



BELL John

Parents: John Bell and Margaret Wilkinson

Siblings:

1. Walter
2. Adam

Birth: 1831 Camp Town, Jedburgh, Scotland

Marriage: 13 August 1862 in Warrnambool, Victoria, Australia, Janet Rome Slack

Immigration: John emigrated on the *Three Bells* with his brother Walter, leaving from Greenock on the 23 March 1852, arriving in Melbourne in June 1852.

His brother Adam arrived on the *Forest Monarch* in March 1854

Children: No Issue

Place of Residence: Lava Street, Warrnambool

Death & Burial: 14 May 1882 Warrnambool

Buried in Warrnambool Cemetery, Presbyterian Section, Compartment 24, Grave 45, on 16 May 1882

Obituary:

The *Warrnambool Standard*, 16 May 1882

Another old and valued resident of Warrnambool has passed away in Mr John Bell whose death took place on Sunday morning last. For some nine weeks Mr Bell had been suffering from a severe internal malady, but a few days ago a change occurred for the better and great hopes were entertained of his recovery. It was not to be, an acute paroxysm of pain seized him on Saturday, and acting upon a system enfeebled from lack of nourishment, which he could not take, and suffering, brought on the end, which came quietly at four o'clock in the morning. The late Mr Bell was a highly useful citizen. His first acquaintance with Warrnambool occurred about 24 years ago, when he built, being then and ever since in partnership with his brother, Mr Adam Bell the lighthouse, which formerly stood on the middle island of Lady Bay. Messrs Bell Bros were then following the occupation of builders. After the lighthouse was built they took a number of contracts in the district for squatters' residences, and several churches were built by them. Mr John Bell took a fancy to the district, and having a knowledge of the milling business, he purchased the building known as the Jetty Mills in the year 1864. In the hands of Messrs Bell Bros the Jetty Mills grew into the sound commercial fabric which it continues to be.

The late Mr John Bell took an active interest in public affairs. He was for many years a Borough Councillor, and was connected with many of the commercial ventures of the town, being a Director of the Warrnambool Gas Company up to the time it passed into the hands of the Borough Council. The Agricultural Society will lose in him one of its staunchest supporters. As a member of committee and treasurer his advice was invaluable, whilst he nursed its finances through troublous times till it had attained its present prosperity. He was an enthusiast in flowers, the specialities of his own rearing invariably taking prizes at the local show. Much more than that, he had a kindly heart and a liberal hand. His shrewd business habits made his advice sought for, and where needed, he would render monetary assistance without ostentation. Many have to thank him for both these valued qualities. Mr Bell's loss will be keenly felt, not only by his very many friends in the town and district, but it will also affect the welfare of the town in which he had lived so long. He died at the comparatively early

age of 51 years, being born in Cape Town, near Jedburgh, Scotland in the year 1831. He leaves a widow but no family behind him. The funeral takes place at eleven o'clock this morning.

Life: On the 24 December 1858 Bell Bros won the contract to erect a lighthouse on Middle Island. Bell Bros were situated in Nicholson Street, Carlton, at the time of gaining the contract. On 4 December 1858 Messrs J & A Bell leased the Flour Mill at the Jetty. They were commended on the oatmeal they produced. In 1865 John was lucky to survive a nasty accident in the mill when his clothing became caught in machinery. In January 1859 Bell Bros won the contract to erect the lighthouse cottage at Warrnambool. John organised a ploughing contest for amateurs in 1868 to aid the hospital. He also participated in ploughing competitions himself. He was the treasurer of Warrnambool Bowling Club during 1870. In February 1868 J & A Bell entered a new partnership with Aitkin & Paterson (Merri Mills) at the corner of Merri & Banyan Streets. Major renovations took place including a new boiler. The firm was known as Aitkin Bell & Co. Mr Aitkin retired from the business in 1870. 1869 Aitken, Bell & Co. took over the Merri Mills, a farina mill of superior quality, enabling them to supply quality flour & oatmeal. In 1871 J & A Bell erected substantial stone premises, as stores, at the corner of Liebig & Koroit Streets. This business was known as the 'Corn Exchange'. They sold flour, bran, pollard, oatmeal, wheatmeal, peameal and barleymeal. Their advertisement also stated, 'All sorts of Grain bought and sold.' John was a councillor for some years. He served 1871 - 1873 and again between 1878 & 1879.

Bell Street, in Warrnambool, was named after him.