

ANDREW BALL

1832 - 1894



Expedition leader and supporter of early Townsville

Andrew Ball led an exploration party in 1864 which discovered the site on which the settlement of Townsville was later established.

Ball, a 32-year-old Irishman, was employed by Black & Co. as the manager of Woodstock Station in the hinterland. The company's General Manager, John Melton Black, sent Ball, along with Mark Watt Reid and a small party of Aborigines, to explore Cleveland Bay with the aim of establishing a port and a boiling-down works. Black believed that a port and industry would ensure the commercial viability of cattle and sheep stations in the hinterland.

Ball's party reached the mouth of Ross Creek in April 1864. They rode around Castle Hill and approached the creek from the north, eventually setting up camp below the rocky spur of Melton Hill, near the present Customs House on The Strand. After further exploration of the surrounding area, Ball returned to Woodstock and reported the discovery of a favourable site to Black.

Andrew Ball returned to the area in November 1864 as a member of Black's party, to establish the settlement that would become Townsville. Typically, delays with the supply ship in these initial days saw the settlement on the verge of starvation. The enterprising Ball resorted to sustaining his men on 'Alligator' eggs.

Castle Hill was named by Andrew Ball. He is also responsible for the settlement's popular early name, Castletown, chosen for a fancied resemblance to Castletown on the Isle of Man. The settlement's first newspaper was called the Castletown Times.

Ball was a popular early pioneer who remained in the town he helped to establish. He was not especially active in civic affairs, preferring instead to invest in or conduct Townsville businesses and companies. In 1886 he built the family villa residence, *Rosebank*, which still stands today. Andrew Ball died in Townsville in 1894 and is buried in the West End Cemetery.



Andrew Ball (1832 - 1894)

