

Thomas Joshua Jackson (of ‘Young and Jackson’s Hotel’)

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Abstract

Thomas Joshua Jackson was the lesser known of the Irish cousins (the other being Henry Figsby Young) who managed Melbourne’s Princes Bridge Hotel, on the corner of Swanston Street across from Flinders Street station, from 1875. The hotel became known as ‘Young and Jackson’s’, and has since been frequented by hundreds of thousands of Melburnians and visitors alike. A somewhat enigmatic figure, about ten years older than his better-known cousin HF Young, Jackson did not seek public office or become an especially prominent businessman. He left no letters, diaries or public speeches on record. He married late and had no children. Upon his death in 1901, his most public mark was as a partner of Young; his most visible legacy is his Jolimont Road terrace house in East Melbourne, called *Eblana*. Much of what we do know of Jackson’s life is found in the files of Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

Thomas Joshua Jackson was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1834, and emigrated to Victoria around 1852, but not much is known of these early years of his life. Research in Ireland has revealed little, other than that he was probably an only son. His life from 1852 was inextricably linked with those of his aunt’s families. Jackson’s aunt, Sarah Connell, née Heaton, married in Ireland for the second time at the age of forty, to Henry Young, a law clerk. The Youngs had one child, Henry Figsby Young, in 1845, and emigrated to Victoria in 1849 with three children. These were five-year-old Henry and the two youngest children from Sarah’s first

marriage – thirteen-year-old John Connell and nine-year-old and only daughter Sarah Isabella Connell. Sarah Young’s eldest son, William Henry Connell, appears to have arrived separately in Victoria about 1851.[1] By 1859, Henry Young senior had become the landlord of the Elsternwick Hotel, one of the earliest ‘suburban’ hotels in Melbourne.[2]

Between 1852 and 1861 nothing concrete is recorded about Jackson. HF Young later said that in 1861 he had ‘chummed together’ with Jackson, and set forth for New Zealand, where for some considerable time they successfully engaged in mining.[3] This might imply that Jackson had some previous experience of mining, perhaps on the Victorian goldfields; it is Thomas Jackson’s name which appears as a preferred claim holder at Gabriel’s Gully in Otago province in early 1862.[4] The third Maori War of 1863 and declining gold returns by 1864 probably acted as catalysts for a return to Melbourne. The next clear public reference to Jackson occurs in December 1867, when he appears in a high profile and somewhat amusing court case involving Young senior.

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The town clerk of Melbourne, Edmund Gerald FitzGibbon,[5] had stopped at the Elsternwick Hotel on his way to Melbourne from Mt Eliza, and, remaining on his horse outside, called for a beer. Finding himself ignored, he then rode his horse into the bar to claim a drink first-hand. Young senior, the landlord, 'assisted by a man named Thomas Jackson,' promptly evicted him from the bar. Cross-summons ensued. Young initially claimed FitzGibbon was drunk, while FitzGibbon claimed that his horse had a fondness for Colonial ale and rode *him* into the bar. The judge decided for the horse and Young had to pay £50 and costs. Other charges, brought by FitzGibbon against Jackson, and against FitzGibbon by Young, were dismissed.[6]

Soon after this court case, Jackson went into business with HF Young when they took up a licence for Sparrow's Hotel at St Kilda junction, first recorded in 1868.[7] By then Melbourne was on the cusp of a decade-long financial, industrial and property boom. Jackson and Young positioned themselves perfectly for it when in 1875 they made their move across the Yarra River to the Princes Bridge Hotel.[8] With licence and lease in hand, they promptly made their mark with extensive renovations. The Young and Jackson names and management of the hotel became so well known that it began to be referred to as 'Young and Jackson's'. [9] Young, who continued to be associated with the hotel until 1914, ensured the fame of the hotel through astute marketing, including the purchase of the then controversial *Chloe* oil painting by Jules Joseph Lefebvre in 1909.

In August 1878, Jackson finally married, at the age of 44. His bride was a widow, well known to Jackson; in fact, she was his first cousin, Sarah.[10] Sarah's late husband, Michael Cavanagh, protégé of Henry Young senior and former landlord of the Prince of Wales Hotel in Prahran, had died in 1877. He apparently left no will or property. Sarah Cavanagh brought into the marriage with Jackson her sixteen-year-old son, James. Until the time of his marriage, Jackson most likely had lived at the Elsternwick, Sparrow's and Princes Bridge hotels in turn. Once married, there was an imperative to find a place of his own and by 1879 he had taken up land in Jolimont Road, Jolimont, 'a most attractive proposition for the investor'.[11]

In 1880, the year that Irish-Australian bushranger Ned Kelly went to the gallows, the Young and Jackson partnership was extended once again with a renewed lease on the Princes Bridge Hotel, this time for fourteen years at an annual rent of £1,000, which included the adjoining building in Flinders Street.[12]

New connections to Flinders Street station in 1879 had quickly boosted confidence in rail travel and the station grew in popularity with train riders from country and city alike. The hotel was in the right place at the right time. It seemed that the incredible decade of growth in Melbourne from 1880 to 1890 would never end; the crash and recession which followed were of equally monumental proportions. The crash had its effect even on popular and profitable hotels and may have precipitated the end of the partnership of Young and Jackson. After all, by 1894 Jackson had turned sixty, with plenty of business to engage him and property development as well.

Jackson's name first appears in connection with Jolimont Road in *Sands & McDougall's Melbourne and suburban directory* and in the Melbourne City Council Rate Books in 1879.[13] He also appears in Albert Ward in the 1878-79 List of Citizens, a Melbourne City Council record. In August 1879 he applied to bring some vacant land on Jolimont Road under the Transfer of Land Statute, and acquired other property on the street. By 1881 he was living in one of three six-bedroom brick houses that he then owned. Over the years to his death in 1901, Jackson appears to have owned between two and five blocks, with a double block making up his eventual home on the street, at Number 42.[14]

Jackson was there in August 1881 when the level crossing not far from his home became the scene of one of Melbourne's great rail disasters. Loaded with some of the business élite of Brighton and Elsternwick, as well as ordinary passengers including a coach especially for schoolgirls, the 9 am Brighton Express, three minutes from Flinders Street, went over an embankment and smashed to pieces. Three passengers were killed outright, a fourth died later, and dozens were injured. The *Argus* tells the story:

At this stage – it was but a very few minutes after the accident – the people around began to realise how matters stood, and the cry was for pickaxes, axes, and levers. Speedily the already roused inhabitants of Jolimont were requisitioned for the necessary implements, and a dozen or so of axes appeared upon the scene. They were mostly obtained through the personal exertions of Mr. T. J. Jackson, who also thoughtfully sent a supply of brandy with jugs of water to revive the fainting.[15]

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In December 1882, Jackson's architect, James Gall, placed an advertisement in the newspapers calling for tenders to erect a 'villa residence' for Jackson. A Notice to Build was lodged in January 1883.[16] Jackson called the house *Eblana*, believed at that time to be the Latin spelling for Dublin. It became a comfortable two-storey home, complete with tiled balcony and hall, vaulted timber ceilings, leadlight windows, and horse stables in the rear giving access to Jolimont Lane. Jackson later added a single-storey extension in which he installed a billiard table. Years afterwards it was described by unknowing but ever optimistic real estate agents as a 'ballroom'. Across the street between Jolimont Road and the city lay the East Melbourne Cricket Ground (later an early home of the Essendon Football Club) which

saw many famous sporting events including in March 1887, a match between Australia and England when the two elevens were shuffled and divided into teams of smokers and non-smokers. Five years later, Dr. Grace led an English team against the East Melbourne Cricket Club on this ground.[17]

Jackson's probate records in 1901 give a fascinating insight into life at *Eblana* and reveal the extent of labour-intensive consumerism at the turn of the twentieth century. The list of personal liabilities includes bills from the doctor, chemist, bell repairer, pork butcher (the area had a large Jewish community at the time and so pork was sold separately), butcher, baker, buttermilk, wood carter, dairy milkman, Chinese greengrocer, servant, gardener, washerwoman, fruiterer, fishmonger, nurse and bootmaker, and bills for wine and brandy supplies (from HF Young), house repairs and eggs. [18] Most of these businesses provided personalised service to Jackson's home at Jolimont Road. He also paid separately for street lighting and sewerage services, in addition to his rates. Most home owners in Melbourne today would be envious of the fact that, in 1900, Jackson only paid £29 3s 4d in income tax. That he and Sarah Jackson lived such a comfortable life was evidence of the financial security he had achieved from his hotel businesses and business investments.[19]

Exactly when Jackson began making business investments is not known with certainty. The opening of the Melbourne Stock Exchange in 1884 may have provided an early incentive. Both Jackson and HF Young invested in a diverse range of businesses – banks, a brewery, brickworks, gold mines and government stocks – as well as property and in speculative new technology opportunities. Young was an astute businessman who went on to develop a business portfolio and art collection valued at over £120,000 by the time of his death in 1925.[20]

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Thomas Joshua Jackson, c. 1890. Photograph courtesy John Ault-Connell.

Jackson, although not as successful as Young in business, still retired from the hotel with a comfortable income from his portfolio of interests. Most of his investments did well, even during the major recession of 1891-95. But in common with today's investors, not all the tips he received worked out for him. In the attendant bank crashes of the recession, Jackson also lost money. The Metropolitan Bank failed in 1892; Jackson and two of his wife's relatives were listed as depositors when a meeting at the Athenaeum upper hall was called 'to arrange for their representation in the liquidation of the bank'. [21] The fact that only a handful of depositors were named in the public notice suggests that they had considerable sums on deposit. The Montgomerie's Brewing Company was another investment which turned sour.

Both Jackson and HF Young invested their reputations and perhaps some capital when Montgomerie's Brewing Company was formed in 1888. The new limited liability company floated on 1 March 1888 with capital of £240,000.[22] The directors included Jackson, and HF Young at a later date, while stockholders' meetings were often held at the Young and Jackson Hotel. But the company was not a success; in 1897 Montgomerie's finally failed, and went under owing the Bank of Australasia £73,302. Disgruntled investors sued the directors, including Jackson – but not Young, who by this time had astutely managed to divest himself of his shares.

The case came to the Victorian Supreme Court in 1899 and sittings began in late 1900. The judgement of the court was in favour of Montgomerie's shareholders. Jackson had to pay £975 for the 1500 shares at 13s each that he was issued in the initial float; the payment was to be made within one month of 15 February 1901. [23] Montgomerie's was Jackson's Waterloo. It didn't destroy him financially, but he must have felt that his reputation at least was damaged, perhaps permanently. The pressure on him may have contributed to his death less than three months later, at *Eblana* on 9 May.

Jackson left assets of £17,483. The sum of £3515 was paid to the Montgomerie's Brewing Company to settle the Supreme Court case. His probate papers show that at the time of his death Jackson held a range of stocks and shares, most notably in government bonds and debentures, in the Port Fairy Corporation (a land developer), in a number of gold mines including one in Queensland and another in Tasmania, in Dan White (the well-known coach-building company), the Modern Permanent Building Society, the *Herald* and *Weekly Times* newspapers, the Hoffman Patent Steam Brickworks, and the Buchanan Gordon Diving Dress company.[24]

Somewhat oddly, Jackson had few investments in beer. At the time of his death he only held shares in the leading malting business of Samuel Burston & Company; he had, of course, also invested in Montgomerie's. He kept a phaeton and horses at the Hotel & Livery in Collins Street, the business of James Garton, a long established hotelier (Garton was also a director in Dan White's coach-making company). One of Jackson's last investments was in Buchanan Gordon Diving Dress Limited, floated on the Melbourne Stock Exchange in 1899. The product driving the float was an underwater diving suit which allowed the diver to safely reach 30 fathoms (about 50 metres), remain underwater for lengthy periods and even talk by telephone to the surface.

Overall, Jackson's share investments, despite the stressful debacle of Montgomerie's Brewery (and even that paid well for many years), must have provided a reasonable income stream. However, by the time of his death many of his shares had little value, bringing in only around £1800 at probate. Even Jackson's interest in 'new technology' stocks, as they would be called today, did not pay off for him: Montgomerie's Brewery, Hoffman's Brickworks, some of the mine technology and even the Buchanan Gordon Diving Dress were highly innovative firms and products for their time. His most valuable shares were the 661 he held in the Herald Standard [newspaper] Company – worth £1090 at probate, followed by the 1041 shares he held in the Great Extended Hustler Gold Company, worth £780.[25]

Jackson was made secure financially, more than anything else, by his modest but wholly respectable investment properties and of course his own home (altogether worth over £9000), backed up by government stocks, debentures, the holding of two mortgages on Hawthorn properties, and cash in the bank (worth over £7500). It was this 'balanced portfolio' which allowed Jackson to overcome his debts and provide handsomely for his widow. His property folio included seven other houses he rented out in Fitzroy, Carlton, Collingwood, South Yarra, East Melbourne and South Melbourne, plus some land in Moonee Ponds.[26]

Following the death of her husband in 1901, Sarah Jackson remained at *Eblana*. In 1907, her son James Cavanagh also died, at the age of forty-five, leaving a widow, Ellen. James had apparently been a heavy drinker, contributing no doubt to the liver disease which killed him; he was also virtually 'broke'. At his death his only assets consisted of 650 shares in the Northcote Brickworks worth £455, a £2 share in the Morwell Tennis Club (from his days in Gippsland), and £78 of assorted jewellery.[27] Listed among his liabilities at probate was £16 advanced to him in 1907 by his mother – bleak testimony to his circumstances at the time. Ellen Cavanagh continued to live at *Eblana* with Sarah Jackson until Sarah's death on Christmas Day, 1924, aged 84. Sarah Jackson was buried with Thomas Jackson and her son James in Kew Cemetery.

What of Sarah Jackson's assets, including *Eblana*? In her will, assets included an oil painting of Melbourne Cup winner Carbine (very possibly the Frederick Woodhouse Jr oil on canvas painted in 1889 and now in the State Library of Victoria's collection); several thousand pounds in cash bequeathed to relatives, friends and a housemaid; and donations to the Organ Fund of the vestry of Holy Trinity Church in Clarendon Street, East Melbourne, the Queen Victoria Hospital, and the City Newsboys Society.[28]



Sarah Jackson, photograph taken in the studio of Johnstone O'Shannessy & Co. Ltd, 234-236 Collins Street East, c. 1901. Reproduced with permission of the Peter & Nancy Fielding Collection.

The balance of her estate was divided into shares to be dispersed among the wider circle of Young and Connell relatives. Altogether, at probate Sarah Jackson's assets, consisting of personal effects, cash, debentures and shares, realised £25,918. Sarah held Commonwealth Government Treasury bonds, and debentures of the State Savings Bank, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Metropolitan Gas Company and the Victorian Government. She had a few shares in the Northcote Brick Company Limited and the Commercial Bank of Australia but the bulk were in the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd (these last realised £7126 alone). In addition she held a similar mix of property to her late husband, which brought in £11,000.[29]

Less than a year later, in October 1925, *Eblana* was sold (described as a 'magnificent brick residence' in the auctioneer's flyer) to the Commonwealth of Australia, after which it was used as the head office of the Post Master General; various owners followed.[30] These included, by 1983, a subsidiary of Telecom Australia.

Later that year, a National Trust survey described *Eblana* as a 'boom period render Italianate style terrace dwelling with a two storey colonnade and parapet over. The grand entry is approached by a flight of substantial bluestone steps...'[31]

In 1983, just over 100 years since it was first occupied by Thomas Jackson and his family, *Eblana* came up for auction once again. A real estate reporter wrote: 'The agents suggest the building would be ideal for offices or professional use, but also suggest, rather wistfully, that someone might want to live there.'[32] In 1997, the neglected house was bought by entrepreneurs Peter and Nancy Fielding. The couple got to work to restore Jackson's house extensively, inside and out. *Eblana* today is a 'beautifully restored Victorian gem, in which antiques, reproduction pieces and classic elegance blend effortlessly', thanks to their generous and sensitive restoration.[33]

Jackson lived through one of the most exciting periods of Melbourne's history. When he arrived just fourteen years after the Colony was proclaimed, Melbourne was a very raw town. Bushrangers still held up travellers near the house signed as the Elsternwick Hotel after it had been built in 1854. Albert Lake as it is now known was a swamp and in 1856 the future Young and Jackson's Hotel was a butcher's shop. From such beginnings, and with luck at the New Zealand goldfields, Jackson and Young slowly but surely created a highly successful hotel business together.

This brought Jackson opportunities to build his wealth, which he was able to do (Montgomerie notwithstanding). And it brought Jackson to Jolimont, where for twenty years his house both reflected his success in 'Marvellous Melbourne' and provided him and his family with a haven during the recession and unhappy failure of the brewing company. It was a long way from his arrival in Victoria in 1852 as a young man with perhaps uncertain prospects. It is the story of *Eblana* which fittingly ends the narrative of Thomas Joshua Jackson. Despite the disinterest and neglect of some of its many occupants over its 130 years, it stands beautifully restored today as Jackson's main legacy.

Endnotes

- [1] The Youngs sailed on the *John Mitchell* from London to Melbourne via Adelaide where the passenger lists were recorded in the local press (*South Australian register*, 25 April 1849, p. 3; 23 May 1849, p. 3). William Henry Connell was baptised in Dublin on 26 July 1825 (see Irish Genealogy database online), though as this does not tie in with the ages given on his marriage or death certificate it is assumed he was not baptised at birth. On the Youngs see also LA Schumer, *Prince's Bridge Hotel – Young and Jackson's*, the author, East Malvern, 1981, p. 5.
- [2] See JB Cooper, *The history of St Kilda: from its first settlement to a city and after, 1840 to 1930*, Printers Proprietary Limited, Melbourne, 1931, vol. 1, p. 162.
- [3] *The Australian brewers' journal*, 20 November 1919, p. 81.
- [4] *The Otago witness*, 19 April 1862 and New Zealand electoral rolls 1853-64, Otago Province, 1855-62, Fiche 14.
- [5] B Barrett, 'FitzGibbon, Edmund Gerald (1825-1905)', *Australian dictionary of biography*, vol. 4, Melbourne University Press, 1972, pp. 181-2. An online version of the entry on Edmund Gerald FitzGibbon is available on the ADB online website (accessed 2 October 2011).
- [6] *The Argus*, 16 January 1867, p. 5 and 5 April 1867, p. 5.
- [7] E Tetlow and G Hamston (comps), *R. K. Cole collection of hotel records: surname records*, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 2000, vol. 4, p. 339.
- [8] The Princes Bridge Hotel was established there in July 1861. See Schumer, *Prince's Bridge Hotel – Young and Jackson's*, p. 4.
- [9] The words 'Young and Jackson' did not appear on the hotel façade until many years after they first won the licence; it would have been more convenient to retain the licence under the old name. The partnership seems to have been based on a 'gentleman's agreement'.
- [10] Jackson's aunt, Sarah Young, died in February 1883. Her death certificate lists six children from her first marriage, four of them predeceasing her, presumably in Ireland. However this cannot be correct, as it does not account for her eldest son William Connell who is known to have arrived in Victoria a couple of years after the rest of the family.
- [11] W Burchett, *East Melbourne walkabout*, Cypress Books, Melbourne, 1975, p. 9.
- [12] See Schumer, *Princes Bridge Hotel*, pp. 4-6.
- [13] PROV, VA 511 Melbourne City, VPRS 5708/P2 Rate Books (Microfiche).
- [14] Now 140 Jolimont Road, East Melbourne. Much of the research on Jackson's land and house interests on Jolimont Road was completed by Ettie Pullman in July 2000 in a report dated 5 October 2000 to her then client Peter Fielding, which is now held in his private collection. For the List of Citizens, see PROV, VA 511 Melbourne City, VPRS 4029/P3 Citizen Lists and/or Citizen Rolls (Microfiche). For the 1879 notice, see *The Argus*, 26 August 1879, p. 8.
- [15] 'Terrible railway calamity', *The Argus*, 31 August 1881, pp. 5-6 (p. 6).
- [16] *The Argus*, 1 December 1882, p. 3 and PROV, VA 511 Melbourne City, VPRS 9463/P3 Burchett Index: Notices of Intention to Build (Microfiche), No. 134.
- [17] Burchett, *East Melbourne walkabout*, p. 14.
- [18] PROV, VPRS 28/P0 Probate and Administration Files, Unit 1016, File 79/618, and VPRS 28/P2, Unit 584, File 79/618, Thomas Joshua Jackson, 1901.
- [19] PROV, VPRS 28/P3, Unit 1514, File 200/267, Probate jurisdiction, Sarah Isabella Jackson, dated 1925.
- [20] PROV, VPRS 7591/P2, Unit 725, File 205/707 and VPRS 28/P3, Unit 1604, File 205/707, Will and Probate Henry Figsby Young.
- [21] *The Argus*, 2 March 1892, p. 8.
- [22] *The Argus*, 24 February 1888, p. 9.
- [23] PROV, VA 2549 Supreme Court of Victoria, VPRS 267/P0 Civil Case Files, Unit 1361, Montgomeries Brewery vs. Jackson and others, Case 1040/1898.
- [24] PROV, VPRS 28/P0, Unit 1016, File 79/618, Probate Thomas Joshua Jackson (executors' account), and PROV, VPRS 28/P2, Unit 584, File 79/618 (probate jurisdiction).
- [25] *ibid.*
- [26] *ibid.*
- [27] PROV, VPRS 28/P0, Unit 1374, File 106/363 and VPRS 28/P2, Unit 834, File 106/363, Probate James Henry Albert Cavanagh.
- [28] PROV, VPRS 7591/P2, Unit 708, File 200/267, Will Sarah Isabella Jackson, dated 1920.
- [29] PROV, VPRS 28/P3, Unit 1514, File 200/267, Probate Sarah Isabella Jackson.
- [30] Z Cawthorne, 'The house that beer built', *Herald-Sun weekend*, 24 July 2004, p. 11. The auctioneer's flyer is in the collection of the current owners, Peter and Nancy Fielding.
- [31] 'National Trust survey', dated 26 July 1983, held by the Peter & Nancy Fielding Collection.
- [32] 'Jolimont – link with history', *The Age*, 7 February 1981, p. 41.
- [33] Cawthorne, 'The house that beer built'.