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BRUCE, Walter Buxton, painter and decorator

BRG 216  
Series List

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Walter Buxton Bruce born 1 July 1898 in "Pine Cottage", his Grandmother's home in Burke Street, Victor Harbor. Parents William James Bruce and Annie (nee Buxton).

Mr. Bruce's parents first rented a cottage from the Pearce family, on the corner of Hinkler and Sturt Street, Victor Harbor. William Bruce was a butcher, having learned butchering under Fred Field, Victor Harbor; then worked for Hugh Bird, in his butcher shop and later Mr. George Honeyman. His brother Jack Bruce had learned butchering under Mr. George Freer of Exeter, and later came back to Victor Harbor working for Roach and Hall butchers. He later became a partner in the firm, which then became 'Bruce & Hall'. The butcher shop was located in Albert Place, Victor Harbor. William Bruce then came to work for the firm, mainly driving the butcher's cart around the district, selling meat. This was a two wheel vehicle with a rail around the top. The inside was Duluxed white, with vents, and hook to hang the meat on.

Walter Bruce finished school and in 1914 went to work at "Mt. Breckan Club", (then a guest-house) for Mr. & Mrs. W.F. Connell, for 12 months. He then worked briefly at the local Railway Station, before joining Mr. Bill Oliver, a local painter. When Mr. Oliver died, Walter and his father William Bruce became painters together working all over the town for people ranging from Mrs. Cudmore at "Adare", Mr. H.C. Care, and in smaller homes and businesses. Jobs included not only straight house painting but also floor staining, painting furniture and even signs.

William Bruce took ill and died suddenly on 23 June 1925. Walter Bruce continued the business, supporting and caring for his mother and two sisters (the youngest was then only 9 years old). He retired in the early 1960's and died on 12 April 1989, remaining at Victor Harbor until within two years of his death.

A.G.L.  
November 1989

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**BRG 216/1 : Plan of allotments**

c.1898. 1 item. Printed, with manuscript additions. OUTSIZE 6  
[Comprises plan of Victor Harbor West including  
Mrs. Bruce's allotments on Burke Street.]

**BRG 216/2 : Rent book**

1899-1906 1 volume Manuscript.  
[Comprises account of rents paid by  
Mr. J. Bruce to F. and J. Pearce].

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**BRG 216/3 : Bank depositor's book**

1912-1915 .1 volume Manuscript.

[Comprises bank book of W.J. Bruce in account with Union Bank of Australia Limited].

**BRG 216/4 : Pocket diary**

1925 1 volume Manuscript.

[Contains several diary entries; chiefly used for rough notes].

**BRG 216/5 : Job cost books**

1919-1946 15 volumes Manuscript

[Includes names of clients and details of materials used entered in school memorandum books. Several volumes, formerly used for school exercises. Volume 8 includes accounts for Bruce and Hall, butchers].

**BRG 216/6 : Invoices**

1927-1933 6 items & covers Manuscript.

[Comprises receipted invoices summarising works undertaken and charges.]

**BRG 216/7 : Price lists**

1931-1934 5 items & cover Processed typescript and printed.

[Comprises price lists for paint products supplied by Lewis Berger and Sons.]

**BRG 216/8 : Painter's tint cards**

c.1920 - c.1950 7.5 cm (51 items). Printed. Originals WITHDRAWN

[Comprises tint cards and colour cards, some in original wallets, produced by Australian and overseas paint manufacturers. Clarkson Limited Notes on Wallpaper Decoration included in series 9.]

To view a special list and images of tints cards do an ARCHIVAL search for BRG 216/8.

**BRG 216/9 : Handbooks**

c.1913-1936 3 volumes Printed. WITHDRAWN.

[Comprises House Decoration edited by Paul N. Hasluck, London, Notes in Decoration, Clarkson Limited, Adelaide, 1936 and Petropine, Vacuum Oil Company Limited, Melbourne.]

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**BRG 216/10 : Photographs**

1912 - c.1930 3 items Photographic prints.

**BRG 216/11-25 : Records relating to the Bruce and Buxton families, Victor Harbour**

Donald and Barbara Bruce of Gertymore, Scotland, came to South Australia in 1855 aboard the *Flora* and settled at Myponga. After being burned out in the 1859, the Bruce's moved to Encounter Bay. When Victor Harbour was established in the early 1860s Donald Bruce set up as a blacksmith in the town. His son, John Bruce, also a blacksmith, worked in the south east of the state, where he met and in 1866 married a fellow Scot, Elizabeth McCulloch. Elizabeth Mc Culloch was a housemaid to Bishop Short's eldest daughter, Millicent Glen, at Woakwine Station, where she knew the poet Adam Lindsay Gordon – and had slapped his face when he was overly friendly after a drinking bout! Elizabeth and John Bruce moved to Victor Harbor with their three small sons in the early 1870s. John Bruce died there of Consumption in 1873. The youngest son, Tom Bruce, had died a year earlier of the same cause.

Elizabeth Bruce's surviving sons, John (Jack) and William (Bill) became butchers at Victor Harbor. Bill worked for the butcher HJ Bird. Jack in the early 1900s moved to Terowie where he ran a butcher's shop until returning to work in a partnership known as 'Bruce and Hall' at Victor Harbour for many years. His eldest son, John (Jack) Mc Culloch Bruce, was the first man from Victor Harbor to be killed during the First World War. William Bruce married Annie Buxton of Kapunda, who with her sister Alice Buxton, who had been working as housemaid to the invalid George Barr Smith, and his companion John Salmon Thorley at 'Seaforth' at Victor Harbor. William Bruce was working as an itinerant coachman and drove for the Barr Smiths and other well-to-do Victor Harbor residents for a period.

Following some years working for the butcher HJ Bird, William Bruce joined his brother's butchering business, but in 1919 began working as a house painter and decorator with his son, Walter Buxton Bruce. William Bruce died in June 1925, after which his son Walter continued the business until the mid-1960s.

Walter Bruce was born in his grandmother's house 'Pine Cottage' in Burke Street Victor Harbor in 1898. Apart from a year spent with his uncle and aunt at Terowie in about 1910, he continued living in Burke Street until 1988. Walter Bruce died at Klemzig on 12 April 1989 aged 90.

(Reference: *They were trimmers, Victor Harbour in the 1900s, memoirs of Walter BuxtonBruce/ retold by Anthony Laube, Victor Harbour, S. Aust., Anthony Laube, 1992*)

**BRG 216/11 : Photograph album of Elizabeth Bruce (c.1837-1922)**

Approximately 1850-1940. 5.5 cm. 59 photographs (1 album).

[Ornate red velvet covered album containing black and white portrait photographs of the Bruce, Mead, Baaner, Waddell, Gehrs and Loveday families, including an image of Elizabeth Bruce outside Pine Cottage in Burke Street, Victor Harbor.]

Context note:

Elizabeth Bruce was the daughter of Andrew McCulloch, who brought his family to South Australia from Argyllshire, Scotland in the 1850's. She worked on the Woakwine Station near Robe, for Millicent Glen (nee Short). Here she met and Married John Bruce, a station hand/blacksmith, in 1866. Donald Bruce and Barbara (nee Fraser) had come to South Australia from Gertymore, Scotland and settled at Myponga with their children. Following the disastrous bushfires of 1859, the Bruce's had moved to Encounter Bay and set up a smithy.

Elizabeth Bruce's sisters included Mary (Mrs James Mead, Semaphore), Agnes (Mrs Ambrose Soar), Julia Ann (Mrs Daviv Waddell, Melbourne) and Jane (Mrs William Simcock), and one brother, Thomas McCulloch.

John Bruce's siblings were: William Bruce, Christina (Mrs Paul Baaner), Jessie (Mrs Gehrs) and Fraser Bruce (Strathalbyn). Jessie Gehr's son Algy played cricket for Australia. The Baaner family owned various boarding houses at Victor Harbor, son Oliver Baaner was the first Mayor of the Corporation of Victor Harbor in 1914.

Elizabeth and John Bruce had three sons: John Frazer, Thomas Andrew and Williams James, all born in the South-east of the state. Following the birth of the youngest child, the family moved to Victor Harbor. Here both son Tom and Elizabeth's husband died of Tuberculosis. The widow took in washing and did house cleaning to make ends meet, renting rooms in an unfinished building known as 'The Folly'. In 1877 she built a cottage "on the edge of the scrub" in what was to become Burke Street, Victor Harbor. Here she also took borders and summer visitors.

**BRG 216/12 : Photograph album of Annie Bruce (1876-1955)**

Approximately 1850-1900. 6 cm. 28 photographs (1 album).

[Black album containing black and white portrait photographs of the Buxton, Loveday, Gehrs and McCulloch. Includes an image of Nelson, the Boer War mascot dog, George Barr Smith and the Barr Smith residence 'Seaforth'. To see images PRG 216/12/4, 11, 17 do an ARCHIVAL search (originals WITHDRAWN).

Context note

Elizabeth Bruce's youngest son married Annie Buxton. Annie was the daughter of John Buxton and Annie (nee Williams) of Kapunda. With her sister Alice, Annie came to work at Victor Harbor in the 1890s as housemaids to George Barr Smith, the epileptic son of Robert and Joanna Barr Smith. George's parents had bought the home 'Seaforth' in the main street at Victor Harbor as a residence for him, with a companion/carer named John Thorley. Later the Barr Smiths moved George to a new house at Brighton, also named 'Seaforth'.

Annie's siblings included Alfred Buxton, William Buxton, Margaret Buxton (housemaid to the Misses Beresford at Victor Harbor), Edith (Mrs Brook Jagger) and Alice, housemaid to Dr and Mrs O'Leary.

While working for George Barr Smith, Annie met William Bruce, who was then working as a 'freelance coachman' to various wealthy families, including the Barr Smiths. They were

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married in 1898. Their children included: Walter Buxton Bruce, Alice Kathleen, Clyde Maxwell and Annie Margaret.

Annie's husband, William, like his older brother, trained as a butcher. Later he and son Walter set up as housepainters. William Bruce died in 1925, leaving Annie with a young family. Son Walter worked to support his mother and sisters Alice (an early telephonist at Victor harbor, until her marriage to Charles Hurst) and Margaret, a dental nurse who later married Mervyn Reid of Owen. Annie's youngest son, Max, died of Diphtheria in 1916.

The album includes a rare photograph of the Boer War mascot dog, Nelson, and one of a group of local Aborigines. Annie spoke of the Aborigines coming to 'Seaforth' and Mrs Robert Barr Smith giving them money and instructing the maids to make sandwiches for them.

John Fraser (Jack) Bruce was married three times. By his first wife, Annie Lush, he had sons Bill, Jack (killed in the First World War), and daughter Violet Jobson of Port Pirie. He then married the widow Fanny Reid (nee Cakebread), and lastly Ena who was later Mrs. Arnold.

**BRG 216/13 : Common Prayer book of Elizabeth McCulloch**

1825. 5 cm (1 volume).

[United Church of England and Ireland Common Prayer book. Given to Elizabeth McCulloch at Christmas.]

**BRG 216/14 : Holy Bible, References book of Alice Buxton**

1888-1963. 3.2 cm (1 volume).

[An inscription in the front reads 'Hill St Baptist S. School, Kapunda. Awarded to Alice Buxton for regular attendance and good conduct, Nov. 1888'. Contains additional handwritten text in the front, and newspaper cuttings of Alice Buxton's death and funeral notices.]

**BRG 216/15 : Photograph of Annie Buxton**

Photograph of Annie Buxton (Mrs William J. Bruce) of Victor Harbor. To see image do an ARCHIVAL search for BRG 216/15. Original WITHDRAWN.

**BRG 216/16/1-4 : Documents relating to William James Bruce**

1901-1913. 0.5 cm.

BRG 216/16/1 : Document for sale of allotment 'C' in Alexandra (Burke Street, Victor Harbor), from R.A. Lawson to William James Bruce. 16 July 1908.

BRG 216/16/2 : Receipt for purchase of bicycle by William James Bruce from Victor Thomas, bicycle salesman at Empire Motor & Cycle Co. Ltd., Victor Harbor. 30 December 1910.

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BRG 216/16/3 : Receipt for fire insurance with Colonial Mutual. Policy belonging to William James Bruce sent from local agent L.Y. Tite, 1913. [This policy was maintained by Walter Bruce until 1989].

BRG 216/16/4 : Reference for William James Bruce from Hugh John Bird, butcher, Victor Harbor, 20 April 1901.

**BRG 216/17/1-2 : Portraits on porcelain of John and Elizabeth Bruce**

[By colonial artist Henry Clayton. To view image and description do an ARCHIVAL search for BRG 216/16.]. Originals WITHDRAWN.

**BRG 216/18/1-5 : Handwritten recipe book and photographs of Alice and Margaret Buxton**

1904-1945. 1 cm.

Alice Buxton (1874-1963) worked as cook and housemaid to George Barr Smith (1858-1914) and his companion John Salmon Thorley (d. 1902) at 'Seaforth,' Victor Harbour, during the 1890s. She then worked for Dr and Mrs Morgan O'Leary at 'The Hill', Victor Harbour. Miss Buxton apparently left here and returned to Kapunda, and in 1919 she is believed to have been working at 'Yattalunga' near Gawler. She came out of retirement during the Second World War when the widowed Mrs Mary O'Leary and her companion Mrs Margaret Fox were unable to find staff. Miss Buxton remained working at 'The Hill' until Mrs O'Leary's death in August 1945. Working with Miss Buxton at this period was her niece, Mrs Margaret Reid (nee Bruce) while her husband was serving in the RAAF during 1942-45.

Margaret Buxton (1882-1911) was a younger sister to Alice Buxton. Margaret Buxton was housemaid to Misses May and Dora Beresford, daughters of one-time ADC, Colonel George de la Poer Beresford, at 'Roseneath,' Victor Harbour. Margaret Buxton worked for the Misses Beresford until shortly before her death at Kapunda, of Tuberculosis, in 1911.

BRG 216/18/1 : Handwritten recipe book including 'a cure for diphtheria' and a doctor's bill, 1919.

BRG 216/18/2 : Photograph of a group including Margaret Buxton (seated on left) taken outside St Augustine's Church Victor Harbor, c. 1910.

BRG 216/18/3 : Photograph (copy) of Margaret Buxton 1904.

BRG 216/18/4 : Photograph of Alice Buxton in a garden, c. 1945.

BRG 216/18/5 : Post card written to Margaret Buxton from Miss Dora Beresford while in New Zealand (1911?).



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**BRG 216/19/1-37 : Postcards and Christmas cards, 1907-1914**

1907-1914, 1 cm

[Postcards and Christmas cards, many with a Scottish context and dating between 1907-1914, relating to the Bruces's guests, or were written by relations at Terowie, Strathalbyn, and Kapunda. Includes items from Mannum, Semaphore, Quorn, Adelaide and Parkside. Many were sent to Elizabeth Bruce's grandson, Walter Bruce.]

Context note:

Following the death of her husband in 1871, Elizabeth Bruce (d.1922) built 'Pine Cottage' in Burke Street, Victor Harbor. Like many widows at the time, Mrs Bruce took in washing and did housework and cleaning for families in the town. She also rented rooms to 'summer visitors' until well into her 80s. These visitors included Mrs Betana Salom (wife of Maurice Salom MP), the Misses Stanley, Miss Christiana Pengilly (a senior employee of James Marshall and Co.), the Furner family and others. Mrs Bruce also had long-term boarders including Miss Katherine Lowe and Mrs Beatrice Self - while Mrs Self's husband was serving overseas during the First World War. (Reginald Self was killed in action during this period, in 1916.) Elizabeth Bruce's daughter-in-law, Annie Bruce, who with her husband and family lived next door in 'Argyle', also occasionally took paying summer boarders.

The postcards and Christmas cards, many with a Scottish context and dating between 1907-1914, relate to the Bruces's guests, or were written by relations at Terowie, Strathalbyn, and Kapunda. Includes items from Mannum, Semaphore, Quorn, Adelaide and Parkside. Many were sent to Elizabeth Bruce's grandson, Walter Bruce. 1 cm.

**BRG 216/20/1-2 : Photograph albums of Harriet Reid (nee Stringer) 1880-1964 of Barunga and Owen**

ca. 1860-1920. 13.5 cm (2 volumes). 20/1 OUTSIZE 1

[Two photograph albums containing black and white portraits of the Stringer, Ireland and Arbon families of Barunga and vicinity. Harriet Reid and her husband, Charles Reid, ran the Owen general store. Son Mervyn married Margaret Bruce (sister of Walter Bruce) and later also ran the Owen store. Includes photographs from Fruhling, Kadina, Port Augusta, Gawler, Port Pirie and Broken Hill.]

**BRG 216/21 : Roll book for the 'private' school run by William Smith Evans at Port Victor**

August 1874-December 1875, 1 cm (1 volume).

[Includes notes pasted in by Walter Bruce relating to the school having been housed in a building named 'Alexandra' in Torrens Street, Victor Harbor, now the site of the St John Ambulance. (Provenance: The roll book was given to Elizabeth Bruce who did housework for William Evan's mother in law, Betty Leworthy. Mrs Leworthy lived in the former school building until her death in 1891.) (Ref.: Randell, Lorna, Victor Harbor Primary School 1874-1974, celebrating 100 years of education, Victor Harbor, Victor Harbor Primary School, 1974; Laube, Anthony, Schools and schoolmasters: early schools at Encounter Bay and Victor Harbor, Victor Harbor, South Coast Christian School, 1986).]

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**BRG 216/22/1-32 : Photographs**

5 cm. Originals WITHDRAWN

[Includes various photographs of family members, visitors, family friends and local scenes. To view photographs do an ARCHIVAL search for BRG 216/22.]

**BRG 216/23 : Wesco (Aust.) Pty. Ltd., Kalsomine box**

ca. 1940-1950, 23 x 10.4 x 10.3 cm, OUTSIZE 2

['Wesco the perfect water colour, Kalsomine; Parchment White, 5 lbs. net., The ideal lime proof wall and ceiling finish for the modern decoration of interiors'.]

**BRG 216/24 : Lewis Berger Sons (Australia) Pty. Ltd., 'Painting Schedules by Berger',**

1<sup>st</sup> January, 1952, No.81. Booklet.

**BRG 216/25 : Walter Bruce's Nature Study school work book**

1911 1cm (1volume)

[School exercise book that was produced by Education Department of SA, used for Nature Study class by Walter at the Victor Harbor Public School. Includes still life paintings of various flowers and fruits.]

**BRG 216/26/1-13 : Additional family photographs**

ca. 1908-1921. 1.5 cm. Originals WITHDRAWN.

[Includes various photographs of family members and friends, some in situ in various locations around Victor Harbor and Granite Island. To view photographs do an ARCHIVAL search for BRG 216/26.]