

George CHALLIS (1839-1882)

George was aged 18, single, literate and a groom from Suffolk when migrating on the 'Trade Wind' to Tasmania in 1858. George was sponsored by John Curwen Walker of Hobart Town. He was discharged from the Quarantine Station at Impression Bay on 16 April 1858 to Dr Brock (1790-1862).

George was the son of John and Harriett Challis. George was baptised on Christmas Day 1839 at Sapiston in Suffolk. Sapiston is less than four kilometres from Bardwell. George, a gardener, married Jane Kinsman (1836-1915) in the Church of Holy Trinity in Hobart, Tasmania on 3 June 1861. Jane was baptised on 14 February 1836 at Shipton Bellinger in Hampshire. Her mother was Caroline Kinsman and her father was not named. Jane, aged 23, departed London on 21 May 1859 and arrived in Hobart on 9 September 1859 per 'Oriental'. Their first-born child, George Charles (1862-1945) was born in Hobart. George and Jane departed for New Zealand in September 1862 per the 'Boomerang' schooner. Another eight children were born in New Zealand. According to the 1870-71 NZ Electoral Roll George was living at Block 12, Rattray Street, Dunedin.

Sponsor, John Curwen-Walker (1811-1878) was the eldest son of the late Charles Walker of Ashford Court and grandson of Christian Curwen, of Workington Hall, Cumberland in England. He came out to Tasmania about 1831 to learn colonial experience and subsequently was an accountant of the Derwent Bank in Hobart. He later moved to Victoria. It is likely, in his role as accountant, he arranged for George Challis to come out to Tasmania to work for Dr Henry Gordon Brock, RN (1790-1862). Dr Brock, RN arrived in Tasmania on the convict ship 'William Metcalfe' from London and Portsmouth on 23 May 1834 with 240 male prisoners. He had previously been the Surgeon and Superintendent on two other convict ships to Tasmania: 'Marmione', 1828 with 186 male prisoners – four passengers died on the passage; and 'Argyle' in 1831 with 244 male convicts.

Dr Brock owned the estates of 'Red Rock' and 'Rosemount' which was occupied by FW Steiglitz, Esq. situated on the St Paul's River, about fifteen miles from Avoca. The properties were advertised in the Launceston *Examiner* on Tuesday 7 November 1871 to let. The properties were described as: 'Red Rock' containing 5,660 acres of first-class sheep land, having a frontage of more than 7¼ miles on the St Paul's River, with rich and extensive marshes, suitable for a dairy or fattening purposes. The property was divided into six runs, and had a good house and all necessary outbuildings. 'Rosemount', separated from 'Red Rock' by the St Paul's River, contained 1,520 acres of purchased land and 500 acres rented from Government, all of good quality; a large proportion was very rich marsh land along the St Paul's River. There was a good stone house on the property. It is very likely that George worked on one or both of these properties.

Dr Brock was criticised in January 1858 (*Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 27 Jan, p2) for refusing to admit a dying man to the General Hospital in Hobart as 'he had money' and should go to a private hospital. The man subsequently died. Dr Brock returned to England and died at Middlesex on 16 December 1862.

George passed away on 29 December 1882 in Dunedin, aged 65. Jane died in 1915 aged 77.