

‘Crime Scene’ (2019) explores the history of Longford and its immediate surrounds (and by extension the history of Tasmania) as a crime scene, as each of the video works addresses a particular act of violence from the colonial period.

The Longford Project is a group of artists (Elizabeth Day, Anna Gibbs, Julie Gough and Noelene Lucas), who have intersecting family roots in Longford and see themselves as part of the Longford diaspora, now dispersed across the world. For several years this group has been creating contemporary art about the intersection of family and colonial histories in the wider Longford region. These works have been exhibited in two major exhibitions in Sydney in 2012, 2014 & in Longford 2015 and the project was awarded an Australia Council Development Grant in 2013 as well as residencies at the Bundanon Foundation, NSW (2016) and the University of Tasmania (2017).

This is a nationally significant project emerging from Tasmania about Tasmania, embodying issues relevant to most communities. *Crime Scene* brings new contemporary artwork back to its home, its place of generation, the place of cultural memory and personal imagining.

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V I S U A L A R T S
T A S M A N I A

Anna Gibbs, Elizabeth Day, Julie Gough,
and Noelene Lucas

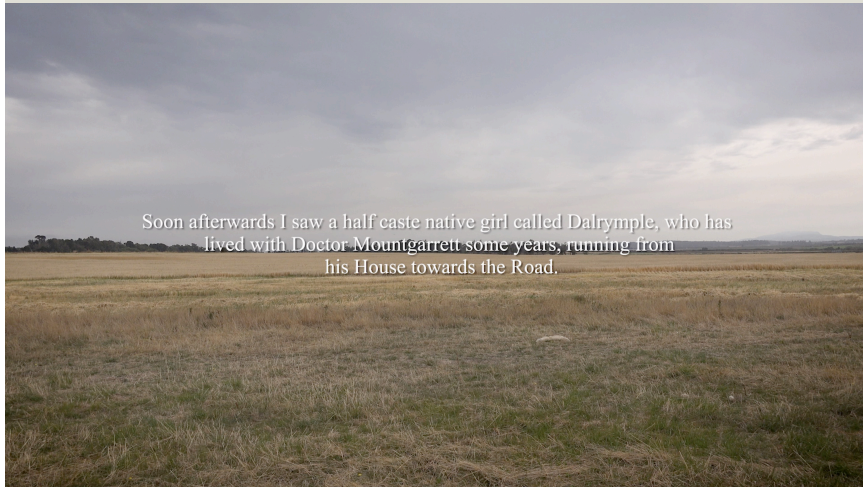
CRIME SCENE

15-17 MARCH 10AM-5PM
LONGFORD TOWN HALL





Elizabeth Day 'Cold Case' 2019



Julie Gough 'Crime Scene' 2019



Noelene Lucas 'A Diabolical Crime' 2019

There was profuse haemorrhaging from the stomach & also evacuation of the bowels." Dr Salman stated "He was alive at this time & vomiting blood up until his death... of this gunshot wound I state, without doubt or hesitation, Mr Wilson died." He died in the morning of April 2, 1837, between 3 & 4 o'clock.

In the trial there were lengthy accounts of who Joseph Wilson was related to, by his stepfather Evan Thomas & by Reverend Knopwood. Joseph's mother, Sarah, & the death of her 2 previous husbands were mentioned. Rev. R. Knopwood stated that he married Sarah to her first husband, William Wilson, in 1812. William was the father of the Joseph. He also stated he baptized Joseph Wilson, on October 16, 1813. After William's death Sarah married Hobart hotelier, Richard Wallis on March 1, 1819 & after his death she married Evan Thomas on May 3, 1823.

Joseph's mother's maiden name was Devine. She was born on Norfolk Island about 1793 and came to Van Diemen's Land in 1808 with her mother, Ann, & her mother's partner William Parsons. Sarah Devine/Wilson/Wallis/Thomas died in Hobart in June 1869.

I thought about her, she made no court appearance, did not formally identify her son's body. She would have been grieving this terrible loss. And she may well have seen or heard reports of how her son died. How do you get images like these out of your mind, how do you grieve & reconcile the brutality of what was done to your son in a senseless random attack.

Walking can be a form of grief, the slow resignation of the frailty of life through the body heavy with pull of gravity, step by step by step. There is a power in the repetition of walking like a mantra or a prayer, walking can bring one to a state of concentration & through that hopefully to a state of peace. Walking can become effortless repetition, like the heart beating, walking through torturous thoughts & painful memories towards peace. The rhythm of walking repetitious & monotonous, maybe soothing to a troubled mind, always one step at a time.

Noelene Lucas

‘A Diabolical Crime’, 2019

HD video, 11 mins

The willful murder of Joseph Edward Wilson, 24, by John McKay & John Lamb.

The Government posted a reward of 100 sovereigns & ‘if not an accessory, a free pardon for the detection of the criminal.’ Newspaper accounts of the murder of Joseph Wilson initially focused on the police investigation and their collection of evidence. Later, publications printed the transcripts of the trial & the testimonies of those who gave evidence. A great deal of time was spent on the movements of the accused murderers with lots of conflicting testimonies from them & their female friends. One of these women, Sarah Ward, stated that on the night of the murder the men were drinking & she overheard them ‘mutually agree, to go out & shoot the first person they met in order to rob him of his money.’ It was a random attack. The murderers stole from Mr Wilson a five pound note number 595 of the Tamar bank.

James Britton stated that when he found Mr Wilson it was starlight, about 3 hours after sunset, his “white hat was lying underneath his head; the hat was bloody, crushed & dirty.” Constable John Hennings testified that he saw Mr Heaney’s servant, Britton & another named Lee assisting an injured man to Heaney’s public house in Perth where he was placed on a table in the tap room. This was where he laid until he died. Joseph Wilson wrote a dying account of what the attackers looked like & what they did to him, they shot him, dragged him off his horse & bludgeoned him with the butt of their rifle until it broke. This was not used as evidence as it was not a sworn statement, but it would have given the Constables some useful information towards the apprehension of the murderers.

District Surgeon John Salmon & others gave detailed descriptions of what the deceased endured before he died about 6 hours after he was attacked. Dr Salmon stated Mr Wilson’s “face was dreadfully disfigured, with two fractures above the orbit..... The gunshot penetrated the right side just below the ribs & passed through the body to the other side where the ball could be felt under the skin.” Surgeon Salmon found “8 deep incisions about the head & face, 2 were fractures of the skull....

Elizabeth Day

‘Cold Case’, 2019

MOV video, 11.23 mins

Cold Case is a short text film, based on research in Trove of court records and newspaper clippings on the extremely violent murder of Ellen Moriarty near the Railway Inn in Longford in 1867. It seems that there were many unresolved questions that have not entirely gone away surrounding the conviction of Daniel Connors.

As a child migrant into Tasmania I was always struck by the predominance of prisons in Tasmania. Crime and its accoutrements, and the British system of punishment was brought into the state by the British and it ravaged in many ways the previously orderly lives of the indigenous Tasmanians. Early Tasmanian culture was wild and lawless. The grisly murder possibly was not that far out of a norm that had resulted from the invasion of the British who were fighting the tribes in this area to be able to install British farming.

I am interested in the fact that Daniel Connors could have been part of a cover up by the local police at the time, though there is no way of proving that. My sense is that there were immeasurable injustices committed against often very vulnerable people in the early years of the colony (and perhaps into the present).

While digging down into the painful circumstances of the murder I wanted to suggest the layering of history, its verdicts and judgments that shape the present.

The Longford Project seeks to revisit and re-appraise the Tasmanian past. People who visit Tasmania often comment on the darkness that they sense here. A friend of mine recently couldn’t wait to get away for that reason. I love Tasmania but have always felt the ambiguity expressed in John Mitchell’s 1851 novel title, *The Gardens of Hell* that for me says a lot. I called this film *Cold Case*. Even though a verdict was reached, a doubt exists regarding Connors’ guilt. I hope that there may be local people who have local knowledge about it, even though it happened over 100 years ago.

Anna Gibbs

‘Techniques of Crime Scene Investigation’ 2019

HD video, 16:9, 10 mins

The murder of Captain Thomas Hammant, aged 59, took place on 18 July 1832 in the course of ‘a drunken brawl between neighbours and relations’ at a pub, possibly called the Eagle and Seven Stars, or the Spread Eagle. It is said to be near Fenton’s Ford, not far from Pateena road outside Longford, adjacent to John and James Herbert’s land grant on the south side of the South Esk River. In any case the licensee, one Alexander Waddle, Canadian convict and a man very much on the make, was fined 10 pounds for allowing ‘Hammant, George Cox and others’ to ‘tipple and create a nuisance in a public house after 8 o’clock at night on the 18th of July 1832’.

George Cox was the youngest son of Ann Brooks (a former convict) and John Cox a former soldier in the NSW Corps) who were sent to Norfolk Plains after the closure of the first penal settlement on Norfolk Island in 1813. They were all neighbours of Hammant’s on the Pateena road. George’s sister-in-law, Matilda Wise (married to his older brother Joseph) was the sister of Hammant’s wife, Susannah Wise, who was very much younger than her husband – around the same age as George, who was 26 and unmarried at the time of the murder. His co-accused, convict Henry Street, also 26, who had been transported to VDL for repeated larceny. In 1829 Henry Street was indentured to Mr Brumby and was charged with neglect of duty and insolence to his master in that year, but it is not clear whether he was still working for Brumby in 1832.

George Cox absconded immediately after the brawl, apparently never to be seen again. The record of the inquest into Hammant’s death has been lost, but it seems that Street, who was acquitted, testified against Cox who was convicted of wilful murder, and a reward of 20 pounds or a ticket of leave was offered for his capture. There is, however, one report of George Cox 18 months later, in the yard of John Batman’s house ‘Kingston’, near Ben Lomond, talking to Batman’s unnamed overseer (possibly George Hollins, who later went with Batman to Melbourne), who claimed not to know he was a wanted man.

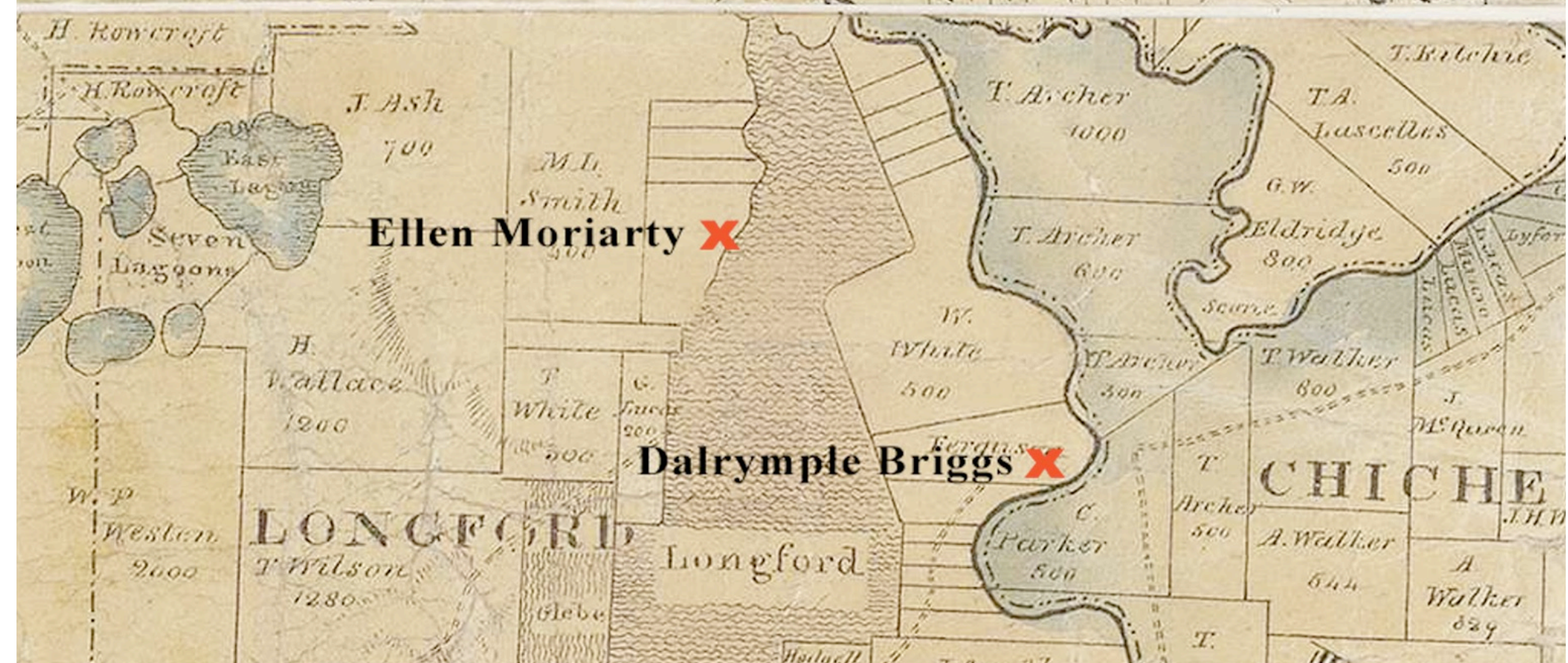
Dalrymple outlived all but one of her known siblings, John Briggs, who relocated to Victoria in the 1850s. In 1827 a “List of children with settlers, 1827” records "*Mary Briggs, aged 8, living with William Bray (of indifferent character)*" and "*Eliza Briggs aged 11, living with William Jones (of good character)*". (TAHO CSO 1/122a). Eliza died, aged 20, in the benevolent Asylum, Launceston on 11 July 1837, and Mary, born 1817, died at age 22 years on 31 July 1839. Their lives were also overshadowed by extreme violence inflicted upon them.

Dalrymple survived being shot by Jacob Mountgarrett, who with his wife Bridget, have been misconstrued in many 20th century accounts as her kindly adoptive parents. This account reveals the reality of their relationship with Dalrymple, and likely other Aboriginal children in their “care”. William Brumby swore, about Mountgarrett in his statement of 5 August 1825: “*I asked him why he shot the black Girl, he replied why cannot I correct my black servant without you interfering*”.

Dalrymple also survived, to raise with Thomas Johnson, 13 children born between 1826 and 1854. In 1841 Dalrymple miraculously successfully petitioned the Colonial Government to return her mother home from exile in horrendous conditions at Wybalenna, the Aboriginal internment camp on Flinders Island. Woretemoeteyenner lived her remaining 7 years with her daughter, son in law, and grandchildren. My ancestor Charlotte was born in Perth and baptized in Longford. With her parents and siblings she moved west to the district of Latrobe, where our extended family remain.

Nearly 200 Tasmanian Aboriginal children were taken to live with colonists in the first 40 years post British invasion of this island, irrevocably changing its future and our Aboriginal demographics. Their lives are little known, most perished young, or otherwise ‘disappear’. Perpetually missing, they are spectres, not to be overlooked or erased. To remain haunted is to remember, and I keep seeking them, these hidden figures of history.

With thanks to my family and forebears, and to William and James Brumby (1825), and to Richard and Louise Archer (2019).



Julie Gough

‘Crime Scene’ 2019

HD video, 16:9, 18 mins, edited by Angus Ashton

On Saturday 16th July 1825, between 5 and 6 pm, one of my ancestors, Dalrymple Briggs, ran, crying **Murder**, from a hut located beside what was then termed the Lake River, on what is now Brickendon estate, near Longford. Dalrymple was about, in her own words, 12 years of age. Little is known of her early life, so these eye witness accounts, the impetus for this film work, stands as key testimony. Now held in the National Library of Australia, Manuscripts section, they are invaluable in any attempt to piece together not only what happened that day, but to contribute to some understanding of her life and frontier times before and after this brutal event.

The accounts recited to the Magistrates, Peter Archer Mulgrave and James Simpson in Launceston on 5th and 8th August by William Brumby, James Thornloe and Dalrymple Briggs are the basis for this video artwork that simply presents their statements overlaid upon footage of the scene of the crime, the crime scene, as it now stands. Thornloe and Brumby are notable for their willingness to testify as witnesses to a crime against an Aboriginal person. Place is also witness, permanent and mute, to this violent event, one of countless enacted against Aboriginal people in colonial Van Diemen’s Land.

Dalrymple Briggs was the daughter of Woretemoeteyenner, a Trawlwoolway woman from Tebrikunna, Cape Portland, north east Tasmania. Sometime in the 1790s, as a teenager Woretemoeteyenner came into the hands of the Bedfordshire emigrant, George Briggs, who entered Bass Strait sealing grounds at that time, for that trade. Dalrymple was one of more than 5 children born to Woretemoeteyenner and Briggs. Said, in her obituary, to have been born on little Kangaroo Island near Flinders Island, around 1810, “*Dalrymple, a native girl*” was baptized by Reverend Robert Knopwood on 18 March 1814 at Port Dalrymple.

Exactly three years earlier on 18 March 1811, Knopwood married Bridget Riley to Jacob Mountgarrett and baptized two “*native boys*” of VDL, Charles Mountgarrett Launceston, and William Lyttleton Quamby. The whereabouts of these boys since is unknown.

The newspaper reports that at the time of publication, Cox was thought to have left the island. Whether that is true, where he went or what happened to him is unknown. But in 1834 Henry Street was convicted of and executed for the brutal murder of Anne Howell, along with two other men. Perhaps this throws some doubt on his testimony about Hammant’s death, but we can’t be sure. It is impossible to tell whether Cox was innocent or guilty.

What is clear, however, is that this brawl was typical of the heavily male-dominated, extremely violent society in which all these men lived. Records of inquests reveal astonishing numbers of deaths due to drinking, alcohol-related drowning and other accidents, as well as violent crime among the non-indigenous population. The colonists were also often threatened by the numerous bushrangers on the loose in the north during that period.



Anna Gibbs ‘Techniques of Crime Scene Investigation’ 2019

Life on the Norfolk Plains, as the area was then known, was hard, and many of the settlers were not successful farmers. Most of all though, this was a society shaped by the fact that all these men, willingly or not, whether settlers or convicts, were invaders in a land not their own. They were part of an occupying population that had fought a brutal 25 year war against the original inhabitants and rightful owners of the land, of whom they had lived in fear despite the fact that far more indigenous people than European occupiers were killed in these wars. The original inhabitants were dispossessed of their land without compensation, and this is a crime to which the present is heir.