The Dons

James Ballantine Don

It is thought that James Don arrived at Melbourne on the Clipper ship "James Baines" in June 1856 owned by a James Ballantine,, the man his father worked for in Maybole in Ayrshire Scotland. In later life James Don was known as James Ballantyne Don.

James' father John was a gardener at Castlehill in Maybole, a mansion surrounded by gardens and parkland, which was owned by a James Ballantine.

A page of the 1841 census in Ayr which shows some of the occupants of James Ballantine's household at Castlehill including John and Mary Donn and their son James living in the Castlehill Gardener's house. Missing is their daughter Margaret who would have been four years old.

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The 'n' in Donn was sometimes dropped, Don was commonly used. It is thought James was paying homage to his father's employer in using the name Ballantine. In the records, James didn't use Ballantine as his second name until sometime after 1880. On all of his children's birth registrations he is recorded simply as James. In the inquest after his death in 1898 the names Ballantine and Vallentine were used in the inquest papers.

From the Scottish records we know James was the second of six children. There are questions about the early family. That appeared in the 1841 census at living at Castlehill but in the 1851 census they appear to be missing. Two of the children, John and Mary, may have been living with a great aunt in Ayr and a James Don is described as a 'deserted boy' is living in what appears to be a home for such children in Ayr. If these are James and his siblings it

John and Mary Donn's family

John Donn, b. circa 1815 +Mary Dickie, b. 1812, m. 23 Apr 1839 at Maybole, Ayr, SCO

Margaret Donn, b. 5 Mar 1837 at Ayr, SCO James Ballantine Don, b. 14 Nov 1839 at Maybole, Ayr, SCO, d. 9 Jan 1898 at East Baynton, VIC, AUS

----- Mary Donn, b. 17 Dec 1841

- John Donn, b. 14 Apr 1844 at Ayr, SCO

Catherine Donn, b. 13 Jun 1846 at Ayr, SCO

William Lyon Donn, b. 20 Mar 1848 at Ayr, SCO

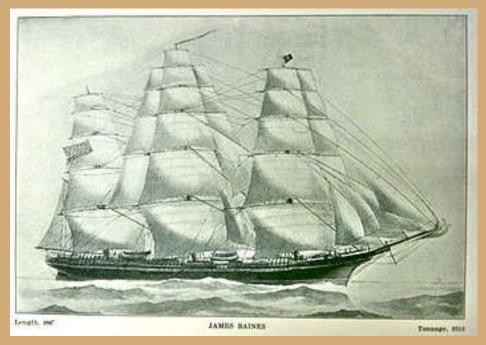
The Dons

indicates some calamity has befallen the family between 1848 and 1851. What happened remains a mystery.

It is thought that James Don arrived at Melbourne on the Clipper ship "James Baines" in June 1856. The ship was the namesake of *James Baines*, her owner James Baines of James Baines & Co. of

Liverpool. Once described as "the most perfect ship afloat", the James Baines could carry 700 passengers and had a crew of 100. It was launched in 1854 and made four round trips from England to Australia. On April 22 1858 it caught fire when unloading its cargo, the ship and its cargo was destroyed.

James' trip on the James Baines would have been exciting and memorable.



The ship held records for speed and for the longest distance travelled in a Day. On the ship's manifest he is recorded as being 21 but he was only 17. He must have had some means as he had paid for his own passage.

In Australia the first record of James Don was his marriage to Mary Ann Ellis in 1863. The marriage ceremony was held at the Presbyterian Manse, Collins Street Melbourne. On their marriage certificate, James was aged 22 and described as a ploughman from Gisborne. Mary Ann was 23, domestic duties, from Broadmeadows. She was born in Derrylane, County Cavan, Ireland.

Mary Ellis arrived in Melbourne on the immigrant ship Boanerges on July 12 1862 along with 447 other government immigrants. The government brought out the migrants to provide a labour supply for the colony. Mary would have been destined to become a domestic servant, but not for too long as her marriage to James Don was on the 23rd April 1863. It is clear that the single women amongst the government immigrants also provided marriage opportunities for the male population. There were many more males than females in the colony at the time.

Although they married in Melbourne the Dons began married life in or around Taradale. The Dons had nine children and the registrations of their births indicate



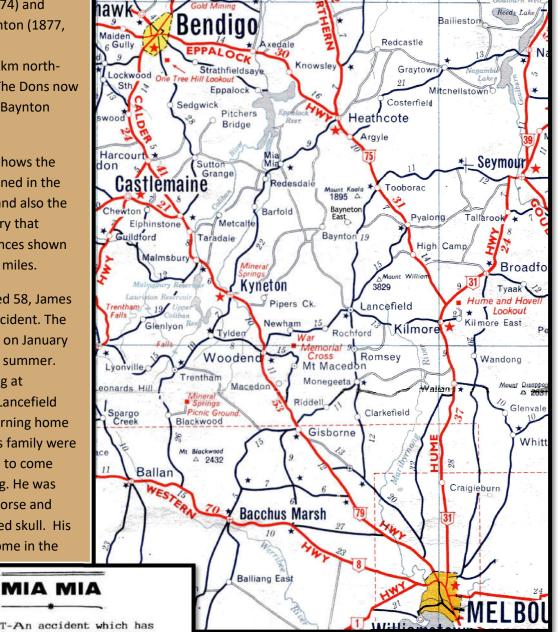
where they lived. The first three were registered at Taradale (1863-1866), then four children at



Kyneton (1868-1874) and finally two at Baynton (1877, 1880). Baynton is approximately 20 km northeast of Kyneton. The Dons now had a property at Baynton East.

The map at right shows the townships mentioned in the Don family story and also the Milsom family story that follows. The distances shown on the map are in miles.

In 1898, when aged 58, James suffered a fatal accident. The accident occurred on January 12th, the height of summer. James was working at harvesting in the Lancefield area and was returning home in the evening. His family were not expecting him to come home that evening. He was thrown from his horse and suffered a fractured skull. His horse returned home in the



FATAL ACCIDENT-An accident which has since proved fatal happenen to Mr James Don,an old resident of East Baynton, on Saturday night. He had been working near Lancefield, and left the place about 8 p.m. to return home. When within about two miles of his own residence, on a lonely piece of road, his horse shied and threw him. He fell on his head, his skull being badly fractured. As his son was not expecting him home, he lay all night in an unconscious condition where he fell. The first intimation his son had that anything was wrong was in the morning, when a neigbour brought the horse home, it having been found on the road with the saddle on. A short search, and the sufferer was found but by the time a vehicle was procured and he was removed home, i was past midday. He lingered on until 3 it p.m. on Sunday afternoon, when he passed away, never having regained consciousness. The funeral took place on Tuesday, the place of interment being the Heathcote cemetery. It was largely attended, showing the respect in which the deceased was held. Mr Don who was 58 years of age, leaves behind him a large family of sons and one daughter, for whom the greatest sympathy is felt in their peculiarly sad bereavement.

morning and it was then his son Ned began searching for him. He was found unconscious around mid day but was unable to be revived and he died some three hours after being found. The story is told in his obituary from the local paper. James' wife Mary had died about 2^{1/2} years earlier, she was aged 55 years.

KYNETON GUARDIAN THURSDAY 13/1/1898

George Don (1866-1934)

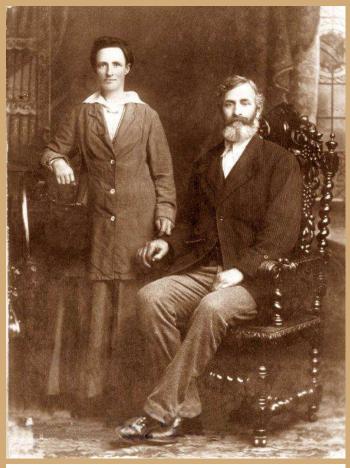
Our direct ancestor was James and Mary Ann's third child, George Don (1866-1934).

George was to marry Rowena Mary Langdon Edwards at Bendigo in 1890. There is a belief amongst the Edwards family that Rowena came from a family whose connections go back to early Tasmania and before that to Montacute in Somerset, through her grandmother, Mary Lucy Langdon. The line goes back to the 1300s and a man with the grand name of Sir Lizard de Bere. (Shades of 'To the Manor Born'). The line is still to be proven.

George Don and Rowena were to have five children. The first born in Yarrawonga, then all the other's births were registered at Heathcote. Our direct ancestor was the third born, James Gilbert Don.



G. Don Heathcote Urban Fire Brigade Captain 1904 – 1916



George and Rowena Don circa 1918

The above photo of George and Rowena is important. Family members immediately recognise that Rowena has a likeness to her son James Gilbert Don and some of his children particularly Norma and Marjorie.

The family moved to Heathcote around 1892. In Heathcote George Don was active in community life. In 1901 a volunteer fire brigade was established in Heathcote and George was one of the original members. A photograph to be found today at the Heathcote Fire Station shows he was Captain of the brigade from 1904 to 1916. George and Rowena moved to Goulburn, N.S.W. around 1916.

Our ancestor, James Gilbert Don (1894-1965) married Ruby Elizabeth Isobel Milsom in Goulburn in 1916, he was 22 she was 19. Ruby was born in Tooborac so it is likely that the couple knew each other back in Victoria. Tooborac is 10 miles from Heathcote.

The Dons

Descendant Chart of John Donn

John Donn, b. circa 1815
+Mary Dickie, b. 1812, m. 23 Apr 1839 at Maybole, AYR, SCO
Margaret Donn, b. 5 Mar 1837 at Ayr, AYR, SCO
James Ballantine Don, b. 14 Nov 1839 at Maybole, AYR, SCO, d. 9 Jan 1898 at East Baynton, VIC, AUS
+Mary Ann Ellis, b. circa 1840 at Derrylane, Cavan, IRE, m. 23 Apr 1863 at Melbourne, VIC, AUS, d. 30 Jul 1895 at
East Baynton, VIC, AUS
John William Don, b. 1863 at Taradale, VIC, AUS, d. 1933 at Kyneton, VIC, AUS
+Annie Eliza Donaldson, m. 1900 at VIC, AUS
Ivy Isobel Don, b. 1903 at Heathcote, VIC, AUS
Annie Elizabeth Don, b. 1904 at Lancefield, VIC, AUS
James Ballantyne Don, b. 1906 at Lancefield, VIC, AUS
William John Don, b. 1909 at Lancefield, VIC, AUS
Thomas Ronald Don, b. 1913
Mark Edward Don, b. 1915
Mary Ann Elizabeth Don, b. 1865 at Taradale, VIC, AUS
George Don, b. 1866 at Taradale, VIC, AUS, d. 28 Jul 1934 at Newtown, NSW, AUS
+Rowena Mary Langdon Edwards, b. 1 Apr 1867, m. 14 Aug 1890 at Bendigo, VIC, AUS, d. 22 Nov 1928 at
Goulburn, N.S.W., AUS
Ida May Don, b. 1891 at Yarrawonga, VIC, AUS, d. 1967 at Hornsby, NSW, AUS
+Edward J Jobson, b. circa 1890, m. 15 Apr 1916 at Hay, N.S.W., AUS, d. circa 1957 at NSW, AUS
+(?) Cooke, m. after 1958
Marguerite Mary Don, b. 1893 at Heathcote, VIC, AUS, d. 1902 at VIC, AUS
James Gilbert Don, b. 31 Dec 1894 at Heathcote, VIC, AUS, d. 12 Aug 1965 at Canterbury, VIC, AUS +Ruby Elizabeth Isobel Milsom, b. 14 Apr 1897 at Tooboorac, VIC, m. 21 Oct 1916 at Goulburn,
N.S.W., d. 14 May 1985 at Melbourne, VIC,
George Thomas Don, b. 6 May 1917 at Goulburn, N.S.W., d. 8 Dec 1984 at Bairnsdale, VIC
Lillian Isobel Don, b. 21 Oct 1920 at Goulburn, N.S.W. d. 1 Dec 1989 at Ringwood, VIC
Norma Meryl Don, b. 26 Sep 1922 at Bendigo, VIC, d. 9 Dec 1995 at Melbourne, VIC
Marjorie Lorraine Don, b. 29 May 1924 at Bendigo, VIC, d. 13 Nov 2010 at Pambula, N.S.W.
Valma Harriet Don, b. 9 Feb 1927, d. 26 Sep 1927 at Carlton, VIC,
Ruby Elizabeth Don, b. 17 Oct 1928 at Melbourne, VIC, d. 28 Dec 2017 at Melbourne, VIC,
James Alfred Don, b. 11 Sep 1930 at Kooweerup, VIC, d. 27 Mar 2003
Leslie William Don, b. 24 Jun 1935 at Warragul, VIC, d. 11 Mar 1992 at QLD,
Harriet Patricia Don, b. 1897 at Heathcote, VIC, AUS, d. 1995 at NSW, AUS
+James A Davis, b. circa 1895, m. 1921 at Sydney, N.S.W., AUS
George Leonard Alfred Don, b. 1899 at Heathcote, VIC, SCO, d. 1959 at Parramatta, N.S.W., AUS
+Eileen C Nagle, b. circa 1910, m. 1931 at Tamworth, N.S.W., AUS
James Don, b. 1868 at Kyneton, VIC, AUS
William Don, b. 1870 at Kyneton, VIC, AUS
Thomas Don, b. 1873 at Kyneton, VIC, AUS
Edward Don, b. 1874 at Baynton, VIC, AUS, d. 1946 at Kyneton, VIC, AUS
Mary Don, b. 1877 at Baynton, VIC, AUS, d. 1962 at Preston, VIC, AUS
+Andrew Rainey, m. 1896 at VIC, AUS
Margaret Don, b. 1880 at Baynton, VIC, AUS, d. 1880 at Baynton, VIC, AUS
Mary Donn, b. 17 Dec 1841
John Donn, b. 14 Apr 1844 at Ayr, AYR, SCO
Catherine Donn, b. 13 Jun 1846 at Ayr, AYR, SCO
William Lyon Donn, b. 20 Mar 1848 at Ayr, AYR, SCO

Note: This is not a complete chart, I have concentrated on our direct family.