

THE PIONEER

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The Caton and Townsend families of Buderim, 1872 to 1900.

by **Bill Lavarack**

This Occasional Paper is the first of three which follow the family line of Caton to Townsend to Bell and to Chadwick. They will span the period from 1869 to 1960. I would like to express my thanks to Ken Chadwick OAM. The people discussed in these papers are Ken's ancestors and his book *From Buderim Farmer to Band Leader* has been most useful in many, if not most, parts of these papers. Ken who is now in his 90s, is also a friend and a relative of my wife Bev, and has been most helpful in my research of Buderim history over many years.

John Caton was born in England in about 1845. He migrated to Australia from London on the S.S. *Queen of the South* on 1 September 1865, arriving in Moreton Bay on 8 December.

In 1869 surveyor William Fryer, assisted by William Guy and John Caton, surveyed the first land for settlement on Buderim, defining the boundaries of the blocks which would be selected by Buderim settlers over the next years.

On 29 December 1869, John Caton and Barbara Wishart were married in Queensland. (Registration Number B002848). Barbara Wishart, age 20 had arrived in Brisbane on 15 November 1865 from Glasgow as an assisted migrant.

On 3 August 1870 the commissioner for the Moreton district announced that John Caton was amongst the successful selectors for blocks on Buderim. John selected two blocks in county Canning (which includes Buderim).¹ On the smaller block of 20 acres, which was designated for 'homestead-agricultural' land, he built a house. This was near the current intersection of Tulip Lane and Lindsay Road and was much later sold to George and Tom Atkinson. The other block of 60 acres which was designated 'pastoral' land, stretched from the present Old Post Office to the present Townsend Road. John Caton and his wife and his brother George were among the first settlers on Buderim taking up land in 1871. Barbara Caton was the first white woman on Buderim.

¹ The Brisbane Courier, 3 August, 1870, page 3, LAND SELECTIONS.

Initially the Caton's closest neighbours were the Guys to the west and the Lindsays to the north. One report in 1885 states that *'There are about a dozen farms on Buderim: their owners are Messrs J. Dixon, J. Fielding, W. Burnett, H. Burnett, W. H. Guy, J. Caton, S. Short, J. Lindsay, G. A. Rich, J. Burnett.'*¹ In common with just about all other settlers, they grew sugar cane. John assisted in the construction of the Dixon and Fielding sugar mill in what is now Mill Road and, according to Joseph Dixon's diaries, fixed fences, cut cane and mustered cattle. He also took up land on Martin's Creek on the Eudlo Creek Flats, bordered by Jones Road to the east.²

When Dixon's sugar mill closed in 1896 John Caton resorted to other crops including bananas, citrus, pineapples and coffee. He operated a mail coach service from Mooloolah to Buderim, probably once or twice a week in 1888.³ The term 'coach' is probably an exaggeration and it is likely the service was by horseback, or by a buggy at best.

When age and ill health caught up with him, he sold to George and Tom Atkinson. George Atkinson demolished the Caton house and built his own behind the site of the original house. John Caton was prominent in civic affairs and was elected district representative on the Caboolture Divisional Board, where he served from 1885 to 1895.⁴ As a well-known local, John Caton guided a party on an excursion in the area, in part to look at a possible route for the proposed railway. They proceeded from Caloundra, up the beach and across the plains and finally up to Buderim in 1886.⁵

The Caton brothers, John and George, were members of the 'The Pride of Meridian Plains' Good Templars lodge on Meridan Plains.

In May 1921 his final years, John Caton was admitted to the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum on Stradbroke Island where he died 'of senility' on 15 June 1928. He was buried in an unmarked grave. Unfortunately there appears to be no photographs of John Caton.

In 1882 John Caton sponsored **Fred and Harriet Townsend** as migrants to Australia and to Buderim. Harriet Ellen (1850 - 30/6/1940) was John Caton's sister, Fred (ca. 1851 to 1890) was a blacksmith. They travelled on S.S. *Compta* from Ledbury, Somerset to Buderim. They had four children - Alice Minnie (b.1877), Ernest Frederick (b. 1874), Stanley Thomas (b. 1879) and Edith Agnes (b. 1882). They lived in a house on John Caton's land opposite the present Lion's Lookout. A note by Ken Chadwick, a descendant of Fred and Harriet (held by the author), states *'Only thirteen months after arriving to start a new life, Fred died [from TB], leaving Harriet with four children including a baby, to support. Friends chipped in to help and built her a brick oven and she baked bread for the mill workers and others.'* She also took in washing and ironing and made a life for herself and her children. Harriet died in 1940 and is buried in the Buderim Cemetery.



Harriet Townsend.
Photo: Ken Chadwick

¹ *The Queenslander*, 16 May, 1885, page 800, To the Glasshouse Mountains and Caloundra.

² S.P. Weir, 1989, *John Caton*, part of a series of loose leaf typescript accounts titled 'PIONEERS', held by Buderim Historical Society Inc.

³ Helen Gregory, 1991, *Making Maroochy, A History of the land, the people and the Shire*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, p. 34.

⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 21 January, 1885, page 4.

⁵ *Moreton Mail*, 6 November, 1886 A Trip to Buderim Mountain continued.

Original Townsend house. This was opposite the site of the present Lion's Park on Burnett Street.

L to R: Minnie, Harriet, George Caton, Stanley Townsend, Edith Townsend.

Photo Ken Chadwick.



Ernest Townsend (1875 - 11/8/1954) was old enough for his father, before his death, to have taught him the trade of blacksmith/ farrier, which

he continued after his father died. He also was one of the early mail carriers travelling to the pick-up at Landsborough. He had indifferent health and lost a lung to TB and spent some time as a drover out west, possibly at Longreach. He was a very quiet man and had a strange affinity with animals.¹ As a farmer he grew the usual Buderim crops including citrus and pineapples. Harriet, probably with the help of Ern and other family members, built a house on the corner of Townsend Street and Burnett Street.



Townsend's second house on the corner of Burnett Street and Townsend Lane. About 1922.

L to R: Bill Bell, Harriet Townsend, Charles and Edith Burnett, Beatrice Townsend nursing Myrtle Townsend, Ernest Townsend, Ivy Chadwick, Stan Townsend.

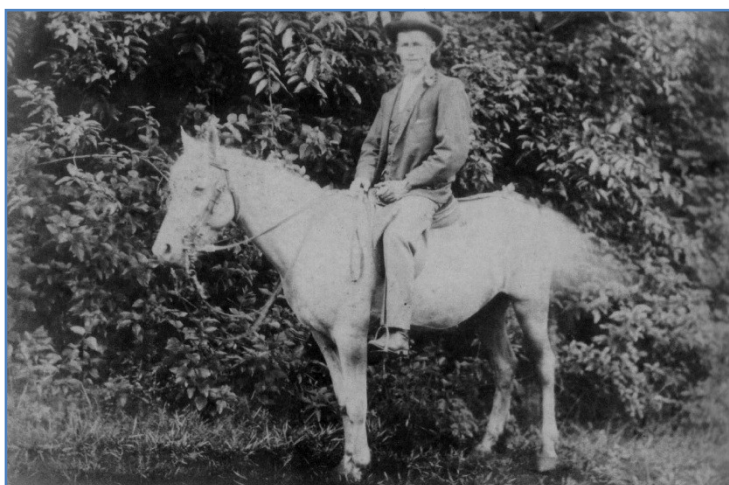
Photo Ken Chadwick

¹ Chadwick, K.B., 2017, *From Buderim Farmer to Band Leader*, publ. and edited by Bill Lavarack, 69 pages. Much of the detail on this and the preceding page comes from this source.

Stanley Thomas Townsend (6/11/1879 - 3/1/1953) married Beatrice Mary Heddon and they had four (five ?) children: Olive Beatrice, Winifred, Arthur and Myrtle. (according to Ken Chadwick).¹

The following is an extract from Ken Chadwick's book 'From Buderim Farmer to Band Leader':
Stan's farm was on the corner of Main Street and Cogill Road, opposite Bill Bell's second farm 'Hylton'. (His home farm was called 'Rocklea'.) Stan was an excellent sportsman, playing cricket and tennis. This sporting ability was also evident with Myrtle, who records show, was a district tennis champion. Stan was a fast bowler and, according to Bill Bell, had the temper to match. Bill and Mum [i.e. Ivy Chadwick] treated him with great admiration and respect and when I was young he was always held up to me as an exceptionally hard worker and man of integrity. I knew him well as I was working mostly on the 'Hylton' farm from 1944 to 1952. ['Hylton' was across the road from Stan Townsend's farm.]

Stan Townsend died on 3 January 1953 and was buried at Buderim Lawn Cemetery.



Stanley Townsend



Alice Minnie Townsend

Alice Minnie Bell (née Townsend, 20/5/1877 - 21/7/1900) married William Fawcett Bell junior (known as 'Bill Bell') in 1899 but tragically died from septicaemia soon after childbirth in Brisbane. Bill Bell brought his newborn daughter by train to Palmwoods and in his arms on horseback, to Buderim. Ivy was brought up by Harriet and the Townsend family. The story of Bill and his daughter, Ivy, will be told in the next Occasional Paper.

Edith Agnes Burnett (née Townsend, 1882 - 27/1/1967) married Charles Arthur Burnett, son of J.K. Burnett in 1906. They had three children, Jessie, Owen and Norman. In the 1930s the family moved to Glenview and managed a dairy farm belonging Alan Burnett.

Acknowledgements

All photographs are from the Ken Chadwick collection.

Much valuable information, (particularly concerning John Caton) was provided by Helene Cronin OAM from her extensive data base on Buderim History.

Reference Chadwick, K.B., 2017, *From Buderim Farmer to Band Leader*, publ. and edited by Bill Lavarack, 69 pages.

¹ Chadwick, K.B., 2017, *From Buderim Farmer to Band Leader*, publ. and edited by Bill Lavarack, 69 pages.