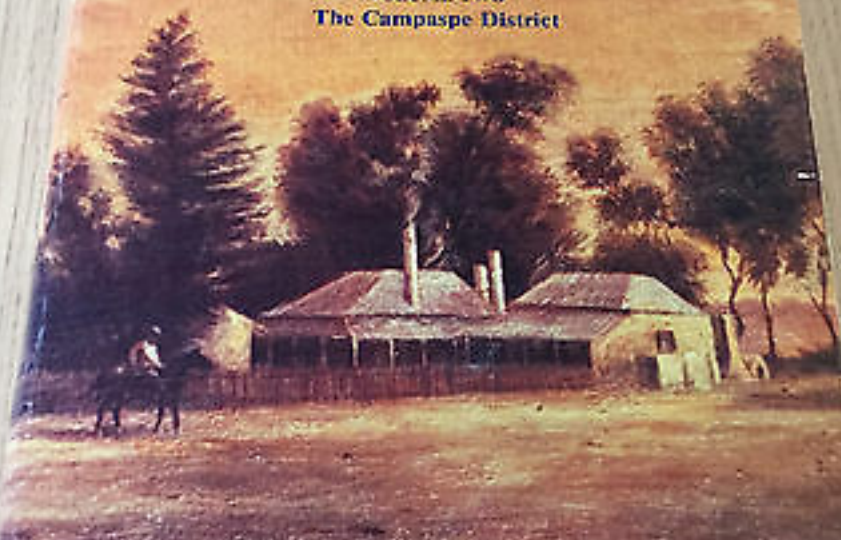
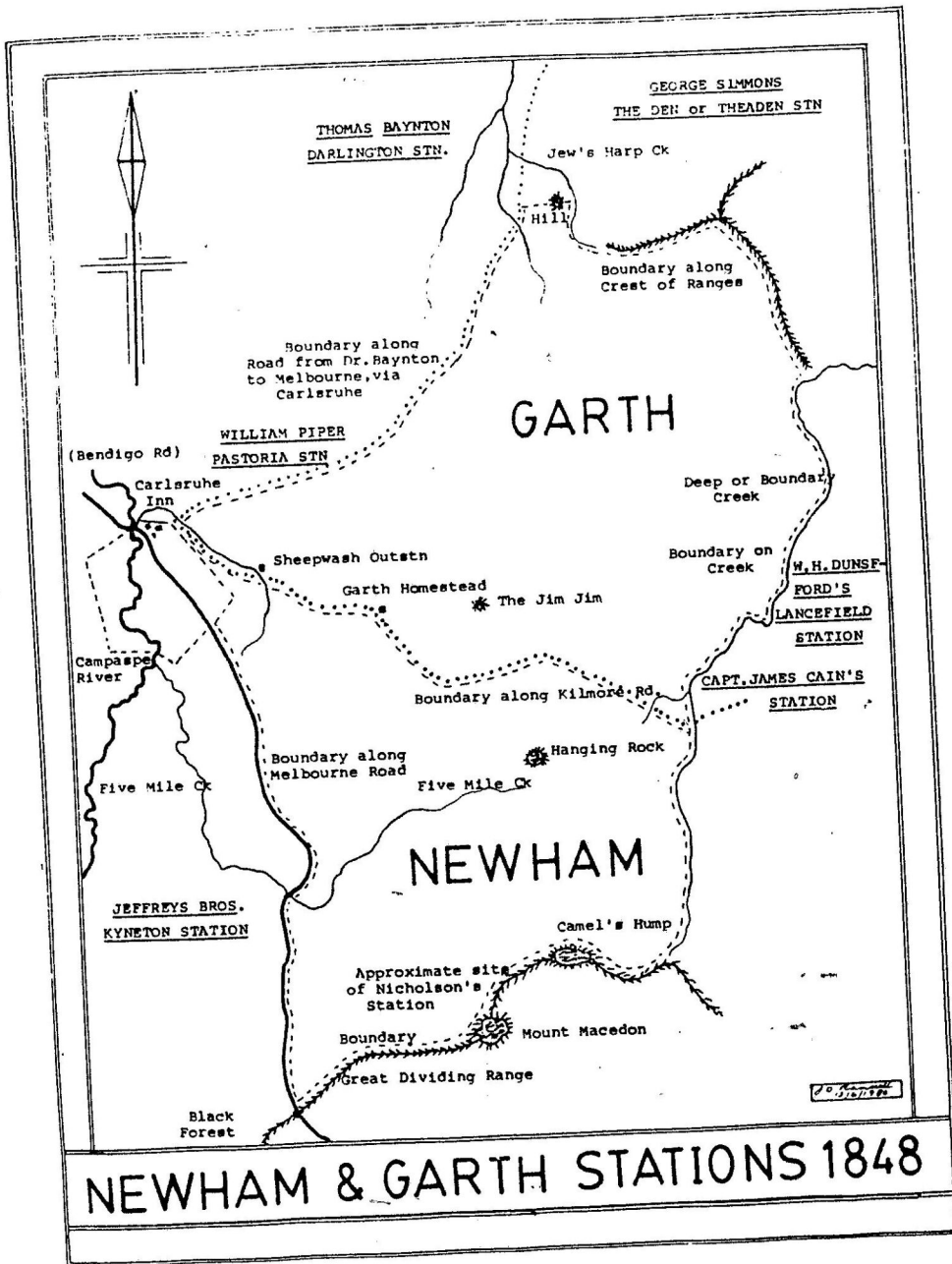


**Pastoral Settlement  
in  
Northern Victoria**

VOLUME TWO  
The Campaspe District



J. O. RANDELL



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## Newham Station

EDWARD DRYDEN AND CHARLES PETERS

Edward Dryden and Charles Peters arrived in Melbourne, from Tasmania, in 1837. They brought sheep with them and formed a station named Killamaine, near the present township of Kilmore, where Dryden stayed until he handed over the run to Robert Aitken in 1839.<sup>1</sup> After leaving Killamaine, Dryden and Peters took up a run called Mount Macedon Ranges Station, one of several bearing that name. This country became the Newham and Garth Stations and was first occupied by Edward Dryden in June 1839.<sup>2</sup>

Edward Dryden was the owner, or part owner, of an estate in Tasmania named Haggerston. Charles Peters was similarly situated with the Garth Estate near Fingal, in the same Colony.

Crown Lands Commissioner Henry F. Gisborne called on Dryden at Mount Macedon Ranges Station on 4 November, 1839. He made no mention of Charles Peters but listed Edward Dryden as resident owner, living in a bark hut. Gisborne noted the soil was sandy, the country heavily wooded and the run was watered by creeks.<sup>3</sup>

In his letter of August 1853 to Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe, Edward Dryden described the aborigines who inhabited the district when he first occupied his station. He said the local tribe consisted of about 150 men, women and children, who wandered over the country between Mount Macedon and Mount Alexander. Dryden added that they were a harmless and simple people who had never injured any of the white settlers.<sup>2</sup>

The following advertisement in the *Port Phillip Herald* of 9 July, 1841, suggests Edward Dryden had more trouble with his own race.

Two Pounds Reward for the person who will lodge my servant of two years in gaol, engaged at Launceston on 31 March.  
Edward Dryden,  
Mount Macedon.

The List of Depasturing Licenses for the Western Port District is no longer in existence for the period 1 July, 1839, to 30 June, 1840. The first license is No. 184, issued to Edward Dryden, alone, for Mount Macedon Ranges Station from 1 July, 1840, to 30 June, 1841. The license for 1 July, 1841, to 30 June, 1842, was issued in the name of Edward Dryden and Co. and in the two years, 1 July, 1842, to 30 June, 1844, they stood in the name of Dryden and Peters.<sup>4</sup>

After this their Mount Macedon Ranges Station was divided into two parts. Edward Dryden retained the southern portion, which he named Newham after the place near Newcastle on Tyne where he was born in 1808. For some years afterwards, in official correspondence, Dryden's run was still referred to as Mount Macedon Ranges Station. Charles Peters took the northern half of the run and named it Garth Station after his Tasmanian estate of that name.

Crown Lands Commissioner Frederick A. Powlett called at Newham on 18 April, 1842, but left no details. When at the station on 13 November, 1844, Powlett recorded that Dryden had 9 workmen, a slab house, 7 acres cultivated, 2 horses, 8 cattle and 3500 sheep.<sup>3</sup> In 1843 Edward Dryden had married Ann, only daughter of James Robertson of Upper Keillor Station, and taken his bride to live in the slab house at Newham.<sup>1</sup>

Late in 1844 Edward Dryden bought a 6400 acre lease adjoining Newham from Mark Nicholson (see note on Nicholson in this volume). The Return of Stock and Runs at 1 July 1845 estimated Newham Station to contain 12,800 acres and, when added to Nicholson's former run, this took Dryden's holding to about 19,200 acres. The total stock on both leases was 36 horses, 40 cattle and 5000 sheep.<sup>5</sup>

At about this time Edward Dryden became indebted to his brother, Thomas Dryden, of Haggerston, Tasmania. On 8 March, 1848 Edward Dryden had someone else fill in the standard form, applying for a lease of Newham. The application requested that the lease be issued in the name of Thomas Dryden and Edward signed on his behalf. However it was officially noted on the form that Edward Dryden had held the preceding licenses, from 1 July, 1844-30 June, 1848, and the new lease was issued in his name. Newham was then estimated to contain 25,000 acres and thought capable of carrying 9000 sheep. The boundaries were described as follows: 'Bounded on the North by Peters (10½) ten and one half miles. Bounded on the West by Jeffreys and the Melbourne or Mount Macedon Road, (9) nine miles. Bounded on the South by the Mount Macedon Ranges and the station formerly known as Nicholson's to the top of Boundary Creek, (8½) eight and one half miles. From this in a Western direction to the Melbourne Road, two and one half miles (2½). In all the Southern boundary is (11) eleven miles in length. Bounded on the East by Cain, (9½) nine and one half miles.'<sup>6</sup>

Robert Aitken, to whom Edward Dryden had handed over Killamaine Station in 1839, was working as overseer for Dryden at Newham in 1849. Aitken had been at the races in Melbourne and returned to the station on 3 April. Eight days later, on 11 April, he was found dead in his bed at the homestead.

William Piper, J. P., conducted an inquest at the Newham homestead later in the same day. Edward Dryden said Aitken had spent two days in bed after returning from the races and added, "I imagined he was suffering from too much free-living in Melbourne, he complained of a pain in his head ever since he returned." On the day previous to his death, Aitken had done his usual work and gone to bed a little after nine o'clock, saying his head had been a little better that day. Dryden continued, saying he had heard Aitken snoring very loudly during the night. He had called out to Andrew Murray, a house guest who was sharing Aitken's room, to speak to him in order to have him stop snoring so loudly. Murray had called out, "Mr. Aitken" and the snoring abated. Dryden went on to say; "I heard no more snoring. I called Mr. Aitken at sunrise. As he did not answer, I called Mr. Murray if Mr. Aitken was up. Mr. Murray said he believed he was up as he did not answer. Mr. Murray got up immediately afterwards and called out that the deceased was dead. I got up immediately and found it was the case. The body has not been touched."

Andrew Murray said he had been staying at Newham for the last week. He had known Robert Aitken for fifteen years, "ever since he came to the Colony". Murray continued, saying Aitken "was a very healthy man and, though a free-liver at times, was not habitually so". William Piper found that Robert Aitken "died from a visita-

tion of God" and noted that he was said to be forty-eight years old at the time of his death.<sup>7</sup>

On 26 July 1852 Edward Dryden applied to purchase 640 acres at his homestead under the pre-emptive right provisions. Permission was granted on 22 September, 1852 and the land was valued at 20/- an acre. A year later, however, due to the greatly increased work brought about by the gold discoveries, the block had not been surveyed and, because of this, Edward Dryden was unable to fence it in. He wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands in November, 1853, requesting the work be carried out as soon as possible.

Ten months later, on 30 September, 1854, Edward Dryden wrote direct to the Governor, Sir Charles Hotham, again urging that the survey be carried out. He said, "my reason for such request, as then stated, was to prevent the constant destructive trespass of teams going to and from the Diggings, as the locality of the purchase is immediately contiguous to the Main Line of Road between Woodend and Carlsruhe". Dryden was advised that the survey would be carried out without further delay.<sup>6</sup>

The *Parliamentary Report on Crown Lands, 1856*, gives the following figures for Newham Station: 1852, 80 horses, 30 cattle and 12,000 sheep; 1854, 100 horses, 30 cattle and 4000 sheep; 1855; the stock figures are the same but the area of the run had been reduced from 25,000 acres to 19,360 acres. Doubtless the decrease was due to the effect of Government land sales.

Edward Dryden's brother Thomas had been financially involved in Newham Station since the 1840s and, on 26 January, 1856, Edward Dryden requested that the pastoral lease be transferred to him.<sup>6</sup> This was done and soon afterwards the 640 acre Newham pre-emptive section was conveyed to him. The title certificate recorded that the land had been first purchased from the Government with Thomas Dryden's "own money".<sup>8</sup>

Further purchases brought the freehold area of Newham Estate to about 1220 acres and Thomas Dryden leased much of this land to tenant farmers. In March, 1867, Newham, with the probable exception of the homestead and a small area around it, was leased to Andrew Rowan for seven years at a rental of £200 for the first year and £350 annually for the remainder of the term.<sup>8</sup> All the worthwhile land in the Newham pastoral lease had been sold by the Government in the 1850s and 1860s.

Edward Dryden senior, who had pioneered Newham Station in 1839, appears to have taken little interest in the property after it was transferred to his brother Thomas and selected farming country near Cohuna in Northern Victoria during 1877. He had a hard struggle on his selection but managed to establish a mixed farming and grazing property. He died in 1886 and the farm was carried on by his son Thomas and his children for many years.<sup>9</sup>

Thomas Dryden senior, the owner of Newham, died intestate and his nephew, Edward Dryden junior, secured the right to administer his uncle's estate. This was challenged by his brother, James Tait Dryden, and there began ten years of litigation over the ownership of their uncle's Newham property. In 1882 the freehold land became the absolute property of Edward Dryden junior.<sup>8</sup>

He was not successful, and in 1891 was living at Clare Inn on the Campaspe River, in a wooden cottage owned by his maternal uncle Thomas Robertson.<sup>10</sup> Newham estate was leased to various tenants although Mrs. Edward Dryden senior lived in

UNCLE

COUSIN

\* THIS WAS EDWARD DRYDEN (1808 - 1886) in BOTH CASES  
THE AUTHOR IS CONFUSED.

## *Nicholson's Station*

This station was a small pastoral lease of about 6400 acres<sup>1</sup> adjoining the holding of Edward Dryden and Charles Peters on their southern boundary. Owing to the considerable number of lesser squatters who gave the location of their runs as Mount Macedon, regardless of the direction from that mountain, I have not been able to establish the name of the man from whom Mark Nicholson and Edmund Thomas Higgins bought their pastoral lease.

Mark Nicholson was born in England in 1818 and, with Edmund Thomas Higgins, arrived in Melbourne at the beginning of 1840.<sup>2</sup> Higgins is said to have been connected by marriage with the Nicholson family. They first settled on a small station at Merri Creek, near Melbourne, but sold it and bought a station on the north side of Mount Macedon in 1841-2.<sup>2</sup>

At about the time this run was bought, Higgins departed on a visit to England, leaving Mark Nicholson to work the property, which was never known by any name other than Nicholson's Station. He ran it as a small dairy establishment, milking about 30-40 cows and selling the butter in Melbourne. His small capital, and presumably some of Edmund Higgins', had been invested in this venture and, due to the financial depression of the early 1840s, Nicholson was forced to carry on the property until conditions improved before he could sell it and buy something more productive elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Writing to his family in England in March 1842, Mark Nicholson said he employed a stockman, a dairyman and a milkman. He worked very hard himself and told his family that he did the cooking and baking for his establishment in addition to helping in the dairy. Nicholson said he had just sold 700 lbs. of butter in casks for 1/11d. a pound and added this was at least 6d. a pound higher than the average.

Mark Nicholson also told his relatives he had nearly 100 calves from his cows on the station at Mount Macedon that year but had lost a few killed by the dingoes. He had accounted for several dingoes with his dogs and hoped to kill some more as he expected them to be more troublesome when the winter came on.<sup>3</sup>

Crown Lands Commissioner Frederick Powlett called at Nicholson's Station at Macedon on 18 April 1842 and stayed the night there on 6 May, 1844, riding on to Alexander Mollison's Colliban Station next day.<sup>4</sup> However, Powlett left no details of the station in his itinerary.

Soon after the Commissioner's second visit, Mark Nicholson sold the station to Edward Dryden, the adjoining squatter, and it became incorporated in Newham Station. Having retrieved his share of the capital invested in this run, Nicholson bought the Falls of Hopkins Station in the Western District of Victoria. He was elected to the Legislative Council of Victoria in 1853 but left for England in 1854.<sup>2</sup>

## Garth Station

When Charles Peters and Edward Dryden dissolved partnership in 1844, Peters took the northern portion of the run they had taken up in June, 1839, and named it Garth Station after his Tasmanian estate. Peters and Dryden's joint holding had been known as Mount Macedon Ranges Station, one of several bearing that name.<sup>1</sup>

Garth Estate in Tasmania had a history of sadness and misfortune. In later years it became one of Tasmania's more celebrated haunted houses and is situated on a high bank above the South Esk River near Fingal. Local legend credits Garth with having been the scene of three violent deaths. In about 1838 a young Englishman was said to have begun building the stone house at Garth, in anticipation of his marriage to a girl in England. When the house was well advanced the owner sailed back to claim his bride but found that she had married someone else. He returned to Tasmania and, on the night of his arrival, committed suicide in the courtyard of his unfinished house. The upstairs rooms had not been plastered when this happened and it was never completed.<sup>2</sup>

After this, the Peters family held the property and made it their home. One of the children, Ann Peters, was in the care of a convict woman nurse who threatened to punish her every misdemeanour by throwing the child into the well in the courtyard and had gone so far as to hold her by the ankles above it. One day Ann Peters had done something which she was sure would be particularly displeasing to her nurse and, remembering the threats, the terrified child ran to the well and jumped into it. The convict woman got into the well in an attempt to save the child but both were drowned. Ann Peters has a headstone on her grave a short distance from the building. The legend goes on, saying that no one would live in the house at Garth after these tragedies and it fell into ruin. The property became part of the Rostrevor Estate.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the ill omens associated with the Tasmanian Garth, the Peters family gave its name to their Port Phillip run. In the *Return of Stock and Runs* at 1 July, 1845, it was referred to as "Mount Macedon Ranges" Station and the area was said to be 6400 acres, carrying 22 horses, 4 cattle and 4000 sheep, which indicates that the run's area was greatly underestimated.

In addition to their sheep, both Edward Dryden at Newham and Charles Peters at Garth bred horses as a commercial venture. In January 1847 a reward was offered for the recovery of a horse lost from "Mr. Peters' station in the vicinity of Carlsruhe". It was signed by "Thomas Lewis, groom to Mr. Peters".<sup>3</sup>

On 8 March, 1848, Charles Peters completed his application for a lease under the Order-in-Council, giving the area of Garth as 22,720 acres and estimating the carrying capacity at 200 cattle and 4000 sheep. A plan of the run, drawn by a Mr. E. K. Horn, was attached to the form and the boundaries were described as follows.

Bounded on the North by Baynton and Simmons, 7 miles (seven). Bounded on the east by Dunsford and Cain, 5¼ miles (five and three-quarter miles).

B

RUBBISH  
SEE  
REQUEST ON  
ANN PETERS'  
SEPT. 1840

Bounded on the South by Dryden, 10 miles (ten miles).  
Bounded on the West by Piper, 4½ miles (four and one half miles), more particularly and definitely shown in the accompanying plan.<sup>4</sup>

W<sup>c</sup> BROTHER

The plan alluded to by Charles Peters was drawn by E. K. Horn in January 1848 and he mistakenly inscribed David Peters as the owner of Garth Station. He was probably a son of Charles Peters and the person mentioned in the passenger list of the brig "Raven" from Launceston in November 1847, "Mr. Dryden, Mr. Peters and Mr. Peters junior".<sup>5</sup> David Peters later held Torpichen Station near Wedderburn until 1860.<sup>6</sup>

Thomas Baynton, of the adjoining Darlington Station, lodged a caveat against the issue of a lease to Peters, saying he was trespassing and requesting that the matter be referred to the specially appointed Commissioner of Disputed Boundaries.<sup>4</sup> There are no further details in the official files and it appears that Baynton and Peters resolved their differences without recourse to the Commissioner.

Charles Peters applied to purchase 320 acres at his homestead under pre-emptive right and this was allowed at 25/- an acre. On 15 May, 1854, Charles Peters wrote from "Garth Station, Mount Macedon", requesting an additional 320 acres at valuation. Crown Lands Commissioner Edward Barnard, "The dwelling house on this station is good. Some portion of the land in neighbourhood of the homestead is fenced in. Land applied for joins section already granted. The run is an original one but was subdivided some eight years ago. The road from Kyneton to Kilmore passes near the homestead. No indications of gold". On 14 September, 1855 the section was valued at 25/- an acre by Commissioner Barnard and Edward Dryden, who acted on behalf of Charles Peters.<sup>4</sup>

The *Parliamentary Report on Crown Lands, 1856*, gives these details of Garth Station. 1851; 22,000 acres held under 2¼ licenses for £22/10/0 a year: 1852; 50 horses, 10 cattle and 9000 sheep, Stock Tax £79/12/0: 1855; 18,750 acres, 4½ licenses for £45 a year, 20 horses, 12 cattle and 5000 sheep, Stock Tax £44/5/4.

Over the next few years Government land sales absorbed all the best of the Garth pastoral lease and the remainder was abandoned in 1861. By this time James Peters, apparently one of Charles Peters' sons, was in occupation of the homestead and freehold area. This totalled little more than the 640 acre pre-emptive section and was run as a mixed farm.

In 1862 James Peters and his wife Elizabeth had two sons, aged five and three years. On 17 January harvesting was in progress at Garth and James Peters left his house to go to the reapers. His two sons followed him a short way but turned and he saw them go back to the house. A woman named Rosa Riallia was employed as nursemaid to the children and that afternoon, at about 3 o'clock, she saw the younger boy William playing happily in the blacksmith's shop near the homestead. Rosa Riallia went back to the house and, when she looked for the child a short time afterwards, he was found drowned in the sheep dip.

Dr. J. Mackenzie, J. P., held an inquest at Garth Station next day and Elizabeth Peters gave the following evidence.

Yesterday afternoon, about half past five, my nurse, whose name is Rosa Riley, told me my little boy William was missing. Of course I ran directly to the dipping box, which is kept for dipping sheep in. It was five feet deep but the water in it was not more than two and a half feet deep. There were about three hogheads of



water and eighteen pounds of tobacco in the box. I saw the child's little jumper floating on the top and at first saw nothing else, for his head was right down under the water. I fainted as soon as I told his little brother to run for the girl. She came and took the child out by the time I had recovered and I took the child from her and carried it home. The body was quite warm then. I put him in a warm bath and tried every means in my power to recover him but I saw no symptoms of life.<sup>7</sup>

In June 1882 the administrators of James Peters' estate sold the 640 acre Garth Estate to William McFeeters from Lake Corop for £5856, or £9/3/0 an acre. The new owner was one of the first to introduce Polled Angus cattle into the district. McFeeters died suddenly on 11 November 1889.<sup>8</sup> The present Garth Estate comprises about 1000 acres of freehold land and is owned by the Chapman family who are descendants of William McFeeters.

#### SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup> See chapter on *Newham Station* in this volume.
- <sup>2</sup> Michael Sharland, *Stones of a Century*.
- <sup>3</sup> *Port Phillip Patriot*, 19/1/1847.
- <sup>4</sup> *Garth Station File*, Dept. of Lands, Melbourne.
- <sup>5</sup> *Port Phillip Patriot*, 23/11/1847.
- <sup>6</sup> Billis and Kenyon, *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*.
- <sup>7</sup> *Inquest Files*, P.R.O., Victoria.
- <sup>8</sup> *Kyneton Guardian*, *History of Kyneton*.

#### EDWARD DRYDEN

THE KYNETON GUARDIAN - Wed. April 28 1886.

Tuesday - I regret to have to report the death of one of the pioneers of the district and of the colony, Mr. E. Dryden, of the Newham Station. Mr. Dryden was born at Newham in Northumberland, England, in 1808, and came to Tasmania in 1836. On New Year's Day, 1837 (with Charles Peters), he landed in Melbourne, and shortly afterwards he camped on the Garden Hut Creek with some sheep, and then shifted to the site of his late residence at Newham, named his station after his native village, and then gave the name to the parish and shire. In 1842 he married Miss Anne Robertson, sister of the late Hon. F. Robertson, M.L.C. and leaves a family of six children. Mr. Dryden was 78 years old when he died. His funeral will leave his house at 2 p.m. today (Wednesday), and is certain to be largely attended.

THE KYNETON GUARDIAN - Sat. May 1 1886.

WOODEND - The funeral of the late Mr. Edward Dryden took place on Wednesday afternoon, and the respect in which he was held was shown by the attendance which was one of the largest ever seen in the district. There were about 40 conveyances and 100 horsemen, the procession extending for fully half a mile. The funeral service was impressively read by the Rev. J. Allen. Messrs. W. Peters, C. Ritchie, W. Moubray, and McFeeters were the pall-bearers. The funeral was conducted by Mr. Bromley of Kyneton.