

Keswick – The early residential years – from beginnings to World War One.

Keswick is situated in section 45, Hundred of Adelaide, County of Adelaide. Section 45 was first granted in February 1839, by Land Order No. 174, to Richard Morris of Waliner, near Deal, in the county of Kent, England Morris. The measured 136.5 acres (54.6 hectares). Morris's origins in Kent may explain the derivation of certain of Keswick's later street-names – for example, Kent Road. (1)

Richard Morris never came to South Australia; after his death in the early 1850s he bequeathed all his South Australian land to Rowley Lascelles, barrister of London. In March 1852 Lascelles sold section 45 to Charles George Everard esquire of Ashford, near Adelaide. Everard paid 1000 pounds for the property – a very reasonable price given its advantageous location.

Charles George Everard (1794-1876) was one of the more prominent early pioneers of South Australia. He arrived in the colony from Gloucestershire in June 1836 aboard the Africaine. After a short time as a surgeon and a small farmer, in 1838 Everard and his family moved to sections 43, 44 and 52, which they had acquired with Preliminary Land Orders. Everard established his farm Ashford, on sections 44 and 52 on the west side of the Bay Road. Ashford flourished, and by 1843 Everard had over 100 acres under crop cultivation, mainly wheat, as well as maintaining almost 400 head of livestock. (2)

A little later Everard created a second farm, Marshfield – named after his place of origin in Gloucestershire – on section 44 on the eastern side of the Bay Road. Everard expanded his farming interests to include viticulture. Later still he became a long term member of the South Australian Legislative Council.

In September 1875 an ailing Everard sold section 45 to his son, Charles John Everard esquire of Marshfield, for just ten shillings, taking into account the “natural love and affection” between the two. At the same time C.J. Everard (1821-1892) also acquired sections 43, 44, 52 and part 53 from his father.

The late 1870s and early 1880s was a period of strong economic growth in South Australia. Many new subdivisions emerged across Adelaide. In West Torrens subdivisions created during this time included Garfield, now part of Brooklyn Park; Ellenville, now part of Richmond; Hayhurst (Plympton); and Marleston. (3) Keswick was another.

In late 1882 Charles John Everard divided section 45 into two portions, the larger northern part containing 104.5 acres (42 hectares). The southern part, of thirty-four acres, (13.6 hectares) later became a part of the Ashford subdivision. Everard divided the northern section into 504 allotments, most of around 27 perches (.16 acres or .06 hectares) in size. (4) He named the subdivisions Keswick after a town in England. The first sale of Keswick allotments took place at auction on the site on 21 October 1882. (see document).

According to Lands Titles Office records the first Keswick allotments were sold (transferred) to a Henry Pope of Mount Barker, who was described as being 'out of businesses. He bought allotments 35 and 36 for a total of 200£. Another early sale – October 1884 – saw allotments 84 to 86 sold to Frederick Allen of Adelaide, clerk, for £344 8s lld..(5) During the 1880s most of the sold allotments fetched around £100 each, the equivalent of about £400 per acre. (6) This very healthy price was a reflection of Keswick's desirable location, including its 560 metre Bay Road frontage.

The price was also a reflection of claims that a tramway was about to be built in the area: the Keswick, Ashford, Richmond Edwardstown, and South Road Tramway Company was floated in December 1882. However the line failed to materialize – no tramway serviced Keswick until after 1918 and Donovan suggests that the company was an attempt by certain land agents to increase the value of the land. (7) I have found no evidence to show that Everard was directly involved in such a scheme. Donovan also mentions that the 'Keswick Land Company' created the Keswick subdivision. (8) I can find no mention of this company in the Lands Titles Office index. It was, perhaps, a company name used by Everard at the time he put section 45 up for auction.

Charles John Everard died in July 1892. In accordance with his will the unsold Keswick allotments, numbering about 450, were divided equally among his children: Eliza Catherine Everard (1857-1955) and Rosa Maria Everard (1860-1935), both described in L.T.O. records as 'spinsters', and William Francis Everard (1855-1915), sheep farmer, all of Marshfield. (9)

Over the next fifteen years the Everard siblings each steadily sold off their allotments. By 1908 a total of about seventy remained, most – approximately sixty – in the hands of William Everard. (10) During the 1890s the sale price of Keswick allotments had dropped dramatically to an average of about £20 each. (11) Into the new century the decline continued to an average of around £15 per allotment. (12) The price fall was the product of somewhat sluggish sales, a decline in the local economy – particularly in the early-to-mid 1890s and the non-appearance of the mooted tramline.

In 1908 the Everard sisters were declared to be insolvent and their remaining handful of allotments disposed of by the Court of Insolvency. (13) William Francis Everard died in 1915. His widow, Mary Ann Sarah Everard, transferred his remaining Keswick allotments, along with his other real estate interests, to the Estate Trustee and Agency Company of South Australia. (14) In due course the company sold off the Keswick land; this was the end of the Everard family's direct involvement in the suburb.

Probably the most prominent early resident of Keswick was Egerton Lee Batchelor (1865-1911). Batchelor lived in Keswick, on the corner of Nottingham Avenue (now Richmond Road) and Hampton Road, from 1897 to 1905. (15) He was a pioneering member of the South Australian Labour Party. Beginning his working life as a train engine fitter at Islington, by 1892 Batchelor was secretary of the South Australian Trades and Labour Council. In 1893 he became one of the first Labour members of the House of Assembly, winning a seat in West Adelaide and in the process polling more votes than Charles Cameron Kingston. He later became parliamentary leader of the Labour Party and minister of education and of agriculture (1899-1901). In 1901, while living at Keswick, Batchelor was elected to the House of Representatives in the first federal parliament, the only Labour M.H.R. from South Australia. He later became the minister for home affairs (1904) and the minister for external affairs (1908-09 and 1910-11). Batchelor was widely respected for his 'energy, organising talent and general ability'; he was seen as a calm and moderate force for reform. At the time of his death the Bulletin observed: 'It is questionable if any man in the Australian Parliament was more popular or more deserving or popularity, and in point of intellect he ranked either first or a good second among the members of the Fisher ministry'. (16)

One of the noteworthy features of Keswick today is the home, Alpine, situated at 45 Farnham Road. The West Torrens Heritage Survey of 1998 states that the relevant allotment built soon after. (17) However L.T.O. records show that Clements, a harness maker of Carrington Street, Adelaide, bought his Keswick block – allotment 372 – in November 1902. (18) Alpine is nonetheless one of the older homes in the suburb. As the Heritage Survey notes, the house features "highly decorative elements...including a balustrade parapet, timber fretwork to its verandah and goose-neck finials". (19) Alpine is typical of many of the homes to be found in Keswick during its earliest residential period.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Most of the information in the section is derived from material in Application Packet No. 19389 at the Government Record Office, Carrington Street.
- (2) South Australian Land Returns 1843, compiled by A. and S. Twining In Family History section, State Library. Information on Everard Derived mainly from R. Jennings, The West Terrace Cemetery - Some West Torrens Identities Remembered (2001). Held by West Torrens Historical Society.

- (3) P. Donovan, *Between the City and the Sea. A History of West Torrens from settlement in 1836 to the present day* (Adelaide, 1986), pp. 57-58.
- (4) The relevant Certificate of Title (CT) for the creation of Keswick is CT 423/82, at the Lands Titles Office, Grenfells Street. For the First plan of Keswick, L.T.O. deposited plan no. 1288.
- (5) Memorandum of Transfer (MT) No. 169572 – sale to Pope, December 1883; MT 182942 – sale to Allen. Both on CT 423/82.
- (6) See for example MT 177130 – sale to Henry Whitbread of Parkside, carpenter, June 1884; MT 183146 – G.F. Gardiner Of Adelaide, painter, October 1884; and MT 183862 – H.M. Deimel of Adelaide, clerk, November 1884. All on CT 423/82.
- (7) Donovan, op.cit.,p. 54-55.
- (8) Id., p. 57.
- (9) Noted on CT 423/82 and 567/122.
- (10) For the progress of the sales over the years see:
 Rosa – CTs 567/122; 570/2; 659/17; 660/161.162; 680/146,147; 710/90.
 Eliza – CTs 567/122; 570/3; 659/18; 660/163, 164; 680/148, 149; 710/92.
 William – CTs 567/122; 570/4; 574/32; 712/19
 In 1893 William Everard sold a half share in his Allotments to Charles Mortimer Muirhead, solicitor of Adelaide. In 1900 he bought out Muirhead's share In the remaining allotments.
- (11) See for example MT 282276 on CT 570/3 – sale to G.H. Gilbert, carpenter of Adelaide, June 1894; MT 299139 on CT 570/2 – sale to Michael Pearce, gardener of Adelaide, December 1895; MT 318893 on CT 570/2 – sale to Philip Thomas Teare of Adelaide, August 1897.
- (12) See MT 379671 on CT 680/148 – sale to G.A. Teakle, compositor of Adelaide, January 1902; and MT 385427 on CT 680/146 – sale to Elizabeth Jenkins, married woman of Adelaide, September 1902.
- (13) CTs 710/90, 92

- (14) CT 712/19
- (15) For more information on Batchelor see Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 7, pp. 207-208 (article by Dean Jaensch).
The CT for Batchelor's Keswick property – allotment 54 – was 483/62.
- (16) Both quotes in A.D.B. Vol. 7, p. 207.
- (17) McDougall and Vines, West Torrens Heritage Survey (1998), p. 105.
- (18) On CT 697/76
- (19) McDougall and Vines, loc.cit.

From information supplied by the West Torrens Historical Society