9251, BL. and Withnell-Taylor, op. cit., p. 163. There is some confusion with the McKay's, Mackays etc of the North however and this account may be adding further in that regard.
70 Williams, A. (1977) Interview with Mr. Robert Lukis. 6/7/1977. WAM Records. Donald and Dugin Mackay establishing the station in 1878
71 *Uren*, op. cit.
72 *CSR*, 581/129, BL.
one month after his arrival at Nickol Bay, the Resident Magistrate paid £5-9-6 to Müller for liquor. Müller also appears to have done well financially. On 23 December 1865 for example, Sholl records that he declined to advise Müller whether to accede to Broadhurst's request of an advance of £70 on the Company wool sent south so that the wages of the Company Shepherds could be paid. This indicates that he had some disposable funds and to Müller's credit (and probable loss), the loan was made and the Company stock safely kept till the herds were sold a few months later to defray Company costs.

The Müller's received the first Public House licence to be issued in the North District in January 1866 and named their premises the Victoria Hotel. The family enjoyed what appears to be a monopoly on alcohol supplies until another hotel was opened in January of the following year. Müller was also one of the three Company members in whose name Broadhurst applied for land once it was realized that the Company itself had claim to only 100,000 Acres.

Life was not easy for them and the health of Müller described as 'bad' and the whole family suffered from scurvy at this time. Despite having the rights to the land and the licence to a hotel, the Müllers left for Fremantle in February 1866 on-board the Emma to set up as butchers. Nairn of the DeGrey station then bought the Müller's house at Mt. Welcome (Roebourne) for a store. In June 1867, Müller's 'run' was resumed as a crown reserve. Little is known of Mrs Müller unfortunately.

W.F. Tays: Artisan and Pearler

Tays was not a part of the Denison Plains Company group that travelled on the Warrior and appears to be one of those unnamed members that Battye claims followed the Company to Nickol Bay. He is recorded by the Sholl as from Nova Scotia and as a shareholder in the Company. He is recorded elsewhere as an Irish labourer who migrated to Melbourne in 1856 and as a dealer in sheep and cattle before joining the Company. The matter has not been resolved.

His nautical skills emerge from the beginning and saw him steering a 'crazy old boat kept together by pieces of wood' carrying Broadhurst and the newly arrived Resident Magistrate in November 1865. He, Hicks and Aboriginal assistants then went to salvage the Company 'punt' which was wrecked on Jarman Island for the purposes of setting themselves up in lightering goods from vessels to the shore. (see Hicks above). This incident also indicates that individual men like Tays and Hicks were able to secure

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73 CSR, 581/112, BL.
74 CSR, 581/129, BL.
75 ibid., 29/6/1867.
76 Battye, (1915), op. cit., p.24. No others have been found.
77 TCS, 24/11/1865 and 15/2/1865, BL.
78 Bain, (1982), op. cit., p. 15.
79 RJS, 25/11/1865, BL.
the services of the Aboriginal people and that such invaluable help was not just afforded to the land holders. He was part of a small party, including the Resident Magistrate’s son T.C. Sholl, on an exploration by boat to the Fortescue River. In May 1866 he settled in the embryo township and constructed a forge, engaging in blacksmithing, shoeing horses, fitting tyres, erecting verandahs of the Government Residence, preparing foundations and making iron work for a boat. Sholl described him as a ‘very handy man.’ He was a sportsman of note and possessed of considerable athletic skill and physical strength.

He left the employ of the Resident Magistrate for pearling and other pursuits at the end of June 1866. In July he applied for land as agent for another settler. Though often incorrectly credited as the first to begin pearling, he was certainly the first to achieve an undeniable measure of success working from Nickol Bay to Mt. Blaze. See figure 24 His success was so great as to prove his undoing however. By November 1866 he and his partner Seubert had an estimated 9 tons of shell hidden on the beach between Port Hedland and 50 miles east of the DeGrey. Tays lost his life in the ill-fated Emma whilst on his way south in early 1867 to petition for better security for his shell and to secure a vessel with which to better secure and transport it. Seubert reaped the benefits and set up an inn in the wreck of the schooner New Perseverance.

It is clear that Tays was a major force in the pearling industry and was well on his way to success when he died. His activities and his decision to travel south to enter a partnership and to purchase a vessel would have had an influence on Broadhurst’s decision to do likewise.

H. W. Venn : Explorer, Pastoralist and M.P.

Venn is described by the young T.C. Sholl in his diary as ‘a decent young chap’. He established his quarters along with the others near Withnell’s following the dispersal of the last of the Company in May 1866 and conducted searches for good land with his four associates Cane, McKay and Frazer in the following month. He is generally accepted as the leader of the four man Denison Plains Company exploring team. Their explorations to the hinterland of Nickol Bay, the Fortescue and the

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80 *Exploration Diaries, Vol. 6*, op. cit., BL & *Perth Gazette*, 18/5/1866
81 CSR, 581/239, BL.
82 On the occasion of the celebrations and sports of 24 May 1866 for example, he is recorded as winning a very diverse range of events from the hammer throw, tossing the caber, the sack jump and catching the ‘greasy pig’. RJS, TCS, BL.
83 He was in the government employ in June 1866 at a wage of £6 per month CSR, 581/283, BL.
84 CSR, 582/22, BL.
85 Burges, op. cit., p.4, states that ‘it was Tayes (sic) who made the first venture at Pearl Shell fishing’. Apparently Burges supplied Tays with a boat from an American whaler that he (Burges) had been supplying beef. Darling has been shown to have been the first pearler however. See page 166, et. seq.
86 CSR, 603/20, BL.
87 TCS, 17/11/1866, BL.
88 TCS, 12/2/1865, BL.
Ashburton are recorded in the exploration diaries, and Venn is recorded as receiving a free 100,000 Acre ‘run’ in recognition for the valuable services rendered. In July 1866, he established a ‘run’ on the Fortescue River, and left the district between April and August to purchase stock. In November of the same year, he purchased lot 31 at the newly proclaimed town of Roebourne and returned to Melbourne in the same month. In 1867, he contested a 5,000 acre run on the Fortescue with E.T. Hooley.

He acted as agent for Baynton in April 1869 whose ‘run’ was Karratha Pool (Figure 16), only 2 kilometres downstream from Venn’s place Waijabbi [sic]. On his tour of the region on 17 February 1870 Sholl was to heap great praise on Venn as follows:

Mr. Venn since his occupation of Waijabbi has made many improvements and is a most industrious and active settler... good weather tight cottage built of native wood 26 feet by 10 and one half feet. The walls and roof are of paper bark?...over the roof is a thatch of large reeds which do not seem adapted for the purpose as the rain came in at places. The interior walls are lined with canvas. The roof is well pitched... the floor is...with granite slabs procured in the neighbourhood. There are two doors at the back facing each other and two windows... the building consists of one room. Just outside ... is a substantial lever wool press... by a capstan... the press is to be removed to the wool shed at the rear of the cottage. This wool shed is 30 feet by 25 feet... open at either end... it is thatched with grass and is watertight... paved with granite slabs... walls of paper bark... The stockyard is made of native wood... poles and rails. It is 64 feet by 36 feet with calf yard and cow shed at one side... small kitchen... constructed similarly to the cottage.

Venn became a Justice of the Peace at Roebourne in April 1870 and was also a member of the first Road Board, attending the inaugural meeting of July 1871. He lost all but 50 of a flock of 2200 sheep on the Nickol River in a cyclone of 29 May 1872. He assisted in moving horses along Hooley’s stock route to the Fortescue River and was part of a push to open a copper mine in the district. He married in December 1874 and was back

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89 Exploration Diaries, op. cit., Vol 6, BL.
91 CSR, 582/47 & 54, BL.
93 RJS, 17-19/2/1870, BL.
94 Withnell- Taylor, op. cit., pp. 141, 149.
95 Ibid., p. 61.
at the Maitland River in 1877 having obtained 100,000 Acres leasehold.96 This may have been Baynton’s ‘run’, for according to Richardson, he purchased Karatha Station, and lived there for twelve years.97 He later returned south and developed a large estate at Bunbury becoming a MLC and MLA for Wellington near Bunbury in the period 1880-1896. As a Member of Parliament he progressed to the Cabinet of the Forrest Government as Commissioner for Railways and Director for Public Works until dismissed in a conflict with his leader.98

Charles Wedge

Company Director, Government Surveyor and Pearler:

On his arrival the Company Surveyor, Charles Wedge was 55 years of age, and was recorded by the young Sholl on his arrival as an ‘elderly man who was a Magistrate in Victoria’.99 He was then a man of considerable standing in Victoria and was, with Broadhurst, a Director of the Company.

In the hard times that befell the Company members following the news of October 1865, the Wedge’s, were like all the other Company employees in dire straits living in a ‘small tent...very badly off for provisions...very sad’.100 In January 1866 they were camped at the Company base on the Nickol River along with Messrs Baynton, Brodie and Venn. Without their wages they found difficulty in paying their own debts. They turned their servant girl, Matilda Anderson, out after finding her totally unsuitable, and were subsequently summoned for failing to pay wages owed to her. Their action was described by Sholl as ‘cruel’ but, in mitigation, he allowed that she was ‘not much good’.101

In March 1866, they moved to the growing cluster of houses near the Withnell’s place on the Harding River. Despite his age and judicial background, Wedge was quite capable of enjoying himself. At one stage he got quite drunk and being, in the eyes of the Resident Magistrate ‘disgraceful and disorderly’ during the Queen’s Birthday celebrations of 30 March. This failed to prejudice Sholl against later employing him, but may have been a factor in Sholl’s decision to employ Broadhurst as Acting Resident Magistrate over Wedge and Baynton at the end of the year. In April 1866, Wedge joined the pay-roll as Assistant Government Surveyor. By November the Wedges had established themselves in a small wooden cottage with sides walled with canvas.102 He and Frances Wedge were a well accepted part of Roebourne Society, joining the others in picnics, walks and general hilarity. Despite his age, he engaged in a number of

97 Richardson, op. cit., p. 25.
99 TCS, 12/12/1865, BL.
100 CSR, 581/100, BL.
101 CSR, 581/117, BL.
102 TCS, 12/12/1866, BL.
credible explorations and surveyed the township which was proclaimed on 17 August 1866. He purchased for his own use, blocks 41 and 42. Wedge’s reduced social position as a government employee and not as the ‘Gentleman’ he once was, became apparent in his dealings with Sholl, the Resident Magistrate. His relationship with Sholl soon soured. The Wedge’s returned south in February 1869 where he took out a half share in the pearling cutter *Albert*. 103 A Charles Wedge is recorded as owning a pearling vessel, the 2 ton Cutter *Exelsior*, at Shark Bay when the vessels were first licensed there in 1874.104

Wedge became a surveyor at Fremantle in 1875 and was Collector for the Municipality. He employed four ticket of leave men at Fremantle in 1869/70, two fishermen and two tin smiths. He returned to Melbourne in 1875 and 1883. The Wedge’s three sons returned to the North where they established *Cobblanna* and *Boodarri* stations near Port Hedland. One had interests in pearling out of Shark Bay.105

103 Transcript of the Register of British Ships at the Port of Fremantle, op. cit., p.25.
104 CSR, 751/207, BL.
Appendix Six

(a) The Incorrect Propeller on the SS Xantho Briefly Explained

The fitting of an incorrect propeller to the SS Xantho engine, is a major and inexcusable failing in the engineering of the vessel. There is a possibility that the original propeller may have been damaged en route from England or while the vessel was on the Western Australian coast. This damaged propellor may have been replaced while the SS Xantho was en route from England or at Batavia undergoing refit and that the one found on the wreck was fitted in its stead. On the other hand, from the indications of shoddy engineering which will be analysed in my technical report, it appears likely that the propellor had been on the vessel since its refit in October 1871, or could have been a spare carried on-board.106

Whichever way the propellor came to be on-board, it is a major failing as will be seen and would have eventually led to total engine failure.

In the Trunk Engine, the pistons within the engine carried the angular thrust of the connecting rod directly rather than have it transferred to a ‘crosshead’ as was the case in most other engines of the time. (Figure 42)

Figure 42
An internal view of a Trunk engine, showing the direct coupling of the crankshaft with the piston.107

Without the benefit of a cross-head which accepts the angular motion from the crankshaft and transfers if horizontally to the cylinders, the cylinder walls in the trunk engine were subject to wear on the upper and lower surfaces. Of greater concern was the wear caused by gravity on the lower surface. Because the engine was horizontal, the forces of gravity combined with the angular thrust to wear or ‘barrel’ the underside of the

106 The SS Xantho’s successor, Georgette carried a spare propellor.
107 Jamieson, op. cit., p. 214.
cylinder where it came in contact with the piston. This problem was recognized by the makers. In single screw ships fitted with Penn Trunk Engines, the cylinders were normally placed on the port side of the ship, and the engine was designed to rotate anti-clockwise when looking from astern onto the top of the crankshaft. 108 The propeller or ‘screw’ ran in the same direction and was subsequently built for this rotation and called ‘left handed’. In this configuration, when the vessel was going forward, the thrust on the connecting rod helped to raise the piston off the bottom of the cylinder counteracting gravity and thereby avoiding wearing the cylinder oval. When at full speed it was considerably in excess of the weight of the piston however, so that the friction was sufficient to slightly ‘barrel’ the upper side. This was clearly a better circumstance than when in stern gear, rotating clockwise, when the thrust and weight of the cylinders were combined in doing the same thing to the lower side.109 Because a vessel usually operated in reverse for only a small fraction of its service, this was not usually a serious problem.

This, and other engineering anomalies on the SS Xantho have been analysed by Steam engineer and engineering historian, the late Noel Miller. His unfinished report couched in engineering terms appears below.

(B) Further Anomalies in the SS Xantho Steam Plant

by: N.D. Miller (Steam Engineer)110

‘One question that has come up in checking over the Xantho engine is the condenser. Research has shown that all large Penn trunk engines had a condenser either of the jet condensing type or the surface condenser and at first it was thought that the condenser may have been removed by salvagers after the ship was wrecked. However, The Engineer states that the cylinders were 21 inch diameter with a 12 inch piston stroke exhausting direct into the top of the boiler uptake, in other words they exhausted direct to atmosphere via the funnel.111 So the engines were never originally fitted with a condenser at all. The probable reasons for not fitting these engines with condensers is the fact they were built under an emergency war program and the construction and fitting condensers would have slowed down production. Also the engines only being auxiliary in a sailing vessel, steam would be raised and the engines put into service only to fulfil occasional requirements and the omission of the condenser would not effect the overall efficiency to a great extent. However, in a vessel like the SS Xantho which had to sail halfway round the World, the

110 The late, Mr Miller was the steam engine adviser to my team. He was a model engine maker, held steam engineers qualifications and was recognized as one, if not the, leading historian in this state on the subject of Marine engineering. His technical reports, of which this is an excerpt, will appear in my technical publication on the excavation of the SS Xantho. Unfortunately, Mr Miller died before he could complete this section.
111 The Engineer, 11/2/1898, p. 125.
omission of the condenser must have caused some problems with any extended use of the steam plant. The boiler would have had to use salt water for feed water and this would have required the shut down of the boiler possibly once every four to seven days to remove the salt encrustation from the interior of the boiler.

In single screw ships fitted with Penn trunk engines the cylinders were normally placed on the port side of the ship with the condenser (if fitted on the starboard side and the engine rotated anti-clockwise when looking from astern onto the propellor. The reason for this was that the alternate thrust on the connecting rod from the piston would have helped to raise the piston off the bottom of the cylinder thereby avoiding wearing the cylinder oval. In the *Xantho* engine the reversing links or expansion links have been fitted with wear plates in the die-block slot in the lower end of the link on both sides. This would indicate that when running ahead for extended periods the expansion links suffer from wear in this position and would point to the fact that the slide valves are probably unbalanced and impose terrific pressure on the die-block against the side of the link causing abnormal wear. It is apparently a characteristic of Penn engines in single screw ships that when running ahead the expansion link is raised with the die-block running in the lower end of the slot. The fitting of wear plates in expansion links as in the *Xantho* engines is not a normal thing and the fact that she is so fitted indicates that the Crimean War gun boat engines must have suffered from extensive wear to warrant the fitting of these wear plates. This of course indicates that the engines were designed to run anti-clockwise (left-handed) when the expansion link raised and the die-block at the bottom end of the link.

To contradict this the *Xantho* engine connecting rod crank pin bearings have cylindrical lubricator cups open to top end. The top end of the lip of the lubricator has a high portion on one side which apparently intended to wipe oil from a suspended lubricator wick or oil pipe to lubricate the big end bearing while the engine is running. The high side of the oil cup of the *Xantho* engine is placed on the connecting rod side of the big-end bearing which indicates the engine must have run clockwise to enable the oil cup to pick up the oil from the suspended wick or oil pipe. This is opposed to anti-clockwise direction which was normal for Penn Trunk Engines in single screw ships, and which was indicated by the wear plates being normal for the *Xantho* engine when in the gun boats. This point was finally fixed when we were examining the montage of photos of the *Xantho* wreck lying on the seabed and it was observed that the three bladed propellor definitely ran right handed or clockwise when looking at the propellor. Thus the SS *Xantho* was going ahead under her own steam, her engine was actually running in the reverse direction. With a large trunk engine running in reverse for long periods there would have been problems with excessive wear between the lower half of the circumference of the piston and the cylinder bore. However, in the SS *Xantho* the engine was only auxiliary to sail and would only have been used to get intermittently and as she only had a short life on the West Australian coast before being wrecked, any wear in the engine would be minimal.
The next item of interest which absorbed a fair amount of thought in the early days of the discovery of the SS Xantho is the exhaust steam feed water heater which was recently removed from the Xantho wreck and is now in the tank of water with the Xantho engine so any immediate research is not possible. We now think the exhaust steam feed water heater was an after thought fitted by Mr Stewart of Glasgow when the Xantho was converted from paddlewheel propulsion steam propulsion. Our reason for this line of thought is that the feed water heated exhaust steam supply pipe takes steam from the main exhaust pipe on top of the engine from a point 6 1/8 inches below the main exhaust steam pipe discharge flange. There is not any boss on the main exhaust pipe to point to receive the feed water heat exhaust steam supply pipe and this pipe was fitted with a curved flange to suit the radius of the main exhaust steam pipe. A canvas joining coated with thread lead was fitted to get a good seal between the two faces. If the fitting of the exhaust steam feed water heaters had been a permanent feature of John Penn and Sons Crimean War gun boat trunk engines when they were in mass production, we feel sure that Penn would have cast a boss on the main exhaust steam pipe to get a good flat jointing surface for the flange on the exhaust steam feed water heater of pipe.

The next item for research and investigation on the Xantho engine was the engine driven auxiliary pumps driven forward end of the crank shaft. While engine driven auxiliary plunge pumps were not unusual at any time in marine engineering history and even though the method of driving the plunger pumps bears some resemblance to the Scotch yoke drive. In this case it is quite unorthodox in that the crank arm and crank pin with the solid die-block or the scotch yoke drive has been replaced with an eccentric and two loose slippers bearing against the yoke faces. We do not think these pumps were supplied as part of the original equipment for the Xantho engine by Penn as they had to build 60 or 70 engines as part of the contract and the driving eccentric has a boss cast on the backside of it which allows the eccentric to overhang the end of the crank shaft by 3 inches. Now if Penns supplied this as part of the equipment, we feel certain that they would extend the crank shaft and fit proper keys and made a good job of it. With the large eccentric a 2 loop slipper box of this drive compared with the single crank pin and the single solid die-block with a scotch yoke drive there would have been high frictional losses depending on the revolutions and the load on the pumps as the clearance could not have been maintained between the two slippers, at any one time if one slipper was out it would be working down between the eccentric and the yoke frame causing high frictional losses. In this case use of an eccentric and slippers instead of a crank pin, crank arm and a die-block increases the inefficiency of an already inefficient drive.

Finally in examining the engine framework within the ship, it was noticed that there were further engineering anomalies not conducive to the efficient running of the vessel.

Normally in iron and steel steamships once the engine base line has been decided upon a system of girders built up of plates and angle irons were
built up from the frame of the ship to the base line and the engine was sat on this with the girders coinciding with, coming under bearing, engine bearers or main bearings.'

*In the case of the SS Xantho, these were seen to be flimsy and poorly constructed appearing much smaller in size and without any of the indications of strength that we would expect from such supports.*  

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112 Mr Miller died before completing this section and the words in italic are a personal communication to me.
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