

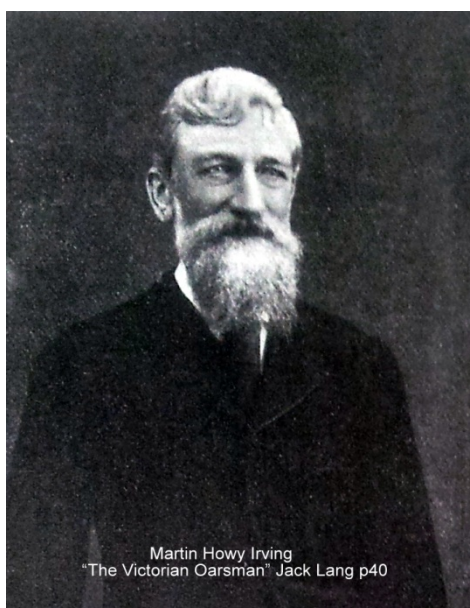
## **THE IRVINGS OF HAWTHORN & KEW**

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper is focused on the World War 1 careers of Godfrey & Harold Irving, sons of Professor Martin Irving of Melbourne University. But to put their service in context Martin Irving's activities in Melbourne as professor of Melbourne University, in education, sport & public service need to be summarised.

## MARTIN HOWY IRVING



Martin was born in London February 1831 and died January 1912 Surrey, England. He was educated at Kings College School, London & Balliol College, Oxford. Because he was a Presbyterian not an Anglican he was unable to secure an academic career at Oxford or Cambridge. His father Edward, a famous preacher, was declared a heretic by the Church of Scotland & he founded the Catholic Apostolic Church, of which his son Martin was an enthusiastic member. In November 1855 Martin was appointed professor of classics at Melbourne University, a position he took up the following year. From 1875 to 1900 he was a Councillor of the University; & from 1887 to 1889 vice-Chancellor. An offer of higher wages saw Martin become secular headmaster of Wesley College. In 1875 he bought Hawthorn Grammar School. Similar to his tenure at Wesley College, Hawthorn Grammar was highly regarded for the achievements of its students.

Martin married Caroline Bruyeres in 1853 & they had four sons & five daughters; after Mary's death in 1881, Martin married Mary Mowat in July 1882 & they had one son & 3 daughters.

A keen sportsman, Martin founded the Melbourne University Boat Club 1859 & was president for 31 years. Two of his sons Harold & Godfrey also were successful rowers with the Melbourne University. Martin also founded the Melbourne Regatta in 1860. It comes as no surprise the Hawthorn Grammar School had a successful rowing boat club. Another of his interests was the military; he joined the

Victorian Volunteer Rifles in 1862 & later was Lieutenant Colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Victorian Militia from 1884-1893.

On his appointment to the Public Service Board in 1884, Martin left the running of Hawthorn Grammar School to his son Edward. In 1893 he accepted a pension & in 1900 left for England.

## HAWTHORN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

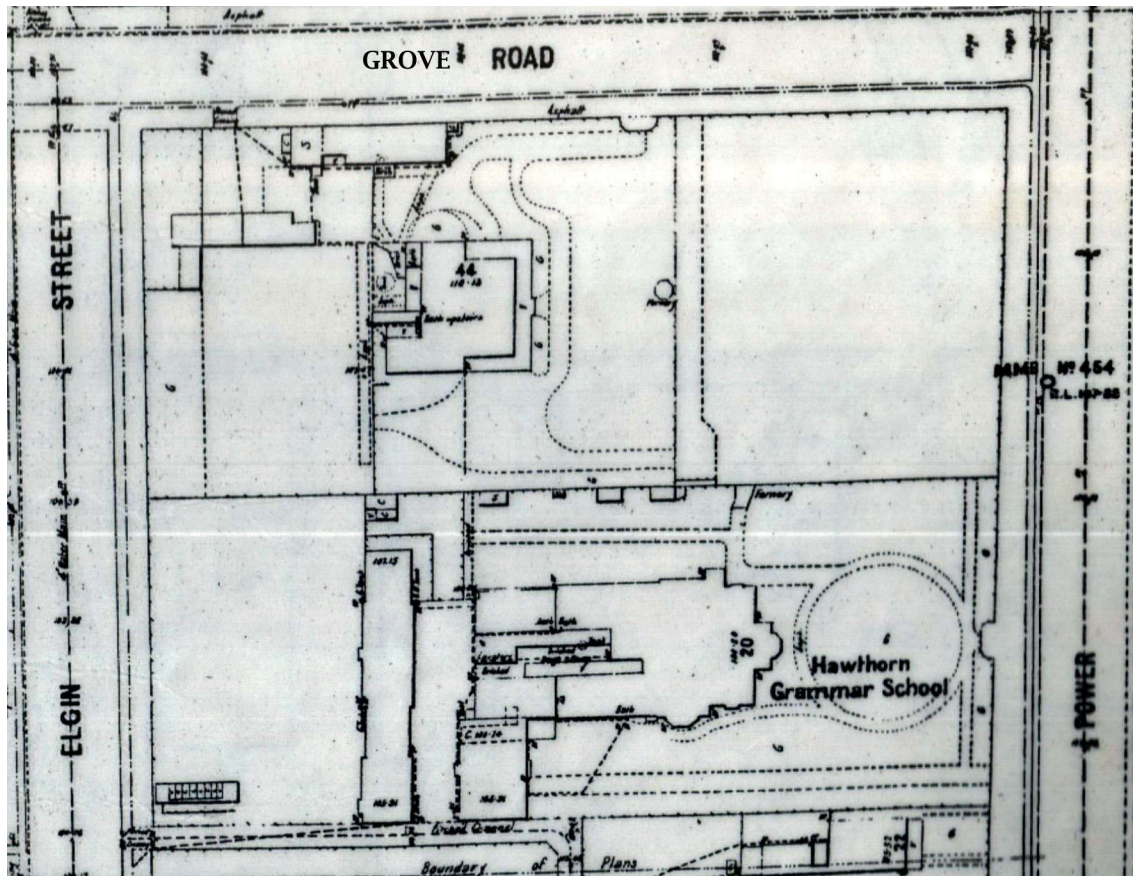


State Library of Victoria Accession No: H92.389/16 Image No: b27191

Hawthorn Grammar School was founded in 1865 by Mr. Postle; by 1874 John Meeson was headmaster, then Professor Martin Irving bought the school in 1875. The school gained an enviable reputation for excellence under his guidance. Many former students went on to make significant contributions to society: Sir Stanley Argyle, doctor, Mayor of Kew (1903-5), Premier of Victoria (1932-5) & World War 1 soldier {1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital Cairo & Lemnos}; Francis Morton Royal Women's Hospital, Sir Richard Stawell, doctor, Kenneth Henderson Headmaster Trinity Grammar; John Nicholson Essendon footballer & oarsman; Captain David Doyle & his brothers Mark & Val; & of course Irving's sons Harold & Godfrey. A former teacher at the school, Dr George Crowther, went on to found Brighton Grammar School in 1881.

The school according the MMBW maps was located on the west side of Power Street east of Grove Road, Hawthorn with the headmaster's house at 52 Grove Road (the site is marked by a brass plaque in the footpath) The school appears to have closed by 1911 because it was no longer listed in the Sands & McDougall directory of that year.

## PLAN OF HAWTHORN GRAMMAR SCHOOL circa 1902



MMBW Map c 1902 courtesy State Library of Victoria

Around 1915, two of Martin's daughters ran Lauriston Girl's School, Armadale, which was founded in 1901.

## WORLD WAR 1 & THE IRVINGS

Two of Professor Martin's sons served in World War 1, Godfrey & Harold.

### Godfrey George Howy IRVING



ANZAC Day Kew 1934 film (source: Norman J Marshall)

Godfrey joined 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Victorian Rifles as a private in 1885 aged 18. Next year he was employed by McCulloch Sellar & Co. merchants & continued in the militia part time. In 1887 he gained a commission as lieutenant in 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion VMR. On his appointment as battalion adjutant (captain) he joined the permanent forces. He continued to be promoted: major 1900 Victorian Rangers; lieutenant colonel 1902. In May that year as commanding officer 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse, he left for South Africa & the Boer War. He arrived in time for the cessation of hostilities & returned to Australia. 1909 Godfrey was made commandant of Western Australia (Lt Col); 1915 commandant of South Australia (Colonel). At the start of WW1 aged 48 he was appointed Chief of General Staff. The Minister of Defence, George Pearce, lacking confidence in Colonel V Sellheim the base commander in Egypt, appointed Godfrey General Officer Commanding Australian Troops in Egypt with the rank of Brigadier General. He was 48. Major General McKay relieved him as commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division & Irving returned to Australia in June 1916. February 1917 he became Commandant of 1<sup>st</sup> Military District Queensland. After other postings in Australia he was made Major General on his retirement in 1925.

In 1896 Godfrey married Ada Derham, the daughter of Frederick Derham, of a well known Kew family & managing director of Swallow & Ariel. Godfrey was an imposing figure, 198cm tall with blue eyes, red hair & a keen sportsman. They had one son & two daughters; Ronald, a graduate of Royal Military College, served in WW2 & retired as brigadier general, Sybil was the founder & commandant of the Australian Women's Army Service 1941-1947 & Freda was a well known Melbourne journalist.

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WD Vaughan 'Kew's Civic Century' 1960

well known Melbourne journalist.

### **Harold Alfred Cardale IRVING**

Harold was a medical doctor aged 45 when he enlisted in May 1915. He was married to Grace Ann and lived in Springvale. Harold was posted to the 8<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance as captain & left for overseas service in November 1915. He returned to Australia April 1919 as a major & was discharged from active service in February 1920. His service record contains the following: "*Brought to the notice of Secretary of State for War for valuable services rendered in connection with the War.*"

Both Harold & Godfrey are buried in the Boroondara Cemetery Kew with other members of their family. Godfrey's name appears on the Kew War Memorial. Godfrey was a member of the Kew RSL Sub Branch & its president in 1936. He features prominently in the 1934 ANZAC Day march in Kew. Harold appears on the Kew Presbyterian Church's Honour Roll.