

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** WOODLANDS WOOLSCOUR (FORMER)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Rocklands Road BALMORAL

**STUDY NUMBER:** 0177

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** Balmoral

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**SECTION:** D

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA ; VicRoads 388J C4; located on the north side of Stirling Street on both sides of the river and adjacent to the river crossing on the road to Rocklands

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Woodlands Woolscour, Rocklands Road, Balmoral.

**Image Date:** 09/01/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the land, extending 10 000 square metres from the Glenelg River, including the boiler, and any other equipment associated with the former woolscour or fellmongery.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Little remains of the woolscour and fellmongery works. There is a piece of equipment, apparently a steam engine. There is a shallow depression in the ground some distance from the south bank where the scour trough was, and a flat piece of river bank where fleeces were laid out to dry. Some equipment, namely the centrifugal spin dryer remains on the site.

## HISTORY:

The land on which the woolscour was established is noted in the 1860 preliminary survey of the township of Balmoral as a "Water Reserve". This was subsequently crossed out and the land was included in the Parish of Balmoral. The first plan shows by far the largest pool in the Balmoral stretch of the Glenelg River, being about 300m long. The other advantage was the nearby natural ford. There was also rising ground to the south and west, above the flood plain, on which buildings could be constructed. This land came to be the northern corner of the township and the buildings came to be known as Woodlands

There was another, probably much larger woolscour associated with the Glendinning run. There was a stone weir and water channels were constructed for a Sheep Washing plant. A forty-five foot water wheel provided power for a centrifugal pump which could shift two thousand gallons of water per minute. Thirty to forty men were employed washing the sheep prior to shearing. The sheep passed back and forth between rollers while under a stream of water rushing from a shoot. The sheep were previously sprayed with a mixture of sulphur and soft soap to allow the water to penetrate the wool easily (McGaffin, 37). The largest surviving sheep wash complex was that associated with the Glen Isla run 20kms east of Glendinning.

B S and J G Chapman had already purchased allotments 5, 6, 7, and 8 in July 1855. James Blair purchased allotments 9 and 10 on the same day in July 1855. He was a most important figure in the district being a Commissioner of Crown Lands, Police Magistrate at Portland and the owner of the early squatting run, Clunie located across the Glenelg River just south of Harrow.

The land on which the Woodlands Complex now stands was first purchased from the Crown by Samuel Clapham in April 1857 (Department of Lands and Survey, 1958). At this time, he purchased allotments 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Section 2. Samuel Clapham also owned allotment 11 of Section 2, the triangular block of land immediately across Sherritt Street to the northeast, which he purchased in December 1856.

The establishment of Woodlands, however, predates the survey and subdivision of the township of Balmoral, and there is certainly a record of Woodlands recorded in ledgers and diaries dating back to 1852 (Wood, 12). Thomas Heape is known as the first white person to settle on the River at Balmoral (formerly known as 'Black Swamp'), in 1841 (*ibid.*). Apparently, he had crossed the Glenelg River while on the 'Overland Road' on his way from Sydney to Portland at some time prior to 1840 (*ibid.*).

In 1841, Heap established a general store to service the large pastoral properties surrounding the Black Swamp, the store trading in household goods and merchandise on the site where the Woodlands Homestead now stands (Wood, 22). Gradually, a settlement began to develop, and the store then served as general merchant to the growing township. Heap is said to have had an association with the English textile industry, in the mid 1840s began a wool scouring business on the banks of the Glenelg River, a few hundred metres downstream from his store and residence. The site took greasy wool (either from shorn sheep or fellmongered from skins) and scoured the wool, removing impurities in a large trough and then dried it, ready for sale. There was also a very early located at the wool scour, described by Charles Wood (23-24) as having

"...a very high roof, made of heavy gauge flat iron, the sheets were 3 feet 6 inch by 2 feet, each sheet contained a large rib. In the case of the Woodlands woolshed roof, these ribs enclosed long black wattle spars to give it stability. The size of the sheets were not large and were imported from England. Most early sheds had high

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roofs to allow for the wool press, which stood upright and quire high.

The Woodlands screw press installed by Thomas Heape was no exception, in fact it required a very high roof, because of the unusual design. Being a screw press, it was necessary to have a platform some twelve feet above the floor where men could walk around in a large circle at the end of a long pole which was used to screw down the press, compacting the wool into bales. Although the press had long been replaced, the corners of the platform were still there and quite visible until this original woolshed was demolished in 1950".

Thomas Heape sold his business and all associated buildings including his house, store and wool shed to Clapham Brothers and Charles Wood for £220, in 1854. It is not known what became of Heape after he sold out, as there is no record of him in the Victorian Pioneers Index upto 1888, nor is his burial recorded in any of the cemeteries in 'South West Cemeteries' on line by Ian Marr.

Brothers John Goodman Clapham and William Clapham arrived in Adelaide from London in June 1839 (Wood, 25) Clapham. After a brief time in South Adelaide, they arrived at Portland where they took up pastoral holdings. After some time, John Goodman Clapham went to explore the Glenelg Valley, eventually arriving at Black Swamp, while his brother William stayed in Portland, becoming the Secretary of the Shire of Portland (ibid.). John Clapham had specific interest in Thomas Heape's fellmongery and wool scour business, as their family was involved in British textile industry. After consulting with William, he sent word to his brothers Samuel and Benjamin to join them in their new business interest, and with them they brought Charles Wood, who became a partner. Charles Wood was born in Worcestershire, England in 1830. He arrived in Melbourne in 1853, several months prior to the Clapham brothers, and spent the time (without much success) on the Ballarat Goldfields until their arrival in April 1854. From Ballarat, he joined Samuel and John Clapham at Woodlands in October 1854, and within a short time, the other Clapham brothers arrived.

The partnership between Charles Wood and the Clapham Brothers lasted fourteen years. Wood was in charge of the fellmongery, while the other business interests were run by the four Clapham Brothers (ibid., 30).

A large woolshed was situated close to the river below the current homestead, but the woolwash itself was some distance downstream at a water hole, on a flat area of land, where the cleaned fleeces were laid out on sheets of calico to dry (ibid.). Later, engines and a larger wool wash along with a metal spinning dryer were installed.

The land on which the business was run was not owned by the business until 1856, when allotments 5, 6, 7 & 8 of section 2 (where the house and store were located) were purchased (Wood, 41). Although the township of Balmoral had been surveyed in 1852, blocks of land were not available until 1854, meaning that all those who had established homes and businesses were considered to be 'squatting'. The stability, which came with ownership of the land, brought about many changes to the business, which until the later 1850s had been a relatively small affair.

Benjamin Clapham sold his share in the business to John Clapham and Charles Wood, although he continued to work at the woolscour for another five years (Wood, 41). The whole site underwent substantial changes, including the renovation of the original three roomed hut which the Clapham Brothers and Charles Wood lived in. In 1858 James McCormic built two chimneys on to the house, an oven was installed and the kitchen floor was brick-paved (Wood, 41). 2000 flooring tiles, 4000 roof shingles, 400 feet of flooring, and three window frames were purchased and installed at the same time, turning the hut into a comfortable cottage. The erection of a new paling fence around the house and establishment of a vegetable garden, complete with a 'Chinese Gardener' was a statement of permanency and success. As the business grew, the partnership purchased more land around the township, and finally, in 1867, they purchased the land on the river flat below the homestead (allotment D) on which the woolwash was located (ibid.).

In August 1861, John Goodman Clapham sold his share of the business and property to Charles Wood and

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Samuel Clapham, while John and Ben took over one of their pastoral enterprises 'Sinclair East' near Heywood, which by 1865 was owned solely by John (Wood, 41). Shortly after, John Goodman Clapham married Ruth Baker (VPI Reg. No. 2028), and at some time later they left Sinclair East and moved to Casterton, where John became Secretary to the Shire of Glenelg. John Clapham was heavily involved in public life until his death in Casterton in 1884 (*ibid.*, 8242, Wood, 49).

Charles Wood married Mary Ralston at the Balmoral Presbyterian Church in 1862 (Wood, 50). They had four live children, Jane, Christene, Charles and George. Mary died bearing George, in 1871.

In 1868, Samuel Clapham sold his half of the business to Charles Wood for £1000 (Wood, 54). Wood named the property 'Woodlands' (in the Wood family tradition of incorporating the name 'Wood' into the name of the family home), and after the heavily timbered countryside around the township of Balmoral (*ibid.*). A year after his wife Mary died in 1871, Wood left his four children with their Aunt Christine McKechnie at Lornwood and returned to England to visit his family. On his return journey to Australia, he met his second wife Laura Ann May, also recently widowed. They married in Christ Church, St. Kilda in 1872 the day after landing in Australia, and they returned to Balmoral (*ibid.*). Charles and Laura had three sons, Herbert Lionel (1874), Glenelg Charles (1877) and Montague Ronald (1880) (Wood, 61).

In December 1872, Wood purchased 7 500 bricks from local brick maker W. M. Ronald in 1873, to build a promised homestead for his new wife, Laura Ann. The house was completed by 1873, and in 1876 further additions of a large dining room and three extra bedrooms were completed. By 1877, the house was much as it now appears. Laura planted many trees surrounding the new homestead, including Oak, Horse Chestnut, Hawthorn Honeysuckle, Pomegranates and Laurustinus along with other shrubs and climbers such as Banksia rose, wisteria and others, some of which survive today (Wood, 62).

Charles Wood continued in the business for many years, by the late 1880s, "...his business of treating skins and scouring wool employed 8 or 9 men for 6 months of the year. He also employed men as drivers of horse wagons which carried goods to and from the Hamilton railhead (Rogers, 36). Wood was appointed Justice of the Peace and represented Balmoral on the Wannon Shire Council and was at one time President of that Shire.

In 1879, a shipment of wool was lost at sea, and plunged the previously successful businessman into financial disaster. "Although he assisted in the arrangements for the first Balmoral Pastoral and Agricultural Show, he never saw the show because he died suddenly during the night before showday" (Rogers, 35), aged only 57 (Wood, 68). In *The Spectator* (01/03/1888) it was reported that the entire Woodlands property, sheep, fellmongery and residence was to be sold. Later reports state that as though the sheep were sold for a good price, the bidding for the rest of the estate did not reach the reserve price and was not sold. His widow, Laura Ann was forced to sell a part of the estate in 1888, and further parts of the whole, including the fellmongery, woolshed and wool wash and the land on which they were located (Wood, 69).

Robert Steele (the licensee of the Western Hotel) eventually purchased the business and land on which it stood (not including the house) in 1891. In 1892 when the river level rose, he started to operate the business of woolscouring and skin tanning, employing about seven men. Steele's enterprise was not financially successful, due to poor wool prices, and the following year, in 1893, he left Balmoral to take up farming near Hamilton (Wood, 72).

Laura remained in Balmoral after Charles Wood's death, and was supported by her sons, Herbert and Glenelg. Herbert went to work for the Brougham family at 'The Wilderness' and Glenelg went to work at 'Yat Nat', owned by the McColl family. Montague, the youngest son remained at Woodlands for many years, working at home.

Herbert later went to Melbourne, where he worked in the office of the Australian Mercantile Land and Finance

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Co., with his stepbrother Charles Samuel Wood. The depression which Melbourne suffered in the 1890s led to Herbert returning to Woodlands to start the Woolwash working again, with many of the old hands from his father's days (Wood, 76). Due to the support from local pastoralists who had known and respected his father, the woolwash began to function again, along with a butchery and bulk merchandise business.

In 1898, equipment was installed and a new employee, George Davis was hired as the fellmonger. Davis remained with the business for many years. By 1899, there were twelve men employed full time at the Woodlands wool scour and fellmongery, by 1901, seventeen men were employed as well as a number of carriers and transporters. The business was supplying the majority of meat to the community, through John Poynter who had returned to the butchery trade.

Wood (80) states that in 1901 Herbert Wood "made one of his most important purchases, he bought from Messrs. Hornsby and Co. one 8 horse power portable steam engine". At the same time, another Williams Patent Washer and a centrifugal spin dryer, which utilized force for spin drying or separating the wool was purchased, increasing the volume of wool which was able to be processed.

Wood (ibid.) describes the wool wash at the turn of the century as:  
"With the wash being driven by steam, and the water being pumped from the river, there were spindles, pulleys and belts running in many different directions. The wool was brought from the woolshed on trolleys running on two rails. On reaching the wash, it passed over the table and was placed in a trough of hot water. (Supplied from the steam engine). The hot water contained soap and soda, which washed the wool with the help of forks. This was called the scour. From the scour the wool was removed with forks and placed on a large board for draining. It was then placed into one of the Williams washers with clean water passing through it. Spin rises, after which it was again placed in baskets to drain and finally put in the centrifugal spin dryer.... Later the wool was spread out over large sheets of calico for drying".

Herbert married Ethel Alberta Maria Jones at St. Augustines, Church of England in Moreland April 1907. Ethel was the eldest daughter of the local schoolteacher, Mrs. Adeline Annie Jones (Wood, 91). They had five children, Laura (1909), Herbert (1911), Erle (1914), Harry (1915) and Bertram (1919) (ibid.). Immediately following his marriage, Herbert (senior) built a new house ('Carinya') for his mother Laura Ann, where she lived until her death in 1923, while he and his wife Ethel moved into Woodlands homestead, adding a new bedroom and new kitchen in 1911.

The Woodlands garden was developed in the first half of the twentieth century, as Ethel was a keen gardener. At one time, the garden boasted over one hundred different types of rose, seventy fruit trees of different varieties, two rows of grape vines and a substantial vegetable garden. Very little remains of this once substantial garden.

The Wool wash closed in 1923 for a number of reasons. One of these was the advent of the railway between Noradjuha, Balmoral and Hamilton, which opened in November 1920. This changed the way in which pastoralists distributed their wool, and the need for a woolwash declined.

In 1937, the original homestead, chaff house, stables, store room, harness room and workshop was all burnt to the ground. Nothing remains of these buildings.

In later years, Woodlands ran sheep for wool, had a Jersey milking herd stud, by the 1940s, the pastoral holdings of Woodlands had grown to over 4000 acres. Financial difficulties eventually forced Herbert Wood to transfer all his property into his son's names, becoming the Wood Brothers Partnership (Wood, 120).

Herbert Wood was also well respected in the district, being elected Justice of the Peace in 1900 at only 26 years old. He was also President of the Mechanics Institute for many years, Secretary of the Church of England Parish Council, Office bearer in the Rifle Club as well as being involved in many other committees. He died on

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January 03, 1951, aged 77 (ibid.).

Woodlands, under the Wood Brothers Partnership continued as a pastoral property for many years, although by the mid 1950s it was apparent that the property was not large enough to sustain four brothers, and the eldest son, John Herbert sold his share of the property to his three brothers. A new partnership, E., H & C. Wood Pty. Ltd. Was formed, which still continues today.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

3.13 Developing an Australian manufacturing capacity

Theme 5: Working

5.1 Working in harsh conditions

5.8 Working on the land

## **CONDITION:**

The site is in fair condition but, being undisturbed by later development and other uses, a high degree of archaeological potential.

## **INTEGRITY:**

Fair degree of integrity

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The site of the former Woodlands Woolscour is located on the north side Rocklands Road, on the bank of the Glenelg River. The site has a piece of equipment, apparently a steam engine located on it, and there is a shallow depression in the ground some distance from the south bank and the paddock where fleeces were laid out to dry. The woolscour was one of the earliest industries in Balmoral, and was associated with Balmoral's first merchant, Thomas Heap who began the business in the 1840s. Heap is said to have had an association with the English textile industry and exported wool to Britain. He sold out to Clapham and Wood who continued to export cleaned fleece. Mr. Charles Wood also operated a fellmongery in association with the woolscouring business, and provided employment for upto ten men for six months of the year. Wood represented Balmoral on the Wannon Shire Council and was at one time president of that shire, and was an important local figure, sitting on a number of boards and committees. Charles Wood carried on this business for many years and then his son Herbert L. Wood took it over on his father's death in 1887. The woolscour and fellmongery ceased operation while in the ownership of a Mr. Steele, in 1893. The site retains a fair degree of integrity as it has been largely undisturbed, and is in fair condition.

How is it significant?

The former Woodlands Woolscour is of historic significance to the township of Balmoral and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Woodlands woolscour is of historical significance as it represents the earliest form of industry in Balmoral. It is of further historical significance as a demonstration of a previous way of life which has been lost, and as an example of the ingenuity of early settlers to turn the natural environment to their needs. The site is of further historical significance as an surviving link with the earliest phases of settlement in towns, and how industry could be incorporated into the township.

## **COMPARISON:**

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There are no other woolscours which have been identified within the Southern Grampians Shire.

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

09-Jan-02

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
B. C Wood	Woodlands - From Balck Swamp t Balmoral; The First 150 Years 1842 - 1991	1991	var.
G. McGaffin	History of the Shire of Wannon, 1872-1972	1972	37
Jack Rogers	Balmoral	1967	5, 35
Lyall Harris with the Balmoral Historical Society	Welcome Back to Balmoral	1975	var.
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	81, 306