



**Altona Laverton
Historical Society Inc.**
PO Box 236 Altona 3018

NEWSLETTER

President's Report By Kim Reilly

The year has got off to a very busy and exciting start with our Devonshire Tea events in March and April drawing in large groups of people from far and wide. Our volunteers have enthusiastically conducted three school tours, a visiting cub troop and two other social groups who came across to Altona to visit the Homestead.



As we move into the Heritage Festival, we are anticipating more people will drop in to look through the Homestead and hear our volunteers talk about its colourful history of the past 170 plus years. This year is also the 150th anniversary of the passing of Alfred Langhorne and our first Newsletter commenced the story of his life and his connection with Altona and Laverton. In this issue we provide the second instalment of this intriguing story. It has been great to revisit Alfred's story and we have learnt several new events that have not been written about before and we set the record straight on a few other events.

Our Family Research discussion group kicked off in March and is gaining interest with people across the breadth of Hobsons Bay attending to chat about their family research stories, to find out research hints and gain insight, from others, about getting over stumbling blocks that we all face in putting our family tree together.

Our keen volunteers are currently working with two local project groups by providing images, stories, and knowledge on two key icons of the City of Hobsons Bay. The first is a video memoir of the Altona Pier which will interview local residents about their thoughts and memories about our much-loved pier that has just completed redevelopment. The other is about community members connection and stories of the Explosive Reserve, otherwise referred to as Trug, TERPS, or the Mago. It is an icon that has been in Altona since 1900. The project is being co-ordinated by Donna Jackson and Megan Slattery and they can be contacted via explosivestories@gmail.com.

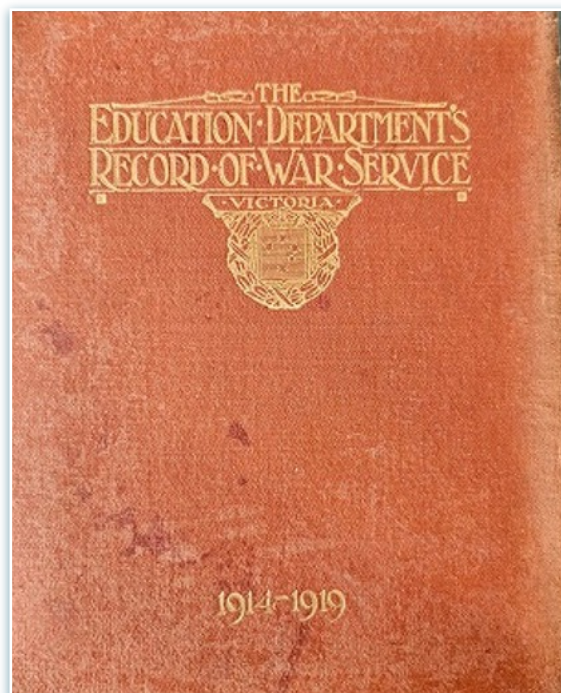
Our research team has been busy scouring through new and old materials that have been donated to the Society. These continue to lead to new stories about the families who shaped the area of Altona, Laverton, Seabrook and Altona Meadows. A day does not go past that we are not learning something new. We are a small but enthusiastic committee and organisation if you are looking to be a part of this dynamic group, please contact us via our website at <https://alhs.com.au> - it is a great way to learn more about this great city in which we live. You only need to put in a small amount of time, some of which can be done at home. Drop in and talk to us or send us an email, we would love to hear from you.

New Acquisition at the Homestead

We were fortunate, last month, that one of our volunteers, was able to pass on a copy of The Education Department's Record of War Service, Victoria, 1914-1919. This book, published to keep before teachers and children, examples of service and sacrifice in a great cause, is presented and was presented to the Altona Primary School c 1921-1922.

From the beginning of World War 1 in August 1914, until it ended in November 1918, teachers from across Victoria enlisted for the Australian Imperial Force and embarked for overseas. Of the 752 enlistments 724 were teachers, two were School Medical Officers, one was a School Nurse, one an Inspector of Schools, while the remaining 24 belonged to the clerical division employed by the Education Department. Of these 146 died.

The book contains information, portraits and biographies of soldiers who were with the Victorian Education Department before joining the Australian Imperial Force. The book is a historical record of great importance, expressing the significance of the work which teachers (overseas and at home) and students in the schools undertook during the Great War.



But it was not only teachers who contributed to the war effort. Children and parents gave 400,000 articles of comfort sent abroad, contributed as a rough estimate 460 tons of supplies to hospitals at home, made contributions of £50,000 to The Young Workers' Patriotic Guild, and £217,419 for the war savings effort in the schools, and £422,470 in general school subscriptions.

We wish to thank the Keenan family of Altona Meadows for locating and passing on this wonderful resource to the Historical Society. It will now become a valued part of our resource library, and if you have a family member who was both a member of the Education Department and served in World War 1, then you are most welcome to view this book or request us to search the contents for you.

employed on Bonney's overland trip was that a quantity of the cattle, within the herd, were owned by William Lonsdale for whom Alfred was employed as an overseer.

William Cooke was a brother to Elizabeth Vigors Cooke who had married William Langhorne, in London in 1825, and thereby a brother-in-law to Alfred⁴. Prior to his departure from England, William Cooke had entered a trading partnership with his mother-in-law Sarah August, formerly Byron nee Maskall. Their intention was to establish a general store in Adelaide and trade as merchants under the name of August, Cooke & Company.

Following a stay of just over a month in Adelaide, the resilient Alfred returned to Port Phillip, with funds totalling some £522 owing to William Lonsdale. It was due to the success of their joint venture that Lonsdale provided Langhorne with a further £500 to acquire more stock while they deliberated upon their future association. It was while Alfred was back in Melbourne that he attended the first public auction of crown land, in June 1840, that took place in Prahran⁵ where he purchased two allotments for a total of £1,908. Two months later he sold one of the properties and half of the other for £2,314, being a very tidy return over a two-month period.

To ensure that his enterprise with William Lonsdale, for the overlanding of cattle, would not waiver, Alfred Langhorne took passage to Adelaide on the brig *Rapid* leaving on 18 September 1840. Twelve days later he consulted with his brother-in-law William Cooke who confirmed that he held orders from settlers and wholesale carcass butchers, and all were eager buyers. At Cooke's Hindley Street office Alfred was introduced to Mrs Sarah August, a partner in the firm, and her daughter, Sarah Marianne August. The August family had arrived in Adelaide aboard the *City of London* on 19 March 1840. Alfred and Sarah met again socially when Governor George Gawler held a reception at Government House, on 13 October, to celebrate his second anniversary in office. When the Gawler officiated at the opening of a port facility, the following day, amongst the official guests were Mr. & Mrs. W.R. Cooke, Mrs. August, Miss August, and Mr. A. Langhorne⁶.



Sarah Marianne August

Sarah Marianne August was born in 1825 in Belize, British Honduras, the only daughter born to John Samuel August and Sarah Byron nee Maskall. John August had been a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Honduras Militia and had operated a Mahogany plantation. There he met the widow, Sarah Byron, who had lost her husband (Joseph Byron) in 1821, when she was only 29 years of age. Sarah had three children to her previous marriage but only her daughter, Mary Byron, had survived to reach adulthood. John and Sarah then had six children, but only four survived to adulthood. Following the abolition of slavery, in 1835, John Samuel August and his family left Honduras for England on March 1838. He had spent near on fifty years in Honduras and on 29 August 1839, at Greenwich, John Samuel August passed away aged 66. It was shortly after this that Sarah August and her three sons, Robert Maskall, John Samuel Jnr and

⁴ The Register (South Australia) 27 March 1839

⁵ These properties were to later become Como House.

⁶ The Register (South Australia) 17 October 1840

George Hornby August and daughter Sarah Marianne August sailed for Adelaide, Australia onboard the *City of London*.

Alfred and Sarah's relationship appeared to evolve quickly, for their wedding was planned for just after Easter⁷ the following year (1841). At the time Alfred was 23 years old, an overlander, businessman, and was a relative of the police magistrate in Melbourne. As well he had quite a land holding between Adelaide and Melbourne, and beyond, would have certainly appeared quite dashing to a young 15-year-old, newly arrived in the Australian colonies. At the time, Alfred Langhorne had established his merchant offices in Bourke Street, Melbourne and his private residence was at Eastern Hill⁸ in Melbourne. Alfred quickly sailed back to Melbourne, leaving Sarah and her mother to plan the wedding. Alfred was keen to organise another cattle and sheep drive from New South Wales across to Adelaide, but having learnt much from his last drive with Charles Bonney, he planned to avoid the hardship that he encountered on that trip and chose to follow the logic of explorer Charles Sturt and follow the Hume River and then travel overland crossing the Murray River to the north of Adelaide near where, on today's maps, Victorian, New South Wales and South Australian borders meet.

By the close of 1840, advertisements were being published in the Sydney Herald for the purchase of some 2,000 ewes and two hundred cows or three hundred and fifty head of cattle. The advertisements must have been successful because Alfred, his brother Charles and his soon to be brother-in-law, Robert Maskell August, sailed on the *Ariadne* on 7 February 1841, from Melbourne, with additional three stockmen, bound for Sydney.

Alfred and his team spent time ensuring that the party was well equipped and well provisioned for the long trek to the Adelaide markets. With all the preparation done, Alfred left Charles and Robert and sailed on 20 March aboard the *Minerva* to Adelaide and his pending wedding to Sarah Marianne August. He arrived on 4 April, with three weeks to then prepare for his wedding day and organise the sale of the stock now on its way from New South Wales.

The South Australian Register of Saturday 1 May 1841, reported the wedding event as follows:

'On Saturday, the 24th inst. at Trinity Church, Adelaide, by the Reverend C. B. Howard, Alfred Langhorne Esq., of Melbourne, Port Phillip, to Sarah, the only daughter of the late John S. August, Esq., of Belize, Honduras.'



Holy Trinity Church, Adelaide circa 1840

⁷ Easter Sunday was 11 April 1841

⁸ Kerr's January 1841 Melbourne Almanac & Port Phillip Directory.

The event was later picked up by the Adelaide Chronicle (5 May), the South Australian (4 May), and the Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser (24 May) back in Melbourne.

Alfred and Sarah's attendants, at their wedding, were William Robert Smith Cooke and Jane Giles⁹. Due to her age, consent to the marriage was required of her mother, Sarah August. The marriage certificate noted that Sarah August was living at Glenfield House, near Walkerville. There is no mention of any of the Langhorne brothers or their partners journeying to Adelaide and attending the wedding. We know that his brother Charles and brother-in-law, Robert August, were still on their trek with cattle and sheep from New South Wales and given that William Cooke stood in as his witness it is likely that business concerns had kept the other brothers in Williamstown attending to their affairs. It is also not known how long Alfred had planned to stay in Adelaide with his new bride, but it is reasonable to think that he would have planned to be there when his brother, Charles, brought the livestock into the Adelaide markets and the stock was sold.



'Mrs August House near Adelaide' by Alexander Tolmer (State Library NSW [PXA 458/Item 8])

At the end of April all was looking rosy for Alfred, but little did he know that there were dark clouds appearing on the horizon. By the following month, word had reached Adelaide that the overland stock route from New South Wales had become extremely dangerous due to attacks by large numbers of aborigines. It is not known what initiated these initial attacks, but one can assume that with drives of cattle and sheep now constantly encroaching on your lands, trampling vegetation, and possibly scaring away native animals, and with no compensation, the indigenous clans would have been entitled to be angry. Alfred had by now become very concerned for the safety of his brother Charles and brother-in-

⁹ Jane Giles was the daughter of South Australian pioneer William Giles.

law Robert, who were heading to the precise area where attacks had been occurring and therefore in mortal danger, not to mention losses of the livestock that they were bringing with them.

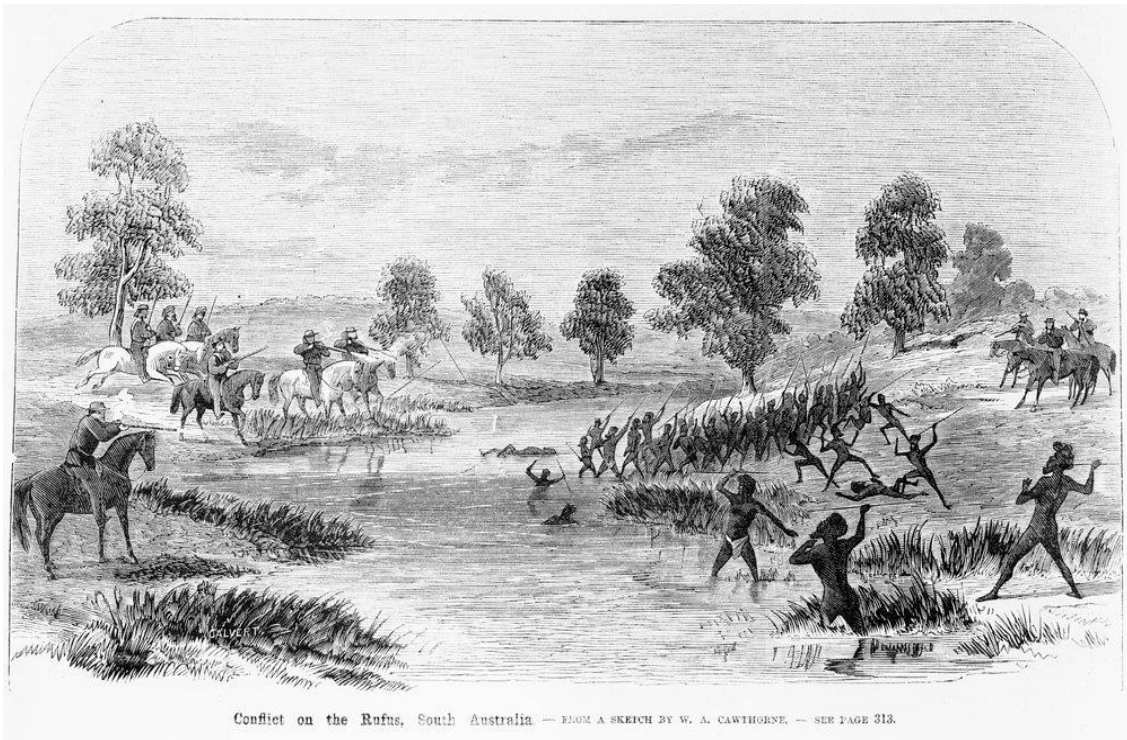
Initially, Governor George Gawler sent Major Thomas O'Halloran, with 23 mounted police troopers, out to recover the stolen sheep and drays from the overland party of Henry Field and Henry Inman, but before they reached the area of the conflict they were recalled to Adelaide. The reasoning for the recall was that Governor Gawler had been replaced by Governor George Grey. George Grey's conviction was vastly differed to that of his predecessor in that he felt that 'the Local Government would never suffice to afford protection for all parties who might desire it and if proprietors, for the sake of gain, were to venture with their flocks and herds so far beyond the limits of the settled districts, they voluntarily encounter a risk from which they are bound to protect themselves.'

This, however, did not stop Henry Field's brother, Lieutenant William George Field establishing a small party of armed men who set out, at the end of April 1841, to do what Thomas O'Halloran was prevented from doing. They were confronted by a well prepared and drilled aboriginal force of about 300 who eventually drove Field's men back and saw them quickly retreat to Adelaide having now done more harm to relations than good.

At an Auction Company's rooms, in King William Street, Adelaide, a meeting was convened by several residents who showed concern for the safety of overlanders who were being harassed by the Maraua tribe of aborigines in the area of 'The Island Country'¹⁰ on the Murray River near Lake Victoria. It was decided that a committee be formed, consisting of several gentlemen, who would draw up a Memorial and present it to His Excellency the Governor George Grey. These gentlemen were - Mr. W Giles, Mr. W Cooke, Mr. Stevenson, Mr. George Hawker, Mr. McFarlane and Mr. A Langhorne. It was William Giles, together with four other local residents that presented their petition to the new Governor. Alfred Langhorne wrote a personal letter to the Colonial Secretary, Robert Gouger on 24 May, pleading that action be taken to protect his men who were still heading towards Adelaide and a life-threatening situation.

On 31 May 1841; the Commissioner of Police South Australia, Major Thomas O'Halloran, and the Protector of Aborigines, Dr Matthew Moorhouse, departed Adelaide under instructions from Governor Grey and accompanied by a troupe of police plus volunteers, bullock drivers and cooks, totalling some 68 persons; charged with recovering livestock that was stolen from the Overlanders. Alfred Langhorne, and several other volunteers also joined them. What Sarah Langhorne felt about this, or the August family, we have no record, but seeing her new husband head of into certain danger would have been a huge worry for any new wife but also, she would have had great concern for the safety of her brother, Robert August, who was also in mortal danger.

¹⁰ The reference to the name 'the Islands Country' was because it contained labyrinth or creeks and small river branches that appeared to create a multiplicity of islands. It is believed that 300 to 400 or more aborigines occupied this area.



Rufus River Massacre
 (State Library of Victoria, IMP27/07/66/308, engraving by Samuel Calvert)

Before the expedition could meet the overlanders, Charles Langhorne's men and the Maraura had already clashed at the Rufus River crossing, later to be known as 'Langhorne Ferry', situated between Lake Victoria and the Murray River. Overlanders were at their most vulnerable, when undertaking these river crossings, as the men needed to split up with some needed to lead the stock across and whilst others pushed the herd from behind.

Four of Charles' stockmen had died in the fight, which when known by the police added to the 'justification' of their actions. Several Maraura men were also killed, but this information was absent in Charles Langhorne's official report to O'Halloran and also in O'Halloran's report to Governor Grey, it was only included within the report made by Dr Moorhouse¹¹. It was now 23 June, luckily both Charles and Robert were alive and unhurt and were now reunited with Alfred. Much of their herd were scattered, with all their sheep gone but 710 head of cattle were still under the control of Charles' stockman.

It is, however, on the return journey that an alleged stain raised against Alfred Langhorne's character. It was said that when asked by James Hawker to allow some of his cattle to be killed for fresh meat for the volunteers and police, it was reported back that Alfred only allowed one to be killed and refused to even sell some to James Hawker for the purpose. This action caused James Hawker, in his journal to describe Alfred Langhorne as a 'churlish beneficariere.' This account was all reported in The Register

¹¹ Moorhouse's report of Charles Langhorne's verbal account to the police party states that five Aboriginal men were shot dead by the overlanders. Moorhouse's report to Grey, 30 June 1841, PRSA no 92/encl 2. News of these deaths does not appear in Langhorne's official report to Major O'Halloran, 22 June 1841, PRSA no 92/encl 3.

(South Australia) on 24 July 1841, page 3, where it also reported that another member of the rescue party, Captain James Beevor, had also requested the same of Alfred Langhorne.

On 27 July 1841, Charles Langhorne wrote to editor of The Register, which appeared on 31 July 1841, stating the following: -

TO THE EDITORS OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
REGISTER.

GENTLEMEN - In reply to a letter which appeared in your paper of the 24th instant, and signed "James C. Hawker," I beg to contradict the assertion therein made, of my having refused to supply the party with meat; also the answer which I am stated to have given to the gentlemen volunteers. My brother's instructions to me were, to supply the party with meat as soon as ever an opportunity offered for slaughtering.

I am also quite unaware of any of the party being afflicted with scurvy. Previous to leaving the party, I slaughtered a bullock, and supplied the volunteers and police with what they required.

I wish to add, that I feel most grateful to Major O'Halloran and the gentlemen volunteers for the kind assistance they rendered to myself and party, in rescuing us from the danger to which we were exposed.

CHAS LANGHORNE

As much as Charles could respond to these accusations, whether true or not, the mud that had been flung and some of it was to stick to the Langhorne name. However, on reading articles by Robert Clyne¹² and Amanda Nettlebeck¹³, Major O'Halloran could be described as a 'dominant personality' who had a military background well versed in warfare and an inability to appreciate the civil function of a police department. This characteristic seemed to pass down to his men as well. They saw themselves not as a civil police force but as being owed the spoils of war. It is interesting that they focussed this attention on Alfred Langhorne and not on the earlier party of Henry Field and Henry Inman, both South Australians. Did O'Halloran, and his men, stay out longer than they anticipated and was this reason because they wished to teach the Maraura a 'lesson'. Who really knows what actually took place, what I always believe is that no matter how thin you slice salami there will always be two side.

O'Halloran's aim, with this expedition, was not one of a peacekeeper but one where a severe lesson to this fierce tribe would greatly conduce to the preservation of life hereafter. So, were the Langhorne's not generous enough to the expedition or were the expedition leaders, and their sense of all conquering and to be trifled with, possessing an expectation beyond what was necessary. As we find sometimes in history, the victor sets the terms of what is truth. Alfred appeared unconcerned with what was being said of him and remained silent.

The Langhorne brothers did not proceed to Adelaide with the police, instead they drove the depleted herd of cattle to rich grazing lands by the Bremer River some 44 miles (70km) east - a site Alfred had squatted on previously and where he had established a temporary station. In later years this place

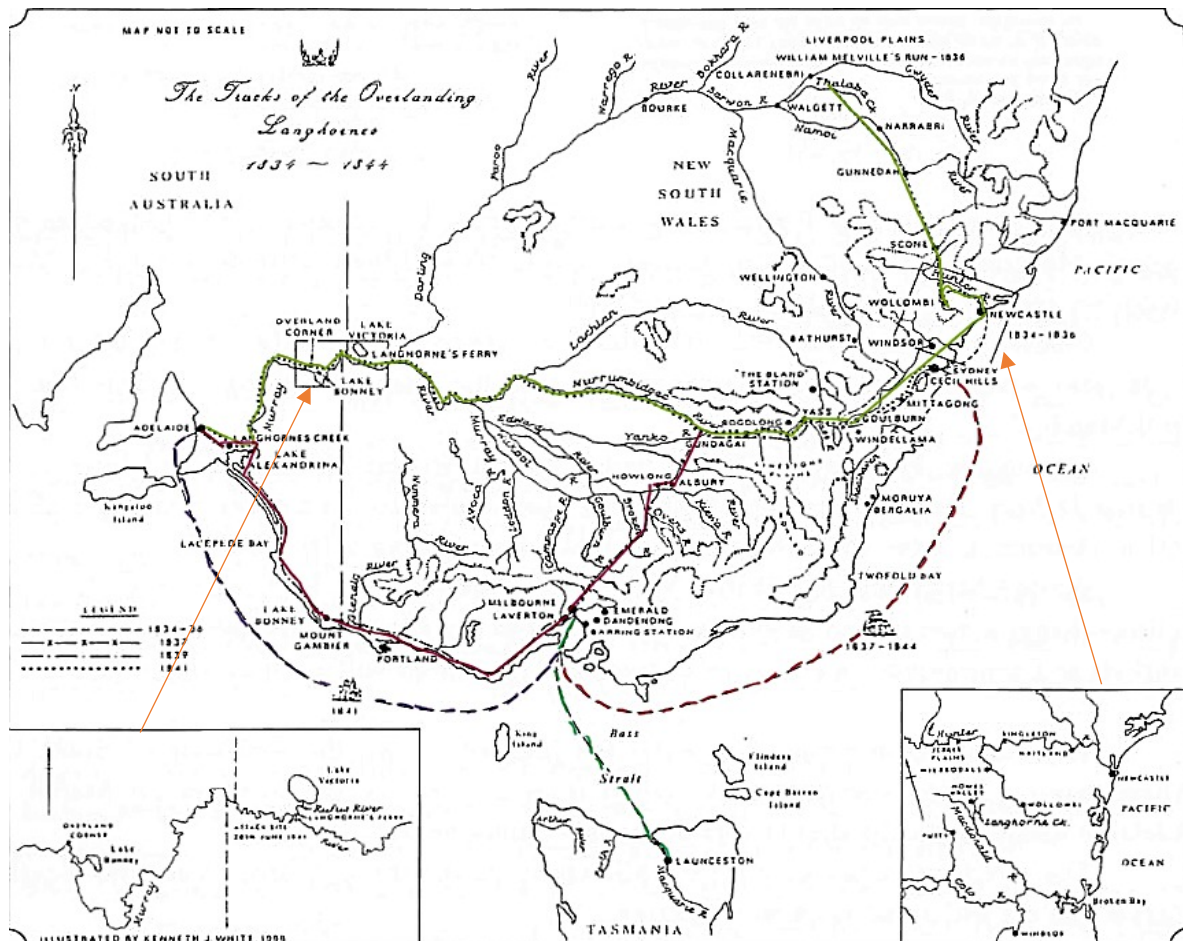
¹² At War with the Natives: From Coorong to the Rufus, 1841. Insights into South Australian History.

¹³ Mythologising Frontier: Narrative Versions of the Rufus River Conflict, 1841-1899, Journal of Australian Studies

would become known to overlanders as 'Langhorne's Station' even though Alfred had, by then, long abandoned it. The township that developed, in this location in around 1854, became known as Langhorne's Creek.

In early August the Langhorne's arranged the sale of their remaining 710 head of cattle at an approximate price of £7.0.0. a head, which suggests the overlanded herd grossed Alfred near to £5,000. During the period of 23 to 25 August, Alfred settled his debts paying by bill of exchange various people, but he ignored the call made by solicitor William James and James C. Hawker to pay a portion of the £121.8.5 being the costs incurred to rescue the overlanders which included Charles Langhorne.

It needs to be remembered that Alfred's relative, William Cooke, had already provided provisions to the party, and it was a government initiative and the duty of the police to undertake this expedition. The expedition appeared to be poorly provisioned and planned, from the start, and the blame for this could be laid at the feet of Major Thomas O'Halloran. Given what occurred during this time and the subsequent massacre at Rufus River, those in authority were possibly looking for anything they could to deflect attention away from their actions.



The Overlanding Routes of the Langhorne Brothers

The barque *William* returned Sarah and Alfred to Melbourne on 28 August 1841. They were accompanied by Charles Langhorne, Robert Maskell August and Sarah's maid. There were also five cases of drapery aboard as cargo. Back in Melbourne, Alfred and Sarah, took up residence in Alfred's Stephen Street residence, (now Exhibition Street), Eastern Hill. The couple were soon mixing within Melbourne's social scene where they were included amongst the guests of the visiting Governor, George Gipps¹⁴, at the first official Port Phillip Levee (presentation of dignitaries) on 25 October 1841. On the night of 24 November 1841, Sarah Langhorne was escorted by James Graham¹⁵ to dinner at the home of Andrew and Georgiana McCrae. According to William Westgarth¹⁶, a Scottish importer, 'Mrs. Alfred Langhorne was one of the most beautiful young women in early Melbourne'.

Melbourne, by the end of 1841 had grown to a population of about 11,738 who were going about their business with some air of confidence. Ship loads of immigrants, from England, Scotland and Ireland were being directed to Port Phillip to meet the increased demand for both skilled and unskilled labour. A boom resulted as the new settlement, now only six years old, was experiencing rapid growth. Speculators bought land rashly as credit was readily available at banks even for those of no real substance.

The partnership of William Lonsdale and Alfred Langhorne was still strong and adventurous. One only needed to peruse the manifest of the ship *Samuel Bodington*, a vessel arriving from London on 14 January 1842. The pair had imported a variety of goods for public sale. To grace his own household, Langhorne had soft-goods and a sofa shipped from London aboard the ship *Bolina*. In the same month Alfred imported brandy and cordials from Launceston; cordials and hogsheads of Geneva from Adelaide - the liquor was stored in Cole's bond warehouse. Cordials, usually a mixture of distilled liquor and fruit or other flavours, were popular drink used medicinal purposes and to drink for pleasure as a after-dinner digestive.

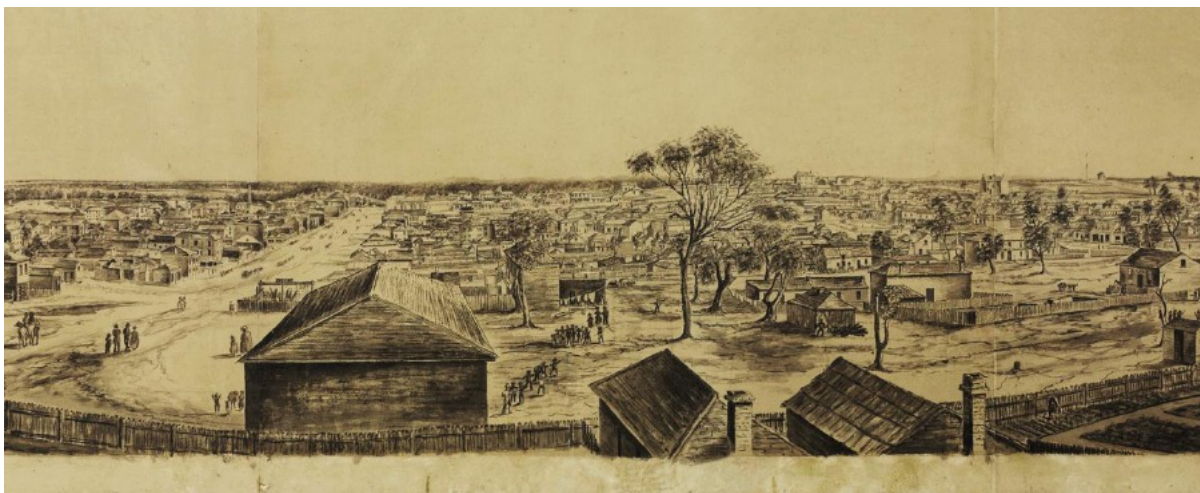
On 10 August 1842, the brig *Scout* brought Mrs. Sarah August, and her son George, to Melbourne where they resided with Alfred and Sarah. In the same month Charles La Trobe, the new Superintendent of Port Phillip appointed William Lonsdale as the Acting Mayor of Melbourne. His partnership with young Alfred Langhorne was still strong and prosperous. Alfred was now 25 years old, had been in the colony for just seven years, and was married to Sarah who was just about to give birth to their first child.

On the 23 October 1842, at the Langhorne residence in Stephen Street, Melbourne. their first child, a son, Henry August Langhorne was born. It must have been a joyous occasion with a new baby and the extended Langhorne and August family together, in Melbourne. Young Henry was christened on 9 November 1842, at St James church, Melbourne with his grandmother and uncles present to witness the happy occasion.

¹⁴ George Gipps was Governor of New South Wales from 1837 until 1846.

¹⁵ James Graham was a local merchant and went on to be a Victorian politician. He was also a member of the Melbourne Club.

¹⁶ William Westgarth (1815-1884) merchant, financier and Victorian politician, who arrived from Leith, Scotland, on 13 December 1840.



Panoramic Sketch of Melbourne Port Phillip from the walls of Scots Church on the Eastern Hill July 30, 1841, by Samuel Jackson, State Library of Victoria (LT1043)

The year 1843 commenced with Alfred being nominated, and accepted, as a member of the 'Melbourne Club', which had been established in 1838 and was seen as a symbol of Australia's British social heritage. The founding members were squatters, civil servants, judges, professional men, and merchants, basically the who's who of Melbourne. The year also heralded in a depression, which had followed from several years of drought, which necessitated imports of wheat which in turn drained liquidity from the colony. This led to a slump in land sales, falling prices, incomes, and an upsurge of insolvencies. Cattle which earlier brought six guineas now sold for seven shillings and sixpence. Settlers found some return from under-nourished cattle and sheep by boiling them down and making soap and candles from the tallow.

During January, John Maude Woolley who, by previous dealings had borrowed some £2,000 from Alfred, was declared insolvent. As mortgagee and sole trustee of the estate, Alfred was empowered to sell off Woolley's land that he had at Prahran. Alfred then used this to settle outstanding matters he had with his associate, Captain William Lonsdale. The following month Alfred sold half an allotment he himself had in Prahran, which contained 10 acres, to William Lonsdale for £400.

William Cooke, of August, Cooke & Co. sent across copies of the South Australian Register to ensure Alfred was kept informed of the Adelaide market prices. The early part 1843 saw demand for cattle, in Adelaide, rise which lifted prices above that being realised in Melbourne. Alfred enlisted his brother-in-law, Robert Maskall August, to head another overlanding party to Adelaide. But before he and Alfred could finalise their plans, a distressing family matter arose for the Langhorne's.

On 20 May 1843, at their Stephens Street residence, Alfred and Sarah's young son, Henry August Langhorne passed away at the age of seven months. A funeral service was held at St. James Church Melbourne and his remains were then laid to rest in the Old Melbourne Cemetery¹⁷. After a period of mourning, Alfred was drawn back to his business matters and continue the plans for his brother-in-law, Robert August, to again lead a herd of cattle across to Adelaide.

¹⁷ The Old Melbourne Cemetery was in what is today the Queen Victoria Market. The burial ground was in existence from as early as 1837 and the last burial took place in 1917. It was eventually closed permanently in 1922. Exhumations beginning in mid-1920s, and only marked graves exhumed and moved to Fawkner, Kew, St Kilda, Cheltenham, and the Melbourne General Cemetery. The Langhorne's burial vault was moved to Fawkner.

In June 1843, the Port Phillip District was to finally gain representation in the New South Wales Legislative Council. Port Phillip was still a part of New South Wales and was still some years away from being an independent State. Alfred did not wish to pursue a career in politics, for himself, but seconded the nomination of Charles Hotson Ebdon who had been nominated by Captain Cole¹⁸.

Mr. Ebdon was a pastoralist and businessman who had settled in the Port Phillip district around 1835, moving down from Sydney when he had heard that the Port Phillip Association had established a settlement. Charles topped the poll, winning one of five available seats within the election, and eventually went on to be elected to the first Victorian Government and served from 1851 until 1860. This early election and subsequent representation on the New South Wales Legislative Council helped the Port Phillip district on its way to separation and self-government. Alfred saw his support of Charles Ebdon as a means for the district to gain self-governance which would be to his advantage, both in his merchant business and for future land dealings.



**Charles Ebdon, by Frederick Grosse,
1867, State Library of Victoria
(IAN26/75/5)**

Alfred Langhorne appeared to have more pressing matters on his mind, at this time than to take up political aspirations. One of these was to move his extended family into his new 'Laverton' estate, west of Williamstown and the other was to liquidate and/or transfer ownership of various land holders into the names of family members. Why? Well during this downturn in the local economy, Alfred was feeling pressure from creditors, as well as trying to collect as much of what was owed to him from his debtors. It must have been quite a balancing act to preserve as much of his wealth and assets as he could so as to be in a prime position to move when cattle and sheep prices returned to pre-1843 levels and finance was easier to obtain.

The Langhorne and August families were hoping that the new year would bring better times and opportunities for their families and their businesses. But within the early years of Melbourne and the Port Phillip district, fortunes can change in the blink of an eye, and no one was immune.

To be continued....Alfred looks for pastureland, Port Philip and builds Laverton Estate.

¹⁸ Captain George Ward Cole was responsible for privately building a wharf closer to Melbourne, approximately near where Spencer and King Streets meet, on the north bank of the Yarra. This allowed ships to dock closer to Melbourne.

Notes on Measurement

Foot	= 0.30 m
Yard	= 0.91 m
Chain	= 20.11 m
Mile	= 1.60 km
Acre	= 4,046.86 square meters
Rood	= 1,011.71 square meters
Perch	= 25.29 square meters

Monetary Conversion

£1,000 (late 1800's) = \$168,000 to \$180,000 (2023)

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POINT COOK(E) AND THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF LAVERTON AIR BASE AND THE RAAF



Point Cook was originally spelled Point Cooke in 1836, it was named after John M. Cooke a Mate aboard His Majesties Ship *Rattlesnake* which was involved in the charting of Port Phillip in 1836.

The ship transported Captain William Lonsdale to Port Phillip where he became the first District Administrator.

The image left is *Rattlesnake* painted by Sir Oswald Brierly in 1853.

(Wikipedia)

Lonsdale, his wife, children and two servants sailed in H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*, which anchored near the mouth of the Yarra River on 29 September 1836. Three surveyors, two customs officials, a commissariat clerk, Ensign King with thirty privates of the 4th Regiment, and thirty convicts followed in October. They found 224 residents in a settlement several miles up the Yarra. Lonsdale decided to establish the government centre there, although Gellibrand Point (Williamstown) would have been more convenient for the unloading of stores. The inland site, however, had the advantage of a plentiful supply of fresh water, and was, he reported, suited to the performance of his civil duties.



(Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 2, 1967)

In 1912 the Federal Government purchased a large section of the area with the vision of establishing the **Australian Flying Corps**.

THE EARLY AIR FLIGHTS

In previous Newsletters we have mentioned details of the first air flight from the Altona Estate when in 1910 Gaston Cugnet, who was from the Aero Club de France, flew a Bleriot X1 Monoplane over the area.

A second flight later followed in 1911, piloted by J.J. Hammond in a Bristol Boxkite fitted with a 50hp Gnome Engine plane for demonstration purposes of this type of machine.

The purpose of the British Company Bristol amongst other manufacturers of aircraft at the time, was to generate interest, especially among Military and Government representatives of various countries, in the possible use of aircraft for military and defence purposes.



The Hammond Flight with M.H.Baillieu as a passenger 1911

In 1909 the Federal Government had offered a £500 prize for the "First flying machine suitable for military purposes.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY FLYING CORPS

These demonstration flights had aroused interest from various Military groups around the World

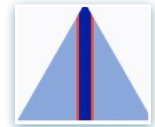
On July 3,1912, the first 'flying machines were ordered (both British built).

On September 22, 1912, the Minister of Defence,Senator George Pearce approved the formation of an Australian military air arm, sites in Canberra and Victoria were recommended and Point Cook in Victoria was chosen for a Central Flying School on October 22,1912.

Two days later the Government authorised the raising of a single squadron to be equipped with four aircraft and designated the number of officers and mechanics approved, they were to be drawn from volunteers in the Citizen Forces.

On March 7,1913, the government announced the formation of the Central Flying School and the Australian Aviation Corps.

The Central Flying School opened at Point Cook in February 1914 and flying started in 1914 shortly after the beginning of WW1..



(Wikipedia)

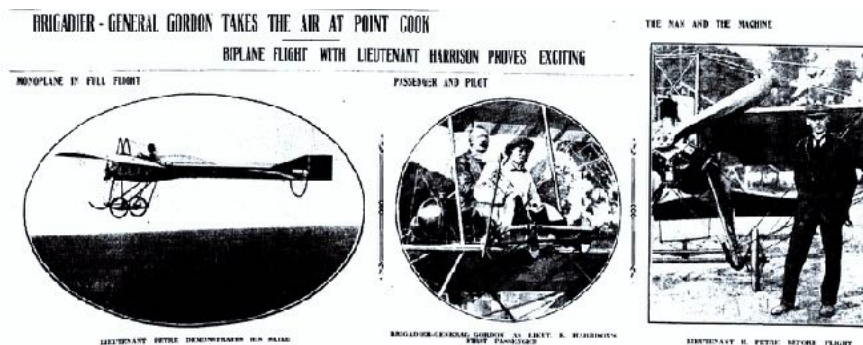
1914 WORLD WAR 1 ERA

No.1 Flight of the Australian Flying Corps was raised on July 14,1914. (Unit Colour Patch right).

BIPLANE FLIGHT PROVES EXCITING

The Herald reported on March 6,1914- A report including an image of Lt. Petre demonstrating his flying skills, together with Brigadier-General Gordon and Lt. Harrison.

Harrison and Petre had been recruited from England to come to Australia



(1) Lt. Petre demonstrates his skills (2) BG Gordon as Lt.Harrisons first passenger (3) Lt. Petre before the flight

Henry Aloysius Petre-DSO,MC was an English solicitor who became Australia's first Military aviator and a founding member of the Australian Flying Corps.

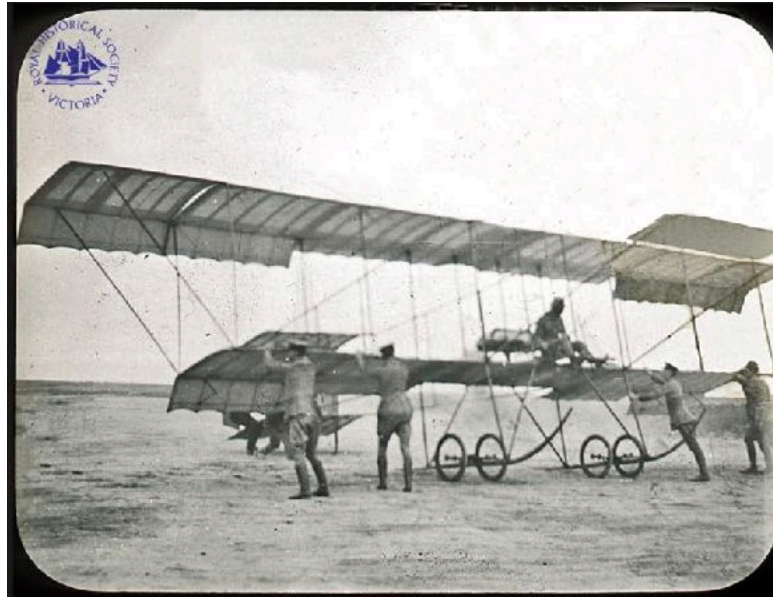


Lt. Harrison an Aviator in the Corp. at Point Cook reported on his flight, the wind was rated at 35 miles per hour "The slow British Biplane was not built for wind and the limit is 40 miles per hour. That is if the wind is blowing at 40 miles, the motor in the Biplane would not oppose it with the force sufficient to keep the machine in the air".- He expressed doubt about the flight "But when the General commands an Army Aviator must obey".

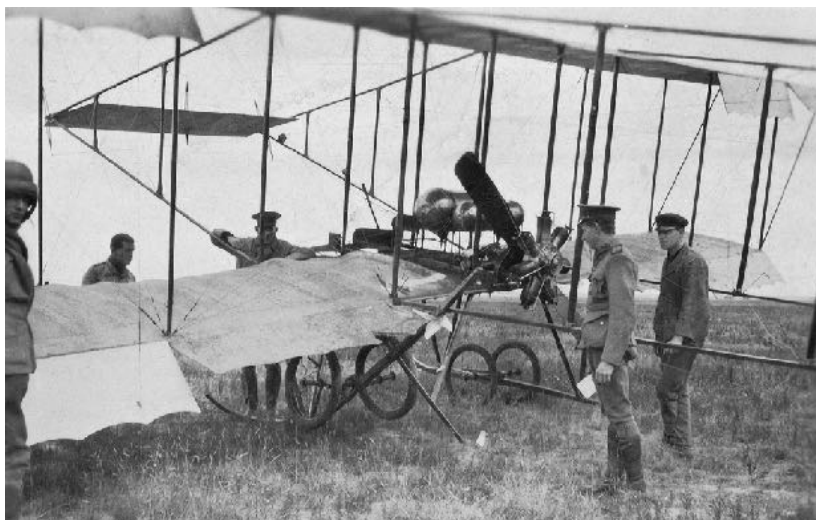
The biplane is said to have come down like a bird with a broken wing. It just cleared the fence of the camp site, rose to the height of 50 feet and then dropped in the middle of a field of thistle.

(The Herald Melbourne March 6, 1914 page 1)

1915 BRISTOL BOXKITE TRAINING AT POINT COOK



This image from RHSV, is captioned - A British Boxkite training Aircraft at Point Cook 1915



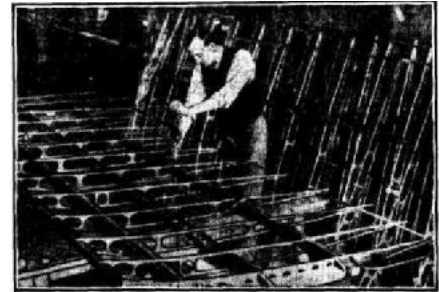
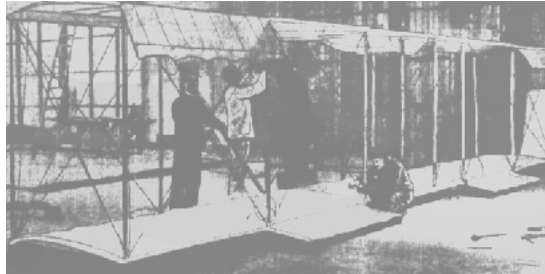
Another image from the Australian War memorial appears to be from the same era

1916 AVIATION SCHOOL AT POINT COOK-MAKING AEROPLANES AND TEACHING MEN TO FLY

The Argus Melbourne ,22 January 1916 page 5 under the heading above reported (a summary):

At Point Cook aeroplanes are built and people trained in aviation.

In the present circumstances however a great many specially interesting particulars must be passed over in silence, so that information will not be given away “elsewhere”.

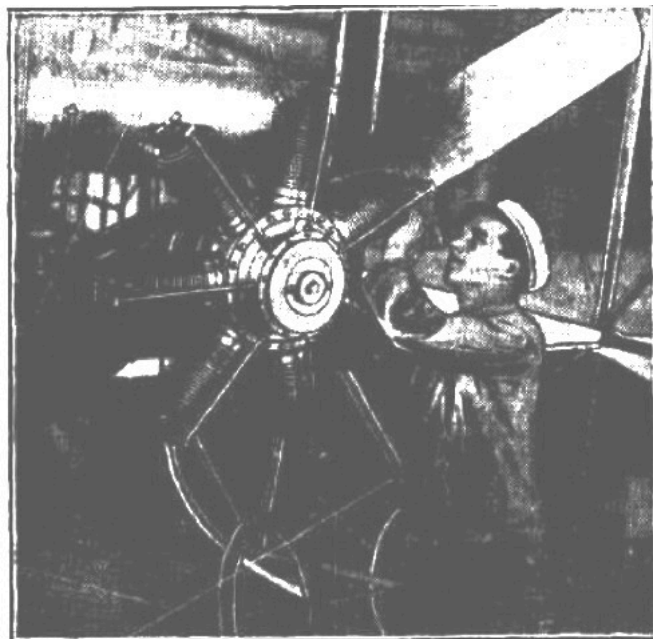


ANATOMY OF A WING.

The standard type of plane at Point cook is a Biplane.

“In many other places steel is used in construction, at Point Cook there is no process for the production of steel ,steel is mainly imported so wood is also in use with the frame and wing construction.”

The image above left shows riggers covering the wings of a Biplane with a fabric made specially for aeroplane work and the image right shows the anatomy of a wing. (National Library Australia Image)



GNOME ENGINE.

The Biplane Engine of the day.

A Gnome Engine was in use this is of the rotary type and revolved with the propellor.

The colour image below a modern one from Wikipedia shows a 1917 version Gnome Engine.



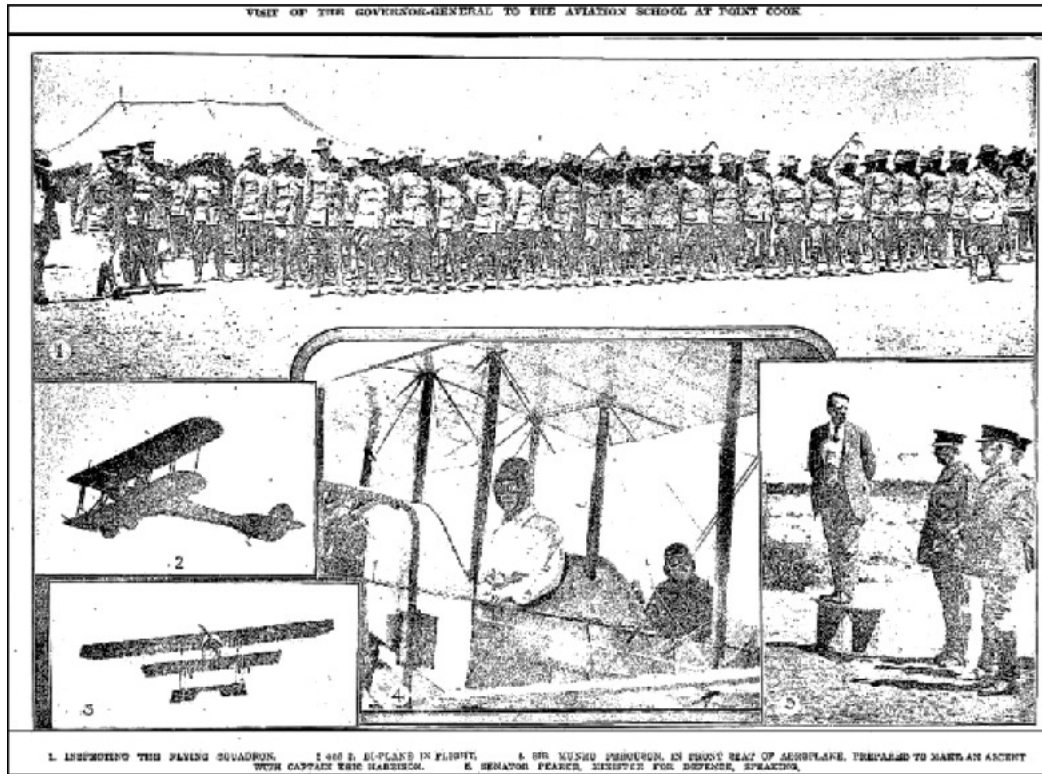
A 1917 Gnome 9N 160 hp *Monosoupape* rotary engine, with *dual ignition* provision. Diameter is 95cm (37.4 in)

Type	Rotary aero engine
National origin	France
Manufacturer	Gnome et Rhône
First run	1913
Major applications	Airco DH.2 Nieuport 28

1917 THE GOVERNOR GENERAL SIR MUNRO FERGUSON VISITS THE AVIATION SCHOOL AT POINT COOK

The Weekly Times (Melbourne) on Saturday 27 January 1917 ,page 17 reported with images of a visit by the Governor General Sir Munro Ferguson to the Aviation School at point Cook.

The images include: 1 Inspecting the Flying Squadron, 2 and 3 A Biplane in flight, 4 Sir Munro Ferguson in front of a plane ,5 Senator Pearer, Minister for Defence ,speaking.



The image of course shows the Officers with Caps and Squadron members in Army uniform with slouch hats, as this was an Army squadron during the World War One period.



Above is an image of the Governor General of Australia, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson at a Military Inspection. (AWM Image)

THE SITE HAS HAD ITS INCIDENTS

The Werribee Shire Banner November 22, 1917

AVIATOR KILLED

Whilst training as a pupil of the Central Flying School at Point Cook, at an early hour on Friday Morning Lieutenant Reginald K Duckworth lost control of his machine when it had reached a height of about 1000 feet, and it immediately fell to the ground, the aviator being killed instantaneously. Since the Central Flying School was established in 1911, Friday's fatality was the first that has occurred there.

A number of similar training incidents have resulted in the death of pilot trainees over the years.

TRANSFORMATION INTO THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE (RAAF) AND THE DEVELOPMENT AT LAVERTON



The Government purchased land at Laverton which was located in close proximity, and could easily be reached from nearby Point Cook.

On March 31, 1921 the **Australian Air Force** was formed becoming the third arm of Australian Military Forces.

It acquired the "Royal" prefix on August 31, 1921 becoming the **Royal Australian Air Force**.

Numbers 1 to 5 Squadrons of the RAAF were formed at Point Cook in 1922, No. 1 Squadron moved from Point Cook to Laverton in 1928.

Point Cook was designated No.1 Station.

1922 The first Aircraft built in Australia for the RAAF was a British Avro 504 trainer, assembled in Sydney.

1939-1945 The commencement of World War 2 saw the rapid growth of the RAAF and deployment throughout Australia and around the World in various actions.

(In 1939 there existed "The Air Force that Nobody Knows" as the Herald headlined it, that was the **Citizen Air Force** a branch of the Militia which created a reserve of civilian pilots.)

1946 An Aircraft Research and Development Unit was established and the area of Jet propelled aircraft arrived.

1952 The RAAF Museum established at Point Cook

1986 Most local Units were disbanded and relocated around Australia.

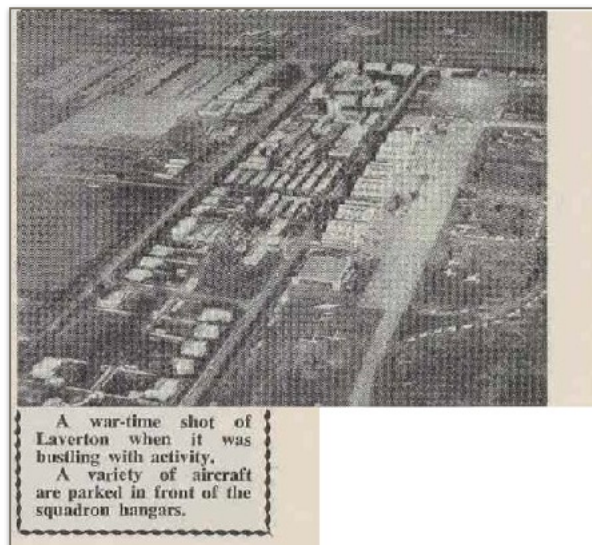
2017 The Point Cook site regained its identity and was renamed RAAF Base Point Cook.

RAAF Base Point Cook is Australia's oldest Military Base and became the home of No.21 (City of Melbourne) Squadron which now operates from Laverton.

Laverton Base remains as RAAF Williams Laverton and coexists with RAAF Base Point Cook.

Point Cook Base is now being primarily the home of the RAAF Museum and Heritage flight operations.

References: Primarily-Trove, Melbourne Herald, Wikipedia, RHSV and Australian War Memorial Records, Google Search Information, The Weekly Times.



A war-time shot of Laverton when it was bustling with activity. A variety of aircraft are parked in front of the squadron hangars.