

Keith Lithgow

May 2, 1933 - March 3, 2012

Family Motto:

“My Honour is to Serve”

Researcher: Lorraine Smith

Biography

Keith grew up in Camberwell and went to Camberwell Grammar School.

From 1948 he played cricket not far from the ground where Gardiners Creek joined the Yarra.

He remembered lovely girls and sporting teams provided strong interests and added attractions.

Then for Keith there was a job to start, then romance, marriage, house, children etc.

His first job was in the textile trade working for Paterson Laing & Bruce in Flinders Lane. He later became the first manager of new products market, Glo Weave Shirts 1956.

He married Margaret Lillian Rainbow (Pixi), and they had three children Debrah, Stephan and Andrea.



Lithgow family headstone at Lilydale Cemetery .

First settler and great grand father

David Lithgow was born in Derry, Ireland and came to Australia in 1847. He was the son of James White Lithgow of Londonderry, Ireland.

He married Catherine Theresa Cormack in 1857. His daughters were brought up as strict Catholics, but there was a more liberal attitude toward the sons.

David tried his luck at the diggings, worked as a carrier and a labourer, became a farmer and then purchased the Lilydale Hotel in 1863, a year after it was built. In 1885, aged 58 years, he sold the hotel.

The following year, he had a brick family home built on the 24 or 30 acres he owned along Gardiner Street, Lilydale. The house called *Tara* was known as a back to front house - the front faced out across the Olinda Creek floodplain while the back faced Gardiner Street. This was probably because David valued the view across the Yarra Valley from the main rooms.

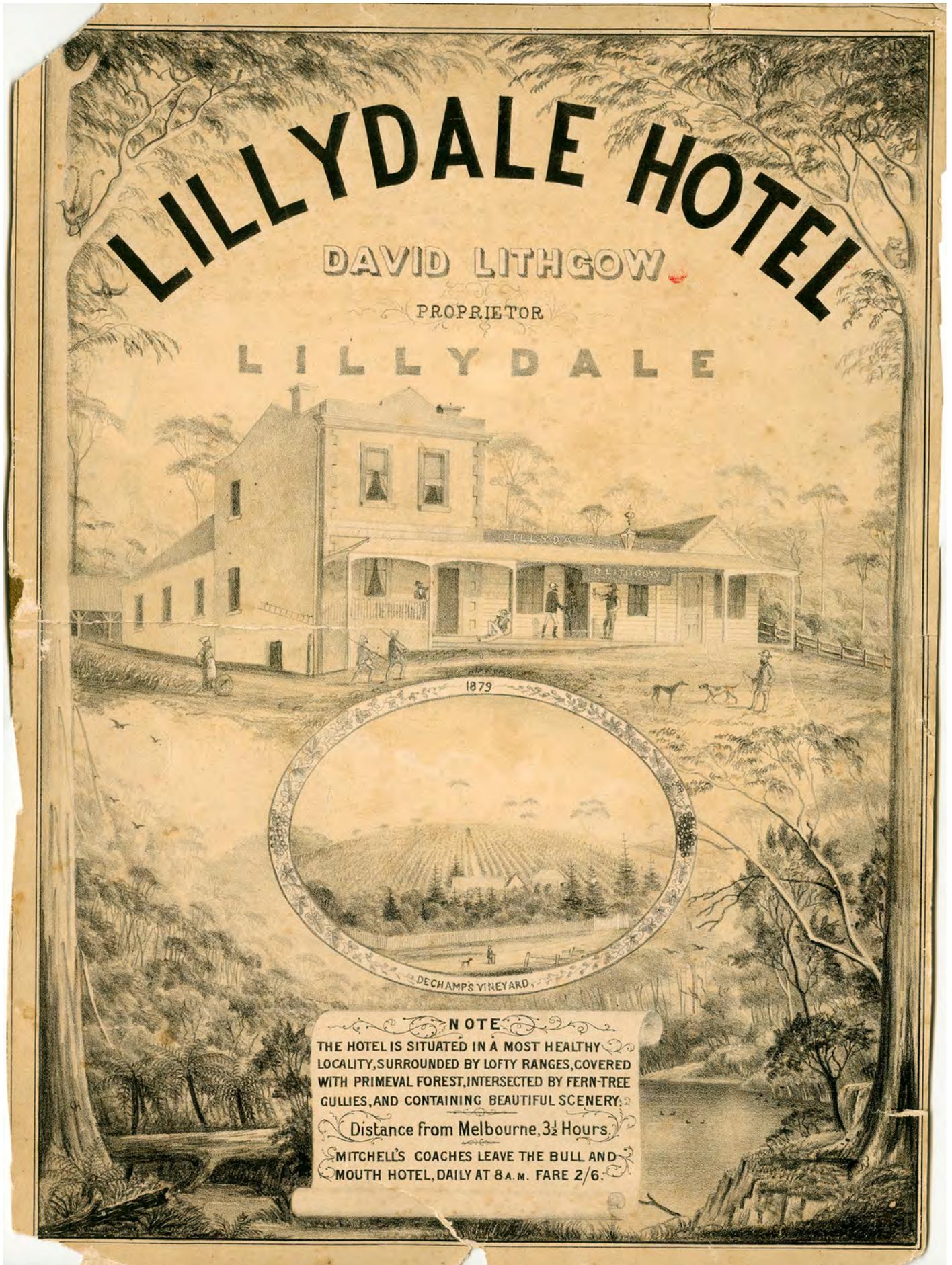
David and his wife Catherine enjoyed retirement at *Tara*. Catherine died 1892 and David in 1897.

At this stage David junior, sisters Catherine Ann and Mary (Hester) were living there. By 1912 their brother William Joseph had several acres, of the property. The other children were twins Robert, and Alfred and James White.

After David junior died in 1942 the house was sold for 550 pounds.



04543 David Lithgow built Tara in 1886 when he retired from his Lilydale Hotel. Tara was built on 37 ½ acres of land at 14 Gardiner Street Lilydale. Known as the back to front house, a driveway encircled the house with stables located on the west side; the stables were knocked down in the 1950s. The house stands as a monument of his ultimate success.



04529 Lillydale Hotel built in 1862 by James Balchin. First named Hazard's Hotel. Bought by David Lithgow in 1863 and was its publican until 1885.



01968 Lilydale Hotel about 1902. Crowd gathering to welcome the return of Melba to Lilydale November 1902.

Grand Father James White Lithgow

James was born in 1858. He was a policeman serving firstly in the country and later at Middle Park, South Melbourne and Camberwell. He married Annie Gardiner and they had one child Keith's father. Evelyn (Lyn) (Keith's father) who was born in 1899.

Annie died in 1927 and James in 1919.



*James Lithgow (1858-1919) son of David. Father of Evelyn.
Married Annie Gardiner 1888.*

(Photo:Keith Lithgow).

Father Evelyn (Lyn)

Lyn who was born in 1899 married Agnes Bromage Halse in 1925. Agnes was born in 1900.

Being of French Norman descent, prior to 1572, the family name was actually De Lyn Lithgo.

They had three son's Donald, Bruce and Keith being the youngest.

They were strict parents; conservative, non drinking Presbyterians and the boys were brought up to respect these values.

Lyn died in 1953 and Agnes in 1977.



Evelyn and Agnes Lithgow on their 25th wedding anniversary in 1950.

(Photo: Keith Lithgow)



Keith Lithgow in his Bayswater mens wear shop.

(Photo: Keith Lithgow).

Business in Bayswater

In the 1960s, Keith decided to start his own business in Bayswater - a men's and boys' wear shop.

Not owning a car Keith would pick up deliveries at the station and use the station trolley to transport large packages across Mountain Highway to his shop. Soon after, the council decided to make the road, so Keith had to wade ankle deep in mud to and from the station.

He joined the Bayswater Rotary Club and became President and then Treasurer. Keith was chairman of Bayswater Art Show, and chairman for Rotary Exchange.

Keith was awarded, a Paul Harris Award for outstanding service to Rotary. Later he joined Neighbourhood Watch and received a certificate for his 20 years of service.

Keith's brother had done quite a bit of travelling and was doing family history. However, because of Keith's busy life, he did not have time. Although he had been up to see the family's ancestral Lilydale home *Tara* on occasions.

In the early 2000 Keith's real interest in Lilydale started. Keith came to find a copy of a single sheet of paper that was an extract from an old book, "Victoria and its Metropolis". This had biographies about three of the four Lithgow brothers in Lilydale .



Keith Lithgow (left) with brother Bruce (right).

Family treasures

Proud of his family heritage Keith kept family treasures: a silver teapot, police baton and a cricket bat, all over 100 years old. There was a painting which hung over the fireplace at the Lilydale Hotel of the old country, theatre programs etc.

Keith joined the Lilydale & District Historical Society to further his research of his family. He was very interested in the cemetery and became one of the tour guides and was on duty at the historical society.

Keith was a keen gardener and every Sunday was gardening day with the family. Love of family and spending time with Pixi, his children and grandchildren, holidays, celebrating birthdays were his priorities.

He loved football and avidly followed Essendon.



Keith Lithgow with his old cricket bat during show and tell in June 2011 at an LDHS meeting.



Keith and Margaret Lithgow, July 1997.

(Photo: Keith Lithgow).

Publications

Melba and Her Mates

Melba's many dinner parties and functions saw people from all walks of life enjoying the hospitality of the great opera star. People from royalty, politics, art, entertainment, business and entrepreneurs would travel from the city to participate in a Coombe Cottage party.

Included were local people who worked side by side with Melba in her home or her professional and charity work.

With Ruby Kwijas:

Lilydale Cemetery Tour Vol 2

Lilydale Cemetery Tour Vol 3

Keith's memoirs are in *Reminiscences of Life Vol 2*.

Lilydale Cemetery Tours

Melba and Her Mates



Keith Lithgow

Lilydale & District Historical Society Inc.