

# ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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## NEWSLETTER

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### RICHARD RUDOLPH KREYMBORG 1904-1987

This month we feature one of Orbost's characters Richard Rudolph "Rudy" KREYMBORG.

Rudy was the son of George James KREYMBORG and Ada Victoria (nee DAVIS). He had one sister, Thelma Helina (Mrs Maurice MORAN). His father died in 1925, aged 53, and his mother later married David John Henry STURGESS in 1928.

The first article, a tribute to Rudy, was published in the 'Snowy River Mail' following his death at Orbost on 29th July 1987. The second article was written in 1976 and published in the 'Age' newspaper.

All photographs are from the Orbost and District Historical Society's collection.

'Snowy River Mail', Wednesday, August 5, 1987:

## A LEGEND IN HIS LIFETIME



**A well-known district identity, a man who could well be described as a legend in his lifetime, passed away on Wednesday last aged 84 years.**

He was Richard Rudolph Kreymborg.

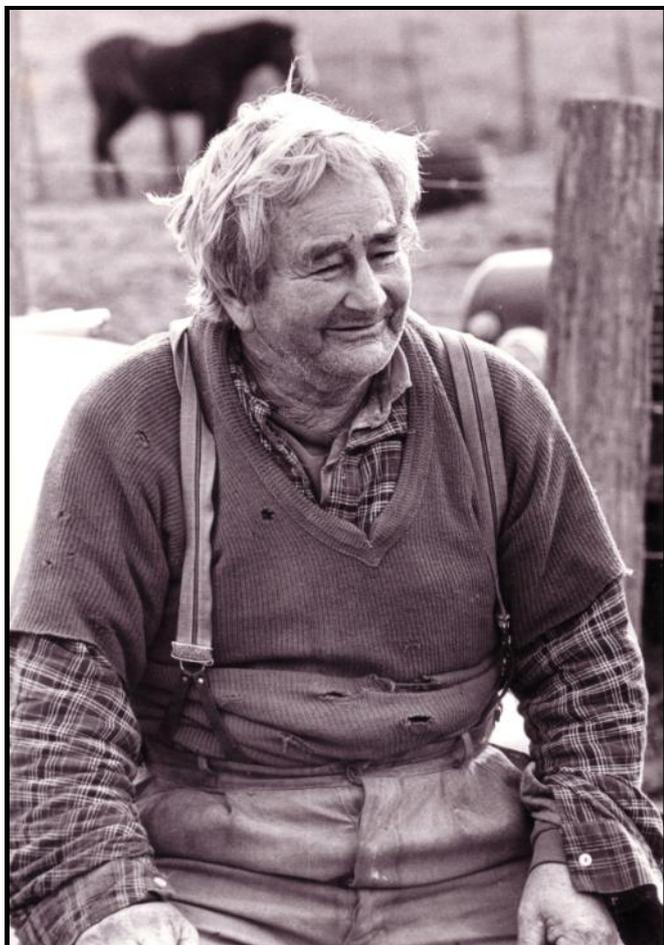
Better known as "Rudy", here is a story as related by him in his own words on September 14th, 1981.

I was born at Bulumwaal, near Bairnsdale 78 years ago; my father was a driver of four-horse coaches from Bairnsdale to Buchan. I went to school at Bairnsdale until we moved to Melbourne, where my mother ran a grocery store at 302 Victoria Street, Melbourne, near Abbotsford Brewery; my father worked at the brewery. I went to Punt Road school.

Money was not plentiful at that time owing to the depression, cigarettes cost 3d for 10 and people would buy three for 1d; that would be about 1911 and 1912. In 1913 people lined up for a bowl of soup and a slice of bread free.

At the start of the 1914 war my father joined the army; my mother went to the country, and bought a hotel at Wombat

Creek [Tildesley Hotel]. The railways had been built a year or two previously, and there was little traffic on the roads. We had the opportunity of buying the Bell Bird Hotel, the one before the present one. With the hotel we got the mail run, 14 miles to Bemm River by saddle horse with a mail bag; later we graduated to a motor car about 1917. We did not get much money for the mail run, but it was something.



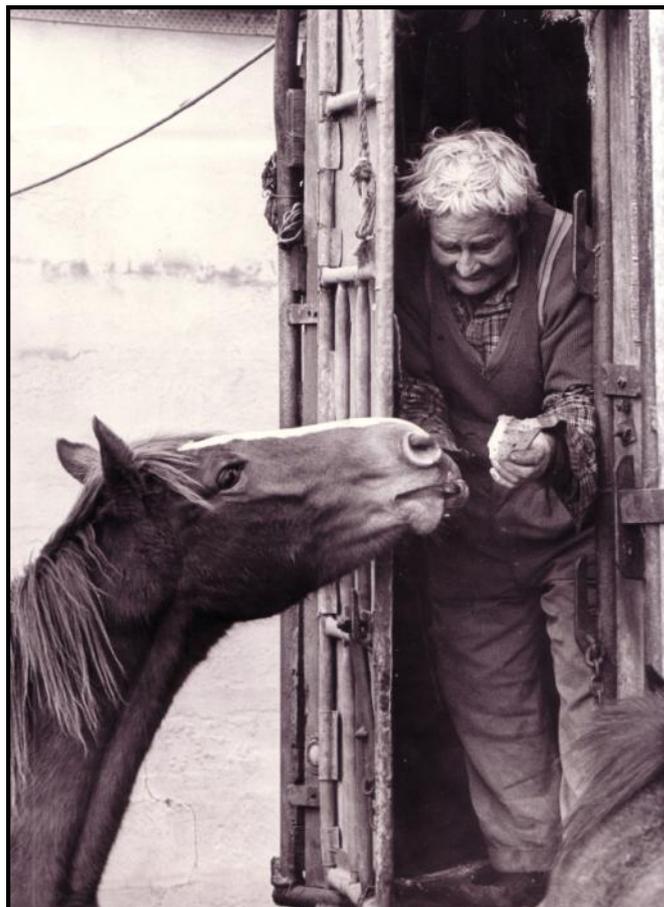
We only bought the pub licence and the ground, as the pub had burnt down just previously. We built the pub again and it cost 10 pounds for materials and 10 pounds for labour for each room, and there were 14 rooms. The stables were some distance from the hotel and were not burnt down; they held 14 horses. While building the hotel the licence had to be kept going so we hung bags between the horse-stalls to make rooms for the hotel guests. Each stall had the name of a racehorse on it, written on a wooden board. When guests were given a "room" they were told the name of the racehorse, and so found their room.

The guests arrived by coach driven by Billy MacAlister; the hotel was a coach stage, Orbost to Bell Bird one stage, and Bell Bird to Cann River another stage. Other guests came by four-wheel buggy or two-wheeled jinker. Ten miles towards Cann River was another hotel the Sans

Souci, owned by Arthur Ventry; he got the money to build the hotel by shooting wallabies and trapping possums for the skins. Sam Ward got money the same way to build the Cann River hotel, built of slabs with a bark roof — not the present hotel.

Money was scarce, a lot of men had bare feet and old clothes; you could get a suit of clothes for 25/-. Women didn't get about much. The structure of the Bell Bird pub and licence came from Bemm River, shifted up by bullock wagon. The Bemm River pub had belonged to a man Erikson, a Swedish sailor. Later on after the pub was rebuilt mum got a lot of furniture from a ship the "Riverina" wrecked at Gabo Island. Some of the pub furniture was built on site from timber out of the forest, tables, chairs, beds from blackwood; a lot of that wood at that time was in the gullies round about.

At that time the Orbost to Bemm River road went by Marlo and crossed the Bemm River by a ford. There were granite boulders, and holes were drilled in them; one and one-quarter inch iron rods went through the logs and into the granite, then splayed out and held firm. Some are still there, but rusted.



After gold was discovered at Club Terrace about the early 1900s, they then rebuilt the Orbost-Cann River road much as it is now, (that's why the Bemm River Hotel closed down).

Johnnie Donald had the hotel at Club Terrace, also he had the butcher's shop, store and post office. Donald went there about 1897. There was a polling booth there and two bachelor brothers used to walk six miles from Mackenzie River to vote. They were Ed. and Bill Roberts, very nice friendly men; if one voted Labor the other would vote Liberal; if one had beer the other had whisky. When anyone called on the two men they had to have a slice of bread from each loaf and some stew out of each pot. In that way there were no arguments.

In turn mother's hotel got burnt down, in 1927 or 1928; it was rebuilt, the third hotel at Bell Bird. Mother had sold the hotel to Bill Quint, who leased it to Alf Wilson; that hotel in turn was burnt down about 1948; the fourth hotel, the present one was then rebuilt by Bill Quint (I think, not sure about that as I was in Queensland a lot). I went to Queensland about 1927, then travelled to and fro until the start of the war in 1939. Just before the war I drove from Orbost to Queensland with a buick car with gas producer. In 1927 I went to Charleville and was staying at Lucy Dalton's hotel in Charleville. I remarked to a pal I was drinking with that I was flying to Longreach, and he said I'd better hurry, so we got a taxi to the airport, and they were just taking the ladder away from the plane. I said, "Hold on, mate. I want to go on that plane to Longreach", and they said, "Are you booked in?" And I said, "No". They said, "Sorry, we can't take you". (You had to book, and sign an indemnity that you

wouldn't claim on them if the plane crashed). I said to my mate, "Well there's plenty of beer left at the pub". So we went back, and the plane crashed at Tambo half an hour later — they touched a wire fence and turned over, killed the pilot and passenger who I believe was Major Bell.

I didn't take the next plane but went by service coach. As far as I know that was the only accident Qantas ever had in that area.

While in Queensland I broke in over 2,000 horses, and trained racehorses for R. J. Winton. There were also Darky Winton, Rowland Winton and Harry Winton, the last mentioned trained good horses at Brisbane. I didn't train for the last three, only R. J. Winton. At Mitchell, half-way between Roma and Charleville, my horses won three races in one day.

I was one of Queensland's top horse riders for buck-jumping. Here in Orbost I rode two star horses in one show — one called Willangie, and the other Ulinda (off Ulinda Station). Before that I rode a black horse, Black Harry, a buck-jumper at Bairnsdale; my name was in every paper from Orbost to Delegate. In Queensland there was unlimited money to back me against any horse in Australia (buck-jumpers).

Funeral of Mr. Kreyborg took place on Friday morning after prayers at St. Colman's Catholic Church, with Father P. Bickley officiating.



'The Age', June, 1976:

## RUDI'S BLAST FROM THE PAST

Rudi Kreymborg passed the stick of gelignite to the fisheries inspector.

"You hold it," he said, "and I'll light it." He lit it and started to walk away.

"What do I do now?" screamed the inspector as the fuse hissed towards explosion.

"You'd better throw it in the pond before we both go up," said Rudi.

Into the water went the gelly, boom went the pond and red went the inspector.

"Four very nice perch he got," says Rudi, "and him a fisheries inspector. "Gee I laughed."

It may sound like a fairy-tale, but it's probably not.

Rudi Kreymborg, 72, tough as horse hooves, is the sort of bloke who could trick a fisheries inspector into breaking the laws he was supposed to be policing.

He lives on the back of a truck behind a store in Orbost, but he is not alone. Two young horses keep him company.

Rudi — Richard Rudolph to officialdom — has lived a rough life, breaking horses, delivering mail on horseback, building roads and bridges, driving bulldozers.

And talking.

Listen, while he sits on a log in the sun and blows a few cobwebs off the morning:

"My grandfather was a coach driver in the early days and he had to look after the horses himself, had to make medicine for them.



Rudi at the back of his truck with his horses.

"One of the early ones was sulphur and lard and burnt leather. That would heal things and grow hairs.

"They reckoned you could drink it if you mixed it with castor oil.

"I was a horseback mailman from about 1915.

"I remember in 1924 I had a nice little pony on the run and there was this kangaroo in front of us.

"This feller stayed just in front of us and kept looking around like he was laughing at us.

"So I thought I'd get him and spurred the pony. He took off, left us for dead.

"But to get extra speed I'd jettisoned the mail bags.

"Everyone in Bemm River and I spent a week looking for the damn mail."

And then there was that one about the fisheries inspector . . . . .

Rudi lived in his truck next to the present Murray Goulburn Store in 'B' Road, Orbost.