

Shepherd & Co. (1835 - 1900)

Monograph on Shepherd & Co., Colonial Nurserymen

by Louise B. Johnson

The unexpected death of Thomas Shepherd in late August 1835 brought changes.

THE DARLING NURSERY

Thomas's son-in-law Robert Henderson became the manager of the Darling Nursery while Thomas William and his younger siblings were not yet of age.¹

By August 1836, exactly a year after Thomas's death, a notice informed

"Capitalists, Gentlemen in public or private offices, Builders, Tradesmen [that] Twenty four Valuable Building Allotments, part of the Estate of the late Mr. Shepherd pleasantly situated on the New Town Road [are] to be leased by Auction, for a term of Fifteen Years".²

The allotments were either 50 or 51 feet wide by 100 feet deep, and this auction would start the process of raising the £5,000 capital for the trust stipulated in Thomas's Will.

In 1841 Jane Shepherd of Newtown was allocated two convict 'labourers, in lieu of men [who] obtained tickets-of leave'.³ That year land on the Chippendale Estate was worth up to £1,000 per acre.⁴ An advertisement in 1844 notified the public that orders for trees, shrubs and plants from the nursery would be 'carefully and punctually executed, and packed to carry any distance, on application to R. Henderson',⁵ so Henderson was still managing Darling Nursery at this time.

In 1846 Thomas William, aged 21, makes his first appearance as nurseryman at Darling Nursery having assumed its management and is offering 'to those who intend rearing Silkworms, 500,000 (five hundred thousand) Eggs to be distributed *gratis* in lots as required'.⁶

At the same time he is selling Chinese mulberry bushes which are 'particularly adapted' for silkworms to feed on. He reminds his 'friends and the public generally, that the season for removing plants and trees' is about to start and that 'he will have, as usual, a choice and extensive collection of Fruit Trees, Shrubs, and Flowering Plants for sale'.⁷ Those 'wishing to send collections to Europe, can have them packed so as to ensure their keeping fresh during the voyage. Also plants in glazed cases always ready for shipment.'⁸

1 *Horticultural Magazine and Gardeners' and Amateurs' Calendar*, 1865 (March) Volume 2 No 15 page 68.

2 *The Sydney Gazette* 30 August 1836 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2206294>

3 *NSW Government Gazette* 6 May 1841 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12869009>

4 *The Sydney Gazette* 5 August 1841 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2554083>

5 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 27 May 1844 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12417311>

6 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 9 May 1846 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12887114>

7 *ibid.*

8 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 26 December 1846 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12899429>

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The following year Thomas William is the named contact at the Darling Nursery for the sale of 'a large collection of useful and ornamental Trees, Shrubs, and Plants ... Indigenous [*sic*] plants and seeds always ready for shipment'.⁹

In 1849 Thomas William commissioned an auction at the nursery of 15,000 fruit trees and shrubs, including

"the best varieties of apple, pear, quince, mulberry, peach, nectarine, apricot, almond, plum, cherry, filbert, walnut, loquat, maclura, guava, cherimolia, orange, lemon, citron, lime, 3000 *morus multicaulis* (two years old), ash, elm, oak, sycamore, lime or linden tree, Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay pine, Moreton Bay chestnut &c., &c."¹⁰

By early 1855 the family began selling, not leasing, parts of the Darling Nursery Estate: building allotments with frontages to Rose, Ivy, Shepherd, Vine, Cleveland, Myrtle and Pine Streets sold for up to £8 per foot (likely per square foot).¹¹ In March, the selling agent Mort & Co placed further notices announcing the 'remaining allotments for sale'.¹²

Darling Cottage, Jane Susan's home, was sold in April 1855 via auction. A municipal ledger for 1845 records the house as single storey, built of stone with shingle roof having three attached rooms, a store and stabling '14 acres within the City' with a total of six rooms, and it was rated £80 for the year; by way of comparison the same year a single storey house with two rooms was rated £6 or £8.¹³

"THE COTTAGE, which is built of stone, is an excellent Family residence, and contains an extensive front verandah, spacious entrance hall, dining and drawing room 17 feet by 14 feet, and four good bedrooms, together with two large attic bedrooms. Attached to the Cottage is a wing containing breakfast parlour, one bedroom and office, under which is an excellent dry cellar, well drained and ventilated. There are also a good detached kitchen and laundry, store and bakehouse; together with an extensive range of buildings, comprising stabling, cart sheds, and other out-offices.

THE GROUNDS have a frontage of about 97 feet to the Newtown Road, and 212 feet to Rose-Street, and are planted with an extensive variety of shrubs, &c., being a portion of the Darling Nursery lands.

This property is so well known that it is not deemed necessary to add any lengthy comment on it. The very extensive accommodation of the cottage, and out-offices, which are built of stone and well finished, together with the situation and character of the land, are certain to ensure competition at the sale."¹⁴

The house and its grounds sold for £2,900.¹⁵ In some respects, this must have been the end of an era for the Shepherd family. Throughout the remainder of 1855 various allotments

9 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 19 June 1847 page 7; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12889726>

10 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 4 August 1849 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12907487>

11 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 10 February 1855 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12965488>

12 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 29 March 1855 page 8; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12967315>

13 City of Sydney; City Assessment Books Ledger 1845.

14 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 17 April 1855 page 7; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12968189>

15 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 25 April 1855 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12968531>

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of the Darling Nursery were advertised for sale 'at £4 to £5 per foot',¹⁶ and a land survey at the time clearly shows the extent of the subdivision.¹⁷

Later that year Dr John Aitken, a surgeon and husband of Thomas Shepherd's youngest daughter Jane (they married in 1849) bought Block 7 of the Darling Nursery Estate fronting Newtown Road and bounded by Myrtle, Rose and Cleveland Streets consisting of 'two acres six perches' for £6,370.¹⁸

In November of 1855 the partnership of Thomas William, David and Patrick Lindesay purchased the whole of Block 6 of the Darling Nursery from Thomas's trustees for £2,073.16.3; the block had previously sold at auction and the successful bidder had paid his deposit of £691.18.9 but failed to settle, so the brothers acquired it for the balance.¹⁹

Via an Indenture dated 14 November 1856, Thomas William, David and Patrick Lindesay purchased the Mount Philo Estate of 'one thousand one hundred acres more or less' on the Western Road near Penrith for £2,900.²⁰ This estate was originally a land grant in 1824²¹ to John Thomas Campbell (Governor Macquarie's secretary from 1810 to 1820) and by coincidence Robert Bell, uncle of the Shepherd brothers, worked as overseer on Campbell's other land grant of 1,550 acres at Bringelly in the late 1820s.²²

At the time the Mount Philo Estate was described as including:

"that famous agricultural farm known as CAMPBELL'S HILL FARM, of about 160 acres – one of the very finest in the district – about one hundred acres of which have been cleared and [*sic*] under cultivation, the remaining 60 acres more or less being enclosed as grass land. There are also labourers' cottage, hay yards [and another portion] of about 60 acres has been leased to two respectable tenants, who are bound to clear, fence, and bring the same under cultivation, and also to erect two good cottages thereon.

The rest of the estate includes a very large extent of the RICHEST AGRICULTURAL LAND, on which there is an abundance of good timber, whether for splitting, sawing, or shingles, consisting chiefly of stringy-bark, beefwood, &c.

The property is watered by Rope's Creek, which forms its western boundary, and by a tributary of Eastern Creek ... As an agricultural estate it would perhaps be difficult to find one which contains so large an extent of really good arable land ... It is accessible from Sydney by rail and coach in a couple of hours..."²³

It is curious that £2,900 was received on the sale of Darling Cottage and perhaps this sum was given to them to purchase land for expansion of the nursery business. At this time, Thomas William was aged 31, David was 30 and Patrick Lindesay was 25. Was £2,900 the

16 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 2 June 1855 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12969960>

17 The National Library of Australia, E J H Knapp survey 1856: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-229997417/view>

18 NSW Registrar General's Book 51 No. 917 Indenture 27 September 1855.

19 NSW Registrar General's Book 51 No. 566 Indenture 10 November 1855.

20 NSW Registrar General's Book 51 No. 753 Indenture 14 November 1856.

21 *The Sydney Gazette* 3 June 1824 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2182940>

22 NSW Census 1828 [entry for Robert Bell, came free on the *Rosanna*].

23 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 6 September 1856 page 9; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28635339>

limit if the Shepherd brothers were bidding and did this allow them to out-bid competitors? They renamed the acreage 'Chatsworth' and David was resident manager.²⁴

SHEPHERD and CO

By the mid 1850s the Darling Nursery was trading as Shepherd and Co and orders 'from the interior, and for export [were] as usual, carefully and suitably packed, and promptly executed'.²⁵ (Thomas would have been pleased.) There were 'exports' of trees and plants to Melbourne.²⁶ Further lots of the Darling Nursery were sold.²⁷

Shepherd and Co had a system of coloured cheques whereby those drawn on the Darling Nursery, Sydney were on blue paper and those for the Chatsworth business were on red paper; Thomas William was the sole signatory for both and he had a habit of signing blank blue cheques, presumably to facilitate business when he wasn't on hand at Chippendale. A disgruntled former employee, Joseph Nash, broke into Thomas William's office late one October evening in 1858 and stole a blank but signed blue cheque. Fortunately Thomas William noticed it was missing first thing the next day and stopped payment but in the meantime Nash had presented it to a draper to pay for goods worth £3, with the cheque made out for £17 2s 6d. The draper recognised Nash as 'the servant of Messrs. Shepherd, who had bought goods with a former cheque'. Nash was charged with forgery. In the Central Criminal Court Thomas William gave evidence that the signature on the cheque was his but the 'filling up' of the value on the face of the cheque and the date was not his writing, and Patrick Lindesay also gave evidence that the 'filling up' writing was not that of his brother. Nash was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to 'hard labour on the roads, or other public works of the colony, for three years'.²⁸ Three years!

By early 1859 Frederick Creswick, aged 39, was working at Darling Nursery.²⁹ Of note, he had landscaping skills.³⁰ He had been elected an inaugural council member of the Australian Horticultural and Agricultural Society in 1856 (alongside Thomas William, David and Patrick Lindesay Shepherd and 20 others),³¹ and he later became a partner in Shepherd and Co.

The same year (1859), *The Sydney Magazine of Science and Art* published a short paper titled 'Jerusalem Artichoke' written by Joseph Graham of the 'Darling Nursery, Feb 5, 1856'.³² Shepherd and Co's employees continue the tradition of writing about horticulture. An earlier review of the Magazine included comment that papers by 'our horticulturists and

24 *Eastern Creek Heritage Report* by GML Heritage Pty Ltd, 2014; <https://www.tngnsw.com.au/media/1101/appendix-u-non-aboriginal-cultural-heritage-impact-statement.pdf>

25 *The Empire* (Sydney) 6 June 1857 page 8; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/64982790>

26 *The Empire* (Sydney) 1 July 1857 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/64982920>

27 *The Empire* (Sydney) 25 July 1857 page 8; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/64983283>

28 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 9 December 1858 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28630685>

29 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 22 January 1859 page 10; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13020157>

30 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 28 April 1883 page 6; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13533684>

31 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 10 December 1856 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12989835>

32 *The Sydney Magazine of Science and Art* 1859 Volume 2 page 197.

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agriculturists are ... desultory, but often interesting and practically useful; those of Messrs. Shepherd are especially valuable'.³³

Further allotments of the Darling Nursery were sold via auction in April 1859; at the same time they sold privately land at the corner of Brisbane and Parramatta streets with 40 foot frontage for £332, and two cottages at 137 and 139 Gloucester Street for £350.³⁴ It's not clear when these properties were acquired.

In late 1859 the three Shepherd brothers borrowed £6,000, a not inconsiderable sum, secured against the Mount Philo Estate property and several Darling Nursery Estate allotments;³⁵ it was a decade before the mortgage was discharged.³⁶

By 1861 'much of the original grant of the Darling Nursery has been cut up into building allotments, and streets, lanes and courts [however it] is not abandoned, but cultivation will continue there on a very small scale [and] it will remain as the depot for the sale of the nursery produce, which will be sent from Chatsworth.' Since its purchase in 1856

"about twenty acres have been cleared and trenched for nursery purposes, and these, to a great extent, have been planted. The establishment offers for sale this season from 15,000 to 20,000 grafted orange trees, and from 60 to 80,000 other fruit trees ... In addition to this, 100 acres are cleared with the intention of being appropriated entirely to the cultivation of the vine and other fruit trees [but only] a small portion of this land has yet been planted. The difficulty of procuring at a reasonable rate adequately skilled labour, being the main obstacle to more satisfactory progress ... At present no pot culture is carried on at the estate at Chatsworth, but two acres of the Darling Nursery are still appropriated to this branch of nursery business. The principal feature of the pot plant nursery is its very extensive and varied collection of coniferous plants; many varieties are rare ... Messrs. Shepherd have recently received a considerable and very rare selection of pine tree seeds from California."³⁷

The Shepherd brothers added to the Mount Philo property in late 1861 when they bought 288 acres of neighbouring land across Ropes Creek for £705;³⁸ the land was part of the 3,000 acre Erskine Park Estate 'perhaps one of the finest dairy estates in the colony'.³⁹

The *Real Property Act* of 1862 which took effect from 1 January 1863 introduced Torrens title into the Colony; this secured indefeasible title to land by registration of conveyance as an alternative to the onerous Old System chain of title deeds required to transfer or deal with property. This legislation, as well as the substantially increased value of their land, may have encouraged the Shepherds to hasten disposal of the Darling Nursery Estate:

33 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 27 September 1858 page 8; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13020816>

34 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 27 April 1861 page 9; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28625307>

35 NSW Registrar General's Book 64 No. 206 Indenture 10 November 1859.

36 NSW Registrar General's Book 115 No. 625 Indenture 2 September 1869.

37 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 21 May 1861 page 10; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13068190>

38 NSW Registrar General's Book 76 No. 429 Indenture 24 December 1861.

39 *The Empire* (Sydney) 16 January 1854 page 6; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/60148299>

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numerous lots, having been converted to Torrens title, were sold throughout the 1860s and 1870s.

Jane Susan, 'relict of the late Thomas Shepherd, Esq' died on 31 October 1863 at Darling Nursery after a lingering illness aged 66,⁴⁰ and was buried with Thomas. At this time a prominent object of the trust established under his Will of 1835 to pay £500 each year to his wife Jane 'by equal quarterly payments for and during the term of her natural life' (given that she did not remarry), ceased upon her death.

Early 1865 heralded a major change: Thomas William, about to turn 40, left the Shepherd and Co family partnership. He conveyed his 'one undivided third part or share' in the Mount Philo Estate, several lots of the Darling Nursery Estate and 'two hundred and eighty eight acres' being Lot 11 of the Erskine Park Estate to his brothers David and Patrick; he also relinquished any further share and entitlement to the Darling Nursery Estate in Chippendale and he received £1,500 in settlement of this arrangement.⁴¹ A notice informed the public of the dissolution of the partnership 'by mutual consent', that David and Patrick Lindesay would carry on the business as Shepherd and Co and that they would receive and pay all debts due to and by the former partnership.⁴² It is interesting to note that this settlement took place just a few months after the death of their mother Jane.

The following month David and Patrick discharged a loan of £563 borrowed in 1863 secured against Darling Nursery land.⁴³ (The death of their mother had freed up £500 per year in capital.)

In mid 1865 John Gould Veitch an English horticulturist visited Sydney:

"The largest and most important nurseries of Sydney are those of Messrs. Baptist & Son, Messrs. Shepherd & Co., and Guilfoyle & Son. I must acknowledge that these establishments somewhat disappointed me, probably from having previously heard so much of them. As a rule, there is a want of that order and arrangement in the Sydney nurseries which in England we consider so indispensable."⁴⁴

This seems to contradict local reports regarding Shepherd and Co which always noted how organised were their nurseries, following the training Thomas Shepherd received in Scotland and England and the discipline he instilled.

In the late summer of 1866, the Darling Nursery was reported as:

"established about 41 years, by the father of the present occupants, and contains within itself some three or four acres, and is kept up chiefly as a depot for Chatsworth. On entering, we find a broad walk with a border on each side, containing what we might term show plants;

40 *The Sydney Mail* 7 November 1863 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/166654178>

41 NSW Registrar General's Book 91 No. 873 Indenture 4 February 1865.

42 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 18 February 1865 page 10; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13107764>

43 NSW Registrar General's Book 83 No. 750 Indenture 27 June 1863; Bk 174 No. 358 Indenture 2 March 1865.

44 "Extracts from the Journal of Mr John Gould Veitch during a trip to the Australian Colonies ..." in *The Gardeners' Chronicle & Agricultural Gazette* (London) 20 January 1866 page 52.

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amongst them are some good and rare specimens, such as *Auricularia imbricata*, this is twenty years old, is now fourteen feet high, and is well furnished with imbricated foliage to the bottom ...

"The plant sheds themselves form no mean object, and now enclose a space of one acre, and everything is kept in order. There seems to be a place for everything, and everything is kept in order ... there are immense quantities of everything, Camellias, new Pines, Figs, in fact, all and everything that may be required by gentlemen laying out gardens ... Concerning the new Strawberries, we must congratulate both Sir W. Macarthur and the Messrs. Shepherd and Co., for their exertions in endeavouring to introduce a superior description of this estimable fruit into this colony.

"Our attention was called to a wall some hundred feet long and twelve feet high, covered with *Canavallia Bonariensis*, this plant, we were informed covered the wall in the short space of four years, thus proving its usefulness for covering unsightly walls and other like partitions ... We were also shown a fine olive hedge about twelve feet in height, and is so close that birds cannot penetrate it; it was planted, according to the records of the firm, in the year 1827 ...

On the whole, we should say that it is one [*sic*] most complete establishments in the Colony, and reflects the highest credit on the Co-Proprietors, viz., Mr. P.L.C. Shepherd and Mr. David Shepherd, and judging from appearances their efforts are well seconded by their able and intelligent propagator, Mr. F. Creswick. In conclusion, we trust to be able to pay a visit to their other establishment at Chatsworth."⁴⁵

They did visit Chatsworth.

"This place is situated about two miles from Rooty Hill Station, on the Great Western Highway, and contains thirteen hundred acres; it is bounded on the eastern side by Eastern Creek, and by Ropes Creek on its western side. The estate is a succession of hill and dale, and contains some of the finest land seen in the colony. The place, through being in a young state, is only as yet partially cultivated. It is here that all the fruit trees and hardy plants are cultivated and sent to the depot [Darling Nursery] in Sydney ... The principal plot at present in cultivation is an oblong piece of ground, having a wide road through it, and bounded by a row of orange trees on each side ... and bearing so many names, apropos [*sic*] of this, Mr. David Shepherd, under whose superintendence this estate is, informed us that he has proved that many of the kinds of oranges bearing local names are alike, and in his opinion only vary through being planted in different situations. This part contains between thirty and forty acres ... Here are also to be found all the colonial raised seedling of Peaches, planted expressly for the purpose of improving their qualities. Mr. Thomas [William] Shepherd, while in the firm, took a great interest in the above affair, and which we hope the present firm will continue; ...

In order to keep up its standing, the firm has lately imported some thirty-five new Peaches, fifteen new Nectarines, and the Diamond Plum ... In this plot we saw a neatly made pond, lined with stone, containing Perch and other fresh water fish; while around its margin the common Privet is planted and forms an admirable hedge."

"Independently of the multitude of worked stock fit for the market, preparations of a gigantic scale are made for furnishing another season's supply, and so on for succession. That everything shall be done well, any inequalities of the land are filled up with maiden soil before the ground is used, which although expensive, yet it amply pays itself ... one would wonder where all the fruit trees went to but when we take into consideration that New South Wales supplies

45 *Horticultural Magazine & Gardeners' & Amateurs Calendar* 1866 Volume 3 No. 28 (April) 1866 pages 85-87.

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Queensland, New Zealand, Melbourne, and even Western Australia, our wonder naturally ceases. Even in this nursery the stock of fruit trees is immense, numbering thousands of descriptions."

"Mrs. David Shepherd holds a Sunday school, to which the juvenile community attend, instead of letting them run wild ... we wish success to the Messrs. Shepherd and Co.'s undertaking in endeavouring to keep up the standing of New South Wales as a supplier of nursery stock to the various Australian colonies."⁴⁶

The first railway from Sydney to Parramatta Junction opened in 1855 and the extension to Moss Vale, passing through Bowral, opened in 1867. Following this, John Norton Oxley, son of explorer and Surveyor General John Oxley, began selling off parts of his Wingecarribee Estate grant of 4,200 acres. The land was originally promised to his illustrious father c.1824 by Governor Brisbane on payment of £125 deposit but Oxley senior died in 1828 aged 44 without receiving title and the deposit was refunded; in 1855 the Court of Claims determined that since Oxley senior's widow was also now deceased, the land belonged to his sons John Norton and Henry Molesworth and the title deed issued as a grant.⁴⁷ Henry sold his interest to his brother in 1858. John Norton Oxley sold 42 acres for £35 to Patrick in late 1869 and a further 37 acres to him for £142 in late 1870.⁴⁸

"Messrs. Shepherd and Co. of Sydney, [have] lately purchased sixty [sic] acres on the east side of the village [of Bowral] for a nursery, which is to be quite on an English scale, under the superintendence of Mr. Pember ..."⁴⁹

There was a family connection: Robert Henderson, the Shepherd brothers' brother-in-law, had come out to the colony in the late 1820s to work as John Oxley's overseer on his property near Camden.

The *Town and Country Journal* visited Darling Nursery in the winter of 1872.

"The old entrance to the nursery at the western side of the homestead of Darling Nursery has been opened up into a splendid avenue about 350 feet long, extending from the Newtown Road to the door of the nursery, with a pathway of six feet, and side drains of brick for the whole length upon each side. Three large trees have been cut down, and the butts and roots of them as excavated, occupy prominent positions, the centre one being covered by mesembryanthumum ... At the bottom of the avenue on corresponding sides of the walk are two fine ornamental specimens of *Abutilon Thompsonii*, between four and five feet high, which form admirable border plants ...

Entering the greenhouse to the left of the gate were found some of the new and rare plants that the firm are sending out this season [and in] the propagating beds, new palms are being plentifully raised ... It may here be mentioned that in the propagating pits there are nearly a hundred varieties of fuchsias, the one described as the *Avalanche*, a double one, being considered the finest in the world ... in another month or two the nursery with its recently imported varieties of *Azaleas*, *Chrysanthemums*, *Coleus*, *Dahlias*, *Zonale* and other pelargoniums will present a gay and splendid appearance."⁵⁰

46 *Horticultural Magazine & Gardeners' & Amateurs Calendar* 1866 Volume 3 No. 30 (June) 1866 pages 138-140.

47 *NSW Government Gazette* 7 April 1854 page 757; and *NSW Government Gazette* 24 August 1855 page 2270.

48 Registrar General's Book 118 No. 55 Indenture 24 December 1869; Bk 122 No.961 Indenture 25 November 1870.

49 *The Evening News (Sydney)* 18 November 1870 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/107134608>

50 *Town & Country Journal* 20 July 1872 page 76; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/70495913>

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In early 1873 a 16 page catalogue containing a 'Special list of new plants, new fruit trees, and garden seeds' issued by Shepherd and Co of the Darling Nursery, Sydney, claimed their 'stock of Fruit Trees this season is the largest and best ever offered in Australia'.⁵¹

To celebrate fifty years of their establishment, on Saturday 3 March 1877 Shepherd and Co invited

"their employees to a friendly game of cricket. Eleven men were selected from the Sydney branch to contest the game, with a like number selected from the Chatsworth branch. The Sydney team accompanied by their friends left the Redfern station by the 7.25 a.m. train and proceeded as far as Rooty Hill where vehicles were in readiness to convey them to Chatsworth, a distance of about three miles. The Chatsworth men went in first to the wickets when [*sic*] they placed 56 runs to their credit before being disposed of. The Sydney team followed and only succeeded in scoring 44 runs. After an hour's adjournment for refreshments, the Chatsworth team resumed their places at the wickets, and ran up a score of 67. The Sydney team following with a score of 57, leaving the Chatsworth men victors by 22 runs. The whole party then took a ramble through the extensive grounds and nurseries, and after mutual cheers and congratulations, the Sydney visitors returned per 8 p.m. train highly delighted with their day's amusement."⁵²

RYDALMERE

The year 1879 saw another land acquisition by Shepherd and Co: David and Patrick purchased just over 40 acres of the Vineyard Estate fronting the Parramatta River at Rydalmere for £581.8 shillings.⁵³ For the convenience of transporting produce, Shepherd's Wharf was constructed on the south-west corner of their property fronting the river.⁵⁴

David sold his equity in this property to Patrick in 1882 for £750,⁵⁵ perhaps to free up capital and to concentrate on Chatsworth. However, Patrick sold the Rydalmere property back to David just four years later for £1,337 'one shilling and three pence',⁵⁶ thus David became the sole proprietor of this acreage which he called Lindesayville.⁵⁷

In 1889 the council assessed the property for rates at £140 which David disputed and he was successful in having the assessment reduced to £100.⁵⁸ Also that year the Crown negotiated to purchase two acres on the north-west corner of their acreage for £240,⁵⁹ on which to build a Public School and School of Arts and these opened in late 1890.⁶⁰

51 National Library of Australia; <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1638588266>

52 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 7 March 1877 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13390339>

53 NSW Registrar General's Book 191 No. 180 Indenture 14 February 1879.

54 NSW State Library poster; <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74Vvdxwma0ed/wxo3eqL6yZZgB>

55 NSW Registrar General's Book 240 No. 964 Indenture 4 March 1882.

56 NSW Registrar General's Book 443 No.197 Indenture 14 December 1886.

57 1887 Shepherd and Co [colour] Catalogue.

58 *The Cumberland Argus* 31 August 1889 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/86270162>

59 NSW Registrar General's Book 444 No. 312 Indenture 9 September 1890.

60 *The Cumberland Argus* 20 December 1890 page 6; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/86275026>

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By 1893 David's Rydalmere property was described as:

"situated on the Parramatta River, about three miles from Parramatta station. The property ... contains 43 acres freehold. Here Shepherd and Co. have about 20 acres planted out with every variety of the citrus tribe, besides many thousands of plums, apricots, and other fruit trees. Here, also, are grown annually very large numbers of all the leading varieties of roses. Roughly estimated, we can safely say that 200,000 roses and 2,000,000 orange and lemon trees in various stages can be seen growing, in a strong healthy condition, at Rydalmere. The question how are all these trees, plants, &c., disposed of may reasonably be asked, and the reply is that Shepherd and Co. have been so many years before the public growing and selling reliable trees, and generally giving their customers satisfaction, that they now have customers in every part of Australasia, as well as India, Japan, Fiji, Honolulu, and America. Trade which is properly conducted, like good wine, improves with age."⁶¹

David gifted the Rydalmere property of just over 38 acres to his three 'spinster' daughters Emily Isabella, Jane and Edith Susan for Ten Shillings in 1896,⁶² it was worth at least £120 per acre based on the 2 acre sale to the government in 1889. His daughters Jessie Elizabeth who had married William Joshua Wilson in 1877, Mary Bell who married John George North of J B North & Sons in 1882, Annie Laura who married Jonathan Starr of Capertee in 1889, and son Thomas Robert were not included in this beneficence although Thomas Robert would in time acquire the Shepherd and Co business from David.

Ahead of further sale of Darling Nursery allotments, in 1880 Shepherd and Co

"offered to the Director of the Botanic Gardens many of the valuable standard plants which occupied the grounds to be sold. Mr. Moore at once availed himself of this offer, which has enabled him to make additions to the gardens of some 40 trees and shrubs [the] trees were of considerable size, and if they survive as they are now planted in the garden, they will greatly add to its interest. Many other trees from Messrs. Shepherd and Co.'s nursery, which were not required for the Botanic Gardens, were removed and planted in various positions in Victoria Park, which adjoins the nursery. About the same time, Mr. John Baptist, of 'The Gardens,' Surry Hills, presented to Mr. Moore, for the Botanic Gardens, 60 distinct species of plants, most of which have been recent introductions into the colony, and are therefore rare and valuable."⁶³

1893 saw the end of the Darling Nursery in Chippendale.⁶⁴

SURRY HILLS

On 1 January 1882 Shepherd and Co began trading in Bourke Street, Surry Hills, having purchased the stock of nurseryman John Baptist and leasing his premises.⁶⁵

61 *The Sydney Mail* 25 March 1893 page 593; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/162197697>

62 NSW Registrar General's Book 580 No. 347 Indenture 15 June 1896.

63 *The Sydney Daily Telegraph* 15 September 1880 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/238296324>

64 *The Queenslander* (Brisbane) 26 August 1893 page 386; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/20344293>

65 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 28 February 1882 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13505927>

Shepherd & Co. (1835 - 1900)

Further major changes in Shepherd and Co took place with the addition of new partners:⁶⁶ Thomas Robert (1859-1936) (David's son), Lindesay (1858⁶⁷-1933) (Patrick's son), Frederick Creswick (who had been with the firm for over 20 years) and Edmund Cunningham.⁶⁸

The 36 page Catalogue published in 1883 under heading 'Wooden Plant Sticks' informs the public that 'we have imported a large stock of these from Germany'.⁶⁹

By late 1883 changes had been made to the Bourke Street premises:

"with the exception of letting the old greenhouse stand ... Commodious bush sheds have been erected, new low-roofed plant house raised, and the grounds generally undergoing an extensive system of remodelling".⁷⁰

In September 1884 Shepherd and Co was offering 30,000 orange trees, 200,000 fruit trees, 500,000 ornamental trees shrubs and plants, landscape gardening and 'T. W. Shepherd's Asthma Herb' at 1 shilling per packet;⁷¹ Thomas William had died the previous month.

According to a public notice in 1884 the Shepherd and Co partnership dissolved due to an increase in business: David, his son Thomas Robert, together with Frederick Creswick and Edmund Cunningham would continue a nursery business as Shepherd and Co; and Patrick and his son Lindesay trading as P.L.C. Shepherd and Son would deal exclusively with the seed business operating from premises in the Royal Arcade effective from 1 October 1884.⁷² It has been suggested that the reason for the dissolution of the partnership was that there was a disagreement as to how the business should be managed.⁷³ This division of the business may also explain why Patrick sold the Rydalmere property back to David.

The Shepherd and Co *Plant & Fruit Tree Catalogue for 1885* of 76 pages comes with note that 'we shall feel very grateful to those who may receive a Copy, and have no use for it, if they would kindly hand it to some person interesting in Gardening'.

In 1887 the Shepherd and Co colour catalogue describes the three sites from which they operate and says that Thomas Robert Shepherd (David's son) is the resident manager at Surry Hills and Creswick is the manager of Chatsworth.

Trading from the Bourke Street, Surry Hills premises had ceased by August 1892.⁷⁴

66 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 4 March 1882 page 17; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13506300>

67 Lindesay Shepherd (1858-1933); his birth was not registered; his parents Patrick and Isabella married in 1857; birth of a son reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* 10 April 1858; marriage of Lindesay 'eldest son of P.L.C. Shepherd reported in *The Sydney Mail* 27 January 1883.

68 Edmund W Cunningham (1851-1908); Mrs E W Cunningham of Shepherd St Darlington birth of a son: *The Sydney Morning Herald* 21 August 1875.

69 Shepherd and Co *Seed Catalogue for 1883* page 35.

70 *The Sydney Mail* 29 December 1883 page 1220; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/162023927>

71 *The Sydney Mail* 6 September 1884 page 452; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163267032>

72 *The Sydney Mail* 27 September 1884 page 609; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163270629>

73 *Eastern Creek and Land Settlers* by George Nicolaidis, 2000 page 44.

74 *The Evening News* (Sydney) 10 August 1892 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/112596554>

Shepherd & Co. (1835 - 1900)

WATERLOO

By early 1891 Shepherd and Co had begun trading at Lachlan Street, Waterloo.⁷⁵ Initially they leased the land probably with an option to purchase because in time the family owned the property.

The 1891 catalogue was 'handsomely got up in gilt and colour cover. The contents are exhaustive, and the list is clearly printed and well arranged, and the publication as a whole is a very creditable credential'.⁷⁶ The 1892 catalogue was 'neatly bound, well arranged, and clearly printed, and contains copious lists of the trees, shrubs, and flowering plants suitable to the climate'.⁷⁷

By 1893 the Lachlan Street premises of 2¼ acres as head office comprised

"large and commodious offices, seed warehouse, packing shed, drying loft, and all necessary out-houses have been erected at a cost of several thousands of pounds. One of the newest bushhouses in Australia, 240 x 75 [sic], with upwards of 200,000 pot plants, set up and arranged ready for sale, is a striking feature of this nursery. Outside this plant shed are the planting grounds, containing over 150,000 pot plants arranged for sale, and in numerous well-arranged beds may be seen thousands of pines, thujas, daphnes, dahlias, carnations, &c., in splendid condition.

The hothouse is well stocked with a magnificent collection of house plants, orchids, begonias, &c. The fern and palm houses are well filled with a choice collection of these popular plants for decorative purposes. The covered pits are filled with many thousands of bouvardias, fuchsias, pelargoniums, &c. The business of this establishment is conducted and managed by Mr. T. R. Shepherd, the only son of Mr. David Shepherd (senior partner) of Shepherd and Co."⁷⁸

By 1893 Lachlan Street was the only city address.⁷⁹

CHATSWORTH

In 1893 Chatsworth, near St Marys, was reported as

"a grand property [which] contains 750 acres of freehold, the property of Mr. David Shepherd. Here Shepherd & Co have established their headquarters for growing fruit trees, camellias, azaleas, magnolias, &c ... About 40 acres are under fruit tree culture, eight acres under orange and lemon trees, and 12 acres as an orchard for testing all fruits grown or imported by the firm. About two acres are devoted to bulbs, &c. Roughly estimated, 3,000,000 fruit trees are now to be seen here, growing in various stages, all in strong healthy condition.

The immense stools of camellias, azaleas, &c., covering over three acres, are a special feature at Chatsworth, and so great a show cannot be seen in any other nursery in Australia. In the immense bushhouse, covering one acre, may be seen 20,000 camellias in pots ready for immediate sale, and many thousands of persimmons, Japanese plums, and other new fruits recently imported and just commencing to sprout.

75 *The Sydney Mail* 11 April 1891 page 797; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163656556>

76 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 25 March 1891 page 8; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13818700>

77 *Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney) 16 March 1892 page 21.

78 *The Sydney Mail* 25 March 1893 page 593; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/162197697>

79 *The Queenslander* (Brisbane) 26 August 1893 page 386; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/20344293>

Shepherd & Co. (1835 - 1900)

The reservoir for supplying water to the house and nursery is a beautiful sheet of water covering over four acres, and averaging 18ft deep ... About three quarters of a mile away in a sheltered spot 12 acres have been devoted to the culture of orange and lemon trees for sale from Chatsworth Nursery. The whole of this stock are looking and doing splendidly.

About two acres are devoted to bulb-growing, such as hyacinths [*sic*], gladioli, narcissus, hippeastrums, lilies, &c., where thousands are annually raised."

"Shepherd and Co. have been so many years before the public growing and selling reliable trees, and generally giving their customers satisfaction, that they now have customers in every part of Australasia, as well as in India, Japan, Fiji, Honolulu, and America. Trade which is properly conducted, like good wine, improves with age."⁸⁰

That winter the camellia house at Chatsworth included 'many specimens of persimmons (date plum) grafted last year and now some of them have reached the height of five feet ... This fruit was first brought over from Japan about 12 years ago by Messrs. Shepherd and Co'.⁸¹ In the nursery proper could be found

"about a dozen men employed together making up a large order of 5,000 trees to be shipped to Queensland [and] the firm sells something like 20,000 [roses] a year ... The next plot was occupied by peach trees grown from the peach stones gathered about the country ... Quinces came next, of which 10,000 were budded this year, and besides these there are 20,000 apple and 80,000 orange trees in the nursery ... there were no less than 840 kinds of camellias [and the stools], that is, the trees which are layered from, were planted 85 years ago, and have been layered from every year since. [There are] plums, (one variety of which comes from Persia), prunes and Japanese plums ... persimmons, well loaded ... some of the fruit of which weighs 1¼ lbs ... A tour through this nursery is a real day's pleasure. It is the largest in the colonies [*sic*], and is said to contain upwards of 500,000 trees and plants. Among this number there are 300 varieties of apples, 160 of peaches, 120 of plums 200 of pears, 40 of cherries, and 40 of nectarines."⁸²

In March 1894, with report of Shepherd and Co's new catalogue, it was quipped 'A peculiar feature of their business is that they have no shop, office, or agent in this city'.⁸³ In November that year they purchased Messrs. J Graham and Co in the Strand Arcade, an old established seed and nursery business.⁸⁴ Joseph Graham had worked in the Darling Nursery in the mid 1850s.

A *Town and Country Journal* report in April 1895 noted:

"We have received from Messrs. Shepherd and Company ... a copy of their descriptive catalogue for 1895. It is well arranged, and very clearly printed, and has a number of special merits. It contains an attractive list of novelties and specialities for the season, including flower seeds and a number of fruits, among the latter being four new varieties of peaches, and three of oranges. The list of fruit trees is a very long one, all the best varieties being represented. At the end of the catalogue are useful tables showing the quantities of seed required per acre for various

80 *The Sydney Mail* 25 March 1893 page 593; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/162197697>

81 *The Nepean Times* 3 June 1893 page 7; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/101080057>

82 *ibid.*

83 *The Sydney Mail* 17 March 1894 page 530; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163331385>

84 *The Nepean Times* 17 November 1894 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/108684396>

Shepherd & Co. (1835 - 1900)

crops, and the weight per bushel, the time of the month to sow the different kinds of vegetable seeds, and at what depth they should be sown."⁸⁵

In October 1896 a deputation of six men representing the nurserymen of Sydney which included Patrick Lindesay, Thomas Robert (David's son) and Frederick Creswick junior met with the Colonial Secretary

"to direct his attention to the serious manner in which the trade was handicapped by the competition of Government institutions. The burden of the complaint was this: That the Agricultural College, Botanical Gardens, and State Nurseries, instead of confining themselves to the legitimate objects for which they were founded, seriously injured the nursery and seed trade by distributing trees, plants, and flowers gratuitously to private people, principally 'Premiers and members of Parliament'. The Government ... might just as well supply food, clothing, boots, and shoes as plants, and [it was] very unfair that nurserymen, who had to employ labor, pay taxes, and who, at the present time, could scarcely make ends meet, should be handicapped in this way."⁸⁶

It was also the beginning of the late nineteenth century depression.

Dissolution by mutual consent of the partnership of David, his son Thomas Robert and Frederick Creswick junior (trading as Shepherd and Co) took place in March 1898;⁸⁷ Creswick senior had died in 1895 and Cunningham must have already left. David (aged 70) is to continue the business on his own at Chatsworth and Waterloo. The dissolution is witnessed by solicitor John Archibald Aitken who is David's nephew. The following month David sold Shepherd and Co to Robert Thomas, likely for a nominal sum given that he was not included when the Rydalmere property was gifted by David to his daughters.⁸⁸

The *Town and Country Journal* reported that Shepherd and Co's mid-year 1898 catalogue "is a comprehensive one, and lists most things that are worth growing in a garden. The cultural notes are up to date, and contain much valuable information. The novelties include choice flower and vegetable seeds, new plants, roses, etc., also several new fruits of considerable merit."⁸⁹

In spring the following year David listed his Chatsworth holding for lease:

"over 700 acres of Splendid Grazing Land, with permanent water supply, and subdivided into convenient and securely fenced paddocks ... Residence, containing 7 rooms ... stable, coach-house, large cow sheds, and paved milking yard ... Full particulars from J. G. North"⁹⁰ [who is his son-in-law].

In 1899 David's daughters Emily Isabella, Jane and Edith Susan Shepherd 'all of Ashfield' purchased lots 4 and 5 being 'two acres more or less' of the Mount Lachlan Estate at Waterloo for £1,016 where Shepherd and Co had its main business.⁹¹

85 *The Town and Country Journal* (Sydney) 13 April 1895 page 9; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/71228325>

86 *The Evening News* (Sydney) 23 October 1896 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/108215015>

87 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 3 March 1898 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/14148272>

88 *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 27 April 1989 page 11; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/238371715>

89 *The Town and Country Journal* (Sydney) 4 June 1898 page 21; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/71287008>

90 *The Nepean Times* 16 September 1899 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/101312763>

91 NSW Registrar General's Book 652 No. 323 Indenture 16 October 1899.

Shepherd & Co. (1835 - 1900)

April 1900 heralded the end of Shepherd and Co. Thomas Robert sold the Waterloo business comprising the stock and goodwill to Pearce Brothers of Randwick.⁹² (His sisters owned the land.)

Goodwill remained in the Shepherd name and the firm P.L.C. Shepherd and Son added 'established in 1827' to their notices. Patrick Lindesay continued to use the Waterloo site as P.L.C. Shepherd's nursery with their business premises at 202 Pitt Street.⁹³

Chatsworth was listed for sale in 1909:

"Chatsworth is a fine grazing property of 801 acres, eminently suitable for a Stock Depot or Stud Farm, or for subdivision into 3 or 4 dairy farms.

Only 3 miles from Rooty Hill Station, within 30 miles of Sydney, and very close to St. Marys and Flemington Sale Yards.

It is subdivided into convenient paddocks; there are two very comfortable Cottages of 6 rooms, kitchen, and outoffices [*sic*] thereon, with necessary outbuildings and yards. Never-failing supply of water in creeks and dam. The latter is the finest in the County of Cumberland, and cost £1,000. Several flats are suitable for lucerne.

A feature is the valuable timber which is located on about 200 acres of the Estate, and for which an offer of £1,000 cash was recently refused. The greater part of the land is cleared and stumped.

"Chatsworth" has been in the hands of Mr. Shepherd, the present owner, for 50 years, and the opportunity now occurs for buyers to acquire an ideal Estate with all the foregoing advantages. Title, freehold."⁹⁴

It was bought by Thomas Baker for £4,500 and included the homestead and outbuildings.⁹⁵ David's solicitors for the sale were Aitken & Aitken of Castlereagh Street, his nephews.

The original Chatsworth estate totalled about 1,300 acres. David sold just over 242 acres fronting Eastern Creek to Patrick Lindesay in 1891 for £2,684.11.1;⁹⁶ Patrick Lindesay's acreage was sold by his widow Sarah Jane née Deane in 1905 for £1,150.⁹⁷

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92 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 14 April 1900 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/14305662>

93 *The Australian Town and County Journal* 22 September 1900 page 6; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/71390257>

94 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 11 September 1909 page 21; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/15102489>

95 NSW Registrar General's Book 895 No. 803 Indenture 6 December 1909.

96 NSW Registrar General's Book 467 No. 690 Indenture 20 February 1891.

97 NSW Registrar General's Book 773 No. 357 Indenture 17 January 1905.