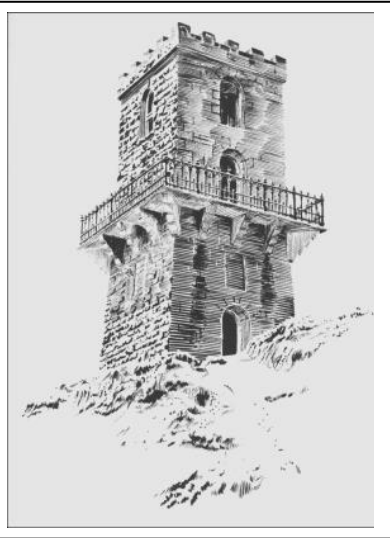


# MOUNT GAMBIER HISTORY GROUP NEWSLETTER

## AUTUMN 2017



*If undeliverable please return to:*

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**MOUNT GAMBIER , SA 5290**

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Fax 08 87251105

*The Mount Gambier History  
Group would like to thank  
Mr Tony Pasin, Member for  
Barker, for the printing of this  
newsletter.*



**shadforth** Financial  
Group

**Ben Newman**  
Dip FP  
Private Client Adviser

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## Mount Gambier History Group

**Next MEETING DATES coming up**  
**11<sup>th</sup> April, 9<sup>th</sup> May, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 11<sup>th</sup> July**

Held monthly each 2nd Tuesday of the month at **11 AM** at the **Club rooms**

**All welcome**

### MGHG COMMITTEE 2017

President: - Phil McInnes  
Vice President/Librarian: - Margaret Brown  
Secretary - Lynn Lowe  
Treasurer : - Maxine McInnes  
Committee members:  
- Tricia Bott  
- Elaine Lightbody  
- Jim Lightbody  
- Tony Bott  
- Aileen Clarke  
- Stephanie Edgeworth

### Website:

<http://mountgambierhistorygroup.weebly.com>

Email: [mountgambierhistorygroup@gmail.com](mailto:mountgambierhistorygroup@gmail.com)

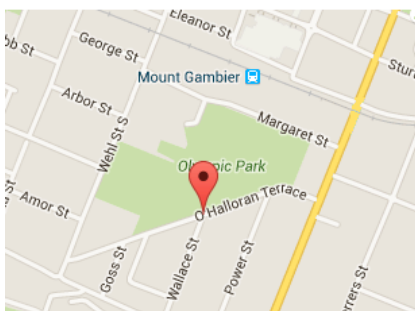
### Annual Membership:

Single: \$16.50

Family: \$25.00

Concession: \$11.00

**The History Room is open for research**  
**Tuesdays 1.30 - 4.30pm**



**REIDY PARK CENTRE,**  
**O Halloran Tce**

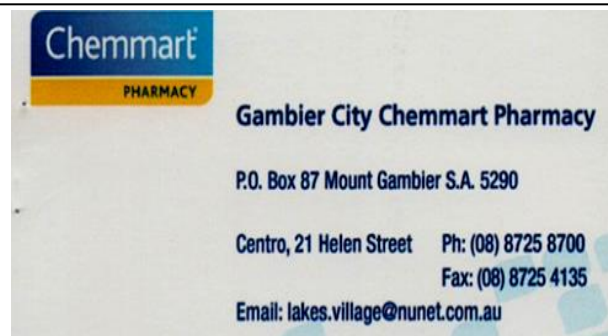
**Also open by appointment**



### Contents:

- Page 3** Photographic exhibition May 26-31. Websites of interest.
- Page 4** Extract from Neil MacIntosh's diary
- Page 5** Norma's Quiz
- Page 6** Ned Kelly's gang heading East
- Page 7** First flight into Mount Gambier
- Page 8** Basil Watson air plane crash  
Convict ancestor  
Main corner 1882
- Page 9** Excerpts from Government gazettes  
1850 to 1853 re SE aborigines
- Page 10** Details and description of 4 local hotels in 1893

**Happy reading from the editing team**  
**Elaine, Norma and Stephanie**



**St Martins Lutheran College**  
Grow in Christ | Growing the Future

3 St Martins Drive Mount Gambier

Phone: (08) 8725 1430 | Fax: (08) 8723 2550

Email: [office@stmartins.sa.edu.au](mailto:office@stmartins.sa.edu.au)

### Disclaimer

The information in this publication is presented in good faith as a service to members of Mount Gambier History Group Inc. While the information is believed to be correct the society takes no responsibility for its accuracy.

No liability is accepted for any statements of opinion, or any error or omissions. Although advertising material is accepted for this newsletter, such acceptance does not imply endorsement by the Mount Gambier History Group

*The work of today  
is the history of tomorrow,  
and we are its makers.*

Juliette Gordon Low

**South Australia's History Festival 2017**  
 Mount Gambier History Group  
 and  
 The Mount Gambier Library  
 present




City of Mount Gambier

**Mt. Gambier through the Lens**  
 a photographic journey through time

26/5/2017 - 31/05/2017  
 10 am to 4 pm daily

**MOUNT GAMBIER  
 CITY HALL  
 MAIN CORNER**

Vintage Camera Display  
 by The National Trust  
 Mount Gambier Branch

DIARY DATE:

**26<sup>TH</sup> TO 31 MAY**  
**10 TO 4 DAILY**

**AS PART OF HISTORY  
 MONTH  
 CELEBRATIONS**

SEE DETAILS ON  
 POSTER TO LEFT

### Some websites of interest:

**Passenger records and immigration Early Victorian inward and outward passenger lists** (From Public Records Office of Victoria)

<https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/passenger-records-and-immigration>

Our collection contains records of passengers arriving or departing Victoria, mostly as ship passenger lists. Online searchable and sortable tables of passenger list data for both assisted, unassisted and outward passengers are available.

**Ballarat Benevolent Society Register of Inmates 1860-1901/02 and Register of Inmates - Lying-In Wards 1892/93 - 1915/16**

This transcription of the inmate registers of the Ballarat Benevolent Society is an ongoing project by Brett Weinberg. The inmate registers belong to Ballarat Health Services, who, with Brett, have kindly allowed the Ballarat Historical Society to publish the transcripts on their website.

<http://www.ballarathistoricalsociety.com/index.php/the-collection/bbsr>

**Search convict records** This website allows you to search the British Convict transportation register for convicts transported to Australia between 1787-1867. Information available includes name of convict, known aliases, place convicted, port of departure, date of departure, port of arrival, and the source of the data.

<http://www.convictrecords.com.au/>



1897. Further extracts from the diary of local Trooper Neil Alexander MacIntosh.

**Continuing with extracts from the diary of local Trooper Neil Alexander MacIntosh. Neil was one of six local Mount Gambier Soldiers who were honoured with selection to visit England as South Australian Representatives for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations.**

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June**

As there have been so many invitations to visit people and to go to places of interest also functions to attend that the diary has been somewhat neglected. (A copy of my letter home dated June 7<sup>th</sup>)

The last two afternoons we have been in the great military display and tournament at the Agricultural Hall Islington. There were 12 of the South Australians down in the programme for riding and jumping competitions, I was one of them. The Scots Greys were supplying us with horses, but they can't jump much. We were down there yesterday and all ready but the competition was postponed. I don't think I will go up again.

*From this last entry, the remainder of his story is not recorded as a day by day diary. It seems the actual event of the Grand Diamond Jubilee*


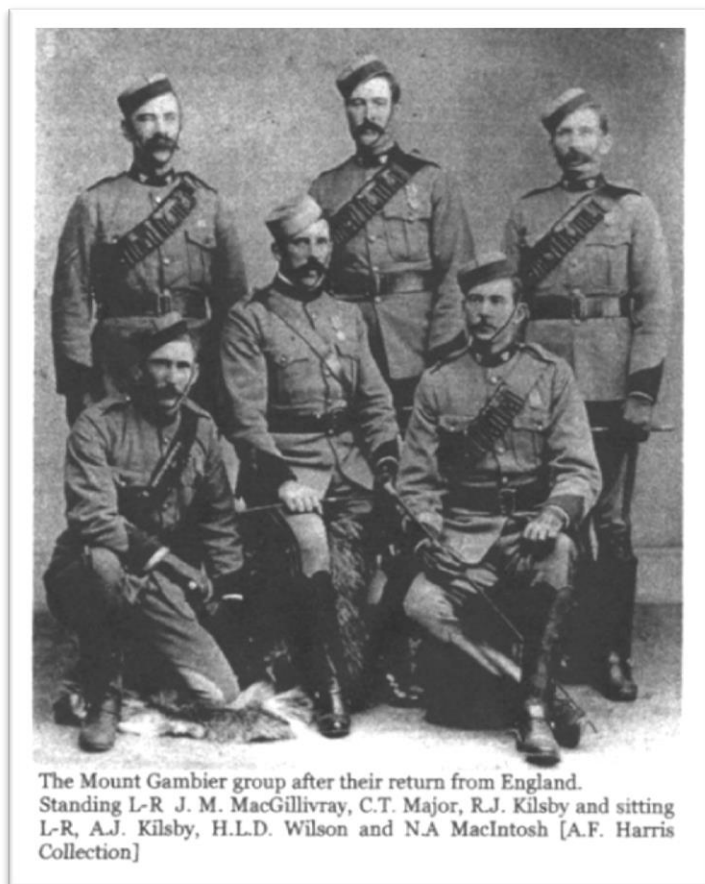
*Procession came and went with the usual grand*

*celebrations but no mention in the diary. A more detailed description of the lead up to and the actual day 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1897 can be found in the book written by Andrew J Kilsby titled "Lions Of The Day", of which we have a copy in the Military section at The Mount Gambier History Group's rooms.*

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of June, our Contingent caught a special train to Portsmouth and had a grand reception there. One of the finest pleasure boats in England to take us through the fleet with breakfast and luncheon provided. We were anchored in the middle of the fleet when the Royal Party went through. We gave a tremendous lot of cheering. The reports of the large guns going were grand. Another invitation down to Portsmouth Docks. Shown right through the docks including the "Magnificent" one of the latest battleships.

**July 2<sup>nd</sup>.** To Windsor Palace, grand lunch. Reviewed by the Queen. The next day at Buckingham Palace, presented with Jubilee Medal by the Prince of Wales.

**To be continued..**His return to Scotland to visit relatives.



Salon 7 hair studio hair for  
individuals

8725 2906

## NORMA'S QUIZ

1. In 1879, Mount Gambier was put on alert because of the possibility that Ned Kelly and his gang may pay us a visit. This was due to one of his gang having friends here. Which gang member was this?
2. In Mount Gambier during the 1860's lived an interesting character by the name of John Allen. He ran a boarding house and a small fruit shop where Jen's now stands; he conveyed goods and travellers from Pt MacDonnell in a coach called the 'Red Rover' & opened a lemonade & cordial factory with John Reilly. What was his nick name?
3. Rev R A Caldwell was a Minister for St Andrews Church for a record 45 years until his death in 1909. He held strong views about the Sabbath Day of Observance and in 1897 preached against what?
4. In 1883, Spencer Vansittart sold land cheaply to the council for the purpose of a sporting ground & park. It was finally developed in what year?
5. The Mt Gambier Hotel opened in 1862. It is sometimes still called Gifford's. In which year did the Gifford family take over the establishment?



Ring a ring o' roses  
A pocket full of posies  
Atishoo, Atishoo  
We all fall down

### Not so innocent nursery rhyme

This innocent nursery rhyme has its darker side. The ring of roses denotes the red spots of the plague which appeared on the chest, the posies are the flowers people carried to ward it off, the 'atishoo' is the symptom. We all fall down.....

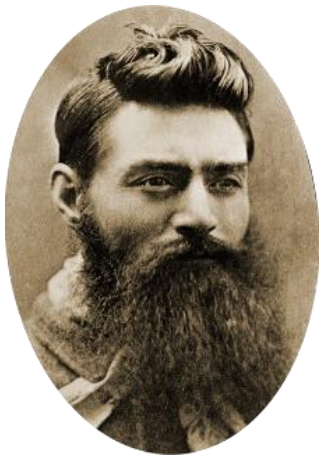
(Taken from Australian Family Tree Connections – Oct 1998 & submitted by the Yates)

## ANSWERS to Quiz

1. Joe Byrne b.1856 – d.1880. He is known as the lieutenant of the Kelly Gang. His skill at writing helped him to write the items that were important in starting the Kelly legend.(Telegram)
2. Ginger Beer Jack"
3. The use of bicycles on Sundays. (History of Mt Gambier)
4. 1910 (History of Mt Gambier)
5. 1923. (The Harvest of their lives)

He then, in conjunction with the late Mr. John Allan ("Gingerbeer Jack") started a cordial factory in Mount Gambier. Mr. Reilly carried on this business for a time and married, but afterwards sold out and went to live at Penola, where, about twenty years ago, he purchased the Prince of Wales Hotel.

Excerpt from John Reilly's Obituary  
'The Border Watch' January 30th 1904 qw12



## WE HAVE PROOF!

### THE KELLY GANG WAS EXPECTED IN MOUNT GAMBIER!

During a recent trip to the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne, our diligent historian, Lynn Lowe uncovered evidence that states in all probability Ned Kelly and his gang would pay a visit to Mount Gambier. This takes the form of the following telegram sent to Superintendent Palmer, dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 1879.

It reads as follows:-

*Re: four armed men.  
Keep officers of  
adjoining districts*

*fully informed of what is known of the party.  
Byrne has friends at Mount Gambier & some of  
outlaws may try to make their way in that  
direction*

*Signed C H Nicholson, A C Police*

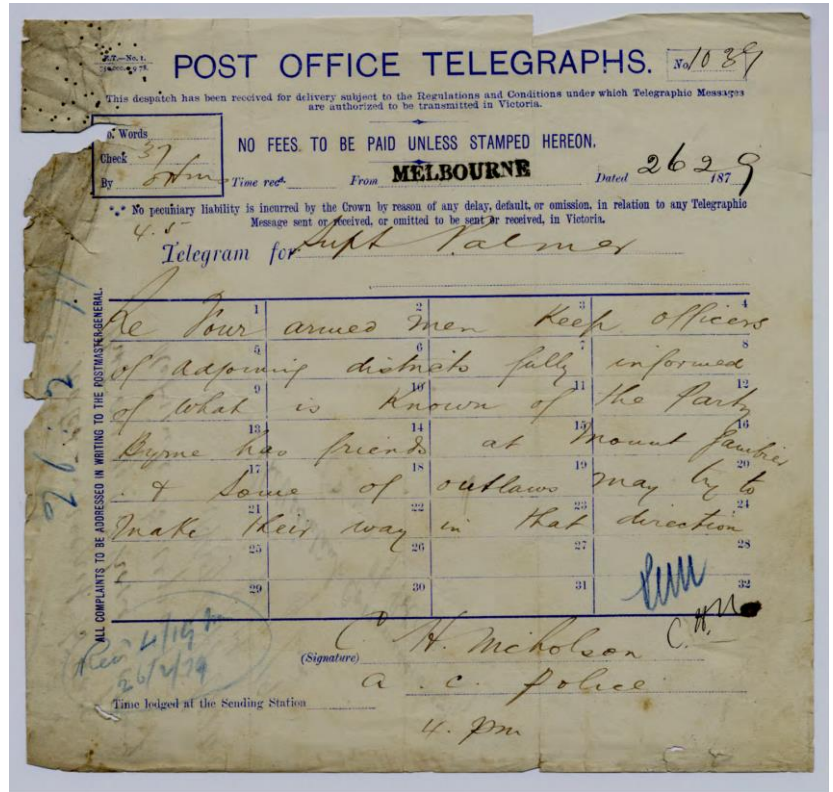
In the early months of 1879, the Border Watch printed several articles regarding a visit by Ned Kelly to Mount Gambier, which caused a lot of excitement. The idea of the Kelly's visiting this locality was generally pooh-poohed but, on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1878, it was stated that a person very like Edward Kelly was reported to have been seen at the Muntham sale. The police thought that Mount Gambier was one of the last places the Kelly gang were likely to visit.

They were, however, quite prepared to tackle them should they come.

Apparently the banks in the district were put on alert and managers were requested to keep their powder dry and place themselves in readiness to give the bushrangers a warm reception. The banks had also taken extra precautions to prevent a surprise attack and a good deal of gold held in the South East had been sent to Adelaide.

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1879 the Millicent Correspondent states: - "The Kelly's are coming! And from what one can judge they are expected, as the Millicent police force were supplied with brand new Martini-Henry rifles and cartridges, and it was to be hoped the "boys in blue" would distinguish themselves should the Kelly gang visit."

But, I believe the closest Mount Gambier got to a visit from the infamous Ned Kelly and his gang was a collection of waxworks which opened on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1879 in the Institute Hall comprising of 70 life size figures including the Kelly's. Thus the Kelly's came! But, I am left wondering who Byrne's friends were in Mount Gambier??



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## MOUNT GAMBIER'S FIRST "AIRMAIL"

A postcard carried by the first "airmail" from Mount Gambier to Melbourne was found among some old papers recently by Mr. J. R. Dowling.

The postcard was addressed to his father, Mr. Dowling c/o Sargood Bros, South Melbourne, and bore a Mount Gambier Post Office stamp dated February 15, 1917.

Mr. Dowling remembers his father receiving the postcard and saying to him, "We will put it away; it will be interesting some day."

"Little did I think then I would be a resident of Mount Gambier," added Mr. Dowling.

It was carried by the first aeroplane to visit Mount Gambier. The pilot was Basil G. Watson, who flew from Hamilton in 56 minutes. Exhibition flights were given at the racecourse. Most business premises closed and hundreds of people went to the racecourse but the day was wet and little was seen of the plane in flight. On the following day, exhibition flights were made over the town.

A month later Watson was killed when flying over Melbourne. His photograph and signature appeared on the postcard.

### 350 POSTCARDS

He took 350 postcards from Mount Gambier. They bore a penny stamp and the notice, "The Commonwealth Postal Department does not take any responsibility for safe delivery of these cards."

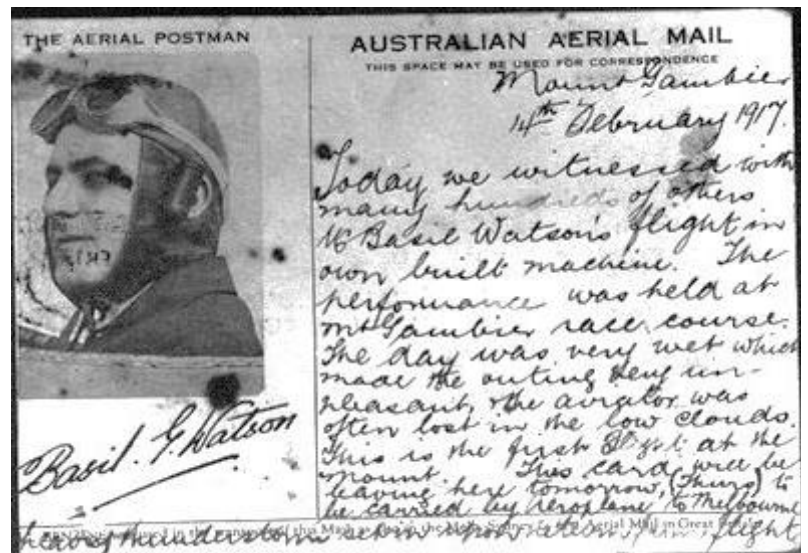
His flight over Mount Gambier was announced by the ringing of the fire bell. People rushed into the streets and saw the small, white biplane hovering 2,000 feet above Commercial Street. It looped the loop twice, sight to most people as it appeared a very dangerous feat."

Watson flew on to Casterton in 23 minutes.

### BUILT OWN PLANE

The plane was built by Watson, who gathered ideas about aircraft while in England. It was described as a scout tractor biplane, single seater, fitted with a seven cylinder 50 h.p. Gnome engine. It measured about 30 feet by 25.

BASIL WATSON, FIRST MAN to FLY to MOUNT GAMBIER. 1917



Mount Gambier 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 1917

Today we witnessed with many hundreds of others Mr Basil Watson's flight in his own built machine. The performance was held at Mount Gambier race course. The day was very wet which made the outing very unpleasant and the aviator was often lost in the low clouds. This is the first flight at the Mount. This card will be leaving here tomorrow (Thurs) to be carried by aeroplane to Melbourne. A heavy thunderstorm set in upon cessation of flight.



The Border Watch 17<sup>th</sup> September 1949

Photos from Arthur Collection  
State Library of SA

A sad POSTSCRIPT to the story on Basil Watson on the previous page

## AN AVIATOR KILLED AFTER A FLIGHT OVER MELBOURNE

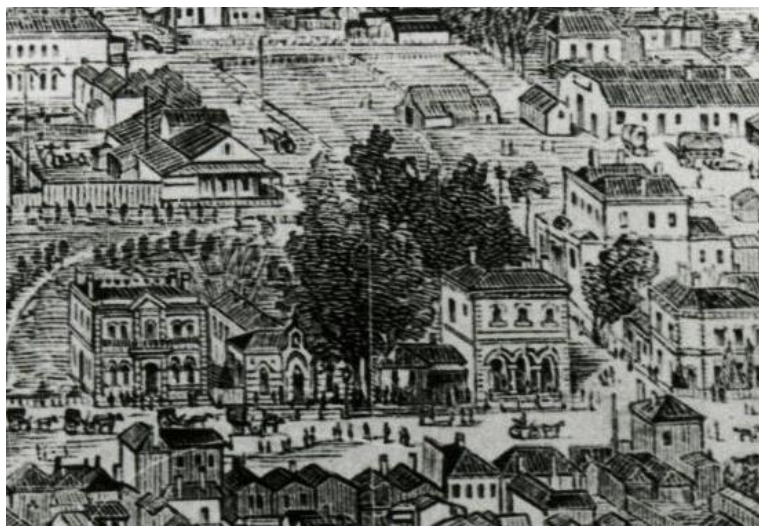
Melbourne March 28

Mr Basil G Watson, a Victorian aviator, (23 met his death in tragic circumstances near the Laverton military camp this afternoon. After flying from Albert Park over Melbourne to Point Cook, he was looping the loop at a height of about 2,000 ft when the wings of his machine buckled, and he was dashed downward at a terrific rate. He fell into the bay within about 60 ft of the shore and was killed almost instantly. The military camp was crowded with soldiers, who had been interested spectators of the display. When Mr Watson fell it seemed certain that the machine would fall right into the midst of the men, but the ill-fated airman realising the danger in which the men were placed succeeded, by a plucky effort in steering, clear of the camp. He was found lying in 3ft of water beneath the wreckage of his aeroplane with his body badly crushed. When the accident occurred he was just preparing to land after a magnificent flight over Melbourne.

Our readers will remember that Mr Watson visited Mount Gambier a few weeks ago and gave an exhibition of aeroplaning. They will all regret to hear of his tragic death.

On learning of the sad accident the Mayor of Mount Gambier (Mr G R Renfrey) telegraphed to the young aviator's father as follows: - "Shocked to learn Basil's sad end. Mount Gambier mourns with you a brilliant aviator and bright life terminated.

"The Border Watch' 17th September 1949



Sketch of the 'Main Corner' in 1882

The **Town Hall** built in 1882 on left doesn't have its clock tower yet. The clock was donated by T C Ellis to celebrate his marriage and was erected in 1883.

Next to that the **Institute** building which built in 1868 and opened in 1869, before the second storey was added in 1887.

What we all call the old **Post Office** was originally built as the Telegraph Station in 1865 can be seen on the right behind the **National Bank**.

**Shops** facing onto Commercial Street in the foreground.

### STUDY OPPORTUNITY

#### **Want to know more about the nation's convict past?**

*Convict Ancestors* will use the wealth of expertise in convict history at the University of Tasmania to walk students through Australia's UNESCO-listed convict archive. It will include important information on how to read and interpret convict records as well as a host of tips for making sense of trial records and information gleaned from other judicial and penal series. This unit is a must for anyone interested in the nation's convict past.

**Online:** *Convict Ancestors* is part of a fully online suite of units to enable flexible study.

The unit is covered by a full HECs scholarship, meaning that you will not incur a tuition fee or debt for study of the unit.

For more information, please visit <http://www.utas.edu.au/arts-law/study/convict-ancestors>.

**SHOWER OF FROGS.**—Mr. J. Medhurst, jun., of Glenoce, reports that during a heavy shower near his place on Monday a large number of tiny frogs fell to the ground with the rain. He was outside at the time, driving in a cart, and many of the frogs alighted in the cart. On Thursday "The Wandering Minstrel" brought to our office a bottle containing samples of the frogs. They were active little brutes, something less than an inch long. The general explanation of this phenomenon is that the frogs are caught up in a whirlwind from some neighboring waterhole or swamp, and they fall to the ground when the storm that lifted them exhausts itself.

"The Border Watch' 23 April 1904



## Snippets from Tony Bott's notes from Government Gazettes 1850 to 1853 re Aborigines

<p><b>January 1850</b></p>	<p>Captain Brewer reports Number of aborigine individuals receiving supplies from Robe Police Station</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Adult Males</th> <th>Adult Females</th> <th>Child Males</th> <th>Child Females</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>19</td> <td>29</td> <td>13</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>28</td> <td>36</td> <td>21</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>30</td> <td>45</td> <td>13</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>12</td> <td>19</td> <td>9</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>11</td> <td>24</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>0</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>19</td> <td>24</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>21</td> <td>38</td> <td>9</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Adult Males	Adult Females	Child Males	Child Females	January	19	29	13	12	February	28	36	21	6	March	30	45	13	7	July	12	19	9	3	August	11	24	9	7	September	13	14	0	7	October	19	24	6	9	November	21	38	9	12
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<p><b>January 1850</b></p>	<p>Mount Gambier Police: 1 Corporal, 2 Constables, 1 Native Constable, 4 police horses <b>July 1850</b> Mount Gambier Police: 1 Corporal, 2 Constables, 0 Native Constable 4 police horses</p>																																													
<p><b>April 1850</b></p>	<p>Captain Butler reports that the Aborigines in Robe and Mount Gambier are of good conduct. Captain Brewer reports on population of Aborigines in Robe area: 20 males, 10 females, 17 boys, 15 girls:2 births and 1 death</p>																																													
<p><b>January 1851</b></p>	<p>Report from Captain Brewer re murder of a local Aborigine by 4 others: their arrest and trial in Adelaide. Problems over witnesses</p>																																													
<p><b>Jan &amp; Oct 1851</b></p>	<p>Mount Gambier Police: 1 Corporal, 2 Constables, 1 Native Constable, 4 police horses</p>																																													
<p><b>June 1852</b></p>	<p>Report for Guichen Bay, South East Division from Capt Brewer: Many shepherds have left the District for the goldfields in Victoria. On many stations Aborigines have taken over as shepherds. It is estimated that 150,000 sheep are in the care of these men. Some are driving bullock teams.</p>																																													
<p><b>July 1852</b></p>	<p>Flour distribution at Robe to Aborigines: March 6<sup>th</sup> 10 men, 10 women, 6 boys April 12<sup>th</sup> 4 men, 12 women, 3 boys, 3 girls May 4<sup>th</sup> 6 men, 13 women, 2 boys, 3 girls</p>																																													
<p><b>November 1852</b></p>	<p>Report from Guichen Bay from Capt Brewer The supply of blankets arrived from The Protector of Aborigines and given to women and children.</p>																																													
<p><b>All of 1852</b></p>	<p>Mount Gambier Police: 1 Corporal, 2 Constables, 1 Native Constable, 2 police horses (The other 2 horses had been requisitioned for increased police presence in the Robe area because so many people, including Chinese, were arriving there on way to the Ballarat Goldfields.)</p>																																													
<p><b>June 1853</b></p>	<p>Report from Capt Brewer re good conduct of the local Aborigines during the present quarter. I have to report that I have not heard of any complaints against the natives in this District during the quarter The general part of them are now constantly in the employ of the settlers by which means they obtain plenty of food, good comfortable clothing and many of them, money wages. Their services are so important in these times of scarcity of labour that I have proposed to Mr Moorhouse (The Protector of Aborigines) to discontinue the monthly issue of flour to the men, it being an inducement to some of them to remain idle and unsettled. Mr Moorhouse has expressed to me his concurrence in my views. I shall therefore, in future, issue flour for the women and children only.</p>																																													

**Details from the annual inspection of hotels prior to renewal of**

**licence 8<sup>th</sup> February 1893.** Note: At the time hotels had public bedrooms and private bedrooms – not sure what the difference was.

**Six Mile Inn**

There is a plaque showing the site of the inn near the roadside opposite the Mount Gambier.

Publican **Yaxley James Mays Height**

Location: Peeweena

Bars:	Tap rooms	Number and size of bedrooms in feet	Distance of sitting rooms from tap	What forage is kept
One	One	Four 14x8 feet, 14x8 feet, 14x11 feet, 13x8 feet	7 feet 30 feet	Chaff and bran

**Description:** House partly wood and partly stone. House and premises in tolerably good condition. Rough accommodations. Furniture ordinary. House has been well conducted during past 12 months. No cases against it. Labouring classes generally frequent this house. Nearest hotels are those in Mount Gambier. 6 miles distant.

**South Australian Hotel**



1898 Les Hill Collection

Publican: **Annie E Prior**

Location: Mount Gambier

Bars:	Tap rooms	Number and size of bedrooms in feet	Distance of sitting rooms from tap	What forage is kept
One	One	Eight 4 at 11x7 feet, 2 at 8 ½ x 8 ½ feet, 2 at 12 ½ x 8 feet	16 feet 6 feet 2 feet 10 feet	Chaff

**Description:** Stone house. House and premises on tolerably good condition. Very fair accommodation. Furniture tolerably good. House has been fairly well conducted during the past 12 months. One conviction for having door of Bar open on Sunday against it. All classes frequent this house and are well conducted. There are 9 other public houses in Mount Gambier.

**Farmers Inn**



1869 Les Hill Collection

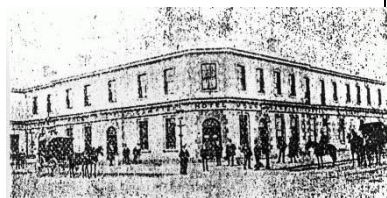
Publican: **Patrick Kenny**

Location: Mount Gambier

Bars:	Tap rooms	Number and size of bedrooms in feet	Distance of sitting rooms from tap	What forage is kept
One	One	Six 2 at 8x8 feet, 2 at 8 ½ x 8 ½ feet, 1 at 15 x 9 ½ feet 1 at 10 x 7 feet	Adjoining 8 feet 14 feet	Bran Chaff Oats

**Description:** Stone house. House and premises in fair condition. Fair accommodation. Furniture tolerably good. House has been well conducted during the past 12 months. No cases against it. Tradesmen and farmers and generally frequent this house and are well conducted. There are 9 other public houses in Mount Gambier.

**Mount Gambier Hotel**



1898 Les Hill Collection

Publican: **Saul Solomon**

Location: Mount Gambier

Bars:	Tap rooms	Number and size of bedrooms in feet	Distance of sitting rooms from tap	What forage is kept
One	One	Twenty 8 at 9x7 feet, 4 at 17 x 12 feet, 3 at 11½ x 11 ½ feet 2 at 18 x 10 feet 1 at 15 x 11 feet 1 at 16 x 10 feet 1 at 17 x 8 feet	30 feet 50 feet 22 feet Adjoining Adjoining 42 feet	Hay Oats

**Description:** Stone house. House and premises in good condition. Very good accommodation. Furniture very good. House has been well conducted during the past 12 months. No cases against it. The upper classes generally frequent this house. There are 9 other public houses in Mt Gambier.