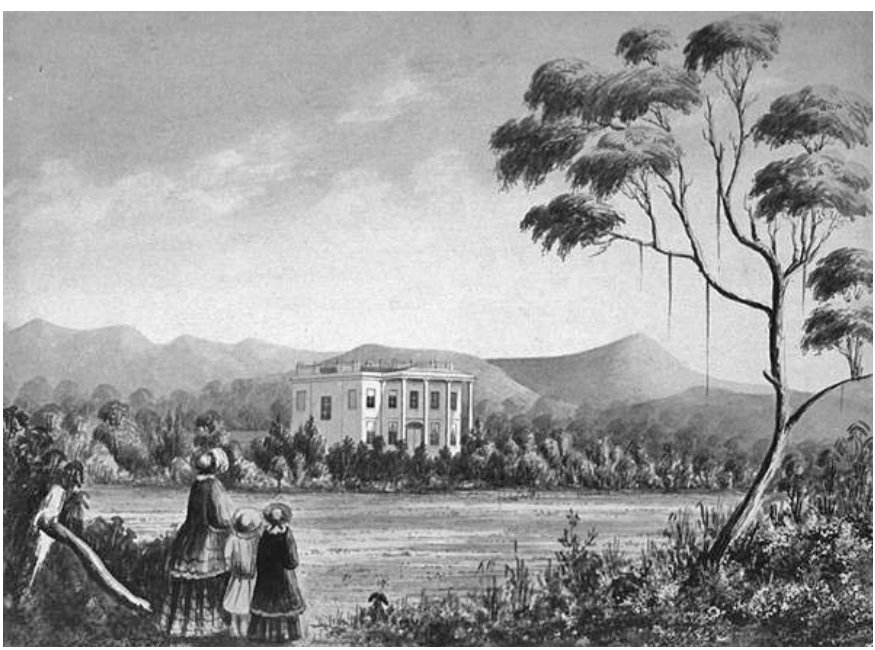
# 22 – Around Longford

The places that follow can all be visited easily during a stay in Longford or Launceston. At least two of them, Brickendon and Woolmers, also have accommodation on the estate.

## Clarendon

This porticoed, three-storey, neo-classical homestead, 9 kilometres south of Evandale on Nile Road, was completed in 1838 to replace an earlier timber house. Outstanding in its day, it was not in good shape in 1962 when it was donated with nine acres to the National Trust, and took ten years to renovate, opening to the public in 1972. Its history is told in *Clarendon and Its People* (MJ Maddock, 1996). And by 'people', the author means not only the owners of the house and its estate: he lists, with all the detail he could find, those involved in their running over the years, and even the names of horses. The 1850 watercolour by Susan Fereday (p172) gives a good impression of its grandeur and setting. And the Coxes entertained appropriately.



*46.* Clarendon, by Susan Fereday, courtesy of the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office

The bigger, finer Clarendon was built by James Cox when he had been married nearly ten years to Eliza Collins, daughter of Tasmania's first Lieutenant Governor and his mistress, Margaret Eddington (p37). By the

time she was ten, Eliza owned 900 sheep; in 1824, under the name Eliza Eddington, she was granted 500 acres not far from Clarendon, and she had been educated at Ellinthorp Hall and Hannah Clark's earlier school (p136) so, aged 19, she did not come empty-handed to her marriage in May 1829 at St John's Launceston (p376).

James Cox moved from New South Wales to Tasmania in 1814. He was to become a magistrate, and twice a member of the Legislative Council, as well as a major pastoralist. I suspect that the Spanish merino ram he bought in 1829 was one of Eliza Forlong's originals (p340). By 1864, his family lived on an estate of over 5,000 acres and he owned other properties let to tenants. He formed the village of Nile (called Lymington until 1910) to house Clarendon's farmworkers and, in 1862, he and Eliza donated three acres for St Peter's Church and burial ground there, together with 200 acres of glebe.

By his first marriage in 1812, Cox had eight children. **Mary Cox** (née Connell, 1793–1828) died a few months after the birth of her last child. Perhaps because she was the daughter of a convict mother, James was not constrained by the antecedents of his second wife. There is some evidence, though, that Cox may have discriminated against his first family once his second was established. It comes from Annie Baxter's journal (p266) and editor Lucy Frost's elaboration. Annie's friend **Rebecca Cox** (1814–1870) had married Walter Glas Cheine/Chiene in 1840 and was widowed on the Mainland the year of Annie's 21 June 1849 entry:

> Today I went over to Clarendon; it is a beautiful house, & the Grounds very pretty.
>
> Poor Mrs Chiene! When I spoke to Mr Cox of her coming away from where she was, he said very coldly 'Has she no neighbours? She must live in some small town, where she can educate her children'!
>
> When I looked at the fine house, & heard him say 'That is my Overseer's house, this is my Woolshed'; and then brought his unfortunate child to my mind's eye – the beautiful story of the Prodigal son recurred to me … Oh! How I grieve for her! But then again this is to be said in his favour; that it would never do to risk her polluting his second family!

Lucy Frost adds: 'When Eliza arrived at Clarendon, Mary's children were dispersed elsewhere …'

I believe Cox met Eliza at Ellinthorp Hall; she was known to be there aged 18. His own daughters were at the school, as is shown in a historically, as well as contemporaneously, useful letter he wrote some months after their marriage to Hannah Clark and which she forwarded to the *Hobart Town Courier* in October 1829:

> Dear Madam, – I can scarcely find words to express my surprise at a report which I understand has been circulated in Hobart town, stating that I had removed my daughters, also Misses Watts and Connelly [Eliza's half sisters] from your establishment. How such a report could have originated I am at

> a loss to account, it being well known to all my friends and acquaintance, that their visit to Clarendon was a short holyday given them on account of your approaching accouchement, and that from long experience (5 years) of the kind attention you invariably give your pupils, and the excellent management of your establishment in general, I never could entertain the slightest intention of removing the ladies in question, and I trust you will publicly contradict so false a report.

A mystery remains: little Julia, Mary Cox's last child, died at Ellinthorp Hall on 17 April 1829, not quite a year old. One has to assume that she had been with a family party visiting the girls there and been taken ill. But it may have had something to do with the girls' temporary removal. Two weeks after Julia's death, her father and Eliza Collins were married.

With Eliza, James Cox had eleven more children. Four of their daughters are of particular interest. **Eliza Cox** (1830–1897), their eldest child, was a recognised water-colourist. Her 1860 painting of Clarendon shows a different view from Susan Fereday's, one from across a sweep of the South Esk River that ran past the end of the stable block and coach house. Both paintings are in the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts. As well as producing a large collection of flower paintings, young Eliza also painted at Marion Villa, the family's 1828 summer home at Low Head on the north coast near George Town; 'Low Head Light House Entrance Tamar River Tasmania' dates from about 1860 and is in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston. Since Susan and her husband lived in George Town, they probably met the Coxes there; Eliza and Susan may even have painted together. Susan's undated watercolour 'Lighthouse at Low Head' is in the Allport. Marion Villa is at 1067 Low Head Road; I have been unable to ascertain its status.

After the death of her widowed mother in 1869, Eliza went to live at Marion Villa and applied for a licence to grow oysters there; traces of her oyster beds remain. In 1877, aged 47, she married the Reverend John Cowpland Dixon, who was also artistic and taught Sarah Ann Fogg (p350). Following her husband's death in England, where they had gone to retire, Eliza Cox Dixon returned to Tasmania and lived at Euroka in Evandale – a house on the High Street and marked on the 'Evandale Heritage Walk' map. She (as Eliza Dixon) and her mother (Eliza Cox) are buried in the Cox family vault in St Andrew's cemetery, Evandale.

*Life at Clarendon: The Reminiscences of Cornelia and Rosa Cox* (1988) is a slender booklet containing some slight writing by the youngest daughters of Eliza and James Cox. The recollections of **Cornelia Cox** (b1844), who was, in 1873, to marry John Innes, son of Lysbeth Grey Innes and her husband (p269), cover three pages. She writes of one of the most important events in Tasmania's history (p172) when she was nine:

> Another of my recollections is when a number of children were given a silver medal to commemorate Cessation of Transportation, which meant that no more convicts would be sent from England to Tasmania or van

> Diemen's Land, as it was called, this was a great event and celebrated with enthusiasm.

The reminiscences of **Rosa Cox** (later Woltmann, b1846) are a little longer. She writes of Eliza at Clarendon:

> My mother was devoted to her garden and superintended the grounds and arrangements and that was often very hard work owing to the difficulty of obtaining competent workmen. After the house was built and the grounds were being laid out, my mother had a number of English trees planted which flourished surprisingly well, much to her delight, as many people thought such trees would not do well in our climate.

The trees included elms, which have survived. Eliza, according to Rosa, was also an authority on mushrooms. Of the trip up the river to Launceston (from George Town?) and her sister Eliza, Rosa wrote:

> I have not mentioned the pretty seaweeds which grew in the waters and for which we dredged from a boat. My oldest sister pressed them beautifully and sent her collection to a museum in London, the South Kensington, I think it was. It was a lot of work as the seaweeds had to be floated in a dish of seawater, then cartridge paper was carefully slipped under them they were lifted out the fronds arranged with a thin, pointed stick, dry cloths put over them and then pressed under a weight on flat boards and left for some days to dry. The seaweeds contain some gelatinous substance which caused them to adhere to the paper.

The editor explains that the seaweed specimens are in the Science Museum, labelled 'Miss Cox XII/64'. Her sister, Rosa tells us, was also 'an excellent archeress and joined a Club in Town and won prizes at some of the tournaments there'. Eliza Marsh (p258) visited Clarendon on 11 October 1851 and wrote:

> After lunch we all walked over to Mr Cox at Clarendon, an excellent mansion with a park in which English deer and kangaroos are kept. Miss Cox walked with us. Saw an Emu with four young ones. The male bird was on the nest 8 weeks without tasting a bite of food or once moving. The grounds are not laid out tastefully, there is no good drive up to the house, but the house itself is handsome and well furnished. A very nice family of grown up and little daughters.

In *Placing Women*, Miranda Morris is rather scathing about Clarendon, 'which offers itself as a catalogue of unrelated objects … one room is called a nursery, but the objects are displayed antique shop-style, rendering them meaningless. Nor is there anything that suggests the life of Eliza Collins …' While sympathising with Miranda's thesis concerning women, history and places in Tasmania, it could be argued that those who owned the house after

the Cox family would not be likely to maintain any trace of previous owners' possessions; indeed, we know that in January 1882 Clarendon was entailed and the latest Cox owner was deeply in debt. A huge clearance sale was held – everything was put up for sale. And in 1917 Mr and Mrs Boyes had the house renovated by Beau Turner of Nile.

The fourth Cox daughter to be noted is Margaret, but she fits better into the story of Entally (p363).

## Brickendon, Woolmers, Panshanger and the Archers

If ever there were intricately entwined Tasmanian families, they are those who lived in the three Archer homesteads just south of Launceston and to the west of the Midland Highway. You can approach them from Evandale, or from Longford.

Thomas Archer of Woolmers, William of Brickendon and Joseph of Panshanger were brothers each developing estates near each other in the 1820s; another brother, Edward, and their father also emigrated and established other Tasmanian estates (p365).

Of the three properties today, approaching from Wellington Street, Longford, where it is signposted, you come first to Brickendon. It is a place to spend a night or two pleasantly in a cottage, either one of two built for workers in 1820–30 and renovated, within the extensive gardens of the main homestead, or three new ones constructed from recycled timber adjacent to the farm, across the road from the homestead.

The farm village, dating back to the 1820s, with its old, carefully preserved buildings, including William Archer's original cottage, contributes to the pleasure of the stay. It is a working farm with over 1,000 sheep, cattle, and a variety of crops harvested between December and late autumn, and there are 3 kilometres of river frontage. The beautiful gardens surrounding the homestead are open to the public. The Georgian house itself, started in 1828 just before William Archer married, is still occupied by the family and, therefore, private, though Louise Archer is hospitable to a genuine researcher. Brickendon is the only one of the three houses lived in by descendants of the original Archer.

Woolmers, a colonial-style bungalow completed in 1819 with an 1843 Italianate façade, has been without an Archer in residence since 1994. It is now run by a historical foundation (the Woolmers Foundation Inc.), and open to the public. It is a homestead deserving a visit, with a well-conducted tour of the house and gardens overlooking the Macquarie River and including the National Rose Garden. You get a real impression of Archer family life throughout the generations – they never threw anything out – as well as of other settler families of their ilk. There is cottage accommodation (built in 1840) within the grounds, and a shop and restaurant.

Panshanger, the property furthest from Longford, is a bit of an oddity. The internet suggests that it offers high class accommodation and facilities, and it is extolled there by those who have enjoyed it. But any attempt to enter the grounds along a very long drive just to see a fine house depicted several

times by Emily Bowring (p344) whose husband managed the property from 1853–55, is thwarted by a large and insistent keep out sign. Woe betide the adventurous researcher who ignores the sign or, indeed, attempts to mend fences by making an appointment directly on the telephone with the lady of the house; my arrangement went unheeded by her husband and I was once again thrown out.

Two of Emily's drawings 'Panshanger from the North East' and 'Panshanger from the South East' are included in *Sketches in Early Tasmania and Victoria by Emily Bowring* (edited by KR von Stieglitz, 1965). Another, with a wider vista, is in the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts.

Elinor Binfield, Hannah Clark's friend who opened a school in Hobart with her in 1823, married Joseph Archer of Panshanger the following year but had no children (p136). On her husband's death, Elinor returned to England and remarried. The paternal grandmother of Madge Edwards was Ann Hortle Archer who was a snob about the antecedents of Madge's maternal grandmother Dora Coverdale Sorell (p268). Ann and her husband lived first at Woolmers. Ann's mother-in-law was also her aunt – **Susanna(h) Archer** (née Hortle 1801–1875) who married Thomas Archer of Woolmers in 1816; six of their 14 children survived. GB Lancaster (p88) was descended from Susanna's elder sister, **Anne Hortle Lyttleton** (1797–1874). One of Susanna Archer's sons, Joseph, succeeded his childless uncle Joseph at Panshanger. But the property passed out of the Archer family in the early twentieth century. Madge wrote of Panshanger in the days of the younger Joseph:

> Farther away still [from Woolmers] was Panshanger where Great-uncle Joseph lived. I thought that one of the loveliest of all the Archer homes.
>
> In the Panshanger grounds I saw what is often called Archer's Folly, a tower evidently at one time used for fowls and pigeons. It was built originally for a sort of fortress in which the family could shut themselves up if raided by blacks or bushrangers.

The area had been Aboriginal hunting grounds, but the tower was never needed. It features in Emily Bowring's sketches.

Of Woolmers, Jane Reid Williams wrote in her journal in November 1836, 'The house is beautifully filled up, but is like a bungala rather than the residence of a man worth £15,000 a year.'

Glimpses of Susanna Archer of Woolmers a year later come from Annie Baxter's journal (p266). She was a bit of a stickler, as Annie found out after her escapade to Ben Lomond without her husband (pp349–50). She records in French in December 1837 (translated by her editor, Lucy Frost):

> On m'appelle *Coquette* – Mais je ne le suis pas – tant qu'on me *dame*, qui doit savoir bien mieux! [I have been called coquette – but I am not – although I have been damned by one who should know better] – My good spirit says – 'Annie don't be scandalous' …

*47.* Susanna Archer c1868, from Brown, *Madge's People*

The following July, Annie was again at Woolmers from Wednesday 18, and her behaviour had obviously not improved; Susanna had cause to lecture again: 'We had a long debate today on the propriety (or rather the impropriety) of waltzing – I have found this dance delightful …' And on Friday 20th: 'This evening Mrs Archer & I had a long debate on different subjects – one was that I set a bad example to young persons in this Colony – I cannot understand it – but it's too much trouble to enquire into the matter further –.'

In 1845, though, when Annie visited again, the family had suffered a double blow. Their son and heir, Thomas William, had died the previous year and the family financial house, Archers Gilles & Co, was in trouble. Susanna Archer kept to her room, and her husband, Thomas, to the estate. Annie was entertained by their daughter **Susan Archer** (b1825). Woolmers itself had not changed:

> They have beautiful paintings in the drawing room – and a fine piano. The Jessamine is grown over the Verandah in such immense quantities, and looks excessively pretty. The garden is not in good order, as the building interferes with it. They are adding three large rooms at the back of the

> house. They have reading every evening out of the Bible – and sing Psalms for some time, and prayers at night.

In 1868, Susanna, aged 73, still living at Woolmers, was hostess when Prince Alfred, first Duke of Edinburgh, visited. She wore an incredible diamond necklace. The dining table at Woolmers is set as it was that evening.

Thomas William's widow, **Mary Archer** (née Abbot, 1818–1874) and Susanna looked after Thomas III when, from the age of ten, he inherited Woolmers on his grandfather's death in 1850. He was educated in England and travelled abroad becoming uninterested in the farming of Woolmers which was let to tenants. His mother, Mary, was killed when she was thrown from her carriage aged 56 and crushed by the stampeding horses. By a horrible coincidence, Susanna's mother, **Ann Hortle** (née Wild, 1766–1814) had been run down and killed by a wild horse.

Thomas IV was also an absentee landlord; he was more interested in golf. **Marjorie Archer** (née Patten, 1894–1969) was the wife of the fifth Thomas Archer of Woolmers. He was more interested in growing apples. She was soon known as 'the Duchess' and led a vice-regal life, waving with a gloved hand from the Wolseley bought for her as a wedding present. Pink was Marjorie's colour, and floral her pattern, as her bedroom – its bed curtains and carpet – and her sitting room show. She doted on her only child, Thomas, wrapping him in cotton wool when he developed a chest complaint, and keeping him there. When he died, a virtual recluse, in 1994, it was the end of the dynasty and of Woolmers as a family home.

Within sight of Woolmers, Brickendon had a different history. William Archer and his descendants were committed farmers. They travelled abroad to study, but came home to settle and work. Three generations still live there and farm; the latest William is the seventh.

As at Woolmers, there was a strong mother, this time **Phyllis Archer** (née Bisdee, 1904–2005; m1926). With an ailing husband, she made sure that Brickendon survived and that her teenage son knew his duty and his farming trade. When her husband died in 1952, Phyllis was left in control of the estate. She and Marjorie did not get on; indeed, while Marjorie was alive, the two families had little to do with each other. After her death, the Brickendon son attempted to help the Woolmers one. Phyllis died aged 101, but missed out on a telegram from the Queen because her birth certificate revealed that she had earlier deducted a year.

Louise Archer has said of Brickendon and its women, 'Each wife or female who has come onto the property has had very different attributes to them, but understand that the future of the farm is the most, or the future of the family is the most, important thing to consider.' It was to that end that they decided to open Brickendon to tourism.

Madge Edwards remembered Brickendon as a child at the turn of the twentieth century and wrote:

> Of the whole place, I remember best the bell that hung in the back courtyard and once called convict ticket-of-leavers from their labours, the great cedar of Lebanon in front and masses of crimson roses heavy with rain. I think I remember the roses because I had grown a trifle Tennysonian and that would have been just up his alley, to write of rain-drenched crimson roses.
>
> Across the road near the cottage still looking like a mill cottage, where the first Archers had lived, is one of the earliest of the colony's chapels. Architecturally it is a lovely little building, but when I saw it the bell was gone out of the tiny belfry and the chapel itself was neglected. Sheepskins were hung across the altar place and on the floor piles of them formed the only congregation.

Two of the Brickendon Archers' farm labourers were ticket-of-leave men, Thomas and John Flanagan, transported from Ireland in 1849 for stealing to feed their families during the famine, and ancestors of today's well-known Tasmanian family. Prior to transportation, they spent two years in a Dublin gaol. Thomas's wife **Mary Flanagan** (d1880) and seven children joined him in 1853. Martin Flanagan writes in his memoir *In Sunshine or in Shadow* (2002) that 'A number of the women of Thomas's family worked in [the] Georgian mansion.' Brickendon's records show that Mary worked for Mrs Archer, two of the children worked in the house, and two on the estate. Thomas was eventually a tenant farmer on another Archer property.

John Flanagan was assigned to the Archer estate Green Rises, on the road from Launceston to Cressy. He was joined by his wife **Bridget Flanagan** (1810 or 1820–1881). They were to have three sons in Tasmania and their descendant Lyn Flanagan has stood with her father at the gate of Green Rises and wondered how it would have felt to Bridget and John 'to look at the beautiful Western Tiers (mountain range to the west) each morning when they awoke'. Bridget died of a tumour and is buried in the Longford Catholic Cemetery. Tim Flanagan, a local doctor descended from Mary and Thomas, writes tellingly in an email: 'her headstone is about the first one you see as you walk in, [I] often ride my bike past, just to ponder'. The gothic Brickendon chapel, built in 1836 for the convict labour, is still there but in rather better shape than in Madge's day, and available for weddings.

The Flanagans were at Brickendon and Green Rises in the days of William Archer II and his wife **Caroline Archer** (née Harrison, 1804–1862); it was they who hired Kezia Hayter as governess to the next generation (p153).

The experience of visiting Brickendon is about as different from Woolmers as you can imagine. A gentle rivalry would not be surprising. Both are revealing of the different branches of the Archer ancestors. Madge captured conversation and attitudes of the extended family at Christmas:

> We visited and were visited. The older women talked gently about friends and relatives, gardens and church happenings. The younger ones had tennis parties and afternoons, and a garden party or two. The older men when they met together were never bored. The talked of sheep – the buying of

> sheep, the sale of sheep, the price of sheep and wool. Sheep, sheep, sheep. I found that to be a sheep owner was virtually to be an aristocrat. But the sheep must be kept whole. One could trade in whole sheep and still not be in trade. If it were bought by the sheep but sold in pieces, by the leg, the rump or the loin, the owner was in trade and not of the aristocracy.

As I write, new bonds are being forged. A walkway is being constructed between Brickendon and Woolmers allowing visitors to walk the paddocks and even better appreciate the landscape.

## Bowthorpe (Mary Bowater Smith)

If you return to Longford and leave it to the north by Pateena Road, half-way along on the left is Bowthorpe. It can be seen from the road. Approaching it from the north when we visited it in 2006, was a fading sign 500 metres in advance saying that it served cream teas, which seemed ideal. But the tea room and antique shop had closed in 1999 and since then it has been privately owned; we were, however, helpfully received.

The house is not that built by Mary Bowater Smith, one of the first women convicts in Tasmania (p27). This one was built just after her death in 1849 by a Cox family. But the Cochranes, in jest or quite seriously, maintain that her ghost roams the house; indeed, I have had an other-worldly email from her.

Mary was certainly a larger-than-life character. Her husband, Thomas, drowned crossing the Esk in 1823, leaving Mary his land and possessions. Irene Schaffer thinks that, anyway, she was the brains behind the marriage. She went on to accumulate much land and stock, and was renowned for her racing stable. She was known as Moll Smith in the Longford and Epping Forest area, and one of her properties was dubbed Moll Smith's Bottom. When she died, aged 84, her family in England benefited, including the son she had left behind but with whom she had kept in touch.

## Entally (Hadspen)

Pateena Road leads you to the main highway west from Launceston; a few miles along it, at Hadspen, is Entally. If there are ghosts about, this one would be that of Mary Reibey. It was she, travelling from Sydney in 1818 with her son Thomas, who secured the initial land grant of 300 acres on which he built Entally. By then, she was a widow running a commercial empire. But the Australian life of **Mary Reibey** (née Haydock, 1777–1855) had not started like that. In 1790, the Lancashire lass, aged 13, and dressed as a boy, was caught horse-stealing, convicted and transported. In Sydney in 1794, she married a young Irishman, Thomas Reibey, in the service of the East India Company. He set up a trading company which she managed when he was travelling. I understand that Catherine Gaskin's *Sara Dane* (1954), which I enjoyed many years ago, drew inspiration from Mary's life. Although she remained in Sydney,

some of the seven children she was left to bring up when her husband died in 1811, settled in Tasmania so that she had occasion to visit Entally.

The house today, leased from the State and managed as a heritage site open to the public by a private company, is not quite as it was when Emma von Stieglitz sketched it in 1835. Its two towers constructed to protect against raids by bushrangers and Aborigines were removed in the 1850s.

*48.* Entally in 1835, by Emma von Stieglitz, from von Stieglitz, *Early Van Diemen's Land 1835–1860*

Entally is a place for the prurient visitor: you can be shown the French windows which led then from the billiard room to the garden through which, so I was told, Thomas Reibey III was spied in 1868 canoodling with **Margaret Blomfield** (née Cox, 1842–1927; m1864) Eliza and James Cox's married daughter. Reibey, by this time an ordained priest and Archdeacon, and his wife **Catherine McDonal Reibey** (née Kyle, d1896) were friends of the Cox family of Clarendon (p353); he was godfather to the Blomfields' daughter and, on James Cox's death in 1866, Reibey had been adviser to Eliza, trustee of the Clarendon estate, and mediator in the family quarrel about the division of property among the daughters.

Blomfield accused Reibey of intimacy with his wife at their Blomfield/Cox property and waited in Launceston 'for a week, in order to horsewhip the Archdeacon in a public street'. When nothing happened, Blomfield took matters further: Reibey was accused in a petition of having 'intent to commit rape'. He sued for libel and lost. The scandal rocked Tasmania, and Reibey resigned and disappeared from public life to Entally. By 1874, though, he was an elected member of the House of Assembly, then Premier from 1876 to 1877, continually holding office thereafter.

Catherine's feelings in all this can only be imagined. The daughter of Thomas' tutor in England, she had married him in 1842 and travelled to Tasmania where he had just inherited Entally on the death of his father. The couple had no children and Catherine was often unwell. She survived the scandal, however, not dying until 1896. She was buried in the graveyard of the unfinished church at Hadspen for which she had laid the foundation stone 30 years earlier.

Mary Reibey lived to see her grandson's earlier rise, but not his dramatic fall. She was, however, alive when her daughter Eliza's husband was found to have committed fraud. Eliza has her place in the founding of the Methodist Ladies' College, Launceston (p380).

What makes the jigsaw of history so appealing is that eight years before the Blomfield scandal the Reverend Thomas and Catherine Reibey harboured another of his goddaughters, sent to escape scandal – this time Julia Sorell Arnold's physical objection to her husband's conversion to Catholicism (p268).

Mary Arnold was only four when the sky fell in on her family. Thomas Arnold wrote to his mother that Mary's 'temper it appears is greatly improved since she has been under Mrs Reibey's care'. He would travel up to Entally to teach Mary to read but he confessed to his sister that the girl who would become a famous novelist 'is by no means quick at that though so ready-witted in other things'.

Of all the fine Reibey possessions that adorn the house today, what caught my eye was a sampler of letters of the alphabet and numbers signed 'Mary Allen Reibey, Ellinthorp Hall, 1827' on the wall in a bedroom. The embroiderer was the older sister of the scandalous Reverend Thomas, and daughter of **Richarda Reibey** (née Allen), first mistress of Entally. **Mary Allen Reibey** (1818–1895) was nine when she stitched the sampler and must have been one of the first pupils of Ellinthorp (p138). She was to marry a nephew of Governor Arthur.

## Franklin House

Franklin village and Franklin House in it are on the old Midland Highway – Hobart Road – 6 kilometres southeast of central Launceston and 6 kilometres north west of Launceston Airport. The National Trust of Tasmania was founded in 1960 to save Franklin House, built in 1838, from encroaching industrial development.

While the village was named after Governor John Franklin and the house named by the National Trust after the village, Miranda Morris, in roundly criticising its heritage manifestation, writes: 'The closest association this house is likely to have had with the Franklins is as a blur in the landscape when they drove past on vice-regal visits to Launceston.' There are a couple of mementos of John Franklin's governorship in the house, and six of the Regency rosewood chairs in the dining room belonged to Jane Franklin. There is also a floral plate from the Franklins' dinner service.

Miranda does not favour the reinvention of the house with furniture and *objets* from hither and yon, but for me there is something touching about the way Tasmanians rallied round, contributing some of their own family heirlooms. And an aging, undated catalogue of the house's contents itemises the objects and their contributors. Among the pictures are at least one watercolour thought to be by Susan Fereday (p172) and a lithograph of one by Elizabeth Prinsep (p77).

From 1842 the house was a select boys' school run by William Keeler Hawkes and his wife since c1833 **Martha Hawkes** (née Green, 1808–1886) who had just arrived in Tasmania; the school lasted until 1866. Pupils included the sons and a nephew of **Hannah Bartley** (née Pickering, b1805; m1826) and her husband Theodore. Their story is told by Yvonne Phillips in *Bartley of Kerry Lodge* (1987). They were to have 15 children, twelve of whom survived early childhood, so it is not surprising that Hannah was to write variations of her 1845 diary entry 'My life is one continual scene of labour, care and anxiety. I am so weary and worn out – both in mind and body.'

Two years after the Hawkes set up their school, Martha successfully approached a local landowner who donated land and built a cottage for her Sunday School. That same year, William's sisters **Marianne Hawkes** (1803–1846) and **Charlotte Hawkes** (1819–1888) arrived in the hopes that the air would help Marianne's tuberculosis, but she survived only two years. Their sister **Elizabeth Hawkes** (1806–1873), also suffering, joined the family in 1854.

When Charlotte's letters to a nephew came to light, Dawn Dyson drew on them for *The Hawkes Family at Franklin House* (1999). Charlotte was a story book spinster: her caring skills no longer needed following Marianne's death, she took herself off from her brother's house to look after the children and run the house of Edward, the fourth Archer brother (p357), of Northbury, Wellington Street, Longford, and his wife **Susannah Archer** (née Moore, 1834–1890; m1834). The couple were to have three daughters and eight sons.

Charlotte stayed with the Archers for more than 40 years. When her widowed sister-in-law Martha died in 1886, she was permitted to reside at Franklin House. She wrote: 'It is a great treat. I have not been so happy for many a long day, 41 years in a situation enough to tire anyone out.' She had only 19 months to enjoy her newfound freedom.

On Charlotte's death, Susannah Archer looked after the affairs of her 'former companion, cook, manager and child nurse', writing to Charlotte's nephew: 'Indeed your Aunt arranged everything and made me promise that her wishes should be carried out.' The members of the Hawkes family are buried in St James's Church opposite the house.

In 1888, William Lyons Shaw Greer and his second wife **Annie Greer** (née Martin, c1853–1894) bought the property and called it The Hollies because of its beautiful holly trees. The Greers might not demand a mention except that, many years later, in 1986, Germaine Greer went looking for her Tasmanian father and described the painful hunt in *Daddy We Hardly Knew You* (1989).

She landed up at Franklin House and ordered a cup of tea and a salad in the café The Hollies; she continues:

> 'Is there a house called "The Hollies" hereabouts?' I asked, with a face red as fire.
>
> 'You're in it,' said the manageress. 'Franklin House used to be called "The Hollies" so they used the name for the tea-room.'
>
> I didn't want to say that it was my forebear who had called the house by that name, or that it was simply someone with the same surname as mine. And I didn't want to explain my absurd situation, prying as I was into matters that may have been none of my business. But, like most Launcestonians, the manageress was expressing a kindly interest, so I told her of my miserable state of not-knowing.
>
> 'Take a look around,' she said. 'You never know. There might be a clue.'

It was a wild goose chase.

The café today is a pleasant pit-stop. Writ large on its walls are the stories of the Leake family of Rosedale (p68) – a house still standing, but in private hands, on the road from Campbell Town to Cressy; and the Cottons of Kelvedon on the east coast (p157). Joy Spence, a volunteer of the National Trust, whose offices are in the house, was as sympathetic an informant as Germaine Greer's.