



THE WAYFARER

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FROTH AND BUBBLE DAY—2007 2

A MAN OF LETTERS 2

GORDON: CHAMPION STEEPLE-CHASE JOCKEY 3

WOLF AND HOUND 4

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE MAGAZINE 4

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 4

NEW MEMBERS 4

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON AND HIS ADMIRERS

Work is in earnest on the forthcoming walking tour of the Brighton General Cemetery (Vic) featuring Adam Lindsay Gordon and 11 of his admirers to be held on Sunday 18 November. The tour is aimed to raise money for the restoration of Gordon's grave (see story below). Amongst those featured in the tour is Warrnambool (Vic) born Edward 'Teddy' John Russell (1878-1925). Russell possessed an oratorical tongue that belied his baby face appearance. He was the ladies' politician. Elected to the Senate in 1906, he served as a member of the Fisher and Hughes war-time Cabinets (1914-19), notably as assistant minister (1914-16) and honorary minister (1917-18). *Melbourne Punch* noted that "having literally and truly talked himself into Parlia-

ment...he was now a man to be reckoned with—a wily political antagonist who, under an air of never-failing bonhomie, conceals a cool, shrewd, wise head, and a wonderful knack for doing the unexpected thing at the right moment. He knows the game, and he plays it for all he is worth. But, unlike some members, he plays it fairly and truly all the time".

In 1910, on the initiative of the actor Edmund Duggan, Russell became the first President of the Gordon Memorial Committee (1910-24) a position he held just before his death at the Sunbury Hospital for the Insane on 18 July 1925 while still a Labor Senator. At the 1917 annual pilgrimage to Gordon's grave, Senator Russell told the crowd in the middle of a world war "that if ever there was a time in which they



Gravesite of Edward 'Teddy' Russell, who will feature in the forthcoming tour of the Brighton General Cemetery

should apply their minds to national aims and aspirations it was the present. Whilst they were honouring Gordon they should remember that Australia today possessed men as good as those of the past". (Source: Edward John 'Teddy' Russell (1878-1925) published on www.brightoncemetery.com;

ISSN 1834-4070
ISSN 1834-4089

THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE INC. (A0049425F)

PO Box 158
FLINDERS LANE VIC 8009
AUSTRALIA

Phone: (+61 3) 5261 2899

info@adamlindsaygordon.org
www.adamlindsaygordon.org

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON GRAVE RESTORATION APPEAL

With the official launch of the Adam Lindsay Gordon Grave Restoration Appeal at the recent Froth and Bubble Day 2007, our fund raising efforts have begun in earnest. The Appeal commenced on a promising start with two generous donations totalling \$400

from descendants of Peter and Maggie Low (nee Gordon). So far, we have raised \$1,165 to date with much work to be done to achieve our goal of \$10,000. For more information regarding the Appeal and how to make a donation, visit www.adamlindsaygordon.org and click on "Grave Appeal".



FROTH AND BUBBLE DAY—2007

On Sunday 24 June 2007, there was a gathering at the magnificent Paul Montford Statue depicting Adam Lindsay Gordon in the Gordon Reserve, Spring Street Melbourne. A crowd of over 30 people listened to an address of welcome by the Secretary of The Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee Inc., John Adams as well as an address in the Universal Language of Esperanto by Henry Broadbent, Secretary of the Esperanto Federation of Victoria. The President, Allan Childs, Manager of the Dingley Dell Cottage Museum read a poem by Edward (Ned) Bright, of "The Sick Stockrider" fame, called "When I am dead". The poem was reconstructed from one of Gordon's poems that had been written and cast aside.

This was followed by the laying of a wattle wreath and

those present followed with sprigs of wattle. To also honour the poet, bubbles drifted into the sky.

A Piper from the City of Melbourne Highland Pipe Band provided the music.

At 2:00 pm we gathered at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria where we viewed a slide show on the life of Gordon with expert commentary by Allan Childs.

Susan Pender gave an address on one of Gordon's poems "Wolf and Hound" and afterwards made a presentation of her annual prize of a small cold cast Arabian horse to the winner of our inaugural Adam Lindsay Gordon Esperanto Poetry Competition, Gaye Phillips of Annerley (Qld). An honourable mention prize was given to Marcel Leereveld of Belgrave South, (Vic).

An announcement was

made by Allan Childs of a fund to the setting up to restore Gordon's grave. To start off the fund, generous donations were received from the Low family.

A vote of thanks was passed to our Guest Speaker, Susan Pender, who flew down from Sydney to be with us, and to our President, Allan Childs, who came from the Dingley Dell Cottage Museum, near Port MacDonnell (SA).

We were honoured by the presence of Hugh Anderson who edited "The Last Letters 1868 to 1870" (1970). Our thanks go to Carol and Miranda Lutz for looking after our selling table.

The afternoon had been arranged by Vivienne Sellers, the Vice President of The Adam Lindsay Gordon Commemorative Committee Inc. with catering arrangements lavishly provided by Elrae Adams.



(above) John Houghton playing the pipes at the Gordon Monument (Photo courtesy John Adams)



(above) Special guest and Gordon author, Susan Pender reading "Wolf and Hound" (Photo courtesy Vivienne Sellers)

A MAN OF LETTERS

On 6 October 1868, a philosophical Gordon wrote to his confidant-in-chief, John Riddoch, about the failure of the Ballarat livery business;

"I do not fancy I shall have any luck but my luck can't possibly be any worse than it has been—I would like never to see a horse again let along to ride one. £8 a week [rent] was too much for those stables & if I had not made a little money in

odd ways by horse dealing, etc., I would have lost very heavily, though I had not much to lose when I come to think of it. Hay and corn have been very dear all this winter & last Autumn at Ballarat & competition has kept our charges down. I could not complete with Gibbings who is a rich man. The stables have been very badly managed & T. Mount [sic], though a well meaning fellow, had a head for busi-

ness worse if possible than mine, but after that bad fall of mine I was bound to leave the books entirely in his hands or get some one else which I did not like to do & a pretty mess Mount made of the accounts. I could hardly have done worse myself—but even with good managements & care there was not a bare living on those stables at £8 a week".

(Source: Anderson, H (ed.), "The Last Letters 1868-1870" (1970) p28-29)

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

Five copies of "The Last Letters 1868-1870" signed exclusively by the editor Hugh Anderson are available for \$A40 incl. postage.

GORDON: CHAMPION STEEPLECHASE JOCKEY



(above) Plaque by Stanley Hammond at Flemington race-course situated under the Members' stand which reads: **ADAM LINDSAY GORDON POET RODE THREE STEEPLECHASE WINNERS ON THIS COURSE 10th OCTOBER 1868** (Photo courtesy John Adams)

“Physically, Gordon was the most unlikely champion jockey, but he possessed an intuitive ability of knowing his horse better than any man.”



(above) Gordon on *Viking* one of the winners he rode at Flemington on 10 October 1868.

The remarkable feature of Adam Lindsay Gordon's unlikely success as an amateur steeplechase jockey was his ability to overcome his physical defects. The Gordons were a family known for their tall and gaunt features. Lanky Lindsay was not your pint-sized midget jockey, but stood over six feet three inches (190.5cm) and weighed just under nine stone ten pound (61.6kgs). Slim and agile with very long legs, he was further handicapped by defective eyesight—beyond the horse's eyes was all blur and mist. Physically, Gordon was the most unlikely champion jockey, but he possessed an intuitive ability of knowing his horse better than any man. A summary of “Long Gordon's” successes reveals a record worthy of inclusion in the Racing Hall of Fame.

Wins (21 places):

- Mt Gambier Hurdle (20/6/61)
- MacDonnell Bay Steeple (1/10/61)
- Mt Gambier Hurdle (26/12/61)
- Penola Steeple (15/1/62)
- Guichen Bay Hurdle (28/2/62)
- Mt Gambier Steeplechase (26/9/62)
- Border Steeple (SA) (5/5/63)
- Guichen Bay Hurdle (24/1/65)
- Maiden Steeple (Vic) (20/4/65)
- Penola Steeplechase (5/5/65)
- Adelaide Annual Steeple (20/9/65)
- Ballarat Steeple (1/12/65)
- Ballarat Amateur Steeple (10/8/67)
- Selling Steeplechase (Vic) (18/9/68)

- Melbourne Hunt Club Cup (10/10/68)
- Metropolitan Steeplechase (Vic) (10/10/68)
- Selling Steeplechase (Vic) (10/10/68)
- VRC Steeplechase (7/11/68)
- Ballarat Steeplechase (5/12/68)
- VRC Steeple (27/3/69)
- Caulfield Maiden Steeple (24/6/69)

2nd place (10 places):

- Penola Hurdle (3/2/60)
- Hamilton Steeple (Vic) (5/12/61)
- Adelaide Steeplechase (10/9/63)
- Great Western Steeple (Vic) (21/4/64)
- Adelaide Steeplechase (15/9/64)
- Ballarat Amateur Steeple (3/4/66)
- Adelaide Annual Steeple (15/9/66)
- Ballarat Autumn Steeple (12/4/67)
- Great Metropolitan Steeple (Vic) (18/10/67)
- VRC Autumn Steeple (29/3/69)
- Ballarat Steeplechase (4/12/69)

3rd place (14 places):

- Storekeeper's Purse (SA) (20/6/61)
- Great Western Steeple (Vic) (20/5/62)
- Great Western Steeple (Vic) (14/5/63)
- Penola Steeplechase (18/5/64)
- Mt Gambier Steeplechase (27/7/64)
- Great Western Steeple (Vic) (20/4/65)
- Melbourne Hunt Club Cup (18/10/67)
- Ballarat Steeplechase (20/12/67)
- Ballarat Hunt Club Steeple

- (18/9/68)
- Grand National Steeplechase (Vic) (1/1/69)
- Ballarat Miners Steeple (12/2/69)
- Bylands Steeple (Vic) (1/7/69)
- Hunt Club Cup (Vic) (16/10/69)
- Hunt Club Steeple (Vic) (16/10/69)

Unplaced (23 places):

- Penola Hurdle (1/2/61)
- Stewards Purse (SA) (1/3/62)
- Branxholme Hurdle (Vic) (22/3/62)
- Casterton Hurdle (21/5/62)
- Mt Gambier Handicap (27/9/62)
- Ballarat Hurdle Race (1/10/63)
- Ballarat Grand Amateur Steeple (3/10/63)
- Corinthian Hurdle (Vic) (22/12/63)
- Portland Steeplechase (30/12/63)
- Ballarat Grand National Steeple (13/5/65)
- Grand National Steeplechase (Vic) (1/1/66)
- Ballarat Grand National Steeplechase (2/4/66)
- Great Western Steeple (Vic) (19/4/66)
- Ballarat Autumn Steeple (15/5/68)
- Master's Cup (Vic) (17/10/68)
- Geelong Steeplechase (4/3/69)
- Croton Park Steeple (Vic) (10/7/69)
- Croton Park Maiden Steeple (Vic) (21/8/69)
- Adelaide Hunt Club Steeple (2/10/69)
- Selling Steeple (Vic) (16/10/69)
- VRC Steeplechase (6/11/69)
- Flemington Steeple (1/1/70)
- VRC Steeplechase (12/3/70)

(Source: *The Border Watch* 5 May 1936 p11)

WOLF AND HOUND

Gordon's poem "Wolf and Hound (Our Sergeant's Yarn)" was probably written at Yallum Park during Gordon's stay with the Riddoch family in January 1869. It was first published in *The Australasian* on 7 May 1870. Whether the poem is autobiographical is a point of contention. It describes the killing of a notorious bush-ranger named Marshall. The poem was read by Susan Pender at the Froth and Bubble Day 2007.

You'll take my tale with a little salt,
But it needs none, nevertheless,
I was foil'd completely, fairly at fault,
Dishearten'd, too, I confess.
At the splitters' tent I had seen the track
Of horse-hoofs fresh on the sward,
And though Darby Lynch and Donovan Jack
(Who could swear through a ten-inch board)
Solemnly swore he had not been there,
I was just as sure that they lied,
For to Darby all that is foul was fair,
And Jack for his life was tried.

We had run him for seven miles and more
As hard as our nags could split ;
At the start they were all too weary and sore,
And his was quite fresh and fit.
Young Marsden's pony had had enough
On the plain, where the chase was hot ;
We breasted the swell of the Bittern's Bluff,
And Mark couldn't raise a trot ;
When the sea, like a splendid silver shield,
To the south-west suddenly lay ;
On the brow of the Beetle the chestnut reel'd,
And I bid good-bye to M'Crea—
And I was alone when the mare fell lame,
With a pointed flint in her shoe,
On the Stony Flats : I had lost the game,
And what was a man to do?

I turned away with no fixed intent
And headed for Hawthorndell ;
I could neither eat in the splitters' tent,
Nor drink at the splitters' well.
I knew that they gloried in my mishap,
And I cursed them between my teeth—
A blood-red sunset through Brayton's Gap
Flung a lurid fire on the heath.

Could I reach the Dell? I had little reck,
And with scarce a choice of my own
I threw the reins on Miladi's neck—
I had freed her foot from the stone.
That season most of the swamps were dry,
And after so hard a burst
In the sultry noon of so hot a sky
She was keen to appease her thirst—
Or by instinct urged or impelled by fate—
I care not to solve these things—
Certain it is that she took me straight
To the Warrigal water springs.

[A full version of "Wolf and Hound" can be viewed on our website
www.adamlindsaygordon.org/works_wolfandhound.htm]

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE MAGAZINE

The Committee were delighted to receive recently an invitation by the publishers of *Australian Heritage Magazine* (www.heritageaustralia.com.au) to submit an article on Adam Lindsay Gordon. The full version can be seen in the Members' Area of our website www.adamlindsaygordon.org. Here is an extract:
"It was a cold winter's morning in June 1870 when a despondent Adam Lindsay Gordon sat on the Brighton Beach fore-

shore contemplating his circumstances. Depressed and penniless, he needed help. But these were the days when a man down on his luck could not turn to the Salvos or ring Lifeline. Just kindness and courage. With Gordon that morning were some private letters, his clay pipe, some tobacco and the lucky shilling he had when as a wild youth of 19, he departed kindred and country for a new life in Australia. In the thick ti-tree scrub beside Gordon was his Brighton Artillery Corps issued service rifle. And the rifle was loaded".

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members should receive a notice by mail in the coming weeks of our first Annual General Meeting. Planning is underway to hold the AGM on Saturday 13 October 2007 at Coleraine (Vic) where Gordon rode in five Great Western steeplechases (1862-66), his best result 2nd place in 1864. We encourage members to consider serving on the Committee and you need not have to attend the AGM should you wish to seek

election. For further information, please contact the Secretary, John Adams to discuss your interest. For members whose membership lapsed on 30 June 2007, we have enclosed a renewal form. Only current members at the time of the AGM can vote so please take the opportunity and renew today. With just \$411.98 in the bank, it is vital for us to continue that you renew your membership.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following members who have joined since May:

Elrae Adams, Kelvin Freeman and Kam Lee.

Thank you to Kelvin Freeman for sharing with the Committee material on his great-uncle, the author Edward Vidler (d 1942) who edited arguably the

most sumptuous book produced on the Poet—the "Adam Lindsay Gordon Memorial Volume" (1926). We plan to feature a story in the coming editions of *The Wayfarer*. If you know someone with an interest in Adam Lindsay Gordon, then why not introduce them to the group? A membership form can be downloaded from our website.