



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES – ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION**

### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council of Western Australia in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

#### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEMES**

- 3.5 Developing primary production
- 5.8 Working on the land
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements.

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEMES**

- 104 Land allocation and subdivision
- 302 Rural industry
- 602 Early settlers.

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is an example of the Colonial Vernacular/Victorian Georgian style homestead and is typical of the type of rural homestead erected in the Avon Valley. The homestead and its outbuildings are situated near Gwambygine Pool the banks of which are lined with mature flooded gums, casuarinas and other native trees. The whole creates a picturesque setting. (Criterion 1.3)

#### **11.2 HISTORIC VALUE**

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its association with the Aborigines who lived in the district and who were incorporated into the work force and daily life of the farm. It also demonstrates that early contacts with Aborigines could be amicable. (Criterion 2.2)

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its associations with the first settlement of the York district in the 1830s and the establishment of the pastoral industries of sheep and wheat in Western Australia. (Criterion 2.2)

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For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J., *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O., *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* reveals the pattern of early settlement along the Avon River with homesteads being constructed near the permanent pools that were a feature of the river. (Criterion 2.2)

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its association with the introduction of convictism and the employment of ticket-of-leave men on rural holdings in the Avon district. (Criterion 2.2)

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its association with the Reverend J.B. Wittenoom, the first Colonial Chaplain in the Swan River Colony and one of the earliest settlers in the Avon Valley, and his family, as the place formed part of the original Avon Land Grant Location Z taken up by Wittenoom in 1830. (Criterion 2.3)

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is associated with the practise of billeting Italian prisoners of war during World War II. (Criterion 2.2)

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its association with Thomas Carter, an experienced farmer who was held in high regard by all classes of society during the early years of the Colony, and for its associations with Lieut. Bunbury and the Reverend Wollaston, both of whom stayed at the homestead during their travels. (Criterion 2.3)

### **11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* has the potential to yield information about colonial construction techniques of the 1830s and 1840s, prior to the arrival of convict labour; demonstrating the early settlers' skills and the use of readily available materials, their established residential habits, and the typical characteristics of form and layout. (Criterion 3.1)

Gwambygine Pool has recognised significance as one of the last deep pools along the Avon River. It continues to be the focus of study by environmental groups, students and others and has the potential to yield information about river ecosystems, river management and aquatic flora and fauna. (Criterion 3.1)

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its archaeological potential to yield information about the lifestyle of a rural farming community in the Avon Valley. (Criterion 3.2)

### **11.4 SOCIAL VALUE**

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its associations with Indigenous Australians who worked on the property and assisted with the care of sheep and cattle. The place was also a venue for a corroboree (in 1841) with tribes converging on the homestead to take part in the ceremony. (Criterion 4.1)

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is important for its contribution to the York community's sense of place. The homestead with its tennis court and grounds was a popular venue for parties and picnics and many children learnt to swim in the Gwambygine Pool. At various times the homestead provided accommodation for the schoolteacher and pupils from distant farms. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1 RARITY**

Gwambygine Homestead is one of the earliest homesteads in this State and one of few that can date sections of its construction back to the mid-late 1830s.

Gwambygine Pool is rare as one of only two remaining permanent deep pools in the Avon River. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is representative of the rural homesteads erected during the early decades of the Swan River Colony. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

Overall, *Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is in sound to poor condition.

Gwambygine Homestead is in sound to poor condition as a consequence of lack of use and essential maintenance. The 1830s initial part of the homestead has been enlarged and altered and some of the changes have contributed to deterioration of the fabric.

The barn, shearing shed, post and rail fencing, the pigsty and all out buildings are similarly in a deteriorated condition due to abuse, lack of ongoing use and no essential maintenance.

Prior to cessation of use of the homestead and associated farm buildings and structures, the place was maintained in a generally useable condition. Past repairs are apparent and generally incompatible with the original fabric. There are no programs in place to use, repair or restore the buildings and structures. Attention to the condition of the fabric of the place is now an urgent priority.

The condition of Gwambygine Pool is sound to good.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

Overall, *Gwambygine Farm and Pool* has moderate to high integrity.

Gwambygine Homestead continues to operate as a farming property with the paddocks being seeded and cropped annually. The homestead, barn and shearing shed, stock pens, pigsty and farm sheds are no longer in use. As a consequence, their condition is deteriorating and their future is uncertain.

All the elements are capable of short-term conservation, adaptation to appropriate rural use or re-use for the original type uses. Substantial work will be required however in the conservation process. There is no timeframe in place for conservation work, but the need is urgent. As a consequence, the integrity of the place is moderate.

Gwambygine Pool is being managed by the Avon River Conservation Group with prospects that its current relatively healthy status will be improved in the short term. Its integrity is high.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

Overall, *Gwambygine Farm and Pool* has moderate authenticity.

Gwambygine Homestead has moderate authenticity as a consequence of the changes to the fabric of the buildings. Interpretation of the original rise fabric and rush or shingled roof is now clouded and not readily discernable. The homestead has been extended and altered, such that the place is now representative of a

Colonial farmhouse originating in the late 1830s, adapted and evolved to meet the need for more accommodation, upgrading of amenity, and changes in lifestyle since then. In that sense, the farm is an authentic example of a Colonial farm developed and changed since inception.

The authenticity of Gwambygine Pool is high. It retains much of its original form and landscape character.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Dr. Robyn Taylor, Historian, and Ronald Bodycoat, Architect, in February 2006, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* comprises a single-storey homestead (c.1836-7 with additions), remains of a tennis court (1890s), a stone barn/shearing shed (date unknown), a c.1949-50 concrete block garage, iron machine shed, post and rail stock pens, sheep dip, pigsty, chicken house, and remains of garden beds and an orchard. The place is located near the northern section of the Gwambygine Pool, one of last deep pools along the Avon River. The property, Avon Location Z, was granted to the Reverend John Burdett Wittenoom in 1830. An experienced farmer, Thomas Carter, with the assistance of Wittenoom's young sons, constructed the homestead and developed the land into a highly productive farming property.<sup>1</sup>

Following the foundation of the Swan River Colony in 1829, the recently widowed Reverend John Burdett Wittenoom of Nottinghamshire applied for the position of Colonial Chaplain. His application was successful and in January 1830 he arrived on the *Wanstead* with his sister Eliza and his four young sons, John Burdett, Henry, Frederick Dirck and Charles.<sup>2</sup> During that same year Governor Stirling had instructed Ensign Dale to lead a small expeditionary party to search for arable land east of the Darling Ranges. During July and August, Dale explored the Avon Valley region and named the Avon River. One of the party's camping sites was Cave Hill (near Gwambygine) a short distance from the river. The cave on the hill was explored and noted for the Indigenous paintings on its surfaces.<sup>3</sup> On his return Dale's report to Governor Stirling was most favourable. Later in the same year Stirling joined another expedition to the Avon Valley with a number of others, including the Reverend Wittenoom, to appraise the land.<sup>4</sup> Following pressure from the settlers the district was declared open. By mid-December, nearly 101,250 ha had been granted.<sup>5</sup> Land for the towns of York and Beverley was allocated in 1831 and 1838 respectively. Gwambygine is situated between these two towns.

Reverend Wittenoom was granted Location Z consisting of 5,000 acres in the area that became known as Gwambygine and included Cave Hill.<sup>6</sup> His was a choice piece of land on the banks of the Avon River with a permanent deep pool.<sup>7</sup>

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- 1 Now Gwambygine Estate Lots 33, 34, 35 and 36. Certificate of Title, Volume 840, Folio 53. Department of Land Information.
  - 2 Batty MN 1649, Wittenoom Family Papers 1816-1867, Private Stack, Acc 5071A. *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, Vol. 4, Pre 1829-1888, Gen. Ed. Rica Erickson, UWA Press, 1988. Entry for Rev. John Burdett Wittenoom. Rev. Wittenoom remarried in 1839 and had three more children. A number of secondary sources state Rev. Wittenoom's mother had accompanied them, however her name does not appear among the family names listed as part of the land grant application. See Acc. 36, Vol. 5/142, State Records Office. According to research by Dr Pamela Statham Drew for a history of the Wittenoom family, Mrs Elizabeth Wittenoom arrived per *Giraffe* in 1835.
  - 3 The hand stencils and other markings were subsequently recorded by George Fletcher Moore on an expedition the following year.
  - 4 Hardey, John W., Journal of expedition over General Darling's Range, entry for 24 October 1830, in *Western Australian Explorations*, Vol. 1 – 1826-35, Principal Editor Joanne Shoober, Hesperian Press, Victoria Park, 2005, p. 185.
  - 5 Appleyard, R. T., and Manford, T., *The Beginning. European Discovery and Early Settlement of Swan River Western Australia*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1980, p. 178. Stirling secured a property 'Grassdale' just south of Wittenoom's grant. This was later bought by Captain Irwin. See Bunbury's journal entry cited below.
  - 6 Wittenoom's allocation was taken up in January 1831. See Acc.36, Vol. 5/142, State Records Office. The meaning of the name Gwambygine is not known.
  - 7 Despite the large catchment area, the Avon River is generally dry during the summer months. The deep pools were permanent sources of water and fish such as cobblers.

He apparently increased this property to 9,000 acres.<sup>8</sup> Location duties were necessary as part of the grant system and with his obligations to fulfil in Perth as Colonial Chaplain, the property was put in the charge of Thomas Carter a highly capable farmer from Norfolk who arrived in 1830.<sup>9</sup> Wittenoom's sons worked with Carter to establish a homestead and farm. In the 1837 Census the farm is listed as being John's (the eldest son) with his brothers Henry, Frederick and Charles all living on the property and listed as agriculturalists. Three farm labourers are also listed including Thomas Carter.<sup>10</sup>

Insights into the settlement of the Avon Valley during the 1830s are provided in the journals of Lt. H.W. Bunbury. His 1837 entry for Wittenoom's property provides detailed descriptions of the methods used in the construction of the buildings. According to Bunbury, the property had recently been established by Wittenoom's 'sons and a Mr Carter' whom he describes as 'one of the most laborious and active settlers in the colony'.<sup>11</sup> At that time the boys would have been aged between 13 and 22 years.<sup>12</sup>

A large quantity of land has been broken and sown with corn this year and appears likely to yield a good return, the buildings are progressing rapidly and are being built of rammed earth, or Ramjam as it is called, a mixture of clay and sand...

All Mr Wittenoom's buildings are covered with grass-tree tops, which form the best possible rough covering for houses especially at first, when shingle cannot be obtained and no straw is yet grown on the farm...

Mr Wittenoom has no sheep of his own but Mr Carter from the high character he bears for industry and integrity, has got charge of large flocks belonging to different individuals... The situation of Mr Wittenoom's farm is picturesque, on a flat between a very fine pool, nearly a mile in length, and the Cave Hill, as it is called on account of some singular caverns in the granite rocks... In these caves are some curious specimens of native drawings such as men's hands, evidently traced from the original, and other things the meaning of which is unknown to us.<sup>13</sup>

References to sheep in Bunbury's journal reflect the fact that the region was particularly beneficial and profitable for grazing. A number of settlers were moving their flocks from the less fertile coastal plain to the Avon.<sup>14</sup> The reference to Carter's reputation is borne out by a letter written a couple of years later by his brother Henry: 'I assure you there are few Settlers who have more calls than we have from all classes from the Governor to the Labourer, we hold that rank here which Mr B [presumably Mr Bayley who worked at Gwambygine] and all Men of Business Know (Viz) Thriving men of Business.'<sup>15</sup>

In 1840 Thomas Carter was joined by his brother Henry.<sup>16</sup> The brothers kept up a lively correspondence with family and friends back home in Norfolk describing the farm and their way of life.

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- 8 Williams, A. E., *West Anglican Way, The Growth of the Anglican Church in Western Australia, the First 100 Years 1829-1929*, Province of WA of the Anglican Church of Australia, July 1989, p. 33.
  - 9 Bunbury, W. S. and W. P. Morell, eds. *Early Days in Western Australia: being the Letters and Journals of Lt. H. W. Bunbury*, London, Oxford University Press, 1930, p. 43. *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit. Entry for Thomas Carter.
  - 10 Census 1837. CSO Vol. 58. Published by Library Board, 1974, p. 63. Charles the youngest and a schoolboy would have been visiting the farm at the time the census was taken.
  - 11 Bunbury and Morell, op. cit., p. 43.
  - 12 *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit., entries for members of the Wittenoom family.
  - 13 Bunbury and Morell, op. cit., p. 43-46.
  - 14 Statham, P., 'Swan River Colony', in Stannage, C. T., *A New History of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Nedlands, 1981, p. 190.
  - 15 Letter from Henry Carter to his sister Sarah, 5 June 1841. Transcript. Battye Private Stack Acc. 795A.
  - 16 Letter from Henry Carter to John Carter in London, 11 June 1840.

Our House stands upon the banks of the River which runs only in the Winter and not always then but before the house is a large pool 3/4 mile long by 100 yards over which [we] have always plenty of water beautifully clear, the situation is pretty, beautifully varied with hill and dale but the House yards fences &c which forms the beauty of English scenery is sadly rough here. The house they tell me is a tolerably good one for the colony.<sup>17</sup>

In another letter Henry provides a sketch of the house.<sup>18</sup> The floor plan is L-shaped with the shorter end comprising the kitchen. A large storeroom is next to the kitchen and occupies a good part of the length of the house that includes a sitting room and two bedrooms. An L-shaped verandah provides protection along the two lengths of the building.

Carter mentions there were eight or nine persons in their establishment including a general servant who cooked, and a Mr Bayley.<sup>19</sup> At any one time there would also be upwards of ten Aborigines, men, women and children, staying at the farm and undertaking chores in payment for bread. Henry Carter found them very 'obliging and useful'<sup>20</sup> keeping the stock together, preventing the cows from wandering into the wheat (30 acres had been planted) and barley crops, tending the sheep (around 2,000), and grinding corn. The corn mill was kept under the verandah by the kitchen door. They also hunted kangaroo, providing meat for the table. His brother Thomas could speak their language and from all accounts the relationship between the brothers and the Aborigines was amicable. In a letter written home the following year reference is made to a 'caroobary' that was to be held at the homestead with over a hundred people from different tribes travelling to Gwambyine to attend the event.<sup>21</sup> Given the proximity of at least two known Indigenous sites, Frieze Cave and nearby Dale's Cave (Cave Hill), and the Avon River with its permanent deep pool, the Gwambyine area would have had considerable significance for Indigenous people.<sup>22</sup>

The letters home paint a positive picture of a highly productive farm. Apart from some supplies, such as sugar and tea, they were self sufficient with pigs, poultry, milk and butter. Whereas many others struggled, the Carters were experienced farmers: 'There are very few of our class in the Colony. I do not think there are more than 6 practical farmers in it.'<sup>23</sup> In this regard the Wittenooms were fortunate to have an established farm when the time came for the sons to take over.<sup>24</sup>

By 1851 the youngest son Charles Wittenoom was already established at Gwambyine. Journal entries made by Reverend Wollaston during his pastoral tours of the Avon district mention spending a couple of restful nights there in May

17 Letter to Miss A. Carter dated 10 July 1940.

18 Letter from Henry Carter to his sister Mrs Sarah Bartram, dated 5 June 1841.

19 Letter dated 5 June 1841. There is no reference to the Wittenooms in these letters by Henry Carter. The letters date from June 1840 to February 1841. According to notes provided by Pamela Statham-Drew old Mrs Wittenoom and her daughter Eliza lived at Gywambyine from 1838 to 1845, Mrs Wittenoom dying there in June 1845.

20 Letter dated 19 June 1840.

21 Letter dated 26 February 1841 to Mrs. Carter from Henry Carter.

22 Burke, Shane, 'Report on the Indigenous archaeological survey of Northam Lot 29061, Seabrook, Western Australia', November 2004, p. 7, in Conservation Plan for Seabrook Battery (fmr.), August 2005. According to the current owner Mrs. Margaret Venerys (nee Clifton), who grew up at Gwambyine, the Aborigines were in fear of Cave Hill and would not go near it.

23 Letter dated 18 June [1841]. In his 15 June 1841 letter Henry mentions Thomas had been approached by the York Agricultural Society the year before to produce their report. This formed part of the Colony's statistical report that was published in England.

24 The first Memorial recorded for Wittenoom's grant Location Z appears as an Indenture of Release that took place around 11 March 1845 between Rev. Wittenoom and Anthony O'Grady Lefroy and Gerald De Courcy Lefroy, both of Spring Hill on the Avon River. The Memorial indicates Location Z was released to the Lefroys for £300. Memorial 288, Book 3. Dept. of Land Information.

1851, and again in 1853 and 1856.<sup>25</sup> One entry refers to the place as 'part of his father's original grant of 5,000 acres'.<sup>26</sup> On 30 March 1853 Charles married Sarah Elizabeth Harding, daughter of Captain James Harding. They had two children: a son Frederick Francis Burdett, born at Gwambygine on 17 December 1855, and a daughter, Rose Agnes, born 1857.<sup>27</sup> In January 1855 Reverend Wittenoom passed away. His first son John Burdett inherited 1,250 acres of Location Z, while the third son Frederick Dirck inherited Gwambygine. The second son Henry was apparently an invalid all his life and was not considered in terms of an inheritance. He is listed in the 1859 York census as living with Charles on Gwambygine.<sup>28</sup> Frederick Dirck passed away in 1863 and Charles a couple of years later in 1866.<sup>29</sup> However by this time it would appear Joseph Hicks and one of his sons had been leasing Gwambygine for the past couple of years.<sup>30</sup>

Joseph Hicks arrived on the *Travencore* with wife Henrietta and family in 1853. A blacksmith by trade, he acquired 10 acres of Cave Hill Farm in 1855. During 1863-73 he and his son Joseph are listed as employing Ticket of Leave men at Gwambygine.<sup>31</sup> The shortage of labour in the Avon Valley had long been an issue and pressure from the Avon Valley farmers on the colonial government was one of the major reasons for the introduction of convictism in 1850.<sup>32</sup>

In 1862, Joseph Hicks married Rosina Snow of nearby Gilgering and the couple had nine children. The sixth child Henrietta Maria (b. 1876), who never married, eventually inherited the Gwambygine property.<sup>33</sup> Hicks had also trained as a blacksmith and either he and/or his father is believed to have set up a blacksmith's shed and forge at Gwambygine some distance from the homestead.<sup>34</sup>

In 1885-86 the Avon region was linked to Perth and the port of Fremantle via the new railway system. The rail line, the Great Southern, ran through York to Beverley with a number of sidings being set up along the way. Hick's Siding was established not far from the Gwambygine property.<sup>35</sup>

During the 1890s the Gwambygine Homestead was a popular venue for social events and tennis tournaments. The tennis court in front of the house was set up at this time and some other courts had been marked out with the surfaces being made from ant-bed. Tennis tournaments were held there.<sup>36</sup>

In 1900 the original land grant of Gwambygine, together with neighbouring Location Y, was purchased by the Crown under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act of 1896. The building of the railway and expansion of the agricultural industry,

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- 25 Burton, The Rev. Canon A., *Wollaston's Albany Journal (1848-56) being Volume 2 of the Journals and Diaries (1841-56) of the Revd. John Ramsden Wollaston MA. Archdeacon of Western Australia 1849-1856*, University of WA Press, Perth, 1948, pp. 133-134, 163, 215.
- 26 Burton, op. cit., entry for 18 February 1853, p. 163.
- 27 *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit., entry for Charles Wittenoom.
- 28 *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit., entries for John Burdett, Frederick and Henry Wittenoom.
- 29 Details regarding Charles Wittenoom's estate in relation to Location Z and other parties (Luke Samuel Leake and William Dalgety Moore) are set out in Memorial 2220, Book 6, dated 1 February 1867.
- 30 *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit., entries for Joseph and Joseph (jnr.) Hicks. Apparently Henry Wittenoom continued to live at Gwambygine until his death in 1884. R. E. Cranfield, *The Wittenoom Family in WA*, Perth, undated [196-], p.17.
- 31 *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit., entries for Joseph and Joseph (jnr.) Hicks.
- 32 Statham, P., op. cit, p. 209.
- 33 Certificate of Title, Volume 840, Folio 53, dated 30 August 1923.
- 34 Margaret Venerys, owner of Gwambygine, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 7 February 2006. This shed and some other old structures and part of the orchard were destroyed in the 1926 flood.
- 35 'Gwambygine Pool and Gwambygine Homestead, York, WA', submission to the Australian Heritage Commission prepared by the River Conservation Society (Inc.), December 1999, Appendix One, p. 5.
- 36 Margaret Venerys, owner, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 7 February 2006.



in particular wheat production, had led to an increase in the number of settlers and workers in the region. There was a demand for land. The two locations were combined to form the Gwambygine Estate and this was subdivided into a number of small homestead blocks that were then opened up for selection.<sup>37</sup> In c.1901 Claude Robert Henry Clifton purchased 1,000 acres at Cave Hill.<sup>38</sup> Before this Clifton had worked in the pastoral industry on various properties first in Esperance then eleven years in the northwest. In 1899, while in Roebourne he married Florence Hicks the daughter of Joseph and Rosina Hicks of Gwambygine. While working as a station manager for Messrs Burges and Wittenoom he had acquired an interest in Mulga Downs station. He sold this in 1901, resigned his position, and the couple left with their baby son Claude Vernon (b. 1900) to settle on the Cave Hill property. Another son, Brian Merton, was born in 1902, followed by Florence Gwendoline (1904), Caroline Nance (1909) and Rosina Jean (1913).<sup>39</sup>

Following the opening up of the York and Beverley districts with the railway and the creation of the Gwambygine Estate, community facilities such as schools were needed. A community hall and a one-teacher school were erected near Hicks Siding (Hicks Siding School 1908-13) later known as Gwambygine Siding School (1913-47).<sup>40</sup> At various times teachers and children from the other side of the Avon River or distant farms were boarded at the Gwambygine home.<sup>41</sup> 'Alterations were made to the house to accommodate these extra persons. The result is a roomy, rambling, unpretentious house.'<sup>42</sup>

From the 1920s the Gwambygine Pool was a popular venue on weekends for picnics and swimming. The riverbanks were shaded by large flooded gums, casuarinas and melaleucas where parents could sit and watch their children learn to swim. The Pool extended into the neighbouring property Glen Irwin where the Scott family erected benches and tables, and a jetty for diving.

Each year on Boxing Day and also New Year's Day there were excursions to Gwambygine by families from as far away as Doodenanning and Balkuling as well as Greenhills. It was a tradition that local families kept through the years, right up until the 1960s.<sup>43</sup>

In 1923 Henrietta Maria Hicks, daughter of Joseph and Rosina, was granted just over 520 acres of the Gwanbygine Estate. This included Lots 33, 34, 35 and 36 the lot on which the homestead is situated. The grant was subject to the payment of £818 18s 3d.<sup>44</sup> During this time Brian Merton Clifton was working on the property. In 1929 he married Gwenyth Joan Compton and the couple were to have three children, a son and two daughters, though only one daughter Margaret Joan Merton Clifton survived infancy. According to Margaret Venerys (née Clifton) a number of the older members of the family, including her 'Hicks aunts', were born in what was referred to as the 'old nursery' (Room 3).<sup>45</sup> In c.1930 the Cliftons converted the dining room (Area 12) into an office. The room

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- 37 Underwood, R., 'A broken window at Gwambygine', in *Barladong*, The York Society History and Heritage Journal, No. 2, 2000, p. 22.
  - 38 *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit., entry for C. R. H. Clifton.
  - 39 *The Cyclopedia of Western Australia*, Vol. 2, 1913, p. 498. *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, op. cit., entry for C. R. H. Clifton.
  - 40 Underwood, op. cit., p. 22.
  - 41 'Gwambygine Pool and Gwambygine Homestead, York, WA', op. cit., p. 5.
  - 42 'Gwambygine Pool and Gwambygine Homestead, York, WA', op. cit., p. 5.
  - 43 Clack, A. M., *A Bathing House on the Avon. A History of Bathing and Swimming in York*, Hedley Creek Press, 1999, p. 33. A school sports day was also held there in 1930.
  - 44 Grant dated 30 August 1925, Volume 840, Folio 53. Followed by Certificate of Title under Transfer of Land Act 1893. Grantee now registered proprietor, dated 3 September 1923.
  - 45 Margaret Venerys, owner, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 11 January 2006.

was conveniently situated as it opened onto the verandah opposite the front path that led up to the house. During World War Two, Area 2 was known as the Red Cross room where Mrs Clifton conducted sewing bees and knitting groups making socks and other items for the soldiers overseas.<sup>46</sup> The room later became Margaret Clifton's bedroom. In the 1940s Angelo Calabrese, an Italian POW stayed at the homestead as a labourer. He slept in a lean-to room attached to the back of the house (Area 4) later moving into the old nursery room. Area 4 was later used (c.1949) to house the generator. 'Angelo became one of the family; there was no thought of him being a prisoner of war. He used to go to York every Sunday to attend church at St. Patrick's and catch up with friends who were POWs.'<sup>47</sup>

In 1950 the property was transferred to Brian Merton Clifton on condition an annuity would be paid to Henrietta Maria Hicks and her widowed sister Linda Linnet Barnes for their joint lifetimes and the lifetime of any survivor of them.<sup>48</sup>

Family and friends who visited or spent holidays at Gwambygine recall it as a beautiful place with gardens and fruit trees. The large kitchen in particular was said to be remarkable with its steeply pitched timber roof where smoked hams were hung.<sup>49</sup> Margaret Venerys (née Clifton) recalls the other ceilings used to be lined with canvas before being replaced with plaster, and various changes being made to the place during the late 1940s early 1950s when window and doors were put in along the back verandah.<sup>50</sup> By that time the original timber floors had deteriorated and needed to be replaced. Because timber was difficult to obtain after the war it was decided to lay concrete instead. The back verandah was concreted first, then the front verandah. The verandah return at the rear was also enclosed to create a sleep-out (Area 8). The garage next to the main house was erected some time during the late 1940s or 1950, however because of the cost of petrol at that time, it was rarely used.

The property continued to be highly productive during the latter half of the 20th century. Crops included wheat, barley, oats, cut hay, baled hay and in more recent times canola. There was a large piggery, and cows and sheep. While much of the old orchard had been ruined by the 1926 floods fruit trees such as a fig, mulberry and pear remain.

Merton Clifton continued to live at Gwambygine until 1998 when a bad fall required him to go into York hospital where a few weeks later he passed away. According to a friend, 'he was always keen to talk of the "hey days" at Gwambygine when all the neighbours would come around for games of tennis on the court in front of the house'.<sup>51</sup> However by 1998 the house had been deteriorating and needed maintenance. Following Merton Clifton's death the house was closed. Some repairs were subsequently undertaken such as fixing sheets of roofing iron and replacing rafters where white ants had caused damage, and a ceiling had fallen in.<sup>52</sup>

While the homestead is currently unoccupied, the property continues to be used by family members for cropping and grazing sheep.

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- 46 Margaret Venerys, owner, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 11 January 2006. She believes the Red Cross room may have started in the late 1930s.
- 47 Margaret Venerys, owner, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 11 January and 7 February 2006.
- 48 Certificate of Title, Volume 840, Folio 53, registered 1 September 1950.
- 49 Rosemary Hunter, friend of Margaret Venerys and who used to visit the property in the 1950s, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 11 January 2006.
- 50 Margaret Venerys, owner, conversation with Robyn Taylor, 11 January 2006.
- 51 Email from Tony Clack, River Conservation Society Inc., to Robyn Taylor, 5 February 2006.
- 52 Email from Tony Clack, River Conservation Society (Inc.), to Robyn Taylor 5 February 2006.

## Gwambygine Pool

During the 1950s the local shires along the Avon River in conjunction with the State Government, embarked on the River Training Scheme (RTS). This was to prevent major flood events along the Avon River and would have been prompted by recent severe floods such as those that occurred in February and September 1955.<sup>53</sup> The RTS began in 1957 and continued until 1972. Despite warnings by some local farmers who knew the river system well, a deep channel was dredged through the riverbed along the length of the river from Brookton to Cobbler's Pool downstream from Toodyay. Some meander bends were removed as well as tea tree and other plants that had previously modulated the flow of the river. While the scheme was deemed a success in terms of flooding, the impact of the faster flow was an increased silting up of the permanent deep pools such as Gwambygine Pool. By 1996 some 300 metres of sand had completely filled the southern end. In that year the Waterways Commission removed around 13,000 cubic metres of sand.<sup>54</sup> However the sand and silt continues to spread into the Pool.<sup>55</sup>

Gwambygine Pool is now considered to be one of the last deep pools to remain along the Avon River, the other being the Glen Avon Pool, and an increasingly rare example of the permanent pools that helped to sustain the settlers during the dry summer months and periods of drought. According to the York based River Conservation Society (Inc.) a study undertaken by CALM of inland river pools in the southwest of the State 'failed to find an inland river pool of comparable quality'.<sup>56</sup> During 1995-97 the River Conservation Society undertook the first biological survey of an Avon River pool at Gwambygine. The monthly surveys revealed a healthy aquatic flora and fauna. For these reasons, and to draw attention to the significance of the historical and natural heritage values of the place, the River Conservation Society prepared a submission on both the homestead and the pool to the Australian Heritage Commission.<sup>57</sup>

In October 2005, Minister for the Environment, Judy Edwards, opened the Gwambygine Pool Conservation Reserve.

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is currently listed as an appendix in the Shire of York's Municipal Inventory. The Shire advises the place will be included in the updated Inventory when this is undertaken.<sup>58</sup>

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* comprises the following elements:

- farm paddocks on Gwambygine Estate - Lots 33, 34, 35 and 36;
- homestead, dating from 1836/37, altered and extended subsequently;
- barn and shearing shed, date unknown;
- post and rail fencing to stock pens associated with the shearing shed;
- pigsty;
- tennis court location dating from 1890s immediately west of and adjoining the homestead, and remnant orchard planting west of the farmhouse;

53 Callow, N., 'Avon River Pool Siltation', student report for the Dept. of Geography, UWA, November 1999, p. 8.

54 'Gwambygine Pool and Gwambygine Homestead, York, WA', op. cit., p. 3.

55 Tony Clack, River Conservation Society (Inc.), discussion with Robyn Taylor 10 January 2006.

56 'Gwambygine Pool and Gwambygine Homestead, York, WA', op. cit., p. 1.

57 According to the Commission's website and register at this point in time (6 February 2006) the place is listed as an 'Indicative Place'. Formal nomination has not been completed.

58 Tony Clack, York Society and River Conservation Society (Inc.), discussion with Robyn Taylor 10 January 2006.

- Gwambygine Pool, a natural physical element of the Avon River, immediately east of the homestead.

Other elements of the farm, now in deteriorated condition are:

- two machine sheds;
- poultry sheds and animal shelters;
- water tanks, pumps and farm vehicles and machinery.

### **Siting**

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is located in the Avon Valley, bordering the Avon River and Gwambygine Pool, a few kilometres south of the York townsite on the Great Southern Highway south towards the Beverley townsite. The context of *Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is rural. The farm paddocks are cleared of vegetation and currently are cropped under a lease/use arrangement, independent of the historic homestead which is currently closed.

The Gwambygine Pool retains much of its original character - a long pool of water within the Avon River basin, with regenerating natural vegetation. The Pool is important as one of only two surviving natural pools in the Avon River system in the York locality. Other pools have been filled by sand siltation. The Gwambygine Pool is relevant for its survival and for its riparian vegetation, now a rare and significant ecosystem as well as a place of value for its association with Indigenous people and Gwambygine Homestead.

The homestead is visible from the Great Southern Highway, set well back several hundred metres to the eastern side and close to Gwambygine Pool a little further eastwards. An access roadway extends from a gateway onto the Highway immediately south of Wittenoom Bridge, up to the northern side of the homestead. The homestead building ranges approximately north-south with the former tennis court, now deteriorated, hard up to the western face of the building. The orchard extends from the tennis court westwards towards the Highway. A machine shed, mostly of 20th century steel construction, is located a short distance north of the homestead. The stone barn and corrugated iron shearing shed runs east-west and is located further north beyond a second machine shed, the pigsty and post and rail stock pens. Further stock pens are provided on the north side of the shearing shed.

Gwambygine Pool runs north-south close to the eastern side of the homestead. The level of the site of the homestead is several metres above the water level of Gwambygine Pool. The vegetation on both sides of the Pool is natural, riparian in character. Beyond the buildings and the pool, the land has been cleared and continues to be cropped.

Intensive and high wild oats growth extends between the buildings, right up to the external walls and east to the top of the steep bank down to the Pool. This growth outside of fencing to the cropped paddocks, prevents a reasonable discovery and assessment of any elements surviving in the open ground around the buildings.

### **Farm Paddocks**

The land beyond the farm buildings and homestead is currently cleared and cropped under a lease/use arrangement. Occasional remnant natural vegetation has been retained throughout the farm, generally along paddock fence lines, creek lines, the Highway road reserve and along the banks of the Gwambygine Pool.

## **Homestead**

The following is a list of the areas which comprise the homestead:

Area 1	Master bedroom
Area 2	Bedroom former sitting room
Area 3	Nursery
Area 4	Engine room
Area 5	Verandah
Area 6	Garage
Area 7	Toilet
Area 8	Enclosed verandah - sleep-out
Area 9	Bathroom - enclosure
Area 10	Front verandah
Area 11	Bedroom
Area 12	Dining room, then office
Area 13	Sitting room
Area 14	Dining room former bedroom (Cook)
Area 15	Back verandah
Area 16	Kitchen
Area 17	Laundry/work area
Area 18	Garden area
Area 19	Garden area.

The homestead dates from the mid-late 1830s. As such, the form is representative of the architectural character indicative of Colonial farmhouses, built by settlers familiar with rural practices in Britain. The form of the homestead was extended in time to accommodate the needs of the resident family and with the addition of verandahs for shelter from the climatic extremes in the Colony. Enclosures of verandahs to provide a sleep-out and bathroom, concreting of floors, alterations to openings and timber joinery, the upgrading of floor finishes and service areas such as kitchen, bathroom, toilet and laundry, the addition of a garage and separate water closet, and the introduction of electricity, piped water and bottled gas are apparent in the evolution of the homestead from the 1830s to around 2000.

The homestead is a representative example of the Colonial Vernacular style, altered and extended beyond the initial section of the building constructed in the 1830s. The building is U-shaped, single-storey, with a later addition forming a leg at the rear left-hand corner. The building faces west with a front garden area within the recess of the plan form. A further garden area is located at the rear, fenced with a low concrete wall with wire mesh fencing over. The plan incorporates verandahs with returns to both the front and back sides; the low height of the gutter line of the verandahs creates a long, low appearance to the building, with the exception of the later verandah along the northern wall which is higher at the outer edge.

The walls are predominantly pise, 450mm and 400mm thick, on a shallow random stone rubble footing. Initially the external face of the pise was lime

washed, and later cement rendered and colour washed. The walls are currently painted white.

The roof is pitched high with central ridgelines and brick gables at the extremities of all wings. The original roof covering was grasstree thatch, later replaced with timber shingles, some of which survive, and then corrugated galvanised iron sheeting over the shingles or to the most recent additions. Verandah roofs and the lean-to along the southern wall are continuous with the main roofline but at a flatter pitch. A small gable highlights the centreline of the front verandah in the western elevation. Gutters do not survive except to a section of the southern lean-to Area 17 feeding into a now collapsed corrugated galvanised iron water tank.

Floors were all initially hardwood timber boards on timber framing. Some early timber floors survive in Areas 1, 2, 13 and 14. The remainder of all floors, including all verandahs, are now concrete slab replacements.

Joinery throughout is timber; some original doors survive as half-glazed doors with nine or four-light glazed panels. French doors to Areas 1 and 13 are replacements of five panes to each leaf. Window sashes throughout have been replaced with paired three-light casement sashes. The timber verandah posts to Areas 10 and 15 are predominantly replacement posts; to the front verandah, Area 10, a concrete dwarf wall is provided along the edge of the verandah and the returns.

The west wall to the kitchen, Area 16, is a brick replacement. The gable ends to Areas 1 and 3 are built in brick.

Chimneys are in face brickwork, with altered tops. The chimneys have been removed to Areas 11 and 12, and fireplaces reported to have been removed from Areas 1 and 2.

The plan form comprises single depth rooms throughout, representative of early farmhouses. Initially, it appears from documentary evidence that the building comprised five rooms and a verandah, Areas 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16. This accommodation provided a kitchen (uncharacteristically attached to the main house), two bedrooms, a sitting room and a store.

Later, Areas 1 and 2 and the back verandah, Area 15, were added. Later again, Areas 3, 4, 5 and 8 were added.

Most recently, additions comprise a lean-to along the southern wall, Area 17, and a garage and toilet, Areas 6 and 7. Area 17 is timber-framed, lined externally with corrugated iron sheeting, and Areas 6 and 7 are built in concrete block walling and corrugated iron roofing. The floor to Area 6 garage, is earth. Enclosures to verandahs, Area 8 sleep-out, Area 9 bathroom, the eastern end of verandah Area 5 and part of the southern leg of verandah Area 10, have been carried out to improve the amenity of the homestead.

Internally, all habitable areas are ceiled in caneite painted and with battened joints, except Area 2, which has a recent plasterboard ceiling with coved plaster cornice. Internal walls are plastered/rendered and painted.

The kitchen fireplace has been altered and a wood-fired heater installed; the fireplace to Area 11 has been bricked up; the fireplace to Area 12 removed and the chimney over removed; and the fireplace to Area 13 modernised. Verbal reports from a member of the family indicate the removal of other fireplaces and replacement with doors and windows. These alterations are not in all cases

evident on site from a superficial examination. A timber overmantel survives at the fireplace in Areas 3 and 11. Alterations and additions as discovered or advised are recorded at the end of this Section.

The homestead building is currently not occupied and is in a deteriorated condition throughout, both internally and externally. Contributing factors to the poor condition are lack of use, absence of ongoing maintenance, and a breakdown of the fabric due to rising damp in walls and corrosion of roof sheeting. The replacement of timber floors with concrete has exacerbated rising damp at the base of walls with the outcome of loss of cosmetic finishes. The loss of gutters, high abutting soil levels and the potential loss or leaking of roofs due to the condition of the roof covering, are issues needing to be urgently addressed. The building walls are cracked in places. Restoration of the fabric is a feasible and reasonable possibility at this point. However, there is no program in place to repair or restore the homestead nor the barn and the shearing shed.

Cement rendering of external pise wall surfaces has prevented natural drying out in areas with consequent cracking and loss of the render. Alterations to door and window openings and elsewhere in the fabric, have resulted in cracks and discernable joint lines in surface render and plaster. Failure of corrugated galvanised iron roof covering has resulted in water penetration onto ceilings and gable end walls. Termite activity over the years has required replacement of verandah posts and some timber floors, and could account for the large extent of replacement concrete floors. There remains some evidence of termite activity. Lack of maintenance and repair over an extended period and the cessation of use of the building, have been responsible for the poor condition of corrugated galvanised iron roof sheeting, the loss of gutters, the loss of garden planting and the poor condition of paint finishes throughout.

### **Barn and Shearing Shed**

The barn and shearing shed consists of one long building incorporating a stone-walled barn at the western end opening without a break onto a framed and sheeted shearing shed at the eastern end. The building runs east-west, with external stock pens at the south-east and north sides for the handling of sheep into and from the shearing shed. The stock pens extend on the northwest side to a sheep dip (shower/spray device) and a truck-loading ramp. The building is approximately 34 metres long and 5 to 8 metres wide.

The barn comprises local stone walling, approximately 450 mm thick, with a lean-to section at the northwest corner. A section of the south wall is framed with bush pole supports, lined externally with corrugated iron sheeting and incorporates two large sliding doors framed in steel tubing and lined externally with corrugated iron sheeting. A section of the southern wall is protected with a lean-to roofed extension housing a blacksmith's forge and bellows, a bench and a hinged timber shutter into the barn. The extension has an earth floor and bush pole framing supporting a galvanised iron roof. The external stone walling in this section is finished as high quality ashlar with white pointed joints. The external stone walling is random rubble construction with squared external face, generally in deteriorated condition and incorporating poor quality re-pointing in cement. The roof to the barn comprises ten bays with a further four bays extending into the shearing shed; the roof is hipped at both ends of the building with a central ridge, clad in corrugated iron sheeting without gutters or with section of gutters in poor condition. Rafters throughout are replacement sawn hardwood members, with

bush pole ties at wall plate level, one to each bay along the length of the building. The floor to the barn is concrete. Internally stone walls have been lime washed.

The shearing shed section of the building is framed with bush pole supports and sawn hardwood wall and roof framing, lined externally with corrugated iron sheeting. The floor is a traditional spaced hardwood batten floor on timber framing. Timber-framed wall partitioning and hinged gates subdivide the shed and the lean-to extensions along the south and east sides into stockholding areas. Tree trunk poles and a heavy timber beam are in place against the northern wall to support shearing equipment no longer in place. A wool press cubicle and machinery for driving the shears are in place. From the north wall of the shearing shed a long and narrow lean-to race in two sections acts as a holding device for stock from the shed. The race is built from bush poles, vertical timber planks and corrugated iron sheeting, with hinged timber control gates at both ends.

The form and appearance of the total building is representative of rural building constructed in the 19th and early 20th centuries on farming properties.

The overall condition of the barn and shearing shed is deteriorated.

### **Post and Rail Fencing to Stock Pens**

Timber post and rail fencing survives at the south-east and northern sides of the barn and shearing shed, installed originally for the handling of sheep to and from the shearing shed. The condition of the fencing is altered and deteriorated.

### **Pigsty**

A traditional style pigsty survives between the homestead and the barn. The sty is a low structure originally built out of timber planks with grasstree thatch as roofing cover. Steel pipe and other elements have been introduced into the fabric, now in a deteriorated condition.

### **Sheds**

A machine shed is located north of the homestead and a short distance away. The eastern bay of the shed is constructed from bush poles; the major part to the west is constructed out of bush poles and steel pipe trusses and supports. The roof and part of the walls are lined with corrugated iron sheeting. The south wall is open for access for vehicles and machinery parked in the shed. The entire structure is in poor condition, and houses a farm truck and other farm machinery which are also in a deteriorated condition.

A second machine shed is located close to the south-west corner of the barn. This is a shed of high volume, possibly intended for the storage of hay and stock food, framed and sheeted externally with corrugated iron sheeting. The open side faces east to the driveway between the homestead and the barn.

A chicken house and mesh fencing survives south of and close to the homestead. The structure and fencing are in deteriorated condition.

### **Site Amenities**

The original tennis court survives hard up against the western side of the homestead. The configuration of the court survives but the surface and border fencing have deteriorated.



The driveway from Great Southern Highway up to the homestead is in useable condition. Four remnant olive trees survive along the northern side of the driveway, close to the homestead.

Two mature oleanders (*Nerium*) survive in the western garden area of the homestead, Area 18. Several bougainvillea (*B. magnifica Trailli* presumably) survive along fence lines close to the western side of the homestead and along the eastern boundary of the garden area of the homestead, Area 19. A large mature pepper tree (*Schinus molle*) is located at the eastern side of the pigsty and machine shed. This surviving introduced planting is indicative of species popular in 19th century domestic gardens and useful for their drought resistant property.

Throughout the orchard, west of the homestead and extending down to the Highway, there is some evidence of earlier fruit tree plantings now in poor condition.

### **Gwambygine Pool**

Gwambygine Pool forms part of the Avon River system and represents one of only two remaining permanent pools along the River in the York district. The Pool is relevant as one reason for the siting of the homestead, adjacent on the western side. The Pool water level is several metres lower than the ground at the homestead, and is reported to be 1,100 metres in length. The homestead is located towards the northern end of the Pool.

Formerly a chain of such deep pools existed along the Avon River between Beverley and Northam. All but two have been partially or totally filled with sand.

The Pool is bordered on both banks with natural aquatic and riparian vegetation. The environmental characteristics and aesthetic quality of the pool and associated vegetation is of primary importance, not only for its connection as a water resource for Gwambygine Homestead and the social life recorded around recreational use of the Pool and its early fish stock but also for its historic significance for the morphology of the Pool and its occupancy by generations of Aboriginal people.

The River Conservation Society is currently involved in monitoring and improving the condition of the water in the Pool and the rejuvenation of the riparian vegetation.

## **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

There are a number of early rural homesteads in Western Australia though few can date the origins of their construction to the 1830s. The Heritage Council database shows 109 other places constructed between 1829 and 1840. Of these, 37 are listed as having the use of farming or pastoral, which includes homesteads, cottages, stables, stockyards or another associated pastoral structure; 27 are listed specifically as homesteads. Of the 27 homesteads, 14 are rural (not in the metropolitan area) and of those, seven are on the Register of Heritage Places. These are 00032 *Strawberry Hill Farm & Gardens*, Albany; 00394 *Sandilands*, Busselton; 01485 *Hall's Cottage*, Mandurah; P01843 *Buckland Homestead and Farm Buildings*, Northam; 02867 *Balladong Farm Group*, York; 03414 *Bardeen*, Northam; and, 04536 *Alverstroke*, Harvey. Gwambygine Farm and Pool is therefore one of few rural homesteads constructed prior to 1840.

Of the 37 other places constructed with the use farming/pastoral (constructed from 1829 to 1840, as mentioned above), six are in the Wheatbelt region. In addition to *Buckland Homestead and Farm Buildings*, *Balladong Farm Group* and *Bardeen* (all registered and mentioned above) Morby Farm Cottage, Culham Homestead and Dangin Park Estate Precinct fall into this category. However, none are directly comparable to *Gwambygine Farm and Pool*.

*Balladong Farm Group* in York was one of the first inland farms in the Swan River Colony. The farm was established in 1831 following the opening up of the district in late 1830 for selection. However, most of the material on site dates from a later period such as the stables and granary (1850s), Bridge House (1860) and Balladong House (1890s). The latter two buildings are no longer part of the farm group due to changes in title and boundary.

*Buckland Homestead and Farm*, and *Bardeen*, both feature outbuildings and cottages from the same period as *Gwambygine Farm and Pool*, but the main homesteads date to later periods. *Buckland Homestead and Farm* in Northam is a particularly fine example of the Victorian Georgian style with the main two-storey building (1876) being flanked by two earlier single-storey cottages (c. 1836 and 1853), and a workers' cottage (c.1840-74). The homestead at *Bardeen* (1858) is also in the Victorian Georgian style.

Morby Farm Cottage in York Street Northam (c. 1836) is a single-storey cottage, built by James Morrell, a builder by trade, and the first settler in the town of Northam. The main house remains largely unchanged from the time it was built in the 1830s. It has a simple plan form being one room wide running east to west with the rooms opening onto front and back verandahs. These run the length of the building. The walls of the house were constructed of mud, the front walls were later rendered with cement. The place was restored using funds acquired through the National Estate Grants programme and now operates as the Shire's museum.

The original 1836 buildings of Culham Homestead were incorporated into a new building in the 1880s, and there is no 1830s fabric at Dangin Park Estate Precinct as, although it is the site of Stephen Parker's original land selection in 1836, it was not settled until the 1850s.

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is therefore rare as a pre-1840s, extant homestead in the Wheatbelt region.

Comparable homesteads of early settlers exist in other regions, such as the Berkshire Valley Homestead in the Moora district, which includes a one-room stone hut (c. 1842), homestead (c. 1847) and other buildings constructed during the 19th century. The buildings exhibit various construction techniques from pise, random rubble to baked brick. The place is listed on the Moora Municipal Inventory, and the Register of the National Estate. It has also been classified by the National Trust.

The mud brick cottage at Cattle Chosen, Busselton (Place 05337) was erected in 1840 by John Bussell as a freestanding dwelling for himself and his wife Charlotte. This building was constructed adjacent to the main Cattle Chosen homestead, now demolished, which John and his brothers had erected in 1834-36 for their mother and sisters. The Cottage consists of an attic, a single large room called the drawing room, and a basement and remains in a sound condition. Farm diaries kept by the family record the day-by-day construction of the place. The Cattle Chosen property continues to operate as a working farm by

descendants of the Bussell/Vine families.<sup>59</sup> Cattle Chosen was entered on the Shire of Busselton's Municipal Inventory in 1993.

Another early Bussell property is *Sandilands* constructed in 1840 for Charles Bussell. The two linked buildings are constructed of wattle and daub, stone and weatherboard.

*Gwambygine Farm and Pool* is representative of the rural homesteads erected during the 1830s, in regional areas which supported the survival and development of the Swan River Colony.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

No key references.

#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Research into other correspondence by Thomas and Henry Carter, and any Wittenoom family papers referring to Gwambygine may provide dates and order of alterations and additions to the homestead and its buildings. This would reinforce an appreciation of how the building has changed since initial construction in the late 1830s. Physical investigation of the fabric to be found on site including in the roof space will help to validate and extend this appreciation.

No archival photographs of the place could be found in the standard reference sources. However the owner of the place has indicated a search would be made for family photographs taken at Gwambygine. A member of the Hicks family has been preparing a history and contact with this person is also being arranged through the owner.

A history of the Wittenoom family to be published is currently being researched. Contact with the authors regarding any material on Gwambygine resulted in copies of some recent material that has been included in this assessment. It is anticipated other documents will be found.

By comparison with other similar historic homesteads such as Tipperary to the north of York, no articles appear to have been researched and written on the Gwambygine Homestead.

Professional archaeological investigation of the homestead in proximity to the surviving buildings has the potential to yield information that will contribute to a greater understanding of the development and use of the homestead and the barn and shearing shed.

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Lawrance, N., and Taylor, R., *Cattle Chosen, Busselton, 1840s Cottage*, Draft Conservation Plan, December 2001.