



ISSUE 24 - DECEMBER 2012

# THE WAYFARER

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

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POEM "FAUCONSHAW"

A carpenter sent to make repairs in a local house entered the apartment of the house with his apprentice.

"Mary", the lady called to her servant, "see that my jewel-case is locked at once."

The carpenter understood. He removed his watch and chain from



his waistcoat with a significant air and gave them to his apprentice. "John," he said, "take these back to the shop. It seems that the house isn't safe."

**National Trust Heritage Festival.**

18 April-19 May 2013

**Royal Historical Society Victoria History**

**Week** From Sunday 20th to Sunday 27th October 2013



**The Annual General Meeting Of The Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee**

**Inc.** took place on Sunday 16 September 2012

at The Ballarat Library Meeting Room 178 Doveton Street North, Ballarat 3350 . We congratulate the following:

President: Allan Childs

Vice President: Viv Sellers

Secretary: John Adams

Treasurer: Elrae Adams

Ordinary Committee Members:

Lorraine Day and Jenny Childs

New Members:

Julie Ross

Historian, Dr. Helen Dehn was welcomed as our Ballarat representative

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THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE INC. (A0049425F)

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**Our Patrons. Professor Weston and Janice Bate.**

**A Celebration.** For the full story go to the RHSV Website:

[http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/history-](http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/history-news)

[news](http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/history-news) On the 17th November, the work of Professor

Weston Bate, was celebrated with a formal dinner at The Savage Club, Melbourne.

50 years ago an extraordinary book *A History of Brighton* was published. It created ripples never felt before and possibly never to be repeated in Australian history circles

Local and family historians are in his debt.

Weston believed that specialised training was needed to open the doors of the past.



**Why not become a Member? Only \$15:00 plus \$5 joining fee.**

**Help us to keep the memory of Gordon alive, with access to our members area.**

For details please go to: <http://adamlindsaygordon.org/joining.htm>

BOOK EXHIBITIONS AND ARTICLES



This year we have mounted Adam Lindsay Gordon Exhibitions at two public libraries, each for a month. The first at the Torquay (Vic) Library and the second at the Ballarat Library, which was also part of the Royal Historical Society's History week.

At both libraries we received comments that our exhibition created interest, and we were told that our exhibition would be welcomed back at any time.



STARLIGHT AND HIS GANG

*Aye! We had a glorious gallop after 'Starlight' and his gang.....*

From 'The Sick Stockrider', written at Yallum Park S.A when Gordon came from Melbourne as guest of his great friend John Riddoch and family in the period January/February 1869.

Who was Starlight?

In the South Australian Chronicle of Saturday December 26th 1868 'Starlight's gang' is mentioned in relation to a series of holdups dating back two months in outback New South Wales. This is the first time that the name of a bushranger called "Starlight" can be found in a search of all of the Australian newspapers for the years 1867/68. In early January 1869 the newspapers were full of the capture of Dr. Frank Pearson, with a remarkable police chase in circumstances closely related to a section in Gordon's poem. We can only surmise that, on reaching Yallum Park, near Penola in South Australia, Gordon has picked up the South Australian papers to catch up with the news and has come across the name 'Starlight's gang' and the subsequent capture, or that Gordon has heard the story in public conversation.

On reading the newspapers covering the period from October 1868 to February 1869, it is sometimes hard to separate fact from fiction as reports are often taken from the mouths of the bushrangers themselves and written down word for word in the newspapers, and the reporters have, at least on one occasion, been recorded as having added fiction after fact.

This one big event happened on the 6th of October 1868, and has continued to be of public interest for the years that followed. It involved two men, Charles Rutherford and Dr. Frank Pearson.

**Dr. Frank Pearson** was born in England in 1837 of a Spanish mother and an Irish father. and received a great part of his education at the Propaganda in Rome, a Catholic institution set up for the purpose of training missionaries. After a wild life back in London he came to Australia in 1864,( the prison records show 1866) after the death of his mother. Upon joining a gang of bushrangers he became the recognised leader until the sticking-up of Keightley's station, when, owing to his opposition to bloodshed, which some of the others demanded, there was a split in the gang. Henceforth, in 1868, Pearson, or as he was better known, Starlight, was associated with a young man, a stockman named Charles Rutherford.

During his lifetime, Pearson took on the names of Arnold, Ward, Gordon, Thunderbolt, Starlight, Rutherford, Redford, and, at the end, Major Pelly. At the time of his capture he was described as about 30 years old, five feet eight and a half inches in height, with dark complexion, clean-shaved face, long black hair worn in the native fashion, and long nose. From prison records, he had two bullet wounds in his right arm, one in the groin, another on the hip, and another on the right shoulder. His left arm was tattooed.

**Charles Rutherford** was described as 22 years of age, five feet eight inches in height, with light hair, small light beard, and pug nose. Before he met Pearson he was a shepherd on a New England station.

**Dr. Frank Pearson, alias Starlight**, was captured for the murder of Senior Sergeant John McCabe who was shot on the 6th of October 1868, and died of his wounds on the 1st November 1868.

The case came up before the Bourke police bench, on Monday, Dec. 28. 1868. For Senior Sergeant's evidence see the next page.

**This article was inspired by a question to our committee** from our member Joe Baker of Canungra Qld whose grandfather worked on Brunette Downs on the Barkly Tableland from 1887 to 1905 and Harry Readford also worked there on and off. He was a real rogue but had an engaging personality. To Joe's mind he is definitely the man on whom Starlight in Robbery Under Arms was based. Joe says he was a wonderful bushman. He was about 60 years old when he drowned in Corella Lagoon on Brunette Downs in March 1901. His body was found by Jim Hutton the manager of Brunette and he was buried alongside the lagoon. Joe has visited his grave.



On Monday, the 28th, a very valuable Christmas box was presented by senior-sergeant Cleary to the town, in the person of Dr. Pearson, an individual about 28 years of age, of rather a respectable appearance, and as much cool impertinence as would suffice for half-dozen common men, and the supposed murderer of the unfortunate M'Cabe, at Shearer's hotel, on the Warrego. But here is the sergeant's evidence :— On Monday, the 21st instant, from information received that Messrs. Field's and Acres' stations, on the Darling River, had been stuck-up by a man who called himself Thunderbolt, the following morning I started, with constable Johns, for the scene of action ; I arrived at Tooralle about seven p. m., and there waited for a black who was out looking for horses, and who had seen a man on horseback the Monday previous, about five miles towards the Gundabooka Mountains, the black-fellow stated the man was armed with gun or rifle, and riding a grey horse; I procured the black-fellow from Mr. Chambers and started in pursuit of the man.

Found the tracks of one horse, and ran them to the Gundabooka Mountains ; we came to a hut and a small waterhole, and saw a flea-bitten mare close to the hut, apparently very hard ridden; constable Johns rushed the hut and found it empty; we then started for another hut, distant about six or seven miles, and came in sight of it about half-past five (Wednesday); a horse was tied to the verandah; constable Johns rushed this hut, with the tracker, when I saw a man rush out to meet them; this man turned out to be Mr. Smith; he said Thunderbolt had just left for the range, to water his horse, that he was well armed, and advised us to be cautious; I turned round, and on the range saw a man riding a black horse; Mr. Smith said "There he goes ;" constable Johns and tracker parted in pursuit; we followed his tracks for half-an-hour among the rocks, sometimes riding at other times dragging our horses along, on foot; we caught sight of him doubling us; we dismounted, but he had seen us, and galloped down on the opposite side of the range into a deep gully. Our horses' feet by this time were suffering much from the rocky state of the ground; we then returned to the hut, and took up a position among the rocks to watch a horse, the black said belonged to prisoner, but it was a horse coming in to water.

I turned and saw a horse ridden towards the hut. I said, "That's him." The black said "No," but we at once started at a rapid pace. The prisoner was riding at racing speed towards the hut. We tried to cut him off from the hut, and he made for the ranges. We were then 300 yards from him. I called to him at the top of my voice to "stand, and fight like a man," at the same time I sent a bullet after him; Johns did the same; we fired again and again, when suddenly the prisoner rolled from his horse on the off side; I said he is wounded; he then turned and placed his hand to his breast; we dismounted; he then aimed a pistol at Constable Johns; I believe he did not fire; he then scrambled behind a large rock quite near; I left my horse, and fired my fourth shot at the retreating fugitive; we stopped about a minute to breathe; the black following here called out, "He is mounting the range ;" we then made a dash for his horse, which we secured, with bridle, saddle, water-bag, and a loaded single barrel gun. We returned to the hut with the horses, watching them all night; all the horses on the station were alike yarded.

On the following morning I put the trackers on the trail, and followed them throughout the day in different parts of the mountains; we again returned to the hut with all the horses, and again kept a strict watch.

The next day, the 25th, we were again on his tracks; I then gave constable Johns charge of all the horses, saddles, &c., &c., and directed him to keep Mr. Smith's company with the other men on the station, and that I would follow the trail myself, forming a code of signals, showing him how to act; we followed the footprints till about half-past ten, leaping from rock to rock. The blacks were here at fault for quarter of an hour; one then said—"White fellow close up, heel boot, sit down ;" I was above him when he said this, looking down the different caves and gullies, and as I gained a shelf in the rock, I saw a pistol and a large pouch; I then returned to the top of the rock, took off my boots, and signalled the blacks to join me; they did so; I despatched one of them for constable Johns and the horses, myself and Tommy keeping watch near where I found the pistol; in an hour I was joined by Johns, Mr. Smith, and another man; I signed to Johns not to come up; he took off his boots, and we crept to the place where I had found the pistol; Tommy here said that he could see a naked leg between the crevices of the rock, and that it moved; I said we must rush the place; crawled to the rock under which he was, and jumped down to where he was, one taking one end and the other the other, and then I called on him in the Queen's name to stand, each of us covering him with our revolvers; the prisoner said "Yes, I will ;" I said to Johns "handcuff him ;" one of his hands was thrown up; he was then secured; he was quite nude; I disarmed him of a revolver loaded and capped in six chambers; also, a single pistol loaded and capped, a pouch containing a bag of powder, box of caps, 28 bullets, and 7 revolver bullets; I gave him the usual caution, and asked his name; he replied, "My name is Rutherford, Thunderbolt's mate ;" I then charged him with shooting Senior constable M'Cabe on the 6th of October last, on the Warrego River; he said, "Yes, I am the man who shot M'Cabe ; I am sorry for it, and must suffer for it ;" we then gave him water, and started for the horses; and on the way down he said his name was Pearson, and was a doctor by profession.

I left the Mount at five o'clock on Friday evening, travelled all night, and arrived in Bourke on the 26th at six a.m. The prisoner declined answering any questions, save one which was whether he was not quite exhausted when taken. He replied that he was; the prisoner then said the police had shown more pluck than is generally displayed, and that they treated him with extreme kindness. He is remanded till Monday next. During this hearing he remained as cool as a spectator at a theatre, glancing back unflinched stares from all who sought his gaze; but once only did his lip quiver and the moisture dim his restless eye, and that was as he looked upon the wretched tatters that covered him and his naked braised feet.

ARTISTS AND AUTHORS

Geoff Dening

<http://www.starnow.co.uk/geoffdening>  
 CD "The Ballad of Adam Lindsay Gordon"  
 DVD Presentation "Champions" Racing Museum

Brenton Manser

<http://www.brentonmanser.com.au/admella.html>  
 DVD "The Wreck of the Admella" 2009

The Torquay Froth and Bubble Literary Festival

<http://www.torquayfrothandbubbleliteraryfestival.com/>

Lorraine Day

<http://www.freestylepublications.com.au>  
 "Gordon of Dingley Dell": The Life of Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-1870) Poet and Horseman  
 "Reef of Despair." The wreck of the SS Admella – COMING SOON !

Michael Wilding

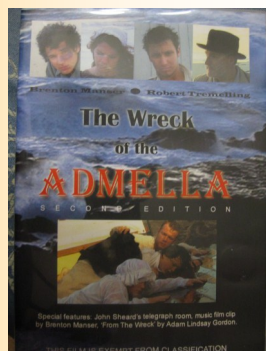
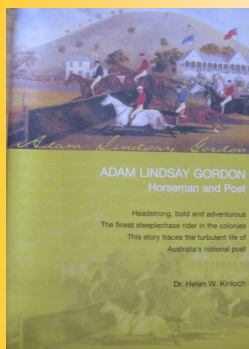
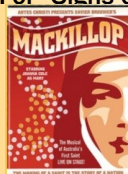
<http://www.scholarly.info/home/>  
 "Marcus Clarke" Edited by Laurie Hergenhan, Ken Stewart and Michael Wilding  
 "Wild Bleak Bohemia"; Marcus Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall

Dr. Helen Kinloch

Adam Lindsay Gordon-Horseman and Poet

Xavier Brouwer

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xavier\\_Brouwer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xavier_Brouwer)  
 "MacKillop" The Musical  
 At present exploring the poems of Adam Lindsay Gordon For "Sighs of Sorrow"



POEM

FAUCONSHAWE A Ballad (Excerpt)

Night black and chill, wind gathering still,  
 With its wail in the turret tall,  
 And its headlong blast like a catapult cast  
 On the crest of the outer wall,  
 And its hail and rain on the crashing pane,  
 Till the glassy splinters fall.



A moody knight by the fitful light  
 Of the great hall fire below ;  
 A corpse upstairs, and a woman at prayers,  
 Will they profit her, aye or no ?  
 By'r lady fain, an she comfort gain,  
 There is comfort for us also.

The guests were gone, save Sir Hugh alone,  
 And he watched the gleams that broke  
 On the pale hearth-stone, and flickered and shone  
 On the panels of polish'd oak ;  
 He was 'ware of no presence except his own,  
 Till the voice of young Margaret spoke :

I've risen, Sir Hugh, at the mirk midnight,  
 I cannot sleep in my bed,  
 Now, unless my tale can be told aright,  
 I wot it were best unsaid ;  
 It lies, the blood of yon northern knight,  
 On my lady's hand and head.'

'Oh ! the wild wind raves and rushes along,  
 But thy ravings seem more wild—  
 She never could do so foul a wrong—  
 Yet I blame thee not, my child,  
 For the fever'd dreams on thy rest that throng !' —  
 He frown'd though his speech was mild.

Published in 'Sea Spray and Smoke Drift' (1867).

