

Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

## Monograph on An Early Colonial Nurseryman

by Louise B. Johnson

Thomas Shepherd was already a highly accomplished landscape gardener and plant nurseryman in England when he arrived in Sydney early in the year 1827. It was the beginning of a most productive but short career that included the establishment of the first commercial plant nursery, an appointment by the Governor, and delivery of a series of lectures on horticulture and landscaping in the Colony that were subsequently published.

### A SCOTTISH AND ENGLISH BEGINNING

About 20 miles south-east of Perth as the crow flies in Fifeshire, Scotland is the small town of Kemback where Thomas Shepherd was born and spent his early years. Thomas learnt the trade of nurseryman under his father on the estate of the Earls of Crawford and Lindesay, his father 'having served for many years as Principal Gardener under the late Earl and his Father, under whom also my Grandfather and Uncle were tenants for near a century and where I drew my first breath'.<sup>1</sup>

Of his early education Thomas wrote:

"I was educated at a little country school in Scotland; I was taught nothing ... but reading, writing, and arithmetic; but after I left it, and had commenced studying the profession of a Horticulturalist, I persevered ... in obtaining all the education which my situation in life at that time would permit".<sup>2</sup>

He then joined a

"first rate gardener's lodge [which] was more like a school ... In the evening, the young gardeners would study, principally from books ... grammar, arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, land surveying, and mapping, mensuration, horticulture, botany, garden architecture, and geography. It was customary for the head, or principal gardener, to attend in the lodge for an hour or two in the evening, to teach the apprentices and junior men".<sup>3</sup>

"I was brought up to gardening from my infancy. I was educated under the first professional men in that capacity, which England and Scotland have produced.<sup>4</sup> Ever since, I have had as much practice as most men, and have conversed with, and read nearly all the modern authors on the theory and practice of horticulture."<sup>5</sup>

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1 Thomas Shepherd, *Lectures on the Horticulture of New South Wales*, 1835; Dedication to Brigadier General Patrick Lindesay; National Library of Australia digitisation: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1504681579>

2 Thomas Shepherd, *Lectures on Landscape Gardening in Australia*, 1836 page 14; NSW State Library digitisation [https://digital.sl.nsw.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?embedded=true&toolbar=false&dps\\_pid=IE3713151](https://digital.sl.nsw.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?embedded=true&toolbar=false&dps_pid=IE3713151)

3 *ibid* pages 12-13.

4 Thomas White (1736-1811), English landscaper who trained under Lancelot "Capability" Brown; and Humphrey Repton (1752-1818), English landscape gardener.

5 *The Sydney Herald* 9 May 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843026>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

But it was Thomas White's plans 'seen by me in my youth which first gave me a taste for Landscape Gardening' and he felt he could not exist without obtaining a knowledge of the art.<sup>6</sup> And having decided on becoming a landscape gardener,

"which was more likely than the situation I then occupied to raise me higher in the scale of society ... I therefore commenced with a fixed determination to obtain a sufficient Knowledge, such as would fit me to become a proficient in the Art of Landscape Gardening".<sup>7</sup>

The knowledge which he believed it was absolutely necessary for him to acquire was: first, to learn to read English and to write with his pen; second, competency in arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, and the use of logarithms; third, surveying and mapping; fourth, landscape painting; fifth, some knowledge of architecture, and sketching elevations; sixth, competency in Horticulture; seventh, slight knowledge of 'music and poetry, for the purpose of raising my imagination to effect sublime scenery'. After that he started on his study of landscape gardening.

In about 1797 Thomas moved to London where he took landscape painting lessons from a reputable landscape painter for a year.<sup>8</sup> While residing in London, he 'gave designs in the modern style of Landscape Gardening for near a hundred parks, pleasure grounds, and gardens' including in several Counties.<sup>9</sup>

In 1805 his friend from school days, the noted Scottish painter Sir David Wilkie,<sup>10</sup> also arrived in London.

"The habits of the two men were on a par in point of industry and perseverance; and they have been equally and eminently Scotch [*sic*] throughout their career[s] in the unquestionless integrity and moral worth of their character. Wilkie ... aimed at the elegancies of fashionable life; and was in consequence generally met with in that round of fashionable society in London, where men of Letters and Science are found. Shepherd on the other hand, from the habitudes of early life, cared for none of these things. He was attracted to London as well as Wilkie. But he harboured no idea of entering into elegant life. In the neighbourhood of the metropolis, he became known as a highly industrious, intelligent, and enthusiastic Nursery Gardener."<sup>11</sup>

Then a position as gardener in Worthing, Kent lured Thomas from London.<sup>12</sup> He acquired the leasehold of a nursery near Romford, Essex, however for some reason 'Thomas Shepherd, of Romford, Essex, seedsman' was declared bankrupt in 1806,<sup>13</sup> which forced the sale of his Romford 'nursery and garden grounds ... comprising 40 acres of rich fertile land, in a high state of cultivation, particularly eligible for Nurserymen; held on lease, for

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6 *Lectures* (1836), page 21.

7 *ibid* page 14.

8 *ibid* page 21.

9 *ibid*.

10 Sir David Wilkie (1785-1841), renowned for portraits and paintings of historical events; elected to R. A. in 1811.

11 *The Sydney Monitor* 9 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149684>

12 *The Colonist* 3 September 1835 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31716929>

13 *The Hereford Journal* 26 February 1806.

Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

37 years, at a moderate rent'.<sup>14</sup> In October 1807 he received a dividend, possibly resulting from the sale of the Romford leasehold.<sup>15</sup>

At an auction the following year, by direction 'of the Assignees of Mr. THOMAS SHEPHERD, Nurseryman', were

"SEVERAL THOUSAND STANDARD FRUIT TREES, SHRUBS, & AMERICAN PLANTS, consisting of Laurels, Alders, Spruce, Firs, Holly, Yew, Maples, Thorn, Leving Heath, Ivy, Elms, Weeping Willow, Oaks, &c."<sup>16</sup>

As well as the Romford business, Thomas had become the 'owner of an extensive Nursery, at Hackney, where he spent near thirty years of his life';<sup>17</sup> actually it was closer to 20 years.

At about this time, Thomas travelled to 'the west of England to take the charge of an horticultural and agricultural establishment. I had the charge of a number of hot-houses, two of which were pine-stoves. Grape vines had been planted in a border outside of the pineries [and] the number of grape vines planted [was] forty.'<sup>18</sup> He also recorded that he had 'often sold the market-gardeners about London, hundreds of strong rhubarb plants at a time; and in three months afterwards, they have sold the stalks for three times the amount they paid me for the plants'.<sup>19</sup>

However, Thomas 'worked hard in [his Hackney] nursery for very little more income than that of a labourer',<sup>20</sup> and perhaps this prompted him to consider emigration: the request for a grant of land on the other side of the world in Van Dieman's Land capitalised by his position as the agricultural superintendent of an expedition to New Zealand.

In early 1825 Thomas appeared before a Committee of the House of Commons<sup>21</sup> where he "was examined at great length ... on the state of agricultural labourers in England, and the best means of lessening the poor rates, about the same time that His Excellency General Bourke was examined on a similar subject in relation to Ireland. The plan he then proposed – the erection of small cottages on private estates, in proportion to the available acres of the estate, has been of late introduced into some parts of England, with great success; and during the last session of Parliament, a measure was carried to give facilities for its extension."<sup>22</sup>

While it is not clear from this whether it was General Bourke's or Thomas's proposal that had been adopted, as this was an extensive obituary following Thomas's death, one could assume that it was Thomas's proposal.

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14 *The Morning Chronicle (London)* 10 April 1806.

15 *The London Gazette* 17 October 1807.

16 *The Bury and Norwich Post* 14 February 1808 page 435.

17 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853025>

18 *Lectures* (1835), page 59.

19 *ibid* page 19.

20 *Lectures* (1836), page 85.

21 Possibly the *Select Committee on Combination Laws*, 1825 Paper 417 however he is not listed as a witness; Thomas Shepherd, nurseryman, is not listed as a witness to any House of Parliament inquiry at the relevant time.

22 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853025>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

In London during the joint stock company mania of 1825, The New Zealand Company was formed for the purposes of 'cultivation, exportation, and manufacture of the produce of that island'.<sup>23</sup> And due to his well-known abilities,<sup>24</sup> at the age of 45 Thomas was appointed Principal Superintendent of an expedition to New Zealand on behalf of the Company where he was in charge of 72 people.<sup>25</sup> He was paid a salary of £400 which was later raised to £500.<sup>26</sup> By way of comparison, his brother-in-law Robert Bell was employed on the same venture as a ploughman with salary of £52 10 shillings.<sup>27</sup>

Under the command of Captain Heard, the brig *Rosanna* left England on 30 August 1825,<sup>28</sup> and was joined by the storeship *Lambton* under the command of Captain Barnett.<sup>29</sup>

On the *Rosanna*, Thomas was accompanied by his family which then comprised his second wife Jane Susan née Henderson (1797-1863) whom he had married on 30 November 1823,<sup>30</sup> and their son Thomas William (1825-1884); and son John Joslin (1812-1856), and daughter Elizabeth Joslin (1813-1874), both born to Sarah Joslin his first wife, whom he married in 1804 and who died in 1818.<sup>31</sup> Thomas and Sarah had two sons prior to John Joslin: Alexander (baptism 1808)<sup>32</sup> and Thomas Galloway (baptism 1810)<sup>33</sup> who seems to have died in infancy because subsequently the family referred to John Joslin as Thomas's 'second son'.<sup>34</sup>

Alexander did not travel on this voyage: 'the Eldest Son of Thomas Shepherd, late of Hackney, County of Middlesex and now of Darling Nursery, [Alexander] formerly in the East India Company Ltd's service, was seen in Essex in the year 1826 or 1827',<sup>35</sup> but he is accounted for in Thomas's Will of June 1835.

### NEW ZEALAND

While sailing from south to north on the east coast of New Zealand, Thomas kept a journal (in the Mitchell Library, Sydney). His first entry recorded events which took place at Stewarts Island on 5 March 1826 and the last entry, with intermittent gaps, is dated 12 November 1826 at the Bay of Islands. The journal records in some detail the geography

23 *The Colonist* 3 September 1835, *supra*.

24 *The Sydney Monitor* 9 September 1835, *supra*.

25 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28654375>

26 Carol Liston *Bellfield and Rossmore: forgotten associations from Thomas Shepherd to Hardy Wilson*; *Australian Garden History* 2010 Vol 22 Issue 1 pages 4-10, page 5; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24918670>

27 "Ploughman" appears nominal; had the New Zealand venture proceeded, Robert Bell was intended as supervisor at salary of £100. Shortly after arriving in Sydney, Bell was employed as agricultural superintendent of the estate owned by John Thomas Campbell, former secretary to Governor Macquarie; see Liston *op.cit.*

28 *The Morning Post* (London) 1 September 1825 'Ship News'.

29 Hilda McDonnell *The Rosanna Settlers: with Captain Herd on the Coast of New Zealand 1826-7* (2002); <https://www.wcl.govt.nz/heritage/rosannaintro.html>

30 *London, England Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1936* St John Hackney, page 195.

31 *England, Church of England Deaths & Burials 1813-1980*; Hackney, St John Hackney 1818 page 252 entry 2012.

32 McDonnell, *op.cit.*, page 20.

33 Thomas Galloway Shepherd christened at St.John's, Hackney on Friday 19 October 1810.

34 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 4 August 1855 page 8; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12972491>

35 *The Chelmsford Chronicle* 21 November 1834 page 1.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

of the landscape as they sailed along the east coast, the different types of flora and fauna encountered, marine life, and dealings with the indigenous people.

For 5 March 1826 at Stewarts Island, Thomas wrote that:

“Having been so long upon the sea I enjoyed the change more than I ever did any thing in my life ... I went on shore to examine the natural productions, quality of the land ... I went into the woods with anxious curiosity to look at a Nation of trees and plants which I had not seen before. Indeed they were nearly all strangers, for with the exception of about a dozen, all were unknown to me. I was highly gratified, for numbers of them were very beautiful in their habit of growth, shape and colour of foliage.”

The following day Thomas recorded in his journal that the bottom of Stewarts Island harbour

“is either a solid rock, Sand or gravel. The rocks are either a strong granate [*sic*], granate and free stone mixed in one body and entire free stone of good quallity [*sic*] and a kind of rocky sand mixed with small metallic particles of a yellowish gold colour.”

At Albion Cove, Thomas recorded for Friday 10 March that he and Captain Herd [*sic*] ‘explored two or three Miles of this extensive harbour ... We found several new species of trees, Shrubs and Perrenniels [*sic*]’.

For Saturday 18 March, Thomas wrote that while on a land excursion with Captains Herd and Barnett he found

“a stem ... of the Anerrenium [*sic*] tribe; the bloom was white with a yellow eye and the leaves long, narrow and pointed. It had a sweet smell. It grew to about 18 inches high and weeped. The foliage [*sic*] of plants here are generally shiny like those from China.”

In Britain, Thomas had been familiar with Chinese flora.

Remarkably, at Albion Cove on 24 March Thomas records

“a long conversation with Tommy, an Englishman who says he was taken by the Natives when a boy about 16 years of age, since which he had married a chief’s daughter and afterwards was made a chief himself. He is very much tattooed, is otherwise very fair, is very conversive. Some give him the character of being very treacherous to his countrymen ... The Ship Tommy belonged to when he was taken was the Sydney Cove.”<sup>36</sup>

His conversation with Tommy continued in the following day’s entry: ‘about the New Zealanders he says they are quite sensible of good usage and have gratitude for kindness but they have a strong resentment against injuries. That the chiefs will not do any kind of labour’. The journal then records the native method of dressing flax and that according to Tommy, potatoes were common throughout New Zealand wherever there were inhabitants.

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36 Likely to be the Sydney Cove (1803); [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sydney\\_Cove\\_\(1803\\_ship\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sydney_Cove_(1803_ship))

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Tommy also said that the natives 'think when they die they will go below the earth and live there with their wives and families. That some of them thought it a disgrace to die a natural Death and gave preference to die in wars'.

For Sunday 30 April, Thomas records that in a large bay 'about ten miles north from Muleneaux's harbour ... I saw a whale near the ship, also a number of pidgions [*sic*']. And for Sunday 21 May the journal records that Thomas, Captain Herd and Bell spent the morning ashore at Cloudy Bay.

"We went to Cabbage Cove where we found a considerable quantity of that useful vegetable and wild celery and a cress peculiar to New Zealand. We were informed by some of the natives that the celebrated C[aptain] Cook left the seed of the cabbage. We had a quantity cut and brought them on board."

If this anecdote that Captain Cook gave the natives the cabbage seeds is true, and there is no reason to believe otherwise, it recorded an event that took place about 50 years beforehand.

The first journal entry headed 'Northern Island Wanga Nue Atra' was dated 1 June 1826. Thomas recorded that together with Captain Herd and Bell they had that day 'completed the Survey of the grounds which surround this Harbour ... On the right side is a ridge of hills of various hights [*sic*] from 300 to 1000 feet'. They travelled about a mile up one river feeding into the harbour and Thomas recorded that the ground 'on its banks is covered with thick woods of beautiful sorts of trees & shrubs, many of which I have not seen before; but time would not allow to take specimens of them'. Almost at the end of the journal an undated entry records that 'we saw four large active creters' [volcanoes] at White Island.

The journal entries show acutely observant Thomas was, that he had a keen interest in recording all aspects of the natural world, was an accomplished surveyor, and that he was able to readily distinguish a species of flora or fauna and could identify type of rock. In relation to the Maori, there are no judgemental comments recorded.

Notably, Thomas did not record a plot by the Maori to seize the *Rosanna*, that was subsequently reported in some detail by the *The Australian*:

"The barque Rosanna, which came up from New Zealand on Sunday night brings up twenty five persons who were in the employment of the New Zealand Company. A design, it appears, was formed by the natives to seize upon this vessel, during her stay at New Zealand, where she has been for ten months. The hostility of the natives rendered it necessary that the Company's servants should sleep on board nightly; and every man on board was obliged to take his turn in the nightly watch. The black chiefs were occasionally permitted to come on board. On one of their visits, a New Zealander, who is usually employed by Captains of vessels touching at the settlement, as an interpreter, communicated to the Captain of the Rosanna the intended plan of his countrymen to seize the vessel. The natives, it is said, were anxious to get the powder; ten tons of which were on board. Powder had been used as a means of barter with the natives, for the land.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

The land thus obtained was worked upon by the Company's men, cleared and cultivated, without interruption from the natives. These were however, at last, by two of the chiefs who had been up to Sydney, induced to form a plan to massacre all the British inhabitants on the island. The Missionaries obtained information of these intentions from some of their coverts. The discovery was made in time to prevent the dreadful consequences. The Missionaries hastened to the ship, compelled to relinquish all further efforts to convert the natives to Christianity."<sup>37</sup>

Thomas did record one contentious event with the Maori which took place in early June 1826 when exploring the harbour at Wangi Nue Atra in the North Island:

"We enquired at the chiefs of [*sic*] which of the rivers was the largest and he informed us that the right hand one was the largest, which however turned out to be the smallest. We could not account for his reason for attempting to deceive us. He went with us up the left branch and when we returned neither he nor his people were so agreeable as before. He had a present for his trouble, and we left."<sup>38</sup>

This is obscure: perhaps they shot him.

Having spent some ten months in New Zealand, Thomas decided that there was 'little prospect of gaining for [the New Zealand Company] the profits which they had anticipated, [so] he very creditably to himself and advantageously for the company, advised the breaking up of the New Zealand establishment',<sup>39</sup> and the *Rosanna* and its storeship *Lambton* left New Zealand waters late in January 1827 bound for Port Jackson. In connection with the abandoned project, the *Gazette* quipped that it was "a matter of surprise to us, that the English Public should suffer themselves to be so gulled by representations which prove to be founded in anything but truth and accuracy".<sup>40</sup>

### PORT JACKSON

On Wednesday 14 February 1827 the *Sydney Gazette* published in its shipping column:

"On Sunday [11 February], the ship *Rosanna*, Captain Herd (formerly of the *Providence*), arrived from New Zealand; as also the cutter *Lambton*, Captain Barnett, from the same place, with sundry stores belonging to the New Zealand Company, to which both ships belong".<sup>41</sup>

Thomas remembered the date of arrival as 12 February as stated in his first public lecture.<sup>42</sup>

Thomas and his family (wife Jane Susan, daughter Elizabeth and sons John, Thomas William and David, born in New Zealand in late October 1826<sup>43</sup> (his birth subsequently registered in Sydney) were all recorded in the Census of 1828 as living on Botany Street, having arrived as free settlers on the ship *Rosanna*.<sup>44</sup> Thomas and Jane Susan had two more children in Sydney: Jane (1829-1887) and Patrick Lindesay Crawford (1831-1903).

<sup>37</sup> *The Australian* 14 February 1827 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/37072547/4249089>

<sup>38</sup> *Journal* [1 June 1826] page 26.

<sup>39</sup> *The Sydney Monitor* 9 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149684>

<sup>40</sup> *The Sydney Gazette* 14 February 1827 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2187676>

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834, *supra*.

<sup>43</sup> McDonnell, *op.cit.* Introduction.

<sup>44</sup> 1828 Census entry numbers 680-685.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Some of the passengers on the *Rosanna* returned to England however many chose to stay in the Colony, including his brother-in-law Robert Bell, his wife Isabella and their one year old son James. It was subsequently noted that 'Mr Shepherd was the first person who landed a large body of Emigrants on these shores', that is, as free settlers.<sup>45</sup>

Residing at 10 Castlereagh Street, Thomas began a correspondence with the Colonial Secretary about a land grant from the Governor, who said 'a nursery was much wanted in the Colony'.<sup>46</sup>

### DARLING NURSERY

By late May 1827 Thomas had received from Governor Ralph Darling a letter of occupancy of 28 acres 2 roods in the Parish of Petersham, about 1½ miles from Sydney, now part of Chippendale and Darlington, contingent upon Thomas cultivating a commercial nursery within two years: to establish 'a public nursery, and fruit garden'.<sup>47</sup> It was named the Darling Nursery in honour of the Governor. 'A small cottage was built, and a more pretentious one started, but Mr. Shepherd did not live to see it finished.'<sup>48</sup>

The Deed of Grant would not be signed until 1835 by another governor.<sup>49</sup> Thomas explained the circumstances by which he obtained his land:

"When I came to this Colony ... I presented to Governor Darling, an order for the grant of land which I had obtained from the Home Government to the Lieutenant of Van Dieman's Land, and I requested the favour of His Excellency to exchange the order, by giving me a grant in this Colony ... I informed His Excellency that ... I had been a nursery man at Hackney, near London, for twenty years".<sup>50</sup>

Reportedly there was animosity between Robert Cooper and Thomas over their competing requests for this land (both needing access to Blackwattle Creek water for their respective businesses) so Thomas immediately erected a stone wall 12 feet high running the 100 foot boundary with Cooper's land, and planted *Canavalia Bonariensis* (jack-bean) which within four years covered the wall.<sup>51</sup>

In due course

"Governor Darling paid me several visits, and was pleased to approve of my proceedings, and he informed me ... that one of the very best things he had done for the interests of this Colony was his having established me as a Nurseryman in New South Wales".<sup>52</sup>

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45 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835, *supra*.

46 *Lectures* (1836), page 60.

47 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834, *supra*.

48 *The Echo* (Sydney) 3 July 1890 page 2.

49 *NSW Government Gazette* 29 April 1835 page 242 entry 77; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230655243/12477341>

50 *Lectures* (1836), page 60.

51 *Horticultural Magazine and Gardeners' and Amateurs' Calendar* 1866 (April) Volume 3 No. 28 page 87.

52 *Lectures* (1836), page 61.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Once established, Thomas

“sold all sorts of common fruit trees, such as apples, pears, plums, cherries, walnuts, Spanish chestnuts, mulberries, peaches, nectarines, apricots, and various other sorts of trees, at one shilling each, although fruit trees were selling at from five to seven shillings each; yet ... the sale has been very limited ... and in lieu of obtaining any profit out of the nursery, I am and have been money out of pocket every year by keeping up the establishment. Gentlemen in this Colony have been so accustomed, for many years, to obtain yearly supplies of trees from the Government Garden, which cost them nothing but the trouble of requisition, that it cannot be supposed that if they can obtain trees for nothing they will come to a nursery and purchase, even at a very moderate price.”<sup>53</sup>

In a letter of 26 March 1831 to the Colonial Secretary, Thomas wrote from Darling Nursery:

“Sir, I have the honour of representing to you that in a short time I will have a large supply of choice fruits of various sorts and varieties, and also vegetables which would be of material advantage both to myself and also to the respectable inhabitants in the town of Sydney were I to open a small shop there, where I could send a fresh supply daily, sufficient for the [*sic*] consumption. My wife would attend the shop from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon.

There is in King Street between the houses of Mr. James King merchant and Mr. Macnaughton Chemist, a small piece of ground where a pump stands, which I believe belongs to Government and of which I think a small part say fifteen feet front might be shared, without any injury to the pump or its usefulness to the town.

If his Excellency the Governor would be pleased to give me a grant of such a proportion of the said piece of land as might be found upon inspection could be spared to build a small shop upon, for the purpose above specified, it would come as a favour.

The situation is the best in the town for a shop of this description.

I have the honor to be Sir your most obedient servant Thomas Shepherd.”<sup>54</sup>

In the Colonial Secretary’s office the letter is annotated ‘referred to Director of Public Works’; then annotated ‘There is such a spot vacant there ... reserved as a protection to the arch covering the tanks’ (probably by the Director of Public Works) with final annotation ‘Being reserved for this purpose, it would not be advisable to part with it’ dated 4 April 1831.

By July 1831 Thomas was supplying grape vine cuttings from his nursery:

“THOMAS SHEPHERD, Nurseryman, Sydney, intimates to the Public, that he has collected a few thousand Cuttings, consisting of four varieties of hardy GRAPE VINES, which have borne abundant crops, even in cold seasons, in sheltered situations, without being blighted. He recommends every one intending to cultivate Vines, for Wine, &c. to procure from him a few of each, even although their ground is not ready for planting, this season: they will produce an abundance of cuttings, in any situation, fit for next year’s planting; or they may be grafted on the

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53 *ibid.*

54 NSW State Archives: Colonial Secretary Letters Relating to Land; Reel 1182 Item 31/2222.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

tender blighting sorts, and bear the same season. The price (only in small quantities) is one shilling per hundred."<sup>55</sup>

Thomas was a co-signatory to a farewell written address by the clergy, magistrates, landholders and merchants of New South Wales to Governor Darling on his departure from the Colony in October 1831. The address acknowledged that notwithstanding 'unfavourable seasons and a depreciation in the value of stock ... the Agriculture and Commerce of the Colony have, however, extended in a four-fold degree, so that its Exports now form an important item in the markets of the mother country',<sup>56</sup> inferring that this took place during Darling's six year administration. There were 75 signatories to this address including Samuel Marsden and Thomas's neighbour Robert Cooper.

In 1832 under heading MR. SHEPHERD'S NURSERY the *Monitor* reported:

"We lately took a walk to the originally barren piece of ground behind the Brisbane Distillery, and were not a little astonished to witness its having been transformed into a luxurious fruit, flower, and vegetable garden. The way Mr. Shepherd has laid out his acres appears to us to display due science in his profession of layer out of pleasure and garden grounds. Most of the land had been trenched three [spades] deep. Exotics of all kinds are growing in luxuriance, and plans are in course of execution, which will render this garden a recreation of the first importance to Sydney, so far as fruit and fragrance can impart pleasure. As a nursery too, it seems to us to be greatly advanced. Fruit trees unknown to us after twenty years [*sic*] absence from home were pointed out to us innumerable, as being either for sale this season, or in progress for sale next. Mr. Shepherd might make a fortune by converting his garden into a tea-garden, but this mode of making money he says does not suit his taste, and he will be contented with slower and less dubious returns for the very large capital he seems to have expended upon this once sterile spot. We know of no emigrant who deserves more praise than Mr. Shepherd. His plans are judicious as regards his own well-being, and at the same time, claim a large share of the public applause."<sup>57</sup>

It is not surprising that the *Monitor* reported a transformation of the land. Thomas said in his first lecture that

"I have often got up in the moonlight, at one, two, and sometimes three o'clock in the morning and wheeled twenty barrowfuls of earth from my upper ground to the lower before daylight, a distance of 500 yards, which would have been considered a hard days [*sic*] work, by any of my assigned servants to perform ... and I continued during the day in assisting the men in the eradication of large stumps, some of which measured from four to six feet in diameter, huge rocks, trenching the ground, and filling up hollows".<sup>58</sup>

"I have grafted this season with my own hands, chiefly in the night by candle light upwards of ten thousand fruit trees which are looking well."<sup>59</sup>

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55 *The Sydney Herald* 4 July 1831 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843221>

56 *The Sydney Gazette* 22 October 1831 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2203191>

57 *The Sydney Monitor* 2 June 1832 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32141328>

58 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28654375>

59 *ibid.*

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Between 1827 and 1834 Thomas 'employed from four to eight assigned servants' (convicts) to assist with duties at the nursery.<sup>60</sup> In 1830 the Colonial Office in London assigned Thomas a servant,<sup>61</sup> in 1832 a further servant was assigned,<sup>62</sup> and another in 1833;<sup>63</sup> the Colonial Office records do not indicate whether the subsequent servants were to replace or were in addition to the prior assignments.

Colonial records of 'Convicts Assigned 1830-1832' show that in March 1831 Thomas was assigned the convicts Gallocker, alias John McFarlane,<sup>64</sup> and Thomas Smith with listed skill 'Dyer and gardener's labourer'.<sup>65</sup> In August that year he was assigned George Steed with skills 'Gardener's labourer, Reaps & Milks'.<sup>66</sup> In early 1832 the convict John Blackwell, stonemason, was assigned to Thomas,<sup>67</sup> however in November 1833 the *Government Gazette* reported that he had absconded.<sup>68</sup> From time to time Thomas also employed 'free labourers, to assist in making the necessary improvements' to his land.<sup>69</sup>

Sometimes there were problems with payments for his produce:

"THOMAS SHEPHERD, Nurseryman, Sydney, having been put to considerable inconvenience in collecting sums of money due to him in the interior, for Nursery Goods, sold since he commenced business, now intimates to the Public, that all Orders must in future be accompanied with the Money or an order on any respectable person in Sydney, who will receive the goods and undertake to pay the amount within three months after delivery, otherwise orders will not be attended to".<sup>70</sup>

### THREE LETTERS IN *THE SYDNEY GAZETTE* - 1831

In March and April 1831 the *Gazette* published three substantial 'letters' written by Thomas addressed to the Landholders of New South Wales.

The *first* letter of 800 words advises land owners that as 'the season is now approaching when the ground ought to be prepared for planting grape vines, I am induced to offer the following remarks in order to assist your selection of the best site for that purpose'.<sup>71</sup> He is certain, from experience, that the cause of blight in grape vines in the Colony is due to cold southerly winds in summer and he sets out his three recommendations to avoid blight: plant facing north or north-west; the land should not have 'a wet bottom'; and completely exposed vines should not be allowed during winter pruning to 'exceed two feet above the ground', with his reasons added.

60 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834, *supra*.

61 NSW 17 Governor's Despatches January-April 1830 entry A 1206 page 374.

62 NSW 21 Governor's Despatches January-December 1832 entry A 1210 page 251.

63 NSW 22 Governor's Despatches January- December 1833 entry A 1211 page 688.

64 Gallocker: #3805, *Grafton Family History Centre* microfiche.

65 Smith: #9866, *ibid*.

66 Steed: #10056, *ibid*.

67 *Government Gazette* 13 June 1832 page 131 entry #33; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230388549>

68 *Government Gazette* 6 November 1833 page 466; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230390981>

69 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834, *supra*.

70 *The Sydney Herald* 18 April 1833 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12846637>

71 *The Sydney Gazette* 5 March 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2199400>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

The *second* letter of about 1,000 words covers cultivation of vines, namely ‘the selection as to *quality* of the soil, and its preparation to fit it for receiving the vines’.<sup>72</sup> The letter ends:

“As I consider it equally important that you should be informed of fruit trees best suited for forming an orchard, so as to ensure a regular succession of ripe fruit, either for your tables or for market, I will take an opportunity, before the planting season commences, of throwing out a few suggestions, to guide you also in the choice of the proper varieties”.<sup>73</sup>

The *third* letter of nearly 3,000 words began as promised:

“I now offer you such suggestions as will guide you in the choice of the sorts and varieties of fruit trees, which you may be able to procure at present in the colony, and which my experience for nearly half a century as a nurseryman, warrants me to recommend ... with confidence to your notice as a commencement to your vineyards and orchards”.<sup>74</sup>

He commences with the Grape, and continues with the Olive, then Orange (noting that ‘Lemons, limes, citrons, shaddocks, of the best quality are all to be had in the colony, which are cultivated in the same manner as oranges’, Mulberry, Figs, Almonds, Loquat, Apple (‘no climate in the world can be better for apples than this is’), Pear (‘it grows to much greater perfection in this country than in England’), Plums, Peaches and Nectarines, Apricots, and Cherries (‘there are six varieties in the colony’).

He notes that there are ‘a number of other valuable fruits in the colony which thrive well (to wit), quince, medlar, walnut, filbert, rose-apple, guava, &c.’ The letter ends with a commendation on the art of landscaping on which he intimates he may address them in the future.

The *New South Wales and General Post Office directory* of 1835 (an almanac) included Thomas’s three ‘letters’ of 1831; there were some minor amendments and a short sentence was added at the end of the first letter. However the style remained the same and lends itself towards Thomas being involved in this republication of his *Gazette* letters. Of the almanac, the *Monitor* noted ‘it is certainly the most useful and cheapest publication that has yet issued from the Colonial Press ... There are three letters from Mr. Shepherd on grapes and fruit trees in New South Wales, which will be found to contain a deal of information’.<sup>75</sup>

In many ways the three *Gazette* letters, in their content, detail, style and length, formed the basis of the public lectures on horticulture that Thomas would deliver in 1834 at the Mechanics’ School of Arts.

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72 *The Sydney Gazette* 19 March 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2199643>

73 *ibid.*

74 *The Sydney Gazette* 23 April 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2200251>

75 *The Sydney Monitor* 11 February 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32148241>

## THE BOTANIC GARDEN

The Botanic Garden had been established by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1816 under the superintendence of a young Scotsman Charles Frazer,<sup>76</sup> appointed the Colonial Botanist in 1821. In mid 1829 Frazer was informed by the Colonial Secretary that 'Mr McLean has been Appointed Assistant Superintendant [*sic*] of the Botanical Garden in the room of Mr Graham to take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April'.<sup>77</sup> By 1830 the Garden had over 3,000 different varieties of trees and plants.<sup>78</sup>

In late December 1831 Frazer, aged 43, died unexpectedly at Parramatta 'after being taken ill at Emu Plains, returning from Bathurst with cartloads of living plants'.<sup>79</sup> The former assistant superintendent, Thomas Graham, returned as head botanist in January 1832,<sup>80</sup> however by this time Graham had his own nursery and market garden of 15 acres at Chowder Bay on the North Shore and may not have been able to give the Garden his full attention.<sup>81</sup> Meanwhile Frazer's assistant superintendent, John McLean, continued in his position.<sup>82</sup> In 1832 the Colonial Office in London appointed Richard Cunningham as Colonial Botanist,<sup>83</sup> who arrived in Port Jackson on 6 January 1833 to take up duties.<sup>84</sup>

It was later reported that Thomas was involved in managing the Botanic Garden and it seems he probably assisted during the 12 month hiatus between the death of Frazer in late 1831 and Cunningham's arrival in early 1833: Thomas had the appropriate horticultural skills and was used to managing garden workers, including convicts.

From London in January 1832 James Busby wrote to Frazer (unaware he had died the previous month) a long letter about his travels and his collection of vines from Malaga, Hermitage, Burgundy and Champagne districts.

"I also intend to present one third of my 'Vineyard Collection' to the Garden to be propagated for General distribution [,] the remainder I will send to Shepherd who will receive the Vines for his trouble and this will enable those to purchase from him who are not fortunate enough to get cuttings from the Garden – the remainder I will dispose of by supplying my own more particular friends. I see there has been a Controversy between Shepherd and some personal Parramatta relative to the cause of the blight."<sup>85</sup>

The 'trouble' Busby is probably referring to is that Thomas was most likely supervising the planting of Busby's vine cuttings in the Garden. As to the cause of blight, a fungal disease

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76 Charles Frazer (1788-1831), sometimes "Fraser", Scottish botanist.

77 Royal Botanic Garden Sydney Letter Register A1 No. 29/289 letter dated 29 July 1829.

78 *The Sydney Gazette* 14 August 1830 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2195778>

79 Walter W Froggatt, *The Curators and Botanists of the Botanic Gardens, Sydney*; Royal Australian Historical Society *Journal and Proceedings* (1932) Vol 18 (3) pages 101-133, at page 108;

<https://www.rahs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Curators-and-Botanists-of-Botanic-Gardens.pdf>

80 *The Sydney Herald* 9 January 1832 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843922>

81 Froggatt, *op.cit.*, page 109.

82 *ibid.*

83 *ibid.*, page 111.

84 *The Sydney Gazette* 8 January 1833 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2210267>

85 Royal Botanic Garden Sydney Letter Register A1 No. 32/264 letter dated 24 January 1832.

Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

which afflicted some plants, there were conflicting views in the colony. Thomas's view, published in the *Gazette*, was that 'the real cause of blight of the grape vines, in this colony, exists in the effects of the cold southerly winds of summer, which generally succeed the hot winds from the north-west'.<sup>86</sup>

'Bacchus' of Parramatta in a long letter to the editor of the *Herald* called Thomas's theory somewhat 'hasty'.<sup>87</sup> This prompted a long response by Thomas, offering a few additional remarks on the cause of blight which he hopes 'will be sufficient to convince Mr. Bacchus ... that although he may be a good judge of wine, he certainly is not by any means a vegetable physiologist'.<sup>88</sup> The *Herald* published Bacchus's partial retreat:

"I had no wish to quarrel with that gentleman [Thomas Shepherd] ... I regret much that Mr. Shepherd should have taken the trouble to write even a longer letter than my first, (of the length of which he complains) for so useless a purpose as to convince me that I am not what I never pretended to be – a vegetable physiologist ... and I may add that the most successful and extensive nurseryman in the Colony, was professionally, not a 'vegetable physician', but a sacred musician; and that the most celebrated vegetable physiologist of the day is a Knight, though not a knight of the spade",<sup>89</sup> (possibly a reference to Sir John Jamison, whose son Robert Thomas would marry Thomas's niece Jessie Isabella Bell in 1857).

It was a long letter which also pointed out perceived discrepancies in Thomas's theory. However it was the end of the spat.

Governor Bourke visited the Botanic Garden in early July 1832.

"The extensive improvements made in the Government garden within the last two months, seem to meet with His Excellency's approval. The approaches to the domain have been beautified, and an extensive garden has been broken up, laid out in walks, and is already covered with verdure. Mr. McLean, who has been unceasing in his superintendence, deserves the highest praise for his exertions."<sup>90</sup>

While it may have been the work of McLean, it strongly suggests the influence of Thomas.

Some 500 vine clippings collected in France and Spain by James Busby were reported to be on their way to the Colony in July 1832.<sup>91</sup> The Colonial Secretary wrote to McLean in late July:

"Sir, I am directed by His Excellency the Governor to request that the supply of Seeds received by the 'Sophia' from Mr Murray of the Royal Botanic Garden Glasgow may be distributed as undermentioned, viz.

Botanic Garden Sydney  
Govt Garden Parramatta

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86 *The Sydney Gazette* 5 March 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2199400>

87 *The Sydney Herald* 25 April 1831 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28654017>

88 *The Sydney Herald* 9 May 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843026>

89 *The Sydney Herald* 30 May 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843088>

90 *The Sydney Herald* 16 July 1832 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12844880>

91 *The Sydney Gazette* 12 July 1832 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2207516>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Carter's Barracks<sup>92</sup>  
Mr W McArthur  
Mr Shepherd, Darling Nursery  
Mr Henderson".<sup>93</sup>

Busby's vine cuttings allocated to the Botanic Garden were already planted by August,<sup>94</sup> and late that year, the *Monitor* reported that:

"An agricultural and horticultural library has been established at Mr. Shepherd's gardens, who provides a room gratis for subscribers. The whole funds subscribed, go to the purchase of the best works."<sup>95</sup>

'Mr. Shepherd's gardens'. Thomas was deeply involved at the Botanic Garden.

In 1833 Governor Bourke appointed a committee to report on the state of the Busby vines in the Garden; the committee included the Chief Justice Sir Francis Forbes, the Colonial Secretary Alexander McLeay, William Macarthur, Sir John Jamison and Thomas. In 1834 the committee was asked to oversee the production of about 250 grape vines from that European grape stock and in February 1834 some committee members made a formal visit to the Governor to report on the Busby vines.<sup>96</sup>

What appears to be the committee's first report issued that month in pamphlet form, measuring 8 by 5 inches. The report itself is four pages, brief and succinct and is signed at the end (in order): Francis Forbes, Alexander McLeay, John Jamison, William Macarthur and Thomas Shepherd. It is addressed

"To His Excellency Major General RICHARD BOURKE, Governor, &c., &c., &c., Sir, in compliance with your EXCELLENCY's commands, we have carefully examined all the grape vines in the Botanic Garden, which were collected in France by Mr JAMES BUSBY, and we have the honour to lay before your Excellency lists containing the numbers of all the vines which are living, together with our observations upon the actual state of each number, and taste and character of such as have borne fruit during the present season. As, however, from the youth of the plants, something less than one-third of the whole have come into bearing."<sup>97</sup>

"Your Excellency should be apprized [*sic*] that there are three separate collections of French vines in the Sydney Garden ... distinguish[ed] by the names of – 1. Mr. Busby's Private Collection; 2. The Montpellier, or Principal Collection; and 3. The Luxembourg, or Supplementary Collection ... the Private Collection, consists of the most valuable vines which Mr. Busby found to be cultivated in the best wine districts of France ... [the] Principal Collection, consists of the vines ... procured from the Botanic Garden at Montpellier [and the] Supplementary Collection, is composed

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92 Near present Sydney Central Station; NSWSL: <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/n88EBMmn>

93 Royal Botanic Garden Sydney Letter Register A1 No. 32/287 letter dated 26 July 1832.

94 *The Sydney Gazette* 16 August 1832 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2208080>

95 *The Sydney Monitor* 28 November 1832 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32142582>

96 *The Sydney Gazette* 6 February 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2215349>

97 *Report on the VINES, introduced into the Colony of New South Wales, in the Year 1832: with a catalogue of the several varieties growing in the Botanical Garden, Sydney* by James Busby Esq., Sydney, 1834; page 3.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

of such varieties as were obtained from the national garden of the Luxembourg, for the purpose of supplying the deficiencies in the Montpellier Collection."<sup>98</sup>

The report attaches a 12 page list, cross-referenced in part to Busby's catalogue appended to his *Journal of a Tour through the Vineyards of France and Spain* published in 1833. In published order, the Private Collection list contains 65 vines, the Luxembourg list contains some 80 vines and the Montpellier list about 200 vines. The authors note that the 'Spanish collection of vines made by Mr. Busby at Xeres and Malaga ... are all unfortunately lost, having perished on the voyage to this Colony'.<sup>99</sup> The authors also 'recommend that a similar examination should take place in the next three seasons'.<sup>100</sup> The report without the attached 12 page list was also published twice in the *Government Gazette* of 1834.<sup>101</sup>

Following the arrival of Busby's vines, in 1833 Thomas assisted George Thomas Graham (a fellow member of the Mechanics' School of Arts) to lay out a 3 acre vineyard on his land grant 'Kinross' on the lower Hunter River about 12 miles from Newcastle.<sup>102</sup>

By 1833 trees were being stolen from the Darling Nursery. In May 1834 the *Australian* advised its readers that

"Persons who are about to plant out fruit trees, should have them watched carefully, until the transplanting season is over, as great quantities of the choicest trees were stolen last year ... Mr. Shepherd, we believe, was also a sufferer to a considerable extent".<sup>103</sup>

However, stolen fruit trees were not his only concern.

"LATE last night or early this morning, was stolen from my UPPER paddock, at Darling Nursery, a BAY MARE, and FILLY FOAL by her side. The Mare is about fourteen hands high, rising six years old, has a large belly, and a large blaze upon her forehead, three white footlocks, and a switch tail. The Foal is also Bay, about two months old, and has a star upon its forehead.

Should the said Mare and Foal be proved to be stolen, the undersigned will give a Reward of Five Pounds to any person or persons who may give such information as will lead to the conviction of the Offender or Offenders, and on the recovery of the said Mare and Foal.

THOMAS HEPHERD, Darling Nursery, December 12th 1834."<sup>104</sup>

By November 1834 Thomas, along with William Macarthur (of Camden), Sir John Jamison (of 'Regentville' Penrith) and others, was acknowledged as one of Sydney's 'first rate wine growers'.<sup>105</sup> In May 1835 it was reported that Thomas's vineyard, grown from vines introduced by James Busby, was 'large and flourishing'.<sup>106</sup> It was noted that

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98 *ibid*, page 4.

99 *ibid*, page 5.

100 *ibid*, page 3.

101 NSW *Government Gazette* [Issue No. 106] 12 March 1834 page 128; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230686363> and [Issue No. 107] 19 March 1834 page 153; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230686407> .

102 *History of Maitland* by G Hendy-Pooley; *The Australian Historical Society Journal* (1907) Vol 2 pp 289-296 at 290

103 *The Australian* 23 May 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/42005996>

104 *The Sydney Gazette* 13 December 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2217732>

105 *The Sydney Monitor* 5 November 1834 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32147531>

106 *The Sydney Gazette* 14 May 1835 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2198156>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

“through the liberality of Mr. M’Leay, Mr. William M’Arthur, and one or two others ... [Thomas] was enabled to store his nursery with fruits and flowers, which even an English nobleman might covet, and which so far from desiring to monopolise, by charging for them an extortionate price, he seemed to take delight, by their cheapness, to extend throughout the Colony“.<sup>107</sup>

In his November 1834 lecture, Thomas noted that what he had sold during the past four years ‘has not been less than thirty thousand fruit trees and ten thousand other trees, shrubs and flower roots’.<sup>108</sup>

Early in 1835 the following advertisement appeared:

“AN OVERSEER, who is perfectly competent to take the management of an extensive Agricultural establishment in Argyle. None need apply who cannot produce strong testimonials of character and competency, and who has been some time in the Colony. A thorough knowledge of the management of Sheep and Cattle will be required. - Reference to be made to Mr. Shepherd, of the Darling Nursery. Liberal wages will be given.“<sup>109</sup>

A much shorter version was published in the same paper a few days later. As Thomas appears not to have had property interests in Argyle (Goulburn environs), it is possible that the advertisement was placed on behalf of his friend the miller Thomas Barker,<sup>110</sup> who by 1835 was the lessee from the Crown of almost 5,000 acres in Argyle. Barker was an original committee member of the Mechanics’ School of Arts in March 1833,<sup>111</sup> (where Thomas gave his lectures), a founding member of St. Andrews church in July 1833,<sup>112</sup> (as was Thomas), and he was named a co-trustee under Thomas’s Will of 1835.

In 1835 Thomas’s new home ‘Darling House’ was completed on land that was part of his land grant and which fronted the road to Newtown (now City Road opposite Victoria Park). The house was

“built of stone ... and contains an extensive front verandah, spacious entrance hall, dining and drawing room 17 feet by 14 feet, and 4 good bedrooms, together with two large attic bedrooms. Attached ... 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

<sup>107</sup> *The Sydney Monitor* 23 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149771>

<sup>108</sup> *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28654375>

<sup>109</sup> *The Sydney Herald* 29 January 1835 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12851408>

<sup>110</sup> Thomas Barker (1799-1875), engineer, grazier and manufacturer; lessee of Crown land in Argyle (*The Sydney Gazette* 23 May 1835); proprietor of the Steam Engine mill and flour warehouse in Sussex Street, Sydney; appointed a Magistrate (*The Sydney Gazette* 24 April 1834); and see *Australian Dictionary of Biography*: <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barker-thomas-1741>

<sup>111</sup> *The Sydney Herald* 25 March 1833 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12846484>

<sup>112</sup> *The Sydney Gazette* 18 July 1833 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2212978>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Nursery lands.”<sup>113</sup>

A drawing c.1855 reveals the house to be a single story building in early Georgian style.<sup>114</sup> Two land surveys of the Darling Nursery dated 1856 clearly show Darling House facing Newtown Road, just north of Myrtle Street.<sup>115</sup>

Regarding Darling Nursery, it was later noted that the promise ‘given on his part to General [*sic*] Darling has been fulfilled by Mr. Shepherd to the letter, and the country now possesses a stock of fruit trees and vines, which, without Mr. Shepherd’s energy could not have existed in the Colony in so short a period’.<sup>116</sup>

### ST. ANDREW’S SCOTS CHURCH – 1833

One evening in July 1833 a group of Presbyterians under the pastoral care of Reverend John McGarvie,

“having procured from Government an allotment of Ground in Kent-street, near the corner of Bathurst-street, on which to erect a Church and School House, [met to consider] the means for effecting the object in view. Mr. Thomas Shepherd was called to the Chair ... twelve Trustees [were] appointed [and] Mr. Thomas Barker [was] requested to act as Treasurer ... Before leaving the Chair, Mr. Shepherd proposed that subscriptions should be entered into, when a sum amounting to nearly £200. was subscribed by the gentlemen present.”<sup>117</sup>

On St. Andrew’s Day, 30 November 1833, the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new Presbyterian Church in Kent Street took place.

“About 12 o’clock, a large concourse of most respectable persons assembled to witness this interesting ceremony. The military band of the Fourth, or King’s own Regiment, was on the spot, and added greatly to the effect. The Honourable Colonel Snodgrass ... soon after appeared on the ground in full uniform, wearing the insignia of various orders. To this distinguished officer was consigned the honourable duty of laying the first stone of the building.”

“The Ceremony commenced by the band playing the beautiful Chorus from “*The Creation*” [and among] the assemblage of Civil and Military Officers, Merchants, and others we observed ... Mr. Thomas Shepherd.”<sup>118</sup>

### LECTURES ON HORTICULTURE – 1834

The Mechanics’ School of Arts (sometimes called the ‘Mechanic’s Institute’) was established in 1833 by a small group of enlightened gentlemen, most of whom were Scottish, and this Institute played an important role in the cultural and intellectual life of Sydney. One of the stated objects of the Institute was for the provision of lectures ‘upon

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113 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 24 April 1855 page 7; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2212978>

114 Darling House: “Chippendale from the University c. 1855” by R.N., Mitchell Library.

115 National Library of Australia: Map F 765; <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-229997417>; and Map F 585; <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-229974671>

116 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853025>

117 *The Sydney Herald* 18 July 1833 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12847289>

118 *The Sydney Herald* 2 December 1833 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12848285>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

the various branches of Science and Art'.<sup>119</sup> Commencing in 1833, the Institute programmed a season of annual evening lectures, which by 1834 were free to the public.

In 1834 there were 20 lectures: an inaugural lecture delivered on 7 August by the Vice President Reverend Henry Carmichael; four lectures were on 'Astronomy, or the Phenomena of the heavens'; three lectures on 'the Mechanical properties of the Atmosphere'; two on 'Electricity; a subject worthy of attention in this Colony, where we have such frequent and varied atmospheric changes ... the theory of thunder and the *Aurora Borealis*, happily shewn and explained'; two on hydrostatics and hydraulics; one on 'Pneumatics, or the phenomena of the Air'; one on steam power; one on magnetism and electro-magnetism; one on animal physiology; and the four on horticulture by Thomas.<sup>120</sup> Governor Bourke was the patron of the Institute and he attended the lecture on Astronomy on the evening of Wednesday 17 December.<sup>121</sup>

Thomas gave his first lecture at the Institute on the evening of Wednesday 22 October, which was reported as 'a most interesting lecture [on] an extensive view of the advantages to be derived from irrigation'.<sup>122</sup>

It was a substantial lecture of nearly 6,000 words and Thomas said that it was 'the first time I have ventured before a public audience'. The first lecture 'is chiefly intended as an outline, sufficient to convey an idea that irrigating land in dry seasons is of the utmost consequence for the production of excellent crops of good fruit and vegetables; and also the proper situation where a garden should be placed'. He occasionally includes informal, personable asides: 'should you wish to have green peas all the year round (I dare say some of you would have no objection to obtain such a luxury,) sow them upon a warm northerly aspect in January, February, and March, for a winter and early spring crop, and sow for summer and autumn crops in May, June'.

He also used an occasional poetic turn of phrase, such as when he spoke of his first couple of years in Sydney when he did not yet know the proper season when to sow seed of any kind, nor whether he would be able to sell produce which he 'might succeed in bringing to perfection'.

Thomas was also not afraid of being mildly provocative: 'I have seen some of the best gardens in New South Wales, and in general I have observed a defect in nearly all of them'.

And he foreshadowed the subsequent lectures on landscaping, noting that the topics of 'Flower-Garden, Pleasure-Grounds, Forest-tree planting, &c. will, most probably, have to be left out this season, as I have promised to give only three lectures, and it will be impossible, in consequence, to introduce them into the subject of horticulture'.

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119 *The Sydney Gazette* 19 March 1833 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2211247>

120 *The Sydney Monitor* 7 February 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32148214>

121 *The Sydney Herald* 15 December 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12851114>

122 *The Sydney Herald* 27 October 1834 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12850816>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

The lecture was published *verbatim* in the *Herald's* Supplement of 6 November where it is clear from the length and detail that the reporter had access to Thomas's lecture notes.

The lecture

"was listened to with great interest by a numerous audience, - its perusal, however, in our columns, will convey but a very imperfect idea of the effect which was produced by the ardour and enthusiasm of its author – in fact, the tone – gesture, and apparent feeling, must have awakened in the minds of all, but particularly Scotchmen, a resemblance of the fervour and eloquence which prevailed in the days of the Covenanters<sup>123//</sup>.<sup>124</sup>

Thomas's second lecture was on 5 November and covered those vegetables known to him then cultivated in the Colony:

"Asparagus, rhubarb, artichoke, celery, beet, parsnip, carrot, potatoe [*sic*], pea, bean, turnip, cauliflower, brocoli [*sic*], cabbage, Scotch kail [*sic*], Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoe [*sic*], sea kail, salsafy [*sic*] and scorzenera [*sic*], onion, leek, pumpkin, cucumber, vegetable marrow, mushroom, endive, lettuce [*sic*], radish, spinage [*sic*], mustard and cress, water cress, parsley, mint and pennyroyal, marjoram, savory, thyme, sage, balm, rhue, tansy, and fennel"<sup>125</sup>.

Thomas himself sums up his lecture as a description of the 'various species, and many of their varieties, and the time of the year when they should be sown or planted, the soil best adapted for their cultivation, the proper aspects, and various other circumstances' as were relevant to the vegetable. He said he 'was as brief as possible on the culture of those vegetables which I consider of inferior importance, and ... dwelt at greater length on those generally interesting'.

Certainly there is an element of subjectivity in Thomas's discussion of the vegetables. As later published, ASPARAGUS covers 3 pages and SHALLOTS receives 2 lines; more than half the vegetables are covered in less than 10 perfunctory lines. Of the PARSNIP: they 'are eaten with salt meat and salt fish, and they make good ale and wine, I have made both, myself, from parsnips, and the ale and wine were very strong and good'.

Thomas is adept at distinguishing the different varieties within a type of vegetable: of the PEA he notes the following varieties are 'cultivated in this Colony, namely – the blue, Prussian blue, union blue, imperial, knights' marrowfat, common marrowfat, matchless, Spanish dwarf, Charlton, and several other varieties'. Of the TURNIP, varieties include 'the early Dutch, the mouse-tail, early stone, yellow, Scotch, Swedish, white Norfolk, red topped, and several others'. Of BROCOLI: 'purple Cape, white Cape, Grange's fine white, brimstone, large purple, dwarf purple, and several others'; and of ONIONS 'the Deptford, brown Spanish, silver-skinned, Strasburg, and Welsh onion'.

Of the CABBAGE he notes:

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123 "Covenanters" were a Scottish sect founded in the 16th Century which expressly rejected the tenets of the Roman Catholic church.

124 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834, *supra*.

125 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 17 November 1834; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12850877>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

“It is singular to observe the difference of taste, respecting this vegetable, between the people of Sydney and the people of London; Sydney people will not purchase a delicate, tender young cabbage, just as its heart begins to form the shape of a cabbage, and has lost its colour from green to white, such as the Londoners, and the people of high rank in England prefer; but they value no cabbage unless it is quite hard, such as are sold to the poor people and the cow-keepers about London. The word *colewort* is unknown in Sydney, London consumes the produce of about ten thousand acres every year of this delicious young cabbage called coleworts.”

Of the lecture it was said: ‘we congratulate the Colony on having so complete a body of practical horticulture, the sole production of an experienced and intelligent gardener, who has for years been making experiments and adapting the principles of this art to the climate of Australia’.<sup>126</sup> ‘Mr. Shepherd concluded amid the loudest cheering, which continued for several minutes.’<sup>127</sup>

The third lecture was given on the evening of 26 November ‘to a numerous and respectable audience’,<sup>128</sup> and it was published the following month.<sup>129</sup> It opens with preamble: ‘When I last had the honor [*sic*] of addressing you on the Horticulture of Australia, I promised that my next lecture should be on the cultivation of fruit trees and fruits, and that I should commence with the apple’. And so he does begin with the Apple tree, followed by trees for the Pear, Cherry, Plum, Apricot, Peach and Nectarine; and lastly Grape Vines including lengthy instructions about their pruning. His lecture includes grafting, how to store picked fruit, and which apples make the best cider.

The *Monitor* published its review:

“Mr. S. enumerated the varieties of each description of fruit that were grown in this Colony, consisting of no inconsiderable number. The Apple, Mr. S. observed, was capable of being cultivated to much greater extent in the Colony than had been hitherto deemed possible, by adopting a very simple plan, - viz to graft them upon loquet [*sic*] stocks, as is the practice in India ... Mr. S. enumerated a great variety of fruits, and in conclusion congratulated the Colonists on the great advantages they were likely to derive from the introduction in this country by Mr. Busby, of such a splendid collection of the best grapes of the continent of Europe.”<sup>130</sup>

On Tuesday 2 December 1834 the *Herald* noted that Thomas’s third lecture ‘will be repeated on Wednesday week’,<sup>131</sup> ie. 10 December.

If the fourth lecture was to be a repeat of the third, this may explain the lack of any press report. (However the fourth lecture, as published in 1835 by William McGarvie, delivers fresh material). The fourth lecture was not published by the *Herald*, either because it was a repeat of the third or possibly because a decision had already been made to publish the lectures in booklet form.

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126 *The Sydney Times* 7 November 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/252811516>

127 *The Sydney Herald* 17 November 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12850877>

128 *The Sydney Monitor* 29 November 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32147710>

129 *The Sydney Herald* 15 December page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12851099>

130 *The Sydney Monitor* 29 November 1834, *supra*.

131 *The Sydney Herald* 2 December 1834 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2217654>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

The Annual Report of the Mechanics' School of Arts for the year 1834 noted that four lectures on horticulture were given by Thomas, 'whose experience and observation in this useful department, so well enable him to instruct others, independent of the treat which the earnest and graphic manner of their delivery afforded'.<sup>132</sup>

In mid November 1834 there were calls for Thomas's lectures on horticulture to be published.

"We beg to call the notice of the Public to the lectures now in progress ... Those delivered on the Horticulture of Australia, by Mr. Shepherd, will be more esteemed hereafter than now; as every succeeding year will give increased experience of their practical value. It is to be hoped that Mr. Shepherd will have these Lectures printed in a convenient shape – that of a child's small school book; so that they may be in the hands of all practical gardeners throughout the Colony."<sup>133</sup>

By late December the decision had been made.

"It must be gratifying to the members of the [Mechanics'] Institution to learn that Mr. Shepherd has made arrangements for publishing these important lectures in a portable form, for the benefit of all those in the Colony who wish to profit in their horticultural operations, by the experience of the oldest professed gardener in the Colony."<sup>134</sup>

On 1 January 1835 an advertisement alerted the public of the proposal to publish Thomas's horticultural lectures 'in a convenient form for general use, and revised and corrected by Mr. Shepherd. It will not exceed *two shillings* or *two shillings and sixpence* in price and will be put to press as soon as a sufficient number of Subscribers have been obtained to cover expenses'. Gentlemen [*sic*] who were interested in acquiring copies were to give their names to William McGarvie 'at the Australian Stationery Warehouse, Sydney without delay. This work will contain all Mr. Shepherd's observations on Grape Vine Husbandry'.<sup>135</sup>

### PUBLICATION OF *LECTURES ON THE HORTICULTURE OF NEW SOUTH WALES* – 1835

Thomas introduced his lectures as being on the horticulture of 'Australia' however on publication the title, somewhat more correctly, states of 'New South Wales'. Thomas notes that he has only had horticulture experience in and around Sydney and has 'doubts whether the same instructions will be equally beneficial, in some of our colder districts, such as Argyle and Bathurst, where I am informed the frost and cold are much more severe than in Sydney'.<sup>136</sup> In fact, the lectures were in many ways only relevant to Sydney.

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132 *The Sydney Monitor* 7 February 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32148214>

133 *The Sydney Monitor* 19 November 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32147640>

134 *The Australian* 23 December 1834 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/42008944/4251686>

135 *The Sydney Herald* 1 January 1835 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28654403>

136 *The Australian* 31 March 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/42006893>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

The book was published by March 1835, it was 'neatly stitched' and cost 3 shillings.<sup>137</sup> And indeed it was little: it measures 8½ inches (21 cm) by 5 inches (13 cm) and was 80 pages – just like 'a child's small school book'.

There is a short Dedication to his sincere friend, Brigadier General Patrick Lindesay<sup>138</sup> C.B. Commander of the Forces at Bangalore, whose family owned the Scottish estate where Thomas, his father and grandfather had worked for over a century. By coincidence Lindesay had arrived in Sydney in 1827 with his military corps. By 1831 he was the senior military officer in command of His Majesty's forces in the colony and during the *interregnum* caused by Governor Darling's departure in October 1831 and the arrival of Governor Bourke in December, Lindesay was Acting Governor.<sup>139</sup> On Bourke's swearing in as Governor, Lindesay was appointed to the Executive Council where he remained until he departed the Colony in the second half of 1832.<sup>140</sup> There was an official dinner in Lindesay's honour in July which was reported as preparatory to his departure for India.<sup>141</sup> Thomas signs off his Dedication at 'Darling Nursery, February, 1835' which confirms he was involved in preparing his lecture notes for publication.

The *first* lecture as published closely resembles the lecture as reported in the *Herald* in November 1834; there is an additional paragraph on 'sandy soil'<sup>142</sup> and there are minor changes, additions, spelling and punctuation amendments.

The *second* lecture as published covers the same miscellaneous list of vegetables, neither listed alphabetically nor by related species, however it includes the addition of horse-radish, garlic, shalot, love apple, capsicum, cardoon and lavender. It is interesting to note that of the 42 published items, more than half are covered in 10 lines or less and four vegetables (Asparagus, Rhubarb, Celery and Cabbage) receive one page or more.

The *third* lecture as published again closely resembles the lecture on fruit as reported was delivered, with small changes such as spelling and punctuation.

The *fourth* lecture as published begins 'At the conclusion of my third lecture I promised to deliver a fourth, which should be a continuation of the last, upon fruits'.<sup>143</sup> So the lecture is a continuation not a repetition of the third. The first five pages cover GRAPE VINES and 'how they should be trained and pruned upon trellises' adding that in 'Mr. Busby's little journal'<sup>144</sup> you will find a great deal of useful information'.

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137 *The Sydney Monitor* 14 October 1835 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149898>

138 Sir Patrick Lindesay (1778-1839); <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lindesay-sir-patrick-2361>

139 *The Australian* 14 October 1831 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/36864689>

140 *The Sydney Herald* 5 December 1831 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843808>

141 *The Sydney Gazette* 19 July 1832 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2207605>

142 *Lectures* (1835), page 10.

143 *ibid* page 55.

144 Probably *A Manual of Plain Directions for Planting and Cultivating Vineyards and for Making Wine in New South Wales*, Sydney (1830), which runs to 96 pages.

Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Then begins the continuation of fruit: FIG, PINE APPLE, LOQUAT, MEDLAR, MULBERRY; of the Mulberry there are several varieties in the Colony and 'the black mulberry tree thrives better, and bears better fruit here, than any I have seen in England'; of the QUINCE there are two varieties; of the ORANGE TREE he notes that 'the bitter orange is the stock preferred for budding the sweet orange upon, by many persons in France and Spain, and also by the nurserymen about London. But in China and in some other countries they bud or graft ... upon citron stocks'. He also notes that 'Chief Justice Forbes imported some years back a very superior orange ... which has borne fruit at his estate in the country'.

Then the POMEGRANATE TREE, the GUAVA of which there are three varieties cultivated near Sydney; the OLIVE TREE which can be grown in the Colony 'as in France, and consequently olive oil and olive pickles must become in a few years articles of export from this country' and that further information regarding the olive may be found in Busby's Journal of 1833.<sup>145</sup> Also CHERRAMOLIA or CUSTARD APPLE, STRAWBERRY, GOOSEBERRY, CURRANT, RASPBERRY, CAPE GOOSEBERRY, ROSE APPLE, WEST INDIAN CHERRY, and the MELON of which 'we cultivate about twenty varieties of this excellent fruit in this country' and which takes up two full pages!

Thomas then discusses several trees including the hazelnut, walnut, chestnut, almond tree and the native current, and the lecture finishes with more comment on the cause of blight and the contribution of letters in the press from Bacchus, South Wind and Side Wind.

Following publication of *Lectures on the Horticulture of New South Wales*, there were many reviews. The *Gazette* published the first review.

"A more useful, and at the same time, a more amusing work we have seldom taken up. It is in many parts as entertaining as a story-book, and through out, imparts information of a most valuable description – not the least of which consists of a manifestation, in the author's own person, of what may be effected by frugality and perseverance. Mr. Shepherd deserves the thanks of the Colony for his little book, which also does no little credit to his descriptive talent as a writer."<sup>146</sup>

A review in the *Colonist* on 26 March 1835 omits any comment on the contents of the book but noted that its 'typography and general appearance are creditable to the Colony'.<sup>147</sup>

On 27 March the *Australian* published a long review.

"As a literary composition alone, this little book is entitled to great praise: it is throughout plain, unaffected, rational, and easy of comprehension; the reader is neither astounded by highflown language, nor disgusted by the appearance of conceit and vanity which often disfigures the writings of those who suddenly leave their accustomed occupations to shine as writers ... in Mr. Shepherd's Lectures – there is not a line in any one page at which the severest critic could justly cavil.

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145 Possibly *Journal of a tour through some of the vineyards of Spain and France*, (1833) - his only 1833 publication.

146 *The Sydney Gazette* 24 March 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2197659>

147 *The Colonist* 26 March 1835 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31716344>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

“The dedication at once prepossesses the reader in favor [*sic*] of the writer; it is addressed to Colonel Lindesay of H.M. 39th Regt. now in India. Mr. Shepherd has courted no rising sun – but detailing shortly and unaffectedly his motives in thus addressing his Lectures, he has gratified those early recollections in which it is creditable thus to indulge, while he evinces that “Auld Lang Syne” is not forgotten in the pursuits and gains of a new dwelling place.

“The first Lecture commences with recommending industry, patience, and good conduct to beginners in every line of business in the Colony – and shewing [*sic*] that such conduct will always obtain what it deserves – success; to this he adds a short sketch of his own course, shewing [*sic*] the difficulties which opposed him, and the means by which they were overcome: there is one rule amongst the[m] which he recommends for the guidance of such persons – *never to expend more upon improvements than can be conveniently spared after paying all other expenses*; it is to inattention to this rule – to commencing upon too grand a scale – that many ruined hopes and projects are to be attributed ...

“The principal point enforced in the pages which follow, is the necessity of irrigation ... We have no space for the insertion of much more that is equally useful and important, but shall advert shortly in our next number to the succeeding Lectures.”<sup>148</sup>

Due to the lack of space, the *Australian* continued its review on 31 March.

“The second Lecture commences with an account of the vegetables cultivated in the Colony, and gives a short but concise and clear insight into the best mode of proceeding with each of them ... He then adverts to the subject of the vine ...”

“The third lecture is on the cultivation of fruits generally ... The whole of this lecture is of great importance to gardeners [*sic*].

“The fourth lecture is a continuation of fruits: pine apples are discussed amongst others; from the few specimens we have seen in the Colony, we should be inclined to agree with Mr. S. that they are not equal in flavour to those grown at home.

“Mr. Shepherd promises to deliver lectures on landscape gardening ... Every settler in the Colony should have a copy of Mr. Shepherd’s lectures.”<sup>149</sup>

Under heading ‘Mr. Shepherd’s Pamphlet’, the *Herald* published its review.

“This important work, of eighty closely printed pages, presents a valuable assistant to the practical horticulturalist of New South Wales, particularly such as have not had the advantage of experience in its very peculiar soil and climate. To such persons it especially recommends itself; but by none will it be read but will acknowledge, that the time devoted to its perusal, has been well and profitably employed. An [*sic*] useful lesson of perseverance under impending difficulties, is therein impressively set forth; for the author, on his outset in the colony, had difficulties to contend with which required the exercise of that virtue in the most extensive degree; but his success, and his still further prospects, happily illustrate the wisdom and the value of encouraging the mind, to a vigorous perseverance in the pursuit of a laudable object. It is unnecessary for us to pursue our observations on the merits of this publication; it will speak for itself in more forcible language than any that we can employ. From a sense of its importance to the Farmer of this

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148 *The Australian* 27 March 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/42006414>

149 *The Australian* 31 March 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/42006893>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Colony, we take leave to recommend it, as a companion to the field and the garden, which none could be without.”<sup>150</sup>

On 9 September the *Monitor* (as part of its obituary on Thomas) noted:

“In the four Lectures on the Horticulture of New South Wales lately published, the character of Mr. Shepherd is fully displayed. He is on all occasions full of himself, - but with the amiable object of supplying his individual and valuable experience for the guidance and benefit of others. And there reigns throughout his observations a consciousness of the importance of the subject discussed, which throws an interest even over the birth, life, and death, of cabbages and coleworts, such as is seldom given to the biographies of their most distinguished admirers. Altogether, these lectures are a valuable treasure to the Colony. It is understood that several of those on Landscape Gardening were finished before Mr. Shepherd’s death. In that case, it is to be hoped that for the sake of preserving the experience of such a man for the benefit of the public, his Executors will allow his MSS to be arranged and published as soon as possible.”<sup>151</sup>

BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS: INQUIRY INTO EMIGRATION (AUSTRALIA) – 1835

In a despatch dated 14 October 1835 to Lord Glenelg, the British secretary of state for the colonies, Governor Brisbane informed him that in May 1835:

“I appointed a committee to inquire and report the extent to which emigration has been carried since the appropriation of the revenues arising from the sale of Crown lands to that subject, and the best means of promoting the introduction of persons of both sexes, of good moral character and industrious habits. The committee reported on the 18th of [September 1835], and I have now the honour to transmit a copy of the report.”<sup>152</sup>

The committee comprised Chief Justice Forbes (chair), Lieutenant-Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass (Officer Commanding the Forces), William Lithgow (Auditor-General), Richard Jones (of Jones & Walker merchants, and landowner) and John Blaxland (grazier). Forbes’s detailed report was tabled in the New South Wales Legislative Council on 18 September 1835.<sup>153</sup>

Twenty seven prominent men gave evidence between 21 May and 1 July inclusive, including Alexander McLeay, William Macpherson (Collector of Internal Revenue), Richard Jones, Sir John Jamison, Dr James Bowman, cousins Hannibal and William Macarthur (landowners), Mortimer Lewis (Colonial Architect) and Thomas Shepherd.

Thomas’s evidence, given on 11 June 1835, covers a range of matters and begins with the statement that since arriving in the Colony in February 1827:

“I have particularly considered the description of mechanics,<sup>154</sup> and labourers most required in the colony. The most valuable emigrants ... are farmers of small capital from England

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150 *The Sydney Herald* 16 April 1835 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12851928>

151 *The Sydney Monitor* 9 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149684>

152 British Parliamentary Papers: *Correspondence and Papers Relating to the Government and Affairs of the Australian Colonies 1837-40; Correspondence Emigration (Australia)* pages 1-82, at page 3.

153 *The Sydney Herald* 21 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853082>

154 “Mechanics” in the 19th Century meant tradesmen such as carpenters, *et cetera*.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

and Scotland, who may be possessed of capitals of from 200 [pounds] to 600 [pounds], and may have from four to six children. These are the most likely to do good both to themselves and to the colony.”<sup>155</sup>

Thomas put forward the types of workers with a range of skills most required:

“carpenters, blacksmiths who can shoe horses and can make and repair agricultural implements, common country shoemakers, a few scientific gardeners, and a large number of common and kitchen and fruit gardeners, country tailors, sawyers, plaisterers [*sic*], painters and glaziers, a considerable number of stonemasons, and a few cutters, bricklayers, country millwrights and wheelwrights, respectable teachers at moderate salaries ... , a few millers, coopers, butchers, bakers and turners, persons well acquainted with the drying and preparing of tobacco, a great number of quarrymen and wool-sorters, country harness-makers, a few boat-builders and sail-makers, working engineers, and a large number of labourers accustomed to the cultivation of hops”.

“I am of the opinion that the colony would not be benefited by the introduction of unmarried labourers; they would be necessarily mixed up with the prisoner population; their morals would thus become corrupted, and the most beneficial object of emigration would be lost.”<sup>156</sup>

He suggests that the best way to select emigrants is through parish clergy in England and Scotland, and that the British government should pay the passage money of families.

“As it is not expected that the best men or most expert workmen will be sent to this country from parishes if the selection be intrusted [*sic*] to resident parish officers, who are naturally desirous of sending off the idle and dissolute, and retaining well-conducted persons, I would propose, for the interests of the colony, that the small farmers who have agreed to emigrate should be entitled to select such mechanics, artisans and labourers to accompany them as may be agreed upon ... These small farmer emigrants would have a direct interest in bringing with them, decent and respectable characters ... If paupers are to be sent out, for whom there is abundant room here, their passage should be paid wholly by the parishes.”<sup>157</sup>

### LECTURES ON LANDSCAPE GARDENING – 1835

When preparing his notes in the summer and autumn of 1835 for his forthcoming lectures on landscape gardening, Thomas still had not received the title deed to his land grant. It had been promised after two years (with condition), however it had probably simply been overlooked by the time of Governor Darling’s departure from the colony in October 1831. In his fourth lecture, Thomas noted:

“I have devoted all my time, during eight years, to fulfil the promise I made to Governor Darling, to establish a nursery on the best plan, for the benefit and general prosperity of this Colony, and I have given the Colonists the best advice in my power for the general improvements of their gardens, both in the cultivation of the soil and in the growth of foreign trees and plants, for use or for ornament. I now appeal to you and the public, whether I have not, under all the

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155 British Parliamentary Papers, *supra*, at pages 49-50.

156 *ibid* page 50.

157 *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Committee on Immigration*, 11 June 1835.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

circumstances, fulfilled by agreement with and promise made to Governor Darling, as to the nursery, and also in giving my best advice both to the rich and the poor of this Colony, for their enrichment, to the full extent of my ability. My conscience tells me I have done so, and I disregard any attempts made by any person to dispute it."<sup>158</sup>

It was a public reminder that he had fulfilled his commitment to establish a commercial nursery on the land and it was a quiet plea for title to his land.

When the Mechanics' Institute released details of the 1835 lecture season, 'fifteen lectures were promised – six of which will be on landscape and other gardening, by Mr. Shepherd of the Darling Nursery, whose lectures last season gave such general satisfaction, and elicited so much well-deserved applause'.<sup>159</sup>

Thomas delivered his first lecture on 17 June, 'before a crowded and highly delighted audience' according to William McGarvie.<sup>160</sup> The *Monitor* published an apology to 'Mr. Shepherd for not noticing his lecture delivered on the 17th instant, and which we are informed was equal to any of those delivered last session. It occurred through our reporter mistaking the lecture night, which will not again occur.'<sup>161</sup>

The second lecture was scheduled for the evening of Wednesday 1 July, but 'was postponed owing to the very severe indisposition of Mr. Shepherd', as notified by the *Herald* the following day. It added that its readers 'will be gratified to learn that our worthy fellow Colonist, who last year benefited the country by his lectures on the horticulture of Australia, is slowly recovering strength'.<sup>162</sup>

However it transpired that Thomas did not recover his strength and would not deliver any further lectures. When Thomas fell ill that winter, his friends made submissions to Governor Bourke requesting the title deed to the Darling Nursery land be issued to Thomas and it was signed on 12 August 1835.<sup>163</sup>

### DEATH – 1835

Thomas died on either 30 August 1835,<sup>164</sup> or on the 31st,<sup>165</sup> according to death notices, leaving a wife and four children (the four youngest: Thomas William, David, Jane and Patrick) 'to deplore his loss'.<sup>166</sup> His cemetery headstone recorded 30 August,<sup>167</sup> but

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158 *Lectures* (1836) page 61.

159 *The Sydney Gazette* 20 April 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2197921>

160 *Lectures* (1836), Preface by William McGarvie.

161 *The Sydney Monitor* 27 July 1835 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149204>

162 *The Sydney Herald* 2 July 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12852558>

163 *NSW Government Gazette* 9 December 1835 page 890; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/230656920/12477980>

164 *The Sydney Herald* 3 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12852981> and

*The Australian* 4 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/42009457>

165 *The Colonist* 3 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31716924> and

*The Sydney Gazette* 1 September 1835 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2199978>

166 *The Colonist* 3 September 1835 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31716929>

167 *Gravestone Inscriptions, NSW* by K A Johnson and M R Sainty, (1973) Volume 1 page 117 entry 2092.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

William McGarvie said he died on 31 August.<sup>168</sup> His Death Certificate omits date of death but gives his age as 55 [*sic*].<sup>169</sup>

At the time of his death, Thomas had been

“engaged to continue his lectures during the present session of the School of Arts; and in fulfilment of his engagement, most imprudently ventured into Sydney on a particularly cold evening, whilst in a delicate state of health from cold previously caught, and delivered his first Lecture on Landscape Gardening, to a crowded audience, and in a heated atmosphere. From the consequences of returning home after the Lecture, at a late hour and exposed to the frosty atmosphere of that evening, he never recovered.”<sup>170</sup>

On 2 September a burial service for Thomas was conducted at the Parish of Scots Burial Ground by Reverend John McGarvie. The funeral ‘was attended by many persons of distinction’ including Alexander McLeay, Colonel Snodgrass, Captain Hunter (Military Secretary to Governor Bourke), Colonel Thomas Shadforth, Thomas Barker Esq., Messrs. Campbell Esqs., John E Manning (Registrar, NSW Supreme Court), Dr James Bowman ‘and many other friends, attended, anxious to pay the last mark of respect to a most worthy and energetic colonist’.<sup>171</sup>

Thomas was buried in the Presbyterian section at Devonshire Street Cemetery,<sup>172</sup> and the upright headstone read (in part) ‘died 30 August 1835, aged 56 years, a father’.<sup>173</sup> When the Devonshire Street Cemetery land was resumed by the State in 1901 for the construction of Central Railway Station, Thomas’s remains and headstone, together with those of his wife Jane Susan, were moved to Bunnerong Cemetery (now part of Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park); the headstone no longer exists.

A number of obituaries appeared in Sydney newspapers and perhaps the most insightful was published in the *Monitor* on 9 September 1835. It was extensive and ran to over 1,000 words. It noted that Thomas ‘has been long known and respected by the principal men in the Colony, for the uprightness and integrity of his character, and for the enthusiasm and perseverance with which he devoted himself to the every day labours of his profession’.

After addressing his early life in Britain and his contribution to the Colony by way of his nursery and his lectures, it continued:

“The value of Mr. Shepherd’s life, as an example, consisted in the determination with which he resisted every thing like hazard in his undertakings. His temperament was enthusiastic, and might therefore have been expected to lead him into hazardous speculations especially in this new country, where speculation guides so universally the actions of men. Yet true to the characteristic principle which often marks so distinctively the doings of his countrymen, his plan

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168 *Lectures on Landscaping* (1836) Preface, page vii.

169 NSW BDM 1074/1835; date of burial 2 September, Scots Burial Ground ceremony conducted by Rev J McGarvie.

170 *The Sydney Monitor* 9 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149684>

171 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853025>

172 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835, supra.

173 K A Johnson and M R Sainty, *op.cit.* page 117.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

was to avoid involving himself in debt. Whatever improvement he made on his estate, - whatever buildings he contemplated, - he made sure of reckoning his means of accomplishment before commencing the expenditure, - and was thus enabled to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God and man; - an example the more valuable because it is rare, and not usually estimated by the wisdom of this world, in proportion to its real and philosophical worth."<sup>174</sup>

An obituary in the *Colonist* gave brief biographical details and then noted his 'inflexible integrity [and] irreproachable moral character'. The writer surmised that 'it was doubtless the excessive fatigue he underwent for a long period in the accomplishment of his object [the nursery] that undermined his constitution'<sup>175</sup> and that Thomas died due to complications following a cold.

However during 1835, as well as managing the nursery probably on a daily basis, Thomas had no doubt been involved in the construction of his new home Darling House, had appeared as a witness before the Committee investigating and reporting on the Colony's immigration requirements, was possibly still preparing detailed notes for his remaining lectures on landscaping and it is likely these also contributed to his being overworked and the reason he succumbed to his illness. The obituary failed to note that he was aged 56 but perhaps this was not remarkable for 1830s Sydney nor would even have been remarkable in late Georgian London.

The *Herald* published an extensive obituary of some 1,500 words and following brief biographical details it reviewed Thomas's contribution to the Colony in relation to horticulture and landscaping.

"In 1830 and 1831 Mr. Shepherd formed one of a Committee appointed by His Excellency, to report on the state of the Vines in the Botanic Garden, introduced by Mr. Busby, and kept there for public use. Mr. M'Leay, Chief Justice Forbes, Sir John Jamison, and Mr. M'Arthur were members of the same Committee, and their printed reports have been read with interest by the Settlers who have directed their attention to this important subject."

"The [landscape] lectures were undertaken to excite a better style of laying out grounds, and building mansions, than have in general prevailed in the Colony, and to encourage the thinning out, but not the total destruction, of the native trees in such situations. They were also written with a view to induce persons with capitals of from £30,000 to £5,000 to Emigrate to these shores, a class of persons who, in Mr. Shepherd's opinion, were calculated to produce great changes on Colonial Society. The lectures are calculated, if published, to be generally useful."<sup>176</sup>

It also noted that in 1833 Thomas

"took an active part in the erection of Saint Andrew's Church, the success of which, from vicinity to his residence, but particularly from the firmness of his principles of religious belief, was an object of constant solicitude to the last hour of life".

"The last public act of Colonial importance, in which Mr. Shepherd was engaged, was his examination before the Committee of Council, on Immigration. It will be admitted, by those who

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174 *The Sydney Monitor* 9 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149684>

175 *The Sydney Colonist* 3 September 1835 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31716929>

176 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853025>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

have read the printed abstract, that his views on that momentous subject, are entitled to much consideration. They are not less showy than those of other persons examined, and in addition, there is a sterling principle in his views, that cannot easily be surpassed.

It is unfortunate that we should at this period lose such men as ... Mr. Shepherd, whose ripened experience, activity, high and honourable [character], and early years, gave promise of much useful exertion on behalf of the Public."<sup>177</sup>

The *Monitor* published a second obituary on 23 September 1835; it was long and omitted any biographic detail but elaborated on his liberal and humanist traits.

"The death of Mr. Shepherd is a public loss. He was a man of liberality in his calling, quite unusual, and therefore the more praiseworthy. He did not begrudge, but seemed to delight in making known what some would call the secrets of the trade. His knowledge of the Nurseries, if not scientific; [sic] was the practice of the best theories, and it was sufficiently experimental to claim for him the merit of discoverer. It is to Mr. Shepherd that the colony is indebted for *cheap* fruit trees of the finest sorts. He reduced the price to less than half, thereby enabling the Colonists to stock their orchards with the best sorts of fruit at a very moderate cost. He duly appreciated the value of the vines introduced by Mr. Busby ... and through Mr. S's skilful care in growing and *packing* the cuttings of the 300 varieties of French grapes, the distant settlers of the North West and South ... have been rapidly [supplied]. Mr. Shepherd had no political prejudices against Mr. Busby, and therefore, such prejudices did not hinder him, as it does many, from paying Mr. B. that tribute of praise, which is so eminently his due. But that he should have had professional envy against Mr. Busby would not have been surprising; but Shepherd was a man whom nature precluded from such feelings. He was of a large heart, as well as clear and vigorous understanding; sanguine indeed, but proportionably generous in all that concerned the advancement of the Colony in the science and practice of his calling. He possessed good natural talents, and by the force of nature, overcame many of the obstacles of a common education, as a lecturer and publisher of a very useful little book on fruit trees, &c.

Mr Shepherd, fortunately, had to deal with liberal patrons in his profession [and through their liberality] he was enabled to store his nursery with fruits and flowers, which even an English nobleman might covet, and ... he seemed to take delight, by their cheapness, to extend throughout the Colony.

For these reasons, we account the death of such a man as Shepherd, a public loss ..."<sup>178</sup>

### LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT – 1835

Thomas's Will is dated 23 June 1835,<sup>179</sup> signed when he was already very unwell and unable to deliver his second and subsequent lectures on landscape gardening. The Will extends to five large parchment pages, signed at the foot of each page by Thomas.

After the opening statement that it his his last Will and testament, the deposition is one long single sentence with no other punctuation until the end on the fifth page, followed by the attestation by Thomas. It is an encompassing document, detailed and thoughtful.

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<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *The Sydney Monitor* 23 September 1835 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32149771>

<sup>179</sup> NSW State Archives: Probate Index 1800-1902; Volume 690 Series 1.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

Following the usual stipulation that all his debts and funeral and testamentary expenses be paid, he sets out a further nine specific directions.

*First*, he gives to his daughter Elizabeth, her heirs and assigns

“two Building Allotments of land being parcel of my Estate called the Darling Nursery situate at Sydney aforesaid and which allotments are bounded on the South by the road leading to Cooks River and on the West by the premises of Mr Robert Cooper”.

This is prime land on the north-west corner of the Darling Nursery, fronting the main road to Newtown between Cooper’s property (on the corner of Parramatta and New Town Roads) and Darling Cottage. The dimension of these allotments is not specified so this must have been pre-arranged with the family and the Will simply formalises the transfer. Thomas was obviously very fond of Elizabeth and her husband, Robert Henderson. It is also possible that Elizabeth did not inherit on her mother’s side and Thomas may have wished to remedy that by his bequest.

Elizabeth kept this land her whole life and after her death in 1874 it was sold for £600, where the land was described as being 100 feet along the north-east and south-east boundaries and 75 feet along the north-west and south-west boundaries, with the north-east boundary up against the wall dividing Robert Cooper’s land from Darling Nursery; so the wall is still there at this time.<sup>180</sup>

*Second*, Thomas appoints John McGarvie, Thomas Barker and Robert Henderson as trustees and devises and bequeaths to them

“all the rest and residue and remainder of my Estates property and effects whatsoever and wheresoever both real and personal and of what nature tenure kind or quality soever the same may be and whether situate and being in New South Wales[,] Great Britain or elsewhere [upon trust to sell by] public auction or otherwise of such part of my said Estate called the Darling Nursery [to] raise the Sum of Five thousand pounds and ... invest the said Sum of Five thousand pounds [for the purpose of paying five hundred pounds every year to his wife Jane Shepherd] by equal quarterly payments for and during the term of her natural life’ [so long as she remained unmarried. In the event of her remarriage, then an] annual payment of Two hundred pounds shall cease at the expiry of twelve months next after such second marriage”.

In August 1836 a public notice announced

“Twenty-four Valuable Building Allotments, part of the Estate of the Late Mr. Shepherd, pleasantly situated on the New Town Road, just beyond Cooper’s Distillery, and opposite the Glebe Land and Grose Farm. To be Leased by Auction for a term of Fifteen years [for] the highly and advantageous opportunity of erecting a neat residence at an agreeable and convenient distance from the town ... Lots 1 to 14 have 50 Feet frontage each, by a depth of 100 feet ... Lot 15 has a similar Frontage and depth ... Lots 16 to 27 have 51 feet Frontage each, by 100 feet depth.”<sup>181</sup>

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180 NSW Registrar General: Book 158 No. 529 Indenture dated 3 April 1876.

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

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

This would start the process of raising the £5,000 capital required to establish the trust. By 1841 land on the Chippendale Estate was worth £1,000 per acre.<sup>182</sup> Jane Susan did not remarry; she died at Darling Nursery on 31 October 1863 aged 66,<sup>183</sup> and was buried with Thomas.

*Thirdly*, Thomas's Will provides that the trustees must apply the remaining part of the interest on five thousand pounds invested

“for and towards the maintenance education and advancement in life of all and every my Children as well daughters as Sons which I shall have by my said Wife Jane Shepherd at the time of my decease who shall be born within a reasonable time afterwards until they shall severally attain the Age of Twenty one years” [with further disposition once they turned Twenty one].

Note the express direction that his daughters were to be educated: Jane then aged 6 and any daughter born ‘within a reasonable time’ after his death.

*Fourthly*, his trustees were to give

“my dear Father Alexander Shepherd<sup>184</sup> ... in Scotland and Helen his Wife [all the] rents issued and profits of my Estate situate at Worthing in the County of Sussex in England (the Title deeds whereof are in the hands of my Solicitor [in] Worthing ...) and which I hold on a lease for the term of Sixty years Forty six years of which term or thereabouts are unexpired for and during [their] natural lives [and on their deaths to sell the] leasehold Estate and property by public Auction or private Contract”.

*Fifthly*, he directs that

“in case my Sons Alexander Shepherd and John Joslin Shepherd ... or either of them should at any time hereafter happen to be in distressed circumstances and my said trustees should think them worthy of consideration to pay and allow each or either of them my said Sons the Weekly sum of Twenty one shillings” [for as long as the trustees deem it necessary].

Of note, this is the only bequest to his sons from his first marriage. As Thomas's Will carefully encompasses all members of his family including his elderly parents, it seems that sons Alexander and John Joslin were already provided for: perhaps they inherited from their mother's estate or from her share from her family. Or perhaps Thomas had already given them property in England: an ‘Alexander Shepherd’ died in 1854,<sup>185</sup> registered at St Thomas's Hackney, Middlesex: did Thomas transfer his Hackney business to his son? Certainly the English newspaper notice of 21 November 1834 requesting Alexander contact Thomas's solicitor in England, intimates such possibility: “He will hear of something greatly to his advantage”.<sup>186</sup>

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

183 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 2 November 1863 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13086776>

184 Alexander Shepherd's death at age 88 was reported in *The Sydney Herald* on 11 October 1839; his mother's death at age 87 was reported in *The Sydney Herald* on 17 October 1836.

185 *England Deaths and Burials 1538-1991* Film No. 1040361 Ref Item 9 Page 603.

186 *The Chelmsford Chronicle* 21 November 1834 page 1.

Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

*Sixthly*, that his trustees were to apply all other proceeds from his real and personal estate for

“the maintenance education and advancement in life of my said daughter Elizabeth Joslin Henderson and all and every my said Children by my said Wife Jane Shepherd already or hereafter to be born as aforesaid until they shall severally attain the Age of Twenty one Years [at which time they become entitled to that share] for his or her own benefit [and once Jane Susan and his parents have died, to divide] the residue and remainder of my said real and personal Estate not by me herein otherwise disposed of unto and equally between and amongst my said daughter Elizabeth Joslin Henderson and all and every my said Children which I shall have by my Wife Jane Shepherd whether already or hereafter to be born as aforesaid as tenants in common and to their several and respective heirs executors and administrators. [Provided that if any of them die before attaining majority but leaving lawful issue, then] his or her Child or Children (if more than one equally share and share alike upon their severally attaining the age of twenty one Years” [will inherit the parent’s share].

Thomas expressly states ‘it being my intention that the issue of any deceased Child should enjoy the full benefit of this my Will for the Father or Mother’. Sons Alexander and John Joslin are not included in any distribution under this provision.

*Seventh*, his trustees are

“to reimburse themselves respectively all loss costs charges and expenses which they or either of them shall suffer sustain expend or be put to in and about the execution of this my Will Together with a reasonable allowance for journeys loss of time and other trouble”.

*Eighth*: Thomas

“hereby constitute[s] and appoint[s] the said John McGarvie Thomas Barker and Robert Henderson and my said Wife Executors and Executrix of this my Will and Guardians of my said Children during their several Minorities”.

So here is the appointment of guardianship over his young children: Thomas William aged 10, David aged 8, Jane aged 6 and Patrick Lindesay aged 4. Henderson assumed the ‘superintendence of the [Darling] Nursery business during the minority of the members of the firm of Shepherd and Co’.<sup>187</sup>

*Ninth*: he gives each of his trustees a legacy of one hundred pounds. For Henderson, this is in addition to the bequest of land he receives with Elizabeth.

Probate was granted in November 1835. As part of the Probate, an affidavit by the executors dated 2 November 1835 includes the statement that ‘they believe the goods chattels credits and effects of the said Deceased do not exceed exceed the value of Two Hundred Pounds’. Interestingly, this is close to the amount of capital Thomas said he started Darling Nursery with in 1827: ‘I had a few hundred pounds at my commencement’.<sup>188</sup> However, he died having received the title deed to his land grant.

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187 *Horticultural Magazine and Gardeners’ and Amateurs’ Calendar*, 1865, *supra*.

188 *The Sydney Herald* (Supplement) 6 November 1834, *supra*.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

### PUBLICATION OF *LECTURES ON LANDSCAPE GARDENING IN AUSTRALIA* – 1836

In October 1835 the *Herald* published advertisements notifying the public that the late Mr Thomas Shepherd had left 'Six Lectures in Manuscript on Landscape Gardening in Australia applied to the Colony, [and] it is proposed to publish the same should a sufficient number of Subscribers be procured to cover expenses [and that] Gentlemen who are desirous of patronising this work of one of our most expert and scientific Gardeners, are requested to transmit their names to Mr. W. McGarvie'.<sup>189</sup>

Thomas considered that landscape gardening

"is the art which has given England a name above all the countries in the world, for its beauty and rich diversity in landscape scenery, - which creates a rash variety of new objects, beautiful and picturesque, romantic and sublime, the valued materials for the landscape painter – which will embellish your parks and grounds around your dwellings, increase the natural partiality which every one has for his landed property, particularly where these embellishments are the result of his own taste and judgment; and finally, it is an art which will make your estates more valuable, and add one more enticement to men of property and taste, to leave their own country and fix their residence contentedly in the highly salubrious climate of New South Wales".<sup>190</sup>

The *Herald* said that

"Mr. Shepherd was considered in former years an excellent draughtsman, surveyor, and landscape gardener. One of his first works on arrival [in the colony], was a splendid design for laying out Hyde Park, with ornamental walks, shaded with trees, and surrounded with elegant public and private edifices [sic]."<sup>191</sup>

Fortunately Thomas had written extensive notes for each of his lectures, the subscription was fulfilled, and *Lectures on Landscape Gardening in Australia* was published on 7 March 1836,<sup>192</sup> with both a *Dedication* and a *Preface* by his friend Reverend John McGarvie (brother of the publisher, William).

McGarvie's *Dedication* states that Thomas's lecture notes were dedicated to The Honourable Alexander McLeay Esq., who

"As one of his first and most liberal friends, by whom was imparted for his Nursery, and eventually for the use of the Colonists at large, every rare and costly Botanical production imported by yourself from all quarters of the world, it was Mr. Shepherd's ardent desire to dedicate these Lectures to you, in admiration of your consummate skill, knowledge, and zeal, in Horticultural pursuits".<sup>193</sup>

And that in dedicating the publication to McLeay, McGarvie is complying with Thomas's 'last wishes'.

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189 *The Sydney Herald* 8 October 1835 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853221>

190 *The Sydney Gazette* 23 April 1831 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2200251>

191 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1835, *op.cit.*

192 *The Sydney Herald* 7 March 1836 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853991>

193 *Lectures* (1836), page v.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

At a committee meeting at the Mechanics' Institute in April 1835 Thomas 'undertook to deliver Six Lectures' that season,<sup>194</sup> however in his *Preface* to the publication McGarvie writes that Thomas had material for 'seven lectures on Landscape Gardening – the first only of which he delivered, at the Mechanics' School of Arts ... while labouring under extreme ill health'. He also notes that as published, the seven lectures 'must appear under disadvantage, as it is probable they would have received additional point and polish, as to language and arrangement, had the respected author lived to superintend their publication'.<sup>195</sup>

In the *First Lecture*, Thomas states

"A well proportioned building should, if possible, be the principal object in a Landscape. The view of its front, or fronts, should not be intercepted by any other buildings, or by dead, dull, or dark fences. It should not be interrupted by trees, but should be entirely open, so that it may appear distinct in all its Architectural parts [which] supposes that the building is a handsome object in itself. But if the Mansion, Villa, or Cottage is an irregular, unsightly, tasteless building, void of proportion, and of a grotesque figure ... it should be partly hid in the front by handsome growing trees, to conceal its Architectural defects."<sup>196</sup>

Essential elements when creating a landscape include

"trees in the greatest variety ... and to have them so disposed that the greatest number and variety may be seen from the mansion ... the *approach*, or *approaches*, and the *main walk* or *walks* are the next objects which require particular consideration ... the *distant objects* come next into notice [then] *Water* ... Nothing looks more lively or pleasing than water in a landscape, in whatever form it appears, whether as the sea, rivers, brooks, lakes, ponds, &c".<sup>197</sup>

"... the principal art in Landscape Gardening consists of giving designs ... for a new creation of a numberless variety of objects, to be brought into harmony with other objects which are already existing, perhaps separate and distinct, and to bring the whole into one harmonious perspective."<sup>198</sup>

In the *Second Lecture*, Thomas gives detailed background information relating to the three professional landscapers who most influenced his own work: Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783), Thomas White (1739-1811) and Humphrey Repton (1752-1818) were

"the only gentlemen known to me who were considered eminent in the profession of Landscape Gardening ... Mr. Brown was the first person who practised the art, and he generally went by the name of *Capability Brown*, as the word capability was so frequently made use of by him".<sup>199</sup>

Thomas outlines the general landscaping principles used by Capability Brown, and considers that Brown's greatest merit was

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194 *The Monitor* (Sydney) 22 April 1835 page 5; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32148756>

195 *ibid*, page vii.

196 *ibid*, page 9.

197 *ibid*, page 10.

198 *ibid*.

199 *ibid*, page 17.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

“in his having invented and introduced into park and garden scenery, curved, circular, or sweeping lines, instead of the straight lines which were in general use previous to his invention”.<sup>200</sup>

### Of Thomas White:

“he was a pupil of Mr Brown. He resided upon his own estate in Yorkshire, kept a set of servants, and lived in the style of a gentleman of the first respectability ... Mr. White justly exploded many of Mr. Brown’s plans, as being too formal; such as his heavy clumps of forest trees, and formal belts, which generally encompassed the parks, blocking out every distant object from the view.”<sup>201</sup>

“I was personally acquainted with Mr. White [and] under his direction ... superintended the execution of some of his principal designs. I had been taught land surveying before I became acquainted with him. I therefore could lay out on the ground any of Mr. White’s designs which he planned upon paper, without his assistance, which made me perfectly acquainted with his very superior method of giving designs. If Mr. White had a fault, it was his unlimited ambition in the extent of his designs. A number of estates cost an immense expense in their execution, indeed so much, that many gentlemen were ruined by it, and were under the necessity of disposing of their estates to pay their debts. In my opinion, this ruin was more occasioned by gentlemen being over desirous of doing a great deal in one year towards the execution of Mr. White’s designs, than to the extent of improvements which he designed.”<sup>202</sup>

### Of Repton:

“Mr. Repton’s unlimited talent was not inferior to Mr. White’s in the art of giving designs ... but Mr. White excelled him in the execution of designs, unless it might be some instances, where a nobleman or gentleman’s gardener, accustomed to such work, undertook the superintendence for him; but such men were not always to be found, and therefore Mr. Repton often failed in the execution of his designs. I once laid out an estate in Kent, adjoining one which Mr. Repton was laying out. His design was admirable; but its execution upon the ground was as rough as a ploughed field, or a common cart road. Not a sweep nor a level was made true, they were outs and ins, heights and hollows, in fact, in no shape or form fit to be seen. It was a good design entirely ruined. Mr. Repton’s employer complained of its roughness and unsightly appearance, and informed him of the superior work I was at that time carrying on. Mr. Repton and his employer paid me a visit to view my performance. Mr. Repton had not been five minutes in the ground before he exclaimed, “I never saw work completed in this style in all my life; I cannot perform work like this”. I replied that he had had no practical knowledge in working with the spade, and that out of a hundred men who were employed in the execution of his design, not one of them knew how to level a piece of ground. I advised him to employ a gardener accustomed to levelling land, and surveying and mapping land estates, as superintendent over the men who were employed in the work ...

“I am almost ashamed of having brought this conversation before you, as it is too much in my own praise, of which I have a great dislike, but I could not resist the temptation, as it elucidates

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200 *ibid*, page 18.

201 *ibid*, page 19.

202 *ibid*, page 20.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

a major point which I wish to explain ... namely, that as much depends upon the execution as upon the design.

“Mr Repton was a gentleman at the height of his profession as a Landscape Gardener, in giving designs. He has written with greater ability on Landscape Gardening, than any other person. Yet his inability to perform the execution of designs in a masterly style, is sufficiently clear.”<sup>203</sup>

Having explained the work of Brown, White and Repton, Thomas identifies three styles of landscape scenery: ‘1st, the sublime; 2nd, the picturesque; 3rd, the beautiful’.<sup>204</sup> the elements “sublime” and “beautiful” appear to have been taken from Edmund Burke’s 1757 treatise on aesthetics, *A Philosophical Inquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, and Thomas was probably familiar with this book. Thomas discusses the elements of the three styles as they relate to landscape gardening in detail.

The *Third Lecture* gives practical instructions in the art of making designs for parks, pleasure grounds and garden scenery and instructions for the execution of designs.

The *Fourth Lecture* presumes to explain ‘how a Gentleman ... may settle in New South Wales, with his lady and family, and live in the first style of splendour’<sup>205</sup> arriving with capital of £20,000, £10,000 or £5,000. Thomas provides hypothetical expenditure accounts for each of the three so capitalised gentlemen which include cost of passage from England, purchase of freehold land in the Colony, cost of sheep, cost of erection of mansion and outbuildings and so forth.

In the *Fifth Lecture*, Thomas sets out five rules for the guidance of landscape gardeners:

“1. the study and display of natural beauties. 2. The concealment of defects. 3. The selection and application of whatever is great, elegant, or characteristic in the scenery from art or nature. 4. The discovery and prominent display of the advantages enjoyed on the place on which the gardener exercises his talents. 5. To supply its defects, correct its blemishes, and improve its beauties. Therefore fitness of parts, consistency, utility, order, symmetry, scale, proportion, appropriation, are its chief objects.”<sup>206</sup>

He discusses the difference between natural or *Universal* beauty, and *Relative* beauty, and outlines the elements of each. Thomas outlines ‘the materials on which the Landscape Gardener exercises the principles of his imitative art’ which are based on those of nature and those of art; those of nature being ‘Ground’ (earth or soil), ‘Wood’, ‘Water’, and ‘Rocks’ and those of art include buildings, roads, walks, fences, and ‘animated objects’. The lecture finishes with descriptions of the first two elements of ‘Ground’ and ‘Wood’.

The *Sixth Lecture* picks up from where the fifth ended and covers the next element ‘Water’.

“Mountain streams are accidental, and [are] not to be depended upon; yet, in some instances, they are beautifully picturesque objects. The finest I ever saw, was a good many years

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203 *ibid*, page 21-23.

204 *ibid*, page 25.

205 *ibid*, page 48.

206 *ibid*, page 64-65.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

ago, at Tristan de Acunha. We saw it at several miles distance, and also close at hand from the ship, and the varied appearances were truly grand."<sup>207</sup>

"The grand effect of water in Landscape depends on wood as its accompaniment. The variety and intricacy of outline, the reflection of forms and colours, the shady recesses and flickering lines of light, all depend on trees. These are not to be sparingly scattered around the margin, but liberally in some places, for the sake of a contrasted mass of colour and shade, to relieve the brilliancy of the water."<sup>208</sup>

He then discusses the use of islands, rivers, rills, cascades and waterfalls.

As to the fourth element 'Rocks': 'Savage rocks' are those unconnected with wood and water and are without verdure as he saw on Salt Island, one of the Cape Verde Islands (a mid-Atlantic volcanic archipelago visited on his journey to New Zealand).

"Some gentlemen may probably dislike our gum trees. For my part, I have no dislike to them ... they look as well as the old ornamental trees in an ancient English park. If any dislike is entertained to them on account of their length and nakedness of trunk, ... plant young gum trees among them, to blind the naked stems of the old trees."<sup>209</sup>

The aim of the *Seventh Lecture*, Thomas says, is to establish

"correct principles and rules for the general embellishment of Marine Villas ... as the possession of such residences may be in the reach of most of us or our friends ...

"The branches, bays, inlets, headlands, and shores of the river of Port Jackson, between the Heads and Parramatta, present many fine situations for houses. The fantastic rocks, covered with trees and shrubs, forming its outline, and the islands in the stream cannot be exceeded in picturesque beauty and grandeur."<sup>210</sup>

He notes that 'it will be preferable to give you a detailed description of improvements made on two of the most highly finished places of residence and ground [in the colony] both on the banks of the river ... and I am happy to add, that I have received permission to do so'.<sup>211</sup> One, at some length, being *Elizabeth Bay House* which belonged to his friend Alexander McLeay; the other somewhat briefly, being *Lyndhurst* which belonged to Dr James Bowman, principal surgeon at Sydney Hospital from 1819 to 1823 and who was also John Macarthur's son-in-law. Both houses, Thomas says, are superb examples of Marine Villas having extensive grounds down to water expanses.

In 1826 McLeay was granted a large tract of land at Elizabeth Bay.

"Interspersed with a mass of rocks, romantically towering here and there, Elizabeth Bay has fertile patches – woods and meadows, and, what is better still, is accessible on every side, but one, to the water. It is in fact a peninsular, and as such, one of the most valuable spots in the harbour –

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207 *ibid*, page 74.

208 *ibid*, page 75-76.

209 *ibid*, page 79.

210 *ibid*, page 86.

211 *ibid*, page 87.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

it is a harbour in itself. It measures in extent, nominally fifty four acres – but others advouch, that it contains very few acres short of one hundred.”<sup>212</sup>

To some in the Colony it was a contentious grant: the *Australian* called it ‘extravagant’.<sup>213</sup> McLeay engaged the English architect John Verge, whose ‘domestic buildings were the colony’s high-water mark of the Regency style’,<sup>214</sup> as the architect of Elizabeth Bay House built between 1833 and 1839. However by 1831 McLeay had already engaged Thomas’s son-in-law Robert Henderson as head gardener to commence landscaping the estate,<sup>215</sup> and Henderson was already growing grape vines there.<sup>216</sup> At the time of his marriage to Elizabeth Shepherd in 1831, Henderson was living at Elizabeth Bay, probably on McLeay’s estate.<sup>217</sup> A watercolour by Conrad Martens of 1836 shows part of the garden landscape which is still incomplete at the time.<sup>218</sup>

Henderson originally ‘came to Australia from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to take charge of Mr. Oxley’s establishment at Cowpasture’ near Camden.<sup>219</sup> John Oxley, Surveyor-General and explorer, had 1,000 acres called Kirkham but he was often absent for weeks or months on surveys and exploration. Henderson became Alexander McLeay’s overseer at Elizabeth Bay probably following the untimely death of Oxley in May 1828. McLeay and Henderson may have been acquainted: ‘Henderson was at the Cape of Good Hope when McLeay passed through on his way to Australia’.<sup>220</sup>

McLeay and Thomas were previously acquainted in London where McLeay was Secretary of the Linnean Society;<sup>221</sup> Thomas was not a member but he may well have provided landscaping or plant nursery services to some who were. As Colonial Secretary (from 1826 to 1835), McLeay most likely vouched Thomas’s credentials as a landscape gardener and nurseryman to Governor Darling when Thomas arrived in the colony in early 1827.

Thomas described the landscaping being undertaken at Elizabeth Bay House in 1835:

“[McLeay’s] botanic, flower, landscape, fruit, and kitchen gardens, are all on the first scale, and he had also expended large sums in digging out rocks ... and in the purchase of foreign trees and plants ... About twenty men have been engaged in these general improvements which have been going on ... for several years [and that if] I might be allowed to make any suggestion, it is, that to complete Elizabeth Bay in a style of the first magnificence, there should be an *Aviary* ... a *Conservatory* ... a good *Pinery* with grape vines ... an ornamental *Summer House* ... These improvements, which probably it is the intention of the respected proprietor to make, would, in

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212 *The Sydney Monitor* 3 February 1829 page 8; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31761409>

213 *The Australian* 16 September 1836 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/36858588>

214 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*; <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/verge-john-2757>

215 *The Sydney Herald* 20 June 1831 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843189>

216 *The Sydney Herald* 6 June 1831 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12843122>

217 *The Sydney Herald* 17 October 1831 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28654058>

218 *Entrance to Elizabeth Bay House*, 1836 by Conrad Martens;

<http://collection.hht.net.au/firsthhtpictures/picturerecord.jsp?recno=32510>

219 Robert Theophilus Henderson to Mary Salmon, *The Evening News* (Sydney) 6 August 1904 page 3;

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/113290959>

220 Liston, *op.cit.* page 5 (but source not cited by author).

221 *ibid.*

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

my opinion, render Elizabeth Bay one of the most finished residences to be met with in any Country".<sup>222</sup>

Although Thomas was not formally engaged by McLeay, he was close enough to know McLeay's intentions *vis à vis* the garden and likely provided the landscape design. Henderson came with management skills appropriate for Oxley's expansive acreage at Cowpasture so it's most unlikely he was trained in landscape gardening. Henderson 'superintended the laying out of those once famed Gardens of the Elizabeth Bay Estate',<sup>223</sup> but probably following Thomas's design which McLeay would not have publicised because Thomas had given his commitment to the Governor to establish a commercial nursery.

The second estate that Thomas discussed was Dr Bowman's *Lyndhurst*, also designed by Verge, which fronted Blackwattle Bay. Thomas considered this Marine Villa as

"another first rate edifice, the grounds of which have been laid off [*sic*] with great attention to the principles of Landscape Gardening ... [the estate] contains fifty acres of land [and] commands about a mile of frontage to the bay. It is beautifully wooded, and has a considerable extent of glade or lawn within a thriving forest scenery. The house is the principle feature in the landscape. Thick masses of wood branch off from the back part of the house. This estate ... will be a model for a genteel marine residence."<sup>224</sup>

By way of his son John Joslin, Thomas may have had a personal connection to Bowman. In 1825 Bowman received a land grant of 2,000 acres in the Parish of Ravensworth, County Durham in the Upper Hunter,<sup>225</sup> he acquired the Crown lease of an adjoining 2,552 acres in 1831,<sup>226</sup> and with additional purchases his total landholding at Ravensworth amounted to some 12,000 acres.<sup>227</sup> In 1835 Bowman's superintendent at Ravensworth was James White,<sup>228</sup> and by 1838 it was James Davis.<sup>229</sup> In early 1839, cattle for sale at Bowman's Ravensworth may be seen 'by application to the superintendent', who is unnamed.<sup>230</sup>

Then in late 1839 'two thousand six hundred and sixty-five Ewes, to lamb in March' belonging to Bowman for auction at Ravensworth 'may be seen at any time, on application to the Superintendent, Mr. Shepherd':

"The high reputation which Dr. Bowman's Flocks have so long maintained, and the care and attention bestowed to preserve that reputation, will be a sufficient guarantee for the character of these Sheep, and the qualities of their fleeces, which, it will be seen, are of that description adapted to the demands of the Continental as well as the London market."<sup>231</sup>

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222 *Lectures* (1836), pages 88 and 90.

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

224 *ibid* pages 91-92.

225 Colonial Secretary Papers 1778-1856 dated 17 May 1825.

226 *The Sydney Gazette* 7 March 1833 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2211054>

227 Australian Dictionary of Biography; <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bowman-james-1812>

228 *The Sydney Herald* 26 November 1835 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12853542>

229 *The Sydney Monitor* 14 May 1838 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32160055>

230 *The Sydney Herald* 15 February 1839 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12856210>

231 *The Sydney Herald* 22 November 1839 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12863394>

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

In 1841: 'Application to be made to Mr. Shepherd, on the estate' Ravensworth for those wishing to view 40 young bulls and 300 rams for sale by Dr Bowman.<sup>232</sup> After White and Davis left in seemingly quick succession, perhaps Bowman employed John Joslin. There is no entry for John Joslin in the 1844 Sydney *Post Office Directory*.

Bowman died in August 1846 at Ravensworth,<sup>233</sup> at which time his eldest son Edward Macarthur took over management of the property until the assets were sold in 1848,<sup>234</sup> which included 'a quantity of superb' household furniture.<sup>235</sup> This presumably ended Mr Shepherd's employ at Ravensworth and in early 1849 a 'well located' allotment of land with 30 foot frontage to James Street in West Maitland, 'the property of Mr. Shepherd', was listed for sale.<sup>236</sup>

In 1855 Robert Henderson placed several public notices with request that John Joslin, the second son of Thomas Shepherd, contact the family noting that 'he will hear of something to his immediate advantage'.<sup>237</sup> This may refer to the provision in Thomas's Will that if John Joslin is 'in distressed circumstances and my said trustees should think [him] worthy of consideration to pay [him] the Weekly sum of Twenty one shillings' for as long as the trustees deem it necessary.

A death notice in late 1856 informed the public that John Joslin Shepherd, the 'second surviving son of the late Mr. Thomas Shepherd, of the Darling Nursery' died on 3 November 1856 aged 45 at Tambaroora,<sup>238</sup> an old gold mining town north of Bathurst.

Thomas certainly kept a ledger: as already noted, he was able to state that by late 1834 he had sold 'not less than 30,000 fruit trees and 10,000 other trees, shrubs and flower roots',<sup>239</sup> and that by 1835 'in lieu of obtaining any profit out of the nursery, I am and have been money out of pocket every year ... I have now sunk £1600 sterling on the general improvements of my land and premises'.<sup>240</sup> In the absence of his ledger it is difficult to ascertain what landscaping work Thomas did in and around Sydney.

The impending sale of part of the *Mount Adelaide* estate which comprised some 13 acres on the eastern side of Darling Point was advertised in 1837. The sale included Lot 42 which "is the *ne plus ultra* of Mount Adelaide, and contains on or about Four Acres. On this spot upwards of £2,000 has been expended in the laying out of a Garden and Orchard, which was planted under the superintendence of the late Mr. Shepherd, with several hundred fruit trees of the choicest description; extensive Vineyard, about four thousand feet in length, containing grape

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232 *The Sydney Herald* 11 February 1841 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28652283>

233 *The Maitland Mercury* 26 August 1846 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/684304>

234 *The Life and Botany of Edward Macarthur Bowman (1826-1872)* by Anthony R Bean; *Historical Records of Australian Science* 2019 Volume 30 pages 12-18 at 13.

235 *The Maitland Mercury* 10 June 1848 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/711250>

236 *The Maitland Mercury* 24 January 1849 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/706044>

237 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 3 August 1855 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12972420>

238 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 18 November 1856 page 1; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12989059>

239 *The Sydney Herald* 6 November 1834, *op.cit.*

240 *Lectures* (1836), page 61.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

vines of every description; an ornamental Fish-pond, with six islands, having sluice gates, a stone-sided Canal, seventy-two feet long, with wire work fixed to a windlass, so that fish may be caught every tide; a stone Wharf, one hundred and twelve feet long; Boat-house, with boat, complete; a weather-boarded Cottage; a romantic Cave, with good roads and paths in various directions, and a never-failing supply of rock-water of the purest quality."<sup>241</sup>

However it seems likely that Thomas did little landscaping work in Sydney.

"I have devoted all my time, during eight years, to fulfil the promise I made to Governor Darling, to establish a nursery on the best plan, for the benefit and general prosperity of this Colony."<sup>242</sup>

"Many gentlemen have also solicited me to go to their residences, to give them advice how to improve their gardens. I have complied with their requests, and I have now only to state, that I have had no other motive, or ambition, or interest, than the satisfaction and pleasure which I feel in having faithfully fulfilled my promise to Governor Darling."<sup>243</sup>

Perhaps when the Darling Nursery was not so busy, Thomas accepted occasional commissions that remunerated well and helped fund his nursery.

On publication, the 95 page book *Lectures on Landscape Gardening in Australia* was sold for five shillings. 'Only a very limited impression of this valuable Work has been printed'.<sup>244</sup>

The *Herald* gave a short review: the Lectures

"embrace several subjects connected with Landscape Gardening, of great importance to the Colonists. Emigration in particular is discussed with much force and perspicuity, in reference to the importation of wealthy individuals. The Lectures were written ... with the design of directing settlers to the best means of laying out their estates [and they] will be attended with much benefit to individuals."<sup>245</sup>

Elsewhere another short review noted that to newcomers 'especially persons of property, it will be found an invaluable work, while gentlemen of long standing in the Colony will find this little book equally interesting'.<sup>246</sup>

In London, the prestigious *Gardener's Magazine* published a long review.

"We should be greatly obliged to the proprietors of [Lyndhurst and Elizabeth Bay House] if they would send us detailed plans of every part of them, including even the house, and domestic and farm offices, together with elevations, sections and perspective views; the latter both of scenery within the grounds, and of the views obtained from different parts of the house and grounds. We should also wish to have a list of the plants, both indigenous and exotic, and including weeds, in the grounds of each residence [and] we will engage to publish them in a manner creditable to all parties."<sup>247</sup>

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241 *The Sydney Herald* 28 September 1837 page 4; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12856692>

242 *Lectures* (1836), page 61.

243 *ibid* page 62.

244 *The Sydney Herald* 7 March 1836, *op.cit.*

245 *The Sydney Herald* 10 March page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28654720>

246 *The Sydney Monitor* 16 March page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32150943>

247 *The Gardener's Magazine and Register of Rural & Domestic Improvement* 1837 Vol 3 pages 584-590 at 589-590.

## Thomas Shepherd (1779 - 1835)

By October 1836, copies of both *Lectures on the Horticulture of New South Wales* and *Lectures on Landscape Gardening in Australia* could also be obtained from 'Mrs. Shepherd, at the Darling Nursery'.<sup>248</sup>

In his *Records of Australian Botanists* of 1908, Joseph Henry Maiden, then NSW Government Botanist and Director of the Botanic Garden, wrote that the Garden's library copy of *Lectures on Landscape Gardening in Australia* 'has two pages of notes in the holograph of the author'.<sup>249</sup> With the passage of time these pages cannot be located.

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Of Thomas, the man:

"Mr. Shepherd will long be remembered as a man of great firmness of character, possessing a clear, discriminating, and ready judgment. To a strong natural understanding he had added acquirements not generally met with in common life, and his religious principles, derived from affectionate parents in youth never left him, and never varied. His conduct was exemplary as a man and a christian [*sic*]. He was warm-hearted, liberal, honourable, and open in all his transactions; he was sincere and earnest in his manner, and an affectionate and tender husband, father, and friend; one whose word was his bond; one whom his friends never left without regret, nor revisited without pleasure."<sup>250</sup>

Six months before he died, Thomas was reported as saying

"that he would always feel a pleasure in rendering every assistance in his power for encreasing [*sic*] happiness and prosperity in Australia. He was quite aware that subjects on horticulture must be interesting and pleasing to ... the land proprietors throughout the Colony. He therefore pledged his word that he would withhold nothing of importance from them on the horticulture of Australia, which might come within the reach of his knowledge ...".<sup>251</sup>

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248 *The Sydney Herald* 13 October 1836 page 3; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12862018>

249 *Records of Australian Botanists* by J H Maiden; *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of NSW*, Volume 42 (1908) pages 60-132 at page 118; <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/129864#page/152/mode/1up>

250 *The Sydney Herald* 10 September 1834, *op.cit.*

251 *The Australian* 5 December 1834 page 2; <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/42004522>