

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name RUNNYMEDE HOMESTEAD COMPLEX
Address 438 RUNNYMEDE ROAD, SANDFORD
Place Type Homestead Complex
Citation Date 2006



52794 Runnymead Sandford 2nd 3rd 1st wings 116

Recommended VHR - HI - PS -
Heritage Protection

History and Historical Context

The Hutcheson brothers, David, John and George, established the Runnymede pastoral run on the Glenelg River, 5 miles from Casterton, in c1846 (Billis & Kenyon, p. 87). The brothers were among the pastoral pioneers who, during that decade, took up large tracts of land within the present Glenelg Shire. David, John and George were the sons of David and Isabella Hutcheson of Abernethy in Perthshire, Scotland. David Hutcheson Sen., who came from an old family of millers, died while the boys were young. They migrated to Tasmania with their mother, Isabella, but accounts of the newly discovered country of 'Australia Felix' in the Western District 'led the Hutchesons (then young men) to come to Port Phillip,' where they 'took up Runnymede Station' (Hamilton Spectator, 20 March 1870).

On 6 March 1848, the brothers applied for a lease for the Runnymede pastoral run, which they had occupied for more than 18 months. At this time, the run covered 16,000 acres. It was located on the eastern bank of the Glenelg River. 'the station held 4,000 sheep and 50 cattle (Runnymede Pastoral Run Papers, No. 1122, PROV). In c1850, after disputes with neighbours over boundaries, the Runnymede pastoral run was carefully surveyed. A homestead was indicated on the Runnymede run beside the Glenelg River. (Tracing from a Plan of Runnymede Station required by Messrs Hutcheson Bros., No.1122).

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

In 1853, George and David Hutcheson applied for the pre-emptive purchase of the homestead portion of their run. They secured 320 acres along the Glenelg River, the site of their homestead, in Crown Allotment 4, Section 24, Parish of Mocambo. An 1864 Lands Department map indicated 'Mr. Hutchison's PR Purchase, Runnymede.' This map shows the homestead in Allotment 4 beside the river with fences stretching down to the river bank and partly enclosing land in the adjacent Allotment 5 (Special & Country Lands, Parish of Mocambo, 1864). A recent 1995 Country Fire Authority map confirmed that the present Runnymede homestead is in the same location (CFA Map and Rural Directory for Region 4, South West Victoria, 1995).

The Hutcheson brothers were also associated with Mount Struan, a pastoral property three miles west of Digby, from 1848 to 1866 (Billis & Kenyon, p. 87).

The oldest Hutcheson brother, George, died at Runnymede Station aged 34 in January 1857 after being kicked by a horse (Hamilton Spectator, 30 March 1870). Some years later, on 30 March 1870, a second brother, John Hutcheson (1819- 1970), who was proprietor of the Hamilton Mill from c1865, died at Runnymede Station (Dept of Justice, Reg. No. 1365). John had been suffering from a heart condition for some years. John was twice married. His first wife, who died childless, was the sister of the well-known pastoralist, John Robertson of Warrock Station on the Glenelg River, 12 miles north of Casterton. When John died in 1870, he left a widow and four sons and a daughter from his second marriage (Hamilton Spectator, 30 March 1870).

The third brother, David Hutcheson (1826-1870), died at Runnymede some 9 months later on 28 December 1870 (Dept of Justice, Reg. No. 10062). An announcement in the district press told of 'the death by his own hands of an old resident of the Western District ... at the station occupied by him.' It was suggested 'that the death of his brother at Hamilton must have had some effect on his mind' (Hamilton Spectator, 30 March 1870). David Hutcheson, a bachelor, who committed suicide by cutting his throat with a pocket knife after a long drinking bout, died intestate. The authorities, after a long debate, decided that David's mother, Isabella, and his sister, Christian Murray (1820-1900) nee Hutcheson, should act as the executors of his estate. They were his only next of kin. His mother subsequently gave up her right to administer the property in favour of her daughter. Christian was married to David's business partner, John Murray (David Hutcheson Probate and Inquest Papers).

At this time during the early 1870s the farm complex at Runnymede was listed as including a 'dwelling house built of stone and brick and containing seven rooms, in the joint occupancy' of David Hutcheson and his brother-in-law and business partner, John Murray. Outbuildings comprised a 'stable, cattle shed, wool shed and yards' and there was post and wire fencing around the station' (David Hutcheson, Probate Papers). It took two years to complete the assessment of the Runnymede property which, due to a number of mortgages taken out by David and his partner, John Murray, between 1863 and 1867, fell into the hands of a firm of Melbourne merchants, Lord, Croaker and Scott (Probate Papers and Billis and Kenyon, p. 27). The brothers' other pastoral property, Mount Struan, went to Lord, Croaker and Scott in 1866 (Billis & Kenyon, p. 253). And, in the same decade, yet another pastoral property, in Glenelg Shire, Rifle Downs Station at Digby, owned by Richard Lewis, publican, fell into the hands of the same Melbourne firm (Billis and Kenyon, p. 271). When the valuation of David Hutcheson's estate was finally assessed, it was found that the liabilities on his half share exceeded his assets by a sum of 7476 pounds, a considerable amount in those days. His largest debt was to Lord, Croaker and Scott (Probate Papers). This firm was listed as the owner of Runnymede Station until 1877.

J. G. Francis became the new owner of Runnymede in 1877 in conjunction with a Scottish pastoralist, James Bruce Gill. Born in Aberdeenshire, North Scotland, in March 1849, James Bruce was the son of David Gill, landed proprietor of Blairythan, Scotland (Smith, 1904, Vol. II, p. 542.3). After an education at Marshall & King's College, Aberdeen, until 1867, James Gill sailed to Australia. He went first to Queensland, taking up land with his brother, P. G. Gill. In 1874, J. B. Gill left Queensland and with his brother rented Monomeith, 48 miles from Melbourne, which he purchased in 1880 with J. G. Francis. In the same year, the pair purchased Runnymede, where Gill went to live.

A few years later, in 1885, Gill married Ruth Pennycuick, who was born in India, the eldest daughter of General Pennycuick (Dept. of Justice, Reg. No. 4163). She was the granddaughter of William Rutledge (1806-1876), MLC, MLA and owner of the Belfast (Port Fairy) Special Survey lands. They appear to have had no issue. Like the

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Hentys at Merino Downs, Gill ran merino sheep on his property as well as a number of successful race horses. Gill was president of the Casterton Racing Club. By the early 1900s, when Gill was owner still, Runnymede comprised 4,870 acres of 'purchased land of fine quality, having river frontages of about seven miles, and 2,300 acres of leased land.' About 500 acres of the property was cultivated under the share farming system (Billis & Kenyon, p. 135; Smith, Vol. II, pp. 542.3).

Most recently, the Laidlaw family has been associated with the historic old property. In c1933, Runnymede Station was purchased by T. H. Laidlaw. A sketch of the Runnymede homestead during the Laidlaw ownership, held by Glenelg Historical Society, showed the front of the house with its 'delightful gardens.' It is noted on the sketch that 'enormous gum trees are a feature of the property' (Runnymede. Sketch held by Glenelg Historical Society undated). A 1995 Country Fire Authority (CFA) map indicated the homestead on Runnymede Road beside the Glenelg River, as in early Lands Department maps. The Runnymede wool shed, now relocated to Emu Bottom Homestead, Sunbury, is shown further east along Runnymede Road on the west side of Bowtell Creek (CWA Map, 1995). Both buildings, listed as No 62 (homestead) and No 37 (woolshed) are recorded as owned by J. Laidlaw. He was T. H. Laidlaw's grandson.

Current Glenelg Shire Council records confirm the ownership by T. H. Laidlaw & Co of Runnymede at 439 Runnymede Road, Sandford. By 2005 the property comprised the Pre-Emptive Right Allotment 4 of Section 24, as well as land in several other Allotments (Glenelg Shire Council records, assessmentID 16384).

A December 2005 auction sale notice for the Runnymede estate contains a coloured photograph of the homestead taken in its garden setting. There are also some black and white photographs which show parts of the property along its 14 acre (5.6ha) frontage to the Glenelg River. According to this document, Runnymede now covers 3065 acres (1226ha), somewhat less than in 1900, held in five freehold titles. The historic old homestead is described as 'in good condition' and as 'a tum of last century homestead' although this is incorrect. The 2005 auction notice describes the homestead as comprising a formal lounge room, dining room, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, veranda and cellar. There is a carport on the property, various sheds, cattle yards, two sets of sheep yards, and an aircraft hangar and air strip. There is mention also of a new 'wool shed and stock handling facilities,' and Chinese market gardens 'in past times.' According to this notice, Runnymede Station currently holds 7,550 sheep, 250 cows and 200 weaner cattle. Its site is described as 'excellent prime lamb country' (Runnymede Station auction notice, December 2005). The present owner tells how the historic old wool shed was moved to Emu Bottom at Sunbury and describes the present homestead as weatherboard and brick (T. Laidlaw, pers. comm., December 2005).

References

- Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1966.
Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip, Billis, R. V & Kenyon, A.S, Stockland Press Pty. Ltd., 1974.
Cyclopedia of Victoria, vol.11, James Smith (ed.), Cyclopedia Company, Melbourne, 1902.
Hamilton Spectator, 30 March 1870 & 31 December 1870., *Hamilton Spectator*, 1870.
Probate Papers, VPRS 28/P2 Unit 7 File 9/918, 1870-72 (PROV)., Hutcheson, David, 1872.
Inquest Papers, VPRS 24/P Unit 247 File 1870/1146, 1870-71 (PROV)., Hutcheson, David, 1871.
Personal Communication, December 2005, Laidlaw, Tim., 2005.
Special & Country Lands, Parish of Mocambo, 4 June 1864 (SLV Map Room)., Dept. of Lands & Survey, 1864.
Tracing from a Plan of Runnymede Station required by Messrs. Hutcheson Bros., No. 1122, (PROV)., c.1850.

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

- 3 Developing local, regional and national economies
- 3.5 Developing primary production
 - 3.5.1 Grazing stock
 - 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

- 5 Working

5.8 Working on the land

Description

Physical Description

Runnymede Homestead is a single storey asymmetrical dwelling comprised of at least three sections. It faces east and is set within an extensive garden.

The earliest section is a weatherboard cottage of five rooms with a simple veranda set between two projecting wings. This probably dates from about 1848 when the Hutcheson Brothers applied for their squatting licence. The floorboards and posts of the veranda are hardwood, probably pit sawn. The weatherboards are a mixture of the original split 'Tasmanian' shingles and modern replacements. The gabled roofs are corrugated iron over timber shingles. There is a brick chimney between the front and back rooms of the south wing. The front door is partly glazed. The rear doors are of ledge and brace construction and may be made from Blackwood. The windows are four-paned double casements, with the east wing paired and the single west wing double-hung sash possibly a replacement. The internal joinery is simple but fine and may have been imported from Tasmania. Internal walls and ceilings are lime plaster on split timber lathes. The materials and much of the detailing of this section indicate its very early date. This section retains a very high degree of integrity.

There are original outbuildings at the rear of the homestead. These are timber framed with structural members which betray their very early date, possibly even before 1848. The walls of one, the smaller and nearer are weatherboard, and the walls of the other are now clad with weatherboard at the sides and corrugated iron at the front and rear. The roofs are hipped and the original shingles are covered with vertical corrugated iron. At least one double casement window appears to match those of the first section of the homestead. The other windows are small, simple and variously multi-paned.

The second section of the homestead, to the south of the first, is a brick house originally of four rooms. This probably dates from soon after 1853 when the Hutcheson Brothers purchased their Pre-emptive Right. One room has been converted into a bathroom and passage. It also has projecting wings with a simple timber veranda between, since modified by the removal of timber detailing. A 1950s iron web truss has replaced the main beam. Steps lead down from the front door about which this section is symmetrical. The windows of the pavilions wings are small, twelve paned double hung sashes. French doors open onto the veranda from the south pavilion while there is a large arched opening into the north pavilion. The windows of the main rooms are twelve paned double-hung sashes. The only chimney in this section is at the rear although there were possibly chimney breasts opposite both front windows. The sheeting of the low pitched, hipped main roof has been replaced with Colorbond®. A mantelpiece survives in the front south bedroom. With its pavilions the veranda, the roof of which is contiguous with the main roof, probably encircled the house but is now lost on the north side and enclosed on the south side. There is a separate weatherboard outbuilding, possibly a detached kitchen at the rear of this second section.

The third section of the homestead sits between the first and the second and is linked to the latter. It probably dates from between 1880 when J. B. Gill purchased Runnymede and 1885 when Gill married Ruth Pennycuik. It comprises a large drawing room at the front with a polygonal bay window and a large dining room behind. This section is also weatherboard with a gabled corrugated iron roof over each room. It may have been constructed in two stages. Both rooms have coved ceilings lined with bead-edged lining boards, possibly once trimmed with hessian and paper. There is a standard timber mantelpiece in the dining room but the mantelpiece in the drawing room has been modified. Two fully glazed French doors open from the dining room onto a terrace, one from the side of the drawing room and one from the bay window. This section is raised on a substantial plinth of five bluestone steps.

Internally the rooms have been altered and modernised with the progressive introduction of modern services, probably from the late 1950s. Most of the change has occurred towards the rear of the homestead. All the sections of the homestead are in very good condition and retain a relatively high degree of integrity.

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

The homestead complex is set within an extensive mature garden of mixed exotics and natives including some remnant trees. Dark conifers and deciduous trees form a backdrop to the homestead. It overlooks the Glenelg River meadows which used to flood regularly. It is reached by a drive which divides towards the front and rear of the building. The last stretch of the drive is .4km long and is lined with Red Gums, Oaks, and Osage Orange trees, the latter perhaps originally intended as hedging. At its commencement there is a massive remnant Red Gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. The garden survives intact to its mid-twentieth century state and is in good condition.

Physical Condition

Generally very good to excellent.

Usage / Former Usage

Residential & pastoral

Recommended Management

Maintain generally as existing. All works on the house, outbuildings and garden should be in accordance with a conservation management plan.

Comparative Analysis

0001 Muntham Homestead Complex, 4876 Glenelg Highway, Carapook
0047 Winninburn Homestead Complex, Heenan-Ferrier Road, Tarrenlea
0232 Prestonholme Homestead Complex and Flour Mill, Mill Road, Strathkellar Road, Strathkellar
1081 Rifle Downs, 2029 Dartmoor-Hamilton Road, Digby
0774 Lal Lal Homestead, 105 Bridgewater Lakes Road Cape Bridgewater
1126 Warrock Homestead, 826 Warrock Road, Casterton

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

Runnymede Homestead is a single storey asymmetrical dwelling comprised of at least three sections. It faces east and is set within an extensive garden. This historic Western District sheep station, established in c1846 by the Hutcheson brothers, David, John and George, Scottish pastoral pioneers, has historical significance as one of a number of such properties in Glenelg Shire associated with the development from the 1840s of the district sheep industry. The Hutchesons were prominent district residents. Later, from 1880, Runnymede was associated with another Scottish pastoralist, James Bruce Gill, and, more recently, from the early 1930s, with the Laidlaw family of sheep farmers.

Remaining farm buildings include a homestead, located on the original homestead site beside the Glenelg River shown on the c1850 run plan. The two early homesteads date from the arrival of the Hutcheson Brothers and the establishment of their Pre-Emptive Right in 1853. The earliest section is a weatherboard cottage dating from about 1848, which is in good condition and has a high degree of integrity. The second part dates from about 1853 and is a brick house, originally of four rooms, and the third section of the homestead sits between the first and the second and is linked to the latter. It probably dates from between 1880 when J. B. Gill purchased Runnymede and 1885 when Gill married Ruth Pennycuick. The exterior of the three parts of the homestead are all in very good condition and retain a high degree of integrity. The earliest part retains a high degree of integrity internally also. The homestead complex is set within an extensive mature garden of mixed exotics and natives including some remnant trees. Dark conifers and deciduous trees form a backdrop to the homestead. It overlooks the Glenelg River meadows which used to flood regularly. It is reached by a drive which divides towards the front and rear of the building. The last stretch of the drive is 0.4km long and is lined with Red Gums, Oaks, and Osage Orange trees, the

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

latter perhaps originally intended as hedging. At its commencement there is a massive remnant Red Gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. The garden survives intact to its mid-twentieth century state and is in good condition.

How is it significant?

Runnymede Homestead Complex is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it Significant?

Runnymede is of historical significance as one of the earliest surviving pastoral properties, including its outbuildings and original homestead (c1848). Of further historical significance is its association with the Hutcheson Brothers, who were important local landholders as well as influential people in society. It is of architectural significance for its ability to illustrate different vernacular building styles and techniques ranging from very early pastoral times through to the mid twentieth century. It exhibits particular building elements which are rarely seen, including fine internal joinery in the earliest section of the homestead. Its setting, overlooking the Glenelg River is deliberate, and in addition to the surrounding expansive garden, the park-like river flats and the deliberately sinuous driveway, the complex has a strong aesthetic significance.

Recommendations 2006

External Paint Controls

Internal Alteration Controls

Tree Controls

Fences & Outbuildings

Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted

Incorporated Plan

Aboriginal Heritage Place

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This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.