

Obituary for Leonard Anderson Bottomley (3 October 1885 – 27 September 1974)



Leonard Bottomley (or “Dar” to his grandchildren), was born in Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada, to Frederick and Emma Bottomley on 3 October 1885. The family had travelled from England where Fred had been a teacher, and Fred took up the same profession in Canada.

By 1889, the family had returned to England and four years later (1893) made the decision to migrate to Australia where Fred had obtained a teaching position in a one-teacher school in Liffey, Tasmania. By this time there were five children, Florence, Leonard, Edwin, Charles and Ida (born in Australia). All of them attended the school in Liffey where their father taught.

After finishing school at Liffey, Leonard applied to become a teacher. However, the pressure of work on his father’s farm meant he could not spare the time to take up the offer of a position. In 1908 he travelled to Lunawanna, Bruny Island to find work.

He wrote in his *Memories*:

“I returned to Liffey after 7 weeks work on Bruny being £7/-/- richer. I returned again to Lunawanna on 25th March 1908 where I acquired 60 acres of land on a purchased lease at the age of 22 years. I worked at clearing land for orchards at 6/- per day plus dinner for 9 hours work.”

There are many references to Len in Richard Pybus’s book “*South Bruny Island – Tasmania: A Brief History of Its Settlement*”.

“Leonard (Len) Bottomley arrived at Lunawanna in 1908, purchasing a small acreage ‘out the back’. He brought two bullocks with him and worked on many jobs including ploughing, carting timber and supplies and clearing land for farmers in the area. At Cloudy Bay he hauled logs for KEMP and DENNING, some of which were believed to have been used for shingles for houses in the Cascades area in Hobart. The year after his arrival (1909) he sold his small property to RICHARD SKINNER, then owner of a local sawmill, for the timber to build his home on another block he had purchased nearer the coastline at Daniels Bay.”¹ .

On 30 June 1909 Len (aged 23) married Miriam Kate Still (1881-1971), a trained teacher. They had three children: **Agnes** (1910-1993), **Barbara** (1911-1985) and **Sefton** (1914-1950). The family lived in a large house at Lunawanna (“*Bankside*”²) when the children were small. Kate taught at the Adventure Bay School from 1924 to 1926).

On July 9, 1909 it was recorded in the Police Gazette that Len had been appointed a Special Constable on Bruny Island.

Len was an active member of the community, serving for many years on the local Council.

“I was elected to the Council in April 1909 and served on and off till 1968. I did not re-nominate as I felt a younger man would not tire as I did even before the meeting was over.

¹ Richard Pybus, “South Bruny Island”, Pybus, Blackmans Bay, 1988, Page 75

² This may have been Clovelly.

I did the work of Council Clerk for 2 periods but it was only a part-time job and it interfered with my other work.”

The social life on Bruny Island in the days when Len was living there, offered many opportunities for entertainment (and fundraising). Activities such as cricket matches, card games, picnics, dances in local halls and chopping competitions, provided locals with opportunities to get together. Len himself was a keen cricketer. In his own words:

“I started to play with the Barnes Bay Cricket Club in 1925 and after a year or two was elected as Secretary. We had one of the finest teams in the country and played matches with teams from New South Wales during the Christmas holidays. We were one of the teams forming the Channel Association and our membership grew to 34 players, and we had 2 teams in the field A & B grade.

I spent some years as Wicketkeeper for B grade. The team was so good that the Association said we would have to play the A grade teams.

The Barnes Bay team had to cross the Channel to play and the matches were full-day affairs with a fine dinner being provided by the ladies. A real picnic was had by all. This was reciprocated by the ladies here when a return match was played and sadly missed when discontinued.

The Doctor did not need to order us to walk 2 miles each day as there were no motor cars then.

After 20 years I left the club being President and returned back to Liffey for 4 years”. (1954~1958).

In late 1926, Leonard and Kate moved to the property “*Sacriston*” on North Bruny Island. Len and his son Sefton farmed together, while Kate worked as a teacher at the Barnes Bay School (1927~29).

(It appears that Len and his son may have moved to *Sacriston* at least a year before Kate moved there as Sefton appears in a photo of children at the Barnes Bay State school dated 1925).

“Len Bottomley and his wife Kate left their small orchard property, “Bankside”, at Lunawanna in 1921 and leased Oliver Drake’s property, “Clovelly”, overlooking Daniels Bay, Lunawanna.”³

*“The BOTTOMLEY family finally broke ties with South Bruny at the end of 1926 after MRS KATE BOTTOMLEY had been transferred to the Barnes Bay State School on North Bruny. Her husband Len, with the assistance of the Closer Settlement Board, had taken up sheep farming on “*Sacriston*” near One Tree point⁴, North Bruny.*

Len was a very fit individual in his younger days. In 1935 he purchased a Huon Pine dinghy from a builder at Great Bay. To get it back to his property at *Sacriston*, he rowed the dinghy the whole way in one day by himself. This is his account of the achievement:

“In 1935 I purchased a 12ft dinghy made from Huon Pine at Great Bay and rowed it home – across Great Bay into Simpson’s, past Green Island and round Kinghorne point into the Channel. There was a good sea breeze blowing. I started at 3pm and had to row with the sea and wind on the quarter so as to allow for the drift towards

³ Richard Pybus, p 137.

⁴ *Sacriston*.

shore when under the shelter of Green Island. I bailed the boat out and continued till opposite Kettering where I again bailed it out. I called into Oliver Gray's place at Killora and had a good Christmas tea. I again pushed off and rowed to Dennes Point before bailing again and continued around into Storm Bay to One Tree Point, beached the boat and walked to my home. As it was now 11.30pm and I was very tired. I slept until 11am next day. Luckily, I had an invitation out for lunch as my folks were away.

I could not have done this row of over 20 miles had I not been training, having had some weeks of swinging a 6 lb hammer breaking stones for the laying of the road. These were the days before outboard motors and dinghy trips were common."

On 4 June 1942 Len took on the Lease of the "Lauriston" property at Bull Bay from Elwin Hunter Pybus. And then, on 24 September 1945, the *Lauriston* lease was transferred to his son, Sefton.

In about 1948 Len and his wife Kate separated, and Kate moved to a cottage at Dennes Point owned by the Tate family. Len remained living at *Lauriston* with his son Sefton, his daughter-in-law Josephine and his 3 grandsons Ralph, Alan and Geoffrey. Then in November 1950 Sefton tragically died from liver cancer.

Then in 1952 Josephine married Ross Denne. Len remained living with the family at *Lauriston* and helping with the farm work until 1954.

In January of that year Len, aged 69, returned to Liffey, where he had spent his youth. He purchased a business which was running a shop, a post office/telephone exchange and a petrol selling station. He employed a lady, Betty Page, to staff the post office.

His grandsons often visited him at Liffey in their school holidays.

But Bruny Island was in Len's bones and he wanted to be closer to his grandsons. Thus, aged 73, he returned to Bruny Island in 1958. He purchased a small house on Nebraska Rd and proceeded to build-on several new rooms at the front. Subsequently the front room became a general store. He built a boat shed on Nebraska Beach and his favourite pass time was to get one of his grandsons to take him fishing in D'entrecasteaux Channel in his dinghy. He also enjoyed playing chess against his grandsons.

In May 1961 Len was again elected to the Bruny Island Council and remained a member until March 1968.

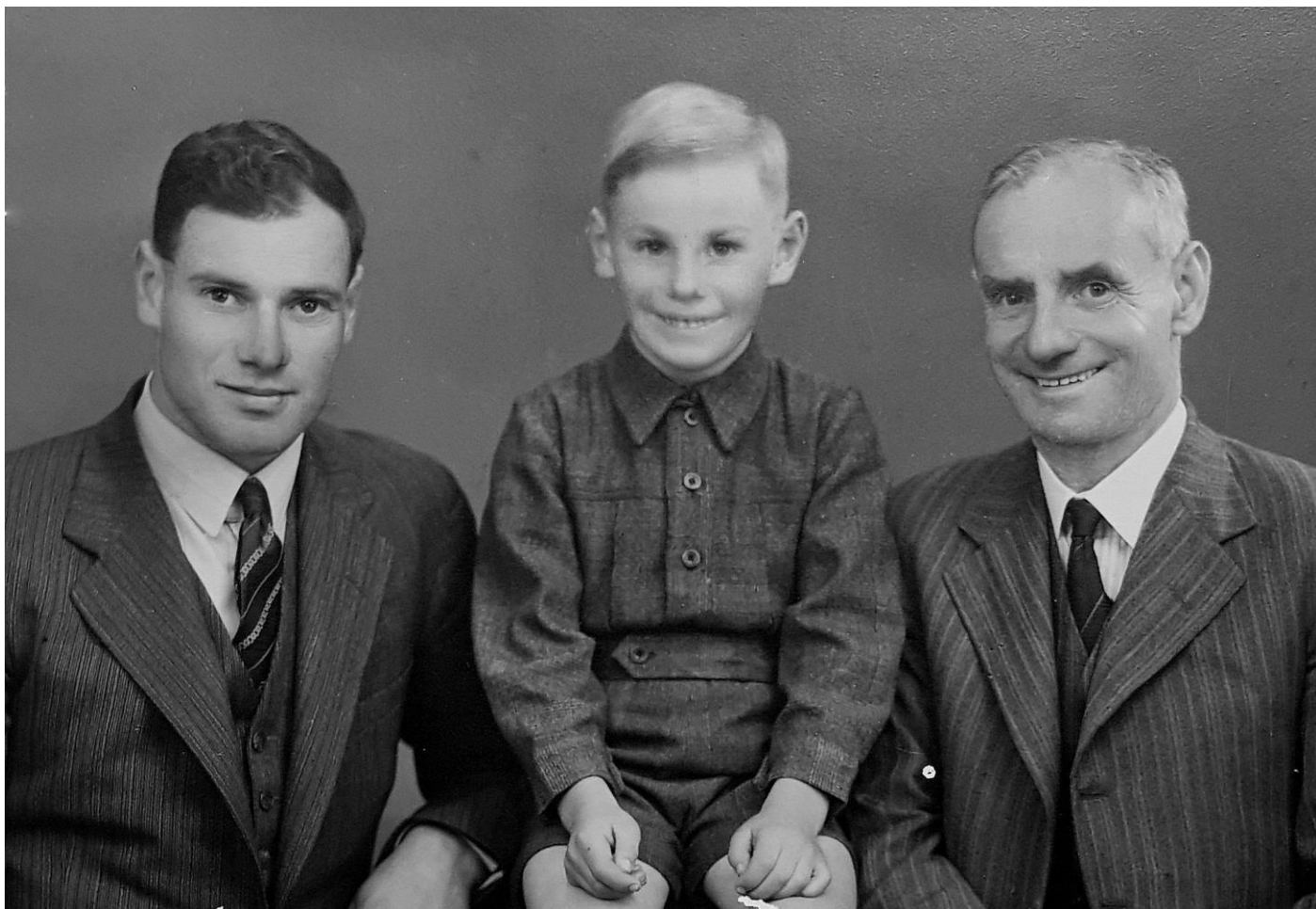
(This was Len's fifth period on the council and altogether he served 23 years on the Bruny Council).

On 15 August 1966 Len's daughter Barbara Bottomley (who had been teaching in Mornington, Victoria) married Max Young and so she moved to Bruny Island to live on the *Nebraska* farm which was quite close to Len's house on Nebraska Road.

At this stage Len was 81 and suffering from angina. Barbara was able to help with his care until he moved into St John's Park Retirement Village, New Town on 28 March 1974.

He died on 27 September 1974 in Hobart, Tasmania, at the age of 88 and is buried at St Peters Anglican Church, Barnes Bay.

The funeral was held on 30 September and was conducted by Rev William Robin Paton. Len shares a grave with his wife Kate who died 3 years earlier on 20 April 1971.



Leonard ("Len") Bottomley (on the right) with his son Sefton Bottomley and his grandson David Percival. Circa 1943.

This Obituary written by Alan and Yvonne Bottomley, APRIL 2022.
