

Local Emigration to Queensland, Australia

At the end of the 19th century, Britain was in a deep agricultural depression. Many local people, unable to find work, left these shores for a new life in Australia. The Rudston Parish magazine which was started in 1879 reported on these events and published letters received from local families who went to Queensland. As you will read, the Church played an active role in these emigrations. I wonder how the relationship between the Church and local landowners fared during these difficult times. Here are some extracts from the Rudston Parish Magazine.

On Saturday 19th December (1886) Henry Deighton, wife and two children, and Francis Deighton left Rudston to proceed to Queensland. They set sail on Wednesday December 23rd from Plymouth, in the A.A.1 sailing ship the "Rialto" (1,180 tons register 200 tons burden) under special charter by the Queensland Government. The vessel carries a Surgeon and a Matron in charge of the unmarried women. The ship is chartered direct to Maryborough, a port 180 miles to the north of Brisbane. The voyage will probably take 12 to 14 weeks. The route is round the Cape of Good hope. It has been done under 11 weeks with exceptional winds and currents; and may, if winds are contrary, exceed 14. Letters may be expected after 5 months. The arrival of the vessel will be notified immediately by telegraph. Free passage continues to be given to Queensland and Western Australia to farm labourers and others of suitable age.

At half past four on Sunday afternoon, 7th February (1887), a party of 22 persons left Rudston for Queensland. Robert Chapman, wife and 7 children. Francis Pinder, wife and 4 children. John Garton, wife and 2 children. 3 single men Jerry Goforth, William Goforth, and Robert Bell. They arrived next morning at Blackwall, London, and in the afternoon went aboard the Queensland Royal Mail Steamer "Quetta" (Capt J.E.Withers, 3,330 tons 500 nominal Horsepower). Sailed from London Tuesday 9th Feb. proceeded via Suez to Aden (Coaling Station) across the Indian Ocean to Batavia capital of Java and thence round the north of Australia to Thursday Island. First call in Queensland will be Cooktown, Townsville, Macay, Rockhampton, then Brisbane. Voyage is expected to take seven to eight weeks with 50 persons on board through the Agency from Yorkshire. Letters posted at once will be received by

friends about 18th May. The "Quetta " passed Sagres at the extreme point of Cape St. Vincent, Spain, on Saturday, 18th February, and left Malta on Thursday, February 18th. "Quetta" entered Suez on the 23rd February and arrived at Brisbane Queensland Tuesday April 6th, eight weeks after leaving London. The "Rialto", a sailing vessel, was reported as "All well" on Wednesday 18th January in latitude 4 degrees south, longitude 27 degrees west.

A letter dated 21st February 1887 from James Smith who left Rudston last year for Bundaberg says, "The floods have been something fearful. They have been round collecting for the distressed that have had their houses swept away. I gave 10 shillings for I did not know how soon I might be myself in need. I have got a rise in wages to 18 shillings a week until my six months has expired, and then, if I stay on, I shall get 20 shillings a week. That is with board and lodgings, but is very hard work here ploughing. There are so many old stumps, for when they do what they call clearing, they cut the trees off about a yard from the ground and then burn it and then set it with sugar or maize, and the stumps have to rot as they will. So as you will see it is not very good work."

The steamship ' Quetta " arrived at Brisbane, Queensland, on Tuesday, 6th April, just eight weeks after leaving London. If the emigrants posted letters at once, their friends will probably hear from them about the 18th May or soon after.

A new Society has lately been established by the Church of England, entitled the "Church Emigration Society." The object of this Society is to obtain authentic information from reliable sources as to the condition of the various colonies, the state of the labour market, the current wages for artisans, agriculturists, domestic servants, and labourers; and also information as to the particular countries where there is a demand for labour and capital. This Society aims to prevent disappointment on the part of emigrants by obtaining for them all particulars and details about the countries they are thinking of emigrating to. They publish a paper called "The Emigrant," which comes out on the first of every month, price 2d. A copy of this will be found in the Temperance Society's Reading Room.

A letter was received on the 10th May from Francis Deighton, who sailed to Queensland on 28th December last in the sailing ship "Rialto". In it he

says, "We landed safe and sound and had a very pleasant voyage. We landed at Maryborough on the 18th March. We like the looks of the country very well. It seems a very pleasant one. I have got work about three miles away from Maryborough, and have engaged for six months." This letter was written two days after landing.

Our Rudston readers will be grieved to see the announcement of the deaths of the children Sarah Ann Chapman and Alfred Finder, two of the party who left Rudston for Queensland on the 7th February last. They both died of typhoid fever, and are laid side by side in the Toowong Cemetery, on the outskirts of Brisbane. Artley Finder also had the fever, but recovered. Robert Bell also had the fever badly, and was in the Hospital for a month, but in his last letter he reported himself recovered, and at work again. The rest of the emigrants from Rudston report themselves as doing well. It will be interesting to our Rudston readers and in some degree perhaps to others as well, to read the following extracts, culled from letters sent by the Rudston settlers in Queensland to their friends at home.

Francis Finder writes from Brisbane, 28th July, "The country is not what it was represented to be, but still it is far better than the old country for making a livelihood. It is not so healthy as they said it was. There are hundreds die in fever here. There is a lot of work, but there are hundreds out of work now, and still they are bringing more. They have landed three ship loads in the last fortnight. We have had regular work. The pay (for ordinary labour) is 7 shilling a day of 8 hours, and 1 shilling an hour for overtime. A young un-married man can put by from 15 to 20 shillings a week clear of clothing and everything, and pay 15 shillings a week for his board and lodging. Last Saturday I took £8 7s 4d for 7 days' work, and left £1 11s 6d on, belonging to the same fortnight. But it is work and be contented with it. So judge for yourselves. I would not persuade anyone to come as I did, but suit yourselves. I like the country far better for some things than the old country, but a man wants a place of his own. Rents are so high that it takes all your spare money. It is far better than the old country for many things, but you leave your comforts behind to a certain extent. We have wood houses chiefly. There are a few brick ones. You would be delighted to see our house set up on props, some of them eight or ten feet from the ground. The higher the healthier it is. They have from two to twenty rooms in them. We have four in ours. We pay 12 shillings a week for rent and firewood or coal, whichever you like to use. I am happy to say we are all well at present."

Jerry Goforth writes, 24th August, "You can get plenty of land here to take up, as that man told you who was lecturing at Rudston. Where I am it is forest land. There are great big trees. I never saw such monsters before with black soil, and strong. We have cleared about 10 acres ploughing with six horses. They generally plough with ten horses going deeper. My time is up next month and I expect I shall get a rise equal to the rest of their work, but illness (the prevalence of measles during part of the year) may have had something to do with that.

Robert Chapman says, "I cannot say that I have any desire to return home, though many have, and some returned with the 'Quetta' who came with her. So far as I can see to Queensland, no man or woman need come except those as have been used to work and mean to do it, and not to be discouraged a little. There is plenty of room here, and those at home must use their own judgment as to whether they will come or not. Good blacksmiths and wheelwrights are much wanted. In fact any tradesmen seem to do well here, 10, 12, and 14 shillings per day of eight hours. You can buy beef at 3 pence per pound, without bone, and any cut you like for 4 pence a pound; a good leg of mutton for 2 shillings. Sugar and bread are cheaper than at home. All other things are dearer.

(Ed. Robert Chapman reports that some returned on the ill fated "Quetta" (see picture). This ship of 3302 tons was 380 feet long with a



40 foot beam. She had three masts and was barquentine rigged as auxiliary power for the main steam propulsion. The ship struck an uncharted rock now known as Quetta Rock. The 133 survivors of the

wreck were picked up by the "Albatross". The last survivor, a 15 year old girl called Emily Lacy, was found 36 hours later delirious but still mechanically swimming. She recovered, married a wealthy Englishman, and died in 1951.

Was anyone from Rudston shipwrecked I wonder?)