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April 29th 1959

WHAT is generally referred to today as "Dunbar's Hotel" was really named "The Dandenong Hotel," which was built by Mr. George K. Dunbar in the early '50's. This was situated where the Mayfair Buildings now stand.

As Dandenong did not possess a public hall in those days local organisations used to hold their meetings there. Early sittings of the local Police Court were also held there.

When Mr. Charles H. Dawson acquired the old hotel he erected the then palatial Royal Hotel on the corner adjoining and converted the old hotel into shops, one of which was occupied by Mr. Robt. P. Kelly, painter and signwriter, who took a keen interest in local affairs, particularly football and the brass band, in which he played the trombone.

Mr. Dawson gave a special banquet to mark the opening of his new hotel. He was an excellent "Mine Host" and a keen businessman.

① DUNBAR. HOTEL

STORY OF OLD HOTEL

BEFORE THE 2 STOREY
BUILDING

② APRIL 29th 1959

DUNBAR'S HOTEL NAMED
DANDENONG HOTEL BUILT
BY GEORGE K DUNBAR.
IN 1850s

BOUGHT BY CHARLES DAWSON
WHEN DUNBAR ACQUIRED
THE

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"GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN" — A whiff of the old coaching days.

With a nostalgic pen the "Advertiser" of Oct. 19, 1922, records the passing of Dunbar's Hotel:

"A very old landmark in Dandenong — Dunbar's Hotel, which was erected in the early sixties on an eminence overlooking the three-chain road from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Lake Tyres (a stock route wisely preserved by the good old pioneers of the forties), but better known this side of the Yarra Yarra as the Gippsland Road (now aristocratically designated the Princes Highway), is being demolished.

George Dunbar, a good old Scotchman, and his good wife Annie, conducted this hostel on good lines, and Cobb & Co.'s Mail Line of Coaches, carrying Her Majesty's Royal Mail, changed horses at Dunbar's, and the stables held more than one relay of sleek, well-fed horses in the brick stables, and were hosed from a huge tank and luxuriously bedded in straw, and fed like fighting cocks.

There were usually five horses in a "Jack" coach and from the time the coach left Cleeland's Albion Hotel, Bourke St., Melbourne, until it reached Dunbar's, Dandenong, over all descriptions of roadmaking -- from blue metal to cobblestones, corduroy, Sprinvale mud and stony rises -- these half-breds had to tear for their lives, between the 2 or 3 mail deliveries at Caulfield, Oakleigh and Dandenong.

The company's groom was in front of the hotel as the panting and sweated horses drew up with a clatter of hoofs, and he unhitched them in a twinkling of an eye. No need to lead the gallant steeds to the stable; They had then covered 20½ miles in 1½ hours, and they knew they were going to be well treated. So did the experienced driver and his heavy load of passengers, who trooped into the hotel and refreshed the inner man.

Then the relay of horses, spick and span, were led out and buckled up ; the driver mounted the box seat, gathered up 'the ribbons' which were attached to the heavy brick lever, and roared once or twice 'All aboard', and off went 'the pack'. Then there was a terrible run through the several stages along the road to Sale".

After talking about the gold escorts on this coach run -- ~~on which~~ ladies were not allowed to travel on these occasions, the writer added: "Then were the good old days, when an old wooden structure, acting as a bridge, spanned the little rippling, tea-tree clad Dandenong Creek, afterwards supplanted by

South

the old granite bridge a few yards further upstream, which at that time was considered a triumph of architecture, but only to be supplanted itself by an ornate monier structure -- a fitting 'key to Gippsland', and to the coming capital of Gippsland -- Dandenong. Much more could I write and reminisce but space will not permit, and with sorrow, not innated with pleasure, I pen the information that the 'old home' is being demolished, to make room for more capacious, ornate and up-to-date arcades and business shops. The whole of the material of the "Old Dunbar's" is to be sold by public auction by Wm. Wauchope, Maloney and McCarthy on the premises on October 23rd."

This was not the original Dunbar's Hotel, but the 2-storey building of which we have an excellent photo