

## Richard Hocking 1835-1918

By Peter Gardner



*former Methodist Church and chapel Daylesford*

Richard Hocking was born in 1835 at Newlyn East. His father died when he was five and his mother remarried a miner, James Andrew, when he was thirteen. During his early childhood he lived next door to his Angove cousins and his younger brother Thomas was to marry his first cousin Christiana Angove. The 1851 census lists Richard aged 15 as a “lead dresser” as was Thomas and his cousin Sam Angove. John Angove, also 15, was listed as a lead miner. By this time the East Wheel Rose mine had begun its slow decline and when it closed in 1857 the wholesale immigration of the Hocking and Angove families had already begun.

The same year Maddicks in his *100 Years of mining in Daylesford* stated that Richard Hocking and party were searching for a deep lead under the township. Besides Hocking he listed as members of the party the Tonkin brothers, Barkla, Tippett, and Clogan\*. The long tunnel commenced in the head of Doctors Gully just north of Raglan Street, went south under Midland Highway and then east under the township and Wombat Hill. It was known as the Township Lead and Richard and his party must have made money out of it as he, and at least one of the others, became firmly established in Daylesford.

Whilst Richard busied himself in mining projects and the Methodist Church his family continued to arrive in the 1860s including Thomas and Christiana and cousins John and Sam in 1863. Richard and his extended family and friends were the core of the Methodist Church and he held various positions throughout his life, including that of lay preacher and secretary of the church trust. The stone with which the original chapel was built reputedly came from a mine he was working in and he and his cousins were on the committee formed to oversee the new church built in 1867.

By 1863 Richard was the mine manager of the Waterloo Gold Mining Co and along with four others had purchased and paid for ten £20 shares which formed the operating capital for the company. As well, between 1863 and 1866 he was the mine manager of the Hercules Quartz MCo and when that mine failed, the New Hercules QMCo. As mine manager he received a weekly wage of an undisclosed sum and he was a founding shareholder in a number of other

companies as was his brother and cousins. It was a common practice to purchase part paid shares in companies they worked in.

Then tragedy struck. On the 28 December 1866 Thomas Hocking was killed in an accident in the Cornish QMCo. Richard then quit mine work completely although he may have continued to hold mining shares and was a foundation shareholder in the New Star QMCo Blind Creek, Daylesford in 1880. In 1867 he purchased 40 acres of land at Glenlyon at £1 an acre - adjacent to 37 acres owned by his step father James Andrew - and became a farmer. On the 29 May the same year he married Miriam Symonds Pitcher.

He began his teaching career at the Musk Primary School in 1873 and lived with his family there until 1876. After losing two of his children in a scarlet fever epidemic he moved back to Daylesford and remained there until after his retirement. Richard taught at Musk until 1895 and Inspector's reports over the years provide a wide range of assessments of his teaching ability from 'plodding' 'hardworking' 'fair' 'careful' and 'able' to 'active' 'intelligent' and 'attentive'.

About 1893 Richard built a house in Daylesford, later known as Trewhella House. He retired from teaching in 1895 on a pension of £92.2.7 but remained in Daylesford. His wife died in 1898. Trewhella house was sold in 1902 and he moved to Prahran about this time. Richard died in 1918 and was buried in the Daylesford cemetery. His estate was valued at £1264 5s 9d including a house and villa in Commercial Rd Prahran. He was survived by one daughter and seven grandchildren.

\*The Cornish tribute system lent itself to co-operative mining ventures. These ventures probably had other non-mining partners like shopkeepers who provided working capital - the same as operated on the Ballarat deep leads - where much unproductive work had to be completed before the gold was found. Likewise many company mines were later worked 'on tribute' successfully when overheads were too high or the returns unprofitable.

## Bibliography

McAdie, M. Index of Shareholders and Mining Companies in Victoria between 1857 and 1886, CD ROM, Ararat, 2006

Maddicks, H.T. *100 Years of mining in Daylesford*

Marie Goldsworthy. *Cornish Connections*, Geelong, 2020

Public Records Office of Victoria. Online records including Probate and Teacher records.

First published in the Cornish Association of Victoria Newsletter August February 23 No 144