

Roseneath and Evans Bay Country Section I

The section of 104 acres was bounded by the sea in Evans Bay towards Kio Bay, and by the Town Belt boundary then about Grafton Road. Point Jerningham was excluded because the Government kept a magazine for explosives there. At first the land was part of Hutt County, then Melrose Borough until it was taken into Wellington City.

In 1855 John Roberts alias Robert Jenkins bought the land for 400 pounds and a deposit of 50 pounds. He was a publican who owned the **New Zealander** that he set up in 1840 on the corner of Manners and Lombard streets on a half-acre site of Town Acre 208 that ran down to the foreshore. Jenkins was a very shrewd operator, living near Greta Point with his Maori de-facto wife and 4 children. He also owned Evans Bay Country Sections II and III. Jenkin's ownership set the time scale for the development of all of the area from Roseneath to Hataitai. When he died in 1859 he left a country section in trust to each of three children in New South Wales where he had settled in 1836 to farm at Boro Creek, after bringing his wife and nine children as free settlers to Sydney in 1835. The country sections were leased for farming.

Jenkin's daughter Lydia Perry inherited Section I. She died intestate in 1869. Jenkins executors George Hunter and son John William Roberts had also died. The other problem was the lack of legal title to land that had been traded speculatively all over Wellington from the beginning. The Wakefield Scheme with the New Zealand Company arrived in New Zealand at the time a Colonial Government was being established and there were quarrels with the Crown over the allocation and sale of land, enraging the settlers who had bought it from the New Zealand Company. Eventually the Crown gave in and it was possible to give title through Crown Grants that were backdated to the date of purchase. The Crown Grant for Section I was made in 1883 and back dated.

Lydia's two surviving children applied for their inheritance through the Court. They sold the land for 5,000 Pounds in 1886 to a group of men, Penfold, Bell and Browne, the latter the manager of the Union Bank of Australia, and then residing in Wellington. Mortgage conditions were not met and the Perry family seized the land, auctioned it and sold it for 4,850 Pounds to the highest bidder, Browne, by then living in Tasmania. The subdivision of the land was finally settled and plans drawn up in 1888.

Browne had little success to begin with, few sites selling between 1890 and 1892. The first purchase was made by Robert Dixon who bought lot 34 on 14th May 1890. John Martin bought section 16 in Balaena Bay, Frederick Smith bought Lots 7, 8 and 15, while Harriet Dear bought Lot 47. In March 1892 the subdivision was on sold to Fitzgerald and Hart of Hobart and a marketing campaign began, with proximity to the city emphasised. At first Wellington City refused to accept the responsibility for the roads because they were considered substandard.