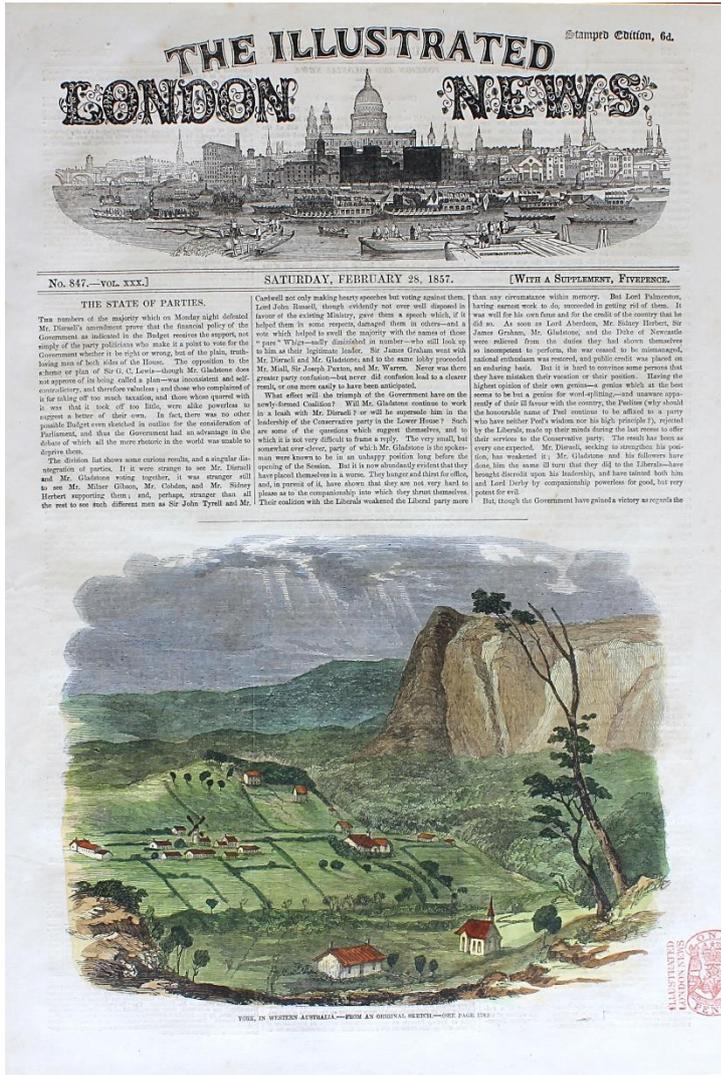


YORK IN THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

The Illustrated London News

The Illustrated London News was the world's first illustrated weekly news magazine and was started in 1842. By 1855, its circulation was 200,000 copies a week, at sixpence each.

The front page of the edition of 28 February 1857 featured an engraving of the small country town of York, attributed to "Captain Henderson".



Henderson also did a number of other drawings of the Colony, including Fremantle and King George Sound. Engravings of these drawings continued in the 14 March 1857 edition which included a comment on York and Toodyay:

“Hence to York, the chief settlement over the Darling Hills, is fifty miles east, and to Toodyay, forty miles north-east; and of course to keep in proper repair such long lines of communication, which are only now emerging from their primitive condition of bush tracks, requires a large supply of labour. York and Toodyay are at present the principal corn-producing districts of the colony, although a considerable breadth of the land in the

southern districts, near Bunbury, has been within the last few years brought under cultivation, and produces excellent crops of corn.

York is presently situated in the rich valley of the Avon, and thence the farms and stations extend still fifty miles further. The high land at the back of the town of York, which appears in the Sketch (engraved upon the first page of the present Number) is known as Mount Bakewell, or more familiarly as "old Bakewell"; the inhabitants of York being justly proud of their handsome friend."

The engraving of York engraving was also the basis for a watercolour which is now in the National Library of Australia by WS Hatton, who never visited Western Australia.¹

Captain Edmund Yeamans Walcott Henderson



Edmund Yeamans Walcott Henderson was the son of Vice-Admiral George Henderson of the Royal Navy and Frances Elizabeth Walcott-Sympson. He was born in 1821. He was educated in Bruton, Somerset and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. At the age of 17, in 1838, he was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Royal Sappers and Miners (from 1856 the Royal Engineers).

He undertook his professional training at Chatham and was then posted to Canada in 1839. He returned to England in 1845 and spent a year in Portsmouth before being posted back to Canada in June 1846. He was in charge of surveying the western half of the boundary between Canada

¹ Design and Art Australia Online.

and New Brunswick, which had been ceded to Britain by the United States, until November 1848, when he returned to England with his new wife, Mary Murphy. He spent the next two years based at Gravesend.

When Western Australia became a penal colony in 1850, Henderson was appointed the colony's first Comptroller-General of Convicts. He travelled to Western Australia with the first convicts on board the *Scindian*, arriving on 1 June 1850. He found the colony completely unprepared for the convicts, lacking even a jail large enough to house them. Henderson secured lodging for the convicts at a warehouse owned by Captain Scott, the harbour master. Henderson then began construction of a place for the warders to stay and in time the Convict Establishment, later known as Fremantle Prison.²

On 27 December 1855, Henderson's wife died and he immediately auctioned his personal things and left the colony to return England with his son on 25 February 1856.^{3 4 5} Henderson took his drawings with him to London in 1856, and this resulted in the engraving of York being published in the prestigious Illustrated London News in 1857.

Also in 1857, Henderson married Maria Hindle, and he returned with her to Western Australia in 1858. He resigned as Comptroller-General of Convicts and left the colony in January 1863.

He must have been recognised as a man of letters as he was elected Patron of the Book Society in York in July 1854, though that might have been so that he would come to York to build the reading room.⁶

Henderson was "a kindly and just man, moderate and understanding, opposed to the harsher forms of discipline. He thought that flogging as a punishment did more harm than good, and might be abolished except in rare cases, and that putting men in chains was useless and aggravating."

When was Henderson in York?

The York prison cells were constructed by the Royal Sappers and Miners in mid-1852, being completed in September⁷ under the command of another Edmund, Lieutenant Edmund du Cane.⁸ Henderson was in charge of the Royal Sappers and Miners and possibly spent at least a few days in York during that time, though there is no newspaper reference to such a visit.

Henderson made a very quick visit to York in early June 1853, staying from 6 pm to 10 am, with no time for any drawing, his visit being so short it was the subject of newspaper comment.⁹

² The sources for this general information about Henderson in the first three paragraphs are the Edmund Henderson pages in the Australian Dictionary of Biography and Wikipedia, and the website for Royal Sappers and Miners in Western Australia: <https://sappers-minerswa.com>.

³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 4 January 1856, p.3.

⁴ Inquirer and Commercial News, 2 January 1856, p.2 and others.

⁵ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 29 February 1856, p.2.

⁶ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 21 July 1854, p.2.

⁷ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 20 August 1852, p.3; See The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.11.

⁸ Michael Bosworth: Convict Fremantle, A Place of Promise and Punishment, University of WA Press, p.31.

⁹ Inquirer, 8 June 1853, p.2.

The only other reported visit Henderson made to York appears to be in October 1853 when he came to the York Agricultural Society fair and was one of the dinner guests at the York Hotel, which at the time was being run by Robert Bennett (though owned by John Henry Monger Snr). Henderson was a member of a party that included Governor Captain Charles Fitzgerald. This party arrived on Wednesday 26 October 1853 at 2 pm and returned home by Saturday evening 29 October 1853.¹⁰ This gave Henderson time to do some drawings while he was at York.

It appears that he stayed at the York Hotel with the official party and this hotel features large and in some detail in the York engraving. So my assumption is that the drawings on which the York engraving is based were made during this October 1853 visit of two days or three nights.

Reception in York

The Illustrated London News engraving was the cause of mirth in York.

One correspondent at the time said it was:

“such a miserable representation as that he thought could only be properly viewed by persons standing on their heads, it being such a corruption of the real scenery.”¹¹

Another correspondent said it was:

“representing an unknown region, with the houses on the wrong side of the river, and threatened by a large rock, looking as if it meant their destruction every minute, by toppling on the Wesleyan Chapel, which, by way of defiance, presents a spire to the expected shock.”¹²

What are the buildings?

I will now attempt to identify every building in the drawing, and explain my reasons, and then discuss what has happened to that building.

In the course of doing this study, it is possible we can resolve some questions asked by York and Blandstown historian the late Shirley Lutze, as I will discuss.

¹⁰ Inquirer 2 November 1853, p.2; 9 November 1853, p.3.

¹¹ Inquirer and Commercial News 10 November 1858, p.3.

¹² Inquirer and Commercial News 17 March 1858, p.2.

York Hotel

The largest structure in the Henderson engraving, the substantial building to the right hand side of the engraving is John Henry Monger Snr's York Hotel and the homestead formerly occupied by the Monger family. This building is also prominent in Philip Chauncey's 1849 survey of buildings in York.¹³ The York Hotel was on Suburban Lot A1 which today runs between Christie Retreat on the left and Ford Street on the right.

For those of you unfamiliar with York, the site of the hotel was the empty block on Avon Terrace opposite Faversham House.

We get a good description of the hotel and residence when Monger put it up for lease in 1844:

"The house contains 3 parlours, 3 bed-rooms, one family sitting room, and bar. At the back of the house there is a commodious kitchen and tap, large store, cellar, and bake-house; and on the premises a 12 stalled stable, a good fenced-in yard for the accommodation of cattle and sheep, and piggeries. There is also a garden at the back of the house, which bears excellent crops of vegetables, and is well stocked with vine cuttings and fruit trees. Two paddocks of 10 acres each will either be let along with the premises or without them, as parties may incline."¹⁴

Monger's store

Monger's store was on the opposite side of Avon Terrace from the hotel, and was a "long, low building" made of stone, and "every three months his wagons would journey to Guildford or Perth for supplies".¹⁵ One can see the stone section of The York Society's Sandalwood Yards building was originally a "long low building" subsequently given greater height with a brick extension so this is most likely a remnant of the original store.

Buildings on the far right

What are the buildings in Henderson's engraving to the far right? To answer this question, we have to go back to the 1830s and the very beginnings of York.

At first, Revett Henry Bland and Arthur Trimmer, the first owners of Lot A1, constructed two houses and a barn to hold provisions in September 1831 and a mill house and began living and farming from this lot.¹⁶ The houses were above the ford and the barn and a mill-house were located closer to where the York Hotel was to be subsequently situated.¹⁷ Bland's home was next to the Trimmer home.¹⁸ Several early maps show structures on this land.

¹³ York Townsite Plan c. 1849 Courtesy SROWA, York 14C, item425 cons 3868

¹⁴ Inquirer, 13 November 1844, p.2.

¹⁵ John E Deacon: A Survey of the Historical Development of the Avon Valley with Particular Reference to York, Western Australia During the Years 1830-1850, UWA, 1948, pp.53 and 74.

¹⁶ Lesley Brooker (Compiler and Editor): Explorers Routes Revisited Western Australia 1836-1864, Roe Expedition 1836, p.11.

¹⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle 25 April, 1885, p.3.

¹⁸ Letter from Luis Giustiniani to Lord Glenelg, Swan River Guardian, 23 November 1837, p.253.

On 18 April 1836 at Strawberry Hill, Albany, Arthur Trimmer married Mary Ann Spencer, one of the daughters of King George Sound Government Resident Sir Richard Spencer.¹⁹ One might wonder how they courted being so far away from each other, the two families must have known each other in England.²⁰ Both families were connected with court and were breeding Merino sheep.

On Wednesday 14 September 1836, following some thefts of flour by local Balladong Noongar from the barn, Arthur Trimmer stationed one of his employees Ned Gallop in the loft of the barn (that is, here) with instructions to shoot. Bland (the Protector of Natives) was away at the time. Ned Gallop waited until a theft had taken place and then as two aborigines were walking away with flour, he shot one of them in the back and injured the other.²¹ One was a woman and the other a child.²²

The Colony was ashamed at what Trimmer had done. The Perth Gazette described it as a “treacherous” killing in “cool blood”.²³ Bland immediately terminated his partnership with Trimmer.²⁴

Monger agreed to buy the land from Bland and Trimmer for 100 pounds and began constructing the York Hotel, probably in the second half of 1836. Monger applied for a licence in January 1837.²⁵ In a report of a trial of John Curran, a private in the 21st regiment who assaulted John Henry Monger Snr, Monger gives evidence that when Curran started giving trouble he went “up” to Trimmer’s house so Monger could go the barracks to get help.²⁶ Also, the Trimmers' first child Ellen Spencer was born at York two months later, on 15 June 1837.

The Mongers always treated this section of Lot A1 separately. When John Henry Monger Snr died in 1867, he left this section of Lot A1 to his son John Henry Monger Jnr who had inherited Faversham House and Lot A2, but the rest of Lot A1 was left to Joseph. Likewise, he excised what we now call the sandalwood yards from Lot A2 (which was then Monger’s mill) and left that area of land to Joseph.^{9 27}

¹⁹ Erickson, Rica (ed.), Dictionary of Western Australians; Ancestry.com Winsome family tree.

²⁰ Arthur’s brother was called Spencer.

²¹ Bunbury, Early Days, 53.

²² Bunbury, Early Days, 27.

²³ Swan River Guardian, 23 November 1837, p.253; Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 17 September 1836, p.765. See also Bunbury, HW, edited by W St Pierre Bunbury and WP Morrell, Early Days in Western Australia, Oxford University Press, 1930, pp.53-56.

²⁴ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 15 October 1836, p.779, with the date of dissolution being advertised as 1 October 1836.

²⁵ Rodger Jennings: Over the Hills, A history of York 1834-1880, p.73.

²⁶ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, 8 April 1837, p.880.

²⁷ Landgate, Deeds and Ordinances VI/390/2453 Last will and testament of John Henry Monger 10 August 1867 registered 10 March 1868.

Faversham House

The two storey building up on the hill is Faversham House without the wings. Faversham House was built in a number of stages. The first stage was a cellar (for the hotel?) and a protective bunker with bars on the windows constructed in stone with windows you could shoot from, indicating that it was possibly constructed in the late 1830s when there was some concern for safety of the settlers.

Work on stage 2, the two storey extension to the original home began on 1 January 1849, and this continued from 1851 using convict labour²⁸. The cellar became the basement. The new home was named Faversham House after the place in Kent where John Henry Monger Snr had been born²⁹. There is no reference to this name prior to the 1850s. There is a reference to Monger's "hospitable mansion" in January 1852, indicating the renovations of Faversham had been completed by then.³⁰

At the time of the October 1853 visit, Monger was living at Faversham House because the host and occupant of the York Hotel was Robert Bennett, the former Captain of the ship *Eglinton* that he wrecked on a reef on arrival in Western Australia. One of the articles that refer to the visit of the Governor and Henderson comments about Bennett: "We do not fear his success after this". They might well have feared for his success because Bennett was shortly to have a dreadful row with Monger.³¹

Monger died in 1867 and two years later his son John Henry Monger Jnr added the wings of Faversham House. This is contrary to popular belief which is that the wings of Faversham House were constructed before the York Hotel. Faversham House was further extended in 1907.

Stables

The building to the right, a little down the hill, must be Monger's stables. Early stone stables are still there and have been extended.

Subdivision

In 1854, Monger attempted to subdivide and put up for sale 16 half acre allotments, 9 on the river front and another 7 on the other side running towards Faversham, presumably not including his store. He offered these lots for an auction to be held on 15 October 1854. The auction details describe the property:³²

"The property comprises a paddock adjoining the Old York Hotel, containing nine half acre allotments, with frontage to the main street, and running down to the river, along which half a chain is reserved for a road. The remaining seven allotments are in a paddock on the opposite side, with frontage to the main street, running four chains upwards to Mr Monger's house and more. For business premises or private residences, they cannot be equalled, the land is well cleared, substantially fenced in, and in a state of cultivation, which, together

²⁸ National Trust Assessment Forms and File on Faversham, circa 1970; 'Faversham House Restoration: a project by Uniting Church in Australia (WA Synod)'.
²⁹ A.M. Clack and Jenni McColl: York Sketchbook, p. 48.

³⁰ Inquirer 21 January 1852, p.1.

³¹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 11 August 1854, p.2.

³² Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 11 August 1854, p.2.

³³ Inquirer, 18 October 1854, p.2.

with their contiguity to the river, leaves nothing to be desired by intending purchasers. The present crop will be removed previous to possession being given.”³³

They were all advertised for sale again on 20 October 1854, so were still for sale during the York Agricultural Fair which took place a week later.³⁴ According the register of Deeds and Ordinances, not a single lot was sold. The seven lots running towards Faversham describes the area we now know as Monger’s Trading Post as at the end of 1854. This is consistent with the Henderson engraving which shows no buildings here in 1854. Monger’s trading post was not constructed until 1876.

Building in two sections

Moving south down Avon Terrace, you see two buildings joined.

In 1841, John Henry Monger was frustrated that there was no blacksmith in York, and had not been for 10 years. Horses had to be taken to Guildford to be shod. So he constructed a blacksmith’s shop which he advertised in August 1841. Then Monger learnt that he had put the building outside his boundary.³⁵

The letters to and from the Colonial Secretary do not identify where this blacksmith’s shop was, but it has to be the building at the rear of Town Lot 1 which includes a stables. Monger applied to the Governor for permission to occupy the shop and was given permission. At the same time, he applied for permission to put a summer garden on an island in the Avon River but was not given permission.

He then negotiated a deal in relation to Town Lot 1 by giving up some land, and received a Crown Grant in 1843 without payment.³⁶

These buildings were occupied by blacksmith George Oliver³⁷ until he was drowned in September 1847 trying to cross the Avon River.³⁸ They were then occupied by Joseph Kenworthy,³⁹ and then by Henry T Franklin, and then by Solomon Cook. Refer to the Chauncey’s map of 1849⁴⁰. For more information about these gentlemen, I will be giving a walk on York blacksmiths for the York Festival in September 2021.

Solomon Cook was born in Penobscot, Maine in 1812, and was the son of a blacksmith.^{41 42} He arrived in Albany in 1837 on the Whaler *Dismount*.⁴³ In 1846, he was in a whaling partnership with

³³ Inquirer, 18 October 1854, p.2.

³⁴ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 20 October 1854, p.1.

³⁵ Rodger Jennings: Over the Hills, A history of York 1834-1880, p.96.

³⁶ Landgate York Town Lot 1, Crown Grant ET 781 dated 29 September 1843 to John Henry Monger, Victualler, expressed to be “in consideration of a certain piece o parcel of land resumed by us for works of a public utility and convenience”.

³⁷ Rodger Jennings: Over the Hills, A history of York 1834-1880, p.97.

³⁸ Inquirer, 8 September 1847, p.2.

³⁹ Inquirer, 17 January 1844, p.6.

⁴⁰ York Townsite Plan c. 1849 Courtesy SROWA, York 14C, item425 cons 3868

⁴¹ ancestry.com

⁴² Australian Dictionary of Bibliography

⁴³ Erickson, Rica (ed.), Dictionary of Western Australians

John Thomas and John Craiggie. This was dissolved on 24 May 1847.⁴⁴ He was naturalised (became a British subject) on 3 July 1847 on the same day as Rosendo Salvado.⁴⁵

His first major project after leaving Albany was to construct Canning Bridge.⁴⁶

Solomon Cook then came to York and set up business as a wheelwright, coach-builder and iron founder.⁴⁷ So it is natural that he would be in a building intended for a blacksmith.

However, Cook had other plans, namely to compete with his landlord. Solomon Cook obtained a "Publican's Spirit Licence" on 11 February 1851 for a pub called the "Dusty Miller" which must have been this building.⁴⁸ Cook sold his pub to William Dunham in April 1852 who expanded the premises.⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ The name of the pub was changed from the Dusty Miller to Dunham's Hotel. Dunham ran the pub with his wife Caroline.

The Henderson Engraving does show the two sections of the adjoined buildings approximately in this location, however they are facing the wrong way and are not smack on Christie Retreat. However, one must assume this is the expanded pub.

A few meetings of the York Agricultural Society were held at Dunham's Hotel. Unfortunately, Dunham didn't pay his bills and in December 1854, Lionel Samson sued him for £114 for goods sold (which we presume was for liquor). The Samson business is still in existence and still sells liquor. Dunham became a farmer, renting land from Monger.⁵¹

The blacksmith's shop and stables still exist.

Ellis

Behind Solomon Cook's pub was a small house in which Mr Ellis lived⁵². This house is shown on the 1849 plan of the town. So the building towards the river from the Dusty Miller is probably Ellis' house.

John Ellis was a sawyer who had worked for John Henry Monger Snr at Lake Monger in 1833 when it was chosen by Yagan, Yellagonga and other Noongar warriors as a place to assemble.⁵³ Despite Ellis being described as a "timid man", he fired his gun at a group of natives before running away. Ellis was summoned before a magistrate to instruct him that firing a gun at natives was not to be tolerated.⁵⁴ Ellis moved to York and became a sandalwood cutter for Monger, living here on Monger's property.

⁴⁴ Advertisement in Inquirer 14 July 1847,p.1.

⁴⁵ Erickson, Rica (ed.), Dictionary of Western Australians

⁴⁶ Inquirer 20 June 1849, p.2.

⁴⁷ Australian Dictionary of Bibliography.

⁴⁸ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 14 February 1851, p.2.

⁴⁹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 23 April 1852, p.3.

⁵⁰ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 14 May 1852, p.6.

⁵¹ Landgate, Deeds and Ordinances VI/390/2453 Last will and testament of John Henry Monger 10 August 1867 registered 10 March 1868.

⁵² York Townsite Plan c. 1849 Courtesy SROWA, York 14C, item425 cons 3868

⁵³ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 26 January 1833, p.15.

⁵⁴ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 26 January 1833, p.15.

A ticket of leave man, Thomas Martin, was charged by Ellis, with leaving his employment and in defence Thomas Martin said that Ellis was in the habit of taking him to public houses and making him drink. Constable Moss said he had seen Ellis drinking with Thomas Martin at Solomon Cook's. The magistrates fined Thomas Martin 6 shillings and ordered him to be sent to the road party.⁵⁵

In Henderson's engraving, the building towards the river below is most probably Ellis's house though it is probably larger than Ellis's house appears to have been from Chauncey's map.

Solomon Cook's Mill

The most prominent building in the centre of the town buildings is Solomon Cook's mill.

Cook's main ventures in York were to construct a flour mill and build a bridge across the Avon. In the first, he succeeded. The foundation stone for the mill was laid on 22 July 1850. The mill was said to be 40 feet high, and the material granite, and the project was being funded by Solomon Cook himself.⁵⁶

Cook borrowed £400 for the purpose from merchants John Barker and Thomas Pope.⁵⁷

The walls of the "windmill" were nearly completed by mid-October 1850, and it was due to be completed in January 1851.⁵⁸

"The architect is Mr Solomon Cook, and both the workmanship and design are such as do no discredit to that individual's established reputation for ingenuity and skill."⁵⁹

The engraving shows a windmill with arms, which it must have had, being originally a "windmill".

Solomon Cook then constructed a steam engine for the mill.

A correspondent reported in May 1853:

"Mr S. Cook's steam engine, constructed on an entirely new principle, was set to work, on trial, on Tuesday last, and appeared fully to answer the expectations formed of it".⁶⁰

He was assisted in the construction of the engine by someone called "John Stevenson" but this is most likely a mistaken reference to blacksmith and convict Henry Stevens.

In her book, *An Australian Parsonage*, Janet Millet refers to Solomon Cook's steam engine: "They manfully hammered a lot of old tire-iron into the form of a boiler and actually succeeded in making their engine grind corn but it was so noisy over its work and devoured such a large quantity of fuel that it soon wore out its own constitution and became useless".

We will return to the uselessness of the mill shortly.

⁵⁵ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 14 November 1851, p.4.

⁵⁶ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 26 July 1850, p.2.

⁵⁷ Landgate Deeds and Ordinances Index V 55/45: Indenture 20 February 1852.

⁵⁸ Inquirer 16 October 1850, p.3.

⁵⁹ Inquirer 16 October 1850, p.3.

⁶⁰ Inquirer 28 January 1852, p.3.

The windmill arms are in Henderson's engraving, hence at the date of the drawings for the engraving (assumed to be October 1853), the arms were still on the mill.

Steam power must have eventually resulted in the removal of the arms of the windmill and their replacement by a weathervane and cockerel.

We know the cockerel was on the mill in 1857 as it is referred to in an 1857 letter to the paper talking about Henderson's engraving and what is actually in York including:

"To that picturesque round tower with its vane and weathercock."

The mill was leased to William Wade as the property became known as "Wade's Steam Mill".⁶¹

In a letter to the Perth Gazette on 13 April, 1855, Wade had to defend his mill (the "parent" of the mills) from allegations from a correspondent named "Stoker" that it was not working, and when it was, it continuously stopped, and that there were "mistakes" made when milling.⁶²

William Wade responded in a letter to the paper dated 9 April 1855:⁶³

"Stoker may think this very fine writing and no doubt expects it will quite stop the engine, but *it is easy for anonymous writers* to make statements – it is another thing to prove them – too many coming from such people are founded either in prejudice or ignorance of the subject they profess to handle."

And he goes on to assert that while it may stop from time to time, the York Steam Mill works "as a public servant".⁶⁴

The mill with weathervane and cockerel appears in a drawing by Richard Meares, which was most likely drawn after his retirement in March 1858.

This was an important corner as the Avon Terrace Macartney Street corner was the entrance to town for travellers from Perth, the road being called Guildford Road.

Mortgagees of Solomon Cook sold the property in January 1857 to Thomas Mead, a farmer of "Springhill" Northam for 750 pounds.^{65 66} The mortgage was discharged by 1859 but re-mortgaged in 1862 when Thomas Mead needed money for the Newcastle Hotel in Toodyay (Newcastle).⁶⁷

Thomas had no interest in running the flour mill because he had installed a mill on Springhill, his property at Northam, in 1857.⁶⁸

The weathercock is referred to by Janet Millet in her book *An Australian Parsonage* (page 52) on her arrival in York (or "Barladong" as she called it) in 1863, after descending from Cut Hill.

⁶¹ Inquirer 25 April 1855, p.2.

⁶² Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 13 April 1855, p.3.

⁶³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 13 April 1855, p.3.

⁶⁴ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 13 April 1855, p.3.

⁶⁵ Landgate Deeds and Ordinances Index VI/27/150

⁶⁶ Anne Mead and Hazel Mead: Mead Family History, undated.

⁶⁷ Anne Mead and Hazel Mead: Mead Family History, undated.

⁶⁸ Anne Mead and Hazel Mead: Mead Family History, undated.

“On perceiving shortly afterwards one or two small houses in the valley, and a round building with a peaked roof, out of which rose a weathercock, I thought I must be approaching a village of some kind, and my driver informed me that we had at length reached Barladong [York].”

.....

None of the buildings, however, make any pretence to the picturesque, excepting the round one with the weathercock, which I afterwards heard had been erected as a windmill by an American, possibly after some hazy model preserved in his youthful recollections of the many old Dutch-patterned structures in his own land. ”

Mead advertised the property in October 1863, describing it as follows:

“four acres of land, fronting the main street of York, about three and a half chains, and directly opposite the main Road to Guildford, with a good brick house thereon, containing one large Store with fittings, and six good rooms; also a very substantial mill house and granary, with four storey tower attached, also engine room and blacksmith’s shop, together with 12 horsepower engine and boiler, nearly new, and in good order, with two pairs of stones, one pair French burs with four dressers attached all complete. The above stones and engine are capable of grinding any quantity of corn; also a stone stable, and cottage containing four rooms.”⁶⁹

Mead died on 24 January, 1872 and his will directed that Lots 3 and 4 be sold⁷⁰. His wife Mary Ann took ownership of the property, and then she married John Vernon Warren. During this time, it is not likely that the property had changed much since Solomon Cook handed the property over to creditors in 1855. There were a number of buildings on the mill site and these are listed in an advertisement for the sale of Town Lots 3 and 4 in 1872:⁷¹

- A brick-built dwelling house of 6 rooms, store and butcher’s shop
- Stone built steam flour mill with two lofts and engines dressing and smutting machines, extra pair of French burr grinding stones, hoisting gear
- Blacksmith’s shop, with anvil and forge
- Stone built hay-loft capable of storing 40 tonnes of hay
- Three-stall stable, ostler’s and harness room
- Large dry store and shed, piggeries

You will see from the Meares drawing that there are a few buildings running down Macartney Street, but more must have existed behind the mill on Town Lot 3. This is confirmed in a rent case involving the two properties in 1878, Warren v Stevens.⁷²

So the drawing does not show all these buildings. Nor does it show the mill and its adjoining hay-loft from the correct angle. As with the blacksmith’s shop earlier, they are there but presented the

⁶⁹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 2 October 1863, p.2.

⁷⁰ Infra.

⁷¹ Herald, 28 September 1872, p.3.

⁷² Eastern Districts Chronicle, 13 July 1878, p.2.

wrong way. It is also confusing where the fence line comes down towards the river. Surely you would expect the fence lines to follow the road. Hence the engraving falls short of reality in the number of buildings and where they are located and in which direction they point.

I have not been able to find any Trove reference to the demolition of the mill. Tony Clack thought the weathervane was moved to the post office around 1900.

The Fisher cottage

We know who had the home down towards the river from the mill because a map from 1849 shows a house on the property occupied by "Fisher": This was George Fisher, his wife Sarah and his family.^{73 74}

The property was owned by George Johnson who was an early Methodist settler and Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

As you can see from the picture by Richard Meares in the late 1850s, the property was being farmed. Is that bump on the right hand side of Meares' drawing the Fisher house or a haystack?

The Fishers were amongst the poorest families in the town.

George Fisher was a labourer. He was illiterate. He and Sarah had arrived in 1843 and by 1845 were living in York. Their children were Eliza, George, Ruth, Mary (who was born in York and died at 3), another Mary, Sarah, Samuel, Harriet and Susannah.⁷⁵

In 1846, Resident Magistrate Meares reported to the Governor with concern for this family that Sarah was ill, and their house was too small for such a large family, 12 feet square, that is, 4 metres by 4 metres. Meares said they were too poor to acquire a small plot of land on which to grow their own food.⁷⁶

Meares goes on to report that Isaac Nelson had become seriously ill with afflictions of the lungs and because there was no hospital, the Fisher family took him in. However it was too hard for them to look after him with Sarah also ill.

The sick Isaac Nelson felt obliged to leave the house and sleep in the bush.

Fisher wanted his children to go to school and complained in 1849 that his children were excluded from school because he could not afford fees.

Even though she had been sick, it was George who was the first to die, on 24 January 1855.⁷⁷

Henry Stevens' blacksmith's shop

⁷³ York Townsite Plan c. 1849 Courtesy SROWA, York 14C, item425 cons 3868

⁷⁴ Rika Erikson: The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians.

⁷⁵ Erickson, Rica (ed.), Dictionary of Western Australians.

⁷⁶ WA, Colonial Secretary, Correspondence Received, 150/145, 166/133, noted in Donald S Garden: Northam, An Avon Valley History, Northam Shire Council and Hesperian Press, 1992, p.35.

⁷⁷ Rika Erikson: The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians.

Diagonally opposite their house, on the town lot owned by Solomon Cook just south of what is now the York Palace Hotel, was former convict Henry Stevens, who had been transported for larceny and was working for Solomon Cook and probably helped build Cook's steam engine. Being a whitesmith as well as a blacksmith, he is likely to have made the weather vane for Cook's mill which can still be found on the roof of the York post office. Stevens was pardoned in 1854 but by then he must have already been trading as a blacksmith. Henry Stevens was also a builder.

In June 1857 the property on which his shop stood was advertised by its owner, William Hoops. The property was referred to in a for sale ad as being let to Mr W Stevens.⁷⁸

The ad described the property as follows:

“Containing a substantial six-room house and blacksmith's shop, sawn roof etc, etc . also on the same allotment, a two-roomed house.”⁷⁹

The town is described as follows: “This allotment lies in the most central part of York which will undoubtedly become one of the largest towns in the interior of Western Australia, and already possesses three powerful steam mills.”⁸⁰

So I assume that the building on the other side of Avon Terrace west of the Mill must be Henry Stevens' blacksmith's shop.

What happened to the blacksmith's shop is not certain. Henry Stevens bought the property in 1868, then sold it to Richard Hoops in 1873, who sold it to Joseph Pyke in 1883. Joseph constructed the shops on the street front, the first to be abutting the street, some of which still exist.

The Courthouse / survey office

Below, above Government Farm land were the Courthouse / survey office and separate stables. You can also see these in the Henderson engraving.

The courthouse was criticised by a correspondent in January 1856 as being a “hovel used as a Court-house” – “when crowded (as it often is), it is as hot as an oven, and, I should say, equally unwholesome; the doors and windows are all on one side of the house, and those are always filled on court days by the crowd. This, combined with its out of the way situation, age and ugliness, would seem to demand that we have a new Court-house erected with a little more regard to comfort. It is bad enough to torture prisoners, but we ought not to shorten the lives of our magistrates by depriving them of light and air for at least 80 hours per week.”⁸¹

In 1857, Meares complained that the Court-house was not a safe place to keep records, the building still having a thatched roof: “the Courthouse ...is an open place for any child can get in at the windows”. By 1858, the rafters were “so consumed by the white ant and decayed” that it was feared that without repairs it would fall in during the winter months.⁸²

⁷⁸ Inquirer and Commercial News 17 June 1857, p.2.

⁷⁹ Inquirer and Commercial News 17 June 1857, p.2.

⁸⁰ Inquirer and Commercial News 17 June 1857, p.2.

⁸¹ Inquirer and Commercial News 30 January 1856, p.3.

⁸² Quoting from The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.12.

These buildings were described in 1862 as having been a “disgrace to our city. Mud walls and thatched roofs have had their day in towns”.

Residence

There appears to be a substantial residence above the courthouse, roughly where the current post office is situated. The building is large with well marked out chimneys. The same building appears in an early photograph of the town taken from Mt Brown. This could be the “Government Residents” referred to in a description of York in 1840 in the Inquirer.⁸³

However, it is more likely to be the residence constructed for John Drummond, inspector of Native Police, at a cost of 40 pounds, finished in early 1842. It was described in the following words:

“Two rooms – one fourteen feet square and the other fourteen feet by ten, the walls to be eight feet above the floor [and] of Rammed earth fourteen inches thick, partition wall the same. Door and window frame of sawn timbers the Roof of Poles and thatched with blackboys , floor of clay – and the building to be plastered inside and out, a fire place to be put in the large room, two large doors to be found.....the whole to be completed strongly and to a workmanlike manner.”⁸⁴

As Walkinshaw Cowan replaced Drummond, it is natural to assume that this became Cowan’s residence.

The approximate location of this residence is provided in two letters from Walkinshaw Cowan to the Colonial Secretary, the first in 1850:

“The Native Policeman Cowits appears very anxious to obtain an allotment in the Town of York where he might have a house built and make a garden for himself. He has now got wife and I would be glad if His Excellency would assign him an allotment near to the Barracks, or opposite my house, in order to see what effect it might have on the Natives of the District.”⁸⁵

And more than a year later:

“Some time back I applied for an allotment on the Townsite of York for the Native Cowit, attached to the Mounted Police, to build a House and make a garden on, but have had no official reply to my letter. The upper part of the allotment on which the Barrack stables are built on is vacant, and as it is desirable that he should be near my house, it would be convenient His Excellency should give him permission to build on this and enclose it for a garden.”⁸⁶

So this is saying that Cowan’s house was on Government land close to the Barrack stables (which were below where the prison cells were to be constructed).

The authors of the history of the Courthouse say that Drummond’s house was also the survey/office

⁸³ Inquirer 20 October 1840.

⁸⁴ Quoting from The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.7.

⁸⁵ 26 August 1850: CSO 1850 V199 202.

⁸⁶ 28 October 1851.

and courthouse building⁸⁷, a building that was 40 metres to the east.⁸⁸

George Robert Teede (b. 1811, arr. 1842, d. York, 1867) was schoolmaster at York from 1847, and also clerk of courts (1848-51, and 1857), and was also appointed to serve as Postmaster at York.⁸⁹ So Teede may have used the house from 1847 or 1848. In the 1850s, Teede purchased the block on the river on the northern side of Ford St.⁹⁰

[There is an alternative possibility. According to Wollaston, Walkinshaw Cowan was living in Revett Henry Bland's "old house".⁹¹

Shirley Lutze very much wanted to work out where Bland's house was. Bland's premises were described as "excellent" by Bunbury. Shirley Lutze observed that this means they were "hardly a two roomed cottage" such as Heal's former home. "Bland employed a housekeeper, a Mrs Hebron, before and after his wife's death. Where did she live?". Shirley Lutze concluded that Bland must have lived somewhere other than in Heal's cottage.

In that regard, there are two possibilities. In 1836, Bland was living in a house next to his business partner Arthur Trimmer, on Suburban Lot A1.

In 1838, Bland married and around this time built a house at Balladong Farm which was leased by Bland to brothers Henry and William Landor in 1841. They described this house as a "a very pleasant dwelling house".⁹²]

Walkinshaw Cowan left the house to try farming at Mile Pool around 1854.^{93 94} This explains why the Government had a house to rent to Pope in 1855. Thomas Pope was one of two Perth merchants who lent money to Solomon Cook and was a mortgagee of Cook's mill. In 1855, Pope opened a store opposite^{95 96} Henry Stevens' blacksmith's shop, so because of its location, the store must have been this same building.

Cell block and police quarters

A recognisable building on the left of the engraving is the cell block with the police quarters at the front on Avon Terrace. The new cell block and police quarters were constructed in 1852.⁹⁷

This building is the long building on the left hand side. The cell block of course still exists. The buildings appear to be on the wrong angle as they actually are not diagonal to Avon Terrace but point towards it.

⁸⁷ The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.8.

⁸⁸ Interview with Kevin Milner, postmaster, in about 2012.

⁸⁹ Erickson, Rica (ed.), op. cit., p. 3026

⁹⁰ Landgate: Crown Grant 1257 in relation to Town Lot 30.

⁹¹ Burton, Wollaston's Albany Journals, p.133.

⁹² Edward Wilson Landor: The Bushman, Life in a New Country, Chapter 20. Also described in Chapter 7 as "a good farm house".

⁹³ CSO 1851 V212 483

⁹⁴ Inquirer, 30 August, 1854, pp.2 and 3.

⁹⁵ Inquirer, 31 January 1855, p.1 (advertisement in relation to York Building Lot 18).

⁹⁶ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 5 January 1855, p.1.

⁹⁷ The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.10.

The cell block and police quarters were unfinished and the gaoler, Mr Patrick Bannon reported in July 1853:

“There is no windows in my room in the place to keep the wind or cold out there is no doors in the place secure with the exception of the cell. The passage door of the cell there is no lock on yet I cannot secure it in any way to keep prisoners in without watching them, if there is no alteration made this cold weather I cannot live in the place with my family.”

Bannon complained again in October:

“The walls of the gaol yard is not sufficient to keep a boy of 8 years of age from getting over them”.⁹⁸

Police Sergeant Bailey complained in 1858 about the

“unhealthy state of the lockup quarters at this Station, it having no back door or windows, only one window in each room and that facing the sun the whole day and in summer the heat is most unbearable and unhealthy to live in. A window in each end could easily be put in, and a back door cut in the centre room out into the garden by the removal of the oven which is perfectly useless. A verandah is also much required.”⁹⁹

In 1859, the front of the building was expanded and a courthouse added, and a verandah.¹⁰⁰ This work was finished in October 1859.¹⁰¹ The troopers’ cottage and yard was added in 1865.¹⁰²

Foreground: *Holy Trinity Church.*

In the foreground is a church and another building. We recognise from the design that this is the Holy Trinity Church, except for the spire. The architect was Richard Roach Jewell, Superintendent of Public Works.¹⁰³ And the building to the left must be the rectory, in which the Rev Edward Millett and Janet Millett were to live from 1863 to 1869.

The church was not built in October 1853, it was not completed until 1855, so what is going on. Why did Henderson include this in his drawing?

Plans for the church were presented to a public meeting at the beginning of October 1854. The church was designed to have a “lofty spire” above the tower and to eventually accommodate 700 people. It would have “narrow lancet windows ... filled with colored glass from England”. “At present it is intended to erect only the nave, tower and porch, at an expense of about 800 pounds affording accommodation for about 250 people”.¹⁰⁴

Richard Roach Jewell, the designer of the church, worked for Henderson, and therefore Henderson was likely to have been aware of the drawings presented to the Anglican Church in about September

⁹⁸ The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.11.

⁹⁹ The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.12.

¹⁰⁰ The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.14.

¹⁰¹ Inquirer and Commercial News 19 October 1859, p.2.

¹⁰² The National Trust of Australia (WA): Old Police Station, York, p.16.

¹⁰³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 3 November 1854, p.2.

¹⁰⁴ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 3 November 1854, p.2.

1854. It does appear that, to give accuracy to his drawings that he took to London, or in some composite drawing, Henderson included the church as it was conceived by Jewell, not knowing that a decision would be made not to construct the tower or spire.¹⁰⁵

This means that if there were drawings on which the engraving was based, the last of them was completed in or around October 1854.

What is not in the engraving

The Wesleyan Chapel (now the Uniting Church Meeting Hall) was being constructed in October 1853, and was opened in April 1854, and does not appear engraving. This may be the reason why one correspondent assumed that the church in the engraving was the Wesleyan Chapel.

Too late for the drawings the subject of the engraving was the CWA building which was constructed by Robert Doncon of the Kings Head Inn in 1856 as a butcher's shop and residence.

Not included in the engraving, slightly to the left, would have been the commissariat's store and the barracks and the first section of the Castle Hotel, which was commenced in 1853 using ticket of leave labour,¹⁰⁶ and an earlier Monger built building next door on the South St corner, built around 1852. Buildings further to the left such as St John's Church (built in 1840) and the Kings Head Inn and other Blandstown buildings are not included in the engraving.

Broad Conclusions

If you look at the whole engraving, York is presented as much closer to Mt Bakewell than in reality. Mt Bakewell appears to be towering over the town.

Avon Terrace appears like a river running across and swinging to the right to avoid Mt Bakewell. The actual Avon River appears below the church. It looks like the town is being viewed from Mt Brown.

Monger's Suburban Lots A1 and A2 are quite distorted. A1 is the lot that contains the York Hotel and A2 contains Faversham House. These lots are both the same size (10 acres) and yet the Faversham Lot A2 is much narrower. From the York Hotel, you have to walk another 80 or so metres to the Ford Street corner. However Ford Street does run to the right of the Faversham House stables. So Ford St appears to have a dog-leg which it does not have.

The main road to Perth was what is now Macartney St running past the mill, but this also has a dog leg.

Some of the buildings are in such detail that Henderson has obviously tried to properly depict those buildings, or the buildings are copied from separate drawings. This is the case with the York Hotel and the prison cells and police station, both of which he knew well having designed the cells, and stayed at the York Hotel.

Holy Trinity Church is drawn from the plans for the church.

¹⁰⁵ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 3 November 1854, p.2.

¹⁰⁶ A.M. Clack and Jenni McColl: York Sketchbook, p. 12.

From what we can deduce, the remaining buildings do appear to represent actual buildings, even though in some cases, they appear closer together than they actually are, or they aren't quite where they should be, or are shown from the wrong direction, and in the case of Cook's mill complex, they are quite simplified with a few not being displayed at all.

My conclusion is that Henderson's final drawing is a composite of a number of drawings of individual buildings in which he tried to accurately depict the core structures of the town in its landscape but could only do so in one drawing by distortion of the landscape.

What happened next?

The town was drowned in two floods, in July 1861 and an even worse flood in July 1862.

Water reached a height of a metre in the Castle Hotel cellar. The local Noongar described the 1862 flood as bad as that in the year prior to the arrival of Europeans in York, 1830. The land was so boggy that they easily caught kangaroos by their tails. A tornado passed though the country to the east of York.

On both banks small cottages near the river were all washed away. This probably included the Fisher cottage. The old court-house and police stables below where the post office now stands were washed away.¹⁰⁷

The York Hotel was probably substantially damaged in this flood. It was demolished and a "new" York Hotel was built by John Henry Monger Snr and his son Joseph in 1864-1865, a building which survived until the windstorm of 2012.

The Troopers' Yard was constructed in 1865.

An Australia Post file refers to "a single storey Georgian style building with a shingle roof" being constructed on the current post office site in 1866.¹⁰⁸ Here is the York Hunt Club photographed in front of this building in 1889.

In 1869, Faversham House's wings were constructed by John Henry Monger Jnr after the death of John Henry Monger Snr. This is contrary to popular belief, the New York Hotel and its wings were built by John Henry Monger Snr and Joseph Monger, before the wings of Faversham House were built by John Henry Monger Jnr.

John Henry Monger Jnr's new Trading post was constructed in 1879.

Rob Garton Smith
President
The York Society (Incorporated)
November 2020

¹⁰⁷ Inquirer and Commercial News 30 July 1862, p.2.

¹⁰⁸ Buildings Sites Accommodation Heritage York Post Office, Australia Post File 049-A97 (1997-98)