

## JOHN HELDER WEDGE 1793-1872

THE SURVEYOR IN BATMAN'S PORT PHILLIP SYNDICATE HAS BEEN TOUTED AS A MAN OF INTEGRITY BUT HE WAS A MANIPULATOR, MURDERER & CHILD ABDUCTOR.



### **Read on to find out how really evil he was!**

While surveying for the government in 1828 in northwest Tasmania, the 35-year-old bachelor Wedge and his men saw an Aboriginal man watching them. They followed him and came across a family of 16 men, women and children. Wedge's men shot one of them without any warning or threat. Wedge did nothing about it.

In the panic to get away, a boy named Wheete, who was aged no more than ten, fled into a raging sea and was seemingly drowned. When his body was washed ashore, Wedge was able to revive him. Instead of allowing the exhausted and crying Wheete to return to his parents, Wedge forced the boy to go with him by tethering his wrist to him with a handkerchief. At one stage Wheete got free and ran, but Wedge pursued and caught him, then tied his hands behind his back.

After three weeks with the survey party Wedge took Wheete back to his residence in Launceston. Wedge kept him as a curiosity and conversation piece for his house guests and Wheete never saw his parents again. Two years later in September 1830 Wheete died from a chest infection, but Wedge simply went and took three more Aboriginal boys into his custody. Wedge also had a female Aboriginal child with him in 1831, but she kept running away. He condemned the girl as incorrigible. Weirdly, people praised him for his efforts to 'civilise' the Aboriginal children he serially abducted.