

# David Lindsay Dymock's Great Work For South Coast

## G.O.M. of DAIRYING

By Vera Hamilton

**V**ERY few of the hundreds of dairy farmers in the South Coast's famed Illawarra district, milking good herds of pedigreed cows by up-to-date machinery, and sending their milk products by swift motor transport to their nearest milk depot, cheese or ice-cream factory, have any real knowledge of the beginnings of the dairy industry on the South Coast. They also probably know little of the man whose energy, initiative and lion-hearted courage put the South Coast on the map as a leading N.S.W. dairying district.

The man was David Lindsay Dymock, of "Linburn," Jamberoo, a tiny village that lies tucked into the foothills of the towering range that divides the coast from the Southern Tablelands.

Some of the outstanding contributions he made to the industry are recorded in the annals of the Producers' Co-operative Distributing Society. But those who knew "D.L.D.," as he was affectionately known up and down the coast, in the hey-day of his activities, are fast disappearing. What they know is now practically only hearsay, for the "grand old man" of the dairying industry died back in 1937 at the great age of 98. He had

spent 93 years in this country mainly on the South Coast where he lived at Jamberoo.

To gain a true insight into the character and calibre of David Lindsay Dymock it is necessary to go back to his parents, for it was unquestionably from them—more particularly his mother—that he derived that unswerving strength of character and Christian outlook that dominated all his actions, and played such a big part in the development of the South Coast and its most flourishing industry—dairying.

David Lindsay Dymock was the youngest of the four children of John and Margaret Lindsay Dymock. Born in Edinburgh, where his father was a writer to a firm of lawyers, he was barely five years of age when his father died and his widowed mother, whose parents and brothers had come out to the new colony a few years previously, decided to follow them and make a home in New South Wales for her children.

The journey, on the 600-ton sailing ship "Eliza," took six months to accomplish, and when the travellers finally arrived in Sydney, they had to transfer to a steamer "William 4th," to make the remainder of the journey to Wollongong, this being the only connecting link between Sydney and the very sparsely settled South Coast in 1845.

Even then, their travels were not ended, for they had to transfer to a common cart and travel the last 20 miles to Jamberoo over rough bush tracks. Writ-

ing to relatives in England Mrs. Dymock said later that the day was so hot and the journey so uncomfortable that she would gladly have lain down and died—only the ground was too hot to lie on.

Her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Waugh lived at Terragong, and there, after staying overnight with her brother, James L. Waugh, at his home at Woodstock Mills, she was received with great joy—and many tears, she not having seen her parents since her widowhood.

For some time Mrs. Dymock and her four children stayed with Dr. and Mrs. Waugh, and the two younger children, Helen and David, went to the tiny bush school at Jamberoo, walking two miles through the bush, and quite frequently meeting blacks on the way.

But Mrs. Dymock was anxious to establish a home for herself and her children and in 1847 she purchased 100 acres of land for £100 which property she called "Linburn."

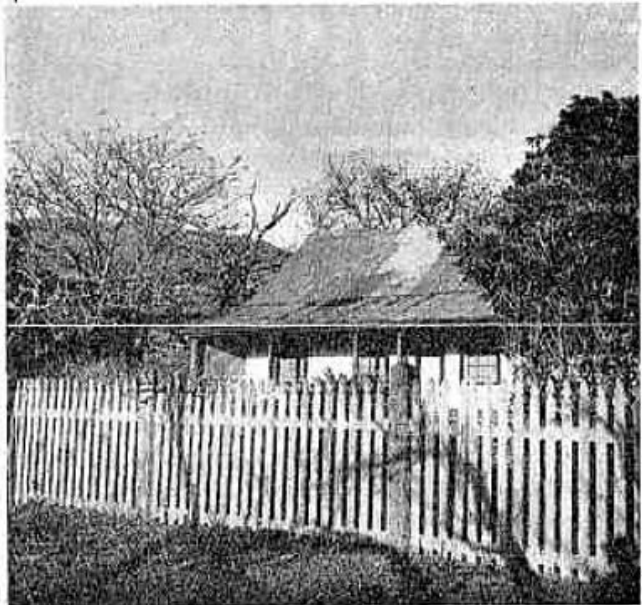
The two older boys cleared portion of this land, and built a rude hut in which they lived for a time. Later, this was replaced by a rough house built of timbers from the property.

Having no glass for windows, it was fitted with blinds which could be let down and secured from the inside as a precaution against attacks from blacks or bushrangers.

William having gone to Sydney to work (he afterwards became a bank manager), John to the gold diggings at Turon, and Helen to her uncle at Goulburn, where she attended school,

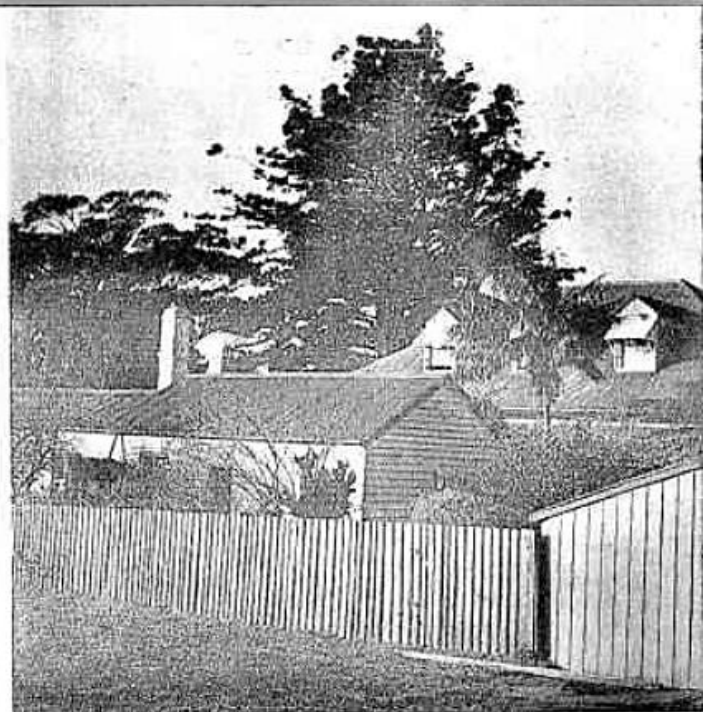
The road through Curramore that runs up over the Jamberoo Mountain to Moss Vale. It was David Lindsay Dymock who was responsible for having this road built, which became the main outlet to the Sydney markets for all dairy produce from the South Coast. The mails also came to the South Coast through Moss Vale on this road. The first inn to be built south of Wollongong stood on the right-hand corner but nothing now remains of it.

"Linburn," the farm home that David Lindsay Dymock and his brother, John, built for their mother. Part of the original structure, on the extreme left, has been removed, but the remainder is still occupied and the property is still being run as a dairy farm.





David Lindsay Dymock, from a photograph taken a few years before his death. He was then over 60 but still very active. This picture, with the bronze tablet beneath it, hangs in the Board Room of the Producers' Co-operative Distributing Society's offices in Sydney.



Minnamurra House, Murrumbidgee, as it is today. In the drawing room of this house, the earliest residence of Dr. and Mrs. Menzies, John Dymock and David Lindsay Dymock were both married to daughters of the house. The house, which is still in a splendid state of preservation, retains to-day many relics of the Menzies family, including the set of brass and leather bellows brought by Dr. Menzies from Scotland to Australia.

young David and his mother were left alone at "Linburn" and the youngster, still in his early teens and too young to do heavy farm work, did his manful best to provide for his mother by tending the vegetable garden, and milking their few cows and selling the butter—at 6d. per lb.—at the nearby store in return for groceries.

The drudgery of milking, setting the cream, churning the butter—the long hours, seven days a week, and the poor return for all his labors, was evidently ingrained in the mind of David Lindsay Dymock during those early years of toil, for he was to spend the greater part of his energetic life in fighting the producers' battles and lifting dairying industries to a position of stability with decent returns for the labor involved.

IT was not so much as a farmer, however, but as an auctioneer of stock and land, that "D.L.D." eventually established himself as one of the leading figures in the dairying industry on the South Coast.

"Linburn" was further developed by the return of John from the goldfields where he had been unsuccessful. He cleared and cultivated a further area in which they planted wheat, sending the grain to Woodstock mills to be ground into flour.

Determined that David Lindsay's education should not be neglected, Mrs. Dymock sent him to Sydney to school but in less than a year he took scarlet fever, which effectively ended his school career. Nevertheless, his mother, being a very literary woman, insisted that he continue his studies at home, especially supervising his reading.

John Dymock married Mary, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Menzies, of Minnamurra, Jamberoo, whereupon he leased a portion of "Waughope," owned by his uncle, D. L. Waugh.

Meanwhile, David Lindsay had been sent a second time to Sydney, this time to work in the office of Howe, Walker & Co., merchants. But, receiving no pay and living with his uncle, the young man decided he could do more good at home, helping his mother on the farm.

Always, he was conscious of the sacrifices she made so cheerfully for his sake, and always there was this strong bond of affection between mother and son.

And so he worked his mother's farm until he was 22, learning the hard way that, while dairying produced a livelihood of a kind, dairy farmers were among the most exploited of all land men and the least organized to secure a better deal for themselves.

TO better himself and his prospects, he took out an auctioneer's licence, borrowing the necessary £2 "capital" from his uncle.

His first sale was that of a few things from Minnamurra Estate, both Dr. and Mrs. Menzies having died. This sale totalled £11 and the young auctioneer thought he got a handsome return when he received 11/-.

His brother John had entered the Church and was a Presbyterian minister, he and his wife being greatly loved in the district. Young David was well respected and liked and, being tirelessly energetic in the pursuit of business, he gradually prospered.

It was nothing for "D.L.D." to travel by horseback as far south as Bega, using timber trails as roads and frequently encountering blacks. Bushrangers were also active in those days, constituting a further travelling hazard.

But even as a youngster he was keenly interested in the improvement of dairy cattle, and when the Kiama Show Society was formed and the first show held in 1849, young David Lindsay Dymock led a calf on a halter all the way from Jamberoo to compete—unsuccessfully.

As his business took him up and down the Illawarra dairying country, and his interests in all matters concerning the development of the area brought him into public prominence, he preached the gospel of co-operation among farmers wherever he went. He became accepted as a leader among men.

Some of the older men of the South Coast, themselves once leading dairy farmers who, in their own day, did much to build up the quality of dairy herds on the Illawarra, can recall the Tuesday sale days at Kiama when "D.L.D." swung his

great brass bell (still preserved at Minnamurra House) in the open market place in front of the Steam Packet Hotel on the waterfront.

As children, they often accompanied their parents to the sales and afterwards, over the excellent shilling luncheon provided by "mine host" George Adams, listened to the "farmers' parliament," which were the arguments and discussions that took place after the meal.

It was the same Geo. Adams who in later years promoted the famous Tattersalls Sweep and established Adams Marble Bar in his Pitt Street hostelry.

HIS brother John having married Mary Menzies, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Menzies of Minnamurra House in 1851, David Lindsay Dymock followed suit and, his business as an auctioneer beginning to flourish, he married Grace Menzies in 1864, adding a wing to "Linburn" in order that he could still continue to run the farm for his mother and sister, keeping them with him.

There were six children of his marriage, four sons and two daughters. His wife, always gentle and loving, took her place quietly but efficiently in whatever social sphere her husband's expanding activities required of her.

David Lindsay Dymock was becoming a power in the land, and it was between the sixties to the turn of the century that he was to do his most effective work for the advancement of the South Coast and the dairying industry.

In 1869 when the Volunteer Corps was formed he was elected Captain. His influence and prestige grew as his public activities expanded.

During the many years in which he was president of the Kiama Agricultural and Horticultural Show Society, he brought it to such prominence that one year, during the late seventies, 25 of Sydney's leading men chartered a special steamer, at a cost of £100 to bring them down the coast to attend the show.

They included the editors of the "Sydney Morning Herald" and the "Evening News." There being insufficient accommodation in the town to put up all these visitors, they stayed on the ship.

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## G.O.M. of Dairying

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While "D.L.D." was becoming known for his enterprise and progressive ideas on the South Coast, many of his childhood school friends from the South Coast were also growing into prominent citizens in Sydney. These men included Joseph Carruthers, William McMillan, George Fuller, William Cullen, all of whom were later to be knighted in their various prominent capacities—all lifelong friends of the man who stuck to the land.

It was undoubtedly through these contacts and his own prodigious efforts that "D.L.D." was able to accomplish so many things of national importance.

He it was who surveyed the first road over the Jamberoo mountain to Robertson. For 15 years before the Illawarra railway line was established, this was the main outlet for the farmers' produce to the Sydney markets, and the main mail route.

He also it was who fought a hard but successful fight in having the old Gerragong Swamp drained and made available for dairying. This has come to be one of the most valuable and richly productive areas in the district.

FOR many years there had been agitation on the South Coast for a railway as far as Wollongong. Finally, farmers and business men raised £800 towards the cost of surveying the proposed line. Calling a public meeting, "D.L.D." vigorously opposed the spending of private money on the grounds that (1) the sum was totally insufficient and (2) it was the job of Government to do the work.

In the end, his eloquence prevailed—the £800 was withdrawn and the Govern-

ment of the day spent £6,000 on the survey that led to the line being built.

It was in 1881 that "D.L.D." and a few South Coast stalwarts established the first co-operative company ever formed in the dairy industry.

This was the South Coast and West Camden Co-Operative, registered on May 24, 1881, with David Lindsay Dymock as chairman and such well-known men as G. Porter, R. Miller, W. Kennedy, D. Moffatt, W. Hindmarsh and J. Monaghan on the executive committee.

The co-operative prospered and it was not very long after that, with a capital of £1,000 the company established its own offices in Liverpool St., Sydney.

Sussex Street agents, who had been exploiting the dairy industry for years by paying 4½d. a lb. for butter, loudly predicted its failure within six months. "D.L.D." was caricatured in the "Bulletin" as "David, entering the lion's den."

But instead of failure, the first six months' sales amounted to £72,271, showing a nett profit of £3,613. The co-operative movement was firmly established. With various amalgamations, this enterprise has finally become the P.D.S. (Producers Co-operative Distributors' Society).

In 1883, when "D.L.D." decided to go abroad to study dairy trends, grateful farmers subscribed £400 towards his expenses and presented Mrs. Dymock with a silver service valued at £120.

Whilst at the Royal Show in England he saw the first cream separator at work and, recognising its worth, purchased one and brought it back to Australia. It was a Swedish Alfa-Laval machine.

He secured the agency for Messrs. D. L. Waugh (his uncle) and W. J. Josephson (Waugh and Josephson) which firm still retains the agency today.

Full of ideas and enthusiasm for the future of the dairy industry, "D.L.D." with Mr. Laidley Mort of the Fresh Food and Ice Company, and a group of six progressive men, built the Commonwealth's first butter factory, called the Pioneer Butter Factory at Kiama. The foundations of this infant enterprise can still be seen in an open paddock by the old tollbridge near the town.

Within the year he was actively associated with the establishment of three more factories, and such was the confidence in "D.L.D." that he became chairman of all three at the same time—Woodstock, Waughope and Albion Park.

IT would be impossible to cover the full ramifications of the work of this remarkable man in a single article, or the many activities with which he was associated.

He was an alderman of Jamberoo Council for many years; a Councillor of St. Andrew's College within the Sydney University for several years; a prominent and forceful influence in the establishment of the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, and (years later) an ardent advocate in the establishment of a chair of veterinary science at the Brisbane University.

But, with his widely developed public interests, it is obvious that he found insufficient time to stabilise his own affairs, and at the time of the bank crashes in 1893, this man, who had helped to put the South Coast on its financial feet, was one of the heaviest losers.

But even to-day, nearly 20 years after his death at the great age of 98, and almost half a century after his best work was done, there are men on the South Coast who still speak of David Lindsay Dymock as "the grand old man of the dairy industry."