

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

BEAUMONT FETHERSTON

Journal, 1889-1894

Reel M1134

**Capt. B.A. Fetherston-Dilke
Maxstoke Castle
Maxstoke
Warwickshire B46 2RD**

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Beaumont Thomas Fetherston (1839-1918) was born at Packwood House, near Lapworth, Warwickshire, which had belonged to his family since it was built in about 1560. He was educated at Rugby and Downing College, Oxford. He did not follow any particular profession and for most of his life was a man of leisure. He was a prominent member of the Rugby Cricket Club and played regularly for the Free Foresters.

In his middle years Fetherston travelled extensively. In 1889 he spent six months sailing around the Mediterranean and Black Seas and he made another trip to Italy, Egypt and Malta in 1890. In 1891 he made a long voyage to Asia and the Pacific, visiting China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. He returned to Australia in late 1892 and remained there until April 1894. He spent most of that time in Melbourne and for several months was private secretary to the governor, Lord Hopetoun.

In 1892, following the death of his elder brother, Fetherston became the owner of Maxstoke Castle in Warwickshire. Built in the fourteenth century, Maxstoke was acquired by the Dilke Family in the seventeenth century. The Dilke and Fetherston families later became closely related. Beaumont Fetherston lived mainly in London and only occasionally stayed at Maxstoke. He never married. Following his death, ownership of Maxstoke passed to his nephew, Percival Fetherston-Dilke.

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BEAUMONT FETHERSTON

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Journal of Beaumont Fetherston, January 1889 - April 1894, mainly kept on his travels in Europe, Egypt, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

In general, the journal has an entry for each day. The longest breaks are from September to December 1890, when Fetherston was living in England, and in September and October 1893, when he was in Melbourne. The entries are mostly short and often very brief. They record his activities and the people whom he met, and sometimes his impressions of places that he visited, but he did not record conversations or his reflections on people or places. The exceptions are a number of short manuscripts inserted in the journal, some of them headed 'Tramp on the White Heather', which appear to be the drafts of articles that Fetherston wrote for the *New York Herald* and the London newspaper *Daily Graphic*. These pieces are more detailed, polished and legible, whereas the daily entries are often rough and of poor legibility.

The first part of the journal describes Fetherston's voyage from London to Egypt, via Naples, on the *Ormuz* in January 1889, his life in Egypt, where he stayed for about four months, his journey to Rhodes, Constantinople, Sebastapol, Malta, Naples and Plymouth, and his life in England following his return in June 1889.

The next part describes his second journey to Egypt, leaving London in January 1890 and returning home in June 1890.

The third part, which begins in January 1891, records a much longer journey on the steam yacht *White Heather*. Fetherston's party included Cecil Leigh, the owner of the vessel, Percy Moore and John Eyre. They sailed to Malta, Port Said, Colombo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Amoy (Xiamen), reaching Japan in early May. They spent about two months in Japan, visiting Nagasaki, Kobe, Kyoto, Yokohama and Tokyo. The *White Heather* then sailed south to Samoa and Fiji, where they stayed a few weeks, before sailing on to Sydney. Fetherston spent about five months in Australia and New Zealand, visiting Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart and Auckland. The entries mostly describe his social activities, such as dinners at various government houses, garden parties, walks, clubs, cricket matches, including a Test match between Australia and England, tennis, and the Melbourne Cup and other race meetings. There are references to Lord Hopetoun, the governor of Victoria, and other governors, Sir George Grey, the former governor and premier of New Zealand, Admiral Lord Charles Scott, and various political, legal and church dignitaries. The *White Heather* stopped at Albany in March 1892, where Fetherston met Sir John Forrest, and then sailed to the Cape of Good Hope and Plymouth.

After a short stay in England, Fetherston set off again for Australia on 30 September 1892. Sailing via the Suez Canal and Colombo, he reached Melbourne on 6 November 1892. He stayed in Australia for about 16 months and for much or all of this time he was attached to the staff of Lord Hopetoun. He often accompanied Hopetoun on his tours of Victoria and on visits to Sydney, Brisbane and Hobart. In January 1893 they set off on a three month tour of New Zealand, visiting Dunedin,

Christchurch, Wellington, Napier, Mount Tarawera (which had erupted in 1886), Rotorua and Auckland. The entries are similar to those in the previous part, recording visits to government houses, meetings with governors such as Lord Glasgow and Sir Robert Hamilton, dinners, walks, tennis, race meetings, cricket matches, and theatrical performances. The Victorian entries touch on many official functions which Fetherston attended with Lord Hopetoun and there are frequent references to the staff at Government House, including Lord Northesk, Captain Edward Wallington, Captain Granville Forbes and Agnew Ralston. The journal ends in April 1894, when Fetherston was returning to England.