

Kilmore Remembers 1914-1918

James Burston 1856
Major General

James Burston was the first born son of Samuel Burston and Sophy Keath, who married in Kilmore in 1855. There were 2 other children; George and Agnes. They lived on 5 blocks on the corner of Parade and Lamb Streets. They also had a business in Somerset House on the north east corner of Bourke and Sydney Streets which they sold after a short time and purchased "Oak Park" at Prospect Hill between Kilmore and Broadford.

The family were by this time in the malting business and moved to Flinders Street Melbourne where they bought up several other malting businesses including Victoria Breweries. James and George managed this business after the death of their father in 1886. James married Marianne McBean in Kilmore in 1883, and had 3 sons and 3 daughters.

James had joined the Victorian Volunteers and by 1885 was promoted to Captain of the 2nd Infantry Battalion. In 1897 as a Lieutenant Colonel he represented Victoria for the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in London. He served in the Boer War.

In 1900 James was elected to the Melbourne City Council and was Mayor in 1908 and retired by 1912 but continued in public office as Chairman of the Officers Selection Board and on the board of the Bank of Victoria and others.

In 1915 James at the age of 58 was the Commander of the 2nd Infantry Brigade AIF, which saw service in Gallipoli. Deteriorating health saw him repatriated to Mudros on the Greek Island of Lemnos where he became Officer Commanding of Reinforcements. He was repatriated to Melbourne in 1916 and retired in 1920.

James died at his residence at Hawthorn on the 4 March 1920 and is buried in St. Kilda Cemetery. There is an ornate brass plaque in St. Pauls Cathedral to his memory mentioning his Boer War service.

Contributed by the Kilmore Historical Society

