

## GILBERT HOUSE/DOCKYARD COTTAGE

The Dockyard Cottage, or Gilbert House as it was later known, was constructed sometime after 1843 and was originally a single large room that was used as temporary housing by early immigrants. It was then converted into the storeman's house and by September 1848 was the home of the Government Pilot. In a letter dated 15 September 1848 it was described as *"a small wooden cottage with 3 windows and a door 12' x 12' with a porch on the East side. It has a chimney, a grate, and a plain stone mantelpiece – but no other fixtures."*

In 1890 Governor Kerr wrote in Despatch 102:

*"All the Government buildings are constructed of wood, with the exception of a part of the Government House, and a row of stone cottages chiefly occupied by the Police officers... Three of these buildings, of a very substantive nature, with massive hardwood beams, were erected in the Dockyard, one of them – that now used as a schoolroom – was, about twenty years ago, by permission of Governor Robinson, turned into a theatre by an amateur dramatic association who floored and filled up the building for that purpose, at considerable expense.*

*When I arrived here the theatre was seldom used, as most of the gentleman connected with it had left the Colony and, after the former schoolroom was destroyed by the peat slip of 1886, I converted the theatre into the present schoolroom... I found the flooring of the theatre quite sound, and had it carefully re-laid but as the boards were rather thin I intended to place a stronger floor over it when necessary. The massive hardwood beams were removed and iron tie rods substituted. The whole building was lined and sided with new matched boarding, five additional windows were put in, and the ventilators from the former school were fitted. The cubic space – 10,657 feet – was greater than that of the old schoolroom – which only contained 8,016 cubic feet..."* [B22; 284]



Taken from Malvina House balcony circa 1900, house to left of photo – Felton Collection

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VERSION: 29 August 2017

In 1907 the old Senior School was converted into a cottage home for the aged and infirm poor and called the Victoria Cottage Home in memory of Queen Victoria. In a despatch dated 25 November 1907 Governor Allardyce stated *“The accommodation for the patients consists of six small cubicles and a large bedroom capable of containing three adults. This latter will probably be set aside as a women’s ward. There is also a good-sized living room which will be used as a sitting room and dining room, with bow window looking out on to the harbour, also a modern bath room, a luxury to which the majority of the inmates have not hitherto been accustomed.*

*In addition to kitchen and scullery, wash-house, ironing room, and peat shed, there are two small single bedrooms upstairs, also a Matron’s sitting room opening as required either into the patient’s living room or the kitchen.”*

The Victoria Cottage Home was officially opened 11 May 1908.

With the opening of King Edward Memorial Hospital as a civil hospital in May 1915 the Victoria Cottage Home was no longer needed and during World War I it became the headquarters of the local Falkland Islands Volunteer Force.



**Falkland Islands Volunteer Force**



**North aspect, post 1915 – FIC Collection**



**West aspect, 1938 – Carr Collection**

The building later reverted to a house for Government employees and at the time of World War II became the home of Austen Woodgate, the Colonial Engineer. He was a keen Gilbert and Sullivan fan and as there was already a building in Stanley called Sullivan House he christened

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the Dockyard Cottage Gilbert House, a name it retains to this day. Since the early 1990s it has served as the office of the elected Councillors.

In 1999 the north and the south chimneys were pulled down.



**April 2000**

