

E.C. Moore (Edward Charles) 1833-1876 of Ballarat

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The tragic career of Edward Charles Moore parallels that of poet Adam Lindsay Gordon of whom Moore was an associate and quite possibly a close friend. Moore was born in 1833 and migrated to Australia on board the “Frances Henty” in 1854. Whilst on board he drew a number of scenes which are amongst 19 pieces of his work now held in the collection of the National Library of Australia.

Attracted to the goldfields Moore travelled to Ballarat which became his home. Design and Art Australia described E.C. Moore as a

“cartoonist, sketcher, actor and businessman, [who] was one of the founders of the first series of Ballarat Punch in 1857, together with C.A. Abbott. Herbert Woodhouse called him a gifted amateur actor and 'a smart humorous artist' and said he drew the outside cover for the first issue of the magazine. Unfortunately, it never appeared 'for want of the necessary wood or stone gravers', Withers recollected. The magazine was printed by F.W. Niven on one of Alfred Ronalds's old hand-presses and did not survive much beyond November and issue no.5 (the only one known)...Moore was also secretary of the Ballarat Turf Club.” (1)

Following his “Punch” adventure Moore became the “secretary & collector” of the Ballarat Hospital – a position he held for five years. During this time he married and had 3 children. Beyond art Moore’s Interests were horses, horse racing and mining ventures in which he gambled and speculated as a broker. In 1863 he teamed up with Clark and Were as a founding broker operating on the famous “Corner” open air exchange in Ballarat. Withers in his *History of Ballarat* noted:

The Corner at that time was covered by a wooden building on posts, an ironmonger's store occupied by A.R. Reid, now the actuary of the Geelong Savings Bank. Michael Walsh was one of the earliest brokers to open an office in the corner building, and he took in a partner named Were, and E.C. Moore, who had been hospital secretary, subsequently joined the firm. Other brokers followed, a daily muster was established, and the foundation of the Ballarat Stock Exchange was thus laid; the first Exchange, with M. Walsh president, meeting in a wooden building erected over an old shaft on the site now occupied by the Academy of Music. This was in the sixties. (2)

During the next 12 years Moore promoted or held shares in 21 mining companies the most famous of which were the Seven Hills Estate Co, the Ristori Freehold GMCo and Loughlin GMCo the latter both incredibly rich mines on the Berry Lead north of Creswick. The tragedy is that if Moore had been able to retain his interest in any one of these ventures his financial problems would have been solved and he would have become an incredibly rich man.

Moore was also a passionate royalist. During the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Ballarat in 1867 Moore, mounted and in military splendour, featured

As soon as the presentation of the address was over, the procession started on its way along the south side of Sturt-street. It was headed by the Chief Marshal, Major Wallace, who was assisted by three smart sub-marshals (Messrs. Greene, E. C. Moore, and Vance) attired in blue

uniforms with silver facings. The municipal carriages came next, the Royal carriage following... His sub-marshals were posted variously, Mr. Greene in the van, Mr. Moore with the Royal escort, and Mr. Vance hovered about the rear. As the procession moved down Sturt-street the full force of the ovation given to the Royal guest became more and more apparent. The great surging crowd rolled along with the procession, shouting welcomes wherever the Prince was visible. (3)

The Prince was reported to return 'in a private capacity' for a day at the races at Dowling Forest near Ballarat where he most probably met E.C. Moore and his Ballarat coterie including Robert Orr (4) William Bailey (5) Martin Loughlin (6) and Walter Craig of Craig's Hotel. Except for the latter all these 'horse associates' were also 'mining associates'. They were all regular attendants and participants in the Ballarat Hunt Club, trotting and jumps and flat races at Dowling Forest. In this capacity they came across poet Adam Lindsay Gordon who was a regular rider at steeplechase events across western Victoria during the 1860s.

In 1867 Gordon purchased the business of running the Stables at Craig's Hotel. His Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB) entry noted that:

On 22 November he rented Craig's livery stables in Ballarat, and in January 1868 he joined the Ballarat Troop of Light Horse. In March he was promoted senior sergeant but suffered a serious horse-riding accident, one of many that undermined his physical condition. On 14 April his daughter died. These private misfortunes, together with the failure of the livery stables, led to his wife's departure from Ballarat on 25 September. A small legacy enabled Gordon to settle his debts and on 1 October he left to stay for two months in Melbourne with Robert Power. His reputation was then growing. (7)

The Ballarat Light Horse trained in the yards adjacent to Craig's stables and Moore was also an officer in the Corps. It is not known whether Gordon and Moore were friends or rivals in this amateur military show. What is known is that Gordon, beset with financial as well as personal problems, departed for Melbourne in late 1868.

About 1870 or 1871 Moore returned to England. His reports to the press of this trip appear little more than self-promotion. In particular and rather egotistically, he spoke of his standing out in the crowd at an English Volunteer Review at Brighton and was thus invited by the presiding general to be part of the 'official' review party. He also spoke of a letter he had written to the Prince of Wales on his convalescing after a bout of typhoid fever. It is not known how much Moore's reports were exaggerated by the press but the Taranaki Herald who wrote of him as 'C.C. Moore' and 'Captain Moore' noted sarcastically "What a bashful, shrinking disposition Mr. Moore's must be." (8)

A more favourable description of Moore comes from Gay's *Some Ballarat Pioneers* who described a humorous event in which he was the main player:

"E.C. Moore (was) one of the kindest of men, gentlemanly, an enthusiastic amateur horseman, and an early captain of the Prince of Wales Light Horse, the original secretary of the Victorian Amateur Race Club. An amusing incident happened to him; on meeting three ladies when crossing the road towards Camp Street, on the way to the "Courier" and "Star" offices to place his advertisements, he greeted them by raising his silk hat, completely

forgetting his private pillar box, until whips of letters smothered him like a snowstorm, but, with my assistance, he recovered the whole, notwithstanding a fierce north wind was blowing". (9)

Early in 1876 as the secretary of the newly formed Victorian Amateur Turf Club (VATC) Moore moved with his family to Melbourne. In this year he sold all his shareholdings and appears to have been gambling rashly. In all probability it would seem that Moore's gambling led to the old story of "borrowing" from VATC funds to place a losing bet and then "borrowing" more to recover that which he had lost. Newspaper reported Moore's demise:

Edward C. Moore, the late secretary to the Victoria Amateur Turf Club, committed suicide on Thursday morning, by shooting himself in the head with a pistol, at his residence in Inkerman street, St. Kilda. It appears, according to the Argus, that when his connection with the Victoria Amateur Turf Club ceased his accounts were not in a satisfactory state, and that he had been subsequently written to with reference to an amount of £114, but had failed to reply. Recently he had been drinking heavily, and threatening to commit self destruction. At 11 o'clock on Wednesday night he went to his bedroom, and requested his wife to sleep in another apartment. Mrs. Moore heard him walking about the house throughout the night, and at an early hour in the morning heard a report, and subsequently discovered that he had shot himself. He was conveyed in an insensible state to the Alfred Hospital, and died there soon after his admission. Mr. Moore was well known in Ballarat, where for a series of years he held the position of secretary and collector for the hospital. (10)

The Seven Hills Estate Co in which he initially held 10% of shares gave £320,000 in dividends over its lifetime. The Ristori GMCo in which he held 300 shares produced dividends of over £16 per share on a paid up share value of little over 10s. Likewise in the Loughlin GMCo Moore held 300 shares or about two and a half per cent of the total shareholding with a paid up value of less than £1 10s which paid royalties (to the Seven Hills Estate Co) and dividends of £70,260. (11) Had Moore remained in Ballarat and speculated with his Ballarat cohorts he would probably have had shares in the Madame Berry GMCo - for some years the richest gold mine in Australia - which paid over one million pounds in royalties and dividends. Although he possessed no shares or real estate at the time of his death his personal property amounted to over £500.(12) The legacy of his early artwork now in the National Library of Australia means that he will be remembered - unlike some of his far more successful business associates.

End Notes

1. DAAO <http://trove.nla.gov.au/people/567984?c=people>
2. Withers *History of Ballarat* <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1304971h.html>
3. http://archive.org/stream/narrativeofvisit00knig/narrativeofvisit00knig_djvu.txt

4. Robert Orr, butcher and mining investor, early pioneer of Creswick, founding shareholder of the Seven Hills Estate and keen amateur horseman. As his wealth grew Orr maintained a string of racehorses, some ridden and later trained by his son-in-law James Scobie *My Life on the Australia Turf*, (The Specialty Press, Melbourne, 1929). At the time of his death in 1908 Orr was the owner of Craig's Hotel amongst other real estate.
5. William Bailey, mining investor and speculator, was also a horse enthusiast and member of the Ballarat Hunt Club. As his wealth grew he maintained a large stable of horses, trained by his friend Robert Orr's son-in-law James Scobie. Bailey was the largest shareholder in the Seven Hills Estate Co owning 45% and built a mansion in Ballarat - now part of the St John of God Hospital.
6. Martin Loughlin, (see ADB entry) miner then mine speculator, and member of the Ballarat Hunt Club had a large racing stable after firmly establishing his wealth. Loughlin's favourite jockey was Tommy Corrigan (see ADB entry) and his horses won the Melbourne Cup in 1885 and the Caulfield Cup in 1887. With William Bailey he controlled the Seven Hills Estate Co and on his death in 1894 owned the adjacent Glengower Estate outright.
7. ADB <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gordon-adam-lindsay-3635>
8. Taranaki Evening Herald 23.9.1872 <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=WH18720923.2.6>
9. Gay, R. *Some Ballarat Pioneers*, Mentone, 1935 p.54
10. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/70605897>
11. Withers. *History of Ballarat* op.cit.
12. Wills & Probate Public Records of Victoria VPRS 29 P0 Unit181; VPRS 28 P2 Unit58; VPRS 7591 P2 Unit 29