

THE PORT OF HOBART

It was from Admiral D'Entrecasteaux's vessel, RECHERCHE, that the Derwent River was first navigated by the white man in 1793.

However, it was not until 1804 that Lieut. Governor David Collins and the Rev. Robert Knopwood discovered a deep cove running apparently into the very bowels of the mountain; they named it Sullivan Cove after the then Under-Secretary, and so the Port of Hobart was founded.

Governor Collins writing to his superior, Governor King of New South Wales, described the site he had selected for the new settlement in these words:

" In the centre of this Cove is a small Island, connected with the Main Land at low water, admirably adapted for the landing and reception of stores and provisions. Round this Island is a Channel for a Boat, at the Head of which is a run of clear fresh water, proceeding from a distance inland, and having its source in a Rock in the vicinity of the Table Mountain named in the French Chart 'Le Plateau'. The ground on each side of the run is of gradual ascent, and upon the next the Cove I have formed my Camp. The OCEAN and LADY NELSON are lying within half a cable's length of the shore in about nine fathoms of water. "
(Despatch to King 29/2/1804)

The Infant Hobart

The Island, named after N.S.W. former Governor Hunter, under whom Collins had also served, was soon converted into a peninsula by building up the sand-spit to a causeway and then broadening it. And here were built the first jetties, at which were landed men and stores rowed over from vessels anchored south of them in the Cove. By 1822 there were three small jetties or wharves projecting from what was still called the "Island", named respectively the Colonial Wharf, the Government Wharf, and the King's Wharf. The Colony had already entered its third decade before moves were made to improve the berthing facilities to enable vessels to come alongside a wharf, and the site chosen for the "New Wharf" (renamed "Princess Wharf" in 1902) was the obvious one, on the southern side of the Cove, where not only was the water deepest but shelter from the wind was afforded by the high bluff known today as Battery Point.

The scheme as adopted involved the building of a waterfront road from near the present Parliament House to the Eastern end of Battery Point, cutting into the face of the bluff for the rock filling required. Convicts, using black blasting powder and the most primitive tools of the iron age, hewed away at the bluff behind, and trundled down the rock on barrows to the reclamation area. Others of them quarried rock from Kangaroo Bluff at Bellerive and towed it across the River in scows to the site. The work on the quay, begun in April 1830, was completed in May 1834.

Construction of wharves to the northward had been undertaken by the mid-century and the Port of Hobart Town had become a very busy centre. Whaling and wooden shipbuilding were both flourishing and the Colony was also a sizeable export of timber, wool and grain.

In 1865 with the advent of steamships more adequate berthage accommodation had become urgent and in the following year the Marine Board, which had been constituted on the 8th January 1858, awarded a contract for the construction of a pier 180 feet long opposite the end of Elizabeth Street, the work being completed in 16 months.

In 1874, congestion of the wharves having increased again, another pier was constructed off the end of Argyle Street, measuring 250 feet by 50 feet.

Due to the high rate of immigration and prosperity in the island, port facilities had to be increased several times.

Brooke Street Pier was renewed by contract in 1879, being widened and extended some eight years later, and Elizabeth Street Pier was lengthened by 40 feet. In 1882 the Board decided to lengthen Dunn Street Pier by 146 feet and in 1887 a tender was let to widen Argyle Street Pier.

A problem which faced the Board at this stage was the provision of a berth to accommodate vessels of 20 feet draught.

Much argument raged on the relative merits on the North and South of Sullivan's Cove. The issue was temporarily shelved, however, and a 50 foot extension of Dunn Street was proceeded with instead.

In 1890 a newly elected Board decided to extend the New Wharf, later to be known as Princes Wharf, by 450 feet eastward and 60 feet wide. The Board, at this stage, also decided to construct Franklin Pier which measured 210 feet by 50 feet.

Between 1899 and 1900 a ferry steamer pier was built off Market Wharf and the older timbers of the New Wharf were renewed and the first No. 2 Shed on this Wharf was constructed.

The new century found the Colony enjoying the effect of a trade boom with new demands being made on berthing facilities of the Port. To meet these demands Alexandra Pier (later to be renamed Queens Pier) was built in 1901-02, Elizabeth Street was renewed in 1903-04 and provided with a shed, and also a shed was constructed on Franklin Pier.

In its 50th Year of constitution the Board had still further problems with wharfage accommodation and the old Dunn Street Pier was replaced by Kings Pier, the largest yet, in 1910.

The development on the northern side of the Sullivan Cove, which had been a problem some 20 years before, was again considered and the Port of Hobart Improvement Act 1910, which authorised the Board to divert the course of the Hobart Rivulet, made way for development in this area.

From an examination of harbour improvements in 1911 by the Chief Engineer of the Sydney Harbour Trust, a comprehensive scheme was implemented involving the diversion of the Hobart Rivulet and the reclamation of nearly four acres of land to the northward and the construction of the Ocean Pier.

The building of Ocean Pier was completed in 1914. However, progress on the other portions of the scheme was slowed down by the intervention of World War I and the diversion of the Rivulet was not completed until some years later. The reclamation continued for nearly 25 years and eventually some 13 acres were reclaimed.

This new land is now being developed in the Port Expansion Project by the Board.

By the 1920's the older piers in the centre of the Cove were coming to the end of their useful lives and their replacement was considered.

Argyle Street and Elizabeth Street Piers were both demolished and on the approximate site of the former, a new pier of 500 feet by 120 feet, with a shed 435 feet by 65 feet, wholly in reinforced concrete was erected. This pier was named Elizabeth Street Pier and was opened in 1934. As a wholly concrete structure it was unique at the time in the Commonwealth and being brilliantly lit according to the standards of incandescent lighting of the time, was considered one of the best illuminated in the World.

With the success of Elizabeth Street Pier construction, the Board embarked on the reconstruction of Princes Wharf in the new medium, the work being carried out in three sections.

The accommodation again being overtaxed just prior to the Second World War, the Board again considered proposals to provide accommodation off Macquarie Point. However, it was decided to construct at the far end of the reclamation, the Oil Berth for the use of the tankers which had been obliged in the past to berth at Ocean Pier. This was completed in 1939.

The post war boom applied severe pressure on the berthing facilities, the old timber piers of which by now were fast approaching a stage when their continued use could no longer be considered safe. A fire in 1948 which destroyed the passenger and cargo shed on Ocean Pier No. 2 and the outer 80 feet of the berth aggravated the situation.

The Board therefore rehabilitated Queens and Kings Pier at this stage. (Queens Pier has now been demolished.)

Reluctant to provide any further works in timber, the Board undertook the extension of Princes Wharf and provision of a concrete shed thereon, which was completed in 1953.

Since then new berths have been completed at Macquarie Point No. 4, Macquarie Wharf No. 2, Macquarie Wharf No. 1, and Macquarie Wharf No. 3 (replacement of Ocean Pier). It is worthy of note that the Macquarie No. 2 Berth had a shed constructed thereon 475 feet long and 150 feet wide which provides over an acre and a half of covered space clear of any obstructing internal columns.

In view of the changing pattern of sea transportation methods, the Board constructed a new berth at Princes No. 4 to provide accommodation for the vehicular/passenger vessel EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA which commenced operation in January 1965; also, alteration by way of floor strengthening, apron widening, provision of marshalling area and ramp loading facilities at the Princes No. 1 Berth to accommodate new roll-on roll-off vessels which were introduced to the Mainland/Hobart cargo services in May 1964.

OTHER FACILITIES

Within this complex at Princes, Kings and Macquarie Wharves are refrigeration facilities for the pre-chilling of Tasmania's apple and pear crops prior to shipment. The capacity of the chilling compartments allow for some 160,000 cases of fruit to be stored at one time.

Also within the Sullivan Cove area are Constitution and Victoria

Docks. These havens for small craft are used principally by Hobart's fishing fleet. In January each year Constitution Dock is made available to the yachts competing in the now famous deep water yachting classic, the Sydney to Hobart Race.

Up river from Sullivan's Cove is to be found the oil berth at Selfs Point and a mile beyond this the Electrolytic Zinc Company's Wharf at Risdon handles the export of manufactured zinc and the import of zinc concentrates and phosphate rock.

ADMINISTRATION

In any business operation a proper system of administration is necessary, and the efficiency of the Port has a marked effect on the welfare and prosperity of the community as a whole. In the early days of the Port, administration had been in the hands of an Officer appointed by the Governor of the Colony, but as the Port grew in size this system proved ineffective in planning a consistent administrative policy. Eventually, in 1858, the then Governor, Sir Henry Fox-Young proclaimed the formation of a Marine Board of Hobart, which consisted of five members to administer the business of the Port. Over the years this number has been increased to nine. Known as Wardens of the Marine Board of Hobart, these gentlemen represent the importers, exporters and shipowners of the Port and are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the Port is kept viable and that Port facilities meet the requirements of modern cargo handling practices.

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

Although this pamphlet is designed to offer information about the Port facilities immediately adjacent to the City of Hobart, it is considered that it would be prudent to say a little about the area of Tasmania's Coastline for which the Marine Board of Hobart is responsible.

The Board is responsible for approximately three-quarters of Tasmania's Coastline reaching from Cape Portland on the North-East tip down the East Coast, along the South Coast and up the West Coast to a point a few miles south of Sandy Cape. Within this area are to be found the Port of Spring Bay on the East Coast which handles the large bulk carrier vessels engaged in the recently introduced export of woodchips to Japan. Situated further South on the banks of the Huon River is Port Huon. Being situated in the heart of the fruit growing area, this Port has been developed primarily for that trade and each year approximately one-third of Tasmania's fruit export passes through this Port.

Closer to Hobart in North West Bay will be found the Port facilities used by carbide works at Electrona.

On the West Coast is the Port of Strahan. Situated in the shelter of Macquarie Harbour, the Port was developed to meet the needs of the mining industry at Queenstown some 25 miles inland.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

The rapid and revolutionary changes in the modes of handling seaborne cargoes found the Port of Hobart, in common with all major World ports, not structured to fully cope with these new methods.

Fortunately these shortcomings were soon appreciated and an extensive development programme was given maximum priority to provide Tasmania's major port with up to the minute facilities capable of handling all types of unitised cargoes.

The programme called for the development of the area known as Macquarie Point. Situated on the northern end of the existing port complex, it is providing three new berths together with large cargo marshalling areas.

Two of these new berths, known as Macquarie Nos. 5 and 6, are now complete. Both berths are equipped with roll-on roll-off facilities designed to accommodate the range of modern vessels operated by the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand Limited, both in their interstate services and Trans Tasman service. The large wharf aprons are prestressed to withstand axle loadings of 70 tonnes and the 10.97 m wide ramps connecting the ship to shore are capable of withstanding 'live loads' of 210 tonnes. The combination of these two factors allows for the rapid movement of all forms of unitised cargo and current statistics show that a turn round of 7,800 tonnes of general cargo is being handled in a working period of $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Associated with these two roll-on roll-off berths are two large single span all-weather cargo sheds and $10\frac{1}{2}$ acres of sealed cargo marshalling area.

The third and final berth to complete the project is now under construction. Known as Macquarie No. 4, the 243.8 m general purpose berth will connect the southern end of No. 5 to the outer end of No. 3 berth.

Due for completion late 1977, this berth with a minimum water depth of 12.8 m at the wharf face, will accommodate the largest general cargo carriers, both unit load and conventional, afloat.

A sealed area of 9 acres adjacent to the berth will allow adequate space for the handling of cargoes.

In excess of 100 mechanical cargo handling units are owned and operated by the Marine Board of Hobart, including fork lift trucks ranging in capacity from 4,000 lbs. to 56,000 lbs.

The Board's most powerful and versatile piece of cargo handling equipment now in use in the Port is a 254 tonne Coles "Colossus" fully mobile crane.

Currently the "Colossus" is the largest and most powerful full slewing and luffing mobile crane in Australia and also in the Southern Hemisphere.

The principal characteristics of the Coles "Colossus" are:

Lifting capabilities	-	172.7 tonnes at 9.1 m radius
		122.9 tonnes at 12.2 m radius
		33.5 tonnes at 30.5 m radius
		14.7 tonnes at 48.8 m radius

The Board's choice of this crane in preference to other container and unit load cargo cranes in other Australian Ports was influenced by three principal considerations -

1. Lower initial cost with consideration of the wharf supporting structure.
2. Versatile lift capability.
3. Overall mobility and suitability for operations other than wharfside cargo handling.

The lifting capability of this unit enables the port to service the largest unit load carrying vessels currently in service, at the same time providing the port with a heavy lift facility.

In summing up, the Marine Board of Hobart has provided the Port of Hobart with a berthing complex at Macquarie Point and a cargo handling facility that places Tasmania's capital city port in World class.

GENERAL

When the Marine Board was first formed in 1858 the largest vessel trading out of the Port was the CITY OF HOBART, a vessel of 617 tons, whilst today the largest vessels to have entered the Port are the R.M.S. QUEEN MARY and QUEEN ELIZABETH of 81,237 and 83, 673 gross tons, respectively. However, these vessels did not use the wharf facilities but anchored in the steam.

The largest vessel entering the Port which has used the existing facilities is the R.M.S. ORIANA of 41,915 gross tons, when the vessel berthed at Macquarie No. 2 Berth. This berth accommodates the 820 ft. long LASH (Lighter Aboard Ship) vessels now regularly servicing Hobart.

Although Hobart is at its busiest during the fruit export season, there is a steady flow of shipping traffic throughout the year, including many overseas ships bringing necessary materials for Tasmanian industry.

In 1858, when the Marine Board commenced to function, the arrivals at Hobart, including whalers, comprised 351 vessels, aggregating less than 60,000 tons. In the year July 1974 to June 1975, 772 vessels with a gross tonnage of 3,581,833 tons visited the Port.

For the same 1974/75 period imports amounted to 1,361,986 tonnes and exports 1,557,175 tonnes, a total of 2,919,161 tonnes.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- THE MONUMENT:** situated between Macquarie No. 1 Wharf and Victoria Dock, was unveiled in 1954 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to commemorate the landing in 1804 by Governor Collins and is standing closely to the spot where records show the landing was made.
- THE CUSTOM HOUSE:** situated opposite Constitution Dock, was built in 1902. This fine example of sandstone masonry is considered one of the best preserved buildings remaining from that era.
- THE NEW MARINE BOARD BUILDING:** magnificently dressed in red granite from Coles Bay on Tasmania's East Coast, it is considered a splendid example of the Board's awareness of necessity, when building, to retain the aesthetic beauty for which the Port is well known.
- SALAMANCA PLACE:** the spot to enjoy a picnic lunch and relax on the well kept lawns and seats provided by the Marine Board of Hobart. Salamanca Place, the original warehouse area of the Port, today retains an abundance of the original architecture of that period.
- MOUNT NELSON SIGNAL STATION:** is a 'must' for those who wish to take advantage both of a panoramic view of the Port of Hobart and visit the signal station, which for many years was a vital link in the chain of communication from Port Arthur to Hobart Town. Established in 1840 this station, complete with its original equipment, is maintained by the Board for the pleasure of both visitors to Tasmania and Tasmanians.