

A CHALLENGING SEASON FOR DROMANA 1928: 90 YEARS AGO Ref: (2018/13)



George Osborne

Dedicated stalwart of Dromana Football Club

In 1928, **Dromana FC** was affiliated with the **Mornington Peninsula Football Association** and there were seven teams in the competition: **Frankston, Mornington, Naval Depot, Somerville, Sorrento, Hastings** and **Dromana** .

In that season, Messrs **Carrigg** and **McLear** were the DFC's delegates to the league; and the pre-season MPFA meeting was an important moment in DFC's history. During the course of that evening, the tabled correspondence included notification regarding the Dromana's team colours that season...

"Dromana club wrote notifying change of colours, which will be yellow and black, with black knickers." Source: 'Frankston and Somerville Standard' May 11th 1928 Page: 7



Source: 'Weekly Times' September 4th 1926, Page: 81

Mr H.J. McCulloch –President of the MPFA in that era

The letter of explanation was not accepted without some controversy arising as **Somerville FC** protested in relation to the colour of shorts worn. Thankfully, common sense prevailed; and the issue was resolved with a compromise between the two clubs.

It is stated that **Mr George Emery** was nominated as the **Patron of the MPFA** that year; and his donation of £2/2/- was gratefully accepted by the association. The Dromana delegates were most vociferous at the meeting and Messrs Carrigg and Griffith raised the subjects of:

- Late starting of matches.
- Appointed umpires arriving late to games.
- Clarification of the duration of quarter and three quarter time.



Among the list of matters related to player clearances, was one pertaining to a Dromana footballer simply named as 'Rennie'...

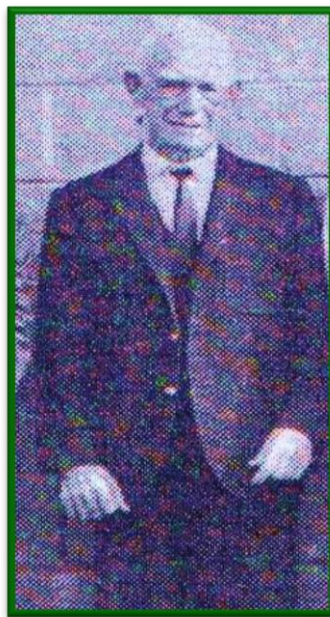
“ Rennie, who had been away for a time from Dromana but had lived there permanently and had not actually filled the residential qualification to reside a full month before the first match, asked for permission to play on Saturday.-No action was taken as Rennie was considered a bona fide resident of Dromana. “



Source: 'Frankston and Somerville Standard' May 4th 1928, Page:4

The first round of the 1928 season was played on May 5th that season; and, as can be seen below, **Dromana** played **Hastings**. The **Naval Depot** had been allotted the first bye of the new season...

- **Frankston v. Somerville.**
- **Mornington v. Sorrento.**
- **Dromana v. Hastings.**
- **Naval Depot- bye.**



Source: Doug Dyall-MPNFL Historian
George Osborne.

According to another local newspaper the '**Frankston and Somerville Standard**', it appeared that 1928 was going to be 'season to remember' in Peninsula football. The following extract placed the onus on the clubs to ensure that the game of football was played with 'gentleman-like' spirit...

"Past executives of these associations have striven, and successfully, to raise the standard of football. The present executives are no exception to the rule, and can

be trusted to function in a clean and impartial spirit.... The clubs, which are composed mostly of the clean, young manhood of the various districts around us, can be expected to carry out their part; that is, to provide clean and wholesome football, to avoid mean, underhand tactics; to remember that, after all, the game's the game. They will reflect also that any unsportsmanlike behaviour reflects not only upon themselves, their clubs and their association, but also upon the district whose name they bear."

THE 1928 DROMANA LIST

The playing list of Dromana that season included the following family names : **Alf Hunt- Captain & Coach (see below), Griffiths, Horne, Farrell, Skillen , Lyng , Rennie, J. Dyson , R. Birch, McLearn, R. Singleton, Clydesdale, Alderson, Hutchins, F. Grey, Vealing, Rudduck and Aust.**

A GRITTY PERFORMANCE BY DROMANA

On June 2nd that year, **Dromana** met **Mornington** in the Round: 5 clash at Dromana. From the report in the 'Weekly Times' (June 9th Page: 78), the game was played in appalling weather which detracted from the standard of play. It is not openly stated but perhaps the weather gave Dromana some chance to compete against the highly fancied Mornington team.

Mornington was weakened that day by the loss of senior players and apparently several juniors (i.e. under-age footballers) took their place in the line-up. The match report indicated that Dromana was competitive and 'extended' Mornington in all aspects of the game that day.

Unfortunately, few names were cited in the report but **Jack Bidgood** was probably the difference between the two sides in that clash. Jack was said to have been: "...unbeatable in the centre."

In a tense last quarter, Mornington hung on to win by a solitary point. It was one of Dromana's best performances for the season; and that exhibition, against strong opposition, would have given the team a badly needed boost of confidence. The scribe (a club reporter) described Dromana's effort in pushing the Mornington team to the brink of defeat as: 'splendid.'

The final scores that day were:

Mornington: 6.15 (51) defeated Dromana: 6.14 (50).

Best players for Dromana were: **Bert Aust** (Best on Ground), the **McLearn** brothers, **Alf Hunt, R. Clydesdale, R. Griffiths, Horne** and **Singleton**.

Best players for Mornington were listed in the newspaper report as: Jack Bidgood, R. Johnson, Monty Johnson, King, Reid, T. Deayton, D. Munro, Martin and P. Sanderson.

Mornington 'got out of jail' that day and clung to second position on the ladder by percentage. Dromana had failed to 'break the ice' at that stage of the season; but, no doubt, following such an improved display that weekend, things around Pier Street seemed a 'little brighter' for the loyal band of supporters.



Source: DFNC archives
Henry McLearn

According to the newspaper report, the MPFA Ladder after that round of matches indicated that Dromana sat at the bottom of the table...

Somerville	16pts
Mornington	12
Frankston	12
Sorrento	8
Hastings	8
Navy	4
Dromana	0

ALF HUNT: COACH OF DFC IN 1928.

For many years, the question of who coached Dromana FC in 1928 had eluded officials but a brief article in 'The Weekly Times', published that year, finally resolved the puzzle ...

" Sorrento club has again appointed Les Oram as coach for the season. A. Hunt will have charge of Dromana and Len Incigneri -Somerville."



Source: Doug Dyall- MPNFL Historian
Alf Hunt - Coach of Dromana in 1928

Outside of the fact that he was a prominent player at Red Hill FC, not a great deal is known about **Alf Hunt** during his time at DFC. It is recognized that he was a talented sportsman; and he made the news in 'The Argus' newspaper, in July that year, when he was involved in a motor accident at Red Hill...

"COLLISION IN FOG. Two Cars Damaged. RED HILL, Sunday. — In a heavy fog yesterday morning two motor-cars met head-on on the main Melbourne-Flinders road. A. Hunt, captain of the Dromana Football Club, was going in the direction of Flinders when his car met the Flinders Motor Service car coming in the opposite direction. There were several passengers in the service car, which was on its way to Melbourne, but nobody was injured. The two cars were considerably damaged." July 30th Page: 11



Source: 'The Argus' July 30th 1928, page 11

It appears that Alf Hunt enjoyed an extensive career at Red Hill FC In 1932, the name 'Hunt' appears in 'The Weekly Times'; and, on that occasion, Alf was playing against his old team , Dromana...

" Red Hill club have the makings of a very useful forward in Glover, who bagged four goals against Dromana. Hunt

from the same team, was another outstanding half-forward." June 18th 1932. Page: 65

BERT AUST TIES IN THE MEDAL



Source: DFNC archives
Bert Aust- Champion of Dromana

In 1928, Somerville won its first-ever premiership by defeating Hastings. It had been another challenging year for DFC; but the season ended on a high note as Dromana's renowned rover **Bert Aust** tied with **N. Craven (Mornington)** in **League's Best and Fairest** award. Each player received a medal which had been donated by **Two Bays Nurseries Pty Ltd**.

GEORGE MCLEAR - A DROMANA LEGEND

One of the reasons for the introduction of this website History Page was to ensure that the names of past players and their accomplishments are recorded for posterity. Future generations deserve to know about the hundreds of young men who have donned the Dromana jumper and strived to ensure the success of the club. **George McLear** is a perfect example of a local footballer who 'gave his all' for Dromana FC.



George McLear Junior & George McLear Senior

What a pity there is no available film footage of George McLear playing in that era. George was a champion, in the true sense of the word, and, as

the newspaper reported later that season (1928), he was compared to the finest whisky...

“The veteran player of the Dromana team, Geo. McLearn, is, like Johnny Walker, still going strong, and his football days are not over by any means.” Source: ‘Frankston and Somerville Standard’ June 29th Page: 6

Club records indicate that George was born in 1891; which made him 37 years of age when the above match, against Mornington FC, was played. George was an inimitable battler and he knew a great deal about conquering adversity in war and sport. See the earlier articles on this club website regarding George McLearn’s distinguished military service.

Note: There are several reliable sources which indicate that George also played football for the Queenscliff Garrison.

GEORGE MCLEAR PLAYS FOR RICHMOND

It is not widely known that George McLearn played three games for Richmond in 1914. His first game was at the age of twenty-two; and he played against St Kilda at the famous Junction Oval.

Richmond had several VFL leading lights in its line-up including: **Charlie Ricketts, Vic Thorpe, Bill Mahoney** and **Hugh James**. On that day, St Kilda won by 22 points. George made two other appearances in VFL ranks (against Fitzroy and South Melbourne) .



**Punt Road Oval. Original source of photograph: Unknown.
George McLearn played his second VFL game for Richmond,
at the Punt Road Oval, against Fitzroy in Round: 2 in 1914.**

During his short VFL career, George wore the number: 21 guernsey. He never kicked a goal or played in a winning Richmond team; however he did receive a brief mention in ‘The Argus’ on August 3rd 1914 in the match against South Melbourne at the Lake Oval...

“ A chain between Thomas, of Richmond, McLear, and Nolan promised brighter things for the visitors, but a free-kick against Herbert spoilt the effort...” Page:6

As is well-known, the **McLear** family has a long history in the district. The McLear family not only made a lasting contribution the settlement of the township but also to the development of the football club. It is believed , that across the decades, nine McLear ‘boys’ played for Dromana; and, in all, totalled more than **1000 games** for the club.

George (Jnr) played 207 games, **Henry McLear** (234 games), **Sam McLear** (218) and **Colin McLear** played 201 games. **James McLear**, who played 20 games with Dromana, is said to have played with **Essendon** in 1919; but further details of that suggestion were very difficult to ascertain and may have referred to **Essendon Town (VFA)**.

Note: As is well known in local circles, George McLear loved Dromana Football Club with a passion; and, as the records of Peninsula football indicate, he gave ‘of his best’ as a player and, in later years, took over the role of **DFC President** as shown in this newspaper cutting from 1939...



Source: 'Weekly Times' June 24th 1939. Page: 65.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION

Sources: MPNFL files – 'Tiger Talk' 2000- DFNC & MPNFL publications- Doug Dyll- MPNFL Historian- Boyles Football Photos- AFL statistics -NLA archives.

Article reference: (Ref: 2018/13)

Researched and written for DFNC by: Roger Spaul -May 2018.

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

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