

NEWCASTLE COAL MINES

ACCOUNT PREPARED BY HUNTINGTON
FOR MILLARD AND SPARKE
COURT APPEARANCE

- HISTORY OF NEWCASTLE MINES –

- UNDER THE CROWN AND AUSTRALIAN
AGRICULTURAL COMPANY –

NEWCASTLE COAST DISCOVERED

The distinguished navigator Cook was the first to discover the coast of Newcastle, on May 10th, 1770 in the little vessel Endeavour, he sighted Nobby Island which he described as "a small clump of island lying close in shore".

NEWCASTLE VISITED BETWEEN 1790 & 1795

Eighteen years after Cook chartered the coast of Newcastle some of the transports en route from Port Jackson to China sighted the Coast but never landed on it. On September 26th 1790 five convicts piratically seized a boat at Port Jackson and ranged in it along the coast, finally becoming settled at Port Stephens. Up to August 1795 the escapees explored the district for miles, and it is obvious they visited Newcastle. About the 21st February 1795 Deputy Surveyor Charles Grimes, entered Port Stephens, and chartered the harbour in the vessel Francis, but he did not reach Newcastle. Six months subsequent to this survey H.M.S. Providence under the command of Captain William Robert Broughton, entered Port Stephens and rescued the five runaway convicts before mentioned.

FIRST COAL DISCOVERED AT NEWCASTLE.

In June, 1796, a fishing boat returned from a bay or harbour (Newcastle) near Port Stephens, into which they had been driven by bad weather, and brought to Sydney Cove several large pieces of coal which they found lying at some little distance from the beach in considerable quantities on the ground.

NEWCASTLE FIRST CHARTERED

On September 9th, 1797, Lieutenant Shortland with two boats entered Newcastle harbour in search of some prisoners who had stolen the vessel "Cumberland" from Port Jackson. He landed at Nobby's also

at a place now called the Market Reserve and on Wallis Island. At the two first named places, he found considerable quantities of coal lying so near to the waterside as to be conveniently shipped. He drew a chart of the harbour and sent it to his father in England.

NEWCASTLE VISITED BETWEEN 1797 and 1799

Almost immediately after Shortland's account of the Hunter River was published, some of the Port Jackson Craft visited the river and brought to Sydney small quantities of coal. In March or April 1799 one of the boats was "cut off" by the Newcastle Aborigines, and the men driven inland. In April Mr. Henry Hacking visited the river and chastised the aborigines, wounding four of them. When the aborigines disappeared he filled his boat with coals and returned to Sydney, where he found afterwards that the "cut off" men had reached the settlement overland.

THE MINES TO BE WORKED BY THE CROWN

In June 1797 Governor Hunter reported to the Secretary of State, that Captain Hamilton had discovered in May 1797 coal at Coal Cliff, Bulli while journeying from the wreck of his vessel "The Sydney Cove" in Bass's Straits, along the sea coast towards Port Jackson. Furthermore he had sent Dr. Bass to report on it and the report showed there was strata of six feet in the face of the sea cliff, extending 8 or 9 miles along the coast to the Southward. Some of this coal was at once sent to Sir Joseph Banks and he at once ordered borers and bits for mining purposes to be sent to the Colony. In January 1798 Governor Hunter writes home about the discovery of the Hunter River and says that as soon as public service would admit of his absence he would go to the river and survey it. Writing on December 19th, 1798, the Duke of Portland refers to the coal discoveries and informs Secretary Dundas, that he had directed Governor Hunter to despatch the Buffalo and Porpoise storeships to the Cape with coals and bring back livestock, The Buffalo would carry 6000 tons of coal which would be worth five to six

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thousand pounds to the Government and he expected the first cargo to reach the Cape about Christmas 1799. All hopes of the coal industry being a great advantage to the Cape Government officials was for a time blighted for the want of shipping facilities. On July 4th 1799, Hunter told the Secretary of State that the Coal seams examined by Dr. Bass in August 1797, at Coal Cliff, were inaccessible but "The coal at the Hunter River could be got at". He promised to try the experiment of a cargo of coal to the Cape, particularly as the Crown had to pay 28 per ton for all coal sent to the station there from England.

THE FIRST EXPORT OF COAL took place in 1800. On December 14th, 1799 the Martha of 30 tons arrived at Sydney Cove and sailed for the Hunter River but entered Lake Macquarie where she landed with very fine coals. The lake was called Reid's Mistake because Captain Wm. Reid made the mistake of believing he had entered the Hunter River. These coals were exported to the Cape or Bengal and were the first export.

THE FIRST EXPORT OF COAL

The discovery of the vast strata of coal was reckoned among the new lights thrown upon the resources of the Colony, and it was the great aim of the Secretary of State to make the Colony self-supporting, the fostering of coal and timber industries. Coal was to be a lucrative article of trade, but the want of shipping and the opposition of the East India Company to Australian trade was a bar to enterprise. Royal instructions prohibited the building of any craft, that would enable the owners to have intercourse with the settlements of the Company, nor could any craft over 350 tons, traverse the Indian Sea without the Company's license. Colonial trade was hide-bound by the Governors instructions in favour of the East India Monopoly of trade beyond the Colony's limits.

The earliest effort for the export of coal took place in 1799, after the arrival (July 26th, 1799) of the Hillsborough from the Cape where she had landed on behalf of the British Government a quantity of British coals for the British settlement there, the price of which was 8 pounds per chaldron.

On of the first (if not the first) vessels to take coals to the Cape was the Brig Anna Josepha. She was 170 tons and carried only two seamen, She was a Spanish prize to the whaler Betsy, and was condemned b the Court and sold to Simon Lord the Merchant. On 7th May 1801 she left Sydney Cove for the Hunter liver, where she loaded coals and on May 29th returned to Port Jackson with a cargo of coals which was sold to the Master of the Vessel Cornwallis. On July 1801, she sailed again for the Hunter and on October 2nd returned to Sydney Cove. On October 26th, she finally quitted Port Jackson for the Cape of Good Hope. Her cargo was one hundred tons of coals and 4,000 of timber. The Newcastle coals were sold a the Cape for seven pounds per ton.

Anther vessel called the Earl Cornwallis, 784 ton register carrying 20 men and 72 guns, took a small cargo (150 tons) of Newcastle coals to Bengal. She arrived at Port Jackson from the Cape on June 12 1801, and sailed on October 4th 1801, for Bengal. The Master James Tennant, offered Governor King a large quantity of iron for making grates and tools, which offer was accepted. Governor King writes of this event "The first cargo of coal brought from the Coal River in a Government vessel (the Francis) I exchanged with the Master of the Earl Cornwallis who goes for Bengal from hence, for iron which he gave 30 per cent profit for our coals at two pounds five shillings per chaldron. Governor King in another despatch says the price was P,3 per ton I believe this is the first return ever made from New South Wales How many chaldron he will take from here I cannot tell until he leaves this, as he has got several small vessels belonging to individuals bringing them round, and as such a produce ought not to be without some advantage to the Crown, I have regulated the export of that article as expressed in the enclosed printed Notice, whatever may arise from this branch of our revenue will remain unappropriated

until I receive commands thereon. However I believe our exports will be small except such as ships as bring convicts out may choose to carry them on to India. This may fairly be deemed the FIRST EXPORT OF NEWCASTLE COAL TO INDIA.

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF NEWCASTLE

In September 1800, Governor King contemplated founding a settlement at the Hunter River to work the Coal Mines, and also as a place of punishment for seditious convicts who were rebellious at the outlying settlements. Before settling the place he caused the Hunter River to be explored and chartered. The vessels Lady Nelson and Francis were engaged on this work under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel William Paterson, the Lieutenant Governor. From June 10th to July 23rd 1801 the vessels were engaged on the undertaking or expedition, which resulted in very favourable reports being sent the Governor respecting the place being highly fit for settlement. One and all praised the coal deposits, the abundance of shells for making lime, the splendid timber for export, the fine fishing grounds, the excellent pastures &c &c.

MARKET SQUARE COALS RAISED IN 1801

The Francis was a schooner of 40 tons and came in frame from England in 1792 in the transport "Pitt". On June 14th 1801, she was loaded with "Freshwater Bay coals", the mine

being on what is now the Market Reserve. She returned to Sydney on 27th of June having left Newcastle on the 25th of June. She brought 20 tons of coals on the government account, which Governor King sold at about 3 pounds per ton for goods at 20 per cent increase on invoice value to the Master of the Earl Cornwallis. At the end of July 1801 Simeon Lords vessel the Anna Josepha entered the Hunter River and took in a cargo of coals which he sold to the Master of the Earl Cornwallis at Z3 per ton and took his goods at 30 per cent above the invoice price. The exact amount of coals baitered by Governor King with the Earl Cornwallis commander who was 40 tons brought to Sydney by the two Government vessels.

THE COAL AND TIMBER OF THE HUNTER PROCLAIMED CROWN PROPERTY

On July 3rd 1801 Governor King by General Order established a port in Freshwater Bay (along the waterside of Scott Street) and directed that no one could go there without a license. The dues and fees were License for coals 5/- entrance fee 2/6 clearance ticket 2/6. The Kings dues were coals 2/6 per ton for home consumption and 5/- for export, metage per ton on coals 1/-.

CROWN MINING IN 1801

In July 1801 Corporal Wixstead and five pirates formed the first port or Government at Newcastle. The Storekeeper was Cole, a soldier who was a brother of a clergyman and a Captain in the Royal Navy. With three miners and six carriers they got three tons per day, and often not so much. Wixstead was removed for irregularities and a Surgeons mate named Martin Mason placed in his situation. Mason was a medical man and a magistrate, but he only got about nine tons per day out of the mine. He laid a way with slabs from the pits mouth, down to a temporary wharf run out upon a bank of stones and sand. He also propped the mines. His labours lasted from October to December 1801 and at the beginning of the year 1802 he was removed for cruelty to the miners whom he overworked.

THE FIRST EXPORT OF COAL IN 1801

On the 3rd of August 1801 a barque of 300 tons called the Hunter arrived from Bengal. She was owned by Messrs. Campbell & Co. of Sydney and brought general merchandise. She carried 8 guns and 50 men under the command of Captain William Anderson. She left Port Jackson on the 15th November 1801 with a small cargo of Newcastle Coals for Bengal. She had secured one hundred tons of coals but there is no record as to how they were disposed of in India although she reached her place of destination.

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On October 4th, 1801 the Earl Cornwallis departed from Sydney Cove for Bengal with between one and two hundred tons of Newcastle Coal and on the 26th of the same month and year the Anna Josepha left Sydney for the Cape with a similar quantity viz, 100 tons, hence we have three vessels leaving in 1801 with 300 tons of Newcastle coals, the first natural product of the Country. These are great historic facts in connection with the Australian coal industry.

The authentic exports of coal from Newcastle are as follows:

On October 4th 1801, the Earl Cornwallis was the first vessel to leave Port Jackson with 150 tons of coal from the Newcastle Mines, for Bengal.

On October 26th 1801, the Anna Josepha left Sydney for the Cape with 100 tons of Newcastle coal.

On November 15th 1801 the Hunter departed from Campbells wharf in Sydney Cove with a small cargo of coal which she obtained at the Hunter River.

COAL BORING PLANT FOR THE MINES IN 1801

When the coal discoveries at Newcastle and Bulli were made known in England, Sir Joseph Banks in March 1799, induced the Navy Board to send to the Colony coal bearing apparatus such as 3 joints, 50 pairs of screws, 2 ground fire bits, 2 chisel fire bits, 2 box ditto, 1 pair of spanners &c. &c. In February 1800 Lieutenant Governor King while on his way out to the Colony to succeed Governor Hunter wrote to the Government from the Cape, for two large water engines to pump out the water that may gather in any of the coal pits to be dug, for he was determined to try for coals at good depths. The request was not complied with as it entailed great expense.

NEWCASTLE COAL MINING IN 1802

Owing to a mutiny among the people of Newcastle in 1801 Dr. Mason was recalled to Sydney in December 1801 and the settlement was broken up, during the year 1802. There are no records of the output

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of coal for that year and it could not amount to much, as only government vessels visited the place for enough coal to supply government purposes.

NEW COAL MINE DISCOVERED AND CAUSES THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF NEWCASTLE IN 1804

Early in April 1803 Messrs. Palmers vessel Edwin, visited Newcastle. Mr. Platt a miner in the employ of Mr. Palmer discovered a rich seam of coal on the hillside, the coal from which resembled that found in the Colliery at Leith near Edinburgh, but more flexible and easily worked. Governor Hunter sent home samples of this coal to the Secretary of State in H.M.S. Glattan, which departed from Sydney on May 18th, 1803. Soon after this in May 1803 the James and Raven vessels belonging to Mr. J. Raby, went to the River and brought round splendid specimens of coal from the new mine. H.M.S. Cate received 24 tons of this coal on board. The net sum for which the above freight amounted to was £63-11-0 exclusive of duty, an additional 5/- on every ton. The coals were of a superior quality to any previously obtained and promised to the Colony a lasting resource. The Cate sailed for England on August 10th, 1803.

NEWCASTLE NAMED AND FINALLY SETTLED IN 1804

On March 15th, 1804 Governor King appointed Lieutenant C. A. F. N. Menzies Commandant of "the settlement" of the Coal Harbour and Hunter River now distinguished by the name of Newcastle in the County of Northumberland". The expedition to Newcastle sailed March 28th, 1804, and reached the port of destination on Good Friday the 30th March 1804. On board the Lady Nelson were 6 privates, John Tucker, overseer and 22 prisoners. On board the Resource were 1 Sergeant and 4 privates, Mr. Knight and 12 prisoners. On board the James were Mr.

George Caley and 3 miners, stores &c. On board the Lady Nelson were Lieutenant Menzies, Dr. Mileham, Mr. Bauer and others above mentioned.

Each of the above vessels returned to Port Jackson within three weeks loaded with timber and coals.

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According to Menzies' "General Instructions" no private persons were to be allowed to dig for coal without Governor Kings permit in writing. If any private vessel went to the port without the permit the crew were to be confined and the vessel geuttled (sic).

THE MINES TO BE CROWN PROPERTY

By General order dated March 24th, 1804, the coals and timber of the District were to be crown property. That no boat or vessel to go the Coal Harbour without a license and owners agree to enter into a recognisance in £50 and 2 sureties in £25 each, to obey all regulations. The order of July 3rd, 1801 was annulled. The fresh dues were a reduction on the old ones. The license was 2/- entrance at the River 2/6 entrance at Sydney 1/-. The Kings dues for the support of Orphans were for each ton of coals for home consumption 2/6 for each ton exported 2/6 metage per ton to wharfinger 2/-

THE OUTPUT IN 1804

The mine worked in 1804 was 80 feet in depth and there was abundance of good coal, but somehow fate was against the proper working of the pit. In August 1804 there was a mutiny among the miners who were mostly Irishmen sent out for the Rebellion in 1798. Governor King told the Secretary of State under date August 14th, 1804 "about 40 of the worst were sent to the coal works at Newcastle and have lately concerted a plan of assassinating Lieutenant Menzies and the small force he had with them, and by a scheme as wild as it is desperate and impossible to effect they proposed making their escape from that settlement. It was 'discovered in time to prevent any attempt'".

The men were so restless and abandoned that they would not work. Under these circumstances the output hardly exceeded four hundred tons for the year 1804.

THE OUTPUT FOR THE YEAR 1805

In March 1805 Lieutenant Menzies resigned the situation of Commandant at Newcastle and on May

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22nd, 1805 sailed for England in H. M. S. Investigator.

On March 19th, 1805 Ensign C. Draffin was appointed commandant of Newcastle and Mr. Charles Throsby the surgeon and magistrate to have the superintendence of public labour.

Here is an abstract of the return furnished the Governor respecting the Coal shipped at Newcastle between March 28th 1805 and 12th August 1806. The return for 1804 is missing but this 1805-1806 return will afford a parallel output.

ON GOVERNMENT ACCOUNT TOTAL 111 TONS

1805			1806		
DATE	VESSEL	AMOUNT OF COAL (TONS)	DATE	VESSEL	AMOUNT OF COAL (TONS)
March 28	Resource	3	April 11	Resource	11
May 14	Resource	2	May 26	Resource	15
May 30	Resource	2	June 28	Resource	6
Sept 6	Lady Nelson	8	July 14	Resource	9
Dec 21	Resource	10	July 22	Resource	9
			July 22	Venus	15
			August 7	Venus	8
			August 7	Resource	7

ON PRIVATE ACCOUNT TOTAL 209 TONS

1805			1806		
DATE	VESSEL	AMOUNT OF COAL (TONS)	DATE	VESSEL	AMOUNT OF COAL (TONS)
May 30	Mareia	3	February 17	Hawkesbury	6
July 7	Fly	10	February 22	Gov. Hunter	23
July 26	Hawkesbury	23	February 27	Mareia	2
July 25	Gov. Hunter	6	March 16	Gov. Hunter	5
Aug 12	Gov. Hunter	7	April 11	Hawkesbury	2

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1805			1806		
DATE	VESSEL	AMOUNT OF COAL (TONS)	DATE	VESSEL	AMOUNT OF COAL (TONS)
Aug. 24	Contest	4	April 22	Edwin	3
Aug. 21	Gov. Hunter	10	May 26	Richmond	13
Sept. 27	Contest	2	June 18	Contest	30
Oct. 17	Richmond	1	July 9	Hawkesbury	15
Oct. 31	Contest	8	July 16	Contest	15
Dec. 13	Contest	6	Aug 9	Contest	35

TOTAL 209 tons

THE OUTPUT IN 1806, 1807, 1808

Ensign Draffyn had hardly been in command of Newcastle a few months after Lieutenant Menzies return to Sydney, when he became insane and being unfit to command from debilitation Dr. C. Throsby assumed the command. This occurred on the 20th March, 1805, and in May following, the Doctor issued orders against the convicts who were plotting to subvert his government, also directing everyone to be in bed by 8 p.m.

The records of the coal output for 1806, 1807 and 1808 are missing but there are sufficient data in existence to prove that there was no improvement on the return already given for 1805-6.

In the Government Sydney Gazette of May 5th, 1805, there is the following paragraph, "Account given by John Platt a coal miner of the coal mines at Newcastle.

"The Coal mines on the sea-side of Government House Newcastle are 3½ feet thick, solid coal and resemble those at Bushy Park, between Warrington and Prescot. The same mine is also in Lord Derby's Park, near Prescot, called Nozeley Park. These coals are of the best quality and are used for furnaces, malt houses, &c. being free from Sulphur.

Those at the Harbour by the Salt Pan called the New Discovery, from its being like a Delf in Weston near Prescot in Lancashire, are of a bad quality, having as much dirt as coal, and fit for burning bricks, fire engines &c."

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NEWCASTLE COAL MINES SLACKLY WORKED IN 1809 AND 1810

In October 1808 Mr. Charles Throsby returned to Sydney and on September 11th, Ensign A. C. H. Villiers, assumed the office of Commandant. On 24th December 1808, Villiers was relieved from the office of commandant, and Lieutenant Lawson appointed to the vacant office. On October 1st 1810, Governor Macquarie appointed Lieutenant John Purcell, of the 73rd Regiment Commandant of Newcastle. There was little or no improvement in the coal mines under Villiers, Lawson or Purcell's administration. *The chief trade was in lime and timber.* Scarcely 400 tons were raised yearly. Very few of the ships cared to dabble in coals as the charges were too high, and those who had taken small quantities on speculation had met with failure. In 1810 some of the persons allowed to dig the coals destroyed the pillars which supported the roofs of the pits, and an order was proclaimed against such practices. Here are two exports of coal which are typical of some made in 1807, 1808, 1809 and 1810. On 21st August, 1806 the Ship Fortune 622 tons, sailed for Bengal with 50 tons of Newcastle Coals. On 5th October, 1806, the Sinclair of 610 tons departed for China with 60 tons of coals.

THE OUTPUT BETWEEN 1811 and 1822.

Lieutenant Purcell held the command of Newcastle until July 25th, 1813, when he was succeeded by Lieutenant Thomas Skottowe, of the 73rd Regiment. On February 19th, 1815 Lieutenant Thomas Thompson of the 46th regiment became commandant and on June 1st 1816 Captain James Wallis of the same regiment, succeeded that officer. On December 26th, 1818 Major Morrisett, of the 48th regiment took command and held it until 1823, when Captain H. Gillman, was appointed to the important post. All those years the coal industry almost lay dormant, the yearly exports never exceeding 200 tons while the home consumption was little more than twice that quantity. On March 7th, 1808, we read of a free trade in the industry as

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the duty on Newcastle coals was removed. No other charge was made for them, than 10/- per ton as a price to defray the expense of receiving them from the mines. This did not promote export and the following three items of the year 1811 will form a good index. On 24th February 1811 the Indian of 522 tons, sailed for Calcutta, with 50 tons. On May 4th, 1811 the Eagle of 130 tons took 74 tons to Calcutta. On June 14th 1811, the Arabella, sailed with 240 tons for Calcutta.

THE FOLLOWING STATISTICAL INFORMATION OF THE EXPORT OF NEWCASTLE COAL IS
TAKEN FROM THE BLUE BOOKS IN ENGLAND

Exports between 1822 and 1834 from Secretary of State Papers.

1822 there was 200 tons of coal exported valued at £141-15-0
1823 there was 200 tons of coal exported valued at £105 Isle off France
1823 there was 450 tons of coal exported valued at £236- 5-0 to other parts
1824 Record missing
1825 there was 115 tons of coal exported
1826 there was 28 tons of coal exported valued at £27-10-0 British possess
1826 there was 160 tons of coal exported valued at £125
1827 No record
1828 there was 974 tons of coal exported valued at £955
1829 there was 248 tons of coal exported valued at £218
1830 there was 300 tons of coal exported valued at £
1831 Coals valued at £850
1832 Coals valued at £310
1833 Coals valued at £994
1834 Coals valued at £1581

THE HOME CONSUMPTION AND EXPORT

The statistics as to the home consumption are very defective as the estimates appear to have been neglected or lost among departmental papers in the Home Office.

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According to a government estimate there was between 1801 and 1829 fully fifty thousand tons raised in the Colony, and the valuation put upon that quantity is 10/- ten shillings per ton or £25,000.

NEWCASTLE RELINQUISHED AS A PENAL SETTLEMENT

In 1822 Governor Brisbane determined to relinquish Newcastle as a penal settlement as the place afforded an inadequate quantity of labour and was not sufficiently remote from Sydney to prevent convicts breaking from their keepers, and effecting their escape to Sydney. Besides the lands on the Hunter were required for immigrant settlers.

Arrangements were made to remove the whole of the prisoners to Port Macquarie, which Mr. Oxley in 1818 had recommended as a place at which to found a penal settlement.

It was not until the end of 1822 that the arrangements were complete as to allow the Government to remove the body of the prisoners from Newcastle, and not until then was the land on the banks of the Hunter River open to the choice of settlers.

Newcastle was then a hamlet of Cottages and huts and Brisbane called the place Kings Town in honor of Governor King, its founder. In 1823, Surveyor Danger laid out the town, and the Governor approved of the plan. Since that period town allotments were given to individuals for building purposes.

THE RISE OF THE AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPANY IN 1824

Towards the end of the year 1824, the colonists were surprised to hear of the establishment of the Australian Agricultural Company under the auspices of Mc. Arthurs (sic).

The members of the great Company included in their ranks, the British Attorney General, the British Solicitor General, with 28 Members of Parliament, among whom were some of the most distinguished men of the day, as Mr Brougham and Mr. Hume, also the Governor, deputy Governor and eight directors of the Bank of England, the Chairman deputy Chairman and five Directors of the East India Company. They were

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also among the members wealthy and eminent bankers and merchants in Great Britain. All the shares were speedily taken up, but 588 were reserved for officers and settlers in the Colony and a committee of five were appointed as proprietors to sit in the colony.

In the following history of the Company taken from the records of the Company also the Government records great stress will be laid on the proceedings which led up to the Company obtaining the monopoly of the Coal mines of Newcastle.

The records as to the Coal questions will be given in full so as to avoid any misstatement as to established facts. At the close of the history, there will be an index also an appendix of important documents too long to mix up with the text of the narrative chronologically told.

All the Company's reports as published in the old London and Colonial papers have been reviewed for accuracy.

FACTS FROM THE A & A REPORT DATED NOVEMBER 26th 1824 AS TO OBJECTS OF THE COMPANY

The original prospectus of the A & A Co dated November 1824 represents that New South Wales presets exclusive advantages for the extensive production of fine wool, also several valuable productions such as the Olive and the Vine tobacco, hemp, flax, silk, and opium, the cultivation of which held out the prospect of ample returns for the capital and labour employed.

With a view to accelerate the attainment of these desirable objects, the Company was formed with a capital of One Million sterling, divided into shares of one hundred pounds each. An application was made to the Right Honorable Earl Bathurst, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department for a grant in New South Wales. His Lordship being satisfied of the great benefits which would become to the Settlement, from a large investment of capital, of the great advantage of Great Britain in being supplied with finest wool from a British Colony, and the probable reduction of expenditure by the employment

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of convicts as shepherds, mechanics and labourers was pleased to sanction the establishment of the Company.

ACT AND CHARTER GRANTED THE COMPANY IN 1824

An Act of Parliament (5th George IV Chapter 86) was passed in consequence and a Royal Charter was also passed under the Great Seal, pursuant to the Act.

By these measures the Company was declared to be a body politic and corporate by the name of the Australian Agricultural Company.

A grant of One million Acres of land in Fee Simple was made with power to select the proper situation, free of any charge for five years, but subject after that period to a moderate annual quit rent redeemable at any time, for twenty years purchase, and which was not be expected at all provided a certain number of convicts would be employed by the Company.

Of this grant the Company had the power of leasing or selling 500,000 acres after the expiration of five years provided the sum of £100,000 shall be expended on the land in the formation of roads, the erection of buildings clearing cultivating, fencing draining or other improvements and also of alienation any portion of the remaining 500,000 acres by license from His Majesty's Secretary of State.

GOVERNOR DIRECTORS AND AUDITORS ELECTED

The Company conducted their business at No 12 King's Arms Yard, Coleman Street, London and engage Mr. J. S. Brickwood, as Secretary and Mr. J. E. Ebsworth as Assistant Clerk.

The First Governor Directors, and Auditors, were nominated and appointed by Act of Parliament. The Governor and Directors were engaged to serve for five years and the Auditors for four years after which they were to go out by rotation. Each officer had to possess fifty shares for his qualification. certificates under common seal of the Company were directed to issue for shares which certificates were to be admitted as evidence in all courts of the proprietors title to such shares.

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NEW SOUTH WALES COMMITTEE

With the view to the proper management of the Company's affairs in New South Wales, there was appointed a Committee of five respectable and intelligent proprietors residing there.

SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT DAWSON

In May 1824 Mr. John McArthur (who was the life and soul of the Company) besought Mr. Robert Dawson (who was resident agent on a nobleman's estate in Berkshire) to become the principal agent of the Company. In December 1824 he was accordingly appointed principal agent of the Company in the Colony, subject to a Committee there. He was well acquainted with the treatment of Merino sheep.

THE PRIME OBJECTS OF THE COMPANY HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH COAL MINES.

At the formation of the Company the coal industry was never thought of, and Commissioner Bigge's report was largely drawn on for agricultural information contained in their prospectus.

The source from which the profits of the Company were expected to be derived, were proclaimed to be

1. From the growth and export of fine wool from the Merino sheep of the most approved breed.

2. From the breed of cattle and other live stock and the raising of corn tobacco &c. for the supply of persons resident in the Colony.
3. From the production at a more distant time of Wine, Olive Oil, Hemp, Flax, silk, Opium &c. as articles for export to Great Britain.
4. From a progressive advance in the value of land as it becomes improved by cultivation and by an increased population.
5. The Company also contemplated encouraging and assisting the emigration of useful families from the South of Europe for the culture of the olive and the vine.

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FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COMPANY JANUARY 18th 1825

The first annual meeting of the Company was held on Tuesday January 18th, 1825 at the London Tavern in Bishopgate Street, London. At this meeting the objects of the Company were discussed. The accounts balanced up to December 31st, 1824, were approved of by the Directors and Auditors in conformity with the terms of the Company's Act. The total sum expended extended (including some cattle and horses bought, also furniture) amounted to £1758-6-8 and of the first installment there was a balance of £8082-13-10. It was announced that during the year 1825 the installment would not exceed w2 per share, also that in future the amount required will probably seldom exceed in any one year £5 per share.

The meeting considered a mode of bylaws which were adopted.

SPECIAL GENERAL COURT OF PROPRIETORS HELD JULY 21st 1825

Considerable progress in the various departments of the Company was reported at a special general court of Proprietors held on July 21st 1825 at the London Tavern in Bishopgate Street London.

It was declared that Merino flocks from Europe and high bred rams were to be selected as the foundation of the Company's flocks also other stock and thoroughbred horses.

TWO SHIPS READY TO SAIL WITH STOCK FOR N.S.WALES.

It was also stated that in June 1825 the vessels York and The Brothers, were despatched under charter from the Isle of Wight, to transport the live stock, families, servants &c. of the establishment to be formed in New South Wales.

Various letters dated New South Wales replying to the Directors letters of July 1824 were read amid great enthusiasm. The Sydney Committee had interviewed Governor Brisbane who had read the Company's despatches. The Governor had promised to do all in his power to promote the Company's patriotic views. Surveyor General Oxley had also agreed to do his best for the Company.

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On November 4th, 1824 Surveyor General Oxley furnished the Company with a favourable report which was read to the meeting. In it he was of opinion that the million acres should be

selected in the Northern district rather in the Southern district. The Sydney Committee had endorsed that opinion. He recommended the fertile district called the Liverpool plains, which were connected by hills of moderate elevation with lofty ranges bordering on the sources of the Hastings River. This location was most fit for cattle and sheep grazing, and Mr. Dangar (Oxley's assistant surveyor) had reported favourably to it.

Letters from Governor Brisbane were read. In them he acknowledged the receipt of the Company's plan of operations, the Act of Charter, also spoke favourably of a location being made at the Liverpool District. The Governor said he had received despatches from the Secretary of State to locate the Company a million acres and to send home the plan for the King's signature, also that if the Company desired to divide the grant into two properties their wishes on that head would be complied with.

NOBBLING THE COAL MINES BY THE "COMPANY WITH THE LONG POCKET" WHEN THE
COMPANY WAS HARDLY A YEAR OLD.

The Company's scheme infected many members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The grand idea of vineyards, olive oil, plantations, silk worm cultivation, orange groves, opium growing, &c. formed many topics for debates in the Legislature, also the courtroom of the Company, but they were never extended beyond the resident managers gardens. The "Company with a long pocket" was the toast at many dinners, and great expectations of wealth to the Colony was predicted by the best men in England.

We now come to the Company's design to grasp the large seams of coal at Newcastle which had been unprofitably worked by the Government. That the Company did secure a monopoly of the coal mines and precluded the colonists from working on any terms any coal which might happen to be found under their estates, for very many years is a matter of history. Nevertheless, the true facts of how they secured that

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monopoly has hitherto been *sub silentio* to the present day in any historical work on the coal history. At the first annual meeting of the Company held of January 18th, 1825, at the London Tavern, Bishopgate Street London, the first mention of the Company's designs on the Newcastle Mines were made known in the following words in the Company's report, published in the London newspapers. "The Newcastle Coal Mines" Lastly we enter upon the subject respecting which we have been more particularly anxious to meet you, namely, the result of a negotiation recently concluded with His Majesty's Government regarding the mines of coal in New South Wales.

"These mines are situated at Newcastle about 60 miles to the North of Sydney, at the mouth of the entrance of a secure harbour called Port Hunter, containing a sufficient depth of water for vessels of about fifty tons and into which the Coal River empties itself.

"The entrance to these mines are on a considerable elevation above the sea and the seams of coal are visible on the surface of the cliff which forms the South head of the harbour.

"The Country immediately to the south of Port Hunter is an extensive field of coal, of which the strata have been traced for nine miles, when they bend downwards and sink below the level of the sea. "Between the coal beds are Strata of sandstone and of clay-slate imbedded in which there is found abundance of argillaceous Iron Ore.

"We have the satisfaction to acquaint you that His Majesty's Government have agreed to grant to the Company a lease of these coal mines for a period of THIRTY ONE YEARS, on the following conditions.

"That one-twentieth part of the coal to be raised shall be allotted to the Crown and that the Company shall purchase such produce, or any part thereof at the Pits mouth at the market price of the day,

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provided the Crown shall deem it advisable to dispose of the same to them. And further that a right shall be reserved by the Crown to take one-fifteenth portion of the produce instead of one twentieth should it be deemed expedient hereafter to alter the terms of the agreement with the Company in this particular, but it is distinctly understood that such additional portion is not to be demanded unless the result of the experiment of working the mines be such as in the opinion of His Majesty's government may justify the demand on and increase.

"His Majesty's Government have also agreed to grant to the Company leases of any other minerals which may be found in the colony.

The working of coal mines at Newcastle have been hitherto conducted on a very limited scale and in a very imperfect manner by the government. It has been effected by manual labour alone until the year 1817, by a simple adit or opening on the surface of the cliff which served as a shaft, both to carry off the water and to wheel away the coals. Since that time it has been worked by a perpendicular shaft of III feet and a common windlass, turned by convicts. Recently a second shaft has been sunk and as access has been opened to the seams lying at a distance from the surface the quality has been much improved. It was at first equal to the ordinary descriptions of English sea coal, and is now ascertained to be of the finest sort, nothing is required but the application of machinery to raise it in abundance and of excellent quality.

"The shafts are within a short distance of the sea and the coal can therefore be shipped with facility.

With reference to the demand likely to be experienced for the produce of the coal mines it may be sufficient to state, that there is now a large consumption of coals at Sydney where fuel is already scarce and that in the course of last year 1824 several cargoes of the produce of these mines were shipped

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to India, the Isle of France and the coast South of America.

At Sydney it is proposed to form an extensive depot for sale.

We may thus in the first place fairly anticipate a considerable sale within the Colony of New South Wales not only at Sydney but at the smaller towns now rising into importance. And secondly, in contemplating the numerous thickly peopled settlements and parts abounding in the Eastern seas, including Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Batavia, Canton, Singapore, the Isle of France, &c, &c, to many which places coals have been shipped from Great Britain, and at all of which it finds a ready and profitable sale we may expect as extensive demand for exportation, independently of the consumption of the produce of these mines, likely to be caused by steam navigation which will probably be introduced into the quarter of the globe and encouraged by the facility of obtaining from the source abundant supplies of coals.

In conclusion it may be proper to add that this new branch of our undertaking will in no respect interfere with the conduct of the main objects of the Company as explained to you in our former statements.

Neither will it require us to call during this year for any increase of the funds already placed at our command whilst the profits from this source together with those likely to arise from the estates of the Company will form a fund out of which dividends may be hereafter made.

THE COMPANYS EXPEDITION TO SYDNEY AND PORT STEPHENS IN 1825

The Company's expedition was the talk of the British Islands as it was often brought up in both houses of the Legislature. In March 1825 Mr. Dawson, their Colonial Agent, was sent to France to purchase several flocks of Merino ewes and some rams.

The live stock embarked on two ships, the "York" and the "Brothers" in the docks of London,

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while many of the sheep were taken on board at Cowes.

The York was 470 tons, and had on board 12 men 7 women and 21 children. The live stock was 325 ewes, 15 rams, and 9 cows and bulls.

The Brothers was 400 tons and carried 13 men 7 women and 19 children. The live stock was 305 ewes, 15 rams, 3 mares, 5 horses, 2 entire horses.

The officials on board were Mr. Robert Davison principal agent Mr. J. G. Dawson, general and confidential superintendent Mr. Charles Hall, wool sorter Mr. Henry Thomas Ebsworth Accountant, and Mr. John Armstrong land Surveyor.

The vessels sailed from Cowes of June 26th, 1825 and called in at Rio De Janiero.

The York reached Sydney on the 13th, and the Brothers on the 15th November 1825. The live stock was sent to a farm called "The Retreat" - 36 miles from Sydney rented at £300 per annum. The sheep were kept in Sydney domain for ten days before being taken to the farm. The horses and cattle were taken to Mr. McArthur's farm at Parramatta.

On January 1st, 1826, Mr. Dawson proceeded to Port Stephens to see about exploring the country for fixing the site of the Million Acres granted.

The Company had been so far very fortunate for out of 825 sheep they had only lost about a dozen.! When at Maida more Merino sheep were secured.

In February 1826, the Company's ship "The Lord Rodney" reached Port Jackson with mechanics labourers and their families for the Company's settlement at Port Stephens.

In March 1826 the "Prince Regent" ship under the command of Captain L. Bamb arrived with sheep, horses, and merchandise for the Company's settlement at Port Stephens.

PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY DURING THE YEAR 1825

On January 31st, 1826 there was held the second annual meeting of the Company at the London Tavern in Bishopgate Street London.

It was stated at the gathering of the general Court of Proprietors, that despatches had been received from New South Wales, by the Hope dated March 21st, 1824, and by the Harriett dated June 22nd, 1825, and several private letters dated July 12th, 1825.

The concerns of the Company had aroused great interest at Sydney, and the Directors learned that the shares allotted for distribution in the Colony had been all appropriated and the first instalment regularly paid.

Mr. Carrbert Harrington had been appointed Secretary to the Colonial Committee of Directors. It was also reported that Surveyor General Oxley and Surveyor Dangar had commenced to survey these parts of the colony favourable for the site of the Company's estates, between the Hastings and the Hunter Rivers. The Survey was expected to last three months.

THE NEWCASTLE COAL MINES IN 1825

At the second annual meeting of the Proprietors on the 31st January 1826 the following statement was proclaimed.

THE NEWCASTLE COAL MINES

"Respecting the coal mines at Newcastle of which in a former report it has been stated that His Majesty's Government has consented to grant a lease to the Company for a period of 31 years the Directors have now to observe that the plans for the working the mines in the most advantageous manner have been gradually matured and it is expected that in the course of next month or the beginning of March Mr. Henderson who is engaged as principal manager will be prepared to embark for the Colony accompanied by an efficient but moderate establishment of assistants and an adequate SUPPLY OF STEAM ENGINES AND MACHINERY.

It may therefore be fairly anticipated that in a few months these mines will be, brought On account of the company into a state of more active operation."

Some facts recently enumerated to the Directors respecting the quality and abundance of coal in these mines and the probability of an increased demand are of an encouraging nature and tend to confirm the opinion hitherto entertained that while this important and valuable commodity may through 'the agency of the Company be distributed at an easy rate to the inhabitants of an extensive portion of the globe, a fair remunerating profit will accrue to the shareholders of the Company.

THE A. A. COMPANY'S OPERATIONS DURING 1826

During the year 1826 the London Directors received letters from New South Wales announcing the arrival at Sydney of their principal agent Mr. Dawson with the establishment of officers and servants also the live stock in the ships York and the Brothers.

Governor Brisbane had lent them the Sydney Domain in which to keep the live stock until they were able to go to a farm of 2000 acres engaged for a short period by the Sydney Committee.

Mr Dawson had reported that he had entered part Stephens and his first impression of that place was not favourable. However further inland he had found good land and he hailed the dawn of the Company's prosperity by pitching his tent on the site chosen by him on January 24th, 1826.

Mr. Armstrong the Company's surveyor had executed a chart of Port Stephens and had forwarded it to the London Directors. An account of the survey accompanied the chart.

The location of the Company's estate is situated in Latitude 30' 40' one degrees north of Sydney and the harbour of Port Stephens consists of an outer and inner harbour.

Stores were landed at the Port and the Country was being well explored.

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Tents and bark huts of aboriginals were utilised by the people. The aboriginals of the district numbered about one hundred.

The map of the million acres selected displayed the location having along the northern limit, a newly discovered stream partly navigable and called the Manning River. On the eastern side was the sea coast and on the Southern side the Waters of Port Stephens. It showed the whole course of the river Karurur and four other rivers on the North and east limits.

THE NEWCASTLE COAL MINES

In adverting to the Company's proceedings in 1825 in regard to the Newcastle Coal Mines, the Directors made the following remarks.

"In a former report it was stated that His Majesty's Government had consented to grant to the Company a lease of these mines for a period of THIRTY ONE YEARS upon condition that the Company should give up one twentieth or one fifteenth of the produce by way of seignorage or rent.

Previous to the final completion of this contract a legal objection was made to the taking of such a lease by the Company and it became necessary to open a fresh negotiation with Earl Bathurst the result of which was that the proposed lease has been cancelled and the Government directed in lieu thereof and as a present arrangement to make over in fee simple to the Company a portion of the coal field to the extent of five hundred acres.

On the conclusion of this agreement it only remained for the Agents of the Company to be put in possession of the property. The requisite authority to that effect was transmitted by the Ship Australia. This vessel sailed from Portsmouth on the 27th July last with Mr. John Henderson the Company's manager of coal mines, several assistants and two powerful steam engines and other apparatus adapted for the efficient accomplishment of the object in view.

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The Directors have learned by letters from Mr. Henderson that the Australia touched at the Cape of Good Hope on 16th October last and all was well. It may therefore be hoped that the

Company's agents have commenced their labours in the mines and that in a short time the markets of the Colony will be supplied with coals at a lower price than it has been hitherto in the power of the Government to dispose of to them.

HOW THE CROWN WORKED THE COAL MINES UP TO 1827

Up to 1827 the Crown held the privilege or right to mine for coal but it has been shorn in the preceding pages how that right was conceded to the Australian Agricultural Company.

The conduct of the English government in granting the Company a million acres of land and the vast area of mineral land and a monopoly of the coal production was very much commented upon in the early days, but the following extract from the Sydney Monitor in the year 1827 throws a very good light upon the lax and slothful manner in which the Newcastle mines were worked by the government prior to the year 1827.

The coal being in the hands of the government may be considered the cause of the wretched state of Newcastle instead of having a steam engine and substantial wagons to run down an incline plane and empty their contents into the vessels holds as is done on the banks of the Tyne and Near the coal is here doled out in miserable thimblefuls and drawn about the wharf by hand barrows. Five or six prisoners to a barrow is quite a common number of hands.

Other accounts showed that the Mineral Surveyors Department in Sydney required an augmentation of labourers and the number removed from Newcastle left only thirty to raise the necessary supplies of coal.

ARRIVAL OF THE A & A. COMPANYS MINING ESTABLISHMENT IN 1827 AT NEWCASTLE

About the close of the year 1826 the Australia brought to Australia the Company's Mining

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Establishment with all the requisite apparatus and stores for working the Coal mines.

Early in 1827, the Sydney Government refused to allow the Company to take possession of the mines, and then the Company's colonial committee of management decided that the whole of the Mining Establishment and Machinery should be sent to Port Stephens. However the two steam engines and boilers &c had to be landed in Newcastle and it took one month to do the work.

During the year 1827 the London Directors were expecting a map of the grant of one million acres in one allotment as finally fixed by the Colonial Committee, from the Colonial government and the Committee.

It was also expected that in the year 1827 the Directors would purchase 5000 breeding ewes to cross with the Company's pure rams and it was expected that during the spring the first shipment of wool would take place.

At this time (April 1827) the Company owned 1498 homed cattle and 176 horses and mares. On April 1827 the Company's establishment comprised 301 men engaged as superintendents, shepherds &c. effecting improvements. This number included 80 women and children.

THE MINES IN 1827 FROM THE DIRECTORS POINT OF VIEW

On the 29th January 1828 the fourth annual meeting of Court of Proprietors was held at the office of the Company No 12 Kings Arms Yard, Bishopgate Street London. Mr. John Smith M.P. was chairman. After dealing with the progress of the agricultural concerns of the Company, the following brief remarks were made about the coal mines.

It may be necessary to inform the Proprietors that the Directors are in communication with the Secretary of State for the Colonies in reference to the Colliery in New South Wales and so soon as

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any decision is taken on this important subject it shall be communicated to them. In the meantime it will be satisfactory to know that there does not appear to be any obstacle to an early and satisfactory arrangement.

The vexed question at issue had reference to the lease of the mines for thirty one years, or a grant of them in fee simple. The Colonial Government were left in total finality of any contract or "bargain" with the British Government.

HISTORY OF THE COMPANY'S PROGRESS IN 1828

Throughout the year 1828 the London Directors were engaged in a laborious and painful investigation arising out of the suspension of their principal agent, Mr. Robert Dawson by the Colonial Committee on April 18th, 1828 which was dominated by the Mc. Arthur family. The London Board of Directors confirmed the suspension, which caused much friction at home and in the Colony.

The most momentous event of the Company's establishment took place on January 9th, 1828 when it obtained legal possession of the million acres of land at Port Stephens.

The survey of boundaries having been completed and agreed to on behalf of the Company, a meeting of the Colonial officers having the superintendence of Crown Lands in New South Wales, under the Colonial Government and also of the Agents of the Company's was held at Port Stephens on the Company's Estate. Legal possession was given with some ceremony.

The instructions from Earl Bathurst of May 18th, 1825 to Governor Brisbane were read and a chart produced containing the survey of the grant to the company.

It comprised 1,018,960 acres of land of which 38,840 acres consisted of unproductive sea coast to complete the Company's Eastern boundary with a reservation of 320 acres surrounding the north head of Port Stephens.

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Another important event of the year 1828 was the safe arrival at Port Stephens of three ships chartered in 1827 for the conveyance of merino sheep, horses, &c. only 35 out of 928 sheep having died on the voyage. The flocks which had been kept on the station near the sea coast had been removed to better pastures inland. A dairy and land cleared for the cultivation of grain was among the improvements.

DIRECTORS AND THE COAL MINES IN 1828

On January 27th, 1829, there was a meeting of the general Board of Proprietors at the Office of the Company 12 Kings Arms Yard London, with Mr. William Manning M.P. in the chair. After a statement showing that the Company owned 9650 breeding ewes and 2630 lambs and wethers, also 105 horses and 2000 head of cattle, the coal mine question cropped up.

NEWCASTLE COAL MINES IN 1828

The Directors report for 1828 were in these words

"Respecting the coal mines upon which subject at this period of the last year it was reported to the Proprietors that a negotiation was pending between His Majesty's Government and the Company the Directors have the pleasure to announce THE CLOSE OF THAT NEGOTIATION and that INSTEAD Or THE FORMER GRANT OF FIVE HUNDRED ACRES, His Majesty's Government have been finally pleased to make to the Company a grant in fee simple the THREE THOUSAND ACRES in one or two allotments as may be thought advisable by the Company of the Coal field at Newcastle and have clearly expressed a determination TO DISCONTINUE THE COAL WORKS HITHERTO CARRIED ON THERE UPON GOVERNMENT ACCOUNT. In pursuance of such decision *instructions* have been transmitted to the Colony by the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department which it is expected will have enabled the Company's agent to commence with energy the working of the coal upon the Company's account so as to produce an important advantage to the public in New South Wales attended by a proper remuneration to the

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company for the capital and attention devoted to this important branch of their undertaking.

THE COMPANYS ADVERSE PROSPERITY IN N S WALES IN 1829

A severe and protracted drought tended to aggravate the evils arising from the defective administration of the Company's affairs in New South Wales during 1828 and 1829. The superintendence and control of the stations were very much disjointed. In 1828 one small shipment of wool from the Company's estate had been received and sold. It was considered to afford satisfactory encouragement for future years. In 1829 the shipment of wool was sold at Auction on 13th October. The total quantity was 91 bales containing 2200 lbs. One lot was sold as low as 1/2 per lb. the next lowest 1/6z and the finer kinds from Saxon and French sheep at 2/6 to 5/3 per lb in the fleeces purchased from sheep purchased in New South Wales generally brought 1/11} per lb.

THE DIRECTORS PROGRESS REPORT OF THE YEAR 1829

The sixth annual meeting or Court of Proprietors took place at the office of the Company 12 Kings Arms London on January 20th 1830, with Mr. John Smith, M.P. in the chair.

The returns of stock showed sheep 20,338 of which 12,776 were breeding ewes, cattle 1390, and horse 220.

The most important business transacted was the appointment of Sir Edward Parry as Commissioner for the entire management of the Company's affairs in Australia for a period of four years.

THE COAL QUESTION IN 1829

The Directors delivered the following statement to the Board of Proprietors as to the coal question in 1829, between the Company and the British Government.

The Directors are sorry to state that the expectations expressed in their last report regarding the coal mines are as yet unrealised in consequence of the Colonial Committee having discharged part of

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the establishment sent from this country before they were aware of the extended arrangements entered into with His Majesty's Government as detailed in last years report and the principal person in charge had in consequence returned to England.

The Directors seeing no ground to alter their original views and intentions regarding these mines lost no time in repairing the precipitation of the Colonial Committee, and although they lament the delay they entertain the same hopes to ultimate success from that undertaking as before.

SIR EDWARD PARRY ARRIVES IN THE COLONY IN 1829

In July 1829 Sir Edward Parry (the Arctic Explorer) with Lady Parry sailed from England in the vessel "William" and reached the Cape of Good Hope on October 19th, finally arriving in Port Jackson on December 23rd, en route to Newcastle and Port Stephens to take charge of the Company's estates. They attended Government House and received the warmest assurances of friendly feeling from Governor Darling and the Civil and Military officials. A few weeks later Sir Edward was exploring the estates of the Company in Newcastle and the District of Port Stephens. He discovered that between two or three thousand acres of land with the exception of a small portion adjoining the Manning River was in no respect adapted to the main object of the Company and he recommended the Company to abandon it and get another portion in lieu of it.

PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY IN 1830

On February 1st, 1831 the Court of Proprietors held their annual gathering in the London office, with Mr. John Smith M.P., the Company's Governor officiating as Chairman.

The Statistics of the Company were stated to be sheep 2500 cattle 2000 and horses 250. Two shipments of wool were received and comprised 145 bales containing 43,528 lbs. The wool was sold on July 3rd and October 5th at prices varying from 1/3½ to 3/10 per lb. The proceeds of the wool was £3611-19-0

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and added to that already sold made the wool receipts amount to £7285-2-4. From wool and other sources the receipts had amounted to £10,000 a sum equivalent to £1 per share. These Statistics reveal much to show how the Company was boomed at first and from first to last was grasping at the Crown lands.

THE COAL MINES IN 1830

The Directors after saying the authority of Parliament had been obtained to gradually reduce the Court of Directors from the original number of 26 to a total number of 14 gave the following account of the coal mines at Newcastle in 1830.

A letter has been received from Sir Edward Parry dated 7th July 1830 stating that he was then at Newcastle in New South Wales with Mr. Henderson the Company's Manager of Coal mines and that a vessel laden with coal from the works about to be transferred to the possession of the Company was leaving the Harbour of Newcastle, her cargo being intended for the smith's use in the Company's establishment at Port Stephens. Daily experience continues to show the probable value to the Company of the harbour at Port Stephens, and an improvement now going on will tend to enhance that value.

NEW SEAMS OF COAL DISCOVERED BY MR. HENDERSON

On February 22nd, 1831 was held an adjourned' meeting of the general Court of Proprietors from February 2nd 1831.

At this meeting it was announced "In reference to the Colliery at Newcastle a seam of coal five feet in thickness of good quality and near to the surface has been discovered by Mr. Henderson which appears to have determined Sir Edward Parry in the choice of situation where in TO COMMENCE THE COLLIERY OPERATIONS on account of the Company."

Among the accounts dealt with was one for the purchase of the cutter "Lambton" and other ships for £3091-10-0. The coal mines two large engines and apparatus wages and other charges amounted to

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£11,575-9-0. During the six and a half years existence of the Company the receipts and credits amounted to £228718-11-8 and the disbursements to the same amount £228718-18-11.

THE COMPANY TAKE POSSESSION OF THE NEWCASTLE COAL WORKS

In 1830 the Colonial Government handed over possession of the Newcastle Coal Works to the Australian Agricultural Company. In 1831 the Company fixed up the machinery &c. and began active operations. In July 1831 Sir Edward Parry furnished the London Directors with an account of the operations at the mines. This statement was read at the eighth annual meeting on January 31st, 1832.

The following is the report of the Directors for the year 1831 on that subject.

The disbursements of the year 1831 have been large consisting of many items of expenditure which will not be continued and including an outlay of considerable amount found requisite to set in action the coal mines which establishment now being in a complete state will not need a further investment of capital.

That Branch of the Company's undertaking holds out an improved prospect. The operations in the Colliery department were for a long time slow owing to causes detailed in former reports and to a deficiency of labourers accustomed to such work but the Government Colliery there having been discontinued and the machines and miners transferred to the Company's services Sir E. Parry announces that by the Month of October last the Company's mines would be in readiness to supply the public with coals in any quantity.

The works at Newcastle which are in a forward state at the date of Sir E. Parry's despatch in July 1831 consisted of the principal shaft with an air tight partition near the centre of it leading to the seam of coal.

A second shaft of smaller dimensions for ventilation and supplying the engine with coals.

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A tunnel from the bottom of the smaller shaft proceeding two ways one towards and communication with the main shaft the other leading to the side of the hill near the sea through which the waters from the main shaft will be discharged avoiding the necessity of raising it to the pits mouth.

The wharf which was constructing with the aid of an excellent pile engine made for the purpose and whereby several poles had been down into very good ground the wharf requiring to be very short the top of it thirteen feet high above high water mark with a good contrivance for shooting the coals into a ship and sufficient depth of water for the largest vessel that is likely to load there.

An excellent blacksmiths shop is likewise completed close to the principal shaft. One steam engine fixed is reported to be sufficient for the work required.

Sir E. Parry states that the whole of the works have been founded by the Company's Coal Manager on sound scientific as well as practical principles, and he adds that although he is aware that not a sing shilling of unnecessary expense has been incurred the whole when complete will form a superior set of works.

Regarding the prospect of profit held out by the Colliery Sir E. Parry states that he has been gradually led to entertain a more and more favourable opinion.

It appeared that the consumption of the Colony was increasing and the two steamboats already established there would augment the demand for coal, which seemed likely to be extended further by the expected immediate establishment of two other steam vessels.

The number of men employed by the Company in various occupations on 30th April last was 462 men, women and children, 1477 making a total on the estates of 609.

IMPOSING CEREMONY OF OPENING THE NEWCASTLE MINES ON DEC. 10th, 1831.

Here is the official report of the opening of the Coal Mines under the auspices of the A. & A. Company.

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OPENING OF THE NEWCASTLE COAL WORKS

The new wharf of the Australian Agricultural Company was opened on Saturday the 10th December, 1831, by the "Sophia Jane" receiving pro forma the first two tons of coals from the new workings.

Sir Edward Parry accompanied by Thomas Brooks Esq. J.P. the Rev Mr. Threlkeld and several gentlemen of respectability proceeded to the Company's wharf from Watt Street and a large crowd witnessed two wagons each containing a ton of coals descend on an incline plane from the pits mouth with flags flying and amid the cheers of the Company's servants, two empty wagons being drawn up the plane at the same time y the descending weight of the full ones. The latter then traveled along the level railroad with great rapidity to the end of the wharf. The bottom of the first wagon being dislodged by a single blow from hammer. Three hearty cheers from every person accompanied the instantaneous discharge of the first ton of coals into the vessel. As the "Sophia Jane" pushed off the miners greeted her with three loud cheers.

HOW THE COMPANY GOT POSSESSION OF THE NEWCASTLE MINES IN 1830

The historical records of the Secretary of States office contains many documents about the Company and the coal mines which have never yet seen the light of day.

The following epitome cannot fail to prove highly interesting as to some of the secrets of the whole business.

On the first day of November 1824 the Charter of the Company was granted by letters patent from the Secretary of State Earl Bathurst. These letters reached the colony in 1826 but Governor Darling seeing it was illegal to grant the mines under a monopoly refused to comply with them or carry them into effect. Between Governor Darling's refusal and the confirmation of the Home Government grants of the mines the officers and machinery of the Company were employed in boring for coal on the Parramatta River and on the

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Company's estate at Port Stephens. The Company sought compensation from the British Government for breach of faith but failed.

Then in 1830 instructions arrived from England to hand over to the Company AT ANY COST the whole of the coal fields at Newcastle TOGETHER WITH THE PROHIBITION TO PRIVATE PARTIES TO WORK COAL OUT OF ANY LANDS SUBSEQUENTLY GRANTED.

THE OUTPUT OF COAL FOR 1829 AND 1830 AND 1831

According to the Statistics the Newcastle Mines output from 1800 to 1828 was about fifty thousand tons which at an average of ten shillings per ton realised in value £25,000. In 1829 the output was 760 tons valued at an average of 10s. per ton made £394 the value of the years coal extracted.

In 1830 the Australian Agricultural Company took possession of the mines and then the output for that year was four thousand tons which was valued at 9/- per ton the value being assessed at £1, 800-0-0.

In 1831 the Company's output five thousand tons which was sold at an average of eight shillings per ton, the value being assessed at £2,000-0-0.

PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY IN 1832

Up to this period the Company had expended £250,000 which had already benefited the colony. However, there were many drawbacks as the shareholders was not receiving any dividends. One of them appears to be that most of the land granted was unsuitable for agricultural purposes. The former agent had selected one million acres the greater part of which was sterile and totally unsuited to the objects of the Company. Application was made to the Colonial Government and permission was given to exchange under certain restrictions a portion of the original selection to the extent of four to six hundred thousand acres as stated in a despatch of Sir George Murray to General Darling dated Downing Street 14th April 1830. Sir Edward Parry had selected two locations but the Colonial Government had interposed obstacles to the grant

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to the Company of the locations.

After a great deal of correspondence the local government sent advisers to Lord Goderich and His Lordship finally has ordered the two locations of 600,000 acres as selected by Sir Edward Parry should be given up to the Company.

The output of coal for the year 1832 was 7,143 tons sold at an average of seven shillings per ton and realised £2,502.

There was a general Court of the Proprietors held on January 29th, 1833 at the London Office of the Company with Mr. John Loch the Deputy Governor in the chair.

Progress reports were read and adopted.

It was shown that the coal mines establishment steam engines and apparatus with carriage to the Colony had cost £13,994-15-0. That the Vessel "Lambton" and other vessels had cost £4762-18-0.

The cost of sheep bought in Europe and New South Wales also the cost of transport to the Company's estates had been £68,376:15:6. The cattle had cost £14,846:18:8 wages paid amounted to £55,295 store and provisions bought amounted to £61,003-16-1 and horses cost £1106-14-0.

The manager of the company's affairs in New South Wales had drawn bills on the London Directors since April 1831 to the amount of £19270-0-0. The total disbursement for eight and a half years amounted to £271552-9-7.

PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY IN 1833

The output of coal from the mines amounted to 6812 tons in 1833 valued at £2575 at the rate of 7/6 – 7/3d per ton.

A. A. COMPANY'S OFFICERS IN N S W IN 1832 & 1833

Commissioner for managing the affairs of the Company in New South Wales Captain W.E. PARRY R.N. J.P.

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Assistant to Commissary and accountant J. Edward Ebsworth J.P.

Secretary	Henry Darch
Clerk	John Charles White
Superintendent of flocks	Charles Hall & G. Jenken
Wool Stabler	John Swayne
Surgeon	John E. Stacey
Superintendent of Agriculture stud and cattle	Henry Hall
Surveyor	Henry Dangar
Clerk in account office & superintendent of manufacture & mechanics	T. L. Ebsworth
Superintendent Store Department	Wetherman
Commander of the cutter "Lambton"	John Corlette
Superintendent of the Colliery establishment Newcastle	J. Henderson
Clerk to the same	William Croasdill

THE COMPANYS MINES IN 1834

The London Directors report for the year 1834 "the sale of coal during the last year (1834) is as far as can be calculated was nearly eight thousand tons being a considerable increase on the preceding year". The actual returns show that 8490 tons were raised valued at £3750 being £8-10-0 the average ton.

Sir Edward Parry had sent very encouraging reports to the Directors that bearing on the coal industry was related by the Directors in these words.

The Company's coal grant at Newcastle has been finally surveyed and marked out. The works long since been completed in very superior style and the operations are proceeding most satisfactorily.

The sale of coal has been most steadily increasing each year since the establishment of the Company's works owing principally to our improvements in the manner of working the coal whereby the former

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practice of selling impure coal has been extensively and entirely avoided.

The rapid increase of the town of Sydney the comparative scarcity of wood for fuel in its neighbourhood together with the necessary introduction of steam vessels and steam engines combine to offer most flattering prospects of adding annually to the Company's profits in this important department of their undertaking.

With a view to increase the export of coal from the Colony an agreement was being entered into with responsible merchant at Sydney to form a depot for the Company's coal at Sydney at his wharf upon terms involving no expense to the Company but affording very

great facility for the shipping of coal as ballast at Sydney at a reasonable price thus obviating the necessity for ships going to Newcastle for that purpose.

The Company's accounts for 1843 showed the receipts at £14652-16-10 and the disbursements at £11190-9-0.

DETAILED INFORMATION FROM THE DIRECTORS REPORTS FOR 1836, 1837, 1838 and 1839 ARE OMITTED HERE BECAUSE THEY ARE VERY LENGTHY AND NOT NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS HISTORY WRITTEN FOR SPECIAL INFORMATION.

CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY THE CROWN ON THE COMPANY ON GRANTING THE MINES REGULATED BY THE OUTPUT OF COAL BY THE COMPANY DURING THE YEAR 1828

The Company for thirty one years had been granted the monopoly of the coal mines. No land containing coal could be granted without a specific exception of the mineral fuel from the grant in conveyance or could any assistance in the shape of convict labour for working any coal mine be afforded to any other Company without the previous sanction of the British Government. This was the bone of contention for many years. The conditions on which the crown abandoned the mines to the Company were to the effect that the land (five hundred acres at Newcastle) might be resumed by the Crown if in any year the Company raised

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less quantity of coal than two thirds the weight of that which in the average of three years ending December 1828 was raised from the mines when worked by the Government. It is also stipulated that the Government should be entitled in perpetuity to all coal wanted for their own consumption, not exceeding in any case one fourth the average annual produce, to be delivered at the pits mouth at prime cost. To gain the sanction to a company competing in raising coal from their land it would have to be proved that the A.A. Company availed themselves of the monopoly to impose an exorbitant price on coal the produce of the Newcastle mines.

THE OUTPUT OF COAL FOR 1835 TO 1843

In order to furnish statistical returns of coal raised by the Newcastle Mines the Colonial Government caused their officers to inspect the Company's books with the result that a set of tables showing the output of coal were tabulated.

In 1835 the output was 12,339 tons valued at £5483 being at the rate of 8s 10s 19s per ton.

In 1836 the output was 12,646 tons valued at £5747 at the rate of 9s 10s 6d per ton.

In 1837 the output was 16,083 valued at £5828 at the rate 9s 8/8d per ton.

In 1838 the output was 17,220 tons valued at £8,399 being at the rate of 9s 9-05 per ton.

In 1839 the output was 21,283 tons valued at £10441 being at the rate of 9s 9-73d per ton.

In 1840 the output was 30,256 tons valued at £16,498 the average being 10s 10-86d per ton.

In 1841 there was a rise of coal although the output was 34,841 tons and the average price was 12s per ton and the value of the coal raised was £20905.

In 1842 the output was 39,900 tons bringing an average of 12s per ton or a value of £23940.

In 1843 the output fell to 25,862 but the price increased to 12s 6-54d per ton making the value of £16222.

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PROGRESS OF THE COMPANY IN 1839

The return of coals sold during the first seven months of 1839 had been received by the London Directors and it showed a total sale of 12,612 tons to that period being an increase of 2321 tons upon the corresponding months of the previous year.

The reports from the Commissioner showed that there was an inadequate number of convicts assigned to the Company for the mines and that the Government had neglected to assign any more to the company.

THE COMPANY PURCHASE 2000 ACRES OF COAL LAND FROM MR PLATT

In 1830¹ the Acting Commissioner under the Directions of the Court of Directors and in pursuance of the recommendation of the late Colonel Dumaresque had completed the purchase of 2000 acres of coal land from Mr. John L. Platt for £6,000. This coal land was in the vicinity of the Company's coal mines and was originally granted to Mr. Platt on August 21st 1822. The purchase of this property was scarcely a matter of choice as from information communicated to the directors they had reason to believe that it was the intention of certain parties in the Colony to get possession of the land in question with a view of working coal in the immediate vicinity of the Company's mines. Such a competition although it would not as the Directors believed have afforded any chance of profit to the persons interested could not but prove injurious to the Company. The Directors therefore considered it a fortunate circumstance that they have been able to secure possession of Platt's 2000 acres of coal land. The amount spent on account of the steam engines implements and other stores salaries wages and other stores as rations on account of the coal mines established had amounted to £22463:0:2. In the Colliery were freemen and 109 convicts.

The Company's grants comprised at Port Stephens Gloucester &c 437,102 acres at Peel River &c. 313, 298; besides 1960 acres granted at Newcastle in excess of the promised million.

¹ This is incorrect, the sale occurred in 1838.

I N D E X

A

Australian Agricultural Company:

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Founded by the McArthur family 1821+	21
Original prospectus issued November 26, 1824	21
Plan of operations	22, 25, 28
Objects of Company	22, 25, 26, 28
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New South Wales committee in July 1824	24
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First principal agent Par. Robert Dawson	24, 34, 35, 38
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	48
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<i>Anna Josepha</i> , brig, visits Newcastle and sells the coal at the cape for 6 per ton in 1801	6
<i>Arabella</i> conveys 140 tons coal to Calcutta June 14, 1811	18
B	
Broughton (the Captain of H.M.S. Providence) visits Port Stephens and rescues convicts who had resided there since 1790, August 1895	2
Bulli coal seams discovered in May 1797	3
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D

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M

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