

10. Death of Johnny and his burial on the foreshore at McCrae

Johnny's death and burial occurred in a later and different era, the gold rush period, 11 years after the Protectorate moved from the Mornington Peninsula. I came upon the location of his grave when seeking information from George Gordon McCrae's journal about George Smith. Then George Smith turned out to be the earliest legal licence holder of the foreshore where Johnny was buried. I was struck with the intimacy, the connectedness of these people, black and white, in those far-off days: here are the same people, Bogy Bogy/Pereuk and George Smith, first met with in the Protectorate era.

And when I went down to the lighthouse precinct to estimate what George Gordon McCrae might have meant by 'a little to the south of the present lighthouse', it seemed obvious that Johnny was buried either beneath a public car park or possibly beneath Point Nepean Road. We must walk unknowingly over Aboriginal graves on the Mornington Peninsula, but it is quite a different matter to park vehicles and trailers on a grave once we know it is there. This chapter brings together all the information gathered about Johnny's death and the location of his grave site. Aboriginal Affairs Victoria will act on the matter.

The most well-known account of Johnnie's death comes to us from the journal of Georgiana McCrae: it survived almost by accident, being included in a portion of Georgiana's diary 'Scrip scrap' which had become separated from the rest of her journals and was found damaged and disordered in her desk:¹ it is a brief and moving account.

But the editor of Georgiana's journal, her grandson Hugh, has been damningly criticised in a recent PhD thesis² for his prejudiced and manipulative changes to the original text, as well as his insertions, which, taken together, subvert Georgiana's meaning: so shocking are these changes which Hugh McCrae made to his grandmother's journal that Weber concluded:

Once one has been made aware of the extent of the re-writing of Georgiana's journal the book can no longer be seen as the journal of Georgiana McCrae.³

1 McCrae 1966: 201.

2 Therese Weber, 'Port Phillip Papers: The Australian Journals of Georgiana McCrae' (Weber 2001). Mornington Peninsula Shire library has purchased a CD copy of this thesis now housed in its local history collection at Rosebud.

3 Weber 2001: 227.

My own comparisons of texts for those parts of Georgiana's story which I have used tend to confirm this strong statement, so the following account by Georgiana of Johnnie's death and burial is copied from Weber's manuscript.⁴ On Weber's CD-ROM, she has reproduced a photographic image of Georgiana's text on one page, and Weber's own transcription on the page facing. The following journal extract commences on 1 October 1851. Note that the spelling of the name is not fixed – Georgiana calls him Johnnie, and her son George Gordon McCrae spells the name as Johnny.

Death of Johnnie

A cold and frosty morning – Poor Old 'Bogie' in great distress as his son is dying – George went to administer what comfort he could – but the poor fellow was scarcely able to swallow anything – liquid – The old man trying to revive him by breathing into his mouth, and instead of allowing the lad to breathe his last in peace and quiet – the old man kept him in his arms, singing into his ear, & from time to time pulling up his eyelids to let him see the light of the sun – About noon we heard a loud Wail from the Lubras, and (the party were Qambying at the foot of our paddock outside the fence & the Cape Shanck road) and we knew by this that poor 'Johnnie' had been released from his sufferings – An hour later 'M^{rs} Bogie' came up to say 'Bogie' wished to see George 'to speak to him' – On George's return we learnt that the old man wanted string or rope to bind the corpse hand and foot, – & to help dig the grave.

The body was wrapped in the blanket and opossum rug in a sitting position, with the elbows resting on the knees, the chin supported by the left hand – and the right one supporting the right angle of the jaw bone – The strings were tightly swathed around, and George having dug a grave breast high – The Father and the (5th) stepmother deposited the body in the sand. They then covered it with twigs – and then – after placing the last bottle of medicine I had sent him and a new pannikin beside the body, the sand was replaced and well trodden-down and before George had left them – Bogie had begun to fence the space around with branches thickly set – Bogie says, he being old, does not intend to kill a blackfellow to satisfy Johnnie's death –⁵

2nd The day following – George went down to fix a stout wood slab as a/Head/mark for poor Johnnie's grave. His name deeply cut in a piece

4 Weber 2001: 654–659.

5 This description of the burial of Johnnie conforms closely to the archetype recounted in Thomas' lengthy paper on 'Manners and Customs of the Aborigines: Burial of the Dead' in C 339, CY 3695, ML.

of soft deel thereon thus⁶ – Bogie quite pleased to see his son’s remains marked ‘All the same ‘as white – fellow’– To-morrow Bogie goes to the Bush ‘to cry with others of his race’⁷ –

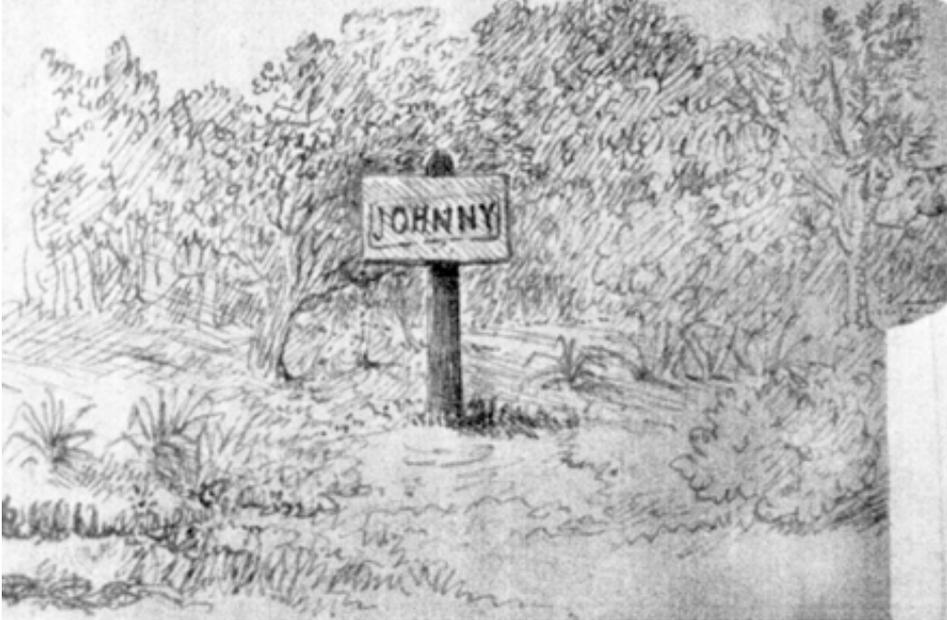


Fig 37. ‘Memorial Cross’

George Gordon McCrae. Georgiana also sketched this cross but George Gordon’s sketch is reproduced because he actually constructed the memorial for his friend. From the McCrae Papers reproduced with the permission of the State Library of Victoria.

3rd Bogie came up to ask me for a crepe hat-band similar to one on a Hat he pointed out to me so I had to take it off the Hat – & Bogie departed.

5th A taxed cart⁸ drove up – & a nimble-footed blackfellow sprang from it – and went hurriedly towards Johnnie’s grave, – and knelt down, thrust his hand into the mound of sand and inserted therein three or four gumleaves – and then returned to the cart – and went off towards the Green hills⁹ – No doubt the youth had done the needful to appease the manes of his fellow man – for it seems their belief is, that those leaves

6 Georgiana has drawn in her text an illustration of Johnnie’s memorial marker. Though Georgiana consistently spells the name as Johnnie in her own text, her drawing shows JOHNNY as does George Gordon’s illustration.

7 Weber notes in her analysis the sometimes incoherent use Georgiana makes of quotation marks, frequently forgetting to close them.

8 Weber’s footnote says that a taxed cart was a two-wheeled originally springless open cart used mainly for trade or agricultural purposes on which was charged only a reduced duty, removed entirely, in spite of the name, in the 1830s.

9 Colin McLear identifies the Green hills as either side of Purves Road on the eastern spine of Arthurs Seat (McLear 2006: 107).

will convey to the dead, the intelligence that his death had been avenged – What is remarkable is that some bodies found in Peru, enclosed in large earthen jars were in precisely the same attitude as that of Johnny – are these Aborigines of ours of the same race degenerated through the agency of earthquake, floods and famine?

5th This Johnny – had gone to California with Geo Smith – & on his return the camping out in Australia during the winter months had brought on Pthisis to which the natives are all more or less suspect, and a few months ago Johnny broke a blood vessel in his lungs – He was a very intelligent nice looking lad – probably 20 years of age – Before he went to California he had been an ally and Hunting companion of our boys – and his death has cast quite a shadow over them all.

George Gordon McCrae

George Gordon McCrae was Georgiana's eldest son, 18 years old at the time of Johnny's death.¹⁰ His account is another first-hand participant narrative, written specifically to pass on information about the Bonurong, because they were all dead: this dates the account as post 1875. The account specifically mentions the present lighthouse which was commissioned in 1883, replacing the earlier one of 1854. George Gordon McCrae spoke to the infant Historical Society of Victoria twice in 1909, on recollections of Melbourne and Port Phillip in the 1840s, the articles being published subsequently in the *Victorian Historical Magazine* in 1911 and 1912, and republished in book form in 1987.¹¹ The text of the published articles follows closely the text of the reminiscences, and it is overwhelmingly likely that he wrote his reminiscences, gave his two addresses to the historical society, and published them, all around the same time, the early twentieth century.

George Gordon McCrae's description of Johnny's burial¹²

When Mr Smith sailed he took with him one of our young Aborigines of whom further and later on ... Johnny was put before the mast and soon became an adept at handling reefing, steering, indeed he might well have been rated able seaman after his two trans Pacific voyages. How long Mr Smith remained in California I forget. They returned apparently not much richer than when they started but brought with

10 'McCrae, George Gordon (1833 – 1927)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol 5: 136.

11 McCrae 1987.

12 George Gordon McCrae, 'Experiences not exploits', vol 3, Ms 2523/4/c, SLV.

them stories of huge fortunes made by others. Johnny on his return to us resumed the possum rug and tomahawk and became once more the companion of my shooting and fishing expeditions. To whatever cause it may have been due he fell into a galloping consumption of which he died, worn away to a shadow of his former self.

I myself carried his body on my shoulders to the grave prepared for him by his father and friends in the very heart of the *bimbel*¹³ scrub in the 'bottom' close to the sea¹⁴ and a little to the south of the position occupied by the iron lighthouse of today. I set up a little memorial tablet there; a square bit of hardwood planking on which I had chiselled the word JOHNNY. After having nailed which on to a stout upright at the head of the grave, I left regretting that it was out of my power to afford him anything more permanent. However, it lasted for years, an object of pride as well as veneration with his family and our blacks in general.¹⁵

The grave was not long and narrow but a bowl shaped excavation like on a very large scale the den of an ant-lion. This was in the first instance lined about the lower part with sheets of bark, which in turn were covered pretty thickly with leaves from the gum trees. This couch being sufficiently prepared, his people placing the body just before burial in a sitting position, tied the thumbs and great toes together, rolled it up in his rug and other wraps which being secured by stout ties, they lowered into the grave. Leaves were then carefully spread over it and packed in on either side above all a few sheets of bark were laid, on these further leaves and bark and lastly the sand filled in till it reached the level of the soil but without raising any mound. There was no ceremony, no talk that I can remember. All drew away from the grave decently and in silence.

This description of an aboriginal funeral as in our part of the country I have given believing that it acquires an additional interest from the fact that of Johnny's hunting and fishing tribe not a single individual survives to this day.¹⁶

In his published paper George Gordon McCrae uses practically the same language as he used in his journal to describe the burial, not as Johnny's, but as a typical burial in our district. The only detail which differs is that in the published version he states that a cord tightly joins the already tied great toes and the thumbs.¹⁷

13 Elsewhere in his Ms George Gordon McCrae defines the *bimbel* as 'beach tea tree'.

14 The 'bottom' was the foreshore, an Aboriginal encampment and a favourite place for cows with calves.

15 Fig 37.

16 George Gordon McCrae, 'Experiences not exploits', vol 3, Ms 2523/4/c, SLV.

17 McCrae 1911: 24.

Location of Johnnie/Johnny's grave

The first observation to be made about the location is that at the presumed time of George Gordon McCrae's description, the early twentieth century, lighthouses, and piers for the bay steamers, and roads for the summer 'season' were everyday topics of newspaper articles. For example, a lengthy article entitled *Round the Lighthouses* published in 1909 describes how the government vessel the *Lady Loch* made regular visits four times a year around all Victorian lighthouses 'carrying stores and transferring the staff from one lighthouse to another'. The first call on these quarterly runs was to Dromana, where the lighthouse keeper and his family (plus a hive of bees) embarked for Cape Everard.¹⁸ Another 1909 article entitled *Seaside Motoring* suggests a Sunday drive to the Mornington Peninsula and assures the reader that 'the road is in good order between Dromana and Rosebud, it having lately been repaired'.¹⁹ My own feeling is that if the road had been built over Johnny's grave, George McCrae would have said so at the time. As can be seen from the Rose postcards, dated 1940–1960, the road remained a single carriageway in both directions until it was widened: though this widening was done within living memory, I have been unable to discover exactly when it was done. The question becomes did the road widening extend over the grave, or is the grave still under the grassed area of the car park in front of the McCrae Yacht Club?

Taking George Gordon McCrae's account as truthful – he is not only an eyewitness but a participant, and given the close, though not total agreement with Georgiana's account, it is certain that the place of death was not exactly the place of burial.²⁰ George Gordon McCrae carried Johnnie's body from one place to the other. Johnny died in the encampment at the foot of the paddock outside the fence and outside the road, therefore close to the sea, and was buried at a place near which Bogie gathered branches from the scrub beside the road, therefore close to the road.

Fencing

Several lines of fencing are mentioned in the original sources, the first one being a sturdy three rail fence enclosing the whole of the ground which included the house, the tutor's hut, the kitchen and the cleared land in front of the house. This fence and these buildings are all shown in Georgiana's four watercolours of the

18 *Argus*, 13 February 1909: 4.

19 *Argus*, 29 November 1911: 10.

20 This agrees well with Thomas' account of traditional 'Burial of the dead' – the body is not buried where the person died but moved 100 yards or so away for burial. Thomas does not suggest a reason for this.

homestead.²¹ The house is on the 16 metre contour line,²² 'situated on a terrace of sandy soil two hundred yards up from the beach' according to Georgiana,²³ and 'less than an eighth of a mile from the sea' according to her son.²⁴

The second line of fencing is equally clear from Georgiana's paintings. She valued her water view extending to the heads, and a large area in front of the house is depicted as cleared in her paintings. The little elevation or escarpment on which McCrae House stands, extends towards the sea to Burrell Street, which runs parallel to the sea. On the sea side of Burrell Street, the land falls away sharply; Georgiana would not have had her water view towards the heads were it not for this sharp fall away of the land: her front house paddock fence was probably aligned along Burrell Street, and it appears from her paintings to be a brush fence sufficient to keep animals from the cleared space in front of the house. In 1850 a new garden fence was commenced, made of vertical poles with tea tree stick wattling.²⁵

The fence at the road

The third fence is what Georgiana calls the paddock fence, outside of which was the Cape Schanck road. This fence ran the whole length of the frontage of the property, as far as 'the creek'.²⁶ That this creek is Drum Drum Alloc Creek is evidenced by its description in Andrew Murison McCrae's application for lease of his run whose boundaries are as follows:

On the north by Mr Jamieson's special survey 4 miles, on the west by the coast line of the bay to the nose of the mountain called St Anthony's Nose, from thence along the Cape Schanck road to the Drumdunnallock creek being the boundary line with Mr Barker, and on the south by the creek to its source, thence by a line bearing east to a point where the continuation of the eastern boundary of the said special survey meets the said line, the large waterhole below the bald hill being in common with the Mt Martha run; also that piece of land between the Cape Schanck road and the sea, commencing near the rocks or the Point

21 There are four views of McCrae homestead by Georgiana, from the north, south, east and west which show the homestead buildings firmly enclosed by a three rail fence, and as well, a view of The Heads from below the House, which shows a brush fence (McCrae 1966: 168–169, 184–185).

22 Phil Hughes, Mornington Peninsula Shire, pers comm 8 October 2008.

23 McCrae 1966: 227.

24 McCrae 1911: 19.

25 Weber 2001, 13 October 1850: 638.

26 George Smith to La Trobe, 7 January 1848, 48/148, VPRS 5359/P/0000, unit 000010, PROV.

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known as St Anthony's Nose, and ending at the creek at the junction of the Point Nepean and Cape Schanck roads, nearly opposite the end of the paddock fence.²⁷

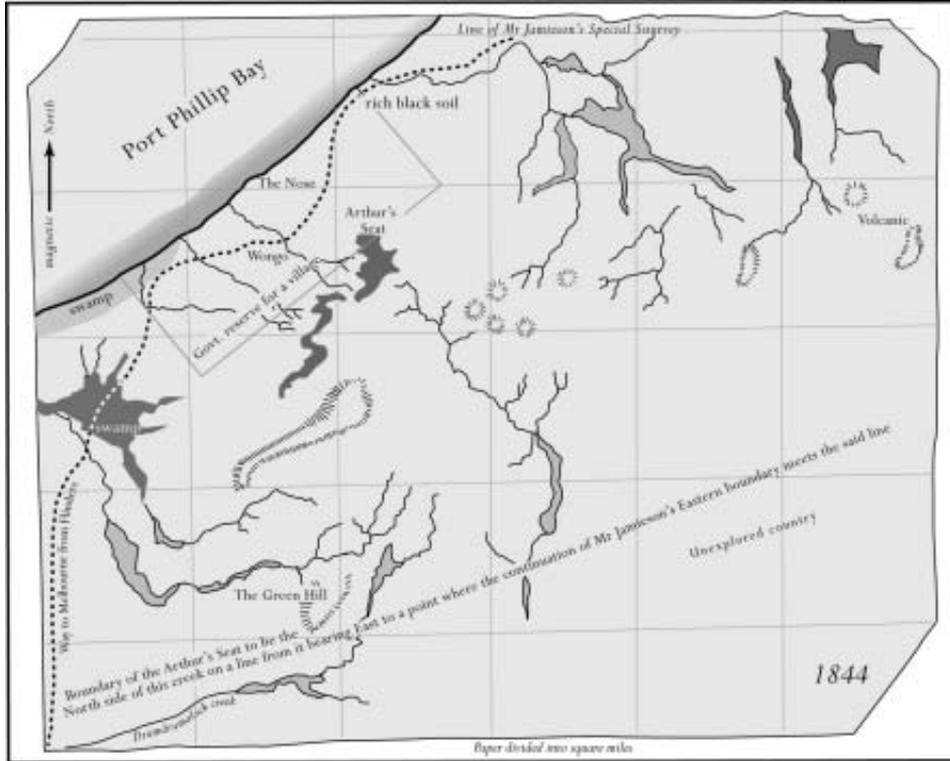


Fig 38. 'Plan of Arthur's Seat Run, 1844'

Andrew Murison McCrae, edited, reproduced with the permission of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

George Gordon McCrae confirms the lower line of fencing in his description of 'the bottom' which is 'the broad strip of land extending from high water mark to our lower level of fencing, well sheltered and densely wooded ... the forest was huge she-oaks'.²⁸ He writes that this coastal foreshore strip was 'for long a great camping ground of the blacks, as well as being the favourite resort of cows with young calves. It was called the bottom. The sheep yards were one mile from the house towards Cape Schanck.'²⁹

²⁷ *Port Phillip Gazette*, 13 December 1848, 'Supplementary List of Claims to leases of Crown Lands beyond the settled districts'.

²⁸ George Gordon McCrae, 'Experiences not exploits', vol 2, Ms 2523/4/c, SLV.

²⁹ McCrae 1934: 167.

Coastal foreshore strip between high water and the Nepean Highway



Fig 39. 'Nepean Highway From The Rocks McCrae, Vic, 1950'

Image no: a00192, reproduced with the permission of the State Library of Victoria.

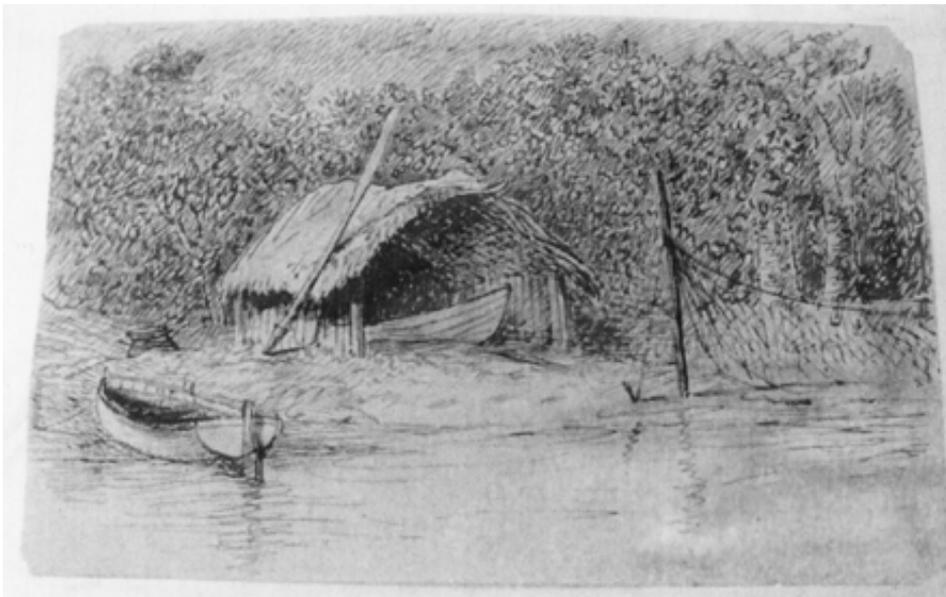


Fig 40. 'McCrae family boatshed showing large coastal banksia on foreshore'

George Gordon McCrae, reproduced with the permission of the State Library of Victoria.

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Initially the McCraes did not have the use of this strip of land as their run did not extend from the house to the water. The 'belt of land' that ran between the beach and the road was one continuous forest of coast honeysuckle³⁰ from St Anthony's Nose almost to the White Cliff (Rye).³¹ Andrew McCrae asked George Smith of Wul-Wul-a-Bulluk at Capel Sound to give him this coastal strip, and George Smith agreed. He requested La Trobe to alter the run description for Arthurs Seat:

Having promised Mr McCrae the small piece of land opposite his residence at Arthurs Seat of which I now beg leave to give a description I request that it may be added to the lease about to be issued to him.

Smith described the strip as:

the small piece of land between the Cape Schanck rd and the sea, commencing near the Rocks on the Point known as St Anthony's Nose and ending at the creek at the junction of the Point Nepean and Cape Schanck roads nearly opposite the end of Mr McCrae's paddock fence.³²

Location of road

The question then becomes where was the lower fence and therefore the road in 1851? The information regarding the position of the road comes from three sources – the 1841 government survey done four years before the McCrae's took up their run,³³ the 1844 plan of the Arthurs Seat run, presumably by Andrew McCrae,³⁴ now in the ownership of the National Trust and hanging on the wall in the visitor centre attached to McCrae House, and the later survey done for Joseph Brooks Burrell's application for a pre-emptive right,³⁵ he having purchased from the McCraes on their return to Melbourne in 1851.

All three show what we now know as the Nepean Highway along the coastal foreshore, in 1841 and 1844 as a track, and in 1860 as a three chain road reservation, in its present position. In addition, the 1860 survey shows the lighthouse, the old wooden one erected in 1854. Both the later maps show another track which left the Nepean Highway and ended at the homestead (probably Burrell Street).

30 Thomas gives the name of the coastal honeysuckle as '*Worruk* or *Barbuntuno*' (CY 2606, frame 18, ML). Honeysuckle was the name used by early colonial writers for *Banksia*, see Mclear 2006.

31 McCrae 1911: 20.

32 George Smith to La Trobe, 7 January 1848, 48/148, VPRS 5359/P/0000, unit 000010, PROV.

33 VPRS 8168/P 1, unit 12, file CS 17 A, PROV.

34 Fig 38.

35 M Callanan, 29 September 1860, no 60/394, A 10, SLV.

There were two options in 1841, still operating in 1845, for getting around Anthony's Nose. Wheeled vehicles went up and over the spur of Anthony's Nose at about the level on which the freeway is now built. Georgiana calls this the 'Mountain Road': the temporary huts built for Andrew McCrae, for the tutor Mr McLure, for the boys, for the workers Lanty and the Tuck family, all nestled close to the brush fence abutting this rear of the property road, higher up the mountain than the new house.³⁶

This Mountain Road is the Old Cape Schanck road, veering off from the present Nepean Highway more or less at the position of the present freeway, proceeding along Bayview Road, passing the rear of the McCrae property and proceeding to Boneo, thence by Boneo Road to Cape Schanck. This agrees well with the road shown on Surveyor Smythe's map of the southern peninsula, dated 1841.³⁷ Foot traffic, mounted riders and driven stock went round Anthony's Nose at beach level. There are instances on record where a wheeled vehicle, Dr Hobson's gig, found the winding road round Arthurs Seat (the up and over route) so steep that he had to descend to the beach and go round by the sand, 'at a snail's gallop' as he described to his wife in a letter.³⁸

Equally, there are instances when the surf pounding against Anthony's Nose left no beach and presumably, the stockman had to wait for the weather to improve or stock had to be driven up and over the spur. Georgiana records an instance of this when Mr Merrick knocked on the door and requested a bed for the night because he could not get his bullocks around Anthony's Nose.³⁹ Mr Merrick was in serious trouble on this occasion because not only could he not get his bullocks around the Nose because of the surf, but his dray was bogged on what Georgiana called 'the old mountain road', so that Henry Tuck and Lanty had to go and rescue him.⁴⁰

On Smythe's very accurate Coastal Survey map of 1841, these two routes around Anthony's Nose converged somewhere near the present township of McCrae. Phil Hughes has overlaid the cadastre on Smythe's map and the divergence appears to be at the junction of what are now The Avenue, Wattle Place and Point Nepean Road at McCrae.⁴¹ So that when George Gordon McCrae writes of 'our home lying on the road branching off to Cape Schanck, Western Port and the Heads' and the consequent constant hospitality they were called upon to extend to travellers, and when Georgiana writes of the Cape Schanck road in

36 McCrae 1934: 154.

37 George D Smythe, 'Survey the coast from the west side of Port Phillip to Western Port', CS 17A, VPRS 8168/P 1, unit 12, PROV; see also CS 68, VPRS 8168, PROV.

38 Edmund Hobson to Margaret Hobson, undated but early 1840s, Ms 8457, Box 865/2, B/2, SLV.

39 Weber 2001, 15 June 1845: 548.

40 Weber 2001, 17 June 1845: 548–550.

41 Phil Hughes, Mornington Peninsula Shire, pers comm 8 February 2010.

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front of their house, they are referring to one track or road, now the present Point Nepean Road. The Parish Plan of Wannaeue shows that the Nepean Highway road reserve was a three chain road, gazetted 10 November 1863.⁴²

Lighthouse

The present lighthouse, the iron one in existence at the time George Gordon wrote his reminiscences was built in England, dis-assembled, transported to Australia, re-built commencing in 1872 and turned on at its present site in 1883, replacing the earlier wooden one which was dismantled and carried to the top of Arthurs Seat to act as a viewing platform. There is a photo taken in the course of construction of the new iron lighthouse which shows clearly *both lighthouses* standing, the old wooden one directly behind the new one, that is closer to the sea. This is to be expected as the lighthouse formed part of a 'lights in line' system, keeping ships safe and steady on course in the south channel. Had the position of the lighthouse been changed appreciably, then all the channel markers would have required shifting. There are also photographs in the Rose series of Victorian postcards which show that the keepers' cottages, now demolished, were situated to the north and east of the iron lighthouse. The two acre reserve for the lighthouse was gazetted in 1872.⁴³ It is 250 feet wide measured from the sea to the road.⁴⁴



Fig 41. 'Stereoscopic glass slide of old wooden lighthouse and present lighthouse (1883) in process of construction'

From the George Jones Collection, reproduced with the permission of Lighthouses of Australia.

42 820 Bje, 1837 Wannueue, 1863, Map Collection, SLV.

43 *Government Gazette*, 1872: 1784. Lands temporarily reserved from sale, Wannaeue near Dromana, two acres more or less, bearings and distances given.

44 820 Bje, 1837 Wannueue, Map Collection, SLV.

It is worth remembering that when the wooden lighthouse was built in 1854, Johnny's stout hardwood memorial cross would have been standing: it was an age which respected death – it would not have been vandalised, and it could not have deteriorated into decay in three years. And as George Gordon McCrae specifically stated, Johnnie's father was pleased with the memorial, and it lasted for years, an object of pride and veneration for his family and blacks alike.



Fig 42. 'South Channel Lighthouse showing relationship to keepers' cottages'

Image no rg001542, 1940–1960, reproduced with the permission of the State Library of Victoria.

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Fig 43. 'South Channel Lighthouse', perspective showing that the lighthouse was constructed adjacent to, not behind, the keepers' cottages

Reproduced with the permission of Lighthouses of Australia.

Lighthouse keepers' cottages

The best Rose postcard of the keepers' cottages, shows them built very close to the road, on the Melbourne side of the lighthouse, that is, to the north-east, but the angle of the photo does not rule out the possibility that the cottages were built partly in front of the lighthouse. Another Rose postcard, this one with the image of the lighthouse taken from the beach makes it clear that this was not so: the cottages were not built in a direct line between the lighthouse and the road.

The Government Gazettes record the contracts entered into for the construction of the cottages. £2000 was spent in 1872 erecting the skeleton lighthouse, quarters etc near Arthurs Seat;⁴⁵ £294 was spent on the balance of the contract a few months later;⁴⁶ £160 was spent the following year on an oil store, fencing etc at the Lighthouse Station, Arthurs Seat;⁴⁷ in 1890, further additions to the Lighthouse quarters and painting etc cost £359.⁴⁸ Tenders were called in 1891 for cartage of furniture from Dromana pier to the lighthouse and for the supply of firewood cut to five foot lengths.⁴⁹ According to the Victorian Heritage database, these cottages were built at the foot of the lighthouse, and were demolished after World War II, apparently later than 1978,⁵⁰ but I have not been able to discover exactly when. A comparison of the physical features in the whole Rose post card series suggests as a working hypothesis that the front fence of the cottages was the limit of the road reservation.

Kermeterrewarrar

The 'great camping ground of the blacks' who were described as 'a hunting and fishing tribe' was occupied so long as fish and game were at their best. The people never numbered more than 200 in George Gordon McCrae's recollection, and at intervals they would strike camp and move in other directions but they always came back.⁵¹

The McCraes got their water from a good permanent spring of fine water welling up in the midst of a tea-tree scrub above the house and there was a waterhole below the house which they named St Anton's Well.⁵² In addition, there were two small creeks that ran either side of the house, brackish and occasionally

45 *Government Gazette*, no 48, 19 July 1872: 1354.

46 *Government Gazette*, no 64, 20 September 1872: 1752.

47 *Government Gazette*, no 81, 14 November 1872: 2008.

48 *Government Gazette*, no 98, 24 October 1890: 4204.

49 *Argus*, 15 December 1891: 10.

50 Pers comm 21 February 2010, McCrae Yacht Club.

51 McCrae 1911: 21.

52 Weber 2001, July 1846: 586.

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salt and their mouths generally silted up in summer.⁵³ One of them however, answered very well to keep the three McCrae boats in during the summer.⁵⁴ 'Our boatshed was on the beach below the house'.⁵⁵

They had great assistance from the blacks in netting and line fishing, and the blacks taught them the exact bait for different fish, and how to spear them with good effect. All this information dates from January 1845 onwards, when the McCrae tutor Mr McLure, and the four McCrae boys moved permanently to Arthurs Seat, living in huts as they built the homestead: Georgiana and Andrew McCrae moved permanently to Arthurs Seat in June 1845.⁵⁶

1845 is five years after the Protectorate moved from the Mornington Peninsula, and two years after the new Protectorate station Nerre Nerre Warren was given over to the Native Police, and Thomas relocated to Merri Creek. The Protectorate was still operating, but only children were more or less permanently at Merri Creek with the school master.

This land occupied by the McCraes was already an Aboriginal encampment known to the Assistant Protector William Thomas by the name of Kermitterrewarrer. It was to this encampment that Thomas went in order to discover the truth about the dray accident described earlier, and it was to this encampment that Bobbinary and Burrenum proceeded when they set off for the ramble earlier mentioned.

Pereuk/Poky Poky/Old Poky/Bogy Bogy/Old Bogie/ Bogie

Johnny's real name was recorded once by Thomas as Utrunbrook (Principal families, 1840, CY 2605, item 1, ML), and once by Robinson as Yar. er. en. bope (Johnny) name of Port Phillip Aborigine who went with L Smith to California, 13 December 1850 (Clark 2000, vol 6: 34). He was the son of a man whose real name was Pereuk/Bareuk, but who was mostly known in the records as Bogy Bogy or Poky Poky. Johnny's mother's name was Barebun. Johnny's father was probably but not certainly, one of George Smith's blackfellows (VPRS 4, Box 5, 38/207, PROV).

⁵³ Only one of these creeks is locatable today, Coburn Creek which emerges into the bay east of the Lighthouse opposite Coburn Avenue (Hughes Map, McCrae burial, 19 September 2008). Coburn is a Scottish name which is mentioned in Georgiana's early journals or drawings.

⁵⁴ There is a pen and ink drawing showing one boat with its mast stepped, moored in a creek, and another boat upended on stilts in a little boathouse on the shore (McCrae Papers, SLV): Fig 40.

⁵⁵ George Gordon McCrae, 'Experiences not exploits', vol 2, Ms 2523/4/d, SLV.

⁵⁶ Niall 1994.

Johnny's father, Peruek, was recorded for the first time by Assistant Protector Dredge in the encampment at Melbourne in March 1839, as 'Beera/Bogee Bogee, age 25, Waworong tribe [this is wrong – he was a Bonurong, but the protectors had been in Melbourne only two months; it is interesting that in their initial capturing of the people's names on paper, the protectors got the phonetics roughly correct, and mostly the correct number of syllables, but very often they got the initial consonant wrong. Thomas relates with regard to his first census that the people all lined up and filed past him, making a game of it, and rejoining the queue and giving a different name the second time round. It sounds as though the scribe might have been looking at his paper and not at the person giving the information as he wrote it down], with a wife Marburon known as Mary, and two children a boy Yadenbook aged three and a girl Wagul aged two' (Dredge Census, Robinson Papers, vol 54, ML). In July of that year Thomas recorded him as We–ur–ruk/Bogy Boge, and his wife as Barebun, an old woman (CY 2604, item 1, ML).

On 17 April 1840, Boggy Boggy was in possession of a firearm given to him by Mr Cheekman (Thomas Journal, CY 2605, item 1, ML). Bogy Bogy's name, as head of a party of five – himself, two wives and two pickaninnies, was on the list of those who chose to stay on the Mornington Peninsula and not go to Western Port on the revenge raid into Gippsland (CY 2605, frame 8, ML). In June 1840, when all the Bonurong were at Tubberubbabel, Bogy Bogy with two wives and two children was at Turtgurruk (CY 2604, item 3, ML).

In August of that year at Major Frazer's at Mordialloc, Bogy Bogy assaulted his wife very harshly because she was found hiding in the chimney of the hut on the property where Major Frazer's 16 year old son lived. His wife was clean and well dressed and concealing herself when sprung by Thomas who wrote that Bogy Bogy was normally the mildest and most inoffensive of men, and was distressed when his rage cooled and he realised how badly he had hurt his wife (CY 2604, item 3, frame 173, ML).

In 1841, Pureuk alias Poky Poky was one of the seven blacks who assisted Thomas and Commissioner of Crown Land Powlett in capturing the VDL blacks after they killed two Europeans at Western Port. For a reward, the seven asked for a blanket, shirt, trowzers, leather belt with buckle, neckerchief, straw hat and a gun (Thomas to Robinson, VPRS 11, unit 8/415, PROV). This success led directly to the establishment of the 1842 Native Police Corps under Commandant Henry Dana.

On 24 February 1842, Pereuk enrolled in Dana's Native Police Corps, and made his mark; he received blankets, clothing and equipment, and the Corps drilled twice daily till March when they had to abandon Nerre Nerre Warren because of the scarcity of water, and marched in easy stages to Merri Creek (Dana to La Trobe, 31 March 1842, VPRS 19, Box 28, 42/674, PROV). At the end of 1842, Pereuk was recorded as aged 35, married with one wife and two children, never punished, on duty for four months at the Mt Macedon police station. His general conduct was good, and he was said to do well about the camp, but was useless on duty (Dana Return, *NSW Legislative Council Votes & Proceedings*, 1844). He was in the second division of the NPC at Merri Creek (Dana Return, VPRS 19, Box 30, 42/1143, PROV) and had been rationed since 1 February 1842 (Dana Return, 27 July 1842, VPRS 19, Box 60, 42/1143, PROV); 31 Jul 1842 – Poky Poky is on the Medical Dispenser's list at Merri Creek being treated for the disease Pseudo Syphilis, the treatment being Liq Arsenic plus aperients internally and Blackwash externally (Henry Jones to Chief Protector, VPRS 4410, unit 2, item 49, PROV).

In 1844, Pereuk is on a return as dismissed from the Corps, and he may well be one of the two unnamed police who were dismissed in 1843 for being absent without leave (Dana Return, 21 September 1843, 4/1135.1, AO of NSW). In 1846 Poky Poky was listed in Thomas' criticism of the Corps as one of those who deserted (Thomas enc. to 46/3341 in 4/2745.1, AO of NSW).

20 Jan 1846 – Poky Poky voluntarily goes to the hospital (Thomas Journal, CY 2606, frame 330, ML); In 1846, Thomas recorded Peerup or Poky Poky on his Family Connections census as male, widower, with a son named Tareum aged 12 (this is Johnny under a different name) and a daughter Barut aged 10 (CY 3083, ML).

In 1848 Poky Poky's name was on a list of Western Port blacks gone to Gippsland, armed and bent on revenge (HEP Dana, 48/10473 in 4/2824, AO of NSW). Thomas said that Poky Poky was one of a number of Western Port men presently in Gippsland to barter for or seduce young lubras (VPRS 11, Box 11/701, PROV).

In his half-yearly return for July to December 1849, Thomas lists Johnny and Tommy, Pokey's sons as having gone to California with Mr Smith (CY 3127, ML). In his reminiscences¹ George Gordon McCrae recorded the

I. George Gordon McCrae, 'Experiences not exploits', vol 2, Ms 2523/4/c, SLV.

name of the ship as the *Sea Gull*, owner George Smith, master Captain Napper (Edward Hobson's father in law). The prospectus for the voyage states that the two Bonurong youths were to be paid as crew, but the amount was unspecified (Bateson). Johnny and Tommy were still away in August 1850, but had returned from California by 26 September 1850, and by 5 October when Thomas met him south of the Yarra, Johnny had discarded his European clothes and 'as filthy as ever' was proceeding to Western Port (all in Thomas Journal, CY 3127, ML). Tommyⁱⁱ though, in servitude to Mr Hobson for one year, he met with cattle from Gippsland on 28 October 1850 (Thomas Journal, CY 3127, ML).

Johnny's father Pereuk/Old Pokey/Bogie died at Western Port shortly after the death of his son, recorded by Thomas in his 1851 census, as dying in the same period (June to December 1851) as his son (Thomas Papers, set 214, item 12: 143, ML).

II. This person Tommy Hobson is possibly/probably the Tommy Hobson whose portrait was taken at Coranderrk in the 1860s though the notes accompanying the portrait identify him as Yarra. There is much more to be discovered about Tommy Hobson from the massive Gippsland records of the Commissioner of Crown Lands Tyers, related to the search for the alleged white woman.

It is this Johnny, son of Pereuk/Old Pokey/Bogie who is buried in a large deep grave just south of the lighthouse, by the Nepean Highway, probably under the public car park between the McCrae Yacht Club compound and Point Nepean Road.