



THE WAYFARER

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

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THE POWERS THAT BE

By: John Adams (Part I)

*Now tell me for once, old horse of mine,
Grazing round me loose and free,
Does your ancient equine heart repine
For a burst in such companie,
Where "the POWERS that be" in
the front rank ride,
To hold your own with the throng,
Or to plunge at "Faugh-a-Ballagh's" side
In the rapids of Dandenong.*

The brothers Herbert, Willie and Robert were "the powers that be" to whom Adam Lindsay Gordon referred in his poem, *Ye Wearie Wayfarer Fytte 111*.

The Powers were a remarkable family who migrated from the confines of Ireland, to what better place to start a new life than Australia. From what we know, David Power was a merchant in Carrick, Waterford, Ireland with his wife Bridget nee Higgins.

They had two sons, David, and Thomas Herbert. Thomas Herbert was born c.1801 and married Mary Sophia Blurton. They had six children born in the 1830s and '40s, Robert, Herbert, Kathleen, William, Marion and Jessie.

They sailed to Australia arriving at Port Philip from Launceston in 1839.

David Power, the eldest,

married Anne Pile in Gawler (SA) and in 1851 they settled in Mount Gambier (SA) on a property that was originally part of the Compton Station but was named Anne Field Station after the maiden name of his wife.

David Power was made a Justice of the Peace in Mount Gambier on 19 May 1853.

They left in 1860 and the name of the property was later changed to Moorak.

Uncle David was the South Australian connection that drew the Power brothers to that part of the country.

Thomas Herbert Power quickly found that the way to make money in the depression years of the 1840s in Melbourne was to boil or melt down carcasses of four-footed animals, to produce tallow for candles. In doing so he perfumed the district, and his smells became well known around the Gardiner's Creek area. At the time of his death he had large properties in Hawthorn, Dandenong, Boroondara, and Nunawading with sheep cows and pigs, and numerous roads were named after him.

Thomas Herbert Power was a

member of Victoria's first Parliament in the Legislative Council 1856-64 and, his business partner Gideon Rutherford followed for a short period later, 1859-60, representing the Southern Electorate. They established the stock and station agency business which later became one of the best known in Australia. Thomas Herbert Power later took into partnership his son, Robert Power. They developed the business together until Thomas Herbert Power retired and handed it over to his two sons—Robert and Herbert—and the firm was carried on under the name of Powers, Rutherford, and Co. There were several partners at various times. Afterwards Robert Power and Mr. Stanford carried on the business for many years until the partnership was dissolved, and Herbert Power established a new firm with his son, Reginald Power as his partner under the style of Herbert Power and Son. The business was carried on until Reginald Power enlisted, and the firm became Herbert Power, Manson, and Co.

Herbert Power having retired

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THE POWERS THAT BE...CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

from business about four years before his death.

His son Reginald was killed in the war.

Thomas' home, now extended, is in Glan Avon Road Hawthorn, close to the river, close to land which he gave for the first public school in Victoria. His father also had property in the district. Thomas Herbert Power became a director the National Bank 1860-66, a commissioner of Savings Banks of Victoria, and held other public positions.

He died on the 28 November 1873.

His wife Mary Sophia preceded him on 27 November 1871.

Probate was granted to Robert Power.

Robert Power was Thomas' eldest son, born in Galway Ireland 1835 and came to Australia with his parents in 1839.

Robert married Harriett French, and their five-year-old child, Maude was the child for whom Adam Lindsay Gordon wrote his poem *Song of Autumn*. Maude later married Mr A.C MacLaren, the English cricketer. Robert retired from the firm Powers, Rutherford and Company at about the age of 60 in 1895.

In the sporting world he was well know as an amateur rider and was one of the founders of the Victoria Racing Club and was on the committee of that body from its inception until a few years before his death. As

an amateur rider Mr Power gained considerable fame, and on one occasion rode in a Melbourne steeplechase, his mount being his favourite horse *Viking*, of which he had a half share with Adam Lindsay Gordon. He also played tennis up to six years before his death.

Gordon was invited to stay at Myrnong, the home of Robert Power to recover his health and was there in October and November of 1868. Gordon supervised the work of his jockeys and took the horses for long walks in the morning. He finished the morning with a swim in the Yarra.

Mr Power's beautiful estate, lay beside the winding Yarra river in leafy Toorak, a fashionable region four miles east of Melbourne, noted for its huge gum trees and the Vice-regal residence. Robert was only 25 years-old, when in 1860, he commissioned architect Francis Maloney White to design *Myrnong* his new home in Boundary (Kooyong) Road. *Myrnong* was built on 17 acres with views across Gardiner's Creek. The big, square, white-washed houses on the hillside overlooked pleasant gardens and rich riverside fields, where the sport-loving Power brothers loved to train and exercise their hunters.

The remainder of the day he would spend quietly in the garden, sometimes playing with the children and sometimes immersed in dreamy reverie.

He also wrote the poem *A Song of Autumn* for Robert Power's five-year-old daughter,

Maude who picked flowers with him in the garden and queried where they went when picked, along with the fallen leaves.

The poem was also a prophesy of his own death.

*Child! can I tell where the garlands go?
Can I say where the lost leaves veer
On the brown-burnt banks, when the wild winds blow,
When they drift through the dead-wood drear?
Girl! when the garlands of next year glow,
You may gather again, my dear—
But I go where the last year's lost leaves go
At the falling of the year.*

Correspondence from Mrs Lewis to the Mayor of Malvern Cr Leonard Righetti on 13 September 1929—"With reference to the idea of securing our property as a possible park for the city of Malvern, I enclose herewith a photograph of a tree, which may be of interest to yourself and councillors. From the late Mrs Robert Power, I learned that the slice of bark missing was removed by the Aborigines for use as a canoe on the river nearby. She [Mrs Power] also said a frequent guest in her home (when she and her husband owned all this land) was Adam Lindsay Gordon, the poet, and that he wrote several of his poems here sitting under the trees on his property."

...to be continued



(above) Robert Power

"The remainder of the day he would spend quietly in the garden, sometimes playing with the children and sometimes immersed in dreamy reverie"



(above) Herbert Power

REMINISCENCES OF JAMES D. BROOKSBY

Continuing our articles featuring reminiscences of those associated with Adam Lindsay Gordon, we feature James Brooksby.

"A big man, tall, and fairly straight, lusty-looking, bearded, genial in expression, with a ready smile—such is Mr James D Brooksby. He is English—that you can see, if you are much of a judge. As a matter of fact, he was born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, in 1849, and is now in his 75th year—not so very old for an old man, and certainly not young for any man. He came to Australia in 1856, over 67 years ago, by the sailing ship 'Carnatic,' and landed at Port Adelaide; was five months coming out. Mr John Chambers, his uncle, who had preceded them to this land of promise some years before, met them in Adelaide with a dray hauled by six bullocks. He had come from a small town called Nairn, 25 miles from Adelaide, where he was then stationed.

Two years after their arrival the family went to Mount Gambier, and young James was glad—proud in fact—to get a job shepherding cattle, not far from the Mount. One day an awful bush fire came along. His cattle were in a swampy place, and he rushed them right into the swamp, to get them out of the way of the fire. So he saved them and got great credit for his wit and determination. This was

about 20 miles from Mount Gambier. 'Glencoe' was the name of the head station, a cattle station of which Adam Lindsay Gordon was chief stockman when Brooksby was there. The station belonged to the Leak brothers, both of them very large men physically, weighing about 20 stone each. Brooksby soon went in to the Mount, where he had some more schooling, principally from his father's tuition. His father was working for Messrs Fiddler and Webb, storekeepers, who lived just outside the Mount. The store was at the Mount itself. His father was a good scholar, he says, and helped him considerably.

'I used to see Gordon frequently until he got his money from home, and went into Parliament. He was a rather nice man, but sometimes eccentric. Sometimes he would speak to you, and sometimes he would not. He joined the police force from 'Glencoe.' In 1870 I saw him and his wife out riding together over post and rail fences.'

Mr Brooksby said his father and family went up to the Hon. John Riddock MLA., who had sold out his business at Geelong, gone to Penola, and bought Yallum Park station. His father and he stayed with Mr Riddoch six years. He was employed principally in riding for the mail. When he was about 22 years of age, Riddoch bought another station, in the Tattiarra

district, called Nalang station, near Border Town. Border Town consisted of a blacksmith shop, a store or two, and two hotels. He was sent to Nalang station, and George Riddoch, John's brother, came up to manage it. Gordon came up there and stayed a week with Riddoch.

'Gordon and I were sent down to Yallum Park with fresh horses. We got there in a day. John Riddoch was very ill about that time. I saw Gordon riding in the Coleraine Steeplechase some years later. He got into Parliament after that race, and I never saw him again. Charles Mullaley and Gordon were riding together in that race. Gordon won the race. They had refreshments at Drummond's Hotel, Coleraine, just before the race started. I was there, and saw them—I am not sure, but I might have had something myself.'

Mr Brooksby had a lot more to tell, details that would perhaps be interesting to many old-timers; tales of the camp and shearing-shed, adventures by the wayside of life, of those pioneering days when gold was much more plentiful than it is now, and the comradeship of the run was brighter and truer than probably it will ever be again."

(Source: The Argus 26 Jan 1924 p19)



(above) An old outbuilding at Yallum Park (SA) taken in 1968.

(State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Picture Collection, H98.252/2055)



(above) Exterior views of Yallum Park taken in 1968.

(State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Picture Collection, H98.252/2052)

Adam Lindsay Gordon

CONFITEOR

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

THE shore-boat lies in the morning light,
By the good ship ready for sailing ;
The skies are clear, and the dawn is bright,

'There is time while the vessel tarries still,
There is time while her shrouds are slack,
There is time ere her sails to the west-wind fill,

'Sir priest, you can shrive these men of mine,
And, I pray you, shrive them fast,
And shrive those hardy sons of the brine,

'And hast thou naught to repent, my son ?
Dost thou scorn confession and shrift ?
Ere thy sands from the glass of time shall run

'Have my ears been closed to the prayer of the poor,
Or deaf to the cry of distress ?
Have I given little, and taken more ?

[The full version of the poem "Confiteor" by Adam Lindsay Gordon can be viewed on our website:
http://adamlindsaygordon.org/works_confiteor.htm]

Now that The Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee Inc. has reached the target of raising \$10,000 for the future maintenance of Adam Lindsay Gordon's monument, with our approaching AGM, the committee will soon be in discussion on our next project.

The current value of the Commemorative Fund stands at \$9,139.08 and is being reinvested every six months with the Bendigo Bank (currently at 6% per annum).

We still hope one day we can salvage the bricks of Gordon's last home and transport them to Dingley Dell at Port MacDonnell (SA), but the task is proving too great a hurdle for our small committee. Even if we stacked the bricks ourselves, we still have to arrange transportation from Pakenham to Port MacDonnell.

In the meantime, money raised from undertaking research requests—which funded the bulk of the

\$10,000 raised—is now being channelled into a 'Future Fund' that can go towards our next project. This amount is currently \$1,110.

It is also hoped that our committee will be in a position to produce the one book that has never been undertaken, of all the many publications that have been written on Adam Lindsay Gordon—an Encyclopedia of Adam Lindsay Gordon.

Every person, place, name, or topic associated with Adam Lindsay Gordon will be featured bringing together all the books, newspaper articles and sources that have been used over the years. This is one of many projects the committee has discussed in the past. Imagine not having to consult different sources, many with conflicting points on a particular topic, say Gordon's Leap at Mount Gambier; or his record as a steeplechase jockey; or Yallum Park; The Manor, Broughton Hackett (Eng)?

TOUR OF BRIGHTON GENERAL CEMETERY
On 17 April 2011, we will be undertaking our tour of the Brighton General Cemetery visiting the graves of the Power brothers, Trainor, McCubbin, Robb and the Simmonds family as well as others with links to Gordon's story. To register your interest to attend the tour, visit our website www.adamlindsaygordon.org/tours.htm or ring John on 5261 2899. Bookings essential.

TOUR GUIDE
1. Edward John 'Taddy' Russell
2. Alexander Francis 'Maddo' Robb
3. Frederick McCubbin
4. Robert and Herbert Power
5. Ernest Blake
6. Catherine Rivlin
7. William Hughes (Hugh) Kelly
8. George Higginbotham
9. Samuel Powell Simmonds