

12. Decades of development, 1949-1974

In 1974 the Clarence Council wrote a submission for funds, describing the municipality's difficult situation caused by its huge growth. Since 1947 Clarence had grown seven-fold, more than any other area in Tasmania. These were the population figures:

1947	5,268
1957	17,783
1967	30,810
1972	37,940
1974	about 40,000 ¹

Why had all these people come to Clarence? It was not for employment, for even in 1974, Clarence only provided 6% of the jobs in the metropolitan district. Most people worked in Hobart or Glenorchy, often in their many new factories. They lived in Clarence because it was attractive, because land was available for building or because the Housing Department sent them there. Once water was available from the early 1950s, the number of residents soared. Most came from other areas of Tasmania, some from the mainland and a few from overseas.

An example of a migrant family from England were the Galloways, who arrived in the early 1950s, aiming for a better life and fresh start. Joe Galloway, an electrician, came first, and lived in a shack at Opossum Bay while he bought a block in Bellerive and built a house. His brother, a ship's carpenter, came to Hobart and stayed for a few months to help him. Joe's wife and small children arrived later, but Bridget Galloway found Bellerive too hot. She was homesick and missed her family – in the 1950s there was little opportunity or money to return to Britain to see them – but Joe loved Bellerive, with its warm climate, beautiful beach and fresh fruit. Without a car the family stayed mainly in Bellerive, for shopping and entertainment.²

Many 'New Australians', immigrants from Continental Europe, came to Tasmania, but few came to Clarence, especially in the 1950s. More came in the 1960s. Jack van Dongen came from Holland, and in 1962 built a house in Rokeby, because it was so peaceful and charming. 'We just

¹ *Eastside* 25.4.74

² Information from John Galloway

loved it.’ The people were welcoming, and ‘we got accepted into the community very well indeed’. The services were poor, but ‘we were very happy’.³

Nick Martelli arrived from Italy in 1953, and came to Bellerive in 1969. It was a nice place to live, he recalled. At first in Tasmania it had been difficult to obtain any Italian products and he had missed them, but by the 1960s a variety was available. He felt welcome in Bellerive generally, ‘though there was always the exception’. Anne Matz also arrived earlier from Europe, in her case Austria, and moved to Bellerive in 1968, urged by friends because a house on a beautiful site was to be auctioned. She bought it, and enjoyed living in Bellerive, becoming prominent in the Bellerive Progress Association – ‘I always tried to do what I could’. There were some other immigrants, and Greek families often ran corner shops. Most old inhabitants welcomed the newcomers and enjoyed the new ideas they brought to Clarence life – ‘they were accepted’, recalled Dr Bill Young.

These immigrants helped change the pattern of employment in Clarence. Between 1946 and 1970 the percentage of people in professional and semi-professional jobs tripled, though was still only 9% in 1970; clerical workers doubled to 19%, and skilled and semi-skilled also doubled to 21%, the largest group. Unskilled workers fell by half to 7%, and farmers fell from 7% to 1%, not so much because their numbers declined, though they did somewhat, but because they were swamped by urban dwellers. Overall, the skill level of the population rose considerably, though this was probably more of a nation-wide move than peculiar to Clarence. Children coming into the workforce were more highly trained, though it is also possible that the newcomers were more skilled than the original population.

The position of women also started to change. Most adult women had always been housewives, and housewives remained by far the largest group in the workforce – still 39% in 1970, though the figure had fallen. In 1946, 87% of women gave as their occupation ‘domestic duties’, and by 1970 this was 77%. So nearly a quarter of Clarence’s women had a job outside the home.

Another change came in the percentage of urban dwellers. By 1970, Bellerive had 33% of the population, Lindisfarne 30.5%, Warrane 15% and Risdon Vale 9% – a total of 87.5%. The rural areas had 12.5%, though this included towns like South Arm, Cremorne, Lauderdale and Seven Mile

³ Adnum pp 206-7

Beach, seaside towns rather than ‘the country’. Farmers, who had once formed almost the entire population of Clarence, were now a very small percentage, about 1%.⁴

Whether they came across the oceans from Europe or only from across the river, the huge number of newcomers needed houses. After the Second World War there was a great housing shortage. There had been little building during the war and now many young couples were wanting a home, and there had also been a rise in standards, so older housing was not always acceptable. Until 1953 building was limited, with Council receiving about 400 building applications a year, but from then on there was rapid growth, with up to 800 applications. In the early to mid-1960s there was a lull, but from 1968 the boom returned and lasted until 1975, with a record year in 1972/3 – 1073 applications. These houses were built by one of three groups: the Housing Department, commercial developers or private owners. Overall, the Housing Department built about 25% of the new houses, developers about 20%, and private builders half or more.⁵

After the war, the federal government made funds available for the construction of homes for ex-servicemen, which in Tasmania were administered by the Agricultural Bank. The Tasmanian Labor government was committed to providing good quality housing for everyone, and the scheme was extended to all those needing homes. In 1953 a separate body, the Housing Department, was set up to build homes. The Department was a major builder in Clarence, but never built half the houses in any one year – though in 1969/70 it came close, with 49.9%.⁶

The new homes were well-built with the amenities of electricity, running water and sewerage. At first there was criticism that they were small, all looked the same, and destroyed a site’s natural beauty; but gradually people accepted that the growing population had to live somewhere, that it was difficult to build hundreds of individual houses, and that the houses themselves were of a far higher standard than those previously available at low rent, in inner-city slums. The Housing Department was learning too, and the next thirty years saw a gradual convergence of views, as the public softened and the Department incorporated new ideas into its suburbs.⁷

There were some problems with Housing Department homes. All tenants suffered to some degree from disadvantages inherent in this type of development: isolation, lack of facilities, no local

⁴ Electoral Rolls 1946 and 1970; for occupations, I studied half and a quarter of the population respectively and extrapolated from these figures.

⁵ CC ARs 50-75; CC 9.2.50, 12.3.53, 13.8.53, 26.5.55, 8.9.55, 23.2.56, 14.2.57; information from Ron Marriott

⁶ Director-General of Housing and Construction, Annual Reports 1980-1995 *passim*

industries and therefore employment, low-income residents, and ‘the stigma attached to any Housing Department development’. The Department’s main aim, especially at first, was to provide houses, and facilities tended to come second. The government ‘took a bloody-minded view’, said a later Housing Department director, and would only provide what private subdividers did and no more; and it was impossible to co-ordinate services, which were provided by different government departments. Shops, schools and bus services might not be, and often were not, ready on time, while the roads too might not be finished. ‘It was always difficult to push services through, especially in any co-ordinated manner.’⁸

The Department began with small subdivisions of sixty to seventy homes. One was built in Montagu Bay in about 1950. ‘That stirred things up’, commented resident Murray Crow. There was some criticism: ‘from an artistic point of view this was the beginning of the spoiling of Montagu Bay’, wrote resident Ruth Tinning; a *Mercury* letter-writer called Montagu Bay ‘a massed collection of tiny houses...an eyesore’; and Pat Knight’s father wrote to her, ‘They’re building Wog houses all over Montagu Bay, don’t come home’. But gradually everything calmed down. ‘It all looked very bare at first, but it wasn’t so bad when trees grew’, said Pat; ‘there weren’t so many problems here’, added Rob Oliver. One of the newcomers, Doris Brakey, agreed. ‘New houses were being built, and it was beautiful. We had a beautiful view. People didn’t mind the newcomers arriving.’⁹

With thousands wanting homes, small subdivisions were not enough, and the Department moved to ‘broad acre’ development, building hundreds of houses on large areas. The first was at Goodwood in Glenorchy, with 494 homes. Then the Department bought the Bignells’ farm, Warrane, at Kangaroo Bay and announced plans to build 1000 weatherboard homes there. The new suburb was called Warrane, an Aboriginal name originally pronounced Warra-né, meaning ‘azure sky’.¹⁰

Council was thrilled at the prospect of this development, even though it meant huge problems: the houses would have to be supplied with water and sewerage, which no one in Clarence had at that stage. Work began in February 1951, and by 1954, 410 mostly weatherboard homes had been built. Streets were named after explorers, a small shopping centre was erected, some trees were

⁷ *Mercury* 8.2.63 (history of Housing Department)

⁸ Woodruff p 12 (A); information from Colin Sproule

⁹ *Mercury* 8.2.63; information from Murray Crow, Pat Job, Rob Oliver and Doris Brakey; Tinning p 28; CC 27.3.50; *Mercury* 18.1.56

¹⁰ Milligan, TL

planted, and people moved in. The first had to have water tanks, but soon water was connected. By about 1956, 867 houses were completed.¹¹

The Housing Department moved to Chigwell, then decided to built a new suburb at Risdon Vale. A preliminary study advised against this, for the area was isolated with no transport, there were almost no jobs locally so people would have to travel some distance to work, and the new gaol would be undesirably close. But the Department went ahead – housing was short, land at Risdon Vale was available and cheap, and there was no easy alternative – and the first houses were completed in 1959. By 1964, 945 mostly weatherboard houses had been built. To serve them there was a set of seven shops and a skeleton bus service, begun in late 1960, but no other amenities at all.¹²

The Department moved back to Glenorchy, but after a few years returned to Clarence, first to the area adjacent to Warrane, where it bought the McDermotts' farm of Mornington. This was less isolated than Risdon Vale – the Department admitted that this had been a mistake – and new ideas in planning were used, so houses had front fences and concrete driveways, to increase people's pride in their homes. The Department planned 640 houses, and in 1968 the first people moved in – to great controversy. There were complaints that development left raw scars and the houses all looked the same, and headlines over incidents of alleged victimisation and rough behaviour, and plans to divide the new suburb by the Bellerive by-pass. A Sorell councillor called Mornington 'a disgrace...one of the worst things to ever happen on the eastern shore'.¹³ The Minister for Housing defended Mornington 'with the fervour of a crusader'. There had been some delays and difficulties, but Mornington would be a garden suburb, as good to live in as any in Australia. Eighteen different basic designs were used, with different materials and colours; people could have a garage or sun porch; and private blocks were scattered among the Department houses to provide variety.¹⁴

Next came Rokeby, where the Department began building mainly brick houses in 1970 – locals called the new development 'brick city'. Some areas were built in a version of the Radburn design, which aimed to foster interaction between residents and to separate traffic from pedestrians and parks. Only backyards were fenced, and front yards looked on to parks and paths, which the Department was taking much trouble to provide – in it older suburbs parks had taken up 5% of the

¹¹ CC 9.3.50, 27.3.50, 14.9.50, 12.10.50, 10.5.51, 14.5.53; *Mercury* 8.2.51, 14.5.54, 18.1.56, 9.3.56

¹² Woodruff pp 4-12; *Mercury* 8.2.63

¹³ *Eastside* 27.2.69, *SEM* 14.11.70;

¹⁴ *Eastside* 27.2.69, 1.5.69; *SEM* 14.11.70; *Mercury* 22.10.68

land, but the Rokeby figure was 13%. By 1976 the Department had built 735 houses, including some units for elderly people.¹⁵

In total the Housing Department built about 3200 homes in Clarence between 1950 and 1976. They provided a good standard of housing for thousands of people, but there were some problems. The influx of newcomers brought change, which was not always welcome. Rokeby was an example. In 1961 it was described as ‘peaceful Rokeby...one of Tasmania’s historic towns’, and its inhabitants loved its rural peace and friendliness. When building started, some old hands did not mind them – ‘they’ve never been any trouble to us’, said Mick Norris – and some did not want the atmosphere of Rokeby changed, but as Snowy Calvert said, ‘we couldn’t do much about it – they just bought land and built’. At first relations between old and new residents were ‘not very happy’ – ‘the Housing Department people wanted to change things’ – but ‘it has improved greatly now’, said Esther Hutchins in 1987. Some of the improvement came because those who disliked change moved away, like Adrian Collins. ‘I still have a soft spot for Rokeby, but it changed dramatically from the Rokeby we knew to the other one...we were perhaps a bit selfish expecting to get that sort of a lifestyle so close to town.’¹⁶

The people moving to Housing Department homes were by definition low income earners, and sometimes they were rougher than their neighbours. There were some problems with petty crime and vandalism. This, and the ‘working class’ image, led to a stigma on all Housing Department suburbs: ‘as each of us is aware, there is a certain – very negative – stigma which is attached to the name “Warrane”’, wrote a resident in 1974.¹⁷

In reality, thought Bill Young, there was not much of a problem with the Housing Department areas. ‘I never heard misgivings.’ Only a small minority of newcomers was rough and compulsory education made a difference, while most crime was petty – and theft of golf balls was just as much a problem on the golf course in Geilston Bay as in Warrane. Many thoughtful observers felt that the stigma came more from outsiders’ perception than from reality, though there certainly were some problems, especially for women at home. In an essay ‘What its like living in Risdon Vale’, a woman resident wrote that it was ‘for the most part frustrating, lonely and very unrewarding’. The suburb was isolated and lacked facilities, and women with young children at home, with nowhere to go and nothing to do, ‘more or less accept the fact that they are powerless to do anything about their lives’.

¹⁵ Martin pp 1-2; *Mercury* 15.4.71; Adnum p 176; information from Snowy Calvert

¹⁶ *SEM* 23.12.61; Adnum pp 21, 61, 85; information from Snowy Calvert and Mick Norris

Both Warrane and Risdon Vale were built with very amenities – minimal shops, a minimal bus service and not much else. When planning for Mornington was being discussed, a reporter hoped ‘that it will go about its business with little of the early Warrane fuss, bother, heartburning, and old-fashioned battling’. In later suburbs the Housing Department did provide more shops, better transport, parks, sports amenities and health facilities. Even so, some Rokeby residents made the front pages in 1974, when they complained that their houses were ‘little boxes on the hillside...and they all look just the same’, ‘a concentration camp’, the main problem being that the houses were so similar.¹⁸

But whenever such criticism was made publicly, other people rushed to defend their homes. Rokeby residents flooded the media with petitions, letters and irate calls; the Minister for Housing said the suburb was unfinished and would be fine in eighteen months; and residents said they loved their homes, their backyards and their verandahs, and wanted to form a progress association to fight for improvements. Uproar also broke out that year when a visiting authority on urban development said Risdon Vale was one of the most depressing areas he had seen. Ben McKay, local MLC, took him up. How could this ‘supposed expert’, after a fleeting glance, insult Risdon Vale’s inhabitants and destroy community pride? McKay himself had nothing but admiration for the community. ‘Risdon Vale is a pleasant, happy and well kept area and the residents give as much thought to their community as any other community in my area.’ The school was ‘wonderfully well supported’ by parents, and many community groups ran successfully. Risdon Vale had beautiful views and good houses, wrote a resident, and only needed ‘a bit of spit and polish’.¹⁹

In 1974 some residents of Flagstaff Gully, who to their irritation had Warrane as their postal address, suggested that as Warrane had a ‘sullied reputation’, the name should be changed. This brought many furious letters, arguing that whatever the address ‘I will still retain the same wife and children, the same dogs and chooks and the same good neighbours’, and that the ‘sullied reputation’ came from bad press coverage such as ‘Warrane Youth in Court’, never used for Sandy Bay youths, and from jealousy from those who did not obtain water and sewerage as soon as Warrane.²⁰

In most suburbs residents formed community groups which fought for better conditions, and many people remember enjoying life in Housing Department suburbs. Robin Pulford, a policeman,

¹⁷ *Eastside* 7.11.74; information from Bill Young

¹⁸ *SEM* 14.11.70, 22.6.74; Woodruff Addendum 2 (9)

¹⁹ *Mercury* 5.2.74, 6.2.74, 7.2.74, 8.2.74; *SEM* 29.6.74

²⁰ *Mercury* 8.4.74, 11.4.74, 5.12.74

moved to Risdon Vale in 1965. 'It was an interesting little place', he said. There was no obvious vandalism, and as in many places at the time, people did not lock their doors, and the children ran about freely with no problems. Robin was happy with his children's school, and was one of a group which built the local Anglican church. He was also on the hall committee, which put out a newsletter. Many people did not own cars and isolation was a problem as the bus service was poor, but overall it was a good community, 'all young families battling to do something'.

In 1955 the Brown family, with the first four of their thirteen children, moved to Warrane. Julia Brown remembered that she liked the newness and the suburb itself to a certain point, but at first facilities were lacking. The family did not own a car, and there were no shops or doctors and very poor public transport. They had to shop in Hobart and bring their groceries over on the ferry, which was difficult with young children. Also, Julia had grown up in Hobart with modern sanitation, and it was a shock to move into a house with a dunny in the back yard and a weekly pan collection. Gradually things improved, as shops were built, the bus service improved, a health centre was built and houses were sewerred, but still, said Julia, it was rather rough, with some vandalism – clothes could be stolen from the line – and there were some difficult neighbours. But 'on the whole you couldn't grumble' – you had a new house, other neighbours were friendly, the new schools were good though sometimes overcrowded, and when Eastlands opened this was a real help with shopping.

There was little stigma attached to the large subdivisions of commercial developers, which ranged from national names like A V Jennings to local firms. Large areas of Lindisfarne, Bellerive, Rosny, Howrah, Tranmere and Lauderdale were developed in this way, such as 'Linwood' behind Lindisfarne School, and 'Eastwood' at Howrah, both Jennings estates. There were smaller builders too, like Wicks and Nichols at Rokeby, who would build a house and sell it, then build another, and so on until they had developed a fairly large area. Because they were private firms, and because there was less controversy, less was written about these developments, but some of the same criticisms were made – the houses looked similar, the bush was turned into housing, and there were poor facilities, especially at first. One Warrane resident complained of 'ribbon development' in Lauderdale and Tranmere. But these people owned their own homes and tended to be more middle class, and there were fewer problems of vandalism and petty crime, and fewer headlines.²¹

Even less was written about people who bought a block of land and built their own homes, though they can tell their own stories. When Basil de la Bere returned from the war in 1948 he found

²¹ *Mercury* 11.4.74, 4.7.73, 18.4.73; Adnum p 52

that Bellerive had not changed much. In 1952 he married and bought land in Corinth St Howrah, but there were no services there – ‘no road, no transport, no milkman’ – so the couple bought land in central Bellerive, where there was still plenty of land. They built a house, as did many ex-servicemen like Basil, often banding together to help each other in the building.

Ted and Betty Marmion also married in 1952, and built in central Bellerive. ‘Bet said we had to have our own place, so we bought a block from Bet’s sister’, said Ted. ‘A lot of people built a few rooms or garages and lived in them, and we built two rooms here – I was a fitter and turner and I knew nothing about building, but we built it. I was the builder and Bet was the builder’s labourer. When we had our two rooms we wouldn’t have called the king our uncle. The Council were more lenient about that sort of thing then. I did everything with the building except that we got a carpenter to build the roof, and an electrician and a brickie, and I helped them. After we’d been here a while with the two rooms, we worked out where to put the rest of the house. The front corner got the sun so we put the kitchen there, and that was very unusual, to put the kitchen in the front. People thought it was odd, but it’s been wonderful.’

Ex-serviceman Eric Barnard also bought a block of land in Bellerive, and built his house there at weekends. Bricks, nails and roofing iron were rationed – ‘you had to grab what you could, when you could!’ In 1952 he moved into the house, where he still lives, and has loved Bellerive. ‘I’m looking out on to Kangaroo Bay and Hobart right now, and it looks pretty good to me!’ Linda and George Free bought a block in Lindisfarne with a two-roomed shack on it, and built their house over it with their own hands – ‘it was the only way you could pay for it’. Doreen and Rob Oliver, both from Montagu Bay, married in 1949. For several years they and their two small children lived in a one-roomed shack in Montagu Bay, where Doreen washed in a kerosene tin, boiling the clothes over an open fire. Then they bought land from an old apricot orchard, and built a house through the Agricultural Bank.

In 1961 Enid Brett and her husband Max arrived from Victoria. ‘[Max] realised that this area [Rosny] was being opened up and we bought a block, because it was so sunny’, said Enid. ‘Ours was the only house on the hill at Rosny at first, and Max was called Baron Brett by the people on the foreshore, but gradually others were built. The Annings had a little shop on the corner of the street, the school was new, and our oldest son went to Rose Bay High, which was new too. Our boys went to learn to sail at once, at Lindisfarne. We enjoyed it here immensely. There was no disadvantage on being on this shore – there were buses to town.’ But there was some snobbery. ‘We went to Wesley

Church, and once at the morning tea after church someone asked me where we lived. I said, “We’re building a house on Rosny Point”. “Oh!” she said. “Right over there!” I asked her where she lived, and she said, “Lower Sandy Bay”. Well, it takes longer to get to town from Lower Sandy Bay than from Rosny – it took us five minutes. We stopped going to Wesley after that.’

Many new areas developed in this period. For decades Howrah had consisted of farms, but from the 1930s some people built shacks by its beaches, the number of houses increasing from 11 in 1939 to 39 ten years later. Arthur Morgan of Hobart built a holiday shack at Howrah. His son Kevin recalled that the other buildings there were mainly shacks, with a few permanent residents who were generally not very well off. But by 1949 the housing shortage was so acute that some of these weekenders were rented as permanent residences, and more development was on the way, with the first subdivision at Howrah approved in 1950. In the early 1950s the Howlett family bought a block in Corinth Street and erected a house – Roger Howlett, aged six at the time, remembered helping his father cart water and make bricks to build it. Howrah became a town in 1953 and continued to expand, with most houses built of weatherboard and in the 1960s, brick veneer. In 1966/7 Howrah contained the most building activity in Clarence, including a big subdivision of 200 lots near Droughty Point. The following year AV Jennings started work on a 200-block subdivision at Howrah, and later other subdivisions there – 710 blocks altogether.²²

The McLeod family moved from Hobart to Howrah in 1969, to Carella Street, which was just being developed by private builders. The family wanted a home near a good co-educational high school and a good primary school, and found these in Howrah Primary and Clarence High. Amenities in the area were fair – there was a bus service, though most people went by car, and some shops by the beach; the Shoreline shopping centre was just starting, developed by a building firm. In 1973 a real estate agent described Howrah as ‘a business and professional man’s suburb’, probably a general view. By this time it had two churches, a shopping centre, a hotel, a primary school, an infant school, a pre-school, a playgroup, a doctor, a progress association, and many community groups including Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Scouts and Apex.²³

Rokeby continued to be a country village, but in the early 1960s some development was taking place. Joan and Mick Norris moved there from West Hobart in about 1960, before the Housing

²² CC 9.2.50; *Eastside* 21.12.67, 2.5.68; Valuation Rolls 1939, 1949; information from Kevin Morgan

²³ Information from Beth McLeod; *Eastside* 29.8.68, 27.3.68; Southern Tasmania telephone directory 1974

Department, because they wanted to live in the country. 'We looked at Lindisfarne, towards Risdon Vale, and they were just building this road, so I talked to the old bloke building it and said I wouldn't mind a block, and he told me they were £400', said Mick. 'That was a good price, and we bought this block, and later the block next door. There were about two or three other houses up here. I designed and built it myself, made all the weatherboards and the floor boards.' There were electricity, telephone and shops, but no bus service, water or sewerage – the family did not mind.

Further east, another area to develop was Lauderdale. Since white settlement the area just north of the Ralphs Bay Neck area had been part of the Clarendon property. When the government was attempting to build the canal, it acquired land on either side, and in the later 1930s people built homes there – 'shacks' made of wood, cement sheeting or 44 gallon drums. In 1953 Graeme Richardson's family arrived. His father worked with the Hydro and the family had lived in Hydro camps, but came south for the children's education. 'We bought a shack on the canal, called "Canalers", made of rolled-down 44 gallon drums. We lived in that for about six years, and then we built the house, in front of the shack. Dad and my sister and I built it. We made the bricks, out of cement and sand, in a hand mould – we had to buy the cement, and we got the sand from Clifton', said Graeme.

There were few amenities: dirt roads and no water or sewerage, and one bus daily from South Arm, which the children caught to school. 'It was great', said Graeme. 'I wouldn't have swapped it for the world. I loved it – it was all bush at the back of the house, and you could walk on the beach, go anywhere with freedom.' The children especially enjoyed playing in the old concrete pill boxes left over from the war.

By the 1950s farming was starting to decline, and some farmers subdivided their land. Clyde and Roy Reynolds inherited Clarendon, and in about 1956 Clyde decided to subdivide the area around the Neck. He put in Bangalee Street and Bayview Road, and sold blocks along the beach. Many people built houses, among them Brian and Val Johnson, who arrived in 1964. They recalled that the area was mostly bush, with Bangalee Street just a dirt road. It was hard to get a loan to build as the area was 'only shacks', but they succeeded – luckily Val worked in a bank – and a Hobart builder erected their house. By this time there were several shops and a post office on the canal, but the bus service had not improved, or the water supply. But 'we loved living here. The beach was white then, and thirty, forty yards wide. It was marvellous for kids – they'd just go off and play, and

you knew they were safe. They could play on the beach, or in the bush. It was a safe beach, a beautiful beach.’

Ralphs Bay developed rapidly, especially after water was connected in 1968. Before then, said Brian, there was only tank water with no pumps and therefore no pressure; ‘it was a case of turn the bath on, go to town, do your shopping, come home and have a bath’. More shops, a school, churches, a garden centre and a hotel were built – some people tried to stop the hotel, without success – and the first doctor arrived in 1968, though for years doctors tended to come and go. In about 1970 the name was changed to Lauderdale, after Robert Mather’s early farm on the site. Some residents thought this a pity – Ralphs Bay suited the place. A more welcome change was that in 1968, after a heavy storm eroded the beach and the steel spikes put in during the war became visible, the Army finally cleared away them away.²⁴

By the 1960s the ‘jerry built’ shacks of the 1930s were no longer acceptable to the authorities. The Commission reported that Lauderdale was ‘a depressed living area due to the indiscriminate erection of substandard dwellings and shacks’, and cleared the shacks, not by condemning them outright since many residents had ‘hard luck’ stories, but ordering extensive renovations or demolition as soon as one was vacated. To frustrate this, shack owners tried to ‘whip in a fresh set of tenants’ before the Commission could act, but by 1968 the worst shacks had been demolished, their owners provided with Housing Department homes. At the same time the last weekenders at Howrah went, bought by Council to make way for open space.²⁵

In the early 1970s the Commission opened a tip at Lauderdale. There were a few complaints, but not many – far worse smelling than the tip was the shallow water on its far side, commented Brian Johnson.²⁶ Overall, people enjoyed living at Lauderdale, with its glorious beaches, though people along the canal sometimes had problems with floods.²⁷

Seven Mile Beach, which had been a small settlement in the 1930s, also developed. Shortly after the war the landowner, Cyril Lewis, subdivided a large area, and in 1949 there were 55 houses, a reserve and two shops, with most dwellings weekenders, though there was an increasing number of permanent residents. Householders formed a progress association, planted marram grass to stabilise

²⁴ *Eastside* 11.7.68, 23.4.69

²⁵ *Eastside* 14.12.67, 18.8.68, 28.3.68

²⁶ Information from David Reynolds, Geoff and Marjorie Essen, Graeme Richardson, and Brian and Val Johnson; *Eastside* 5.10.67, 2.11.67, 14.12.67, 11.7.68, 15.8.68, 18.8.68, 23.4.69, 29.10.70, 28.2.74

the dunes, ran Christmas sports for the children, and raised funds to build a hall. In 1947 Seven Mile Beach was the last area in Clarence to gain electricity and telephone services.²⁸

The Bloms arrived in 1951, but had trouble finding a builder for their three-bedroom weatherboard house. A Lindisfarne firm would not come as it was too far away – their men went to work on bicycles – so the Bloms employed a Bellerive firm, but ‘they weren’t very good, and there were always delays’, said Trevor Blom. ‘I bought a ute so I could take the stuff down myself.’ Mrs Blom tried to keep work going. ‘I’d ring up and ask why no work was being done, and [the builder] would say it was the electrician, so I’d ring the electrician and say, “They’re expecting you at the house”. It took nine months to build it.’

Once these problems were over, the family loved living at Seven Mile Beach. ‘We knew everyone, and you’d leave your door open. There was no real bus service, just a bus that left early in the morning, but you’d get a lift with your neighbour. It was lovely, ideal for young children. You felt secure, and there was space. Most people were permanent residents, and there were a few holiday homes.’ There were two shops, one with a hitching rail in front, and a public phone – those were the amenities.

Seven Mile Beach had many visitors in the summer, which posed a few problems – crowds on the beach, and everlastingly having to help people whose cars were bogged in sand. ‘But we were happy to share the beach.’ They were not so happy at various plans for development, and with other residents fought strongly against plans, for, example, a large caravan park, on the grounds that Seven Mile Beach was a residential area.²⁹

For the children, Seven Mile Beach ‘was one of the best places you could possibly grow up in – there was total freedom, because there was not much trouble you could get into’, said Ian Blom. He and his friends built a dirt track for billy carts which nearly gave his father a heart attack – ‘it was very steep, with trees and rocks in the way, and it went down to a ravine and up again’. The boys had old cars which they kept in the pine forest, ‘and we used to race around...Boys outnumbered girls about five to one, and they hung around with us. We’d go swimming, sailing, fishing. Surfing came in in 1964, when a couple of blokes from Sydney were surfing the point. We were watching, and they let us use their boards.’ Trevor built his sons a boat out of plywood, and later they had little

²⁷ *Eastside* 2.11.67, 29.10.70

²⁸ Valuation Roll 1949

²⁹ *Eastside* 21.4.74

Sabots for sailing, while Ray Trousselot, who taught at Rose Bay High, ran a Youth Club for some years.

In 1974 a resident wrote to the *Mercury* that Seven Mile Beach had become a 'freaks Paradise'. Beautiful girls romped topless in the surf, nudists had a spot further up the beach, perverts lurked in the pine trees and hid behind the dunes with binoculars, and sometimes there were attacks on girls and children. There was also a problem of theft, he said, with vandals leaving smashed bottles in the dunes. The progress association asked for more police help, but this was refused on the grounds of expense.³⁰

Another new area of settlement by a beach was Cremorne, which has a beautiful front beach, excellent fishing and a sheltered back beach, ideal for mooring and launching boats. Originally owned by Knopwood's friends the Macauleys, the area was part of the Morrisbys' Waterloo estate, and boats had taken fruit to market from jetties on Pipe Clay Lagoon. After the First World War the property was divided between two Morrisby sons, Alf and Alan, and the half nearest the beach was called Cremorne, after Alf's wife's former home in Sydney. In the 1920s Murray Crow helped his uncle James Hurburgh, a Hobart builder, erect the first shack, on the sandy spit which divides Pipe Clay Lagoon from Frederick Henry Bay. As a boy in the 1920s, Terry Morrisby went for picnics at Cremorne, but since there was no public road, few others went there.

Alf Morrisby sold the estate of Cremorne in 1943, and it was subdivided and put on the market in stages from 1946, by Hobart estate agents. There were 201 blocks, along the waterfront, along the lagoon and some inland, and by 1949, 121 had been sold and 48 dwellings built, virtually all weekenders. There was also a reserve, giving public access to the beach. The new township was naturally called Cremorne.³¹

William White, a zincworker, was one of the first to buy. He purchased a waterfront block in May 1946 for £120 and paid it off in instalments. First he put a caravan there, then built a shack, his cash book showing what he bought to do this: concrete blocks, tanks, sheets of asbestos, plywood, gravel, cement, windows, paint, doors, a tin bath and a septic tank. After paying building fees to Council, William was 'all square' in June 1951, and the family often came down for weekends and holidays. William bought three other blocks 'on spec'; he bought one for £90 in 1947 and three years later sold it for £180, double the price. On one block he built Cremorne's first shop, White's Cash

³⁰ *Mercury* 23.11.74

Store, from timber he bought when an old barn was demolished. The small shop sold basic stores at holidays – flour, milk, bread, lollies and so on. The land and building cost £210, and three years later William sold it for £655, a good profit. He shrewdly worked out his finances so that profit from the other blocks paid for his shack on the premium site.

On New Year's Day in 1948 John and Betty Beaumont of Hobart were having a picnic at Ralphs Bay Canal. It was windy and there were mosquitoes, 'and I said, "Let's go to the new place that's just been cut up", said John. 'So we came, and we had a picnic on the block, and there were no mosquitoes and the sun was shining brightly. So we bought the block' – not from the auctioneers, but from its first owner, from Sydney, who had presumably bought it 'on spec'. It was comparatively dear, but the waterfront site was so good and so near Hobart that it was worth it. The Beaumonts built their shack themselves.

Arch Smith bought three waterfront blocks at Cremorne in 1948, because it was so good for fishing. The family built a boatshed and camped in it while they built a house. 'I'd take a trailerload down at weekends – I did a lot of the building work, and I had builders helping... It was hard to get materials, but I got them from various places.' The house was lined with car cases – cars came in wooden crates, which you could buy cheaply. You knocked them to pieces, put them through a planer and you had your lining.

At first facilities were limited. The access 'road' to the Beaumont and Whites was the back beach which was often under water at high tide, and there was not only no water or sewerage (still the case) but no electricity. 'We used pressure lamps with shellite, and the toilet was a great big hole I dug in the ground', said John. 'We had tank water. And for cooking primus stoves and the open fire – there was always a kettle of water on the hook.' 'We had a big baby bath in front of the fire, and we'd boil up a kettle of water and the kids would have a bath', said Betty. The Smiths used kerosene lanterns, and Arch's son Ian remembers driving down one Friday night. 'It was dark by the time we arrived, and the tide was in so we couldn't drive along the beach, we couldn't even walk, so we had to walk along the front beach then through the bush to the shack, then light the kerosene lanterns. We were often cut off by the tide.'

No one seemed to mind all this, and everyone loved holidays at Cremorne, with its beautiful beach and good fishing – 'the fish we caught in the bay was nobody's business'. Many shacks were

³¹ CC 8.11.45, 13.5.48, 10.3.49; Valuation Rolls 1939, 1943, 1945, 1949; information from Cynthia Alexander, Terry Morrisby and Murray Crow; Gee passim

going up, and everyone was friendly. 'On New Year's Eve we had a big bonfire on the beach for the kids, and we had a barbecue and crackers, and dance round the fire and after the kids went to bed at midnight, everyone came to our place, and I'd supply the crayfish and they brought the champagne. I used to catch the crayfish on the same day, no problem', said John. 'Then the Council stopped us lighting the fire.'

The progress association started in 1948, and fought for amenities and a better access road, and against intrusion – motor cycles racing on the beach and drunkards in the reserve. 'The road [into Cremorne] was a dirt track at first, with holes which sank deep into the sand', said Arch Smith. 'It was a major worry. The progress association several times bought gravel to fill the holes, and people worked on it.' But they did not want a road along the back beach, as this would spoil the scenery. 'We didn't want a better road – we wanted to keep people out!' said John. By 1968 the progress association had achieved a sealed road into Cremorne, streetlights, rubbish tins and development of the reserve, often through working bees of residents. In the early 1970s Council built a sealed road along part of the back beach, to many householders' annoyance. James Hurburgh had sold his shack long ago, because he wanted peace and quiet.³²

In the early years only one man lived permanently at Cremorne – everyone else was a weekender. But as amenities were provided from the 1950s, more permanent residents arrived. In 1960 Murray and Heather Crow bought the Waterloo property, where they ran cattle and sheep and grew lucerne. In about 1970 they planted a row of poplars along the road, to give the community a boost and block the wind from the farm. Since then Cremorne has developed into a town and most of the weekenders have been rebuilt as permanent houses – but the Beaumonts still have their original shack.

As seen above, much of Clarence did not have amenities that had become standard elsewhere: water, sewerage, sealed roads, footpaths, kerbs and gutters, a garbage collection, streetlights. In 1947 all these items were lacking all over the municipality. Somehow they all had to be provided. It was a huge challenge for the authorities.

³² CC 11.5.50, 8.5.52, 29.5.52; *Mercury* 31.1.57; *Eastside* 28.9.67, 5.10.67, 22.2.68, 31.10.68, 15.2.73; information from Robert White and his mother (from a tape recorded by Bob), William White's cash book in the possession of Bob White; information from Jenny Roberts, Cynthia and James Alexander, Arch and Ian Smith

The most important amenity was water. By 1950 the Southern Regional Water Scheme was making some progress, with the government aiming to provide bulk water, and Council local reticulation. But there were delays. Both money and materials were in short supply – pipes ordered in 1945 had still not arrived in 1951, and Council had to order some from Italy. When the Housing Department announced that it would build 1000 homes, the scheme had to be extended to cope with this. But at least it continued.³³

In 1952 rumours flew that the government was halting work and diverting its pipes to a northern scheme. This caused a huge commotion, with Bellerive ‘up in arms’. Five hundred people attended a vociferous public meeting which urged the government to give the scheme priority. The government replied that it could not obtain pipes, and would provide a temporary supply across the bridge.³⁴ There were further delays – the government blamed Council and Council blamed the government – and problems with breaks and leakages in the pipes, due to inexperienced workmen and faulty Italian pipes.³⁵ But finally, in 1954, the first people had running water. More and more areas were gradually connected, though water restrictions were often necessary in summer. The Southern Regional Water Scheme was opened in 1956, when 15,000 residents in Lindisfarne and Bellerive were provided with water. In the next few years Howrah, Rosny and Risdon joined them, which meant most Clarence people had water.³⁶ In 1961 a dam was built at Flagstaff Gully to aid reticulation.³⁷

There was now a pause, but by the mid 1960s many who did not have water were demanding it. The Rokeby Progress Association was re-formed in 1966 to fight for a water supply, and Lauderdale people agitated by erecting ‘distasteful’ hoardings on roadsides, which caused satisfactory commotion and publicity. The 1967 bushfires provided impetus, and the Commission and the government gave in. Cambridge, Seven Mile Beach, Rokeby and Lauderdale were provided with running water, and a large dam was built at Risdon Brook. Rokeby residents planned to celebrate by holding a ball, and the *Mercury* published photos of people enjoying the novelty of

³³ *Mercury* 14.4.50, 11.5.51; CC 8.3.51

³⁴ CC 14.2.52, 12.6.52; *Mercury* 15.2.52, 12.3.52, 12.9.52

³⁵ WR 53; *Mercury* 15.5.53, 21.5.53, 22.5.53

³⁶ WR 54, 55, 56, 57; CC 14.1.54, 11.3.54, 13.1.55, 13.10.55, 8.3.56; *Mercury* 12.10.54, 27.3.56

³⁷ Murfet pp 103, 108, 109

watering their gardens with a hose.³⁸ Water was not extended to the area south of Lauderdale, which still, in 2003, did not have a water supply.

Having water made a huge difference, and many people claimed that of all the improvements of the time such as the bridge, sewerage and sealed roads, water was the most important: ‘the best thing’, ‘people went mad’, ‘we had indeed reached the ultimate’. ‘Having the water on meant you could have a bath every day!’ People could shower more often, wash clothes more easily, and grow vegetable and flower gardens, and life generally was much more pleasant.³⁹

Running water meant a sewerage system could be installed, but Council hesitated as it was so expensive. Besides, many people were installing septic tanks, so sewerage did not seem so urgent. In 1950 Council’s sanitary collection, the ‘honey cart’, served 2000 houses, removing full pans and burying the contents in a sanitary disposal area on top of Warrane Hill, where it was ploughed into the soil. Later it was taken out to sea and disposed of.⁴⁰

People enjoyed telling stories about this system. In Lindisfarne the nightcart men drove the nightcart to the bay then ran down a wooden plank to a barge, carrying the heavy metal drums of sewerage on their shoulders. One man grew tired of carrying the drum on his shoulder, and tried carrying it on his head. But the drum was corroded, and his head went through. ‘You can imagine the rest, as his friends attempted to free him without injuring him on the jagged metal.’ About five days after the disastrous 1967 bushfires, people in Rokeby finally enjoyed a laugh when the nightcart, tearing down the main road, had an accident. The tins fell over and their contents spilt all over the road. ‘You just burst into laughter because that dreadful smell from what had been tipped over... It was just one of those things that gave you a lightness of spirit, even the people who had lost their homes’.⁴¹

But by the 1950s sewerage systems were part of modern life, and the Housing Department insisted that its houses have proper sewerage. Council was forced to act. In 1953 a sewerage scheme for Warrane and Bellerive started, and treatment works were built. There were some criticism of the treatment plant, in full view on the shore at Rosny, but it had to be put somewhere on the shore, and there were fewer people to complain at Rosny than anywhere else. In the 1960s the sewerage was

³⁸ ARs 63/4, 65/6, 66/7, 67/8; *Mercury* 5.10.66; *Eastside* 5.10.67, 26.10.67, 31.10.68; Murfet pp 142-3

³⁹ Information from Doris Brakey, Geoff Dakin, Basil de la Bere, Iris Lane and Rob Oliver; Murfet pp 142-3

⁴⁰ WR 54, 55, 56, 57; CC 13.5.54; *Mercury* 15.4.55, 25.4.55

extended to Montagu Bay, Geilston Bay, Howrah, Risdon Vale and finally, in 1971, Lindisfarne and Rokeby, and a second sewerage treatment plant was built at Droughty Point. The old sanitary depot became a market garden, where vegetables flourished.⁴²

Disposal of garbage was another question. In 1950 a new tip was sited at the head of Lindisfarne Bay, despite complaints from residents that this would spoil bathing facilities and create odours. There were also tips at the head of Geilston Bay, Montagu Bay and Kangaroo Bay, with promises that the land would become playing fields or parks. 'It was what you did – it suited us to do it', said Councillor Trevor Blom, and Dr Heather Gibson, whose home overlooked the tip at Lindisfarne Bay, agreed that this was a recognised practice. Eventually these tips were closed, as was another large tip at Wentworth Park, and by 1970 it was accepted that tips should not be placed in built-up areas. By 1974 a new large tip at Lauderdale was serving all Clarence.⁴³ Another change was a garbage collection, which was collected in the main areas in 1953, and gradually in other areas.⁴⁴

Developing reserves was restricted by lack of money, and the most that could be done was to buy land in developing areas for reserves in the future. In 1953 Council owned 220 acres of reserves, with larger areas at Natone Hill (by far the biggest), Lindisfarne recreation ground, Warrane and Geilston Bay, and many smaller recreation grounds.⁴⁵ In the late 1960s, with a little more money available, more could be done. The reclaimed land at Wentworth park was turned from a mosquito-ridden marsh into hockey fields; reclaimed land at Montagu Bay – which had been an eyesore, the site works for the Tasman Bridge, with piles of rusting metal, old tyres and long grass – was levelled and sown with lawn; and the village green in Rokeby was safeguarded against development. In 1969 restoration began at the Bluff reserve, but from then on, as financial problems appeared in the 1970s, little was done.⁴⁶ But land was acquired for reserves, and by 1974 the earlier 200 acres had increased sixfold to 1255. Playing fields, which in 1950 had been one football oval, consisted of 11 football

⁴¹ Spargo p 7; Adnum p 9 (Webb interview)

⁴² CC 12.10.50, 10.5.51, 13.10.55, 13.12.56; M 15.8.52, 18.1.56; *Eastside* 25.1.68; WR 53, 54, 55, 56, 57; AR 63/4, 65/6, 66/7, 67/8, 69/70, 70/1, 71/2; information from Trevor Blom and Heather Gibson

⁴³ CC 9.2.50, 13.4.50, 12.2.53, 14.10.54, 14.4.55; *Mercury* 9.6.50, 12.12.52; *Eastside* 14.12.67, 7.12.67, 12.2.70, 2.4.70, 7.4.71, 28.2.74, 4.7.74, 26.9.74; information from Heather Gibson and Trevor Blom

⁴⁴ CC 8.2.51, 31.1.52, 9.4.53, 21.5.53, 14.5.53; *Mercury* 28.2.51, 14.12.51, 10.7.53

⁴⁵ CC 14.6.51, 9.8.51, 26.5.55, 13.9.56; WR 53, 54, 55; information from Trevor Blom

⁴⁶ AR 65/6, 66/7, 67/8, 68/9, 69/70; *Eastside* 5.10.67, 15.8.68, 23.1.69, 22.3.73

and cricket ovals, 3 hockey fields, 2 soccer fields, the pool and golf course. Council also controlled 500 acres of beach.⁴⁷

Two major public recreation amenities were provided in the 1960s. The Clarence Olympic Pool was opened in 1962, an eight-lane, heated, open air pool, open for five months a year. It ran at a loss, like most public pools. Then when the Royal Hobart Golf Club left Rosny, Council acquired the land and in 1963 opened a public golf course there, which also provided a green belt.⁴⁸

As the idea of a green belt showed, interest in town planning, along with restricted building regulations, was developing. Regulations covered house sizes and limited high-rise buildings (after public outcry), and a zoning plan was formed in 1954. There was no building above the 200 foot contour line, at first because water and sewerage could not be provided without vast expense, though by 1970 this had been lifted to 300 feet, now due to a desire to keep the area's 'scenic qualities'. In 1963 Nick Martelli became assistant to the Clarence town planner, Victor Robinson, and they completed Clarence's first planning scheme. It was a big map of the municipality, recalled Nick, divided into rural, residential, and industrial/commercial zones. Then planning started on highways and development, and a survey was made of the whole municipality, including every house, shed and lean-to. Compared with later planning this was rudimentary, but it did provide guidance for developers and for Council.⁴⁹

As well as such services as water, improved transport was vital for the increased population. In 1945 almost all roads in Clarence were gravel, with only the main highways out of Bellerive sealed for a short distance. Roads were made of white gravel from the area round Tunnel Hill, which meant clouds of dust in summer, or brown gravel from a quarry at Mornington, which was an improvement as there was less dust – but no dirt road could cope with the increasing amount of motorised traffic. Most roads were dreadful, with potholes and corrugations, recalled the doctor, Bill Young, who often travelled over them. Over the next three decades a huge amount of road making and sealing took place, and Council also formed kerbs, gutters and footpaths. All this was extremely expensive and worrying, with residents calling for improvements, public meetings, and a continual shortage of finance. 'Sealing roads was a headache', said councillor Trevor Blom. 'There was a tendency on the engineer's side to repair roads rather than build roads, which was more expensive in

⁴⁷ *Eastside* 25.4.74

⁴⁸ CC 22.3.56; AR 63/4; *Eastside* 28.9.67, 8.2.73, 10.11.77; Hagan pp 9, 13, 36

⁴⁹ AR 1967/8, 69/70, 76/8; information from Nick Martelli; CC 12.10.50, 9.10.52, 12.8.54, 8.11.52, 14.2.52, 10.9.53; *Eastside* 30.10.69, 23.4.70

the long run. It was an issue.’ Commissioner Mainwaring agreed with Blom: ‘Roads were always a headache. Everyone had petitions about getting roads sealed, and they all had good arguments – it was all a matter of finance’. By 1973, however, all major roads and many minor roads were sealed, with some government assistance.⁵⁰

There was even more controversy about the main highways, the state’s responsibility. In 1955 the Eastern Outlet was proposed, to run across the Rosny golf course and Warrane. There was uproar, especially about the golf course/green belt being divided, but the government stood firm – ‘the Minister for Lands and Works, Barnard, came from the north and he was determined, and the people weren’t in his electorate’, explained Mainwaring. Over the years a new four-lane highway was built, running over Rosny hill, across the golf course, through Warrane, over Tunnel Hill, and joining the old highway just past Cambridge. The major section was opened by 1974.⁵¹

A second outlet planned was the Bellerive Bypass, which would mean that through traffic would avoid the congested centre of Bellerive. Even in 1968 it was described as ‘long-proposed’, but it did not eventuate for years. ‘It was always on the agenda, but it was always knocked off because of finance’, said Ron Mainwaring.⁵² Even more problematic was the South-Eastern Freeway, planned to run from the Eastern Outlet at Rosny to the head of Kangaroo Bay, across to the second beach and along through Wirksworth, and to Rokeby. Some land was acquired but the road was never even started. Neither was the Howrah Bypass, or the continuation of the Bellerive Bypass right round the end of Droughty Point, but plans for these were published and caused much upset.⁵³

All these highways converged on one outlet, the bridge across the Derwent. As Clarence grew, the Hobart Bridge became inadequate: it had only two lanes, was closed when the span was lifted to allow ships through, and was subject to upset in rough weather. By the late 1950s it was extremely congested at peak periods, and in 1964 it was replaced by the four-lane Tasman Bridge, built on pylons so ships could pass underneath. This made a huge difference to traffic flow, though as the population rose, by the early 1970s even the new bridge was congested in peak periods, with traffic jams at the railway roundabout in Hobart taking up to thirty minutes to clear. In 1972 a ‘tidal flow’ lane system was introduced, with three lanes for west-bound drivers in the morning, and for

⁵⁰ CC minutes passim, but especially 8.6.50, 8.3.51, 11.6.53, 10.9.53, 9.9.54; *Mercury* 12.9.52; WR 53, 54, 55; information from Ron Mainwaring; Murfet p 56

⁵¹ *Mercury* 8.2.51, 11.8.55, 13.10.55, 12.1.56, 16.8.71, 28.8.72, 1.9.72, 19.1.73, 13.4.74; *Eastside* 20.2.69, 7.9.72, 23.11.72, 14.12.72, 21.12.72, 24.5.73, 24.10.74; information from Ron Mainwaring

⁵² *Eastside* 2.5.68, 8.7.71

east-bound drivers in the afternoon. Even this did not greatly improve the situation, and by 1970 there were calls for a second bridge at Risdon to ease congestion, and in case a ship smashed into the pylons of the Tasman Bridge – ‘the Eastern Shore is nervous about its dependence on a single lifeline’. Council was particularly vocal; when the warden, Bruce Goodluck, with his wife and daughters was involved in a four-car pile-up on the Tasman Bridge in 1974, he said this was just one of many incidents showing the urgent need for a second bridge.⁵⁴ But nothing happened.

Change also came to the airport. As flying became more common and flights increased, it was clear that Cambridge airport was too small for modern planes, and it was often closed by rain, fog or drizzle. A new site was chosen, nearer Frederick Henry Bay and further away from the hill so it had better weather and unobstructed approaches. A wide, long airstrip was made and Llanherne airport opened in early 1956, ‘one of the most modern air terminals in Australia’. Cambridge airport was kept for light aircraft. There was only one major crash in these years, when a plane loaded with zinc took off from Cambridge with two pilots inside. It was a dreadful night, blowing a gale with snow, recalled Dr Bill Young, who was called to the scene. The plane lost power and crashed into Pittwater, and Bill and an airport officer had to wade out in the mud in the darkness, to find it with the pilots dead inside, an unpleasant duty. The plane was bought by Brodribb Blinds and turned into venetian blinds.⁵⁵

Ground transport too saw change, with a huge rise in car ownership from the 1950s, and fewer passengers using public transport. Like the late 1940s, the 1950s saw many complaints of inadequate bus services, but as conditions improved, so did bus services, gradually. They spread to newer areas, and though Housing Department suburbs were often poorly served at first, complaints by residents led to slow improvement.⁵⁶

Falling passenger numbers were particularly noticeable on the ferries. For twenty years after the Hobart Bridge opened the *Derwent* and *Rosny* maintained the Bellerive-Hobart service, but passengers dwindled, and the ferries ceased in 1963. Ten years later, Bob Clifford built a ferry at Rokeby and restarted the service to first Bellerive and later Lindisfarne with his ‘bushranger’ ships

⁵³ *Mercury* 12.7.69 for map

⁵⁴ *Mercury* 14.2.55, 6.5.71, 21.12.71, 24.5.72, 4.7.73, 31.7.73, 10.1.74, 30.8.74; 63/4 AR; *Eastside* 9.7.70, 11.11.71, 17.10.74, 21.11.74, 3.11.77

⁵⁵ *Mercury* 17.12.53, 21.11.54, 9.12.55; CC 10.2.55; Hobart International Airport Master Plan September 1992, TL; p 5; information from Don Richardson and Bill Young

⁵⁶ CC 13.7.50, 1.11.51 (PM), 22.3.57 (PM), 16.4.57 (PM), 14.2.57 ; *Mercury* 14.7.50, 2.11.51, 10.4.52, 9.5.52, 10.4.53, 10.12.54, 21.10.55

Matthew Brady and *James McCabe*. The *James McCabe* had a liquor licence, so passengers could enjoy a drink, and Clifford also ran cruises with scallop and crayfish lunches, and chartered the ferries for functions. By 1974 he had fourteen sailings a day to and from Bellerive.⁵⁷

The increasing population needed other services. As suburbs developed, there were calls for better fire protection. Once the bridge was open the Hobart Fire Brigade served urban areas and set up a fire station on Rosny Hill. Country people had to form their own brigades; the residents of Lauderdale did this in 1959, and Seven Mile Beach in the early 1960s, buying an old fire truck from the airport. But all this proved totally inadequate in the 1967 fires, and afterwards volunteer brigades were set up in rural areas. By the end of 1968 there were seven, with the Hobart brigade still servicing urban areas. The East Risdon Brigade included volunteers from the prisoners at the jail, who served bravely in a fire in 1974.⁵⁸ Ambulances came from Hobart, and often took some time to arrive. There were calls for a local ambulance service, but the government did not agree. An accident in 1974 received much publicity, with claims that the ambulance did not arrive for thirteen minutes, and one was promised for the Eastern Shore.⁵⁹

The larger population needed more police, and the force was extended. Crime increased with the growing suburbs, the main complaint being vandalism, especially of sports grounds and reserves, which though deplorable was not major crime. As so often in Clarence, there was also a good deal of petty theft. An addition to the police force was the Police Academy at Rokeby, begun in 1970. It was not completed for five years, but the first courses were held in 1971.⁶⁰

In 1945 there was only one library in Clarence, at Bellerive, but in the 1950s a second opened in a Musset hut in Lindisfarne, and later a third at Risdon Vale. A new library was built at Lindisfarne in 1968, and outlying areas were served by a bookmobile, which visited them regularly.⁶¹ A new service in the 1970s was child care, with the Jack and Jill Child Care centre set up in Geilston Bay in 1972 through a federal government grant. Sister Shelley owned it, but ran into difficulties. In 1974 the federal government bought it, renovated it and handed it to Council as a going concern. It

⁵⁷ Cox p 119; *Eastside* 22.6.72, 2.8.73, 1.11.73, 29.11.73, 13.12.73, 8.2.74; *Mercury* 23.9.72, 24.10.72, 22.3.73, 21.1.75

⁵⁸ CC 11.1.51, 10.9.53, 10.6.54, 19.2.59; AR 55; *Eastside* 29.8.68, 31.10.68, 10.2.72, 16.3.72, 5.4.73, 18.1.74, 17.7.74; information from Ian Blom

⁵⁹ CC 22.11.56, 13.6.57; *Eastside* 18.7.74; *Mercury* 5.9.74, 10.9.74

⁶⁰ *Mercury* 6.5.71, 12.5.72, 4.12.73, 20.11.74; CC 11.6.53; *Eastside* 30.11.67, 10.4.68, 14.5.70, 18.11.71, 9.11.72, 27.6.74; Adnum p 241

⁶¹ CC 9.9.54, 14.2.57; *Eastside* 29.2.68, 9.5.68, 19.12.68, 22.8.74

was the only child-minding centre on the Eastern Shore, serving 40,000 people.⁶² Another new service was a Social Security office, opened in Bellerive in 1974, which provided service such as paying pensions. It was particularly handy for pensioners. Many did not own cars, and now they not have to travel to Hobart for pensions, advice and other assistance.⁶³

Shopping centres were a great plus, and there was great excitement when Tasmania's first regional shopping centre, the Rosny Regional, opened in 1965 with about forty shops. On the opening day, five thousand shoppers thronged it. In his opening speech, commissioner Charles Hand said that the centre had been criticised for being ahead of its time but this was wrong; it was very modern, but within five years it could be behind the times. This proved roughly true: Rosny Regional was extended and renamed Eastlands in 1972, with the mall roofed and parking for 550 cars provided.⁶⁴ Not far behind Eastlands was the Shoreline Shopping Centre, opened in 1966, and later there were smaller centres in Lindisfarne and Rokeby.⁶⁵

The story so far is a magnificent saga of development, by Council and people, as Clarence grew in so many ways from 1950 to 1974. There were, however, some areas which did not see development, despite great effort. One was attracting industry.

Municipal authorities desperately wanted more industry in Clarence, to provide both jobs and rates – there were no big industrial ratepayers, so helpful to municipal finances. Many new industries were setting up in the Hobart area and the Clarence authorities tried to encourage them to come to the Eastern Shore, but most chose Glenorchy, where there was plenty of labour, land, excellent transport, water and sewerage, and they did not have to rely on the bridge, with its delays. So attracting industry was an uphill battle, partly because Council could not offer what industries wanted, rate reductions, since it wanted industries to increase rates. Even worse, some of the few industries in Clarence ran into major problems and dwindled.

In 1945 the only large industry was the radiata pine plantation at Cambridge. To process the logs, Alstergrens, the owners, also had a sawmill at Mornington, later moved to Cambridge. John Kirwan's father was in charge of the plantation, and the family lived at The Pines, as it was called – a wonderful place to grow up, said John, so near the beach.

⁶² *Eastside* 2.8.73, 20.9.73, 27.9.73, 16.5.74, 19.12.74

⁶³ *Eastside* 10.10.74

⁶⁴ AR 63/4, 65/6; *Examiner* 22.11.65; *Mercury* 23.2.72; *Eastside* 13.8.68, 14.12.72

⁶⁵ *Eastside* 29.8.68, 27.3.69, 2.9.71, 12.12.74

The trees had been planted from 1929, and by the 1940s they were in full production, with about two dozen men employed to cut them, transport them, then process them. When he finished school John worked for his father, starting in 1951 – the year the Sirex wasp appeared. The Llanherne airport was being built beside the plantation. ‘Wooden crates came into the airport in the early days with building products, and they contained unimmunised wood from New Zealand which contained the wasps, and they were only a hop, skip and jump from the host trees. They took off like a rocket. Dad found them. He’d never seen them before and he was catching them in matchboxes, and he took them to the government entomologist and had them identified. Everything hit the fan then. Dad knew their effects on radiata.’

The female Sirex wasp copulates with males at the top of a tree, then uses her ovary depositor to bore holes through the bark into the sapwood, almost to the heartwood, to lay her eggs. Each wasp can bore over 100 holes, and also deposits the spore of a fungus, ‘and it’s that that really kills the tree, spreading through the cambium layer in the tree’, said John. You could tell affected trees because of a trickle of sap which ran down the trunk from the bore holes, and because they paled off. ‘We went through the forest five times and cut down any trees affected. We got government assistance, men detailed from the government services, and we cut down and burnt the affected trees.’ But the tops of the trees were left lying on the ground, the wasps spread in them, and ‘a year later there were swarms of wasps out of the tops and we’d lost control’. Nothing could be done, and the plantation was virtually wiped out, with enormous losses. ‘My father’s life work disappeared before his eyes.’ The plantation was the first in Australia to be affected.

The CSIRO set up a research station at the plantation and eventually, in 1960, found a natural enemy of the Sirex wasp which eradicated it, but by then Alstergrens had decided to quit the area, and eventually in 1980 the government acquired the land for a park. Meanwhile, regeneration had occurred from seeds shed when the trees were dying, and these are the trees which later grew in the park, giving Seven Mile Beach its distinctive appearance.⁶⁶

The other major industry was sand mining. High-quality sand was in demand for silica making and builders’ sand for building, and in the 1950s and 1960s sand was mined at many Clarence beaches including Ralphs Bay, Seven Mile Beach, Clifton, South Arm and even Howrah; in 1954 Council was concerned about Howrah beach but as the area was privately owned had no power to stop sand mining. At Clifton in the 1960s there was a huge hole 16 metres deep and 15 metres

⁶⁶ Information from John Kirwan and Gary Richardson; Bailey passim

wide, with mining from 9 to 5 on weekdays. By 1971, 2000 tons a day was being removed from Roaring Beach, Hope Beach and Seven Mile Beach, and inspection showed that miners had no thought at all of conservation. Concern grew that beaches were being damaged, and regulations were imposed. No sand was to be taken less than 300 metres from high tide; operations could only take place behind the foredunes and secondary dunes and must be screened from the road; and licences were issued for leases.⁶⁷

Oyster farming was another coastal activity. Oysters had been found in Ralphs Bay in the early days then in the 1920s, but in the 1950s none were being harvested. The CSIRO was interested in developing the industry in Tasmania, and introduced the Pacific oyster for farming. It was first tried in the Tamar, without success, but in 1968 Peter Bruce and Hedley Calvert started growing oysters in Ralphs Bay, where mud oysters had been growing for years. The oysters spat is grown on sticks, which are transferred to racks in the water to grow. Bruce and Calvert built racks, and went to Launceston to gather wild oysters that had grown from the earlier attempt. They put them in three different areas of Ralphs Bay, and despite problems with fishermen, stingrays and poachers, they were fairly successful. Some others also tried oyster farming, and in 1971 there were five applications for oyster leases in Pipe Clay Lagoon, Frederick Henry Bay and Sandford as well as the South Arm activity. But in 1972 people became sick after eating local oysters, and it was found that they were contaminated with zinc from the zinc works. Production stopped while the zinc works was forced to clean up its act.⁶⁸

There was little other industry in Clarence. Star Dry Cleaners started a factory in Bellerive in 1953, and in 1969 expanded to Lindisfarne, employing about 24 people in either place; and Crisp and Gunn started a sawmill at Mornington in 1964. An unusual activity took place at Rokeby, where Vern Reid had a hangar and two planes, a Tiger Moth which he landed in a paddock, and a seaplane, which he towed with a tractor from the hangar to the shore, and launched from Ralphs Bay. He used the planes for charter flights and aerial photography. But these activities did not employ many people, and in the late 1960s the Commission redoubled its efforts to attract industries.⁶⁹ Finally, in 1969, the first good news appeared. Namco, who made saucepans and pressure cookers, did not have

⁶⁷ Gee pp 48, 52, 65; *Eastside* 19.8.71, 29.3.72, 7.3.74, 2.5.74; *Mercury* 22.4.54, 13.8.71, 15.6.72, *CC Clifton Beach Local Area Plan* passim

⁶⁸ Bruce passim; *Marine Farming Devt Plan...* pp 20-25; *Eastside* 1.8.68, 7.8.69, 22.12.71

⁶⁹ CC 10.9.53; *Eastside* 27.3.69, 25.9.69, 26.2.70, 19.3.70. *Mercury* 27.11.72; Adnum pp 100-101; information from Snowy Calvert

enough room at its Moonah factory so moved to Cambridge, employing a hundred people, and Besser moved from Glenorchy for the same reason, to make concrete blocks at Mornington. By 1973 the Frigrite Airconditioning Company had moved to Cambridge as well, and Emoleum set up a hot mix asphalt plant in Flagstaff Gully. There were also some smaller establishments which counted as factories, such as joinery workshops, but even so, by 1972 the 24 industries in Clarence employed only 295 people; Hobart had 157 factories employing 3240, and Glenorchy 102 employing 6920.⁷⁰

Tourism was another possibility as an employer, but this too languished, and in 1961 a newspaper report on the tourist potential of the South Arm peninsula warned visitors that there was nowhere to buy food south of Lauderdale and they should bring everything they needed themselves.⁷¹ Tourism was linked to hotels, which provided not just a bar and accommodation but entertainment. For decades there had been only two hotels in Clarence, at Bellerive and Cambridge, but more were built: the Beltana at Lindisfarne in 1952, which became a well-known entertainment centre under owner Murray Crow; the Shoreline at Howrah by 1967; and in the early 1970s the Lauderdale Tavern, the Risdon Tavern and the Sun Valley Inn at Mornington. This last was ultra-modern, and included a take-away food outlet named 'The Chuck Waggon', a drive-in bottle shop, two bars, a restaurant, a reception room for private parties and ten self-contained units. There were also hay wagons and bullock wagons, bought from pastoral properties to recreate 'the sedate atmosphere of former days'. There were now seven hotels in Clarence, and other licensed premises developed at motels, sporting clubs and RSL premises.⁷²

The first motels came to Clarence in the 1960s. Nancy and Donald Richardson had developed the Penzance Motel, the first in Australia, at Eaglehawk Neck, but as their sons grew up they wanted to move nearer secondary schools, so in 1960 they built the Panorama Motel at Rosny. They chose the site because it had a good view and was available, recalled Nancy, and the highway was not a problem then, as it was just a two-way road. The motel had about twenty units, and guests included tourists and engineers working on the new bridge. The Jason Motel at Lindisfarne opened soon afterwards. The Richardsons had ten successful years at the Panorama, and sold in 1970.

Another venue was Sherwood Lodge. In the late 1960s Fred Murfet decided to build a tourist and reception centre on his land at Flagstaff Gully, in the style of a pioneer log cabin. His site was

⁷⁰ ARs 1969/70, 1970/1, 1971/2; *Eastside* 4.10.73; CC 13.3.69; *Eastside* 25.4.74

⁷¹ CC 11.12.52; 12.11.53, 10.6.54; *SEM* 23.12.61; *Mercury* 14.11.52; *Eastside* 5.10.67, 30.8.73, 31.1.74, 25.7.74, 8.3.74

⁷² *Mercury* 13.9.73

excellent, on top of a hill overlooking Lindisfarne, the river and Mount Wellington. The Lodge was used for his daughter's twenty-first birthday in 1967, and became very popular for engagement parties, wedding receptions and functions of all types, with up to 600 guests. There were several jazz conventions, with some of Australia's top groups performing.⁷³ But although there were more entertainment venues in Clarence, there were few tourist enterprises as such.

Along with industry, agriculture languished. The once-flourishing apple and pear industry collapsed after Britain, the major buyer, joined the Common Market and gave preference to European fruit. Orchardists tried to sell locally and interstate, but prices were poor. As the taste for tinned fruit and jam declined, fruit processors in Hobart closed and that market disappeared. Apricot orchards were hit by die-back and brown rot, while farmers had to make the decision whether to replace ageing trees. Many could not afford this, and the apricot industry dwindled. 'So fruit went out', as Paul Calvert summed up the situation. In the 1960s 'woolgrowers were kicked in the teeth with prices the lowest ever', so sheep became less profitable. Vegetable growing was becoming mechanised, to the benefit of large growers, but most Clarence growers were small; and the new supermarkets bought in bulk from interstate and overseas, so that market too dwindled. 'Prices for all primary products became marginal, and many small farms which had supported families, couldn't continue.' Farmers could not employ labour and the population drifted away, young people finding work in town. Another problem was that serrated tussock was found at Cambridge in 1971, and eventually the area south of Lauderdale was quarantined, so that any stock or machinery had to be washed before going out of the district. 'That made it hard.'⁷⁴

These difficulties were made worse by a rise in rates, as suburbs spread and the value of land in Clarence rose. In 1970 it was claimed that in 1955 rates had been \$80 a year; in 1964, \$1300 including the new land tax; and by 1969 \$2000, a rise of 2500%. With high rates and low returns, many farmers felt they had to subdivide their land. For some farmers this was successful – the Reynolds sold the Lauderdale area, the Morrisbys Cremorne, the McShanes Risdon Vale, but not all farmers had suitable land for subdivision or wanted to sell, while there was so much land on the market that prices fell. Many children could not see a future in the land, and went to well-paid jobs

⁷³ Murfet pp 132-3, 136, 141-2, 144, 153

⁷⁴ *Eastside* 11.3.71; information from Paul Calvert, Terry Morrisby and Snowy Calvert; Adnum p 123

in town. For example, Jim Wishart worked in Hobart, and by 1964 his father could not run the farm by himself, it was hard to get paid help, so they had to sell.⁷⁵

In 1972 Clarence farmers' problems were listed: farming was marginal as costs and debts were increasing, farms were small, the soil quality was low, rain was unreliable, markets were bad and production yields very low. Not surprisingly, farms decreased in number. Although between 1948 and 1967 the total area in crop remained much the same (largely because much more hay was grown), the acreage of orchards declined by two-thirds, and wheat, peas and green fodder also declined. The number of horses, sheep and cattle remained much the same, and in 1969 there were still 146 rural holdings, with an average size of 280 acres. But problems accelerated over the next five years, and in 1974 a council officer commented that farmers might make more money by leasing land to mini-bike riders than by growing apples or sheep. Another report commented that farmers were trying to diversify from fruit and grazing, through growing vegetables, lucerne, potatoes and cash crops, and through oyster leases.⁷⁶

In 1973 the Tasmanian Farmers Federation asked for a rural ward, so that farmers could have a voice in municipal government. They claimed that rural people paid high rates but received fewer amenities, especially on the South Arm peninsula where there was no water supply or sewerage, and rural people were being 'held to ransom' through their land values. Farmers claimed they had to pay more than ten times what urban ratepayers paid for services. The new Council listened, and from 1974 farmers were able to get reductions in rates.⁷⁷

In 1974 a newspaper article about the Mays showed what had happened to one farming family. They were celebrating their centenary at their property Forest Hill at Sandford, five generations having farmed there. Rupert and Betty May now occupied the original farmhouse, and Rupert's brothers lived in modern residences on the property. The orchards had been grubbed to make way for grazing sheep and cattle, Robert May conducted a market garden, and Louis and John Hobden leased some land and were mining sand and loam. Farmland could give way to housing subdivisions, public parkland or sporting turf, ran the article, but at the moment the May family was 'full of enthusiasm' for the farming life. But in 2002 Betty May commented that about this time 'farming became unprofitable. To begin with, labour went up, and became very expensive. People

⁷⁵ *Eastside* 30.7.70; information from Jim Wishart

⁷⁶ *Statistics of Tasmania* 1948-9 and 1966-7, 1968-9, Farming section; *Eastside* 17.2.72, 28.2.74; Tasmanian Conservation Trust *passim*

⁷⁷ *Eastside* 25.10.73, 25.7.74, 15.8.74, 5.9.74, 12.9.74, 17.10.74

worked very hard, but they could only just clear themselves, and this stopped them going on. It became tempting to sell the land, especially when there were no boys in the family'.⁷⁸

Terry Morrisby was another Sandford farmer who came from a well-established rural family. After serving in the war, he applied for assistance to buy a farm under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme, and in 1946 he married. His bride Maureen came from Sydney, and they rented the old Cremorne homestead and raised day-old chicks. Then the Scheme sent Terry away for eight weeks for a refresher course. 'So Maureen, a city girl, was left on her own with a cow to milk who wasn't impressed with an amateur to milk her, a hungry sow with suckers, and a hundred chicks that seemed to have great affinity with brooder pneumonia. It's a wonder Maureen didn't go home', wrote Terry. 'The boys teased the life out of me, being a suburbanite', was Maureen's version.

Terry and Maureen bought a property at Cambridge, with a dilapidated hundred-year-old house and outbuildings made of slab walls round poles, with shingle roofs. Slowly they made improvements. They kept about 200 fowls, milked six cows and ran sheep; Terry built new outbuildings; and he decided to get rid of the sheep and produce milk all year round. He learnt the tricks of the trade, and found that one milk vendor bought 75 gallons of milk and sold 83. 'I suppose 8 gallons of water a day made a very good profit.' Maureen also adapted, very thoroughly. 'The day our first daughter was born I was out marking lambs and pigs, and when I finished I thought, I haven't got a small enough nightie made for the baby, so I got out the material and started machining, and she was born that evening, three weeks early.'

The Department of Agriculture selected the farm as a dairy demonstration farm and helped with equipment and advice. For several years the Morrisbys won the award for the best dairy farm in southern Tasmania, and they built a new house and raised their family. But milking cows seven days a week all year became tiring, and in 1961 they sold their farm and bought a larger block at Sandford. Terry went into partnership with his brothers, but in the early 1960s the post-war honeymoon of good prices for rural products came to an end. 'First one commodity then another dropped in price, so we looked for new avenues to raise our income.' They opened a quarry at Sandford and grew vegetables, at Sandford and on land they bought at Oyster Cove, which had a higher rainfall. But what put them on their feet, wrote Terry, was selling blocks fronting the South Arm road.

'In 1965 five acre developments started here, as the smaller farms couldn't make a go of it, and they took jobs in town and sold out,' recalled Terry. 'We objected to five-acre blocks for a

⁷⁸ *Eastside* 19.9.74; information from Betty May

while, but then we decided, “if you can’t beat them, join them”. A lot of the land that was sold wouldn’t support a bandicoot. We had the only dozer in the district, and we made drives and waterholes, and laid foundations. We did a lot of contracting, and we got more machinery, a 28-ton excavator, a 120-ton a day crusher.’⁷⁹

Fred Murfet farmed at Flagstaff Gully, mainly growing fruit, apricots, pears and apples. The 1950s were prosperous years for primary production, and in 1952 he employed twenty pickers. As well as fruit growing, his wife Hilda raised day-old chickens, they grew lettuces, and Fred leased a pear orchard at Sandford. But though prices were good, there was scarcely ever a perfect season – winds created limb rub and denuded the trees of their fruit, hail broke the skin of the fruit, droughts retarded growth, or birds ate the fruit. By the late 1960s ‘profitable orcharding was grinding to a halt’. Prices were falling and costs rising, prolonged drought lowered production, and pilfering of fruit was a problem. The future lay in subdivision, said Fred, and in 1970 he began his last fruit harvest. After this he subdivided land and moved into a tourist venture.⁸⁰

Even so, the rural areas were not totally in decline, and a 1968 article written by a local resident described Sandford as ‘a progressive district’. It had a rifle club, pony riding school, Rural Youth Club, CWA, badminton and Tasmanian Farmers federation meetings, and had just been made an Anglican parish. Country areas shared to a certain extent in the developments of the 1960s and 1970s – but by now they contained only 6% of Clarence’s population.⁸¹

Presiding over much of this activity was the municipal authority. Clarence Council was faced with problems from 1950 onwards. Development was happening fast and amenities had to be provided at the same time that costs were increasing, which meant large loans, huge projects and a great deal of work. The administration was too small and in 1952 the council clerk asked to be moved to an assistant position, as the job had grown beyond his abilities and knowledge. He had been appointed 26 years earlier, when the position called for far less specialised knowledge. The administration reorganised and a new council clerk appointed, Don Dudgeon, ‘a very good operator’. There were other changes, with better conditions for employees such as long service leave and higher

⁷⁹ Terry Morrisby’s memoirs; information from Terry Morrisby

⁸⁰ Murfet pp 69, 77, 89, 95, 102, 105, 135, 140-1

⁸¹ *Eastside* 15.8.68

wages,⁸² and modern equipment: a power lawnmower instead of a horse-drawn machine, a duplicator, an adding machine and a bulldozer.⁸³

All this was relatively straightforward, and though meetings tended to run into the small hours of the morning because there was so much business, Council managed the huge amount of work. A typical comment in an annual report was that it had been a year of steady progress. Problems were formidable, but if tackled in a logical and efficient manner, they would be overcome.⁸⁴

Council ran into serious trouble from another cause – factional fighting. From its formation in 1860, Clarence Council had few serious arguments because it was dominated by conservative farmers with the same outlook. Both rural wards returned farmers, and though some more radical councillors were elected from urban wards, the rural lobby dominated because the urban wards always elected one or two farmers or other conservatives. Councillors prided themselves on being non-political – but in this situation there was no need for any overt politics.⁸⁵

Outsiders could have a tough time. In 1951 the first woman was elected to Clarence Council – Alice Castle, the nursing sister at the Bellerive infant health clinic. She gained 48% of the vote, defeating three male candidates, including the sitting councillor. But winning the seat was one thing, achieving anything in Council another. ‘I heard that she didn’t get an easy time’, said Trevor Blom, a later councillor. ‘They didn’t like it that a woman was on Council.’ Alice Castle resigned after a year.⁸⁶

Rural wards had an unofficial system which allowed each area to send one representative to Council. In Sandford ward, South Arm, Sandford and Rokeby each returned a councillor, and in Cambridge one came from Seven Mile Beach, proposed by the progress association. ‘We’d had Vernon the shopkeeper on, and he served one term, but that was enough [for him]’, explained Trevor Blom. ‘So I stood, unopposed.’ This was 1952.

This changed when urban areas developed in rural wards, especially Warrane in Cambridge ward, but also Howrah in Sandford. Rural voters were outnumbered, and the new voters elected their own representatives, often Labor supporters. In 1955 Blom stood again, but this time Robert Breen

⁸² ARs 1950-1957; CC 10.4.52, 19.5.52, 12.5.55

⁸³ CC 14.12.50, 14.8.52, 11.6.53, 10.9.53; *Statistics of Tasmania* 1948/9, 1966/7

⁸⁴ WR 54, 55; CC 13.3.52; information from Trevor Blom

⁸⁵ *Mercury* 13.2.50

⁸⁶ *Mercury* 4.5.51; 10.5.51; CC 10.4.52

stood against him. 'He lived in Warrane and had the backing of the ALP, and I only had the Seven Mile Beach Progress Association, so of course he won.' Now, as well as farmers, businessmen and professional men, Council contained plumbers, fitters, clerks and labourers. They brought new ideas and clashed with the rural lobby, since they wanted to assist urban working people. Some councillors found this so challenging that they did not stand, and there was a huge turnover. By 1957, except for Doug Reynolds, the only old-fashioner stayer, councillors' average term was eighteen months, a far cry from the stable position of earlier years.⁸⁷

By this date, all Cambridge councillors came from Warrane, with colleagues from Bellerive and Lindisfarne. Conservatives were appalled. 'They got a lot of stirrers...ratbags on the council', was Don Dudgeon's version. 'The council went down fast.' 'There was a lot of faction fighting on Council, and that's what caused the Commission to be set up', said Trevor Blom. 'There was quite a bit of wheeling and dealing. [One man] was a red ragger, very able, [as was another]. They were both left-wingers, the most political ones.' Alma Calvert used to come home from Council meetings at all hours, concerned about the factionalism and the threats of physical violence.⁸⁸

Disagreements escalated, it became difficult for Council to get anything done owing to long arguments, meetings lasted till 3 am and later, and to make matters worse, there were allegations that Council property had been misappropriated. From 1954 Council was severely criticised, both privately and publicly in letters in the press, mostly by conservatives. The gist of these was that nothing was being done, roads and gutters were appalling, rates were exorbitant, everything went to Warrane, and there was 'bungling control'. An appointed commission would do a better job.⁸⁹ Commissions had been set up in other municipalities when councils ran into strife, so there was a precedent.

The warden from 1950 was Newton Lee, a Lindisfarne pharmacist, but he was defeated in 1954 and Royden Chen became warden. Young, clever, articulate, a lawyer of Chinese heritage, Chen was described as outstanding, but he became tired of constant bickering and resigned at the end of 1955. He was replaced by Doug Reynolds, a Rokeby farmer. Like Lee, Reynolds was hardworking, committed and honest, but did not have the toughness required to control an argumentative council.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *Mercury* 17.4.57

⁸⁸ CC 26.4.56; *Mercury* 6.4.72; information from Trevor Blom and Paul Calvert

⁸⁹ *Mercury* 10.4.53, 8.10.54 12.10.54, 15.10.54, 14.1.55; CC 14.10.54, 10.11.55, 24.11.55

⁹⁰ Information from Trevor Blom; WR 55

Fighting came to a head in 1957, over rating. Council was evenly split, 6-6, and trouble was inevitable. Clarence had always rated on improved value, but more radical councillors wanted rating on unimproved value, which would assist lower-paid ratepayers. In March 1957 one debate lasted all night, and an adjourned meeting ended in pandemonium when three conservative councillors walked out so there was no quorum and nothing could be passed. Eventually Council rejected unimproved value rating, at a meeting so packed with spectators that some had to stand in the passage. Among the dramatic events, councillor Frawley called those against unimproved value rating ‘forces of suppression and reaction’, and councillor Parish threatened to throw another councillor in the river.⁹¹

The *Mercury* was flooded with letters. Geoff Calvert, president of the Clarence branch of the Tasmanian Farmers Federation, put the conservative view: factional disputes had led to the neglect of ratepayers’ welfare, and some councillors had subverted the interests of the municipality as a whole to those of the area they represented. They had also interfered in administration, making staff members’ jobs impossible. The municipality’s growth had been so phenomenal that it was beyond the ability of many councillors to cope. Chen wrote that Council was divided into two violently opposed factions, with efficiency shelved as one section tried to obstruct the other. Meetings had degenerated into disorder, abuse, denunciation and points of order raised on trivial issues, to the neglect of urgent business. Only a few letters came from left-wing supporters, who argued that democracy worked faster when proceedings included ‘good, old fashioned name calling’, and councillors rose and fell in battles round the parish pump, at the will of the people.⁹²

The conservatives acted. In April a petition was presented to parliament asking for a poll to be held on the question of a commission. Over 66% of the electorate voted, and 64% of these, almost two thirds, voted for a commission. So Council was dissolved, and in June 1957 the Commission took over.⁹³

The Commission consisted of three men appointed by the government, usually experienced senior public servants, one a treasury official. Since it was a Labor government, they tended to be Labor supporters. Most were in full-time employment, and being a commissioner was ‘after hours’ work. The first chairman, Charles Hand, had served in World War I, then came to Tasmania, farmed at Campania and led the union of primary producers. He won a seat in parliament in 1948 and became a minister in 1950, but was defeated in the 1956 election. He was admired by everyone, a

⁹¹ *Mercury* 8.3.57, 15.3.57, 5.4.57

⁹² *Mercury* 29.3.57, 8.4.57, 10.4.57, 11.4.57, 12.4.57, 13.4.57, 14.4.57

real success as chairman. Roy ‘Bunny’ Richard, a lawyer, also served in the War, then joined the public service. Jack Miley was chairman of the Wages Board, and Max Jillett was the Public Service Commissioner, ‘a very engaging man’. Bill Delderfield was the Commissioner of Police, very ‘hail fellow well met’. Almost all were publicly esteemed and successful; it is a tribute to the government that they chose such successful commissioners.⁹⁴

Ron Mainwaring joined the Communist party when he was seventeen, but, disillusioned, left it during the war. In Hobart he worked as a joiner and was active in the trade union movement. He lived in Lindisfarne, and was always interested in local government. He followed the doctrines of Henry George, who supported unimproved rating, and with this and his communist past his appointment as commissioner was not popular in some quarters. But Ron became convinced that it was not possible to introduce unimproved rating so did not bring up this topic, and also became friendly with Charles Hand, so the Commission continued to run smoothly and ‘they soon realised they had no problem’.

The commissioners, democrats to a man, were uneasy with their undemocratic position, and did what they could to keep in touch with public opinion. As the best way of doing this, they worked closely with progress associations, and Ron attended as many public meetings as possible – he was out every night, his wife recalled, and used to eat his dinner standing up before rushing out again.

Unlike councillors, commissioners did not depend on election, so they were not as liable to outside pressure as councillors could be. Still, people tried: progress associations, government departments like the Housing Department, developers, the farming lobby, the public generally, and council staff. The three commissioners generally agreed, but there was some division between them and Don Dudgeon, who had been appointed by a farmer-dominated Council and was more conservative, as Ron recalled. He himself ‘was conscious that I was out of step, and I didn’t push as much as I would have liked. Hand was a diplomat, and he handled the first period’. No one could do everything he wanted in any case, because of problems with finance: there was never enough money, and the commissioners had to do the best they could with what was available.

This was at a period when there was a huge number of urgent projects: providing water, sewerage, sealed roads, footpaths and gutters, tips, a garbage collection, sporting facilities, reserves, controlling building, creating a town plan. Water was the most important, said Ron, and other

⁹³ CC 24.4.57; *Mercury* 1.6.57, 3.6.57; *Eastside* 4.12.69

⁹⁴ Information from Ron Mainwaring, Ron Marriott, Paul Calvert; *Mercury* 4.10.66, 7.12.67

amenities were provided as fast as possible. Despite the problems with finance, there is general agreement that the Commission did a good job in a difficult period. Because there were only three members, and they were not representing different areas or lobbies but doing a public service, there were not the disagreements Council had struggled under, and they could get on with the job, so much so that many people preferred this arrangement to an elected council. They seemed able to avoid the pitfalls of being either too conservative or too radical, and there were few complaints. The Commission also stood up for Clarence – many commissioners lived there – for example, against the urban areas being included in a greater Hobart, a plan of the 1960s.

Generally, people admired the Commission's achievements. 'They straightened everything out, and handed it back in a very good state', said Clarrie Roach of Bellerive, a typical comment from a Clarence resident. Nick Martelli, who worked for the Commission, commented that they were much better than Council. 'There were only three of them, and if anything was reported to them, it was carried out – there weren't any factions.' In writing the history of the Geilston Bay Recreational Area, Peter D'Emden wrote the Commission was extremely helpful to residents, providing 'wonderful co-operation and assistance'. Ron Marriott, council clerk from 1972, thought that 'Clarence owes a big debt to the commissioners. They were very able and experienced people, and laid a very good foundation for the municipality'. Looking back, said Ron Mainwaring, 'there's nothing I would have changed. We could have had more money, but we achieved a great deal. It was a lot of hard work'. Later warden Paul Calvert thought the Commission 'ran the municipality very well', with Ron Marriott 'one of the best council clerks round the nation'.⁹⁵

Among the Commission's achievements was moving municipal government from Bellerive to Rosny. By the 1960s the old town hall and offices were far too small for the growing administration, so despite strong opposition from those who wanted Council to stay in Bellerive – a newspaper poll showed 92% in favour – in 1973 a new council chambers was built at Rosny, where other developments were taking place.⁹⁶

From the mid-1960s there were a few moves to restore elected government, but sustained lobbying started only in 1969, when Eric Barnard MHA called for an elected council. The Commission had worked very well in a period of rapid development, he said, but it was time to return to democracy. This argument was advanced occasionally over the next few years, while those in

⁹⁵ AR 65/6, 69/70, *Eastside* 6.6.68; *Mercury* 18.11.72; D'Emden *passim*

⁹⁶ *Eastside* 5.3.70, 25.3.70, 9.4.70, 30.4.70, 16.4.70

favour of the Commission argued that councils were outmoded, as the work of municipal government was essentially administrative.⁹⁷

Argument grew when developers became involved. Like Council, the commissioners tried to encourage industry to come to Clarence, but also respected the planning scheme and planning advice generally, and did not want to encourage activities which went against this. They did not want to permit development before amenities like sewerage were available, and kept a brake on 'unwarranted expansion'. Being unelected, they were not open to lobbying from developers. From 1972 they were criticised by a small group for restricting development; but others praised them for stopping 'unrestricted development by large building firms'.⁹⁸

Arguments from developers joined a growing feeling that it was time to return to elected government – and Ron Mainwaring, now chairman of the Commission, agreed. 'My whole being revolted against being in a non-elected government. I always felt that all government should be elected. But we went along happily enough, and the people seemed happy. The only ones who weren't were the big subdividers... The commissioners probably felt that too, that it was time for an elected council – there were no real problems by then, and no big debts to hand over'. The local member of the House of Assembly, Ben McKay, led a movement to restore Council, and this time it was successful. An Act was passed, a compulsory poll was held, 66% of eligible voters took part (much the same as in 1957), and 55% voted for Council. It was enough, and Council elections were held in 1973.⁹⁹ But many people mourned the Commission, and some still do. Council taking over was 'the worst thing that ever happened', said Linda Bridge of Lindisfarne. 'It was much better with the Commission – they just worked, they had no axes to grind, they were very nice people, and everyone got helped.'

There was great interest in the first local election since 1957, with 45 candidates, including five women. Boundaries were redistributed to allow for population changes, but there were still the original four wards. In a vigorous advertising campaign, candidates mentioned most often that they were long-term inhabitants of Clarence, and also that they were involved with progress associations or other community groups, were justices of the peace, and had war service or business experience. Their occupations ranged from the traditional businessman, farmer and professional man to salesman,

⁹⁷ AR 63/4; *Eastside* 4.12.69, 11.12.69, 11.6.70

⁹⁸ *Eastside* 21.9.72

⁹⁹ Information from Ron Mainwaring; *Eastside* 22.2.73, 1.3.763; *Mercury* 20.10.72, 23.11.72, 26.2.73

shearer and housewife. Elected were six professional men; two businessmen; two public servants; a salesman; and a housewife, Hazel Johnston of Rokeby – though she also ran the Rokeby Garden Centre. Many of the new councillors had jobs where they came in contact with the public: two pharmacists, Bruce Goodluck who ran a service station, a doctor, two shop managers and two teachers. It was the first Clarence Council ever which contained no farmers, but two councillors did live in rural areas, which now housed only 6% of the population, so were in fact over-represented.¹⁰⁰

Bruce Goodluck was elected warden, and proved a popular choice, shrewd, energetic, ‘a man of the people’ who could talk to anyone. He pushed for amenities and progress, and so much did he have the interests of the municipality at heart that when he was re-elected warden in 1974 he rejected an increase in his allowance, which would come from ratepayers’ money. This election also saw Jock Campbell enter Council, beginning a long term.¹⁰¹ Once again, however, a woman did not succeed. Hazel Johnston resigned in 1974, not because of other councillors’ actions, but because, she said, residents were never satisfied, and should ‘stop niggling and harassing’ their councillors. She also suffered ill-health, and found it hard to work in her job and as a councillor.¹⁰²

As the Commission had found, finance was a problem – there was not enough money to do everything necessary, made worse by the fact that costs and wages were rising rapidly, and that at least half Clarence’s income went in repaying earlier loans. But for the first time, the federal government was providing money, mainly for unemployment relief, which was most welcome and meant that unskilled and semi-skilled work such as clearing reserves could be done.¹⁰³

Even so, in 1974 Goodluck described Clarence as ‘limping’. That year the Whitlam government made grants available to municipal authorities to enable all to provide adequate services, and Clarence applied. Its submission stated that the municipality had seen the most rapid growth in Tasmania, a third of the entire growth in the State. Council had to provide sealed roads, kerbs and gutters, water and sewerage, which meant huge loans, but these had to be repaid, and Clarence was in a financial straitjacket as rapid growth outstripped its capacity to finance services. There were no big industries to help with rates, while 41% of the population was under seventeen so did not pay rates, but meant there was a big demand for parks, playing fields and playgrounds. The 1967 bush fires

¹⁰⁰ *Eastside* 22.3.73, 24.4.73, 14.6.73, 1-17 June 73 passim; *Mercury* 31.6.73, 26.2.73, 14.6.73, 18.6.73

¹⁰¹ *Eastside* 10.4.74, 18.7.74, 26.9.74; information from Clarrie Roach

¹⁰² *Eastside* 1.8.74

¹⁰³ *Eastside* 22.2.73, 29.8.74, 5.12.74

had caused great loss. Clarence had developed primarily as a dormitory suburb for Hobart, and provided only 6% of metropolitan jobs while housing 26% of the population. Much work still needed to be done, and Clarence needed financial aid. The result of this was a large and very welcome grant, 'a real godsend' as Ron Marriott said, and later several more, such as grants for sewerage and child care.¹⁰⁴

This made the picture brighter, and there had also been a good deal of development in the previous few years. Many services had arrived: the number of doctors had grown from one to eight, and there were now travel agents, a legal firm, banks, shopping centres, architects, a drive-in theatre, a Chinese restaurant, an astronomy observatory, and some specialist doctors, dentists and physiotherapists.¹⁰⁵ Clarence was not yet a real city, but it was developing towards this status.

Boxed items

Risdon Jail

By the 1950s the old convict-built jail in Hobart was clearly inadequate – the dormitories were crowded, the bricks and mortar so old that one prisoner escaped with the aid of a penknife. In 1960 a new jail was opened at Risdon Vale. It was praised as 'one of the world's best', with separate cells, central heating and segregation for different types of prisoners. It held 324 inmates and 80 warders, and was built of mesh and pink reinforced concrete, so was nicknamed the Pink Palace. There were towers to give warders a complete view, and prisoners complained that it was like being in a large cage. A separate women's prison was opened next door in 1963.

There was a new focus on training and rehabilitation, so that inmates could develop other interests and possibly become self-sufficient on release. It made the jail almost self-supporting, as prisoners being trained provided metal goods, vegetables, clothing and shoes. The main industry was bread baking, with the jail supplying several government areas.¹⁰⁶

Ted Richardson, a teacher, was the first Education Officer. The first concern of the staff was the management of the prisoners, he recalled, and they were suspicious, but they came round. They were nervous when Ted had the prisoners playing basketball in inter-yard rosters, 'but we had no problems. If the prisoners had lynched someone, it would have stopped the basketball, so they didn't do it. We had film evenings, concert groups came in – suddenly they had things to look forward to,

¹⁰⁴ *Eastside* 12.9.74, 21.2.74, 7.3.74, 25.4.74, 19.12.74; information from Ron Marriott

¹⁰⁵ Walch 1950-1974; AR 63/4; *Eastside* 17.8.72, 13.12.73, 16.5.74, 5.9.74, 12.9.74, 28.11.74,

and if they misbehaved, they didn't go, so they did behave. The relations between prisoners and staff improved...

'We had a few things I was especially interested in. [Sculptor] Stephen Walker came over and helped people with art – we had evening classes. I ran basic literacy classes. I arranged for a university lecturer in History to come in for two students, and they sat for university subjects and passed. I felt it made a difference to their lives. I helped them to see their time through, and tried to change their attitude a little bit.' For the staff, Ted had a cricket pitch built – a team played in the Midweek Association – as well as a rifle range.

For a while all went reasonably well, but the 1970s brought trouble. In 1972 there were disturbances with 140 prisoners rioting, yelling, smashing windows, and setting their bedding alight and throwing it out the windows. Some complained to a reporter of low pay for their work, poor food, a lack of television and poor treatment by prison officers. In 1974 there were allegations of male rape in the prison.¹⁰⁷ But for the time being this blew over, though the riots alarmed some residents of Risdon Vale.

A community doctor

In 1948 Dr Bill Young and his family arrived in Bellerive. His wife Mary was also a doctor, who did some work at home and also immunisations for children, but Bill was the main doctor for the entire area from South Arm to Colebrook until 1954, when he was joined by a partner in the practice. He was also the Clarence Health Officer, and he remained working as a doctor in Clarence for many decades.

At first Bill had a surgery in his Bellerive house, a room in a house in Lindisfarne, a room in the post office in Colebrook and a room in Richmond, and messages were left in the Campania post office. People in other areas had to ring up. The family had a holiday cottage at Opossum Bay, and the post office would put messages through there. The only hospital was a small maternity in hospital in Lindisfarne, run for some years by Nurse Curtis, but most women went to Hobart to have their babies – sometimes Bill drove them to hospital himself.

There were no epidemics in these years, and Council work was straightforward, mostly inspecting housing conditions, shops and other premises. The main problem was that some were not

¹⁰⁶ *Examiner* 31.5.61; *Mercury* 3.8.63

¹⁰⁷ *Mercury* 24.10.72, 15.8.74; information from Trevor and Ian Blom

clean, and owners had to be taught more about hygiene. Bill recalled that there were pockets of poverty in Clarence, such as in the shacks by the canal at Lauderdale and in some areas of Bellerive, where one father supported his family of eight children by cutting and selling firewood, and had his two horses living in the house with them. But generally people were well fed and pretty healthy, said Bill. There was the occasional accident, such as when one boy was blinded after he and some friends took some explosives from the council quarry and set them off.