ALICK OSBORNE AND THE ADAM LODGE

Background to Emigration
In October 1835 Governor Bourke wrote a lengthy letter to the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, on the subject of emigration to Australia. This letter raised a number of points:

1. Revenue from sale of land is being used to encourage free settlers, for whom a bounty system is proposed for approved persons who make use of private agents.

2. The Colony is much in need of useful mechanics and labourers of good moral character and industrious habits.

3. Bourke suggests young couples under 30 years of age and their families; unmarried female relatives 15 to 30 under protection of these families; and unmarried men 18 to 25 years.

4. Bourke outlines a government scheme under which he proposes to employ as agents a number of Surgeon Superintendents with knowledge of the Colony and experience in the proper management of large numbers of unoccupied Persons embarked on Merchant Vessels on long voyages.

Historical Records of Australia, Vol XVIII, pp 161-163.

Bourke wrote again to Gleneig on 28th February, 1836, referring to the above despatch and to the fact that David Boyter had been sent to Eastern Parts of Scotland to select emigrants; and introducing Alick Osborne, Esq., who has been furnished with similar instructions for the Northern Parts of Ireland, which he has been likewise directed to lay before Your Lordship. Ibid, p 302.

Alick appointed Agent
Armed with this dispatch, Alick Osborne sailed from Sydney on 7th March, 1836, per City of Edinburgh, as reported in both the Sydney Gazette and the Herald of 8th March. Presumably he carried other dispatches from the Governor, including a letter to Lord Glenelg dated 3rd March, containing "A brief report upon the Female Emigrants by the James Pattison, arrived Port Jackson, the 6th February, 1836, under the Superintendence of John Osborne Esq of the Royal Navy". John was Alick's brother. John had brought with him his wife and six of their seven children on the James Pattison. Alick duly presented the Governor's letter to the Colonial Secretary in London on 8th July but had to wait for his orders until 27th July.
Reaching Londonderry on 15th August, he started visiting towns in Northern Ireland to encourage emigration, especially of mechanics with families. All went well until September 8 when his horse shied, bringing his shin-bone into contact with a cart wheel, causing him to be laid up with the injury.

While he was still indisposed he received orders from the Colonial Office to proceed to Cork to advise the local committee in the selection of emigrants there, but his wound developed erysipelas and he was delayed until October 10 before he could leave by coach to Dublin enroute for Cork. However the Dublin coach overturned, causing severe contusions to his back, left leg and hip, so he finally hobbled into Cork with the aid of a stick on October 15. Being so late, the best he could do was to accept the committee's selections, inspect the ship and its accommodation, and see that the food supplies were satisfactory. The latter consisted of flour, rice, biscuit, tea, sugar, beef and pork — the last two salted of course. The Lady McNaughton finally sailed for Australia on November 5th, but was quarantined on arrival in Sydney.

Selecting Emigrants
On November 20th Alick received orders to begin selecting his own load of emigrants, whereupon he immediately placed orders for printing of bills and advertisements before setting out on his rounds of many towns in Northern Ireland, everywhere finding "disposition in favor of emigration".

On January 23rd he left for Liverpool to charter a ship, which he managed to do on February 6th: the Adam Lodge of 567 tons, to be ready at Londonderry on 14th March, with the intention of sailing on 15th March.

Loading the Ship
14th March Alick and all the emigrants were at Londonderry, but the ship did not arrive until 4pm the following day. As there was no wharf, the ship anchored out in the stream and all passengers, baggage and supplies had to be conveyed to the ship by boat. It was not until March 20 that the passengers and their baggage were taken on board by the steamboat Foyle in the short space of one hour, which must have been the only thing that worked smoothly in that Irish port. That Alick procured four policemen to control the crowd gives some idea of how many relatives and friends were there to see them off, but it is hoped they didn't wait around until the ship sailed: there were so many delays in loading and stowing the cargo, followed by a spell of stormy weather with much snow, that the ship didn't sail until 7am on 29th March, two weeks behind schedule and nine days after the emigrants had been taken aboard.
Food supplies were not mentioned except for ten tons of potatoes, presumably in addition to the usual flour, rice, biscuit, tea, sugar, salt beef and salt pork. This list was to prove very significant in the light of later developments on this non-stop voyage.

The Voyage
The ship must have been barely clear of Lough Foyle when the first baby arrived, a son to Mrs Donaghy, presumably the same infant boy who died on June 28.

Next day, as the ship sailed past the west coast of Ireland, the mountains of Galway were thickly blanketed in snow, indicating that the winter was not yielding readily to the coming spring.

Three days later they ran into heavy weather which continued for several days. Most of the emigrants were seasick and the deck below was in a bad state, "mainly due to the carelessness and ignorance of the women about the water closets". Alick arranged for the deck to be swabbed and windsails to be rigged fore and aft to provide ventilation.

It is worth noting that on that one deck of mostly open space there were reported to be 84 mothers and 209 children plus the newborn baby and maybe the 20 unmarried females as well. The 84 husbands were housed somewhere else, bringing the total number in Alick’s care to 397 plus the new baby. Folklore maintains, and the official policy supports, that there were other single emigrants as well, like there were on the James Pawson in 1836. On the Adam Lodge, John Park could have been one of these as his death was not recorded in the surgeon’s report.*

*Australia The Early Years: Reports from the Ulster Journal, Ch 3: Alexander Fairley’s letter home, Sept 2, 1837.

By April 7 the weather had cleared and they were able to air their bedding, but the separation of husbands and wives was becoming a problem: "Last night inspecting the female apartments at ten o’clock found nine men in bed with their wives contrary to regulations. I stopped (sic) their ration of tea, sugar and flour for one week". Perhaps Alick aimed to reduce their energy levels.

First Death
On April 8, the eleventh day of the voyage, the first death occurred, Charles Irwin aged 14 months, from influenza, and many other infants were affected. Next day Mrs Drane was safely delivered of a daughter and two days later Alick began vaccinating children against smallpox.

School
On April 12 the children were organized into a school, 54 males and 46 females in 10 classes conducted by volunteers. This school continued until May 24, of which more anon.
Warmer Weather

By April 14 they were in latitude 20N and the weather was warming up. The emigrants requested an increase in the water allowance so Alick allowed an extra quart to each adult and to children in proportion. The heat must have affected tempers. On the night of 14th a tipsy sailor making a riot on deck had to be restrained with handcuffs. The following night one of the emigrants was found punching and kicking a sailor, bringing a sharp rebuke from Alick who grudgingly admitted there had been some provocation.

Church Services

A Presbyterian clergyman held public prayers every morning and services on Sundays which were well attended. When the conditions allowed, these were held on deck; but when the weather was wet or rough they were held in the women's quarters, the largest space in the ship. Evidently the clergyman was not universally popular as some parents asked Alick to baptise their babies and John Park requested Alick to read his funeral service. Alick also had to conduct a burial service during a gale when the clergyman was indisposed, presumably seasick.

Tropics

As they neared the equator, awnings were rigged in addition to the usual windsails. One side of the deck was screened after sunset for the females to bathe and the children bathed in the morning. On April 19 the temperature reached 80 degrees F for the first time, peaked at 86 on April 25 and remained in the eighties until it dropped to 78 on May 6. These were not necessarily maxima as the temperature and position were logged at noon each day and recorded by Alick in his journal. During this period, winds slackened and once it took two days for the ship to travel one degree south. There was one compensation, however, as there was time to communicate with passing ships. They spoke two ships and a third sent a boat alongside so Alick was able to despatch a letter to the Secretary of State to report progress.

"Hooping" Cough

Finally the doldrums ended with squalls and showers. By April 26 they had crossed the equator and the following day Alick reported three cases of hooping cough. This disease raged throughout the ship and at one stage Alick reported that every family was affected. Three deaths occurred of children aged 2, 4 and 5 years, the first two on May 12 and 15 and the third on May 26. On that date they reached the 39th parallel where they suffered three days of heavy gales with showers, at the height of which Alick had to read the burial service for the two-year-old victim of whooping cough.
Three days after crossing the equator there were signs that tempers were wearing thin. The clergyman complained to Alick about Robert Osborne, but Alick "found the complaint trivial and admonished him to be more circumspect in future in addressing the clergyman at all". On May 4 they were still in tropical waters at 18 degrees south, temperature 80 F, eighth week aboard ship, with Alick noting: "Passengers getting quarrelsome, two men fighting".

School Abandoned
On May 24, just before the gale mentioned above, Alick records: "School relinquished as there is an indifference on the part of the parents". This is a clear sign that the emigrants are losing their morale after more than nine weeks aboard ship. One adult and eleven children have died, fever and whooping cough are rife and the diet is monotonous as well as being inadequate for small children and nursing mothers. To make matters worse, the weather is cold and the southern winter is approaching.

Along the Roaring forties
The end of May brought fine weather but it was short lived. While it lasted the mice began to play again, as illustrated by portion of Alick's entry for May 31: "Last night on inspecting the female quarters found 8 men in bed with their wives contrary to the established regulations of the ship. Stop'd their week's ration of flour as a mark of my disapprobation of such indelicacy".

By June 3 the gales were back again, this time so strong that it was virtually impossible to do any cooking, many women were complaining of seasickness and headaches, while many children continued to suffer from whooping cough and there were still four cases of fever, not to mention Mrs Callaghan whose temporal mania made her very unmanageable.

Premature Births
It was in conditions like these next morning that Alick made the following entry: "This morning Mrs Jas Osborne was delivered of a female child premature birth in consequence of a fall. The child was about 7 months. Lived 2 hrs. I read the ceremony of private baptism for it a few minutes after it was born".

Nine days later, with the ship running before a strong westerly wind, "To Mrs D Thompson a son, seven weeks before time". Again Alick read the baptism and the child lived only about two hours.

Second Adult Death
Next day, June 14: "Mrs Callaghan who had been affected with mania for some time was
found dead in her bed at five o'clock an infant two months old died a few minutes after”. As there is no record of this child having been born on the ship it must have been more than two months old.

**Marasmus**

Defined in the dictionary as a wasting disease, marasmus is probably what we now call malnutrition. The first death attributed to was that of 8-months-old James Irwin on May 18. The second was Jno Wilson, 6 mths, on June 24. Two other boys ages 16 and 18 months died in the final week of the voyage. Another ship, the John Barry, which arrived in Port Jackson the same day as the Adam Lodge, had a similar number of infant deaths which the surgeon attributed largely to the salt diet of their mothers.

**Medicine**

The state of medicine in the 1830s is illustrated by this little entry for June 25: "A number of febrile attacks commencing with headaches and rigors. Copious bleeding and strong purgative generally cut them short".

**Pork and Bread**

Towards the end of the voyage there were ructions about the quality of provisions, illustrated by parts of a somewhat lengthy entry in Alick's journal on June 27: "Yesterday afternoon when the provision was serving, it appears that a piece of pork of inferior description was issued to the 1st mess. Without making any complaint to me or bringing it aft they threw it overboard with expressions of great indignation............. One of the same mess when receiving the ration of bread spoke in no measured terms of the bad quality of the article, throwing a portion of it indignantly about the deck". Alick was no less indignant with his reply!

**Deaths**

Deaths continued right up to the final day, July 13, 1837, by which time they numbered 30 in all, With nine births. ‘This does not agree with Alick's figures but the numbers have been checked and re-checked against the journal. My figures include both premature births and deaths plus the death of John Park who evidently was not in Alick's list of families. Alick's report counted eight births, indicating that he ignored one of the premature births and not the other, whilst his figures for deaths had ignored the two premature ones.
**Journey's End**

as reported in the journal:

July 13: "Fine weather at 10am pilot on board. Died this morning Matthew Mcilroy (sic) aged 14 mos. Buried at 11am. At 2pm died Mrs Egan of pleurisy. Anchored in Neutral bay".

July 14: "Fine weather All our Emigrants inspected on board by His Excellency the Governor"

July 15: "Sent the body of Mrs Egan on shore to be buried. People are much delighted with their prospects".

July 17: "Landed all Emigrants with their own consent paid back the deposit to all who had advanced it in Omagh".

Thus the Emigrants graduated as Immigrants.

In due course, Alick presented his report to Governor Bourke:

**Ship Adam Lodge from Londonderry**

Tonnage: 567
Surgeon in Charge: Alick Osborne R N
Sailed: 29.3.1837
Touched at no ports.
Arrived: 13.7.1837 Passage 107 days.
Number Embarked: Adults 188 Children 209
Born on Board: 8
Died on Board: Adults 4 Children 22
Principal diseases: Consumption, Influenza, Croop.
General state on arrival: 4 on sick list.
Whether placed in Quarantine: Not
Deaths after landing: Nemo
Total expenses of ship: £6497-15-8 [£ = Pounds]

Remarks

These immigrants were not placed in Government buildings but provided themselves with lodgings and obtained employment without difficulty, and were considered as acceptable to the Colony, but the number of children interfered very much to the prejudice of the Commander.

Alick Osborne

Forwarded to the Governor with this report was a list of 83 families showing Surname and Christian names of the parents, Town or County of origin, Age, Education (read or
write), Married or Single (all married couples), Religion, Character, Relatives in NSW (none listed) and Trade.

The writer has not been able to reconcile the number of births and deaths on board the Adam Lodge with this report.

From the journal nine births can be traced, along with the deaths of four women and 23 children, plus the two premature babies and one man, John Park, making a total of 30 deaths. That John Park was not mentioned in the report could indicate that he was not one of the recruited emigrants.

A. Fairley (listed as Fairly) in his letter home mentions 30 deaths: 25 children, 4 women and a Derry man called John Park, which agrees totally with my figures. Evidently he kept a more accurate count than did Alick, but he was quite impressed with that same surgeon: "It is but fair to tell you what Doctor Osborne did for me. In the first place, he acted as a father to me on the passage, and when we landed he got me a situation with a gentleman to do the work of a new house for him, where I am as well as I can wish and get every indulgence". See note [4] above. Alick Fairly is shown on the return as a carpenter from Londonderry, aged 27, with wife Mary and two children.

It was left to the newspapers to mention the 20 unmarried females who did not appear on the surgeon's report. Both The Australian and the Sydney Gazette were active in their reporting, even though not always fully accurate in their information. The Gazette of July 15th, 1837 reported:

"The Adam Lodge, Captain Mayne......... is the first arrival with emigrants under the new regulations. We regret having to state that as many as 22 out of ninety-five infants have died on board during the passage, which has been made in 106 days. The emigrants consist of 83 males, 81 married and 20 unmarried females, and 195 children, making a total of 379, under the care of A. Osborne, Esq., R. N". The list of passengers landed, all of which has been tabulated separately, shows 83 husbands, 79 wives (4 had died), and 196 children. Add to this the 20 unmentioned unmarried females and the total comes to 378 live persons delivered. I rest my case.

Another ship on an identical errand arrived the same day from Dundee, Scotland, whence it had sailed on 25th March. This was the John Barry in the care of David Thompson, R N, who had already served on three convict ships. This emigrant ship of 524 tons embarked 188 adults and 148 children, a total of 317 to which was added 6 births on board. By the time it reached Sydney there had been 25 deaths, 3 adults and
22 children, but there was fever on board and the ship was placed in quarantine. By the time it was released on July 31 nine more adults and 3 children had died, bringing the total death roll on this ship to 37 out of a total of 323, or 11.45%. The Adam Lodge’s figures are somewhat rubbery, but the death roll works out at about 7.14%.

This illustrates that, horror voyage as it must have been on the Adam Lodge, it was not the worst in this first attempt at bringing out large numbers of parents and children. It did not appear possible to gloss over the trauma these parents must have gone through by just giving the figures alone. I have culled from the journal every detail which seemed to illustrate what the emigrants experienced on the way, like the frustrating delays at departure, freezing in the snow as they left, roasting in the tropics, prostrated by seasickness, tossed by heavy seas, living on salt meat and salt pork of doubtful condition, and watching their children die yet being unable to do a thing to help them. Thirty times they went through the ceremony of seeing someone’s loved one committed to the deep, most of them little children.

How must they have felt on walking off the ship without their own loved ones to face life in a new, raw-boned country? For example, Morris Callaghan’s Wife lost her reason and died, their two children died and he walked off alone; David and Isabela Thompson lost three of their seven children; Andrew Stewart lost his wife and a son and was left to care for six other children.

But, as Alick Osborne wrote, those who survived were delighted with their prospects. Such is the resilience of the human spirit!

Frank Osborne 22.7.1997

Author’s Note: Included among the emigrants on the Adam Lodge were some of Alick’s relatives: my great-grandparents Robert Osborne and his wife Rebecca Musgrave with their three-year-old son George; and James Osborne with his wife Catherine Blakeley. This seemed to finish the Osborne invasion of Illawarra begun by Henry and Sarah in 1829.

Alick’s record as Surgeon Superintendent of convict transports contrasted markedly with the troubles experienced with the Adam Lodge emigrants. Before Alick ended his seagoing career, he had brought out nine shiploads of convicts, embarking a total of 2,034 and delivering 2,024 of them. Thus his loss rate for convicts was less than one half of one percent. Presumably in 1837 nobody realized the difficulties involved in caring for such a large