

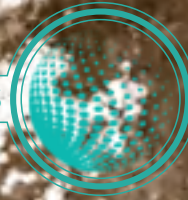
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TORQUAY MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



# HISTORY MATTERS



**COBB & CO**

**JAN JUC GROWS**

**LIGHT HORSE CHARGE**

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# TRAILS & TAILS

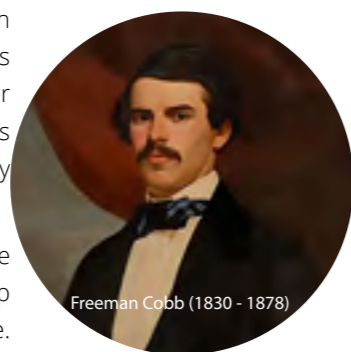


## THE COBB & CO STORY

CHERYL BAULCH

We grew up in the era of black and white TV westerns where we watched the Pony Express and Wells Fargo. They were made famous despite the Pony Express operating for a mere 18 months, and Wells Fargo working as a coaching service for approximately nine years. Cobb & Co was established in Australia during 1853, operating across much of the country until 1924. For over 70 years, Cobb & Co covered thousands of miles and touched the lives of many Australians.

In 1853 a small man with a large moustache, pale skin and noticeable limp stepped ashore at the port of Melbourne. The young man was American, Freeman Cobb. He had been working for a coaching company in Panama, but now with three companions, was ready to start his own suburban coach service in Melbourne to Port Melbourne, then known as Sandridge.



Freeman Cobb (1830 - 1878)

The four partners quickly abandoned this small venture in favour of a more ambitious plan to cash in on the heavy traffic between Melbourne and the Bendigo goldfields. They imported the brand-new American 'Concord' coach and employed a team of 'Yankee whips' to drive them. By the end of the year they had selected and trained 70 horses, allowing them to provide a fast, daily service in both directions. They divided the 90-mile (150 km) trip into eight 'stages' (fresh horses were harnessed at the end of each stage). The short stages meant that the journey could be made in less than a day.

They expanded their services into other routes, but in 1856 Freeman Cobb sold his share in the business and returned home. In the 1860s another American James Rutherford, took control of the company, expanding its operations into every corner of Australia.

PHOTOS COURTESY STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA.



The roads were hard going. The coach body was suspended on thick strips of leather called thoroughbraces that would rock back and forth enabling the coach to negotiate the roughest conditions. Motion sickness was common among the passengers. For this reason, the changing stations, though often basic in their fare (meals of stew, salt beef or damper), were always a welcome break in the journey.

Riding on the outside of the coach on the box seat beside the driver was for 'First Class' passengers. Riding inside the coach were the 'Second Class' who endured confined spaces and close contact with fellow travellers. When the road was steep or boggy, or the coach broke down, everyone was expected to help, or walk, or push the coach.

Spring Creek (Torquay) had already been established as a picnic, holiday and fishing destination when James Follett acquired land from the Crown in 1881. He built his Ocean View Villa and began a conveyance service in 1883 to bring visitors and guests to Spring Creek. They would leave from the Red Lion Hotel in Moorabool Street, Geelong on Saturdays and Mondays. The fare was three shillings. His son Colin later took over the operation of the service.

During 1888 James Follett opened his Coffee Palace Hotel and moved his pickup of passengers to the Prince of Wales Hotel. Felix Rosser, never one to miss out on a money-making opportunity, also started a conveyance service to Spring Creek taking the opportunity to use the Red Lion as the pickup point. Though his service didn't last long, he sold his stables a few years later. After all his main occupation was fishing.

During 1891 the Spring Creek residents had been agitating for a daily mail service to the town. James Follett offered to collect the mail during his regular coach service. Just before Christmas that year, the Postal Office Department agreed to the offer. The new service was to last for three months, and the system adopted was called 'loose bag service'. Letters and newspapers were picked up at the Mount Duneed post office every afternoon. The bag was left at the Palace Hotel where residents would deposit and collect their mail.

On 20 August 1894, Torquay's 'loose mailbag' service was abolished and a non-official post office established, resulting in a direct mail service from Geelong



James Rutherford (1827 -1911)



Leather throughbrace.



Cobb & Co trail at Jan Juc contributed by Yvonne Sumner.





Torquay - Anglesea transport contributed by Anglesea Historical Society

six days a week. The Post Office remained at the hotel until 1897 when Alfred Payne was appointed postmaster and the mail service was transferred to his General Store in Gilbert Street. This store also served as the local booking office for Cobb and Co.

The Western Stage Company, operating under the Cobb & Co banner operated a 'special event and holiday' service from the Prince of Wales Hotel. In 1893 they started a four-horse daily coach service. To keep the service operating, the company approached the Torquay Improvement Association (TIA) for a guarantee of 26 pounds annually to maintain the service. After obtaining feedback from the locals, the TIA replied they couldn't do that, so the service was reduced.

During 1889 James Follett's son Charles, a coachbuilder by trade, was operating the coach service. He was later advertising the service as the 'Torquay (Spring Creek) Line of Coaches'. The same year Anglesea residents were insisting on a more regular postal service. The service was extended from Torquay to Anglesea in 1899. Follett would cross the mouth of Spring Creek, travelling along the top of the cliff for about 2.5 km, then he followed the contours of the land to Bellbrae.

Cobb and Co had continued to run services for special events, holidays and the summer season. Eventually, they took up Follett's postal and passenger run in 1906 after Charles died suddenly in 1904.

In 1912 fire swept through the Anglesea forest near Jan Juc. Cobb and Co.'s coach, with a five-horse team, driven by T. Petrasson, was headed off by the fire near Addiscott, and before the coach could turn, the flames were within a few yards of it – in fact, it was reported that one of the horses was slightly singed. Petrasson skillfully avoided the main body of the fire and went back towards Jan Juc (Bellbrae). There he found another belt of flame in the way. Between

the two sections, the coach remained in safety, but the roar of the flames made the six passengers uneasy, and the smoke-charged atmosphere was very trying. A change of the wind to the south soon arrested the progress of the fire towards the settlements. The coach was two hours late in reaching Geelong!

By early 1918, travel by coach was being replaced by the motor car, and motor garages grew in our coastal towns. Cobb and Co. began selling their stock and stables. They too had turned to the motor vehicle, delivering the mail by car. The Torquay Cobb & Co. depot had been moved to McFarlane's kiosk on The Esplanade and the stables were removed from the Palace Hotel in 1927.

Despite its demise, this iconic transport company was forever immortalised in Australian folklore. 🇺🇸

Torquay - Anglesea transports contributed by Anglesea Historical Society



Photo courtesy State Library Victoria



# CARRIAGE MUSEUM

← CHRIS BARR →

## GEORGE McCARTNEY

Photos McCartney Family Collection



Many newcomers to Torquay are eager to hear stories about the old days in our town. They may be surprised to learn there was once a busy Carriage Museum at Bellbrae which held the amazing collection of old horse-drawn carriages of Real Estate Agent and longtime supporter of Torquay, George Rutherford McCartney.

George was born in 1903. He was the son of a hardworking pioneer Arthur McCartney, who operated bullock drawn vehicles going to and fro to the great timber forests and timber mills around Euroa. Arthur also had a team of horses carrying chaff, timber and wool. George would travel the roads with his father and gained a love and understanding of the early Australian pioneering life. Memories of being on the old wagons with his father prompted George to start the carriage collection as a hobby. It proved to be more than a hobby and became a busy historic museum winning several tourism awards.



In 1961 George saw an ad in the paper for an old straight shaft sulky, made in 1900 by Geelong craftsman W Egan.

It appeared at just the right time, and after inspection, despite the perishing leatherwork and aged timber, he thought he would buy it and give restoration a go. As a lad looking for work, George turned his hand to coffin making and also had a stint at French polishing, giving him very handy skills for the restoration of his buggy. As his collection grew, the knowledge he gained working as a

The woodwork would be rubbed back repainted, and varnish applied. The leather was replaced with new materials as close as possible to the original, and the ironwork would be cleaned and rubbed back, and the rust scraped off, later to be sealed and painted.

His knowledge about the buggies was quite amazing, and he developed a keen eye for spotting a sulky or buggy in a pile of rubbish. He would already be making plans for restoration or hunting for spare parts. George had a large



builder in Geelong, and later Benalla, provided more handy skills which were invaluable to his hobby of bringing the sulkies and buggies back to life.

Like most collections, it started with just one, then two, and then three. In all George collected over 30 carriages. He sourced them out from country Victoria and New South Wales. Some were found in sheds, others long forgotten behind farm outbuildings, in paddocks and under trees. Most were in poor condition, had suffered weather damage and were in need of some TLC and they found just the right person in George.

He transported them home to his farm at Bellbrae, cleaned them and then set about finding parts. His restoration of them was painstaking and careful work, which required endless hours. The worse the deterioration, the bigger the challenge for George, and he was very thorough, paying attention to even the smallest detail.

collection of books and photographs he would use for reference in his work. When he started the museum it was a way of sharing his knowledge of days gone by with a new generation.

The pride of the collection was the rare Cobb and Co built in Concord, New Hampshire in the mid 19th century. The Concord Jack was believed to be the only American built Concord coach left in Victoria at the time. George bought the coach in Bright for \$6000. It weighed over a tonne and was imported by Cobb and Co for a run daily from Melbourne to the gold fields around Beechworth. It made its last run in 1924. In its heyday it carried nine passengers inside, two passengers up with the driver, and another three on the rear seat. On a short run, it could carry 12 people inside for a 'squeazy' ride. It was a suspension rather than sprung vehicle, which meant there were never stops caused by broken springs. It may not have stopped for a broken spring, but stop it did when bushranger Ned

Kelly gave the order, robbing it at least three times. When George picked up the beautiful red coach the whole town of Bright turned out to farewell it.

The Carriage Museum collection included buggies, a Phaeton, a delivery van, a drover's cart, a buckboard, a little wagonette, a governess carriage, a hawker's van, a dog cart, a ladies Phaeton and several types of sulkies.

Each cart has its own story and George loved chasing up the original history of his collection.

A McAlpine's bread delivery truck finished service around the streets of Abbotsford about 1930, after approximately 30 years delivering bread to Melbourne homes. George made contact with McAlpines for advice on its restoration.

A ladies Phaeton had a bent shaft which allowed ladies to get and out of it with ease. It was used for ladies outings.

A milk cart owned, by Frank Moore of Polar Dairies in Geelong, came complete with harness and "Jason" the horse. It brought back memories of a time when the horse-drawn milko cart would bring bottled milk to families all over Victoria.

Another special vehicle was the racing buggy which George bought in Taggart from a collector who was retiring. This buggy, built in England, had only a seat for a driver who would take part in competitions with the well to do owners of similar buggies. This sport has been popularised lately by Prince Phillip, who can still be seen driving his racing buggy in Great Windsor Park. George had a special spot for the Governess carriage, which was the oldest in the collection. Built in England the 1820s and used to take children to school, it found its way to the Ballarat goldfields in the 1850s and was bought by George at the Melbourne Showgrounds, carefully restored, and added to his collection.

Once the collection was nearing completion, George helped build sheds to house them, and a driving track for demonstrations and, of course, horses to pull them. The Museum was his pride and joy and the great pleasure of his busy retirement.

George opened his museum in the early 1980s when he was in his eighties and ran it for 15 years. He won several tourism awards including being named Best Small Private

museum in Victoria in the late 1980s. It was a wonderful asset for our town, as indeed was George himself, who left his mark through remarkable achievements in a range of organisations. He moved to Torquay in 1951 and opened a hardware store and timber yard. He later became the first full-time real estate agent. He served as a South Barwon City Councillor for eight years and lobbied so hard for the road through to Breamlea that when this was achieved they named the bridge after him (stop and look at the plaque next time you drive over it).

George also called a meeting which led to the formation of a small committee that established the Torquay Football Club. When a better ground was needed, George formed the Spring Creek Reserve Committee and negotiated to buy swamp land from the lands department. He was the prime mover for the establishment of the present football oval named the "George McCartney Oval" using change rooms donated by the defence department from Puckapunyal. The Spring Creek Reserve Committee then set about establishing the Torquay Cricket Club, the Torquay Netball Club and the Torquay Tennis Club in the reserve. He was the Torquay Football Club's Inaugural president and first life member and was a wonderful supporter of the local school. He was a foundation member of the Torquay Senior Citizens, Torquay kindergarten and a member of the Torquay Improvement Association. No wonder he did not enjoy being idle.



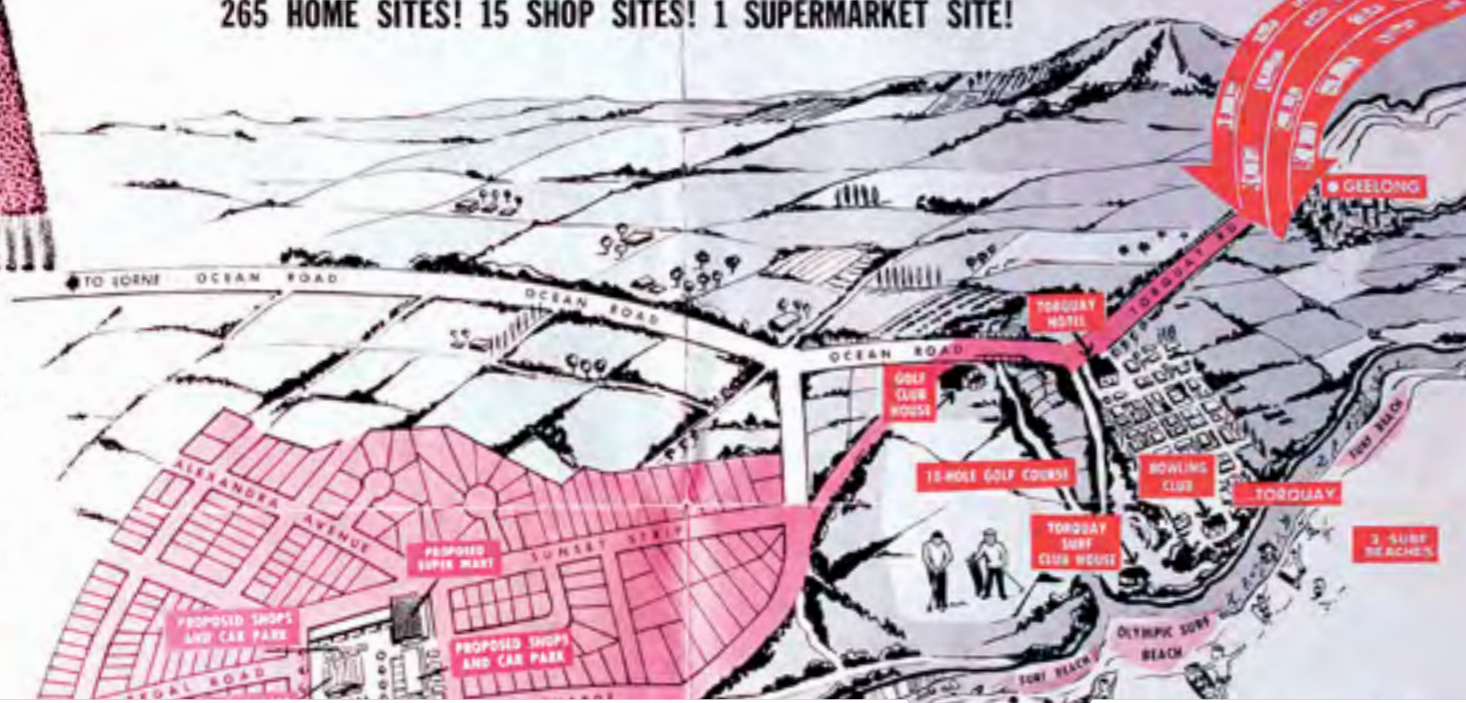
When he passed away the museum ceased to operate. His collection gave locals and visitors alike a glimpse of bygone days. They enjoyed the opportunity to enjoy and share in the labours of George's amazing retirement.

Thanks to Graham, Helen and Ray McCartney and family for assistance with this story. 🏠

# TORQUAY

## Boulevard

265 HOME SITES! 15 SHOP SITES! 1 SUPERMARKET SITE!



# JAN JUC GROWS

(PART 3)

← CHERYL BAULCH →

## 1937

Sir Hubert Opperman was a regular visitor to Torquay in the late 50s early 60s. It was, therefore, no surprise that in the early 1960s, he and his best mate Sir Bruce Small built the Gold Coast looking apartment block "Surf Sun 10" located at the start of The Esplanade in Torquay. Having become familiar with the area, and Sir Bruce always on the lookout for investment opportunities, they began discussions with Bob Pettitt who owned much of the land we now call Jan Juc.

## 1962

From his house at the top of a Jan Juc hill, with magnificent sweeping views over the hills to the waters of Bass Strait, Bob Pettitt watched the development of the Golf Club Syndicate Estate in the fifties. Gravel roads were going in, and slowly houses were appearing. It was not surprising then that at a time when Bob wanted to reduce his work around the farm he became interested in selling his 1000 acres to developers.

## 1983

Since James Gattie Carr first purchased the land of the Jan Juc hills from the Crown over 100 years earlier, farmers such as J.C. Bell, James Noble, Joseph Gundry, William

Pearson, the Paulke family, as well as Bob either owned this land or leased it for grazing.

Bob Pettitt enjoyed his summer holidays in Torquay so much that he bought 1000 acres in Jan Juc during 1937 for £4120. Some of the land had been prospected for oil without success, so the owners wanted to sell it. Over the years, Bob successfully farmed sheep and cattle as well as growing crops on the property.

In 1962, he sold his property to one of Bruce Small's property developing companies – Ocean Boulevard P/L for £100,000. They called the first subdivision the 'Torquay Boulevard' Estate. It contained sites for 265 homes, 15 shops, a supermarket and a proposed baby health centre. Home sites were advertised for sale from £590 to £1350 per block around 1963, a significant increase in the £20 per block of the Torquay Golf Syndicate Estate thirteen years earlier.

Torquay Boulevard, the estate's namesake, ran parallel to the beachfront. The name was later changed to Ocean Boulevard after the company who was developing the estate. The name Torquay Boulevard was given to the road that connected both subdivisions.

The second release of the 'Torquay Boulevard' Estate opened up a further 16 blocks and when these were sold,

the next stage was advertised with a further 228 blocks. By now the price had increased to \$1,600 per block.

Bruce Small became more involved with his Queensland commitments, and consequently he was no longer involved in developing Jan Juc any further.

On 9th February 1963, at the home of Joe Sweeney, a meeting was held that established the Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club. A £10 shed was contemplated to store gear. Generous support enabled the new club to build its first club rooms for the 1964-65 season. This clubhouse was adjacent to the old Cobb & Co. coach road and close by was a 'soak' which was used for watering the Cobb & Co. horses. The clubhouse was opened on 28th February 1965 by the Hon. Hubert Opperman, OBE MHR.

During 1977 the V.A.C.C. Estate had opened up between Bruce Small's second stage of development and Duffields Road. 28 home sites were first released, with a progressive release of sites. The sixth release of 33 home sites was advertised in 1983 for between \$7,000 and \$10,000.

When James G Carr and Elias Harding first purchased the land we now know as Jan Juc in 1857, they certainly would not have imagined 160 years later their land being occupied as it is today. Bob Pettitt and Bruce Small certainly did. 🇺🇸



Image Kerrie Smith



Image Yvonne Sumner

**SEASIDE AUCTION TORQUAY**  
**V.A.C.C. ESTATE 6TH RELEASE**  
**UPSET PRICE**  
**GROUP 1. \$10,000 GROUP 2. \$7,000**  
**33 SPLENDID HOME SITES**  
**ON THE ESTATE IN SEATED MARQUEE**  
**ATURDAY 22nd JANUARY, 1983 at 2.00 p**

**Elders** REALTY (1971) COMMERCIAL REALTY LTD.  
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Image Malcolm Walker



Image Rose Hodge, 1973, from Strathmore Drive

**TORQUAY**  
**Boulevard ESTATE**

**SELLING AGENT: HENRY GORNY**



Image Chris Anderson - taken from Empire Avenue



Image Yvonne Sumner

## SIR BRUCE SMALL



Extracted from **Australian Dictionary of Biography** -

Sir Andrew Bruce Small (1895-1980), was a bicycle manufacturer, land developer and politician. At the age of 24, in 1920, Bruce had saved enough to buy a bicycle shop in Malvern for £200 which he grew into the nationally-renowned Malvern Star Company. At first he manufactured twelve bicycles a week. With the slogan, 'You'd be better on a Malvern Star', the business blossomed, and he formed his first company.



During World War II Small's factories produced bicycles, both for the armed forces and for civilians. Demand surged due to petrol rationing. Malvern Star also made radio-location sets, tubular tent frames and radio-masts for defence purposes.

In his early years, Sir Bruce was also heavily involved with organisations helping the blind, guiding at-risk youth and housing the elderly.

Bruce Small was a millionaire by 1958. He sold his holdings in Allied Bruce Small and moved to the Gold Coast, Queensland. He soon began acquiring and reclaiming land with Paradise City one of his achievements, and locally in Victoria, Jan Juc development another.

Using the slogan 'Think Big, Vote Small', he stood successfully for mayor of the City of the Gold Coast on 29 April 1967. Bruce Small was an immensely popular mayor and was knighted in 1974. His efforts during the disastrous cyclone in June that year, when he marshalled 5000 civilian volunteers and 187 soldiers to fill and place thousands of sandbags along the eroded beach front, won him added support. He became known as 'Boulder Bruce' for his efforts to have permanent rock walls constructed along vulnerable Gold Coast beaches. Determined that the Gold Coast's image as a holiday resort would not suffer as a result of the erosion crisis, he toured Australia in 1968 with a bevy of 'meter maids', clad in gold lamé bikinis.<sup>4</sup> It was about this time that he approached Bob Pettitt, purchased much of his property and subdivided it and released allotments in two stages.



In May 1972, at the age of 76, he won the Legislative Assembly seat of Surfers Paradise for the Country Party before returning to the role of mayor in 1976.

In 1978 Sir Bruce Small fell gravely ill with cancer, and he died on 1 May 1980.

Source: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/small-sir-andrew-bruce-11714>



*Blinkbrae South built in 1937.*

*Photos Pettitt family collection*

# ‘BLINKBRAE SOUTH’

After inheriting the family farm at Bell Post Hill during World War 2, Bob Pettitt decided to sell this land to buy and clear a farm at Jan Juc/ Torquay. It was still the depression, but he could see a future and great investment on the coast.

Living on £2 per week, he and his brothers bought 1000 acres from Rupert Pargeter in 1937 at four pounds, ten shillings an acre.<sup>1</sup> In his memoirs, Bob describes how he sowed down the paddocks with oats and barley as cover crops using eight work-horses. He also moved the stud sheep to this farm which he called ‘Blinkbrae South’ establishing an Aberdeen Angus stud and Corriedale Sheep stud (Flock No. 199). During the war years he ran 400 sheep on the Torquay Golf Links to keep the grass down.

Blinkbrae South, was one of the first two houses built on a hill just outside of Torquay on the south side of The Great Ocean Road. The 1936 – 37 rate book indicates there was no house on the property at the time of purchase. The family believe that Bob purchased the house with the property which was to become his family home with Doris and their two daughters and son. As the family grew so did the house!

Bob describes the farm development as taking five years before the farm was carrying two and a half sheep per acre. He remembers “working very hard and one year I poisoned 3,500 rabbits because Doris got tired of cutting up carrots to feed the rabbits before poisoning them. Foxes were also a problem which had to be dealt with.”

*Blinkbrae South is one of the first two houses built on the southern side of The Great Ocean Road.*

*Next door is ‘The Summer House’ built at the same time by William Pearson. The house is now an accomodation & lifestyle retreat.*



[www.thesummerhousetorquay.com.au](http://www.thesummerhousetorquay.com.au)

An avid researcher of farming techniques, Bob had read a book that stated, ‘black sheep’ were a good judge of mineral deficiency so he purchased three, and put them in a paddock for three months where he had used copper and cobalt. Their wool became as ‘black as pitch’. The shearers were astounded at the colour of the coats. Bob left them in the paddock for six months before moving them into a paddock where no minerals had been used. Their coats became half black and half brown proving cobalt and copper was needed for the best wool so he put the minerals in every paddock along with some salt blocks. The Department of Agriculture became very interested in the result of his work and visited the farm taking photos and notes which were written up in Agricultural journals.

The 1940 bushfire, started by a Moriac train, which wiped out much of Torquay, also hit the farm. Bob says “I was left with 1000 acres, no fences, a house and Doris! It was a hard battle but we won out.”

During the late 1940s Bob was leasing about 500 acres from “Old man Paulke”. He had leased the land for about ten years before deciding to buy it. During the purchase process, it was revealed that Ern Wood, ex-army, under the soldier settlement scheme could purchase the property. Consequently, Bob continued to lease the land for a further five years. During this time “Old man Paulke” died and his son Charlie took over the lease at the end of the five years. Bob decided to purchase Charlie’s sister’s 270 acres. Charlie negotiated on her behalf and they agreed

to £40 per acre. Before anything was signed Charlie went to his agent (Dennys Lascelles) and they advised him to auction the land thinking that it would bring more. When Bob found out, he was annoyed but determined to purchase the property. At the sale Bob sat with his friends Frank Piper and Vic Gross. They had taken a young lad from the Dalgety’s wool room and sat him on the other side of the room. Bob didn’t want to do any bidding himself so he organized the young man to bid for him on a set of signals – every time Bob scratched his head the young man was to bid. Vic Gross was also bidding, but unbeknown to everyone, it was also for Bob. Under Bob’s instructions – by not scratching his head – the young man stopped bidding at £32 and Vic was the next best bid at £32/10s. Charlie and his agents were shocked and devastated. They pursued Vic to encourage him to purchase the land at £40 but Vic insisted the bid was £32/10s and that was all he was going to pay. After much discussion Bob was called into the negotiation at which time Charlie realized what had gone on. Bob apologised to him for the way it was done. The Dennys Lascelles manager agreed everything was ‘above board’ so Bob wrote the cheque for the deposit.

In the early sixties Bob bought his brothers’ shares of the Jan Juc property, later selling it all for £100,000 to Bruce Small, a Property Developer. Bob moved to 272 acres of land in Grossman’s Road, and Jan Juc went on to grow just as he had predicted. 🏡



# BOB PETTITT

By Bob Pettitt



## THE MAN WHO OWNED JAN JUC

Bob Pettitt spent years working on his Jan Juc farm which is now covered with houses. From the late 1930s to early 1960s Bob farmed almost 2000 acres stretching from Bells Beach to the Torquay Golf Club.

Robert (Bob) Pettitt was one of six children born to John Pettitt and Marianne Hope Houston. He was born on a 40-acre farm, at Bell Post Hill called 'Blinkbrae'. The family would work their farm all year then escape to Torquay for the summer holidays.

**Bob wrote his own story for his family which they have shared with us....**

I was born on the 29th May 1913 in Geelong. I remember the nurse carrying me to my dad and saying, "It's a boy!".

My father John Pettitt was a timber merchant owning a sawmill at Weepoina and one in Tasmania. He also owned a sloop called the 'Cathcart' which was used to transport timber from Tasmania to Geelong. On one trip, the boat was caught in a gale in Bass Strait making land at Sydney where the crew walked off. Dad had to hire a new crew to bring the 'Cathcart' back to Geelong.

I attended the local school before moving to Geelong College from 1922 to 1929. My three brothers John Alexander 'Ian' Pettitt (1910-1977), James Wilson Pettitt BEM (1914-2007), and Neil Houston Pettitt (1916-1991) also attended the College. While at Geelong College I did well at athletics. I won a race and got ten shillings to which I added another ten shillings and bought a watch. I still have it in a tin, and it is still going well. I later won the cup twice for running in the 100 and 200-yard events, the long jump and the high jump. One of my highlights was running on the MCC sports ground.

I topped the bookkeeping class and mum said, "That's good, you can go help your father in town." I was the bottom of the class after that as I wanted to go on the land. The Master could not understand it at all. While at school I got up to plenty of antics. I would take letters from the Geelong College boarders to girls at Morongo who would meet me down by the fence. I think these letters were from girlfriends and not from sisters as I was told. I would ride

cow down there so that we could have fresh milk. During this time dad also bought the land south of Two Bays to the corner, up Price Street and along Pride Street to the house next to the Scammell, it was covered in wattle about 20ft high and 6ins thick. He also bought the land above Taylor Park up to Rice's wood yard, later subdividing it into Puebla and Spring streets. In 1950, I sold these blocks for mother at \$50 per block.

Dad also bought the old Presbyterian Church. He and Carl Voss rolled it on planks down to Pride Street where he added three bedrooms and called it "Kirklands".

Living and working on the family farm 'Blinkbrae' at Bell Post Hill on the outskirts of Geelong, I learnt to be a wool classer. I studied Wool Classing for two years before working on the family farm shearing and classing. During the depression years, we milked 80 cows by hand with the help of two boys. We paid them 10 shillings plus keep per week. Later we put in milking machines and had a milk round in town.

I met Doris in 1929 and after that went to her place for tea every Saturday night. I bought 1000 acres of land at Jan Juc in 1937 and married Doris the following year. Our 50-year wedding anniversary was a lavish affair, about 100 people celebrated the occasion at the Torquay Bowls Club. Peacocks and pheasants were running around the place and a pond full of Gold Fish for the occasion.

Doris and I had three children, Glad, Alan and Heather with all three attending Torquay State School before the girls transferred to Morongo and Alan to Geelong College.

For sixty years Doris was busy with the local guild and the Geelong Show (Homecrafts section).

The war broke out and Jim my younger brother tried to enlist but he told them he worked on the farm. If you worked the land you couldn't enlist. My older brother went in the next day and told the recruiting officer he was unemployed so they accepted him. I had to run the farm and farm production for the army. I leased 500 acres from Paulke, 400 acres from Spittle and 400 acres from Baensch to run sheep and cattle. I was also made Fire Captain because the local businessmen had enlisted in the army. During 1940 a fire wiped out half of Torquay. Could it have been prevented? Two bushmen, Baensch and Gogoll were backburning along the road on the west side of Geelong Road. Halfway along they were stopped by the Police, who at the time were posted in Barwon Heads. The result was that half of Torquay was saved, the other half burnt out.



my horse to school, so I always had a big box for chaff. Inside the box were always mice too. I had a reputation for taking a mouse into the classroom and letting it go causing everyone to throw a book at it. The last day I was at school, as usual making a noise, the Master asked what the matter was and I replied that someone had taken my mouse tin. I was sent to the Headmaster, but I never made it - I left school leaving all my books etc. behind. I was 15 years old.

Dad bought the bungalow on the corner of Anderson Street and The Esplanade in 1920 from Dr. Marwood. It was here that the family holidayed every year. We spent many happy Christmas holidays there. We would take our own

Eighty houses, the Hall and the Sunday School. Had they been left alone the whole of Torquay would have been saved. The aftermath was that the Fire Brigade Captain was given authority over the Police. The new Fire Brigade tried to be more proactive after the fire, and was burning a break around Torquay when the police threatened to arrest me for lighting the fire break. I rang the Chief in Melbourne who told me to put the hose in his car and blow the whistle twice, which meant water. No more was heard of the matter! The Fire Board in Melbourne got us a Tower and Bell to put up in the town. By this time the army had taken over the town, setting up camp near Point Danger where a gun had been placed. The Army Captain took the bell and erected it on the beach where the sand dulled the sound. I rang the Fire Brigade Chief who said, "meet me tomorrow at 1 pm in full uniform." The Chief arrived with a driver and told me to get the Army Captain, which I did after a lot of convincing. The result was they returned the bell and the Army helped us erect the tower.



Sydney Show 1962 courtesy Geelong Wool Museum

In my roles, I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to Prince Charles, looking after the Governor General and his wife, as well as entertaining the Victorian Governor.

I was on the Barrabool Shire Council for 27 years, appointed President on six occasions. While President, Rip Curl (Surf Gear) wanted to move to the Gold Coast. I had meetings with the Rip Curl owner and the landowners to keep the company at Torquay. Rip Curl started in Jan Juc in an old shed out in the bush with two 44-gallon drums of chemicals. The fire brigade was concerned about the drums, so we as a Council went up to see them and told them it was unsafe resulting in them moving to a house in Torquay.

While I was President of the Barrabool Shire Council, the

Torquay/Jan Juc residents wanted to start a surf club and were looking for names. I suggested that it be called the Jan Juc Surf Club which resulted in the whole area being called Jan Juc.

Editor Note: Bob's natural interest in Corriedale breeding led him to become a well-respected leader among Corriedale stud breeders in Australia as well as overseas. He was the export director for the Australian Corriedale Association and became president of both the Victorian and Australian Corriedale Sheep Associations. He was also Life Governor of the Royal Agricultural Society, its president for 14 years as well as being a staunch member of the Geelong Agricultural and Pastoral Society. Bob excelled in administration and with his wife Doris, became a famous ambassador for Corriedales Australia wide, in New Zealand and also South America.

He was an active community member across a wide range of interests and holding Life Membership of the Coast Tennis Association; Torquay Community Centre; Torquay Fire Brigade; Torquay Bowls Club; Victorian Corriedale Association; Australian Corriedale Association; Geelong Agricultural & Pastoral Society (President 14 years); Royal Melbourne Agricultural Society and The Australian Sheep Breeders Association.

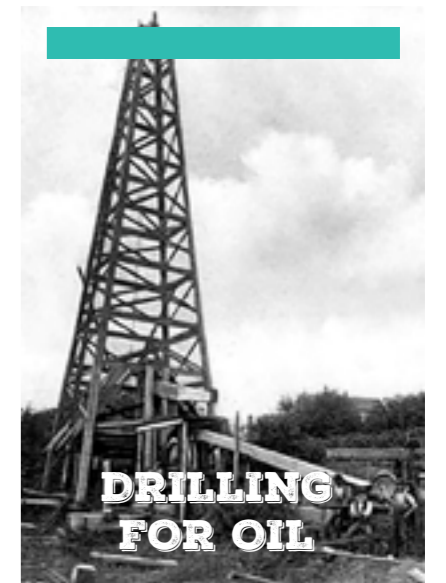
He was a committee member of the Belmont Rotary Club; Torquay Sewerage Authority; Torquay Senior Citizens Club; South Barwon Care for the Aged; Geelong Hospital Board, Geelong Regional Planning Committee.

Farmer, local government councillor for twenty-seven years and six times Shire

President of Barrabool Shire 'Bob' Pettitt was awarded an MBE for his work in rural and municipal affairs in December 1980. He also held the Paul Harris Fellow Award (the highest Rotary Award) for his work with Belmont Rotary and was Patron of the Australian Corriedale Association.

Bob Pettitt Park in Jan Juc is named after him. The reserve has a pavilion, soccer pitch, cricket nets, oval, tennis courts, playground, half-basketball court, barbecues and a skate park. 🇺🇸

# DEAKIN UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



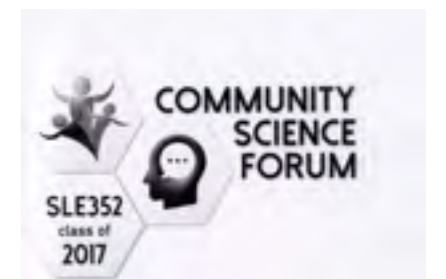
During the year we joined with Deakin University in their practical training program for Bachelor of Science students participating in the Community Science Project. Our authentic projects were Drilling for Oil and Before the Flush, both of which will be published in future magazines.

This week they successfully showcased the outcome of their projects to their fellow students, lecturers and community partners during the Community Science Forum. Working as part of a team, students applied scientific knowledge, processes and techniques to communicate the value of science and develop an outcome of value to their community group partner. The next step for our six students will be for them to publish their research in future editions of HISTORY MATTERS.

Daniel Granville and Henry Hall researched the Drilling for Oil that occurred in the Jan Juc area during the 1920s and later in the 1960s.

Darcy Beveridge, James Campbell, Paige Watts and Stephanie Cooper researched the effects of dumping on Grass Tree Park had on its vegetation. Their project was called Before the Flush.

Well done to all of them. 🇺🇸



# LIGHT HORSE CHARGE INTO HISTORY

◀◀ CHERYL BAULCH ▶▶

Photos Australian War Museum

*31<sup>st</sup> October, 1917*

The main conflict throughout the Great War was on the Western Front. However, the Middle East was of critical importance.

In 1915, the Turkish Ottoman empire still extended into the Middle East. As a German ally, Turkey threatened the Suez Canal, a vital shipping link.

As the Australians began arriving in Egypt for training early in 1915 the Turks had already started their attempts to seize the canal. The British needed to secure the canal and capture the Turkish-held Sinai Peninsula. The Australian Light Horse Brigade played a crucial role in this campaign.

Most of the Light Horsemen were from farms and the outback. Their horsemanship was unparalleled. Walers were their mounts – a unique Australian breed, a mix of wild station horses and pedigree thoroughbreds, light but built for endurance. The Light Horse epitomised the Australian soldier – strong, resourceful, exuberant to the point of unruliness but with courage and loyalty beyond doubt.



By early 1916, Light Horse survivors who had served in the bloodbath of Gallipoli were back in Egypt and back on their horses. The Light Horse, combined with the Imperial Camel Corps to become the Desert Mounted Corps. Together they played a significant role in capturing towns. The Desert Mounted Corps crossed the Suez Canal and entered the

Sinai Peninsula as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force beginning their slow but steady push across the Sinai up through Palestine and onto Jerusalem and Damascus to drive the Turks out.

When Rafa was occupied in January 1917, and further small garrisons taken, the Sinai was in British hands, a springboard for the invasion of Palestine.

The invasion did not start well with poor judgment and planning hindering the early campaign. The Turkish line, anchored on Gaza in the west, extended to Beersheba in the east. Garrisoned by some 4000 men, Gaza was the key to the Turkish position.

After a couple of failed attempts to take Gaza, attention was



1917 - A regiment of the Australian Light Horse on the march through Jerusalem. More than 1250 Australians lost their lives in the Sinai-Palestine Campaign between 1916 and 1918.



1917 - Members of the 4th Australian Light Horse (4ALH) Regiment crossing a dusty stretch.

focused on Beersheba. It was here that the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade rode into history with their famous charge.

The 4th Light Horse Regiment was part of The Desert Mounted Corps which moved out from Tel el Fara on October 28 with rations and fodder for three days. The attack was launched on October 31, 1917. Privates Wallace Findlay (Anglesea), Harry Trigg (Bambra), Philip Quinn (Winchelsea), John Gaylor (Winchelsea), Leslie Ameit (Winchelsea) and Ernest Cork (Barabool) were waiting in the heat of the wadi. They had been without water for nearly two days. Thirsty, and with parched lips, little did they know they were about to ride into history. British troops had



Beersheba! Each man knew what to do – charge forward, attack and capture the town intact.

The line of cavalry stretched almost 1km across the skyline. At the order, the two regiments—the 4th on the right and 12th on the left—walked off the ridge and down onto the plain. They rode in three successive lines, 300 yards apart. Each man was ordered to ride with drawn bayonet—with its gleaming 18-inch blade it closely resembled a short sword. Almost immediately Ptes Findlay, Trigg, Quinn, Gaylor, Cork and the other “men spurred their mounts into a trot, then a canter and finally a gallop, shouting at the top of their lungs and waving their bayonets overhead,” wrote official historian, Charles Bean. At the back was Pte. Leslie Ameit’s



been attacking Beersheba without success. The Australian Light Horse Brigade was ordered to attack Beersheba. With no time to plan and little support, the feat seemed impossible. However, the element of surprise was on their side. The Light Horse wasn’t designed (or equipped) for the mission they were soon about to undertake. The cavalry was brilliant in getting soldiers from place to place quickly, but there was no fighting on horseback. Usually, the Light Horsemen would ride to the scene, get off their horse, and fight as regular infantry.

Speed was vital. The town had to be taken before the Turks could destroy the town’s vital water supplies - nineteen full-functioning water wells.

Late in the afternoon, the battle was at a crucial stage with darkness not far away. At 4.40 pm, 800 Light Horsemen mounted up looked out at the four miles of wide-open terrain to the imposing walls of the desert fortress of

MG Squadron. The charge startled the Turkish gunners who opened up with artillery fire but could not depress their guns rapidly enough to keep up with the pace of the charge. Within minutes the Australians reached the trenches, at which point much hand-to-hand fighting took place, while many troopers merely jumped the defences and galloped into the town. Panic took hold among the enemy, and their resistance quickly crumbled. Many tried to run and were overcome by those who leapt from their horses and attacked the Turks with bayonets and revolvers.

There were early casualties, but all Surf Coast locals were unscathed. By day’s end, 32 men had been killed, 36 wounded and 70 horses died to seize 17 of the 19 wells intact. These men took a seemingly foolhardy suicide attack and turned it into the last great cavalry charge in history. The charge is entrenched in the Australian character, along with Gallipoli and the Kokoda Track.

The capture of the town of Beersheba altered the course of the war. The 4th Light Horse Brigade victory was a decisive factor in the battle for Gaza and helped lay the groundwork for Allenby’s victorious entry into Jerusalem less than two months later.

#### OTHER LIGHT HORSEMEN OF THE SHIRE.

Across the Shire there are 55 who served with the Australian Light Horse Corps, of these, 20 were with the 4th Light Horse Regiment. However, only six participated in the charge. Sgt Charles Murray Storrer (Torquay Avenue of Honour) died in Gallipoli. Others such as 2/Lieut Norman Hunt (Anglesea), Lieut Ernest Mountjoy (Lorne), Sgt Albert Box (Deans Marsh), L/ Corp Thomas Macfarlane (Torquay), Sgt Herbert Marendaz (Waurm Ponds) and Corp Charles Lawry (Barwon) had returned to Australia before the Gaza campaign. Lieut James Munday (Torquay Avenue of Honour), son of James Munday (whom Munday Street is named after), had been transferred a week earlier for training school. David Ellis, Charles Trewin, Robert Bennett, James Cooper, William Baird had transferred to other units before the Palestine offensive, and trooper Joseph Murphy (Winchelsea) had come down with malaria. He was admitted to hospital a few weeks earlier.

#### SOURCES:

The Light Horse Takes Beersheba | Historynet, <http://www.historynet.com/the-light-horse-takes-beersheba.htm> (accessed September 07, 2017).

Inside History Magazine | The Beersheba Chargers By Neil Smith, <http://www.insidehistory.com.au/2013/04/the-beersheba-chargers-by-neil-smith/> (accessed 7 September 2017).

<https://togethertheyeserved.com/> (accessed 7 September 2017)

**HISTORY WEEK**  
October 15 - 22

**NEIGHBOURS  
EXHIBITION**

[www.torquayhistory.com/](http://www.torquayhistory.com/)  
in conjunction with  
Facebook “Humans of Torquay”

**2017**

# REMEMBERING SONNY

← CHRIS BARR →

**HAROLD BELL (1891 - 1917)**



Harold George Bell, always known to his family as Sonny, was born on July 25th 1891, when his parents, John Calvert Bell and Frances Bell were living at Calder Park, Mt Duneed. A fourth sister, Mary Kathleen, arrived when he was three.

After the death of his wife in 1900, John Calvert bought the Addiscot Estate at Bells Beach and settled his family there. The Bell children had an idyllic childhood exploring the beaches and the bush around their home. They would ride their ponies along the cliff tops and through the bush, and swim at Southside where the family had a bathing box, and picnic at Point Addis.

After schooling, Sonny started work on family stations around Victoria and in New South Wales. In 1915 when the Anzacs landed at Gallipoli, Sonny was working as an overseer on a property called "Moronga" in NSW, and shortly after he enlisted

and swore to serve his Sovereign Lord and King until the end of the war. Like most young Australians, he thought this would be a great adventure, as indications were the war would not be a long one, and he would be home in a matter of months.

In March 1916, the Australian Government formed the Third Division and Harold was attached to this new division whose commander for most of its war service was Major General John Monash. Sonny was 24 years old when, in April 1916, he left Australia with the 3rd/ 8th field infantry and landed in Plymouth. He commenced further training at the Military Training Camp at Swanage.

Letters to his father tell of his voyage and his introduction to the European war.

*My Dear Dad*

*We left Cape Town bound for Minello, St Vincents Isle, Cape Verde Island off the West coast of Africa with other troop ships. We had a run of fifteen days this time seeing nothing but open sea all the time. One of our lads died between these two ports of Pneumonia and he was buried at sea. Poor chap, it was a very lonely burial at eight o'clock at night.....We arrived at Plymouth on the 18th and four destroyers met us and escorted us safely into Plymouth.*

Harold wrote many letters to his father, sisters and grandmother during his training and from the front. These letters give a great insight into his life at the time and they were full of optimism, despite his homesickness.

*My Dear Nan,*

*Well we have changed our Camp again and have shifted to the above address, it's not a bad Camp at all, the meals are pretty fair and the Camp is right near town and we can go down anytime after work but must be back in time for roll call at 10 pm.*

His letters always asking them not to worry about him, despite the fact that the casualty lists were growing and war showed no signs of ending.

*My dear Dad*

*Well I am keeping fine and am in the best of spirits but feel work and the long hours pretty tiring....., don't worry about me for a second as everything will turn out alright.*

He wrote to his sisters Clara and Naomi in July 1916, telling them about the welcome he received when his third battalion arrived at the Swanage Camp:

*Dear Clara and Mid.*

*We are the first Australians to be trained in this camp. The people gave us a great welcome when we arrived they had a band marching in front of us from the station to the camp. The civilians followed us nearly all the way.*

He also mentioned how everything looked so different to Australia with lush green meadows, wistfully hoping the war would soon be over so he could have a good look around.

*There is a nice little esplanade walk right along the shore, the people go down there in droves in the evenings, they do a lot of mixed bathing. The beach is lined with little transportable bathing boxes and they like to take a dip before 8 pm, after which mixed bathing is prohibited.*

Harold turned 25 when at his training camp and arranged to have some photographs taken of him in his uniform and with his mates to send home to his family. Although his enlistment papers show he was a single man in one poignant letter he asked his father to pass on a photograph to a Miss M Mc Gregor of Bells Grove, Wentworth, Sydney. He added he hoped to be home for his next birthday.

On his first leave Sonny went up to London. Despite the war, the wonders of the big city were not lost on him and he wrote to his grandmother that he had plans for some

travel when the war was over.

*Grandma*

*I would like to have about six months to myself and a little cash and one could have a lovely time here sightseeing.*

*By late September Harold had been moved to Lark Hill where it was bitterly cold. He was stationed with Canadian troops who were more used to the cold and the soldiers enjoyed snowball fights.*

*It is bitterly cold here and since we got here we have had wind and rain nearly every day and our boys feel it very much. If it gets much colder here it will commence to play up with some of us.*



In fact, the English weather took its toll on Sonny and he was hospitalised for two weeks with influenza and bronchitis. The issue of 'straw hippers' to sleep on and woollen gloves were some help.

By late 1916 Sonny was finishing up with his training and wrote to Naomi that:

*I am keeping fine and glad to have seen a little of the "home country" but hoping to see a little bit of France and perhaps with a bit of luck a bit of Germany too.*

He signed off always sending love to all at Addiscot.

*My dear Nan*

*Give my best love and wishes to all at home. With best love to Dad and self also Clara, Queenie, Girlie and Mid when speaking to them.*

*I remain dear Nan*

*Yours lovingly*

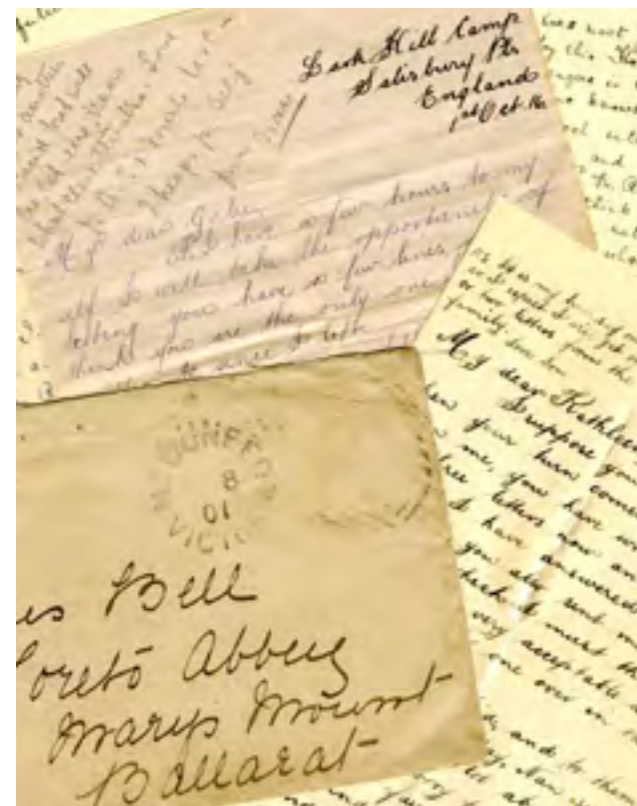
*Harlod G B*

In October, 1916 the Third Division was part of a fine turnout at Salisbury plains for an inspection by the King. Harold, a driver, was now a driver attached to a Howitzer battery. Knowing his departure was eminent, Sonny registered the only blemish on his military record when he went AWOL for 14 hours. For this he was docked two day's pay.

By late November, Harold was ready to leave for the front he wrote to his father:

*My Dear Dad*

*A lot of the third division have gone across to France. Practically all of the infantry has gone and some of the Artillery I think we will be leaving by Christmas.*



On December 31st 1916 the third division moved to France, becoming the last division to do so, taking over part of the "nursery" sector near Armentieres. Through 1917, Harold, now attached to the 11th field artillery, was involved in the battle of Bullecourt in France. In June, his battalion fought in the Battle of Messines in Belgium. The attack on the village of Messines was precipitated by the detonation of 19 enormous mines under the German front. The Germans aware of the planned attack, shelled the woods with gas causing up to 2000 casualties. Harold's 11th battalion was the divisional reserve at Messine, and he wrote home shortly after the battle

*My dear Dad*

*Nan seems to be worrying a lot about me she need not worry for a minute as I am a fair distance behind the line and only go up there now and again, so I am pretty safe compared to some of the poor chaps who practically live in the line.*

Following the success of Messines, the British Commander-In-Chief, Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig, launched a long-planned offensive from Ypres attempting to drive the Germans from the surrounding ridges. He unleashed this attack called Passchendaele on July 31st 1917. Harold was involved in the battle of Broodseinde Ridge in early October. The constant shelling having put an end to the drainage of the lowlands of Belgium and the soldiers were constantly in the deep cold mud. Harold wrote thanking his sister

*My Dear Kathleen,*

*Thank you for your letters and you also sent me some socks for which I must thank you, they are very acceptable articles of clothing for one over in these parts.*

The Battle of Menin Road was an offensive operation, part of the Third Battle of Ypres on the Western Front, an attempt to take sections of the curving ridge, east of Ypres, which the Menin Road crossed. The advancing troops had to overcome formidable entrenched German defensive positions and also resist fierce German counter-attacks.

At midnight on October 5th, in very heavy rain, which reduced the ground to a sea of mud, the 11th Field artillery launched a surprise attack and caught the enemy off guard. They suffered heavy casualties. The intelligence dairies of the time say, 'The Hun made a few feeble counter attacks which were easily repulsed', but the battle continued for several days with the Australians under constant shelling.

The war dairies say the drivers experienced great difficulty bringing up ammunition; the men and horses badly required a rest. When ordered to advance, and with superhuman effort some men got to new positions only to be bogged in the mud. Despite it being described as almost hopeless to get them out, the dairies continue "Our boys are determined to do so and will." During heavy shelling on the morning of October 8th 1917, Harold George Bell was hit by a shell near Chateau Wood. Red Cross reports tell us that while trying to dress his wounds he was hit by a second shell and killed. He was buried where he fell and a small cross erected. Later the burial site was shelled and his body was never recovered.



In 1927 the Belgium people rebuilt the Menin Gate as a memorial to the missing soldiers who passed through it during the war years. There are 55,000 names inscribed on the gate, and 6000 are Australian. Harold George Bell's name is on panel 7 under an inscription that says

"Here are recorded names of officers and men who fell in Ypres Salient, but to whom the fortune of war denied the known and honoured burial given to their comrades in death".

From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 enlisted of whom more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner

The family at Bells Beach were broken-hearted when told that Harold had been killed. His father wrote many letters to military authorities for the next three years trying to find where his son was buried. He was asking for copies of cemetery records and requesting his medals. It was exceedingly difficult for families in Australia losing a loved one so far away.



DRIVER		
	BELL H. G.	HE
	CAMPBELL L. G.	SM
	CARDWELL P. J.	SO
	COMERFORD H. M.	TU
	COWIN N. C.	WA
	DUFF D. E.	
	HAVEY E.	
	HEFFERNAN T. G.	
	HUDSON T. F.	
	ISLES W.	
	JEBB W. J.	L
	KEARNEY P. J.	WA
	LIVERS W. V.	
	LYNCH L. C.	CO
	MCCOLGAN W.	HA
	MCKEON E. J.	
	MACLEOD S. M.	CO
	MASLIN E. J.	SM
	MONCRIEFF H. J.	
	MURPHY M.	
	PAGE P.	
	PATERSON I.	CA

Almost 77,000 Australians were killed, missing or wounded in 1917.

Sunday October 8th will be the centenary of Harold George Bell's death.

[Lest We Forget.](#)

# MOUNT DUNEED

## WILLIAM UNDERWOOD



1851  
1891

Contributed by Gwen Threlfall  
Mt. Duneed History Group

A subgroup of the Mount Duneed Progress Association

History meetings are at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of February, April, June, August, October and December.

<http://mdpa.weebly.com/blog>

On Saturday 3 October, 1891 the Geelong Advertiser reported the following news:

"The relentless reaper so busy of late has removed from our midst another very old colonist in the person of Mr William Underwood, of Connewarre, who died yesterday at the advanced age of 80 years. Deceased, who has been for fully 40 years a resident of this district, was a pioneer of pluck and endurance, and was one of the first who had the hardihood to essay the difficult and dangerous overland journey from Sydney to Geelong. He settled down in this district as a grazier, and continued his calling with success for a great number of years. In the progress of the district he took a deep interest, and took a prominent part in municipal government, having been a member of the old Connewarre road board, and later of the South Barwon shire council, with which he was identified until four or five years ago. He was a zealous member and committeeman of the Geelong Agricultural Society, and until his health became seriously impaired a couple of years ago, he was never to be missed from the annual shows of the society. The picture of health and robust manhood in his prime, he continued hale and hearty until seized with an attack of paralysis, since which he has been an invalid. His death has been expected daily during several months, and the final event is therefore not a surprise to his friends. He leaves a widow and grown-up family."



The land belonging to William Underwood which was at the auction on 14 March 1907 stretched from Breamlea Road and Shaws Lane in the west to the lake and from Belchers Road in the north to Bluestone School Road in the south. Barwon Heads Road ran through the farm. The Connewarre Presbyterian Church was built in 1916 on the south-western corner of allotment G section XII on land donated by David Polly.

William Underwood was one of the earliest settlers in the district, coming to Geelong in 1836. He was born on 10 August, 1815 in Launceston to convict parents William Underwood and Catherine Lynch. He married Sarah Isabella née Robinson in 1854. Their children were:

- William — born 1855, died 1858
- Christopher — born 1855, died 1941
- Sarah Isabella — born 1858, died 1943
- William — born 1860, died 1937 Colac
- Thomas Robinson — born 1861, died 1915
- Catherine — born 1864, died 1866
- Catherine — born 1866, died 1938
- James — born 1868, died 1876

William purchased crown land in Connewarre which he farmed for 40 years until he died on 2 October 1891 aged 80 years. He added to his initial acquisition as land became available, owning 855 acres when he died. His estate was valued at £5190 which was left to his wife, Sarah, for life and at her death to his children equally. Sarah died on 20 January, 1907 at the age of 82. His farm "Oaklands", was sold on 14 March 1907 for £6,000.

William and Sarah were buried together in the Church of England section of the Geelong Eastern Cemetery. [View on map](#)



# TOWN TALK

## SHOUTS & MURMURS DURING 1800s

### IN THE GEELONG ADVERTISER

#### TORQUAY

Some weeks since a petition was signed by a number of residents of and visitors to Torquay asking for the construction of a jetty on that coast. It was presented to the Public Works Department, and through the action taken by Mr Levien, M.L.A., an officer was sent to Spring Creek to make a report as to the feasibility of the work, and the estimated cost of constructing the jetty. The place surveyed and sounded is on the coastline immediately east of the Pioneer Coffee Palace, in the most protected part of Zeeley [sic] Bay. 27/2/1893

#### JAN JUC

Mr. J. C. Bell, of Addiscot, has suffered considerable annoyance through the visits of honey hunters. On Saturday he found that one of the most valuable ironbark trees on his property had been sawn through with a crosscut saw. The tree was 3ft. 6in. across the stump. In future trespassers are to be prosecuted. 29/4/1918

#### CONNEWARRE

The weather has been very rough and cold for several days, but the rainfall has been very welcome. It amounted to over one inch, which was very much needed for the grass, which was turning brown, and for the germination of the sown seed. Farmers are busy at seeding operations. Not so much as usual is being sown here. The larger landowners are stocking more sheep, which means less expenditure than cultivation and is probably just as profitable, as wool values have been and are expected to remain high. 16/5/1928

#### MT. DUNEED

The scholars of St. Wilfrid's Sunday School sprung a surprise upon their teachers recently. One Sunday afternoon before the close of the school the Vicar (Rev. R. H. B. Williams) presented each teacher with a book subscribed for by the scholars. In making the presentation the Vicar referred to the spirit prompting the scholars to act in such a way, showing how well it reflected the enthusiasm of the teachers themselves. Mr. J. Rainford (superintendent) responded on behalf of the teachers, thanking the scholars for the interest they always displayed in their work. The teachers in the school are Mr. J. Rainford, Miss Rainford, Miss Lamond, Miss A. Lamond and Miss White, whilst during the absence of any teacher Miss Stewart is always ready to fill the vacancy. 4/2/1914

#### BREAM CREEK

On Sunday last the flood waters in Bream Creek began to cut their way through the bar at the mouth of the creek, and in a few hours there was a deep and wide channel through which the waters rushed with tremendous force, giving the creek a thorough cleansing. It is expected that excellent angling will be obtainable as soon as the water settles a little. 2/8/1905

# EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

## A NAME PLAQUE OF INTEREST

contributed by Carolyn Williams



In 1979 we moved into our newly completed house in Torquay. Friends, whose property is on Thompsons Creek at Freshwater Creek, were excavating to build sheds and uncovered an old brass plaque with name Williams engraved on it. They presented us with the plaque for our new home. We could only surmise how it came to be there and knowing that Williams Road was named for a farmer in the district we presumed that there could be a connection.

Joseph Williams and his wife Hannah and their two sons George and James together with their niece Elizabeth Frear arrived in Melbourne by the sailing ship Lochiel in 1853. They erected a cottage at Summerhill Mt Duneed in 1854. The prefabricated iron cottage was a rare example of a two-room prefabricated iron cottage. They lived in the iron cottage with its rounded roof, until a weatherboard house consisting of four rooms was erected in 1860 with further additions in the 1870s. Joseph Williams died in 1892 and his wife Hannah died in 1863. They are both buried at the Mount Duneed Cemetery.

Williams Road was named after their son George Williams (1836-1919) who lived at Summerhill with the exception of ten years, which were spent in Melbourne working for the Geological Department. For many years, he was engineer and secretary for the Shire of Barrabool. He was active in church affairs as a trustee, class leader and steward of the Methodist church of Mount Duneed. He and his wife Elizabeth Frear had two sons and three daughters.

Summerhill is at 155 Mt Duneed Road and approximately 5 km from where the plaque was found.

In January 1944 fires swept across Mt Duneed with a number of homes destroyed that included the Williams property Summerhill. It was thought that the plaque could be a relic of the fires. However it was not found in proximity to Summerhill. Also it is not known what other properties the descendants of the Williams family may have owned at Freshwater Creek. Perhaps readers of History Matters can solve the origin of our house plaque.



Reference  
Mt Duneed History Group. <http://mdpa.weebly.com/history>.

*Do you have a favourite image you would like to share with our readers? We would love to hear from you. Email a high quality scan and the history behind the picture to [tmuseumwithoutwalls@gmail.com](mailto:tmuseumwithoutwalls@gmail.com) and we will publish it here. If you don't have a scanner, let us know and we will visit with a scanner to help you.*



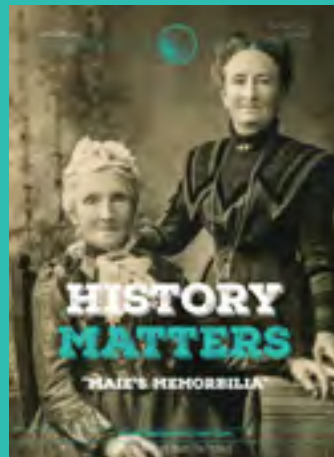


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