

## **John BONNER (1831-1928)**

John was aged 19, single, a ploughman from Norfolk when migrating to Tasmania on the 'Trade Wind'. John was named Robert John Bonner at birth but was known as John. He was baptised in March 1832 at Kings-Lynn, Norfolk, the son of Robert and Alice.

John was sponsored by Captain Samuel Horton (pictured - 1795-1867), who was one of the oldest settlers of Tasmania. Captain Horton went to Ross from Hobart Town in company with Thomas Parramore, Esq., the journey occupying ten days. Horton took up a grant on 30 June 1823, naming the property 'Somercotes'. Horton was a very liberal and philanthropic man and there were few charitable institutions that he did not participate in. He gave the land on which was built the Wesleyan College at Ross and donated £1000 towards the erection of the building. Horton College foundation stone was laid on 26 January 1852. For forty years Horton College was one of the leading schools in Tasmania and was famous as an educational establishment throughout Australia. In 1919 the college was pulled down and the material sold. Only the old archway now remains. Somercotes was troubled by bushrangers. On one occasion they brought all the farm servants into the house, and as they entered a gun was discharged, shooting the cook. Martin Cash, the noted outlaw, visited Captain Horton on another occasion and bailed him up. Horton said "You may shoot me, Cash, but God will protect me." Bullet marks in the cedar walls of one of the rooms caused by shots from the outlaw's pistol were objects of awed interest to many. It was on the 'Somercotes' property where John was employed all his life.



John married Jane Standaloft nee Found (aka Barchard - 1824-1897) at Horton College on 5 February 1859. Jane was also a passenger on the 'Trade Wind', along with her first husband, Thomas Standaloft, who died at sea on 21 January 1858, under suspicious circumstances. [See Thomas and Jane Standaloft for further details.] Jane had one daughter, Annie Elizabeth who was born on 9 March 1853 and had accompanied her parents on the 'Trade Wind'. After her mother's marriage to John Bonner she became known as Annie Bonner. John and Jane had seven children, the first two died in infancy. The remaining children stayed in Tasmania except Harry, the youngest, who settled in New Zealand.

John died on 12 August 1928 at the residence of his daughter, Fannie Whittles, 15 Wellington Street, North Hobart. His death notice recalled that he had been an employee of the Riggall family of 'Somercotes', Ross, for 70 years. Mr Thomas Riggall (1832-1917), was a nephew of Captain Horton.

Executors of John's Will were William Whittles, formerly of Westbury, station master, now of Hobart, retired and Robert John Bonner of Ross, farmer, son. He left his estate to Emma Bonner, daughter; Robert John Bonner, son; William Bonner, son; Harry Bonner, son; Fannie Whittles, daughter; Annie Elizabeth Green, step-daughter; and Alexander George Ingle, grandson. John's wife had predeceased him by 31 years. She died on 24 June 1897 at Ross.

For further information contact [bettypilgrim@hotmail.com](mailto:bettypilgrim@hotmail.com).