

This work, which comprises the three separate study papers, was put together being all connected to the Tamar Valley's Palaeo-Aboriginal history.

As the reader progresses they will see that included are remarks on areas just outside the valleys geographical boundaries, this is because culturally the people who claimed the area as their homeland actually included a small area of Tasmania's coast and the land around today's Launceston city. How far the various Tamar Valley bands expanded to is speculative but the Cataract Gorge in Launceston is of importance and probably was a part, this is why my note N9 "A Note on the Cataract Gorge" is included.

I could have included Launceston itself however, I feel that perhaps the city deserves separate attention, although practically nothing archaeologically exists, except a few mostly isolated artefact scatters, and a temptation to suggest the area known as the "Sandhill", which is now destroyed by development, may have been a camping site with now lost material. To emphasise this lack of material, we have from the Brimfield collection of artefacts (c.1967-1971), isolated stone items from the Punchbowl Reserve, Waverley Lake and a few crude pebble items from Norwood and some greatly rolled small pieces from the now destroyed shingle beach at Royal Park, it was reported that some stone artefacts were recovered from a gravelly terrace near the park but the information is vague.

The principle paper is B72 and is a replacement more or less of my B5 of April 1970 (a rather crude presentation of 46 years ago). B29 "The Tamar Valley, It's Palaeolithic Value" of 2009 is included in this later work too.

I must emphasise that the work of Sue Kee (207), "Midlands Aboriginal Archaeological Site Survey" of 1990 is a "must" in the study of the area.

## **ABBREVIATIONS USED**

The following list applies to all my works and are abbreviations used.

<b>(12)</b>	Reference – consult “References” in each work e.g. (12) = Friendly Mission
<b>(12:21)</b>	As above but denotes the page number in a work
<b>(12:650 N7)</b>	As above but denotes the page number in a work plus “N” for note quoted
<b>(12:20/7/31)</b>	As above but the date in that work
<b>A.A.</b>	Average annual death rate
<b>A.S.L.</b>	Above sea level (the present)
<b>B.C.E.</b>	Before the Christian era (formerly just B.C.) or “Common Era”
<b>B.P.</b>	Before the present (1950)
<b>B.S.L.</b>	Below sea level (the present)
<b>C.14</b>	Radio carbon dating e.g. c.14. 9,120 ± 200 B.P.
<b>C.</b>	Circa = about e.g. c.8,120 B.P. = About 8,120 before the present
<b>Cal.</b>	Calibrated date
<b>CE</b>	Common or Christian era
<b>CM</b>	Centimetres
<b>CR</b>	Protected by “copyright” and not to be reproduced etc. for my publications
<b>G.A.R.</b>	George Augustus Robinson
<b>IS</b>	Island
<b>KM</b>	Kilometres
<b>KYG</b>	Thousands of years ago e.g. 10 kyg = ten thousand years ago
<b>K<sup>2</sup></b>	Square kilometres
<b>L.G.M</b>	Last glacial maximum (c.20 – 18,000 B.P.)
<b>M</b>	Metres e.g. 100m

## ABBREVIATIONS USED (cont.)

<b>MM</b>	Millimetres
<b>P.G.M.</b>	Post glacial maximum (c.6 – 3,500 B.P.)
<b>P.P.S.</b>	Palawa Pleistocene speakers
<b>P.S.L.</b>	Present sea level
<b>S.L.</b>	Sea level
<b>T.A.C.</b>	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
<b>T.S.W.F.T.</b>	Tidal Stone Wall Fish-Traps
<b>Y.A.</b>	Years ago
<b>YRS</b>	Years
<b>BL</b>	Ben Lomond
<b>BR</b>	Big River
<b>N</b>	North
<b>NE</b>	North East
<b>NM</b>	Northern Midlands
<b>NW</b>	North West
<b>OB</b>	Oyster Bay
<b>SE</b>	South East
<b>SW</b>	South West

If includes a “**P**”, e.g. **NMP**, this is “people”.



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1. **THE AREA DISCUSSED (SEE MAP A)**

(All measurements are only approximates).

**Position:** Longitude 146° 45' to 147° 10'  
Latitude 41° 05' to 41° 25'

**Named Boundary:** From West = Badger Head, South = Hadspen  
East = Ravenswood, North = Five Mile Bluff

**Area:** c.55km (north-south) x 18km (west-east)  
being c.1,000km (from coast to Launceston, see Map A1)

**Altitude:** Sea level to c.300m

**Vegetation:** Principally dry sclerophyll forest with scrubby understorey. Rainforest near Flowery Gully areas (Map C).

**Landscape:** Hilly, poor soil to some flatter thicker forest. Large areas of rocky surfaces.

**Fire-Sticking:** Very little suggested due it seems to terrain. However, at West Frankford, just outside area to the west, first explorers found some cleared plains suggesting fire-sticking (253). In the far south, north of Hadspen (Westwood, Rosevale) some fire-sticking did take place, this area is more of an extension of the vast Northern Midlands than of the Tamar Valley.

Nomadic travelling required some use of fire-sticking to keep tracks open. Winter access to the coast being carried out.

No water-bourne craft used on the Tamar River.

**Settlement:** The poor quality of land in comparison to the adjoining Northern Midlands to the south is reflected in land grants and farm-pastoral activities in these midlands, very little along the Tamar (Map E).









## 2. EUROPEAN INTRUSIONS

I will only chronologically list significant historical events:

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1798</b>	Bass and Flinders discover Port Dalrymple and investigate up to about Gravelly Beach. Natives seen at the port but ignored explorers (235:2).
<b>1802</b>	Baudin (French Explorer) invited to come ashore by friendly natives but not taken up. Continued up to about Gravelly Beach (86:99).
<b>1803</b>	A British ship entered the port in search of fresh water only to meet a hostile reception (226:109).
<b>January, 1804</b>	William Collins inspects the river up to today's Launceston. Natives met at Outer Cove, George Town but startled them. Another meeting resulted in a misunderstanding and agitation (85:45).
<b>November, 1804</b>	Paterson arrives to take possession, peaceful meeting to aggressive behaviour (85:45) at George Town. On the other side of the port, surprised a band who were friendly but when more Europeans arrived they retreated (85:47).
<b>Sealers? Pre 1804</b>	At this meeting, near York Town to be, a "white button" on a shell necklace was observed suggesting possibly some sort of meeting with sealers who were operating in Bass Strait since c.1798>. From 1804 harassment by Aborigines especially to kangaroo hunters occurred forcing some military instructions to put fear into the natives, however, although some Aboriginal deaths may have occurred undocumented, it was not until 1819 that any European deaths occurred.
<b>1806</b>	Launceston founded as a settlement.

In 1820 the whole Tamar Valley north of Launceston was still only lightly populated by Europeans, only 543, mostly at George Town on the eastern side of Port Dalrymple. Some settlers were on the western bank mainly around area of Sidmouth – Rowella – Richmond Hill with a few looking for land in Middle and West Arm. It was a "\_\_\_\_\_lightly populated, forested backwater without roads and completely dependent on the river for communications", even in 1835. Very little contact being with the Aborigines (507:8-9).



### 3. **ABORIGINAL HISTORY**

The last glacial maximum ended about 17> KYG, (i.e. 17,000 years ago), and as the sea rose from its maximum depth of below the present of c.120-105 metres, a large bay in the centre of Bassiana developed. By 14.5-14 KYG the sea had risen to c.60-55m and separated Tasmania from Victoria. At this time the coast was about 25 kilometres north of Port Dalrymple and by 9 KYG it was 10 kilometres at a depth of 40m. It was at c.6.5 KYG that the sea reached its present level, even exceeding it then dropping back about one to two metres to the present level (this is subject to opinions).

Originally the Tamar River was a small stream of fresh water that emptied into the lake (Bass) that would ultimately become the salt water bay. As a lake it was probably saline.

Port Dalrymple probably became a tidal river area about 14-9 KYG and changed the ecology considerably. As the river widened the people in the west became more separated from the eastern people.

The camp sites and any archaeological evidence up to at least 6 KYG is now lost under the sea for occupation of these coasts but inland still may in the future yield some more evidence of occupation.

Regretfully, we have only the one Carbon 14 archaeological date as far as I am aware, coming from the bone deposit in a cave at Flowery Gully, being 7,080 c.14 (67:3), (cal. c.8,000) B.P. however, there can be no doubt that Aboriginal history extends back to the Pleistocene (pre. 10,000 B.P.).

In Tasmania's south west we have a date of c.40,000 B.P. (cal.) and in the south east at Brighton finds that have been referred to about the same period but are questioned. Access to Tasmania was therefore in excess of 40,000 possibly 42,000 perhaps 44,000? Whatever the date, the northern area of Port Dalrymple and up the Tamar Valley may have been as old as 40,000, however, without datable evidence it can only be postulated. Actually an argument for a later occupation can be made due to the Pleistocene environment in the area being inhospitable for foraging over, perhaps it was not ventured into by the peoples during their unconscious drift southwards following both west and east coasts.

## **ABORIGINAL HISTORY (cont.)**

Linguist, John Albert Taylor, proposed in his detailed studies (236) that since the central Bassian Plain with its centralised saline lake was such a formidable desert then its penetration going south into Tasmania's central north was impossible until just before the "Terminal Pleistocene", that is 17,500 – 15,500 B.P.. However, although this route following river valleys from Victoria to the Bassian Lake and then up the rivers that flowed from Tasmania to the lake may have taken place only at that time, there is cause to reason that what is now the north central coast, from c. Wynyard east to Port Dalrymple's Tamar Estuary was ventured into by small groups, probably extended families well before then, but coming from the west, that is King to around Cape Grim going east.

This belief is based on the fact that an archaeological rock shelter was excavated by Harry Lourandos in the upper Forth River valley some 50+ kilometres inland from the Bassian Coast of today, its height above sea level being c.300 metres. Distance north east to the Tamar Valley is about 80 kilometres. This site is called "Parmerpar Meethaner".

Its basal date is one of the oldest in Tasmania and the oldest outside the south west Tasmanian area being c.33,850 B.P.. This site was occupied for the whole period – a surface date was 780 B.P., but the area was foraged over in historical times.

During the "Ice Age" this valley was still inhabitable, not like the nearby c.8km away similar "Warragarra" shelter in the Mersey River Valley, having a basal date of c.10,600 B.P. (cal. c.12,000 B.P.).

Although the Forth and Tamar are today quite different in environments, in the Pleistocene of c.34,000 B.P. they would have been similar, hence the thought that the Tamar may have been ventured in to.

It is worthwhile summarising the Forth's history as a possible comparison to a similar unknown Tamar history.

## **ABORIGINAL HISTORY (cont.)**

<b>c.34,000 – 18,000</b>	Transient hunting base. Economy: Wallaby mainly. Environment: Glaciers above valley, but valley open from coast.
<b>c.18,000 – 10,000</b>	More intensive use by “man”.
<b>c.10,000 – 3,000</b>	Lesser intensive use.
<b>c.9,000 – 3,000</b>	Maximum extent of rainforest and west sclerophyll forests.
<b>c.3,000 – 780</b>	Increase in use. Use of “fire sticking” more successful (234:262-5).

Regretfully, we do not have any known rock shelter in the Tamar Valley that would provide a chronological sequence to prove any hypothesis.

A further confirmation of what may have occurred in the Tamar Valley and subsequently expansion into the Northern Midlands is evidence coming from a Southern Midlands site “ORS7” situated on the lower Shannon River Valley, just south of the Central Plateau at c.440m above present sea level. This site is about 60km due north west of Brighton and the lower Derwent River areas. The suggested 40,000 B.P. date from Brighton seemed possible considering the basal date from ORS7 being c.30,840 B.P.. Indeed this lone site, no other site with such an age is known in the Southern Midlands, proves that humans could and did penetrate deep into hostile Pleistocene areas similar to the Northern Midlands with its Tamar Valley. ORS7 was occupied off and on for the whole of its c.31,000 year history as shown:

## **ABORIGINAL HISTORY (cont.)**

<b>c.30,840 – 19,080</b>	Transient hunting base. Economy: Wallaby, native cat, broad tooth rat, emu eggs. Environment: Grass and woodlands. Many stone tools of local raw material. Un-retouched flakes of quartzite and hornfels.
<b>c.19,080 – 17,660</b>	Fewer tools all un-retouched – less usage of site.
<b>c.17,660</b>	Increase in greater range of stone raw material.
<b>c.10,440</b>	No retouched flakes. Sparse in fauna, emu eggs continue.
<b>c.2,450</b>	More “tools” some retouched.
<b>c.2,000</b>	Still being occupied – burnt organic material. Environment now dry sclerophyll forest.

### **NOTES:**

Emu eggs would denote late winter, early spring. In the Pleistocene 30,840-10,440 cold, drought prone, food resources scattered and less predictable. In the Holocene 10,440 – present warmer, wetter with increased vegetation. Wallaby, other macropods, emu and possum in good numbers (320).

On comparing these two extremely important sites, Parmerpar Meethaner (PM) and ORS7, there is considerable similarities that possibly can be applied to the Tamar Valley even into the Northern Midlands. To appreciate this we have:

**ABORIGINAL HISTORY (cont.)**

<b>PM</b>		<b>ORST</b>	
<b>C.KYG</b>		<b>C.KYG</b>	
34 – 18	Transient use (Relatively open)	31 – 19	Transient use (Grass & woodland)
		19 – 18	Considerable less use (Intense open cold conditions)
18 – 10	More intense use (Stone imports)	18 – 10	Increase use (Greater range of raw stone)
10 – 3	Less intense (Rainforest spreading)	10 – 2.5 (5	Less intense (Sparse fauna) Earliest human evidence in sand deposits
3>	Increase use (Use of fire-sticking)	2.5>	Increase use (Use of fire-sticking)

There seems little reason not to apply a similar suggested history for the Tamar-Northern Midlands, it's just we do not have site deposits to confirm it.

What is suggested that the first people ventured up the valley in very small numbers utilising any suitable area that was sheltered to hunt probably wallaby briefly, leaving little behind. The intense cold of the glacial maximum c.19-18 KYG meant very little use if any at all, then as the conditions improved they returned more regularly and even had now more contact with further away peoples. The spread of forests c.10 KYG saw a further reduction in use of the midlands even the valley perhaps.

With the onset of an El Nino c.4 KYG the dry conditions created an environment that enables the use of fire to again penetrate the area and saw an expansion of usable territory, social gatherings and population growth.



## **ABORIGINAL HISTORY (cont.)**

From about 14,500–13,500 Tasmania became an island again, although cultural activity between Australia and Tasmania may have continued for a short period after that. Prior to that c.16,000–15,000 King Peninsula formed in the west and a corridor was created in the east, the area in between is suggested as a route south crossing a narrow water-way created by an intruding Indian Ocean meeting a water-course coming from “Lake Bass”. Peoples could have come down the west and east sides of the lake following as mentioned, then fresh water water-courses south that flowed from the Tasmanian Peninsula north into the lake. These rivers, including the much smaller than today’s Tamar, would have supplies of terrestrial “foods” surviving off the river banks. Penetration up the river even into the Northern Midlands is possible, but we have no evidence for it, except perhaps the existence of occasional greatly rolled stone artefacts, all undated surface gravel finds.

Any migrating original population would have been small groups, probably “extended families” of perhaps about twelve individuals, later to become “bands” of some 40 plus. Such small groups may have not penetrated very far into the midlands until c.5,000 B.P. when conditions made it possible to increase in population using fire-sticking as an economic artefact.

At about 6,500 B.P. the sea reached its present level and any coastal dune site probably dates from well after that. The lack of caves like those on the north west coast at Rocky Cape is regrettable, because of many archaeological benefits that would result, especially since at Rocky Cape we have a carbon 14 date of c.8,000 B.P. (44), is it therefore possible that the Tamar could have at its estuary occupation as long ago as that too? The now destroyed oyster middens may have helped, but it must be mentioned that oyster middens at Little Swanport on the mid East Coast as well as the middens in the south, Derwent Estuary, only date to no more than c.<5,000 (234:268). However, at Rocky Cape the evidence shows that people were using the cave while foraging some c.3km away at shore-lines. If oysters were lacking in the Tamar estuary or earlier further out to now submerged coasts, foraging for other inter-tidal molluscs would have been possible, perhaps seal? Terrestrial resources would have existed and no doubt exploited.

The sole Flowery Gully date of c.7,000 c.14 and Rocky Cape c.8,000 c.14 are very similar and is suggestive that we can at least show a crude comparison, regrettably nothing more!

The attached “Tamar Valley” chronological list is a suggested possible history of the valley’s environment and John Taylor’s Linguistic Opinions (236) showing his various Aboriginal “speakers” who intruded and settled in the valley.

## ABORIGINAL HISTORY (cont.)

Although no dates for these suggested events exist, John bases his beliefs on data from mainland Australia and items such as meanings of place names which show pre 6,500 B.P. geographical landscapes.

<b><u>"TAMAR VALLEY"</u></b>		
<b>Circa Date B.P.</b>	<b>Environmental Event</b>	<b>John Taylors "Speakers" (236)</b>
<b>40,000</b>		
<b>39,000</b>	Periglacial. An extension of the	
<b>37,000</b>	"Bassian Desert" – grasslands, steppe	The <b><u>"Palawa Pleistocene Speakers"</u></b> the
<b>35,000</b>	with scattered woodlands. Extreme cold.	first people in area of Tamar – very small
<b>33,000</b>	Much smaller river, 60m lower than now.	population.
<b>31,000</b>		Utilise valley to access North Midlands.
<b>30,000</b>	<b><u>29,000 – 21,000</u></b>	
<b>29,000</b>	Possible respite – little less harsh.	
<b>28,000</b>		
<b>27,000</b>		
<b>26,000</b>	<b><u>22,000 – 12,000</u></b> "arid phase" – periglacial.	
<b>25,000</b>		
<b>24,000</b>		
<b>23,000</b>		
<b>22,000</b>		
<b>21,000</b>		
<b>20,000</b>	"Ice Age" peak 20,000-18,000.	
<b>19,000</b>	<b><u>18,000 – 12,000</u></b>	
<b>18,000</b>	Droughts, cold, vegetation loss, feature	<b>Invaders:</b>
<b>17,000</b>	less hills with very little water	<b>After 17,000 – 13,000 "Victorians"</b> arrive
<b>16,000</b>	flow.	"P.P.S." forced inland. "V" move up the
<b>15,000</b>		valley.
<b>14,000</b>	<b><u>13,000 – 11,500</u></b>	
<b>13,000</b>	Great increase in rain, temperature.	
<b>12,000</b>	Forests, some dense, spread.	<b>"Furneaux Speakers"</b>
<b>11,000</b>		<b>About 11,000</b> At mouth of Tamar but
<b>10,000</b>		not up it.
<b>9,000</b>	<b><u>8,000 – 7,000</u></b>	<b>After 9,000 "Nara"</b> displace "T.F.S." and
<b>8,000</b>	Warmer – wetter, vegetation increase,	go only up the valley.
<b>7,000</b>	woodlands. At 7,000 drier.	<b>After 7,000 "Mara"</b> displace ""Nara"
<b>6,000</b>		extensive use of the valley.
<b>5,000</b>	Start of present day conditions.	
<b>4,000</b>	<b><u>7,000 – 4,000</u></b> "arid phase", frosty, open veg..	
<b>3,000</b>	<b><u>3,000 – 1,500</u></b> slightly drier and cooler.	
<b>2,000</b>	<b><u>1,500 – P.</u></b>	
<b>1,000</b>	Wetter conditions.	
<b>500</b>		
<b>200</b>	Thick forest, scrub, upper reaches of wetlands.	

### **ABORIGINAL HISTORY (cont.)**

The Tamar Valley was and had been for millennium the gateway into the rich (Holocene) hunting grounds of the Northern Midlands. A natural border is suggested to its west and east. However, where the midlands hunting grounds existed no such area existed in the Tamar except a few pockets of clearer land that could be controlled by fire-sticking. The most fruitful area seems to be south of Legana to Riverside, Danbury Park. Plomley made reference to the rich hunting grounds along the Tamar (211:8), but I find no evidence for this belief, indeed the European intruders only thinly occupied it well after the Aborigines had been eradicated preferring to work the Northern Midlands, see Map E c.1818 CE.

The Aborigines did the same, although they occupied it, it was one of a much smaller population, perhaps three or four bands.

#### 4. THE PORT DALRYMPLE PEOPLE

A further note specifically on the “Port Dalrymple People” is necessary. As seen some refer to the people of the Tamar River Valley as a tribe, band or mob (an early Colonial terminology for a group of Aboriginal people). However, generally the people who had their “custodian homeland” in that area are regarded as a part of the “Northern Midlands Tribe” (people), see Map D. It is even suggested that a single band claimed both sides of the River Valley, I for one cannot justify this thought, instead suggesting that at least two bands, probably more, claimed the area. One on the west and the other on the east. This is also Plomley’s (224:18) belief. The reason being the river is a huge natural barrier, wide with some dangerous flows. Supporting this is evidence that the peoples along the north east, including the Tamar Estuary, had no water-craft and Robinson during his journeys in the area took steps to destroy his craft so the inhabitants of the coast did not use them or copied the manufacture (B55).

The Port Dalrymple people, probably better referred to as “Tamar Valley”, according to Taylor (236) were a part of the socio-linguistic group that had connections with the Northern Midlands people (NMP) suggested Oyster Bay and Big River peoples, although there is some thought that on the eastern area of Port Dalrymple (Low Head – George Town to Pipers River Heads), a linguistic connection to the north east existed.

Regretfully because of the devastating impact of the British invasion, especially the raiding by sealers for women and possibly infectious killer disease such as the common cold that developed into lung disease, the people of the Tamar suffered terribly and little was recorded about them. Exactly what caused the demise of the people is not the subject of this work requiring more examination:

1. Le.ter.re.mair.re.ner (Port Dalrymple eastern side), Ryan includes them as a part of the NMP.
2. Pee.ber.rang.ner (West of Pipers River), Ryan includes them in the north eastern peoples around Cape Portland (90:16, 23).

and an “un-named people” being the third around the Western Tamar (224:18-19). Archaeologically large surface scatter of mainly local quartzite pebble artefacts exist at Glengarry and West Frankford (B1) inland within the West Tamar area suggesting the band. By 1829 they were probably all but extinct.

Ryan (90:30-31) included a possible band at York Town and may be Plomley’s “un-named people”.

## **THE PORT DALRYMPLE PEOPLE (cont.)**

Although some areas of the Tamar Valley, from Port Dalrymple itself to Launceston and extensively into the areas immediately south, Norfolk Plains, had been settled from 1804 to 1818 and beyond, very little was recorded about the bands there. Regretfully, it seems the Launceston people – the residence of most of the white population – had little desire to record such anthropological matters.

Turning to Roth (6:170), we do have some additional information which suggests that his so-called “Port Dalrymple Tribe” had territory not only in the Tamar Valley but extensions into the northern area of the Northern Midlands:

“The country to the north of the Stony Creek natives – including the neighbourhood of Perth, Evandale, Launceston, the North Esk and probably both banks of the Tamar\_\_\_\_\_”.

Evandale is also known as part of Paterson’s Plains. Roth refers to them “roaming” to the Lake River, and as far as Longford and Westbury, “if not further”.

Roth makes a suggestion of a strong relationship with the “Stony Creek” who hailed from the Campbell Town area, and that they were probably related to the northern eastern group. Taylor (236) as said, makes a suggestion of a linguistic connection with the north east for the people at the eastern area of Port Dalrymple Heads. Additionally, Roth even suggests a possibility that the “Port Dalrymple Tribe” may have extended west to Port Sorell and even the Mersey (Devonport), actually Roth’s map at the back of his book shows “North Eastern” as a tribe stretching from about the Mersey to Launceston areas then to the St. Helens area but without a lined boundary. I, myself, cannot find justification for the use of the terminology “tribe”, like the “Northern Midlands Tribe”, instead the named smaller groupings termed “band” is preferred.

## 5. ARCHAEOLOGY

Tasmania, including its Bass Strait islands, has an Aboriginal history in excess of 40,000 years, however, over such a long period there is regrettably little to represent it. Never-the-less what has been archaeologically discovered is often incredibly important, even unique. It is therefore so disappointing to find that within the area we call the "Tamar Valley" catchment, no such discoveries have been made.

At first appearance it is very suggestive that we could expect at least something of significance, but "no".

In Sue Kees important archaeological site survey of the Midlands (207) she included sections on the Tamar Valley. Sue's comprehensive study is the only one undertaken, explaining that despite searches for sites along almost the entire area of the Tamar River (and its estuary, Port Dalrymple) only a handful of archaeological sites were recorded, not enough to form a pattern estimate of site location.

Sue writes;

"Along the Tamar River small numbers of isolated stone artefacts and small artefact concentrations will occur on flood plains and alluvial terraces, stone quarries may occur on the tidal flats where there is a dolerite and sandstone, or basalt and lithified silty sands, or gravel contact zone" (207:87).

Elsewhere Sue refers to "significant archaeological areas" and lists them but the Tamar Valley is not mentioned.

In her appendix IV "Summary of Archaeological Site Data" under "Tamar" (valley not estuary) (207: AIV, 20-21), she lists only 10, being 8 artefact scatter, 1 isolated artefact and a quarry. Additionally, the artefacts collected being 785, 192, (outside our study area), the others numbered only 7, 4, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, total 20, really insignificant.

The obvious question is "why" so little? Sue puts it down to the high amount of European development destroying evidence, the local environment and "\_\_\_\_\_ there is not a rich resource of estuarine foods" (207:51).

While I completely agree with Sue I would also include:

That the terrain, being hilly thick vegetation, makes it extremely difficult to explore.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

Additionally, when Sue is referring to the lack of rich estuarine foods, she must be also referring to terrestrial contributions, this too lacks a richness, mainly scrub-dwellers such as small macropods, bandicoots, echidna and possum. Wombat seem to be scarce, but wallaby typical of their species frequent the areas. Kangaroo's (Eastern Grey) are all but missing. However, marsh and estuarine water fowl were common, both the birds and their eggs being sought after, but such a resource leaves no midden evidence of foraging activities due to the fragility of its remains, see photo 562.

Although coastal shell scatter of inter-tidal species exists on the limited coast line, no deep strata has been found, although the period of possible accumulation dates back to c.6,000 at least. Any archaeological excavations would suggest shallow work, probably more surface investigations than anything else.

This may not be so for what is left on the west side of the estuary, Port Dalrymple with its oyster deposits, although the vast majority of deeper deposits were destroyed in c.1804 by the British invaders who required lime for mortar in their building works (365).

As far as I am aware no archaeological excavations have taken place and the only absolute (carbon 14) date so far recovered is from a bone deposit in a limestone cave at Flowery Gully in the western bushland south of Beaconsfield. Although no evidence was reported of Aboriginal activities on the terrestrial animal bones, a single, rather crudely made bone tool – awl? – was recovered dating to 7,080 B.P. (cal. c.8,000 B.P.), (photo 65), (fig. 6).

There is I suggest a possibility that we do have some stone artefacts that may date from the early days of visitations by small foraging groups penetrating up the Tamar Valley before possibly it was as large and imposing as it is today. These greatly rolled crude flakes (fig.1.), possibly cores, seem to be in-situ amongst gravel deposits, all surface spread material that because it is well above high-tide marks on flat horizons further suggests it is of great age, the rolled appearance being caused by precipitation flow not river action. The raw material is dense and hard requiring a considerable time to be affected. Such artefacts are extremely difficult to observe.

With the necessity of being able to see percussion marks on the ventral (inside surface) to be recognised as artefacts. Examples have been found at Native Point Nature Reserve, Tamar Island and a keeled artefact at the Launceston Casino Golf Course (all held at the Queen Victoria Museum, Launceston, under "The Brimfield Collection"); see also photos 565, 566, 567.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

In 1798 Bass and Flinders, who discovered Port Dalrymple, reported it was an excellent place for refreshment, not only fresh water but also food resources, having great numbers of black swan, ducks and teal. They also referred to “\_\_\_\_\_ kangaroos, of the Forest kind; \_\_\_\_\_” which I take it as meaning wallaby and probably pademelon, not the “kangaroo”, being the Eastern Grey. However, it is their reference to “\_\_\_\_\_ mussels and oysters, were found in abundance” (266:20-21) that I find interesting. On researching the area, although there is considerable evidence both ethnographic and archaeological to support the reference to oysters, I feel that the mussel data is ambiguous. Indeed, Brian Smith (239) in his research of the Tamar only mentions small, not over 30mm in length, mussels in the port, nothing like those found and important to Aboriginal diet in the distant Derwent and Channel districts around and south of Hobart.

I have inspected the estuarine middens and only observed oyster although when one reaches the area of conjunction, coast and estuary, small inter-tidal species become prominent. Oyster will continue in larger numbers in the west as far as Gravelly Beach, while in the more open east it is inter-tidal coastal molluscs that predominate.

As far as large mussels are concerned I have observed nothing except in 1970 when I first visited the Anchor Point area I recorded observing minute pieces of smashed mussel, an occasional near whole mussel as well as oyster, limpet and warrener (B4). A revisit in 2016 revealed little due to the regrowth of tea-tree. Only shells from oysters in a couple of spots (photo 582-3). On inspection of the inter-tidal area at low-tide, oyster was prominent but of a much larger variety (photo 581) than in the midden. A local who has lived in the area for decades said the present oyster in the river was the spread of non-Indigenous species from introduced oyster farming. The only other molluscs seen were a very few isolated periwinkle species (photo 581) and minute, less than 5mm, shells adhering to rocks. No mussels, limpet, warrener, or chiton.

Sue Kee (207:87) on Tamar estuary middens, if found, will contain “\_\_\_\_\_ in order of frequency of occurrence, mud oyster, mussel and chiton”. This opinion is reinforced by Sue (207:52) when she recorded that the stratified middens on Anchor Point at the entrance of West Arm, (Map F), revealed chiton, mussel and mud oyster.



### **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

Unless a controlled professional archaeological excavation is undertaken at Anchor Point, the true significance of the molluscs economic importance will not be established, however, could I suggest with the lack of information about suitable large mussels not today existing in the estuary (239), that any mussels will be no more than suggestions that they were possibly important to the Aborigines. However, Sue did record them and Bass and Flinders utilised them it seems? Have they been eradicated since c.1800?





## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

At the other end of our time scale are glass (mainly bottle) artefact and possible artefacts, obviously post 1804 CE, obtained from the intruding British settlements (see photo 325, fig.2 and artefact no. 270/4, fig. 3).

Sue Kee refers to only 10 sites located in the “Tamar Estuarine Landscape” being:

- 5 On flood plains/alluvial terraces, (isolated artefacts, one with 15).
- 2 On tidal flats (both quarries); and
- 3 On low dunes (coastal), (isolated artefacts) (207:51, AIV–17, 18).

Additionally, the quarries were near each other close to York Town comprising scattered flaked and pounder material (207:52, 103). Sue also lists my sites recorded as; “Stone quarry sites” (207:29) as 7, but they represent only locations where pebbles were obtained near to midden areas, mostly coastal inter-tidal stone or amongst river shingle material, see photos 356, 564.

Although the Tamar Valley is within the boundary of the great deposits of tough compact flinty (**not** flint) stone (51), (B54:223-224, map 46) so popular with the Palaeo-Tasmanians, no major outcrops used to mine the material is known, except that near York Town with its two sites (207:90). However, pebbles of the stone can be found in alluvial deposits. A chert deposit is reported from somewhere near Dilston.

It seems that most raw stone material came from river edges, water courses or beach lines in pebble form, requiring the bipolar flaking technique for working due to its size (fig. 5).

One area suggested as a source of stone for artefacts is Native Point on the mid-east Tamar, opposite Lanena and Gravelly Beach on the mid-west bank (photo 452). Inspection in the 1960’s revealed a greatly damaged pebble area that was then being mined. The material was mostly poor grade quartzite. The source of the suggested use is confused, but its name “Native Point” is suggestive.

Without undertaking a comprehensive analysis of collections it is not possible to be exact. My collection, as explained, is not in my possession, however, fossil-wood (petried wood, wood-opal) (49:148) is relatively common in the mid-Tamar amongst shore line beach shingle like material. It was utilised often, but because of its characteristics, being small irregular shaped pebble, the bipolar flaking technique too had to be employed.

Amongst some material an occasional “import” item, that is material not associated with sourcing locally, is found, usually larger mined cherty-hornfels.



## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

Since it is well documented the Northern Midlands people visited the valley and suggestions are strong that the Tamar peoples not only also visited the midlands but some bands may have included both areas of the valley and midlands within their “homelands”, the presence of the material is not surprising, actually expected.

Relationships of the valley and the north east people was not that particularly cordial, but since the raw material along the coast from Badger Head (west of the Port Dalrymple) to the north east was similar, except in the Cape Portland (far north east) area, any evidence of “imports” into the valley from there is difficult to substantiate.

No art sites are known and caves are nearly non-existent except for the limestone cave at Flowery Gully where the bone tool was found. Regretfully, although possibly unimportant, this site has been all but destroyed by mining activities. The lack of sandstone like that in the Southern Midlands is unfortunate.

I will now refer to ochre sites. Firstly, amongst the river shingles you could also find small bean-size red ochre pelettes. Mrs. Page (493) referred to red and yellow ochre on the beach at Robigana but I could not locate any. As far as mines being worked are concerned we have a definite one at Russell Plains, Rocherlea near Launceston (B24). It was substantial enough for some European use. A much larger area of deposit that lies in the lower West Tamar near Beaconsfield was extensively mined by Europeans and any evidence of Aboriginal use is most likely destroyed, however, its area and quality of ochre is just too great not to have been utilised (365:12), (B60). See B46 “Tamar Haematite Deposits”.

This leads me to mention the early settler report at Kelso whilst in search of good pastoral land. A strange wooden structure was found with a sort of seat on its peak. A number of huts surrounded it together with many waddies, but few spears. Also present were what looked like “birds’ nests” each containing a number of pebbles. It was obviously ceremonial and had been abandoned, was it connected in some way to the honouring of marsh birds? The waddies were popular for downing birds as well as using stones, but the stones in the “nests” were they symbolic of eggs? A food they delighted in, perhaps it was a fertility rite, the eggs representing the continuation of the birds? (6:110).

Some suggestion has been made that the Northern Midlands people retired to their coast for mutton birds (90:32), but I find no evidence of rookeries in the area.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

I have mentioned that oyster deposits exist on the western side of Port Dalrymple. Care must be taken about accepting all oyster deposits as Aboriginal, they are not! (Photo 34, 332, 379, 568).

The oysters seen today apparently are evidence of attempted and some successful European enterprises. Spores from Port Sorell activities of the past were carried east into the Tamar and spread, others appeared to have originated from West Tamar enterprises. The spread is up-stream as far as Blackwall, even beyond.

There can be no doubt that Indigenous oyster species existed and were foraged over by Aboriginal peoples, possibly since c.5,000, although no dates have been obtained. The area at Greens Beach and Kelso once had large deposits, while in West Arm (Clarence Point and Ilfraville) both on the West Port Dalrymple area, still have evidence of layers of oyster deposits (photo 34). The age as said may be c.5,000 but the present sea level was reached at c.6,500, however, "The Post-Glacial Maximum" said to be c.5,500-4,200 at its possible 2m peak (rise above today's level), may mean some deposits are only c.1,600, the suggested date of a return to today's level.

Perhaps the deposits of today that have survived may be those that resisted destruction during the rise (B58).

We have recorded evidence that the shell deposits of the native or mud oyster, "Ostrea anagasi", were excavated on the west banks of the estuary by the first intruding British who settled at Outer Cove (now George Town at York Cove), and York Town (in West Arm, now only an historic site), for burning to extract lime for construction work (B46). Apparently the deposits at Greens Beach (east end, now a golf course?) and those at Ilfraville (southern section of West Arm) were extensive but still did not satisfy the colonial intruder's requirements. The most well preserved deposits lie at Anchor Point on the north side entrance into West Arm, however, extensive residential work has destroyed much. In this setting relatively thick tea-tree vegetation has taken root within the shells (photo 34). No artefacts except a few "chips" has been recorded, however, it is clearly an Aboriginal midden as all the nearby ones were. If like Little Swanport on the mid-east coast any artefacts would be minimal. (See Map F: Page 27).

## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

Turning to the coast, although not geographically a part of the Tamar Valley, never-the-less it was a part of the annual foraging of the valley's population, even those coming in winter from the Northern Midlands. It is necessary to mention that the archaeology is mainly confined to coastal dune blow-outs and on top of hard dark sand deposits containing only scatter of inter-tidal mollusc shells and manuports of mostly unmodified raw beach stone, fortuitous pieces, by-products and a few well-shaped tools, although it is obviously there was more. The continual weather conditions have devastated these dune-sites (photo: 36B, 36C). Areas on higher slopes of bush between beach areas have evidence of shell and limited artefact scatter (photo 47).

From evidence available it seems the sub-littoral resources of abalone and cray were not exploited to any great degree, that is if they existed. Any evidence of crayfish would not survive.

This leads me to remark on the "tidal stone wall fish-traps" that exist just inside West Arm and at Clarence Point (only 2 to 3?) and the incredible amount of stone walls (not all traps) from the monument at George Town, (to its settlement), north to the Pilot's Station complex. I have made extensive investigations and regard them as European, c.1804 to recent (B45, B57, B70), (photos 364, 374).

Regretfully, because I would prefer not to get involved in criticism of others work but find it necessary to protect the value of the subject; I will refer to a tourist information signage at Launceston Royal Park near an Aboriginal symbolic greeting/meeting place created to celebrate the first inhabitants of the Tamar Valley. On this sign is reference to:

"The estuary provided a rich, seasonally changing food source. These were – and an endless supply of fish and shellfish" (see photos 463, 561).

This strongly infers, even states, that the Palaeo-Aboriginal people who lived in the valley caught and ate "scale-fish"!

Although c.180km west at Rocky Cape on the north west coast undoubtable evidence of consuming scale-fish from c.8,000 to 3,700 B.P. exists (44), there is no evidence for this in the Tamar Valley and very dubious suggestions for it elsewhere, being far away from the valley. It would seem that the sign is a presumption based on the Rocky Cape excavations. The reference to "endless supplies" is also very misleading!

I must point out that John Bass, January 1799, on his visit to Port Dalrymple wrote, "no remains of fish were ever seen" (207:A11-29).





## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

It is worthwhile making another comment on this sign at Royal Park. The information includes:

“Many artefact scatters and cultural living places have been found on the flood plains and tidal flats”. As can be seen in photo 463 this is repeated and emphasised. It is necessary to first explain what the principle terms mean to appreciate their implications.

<b>Artefact Scatters</b>	Suggest a large amount of artefacts at several places.
<b>Cultural Living Places</b>	Means mainly “midden” material, the word “midden” is regarded as insulting by some Aboriginal people as its meaning is a refuse-heap. In archaeology it is a place where evidence exists of past meals, mainly shell, but can, if preserved, be bone, a camp-site.
<b>Flood Plains</b>	An area of vegetation that becomes inundated at high tide.
<b>Tidal Flats</b>	An area lacking usually vegetation except some grasses on muddy terrain that becomes inundated at high tide.

Although artefact scatter does exist along the Tamar Valley it is far from substantial which the sign suggests, and if found they are rarely deposits of large quantities of artefacts.

Cultural living places are confined to the artefact scatter and basically destroyed oyster deposits and a few shell scatters, all within the estuary. Oyster deposits such as those at Native Point Nature Reserve (photo 568) are recent activities of Europeans.

As far as locating them, significant scatter and living places are not to be found on the daily inundated flood plains and tidal flats for obvious reasons, although an occasional artefact can be found amongst the inter-tidal shingles along the river edges, the obvious evidence of an individual or two forager.

Sue Kees (207:51) refers to only 5 flood plain/alluvial terrace finds (sites) and 2 tidal flats sites close to each other being quarries not “living places”. The flood plain sites it seems were apparently more isolated stone artefacts.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY (cont.)**

Finally, I will mention the availability of fresh water in the valley. The Tamar River is tidal and this fluctuation in levels can extend up the lower reaches of its two principle tributaries, the North Esk that goes through St. Leonards and the South Esk being the river that cuts through Launceston's Cataract Gorge. Both rivers flow into the Tamar at Launceston and are only c.500 metres apart.

Sea water is said to extend south east in the Tamar as far as Rosevears (207:51). Others nominate a little further up-stream to Freshwater Point near Legana, however, sea-water is known to penetrate as far as St. Leonards and into the lowest reaches of the Cataract Gorge.

In winter fresh water can be often found in the many small water courses that flow into the Tamar, so providing sustenance for Aboriginal peoples on their way to and fro along the valley, but in summer often many courses are dry or contain little water.

### **Re: Figure 1, Rolled Artefact 373/1, Photo 574**

This stone artefact was recovered half buried, suggesting it was possibly in-situ from the surface of a sand and gravelly deposit on Tamar Island's north west area about ten metres above high water line and some distance from the river edge.

It appears to be a hornfel raw material and its greatly rolled appearance testifies to its obvious great age. I do not think the rise of the post glacial sea maximum of c.5,000 B.P. would have been high enough to cause the rolling, leading us to ponder what caused it?

Its left margin is concaved from a single dislodged flake with the right margin showing a keeled straight secondary retouching. To further confirm its artefact qualification, a striking platform at an appropriate angle and point of percussion are clearly visible, fissures are less obvious.

Considering everything it is just possible that this artefact and similar other ones may date from c.31,000 B.P.?



## 6. **BRIMFIELD SITE RECORDING**

Over 50 years ago I began what I like to refer to as “salvage work”, that is collecting surface material in danger of destruction and mostly done quickly. Although contact was made with the only person in the north with experience in anthropology about such “collecting”, I received no advice to halt the practice. Although I did retrieve items in great danger, (now housed with the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston), I still have deep reservations about doing it. This practice was halted as soon as I met Archaeologists Rhys Jones and Harry Lourandos.

This surface collecting covered both sides of the Tamar including along the foreshore of this great tidal river (photo 356). Practically all of it comprised single or a few stone artefacts. The river edges of that time are all but now destroyed by the intruding grasses that continue to spread. It is only in the estuary of Port Dalrymple and a little further south that the grass is not present. Originally (over 50 years ago) this grass area comprised river gravel of a shallow nature and it was within this that the artefacts could be found. Sometimes glass or pottery was noticed dating to colonial times. These sherds appeared to have a working edge, retouching on one side, often concaved (photo 325).

The only substantial surface site located is at Robigana on the West Tamar (493), just inland from the beach. Although it cannot be the only one, regretfully the terrain and vegetation is the greatest liability in trying to find evidence, additionally, residential development has contributed to the problem. I am not aware of the artefacts deposition but hopefully they were not destroyed. My last contact with Mrs Page was in 1970, 46 years ago.

I should mention my finds at West Frankford and Glengarry (photo 572), (B1). These were extensive artefact scatter or quartzite, especially the former (both now destroyed sites), and although outside the area of our discussion but not probably of the homeland of some Tamar Valley peoples. The very existence of such surface sites is evidence of the possibility of other similar sites nearby or further afield in the valley area.

Access to sites was only when a road provided a short walk, usually following the Tamar Rivers shoreline. Artefacts obtained being isolated usually or in close association of small numbers.

In April 1970 I wrote a small paper (B5) “An Archaeological Survey of the Tamar Valley”, this title I now believe to be a bit grandiose. This limited work was the result of combining all the archaeological sites recorded by me into a “summary” more than a “survey”.

## **BRIMFIELD SITE RECORDING (cont.)**

My “discoveries” had been documented for the “Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies”, Australian National University, Canberra. The institute supplied me with a stock of card-index stationary during 1967 to 1971 at the request of Archaeologist Rhys Jones who I had the pleasure of meeting at Burnie during his ground-breaking excavations at Rocky Cape – Sisters Beach. Although my work of recording was in line with the institute’s pursuits, there is no doubt they are today inadequate mainly being in need of more detailing on the sites location, this was correctly pointed out by Archaeologist Sue Kee in her “Midlands Aboriginal Archaeological Site Survey” in 1990 (207). I mention this in acknowledgement of my original work now some 50 years ago.

Copies of the cards were apparently passed on to “The Department of Parks and Wildlife”, Hobart, as Archaeologist Jim Stockton frequently contacted me 1975> about them, and more recently Archaeologist Don Ranson, in 2014, who mentioned they still existed with the department.

All my other information on these cards has been in 2014, passed on to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston for safe keeping.

Sue Kee as I mentioned included my Tamar Valley sites in her work (207). I have already admitted the lack of exactly recording the location of sites, but revisits to most areas, some are not now accessible, found practically all have been destroyed either due to development or by natural agencies, such as wind erosion.

My other sites being isolated artefact finds, scatter and estuarine middens are not detailed naturally by Sue, and as said at this time, 2015, my records are not in my keeping. However, what is available to me (see Map F) shows the **areas** of some:

36 surface sites on the West Tamar (includes coast)

18 surface sites on the East Tamar (includes coast)

The coastal sites comprised some 20 or so scatter with usually eroding mollusc midden comprising inter-tidal species. A limited area of coast adding to the small number of sites.

Obviously there is no need for me to mention the importance of Sue Kee’s work, it speaks for itself, but I must emphasise that it is a must to consult and study being the only detailed work on the subject.

### **BRIMFIELD SITE RECORDING (cont.)**

Launceston and its Cataract Gorge are right on the very southern limits of the Tamar Valley and could be argued they may have more connection to the Midlands, however, it is still the Tamar River being created at this point by the two Esk Rivers, north and south so named.

The Gorge (see (N9)) is so obvious an impressive place that the beliefs by today's Aboriginal people that it was a mystic sacred place cannot be argued, although evidence is limited. Very little archaeology exists in its boundaries, isolated artefacts and a petroglyph that has sadly not been refound or recorded in any way other than that it exists.





**BRIMFIELD SITE RECORDING (cont.)**

<b><u>RE: MAP F</u></b>	
<b>1</b>	Badger Head Beach
<b>2</b>	Greens Beach
<b>3</b>	East Beach, Low Head
<b>4</b>	“Fish-Trap Area”, North of George Town to Low Head
<b>5</b>	Kelso, Garden Island
<b>6</b>	Clarence Point (includes 2 fish-traps), Lyetta Point, Anchor Point
<b>7</b>	Ilfraville, Redbill Point
<b>8</b>	“Ochre Deposits”
<b>9</b>	Flowery Gully
<b>10</b>	West Frankford (just outside our discussed area)
<b>11</b>	Glengarry (to Winkleigh)
<b>12</b>	Deviot
<b>13</b>	East Arm, Fourteen Mile Creek
<b>14</b>	Native Point
<b>15</b>	Tamar Island
<b>16</b>	Russell Plains
<b>17</b>	Cataract Gorge
<b>18</b>	Launceston, Ravenswood
<b>19</b>	Legana, Riverside, Danbury Park, Freshwater Point
<b>20</b>	Rocherlea
<b>21</b>	Dilston
<b>22</b>	Windermere
<b>23</b>	Blackwall, Gravelly Beach
<b>24</b>	Hillwood
<b>25</b>	Whirlpool Reach
<b>26</b>	York Town
<b>27</b>	Lagoon Bay
<b>28</b>	George Town, Outer Cove
<b>29</b>	Bridgenorth
<b>30</b>	Rosevears
<b>31</b>	Exeter
<b>32</b>	Swan Bay, Little Swan Point, Robigana, Paper Beach, Supply River
<b>33</b>	Beaconsfield

## THE BRIMFIELD COLLECTION

The following is a list of surface sites within the discussed area but not coastal zones.

I must strongly emphasise that this data is only from my collection and does not include (207).

<u>ESTUARY</u>					
WEST TAMAR			EAST TAMAR		
Site No	Area	Artefacts	Site No	Area	Artefacts
73, 240	Kelso	10	271	Low Head	24
274, 282	Lyetta Point	7	272	Low Head	10
72	York Town	19	273	Low Head	7
212	York Town	64	106	Lagoon Bay	3
305	Greens Beach	8	210	Lagoon Bay	11
56	Greens Beach	132	209, 80	George Town	51
<b>8</b>	<b>Average Artefacts 30</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Average Artefacts 15</b>	<b>106</b>

**THE BRIMFIELD COLLECTION (cont.)**

<b><u>THE VALLEY (WEST)</u></b>					
<b>Site No</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Artefacts</b>	<b>Site No</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Artefacts</b>
373	Tamar Island	1	335	North of Robigana	1
132	Danbury Park	32	343	Papers Beach	52
27	Legana (Swamp)	5	118	Bowens Jetty	10
26	Legana Beach	13	172	Supply River	1
39	Freshwater Point	2	328	Robigana	3
207	Legana Jetty	4	336	Deviot	2
270	Bridgenorth	13	342	East of Beaconsfield	1
204	Rosevears	2	241	Beaconsfield	1
55	Exeter	1	205	South of Rosevears	52
19	Gravelly Beach	3	206	Rosevears	8
69	Gravelly Beach (Anzac Pk)	4	281	Paper Beach	19
70	Gravelly Beach (North)	16	<b>28</b>	<b>Average Artefacts 18</b>	<b>504</b>
158	Glengarry	192			
157	Exeter – Winkleigh	2			
171	Exeter – Winkleigh	3			
68	Swan Bay	34			
104	Lil. Swan Point	27			

**THE BRIMFIELD COLLECTION (cont.)**

<b><u>THE VALLEY (EAST)</u></b>					
<b>Site No</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Artefacts</b>	<b>Site No</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Artefacts</b>
154	Rocherlea	76	266	14 Mile Creek	60
112	Dilston	4	105	14 Mile Creek	20
108	Windermere	5	<b>11</b>	<b>Average Artefacts 18</b>	<b>199</b>
21	Native Point	15			
376	Opposite Blackwall	5			
330	Hillwood	4			
269	Hillwood	6			
268	Hillwood	3			
267	Whirlpool Reach	1			

It must be explained that although 36 sites were visited on the west and 18 on the east, totalling 54 and 1,049 artefacts “recovered”, they represent mainly non-descript flaked pieces, including pebble cores, a number of modified flakes without retouch and very few retouched edge pieces, (see following percentages).

For site 158 “Glengarry” with 192 artefacts, a number retouched pieces typical of the Tasmanian tool-kit, flakes and core tools, (see fig. 4).

The average site yielded only c.20 artefacts, exclude Glengarry, it is only 16. Most pieces would have probably been ignored as human endeavours being often crude and rolled like those coming from Fourteen Mile Creek, perhaps some could be argued as natural?

## THE BRIMFIELD COLLECTION (cont.)

Utilising my suggested typological classification of stone artefacts (B54), I include here the percentage of each type recognised.

Non-descript fortuitous pieces (includes bi-products of manufacturing)	55.7
Primary trimmed flakes (deliberately created shapes)	9.7
Secondary trimmed flakes (secondary trimming or retouch visible)	9.1
Keeled, steeply trimmed flakes and cores	4.6
Those pieces with trimmed nose and/or notches, includes concaved edges	3.6
Awls/points	.1
Uni-facial chopping tools	.4
Bifacial chopping tools	-
Bipolar worked artefacts	8.5
Cores (source of flakes)	7.8
Hammers – Anvils	.4
Grinding, rubbing, pounding tools	.1
“Exotic types” (strange, unusual)	-
	<b>100%</b>

At Legana there use to exist a lagoon that no doubt was visited for egg foraging during the spring, but it is now a residential area. I have already remarked about such rich areas of significant size in the upper reaches of the river, south of Dilston (photo 562), north of Riverside and the once huge Mowbray (Invermay, Inveresk) swamp. These areas had great quantities of marsh birds, especially black swan, but now very little in comparison. However, while a recent report of stone artefacts has come from an old property overlooking Churchill Park, (the previous Mowbray Swamp), little else has been reported. If we are searching for evidence of egg foraging by Aboriginal people it is pointless, as no “midden material” would have survived. Artefacts found would relate to terrestrial foraging not ave eggs.

Sue Kee refers to archaeological sites as “isolated finds, artefact scatter, stone quarries and shell middens” (207:90), included could be possible sacred areas (lacking evidence), ochre quarries and an isolated find in a cave deposit. Interesting Sue makes no reference to tidal stone wall fish-traps.

Finally, I must mention that some artefacts will be found in top-soils transported from the midlands for recent garden work, so if found creating archaeological confusion. This has happened to me twice over the years.





## 7. FINAL SUMMARY

Although the coast was an important part of the Tamar Valley peoples annual time-table, it is the River Valley that has been the focus of discussion. The rivers estuary, Port Dalrymple, being a divisionary area between the two, thus we have:

<u>“OPEN SITES”</u>	
<b>Coastal Sites</b>	Shell and manuport scatter in dunes and hinterland, by far the most obvious archaeological material.
<b>Estuary Sites</b>	Oyster middens on west side with very little artefact scatter. Area of disputed tidal stone wall fish-traps.
<b>River Edge and Inland</b>	Hard to find, due to environment and very limited artefact scatter, mostly single or a few.
<b>Ochre</b>	Two areas, one in the north west and one in the south east at inland areas.
<b>Raw Material, Stone</b>	Beach debris, river shingle material, gravel and limited outcrops.

All in all the Tamar Valley is archaeologically very disappointing and although no doubt development has caused considerable damage, the area as a whole was economically poor. Perhaps its main archaeological attraction is the rare finds of single greatly rolled stone flakes that suggest its very limited occupation in the Pleistocene, pre 10,000 B.P.? Its economic value, as said, was poor with rare kangaroos being greatly outnumbered by the scrub macropods. Foraging would have been difficult and little evidence exists of fire-sticking. However, during the spring egg season its value greatly improved. Although the coast was not that rich and limited in length, the estuary did supply oysters and the valley itself was an avenue, “gateway” to the vastly richer Northern Midlands. The European invaders found this out in a very short time.

Preservation of Aboriginal sites is always important, however, what is known to still exist (at 2015 CE) is only isolated artefacts in small quantities, although it must be emphasised that in some places large scatters, like that at West Frankford, must exist. Regretfully it is very doubtful those coming across any would recognise them. Any shell scatter is disintegrating rapidly that still exists, there is virtually nothing else known.



## **FINAL SUMMARY (cont.)**

The large number of Aborigines met with on both sides of Port Dalrymple in 1804 by the invading British suggests some large sites exist, although the population was nothing like that in the Northern Midlands, the foraging areas economic value being far less.

Excluding the Tamar estuary and the Launceston areas, the Tamar Valley was more of a transient zone. Because of its geographical situation between coast and the Northern Midlands it had to be penetrated and nomadically covered in a relatively short period of time, but still taking advantage of stop-over areas, like Robigana about half way along the western river side or when seasonally permitting to exploit the egg season. Thus archaeological material could be expected, although expected to be very limited.

























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## A LIST OF MY UNPUBLISHED WORK

### BY BARRY H. BRIMFIELD

(If marked \* it has been given to the Department of Parks, Wildlife & Heritage, Hobart).

Barry H. Brimfield.

<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	
<b>B1</b>	"An Assemblage from 'Rosslyn', West Frankford"	Oct, 1969	*
<b>B2</b>	"Clarence Point (Fish Trap & Oyster Middens)"	Sept, 2008	*
<b>B4</b>	"Report on the Aboriginal Midden at Anchor Point on the Tamar River" (Site 274)	April, 1970	*
<b>B5</b>	"An Archaeological Survey of the Tamar Valley"	April, 1970	*
<b>B6</b>	"A Note on 'Native Point Reserve' (Site 375)"	Feb, 2002	*
<b>B7</b>	"A Note on 'Tamar Island' (Site 373)"	1995	*
<b>B8</b>	"A Note on 'Fourteen Mile Creek' (Site 105 & 266)"	Dec, 1989	
<b>B10</b>	"A Note on a Glass Bipolar Artefact Recovered Near Launceston, Tas."	May, 1969	*
<b>B11</b>	"Who Made the Fish-Traps of Northern Tasmania?"	Sept, 2008	*
<b>B24</b>	"A Note on an Aboriginal Ochre Mine at Russels Plains, Rocherlea, Tasmania"	Dec, 2008	*
<b>B26</b>	"The George Town to Low Head Stone Wall Tidal Fish-Traps and Other Stone Structures"	2009/9	*
<b>B29</b>	"The Tamar Valley, It's Palaeolithic Value"	March, 2009	
<b>B45</b>	"Research Notes on Tasmania's Tidal Stone Wall Fish-Traps"	2009-2012	*
<b>B46</b>	"Tamar Haematite Deposits"	2013	*
<b>B53</b>	"Palaeo-Tasmania (Sea & Fresh Water Foods)"	2012	*
<b>B54</b>	"Palaeo Tasmania, A Typological Classification of Stone Artefacts" (Section 1 & 2)	2011	*
<b>B57</b>	"Research Notes on Tasmania's Tidal Stone Wall Fish-Traps" (Part 2)	2013	*
<b>B58</b>	"Sea Levels Around Palaeo-Tasmania"	2013	*
<b>B60</b>	"Tasmania's Aboriginal Palaeo-Art"	2013	*
<b>B64</b>	"Food, Foraging & Cooking in Palaeo-Tasmanian Aboriginal Culture"	2015	*
<b>B70</b>	"Research Notes on Tasmania's Tidal Stone Wall Fish-Traps" (Part 3)	2015	*