

John William Veal (1827-1900)

John William Veal was born on 10 July 1827 in Petersham, Surrey, England. He was the son of John Veal and Ann Sophia Rogers.¹ He married Emily Bartram Goul² on 31 March 1849, in St Mary's Church, Cheltenham, England.³ In 1851 the Veals were living in Ramsgate, England which is where their first child, Emily Sophia was born.⁴

The Veals arrived in the colony with four children on the ship *Robert Morrison* on 1 February 1862.^{5 6 7} They left for York on Friday 7 February 1862 to take charge of the York School.⁸ They came to Western Australia "for checking incipient consumption"⁹, presumably on the part of John William.

Janet Millett says of him as a schoolmaster, that he had the:

"power of imparting knowledge was equal to that of any person whom we had ever seen at the head of a National school in England".¹⁰

The Veals lived in a residence attached to the York Boys School, but it was not considered habitable, so on 5 April 1862, the Colonial Secretary directed the General Board of Education to carry out repairs which were considered "most necessary". A veranda and well were also constructed at the school.

Veal was a cricketer, for example, representing York in a match against Northam on 11 February 1863.¹¹

He donated 7 shillings and fourpence (with contributions from students) to the Lancashire Relief Fund in March 1863.¹² He also donated 5 shillings for the "destructive fire" at the Greenough Flats in February 1864 (as JW Veal).¹³

On 4 March 1863, Veal bought Town Lot 179, being a one acre block of land behind the school, paying £33.¹⁴

In 1865, Veal and his family were renting a 6 roomed cottage with a small cottage in the garden.¹⁵

¹ Wikitree and the references therein.

² Or Gaul?

³ The Age 1 April 1899, p.1; The Australasian 8 April 1899, p.55, celebrating his Golden Wedding anniversary.

⁴ Wikitree and the references therein.

⁵ Inquirer and Commercial News 20 November 1861, p.2; 5 February 1862, p.2; Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 7 February 1862, p.2.

⁶ His youngest son was called William Herbert of Hotham-hill, he married Jane Carriss on 20 March 1884: The Argus 9 April 1884, p.1.

⁷ Another child was Emily Sophia who became Emily Sophia Clegg (Wikitree).

⁸ Inquirer and Commercial News 12 February 1862, p.2.

⁹ Janet Millett: An Australian Parsonage, Chapter 15, assuming that the only person Janet Millett could be referring to is Veal.

¹⁰ Janet Millett: An Australian Parsonage, pages 405-406.

¹¹ Inquirer and Commercial News, 18 February 1863, p.2.

¹² Inquirer and Commercial News, 4 March 1863, p.4.

¹³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 12 February 1864, p.2.

¹⁴ Landgate Deeds VI 217/1391.

¹⁵ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Times 27 January 1865, p.2.

Mr Veal, whose first names are not known was a proponent of the "object lesson" method of teaching:

This painstaking gentleman, being under the impression that the faculties of colonial children could be drawn out by the same means as had proved successful with their English contemporaries, commenced a course of "object" lessons; and in order to make them more interesting procured from home, at his own expense, little specimens of coke, "Wall's End," Kentish filberts, and many other productions of the land of their forefathers of which his Australian pupils were necessarily ignorant. It unfortunately happened, however, that any method of instruction which appealed directly to the intelligence of the scholar was as great a novelty in [York] as it would have been in some parts of England fifty years ago, and the local Conservatives, who had never before heard of such roads to learning as lessons on objects, denounced them as sheer waste of time, devices of the master's own invention to save himself the trouble of teaching.

These objections had but little weight with candid parents, who noticed the improvement of their children in spite of such unusual means of promoting it; but in the small society of Barladong¹⁶ there were some to whom a schoolmaster of the only type that they had as yet seen brought profit of another kind, and who little relished the appearance amongst them of one whose education and refined manner seemed to challenge a respect which had not hitherto been accorded, in that place, to a member of his profession. The publicans gained nothing by him, for he spent no money in drinking, and his thrift made him independent of the storekeepers, both of which classes had been used to consider that a schoolmaster was a creature habitually "out-at-elbows," who would thankfully receive payment in kind for posting up their books.

A clamour, in which the self-interests of different parties dovetailed, and in which each made a tool of the other, was accordingly raised against the schoolmaster, accusing him of indolence and inefficiency, and the Colonial Board of Education took advantage of the outcry to practise a little economy in issuing a completely new reading of the terms of the schoolmaster's appointment. He had been appointed in England to his post during the colonial secretaryship of the Duke of Newcastle, at a salary of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, with a free passage to Australia on the same conditions as those on which the Government chaplains receive their passage-money, namely, that half the sum shall be refunded to Government if they return to England before the expiration of three years. Ordinary minds had hitherto supposed that this stipulation was framed to prevent imposition upon the Government, but the new interpretation which was given to it by official intellect made it as clear as daylight that the appointment itself was good for three years only. It was therefore notified to the schoolmaster that, if he thought fit to retain his post beyond that period, he must content himself with receiving a payment of one hundred pounds a year only, instead of one hundred and fifty.

¹⁶ Meaning York.

In this case the schoolmaster's course clearly was to commence an action at law against the Colonial Board; but to do so would have required a far greater sum than that which he sacrificed in resigning his situation. He shook off the dust of [York] from his feet, and with his wife and family left the colony for Melbourne, proceeding thither by the advice of my husband, who felt sure that such real abilities as a teacher, although low-rated in Western Australia, would be certain of appreciation in Australia Felix. It was hard to be driven away, at the cost of all his little savings, from an appointment which he had received as permanent, and it was also hard that those who had learned to discern the merits of the master should be deprived of the benefit of them for their children, but in a few weeks after reaching Melbourne he obtained the charge of a school so far superior both in importance and in remuneration to the one which he had left, that his enemies, in causing him to quit Western Australia, eventually proved his best friends.¹⁷

Veal's salary reduction would have caused the Veal family great difficulty as Janet Millett explained:

The class to whom the colony is least of all suited would seem to be those who are dependent solely upon a small fixed income, such as the chaplains of the Church of England, the ministers of the various non-conforming denominations, the lower grades of the Government officials, and the country schoolmasters and mistresses in Government employ. Their incomes are very small compared with the expenditure absolutely necessary for the maintenance of themselves and their families in a position of respectability, while, unlike the settlers in general, they are unable to pay for any of the goods supplied to them by the barter or exchange of their own produce, (since they do not possess any land or stock,) but are obliged to settle all their bills by cheques upon their banker. No one who has not had personal experience of this state of things can form any right judgment of the whole system. In Perth or Fremantle so many of the residents are in Government employ that payments in money are far more frequent than in the country districts, and prices are, in consequence, far lower than in the little inland towns. Moreover even in the inland districts competition has arisen during the last few years, and new stores have been established wherever there appeared to be a good opening, so that prices have been considerably lowered in comparison to what they were ten or twelve years ago. At that date the storekeeper in each country district enjoyed a virtual monopoly. His prices were fixed, not so much by any consideration of the actual cost of his goods to himself, as by the distance of his nearest competitor and the amount of profit which that competitor was charging.¹⁸

The Veal family left the colony on a ship bound for Adelaide on 2 March 1865.¹⁹

He sold his block, Town Lot 179 to William Edwards for £20 on 20 October 1866.²⁰

¹⁷ Janet Millett: *An Australian Parsonage*, pages 405-406.

¹⁸ Janet Millett: *An Australian Parsonage*, pages 405-406.

¹⁹ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Times, 3 March 1865, p.2; Inquirer and Commercial News, 8 March 1865, p.2.

Veal does appear to have gone to Victoria as Janet Millett says. He became a member of the committee of the Church of England Sunday School Institute in June 1867²¹ and was involved in other activities of the Church of England, as was his wife.^{22 23}

Veal died in Victoria on 1 August 1900 aged 73. At the time, he was living in Canning Street, North Melbourne.²⁴ Probate was granted in September 1900, the estate being valued at £1,155.²⁵

Rob Garton Smith
President
The York Society (Inc)
23 March 2022

²⁰ Landgate Deeds VI 344/2145.

²¹ The Australasian 22 June 1867, p.20.

²² The Church of England Messenger and Ecclesiastical Gazette for the Diocese of Melbourne and Ballarat, 9 December 1885, p.7; The Argus 16 March 1895, p.8; The Church of England Messenger and Ecclesiastical Gazette for the Diocese of Melbourne and Ballarat, 14 December 1894, p.217;

²³ From at least December 1867, a Mrs Veal was head-mistress of the Perth Girls' School. Inquirer and Commercial News 25 December 1867, p.3. However she appears not to be the wife of John William Veal.

²⁴ The Argus 2 August 1900, p.3.

²⁵ The Age, 21 September 1900, p.3.