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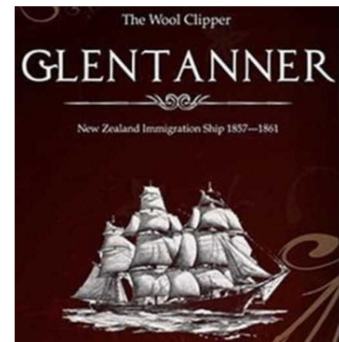
May 2025

The Ballingers of Mooloolah and Buderim

by Bill Lavarack

‘Ballinger’ is a name that appears frequently in the Buderim area – there is a Ballinger Road, Ballinger Court, Ballinger Park Sports Centre which contains the Ballinger Park Tennis Club and Ballinger Beach at nearby Currimundi. But who were the Ballingers?

Charles Ballinger (1829 – 1881) was born in Gloucestershire. He married Sarah Harbur (1834 – 1890) in 1850 and they had two children before migrating to Australia in 1859 aboard the sailing Ship *Glentanner*. The children were Thomas John (1852 – 1938) and one year old William.¹



Clipping from *The Sydney Morning Herald*,
18 July, 1859, page 2, MORETON BAY.

The voyage was a long and difficult one, with scarlet fever and measles breaking out and causing the death of 23 passengers, 19 of them being infants. Included in the death toll was the Ballinger's one year old son, William.² They were to have another six children in Australia.

The ship *Glentanner*, 610 tons, Captain Wilson, with 243 immigrants, arrived on the 6th. She left Southampton February 23rd, and has made a long passage. The immigrants were under the medical superintendence of Dr. Scott. Measles and scarlatina prevailed during the voyage, and there were twenty-three deaths, four of that number being adults. The number of births during the passage was nine. The ship was declared clean by the Health Officer, and the immigrants were speedily brought up to the depôt. The hiring of them commenced on Monday, but comparatively few are open to engagement, a large number having come out to join their friends. During the voyage, a seaman, named Thomas Brown, accidentally fell from the rigging and was drowned. The *Glentanner* brings about 300 tons of general merchandise.

¹ Charles' first marriage was to Sarah Woolvin. His second marriage to Sarah Harbur, said to be in 1850, produced sons Thomas John and William. If the year of this second marriage (1850) is correct then T.J. was the son of Sarah Harbur, but some uncertainty exists.

² Helene Cronin, 2019, *Timber – Trains – Turmoil: A History of Buderim and its Tramway*, 642 pages (pp. 72-73 in particular), researched, written and published by Helene Cronin OAM for the Buderim-Palmwoods Heritage Tramway Inc.

Charles was described in immigration records as a ‘labourer’.¹ He died in 1881 at the age of 53. His obituary says that he was ‘without the advantages of the merest rudiments of education’.² However, through ability and persistence, he was able to make a success of his life in Queensland. After his arrival in Australia, Charles grew sugar cane at Oxley Creek. Later he was involved with Mr Nicholson’s sugar plantation at Burpengary Creek where he and his 18 year old son, John (Thomas John, known as ‘John’), were involved in developing a steam boiling process for refining sugar. They produced the first ton of white sugar by this method in 1870. Charles reported that the process could turn out one and a half tons of sugar each ‘fair working day’. In addition five thousand gallons of molasses were made during the season.³

In 1869 Charles purchased a block of 640 acres from John Westaway and grew sugar cane near the junction of Sippy (‘Scippy’) Creek with the Mooloolah River. In 1877 he was appointed as a Crown Land Ranger along with his son John who had been a Ranger since 1874. In the late 1870s he left the Mooloolah area and later owned a produce agency in Brisbane. About 1870 his son John was educated in Brisbane in land surveying.

When land was opened for selection on Buderim in 1870 Charles and his son John took up land there. Charles had portion 64 (56 acres) and John had portions 57 (130 acres) and 69 (56 acres). Charles and John cleared their land which was on the southern side of what is now Burnett Street and sold the timber to William Pettigrew’s sawmill at Mooloolah Heads. Charles gave his block to his son John, so John owned land on the southern side of Burnett Street from the present Ballinger Road west to the end of William St.⁴

This image is labelled ‘the Ballinger family’. The identification of each, as given with the original photograph, is confusing, but a possible guess is as follows: back row left to right Charles Walter Timm, Charles James Ballinger, Charles Ballinger (senior); front row Maud Frances Ruth Timm (nee Ballinger), her daughter (?) Mary Doris Timm. Possible date ca 1880.



Charles continued to live at Mooloolah, but John built a house which he named ‘Clifton Cottage’, a little to the east of the location of the present Buderim Tavern. John married Agnes Martin McDonald, the daughter of fellow immigrants and friends of the family, on 5 August 1871. She had come to Australia from England at the age of 18 in 1862.⁵ Two children were born at Clifton Cottage – William born 1872 and Agnes Gertrude born 1875. John grew sugar cane on his land and also cut cedar and beech logs which he sold to William Pettigrew’s depot at the mouth of the Mooloolah River.

In December 1871 the *Queenslander* reported: *While returning with a dray from the mountains [presumably Buderim] to the plains on Saturday last a son of Mr Ballinger met with a serious accident – while crossing a log the dray was upset and fell upon the young man. For a time his body was under the dray while his head was outside of the guard iron which crushed the poor fellow severelyThree of the ‘Friends’ came to the rescue.*⁶

Early settlers on Buderim were a very temperate, religious group. The Rev. Joseph Buckle, a minister who travelled regularly between Brisbane and Gympie, called at Buderim In July 1873.

¹ D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *T.J. Ballinger (March 1852 – May 1938)*, 5 pages typescript, held by Buderim Historical Society.

² *Telegraph* (Brisbane), The Late Charles Ballinger, 27 September, 1881, , page 2.

³ Charles Ballinger, the System Followed at Burpengary Plantation, the *Queenslander*, 5 March 1870.

⁴ D.B. Goodsir, 1986. *loc cit*, page 2.

⁵ D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *loc cit*, page 2.

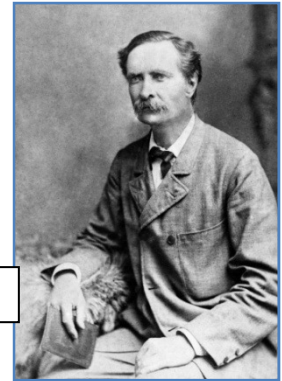
⁶ It is not clear, but this probably refers to one of John’s younger brothers who would have been a teenager at the time.

This resulted in the formation of a branch of 14 members of the Good Templars Lodge. They met at John Ballinger's house for discussions, general socialising and organisation of meetings – a most useful function in a remote, abstemious community. The group also had a small lending library.¹

John was a prominent member of the Buderim community. On 3 May 1875 he wrote to the Board of Education stating that 'there are 19 children in the Mooloolah District and there is no school for them'. A Provisional School was then established on Buderim and three of John's brothers (who were several years younger than he) were among the new Buderim Provisional School pupils. John then served on the new school's parents committee.²

John's father, Charles Ballinger, was involved in the establishment of the Glenview State School which started in a disused building which had previously been a Good Templars Lodge, and was adjacent to the Mooloolah Cemetery south of the Mooloolah River.

In 1873 John offered his services to the Government in opening tracks to new country. He then worked with the Public Works Survey Branch for Captain Claudius Whish who was Inspector of Road Surveys and based at Caboolture.³ In this capacity John worked in many parts of Queensland and had a good knowledge of the State. As a surveyor he helped layout the town of Bundaberg. In February 1874, he was appointed to report on proposed railway routes and other matters.



Capt. Claudius Whish

In 1873 John accompanied Captain Whish on an exploratory excursion in the area north of Caboolture and south of Buderim, helping mark out possible routes for proposed roads.⁴ At the request of Surveyor Whish, he surveyed a road from Buderim across the plains to Landsborough, first marking the road south from Buderim to Mountain Creek (now known as Ballinger Road), then marking a road from Mountain Creek to the junction of Sippy Creek with the Mooloolah River and on to Landsborough.

On 2 October 1875 Captain Whish, in a letter to John Ballinger, instructed him as follows: '*You can mark out a line from Cobb's Camp to Buderim Mountain, a road from Westaway's or Deadman's water hole, to the head of navigation Mellum Creek and the road Bonney wants.* [Cobb's Camp is now known as 'Woombye', 'Deadman's Waterhole' was on the Mooloolah River near the current Caloundra turnoff and Landsborough was known as 'Mellum Creek' at the time].⁵ The road from Woombye to Buderim is now known as 'Mons Road' after the First World War battle.

John Ballinger selected 277 acres overlooking what is now Bulcock Beach at Caloundra, however he made no improvements and, under the terms of the selection, the land reverted to the Crown. In 1875 Robert Bulcock purchased this land. This block was later to become 'the heart of the town of Caloundra'.⁶

About 1880 John was appointed clerk to the Nundah Divisional Board and the family moved to Brisbane. He sold his land in separate blocks to three of the Burnett Brothers (John, Wallace and Harold).⁷ The block nearest to Ballinger Road was purchased by John Kerle Burnett who, in about 1882, built 'Pioneer Cottage' there.

¹ D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *loc cit*, page 3.

² D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *loc cit*, page 3.

³ Captain Claudius Whish (1827 – 1890) and his wife Anne were two of the 134 people who drowned when the RMS *Quetta* struck a rock in Torres Strait on 28 February 1890 while on a voyage to England.

⁴ Claudius Whish, 1873, 'The Mooloolah Road District', *Telegraph*, 24 February, 1873, page 2.

⁵ D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *loc cit*, page 3.

⁶ Gary McKay, 2007, *Times of Change A History of Caloundra City*, 215 pages, page 36, publ. Caloundra City Council.

⁷ D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *loc cit*, page 4.

Soon after, John's second daughter was born and, in 1881, his third daughter was born, but his wife died shortly after. In 1883 he married Elizabeth Mary Alden in Brisbane. They were to have four sons.

He unsuccessfully tried sugar farming at Mt Mee, then worked in several places including Dinmore Pottery Works, and in Roma and Toowoomba.

In 1903 he was appointed Chief Bailiff and Deputy Marshall of the Supreme Court in Brisbane, from which position he retired in 1919. For a period after this he worked at Stanthorpe. He then was elected as an Alderman of the Sandgate Shire Council. He lived in Sandgate during retirement.¹

Charles Ballinger died in Brisbane on 28 June 1881.
Thomas John Ballinger died at Sandgate on 2 May 1938.
Both were buried at Toowong Cemetery Brisbane.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FURTHER READING

D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *T.J. Ballinger (March 1852 – May 1938)*, five pages typescript, held by Buderim Historical Society.

Helene Cronin, 2019, *Timber – Trains- Turmoil, A History of Buderim and its Tramway*, 642 pages (pp. 72-73 in particular), researched, written and published by Helene Cronin OAM for the Buderim-Palmwoods Heritage Tramway Inc.

P.S. (Bill) Lavarack, 2020, *Pathways to the North Coast - to Buderim & Mooloolaba by Horse, Boat, Train, Tram & Car*, published by Dr Peter S. Lavarack, 48 pages, email: lavarack@westnet.com.au

Year 7 students of Buderim State School, 1975, *The History of Buderim Mountain*, typescript held by Buderim Historical Society.

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¹ D.B. Goodsir, 1986, *loc cit*, page 4.

Obituaries for Thomas John Ballinger (1852 – 1938) and Charles Ballinger (1829 – 1881).

**MANY YEARS AS
CHIEF BAILIFF**

**Death of Mr. T. J.
Ballinger**

Mr. Thomas John Ballinger, for many years chief bailiff of the Supreme Court, died at his home at Sandgate late on Monday night. He had spent most of his 86 years in Queensland, and had played many parts in its development.

As a surveyor, Mr. T. J. Ballinger helped to lay out the town of Bundaberg. Later he grew sugar at Mount Mez. As a clerk in the Booroodabin shire office he was linked with the building of the old Breakfast Creek bridge. Still later he worked at Dinmore pottery. After a period as a commercial traveller he became bailiff, and then chief bailiff, of the Supreme Court, and one of the best known figures in the city.

He retired in 1919 and went to Stanthorpe, where he was associated with the fruit growing and canning industry. A few years ago he went to Sandgate.

The Courier-Mail, 4 May, 1938, page 10.

THE LATE CHARLES BALLINGER.—No man has been better known at this end of the colony for the last ten or twelve years than Charles Ballinger, who died at his residence, Roma-street, about 5 o'clock this morning, aged 53. He came to the colony about twenty years ago, and by his untiring energy, shrewdness, and force of character, soon succeeded in making his influence felt in many directions, in spite of obstacles which the majority of men would have found insurmountable. Without the advantages of the merest rudiments of education, he was still able to undertake, and successfully carry out, work of various kinds which would be thought impossible by a man in his position. About two or three years ago, he commenced business in Roma-street, as a produce merchant, and achieved a success that is really remarkable under the circumstances. Mr. Ballinger took a very lively interest in politics, and was perhaps the most indefatigable election agent in the colony. In all respects, private and public, Charles Ballinger was a worthy man. The immediate cause of death was rheumatic fever.

The Telegraph, 27 Sept., 1881, page 2.