



ISSUE 7 - SEPTEMBER 2008

# THE WAYFARER

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



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## POET GORDON AND HENRY VIII

**K**ing Henry VIII (1491-1547) was a significant figure in the history of the English monarchy through his struggles with the Roman Catholic church that ultimately led to the separation of the Anglican Church from the authority of Rome. He also married six times and had two mistresses one who was Mary Boleyn (c1499-1543); her sister Anne was Henry's second wife but failed to produce a male heir and was beheaded on dubious charges of adultery, incest, and high treason.

Historians differ on whether Mary's son Henry Carey (1526-96) was the biological son of King Henry VIII or Sir William Carey (c1500-28), courtier and favourite of Henry VIII. It was said that one witness noted that Mary's son bore a resemblance to the King. However, on the weight of evidence, it's unlikely Henry VIII was the biological father. So, you might ask, what has this got to do with Adam Lindsay Gordon? In a remarkable find for the Committee, Gordon's family tree can be traced back to none other than Lady Mary Carey *née* Boleyn which makes the possible ancestry with King Henry VIII a tantalising thought. Genealogists researching the Gordon tree have traced the Gordon clan back to Adam of Gordon of Berwickshire without

realising the link to Royalty.

1. **Mary Boleyn** (c1499-1543) m Sir William Carey 4 February 1520
2. **Henry Carey** (1526-96) m Anne Morgan 21 May 1545
3. **Hon Sir Edmund Carey** (c1558-1637) m Judith Humphrey
4. **Sir Ferdinando Carey** (1590-1638) m Phillipa Throckmorton
5. **Mary Carey** (d 1695) m Sir Alexander Fraser after 1659
6. **Carey Fraser** (d 1709) m Charles Mordaunt circa 1678
7. **Lady Henrietta Mordaunt** (1682-1760) m Alexander Gordon before 13 February 1706
8. **Lady Anne Gordon** (1713-91) m William Gordon 9 December 1729
9. **Lady Henrietta Gordon** m Robert Gordon 2 March 1760
10. **William Gordon** (1764-1803) m Frances Elrington
11. **Adam Durnford Gordon** (1796-1857) m Harriet Elizabeth Gordon 21 September 1829
12. **Adam Lindsay Gordon** (1833-70) m Margaret Park.

It is an interesting fact that Henry Carey lies interred at Westminster Abbey where his ancestor, Poet Gordon is immortalised in Poets' Corner.

(Source: [www.worldroots.com/brigitte/famous/h/henry8englanddescendants.htm](http://www.worldroots.com/brigitte/famous/h/henry8englanddescendants.htm))



(above) Henry Carey (1526-96), 1st Baron Hunsdon of Hunsdon and forefather of the Poet Adam Lindsay Gordon (Source: [www.tudorplace.com.ar](http://www.tudorplace.com.ar))



(above) Lady Mary Carey *née* Boleyn (c1499-1543), mistress of King Henry VIII (Source: [www.tudorhistory.org](http://www.tudorhistory.org))

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**DOWLING FOREST: GORDON ON 'BABBLER'**

One of Adam Lindsay Gordon's 21 wins as arguable Australia's finest amateur steeplechase jockey was during the Ballarat Turf Club meeting at Dowling Forest on 5 December 1868. It was the third day of the meeting and there were six runners in the four mile steeplechase won by Gordon on 'Babbler' (11st. 7lb) owned by his friend Major Thomas Baker, followed by 'Ingleside' ridden by Robert Orr (10st. 4lb) with 'Union' ridden by Harden (11st. 4lb) finishing third. Years after the event, C R Macpherson of Balranald (NSW) recalled the event in one of the rare personal accounts of a race involving Gordon:

*"I was merely a boy at the time, and was standing in the saddling paddock looking at Babbler, who had only a bridle on, led by a boy, when there appeared from the weighing room, with the saddle on his arm and the colours up, having just weighed out, Adam Lindsay Gordon, or, as he was generally known in those days, "Long Gordon." I was really the only onlooker while he adjusted carefully the saddle and breastplate, and, having drawn the girths tight, took the reins from the boy, and,*

*putting them over the horse's head, placed his foot in the stirrup and leisurely mounted. He was so tall that there was no occasion for a "leg up," as, though Babble was a tall and big-boned dark bay gelding, the stirrup was down fairly low. Having got out on to the course, he took his preliminary canter, but the greatest admirer of Gordon could hardly maintain he was a graceful rider. Leaning low down and well over the horse's neck, and bending at the knees, at every stride he got the full benefit of the present "Tod Sloan" style [forward seat style of riding], but it was not picturesque. There were about half a dozen other competitors in the race, but I cannot remember the names of either the horses or their riders, except that the late Mr. Robert Orr was one of the latter, mounted on an "iron grey." At that time the last of the treble of obstacles in front of the stand was a pretty wide water jump, with a paling fence on the take-off side. The race started and led over these, and as the field swept past Gordon, on Babbler, was the very last to clear the water jump. The steeplechase course was flagged out across the Ballarat lane into an adjoining paddock, and then, in a half-circle, back across the lane into the course proper. These two doubles were very formidable, and took a "power of jumping." Well, Gordon kept Babbler well in the rear of the field till they passed the stand the second time, and then commenced to move up, and by the time they had jumped back across the lane into the course he had gradually crept forward, and eventually got on terms with Bob Orr on the grey, who at that time was leading. These two then led the field over the last three fences, taking their jumps so simultaneously that it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other. They thus landed over the last fence together. But Gordon, on Babbler, evidently had Bob Orr on the grey, beaten, as he came away at once, and led easily up the straight at a long-striding gallop, and eventually won by several lengths....I have seen the opinion expressed that Adam Lindsay Gordon, though a plucky was not a finished race rider. I have never agreed with that opinion, and could always quote this event, in which I maintain he rode what was actually a waiting race with restraint and judgement."*

(Source: *The Australasian* 22 Feb 1919 p330)



(above) Adam Lindsay Gordon riding at Dowling Forest racetrack, Ballarat by Thomas Hamilton Lyttleton, (La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria, mp000628)

**MEMBERS**

Members can read the full newspaper article on the Members' Area on our website

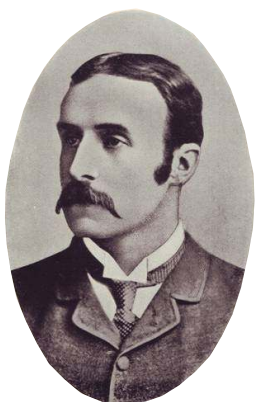
[www.adamlindsaygordon.org](http://www.adamlindsaygordon.org)

**History Week 08**  
www.historyweek.org.au 12 - 19 October

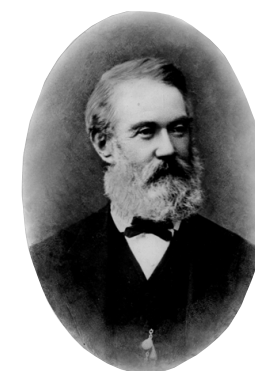
*discover the wonders  
of Victoria's past*

History Week 2008 is a wonderful initiative of the History Council of Victoria and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc. From fascinating walking tours and engaging discussions, to exhibitions and 'history in the making' events—there is something in store for everyone to enjoy. Visit the website and discover the wonders of Victoria's past! [www.historyweek.org.au](http://www.historyweek.org.au)

THE SLADENS AND WESTMINSTER ABBEY



(above) Douglas Sladen in Melbourne at the age of 24



(above) Sir Charles Sladen  
(Reproduced with the permission of the Victorian Parliamentary Library)

How the seemingly trivial acts often lead to immense results. Who would realise that the bust of Adam Lindsay Gordon, immortalised as the only Australian poet at Westminster Abbey had its origins on the first night a young arrival from England spent at his uncle's home in Geelong. Not any uncle, but one of Victoria's prominent citizens in Sir Charles Sladen (1815-84).

Douglas Brooke Wheelton Sladen (1856-1947) was born in London and educated at Cheltenham College—the same school as Adam Lindsay Gordon attended between 1841-42 and 1851-52. Sladen was a brilliant student and scholar but with an inclination towards history instead of classics. His father Douglas Brooke Sladen was "a tall, well-set-up, very handsome and determined-looking man", one of sixteen children

to John Baker Sladen and Ethelred née St Barbe. Like his brother (Sir) Charles, Douglas senior was a solicitor the clients who were chiefly family relations.

After graduating at Trinity College, Oxford (B.A., 1879), Sladen junior was disinclined to follow his father's career as a comfortably-off solicitor and instead went to Victoria intending to follow his childless uncle into politics. Sladen would describe his uncle as "extraordinarily beloved and respected". In his memoirs *My Long Life* (1939), he went on to describe his first night with Sir Charles in Australia:

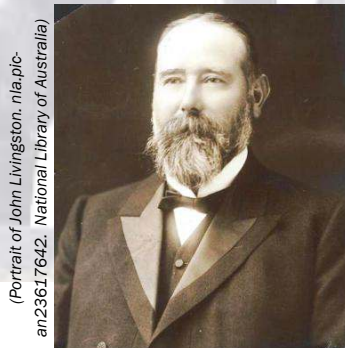
*"My instincts as an author were awakened in Australia from the very beginning. On the first night that I spent under his roof my uncle put into my hands the Collected Poems of Adam Lindsay*

*Gordon. He knew Gordon and admired the man and his work, and was anxious that I, as an Englishman fresh from Oxford, should be impressed with it. 'Pretty nearly every educated household in Victoria has a copy of this book,' he told me. I was immensely struck by it, and read most of it except the Lyrical Drama, Ashtarothe, before I went to sleep".*

The rest, as we know, is history. Sladen went on to write *Adam Lindsay Gordon and his Friends in England and Australia* (1912) with Edith Humphris and later *Adam Lindsay Gordon: Westminster Abbey Memorial Volume* (1934). His biggest contribution though was his effort to have Gordon immortalised in Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey in 1934. For this we have Sir Charles Sladen to thank. (Source: Sladen, D., "My Long Life" (1939) p63)

BACK IN TIME: VANSITTART PARK (SA)

With a growing archive of over 130 original newspaper articles on Adam Lindsay Gordon, whether a researcher or leisurely reader, members will find hours of enjoyment browsing the website. This article from *The Argus* (Vic) of 21 October 1915 concerns the planting of the wattle at Vansittart Park in Mount Gambier (SA) by John Livingston on 18 October 1915.



(Portrait of John Livingston. nla.pic-an23617642. National Library of Australia)



(above) John Livingston MHR and the tablet at Vansittart Park marking the planting of the wattle from Gordon's grave:  
*"This tablet was placed here by Geo. Riddock [sic] of Koorine with approval of the Corporation of Mt. Gambier to mark the spot where a shrub was planted by the Hon John Livingston M.H.R. on the 18th October 1915 which was got from the late Adam Lindsay Gordon's grave at Brighton Vict by J. J. Driscoll of Mt. Gambier."*

Mr. John Livingston, M.H.R., planted on Sunday last in Vansittart Park, Mount Gambier (S.A.), a shrub brought from Adam Lindsay Gordon's grave in the Brighton Cemetery by Mr. J. J. Driscoll, a member of the Old Residents' Association. Mr. George Riddoch, who was a personal friend of the poet, said that he had spent many days on horseback with Gordon, and he found him a lovable man. While he was a practical man, Gordon was a dreamer, and things that would prey on his mind would not concern the ordinary man. He recounted a coincidence concerning the poet's death. In a conversation with his brother, the late Mr. John Riddoch, at Tallum, he remarked one morning that he thought they should telegraph to Gordon, and tell him to come to Tallum. His reason was that he thought it unwise to allow the poet to remain in Melbourne alone in his then state of mind. Before the telegram could be sent one came from Mr. Herbert Power, telling the tragic story of Gordon's death. Mr. John Watson, who was a literary friend of Gordon's, referred to him as an intellectual and companionable man, and said that Gordon's earlier poems passed through his hands for publication, and appeared in the "Border Watch."

(Newspaper Collection, State Library of Victoria)

LATE LAURELS

by Grace Jennings Carmichael (1868-1904), written at the grave of Adam Lindsay Gordon.

Wreath the cold laurels o'er the buried head,  
The surest Garland for a poet dead.

The wreath that comes too late!  
O,well to mourn him in this solemn scene,  
O,well to crown him when his grave is green;  
This is the singers fate!

There was no laurel for the living brow,  
Thro' carven bays cling 'gainst the pillar now  
Low in God's acre set.

O poet mine! thinking of thy wild years,  
So sad the marble wreath to me appears  
That my dim eyes are wet.

The winds that come a'moaning from the shore,  
Shake the dark cypresses, and ripple o'er  
The graveyard grasses deep.  
The sunlight dances on the column grey,  
And warms the marble with its golden ray,-  
And thou art fast asleep!

Dost thou not hear the cadence of the breeze.  
Dost thou not see the shadows of the trees  
Gathered about thee here?

Sweet nature, surely, is not mute to thee!  
T'ween the calling voices of yon sea  
Have reached thy listening ear.

Somewhere thine eyes are open and thy hands  
Quiver on perfect keys: on mystic strands  
Thy music sways and swings.  
O, may there be no grief in that refrain.  
No minor measure slipping into pain  
No jar of broken strings.

But all our discords harmonised, no note  
Dying sob-silenced in the singing throat.  
In broken melodies.

But music into passionate fullness grown,  
Rounding the stammering numbers we have known  
In earthly minstrelsies.

[The full version of the poem "Late Laurels" by Grace Jennings Carmichael and other tribute poems can be viewed in the Members' Area of our website [www.adamlindsaygordon.org/secure/tributepoems.htm](http://www.adamlindsaygordon.org/secure/tributepoems.htm)]

TOUR OF BRIGHTON GENERAL CEMETERY

Our final tour of the Brighton General Cemetery (Vic) for 2008 will be held on **Sunday 9 November 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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT COLERAINE

Our second Annual General Meeting was held at the Eucalyptus Discovery Centre, Coleraine (Vic)—the former Wannan Shire offices—on 20 September 2008. The meeting was followed by a presentation on the life and times of Adam Lindsay Gordon for the people of Coleraine which was attended by fifteen people.

At the AGM, members elected the following persons as office bearers and ordinary committee members for the year ending 30 June 2009:

- President:** Allan Childs
- Vice-President:** Viv. Sellers
- Secretary:** John W. Adams
- Treasurer:** Travis M. Sellers
- Ordinary Committee Members:** Lorraine Day and Joan Tarn

Joan Tarn (Vic) joins the Committee as our newest member and we congratulate Joan on her election while thanking Geoff Dening, an inaugural member of the committee since Australia Day



(above) Secretary and Life Member John Adams speaking at the Annual General Meeting



(above) The finishing line of the Great Western Steeplechase, corner of Pilleau and Henty Streets, Coleraine

2006 for his sterling contribution. While at Coleraine, we took the opportunity of taking photos of the course taken by the Great Western Steeplechase in which Gordon rode in.

THE ADAM LINDSAY GORDON GRAVE RESTORATION APPEAL

The Adam Lindsay Gordon Grave Restoration Appeal has reached the half-way point of our target. We have now raised \$5,252 towards the restoration and future maintenance of Adam Lindsay Gordon's gravesite.

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

- Marie Gray, Greg Ostler (\$50),
- Kim Sheppard (\$40).

