

## ABOUT GEORGE BRISCOE KERFERD

Born in Liverpool, England, in 1831, George Kerferd was brought up in a business environment. His father was Joseph Kerferd, a well-known trading merchant.

Young George (named after his grandfather) was sent out to Australia by his father in 1852 to set up a branch of the family business. He arrived on the ship "Albatross" in April, 1853. As he stood on the wharf as a young man of 22 and gazed out at the bustling scene of Melbourne in 1853, little did he know that he would one day be Premier of the Government of this new State of Victoria.

He went first to Bendigo, and sold all the merchandise he had brought with him. Before leaving England, he had become engaged to a girl from Cumberland, Ann Martindale. She came to Australia shortly after George and they were married at St James Church, Melbourne, in September, 1853. He was 22 and she was 20.

Setting up a branch of the family business was more difficult than expected, so George got a job as a cashier with WM Bell in Melbourne.

By June, 1855, George and Ann had decided to move to Beechworth, three months after James and Margaret Ingram arrived, and less than three years after gold had been first discovered.

By 1856, after a short partnership as wine and spirit merchants with Mr H Robertson, George Kerferd established a brewery in Camp Street, on the southern corner of Last Street.

He was a very public minded man. By 1857, he was a member of the Beechworth Municipal Council, and was chairman in 1858-1859 and 1860-1861. He continued on Council until at least 1864.

But he was busy in other directions, too. He had joined James Ingram in establishing Ovens District Hospital, and was its first Secretary in 1857. Like James Ingram, he was also involved with the establishment of Ovens Benevolent Asylum, and was elected its first President.

Beechworth became very dear to George Kerferd's heart. In October, 1864, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly as the representative for Ovens District. He once said, "The advancement of Beechworth means more to me than my political career."

One of his major projects was to get a water supply for Beechworth. This was how Lake Kerferd came to be formed, and the Council named it after him in acknowledgement of his hard work in bringing it to fruition. But it was to be eleven years (1874) before the water from the lake finally flowed into Beechworth.

In 1865, George Kerferd moved to Melbourne as the new local member. He was now 34. He had always wanted to study law, but his father had insisted on him going into a commercial career. In Melbourne, he commenced his law studies and was called to the Bar in 1867.

George Briscoe Kerferd had an illustrious political career. He held portfolios in six ministries, was five times Attorney General and was elected Premier in 1874. It was because of his political influence that he succeeded in bringing the railway to Beechworth in 1876.

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In 1885, Kerferd resigned from Parliament to take up a position of Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria. He served in this capacity for five years, until his death on the last day of 1889.

So ended the life of one of Beechworth's greatest and most influential pioneers. He was buried in the St Kilda Cemetery on 2 January, 1890 and now rests there along with another of Beechworth's pioneers, John Alston Wallace, who died in 1901.