Early Settlers
The Dart, Watt and Jarrott Families

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Contents

William Dart, Sugar Planter of St Lucia  2
Dart Timeline  18
The Watts and Jarrots  22

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Cover illustration – Dart’s Mill St Lucia courtesy Dart family archive

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WILLIAM DART, SUGAR PLANTER OF ST LUCIA
Marilyn England May 2004

Today as we walk around our beautiful suburb with its many trees and open spaces along the river near the University we wonder how St Lucia used to look when Brisbane was young. It is now a vibrant suburb with its university, its diversity of homes along ridgebacks and its high rise units along the river. St Lucia, more than any other suburb in Brisbane, is surrounded and dominated by the Brisbane river and it makes us remember the horrific floods of 1893, 1931 and 1974 when the water rushed over the lowlands of the peninsula and we think: ‘What was it like 150 years ago when St Lucia was still virgin bush?’

It is said that Aboriginals camped along Sandy Creek which runs through the St Lucia golf course but it is only after European settlement that we can get a true picture of how our suburb began.

For the history of one of the most important of St Lucia’s early pioneers, William Dart, I have to acknowledge the help of Professor Frederick Robinson who interviewed the Dart family in 1951 and has left letters from William G. Buckle of Cannon Creek, Stanthorpe, and reminiscences of J.A. Carmody in the Fryer Library of the University of Queensland. Also I want to thank present day historians, the late John Kerr, Peter Brown, Andrew Darbyshire, and Colin Dyer for their assistance in compiling the Dart history of St Lucia, and Joan Haig for supplying the portrait of William Dart as a young man. I must also thank the Dart family, in particular John Dart, grand nephew of William Dart, and Eliza Ann Dart, John’s grandmother, for her reminiscences which she began to write in 1939 when she was 77 years of age through letters to her son Raymond (born during the 1893 floods). As a professor at the Johannesburg University he was widely known for his research in 1924 when he discovered the Tuang skull at a nearby limestone quarry. Eliza continued writing the reminiscences of her family history until 1946 when she was in her 84th year.
The Dart name first appeared in print in Queensland in 1852 when a G.W. Dart wrote in the Maryborough Chronicle that gold had been discovered in Gympie by Bidwell, the first Commissioner of Crown Lands for Wide Bay and Burnett while marking a tree line from Brisbane to Maryborough (Gympie Times 24.10.1896). We know nothing about G.W. Dart but it is possible that he was a member of the Dart family of Devon in the south-west of England who wrote home describing Queensland as a land of opportunity because in 1856 William Dart, then 18 years old, arrived in Brisbane aboard the Persia with only seven English sovereigns in his purse. It was said that when he arrived tree stumps were still being dug out of Queen Street.

William Dart was born at Torquay in 1837. In England he had been trained as a coach builder and wheelwright which led to his first employment in Queensland with Fraser Bros. of South Brisbane. However, William appeared to be ambitious and wanted to make his way in this new land so it was not long before he went to live and work in Ipswich where it was said that he built the first spring cart in the town.

By 1859 he had made enough money to move back to Brisbane where he began life as a farmer on the rich riverbank lowlands of St. Lucia where the university stands today. The land was described by John Oxley as being covered by low open forest, good grass and ironbark trees, further inland on the peninsula he noted that there were a number of pines. Oxley believed that some of these were 100 to 140 feet high (he also remarked on the mosquitoes and sand flies - it would not have been a favourite campsite).

William’s family lived at Coldridge in Devon. His father was born in 1814 near Totnes on the River Dart but later moved to Coldridge where other descendants of the family are still living. William Snr. had two brothers, John (who lived at Coldridge) and Theodore. They both remained in Devonshire with two sisters Anna who became Mrs Andrew Lang and Charity who died as a young woman. The father of William Snr. was John Dart who had married a lady named Potter. William Snr. had a carrying business with a contract to service His Majesty’s mail in the Coldridge area but in 1859, with his wife Mary (born Coldridge 1816), and his daughter Mary, he joined his son William at Indooroopilly (as St Lucia was then called). William Jnr. had two brothers, an older brother, John, and Samuel (who was born at Indooroopilly in 1860). His sister Mary became Mrs T. Strong when she married Thomas Strong, whose family farmed along the Oxley Creek and Brisbane River. They came to live and farm at what was later to become known as Ryan’s Road. Thomas Strong later became Mayor of Sandgate when he, along with his family, moved to what was then a popular bayside resort.

Eliza has written that John, the third Dart brother, was also a farmer. His first farm had been established at Seventeen Mile Rocks where he grew sugar cane and bananas. Later he moved to Brookfield where he began mixed farming and dairying. One of John’s sons became a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the Queensland State Parliament in the 1920s.

1 John Oxley Field Notebook September 1824.
2 Eliza Dart unpublished manuscript 1944.
By 1859 William Dart was farming the land where the University Rowing Club now stands which he purchased from W Southerden (the original owner who had purchased it in 1857 when the land was subdivided). This was Portion 13, 46 acres fronting the river opposite Highgate Hill for which he paid £160. With a nostalgia for the town where he grew up, he built his house on a knoll at the northern end of what is now the clubhouse overlooking the spectators’ bank alongside the large athletic track at the University of Queensland and he called his farm ‘Coldridge’ Plantation.

In 1862 he married Miss Betsy Harvey Payne, a daughter of Mr and Mrs Thomas Payne at Lang Farm (owned by Robert Cribb, it was the first farm in the area and went from what is now Guyatt Park across Toowong Creek to what is now High Street Toowong and up to the Fiveways at Taringa). Later the Paynes started their own farm over the river along Oxley Creek.

William and Betsy’s eldest child Mary was born in September 1865. Their eldest son, William Henry, was born in 1867. From William’s death notice it appears that in the following years the couple had another eight children. Four of the five boys were named William, Ralph, Montrose and Ernest (who died in 1895). There were five girls - Mary, Emily Mabel, Martha and Ruby. With William Jnr. establishing his own family, in 1860 his father, William Snr., bought Portion 16 on what was known as Oxley Point (Chelmer today) to set up his own farm. Later he bought Portion 12 close by and young Samuel attended the Sherwood State School when it opened in 1867 (it was then known as West Oxley State School, the first school to be opened in the area). Mary died at Graceville in 1874 aged 58 years and William Snr (who retired as a farmer in 1873) died at Sandgate when he was 82 years old. It was Samuel who inherited the farm at Graceville.

Young William Dart was 23 when he purchased his farm. With cotton shipments from America to England coming to a halt through the Civil War, the newly formed Queensland government (1859) was subsidising the growing of cotton. Originally William had begun by growing bananas and vegetables on his farm and in 1864 a cauliflower weighing ten pounds was grown on his land near the river. He transported his produce to Brisbane by boat in the morning, returning to his farm in the evening (this of course, would probably depend on the tides although it was reported in 1864 that he owned a cutter called ‘Dart’.) However, he was one of the farmers who took up the government offer to grow cotton and was among those who grew it along the Brisbane river. He made £2/10/- an acre (in 1870 he supplied The Brisbane Courier with a return showing the costs of production and the amount he had made from cotton). Children from the peninsula and from across the river at Highgate Hill were paid a penny a pound for picking cotton on his farm. They would pack it into pillowslips tied around their necks.
Cotton planting slumped in 1865 when the government ceased its subsidy following the end of the American Civil war and in 1867, after attending a meeting of the East Moreton Farmers Assn. his interest turned to growing sugar.

In 1868, at a monthly meeting of the Indooroopilly branch of the Farmers’ Association, Mr Jarrott in the chair discussed cotton and sugar. Secretary A. Watt spoke of sugar and Mr Dart Jnr. (William) supplied several of the members with shares in the Brisbane River Sugar Company. Dart imported cane plants from Java and Mauritius and in 1869 he sent a rich dry ration sugar made from his own cane at St Lucia to Brisbane valued at £33 per ton. However, harvesting sugar was not easy for white men in 1869 and in December of that year a Robert Hunter died from sunstroke while working at the Dart farm. Like other sugar planters he may then have employed Kanakas, he certainly did at Bundaberg in 1896.

We only have a brief description of Coldridge, and no knowledge of the house. Surrounding it was an acre-and-a-half devoted to orchard and vineyard where oranges and vines grew luxuriantly. Twenty acres were under cane and the remainder of the ground was occupied by a large dam, houses for the workmen, and paddocks for the horses.

7 Brisbane Courier 14.1.1870.
In 1871 Dart built his own sugar mill on the river bank near where the University rowing sheds now stand.

The first canes put through were a splendid lot of ribbon from the farm of Mr Alex Watt. The battery, (supplied by Smellie & Co. in Brisbane) was under the care of Mr Ballinger jnr. and was soon at work, strike after strike about every half hour showed that the liquor was very clean, and that good sugar would result. The mill worked easily and with a steadier and evener motion than any horse mill yet seen.8

(This was also the year when farmers Robert Jarrott, W. Spode, W. Penman, William Dart and W. Pitman (butcher) established the Indooroopilly Roads 5-1/4 miles trust for the area.9)

With Dart persuading local farmers to turn to cane-growing rather than the cultivation of potatoes, maize and cotton, from 1871 the mill made cane cultivation a staple activity at St Lucia and Long Pocket. The cane was transported to the mill by punts and rafts made of logs roped together and floated to the Dart mill on the tides. Sugar was also being grown around Oxley Creek and at Chelmer where William Dart Snr. had his farm, also at Seventeen Mile Rocks where brother John was farming. Cane from nearby farms was brought to the mill by horse and cart, but with roads not properly developed the processed sugar was taken to Brisbane by boat, a faster method of transport.

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9 The Queenslander, October 14, 1876 supplied by Peter Brown.
The cane grown at St Lucia was of the Bourbon variety, juicy, rank-growing, but liable to suffer from frost and to develop rust after cutting, it was crushed between rollers turned by horses, then boiled. The brown sugar which resulted was dried out in barrels and lengths of banana stalks were inserted in holes in the barrel-sides in order to drain off the surplus moisture. The sugar was then wrapped in Japanese mats. The molasses which remained was given to children who would carry it away in billys and tins. Sixty years later people still remembered how much they enjoyed Dart’s molasses.10

Alexander Watt, a neighbouring farmer, assisted at the mill, sending his own cane in for processing. With his wife Susan he had arrived from Scotland in 1854, settling at Hill End. In 1860 Alexander and Susan bought Portion 14 which lay between Dart’s land and Carmody’s land and their house stood near where the Abel Smith lecture theatre is today. Three of the Watt children are on the 1870 roll of Ironside school. Initially Watt grew pineapples and vegetables for the Brisbane market, but by 1868 sugar for the mill was his main crop. When his farm became unprofitable, in 1876 he bought land on the Albert River and moved down there to grow cane and produce sugar in his own mill.

Dart’s mill was built of wood with a galvanised iron roof topped by a tall brick chimney which followed fairly closely to Captain Louis Hope’s first production of sugar in Queensland (on a commercial basis) at his mill at Ormiston about 1864.

In 1875 Dart ordered machinery for making white sugar from Mirrles, Tait and Watson of Glasgow. It included a vacuum pan, a vacuum pumping engine and a multi-tubular boiler, costing (apart from freight charges to Australia) £1,065. It took 110 days for the machinery to arrive in Brisbane via London. William made a down payment of £100 with his order, and a second payment of £432/10/- two months later with the balance to be paid on delivery. All other costs, apart from insurance and shipping costs in England were to be paid by William. Following the introduction of his new vacuum pan process, in 1875 he was awarded a gold medal for the best white sugar to be produced locally.

To provide the mill with a gravity supply of clear water, a dam with a stone wall had been constructed on the slope just to the right of the present Campbell Rd. This dam went dry for the first time in the great drought of 1902.11 Six to eight men were employed at the mill. The white sugar which the mill produced was loaded on to punts and floated downstream before being sold to merchants in Elizabeth Street.

By 1878 three medals had been awarded to the district for the quality of its sugar. The National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland gave a silver medal to James Carmody ‘for growing sugar cane’, a bronze medal to William Dart for ‘Vacuum Pan sugar’, and there was the gold medal which was given to William Dart in 1875 by the East Moreton Agricultural and Horticultural Association. In 1876 The Queenslander wrote:

‘This gentleman commenced in a modest way with a horse mill, by dint of indomitable perseverance, and any quantity of hard work, he kept afloat when others were sinking in all

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10 Professor Robinson unpublished paper 1954.
11 Professor Robinson unpublished paper 1954.
directions.... he finally crowned his success by the introduction of the vacuum pan, which is now in full work, and turning out sugars which are quite equal to refined sugars, being beautifully white, large grained, and of sharp clearly defined shape.’

The article went on to describe the mill, in so doing it gave readers an insight into the forward thinking of William Dart

‘The sugar house is conveniently situated on the bank of the Brisbane River, about five miles from town. A wharf (which might be larger, by the way) admits of the discharge of cane punts. A very large one was being unloaded when I arrived, and the sight of a score of men, carrying half-a-dozen canes a-piece from the punt to the drays, recalled to my mind a reflection I had made some years since, as to the possibility of so arranging the load that it could be hoisted out by a crane in three or four loads. I mentioned this to Mr Dart and he told me he had thought of a plan by which the unloading could be much simplified. This was, to provide a number of large rope slings, several of which would be laid in the bottom of the punt about to be loaded. When filled, the end of the slings would be turned over the load. Fresh slings would then be laid down on top of the lower tier of canes, and thus the process would go on until the punt was filled. Arrived at its destination, the crane would be brought into action, and each sling full could be hoisted at once into a dray and delivered at the rollers.’

The article continued to give a detailed description of the inside of the mill, noting that the whole of the machinery was under the charge of Mr Bell who had rendered material assistance in the erection of the vacuum pan. The battery was under the superintendence of Mr Satchwell, whilst the vacuum pan was being worked by an experienced operator from Plantation Enmore in Demerara, Mr E. Johnson. Johnson had not been long in the colony and this was his first employment, Mr Dart was happy to have secured the services of one who was so adept in the art of sugar-making, with the average amount of sugar produced daily at the mill being from 1½ to 2 tons.

Mr Dart bought all the cane he could get from local farmers. He paid from £20 to £30 per acre, according to quality. Disease may have been the reason farmers gave up growing sugar along the Brisbane river as the news paper then reported: ‘A new disease has appeared in a patch of Malabar cane, which he is convinced is not the rust This disease would be worthy of investigation.’ However J.G.Steele has written that it was a succession of severe frosts in the 1870s which killed the [sugar] industry on the Brisbane River.

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12 The Queenslander, October 14, 1876 supplied by Peter Brown.
13 The Queenslander, October 14, 1876 supplied by Peter Brown.
In 1870, at a meeting of the inhabitants of Prior’s (Murray Prior’s land) and Long Pocket it was agreed to raise funds to erect a new school house and residence. This would be one of the first non-private schools to be opened west of Brisbane (West Oxley opened in 1867), but it had been preceded by Mr Turner’s private classes costing 1/- per week in a slab building which was situated in the grounds of the present day Ironsides school. At this meeting R Jarrott was in the chair with A. Watts secretary and William Dart Treasurer.15

In 1871 Robert Jarrott, W. Spode, W. Penman, William Dart and W. Pitman (butcher) established the Indooroopilly Roads Trust to have 5-1/4 miles of road built for the area, using the new Indooroopilly National School, opened in February 1871, at Prior’s Pocket,[now Ironsides] for the meeting.16 They were successful in having the Indooroopilly Road through to Long Pocket completed in 1872.

Dart was involved in a number of community services. For two years (1874-76) his mill was used as a receiving depot for local mail. In 1877 the name was altered to Toowong and Indooroopilly Receiving Office. In 1880, when sugar production stopped on the Brisbane river, the mail delivery to the mill ceased. It was not resumed until 1889 when Mrs Eliza Barker, the ferryman’s wife, opened a receiving office a short distance away.17

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With sugar becoming uneconomical, in 1881 Dart bought an extra 39 acres from William Mooney which lay next to his farm and with his friend, William Wilson, he subdivided both farms into 16 perch allotments and put the land up for auction. In 1883 it was advertised as ‘St Lucia Estate by auctioneers. When the land did not sell he sold out to a syndicate of developers, including William Wilson, who had also purchased Portion 14 owned by ‘Sandy’ Watt. In 1885 the syndicate employed Arthur Martin & Co. to once again try to auction the land.

The suburb of St Lucia was named by William Wilson who formed a syndicate to buy the Dart land and portion 14 owned by ‘Sandy’ Watt which he called ‘St Lucia’ as Wilson was born on the island of St Lucia in the West Indies.

W.A. Wilson, a prominent member of the syndicate, was a grocer who had his shop in George Street (between Queen and Ann Street where Trittons Furniture store was later built). Wilson lived across the river; his home, ‘Wanda Walha’, was on five acres of land which he had purchased at Hill End. By the 1880s Wilson had also moved his business to Hill End, and had become the owner of several stores in the area. Because he had been born in the West Indies he used the name ‘St Lucia Estate’ for the development. It was the name by which the suburb would come to be known.

‘Princes’ Bridge Estate’ with a drawing of a proposed bridge to West End was another development, it was the first bridge to be proposed for the area. Others in the initial consortium with Wilson were Irwin Waugh, James Waldron, Michael Gannon, Ino Nevion, Edmund MacDonnell and Henry Davis.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18} Peter Brown unpublished paper 2004.
Before the land was subdivided, there were only two marked roads in government maps of the area. There was Carmody Road, named after local farmer James Carmody which connected with Burns Road from Church Street Toowong and continued down across the higher part of the peninsula to the river (much of this road remains today) and Jetty road, later called Mill Road after Dart’s mill, which crossed at right angles along the boundary of William Dart’s land. On his maps Wilson named a number of streets which would never eventuate.

In 1880 The *Queenslander* wrote that Mr Dart owned a sugar mill at Redland Bay. He had bought 593 acres from Richard Newton for £8000, (216 of these were cultivated). He sold some of this land to a Brisbane syndicate who cut it up into fruit farms. Newton’s sugar mill was described as having a tall chimney and an avenue of cypress pines for a drive. However Dart rebuilt the mill to process his sugar, installing a similar vacuum pan to the one he had at St Lucia. It was so efficient that in 1883 Dart’s battery system was also being used at Robinson’s sugar mill at Helensvale and others who built their mills were using batteries constructed on the Dart principle. Although Dart grew sugar at Redland Bay, couch grass, kangaroos and wallabies created problems and it seems that Dart gave up growing sugar and decided to move into sawmilling.

![William Dart built Hillstone on Portion 31, the land he purchased from James Henderson. Subsequently the house and part of the property would be purchased by the founders of the Indooroopilly Golf Club. Little (if any) remains of the original house following the various stages of redevelopment to create what is now the function centre at the St Lucia Golf Links. The name has been re-introduced as part of the most recent upgrade.](image)

In 1884 it was reported that the JW. Sutton Iron Foundry at Kangaroo Point had a contract to complete a sawmill for Mr Dart of Redland Bay. There is no record in postal directories but it appears that William remained at Redland Bay until the beginning of 1886, when Wilson and Cusack purchased the
property and subdivided it.¹⁹ (There is a Dart Street in Redland Bay today and rumour has it that his home was burnt down and that it stood where the Redland Bay Hotel stands today.)

When he sold his property at Redland Bay William was a wealthy man. He was still in his prime at forty-nine years of age in 1886 when he returned to St Lucia to build a new home on higher land at Indooroopilly. He had purchased the land in 1876 from James Henderson, (the first registered owner of Portion 31, who had paid £53, or £1 per acre at the Government Land Sales in September 1859²⁰). Dart named his new home ‘Hillstone’. It stood on a rise overlooking the river where the St Lucia golf links are now located.

When the golf club purchased the property in 1926 Hillstone became its clubhouse, however nothing of the original house is apparent when looking at the building today, although the dining area in the present clubhouse is certainly part of the original Hillstone. There is no record that Dart farmed the land around Hillstone, in fact his property did not go down to the river flats. At this time his occupation was listed as a building contractor (gentleman of Toowong) and it has been noted that sugar production in St Lucia ceased in 1881.

As a building contractor the family wrote that he was responsible for erecting a number of buildings in Brisbane. They included the old St Andrews Church with its four spires, buildings for the Brisbane General Hospital, supervision of the building of the circular dome for the Customs House (now owned by the University of Queensland) at Petrie Bight, and a number of buildings in South Brisbane.

In partnership with William Wilson he had purchased a sawmill at South Brisbane (more about that later). By this time his old sugar mill at St Lucia was owned by Wilson and was being used as a sawmill until it was partially destroyed in the 1893 floods. Logs for the mill were brought from ‘Pitman’s Paddock’ to the south-west of the university (later McKinnon’s Paddock), a fattening paddock for the slaughter-yards. The paddock contained 240 acres and extended to the present Ironside school site. Keith Jarrott included a description in his book Aylesbury to Brisbane:

> We pass the village schoolhouse (at Ironsides) and place of worship (latter on a primitive scale). At Pitman’s paddock the scent of the slaughter yards is far from odoriferous and necessitates one to take long sniffs and hurry by and get down to the sugar mill and property of Dart Jnr. Mr Dart, like his father on the other side of the river, has a goodly breadth of land under cane and a steam sugar tram on his own property. Mr Dart has been patronised by farmers in his immediate neighbourhood - 12 acres of his own and cane from farms of Jarrott, Watts, Lane, McMahon, Carmody, Strong and others.²¹

William was a devoted family man, heavily involved with local church matters. Back in 1866, while still living at Coldridge, he had been a founding member of a local bush school/chapel which stood near where Ironsides school is today. In the 1870s, as a lay preacher with the Primitive Methodists, he

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held prayer meetings at his home. Both William and his wife, Betsy, regularly attended the Methodist church in Toowong when it opened in January 1876 and became lifelong members and supporters of the church. Betsy was also involved in the local community and was known as an excellent mother, hostess and musician.

John W. Dart, grandson of William Dart wrote that his father, Monte, grew up at Hillstone and had happy memories of that home. William’s daughter Mary married William Buckle from Hillstone on 23 July 1891. When supplying information on William Dart, Mary’s husband, William Buckle, has also provided an interesting picture of early St Lucia. He recalls that around 1871 he would walk from ‘town’ across South Brisbane to the river opposite ‘Coldridge’ where he would stop at Captain O’Reillie’s residence at Highgate Hill and cooee for someone to come from across the river to take him to William’s home. He remembered that Dart’s neighbours were Messrs Carmody, Carr, Behan, Deller and Pitty (the last two later went to live at Kelvin Grove).

These farmers lived to the west of Mill Road. He also recalled the Spode brothers, they made biweekly trips into town with spring carts loaded with bundles of well grown lucerne. One of the brothers (Copeland Spode) later became Clerk of the Redcliffe Divisional Board soon after it was formed in 1888. Other families grew bananas on the fertile riverbank and from about 1870 these were being supplied to the Sydney market. He also recalls James Moore who later went to live at Redland Bay [James Moore worked on Dart’s sugar farm at St Lucia for three years, before buying their own farm at St Lucia which was destroyed by fire. In 1880 he went with Dart to manage the sugar plantation at Redland Bay while Mrs Moore cooked for the farm labourers. He set up his own farm, buying a fine piece of land overlooking the bay from William Dart, and remained in Redland Bay when Dart returned to St Lucia].

Then there was Conor McMahon whose cottage was near where the Geology Building now stands. Thomas Strong was another he remembered. Strong married William Dart’s sister and later moved to Sandgate where he became the mayor. In St Lucia he lived at what is now known as Ryan’s Road, named after Thomas Ryan (a Brisbane auctioneer) who purchased the Strong house and lived there for a number of years. Buckle recalls that the eastern end of Ryan’s road was one of ‘the ports of call’ for the ill-fated steamer ‘Pearl’ which ran a passenger service up and down the river from Indooroopilly to North Quay before being capsized in the South Brisbane Reach during the 1893 flood when it was washed broadside onto the anchor chains of another steamer anchored in mid-stream.

Buckle also recalled that in the early days there were no public conveyances running between St Lucia and the city. The earliest that would be at all convenient was a two horse wagonette run by a Mr Roberts between Taringa and Eagle Street between about 1872 and the opening of the Ipswich-Brisbane railway about 1875, though the two stations Taringa and Toowong on that line were rather too distant to be of much use to the people from St Lucia. Settlers would take smaller loads of produce into town in their own carts.

Heavier loads were taken in boats down the river as far as ‘The Market Wharf’ at North Quay which was just in front of the Supreme Court. Still heavier loads were carried up or down the river by Captain
Mellor’s stern wheeler the ‘Settler’ or by his screw-propelled boat ‘The Louisa’ which was the first iron steamer built in Brisbane. She was built by a Mr Cameron in what are now the workshops of the AUSN Co. (his letter was written in the 1950s) and was launched from the end of Alice Street close to the Kangaroo Point ferry and Port Office. The AUSN Co. River steamers (the ‘Emu’, the ‘Brisbane’ and the ‘Ipswich’) made regular daily trips to and from Ipswich but Buckle could not recollect any of them stopping between their terminals to pick up either passengers or freight. Two of these steamers had cutwaters (or stems) and rudders at both ends to prevent any need for the ship to turn around in the narrow Bremer River at Ipswich.22 There were also several seventy-ton punts travelling up and down the river past St. Lucia with the tides, conveying coal, blue metal etc. down to Brisbane and returning with any loading that they could get. These would, no doubt, put in to the bank wherever sufficient inducement offered and tranship their cargoes direct to inter-colonial or overseas vessels as required on arrival at Brisbane.23

Eliza Dart, who married William’s brother Samuel on 2nd March 1880 mentioned William when she wrote her memoirs from ‘Woodville’ at Indooroopilly in 1939. She wrote that the innovations which William had put into the St Lucia mill were all to his own design. These were so successful that the Governor of Queensland and his daughter were among the many notable people of Brisbane who came to see the mill at work. She also said that William made his wealth from the sale of land he had purchased as a sugar plantation at Redland Bay. She described the buildings William erected in Brisbane as ‘a court house, several large places near the Victoria Bridge in South Brisbane, a factory and St Andrews Church.’ She said that ‘Hillstone’ was sold following the collapse of his building and development business to pay off creditors.24

The financial troubles that Eliza spoke of began in 1884 when a Memorandum of Assn of Victoria Bridge Saw Mills and Steam Joinery Co. Ltd., was registered with its office in Stanley Street, South Brisbane. The company had been set up to purchase or lease land at South Brisbane or elsewhere to erect steam engines and suitable machinery for sawing timber and the manufacture of doors. William Dart, Sugar Planter of Redland Bay was one of the syndicate when he bought 500 fully paid shares and 1600 shares paid to 10s in 1884.

Later William Dart builder was again listed as having bought 2000 shares in the company. William Alexander Wilson, grocer of George Street, (and developer of Dart’s land in St. Lucia) was also a shareholder. In 1885 Mr W.A. Wilson resigned from the company through insolvency. In 1886 William Dart of Redland Bay was attempting to sell his complete sugar mill, plant, vacuum pan and his sawmilling equipment at Redland Bay and in 1886 a new company was formed, the West End Sawmill and Steam Joinery Co. Ltd., which moved to Montague Road (when it was situated at the southern end of Victoria Bridge it had been known as the Victoria Bridge Sawmill Co. Ltd.). The new company was recorded as having a 264 ft. frontage to the Brisbane River with splendid wharfage, steam crane for hoisting timber from vessels, a sawmill and a two storeyed joinery shed, with a third story used for drying and seasoning. It also had a large shed for storage and a manager’s house with

23 Ibid.
24 Eliza Dart unpublished paper.
offices attached. There were 65 men employed and the capacity of the mill was 55,000 ft. per week. Principal members of the firm were E. Vichery of Sydney, T.F. Merry from Warwick, C.M. Foster of Foster & Kelk, Brisbane, William Dart of Indooroopilly, and W.A. Wilson and J. Berry Jnr. of Brisbane.25

As we know, after the booming 1880s the Queensland National Bank crashed in 1890, and this would have affected William Dart because in 1890 Mr William Dart moved and Mr Percival Hiley seconded that Mr William Henry Parker be appointed Liquidator in the place of Mr Henry Jordan deceased. In 1892 at the office of King & King, Queen Street, Brisbane it was resolved that the company be wound up voluntarily, William Myer King and William Dart were appointed joint liquidators. In 1894 there was a mortgage owing to the bank of £3941.16.1. Office furniture was sold by public auction. The freehold was submitted by public auction and every effort was made to sell, but the amount of the bank’s claim could not be realised. The bank called on directors, Joseph Berry Jnr, William Dart, Thomas Frederick Merry and Charles Milne Foster jointly and severally liable to repay the mortgage. They discharged the liability to the bank and in consideration the property was transferred to them.26

It appeared that Dart had lost heavily in the enterprise as well as in his attempt at developing the land surrounding Hillstone. Following this Dart mortgaged Hillstone in 1892 to the Commercial Bank of Sydney for £9000. The land surrounding the house appears to have been subdivided as the ‘Hillstone Crescent Estate’. Lots 1 to 210 were generally 16 perch house lots; Lot 211 was an area of about seven acres and is the area now occupied by Camira Street and Lex Ord Park. Lot 212 where Hillstone stood was about 18 acres. As with the earlier developments initiated by Wilson in the 1880’s the land did not sell well; only five purchases were made in two years and these were for lots on the ridge along Swann Road. William Dart’s father, (William Snr.) purchased two of these lots side by side, they are now at 325 Swann Road.27

In later years a weatherboard house was built on the steep slope of 325 Swann Rd. by the family. William Dart’s son, W.H. Dart, and his family, were living in the house called ‘Moa Moa’ in the early 1950s when interviewed by Professor Robinson.28 Following the mortgage of Hillstone in 1892 William Dart bought the Seaview sugar plantation at Bundaberg for £4550 with its complete sugar making plant in good order. He shipped bricks and machinery to Bundaberg along with seven horses and lived there for a number of years.

He was probably glad he had made the move when in 1893 Brisbane saw the most severe flooding since white settlement on the peninsula. Three or four cottages near the mill were washed away, including those of Raven, McGrath and Westwood. Twenty-seven people took refuge in the old Dart homestead (then occupied by Fitzgerald) until rescued, as the waters were still rising. The mill itself, with its tall chimney, ‘formed an island in the centre of a wide stream’ (Maryborough Chronicle 10.2.1893) and was destroyed by the flood. [Not all of it, Peter Brown has a photograph showing that it

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28 Professor Robinson unpublished paper 1954.
was only the chimney which was washed away.] Raven’s cottage is shown on the river bank in the painting of the mill by W.S. Austin. Raven was a boat builder, and a nearly finished cedar boat was washed away. The two large dead trees by the mill, on which pelicans used to settle, were also washed away.

With William’s family now living in Bundaberg, the local papers reported that in 1894 Monte Dart, aged 12 of Seaview nearly died when he slipped while standing on a carrier. Fortunately for him the steam had just been cut off (Bundaberg Mail 9.11.1894). In 1895 Ernest Dart, 24, son of William Dart of Seaview Plantation died after nine weeks of medical treatment (Bundaberg Mail 11.11.1895). In 1896 there was an incident at the Seaview Plantation when a planter named White who was under the influence of drink allegedly fired a revolver at two Kanakas. Mr Dart had to intervene (Bundaberg Mail 16.10.1896). As a young Kanaka woman employed by William Dart at Redland Bay had died under his care and he had narrowly escaped being charged with neglect, he would have been very mindful in making sure that he could not be blamed for any further incidents involving Kanakas.

Around 1905 when William would have been 68 years old he sold ‘Seaview’ for an excellent price and moved with his family to Montville to engage in fruit farming. He spent twenty-six years in the district. He acquired 223 acres on the razorback at Montville with views to the sea and the coastal towns of Caloundra and Maroochydore. Here he cultivated a variety of citrus trees and produced a new variety of mandarin called Waratah, by grafting a Scarlet mandarin onto a Washington navel orange. Eliza wrote that the new fruit was considered very good, being more tart than a mandarin and almost seedless. She also wrote that William had attended every Brisbane Exhibition but one during his lifetime, stating that with the assistance of her own father, James Brimblecombe, Dart had been the first to organise the exhibitions.

When William Dart was 80 years of age it was said that he built a full-sized wagon that was reputed to have been used by Sir William McGregor, governor of Queensland when he visited the Blackall ranges. William had always led a very active life and boasted that even at the age of 78 he could stand and chip in a banana patch with the best man in the district. He had a fund of good stories and reminiscences of the old days and used to relate that at the age of 26, while farming at St Lucia, he went to Melbourne, taking with him the first pineapple exported from Queensland to Victoria. It had been grown in an orchard on the site of All Hallows’ Convent. Because they were scarce in those days pineapples were very expensive to buy.30

Eliza has given us a further insight into the Dart family through reminiscences of her disappointing honeymoon with Samuel in 1880: ‘After our marriage in March 1880, we left that evening to spend the night at his sister’s home in St Lucia, while she and her husband remained at the wedding party, which lasted all night. Next day we went to Cleveland in his father’s buggy for our honeymoon. (At that time Wm. Snr. owned land at Cleveland and probably had a house there). I soon made enquiries as to how much Samuel could spend, also how our house was furnished etc., and found that he had a total of £1.5.2 for the honeymoon. He had bought a bed but no mattress and a few second hand things, mostly

29 Newspaper reports from John Kerr unpublished notes.
for the kitchen. It was not the custom of the bride to enquire into such affairs before her marriage, and my parents had not troubled because they knew his father and sister were wealthy.31

In 1911 the Dart family had a reunion at his daughter’s home at Nundah. There were twenty-seven people at the gathering. It was arranged to coincide with the anniversary of William who had arrived in Brisbane in 1856 with his bag of belongings and seven English sovereigns in his purse. Fifty-five years later William and Betsy celebrated the occasion with their three sons and four daughters and all of their grandchildren who came from Rockhampton, Lismore, Nambour, Montville and parts of Brisbane.

Around 1927 William and his wife retired to live with his son at Albion. In 1930 they moved to Nundah to live with their daughter, Mrs Buckle. William died at the age of 93 in July 1930 and was survived by his widow, daughter of Mr Thomas Payne, an early settler of the Sherwood district, and two of his sons, W.H. Dart of Albion and Montrose Dart of Montville, and four daughters. These were Mrs Trappett (Lismore), Mrs Buckle (Nundah), Mrs Attewell (Nundah) and Mrs Brown of Montville. Three sons and a daughter pre-deceased him. When he died there were twenty grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. His wife Betsy died in 1933 aged 91 and they are both buried in the Toowong Cemetery, grave number 13,13,21.

31 Eliza Dart unpublished paper.
DART TIMELINE

1855  John Dart (23) (brother?) arrives in Brisbane aboard Cambodia

1856  William Dart (18) arrives in Brisbane aboard Persia from Coldridge Devon
      Born Torquay England in 1837. Trained as a coachbuilder and wheelwright.
      Assisted immigrant so worked with Fraser Bros. at South Brisbane and later at Ipswich

1857  Andrew Dart (23) arrives in Brisbane aboard Blenheim (cousin?).
      All boys were assisted immigrants

1859  William Dart begins farming at St. Lucia (then known as Indooreopilly Pocket) on the site of
      the present day University (near rowing sheds). He called his farm Coldridge Plantation after
      the town he came from in England. He begins by growing vegetables and has fruit trees but
      changes to cotton when the new Queensland government subsidises cotton to feed the
      English mills which have had American supplies cut off because of the American Civil war.
      William Dart Senior (father) arrives with his wife and daughter to live at Coldridge farm
      with his son

1860  1860 Samuel Dart born to William Snr. and wife Mary. He is 23 years younger than young
      William Dart.
      Brother John Dart is farming at Seventeen Mile Rocks

1861  William’s only sister, Mary, marries Thomas Strong on 19th February 1861. The Strong
      family is farming along the Brisbane River next to Oxley Creek
      Alexander Watt, farmer, buys Portion 14, next to Dart farm at Indooreoepilly Pocket

1862  1st February, William Dart marries 17 year old Betsey Harvey Payne, daughter of Mr and
      Mrs Thomas Payne who is managing Lang Farm near Toowong for Robert Cribb. Payne
      eventually buys his own farm over the river at Oxley Creek. William Dart Snr. and family
      leave Coldridge farm to buy into Oxley Point (Chelmer today) to farm, first 49 acre Portion
      16 and later 46 acre Portion 12.
      William Dart Jnr, buys Coldridge farm from William Southerden, the original owner who
      had bought the land when it was opened up in 1859 and then leased it to William

1864  Newspaper reports that a cauliflower grown by William Dan Jnr, weights 10 lbs. William
      shipped his produce to Brisbane town on his cutter Dart

1865  With the end of the American Civil war cotton growing on the Brisbane river ceases when
      the Queensland government bonus of two pence per pound is stopped.
      William and Betsy’s first child, Mary, is born at Coldridge farm

1865  William Dart is a founding member of the local private school/bush chapel near today’s
      Ironsides

1867  William and Betsy’s second child, William H. Dart, born at Coldridge. 8 more children over
      the years

1868  Local farmers meet at Oxley to discuss sugar growing. Both William Snr and Jnr, attend the
meeting

1869  William Dart Jnr. sends his sugar to Radcliffe’s mill at Oxley for milling

1870  William Dart Jnr, gives a story on cotton growing to the Brisbane Courier. With others he is raising funds for a public school at Ironsides. It opens in 1870 (see Keith Jarrott’s book for more on that).

1871  William Dart builds his own sugar mill near where the University rowing sheds are today. William Buckle (who marries William Jnr’s daughter Mary) visits Coldridge and tells of cooeeing for a boat to take him across the river from West End to Coldridge farm

1874  September. A mail service opens to West Milton operating from Dart’s sugar mill. From 1874-1880 Alexander Watt is the office-keeper for the mail service. By the late 1880s the Boundary Street ferryman’s wife, Eliza Baker, opens a mail receiving office (Keith Street area)

1875  Dart receives a medal for his vacuum pan sugar. Train services from Brisbane to Ipswich, through Chelmer, Toowong and Taringa begin. Trains stop at the river passengers use the ferry punt until the rail bridge is built. The railway cuts through William Dart Snr’s farm

1876  The Queenslander writes up a story about the Dart mill. Dart buys land at Indooroopilly/Taringa (Indooroopilly Rd.) to build Hillstone where golf club is today. Land goes to today’s five ways at Gailey Road and is bordered by Swann Road St. Lucia

1878  James Carmody and William Dart both receive medals for sugar growing at St. Lucia

1880  Eliza Brimblecombe from Brookfield marries Samuel Dart, third son of William Dart Snr

1881  Sugar production ceases at St. Lucia. It is said that severe frosts along the Brisbane River in 1870s is to blame. William Dart buys neighbouring farm from William Mooney and at Redland Bay, the Newton sugar Plantation. 269 acres

1883  William Dart has his and Mooney’s farms cut into a housing estate which is called St. Lucia Estate and auction notices are printed for John Cameron auctioneer to sell the land. The land did not sell as in the 1800s it was known to be periodically flooded by the Brisbane river. William sells his shares to his friend William Wilson who lived at Wanda Walla in West End along with his farm and his sugar mill. Wilson forms a syndicate to sell the land, Wilson had been born in St. Lucia in the West Indies and so the estate came to be called St. Lucia, The old mill is turned into a small saw mill

1884  JR Sutton of Kangaroo Point have a contract to complete a sawmill for Dart of Redland Bay. Dart and Wilson, along with others. set up the Victoria Bridge Saw Mills and Steam Joinery Co. at South Brisbane

1885  Wilson becomes insolvent and resigns from the company
1886  Wilson and Cusack buy Dart’s land at Redland Bay for subdivision. The sugar plantation is cut up into small farms and auctioned by Arthur Martin & Co. Auctioneers. William Dart also sells the Sugar Mill at Redland Bay. The sale is highly successful and William returns to Indooroopilly to build Hillstone where the St. Lucia Golf course is now situated. He is no longer a farmer and is listed as a builder, a gentleman of Toowong. The Victoria Bridge Saw Mill goes into liquidation. A new company, West End Joinery and Steam Joinery Co. Ltd. is formed, with both Dart and Wilson as partners along with others.

1888  William Buckle who marries one of Dart’s daughters recalls in his reminiscences that bananas from the riverbank at St. Lucia were being sent to Sydney. William Dart is listed in the postal directory as living at Hillstone.

1890  West End Joinery and Steam Co. Ltd. goes into liquidation. Dart sub-divides Hillstone Estate, his land which reaches to the present day 5 ways and Swann Road, only Lot 59 is sold by November of that year.

1891  Mary Dart marries William Buckle from Hillstone. In May William Dart Snr. buys two lots on Swann Rd. from William’s Hillstone Estate. By November only one more lot is sold.

1892  William Myer King and William Dart appointed liquidators of the West End Sawmill. William Dart is still listed in the postal directory as living at Hillstone, Indooroopilly Rd., Taringa. He mortgages Hillstone to the Commercial Bank of Sydney for £9000.

1893  Dart buys Seaview Sugar Plantation at Bundaberg for £4550 and family goes to live in Bundaberg.

1894  Assets of West End sawmill sold to repay Bank. Shortfall paid by Dart and others (not Wilson). Dart listed in postal directory as living at Seaview. Accident at Seaview newly kills Dart’s son, Monte.

1895  Dart’s son, Ernest, 24, dies at Bundaberg after an illness.

1896  Incident at Seaview, planter named White shoots at two Kanakas. Dart forced to intervene.

1905  William Dart sells Seaview and moves to Montville to live with his son-in-law, T.H. Brown. He buys land at Montville overlooking the sea coast.

1910  Hillstone sold to Ida White.

1911  Dart family hold a reunion at Buckle’s home at Nundah. Photographs in the St. Lucia golf club house.

1926  Hillstone land bought from the White family and it becomes the clubhouse for the Indooroopilly Golf Club.
1927  William and Betsy retire to live with W.H. Dart at Albion

1930  They move to Nundah to live with daughter Mary and William Buckle. William dies aged 93

1933  Betsy dies aged 91. Both buried at Toowong Cemetery. Grave No. 13.13.21

1950  Professor Frederick Robinson from the University of Queensland sends letter to W.H. Dart (son of William living on Swann Road) thanking him for his early history of St. Lucia

1951  Prof. Robinson interviews W.H. Dart at Moa Moa, 325 Swann Rd, St. Lucia (in Fryer library).

1954  May Dart (wife of W&I. Dart) writes to thank Prof. Robinson for his expression of sympathy for her on her husband’s death. (WH Dart would have been 84).

1955  May Dart writes to Prof. Robinson to thank him for calling on her and Dr Ellice Dart and reading his completed St. Lucia history to them. Prof. Robinson also brought a medal with him (which means a Dart medal may be in the Fryer Library).

William and Betsy in a photograph taken around 1927
Photo courtesy John Dart
THE WATTS and THE JARROTTS

By Marilyn England
For St Lucia History Group 6th August, 2005.

Back in the 1860s and 1870 before local councils had come into existence community minded farmers organised themselves into associations to set up schools, places of worship, the type of crops they might plant as a group and generally helped each other in times of trouble.

When researching the Dart family of St Lucia two names continually cropped up in these associations, along with William Dart, they were Robert Jarrott and Alexander Watt. These three gentlemen all served at meetings to build better conditions for the farmers of St Lucia and Long Pocket areas where they farmed, and I have been lucky enough to gather stories telling us part of their background.

Alexander Watt

Veronica Rodger, great granddaughter of Alexander Watt has kindly supplied me with information her family have gathered for their family history and I have added details from my research into the Dart family. Only the St Lucia years are included in this paper.

As we know, William Dart started farming at St Lucia in 1859 when he leased Portion 13, 49 acres owned by William Southerden. In 1860 Alexander Watt purchased Portion 14, 28 acres next to William Dart, bought by J. Collins in the 1850s.

Alexander Watt (Sandy) (1837-1894), with his wife Susan, arrived in Moreton Bay in 1854. Initially they settled at Hill End but in 1860 they moved to what was then known as Indooroopilly Pocket (St Lucia today).
In 1858 Alexander Watt purchased Sub 2, Portion 14, Parish of Indooroopilly (5.77 ha) from James Collins for £42.10.0, moving to the property in 1860. Some 15 metres (50ft) of the eastern end of the Main Building of the University of Queensland, including the Library, is now situated on his land. In 1866 Portion 110, Parish of Indooroopilly was acquired by Watt. This was later surrendered to the crown. In 1870 he purchased Sub 3, Portion 14, Parish of Indooroopilly (5.77 ha), which was the adjoining allotment, from Angus Matheson for £200.0.0. but in 1876 sold both sub 2 and sub 3 to John Young of London.

When Watt came to Indooroopilly Pocket he immediately commenced clearing the land and establishing a home for his young family. The house they built stood where the Abel Smith lecture theatre is today, the site of their home was marked until quite recently by two pine trees. They planted their crops along the river and their first planting was pineapples and vegetables for the Brisbane market. As there were no real roads in those days all produce was taken to town by boat to the Market wharf on North Quay (near where the Commercial Rowing Clubhouse used to be if anyone here remembers it). By late 1868 sugar was his main crop.

The first crops grown at Indooroopilly Pocket were bananas, pineapples, potatoes and maize. In 1868 at a monthly meeting of the Indooroopilly branch of the East Moreton Farmers’ Association, with Mr Jarrott in the chair, Alexander Watt as secretary spoke of sugar and Wm. Dart Jnr. supplied several of the members with shares in the Brisbane River Sugar Company. Dart imported cane plants from Java and Mauritius and soon the whole of the pocket was under cane. William Dart built his sugar mill in 1871, (the Watt family think that Alexander had a financial interest in it) and the first rollers for crushing were turned by horse power. Alexander Watt assisted at the mill and his cane was one of the first to be processed. Around 1875 frosts and general unsuitability of the area caused a decline in sugar growing and some of the farmers moved out. In 1876 Watt bought land on the Albert River and proceeded to grow cane and produce sugar in a mill he built on the river. He purchased his land for £276.7.6 and called his farm ‘Bannockburn.’ I understand that although the mill is gone a boiler from it is on display in Logan village.

When Watt moved to Beenleigh it was the centre of the cane growing industry south of Brisbane and there were over thirty small sugar mills in the cane-growing district, which at that time extended down to the Nerang River. Dart’s open pan method was used for boiling sugar in many of the mills of those days. Among treasured Watt possessions today are a number of framed certificates and silver cups, given as prizes for boiled sugar at various exhibitions. A prize certificate and a silver cup were won in an international competition held in Paris in 1878. Although other family members have queried this the story goes on to say that it was something of an achievement for a small mill in the Beenleigh District to win first prize for sugar in Paris, competing against, Cuba, Jamaica and other world famous sugar growing centres. It was the bank crashes of the early 1890s which killed the sugar industry in the Beenleigh area.

The first school at Indooroopilly Pocket – today known as Ironsides State School
Before their first school was established where Ironside is today the Watt children would go to school by rowing across the river and walk up through the bush along Gladstone Road to a school near Fish Lane in South Brisbane. When the Indooroopilly Pocket school opened (Ironside) it was a blessing for the farmers of St Lucia, and three of the Watt children were the first to enrol (they were James, Andrew and David). A Mr Arthy was their first teacher. Our research has shown that in 1870 at a meeting of the inhabitants of the Prior’s and Long Pocket chaired by R. Jarrott with Alexander Watts secretary and William Dart treasurer, it was agreed to raise funds to erect a new school house and residence for a teacher. It was one of the first non-private schools to open west of Brisbane, although it had been preceded by Mr Turner’s private classes costing 1/- per week. The school began in a slab building which was situated in the grounds of the present day Ironside school.

**Robert Jarrott**

My information on Robert Jarrott came from Keith Jarrott who wrote his family story *Aylesbury to Brisbane* in 1984. I came across his story when researching the Dart home (which is still standing) across the river at Chelmer. The Chelmer house began as a two or three room cottage when William Dart Snr. left Coldridge and took his family over the river following his son William’s marriage to Betsy Payne in 1860. Edward Jarrott (son of Robert Jarrott) purchased it in 1877. It was either William Dart or Edward Jarrott who made it into the very large home we see today. In those days it was surrounded by farmland. The Dart land contained two portions, 12 and 16, totalling around 90 acres, the land ran from the Brisbane river to the other side of Oxley Road.

It was sometime in late 1856 that Robert Jarrott and his wife Laura made a decision to migrate to Australia from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, England. They went by rail to Cheddington where they caught the London-Birmingham train to Liverpool to embark on the *Hastings* on their journey to Moreton Bay as assisted migrants.

At first Jarrott followed his trade as a boot and shoe maker in Brisbane, but by August 1859 he had turned to market gardening. He purchased land from John Isaac Markwell, Allotment 22 which was 9 acres, 30 perches, Parish of Enoggera at Sylvan Road (Milton as it was known in those days). It was near what is now the railway embankment and Toowong Park. This would be close to where the well-known Chinese market gardens of Toowong were located.

He cleared and farmed the land until the severe floods of 1863 and 1864 forced him to seek higher ground. Keith Jarrott goes on to say ‘Contrary to the oft repeated stories that the banks of the Brisbane river were covered in dense rainforest, this part of Milton was predominantly swamp or open forest. The survey marks on the corners were on trees – mahogany, gum and ash.’ J.B. Fewings mentioned Robert Jarrott as among the first thirty settlers in the area. The *Moreton Bay Courier* of 12 August 1861 wrote that he had planted shaddock (poor man’s orange).

It appears that Robert Jarrott was always civic minded, in 1860 his name was included among those who signed a petition for the repair of the road from Moggill to Brisbane.
In 1862 Robert Jarrott was listed in *The Queenslander* as among those farming at Oxley. Jarrott’s farm was illustrated in the article. It was two A-shaped slab sided huts erected like a tent with a bearded farmer sitting on a chair at the entrance to one hut. There was a large tub at the front, a billy hanging on the ridge pole, an axe on a stump and a workman carrying a mattock. Keith Jarrott’s research shows that he leased the farm near Oxley Creek, he did not purchase it.

Portion 67 Parish of Indooroopilly (incl subsequent sub-division)
McKellar Map mid 1890s

In 1863 Robert Jarrott purchased Portion 67 on the riverbank at Indooroopilly from Isaac Markwell who had bought it at a crown land sale in 1862. He paid £4.6.0 an acre for 21 acres. In 1865 the *Moreton Bay Courier* reported:

Mr Jarrott of George Street, whose farm is situated above Oxley Creek, on the opposite bank of the river, has for several years been experimenting in the cultivation of potatoes. At the spring Show, the government announced ‘it will open a road skirting the Long Pocket from Lang Farm to the furthest farm (R. Jarrott), a distance of some miles. Over 500 acres hitherto almost shut out from the market owing to river distance – in the case of Mr Jarrott’s farm (by land 5 miles, by water over 11 miles), by land it is impracticable by drays at present.’

Thomas Pamphlet described the Long Pocket site in 1824
We found the brush so thick, and the country so rough, that it was impossible, naked and shoeless as we were, to travel it.

Pamphlet, Finnegan and Parsons returned by canoe to the south bank of the river where they were able to walk through the open forest along the riverbank.

Jarrott’s Indooroopilly farm is now part of the Indooroopilly golf course at the upstream end. It stretched from the present Harts Road to the river and was situated where Thomas’s Bougainvillea gardens can still be seen.

Most of Portion 67 would have been covered in rain forest when Robert purchased the land and with his sons he had a gigantic task in felling and burning the trees and undergrowth. Remnants of the local rainforest survived a half kilometre downstream to late 1982 but a court case permitted the Golf Club to sell the rainforest patch for sub-division. Robert’s land, Portion 67 has a frontage to Brisbane River of 375 yards (337 metres) and part of Indooroopilly Island was offshore. This island was reduced in size in the 1974 flood, and is famous or infamous for its colony of flying foxes. It is on record in the 1870s that on one of the farms across the river at Tennyson, the flying foxes ate bananas and other fruit. Their range covers several miles and the colony still heads for suburban gardens 120 years later. This part of the riverbank and golf course still harbours scrub ticks and was avoided by residents exercising their dogs at least as late as the early 1970s.

The move from George Street, Brisbane to Portion 67 Indooroopilly occurred in late 1867. How did Robert and his family move their furniture? The Moggill Road from town had a long history of disrepair and the track around to Jarrott’s part of Indooroopilly was described in March 1868 as dangerous. In spite of the lack of a made road, the furniture was probably moved by wagon. The alternative, by barge up river would have involved two handlings, loading on to a barge at the river end of Ann Street, and then offloading onto a makeshift jetty and manhandling the family’s furniture across the newly established orchard and up the hill to the house which would have been almost at Harts Road level. No description of the Jarrott home has been located but considerable details of the farm were published in the 1860s and 1870s. For instance, in the week ended 2 Nov. 1867 the *Brisbane Courier* wrote of a visit from Mr Cribb’s Lang Farm at St Lucia to that of Mr Jarrott:

> We were pleased with the vigorous way in which the land is being brought under cultivation … In places the road is very bad and as a considerable amount of produce is brought over it, it well deserves looking into. The farms look well but are in want of rain. There are some fine lucerne patches.

The Indooroopilly home of Robert Jarrott would have been a lively place on 11 July 1868 when Rev. H.J. Lavers (Wesleyan) performed a double wedding. Two of the Baldwin girls were the brides. Maria married William Jarrott and Emily married Mr H G. Costin. Maria and Emily had arrived in Moreton Bay with their parents Joseph and Ann Baldwin in *The Light of the Age*, a migrant ship, in 1864.
Robert Jarrott was a member of the East Moreton Farmers Association from its beginning in 1867 to its demise in 1878 and was active on the committee for most of those years. The Darts, both father and son, were also members. Later the Association amalgamated with the National Association to become the Royal National Association (which runs our ‘Ekka’).

In 1868 he occupied the chair at the Indooroopilly branch of the Farmers’ Association. The planting and pruning of cotton, sugar growing and a proposed sugar mill were discussed (this was the meeting noted by both the Watt and Dart families). Robert J. expanded on the advantages to small farmers from having cane sugar crushed on their own ground. At a subsequent meeting the minimum sum was subscribed for Messrs W. Dart Jnr. and A. Watt to negotiate with Mr Booth to erect a mill at once. Keith does not know if it was a co-operative mill built by William Dart in 1871.

It appears that Robert Jarrott had little involvement with sugar cane growing. Keith Jarrott writes from the Queenslander of 5 June 1869.

Vegetables were no longer the major produce of Robert Jarrott. The orchard was increasing in importance and Robert’s pioneering in citrus growing was being recognised … Mr Jarrott’s orangery on Brisbane River is one of the largest in the State – 400 to 500 bearing trees on scrub land of about 10 acres…. A large dam is being stretched across a natural reservoir, it is of clay, got close alongside and will enclose a very large body of water at a height sufficient to irrigate nearly the entire orchard. The pines here are magnificent, those of the smooth leaf Cayenne in particular and a few will probably be at the forthcoming Show in Brisbane.

The Indooroopilly Road Trust

On 18 March 1868, the road problem was taken to the Minister of Works by a deputation (Messrs Ewart, Jarrott and Pitman) representing the Indooroopilly residents:

Urging on him the desirableness of repairing the road leading from Moggill Road into their locality … can carry considerable traffic … presently is dangerous and has impracticable parts.

The Minister, Mr Palmer, stated he would instruct Mr Longland’s road overseer to examine the report with a view to having the road repaired. A letter appeared in The Queenslander of 4 April 1868 in connection with the road request

We mostly have [to use] boats. No. 1 boat cost £25 and was used up after five years’ service. No. 2 boat cost £26 and is now worth £5. No. 3 boat cost £30 and after three months is badly eaten with cobra – repairs are necessary. Others come to grief by accident; conveyance of produce by river is no trifling expense and time consuming. We need roads and drays. We would rather pay a tax on road use.

More success in encounters with government occurred for Indooroopilly farmers in March 1871 when an Indooroopilly Road Trust was approved. The venue for the inaugural meeting was the Indooroopilly School (Ironsides). These road trusts were the forerunner of Shire Councils. The Trust
members were Robert Jarrott, W. Spode, W. Penman, W. Dart, and W. Pitman (butcher) and they would be responsible for 5-1/4 miles of roads.

At the inaugural meeting of the Trust on 22 February 1871, the farmers agreed to supplement the expected grant by providing the cartage of road material. The department recommended spending £20 per mile on 5-1/4 miles of road. The Minister inspected a proposed road in April 1871, which was to run along a ridge through Prior’s and Haly’s properties. The Indooroopilly Road Board favoured this as it would assist the carriage of crops from 300 acres of hay, green fodder, fruit and cotton. A sugar mill and a butchering establishment would be accessible. The road engineer pointed out to the Minister that compensation to Prior and Haly of £203 would be required.

In April 1872 a second £50 was requested, to repair work started and damaged by the summer rains but only £20 was granted. In October 1872, the Board was faced with some local objection, so the Minister called for a report by E.H. Alder, Chief Overseer. He upheld the work carried out by the Board as follows:

I have visited the works and failed to see any reason for such objection, inasmuch as the improvements are suitable, fairly executed, and at parts of the road where they will benefit the largest number of settlers. The improvements in progress are well calculated to benefit the community generally.

The dissenting members of the Trust are of the opinion that a portion of the funds could be expended with greater advantage by cutting down and forming a steep slippery ascent near Messrs. Spode’s and Penman’s farms. This opinion I cannot support, but I would recommend that £20 be specially granted for this work as being much required.

The Indooroopilly Road through to Long Pocket was completed in 1872. The Road Boards were superseded by Divisional Boards and Shire Councils in the early 1880s.

£60 was granted for 1873 after a request by Robert Jarrott as chairman on 20 May, 1873. A flood occurred on 24 June, 1873 in the Brisbane River. Indooroopilly farmers suffered from that flood according to the *Brisbane Courier* of 9 August. Crops were destroyed, wharves and lands were loosened or flooded. The roads had since been repaired.

The use of Prior’s Pocket as an address is a puzzle as in correspondence with the Minister for Works, Robert Jarrott used Indooroopilly as his address, and that of his colleagues and neighbours appointed to the Indooroopilly Road Trust

**Jarrott account of the Indooroopilly Pocket school:**

Next comes the Jarrott account of the school at Ironsides when Keith Jarrott writes:

The details of an early school at Indooroopilly are obscure but one did exist before a meeting was held at the ‘old schoolhouse’. A deputation was appointed to seek a government primary
school (Queenslander 5 August, 1868). Messrs R. Middleton, R. Jarrott, W. Dart and A. Watts were to ask the owner of ‘Cross Roads’ (Murray Prior) for land for the proposed school. More than 70 children could attend. £51 was subscribed at the meeting. Another effort for a school occurred in September 1870.

A successful drive for a school was made in September 1870, the proposed location being at the Pocket. Robert Jarrott was in the chair. No other details were located in the newspaper but by February 1871 the Indooroopilly National School was opened at Prior’s Pocket. Speakers included Robert Jarrott. The 1871 census recorded 83 farms and a population of 493 at Indooroopilly.

Possible occasional use of this school by residents was a key issue in a letter written by Robert Jarrott on 22 May 1872 to the Board of Education, Queensland. He sought ‘use of the school for mutual improvement and advocacy of total abstinence. Knowing of the government restrictions, religious controversy and political subjects would not be discussed.’ The Board replied: ‘they cannot consistently with their regulations, comply with the request’

This was in a period of rapid expansion of the Good Templar Lodge movement. Robert Jarrott had spoken on 18 June at the Oxley Primitive Methodist Church (remember this is the church to which the Darts belonged) on the Good Templar movement and a week later an Indooroopilly Good Templar Lodge (No. 8) named A Shining Light was formed. The Queenslander of 29 June 1872 reported on the lack of a proper place of meeting; both the National School and the chapel [at Ironsides] had been refused them, but the fact that ‘the W.C.T. is Robert Jarrott Snr. is a guarantee that this difficulty will soon be overcome.’

An 1872 description of driving from Jarrott’s farm to the Dart mill.

In 1872, a journalist with the Brisbane Telegraph, ‘Old Tom’, after describing Oxley, crossed the river from Fisher’s farm at the Twelve Mile to Spode’s farm, and then visited Jarrott’s farm residence a little further up the river. ‘Old Tom’ wrote;

As I had not been for some years in this direction I was extremely gratified at such abundant proof of property among the Indooroopilly farmers.

Mr Robert Jarrott’s farm, orangery and nursery – for it partakes of all these designations – is replete with interesting objects of agricultural and horticultural beauty and crowning all in my humble opinion, one feature of farm economy that deserves special mention and imitators – well kept grounds. To the left of the snug dwelling house are long rows of trellised grape vines of assorted varieties, but during the last two years these have suffered severely from oidum tuckeril – sulphur is useless. Mr Jarrott will turn out the grape vines and plant other crops. Along the ridge on the right are the milking yards, piggeries, tool shed and other outhouses. Well fed cows were being milked. The pigs looked well fed.

An ugly dry watercourse in recent years has been made into a spacious deep reservoir (filled at present) and is fitted with a force pump and hose. The reservoir is 30 feet above the lowest ground. The cost of the dam was considerable. The orangery at the foot of the hill has 500
trees of various sorts. Figs, bananas and the mammoth lemon 27 inches in girth and 7 lb in weight; shaddock and citron were fine. Three magnificent walnut trees 7 years old will bear in a few years.

Mr Jarrott has planted a little sugar cane on a few patches but cutting, carting and puntng to the mill is likely to be too expensive. A friendly lift in Mr Jarrott’s market cart enabled me to visit several farms down river. We had a friendly hour’s chat on the cart. Mr Jarrott is the chairman of the Indooroopilly Road Board.

It takes a shortcut through sliprails in the fences of sundry unimproved properties and a few snug clearings … Many of the residents have benefited but have lent their aid in the shape of horses and carts to supplement the grant of the Ministry [to the Indooroopilly and other Road Trusts]. I think absentee owners ought to contribute by a land tax.

We pass the village school house and place of worship (the latter on a primitive scale). At Pitman’s the scent of the slaughter yards is far from odoriferous and necessitates one to take long sniffs and hurry by and get down to the sugar mill and the property of Dart Jnr. Mr Dart, like his father on the other side of the river, has a goodly breadth of land under cane and a steam sugar mill on his own property … I missed the order and cleanliness apparent at the mills of Dr Waugh and Berry. Mr Dart has been patronised by farmers in his immediate neighbourhood – 12 acres of his own and cane from farms of Jarrott, Watts, Lane, McMahon, Carmody, Strong and others. Cane of the De Jongh variety gives very satisfactory results. Malabar was highly spoken of also. Mr Watts is experimenting on Chicago, De Jongh, Salangore and ribbon.

In May 1873, a meeting of the residents of Toowong and Indooroopilly decided to initiate a Penny Reading class on the Friday before each full moon [at what is now Ironsides State School]. Mr Arthy (school teacher) was elected as Secretary and Edward Jarrott (son of Robert Jarrott) as Treasurer. The meeting hoped for gifts of books and was held in the schoolroom at Prior’s Pocket. The BrisbaneCourier gave a boost to the Indooroopilly Penny Reading of 4 September by reporting:

Mr Arthy’s musical class, after only fifteen lessons in singing, astonished their friends. To all who enjoy an evening’s ride in the bush and an hour’s good amusement, we strongly advise a Penny Reading at Indooroopilly.

William Jarrott (Robert Jarrott’s other son) and Mr Arthy’s paths were to converge in 1877 when William, having been appointed by the Education Department as a country music instructor, was 'shown the ropes’ by Mr Arthy who had become the music instructor for the metropolitan schools.

A political meeting on the Jarrott farm (possibly for the first and only time) occurred in November 1873. The BrisbaneCourier of 20 November states:

Mr S.W. Griffith addressed electors of Oxley at Mr Robert Jarrott’s residence at Indooroopilly. Mr Jarrott was in the chair. Thanks were expressed by Messrs A. Watts and W. Dart.
S.W. Griffith was later to become Premier of Queensland, Sir Samuel Griffith, and eventually Chief Justice of Queensland.

1873 was an eventful year for the Jarrots. Land leased by Robert J. at Oxley (Chelmer) from W. Dart Sr. was affected by the construction of the Brisbane to Ipswich railway line. Part of Portion 16, Parish of Oxley, was resumed and Robert Jarrott claimed compensation. He also claimed compensation in respect of a lease of Portion 12, Parish of Oxley, also owned by W. Dart Sr. After some correspondence and an agreement by the Railway Department to provide a cattle ‘creep’ or ‘race’ under the rail embankment he accepted some compensation.

Portion 12 was 44 acres in extent before the resumption and was subdivided at the termination of R.J’s lease. The western subdivision was bought by Robert’s sons, William and Edward Jarrott in 1877. William may have been farming on the Chelmer lease at this time but Edward, in January 1875, and for some time previously, was the sugar boiler for William Dart Jnr. at his mill at Indooroopilly.

Possibly from the proceeds of the compensation received in 1874 from the Railway Dept., Robert Jarrott purchased Sub. 2 of Portion 34 Indooroopilly from WJ. Munce. This is on the south side of Lambert Road. Title was registered in February 1874. On 2 October 1875, a proposed road resumption appeared in *The Queenslander*. This showed that Sub 2 of Portion 34 was fenced and unoccupied. Sub 1 of 34 was unimproved forest land and Portion 39 (on the west side of 34) was fenced and unoccupied.

The resumption from Sub 2 was registered in July 1876 and the main part of Sub 2 was sold to George S. Lambert as per registered transfer of 6 February 1877. Part of the Portion was flooded in 1893. It had become prime residential land by the 1950s and parts were again flooded in January 1974. It is bounded by Lambert Road on the north, Indooroopilly Road on the east, Portion 33 on the south and St Peters College on the west.

Edward Jarrott married Sarah Strong of Oxley in 1875. Sarah was born at Bulimba on 13 July 1853, the Strong family having arrived at Brisbane several years ahead of the Jarrots. Edward must have done his courting by row boat as the Strongs lived on the south bank Indooroopilly Reach of the river and the Jarrots lived on the opposite bank.

To link the Jarrott farm with Sub 2 of Portion 34, Robert J. purchased Portion 33 from J.E.O Daly. This was registered on 25 August 1876 and contained 35 acres. It is bounded today by Harts Road on the south, Indooroopilly Road on the east, St Peter’s College on the west and the northern boundary is a line between Lohe and Garema Streets.

This land was quickly subdivided and an advertisement appeared in the *Brisbane Courier* of 28 October 1876.

Advertisment by John Cameron – by order of Robert Jarrott:
Five 4-acre blocks – opposite the residence and orangery of Robert Jarrott; adjacent to new residence being erected for G.L. Hart, adjoining property of E.M. Long; only 3/4 mile distant from Witton Rail Station; quarter cash and balance 3, 6, and 9 months, 8% interest added.

Plan of Subdivision Portion 33, Lots 1-5 Parish Indooroopilly. The aspect and formation of the foregoing property is everything that could be wished for gentleman’s villas. Monday 30 October.

Possibly G.L. Hart had purchased 15 acres of Portion 33. Sales of the subdivisions didn’t eventuate. In July 1877 Portion 33 was mortgaged to Henry Jordan and following Robert Jarrott’s death on 9 January 1879 it was transferred to Jordan on 10 January, 1879.

Keith Jarrott wrote: Robert Jarrott’s Dam between the river and Hart’s Road (Indooroopilly golf club land up near Bougainvillea gardens) has survived, and is situated as a hazard immediately in front of the 17th tee on the golf course. It is covered with reeds etc. and if one stands quietly for a few minutes, many water hens emerge from hiding to resume eating. One of Mr Thomas’ grand-daughters recalls helping him clear the dam of weed and it was used by him to water his cattle. Let’s put it on record that the dam built by Robert Jarrott in 1869 is likely to be the oldest surviving farm dam in Greater Brisbane.