



# MURRUMBIDGEE ANCESTOR

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

**June 2024**  
**No. 142**

# WAGGA WAGGA AND DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

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

**Web Page: [www.waggafamilyhistory.org.au](http://www.waggafamilyhistory.org.au)**

**Email: [wdfhs@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wdfhs@yahoo.com.au)**

## PATRONS

**Michael McCormack, MP**

**Joe McGirr, MP**

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

---

## 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>
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Leanne Diessel</b>	<b>5914 0673</b>
	<b>Wendy Bellany</b>	<b>0466 052 327</b>
	<b>Helen Lubke</b>	<b>0422 989 267</b>
	<b>Marcia McIntyre</b>	<b>0421 082952</b>
	<b>Rex Stanton</b>	<b>69224092</b>
	<b>Geoff Burch</b>	<b>0417277592</b>
	<b>Sharon Wheatley</b>	<b>69223980</b>

**Editor:** Marcia McIntyre ([marciaannemcintyre@gmail.com](mailto:marciaannemcintyre@gmail.com))

**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 1.30pm.

**Note: Most 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** by appointment only; **Tuesday** 1pm to 4pm. **First Saturday of Month** By appointment only. Closed on Public Holidays. Closing at 3 pm during Winter months.

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

---

Murrumbidgee Ancestor is produced in February, June and October.

Permission from the Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society Inc is needed to reproduce articles. Copyright is vested with the author. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the society or its committee. The Society does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of content in submitted articles or for any opinion expressed in the journal.



**MURRUMBIDGEE ANCESTOR**  
**June 2024 - No. 142**



**CONTENTS**

President's Report	<i>Rob Walker</i>	4
Editor's Report	<i>Marcia McIntyre</i>	5
Society Happenings	<i>Jan Hurcum</i>	7
Notes From Wagga Wagga	<i>Compiled by Leanne Diessel</i>	9
Research	<i>Compiled by Leanne Diessel</i>	11
Vale—Susan Weisser	<i>Rob Walker</i>	12
Digging into the Mysteries of Sydney's Cemeteries	<i>Mavis Gaff-Smith</i>	13
Parkin Family Story	<i>David Parkin</i>	15
My Grandfather, Twice a Hero, Once a Sheep Thief	<i>Marcia McIntyre</i>	20

## Journal Contributions June 2024

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	22 May	15 September
Editing and layout	20-26 January	22 May– 5 June	18-25 September
Proof-reading	27 January-2 February	5 June-9 June	25 September-2 October
Edition to printers	3 February	9 June	2 October
Edition distribution at monthly meetings (check dates)	14 February	19 June	18 October

## **NEW MEMBERS**

Derek Douglas of Yerong Creek  
Paula Rees of Lake Albert  
Fran Payne of Wagga  
Bruce & Janet Lally of Ashmont

The following current members have passed away.

Geoffrey Scott  
Shirley Oakman  
Susan Weisser  
Carol Bunyan

Past members known to have died in the last year.

Betty Rocks  
Therese Harris  
Ronald Hush  
Lorna Buik  
Rosemary McKenzie (formerly Little)  
Carmel Price

## **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**

Since my last report, for the February Journal, time has not stood still so it is worthwhile reporting on some of the current issues faced by the Committee and the membership generally.

The format of the afternoon general meetings continues to be very well supported, with a consistently good rollup and three excellent recent presentations on The Tichborne Case, a history of Bullenbong, and the Blake family of Wagga. A bonus is that we have also restarted the meeting raffles and adding to the finances, which is making our Treasurer smile.

On the subject of finances, we made a commitment to work a Bunnings Sausage Sizzle in April to give a large boost to our ledger. There was some trepidation, but with the enthusiasm and meticulous planning of Geoff Burch, a band of 14 members spent one Saturday in April satisfying the culinary needs of a passing public to the tune of 600 sausages, requisite fried onion and slices of bread and sauces. My thanks to everyone involved and I suspect, on a once-a-year basis, that we will revisit this task.

Elsewhere in this journal we have a tribute for Susan Weisser, a loved member who is no longer with us. One legacy she has left behind is our splendid webpage, but this also requires skills to update the content. So far, we have negotiated password issues and carried out some band aid changes, but we hope help is at hand to be able to dig deeper into the workings of this technology to keep the high standards she has set.

Some of you might be aware of what was the Wal Fife Room at Mt Erin, which our FH Society has had a part in the Committee maintaining the room. The room has been closed to the public and in coming months will be dismantled, as the site is to be repurposed by the Boarding School. We will take delivery over time of that part of Wal's collection relating to family history, with the agreement of Marcia Fife and the family. There could be some very interesting additions to our library.

At the end of May we held the Special meeting to alter our Constitution and lodged the updated version with Fair Trading and ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission). We await formal approval and compliance with the ATO to formalise our Society as a Not-For-Profit charity organisation. It was also necessary to make changes to our ABN structure. We thank Geoff Burch for driving the rewording and the technicalities of the lodgement.

Coming up in September is our AGM, and rather than scare possible candidates off, I would urge members to consider nominating for a position on the Committee. I believe there is a good energy in the Society at the moment and we need to capitalize on a wide range of skills, from managerial to elementary, that you possess which could be useful in confirming our future.

## Editor's Page

**Marcia McIntyre—Member No. 840**

The second edition of *The Murrumbidgee Ancestor* for 2024. Here we are at almost the half-way point for the year. I hope our members will find this edition interesting and informative.

A very sad event has happened with the passing of member Susan Weisser in January. Rob Walker has compiled a tribute to a very valued member of our Society, which can be found on page 12. Mavis Gaff-Smith found an intriguing article in the *Sun Herald*, printed 14 April, to commemorate NSW Heritage Week – re-printed on page 13. David Parkin told the story of his Parkin family on page 15. Two members of his family, father and son, were Mayors of Corowa, NSW. On page 21, I decided to tell the story of my maternal grandfather, Edward Pickering True. An interesting life, with good and bad happenings!

I am hoping to purchase a copy of a new biography which has just been released. The title is: *Along the Road to Gundagai, Biography of Jack O'Hagan and Birth of Australian Pop Culture* by Jo Gilbert. O'Hagan wrote our nation's most beloved and enduring songs - 'Along the Road to Gundagai', 'Where the Dog Sits on the Tuckerbox' and 'Our Don Bradman' and "God Bless Australia" which was under consideration at one time to be Australia's National Anthem. The author, Jo Gilbert, is a granddaughter of Jack O'Hagan. The book is a hardback of 504 pages, printed full colour throughout, size 203 x 203 mm. The cost is \$69.99. If anyone is interested in purchasing this biography, go to the webpage – [www.jackohagan.com.au](http://www.jackohagan.com.au) – for more details.

A notable anniversary is on the horizon in October this year. It will be 200 years since Hamilton Hume and William Hovell completed their epic journey of exploration in 1824, leaving from Appin then Lake George, then on into Victoria, keeping west of the Great Dividing Range and ending up at Corio Bay, on the Victorian coast, where present day Geelong is situated. Several convicts accompanied the explorers, three in particular settled in this area – James Fitzpatrick had a property in the Cootamundra district, Henry Angel was an early settler at Wagga Wagga, and Thomas Boyd settled at Gilmore, near Tumut. There are many descendants of Henry Angel and Thomas Boyd in Wagga Wagga, Tumut, Gundagai, and other Riverina towns.

William Bollard was another member of the Hume and Hovell expedition. He was not a convict, but came free on board the "Providence" in 1822. He was a servant to William Hovell. William was later an innkeeper at Picton, NSW. Peter Gissing, during his talk about the Blake family of Wagga Wagga at our May meeting, mentioned that a Minnie Violet Bollard (1867-1900) married William John Blake (1837-1874). Minnie was the grand daughter of William Bollard, the Hume and Hovell explorer.



**Above: Peter Gissing, guest speaker at the May Meeting**



**Peter Carne speaking of the history of Bullnong at the April Meeting**



## SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

Jan Hurcum, - Member No. 32

Member Peter Maxwell was our guest speaker for the very well-attended February meeting, and his subject was “Interesting Stories about Wagga Railway Station”. Did you know that there is no exact date for the actual opening of the station building? The line to ‘South Wagga’ (i.e. Wagga Wagga) was opened to great celebration on 1 September 1879, but the closest date for the opening of the building (which was built by Charles Hardy) is between late October and early December 1880. Peter had some outstanding photos of the building in the early days, and also later ones showing snow (probably 1966 or 1975) and flooding (about 1942). There were lots of other interesting details, including a list of the station masters 1879 to 1986; staff wages per week; refreshment rooms; and tragedies. We will all have to visit the Wagga Railway Station museum!

**Below: Peter Maxwell speaking about the Wagga Wagga Railway Station.**



Members Leanne and Geoff have run two more family history-type sessions at Wagga Library (the last one on Family Tree Maker), and have had good attendances. Lots of questions were asked about DNA, so Geoff has asked member Meri Stewart to add her expertise (23 and 30 July I think). The Library is hoping to make these sessions a monthly event.

Geoff has recently spoken about family history at a Carers' monthly meeting.

Our Society recently lost our webmaster, Susan Weisser. Susan has been a valued committee member, and contributed in many ways by being a guest speaker twice, compiling books, and submitting articles for our ‘Murrumbidgee Ancestor’. She also helped one of our rural members to put together his memoir (which he says would not have happened except for Susan’s help). Susan will be very much missed.

Michelle Madison from the Museum of the Riverina was our guest speaker at the March meeting, her subject being “The Tichborne Case”. You may not know that, in the 1860s, Wagga butcher Tom Castro/Orton put Wagga on the world map by

becoming the ‘pretender to the throne’ of the Tichborne family in England. Sir Roger Tichborne disappeared during a boat voyage to the Americas, and 11 years later the ‘Wagga butcher’ answered the request advertised world-wide by Lady Tichborne. Unfortunately, when Lady Tichborne died, the rest of the Tichborne clan threw poor old Tom and his family out. The resulting arrest/trial/ criminal cases/verdicts/ confessions/retractions etc. were big news. Tom lost in the end, but still claimed he was Lord Tichborne. You may not know that there was a second Tichborne claimant, but he ended his days in an Australian lunatic asylum! There have been many books and articles written, and they make fascinating reading.



**Above: Michelle Maddison speaking about the Tichborne Claimant**

Member Peter Carn was guest speaker at our April meeting, his subject being “Bullenbong Bits & Pieces”. “Bullenbong” was once one of the bigger properties near Wagga (22,000 acres), and Peter and many of his family have or have had properties in the area or on parts of “Bullenbong”, so he knows the area very well. There used to be a hotel at Bullenbong which was on the Cobb & Co. run between The Rock (railway station) to Urana, a Catholic Church, and there were also the usual cricket and football matches and horse races. It was more like a village, as were most of the larger properties/stations. In about 1910 “Bullenbong” station was cut up and sold off.

Also in April we had our big fund-raiser – a sausage sizzle at Bunnings, which was an interesting experience! 14 members helped run the show from 8am to 4pm, some working in shifts and several there all day (including Geoff Burch who was the ‘boss’). The sausages and bread disappeared in vast quantities, and we raised about \$1800 on the day. A success!



Member Peter Gissing was guest speaker at our May meeting and told us about his ancestors the Blake family, descendants of William John Blake who arrived in Australia from County Clare Ireland in 1855. He was a coach-builder in Victoria, before arriving in Wagga, and he and members of his family went to Queensland about 1894. However, his son William John Blake remained in Wagga and he and his descendants had a great influence on Wagga business and sporting/racing activities.



## NOTES FROM WAGGA WAGGA

Compiled by Leanne Diessel - Member No. 412

### LAWSON MEMORIAL FUND

Yesterday the public schools of Wagga raised £20 for the **Lawson Memorial Fund** at a benefit picture matinee at the **Strand Theatre**. Throughout the week Henry Lawson's poems and prose writings formed an important part of the school curriculum, and the pupils made a special study of the life of the poet. Their remembrance took concrete form in the last school day of Lawson Week in their attendance in hundreds at the matinee. The Wagga High School, the Gurwood Street School, and the South and North Wagga public schools attended in full force, and most of the pupils of the Bomen, Forest Hill, and Bruce Dale schools were present.

## **WAGGA F. AND S.A.**

At the monthly meeting of the committee of the **Wagga Farmers and Settler's Association** last night **Mr. J.S. Carter**, the president, was in the chair. **Mr. W.J. Lloyd**, night officer at **Bomen railway station**, wrote asking the association's support in an application to the Railway Commissioners for the erection of night officers' quarters at the station. It was decided to support Mr. Lloyd's application. The president and secretary (**Mr. W. Simpson**) were appointed delegates to the F. and S.A. annual conference. **Mr. A.H. Tapscott** was authorised to send circulars to all of the farmers interested in the 1916-17 Wheat Pool asking their financial support in the action against the Government for mismanagement.

## **TARCUTTA ROAD DEATH-TRAP**

Yesterday afternoon an accident, in which it seems remarkable that there were no serious consequences, occurred at the death-trap railway crossing at the Tarcutta road entrance to Wagga. **Dr. Robertson**, of Gundagai was coming into Wagga in a heavy car, with two passengers, and slowed down to make the crossing. The high fence on the river side of the road hid an approaching tricycle on the line, and the car, travelling at moderate pace, crashed against it, smashing the machine, and slightly damaging the front of the car. It was marvellous that **Mr. S. Bulter**, who was on the tricycle, was not injured. This crossing is becoming more dangerous every year as the traffic on the road and the railway increases. For many years the Municipal Council and other public bodies have been agitating for the construction of an over bridge or subway, but the Railway Department has not yet taken any action.

## **MOTOR CYCLE OVERTURNS**

On Thursday afternoon, **Mr. J.S. Mitchell** and **Mr. W. Bartlett** narrowly escaped serious injury in Fitzmaurice-street, Wagga. Mr. Mitchell was riding a motor cycle and had Mr. Bartlett in a new sidecar, which he had brought. Unused to the sidecar, he turned the cycle too sharply in front of Bartlett's shop, and it turned completely over. Beyond a few scratches neither of the men were injured. The only damage to the machine was a slight bending of the front fork.

## **BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mr. Armstrong**, of 10 Thorne-street, Wagga advertises that he is prepared to tune and repair pianos and organs in any part of the district.

**Dr. Alfred Nathan**, dentist, advertises the dates of his next visits to The Rock, Ganmain, Coolamon and Junee.

**AMERICAN Dry Cleaning Co.** are specialists in Art Dyeing and Dry Cleaning, all Pleating, Hat Blocking, etc. – 23 Fitzmaurice street, Wagga

**DIXIELAND Ball**, Masonic Hall, July 9.

**DIXIELAND Ball** Tickets obtainable at **E.J. Freeman's, Allan Bruce's, Lyric Music House** and **Gilchrist's**.

**DANCING** – **Miss Rolffe's** Juvenile Classes, Masonic Hall, Saturday 10.30 a.m.; Adult Classes Monday, 8 p.m.

## MUSIC

**MISS HAYWOOD, L.R.A.M.** Teacher of Piano and Theory, has commenced Teaching at 202 Tarcutta-street, and will be pleased to enrol new students.

## M'DONALD & MASON

FUNERAL Directors, Horse or Motor

Calls attended to, day or night.

Corner Baylis and Edward-streets, Wagga 'Phone 668

## MISS ADDIE BOWEN

LATE King-street, Sydney, receives clients for Toilet work, Electric Face and Scalp Massage, Hairdressing, Hair Curling, Bobbing, Singeing and Tinting, Makes and remodels latest Frocks, Top Coats – 12 Gurwood-street (upstairs) near **Miss Comber's**.

*Source: Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Saturday 21 June, 1924*

## 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.

**George William COMMINS**, surveyor, of 'Springfield' North Wagga.

Contact: Robert COMYNS

**Wilhelm Heinrich Gustav WOLFF** married Wagga 1900 to **Laura Maud HODGES**. Daughter **Nellie** was born at Wagga in 1902. Laura died in 1913 & Wilhelm (known as William) died in 1915, both buried in the Wagga Wagga Monumental Cemetery.

Contact: Lynn GARLICK

**John & Georgina ANDERSON** of 'Mascot' Mangoplah (1878-1915) After John died in Melbourne 1915 Georgina moved into Wagga to live. Children: **William, Louisa, Eliza-Jane, Lucy, Margaret, Robert, Annie, Richard, Albert & Charles**. Daughter **Margaret** married 1913 in Victoria to **John CLARK**. Family & descendants also lived at '**Warbling Springs**' Pullitop, **The Rock, Burrandana, Yerong Creek, Tooyal, Coolamon, Westby, & Big Springs**. Looking for photos of individuals.

Contact: Dianne PLATTFUSS

## VALE – SUSAN WEISSER

**Rob Walker—Member No. 696**

The sudden death of our member Susan Weisser on 31 January 2024 at Calvary Hospital was a great shock because she had become an important contributor to the workings of our Society.

Susan had been a member for 7 years, having become member No. 884 in September 2017, and was a committee member from March 2021 until September 2022, only resigning that position as she was spending time overseas on family research. Susan was also a guest speaker at our general meetings on two occasions. In April 2021 she spoke about her great aunt Marion Waterworth under the heading of “Life & Federation: One Woman’s Story.” Interestingly this was also the first time our TV screen was used as an audio-visual display. In February 2022 Susan’s topic was “Strike & Return: A WWII Airman’s Story” and it was a story about Reg Bain, her partner Philip Bain’s father, and was one of the best presentations we have ever seen. Sadly, Susan was also listed to be our speaker in April 2024 on a similar subject “Stories of WWII RAAF Airmen”.



In the June 2019 “Murrumbidgee Ancestor” Susan wrote about “Convict Strands” and Philip’s first fleet convicts Anthony Rope and Elizabeth Pulley from Norfolk. Susan expanded her great skills in writing to become a published author of this story as “From Convict Origins”, a copy of which she donated to the Society library in January 2020.

In February 2020 Susan penned an article about Francis McNamara, an Irish convict under the title “Rebel, Penman, Poet”, followed in June 2020 by “Catholic marries Protestant, One Family’s Path to Australia” about John Robert Purcell. Another quality article appeared in the June 2021 journal with an article “The Perils of Modern Transport” about her

**Above: Susan giving one of her interesting presentations.**

great grandfather William Waterworth, who was fatally injured in Melbourne in 1921 when knocked down by a car.

Following a inquiry to our Society about help in writing his memoirs Susan jumped at the chance to help Will Kember, with the result that another excellent book “Memoirs of Will Kember OAM, Pine Farm, Ganmain” was published in 2021, also in our library.

An interest in old photos prompted Susan to develop a new project called the “Digital Photo Bank” as a means of banking family photos for future generations, and she expanded on this in an October 2021 article for the journal.

Her main legacy will be the setting up and operating of our current webpage. In November 2019 when we put out a call for someone to take on this task, Susan agreed to do it and had been the webmaster since that time until her death. Little did we know then that she was also webmaster of other local groups but that did not faze her, and we now boast a good website, which with various adjustments of passwords we can now operate, but in a very elementary fashion until we can learn “the language”.



## **Digging into the Mysteries of Sydney’s Cemeteries**

**The following was contributed by Mavis Gaff-Smith – Member No. 248  
From an article written by journalist Tim Barlass, printed in the *Sun Herald*,  
14 April, 2024.**

Do you know what a carved broken flower on a gravestone signifies? Or the word *relictus* in an epitaph?

Kerina-Gae Topp does. She’s an authority on headstone symbolism and the meaning of inscriptions from past eras, many of which have slopped out of our collective knowledge. The church whisperer explains some of these mysteries in *Talking Tombstones*, a tour of the May’s Hill Cemetery in Parramatta, as part of the Australian Heritage Week Festival.

Coincidentally, Topp spoke to the *Herald* after attending the funeral of a colleague from community radio station Alive 90.5 FM, where she has played rock requests for 30 years. “It’s terrible when you go to someone’s funeral and you learn so much more about them than you ever knew when they were alive” she says.

An interest in history and the role of treasurer for several cemetery groups in Parramatta qualified Topp to start outdoor churchyard tours when COVID and social distancing curtailed her day job as a bus tour operator. “There are three main words that appear on the older headstones, the oldest at May’s Hill cemetery for free settlers coming to the area dates from 1843” she says “On the gravestone of Elizabeth McKay is the word *obit*, from the Latin ‘he or she died on’, followed by 9 October, 1843. Her husband John arrived here as a valet to Governor Gipps before he became licensee for the long gone *Australian Arms* Hotel in Parramatta.

“After the date it has the word *aetat*, which means ‘aged’ or ‘at the age of’ – it has ‘*aetat 34 years*’. Another grave uses the word *relict*, again from Latin, the word *relectus*, which means ‘left behind’, so when it is put on a headstone it is an archaic word meaning ‘widow’.

Some graves are adorned with carved stone ivy, an evergreen that means keeping or clinging to the person's memory. Urns on top of graves, she explains, are symbols from classical Roman times when people used to cremate bodies and put the ashes in urns. Daisies on a grave represent innocence, acorns mean faith and endurance, and a lily displays purity.

A grave, Topp says, is also a good indicator of the wealth of the family of the occupant. "The cemetery at May's Hill is very simple. When the fashion became for marble, and the bereaved didn't have the money but wanted the headstone to look like marble, they painted them white. At one stage it was called the wooden cemetery. Compare that to Waverley Cemetery in Sydney – the grandeur of some of the graves there, with angels and carvings, is totally different."

Topp visits churchyards when she travels abroad and is a fountain of knowledge about churchyard trivia. Did you know escapologist Harry Houdini visited the Rookwood grave of William Davenport, who with brother Ira, found international fame in 1854 with a supernatural box illusion called the "The Mysterious Cabinet"? Perhaps the most famous epitaph? That on Spike Milligan's grave in the grounds of St Thomas' Winchelsea, East Sussex. It includes the phrase *Duirt me leat go rabh me breoite*: Irish for "I told you I was ill".

#### **Gravestone symbolism and Words Explained:**

A broken flower - An early death, usually a child  
Convolvulus - Clinging to the memory of the departed  
Cherubs - Flight of the soul  
Wheat and grapes - Body and blood of Christ  
Inverted torch - Torch of a relay race, meaning life's race run.  
Dove holding an olive twig - Noah's dove, hope for the new world.  
A handshake - Either farewell or welcome on reunion  
Tollat crucem suam - "May he carry his cross".  
Hic Sepelluntur - "Here are buried".  
Ora pro nobis - "Pray for Us".  
Resurgam - "I shall rise"





# The Parkin Family Story

David Parkin – Member No. 810

## Thomas Parkin 1835-1910

Thomas was the youngest of James and Mary Parkin's seven children and was born in Hull, Yorkshire, on 15 September, 1835. He was 13 years old when he sailed to Australia on the ship *Una* with his parents, sister Sarah and brother Samuel. They left Plymouth on July, 1849 and arrived in Sydney in November, 1849. After spending some time in Parramatta, the family sailed to Melbourne in 1850 taking 14 days for the journey. Thomas lived with his parents in Richmond where he was apprenticed to the carpentering trade and assisted in making the first "cradle" in Victoria for gold prospecting.

### Below: Thomas Parkin



The gold rush to Forest Creek attracted him, so he joined the many who abandoned their occupations to try their hand at prospecting. After spending some months as an unsuccessful digger, first at Forest Creek, then at Bendigo, he returned to Melbourne to complete his indenture in 1856.

Thomas went to Dunnolly and opened a store, where he met and married Sarah Allen on 23 March, 1857 in the converted Woodridges billiard saloon which served the town as the Church of England church.

Thomas and Sarah went to Malmsbury where Thomas followed the occupation of millwright, and was one of the founders of the Loyal Coliban Lodge, M.U.I.O.O.F. A daughter, Elizabeth, was born at Amherst on 14 February, 1858 but died on 21 December, at just 10 months of age. She had suffered dysentery for four days (possibly being summer, she had also become dehydrated).

The following year when daughter Mary Elizabeth was born on 19 July, 1859, Sarah and Thomas were back in Richmond, living at his parent's house. They returned to Malmsbury and Thomas joined the Volunteers and was a member of the Second Castlemaine Company for five years. Another four children were born; Emily (at Tara-dale 10 October, 1861), a stillborn in 1863, Edward James (21 November 1864) and William Henry (21 May, 1867).

At some stage, Thomas and Sarah purchased Allotment 12, Section 20, corner Orr and Bennett Streets. Also Allotment 13, Section 20 in Bennett Street at the rear of their other block. These they sold to Mr John Hookey on 19 March, 1877 for £90.

Sarah's brother Tom Allen approached Thomas around 1867, to come to Ten Mile and build Ten Mile House. So Thomas, Sarah and their four children went to Ten Mile. Thomas built, then managed for his brother-in-law, Ten Mile House which consisted of a public house, store, post office, accommodation house and dwellings.

The Parkins settled at Ten Mile in a small house overlooking the river, across Loyola Creek. It was here that three more children were born, George (13 May, 1869), Arthur (19 July, 1871) and Henry (5 April, 1873). Thomas was one of the original shareholders in the well-known Sailor Bill Gold Mining Co. Wages were small and the hours long – 14 to 16 hours daily – and with his family growing, Thomas decided in 1875 to go and seek something better. Leaving his wife and family behind, he took his basket of tools on his back and about £10 in his pocket and tramped to Corowa, NSW. When he arrived, the Bank of NSW was being built where he obtained employment at his trade of 10 shillings a day for ten hours work.

Upon completion of the bank, Thomas commenced business as a contractor on his own account, and was the first employer in Corowa to pay 10 shillings per day for eight hours. By hard work and careful handling of his money, he managed to save enough to purchase half an allotment in Sanger Street. There he erected a carpenter's shop and dwelling and during his spare time made furniture and sold it.

Sarah and the children joined Thomas in Corowa and four more children were born, Alfred (26 June, 1876), Ada (23 September, 1878), Frederick John (21 March, 1880), who lived seven months and Evelyn (10 November, 1882) who lived 11 months.

Thomas and Sarah with their 10 children lived in Corowa. Thomas continued to expand his property and business and advertised in the local newspaper his extensive range of wares. He had a timber yard in another part of Corowa.

Some of advertisements read in 1875: *Carpenter and joiner's work. Funerals conducted at reasonable rates, monuments, gravestones, memorial crosses and palisading.* By 1886 he had *carpets, linoleums, door mats, stationery, novels, paperhanging, grocery, ironmongery, furniture, wine and spirits.*

Thomas was one of the founders of the Loyal Border Lodge, M.U.I.O.O.F in 1875 and filled all the chairs in the Provincial Grand Lodge, and was secretary of the local Lodge for over 20 years.

He took a prominent part in the erection of the Methodist Church and was for some years a very active member of that body. He was a trustee of the Corowa Common for some years and a Director of the Corowa Deep Lead Gold Mining Co. The gold fever never quite left him. He was a member of the Murray Rifle Club as well as supporting many other clubs.

In 1903 Thomas Parkin was elected to the Council and became Mayor of Corowa.



**Above: Sarah Parkin nee Allen, wife of Thomas Parkin**

One of his sons, William Henry Parkin (1867-1919) was also Mayor of Corowa. His obituary from the Corowa Free Press, 4 November, 1919: *On Friday last, 4 November, 1919, the death occurred of our popular Mayor, William Henry Parkin, under tragic circumstances. He had been inspecting Council undertakings in South Corowa in company with Mr Sweeting, Council engineer. On arriving at a cross-roads, they met with a cyclist, who approached rather suddenly, causing the pony to shy and capsize the sulky. Mr Parkin had his young son, Jack, with him and in trying to protect him, took the full impact with the ground. He remained in bed until Saturday, but on the advice of his doctor, went to hospital for observation. He seemed to be recovering, but on Saturday evening, internal complications set in and he took a bad turn and passed away aged 52 years.*

*Early in his career he entered business in Bathurst, but after spending some years there, he returned and managed the Timber Dept. of Thomas Parkin until Tait & Co. purchased the business.*

*He was elected to the Corowa Municipal Council in 1914, and was elected Mayor in 1918 and 1919. He was a staunch supporter in following the Local Government ordinances to the letter.*

*His time on Council saw major schemes implemented, the town water supply, electricity, street paving and sanitary improvements. During the devastating floods of 1919, he worked tirelessly beside Council staff, to keep the road and communications open to Victoria.*

*He was a long-standing member of the Fire Brigade and represented Corowa in a Fire brigade competition in New Zealand some years ago. He married twice. Emily Evans with children, Lionel, Allen, and May (Mrs Seaton) and Lilian Roach, with children, Jack, Enid and Joan.*

**Right: William Henry Parkin**





**The day after Peter Carne gave his interesting talk- *Bullenbong Bits and Pieces* at the April meeting, he celebrated his 90th birthday. So of course, after the meeting, a day early, Peter cut his birthday cake.**

## **My Grandfather, Twice a Hero, Once a Sheep Thief**

**Marcia McIntyre – Member No. 840**

My maternal grandfather, Edward Pickering True (sometimes known as Ned True) was born in Gundagai, NSW in 1865<sup>1</sup> and died in Gundagai in 1943<sup>2</sup>, well before I was born, so I never knew him. His “Pickering” second name originated with his great-grandmother, Martha Pickering, who married Ambrose True at Market Deeping, Lincolnshire, in 1766. Edward’s father, uncle and aunt also had “Pickering” as a second name, as did three of his brothers. Edward was the son of Samuel Pickering True Snr. and his wife, Mary Ann nee Luff, who emigrated from Lincolnshire to NSW in 1849 and settled in Gundagai. They survived the disastrous 1852 Gundagai flood. The True family were saved by the indigenous heroes of the flood who rescued many people<sup>3</sup>. Mary Ann’s uncle, William Luff of Gobarralong, near Gundagai, (an ex-convict) drowned in this flood.

Edward True saved Percy Jenkins from drowning in 1886 (possibly in Morley’s Creek, which was near the True residence). The Royal Humane Society of Australasia awarded Edward a Certificate of Merit for saving Percy’s life.<sup>4</sup>

*Edward True proceeded to Sydney yesterday by train to receive the medal awarded to him by the Royal Humane Society of Australasia. True, it will be remembered, very pluckily saved the life of young Percy Jenkins last year; and his conduct was brought under the notice of the Society which decided to recognise his bravery. The distribution of awards will take place at the Town Hall, Sydney, on Monday, and will be presided over by His Excellency the Governor (Lord Carrington)*<sup>5</sup>. This article is not quite accurate. The Humane Society did not award Edward a medal for the 1886 rescue - no medal, but a Certificate of Merit. He was privately awarded a medal by Percy’s grateful parents.

*In introducing True to the Governor, Captain Payne, R.N., Secretary to the Society, related the following facts:- “Edward True, aged 21 years, a labourer, saved the life of Percy Jenkins, aged 12 years, a schoolboy, near Gundagai, on December 6, 1886. The boy Jenkins had, with other boys, gone to bathe; he got out of his depth and, being unable to swim, sank. The other boys called for help. True, hearing the cries, ran from his house, about 300 yards distant, and plunged in with his clothes on, swam to where he saw bubbles in the water, dived, brought the body to the surface, and afterwards to the bank, and then took means to restore him, as he was unconscious. The place where Jenkins sank is 15 feet deep.”*

*True was awarded the Society’s Certificate of Merit – a parchment document, enclosed in a neat leather case, containing True’s name and the circumstances under which it was awarded. True has since returned to Gundagai, and speaks in very high terms of the way in which he was received and treated.*

*True has a special word of praise for the kindly way in which the Governor spoke to each of the recipients of awards and says His Excellency cordially shook hands with the lot*<sup>6</sup>.



**Left: The silver medal of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia**

Edward True was awarded the silver medal of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia in 1891, for saving lives in the 1891 flood at Kimo, near Gundagai (the medals for both the 1886 and 1891 rescues are in my possession, together with the Humane Society's citation for the 1891 rescues but the 1886 Certificate of Merit has not survived). In the 1891 flood, two men, Harry Gooden and Richard Worlton, who were employed by James Robinson of Kimo Station, drowned.

Richard was my late husband's great-grandfather. My grandfather and David Maginnity<sup>7</sup>, a station hand at Kimo, both received a silver medal (in spite of Edward rescuing more people than Maginnity and rescuing him from a tree). C.R. Cunningham, John Burns and Jack Reardon all received the bronze medal of the Royal Humane Society for their part in the rescues<sup>8</sup>.

In a special historical edition of the Gundagai Independent in 1952, to commemorate the centenary of the 1852 flood, Edward True's heroism 61 years previously in 1891, was mentioned – *In paying tribute to Edward True, one citizen said 'That True would be to the fore where a life was to be saved goes without saying as he already holds the Royal Humane Society Certificate of Merit for the rescue of Percy Jenkins some years ago.....Peace hath its heroes no less renowned than war, and of such is Edward True.....Edward Battye, another occupant of the boat with Eugene Sullivan, were for seven hours hanging on a snag. He thus describes his experience:—When the boat cap-sized, I was underneath. After coming to the surface I was washed down several hundred yards by the current when I reached a tree, but only held on for a short time. When I was swept further down, I saw poor Worlton sink, and I don't think he ever rose again. Gooden got on a small oak tree a short distance below, and about half an hour before assistance came, called out to say he was almost done. This was the last I heard of him. A few minutes later I could get no answer. Waller, a relation of Robinson's, and McGinnity, were also within calling distance.*

*We were all fully half a mile from land, and when **the brave fellow, Edward True**, reached us, myself and Sullivan could not have held on 10 minutes longer. It may be mentioned that after McGinnity landed Cunningham and Barnes, and in returning to get others his skiff struck a tree and smashed up. He then managed to get on a tree. Those on shore had to come from Gundagai, five miles away, and succeeded in getting a small flat-bottomed boat, a very frail one, which they managed to leave town with about 3 o'clock this morning.*

*There were about 40 men present and out of this number **only one young man named Edward True, a native of Gundagai and holder of a certificate of merit from the Royal Humane Society, would volunteer to go out in the boat.** Those present considered it madness to attempt out in such a rapid stream until daylight. **However, True was determined and started by himself,** and in a very short time he returned with Waller and McGinnity. He again faced the current and succeeded in rescuing Battye and Sullivan, who, had he been a quarter of an hour later, would have shared the same fate as Worldon and Gooden. **True's bravery is the all absorbing topic**<sup>9</sup>. The story of this flood and the bravery of my grandfather was recounted at the time, in many newspapers all over Australia.*

Frank Waller was one of the men saved by Edward True. Frank was a guest of the Robinson family. He was either a relative or his family were close friends of the Robinsons. An account of the public meeting held just after the flood - *Mr. T. F. Waller, father of one of those rescued who fairly wept, .....he said "no one could tell what was in a father's heart, but his was full of gratitude for that brave Edward True for saving my boy. He could not express his thanks in fitting terms as his heart was too full. He had been at the scene of the disaster that morning and could not understand how the men are alive. .... Edward True went alone to help. (Applause.) It was easy for us on dry land to talk about these things, but he must have been a great man with a great heart to have undertaken what he did. He also paid a glowing tribute to the bravery of David McGinnity, who performed heroically in saving many lives, and he vied with True as hero of that awful night*<sup>10</sup>.

The following is the wording at the end of the citation with the details of Edward's award from the Royal Humane Society of Australasia. This citation is presently in a frame on my wall - *At a General Court of Directors of the Royal Humane Society held in Melbourne on 18 November, 1891, it was resolved that the courage and humanity displayed by **Edward True**, aged 28 years, a labourer of Kimo Station, Gundagai, NSW, in saving life during the flood on the Murrumbidgee on 28 June, 1891, call for the admiration of this Court and justly entitles him to the Silver Medal of this Society which is hereby awarded.* Edward did not live at Kimo Station as stated in the citation. He lived in Gundagai.

*Among the treasured possessions of Mrs. Jack Jones of Jones Creek, Gundagai, are the awards for bravery granted to her father, the late Mr. Edward True, for his gallant actions in saving lives from drowning in the two floods of 1887 and 1891. Besides the two citations for bravery there is also the Royal Humane Society's medal, given only for outstanding acts of courage and bravery*<sup>11</sup>. The rescue of Percy Jenkins was in 1886, not 1887 and his predicament was not caused by a flood.

My grandfather's impeccable reputation took a battering in 1906, when, on 30 December of that year he was arrested and accused of stealing a sheep belonging to James Robinson, the value of the sheep being 15 shillings. Edward's brother-in-law, Fred Brown (Fred later married a granddaughter of a Premier of Tasmania) was said to be Edward's accomplice, but I have not yet found any evidence of Fred being charged.



**Below: Edward True with three of his seven children—Emma, Alec and Molly.**



Edward appeared at the Gundagai Police Court on 7 January, 1907 (this was only seven days after the birth of Edward and his wife Margaret's eldest child, my uncle, Robert James True, who was born on New Years Day, 1907). My grandfather was committed to stand trial at the Gundagai Quarter Sessions on 12 April, 1907. At the trial, Edward was found not guilty by a jury. The reason given was his good character and reputation and his heroism in 1886 and 1891. I believe my grandfather was probably guilty of stealing the sheep. I was told that after the 1891 flood Edward was never very fond of James Robinson. Robinson ordered his workers, Richard Worlton and Harry Gooden, into the floodwaters to rescue his sheep, and as a result the men drowned.

My grandfather (and others) blamed Robinson for their deaths. Because of his low opinion of Robinson, possibly he thought stealing one of his sheep was suitable retribution. My mother and her siblings, as far as I know, never knew of this sheep stealing episode, as they were all deceased by the time I found the information. I was told by my mother of a story handed down in the family, that just after the flood, Robinson offered Edward £50 in Gundagai's main street, as a reward for his efforts. Edward apparently threw the money back at Robinson<sup>12</sup>

I have a story about the bushranger Captain Moonlite (Andrew George Scott) and my grandfather. In 1879 (during Moonlite's rampage in the Gundagai area) when my grandfather, Edward, was aged 14, he travelled a few miles out of town to bring his father Sam's lunch to his workplace. Possibly my grandfather was also going to assist his father with his work, as Sam was a stonemason and builder. On the way, my grandfather ran into a group of men playing leap frog on the side of the road. So he decided to join in the game with these friendly strangers. A few days after that, Edward was in town near the Gundagai Court House, part of a big crowd which had gathered to see a gang of bushrangers brought to the Court House to be charged with murder and robbery.

Lo and behold! It was Moonlite's gang, the group of friendly strangers Edward had been enjoying a game of leap frog with, a few days previously!! I have no proof or evidence that this story of Edward's meet-up with the bushrangers is true. It is just a strong oral story in my family.

Edward's obituary from the Gundagai newspaper - *One of Gundagai's most widely known personalities, Mr Edward Pickering True, died in Gundagai District Hospital on Saturday morning last. The late Mr True had only been in hospital a few days, and his death was totally unexpected. He succumbed following a sudden heart attack. The deceased who was 77 years of age, was a native of Gundagai. His father was one of Gundagai's first stonemasons, and he constructed many of the township's original buildings. As a young man the late Mr True was twice commended for bravery in rescuing persons from drowning. In the big flood of '91 he saved several men who were marooned on low lying ground near Kimo. The deceased followed pastoral pursuits and owned property out Reno way. He married a daughter of the late Mr James Brown, who predeceased him. Seven children are surviving, Messrs Bob (Sydney), and Alex (A.I.F.) Mrs W. Thomas (Melbourne), Misses Alice (Gundagai), Margaret (A.W.A.S), Mollie (Wagga) and Emma (Albury)*  
13.

#### REFERENCES:

<sup>1</sup>NSW Births Index - 9406/1865

<sup>2</sup>NSW Deaths Index - 18932/1943

<sup>3</sup>Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, 11 August, 1933 - The obituary for Edward's brother, George William True, who died at Bembooka, NSW, mentions that when he was a baby, George and his family was saved by aborigines in the 1852 flood at Gundagai. Edward and George's sister (my great aunt) told my mother many times about the aborigines saving the True family.

<sup>4</sup>*700 Brave Australians*, a History of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia, 1874-1994, by Colin Bannister, published January, 1996. Edward's details are recorded in Appendix 9, Page 406.

<sup>5</sup>Gundagai Times, Friday, 1 July, 1887.

<sup>6</sup>Gundagai Times, Friday, 8 July, 1887

<sup>7</sup>Maginnity's father, David Maginnity Snr. was a police sergeant murdered by the bushranger, Dan Morgan near Tumbarumba, NSW, in 1864.

<sup>8</sup>A full account of the 1891 flood and the part played by Edward True, can be found in a book in the library of the Wagga Wagga Family History Society, *Gundagai, A Track Winding Back*, by Cliff Butcher, page 91, under the heading "Heroism and Death in the 1891 Flood".

<sup>9</sup>Sydney Morning Herald, Monday, 29 June, 1891.

<sup>10</sup>Gundagai Times, Tuesday 7 July 1891, page 2.

<sup>11</sup>Gundagai Independent, Monday 9 June 1952, page 4

<sup>12</sup>Biography of James Robinson – from *The Pastoral Review* magazine [https://oa.anu.edu.au/uploads/obituaries/870/robinson\\_james\\_obit\\_1921.pdf](https://oa.anu.edu.au/uploads/obituaries/870/robinson_james_obit_1921.pdf)

<sup>13</sup>Gundagai Independent, 27 September, 1943

## PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

ABN:22 832 789 015

	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Posted</b>
Cemetery Transcript - Coolamon Shire [2002] (to 30 September 2002)	\$20.00	\$27.00
Cemetery Transcription - Culcairn Shire [2002] (to 31 December 2001)	\$15.00	\$22.00
Cemetery Transcription – Gundagai Shire [2004] (to 31 May 2004)	\$20.00	\$27.00
Cemetery Transcription – Holbrook Shire [2003] (to 31 October 2003)	\$15.00	\$22.00
Cemetery Transcription – Junee Shire [2003] (to 31 May 2003)	\$20.00	\$27.00
Cemetery Transcription – Lockhart Shire [2002] (to 31 December 2001)	\$15.00	\$22.00
Cemetery Transcription – Urana Shire [2003] (to 30 September 2003)	\$10.00	\$17.00
Cemetery Transcription – Wagga Wagga Monumental Cemetery Anglican [1996]	\$20.00	\$27.00
Cemetery Transcription – Wagga Wagga Monumental Cemetery Catholic [1997]	\$20.00	\$27.00
Cemetery Transcription – Wagga Wagga Monumental Cemetery Miscellaneous [1999]	\$15.00	\$22.00
Cemetery Transcription – Wagga Wagga Lawn [2001] Cemetery (Vol 1 – Burials to 30 October 2001)	\$30.00	\$37.00
Cemetery Transcription – Wagga Wagga Lawn [2001] Cemetery (Vol 2 – Cremations to 31 August 2001)	\$25.00	\$32.00
Cemetery Transcription – Wagga Wagga City (Rural Area) (Cemeteries & Private Burials to 31 Dec 2001) [2001]	\$10.00	\$17.00
J C McDonalds Funeral Records—1924 to 1940 [2010]	\$20.00	\$27.00
Alan Harris Funeral Files—1936 to 1965 [2021]	\$20.00	\$27.00
Wagga Wagga Lawn Cemetery & Crematorium Burials [2021]	\$20.00	\$27.00
DVD—Riverina Cenotaphs and War Memorials [2018]	\$20.00	\$25.00
The Pioneers of Wagga Wagga and District—CD [2003]	\$30.00	\$35.00
Births, Deaths, Marriages & In Memoriams. From “The Wagga Daily Advertiser “ CD. From Wagga Wagga NSW & Sundry Records 1998-2022 <b>(2ND EDITION) (NEW)</b>	\$35.00	\$40.00

Post cheque to: Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society Inc,  
PO Box 307, WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

OR

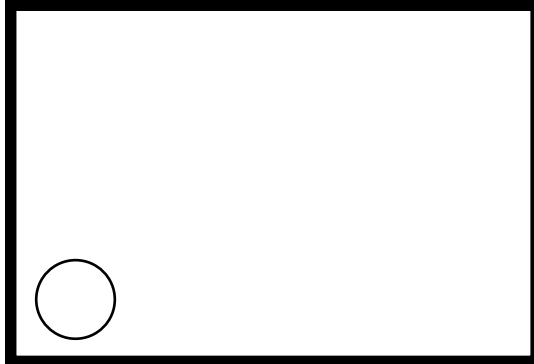
By Direct Debit: Bendigo Bank; BSB 633000, A/c 169210739 WW&DFHSInc  
Under Reference please add your name and description of purchase, and send email to the Society  
advising Full Name and Postal Address  
Email: [wwdfhs@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wwdfhs@yahoo.com.au)

Registered by Australia Post  
Publication No. 100005172  
ISSN 1038-7765

SURFACE  
MAIL



POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA



If undelivered, please return to

Wagga Wagga & District  
Family History Society Inc  
PO Box 307  
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Printed by:



170 Hammond Avenue  
Wagga Wagga 2650  
Tel: 02 6938 4888