

14 Mercer Road - R

- 1897: Part of allotment measuring 249ft valued at £145. Owner: Bowes Kelly (Malvern Rate Book 1897-98)
- 1899: 3 brick houses built Nos 12, 14 and 16. No 14 was vacant. Owner: Bowes Kelly (Malvern Rate Book 1898-99)
- 1900: The three houses described as having 10 rooms each. (Malvern Rate Book 1899-1900)
- 1901: Occupied by Lyell S Christie, described as having 9 rooms and 800 ft of land
- 1902: 3 houses shown on MMBW plan
- 1903: Owner: Bowes Kelly, 70 Queen Street, Melbourne Agent: H A Harrison, 13 Seymour Avenue, Malvern - Occupation of Harrison unknown (MMBW Drainage Plan 36709)
- 1904: Occupied by Charles Franklin, merchant renting from Bowes Kelly (Malvern Rate Book 1904-5)
- 1910: Occupied by Alfred Harvey, broker
- 1915: Occupied by Henry Deane, civil engineer (Malvern Rate Book 1915-16)
- 1919: Deane purchased house from Bowes Kelly (Malvern Rate Book 1919-20)
- 1925: Owner and occupier Thomas A R Tabart, accountant (Malvern Rate Book 1925-26)
- 1929: Tabart's name crossed out, house vacant. Owner: C/o Lewis & Company, Hobart Tasmania. (Malvern Rate Book 1929-30) This entry refers to Tabart as T A Tabart (c.1837-1932), retired Chief Inspector of Stock of Tasmania, appointed in 1870 serving nearly 60 years in 25 State administrations long past his retirement age. An authority on sheep scab he was responsible for almost eradicating it in Tasmania. He organised several international scab conferences. (*Australasian Pastoralist Review* Vol 25, August 1915, page 744 and H A Gibbney and Ann G Smith, *A Biographical Register 1788 - 1939*, Canberra, 1987, page 293)
- 1932: New owner/occupiers Drs Stewart & O Cowen of 12 Collins Street, Melbourne (Malvern Rate Book 1932-33)
- (This material was compiled by the National Trust)
- 1947 & 1950: McKenzie, Very Rev John, former Pres. Minister, Toorak (Who's Who)
- 1950: Fletcher, James Bruce, Actuary (Who's Who)

One of three once identical houses constructed by famous mining magnate Bowes Kelly, an original director of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited and the principal developer of the Mt Lyall mine in Tasmania, Bowes Kelly lived nearby in Waiora in Glenferrie Road from 1888 before moving to Moorakyne, a mansion next to Stonnington. He also was involved in property development in Melbourne. It has not been established who the architect was for these three buildings. They are possibly the work of Arthur Fisher who lived next to 1 Sorrett Avenue, and who designed the pioneering mediaeval inspired half timbered Westford, at 2 Ash Grove East Malvern. These houses are stylistically very similar to 1 Sorrett Avenue and Nos 3, 5 and 7 Myamyn Street, also with mediaeval influences. Bowes Kelly was also responsible for these and they are close to his residence Waiora. They are also similar to Fisher's developments at 127, 129 and 133 Manning Road East Malvern.

These houses were designed in an eclectic manner with a mediaeval character to the gable facing the street which has a secondary projecting hip roof over a window bay. The mediaeval character was probably reinforced by the entry gablet on the verandah with

wooden fretwork. They may have borrowed this detail from Sir George Verdon's hill station, Alton at Mt Macedon which was influenced by Verdon's association with leading English architects. The steep pitched roofs, tall chimneys and the lack of stucco ornamentation on these red face brickwork buildings represents a rejection of the Italianate and the more flamboyant Queen Anne styles. The plan form, however, with two projecting bays containing a return verandah is not uncommon for the period. 14 Mercer Road has remained substantially intact although the gablet above the entry is missing, it is possible that it was not part of the original design. The new picket fence is similar to the fence of No 16.

14 Mercer Road is of regional significance as an integral part of a group of three which possess a distinctive mediaeval character and restrained detailing that set these buildings apart from the prevailing fashions. It is also significant as one of a group of houses constructed by one of Australia's most famous mining magnates.