

‘White Cliffs’

Journal of

THE RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July-August-September

2015

President: Prue Found 5985 5767

Secretary: Pauline Powell 5985 2797

Treasurer: Danny Jennings 5985 2231

PO Box 65 Rye 3941

<http://ryehistoricalsociety.weebly.com> index.html

Meetings – 8pm, Fourth Monday of each month

Rye Primary School Library

Visitors welcome. Enter from Collingwood Street



George (Dod) Jennings. Page 6

Almost two years after seeking advice from the Shire heritage advisor and a heritage architect regarding the state of the old schoolhouse, we will finally see some action. The repair work to the areas of most concern, being the cracked window lintels, will be done in the September school holidays. This has been a complicated issue as the building is leased by the Society from the Education Department, but the maintenance of the building is the responsibility of the Society. We have tried all avenues seeking support from the Education Department, but they have much greater problems to deal with it seems. This has been a frustrating process, but we are very determined to save one of the few remaining buildings of historical significance in Rye.

In May, we celebrated fifteen years since the Society was formed. I believe we have achieved a great deal in that time, mainly due to the commitment of our members to assist in whatever ways they can. We must all continue to promote the Society in the wider community, as our future depends on our members. We hope that new members will become involved in the many and varied jobs that need to be done. There is something for everyone! We continue to enjoy the planned guest speakers, social gatherings and outings, and I encourage all members to join us over the coming months.

Prue Found

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Nominations and subscriptions Nomination forms for Committee are enclosed with this newsletter and should be lodged with the secretary Pauline Powell by the 17th August. Also enclosed are renewal of Membership slips for the year 2015-2016. Fees are Family \$25, Single \$15. Please remit all subs to the secretary or personally to treasurer Danny Jennings.

Annual General Meeting and Bring a Treasure The AGM will be held on Monday 24th August. After the meeting instead of a guest speaker we will have our annual **Bring A Treasure** evening. Bring along one of your special treasures and tell us the story about how it came into your possession.

Street Stalls The Society has decided to hold several street stalls instead of our usual Rye foreshore market stall. The first will be held on Saturday 31st October. More details at future general meetings.

MP National Trust's 30th Anniversary. Among the 75 guests all of the eight Historical Societies on the MP Peninsula had invited representatives at Beleura on 25 June. Gathering in the reception room the occasion was celebrated by various speakers - the Mayor Cr Bev Colomb, National Trust (Vic) CEO Martin Parslow, MP Branch Chair Judy Walsh, Anthony Knight of Beleura, with the speech then toast to the branch delivered by Simon Molesworth AO, Chairman of the Executive Board of the International National Trusts Organisation. A delicious finger food lunch in the Beleura tradition was served after which all were invited to the Tallis Room to witness a recital by the world renowned Australian pianist Alan Kogasowski, after which he accompanied singer Galit Klas. A truly memorable day.



Pictured above at Nat. Trust 30th Anniversary. Joy Kitch (Nepean HS), Shirley Davies, Rita Cooper (Hastings-Western Port HS), Prue Found, Pauline Powell (Rye HS), Val Wilson (Mornington & District HS)

Nell Arnold Pictured right is the plaque that our Society has had installed on the Memorial Board at the Rye Cemetery. Nell was a foundation member of the Rye Historical Society. She first came to Rye in 1921. She attended Rye Primary School and amongst the first group to move to the new school that is now the home of the Society.



Rye and Nepean Historical Societies Mid-Year Luncheon 3rd July

The guest speaker was Professor Simon Molesworth, who is one of Australia's leading environmental lawyers. He spoke about the National Trust Movement. The illustrated talk outlined the National Trusts that exist throughout the world and the difficulties experienced in raising funds. He outlined the variations that exist from country to country in what is considered an item worthy of preservation and emphasized that it was vital to embrace the young to ensure continuity. Finally he raised the challenge of the impact of climate change in the maintenance, restoration and conservation of the world's heritage. Pre dinner canapés and main meals were of the high standard we have come to know from the Rye Hotel. Eight Rye members attended the above luncheon.

Local History Network In June the first of the two annual open Local History Network meetings was held at The Briars. Six members from Rye attended - Prue Found (President and delegate), Lynne and Alan Woollard, Jill and Wayne Bastow and Pauline Powell. Local History Officer Sally Robins chaired the meeting and brought the societies up-to-date on recent happenings. Boundaries have been established again for all the eight societies in the Shire. For those who had not been to The Briars before National Trust guides, including Jill and Wayne, described the connection with the Balcombes and Napoleon and the reason for the items of significance being in Mount Martha. After a delicious morning tea, Jarrod Ruch the ranger at The Briars conducted a walk around the homestead explaining the orchard of heritage fruit trees, and the heritage hens happily scratching away on their mound of vegetable scraps, with their comfortable 'house' to keep them free of foxes. Then the vegetable garden to provide heritage seeds for planting and for sale and the delightful new pigs scratching and burrowing into the ground disturbing all the weeds, particularly the kikuyu - we could do with them in Rye! They have a program to buy heritage sheep and cattle, breeds that would have been used on the original farm. Those who purchase (\$1800 for cattle and \$250 for sheep) will have their chosen name engraved on a bell to hang around the animal's neck - that's an incentive for everyone!

From the RHS Pantry - Our home made jams are available in the room on Sundays 2 - 4, and Tuesdays 9.30 - 11.30. We have a great selection of marmalades (all varieties), also plum and raspberry, fig, and quince jams, also tomato relish. Purchase Rye kitchen hand towels now for Christmas gifts - various emblems \$11. And don't forget our selection of published books listed on our webpage below.

<http://ryehistoricalociety.weebly.com/publications.html>

Black Rock House. On Wednesday **28th October** we will be visiting the National Trust home in the bayside suburb of the same name. This will take place instead of the previously reported visit to **The Heights and Barwon Grange**. The cost will be approximately \$35 with lunch at the historic Royal Hotel Mornington at own expense. **Black Rock House** was built 1856-59 by Charles Ebdon as his seaside residence and was a great rendezvous for Melbourne's elite. More details and a list will be available at future general meetings.



Black Rock House, 34 Ebdon Avenue, Black Rock

Women of Rye In May the annual Women of Rye lunch was held in the Rye Hotel Main Sail Upper Deck. A sell-out as usual, the founder of 'Light Up Autism' Bianca Appleford spoke feelingly of the project she instigated, which now has specialist teachers in some schools on the peninsula. The Rye woman featured this year was Theresa Baker of Rosebud Police, for her work with the youth of the community over many years. Entertainment together with an auction, silent auction items and a raffle was conducted, with the proceeds of \$6,000 going to 'Light Up Autism'.

Sausage Sizzle Our annual Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings will be held on Saturday 17th October. This is our main fundraiser for the year. A roster will be available at our September general meeting

Have you heard? The Rye Cemetery Trust have announced that their new web page will be up and running by August 1. Go to the link below and follow the countdown at www.ryecemetery.com.au

An extract from Linda Berndt's *White Pearls and Jersey Gold*, the family history of the Jennings family of Rye.

In April 1914 George (Dod) Jennings purchased 221 acres from Jim Brown at a cost of approximately £3 an acre. The land was part of The Cups country and was bounded by what are now Dundas Street, Browns Road and Weeroona Street, formerly known as Jennings Road. Dod named the farm Kariah after the area near Camperdown which had provided him with the finance to again become a landowner. It had taken 20 years but he was again in control of his own turf and his family had stuck by him all the way sharing the dream. We will now go back and share the story of Dod's early life that led to his decision to move to Rye.

George Jennings was the fifth child of John and Phoebe and was born on Thursday, 5 March 1857. John was aged 29, a labourer from Indented Head. Phoebe was 26. This suggests John may have been born as early as 1828, but contradicts the information on older son Jonathan's birth certificate which has John as 31 in 1855, two years older than he was listed as in 1857. Phoebe's age should be 25 as she had turned 25 on 19 February, just prior to George's birth.

George, or Dod, as he became known, would have had a basic education as schooling was not made compulsory for 6 to 14-year-olds until the implementation of The Education Act in 1872. Dod would have been 15 at this time and well and truly earning his keep. The first school to open in the Drysdale area was the Free Presbyterian in 1849. By 1851 the Church of England had opened a school in the fledgling town and not to be outdone, the Catholics also had a school to educate their parishioners, built in 1853. By 1875, the Education Department had built a school on the land beside St James Anglican Church, amalgamating the various church schools. It is most probable that Dod and his siblings went to the Church of England School for a basic education. No records of the school exist. After being drilled on the three 'Rs', Dod no doubt helped his parents on their farm and perhaps, as he got older, worked as a labourer nearby his home. Farming was certainly in his blood as his life's work was on the land.

Family lore tells us that Dod was a terrific sportsman. One tale told by his late grandson Claude suggests that he was so fit he chased a horse around a paddock, until the horse dropped dead from exhaustion! Dod played football in the developing years of the game. Again, family lore tells us he played for Geelong, however the Geelong Football Club have no record of George Jennings or his brothers playing for them. Geelong was still a fair distance from Drysdale in those days and transportation to Geelong infrequent. The railway did not go through to Queenscliff until 21 May 1879. It is more likely

the photo of Dod in his footy kit may have been in Drysdale colours.

Newspaper articles from the Queenscliff Sentinel, Drysdale, Portarlington and Sorrento Advertiser from 21 May 1887 clearly tell us that a Jennings was playing for Drysdale: Grandson Claude recalled the tale of how his grandfather won all the running events in a sports meet in Geelong, from the sprints to the 5-mile event, however a search of the local newspapers of the time is unable to locate such a feat.

Transportation around Drysdale was virtually non-existent. In 1865 there was a coach to Geelong on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays so communication with other areas on the Peninsula was fairly limited, meaning families such as the Jennings' lived in a close knit community where neighbours socialised and intermarried on a regular basis.



George (Dod) Jennings
1857-1918

On 23 April 1879 at age 21, George married 22-year-old Hannah Wiffen (27 October 1856 – 26 July 1834) at her parent's home in Drysdale. The service was conducted by the Reverend Charles Henry Ingamells of the Wesleyan faith. The witnesses to the service were Edward Wiffen, presumably Hannah's first cousin, once removed, the son of Thomas and Ann Wiffen (née Harding).

Edward was the same age as the groom so presumably was a friend of the couple as well. The second witness was Frederick Harding. The Hardings had married into both the Wiffen and Jennings families so it is possible that Frederick was related in some way. George is listed as a labourer and Hannah as a dressmaker.

Hannah had a young daughter, Harriet Annie. Harriet, or Annie, as she was known, was born in 1876 and her birth registration lists her father as unknown. Annie was always acknowledged as Dod's daughter and when she married James Bryant in 1899 she married as Harriet Jennings. Contrary to popular belief 'living in sin' was common during the late 1800s. Almost half of all brides were pregnant at their wedding for many, a wedding was too expensive. It is therefore feasible that George was indeed the biological father of Annie. Dod appears to have had a wild side. From 1876 through to 1898 George Jennings appeared before the magistrate in Drysdale on 13

occasions. His 1885 appearance for indecent assault towards Mary Ann Bryant is noteworthy as she was to become the mother-in-law of his daughter Harriet Anne (Annie). Dod was a hard worker, leasing 40 acres of land from a David Sharp between 1878 and 1881. In 1882 George Jennings is listed as the owner of the same land at "Clarendon", which had been subdivided in 1852 by Thomas Forster and lies immediately to the east of Drysdale. Forster, a real estate agent, advertised his 640 acres as Clarendon Estate, the sizes of farms varying in acreage. This estate had a frontage along the government reserve and the village of Bellarine (Drysdale). It was close to Mr McKenzie's Inn and water was plentiful, a great thing for the Bellarine Peninsula where natural water supply was quite an issue. Today, Clarendon Road passes through the centre of the old estate. In the 1871 census the Clarendon Estate consisted of 34 houses, five of which were brick or stone and four made from slab or bark there is no indication as to what the other houses were built from.

Depression years

The boom years created by the discovery of gold and the opening up of land had come to a crashing end by 1891. For the next decade Australia suffered through a crippling depression. Dod, like many, many others, suffered as a result of high unemployment and union strikes that helped to bring down wages. It was perhaps the Great Maritime Strike of 1890 that began to cause problems for Dod. The dispute began on 15 August 1890 when the Mercantile Marine Officers' Association directed its members to give 24 hours' notice to their employers after negotiations broke down with the Steamship Owners' Association of Victoria over longstanding pay and conditions claims. Industrial action quickly spread to seamen, wharf labourers and then gas stockers. Coal miners from Newcastle, Broken Hill, and even New Zealand were locked out of their work places after refusing to dig coal for non-union-operated vessels. By September 1890, 28,500 workers were on strike. With so many unemployed the effects rippled throughout other areas of the community. Businesses closed and the demand for produce was not as great as people reigned in their spending. People did not want to buy onions and this caused hardship for farmers such as Dod

By November 1891 Dod and Hannah were facing financial ruin and taking perhaps the only option available to them at the time, they decided to sell their farm. Dod auctioned 4 ½ acres according to an advertisement in The Geelong Advertiser.

Wednesday the 25th November 1891, At 3 o'clock, On the ground, Drysdale. Sceney and Co, in conjunction with W.P.Carr, have been favored with instructions by Mr George Jennings, to sell by public auction, as above.

His valuable property, consisting of 4 ½ acres of first-class onion land, with splendid 4-roomed house, stable, coach house, and all necessary out buildings. The Auctioneers would call special attention to the above sale, as the property is for positive sale, and a really good one. It is unclear if this land was part of “Clarendon Estate” farm or if perhaps Dod had other land investments. It is also unclear whether the farm sold.

As the depression bit into the economy people found themselves filing for bankruptcy. George (Dod) Jennings was amongst those doing so and filed in May 1894 (State of Victoria, 1894). The reason he gave was the forced sale of crops for two years in succession to meet liabilities with the Colonial Bank. Dod’s liabilities were £109/4/9 and his assets totaled £10/-/-, leaving a deficiency of £99/4/9. Mr CJ Mead was the assignee.

At age 37, with six surviving children including two month- old Doris, Dod was left with nothing. The family had hit rock bottom and Dod had to start again. Just a month after losing everything in 1894, baby Doris, the couple’s youngest child, passed away aged three months. It must have been a trying time for the couple and their despair immeasurable.

For the next few years the family appears to have moved around the Drysdale area, becoming itinerant farmers. Perhaps family took them in and helped support the young brood. Hannah’s parents, George and Ann Wiffen, had helped her younger brother Samuel and his family when he was unable to find work during this time. His wife, Letitia (née Sheridan), wrote her memoirs around 1960 and was grateful to her mother in law for helping the family in their time of crisis: ‘... how very good Grandma Wiffen was to us. Gave us a cow and calf and lots of fruit and vegies and helped in lots of ways.’ Ann did this even as she cared for her husband, George who had had a debilitating stroke.

This time in George’s life certainly explains two of his court appearances. Son George Ernest’s non-attendance at school in 1892 and the subsequent fine imposed on Dod could easily be explained. Young George (Ern) was most likely needed to help his father on the farm. He was 12 years of age, fit, strong and would have been a huge help to his father who probably could not afford to employ labourers as the depression bit. The overdue rates in 1893 could also be explained. In his 1894 application for bankruptcy George had listed crop failure as a major reason for his situation and inability to pay the Colonial Bank. Dod simply did not have the income to pay his rates. Both matters were struck out.

***White Pearls and Jersey Gold* by Linda Berndt is available in our Room. \$30.**

A study of a map of Australia shows the border between New South Wales and Victoria to be made up of the River Murray and what appears to be a straight line from the east end or start of the Murray down to the coast at Cap Howe. This apparent straight portion is known as the Black-Allan line.



Figure 1

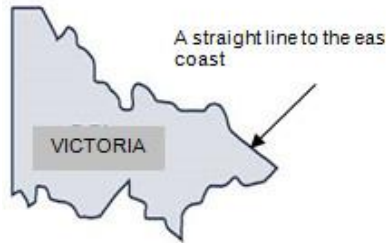


Figure 2

The line is named after Surveyors Alexander Black and Alexander Allan, who back in 1870, spent two years surveying the line delineating the two colonies.

The River Murray Portion

Since 1851, the border between Victoria and New South Wales has officially been the top of the bank of the southern side so none of the river is actually in Victoria.

“ this boundary definition is as muddy as the waters of the great river itself, due to river course changes and modification of some of the river banks.....”

In an unusual case (Ward .v. the Queen 1980) dealing with boundaries and jurisdiction between states, the High Court considered whether a murder on the Murray River had taken place in Victoria or New South Wales.

The shot was fired by assailant Ward from the top of the riverbank in Victoria. The victim's body was at the water's edge with his feet in the river and head angled up the bank on the Victorian side of the river.

Ward was captured shortly after and sent to trial in The Supreme Court (Victoria) in December 1978, and found guilty.

Ward appealed to the High Court who held that the border ended at the top of the riverbank, which meant that Ward's victim died in NSW and so could not be tried in Victoria. The conviction in the Victorian Supreme Court was set aside. Ward was later tried in NSW, found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Straight Portion

Usually state and country borders coincide with natural features such as rivers and ridges of mountain ranges. In the case of the Black-Allan line, the boundary was drawn more or less at random without consideration of the terrain.

It commenced at the “Spring” of the River Murray, traversed up hill and down dale, through very difficult terrain until finally terminating at Cape Howe. Surveyor Black marked the easterly part from the Spring to a peg placed on the banks of the Delegate River. Surveyor Allan marked the remainder of the line to the coast. Surveyor William Turton assisted both Black and Allen but received little recognition for his contribution.

The question arises as to what curve was used to layout the apparent straight portion. As the Earth's surface is not flat it is necessary to represent it on a flat surface using a map projection. A map projection encompass shrinking and enlarging at different points to enable a flat presentation. Any one of a number of lines can be drawn between the terminal points. Each of which is a highly complex mathematical expression.

In other words there are as many different lines possible as there are map projections. A simpler approach is to develop a line in relation to a model of the shape of the Earth's surface. The Earth approximates a three dimensional solid known as an oblate spheroid.

A number of reference spheroids have been in use over the years and it follows that, while nearly all the same, the number of curves possible is almost endless. For a particular reference spheroid there are a number of curves that could be used to

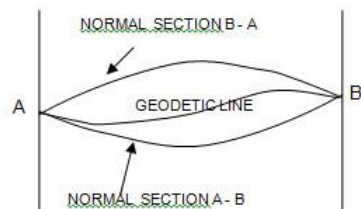


Figure 3 Possible Curves

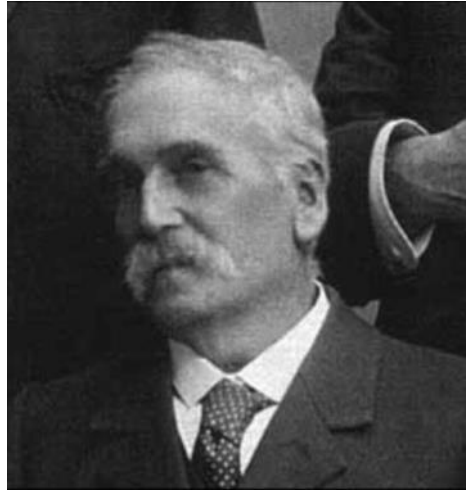
12 The New South Wales-Victoria Border – The Black-Allan line.

join the terminal points. These are illustrated in Figure 3 point A.

Surveyor Rod Deakin of RMIT walked the route and on inspection of Geodetic Surveyor Thornhill's computation book concluded that the line adopted was a normal section containing the normal to the Spring at point A, and that the reference ellipsoid was most likely to have been Clarke's 1866 ellipsoid.



Alexander Black



Alexander Charles Allan

The Terrain



Figure 4 Example of a cairn

There was no settlement along the line. Access is difficult with very few access points. The terrain is horrific, steep and generally the conditions bad. Summer can reach high temperatures and in the winter snow is the norm.

At the time of the surveying both men returned home every six months and when on the job worked from daylight to dark when possible, and it is said, even on Christmas Day. There were problems with supply of water and food and it was necessary to supplement their meat intake by

To commemorate Victoria's 150th Anniversary, Australia Post published a booklet, *History of Postal Services in Victoria*. The booklet makes no mention of the first settlers at Sullivan Bay Sorrento in 1803, and the appointment of anyone to take care of any mail in the short time they were there. The story starts with the arrival in the colony of John Batman and the members of the Port Phillip Association 1835 from Van Diemen's Land. Those first settlers appointed Batman to take care of any mail. The subsequent employment of personnel in charge of the mail was short and varied mainly due to the workload involved and the poor remuneration. The procession of postal masters and their conditions provide an interesting story.

When Police Magistrate William Lonsdale arrived at the colony in October 1836 he took charge of the mail and in February 1837 appointed customs officer Robert **Webb** to take on the position. In April that same year, Mr. **E J Forster** who was a Clerk of the Bench, was appointed the first Official Postmaster in addition to his court duties. Less than eight months later he resigned from both positions and was replaced by **Charles Frederick Leroux**, Clerk of Works, who was dismissed from both posts a few weeks later for continual drunkenness. The next to fill the position was a merchant **Alfred John Eyre** who remained in the position till January 1838.

Captain **Benjamin Baxter** was the next to take up the position. He was also a Clerk of Petty Sessions and with his wife and family rented a cottage in Flinders Street. He commenced his extra duties on the 28 January 1838. Baxter's salary was £150 less the rent for the cottage. His court duties took up most of his time so his wife Martha mostly attended to the postal duties. Apparently Baxter's cottage was built on very swampy land and when the Yarra flooded the family had to be rescued by rowboat. The poor salary and conditions and the health of his wife led to Baxter resigning in November 1838. Another Clerk of the Bench **James Smith** was next to fill the position. He was paid 20% commission on all mail handled and retained the position till February 1839 when he resigned.

Skene Craig, a merchant accepted the role on the same basis and the Post Office operated from his store on the corner of Collins and King streets until he resigned in July 1839. In five and a half months he earned thirteen shillings and four pence commission. In August 1839 **David Kelsh** was appointed as the first full time official and he saw the move into what became the first official post office on the corner of Bourke and

Elizabeth Streets. Prior to that he operated from an office in what is now Little Collins Street. As part of his stipend he was given an allowance of 30 shillings a year for light and fuel.

By the end of 1839, letters and newspapers handled by the Melbourne P.O. had reached nearly 40,000, compared to less than 2,500 two years earlier. A census taken on March 2 1841 showed the population of Melbourne had risen to 4479, comprising 2676 males and 1803 females. The first official letter carrier was appointed and was paid 30 shillings a week and two letter boxes were built at the post office.

In August 1842 **Henry Darling Kemp** was transferred from the Sydney Post Office at a salary of £300. He saw the addition of a clock tower to the post office and was to remain in that position till 1851 when **Captain Alexander McCrae** was appointed Postmaster with a salary of £400. McCrae migrated to Port Phillip in 1841 and in 1845 was appointed Clerk of the Treasury. By 1851 the population had risen to more than 23,000. Just five months after taking up the postal position he was promoted to Postmaster General of Victoria at a salary of £1200 and was to remain in that position till 1857. That year a competition was held for the best interior and exterior design for a new post office and ten years later it was opened.



The first official Post Office built on the corner of Bourke Street and Elizabeth Street



Melbourne GPO c 1875. A third story was added in 1886 and in 1910 a further two stories were added along Elizabeth Street

Meetings and Guest Speakers.

Monday 27th July **Some old time movies from our member Arthur Hicowe**

Monday 24th August **Annual General Meeting followed by Bring a Treasure evening.**

Monday 28th September **To be announced**

Coming Events

Sausage Sizzle **17th October.**

Black Rock House **28th October**

Rye RSL Happy Hour. 5-6pm **Last Friday of the month.**

Home Page. <http://ryehistoricalsociety.weebly.com/index.html>

Several past issues of our newsletter may now be viewed in colour on the Society's website. Google '**Rye Historical Society**'. Members may like to send our newsletter on to friends or review past editions. Go to our site and then click on '**Newsletters**' then click on the '**Download File**' icon. The latest newsletter will be uploaded within a couple of weeks of it being posted.

THE WISE GIRL

“How foolish is the pessimist,
Despondent and forlorn
Who always when she gets a rose
Goes hunting for the thorn!
The optimist has better sense,
The charm of life she knows,
She doesn't mind a scratch or two
If she can get the rose.”



Anon. The Girl's Own Paper October 16 1897

The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference.
He acquired his size from too much pi.
I thought I saw an eye-doctor on an Alaskan island,
but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.