

# MURRUMBIDGEE ANCESTOR

*The Journal of the  
Wagga Wagga  
and District Family History  
Society Inc.*

**October 2023**  
**No. 140**

# WAGGA WAGGA AND DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

All correspondence to **The Secretary PO Box 307 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650**

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## PATRONS

**Michael McCormack, MP**

**Joe McGirr, MP**

**Councillor Dallas Tout, Mayor of Wagga Wagga**

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## 2023-2024 COMMITTEE

|                  |                        |                     |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>President</b> | <b>Rob Walker</b>      | <b>69215470</b>     |
| <b>Secretary</b> | <b>Jan Hurcum</b>      | <b>6922 3523</b>    |
| <b>Treasurer</b> | <b>Neil Dallinger</b>  | <b>0408626299</b>   |
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**Research Officer:** Leanne Diessel ([diessel@optusnet.com.au](mailto:diessel@optusnet.com.au))

## Meetings

*Committee Meetings:* 2nd Wednesday each month at 9:30 am

*Monthly Meetings:* Third Wednesday of each month 7.30pm. Room opens 7.00pm

**Note: Some monthly meetings will be daytime meetings from 2024.**

*Location of Meetings:* Society rooms, 24 Tarakan Avenue, Ashmont

## Annual Membership

*Ordinary Member:* \$38. *Pensioner:* \$28 (Pension number required).

*Family Member living at same address (Additional)* \$12.

## MEMBER ENTITLEMENTS

Use of Society's extensive resources; receipt of monthly newsletter and the journal *Murrumbidgee Ancestor* three times a year (extra copies \$2.50 each); guidance with research; borrowing from the library and attendance at meetings and workshops. **Research** can be undertaken using the resources of the Society's library and at other repositories around Wagga, at a cost of \$25 per hour. Contact the Research Officer through the secretary.

**Research Room:** 24 Tarakan Avenue, Ashmont. **Opening Times: Monday & Wednesday** 10am to 4pm; **Tuesday** 1pm to 4pm. **First Saturday of Month** 10 am to 1 pm. Closed on Public Holidays. Closing at 3 pm during Winter months.

**Enquiries:** ph. **02 59257217** during opening hours.

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**MURRUMBIDGEE ANCESTOR**  
**October 2023 – No. 140**



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## Journal Contributions 2023

Contributions for publication in the journal are welcome. Electronic copies are preferred, in Word and Times New Roman font. Paper copy is welcome if electronic form is not possible.

There are no word length restraints, and no contribution is too short, but 1200 words is the preferred maximum length (this is 3-4 pages in the journal, depending on illustrations). No article of interest to the family historian will be rejected because of word length. The Society membership number of the author (s) should be included.

|   | <b>February</b>       | <b>June</b>   | <b>October</b>  |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Articles submitted  | 20 January            | 15 May        | 11 September    |
| Editing and layout  | 20-26 January         | 15-27 May     | 11-16 September |
| Proof-reading   | 27 January-2 February | 27 May-1 June | 24-29 September |
| Edition to printers   | 3 February            | 2 June        | 2 October       |
| Edition<br>distribution at<br>monthly meetings<br>(check dates) | 21 February           | 21 June       | 18 October      |

## **NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome the following new members to our Society

Kelly Cameron of Jerilderie  
Antoinette Whitton of Lloyd

It is hoped that you will find being a member of our Society a very productive and worthwhile experience, with a chance to meet new friends and to further your research interests, using our many resources.

## **On Being a Volunteer**

All voluntary organisations depend on people giving a little of their time and energy to help keep things running. Helping in this way is volunteering.

Volunteering:

- Benefits the community
- Promotes participation and personal growth because it is done freely, without coercion and for no financial regard.
- Provides an opportunity to address human and social needs, and
- Respects the rights, dignity and culture of other people.

Volunteering rewards the volunteer at the same time as it rewards those who are helped.

The Society's "Duty Staff" who make the use of our rooms possible, and make the Society's collection so valuable, are volunteers. By becoming a "duty" person, or helping out in some other constructive way, Society members learn more about the collection and are able, as a result, to use it better themselves. The potential rewards are great. Why not give it a try?

## **CONTINUING MEMBERS**

Please remember to renew subscriptions, returning your form and payment to the Society's rooms or by mail to PO Box 307, Wagga Wagga, NSW, 2650.  
Direct Deposit: Bendigo Bank, BSB No. 633000. A/C No. 169210739  
Please give details of name, membership number and reason for payment.

# President's Report

**Rob Walker – Member No. 696**

As I report on the year past, I am mindful of the significance of this AGM coinciding with the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of our Society in 1983. It is a great achievement, and we can be justly proud of our ongoing ability to provide a high standard of genealogical research and advice, all down to the skills of our members, past and present.

We held a special Anniversary Morning Tea, coinciding as it did with Family History Month, and were able to welcome John Withers (member 2), also noting an apology from Doug Thomas (member 1). A goodly number of early members attended, together with our Patron, Mayor Dallas Tout, to cut a cake. It is worthwhile recording that our newest member will be issued with membership number 950, confirming the large number of members who have contributed to our Society in the 40 years. By my reckoning our present location is the fourth premises from which the Society has been operational.

It has been said that “a book is only as good as its index”. This certainly applies to many historical books in our collection. If a book, or other accumulated records, provides a list of names or places, that can be digitised, the resulting database will make it much easier and quicker to benefit those seeking answers. To this end, several members, Wendy Bellany and Cynthia Collison included, have been very diligent in constructing such database material, with hard copy indexes, to complement our local history collections. Neil Dallinger has recently published the 2nd edition of “BDM and In Memoriam Notices from the Wagga Daily Advertiser” (49,500 records, 1998-2022). An index for our *Pastoral Review* collection is being put together, with the significant assistance of Graham Levett and Lesley Vennell, and will include WW1 volunteers (1450 photos and notes). An Index of Wagga Roman Catholic burials (1916-1964, 3400 records) has also been completed. Blandly listing these indices does not consider the hours of deciphering handwritten entries, reading very small print, or evidence of poor editing prior to publication in some books, required to finalise such databases. However, if they enable one person to track down missing information, it is all worthwhile and will continue to be one of our main tasks into the new year, and we are always looking for members to assist with this work. Using the word “deciphering” is appropriate as old books and records are littered with ciphers, codes, abbreviations, suspect spelling, or incorrect information, and require sound detective work to make those records applicable to modern day students of family history.

In this post-Covid period, we decided not to hold night mid-winter meetings in June and July and to alter our opening times to reflect low participation levels. That led us to canvass a move to hold some daytime general meetings rather than at night. In the past we would have had a lot of members who held down day jobs, but a quick poll at our August gave support for daytime meetings. Members are advised to keep aware of our meeting calendars as we intend to have a mix of day/night meetings, dependent on availability of speakers and the vagaries of daylight-saving times.

Many of our members prefer not to venture out at nighttime so we will attempt to accommodate the majority opinions. It is worth noting that at the August meeting we had a large attendance to hear Peter Gissing's wonderful history of his ancestor, Anthony Brunskill, pulling in some descendants living locally.

During the year we witnessed the major relocation of CSU Archives from South Campus to the Main CSU Campus. A spin off from this move is that we now have a collection of *The Pastoral Review* journals (1891-1977) amounting to 75% of those published and are in the process of putting together a relevant index for the series.

The Society has ventured into social media, thanks to Geoff Burch, one of our new committee members, when he established a Facebook page mid-year. Together with our website we can claim to have directly received several research enquiries. Leanne Diessel, our Research Officer, was pleased to follow up with contract research.

In closing I would like to thank my committee of the past year. Jan Hurcum (Secretary), Neil Dalinger (Treasurer), Leanne Diessel (Research Officer), Geoff Burch, Helen Lubke, Wendy Bellany and Marcia McIntyre (Journal editor), who have all played very important continuing roles, while Susan Weisser has continually maintained an excellent webpage, and Rex Stanton had strong input when available. A special mention for Diana Thomson, our membership secretary, for her sterling record keeping. We are still struggling to attract members, both for the Committee and in general, to boost our management resource, as we are probably at our lowest membership for some years, so a further call-out for new members is in order.

I would also like to thank those members who have served as Duty Officers helping around the Rooms and where garden maintenance was required. We will be holding a workshop in November for any potential or returning duty officers.

We look forward to the coming year as we strive to build on the foresight, and foundations, of those intrepid souls of the 40 years past that have given us such an inheritance. Let's not even mention the letters AI (Artificial Intelligence).



## Editor's Page

Marcia McIntyre—Member No. 840

The months of August and September this year were Red Letter months for our Society. In August during Family History Month ( a month early) we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Society. The actual date of the foundation was 21 September, 1983, when the inaugural meeting was held. The Society has had a very successful 40 years advancing the cause of family history and genealogy in Wagga Wagga and other areas of the Riverina, and helping many members with their research.

Many family history and genealogical societies emerged all over Australia in the 1980s. The impetus for the awakening of interest in the origin and history of families was no doubt helped by the approaching Bi-Centenary of the arrival in 1788 of the First Fleet. During the decade preceding the Bi-Centenary, there was much activity and planning about how the anniversary was to be celebrated. People became interested in the possibility of their ancestors being Fleet Fleeters and if not, then when and where their ancestors arrived, and whether convict or free, in the early years of settlement.

I am sure that is what stirred the interest of Wagga Wagga citizens and others all over Australia in the 1980s, to come together to form Family History Societies, to investigate the story of their ancestors.

I commenced my research in 1984, although I had been a little bit curious for years, about where my various branches (and my husband's family) originated. But I am sure that my interest was amplified by all the publicity about the forthcoming Bi-Centenary.

In this issue of "The Murrumbidgee Ancestor", Wendy Bellany, on page 14 has given us a history of the Society, after 40 years in operation. On page 17, Jan Hurcum has written a book review of Sister Noela Fox's latest book—*The Orphan With a Hundred Mothers* . An interesting read.

David Parkin has written an article on the Miller family, a branch of his Parkin family, to be found on page 18.





## SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

**Jan Hurcum - Member No. 32**

Towards the end of May our Society had a visit by 9 members of the Leeton Historical and Family History Society. They actually came to Wagga to view the newly refurbished Museum of the Riverina, then came to our rooms after lunch. They are a fairly new group, but very enthusiastic, and were interested in our resources and how we run the business and research side of things. We are hoping they will visit us again some time.

Our Society now has a Facebook page, organised by member Geoff Burch. This is proving quite popular and is handy for advertising happenings and sale items. We will have to think of interesting snippets of information to make it more interesting.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, several members attended a very important book launch. Our senior member, Sister Noela Fox, has just published her tenth book *The Orphan with a Hundred Mothers*, and the book launch was well attended. A very tasty afternoon tea was enjoyed by everyone after the official speeches. There was also an article and photograph in the local *Daily Advertiser* newspaper on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> June.

On 6<sup>th</sup> June, the CSU Archives had an official opening at their new venue at the North Campus of the University. This is a great place for seekers of family and local history.

Also launched this month was Neil Dallinger's latest CD of Births, Deaths etc. from The Daily Advertiser newspaper and other sources – a unique project containing 49,000 entries spanning 25 years.



**Above: President Rob Walker with Ian Hodges, a great friend of our Society. Ian has recently written a book—*He Belonged to Wagga*—about soldiers from Wagga Wagga who enlisted in the Great War.**

Even though we have abandoned our night general meetings in June and July due to the cold weather, our Society is still functioning at top (or almost top) speed.

August is National Family History Month, so we had an Open Day on Saturday 5 August, and a morning tea on Monday 7 August (the Mayor of Wagga Wagga attended). We also celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on that day, a very important milestone. Our actual first meeting was in September, but it seemed a good idea to combine the two celebrations. The morning tea was very successful, with the usual luscious food, cutting of a cake, and lots of talk.

Our speaker for the August meeting was member Peter Gissing, who spoke about his great-great-grandfather Anthony Brunskill, a notable property owner in Wagga together with his father and four brothers. We also had visitors who brought some great old photos of some of the early properties and the homesteads. A very interesting meeting, also a very busy one, as we also drew our latest raffle: winner Frances Hemphill (friend of our senior member), and second, Col Honeyman, who is a local member. After asking everyone at the meeting, we discovered that a majority would prefer a daytime general meeting on a Wednesday afternoon, so we will be having a trial run soon.

September was our Annual General Meeting, and we had an attendance of two more members than last year!

Our Committee is virtually the same, with the addition of one – thank you for coming on board, Sharon Wheatley. After the meeting we watched a display of photos, some from the August 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and some from many years ago.

### **Below: Members at the August Monthly Meeting**



# NOTES FROM WAGGA WAGGA

Compiled by Leanne Diessel - Member No. 412

**UNCLE TOM CABIN COMPANY.** The company, who for a long time past have been performing in the colonies under this name, will appear at the **Masonic Hall** on Monday night. The entertainment is very highly spoken of, and, what is more to the purpose, always draws large audiences. Apart from the dramatic powers of the company, which are acknowledgedly high, the incidental vocalism proves an especial attraction.

**SNAKES** – We are informed that in the course of improvements now being carried out by **Mr. Oram**, in the **Church of England cemetery**, a number of snakes have been unearthed. The reptiles were in every instance despatched without difficulty.

**WESLEYAN CHURCH** – On Sunday last, anniversary sermons in connection with the **Wesleyan Foreign Missions** were preached by the **Rev. H. Youngman**. On Monday evening a public meeting in connection with the same object was held.

**MINISTER REGISTERED FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE** – It is notified in the *Gazette* that the **Rev. Thomas H. Jennings, Wagga Wagga**, of the **Church of Christ**, has been registered as an officiating minister for the celebration of marriages.

**OBSTREPEROUS PRISONERS** – The two men, **Walker and Thompson**, committed from Narrandera for garotting, continue their violent conduct in gaol. They were yesterday brought before the visiting justice, **Mr. Baylis, P.M.**, who sentenced them to a term of imprisonment in the cells for insubordination and fighting during the exercise hour. During the progress of the inquiry they behaved in the most violent manner, and upon the sentence being passed upon them they gave vent to the strongest language against the Police Magistrate. It is an unfortunate thing that the gaol regulations do not provide for the mild persuasion of the cat-o'-nine-tails in the case of such ruffians.

**DEATH OF AN OLD RESIDENT** – We regret to announce the decease of **Mr. John Smith**, of **Kyamba**, who for many years past has resided in the district. For some little time Mr. Smith, who had attained the age of eighty-four years, has been in failing health, and his death, which occurred on Saturday, at his residence, was wholly not unexpected.

## **POLICE COURT**

Tuesday, August 26

(Before the Police Magistrate)

**DRUNKNESS** – **William Nowlan**, charged with being drunk and using obscene language, was fined £2, or in default one month's imprisonment

**WILFULLY DESTROYING PROPERTY – Stevenson v. Piper** – Summons not served.

**WAGES – Ohlsen v. Crossley.** In this case defendant on being called did not appear., and the Bench made an order for £3.5s, with 4s. 10d. and professional costs £1 11s 6d. **Mr. Fitzhardinge** appearing for the plaintiff.

**CHILD DESERTION – Thompson v. Patrick Sheilds.** Order made to pay 10s. a week for 12 months, with costs 8s. 4d.

*Wagga Wagga Express, Wednesday, August, 27., 1879.*



## RESEARCH

Compiled by Leanne Diessel - Member No. 412

Information required on the following places & people:

For privacy reasons contact details cannot be published. If you can help with research, please email [wwdfhs@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wwdfhs@yahoo.com.au) or write to the Research Officer (C/- PO Box 307 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650) and information will be passed on.

The family of **Irene May FULLER** born 17 Sep 1911 at Wagga, daughter of **Arthur FULLER & Ada DAVIS.**

Contact: Chris WORKMAN

**Thomas Henry CULLEN** of Currawarna & related family of **DENNIS.**

Contact: Pam McGearry

Photo of **James Bradley RICKARD**, married **Ethel BRUNSKILL** at Wagga in 1916, was a stock & station agent in Narrandera, secretary of the Farmer's & Settlers Association, Helped with Country Week, known as Riverina Rickard. Died at Wagga in 1940.

Contact: Linda LIM

**George & Isabella SPRY** & family of Wagga.

Contact: Robyn SPRY

**TOLAND & BROMHAM** families of Wagga district

Contact: Chrissy CAMPBELL

**Alexander NELSON** & his mother **Mary Ann STEARMAN** who lived in Wagga.

Contact: Wayne & Cathie NELSON

**Bryan Leslie RODEN**, who possibly lived in Wagga 1960-61. He died at Mudgee 1961.

Contact: Edward RODEN

**Eileen Merle CASTLE** b1914 Wagga to **Mary Ann CASTLE**. Mary Ann (daughter of **Samuel CASTLE & Emily DAVIS**) married **George FRY** in 1919.

Contact: Kate MASON

**Ernest Edwin & Florence Gertrude BRETNALL** & family of Wagga.

Contact: Rosslyn MAKIN

**Olive Martha GRESSER nee ALLEN** who died at Wagga 1986.

Contact: David GOLDNEY

**William McDONALD** who lived at Chiltern & Wodonga districts in the 1880s & possibly the father of a couple of children with **Catherine Simons SHILSON**

Contact: Rosemary PIDGEON



**Display at Wagga City Library to commemorate National Family History Month and the 40th Anniversary of our Society—artfully created by Leanne Diessel and Wendy Bellany.**



**Above: Peter Gissing telling the story of his ancestor Anthony Brunskill.  
At the August meeting**



**Above: Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Dallas Tout with early members of our Society. Left to right: The Mayor, James Hamilton, John Withers (Member No. 2), Shirley Sampson, Cynthia Collison, Jan Hurcum, Adele Rosser.**



**Above: August Meeting. Peter Gissing on left. President Rob on Right.**

# Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society Inc. 1983 – 2023

Wendy Bellany – Member No. 825

In 1983 a fellow named John Winterbottom took microfiche films and a microfiche reader to the Wagga Library (then located in Gurwood Street). The Microfiche films were of Births, Deaths and Marriages and the Librarian, Marion Brown, was so impressed she commented that “you ought to start a club”. A chance meeting with Doug Thomas, of the Department of Public Works, outside the Library also cemented the idea of forming a club with the intent of researching family history. Following on from this in September 1983 advertisements were placed in the *Daily Advertiser* (13 September, 1983) and the *Riverina Leader* (14 September, 1983).

There was a great response from the advertisements and 57 interested people gathered at the Inaugural Meeting of the Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society on 21 September 1983 at the Library. Office bearers were called for and the following were nominated and accepted: Doug Thomas, President; John Metz, Vice-President; Brian Dietsch, Secretary; Norma Chalmers, Treasurer; Adele Rosser, Membership Secretary and Newsletter; Jan Balgowan, Registrar of Researchers; Keith Hales, Publicity and Programmes.



A Logo designed by Doug Thomas and adopted by the Society was modelled on the Red River Gum on the North Wagga Wagga River flats and symbolises our Society through several aspects: Water, Roots, Trunk, Branches & Foliage.

It was a big learning curve in the early years, but also good fun. We started our endeavours in a room at the Library and used their equipment as we had none of our own. From then we moved to the Education Centre in Peter Street. Next we were allotted a room at the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives in which to house our growing Resources, most of which had been donated by members.

After many years at the Archives the Society was allocated a class room (known as Room 19) on CSU South Campus not far from the Archives. This room was later dedicated to Michael Starr for his wonderful input to the Society.

Researching ancestors, before technology hit, was by microfiche, libraries, church records, State and local records, and family memories. Over the years we have had lots of interesting guest speakers and seminars, as well as visits by the Heraldry & Genealogy Society (HAGSOC) of Canberra members with their travelling road show. The Canberra folk took our Society under their wing and we learned a lot from their combined knowledge. We also had a number of bus trips to Canberra and Griffith to visit the local History Societies to see their resources. As with any voluntary organisation, funds had to be raised to keep the organisation afloat. Membership fees were a necessity and fund raising ventures were organised.



One of the first large projects we carried out in the early days was the transcribing of tombstones in local cemeteries. Sounds macabre, but in fact we took our picnics with us and had lots of fun. Books produced from these cemetery transcriptions aided in raising funds for the Society. These books are still available for sale.

A monthly newsletter kept our members up-to-date with a Calendar of Events and information. To keep our members connected & informed, a quarterly Journal *Murrumbidgee Ancestor*, encouraging members to submit stories regarding their own family histories was also introduced on 1 March 1984.

The Society became incorporated on 20 October 1988 so the Society's name was now officially, Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society Inc.

Our final move in January 2008 was to the old Bardia Pre-School building at 24 Tarakan Avenue, owned by Wagga Wagga City Council, with more space for our ever growing number of Books & CD Resources.

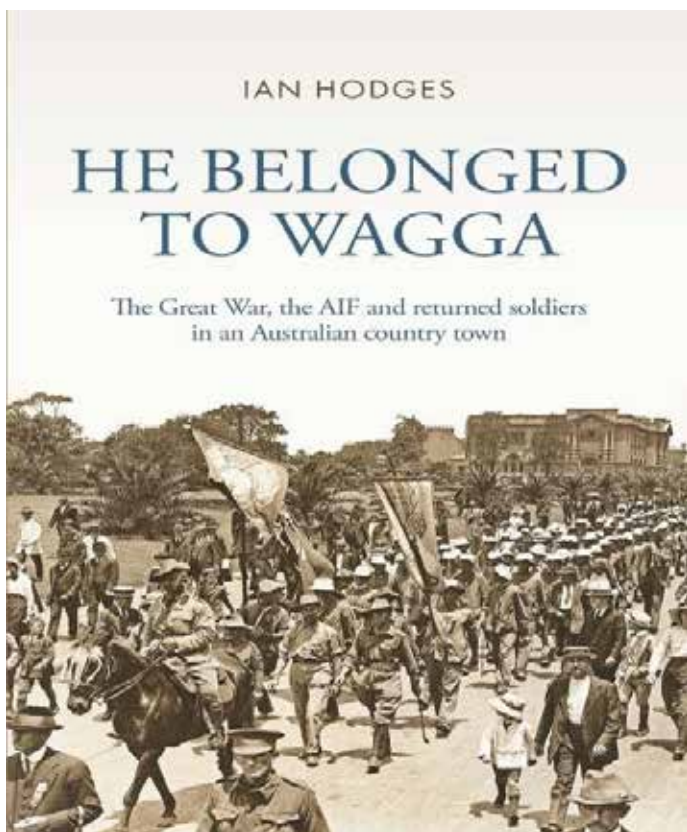
Technology happened and online service providers such as Ancestry, FindMyPast, Family Search, My Heritage and others opened up a whole new way of researching family history records. It made it easy to find family members, but is also full of pitfalls where proper research is not conducted and copies of Births, Deaths & Marriage Certificates not being obtained to back up the information on line. But how wonderful it is to have computers and search engines! It certainly makes searching a lot quicker and saves shoe leather.

Our Society is still totally run by volunteers and again fundraising is essential. Our project endeavours increased with new technology and we have produced CDs on cemeteries; soldiers' honour rolls; birth, deaths and marriages. We still hold monthly meetings, produce the monthly newsletter and the *Murrumbidgee Ancestor*, published three times a year. Some guest speakers, unable to attend in person, connect to our monthly meetings using the wonder of Zoom.

Family History Societies around the country have so much to offer helping people connect to their local history and ancestors. Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society Inc's extensive Library of over 7,000 books and records of local and interstate information may help you on your way with your own Family Tree. We have a qualified Research Officer who can help the beginner to the more experienced.

**Our Family History Society has helped many people over the last 40 years to connect to their ancestors. Come on in and have a Cuppa with us ..... you will be pleasantly surprised!**





Ian Hodges of Canberra has won the NSW Premiers Community and Regional History Award 2023, for his recently published book. Ian has regularly given presentations at our Society's monthly meetings, focusing on Australian military history and the lives of enlisted men who served in various wars.

*The New South Wales Community and Regional History Prize is for a major work of non-fiction, published in book or eBook form, that makes a significant contribution to understanding of any aspect of the history of New South Wales, including community, regional, urban, institutional or local histories.*

**BOOK REVIEW**  
**The Orphan with a Hundred Mothers**  
**by Noela Fox Phd pbvm**

**Jan Hurcum—Member No. 32**

The title of this book may seem very strange, but it makes sense when you discover the orphan, 5 year-old Irene Kedgley, lived at Domremy Convent, in the Sydney suburb of Five Dock, and the nuns were her ‘mothers’.

Irene and her mother Margaret came to Australia after World War 1, as it was hoped that Australia’s dry climate would help Margaret who suffered from TB. Irene’s father Arthur was killed during the war. Margaret had no-one to care for Irene while she worked, but she was able to get advice on a school for Irene from the Fitzgerald family and Mrs. Fitzgerald suggested Domremy Convent.

Unfortunately, Margaret’s health was failing; she entered a sanatorium and died almost 12 months later. Mother Joseph of the Convent had promised Margaret that the Convent would always care for Irene. Irene lived happily at the Convent, was officially adopted by the nuns and eventually converted to Catholicism.

After passing the Leaving Certificate and enrolling at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Irene still lived at Domremy Convent, and was married to Ray Maher from there in 1938. She was a frequent and welcome visitor all her life.

At a time when the legal rights of women were limited by Church and State, this story emphasises the courage of Margaret (Irene’s mother) to migrate to Australia alone, and also that of Sister Joseph and the Presentation nuns to keep their promise to look after Irene in the face of legal difficulties and social conventions.



## The Miller Family Another Branch of the Parkin Lot

### David Parkin – Member No.810

My Dad's sister, Aunt Rebecca (nee Parkin), who was married to Maurice Rapley, and lived at 37 Sunshine Avenue, Turvey Park, Wagga Wagga, was born in Cobram, Victoria in 1899, and lived until 1980. The Turvey Park house, which was built by the well-known Wagga building firm, Felix Siebles, housed Rebecca, Maurice and their eight children and when she became a widow, she rented a flat to boarders there.

Aunt Rebecca gave me several old photos relating to the Parkin family descendants from my great-grandfather, Samuel James Parkin, and his first wife (my great-grandmother) Maria Rebeccca Parkin nee Haslem.

One particular photo was inscribed "Merry Christmas 1912 from Harry Miller". "That's your grandfather's nephew" was all the information given by my Aunt. The photo of a young teenager in what I took to be an infantry uniform, interested me greatly. It took years until I started getting military service records to find out the details listed about Harry and his family.

The details reveal that Harry's parents were Lucy (nee Parkin, the daughter of Sam and Maria Parkin) who married Richard Stamp Miller. He had worked at the "Railway Terminus" Hotel at Murchison East, Victoria, which was built and owned by Lucy's father and mother, Samuel and Rebecca Parkin.

So then I followed the trail of family history to learn more of Harry's parents, Lucy (my great-aunt) and her husband, Richard and son Harry, and his siblings.

So let us begin at the beginning....

The 9<sup>th</sup> child of Samuel and Maria (Haslem) Parkin of Murchison, Victoria was Charlotte Lucy, known as Lucy, born 9 June, 1872. On 27 January, 1893, Lucy married Richard Stamp Miller at Shepparton, Victoria. Richard, from Yorkshire, England, was a widower with two children. He was a painter and decorator by trade, who also worked on the "Railway Terminus" Hotel, at Murchison East, Victoria – the hotel owned by Samuel and Maria Haslem – the parents of Lucy. Lucy and Richard had the following children:

Marina Miller, born 13 April, 1893, married Norman Jones.

Harry Miller, born 29 August, 1897. He served his time in the Universal Training Scheme from 1912 to 1915, when he transferred to the A.I.F., being accepted on his second try. His first application failed due to chest problems. Harry Miller became Private No. 7263, at 19 years and 5 months old.

He served in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Infantry, and saw active service in France and Belgium. During action in France on 30 March, 1918, he received a head wound, and after treatment on an Ambulance Train, he was shipped to Norfolk in England. Harry returned to Australia around the end of the year. On 11 September, 1920, Harry Miller, who was then a salesman, married a saleswoman, Ruby O'Donahoo. Harry died in 1978.



**Above: Harry Miller, son of Lucy and Richard Stamp Miller**

The photo taken of Harry was taken at Corowa, NSW. On 3 December, 1912. It was posted to my grandparents Robert Hazlem Parkin and Ann Elizabeth Parkin (nee Martin). The photo also had Christmas greetings for 1912, and was sent to them in Cobram, Victoria. I think Ruby and Harry had a daughter named Bernice.

Willie Gordon Miller, born 3 November, 1899. Willie was a baker's assistant and had breathing problems. He had completed two months training with the Citizens Military Forces, and in 1917 he volunteered for active service but was found unfit. As W.G. Miller No. 67428, he served in the 3rd District Guard in C Company. He was discharged as medically unfit on 12 June, 1918. Willie's record show that he and the Army did not always agree. He was 18 years and 2 months old when he joined up and he served a total of 346 days. Records are marked "Discharged due to being medically unfit" and on the last page of the records it stated "Deceased 2 June, 1957".

Arthur Jack "Jack" Miller, was born 26 March, 1902. A cook by trade, he enlisted on 17 March, 1941. By 1944 Jack was promoted to Sergeant, and had served in Victoria, N.S.W. and Western Australia. He was attached to the Royal Australian Engineers, and went to Japan, as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces. It seems he liked the life of an Army cook and stayed with it. Sadly, on 27 October, 1947, he died of natural causes at Kure, Japan, and was buried at Yokohama War Cemetery. So, he was born in Shepparton and died in Japan.

James Arthur "Jim" Miller, was born 29 June, 1915. He joined the Merchant Navy about 28 September, 1941 (No. 9160). James served as a cook and a butcher in Australian waters and around New Guinea. Several merchant ships were sunk and damaged in this area. His first ship was on the *Queen Elizabeth* in 1941, and the last was on the *Union Trans Tasman* on a trip from Auckland, New Zealand and back to Melbourne, Victoria on 20 August, 1974 – quite an amount of service. His home address was given as 22 Hope Street, Balgowlah, N.S.W. and his marriage to Dorothy Billet who was born on 7 October, 1915, produced two daughters, Marina and Janice, and one son, Richard. I do not know the fate of Jim Miller. I believe that he was still alive about 20 years ago.

I would be very pleased to make contact with Miller descendants. Jack Miller's service medals remain unclaimed and could be claimed by a niece or a nephew.

End Notes – Richard Stamp Miller was born on 22 October, 1855, and he died in 1923, aged 68 years. His two surviving children from his first marriage were: Ada Beatrice Miller, born in 1887, and Richard Miller, born 18 February, 1885, died in 1943. Lucy Miller (nee Parkin) died in 1926.

This quick glimpse of the Miller family show how history and times played a big part in their lives.



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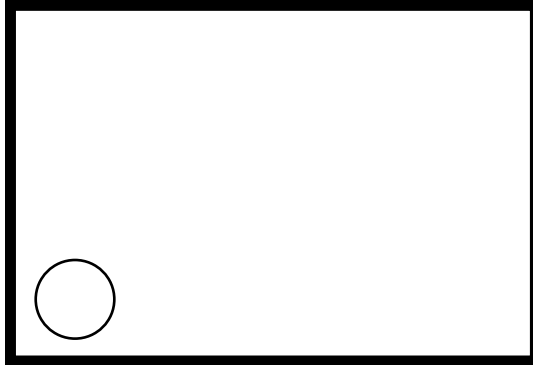
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