**Work**

***Reminiscences of Bendigo by the Almanac***

***Written by Peter MacIver***

Following the end of his time at Raywood, Dave Scott spent several months at Sailor’s Gully washing the tailings from the quartz crushing machine. After this he returned to Bendigo to work with his father on a claim they had at Hustler’s Reef. This claim was next to the Tough and Joseph claim which produced gold worth £10 000 a year while it lasted. Sadly for the Scotts, their claim did not produce much gold and his father amalgamated it with the Great Extended Hustler’s claim, thus ending young David’s mining days.

With his hopes of gold riches gone, David Scott decided to learn about other metals and entered an apprenticeship with Henry Jackson, ironmonger of View Point, to learn all about “iron, steel, locks, saws, bolts, rope and mining appliances”. The three stories show that an apprentice’s lot in the 1860s was much the same as it is today.

Dave Scott takes up the story in his *Reminiscences* article of 31st October 1908, “It was a very old firm, having been established in 1853, and is still carried on in 1908 as Henry Jackson and Sons. An amusing occurrence took place shortly after I went there, which nearly ended my ironmongery days. The manager was Mr. Samuel, a Glasgow ironmonger, and one day a farmer came and said to Mr. Samuel, "I want 3lb. of pitch.” Mr. Samuel told me to get him 3lb. of pitch. The pitch was done up in 3 cwt. casks, and I rolled the cask out into the middle of the yard. It was a very hot day, about 100 in the shade. I got a crowbar and set to work, but as fast as I get a piece loose the great heat of the sun ran it into a molten mass. I had a new crimean shirt on that had cost 13/ or 14/, and I was soon in a nice mess, covered with pitch. I was a long time over the job, and the farmer got tired, and he said, “What about that pitch?" Mr. Samuel came out and said, ''Scott, have you gone to Melbourne for that pitch? Hurry up, the farmer is waiting." I was wild, and said. "Hurry up yourself, and dig out the pitch. I'm off home," and I put on my coat and went away. I had about a mile to go, and when I got there the coat was fixed and would not move. I got a neighbor to cut it off in pieces, also the shirt, and it was a long job, and before the pitch was removed from my arms junks of flesh and tufts of hair came with it. Next day I went back and apologised to Mr. Samuel, and he laughed and said. "Next time you dig pitch, keep it out of the sun." He told the yarn about it to his friends for many a long day, and thought it was a huge joke. I never repeated the experiment, and soon got into the run of the place.”

The same *Reminiscences* article goes on to tell of the Duke of Edinburgh’s visit to Bendigo in December of 1867. “While I was at Jacksons, the Duke of Edinburgh paid a visit to Bendigo, and as Jacksons’ place was opposite the entrance to Rosalind Park, they made a great display. There were no electric lights with illuminations in those days, but with gas illuminations and transparencies they made an excellent show. We had a half-holiday the day the Duke came, but as we were all busy looking after the illuminations, it did not count for much. The next morning the only one that turned up at the shop was Mr. Chidley, who carried the keys and my-self, I look the shutters down, but for over an hour not a soul came into the shop. I said to Mr. Chidley, "It is no use keeping open," and suggested to him that he should send me down to Holmes and Francis Bros., the only other ironmongers in the town, and tell them if they closed we would do likewise. He thought it a good idea and I went off at once. I saw Mr. Holmes, the head of the firm, who was in the shop by himself, and had not seen a customer up to then. He said, "Certainly," and before I left the place was closed. I also went to Francis Bros., and they told me the ironmongery department would be closed, as Jackson and Holmes were doing so. I rushed, back very quickly, and Mr. Chidley said, "Close up.” I never put the shutters up so quickly in my life. There were two ways of going home, one up View Point, where there was a chance of meeting Mr. Jackson or Mr. Samuel, and one up High-street, where I would meet neither, so I chose the High street road, and rushed home and changed my clothes.”

The following excerpt from the *Reminiscences* of December 26, 1908, will send a shiver down the spine of any health and safety officer who reads this. “When I look back at the many half tons of blasting powder I have taken in a cart over the roughest of roads and long distances, I have often wondered why I am still here and able to write reminiscences. The powder magazine was at Quarry Hill, and every precaution was taken there to prevent accident. You were never allowed inside the door, and the caretaker always wore rubber soled shoes, and the trucks were all covered with copper and rubber tyred wheels; but our carts were only the ordinary delivery carts, and there were strips of iron running along the bottom to strengthen it. 'Well, all we put over the powder was a tarpaulin. I generally drove the cart when there was half a ton of powder required for one mine, and it was known as the extra cart. Well, very often I have taken a load to the Break o' Day mine on a blazing hot day 100 in the shade- and the road, especially from Kangaroo Flat, was very rutty and uneven, and what was there to prevent some of the kegs becoming loose and spilling their contents-they were made of wood, and the heat of the day almost making the iron red hot-and driver, horse and cart being blown right out of sight? I thought nothing of it then, and never had an. accident, but I have often wondered since how there were so few accidents. Very often when we got to the mines the powder was placed in a sort of a shed, with a roof and door to it, and otherwise protected, but in a great many instances no distance away from the blacksmith's shop or the boiler-house. There must have been a Providence protecting us in those days. Of course at the present time I believe they have special enclosed carts for that purpose, and a proper magazine at all mines.”

In 1868, following the completion of his apprenticeship with Jacksons, Dave Scott moved to Melbourne and took up a position with James McEwan and Co. who were the leading ironmongers of Melbourne at that time. He rose to be in charge of their Government contract section and stayed with this company until he joined with his old friend Harry Boyle to set up Boyle and Scott’s Cricket and Sports Warehouse in 1879.