
**D 8206 Research note on Richard Day (1818-1900) A pioneer of South Australia
Compiled by Max Slee of Tranmere SA in conjunction with a presentation on
29 May 2005 to the Enfield & Districts Historical Society Inc on the occasion of History
Week, 2005.**

One of the pioneers of State of South Australia, Richard Day arrived in the young colony only two years after its establishment, with less than £1 in his pocket. By astute land investment and farming, and by hard work, he "...experienced all the vicissitudes of life in a young country and pulled through them nobly and well, and lived to be an old respected and influential citizen"¹.

Origins in Gloucester, England

Richard Day was born at 9.15am on 28 December 1818 at the small rural township of Minchinhampton in Gloucestershire, England. He was the eldest son of Luke and Elizabeth Day. His family had been resident in Minchinhampton for generations and many were involved in the dairy farming industry, for which the district is renown. Richard was baptized on 7 February 1819.

Soon to follow were two sisters (Charlotte and Harriet) and three brothers (George, Robert, and Thomas) and he spent a happy childhood with them. He did not spend many years at school and it was related later that, "Early in life he had to earn his own living. Boys of 12 years of age then received 3d per day, and men 1/- and 1/2, and frequently employment was not to be obtained at those rates."²

As a teenager he began courting a local girl, Mary Ann Harris, daughter of Thomas Harris and Elizabeth Harris (*nee* Matthews). She had been baptized at Minchinhampton on 20 April 1817. On 11 September 1837 Richard was married to Mary in the parish church of Rodborough, by the curate, Mr Thomas Glascott. At the time he was aged 19 and his bride was 20.

Richard was a laborer living at *Turkbrook* farm, Avening, when he and Mary decided to migrate to South Australia. Avening and Minchinhampton are rural townships located about five kilometres apart in the Cotswolds, near the source of the Lower Avon river. Both townships have a long history of association with the cloth trade and the area has extensive dairy farming. In the 1820's and 1830's the decline of the cloth trade caused major unemployment and many people moved from the area or immigrated in the search for jobs and a secure future.

Migration to South Australia

The colony of South Australia was founded by a mere few hundred people who arrived in 1836 and was formally proclaimed on 28 December that year when the first Governor, Hindmarsh, arrived. No doubt hearing promising public reports from the first arrivals, on 8 September 1837 the young couple, who then had no children, lodged an application to migrate to the infant colony. How and why they came to make this life changing decision is

¹ Descriptive Australia, 1890, J. Smillie, p.159

² Advertiser newspaper, biography of Richard Day (from clipping, date unknown)

not known, but from later letters between England and Australia it is obvious that they had the support of both their parents.

They subsequently received advice that they had been assigned to travel on the ship *Royal Admiral* and were given Embarkation Number 763. Accordingly, the young couple packed their few possessions and said farewell to family and friends. These farewells must have been heartwrenching, especially for their parents, for all concerned knew that in all likelihood they would never see each other again. That same month Richard and Mary travelled to the port of Gravesend.

The *Royal Admiral*, of 413 tons, under command of Captain Grives, was waiting at anchor in Gravesend to embark immigrants, of which there was a total of 208, 142 of these being Cornishmen and their families. The ship departed Gravesend on 25 September 1837. Keeping well out to sea during the three-month voyage, the ship did not make any landfall until its arrival at Holdfast Bay at Glenelg, Adelaide, on 18 January 1838. A contemporary newspaper report stated that the voyage had been good, with very little bad weather, and the ship was so well provisioned with food and water that upon its arrival there was a surplus.

Arrival in Adelaide and pioneering days

There being no wharves, the passengers were landed ashore at Glenelg in small boats. The entire population of the colony, not including Aboriginal people, was then only several thousand, nearly all of who were still clustered in and around the infant village of Adelaide. As an indication of how undeveloped the colony was, on the same day that Richard and Mary arrived the Surveyor-General, Colonel William Light, went on an exploring expedition as far as Lyndoch in the Barossa, along with Finniss, Fisher, and McLaren.

Richard and Mary walked from Glenelg to Adelaide and camped near the River Torrens, on the site now occupied by the Adelaide Gaol. Here they built a hut, toiled, and together hewed the wheels for their first dray from the solid trunk of a tree. Like most of the pioneers, Richard and Mary were masters of improvisation. When visited by the biographer J. Smillie in 1889 Richard showed him, "...among other relics of the past ... an old cartwheel cut out of the solid wood by himself and wife forty years ago"³ (1839). This solid wheel had been retained by Richard throughout his life, with pride, and remained at his Croydon property after his death, handed over to his son Thomas.

The young immigrants quickly found that food and goods were in short supply. In later life Richard recollected, "When I arrived in South Australia ... my capital was 16/4. 'Forward' was my motto. I worked hard. Not eight hours a day, but day and night as circumstances required. Work done was what I strived for, and I never left for tomorrow what I could do today. To that I owe my success. I farmed my land systematically, and always had good crops. The year after I landed I planted potato rinds, which yielded a good crop. It was no use sticking at trifles in the early days: potatoes were 8d a pound, cabbages 2/6 each, flour 1/3 per lb and £11 per bag, and bread 3/6 a 4lb loaf.

"Other provisions were proportionately high in price. Wearing apparel was equally expensive, and the man who possessed a pair of white moleskin trousers, a blue smock, a

³ Descriptive Australia, Smillie (ibid.)

Tam O'Shanter hat, and a good pair of boots was considered well off. I have not included socks or stockings, for they were a luxury. I have seen the leading men of this province in the early days thus garbed. In attire we were all alike."⁴

Camping beside the Torrens at Walkerville – and letters from Home

About nine months after arrival a second hut was built in the bush at Walkerville, again on the banks of the Torrens, the roof of the first hut being carted on their dray for use on the new home.

Richard and Mary had written letters home on the 12 and 20 September 1838, and around six months later, at about the time they moved to this hut at Walkerville, they must have been very excited when they received the following replies from England, which are transcribed verbatim:

Letter from Richard's family, paper folded, sealed with sealing wax, addressed:

*Richard Day
Spencers Gulf
nr. Kangaroo Island
SOUTH AUSTRALIA*

*Inchbrook
JanU 11th 18038*

Dear Richard,

We received your letters of the 12 & 20th of September and we are glad to hear that you are in good health and spirit. We hope you will not be disappointed as it respect the fair prospect you are anticipating We have taken the opportunity of sending this letter to you by favour of Job Baker and we sincerely hope it will find you both in good health as it leaves us all well at present. We shall be happy to hear that you have had a pleasant voyage and that you are situated in comfortable circumstances and that the Report of the Country is far inferior to what you find it and that when you are settled in the Colony you will send us the particulars of the prices of the Produce of the Country, the price of Wheat in England is from 5 to 7 shillings per bushel Barley from 3s to 4s per bus Oats from 3 to 3/6 per bushel Potatoes from 4 to 6/- per Sack Fat Pigs from 7/- to 8/0 Shillings per Score Beef and Mutton from 5d to 7d per lb.

The House Colonel is dead has been dead about 2 months we have all the land in our own hands as we had when you was at Home. I have taken the Barn Close again for Hay is dear again this Winter but not so dear as last winter Hay is from £3 to £5 per ton Straw from £2 to £10/-. We are a great deal better off for Work this Winter than what we expected we have took to Mr Bernard Work and took to his House so that we have now 4 Houses and as much work as we can possibly do with them - I enquired of your wife's brother Jacob and they are all well and purposed to send a letter with all particulars but I understood him to say that he was not certain where her Brother Henry was - your Brothers and Sisters send their kind Love to you both. As you did not put down in your Bible the

⁴ Advertiser newspaper, (ibid.)

account of your Age we have sent you the same December 28th 1818 ¼ past nine o'clock in the morning - We hope you will send us all the particulars how you are situated and how you like your situation and how you like it and what wages you get - Isaac Wilk's kind love to you and George Bishops desires to send his love to you and hopes to hear a good account of the place. We should have sent you a little Money if we could have been sure that Job Baker would have come to the same place but not being certain we did not send any hoping to hear from you all the particulars of your proceedings and what Treatment you have met with Your Brother George talks about coming if you send any encouragement hoping to hear from you We conclude with our Kind Love to you both and Remain

Your affectionate Father & Mother
Luke and Elizabeth Day

I hope you well not wait the return of Letters but send us every opportunity.

Letter from Mary Ann's family, paper folded, sealed with sealing wax, addressed

Richard Day
Australia
Vandimans Land

.....?..... Horsley
Januy 14 18038

Dear daughter

We embrace the opportunity of sending you these few lines hoping they will find you both well as it leave us all at present

Dear Son & Daughter I hope by this time this letter reaches your hands you will be settled and comfortable Your father have seen Henery he is very well and doing verry well and if had known as you had been going he would have went Along with you Your Brothas Williams kind love to you and he hopes you wil be got safe over your journey Johns kind Love he wishes to know if there is any prospect of he being a Uncle and your Brother James sais never mind the weather or how the wind do blow when comes to Australia he will jump Jim Crow Tom sais I shall not go S...(sailing?)... for he do count you would be at the bottom of the seas

Dear Sister & Brother I long to be with you I have not altered My life Nay Father sais I shall not until I am One & Twenty because I shall not leave England John Tainton, Kind love I was to?..... we was very happy and very comfortable he thinks about coming he is going to accumulate a little money first. you must gett out and shoot a cangaru against I come your Mother verry affectionate and kind love and she shall never se you no more ...?..... never forget you Mother dreamed you had a baby and you was going down to Mrs. Day and she took the babey and kissed it Jacob and Mary Ann are both well and send their love Uncle Charles kind love to you Your father and Mother and all of Us Join in Love to you Both

We all hopes will be sure to send as soon as possible

While Richard and Mary were living at Walkerville the successor to Governor Hindmarsh, Colonel George Gawler, arrived at Holdfast Bay on 12 October 1838 with his large family and a retinue of servants. Richard continues in his biography, "I have done plenty of bullock punching. I drove a team to Glenelg, or the Bay, as we called it, on the arrival of Colonel Gawler, to cart his luggage to the city and was the first man on shore to whom he spoke after landing. It was, I think, about 9 o'clock at night. We lit fires on shore to indicate to those on the vessel our position, and I can remember Governor Gawler saying that when he was approaching the shore it was a grand sight viewed from the boat. I drove a bullock team on the Port Road. The time occupied in going from the Port to the city was three hours or over."⁵

It was while living at Walkerville that the couple's first child, Thomas, was born on 1 November 1838, but died in January 1839, probably of dysentery from the poor water available. In the heat of summer the Torrens dried up into a series of rank ponds. A second child, Robert, was born in the heat of summer under the shade of a tree at Walkerville on 22 January 1840.

Pioneering at Prospect Village

Money earned by Richard from carting added to the family's meagre income from a cow and some fowls, and after two years at Walkerville they were able to purchase 5 acres of land at Prospect Village where farming was commenced, with milk cows and fowls still adding to their source of income. The 5 acres (Lot 45) formed part of four 80 acre sections and was purchased for £18 on 21 January 1842 from John Watts of Willunga, Alex Hill and Saml. Field, both being brick makers at Hindmarsh. Richard had made the first of his many land investments in the colony.

In 1841 Richard and Mary were recorded in a census as having one son and were living at Prospect Village. Their next child, also a son, Thomas, was born there on 7 September 1841. Located between the present Main North Road and Prospect Road, the village was settled in 1841 when farming land was being opened up near to Adelaide. Most of the blocks were around 10 acres and at first the sales of the land were slow.

"One of the obstacles to it was that nearest water was at the Torrens at Walkerville. Farmers who used bullocks to clear and plough Prospect land had to drive their teams there every day to drink. At night, they were turned loose in the Prospect Scrub to be rounded up by dogs in the morning, or found by the sound of their bells.

In good seasons, Prospect farmers reaped heavy yields of wheat, for which there was a ready market at flour mills in Adelaide. Section boundaries were ill-defined and disputes about them plentiful. Dependence on the River Torrens for water was proving intolerable ... and scores of deep wells were being put down to depths of 100 feet. They yielded good water, but milky because of the limestone ground. Some Prospect farmers ran dairies, where ideas of hygiene were orientally simple and flies plentiful. Their sons delivered milk to nearby houses by billygoat cart"⁶

⁵ Advertiser newspaper, (ibid.)

⁶ Prospect 1872 – 1972, by Max Lamshed

Among these farmers and dairymen was Richard, whose herd and capital was slowly increasing. Given his fastidious nature, and his dairying background in Gloucester, it is highly unlikely that his dairy was in the state of those described above.

Dairying and farming at Tam O'Shanter Belt (Regency Park)

The young family spent about 18 months at Prospect Village and moved when they purchased Section 411, being 160 acres of land, for farming at a place named Tam O'Shanter Belt, now in the suburb of Regency Park. The level, and in parts swampy, ground was covered with low bushes and trees, and it was virgin country and unfenced when Richard bought it. Another hut was built, at a spot near to the present Days Road, and it here that their first daughter, Elizabeth, was born on 30 September 1843. At that time it seems that the locality was also named Salt Water Springs, that name being given on Elizabeth's birth certificate as her place of birth.

Prospects boomed and the farm income was such that they were soon able to build a more substantial house and barn. Later, more farming outbuildings were added. This small complex of buildings was to remain as part of the sewerage farm for many years after the Day family had sold out to the government, and were located on the land which is now the Regency Golf Course.

Richard recalled later, "Few people know why the locality of Tam O'Shanter Belt was so named. The ship *Tam O'Shanter* ran ashore near the North Arm when coming up the Port River. The passengers landed there and walked from that point to North Adelaide. When on the hill they viewed the Tam O'Shanter in the river across a fine belt of trees, which they named Tam O'Shanter Belt."

In the mid 1840's the government levied a tax on those holders of stock such as sheep, cattle or horses. Landholders were required to complete an Assessment Notice giving a return of all such stock. These notices were personally served on the landholders by the local police and the return collected shortly thereafter. The Memorandum Book of the Commissioner of Police records that such a notice was served in 1844 on Richard Day by Constable Pollard of Port Adelaide Police Station. Richard's address was recorded as "Section 407, North Channel", and he reported that he then had 44 cattle. Constable McLean of Port Adelaide served another such notice on Richard on 8 October 1845, and the same address was given.

Of this period Richard later related, "Times were very hard and money scarce previous to the discovery of the Burra Burra mines (1845). In fact, there was very little money in circulation, and business was transacted by barter. I once purchased a standing crop of five acres of wheaten hay for £4 and paid the whole amount in half-Crown pieces. The vendor, in astonishment, exclaimed, "That is the first time I have seen the colour of money for six months." A man who had ready money was considered wealthy. Governor Grey brought about a better state of affairs. All honour to him."⁷

⁷ Advertiser biography

Work as a teamster to the Burra mines

Upon the discovery of copper at Burra in 1845, Richard was one of the many bullock drivers who sought extra cash when not farming by carting the ore to Adelaide. Of these times he relates, "I have travelled to the Burra mines more than once with my bullock team. I had a team of eight bullocks, and in those days a man who could say, "This is my team" was not to be despised. The trip from Adelaide took about three weeks, but the return was done in less time. The price for carting ore down was £3 per ton. A load for eight bullocks was about three tons. The cartage of goods to the Burra from Adelaide was £1/10/- per ton, and frequently teams would go there with an empty dray. There were no macadamised roads. We followed the track. I made a practice to 'pass' all public houses, for I had no inclination to spend money in drink.

"In the early days nearly every bullock-driver knew where the 'Sheoak Log' was, but few now know what that name originally meant. It was a large solitary sheoak tree, standing on a plain by itself; a sort of beacon for teamsters, who made it a halting place to camp. Someone cut it down, hence it was called 'The Sheoak Log'. It stood from five to seven miles beyond Gawler. The track to the Burra ran across Gawler River and the 'Dirty Light' (Light River).

"I was not a bullock-driver pure and simple, for I always kept my farm and dairy going, and while my crops of wheat and hay were growing I was carting. For 26 years I made an annual profit on my farm of £800. This I have kept and rolled into something larger."⁸

Additional early land purchases around Cheltenham and Regency Park

Richard certainly had done that! Throughout the 1840's and 1850's he purchased additional farming land near Adelaide, all north of the River Torrens. In 1844 he was listed in a census as holding the land at Tam O'Shanter Belt and his stock comprised 48 cattle and 1 pig. In 1847 he bought Section 419 at Cheltenham, comprising 134 acres. The following year he bought three lots of five acres, being parts of the 80 acre sections numbered 401, 107, 408, and 413, for £18 in all. This land was bought to provide Richard with access from his Tam O'Shanter Belt farm to Section 419 at Cheltenham. The 5 acre lots ran in a strip along what is now Ninth Avenue, Woodville North.

In August 1849 he bought all of Section 402, being 80 acres, for £160 from Richard Frew (of Frewville fame) and George Morphett (of Morphettville fame). This land was where the present Angle Park Greyhound Racing Track is situated, on the western side of Days Road. His land extended on both the west and east sides of Days Road and included the present Harold Tyler Reserve and the golf course at Regency Park. Richard was farming Section 419 and dairying at the home farm. The Cheltenham land fronted Port Road and is partly occupied today by the Cheltenham Cemetery, which Richard and Ann are buried.

In December 1850 he purchased from Robert Miller all of Sections 389 and 390, a total of 160 acres, for £480. This land was at present day Regency Park, between Days Road and Naweena Road, bounded at the north by present Taminga Street and at the south by Camira Street. In October 1853 he paid Henry Ayers (of Ayers House) £800 for all of Section 380,

⁸ Ibid.

being 80 acres. This land was on the western side of Churchill Road where the Islington railway workshops were later located.

In November 1857 Richard decided to construct a road to connect his land at Cheltenham (section 419) and at Regency Park (389 and 390) so he purchased for £12 from Peter Ford, sawyer, of Adelaide Tiers, 5 acres being parts of sections 401, 407, 408, and 413.

As quickly as his land purchases were blossoming around him, so were his children. He now had eleven children, eight boys and three girls. His older children were by now in their late teens and were assisting to run the expanding dairy and farming enterprise. Mary Ann organised the large family and the busy household, while Richard did the farming, spending many gruelling hours behind a horse and plough. Richard was said to be a disciplinarian, but with a soft heart, and that was probably the ideal temperament for the father of so many sons. All the children grew up in this loving home to be strong adults, ready to stand and thrive independently.

The family of Richard and Mary Day were:

Name	Birthdate	Place
Thomas	1 November 1838 (died January 1839)	Walkerville
Robert	22 January 1840	Walkerville
Thomas	7 September 1841	Prospect Village
Elizabeth	30 September 1843	Tam O'Shanter Belt
Richard	12 December 1844	Tam O'Shanter Belt
Mary Ann	9 August 1846	Tam O'Shanter Belt
Luke	29 February 1848	Tam O'Shanter Belt
Walter	1 September 1849	Tam O'Shanter Belt
William	20 April 1851	Tam O'Shanter Belt
Henry	9 May 1853	Tam O'Shanter Belt
Harriett	15 November 1854	Tam O'Shanter Belt
James	28 July 1857	Tam O'Shanter Belt

Service to Local Government

Richard was now in his early forties and, as if he didn't have enough on his hands, was turning his mind to municipal affairs. At that time the whole of his land lay in the area of the now defunct Yatala District Council.

This council held its first meeting in Adelaide on the 9th July 1853. There were only three councillors for most of its early history and elections were held annually. The council district originally comprised most of the Hundred of Yatala, which was nearly all of the Adelaide suburbs north of the River Torrens.

As time went by and areas became more closely settled, various regions began to break away and form their own more localised councils, some of them being the Prospect, Walkerville, Hindmarsh, Salisbury, Elizabeth, and Tea Tree Gully councils. From this list it can be seen what a large area the original Yatala District Council covered. As a result of these breakaways, the council area was considerably reduced and eventually the name was

changed to Enfield City Council – all that was left of the original Yatala District Council - and this was subsequently amalgamated with Port Adelaide.

On 24 January 1859 a meeting of ratepayers was held for the purpose of electing a councillor to replace Mr Jas Pitcher who had resigned upon leaving the Colony. Mr C.J. Folland and Mr Jas. Rofe proposed and seconded that Mr Richard Day of Tam O'Shanter Belt be elected to fill the vacancy and so he was duly elected.

Richard was to serve many years as a councillor for the Yatala District Council. At the end of his term in 1860 he proposed for re-election but was out-voted. In July 1864 he rejoined the Council and served until July 1867, when he declined to propose for re-election. In 1872 he again proposed and was voted in, then serving until 1875 when he abstained from proposing.

Richard continued to keep a keen interest in council affairs. Many of the local roads were nothing but dirt tracks. Much of the district was still unfenced and straying stock were a constant source of work for the appointed ranger, who was unpaid but received half the fines. Because of this there were many complaints to council as to the impartiality of the various rangers. In October 1877 Richard wrote to the council regarding damage done to his property by straying cattle and stated that he would willingly pay a special rate for 'an efficient and impartial ranger'. This last comment was apparently a snipe at the ranger's lack of zeal regarding straying stock from a particular neighbour.

Buying more land, Old Colonist celebrations, and family life

During the early 1860's Richard began to look at expanding his investments into farming land beyond Tam O'Shanter Belt, and in particular to the north on the Adelaide Plains and into the districts beyond Gawler. Over the next ten years he purchased various sections of farming land at Reeves Plains (3 farms), Gawler River (1 farm), Two Wells (1 farm), and Kangaroo Flat (7 farms), some of which were occupied by his family and some of which were leased to tenant farmers.

28 December is a date now celebrated annually in South Australia as Proclamation Day. On that day in 1871 a large banquet was held at the Adelaide Town Hall to honour all surviving Old Colonists, officially being those pioneers of the 1836 to 1840 period. Being one of the Old Colonists, Richard was among those who attended this banquet. All those attending had their portrait taken by a prominent photographer, Mr T Duryea, and these were mounted on a large display board, now held in State Records, and Richard's portrait is among these.

In June 1874 Richard was one of the petitioners who signed a petition to Governor Musgrave calling for the incorporation of the Town of Hindmarsh. Richard had for some years owned land at Croydon and was using a track which he had cut through the bush between his Croydon and Tam O'Shanter Belt properties to drive his dairy cattle and farm machinery back and forth. This track became known as Day's Road, the title it still bears today as a major suburban arterial road.

This was a period when many of Richard and Mary's children were marrying and beginning their own families. Many of the marriages and births of the family took place at the Tam O'Shanter Belt farmhouse.

Supporting Experimental Farming

On the afternoon of Friday 5 April 1878 about fifty gentlemen interested either in agriculture or manufactures met on Richard's farm at Tam O'Shanter Belt, by invitation of Messrs John Colton & Co, to witness a trial of the Osborne mowing and reaping and binding machine. An *Advertiser* newspaper reporter present said,

"It was not to be expected that in a stubble field where the straw had been a good deal trodden down that the capabilities of the machine could be shown to the best advantage, nevertheless it performed all that that the inventors claimed for it, in a most surprising and satisfactory manner. The stubble, rough as it was, was cut clean and close to the ground, the straws laid neatly together, and bound tightly in wire in regular sized sheaves ... the machine is warranted to reap and bind an acre of wheat per hour, and can be easily drawn by one pair of horses. They can be delivered in Adelaide at £75 each. Mr Case drove the machine at Mr Day's farm on Friday and it was sold before it left the ground. As it is the only one of the kind in the Colony, Messrs Colton & Co stipulated that it should remain for some time at their establishment in Currie Street for exhibition. There was also on the ground one of the Hollingsworth hayrakes, a light, beautiful and efficient instrument... "

Government buys Tam O'Shanter Belt for sewerage farm

In 1878, the same year as this field trial, the State Government decided to pass an Act to purchase land for a sewerage farm to service Adelaide and North Adelaide. This was to be the first water-borne sewage system in the Southern Hemisphere. It was intended to operate by means of a downhill gradient and so a flat, low-lying area was needed. Two locations were considered; Findon and Tam O'Shanter Belt.

"The latter was chosen because of the large area of land available, the price was much less, and the outlet cheaper and better. The government's agent reported that the sections at Tam O'Shanter Belt were valued at £30 per acre. Most sections were fenced with sheep-proof fencing and used as depots for sheep coming to market and for butchers' purposes. In order to satisfy themselves regarding the suitability of the land for the proposed purpose, the Commissioners, in 1879, interviewed local landholders.

"One interviewee, Andrew Shillabeer, farmer and Chairman of the Yatala South District Council, said he had resided at Tam O'Shanter Belt for 38-39 years. When he first went there, there were red gums, blue gums, sheoaks and wattles growing luxuriantly. He grew mostly hay, and also wheat. He drank water from the wells and the cattle thrived on it. (Mr Shillabeer was obviously in a selling mood.)

"Richard Day, also a former councillor, and perhaps because he sensed imminent acquisition, gave an entirely different description to that of Mr Shillabeer. Stating to the Commissioners that he had lived in the area for about 30 years and owned four sections (320 acres) he commented that 40 to 50 acres were affected by floodwaters. He did not use water from wells: he used tanks; but well water was good for cattle. Day was adamantly against the proposal. He said, "I am of the opinion that the land will never be suitable for a sewerage farm. I think it will require draining instead of watering."

Day's desire to retain his land was not fulfilled. In September 1880, the government, in accordance with The Adelaide Sewers Act No.106 of 1878, acquired two sections (380 and 390, 160 acres) of his property, for which £8,000 compensation was paid.”⁹

Richard had been so desperate to retain this land that at one stage in negotiations he offered £1,000 to the government to allow him to retain it. Despite that offer, the land was acquired by the government on 15 September 1880 and the Day family had to move from their old homestead. The name Tam O'Shanter Belt was destined to slip into history as the area now came to be known as the Islington Sewage Farm, and from 1975 to be renamed again as the suburb of Regency Park.

Richard's views about the unsuitability of the locality for a sewerage farm were eventually proven correct. “By the early 1920's complaints about the smells from, and overloaded nature of, the Sewage Farm were heard from many different quarters ... the obnoxious conditions existing in the low-lying area to the north of the Islington Sewage Farm were not ... easily dispelled.”¹⁰

The Sewage Farm was closed down in 1966 and although most of the area was subdivided for light industry, the 4.5 acres containing the treatment works and farm buildings, named *Sunnybrae Farm*, were heritage listed in 1981 and are now used as a museum and function centre. Located at Gallipoli Grove, Regency Park, they include the Richard Day Restaurant.

‘Croydon Villa’

Though he still retained the Angle Park property, Richard and his family left the old Tam O'Shanter Belt homestead and moved to his farm land at Croydon. This land was bounded by the present South Road, Torrens Road, Port Road, and Croydon Avenue. He had bought the first of his land there on 2 April 1873, and it comprised Part Section 374, being 58 acres. Upon deciding to move there, Richard built a substantial villa-style house and barn which stood well back off South Road, with a long driveway leading to the house. In its heyday the house was surrounded by extensive gardens and trees.

They called this home *Croydon Villa* and he continued to farm. The homestead was located at what is now 14 St Lawrence Street, Croydon North. The house stood in large grounds and was used as a residence until the early 1970's when it was demolished and replaced by a collection of home units in a precinct named *Day's Court*.

By now considerably wealthy, the comfortable years that Richard and Mary Ann were to spend at *Croydon Villa* were in stark contrast to the struggle of their pioneering days. Along with having the proceeds from the sale of Tam O'Shanter Belt, Richard owned many farming properties at the time of the Land Tax Assessment on 1 March 1885.

In that Assessment his then 98 acres at Croydon North was valued at £7,200. In addition he had by now a total of twelve farms in the Kangaroo Flat, Two Wells, and Reeves Plains districts which had a total area of 4,342 acres and a total assessed value of £18,746.

⁹ Enfield and the Northern Villages, H John Lewis, Corp of the City of Enfield

¹⁰ Water South Australia – A history of the E&WS, 1986 , Marianne Hammerton, Wakefield Press, p 161 & 218

On some of these twelve farms were seven sons and one daughter (Elizabeth), and their families. Richard's intentions were to set up each of his children on their own farming property before his death. Being the astute businessman that he was, he never actually signed over the ownership of these farms to his children until just before his death. This was typical of his attitude toward his children in which he was said to be very generous, but he ruled them all with an iron fist.

Death of Mary Ann and Richard's remarriage

On 20 September 1886 Mary Ann Day died at her home, Croydon Villa, of "Diabetes Mellitus". Aged 70 years at the time of her death, she was buried in one of the largest plots in the Cheltenham Cemetery. Richard purchased 20 adjoining normal sized grave allotments, in two rows of 10, and surrounded the whole lot with an ornate cast iron fence and entrance gate. In the centre he placed a tall white marble obelisk and as an epitaph he wrote, "*A kind mother and a loving wife.*".

The following year Richard remarried and although his second wife, Miss Ellen Hannah Sims, also from Gloucester, was too old to have any children, they remained faithful and loving companions.

In 1890 Richard was visited by the biographer, Mr J Smillie, and a brief biography appears on page 159 of Smillie's book, *Descriptive Australia*, published in Adelaide in 1890. Smillie described Richard as being, "one of the old pioneers who have done so much to build up and develop the colony".

Donates land for Croydon Railway Station

The 1890s was the period when the suburbs of Adelaide began to encroach on the outskirts of Richard's Croydon North farm and so he began to consider subdividing the farm into residential allotments. The railway from Adelaide to Port Adelaide passed right by this land and agitation by local residents for a railway station somewhere in the Croydon area became strong in 1883 when a deputation to the Hindmarsh Council presented a petition signed by 170 residents of the adjacent areas. It was claimed that due to the increase in population and business in the area there was a need to have trains stop near the Croydon Crossing (over South Road). It was claimed that all that was needed was a small platform and that it would enhance the business and prosperity of the area.

Richard agreed with the petitioners and offered to sell some of his own land adjacent to the railway line, at just a nominal figure, to be used for the station site. For several years the railways objected to this suggestion of a new station, but were finally forced to relent and so in 1888 the Croydon Railway Station was opened, the offer of the land from Richard having been accepted. This apparently generous offer by Richard had its advantages to him, as it was handy to have the attraction of a railway station nearby when his farming land was subdivided into residential allotments.

Subdividing Croydon North

Soon after the railway station was established, Richard began to subdivide that part of his farm nearest Port Road and the railway line. Eventually he was to subdivide the whole Croydon North farm, but he did it in three stages. After the land nearest the railway station

was sold, he divided the central portion of 26 acres in 1897-8, and a few years later this was followed by the remaining portion nearest Torrens Road.

Donation of land for retirement homes

Amid all this capitalisation Richard retained a charitable spirit and, when it was proposed to build homes for elderly citizens in the Hindmarsh area, Richard announced that he would donate part of his land facing South Road as a site. The homes were to be known as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Homes, in celebration of Queen Victoria's jubilee.

Three cottages were built at first and Richard was a guest of honour at the ceremony when the foundation stone was laid on 31 July 1897 by the Governor of South Australia, Sir T Powell Buxton. Three additional homes were added a few years later and in 1928 three more were built. All the buildings were paid for by public subscription and maintained by the accumulation of nominal rents and donations. The nine cottages are still in use for their original purpose, although they may eventually have to be re-sited due to road widening plans for South Road.

Naming the Croydon North streets.

By now, Richard's family were all adults with families of their own, and on a memorable day in 1899 they all gathered at *Croydon Villa* to celebrate his 80th birthday. A group photo was taken showing Richard proudly surrounded by his family. Richard was so proud of his family that when he subdivided the Croydon North farm he named all the streets in the new suburb after them.

Apart from Days Road, the family surname is also perpetuated in Day Terrace, which runs parallel to the railway line and has expanded from the original short length to include the former Tait Terrace and Station Place. The streets named after his children are Robert Street, Henry Street, William Street, Hurtle Street, Harriet Street, Elizabeth Street, and Thomas Street. Ann Street was named after his first wife, Mary Ann, and Ellen Street after his second wife. Ann Street was later renamed Cedar Avenue by the Hindmarsh Council due to duplication of streets with the same name.

The last portion to be subdivided, nearest Torrens Road, was done by son Thomas and his wife, Eleanor Mary. She had come from Nova Scotia in Canada and was influential in naming the remaining streets as Scotia Street, St. Lawrence Avenue (after the river), Bedford Street (town in Nova Scotia), and Dartmouth Street (town in Nova Scotia).

Death and legacy

Having seen in the beginning of a new century, Richard was aging but still in relatively good health up until his sudden death from a cerebral haemorrhage (stroke) at his Croydon Villa home on 31 March 1900, aged 81 years. He was interred with his first wife, Mary Ann, in the Cheltenham Cemetery.

Just prior to his death he had dispersed his farming properties among his children and had made a Will in 1898 to dispose of the remainder of his large estate. In this Will he named his son, Thomas, and his second wife, Ellen, as his executors and sole beneficiaries. On 8 May 1900, a few months after his death, Ellen formally renounced her executorship and claim to

the estate and made it over in favour of Thomas. Thomas undertook to support her until her death.

And so, although Richard and Mary Ann had accumulated considerable wealth during their life time of hard work and frugal habits (some even considered Richard to be a miser), his charitable donations and his fair and doting distribution of that wealth among their numerous children has meant that the bulk has been diluted through the succeeding generations. Richard's pride and joy was his family and it was his proud boast that he had lived long enough to see seven generations of his family, from his great grandfather to his great grandchildren.

Richard's contribution toward pioneering his adopted homeland has been acknowledged further in the naming of the *Richard Day Reserve*. This is located at the corner of Durham and York Terrace and Lachlan Street, Ferryden Park, and was officially opened by the Mayor of the City of Port Adelaide Enfield on 28 January 2005.

But the real memorials to Richard and Mary Ann Day are not just their grand pioneering story, or the success they made of life, or the many street names, but their eight sons and three daughters still living at the time of their death and the many hundreds of their descendants who continue today to contribute to the Australian nation and its way of life.