Whitemore , Tasmania

Whitemore is a small rural town in Northern Tasmania , in the Meander Valley Council area . The town 's land and surrounding rural area was first granted to Richard Dry in the 1830s then sold for farming to William Hingston in 1854 . Hingston constructed a Wesleyan Chapel , near which a few later buildings were added . Over time the town has had a blacksmith , post office , library , shops and petrol station ; none of these remain in the 21st Century .

Shaw Contracting , a large Civil engineering firm formed by James Alan Hope Shaw , has been the most significant business in the town 's history . Whitemore 's most prominent features are the 1864 brick church , adjacent original church building dating from 1857 ? now a community hall ? and the large workshop and offices of Shaw contracting .

From 1870 to sometime before 1978 the town had a nearby rail service but in the 21st century transport is by car or school bus . The town has a small largely Australian born , and aging , population . Whitemore has a few houses , a church that is part of the Uniting Church in Australia , the offices and workshops of Shaw Contracting , and a recreation ground and tennis courts used by the towns ' tennis and cricket teams .

History

Whitemore is in the southern part of the former Quamby estate . The estate was granted to Richard Dry , father of Richard Dry who was later Premier of Tasmania , in 1837 . The estate was in two main parts . The southern section was approximately 4 @,@ 500 acres (1 @,@ 800 ha) , including an outlying part of 500 acres (200 ha) on which the modern town of Whitemore lies . The land in this section was recorded as first leased to William Burke in 1846 . He worked a 200 @-@ acre (81 ha) lot as a tenant farmer , though it was probably leased before this , as at the time 200 @-@ acre (81 ha) was recorded in the lands returns records as cleared . This southern part of Quamby Estate covered the Whitemore Creek valley , the later town of Whitemore and Shaw 's farm , amongst other later farms .

By 1851 , 350 acres of the 500 acre section was cleared . By the mid 1850s the area had been settled for almost two decades and was noted as " fairly well populated " . Dry sold land in the area in 1854 to William Hingston , who named a 120 acres (49 ha) section " Whitemoor farm " after a farm his family had run as tenant farmers in Cornwall . Hingston 's land ownership and actions assisted the establishment of Whitemore as a central village of the surrounding farming area . Around 1857 Hingston donated the land for a Wesleyan chapel that became known as " Whitemoor chapel " . Over time this name was taken by the village that grew around the church . Hingston built " Whitemoor house " in c.1860 using locally made bricks . The building was extant as of 2002 .

By the time Hingston built Whitemoor House the town had a modest country store , a blacksmith 's shop and the Wesleyan chapel . The town never became the population centre and Whitemoor remained a farming district with only a few buildings clustered near the church . By 1865 the town had four substantial buildings : A brick church ; the original wooden church now used as a school ; and two cottages . As late as 1915 there were only three occupied cottages in the town .

Land was purchased by the local council in 1951 for a memorial hall to commemorate those who served in the two world wars . Built largely using volunteer labour and working bees , the hall opened on 9 December 1953 . The buildings in Whitemore are constructed either side of the only road through the town . The town section of this road was sealed in 1953 .

Services

In common with the rest of Tasmania , Whitemore no longer has passenger rail transport ; the last Tasmanian passenger rail service stopped in 1978 and the service to Whitemore prior to that . Rail transport for Whitemore opened in the late 1870s . The first passenger train was on 27 April 1870 and the rail line opened for regular traffic in February 1871 . This transport was from a siding rather than a station . The Whitemore siding did not have a full @-@ time station master and was not a

regular stop ; passengers had to request the train stop or flag the train for a pickup . The town ? s only regular transport services as of 2014 are Redline Coaches ' private school @-@ bus services .

One of the town 's buildings was used as a house and a shop from 1859 ; a Shell petrol bowser was installed in the late 1920s outside the shop . A district post office was established in 1871 at the railway siding 's station house . By 1908 the post office was run from the chapel house in the main part of the town , and a shop ran from the same building . This building was used for around 70 years as a store , telephone exchange , mail exchange and petrol station . The post office closed in 1977 and has not reopened .

Telephone services reached Whitemore in 1918 , initially with only three subscribers . Telephone switching was done at the post office . Whitemore was connected to the State 's electricity system in 1929 . The electricity was fed from the Hydro @-@ Electric scheme and was connected to twelve buildings , in Whitemore and several nearby farms , by August of the same year . There may have been blacksmiths in Whitemore from the mid @-@ 19th century . A blacksmith established a shop on the main road in 1895 that was , by 1900 , the only blacksmith in the area . Shaw Contracting 's office is on the site of this former blacksmith 's shop .

The Whitemore irrigation scheme was begun in 2010 to provide irrigation water to 12 @,@ 000 hectares (46 sq mi) of farmland with water from the Poatina Hydroelectric Power Station . The scheme uses a 400 megalitre dam for storage .

= = Religion = =

A Methodist circuit had been established in Westbury in 1848 with meetings held in homes of the Oaks Estate . After Hingston purchased his land in 1854 , Methodist meetings were held at his home . Hingston 's home proved too cramped for religious meetings so in 1857 he donated land for a chapel , which was built in the same year by Joshua Higgs . It was an all timber 18 by 30 feet (5 @.@ 5 m × 9 @.@ 1 m) building made from pit @-@ sawn beams clad with split timber . It opened for services on 13 December 1857 , after completion at a total cost of 250 pounds . The wooden church was also used as a Sunday school and state school from 1865 to 1928 . A chapel house was built in 1859 next to the church by the Wesleyan trustees . This house was used initially by David Tinning , the town 's first school teacher .

In the 1860s a new church was planned . The original wooden building was relocated in 1864 , and the new church subsequently built on its site . Its foundation stone was laid on 30 November 1864 ; the year of the Australian Wesleyan Church 's jubilee observance . The church is a brick @-@ structure in a Gothic architectural style , and was designed to hold 200 people . The new Wesleyan chapel at Whitemoor , as it was then known , was opened Sunday 4 June 1865 . It had cost 450 pounds , 150 from the Wesleyan building fund and the remainder from subscriptions , fund @-@ raising and donations . The money from Wesleyan building fund was a 10 @-@ year loan . By 1929 it was used as a Methodist chapel in 1929 and in the 21st century is part of the Uniting Church in Australia .

The original wooden church building was moved again in 1909 and extended in 1928 for use as a community hall . It had a kitchen extension added in 1955 and a kindergarten room in 1958 . The split paling cladding was replaced with weatherboards in the 1900s . The roof was replaced with iron , probably in 1914 when the brick church was also re @-@ roofed in iron . The interior paling lining of the old wooden church was covered with pine sheeting in the late 1930s . This building has been used as a church for seven years , more than sixty years as a meeting room and community centre and more than seventy years as a day and Sunday school . After the school moved to a new building in 1929 the old building remained in use as a Sunday school .

= = Sport and recreation = =

On the main street , opposite the church , is a recreation ground and playground , both maintained by the Meander Valley Council . The recreation ground was upgraded with toilets c.1949 that were replaced with newer ones in 1966 . Playground equipment was installed in 1964 .

Whitemore cricket club began in the 19th century . An early record is of a match against Oaks in 1898 , though club minutes date only from 1927 at which time it was playing in the Westmoreland association . A cricket pavilion was built some time prior to 1900 and was replaced during 1962 @-@ 63 . The cricket club has continued to field teams and in 2013 they played in the B grade of the Northern Midlands Cricket Association . Their most successful years were from the 1960s through to the 1980s .

Whitemore tennis club had its first meeting on 18 November 1910 . Asphalt was laid on the courts in November 1921 and a shed built in February 1923 . From 1928 the tennis club fielded two teams in the newly formed district tennis association . Lights were installed on the courts in 1958 . The tennis club had three plexipave courts by 2002 . As of 2012 the Whitemore Tennis club fielded an amateur A grade team , and others in lower divisions

= = School and Library = =

The first wooden church was used as the area 's school from 1857 . This dual use of the church as a school has been stated , by local historian Ivan Heazlewood , as likely to be planned from the beginning . The area was more heavily populated in the past than in the 21st century due to a large number of tenant farmers with large families . Heazlewood speculated that the later 1865 church was probably used for classes due the small size of the wooden school building . The school grew to around 100 pupils on the register in 1900 . The church building , also used for Wesleyen Sunday school , was used as a school until 1929 . For this period the Education Department rented it from the Church trustees . A new school was built , on donated land , opposite the church and next to the recreation ground . This state school was opened in a ceremony on 23 August 1929 . The school remained open as late as the end of 1954 .

A library was operating from the wooden church building by 1860 . Patronage of the library had declined markedly by the 20th century and by the 1930s it was virtually unused . A mobile library began calling in the 1960s and for a time called once per month . The bookmobile service was finally ended , for all places not only Whitemore , in 1998 .

= = Current town = =

In the 21st century , Whitemore consists of a small cluster of buildings either side of the only road , surrounded by farming land . At the 2011 census the total population was 259 , of which almost 95 % were Australian Citizens and almost 92 % born in Australia . By the late 20th Century the town 's population was ageing , and it was described as somewhat of a retirement village . The buildings owned by Shaw Contracting dominate the town ; they have two workshops and a three @-@ storey office .

= = = Agriculture and land = = =

The town sits on flat to gently undulating land in the base of the Meander Valley . The soil is primarily of alluvial origin , underlain by dolomite bedrock . Whitemore creek , a tributary of the Meander River (Tasmania) , flows past Whitemore . The creek is seasonal , often drying up completely in summer . The Whitemore Irrigation Scheme has reduced the dry periods by discharging up to 2 megalitres (71 @,@ 000 cu ft) per day into the creek for downstream irrigation use .

Whitemore , along with Hagley , has historically had one of the highest concentrations of stud farms breeding pedigree livestock , in Australia . In the 1950s there were more than 100 registered studs within 5 miles (8 @.@ 0 km) of the town 's centre . The Poll Dorset , an important breed in prime lamb production in Australia , was first bred at a Whitemore stud . Whitemore farmers , the French family , began breeding Ryeland lambs in early 21st century . The family had originally farmed this breed in the 1930s , but it had now become uncommon in Australia due to changing fashions in meat . The Heazlewood family breeds the Border Leicester , another sheep breed that is now

uncommon in Australia . The family was honoured by the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania in 2013 for their involvement in the Tasmanian sheep industry over the previous one hundred years .

In 2014 a Whitemore farm attracted media attention creating the first crop maze in Tasmania . It was designed by specialist crop design company from the United Kingdom , and created to attract tourists and visitors . The maze was in the form of a stylized Tasmanian tiger , cut into a 5 @-@ hectare (12 @-@ acre) sorghum field . An open day was held on 28 February 2014 and the maze subsequently opened to the public , until the crop was harvested a few weeks later .

= = = Shaw Contracting = = =

Shaw Contracting is a large Tasmanian civil contracting firm based in Whitemore . Its two large workshops and three @-@ storey office dominate the town ; the company has stood large in Whitemore since the mid @-@ 20th Century . James Alan Hope Shaw was born in Bridgenorth , Tasmania in 1904 . He designed and built agricultural machinery , including the first " stump jump " scarifier that was suitable for the northwest coast of Tasmania . In 1939 Shaw was granted a patent for " An improved scraper for reversible disc ploughs " . This plough was never commercialised though some prototypes were built and used . Shaw moved to Whitemore in late 1935 and began work as an agricultural service provider , from what had been a blacksmith 's workshop .

His company expanded into civil construction work during World War II . Using in @-@ house manufactured equipment they scarified 5 mi (8 @.@ 0 km) of road so it was ready for regrading . The company 's work did have some negative impacts on the town . When they had electricity installed their first welder drew so much power the town 's supply had to be upgraded . This welder also put out sufficient radio @-@ frequency interference to disrupt radio reception elsewhere the town ; a matter that caused some complaint . They added vehicle sales and maintenance in the 1940s and expanded with the purchase of a one @-@ acre lot opposite the original workshop in 1946 . A significant part of the Shaw company 's income from the late 1940s to the early 1950s was selling vehicle tires . The company continued to expand and a new workshop was opened in the town , with a ceremony in August 1953 . In the same year the company became an agent for " David Brown " tractors , its first agency .

In 1958 James Shaw and a partner purchased a 25 ton International Harvester TD24 tractor that was formerly owned by Tasmania 's Hydro Electric Commission . The company by this point was known as " JAH Shaw & Sons " . With the lack of a transporter at first the tractor could only be used in the close surrounds . One of its first jobs was levelling the tennis courts in Whitemore . By 1960 JAH Shaw & Sons had moved into large scale earth @-@ moving . In 1970 they tendered for , and won , work on the Cressy to Longford irrigation scheme ; 7 km (4 mi) of main channel excavation and 100 km (62 mi) of smaller channels . By the 1970s the company was known as " Shaw Contracting " . An offshoot was launched in 1973 as " Shaw Mix " which sold concrete and created and installed precast concrete panels . Shaw Mix were involved with the Launceston General Hospital and some cast concrete bridges but this line of work ceased during the 1990s . Other significant contracts have included : Building 11 kilometres (7 mi) of the Hume freeway from Seymour to Avenel Victoria in 1978 ; A road upgrade near Samoa 's capital Apia in 2004 ; Constructing , from 2009 , a 15 kilometres (9 mi) bypass of the Town of Dilston on the road from Launceston to Georgetown . The company completed their three @-@ storey offices in the town in 1999 . Alwyn Shaw ? Son of James Shaw ? and his wife Judy ran the business until 2013 , when they sold it to a group that included long @-@ term company employees . When sold the company had approximately 100 employees .