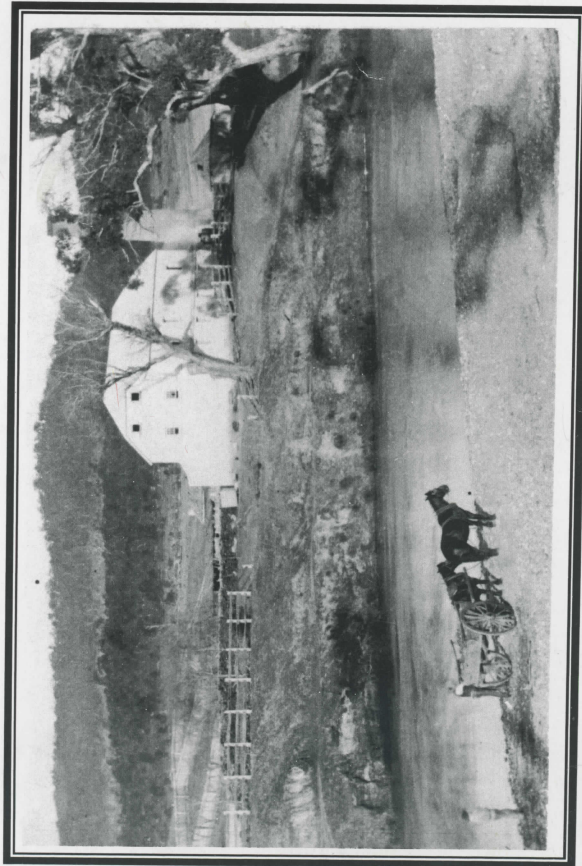


Quinbean

Volume 10 No 3
December, 2017



The Journal of Queanbeyan & District Historical Museum Society

QUEANBEYAN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL MUSEUM SOCIETY

QDHMS is a local history society aiming at preserving the history of the city and its wider district and sharing this, with the strong support of the Queanbeyan City Council, through the context of the Museum of Queanbeyan.

Find us on the net at www.queanbeyanmuseum.org.au

Contact us: email qbnmuseum@yahoo.com.au

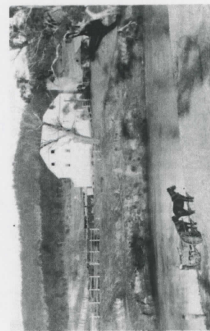
THE MUSEUM OF QUEANBEYAN

The Museum is open from 1pm to 4pm Saturdays and Sundays or by arrangement. It is found at 10 Farrer Place Queanbeyan, next to the Police Complex and opposite the State Office Building.

Cover Story

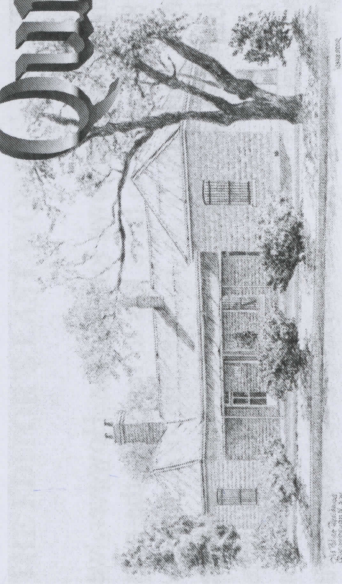
Severne Mill, owned by Wright

Dulhunty Collection, QPRC



Quinbean

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this, the Museum is winding down for the year. However, we already have plans for 2018 and expect to have lots to report in the next edition of *Quinbean*. I hope particularly to resume the oral history project with a meeting early in the new year and we have the Heritage Festival to prepare for.

The Annual General Meeting saw the re-election of most of the existing committee although I have stepped down from the President's role. In fact I am writing this report under false pretences but I hope you'll forgive me a final flourish.

We have had a very pleasant end of year party for volunteers and the sub-committee dealing with the outdoor display grant has met several times and the project is progressing well.

Sadly we have also suffered the loss of one of our most reliable members and volunteers, Ruth Blunden, who died unexpectedly in November. She will be much missed.

I would like to personally thank Gillian Kelly for all that she has done for the Society and Museum over many years and remind readers that even if they cannot hope to match all her achievements, they could consider taking up some of the tasks she took on such as local history research and contributing to *Quinbean*.

John McGlynn

Quinbean shines

Shining jewel Quinbean:

River flows strong and free.

Platypus, waterfowl play.

Lee Davy

THE EDITOR'S LAST WORD

It is with a great degree of sadness that I pen this last Editorial for *Quinbean*.

Some eleven years ago Andrew Blundell and I discussed at length the appropriateness of a small journal that would carry the stories of the town – the small stories, not the big histories that reflect, quite often, the history of a place from the formal, governmentally correct point of view. The journal was so aptly named by member Sandra Young and from that little beginning a solid collection of stories of the village to town to city has evolved, and will continue to do so.

During this period I have had unbelievable support from people willing to share their knowledge. All of you who have written for the journal have my deep gratitude but special thanks and appreciation must go to a core of consistent writers who you will all recognise:

John Cope	James McDonald	Pat Jeffreys
Lee Davy	John McGlynn	Eric Rawling
Marilyn Folger	Brendan O'Keefe	Kerrie Ruth
Peter Johnston	Peter Proctor	

And above all I must thank Rosemary Curry for her incredible continued support, interest and intriguing stories the basis of which she collected in the time she lived here in Queanbeyan. What she, and all of you who have written for *Quinbean*, have done is opened a doorway where the conventional wisdoms of the history of the district and the city have been challenged and opened up. Keep questioning and writing! There are a wealth of stories out there waiting to be told.

I wish the new Editor of *Quinbean* great joy – it is a very satisfying role to have, and I look forward to still writing, but mostly being a reader!

Gillian Kelly

QUEANBEYAN AND THE 1930S DEPRESSION TENSIONS WITH CANBERRA

When I arrived in Queanbeyan in the 1970s there still seemed to be a real separation between our city and the capital across the border. Many pupils at the school where I taught seemed almost never to go to Canberra and reviews of Queanbeyan Players' productions always had to include a reference to a 'trip across the border'. However, of course the two places have always been inextricably linked with attitudes on both sides varying from admiration to condescension depending on the period and the relative attractions of each location. One period which highlighted tensions between the two locations was the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The depression in Australia of the 1930s was severe everywhere but its effects were varied depending on many factors. For example those with government jobs may have experienced a reduction in salary but at least did not lose their jobs and generally kept their homes. Those with wages could still afford to live as prices of commodities dropped. On the other hand, unskilled workers or those without job security could find themselves unemployed, and if they rented, without a home. Many ended up as victims of an unemployment system, which saw them moving from to district to district seeking work, which was mostly unavailable, or receiving meagre benefits. Unemployment went from the already quite high 6 to 11% in the 1920s to 24 to 28% out of work from 1930 to 1932.

The governments were beset with many contradictory policy solutions, undecided whether to spend more or spend less and the Federal Labour Government was further hampered by a conservative majority in the Senate.

Queanbeyan residents who had benefited from the construction of Canberra suffered a particularly bitter pill seeing what had seemed a prosperous future taken away. A look at a file from the National

Archives of Australia illustrates the frustrations of these residents. For example a deputation in November 1932 (See document 1) sought special consideration for Queanbeyan in granting employment in the Capital Territory.

Another document (No 2) in the file further paints the picture of hopes disappointed and the bureaucratic solution. As a Queanbeyan resident it is pleasing to note that Queanbeyan was considered a much more desirable place to live than Canberra. However, for the bureaucratic mind there was a still apparently a sharp distinction between 'locals' and those from the town over the border. In a way the benefit to Queanbeyan of the building of the capital made it worse when the work there was curtailed. People had made plans on the expectation of continued growth and, just as in the rest of Australia, the sudden halt to growth hit them hard. Psychologically, it must have been more galling when an artificial border determined what work or relief they could receive.

An editorial in the Canberra Times explains some of the particular problems of Queanbeyan residents who purchased homes. Of course their problem was no different from that of many throughout Australia but they had the articular grievance that it was the government which had encouraged them to settle in the district and build the Capital and was now pulling the rug from beneath their feet, as it were.

I have looked only at one aspect of the Depression era and Queanbeyan. For more detail the account of Errol Lea-Scarlett is still the best. However, an examination of the entire file from the National Archives is fascinating in offering a glimpse into the mind set of the time.

John McGlynn

WORKS AND SERVICES BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FG/GL

EMPLOYMENT - QUEANBEYAN RESIDENTS

The Assistant Secretary:

Pursuant to your verbal direction, the following report is submitted in respect to the employment of Queanbeyan residents.

For many years residents of Queanbeyan enjoyed the same preference in employment as Canberra residents owing to the large measure of employment available. The first curtailment of constructional activity in 1927 made it apparent that curtailment in the number of employees was inevitable. A schedule of preferences was therefore, applied, which, subject to the statutory Returned Soldier preference, provided for preference to Queanbeyan residents after local residents. The reason for the adoption of such preference, having regard to the scarcity of work, was due to the obligations of the Administration in Canberra to residents of the Territory whose domestic responsibilities were located in the Territory. The alternative to such preference would have been the employment of Queanbeyan residents resulting in local residents becoming a charge on the State. Even after the introduction of such preference scale, Queanbeyan residents were employed as opportunity offered while there was work available. The introduction of such preference was not meant to be regarded as exclusion of Queanbeyan residents, but was occasioned by the fact that the work available was not sufficient to absorb all applicants from that town.



The Hon. J. A. Perkins, Esq.,
Minister for the Interior,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to ask if you will be so good as to meet a deputation from this Council, as early as convenient, which will place before you the case of those workmen who purchased homes on time payment in Queanbeyan on the expectation that the work they were then engaged in in the Federal Territory would continue and in which they were disappointed. The deputation would urge that those people be given special consideration when work is available.

Yours faithfully,

The Hon. J. A. Perkins (Works)

The Minister is receiving the deputation this afternoon and leaves to know what is the position.

Mr. [unclear]

*Mr. [unclear] 32
The Minister is not out in the attached memorandum by the Industrial Officer; also in copy of [unclear] 29/11/32*

Tom Clerk.

Whilst it may be admitted that housing accommodation in Canberra was scarce at the inception of construction, it is equally true that some of the workmen housed their families in Canberra and were not attracted by the comparatively better domestic and social conditions in Queanbeyan. Even when houses were built in Canberra those workmen who were living in Queanbeyan were unwilling to move on account of the more attractive social associations of Queanbeyan. There is little doubt but that the work in connection with the establishment of Canberra was responsible for an artificial growth in the town of Queanbeyan.

The suspension of constructional activities owing to financial conditions has resulted in insufficient work being available even for the constant employment of local residents. This condition is the inevitable reaction on completion of constructional works, and in normal times those employed on such work would seek employment elsewhere. Existing conditions have made this impracticable.

Summarily, there has been no general prohibition on the employment of Queanbeyan residents, but as the work available has been insufficient to absorb local residents, it has been impossible to extend offers of employment to retalidents in that town.

Existing conditions in Canberra are, however, different. There are approximately 620 unemployed provided with relief work. Funds for such work are made available both from the Additions, New Works Item on the Estimates and the Alleviation of Distress Vote. It is, therefore, considered that all funds for new work in Canberra, as distinct from maintenance, may be regarded as a relief vote. To confine such work to local residents is reasonable and is in fact the policy adopted on similar work both

by the Government of New South Wales and Local Government Authorities in that State.

Apart from relief work, the only other unemployment benefit in Canberra is ration relief, whereas New South Wales residents in addition to relief work and ration relief are eligible for Child Endowment.

Industrial Officer
26/10/1932

*The Secretary,
Submitted*

Scale of preferences operating in relation to employment at Canberra attached.
25/10/1932



Canberra Brick Yards, Yarralumla where many Queanbeyan men were employed

QUEANBEYAN'S SPECIAL CLAIM

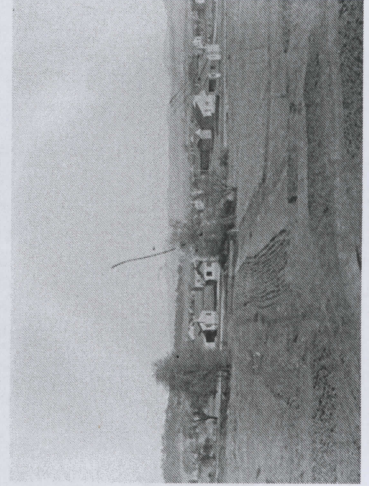
FOR a long time now, Queanbeyan has had a grievance against Canberra. For this the people of Canberra are not to blame. The grievance is that the townspeople of Queanbeyan are ranked for employment after those of Canberra in the engagement of labour for Government purposes at the capital. In the last few months, however, there has not been enough work in Canberra for Canberra people, so that whatever arguments and claims may have been advanced by Queanbeyan people for Canberra employment formerly, it is obvious that there has been little room for their consideration when Canberra people have been on the unemployed list and are denied the right of participating in any State unemployment relief scheme by reason of their residence outside the State.

But there is a special claim possessed by certain people in Queanbeyan which should receive attention now that it is announced that work is available in the Territory for all the unemployed resident here. The special claim attaches to those residents of Queanbeyan who have by their thrift purchased or committed themselves to purchase of their own homes there at a time when they were employees of the Commonwealth Government in Canberra. There was a time when it was impossible for a married worker to get a house in Canberra. Yet the Government wanted his work in the building of the capital. There were many who, having employment from the Government and having responsibilities as husbands and fathers, had to secure for themselves a home. At a time when money was flowing like water and was being spent with abandon by some employees, others saved their money and, being unable to rent, buy or build a house in Canberra for reasons well known to everybody associated with the Capital in its early stages, did commit themselves to property purchases in Queanbeyan. Since then they have lost their employment in Canberra, but still have had to face their financial and domestic responsibilities in Queanbeyan. They have moreover, in good times and bad, been contributors even indirectly to the revenue of Canberra through the arrangements made by Queanbeyan for the supply from Canberra of both water and electricity supplies. They are a good class of citizen such as Australia should stand by and encourage. Their case is one which should be considered.

The time for Queanbeyan to secure support for these people is the present. An election contest is proceeding in Eden-Monaro, of which Queanbeyan is the centre. Queanbeyan should seek from the candidates a clear understanding as to the attitude each will take up in this matter in the event of his election. A review of the manner in which Queanbeyan claims have fared in the past does not give the impression that they have been too well served by their representative. An opportunity is at hand for the people of Queanbeyan to correct this.

Meanwhile, the claims of those residents of Queanbeyan who have built homes there because they could not get them at Canberra and have thereby suffered under the present preference system and have been heavily burdened in keeping their homes together, are worthy of examination by the Commonwealth. It is a general hope and belief that henceforth affairs at Canberra will improve. The Capital has to be pushed on and developed to the final transfer stage. This means work and employment. The workman, be he a resident of Canberra or of Queanbeyan, who recognises his responsibilities to his family and who exemplifies this in the purchase of his own home from his savings, proves himself a good citizen. In any work which may be available in Canberra in the future which calls for additional employees, the Government should be careful not to go beyond Queanbeyan until every man there who has proved his claim has been absorbed into the pay roll in the development of Canberra.

Extraction of information,
John McGlynn



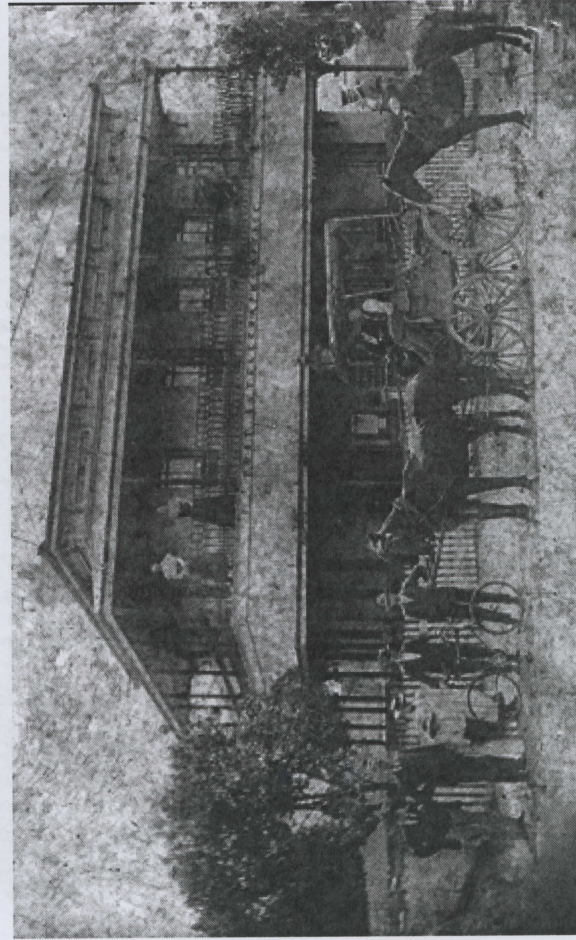
MAIL CONTRACTS

GOULBURN/QUEANBEYAN/COOMA/BOMBALA ROAD

1867-1888

When you think mail and coaching services for the district in the middle 1800s, Cobb and Co immediately springs to mind, but the facts are that the company only ran on the Goulburn - Queanbeyan-Cooma-Bombala run for four months. This was also the case for the Goulburn-Bungendore-Braidwood-Araluen-Moruya run.

Queanbeyan district an beyond was serviced with coach and mail services by families from the district. These included the Malones, the Morans, the Pooleys, and the famous Billy Roohan.



Patrick Malone was a Braidwood man and in he procured the contract to bring mails from Braidwood to Queanbeyan through the Molonglo Gap but the service only lasted four years.

In 1867 Thomas Moran had won the 3 year contract for Boro to Cooma, and by 1868 he was licenced to run three two-horse vehicles between Marulan and Cooma. Two years later this was extended to include Boro.

By 1871 Thomas' son John was running the mail from Goulburn via Tarago, Boro, Braidwood; Boro, Bungendore, Queanbeyan and Cooma; also Goulburn, Collector, Gundaroo, Ginninderra, Canberra and Queanbeyan. George Reed had the mail contract from Cooma via Nimitybelle to Bombala; Cooma to Bobundurah; Bobundarah to Bombala via Gunningrah and Buckalong; Bombala to Delegate via Craigie (for 3 years).

The next year John extended his contract to include the Tarago-Bungendore-Queanbeyan-Cooma run. Each year demand for extra postal stops arose and by 1873 Rob Roy and Michelago were included.

In 1873 John Moran had the mail contract from Tarago, Bungendore, Queanbeyan, Rob Roy, Michelago and Cooma.

The contractual arrangements changed regularly and by 1874 John Kingsland and Owen Malone had the mail contract from Tarago or Boro to Bungendore and Queanbeyan. John Pooley had the mail contract from Queanbeyan via Rob Roy, Michelago to Cooma. George Reed Cooma, Nimitybelle to Bombala (until December 1876).

In July-November 1873 Frederick and John Pooley were driving coaches for 'P Malone's Star Line of Coaches' between Queanbeyan and Cooma. Following the death of William Roohan in April 1874 Patrick Malone and John Pooley were successful in tendering for his

mail contract from Goulburn to Gundaroo, Canberra and Queanbeyan for 2 1/2 years.

On 31 October 1874 Cobb and Co purchased horses and vehicles running on the Braidwood, Queanbeyan and Cooma lines from Messrs Thomas Moran, James Malone and Frederick Pooley. Possession was to be given on 1 January 1875. Also in October 1874, John Pooley won the mail contract for the conveyance of mails from Queanbeyan to Cooma for 3 years. On 18 November, it was reported that John Pooley had disposed of his interest in his contract to Cobb and Co.

In January 1875, Cobb and Co's Telegraph Line of Coaches commenced operation from Goulburn to Braidwood and Goulburn to Queanbeyan and Cooma. There was some fierce competition from rival proprietors Kingsland and Malone who continually undercut Cobb and Co's fares. In March fares had been reduced from 10/- to 2/6 each way. Cobb and Co Telegraph Line of Coaches did not prove to be profitable, they sold their plant and interest in their coaches running on the Braidwood road to John Kingsland and Owen Malone in April. Shortly afterwards in May they sold their Queanbeyan and Cooma coaches to Patrick Malone. Cobb and Co had only operated their coaches on the Monaro for 4 months.

In the meanwhile, Patrick Malone and John Pooley had the mail contract from Goulburn to Gundaroo, Canberra and Queanbeyan until December 1876. Arthur and Philip were driving the coaches as sub mail contractors.

In June 1875, Frederick formed a partnership with Patrick Malone and John Malone 'Malone and Pooley's Royal Mail Star Line Coaches'. In July they commenced operating a day coach from Goulburn to Cooma. In July, it was reported that William Southall of Goulburn had completed a first-class mail coach to the order of Messrs Pooley and Malone, for the conveyance of mails and passengers between Goulburn

and Cooma. The vehicle, was constructed of English ash and American hickory, and capable of holding with comfort eleven persons. The interior of the carriage was substantially upholstered and able to be converted into an open one in warmer weather.



In January 1876 John Pooley won the contract to carry the mail from Gunning Railway Station to post offices at Gundaroo, Ginninderra, Canberra and Queanbeyan. In December the same year Frederick Pooley and John Malone won the mail contract for Cooma, Nimmitybelle and Bombala and also Bobundarah to Bombala via Gunningrah and Buckalong for 3 years.

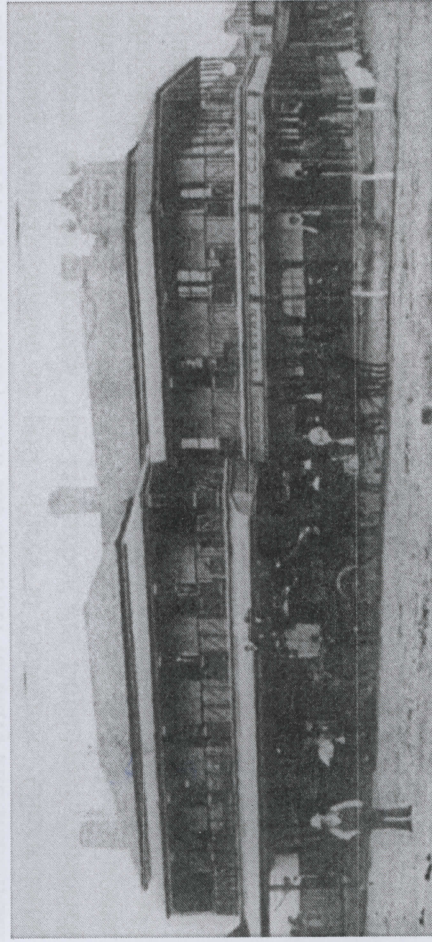
On 27 Oct 1877 the partnership of Patrick Malone, John Malone and Frederick Pooley was dissolved. Frederick continued as the sole proprietor of Malone and Pooley's Royal Star Line. From 1877 until late 1878, he was running coaches from Goulburn, Bungendore, Queanbeyan, Cooma, Bombala and Merimbula. The Bombala to

Merimbula route was sub-contracted to George Reed of Bombala for twelve months.

The Rev Mr Reeves of Bombala presented Philip with a set of gold studs, in November 1877. In a letter which accompanied the gift, the Rev expressed his approval of the humane treatment Philip had given to the horses in his charge.

Malone and Pooley's Star Line of Royal Mail Coaches continued on the Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Cooma and Bombala road until 1882 when the train reached Tarago. In 1883 the partnership of Frederick Pooley, John Pooley and John Malone was dissolved. The coaching business was carried on under the same name by Thomas Pooley and John Malone with Frederick Pooley as the Road Manager. From 1883 they carried the mail and passengers from Tarago to Queanbeyan and on to Cooma and Bombala.

In 1886 from Bungendore to Queanbeyan, Cooma and Bombala and in 1888 from Michelago to Cooma and Bombala. In mid-1888, Malone and Pooley ceased coaching on the Michelago, Cooma to Bombala road.



MERVYN BLANDON 1912-1938

Tucked away in the folders of Errol Lea-Scarlett is a copy of an obituary¹ for one of Queanbeyan's unsung, but magnificent sportsmen, Mervyn Darkie Blandon.

Merv was born in Queanbeyan in 1912, the son of George and Mary Blandon. He grew to be a small man of 5'2" but with great strength and an appetite for pugilistic practices. Like many before and since he started his fighting career in the travelling boxing tents, but he went on to become the Australia's Bantamweight Champion in 1933 and the Featherweight Champion in 1935.

His transition from the amateur boxer to professional came when he was in the northern part of NSW and his identity is often linked to Inverell, but with a large family still in Queanbeyan, he returned often and was always a Queanbeyan boy.

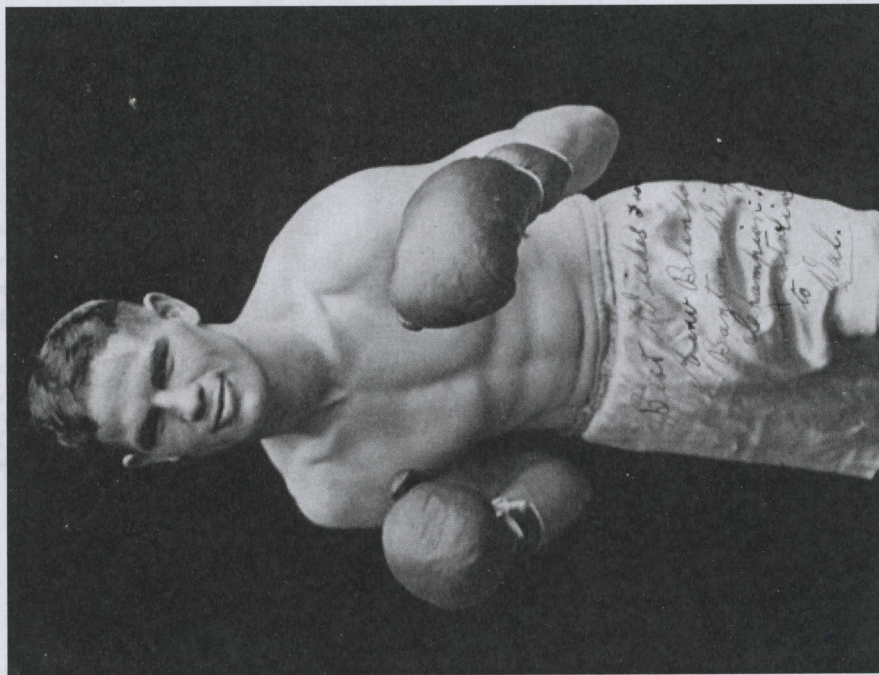
From sixty seven fights he won fifty one, drew eight and was defeated eight times. He didn't lose his titles in a loss, but by relinquishing them – the first because he had gotten heavier and the second because he was ill. Journalist Fred Flowers recorded his life for the boxers' magazine *Referee*.



¹ From *Referee*, October 20th, 1938, page 12

VALE, DARKIE BLANDON

Fred Flowers



Mervyn Darkie Blandon Bantamweight Champion of Australia 1933.
Photograph QDHMS

On Thursday Night last, Mervyn, Darkie, Blandon, one of Australia's greatest bantamweight boxers, died in St Vincent's Hospital – just a few hundred yards from Sydney Stadium, the scene of his most outstanding successes. Never a boxer, Blandon took everything as it came, and

drilled on for more. Eventually an undiagnosed illness caused his retirement in 1936, just 24 years of age – at the height of his career.

He battled courageously against this mystery ailment, refusing to throw in the towel. A month ago he entered hospital where it was discovered he was suffering from a growth on the brain and a withering optic nerve. If he had lived he would have been blind for life. Such a disability to a fellow of his athletic prowess and temperament would have been a living death – perhaps he is better off dead.

The last words I said to him were: "Is it worth while? If you had your time over again, would you choose boxing as a career?" His whispered answer was: "If I had my time again I'd choose the same career – it's a great game. Anyhow, as soon as I am better, I plan a comeback!" No quitter Blandon!

The career of Merv Blandon has a remarkable parallel with that of the late Les Darcy. Darkie, as he was known by boxing fans, was born at Queanbeyan on June 9th, 1912. His parents were poor and he was one of seven children. Like Darcy, he was compelled to work at an early age. His youthful labours made him strong and tough and he was ever ready to 'box on' with his mates whether big or small. When Alf Henson, itinerant boxing promoter, arrived in Queanbeyan, attracted by the business boom that followed the extensive operations in Canberra, Blandon was one of the first to greet him.

Young Merv stood in the crowd milling around the dust-covered booth, and stared goggle eyed at the line up of travel worn boxers. With a megaphone Henson pointed to a bruiser weighing about twelve stone. 'Who'll have Tommy Jones on?' his voice rasped out above the din of the crowd. He mopped his brow with a dusty hand. "Come on Gents, I'll give a fiver to the man who can knock out Tommy, champion of the north."

Tommy glared down viciously over folded arms, his tattered gown flapping in the breeze. Nobody took up the challenge. Then a little fellow shoved his way forward. "I'll have 'im on for a fiver, mister!" he shouted. A gale of laughter rippled through the spectators.

Henson roughly told him to git, but Blandon stuck round. Eventually the determined set of his jaw, his well developed arms and the man sized chest impressed the promoter and he decided to take Darkie into the show with him.

Blandon stayed with Hanson for about eighteen months, fighting night and day. Strenuous work that fitted him for his still more strenuous career. The round-arm punching of bush whackers over two stone heavier than he taught him to infight with astounding ferocity. He learned to throw a right arm punch which gradually developed into his most formidable weapon. When the booth was encamped at Gunnedah news trickled through that one Roger Nasser was promoting big time bouts at the Kewpee Stadium at Tamworth. Thrilled by the idea of big money, Blandon and two mates left Hanson's show and hiked about forty miles to Tamworth where they arrived with about two pounds between them and starvation.

But promoter Nasser would not give them a chance. A kind local put them up in an old tin shed with a perforated roof. The boys existed in this rheumatic hole for some months, growing lettuce and other vegetable around it. They sold the result of their labours and eked out a precarious existence. Finally Blandon's daily pleading melted Nasser's resistance.. He billed him in a preliminary that Blandon won with ease. From then he became a regular preliminary star.

Don Raverson, ex-champion cyclist, and representative of the Rushcutter's Bay Stadium in the McIntosh era, scented a champion. He found a job for Blandon in his hotel, and gave him plenty of time to train. Darkie's big chance came when Spider Roach's opponent failed

to turn up. Blandon substituted, and although he was beaten, proved he was a born ringman. He became a Tamworth topline and won seven of his next eight contests, three with KO's.

Definitely established, he fought a return bout with Roach at Inverell and held him to a draw. They met again in the same town and Blandon was the victor. In all, Blandon fought Roach nine times for five wins, three draws and a loss.

Whereas Blandon was a born fighter who cared little for boxing, Roach was a keen tactician and a clever boxer. These contests invariably attracted large crowds, before whom Blandon proved himself Roach's master. Jack Waites, a Tamworth horse trainer, now residing in Sydney, became the embryo champions greatest friend. In quick succession Blandon twice beat Harry Toots Mack, champion of NSW, and decisioned Norm Foster who was over a stone heavier.

When he KO'd Billy McAllister, ex bantamweight champion, Walton sent hot-foot for Jim Peoples.. As Blandon's manager Peoples took him to Sydney and together they approached promoter after promoter begging for a fight. But to no avail – the bush boy wasn't wanted. Slowly Merv's £70 roll, which he had managed to save from his country winnings, shrivelled to a meagre £15.

At the point of returning home, at the eleventh hour he was approached to act as a fill-in for brilliant Phillipino, Young Guildo, at Leichardt Stadium. He jumped at the chance and was billed as Darkie Blandon. Their hearts immediately warmed to him as he unfolded his pugilistic style and before their very eyes he became firm favourite. Before the bout was half over he had gone from ten to one against to even money. He won the fight in a sensational manner.

A return bout was arranged immediately and Young Guildo was warded a decision on points. Keen judges state that at the very least the verdict should have been a draw. After minor engagements Blandon met Pat

Craig, Bantamweight Champion of Australia at Leichardt Stadium and one the battle on a KO. A fortnight later he met Craig in another title tilt and repeated the performance. Ever ready to risk his title he became an idol. Within a month he knocked out both Young Eagle and D Costa and scored a points victory over Ron Leonard – all championship fights.

After the Costa bout the contract with Leichardt lapsed and he was eagerly snatched up. His first encounter under new management was at Rushcutter's Bay where he met Speedy Dado the lightning young man from the Phillipines. The Australian, after a gruelling fight, was awarded a clear-cut decision on points. Blandon, the boy from the bush, unknown two years ago – had smashed his way to fistic fame over the dashing Filipino Speedy Dado, conqueror of the world's bantamweight champion, Al Brown. Dado also had a points decision over the world's featherweight Champion, Freddy Miller! Truly a wonderful performance for a twenty-one year old bush lad!



Darkie Blandon defeated Star Frisco in Melbourne

In Melbourne a few weeks later Blandon defeated Star Frisco, Dado's stablemate, in a decisive fashion. Frisco earned the reputation of being the first, and only, boxer to knock Blandon down. Late in the second round he connected with a savage blow to the head. Blandon dropped heavily to the canvas but was up before three had been counted. The hurt Blandon was to call forth all his fistic armaments. For the remainder of the battle he fought like a wounded wildcat, pasting Frisco all over the ring. In the dressing room after the conflict was over Blandon could not remember being knocked down. His only comment was "Frisco's got a fair punch!"

Back to Sydney and a return with demon Dado. The bill attracted a great crowd of 14 000 fans who saw another grand fight. Many thought that Dado, having had more time to acclimatise, would reverse the action. Blandon entered the ring a two-to-one outsider. He displayed amazing improvement to win on points once more. After the contest Dado said "This Darkie of yours is world class. I hit him three times tonight with punches that would have felled any other bantam in the world but he just shook his head and continued. He is tough, strong and he never gets tired – back him against anyone in the world." Praise indeed, coming from the second best in his class in the world.. Blandon consequently met Frisco in another three contests and dropped one on decision. In the fight he lost he was suffering a bout of tonsillitis.

American critics lauded him No 1 bantam champion in the world in front of American negro Al Brown. Other importations he fought were Englishman Phineas Johns who he KO'd, Claude Varner who gave him the toughest fight of his career – until the tenth it looked as if Varner would gallop off with the decision, but Blandon came with a remarkable zest at the finish to gain the lead, Vernon Cernier who held him to a colourless draw and Tiger Connell who he defeated.

He fought Zwick who was taller than Blandon. Blandon overcame his rangy opponent's tremendous reach by infighting and clever claiming.

At no part of the competition did Zwick have the Australian's measure. Once Zwick bottled the weaving, holding the champion in a neutral corner. With his legs wide apart he prepared to deliver a knock-out punch, only to find his opponent had disappeared. The resourceful boxer had dropped to his knees and crawled through his aggressor's legs! The action caused a tremendous burst of mirth and Blandon won on points.

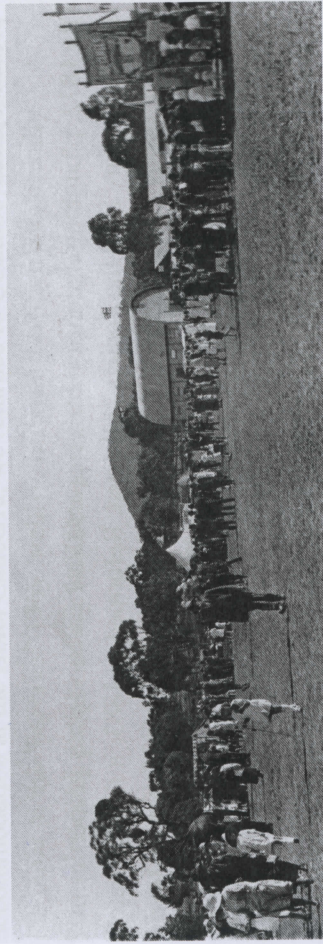
Just before the Zwick encounter Blandon linked up with Jack Dunlop, Australia's premier boxing instructor, who managed him for the remainder of his career. He entered the featherweight to fight against Joe Hall, Australia's featherweight king and won easily on points.

There were a number of contenders for his crown, but he defeated them all. In one of his last fights Mickey Miller, dual feather and bantam weight champion, was victorious however the battle was not for the title. Blandon fought Miller three times and won two bouts to Miller's one. Having cleaned up all serious opposition in Australia his fancy wandered overseas. He received offers from three sources: South Africa, New Zealand and Los Angeles – one of these running into four figures. He was about to make up his mind when he became ill and was advised by his brother to leave the ring. Although he was sure he would be back in the game within six months he preferred to revoke the featherweight championship crown which automatically reverted to Joe Hall.

He packed away his gloves with the words "If I am not good enough to regain the title in six months' time, I don't deserve to hold it". Brave words those – spoken by a gentleman of the ring. He never unpacked his gloves. He fought his greatest battle without them just before he reached the operating theatre.

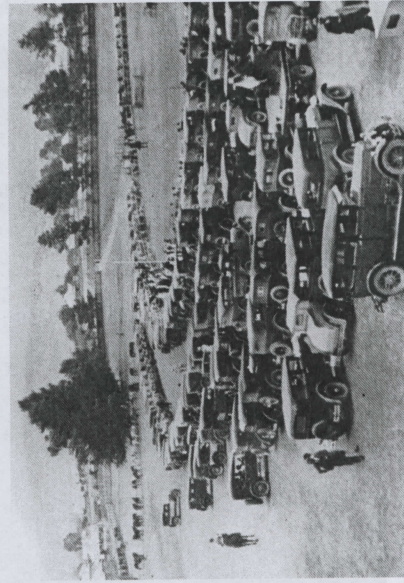
Vale!

QUEANBEYAN SHOW GROUND



Queanbeyan Show 1924, Photographer P Hardy

Queanbeyan is fortunate to have a designated recreational area in the centre of town, and may we always value it. The present area was Crown Land when Surveyor James Larmer designed the town of Queanbeyan in 1838, when the village was only "a little nest of official buildings and slab huts".



Show Day 1938 Rosemary Curry Collection

The present Showground is located on the south west edge of Larmer's original square mile. A public reserve was first dedicated for Public Recreation 10th January 1865, promoted by John Gale and others for the Queanbeyan Pastoral Agricultural and Horticultural Society, but not in its present space.

By 1872, ploughing matches were a major attraction on various properties in the community until the Society collapsed. Reformed in 1883, it then operated on what is now Seiffert Oval. However, dissatisfaction occurred, having to vie with a brick kiln and clay pit in its centre, producing bricks for the incoming railway in 1885. In 1890, the present showground was finally dedicated.

One of the first major functions was the entertainment for all the people staying in Queanbeyan for the official opening of Parliament in Canberra!

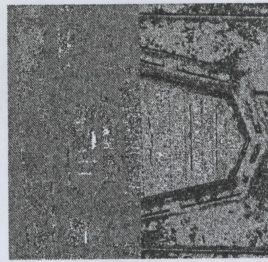
Since 1893, Shows have been held annually for two days, generally showing the highest achievers in agriculture. Among others events, wood-chopping and sheaf-tossing were popular from the beginning.



The Wood Chop 1924, Photographer P Hardy

The ground has had other uses, when at the outbreak of WW 2, the area was used as a drill ground by Canberra Light Horse . But on show days, Queanbeyan was crowded to the hilt, as a Perth businessman reported on 11th April 1926: "After a hurried spin around the new Capital and failing to get accommodation at the Hotel Canberra, we returned to Queanbeyan to spend the night in the 'beehive.' I say beehive, because the town was literally swarming with people owing to it being Showday."

The showground was also used for temporary quarters for two Primary classes of Queanbeyan Public School in the late 1950s, and in 1974 campers were moved there from the riverside during floods. The show itself was delayed in 1952, due to bushfire damage to potential exhibiting farmers and graziers. Crowds for this type of recreation are not now quite so huge, but various events still draw an audience for outdoor activities .



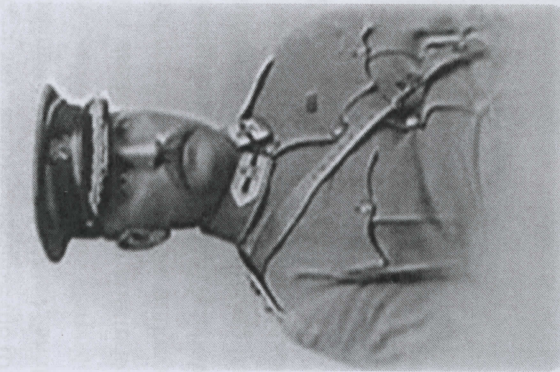
Perhaps the first inhabitants of this land might prefer it to be quieter. Beneath the present grandstand lies an Aboriginal burial site, and Bert Sheedy and others have recorded many artefacts found in the vicinity. It is also recorded that the last known corroboree was held there in 1862, when "hundreds attended over many weeks."

It seems this area was always meant to be a gathering place, so may it continue forever. **Rosemary Curry**

References: Moneroo to Monaro, Sheedy, Percy Bygone Queanbeyan, Cross Town in Transition, Withycombe Queanbeyan, Lea-Scarlett Wikipedia

GRANVILLE RYRIE OF MICALAGO

as told to Bert Sheedy by his son JAG Ryrie in 1978



Colonel Granville Ryrie

Sir Granville de Laune Ryrie, grazier, politician and soldier, was born on July 1st 1865 at Micalago, Michelago, son of Alexander Ryrie, and Charlotte, the daughter of Alured Tasker Faunce, Queanbeyan Magistrate.

Granville as a young fellow went to Mr Southee's school at Mittagong. There was no train this side of Goulburn so he went in a coach. The winter was terribly cold and the coachman used to give him a tot of rum now and again to keep him going.

He got to the school and there was a big bully there with a mob around him. They found that Father could sing so they used to make him sing. If he wouldn't sing they'd push him up to the fire backwards until he got his legs singed and then he'd probably sing. As he put it, "the worm turned" after a while and he challenged this big bully to a fight. It was thought something fantastic among all the boys of the school for this young little fellow to take on the big bully. He won that fight and that was probably one of the proudest moments of his life, I think. It started him off and he loved boxing after that. He went to King's School after that and then he went to Goonoo Station, north of Moree. There he learnt rough riding, to be a bullocky, speak Aborigine, chuck boomerangs – all these things – and actually he loved it. He came back from there to manage Micalago and he used sometimes to go down to the shed and offer to fight anyone but they didn't take him on and he had to put the gloves away.

About this time the Member for Queanbeyan was O'Sullivan. Billy Hughes was also in the State parliament at the time and they had an argument. O'Sullivan said "You come up to my area and we'll have a debate to see who wins this argument". Hughes agreed to that and Captain's Flat was nominated as the place. Hughes rode a bike from Queanbeyan to Captain's Flat. The hall was packed when he got there. They had a chairman and the debate was on. O'Sullivan spoke and it didn't go down that well. When Hughes got up he talked the crowd over. They were all for him and in the end O'Sullivan chucked the towel in. This left the chairman completely defeated because they had been there only about half an hour and the boys were expecting to be entertained all night. He was at his wits end to know what to do and he asked "Can't anyone sing?" There was no piano in the room.

Then a big man came in from the back of the hall, a big man in corded breeches and leggings. He marched straight up and sat down on the table where the chairman was sitting and said "Twenty-five guineas. I'll fight any man in this hall, bar Jack Goggin". The chairman counted the

money; it was all there. "Will anyone take him on?" Nobody would take him on. So he said "Nobody will fight you. Can you sing?" Dad said "No, I can't sing". (It was my father, of course). He said "I can whistle, though").

He had lost the end of his front finger somewhere on the Murrumbidgee and he put the second joint of his finger into his mouth and whistled beautifully! He entertained them for the best part of an hour. Hughes said that in all his political career and his life this was something that really stuck in his mind. Later he went to Sydney and entered the amateur boxing championships and got into the final of the heavyweight boxing championship with a fellow called à Beckett. A Beckett won that fight. Years later they both had another go in the same stadium and my father won that fight. They were both about eighteen stone. It didn't last very long. It got a bit tough!

In 1896 he married my mother, Mary McFarland; he built the cottage just near the main house and they lived there, but not for very long because in 1898, two years later, Britain issued an invitation to Australia to get some men together to fight the Boers. This was accepted and volunteers came from Cootamundra, Gundagai, Wagga, Young, Hay, Toomah, Moree, Cobar, Tenterfield and Bourke. They had to be men who could ride hard, shoot well and find their way about without difficulty. The pay was twenty-three shillings a day for a Lieutenant-Colonel and 10/3 for buglers and private.

It was a small ship they left on, full of troops and horses; the only weapon they had was their rifle. They had trouble with horses; naturally the men got sick and so did some of the horses. They didn't lose many from the ship, but they did later on. He served as a captain at Beira. The horses were slung over the side in slings. The ship was surrounded by a lot of little boats. Fellows from the shore came out. On the way to Mafeking, he said, a lot of horses died of blue-tongue; he said it was incurable but I don't know whether it was the same thing we talk about

today. Later on he referred to horses dying of glanders, which is another horrible thing. I don't know how many died.

He had breakfast with Cecil Rhodes one day and he had a look at the rations for the men, oats and chaff. At Mafeking, at a place called the Manko River, they were camped and Willy, his brother, was out on patrol when they got fired on by the Boers. Dad quickly got his squadron together and galloped out after them to see what was happening.. He said he was right out in front with his bugler behind him and the bullets were whizzing past like mosquitoes. When he got there he waited for the brigadier to arrive, who then said that he wanted an officer and twenty men to go ahead and settle these fellows. Dad was in a quandary because if he didn't send his brother they'd think that he was showing favouritism, so he went himself in the end. They had a machine gun and they settled these Boers very quickly.

He worked sixteen months and he returned as a major to Australia. He returned to Michelago and the welcome was terrific. They had a banquet down there. A brass band was playing and the family all arrived from the homestead in a big buggy; the local detachment of the Light Horse (the Bushmen) went up with black plumes in their hats and banners flying to lead his buggy into the town.

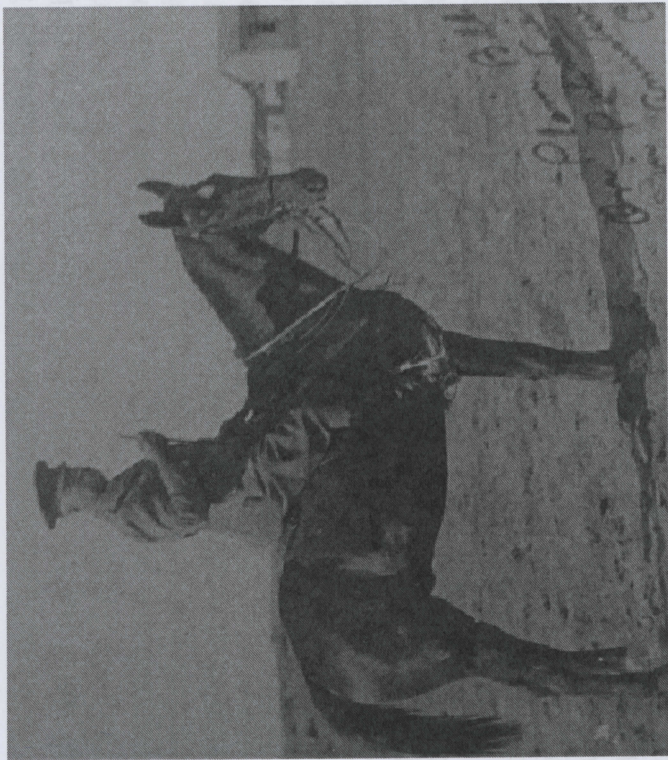
About that time there were races everywhere – Bungendore, Michelago, Jerangle, Bredbo and Captain's Flat – and Dad used to go to these. At Michelago one day he had a horse called *Bundoora*. He said "I think I'll enter my old buggy horse". He entered *Bundoora*; they had the race and *Bundoora* won the cup, of course. There was an old character there called Dan Denahy, a very well-known personality who had been training a horse for months for this race. After the race Dan went up to my father and he said "Begging your pardon, Sir, you're a damned scoundrel". There was another time when an old chap came to one of these meetings in a sulky and he tied his horse up to the fence. He went in and when he came out the boys had unhitched his horse, taken the

sulky around to the other side of the fence and hitched it up again. It was such a situation he didn't know what to do.

After coming back from the Boer War he remained O.C. of the Third Light Horse. In 1906 he got interested in politics. He went around in his sulky with boxing gloves and a banjo for the Queanbeyan by-election. Some bloke said one day "You couldn't do much with those" (he had these gloves). Donny Ryrie, a cousin of Dad, was with him at the time and he said "You couldn't hit him with a decent weed!" That settled the argument. He won the election for Queanbeyan, just narrowly won it, but he was defeated in 1910. Then, in 1911 he went for the Federal seat of North Sydney and he won that with a huge majority.

In 1907, just before that, he was placed in command of the second brigade and he was the youngest brigadier at the time in the Commonwealth. The federal parliament was in Melbourne at the time but he used to return every weekend; he would sometimes walk up to the house and sometimes I had to go down in the buggy and get him. It was pitch dark in the winter and I would have to light a fire in the dining-room before he got there and light the lamps on the buggy for the trip.

The Great War started then and at North Sydney he was given a send-off; all the Liberal and Labor people got together and gave him a tremendous send-off. They presented him with a charger, a brown stallion called *Flandelle* and he had that horse all through the war. Dad was at Gallipoli. He had what they called "Ryrie's Port", which was a sort of long trench with tunnels going out towards the Turkish lines. I remember that in one of his letters he said they were tunnelling along and they could hear the Turks talking above them in their tunnel, so they blew it up and ran back.



Ryrie on Plain Bill in Palestine

It was at Brown's Hill that he said he saw the submarine adjusting the torpedo for the *Triumph*, a battleship; she went down in fifteen minutes with guns still firing. A few minutes later they got the *Majestic*; it sank too. He saw the whole thing. He got wounded. It was dangerous to put your head out and, of course, he did stick it up and he got it in the neck. It just got the jugular vein. He was sent to Egypt to a hospital where he got better. After a while he was convalescing there, walking down the street with a friend of his, and suddenly he started to laugh. The friend said "What are you laughing at?" He said "I've just remembered what I said to my wife in a cable: 'Going back to Front'." He came back to Gallipoli after that and he said there was a most frightful blizzard there. The men got swollen feet and the doctors couldn't understand what it was; it wasn't frost bite. At one place there they lost three hundred men who died of the cold. Dad said the cold there was just unbelievable.

At the time when the evacuation was on, Hughes was giving his speech in Sydney at the Town Hall and he had had word just before from the British that the evacuation was on and that they expected to lose 40% of their men. He didn't dare tell the people this. He thought it was dreadful. He was giving the speech and a messenger arrived and gave him a note which said that the evacuation had been completed without a casualty. He was so pleased about this that he raced back to Parliament House and dictated a telegram himself. It was right; there were no casualties.

That was the finish of that and the brigade went back to Egypt and they started a long campaign, the Syrian Campaign. The brigade major, Major Richardson, who later became a general, said in letters to the paper at the time "I do not think any other senior officer enjoyed the full confidence of his command to the extent that he did - every inch a general officer, yet a human amongst them all. I think that was the general opinion of him". I wouldn't say I'd like to find such a thing, but I have not yet found anything against him.

In the Jordan Valley, not far from where they were, the Indians had their lines. They used to go down there to bathe in the river and one day some officers and spoke to Donald Cameron (later Sir Donald). They said an officer was bathing in the river completely naked and could something be done about it. Dad thought that was funny but it didn't stop him bathing. Later on he stood on a scorpion in his tent, one of those with a forked tail. They are usually fatal and he said the pain was something frightful. He called the doctor and he got two jerks of morphia and even then, he said, he could just about put up with it.

At Hebron he saw the tombs of Abraham, Isaac and Leah. He said that was a very interesting thing. Very close by is Solomon's Pool which King Solomon built to supply Jerusalem with water; some of the aqueducts were still there. At Gizeh, when they went to take over the town, the Turkish officer commanding rode out to meet my father and

he said he wanted to have protection from the Arabs. Dad said "Don't be silly. They are our allies". He said "They might be. I want protection". The Turkish prisoners and the Australians all sat around the same camp fire that night. In the end he was knighted on the personal recommendation of Allenby; it didn't go through all the usual channels and my father thought a great deal of it. When my mother and my sisters went over to Egypt they were given the use of a train to tour Palestine.

In 1927 he was Assistant Minister for Defence in the British Government and he was appointed High Commissioner in London. Mr Gullett, M.H.R. (later Sir Henry) was a war correspondent associated with Sir Granville in Palestine. He paid a tribute to "his courage and versatility: thousands of veterans and light horsemen scattered about the backblocks will rejoice in the appointment of the 'Old Brig' as High Commissioner. The A.I.F. contained perhaps few senior officers who were greater students of the signs of war than Sir Granville Ryrie, but contained none who knew better the distinctive characteristics of the Australian countryman ... and none with a better sense of the fascinating hide-and-seek game of the mounted infantry". It is hard for young people to understand, particularly to appreciate, warfare and while the old fellows express themselves on Anzac Day, many don't know what the word *Anzac* stands for. I suppose you can't blame them. Why pick on that war when there were so many?

As High Commissioner he had a difficult time but he still retained his straight-forward way of looking at a problem and in the United Nations Assembly in 1927, amongst all those European statesmen, he got up and said "Cut your cackle and get on with the business". That shattered them a bit! Once on a train he was travelling with some people who kept the window shut. "If you keep it shut", he said, "I'll suffocate". He called the guard who said "Open it and one will die; shut it and the other one will die and then you can get to sleep".

Another time I went with him to a meeting to do with the motor manufacturers. He told them "The registration of cars in this country depends on the horsepower of the car - small engine, small car, small boot. You ought to do something about it." The manufacturers then send a deputation out here and it wasn't long after that that they produced the Jaguar Mark VII, which was what they wanted in that particular car - a big car with a big boot. I remember Bert Hinkler landing when we were there. We welcome him. He had flown across the Atlantic and he had a bottle of oil turned up over the sump, so that when the oil started to go he had this little bit of reserve.



Loading wool on Micalago 1900 Charles Kerry Post Card

He lived quietly then at Michelago and he died in 1937. There was a State funeral, with a ceremony at St Andrew's. Then the coffin was put on a gun carriage and went to Central Station and was put on the train for Michelago. That's where there was the funeral, at the cemetery at Michelago with full honours.