

So, how was it, George?

The following document is from information mostly contained in the book, "Convicts and Carriageways," which describes Tasmanian Road Development until 1880.

George Blackwell bought the block at Table Cape in 1868.

Hobart was settled in 1803, Launceston not long after, and road communication between those places quite a while later, but only as a dirt track for many years.

The VDL Company settled at Stanley in 1825, and proceeded to develop the Woolnorth block in the far North West from then onwards. They had created a track from Launceston to Burnie, inland from the coast as far as the Hampshire hills, then directly North to the Coast to Burnie. It went no further west.

In 1856, the Road Trustees cleared a track from Deloraine to Devonport, (Don), and from Formby (Devonport) to Leith (near Forth) = Hamilton-on-Forth.

In 1859, the road between Don and Forth was completed.

In 1867, there was an amendment to the 1865 Act authorising funds for the road between the River Leven (Ulverstone) and the River Blythe (5km east of Burnie, also the clearing of tracks between Table Cape and Circular Head (Stanley) and The Duck River (Smithton).

The bridge over the River Forth was completed in May 1867.

IN THE FAR NORTH WEST.

Settlement in the far North West was retarded by the want of roads. Reporting to the Surveyor General in 1859, Peter Lette, a government surveyor, stated that the land from the Cam (Somerset) to the Inglis (Wynyard) was of the richest description. A track was about to be cut along the Inglis to the dividing range between the Arthur River and the North coast waters. Lette suggested the opening of another track from Circular Head to Wynyard, and the reduction of the distance by bridging the Detention River and carrying the track to the South of the Sisters Hills. He suggested the track should pass through the rear of the lots fronting the Flowerdale and the Inglis Rivers, to a road recently marked to Mr Sheckleton's lot, thus avoiding the very tedious and circuitous coast road in use.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS. Hobart Town 28th March 1868.

Tenders for clearing road from Table Cape to near Jacob's Boat Harbour, and for forming part of the road.

Tenders will be received at this office till noon on Friday the 1st May, for clearing a road from the top of the east bank of the Big Creek at Wynyard, to the east boundary line of Walsh's or Reeves's land near Jacob's Boat Harbour, a distance of about 5 miles; also the forming about 68 chains of Road at the Township of Wynyard.

Specifications can be seen....etc.

W.R.Falconer, Director of Public Works.

Reporting in 1860, R.G.Gunn stated that people were deterred from taking land west of the River Leven in consequence of the want of facilities for crossing the rivers emptying into Bass Strait. These rivers could only be crossed at low tide and became very dangerous in winter.

Further descriptions are provided of the difficulties experienced by any traveller between Table Cape and either Stanley to the West, which was vaguely possible, and Launceston via Devonport to the East, which was virtually impossible, or Melbourne to the North by small vessels which were decidedly risky.

There is water available in the Table Cape area from springs, the nearest of these was probably a quarter of a mile away from George's block to the West.

This is only an indication of the roads in the area at the time. The difficulties of living in the area can only be guessed.

From Rex Blackwell,

November 2016.