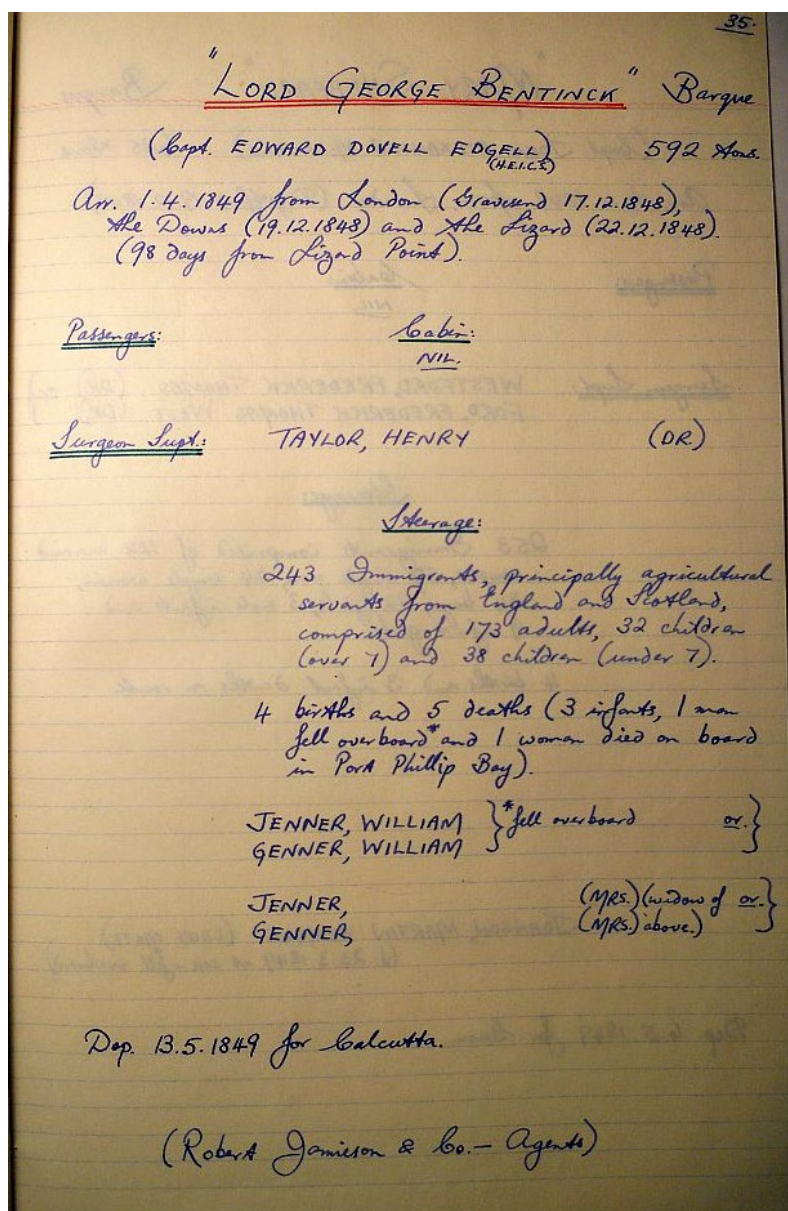


## Evans Crescent

In the northeast corner of the suburb of Laverton, east of Bladin Street and north of Jennings Street, is a residential area where the street names reflect on a time long ago. A time well before Laverton became an official suburb within the western region of Melbourne. If you were to look at the plans of the Parish of Truganina, specifically from the second half of the 1800s, the names of many landholders and graziers are honoured here. So, who were these people, and what was their connection to Laverton to have their names preserved in history? One of these streets is Evans Crescent, which runs between Bladin Street and Eades Street, and acknowledges the life and deeds of one Samuel Evans. There is also a Samuel Evans Court in the neighbouring suburb of Seabrook too.



Samuel Evans was born on 8 September 1810, in Clapham, Surrey (a district in south west London) to parents Samuel Evans and Mary Evans (nee Clarke). Samuel appears to have grown up within a large family. Samuel took up the trade of a carpenter, and on 1 August 1832, he married Marianne Payne, the daughter of William Payne and Susanna Payne (nee Mitchell). Marianne was also a native of London, being born in All Hallows London Wall. While they got married in 1832, they did not appear to have had any children until 1844 when their son James Henry was born. Their daughter Jane was born two years later in 1846. By 1848, the couple must have heard news from Samuel's brother that there were vast opportunities in the new colony of Port Phillip in Australia because they quickly booked for passage on an immigration ship. It was set to sail from Gravesend (a town in the Kent region of England) on 17 December 1848 on the barque<sup>1</sup>, Lord George Bentinck with 239 others.

<sup>1</sup> The barque is a sailing ship with at least three masts, of which all but the one at the stern is rigged with square sails. The sail at the stern is rigged fore and aft, for handling purposes.

We know very little of the voyage other than that there were four births and five deaths (three infants, one man, and one woman). Unfortunately, the woman was Samuel's wife Marianne who died of consumption<sup>2</sup> on 1 April 1849, within Port Phillip Bay, on the final part of the journey. There are no records that we can locate which tells us how long Marianne suffered from her illness during the voyage. Samuel was now left to care for his two young children alone in a new colony halfway around the world from home. Marianne was only 34 years of age, and it is believed that she was buried within the old Williamstown cemetery near the sea front<sup>3</sup>.

The ship's passenger list indicates that Samuel was to meet and stay with his brother who was living in Melbourne, whom we believe to be William Evans. There was another passenger on the ship, Margaret Lawpell Reid, who may have assisted Samuel to care for his children whilst he attended to Marianne. We will catch up with Margaret Reid again within this story.

Samuel appeared to stay with his brother for a short time, allowing himself to recover from the death of his wife, care for his children, and settle into the ways of the new colony. He also needed to determine his next move. One of his key priorities was to find a new mother for his children, because if he didn't have someone to care for them, he could not work and therefore provide for the family's welfare. Sometime after settling into Melbourne, Samuel reacquainted with Margaret Reid and the two married in 1852. Why not earlier? Well, Margaret had been assigned to work as a house maid at a property in Mount Ridley<sup>4</sup>, and her assignment there was for at least six months. It was around this time that Samuel acquired Lot 4 Section XXV in the parish of Truganina, which was about 159 acres<sup>5</sup>.



**Evans' family home, 725 Boundary Road**

Today, the land in which this lot was located can now be recognised as 725 Boundary Road in the suburb of Truganina. During the 1850s however, it was owned by John Wood and covered an area of roughly 159 acres. By the 1860s, this same allotment had been incorporated into the adjacent allotment, now owned by Samuel Evans. It is recorded that Samuel was paying rates on 320 acres of pasture in 1864. Some of the early farmers around Truganina in this period were William and Alfred Leake, John Robinson, George Harrison, Septimus Davis, John Wood, George Missen, as well as the

---

<sup>2</sup> Tuberculosis, also known as consumption, is a disease caused by bacteria that usually attacks the lungs which then consumes the body. Between 1851 and 1910 in England and Wales four million died from consumption. More than one-third of those fatalities were aged 15 to 34; half of those aged 20 to 24, giving Consumption the name the robber of youth.

<sup>3</sup> Argus (Melbourne) 3 April 1849, p2

<sup>4</sup> Mount Ridley is located near the modern Melbourne suburb of Craigieburn

<sup>5</sup> Crown Allotment Plans, Parishes of Derrimut and Truganina

brothers George, Benjamin, Samuel, Effield and John Cropley. Like many of the farmers in this district, the main crops grown on the Evans property were barley and oats. They also produced hay and chaff<sup>6</sup>, grazed sheep, and even had their own livestock.

Samuel Evans, like several of his neighbours, was concerned about the social welfare of the small settlement that was Truganina. The first organised public school was taught in the room of a private house north of Boundary Road. It was soon transferred to a wooden building, built at the expense of James Thomson, Samuel Evans, and Thomas Hillman, on land owned by Thomson. Opened on 1 April 1856, the new school building was 25 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 8 feet high. It had two rooms, one being the school room, and the other a sleeping room for the teacher. The rooms were lined with canvas, and both had an earthen floor.



**Truganina Baptist Church building, 1862**

---

<sup>6</sup> The chaff is the husk surrounding a seed, the part of the grain that is generally thrown away. In cereal crops like rice, barley, oats, and wheat, the seed — the part of the plant that we eat — is surrounded by a husk which becomes chaff.

Following the new school, the first coordinated public effort for the Truganina settlers seems to have been in connection to building a church. Samuel Evans gave one quarter acre of his land, forming the north-east corner of the intersection of Doherty's Road and Woods Road, for religious purposes only. On this site, a Baptist Church of corrugated iron was built in 1863. The stalwarts of the church included the four Cropley brothers and the Evans family. The local preacher, John Cropley from Rockbank, used to travel across the country to take services at Truganina. From 1862, Rev William Wade became the first minister to visit their church, coming once a month from Footscray to preach. The church would later be sold to the Presbyterian minister of Werribee, Rev McIntosh, and it became a Presbyterian church in 1907.

On 31 August 1867, following a short illness, Samuel Evans passed away (aged 57) and was interred with the Truganina cemetery. In his will, he left all his properties to his wife Margaret and only son James Henry Evans. James took over the ownership and running of the Truganina properties, which by the 1880s had increased to include allotment 4 section XXV and allotment 5 section XXVI.

Samuel Evans appears to have also amassed other land outside of Truganina. His will notes that he held land in Moorabbin, which he left to his wife Margaret too. Margaret Evans lived until the age of 80, passing away on 6 March 1899 whilst living with her niece in Yarraville. She had lived within the colony for 50 years. Margaret was interred within the Melbourne General cemetery in North Carlton.

Their son, James Henry Evans married Jane Doherty in 1867, the same year his father passed away. Jane was the daughter of William Doherty, who owned land near to the Evans' properties. The couple and their family remained working the same land with their son, Edward, purchasing more land and entrenching the Evans' name into the history of this area. By the time of the First World War, Edward Charles Evans was recorded as the owner of the family's two allotments. James passed away on 4 August 1925. He and Jane were interred within the Truganina cemetery. Samuel's daughter, Jane Evans, married John Doherty and the couple eventually moved to Williamstown to live.

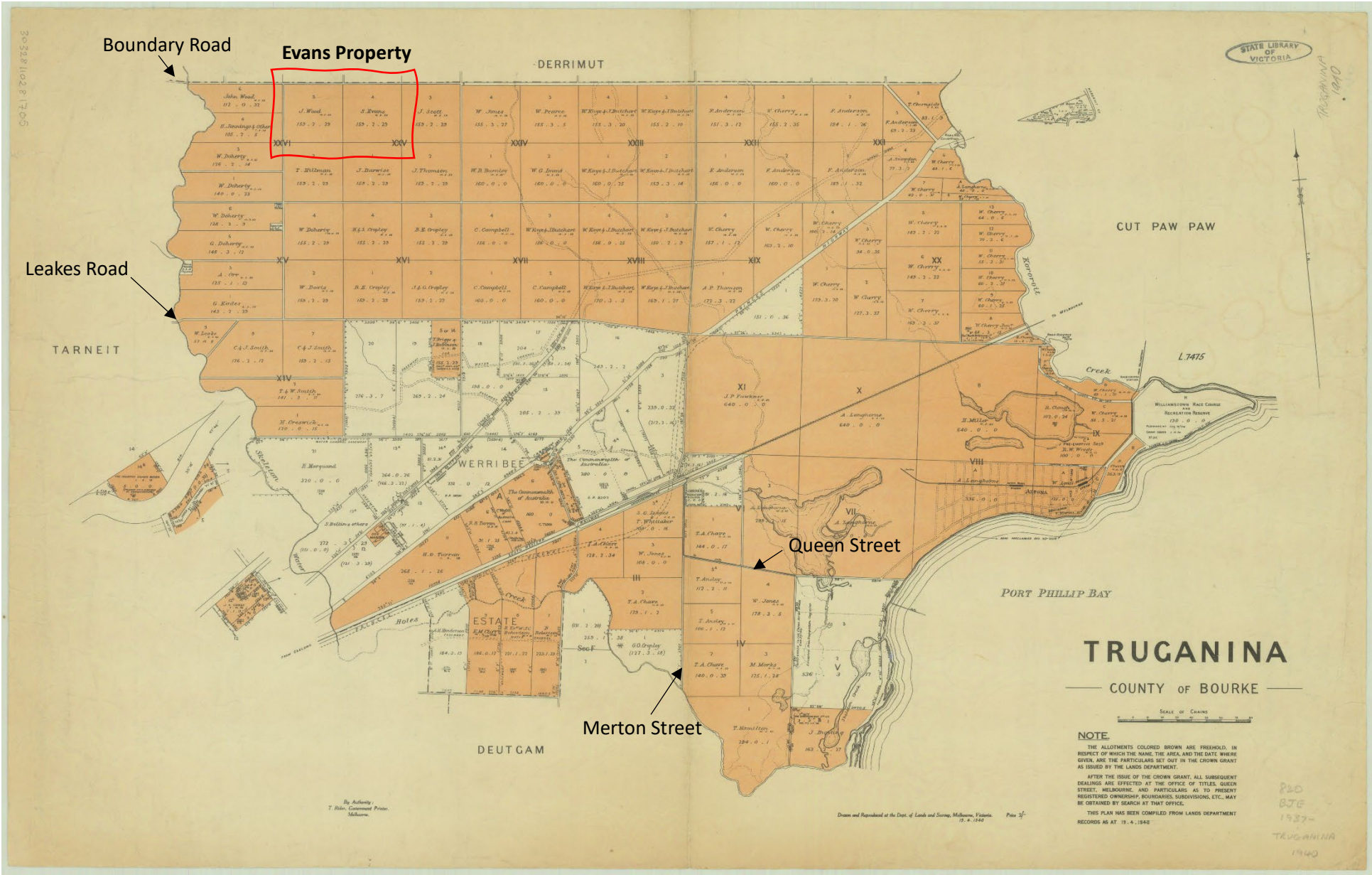
The naming of both these streets after Samuel Evans, and the Evans' family, is a fitting recognition of the family's connection and contribution to the areas of Laverton and Seabrook. They pay tribute to this pioneering family who saw the value of the area and contributed to its progress.



Headstone - Samuel Evans, Truganina cemetery

**Research: Graeme Reilly (ALHS 2024)**

**Editing: Adam Virgona**



30328102 P. 1705

STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

Truganina 1940

Boundary Road

Evans Property

DERRIMUT

CUT PAW PAW

Leakes Road

TARNEIT

Queen Street

PORT PHILLIP BAY

**TRUGANINA**  
COUNTY OF BOURKE

SCALE OF CHAINS

**NOTE.**  
THE ALLOTMENTS COLORED BROWN ARE FREEHOLD, IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE NAME, THE AREA, AND THE DATE, WHERE GIVEN, ARE THE PARTICULARS SET OUT IN THE CROWN GRANT AS ISSUED BY THE LANDS DEPARTMENT.  
AFTER THE ISSUE OF THE CROWN GRANT, ALL SUBSEQUENT DEALINGS ARE EFFECTED AT THE OFFICE OF TITLES, QUEEN STREET, MELBOURNE, AND PARTICULARS AS TO PRESENT REGISTERED OWNERSHIP, BOUNDARIES, SUBDIVISIONS, ETC., MAY BE OBTAINED BY SEARCH AT THAT OFFICE.  
THIS PLAN HAS BEEN COMPILED FROM LANDS DEPARTMENT RECORDS AS AT 18.4.1940

P20  
B76  
1937-  
TRUGANINA  
1940

By Authority  
T. Rife, Government Printer,  
Melbourne.

Drawn and Reproduced at the Dept. of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, Victoria.  
Price 3/-

## References

- The Age (Melbourne) 3 September 1867 p 4.
- The Argus (Melbourne) 7 March 1899 p1, 8 March 1899 p 1.
- Campbell, Margaret, From There to Here, Werribee Community Centre, Victoria 2005
- Context Pty Ltd, Historic Heritage Assessment Tarneit Precinct Structure Plan Area 90, April 2012, 22 Merri Street Brunswick, Melbourne.
- James, Ken, Pritchard, Lance, Werribee the first 100 years, 2008, Werribee and District Historical Society.
- Leader (Melbourne) 7 September 1867 p 30.
- Port Phillip District census, electoral rolls, and immigration records, <https://www.portphillipdistrict.info>, accessed 17 October 2023.
- Public Records Office Victoria – Wills and Probate Samuel Evans.
- Vines, Gary, Pastoral Properties: Grazing on the Keilor-Werribee Palins, 1993, Melbourne's Living Museum of the West Inc.