

Brief Summary of The Louttit Quarry and Family

A more detailed account is given in the booklet *Set in Stone* by Shirley Jurmann

Joseph Louttit was born in Stromness, Orkney, Scotland on the 26th of November, 1826. He arrived in Australia to stay in 1858.

He was an unsuccessful prospector and developed eye problems from the sand and dust. He realised that this life was not for him. He and fellow gold prospectors, Patrick Beashel and George Moore decided to work their way around the coast towards Sydney. Having reached Moruya, Joseph and his two friends saw what a beautiful place it was and decided to stay. The granite outcrops reminded him of his native Orkneys although he probably found the Moruya countryside a little less bleak and windy. It is said that if the wind drops in the Orkneys the people fall over!

Joseph wrote to his brother John Flett Louttit, who had gone to the USA with two other brothers, praising the wonderful spot he had found. John decided to join him. Both brothers purchased land near where Louttit Creek entered the Moruya River near a place now known as The Anchorage, John Flett Louttit in 1857 and Joseph in 1861. They began to quarry the granite for breakwaters and walls along the river banks to stop erosion.

On his trips to Sydney Joseph sometimes went to visit his cousin William in Windsor and it was there Joseph met Margaret Etherden. He married her in 1863. They lived all their married life at the quarry and it was there that their eleven children were born.

In 1886 they were joined by their nephew, also John Flett Louttit, from the USA.

The quarry continued to provide stone for harbour works and breakwaters in the 1860s.

The quarry was leased to Mr John Young for a period of seven years when he was awarded the contract for the building of the new GPO in Sydney.

The "Sydney Morning Herald" of 29th January 1869 had an article describing the new General Post Office in Sydney. One section of the article describes the columns of Moruya granite from the Louttit quarry as follows:

The first portion of Mr Young's contract, as seen from George Street and the proposed new street, is composed of grey granite, from the quarries of Moruya, opened for this purpose by the contractor, now for the first time, introducing the use of this beautiful and durable stone as a building material. All these blocks of granite are of enormous size, weighing from five to as much as twenty tons each. The blocks supporting the principal piers, which face George street and adjoin the western angle of New Street, are all of a most remarkable size, conveying a most vivid impression of the vastness of the structure they are intended to sustain. The remaining continuity of the granite blocks constitutes

the line of entrance steps to the building, the contrast of the light grey granite with the warmer tint of the main walls of the edifice (of the very best Pyrmont stone) being extremely pleasing. Towards George Street a number of the square piers of Pyrmont stone moulded with rusticated work are already built, and give some notion of the grandeur of the proposed building. On one of the granite bases facing the New-street on of the Moruya granite columns (beautifully polished by machinery at work night and day on the premises) was erected on the 21st instant, the day of the arrival here of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh last year. The first piece of polished granite ever produced in the colony is of exceeding beauty. It will be one of ten columns, supporting a lofty arcade, which is to reach from George Street half way down to Pitt Street – the limit of the present contract.



Columns of GPO, Louttit Quarry granite.

For some years prior to 1868 there was considerable concern that the first known European explorer of the east coast of NSW, Captain Cook, had no monument to him in the colony. It was decided to remedy this. A committee was formed. The exact character of the statue had not yet been fully determined but it was decided to get things started by putting the base and pedestal in position. Louttit quarry granite was chosen as being suitable for the purpose and a site was chosen in Hyde Park.

John Young was also awarded the contract for the construction of the base of the Captain Cook statue. The Louttit Quarry also supplied granite to Sydney for columns in St Mary's Cathedral.

The stone for the base of the Captain Cook statue was mined in 1868 and shipped to Sydney in 1869 on the "Settler's Friend", specially requisitioned for the task. The "Empire" newspaper

