



# THE WAYFARER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE INC.



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**WILLIAM TRAINOR AND FENCING GORDON'S GRAVE** 2

**'A BLOT ON OUR ESCUTCHEON'** 2

**SWIMMING AT FLEMINGTON** 4

**THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON GRAVE RESTORATION APPEAL** 4

**A YEAR IN REFLECTION** 4

**THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON GRAVE RESTORATION APPEAL** 4

## TORQUAY FROTH AND BUBBLE LITERARY FESTIVAL

The second annual Torquay (Vic) Froth and Bubble Literary Festival was held during the weekend of 20 and 21 June. Run by four of our members who formed a sub-committee, their hard work culminated in a feast of languages, workshops, a festival dinner and a theatre play. This festival is subsidised by the Surf Coast Shire Tourism and the Torquay Commerce and Tourism Association and we thank them for their support. The local newspapers the *Surf Coast Times* and *The Echo* wrote articles with photos and local photographer Peter Marshall photographed most of the proceedings. Our Secretary and his wife are both residents of Torquay and saw that the growing town which has tripled in size over the last ten years needed a vehicle to bring together all those associated with

literature so that newcomers could make themselves known in the town.

Torquay is only a 15 minute drive from Geelong where Douglas Sladen, during his five year stay in Australia from England (1879-84), was given a book of Gordon's poems by his uncle Charles Sladen and read them through in one night with the exception of "Ashtaroath" (see *The Wayfarer*, Issue 7-Sep 2008). On his return to England, with the help of authors Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling and others, Sladen was behind the push to have Poet Gordon immortalised in Westminster Abbey. It was also to the Geelong racecourse where Gordon made a rare trip to the district.



(from top to bottom) Slovenian national costume; John Bartlett, "Publishing your book", interactive workshop; Miranda Lutz demonstrate Auslan sign language; Adriana Gargiulo talks Spanish; and Marisa Manes demonstrates an aspect in the Italian culture.

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WILLIAM TRAINOR AND FENCING GORDON'S GRAVE

The idolatry of William Trainor towards his life long friend and companion from their horse-breaking years has been much commented upon, but little written about Trainor's efforts after Gordon's death to keep his memory evergreen. This extract from *The Brisbane Courier* gives another insight into their relationship.

"In a sequestered spot in the Brighton Cemetery has for the past ten years lain neglected and lost to identity in the wilderness of surroundings, save for the halo attaching to the memory of its occupant, the grave of a man once regarded as the brightest, and at the same time most unfortunate, ornament of Australian turf—the grave of Adam Lindsay Gordon. At the time he sang—

When green grass grows above this clay,  
And that might be ere long,  
he probably had a foreboding that such time

might indeed not be far distant ; and one who had experienced so much ingratitude and coldness...during life could not expect any particular attention in death...at last, sympathy has come from a quarter—that of sport—where that commodity is by many regarded as at a discount, except for purposes otherwise than honourable of kind. Unable longer to bear the sight of the neglected and weed-grown mound, Mr Trainor, the well-known racing man, who flourished in the western district during some of Gordon's rash equestrian escapades...has decided to have the poet's grave renovated by the erection of a fence, and the general improvement of the mound itself. This act speaks of a kind heart, and offers example worthy of imitation by others who knew the poet in his best days".

(Source: *The Brisbane Courier* 7 Dec 1883 p3)

"...a movement is on foot to fence in the grave of Adam Lindsay Gordon...Poor Gordon's writings shed a lustre on Australian sport, and his memory should always be green in the minds of all lovers of Isthmian games"  
— from the *Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 20 Oct 1883 p5.



(from top to bottom)  
Renée Otmar "Publishing your book", interactive workshop; Katarina Steele talks Slovakian; Sean Doherty talks surf, books and career at the Surf World Museum; Norman Stanley from Narana Creations on the Didgeridoo; and Ted and Jura Reilly talk Lithuanian.

**'A BLOT ON OUR ESCUTCHEON'**

**W**illiam Trainor's efforts in 1883 to have Poet

Gordon's grave fenced in did not succeed, but the support remained. This letter from George Forbes of Balaclava (Vic) to editor of *The Argus* was published on 26 August 1889;

"Sir,—I feel sure you will grant me a little space in your columns in order, if possible, to arouse some public interest in perpetuating the memory of the man who has 'laid the foundation of Australian poetry', Adam Lindsay Gordon. Recently I paid a visit to the poet's grave in Brighton Cemetery, and it certainly does not redound to the credit of the Victorian, or, more particularly, the Melbourne people. Beyond the somewhat unpretentious pillar which marks the spot there is little at present to show that anything has been done to beautify it, and as the grave has never been surrounded by a railing it is of course difficult to preserve flowers or shrubs, which might be planted about it.

True, there is one person—a lady [Elizabeth Lauder nee Bright]—who has for years past undertaken the responsibility of preserving Gordon's resting-place from absolute neglect, but her residence is many miles away from Brighton Cemetery, and she is consequently dependent upon the caretaker for any little attention bestowed upon the grave....Unfortunately, the proclivities of Australians for money-getting and money-spending leave little time for the admiration of poetic genius or the finer arts, but it will be a blot on our escutcheon if we allow some outsider to do what devolves upon us as a duty. Now, Sir, having said thus much, I would suggest that 'An Evening with Gordon' be given in one of our public halls, having the dual object of bringing the poet and his writings under the notice of the rising generation and the raising of funds to enclose his grave".

(Source: *The Argus* 26 Aug 1889 p6)

**"...it will be a blot on our escutcheon if we allow some outsider to do what devolves upon us as a duty..."**



(from top to bottom) Alan Bishop; Marumi Smith talks Japanese; Travis M. Sellers on the 'Life and Times of Adam Lindsay Gordon'; (l to r) Eva and Mathew Baird, Debbie Meaney, John Adams, Elrae Adams and Martin Hooper; (l to r) Cr. Rose Hodge and Elrae Adams.

SWIMMING AT FLEMINGTON

by Dr. Penelope Cottier of Canberra (pen name P.S. Cottier) who won The Adam Lindsay Gordon Open Prize at the recent Fellowship of Australian Writers National Literary Awards

The sea is inside me now, waves breaking on soft beach of skull.  
 The horse long bolted, hooves wrapped in socks of muting turf.  
 Now I see Jane swimming, beside me, seventeen still,  
 her hair a soft cord, pulling me up from turbulence.  
 Sudden ship severs the link, and I taste salt, sharper than blood.  
 My eye struggles to focus again; luminescent shadow slips,  
 becomes a baby, submerged lily, waving. She paddles,  
 shining, faster than me, but downwards, downwards, smiling,  
 leading the way. *Not today, Annie, but soon, my dear, soon.*  
 What marvels here, beneath. Toddlers without fear of drowning,  
 beauty without age, and the waves, the waves, always shifting,  
 unbroken stallions quieter than this liquid charge within my head;  
 percussion of vivid world, transferring energy through water  
 as it lifted me here, on that fateful ship, to ride and lie and listen.  
 What louder noise could stop the symphony, the rhythmic pump of  
 heart?  
 I am an ear, held to the earth's shining drum-shell beating  
 beneath muddied track of contest. I surface, but not for long now.  
 A kiss, a leap of sound, and I'll float forever in this bluer world,  
 restlessness finally rested. Such splendid suspension.  
 Each bubble will rise like a foal to play on the surface,  
 a final poem, written in air, lines of such joyous surprise.

Join us at the Anglesea & District Historical Society  
 to hear us speak on...

'The Life of Adam Lindsay Gordon'

Where - 5a McMillan Street, Anglesea  
 When - Sunday 2 August 2009 at 2:30pm  
 Contact - Bruce Bodman (Hon. Sec) (03) 5263 1249

TOUR OF BRIGHTON GENERAL CEMETERY

Our next tour of the Brighton General Cemetery (Vic) will be held on **Sunday 16 August at 10:30am**. 'Adam Lindsay Gordon: His Life and Beyond' is an insightful and informative tour featuring 11 subjects with links to the life and legacy of Gordon. **Bookings are essential.** Cost is \$5.00 (non-members \$10.00) and includes refreshments and a tour guide. For more information ring 03 5261 2899 or visit our website [www.adamlindsaygordon.org/tours.htm](http://www.adamlindsaygordon.org/tours.htm).

All proceeds goes towards  
 The Adam Lindsay Gordon Grave Restoration Appeal.

THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON GRAVE RESTORATION APPEAL

The Adam Lindsay Gordon Grave Restoration Appeal has now raised just over \$6,520. The target of \$10,000 will go towards a trust fund for the future maintenance of Adam Lindsay Gordon's gravesite.

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Appeal especially the following:

Elaine Barry (\$50), Cathie Purtell, Pamela Ueckermann (\$40), Diana Banks (\$30).



A YEAR IN REFLECTION

We ended the financial year to 30 June 2009 with a net income of \$A278.77. Net equity increased to \$A5,552.79 (up from \$A5,244.02). The Adam Lindsay Grave Restoration Appeal raised an additional \$A1,701.35 while our Operating Account with the Bendigo Bank is \$A417.16. For this reason, the Committee has decided to increase the annual membership fees for

2009-10 from \$A15.00 to \$A25.00.

The Torquay Froth and Bubble Literary Festival held on 20 and 21 June 2009 recorded a loss of \$A252.03.

Congratulations to John and Elrae Adams and Joan Tarn who served on the sub-committee overseeing the arrangements. We are hopeful that grants and sponsorships will cover the costs for 2010.



(above) The Poet Gordon's grave in April 2009 after the planting of roses from funds granted by The Commemoration of Historic Events and Famous Persons Grant in Aid Program.