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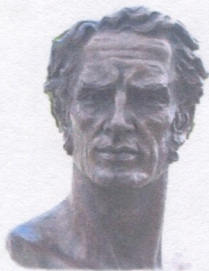
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*"Dingley Dell was the home of **Adam Lindsay Gordon** from 1864 to 1867. There is a legend that **Gordon** won the **cottage** in a card game from its owner George Randall"*

Adam Lindsay Gordon



Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-70) was sent to the colonies from England by his parents, to redeem a misspent youth. Although he never completely felt at home in

Australia, his writing captured and emulated the mateship and spirit of the people.

Gordon was regarded as both a man of action and a dreamer but, unfortunately, it was not until after his death that he was taken seriously as a poet. Unlike most Englishmen who couldn't come to terms with the seemingly hostile Australian environment, **Gordon** never set out to conquer the bush, but rather he learned to live in it. His understanding of and rapport with horses from an early age stayed with **Gordon** throughout his short life - when he was astride a horse, he and the animal became one. His famous 'leap' on horseback, over a fence on a narrow ledge between the Blue Lake and Leg of Mutton Lake, has never been equalled

While his fame as a fearless rider grew, he received little recognition for his poetry in his lifetime, and **Gordon** was to

History

One day while out riding, **Adam Lindsay Gordon** saw a piece of land beside the beach, and on it, about a mile (1.6 km) from the coast, he found a stone **cottage** with a shingle roof, set among blackwoods, golden wattles and eucalypts, with pastures for farming or grazing horses. The 101 acre (40.8 ha) property, just 2 km from Port MacDonnell had been granted to a land agent, Peter Prankherd, on 10 July 1861.



When the property came up for sale, **Gordon** bought the **cottage** on 8 March 1864, for £150. He named the **cottage** 'Dingley Dell' (after the nostalgic manor farm of Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*).

The **cottage** was plainly but comfortably furnished. Bridle paths linked Dingley Dell to the coast through the sand dunes. This was **Gordon's** only true home and resting place in Australia, where he found peace to write, grass for his horses and an unbroken view over the Southern Ocean.



find that life in Australia, the land of opportunities, was not immune from tragedy and misfortune. Facing bankruptcy and overcome with despair, at just 37, in a lonely patch of scrub at Brighton Beach (Vic), he shot himself.

Probably the most quoted of **Gordon's** published verses remains a literary epitaph to his life:

*Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone:
KINDNESS in another's trouble.
COURAGE in your own.*

From 1913-14, the property changed ownership a number of times and by 1920, Dingley Dell was described as a haven for snakes, bees and rabbits. The Dingley Dell Restoration Committee, after much public interest, approached the South Australian Government to purchase the **cottage** for preservation as part of our national heritage. This took place on 17 February 1922, making the **cottage** the oldest government-owned historical residence in South Australia. On 24 July 1980, Dingley Dell **Cottage** and Heritage Museum became the first building to be listed on the South Australia Heritage Register.

In June 1997, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources leased the **cottage** and residence to Allan and Jenny Childs as on-site caretakers to operate Dingley Dell **Cottage** as a museum and tourist attraction.

Courtesy of Day, L., "Gordon of Dingley Dell. The Life of Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-1870) Poet and Horseman" (2003)