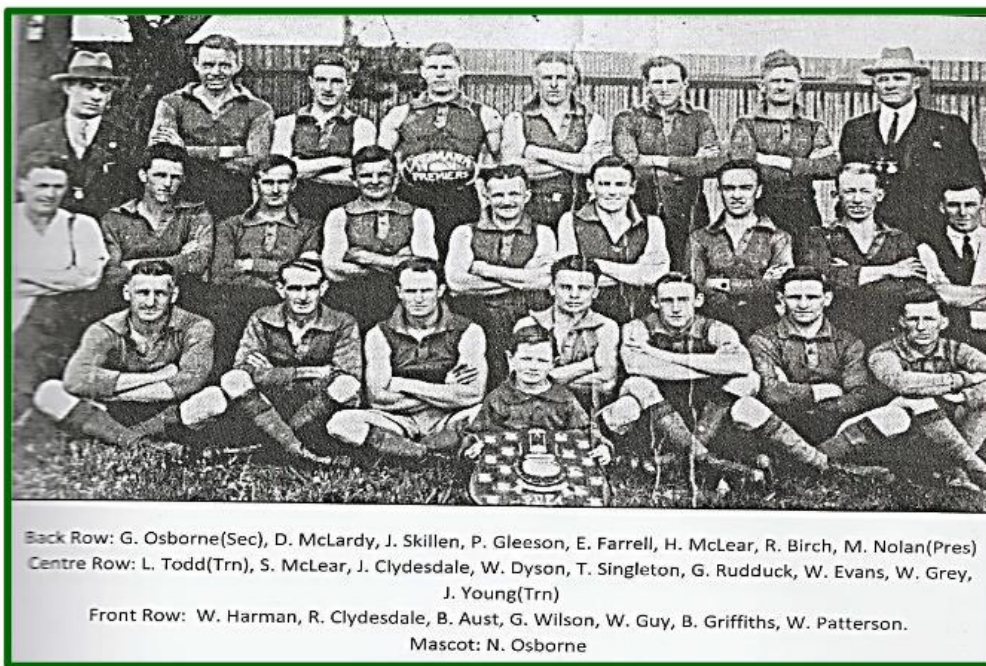


1931- 90 YEARS AGO

FENTON'S PADDOCK

& THE FIRST FLAG.

Reference 2021/14



1931- AN UPHILL STRUGGLE BRINGS REWARDS

Most DFNC supporters appreciate that the club's journey, in the early years was 'unsteady, rocky and full of potholes'; and the committee and players faced some daunting challenges. Elsewhere on this website, there are stories regarding the enduring commitment given by local families in building the club and steering it through grim times.

The economic depression of the 1890' had a catastrophic effect on all communities; and, of course, the First World War not only brought football and other sports to a halt but claimed the lives of thousands of young Australians. The main priority of most local families after the Great War was rebuilding their lives; and, consequently, the restoration of the football club , after the hiatus, fell upon the shoulders of a small and loyal band of local residents.

In 1901, the permanent residential population of Dromana was about three hundred people; and by 1930 had increased to 509; and, as can be imagined, rebuilding a football club was a heavy load for a small community.

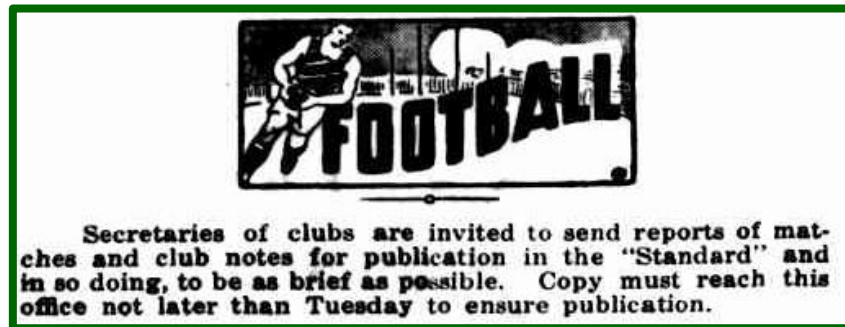
In those austere times, the administration and maintenance of any football club demanded time and effort and Dromana was no exception.

There's a saying which seems most apt for those early years of football at Pier Street...

“What comes easy won't last...and what lasts won't come easy...”

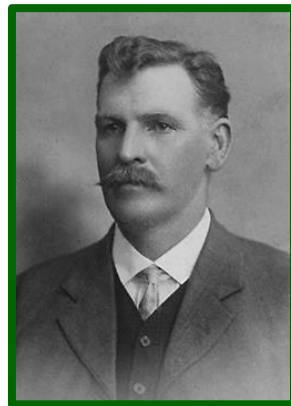
How true; and as the archives show, it wasn't until 1931 that the club claimed its first premierships pennant.

The following match report between Dromana and Pearcedale was recently discovered in a copy of the 'Frankston and Somerville Standard' (July 11th 1931); and it provides a good account of Dromana's convincing win in Round: 10 that season. The review was written by a local scribe (perhaps the club's secretary) and it is an important piece of the football history for the DFNC.



The 'Frankston- Somerville Standard' –A notice to club secretaries in 1933.

DROMANA V PEARCEDALE AT FENTON'S Paddock -1931



James Edward Fenton 1864-1950

This match report is most enlightening as it is stated that the match was transferred to Fenton's paddock because the home ground was unsuitable for playing after the heavy rains that week. Fenton's 'paddock' was, in all probability, part of the property owned by Mr James Edward Fenton.

Younger readers may be unaware that James Fenton was not only a distinguished member of Federal Parliament (1910 -1934) but was also the acting Prime Minister of Australia for five months in 1930 (when Prime Minister Scullin was overseas). He also held the portfolios of Minister for Trade and Customs and Post Master General during his time in Federal Parliament. Among his lasting legacies to the nation, was his strong advocacy for the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

**MR. FENTON, ACTING PRIME
MINISTER.**

The Australian Prime Minister (Mr. Scullin), in a message to the "Daily Express," through its Paris correspondent, expressed the determination of Australians to balance the Budget for the current year. He said he had every confidence in Mr. Fenton (Acting Prime Minister) and his colleagues, knowing that they would save the situation and take the proper steps.

James Fenton was acting Prime Minister of Australia for five months in 1930.

The Fenton family lived at Merricks North; and James was known to be a spirited member of the community who gave considerable time and energy to local activities. The photograph, below, shows the opening of Fenton Hall in 1938 (on the Bittern-Dromana Road).



The following newspaper extract, regarding the death of James Fenton, was published in 'The Argus' on the 4th December 1950. James was buried in the Mornington Cemetery following a State Funeral...

**Mr. Fenton,
Ex-Acting
P.M. Dies**

Mr. James Edward Fenton who was Acting Prime Minister in the Scullin Government, died at his home in Frankston on Saturday night after a long illness.

Mr. Fenton, who was 86, represented Maribyrnong in the House of Representatives from 1910 until 1934.

"The former acting Prime Minister who died at his home "Harton" The Crest, Frankston last night will have a State Funeral on Tuesday. Mr. Fenton represented Maribyrnong in the Federal Parliament from 1910 to 1934 and was acting PM in the Scullin Government.....A State Funeral will take place on Tuesday at 2.30 pm at the Methodist Church Frankston and will be buried in the Mornington Cemetery."

THE PDA LADDER AFTER TEN ROUNDS IN 1931

As can be seen from the press cutting, Dromana was undefeated after ten rounds and had 'cleared the pack;' and had become the dominant force in the District Association that season. It is interesting to note that Flinders FC was most competitive in that era and sat third on the table.

PENINSULA DISTRICT ASSOCIATION					
POSITION OF CLUBS.					
	P.	W.	L.	D.	Pts.
Dromana	10	10	0	0	40
Rosebud	10	7	2	1	30
Flinders	10	7	2	1	30
Seaford	10	6	4	0	24
Somerville	10	6	4	0	24
Tyabb	10	4	5	1	18
Pearcedale	10	3	6	1	14
Red Hill	10	2	8	0	8
Langwarrin	10	0	10	0	0

Mornington has withdrawn.

THE ORIGINAL MATCH REPORT FROM JULY 1931

DROMANA v. PEARCEDALE.

Dromana: Gleeson, Birch, Aust, Singleton, Wiseman, Griffiths, Wilson, Clydesdale, Skillen, Patterson, Guy, Evans, Farrell, Harman, Grey, S. McLearn, H. McLearn, McLardy.

Pearcedale: White, Campbell, Percival, McLeod, Oliver, Sullivan, Doewra, Bodey, Wells, Smith, Henderson, D. Head, Bodsworth, Lord, Sheffield, Beamid, Callanan.

On account of the recreation ground being very wet and muddy after the heavy day's rain on Friday the match Dromana v. Pearcedale was played on Mr. Fenton's paddock. This ground also was wet and made good football an impossibility. A fairly large crowd was present and it again witnessed Dromana score another easy win. The game was played in the very best of spirits, both sides' barrackers joining in the fun watching the players getting mud baths. The scores were:—

1st: Dromana 8.8, Pearcedale 0.2.
 2nd: Dromana 8.2, Pearcedale nil.
 3rd: Dromana 8.2, Pearcedale 2.5.
 4th: Dromana 5.1, Pearcedale 1.0.
 Final: Dromana 15.9, Pearcedale 3.7.

Goal kickers.—Dromana: Guy (7), W. Grey (3), W. Patterson (4), W. Harmer. Pearcedale: McLeod, C. White, J. Powell.

Pearcedale's best: White, Campbell, Sullivan, Callanan.

Best players for Dromana: Aust, Guy, McLearn brothers, McLardy, W. Grey, Birch, Griffiths, Singleton, Patterson, Gleeson and W. Harmer.

Today Dromana visit Somerville, where a good game should be witnessed.

Guy, the Dromana goal-kicker, has kicked 48 goals so far this season and has only missed one match.

The above image of the match report was published on page: 6 of the 'Frankston & Somerville Standard' on July 11th 1931. A legible copy is provided below and gives details of teams, goal kickers and best players that day.

DROMANA v. PEARCEDALE.

Dromana: Gleeson, Birch, Aust, Singleton, Wiseman, Griffith, Wilson, Clydesdale, Skillen, Patterson, Guy, Evans, Farrell, Harman, Grey, S. McLear, H. McLear, McLardy.

Pearcedale: White, Campbell, Percival, McLeod, Oliver, Sullivan, Docwra, Bodey, Wells, Smith, Henderson, D. Head, Bodworth, Lord, Sheffield, Beamid, Callanan.

On account of the recreation ground being very wet and muddy after the heavy day's rain on Friday the match Dromana v. Pearcedale was played on Mr. Fenton's paddock. This ground also was wet and made good football an impossibility. A fairly large crowd was present and it again witnessed Dromana score another easy win. The game was played in the very best of spirits, both sides' barrackers joining in the fun watching the players getting mud baths.

The scores were: 1st: Dromana 3.3, Pearcedale 0.2. 2nd: Dromana 3.2, Pearcedale nil. 3rd: Dromana 3.2, Pearcedale 2.5. 4th: Dromana 5.1, Pearcedale 1.0.

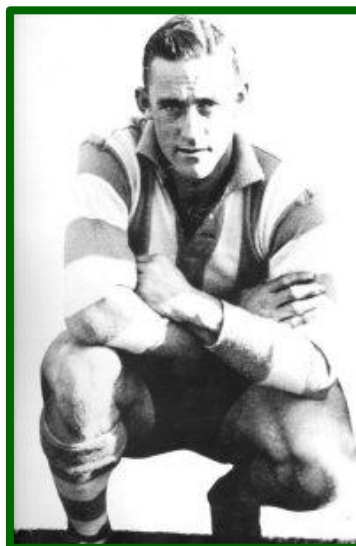
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Pearcedale: McLeod, C. White, J. Powell.

Pearcedale's best: White, Campbell, Sullivan, Callanan.

Best players for Dromana: Aust, Guy, McLear brothers, McLardy, W. Grey, Birch, Griffiths, Singleton, Patterson, Gleeson and W. Harmer.

Today Dromana visit Somerville, where a good game should be witnessed. Guy, the Dromana goalkicker, has kicked 42 goals so far this season and has only missed one match.



Wally Guy who booted seven goals against Somerville in Round:10 in 1931.

THE FIRST PREMIERSHIP FLAG FOR DROMANA -1931

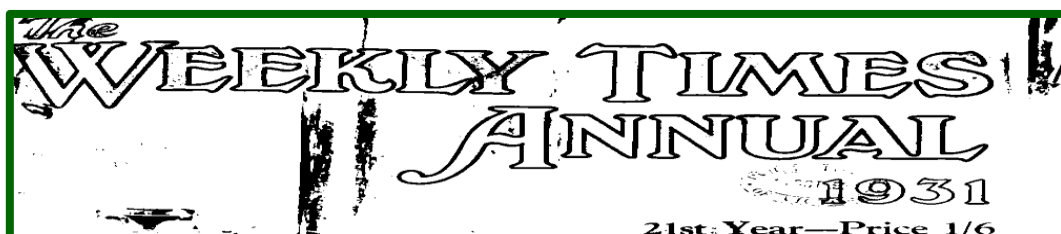


Source: Weekly Times October 10th 1931 page: 60

Dromana's pennant in 1931 was the pinnacle of the club's early years. Not only was it a classic 'from rags to riches' story but it was a fair and just reward for the labours of the faithful and dedicated members of the club.

THE MATCH REVIEW IN 'THE WEEKLY TIMES'

Dromana won the 1931 Grand Final by eight goals and, in so doing, etched its name into football history. 'The Weekly Times' carried a comprehensive review of The Grand Final and it is reprinted below. The article gives a colourful account of the match and lists goal kickers and the better players for both Dromana and Somerville.



DROMANA PREMIERS

WELL-EARNED VICTORY

DROMANA won their first premiership at Mornington on Saturday, when they decisively defeated Somerville in the grand final match. The excitement among Dromana barrackers was intense. Although Somerville won the final against Dromana. it was a different Dromana team that contested the grand final, as they played ideal football and never left the game in doubt.

Dromana's forward line was the weak link in the final match. This was greatly strengthened and in the first quarter Dromana scored 6-6 to 1-1.

The second saw even football, each team piercing the goal three times. It was in the third term where Dromana showed superiority Scoring seven goals to Somerville's solitary single, they had the game well in hand. Somerville. however, made a good effort in the last quarter, but found the opposition far too strong. Final scores were:— Dromana 16-19. Somerville 8-6.

The winners fielded a strong side, but the outstanding men were W Patterson and W Guy, both capable forwards.

Patterson kicked eight goals, some from difficult angles. Several seasons ago he was the best forward in the senior league.

Guy is the makings of a champion. Being a fine, deadly kick, and noted for his quick turning when' going for goal, he would hold his own in senior company By kicking five goals he brought his total for the season to 84, a splendid performance Patterson's total is 59. Others prominent were B. Aust, who played a magnificent game roving and on the half-forward flank; S McLear (centre); G Gleeson and W Harman (following), E Farrell (half-back), and R Birch (back).

Somerville's form was far below that oi the previous Saturday Their best player was Claude Harding, who saved many times at centre half-back. R. Jessup was prominent up forward scoring two sixers, and received good support from A. Telford and S. Clarke. W Craig, N. Unthank and J Wood were the best of the remainder.

Dromana will be presented with a pennant. Each player will also be handed a medal by the association. All football on the Peninsula is now finished, after a successful season.

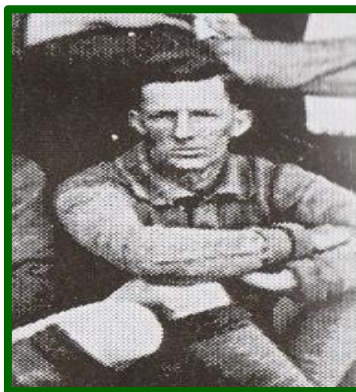
FURTHER READING ABOUT THAT ERA OF DFNC HISTORY

One of the major aims of the DFNC History website is to ensure that the 'pioneers of Pier Street' are never forgotten and their contribution in building the club is recognized and respected by future generations.

The 1930's was a period of 'good returns' for the club; and final appearances and two flags (1931 and the Dromana District team victory 1937) were not only warmly welcomed but justly deserved. Various articles regarding the identities of earlier times such as Wally Guy, the Rudduck family, Bert Aust, George Osborne, the McLear family and Norm Osborne (the mascot), can be found on this website.

Further, the following information, regarding Bill Patterson, Peter Gleeson and Michael Nolan is re-published for younger readers to gain an appreciation of their on-field prowess and their vital role in building the club in those times.

BILL PATTERSON –THE SPEARHEAD

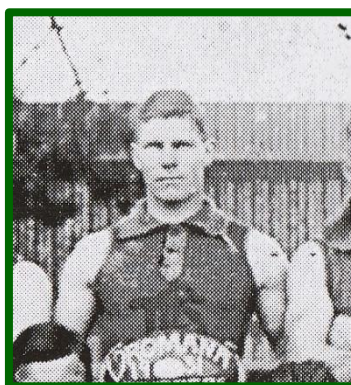


Bill Patterson- The champion forward of that era.

On that historic day of the 19 Grand Final , Dromana’s Bill Patterson was the ‘hero of the hour’ with eight goals; and Wally Guy was also in the limelight with his superb skills and ‘bag of five.’

Bill Patterson was Dromana’s greatest forward in the period 1930-39; and he won the club’s goal kicking awards in 1923-29-32-33-34 and in 1935. His potency as a key forward was widely recognised throughout the Mornington Peninsula. An interesting fact is that Wally Guy won the club’s goal kicking in 1931 with 84 goals while Bill finished the season with 59 goals.

PETER GLEESON- THE COACH



An admired and respected coach and star defender –Peter Gleeson

The coach of the team in 1931 was Peter Gleeson; and during that season he had ‘caught the eye’ of the VFL scouts with his dazzling displays across half back. ‘The Weekly Times’ (January 23rd 1932) reported that Peter had signed with Hawthorn...

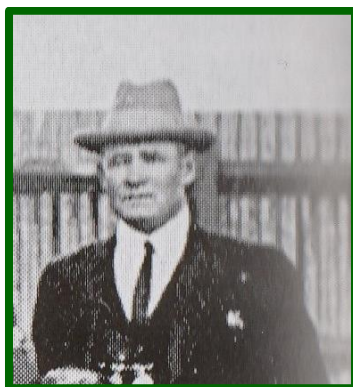
“ H. Johnson, the Sale follower; Luckins, a young Bairnsdale forward and P. Gleeson, captain and half-back player, of Dromana, have signed up with the Hawthorn club for the coming season.”

There is no evidence to suggest that Peter Gleeson ever played with Hawthorn but the name ‘Gleeson’ is often mentioned in relation to match reports with Carrum FC in 1932.

As is well known, Wally Guy crossed to Carrum in 1932 and Peter may have also 'transferred out' with Wally. Carrum won the PDFA premiership that season and Wally was the captain and 'P. Gleeson' was part of that triumphant team.

Further research indicates that a certain 'Gleeson' had trained with St Kilda in 1928 and perhaps that was Peter. However, Peter Gleeson is not to be confused with Phillip Gleeson who captained the Xavier College football team at around the same time.

MICHAEL BERNARD NOLAN- THE DYNAMO



Michael Nolan- Dynamic, dedicated and determined.

The enduring contributions of the Rudduck and the Osborne families to the life of DFNC are well known and have been previously noted on this website.

The Ruddock's, the Osborne's and Mr. M.B. Nolan (shown in the above photograph) were 'dynamos' at Pier Street; and their dedicated off-field organization and wholehearted involvement in club affairs were factors in the team's success in 1931,

Sadly, most current local residents have never heard of Michael Nolan but he was an heroic figure in and around Dromana in that era.

Mr Michael Bernard Nolan, better known around town as Sergeant M.B. Nolan, was a highly respected police officer in Dromana. He played with DFC in the 1920's and was captain in 1930. His name featured prominently in the affairs of the club in those days; and, as a delegate to the PDFA, he was a 'powerful voice' and spoke with authority at league meetings.

Little is known about Sgt M.B. Nolan following his departure from Dromana. However, after a lengthy search, it was discovered that he actually died on duty at the Kensington Police Station in May 1945

" The funeral of Sergeant Michael Bernard Nolan, 54 years, who died on Friday at Kensington Police Station, where he had been officer in charge for three years, will leave Holy Rosary Church, Kensington, to-day, for Fawkner cemetery, following Requiem Mass at 9 a.m.

Before being transferred to Kensington Sergeant Nolan had been attached to a number of country police stations, including Rochester, Mornington, Dromana, Numurkah and

Seymour. He leaves a widow, four daughters and two sons, F.O. Francis Nolan (R.A.A.F.) and John, who served six years with the R.A.N. Tobin Bros, have charge of the arrangements.” Source: ‘The Age’ May 21st 1945 Page: 4.

It is extremely difficult to verify if Michael Nolan was, in any way, related to Frank Nolan who played with Hawthorn in 1934 or Jack Nolan who played nine games with North Melbourne in 1926. It would also be interesting to know if M.B. Nolan was related to Brunswick’s champion Barry Nolan who won the Liston Medal in 1978. Barry captained Brunswick in 1978-80-81-82-84-85 and also coached the ‘Wicks to VFA Second Division premierships in 1980 and 1985.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: NLA- DFNC Records -Personal files.

Article reference: Fenton’s Paddock and a Flag. (Ref: 2021/14)

Researched and written for DFNC by: Roger Spaul –June 2021.

DFNC website administrator: Graham Stelling. DFNC Secretary-Board Member.

Email contacts:historian@dromanatigers.com.au. or admin@dromanatigers.com.au