Chattering Voices:
Activating Stories in Riverina Museum Collections

Ladies catering group Lutheran Church Trungley Hall NSW, c1930
(Photographer: Unknown, collection of A. Brown)

© ANNETTE BROWN 2011

Charles Sturt University
Chattering Voices: Activating Stories in Riverina Museum Collections

SUBMISSION OF THESIS TO CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY:
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

CANDIDATE’S NAME:
Annette Brown

QUALIFICATIONS HELD:
BA Honours (Art History), Charles Sturt University, 1998
BA Honours (Fine Art), Charles Sturt University, 1998
BA Visual Art, Charles Sturt University, 1996

FULL TITLE OF THESIS:
Chattering Voices: Activating Stories in Riverina Museum Collections

MONTH AND YEAR OF SUBMISSION:
February 2011
## CONTENTS

Part 1 – Chattering Voices – Activating Stories in Riverina Museum Collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chattering Voices – Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview – The value of regional collections</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. i: Museums and Objects/Collections Discussed in Thesis</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig ii: Riverina Map</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Significance’ – The Riverina Workshops</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Riverina 100 Objects of Significance Project</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Towns German Stories – Significant German Histories in the Riverina</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices – The Significance of Storytelling</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bell and the Bride – Significant objects, significant stories</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacups and Tall Tales – Storytelling as a family tradition</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Captain, the Poet and the Trumpet Player – Uncovering the stories</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of Storytelling – Research Methodology</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Histories Near and Far – Local voices, wide perspectives</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Histories – Local voices, local experiences</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarns, Myths and Gossip – The lesser known stories</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Voices – Theoretical Framework and Literature Review</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting and memory</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects and narratives</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-narratives</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New conceptualisations of history</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis structure</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part 2 – Riverina Museum Collections: Thematic studies

#### Chapter 1: ‘Much For the Colony’ – Stories of agriculture in the Riverina

1.1 Objects and collections – an overview

1.2 Introduction

1.3 The Pfrunder and Jones families – Stories of farming selectors
   - ‘A Great Deal of Trouble’ – Stories of fences
   - ‘Great Strength’ – Stories of farm gates
   - ‘Make Use of the Water’ – Stories of dams, windmills and water tanks

1.4 ‘A Very Big Undertaking’ – Stories of the German farmers
   - ‘Even the Squeal Was Used’ – Stories of pig killing and sausage making

1.5 ‘Work For Hours’ – Stories of the Chinese tobacco growers

1.6 ‘Bread and Butter For Many’ – Stories of the broom millet industry
   - ‘It Wasn’t Really Hard Work’ – Stories of millet threshing
   - ‘Millet Rust to Early Ripe Shades’ – Stories of the millet cutters’ ball

1.7 ‘Many of the Ewes Were Known to Us’ – The story of the tallow vat
   - ‘Well Equipped With Machine Tools’ – The story of Dawson’s foundry
   - ‘On Kiley’s Run’ – The story of a legend

1.8 Summary

#### Chapter 2: ‘A Choice Assortment’ – Stories of commerce and industry in the Riverina

2.1 Objects and collections – an overview

2.2 Introduction

2.3 ‘A Great Convenience’ – Stories of commerce in Adelong
   - ‘The Best to Be Procured’ – Stories of Adelong hotels
   - Syrians and Indians – Stories of travelling hawkers

2.4 ‘A Solid Support’ – Stories of the Tumut Butter Factory
   - ‘A Lot of Happy Memories’ – Jack Bridle’s story
   - ‘I Was the Office Boy’ – Harry Hill’s story
Chapter 2: Just Around the Bend – Stories of Chinese commerce

2.5 ‘All Industrious’ – Stories of Chinese commerce
Storekeepers and Financiers – Stories of Chinese business ventures
‘Always the Best Quality’ – Stories of Chinese market gardens
‘Just Kids Having Fun’ – Oliver Barnes’ Story
‘Kindly and Cheerful’ – The story of Thomas Tip Nooey

2.6 ‘The Centre of Flourishing Trade’ – Stories of commerce in Coolamon
‘Pretentious Dimensions’ – Stories of the Up to Date Store
‘No Strain on the Purses’ – Stories of advertising campaigns
‘Simple, Effective and Cheap’ – Stories of the Lamson Cash Carrier

2.7 ‘Narrandera's Big Store’ – Stories of S. Richards & Co.
‘Perfecting This Machine’ – The National Cash Register Company

2.8 ‘A Difficult Trade To Learn’ – Stories of broom making in Tumut
‘A Cape Or a Cover’ – Stories of domestic brooms

2.9 Summary

Chapter 3: Just Around the Bend – Stories of transport in the Riverina

3.1 Objects and collections – an overview
3.2 Introduction

3.3 Work Horses of the Rivers – The river steamers
‘Billed Head and Round Stern’ – PS Wagga Wagga
‘Stuck in the Channel’ – The Log Books of PS Wagga Wagga
‘A Hundred Miles of River’ – Stories of the river charts
‘An Ancient Chart’ – Chinese Junks on the Murrumbidgee River?
‘A Civic Minded Man’ – Captain Thomas Bynon (1858-1945)
‘A Varied Career’ – Captain Antoine Justin Valery (c1848-1934)

3.4 ‘Hard At Work’ – Wagons in the Riverina
‘Second to None’ – The J.T. Close Finley Foundry
‘Hard At Work All Day’ – The Bennett Wagon Company
The John Bull Wagon – The Hamilton family of Rosevale
‘A Little Timely Care’ – Wagon wheels

3.5 ‘To the Top of the Great Divide’ – The Bradley family pack saddle
The Bradley Family of Neurenmerenmang
‘Only As Good As His Horse and Dogs’ - Summer grazing
‘Untouched For Quite a Few Years’ - The pack saddle
3.6 Working the Long Paddock – The drover’s cart
   ‘Reliable and Honest’ – William Theodore ‘Swannee’ Smith
   The Pastures Protection Board

3.7 ‘Desperate Efforts’ – The Blowering Dam possum rescue
   ‘Operation Noah’s Ark’ – Dooley Manns and friends
   ‘A Man of Vision’ – Frederick Kinred (1851-1931)
   ‘Blowering Dam’, Dooley Manns, 1968

3.8 Summary

Chapter 4: An Extra Pair of Hands – Stories of women in the Riverina

4.1 Objects and collections – an overview
4.2 Introduction

4.3 The Pioneer’s Daughter – Gertrude Purtell (nee Pabst)
   The Pabst family
   The Purtell family
   ‘Most Fashionable Style’ – The Gertrude Pabst wedding gown
   German wedding traditions
      Federschleissen (feather picking)
      Polterabend (tin kettling)
   All In the Name – Ten Mile Creek, Germanton and Holbrook

4.4 A Life-long Friendship – The story of Heather Kenn (nee Shung)
   ‘We Often Laughed’ – Heather and Dolly, life-long friends
   ‘Taught Her a Lot’ – Working for Thelma Hook
   ‘The Most Disastrous Accident’ – Return to Narrandera
   ‘Her Approaching Marriage’ – A 1940s wedding

4.5 ‘Too Noisy to be a Japanese Girl’ – Mitsue Stockley (nee Iwai)
   ‘I’m Not Hating Anybody’ – Life in WWII Japan
   ‘I Needed Time to Think’ – Leaving Japan
   ‘I Thought I Had Come To Hawaii’ – Coming to Wagga Wagga
   ‘I Tried To Do the Best By Wagga’ – Fitting in

4.6 ‘She Came as Often as She Could’ – Miles (Stella) Franklin
   ‘Over By Morning Tea Time’ – Visiting friends and relations
   ‘To Commemorate the Centenary’ – The Miles Franklin memorial
   ‘The Usual Pioneer Emergencies’ – Miles Franklin in Macedonia

4.7 ‘The Name Just Stuck’ – Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot
   ‘He Called Me Baby’ – A country girlhood
   ‘Tojo Here I Come’ – The Australian Women’s Army Service
   ‘Sadly Missed’ – With Qantas in New Guinea
‘A Mecca for Tumut Expatriates’ – The Eveleigh Hotel
‘The Eveleigh Hotel’, Anonymous, c1960

4.8 ‘Her Great Interest Was in Her Family’ – Mary ‘May’ McLean Patchwork and Quilting Traditions
‘The Tiniest Scrap of Silk’ – Crazy Patchwork

4.9 Summary

Chapter 5: ‘Simple Sure Methods’ – Stories of making do in the Riverina
5.1 Objects and collections – an overview
5.2 Introduction
5.3 ‘True Comforts’ – The Susannah Wilkinson baby cradle
Raising Susannah’s Children
Cradles and Folklore

5.4 ‘To Do a Mother’s Work’ – The Louisa Meacham lace collection
The Meacham Family
‘Glory of our Grandmothers’ – Crochet lace

5.5 ‘She Sat and Sewed’ – The tussock grass hat
The O’Neill Family of Dry Plains
Margaret Casey (nee O’Neill)
The History of Coiled Straw Work

5.6 ‘We Only Had Boards’ – The sallie bush high chair
Amy Hill’s Childhood and Marriage

5.7 ‘A Lot of Clever Planning’ – The homefront during WWII
‘Saving Money Year After Year’ – The use of preserving pans

5.8 ‘It Answered Well’ – The charcoal cool safe
Widgiewa Station
‘Can Be Made By Any Handyman’ – WWII economy

5.9 ‘We All Had One’ – The truck driver’s wagga rug
‘It Was a Good Jumper’ – John Foster remembers
‘Wagga Lily Flour’ – The Murrumbidgee Milling Company

5.10 Summary
Chapter 6: ‘Sturdy Young Scholars’ – Stories of education in the Riverina  

6.1 Objects and collections – an overview  
6.2 Introduction  

6.3 ‘Fitted Up With Desks’ – Stories of Adelong schools  

6.4 ‘Good English Scholars’ – Stories of Milbrulong schools  
Deutsche Sonnabendschule – German school  

6.5 Stitching Obedience – Stories of the Susan Hoad sampler  
History of Samplers  
Berlin Wool Work  
‘From Carcoar to Tumut on Foot’ – The Hoad family  
‘Educating the Rising Generation’ – Schools in Tumut  
‘Restrictions and Ideologies’ – Stories of Samplers  

6.6 ‘Trained and Educated’ – Stories of the Edith Short collection  
Edith Short and Her Family  
‘A Large Number of Children’ – The story of Temora Public School  
‘Their Sphere in the Home’ – Needlework and the school curriculum  
Needlework Examination Schedule c1830-1914 (Austin & Sellick)  
‘Darned Old Socks’ – Pastoral and Agricultural Shows  

6.7 St Clare’s Convent – The Josephite Sisters in Germanton  
‘Favourably known’ – The story of Gordon and Gordon  
‘Made from Ordinary Peanuts’ – Fundraising and peanut dolls  

6.8 ‘A Band of Valiant Women’ – From Ireland to Wagga Wagga  
Inland to Wagga Wagga – The journey  
‘Their Time and Talents’ – The founding of Mt Erin School  
‘That Your Light May Brighter Shine’ – The end of an era  

6.9 ‘A Unique Teaching Aid’ – The Victor Haberecht rolling charts  
Victor Lawrence Haberecht (1905-1963)  
The Teaching Career of Victor Haberecht  
Social Studies, Singing and the British Empire – The rolling charts  

6.10 Summary  

Chapter 7: ‘No Community Untouched’ – Stories of World Wars I & II in the Riverina  

7.1 Objects and collections – an overview  
7.2 Introduction  

viii
7.3 ‘I Have Not Seen Him Since’ – Mabel Lewis (nee Pearce) 384
  ‘He Was Bright and Cheery’ – Private Wilfred Ernest Pearce
  ‘I Left Australia with Him’ – Private Alfred Edmond Pearce
  'Try and Give Something' – Women's magazines and the war effort
  ‘In Her Time of Peril’ – The Union Jack flag

7.4 'Good Colonists' – Germans in the Riverina 395
  ‘Industrious and Well Behaved’ – The Heinecke family of Tumbarumba
  ‘Of Their Loyalty We Have No Doubt’ – Anti-German sentiment in WWI
  ‘Danger and Menace’ – Anti-German sentiment in WWII

7.5 ‘We Rolled Up Our Sleeves’ – The RAAF nursing service of WWII 409
  The Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS)
  The 3MRS (3 Medical Receiving Station) Townsville QLD
  1 RAAF Hospital Wagga Wagga NSW
  ‘Are We Happy Here in Con’ Ward’, Bluey Rose, 1944

7.6 ‘An Indifferent Response’ – The Australian Women’s Land Army 417
  ‘Working In Their Slippers’ – From National Service to AWLA
  ‘The Benefits of a Country Life’ – The AWLA in Batlow
  ‘A Good Deal of Ladder Work’ – Working conditions in Batlow
  'The Best Night's Fun' – Leisure and community events

7.7 Summary 432

Chapter 8: ‘Secure Your Tickets’ – Stories of entertainment in the Riverina 433
8.1 Objects and collections – an overview 433
8.2 Introduction 433

8.3 Long Winter Evenings – Music in German communities 437

8.4 ‘For the Benefit of the Public’ – Entertainment in Adelong 440

8.5 ‘The Family Came, Babies and All’ – The Nutcrackers’ Orchestra 443
  Take Your Partners – Dances, balls and parties
  ‘We Were Really Decent People’ – Stories from the dances
  Nutcrackers’ Orchestra – Members 1943 to 1978

8.6 ‘The Star Artiste’ – Catherine Mary Ryan 453
  ‘The Queen of Irish Song’ – Marie Narelle
  ‘Our Beloved Mother’ – The headstone comes home
8.7 ‘Wagga’s Duchess of Dance’ – Pauline Harvey (nee Kenyon) 461
   ‘An Inspirational Teacher’ – Madge Wallace
   ‘Full of Entertainment for All’ – The City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod
   ‘A Chip Off the Old Block’ – Wagga Wagga eisteddfod during WWII
   ‘The Most Coveted Dancing Trophy’ – The Carabost Cup
   Winners of the Carabost Cup – 1944 to 2008

8.8 ‘Pleasant Hours’ – The Wilna Wattle Debating Society 477
   ‘Above Monetary Value’ – Creating the Wilna Wattle Debating Club
   ‘A Very Dainty Supper’ – The 10th anniversary reunion 1933
   ‘The Battle of Tongues’ – Debating and drama
   ‘A Farce in One Act’ – Lectures and dramatic productions

8.9 ‘Who’ll Take a Glove?’ – The Jimmy Sharman tent boxing troupe 486
   ‘The Little Chinese’ – Rud Kee
   Leslie ‘Bronco’ Burns

8.10 Summary 495

Part 3 – Conclusion: Stories and more stories 496

Introduction 496
   Thesis Summary
   Findings
      1. Object status and significance
      2. Stories and storytellers
      3. Thematic connections and crossovers
   Contribution to Knowledge
   Further Application of Research
   Summary 504

Bibliography 505

Acknowledgements 525

Appendices 527
   Appendix I: List of Images
   Appendix II: Significance
   Appendix III: List of Other Riverina Museums
   Appendix IV: Statement of Significance – Mennecke bell
   Appendix V: Questionnaire
   Appendix VI: List of Interviews
Chattering Voices: Activating Stories in Riverina Museum Collections
Submission to Charles Sturt University for Doctor of Philosophy

3.8 ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of museum objects and collections as mnemonics in storytelling. The thesis locates the place of local history, and in particular oral history and story-telling, within a broader historiography. Objects and collections dating from the mid 19th century to the late 20th century from fourteen Riverina museums were examined and, using ‘significance’ criteria, object files were established. These files collated existing images, stories and information already gathered by the museums and my research has contributed further material from community members, and ‘local studies collections’ of Riverina libraries and archives. Sources examined included published and un-published local histories, newspapers, women’s magazines, oral histories, written field interviews and questionnaires. The themes of agriculture, commerce, transport, women, making do, education, World Wars I and II, and entertainment were used to explore the significant link between the stories and objects. All of the objects examined were found to offer significant insight into the social and cultural history of the Riverina.

The primary aim of this research is to preserve the stories gathered and reconnect them to their relevant objects and collections. Many of the most revealing and poignant stories, related to these objects and collections, were obtained from ephemeral sources including photographic material, trade catalogues, theatre programmes and museum brochures. As the research process developed, it became apparent that greater visibility and coherence was given to previously unaccessed stories, therefore adding depth to the already existing significance of these objects and collections.

By examining these artifacts within the context of their associated stories, the importance of micro-narratives within the dialogue of local history has been exposed. This research material fills a gap in previously under-researched fields of study in Australia in the areas of traditional crafts and rural technologies, including embroidery, quiltmaking, riverboat operation and millet broom making, which have either disappeared or are rapidly declining. An outcome of this investigation is to contribute new research material for use by professionals, volunteers and visitors in regional museums in the Riverina. Further audiences for this research are scholars in the areas of social/cultural history, local history, textiles, graphic design, rural and media studies.

The conclusions drawn from this research found that while these objects and collections are valued as heritage items, it is the accompanying stories and the sources of those stories which are of paramount importance to both the museums involved and the wider community. While the examination of objects and collections under thematic headings has put into action a process of historic and cultural distillation, reflecting the local and regional history of the Riverina, this process has the potential to act as a model for other regional museums in Australia.
Part 1 - Chattering Voices: Activating Stories in Riverina Museum Collections

Chattering Voices: Introduction

Overview – The value of regional collections

The focus of this research is on the importance of the stories that lie behind the objects and collections in regional museums, and the reconnection of museum objects to their related narratives. The research into finding and documenting stories was carried out in a regional area called the Riverina in New South Wales, Australia and involved 14 museums across the region (See Figs. i, ii and iii). Further research explored a theoretical framework that placed value on such local histories in the context of broader cultural studies.

The Riverina is ‘in its broadest sense … the land bounded by the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers: the Riverine slopes and plains.’1 Similar collections, as in the Riverina, are spread across Australia and, like their Riverina counterparts, most represent a timeline of non-Indigenous2 settlement in these regions, as a result of post-colonial contact. Boyup Brook in the south-west of Western Australia, Kingaroy in Queensland, Echuca in Victoria and Young in NSW, all have museums with eclectic collections similar to those of Riverina museums which I have visited. As Australian academic and historian Christopher Healy notes, they place emphasis on local places, events and key industries.3 The tiny town of Silverton in the far west of NSW has another example of such a collection, which is housed in the old court house and gaol building. In his essay ‘Histories and Collecting: Museums, Objects and Memories’, Healy elaborates on the unique qualities of these often overlooked regional collections, using Silverton as a reference point:

2 Many of these regional museum collections do hold Indigenous artifacts, for example: stone axe heads and spear tips, carrying vessels and bark canoes. For the purpose of this research, Indigenous objects have not been included as the author considers these objects to be outside her field of expertise.
As I wandered through the maze of rooms, objects seemed to be spilling into the courtyards, pressing at the windows, falling off the tables. At one point I stood before a glass cabinet that contained mine relics, railways memorabilia and women’s clothing. The combination of these objects in the one display case was both familiar and bizarre. Familiar in that similarly anarchic displays can be found in many country towns throughout Australia … But the assemblage in that glass case … was bizarre; it did not feel like it belonged in a late twentieth-century museum … The artifacts were not ordered by chronological sequence or theme. Many were not labelled and, more often than not, the objects did not follow a theme or ‘teach’ the visitor anything in particular … It seemed as if the objects were meant to invoke associations, to trigger memories, to generate questions.4

It can also be argued that museum objects not only ‘trigger memories’, as Healy has pointed out, but also act as triggers for storytelling, as memories and storytelling are intrinsically linked together. If we read objects as images, this observation is supported by Healy, who points out that ‘we know that mnemonics has long been governed by interlocking regimes of training in the ordering of memory, image and language’.5 Healy then provides further support for this statement by explaining:

[a] great deal of how we think about memory is articulated in terms that are overwhelmingly social and certainly historically specific … memory as necessarily narrative … memory as indispensable for communication.6

It was this overpowering sense of the object in the role of mnemonic and the resulting memories as stories that became the focus for this body of research.

The reconnection of those stories and objects, via the storytellers, was focused primarily around people7 aged over sixty years. These older members of the community are referred to by Paula Hamilton as ‘living treasures’.8 Hamilton then goes on to say that ‘society increasingly values those who remain to tell the stories of their past experiences’,9 but this positive attitude is not shared by all, with Gwyn Prins reminding us that ‘most professional historians – are generally pretty sceptical about the value of oral sources in reconstructing

---

5 Ibid. p. 36.
6 Ibid.
7 Indigenous storytellers were not canvassed, except for the ‘Bronco Burns’ story in Chapter 8. This was not meant as a denial of the historic and cultural status of the Indigenous people of the Riverina, but rather an ethical stance by the author. Descended from an Irish-Anglo background, the author believed that the Indigenous stories should be researched by and written from an Indigenous perspective.
9 Ibid.
the past’. Prins cites the historian A. J. P. Taylor, who declares that ‘[i]n this matter, I am an almost total sceptic … old men drooling about their youth? No!’ Prins elaborates further on the perceived value of oral history sources by observing that:

> In both the sympathetic and hostile cases, the basic Rankean test is applied. Under the Rankean hierarchy of date, when official, written sources are available, they are to be preferred. Where they are not, one has to put up with second best, filling one’s bucket further away from the pure source of official text. Oral data are, in these terms, without doubt, second best or worse, so their role is to facilitate second-best histories about communities with poor sources.

As Prins points out ‘oral history best reconstructs the minute particulars of the lives of ordinary people’ and personal reminiscences, ‘can bring … freshness and a wealth of detail which is not otherwise to be found’.

In reality however, it was to be a combination of objects, official texts, unofficial texts, oral histories and both oral and written reminiscences that would reconstruct the ‘minute particulars of the lives of ordinary people’ in the Riverina. My engagement with and the search for those ‘minute particulars’ began in 2002 at a series of ‘Significance’ workshops held in the Riverina, for both professional museum staff and volunteers. (See page 9)

Fig. i. lists the Riverina museums and collections that I investigated in this research. I selected these museums as a continuation of my appointed role as Significance Officer with the Museum of the Riverina.

---

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid. p. 121.
13 Ibid. p. 138.
14 Ibid. p. 139.
15 Ibid. p. 138.
Research Questions

In the context of regional museum practice it was the issues of ‘disconnection’ between objects and their stories, and the ‘inaccessibility’ of those stories, which drove the research. These issues raised the following questions:

1. What are the relationships between the objects and the stories?
2. How important are the stories to museums?

These concerns were addressed during and directly after the 2002 Riverina Significance Workshops in which I participated. While the Russell and Winkworth\(^{16}\) publication used in those workshops remains as a seminal text for both professionals and volunteers in Australian museums, the future of Significance applications in regional museums remains largely dependent upon the input of a hard-working core of elderly volunteers. Without a certain level of professional guidance the continuity of ‘Significance’ and by default, the collating of object and collection related stories remains tenuous.

My research is intended to fill the dual needs of continuing the process of uncovering and gathering these stories while offering the material as a resource for other researchers in regional museums, both to provide further information and insights into objects and collections, and to contribute to assessments of their significance.

**Fig. i: Museums and Objects/Collections Discussed in Thesis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Object/ Collection</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batlow Historical Society Museum</td>
<td>Batlow NSW</td>
<td>The Australian Women’s Land Army collection</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum</td>
<td>Coolamon NSW</td>
<td>RAAF nurse’s uniform, Mabel Lewis collection</td>
<td>409, 384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gundagai Historical Museum</td>
<td>Gundagai NSW</td>
<td>May McLean collection, Drover’s cart, Nutcrackers Band</td>
<td>262, 188,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bass drum, Tallow vat</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jindera Pioneer Museum</td>
<td>Jindera NSW</td>
<td>Tenor horn, Bridal veil, Kaiser Wilhelm II print, Meat</td>
<td>437, 217,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mincer</td>
<td>403, 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockhart Historical Society Museum</td>
<td>Lockhart NSW</td>
<td>Cow horn funnels</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Erin Archives</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga NSW</td>
<td>Beleek china tea set, Holy card</td>
<td>368, 370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum of the Riverina</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga NSW</td>
<td>Mitsue Stockley collection, Pauline Harvey collection</td>
<td>230, 461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Haberecht collection, Wagga Lily flour bag apron</td>
<td>375, 324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum</td>
<td>Narrandera 17 NSW</td>
<td>Charcoal cool safe, <em>PS Wagga Wagga</em> log books, River</td>
<td>310, 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>charts</td>
<td>157, 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shung wedding gown, Watering can, National cash register</td>
<td>109, 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Womens Hut</td>
<td>Tumbarumba NSW</td>
<td>Sallie bush high chair, Truck driver’s wagga rug, Tussock</td>
<td>296, 317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>grass hat</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temora Rural Museum</td>
<td>Temora NSW</td>
<td>Louisa Meacham collection, Short sampler collection,</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marie Narelle</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 19th and early 20th century records have Narrandera spelt without the ‘double r’, i.e. Narandera.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tumbarumba Museum</td>
<td>Tumbarumba NSW</td>
<td>Pack saddle</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Union Jack flag</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumut and District Historical Museum</td>
<td>Tumut NSW</td>
<td>Miles Franklin collection</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elliot collection</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wilkinson baby cradle</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Susan Hoad sampler</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tobacco collection</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Millet thresher</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Butter factory collection</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Broom clamp</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possum rescue boat</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up To Date Store/ Garth Jones Collection</td>
<td>Coolamon NSW</td>
<td>Lamson cash carrier (UTD Store)</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chock and log fence (GJC)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post and rail fence (GJC)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sunshine brand farm gate (GJC)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Windmill (GJC)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bennett wool wagon (GJC)</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>J. T. Close wagon (GJC)</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolpack Inn Museum</td>
<td>Holbrook NSW</td>
<td>Peanut dolls</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pabst wedding gown</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. ii: Map of Australia showing NSW and Riverina
(Artist: Christina Reid)
Fig. iii: Riverina place names
(Artist: Christina Reid)

1. Wagga Wagga
2. Albury
3. Temora
4. Narrandera
5. Hay
6. Griffith
7. Leeton
8. Gundagai
9. Tumut
10. Tumbarumba
11. Batlow
12. Adelong
13. Coolamon
14. Junee
15. Lockhart
16. Milbrulong
17. Mangoplah
18. Gumly Gumly
19. Holbrook
20. Henty
21. Gerogery
22. Jindera
23. Walla Walla
24. Trungley Hall
25. Illabo
26. Sebastapol
27. Combaning
28. Table Top
29. Talbingo
30. Kiandra
31. Union Jack
32. Marrar Vale
33. Mundaroo
34. Lacmalac
35. McPherson’s Plains
36. Dry Plains
37. Jerilderie
‘Significance’: The Riverina Workshops

*Overview*

For those working in the Museum of the Riverina in Wagga Wagga and many of the community museums included in its outreach programs, a major shift in thinking and practice occurred through their involvement in a series of workshops in 2002. The text provided, written by Rosalind Russell and Kylie Winkworth, *Significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*,18 was to play a seminal role for those people involved in the assessment and care of these museum collections. The primary set of significance criteria, that consider historic, aesthetic, and social values, was used, together with a comparative analysis of provenance, rarity, representativeness, condition and integrity.19 (See Appendix II)

The ‘Significance workshops’ were held in Hay, Griffith and Tumut and involved both volunteers and employed staff from museums across the Riverina, including myself (Significance Officer 2002-2004). From the very beginning, the workshops challenged all the participants to look beyond the monetary value of collection items and focus instead on any narratives associated with the objects, which might be activated as a result of applying a particular research process to understanding and valuing them.

Representatives from each museum present at the workshops were asked to bring with them an object which had, in their estimates, the potential to meet the criteria necessary to be deemed a ‘significant’ object. The range of artifacts was both diverse and astonishing. They included a carrot harvester from the Griffith Pioneer Park Museum, a bullock bell from the Museum of the Riverina and a bride doll in a hand-made bridal ensemble from the Hay Gaol Museum. These objects became the catalyst for further assessment and research of Riverina museum objects.

---

19 Ibid. p. 20.
The Riverina 100 Objects of Significance Project.

Following on the success of those initial Significance workshops in 2002, the decision was made by the Manager of the Museum of the Riverina to apply for funding from the Arts NSW Museum Program to assess and research more objects held in these same collections (see page 4). It was planned not only to research and write statements of significance for a total of one hundred\textsuperscript{20} objects/collections, but also to make the research material available in a print based format for each museum involved and place the information gathered on a website. The website\textsuperscript{21} was proposed to promote each museum involved in the project and highlight the significant objects in their collections. It was also hoped that the website would assist in the generation of cultural tourism in the Riverina, i.e. the creation of a “Riverina Museum Trail”.

The \textit{Riverina 100 Objects of Significance Project} involved museums which came under the outreach umbrella of the Regional Museum Officer, based at the Museum of the Riverina in Wagga Wagga. The museums involved were: Shear Outback Museum, Hay, Hay Gaol Museum; Hay War Memorial High School Museum; Hay POW and Internment Camp Interpretation Centre; Bishop’s Lodge Heritage House and Rose Garden, Hay; Griffith Pioneer Park Museum; Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera; Up To Date Store/Garth Jones Collection, Coolamon; Coolamon RSL Museum; Lockhart Green’s Gunyah Museum; Tumut Historical Society Museum; Gundagai Historical Museum; Junee and District Historical Museum; Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba; Tumbarumba Historical Museum; Batlow Historical Society Museum; Adelong Alive Museum; Temora Rural Museum; Woolpack Inn Museum, Holbrook; and Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga.

Researchers involved in this project included paid, professional museum staff (curators, research assistants and a significance officer) and unpaid volunteers. It must be noted however, that all the unpaid volunteers involved in the writing of the statements of significance were equipped with a high level of research and writing skills and included school teachers, librarians and local historians. A plethora of local knowledge was

\textsuperscript{20} The figure of 100 objects was based on a wages and time breakdown of the funding from Arts NSW.
\textsuperscript{21} Further funding was not gained for the creation of the website.
uncovered during this project, with members of the community, family historians and local studies librarians added to the list of contacts and resources.

This project and the subsequent writing of one hundred statements of significance has served to uncover many ‘hidden treasures’ in all the museums involved, with some of the most prosaic objects being the most highly significant. The objects identified covered a diverse and often surprising range of items, such as the row-boat used to rescue possums from the rising waters of the newly constructed Blowering Dam, held in the Tumut Historical Society Museum collection. One of the unexpected by-products of this project was the sense of community which developed between all the museums involved. From the initial Significance workshops, facilitated by Kylie Winkworth, a knowledge base grew, which was added to along the way. A high level of interest was shown in the progress of research at all museums and the exchange of information among those involved was a common occurrence. The core task of the project, identifying and researching one hundred objects and writing an accompanying statement of significance was completed in 2004.

‘German Towns German Stories’ - Significant German Histories in the Riverina

From the careful scrutiny of the Riverina 100 Objects of Significance objects and collections in Riverina museums, definite themes were uncovered. Agriculture, rural industries, transport, leisure and recreation were recognizable themes, with one of the most dominant themes being that of migration. Chinese, Anglo-Saxon, Italian and German migration stories were all touched upon in many statements of significance written during the Riverina 100 Objects of Significance Project.

The history of German migration to the Riverina stood out as a contender for a further focused study and at the end of 2004 collaboration between the NSW Migration Heritage Centre and the Museum of the Riverina saw the beginning of the German Towns German Stories project. This thematic study concentrated on the history of the German communities of the Eastern Riverina. The identification of significant museum objects and the writing of statements of significance once again played an integral role in the interpretation of this study, with twenty objects/collections being the desired target. I was appointed as the
researcher and writer for the project, with editorial assistance from John Petersen and Stephen Thompson, who were based at the NSW Migration Heritage Centre. At the completion of the Riverina 100 Objects of Significance Project, several objects/collections had already been identified as having strong connections to German migration in the Riverina. On closer scrutiny it was discovered that other objects, with the inclusion of additional research material, also had the potential to be added to the list.

Museums already surveyed in the Riverina 100 Objects of Significance Project were revisited, and with the addition of the Jindera Museum and collections, were examined from the perspective of German migration and settlement in the Riverina. There were some surprising finds. Museum staff and volunteers, academics, librarians and archivists all played a role, but it was to be the descendents of German migrants themselves, who provided much of the most pertinent and personal information. As well, museums, war memorials, cemeteries, churches, farms, schools, country stores and private homes all held remnants of these largely untold narratives. The objects and the stories were likened to layers of a cake by John Petersen from the NSW Migration Heritage Centre. The hundreds of images gathered at the time were seen by Petersen to be ‘the icing on the cake’.22

Voices: The significance of storytelling

Overview

In this section I have explained the shift of focus from significance-focused research to story-focused research. Many of the objects and collections included in the significance-focused projects conducted in the Riverina from 2002 to 2005 were themselves ‘significant’ as artifacts. As the research progressed however, it was clear that their accompanying stories also stood out as being historically and culturally important. Some of the more mundane objects became the mnemonic for the most powerful and significant stories.

---

The Bell and the Bride - Significant objects, significant stories.

For that first Significance workshop in 2002, it was suggested that we bring with us an object of ‘significance’ from the collection of the Museum of the Riverina in Wagga Wagga, NSW. Curator, Michelle Maddison and I decided that the Menneke bullock bell (See Appendix IV) would, at the very least, fit within the primary significance criteria of historic and social, and the comparative significance criteria of provenance, rarity, condition and interpretive potential. The layout for this particular statement of significance was to be used as a model for those statements which I would compile over the next two years. We then prepared for a three-hour road journey to Hay. Since that time, the story of that journey has often been repeated to friends and colleagues, in particular the story of events which took place at the workshop.

My colleague and I from the Museum of the Riverina both eagerly scanned the objects on display. We congratulated each other in whispers on our ‘interesting’ choice of object, for among the various objects other participants had selected lay a circa 1960s vinyl doll dressed in an obviously home-made bridal outfit. This doll, we were told, was from the collection of the Hay Gaol Museum. Was this the best object they could offer, we asked each other in superior undertones? Our self-satisfaction however, very shortly turned to amazement and embarrassment as we listened to the ‘story’ of the doll.
During the 1960s and 1970s, the former Hay gaol operated as an annexe of the Parramatta Girls Home. The girls, who were sent to the ‘Institution for Girls Hay’, were considered by the authorities to be chronic trouble makers, who constantly flouted the strict levels of discipline that were applied at Parramatta. Due to its climate and isolation, Hay was the equivalent of the ‘Siberian salt mines’. Incarceration at Hay was designed to ultimately subdue and discipline these girls, thereby making the likelihood of further sentencing to Hay appear as unappealing as possible.

The girls existed within a strict regime of hard physical work including kitchen and laundry work, digging garden beds and constructing cement pathways. Demoralising regulations such as restrictions on communication and physical contact with each other were also imposed. Inclusion in sewing and knitting classes was the incentive offered for good behaviour, with entry of work in the annual Hay Show the ultimate reward.

The maker of the doll’s clothing was a participant in these sewing classes and it was the choice of this unknown girl to dress the doll as a bride, with the doll and the materials used supplied by Effie Ray, a participant in the workshop and an employee at the gaol at the time of the making. The poignancy of the choice of ‘bride’ was highlighted when we were told that this girl was not only a repeat offender, with several spells at Hay on her record, but also a victim of physical and sexual abuse suffered at the hands of various male relatives. Life at Hay, we were told by Effie Ray, was luxury compared to this girl’s domestic environment.

How wrong our initial reading of the bride doll and how powerful was Effie Ray’s retelling of the story:

The girls, they were getting things prepared for the show and this particular girl I took a great interest in her because [of] the beautiful sewing she did, just with these very ordinary things that they had to wear in the institution. … And she wanted to do a bride’s dress and … I said I’d bring her a doll so she could make it. So I lent her my daughter’s doll. … And anyway I took the doll up and she began

---

23 The site of the Parramatta Girls Home in Sydney NSW was in continuous use for the confinement of females from 1886. It operated as a NSW Government welfare institution for girls aged between 12 and 18 years. In 1961 an annex was established at the former Hay NSW gaol. It was known as the ’Institution for Girls Hay’ and was intended for girls who would not obey the strict discipline of Parramatta Girls Home. Parramatta Girls Home and the Institution for Girls Hay were closed in July 1974.
to make the dress and so everyday I was like her, I was interested in what she’d done and how she’d done it.24

Perhaps it is more accurate to say ‘stories’, for what became apparent before the end of that workshop was the capacity of one object to act as a focus for many stories including that of the unknown maker, the place of the making, the reasons for the making and the supplier of the doll and materials.

Fig. v: Bride doll, maker unknown, c1960s
Collection of Hay Gaol Museum (Photo: J. Japp)

Stories linked to Effie Ray and the former young inmates of the Hay Gaol flow into the 21st century. Through her role as a volunteer at the Hay Gaol Museum the stories of the girls and the making of the doll’s bridal outfit have been retold many times to visitors, many among them who were former inmates and their families. For Effie Ray, the retelling of those stories never diminishes in emotional intensity. ‘I always did my best for the girls and I still pray for those girls every night’,25 she stated in a 2002 interview.

What I learned at that first Significance workshop is still used as a reference point when introducing people to the objects and the stories which have followed. It has had a lasting effect on my choice of objects discussed and most importantly, how subsequent stories might be uncovered and interpreted.

25 Ibid.
The story of the bride doll has underlined that although the object may or may not be aesthetically significant, it is the stories themselves which resonate most strongly for me. But where did this predilection for stories and storytelling begin? Coming from a predominantly Irish ancestry, stories and storytelling have played an important role in family gatherings for as long as I can remember. Apart from the stories that were read to me, and by me, from an early age, it was the ‘family stories’ that held the strongest appeal. Both my maternal and paternal grandmothers and my great uncle always had a variety of stories to tell.

These stories were often told around a kitchen table and were accompanied by, depending on the storyteller, certain activities and objects. My maternal grandmother for instance could be relied upon to launch into some of the most interesting family tales while making cakes or scones. Certain pieces of kitchenware, which I have inherited from her, still have the capacity to evoke not only those domestic activities, but her stories. Stories told by my paternal grandmother on the other hand, were generally accompanied by a deck of cards, as she played endless games of Patience.
Again, memories of my great uncle Oliver’s stories centre round a table. This was the venue for his Saturday afternoon horse racing rituals. The smell of Tally-Ho brand tobacco and the tinny squawk of his transistor radio were always accompanied by a succession of stories. They were from his time in the Light Horse during WWI, as a police constable in the inner suburbs of Sydney in the 1920s and 1930s and from his years spent in the bush as a share farmer. Certain of his stories, usually the most outrageous ones, were repeated constantly at the request of my cousins and me. This element of outrageousness or exaggeration in storytelling, explains Katherine Perry, is interpreted by historian Janis Wilton as conveying to ‘the listener how important an idea or belief is to the speaker’.26 Those stories are still repeated at family gatherings. Unfortunately, those family stories were never recorded to audio tape and their survival now depends on younger members of my family recording them, either as oral histories or written histories, to remain as ‘a valuable source of social history’.27

The older members of my family, including my parents, were instinctive storytellers. That same storyteller’s mantle has now been passed on to my generation and we also delight in telling those tall tales and adding new ones of our own. From the vantage point of over sixty years it can be seen that the rituals of storytelling or ‘remembering’ are just as important, if not more so, to the senior members of our society, as to the children. As Janis Wilton stresses, ‘these memories offer the vital link to worlds and lifestyles at risk of disappearing as older generations die.’28

The Captain, the Poet and the Trumpet Player - Uncovering the stories

It can be argued that certain people in our society are more likely to be cast in the role of storytellers. But who are those storytellers and where can they be found? In relation to this research, the storytellers were accessed primarily through their associations with local museums or through connections to me. When approached, they were quite often unaware

27 Ibid. p. 1.
of their status as storytellers. As a demographic, they were generally over the age of sixty, of Anglo-Celtic\textsuperscript{29} background, retirees and both male and female. During their pre-retirement days they had worked as mechanics, farmers, shop assistants, dancers, nurses, housewives, stock and station agents, school teachers, dry cleaners and secretaries and they all had ‘stories to tell’ about the chosen museum objects.

Just as in my recollections of childhood and family storytelling, most of these storytellers were at their very best in the familiar surroundings of their own homes. Their memories and the subsequent storylines came alive around a kitchen table and were always accompanied by a pot of tea and a plate of cakes or home baked biscuits. These storytellers inevitably began their discussions with ‘I really don’t know very much’, but with some gentle persuasion, the tales would be forthcoming. The storytelling, in relation to whatever object or collection it referred to, was rarely straightforward. It was almost as if the memories and the related information had to be filtered through a series of lateral stories, to bring into focus the central theme.

Norm Kelhear, for example, took me on a detailed family history ramble before focusing on the specific information about his grandfather, Captain Thomas Bynon, who had skippered the river steamer \textit{PS Wagga Wagga} from the 1880s until 1911 (See Chapter 3). Rather than being a distraction, this highlighted the Bynon family’s connections to the commercial history of Narrandera and most importantly, the need to re-engage memories of his grandfather through related family stories.

\textbf{Fig. vii: Norman Kelhear, Narrandera, 2002}
\textit{(Photo: A. Brown)}

Norm was delighted to reminisce about his family, including his maternal grandfather, Captain Thomas Bynon, the last skipper of the paddle steamer \textit{PS Wagga Wagga}.

\textsuperscript{29} The exception to this was Mitsue Stockley, of Japanese origin.
This same pattern of remembering and storytelling through an initial monologue of family history was not uncommon. Storytellers, including Sheila Garner (Chapter 4), Oliver Barnes (Chapter 2), Pat Jackson and Amy Lewis (Chapter 7), all focused their initial storytelling on recounting details of family history, which ultimately led to the stories associated with their respective object or collection. It seemed that, in these instances, the sharing of family history acted as a precursor to what Christopher Healy described as:

"[T]he ordering of memory, image and language … memory as crucial to identity; memory as necessarily narrative; memory as an expression of continuity in the world; memory as indispensable for communication."

Other storytellers had no apparent need to introduce a sub-story of family history and the object was instantly identified as the mnemonic or the aid to their remembering. For Rolf Bridle (portable millet thresher), Pauline Harvey (dancing costume), Barry Luff (bass drum), Norman Bradley (pack saddle), Mitsue Stockley (kimono) and Jenny Newbound (rolling charts), there was an immediate connection between their stories and the object.

Barry Luff retold stories connected to his time spent as a trumpet player with the Gundagai Nutcrackers’ Band.

Why was there a difference in the initial response to the storytelling between these two groups: the lateral progression to remembering and the instant reconnection to

---

remembering? The difference lies perhaps in the ‘personal connection’ between the storyteller and the object. With the first group, the retelling of family histories enabled them to ‘rebuild a memory’ of the object through a person or place or event, because they had never been personally attached to, or acquainted with the object. For the second group, ‘rebuilding a memory’ was unnecessary as they had all been either owners of these objects, or had worked with the object in question.

Summary

Whether the stories are generated from a personal response between the storyteller and the object or from a ‘rebuilding’ of memories connected to the object, there appears to be no overall difference in the intensity, sincerity and the relevance between the two groups.

What I decided was of paramount importance was to make an accessible record of these stories, so that they may be ‘heard’ by a wider audience. This same opinion is shared by Brenda Niccol, the publisher of *Murrumbidgee Memories and Riverina Reminiscences*, and daughter of the author Hilda Freeman, who states in the preface to this publication, ‘I feel that the result of her long labours should not lie gathering dust and disintegrating in some dark drawer.’

These previously unpublished stories will then sit alongside publications also referred to in this research by other published Riverina writers and poets including Garth Jones, Jack McInnes, Harry Hill, Norman Bradley, Hilda Freeman, Margaret Carnegie, Dame Mary Gilmore, John O’Brien, Bill Gammage, Joan Austin Palmer, Sherry Morris, Steve O’Halloran, Catherine and Ron Frew, Mavis Gaff-Smith and musician/songwriter Grant Luhrs.

---

32 Grant Luhr’s album *Songs of the Riverina* includes the tracks ‘Don’t Call Wagga Wagga Wagga’, The South West Mail’, ‘The Land Army Song’ and ‘The Whaler’s Song’.
Foundations of Storytelling: Research methodology

Overview

Different research methods were used to gather and investigate the information including oral history interviews and written field interviews, (all conducted under CSU ethics approval), questionnaires, letters, emails, unpublished sources, photograph albums and literature searches, with many of the sources falling into the category of the ephemeral or ‘non-traditional’. Trade and advertising catalogues, performance programmes, museum brochures and Australian women’s magazines were among the most valuable sources.

Four outstanding points emerged from the process of collecting these object related stories:
1) The wide variety of sources for these stories
2) The complexity of the storytelling and the presence of micro-narratives
3) The importance of these stories to the communities involved
4) The place of these stories within a local history genre.

These four points have all been discussed within a qualitative research framework, through which, Jennifer Mason points out:

We can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate.33

At all times the search for material was undertaken in a non-linear fashion and at this juncture, it must be remembered that these ‘stories’ were generated from museum objects and were drawn from and intended for members of the wider community, rather than just professional historians and academics. Paula Hamilton and Paul Ashton remind us that ‘many Australians develop a passion for the past … from public institutions such as museums’.34

Histories, Near and Far: Local voices, wide perspectives

The local history sections of the Narrandera, Tumut, Temora and Gundagai libraries, and the Mt Erin Archives, were to prove invaluable. As Linda Allery, Manager of the City of Playford Local and Family History Service in South Australia points out, ‘those who work in the local history field know the importance of the collections – have seen the wonders they hold’35, and the Riverina local history collections matched these expectations. Published sources, including official histories, social histories, family histories, regional histories, local histories and newspapers (microfilm) were all sourced from these Riverina libraries. Larger lending institutes, including Charles Sturt University (CSU) Library,36 Charles Sturt University (CSU) Riverina Regional Archives, the Agricultural Research Institute Library, the Riverina Regional Library, the National Archives (Canberra), the National Library of Australia, the Powerhouse Museum Research Library, the NSW State Library and the Maritime Heritage Centre of NSW, added to the growing body of research material. Unexpected ‘personal’ incidents occurred at the Charles Sturt University Library in Wagga Wagga and the National Archives in Canberra, which brought about extra information for the stories of German farmers, German schools and WWI German internment. Margaret Hill,37 for example, offered me family photographs and a field trip to her father’s property, Quandong Park, at Milbrulong, while Graham Wencke38 in Canberra offered me a copy of his unpublished research paper.

Oral Histories: Local voices, local experiences

In the case of oral history interviews and field interviews, the pattern of searching generally revolved around the personal schedules of interviewees and the availability of volunteers at the various museums involved. Consideration was always given to the opening hours of the museums and the advanced age of many of the interviewees. Where possible, visits to interviewees, museums, libraries, and associated field trips to historic sites were organised

36 CSU Library – Wagga Wagga, Albury-Wodonga and Bathurst campuses.
37 Margaret Hill is employed as an acquisitions librarian at Charles Sturt University Library, Wagga Wagga Campus.
38 Graham Wencke is employed as a librarian at the Australian National Archives, Canberra ACT.
‘geographically’. For example, Lockhart, Milbrulong, Jindera, Walla Walla and Holbrook would be grouped together as a day trip. Gundagai, Adelong and Tumut were also grouped together, as were the Tumbarumba Museum and the Pioneer Women’s Hut at Glenroy, five kilometers west of Tumbarumba.

Multiple road trips were made to these locations, with patience and perseverance becoming bywords during these visits. Interviews were conducted either at the local museum or the homes of the interviewees, and my family connection to many of these localities proved invaluable in establishing a rapport with both those people interviewed and the museum volunteers.

More often than not, the process of interviewing set in motion a ‘chain reaction’ of related names, places and events relating to both the targeted objects and to other objects in the same collection, and as sociologist and oral historian Paul Thompson observes, they ‘will provide, too, a means of discovering written documents and photographs which would not have otherwise been traced’.39 For example, not only did the interview with Barry Luff in Gundagai disclose information about the Nutcrackers’ Band bass drum, but it also unearthed a wealth of unpublished documents, photographs and paper-based ephemera. The interview with Barry Luff also led me to Joe Reardon, who was subsequently interviewed for the ‘Swannee’ Smith drover’s cart.

In Narrandera, Mervyn Shung provided information on the Chinese market gardeners and contact details for Dolly Williamson (the Heather Shung wedding gown), while Alexander ‘Nugget’ Waller not only told me stories of the charcoal cool safe, but also provided the contact details for Ted Kirk who offered information on S. Richards & Co. in Narrandera. Roy Wade, a volunteer at the museum in Narrandera, provided contact details for Norm Kelhear, the grandson of Captain Bynon of the PS Wagga Wagga, as well as Bill Choy, the last remaining Chinese business owner in Narrandera.

The idea for the questionnaire on wagons and farm gates came about after a guided tour and floor talk at the Garth Jones collection in Coolamon. I had been invited as ‘tour guide’ and

‘guest speaker’ for ‘The Canola Adventurers Group’, most of them retired farmers living in Coolamon. While I had been invited to attend as the ‘museum professional’, their knowledge of and engagement with the objects in the collection far outweighed my own. The resulting questionnaire (See Appendix V) added other voices to the stories of wagons and farm gates, providing historical weight to the information already given by Garth Jones. Friends and family were also drawn into the search for material, with subsequent interviews and emails providing personal and contemporary sources. Ethics clearance for all interviews was gained from the Charles Sturt University Ethics in Human Research Committee, with all research material gathered under Approval/Protocol Number 2004/090.

**Yarns, Myths and Pictures: The lesser known stories**

Unpublished sources, including local and family histories, letters and poems added to the diversity of the research material. They articulated hidden or seldom heard stories, including the story of RAAF nurse Alma Pearse, the Blowering Dam possum rescue, and the story of the Nutcrackers Band, and Bebe Elliot and the Eveleigh Hotel. The notion of mythmaking was also explored in the stories of the river charts (Chapter 3) and the tallow vat (Chapter 1), with published popular history and literary sources providing the framework for these particular discussions. Women’s magazines from around 1915 to the 1940s contributed another body of ‘non-traditional’ material, activating the stories of women and girls in the domestic realm and during both WWI and WWII. Photographic material, theatrical programs, product catalogues, advertising images, headstones and holy cards were also examined and played a role in adding to the diversity of the resources accessed.

![Fig. ix: Wilna Wattle concert programme, 1933](Photo: A. Brown)
Summary

The research for this thesis has presented an opportunity to work with, and inter-weave stories from, a large and diverse range of sources. By addressing such an eclectic and at times ephemeral body of research material it has been possible to articulate, document and augment rarely heard stories. The value and use of these ‘non-traditional’ sources has been discussed by academics including E. P. Thompson (1963), Peter Bourke (2001), Jim Sharpe (2001), Paul Thompson (2000), Grace Cochrane (1997), John Rickard (1988) and John Tosh (2002).

As Paul Thompson points out:

The more personal, local, and unofficial a document, the less likely it was to survive … This has remained true even after the establishment of local record offices … but of the innumerable postcards, letters, diaries and ephemera of working class men and women … very little has been preserved anywhere. 40

These stories occupy a largely unheard and inaccessible position in Riverina history. Their re-activation and re-connection to their relevant museum objects and to the wider community is of immediate and primary importance in contributing to information about these objects, and to existing local histories.

Other Voices – Theoretical framework and literature review

In researching the stories that lie behind objects in the collections of museums in the Riverina region, it became clear that it was necessary to investigate the value that was placed on memories, anecdotes and stories, in the compilation of histories. A number of authors have written about this issue from their own research experiences, acknowledging the qualitative value of local information which may or may not be considered unreliable in a more quantitative measure.

This section will consider the process of gathering stories from oral accounts and existing documentation for this particular research project, in the context of comments, theories and

findings of other authors and historians who discuss the relative contribution of similar material in the compilation of histories. Among these authors, two key concept groups have been identified. They are: the role of objects in relation to memories, and the value of narratives as sources.

This review of their literature is integrated, through examples of content, into the theoretical and organisational framework of my research.

**Overview**

The Riverina museums hold objects and collections that are waiting to be reconnected to their stories; these museum collections are triggers for local stories and memories. But why, and how, are the stories that are told about them, important elements in compiling their histories? As academic and writer Chris Healy explains, many of these regional museum collections had their ‘[b]eginnings in private homes and then spreading to small local museums was a tradition of nineteenth-century collecting’. The ‘tradition of nineteenth-century collecting’ continued into the 20th century with regional museum holdings having their genesis in such collections. For example, the Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum began in this way, with many of the objects having been accumulated originally by Doctor Harold Octavius Lethbridge (1880-1944), who set up a medical practice at Narrandera 1904. The Elliot and Franklin collections, held by the Tumut and District Historical Museum, and the Garth Jones collection held at the Up To Date Store precinct in Coolamon, are all examples of family-based collections. All three collections contain objects spanning several generations of the Franklin, Elliot and Jones families and cover a time frame from the mid-1800s to the 1960s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880s to 1960s</td>
<td>Tumut and District Historical Museum</td>
<td>Bebe Elliot Collection</td>
<td>Elliot family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880s to 1950s</td>
<td>Tumut and District Historical Museum</td>
<td>Miles Franklin Collection</td>
<td>Lampe and Franklin families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42 Ibid. p. 45.
Collecting and Memory


In the process of collecting stories for *Making Do. Memories of Australia’s back country people* in 1982, artist and historian Murray Walker commented on the detail and liveliness of the memories of the people to whom he spoke:

> I had anticipated difficulty in tapping the memories of these old people, knowing that some would be illiterate and others would have had little schooling. To my delight, their words rolled on with a fluent, descriptive vigour. They had compensated for their lack of education by developing the power to converse and to convey clear, memorable word pictures. … Their reminiscences are lively and direct and part of largely unknown, untapped, collective folk-memory. Some are satisfying as well-rounded short stories told without artifice or education. Some seem to be part of the best Australian literature. 43

While Murray has shared his personal delight in hearing ‘clear, memorable word pictures’, academic and historian Janis Wilton also warns the researcher or curator that:

> There is a need to create spaces for misremembering as well as remembering; for mistakes and corrections; for different and often conflicting memories about an object, place, person, or experience. 44

Wilton’s comment on ‘misremembering’ was observed many times, and at several different museums throughout the Riverina, while gathering the research material. Labels, correspondence and conversations containing ‘misremembered’ information have all added to the layers of memories and stories. Referring specifically to Chinese focused objects and memories Wilton reminds us that ‘the mistakes are evidence of the complexities of’

---

remembering.' This complexity was evident in my own research, in stories associated with for example, the River Charts (Narrandera) and the Tallow Vat (Gundagai), where imagined or folkloric ‘memories’, were at odds with documented reality.

For my research, Riverina museums and their collections were the starting point for what would ultimately become a thesis which explores the premise that museum objects have an important role as triggers to storytelling. These same museums also became the first point of reference for a wide variety of sources. Accession registers, newspaper clippings, handwritten notes and object labels, no matter how incomplete or poorly composed, began the search. As a museum professional and a researcher, I was placed in an enviable position for, as lecturer in museum studies Gaynor Kavanagh points out:

> Historians working in museums have possibly the most creative and complex roles of all history-makers. They have a wide range of evidence on which to draw, including objects, oral tradition and observed social practice; forms of evidence often ignored by academic historians.\(^{45}\)

In many cases, the museum volunteers themselves became ‘resources’ and they in turn, pointed the way to other people in their respective communities who would also add to the research information through their remembering and storytelling.

In relation to these regional museum collections, academic and writer Chris Healy points out that many objects ‘were important because they held or pointed to memories of local places and/or local events … and [were] associated with the dominant industries of the locality.’\(^ {46}\) Memories and stories connected to the Garth Jones collection; the portable millet harvester; the Tumut Butter Factory collection and the drover’s cart are representative of dominant local industries, in particular primary industries. The Mt. Erin collection; the Edith Short collection; the Wilna Wattle collection; the Jimmy Sharman collection; the Nutcrackers’ bass drum and the Pauline Harvey collection are all interpreted through memories and stories representative of either ‘local places or events’.

---


Healy then extends his discussion of a locality-driven historiography by observing that ‘many objects related to that very old form of remembering, genealogy: objects that were important because of their place in the metaphors and tropes of family sagas’. Academic and designer Helmut Lueckenhausen adds weight to this argument, citing former psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who points out that ‘objects which were special [to people or communities] evolved meaning by context and association … not by perceptual stimulation.’ The Wilkinson baby cradle, the Bebe Elliot collection, the Garth Jones collection and the Miles Franklin collection all sit within this genre.

**Objects and Narratives**

A number of authors also discuss the value as sources, of personal and local narratives, especially those associated with objects, in the documentation of histories. They include: John Rickard and Peter Spearritt (1991), Christopher Healy (1994), Gaynor Kavanagh (1996), Helmut Lueckenhausen (1997), Peter Burke (2001), Paul Thompson (2000), John Tosh (2002), Paula Hamilton and Paul Ashton (2003), and Janis Wilton (2006).

Australian academics, Paula Hamilton and Paul Ashton, for example, exemplify Csikszentmihalyi’s acknowledgement of the dominant role played by objects as a ‘medium for historical narratives’. The results of a 1998 survey funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and carried out by Hamilton and Ashton and colleagues at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) shows that:

About 53% of respondents (75 men and 107 women) collect objects to pass on or use material culture as triggers for remembering someone. Objects also became a driving or anchoring force in narratives. Most people responded to the material physicality of objects and their tangibility as ‘evidence’ of the past.

Healy (1994), Lueckenhausen (1997), and Hamilton and Ashton (2003) have all drawn our attention to the importance of certain objects to individuals and communities, and it was

---

47 Ibid. p. 46.
49 Ibid. p. 13.
this premise that underpinned the decisions made when identifying and selecting the objects and collections for the case studies in my research. Identifying appropriate themes or headings under which to discuss the objects was not so straightforward. While local places, local events, dominant industries and family sagas did inform the eventually chosen themes,\footnote{A thematic study is a comparative survey of collections or heritage items related to a particular theme, subject or region. Collections Council of Australia Ltd. \textit{What is a Thematic Study?} \url{http://www.collectionscouncil.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=643} Accessed June 6 2010.} many of the stories or sub-stories contained under those headings could easily be cross-referenced to, or discussed under, several of the chosen themes for, as Janis Wilton reminds us '. . . any one object on display is supported and contested by a variety of experiences, stories and memories.'\footnote{Wilton, Janis. (2006). p. 65.}

\textit{Micro-narratives}

The thematic headings identified in Part 2, of ‘education’, ‘entertainment’, ‘women’, ‘making do’ and ‘world wars’ presented the problem of defining appropriately perceived parameters, because each of these themes were constructed around what British historian and writer Peter Burke refers to as ‘micronarratives’, a form which he claims ‘more and more historians are turning to’.\footnote{Burke, Peter. \textit{‘History of Events and the Revival of Narrative’}. In Burke, P. (ed.). (2001). \textit{New Perspectives on Historical Writing}. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 293.} John Tosh, another British historian, concurs with Burke on the value of the historians’ use of the narrative or micro-narrative format, observing that:\footnote{Tosh, John (2002) \textit{The Pursuit of History}. Harlow UK: Pearson Education Limited. P. 150.}

\begin{quote}
Social historians … now favour narrative as a means of conveying how the social structures, life cycles and cultural values that they analyse in abstract terms were experienced by actual people.\footnote{Burke, Peter. (2001). p. 293.}
\end{quote}

While the narrative or micro-narrative allows for the writing of non-linear, and at times, what appear to be non-related stories, Burke cautions the historian, pointing out that ‘it would be a mistake to regard [micronarratives] as a panacea [as] it generates problems of its own, notably that of linking microhistory [or] local details to general trend.’\footnote{Ibid. p. 285.} Burke also points out that ‘what some historians are writing now are narratives about narratives’.\footnote{Ibid. p. 285.}
In other words, when writing these stories, the historian must be conscious of his or her personal or professional biases in the reconstruction, particularly when using oral history sources. While there is a strong strand in oral history scholarship about reflective practice, ‘lifelong socialist’\textsuperscript{57} Raphael Samuel observes:

\begin{quote}
The collector of the spoken word … is in a privileged position … His role … is that of archivist, as well as historian, retrieving and storing priceless information which would otherwise be lost.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

Samuel then continues to advise the historian that he or she should take care:

\begin{quote}
Not to impose his own order on the speech of his informants. He retains the privilege of selection, but he should use this as scrupulously as he would when working from printed sources.\textsuperscript{59}
\end{quote}

With the exception of well-known Australian author, Miles Franklin, the ‘narratives’ and ‘micro-narratives’ which form the body of the case studies in my research deal primarily with the lives of ordinary or unknown men and women. Burke points out that in his 1989 study of the French Revolution, \textit{Citizen}, British historian, Simon Schama, had successfully ‘inserted microhistories of relatively unknown people’\textsuperscript{60} into what was a well documented and major event. Historian Jim Sharpe reinforces Burke’s reference to Schama, by stating that for the social historian ‘one focus of attention … might be the process of interaction between major events and trends on one side and the structures of everyday life on the other.’\textsuperscript{61} For example, texts on the history of professional dance in Australia, from the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century to the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, fit this profile, with Pask (1979), Lawrenson (1999), and Brissenden and Glennon (2010) discussing the ‘major events and trends’ in professional dance and dance companies. In contrast, the narratives and micro-narratives attached to the Pauline Harvey collection (Museum of the Riverina) examine ‘the structures of everyday life’ through a discussion of dance at a ‘grass roots’ level, where the development of professional dancers has been nurtured since the late 1800s.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. p. 391.
\textsuperscript{60} Burke, Peter. (2001). p. 293.
Epitomising this premise of the ‘interaction between major events and trends … and the structures of everyday life’, is the Blowering Dam possum rescue story (Chapter 3) and its connection to the Snowy Hydro Scheme. Similarly, the stories of Mabel Lewis (Chapter 7) and the Heinecke family of Tumbarumba (Chapter 7) link to events associated with WWI.

**New Conceptualisations of History**

In considering new ways of researching and documenting histories, Jim Sharpe draws our attention to English historian, E. P. Thompson and his 1963 text ‘The Making of the English Working Class’. Here Thompson reminds the historian of his or her obligation to not only reconstruct the experiences of ordinary people, but to also ‘understand people in the past, as far as the modern historian is able, in the light of their own experience and their own reactions to that experience’.  

This is where the use of personal and unofficial sources adds depth and authenticity to local or everyday historical narratives, with Burke expressing the opinion that ‘official records generally express the official point of view … such records need to be supplemented by other kinds of sources’. Sociologist and oral historian Paul Thompson believes that ‘there is a remarkable amount of unexploited personal and ordinary information even in official records – such as court documents.’ This proved to be the case in the Riverina research, when information on travelling hawkers was sourced from the Adelong Court Registers, held by the CSU Riverina Archives. Official correspondence in the Australian Women’s Land Army collection (Batlow Historical Society Museum) is another example, for while Hardisty (1990) provides a comprehensive history of the AWLA, and does contain references to the Batlow camp, official correspondence from the Batlow AWLA collection provides valuable, undocumented information.

While Thompson might disagree with Burke, Jim Sharpe adds weight to Burke’s argument by pointing out that:

---

62 Ibid. p. 37.
The historical imagination can be applied not only to forming new conceptualisations of the subject matter of history, but also to asking new questions of documents and doing different things with them.65

Sharpe then argues that ‘the imaginative use of source materials can illuminate many areas of history that might otherwise have been thought of as doomed to remain in darkness.’66 Paul Thompson also suggests that ‘once the life experience of people of all kinds can be used as its raw material, a new dimension is given to history.’67 In other words, rather than avoiding the lesser known stories associated with these objects, it is perhaps more of a challenge for writers of local histories to utilise a format of accumulating micro-narratives since, as Thompson stresses:

None of these need be separately as rich or complete as a single narrative [and] this is a better way of presenting more typical life-history material [and] allows the stories to be used much more easily in constructing a broader historical interpretation.68

Jennifer Mason, in her book, *Qualitative Researching* (2002), reminds researchers that in using such sources to construct ‘reasonable or interpretive’ narratives, it is important to show that interpretations are ‘sensitive, appropriately nuanced, and valid’.69 She acknowledges that matching ‘theory with well-known social science research strategies is a useful exercise’, but also advocates that a researcher should:

… recognise all the ways in which you are using theory in your everyday research practice, and that you incorporate the appropriate style and approach into your analytical explanations and arguments. That means it could be useful to bring your thoughts about theorising … into the everyday, by thinking about the processes of having ideas and using data theoretically. 70

Australian historians John Rickard and Peter Spearritt also advocate the use of ‘unconventional’ sources, explaining that:

Many historians have been reluctant to move out of the conventional archive, in which ‘the documents’ were preserved, dutifully awaiting interpretation. Even paintings and photographs, respectable enough in many contexts were used largely as ‘illustrations’ rather than as evidence in

---

66 Ibid. p. 37.
68 Ibid. p. 6.
70 Ibid. p. 181.
themselves. The recognition of a whole new range of sources, from film and video to sites and artifacts, might initially have been stimulating but the addiction to ‘documents’ is not easy to break.71

We might also put forward the argument that there are other kinds of ‘documents’ to be explored, particularly in regard to women’s history. As historian A. Mary Murphy suggests, researchers ‘are often confronted with a potentially discouraging lack of traditional textual materials with which to work’.72 Murphy then goes on to explain that women ‘unreflexively provide traces of all kinds in their wardrobe trunks, their recipe boxes, their tool kits, their photo albums; all their things become potential text for us to read’.73 Add to this list of personal items the ubiquitous women’s magazine and the researcher has at their disposal a virtual goldmine of ‘everyday’ information, for as Grace Cochrane points out:

These publications [provided] not only a lay commentary of opinion and taste which rarely appears in official histories of the period, but often offered the only documentation of whole areas of activity not recorded elsewhere.74

Summary

After considering the research process undertaken in this thesis, within the findings of the authors of the publications discussed, the following question could be posed. Are we to assume that ‘unofficial’ written records sit somewhere between ‘official text’ records and oral sources?

Perhaps we should look to Paul Thompson for clarification of this point, for as he observes, ‘all history ultimately depends upon its social purpose’.75 It has been my intent, therefore, not to lose sight of the purpose of compiling the ‘histories’ around which this research is structured, as that of activating stories and reconnecting them to specific museum objects and collections in the Riverina region.

73 Ibid.
This objective was realised through a process of personal interviews and questionnaires, and identifying and utilising traditional and non-traditional resources, while also relying heavily on established, or popularly understood, local or regional histories. While these particular facets of historiography may be dismissed as legitimate sources by ‘purists’ in the field, academics David Walker and Richard Nile are convinced that the inclusion of ‘regional history is an important methodology because it offers the opportunity to encompass the diversity of Australian life overlooked in the predominant national historiography.’

These stories of objects and collections in Riverina museums are underpinned by micro-narratives, discussed within a framework of local or social history. The ‘chattering voices’ of the micro-narratives, accessed through predominantly local and personal sources, often unofficial, add an important vitality and depth to our understanding of this region, and other regions like it, within wider social, cultural and political histories. As Victoria Peel and Deborah Zion state:

Successful local history demands breadth of vision combined with a well honed appreciation of the significance of small things. Despite its popularity and general acceptance by the academy, the local history is sometimes regarded as too narrow to justify the larger treatment required of a typical doctoral thesis. Yet the successful integration of the micro and the macro in local history writing is a serious challenge.

The following thematic studies in Part 2, grouped under the headings of ‘Agriculture’, ‘Commerce’, ‘Transport’, ‘Making Do’, ‘Education’, ‘Entertainment’, ‘Women’, and ‘WWI and WWII’, draw together a diverse array of narratives and micro-narratives. These stories interact and overlap with one another and demonstrate the depth and detail which is to be uncovered in historical research which has been undertaken at a local history level.

The storytellers who shared their memories and responses in this thesis fell into two categories: those whose stories were generated from a personal connection between the storyteller and the object, and those who ‘rebuilt’ memories in order to connect them to an

---

object. Both groups produced rich associations and contexts, mainly through previously undocumented stories. What is of foremost importance in this thesis is to create a record of these stories so that they may become available and be recognised alongside the stories told by published Riverina writers and poets.

**Thesis Structure**

This thesis is structured in three sections presenting the research process, the stories and objects as a set of thematic studies, and the research findings.

Part 1 describes the research methods and theoretical perspectives, along with a literature review of the fields of Australian history, local history, oral history and museum practice.

Part 2 (Chapters 1 to 8) presents the thematic studies as a compilation of stories related to their key object or collection.

Part 3 examines the research outcomes and conclusions and discusses further research possibilities.
Part 2 - Riverina Museum Collections: Thematic studies

The themes in Part 2 are the stories of the people and places of the Riverina. They were selected from those which emerged during the earlier Significance Assessment project and from subsequent information and stories collected. They reflect the existence of particular objects and collections in Riverina museums that represent the broader stories of people in the region. The structure and tone of the information provided in these chapters is underpinned by a historiography of narrative, with the emphasis being placed on the use of objects as triggers for specific stories. The purpose of the documentation is to provide a resource for those working in the museums, by providing information that will assist in museum displays and the significance assessment of objects and collections.

Those in pursuit of land for agriculture opened up the Riverina to non-indigenous settlement. With the establishment of pastoral and agricultural runs came the towns, and with the towns came commerce. Transport was the lifeline between these growing communities. The growing communities of the Riverina needed families to expand even further, making women and children a vital component of this expansion. Families grew and prospered, with hard work and adaptability, often in the form of making do, shaping their futures, while the education of their children was secured through the opening of schools throughout the Riverina.

The people of the Riverina have lived through World War I and World War II, droughts; floods and hard work have been supported by their sense of community. Diversion and entertainment has eased the heavy burden the hard times and their everyday lives.

Fig. x: Women admiring aprons, Wagga Wagga c1960s
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)
Chapter 1: ‘Much for the Colony’ – Stories of Agriculture in the Riverina

1.1: Objects and collections – an overview

Objects and collections referring to the agricultural history of the Riverina are commonplace in museum collections throughout the region. Those discussed in this chapter are not intended to be representative of the entire range of agricultural practices in the Riverina, either past or present. However, they do represent a broad range of pastoral and agricultural activities, events and geographical locations of the area. The associated objects include: settler farming (the Garth Jones Collection); German farming practices (cow horn funnels and sausage mincer); Chinese farmers (tobacco leaf); broom millet growing and rural contract labour (portable millet thresher); and the rural economic downturn of the late 1800s (cast iron tallow vat).

1.2: Introduction

According to G.L. Buxton, ‘settlement in the Riverina, as in so much of inland Australia, followed the watercourses.’ By 1832, many of the pastoral and agricultural runs had been established along the Murrumbidgee River, as far west as Wagga Wagga and by 1835 settlement had also commenced around the present site of Albury on the Murray River. Reports of adverse conditions further west caused a delay in movement on to the plains of what is now known as the Riverina, an agricultural region in the south-west of New South Wales.

The Riverina was home to Indigenous groups for over 40,000 years prior to European settlement, including the Wiradjuri, Nari-Nari, Mudi-Mudi, Gurendji, Yida-Yida and Yorta-Yorta people.

John Oxley, who followed the Lachlan River as far as what is now the town of Booligal in 1817, was the first European explorer in the Riverina and was followed by Captain Charles Sturt between 1828 and 1831 and Major Thomas Mitchell in 1836. An article under the heading of ‘Riverine Colony’ appeared in the Albury Border Post in January of that same year.

---

year. The name was first used by Dunmore Lang, who was involved in the Riverina secession movement, active in the 1860s.

As Simon Ryan points out however, the ‘[t]rue European exploration of Australia was not done by a handful of men called ‘explorers’, but by women, sealers, travellers and drovers.’ ² What would eventually become known as the Riverina was also ‘explored’ by travellers and drovers, with the ‘exceptional entrepreneur’ ³, Ben Boyd, among the first Europeans to claim land in the area:

By 1844, after only two years in the colony, he and the bank controlled 2.5 million acres (just over 1 million hectares) on the coast, in the Monaro and the Riverina.⁴

Boyd made use of indentured labourers to work on his properties, including Pacific Islanders. The impact of harsh weather conditions and geographical isolation is discussed by Thomas Keneally, who states that:

Some of Boyd’s Islanders who were assigned to his mountainous stations in the Monaro suffered severely from the winter cold, and others could not get accustomed to the great stretches of plateau and Riverina plains.⁵

---

⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
Captain Charles Sturt described the area in dismissive terms, while leading the first European exploration of the Murrumbidgee River. ‘Nothing could exceed the apparent barrenness of these plains, or the cheerlessness of the landscape’ wrote Sturt in 1829. His observations of the Riverina were not all negative however, with Riverina pastoralist, James Gormly’s account of the 1829 journey quoting a Sturt diary entry as saying ‘I think it probable that those lands which lie hardening and bare in a state of nature, would produce abundantly if broken with a plough.’

Settlers, or to be more accurate, ‘squatters’ had taken up river frontage runs as far west as the junction of the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers by 1845; however the initial success or failure of many selections in the Riverina was to be inexorably linked to strikes on the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales. Casual labourers formed the nucleus of pastoral and agricultural employment in the Riverina during the 1850s and many of these

---

7 Ibid.
9 Squatter: a person who occupied a tract of Crown land in the 1800s without legal title, for the purpose of grazing livestock.
men walked off the job, without any notice, to try their luck during ‘rushes’ on the goldfields.

As Buxton observed, members of the Riverina press saw the squatters as ‘the pioneers of civilization who by exploration, industry, investment and the production of a staple acceptable in world markets had done much for the colony’.\(^{10}\) The squatters, including the Kennedys of Jerilderie and the Hentys of Walla Walla have been well documented; however it is the narratives of the selectors who were the owners of much smaller properties which activate a sometimes overlooked facet of the Riverina’s agricultural history.

![Fig. 1.2: Murrumbidgee River Gundagai NSW, c1886](National Library of Australia: nla.pic-vn4312940)

Access to a reliable water source was paramount when choosing an agricultural run in the Riverina.

The passing of the Robertson Land Acts\(^{11}\) of 1861 saw the breaking up of many of the large stations, such as Walla Walla situated between Albury and Culcairn, which could be measured in square miles as well as acres, with Buxton citing Richmond Henty as riding ‘for fifteen miles through our own country’\(^{12}\). Among the new selectors to take advantage of the farming land which was made available, were German farmers from Victoria and South Australia. Agricultural labourers and farm-hands from Ireland and England brought traditions and knowledge of horse-handling, fence and gate building and blacksmithing. All

---


\(^{11}\) The Robertson Land Acts of 1861 allowed the purchase of land for £1 per acre, without the need for survey.

of these skills were vital for the long term survival and success of the Riverina agricultural industry, and the transition from small scale farming to broad acre wheat farming.

Fig. 1.3: Map of Riverina stations. Walla Walla is situated in the bottom right section. (Walsh, G. (1993). *Pioneering Days*. p. 75.)
1.3: The Pfrunder and Jones Families – Stories of farming selectors

Fig. 1.4: Up To Date Store, Coolamon, NSW 2004
(Photo: A. Brown)

The corrugated iron extension, which houses the Garth Jones Collection, can be seen to the left of the original building.

The Garth Jones Collection\textsuperscript{13}, which is housed in the rear section of the Up To Date Store in Coolamon, New South Wales, consists mainly of agricultural objects such as fences, gates and windmills, which have been used by three generations of the Pfrunder and Jones families. The collection also includes objects with links to other farming families in the Riverina, such as the Hamilton family of Illabo.

In response to a UK survey of ‘non-users’ of museums, Tanya Du Bery points out that:

\begin{quote}
As far as local museums were concerned, people felt they have an important role to play in preserving and communicating local history, that they could be developed and promoted, and that they would encourage visitors to the area.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

This notion is also supported by museum consultant, Kylie Winkworth, in the interpretation policies outlined for the Garth Jones Collection which include:

\begin{quote}
8.10 Use the collection and its themes as a springboard for developing programs and activities that will engage the community and keep the collection relevant to contemporary interests and farming practice.
8.11 Use the collection to encourage families to record the stories and association of objects in their family collections, and to keep them safe for the next generation.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} The Garth Jones Collection was donated to Coolamon Shire by Mr. Garth Jones in the late 1990s.
This is precisely where the strength of the Garth Jones Collection lies, not just in its capacity to interpret agricultural objects in relation to late 19th and early 20th century rural life, but more specifically, in the context of its links to the history of the Coolamon district.

The farming heritage of Garth Owain Jones stretches back to his maternal grandfather, Johann Adolph Pfrunder. Leaving Baden Baden in Germany in 1878 and after many years of farming in the mallee country of Victoria, Pfrunder arrived in the Coolamon district in 1899. Pfrunder and his wife Bertha were successful in drawing a homestead block in a land ballot in the Coolamon area. This property was named Baden in honour of his home town in Germany and Pfrunder was to work and live on Baden for the remainder of his life.

Jones’ father Stanley came originally from London, but was extremely proud to claim his Welsh heritage. Arriving in Australia in 1908, Stanley Jones spent several months training at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, before making his way to Coolamon. During this period Jones senior share-farmed and it was at this time that he met the Pfrunder family, including their daughter, Ellen Martha. Just prior to his joining the AIF in 1915, Jones senior purchased a block of land on South Yalgogrin, which he named Southern Hope. He held this block until after the end of WWI, when he relinquished it to purchase an 800-acre Soldier’s Settlement block, which was named Goldenhope. Although he had been badly injured during WWI and had very little use of his right arm and hand, Jones senior was still able to sow his own crops. In later years he was to have permanent paid help on his property.  

Fig. 1.5: (Front) Joan and Glyn Jones, (Back) Ellen and baby Garth Jones, ‘East Yalgogrin’, c1930
Image courtesy of Garth Jones
(Photographer: Unknown)

---

In 1921, Jones senior married Ellen Martha Pfrunder and they settled into their home on East Yalgogrin. Their youngest son, Garth Owain Jones was born in August 1929. East Yalgogrin was a larger property than Goldenhope, which Jones senior ran in partnership with Mr. R.C. Kitto from Moonta in South Australia. During the hard years of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Jones family, like many other farming families, was forced to walk off East Yalgogrin. As Garth Jones explains:

By 1933 Father had no equity in East Yalgogrin and in fact owed money to the Kitto family. This money had to be paid off on a yearly basis for some years to come. This was when he decided … to move [back] onto Goldenhope, the Soldier’s Settlement Block that he had held since 1920. This meant that all the building up he had done on East Yalgogrin had brought in no return to him.17

It was quite common for the owners of smaller farms, such as the Jones family, to utilise the labour of their school age children and they became a particularly valuable commodity during the WWII years of reduced manpower. Garth Jones was to learn his trade as a farmer during the war years, assisting his father with cropping and livestock and gaining invaluable experience, including the handling of horse teams. These skills were put to use in the operating of his farming properties in later years. With the 1942 introduction of petrol rationing during WWII, horses were brought back into service on many farms. They were also used by some farmers during the post-WWII years when new farm machinery and spare parts for old machinery was still difficult to acquire. During and directly after WWII, the Jones family was among the many local Coolamon farmers who utilised horses in the daily work routine. A good draught horse was ‘worth its weight in gold’ and in 2008 correspondence Garth Jones recalled his ‘workmates’ with fondness:

The leading horses – rein horse Bradman, near-side check-rein horse Ginger, then Patra, Baldy and Trimmer, then Kate the offside check-rein horse and Poppet the offside rein horse. The back horses were Model near-side, Duke, Duchess, Silver, Darkie, Cochrane and Violet on the offside. Blossom and Bess were only used as reserves ‘because of [advanced] age’.18

---

In 1949 Garth Jones acquired Wallandry at Burallyang near Tallimba and during the first two years, drove a fourteen-horse team for all planting and harvesting on his property. Towards the end of 1952 Garth Jones purchased additional land (Garwain) from Max Shine of Eugowra. During the many years of farming in the Coolamon district Garth Jones, and his wife Denise, were connected to several different properties.

---

At the end of their farming life and prior to retirement in 1999, Garth Jones and his wife, Denise Jones, sold Parmenters, Garwain and Weilands to Ian Maslin, a local farmer.⁰

---

⁰ Jones, G. (c2004). p. 16.
Fences, both real and imagined, form an integral part of Australian iconography: the dingo fence, the rabbit proof fence, the picket fence and the wire fences associated with boundary riders and vast outback landscapes. Fences have been discussed as subject matter in literature: *The Bushfire* - Andrew Barton (Banjo) Patterson, music: *Humpin’ My Bluey* - John Williamson, film: *The Rabbit Proof Fence* and the visual arts: *Great Fences of Australia* – Jon Rose and Hollis Taylor.

Some of the earliest fences were made by stacking up the timber left over from land clearing. After felling, complete trees were often dragged into position on boundaries by teams of bullocks. This type of brush fencing did not require ‘topping up’ for several years and remained cattle-proof, according to the Australian Agriculturist and Colonists’ Guide.\(^\text{21}\) Chock and log, log and bush, Billabong, Stubb, double and triple post and rail, dog leg, zigzag or Virginian snake and basket were also styles of fencing, popular before the common usage of wire fencing.\(^\text{22}\) According to Hilda Freeman ‘chock and log, brush or log

---


\(^{22}\) For further information on fencing in rural Australia see the *Illustrated Glossary of Australian Rural Fence Terms* available as a download from the NSW Heritage Office website at [http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/03_index.htm](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/03_index.htm)
fencing, the dog leg fencing, post and rail, and wire fences were all tried, and the last, though costly for wire, proved to be the most effective.'

Pioneer settlers of the Riverina, Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh and George Gow have both left historical details of early methods of fencing in the area, with Fetherstonhaugh recalling that ‘most of the fences were brush, a few chock and log [and] brush fences were very dangerous helps to the spread of bush fires.’ George Gow, writing in 1924 recalled that some of the earliest fencing in the Riverina was constructed on Warri Station in the Mirrool district, recalling that:

A strong post and rail fence was built around [the] dam to keep out wild horses. The timber was grey box. A high post and rail fence of pine was also erected on the west side of the creek to keep wild horses on Taylor's Hill side, off the run. This work was done in 1855.

Gow’s reminiscences also highlight the difficulties property owners faced when sourcing for the right materials for wire fencing:

[T]he only wire then obtainable was a large gauge, almost as large as quarter inch iron; consequently the first fences were made of brushwood, chock and log, or post and rail. Timber was so plentiful, that even for post and rail fences, it was to be had on the line required for the fence.

To a 21st century observer, the impact of any newly constructed wire fences on stock is probably overlooked, as they are a familiar aspect of most rural landscapes. Gow however, reminds us that in the late 19th century Riverina, wire fencing was both unfamiliar and intimidating to stock. As Gow recalls:

At first there were no fences but gradually, brush and log fences were built, and after many years, wire fences were built, but these caused a great deal of trouble, as the cattle and horses never seemed to see the wires and they could rush pell-mell into them and would often be seriously injured. The fences had all to be capped until the stock grew familiar with the danger of the wires.

---

26 Ibid. p. 85.
27 Freeman, H. M. (1985). p. 120.
Hilda Freeman writing her then unpublished history in 1937 gives us further insight into fence building and the subsequent deforestation of the district, observing that ‘today posts for a new line of fence, frequently must be carted ten or twelve miles’.\(^\text{28}\) Gow continues on to speak of later post and rail fences built in either 1869 or 1870 and again Freeman adds a poignant postscript in 1937 observing:

\[\text{[P]art of [that fence] still stands, just a few panels here and there, as they were built so long ago. The marks of the mortising axe still shows especially where the builder made a false blow. There will not be another fence built like this…the grand old trees are gone from the forests.}\(^\text{29}\)

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Fig_1.9.jpg}
\caption{Mortising joins - post and rail fence, June 1906 \protect\textit{Agricultural Gazette of NSW}}
\end{figure}

The Australian Agriculturist and Colonists’ Guide of 1890 advised farmers that when constructing a chock and log fence:

\begin{quotation}
To be sheep-proof, the chocks are not more than six inches in diameter, and the fence for sheep need not be more than three and a half feet, and for cattle four feet high. A fence of this description, where the wages of labourers are twenty shillings a week, and timber convenient, may cost from £30 to £40 per mile, and in stringy-bark, or thickly-timbered country, from £20 to £25 per mile.\(^\text{30}\)
\end{quotation}

\footnotesize
\(^{28}\) Ibid. p. 85.
\(^{29}\) Ibid.
Garth Jones also recounts the installation of chock and log fencing around a sheep yard:

It was erected by my father, Stanley Jones, in 1933 on his property Goldenhope, Tallimba [and] made from cypress pine timber hauled by horse wagon teams from Basham’s [property], Saddleback. The rails were bought per piece. He [Basham] had to cut them, although there were some slight differences of opinion, because they had to be 4 inches at the small end and that meant that at the large end they would have to be approximately 6 or 8 inches, which Mr. Basham thought were too big. The strainer posts could be cut out of the big end, which, looking at these would have been very small strainer posts. At the end of a chock and log fence, chocks were placed the same size to keep the rails apart. Wire was placed at the top of each pair of posts to stop them spreading.  

---

31 Jones, G. Garth Jones collection catalogue notes. 10. [Unpublished manuscript]. Coolamon NSW: Up To Date Store Archives p. 3
The Australian Agriculturist and Colonists’ Guide of 1890 recommended post and rail fences constructed from ironbark, bloodwood, blue or red gum, or other hardwood as being ‘very durable’. ‘Old Bob’ a Queensland fencer of the late 1800s also had definite opinions on the suitability of fencing materials explaining that ‘flooded gum and iron bark is my fancy. Iron bark is bad to mortise and dress if it’s left too long. Bloodwood makes the best posts and it’s like butter to mortise.’

Landholders were also advised on the implementation of contracts for fencing:

A written agreement between the parties concerned is in all cases desirable. In timbered country, the contract should specify by whom the line is to be cleared, and the width of the clearing; dead timber should never be allowed to remain within five feet of a fence … if possible, the timber to be used should be specified and towards the erection of boundary fences it is usual for all parties concerned to pay equal shares.

33 Ibid.
'Great Strength' – Stories of farm gates

The key object in this section is the H. V. McKay Sunshine brand farm gate, which was erected by Johann Adolph Pfrunder on Baden, some time around 1904.

Fig. 1.13: H.V. McKay ‘Sunshine’ metal farm gate, c1904
Garth Jones Collection, Up To Date Store, Coolamon NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)

Hugh Victor McKay produced the first successful stripper/harvester in Australia in February 1884. As author and historian, Frances Wheelhouse states, ‘The story of the McKay family is one of the most inspiring in Australia’s pioneering history’.³⁴ After the successful trial of their horse-drawn stripper harvester grain was to be ‘stripped, threshed, cleaned and bagged ready for market’³⁵ all in one operation. He went on to establish the constructing a chock and log fence, McKay Harvesting Machinery Company Limited in 1889. Famous for their ‘Sunshine’³⁶ brand harvesters, the company also manufactured combined grain and fertilizer cultivators, hay presses, swingle trees, equalizing horse yokes, farm gates and garden gates.

The 'Sunshine' bar gate in the Garth Jones Collection is believed to be one of the first erected in the Cowabbie district and was installed on the property Baden by Johann Adolph Pfrunder, maternal grandfather of Garth Jones.

³⁵ Ibid.
³⁶ A talk given at Ballarat, in 1902, by a visiting evangelist named Dr. Talmage, revolved around the subject ‘Sunshine’. After attending the talk, H.V. McKay, who was a religious man, was inspired to use the word ‘Sunshine’ as the brand name for his harvesters. Cited in The Sunshine Works 1884 (publication details unknown) pps. 8 & 10.
Advertised as ‘The Cattlemen’s Favourite’ by H.V. McKay, this particular style of gate had six horizontal bars that were guaranteed to ‘give great strength without making the gate unduly heavy.’ Gates of a similar design to the one installed by Johann Adolph Pfrunder in c1904 were still being advertised for sale by the company in the 1940s.

For the children of many farming families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, toys were a luxury item, or at the very least, home made or improvised. Empty kerosene tins, wooden boxes, lengths of rope, wood, string and wire were all used to manufacture home made toys, including billy carts, doll prams, doll cradles, scooters, swings and see-saws. In the absence of home made toys, children would often use improvised structures such as gates, fences, ladders and barrels.37

In her classic Australian children's story, ‘Seven Little Australians’, first published in 1894, Ethel Turner refers to Esther's memories of a particular gate from her childhood:

> At last, when everyone was beginning to feel the very end of patience had come, a high white gate broke the monotony of dripping wet fences. "Home!" Esther said joyfully. She jumped the General up and down on her knee. "Little Boy Blue, Mum fell off that gate when she was three," said she, looking at it affectionately as Pip swung it open. 38

Garth Jones recalls that his mother, Ellen Martha Pfrunder, who was born around 1896:

---


used to swing on the [Sunshine bar] gate on her way to school, approximately in 1904. The story goes … one of the neighbours saw my mother swinging on the gate and told my grandfather about it. My grandfather, [Johann] Adolph Pfrunder, was most incensed that the man thought that a gate swung by him wouldn’t take the weight of a small child.  

Stan Heffer, a retired Coolamon farmer, recollects that:

Most H.V. McKay gates became lift and drag gates because they were too heavy. In the early days farmers could not afford gates on every opening and used gates made of wire. Playing on gates … swinging was a good pastime, but our gates were mostly lift and drag jobs.  

Laurie Gaynor, also a retired Coolamon farmer, has vivid memories of farm gates and childhood games:

The steel gates were the best and a lot of the old gates still remain on farms. Old McKay gates sell like hot cakes at clearing sales. I was belted by my father for swinging on gates, by this I mean it made the gate sag, prevented it from swinging.

---

41 L. Gaynor (personal communication, 2003, February 9).
In the early years of settlement in the Coolamon district, the provision of water for stock was not always easy as the creeks dried up in summer and, due to lack of knowledge of the underlying geology and hydrology of the area, there were no permanent water holes available in the district. Wells were sunk and dams constructed across creeks at a point where surplus water could be diverted. Neither of these methods was used to good effect. In 1906, the *Agricultural Gazette of NSW* appealed to those working in the rural sector to ‘make use of the water which flows unheeded beneath their paddocks, and of the winds which, for the taking, will supply them with power’.42


Dams were excavated, some with picks, shovels and barrows, while others were made with the use of a horse drawn plough and scoop. The plough and scoop was also used to make banks across the creeks. Through inexperience, many dams were constructed in the wrong location. They would not hold the water or too little water ran into them.

On farms, the supply of water for household use and for animals was always a priority and a constant problem in the early years of settlement. In her memoirs, Coolamon resident, Ivy Lawrence, tells of supplies of water coming at first from the nearest water hole. This method was changed, recalls Lawrence, ‘when a small dam had been excavated with the only tools available: a pick and shovel’⁴⁴. Later a cask was obtained and mounted on a forked limb as a sledge and pulled by a horse. During any long dry spells, water was obtained from a station dam three miles away. The cask frequently overturned on the return journey due to the rough track. The muddy water was cleared with ashes.⁴⁵

The carting of water for household and stock use was made faster by the use of a water cart. Furphy, Coxon and Fitz were among the recognised manufacturers of water carts.

As Garth Jones observes in his memoirs:

> Water carting was made a lot quicker, but not much easier. I can remember vividly at the age of 16, backing the Furphy into the very flat dam and with just a bucket, filling it in just under 10 minutes.⁴⁶

---

⁴⁵ Ibid.
In the Coolamon district windmills were also widely used for irrigation and the supply of water to animal troughs and household tanks on farms. The March 1906 *Agricultural Gazette of NSW* bemoaned the fact that, ‘in this state there seems to be no reason whatever for the deplorable state of things which often exists in the plains of the interior.’\(^\text{47}\) All, it seemed, that was required was the construction of a suitable windmill to raise underground water supplies to the surface. Such windmills were a familiar feature on the properties of Garth Jones and his father and grandfather before him, with one windmill in service on Wallandry from the late 1800s until 1947.

Like fences and gates in the previous two sections, the stories of windmills; dams and watertanks have added a personal dimension to already existing agriculture histories.\(^\text{48}\)

\(^{47}\) Irrigation. (1906, March 2). *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, 17, pps. 277-281.

1.4: ‘A Very Big Undertaking’ - Stories of the German farmers

Fig. 1.20: Wattle Grove Henty NSW, c1906
Image courtesy of A & L Lieschke
(Photographer: Unknown)

The original kitchen building is on the left. This property is still operated by members of the Lieschke family.

In 1867, Johann Gottlieb Klemke Senior, Christian Graske and Johann Heincke, travelled to the Jindera district in the Riverina with the view to purchasing farming land. Graske and Heincke both selected land at Jindera in 1867, while Klemke Senior waited until his return to the area in 1868 to purchase land.

Although the Klemke group was not the first to relocate from South Australia to the Riverina, they were the largest group. Growing families meant that additional farming land was required for adult sons and an increasing scarcity and rise in land prices in South forced German families to look further afield. Albury newspapers had reported groups arriving at the end of 1866 and in early 1867. ‘These earlier settlers had come from Blumberg (Birdwood), Mt. Torrens and the Barossa Valley. Most of them had selected land in the Jindera and Gerogery districts.’

Klemke Senior departed from Ebenezer, two miles north-west of Light Pass and began the journey back to the Riverina, leading a group consisting of fifty-six people. Sturdy, high sided German style wagons were loaded with everything that would be required on the long overland journey, and as the Klemke history tells us he:

… worked out the distance that they would be able to travel each day and had to work out watering places for their horses and cows. It was indeed a very big undertaking as there were no rooms for accommodation en route, or stores to replenish their food supplies. So they had to take their livestock

---

and poultry, vine cuttings, seeds and feed for their horses and fowls along with them, besides all their belongings.\textsuperscript{50}

Heavier items, including single furrow ploughs, strippers, winnowers and furniture were to be transported by river steamer along the Murray River, from Blanchetown in South Australia to Albury. Due to low river levels the farm machinery only traveled as far as Echuca in 1868 and in 1869 the steamers had only gone as far as Corowa.\textsuperscript{51}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Fig.1.21.png}
\caption{Original farm buildings of pug and log construction, Wattle Grove, Henty NSW (Photo: A. Brown)}
\end{figure}

Pug and Log construction: Native cypress logs were cut and sunk side by side in a shallow trench for stability. The log wall was then coated with a mix of clay and chopped straw for weatherproofing.

There were fourteen wagons, two spring carts and thirty one horses included and distances travelled each day and watering places for horses and cattle were carefully calculated before leaving South Australia. The men and older boys slept under the wagons each night and the women, girls, children and babies slept inside the wagons. Arriving in Albury five and a half weeks after leaving South Australia, the group travelled on to Dight’s Forest, now known as Jindera.\textsuperscript{52} Ernest Pech recalled that:

\begin{quote}
When my parents first came and settled in New South Wales, conditions were pretty hard. My mother had to do a lot of work in the paddocks, helping grubbing to get the farm ready. They started off with 20-30 acres and gradually increased it. The wattle was easy to clear, but further out the timber was heavy. The land was freehold, and they had to pay 30 pounds a year to pay it off.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Manual labour on the farms was constant and one of the first tasks was the clearing of land. This was done by digging around the trees and cutting as many roots as possible to weaken the tree. The tree was then pulled over with the aid of horses. Fallen timber was cut and

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. p. 27.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. p. 29.
used for fencing, houses and fires. Burning and ring barking were also used to remove trees and clear land for grazing and cropping.\textsuperscript{54}

Pastor Simpfendorfer of the Lutheran Church recorded one of the first histories of the Jindera district. While his observations are interspersed with biblical analogies, he does, nonetheless, portray the difficulties faced:

The men found out, very soon, that all beginnings are hard. No road, no bridge, no fodder, no water … nothing but trees and trees. Their wagons served them as living quarters, sleeping quarters, even their work rooms, and, above all, their prayer chambers. God the father was looking after them for soon after they arrived a heavy thunderstorm caused rivers of water to flow everywhere and to make the lands to blossom very soon. Over the sounding of songs of joy of the children, you could hear the eucalyptus trees crashing to the ground, felled by the mighty swings of axes by the strong men in the congregation. They fell like the walls of Jericho. After one year of hoping, they harvested for the first time and there was singing in the fields. The fields are heavy with corn; sing and shout for joy.\textsuperscript{55}

Land clearing was also a priority for German settlers in the Trungley Hall area, with a Hartwig family anecdote suggesting that, ‘the scrub was … so thick “that even a dog couldn’t bark”.\textsuperscript{56}

Technical advances in agricultural machinery were embraced by German farmers in the early years of settlement and, while many started their farming life in the Riverina without the benefit of adequate equipment, others came well equipped. Ploughs, strippers, winnowers, mowers and binders were brought on the long journey from South Australia and Victoria. Most properties also boasted a well equipped blacksmithing workshop, with some farmers, such as Ernst Hoffman of Milbrulong, combining the roles of farmer and blacksmith to add to the family’s income.

In the Trungley Hall/Temora area at the turn of the 20th century, two, three and four furrow ploughs were in common use, in advance of their widespread use in other farming areas. Ploughs made by German blacksmiths were popular and included the Welzel plough (Jindera), and Mickan ploughs and scarifiers (South Australia). Ploughs and earth scoops

\textsuperscript{54} Wegner, L. (Ed.). (1976). p. 34.
made by Linke Noack (South Australia) were also advertised and used in the Temora district.

While the work on local farms became increasingly mechanised, for many farmers with little capital the use of family labour was still the norm. Children as young as eight years old drove the horses and harrow, while the farmer cast seed grain by hand from a tub slung over one shoulder. As Emilie Krause recalled:

When the cultivated area grew too large for broadcasting by hand, the seats were taken off the buggy and [I] sat in the front slowly driving, while [my] father rode in the back with a bag of wheat, casting it out with both hands.57

Mechanised broadcasting machines were later purchased.

Harvest on the 600 acre Klemke farm of 1891 involved father, mother and the three Klemke boys, the youngest aged nine years. The winnower stood in a paddock, to process the grain which was brought in from the three-horse stripper. According to Gottfried Klemke, ‘[t]he whole family helped. Gotthilf used to shovel it into the winnower. Mother turned the winnower and Willie and I used to bag with the dish.’58

All the family shared in the milking of cows both in the morning and the evening. The production of pigs, sheep, poultry, vegetables, fruit trees and vineyards added to the farm’s economy and also to the allotted tasks of the family. Work continued the year round between seeding the ground and harvest. The small dams of earlier years were gradually

enlarged, with contractors often hired to scoop out larger dams. Brush and some post and rail fences were erected to protect stock. These were gradually replaced by wire strung fences.\textsuperscript{59}

![Fig. 1.23: Milking on the Wendt family farm, Trungley Hall NSW, c1900](image)

Image courtesy of Hartwig family
(Photographer: Unknown)

The German farmers continually worked to improve the yielding capacity of their properties. After the establishment of the ‘Model Farm’ at Wagga Wagga in 1891 a yearly visit was always on the calendar.\textsuperscript{60} Many German farmers included experimental plots on their farms, where they sowed seed provided by the New South Wales Agricultural Department for testing. Purple Straw and Steinwedel strains of wheat were among the more commonly grown varieties.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60} The Model Farm or Wagga Experimental Farm was established near Wagga Wagga in 1891 by the NSW Department of Agriculture. The farm provided a venue for the trialing of various farming techniques including cropping, orchards and grazing. The Model Farm became the Agricultural Research Institute and now operates within the Charles Sturt University Campus.
\textsuperscript{61} Purple Straw: an older strain of soft wheat, preferred by flour millers for its production of soft and very white flour. Steinwedel: discovered in South Australia by a German farmer (Steinwedel) and relatively drought resistant.
German farmers were also active members of the Farmers’ and Settlers’ Union during the late 19th and early 20th century. In 1902, the *Albury Border Post* reported that:

A special meeting of Walla Walla Farmers’ and Settlers’ Union was held at the Ebenezer Hall yesterday, 31st ult. Mr J.G. Klemke senr. was in the chair. The meeting was thoroughly representative. The chairman in opening the meeting briefly drew attention to the importance of the Rabbit Act from a farmers’ point of view, and urged those present to do their best to return such men for the Rabbit Board as would look after their interests. Messrs. Paech, Odewahn, and others also spoke of the importance of the Act to small landowners, who, if not safeguarded, may in many cases be subject to extra heavy taxation. Mr Odewahn then moved, and Mr Klemke seconded, that this Union nominate Mr H.A. Paech as a candidate for the Rabbit Board.62

Descendents of these German pioneer farmers continue the tradition of innovation in agriculture. In 2005, Wayne Krause of Trungley Hall is renowned for his micro-fine wool.

---

Pig killing was a labour intensive activity and involved several days of hard work, involving all able bodied family members. A beef animal was often slaughtered and prepared at the same time as the pig and after killing and cleaning the animals, there came the work of making smallgoods. This included mettwurst, blutwurst and leberwurst. Many of the sausages and hams were hung and smoked, with a fire continuously smouldering on the floor of a specially constructed smokehouse. Before the advent of reliable methods of refrigeration, smoking and salting were two proven methods for prolonging the storage capacity of meat and meat by-products, including sausages.

Prior to smoking the portions of meat for the hams and bacon were packed in wooden barrels and covered in brine for six or seven weeks. The fat was also melted down for lard, which was often spread on bread and with added sauerkraut or pickled cucumber made a delicious snack. According to the authors of the Hohnburg Family History, every part of the pig was used, including, they humorously declare, ‘the squeal from the pig, which was used in teddy bears’.

Author and historian Colin Thiele describes in vivid detail his childhood memories of the pig slaughtering in South Australia which, he recalls:

---

Involved the whole family and demanded detailed preparation and frenzied activity. The gallows were always ready near the sty, with hook, spreader and endless chain. Close at hand my father set up a row of four-gallon tins of boiling water and a special rack on which the carcass was to lie.  

![Fig. 1.27: Hoffman family making sausages, Victoria c1900](Museum Victoria: MM 001328)

The freshly killed and bled pig was covered with hessian and boiling water was poured over it, to soften the bristles on the skin. Home-made metal scrapers were then used to scrape away the softened bristles, leaving the skin clean and unblemished. After being hung clear of the ground and cleaned and dressed, the carcass was encased in a calico bag and left to hang from the ‘gallows’ to air and cool:

> Little of the offal was discarded. Anything that was useful was sent over to the house to be cleaned and prepared for use the next day. My job was usually the cleaning of the intestines (or ‘runners’) under the stern supervision of my mother. These were the sausage-casings-to-be for Bratwurst. I stood on a box with a funnel, a dipper, and a bucket of brine, flushing the intestines again and again, turning them inside out and repeating the process over and over. It took a long time before my mother was satisfied that I had really done the job properly.

The following morning saw the butchering of the carcass, which involved ‘a welter of cutting, sawing, slicing, mincing, mashing, salting, spicing and boiling, until every fragment of the pig had gone its allotted way’. Various portions of the beast were set aside for salting or for immediate consumption, or were exchanged with relatives and neighbours for other items of produce.

---

65 Ibid. p. 35.
66 Ibid.
Hand operated meat mincers played an integral role in the preparation of the various types of sausage, which included the traditional German Bratwurst, Blutwurst and Leberwurst. Sausage making equipment was stocked and sold by Wagner’s Store67 in Jindera. The shop fittings, which are still in situ, show the drawer which was set aside especially for this purpose.

Many of the recipes used for sausage making were passed from mother to daughter over many generations and the exact contents of the recipes were often closely guarded family secrets. The skill of German women in the making of sausages is evident from the pages of the *Australian Woman’s Mirror* of 1935, when a correspondent states that:

---

67 Wagner’s Store in Jindera is now the site of the Jindera Museum. Original shop fittings and stock from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remain in situ.
“Nemo” … who wants to know how to make sausages that keep, probably means the Metwurst, a smoked sausage? One winter we bought half a pig. My husband had seen the wurst-making done in his young days, but to make sure we enlisted the help of an old German farmer-woman. Following her instructions we got a long flat wooden tub, a chopper on a long handle for mincing the meat. To 2 parts of raw pork she allowed 1 part of raw beef, plenty of salt and pepper, a little caraway seed and garlic (if liked) and mace, marjoram and thyme, dried herbs. She worked the mixture with her hands like dough, and filled the casings (bought from the butcher) very tight, tying each securely. The sausages were hung in a draughty place to dry and then in the smoke of tea-tree for several days. The wurst was delicious and would have kept till the next winter if we had not eaten it before.68

1.5: ‘Work For Hours’ – Stories of the Chinese tobacco growers

The Tumut district is well known for its primary industries including dairy farming, fruit growing and beef cattle. Tobacco was also grown in the Tumut district from around 1853. The success of the tobacco crops attracted Chinese growers, many of whom had previously worked on the Kiandra goldfields, situated in the Snowy Mountains, east of Tumut. The growing of tobacco became the main source of income for many farmers and crops were often grown on a share basis between Chinese and non-Chinese farmers.

![Fig. 1.30: Chinese growers harvesting tobacco leaf, Tumut Plains NSW, c1880s](Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum) (Photographer: Unknown)

The voices which bring to life the narratives of the Chinese tobacco growers in the Tumut district are those of the newspaper journalists and Agricultural Department officials of the late 1800s. In particular, the voices of the journalists, while giving credit to the Chinese growers for their hard work and care of the developing plants, often presented the information in a patronising tone. The deliberate misinterpretation of Chinese names and the attachment of terms such as ‘the almond eyed’ and ‘celestials’, by the *Goulburn Herald* and the *Sydney Mail*, is a direct manifestation of the racism of the period:

Large quantities of tobacco are on the road to market, as far as I can judge, the producers are doing well. The growing of the tobacco weed is, entirely in the hands of the almond eyed, your white being not possessed of the patience absolutely necessary, to the successful production of this well paying but delicate crop. The Messrs Ching Chong Oh, My & Co water each plant morning and evening, in the morning covering each plant with a bunch of straw to keep off the fierce rays of the sun, and in the evening removing this covering. When the plants assume larger proportions you will see the celestial squatted on his knees, hands wipeing to clean each separated leaf of each plant. This is not on a small patch of ground, but acre upon acre. The colonial farmers leave it to struggle on as best it can with consequent failure – for, if not scorched up, caterpillars which are extremely fond of it go in for chews, like thorough down east Yankees.69

The *Sydney Morning Herald* however, reported the activities of the Chinese tobacco growers in a more equitable manner, reporting that the:

Tumut … tobacco crop is turning out better than expected. The first planting was damaged by grubs and mostly destroyed. Ah Chang of Windowie has a much larger crop than last year. Two other Chinese have 6 and 15 acres under cultivation.⁷⁰

E.G. Brown,⁷¹ a local landowner and businessman rented large areas of river flats to the Chinese tobacco growers, at a rate of £3 per acre per year. Brown was also the chief buyer of tobacco leaf in the district, with the *Sydney Morning Herald* reporting that in 1878, ‘E.G. Brown sold 24 tons of tobacco to Sydney firms on behalf of several Chinese growers.’⁷²

Fig. 1.31: Drying tobacco leaf, Tumut Plains NSW, c1900 (E. G. Brown - right)
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

Air curing was carried out in open barns. Three tiers of leaf was threaded on pins and tied to poles.

The late 1800s saw the supply of tobacco leaf outstrip demand, which caused the price to plummet alarmingly. Many farmers turned their attention to the growing of more cost effective crops including maize. Tobacco growing was continued however, by a few Chinese tenant farmers, with the *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales* highlighting the preponderance of Chinese growers in the Tumut district:

The area of available tobacco land in the district is of great extent, covering thousands of acres. The cultivation which was formerly carried on by Europeans has of late fallen entirely into the hands of Chinamen, who rent land from the owners, but there are many among the farming class who are well

---
⁷¹ Edward George Brown (1829-1895) – Educated at the King’s School in Sydney, Brown was a well known and respected land owner and stock and station agent in Tumut. Brown became the district Parliamentary representative for Wynyard in 1886, serving for six years, and was also chosen as one of the first aldermen for Tumut and consequently elected as the first Mayor of Tumut.
acquainted with the industry, and would again engage in the cultivation if there was any assured market for their produce.  

While acknowledging the high numbers of Chinese growers in the Tumut district, the agricultural practices which they employed were discussed in a negative tone, with S. Lamb and G. Sutherland of the Department of Agriculture stating that:

The Chinamen, so far as we have seen, do not remove these primary leaves, but allow them to remain on the plants, and such of them as do not rot on the ground are gathered and dried to form part of the crop under the name of No. 2 tobacco. The proper destination of these leaves is either the fire or the dung-pit.

The technical ability of the Chinese tobacco growers was also questioned in the same article, particularly in regard to the application of Bordeaux mixture for the control of mildew in tobacco plants. Lamb and Sutherland suggested that, ‘a hand or knapsack spraying machine is recommended in the case of tobacco cultivation in our [Tumut] districts, as the machine will be simple and handy for the Chinamen to use.’

Tobacco growing in the Tumut district was revitalized in 1904, as a result of stimulus from the British Australian Tobacco Company, with local farmers encouraged to erect kilns for the drying of the tobacco leaf. A three year growing trial was, however, found to be unsuccessful, with low prices and an outbreak of blue mould bringing to an end the growing of tobacco in the Tumut district. Blue mould infestation of tobacco leaf was a threat in many areas and, as early as 1898, the Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales referred to blue mould as ‘the principal enemy of the tobacco grower … season after season whole crops are damaged – sometimes beyond the faintest hope of yielding a return’.

74 Ibid.
75 Ibid. p. 318.
76 Untitled. Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales. 9. (1898, March) 335.
In 1922, another revival of tobacco growing in the Tumut district was again led by the British Australian Tobacco Company. Large areas were sown each year and farmers were guaranteed a market return of 2/6 per pound of kiln dried tobacco leaf.

The 1920s were the peak years of the Chinese tenant farmers on Tumut Plains and as Jack Bridle recalls:

They would work all day sowing their tobacco plants, shuffling along on their knees or backsides, pushing their baskets of plants in front of them and sowing a row on either side … they would work for hours on the hottest day.77

A lifelong resident and retired farmer from the Tumut district, Jack Bridle, has clear recall of the Chinese tobacco growers in the Tumut district during the 1920s and 1930s. Bridle’s recollections are far more positive than the harsh voice of journalists and the agricultural experts from the late 1800s:

My father and I always made a point of delivering wood to them at Chinese New Year (some time in February). They would invite us to their feast of roast pig and duck with rice wine and Chinese whisky. I usually did the driving home, with dad asleep in the cart.78

78 Ibid. pps. 12-13.
1.6: ‘Bread and Butter For Many’ – Stories of the broom millet industry

Made by Selwyn Wilkinson in the 1930s, this portable millet thresher was purchased by a group of five men: Rolf Bridle, Joe Hampstead, Garney Naughton, Jack Le Fevre and Clem Hampstead. The men paid £5 each, a total of £25, for the purchase of the portable millet thresher. It was used primarily throughout its working life by the five co-owners on their own properties, which were spread throughout the Blowering Valley. On the occasions when the thresher was used in the interests of farmers other than the five co-owners, the operators were paid 10 shillings per day. According to Rolf Bridle, this was quite a considerable amount of money for the 1930s period.\textsuperscript{79}

Similar in design and operation to a hand operated hackler illustrated in the \textit{Agricultural Gazette of NSW} 1914, the portable millet thresher made by Wilkinson could also be powered by a drive belt attached to a petrol engine. Rolf Bridle also recalls that it was also capable of being horse powered, using a horseworks\textsuperscript{80}, if necessary.

\textsuperscript{79} R. Bridle (personal communication, October 10, 2002).
\textsuperscript{80} Horseworks – Circular mechanism with attached shaft which could be pulled by a horse walking round in a circle. For further information see: Wheelhouse, F. (1966) \textit{Digging Stick to Rotary Hoe. Men and machines in rural Australia}. Melbourne: Cassell.
Sharpened knives were an essential part of the millet threshing ‘tool kit’. Rolf Bridle, like millet grower Peter Sturt, recalls that most of the workers owned an assortment of knives, among which would be a ‘favourite’ knife. Many of these millet cutting implements were fashioned from ground-down, domestic vegetable knives. Rolf Bridle also puts the skill levels of the millet workers into perspective by stating that ‘people like to think of the cutting and threshing as hard work, but it really wasn’t hard work when you knew what you were doing.’

Selwyn Wilkinson, the maker of the millet thresher, was renowned in the local community for his eccentric personality, often disappearing or ‘going bush’ for weeks at a stretch. He was also known for his skill as a ‘bush carpenter’ and his insistence on a quality product.

---

81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
and using the best materials available. In Rolf Bridle’s estimates, the millet thresher would have been carefully designed by Wilkinson and definitely not constructed from ‘just any old bits and pieces’, but from the best timber available.\(^{83}\)

At the end of its working life, the portable millet thresher was placed into storage on the property of Joe Hampstead. The thresher was then purchased at a clearing sale by Rolf Bridle for the price of $2, and donated to the Tumut & District Historical Museum.

‘I paid $2 to buy back my own millet thresher!’\(^{84}\), said Rolf Bridle with a chuckle.

The suitability of growing broom millet in the Tumut area was known from the early 1900s, although for many years there was little demand for the crop. Millet growing in the district was established in the 1920s, with the boom years being the 1950s and 1960s, when broom millet production reached a peak.

\(^{83}\) Ibid.
\(^{84}\) Ibid.
From planting to harvest, the millet crop provided work for large numbers of men in the Tumut district, particularly in areas such as Tumut Plains and the Blowering Valley. Experienced cutters and threshers were among the most sought after among the agricultural labourers in the district and their expertise with a razor sharp knife was legendary among the local community.

After the cutting of the millet came the equally important job of threshing the millet. This process was often undertaken by contract workers, who also doubled as cutters during the harvesting season. Until the introduction of automated machinery, the operation of stripping the seed from the millet head was undertaken by hand using a hand driven thresher or hackler. The high protein millet seed was then used for poultry or sheep feed, while the stripped millet heads were used in the manufacture of straw brooms. The *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales* of 1914 published an extensive article entitled ‘Broom-making on the Farm’, which included directions for the operation of a hand operated hackler or thresher.

![Fig. 1.38: Hand operated millet hackler or thresher, 1914](image)

Broom millet is still grown in the Tumut area, with around 90% of the state’s requirement being supplied from there. Tumut is also one of the few places where millet brooms are still made in Australia. Peter Sturt, a grower and manufacturer and Geoff Wortes, broom manufacturer are the local custodians of both the technical and social history of this once extensive industry.

---

'It Wasn’t Really Hard Work’ – Stories of millet threshing

As Peter Sturt explained in a 2003 interview with ABC Radio journalist Emily Doak:

I’ve been growing [millet] since I was fifteen and I was a grower of thirty to forty tons at one stage. I’m down to about five, so that’s how the industry has changed in the last ten to fifteen years here. There’s just not the market for it and you just can’t compete against the overseas stuff … It was the bread and butter for a lot of small landholders in the district. They all used to have a crop of millet. Some of them would be growing four or five ton and harvesting on the weekends for a bit of a sideline and then there was a lot of big growers like Hallorans, myself and Le Fevres were big growers, growing thirty or forty tons and there was big manufacturers going then. The Queen Brooms were taking a lot and Mitchell’s and our local little factory in here [Tumut] was handling about one hundred tons a year. We were producing about fifteen hundred tons a year and now we’re down to about eight or nine … If you haven’t got experienced men, well it’s a very difficult job and these days there are not many experienced men about. The young people aren’t interested in this sort of work and that’s another thing that’s killing the industry, the lack of good millet cutters.  

Good millet cutters were readily available however, during the peak period of the industry in the 1950s and 1960s and competition, cloaked under a veneer of light hearted humour and badinage was fierce among the men, both on and off the job. The expertise of these millet cutters was put to the test annually at local millet cutting competitions.

These events were often held in conjunction with the millet cutters' ball and acted as fundraisers for local charities, with the Tumut & Adelong Times reporting in 1959 that:

Aub Vickery and Jim Halloran regard their cutting team as all “dark horses”, but will definitely shine in the championship. Veteran cutters, “Sparrow” and Frank Sturt, are reported to be choosing their own millet for the judging, which missed out at the Tumut Show. Frank Stanfield has the millet for the cutting championship in tip-top condition and it will only be the condition of health that should be rough during this important event. Two new entries this week include Len Armstrong, who surprised years ago in a sweet-corn pulling competition at the Plains, and Darcy (“Nine Toes”) Crowe, who will cut with farrier’s knife and apron on. Cliff Davis has received a lot of support from Blowering residents for star-cutter Clem Malone, who had a trial gallop this week cutting cabbage thistles on the Town Common.  

Over 200 people attended the ball and millet cutting championships held at the Tumut Plains Hall. The event received wide publicity and ‘even obtained mention in the Sydney Morning Herald’ boasted the Tumut & Adelong Times. Male debutantes were ‘presented’, much to the hilarity of those in attendance, with the attire of the ‘debs’ varying from ‘millet rust to early ripe shades … whilst they carried bouquets of millet worthy of a prize at any Horticultural Show’.

‘Millet Rust to Early Ripe Shades’ – *Stories of the millet cutters’ ball*
According to the newspaper report, along with the presentation of the ‘debutantes’, the highlight of the evening was the millet cutting championship:

There were four heats each of eight cutters in the millet cutting championships and the six fastest contested the final. Twelve stalks of millet were laid on the table for each competitor under lights outside the hall. The stalks came from Jim Malone’s crop, which is considered to be the best for years. Mr. Herb Gaul was judge, Messrs. P. Cruise and T. Sturt timekeepers, Mr. M. Bristow starter and Messrs. Clem Malone and Garry Gaul were stalk stewards. The competition was conducted in a mixture of millet dust and heavy dew. Conditions were considered to be very heavy, but ideal for back-hand cutters. The champion millet cutter proved to be Mr. Frank Stanfield of Blowering, who was making his last appearance as a singles player on the Plains. He cut his twelve heads of millet in 9 seconds. Other times in the finals were Ern Sturt 9.4 seconds, John Shiels 9.7 seconds, Des Hampstead 10 seconds, John Halloran 10.3 seconds and Garry Gaul 10.3 seconds. Frank Stanfield received a championship sash and a trophy donated by the Tumut Millet Society. A humorous sidelight was caused when cutter, Frank Stokes handed his coat and a bottle of rum to a Police officer to hold while he went into action. Tumut Plains identities stated that never before has such a fine gang of cutters been banded together on the Plains. Teams for next year’s cutting have already been picked.  

---

The volunteers at the Gundagai Historical Museum delight in telling visitors the story of how the large, cast iron tallow vat was brought to its new home from Red Hill Station, which is situated in the Adjungbilly area to the east of Gundagai. For these men, the significance of the tallow vat’s history lies not in the object itself, but in its alleged connection to Kiley, of ‘Banjo’ Paterson’s ‘On Kiley’s Run’ fame. The vat in fact becomes for them a vehicle for the retelling of pioneer stories and connections to the maker and the circumstances for its making have been overlooked.

By applying significance assessment to the tallow vat the stories of the maker, Richard Dawson, and the context of its making and use were all brought into focus.
When the price of wool or meat fell too low to make normal marketing worthwhile, sheep were boiled down in a cast iron tallow vat. This practice is thought to have been introduced by Henry O’Brian of Jugiong, New South Wales. In January 1843 O’Brien recovered his dwindling finances by converting his sheep into tallow, whereby an important new industry, which included the export of both tallow and hides, was established virtually by accident. During depressed times squatters could depend on a minimum value of 7 shillings per animal for tallow, rather than 6 pence on the hoof. Tallow, at that time, was selling for £28 per ton.

Among the primary uses for tallow at that time were: as a lubricant for munitions; soap and candle making; explosives; tanning; and the manufacture of bone china.

While ‘boiling down’ may have ensured a profit for the farmers involved, Port Phillip squatter, Alfred Joyce, described the process in more personalised terms:

We boiled down the first lot of ewes culled by Mr. Goldsborough, numbering about 1100, and yielding about twenty pounds of tallow each, netting about 5s. [Shillings] a head, a price that we considered quite satisfactory at that time. Our neighbour boiled down a somewhat larger number, with about the same results, and these were also Mr. Goldsborough’s culling. Being in town at the time our ewes were going through the melting pot, I took advantage of the opportunity to see something of the process, which, as far as slaughtering and dressing was concerned was not an
exhilarating spectacle, in the case of our own sheep especially, as many of the ewes were individually known to us and had received particular names.  

A poem of the period also describes the anguish of many squatters as they boiled down ‘their capital asset’.  

Sair, sair was my heart when I slaughtered a’ my sheep;  
I sat beside the boiling pots and bitterly did weep;  
For the taxes were sae high, and the profits were sae sma’,  
That they gar’d me melt ‘em down into candles a’  

‘Well Equipped With Machine Tools’ – The story of Dawson’s foundry  

The solid, cast iron construction of the tallow vat in the Gundagai Museum gives it the appearance of being virtually indestructible, however, as Graham Clegg, conservator in metals and engineering from the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney observed:  

The vat is actually extremely fragile, resulting from crystallisation of the cast iron over a period of more than a century and a half and one tap in the wrong place could cause the tallow vat to crack.  

This aspect of the tallow vat’s significance was overlooked or perhaps misinterpreted by the volunteers at the Gundagai and District Historical Museum. While they are quick to point out the importance of the vat’s ‘pioneer’ connections, they fail to understand the importance of relocating the vat to an under cover area of the museum. While the tallow vat  

---  

91 G. Clegg (personal communication, March 7, 2003)
remains at risk of damage in its exposed location, other, far less significant objects, such as unprovenanced sulkies, are stored under cover.

**Fig. 1.45: Detail of cast iron ring on tallow vat**
Collection of Gundagai and District Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

The cast iron tallow vat was manufactured by the Australian Foundry in Sydney during 1844. Situated at 633 Lower George Street, the Australian Foundry was established by Richard Dawson in 1833 for the casting and working of iron. It was the most important foundry at that time and one of the colony’s rare heavy industries. Two other engineering works were founded in 1840, with George Coke opening premises in Bathurst Street and William Orr commencing business in Sussex Street. Orr was succeeded at this location by Messrs Young & Mather.

Castings of up to 4 tons in weight were produced by Dawson’s Foundry and in 1837 Dawson had completed a high pressure steam engine of 8 horsepower, to drive machinery in the foundry. The small iron ferry, *PS Rapid*, was also assembled by the Dawson Foundry in the same year.92

---

In 1853 the steamer, *Croesus*, arrived in port at Sydney, damaged and leaking. No dock in Australia could accommodate the steamer and Dawson displayed great skill and initiative by constructing a watertight coffer dam of cast iron plates, which was placed around the after end of the ship. The damage to the ship was successfully repaired and the *Illustrated Sydney News* of 8 January 1854 reported that Dawson had previously built a similar coffer dam and salvaged and repaired the sailing ship Thomas Lowry.

By 1865 Dawson employed fifty-one men and two boys, and staff included engineers, fitters, moulders, pattern-makers and blacksmiths. The works had three furnaces, the smallest of 8 tons capacity, with the largest being of 16 tons capacity, with the foundry using from 12 to 15 tons of metal per week. The engineering workshop was well equipped with machine tools designed for boring, slotting, planing, turning, shearing and punching. An engine column weighing 4½ tons, from the Australian Steam Navigation Company Ltd., was the largest casting handled by Dawson’s. ⁹³

The business carried on after the death of Richard Dawson (c1857) and was purchased by Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, who then wound the business up. Although the exact date of Mort’s purchase is unknown, it is known that in 1866 he ‘added iron and brass foundries … and new facilities for boiler-making, blacksmithing and engineering’ ⁹⁴ to his business interests.

---

⁹³ Ibid. p. 109.
Men such as the legendary landowner, Kiley, of ‘Kiley’s Run’, are seen by an older generation of Australians, such as the volunteers at the Gundagai Historical Museum, as the embodiment of the pioneer spirit of the bush and outback. Along with other larger than life characters of the bush, including ‘Clancy of the Overflow’ and ‘The Man from Snowy River’, Kiley has been immortalised in the writings of Andrew Barton ‘Banjo’ Paterson.

Contemporary Australian bush poet, Denis Kevans, in his 1994 poem *Hey, Banjo, Have You Heard, Mate?*, has Paterson spending time in Kiley’s company and penning several poems at Kiley’s Run including: *A Mountain Station*, *On Kiley’s Run*, and *The Geebung Polo Club*. In reality, Kiley’s Run was a fictional location and the poem; *On Kiley’s Run* was, according to Paterson, ‘the story of a station or rather of many stations rolled into one’.  

The most relevant connection between the tallow vat and the poem *On Kiley’s Run* is contained in the verses which describe Kiley at the mercy of economic downturn and his vulnerability in the face of ruin. Written in 1890, at the beginning of the Australian Rural Depression of the 1890s, the poem outlines the ‘bushman’ not only as the mythologised hero, but also as the victim:

---

But droughts and losses came apace to Kiley's Run,
Till ruin stared him in the face;
He toiled and toiled while lived the light,
He dreamed of overdrafts at night:
At length, because he could not pay,
His bankers took the stock away
From Kiley's Run.

Old Kiley stood and saw them go
From Kiley's Run.
The well-bred cattle marching slow;
His stockmen, mates for many a day,
They wrung his hand and went away.
Too old to make another start,
Old Kiley died – of broken heart,
On Kiley's Run. 96

1.8: Summary

While the more dominant mainstream narratives of agricultural technology and history form a contextual framework for the objects in this research, it is through lesser known stories, such as those connected to the cultivation of tobacco and broom millet in the Tumut area, which truly animate the objects, their makers and owners. The examination of narratives of failure also adds a further dimension to the agricultural history of the Riverina. Stories, such as those connected to the tallow vat and the rural depression of the 1890s, when ‘[r]eturns on squatting investments fell to exceptionally low levels [and] wholesale prices\(^7\) for Australian agricultural products (including wool) dropped steadily from 1500 in 1889 to 650 in 1894.’\(^8\)

Such stories reinforce the stark realities of the rural sector’s defencelessness in the face of economic downturns of both the 1840s, when the tallow vat was manufactured and the 1890s, when the vat was allegedly in use on Red Hill station. A time, Cannon reminds us, when:

\[\text{[S]o many cases of foreclosure had occurred, sometimes unfairly, to make squatters view their mortgage payments as a far more important consideration than wages paid to the men who actually performed the labour.}\]

What can be determined from an analysis of the research on fences is that texts on the history of fencing in Australia do exist, for example: *Illustrated Glossary of Australian Rural Fence Terms* (2010) available as a download from the NSW Heritage Office website, Gerald Walsh, ‘Pioneering Days. People and innovations in Australia’s rural past’ (1993), James Semple Kerr, ‘A Brief Account of the Development of Fencing in Australia During the Nineteenth Century’ (1984), and Murray Walker, ‘Pioneer Crafts of Early Australia’ (1978). They are however, concerned primarily with fences in an agricultural or industrial sense. The Garth Jones Collection fence stories add a personal perspective to the history of fences in the Riverina.

\(^7\) Compared with a base figure of 1000 on 1911 prices.


\(^9\) Ibid.
The historical and cultural significance of the Garth Jones Collection lies in the ability of objects such as the H.V. McKay farm gate, to interpret the stories of childhood and children's games by farmers and their families in relation to farm life.

The section on stories of farm gates highlights the capacity for everyday, utilitarian farm objects to act as triggers for personal narratives, and like the preceding section on farm fences, these stories add extra dimensions to already existing agricultural and industrial histories, as do stories of the tallow vat.

Research into the tallow vat has also allowed Australian folkloric micro-narratives to be uncovered in relation to this object. As curator of the Royal Engineers Museum in Chatham England, James Rattue, points out:

> In the folkloric model, objects become deep, rich, powerful items bearing complex social messages … Folklore reveals people’s relationships to the objects they use to express their lives in a way no other medium does. ¹⁰⁰

While there may be similarities between the ‘German’ farming practices of South Australia, North East Victoria and the Riverina, they are all aligned with the geography and climate of the particular area. What is apparent however, is the tradition of a strong work ethic and a willingness to experiment and diversify. Focused research and comparison studies into the history of ‘German’ farming practices of the Riverina, South Australia and North East Victoria would be well worth the undertaking.

Chapter 2: ‘A Choice Assortment’ – Stories of commerce and industry in the Riverina

Fig. 2.1: S. Richards & Co. building Narrandera NSW, 2003
(Photo: A. Brown)
This site now operates as an IGA supermarket.

2.1: Objects and collections – an overview

The key objects and collections in this chapter tell the stories of commercial and industrial enterprises in the Riverina, most of which have ceased to operate at the beginning of the 21st century. They not only tell the stories of places and people throughout the region, but also technologies which have either been superseded or have disappeared completely.

The objects and collections are: Coolamon’s Up To Date Store and Lamson cash carrier; the Class 500 National cash register; the Tumut Butter Factory collection; the Chinese market gardeners watering can; and the broom clamp.

2.2: Introduction

Commercial and industrial development in the Riverina during the late 1800s and early 1900s was driven by agricultural land selection and the subsequent growth of towns in the vicinity of large pastoral runs and smaller selections. Narrandera, Wagga Wagga and Coolamon became the commercial hubs for surrounding farming communities. Temora and Adelong were exceptions, with their initial development linked to the gold mining operations in the vicinity of each town.
Where Narrandera grew with the rate of land selection, and Adelong\(^1\) prospered with strikes on the gold diggings, the commercial expansion of Tumut was a combination of both these factors. Geographically positioned between the gold diggings of Adelong and Kiandra, to the west and south respectively, Tumut serviced both these communities in a commercial capacity. Surrounded by rich pastoral and agricultural land, Tumut’s key industries were related to the primary industries of the area, in particular butter making and the manufacture of straw brooms.

As early as 1871, census figures for Narrandera listed 4 hotelkeepers, 1 storekeeper, 2 butchers, 1 baker, 2 gardeners (1 Chinese), 1 bootmaker, 2 carpenters and 1 blacksmith. Narrandera was a junction for the Hay and Jerilderie railway lines, as well as a steamer port, and by the late 1880s boasted the services of sawmills, a coach factory, a brewery and cordial factory, a flour mill, wool scour and meat freezing works, as well as hotels and retail outlets. From 1881 to 1891, the number of houses in Narrandera increased from 594 to 921 and, according to G.L. Buxton, by 1891 on a population basis, Narrandera was, ‘the most highly industrialised town in the Riverina’.\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) The Adelong stories have no direct link to an object or collection. They do however, provide an extra layer of stories that highlight the vibrant commercial and industrial history of the Riverina.

Among the businesses operated in Narrandera during the late 1800s and early 1900s, several were owned by members of the Chinese community. From their initial occupations as market gardeners and rural contract workers, the Chinese moved into roles of financiers, general business operators, grocers and laundry proprietors.

Prosperity and growth in Riverina towns also aided the establishment of businesses by entrepreneurs such as Solomon Richards in Narrandera and Messrs. Nadin, Iverach and Denoon in Coolamon. During the boom years of Richards & Co. in Narrandera and the Up To Date Store in Coolamon, service and cutting-edge retail technology of the period became synonymous with both these stores.
2.3: ‘A Great Convenience’ – Stories of commerce in Adelong

Fig. 2.4: Tumut Street, Adelong NSW, c1915
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an24307178)

The growth of retail trade in Adelong and its surrounding district grew hand in hand with the rise and fall of the gold diggings in the area, with the Adelong Mining Journal of November 1858 stating solemnly that:

Business in general at the present time is not so brisk as could be desired, which is attributed to the scarcity of money, or the unwillingness to part with it, but the former is most probably the case, as for the past week or two many of our quartz holders have been reserving their quartz in the hope of the price for crushing being considerably lowered.3

Among the earliest group of retailers in the Adelong district were the travelling hawkers. To people of the outlying Adelong district, especially women, these portable retail outlets were frequently a lifeline. They not only provided consumer goods, but also social contact in an often isolated lifestyle.

For many of the ‘new chums’4 hotels were often their first point of contact with life on the Adelong diggings. Apart from the service of alcohol and the offer of rooms, hotels formed an integral part of the local information network. It was here that groups of men gathered and where news of the latest finds and failures on the diggings were discussed. Hotels provided relaxation and companionship and, above all, job opportunities. Local newspapers would be read aloud, or passed from hand to hand, with ‘wanted’ ads eagerly ‘conned’.

Supplies for the mine owners and their employees were extensive and ranged from personal items to a variety of tools. The Australian Store offered clothing such as hats, shirts, pants,

vests and boots to the men of Adelong and district, along with ‘Barrett’s Twist, and other American Tobacco and Cigars.’ The tools and equipment of their trades were also available, including ‘the very best Blasting Powder and Fuse ever brought on these diggings’.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marriot’s best Cast Steel, in bars and drills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large and small Hammers, Picks, long and short-handle Shovels, Prospecting and other Pans and Dishes, Axes, Adzes, Tomahawks, Wedges, Cross-cut, Hand and Pit Saws, Augers, Gimblets, Files, Chisels, &amp;c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aware of the debt owed to his local patrons, Michael Doyle, proprietor of the Australian Store at Adelong Creek [Adelong], thanked them with an advertisement which appeared in the pages of the Adelong Mining Journal,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MICHAEL DOYLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takes this opportunity of returning thanks to his friends, the Miners and inhabitants of these diggings and the surrounding district, for the kind support he has received for the last eighteen months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Steven’s Bathing Room offered to supply the ‘clean body’ to accompany the smart new clothing purchased from the Australian Store, with the price of admission being one shilling.

A listing of retail traders in Adelong and district of the late 1800s and early 1900s was extensive, with business advertising during that period including: saw-miller, farrier, coach builder, wheelwright, blacksmith, chimney sweep, general merchant, dressmaker, baker, pastry cook/caterer, undertaker/embalmer, carpenter/cabinet maker, brewer, hairdresser/barber, tailor, jeweler/watchmaker/optician, chemist, doctor, solicitor, dentist, mid-wife, photographer, fruiterer/greengrocer, publican, wool/hide merchant, mechanic and butcher.

A common practice in the 19th and early 20th centuries was for many retail businesses to practise what is known in the early 21st century as multi-skilling. The Adelong Coach

---

6 Adelong Mining Journal. (1858, 1859 & 1860) [Advertisements] and the Adelong & Tumut Express. (1880 to 1920) [Advertisements].
Building Works operated by Charles Passlow was a prime example of the ingenuity of many tradesmen and retailers of the time, with trades ranging from coach building and wheelwrighting to undertaking and embalming.

Fig. 2.5: Chas. Passlow, coachbuilder's advertisement, 1858
Adelong Mining Journal

Women were eagerly sought after as potential consumers by local retailers, and advertising from the late 1800s encouraged the local ‘ladies’, with vivid word-pictures of the goods available. The Australian Store of 1858 offered ‘a choice assortment of ladies’ wedding, and other silk bonnets and mantles, all of the newest fashion’\(^7\) and ‘ladies’ silk dresses, cashmeres, muslins, de laines, prints, &c’.\(^8\)

Taylor & Bell’s New Store, of Camp Street, Adelong, advertised a glittering array of items ‘expressly for the ladies of Adelong’ in April of 1859. Everything from Chinese crepe shawls, Berlin slippers, Bugle lace, French flowers, print dresses and stays [corsets] to infants’ hoods, cut glass ware, papier mache trays, table spoons, dish covers, cruet sets and perfumery could be purchased.\(^9\)

---

\(^8\) Ibid.
V.C. Fitzgerald, pastry cook and caterer, offered the people of the area his services in January 1907. Balls, banquets, picnic and supper parties would be catered to ‘at the shortest notice, at city prices’ and there was also the offer of ‘large and well ventilated Tea Rooms, open all the afternoon.’ The ladies of Adelong and district were enticed to the tea rooms through slick advertising. Written along the lines of present day campaigns, which suggested that ‘Ladies shopping in town will find V.C. FITZGERALD’S TEA ROOMS [a] great convenience, and the tea provided everything they should desire.’

‘The Best to Be Procured’ – Stories of Adelong hotels

---

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
The boom years of the late 1880s saw the establishment of hotels and inns throughout Adelong and the surrounding area, with the first known hotel, Little Plain Hotel, established on the property known as Little Plain in the years before the gold-rush. Union Hotel, Pride of Galway, Adelong Hotel and Reef Inn were among some of the most successful hotels of that era.

The Pride of Galway offered beverages referred to as ‘American Drinks – prepared after the most approved fashion of the United States.’ Along with ale, porter, wines, spirits and cordials, the imported drinks were no doubt on offer to cater to the influx of American miners working on the Adelong diggings.

Competition among local publicans was fiercely contested and, while the Pride of Galway enticed customers with the latest in American drinks, the Adelong Hotel appealed to the patriotic hearts of drinking men, with an advertisement in the Adelong Mining Journal of the 13th of January 1860, announcing that ‘The Bar – is fitted up in the Sydney style, and the Liquors, Wines, &c, are the best to be procured.’

To many hotel patrons of Adelong and district, clean and well attended stables were the late 19th century equivalent of the early 21st century hotel’s valet car parking. Horses formed a fundamental and valued part of a man’s possessions. They were often both transport and work vehicle rolled into one and the loss or ill-treatment of an animal could mean unemployment and isolation. J.R. Paul, the proprietor of the Pride of Galway, offered his

---

customers ‘[e]xtensive Stabling’ in October of 1858, with stables ‘kept supplied with the best of forage … travellers may therefore rest assured that their horses will be carefully attended to, as an attentive Ostler has the entire management of that branch of the business.’

Fig. 2.9: Tumut Street Adelong NSW, c1915. (National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an24307162)

The Commercial Hotel can be seen at the right.

The establishment of the retail and civic sector of Adelong brought a more diversified clientele to the hotels of the area. Publicans still jostled each other for the patronage of travellers and locals alike, however enticements such as ‘Bagatelle Tables’ and ‘American Drinks’ had been replaced with proposals of a more genteel nature. Although pastoralists and the workers of the diggings could still be found in local hotels, patrons also included commercial travellers, solicitors, doctors, retailers and civil servants. In effect, hotel patronage had grown to include a clientele who would expect the ‘careful and civil attention’ which was advertised in October 1901 by H.W. Wilkinson, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel (formerly the Pride of Galway).

Although the presence of women in public bars was frowned upon, women as publicans have been commonplace since colonial times. Several hotels in Adelong and nearby villages were operated by women during the early 1900s. They were the Royal Hotel Adelong – Mrs. John, the Shamrock Hotel Grahamstown– Rose Gorman/Elizabeth McNamara, and the Cosmopolitan Hotel Grahamstown– Margaret Ryan.

---

Publicans, such as H.W. Wilkinson, were well-known and highly respected members of the Adelong community and change of ownership of local hotels was often a major event:

It is quite within the bounds of possibility that the Royal Hotel will, at an early date, pass into other hands than those who have had the management of that popular hostelry for the past three years. If such should come to pass, Adelong will lose the citizenship of not only one of the best publicans that ever served a customer. “Wilkie” will be missed by old and young. His generous free heart is ever open to the many calls, and his donations and sympathy are so pleasingly given that it is a positive delight to call upon him. If he should be superceded the incomer will have to be a “prince among men” to fill “Wilkie’s” shoes.18

Fig. 2.10: Post Office Hotel advertisement, 1926
Adelong & Tumut Express

The hotels of Adelong and district have provided service and comfort to locals and travellers since the late 1800s. The hotel trade adapted to the changes in population, employment and technology during the early to mid 20th century. The Post Office Hotel, under the management of R.J. Benson, advertised a ‘Jovial Welcome For All’19 with business ‘conducted on the most modern lines’20 during 1926. The Commercial Hotel catered for all travellers’ needs during 1928, with their advertising of ‘motor garages and horse looseboxes’21 being available, as well as ‘the comforts of one’s own home.’22

---

19 Post Office Hotel. (1926, January 8). [Advertisement]. Adelong & Tumut Express, p. 6
20 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
Syrians and Indians – Stories of travelling hawkers

Hawkers serviced the Riverina by foot, pack-horse and in horse-drawn vehicles. They travelled to outlying properties and towns including Ariah Park, Coolamon, Temora, Cootamundra, Tumut and Adelong. Courthouse licensing records indicate that the hawkers working in the Adelong area included foreign-born nationals from India, Syria, Lebanon and Switzerland.

The hawkers were often welcomed by women in isolated rural communities providing a:

    distraction … with his cases containing small essentials – pins, needles, camphor, ribbons and piece goods, all dear to a woman’s heart, and valued by the very fact of their scarcity in the outback.  

Women, including Mary Razar and Sophie Moses, both from Syria, were numbered among the hawkers of the Adelong district, and several of the Adelong hawkers went on to establish successful family-run businesses which still operate in the Riverina. They included Syrians, Nader Moses (Narrandera) and George Deep (Cootamundra).

Isolation was a constant concern for women living in rural and regional areas during the early 20th century. Reliable transport and communication were a rarity and, apart from family, itinerant workers and hawkers were often their only visitors. An article submitted to the Woman’s Budget magazine of 1933 outlines the interaction between an unnamed hawker and his customer. The significance and the humour of this exchange between the

---

two is emphasised in the correspondence; as the woman, writing under a pen-name 'Kitchy Koo' explains:

I had made a small purchase from a hawker the other day and as he packed up his wares he made this remark: "It strikes me you ladies are like walking art galleries with all your fancy aprons. Nearly every house I go to the missus comes out with something round her with pictures on. The girl on that apron of yours is the dead image of a girl I used to go out with … a nice girl Gert was." So that particular apron has been christened Gert.24

Correspondence submitted to the *Australian Woman's Mirror* of December 1935 also corroborates the importance of these visits by hawkers and the efforts made by some women to make these infrequent callers feel welcome. The correspondent, identifying herself as 'Lynn Grey' recalls:

I often visit an old lady who has a novel way of dispensing brightness. Her kitchen is quite an art gallery. "But why have all this work in the kitchen?" I asked. "Well, you see," she replied, "all the hard-up people, hawkers and tradespeople come to the back door, and as I can't help them in any other way I like to feel I can give a little cheery feeling. As a rule they have a bit of a laugh and go away with a more pleasant frame of mind. Besides, I feel a wee bit happier myself."25

Hawkers were still operating in the Adelong district until at least 1943, with licenses bearing that date issued by the Adelong Courthouse.26

---

24 'Kitchy Koo'. (1933, April 26). In our letter rack. *Woman's Budget*, p. 31.
26 Adelong Court of Petty Sessions. Registration of applications for auctioneers’, hawkers’ and other licenses, 1898-1958. SA96/1. Riverina Archives: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga NSW.
In the early 1900s, the farmers of the Tumut district brought their milk into the factory in cans, carried by horse and dray, and the retail price of butter was set at 9 pence per pound bulk and 9½ pence per pound wrapped.

The dairy herds of the Tumut Plains area have been a common sight since 1886, when the first recorded dairy farm was established by Mr. R.M. Shelley. In the early 1900s, many families in the Tumut Plains district owned a few cows and milked by hand. This was often the job of women and children and for many families the money made from the sale of milk, cream, butter and cheese was often their only income.

Such was the importance of dairying on the domestic front, that in her book on household hints published in the late 1800s, Mrs. Lance Rawson devoted an entire chapter to ‘The Dairy’. Among the topics covered were: ‘Dairy Buildings’, ‘Points of A Good Cow’, ‘To Tell The Age of A Cow’, ‘Management of A Cow’ and ‘Hints About Cows’. Mrs. Rawson

---

also instructed farmers and their wives in the best way to build a ‘portable dairy’.\textsuperscript{28} As Mrs. Lawson says:

Mine was made of a huge packing case with shelves that would slip in and out to hold the dishes, doors back and front, and holes bored in doors and sides too, to allow the air to get through. This box (or dairy) I placed in the heart of the scrub where it could not get any sun, but plenty of air and shade. To prevent the dust getting through I pasted muslin inside. It answered well, and during a very hot summer I never had to boil my house milk once.\textsuperscript{29}

The voice of the ‘scientific expert’ was provided by the \textit{Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales}, which covered an extensive range of topics related to dairying. Between 1891 and 1912, articles ranged from ‘Butter and Cheese Making’ (1891) and ‘Silky Oak Butter Casks’ (1893), to ‘Rugging Cows’ (1906) and ‘Storing Butter for Home Use’ (1912).

While Mrs. Rawson promoted the more traditional methods of 'home dairying' for men and women the \textit{Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales} encouraged the idea of technical training for women in the dairy industry. In a 1909 article which highlighted the ‘Women's Exhibition' held in the same year the author, M. A. O'Callaghan proposing that:

\[\text{[i]f the women who look after the cream on the farms, while it is waiting to be dispatched to the factory were trained somewhat in the scientific side of dairying, a great amount of good would result,}\]

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
because the man’s attention to the cream practically ceases when the separating is over, and while he is out working on the farm throughout the day, the cream could have proper attention from his wife or daughter with very beneficial results.  

In 1908, the *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales* published a list of 137 butter factories in New South Wales. This listing included the Tumut Co-operative Butter Factory Ltd., which was built in 1904 and commenced operation in the same year. The farmers of the Tumut district brought their milk into the factory in cans, carried by horse and dray, and the retail price of butter was set at 9 pence per pound bulk and 9½ pence per pound wrapped. Dairying flourished and when the new butter factory, which was bigger and better equipped, was built in 1923, the average annual output was 350 tons of butter per year.

![Fig. 2.14: ‘Victory’ brand mechanical butter churn, 1909](image)
*Agricultural Gazette of NSW*

Milking machines were introduced to some local dairies in the 1920s, which made work in the dairy easier and enabled those farmers to increase the size of their herds. There were approximately twenty small dairy farms on Tumut Plains during the 1920s and 1930s and they provided valuable financial support to the families operating them during the difficult years of the Great Depression. ‘Dairy farming was the great stand-by in the Depression years’, recalls Tumut man Jack Bridle. ‘At least they got a cheque of some sort on the 21st of each month.’

---


At the peak of its production in 1939 and 1940, the Butter Factory processed cream from 150 to 160 dairies and processed up to 40 tonnes of butter per week:

During the 1950s, the handling of milk, as well as cream, commenced at the Tumut factory. In 1956 the milk run to Canberra began, milk at first being carried in cans covered by a canopy, and after 1958, in a newly purchased tanker. District schools were supplied, as were the Snowy Mountains Authority construction villages and some nearby towns.32

Butter production had fallen considerably by the end of the 1960s and the operations of the Tumut Butter Factory were merged with the Murrumbidgee Dairy Company, based in Wagga Wagga, in 1971, with the Tumut Co-op retaining a 25% interest. The Tumut Butter Factory ceased operations in the mid 1970s.

‘A Lot of Happy Memories’ - Jack Bridle’s story

Tumut identity, Jack Bridle, started work at the age of 14 years at the Malone dairy farm on the Tumut Plains Road. He was paid 10 shillings for a seven day working week, yarding the cows before dawn. 'Sometimes they were hard to find in the fog [and] even though it was hard work I have a lot of happy memories of those years.'33

---

According to Jack Bridle, the first organised cream run (c1920s) was operated by Tumut Plains resident Alf Le Fevre with a horse and spring cart. Along with his produce, Le Fevre collected cream from seven dairy farmers and delivered his load to the Tumut Butter Factory. A cream run was also operated at the same time by Charlie Hampstead, who had the mail run from West Blowering to Tumut via Tumut Plains. This was a round trip of 40 miles in a horse and sulky and the cream was collected three times a week. A separate cream run was also operated from West Blowering by Jack Harris and Harry Stokes, but this run did not include Tumut Plains. In 1939, Bridle bought a truck and organised the separate cream runs into one run. ‘I think they [the cream run operators] were glad to give it away’\textsuperscript{34}, said Bridle. The cream truck also provided a convenient form of transport to school for many local children at that time.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
Until the introduction of bulk tanks in 1969, individual metal cans were used to transport the cream to the Tumut Butter Factory. The cans were of 10 gallon capacity and each can and lid was distinguished by a metal plate, onto which was stamped the name of the dairy farmer and the weight of the can and lid. As Harry Hill recalls:

> The cream cans were delivered to an open part of the butter factory called the platform. The cans were lifted onto a metal roller at floor level and could be pushed along it … Most of the small [name] plates were copper and the most fastidious dairymen used steel wool, Brasso and elbow grease to make sure their name plates were dazzling.35

‘I Was the Office Boy’ - Harry Hill’s story

While the recording of technical data and the operational history forms a formal history of the Tumut Butter Factory, it is through the memories of ex-employees such as Harry Hill that the daily working life of the Tumut Butter Factory is activated on a much more personal level.

Retired school teacher, author and historian Harry Hill, before enrolling at Sydney Teachers’ College, began his working life at the Tumut Co-operative Dairy Company Limited (Tumut Butter Factory) in 1944. As Harry Hill recalls, ‘I was the office boy – the sweeper of the floor, collector of mail from the PO Box, duplicator operator, etc, but most importantly the computer of each dairyman's butter.'36

---

**Fig. 2.18: (Left) Harry Hill, c2000**

(Google Images)

36 Ibid.
During the 1940s dairying was the Tumut district's biggest primary occupation. Supplies of cream to the Tumut Butter Factory were made in some instances, in what would be seen in today's 'Occupational, Health & Safety' conscious industries as a casual manner. Some dairy farmers, Harry Hill explains 'brought their own cream by way of sulky, car or truck when they came to town, [others] onto the daily train from Cootamundra to Tumut and the bulk relied on cream carriers'.

This rather cavalier approach to the delivery of their product could, at times, result in cream that ranged from fresh to three or four days old, which, Harry Hill recalls 'was certain to be sour; especially in summer, and anything over a week old was certain to be undergoing chemical and physical reactions'.

Although he was only employed at the Tumut Butter Factory for a short period, Harry Hill's recall of that time provides a valid, if not slightly irreverent insight into the work practices of the time. His description of the process of testing and grading the cream and the performance antics of the cream tester, ‘Titch’ (Jack Reilly), leave a contemporary audience both fascinated and revolted:

To determine the relative butter fat in a can of cream a small sample was taken and tested. This necessitated the employment of an important individual in a butter factory – the cream tester. He could just as well be called the cream taster as he was required to taste the cream in each can as it was being weighed. He was not required to swallow – just taste and spit. The cream tester was a happy bloke, very much overweight and quite a character. As each can was pushed towards him he poked in a plunger-stirrer device and agitated the contents vigorously. Then his free hand would go into the can and reappear with one finger dripping with cream which he would insert into his mouth to be tested. There was much slobbering, smacking of lips, noise and facial movement as each sample was taste tested.

The process of testing and tasting, which Harry Hill described, allowed for certain technical judgements in relation to the quality of the cream and the results were recorded on the ‘cream slips’, which were then returned to the suppliers. Harry Hill also recalled highly evocative terms such as ‘weedy’, ‘metallic’ and ‘rancid’ being used on the slips, as well as ‘rusty can’ and ‘foreign object’.

37 Ibid. p. 9.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid. p. 10.
Harry Hill’s retelling of the ‘foreign object’ narrative, which once again relates to the cream tester and his unorthodox testing methods, is another story with the capacity to instill varying degrees of amusement and horror in the reader. As Harry Hill explains:

He bent down to get a better view of what was in the can under review, then, very slowly and purposefully he lowered his hand and lower arm into the can. Titch slowly withdrew his arm to show that, by the tail, he was holding one very dead, very drowned, very bloated, very cream covered rat. Little by little, the gray of the rat was revealed as the cream was wiped off the belly, the sides, the back, the head, the legs so that it dribbled back into the can. He even inserted the point of a finger in each ear and gave a half twist. The final movement was to invert the rat and clean the tail; with sound effects.

With all the cream returned to the can, the rat was given a mighty heave onto the railway line and Titch emphatically classified the cream as being “Second Grade – Foreign Object”.40

Fig. 2.19: ‘Titch slowly withdrew his arm to show that, by the tail, he was holding one very dead, very drowned, very bloated, very cream covered rat.’
(Image courtesy of Harry Hill)

40 Ibid. p. 10.
2.5: ‘All Industrious’ – Stories of Chinese commerce

The watering can was owned and used by King Fan, the last Chinese market in Narrandera.

The contribution made by members of the Chinese community in Narrandera and the surrounding area is outlined accurately by Joan Austin Palmer in her book *Memories of a Riverina Childhood*. Palmer, reflecting on her early years at Midgeon Station in the 1920s, recalls that:

> For years we employed Chinese vegetable gardeners and they were all industrious men who wore frayed denim before it became a fashion item and who spent all day among their plants, using their own system of irrigation, leaving in the evening for their primitive cottage at the edge of the swamp … There was quite a large community of them in Narrandera and all were connected to the See Yap Society. It represented four counties near Canton, advanced them their passage money [from China to Australia] and cared for their families at home [in China], but bonded them to work for it here. Last century [19th century] a very large community of Chinese in the town had been employed on the stations ringbarking and scrubbing trees, occupations that Australian workmen did not care for. This work had dwindled, and by the time we went to Midgeon [1920s], Chinese were employed almost solely as gardeners and cooks.41

Writing in 1924, George Gow offers far more detail of those long gone Chinese contractors and labourers. As Gow points out, they ‘provided the labour necessary for building houses, fences, dams … and for clearing away the encumbering timber’42. Among the most well known of the Chinese contractors was Wong Gooey. As Gow explains:

---

If a station owner wanted some ringing [ring barking] or scrubbing [scrub clearing] done, he sent to an agent in Nar[endar]a, who in turn, informed Wong Gooey. He would come out on his old grey horse, inspect the proposed contract, and then start haggling for terms, usually asking for very much more than he was prepared to accept … but he was a wily old bird, and a deal was usually made. These contracts were sublet to a body of Chinese who gave Gooey 5 per cent “for organizing the job”. Sometimes he had several jobs going at once, extending into thousands and thousands of acres, and he would move to and fro inspecting them, but he never did any manual work himself.43

In the early 21st century, the Sunshine Dry Cleaners, operated by the Choy family in East Street, objects in the collection of the Parkside Cottage Museum and headstones in the Narrandera cemetery remain as the few physical markers of that once vibrant Chinese community.

Fig. 2.21: Bill Choy owner Sunshine Dry Cleaners & Laundry, Narrandera NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

Buildings which previously housed a thriving hub of Chinese owned and operated businesses are still standing in Narrandera’s main street although, apart from Choy’s Sunshine Dry Cleaners and Laundry, all other Chinese business names, such as John Loo & Co, Chun Cheong Bros, Sun Hong Shing & Co, Sun Tung Shing & Co and Shea have vanished. Time and land development have also seen the remnants of once extensive Chinese market gardens all but disappear, with only vague outlines of the gardens and

43 Ibid. p. 109.
building sites remaining.

Fig. 2.22: John Loo & Co. advertisement, 1908
Narrandera Argus

Storekeepers and Financiers – Stories of Chinese business ventures
During a July 2002 interview, Mervyn Shung\textsuperscript{44} painted a brilliant word picture of an earlier Narrandera, populated by Chinese market gardeners, grocers, businessmen and entrepreneurs. According to Shung, the primary source of income for his father, George Hock Shung, and uncle, Sam Yet\textsuperscript{45}, was in the supply of provisions and labour for the Chinese contract scrub cutters and clearing gangs in the Narrandera district. Sam Yet was also described by George Gow in 1924 as a ‘Chinese storekeeper and financier’,\textsuperscript{46} who not only supplied the rations, but also delivered the men on the job:

\begin{quote}
It being a community matter, all the men shared in the contract, tuckered and worked together as one man. Sam Yett [sic] would load up his two horse caravan, collect the men, (sometimes as many as twenty) and all would take to the road, the baggage wagon bringing up the rear. As they generally walked along the road in single file, all about twelve to twenty feet apart, they were rather a peculiar sight.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{shea-family-general-store-narrandera-nsw-2007}
\caption{Site of the Shea family’s general store, East Street Narrandera NSW, 2007}
\label{fig:general-store}
\end{figure}

Mervyn Shung also recalled that both his father and uncle were remembered by many Narrandera residents as being successful businessmen and store owners during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.\textsuperscript{48} His positive memories of Sam Yet are also substantiated in the latter’s obituary written in 1903. The obituary describes Sam Yet as being a ‘storekeeper and financier of Chinatown, Narrandera’ and goes on to say that:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\footnote{Mervyn Shung: son of George Hock Shung and nephew of Sam Yet.}
\footnote{Sam Yet was also known as Hock Shung.}
\footnote{Freeman, H. M. (1985). p. 109.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{M. Shung (personal communication, July 31, 2002)}
The King of Chinatown was born in Canton in 1841 and was thus 62 years of age. He was the son of a mandarin of that city … Forty years ago he came out to Australia, leaving his wife and four sons behind … For ten years he conducted considerable mining operations at Beechworth and Chiltern and accumulated much wealth. Then he came to the Riverina and entered into large clearing contracts with pastoralists and financed many Chinese concerns. Of late years his operations have not been so extensive, though it is considered that he leaves considerable property. He practically owned and supported the Chinese population of Chinatown, being in his way something of a philanthropist. Towards local charities he was ever liberal, and his support to deserving institutions will be greatly missed.49

Fig. 2.24: Site of George Hock Shung’s store, Narrandera NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

The 1944 obituary for Mervyn Shung’s father, George Hock Shung, corroborates his memories of his father’s status as a successful business identity in Narrandera and district:

George Hock Shung was known far and wide throughout the Narrandera and surrounding district for many years. He came to Narrandera nearly 50 years ago, and for many years entered into contracts for clearing on district stations. In this capacity he employed a number of men, and at times held fairly large contracts. Later he became a dealer and also conducted a store for many years. George Hock Shung was respected by all who knew him. He had many good qualities and in past years had been a contributor to the Hospital and other movements.50

‘Always the Best Quality’ – Stories of Chinese market gardens

49 Death of Sam Yet. (1903, June 26). Narrandera Argus, p. 5.
Moving north, as strikes on the Victorian goldfields dwindled, the Chinese\textsuperscript{51} established a thriving community in Narrandera by the late 1800s. Extensive market gardens were created on both sides of the Murrumbidgee River and many Chinese also established themselves in the developing commercial sector of Narrandera.

Fig. 2.25: Chinese market gardens on the Murrumbidgee River, Narrandera NSW, c1920s
Collection of Narrandera Library

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Chinese market gardeners, their horse-drawn carts laden with fresh fruit and vegetables, became a common sight in the streets of Narrandera. At least two Chinese market gardens were still operating in the 1950s, run by King Fan and Tommy Poy.

Although no description remains of the Chinese market gardens in Narrandera, the Deniliquin Chronicle of September 1864 describes a garden operated by Chinese gardeners. Their use of liquid manure and a regular watering regime at 8am, noon and 4pm is described as giving the growers an ‘adequate return’.\textsuperscript{52}

Melons, peas, and beans, the Chinamen grow on long ridges raised about nine inches, flattened at the top and drilled. In this drill the seeds are placed and covered with a very little soil, and that again with manure. The success that has attended these clever fellows in their attempt to grow vegetables during the heat of Riverina is surprising, but it thoroughly proves that the destroying heat of the sun’s rays can be counteracted by the supply of an abundance of water. The garden is well worth

\textsuperscript{51} The Chinese who moved north to Narrandera were mostly adult males, who had worked as miners, merchants and labourers on the Victorian goldfields.

\textsuperscript{52} Chinese Industry. (1864, September 24). Deniliquin Chronicle and Riverine Gazette. p. 4.
looking at. It is a perfect oasis in the surrounding desert, and its beautiful green appearance is most refreshing.53

The *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales* provides the ‘voice of the expert’ in relation to market gardening practices of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both in China and Australia. In his 1894 article, F.B. Parkinson discussed the use of human waste or night soil as a soil enhancer and the constant attention to weed control in the agriculture of the Lower Yang-tse Basin in China. The design of tools was also examined, with Parkinson observing that:

although their implements appear of crude construction at first sight, yet on closer acquaintance one is forced to admit that they are fairly well adapted to the needs, and the final results scarcely leave anything to be desired … It is worthy of remark that all their tools with cutting edges, such as hoes, picks, sickles, pruning hooks, &c., although of purely native manufacture, are all steeled and tempered on the edge.54

A detailed description is also given by engineer Thomas Whitchurch Seaver, of a Chinese market garden on the Bogan River in the central west of New South Wales:

I have visited a Chinaman’s garden on the banks of the Bogan, in which all kinds of vegetables were growing in the most luxuriant profusion, shaded by groves of fruit trees of all kinds, and in full bearing. All around outside the fence was a red and dusty plain without a vestige of grass; and the cause of this magical change – next to the Chinaman himself – was an old horse patiently walking in a circle, under a spreading grape vine, and furnishing the power by means of which water was pumped upon the land.55

Although mechanized methods of irrigation are documented in the *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, manual means were also used. Mervyn Shung recalled the Narrandera market gardeners walking up and down the rows of plants, the seedlings in particular, with a watering can balanced at each end of a wooden shoulder yoke. According to Mervyn Shung, this hand watering would be performed every morning and evening until the young plants were well established.56

‘Just Kids Having Fun’ – Oliver Barnes’ Story

54 Parkinson, F.B. (1894). *Agriculture in the lower Yang-tse basin*. Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales. 5, 712-713.
56 M. Shung (personal communication, July 31, 2002).
Oliver Barnes\textsuperscript{57} added rare insight into Narrandera’s Chinese history, from the perspective of an Anglo-Celtic boy residing in Narrandera during the early part of the 20th century.

Oliver Langham Barnes was born in Narrandera in 1916 and spent many of his school holidays in Narrandera, after his parents had relocated to Sydney. His grandfather, Sam Langham, was a well known Narrandera businessman and proprietor of the Narrandera newsagency while his grandmother, Alice, managed the domestic front. Like Mervyn Shung, Oliver Barnes’ memories of the Chinese market gardeners were clear and detailed and resonated with a small boy’s sense of fun and mischief.

\textbf{Fig. 2.26: Alice Langham c1920}
(Photographer: Unknown, collection of A. Brown)

‘Every Christmas my grandmother got a jar of ginger from old Tip.’\textsuperscript{58}

With his friend Patrick Smith, a Narrandera boy, Oliver would follow along behind Thomas Tip Nooey’s fruit and vegetable cart. The boys would swing on the back of the spring-cart until ‘Tip’ told them to stop. ‘We’d ask Tip for a peach or a nectarine, in return for not swinging on the cart’\textsuperscript{59}, said Oliver Barnes with a chuckle:

\begin{quote}
All the kids did this, there was no harm intended, just kids having fun. Old Tip would give us a peach or a nectarine and off we’d go. We would then repeat this performance in the next street and hopefully get another piece of fruit.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57} Oliver Langham Barnes (1916-2007): Eldest son of Oliver and Alice (nee Langham) Barnes and grandson of Alice (nee Risby) and Sam Langham.
\textsuperscript{58} O. Barnes (personal communication, July 1, 2002).
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} O. Barnes (personal communication, July 1, 2002).
Oliver Barnes also meticulously delineated a time when suppliers, such as the market gardeners, came to the housewife and notions of loyalty and quality were paramount to both vendor and customer, recalling that:

My grandmother, Alice Langham, always bought her fruit and vegetables from old Tip. His produce was always of the best quality and Grandmother would never have thought of changing to another green-grocer. Tip had his regular customers and every Christmas they would receive a jar of ginger, imported from China. I can remember the ginger jar sitting in my grandmother’s kitchen. Grandmother knew Tip well enough to joke with him and ask him if he had cut off his pig-tail, which meant that he couldn’t be buried in China. Tip would laugh and lift his cap and her show his pig-tail coiled up underneath.  

Like Oliver Barnes, Joan Austin Palmer in *Memories of a Riverina Childhood* recalled the generosity of Thomas Tip Nooey. According to Palmer, Tip Nooey owned:

… a flourishing vegetable garden by the river on the outskirts of town [Narrandera] and became a well-known citizen and member of the Church of England who gave generously to local charities. In later years Father got his cabbage and cauliflower seedlings from Tip rather than plant the seed himself, and Tip would happily drag them out by the roots with Father protesting that he would like a little earth with them. Tip would grin and say, ‘She’ll be right’ or his equivalent of the Aussie phrase. And of course they would be, Tip’s reasoning being that by tearing the roots the plant had to work harder to make fresh ones when transplanted, thereby becoming sturdier. Tip died in 1939 and is buried on a sandhill in the Narrandera cemetery just beside my parents … so I feel my mother and father are in good company.  

---

61 Ibid.
'Kindly and Cheerful’ – The story of Thomas Tip Nooey

The obituary notice, published in 1939 for Thomas Tip Nooey, shows the depth of affection and respect which was extended to him by the Narrandera community.

Mr. Tip Nooey was born in China and came to Australia at an early age. He came to Narrandera when 19 years of age and took scrub cutting and clearing contracts in the district. He leased his present garden, on the south bank of the Murrumbidgee River, from Mr. Jenkins, owner of Buckingbong Station, over 50 years ago. At the time it was part of the station; but it was later included in a scheme of closer settlement sub-division, and Tip Nooey purchased it.

His occupancy of the garden was not altogether an easy one in the early days, for besides the restricted market the garden was within the flooded area, and the big flood of 1891 washed everything on the place away. He struggled on gamely, and overcame the difficulties of the early times.

There have been few more generous donors to the Hospital or other institutions, so far as his means permitted, than Tip Nooey. He was also a constant supporter of the local church flower shows. Tip Nooey was possessed of a kindly and cheerful disposition, and was respected by all the community.63

2.6: ‘The Centre of Flourishing Trade’ – Stories of commerce in Coolamon

First moves towards the foundation of the town of Coolamon were made in 1880, when the district surveyor C.F. Bolton reported on the necessity for a village to be established on reserves running along the main Wagga Wagga - Cowabbie Road and adjacent to the railway station, where it would operate as a commercial service centre for the surrounding farming communities. In 1881, surveyor B.C. Garland proceeded with the survey of the first sections of the village, north and south of the railway line. Although Coolamon was reported to be ‘handicapped by the older and larger town of Junee Junction’\(^{64}\) it was at the centre of a flourishing timber and wood trade and, in addition, the township was also placed in the midst of the thriving wool and wheat growing regions of Berry Jerry, Rannock, Mimosa and Merool.

In 1885 Coolamon supported a population of just over two hundred persons and boasted the services of three stores, two ‘good hotels’\(^{65}\) and an assembly hall. By 1907, Coolamon was described as being one of the ‘towns of importance’\(^{66}\) in the southern part of NSW, with the heads of the Shire Council, the Land Court and the Court of Petty Sessions sitting in Coolamon. The Coolamon Interstate Ploughing Carnival Souvenir Booklet proudly stated

\(^{64}\) Coolamon Interstate Ploughing Carnival. (1907). (Souvenir Booklet).
\(^{65}\) Ibid.
\(^{66}\) Ibid.
in 1907 that ‘another important factor in the immediate progress of the town and district of Coolamon is that roads, like a spider’s web, lead to all important centres from here.’

If the surrounding roads led to the town, then for many people travelling to Coolamon between 1909 and 1932, the Up To Date Store building was their ultimate destination. It was not just a venue for purchasing everything from hardware to millinery, but also a meeting place for townspeople and farming families. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a range of topics were discussed; from the weather and the price of sheep, to recipes and the health of children. While the building, which was included on the National Heritage Register in 2003, is a significant link to the commercial history of Coolamon, it is through the retelling of lesser known stories that the remembering is strongest.

‘Pretentious Dimensions’ – Stories of the Up to Date Store

Operating from premises on the corner of Cowabbie and Loughnan Streets from 1909 until 1932, the Up To Date Store was built on the site of the first Coolamon general store, established by Messrs. Steignior and Humphries in the 1890s. The Up To Date Store was managed by Mr. David Mitchell, who later purchased the business. The store was then sold to Mr. Edwin Cork and traded as Mitchell and Cork until ownership was assumed by Mr.

---

67 Ibid.
68 B. Seymour. (personal communication, September 3, 2004)
Frederick ‘Daddy’ Hall. The business traded as the Up To Date Store until the early 1900s, when it was sold to Messrs. Nadin, Alcock and Denoon.

Built in 1909 to replace the original weatherboard structure, the building was commissioned and owned by Nicholas Mutton, designed by William John Monks of Wagga Wagga and the building contractor was George Henry Mutch. Sign-writing for the store was provided by Mr. Drane.

The Up To Date Store passed through the hands of several lessees throughout the years:
- 1909 to 1912 - Nadin, Iverach and Denoon
- 1912 to 1925 - Nadin, Iverach and Wilson
- 1925 to 1946 - Iverach was the sole proprietor.

After W.A. Iverach’s death in 1946, the store was run by Iverach’s sons. The Coolamon and Ganmain Farmers’ Review of 30 July 1909 reported that:

Messrs. Nadin, Iverach and Denoon are now comfortably settled in their fine new store. The building is certainly true to its well known name, viz., “Up-to-date.” The architect, Mr. Monks, of Wagga, has given further proof of his ability to do good, creditable, all round work … The exterior presents an appearance at once pleasing to the eye, and visitors to the town never fail to pass unstinted praise when viewing its pretentious dimensions … let us wish Messrs. Nadin, Iverach and Denoon a full measure of success and prosperity, and that they and Mr. N. Mutton will be able to look back with pride to the day upon which the contract for the new premises was let.⁶⁹

---

Hall and the succeeding owners of the Up To Date Store were active in the community through their involvement with various sporting, religious, educational and cultural groups. Hall was a Justice of the Peace, President of the Musical Society and Treasurer for the Presbyterian Church, while Denoon had a passion for cricket. Iverach also invested time and effort into various public positions.\(^70\)

Hall’s advertisements in the late 1890s and early 1900s not only emphasised the quality of the goods stocked, but also included an appeal to the fashion conscious and those with economy in mind. ‘[F]elt and panama hats for style quality and price A1’,\(^71\) stated an advertisement from 1898. In the same year, Hall urged customers to spend, using a well known proverb that carried a double meaning, neatly tying in with the work ethic, ‘Never put off till tomorrow what can well be done today.’\(^72\) The work of shopping was promoted to the consumers of that time as a serious business.

The Up To Date Store was divided into several different ‘departments’ which included grocery, ironmongery, crockery, drapery, mercery, millinery and footwear. Advertising for the store was placed in the *Coolamon and Ganmain Farmers’ Review* and was aimed at a

---

\(^{70}\) Hofsteede, S. (c2001). *Coolamon’s Up To Date Store*. Unpublished manuscript, Up To Date Store Archives: Coolamon NSW. p. 8.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.

\(^{72}\) Ibid.
specific market, with clever consumer psychology utilised in the wording of the advertising. For example, by appealing to their sense of responsibility, farmers in 1909 were persuaded to buy equipment for their horses, ‘Australians are noted for the care of a horse. With the Ploughing Carnival so near a Rug is essential to the preparation of “Dobbin”, who must play his part.’

Fig. 2.33: Up To Date Store advertisement, 1909
Coolamon & Ganmain Farmers’ Review

The ladies of Coolamon and district were also urged to be seen at their best for ‘Coolamon’s Gala Day’, with the Coolamon and Ganmain Farmers’ Review of 1909 advertising ‘the very latest fashions from London and Paris in ladies’ trimmed hats’.

---

‘No Strain on the Purses’ – Stories of advertising campaigns

Just like contemporary marketing campaigns, the advertisements of 1910 appealed to women through a sense of ‘doing the right thing’ by their children and making an economical purchase:

Now the little ones have to have clothes that are right up-to-date in style and quality. Well, this store has changed with the times, and is ready to supply the wants of the school children in every particular. And we are ready in such a way that there will be no strain on the parent’s purses! 75

‘FREE LOLLIES at 4 o’clock in the afternoon and also at 8 p.m.’ 76 were offered as an incentive to prospective purchasers in Christmas advertising of 1924. The 1920s equivalent of 21st century prime time television advertising directed at children was also used in this 1924 advertisement. ‘ASK MOTHER to bring you up to Nadin, Iverach and Wilson’s on Xmas Eve’ 77 implored the advertiser.

75 We are ready for the school days! (1910, January 21). [Advertisement]. Coolamon & Ganmain Farmers’ Review, p. 4.
77 Ibid.
Illustrated advertising was in regular use from as early as 1911. These advertisements were designed to convey the elegance of the fashions of the period, with economic constraints reinforced in the wording of the advertising.

The men and women of the Coolamon district were encouraged, with well designed advertising, to buy the latest in fashions from the Up To Date Store. Milliners, dressmakers and tailors often worked within the store, producing goods to order for customers.
The Up To Date Store building continued in its role as a general store until 1932, when Iverach relocated his business to a more central location in Cowabbie Street. From 1932, the building was utilised as a fruit and vegetable shop, roller skating rink, storage area and workshop and a second hand and antiques business. With backing by the community, the property was purchased by the Coolamon Shire Council in 1997 and now operates as a Community Cultural Facility, Museum and Library. As well as preserving the built history of Coolamon, the Up To Date Store (preserves) the stories and memories of the community.

‘Simple, Effective and Cheap’ – Stories of the Lamson cash carrier

Fig. 2.37: Lamson cash carrier, c1909
Up To Date Store, Coolamon NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)

The only known and in-situ Lamson cash carrier of this kind, worldwide.

In 1875, David Brown of Lebanon, New Jersey patented a ‘simple, effective and cheap apparatus for transmission of goods, packages, money, particularly money in stores’. This apparatus consisted of two poles with a wire between. A carriage was hung from the wire and movement was facilitated by a continuous rope. Bells were placed at the top of each standard to indicate the arrival of the carriage. This apparatus was first installed at the ladies’ furnishing store of William S. Lamson in Lowell, Massachusetts in February 1879. Lamson began producing the cash carriers in 1881 and the Lamson Cash Railway Company was incorporated in January 1882:
It is said that in William Lamson’s shop at Lowell, Massachusetts, the salesmen used to tie the cash up in a handkerchief and throw it across to the cashier! He then came up with the idea of using a wooden ball, like a hollowed out croquet ball. The money was placed inside, held by a spring.78

An agent for the Lamson Cash Railway Company was first appointed in Australia in 1889. The installation of the cash carrier system in the Coolamon Up To Date Store in the early 1900s demonstrated the proprietors’ wish to have the latest and best in retail technology on hand for their staff and customers, with the Coolamon and Ganmain Farmers’ Review of 1909 reporting that, ‘The interior is replete with modern appliances on every side to suit the conveniences necessary to run a large and growing business.’79

The Lamson cash carrier system was designed to solve the problem of women [shop assistants] being less numerate than men [cashiers].

The cash ball system was superseded by the wire system, where the money was placed in a wooden cup which could then be attached to a suspended carriage running on one or two wires. It was propelled by either a catapult system at each end (Lamson’s Rapid Wire System) or by pulling apart the two wires at the sending end (Gipes). This system was then superseded by the pneumatic tube system, the money being placed inside a cylindrical canister, which was propelled through a tube by air pressure.80

The demise in popularity of the cash railway system came with the invention of the cash register in 1882 by James Ritty of Dayton, Ohio. Cash railway systems did remain in use in some stores until at least the 1950s, especially in regional centres.

Lamson systems have been used in a variety of places other than shops. The Cabinet War Room and Goodge Street Deep Shelter in London were connected by a Lamson Tube document transportation system during WWII. Lamson systems have also been used in hotels such as the Savoy, the Ritz and the Piccadilly in London, government departments such as MI5 and libraries.81

Cash railway systems have featured in literary and film sources. Dylan Thomas’s *Under Milkwood*, ‘I am a draper mad with love … I have come to take you away to my Emporium on the hill, where the change hums on wires.’82 The British film, *Kind Hearts and Coronets* also includes two scenes in the early part of the film which feature a wire system installed in a draper’s shop and a pneumatic system in a larger drapery store.83

---

Brian Erskine Stevenson, the grandson of David Iverach, recalls his memories of the Lamson cash railway system:

I can remember the little containers, with money and dockets in them being ‘whizzed’ to the cashier’s box on the flying fox system in Iverach’s store. This used to amuse me. On one occasion a staff member lifted me up and let me pull the cord and away shot the money container. A great thrill for a young lad in those unspoilt days.84

---

2.7: ‘Narrandera's Big Store’ – Stories of S. Richards & Co.

A newspaper report from 1911 gave a first hand account of the construction and opening of the S. Richards & Co. store on the corner of East and Bolton Streets, Narrandera. Solomon Richards was born in Austria and spent his early years in NSW working as a travelling hawker. He came to Narrandera in 1880 and operated a store in Twynam Street Narrandera until the move to the new premises in March 1911.

Mention is also made of a Solomon Richards in Frances Pollon’s text *Shopkeepers and Shoppers. A social history of retailing in New South Wales from 1788*, published in 1989. Retailing businesses in Bora Creek near Inverell in New South Wales (1899) and Castlereagh Street in Sydney (1902) were operated by this particular Solomon Richards. It is unlikely that this was the same Solomon Richards who established the Narrandera store; however they may have been related to each other.

Hilda Freeman, writing in 1937, recalls the original store in Twynam Street and its surroundings:

In those days, the store was as much patronised on Sundays as week days, owing to the fettlers engaged in the construction of the railway line to Jerilderie, coming to Narrandera to do their shopping during the weekends. From the store, the view to the east was over a wheat field, which...
extended to the east almost as far as the Show Ground and to the north a considerable distance towards the railway. It is all built on now.\textsuperscript{85}

In describing the store Freeman has also told the accompanying story of a period in the Riverina’s history when towns were bustling with the construction of rail lines and smaller communities were linked together for the first time by a reliable form of transport. A drive through the Riverina in 2010 will now show those same rail lines abandoned and overgrown and many of those small towns without a rail link.

Reporting on the ‘Big Store’ of Solomon Richards, the \textit{Narrandera Argus} provides the contemporary reader with an insightful description of the store itself, and also highlights the developments in building and state-of-the-art retail technology of the early 1900s. Although it is not mentioned in the \textit{Narrandera Argus} report, the Class 500 National Cash Register which plays a role in the store’s narrative was installed shortly after the opening.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig242.jpg}
\caption{S. Richards & Co. store and staff, c1915}
\end{figure}

References to polished oak fittings and plate glass, marble and brass counters all serve as reminders of the elegant design principles of the early 20th century. The word picture painted by the unknown newspaper journalist in 1911, recalls a period in retail trade where a high quality of service was paramount. It was also a time when a strict hierarchy in retail staffing was adhered to. This is brought into focus through the use of descriptive terms such as ‘the cashier’s pulpit’. The cashier’s station was placed in such an elevated and visible

\textsuperscript{85} Freeman, H. M. (1985). p. 149.
location for security reasons, however, from a 21st century perspective we could be forgiven for assuming that the role of ‘cash handler’ had been elevated to a ‘god-like’ status:

Quite the biggest evidence of commercial activity and progress in Narrandera has been emphasized this week by the removal of Messrs. S. Richards and Co’s general store business into the extensive and palatial premises which the firm have erected at the corner of East and Bolton streets, two blocks nearer the railway than the premises occupied by them for the past twenty odd years. The building is designed by Mr. E. R. Laver, and the construction has been supervised by Mr. Joiner. The brickwork was contracted for by Mr. W. Breakall; but most of the wood-work, metal work and joinery has been completed by specialists in each particular department. The result is a building in which everyone concerned in its erection, as well as the citizens of Narrandera, may well take pride. The building is practically a two-storey one, for the store comprises a ground floor and a gallery.

The East Street front is most commanding, finished in brick and freestone stucco, with red marble facings, tiled entrance, and great plate-glass windows. An “island” window at the entrance is also a feature; while a spacious verandah, lined with Wunderlich steel and mounted on iron pillars covers the whole footpath.

But it is the interior of the building that is best calculated to excite admiration. It is 52 feet wide and 170 feet long on the main floor, rising 20 feet to the Wunderlich steel ceiling, lighted by high windows and light-shafts through the roof. The departmental counters run the full length of each side; ironmongery and grocery on the right, boots and soft-goods on the left. A circular fronted centre counter is being devoted to crockery and fancy goods. Behind this “island” fixture is an elevated desk for the superintendent, behind which again at a higher elevation is the cash station, from which the wires of the Shanghai cash carriers reach to every department in the store. A telephone switch, with four branches throughout the building, is connected with the Narrandera exchange.

The Millinery Department is situated behind the cashier’s “pulpit” and the staircase; and is a glitter of varnished arches and cathedral glass. It is the most ornately furnished department on the premises, being handsomely carpeted, fitted with plate glass counters and show cases, and elaborately caparisoned in every respect.

In the north-east corner of the main building is the manager’s room and the counting-house, the remainder of this portion of the main floor being occupied by a large receiving and shipping floor, from which a goods elevator runs down into the cellar and up to the gallery.

The fixtures and furnishings throughout are the best procurable, all the shelves and lockers being of oak, and the pillars and balcony of the gallery, as well as the handsome stairway, are of the same material. The counters, except where they are plate-glass or marble, are faced with stamped bronze and add to the generally fine appearance of the interior.

To go into minute details would encroach upon too much space, but it may be mentioned that the building is provided with sewered lavatories on each floor; also Birkenfeld water-filters. The produce counters are of marble over specially constructed ice-boxes. In addition to the main building, there is a huge brick bulk store at the rear … built in harmony with the main building; and the whole is brilliantly illuminated at night by a 70 light De Laitte petrol-gas machine – undoubtedly the finest lighting plant yet installed in the town.86

WWII saw many changes to operating procedures including the introduction of ration coupons for most items and a change in the staffing structure. War service requirements and an absence of senior male staff members saw a greater number of women being

86 The Big Store. (1911, March 24). Narrandera Argus, p. 3.
employed in managerial positions within the store. According to former employee, Ted Kirk, S. Richards & Co. was staffed primarily by female and junior staff during WWII.87

Fig. 2.43: S. Richards & Co. staff, c1930s
Collection of Narrandera Library
(Photographer: Unknown)

Ted Kirk, who was an employee of the ‘Big Store’, and its succeeding owners88 from 1943 until his retirement in 1978, was preceded as an employee of the company by his father Mr. Milton Kirk, who worked for the store in several departments including footwear, men’s and boy’s wear and men’s mercery, from 1931 until his retirement in 1956. Ted’s older brother Mr. Geoff Kirk was also an employee of S. Richards & Co. for many years.

Multiple departments were a feature of S. Richards & Co. They included: hardware, grocery, crockery, kitchenware, furniture, bedding, electrical, floor coverings, Manchester, hosiery, haberdashery, ladies wear and men’s wear. S. Richards & Co. also acted as agents for many leading companies including the car manufacturers, General Motors.

---

87 T. Kirk (personal communication, July 31, 2002).
88 Burns Philp & Co. – owners from 1948 until the 1970s. An IGA Supermarket now operates from the premises.
The Chevrolet motor car was manufactured by General Motors.
‘Perfecting This Machine’ – The National Cash Register Company

Fig. 2.46: Class 500 cash register (detail)
(Photo: A. Brown)

‘All cash registers manufactured by the National Cash Register Company/NCR, regardless of class or design, have an attached serial number. Serial numbers are in ascending numerical order. e.g. 690,000 – January 9, 1909 to 800,000 January 25, 1910.’

From a newspaper advertisement in the *Wagga Daily Advertiser* of 1912, it is known that the National Cash Register Company boasted of ‘[c]ompeting in its history with over 50 other firms and companies that have attempted to produce Cash Registers.’

We can also ascertain from the same advertisement that the National Cash Register Company’s cash registers had been installed in at least one other town outside Narrandera, with J. M. Scott, the Southern Line Representative stating that, ‘[a] little while ago two opposition Registers found their way into Temora. They are not there now; they were put out and in their place are NATIONALS.’

Allowing for date of manufacture, transport by sea from the USA to Sydney, and by rail from Sydney to Narrandera, it is probable that the Class 500 cash register in the Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum was installed in the S. Richards and Co. store during 1911. The National Cash Register Company (NCR) had always been at the cutting edge of retail technology. The Class 500 cash register was the 1910/1911 equivalent of the state of the art retail scanning and cash management systems of the 21st century. Renowned for its

---

89 W. Brown. (personal communication, April 16, 2002).
91 Ibid.
technical innovation, the National Cash Register Company was also recognised for its
skillful advertising campaigns. In reference to the Class 500 cash register the National Cash
Register Company proclaimed that it had:

… spent more than thirty years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in perfecting this machine. It is
the result of our study and the suggestions of thousands of merchants who, like yourself, want to stop
mistakes that cost them money. It will give you more protection against mistakes and losses, and
more information about your business, in less time and with less work, than any other business
system you can install in your store. We haven’t space enough to tell you all the money-making
advantages of this machine to a merchant. Considering what it does, the National Cash Register is
the lowest priced machine sold in the world. It will cost you nothing to investigate. Write for more
information.
The storekeeper is benefited because his mind is free of detail and worry. His clerks share his
responsibilities. His business grows. His profits increase.
His family is benefited because there is more money from the business for education, recreation,
amusements, and for savings against the future.
Clerks and cashiers are benefited because they become more efficient and more valuable for their
employers. A National shows how well each one does his work.92

The National Cash Register Company was established in Australia in 1885 and operated
from premises in York Street in Sydney. In 1887 an office was opened in Russell Street,
Melbourne in 1887 and the first cash registers were installed in the Australian Centennial
Exhibition in 1888, which was held in Melbourne.

Former NCR93 staff member, Mr. Robert (Bob) Baker also provided additional information
on company procedures in Australia. Bob Baker was initially employed by the National
Cash Register Company as an apprentice technician in the 1950s and rose through the
company ranks to become head of NCR Australia in the 1990s. During his early years, Bob
Baker was employed as a technician in the Riverina and was trained to service, repair and
install a range of mechanical cash registers, including the 500 Class. Training on the 500
Class cash register enabled Bob Baker to:

Service the 9 drawer 500 [Class cash register] installed on the grocery counter at Huthwaites Store in
Baylis Street, Wagga Wagga. I also serviced the equipment at S. Richards & Co. in Narrandera.94

site: http://www.ncr.com/history/history.htm
93 Founded in the USA in 1884 by John H. Patterson, the National Cash Register Company was the first
manufacturer of mechanical cash registers. The company name was changed to NCR Corporation in 1974.
Fig. 2.47: National Cash Register promotional image for the Class 500 cash register
In 1946, Tumut farmers formed a co-operative group and bought special millet grading machinery, guillotines and binders and formed the Tumut Broom Company, which operated in this format until 1980. A ready market for locally grown broom millet was then guaranteed. Prior to the establishment of the Tumut Broom Company, broom millet crops were appraised by buyers and transported for use in broom making factories operating outside the Tumut area. Cliff Wortes took over as the sole owner of the broom factory in 1980 and was joined in the business by his son Geoff Wortes in 1987.

Tumut resident, Wally Melrose, learned the craft of broom making at the Tumut Broom Company. Cliff Wortes and Wally Melrose started work at the factory in 1946 and both men continued to work there until retirement. Geoff Wortes explained that 'for thirty five years, Wally worked on the same broom winding machine in the same corner where he was happiest.' 95 According to a 1994 interview with Cliff Wortes, 'broom making is a difficult trade to learn and although it is possible for some individuals to learn the technique in a month, it generally takes at least five years to perfect it.' 96

---

95 G. Wortes (personal communication, November 18, 2003).
The Tumut Broom Factory commenced its operations with approximately 12 employees and this figure doubled during the boom years of the 1960s. Nine grades of brooms were manufactured, each one requiring different grades of millet, with the straightest fibres being placed on the outside of the broom. Styles of brooms also varied and included: domestic brooms, railway brooms, government brooms, toy brooms and brushes.

Under the State Award, wages for employees in the broom trade in 1949 ranged from £8.8.0 per week for Grade 1 broom makers and sorters, to £1.19.7 per week for an apprentice under 16 years of age.
Of all the brooms made at the Tumut factory, the biggest and heaviest were used in shearing sheds around Australia:

The rouseabouts need to get the wool away as fast as possible, so they want a big, stiff broom. Millet pushes the dirt where you want it, unlike plastic brooms, which are electrostatic and hold the dirt.97

Broom-making requires specialised machinery and specific skills and the broom clamp, which is now part of the Tumut & District Historical Museum's collection, represents just one component of the many machines and skills necessary for the successful making of brooms. Many of the skills, which were an integral part of the hand-making of millet brooms, are now disappearing, as most Australian based broom factories have ceased production.

---

In the mid-20th century there were fourteen broom factories operating throughout Australia. Two of those broom factories operated in Tumut. They were the Tumut Broom Company and the Queen Broom Company. Other major broom factories were the Federal Broom Company in Sydney and the Rodney Hearne Broom Factory in Lismore. In 2003, there were two hand-made broom companies operating in Australia, one at Tumut and one at Lismore. The Tumut Broom Company continues to operate under the ownership of Geoff Wortes.

*A Cape or a Cover* – *Stories of domestic brooms*

Domestic experts of the nineteenth century, Mrs. Isabella Beeton and Mrs. Lance Rawson, both advocated specific techniques for the care and maintenance of hair and straw brooms, with Mrs. Rawson suggesting that:

> In choosing a millet broom take one with a greenish tint through the straws, and notice if all the twigs reach to the bottom, as when some are uneven or short, only reaching half way, the broom will not wear well, the straws and twigs breaking off. Also see that all the twigs go up to the handle and are not only fastened under one or the other of the wires. A good plan is to put a cape or cover on a new millet broom round the shoulders and reaching a short distance below the wiring. It will keep the straws from breaking off or catching in curtains, valances, &c., as they often do. Brooms should always be hung up when not in use, and if this plan is not convenient they should be stood with the brush end up, if otherwise they soon lose shape.

---

98 Locally grown millet was supplied to the Queen Broom Factory by Phillip Halloran. After the close of the factory in 2002, all remaining machinery was bought by a Chinese company. Straw brooms are still made in China under the Queen Broom brand name.
Millet brooms should be washed [in warm suds once a month] as often as the others [hair brooms], and, besides cleaning it often keeps the twigs from breaking.99

Millet straw brooms were still a valued household aid well into the 20th century, with the Woman’s Budget of 1933 pointing out that women could ‘[s]ave wear and tear on your millet broom with this felt cover, which costs 1/11’.100

---

100 Words To The Wise. (1933, August 16). Woman’s Budget. p. 15.
2.9: Summary

Commercial precincts, large and small, have always been the heart and soul of Riverina communities. They act as retail venues and meeting places, especially in smaller towns, such as Adelong and Coolamon. Commercial and industrial enterprises in Riverina towns have grown around a need to service the surrounding rural communities. These objects and stories are a reminder of the diversity and energy of the early settlers of the Riverina, such as the gold miners of Adelong, the Chinese in Narrandera and the farmers and graziers throughout the Riverina.

Except for Bill Choy’s Sunshine Laundry in Narrandera, the era of Chinese owned commercial enterprises is almost beyond lived memory. The gold miners of Adelong are long gone, and the glory days of the Tumut Butter Factory are becoming a distant memory, and while broom making remains in Tumut, its future depends upon financial viability and the continuity of skills.

While it has been recognised that visible reminders are scarce, there is also a lack of accessible narratives. The collecting of these stories of Chinese commercial history in the region is of importance, as the retelling of Chinese history in Narrandera is dependent on the memories of older members of the community and quickly approaching the ‘outside lived memory’ threshold. Although histories of the Chinese communities in regional New South Wales are available, it is through the vivid, personal recollections of older people from Narrandera and district that clarity and character are added to other, more official voices.

At the end of the 19th century, Narrandera had the largest Chinese population in the Riverina, with the Chinese community making a positive contribution to the commercial development of Narrandera at that time. At the beginning of the 21st century there seems to


102 At the end of the 19th century, the presence of 303 adult Chinese males was recorded in Narrandera. That meant that every second man in the town was Chinese. Information from Kelvin Maxwell: ‘The Chinese Experience in Australia with Particular Reference to Narrandera’ (unpublished research paper, date unknown)
have been an unfortunate loss and oversight of Narrandera’s Chinese cultural heritage. These narratives offer a re-engagement with that rich and important facet of Narrandera’s history.

For many older Australians, stories of S. Richards and Co. in Narrandera, and the Up To Date Store in Coolamon, are linked to their memories of visits to similar country and city stores of the early to mid 20th century. Images are awakened of wooden floors and counters, the smell of groceries, patent medicines and poultry food or the fascination of watching the overhead change machine.

The stories of commerce and industry in the Riverina are representative of a time when ‘local product’ meant exactly that. They evoke a remembrance of and nostalgia for, an era when personal service and a quality product were seen as an intrinsic part of good business practice.
Chapter 3: Just Around the Bend – Stories of transport in the Riverina

3.1: Objects and collections – an overview

The key objects in this chapter are representative of changes in transport technologies and lifestyles in the Riverina between the late 1800s and the mid 1900s. They are not inclusive of all methods of transport; which have been used in the Riverina, for example railways and air transport however they do represent key areas, such as road and river transport. The *PS Wagga Wagga* log books and river charts (Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera NSW) tell the stories of a brief but vibrant period in Riverina history, when the river steamer was vital for communication between remote communities. The Bennett and J.T. Close wagons (Garth Jones Collection, Coolamon NSW) highlight the story of not only the wagon builders, but also the links to agriculture and commercial use. Like the river charts and the log books, the drover’s cart (Gundagai and District Museum) and the pack saddle (Tumbarumba Historical Museum) both focus on stories of rural technologies and lifestyles which have disappeared completely or are now rarely seen. A simply designed plywood dinghy (Tumut and District Historical Museum) provides the key to a group of rarely heard stories of a singular event connected to the monumental history of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. While the ‘wagga’ rug is primarily seen as an iconic domestic object, the stories associated with John Foster’s wagga, also highlight its place within workplace and journey narratives.

3.2: Introduction

Transport is the lifeblood of communities in regional and rural areas. From a technological perspective there have been many changes in forms of transport from the late 19th century to the early 21st century. The steamboats of the inland river systems, which were superseded by the railway, have been relegated to the role of tourist attractions at three locations on the Murray River.¹ Horse-drawn transport including wagons, carts and sulkies have become a novelty rather than an everyday sight, while the saddle horse and the pack horse have all but vanished from common usage in agriculture, although they are still used in the horse racing industry, riding schools and tourism companies.

¹ These locations are: Goolwa in South Australia, Albury in New South Wales, Mildura in Victoria and Echuca in Victoria.
Research within the Riverina has uncovered many overlapping and interwoven narratives, some of which focus on the lesser known facets of transport use. Family histories, newspapers, museum collections, libraries, archives and personal interviews have all aided in the compilation of these stories. The stories told are sometimes muted by time and often revealed through the memories of those who were not originally involved as owners, builders or operators.
3.3: Work Horses of the Rivers – The river steamers

From the late 1800s until the early 1900s, the lives and livelihoods of townspeople and property owners along the Murrumbidgee River were linked together by river steamers. With roads poorly constructed or non-existent and the railway\textsuperscript{2} not extending into the Riverina until 1878, when it reached Wagga Wagga, river steamers were among the fastest means of moving people and cargo. In particular, the river steamers provided a reliable form of transport to the large stations with river frontage such as Tubbo, owned by the Peter family. As historian Paul de Serville states, ‘[o]ne set of men were vital to the everyday running of the station. They were the crews of the river steamers, bringing in supplies and taking out the wool.’\textsuperscript{3} The barges pulled by these river steamers could carry up to two thousand bales of wool, which exceeded the load capacity of wool wagons of that period.

By 1867 thirty thousand wool bales had reached Echuca on the Murray River, where the headquarters of the major steamship companies, such as William McCulloch & Company, River Murray Navigation Company, Upper Murray Steam Navigation Company, Wagga Wagga Steam Navigation Company, Melbourne and Riverine General Carrying & Forwarding Company and the Hay Steam Navigation Company were located.\textsuperscript{4} The majority of the wool bales were destined for the worsted woolen mills of northern England.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig3.2.jpg}
\caption{Fig. 3.2: Historic Echuca wharf, 2002
(Photo: A. Brown)}
\end{figure}

The height of the wharf allowed for fluctuations in the depth of the Murray River. Cargo could be craned ashore. The crane can be seen at the front of the storage shed.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[2] Wagga Wagga (1878), Narrandera (1881), Hay (1882).
\end{footnotes}
Transport of cargo by river steamer had started during the gold rushes and by the 1850s they were operating on the Murray, the Darling and the Murrumbidgee rivers. The river frontage in the towns of Wagga Wagga, Narrandera, Hay, Jerilderie and Wentworth echoed to the sounds of the river steamers loading and unloading. Sawmills added to the activity on the riverbank in Narrandera, with river steamer and sawmill operations co-owned by Risby & Company and sharing facilities and employees.

The height of the riverboat industry on the Murrumbidgee River, when as many as six river steamers per day passed through Hay, was short lived. Troubled by the inconsistencies of river height and flow and the increasing expansion of the railways, by the late 1890s the sighting of steamers on the river had become an uncommon event. As the ‘witty and well educated’ correspondent Paddy Cleary (1856-1936), who wrote under the name of ‘Phil Random’, pointed out in 1893:

Five minutes walk from the woolshed will bring you to the banks of the Murrumbidgee, and as I gaze on this stream it brings up memories of bygone days, when the sight of a steamboat was not such a rarity as now. The steamer Goldsborough passed here the other day with a cargo of goods for Whitton, which speaks volumes for our railways with all its boasted retrenchments, &c., when compared with river traffic. It is quite fresh in my memory when I used to take my turn at the wheel on these little steamers; and many thousands of miles have I travelled on these rivers in the good old days, before the railways were constructed where they were little needed and run at a loss to the country. Why the line from Narandera [sic] to Hay was ever built is a conundrum; it runs parallel with a navigable river and cost a wealth of money to make.  

At the beginning of the 21st century, to all but a few older people in the Riverina community and a handful of local historians, the river steamers and the stories about

---

3 The wharf in Wagga Wagga was located close to the site of the Hampden Bridge on the south side of the Murrumbidgee River.
7 'Phil Random'. (1893, September 29). Narandera Ensign, p. 2.
them had disappeared. In 2002, however, the water level of the Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera dropped to an extremely low level, exposing the skeleton of a long submerged river steamer, the *P S Wagga Wagga*.

Photographs of the wreckage then appeared in the Wagga Wagga newspaper, the *Daily Advertiser*, which in turn generated a response from Tim Smith, a marine archaeologist from the NSW Heritage Office in Sydney. The location of the *P S Wagga Wagga* was added to the National Shipwrecks database and stories of the river steamers on the Murrumbidgee River, in particular stories of the *P S Wagga Wagga*, were once again activated.

‘Billed Head and Round Stern’ - *PS Wagga Wagga*
*P S Wagga Wagga* was built in 1877 at Cornella Creek on the Murray River in New South Wales, for Robert Barbour, a sawmill proprietor. Bearing the official number 74946, the *P S Wagga Wagga* was a side wheel design paddle steamer with a wood framework, one deck, billethead and round stern and measured sixty eight feet in length and sixteen feet wide. During the working life of *P S Wagga Wagga*, other owners included G.H. Risby & Co., a sawmill proprietor of Mildura,8 Messrs. W. Plant and Sam Langham, Messrs. James and E. Roach and finally Mr. James Roach.

![Fig. 3.6: PS Wagga Wagga and crew (Captain Thomas Bynon right), c1900](image)

Collection of Narrandera Library  
(Photographer: Unknown)

Crew members of *P S Wagga Wagga* were also employed by the sawmill proprietors between trips up and down the Murrumbidgee River. ‘Hands working in mill from the 7th Dec. to the 11th & from 19th to 24th’9, wrote Captain Thomas Bynon in 1887.

---

8 Risby was also the owner of a sawmill in Narrandera.
Life on the river was not all hard work for Bynon and his crew. Apart from her regular runs carrying cargoes of wool, timber and other goods, the *P S Wagga Wagga* saw service as an excursion vessel on several occasions. Fundraising for the Narrandera Hospital was the primary aim of these social outings, with reports on the planning process and the outcome of the excursion recorded in the *Narandera Ensign* of September and October of 1893:

A letter from Mr. Graham (late Risby and Co.) kindly offering the steamboat “Wagga” for a river excursion, on any suitable day by giving a week’s notice, and suggesting moonlight weather; the committee making arrangements, fixing fares, etc., for the benefit of the hospital. The offer was gladly accepted, and Mr. Cohen was appointed to interview Mr. Graham for making the necessary arrangements.\(^{10}\)

As Geoffrey Blainey points out, ‘in rural areas, people planning a journey, or fixing the date for a ball, carefully consulted the almanac to see when the moon would be brightest’\(^ {11}\). This dependence on adequate natural lighting is also highlighted in the newspaper report of the upcoming excursion:

The River Excursion, advertised a fortnight since to take place shortly for the benefit of the Hospital, has not yet been fully arranged for. During the time of a full moon is considered to be the most suitable for such an outing, and as it was thought the weather might be more settled and propitious about the end of October than at present, any definite decision upon the date has been postponed for a week or two. The time, when fixed, will be duly advertised, so as to give lovers of aquatic excursions ample opportunity of joining in the swim.\(^ {12}\)

\(^{10}\) Local news. (1893, September 15). *Narandera Ensign*, p. 3.


\(^{12}\) Local news. (1893, September 29). *Narandera Ensign*, p. 4.
The steamboat excursion was finally set down to be held on Wednesday 25th October, beginning at 2pm and returning to the starting point by 9pm. Arrangements for the excursion also highlight the dependence, particularly in rural areas, on natural lighting at that time, with the statement ‘FULL MOON’ given prominence in the advertising. The timing of the event also coincided with the half-day retail trading, which was in place at that time. Tickets were priced at ‘Half-a-Crown’ and it was also pointed out to would be patrons that, ‘a band will accompany the Excursionists.’

The newspaper account of the excursion itself provides a detailed narrative of leisure activities of the late nineteenth century, which have now disappeared, with the excursion presented in glowing and positive terms by the anonymous 19th century journalist:

A River Excursion Trip to North Yanco took place on Wednesday afternoon in the steamer Wagga Wagga, kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. H. Graham, of the Saw Mills, the proceeds going to the funds of the Narrandera Hospital. The boat started about 2 p.m., carrying between 150 and 200 passengers, including the Town Brass Band, and journeyed to the spot known as Graham’s Grave, where the excursionists landed, and after indulging in dancing and other games for about two hours, the party returned homewards, arriving in town just before 10 o’clock, thoroughly pleased with the outing. Another trip has been arranged for Sunday next, the steamer leaving at 10 a.m. and returning at 7 p.m.

The PS Wagga Wagga was scuttled in the Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera in 1911.

‘Stuck in the Channel’ - The Log Books of PS Wagga Wagga

As a matter of survival, experience at gauging the notoriously changeable conditions of the Murrumbidgee River was learned in the early years of settlement by timber cutters, shepherds, drovers and landholders with river frontages. According to Roy Wade, a

---

14 Local news. (1893, October 27). Narandera Ensign, p. 3.
15 Scuttle: To deliberately let water into a ship to sink it.
Narrandera resident for more than seventy years, people who had lived along the river for many years could read the shifts in currents and channels from observing the colour and surface texture of the river, and timing the changes in river heights became almost an intuitive skill.\footnote{R. Wade (personal communication, April 15, 2007).}

There were, however, none better equipped in the task of ‘reading the river’ than the captains and navigators of the river steamers, who have left an invaluable historical record of daily work schedules and river conditions in log books and hand written river charts. Often starting their careers in their early teens, these men served a long and rigorous apprenticeship under the guidance of experienced river captains. The log books of the \textit{P S Wagga Wagga}, written by Captain Thomas Bynon between 1884 and 1890, offer a rare glimpse into life on the Murrumbidgee River of the late 19th century, and remain as the only known examples of log books connected primarily to steamer operations on the Murrumbidgee River. Not only do these log books bring the daily working routines of the \textit{P S Wagga Wagga} to life, but also many of the day to day operations of the great pastoral stations along the Murrumbidgee, from Narrandera to Wentworth, including Eli Elwah, Toganmain, Tubbo, Burrabogie, Goll Goll, Groongal, Bringagie and Uardry.
The log books record the daily grind of working life on board the steamers, when hours of heavy physical labour were interspersed with long periods of forced inactivity while the captain and crew waited for the river to rise. Written in a careful copperplate script, the log entries detail the prevailing weather conditions and the dependency on water levels for continued progress along the river. Cargo loading and off-loading, crew supplies and inventories are all recorded. A log book entry for 27th June 1891 also lists C. Ah Chun as the cook on board the *P S Wagga Wagga* and documents his rate of pay at £7 per month. This entry forms a valuable link between the narratives of the log books and the narratives of the Chinese community in Narrandera. Wages listed for other crew members were: ‘J. Lipscombe – deckhand - £6 per month’ and ‘J. McCann – barge master - £8 per month.’

The constant references made by Captain Bynon to the renewal of firewood supplies for the steam boilers, reinforces the extreme physicality and repetitive nature of the daily work routine on board the *P S Wagga Wagga*. One such entry made in 1884 by Captain Bynon states that the *P S Wagga Wagga* had ‘left Hay at 5.45am … stopped about two hours to take in fire wood.’ Similar references to the replenishment of firewood are recorded throughout the log books. Woodpiles were placed at regular intervals along the riverbank by landowners and lessees. Among the names of woodpile owners listed were:

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Concise entries for three days in June 1885 demonstrate the demands placed on both the crew and the vessels, with groundings, mechanical failure and assistance to other river steamers all discussed. Captain Bynon reported:

Monday 22 left camping place at 6am got stuck five times during the day. Delayed in all about 3 hours. Passed Mildura at 10am. Passed Goll Goll at 12.15 noon. Passed Mallee Cliffs Station at 5.45pm arrived at McFarland Reef at 8pm. Camped for the night. Steamer “Emma” stuck in the channel. Tuesday 23 commenced pluck the “Emma” off at 6.30am could not shift her left 7am. Engine broke down at 7.30am just got through the reef. Put into bank started to repair engine. Delayed all day. Wednesday 24 finished engine at 12.0 midday.

The emotional demands made on the captain and crew was also recorded in the log book when a crew member from the barge Whaler was lost overboard:

Barge struck a snag in the Long Reach below the Reef. Knocked hole in the “Whaler”. Knocked David Evans overboard who lost his life through drowning at 12.15 midday … try to find body but couldn’t.
Fig. 3.12: (Detail) Death certificate of David Evans
(NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages Historic Register)

‘Accidentally killed through falling off barge 23 February 1885’

The pre-federation legal requirements of state border crossings are also uncovered in the pages of the log book, with several mentions made of customs clearance. ‘Laid until daylight waiting to clear customs left Euston at 8.0am’,24 wrote Captain Bynon in the 1880s. Although it is unknown whether the cargo carried by P S Wagga Wagga was ever a cause of concern for customs officials, inter-colonial disputes were a common event. Clashes with customs officials generally concerned the levying of customs and excise duties on inter-colonial trade goods and as James Lee of the Australian Customs Service points out, could often lead to ‘resentment, rivalry, and retaliations’.25

---

‘A Hundred Miles of River’ – Stories of the river charts

Used aboard the *P S Wagga Wagga*, which operated along the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers, the river charts present a facet of Murrumbidgee river history almost completely lost. Hand drawn, in ink on joined sections of cotton cloth, the images on the charts are executed in a naïve style, reminiscent of some topographical maps of the 19th century.

![Rolled Murrumbidgee River cloth chart](Collection of Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum (Photo: A. Brown))

The chart references were drawn in ink on lengths of cotton cloth (approx. 14 inches or 40cm wide). When in use, the outer end of the chart was attached to an empty wooden spindle and unwound to correspond with the various sections of the river being navigated. Channel depths and pertinent geographical features of the river were consulted and where necessary, changes or additions were made to the charts, using pen and ink.

Woodpiles, cliffs, billabongs, sandbanks, channels, snags, jetties, townships, lone cottages and homesteads are all depicted on the charts as simple, stylised images. When in use, the outer end of the chart was attached to an empty wooden spindle and unwound to correspond with the various sections of the river being navigated. Channel depths and pertinent geographical features of the river were consulted and where necessary, changes or additions were made to the charts, using pen and ink.

After being discharged from service in the Militia in 1945, Australian writer and poet Ian Mudie (1911-1976) took up a Commonwealth Literary Fund Fellowship to research the history of paddle-steamers on the Murray and Darling rivers. In his 1963 publication *River Boats*, Mudie tells of the use and occasionally, misuse of charts by river boat skippers and their crew. A skipper known as ‘Pirate Wilson’, said Mudie:

… took great pains to train his crews in everything necessary for them to become good rivermen [and] considered that one of the first things a new hand should be taught was how to read a chart.  

Fig. 3.14: Captain Arch O’Connor reading cloth river chart, c1974
(State Library of South Australia: PRG 1258/4/77)

He then recounted that:

[Wilson had] spent most of the afternoon in the wheelhouse showing a newcomer how to steer and how to read a chart. The hand watched carefully as the skipper showed him how to handle the wheel, how to watch the channel and the landmarks, and how to give an occasional turn to the knob at one end of the chart-box to bring a little more of the long strip of chart into view behind the glass.  

These lessons were not always successful, however, with Mudie concluding that after Pirate Wilson having left the hand alone at the wheel:

[He] went to his cabin to lie down. At the end of an hour there was a tap on the window between the wheelhouse and the captain’s cabin. “Got any more of these chart things, Skipper?” the hand wanted to know. “I’ve finished with this one.” … He had twirled the knob on the chart-box so vigorously that – according to the chart – he had steered the steamer along nearly a hundred miles of river in just under an hour.

---

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
Mudie also highlighted the historical significance of the river charts when he observed:

… some skippers kept their charts as actual records of river history … because of this it is a great pity that more of the charts were not saved, instead of being thrown out or burnt when their last owners died; they would have helped to fill in a number of blank spots in the history of the river.30

As Mudie has pointed out in the previous quote, any surviving river charts are valuable in their ability to fill in gaps in the history of rivers. Cloth charts of the Murray River are to be found in several collections, including the State Library of South Australia, the National Museum of Australia and the Echuca Historical Society Museum. The P S Wagga Wagga river charts, held in the collection of the Parkside Cottage Museum in Narrandera, are particularly significant and rare, because they are the only known charts of the Murrumbidgee River.

‘An Ancient Chart’ - Chinese Junks on the Murrumbidgee River?

Roy Wade, a volunteer with the Parkside Cottage Museum, was quick to understand the key role of storytelling in relation to the river charts. With a wide smile on his face, Wade produced a letter and proceeded to tell me a most amazing story.

The letter was written by John Braine-Hartnell in March 2002, to the mayor of Narrandera and it adds a contemporary and unexpected voice to the stories of the river charts. As Braine-Hartnell states in his correspondence:

30 Ibid. p. 183.
I am trying to locate an ancient chart/map of the Murrumbidgee River made on parchment and rolled on a rod, like lavatory paper. I reckon it was about 15” wide and, in the parts I saw, the river would go to the right, or left and continue upwards, zig-zagging up the roll, showing great detail of sandbanks, fallen trees in the river, rocks and so on.  

The description of the images recorded on the parchment chart appears to correspond with images found on cloth river charts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Braine-Hartnell had spent time as a school boy in Narrandera during WWII and had acted as golf caddy on several occasions for Dr. Harold Lethbridge, a Narrandera doctor and amateur anthropologist and collector.

![Fig. 3.16: (Detail) Cloth river chart showing image of woolshed at Mildura VIC (Photo: A. Brown)](image)

In later years, it was Dr. Lethbridge who donated his private collection, including the river charts, to the Narrandera Museum. The sighting of the ‘ancient chart’ had obviously left an indelible impression on the mind of the young John Braine-Hartnell and he had also been fascinated with stories related to the chart, told by Dr. Lethbridge, that the chart was:

Believed to have been used by Chinese junks that sailed to the southern parts of Australia, anchored off the river estuaries, dropped their long boats and sent them up the rivers to barter trade goods and then return to their mother junks.  

Mention is also made of a lecture attended by John Braine-Hartnell and his account of this event adds yet another voice to this vivid historical narrative:

---

31 J.C. Braine-Hartnell (personal communication, March 30, 2002).
32 Ibid.
When I heard a lecture by Gavin Menzies this month in London about the very strong likelihood of Chinese navigators exploring Australia and much of the rest of the world in 1421 or before I was very interested. His arguments are very sound, are supported by ocean maps and material objects and a book will be published soon.33

Fig. 3.17: Chinese trading junk
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an2310331)

With regard to a Chinese maritime presence in the Riverina, the ‘measure of credence that should be accorded to Menzies’ book as a whole may perhaps be judged by an examination of his claim that the Chinese discovered Australia’34 states Associate Professor Bill Richardson from Flinders University in South Australia. Richardson continues:

Menzies assumes that the enigmatic landmass south of Indonesia [on the Vallard atlas’s maps of ‘Australia’] is Australia, and repeatedly says that it is. He never proves it, but time and again uses Australian place-names to identify unnamed features.35

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s journalist Quentin McDermott also exposed Menzies’ historical account of the Chinese navigators as being:

Not just a story about one man’s wild theory [but also] a parable of modern popular culture, a tale about intellectual chutzpah and about a publishing industry that knows how to extract profit from a public which wants to thumb its nose at the dry though documented history taught at school.36

---

McDermott then goes on to say that ‘[p]rofessional historians label it naïve scholarship or worse, straight out fabrication’. 37

Although Menzies’ theories of Chinese navigation in Australian inland waters may be invalid, the Braine-Hartnell/ Menzies micronarrative adds a fascinating postscript to the story of the Murrumbidgee river charts.

‘A Civic Minded Man’ - Captain Thomas Bynon (1858-1945)

Thomas Bynon was born at Huntley near Bendigo in Victoria on the 26th December 1858. According to Riverina historian Hilda Freeman, Thomas Bynon ‘as far back as 1875 … was skipper of a river steamer’. 38 This vessel was the P S Murrumbidgee, which, with the barge Namoi, was based at Echuca and operated on the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers. Freeman notes that the Murrumbidgee, skippered by Thomas Bynon, (between 1875 and 1881) ‘brought Narrandera 200 tons of cargo, including 300 colonial ovens,’ 39 from Echuca, the goods having been carted there from Melbourne. 40

---

37 Ibid.
39 Camp oven: A free standing cast iron oven, rectangular in shape with a hinged door at the front. The oven was placed in an open fireplace with a wood fire built underneath or around it.
Along with his wife Selina, Captain Thomas Bynon came to Narrandera in 1881, where he was employed by Messrs. Blunt and Mason, contractors for the Narrandera to Hay railway line. Captain Thomas Bynon was in charge of the steamer *P S Alert*, which carried the timber cutters and cargoes of river red gum sleepers from the sawmills along the Murrumbidgee River. At the same time, Captain Antoine Justin Valery was employed to skipper the *P S Wagga Wagga* over the same stretch of the river.

During the 1880s Captain Bynon continued to carry sleepers used in the construction of the Jerilderie railway line and the building of the railway bridge over the Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera. Captain Bynon later became an employee of Messrs. Risby & Co. (G.H. Risby, Samuel Langham, W. Plant and Henry Graham), saw millers and owners of the river boats *P S Struggler* and *P S Wagga Wagga*.

![Fig. 3.19: PS Wagga Wagga, c1900](State Library of South Australia: PRG 1258/1/3899)

Captain Bynon’s skills as an inland mariner was well known to Narrandera locals and in a public lecture entitled ‘The Murrumbidgee’; given some time between 1924 and 1937, Dr. O. Lethbridge emphasized the captain’s expertise by observing that:

> I doubt that anyone about Narrandera is more qualified to tell of the river from Wagga to the Murray than Mr. Bynon, who for 38 years was captain of the S. S. Wagga which now lies in the bed of the river at the Gum Mill. He tells me that he has never seen the river stop running at Narrandera. He tells me of the old days at Hay before the railway came, when 40 teams would be camped at Hay and the wool stores piled to the rafters, and steamers to take the wool down. There were side tail tubs and table tops, coaches and bullock drays. He has seen four fights going on at once between the land lubbers and the mariners. What days!!

Captain Bynon was employed in the river steamer and sawmilling industry until 1924. Not only was he a valued employee on board the steamer, but he was also employed as

---

41 Ibid.
a manager at the red gum sawmills. His connections with the waterways of the Riverina continued even after the *P S Wagga Wagga* had ceased to run, when he was engaged in construction work on the Yanco Weir in 1929 and, finally, placed in charge of running of the pumping plant at Buckingbong Station during the early 1930s.

An extremely civic minded man, Thomas Bynon captained the steamer *Wagga Wagga* as an excursion vessel for local fund raising events on several occasions. He was also a member of the Narrandera chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F) for over fifty years, a representative of the Australian Workers Union and President of the Narrandera branch of the Labour League.

Written records tell us of Captain Thomas Bynon’s expertise and long years of service in his profession of river steamer skipper. Those same records also tell us of Bynon’s strong connection to his community. There are however, no known written accounts to tell us of Bynon’s reaction to the end of his working life on the rivers. Perhaps the scuttling of the *P S Wagga Wagga* was all part of another working day to the Captain? Or was it tantamount to watching an old friend drown, slowly and painfully, in the cold water of the Murrumbidgee River?
Of steamer captains who worked the Murrumbidgee River, little information remains. A photograph of 1875 identifies captains George Grundy, Edward Creamer and F. H. Kruse who worked the Murray River. A brief mention is made of Captain Valery, who worked both the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers, by Hilda Freeman in 'Murrumbidgee memories and Riverina reminiscences: a collection of old bush history', which was published in 1985. An obituary notice from the *Narrandera Argus* of 1934 provides what could very well be the only other historical record of this river captain:

> The death occurred at the Public Hospital on Sunday last of one of the oldest and most esteemed residents of Narrandera in the person of Mr. Antoine Justin Valery, at the ripe age of 86 years. Mr. Valery, who was a native of Bastia, Corsica, had a varied career as a young man. Being a seafaring man there was practically no part of the world with which he was not familiar. As the steamship was not in general use in those days he acquired his experience in sailing vessels. As would be expected of seafaring men in the seventies and eighties, Mr. Valery had many thrilling experiences; and in later years took a delight in recounting them to his family and intimate friends. It is nearly 56 years since he decided to settle in Australia, and, having gained ... knowledge of engineering, found employment with Messrs. Risby and Co., who conducted a river boat service between Echuca and Wagga. Mr. Valery held a responsible position with the firm, but after being several years in their employ, decided to settle in Narrandera. Coming to this town about 50 years ago, he found Narrandera but a village. He was here only a short while before he became foreman and engineer of the wool scour, then conducted by Mr. G. F. Sugden, and held this position until about 12 years ago. During his long service with Messrs. Sugden and Co., Mr. Valery became known to practically every sheep owner in the district, and the work done at the scour was considered equal to that of any scour in the country.
Although Mr. Valery did not take an active part in public affairs, he was always interested in both local government affairs and State and Federal politics. He was a keen Freemason, having joined Lodge Leopold in Narrandera on 20th July, 1894. As one of the three oldest contributing members, Mr. Valery lived to see the golden jubilee of the lodge on 19th September last. Deceased was also a member of the I.O.O.F. lodge for a great many years. He was possessed of a very fine voice, and was very fond of music.

Mr. Valery was twice married, and is survived by one son of the first marriage and his widow and two daughters of the second marriage. The son is Mr. Louis Valery, Sydney, and the daughters are Miss Virginia Valery (Narrandera), and Violet (Mrs. P. Roberts), Narrandera.  

Like the obituary written for Captain Thomas Bynon, this detailed account clearly shows Captain Valery’s expertise as a mariner and his commitment to the district.

42 Obituary. Mr. Antoine J. Valery. (1934, October 9). Narrandera Argus, p. 6.
3.4: ‘Hard At Work’ - Wagons in the Riverina

Horse drawn wagons and carts were a common site in the Riverina up until the late 1940s. Wagons, manufactured in Australia by companies such as the J.T. Close Finley Foundry in Finley, New South Wales, and the Bennett Wagon Company in St. Mary’s, NSW, were based on traditional wagon designs from the northern hemisphere, in particular the United Kingdom. As Martina Margetts explains:

Every county of England had its own style of wagon that had been slowly developed among its wainrights [wagon builders] and was handed down from master craftsman to apprentice over hundreds of years. The wainwright was probably the village wheelwright as well. Making the wheels was the most difficult part of the process and it was the wheelwright who held the key to the successful geometry of the wagon. If need be he could make the whole wagon himself, otherwise he was foreman to a smith andwrights who specialised in making the undercarriage frameworks and the bodies of the wagons.43

Fig. 3.21: Derelict wagon
Coolamon Road, Wagga Wagga, 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)

These traditional skills and crafts, outlined by Margetts, were to become a vital part of the expansion and development of the Riverina. From the late 1860s, the heavy, four wheeled wagon was built in the colonies of Australia and used to haul wool, wheat and stores. These wagon builders, researcher Malcolm Kennedy points out, ‘provided … robust vehicles … for virtually every type of production and region in Australia.’44

Wagons and horse teams were a part of farming life in the Riverina until the early 1950s, with farmers such as Stanley Jones of Coolamon bringing wagons and horse teams back into everyday use on his property during the fuel shortages of WWII (1939-1945).

Stan Heffer, a retired farmer now residing in Coolamon, has clear memories of his working experience with wagons and horse teams in the early 20th century. Stan Heffer said of his experiences:

Yes, I carried 65 bags [of grain, pulled by] 5 horses and 96 bags [of grain, pulled by] 8 horses. This is about 1 ton per horse. The two horses in the shafts had to be big and strong for only they could pull the wagon up. The wheels could have the tyres [metal rims] coming off due to wood shrinkage in summer time. You had to drive it around the edge of the dam and put wet bags over them at night. The wagon I used was called St.Elmo and is still standing [on a property] at Marrar.  

Laurie Gaynor, also a retired farmer from the Coolamon district, recalled his time spent working with horse teams and wagons as a young boy in the 1930s:

I drove 11 horses in a wagon carting wheat to Coolamon silos, when I was 15 years old. [I would] leave the farm at 4 o’clock in morning, returning in the evening, then load the wagon with wheat.  

Wagon building establishments such as the Bennett Wagon Company, owned by James Bennett and his sons James and George, and the J.T. Close Finley Foundry, continued the tradition of wagon making in Australia. Other wagon makers operating in the Riverina during the same period (mid 1800s to mid 1900s) were W. Baird of Coolamon; Robert Murray’s Riverina Carriage Works of Ganmain; The Ganmain Implement Works owned by Robert D. Burns; Cohoe and Walster Pioneer Foundry in Junee and the Narandera Carriage & Waggon Co.

---

45 S. Heffer (personal communication, February 9, 2003)  
46 L. Gaynor (personal communication, February 9, 2003)
In the 21st century, physical evidence of these once flourishing Riverina businesses is rare. Many carriage and wagon works gradually converted to farm machinery, truck and car repairs and maintenance, thereby surviving the transition to a more mechanised age. Cohoe and Walster of Junee, who initially operated as the Pioneer Foundry, traded from 1893 until 1994. The J.T. Close Finley Foundry, which now operates as the J.T. Close Engineering Works, remains as the only continuously operating business of its kind in the Riverina.

‘Second to None’ - The J.T. Close Finley Foundry
Established in 1893, the J.T. Close Finley Foundry was advertised as being the largest in the Riverina. In a 1923 sales catalogue Close said of his foundry:

I have endeavoured to put Implements on the market that would be Second to None in the Commonwealth, and have succeeded in so doing. It has always been my aim to better the conditions under which the farmer has to work, by turning out machines, etc. to minimize his labour and produce better results, and I have recently Invented and Patented a Bulk Waggon and Kicker, the greatest money-saver the farmer has known for years; then my “Ideal” Disc Cultivator is recognized as the best Implement of its kind at present in use. If you support your Country Industries, you advance your district and benefit all. My Motto has always been “QUALITY”\(^{47}\)

Along with the publication of his personal aims and objectives in producing a ‘quality’ product, endorsements or testimonials from satisfied customers were also included in the catalogue, used by Close to promote his business. A customer from Myrtle Park, Finley, wrote in 1923:

When you get a Close Waggon you have no worry with loose tyres or green timber to shrink, it’s all seasoned in your own climate; they are built very strongly, especially underneath, where it is necessary.\(^{48}\)


\(^{48}\) Ibid.
C. McAllister Senior from Koondah Park, Barellan, also recommended the J. T. Close wagon in positive terms, stating that:

The eight ton wagon I bought from you in 1914 has stood exceptionally well, it’s a wonderfully light runner, the material was thoroughly seasoned as we have no occasion to have the tyres cut as yet, after nine years heavy work. We have repeatedly carted 120 bags of wheat, and can thoroughly recommend your wagons to any farmer, especially if he wants it to do solid work.49

Products manufactured at the Finley foundry included water carts, disc cultivators, wagons, drays, spiked rollers, swingle bars, sulkies and delivery carts. The J.T. Close Foundry also acted as agents for the Maxwell Motor Car, The Case Tractor and Meadowbank ploughs and farm machinery.

49 Ibid.
The Close family has operated a foundry and engineering works on the same site in Wollamai Street, Finley, for over 100 years. In quiet times, John Thomas Close employed his workers to build the Finley Presbyterian Church and the Finley Ambulance Station, thus securing their tenure. In the 21st century, Close Engineering still offers quality service, equipment and consultancy to their customers. They continue to play a vital role in the agricultural service centre of Finley NSW.

‘Hard at Work All Day’ - The Bennett Wagon Company

James Bennett immigrated to New South Wales from England with his wife and baby son, James William, in 1853. Employed as a wheelwright, he worked in Sydney for the next two years. A second son, George Thomas, was born in 1854. In 1855 James Bennett moved to Emu Plains, west of Sydney, and established his own wheelwrighting business, which was eventually relocated to St. Marys, or South Creek.

James Bennett’s wagon factory was well established by the 1870s and had a reputation for quality workmanship throughout NSW. His skill as a wagon manufacturer and wheelwright was also known in North America, with a pair of wagon wheels sent to Canada in 1876 and another to California several years later.

In 1879 James Bennett Junior and his brother George Bennett took over the running of the business, however a dispute saw them eventually running separate wagon building businesses. Such was the extent of the good reputation of Bennett wagons, they were sent by rail as far as Dubbo and Temora as early as 1880-1881. George Bennett and James Bennett Junior did not advertise, their reputation being spread by word of mouth,
with the product being its own advertisement. An extract from George Bennett’s diary for Thursday 6th January 1881, details both the large numbers of orders undertaken as well as repairs to existing wagons:

We have been hard at work all day. We have more than we can do, without working long hours. There is plenty of tyre cutting and we have four or five drays to make.30

The giant table-top wagons built by both George and James Bennett Junior from the 1890s are remarkable examples of local coach building. They also provide some justification for the claims made for supporters of the use of native timbers, such as J. A. Maiden, which were used extensively in the construction of Bennett wagons. As the *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales* reported in 1904:

Some highly satisfactory tests of the strength and resisting power of Victorian blue-gum have just been made at the Engineering School of the Melbourne University. As there are in Victoria vast quantities of superior blue gum, it seems only a matter of time, when Australia will cease to be interested in the gradually-lessening supply of American hickory.51

The Bennett Wagon Company’s practice of naming wagons dates from at least the 1870s, with wagons being named by the Bennetts (James Senior, George, and James Junior) on behalf of the purchaser. Wagons were given distinctive names such as South Creek Wonder, Cobar Star, Bogan Star, South Creek Terror, South Creek Times and

---


John Bull. The convention of naming or personalising vehicles has continued into the 21st century, with long distance road transports often carrying similar coachwork and identifying names, such as those seen on the Bennett wagon.

James Bennett Senior died in 1908 and George Bennett’s business continued until 1919. James Bennett Junior’s two sons entered the business as blacksmiths and wheelwright/body makers in about 1910. In a 1984 interview, Harold Bennett, a son of James Bennett Junior, recalled that:

A job had to be perfect. If it wasn’t perfect, my father would put a chip in it with a bit of paper to show it wasn’t finished properly. If an undercarriage wasn’t fitted properly to a waggon, you would have to pull it off and do it properly.  

Harold Bennett also recalled the difficult working conditions for apprentices in the wagon building trade:

I worked at a blacksmith’s fire to learn the trade and it wouldn’t matter if it was 90°F or 100°F (32° - 37°C) we would still be working at the fire. We drank 2 or 3 buckets of water a day.  

During the 1920s James Bennett junior employed 25 tradesmen and apprentices, until motor and rail transport of goods started to affect demand for new wagons. From the 1920s to the 1940s the business remained buoyant, with property owners and commercial fleet operators preferring horse drawn drays and wagons to motorized vehicles and with economic and wartime conditions limiting the use of motor vehicles. By the early 1950s these circumstances had changed and the business ceased operating in 1954.  

The John Bull Wagon - The Hamilton Family of Rosevale

Old, disused wagons, including those built by the Bennetts, are not uncommon objects today. They can be found rotting slowly away in farm paddocks across Australia. They can also be found in many regional museum collections, for example the Gundagai and District Museum and the Woolpack Inn Museum at Holbrook NSW. What is a rarity however are the chances of finding a Bennett wagon that is both provenanced and in

---

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
original condition. As the authors of ‘Safe in the Shed. Caring for historic farm machinery’ point out ‘if the machinery is located on an old farm it contributes to the overall interest of the place [and] where possible protects it on site’.  

Fig. 3.30: “JOHN BULL” wagon loaded with wool bales, Rosevale, Illabo NSW, c1920
Image courtesy of Reg and Ann Hamilton
(Photographer: Unknown)
Robert Hamilton can be seen on horseback to the right of the wagon.

In the case of the Hamilton family’s Bennett wool wagon, it had been protected on site, with ‘original finishes, signs of wear and tear and other evidence of its history of use in Riverina paddocks … retained’. Garth Jones would eventually purchase this wagon and in doing so, the historical importance of this wagon and its links to the Hamilton family of Illabo have been preserved. As Garth Jones explained:

I went to his [Hamilton’s] property on the Hooligans [Houlaghan’s] Creek near Wagga to inspect a bull. I saw this wagon in an old shed covered by straw. I was so taken with it that I bought the bull that was not really what I wanted so I could buy the wagon. [I] was able to get Mr. R. Hamilton to transport [the wagon] to my place where it went straight into a shed.

Robert Hamilton was the youngest son of Matthew and Margaret Hamilton, who migrated from Scotland in 1855. After working at the Adelong Goldfields for several

56 Ibid. p. 13.
57 G. Jones (personal communication, July 7, 2008)
years, Matthew Hamilton, along with five of his children, bought 1920 acres of land on the Merrybindinah Run in the Illabo district, which he called Rosevale. It was heavily timbered in those days, and Matthew Hamilton spent many years clearing timber and cultivating land. Rosevale homestead was built in c.1908-1910 and G.H. Mutch of Junee was the building contractor. Bricks for the house were made on the property. Robert Hamilton took over the running of Rosevale after his marriage to Florence Roberts in 1897.

The *Tumut and Adelong Times* of 10 February 1956 reported the death of Mr. Robert Hamilton of Rose Vale, Illabo

One of the oldest and best known district residents, at the age of 83 years. He was born at Adelong and with his parents went to “Rose Vale” Illabo as a child 18 months old and had lived there ever since.58

Bennett wool wagons are not a rarity as museum objects. They can be found in many regional museum collections. The significance of the ‘John Bull’ wagon lies in its original condition, particularly the paintwork and signage. At the height of its production in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Bennett wagon was regarded as the

best of its kind. For a successful farmer, like Robert Hamilton of Rosevale, the Bennett wagon was a status symbol.

The ‘John Bull’ wagon remains as evidence of the craft and skill of master wagon builder, George Bennett.

‘A Little Timely Care’ – Wagon wheels

Daily work schedules on farms and in towns depended on the reliability of horse drawn transport, with the maintenance of wagons, coaches, carts and sulkies being of paramount importance. The Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales provided advice for both the manufacturers and those who used various forms of horse drawn transport, including farmers, business operators and individuals. In particular, wheels and their maintenance were discussed in detail:

No sight is more common than vehicles with wheels being just ruined for the want of a little timely care. Once a wheel is allowed by exposure to weather, and from lack of paint to get into a bad condition it is almost hopeless to expect a wheelwright, however skilful he might be, to make a good job of it. Most of the trouble, especially where roads with deep ruts have to be traversed, is due to the scraping off of all the paint from the felloes. In wet weather the bare wood will shrink, while the rusting of the underside of the tire will injure the felloe. To prevent this, the wheel should receive periodically a liberal coating of paint or oil. The best way to use the latter is to apply it hot, and rub it into the crevices between the tire and felloe as well as the shoulders of the spokes and well around the nave. A wheel treated in this way will last about twice as long, and the tires in long spells of hot dry weather will not give any trouble.59

59 Care of dray & cart wheels. (1905). Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales, 11, 300.
Australian wagon manufacturers used native timbers in their wagon making, particularly in the manufacture of wheels. As economic botanist Joseph Henry Maiden 60 pointed out:

There is undoubtedly an unwise prejudice in the colonies against colonial timbers for carriage building … some of our timbers have passed the experimental stage for carriage-building, and a user may run no risk with them … I have jotted down a few notes in regard to colonial timbers for carriage-building, more as suggestions than anything else. I am collecting data as to the various colonial timbers used and deemed to be suitable to special trades; and I trust these few notes will provoke discussion. 61

Maiden then went on to discuss the individual attributes and shortcomings of a variety of native timbers. He considered Cedar:

… excellent framing for many of the parts of a carriage. In fact, I have been informed that Sydney cabs of excellent quality have been built of cedar alone, except the wheels and shafts. 62

Other native timbers considered suitable by Maiden included: Rosewood, Blackwood, Coach Wood, Acacia, Colonial Beech, Blue Gum, Grey Gum and Spotted Gum. Only Acacia species and Blue Gum species were available in the Riverina. All other species listed were milled on the north or south coast of New South Wales.

Fig. 3.33: Detail of wheel – J. T. Close wagon
(Photo: A. Brown)

62 Ibid.
3.6: ‘To the Top of the Great Divide’ – The Bradley family pack saddle

The pack saddle acts as a focus for the stories of the Bradley family and summer grazing in the high country, to the south-east of Tumbarumba, on the property known as Neurenmerenmang. Working the snow leases was an annual summer occupation for many men and boys in the mountains, until the gazetting of the Tumbarumba/Kosciuszko area as a State Park in 1967 and the cessation of grazing within its boundaries.

Cattle were moved to the high country from December until around the end of May and local men, including those of the Bradley family, were hired for work during this summer grazing period. A lifelong friend and workmate of the Norman Bradley, bush poet Neil Hulm, evokes the atmosphere of preparations for the journey:

The packs are put together
and the horses have been shod,
We’re leaving for the highlands
with cattle sheep and dogs.63

Fig. 3.34: Map showing Neurenmeranmang snow lease (top right)
(Andrews: The First Settlement of the Upper Murray 1835 to 1845)

---

63 Hulm, N. (n.d.) To the top of the Great Divide. (Unpublished poem)
Narratives surrounding traditional bush crafts such as leatherwork, which included the making of saddles, whips, bridles, reins, ropes, halters and stirrup straps, are also accessed via the pack saddle. Handcrafted objects, including the pack saddle, could be fashioned from tanned leather or untanned leather (green hide), with the process of crafting equipment forming both a functional and leisure activity for the men living and working on the snow leases of the Snowy Mountains.

**The Bradley Family of Neurenmerenmang**

Four generations of the Bradley family have worked as stockmen in the mountains surrounding Tumbarumba and the connection to Neurenmerenmang goes back to Matthew Bradley, who arrived in Tumbarumba in 1863 and settled at Neurenmerenmang on the Sue City Road, approximately twenty miles east of

---

64 There are at least two different spellings of the property name – Neurenmerenmang and Newrenmerrimong.
Tumbarumba. Although anecdotal information suggests that Matthew Bradley was living at Neurenmerenmang in 1863, the exact length of his occupation remains unclear.

A family of six boys and four girls was raised by Matthew Bradley and his wife Martha Jane (nee Oakes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew Bradley (1833-1892) m. Martha Jane Oakes (1942-1901)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 boys &amp; 4 girls including: Thomas Cowper Bradley (b. 1866) m. Elsie McLachlan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 boy &amp; 2 girls including: Matthew Selwyn Bradley (1904-1968) m. Sadie May Vogel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 boys &amp; 2 girls including: Norman Bradley (1930-2006) m. Ellen Norma Widdison</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those ten children was Thomas Cowper Bradley, born at Tumbarumba in 1866. Thomas Cowper Bradley became an expert stockman like his father and settled at Ruby Vale, a selection which was also on the Sue City Road. Thomas Cowper Bradley
married Elsie McLachlan of Green Gully, Sue City Road and they raised a family of one boy and two girls.65

Matthew Selwyn Bradley, the only son of Thomas Cowper Bradley, was born at Tumbarumba in 1904. He also became an expert stockman and after marrying Sadie May Vogel of Tintaldra Victoria, raised a family of two girls and four boys.

Norman 'Norm' Bradley, one of the four sons of Matthew Selwyn Bradley, was born at Tumbarumba in 1930 and also settled in the Tumbarumba area at Glenroy. He married Ellen Norma Widdison and they raised a family of three boys and two girls. According to Norm Bradley, his first recollection of his grandfather was during the late 1930s, when his grandfather took cattle up to Peppercorn, a cattle station owned by Naughton Bros in the Monaro district. Thomas Cowper Bradley managed Peppercorn for a number of years. Thomas Cowper Bradley later joined his son Matthew Selwyn Bradley, who by this time had also become an expert horseman, droving and caring for cattle from Ardenside, his cattle and sheep station in the Upper Murray area.

The mountain country around Tumbarumba and Neurenmerenmang has been part of Norm Bradley’s life since his childhood. His affinity with the area is apparent when he

65 John William Anthony Bradley (brother of Thomas Cowper Bradley) and his sons and grandsons also worked cattle in the McPherson’s Plains area in association with property situated on Merage Creek at the foot of Clarke’s Hill.
speaks of the countless times he has saddled up his horse and ridden into the mountains for work purposes and for pure enjoyment and leisure. As he explained:

I was always happy for the wife and kids to go over to the coast for holidays, but I never wanted to go with them. My holidays were spent here in the mountains. Riding in the mountains began for Norm and his brother, Selwyn, under the watchful eye of their father; Matthew Selwyn Bradley:

As soon as my brother [Selwyn] and I were old enough to ride horses to the satisfaction of our father [Matthew Selwyn Bradley], we would spend most of our Christmas holidays with him and our Grandfather [Thomas Cowper Bradley] at Neurenmerenmang.67

Joan Austin Palmer in Memories of a Riverina Childhood also recalls her joy as a child, helping with mustering on her father’s property Lake Midgeon near Narrandera, when:

… after school we would be up and away on our ponies. Sometimes we helped to move stock, which we loved, being with Father and the men, but more often we were bent on some ploy of our own.68

‘Only As Good As His Horse and Dogs’ - Summer Grazing

The property known as Neurenmerenmang was settled by G. Sparkes some time after 1850 and, was listed as forfeited for non-payment of rent by James Sparkes in 1861. By 1882 it was owned by the Australian Mortgage, Land and Finance Co. and in 1889 H. Ricketson was in possession. According to Dr. Arthur Andrews the property ‘is very rough and almost entirely summer country’.69

Fig. 3.39: McLachlan’s hut, c1930s
Image courtesy of Norm Bradley
(Photographer: Unknown)

These huts were used as living quarters by men working the summer snow leases.

66 N. Bradley (personal communication, October 1, 2004).
67 N. Bradley (personal communication, October 1, 2004).
Norm Bradley joined his father, when from 1945 to 1948 Neurenmerenmang and surrounding forestry and Kosciusczko Park leases were used as relief summer grazing for their Angus cattle. As Norm recalled, ‘the men would usually leave Ardenside in early December and arrive back in May, depending on the severity of the seasons.’ The area grazed covered 40 to 50 thousand acres. Their time was taken up boundary riding, mending and replacing fences and cattle yards and ‘packing’, or carrying in on pack horses, coarse ground salt and salt blocks to various parts of the cattle runs. According to Norm ‘the cattle loved salt and would not graze very far away from the salt deposits.’ The salt was an important method in the control and movement of cattle in those vast, unfenced bush areas. Transportation of men and gear was by saddle and pack horse, with a great deal of time being spent shoeing, breaking and educating horses to the ways of cattle and the bush. ‘A good stockman was only as good as his horse and dogs.’

![Fig. 3.40: T C Bradley with newly broken in horse, Neurenmerenmang cattle yards, c1930s](image)

The actual number of cattle taken up varied according to seasonal conditions and could range from three hundred to six hundred cows and calves. With Ardenside in close proximity to the summer grazing area the droving trips were short, generally three to four days at the most. Three to four men and dogs were required for the actual droving trip, but two men and dogs were enough to remain and care for the cattle during their stay in the hills.

---

70 N. Bradley (personal communication, October 1, 2004).
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
Living conditions were primitive, with water carried in a bucket from a well constructed on a spring situated approximately 110 metres from the hut. A galvanized rain water tank was added to the side of the hut in later years, to minimise the amount of water carried from the spring. Lighting was from a kerosene lantern and there was no such thing as refrigeration, with perishable foods kept in a gauze and hessian food safe. In very hot weather, butter and other dairy foods would be put in a bucket and lowered down the well to water level to keep cool. Fortnightly trips were made to Tumbarumba to replenish food supplies, with the men’s diet becoming less varied as the time to restock approached.⁷³

---

⁷³ N. Bradley (personal communication, October 1, 2004).
There was no communication with the ‘outside world’ in the early years until a radio was installed around 1940. The radio was built by Ivan McEachran, a friend of Matthew Selwyn Bradley’s, using a butter box as a cabinet. ‘Dad was the only person who would touch the radio and after it was tuned in the reception was loud and clear’, with the ABC radio network the only one received in that remote mountainous location.

The true test of experience and ability for these stockmen was displayed in the later part of the season as the feed supply diminished and the colder weather approached. ‘The cattle would become restless and difficult to find and even more difficult to handle.’ Long, hard, cold and hungry days were spent at Neurenmerenmang, which were never over until the cattle were safely in the mustering paddock.

‘Untouched For Quite a Few Years’ - The pack saddle

The story of the pack saddle in the Tumbarumba Museum was related to me over a pot of very strong black tea and a plate of home-made biscuits in the comfort of Norm Bradley’s kitchen at Glenroy. Norm’s ‘remembering’ of the pack saddle story took us both far beyond the cosy warmth of the kitchen. You could almost smell the mountain ash, the ponies, the cattle and the smoky interior of that long-ago hut.
I can’t ever recall any stay at Neurenmerenmang when I didn’t see the pack saddle hanging on a peg on the wall, where most of the gear was kept. Even though pack horse work was almost a daily routine, I had never seen this particular saddle in use and when dad and grandfather left in the late autumn with the cattle I feel reasonably confident, that the pack saddle never left its peg. It seemed to be always in the same position, untouched for quite a few years.

We boys were always both intrigued and fascinated every time we watched our grandfather [T. C. Bradley] in the task of cutting a fall or strands for a whip from a piece of green hide or tanned kangaroo hide. He had a long, specially grown thumb nail on his left hand, which he used as a gauge for the width of the strands he was cutting. He would attach the piece of material to a nail or hook on the wall, about waist high and then he would insert the blade of his knife with his right hand, from the underneath side of the hide, at the required width of strand needed. His left hand, half closed index finger, partly under the edge of the hide, pressing against the side of the blade, his thumb pressing firmly down on the index finger and firmly against the edge of the hide, with the long thumb nail protruding over the face or top side of the blade. He would then lean or shuffle backwards, depending on the required length, drawing the strands and knife in motion together. He would run off neat strips of uniform width, the entire length of the hide and most times in the one motion.\(^\text{76}\)

![Fig. 3.44: Detail of pack saddle](Photo: A. Brown)

Hand plaited, Turk’s head knot made by Samuel Thomas. A dingo trapper by trade, Thomas was a friend of the Bradley family and specialised in the making of Turk’s head knots for saddle trims and whip handles.

Although the pack saddle never appeared to leave its place on the wall of the hut during Norm Bradley’s childhood days spent in the mountains, he was to use the saddle on several occasions in later years. In his early working days at Neurenmerenmang, during the late 1940s, Norm Bradley used the pack saddle and found it to be ‘far inferior in design to the commercially produced pack saddles available’.\(^\text{77}\)

---

\(^{76}\) Bradley, N. (n.d.) *Home made greenhide pack saddle*. (Unpublished manuscript)

\(^{77}\) N. Bradley (personal communication, October 1, 2004).
3.7: Working the Long Paddock - The drover’s cart

In his book, *Station Life in Australia: Pioneers and Pastoralists*, Peter Taylor speculates, ‘Perhaps the first true drover in Australia was Joseph Hawdon, who in 1836 helped to overland the first cattle to Melbourne on a 500 kilometre trip from the Murrumbidgee.’78 Two years later Joseph Hawdon, along with Charles Bonney, drove a mob of cattle from the Goulburn district to Adelaide in South Australia. The Adelaide newspaper, *The Register*, reported that ‘Mr Hawdon arrived from NSW with 335 cattle after a journey of 1,000 miles in 10 weeks.’79 That journey was the beginning of what was to become known as the ‘Overland Era’ in Australian history, which lasted from 1838 until approximately 1855.

![Drovers' camp – Riverina, c1950s](National Archives of Australia: A1200: L8969)

Droving became an integral part of Australian cultural history, and drovers and their exploits have been immortalised in the poetry and prose of Andrew Barton ‘Banjo’ Paterson, bush songs such as *The Overlanders*80 and the film81 of the same title. Russell Drysdale’s iconic painting *The Drover’s Wife*, which features the image of a drover’s

---

80 *The Overlanders*. Australian folk song first published c1865 in the *Queenslanders’ New Colonial Fire Song Book*.
81 *The Overlanders*. Harry Watt (Director). (1946).
cart in the background, evokes the isolation in which drovers and their families often worked.

Before the advent of a rail network, stock was moved overland when new country had been selected, in which case the stock owner was usually in charge of the consignment. After the establishment of pastoral runs, cattle in particular were moved overland for sale, with stock walked by a drover to the saleyards and meat works on the coast. After the construction of the railway system, cattle were walked to the nearest railhead, for shipment to meat works. Most drovers, such as Gundagai man Theodore ‘Swannee’ Smith, were independent contractors who specialised in this work. They were accomplished stockmen and most had spent some time working on properties before branching out on their own. Their fee was generally based on the miles covered and the number of animals moved; however, some drovers took a share of the profit on the completion of the sale.

Fig. 3.46: Drover, wife and child – Riverina, c1957
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic – vn4318270)

A drover supplied his own equipment called a ‘plant’, which consisted of horses, riding and pack gear, cooking equipment and rations, and a wagon for transport of the equipment. They also supplied any extra men needed to work the stock. The stock was counted over to him at the start of the journey and counted out at the end; the value of any stock lost on the way was deducted from the money due to him. Once the drover had handed over the stock he was ‘empty’. He paid off his men, who either went on their way or stayed with him and waited for the next job.82

As droving became common, regulations were introduced to govern the movements of stock. Sheep had to travel at least 6 miles (9.7 kilometres) per day and cattle had to travel 8 miles (12.9 kilometres) per day unless flood made either impossible. Drovers also had to give notice to property owners of their intention to move stock over a route that crossed the property owner’s land, and drovers had to keep their mob within a width of approximately [875 yards] 800 metres.83

Failure to comply with the regulations set down by the Pastures Protection Board often resulted in legal proceedings brought against both the drover and the owner of the stock, as reported in the *Gundagai Independent* in 1930:

> At Cootamundra police court, on Monday, the Gundagai P.P. Board proceeded against G. Kelly, drover, on two charges of not travelling sheep the required distance, and for failing to produce a permit. Mr. Kinsey, on behalf of the defendant, pleaded guilty. Stock Inspector Freeman said he had interviewed the defendant, who had admitted his guilt, but said he had been acting under instructions from the owner, Daniel Barnett. He had obtained a permit for the outward journey, but did not get one for the return. Defendant said that, as he had permission to feed sheep on the railway, he thought this was enough. The sheep were on Wambidgee reserve. Defendant was fined £5; with 8/- costs, and £1/19/6 witness’s expenses on each of the first two charges, and £1, with 8/- court costs, and £1/19/6 witness’s expenses on the third charge. Daniel Barnett, employer of Kelly was fined £3; court costs 8/-, witness’s expenses, £1/19/6, for failing to obtain a permit.84

The names of many travelling stock reserves throughout New South Wales also reflect the history of their locations. In the Gundagai Rural Lands Protection Board area for instance, stock reserves carry names such as ‘Gravel Beach’, ‘Lime Kiln’, ‘Beehive’,

---

‘Long Water Hole’, ‘The Boundary’ and ‘Boiling Downs’; all references to geographical features or past occupations of the area.

With the construction of a system of bitumenised roads throughout Australia in the 1960s, stock was moved across the country in road trains and the demand for drovers ended. Although some cattle are still walked overland to their destination, the sight of many thousands of sheep and cattle being moved in this manner is now only seen during times of drought, when stock is moved along the sides of roads, or what is colloquially known as ‘the long paddock’, in search of adequate grazing.

Fig. 3.48: Drovers and wives in camp, c1950s
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic – vn3099626)
‘Reliable and Honest’ - William Theodore ‘Swannee’ Smith

The son of William and Charlotte Smith, William Theodore was born in 1902 or 1903. Very little is known of his early years. ‘Swannee’ Smith was a familiar and well liked figure in the Gundagai area and between his droving trips he made his home in South Gundagai. His working dogs and horses were among his most treasured possessions and according to Gundagai resident Joe Reardon, ‘he would make sure they had a drink before he did’.85

Like the many other drovers who worked in the Gundagai district from the 1920s to the 19560s, Swannee was well known to the proprietors and staff of the various stock and station agents throughout Gundagai. Quietly and slowly spoken, 'Swannee' epitomised the iconic Australian bushman. Joe Reardon also remembers 'Swannee' as being unexcitable, even under the most extreme conditions, and valued by local stock owners for his ‘reliability and honesty as a drover’.86

---

85 J. Reardon. (personal communication, November 19, 2004).
86 Ibid.
Most work for drovers during that period was gained through local stock and station agents. According to Joe Reardon, 'Swannee' obtained worked through Gundagai agents such as Leo Boyton, E.A. Tout, Goldsborough Mort, C.A. Gardiner & McDonald and Dalgety. While most droving work was done before the summer months, when stock was moved into the mountains for fattening on summer grass, droving trips could also be carried out all year round if drought conditions prevailed, when drovers moved stock on ‘the long paddock’ or stock routes in search of adequate feed.

Theodore ‘Swannee’ Smith died in the Gundagai District Hospital on the 23rd June 1971 aged 68 years. According to a report in the Gundagai Independent ‘He had been in ill health for some time.’ His funeral took place at St. James Church of England and he was buried in the South Gundagai Cemetery.

The Pastures Protection Board

The sheep disease, scab was rampant through the flocks of colonial New South Wales in the early 1800s and, in an effort to combat the spread of this highly contagious

---

88 Scab is a type of mange affecting sheep.
condition, the Scab in Sheep Act was passed in 1832, and covered only the ‘boundaries of land for location to settlers’. The entire colony of New South Wales was included in the Scab in Sheep Act in 1835 and the Rural Lands Protection Boards were also developed at that time in an effort to control the disease.

By 1866 the Disease in Sheep Act was legislated and the colony was divided into districts with a board of five directors in each:

There were 41 Sheep Districts and the boundaries of the then-existing Police Districts were used, with one or more Police Districts making up a Sheep District. Levies were paid, and graziers with more than five hundred sheep were registered.

Variations were made to the Diseases in Sheep Act over the following years, with travelling stock permits instituted in 1870. Changes to the act were also made in 1880, 1883, 1898, 1901 and 1918.

The Pastures Protection Board is now known as the Rural Lands Protection Board, with the power to issue permits for stock reserves both within their jurisdiction and outside their control. Stock permits are issued in four classes: Walking Stock Permits, Long Term Grazing Stock Permits, Roadside Grazing Permits and Routine Movement Stock Permits.

---

90 Ibid.
3.8: ‘Desperate Efforts’ – The Blowering Dam possum rescue

The Snowy Mountains Scheme was described in 1986 as:

… a dual purpose hydro-electric and irrigation complex located in south-eastern Australia. It impounds the south-flowing waters of the Snowy River and its tributary, the Eucumbene at high elevations and diverts them inland to the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers, through two tunnel systems driven through the Snowy Mountains. The Scheme also involves the regulation and utilisation of the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee, Tumut, Tooma and Geehi Rivers.  

The scheme was initiated in 1949 and completed in 1975, and statistics highlight the enormity of its construction. It is estimated that one hundred thousand people were involved in the work, including surveyors, hydrographers, engineers, explosives experts, truck drivers, crane operators, bulldozer drivers, welders, bricklayers, carpenters, cooks and cleaners. The majority of workers were drawn from the ranks of post-world war two immigrants from the UK and Europe. The completed project features sixteen major dams, seven power stations, one pumping station and two hundred and twenty-five kilometres of tunnels, pipeline and aqueducts, with only two percent of the construction visible above the ground. Narratives connected to the construction of the dams, the infrastructure, the major companies and the impact of the engineering involved are well documented.

Effects of the economic and emotional price paid by individuals and local communities appear however, to have been largely overlooked, while the impact on native fauna barely rates a mention. The ‘ignoring’ of an event such as the Blowering Dam possum rescue is explained by historian and academic, Beverly Kingston, in these terms:

---

When [a] community or society neglects its past or ignores its collective memory, this seems of little consequence. It may even be interpreted as an indication of devotion to progress rather than a potentially dangerous state.\(^9\)

In the minds of the community, this was perhaps a small and isolated event when compared to the overall engineering and environmental gains of the Snowy Hydro project.

Of the sixteen major dams, Blowering Dam, an earth filled construction standing one hundred and twelve metres high, was the second last to be constructed. Apart from its obvious link to the Snowy Mountains Scheme, Blowering is best remembered for the successful attempt on the ‘water speed record’ made by Ken Warby on 8\(^{th}\) October 1978, in his jet powered boat, *Spirit of Australia*. Warby’s record breaking run across the waters of Blowering attracted local, national and international attention and that record of 317.6 mph (511 km/h) still stands.

Warby’s jet-boat is not the only vessel used on Blowering for a brief and specific purpose to have attracted the media’s attention. The *Kinred Star*, captained by Dooley Manns, also drew the attention of both print and electronic media sources in May 1968.

Where the story of Warby and *Spirit of Australia* has been documented in mainstream histories and is, relatively speaking, well remembered in the early 21st century, the story of Dooley Manns and the *Kinred Star* has been all but forgotten.

Generally used as a fishing boat powered by a small outboard motor, this home made plywood boat was used, during a few weeks in 1968, to rescue and relocate possums and other small animals trapped by the rising waters of the newly constructed Blowering Dam. The name of the boat, *Kinred Star*, was chosen by Dooley Manns and provides a reference point for the additional story of Frederick Kinred and his plans, drawn up in the late 19th century, for a dam to be built in the same location as the 1968 Blowering Dam.

*‘Operation Noah’s Ark’ - Dooley Manns and friends*

On the morning of 2nd May 1968, the newly constructed Blowering Dam gates were closed and the storage of water in the dam began. ‘The diversion tunnel of the $42 million Blowering Dam was completely closed off yesterday morning by the dam contractors, Morrison-Knudsen-Utah-McDonald’, reported the *Tumut & Adelong Times* of 3rd May 1968. The long held dream of Frederick Kinred (see page 211) for the damming of the Tumut River had finally been realised.

---

With the rising of the water level other, more immediate problems were suddenly highlighted and, while the magnitude of the dam structure itself had been loudly applauded, minimal attention had been directed towards the welfare of native animals within the dam precinct:

Hundreds of possums are being marooned on tree tops by the rising waters of Blowering Dam and desperate efforts are being made by men in boats to rescue the marsupials.  

This was reported by the *Tumut & Adelong Times* and the Manns family was included in this effort. Dooley Manns and his son, Allan had first noticed the precarious state of the possums’ habitat while hunting for rabbits at the dam and the decision was made at that point to remove as many of the possums as possible and take them further up the

---

mountain. Word soon spread around town of the possum rescue attempts and the *Tumut & Adelong Times* wrote:

Mr. Dooley Manns, 64, and his son, Allan 30, both carpenters, first noticed the plight of the opossums and with the aid of their home-made outboard motor boat have already saved the lives of many of the opossums, which were dying from exposure or starvation.\(^{96}\)

![Fig. 3.55: ‘Operation Noah’s Ark’ Blowering Dam, May 1968 Australian Women’s Weekly](image)

The *Kinred Star* can be seen at the bottom right of the frame.

Assistance also came from the Tumut Shire Council which provided several men to help. Wally Fowler, the proprietor of the Wynyard Hotel, placed a sign in the bar asking for volunteers. The RSPCA and the National Parks and Wildlife Service also helped out and the Snowy Mountains Authority provided a pontoon to ferry people around the dam. Their efforts were widely reported, attracting attention from the NSW State President of the RSPCA:

The State President of the RSPCA, Mr. V. Jerbek, returned to Sydney on Sunday night from what he found a “wet and depressing rescue operation” at the dam. Mr. Jerbek hopes for legislation which would force dam builders to warn animal protection bodies before closing off rivers in forested areas. The publicity being given the rescue of native fauna from the rising waters of the dam is proving beneficial in building up the tourist trade to the area. Large numbers [of] visitors are noted each week at the dam site lookout.\(^{97}\)

Dubbed by Tumut locals in later years as ‘Operation Noah’s Ark’, the rescue operation attracted nationwide media attention including The ABC Television program *This Day Tonight*, the *Melbourne Sun* newspaper and *The Australian Woman’s Weekly*.

---

\(^{96}\) Ibid.

At the end of the rescue operation, it was estimated by Dooley Manns that he and his crew had caught and relocated over sixty possums and that approximately forty more had been rescued by other groups.

One of the most poignant reminders of the possum rescue operation is a contemporary bush poem; ‘Blowering Dam’ (see page 202), written by Dooley Manns. It reveals the often hidden, caring nature of many bush men, including Dooley, who had worked as a trapper during the Great Depression, when possum skins were worth anything up to £1 each. In a 1968 interview Dooley Manns observed, ‘I couldn’t kill one now, though, even if he bit me. They are such harmless animals and they can make fantastic pets.’

‘A Man of Vision’ - Frederick Kinred (1851 - 1931)

Arriving in Tumut from the Isle of Man in January 1876, Frederick Kinred married Emma Bridle of Talbingo later in that same year. Frederick Kinred’s thoughts were

---

constantly focused on schemes to tame the waters of the Tumut River for irrigation. He would often return home, late at night, from excursions to the Blowering area, where he would spend hours studying the terrain. Other sites which he visited frequently were Goobragandra, Talbingo and Darbalara.

A Tumut architect and builder, Frederick Kinred first proposed the construction of a clay and rock dam at Blowering approximately seventy years before the instigation of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Included in Frederick Kinred’s plans, which were presented to the NSW Government in 1887, was a complete scale model of the dam, with the materials to be used in its construction to be taken from the exact location from where it was eventually sourced in the 1960s.

The descendants of Frederick Kinred, including his grand-daughters Freda Taylor and Lois Adam, and grandson John Frederick Kinred, are scathing in their comments on the lack of recognition given to their grandfather by local authorities. They acknowledged him as a brilliant man:

… born at least 50 years before his time … He spent a fortune on research for a dam … firstly the Blowering Dam … and it was 70 years before they [the Snowy Mountains Authority] thought of his scheme.99

99 F. Taylor (personal communication, August 20, 2003).
Frederick Kinred’s story also forms a connection with the Miles Franklin narratives, through Kinred’s wife Emma, who was a sister of Miles Franklin’s mother. Frederick Kinred was a favourite uncle among his many nieces and nephews and on an impromptu visit to the Isle of Man in 1924, Franklin wrote to her uncle, vividly describing both the scenery and the people of the island:

My Dear Uncle Fred,
I had no idea I was coming here, till I jumped on a dirty, little boat, and came … I have been all over this pretty, little island, from Point of Ayre to Peel, and Port Erin and the Calf, and Castletown and Laxey … Yesterday, I made a special trip to Sulby, as that is where you were born, I believe, and I thought you would like to hear about it. I met a woman on the road, Mrs. Cowle, who told me she knew all the Kinred boys well, and that Freddie was a dear boy … Had I dreamed of coming, I should have got information from you, when I was there. That was a heavenly warm day I spent in Tumut … Love to you all from your affectionate niece … Stella Franklin.¹⁰⁰

Blowering Dam, Dooley Manns, 1968

The Blowering Dam is finished and the water starts to flow
Down among the willows where it always used to go.
Now the willows, downstream from the wall they hang their heads and weep
For their kinfolk far beyond, that lie in water deep.
And as we think of reservoirs and water for to stow,
Just think, we all must realise this beauty had to go.

The gates were ordered to be closed, the water had to swell;
It flooded all the burrows, where the “bunny” used to dwell,
And the poor old possum had to shift right to the highest limb
Until “The Ark” had come along there was little chance for him.
So one by one they came aboard and then out to the shore
The “Noah” sets his sails again to go and bring out more.

So this went on for days and days and also in the dark
While the poor old possum lived on nothing but toughened willow bark.
And so it looked so mournful to see them in their plight;
We knew that they had been there for many a weary night.
Sometimes you could see them hanging stiff and stark;
The poor unfortunate creatures could not exist on bark.

I remember in the distant past, many years ago,
That this scheme had been planned to trap the melting snow,
This gent he was a builder and he left some great landmarks
Around about old Tumut, where we have our glorious parks;
And when you saw him at his work and also in the street

There would be “Old Freddie” with his plans and specs complete.

So it makes me think and wonder that there’s nothing said of “him”
Because he pioneered when this country looked so grim;
He built hotels and cottages and they stand here to this day.
To him my thoughts went back when the dam was closed in May.
Although he’s gone for many years and gone right “o’er the bar”,
In recognition of his deeds we named our boat the “Kinred Star”.
Now there’s so much of this valley that we witnessed in the past
And there are many anxious anglers, who are waiting here to cast,
Or talk about the big one or the one that got away;
And many folk that come here will come here for to stay.
Now this valley looks so lonesome since our folk went with the tide
And we are left to mourn the loss of those who crossed the Great Divide.

3.9: Summary

The voices of riverboat captains, drovers, stockmen, wagon builders and boat owners have been activated to interpret the stories of the technological history of transport in the Riverina through the objects discussed in this chapter, and most importantly their accompanying social histories. These narratives have brought to life a time in Riverina history when the wagon builder, the wagon driver, the riverboat builder and the riverboat captain were indispensable parts of the transport network of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

While narratives of drovers, stockmen and boat owners of the mid to late 20th century are more contemporary in nature, elements of their recounting originate within that earlier timeframe and demonstrate the multiple roles played by transport in the development of the Riverina, as agricultural, commercial and social markers.
Chapter 4: An Extra Pair of Hands – Stories of women in the Riverina

4.1: Objects and collections – An overview

The key objects and collections in this chapter tell the stories of Riverina women from the 1870s to the late 1900s. The Gertrude Pabst wedding gown (Woolpack Inn Museum Holbrook NSW) tells the story of a colonial bride of the 1870s, while the bridal veil (Jindera Pioneer Museum) adds a micro-narrative of German wedding customs to this story. The Heather Shung wedding gown (Parkside Cottage Museum Narrandera NSW) is the focus of a group of stories which revolve around a lifelong friendship, working life before and during WWII, and a post-WWII wedding. The Mitsue Stockley collection (Museum of the Riverina Wagga Wagga), the Miles Franklin collection (Tumut and District Historical Museum) and the Bebe Elliot collection (Tumut and District Historical Museum) tell the stories of three women with strong personal ties to both the Riverina and beyond, while the May McLean collection (Gundagai Historical Museum) tells the story of one woman’s lifelong ties to both her family and the Riverina community in which she lived.

4.2: Introduction

These objects and collections tell the stories of women’s lives in both the private and public spheres of society. The richness and depth in those stories are highlighted when they are interpreted through issues of social status, cultural expectations and local, national and world events of their time.
For Miles Franklin, Bebe Elliot and Mitsue Stockley (nee Iwai) there was an eventual distancing from the traditional roles destined for them, while Gertrude Purtell (nee Pabst), Mary McLean and Heather Kenn (nee Shung) lived primarily within the prescribed social boundaries of their respective eras.

Although only a small amount of information relating directly to Gertrude Purtell herself was uncovered, the attendant narratives place her story within the context of the typical Victorian era daughter and wife, set against a rural colonial backdrop.

In particular, the stories of Miles Franklin, Ruth 'Bebe' Elliot and Mitsue Stockley (nee Iwai) connect to international events and places, as, to a lesser degree; do the Heather Kenn (nee Shung) narratives, but always with a constant reminder of their place within respective Riverina communities. While the story of May McLean is interpreted on a more localised level, it reflects the inestimable value of countless single women who spent most of their adult lives supporting both their families and the wider community.
4.3: The Pioneer’s Daughter - Gertrude Purtell (nee Pabst)

The economic and social rise of both the Pabst family and Purtell family was typical of many immigrant and convict families of the nineteenth century. The 1874 marriage of Mary Gertrude Pabst, the youngest daughter of John (Johann) and Ellen Pabst, and Maurice Purtell, the son of John and Mary Purtell, saw the union of two of the ‘pioneer’ families of the Holbrook (Germanton) area. I acknowledge that the term ‘pioneer’ is problematic, and loaded with associations of white, patriarchal, middle and upper-class histories. This view is supported by museum curator and writer, Wendy Hucker, who relates that:

   These classes are usually the power-brokers, the civic image-makers in many country towns across Australia. They shaped the towns to their own liking, writing their own history, preserving status buildings such as court houses and mansions, linking famous people to the town, even if the thread is tenuous.¹

Lexicographer, J. M. Arthur, makes the point that the application of a European or ‘pioneer’ timeline on geographical locations ‘acts as a displacing mode in relation to the indigenous population’². Like Hucker, he also draws our attention to the almost super-human qualities attached to these ‘male’ pioneers ‘which is exemplified by courage determination and so on, and associated with struggle’³.

The term, ‘pioneer’, is still widely used by older people, particularly in regional communities, and as Hucker has observed, is more often than not, applied to male pioneers. It was used as a descriptive by David Cathcart, manager of the Woolpack Inn Museum Holbrook, when referring to the Pabst and Purtell families, who, he pointed out:

   … are still spoken of with pride by individuals with a long connection to the town. They’re held up as an example of pioneer families who came from humble beginnings and made something of themselves as landholders and businessmen in the area.⁴

The fact that the Purtell family’s life in Australia began with a convict ancestor, was never mentioned.

³ Ibid.
⁴ D. Cathcart (personal communication, January 20, 2004).
The Purtell and Pabst families were involved in community organisations and events, with John Purtell’s sons William and Maurice and Johann Pabst’s son John listed as stewards of the Ten Mile Creek Races in February 1875.

The Pabst Family

Johann Christoff Pabst was born in Leipsic [Leipzig] Prussia in 1904 and came to Australia in 1825 as an indentured servant. He was employed as a sheep overseer by the Australian Agricultural Company, which was formed in 1824 as a land development company to extend and improve the flocks of Merino sheep in the colonies. Sheep from Saxony were also purchased by the Australian Agricultural Company for cross breeding with existing Merino sheep in New South Wales. Between 1825 and 1860, the Australian Agricultural Company brought to Australia over six hundred men, almost all of whom were under some form of contract. Shepherds from Saxony, including Johann Pabst were employed by the company because of their expertise in the areas of sheep breeding:

He was engaged for a term of seven years, at a salary of 40 pounds per year. He arrived in Sydney on 11 November 1825. On April 1835, he married Ellen Scott, a 21-year old Irish immigrant.

---


At the completion of his indenture with the Australian Agricultural Company, Johann Pabst moved to the Ten Mile Creek area of the Riverina, in the employ of T.H. Bardwell and T.H. Mate, two local land owners. According to Dr. Arthur Andrews, ‘in after years, [Johann] Pabst was mailman for a considerable section of the road, and became a well-known figure in the district.’\(^7\) Johann Pabst became a successful businessman and licensee of the Woolpack Inn at Germanton in 1840. The census records of March 1841 tell us that the Pabst family ‘were living in a finished wooden house, the site of the Woolpack Inn … In addition the Pabst’s had a stable for mail coach horses and a blacksmith’s forge’.\(^8\)

\(^7\) Andrews, A. (1920). *The first settlement of the upper Murray 1835 to 1845*. Sydney: D.S. Lord. p. 68.


\(^9\) Ibid.
At that time the Woolpack Inn was the only building where the town of Holbrook now stands. Because of the difficulty of pronouncing the name ‘Pabst’, the area of the Woolpack Inn was referred to by locals and travelers passing through as ‘John the German’s’, ‘The German’s’, ‘The German’s Crossing’ or ‘German’s Flat’. This common usage then evolved into the place name, Germanton. (See page 239)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johann Pabst – Ellen Pabst (nee Scott)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ann (b. 1836)       Maria Rachel (b. 1837)   Harriet (b. 1840)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Christopher (b. 1842)   David (b. 1844)   Frederick William (b. 1846)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Christopher (b. 1848)   Charles Edward (b. 1851)   Lucy Eleanor (b. 1854)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gertrude Emeline (b. 1856)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Purtell Family**

Born in 1800 at Rathkeale in County Limerick, John Purtell\(^\text{10}\) was sentenced at Limerick to seven years transportation although the crime for which he was convicted is not listed. He arrived in Sydney on 8th November 1822 as a convict on board the Mangles. John Purtell received his ticket of leave on 21st March 1827, less than five years into his seven year sentence, and in 1828 was employed as a stockman and shepherd at Camden.

![Fig. 4.5: The Mangles](State Library of Victoria: H92.410/20)

Although no record of the place or year of John Purtell’s marriage can be found, his wife’s name, Mary Hayes, is known from the death certificate of his son Maurice. It can also be ascertained from historic registers that John Purtell and his wife had at least five sons: John, Thomas, Patrick, William and Maurice.

\(^{10}\) Irish convict records state that Purtell also used the alias Purnell.
By 1858, John Purtell had raised himself to the respectable level of business owner, having built the Criterion Hotel in Germanton, which he also operated. ¹¹ John Purtell initially made his mark in the district as a land owner, having secured the Ten Mile Creek run in 1837.

As historian, Dr. Arthur Andrews explains in The First Settlement of the Upper Murray 1835 to 1845:

Many years ago a relative of [John] Purtell [said] that when Purtell first took up the Ten Mile Creek station, there was not a white man on the face of the earth, except himself. ¹²

---


'Most Fashionable Style' - The Gertrude Pabst wedding gown

We can only assume that Gertrude Pabst fitted the stereotype of the colonial girl who academic John Rickard describes as being ‘a healthy tomboy who could nevertheless command the maidenly virtues’. Marriage in the Victorian period, especially for daughter of such a well known family, was surrounded by carefully prescribed protocols. Ignoring these conventions could ‘set tongues wagging’ in the local community for years to come, especially when the topic of correct wedding protocol was discussed in the Border Post of 1875, advising readers that:

A wedding must not be uncheerful, but it must certainly be solemn to all who realise what it is … We are sure there are few girls who, if they reflect on the seriousness of the step they are about to take, will not choose to make their loving vow merely within the loving limits of their home circle … Let there be as much party making, rejoicing and pleasure taking afterwards as hearts desire; but let the solemn vows be made in the presence only of those nearest and dearest.14

Although no written report can be found for the Pabst/Purtell wedding in local newspapers, other contemporary sources describe the design, materials and cost of wedding gowns from around the same period. Day dresses, undergarments and outer garments, inclusions in a bride’s trousseau, were also discussed in the same source. In a letter written to her sister, Henrietta “Etta” Boyce in England during December 1865, 19th century diarist Rachel Henning discusses her sister Annie Henning’s wedding plans and explains that ‘her wedding dress is to be white muslin, as white silk would be

---

utterly useless in the bush. There are to be eight bridesmaids, four in pink and four in blue.\textsuperscript{15}

Writing to Etta in December 1872, Rachel Henning again gives details of current fashions, when describing the wedding of her brother and sister-in-law, Biddulph Henning and Emily Tucker:

Biddulph came up to the [altar] rails soon after we took out places with Mr Walker, who was his best man. He looked so well and was not at all nervous. Then the bride came in with her father. She was magnificently dressed in white satin trimmed with Maltese lace and wreaths of clematis, a wreath [on her head] of clematis and orange-blossom and a tulle veil.\textsuperscript{16}

The marriage certificate of Maurice Purtell\textsuperscript{17} and Mary Gertrude Pabst\textsuperscript{18} tells us that they were married at Ten Mile Creek on 27th December 1874 according to ‘the rite of the Church of Rome’. Maurice Purtell’s ‘usual occupation’ was listed as ‘farmer’, while Gertrude Pabst was recorded as ‘living with friends’. The officiating minister was William Bermingham and the witnesses were William Purtell, the groom’s brother, and Mary Ignatius Garry, a family friend and future sister-in-law.

Whether the bride’s pre-wedding arrangements involved any German wedding traditions brought to Australia from Saxony by her father is pure speculation. The likelihood of these marriage customs being enacted were more likely had Gertrude

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p. 298.
\textsuperscript{17} The Purtell’s raised a family of ten children: Maurice, Alma, Cyril, Ivan, Doris, Patrick, Frederick, Leslie, Mary and Aloysius.
\textsuperscript{18} Mary Gertrude Pabst is listed as Gertrude Emmeline Pabst (born 1856) in the Historic Births, Deaths & Marriages Register of NSW. She is listed as Gertrude E. on the birth certificates of all her children. It is only on her Marriage Certificate that she is listed as 'Mary Gertrude' Pabst.
Pabst’s mother also been of German heritage, which was not the case. It is still relevant to include a reference to these wedding traditions, as it is possible that customs such as *federschleissen* and *polterabend* (See page 238) were at least spoken of by Johann Pabst to his daughter.

During the 19th century the colonies depended heavily on imported clothing. British-made goods were in particularly high demand by the end of the century. As historian Margaret Maynard explains:

> American shoes, French and German fancy accessories, haberdashery and other specialist items frequently supplanted British made items.\(^{20}\) By the 1850s an increasing variety of imported, ready-made garments for ladies could be purchased in Australia. Most of these garments were informal, outerwear or leisure garments. Maynard also states that there was little in the way of stylish or haute-couture gowns in the colonies, although 'part-made evening and walking gowns, the skirts readymade, and some [ready-made] gowns were available.'\(^{21}\)

---

\(^{19}\) Ellen Hayes was born in Cork, Ireland.  
\(^{21}\) Ibid. p. 126.
Professional dressmakers advertised in both city and regional newspapers, offering experience, exactness of fit and neatness of work among their attributes, with neatness in particular being of paramount importance before the common usage of the sewing machine.

According to the nieces of Gertrude Purtell (nee Pabst), Daphne Purtell, Violet Purtell and Lillian Martha Purtell, the wedding gown worn by their aunt was imported from France. It is more likely however, that the fabric, rather than the completed gown was imported. Trade with France was brought to a standstill during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the availability of a French designed gown may have been impossible had the timing of Gertrude Pabst's wedding been any earlier than December 1875. As contemporary costume designer and curator Marion Fletcher explains, ‘even a provincial store in Australia, though a world away from the French capital, was suffering from the uncertainty of getting stock.’ 22

---

22 Ibid. p. 132.
These gowns show ruching and sleeve design similar to the Pabst wedding gown.

With its boned bodice, frilled sleeves and ruched, apron fronted skirt; the gown shows design elements typical of the elaborate fashion of the late 1870s. Whether the wedding gown was imported as a finished item is unknown, however it may have been in a ‘part-made’ format as described by Maynard, with the final fitting and sewing completed on receipt of the gown. A description of ‘part made’ garments is also given by Mrs. Edward Millet, describing her visit to a Western Australian country store in 1872:

The store which we now entered was the first which I had seen ‘over the hills’ and was a good average specimen of similar emporiums in the country districts. On one side of the shop, where the grocery was sold, there stood a heavy weighting machine and a tub of salt fish, crockery, gown pieces, paraffin lamps and woolen goods were ranged on the shelves … and under a glass-case was [a] dowdy little collection of millinery and fancy goods.23

At a time when dresses were often ‘made and re-made from material sent up from town or occasionally bought from a travelling peddler’,24 the Gertrude Purtell wedding gown was a special garment, made for a special occasion. Although the diarist and letter writer Rachel Henning25 may have caustically observed that Sydney fashion ‘was three months behind London and the bush [another] one year behind’,26 Gertrude Pabst wore a gown ‘fit for a princess’ on her wedding day in December 1874.

---

German Wedding Traditions

German wedding traditions are many and varied and differ from region to region. For those migrating to Australia during the 19th and 20th centuries, it was a way in which to stay in touch with the customs of their homeland. These traditions were then often passed down from one generation to the next and many of these have been recorded in German-Australian family histories. According to Margaret Hill (nee Hoffman) the tradition of *polterabend* (tin kettling) was still practiced within her family at least until the 1950s and although the term *federschleissen* (feather picking) was not referred to, quilts were made by older female family members for new brides.\(^{27}\)

\(^{27}\) M. Hill (personal communication, June 12, 2010).
According to the Hartwig family history ‘the wedding ceremony was usually performed on a Thursday morning, with the young couple leaving the bride’s home together for the church.’  

Celebrations would continue for several days with the wedding guests including most of the relatives and generally a majority of the neighbourhood involved in the festivities. The Hohnburg family history also describes that:

Horses and wagons [were] decorated [and] when leaving the church to the bride’s home, ropes were put across the road by children and men to stop the wedding party for lollies and wine.

Fig. 4.14: Bridal veil with myrtle wreath, encased in a glass fronted box frame, c1880s
Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Similar framed bridal veils are held in the collection of the Temora Rural Museum.

Until about the turn of the 20th century brides would quite often wear a black wedding gown, while the bridesmaids wore white. The bride’s veil was trimmed with myrtle and, according to the Hartwig family history:

It was customary for brides to encase their wedding wreath and veil in a wooden box approximately 30cm square [by] 15cm deep. This had a glass front and thus the contents could be seen when hung on the wall in the couple’s bedroom.

Among the German settlers, conscientious couples would not contemplate marriage during the period of Lent and parents disapproved of family members marrying outside

---

the Lutheran faith. Some parents would refuse to attend the marriage of such an offender.31

The wedding reception was always well catered for, with noodle soup (Hochzeitssuppe), poultry, meat, streusel kuchen, dessert, wine and beer. It was not unusual for guests to stay for two days or more, enjoying the festive company and musical entertainment.32

**Federschleissen (feather picking)**

Particularly during the cold winter months and prior to a wedding, a popular night time activity was feather picking or federschleissen. Young people would gather to strip the hard central shaft from feathers kept from chickens, ducks and geese. The stripped feathers were then used to fill a quilt and presented to the bride to be. Dancing, music and a supper of streusel kuchen completed the evening. This event was often the beginning of relationships between other young couples.33

**Polterabend (tin kettling)**

On the night before a wedding, young local men would gather at the bride’s home for the ritual of tin kettling or polterabend. First, making sure that all the horses had been led a safe distance away and securely tied, lengths of iron, empty kerosene tins and cow bells would be banged and rattled and shot guns would be fired in the air. The rowdy
group would then be invited into the bride’s home for glasses of home made wine and cake (streusel kuchen).34

**All in the Name - Ten Mile Creek, Germanton and Holbrook**

The town of Holbrook (Germanton) was originally called Ten Mile Creek, the name given in 1837 to the adjacent Ten Mile Creek station by John Purtell. It was common practice at that time for property names to be applied to nearby towns or surrounding districts, or vice versa. When the town of Ten Mile Creek was officially gazetted, some time after 1850, the name was then changed to Germanton in honour of Johann (John) Pabst’s long residence in the town. Examination of advertising and other articles from editions of the *Albury Border Post* published between 1867 and the 1880s shows that the names ‘Ten Mile Creek’ and ‘Germanton’ were both still used concurrently until at least 1888.35

![Fig. 4.16: Postcard showing Albury Street Germanton NSW, c1900](Collection of A. Brown)

Acceptance of ‘Germans’ in Australian communities was replaced with antagonism during and immediately after the years of WWI (1914-1918). People, products or geographic locations with a connection to Germany were under suspicion. Both German-born people and Australian-born people of German descent were closely scrutinised, with well known and respected members of Riverina communities placed under suspicion, and several interned, in line with the xenophobic rhetoric of the period. (See Chapter 7)

34 Ibid.
Geographic locations with German sounding names, such as Germanton, were also denounced and despite strong opposition from many people in the local community, the Germanton Shire Council called several public meetings in September 1914, to put forward suggestions for a change of name. ‘Martin’ was finally selected in early 1915; however this choice was ultimately rejected, as there was already an existing town with the same name in Western Australia.

Fig. 4.17: Lt. Norman Holbrook on board *HMS Adamant*, December 1914  
(Australian War Memorial: G00453)

The name Holbrook was adopted for the renaming of Germanton, in honour of Lieutenant Norman Douglas Holbrook VC, and the first meeting of the Shire Council under its new name was held on 24th August 1915.
4.4: A Life-long Friendship – The story of Heather Kenn (nee Shung)

Stories of a lifelong friendship between two women, which had its beginning in the earliest years of their childhood, are activated through the wedding dress, worn by Heather Kenn (nee Shung) in 1948. However, while the wedding gown is the key object for these stories, those directly related to the gown act as a final chapter in this group of micro-narratives.

Heather Kenn and Dolly Williamson (nee Wilson) shared many rites of passage throughout their lives, including first communion and the transformation from childhood to adolescence. Their period of employment together in war-work during WWII marked the passage to adulthood, which culminated in the sharing of the rite of marriage as bride and bridesmaid in 1948.

Interviews with Heather Kenn’s brother, Mervyn Shung and her lifelong friend Dolly Williamson revealed the close ties between their respective families and the ease with which the racial divide between the Chinese and non-Chinese communities in Narrandera could be negotiated.

“We Often Laughed” – Heather and Dolly, lifelong friends

Fig. 4.18: Dolly Wilson (left) and Heather Shung (right), both aged 5 years
Image courtesy of Dolly Williamson
(Photographer: Unknown)
According to Dolly Williamson (nee Wilson) her earliest memories of the Shung family concern visits to her parents’ farm at Gillenbah by Mr. and Mrs. George Hock Shung and their children:

Mr. Shung would carry Heather on one arm and me on the other and say he was double banked. Over the years picnics were often [held] at the farm. The Shungs and Hooks loved bush picnics and they were enjoyable ones too for us all.36

Horse riding and trips to the local picture theatre were interests they shared as schoolgirls. As Dolly Williamson recalled:

Heather and myself liked to see a picture sometimes and Mr. and Mrs. Laurantus had the [Criterion] picture show in Bolton Street. ‘I used to ride a bike into [the] Shung’s home and stay the night and we did this for a few years. Heather, being small, paid junior price to the pictures for longer than me even though she was a few months older. Mrs. Laurantus was on the door to check everyone. Then long dresses came in for teenagers and Heather used to pin up her long dress to go into the picture theatre. We often laughed about that.’37

---

36 D. Williamson (personal communication, October 16, 2002).
37 Ibid.
‘Taught Her a Lot’ – Working for Thelma Hook

Prior to departing for Sydney to take up war work under the Manpower Act of 1942, Heather Shung had worked in Narrandera as a dressmaker for Miss Thelma Hook.

According to Heather’s brother, Mervyn Shung, Thelma Hook was ‘more than just an everyday dressmaker. She was known in Narrandera as a costumier.’

Thelma Hook’s design and sewing skills dressed the most fashionable women in Narrandera and it was during her employment by Thelma Hook that Heather Shung learned these same skills. As Dolly Williamson recalls:

Heather was always good with any sewing and knitting … But I always feel that Thelma Hook would have taught her a lot. One frock they [Thelma Hook and Heather Shung] made with red beading, Heather did it [the beading].

The three Hook sisters, Thelma, Dorothy (Dot) and Hazel were well known identities in the Narrandera community during the early to mid 20th century. Thelma operated her dressmaking business above the premises of Chun Cheong Bros., while Dot worked for Chun Cheong Brothers. As Dolly Williamson explains:

38 M. Shung (personal communication, July 31, 2002).
39 D. Williamson (personal communication, October 16, 2002).
The shop [was] in East Street [Narrandera] between the Council Chambers and the Murrumbidgee Hotel. [It] was a mixed business, really two shops [with] two entrance doors and rooms behind the shop and above. Mr. and Mrs. Hook were in it [Chun Cheong Bros.] too and Thelma Hook had a large room upstairs and a balcony. 40

The youngest of the Hook sisters, Hazel, helped in the Hook family home in Audley Street Narrandera. According to Dolly Williamson:

The Hook girls were all very nice. Hazel, the young one, was a good cook. She stayed at home and Dot worked in the shop with the older [family] members. They were always very obliging. They belonged to the Methodist Church. 41

Fig. 4.23: (Left to right) Dorothy, Hazel and Thelma Hook, c1966
Narrandera Argus

All three Hook sisters left Narrandera in the late 1960s to take up residence together in Parkdale, Melbourne. At a farewell function held in their honour it was reported that, ‘The three sisters were lifelong residents of Narrandera, and will be sadly missed by their many friends.’ 42 The report of their imminent departure for Melbourne does not state their reasons for relocating from Narrandera to Melbourne.

40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Narrandera Argus. (c1966). (Photocopy from Parkside Cottage Museum). Narrandera NSW.
‘The Most Disastrous Accident’ - Return to Narrandera

The two friends were separated for several years when Heather Shung gained employment in war work at the Commonwealth Aircraft factory at Lidcombe in Sydney. As Dolly Williamson recalls:

They were building the Beaufort Bombers at the time and she [Heather] was in one of the stores and used to come home at Xmas and other holiday times. I would drive in and see her off on the train, back to Sydney. One frosty morning she said to me ‘You drove in with no gloves. I’ll knit you a pair on night shift.’ So a lovely pair of red woolen gauntlet gloves arrived and I still have them today.43

Fig. 4.24: Bannerhead, ‘Sensational Plane Crash’, September 1945
Narrandera Argus

Heather Shung’s work at the Commonwealth Aircraft Factory in Sydney was cut short however, when her brother Corporal Hilton Shung, along with six other members of the RAAF, was killed in an air crash over Narrandera on 3rd September 1945. The accident shocked and saddened the entire community, with the Narrandera Argus reporting that:

At about 12 o’clock it flew over the town with a roar, and then went south westward, and apparently was circling to come over the town again, heading north-easterly, when it collided with the high tension main … It then commenced to break up and pieces of fuselage were strewn along the banks and the bottom of the canal for a considerable distance.44

This tragic event saw the need for Heather to return to Narrandera and support her mother. Heather and Dolly were separated for several years, until they were reunited on the occasion of Heather’s marriage to Hector Kenn. As Dolly Williamson explained:

43 D. Williamson (personal communication, October 16, 2002).
Heather had to return to her mother. That’s how I was in Sydney for a few more years, ten years in all at [the] Commonwealth Aircraft [Factory] and we had changed to the Rolls Royce Merlin [engine] and that is why I did not know very much about [arrangements for] Heather’s wedding.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{45} D. Williamson (personal communication, October 16, 2002).
'Her Approaching Marriage' – A 1940s wedding

Events leading up to the Heather Shung/Hector Kenn wedding included a traditional gift evening, with the *Narrandra Argus* reporting that:

On Friday evening last the Church of England Ladies’ Guild organized a gift evening to Miss Heather Shung in honour of her approaching marriage … There was a large attendance of church people and other friends, who spent a thoroughly enjoyable time, the entertainment (dancing, games, etc.) being happily arranged by Mr. F.H. Baker, assisted by Mr. G. Walker. After a very nice supper had been served by the members of the Guild, the acting rector, the Rev. Blaxell formally presented to Miss Shung a very nice collection of gifts which her friends had brought along. The Rev. Blaxell and Messrs. D. Drover, J. L. Moir and K. Cole referred to the great help that Miss Shung had rendered to the church and its various organisations and wished her much happiness and prosperity in future years … Miss Shung very appropriately replied, thanking the Guild for arranging the function, the speakers for their kind references to herself, and her friends for their gifts.46

The marriage of Heather Shung and Hector Kenn took place in St. Thomas’s Church of England in Narrandera, on 29th September 1948. St. Thomas’s Church provided a familiar setting for the bride on her wedding day, as she and her family had attended services there for many years. Heather Shung had also been the assistant organist at the church for several years, as well as being involved with the Sunday school and the church tennis club. According to Dolly Williamson’s reminiscences, both she and Heather had attended Sunday school and church at St. Thomas’s and they had both made their holy communion at St. Thomas’s. ‘Heather made her first communion the year before me and I wore her veil the next year’,47 recalled Dolly Williamson.

---

47 D. Williamson (personal communication, October 16, 2002).
The full length bridal gown was made from white patterned organza and white tulle, with a round neckline, fitted sleeves and bodice. It has a centre back opening with covered buttons extending to the hip line. Typical of bridal gowns of the 1940s, the dress features examples of fine machine and hand stitching. Careful choice of fabrics, stylistic interpretation and precision needlework skills are all displayed in the garment.

A formally posed wedding photograph taken on the day of their marriage is representative of wedding portraits of the 1940s. The groom and his best man William Curtis are fashionably attired in dark lounge suits, white shirts and matching ties.
The gown worn by the bridesmaid, Dolly Wilson, was also made by Heather Shung. Correspondence from Dolly Williamson in 2002 stated that ‘Heather [had displayed] sewing and knitting skills since childhood’. ⁴⁸

Fig. 4.29: Wedding gown worn by Heather Kenn (nee Shung), 27th September 1948
Collection of Parkside Cottage Museum Narrandera NSW (Photo: A. Brown)

⁴⁸ Ibid.
4.5: 'Too Noisy To Be a Japanese Girl' - Mitsue Stockley (nee Iwai)

With a time frame which extends from Japan during and directly after the years of WWII (1939 to 1945), to Australia from 1954 until the present time, this group of micro-narratives involves a retelling of many deeply personal stories. Stories of life as a schoolgirl in Kure Japan, a young woman in post-WWII Japan, a new bride in post-WWII Australia and a wife and mother in Wagga Wagga of the late 1950s, through to the present time are all brought in to focus through personal objects and photographs.

Mitsue Stockley Iwai, the youngest of four siblings, was raised by her grandparents from the age of two, after her father died from a heart attack and her mother was forced to return to the work force to support her family.

Mitsue, whose name means ‘sunshine’ in the Japanese language, recalls with humour her mother’s comments that ‘I was always “too noisy to be a Japanese girl” and should have been a boy.’49 In the traditional Japanese culture of her childhood, girls were expected to be quietly spoken. This ‘untraditional’, outgoing and ebullient personality was to be an advantage for Mitsue during her first difficult and lonely years in Wagga Wagga, with her husband, Roy Stockley.

For the Japanese war-brides of the 1950s, as with other non-British migrant groups of the post-war period in Australia, assimilation was seen as both desirable and necessary.

49 M. Stockley (personal communication, July 18, 2006).
For Mitsue Stockley, this was achieved through English language lessons undertaken by correspondence and by embracing western cultural trends in fashion and food.

A newspaper article written in 1962 highlighted the shift in culinary choices among Japanese women living in Wagga Wagga, stating that:

Japanese cooking has “gone by the board” with these women, and they now serve their husbands the typical Australian meals of steak, chops and sausages. Octopus and squid – delicacies in Japan – no longer appeal to the women.50

It is also probable that the desire to choose a ‘Western’ diet in preference to an ‘Eastern’ diet was driven, at that time, by the limited range of ‘exotic’ produce available in regional centres such as Wagga Wagga, rather than by an urge to ‘fit in’. Involvement with community organisations from the late 1950s until the late 1990s has also assisted in breaking down cultural barriers and the development of a sense of place and belonging for Mitsue Stockley. Girl guides, schoolchildren, women’s groups, men’s groups, theatre groups and Japanese visitors have all benefited from the Japanese language and cultural tuition offered by Mitsue Stockley.

From the traditional tea ceremony of her childhood in Japan to the contemporary Australian tea ceremony, complete with the ubiquitous ‘iced vo-vo biscuits’, Mitsue Stockley continues to engage and charm those people in the Wagga Wagga community who come into contact with her.

‘I’m Not Hating Anybody’ – Life in WWII Japan

The dropping of the first atom bomb on the city of Hiroshima was a tragic turning point in Mitsue Iwai's childhood. At that time, Mitsue was an eleven-year-old schoolgirl living in Kure, just outside Hiroshima and her eldest sister Toshie Iwai, aged twenty-one years, was on her way to work in a factory in the Hiroshima city centre. Mitsue Iwai and her classmates were being addressed by their headmaster at the beginning of the school day, outside in the schoolyard, when the bomb was dropped at 8.15am on the 6th of August 1945. ‘We did not hear anything’, recalls Mitsue, however, along with the other students she was:

… blinded by a flash as if someone had taken a [flash] photograph … I couldn’t see anything and then about fifteen minutes later we saw the mushroom shaped cloud hanging over Hiroshima, which was about 35 kilometres away.\(^{51}\)

\(^{51}\) Ibid.
Mitsue's sister Toshie, an aunt and uncle, cousins and friends were among the estimated 100,000 people who died instantly in the Hiroshima blast. ‘The chap who dropped the bomb – it was not his fault … I’m not hating anybody … war is war’, 52 observed Mitsue Stockley in an interview with journalist Louise Shuter in 1997. This same positive attitude supported Mitsue and many others of her generation through those harsh times:

There was nothing to eat at school and we were sent out to catch grasshoppers … we would remove their wings and legs and fry them and we also cooked and ate pumpkin vines. It makes me feel sick, just remembering it. I liked pumpkin seeds though, they were just like peanuts. 53

The arrival of the occupying American forces in 1945 is also recalled in detail by Mitsue, ‘I was scared of them and I used to hide … they would try to give us chocolate and chewing gum and we thought it was poisoned and would run away.’ 54

53 M. Stockley (personal communication, July 18, 2006).
54 Ibid.
After leaving school in the late 1940s, Mitsue’s ultimate aim was to gain employment at an Australian military camp, however her older brother still harboured strong anti-Australian and anti-American sentiments and would not agree to his young sister working at the camp. The family’s opposition to Mitsue working at the camp finally wavered and from an application list of more than one hundred girls, she was among only a few chosen to work as waitresses in the officers’ mess.

Mitsue was employed in the camp office in the early 1950s, after learning to type, where she met her future husband, Roy Stockley, who was employed as a clerk. The couple became friends and by the time Roy Stockley was due to return to Australia, he had asked Mitsue to marry him. Reflecting on her late husband’s proposal of marriage Mitsue Stockley said, ‘I was not sure whether I could leave my family and my mother. I needed time to think about Roy’s proposal.’

55 Australian Occupation Forces - Japan.
56 M. Stockley (personal communication, July 18, 2006).
Roy Stockley wrote Mitsue four letters a week and within two years of returning home to Australia, he had re-enlisted in the Australian army and was back in Korea with the Australian Occupation Forces. His re-enlistment had been a deliberate plan to enable him to travel back to Japan to see Mitsue once again. Eight months later in 1954, after marrying in Japan, Mitsue Stockley was among eleven Japanese war brides who travelled to Sydney aboard the *MV Taiyuan*. She was to become one, of over six hundred Japanese born war brides who entered Australia in the 1950s.
'I Thought I Had Come To Hawaii’ – Coming to Wagga Wagga

After the crowds and the noisy activity of large Japanese cities, the quiet country town of Wagga Wagga in 1954, with ‘no people in the streets’, resembled a ghost town to Mitsue Stockley. Thoughts of having perhaps arrived at the wrong destination had also crossed Mitsue Stockley’s mind when, during a 2006 interview she recalled wryly that ‘when I saw Peter Street and the palm trees, I thought I had come to Hawaii.’

Mitsue Stockley’s early years in Wagga Wagga were far from easy. Arriving in a post-war era when suspicion and hostility towards Japanese nationals was openly expressed, Mitsue had been warned by her husband Roy of the likelihood of such reactions from local people. Aggressive and negative behaviour was difficult for Mitsue to deal with at times, especially after the birth of her two sons, Wayne (b.1957) and Jeffrey (b.1959). As journalist, Louise Shuter, noted of Mitsue Stockley:

She has borne the hatred felt towards the Japanese, once being followed in the street by an elderly woman who asked Mitsue and her Japanese friend ‘why didn’t they chop off your head before you came here?’

---

57 M. Stockley (personal communication, July 18, 2006).
58 Ibid.
Mitsue Stockley’s answer to these anti-Japanese outbursts was to become as familiar as possible with the Australian language and culture, which in the early years produced some amusing and memorable moments for both Mitsue and her husband Roy.

Australian colloquial terms were to prove particularly difficult for Mitsue Stockley. When Roy came home from work one day and said that he had “missed the boat” [in regard to a work related issue], I said to him, ‘I didn’t know you were going anywhere today, should I go and pack for you?’ recalled Mitsue with a broad smile.

Raised in the Shinto traditions of Japan, Mitsue also found it difficult to comprehend some Western religious practices:

I couldn’t understand why people kept disappearing into telephone boxes during a friend’s wedding [in the early 1960s]. But of course, we were in a Catholic church and people were going into the confessionals, weren’t they? 

‘I Tried To Do the Best By Wagga’ - Fitting in

From the late 1950s until the late 1990s, Mitsue Stockley acted as an unofficial Japanese cultural ambassador in the Wagga Wagga community. Reflecting on those
early years in Wagga Wagga, Mitsue explained, ‘I tried to do the best by Wagga. Everything I could I helped with.’

Fig. 4.39: (3rd and 2nd right) Japanese Lions Club exchange student and Mitsue Stockley, Wagga Wagga c1970s
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Unknown)

Community involvement over the following years included acting as a guest speaker and Japanese language teacher to a diverse range of groups including the Girl Guides, school groups, the Country Women’s Association, the Wagga Wagga International Club, Lions’ International, the Wagga Wagga School of Arts and the Workers’ Educational Association. The Daily Advertiser reported on the proposed Japanese language classes, stating that:

Several vacancies are still available in the WEA’s class in Conversational Japanese to be held in Wagga this year. The length of the course has now been reduced to 10 lectures, and the price has also been reduced to £1/15/- for the series.

Tutor of the class will be Mrs. Mitsui Stockley, of Wagga, who has been living in Australia for 10 years.

The WEA started a Conversational Japanese class with Mrs. Stockley as tutor last year, due to the number of district people going to the Olympic Games in Tokyo. This class was so popular that another Japanese Class has been started for this year. Mrs. Stockley has found the reasons for her pupils wishing to learn Conversational Japanese were varied and interesting. Some of her pupils are businessmen who wish to know something of the language before making a trip to Japan. Others are interested in Japanese culture and wish to learn all they can about the country. Many are housewives who say the closest they’ll ever be to Japan is a Japanese restaurant. Mrs. Stockley has nothing but praise for Australia and its people. She still retains a slight accent and says her small son recently told her, “Mum you’re old enough to speak English”.

Japanese cultural practices were also introduced to local people through Mitsue Stockley’s role as a guest presenter in the mid 1960s, on the RVN2 (Prime TV) daytime program, At Home with Two, where she hosted segments on traditional Japanese dress, cooking and domestic practices. As Mitsue had pointed out in an earlier interview with

---

the *Daily Advertiser's* Nancy Ritchie, 'I wanted Australian people to understand the Japanese people better and to teach them about Japanese culture.'

Entry into the workforce helped to ease Mitsue Stockley’s transition from ‘foreigner’ to ‘local’ and during her years in Wagga Wagga; Mitsue Stockley has worked in the kitchens of Calvary Hospital, as a beautician and as a shop assistant. Mitsue Stockley became a well recognised and much loved member of staff during her twenty-one years as a retail assistant at the Wagga Wagga branch of Best & Less. In a 2006 interview, Mitsue Stockley recalled that during her years at Best & Less she particularly liked to help members of the RAAF, who originated from nearby Pacific Island and South East Asian countries such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Malaysia, with their purchases. ‘Those boys often got a hard time from some local people and I know what that’s like’, observed Mitsue Stockley, reflecting back on her own arrival in Wagga Wagga.

---

65 Best & Less – An Australia wide chain of clothing stores.
66 Royal Australian Air Force base situated at Forest Hill, just outside Wagga Wagga.
67 M. Stockley (personal communication, July 18, 2006).
4.6: ‘She Came As Often As She Could’ – Miles (Stella) Franklin

Miles Franklin’s fame as an internationally recognised author and benefactor of the prestigious Miles Franklin Literary Award for Australian fiction is undisputed in academic circles, however it is the memory of Miles Franklin, the ‘local girl’ or ‘one of our own’, which resonates strongly within the Talbingo and Tumut communities, particularly among the older generation.


Many residents of the district are able to claim family ties to Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin and, related or not, many people are still quick to claim Miles Franklin as a member of their community. Rivalry between the communities of Talbingo and Tumut
is at times strong, as in the case of deciding on a location for the Miles Franklin memorial, proposed in the 1970s.

Stories surrounding Miles Franklin are valued not only for their connections to Miles Franklin, ‘the Australian author’, but also to 'Stella' Franklin, the ‘local girl’ and descendent of the pioneering Franklin, Lampe & Bridle families of the Talbingo and Tumut district. Miles Franklin herself spoke of her pioneer forbears and used examples of their strength and ingenuity when applying for service with a Scottish Nursing Unit in Macedonia during WWI.
As Tumut octogenarian Sheila Garner, a second cousin to Miles Franklin, recalls of childhood meetings, ‘I was a wee bit in awe of Stella, she was never called Miles by the family. Her name was Stella Maria Sarah Miles [Franklin].’\textsuperscript{68} Strong minded and at times intimidating Miles Franklin may have been, but most importantly she remains, in the eyes of the Tumut and Talbingo communities, a local girl.

\textbf{Fig. 4.44: Miles Franklin, Brindabella NSW, c1939}

(NSW State Library: a673014)

\textit{‘Over By Morning Tea Time’ – Visiting friends and relations}

Miles Franklin maintained her close ties to the district in which she was born, through her correspondence with and visits to family and friends in the Tumut area. A strong connection to the landscape, as well as people drew her back over the years. When abroad, the landscape of the Talbingo area could be recalled in the geography of overseas locations in which she travelled. In a letter written from the Isle of Man in 1924, Miles Franklin wrote evocatively of the Isle of Man, making connections between the local landscape and her beloved Snowy Mountains:

I then went away up the glen … and crossed the river on a swing bridge. It is a lovely river, clear and rapid, and sings the same, entrancing song, as the Jounama.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{68} Garner, S. (n.d.). \textit{Miles Franklin}. Unpublished manuscript.

A sentimental referencing to the region of her birth was occasionally recorded in her diaries, with the Jounama Creek holding a special place in her recollections. Of a 1949 visit to friends at French’s Forest in Sydney Miles Franklin wrote:

> A sudden post-noon clearance in the downpour and off we went to French’s Forest and found a creek swollen to Jounama [Creek] proportions, and many spring flowers including a waratah or two, surviving like a flame amid the dark greenery. It took me back to childhood and poignant nostalgia for things and relatives long gone.\(^{70}\)

The link between her garden in Carlton, Sydney and her maternal grandparents’ home was also recalled by Miles Franklin in a 1953 diary entry, ‘The wisteria my mother planted for me has blown its ecstasy again. A piece from the old Talbingo vine that bloomed when I was born.’\(^{71}\) This connection to the district of her birth is also spoken of by Sheila Garner who explains that:

> Stella spent holidays in Brindabella [between Canberra and Talbingo] and Tumut as often as she could. When at Brindabella she stayed with my Uncle and Aunt, Les and Trix Franklin, her first cousins, and enjoyed riding and fishing with my Uncle up till shortly before he died in 1946. A daughter-in-law seeing them off one day for a ride up the valley wished she had them [audio] taped so as to catch the chatter going on between them.\(^{72}\)

---

\(^{70}\) Ibid.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.

Sheila Garner also recalls visits made by Miles Franklin to Tumut, which reveal facets of Miles Franklin’s often intolerant nature and her desire for seclusion:

She usually stayed at the Commercial Hotel. It was only a short walk around to my Aunties’ [house]. I used to wonder why she stayed at the Commercial Hotel because she seemed to be at Aunties’ [house] so much. But I thought later that maybe [it was] because one of my aunts was a music teacher and she started teaching early in the morning. She would be over by morning tea time at the latest and probably there for lunch and afternoon tea as well, if she wasn’t going to visit some of the other rellies [relatives]. She came as often as she could and seemed to enjoy being in Tumut very much.73

Through interviews with Sheila Garner we can ascertain that Miles Franklin’s reputation as a well known literary figure had not gone unnoticed by her young relative. Added to Miles Franklin’s apparent aloof demeanor, this was guaranteed to thoroughly intimidate a much younger Sheila Garner:

73 S. Garner (personal communication, July 1, 2002).
I recall one of these visits in particular; Stella had gone to church with the Aunties by car, after church she decided to walk back as it was such a glorious day. They promptly said “Well, Sheila will walk with you.” I was absolutely horrified, what on earth could I talk about to such a person? But one did as one was told. I don’t recall the conversation, but I have always remembered that walk as probably the most interesting and enjoyable that I have ever had. We eventually arrived at Aunties’ [house] for lunch. I had survived.74

Nonetheless, Sheila Garner remembers her famous relative with fondness:

She was a most delightful lady with a great sense of humour … I feel very privileged to have known her and most importantly to be able to count her as family. 75

‘To Commemorate the Centenary’ –The Miles Franklin memorial

Fig. 4.48: Graham Hepburn carrying rock from the shoreline of Blowering Dam, 1979
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: B. Seymour)

Prior to construction of the Miles Franklin Memorial in 1979, to commemorate the centenary of her birth, debate raged between the towns of Tumut and Talbingo as to where the memorial should be located. According to Barbara Seymour, secretary for the Miles Franklin Memorial Committee, there was no doubt as to the rightful location for the memorial, as Miles Franklin was born in Talbingo.

75 Ibid.
As Barbara Seymour explains:

The Memorial was located in Talbingo to commemorate the centenary anniversary of Miles Franklin’s birth at the Old Talbingo homestead, home of her maternal grandparents, Oltman and Sarah Lampe, on 14th October 1879. The homestead site is now under the waters of Jounama Pondage. Although her family lived at Brindabella, Miles Franklin spent much of her childhood at Talbingo with her grandparents.

During 1977 a group of interested people from Talbingo formed the “Miles Franklin Memorial Committee” to work out a suitable way to recognise the centenary anniversary. Jack Bridle was a valuable member of that committee as he is Miles Franklin’s cousin. The committee was also a sub-committee of the Tumut Festival of the Falling Leaf, but they had little input into what we did.

The committee decided to build a memorial in the park opposite the Talbingo Country Club and the National Parks and Wildlife Service actually did all the work on the cairn because Graham Blinksell, the Senior Ranger for the Tumut Region, was on the committee. Members of the committee made it a real family day out when we all went out to the old Wilkinson homestead site (now under the waters of Blowering) to collect rocks for the cairn. The dam was very low at the time due to dry conditions.

On Saturday 13th October 1979 the Miles Franklin Cairn was unveiled. Pearl Cotterill, first cousin of Miles Franklin, unveiled the cairn. Tumut did have a part to play in the centenary anniversary when the 1978 Miles Franklin Literary Award was announced in Tumut on Wednesday 2nd May 1979. The winner of the award was Tirra Lirra by the River by Jessica Anderson. Also, the film My Brilliant Career had its first screening at Tumut in 1978 and we all went along. Some of that movie was filmed at Talbingo.76

76 B. Seymour (personal communication, 2008, November 7).
The parkland which surrounds the Miles Franklin Memorial Cairn overlooks the waters of Jounama Pondage, which covers the bed of Jounama Creek. Talbingo and in particular Jounama Creek always held a nostalgic place in Franklin’s memories of her childhood.

Following her death in 1954 and according to instructions in her will, Miles Franklin’s ashes were spread on the waters of Jounama Creek.
‘The Usual Pioneer Emergencies’ – Miles Franklin in Macedonia

The narratives surrounding Franklin’s military service during WWI are activated through a Macedonian goat bell and a caplet made from Macedonian coins, which are aesthetically engaging souvenir objects. They move beyond the purely decorative however, and act as markers for a fascinating period in Miles Franklin’s life. Again, even though Miles Franklin was physically removed from the Snowy Mountains, the experiences which she gained in that setting are brought into focus through her letters of application for war service in Europe.

Miles Franklin cites instances of her daily experiences in the Snowy Mountains as evidence for her suitability for war service. In a letter addressed to the secretary of the Scottish Women’s Hospitals for Foreign Service, she states that:

I have gained my experience in Australia where I have cooked under all sorts of conditions and have faced all the usual pioneer emergencies from beating out bush fires to rescuing stock from flood or famine conditions, and I can ride, drive, milk cows and do many other things.77

Service as an assistant cook in a hospital in Macedonia was finally granted to Miles Franklin on 8th June 1917. In this letter, the Honorary Secretary Beatrice Russell pointed out to Miles Franklin:

The climate of Greece in summer is unhealthy, and we are anxious to send out only women who are thoroughly robust and able and willing to rough it under difficult conditions.78

---

78 Ibid.
In a return letter Miles Franklin once again defends her appointment to the unit by stating firmly that ‘I am very wiry and totally free from any tendency to hysteria so that I have many times come out ahead of those who can lift heavy weights.’

At the end of her service with the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Home & Foreign Service unit a letter of thanks was sent to 'Miss Stella M. Franklin' which read:

Dear Miss Franklin I am directed by the Hospitals Committee to express to you their cordial thanks for the work you have done for the Scottish Women's Hospitals during your period of service with the American Unit in Macedonia. The committee is deeply grateful to all those who have assisted in the work undertaken by the Hospitals for the help of our Allies … Yours sincerely, S. E. S. Mair, President & Commissioner.

---

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
4.7: ‘The Name Just Stuck’ - Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot

Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot was a well known and much loved figure in Tumut, and her obituary notice in the Tumut and Adelong Times of 1989 recalled a woman dedicated to the local community through volunteer work with the Tumut RSL Club and the Tumut Golf Club, a commitment which is common to hundreds of people in rural and regional locations. It is however the references to Bebe Elliot’s varied and at times colourful career paths which bring into sharp focus her adult life as the antithesis of the private and retiring role commonly associated with the ‘spinster’ or single woman in many communities.

Personal letters, photographs and ephemera from time spent in the Australian Women’s Army Service from 1943 to 1945, employment with Qantas in Papua New Guinea in the early 1950s, and as the proprietor of the Eveleigh Hotel in Redfern during the late 1950s and early 1960s, all evoke narratives about an independent, adaptable and sociable woman.

![Fig. 4.54: Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot on skis, c1930s](Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photographer: Unknown))

As sociologists Robyn Penman and Yvonne Stolk point out:

> Generally speaking, single women are socially invisible in our culture and, because of their socially ambiguous role and their lack of status in relation to men, they have been easy to ignore.\(^81\)

---

Whether by sheer force of her outgoing personality, her intelligence or her resourcefulness or a combination of all of these factors, social invisibility never appeared to be an issue for Bebe Elliot.

This pattern, of a varied career path combined with Bebe Elliot’s involvement in community activities, continued when she returned to Tumut in 1963 and joined the staff of the Tumut and Adelong Times in an administrative position. Two years later, in 1965, Bebe Elliot once more became a business proprietor, when she purchased The Lorraine Frock Salon in Tumut. This business was to remain under her ownership until her retirement in 1981.

Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot had always lived by the philosophy passed on to her by her father, ‘If you want to do anything, do it well!’

‘He Called Me Baby’ – A country girlhood

Born on the 10th of December 1908, Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot was the middle child of John and Mary Elliot. ‘I got the name “Bebe” from an Irish farmhand we had working at Lacmalac. He called me “Baby”, but with his accent it came out “Bebe”. The name just stuck.’ An older sister, May, was born in 1905 and a younger brother, Usher, was

---

82 Miss “Bebe” Elliot farewelled. (1942, April 14). Tumut & Adelong Times, p. 3.
born in 1913. Bebe Elliot, along with her sister and brother, was educated at schools in Lacmalac and Tumut and she then went on to complete her secondary schooling at Sydney Church of England Girls Grammar School.

Photographs of Bebe Elliot from the early 1900s show a neatly attired and somewhat serious small girl, with long dark hair tied back in a ribbon. It is the images of a slightly older Bebe Elliot however, which give an indication of the adventurous spirit which would emerge from the constraints of an Edwardian upbringing.

A photographic portrait of Bebe Elliot and an unidentified dancing partner, taken in Tumut around 1920, shows both girls dressed as gypsies. Standing diagonally to the camera, the girls wear patterned skirts, white peasant blouses and sashes around their waists, with head scarves and tambourines completing the costume. While her friend smiles at the camera, Bebe Elliot assumes a more serious and thoughtful pose. When compared to images of an older Bebe Elliot, quite often captured in awkward poses and exotic locations, we can only speculate that the impromptu moment, rather than the carefully choreographed event, was her preference.
Fig. 4.57: Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot (L), and unidentified partner, in gypsy costumes, c1922
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

‘District School Children’s Concert and Operetta … A Gorgeous Display … Spanish Gipsies [sic] beguile the time with song and dance’. 84

In her memoirs, Bebe Elliot recalled playing ‘a lot of tennis’ 85 as a child, when she lived at Lacmalac and photographs taken in the 1920s show a young woman who continued to enjoy outdoor and sporting activities well into adult life.

Fig. 4.58: Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot on horseback, c1920s
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

‘Tojo Here I Come’ - The Australian Women’s Army Service

After the introduction of the Manpower Act of 1942, single women who were not already employed in ‘protected industries’ were urged to join military services (Army, Navy or Air Force) or other groups such as the Land Army or the Voluntary Aid Detachment.

84 District School Children’s Concert and Operetta. (1922, August 18). Adelong & Tumut Express. p. 4.
Already engaged as a volunteer for the Diggers Auxiliary before 1939 and an active member of the Comforts Fund from 1939 to 1943, enlistment in the Australian Women’s Army Service was the choice made by Bebe Elliot. Images taken during her service with the AWAS (1943 to 1945) reveal a laughing, relaxed and confident woman, who appears to have made the transition from civilian to servicewoman with ease.

There appears to be a sense of humour captured in photographs of Bebe Elliot during her time in the AWAS. This is particularly evident in an image which shows Bebe Elliot sitting with three colleagues and holding a hand painted sign which reads, ‘TOJO HERE I COME’. An unidentified woman sitting next to her also holds a hand painted sign which reads, ‘HOME TO JAPAN’, a reference to the much anticipated defeat of the Japanese forces. During her time with the AWAS, Bebe Elliot was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and served in an administrative role.
Bebe Elliot was also contacted in 1951 by Lieutenant Colonel Kathleen Best, Director of the Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps, with an offer to return to active service which read:

The Prime Minister has stated emphatically on a number of occasions that Australia’s defences must be fully prepared for war by 1953. For these reasons it is essential that the Womens Royal Australian Army Corps be developed to a maximum state of efficiency as soon as possible…With these thoughts in mind I am writing to ask you if you would consider submitting yourself for selection for a full time Army appointment in the WRAAC.  

In her reply to Lieutenant Colonel Best, Bebe Elliot explained:

I have given your letter due consideration, and firstly would state that I will be 43 years of age on 20th December, 1951. Secondly at the present time I am rather tied up with family Estate matters … Still, if you think I would be of any assistance to you at a later date, please let me know.

Bebe Elliot did not re-enlist with the WRAAC.

---

86 Elliot Collection. Tumut NSW: Tumut & District Historical Museum.
87 Ibid.
'Sadly Missed’ – With Qantas in New Guinea

Bebe Elliot was on the move once again in 1953, returning to Papua New Guinea, where she spent a short time holidaying on Bougainville with her sister May and brother-in-law Sydney Pasley. After gaining employment as ground staff with Qantas, she was to remain in New Guinea until 1956. Photographs and personal correspondence from that period disclose Bebe Elliot surrounded by a well established circle of friends among her work colleagues in Rabaul and throughout New Guinea.
Correspondence received from Qantas colleagues at the time of Bebe Elliot’s imminent departure from New Guinea reveal that she was popular on a social level, as well as a professional level:

We were all sorry to have missed you when you passed through Lae, and more so to hear that you had an attack of the wog,\textsuperscript{88} and not able to surface … we had PLANS for you! We hope you will accept this little gift from the undersigned crews in Qantas in New Guinea, in appreciation of all you have done for us. The best we can wish goes with it, Bebe. To quote from the columns of the Sydney Morning Herald – “SADLY MISSED”!!!!!!!\textsuperscript{89}

Signing off with, ‘cheers from’, the letter displays eighteen hand written signatures and nine typewritten names. Bebe Elliot had obviously made a positive impression on those people with whom she had come into contact with during her time with Qantas in New Guinea.

\textsuperscript{88} ‘Wog’ – Australian colloquial term a) an illness or infection, usually minor e.g. a cold or an upset stomach b) the germ etc. causing this (I think I’ve caught a wog).

\textsuperscript{89} Elliot Collection. Tumut NSW: Tumut & District Historical Museum.
On her return to Australia from Papua New Guinea in 1956, Bebe Elliot was again working in the public domain, when she became the owner and licensee of the Eveleigh Hotel in Redfern, Sydney. From 1956 until her return to Tumut in 1963, the Eveleigh Hotel was to become a ‘Mecca for Tumut expatriates’. ⁹⁰

The Eveleigh Hotel (See page 261), an anonymous poem written at the time of Bebe Elliot’s tenure, remains as a rare social document detailing the Redfern and Chippendale locals who frequented the hotel in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It relates to not only the publican herself, but also the hotel workers and patrons. The local whingers, ‘local females’, commercial travellers, policemen, the hotel cook, the barmaid, the local postman and the hotel’s ‘glamour boy’ Jimmy McNamara are all described in vivid detail. Even ‘Spotty’ the pub dog gets a mention.

As historian Clare Wright observes, ‘To maintain order in the [bar], a female hotelkeeper had to prove, through her own performance, that she was not herself a ‘disorderly’ woman,’91 and then goes on to explain that there were:

… aspects of ‘lady-like’ behaviour that female publicans used to establish their command [and] most strikingly, women who ruled from behind the bar ensured that they themselves remained dry.92

Wright also explains that ‘individual temperament and personality were important factors in establishing a relationship of control over clientele’.93 These ‘important factors’ are highlighted in The Eveleigh Hotel, with the writer stating that ‘Bebe’, has a

---

92 Ibid.
93 Ibid. p. 187.
‘cheerful word for all’, but not for ‘the silly fella, who elects to start a brawl.’ Wright also refers to the ‘grand dame’ persona, commonly adopted by older female publicans, which could be applied to Bebe Elliot, who, as a middle aged woman in her fifties, appears in images as a well dressed, carefully coiffed, matronly figure in images from that time.

Fig. 4.66: Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot, Sydney, c1956-63
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)
The Eveleigh Hotel, Anonymous, c1960

There’s a little pub near Redfern, in Abercrombie Street
Where the beer is very pleasant, like the people that you’ll meet.
The publican is Bebe, with a cheerful word for all
Except the silly fella, who elects to start a brawl.

Old Stibbard calls in often, he knows they like his stuff
and he winges like a goodun, if they do not drink enough.
And other odd commercials, including good old Roy
To drink the golden liquid, and the company enjoy.

You’ll find Billy there, and Gordon, to discuss a horse’s chance
and also there’ll be Snowy, to you Sir, Mr Blanche.
He can down more blooming middies, than any bloke we know
and it’s not till Sunday evening, that his speed begins to slow.

You’ll find Fatso, Mac and DJesser, to name just a few
and you’ll often find some coppers who drop in to try the brew.
While Keith is pulling schooners, to the juke box roar and thud
you’ll see Betty pushing pints, across the bar to Spud.

There’ll be Peggy dear, and Iris, and most times good old Rene
and other local females, to decorate the scene.
There’ll be Una too, and Olga and Myrtle and her bloke
and Wednesdays the other Una, with her mind on some poor moke.

Most days you’ll see Roy Ibbotson, and Salty, his good man
who make it about lunchtime, for a snack that cooked by Ann.
Though she’s very short in stature, she can grill a decent steak
and if she cooks too many, old Spotty gets a break.

There’s a happy sort of postman, and to give the bloke his due
they went and called him Curly, when they should have called him Blue.
Though it doesn’t seem to matter, he can always sink a pot
or say rude things to Vicky, the girl I near forgot.

On Saturday the jukebox grinds, and all the people sing
it sounds just bloody awful, but it makes the rafters ring.
And then you’ll see old Bubbie adancing round the room
if he cannot get a girlfriend, he’ll settle for a broom.
And last but not the leastest, I introduce with joy
young Jimmy McNamara, the pubs great glamour boy.
His troubles come quite often, from a varied lot of Sheilas
it’s time he took a jerry, to this artful bunch of spielers.

Now all you licensed Victuallers, the thin ones and the stout
just slip along to Chippendale, and see what its about.
And if you like good drinking, and company that’s swell
we recommend a visit, to the Eveleigh Hotel.95

95 Anonymous. (c1960). The Eveleigh Hotel.
4.8: ‘Her Great Interest Was In Her Family’ - Mary ‘May’ McLean

Born on the 2nd February 1877, Mary ‘May’ McLean was the younger daughter of John Cameron McLean, a teamster and pioneer of the Gundagai district, and Mary Sinclair McLean\(^{96}\) (nee Graham). Born at the family property, Big Ben, May McLean and her older sister Isabella took over the dairying operation following the death of their father in 1927. Big Ben remained May McLean’s home until her death.

![Fig. 4.67: (Left) Mary ‘May’ McLean and her father, John McLean, Big Ben c1920s](Image)
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

It was not uncommon for girls and women to be the operators of dairies on farms however it must also be noted that May McLean and her sister Isabella successfully ran a ‘registered’ dairy, which required high standards to be met for milk and cream to be accepted for sale by local Butter Factories. Apart from the twice daily ritual of herding and milking, additional tasks included regular inspections of both records and equipment by Department of Agriculture officials and the maintenance of suitable standards of health and breeding in the dairy herds. No mention is made in existing McLean documents as to whether a dairyman was employed on the property or when machine milking was introduced at Big Ben.

\(^{96}\) Mary Sinclair McLean (nee Graham) was the second wife of John McLean. The name of J. McLean’s first wife is unknown, although it is known that J. McLean had one son and two daughters from his first marriage. The name of only one daughter is known: Frances Ann McLean.
While dairying can be interpreted as being May McLean’s ‘profession’, it is only briefly mentioned in her obituary. Instead, the emphasis is placed firmly on women’s traditional domestic roles including community work, itself an extension of the domestic, gardening and needlework. For girls of May McLean’s generation, domestic skills, including learning to sew, was seen to be a necessary skill for their future role as housewives.

An image of May McLean, at around eighteen years old, shows her holding cutwork embroidery on her lap, with embroidery threads and fabric displayed on a nearby table. The prominent placement of items such as books or family bibles was a common theme in Victorian photography. It denoted the status of a family as ‘middle-class’ and, having both the time and disposable income available for ‘leisure’ activities. That May McLean has chosen to be photographed with these particular domestic items suggests that ‘sewing’ rather than ‘reading’ played a dominant and important role in her daily life.
We cannot state with any certainty that May McLean’s needlework skills were initially passed on to her by a family member, however it is known that sewing was an inclusion in the school curriculum of the period. That sewing lessons were often learned at home has been documented in the childhood recollections of Gladys Timbs (born 1907) who recalled that:

> Every afternoon after school I had to sit on the front balcony with her [mother] in the sun, if it was winter, and learn to sew. And she taught me to make buttonholes out of a big square of calico … they had to be perfect and there was no machines that made buttonholes when I was a child … Every girl had to learn to sew – that was the first thing they did. And then you advanced on to fancy work … embroidering tablecloths and teacloths with coloured cottons and things, and a lot of drawn threadwork on linen.97

May McLean was a dedicated member of the Presbyterian Church, church organist and supporter of the Red Cross Society. Church fetes and Red Cross fund raising bazaars were a common part of community life throughout the Riverina, especially during WWI and WWII. Many women including May McLean worked for multiple fundraising organisations during WWII. In 1941, the *Gundagai Independent* newspaper reported that:

> The following applications for permission to hold street stalls were granted: Methodist Church (June 7), Town Patriotic War Fund (June 14), Women’s Voluntary Services Comfort Fund (August 16), Presbyterian Church (June 21), and Red Cross Society (May 31).98

---


98 Gundagai Shire. (1941, May 15).*Gundagai Independent*, p. 5.
Traditional domestic crafts, such as those offered by May McLean became a valued resource during war time. Aged thirty seven years at the beginning of WWI in 1914 and sixty two years at the start of WWII in 1939, it could be proposed that May McLean’s needlework skills were utilised for both World Wars.

Fig. 4.70: (Left to right) Frances and May McLean holding a crazy patchwork quilt, c1940s
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

Patchwork domestic textile articles including quilts, cushion covers, tea cosies and table runners are held in the collection of the Gundagai Historical Museum, a physical reminder of both the skill levels and the lifetime commitment of May McLean to this traditional craft form.

May McLean’s commitments also extended to family members, with her 1971 obituary notice observing that, ‘her great interest was in her family, and Big Ben was the holiday home for all her nieces and nephews. During school holidays Big Ben was inundated with children.’99 The emphasis appears to have been placed on May McLean’s value as a carer and family support, a common scenario for single women of her generation.

Notions arise of the stereotypical ‘old maiden’ described by Penman and Stolk as being ‘pernickety [and] preoccupied with a daily routine of trivia,’100 although May McLean’s legacy of involvement in dairying, community groups and the sheer numbers of hand-wrought textiles would lead us to believe otherwise. Although May McLean may have fallen into the role of the ‘maiden aunt’ with obligations to her family, images from the late 1940s show her appearing happy in that role and interacting positively with her great-niece.

Dairy farmer, gardener, quilt maker, community worker and loving aunt, May McLean is also remembered by the Gundagai community as ‘a truly grand old lady … [And] the last survivor of one of Gundagai’s great pioneering families.’

**Patchwork and Quilting Traditions**

Patchwork and quilting traditions in Australia arrived from Britain in the first decades of the new colony, with one of the first patchwork and quilting groups being organised by prison reformer Elizabeth Fry and beginning in 1818 with the departure of the ship *Maria*.

On board ship, the women were divided into groups of twelve, with a monitor to oversee their activities. To provide occupation for the long voyage, patchwork materials were supplied, as well as some other knitting and sewing requisites. The patchwork

---

made during the journey could be sold on arrival in the colony, providing the women
with some money.\textsuperscript{102}

The patchwork technique employed by the convict women working under the guidance
of Elizabeth Fry was the traditional English method of paper piecing, with the most
predominant shape being a hexagon. Pieces of paper or cardboard are cut, following a
template shape made of cardboard or metal and the fabric is temporarily stitched to the
papers. Once the patches are stitched together, the paper shapes are usually removed,
and the patchwork lined.

Although the hexagon pattern continued to be popular, the three dimensional ‘tumbling
blocks’ or ‘baby’s blocks’ pattern appeared from around the middle of the 19th century.
With the increased availability of fabrics at that time many quilts were made from a
combination of fabrics which included satin, velvet, silk and ribbons. Patterns were
freely available in English magazines such as \textit{The Queen}, however, many patterns were
for smaller objects similar to those made by McLean, such as cushions, tea cosies and
table runners, rather than for quilts.

\textit{‘The Tiniest Scrap of Silk’ - Crazy Patchwork}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{crazy_patchwork.jpg}
\caption{Crazy patchwork tea cosy, made by May McLean, c1900-1940
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photo: W. Hucker)}
\end{figure}

Crazy patchwork was a favourite technique employed by May McLean. Utilising a
piece of background cloth which was covered with smaller pieces of cloth varying in
shape and size, crazy patchwork became the rage during the late 19th century. This

\begin{footnotesize}
\end{footnotesize}
technique, along with other American patterns, was introduced from America to England and filtered through to Australia. It was promoted in magazines such as *The Queen* and *Weldon’s Practical Needlework* of the same period also featured articles on crazy patchwork. A *Weldon’s Practical Needlework* article from the late 1800s entitled ‘Practical Patchwork’ insisted that, ‘the more irregular the patchwork is as to colour and size of the pieces of the material employed, the more effective and stylish the work.’¹⁰³ The article then went on to say:

> All one’s odd scraps of satin, plush, velvet, the accumulated débris of years of fancy work, can now be turned to good advantage, there being no need to waste even the tiniest scrap of silk.¹⁰⁴

Patterns appeared in most women’s magazines during the early twentieth century and were available for a wide variety of objects such as antimacassars, cushions, carriage rugs, sewing machine covers, work or theatre bags, pincushions, tea cosies and glove sachets.

### 4.9: Summary

Textiles and personal items are among the most commonly found and popular objects in Riverina museum collections. They are also among some of the most poorly provenanced objects. Museum visitors are drawn to these everyday objects because of their familiarity and the addition of stories will make them even more engaging. As the director of the Australian National Maritime Museum, Mary-Louise Williams, points out:

> Museums are not just about exhibitions; that is only one small part of their function. What is just as important (perhaps more so) are the roles of conservation, research and documentation.¹⁰⁵

The wedding gowns, bridal veils, kimono, souvenirs, patchwork, and paper-based ephemera are a focus for women’s lives. They highlight the diversity and richness of domesticity and more importantly, the role played by women outside the domestic sphere. These stories also demonstrate the importance of exploring the place of micro-

---

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

268
narratives within a broader historiography, and as Dr. Beverly Kingston, research fellow from the University of New South Wales observes:

Even the humblest or most obsessive kind of local history makes its contribution to the great river of historical knowledge. Further, in generating local interest, debate, or even in creating local legends, collections, or historical museums, such history enriches the lives of others and may even stimulate curiosity or new kinds of interest.  

The wedding gowns in particular offer a chance for further investigation, even though colonial era and early 20th century wedding gowns can be found in most museum collections across the Riverina including the Museum of the Riverina, the Temora Rural Museum and the Parkside Cottage Museum Narrandera. Wedding gowns from the 1800s, provenanced and connected to the early German settlers of the Riverina are rare. They present an opportunity for research into the owners, who were generally ‘pioneers’ of the respective areas. Social history research, in particular: fashion design, wedding customs, photography and immigration could also be built around these wedding gowns. The ultimate desired outcome would be the establishment of a register of wedding gowns.

Chapter 5: ‘Simple Sure Methods’ – Stories of making do in the Riverina

5.1: Objects and collections – an overview

Museum collections in the Riverina are treasure troves of hand-crafted objects, and as Kylie Winkworth points out:

Local history museums and historical societies have traditionally had the best collections of bush crafts. They were typically displayed with labels that connected them to a local event or identity and they were seen to have a quaint charm as relics or curiosities.1

Stories including the Wilkinson family cradle; the Louisa Meacham lace collection; the tussock grass hat; the sallie bush high chair; the home-made preserving pan; the charcoal cool safe and the truck driver’s wagga rug all sit within this bush-crafted or hand-crafted genre. It must be remembered however, that:

This view is very different from the contemporary status of the artifacts as decorative objects and relics with a wider significance for Australian culture.2

The objects act as markers or signposts to the multiple narratives of domesticity and craft traditions of the late 19th to the mid 20th centuries. The voices which have been activated tell many different domestic stories and delineate the complexity and depth of domestic culture.

5.2: Introduction

In terms of museum object interpretation, the notion of ‘making do’ is generally connected to the ‘Great Depression’ of the 1930s. The historical time frame of these objects extends far beyond the 1930s and encompasses the notion of ‘making do’ as both a physical activity and an emotional response to geography and circumstance. As Winkworth reminds us, ‘[t]here are many other possible motivations, such as the pleasure of making something, or filling spare time, or the culture of waste not want

2 Ibid.
In terms of visitor response, these objects are among the most popular in museum collections, but as Winkworth reminds us:

Much of this re-creation of a warm, hand-made Australian past is simply a marketing exercise. Yet the saleability of this image of the Australian past, both in the consumer world and the heritage and museum arena, testifies to a yearning for a sense of continuity and reassurance.  

---

Fig. 5.1: Laurel Kerosene advertisement, 1923

*Woman’s Budget*

Kerosene boxes were used to make chairs and cupboards and often referred to colloquially as, the ‘Laurel Suite’.

---

John Tosh also reinforces Winkworth’s statement when he states that:

In any scholarly enquiry it is the otherness of the past that tends to come to the fore because the passage of time has made exotic what once seemed commonplace.

It was the presence of women that provided the comforts and the civilising surrounds of a home, rather than just a house. Wives, mothers and children contributed in their various ways to the running of large and small farms, from their traditional domestic role within the home to organising the daily operation of poultry, dairy, orchard and vegetable garden, women worked, more often than not unheralded and unpaid. This daily routine was for many women, accompanied by the care of children. As Jennifer Isaacs observed, ‘[t]hey invariably knew what it was like to cope with little, to make things from scraps, bags, tins, and boxes.’

---

4 Ibid. p. 124.
For most women and men their daily routine was, from early childhood, one of hard physical work and responsibility. Isolation was an added burden in remote areas of the Riverina, with many women having to cope with work outside the traditional female sphere in the absence of husbands. This could also be the same for women living in the cities. My maternal grandmother coped with running a home, raising children and organising a poultry farm in the outer suburbs of Sydney, when my grandfather was away from home, working as a road building contractor.

Until advances in technology and transport were made available after World War II, domestic lives for most Riverina women remained relatively unchanged from that experienced by their mothers and grandmothers several decades earlier. The rationing and restrictions imposed on the civilian population during World War II forced many women to revert back to the make-do-and-mend ethic of the Great Depression, with the feeding of families in particular requiring ingenuity and inventiveness.

The domestic sphere and the role of women within those boundaries, from the mid 1800s to the mid 1900s are also central to these stories, with notions of gender-specific traditions associated with domestic craft practices aligned to each of the objects.

Stories about the ‘wagga’ rug are associated with the make-do-and-mend ethic, and have strong associations with the Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930s. The wagga rug, although an example of a true domestic wagga, stands alone within this group of objects as having been utilised outside the confines of domesticity, adding a male voice to the predominantly female dialogue.
Each of the objects carries a multiplicity of narratives which discuss craft traditions of the northern hemisphere and the relocation and adaptation of those traditions to Australian surroundings, while as Winkworth points out:

… commentators still speculate about the circumstances of use and the motivation for making the artifacts … Support may be found in journals, recollections, literature and oral histories, where there are many comments on the practice of improvising and making do in the bush and the city.7

---

5.3: ‘True Comforts’ - The Susannah Wilkinson baby cradle

The narratives surrounding the Susannah Wilkinson cradle epitomise the strength and ingenuity of many pioneer women of rural and regional Australia. Often relegated to a supporting role in the interpretation of pioneer histories, the reality was that many women of rural and regional Australia in the 19th century played a pivotal role both within their families and the wider community. Researching the stories surrounding the cradle also provided a female voice from the 19th century, a rarity in many museum narratives throughout the Riverina:

Bush crafts and vernacular artifacts have a special appeal in the way they suggest the hand of the maker and a life of functional use …loss of provenance and the lack of contextual information about their use and manufacture … does not close the door on research or … freeze the objects into a nostalgic, romanticized view of the past.8

Fig. 5.3: Wilkinson family baby cradle, c1852
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Daily life in the isolated terrain of the mountains surrounding the Blowering Valley was often difficult for pioneer men and women, and it was a compulsory requirement for many women to be conversant with more than just the traditional domestic skills. Information contained in the 19th century publication of Mrs. Lance Rawson describes the role played by pioneer women in what is generally understood to be the male dominated pastime of carpentry. Mrs. Rawson states unequivocally that ‘in the bush it is almost necessary for a woman to know something of carpentry to furnish the home with

the true comforts she wants.' She goes on to say that ‘in making articles of furniture it does not matter how roughly they are fashioned as long as they will stand and are strong.' Wilkinson family history suggests that the cradle was indeed ‘strong’, as it housed all eleven of Susannah’s and Thomas’ offspring, plus several babies of the next generation.

![Fig. 5.4: (Detail) Wilkinson family baby cradle, c1852](image)

Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Made and used at Yallowin (Yellowin) in the Blowering Valley, by Susannah Wilkinson, the cradle is typical of the closed-in style of baby cradle used in Europe, North America and the British Isles during that period. The wooden cradle, which was constructed from a packing case and a wine barrel, is rectangular in shape (packing case) with a rounded hood section (wine barrel). There are wooden rockers underneath the cradle at the head and foot ends (packing case).

Mary Gilmore, in *Old Days Old Ways*, refers to babies being housed in improvised cradles. As Gilmore explains:

> There would be a clothes-box, and now and then, but very rarely, a small chest of drawers. The cradle would be a gin-case on rockers. The gin-case was universal because it was of soft wood and had no splinters. Also it was just the right size, easy to obtain and light to carry. Over it a tilt was made with a bit of gauze or tarlatan to keep the flies from the child’s face. But once in a while some man, tender for the woman who was to bear his child, and grown self-forgetful because tender, would make a cradle such as she had rocked in the old land, or similar to one in which his mother had laid one child after the other till the whole twelve, fourteen, or even sixteen, had slept in it in turn. The first one of this kind that I ever saw was made of boree …

---


10 Ibid.
Both ends of this cradle were carved, the head very ornately. And it had all been done with a pocket knife.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{flushright}
Fig. 5.5: Baby in improvised clam shell cradle, 1892
(Museum Victoria: MM030058)
\end{flushright}

In 1968, when the rising waters of the newly constructed Blowering Dam flooded the Wilkinson properties of Yellowin Station and Hillview, the cradle was donated to the Tumut District Historical Museum.

According to museum records, it was at this time in the early 1970s that the cradle, which had lost its original outer covering of oilcloth, was painted black on the outside and white on the inside, in an effort to restore the object. Although the 1970s painted finish has compromised the original condition of the cradle, the underlying design and structure of the cradle is still visible.

Raising Susannah’s Children

Raising even one child to adulthood in Susannah Wilkinson’s time would have been a daunting prospect for many women. The bearing of eleven living infants was in itself a major achievement. The cradle was subsequently used by all eleven children of John and Susannah Wilkinson: John (1852), Thomas (1854), William (1857), Margaret (1859), Martha (1861), Henry (1863), Phillip (1867-68), Alfred (1868), Phillip Edmund (1870), Herbert (1874), Sydney (1876).

The history\textsuperscript{12} compiled by members of the Wilkinson family adds depth to the story of both the cradle and the family itself. *The Buddong Flows On Volume 2* meticulously lists details of Susannah and Thomas Wilkinson’s eleven children.

The use of the cradle by all eleven of the Wilkinson infants and several babies of the following generation was substantiated by various descendents of the Wilkinson family. The fact that the cradle was definitely made by Susannah Wilkinson, and not by her husband Thomas, was also verified by several members of the Wilkinson family.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} N. Plumb (personal communication, October 25, 2002).
Family anecdote contends that Susannah Wilkinson was an extremely competent home carpenter and, when it came to the construction of small items of furniture or repairs to be done, the hammer and nails would be handed to Susannah. In the estimation of Darcy Wilkinson, a grandson of Thomas and Susannah, Thomas Wilkinson may have been an expert horseman and bushman but ‘when it came to a hammer and nails he was useless!’

The eldest son, John (1852-1937), for whom the cradle was originally made, went on to establish the Hillview branch of the Wilkinson family:

John’s boyhood, and indeed his whole life, was to be moulded by his father’s strict Christian standards of behaviour, honesty and fair dealing. Despite, or perhaps because of this, youthful exuberance often ruled the day when John and his younger brothers mounted their horses and ventured into the hills and valleys around Yellowin. 

14 S. Garner (personal communication, June 12, 2002).
Cradles and Folklore

Stories of cradles in a folkloric context have been included and among this information is that of the ‘Rocking the Cradle’ ceremony from Blidworth in the English Midlands, which commemorates the presentation in the Temple of the infant Jesus.\(^\text{16}\)

If you stepped into the church of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, at Blidworth in the English Midlands, on the Sunday nearest to 2nd February, you would find an old wooden cradle standing by the altar as a symbol of Christ’s infancy. On this day the service of “Rocking the Cradle” commemorates Christ’s Presentation in the Temple. The baby boy born nearest to the previous Christmas Day in the parish is presented at the altar by the vicar, who rocks him in the flower-decorated cradle, saying the Rocking Prayer.\(^\text{17}\)

In Scottish traditions, the birth of a baby, especially a ‘pretty baby’ would bring unwanted attention from the ‘fairies’. In the Orkney Islands for instance:

> Not one or two, but sometimes as many as half a dozen women were called to the house on an occasion of this kind to keep the ‘peerie-folk’ – those unearthly visitants who were particularly busy when a new arrival came. For several nights the neighbours by turns rocked the cradle all night and watched, so that the baby was not stolen away.\(^\text{18}\)

---


\(^{17}\) Ibid.

5.4: ‘To Do a Mother’s Work’ - The Louisa Meacham lace collection

Both men and women of farming families worked long, hard days. The women of these households often rose earlier than the men, as it was their job to clean and light the fires and prepare the food for breakfast for the men and boys; this meal was generally eaten after they had completed their early morning duties. While the girls helped ease the heavy physical burden of work inside the house, boys would help in the stables and the paddocks, while both girls and boys assisted with poultry and dairy work. The use of children as unpaid labour on farms was an accepted practice until the mid 20th century. With advances in farming technology and transport after the 1940s, this practice became less common.

Fig. 5.8: Crochet lace samples, made by Louisa Meacham, c1890
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Similar, unprovenanced, crochet lace samples are held in the collection of Coal Creek Heritage Village, Korumburra, Victoria. 19

Anecdotal evidence provided by members of the Meacham family indicates that at eleven years of age, Louisa Ferguson (nee Meacham) worked the crochet lace samples by candlelight as she waited for her brothers to return for their breakfast, after feeding and grooming the horse teams on their father’s property. Children's author Max Fatchen, who was born on a farm in South Australia recalls in detail rising early to help with the horses:

I do remember what I’ll always call draughthorse dawn – when I stumbled out of bed to feed the horses. Draughthorse dawn was crossing the path of a fallow paddock to a long, stone stable…It was the sharpening definition of river trees in the strengthening light - But mostly it was the big draughthorses, horses with heavy hooves and a good strain of Clydesdale in them, big horses waiting for breakfast before being harnessed in the plough or some other agricultural implement. The horses fed from mangers, each manger a compartment. The kickers and malcontents had their own stalls but even they were reasonable animals. As soon as they caught sight of my figure in the growing light, there were whinnies of recognition, a throwing up of heads,

impatient blowing through velvet nostrils. There came the sound of a hairy knee against a manger, much as we bang a spoon upon the table. The chaff shed which made up half the stable was dim. There was a smell of mice … Bang, snuffle, neigh from the windows that opened into the mangers. Calls for breakfast. Breakfast was served, tubs of chaff with a dash of bran, a sheaf of hay for the old mare who was finicky. A soft nose against my hand, big liquid eyes and the white blaze of a great head: a horse’s good morning. 

Fig. 5.9: Draught horse feed trough Quandong Park, Milbrulong NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

For the Meacham family, like a majority of other farming families of that period, it was an accepted practice to enlist the help of children and, except perhaps for very small children, everyone had a job to do on the farm. As ‘Ella’ from Glen Forbes in Victoria, a correspondent to the Woman’s Budget magazine in 1923, explained:

I have had to do a mother’s work from the age of 11: my people had a farm, and mother used to go out and do paddock work. What with bad seasons and poor land, I know a little of hardships.

Apart from the more immediate advantage of having children assist in the home and around the farm, it was also seen as beneficial to them for instilling the notions of discipline and service to others and, for girls, learning the necessary skills for the managing their own homes in the future. The practice of traditional domestic crafts such as crochet, tatting, embroidery and knitting were also seen as a part of this learning process for girls. Crochet work was also portable and required a minimum of equipment, with just a ball of crochet cotton and a steel or bone crochet hook all that was required.

---

Craft work, including embroidery, knitting or crochet, was also seen as a leisure pursuit and a welcome diversion from the often repetitive and physically demanding domestic routine. Where family anecdotes tell us that Louisa Meacham found time for her crochet work during a lull in the early morning routine, other girls may have found time in the evenings. ‘Horseygirl’ writing from Porepunkah in Victoria pointed out to the editor of the *Woman’s Budget* in 1925 that although ‘my time is well occupied … I have plenty of time to read and crochet at night.’

Textile crafts also played an important role as an antidote for depression and anxiety, with feelings of isolation among girls and women not only restricted to rural and regional areas. As ‘Hitehead’ from Newcastle in New South Wales stated in 1920:

> I have made lots of things for myself and the children … and lots of crochet, of which I am very fond, as I think crochet is just A1 to pick up when one gets in the dumps.

Comments from ‘G.H.W’, a 1926 correspondent from Ganmain in the Riverina, also highlights the importance of textile crafts as a distraction from daily anxieties:

> How I long to leave the daily cares and worries, and go right away from everyone. If I could take my crochet and go away into the heart of the bush, if only for a fortnight, how happy I’d be!

---

From the Victorian period through to the mid 20th century the inculcation of discipline and ideals of ‘helpfulness’ in the young was also perpetuated by articles appearing in women’s magazines and journals.

The correspondence sections of women’s magazines from this period offer valuable insight into the expectations placed on children in regard to assisting with household and other related duties. As a correspondent from 1924 wrote:

I am the eldest of five, and remember always being a little help to my mother. Many a time I have washed the floor and done lots of other jobs that a big child to-day would think dreadful.  

It would also seem that members of the younger generation of that period were viewed as unenthusiastic in regard to helping around the home. Other correspondents, while expressing support for ‘useful’ girls, felt that boys should be excused from domestic duties in deference to their education and their masculinity:

I agree with you that children should be taught to be useful, but I do not approve of the mother who makes her small son work so hard before going to school. I’m afraid he must be one of those who are always falling asleep over their lessons, as he must have to get up with the dawn to manage so much. Let the girls learn to do housework, sewing and cooking, but don’t make a molly-coddle of your boy.

---

The Meacham Family

Louisa Jane was the fourth of twelve children, born in Victoria to William and Mary Meacham. William, along with sons Bob and Harry, worked in the Wyalong and Temora areas at the time of the gold rush in 1894. After the death of his father in 1895, Harry selected a block of 396 acres in the district of Bundawarrah, five miles from Temora. The property was named Trigalong and in 1896 the remainder of the Meacham family was moved from Rushworth in Victoria to NSW. The boys made the move by wagon, the girls by cart and mother and baby by train to Narrandera.

The boys, Bob, Fred, Harry and Jack came on to Trigalong to build a house for the family. They had £60 ($120) with which to purchase the materials needed. The house consisted of five rooms with a hall through the middle and a verandah all round. It was
built of round pine posts placed close together to form the wall, the outside of the posts being plastered with a mud mixture. The verandah roof was bull-nosed iron.²⁷

In an unusual move for the early 1900s, the ownership of Trigalong had been promised to Mary Meacham by her son, Harry, and after five years the title of the property was transferred to Mary Meacham. The older boys continued to support their mother and the younger members of the family through their farming activities and also with other occupations, including sleeper cutting. Mary Meacham continued to reside at Trigalong until her death in 1925 and is buried in the Temora cemetery.

According to information published in Temora Yesterday and Today 1880-1980, the Meacham family spent many happy days on Trigalong. They played tennis, competed in athletics competitions and attended dances and other district social functions. The farm gradually became productive and the children married and went their separate ways.

Fig. 5.14: Louisa and John Ferguson on their wedding day, 1906
(Image from Temora Yesterday and Today 1880-1980)

Louisa Jane Meacham married John Ferguson at Trigalong in 1906. They made their home at Summerlea, Combaning Siding. John Ferguson died in 1943 and Louisa Ferguson in 1959.

‘Glory of our Grandmothers’ - Crochet lace

Crocheted laces, which imitated European lace techniques, allowed the quick and easy production of intricate patterns. As Jennifer Isaacs observes:

In Australia the widespread popularity of the simpler lace techniques, particularly crochet, resulted in the great production of d’oyleys, tray cloths, scone cloths, runners for the table, and jug covers, predominantly in white lacy patterns that accentuated the appetizing freshness of the food offered. Many of the d’oyleys centred on the table setting. Others were for the parlour or sitting room – table and sideboard runners, tablecloths and antimacassars.28

Crochet lace could also be used to trim clothing such as collars, cuffs and hems on blouses, petticoats, nightgowns, christening gowns and aprons.

From the 19th century machine spun cotton thread was most commonly utilised and a crochet hook made from materials such as bone, ivory or steel was used. Stitches included chain, double crochet, treble and picot, with all of the stitches based on the simple chain loop.

Fig. 5.15: Crochet lace made by Louisa Meacham, c1890
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Designs for crocheted lace were quite common in Australia from the 1890s onward and patterns were published in a wide variety of women’s journals such as The Australian Home Journal, Weldon’s Practical Needlework, The New Idea, The Weekly Times, The Australian Woman’s Mirror and The Australian Women’s Weekly. Separate patterns and pattern books were also published e.g. the crochet patterns of the Australian designer, Mary Card.

Although the making of crochet work remained relatively constant during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, styles of crochet, such as filet lace, were seen to make a re-appearance, according to ‘Our Ladies Letter’ section of the *Temora Independent* newspaper of 1914, which reported that:

> The craze for filet lace has led to the revival of filet patterns in crochet, and the old-fashioned antimacassars, pincushions, covers, etc., the one-time glory of our grandmothers and which hid in shame before our mother’s dainty ideas, are now coming to light once more, and designs are eagerly copied by all who know how to handle a crochet needle.29

Crochet patterns came under a wide variety of names, which were either inspired by the design elements themselves or named in honour of a well known person or event. *Weldon’s Practical Needlework* published a wide variety of patterns with names such as: tortoise, spider-web, jubilee, waterfall, marguerite, thistle, willow, trinity, coral, shamrock, star, snowdrop, target and Honiton.

While women’s magazines and journals supplied patterns for crochet work, the teaching of crochet techniques was frequently passed from generation to generation, often informally. Most young girls were taught to crochet by their mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts or older female friends. The patterns found in women’s magazines and journals were generally used to increase the range of patterns already learned at home. It is also interesting to note that instructions given for crochet patterns of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were less detailed than their 21st century counterparts, with the assumption that the target audience, young girls and women, had already gained

---

sufficient skills to make elaborate instructions unnecessary. An unnamed correspondent from 1922 alludes to the technical skill of her daughters by stating:

One of my daughters, aged 14 years, worked the Greek Key lace and insertion to match, for a petticoat flounce, then adapted the same pattern to form a yoke for the top of a princess petticoat, and the completed garment is very nice indeed. An older daughter has worked the Fuchsia lace and corner for a supper cloth and it looks beautiful.30

Crocheted lace, along with other handcrafted textiles were often passed from one member of the family to the next and with careful laudering would often last for several generations. Women’s magazines and journals, along with household hint publications such as Mrs. Lance Rawson’s Book of Household Enquiry and Mrs. Beeton’s Book of Household Management, offered detailed instructions for the care of household linen and clothing. Mrs. Beeton offered the following directions:

Lace collars soil very quickly when in contact with the neck; they are cleaned by basting [stitching] the edge of the collar between the folds of a fine linen cloth, then washing the edges as directed above, and spreading it out on an ironing board, pinning it at each corner with fine pins; then going carefully over it with a sponge charged with water in which some gum-dragon and fig-blue have been dissolved, to give it a proper consistence. To give the collar the same tint throughout, the whole collar should be sponged with the same water.31

5.5: ‘She Sat and Sewed’ - The tussock grass hat

Often living in isolated areas, Australian pioneer women of the 1800s were forced to 'make do' with locally available materials when making clothing or other handcrafted objects. The use of cabbage tree palm fronds for matting and hat making and dried fern fronds or tea tree leaves for stuffing pillows or mattresses is well documented. According to Jennifer Isaacs, ‘weaving with natural materials [was] taught and developed by the Country Women’s Association.’\(^{32}\)

Australian author, Mary Gilmore, makes several references to the role played by traditional crafts in providing shelter and clothing for the pioneer families of the Riverina district. Thatching, furniture making, blacksmithing, quilt making and hat making are all mentioned by Gilmore in *Old Days, Old Ways: a book of recollections.* Gilmore’s memories of a neighbour’s hat making skill provides not only insight into the hat making process itself, but also the attendant hardships facing families when establishing resources for both themselves and their animals:

Mrs. Rickley, of Rickley’s Farm, had twelve children, six boys and six girls, and she made hats of grass for all her boys. Wheat and stock being at their beginnings, straw had to be saved for cattle-chaff and house-thatch. Patiently each summer she went out and picked the stems of the fine Riverina grass, and (this being her only time of rest) in the early dusk of winter, or at daylight in summer, she sat and sewed, sewed, sewed them into hats.\(^{33}\)

Although the precise hat making technique used was not clearly defined by Gilmore, the reference to the use of ‘fine Riverina grass’, which was gathered during the summer when the grass was at its driest, would lend itself to the coiling technique. This


technique required the over-sewing of bundles of fine grass, whereas the plaited technique would have been much more difficult with such fine, dry grass. The tussock grass hat made by Margaret Casey (nee O’Neill) provides a significant connection to the narratives related to traditional northern hemisphere craft skills and the transfer of these same skills from generation to generation of women, often in a tacit or informal manner.

The helmet shaped hat, which was made at Dry Plains near Adaminaby, was also made with a native grass, *Poa sieberiana*, and commonly known as tussock grass, with the bunched strands held in place with linen stitching. The same tussock grass is still a common sight in the Adaminaby area and extending westward to the South West Slopes of the Riverina including Tumbarumba, Rosewood, Tumut, Adelong and Wagga Wagga. Unlined, the hat has an insert of round, flesh coloured fabric, hand stitched at the crown.

*The O’Neill Family of Dry Plains*

Simon O’Neill emigrated from Tipperary in Ireland and arrived in the Monaro district along with his brothers Patrick, Edward and Matthew in 1855, eventually settling at Dry Plains where he lived until his death in 1918. O’Neill’s wife, Frances Stopp, was born in Oxfordshire and migrated to Australia with her parents aboard the *James Gibbs* c.1846. Soon after arriving in Australia the Stopp family travelled by bullock dray to the Monaro district. Arriving during the first phase of white settlement, Frances Stopp recalled the lone stockman’s hut on the site of Adaminaby (Old Adaminaby) township...
and encounters with the miners who came in search of gold at Kiandra. A resilient and resourceful girl, Frances Stopp survived for three days in the surrounding bush after losing her way while out on a walk. She remained in the Adaminaby area all her adult life and, after her marriage to Simon O’Neill, resided at Dry Plains.

A skilled needlewoman, Frances O’Neill passed these craft skills on to her daughters. Examples of crochet, filet crochet, quilting, canvas work and embroidery made by Frances and her daughters have been kept in the family by her great-grand-daughter, Monica Talbot, of Tumbarumba. With the skills and techniques in various needlecrafts being passed from mother to daughter, it is highly likely that the coiled basketry technique, used for making the tussock grass hat, was also passed from Frances O’Neill to her daughter, Margaret.

---

Fig. 5.19: Berlin wool work sampler worked by Frances O’Neill, c1880s
Collection of Monica Talbot
(Photo: A. Brown)

Fig. 5.20: Embroidery wool, cotton and silk, circa late 1800s
Collection of Monica Talbot
(Photo: A. Brown)

34 Frances, Mary Jane, Ada, Margaret and Annie O’Neill.
Margaret Casey (nee O’Neill)

Margaret O’Neill married Michael Casey in St. Patricks Catholic Church at Cooma in 1883 and resided in the Adaminaby area until the last six or seven years of her life. She was the first woman to take up a selection of land in the area in her own name.

According to her niece Monica Talbot:
Granny Casey was well known for her hat making out of tussock grass. My cousin told me he had the job of getting the grass for her. It used to grow near a river at Dry Plain, where she lived, but it had to be green, not dry. She also made little baskets and lined them with nice material and also put handles on them. She also made me a cup and saucer at one time.35

![Fig. 5.23: Margaret Casey (nee O’Neill) wearing the tussock grass hat, c1920s](Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba (Photographer: Unknown))

Phyllis Gaylard also related the story of her O’Neill ancestors, recalling in an unpublished family history that:

> She [Granny Casey] told me her father, Simon O’Neill used to drive a horse and cart to Sydney and come home laden with material, lace and cotton and whatever they needed. It took him a long time to do the trip. Maybe every six months he did it.36

According to Monica Talbot, the coiling technique was also passed on to the second generation of the O’Neill family born in Australia, with the children of Margaret Casey’s younger sister Ann being taught by their aunt to make small, coiled baskets, cups and saucers. She recalled:

> The grass was gathered green and then dried and Granny Casey also dyed some of the tussock grass … Red and green are two of the colours that I remember, but I can’t remember what was used in the dye.37

---

The History of Coiled Straw Work

Coiled straw work is one of the oldest forms of basket or hat making techniques and can be found in many cultures including Native American, African, Asian and European. The same technique is also used by some groups of Indigenous Australian people, to make baskets and fish traps.

Until the advent of moulded plastics and metals, household articles including baskets and platters were made by the coiled method. In the UK rushes or straw were commonly used, with other types of suitable grasses such as marsh grasses also being utilised. This method of straw or rush work was known as ‘Lip Work’ and is thought to be a corruption of the Scandinavian word lob, meaning coiled basketry.

Fig. 5.24: Coiled work basket made by Margaret Casey (nee O’Neill) from tussock grass, c1920s
Collection of Monica Talbot
(Photo: A. Brown)

Lip work can be found throughout the UK from the Orkney Islands to Cornwall and also throughout Ireland, Scandinavia and Europe. The raw materials needed were readily available and the techniques employed required no machinery. A hollowed cow horn was traditionally used for moulding the fibre into a rope like form and a goose’s leg bone, cut off at a sharp angle, was also used to push between the coils. The fibre or thread used to tie the coils together was then threaded through the hollow leg bone and the bone withdrawn. The coils emerge from a single central point, making a shape similar to that of a snail’s shell.38

Fig. 5.25: Coiled work baskets made from Watsonia leaves, 1931

*Woman’s Budget*

Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba

Examples of coiled work basketry are also held in the collections of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney NSW and the Hurstville City Museum and Gallery, Sydney NSW.
5.6: ‘We Only Had Boards’ - The sallie bush high chair

Made by Peter Shore for his grand-children during the early 1920s, the home-made high chair was made from Sallie bush or Sallie gum, found growing locally on Mannus Creek, in the Tumbarumba area. The high chair, with its distinctive bushcrafted appearance has significant links to the early settlers in the Tumbarumba district and the make-do-and-mend ethic of bushcraft skills and the transfer of these traditional skills from one generation to another.

Locally grown native timbers were also used to fashion other pieces of furniture for the Shore family, including a fireside chair made by Peter Shore's son William. The stories behind these pieces also have important links to the daily working lives of both the men and women of that period.

With basic tools and bush carpentry skills, Peter and William 'Bill' Shore provided a home and furnishings for their growing family. With its splayed legs and carefully morticed cross supports at the front, back and both sides, the highchair exhibits a high degree of design and carpentry skills, even though undressed timber has been used. It was often necessary for men to make or repair items of furniture when money was scarce. This was often done in the evening, by kerosene lantern light, after the

39 The Sallie Bush or Sallie Gum referred to is Eucalyptus stellulata or Black Sallee, which is common to the area.
completion of their daily, paid work. Women, too, were drawn into the constant battle of ‘making ends meet’, with the use of improvised furniture, clothing and toys for children.

Fig. 5.27: Fireside chair (wood and hessian) made by Bill Shore, c1920s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photo: A. Brown)

Fig. 5.28: William ‘Bill’ Shore, c1930s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photographer: Unknown)

Amy Hill’s Childhood and Marriage

From childhood, life was the scene of hard work for Amy Hill, who was born in 1901. The need to supplement a precarious family income was learned at around the age of
twelve or fourteen when Amy Hill earned extra money by selling pipe clay which was used to clean fireplaces:

I used to take the horse and buggy and go to near where Mary McPherson now lives, down a steep bank and dig it [pipeclay] out with a pick. Into sugar bags and then haul it back up the very steep bank. I would sell it from Grandmother’s place and get 1/- (one shilling) a sugar bag.40

With the onset of WWI many young local women found themselves alone and without the assistance of fathers, husbands or brothers. Jobs such as repairing fences and outbuildings, carting water and collecting and cutting firewood were left in their care, and for many women, this was an unfamiliar and seemingly impossible task. As Amy Hill recalled:

I used to go out into the paddock and cut spring cart loads of wood for some of them. Sometimes some of the women used to come with me to load it. I used to charge five shillings a load for it.41

Amy Hill married William Shore in 1919 and they lived with Amy’s parents until their first child was born. Amy and William then went to live at Mundaroo West where William had a job as a station hand. The Shore family moved from Mundaroo West to Wolseley Park after the birth of their second child, where William once again had work as a stockman. When the job at Wolseley Park finished the family moved into rented accommodation in Albury Street in Tumbarumba, and it was during this period that William and his father began the building of a small house on a piece of ground taken up as a ‘Miner’s Right’ by Amy and William.

Constructed from slabs and shingles, this first home for the Shore family was built entirely from bush timber. Although this was a basic dwelling, Amy Shore recalls her first home with the pride of first home ownership:

We only had boards on our bedroom floor and a dirt floor in our living room. We also had a huge fireplace built of mud and stone and the chimney was made out of kerosene tins opened out and shaped like a chimney. The walls inside were lined with Hessian and I used to paper them with newspapers. I had no stove but the big fireplace and I used to do all the cooking in a camp oven. The food was delicious, the scones and bread were really lovely.42

41 Ibid. p. 30.
42 Ibid. p. 32.
As the family grew more rooms were added and William Shore bought an old house and pulled it down and used the boards to put a floor in the living room and line the two new rooms.

Fig. 5.29: The Shore family home, c1970s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photographer: Unknown)

When the Shore family first moved to their own home the land was covered with timber and scrub, the only cleared area being around the house. Clearing was done with a pick and shovel and there was very little water. William Shore worked away from home all week, which meant that water had to be collected on weekends:

He [William] had a vinegar cask wired on to a forked tree made into a slide and would harness the horse up and go about a mile to a creek and fill the cask with water and then tie a bag over the top and that water had to do us for everything till the next weekend.\(^{43}\)

Water was a precious commodity and baths could only be taken once a week. ‘We had a big round tub and also a large fireplace. We would hang a kerosene can of water over the fire by a chain to heat it and then bath in the tub. We all used to bath in the same water and next day either do our washing in it or scrub the floors.’\(^{44}\)

\(^{43}\) Ibid. p. 30.
\(^{44}\) Ibid.
Amy and William Shore and their six children continued this pattern of hard work all throughout those early years and it was often necessary for Amy and the children to supplement the family's income:

Not long after we came here things weren’t very prosperous and it was coming on Christmas so the boys and I got a drum and made eucalyptus oil to get some money for Christmas. It is quite an interesting job. Anyway we made a gallon and got £9 for it so we had a spend up. Some years later I also bred ferrets and at one time, had 70 of them. We used them for rabbiting and would sell the rabbits for meat and also the skins. I sold the ferrets for £2 each and we got our place lined with ferret money. Before that it was Hessian.\textsuperscript{45}

In her recollections, Amy Shore looked back with pride at those hard years:

Now the paddocks are green and beautiful. The house now has six rooms and is over sixty years old and some of the walls are still standing and most of the timber is the timber that was cut off the ground as we cleared it.\textsuperscript{46}
5.7: ‘A Lot of Clever Planning’ – The homefront during WWII

Historian and heritage consultant, Lindsay J. Peet explains that during WWII in Australia:

Women coped with everything from the death and imprisonment of loved ones, to how to gather enough sugar for a wedding cake. They learned to deal with the rationing of both essential and luxury items … and improvised in many inventive ways.47

Identity Card and Civilian Registration procedures for all British subjects aged sixteen years and over were introduced in March 1942, followed by the distribution of ration books in June 1942. It was estimated by the divisional electoral officer Mr. W.H. Miller, that 70,000 ration books had been distributed in the Riverina.

Rationing and the unavailability of metal resulted in many households resorting to the use of recycled metal for the manufacture and repair of farming and household equipment such as ploughs, windmills, gates, buckets, kettles, jam boilers and preserving pans. Wartime restrictions on petrol and kerosene also forced many households to replace current domestic objects such as the kerosene powered refrigerator and return to domestic technology of the late 19th and early 20th century, such as the ‘coolgardie’ or charcoal cool safe.

Wartime restrictions on food supplies for the Australian civilian population saw the stringent domestic economies of the depression years reapplied in line with the implementation of the Manpower Act of 1942. Rationing became a daily reality for the housewife, and even prior to 1942 wartime domestic economies were featured in

---

women’s magazines. ‘From Australian housewives is expected a lot of clever planning nowadays, to keep in line with the nation’s war requirements’, proclaimed the Woman’s World of September 1941. In a feature headed, ‘Wartime in the Kitchen’, domestic economist Beth Laby stated that ‘these economy rules we should have been always practicing in our kitchens, anyway.’ She then went on to describe the kitchen economies being undertaken in England, even by the Royal Family.

Restrictions on the supply of manufactured food items such as canned fruits and vegetables saw many women, particularly in rural communities where home grown produce was freely available, producing their own preserved fruits and vegetables. In January 1944, the food and cookery expert for the Australian Women’s Weekly instructed readers to remember that:

To-day’s nutrition programme lists home preserving as an essential duty of every homemaker. Pull your weight on the home-front and make the most of the summer fruits for the year’s scarce seasons.

Women were also encouraged to go ‘back to the simple, sure methods of grandmother’s days when every industrious housewife made her preserves, brewed her mild nectars, and put down her pickles.’

---

49 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
Women’s magazines continued in their role of promoting patriotism, along with economy and saving on the domestic front, through the use of columns and articles offering expert advice and a calculated use of advertising such as ‘Aunt Mary’s Baking Powder’ reminding consumers that ‘[n]ever before have we all had to preserve the virtue of patience as during this war’. A column in the *Australian Women’s Weekly* of January 1944 reinforced this stoic attitude stating that:

> Few of the community’s workers have felt the war more keenly in their daily tasks than homemakers and mothers … These have borne the trials of each extension of rationing … They have had to apportion the butter between Dad’s demands for a cut lunch and a daughter’s wheedling for enough to bake a cake for her sweetheart at the front.

Although this was a correct observation, for many countrywomen such as Mrs. Clarice Fritsch, the owner of the preserving pan in the collection of the Temora Rural Museum, life in a rural location made rationing easier to deal with.

---

53 Ibid.
The maintaining of Victory gardens and the supplementing of the pantry with home grown vegetables was also promoted by women’s magazines. In a gardening article headed, 'How to Store Vegetables’, advice was given for the storage of vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, beetroot, onion, turnips, pumpkin, squash and potatoes. Where flowers, shrubs and lawns flourished in many suburban backyards before WWII, vegetable plots were established as a patriotic duty. The 'Victory Garden' of Mr. and Mrs. H. Law of North Bondi was featured by the *Australian Women’s Weekly* as a guide to what could be achieved with hard work. ‘Once pure sand, the soil now yields sufficient vegetables for the family’s needs all through the year’, 55 boasted the ‘Home Gardener’ in the *Australian Women’s Weekly*. For country women such as Clarice Fritsch, these skills were more than likely well established before the advent of WWII and the introduction of rationing.

Gardening and the growing of fruit, vegetables and flowers was also encouraged by the women’s magazines as a therapeutic measure, with the *Australian Women’s Weekly’s* home gardening expert in 1944 pointing out to readers:

---

You can find a lot of joy in that big “room” outdoors and the boys, when they return, will be welcomed by brightness round their homes when they need it most . . . And just as sure as an hour’s work a day in the vegetable garden keeps the greengrocer away, so an hour a day in the flower garden will keep the glooms away.56

The ‘Home Gardener’ then went on to state that ‘gardening is not only an escape from the irritations and pressures of life; it is part of the very fundamentals of life and civilization for which we are fighting today.’57

Fig. 5.35: Ted and Clarice Fritsch, c1940s
Photo courtesy of Harold Fritsch
(Photographer: Unknown)

---

57 Ibid.
‘Saving Money Year After Year’ - The use of preserving pans

The preserving pan in the Temora Rural Museum was made during the 1940s on Woolshed Farm in the Trungley Hall district for Clarice Fritsch by her husband Edwin Fritsch. It is a physical reminder of WWII on the ‘homefront’ and its impact on domestic rationing and household economy.

![Home-made preserving pan, c1940s](Fig. 5.36: Home-made preserving pan, c1940s)
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Phot: A. Brown)

Harold Fritsch, the son of Clarice and Edwin Fritsch, has clear memories of his mother gathering fruit and vegetables from the family farm’s orchard and garden and although he has no actual memory of his mother ‘bottling’ the produce, family meals, in particular those which included home preserved fruit, are remembered.⁵⁸ Among local families of German descent, including the Fritsch family, preserving home grown produce was a common practice.

The home-made preserving pan utilised domestic food technology principles available during the early 20th century. Preserving pans aided in extending the shelf life of fruit and vegetables for household consumption and the method of use was to place fruit in sugar syrup and vegetables in salt water into glass jars. The filled jars were then capped with a rubber seal around the rim and covered by a metal lid held in position with a metal clip. The sealed jars were placed side by side in the preserving pan. Water was then added to the pan to partially cover the jars and the preserving pan placed on top of

⁵⁸ H. Fritsch (personal communication, November 24, 2005).
an electric, gas or slow combustion stove. The water was brought to boiling point and
the jars and their contents were kept at a constant temperature in the preserving pan to
facilitate sterilization of the contents. A jam making thermometer was placed in
reservoir on the outside of the preserving pan, which enabled the use to check the
temperature of the water at intervals.

Later models of commercially produced preserving pans, available during the late 1960s
and early 1970s, were made with inbuilt heating elements and external electric plugs.
One of the most popular brands of preserving pans in Australia was the Fowler’s Vacola
Fruit Bottling Outfit, which had been marketed since the 1930s. ‘Peach pie – out of
season and only twopence for the fruit’, 59 read a Fowlers Vacola advertisement of 1935.
This was clever marketing, aimed at housewives who wished to economise.

The promotion of the Fowlers Vacola product was also directed at the new bride with
advertising from 1935 suggesting that, ‘Among the wedding presents is a Vacola
Outfit. She will have less work, more leisure, and will go on saving money year after
year.’60

Australian women’s magazines of the late 1930s continued to encourage the domestic
economies of the Depression years, with fruit bottling promoted as a means of cost
saving in the kitchen. ‘The ideal way to preserve summer fruits for use during the

60 Ibid.
winter’, stated the *Australian Women’s Weekly* cookery expert, Ruth Furst, in January 1937.

Wartime restrictions would see these same domestic practices continued into the 1940s. Olwen Francis, food and cookery expert to the *Australian Women's Weekly* gave precise instructions for preserving fruit, with additional information provided in line with wartime shortages:

**Bottling Process** - When fruit is preserved in a syrup or in water it is essential that the preserving jars be quite airtight. Many housewives may have to discard this method owing to the shortage of preserving jars, rubber rings or patent metal preserving caps. Try the elasticity test on previously used rubber rings before risking further use. The wax or clarified fat method of sealing has been found satisfactory, even for syrup preserves with the screw-top jar. The fruit is prepared and packed and completely covered with heavy syrup. Warm, but not hot, wax or fat, is poured on top, filling but not spilling over the jar. Cover with the screw-top and process in an oven (250 deg. F.) or in a preserving pan with the water coming half-way up the jars. When cooling, re wax outside edges of lid, or seal with sticking plaster. This method cannot be absolutely guaranteed … Here Is the Way to Preserve Them - Wash, peel, and prepare the fruit, removing all bruised or decayed parts. Blanch in boiling water, skinning if liked. Plunge fruit in cold water and then pack neatly into clean jars. Fill the jars with boiling syrup or hot water. Adjust rubber ring and lid with clamp or screw-top lid. Cook for the required time well covered in hot water in preserving pan or in oven (250 deg. F.) Most fruits take 20 to 30 minutes in the water bath or up to 1 hour in the oven for fruit such as quinces. Tighten screw-tops after processing and test for complete sealing.62

---

62 Ibid.
Fig. 5.39: Verso cover Fowlers Vacola catalogue, c1943
Collection of A. Brown
(Photo: A. Brown)
5.8: ‘It Answered Well’ – The charcoal cool safe

Representative of the make do and mend style of bush carpentry, the charcoal cool safe in the collection of the Parkside Cottage Museum in Narrandera, was made and used on Widgiewa Station, south-west of Narrandera. It ranks alongside other domestic objects such as, the Coolgardie safe\textsuperscript{63} and the canvas water bag for its practicality and design innovation. Even though the charcoal cool safe pre-dated its more technically advanced successors such as the ice-chest and the kerosene fridge, factors such as isolation and financial hardship saw them still in use, in some regional and remote communities, including Widgiewa, up until the mid 1950s.

![Charcoal cool safe](image)

Narrandera resident, Mr. Alexander ‘Nugget’ Waller, was not only familiar with the acquisition of the charcoal cool safe, by the Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum, but had also spent many years working on Widgiewa Station, the original home of the cool safe. An interview with 'Nugget' Waller provided rare first-hand information on work and living conditions of Widgiewa Station in the mid 20th century.

Effective and hygienic storage of fresh meat and dairy products was a continual concern for households, especially in areas affected by high summer temperatures, with not only heat, but flies presenting problems. The hole-punched metal door and the dampened

\textsuperscript{63} The Coolgardie safe was designed in the 1890s in Western Australia by Mr. A.P. McCormick
charcoal acts in the same manner as the wet hessian covering on a Coolgardie safe. This serves to promote evaporation and a reduction in air temperature inside the safe.

Fig. 5.41: Detail of interior, charcoal cool safe, c1930s to 1950s
Collection of Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

The charcoal cool safe also tells the story of the important role played by bush craftsmen and tradesmen, such as blacksmiths, in the day to day running of large Riverina properties like Widgiewa. Innovation and invention during the formative years of many of these great pastoral companies was a necessary component in the establishment of bearable living and working conditions. In a 1906 article, the Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales stressed the importance of a well equipped workshop on the farm and suggesting that while a carpenter’s shop was necessary, ‘at the same time no farmer should attempt to get along in this age without a blacksmith shop.’

The article concluded by stating:

It seems that most farmers are natural-born carpenters, and can build or repair anything that is constructed from wood, but take particular pains to keep clear of jobs where an iron-worker’s skill is needed … it is astonishing how quickly the amateur learns to do the small jobs and thereby save a trip to town, which makes the blacksmith shop on the farm a profitable investment.

Mrs. Lance Rawson, in her 1894 book entitled Australian Enquiry Book of Household and General Information: A practical guide for the cottage, villa and bush home: recipes and information upon everything and for everybody, also mentions a similar structure, which she refers to as a ‘portable dairy’:

64 Blacksmithing on the farm. (1906, May 2). Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales. 17, 477-479.
65 Ibid.
The idea was my own I think, at least I never heard of anyone else trying it till after I published mine … It will only answer where there is not very much milk, unless you make a very large one. Mine was made of a huge packing case with shelves that would slip in and out to hold the dishes, doors back and front, and holes bored in doors and sides too, to allow the air to get through. This box (or dairy) I placed in the heart of the scrub where it would not get any sun, but plenty of air and shade. To prevent the dust getting through I pasted muslin inside. It answered well, and during a very hot summer I never had to boil the house milk once. 66

Fig. 5.42: Coolgardie safe diagram, 1912
*Agricultural Gazette of NSW*

In her reminiscences of the Wilcannia district in the 1920s, Elsie Rose Jones remembered that:

> To keep the meat, they used to make the charcoal coolers, but we never used to have much meat in those days. We mostly had the safes that we used to make ourselves with chaff bags. 67

Mrs. Nell Maslin of Temora also recalled the charcoal cool safes in use on her family’s property during the 1930s. According to Mrs. Maslin, the charcoal cool safes, along with the hessian covered Coolgardie safes were always located along a shaded verandah or ‘breezeway’ outside the kitchen area of the house. The charcoal cool safe was used to store milk, cream, cheese and butter, with meat being stored separately. 68 Mrs. Betty Punnet of Cootamundra also remembered the charcoal cool safe, along with the Coolgardie safe being placed on a shady verandah or along a ‘breezeway’ on her family’s property in the 1940s. 69

68 N. Maslin (personal communication, July 26, 2002).
69 B. Punnet (personal communication, July 26, 2002).
Widgiewa Station

Franc Sadlier Falkiner was the owner of half a million acres of land and one quarter of a million sheep when he died in 1909. Along with Widgiewa, Pericoota, Moira, Moonbria, Boonoke, Morago and Tuppal were under his control and encompassed an area which extended from the Murray River to the Old Man Plain.
F.S. Falkiner’s empire passed into the hands of his six sons including Otway, who maintained the high standards set by his father and saw Widgiewa established as the main ram depot for F.S. Falkiner & Sons for many years. These valuable stud animals were exhibited at P. & A. shows as far afield as Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne. Like many of the large and often isolated pastoral runs in the Riverina, Widgiewa was relatively self-sufficient, with its infrastructure covering every need from administration and transport to market gardening and blacksmithing.

A group of four cottages stood on Widgiewa, and were occupied by male employees and their families, including Alexander 'Nugget' Waller and his wife. It was in the vicinity of these cottages that the charcoal drip safe was utilised, with these families killing and dressing their own meat and also supplying their own milk, vegetables and fruit. Kerosene refrigerators and lights were also used, with electricity only being connected to these cottages in 1970.  

Among the large workforce who lived and worked on Widgiewa were jackaroos, blacksmiths, general farm hands, stud grooms, housemaids, pantrymaids, cooks, houseboys, gardeners and secretaries plus many casual employees such as shearsers. Many of these properties including Widgiewa and Boonoke also boasted their own school, with as many as 14 pupils being catered for on Widgiewa.  

Although no written account remains of the ‘out-buildings’ on Widgiewa, a description of Momba Station near Wilcannia explains:

The manager’s domain began at the back door of the mansion. Here were clustered various stables and outbuildings housing vehicles and machinery, blacksmith’s shop, meathouse etc. A little further distant were the men’s huts, woolshed, milking yard and so on. These clusters sometimes grew into miniature feudal townships, with their own post office, church, school, and store at which a variety of food and clothing could be bought.  

---

70 A. Waller (personal communication, July 31, 2002).  
71 Ibid.  
‘Can Be Made By Any Handyman’ – WWII economy

Many homes, especially in regional and remote areas, were not connected to electricity until the post WWII period and household appliances such as refrigerators were run on petrol or kerosene. As a consequence of fuel rationing during WWII, householders were encouraged to utilise technology such as the charcoal safe and the coolgardie safe as a means of wartime economy.

The *NSW Agricultural Gazette* article pointed out that:

> With the approach of summer the problem of keeping foodstuffs cool must again be faced. In many country areas the use of ice is not possible, and this will be the case in many more areas than usual this summer because of petrol and manpower shortages.\(^\text{73}\)

---

\(^{73}\) A charcoal cool safe for country homes. (1942, December 1). *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, 53, 547-548.
The instructions given for the construction of the charcoal cool safe were detailed, however the writer of the article assured readers that ‘a cooler of the type shown in the drawings on the opposite page can be made by any handy man, and has been shown by experience to be very efficient.’ It was also stated that:

The materials required should be available in most country towns. The door should be lined on both sides with plain iron, be packed with charcoal to preserve the insulation, and should fit neatly … such a cooler should be strongly constructed … to operate the cooler it is necessary occasionally to throw a few buckets of water on to the charcoal on top.\(^{74}\)

---

\(^{74}\) Ibid.

---

\textbf{Fig. 5.47: Cool safe advertisement, 1944}

\textit{Daily Advertiser}
5.9: ‘We All Had One’ - The truck driver’s wagga rug

As a textile object, the ‘wagga’ rug is generally associated with the make-do-and-mend ethic of the Great Depression Years of the 1930s. The most commonly recognised form of the wagga rug is the domestic wagga, which was often constructed from disused clothing, household linen, calico flour bags and cretonne furnishing fabric.

The wagga rug however, came into being in the late 19th century. This was a time of pastoral expansion and growth in the Riverina. It was also a time when large groups of itinerant or contract workers criss-crossed the area in search of work on the agricultural properties of the district. It is generally presumed that the term ‘wagga rug’ originated through its connection to the wheat growing and milling activities of the Wagga Wagga area, in particular to the Murrumbidgee Milling Company and its production of Wagga Lily brand flour.

Discarded and damaged calico and jute flour bags were often stacked outside the flourmill and it was from these basic components that the men would fashion make-do blankets or swags, which were to become known as wagga rugs:

The sewn-together bags provided a layer, either with or without a blanket. Usually four or five bags, not opened up, were sewn together with a bag needle and twine. Wheat or flour bags were used because they were closely woven, although wheat bags were made of a course jute fibre. Chaff bags were considered less suitable because they were too open in weave.75

These utilitarian covers were used in the bush by shearers, drovers, fencers, rabbiters, scrub clearers and agricultural labourers in general. They were carried by men on foot,

horseback, wagons, trains and riverboats. The place of the wagga rug in the folk history of the Riverina is detailed in a poem entitled *The Wagga Rug* (See page 323) written by Jack McInnes in 1994, and Henry Lawson has left us with a lively description of the wagga rug in use:

> We tried to sleep, that night on the ridge of two wool bales laid with the narrow sides up, having first been obliged to get ashore and fight six rounds with a shearer for the privilege of roosting there. The live cinders from the firebox went up the chimney all night, and fell in showers on deck. Every now and again a spark would burn through the “Wagga rug” of a sleeping shearer, and he’d wake suddenly and get up and curse.76

From the late 1800s onward women adapted the original workingmen’s waggas, which were made from bags, and manufactured the more familiar domestic wagga rug. Bags were often still used, generally calico flour or sugar bags, as these were softer to the touch and more easily manoeuvered through a treadle sewing machine than the larger jute flour bags. To these recycled calico bags pieces of outgrown or discarded clothing and blankets was added and a covering made from printed cotton or satin fabric. The method of making a domestic wagga is described by ‘L.P.’ of Newcastle, a correspondent to the *Woman’s Budget* magazine in 1926:

> I made a nice, warm cover for one of our verandah beds by sewing to a foundation any pieces of flannel, bits of blankets which had worn thin, and any pieces of warm material I had saved from time to time. After they had all been neatly arranged I covered the whole thing with pieces of sateen, and stitched them well through from one side to the other. This cover is almost as warm as a feather eiderdown.77

Even when extra disposable income was available many women chose to continue with the re-using of garments and household linen to make bed coverings. The wagga rugs were not just made with economy in mind but also within a context of pride in the needlework skills used. This was the tenet employed by Mrs. Doris Barnes of Weetalibah, New South Wales, in making a domestic wagga rug in 1961. Pieces of re-used skirts, trousers and blankets were hand and machine stitched together to form the padding for the inside of the rug, which was then covered in a pink floral cotton curtain fabric. ‘Doris hated to see anything go to waste’,78 recalled her husband Oliver ’Ollie’ Barnes.

---

77 ‘L. P.’. *One housewife to another. (1926, November 12). Woman’s Budget,* p. 43.
78 O. Barnes (personal communication, July 18, 2005).
Doris and Ollie Barnes went on many trips to the upper Murray region on trout fishing holidays during the 1960s and 1970s and, according to Ollie, ‘the wagga rug was lovely and warm on cold nights when we slept in our Holden station wagon, although it was damned heavy to sleep under.’79

After moving to Wagga Wagga during the mid 1970s, the wagga rug was used by Ollie as an ‘engine cover’ for his car during the cold months of winter and he recalled that the wagga rug became ‘a favourite camping spot in cold weather for Tiger, the neighbour’s cat.’80

---

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
The wagga rug owned by John Foster of Tumbarumba falls into this category, acting as a focus for a series of narratives involving both the domestic or private sphere and the public or male orientated domain. During his school years, the wagga rug was used on his bed, but after commencing work as a truck driver the rug was ‘taken on the road’. As he recalls:

> During the day used to fold the wagga over the engine mount inside the cab of my truck to keep it warm. I’d roll myself up in the wagga, like a swag at night. It was lovely and warm.\(^8\)\(^1\)

\(^8\)\(^1\) J. Foster (personal communication, September 4, 2004).
The wagga rug was made in the late 1950s by Lorna Foster for her son John. Lorna Foster spent much of her time sewing and knitting for her family, while living on the family farm at Taradale near Tumbarumba, with bed quilts and waggas among the items made for John and his brother:

We all had one each at home, one on every bed. On the other side of the dark cover [of] railway coats or government coats, are some old jumpers, one of them grey with green braid or margins. An old school jumper, the Central School colour scheme, from Tumbarumba.  

According to John Foster his mother was always busy knitting and sewing for her family. Many of the jumpers included in the rug are re-used, hand knitted jumpers made for Lorna Foster’s husband and children. For many women, including Lorna Foster, the time spent in fashioning hand-knitted jumpers was precious and great care was taken in both the making and the laundering of these garments. As John Foster recollects:

The red jumper, the one dad had, I can remember mum going crook. He used to come in from feeding the poddy calves and the cows used to suck all the bottom of it [the jumper] and the bottom was all slimy and sticky and mum used to go crook. It was a good jumper in those days. 

---

82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
Fig. 5.55: Detail of John Foster’s wagga rug  
(Photo: A. Brown)

‘[T]he poddy calves and the cows used to suck all the bottom of it...’

Fig. 5.56: Foster family home  
Tumbarumba NSW, c1960s  
Photo courtesy of John Foster  
(Photographer: Unknown)

84 Ibid.
Reclined on postupaedics with the blanket set on three,  
Snuggled down in comfort warmed by electricity.  
Just below the chin draw up the sheet and Continental,  
Hoping that our sleep this night will be sweet and gentle.  
But sleep is marred by anxious thoughts of costs and high inflation  
Of riots, strikes, dissensions and the future of a nation.  
As we wonder will the Budget bring another income slug,  
Spare a thought for Charlie Cummins sleeping ‘neath his Wagga rug.  
Charlie in the early years traversed the bush arena,  
As shepherd, shearer, fencer, throughout the Riverina,  
The huts where Charlie dined and slept were always rather rough,  
A chair, a table and a bed he reckoned fair enough.  
The bed ends were rough saplings, these were set into the ground,  
The mattress was a pole each side, with chaff bags wrapped around,  
A straw paillasse beneath him, Charlie slept both sound and snug,  
Covered to the eyebrows with his good old Wagga rug.  

Perhaps an explanation to the uninitiated  
Who may think the Wagga rug is being over-rated.  
Its construction, mainly cornsacks, the texture heavy jute,  
Old clothing patches covered, it was really rather cute.  
The stitching very varied, it wouldn’t pass a tailor,  
But good enough for Charlie, or the Murrumbidgee Whaler.  
These hardy carefree characters, oft partial to the jug,  
Had nights of sound, contented sleep beneath the Wagga rug.  

---

‘Wagga Lily Flour’ - The Murrumbidgee Milling Company

The unsatisfactory business methods of some grain buyers led to the establishment of the Murrumbidgee Co-operative Milling Company by Messrs. J.J. Peadon, J.P. Wilson, J.D. Norman, R. Cox and R. Dunn. Built by Charles Hardy and opened on 28th June 1890, the flour mill had an original 12-sack capacity plant.

![Fig. 5.57: Murrumbidgee Flour Mill, c1890s (CSU Regional Archives)](image)

Within twenty years the mill was producing between 12,000 and 13,000 tons of flour per annum and exporting flour to the European Continent, South Africa and Egypt. By 1927 the mill was producing 20,000 to 22,000 tons of flour per annum and the steam engine powered mill was upgraded and connected to electricity from the municipal supply.

One of the best known and most enduring products to come from the mill was the famous ‘Wagga Lily’ brand flour. Marketed in its distinctive calico bag with the lily logo, this product was valued for both the contents and the packaging. Many Wagga and district women have served ‘light-as-a-feather’ scones and cakes baked with Wagga Lily Flour, and many of the same women have also utilised the calico bags to good effect.

During the long, hard years of the Great Depression local women would boil and bleach the flour bags and recycle them in the form of underwear, aprons or household linen. Pot holders, peg bags, marble bags and food storage bags were among the many other items fashioned from flour bags.
The Murrumbidgee Co-operative Milling Company ceased operation in August 1978. It was the end of an era for local grain producers and for local households.  

Fig. 5.58: Apron made from a ‘Wagga Lily’ flour bag and cotton gingham, c1980s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.10: Summary

Objects and stories of making-do play an integral role in the definition of social histories. It has been demonstrated that they are not confined to any particular gender, age, geographic or time framework, and their making is not always associated with necessity. In fact, as Kylie Winkworth states, ‘there are many other possible motivations, such as the pleasure of making something, or filling spare time, or the culture of waste not want not.’

While the narratives connected to the cradle, the high chair, the lace collection, the wagga rug, the charcoal cool-safe and the tussock grass hat provide a link to specific families and individuals, they also reference the many unknown women and children who provided labour and added income to many rural families during the first half of the 20th century. Work, both inside and outside the home was, more often than not, a daily event for women and children in rural communities. The wagga rug and its retelling of stories of early 20th century household ingenuity and thrift, also adds narratives of contemporary journeys and an adaptation to a usage outside the domestic environment.

These hand-crafted objects are familiar to older museum visitors and fascinating to younger visitors, and as Winkworth observes these:

Bush crafts and vernacular artifacts have a special appeal in the way they suggest the hand of the maker and a life of functional use … loss of provenance and the lack of contextual information about their use and manufacture … does not close the door on research or … freeze the objects into a nostalgic, romanticized view of the past.

They form a significant facet of Riverina history.

88 Ibid. p. 129.
Chapter 6: ‘Sturdy Young Scholars’ – Stories of education in the Riverina

6.1: Objects and collections – an overview

Objects connected to education are a common inclusion in museum collections throughout the Riverina. Desks and chairs, blackboards and slates, pens, inkwells, books, satchels, maps and photographs, all assist in the interpretation of stories connected to the history of Riverina schools from the mid 1800s through to the 1970s. These objects often act as visual triggers for reminiscences, particularly among an older age group. Provenanced objects and collections are linked directly to particular people, locations and events. Education-centred stories become particularly focused and strengthened, and additional voices and stories are activated, when provenanced.

The key objects in this chapter include: the Susan Hoad Sampler, the Edith Short sampler collection, the St Clare’s Convent peanut dolls, the Mt Erin Beleek tea set and holy picture and the Victor Haberecht collection.

Fig. 6.1: Cowra Public School, c1950
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an23697892)

This classroom interior is typical of country schools of the period.

6.2: Introduction

The Susan Hoad Sampler c1866, and the Edith Short Collection c1894, brings to light personal histories and stories connected to the development of educational facilities, both denominational and government operated, from two different areas of the Riverina, Tumut and Temora. Both the Hoad and Short samplers bring into focus formal education of the late 1800s and its role in the inculcation of domestic and gender-specific attitudes of the period. The Edith Short collection also identifies the connections between the education of girls and the emphasis placed on the teaching of
domestic skills in the curriculum. Agricultural Shows and the role of display and competition among girls and women add an extra voice to the education narratives of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

While the stories associated with the schools in Adelong and Milbrulong are not related to key objects in this chapter, they provide additional narratives, which link the small schools of the Riverina together within the context of social and educational histories.

The Peanut Dolls c1900, and objects from the Mount Erin Archives Collection c1874, connect us to both contemporary and historic voices which discuss the establishment of Catholic Schools in the Riverina. Stories of the five founding Presentation Sisters of Mount Erin Convent, and the founding Josephite Sisters of St. Clare’s Convent in Germanton, demonstrate the key role played by women in religious orders as educators, administrators and members of the communities in which they lived and worked. Stories of cultural change, isolation and innovation associated with both the Josephite Sisters of St Clare’s and the Presentation Sisters of Mt Erin, add to the historical dialogue connecting these particular objects with stories of education in the Riverina.

The Victor Haberecht collection, c1950s, focuses on a series of stories which covers the timeframe of the early 1900s to the 1950s. They highlight the innovation of Victor Haberecht as an educator and place his contribution within the educational syllabus of the 1950s.

6.3: ‘Fitted Up With Desks’ - Adelong Schools

Before the establishment of government and church-run schools, private and home schooling were the methods undertaken to educate the children of the district. In line with the strict Victorian principles of the period, it was the moral as well as the scholarly aspects of education which were an important consideration. Advertising in the Adelong Mining Journal of 11th December 1858, Mr. D. Small implored the parents and guardians of the town, to send their young people to the ‘Scripture Reading Meetings … at his residence in Camp Street … it is hoped for the sake of the moral, social and religious advancement of the coming generation, that they will send their children.’

From advertisements listed in the *Adelong Mining Journal*, it is known that the National School at Lower Adelong was operating in 1859 and at the end of that same year Mr. M.R. Perkins announced the opening of the Adelong Grammar School on Monday 2nd January 1860. It was the hope of Mr. Perkins ‘to impart to his pupils a sound practical English education, assimilated as far as conveniently can be to that of the Grammar Schools of the mother country’. Until the construction of a permanent building the Adelong Grammar School operated from ‘a commodious tent, two hundred yards in the rear of Messrs. Taylor and Bell’s Store [and was] fitted up with desks and other schoolroom appendages for the purpose of tuition’.

With the increase in population of Adelong and district an application was made to the Board of National Education for the establishment of the Adelong Public School in February 1860. An initial enrolment of less than 30 pupils grew to a total of 224 children in 1874. A new school building was completed in May 1878.
At the beginning of the 20th century funds were also being raised for the building of a Convent School in Adelong, with the Adelong & Tumut Express of 10th July 1903 reporting of the event, which was held in the Oddfellows’ Hall:

Upwards of 140 persons were present … and the dancers appeared to enjoy themselves greatly. Financially, the event exceeded the most extravagant estimate of the committee … the result of the effort is that sufficient funds are now available, with the amounts already collected, to enable the building of the school being commenced.4

In 1903 the Adelong Public School had been elevated to a class IV category5 and all subjects taught in a superior school had been offered to the pupils during that year. The headmaster, during his end of year address, reported that ‘The average daily attendance of pupils for the year was 196.4, as against 170 for the previous year and … the sum of £101 has been received in school fees.’6 The headmaster also observed that, ‘Many parents kept their children most regularly at school’7 and admonished parents and guardians against keeping children from their lessons ‘except in cases of great urgency or sickness, and then both teachers and pupils would benefit.’8

School plays, concerts, fancy dress balls and sports carnivals added variety and entertainment to the continuous round of classroom work. The Adelong & Tumut Express of 15th December 1916 reported that the Adelong Public School concert ‘was the best seen yet’.9 During the concert interval, the headmaster Mr. A.R. Clarke ‘thanked the people for their assistance and attendance’10 and stated that the money

---

4 Convent ball. (1903, July 10). Adelong & Tumut Express, p. 2.
5 A Class IV school offered subjects for children aged from primary to secondary school levels, much the same as Central Schools in regional areas offer today.
7 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
raised would be used ‘for the purpose of erecting an honor-board for the old boys of the school who had gone forth to fight for their Empire.’

6.4: ‘Good English Scholars’ – Stories of Milbrulong schools

On the 1st of May 1885, Patrick Brislan, the owner of the property French Park initiated steps for the establishment of a school at Milbrulong. Brislan wrote to the Minister for Public Instruction informing him that in the immediate area there were a number of children ‘whose education is lamentably neglected’.

In this letter, Brislan asked the department for a Provisional School, or at least a house-to-house teacher. The usual departmental forms were sent to Brislan and on the 18th May 1885 a public meeting was held and a committee formed and the application

---

11 Ibid.
completed for a Provisional School ‘near French Park’. The site for the school was in the parish of Milbrulong and it was this name which the department used in discussing the application.

District School Inspector O’Byrne was optimistic about the development of Milbrulong, referring to it as a ‘recently formed free selecting settlement’, where it was probable that more families would settle because of the availability of unoccupied land. Inspector O’Byrne expected an average attendance of 15 pupils at the Provisional School, three more than the required minimum, and he recommended the establishment of the Milbrulong School.

The Education Department formally granted the application on the 22nd July 1885 and also agreed to contribute £45 towards the cost of a furnished school room.

![Fig. 6.7: Milbrulong Public School, c1918](Image courtesy of Margaret Hill (Photographer: Unknown))

On the 22nd of September 1885, Inspector O’Byrne returned to Milbrulong and recorded the following comments:

The schoolhouse stands on good substantial blocks & the frame is firm and well stayed. The walls are weatherboard of best quality: roof, iron, spouted, and very well put on. The dimensions are 16ft by 12 ft by 9ft. There are two large double-sashed windows and an ordinary American pine panel door. The chimney is brick, & there are two very fair weatherboard W.C.’s. The furniture, which is somewhat rough, consists of:- 2 desks 12 ft long, 2 forms, 1 cane chair, 1 small pine table and 1 small book press (pine). 'In addition to the above, the residents are providing a 600 gal tank: they have also promised to grub & clear the playground so as to make it fit for the intended purpose. Altogether, the material and workmanship are of good strong quality, and a good building has been provided at a low cost.

---

13 Ibid. p. 12.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid. pps. 12-13.
Between 1885 and 1895 the fortunes of the Milbrulong School swung from high to low and back again. A shortage of teachers, and at times the placement of what were deemed by the authorities as ‘unsuitable teachers’\textsuperscript{16}, were among the problems. The fluctuating, and often extremely low numbers of pupils enrolled were however the paramount problem. By late 1888 there were no longer enough children at Milbrulong and the school was forced to close for twelve months.

Milbrulong School reopened in April 1890 with Miss Maggie Patton as its headmistress and sole teacher. Miss Patton soon found that attendance was irregular, especially in bad weather. There were also other difficulties at Milbrulong for Miss Patton as during the inspection early in 1891 it was found that the pupils’ ‘attainments’ were low.

The school serviced a farming community which was dominated by settlers of German descent, and in correspondence to the Education Department at that time, it was explained by Patton that:

\begin{quote}
[i]n reference to the low attainments of the pupils, I beg to state that most of the children under my charge are Germans, and some of them never attended an English school till the beginning of this year. They are taught their native tongue at home, and being all young children it is almost impossible to make them good English scholars, as in their homes English is neither written nor spoken. 'Another family of three have been away nearly twelve months and only attended 29 days last quarter.
Hoping you will have a little consideration for me in these matters.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

With enrolments falling to an average of 5.2, Milbrulong School was once again closed in November 1892. It was to remain closed until 1895. The Department of Education was once again appealed to, with correspondence from anxious parents pointing out the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16]\textit{Ibid.} p. 13.
\item[17]\textit{Ibid.} p. 14.
\end{footnotes}
number of new families in the area, especially ‘a lot of German settlers’ and the fact that ‘our children are sadly in want of education’.

Charles Tydeman reopened Milbrulong School on 13th May 1895 and within two weeks there was an enrolment of 28 pupils. The good enrolment figures justified the conversion of Milbrulong School to a Public School in October 1895. Milbrulong School was closed for two weeks in April/May 1900 while the two school buildings were relocated to a new site. The status of ‘Public School’ has been retained since 1895.

---

19 Ibid.
20 The relocation site is unknown.
‘Deutsche Sonnabendschule’ - German School

Children from German families in the Milbrulong district attended ‘German School’ or ‘Deutsche Sonnabendschule’ each Saturday, where they were taught to speak, read and write in the German language. Classes were held at the Lutheran manse and were conducted by the Lutheran Pastor.

Fig. 6.10: Lutheran Manse Milbrulong NSW, 2004
(Photo: A. Brown)

This tradition was discouraged during WWI (1914-1918) due to anti-German sentiments in the community and re-instated after WWI. ‘German School’ continued until at least the 1920s, although by that time all the children in attendance were Australian born.

Margaret Hill (nee Hoffmann) recalls that her father, Ernest Gerhardt Hoffmann, ‘reluctantly’ attended German school in the 1920s. Ernest Hoffmann saw himself as being ‘thoroughly Australian’ and although older members of his family, including his parents and grandparents, spoke German among themselves, he considered the lessons to be ‘quite unnecessary’.  

---

22 Translated into English, Deutsche Sonnabendschule means ‘German saturday school’.
6.5: Stitching Obedience - Stories of the Susan Hoad Sampler

The sampler stories include: the stories of Susan Hoad and her family, the Richmond House Boarding School, the history of samplers, the education of girls in the 19th century, domestic needlework and the development of educational facilities in Tumut.

Fig. 6.11: The Susan Hoad Sampler (detail), 1866
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)
Made by Susan Hoad, Richmond House Boarding School, Tumut NSW 1866.

These stories have reinvigorated the connection between the sampler and the Tumut community, with descendants of the Hoad family responding quickly and positively to a request for additional information on the sampler’s maker, ‘Aunt Susan’. Research material surrounding the history of education and the place of needlework within that history has added an extra dimension to the stories.

History of Samplers

The word ‘sampler’ or ‘exampler’ comes from the French word *examplair* meaning a pattern to copy or imitate, which was derived from the Latin root word *exemplum*.

Before the publication of printed pattern books in 1523, embroidery designs were passed from hand to hand. The stitching of patterns or motifs on linen fabric was a method of recording these designs, which in turn became a ‘sampler’. New patterns and stitches were collected and exchanged among women. These early examples of samplers from the late 15th and early 16th centuries are now referred to as ‘random’ or ‘spot’ samplers, in reference to the haphazard placement of the patterns and motifs on the fabric.
English samplers of the 16th century, known as band samplers, were worked in long narrow strips of between six to nine inches (15-23cms). This width was dictated by loom width of the woven linen cloth. Because the linen fabric was expensive, the sampler was totally filled with designs and often combined different styles such as Assisi work, Black work, White work and Open work embroidery. These samplers were valued items and were often listed in royal inventories and bequeathed in wills.

Samplers were a reference guide used by women when marking household linen and undergarments. Monogrammed initials and motifs such as birds, animals and crowns were used to identify items that were sent to be laundered outside the home.

By the 18th and 19th centuries, embroidery on samplers had taken on the appearance of a picture, with symmetrically placed motifs of animals, trees and flowers included with alphabets and numbers or biblical texts. Although still retaining some of their utilitarian function as a teaching aid for needlework stitches, they had become primarily ornamental and designed to display the achievement of the maker.

The motifs, patterns, materials and techniques contained in English samplers were brought to Australia from the earliest years of colonial settlement, with one of the earliest examples of a sampler produced in the colonies held in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney NSW and designed by Isabel Buist (1830-1917).

Like many other young girls, Isabel included her name, age and the place and date of completion, 'Van Dieman's Land April 16 1839'. This information confirms that this is one of the relatively few Australian provenanced samplers from before 1850 that is known to have survived.

Isabel Buist was born in Tasmania, the daughter of Scottish immigrants who had arrived in 1823. She married William Bayles in 1854, and the couple moved to Melbourne where William later became mayor. Isabel Buist died in Toorak in 1917.24

Samplers are a common inclusion in the collections of major and regional museums nationwide, with many examples produced in England and brought to Australia by immigrant families of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Berlin Wool Work

The designs for Berlin wool work were transferred from quadrille or point paper to the canvas. Each square on the paper represented a square on the canvas and the design was worked by counting the squares of each colour and making a stitch for each square. A large variety of Berlin wool work designs were produced, with the first charts released in 1804 and approximately 14,000 designs created between 1830 and 1840. Biblical quotes and moralising mottoes were a common inclusion in these samplers.²⁵ The cross-stitch patterns were worked with very soft wool, which was spun in the city of Saxe-Gotha in the German region of Thuringia. The wool was taken to Berlin where it was dyed and packaged with the charts which were printed and painted there. These brightly coloured and commercially available wools began to replace crewel, lambswool and silk threads which had been popular. The bright colours were a reflection of German popular taste of the period, with some designs being even more colourful with the inclusion of coloured glass beads as highlights.²⁶

Fig. 6.13: Cross-stitch sampler showing brightly coloured ‘Berlin’ wool thread, c1890
Collection of Monica Talbot
(Photograph: A. Brown)

‘From Carcoar to Tumut on Foot’ – The Hoad family

George Hoad, after visiting his brother Henry in Tumut in 1853, decided to settle there himself. A cart was sent to Carcoar27 to bring his wife, Mary Ann and children, George, Henry and Susan to Tumut. With the cart overloaded, Mary Ann Hoad made the journey from Carcoar to Tumut on foot, carrying seven month old baby Susan. According to the Perkins Papers, ‘this was not unusual among pioneer families’.28

George Hoad soon found work as a brick maker and the family lived in Fitzroy Street Tumut. Three more children, James, Naomi and Jemima, were born in Tumut. The connection to the building industry in the Hoad family was maintained into the next generation when Susan Hoad married Richard McCallum, a Tumut based stonemason, in 1877.

---

27 Carcoar NSW, is situated between Bathurst and Cowra in central eastern NSW. The distance from Carcoar to Tumut is approximately 265 kilometres.
Richard and Susan McCallum (nee Hoad) had seven children. They were: Angus Cameron (1878-1879), Mabel Adeline (1879-?), Arthur George (1881-1899), Elsie May (1882-1882), Elsie May (1883-?), Ella Gertrude (1886-?) and Richard (1888-1888).

Susan McCallum (nee Hoad) died in Tumut on 19th December 1888 aged thirty five years, ten days after giving birth prematurely to her youngest child, Richard McCallum.

‘Educating the Rising Generation’ - Schools in Tumut

From the date on the Susan Hoad’s sampler, 1866, it would appear that Susan Hoad was still attending school at the age of twelve or thirteen years. For many working class families of that period, education for a girl which continued to this age was not seen as a
necessity, placing Susan Hoad within a minority group. Girls and boys were often temporarily withdrawn from school to act as unpaid labour within the family unit, especially in farming communities, causing disruptions to their education. Parental unemployment, illness, the number of siblings and even the time of the year could affect school attendance for many children.

While education for many children in regional areas was often inconsistent, for those town residents, like Susan’s father George Hoad, aspiring to become part of the ‘decision-making ranks of the bourgeoisie’, education for George Hoad’s offspring may have been seen as a necessity, because ‘usually uneducated himself, he could see that education was essential for his own children to ‘get on in the world’.’ Although classed as an ‘artisan’ rather than ‘bourgeoisie’, Hoad, who worked as a brickmaker, had brothers who were local landholders. Family connections therefore, may have influenced the choice and longevity of Susan Hoad’s education at Richmond House Academy.

With the implementation of the Public Instruction Act (NSW) of 1880, compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 and 14 years was introduced. A system of state elementary, superior public and high schools gradually replaced an education system dominated by schools which were privately operated. Compulsory attendance, however, was still not enforced in many instances.

---

30 Ibid.
31 Henry, John and James Hoad.
33 Ibid.
According to historian Noeline Kyle, it was the public elementary schools which became ‘the cradle for the rise of domestic science’, with the skills learned being seen as part of the domestic training necessary for girls to take their place as good wives and mothers. Needlework was taught to girls from Grade III onwards and under the directorship of Annie Dadley (State Curriculum Advisor - 1880 to 1890) a standard of proficiency was set for sewing tasks for girls in each grade. In 1889 needlework was added to the curriculum for infants’ schools (Kindergarten to Grade II) and plain sewing was taught to both boys and girls. This educational ideology was to remain in place, relatively unchanged and unchallenged, until the late 1960s.

Until the establishment of the Tumut National School in 1867, the parents and guardians of Tumut were reliant on private or denominational schools for the education of their children. In 1857, Queen’s Ville Seminary, under the guidance of Mrs. Large, the wife of the local surgeon, Dr. Large, offered ‘the purest elements of a strictly useful and well regulated education’ for the children of Tumut and district. Operating from the Empire Theatre on the corner of Fitzroy and Richmond Streets in Tumut, the school also incorporated boarding facilities and ‘resident pupils’ paid £40 per year. Mrs. Large was not without competition however, with teacher, W. T. Finnegan, announcing the opening of the Tumut Denominational School, in December 1858:

Tumut Denominational School will be open to children of every religious denomination on and after the 1st of January next. The arrangement has been made for the express purpose of opening

---

34 Ibid. p. 46.
36 Ibid.
in this town a good public school, suited to the requirements of all classes in the
neighbourhood.  

Mrs. Harford also advertised her ‘Day and Boarding School for Young Ladies’ in
October 1858, setting out a curriculum which included: ‘English, Reading, Writing, and
Arithmetic, with Plain and Fancy Needlework’.

Another private school was also operated in Tumut during the late 1850s by Mr. Hilton,
who was then succeeded in this position by Mr. A. McCutcheon.

Fig. 6.17: Catholic Church Tumut NSW, 2010
(Photo: A. Brown)

A Roman Catholic Parochial Church
was opened in Tumut during 1859 and
was also used as a school.

An article in the Tumut Times of 1867 stressed that:

… the great importance of educating the rising generation of all classes and the liberal assistance
proffered by the Government on this behalf will surely coax something handsome from the most
close buttoned breeches pocket in the district. 

Private education was still advertised for the children of Tumut and district in 1899,
with Miss Pentecost advertising Wyndarra High School. Pupils were offered a:

general school routine or … instruction in any single accomplishment … a circular will be
forwarded on application … The school course includes all English subjects, Conv.
[conversational] French, German, Latin, Music, Singing, Drawing, Painting, Modelling, Dancing,
Calesthenics, Cooking and Scientific Dressmaking.

Although the date of ‘August 28 1866’ is embroidered on Susan Hoad’s sampler,
Richmond House Academy was not officially opened until September 1866 by the

---

38 Mrs. Harford’s Day and Boarding School for Young Ladies. (1858, October 16). Adelong Mining
Reverend C.J. Byng. In his opening address, he spoke of the defects of the National School system and stated that ‘he did not consider one day in seven sufficient for the [religious] instruction of the young.’41 Although not an uncommon motif for the mid-Victorian period, the inclusion of the religious quote on the sampler highlights the emphasis placed on religious instruction in the school’s curriculum and the influence of Victorian evangelical movement. As Elizabeth Burton points out, ‘religious observance and faith, within and without the church, are at the heart of the Victorian picture’42 and this is supported by the Reverend Byng’s statement.

‘Restrictions and Ideologies’ – Stories of Samplers

As Roszika Parker observed in regard to Victorian era needlework, ‘differences were maintained in embroidery practiced by each class, dictated both by material restrictions and by ideologies about what was appropriate or possible in the hands of working class women.’43 Parker also maintained that samplers produced in village schools in England, where a majority of enrolled pupils were from the working class, tended to be less ornate than those made by girls from upper class families. Although Parker proposes this as a direct response to class differences, Australian historian, Michael Cannon points out that ‘[c]lass distinctions on the exaggerated European model usually remained muted in the rough democracy of the Australian bush.’44

The Hoad sampler, with its combination of floral motif, religious tract, alphabet and numerals, represents in a visual sense, a melding of upper class gentility, middle class piety and working class functionality, which Parker promotes. With Susan Hoad coming from a working class family, but attending a privately operated school, it could also be seen as demonstrating the erosion of traditional class barriers, a characteristic of Australian colonial society, discussed by Cannon.

The rectangular shaped, Berlin work sampler is worked in cross stitch, in wool thread of various colours on a canvas backing. While the uneven and at times reversed placement of letters may very well suggest low levels of literacy and spatial skills in the maker, or

perhaps disinterest at the task in hand, the occurrence of misplaced letters on samplers is not uncommon.

The upper section of the stitched motif consists of three horizontal panels of text, all worked in burgundy coloured wool thread, including numerals and letters of the alphabet, which are worked in multi-coloured thread. Below the three panels of text is a Biblical quote, divided from the text above by a horizontal geometric band.

**SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME AND FORBID THEM NOT FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

Below the Biblical quote is another geometric band, stitched in sky blue wool thread. The lower part of the sampler motif consists of three sections. The left-hand section reads:

Susan A
Hoad Age
13
AUGUST
28
1866

The central section consists of a bunch of multi-coloured flowers and green leaves with burgundy coloured scrollwork stitched beneath. The right-hand section reads:

Richmond
House
Boarding
School
TUMUT

There has not been enough room left for the letter ‘d’ at the end of ‘Richmond’ and it has been positioned slightly above the letter ‘n’ and worked in a smaller count. Several of the letters ‘S’ throughout the sampler have been worked in reverse.
The statement of significance, written for the Susan Hoad sampler in 2003, helped in gaining funding for conservation work to be carried out on the sampler.
6.6: ‘Trained and Educated’ – Stories of the Edith Short collection

The Edith Short collection, in the Temora Rural Museum, comprises school needlework samplers and an agricultural show prize card, and is the focus for multiple narratives, including the history of Temora Public School and the link between school needlework and Pastoral and Agricultural Shows.

![Fig. 6.19: Needlework sampler, c1894 - Edith Short sampler collection](Photo: A. Brown)

Edith Short and Her Family

Edith Short was the second eldest daughter of Alexander and Martha Short. Records from the NSW Historic Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages indicate that the Short family was residing in Temora in 1884 when their son John was born. Edith Short, at the age of five or six years, was therefore, among the first group of children to be enrolled at the new Temora Public School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHORT FAMILY TREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Short and Martha Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella (b.1877) Edith (b.1879) Eva (b.1881) Alexander (b.1882)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (b.1884) Martha (b.1887) Elsie (b.1890) Walter (b.1897)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Edith Short, like most girls educated in the late 19th century and early 20th century, needlework was a major component of the school curriculum, with gender-specific subjects a feature of the timetable for Australian Government Schools at that time. Boys were occupied between 2pm and 3.20pm with reading, geography, elementary tables, arithmetic, geometry, mensuration (measurement of geometric figures), spelling from dictation and writing from dictation. Girls were occupied between 2pm and 3.20pm with sewing, knitting, making, mending, cutting out and plain and fancy work.\(^{45}\) The needlework examination schedule for a schoolgirl was rigorous, with standards of excellence which would test the needlework skill of many adults in the 21st century.

The skills learned were seen to be part of the domestic training necessary for girls to take their place as good wives and mothers. The *W.A. Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid* of July 1900 stated that:

> It is not the work of the State to train servants. Girls should be trained and educated to fit them for their sphere in the home, the duties of which no woman can neglect without culpability and disgrace.\(^{46}\)

Edith Short made needlework samplers at school and submitted samplers to the Temora Show. After Edith Short's marriage to Percy Everett in October 1909 the needlework skills that had been carefully learned at school were put to use for her family. In the early to mid 20th century domestic skills, such as needlework or cooking were a yardstick by which a woman’s worth in her community was measured and it was noted in Edith Everett's 1955 obituary notice that she was ‘remembered by many in Temora for her dressmaking ability.’\(^{47}\) Widowed in 1940, it is also likely that Short utilised these same domestic skills to supplement her income, with the obituary also stating that she ‘was engaged in sewing activities here for many years, right up until recently.’\(^{48}\)


\(^{48}\) Ibid.
'A Large Number of Children’ – The story of Temora Public School

Official application for the establishment of a school in Temora was made in March 1880 and on the 17th August 1880 Mr. William Temple, secretary of the local committee informed the Minister of Public Instruction that:

Although a large number of persons here at present will leave, it is also pretty certain that this will be a permanent gold field supporting a large population and that in a very short time there will be a large number of children here.49

A further application was made in November 1880 for a temporary school building and Mr. William Swann was appointed as the school’s first teacher. An auction market building, measuring twenty feet by forty feet and constructed of galvanized iron, was the only structure available at that time. Unlined and without a floor and ceiling, this temporary building was leased for six months from a local businessman, Mr. Warely, at a cost of £2/10/- per week.

The school opened on the 6th December 1880 and the Sydney Mail reported:

Mr. Swann has now an attendance of 100 children which is likely still to increase after the holidays. Considering that most of the children are entirely untaught, so that no local teaching assistance of ever so little account could be obtained, it is highly desirable that some assistant teachers could be supplied for Mr. Swann’s aid.50

50 Temora. (1880, December 29). Sydney Mail, p. 3.
By January 1881, 295 pupils were enrolled at the school and James Beacroft was appointed to assist Mr. Swann. Conditions in the building were less than satisfactory and Mr. Beacroft, along with many of his pupils, became ill. On the 6th April 1881, the school was inspected by the Government Medical Officer, Dr. John O’Connell, who then sent a telegram to his department with the following message:

Inspected public school today. Building disgraceful. Rev. West with me. Teachers very desirable but lady should be sent and building improved immediately. School will not be able to be kept open if suitable accommodation is not found.51

Fig. 6.21: Temora tent school, c1880
(Image: Temora yesterday and today 1880-1980)

Two tents, measuring 40 feet by 16 feet and costing £140, were sent by the Department of Public Instruction to alleviate the cramped conditions. The added accommodation was erected in Polaris Street opposite the Police Camp and was occupied on 23rd May 1881. A third tent was erected shortly afterwards and a pupil teacher was appointed.52

Edith Everett (nee Short), who was a lifelong resident of the town, can be included among those early students at the Temora School, with her 1955 obituary stating that ‘The late Mrs. Everett attended school here in the tents and spent her entire lifetime here.’53

Amid constant complaints from parents and the local newspapers, the Temora Public School continued in this unsatisfactory format until November 1882. At this time a site was secured in De Boos Street, one street back from Temora’s main street. The tents were removed to this land until the school and residence were completed for the

---

52 Ibid.
commencement of the 1884 school year. The erection of permanent school buildings to provide accommodation for 200 pupils and a four roomed teacher’s residence was sanctioned in 1883 following a report from Inspector McIntyre.\textsuperscript{54}

The school was completed after the boom years of the gold mining had passed. Many families existed on the poverty line and for the next decade few parents could afford the expense of school fees. Malnutrition and disease frequently accompanied the impoverished living conditions and epidemics of diphtheria and typhoid fever closed the school several times between 1884 and 1893.

In June 1894, the teacher at the Temora Public School, Mr. Gambell, complained that a large number of his pupils arrived at school exceedingly late and had no legitimate reason for doing so.\textsuperscript{55} Whether Edith Short was included among the habitual latecomers is not known; however from the evidence of the quality of her samplers, it could be argued that Edith Short was one of the more conscientious pupils, at least in regard to her needlework.

\textit{‘Their Sphere in the Home’ - Needlework and the school curriculum}

The teaching of needlework skills in Temora was not only confined to the public education sector, with ‘Mrs. Louis J. Wilson’ advertising her ‘Private School’ in November 1895, which ‘[i]s prepared to receive pupils. All English subjects, French,

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. p. 150.
Changes to education syllabuses and a more scientific approach to the teaching of domestic science in the early 20th century brought about a shift in the perceived value of handcrafted objects such as samplers. A correspondent to a 1930s issue of the *Woman’s Budget* pointed out:

> In the Homecrafts section at the Adelaide Show recently one was struck with the progress which has been made in the realm of handicrafts for schoolchildren in recent years. Instead of the old-fashioned “sampler” of stitches, or chemise, with its array of tucks and fine seams, was a splendid display of lingerie, frocks, and costumes, all made by girls.  

Australian author Miles Franklin expressed exceptionally strong views on the subject of teaching as a vocation, explaining:

> I could become a pupil-teacher, but I loathed the very name of the profession. I should have had to do the same work as a man for less pay, and, in country schools, to throw in free of remuneration, the speciality of teaching all kinds of needlework.  

---

The teaching of needlework skills was not always the responsibility of the pupil-teacher. Teaching needlework classes could also be thrust upon an unwitting headmaster’s wife, especially in small, one-teacher schools. According to Barbara Seymour, who was a primary school principal’s wife, this was still an accepted practice in the 1970s:

My husband was headmaster of Watson’s Creek School [northern NSW] from 1970 to 1973 and it was assumed that I would teach the needlework classes as an extension of his teaching duties. It was a requirement that I kept a day book and organised a written programme for the girls at the school. This was a directive of the Education Department of the day. Although this was a salaried role of approximately $2 per week, the money was never given directly to me, but was credited to my husband’s salary. This was also an Education Department directive! 59

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Exercises</th>
<th>Material Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants Class III</td>
<td>To hem a piece of calico 3 inches long in two colours of cotton (one side only)</td>
<td>A piece of calico 3 inches long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I</td>
<td>To fix and work a sew and fell seam of 3 inches</td>
<td>Two pieces of seam calico 3 inches by 2½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard II</td>
<td>a. To fix and work a sew and fell seam of 3 inches</td>
<td>a. Two pieces of calico 3 inches by 2½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. To gather and stroke a piece of calico 5 inches by 2½ inches</td>
<td>b. One piece of calico 5 inches by 2½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III &amp; IV</td>
<td>a. To make a band and fix it for gathers, and work not less than 2 inches, and sew on a string</td>
<td>a. One piece of calico 3 inches square and a piece of tape 2 inches long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. To fix and work a sew and fell seam of 3 inches, turn down and fix for hemming the four sides of the material</td>
<td>b. Two pieces of calico 3 inches by 2½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. To work 3 inches of herringbone</td>
<td>c. One piece of flannel 3 inches by 2½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. To gather and stroke down 5 inches, and fix it into a band of 2½ inches and set it in 1½ inches (Standard IV only)</td>
<td>d. A piece of calico 5 inches by 2½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. To work a button-hole (Standard IV only)</td>
<td>e. A piece of calico 3 inches by 2½ inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard V and Upwards</td>
<td>a. To gather and stroke down 5 inches, and fix it into a band of 2½ inches and set in 1½ inches</td>
<td>a. A piece of calico 5 inches by 2½ inches, and a piece 3 inches square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. To put in a flannel, a print, or a calico patch 2 inches square</td>
<td>b. A piece of flannel, of print, and of calico each 4 inches square, and another piece of same 2 inches square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. To double down as for a band, and on this cut and work a button-hole, and sew on a button (not pierced)</td>
<td>c. A piece of calico 5 inches square, and a linen button (not pierced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. To darn an irregular space about one inch square, on stocking material (Standards VI &amp; VII only)</td>
<td>d. A piece of stocking-web 3 inches square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Cut out and tack together one of the following:-</td>
<td>e. Two sheets of tissue paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. A child’s pinafore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. A child’s frock body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. A chemise for a girl eight years old. (Standard VII only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The needlework sampler worked by Edith Short in 1892 includes buttonholes, darning, eyelets running stitch and featherstitch. In line with the Austin & Selleck curriculum, the use of these needlework techniques by Edith Short would suggest that her skills were equal to a Grade III and IV level.

‘Darned Old Socks’ - Pastoral and Agricultural Shows

Pastoral and Agricultural Shows have been a long held tradition throughout the Riverina since the late 1800s. The Temora Pastoral, Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial Association (P.A.H. & I. Association) was formed in 1885 by district farmers and town citizens, with an annual show being held over three days.
This was the perfect event for the men of the district to show off their skills in livestock production, cereal crops, horsemanship and industrial pursuits such as blacksmithing. It was also a venue for the women and girls of Temora and district to exhibit their domestic or homemaking skills.

Needlework sections were varied and numerous, and prize money was generous for both junior and senior sections. Sections for girls catered for age groups from sixteen years and under, down to girls as young as ten years and under. Needlework categories ranged from ‘Best Darning’ and ‘Best Patching’ to ‘Buttonholes’, ‘Darned Old Socks or Stockings’, ‘Dressed Doll’ and ‘Sampler’. Many of these junior needlework categories also specified that the entrant must be ‘attending school’. Girls from Temora Public School not only entered needlework in their local Temora Show, but also in other district shows, with Cootamundra Show results of 1897 showing that ‘Maggie Duncan’ from ‘Temora School’ won 1st prize in a needlework section.\(^{61}\) A Temora Show prize card, in the collection of the Temora Rural Museum, indicates that Edith Short won first prize in 1894 for her samples of button holes.

The Wagga Show of 1887 advertised a section for ‘Best sample of Plain Needlework (Hand-sewn) by a girl under 16 yrs attending school’ and there was an equivalent section for ‘girls 12 yrs’. The first prize money for both these sections was 10 shillings and 6 pence, a substantial sum of money considering the average yearly wage was approximately £100. These large sums of prize money offered attested to the value placed on the attainment of domestic skills for girls and women.\(^{62}\)

\(^{61}\) Cootamundra show results. (1897, September 18). *Temora Independent*, p. 5.

Temora Show of 1897 offered girls under the age of 15 years a section each for ‘Best Darning and ‘Best Patching’, with a first prize for each section of 10 shillings and 6 pence, while the Adelong Show of 1903 featured special sections for children’s samplers and buttonholes.

Sewing sections for schoolgirls at agricultural shows has continued into the 21st century, including Sydney’s Royal Easter Show, Wagga Wagga Show and Temora Show. These sewing or ‘craft’ sections are no longer advertised as gender specific, with boys as well as girls encouraged to enter their work.

---

63 Temora show results. (1897, September 18). Temora Independent, p.5.
6.7: St Clare's Convent - The Josephite Sisters in Germanton

David Cathcart, the manager of Holbrook’s Woolpack Inn Museum, was very accommodating in his efforts to show what he considered to be the most ‘significant’ objects in the collection. Inevitably, the objects which Cathcart considered important were connected to the pioneer families of Holbrook and the surrounding area.

While Cathcart considered the peanut dolls ‘interesting’, they were, in his estimates, just that, a curiosity, and were almost overlooked as they lay on the very bottom shelf of their dimly lit, 19th century-style display case. With a personal interest in handcrafted artifacts, my attention was repeatedly drawn back to the tiny, fragile dolls made by, their label indicated, the Sisters of St. Clare’s Convent. Why would these childless women, who belonged to a religious order, make dolls? No further information was provided with the dolls, to explain their story. Perhaps the answer lay in the efforts of the Catholic community of Holbrook (then Germanton) to raise funds for the building of the convent and school?

![Fig. 6.30: Peanut dolls made by the Sisters of St Clare’s Convent, c1900](image)
Collection of Woolpack Inn Museum, Holbrook NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)
Research for the dolls is drawn from the statement of significance written by A. Brown, and held by the Museum of the Riverina

In early 1892 a group of four Sisters of St. Joseph: Mary Columba Maher, Mary Augustine Doyle, Mary Bernard Corbett and Mary Kevin Goode, traveled by train from Goulburn to Culcairn. They were met by the McGrath family and travelled on to Germanton 64 (Holbrook) in a convoy of three horse-drawn buggies.

---

64 Due to the rise of anti-German sentiments during WWI, the town’s name of Germanton was changed to Holbrook in 1915.
According to Sister Mary Lewis⁶⁵ of the Josephite Community in Goulburn, only a small amount of information had been published in regard to the establishment of St. Clare’s Convent and St. Joseph’s School in Holbrook, with most of the early records of both the Convent and School either lost or destroyed.⁶⁶

On their arrival in Germanton, the sisters were greeted by a grand reception and a Mass conducted by Father John Gallagher from Wagga Wagga. Together with Father Martin Vaughan, the Germanton parish priest, and local parishioners, Father Gallagher sang a ‘Te Deum’ in thanksgiving for the arrival of the sisters. The sisters took over the running of a small school, which had been previously run by lay-teachers. This was also the pattern in other small Riverina towns, such as Adelong and Temora. Housed in the Catholic presbytery until the completion of St Clare’s Convent in 1893, the sisters were active in the community where they became a familiar sight on their round of visits to the sick and bereaved and also ‘the backsliders.’⁶⁷

In February of 1892 it was reported by the *Albury Border Post* that there were ‘rumours of negotiations being carried on for purchase of [a] suitable building for convent

---

⁶⁵ Sister M. Lewis (personal communication, March 4, 2004)
⁶⁶ The Josephite Sisters in Goulburn were delighted at the prospect of any extra information being compiled on St. Clare’s Convent.
purposes. In the meantime, the organisation of the school community in its existing premises was a priority for the sisters, with the first concert being presented by the convent school in late March of 1892, only several months after the arrival of the sisters in Germanton. The Albury Border Post reported of the pupils:

Though only having had short training and little opportunity to appear before the public at a concert, yet they acquitted themselves satisfactorily, keeping both time and tune in the choruses. They have to thank the nuns for the result achieved during the evening, as without them it is not likely we would have had the concert that night.

The excitement generated by the proposed new convent building is reflected in the words of the anonymous Albury Border Post journalist, who writes:

Through the courtesy of the Rev Vaughan I have been enabled to inspect the plans of the convent, prepared by the architects, Messrs Gordon and Gordon, Albury, and find that we are to have a substantial building with all the latest improvements, having a frontage to the main street in Germanton.

The growth of the new convent building continued to be closely followed by both the local community and by the journalist from the Albury Border Post, with an article on the laying and blessing of the foundation stone describing the event in minute detail:

The ceremony of consecration or blessing having been completed, the duty of placing donations and offerings on the stone was done, a total of £156 11 [shillings] being given. This, with a total of £64 already in hand, brought the funds up to over £200, or about one-fifth of the entire cost of the building. The remaining portion of the debt, it is expected, will be almost, if not quite, wiped off before the ceremony of opening the convent in January 1894. Messrs. Gordon and Gordon, of Albury, are the architects, and Mr Murphy, of Goulburn, is the contractor. The building, when finished, is likely to prove an attractive addition to the township.

Fig. 6.32: St Clare’s Convent Holbrook NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)
Officially opened by Bishop Lanigan on Sunday 13th May 1894 in the presence of a large and appreciative crowd, the new convent building was described by the *Albury Border Post* as being a:

[m]ost pretty edifice, and does great justice to the taste of the architects (Messrs Gordon and Gordon) and also to the able contractor (Mr P. Murphy). It is of Gothic build, and its red brick walls and Gothic gables tend to make it not only an ornament to the town but also the electorate.⁷²

It would take Reverend Father Vaughan and his band of hard working parishioners several more years of dedicated fundraising to clear the outstanding sum owed on the new building and although unrecorded, it is likely that the efforts of the sisters also added to the achievement of the final outcome. As the *Albury Border Post* reported:

In order not to be behindhand the R.C. Committee has announced that they intend to hold a bazaar in September (show time) to liquidate the debt on their new convent, which the contractors have made great progress with and expect to have finished shortly.⁷³

Remaining in Holbrook until the mid 20th century, the succession of Sisters who taught at St. Joseph’s School were always much loved members of the Holbrook Catholic community. They were always particular in regard to the teaching of ‘elementary work’ to the children in an age when ‘rote learning’ was the norm. Music, singing and verse speaking were also skills which were reinforced in the classroom and displayed to great effect in the public arena. The prowess of both the Sisters and their pupils was reported in the *Albury Border Post* of 29 May 1896:

A very successful entertainment, given by the pupils attending the convent school, came off on the 24th of this month. The greatest praise is due to the Sisters, who prepared all the boys and girls, for such a pleasing entertainment, and as the children did their parts so well the parents should be justly proud of them.⁷⁴

---

From their earliest years, the Sisters also gained the trust and respect of the non-Catholic community, and the entire Germanton community mourned the untimely death of Sister Mary Julian in 1897. Aged just 26 years, Sister Mary Julian died from tuberculosis. The decision was made by members of the community that ‘the common cemetery was not a suitable place in which to bury a Sister’\textsuperscript{75} and Sister Mary Julian was laid to rest in the grounds of St Clare’s Convent.

John Gordon was the founder of this firm of architects and surveyors at Goulburn in 1867. By 1869 John Gordon had settled in Albury and the firm operated from offices in both Albury and Wagga Wagga. They were ‘favourably known in connection with ecclesiastical and private architecture in the Riverine district.’ From 1881 the firm was under the control of William and Charles Gordon, the sons of the founder. The practice initially covered the southern Riverina, however by 1890 it was Victorian orientated, with offices in Melbourne, Corowa, Rutherglen, Mansfield, Benalla, Euroa, Wangaratta, Albury, Seymour and Wodonga.

Among the ecclesiastical buildings designed by John Gordon and his sons were: St. Bridget’s Convent Albury (1868), St. Patrick’s School Hall Albury (1885), St. Joseph’s Convent Wodonga (1893) and St. Clare's Convent Germanton (1893). The firm of Gordon and Gordon also designed the Riverina Hotel Germanton (1893).

---

The building of both St. Clare’s Convent and the Riverina Hotel was delayed, with the *Albury Border Post* reporting that a ‘scarcity of bricks [had] hindered the progress of the work.’77

---

‘Made From Ordinary Peanuts’ – Fundraising and peanut dolls

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, social events were paramount in the gathering of funds for the construction and furnishing of the new civic buildings, including schools, churches and community halls. School concerts, dances, balls and bazaars became an integral part of the fundraising for the new convent over the next few years. It was reported by the Albury Border Post of 23rd June 1893 that:

The contractor for the convent (a Goulburn man) intends to start his contract without delay. Thus it will be seen there will be some work to be had in the place, causing money to be spent and put in circulation.78

Fund raising toward the new building continued, with a bazaar planned for the week before the Germanton Agricultural Show in September 1893. A series of concerts, dances and a ball were also held during 1893 in conjunction with the bazaar.

Bazaars, or ‘sale of work’ stalls were a common fundraising event in Australian communities of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The ubiquitous ‘fundraising’ stall still plays an important role in the 21st century, especially in regional communities. School and church groups and other associations such as the Red Cross, CWA, sporting and cultural organisations and Agricultural Show Societies utilise the skills of their communities for such events, in an effort to gather much needed funds together.

---

Domestic skills of women in the community, such as cooking, knitting, crocheting and embroidery needlework, were often the mainstay of these bazaars and ‘fancywork’ items were much sought after. Although it is impossible to affirm that the two exquisitely costumed peanut dolls in the Woolpack Inn Museum in Holbrook were among the ‘fancywork’ goods offered for sale during the late 1890s, similar items, including children’s cloth or peg dolls, were often inclusions on stalls.

Patterns for the making of peanut dolls appeared in women’s magazines during the 1920s and 1930s. A pattern featured in the *Woman’s Budget* of 7th January 1927, is
almost identical in construction to the 'St Clare's' peanut dolls. As the craft editor of the 
*Woman’s Budget* eagerly explains:

I saw a beautiful one the other day, and it was made from ordinary peanuts, just strung together 
like this. You will need a long one for the head, two smaller ones for the body, two more for the 
upper part of the arms, with a larger one below each to complete them. Choose nice curved nuts 
for the lower part of the legs. Thread them all together with strong cotton, then draw a face with 
ink. With glue fasten some red wool on his head. If you give the face a broad grin, make the hair 
as wild and woolly as you like. Dress him in any way.79

The *Woman’s Budget* of 1st August 1934 also featured a pattern for a ‘Peanut 
Mandarin’ under the heading of ‘Embroidery for Children’. Mention was also made of a 
pattern for ‘Peanut Polly’, which had been included in the *Woman’s Budget* two weeks 
earlier. It is highly probable that these ‘peanut doll’ patterns were sourced from earlier 
women’s journal publications as it was common practice to republish craft patterns on a 
regular basis.

Fig. 6.41: Peanut Mandarin, 1934
*Woman’s Budget*

---

6.8: ‘A Band of Valiant Women’ - From Ireland to Wagga Wagga

In 2006, Sister Alexis Horsley spoke in proud and reverential tones of the five founding Presentation Sisters of the Mt. Erin Convent in Wagga Wagga. In her estimates, Mother Mary John Byrne (d. 4th January, 1906), Mother Mary Evangelist Kelly (d. 1st April, 1892), Mother Mary Xavier Byrne (d. 21st July, 1906), Mother Mary Paul Fay (d. 25th October, 1913) and Mother Mary Stanislaus Dunne (d. 26th September, 1934) were the equal of many male pioneers of the same period. Sister Alexis Horsley alluded to the surprise that must have awaited those five sisters, considering not only the vast distances between towns, but also the physical shock of a landscape and climate so alien to their northern hemisphere sensibilities. Sister Alexis Horsley also highlighted emotional effects of the lifelong separation from, Ireland, and their families, endured by those founding sisters and by many others who followed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the majority of whom never returned to the country of their birth.80 As Sister Alexis Horsley explained, even the ‘feel’ of a piece of Beleek china could evoke memories of their absent homeland:

One elderly Irish Sister, Malachy Tiernan, often asked the Sister in charge of the pantry, to “lift down the china that the Sisters brought out with them in the beginning”. She would then hold it in her hands and gently fondle it, then hand it back to be put away. It was her only “touch” with the land of her birth. Having come to Australia to join the Presentation Order at Wagga Wagga in 1909, she never returned to Ireland.81

Sister Malachy Tiernan died at Wagga Wagga in 1981, aged 90.

---

Fig. 6.42: Beleek milk jug, c1870s
Collection of Mt. Erin Archives, Wagga Wagga NSW
(Phot: A. Brown)

---

81 Ibid.
Father McAlroy from Goulburn had been ‘commissioned by Bishop Lanigan of Goulburn, to proceed to Ireland in an endeavour to get some teaching nuns for the schools in the Diocese of Goulburn, which then included Wagga Wagga.’ So eloquently did he speak on behalf of the Catholic population of the Riverina that in 1874, several members of the Kildare\(^8^3\) congregation of the Presentation Order volunteered and offered their services. Five of these women were eventually chosen to come to Wagga Wagga. Before leaving Ireland the sisters sought permission from Pope Pius IX to teach not only the poor, but also the children of wealthier families. This was a reasonable request for this period, as the children of wealthy landowners in rural areas of Australia were often far removed from any form of Catholic education.

On the eve of their departure from Kildare, a small picture of the ‘Five Angels’ was presented to Mother Stanislaus as a farewell gift. The image was seen as representing the five sisters who were about to set out on the long and potentially dangerous ocean voyage to Australia. Four suitable verses were written on the reverse side:

‘God Be With You’

Go, and may His love befriend Thee,
May His wisdom guide thy way;
May His mighty arm defend thee


\(^8^3\) Kildare is situated in County Kildare Ireland, south west from Dublin.
Safely on life’s dreary way.
In each scene of desolation
May His voice thy spirit cheer;
May the God of thy salvation
Still in thy defence appear.

And when angel bands descending
Bid thine earthly warfare cease,
May the Lord Himself descending
Close thine eyes and whisper peace.

May His presence and His blessing
Sweetly tranquilise thy breast
Till the crown of life possessing
Thou shalt enter into rest.

Fig. 6.44: Mother Mary John Byrne, the foundress of Mt. Erin Convent
Collection of Mt. Erin Archives
(Photographer: Unknown)

_Inland to Wagga Wagga - The Journey_

The _Dublin Freeman’s Journal_ recorded on 10th March 1874 that ‘a band of valiant women took their departure by the mail train from Westland-row, destined for London, and Gravesend, where they were to embark on the new _SS Northumberland_ for
Melbourne, and thence inland to Wagga Wagga in New South Wales. The voyage was ‘rapid and prosperous’ making the passage from Eddystone light to Cape Otway in 51 days, arriving at Sandridge Pier Melbourne on 6th May 1874.

The sisters were welcomed at the Presentation Covent in Windsor, Melbourne and left for Albury on 16th May 1874. It was another lengthy and tiring journey for them, but they were received with kindness by the Sisters of Mercy in Albury. They departed on the last leg of their journey to Wagga Wagga on 28th May, arriving at Mangoplah Station 34 kilometres south of the town, the home of the Cox family.

‘Their Time and Talents’ - The founding of Mt Erin School

The imminent arrival in Wagga Wagga of the Presentation Sisters was recorded by the *Wagga Wagga Express* of 27th May 1874:

> We understand that on Friday next five nuns of the Presentation Order, together with the Rev. Dr. McAlroy will arrive in town from Albury. The sisterhood will, for the present, take up their abode at the presbytery … and devote their time and talents to the education of the young.

The Presentation Sisters arrived in a municipality which serviced a population within its boundaries of 2,500 people. The town itself boasted several stores, three banks, four hotels, four churches, the School of Arts, public and private schools and several

---

Government buildings. Wagga Wagga had no railway connection until 1878, and at the time of the sisters’ arrival in 1874, was connected to Albury and Cootamundra by daily coaches.

For more than two years the sisters lived in the presbytery, which the priests had vacated for their use. This temporary accommodation consisted of two small and ill-ventilated rooms. The stables attached to the presbytery were converted into a two room school, which accommodated over 130 children. It was during these first two years that John Donnelly of Borambola Station purchased an area of forty acres for the sum of £1500/-/-. The block of land was situated on a hill overlooking the town, in Newtown (South Wagga).

This hill later became known, far and wide, as Mt. Erin. The block of land was presented as a gift to the Presentation Sisters, by the Irish born Donnelly, as a site for a convent and school. His fellow countryman, John Cox offered to build the convent.

The plan of the Convent was prepared by Gordon & Sheppard of Wagga Wagga and on 20th November 1876, two years after the laying of the foundation stone, the sisters took
up residence at Mount Erin. The Convent was then officially opened by Bishop William Lanigan on 10th December 1876.

Mt. Erin Convent was described by the *Wagga Advertiser* as being ‘built on one of the most elevated spots about Wagga Wagga, in a paddock of forty acres. A more beautiful site could not be found.’ \(^8\)

---

On 26th September 1934, the last of the five founding sisters, Mother Mary Stanislaus Dunne, died at Mount Erin. “Mother Stan”, as she was familiarly known by thousands of girls, past and present, was buried in the private cemetery in the grounds of Mount Erin. Her death brought to an end an era of sixty years of dedication and service to education and the community of Wagga Wagga and district, by the five pioneering sisters from Ireland.

Those first five intrepid Presentation Sisters from Kildare in Ireland cast the mould of excellence, which remains imprinted to this day in Wagga Wagga’s educational history. Their mark on the hearts and minds of generations of girls is best described in the words of the Australian poet, Dame Mary Gilmore:

When Christ Our Lord lived on the earth
And taught from day to day,
He used to give His lessons
In the simplest kind of way.

“What man”, He one day said,
“Having lit a candle up
Will hide it underneath his bed,
Or keep it covered up?”

“No! Rather will he place it
Upon a candlestick,
And if its gleam be feeble
He’ll deftly trim its wick.”

“And so the little candle
Set securely on a height,
Will pierce the gloom about it
With its warmly golden light.”

Lights that are placed upon a height
Their purpose best fulfil,
And that is why “Mount Erin”
Is built upon a hill.
On your nearness to the candle
Rests the brightness of your ray,
You’ll almost lose your little beam,
If you keep too far away.

So that your light may brighter shine
Keep close – aye, closer still,
To your candle on its candlestick,
“Mount Erin” on its hill.

_The Light Upon The Hill_ – Mary Gilmore 1942-3
6.9: A Unique Teaching Aid - The Victor Haberecht Rolling Charts

**Victor Lawrence Haberecht (1905-1963)**

The youngest son of August Paul Haberecht and Anna Dorothea Martha (née Modistach), Victor Lawrence Haberecht spent his childhood in Henty. His older siblings were: Elsa Margaratta (1898-1982), Norman Percy (1899-1982), and Vera Ernestine (1902-1942).

![Fig. 6.48: Book prize, awarded to Victor Haberecht for academic achievement at Henty Public School, c1915](image)

Collection of Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga NSW

(Photo: A. Brown)

Educated at the Henty Public School, Victor Haberecht showed an aptitude for music, art and sport from an early age. All the family loved music and all the children learnt to play different instruments: Elsa and Vera the piano, Norman the violin and Victor played the cornet. According to Victor Haberecht’s daughter Jenny Newbound, her father clearly remembered musical evenings as a popular and enjoyable form of entertainment for his family.

The Haberecht family history substantiates this claim, noting that Victor Haberecht’s mother, Anna, wrote to her sister in 1915 saying,

> You ought to be here tonight, they are having music in the next room and a bit of a romp too so there is plenty of noise, can’t write well half the time I am listening to the children.  

---

88 J. Newbound (personal communication, November 2, 2005).

Always an academic and highly motivated student, Victor Haberecht received prizes for ‘General Proficiency’ during his years at Henty Public School and, after serving in the Australian Army as a lieutenant during WWII, went on to study at the Sydney Teachers’ College.
The Teaching Career of Victor Haberecht

Victor Haberecht taught at several schools around the Albury and Wagga Wagga areas, including Kooringal Public School, Table Top Public School, Marrar Vale Public School, Gumly Gumly Public School and North Wagga Public School. During his time at Marrar Vale the student enrolment numbers grew from 15 to around 50 pupils. Jenny Newbound also observed that many families were attracted to the school by the high standard of Victor Haberecht’s teaching prowess.90

During the post WWII period of the 1950s many small Riverina communities were directly affected by the improvements in transport and technology. Some families elected to send their children to larger centres, such as Wagga Wagga and Albury; this exposed many small schools, such as Marrar Vale and Table Top, to the threat of reduction in teacher numbers or closure. Through the innovative efforts of teachers such as Victor Haberecht ‘many families maintained their loyalty to these small, one or two teacher schools over many years, saving them from downgrading or closing.’91

Throughout his many years of teaching Victor Haberecht developed a number of unique teaching aids, including a set of ‘rolling charts’ or scrolls. They were developed and assembled during Haberecht’s teaching appointment to North Wagga Public School in the 1950s, with a majority of the work completed in his own time. The charts were regarded by his teaching peers as one of the most innovative teaching aids of that time.92

91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
Fig. 6.52: Rolling chart, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photo: A. Brown)

Fig. 6.53: (Left) Vic Haberecht and staff members cleaning up after a flood, North Wagga Public School, c1954
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown)
Made from lengths of brown paper, which have been glued together and attached to a wooden spindle, the rolling charts have text written in black ink. Maps and images are also hand drawn and painted in black and coloured gouache or water colour paint. When used in the classroom, the outer end of the chart was stretched across a wooden frame and attached to an empty spindle. The frame and chart were then placed in an upright position and wound forward, enabling students to view the contents of the chart.

Similar in design and content to celluloid film rolls distributed by the NSW Department of Education during the 1950s and 1960s, the rolling charts also bear similarities to the nineteenth and early twentieth cloth navigation charts used by riverboat captains.
Subjects covered in the charts include Arithmetic, Social Studies, Singing, Verse Speaking, Nature Studies, Spelling and English. The content of the charts includes a comprehensive coverage of the primary school curriculum of the 1950s period. Subject headings such as ‘The British Empire’, ‘Europe’ and ‘South East Asia’ are included on the Social Studies chart.

Fig. 6.56: Rolling chart, showing detail of a social studies section on ‘Papua – Land of fuzzy haired people’, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photo: A. Brown)

Jenny Newbound recalls that other primary school teachers who saw Victor Haberecht’s unique rolling charts were greatly impressed by the detail and artistry displayed. ‘The charts were still being referred to in Riverina teaching circles as fine examples of teaching aids, even in to the 1970s.’

Rhona Morton, who trained at the Wagga Wagga Teachers’ College in the early 1950s, taught at Gumly Gumly School under the direction of Victor Haberecht as part of her teaching practicum. ‘We weren’t provided with any classroom resources. You had to provide your own or make your own’, recalled Rhona Morton.

94 R. Morton (personal communication, September 15, 2005).
The Victor Haberecht educational rolling charts interpret a period in education when unique hand-made teaching aids, rather than mass produced aids were a vital part of classroom teaching and curriculum development.

Fig. 6.57: Rolling chart, showing ‘nature study’ images, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photograph: A. Brown)

Fig. 6.58: Victor Haberecht and year 5/6, North Wagga Public School, 1959
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown)
6.10: Summary

The history of education in the Riverina reflects the diversity of the people of the Riverina, and the stories surrounding these objects and collections are themselves diverse. There are no dominant narratives, but rather a series of inter-woven micro-narratives, which are predominantly local history focused. Much of the research material has been uncovered from what could be seen as unconventional sources, and this has resulted in a rich, multi-layered structure. As academics Victoria Peel and Deborah Zion remind us:

Successful local history demands breadth of vision combined with a well honed appreciation of the significance of small things. Despite its popularity and general acceptance by the academy, local history is sometimes regarded as too narrow to justify the larger treatment required of a typical doctoral thesis. Yet the successful integration of the micro and the macro in local history writing is a serious challenge.95

The challenge of finding and revealing the micro-histories attached to these objects and collections has enabled a richer telling. Woven together, these stories tell more than just the history of bricks and mortar, an educational syllabus, or a particular group of teachers. They uncover the tenacity of individuals, the creativity of pupils and teachers, and the role of education in the wider community.

Chapter 7: No Community Untouched – Stories of World Wars I & II in the Riverina

7.1: Objects and collections – an overview

Unlike objects held by large collecting bodies such as the Australian War Memorial Museum in Canberra, many WWI and WWII related objects in Riverina museum collections highlight wartime stories which connect directly with local people and the communities from which they have been donated. The key objects/ collections in this chapter are: The Mabel Lewis filet crochet (Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum); the Union Jack flag (Tumbarumba Museum); the Kaiser Wilhelm II chromolithograph (Jindera Pioneer Museum); the RAAF nurse’s uniform (Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum); and the Land Army collection (Batlow Historical Society Museum).

7.2: Introduction

These narratives deal primarily with life ‘behind the lines’ and they recount the trauma facing civilians dealing with allegations of unpatriotic behaviour and those coping with the loss of family and friends during WWI and WWII. The Heinecke family of Tumbarumba, and Mabel Lewis (nee Pearce) of Coolamon, lived the horror of WWI through official correspondence, with the Heinecke family contending with the added burden of prejudicial reporting from the local press.

There are also WWII stories highlighting the roles of women working in the armed services and in agriculture. Narratives connected to the orchardists and Land Army girls of Batlow outline the constant battle to grow and conserve primary produce on both the domestic and commercial front during WWII. For others, such as WWII RAAF nursing sister Alma Pearse, the narratives alternate between the Riverina and far north Queensland.

These objects are all bound together by the common thread of activating the stories of ordinary people dealing with extraordinary events during wartime.
7.3: ‘I Have Not Seen Him Since’ - Mabel Lewis (nee Pearce)

Grief impacted heavily on family members during and immediately after WWI. There had been great loss of life:

For Australia, as for many nations, the First World War remains the most costly conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of which over 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.\(^1\)

Fig. 7.1: Mabel and Herbert Lewis, c1920
Image courtesy of Pat Jackson and Amy Lewis (Photographer: Unknown)

‘Ten million mothers weeping like Rachel for their children! What an ocean of tears! The grief of motherhood is a thing apart’,\(^2\) declared a journalist in 1915 and Mabel Lewis (nee Pearce) was among the ‘millions’ who grieved for her older brothers, Private Wilfred Ernest Pearce and Private Alfred Edmund Pearce, who were both killed in action during WWI.

Authors and educators Bruce Scates and Raelene Frances proposed:

… that [if] each man had 10 people he was very close to – father, mother, sibling, fiancée, lover, wife, mates – then the war brought bereavement to 600,000 people; about one in every six Australians knew what it was like to experience such loss.\(^3\)

---


During and after WWI, individual women responded differently to their ‘bereavement’ and sense of loss. Fund raising for the Australian Red Cross or for the construction of war memorials, and attending the annual Anzac Day celebrations, became a public outlet for their grief.

![Fig. 7.2: Red Cross fundraising Coolamon NSW, c1914-1918
Collection of Up To Date Store (Photographer: Unknown)](image)

For other women, grief was dealt with privately and the creation of handcrafted objects became a practical and therapeutic pastime. Scrapbooks, photo albums and crocheted and embroidered mementos were among the most prolific and popular items created as reminders of family and friends who had served, or were currently serving, in the military forces. These handcrafted items included table runners, tablecloths, d’oyleys, cushion covers, bedspreads, antimacassars, jug covers and album covers. Handcrafted objects gained even greater symbolism and importance, when they commemorated the death of a family member.

Patterns depicting patriotic themes were published in women’s magazines during the period of WWI (1914-1918) and into the early 1920s. Australian women’s magazines including the *Woman’s Budget* played an invaluable role as a public forum for women and girls to express their anxiety and grief during and immediately after WWI. Hand crafting, in the form of filet crochet work, played a key role in the grieving process for Mabel Lewis, who worked an album cover in memory of her two older brothers. Two framed photographs bearing an image of a transport ship and a vignette of a soldier also form part of this personalised, family memorial to the Pearce brothers, which was kept in the Lewis family for many years.4

4 The Lewis Collection was donated to the Coolamon RSL Museum during the 1980s.
Pat Jackson and Amy Lewis, daughters of Mabel Lewis, recalled their mother taking a regular supplement of a women’s magazine, which they remember as being the *Everylady’s Journal*. Crochet work was always Mabel’s forte, and as her daughters recalled, ‘mother would refer to a crochet pattern just once and then memorise the pattern’. During WWII, Mabel Lewis was also taught to knit by her daughters and she then went on to knit many garments for Australian soldiers serving overseas.

Both Pat Jackson and Amy Lewis attest to their mother’s silence in regard to her personal feelings surrounding the deaths of her older brothers, Private Wilfred Ernest Pearce and Private Alfred Edmund Pearce. Mabel Lewis’ loving relationship with, and grief for her older brothers was revealed to her family in other ways: two of her own sons were named ‘Wilfred’ and ‘Alfred’ in memory of her older brothers, and the farming property which Mabel and her husband Herbert Lewis owned near Coolamon was named Kyarra, in honour of the troopship in which Private Wilfred Pearce embarked in 1915.

---

5 P. Jackson & A. Lewis (personal communication, August 4, 2003).
The pattern for the ANZAC filet crochet, which was worked by Mabel Lewis, was first published in the March 1916 edition of the *Everylady’s Journal*, to which Mabel subscribed. Designed in Australia by Mary Card, this particular image was produced as a tribute to the many Australian and New Zealand troops who were either killed or wounded in the Gallipoli offensive. It was suggested by Mary Card that the filet crochet work could be used as a cover for a scrapbook, which could then be filled with newspaper clippings featuring articles on events in the war. Mary Card also observed that the soldier ‘would probably be rather pictured in something else [other] than lace’⁶ and also proposed that the crochet should be ‘worked in khaki’⁷ to give the finished piece a more military look.

---

⁷ Ibid.
Wilfred Ernest Pearce, Service Number 2010, enlisted in the 3rd Battalion of the 1st AIF (Australian Imperial Force) at Coolamon on 15th January 1915, with the rank of private. He embarked on the SS Kyarra, landed at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915, and was listed as missing in action at Lone Pine on 12th August 1915 aged 29 years. Although AIF Headquarters would eventually list Private Wilfred Pearce as killed in action some time between 7th and 12th August 1915, the last official report was from an eyewitness in regard to Private Pearce’s location and wellbeing, which stated that:

He belonged to the 6th Reinf. [Reinforcement] of the 3rd Batt. [Battalion]. He was wounded slightly at Lone Pine early in August. He stayed with the Batt. until the end of August when we left for Rest Camp at Lemnos. He went into hospital there for an operation. I think it was to have a piece of shrapnel removed from his head. I saw him in camp before he went into hospital. He was bright and cheery. He was a man of about 5 ft. 6 ins., dark and a gay sort of lad. He acted as cook at Lemnos before leaving for hospital. I have not seen him since, nor heard of him.8

AIF Headquarters in London officially certified Private Wilfred Ernest Pearce as ‘K/Action [killed in action] 7-12-8-15 no burial report’9 on 29th August 1915. Private Wilfred Ernest Pearce is listed on the Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli.

---

9 Ibid.
Alfred Edmond Pearce, Service Number 6561, enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the 1st AIF at Junee on 3rd May 1916, with the rank of private, and his ship of embarkation was the *TSS Ceramic*. Private Alfred Pearce, who was previously wounded at Bullecourt, was killed in action at Passchendaele, Belgium on 7th November 1917 aged 33 years. Lance Corporal B.T. Pettit left behind an account of Private Alfred Pearce’s death:

I left Australia with him on the ship Ceramic on 7th 10th [19]16 and was in the same Section. He was killed instantly on the night [of] 7th 11th [19]17 by shell and buried next day with two other lads on the battle field at Passchendaele. He was a short fair complexion chap and worked on Rockview Station Junee and his father lived at Murrumburrah. I was left out of the line at the time of that stunt my mate C.H. Harris buried him poor fellow.10

Private Alfred Pearce had left behind a widow, Mrs. Ruby Pearce, of St. Kilda in Melbourne and Lance Corporal Pettit also offered to contact her, stating that, ‘I am in charge of the Gun Section now and will drop a line to his wife.’11

In official correspondence to A.I.F. Headquarters in London, Private W.J. Bateman also wrote graphically of Private Alfred Pearce’s death:

Pearce was killed alongside me about Nov. 8th. He got the top of his head blown off by a shell which lobbed in the front trench at about 4 p.m. He was buried behind parades by Pte. Charlie Harris…who was in France when I left. His name was Alfie. He came from near Melbourne,

---


11 Ibid.
enlisted in N.S.W. and had an uncle who was a major in the 4th A.I.F. in Salisbury Plains when I last saw him.  

A filet crochet jug cover depicting a patriotic theme, which was worked by Mabel Lewis, has been kept by her daughter, Amy Lewis. Given the delay in officially informing Mabel Lewis’ family of the death of her brother, Private Alfred Pearce, it is possible that, along with the ‘Anzac Soldier’ piece, they were both worked in 1916 or later. 

Fig. 7.7: ‘GOD BLESS OUR BRAVE BOYS’ filet crochet jug cover made by Mabel Lewis (nee Pearce), c1916-1920 Collection of P. Jackson and A. Lewis (Photo: A. Brown)

'Try and Give Something' - Women's magazines and the war effort

Patriotism swept Australia at the start of WWI and Australian women’s magazines were quick to use their pages as a forum for women and girls to express their loyalty. The Woman’s Budget magazine of August 1914 published ‘An Appeal to the Girls of New South Wales’ in which the editor stated:

There will be urgent need for money all over the Empire, not only now for our soldiers, but later on to relieve the terrible destitution which must inevitably follow war.

Readers were then challenged to ‘try and give something no matter how small, if possible every week while the war lasts’.

12 Ibid.
13 An appeal. To the girls of New South Wales. (1914, August 22). Woman’s Budget, p. 20.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
For many Australian girls and women a cash donation to war charities such as the Red Cross was not possible. Their methods of supporting these organisations came in the form of volunteer work, where many of them made and donated handcrafted goods such as crochet, embroidery and knitted articles, cakes, jams and chutneys to fund raising stalls. As ‘Wilford’ of Wagga wrote in 1915:

I have been very busy this past week working for the Red Cross League; I love doing anything for the benefit of our poor soldiers; they deserve all and more than we can give them. At the concert given by Miss Amy Castles here a few weeks ago, a flag, with the words “The Dardanelles, April 1915” worked on it, was sold and resold till it reached the grand amount of £115. I have since worked one similar to it, which is to be sold at a concert in aid of our wounded soldiers, out in the country.  

Patriotic themes became a popular motif for crochet and embroidery patterns throughout WWI, with the Woman’s Budget offering their readers a wide variety such as ‘ANZAC FOR VALOR – BRAVO AUSTRALIA’, ‘SUCCESS TO THE ALLIES’, ‘FOR KING AND COUNTRY’, ‘DARDANELLES 1915 – OUR HEROES’, ‘THE NURSE CAVELL MEMORIAL DESIGN’, ‘THE KHAKI BOY – OUR HERO’, 17 ‘HANDS ACROSS THE SEA’, ‘BRITANNIA’, ‘AN AUSTRALIAN DEVICE’, ‘AN IMPERIAL DEVICE’ and the ‘NEW ZEALAND COAT OF ARMS’. Patriotic crochet patterns continued to be reproduced by women’s magazines until the early 1920s, with some of the most popular themes being those of ‘BRITANNIA’, ‘PEACE’ and ‘ANZAC’.

17 The ‘Khaki Boy – Our Hero’ pattern was very similar in design to the Mary Card pattern. Unauthorised duplication of crochet patterns by women’s magazines at that time was not uncommon.
Australian women’s magazines not only provided a practical outlet through their pattern services, but also an emotional forum through articles such as ‘Our Post Office’ and the ‘Roll of Honour’ published by the *Woman’s Budget*. Not only were these sections an avenue for the personal fear and grief that many girls and women endured, but they also acted as a medium for informing the wider community, in a period when communication, particularly in regional areas, could often be slow or erratic.

![Fig. 7.9: ‘ANZAC DAY APL 25 1915 LEST WE FORGET’ filet crochet pattern, 1916 *Woman’s Budget*](image)

As the editor of *Woman’s Budget* wrote to ‘Cue’ in December 1914:

> It is very brave of you to part with your eldest boy, and to send him to fight for his country; the motherland has every reason to be proud of her sons.18

Hopefully ‘Rover’ was also comforted by being assured that, ‘You are indeed rich to have no fewer than four brothers all equally ready to fight for their King and country’.19 Were these same patriotic sentiments shared by the mother and sister of the Pearce brothers?

The helplessness and frustration felt by many girls and women, while they waited at home are also highlighted in a letter written by ‘Battlemaid’ to the editor of the *Woman’s Budget* in 1915:

> How splendidly the Australians are fighting in the Dardanelles! I can picture them sometimes, such a reckless lot of young fellows, who would rather face thousands of Turks rather than give

---

19 Ibid.
in. I wish I were a boy, I would be at the war; but we must do our share by letting our dear brothers and relations go.20

Such was the influx of war related correspondence to the *Woman’s Budget* that a special supplement was instigated in 1915. ‘Our Honour Roll’ acted as a forum for the publication of names and details of men serving overseas and their relationship to *Woman’s Budget* correspondents. The lists of names and places reflected key points on the battlefront as the war progressed, along with the hopes and fears of many families. ‘Charles Arnold, stoker on the ill-fated H.M.S. Cressy, lost in the North Sea on September 22, 1914. Cousin of “Army” of Elsmore’,21 read one entry and ‘Corporal D. Pheeney, now at the front: served as a gunner in the South African War, was in the police force in Sydney 13 years ago. Brother of “Lincoln” of Wyndham, N.S.W.’, 22 read another. Apart from immediate family and friends, what greater support network was there than that of other, similarly grieving women spread across the country.

‘In Her Time of Peril’ - The Union Jack Flag

![Australian national flag, front cover, *Review of Reviews For Australia*, 1901](https://www.flagaustnat.asn.au)

Even though the Australian flag23 had been designed in 1901, the Union Jack flag became a key rallying point for many recruitment drives, fundraising events and other

---

22 Ibid.
23 The Australian flag was introduced in 1901, gazetted in 1903 and legally recognised under the Flags Act of 1953.
public gatherings during WWI. This was driven by a national sense of obligation and loyalty to Britain or ‘the Motherland’ in her time of great peril.

Newspapers and journals were also quick to capitalise on the iconic and emotive power of the Union Jack; image and songs, craft patterns, fancy dress patterns and poems were often featured in publications. The *Woman’s Budget* of 1st May 1915 featured such a poem, which had been submitted by a correspondent, J. H. Bryant.

To the stranger it is nothing but a many colored rag;  
But what is dearer to a Briton than his bonny native flag?  
The flag of love and freedom, that floats above the free –  
The flag that never yet has floated over slavery.

Dark years of strife and warfare and centuries roll by,  
But still the bonny Union Jack waves proudly in the sky;  
The flag whose silken folds have ne’er been stained by shame –  
The bonny flag of England, the Union Jack by name!

Long may the flag of Britain wave majestic in the sky,  
Long may the bonny Union Jack float proudly up on high;  
And may the sons of Britain, in times of strife to come,  
March proudly ‘neath its tattered folds at beating of the drum.

And while the flag of Britain is waving in the breeze,  
While the bonny Union Jack is mistress of the seas,  
The wanton blood of slavery will ne’er stain Britain’s shore;  
So keep the free flag waving boys, waving for evermore.24

7.4: 'Good Colonists' – Germans in the Riverina

The German migrants of the Riverina played a positive role in the development of the communities in which they settled, and for the majority of non-German community members the arrival of these new settlers in the late 1800s, was perceived as an advantage. The hardworking lifestyle of the German settlers was seen to be ‘a model of Anglo-Saxon industry and frugality’, according to Riverina historian G. L. Buxton. During WWI, however, praise for the tireless work ethic, community spirit and steadfast religious practice of these same German settlers was to all but disappear.

As official correspondence of the time pointed out:

In all these districts [of the Riverina] the German residents were regarded, before the present war, as good colonists, but since the beginning of hostilities the fact is not overlooked that these people are now their enemies, and much bitterness is felt towards them.

This same anti-German sentiment also resurfaced in some Riverina communities during WWII. Earlier acceptance of German community members was replaced with antagonism and both people and geographical locations were subjected to the anti-German rhetoric of the period. Whether individuals were German born or Australian born was of little consequence, when even well known and respected members of Riverina communities, such as the Heinecke family of Tumbarumba and the Wenke, Heppner and Paech families of Walla Walla, were suddenly placed under the suspicious gaze of their neighbours. Place names were not safe from anti-German sentiments either,

---


with the name of Germanton being changed to Holbrook in 1915, and Schleicher Street in Temora, named after the town surveyor, was changed to Crowley Street during WWI.

There is anecdotal evidence of at least one local Temora family officially changing its name by deed poll, and other Riverina families unofficially anglicising the spelling of their names. For example the Boeck family of Tumbarumba changed their name to Beck, and in the Temora area German names such as Muller and Fischer, were changed to Miller and Fisher respectively. German Australians in South Australia were also subjected to the same discrimination for example, ‘Paul Schubert, teacher at Sturt Primary School in Adelaide, had to change his name in order to keep his job. He became Paul Stuart in 1916.’

One of the most highly publicised cases of a family of German descent forced to change their name during World War I however, was that of the British Royal family:

In 1917 King George V changed the family name. No longer Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; the new family name was Windsor. [Queen] Victoria’s cousin changed his family name from Battenburg to Mountbatten. Mountbatten sounded more English.

---

28 Ibid.
‘Industrious and Well Behaved’ - The Heinecke Family of Tumbarumba

Charles Grothe Phillip Thomas Heinecke was born in Germany in 1836. Charles Heinecke married Johanna Burns,29 an Irishwoman, and their three sons, George Thomas, Charles Bismark and Frederick, became well established in the Tumbarumba area.

George Thomas Heinecke, a gold miner, held shares in several mines including the Union Jack Mine. He invented the hydraulic or jet elevator30 method of mining and sluicing, which was used successfully by Charles Bismark Heinecke, on the Burra gold diggings near Tumbarumba, while Frederick Heinecke was the licencee of the Tumbarumba Hotel during WWI.31

George Thomas Heinecke married Mary-Ann Eccleston on 29th July 1898, at Adelong. George and Mary-Ann had five children: George Christmas, Herbert Henry, Ada Ann, Oswald Charles and Johanna Unita.32

Because he was of German origin, George Thomas Heinecke and his family were subjected to unrelenting community pressure during WWI, even though it was well known that he was an enthusiastic supporter of the war effort. Like many other families of German descent in the Riverina, they were also under the scrutiny of both the police and military authorities. The Heinecke family however, was one of the few spared the

Fig. 7.13: Union Jack flag, c1910
Collection of Tumbarumba Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

The flag was flown at the site of George Thomas Heinecke’s ‘Union Jack’ mine.

29 The year and location of Heinecke’s marriage to Johanna Burns are unknown.
30 Heinecke’s jet elevator technology was sold world wide, including England and Malaysia.
32 Ibid.
indignity of an official interview, by virtue of the geographical isolation of Tumbarumba. Official correspondence from Captain Longfield Lloyd of the Intelligence Section to his superiors, outlined the involvement of members of the public and local authorities in what appeared to be a purely vindictive persecution of George Thomas Heinecke, naming two local men who had acted as character witnesses against him, as well as the local Police Magistrate, who had stated that, ‘Heinecke is extremely untrustworthy’ in his business dealings. Lloyd then went on to say:

I do not consider a visit to Tumbarumba necessary as it is over 70 miles away – the railway is only partly completed and as there is only one family of German origin there, the expense of a car there and back would not be justified. The family in question is that of Heinecke …

Fig. 7.14: The Union Jack war memorial, Tumbarumba NSW, 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)

The names of George and Herbert Heinecke are engraved on the memorial, which stands at the site of the former Union Jack school.

George Thomas Heinecke was both the instigator and chairman of many social functions to farewell recruits and to welcome soldiers home during WWI, and this involvement was also continued throughout World War II. A chairman of the local anti-conscription committee prior to the first referendum, George Thomas Heinecke was also involved in discussions on voluntary enlistment, which was seen by many Tumbarumba locals as being highly suspicious, given his German background.

George Thomas Heinecke’s sons in particular, were singled out for attention by members of the local community, and he was forced to defend his sons’ civilian status in the pages of the *Tumbarumba Times* in 1916, stating that, ‘Mr. G.T. Heinecke asserts that two of his sons have, for some time, intended to enlist when at liberty to do so.’\(^{34}\)

George Christmas and Herbert Henry Heinecke enlisted together in 1916, with Private George Christmas Heinecke marrying Alice Bradley\(^{35}\) shortly before his embarkation to Europe. The Heinecke brothers sailed together on the troopship Port Sydney on 4th September 1916, docking in Plymouth at the end of October 1916. They served together in a mining company attached to the 56th Battalion and were both killed in action in France during 1917.

![Fig. 7.15: Private Herbert Heinecke (L) and Private George Heinecke (R)](https://example.com/figure7.15.jpg)

Collection of Tumbarumba Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

In a letter written to his mother from France and dated 5 March 1917, Herbert Heinecke described the apparent comfort of their camp. He also enquired after a favourite horse; a poignant reminder of the keen sense of dislocation felt by many servicemen:

> Well Mother, Son [George Christmas Heinecke] and I are doing well and are in the best of health … We are still in the Mining Company. We are on 4 o’clock shift this week, so we sleep all day … We have a good warm camp in a little dugout, got four blankets between us……How is Ossie and Shine getting on? Tell him to look after my mare and foal. Well there is no more news so I will say good night. Love to all at home … From your loving son, Herb.\(^{36}\)


\(^{35}\) Alice May Heinecke (nee Bradley) remained a widow and died in 1978, aged 89 years.

Two days later, on 7th March 1917, George Christmas Heinecke also wrote a letter home, but this time the news was grim and the letter reported the death of his brother, Herbert:

Dear Father … Just a few lines to let you know about poor Herb being killed last night. It was a terrible shock to me. We were just starting to work when a shell lobbed right among us. A piece of it hit Herb in the small of the back … he lost consciousness and he never came again and died about five minutes after he was hit … There are hundreds of poor fellows laying about here not even buried. Well Dad, this is all I can write about tonight, as I don’t feel too good on it … From your loving son, George. P.S. It is a good job that Ossie did not pass to come to this hole of a place.37

Private George Christmas Heinecke is buried at Grevillers British Cemetery, and Private Herbert Henry Heinecke is buried at Bancourt Cemetery in France.

The pain and loss of the Heinecke family is encapsulated in a letter written by George Thomas Heinecke to the *Tumbarumba Times* in 1918, in reply to further community criticism directed at him by a person writing under the pseudonym of 'Peaceful'. George Thomas Heinecke stated bluntly that:

"Peaceful" is a nice class of man to try and advise people who have sent their loving sons to the battlefield to fight and lay down their lives for the likes of him … If his right name is British, mine is still German but is still cleaner than his so far as a loyal British citizen is concerned. I am not ashamed of my name, but "Peaceful" seems to be ashamed of his.38

37 Ibid. p. 64.
38 Public opinion. To the editor. (1918, August 23). *Tumbarumba Times*, p. 2.
‘Of Their Loyalty We Have No Doubt’ - Anti-German Sentiment in WWI

The Commonwealth census of 1911 showed 33,381 German-born people living in Australia. Although the census did not indicate the number of people of German descent living in Australia, it did list 74,508 Lutherans: 27,794 in South Australia, 24,843 in Queensland, 11,906 in Victoria, and 7,177 in New South Wales.

By 1914, a time when many Australians ‘needed to manufacture threats and crises to make the war real and immediate’, anti-German sentiment was a common occurrence. As historian and academic Michael McKernan points out:

As a small group, they stood out and their separate identity was confirmed by the Australian habit of labeling all persons of German descent, whether born in Australia or not, as ‘Germans’.

Like their counterparts in South Australia, Queensland and Victoria, the ‘German’ settlers of the Riverina, in areas such as Jindera, Walla Walla, Trungley Hall, and Tumbarumba were subjected to scrutiny and suspicion. From 1914 until 1918 the Temora Independent newspaper covered issues which dealt with German nationals, Australians of German descent and also other foreign nationals. Under a heading of ‘British Fair Play To German Australians’ the Temora Independent went on to deplore ‘a spirit of antagonism between nations’. An article was also published which was designed, no doubt, to put the minds of local German citizens at rest:

In the present struggle it is the prayer and hope of every true and loyal British subject that Britain will come out victorious over Germany in the dreadful war which we have just entered upon … In our midst we have a number of fellow citizens of German blood. They have in many instances relatives in Germany engaged in this deadly struggle for our Empire. Naturally men of German blood, whether British subjects or not, are torn between the conflicting emotions of the love they feel for the land of their forefathers on the one part and their love and loyalty for Australia and the British Empire on the other. Those German citizens are deserving of the sympathy and the most generous spirit that we can show towards them. No unnecessary act or word should emanate from us to cause them pain. Of their loyalty we have no doubt.

Not all newspaper articles were written in an understanding fashion however, with rumour and innuendo directed against friends and neighbours ripe in many communities. Temora residents were informed that:

A sensational rumour gained currency in town on Monday to the effect that a former popular resident, a professional man of German nationality, had been shot as a spy. The telephone at this

40 Ibid.
41 British fair play to German Australians. (1914, August 8). Temora Independent, p. 2.
office was frequently set a-tingling by anxious inquirers with the object of ascertaining whether we had any authentic confirmation of the report, which we have not yet received.  

Accusations against anyone with a German sounding name were not uncommon, with retractions and public apologies frequently published in local newspapers. Allegations and ensuing apologies were also made by people with ‘German’ names against others in the community with German sounding names, as in the case of Charles Heinrich Steinhardt, who published an apology in 1916 which read:

I, CHARLES HEINRICH STEINHARDT, do hereby APOLOGISE to Mr. H. GUST, for stating that he was a German. I know now that Mr. Gust, Cabinet Maker, is a Russian, that his parents are Russians; and I regret having stated that he was a German.  

The negative speculation of local people against their German neighbours was reinforced in 1917 with an official visit by an Army Intelligence officer. The towns of Walla Walla, Jindera, Henty, Gidginbung and Duck Creek (Trungley Hall) were those under scrutiny, with the Walla Walla district in particular being seen as ‘decidedly disloyal’. In the written report to his commanding officer, Lieutenant Springhall stated that Australian born second and third generation children were being raised in an ‘atmosphere of reverence to Germany’.

The use of the German language in Lutheran Church services and among individuals was seen as an act of disloyalty and in a report lodged after a trip to Walla Walla in December 1917, Captain Longfield Lloyd wrote:

Whilst at Walla Walla, I looked in at the Lutheran Church upon two occasions and heard the Service being conducted in German. I was able to follow a good deal of it – it was much on a par with other services – but this use of the German language has thoroughly germanised the bulk of the population which would otherwise have become gradually Anglicised as each generation grew up. I considered this subject at length and now recommend that the use of the German language be strictly forbidden, even in Churches. This would not be a hardship to this and similar districts, as all the adults at least understand English and their children would then naturally follow. Undoubtedly the future of the District hinges more upon this than anything else. The Pastor of this Church at Walla Walla is Gottlieb Simpeendorfer [Simpfendorfer], a Nat. Brit. Sub. [Naturalised British Subject], but a thorough German. His removal from the District would materially assist in the clearing up.

---

42 German spy. (1914, October 7). *Temora Independent*, p. 6.
44 Ibid.
As the Chief of the General Staff pointed out to Captain Longfield Lloyd in December 1917, ‘[a]ny person of German descent who has the Kaiser’s picture on the walls of his house may be considered as anti-British’ and this statement in turn prompted a visit to the home of one of the oldest and most respected members of the German community in Walla Walla, Gotthold Klemke.

After his visit to the Klemke household, Captain Longfield Lloyd of the Intelligence Section wrote:

I visited the farm at Gotthold Klemke, who is the only one in that district known to have pictures of enemy rulers. He has hanging on the wall of his kitchen some cheap coloured prints of the late Emperor of Austria, the Kaiser and Kaiserin, Bismark and one whom I do not recognise, but not unlike the King of Wurtemburg. These pictures seem to be about ten or twenty years old and show the Kaiser as comparatively young. Klemke is elderly and has no local influence. The Police consider him harmless. Under these circumstances I think if permission is given to Const. Morris to seize and destroy these prints, no other action is necessary.  

The German community at Henty was also subject to questioning, with Lloyd noting in his report:

Under the heading of Nat. Born Brit. Sub. [Naturalised British Subject] is also one Herman Rudolph Westerndorf. He was rumoured to have a picture of the Kaiser in his house but Sgt. Cameron had never investigated, so I went to the place and demanded to have the supposition verified or otherwise. Sure enough there was the cheap coloured print of the Kaiser – made some years back as in the previously mentioned case.

---

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
I questioned Westerdorf and he said it had belonged to his first wife, lately deceased, and that he had not noticed it nor did he know it was there. As it faces the front door this story is a lie and I am of the opinion that this man is not trustworthy and needs watching. He seemed to be suffering from fright when I left him.

Sgt. Cameron reports very favourably upon him, has known him for many years etc. My opinion is quite the reverse as stated above.48

From the existence of these prints in the collection of the Jindera Pioneer Museum, it can be seen that ‘permission to seize and destroy the prints’ was not given, or that other people in the Walla Walla and Henty communities managed to escape the detection of ‘Kaiser’ images. Even though the report states that the prints ‘seem to be about ten or twenty years old’, the fact that at that time the ‘Kaiser’ was an ally of the British seems to have conveniently escaped the attention of the investigating officer.

Police reports were written, which detailed the so called misdemeanours of certain members of the Walla Walla community, among them Hermann Alfred Paech, Edward Daniel Heppner, Johann Traugott Wenke and Ernst Gottlieb Wenke. Paech was considered to be ‘unscrupulous’,49 and ‘at the bottom of anything that has occurred’50 and it was also considered that his ‘influence has prevented enlistments’.51 Although all four of these men were listed as being ‘natural born British subjects’52 they were seen by the Intelligence Section officials to be ‘German in thought and habit’.

48 Ibid.  
49 Ibid.  
50 Ibid.  
51 Ibid.  
52 Ibid.
These damning indictments against Paech were also verified by the local bank manager. Heppner and both the Wenke brothers were also considered to be ‘strongly pro-German’, even though Johann Wenke had a son serving in Europe.

The fact that Paech, Heppner and the Wenke brothers had contributed to local patriotic funds and the Red Cross was conveniently overlooked, along with their involvement in a local scheme for the repatriation of returned soldiers which was proposed by Paech. Mrs. Hulda Augusta Hoffman, whose grandson had served in the AIF, also sought to reassure the authorities of Mr Paech’s loyalty by stating that:

I, Hulda Augusta Hoffman, of Walla Walla in the State of New South Wales, do hereby solemnly and sincerely declare that I sought the advice of Hermann Alfred Paech of Walla Walla as to whether I should give my consent for my grandson Arthur Schmidt to enlist in the Australian Imperial Forces. Mr. Paech advised me to give my consent. My grandson enlisted and has since died of wounds on the 7th April, 1918, after serving eight hundred and seventy days in the Australian Imperial Forces.

These four men were arrested and sent to Holdsworthy army camp a week after David Wenke, the eldest son of Johann Wenke, had been welcomed home to Walla Walla with a public ceremony. Johann Wenke senior was released from Holdsworthy camp as soon as his relationship to his son came to light. The other three men remained in Holdsworthy camp for ten months.

Although several men from the Culcairn and Henty areas were also kept under surveillance, none were interned. Of the men listed as being under surveillance from Gidginbung and Duck Creek (Trungley Hall) only Johann Hohnberg was interned during WWI.

---

53 Ibid. 54 Ibid.
‘Danger and Menace’ – Anti-German sentiment in WWII

‘In 1937 a German study circle was established in Albury55 and during the years leading up to the beginning of WWII, this group was considered a cause for concern by many non-German citizens of the Albury area. The group was seen as a focus for pro-German and anti-British sentiments, with articles denouncing the group appearing in the Albury newspaper.

Verbal attacks on people of German descent were renewed in the area during WWII and some internments took place. Member for the State seat of Albury, Alexander Mair, called for the internment of all aliens and in an election held during WWII his vote at Henty, a German dominated community, dropped by 13%.

Fig. 7.20: Member for the state seat of Albury, Alexander Mair, c1943
(State Library of NSW: gpo1_22572)

Riverina newspapers were quick to publish articles related to enemy aliens in both the local and wider community. Although some reporting was aimed at Italians, Eurasians and Chinese, community paranoia towards Germans was being fuelled by the blatantly racist reporting in many newspapers. In 1940, the Temora Independent stated that the ‘Officers of Returned Soldiers’ organisations yesterday reiterated their demands for the internment of all enemy aliens.’56

56 Enemy aliens. (1940, August 2). Temora Independent, p. 3.
This hard-line stance was continued in 1942, with the *Temora Independent* declaring that, ‘Speaking by a naturalised British subject of any enemy language, in any public place, be punished by internment and cancellation of naturalization papers.’ In February of 1942, the *Temora Independent* became even more outspoken in its reporting, declaring:

> It is time we interned every alien in the Commonwealth, outside our allied subjects. There are too many aliens walking about as free as the air. The danger and menace they would become in the event of invasion has been pointed out to you often enough. It is useless to say they are harmless. Berlin and Tokyo radios prove how much information is getting out of Australia to enemy countries. The enemy is still within our gates. It is time he was put behind barbed wire, where he will be treated well enough. In point of fact we treat our internees better, in my opinion; than we treated our unemployed when we had that huge army of them a few years back.58

Just as in WWI, many Riverina citizens of German descent were kept under close scrutiny by local police officers. John and Henry Heckendorf and Alfred Fritz Sigismund Shearer from Lockhart were interviewed and held at the Lockhart lock-up as enemy aliens during 1939. They were released immediately in the belief that they were British subjects, however no record was found of their naturalization and the Commonwealth Investigation Branch conducted a comprehensive enquiry into the date and place of their births.59 The transcript of the official police correspondence for the Heckendorf brothers reads as follows:

> I beg to report having interviewed the two above mentioned persons. John Heckendorf stated that he was born at Merino, Victoria on 1.5.1866. He is of German parentage, but his views are with the British principles, and he does not believe in Nazi ideas and therefore has no sympathies in that respect. John Heckendorf has one son in the A.I.F. now at present in Malaya and another attached to the R.A.A.F. at present in Cairns, Queensland.

> Henry Heckendorf has been interviewed and he informed me that he was born at Wodonga, Victoria on 23.2.1891. He is of German parentage, but his views are with British principles and he like his brother does not agree with Hitler’s ideas. Both men are of good character and do not show any signs of sympathies towards our enemies.60

Much of the evidence gathered against Shearer was based on subjective observations. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it was often an opportunity for disgruntled members of the community to exact vengeance. An extract from the official dossier held on Shearer bears witness to the paranoia of the time:

---

59 National Archives of Australia C123/1 – 9689; *Heckendorf, John* (Box 293).
60 Ibid.
Mr. Shearer holds a good character locally, but the people interviewed state in their own words he is “100% Hitler”. He and a number of other Germans hold what is termed Church meetings at Bridge Hall, Galore, and also at Shearer’s residence, only the German language is spoken at these meetings. So far as can be ascertained the following persons attend: John Heckendorf and family, Henry Heckendorf.  

Not only was damage done to the reputations and emotions of local citizens of German descent, but also to the property belonging to the German community. At least three attempts were made to burn down the Temora Lutheran Church during WWII and the *Temora Independent* stated that the damage caused during the last fire in 1944, was to the amount of £300. The report then went on to say:

The Coroner, Mr. C. Wellingham, at the Court House on Tuesday, conducted an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the fire at the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Victoria Street, on February 18th last. He was unable to determine from the evidence whether the fire was accidental or otherwise.  

WWII was to have an effect on children of German descent, who were singled out for ridicule and anti-German remarks from other school students and occasionally from teachers. As Margaret Campbell (nee Wendt) recalled:

My older brother, Errol, became so sick and tired of being verbally abused by a certain school teacher, that with the help of a friend, he threw the teacher out of a classroom window.  

---

61 Ibid.  
63 M. Campbell (personal communication, April 3, 2005).
7.5: 'We Rolled Up Our Sleeves' - The RAAF Nursing Service of WWII

Before the formation of the Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS) on the 26th of July 1940, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) personnel were cared for by male orderlies, civilian nurses or at repatriation hospitals. Associated with the increase in RAAF recruiting and the sudden growth in personnel at the beginning of WWII, was an outbreak of infectious diseases including mumps, rubella, influenza and chicken pox. This affected RAAF units, resulting in the need for more civilian nurses. Sixteen civilian nurses were deployed to four RAAF units, but this proved to be inadequate as the number of RAAF recruits increased. In June 1940, it was suggested that the RAAF should have its own nursing service and approval was granted within a month. Riverina woman, Alma Pearse,64 was among the second intake of nurses at the 3 RAAF Hospital Richmond New South Wales on the 19th of May 1941.

Alma Pearse had started her nursing training at the Wagga Wagga District Hospital in 1930, and after a break of several years, recommenced her training at the Canberra Community Hospital from 1936 to 1938. She also undertook specialist training in Obstetrics at the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Hobart from 1946 to 1947. Alma Pearse nursed at both the Lockhart and Junee Hospitals between 1949 and 1973, serving as Matron of Junee Hospital from 1956 until her retirement in 1973.

64 After her retirement from nursing in the 1970s, Alma Pearse married Jack Skeers of Wagga Wagga NSW. Because the narratives deal with her service in the RAAFNS during WWII, which was before her marriage, Alma Skeers is referred to as either 'Alma', 'Alma Pearse' or 'Sister Alma Pearse'.

Fig. 7.22: Sister Alma Pearse, RAAFNS, in winter uniform, c1941
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)
It is however, Alma Pearse's memories of her time in the RAAFNS during WWII, from 1941 until 1945, which forms the focus for these stories. During a 2003 audio-taped interview, my question about the uniform cape in the Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum set in motion a vivid recollection of how and where the uniforms were allocated:

I had to go to Farmer’s in Sydney and we were measured for all of our uniforms. We were allowed £40 and that included our great coat, our blue winter uniform and our summer drab uniform, two white shirts and six white uniforms and that was what the £40 included … and a navy blue hat for duty. We had white uniforms, with black Air Force buttons down the front, white veils, regulation, of forty inches, with a two inch, hemstitched hem and we wore our blue cape. The sleeves on the uniforms were elbow length, with an extension, with a cuff on so that we could take the sleeve from the elbow length off and then we would work in short sleeves and before we left the ward we had to put our long sleeves back on. All of that came from Farmer’s. Our black ties, we paid 10 shillings for those and we got them from the stores depot at Richmond Base. Our white shoes were regulation, white shoes and white stockings. Then, when the Japanese came into the war they were changed to the drab, cotton stockings and black shoes and our uniforms were dyed to a drab colour and we then wore black buttons down the front of those and that was the continuation of our uniform right through, except when we were in the tropics. We had skirts and blouses and black ties and our summer felt hats and we always had to wear black gloves, winter time, gloves summer time … black gloves. We had to have the regulation black suitcase and we never carried parcels. As time went on we got chevrons for each year of service we had and that’s how I got the four out there [Coolamon RSL Museum] on the blue uniform.65

---

65 A. Skeers (personal communication, June 16, 2003).
The veil was an equally important part of the uniform and its preparation was a carefully circumscribed ritual, as Alma Skeers explained;

You folded it across from one corner to the other and they had to have a one inch fold back, across the front. Then you folded them across, underneath and clipped them with a safety pin. That’s the only thing that held them in place. They were always starched. They [the uniforms] were sent out [to be laundered]. We did our own veils in Robin Starch. All my life, I did my own veils, because I got them nicer and more even and everything and in Robin Starch and you rolled them up after you starched them and you rolled them and let them dry out and then you ironed them and they were beautiful.66

The Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS)

66 A. Skeers (personal communication, June 16, 2003).
3 RAAF Hospital was formed as a separate unit within RAAF Station Richmond on 15th October 1940, under the direction of Matron Muriel Doherty, who was formerly a Tutor Sister at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. Matron Doherty was to become Principal Matron of the RAAFNS in New South Wales and was to be instated as head of nursing at Belsen Concentration Camp in Europe at the end of WWII. Skeers recalled that:

The nursing staff at this stage, were housed in huts at the back of the base, in [another] hut was our mess and kitchen. We had a Dutch chef who was a marvelous cook. We had mess dinners once a month at the Officers’ Mess with Miss Doherty meeting us all in the recreation room to inspect the mess-dress lengths of the newly arrived Sisters.67

Fig. 7.26: Staff quarters at 3RAAF Hospital, Richmond NSW, c1941
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

During her service with the RAAFNS, Sister Alma Pearse was posted to 3 RAAF Hospital Richmond (1941), the RAAF Section 113 AGH (Australian General Hospital), Concord (1942 and 1945), 3 MRS Townsville (1942-1943) and 1 RAAF Wagga Wagga (1944).

---

During her time spent in Townsville (1942-1943), Alma Pearse served with the RAAF 3 MRS (Medical Receiving Station) and, along with other members of her unit, travelled by train to Townsville with stopovers in Sydney and Brisbane. The hospital was originally housed in a series of large tents and according to Alma:

It was interesting for us to learn to manage with makeshift materials and to set up surgical, medical, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) and Out Patient wards all under canvas, beneath shady trees. Primus stoves were used under the autoclaves and sterilisers.\(^{68}\)

---

\(^{68}\) Ibid. p. 137.
Fig. 7.29: Hospital tent, RAAF 3 MRS Hospital, Townsville QLD, c1942-43
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

Fig. 7.30: Operating theatre tent, RAAF 3 MRS Hospital Townsville QLD, c1942-43
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

Fig. 7.31: Sister Alma Pearse and two medical orderlies, RAAF 3 MRS Hospital, Townsville QLD, c1942-43
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)
Skeers vividly recalled her arrival in Wagga Wagga during the summer of 1944, and the subsequent relocation of the RAAF Hospital to the present site of the Charles Sturt University South Campus

In January 1944, in a drought and dust storm, 1 RAAF Hospital was moved from [RAAF] Base Forest Hill into town … Although the building was new, everything inside was thick with dust. We rolled up our sleeves and started scrubbing!\(^69\)

Such was the importance of the newly constructed 1 RAAF Hospital that the Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser published a detailed account, describing it as a ‘Modernly Equipped Establishment.’\(^70\)

![Fig. 7.32: Sister Alma Pearse (Back 3\(^{rd}\) right) and nursing staff, 1 RAAF Hospital, Wagga Wagga NSW, 1944](Image courtesy of Alma Skeers (Photographer: Unknown))

Built over a period of nine months, at a cost of approximately £70,000, without fittings, the hospital had an immediate capacity of two hundred beds. The Daily Advertiser pointed out that ‘the administration, kitchen, and operating theatre facilities, however, are planned to cater for further extension of the wards capacity up to 1000 beds.’\(^71\) ‘All the very latest hospital equipment has been installed’,\(^72\) stated the Daily Advertiser, but

\(^{69}\) Ibid. p. 63.  
\(^{71}\) Ibid.  
\(^{72}\) Ibid.
inevitably, it was the care and professionalism of RAAF nurses such as Sister Alma Pearse that would remain in the memories of the men who were cared for at 1 RAAF Hospital. The gratitude of the patients was encapsulated in a poem, written especially for ‘Sister Pearse’ in 1944, by ‘Bluey Rose’.

**Are We Happy Here in Con’ Ward, Bluey Rose, 1944**

Are we happy here in Con’ ward, or sorry? I don’t know,  
For we’ve “had it” here in Wagga, and its nearly time to go.  
We’ve had our operations, and our wounds are healing quick  
Now its time to go we’re sorry, and we envy those who’re sick.  
The Tucker here’s delicious, and the staff are extra good,  
While the Red Cross hand out comforts, and the nurse does all she could.  
The Sisters, they are Marvels no angels can replace –  
Their kindness is astounding, and no troubles show their trace.  
The M.O. is efficient, as his tools of trade he plies,  
He saves about a thousand for every one that dies.  
We appreciate their efforts, and quote our gratitude  
As we go back to our Units, our health and strength renewed.  
Now I hope that when I’m dying, and its time to quit this earth  
That Old Peter sends an escort, I hope, a Red Cross Nurse.

Bluey Rose - A.C.I.  
Patient of 1 RAAF Hospital [Wagga Wagga] 1943-1944
7.6: ‘An Indifferent Response’ - The Australian Women’s Land Army

Created in 1942 from an urgent necessity to supplement the dwindling numbers of agricultural workers as men enlisted in the armed services, the Australian Women’s Land Army (AWLA) grew to become a pivotal component of the agricultural industry in Australia during WWII. For many Land Army girls it was not only their first venture away from their homes and families, but also their first experience of life outside the major cities of Australia, such as Sydney or Melbourne. Some girls and women were only briefly involved as casual or seasonal workers, but for many others their service with the AWLA was to last until the end of WWII.

The Tumut & Adelong Times of July 1942 described the AWLA girls as:

The greatest boon Batlow had ever had. They have proved so popular and capable that the farmers’ wives have taken them to their hearts … But for them thousands of cases of excellent fruit would have rotten.73

Acceptance and popularity were unheard of concepts for Land Army girls in other areas of Australia, however, with many male land owners doubting their ability to cope with the work allocated and many female community members suspicious of these often young and single women.

---

Hard physical labour, long working hours, unfamiliar and frequently hostile climatic conditions, and basic living quarters were endured by many AWLA members. These harsh conditions were to foster new skill sets, self confidence, friendships and community ties for the AWLA girls.

‘Working In Their Slippers’ – From National Service to AWLA

Between 1939 and 1941, groups of women organised themselves independently to work on farms across Australia, with registers established listing women who were available to work, and farms in need of assistance. The lobbying of state governments and agricultural departments for a nationalised Land Army scheme was commenced and in
New South Wales, organisers of the Women’s Voluntary National Register suggested the training of country girls in camps, to replace men on farms.

In Victoria and Western Australia, following a negative response from their respective state agriculture ministers, the Country Women’s Association took on the responsibility of organising Land Army groups, while in Queensland the Women’s Auxiliary Training Service headed by Mrs. Annabel Philp provided the impetus to establish similar groups. In Tasmania, Miss Agnes Hodgson headed the push for a Land Army training scheme, with the Tasmanian Government providing a grant for the establishment of a training farm at Cressy.

It was not until after the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in July 1942, that the state run Land Army groups were nationalised, as part of the enactment of the Manpower Act. Meanwhile, Land Army training camps had been organised by the Women’s Australian National Services (WANS) at Gundagai in NSW, by Sydney University at Penrith in NSW and by the Country Women’s Association at Berwick and Horsham in Victoria. Girl Guides were also used in peak harvest seasons in some Australian states.

---

Fig. 7.37: Australian Women’s Land Army recruiting poster, c1942-1945
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photograph: A. Brown)

---

74 As more men and women volunteered and were drafted into military services the Australian Government formed the Directorate of Manpower to organise the Australian workforce in January 1942. “Manpower” was the term used for the human resources and labour required to make the economy function properly.
Pay rates for these early Land Army groups were often only a token amount, ranging from 7/6 per week plus keep in Tasmania, to in excess of £5 per week in NSW. In WA, girls paid 15/- for live-in training at Fairbridge Farm at Pinjarra, and in all states Land Army girls also provided their own towels, bed linen, blankets, cutlery and working clothes.

According to author Sue Hardisty, ‘indifference was the overwhelming initial response to the idea of women replacing men on the land’75, but with 100,000 or two thirds of the male agricultural workforce having left farms by the end of 1941, the use of Land Army girls was critical. By mid 1942 the WANS had placed 750 women and the Women’s War Service Council 700 women in seasonal work, with a further 175 women working on farms and orchards on the initiative of the Country Women’s Association and the Women’s Australian National Service.

In accordance with the Manpower Act and in response to the war effort, a national conference was convened in 1942 to discuss the best way to employ women in the agricultural sector. Rural growers and unions were still resistant to the use of women as a labour force, with this ongoing negativity, according to Hardisty ‘based on prejudice rather than logic.’76 Greater risk of injuries and length of training required were cited as reasons for their exclusion.

By the end of WWII around ninety five AWLA camps had been established across Australia: ten in Western Australia, seven in South Australia, twenty in Queensland, seven in Tasmania, twenty one in Victoria and thirty in New South Wales. The nationalisation of Australian Women’s Land Army camps saw an improvement in working and living conditions, with the provision of food coupons, travel concessions, leave entitlement and amenities from the Red Cross. Above all was the increase in the acceptance level of the AWLA girls by other women’s services members. Provision of uniforms was slow with only a minority of AWLA girls having full uniform nine months after nationalisation of the scheme. The uniform was not just decorative, but a functional and necessary addition to their equipment. Often working in wet and cold conditions, girls could be rendered unable to work by an absence of suitable work clothing, with extreme cases being recorded. In a letter written to the Director General

76 Ibid.
of Manpower in 1942, it was stated that, ‘some girls are so short of footwear that they are working in their slippers …’.

Hostility to the employment of Australian Women’s Land Army girls continued in many country towns and rural farming communities, but once ‘prejudices were overcome, applications from farmers for land girls exceeded their numbers’. The Australian Women's Land Army girls could be employed by individuals, food processing companies such as Letona at Leeton, a local co-operative such as the Batlow Packing House Co-operative Limited, or government agricultural organisations such as the Flax Commission. At that time, normal working hours were set at forty-five hours per week, but for Australian Women’s Land Army girls it was a forty-eight hour working week.

Social and sporting activities were encouraged among the Australian Women’s Land Army girls, with amenities and equipment supplied in many instances by organisations such as the Country Women’s Association (CWA), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and other smaller local groups, while radios, pianos and sewing machines were supplied to larger hostels. Although travel to other locations was often difficult due to isolation and petrol rationing, social gatherings such as dances and card parties were still a regular feature, with the Tumut & Adelong Times promoting at least two such events at Batlow in 1945.

Fig. 7.38: Work boots worn by a member of the AWLA, Batlow NSW, c1942-45
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

---

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid. p. 19.
'The Benefits of a Country Life’ - The AWLA in Batlow

The Australian Women’s Land Army collection, held by the Batlow Historical Society Museum, adds specific information to material already held by the Australian War Memorial and the National Library of Australia. The stories of the AWLA in Batlow presented in this thesis only begin to explore the research possibilities of this collection.
In 1941, correspondence from Mrs. Aileen Lynch, the Chief Executive Officer of the WANS, to Mr. A.H. McDonald Esq., Chief of the Division of Plant Industry, outlines the beginnings of the Land Army camps which were to be established in rural areas including Batlow:

To assist in harvesting the present fruit and vegetable crop, camps of girls are to be formed through the country. The girls will work at the ruling district rates in all cases. 

Protocols for employment and accommodation were then explained by Mrs. Lynch:

Where sufficient work can be found for at least 20 girls within a radius of approximately five miles, a camp will be established with a matron-in-charge. In many cases the individual farmer might be able to employ this number, but in other instances adjacent farmers might employ the total number between them. First consideration will be given to applications from farmers who can find buildings suitable to house the girls, (such as empty houses, shearing or packing sheds, showground buildings, etc.) and a certain amount of furniture such as tables and chairs. In camps already established some farmers have given up their own homes for the harvest period to accommodate land girls. The Land Army will provide their own beds, bedding, linen, blankets, cooking utensils, crockery, etc. In urgent cases where absolutely no accommodation is available, consideration will be given to the establishment of camps under canvas.

Suitable housing for the girls remained a problem into the beginning of 1942, with a constant stream of correspondence exchanged between Herbert Velvin Smith the manager of the Batlow Packing House Co-operative Ltd., and Mrs. Lynch, in an effort to find a solution to the problem. As H.V. Smith pointed out:

Accommodation is very limited and we regret we cannot undertake to provide same, nor would it be practicable to secure accommodation for girls on the orchards themselves. It would be a

---


80 Ibid.
matter for yourselves arranging to establish a camp in charge of your own officers and providing your own tents etc. We would, of course, be prepared to give a measure of assistance, and it may be worthwhile sending one of your officers up here to decide whether it would be practicable or not. 81

With the availability of many household items restricted due to wartime constraints, the provision of bed linen and other domestic articles was also carefully negotiated, with H.V. Smith explaining to Mrs. Lynch:

It is understood you would provide all crockery and equipment for the girls’ bedding and mess ing. The growers arranging house or hall accommodation, bunks with wire to receive paillasses and straw for paillasses, lavatory accommodation, showers (for two at a time divided by a partition) hot water. For the central number in Batlow, if available, the “Cosy Inn” would be engaged for central messing and kitchen – this would, it is estimated, cover forty (40) girls … The Scouts’ Hall is suggested as an alternative. 82

The reality of life in the mountain region of Batlow soon became apparent for the Land Army girls during the cold winter months and discontentment with the primitive living conditions became a real concern for all the workers. As the Matron of the Batlow camp, Miss M. Travers stated in a letter to Mrs. Lynch in June of 1942:

Now that it is very cold we are all missing the comforts we are accustomed to having. The hall [scout hall] is not very suitable for the severe cold we are having here and all the girls have been ill. At one time last week I had seven down with bad colds … If only something could be done to make the girls more comfortable for the winter I am sure everyone would be very happy. The majority of the girls are a very fine lot, and are not grumblers. There is not a chair for the girls to sit on. In fact some of the girls have sat only on forms since they have been here … After dinner at night the girls are all waiting for their turn to have a bath. It is too cold for a cold shower and as we have only one bath it takes a good many hours before everyone has had her bath … We have been a most happy family until quite recently, but then the weather was not so cold and we were not all sick. 83

As a consequence of continuous complaints being received by Mrs. Lynch in regard to the Batlow Land Army camps, a list of improvements to be made to the living quarters was sent to H.V. Smith. Included in the list was a request for lining material for the interior of the sleeping quarters at the Central Camp, the provision of laundry facilities at both the Central and Atkinson Camps, the provision of an additional bath at the Central Camp and the completion of the bath-house roof and the installation of a chip [wood chip] bath heater at the Atkinson Camp.

Improvements were eventually made to the Batlow camps, with the provision of electricity to the Atkinson Camp in late 1942 being one of the highlights. Land Army girl Frances H. Hollins, who lived at the Atkinson Camp, wrote to H.V. Smith, expressing her delight and that of the other girls on this occasion.
‘A Good Deal of Ladder Work’ - Working conditions in Batlow

The successful harvesting of the valuable apple crop was a priority for the orchardists and for the management of the Batlow Fruit Co-operative. The placement of girls who were unable to tolerate either the working conditions or the climate could not be risked and as H.V. Smith explained to Mrs. Lynch:

The fruit harvesting commences here towards the end of February and continues until the end of April, and for a period of eight (8) weeks we could probably do with about fifty (50) girls, provided they were strong and able to stand up to the fairly rough conditions. This is a mountain district, three hundred and forty six (346) miles by rail from Sydney, elevation 2,500 [feet], average rainfall 45” [inches], good summer climate and very fine mountain scenery. The actual work of picking apples and pears is not hard, but there is a good deal of ladder work as the trees are fairly high and this in turn means the ladders must be carried about, which is fairly heavy work.84

In later correspondence to Mrs. Aileen Lynch, H.V. Smith outlined the necessity for the girls to be relatively self sufficient if they were allocated to Batlow, stating that the girls would:

… take out their lunches each day when working [away] from Centre [packing house] at Batlow [and] where any girl possesses a bicycle she will do so for transport to nearby orchards …

Some growers at a distance from Batlow have already tentatively suggested certain numbers of girls they require and for whom they would provide accommodation which you have approved – having visited their properties. As many girls, experienced in fruit picking, as are available will be included in those who come to Batlow.85

Among the first growers to make tentative arrangements to employ the girls were: A. E. Herring - twenty girls, B. Atkinson – twenty girls, John Sedgwick – two girls and Mrs. Banks – four girls.

The Batlow girls were anxious to prove their worth as fruit pickers to their employers and the Batlow community and, a visit to Batlow in late March 1942 by Lord Wakehurst, Governor of NSW, and Lady Wakehurst, patron of the WANS, was a chance for them to demonstrate their skills. In a letter written to Lieutenant Colonel Wynne, Aide de Camp to Lord Wakehurst, H.V. Smith observed that the Land Army girls ‘were very keen to pick and pack a case of apples for Her Excellency …’.86 H.V. Smith then went on to say that it was:

[V]ery pleasing to be able to say that the Land Army girls in this district have as regards a large majority carried out their work efficiently and conscientiously and much better than most of our growers believed possible. In this regard the foreman of one team of twenty pickers reports that fourteen of them are equal to a pre-war team of men pickers.87

---

87 Ibid.
Girls across Australia were being urged to join the ranks of the AWLA and the *Tumut and Adelong Times* encouraged local women by declaring that:

… without food armies could not be kept in the field and it would be impossible to maintain munitions production at a high level … People in the fighting services, the munitions industries and the civilian population had to be fed. … A girl who joins the Land Army will work under conditions that mean good health. She will have the benefits of a country life and she will have the satisfaction of knowing that she is doing a job on which our fight for freedom depends.88

This bracing and patriotic rhetoric no doubt attracted many girls to the ranks of the Land Army. However, the reality of ‘country life’ was to prove much more difficult for many of the girls.

Land Army girls had taken the place of workers in what had been, before WWII, a male-dominated industry. Not only was the work heavy and labour-intensive, but at times, also dangerous. An accident at the Batlow Packing House vegetable dehydrator, which was reported by the *Tumut & Adelong Times* in 1945, not only highlighted the details of the accident itself, but also the isolated location of Batlow when faced with a medical emergency:

> The first serious accident since the Batlow Packing House began dehydration of vegetables some 3½ years ago occurred … when a Land Army girl, Ivy Williams, aged 17, had her right hand and forearm badly torn in an elevator … The conveyor was stopped immediately and had to be

partially dismantled before she could be released. The bush nurse was on the scene within a few minutes and a call was made for the Gundagai Ambulance, which first conveyed the patient to Tumut Hospital and then, on the advice of Dr. J.W. Mason, to Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, for specialist’s treatment.89

'The Best Night's Fun' - Leisure and community events

AWLA girls stationed at Batlow may have worked hard and endured sub-standard living conditions, but from information recorded in the _Tumut & Adelong Times_ and _The Land Army News_, they also knew how to enjoy themselves. Fundraising for organisations such as the Red Cross and the Bush Nursing Association were always well patronised by the local Batlow community and the Land Army girls willingly participated in these events.

They were reported as participating in a concert in aid of the Bush Nursing Association in December 1942, with the _Tumut & Adelong Times_ observing that:

> A musical sketch, “Andonio”, by the Land Army girls, was a great success, colourful and well acted and well sung. After the interval a “Russian Ballet” by a visiting metropolitan company (Land Army girls) amazed the audience …”A Shadow Show” [and] “Gertrude the Governess” by the Land Army girls was most amusing.90

---

The Land Army girls also raised money for their own Comforts Fund, with the *Tumut & Adelong Times* providing a detailed account of a ‘gala night’ held in July 1943:

> [T]he Women’s Land Army girls staged a fancy-dress dance in aid of their comforts fund. A big crowd rolled up and enjoyed one of the best night’s fun for a long time. There were many and varied costumes … the Dead-End Kids, to Hitler, Tojo and Musso [Mussolini] … Mr. and Mrs. Ted Ramsay of “Dad & Dave” fame … golliwogs, cowboys and Indian squaws … wardens and baby girls.91

![Fig. 7.46: Front cover of *The Land Army News*](Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum (Photo: A. Brown))

*The Land Army News*, which was published monthly and distributed across NSW, provided a forum of discussion, complaint and amusement for the AWLA girls. Leisure and work pursuits at the Batlow camps were often featured in this publication:

> The Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund benefited to the extent of over £150 as a result of a successful Gymkhana held recently at Batlow … The Land Army played a prominent part in most of the events, winning a number of prizes. Great interest was shown by the girls in the inter-Hostel Tug-of-War; this was won by Sedgewick’s Camp after a very hard pull. A combined team from Sedgewick’s and Francesco Camps won the Open Ladies’ Tug-of-War. The Fancy Dress prizes at the dance at night were all won by Land Army girls.92

The repercussions of wartime restrictions and rationing also featured in *The Land Army News*, with the appearance of ‘fresh cream’ at a Batlow social gathering discussed in humorous terms. AWLA girl Audrey Webster reported the incident to *The Land Army News* and the editor consequently recounted that:

---

91 Batlow. (1943, July 6). *Tumut & Adelong Times*, p. 3.
When [Webster] and five other Land Army girls were entertained recently by neighbours of their’s, the Quarmby’s, the cake took “the cake” – It was a luscious chocolate sponge, smothered with fresh cream! (Must look up the dictionary and see what “fresh cream” means). She [Webster] says they had a delightful evening.93

Fig. 7.47: AWLA girls relaxing on the sundeck of Wakehurst Hostel, Batlow NSW, c1945
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

Exploring the surrounding bush was also a recorded in The Land Army News, where the story of an attempted walk to Buddong Falls reported by Land Army girl, Lola Hyland, was retold by the editor in a decidedly wry manner. A group of girls ‘led by an intrepid, if direction-hazy Matron’94 set out on an expedition to Buddong Falls near Batlow:

From half past nine in the morning they walked until half past one when they consumed grilled steak and potatoes al fresco. In all they walked 24 miles, but did they find the Buddong Falls, alas no!95

94 Social life around the camps. (1944, October). The Land Army News, p. 2.
95 Ibid.
7.7: Summary

These objects and collections tell the largely unrecorded micro-narratives of ordinary people who dealt with both WWI and WWII beyond the frontline, and are connected to national and international macro-narratives of wartime. The Land Army collection, held at the Batlow Historical Society Museum, is a prime example, with its link to already published material and in regard to further research potential. The Kaiser Wilhelm chromolithograph from the Jindera Pioneer Museum and the Union Jack flag from the Tumbarumba Museum are linked to the macro-narratives of German internees during WWI and bring to light previously unpublished material from this era.

The role of women during wartime is focused around the stories of Mabel Lewis, Alma Pearce and the women who worked for the Land Army in Batlow. While these particular narrative streams are not unique, they bring together oral and written sources, which, combined together, give a personal perspective to life during wartime.

Cross-references are also made with several stories in Chapter 5 (Making Do in the Riverina). For example, the Mabel Lewis fillet crochet links to the Louisa Meacham lace collection story, and the stories of the preserving pan and the charcoal cool-safe both have links to WWII rationing.

Apart from the Land Army collection held in the Batlow Historical Society Museum, these objects and collections are not unique. The stories told by these objects and collections are unique, and add fresh insight to already existing narratives of wartime.
Chapter 8: ‘Secure Your Tickets’ – Stories of entertainment in the Riverina

8.1: Objects and collections – an overview

Objects and collections referencing the stories of entertainment in the Riverina are commonplace in museum collections throughout the region and include sheet music, pianos, organs, harmoniums, drum kits, mouth organs, dancing costumes, fancy dress costumes, tiaras, sashes and ball gowns.

The objects and collections which are the key mnemonics in this chapter are not intended to be representative of the entire range of entertainment practices in the Riverina, either past or present. However, they do represent a broad range of activities, events and geographical locations of the area. They tell stories of home entertainment, town bands, orchestras, singers, dancers, eisteddfod festivals, debating and drama. The story of leisure and entertainment in Adelong adds a supporting micronarrative. The key objects and collections include: tenor horn (German communities in the Riverina), Marie Narelle headstone (Temora’s Irish Nightingale); the Jimmy Sharman collection (Tent boxing); the Wilna Wattle Collection (the Wilna Wattle Debating and Drama Club); the Nutcrackers’ bass drum (Gundagai and district’s Nutcrackers’ Orchestra) and the Pauline Harvey Collection (Pauline Harvey, Madge Wallace and the City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod Society).

8.2: Introduction

For the pioneer settlers of the 1800s, listening to the playing of a musical instrument, or the telling of a familiar story around a campfire, helped to alleviate the physical pain of long hours spent walking and riding and the emotional pain of separation and homesickness. References are made to the transportation and use of musical instruments in the published histories of the Riverina’s German communities, including the Lieschke, Hartwig and Haberecht families. The Hartwig family history states that small instruments such as violins, trumpets and accordions were carried from South Australia in wagons, along with other treasured personal items, while larger instruments such as pianos and organs were sent with furniture and agricultural implements, from
Wentworth to Albury by river steamer.\(^1\) Even the enforced wait at river ports on the Murray River for customs clearance was an opportunity for German travellers to indulge in musical diversion, as the *Deniliquin Chronicle & Riverine Gazette* of 1864 reported:

> On one occasion a party of new chum Germans were detained so long during the searching process that they procured a fiddle and wiled away the time by a dance on the green.\(^2\)

Entertainment ranging from the amateur to the professional, continued to play a role in the developing Riverina communities, with music forming the basis for much of the entertainment, along with singing, dancing, dramatic productions and circuses.

As larger communities were established throughout the Riverina in the late 1800s, entertainment diversified to include bands and orchestras. As historian G.L. Buxton explained, ‘In Albury, which supported a German band, it was possible to buy from two shops a veritable orchestra, and Deniliquen for a time boasted a pianoforte manufacturer.’\(^3\)

These groups of musicians, which often featured vocalists, provided music for a range of community functions including weddings and other church services, birthdays, farewells, parades, balls and concerts. Churches, church halls, schoolrooms, woolsheds, community halls, sporting grounds, tents and agricultural show grounds in towns across the Riverina provided the venues for these entertainment and leisure activities.

This same variety of entertainment was also reflected in the demographic of the growing Riverina communities. Expansion in agriculture was reflected in the strengthening of the commercial sector, which in turn attracted additional tradespeople and professionals. Entertainers, both amateur and professional, played an integral role in raising funds for the building of civic and church structures. These events were often the genesis of professional careers as in the case of the Temora girl, Catherine Mary Ryan, who became internationally known as the singer, Marie Narelle.

---


Factors such as the establishment of accessible road and rail links and a developing middle class sensibility influenced trends in entertainment. It was seen, by members of the middle classes in particular, as edifying as well as amusing, and this notion brought about the establishment of musical, choral, drama and debating societies in many Riverina centres. According to Buxton it was hoped that these institutions would assist in ‘the elevation of the masses [and] battle against the fatal attractions of the public house.’\textsuperscript{4} Buxton also refers to a ‘social and musical tea’ staged at Albury in 1860 where ‘gentlemen of the town gave improving addresses [and] gentlemen amateurs and others provided vocal and instrumental music\textsuperscript{5}, no doubt in the hope of ‘elevating’ those in attendance. Eisteddfod Societies, which fostered the arts of music, drama and dance, were established in larger Riverina centres including Wagga Wagga, Albury and Leeton. The Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod Society, established in 1921, was the first of these annual festivals.

Although ‘improving’ events remained popular from the 1800s until the mid 1900s, it was entertainment of a more populist nature, such as fire-eaters, performing dogs and acrobats, which entertained many people in communities across the Riverina. As G.L. Buxton explains, ‘Circuses, with elephants and hippopotami, Wirth’s Wild West show, variety companies and touring artists all provided entertainment, often arriving in the larger towns to coincide with the annual show.’\textsuperscript{6}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{Fig.8.1: Wirth’s Circus arriving at Wingham NSW, c1920s (State Library of NSW - 01535)}
\caption{Wirth’s Circus arriving at Wingham NSW, c1920s (State Library of NSW - 01535)}
\end{figure}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\hline
\textsuperscript{4} & Buxton, G. L. (1967). p. 93. \\
\textsuperscript{5} & Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{6} & Ibid. p. 239. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
Until the 1960s when television broadcasting was introduced to the Riverina, the annual agricultural show with its side-show alley entertainment venues was among the few purveyors of the more ‘spectacular’ forms of entertainment. As Steve O’Halloran recalls:

Side-Show Alley: About twenty five side-shows of every kind lined up on both sides of this street, ‘The Globe of Death’, the inevitable ‘Fat Lady’, the ‘Pigmy from Darkest Africa’, the Jimmy Sharman Boxing Troupe’, ‘Gill Brothers’ Rodeo’, and the ‘Tatoo-ed Lady’ were but a few.7

The weeks leading up to the local agricultural show were accompanied by a sense of anticipation among the younger members of the community in particular, who looked forward to the unfamiliar sights and sounds of side-show alley. This sense of anticipation is vividly narrated by O’Halloran:

Many weeks before “Show Time” we would look hopefully at the Showground as we passed, for some sign of activity. Finally we would notice two or three workmen busy cleaning up … Each day as we came from school we would watch the progress they made, realizing that each day brought us nearer to the Show … On the “grapevine” to us young folk came the exciting news. Someone had seen the first “side-show” arrive and their tent was being erected. This was really news in our world. Soon more side-shows came. We curiously gazed at these strangely dressed people.8

---

7 O’Halloran, S. (c1970). The days that are gone. Wagga Wagga NSW: S. O’Halloran. p. 34.
8 Ibid. p. 31.
8.3: Long Winter Evenings - Music in German Communities

Music was always an integral part of any gathering in the German communities of the Riverina. The accordion, violin, mouth organ, piano, organ, trumpet and tenor horn were among the most popular instruments. Michael Cannon also notes that in areas ‘where German immigrants settled, town bands were a notable feature.’

For children, an appreciation of music was fostered within the family unit, with historian Colin Graetz stating that ‘[a]s the child grew up, memories of long winter evenings were made when father would sometimes ask for his harmonica, or perhaps he had a violin or the old German ‘squeeze box’, forerunner of our modern piano-accordion. As the family became more affluent they may even have purchased a reed organ. Later a piano or Pianola were also accepted as home instruments.’

Advertising from the Temora Independent of 10th January 1914 shows that professional tuition was also available, with Miss W. H. Schrum offering her services to the Temora community.

---

9 Jindera, Walla Walla, Henty, Temora, Trungley Hall and Milbrulong had the highest concentration of settlers of German descent.
Weddings, parties and dances often required the services of musicians, who were usually local people. On special occasions such as civic receptions, musicians could be hired from nearby, larger towns including Albury and Temora. In regard to ‘German’ musicians of the Riverina, among the best known were members of the Homann family. Living in Wagga Wagga and Adelong, the Homanns were sought after as both bandsmen and tutors during the early 20th century.12

Formed in 1880 and functioning until 1910, the Jindera Town Band operated with a majority of members from among the German community. According to the text which accompanies a photograph of the band, members included Gottlieb Schmidt, August Schmidt, Wilhelm Singe, E. Bockman, Alf Schmidt, Gus Funk and Albert Briese.13 The Albury Border Post of 1883 reported that:

… the Jindera Band is becoming quite an institution here. It is not so long ago that it was formed, but under the capable leadership of Captain James Drury, it has made rapid strides towards becoming a rival to either of the Albury bands. Mr. F.E. Quintrell, who was present at last

13 Jindera brass band members. [Object label]. Jindera Museum: Jindera NSW.
Saturday’s recital, was exceedingly surprised at the perfection brought about by the Bandmaster.14

Fig. 8.4: Jindera town band, c1880 to 1910
Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)
(Back L to R) Gottlieb Schmidt, August Schmidt and Wilhelm Singe
(Front L to R) E. Bockman, Alf Schmidt, Gus Funk and Albert Briese

The traditions associated with German music, particularly folk music, were passed from generation to generation in the Riverina until the late 20th century. Musicians from Trungley Hall and Walla Walla have been documented as part of a statewide oral history project conducted by the New South Wales State Archives. Included in the research are Ottie Pfeiffer and Les Schultz from Trungley Hall, and Ted Jacob from Walla Walla.

8.4: ‘For the Benefit of the Public’ - Entertainment in Adelong

The gold diggings of Adelong in the late 1800s attracted a population from many corners of the globe, including hard-rock miners from Cornwall, Wales, America and Scotland. In the commercial sector of the town retailers from Germany and England traded alongside travelling hawkers from Syria and Switzerland. This diversity in cultural backgrounds was also reflected in the wide range of entertainment available at that time.

Fig. 8.5: Advertising poster for Abdy’s Bird Circus, c1860-1896
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an13416619)

Acrobats, magicians, singers, dancers, performing dogs, goats, horses and birds were among the performers listed, with ‘Jones’ Circus’, ‘Mr. R.J. Osborne’s Troupe’, ‘Foley’s Mammoth Circus and Hippodrome’ and ‘Abdy’s Dog and Bird Circus’ among the entertainments presented to the citizens of Adelong and district. Details of the imminent arrival of these performers were advertised by the local newspapers and members of the community were tantalised with glowing descriptions of the awaited acts, such as Jones’ Circus, where they could expect to see a ‘Daring Feat by the Young Nugget on a rope 300 feet in length by 60 feet high, the one end of a rope to be fastened

---

Entertainers and operators of entertainment venues were attracted to the wealth of the gold diggings in areas such as Adelong, Kiandra, Hill End, Temora, Ballarat and Bendigo.
to a tree, the other to a stump. 16 Community members were also requested by The Adelong Mining Journal and Tumut Express of 1858, to:

… secure your tickets early [for] Mr. R.J. Osborne’s Troupe’, 17 which consisted of ‘Professor W. Kholer, The Wizard of the North, Madame Flora, The Fire Queen and The great American canine artiste, The Dog Jonathan in his wonderful FIRE FEATS. 18

In a review of the troupe, written after the Adelong performances, it was observed that:

The entertainments concluded with the performances of their wonderful dog Jonathan, the various manoeuvres he goes through must be seen to be appreciated, suffice it to say, he is a particularly clever animal. 19

From public halls to private homes, the range of entertainment and leisure activities were varied, with both professional and amateur entertainers ‘treading the boards’. Card games, parlour games and musical evenings were all available for home entertainment, and in 1921 the Adelong firm of W.W. Burkinshaw advertised itself as the selling agent for Paling’s Pianos, Player Pianos and Talking Machines.

Among the many local amateur entertainers, C.J. Homann Senior’s Brass Band offered their services to the public in 1903, promising to ‘supply music at moderate prices for balls and parties and public gatherings’. 20 Tea meetings and soirees, grand masquerades, fancy dress balls and suppers all provided a genteel atmosphere for social interaction

18 Ibid.
and, along with the Hibernian Ball of 1899, there was also advertised, by the Misses Madigan and Alpen, a ‘Dancing Class.’

The Adelong Empire Minstrel Company also performed for the first time before an Adelong audience in 1903, with the Adelong and Tumut Express remarking critically that:

… the company has in its ranks a deal of rough material that only requires a little patience and perseverance on the part of those of its members possessed of natural gifts to ultimately produce a combination which the town might well be proud of.  

---

8.5: ‘The Family Came, Babies and All’ - The Nutcrackers’ Orchestra

As a child growing up in the Riverina during the 1950s, I remember attending a debutante ball as one of a group of seven flower girls. For many months leading up to that event the flower girls were drilled to perform their role of leading in the matron of honour, the debutantes and their partners. This preparatory training took place in an empty church hall, with only our dancing teacher and a pianist in attendance.

It was not until the night of the ball that we got the chance to walk slowly and gracefully, down the length of the ballroom, accompanied by the music of a ‘real’ dance band. I can’t remember what the band played, but I can remember the sound of brass and percussion instruments, the prickle of my tulle skirt and mittens, the smell of dust, floor wax, flowers and perfume.

The souvenir program kept from that night tells me that the band was the Cootamundra Jazz Band, who occasionally shared the stage at similar functions throughout the Riverina with The Nutcrackers’ Orchestra, a dance band from Gundagai. At that time, balls and dances were a weekly event in towns across the Riverina. They were a means of social interaction and entertainment, with the ubiquitous debutante ball at the summit of community events.
Dances played a key role in the celebration of personal rituals: birthdays, engagements, weddings and anniversaries. They were also a successful method for raising funds for community organisations such as the local hospital, ambulance station, bush fire brigade, Red Cross, and church groups.

*Take Your Partners – Dances, balls and parties*

Drummer, Leon Newman, was a foundation member of the then unnamed dance orchestra when it was formed in 1943, along with Gordon Schofield, who played trumpet and saxophone, and Alf Johnson, who played the piano. The name ‘Nutcrackers’ was suggested by the band’s saxophonist Bill Jones in 1948. Jones was learning classical piano at the time and the Nutcracker Suite\(^23\) gave him the idea. From 1950 onwards the band played mostly as a four piece ensemble (drums, piano, saxophone and trumpet) for town and district dances. Barry Luff, who was a trumpet player...

player with the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra from 1951 until 1978, recalls that ‘for balls or bigger functions, five or six instruments were used.’

According to Barry Luff, who was a trumpet player with the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra from 1951 to 1978, the usual programme comprised the Quick Step, Fox Trot, Waltz, Barn Dance, Pride of Erin, Gypsy Tap and Jazz Waltz. Among the most popular tunes played during that time were ‘China Doll’, ‘Galway Bay’, ‘Mexicali Rose’, ‘Alexander’s Ragtime Band’ and ‘Midnight in Moscow’.

The ‘Cheer Up Club’ band was also comprised of members of the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra. Founded in Gundagai during 1944, the club raised money for the Australian Red Cross, the NSW Patriotic Fund, and the RSS & AILA (Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen’s Imperial League of Australia), the Gundagai District Hospital, the Gundagai & Tumut District Ambulance and the local schools. Between 1944 and 1956 The ‘Cheer Up Club’ presented nine stage shows in Gundagai and six stage shows in other towns.

---

24 B. Luff (personal communication, March 6, 2003).
During the 1950s and 1960s, the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra often shared the stage with a second band, playing three brackets each. The ‘boys’ from the Nutcrackers were proud to have shared the stage with several famous bands and many well known musicians of that period, including the Cootamundra Jazz Band (Lloyd Jansen, John Costello, John Ansell, Greg Gibson, Kevin McArthur and Bob Cowl), the Riverina RJ’s (Don Crowe and Don Tuckwell), the Batlow Saints (Evan Ross), Reg King from Tumut and the McLures from Tarcutta.

Fig. 8.13: The Nutcrackers’ Orchestra on stage, c1950s
Barry Luff (front centre)
Image courtesy of Barry Luff
(Photographer: Unknown)

The pay rate for band members from 1945 until 1950 was 5/- per hour, with dances paying £1/15/0 and balls £3/0/0 for the night. For band members during the 1950s and 1960s, the pay rate was set at £3/0/0 per evening for dances (9pm till 1am) and £5/0/0 for balls (9pm till 2am). In comparison, at that time Barry Luff was earning £5 per week, in his regular occupation as a motor mechanic. As Barry Luff recalls:

I started learning music when I was a boy at school and one of the school teachers, a tall woman, as I can remember, played violin. I regarded her as most kids regard school teachers, very proper and business like. But when I joined up with the Nutcrackers, I found this same teacher playing in the band with me. When we went out to play she sat in the middle in the back seat [of the car], and I remember her telling some of the most ribald stories. Quite a contrast to the starchy school teacher image.

26 Ibid.
Barry Luff also recalled special occasions like New Year’s Eve dances, weddings and birthday parties held by the ‘big’ land owners when their teenage children were home from boarding school. These events started at about 7pm and continued until breakfast the next morning at 8am. The band members were paid £15 each for these ‘special’ events, the equivalent of three weeks wages.

Certain stories of the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra highlight the contrast in social attitudes of the mid 20th century, to those of the early 21st century. It was a time when codes of behaviour were on a more formal footing and dress codes were strictly adhered to, as were restrictions or limits on alcoholic beverages. A substantial supper and a well prepared dance floor were always part of the evening’s proceedings. Whole families, including young children and babies in their carry baskets, attended many the dances.
The band continued with four to six players until 1972, when the loss of players, due to workplace transfers, plus competition from electric guitar bands, reduced the Nutcrackers to a three piece combination. They continued to perform at small dances, weddings and Service Club dances until 1978, when the sudden death of James ‘Jazza’ Hawthorne, the piano player, brought the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra to a close.

Between 1943 and 1978 the Gundagai Nutcrackers played at the following venues: Gundagai, Tumut, Junee, Batlow, Tumbarumba, Adelong, Tarcutta, Coolac, Tumblong, Brungle, Gilmore, Cootamundra, Jugiong, Adjungbilly, Wantabadjery, Eurongilly, Nangus, Grahamstown, Burra, Bongongalong, Muttama and Mundarlo. The band also played at the following property woolsheds: Nargoon at Gundagai, Mooney at Gobaralong, Kinkora at Edwardstown, Wynyeh at Tumblong and Trinity Lea at Burra.27

---

27 Ibid.
‘We Were Really Decent People’ – Stories from the dances

Between the 1920s and 1960s, dances were a regular event in country halls. Dances offered an opportunity for young people to interact on a social level with people from their own or nearby communities. There was the ‘anticipations of courtship, the pleasures of the feast, and the excitement of transgressing the everyday order’. Groups including the Country Women’s Association (CWA), Red Cross, church guilds, sporting clubs or Service Clubs (Lions Club, Rotary Club and Masonic Lodge) would often provide the supper and the prepare the hall for the dances.

Fig. 8.18: Catering ladies, St John’s Hall Gundagai, c1950s
Image courtesy of Barry Luff
(Photographer: Unknown)


The interior of the hall was decorated, usually with fresh flowers, streamers or eucalypt branches, and the floor was prepared for dancing. The wooden floor was swept and washed using a mop and bucket, and the surface of the floor was then ‘dressed’. A commonly used method was to drag a bag of sawdust soaked with kerosene across the floor. The clean floor was then sprinkled with candle wax shavings. According to Wagga Wagga resident Betty Owen, small children were frequently used as ‘ballast’ on top of the sawdust bag. ‘I often sat on top and was given a ride around the dance floor, when my father waxed the floor [of the community hall] at Natamuck [western Victoria].’

The suppers were just as important and memorable as the dancing and particular venues were renowned for presenting a particular ‘cuisine’. As Barry Luff remembers:

At the Junee Golf Club Ball there was always a seafood supper. Lobster tails were always served peeled, on plates, with lemon and salt. After the ball, the band would dive on the discarded

---

lobster claws and on one occasion we took a few claws into the car, to eat on the way home. About a week later my wife, Shirley, complained about a dead mouse in the wardrobe, but we found that I had forgotten a couple of lobster claws in the pocket of my coat.30

Efforts made by band members to transport their supply of alcohol were varied and inventive, according to Barry Luff. He wrote:

One method used was to get an aluminium 2 gallon keg filled at the pub before we went bush, then to put the sparkle in it, we pumped it up with a tyre pump. Beer on stage was not an accepted thing, so to try to convince dance organizers and audience that we were really “decent people”, we would put our beer in the music port [suitcase] or in some form of disguise … Alcoholic drinks were a necessity to get through the [long] evening.

On one occasion at the Nangus Scotch Ball, we had put a couple of bottles in the drummer’s canvas drum cover. When the time came to open the ball, the local organizers, Jess and Jack Pollack, came on to the stage to introduce the church minister from Junee, who was to open the ball. To clear the path behind the piano, Jess [Pollack] moved the drum cover and out rolled two bottles of Dinner Ale, across the stage. It was very embarrassing at the time.31

Disposing of the 'by-product' of their evening’s illicit drinking also tested the band members’ creativity, with Barry Luff describing in detail the method used to deal with urine:

At some halls, such as Muttama and Jugiong, there was no back door. So to fix the problem, naturally caused by the intake of liquid, we would have to slip behind the usual three ply partition or small change room and relieve ourselves by re-filling the empty beer bottles, scratching the labels to identify the “good” bottles from the “bad” bottles. When the dance was over, the bottles would be taken out the back and emptied. On one occasion I remember Jazza Hawthorne, who would try to keep us out of trouble, emptied about six bottles down a knot hole at the back of the stage.32

30 Luff, B. (c1980s). p. 3.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid. p. 2.
Strict dress codes were also upheld for patrons and band members alike during this period. Barry Luff explains that many venues, particularly community halls and woolsheds, offered little in the way of comfort in colder months:

During the winter months around bush halls, which were mainly tin structures built by volunteers, insulation was not a big thing. [The] comfort of the band was not considered. One night at Nangus, between numbers, the dancers started laughing and pointing at the band. We had taken to wearing our pyjamas under our clothes to keep warm and our pyjama pants had worked down and were hanging over our shoes.33

Compared to the politically correct climate of the 21st century, the mid 20th century was a time of relative innocence. The notion of ‘stranger danger’ was rarely considered and legal repercussions from what were seen at that time as ‘light-hearted pranks’ were unheard of. ‘At bush dances, the family came, babies and all’,34 recalls Barry Luff:

Some halls had small rooms or partitioned off areas for prams or baby baskets. At Tumblong the babies were lined up behind the band on the stage. Leon (Dookie) Newman, late in the evening, swapped babies from basket to basket. After the dance the families returned home and went to put their babies to bed, and found they had a redhead instead of a brunette or a boy instead of a girl. There were lots of quick phone calls to neighbours until the problem was sorted out. Evidently this was all taken in good fun, as pranks of this kind were accepted in those days.35

---

33 Ibid. p. 3.
34 Ibid. p. 2.
35 Ibid.
**Nutcrackers’ Orchestra - Members 1943 to 1978**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leon (Dookie) Newman</td>
<td>Barber</td>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>1943-1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Piper</td>
<td>Store Manager</td>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>1943-1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alf Johnson</td>
<td>Radio Shop Owner</td>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>1943-1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon Schofield</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Piano/Trumpet</td>
<td>1948-1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Jones</td>
<td>Truck operator/Bookmaker</td>
<td>Saxophone/Piano</td>
<td>1948-1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica Boyton</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>1948-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James (Jazza) Hawthorne</td>
<td>Publican</td>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>1950-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry Luff</td>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>1951-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Wilson</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Saxophone/Piano Accordion</td>
<td>1958-1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Turner</td>
<td>Shop Manager/Grazier</td>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>1958-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Malone</td>
<td>Farm Hand</td>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>1960-1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusty Parker</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saxophone</td>
<td>1958-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey Duncan</td>
<td>NSW Police</td>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>1960-1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When formation band member, Leon Newman, left Gundagai in 1960 the bass drum from his drum kit was sold to the Gundagai Town Band and used until the town band folded in 1982.

**Fig. 8.21: Bass drum, showing hand painted outer skin**
Collection of Gundagai and District Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)
8.6: ‘The Star Artiste’ - Catherine Mary Ryan

Born in 1870, Catherine Mary Ryan, who was known as 'Molly' to her family, is said to have possessed a sweet, but untrained singing voice from early childhood. Ryan’s early life was spent in the Combaning/ Sebastapol area south of Temora, where she lived with her parents, John\textsuperscript{36} and Catherine Ryan. Schooling for Molly Ryan was with the Presentation Sisters at Mt Erin Convent in Wagga Wagga, where her first music teacher was Sister Mary Angela Tracy.

![Fig. 8.22: Combaning homestead, birthplace of Catherine Mary Ryan](Image from Temora Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)

Molly Ryan’s first public appearance at the age of eleven years was at the Catholic Church consecration in Temora, on the 9th and 10th of October 1881. At a concert held to commemorate the event, Molly Ryan’s role was not as a singer but as a presenter of the prologue for the concert items, with the Temora Star of 12th October, 1881 reporting that 'the following prologue was nicely recited by Miss Mary Ryan.'\textsuperscript{37} The same article also reported that:

> The first of the series of concerts in aid of St. Patrick’s Catholic Church, Temora, took place at Ward’s Victoria Theatre on Monday evening. As expected the dress circle was crowded there not being sitting room available long before the concert commenced, and the body of the hall was as full as it could comfortably hold. The programme consisted of a prologue and twenty-one numbers.\textsuperscript{38}

The Ryan family moved to Moruya, on the south coast of New South Wales during Molly’s late teen years. In 1888, she was sent to Sydney to continue her education with

\textsuperscript{36} John Ryan was the holder of a property known as the Sebastapol Run and in his later life was well known as a gold miner in the Temora district.


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
the Sisters of Charity at Potts Point, where she was able to study with Madame Ellen Christian, one of Dame Nellie Melba’s former teachers.

Molly Ryan married Matthew A. Callaghan at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney in 1891 and they lived in Candelo and later Bega on the south coast of New South Wales. As a result of Matthew Callaghan’s chronic drunkenness, Molly found it necessary to support her family of three children, Rita, Narelle and Reginald. She travelled throughout the district on horseback, working as a music teacher and church organist.  

In 1898, using the stage name Marie Narelle, she commenced her professional career. ‘Narelle’ was the name of the ‘Queen’ of the Moruya group of Indigenous people on the south coast of New South Wales and in a 1906 interview Marie Narelle declared:

My name is pure Australian. Narelle was a Queen of the Moruya Tribe, and when I was quite a child they used to tell me legends about her, about the days when she and her people were great in the land. And I got to fashion an idea in my mind of how she must have looked. And so, when I was starting out in life – I chose her (name) as a sort of talisman. And, you know I really believe it has brought me luck.

After a series of successful tours throughout Australia which included the south coast of New South Wales and venues in the Riverina, including Cootamundra, Junee, Temora and Wyalong, Marie Narelle commenced three years of study in Sydney, under the well-known conductor, teacher and friend of Puccini, Signor Roberto Hazon. In 1899, Marie Narelle received a standing ovation during her performance in Sydney, at the Sydney Amateur Orchestral Society Concert.

---

39 Catherine Mary Callaghan divorced Matthew Callaghan in 1909 on the grounds of his habitual drunkenness.
41 Roberto Hazon (1854-1920) Conductor and music teacher, born in Parma, Italy.
Fig. 8.24: Marie Narelle, c1899
(Temora Rural Museum archives)
'The Queen of Irish Song' - Marie Narelle

Before leaving for a series of overseas concerts in 1902, an extensive Australian tour was undertaken by Marie Narelle with the flautist John Lemmone, who was to have a great influence on her career. They toured as the Narelle Concert Company. The Launceston Examiner of February 1902 reported Mr. John Lemmone as saying:

Two years ago I joined with Miss Marie Narelle, without doubt the most popular singer in Australia, for the tour we are now concluding. We have visited 231 towns in New South Wales alone and until reaching Launceston we had not once made a debit.

Reporting on the singer's farewell concert in the Sydney Town Hall, the Sydney Morning Herald remarked:

Strictly speaking, the artist, whose voice is not easily classified, is a high mezzo-soprano. The timbre of the voice, beautiful though it be, is unusually marked by individuality. Its chief charm lies in the “seizing effects” of the rich upper register, which at first strikes the ear with surprise, owing to the fact that the general character of the voice misleads the listener into supposing that it is restricted in its high range.

---

44 Concert. (1902, April 1). Sydney Morning Herald. p. 4.
In 1902, Marie Narelle also ‘stole the hearts of the Irish people’, appearing in both Dublin and Cork, where the *Cork Examiner* of November 1902 reported that ‘Miss Narelle is an artist we would wish to hear again in Cork.’

Marie Narelle made her London debut at the King’s Colonial Concert in the Albert Hall on 6th June 1903. Included on the programme were famous artists of the day: Canadian born opera singer, Dame Marie Louise Albani, the British contralto Dame Clara Butt, and Australian born contralto and oratorio singer Miss Ada Crossley. The audience of eight thousand people included ‘Royalty’, and always determined to take every advantage when it came to promoting her career, Marie Narelle performed at the concert, even under trying circumstances. The British Australian of 11th June 1903 reported that:

Marie Narelle, who was the newcomer of the occasion, left a sick bed in order to take her place on the program, but her rich and powerful voice gave no trace of the ordeal and she was warmly and deservedly applauded.

On one of her return trips to the USA from a tour of Ireland, Marie Narelle was selected to sing at the St. Louis World’s Fair of 1904. The retaining fee was 50 guineas per week and she appeared continuously for seven months. Marie Narelle sang as many as thirteen songs in one day she was rarely allowed off the stage with less than three or four encores. As the *Brisbane Courier* newspaper observed:

Miss Narelle was not known as anything but an Irish singer until one day two Australians, doing the Fair, strolled into the Blarney Castle Theatre and sat at the back of the hall. When the Prima Donna walked onto the stage one of the Australians looked up and said, “Who is the singer?” Almost immediately, without any prearrangement two voices blended from the rear of the theatre in a lusty and prolonged “cooee”. The singer, recognizing the call, stopped, quavered between laughter and tears and broke down. The bush had called to her for the first time in two years and her brave heart melted as the lingering echoes faded. She left the stage and everyone in the audience looked around to see the cause of the disturbance. The ushers proceeded to remove the two Australians but Marie Narelle gave instructions that her countrymen be treated with courtesy and they were invited to meet her after the concert. The audience was disturbed and

---


46 Dame Marie Louise Cecilie Emma Albani (1852-1930) Opera singer, born in Quebec, Canada.

47 Dame Clara Butt (1872-1936) Singer, often performed works composed for her by Sir Edward Elgar.

48 Ada Jemima Crossley (1871-1929) singer, born at Tarraville in the Gippsland District of Victoria.

only restored to peace when it was explained that the Prima Donna was herself an Australian and had been recognized by the two who had given the Australian call.50

Marie Narelle returned to Australia in 1907 and began an extensive tour, starting at Moruya on 25th November 1907 and ending in Brisbane on 23rd January 1908. Although it was not included in the tour, a performance was arranged at Saunders’ Hall, Temora on 14th December 1908. The Temora Independent reported that ‘The star artiste was most generous in her contributions and for encores – which followed every number – contributed in her inimitable manner, such old time favourites as “Rory O’More”, “Killarney” and others.’51

Marie Narelle performed for the last time in Temora in March 1926. The concert, which was held in the Crown Theatre in Loftus Street, was extensively covered by the Temora Independent and attracted a large crowd from a wide area. The Temora Independent stated:

Madame Marie Narelle (who was born at Combaning) received many hearty greetings from old friends who were delighted to see her looking so well. We have good reason to feel proud of the fame she has achieved in the musical world. Her voice was even better than on the occasion of her previous visit about seventeen years ago.52

‘Our Beloved Mother’ - The headstone comes home

Marie Narelle died in Chipping Norton on the 26th January 1941 after several years of ill health and was buried in a small graveyard attached to the Holy Trinity Church at Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, England. Along with others in the small cemetery, Marie Narelle’s headstone was removed for the redevelopment of the site as a children’s playground in 1980. John Lyons, a cousin of the singer, was passing the cleared graveyard and among the headstones lying against a fence, he recognised the name 'Marie Narelle'.

After contacting a friend in Temora, arrangements were made by John Lyons for the headstone to be packed and shipped to the Temora in 1980, for display in the grounds of the Temora Rural Museum.
The inscription on the headstone reads:

PLEASE PRAY FOR

OUR BELOVED MOTHER

MARIE NARELLE

(OF SYDNEY AUSTRALIA)

AND NEW YORK U.S.A.)

WHO DIED ON THE 26th JANUARY 1941

FORTIFIED BY THE RITES OF THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH AGED 73 YEARS

GOD REST HER SOUL

The return of Marie Narelle’s headstone to the Temora Rural Museum in 1980 re-activated the narratives of the ‘Queen of Irish Song’, which had been silenced in Temora since the 1920s.
Pauline Harvey (nee Kenyon) has been a member of the Wagga Wagga arts community for over sixty years. Dancer, dance teacher, choreographer, stage director, costume designer, costume maker, and life member of the City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod are listed among Harvey’s accomplishments. In 2006, The *Daily Advertiser* featured an article on an upcoming musical theatre production, *Stepping Out*. This School of Arts production was not only choreographed by Pauline Harvey, but she also performed in the production. As Adam Walters of the *Daily Advertiser* accurately observed, ‘Pauline’s passion for dancing keeps her going strong.’

That ‘passion for dancing’ has been present since Pauline Harvey (nee Kenyon) began her dancing career at Wagga Wagga in 1935, at the age of five years. Ballet, tap dancing, clog dancing, national character dancing, demi-character, song and dance, Irish dancing, Highland dancing and acrobatics were all taught to Harvey at the dance studio of Miss Madge Wallace.

Along with the annual dancing school concert, performing in the Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod was the highlight of the dance calendar for Pauline Kenyon and other students of the Madge Wallace Dance Studio. Long hours of practice were put in by the

---

54 A dance genre which includes a storytelling or drama element in the choreography.
children and stage costumes were designed and made by Wallace and the performers’ mothers, including Harvey’s mother, Mrs. Leah Kenyon.

For tap dancing entrants in the Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod, a win in the Carabost Cup Tap Dancing Championship section was the pinnacle of their amateur stage career. Pauline Kenyon won this prestigious championship event in 1945, aged fifteen. Other championship sections won by Pauline Kenyon included National Character and Demi Character. Pauline Kenyon was also a successful competitor in the City of Goulburn Eisteddfod and the City of Sydney Eisteddfod. WWII fundraising events at the Forest Hill RAAF Base and the Uranquinty RAAF Base were also a feature of Pauline Kenyon’s amateur dancing career in Wagga Wagga.
In 1945, at the age of fifteen, Pauline Kenyon auditioned successfully for the Tivoli Theatre in Sydney. Her professional dancing career did not begin until 1946 at the age of sixteen, when she toured to Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart and New Zealand in the J.C. Williamson production of *Hellzapoppin*, which starred American comedians Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson.\(^{55}\) Initially billed anonymously along with the sixteen showgirls advertised as the ‘Hellza Girls’, Pauline Kenyon eventually gained individual billing as ‘Pauline Kenyon the Sexciting Comique’. She also appeared as a dancer in other Tivoli shows before returning to Wagga Wagga in the early 1950s.

On her return to Wagga Wagga, Pauline Kenyon married Vince Harvey and opened her own dance school. She also worked as a choreographer, staging a succession of variety and musical shows including: *Annie Get Your Gun*\(^{56}\) (October 1978), *The Mis-Used School Girl*\(^{57}\) (December 1980), *We Sing Your Songs*\(^{58}\) (February 1981), *Guys & Dolls*\(^{59}\) (June & July 1981) and *The Boyfriend*\(^{60}\) (date unknown). The Harvey School of Dance was also involved in many community events in the 1950s and 1960s, including group performances at the annual Wagga Wagga Mardi Gras carnival, which was a feature of the Miss Wagga crowning ceremony. Pauline Harvey was awarded Life

\(^{55}\) Ole Olsen (1892-1963) and Chic Johnson (1891-1962) Musicians and comedians who worked in vaudeville, radio, Broadway stage productions, motion pictures and television.

\(^{56}\) Annie Get Your Gun – lyrics and music, Irving Berlin and book, Herbert and Dorothy Field. 1946.

\(^{57}\) A Wagga School of Arts production billed as a ‘Music Hall Variety Show and Melodrama’. 1980.

\(^{58}\) A Wagga School of Arts revue production 1981.

\(^{59}\) Guys & Dolls – Music & Lyrics written by Frank Loesser. Based on two short stories by Damon Runyon, The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown and Blood Pressure

\(^{60}\) The Boyfriend – Sandy Wilson. 1971.
Membership of the Wagga Eisteddfod Society in 1975, in recognition of her many years of service to the society.

Fig. 8.35: Advertising poster for Guys & Dolls, 1981
Collection of Pauline Harvey

Pauline Harvey’s involvement with the local entertainment scene has continued into the 21st century, with the establishment of an adult tap dancing ensemble, The Timeless Tappers. This group of enthusiastic ladies, led by Harvey, performs on a regular basis at venues throughout the Riverina including Gundagai, Coolamon, Junee, Henty, Temora and Wagga.
‘An Inspirational Teacher’ - Madge Wallace

Born in Murrumburrah New South Wales in 1896, Marguerite Lucy Wallace, who was known as Madge, spent her childhood in the Harden-Murrumburrah area. As a ten year old, Madge Wallace acted in the role of escort, when her six year old sister Airlie first attended dancing classes. Captivated by the music and the steps, Madge Wallace could only sit on the sidelines as an observer as her younger sister, who was ‘dainty as a fairy’\(^{61}\) learned to dance. After her sister contracted measles and was unable to attend, it was suggested by the teacher that Madge should join the dance class and finish the term ‘so the fees would not be wasted.’\(^{62}\)

![Fig. 8.36: Madge Wallace, Murrumburrah NSW, c1910](Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(PHOTGRAPHER: UNKNOWN)

After learning as much as possible in Harden-Murrumburrah, Madge Wallace relocated to Sydney to further her skills as a dancer, where she continued her dance training at the Minnie Hooper and Scully Ballet Schools. At the age of fifteen Madge Wallace returned to her home town where she opened her first dancing school. She was also fortunate in obtaining lessons from champion Scottish dancer Andrew Paterson, who had been invited to visit Murrumburrah by Wallace’s father, Robert Bruce Wallace, who was the Town Clerk. During Paterson’s month-long stay, Madge Wallace worked hard and spent long hours perfecting the intricate steps and rigorous techniques of Highland


\(^{62}\) Ibid.
dancing. From approximately 1918 until her retirement in the 1960s, Wallace’s Highland dancers were renowned for their winning performances.

Fig. 8.37: Highland dancing group – Wallace Dancing Studio, Junee NSW, 1918
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

In the 1930s Madge Wallace established her main dancing school at Wagga Wagga and at one time she had ten dancing schools scattered around the district, including in Harden, Grenfell, Cootamundra, Junee, The Rock and Henty.

Fig. 8.38: Madge Wallace (centre right) and ballet examination students, Wagga Wagga c1940s
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

From the 1930s to the 1950s Madge Wallace would enter as many as 45 dancing groups in the City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod, and her working hours stretched from 7.30am until 8pm, Monday to Saturday. Special lessons for groups entered in eisteddfods and ballet examination candidates were scheduled for Sunday when required.
After Madge Wallace’s marriage to Charles Robert Jacobi in 1932, all administration details of the dance studio were dealt with by Charles Jacobi. Apart from her role as a dance teacher, Madge Wallace worked as an eisteddfod adjudicator and an accredited examiner for the Scottish Dancing Association in Australia. From its introduction to Australia in the 1930s, Madge Wallace was also the Riverina organiser for the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD)

Many of Madge Wallace’s dancers continued on to professional level, including classical ballerinas Kathleen Gorham and Mary Duchesne, Tivoli performer Pauline Harvey (nee Kenyon) and the actor Bill Kerr. Known as ‘The Boy from Wagga Wagga’, Bill Kerr had studied tap dancing with Madge Wallace for several years.

Madge Wallace retired in 1965, after forty-five years of teaching thousands of students in the dance disciplines of classical ballet, national character, demi-character, acrobatics, Highland dancing, Irish dancing and tap dancing.

‘Full of Entertainment For All’ - The City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod

After the gold rushes of the 1850s, annual music and arts festivals were established, initially in Victoria, with the Music Society of Victoria (1861) the first of these organisations. These events were influenced by Welsh miners and settlers working on the goldfields. The first ‘true Welsh-Australian Eisteddfod’, 63 which was given the

---

status of a National Eisteddfod, was held in 1863. Initially this eisteddfod was rotated annually through some of the larger towns in Victoria, but has been hosted by the Royal South Street Society of Ballarat since 1879.

In NSW the Wollongong Eisteddfod was founded in 1894 and like the Victorian eisteddfods, it was influenced by the Welsh migrants working in the coal mines of the Illawarra region. The Royal South Street Society’s ‘Grand National Eisteddfod of Australasia’ and the Wollongong Eisteddfod are both still operating in 2009.

Other NSW Eisteddfods were established in the coal mining districts of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. Albury, Orange, Dubbo, Leeton and Sydney are among other NSW centres to host an eisteddfod each year.

Fig. 8.40: Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod Society competitor’s tickets, c1940s
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: R. Willis)

The ‘Riverina District Eisteddfod Society’ was formed in Wagga Wagga in May 1921, with the first ‘Wagga Eisteddfod’ conducted from 25 to 29 of October 1921. A total of two hundred and ninety eight entries were received in that first year. A band contest, which was held at the Wagga Wagga Showground, was a feature of the first eisteddfod and a great favourite with audiences. Most prize winners came from Wagga Wagga, although some prizes were won by contestants from Uranquinty, Orange, Maitland and Cooma.
The audience appreciated both the vocal and instrumental sections and, according to the Wagga Wagga *Daily Advertiser*, the critiques offered by the adjudicator, Professor Sauer, were ‘an entertainment in themselves’. In 1930, the name was changed to the ‘Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod Society’. Total entries had increased to over a thousand and performers came from as far away as South Australia and Victoria as well as from across New South Wales. Most entries however, were received from the Riverina, including Wagga Wagga, Henty, Culcairn, Albury, Junee, Harden, Leeton, Tumut, Lockhart and Narrandera. By 1935, three adjudicators were employed for the three arts of dance, elocution (speech and drama) and music and the eisteddfod was held over eight days. During the 1930s most events were held in the Wonderland Theatre, with other venues used including the Oxford Theatre, the Capitol Theatre, the Strand Theatre and St. John’s Hall.

After the outbreak of WWII, the abandonment of the eisteddfod for the duration of hostilities was initially considered. The decision was made to continue the eisteddfod in light of its educational potential for the community’s children and its moral boosting capacity for the population as a whole.

Writing in October 1951, the editor of the *Daily Advertiser* pointed out:

Most people realise by now the importance to Wagga which this annual event represents. Competitors from all over N.S.W., and from interstate, come here to take part. The reception they earn from adjudicators and audiences, and the hospitality extended to them by the Wagga people, is one of the best advertisements for this city we could hope for. - The people of Wagga
are fortunate in having this annual festival of music, dancing and art of speech … and the best way they can show their appreciation is by giving the festival their support at every session.\textsuperscript{64}

From the 1950s until the present day, a lack of audience has presented a challenge to successive eisteddfod committees. Changes in social attitudes and the attraction of television after its introduction to Wagga Wagga in the early 1960s have played a part in the downturn of audience numbers. It was noted that the audience for the National Dancing (Scottish and Irish) sections of the 1951 eisteddfod ‘comprised mostly mothers of the competitors, and they loudly applauded each item’.\textsuperscript{65}

The trend toward low audience numbers has continued throughout the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, with the only exception being sessions which feature sections such as the Carabost Cup Tap Dancing Championship, Ballet Scholarship, Revue Scholarship or group sections.

The final concert of the 1963 eisteddfod, which was held in the newly opened Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre, was a significant event. The editor of the \textit{Daily Advertiser} described the concert as ‘one of the most glittering occasions in the [eisteddfod] society’s long history.’\textsuperscript{66} ‘The availability of the Civic Theatre throughout the eisteddfod has proved of great assistance to the organisers and has given the eisteddfod a central headquarters for future years’\textsuperscript{67} stated the editor. This assumption was overturned during the early 2000s, however, when the eisteddfod committee was forced to relocate sessions to other venues\textsuperscript{68} due to increasing costs.

\textsuperscript{64} Wagga’s eisteddfod. (1951, October 2). \textit{Daily Advertiser}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{65} Wagga contestants to fore as eisteddfod sessions begin. (1951, October 3). \textit{Daily Advertiser}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Alternate venues have included: Joyes Hall, the Riverina Playhouse, Mt Erin Hall, the Wagga Wagga Leagues Club, Hammond Hall and Kyeamba Smith Hall.
Fig. 8.42: Sarah Brown - National Character performer, c1985
Collection of A. Brown
(Photographer: Freeman Studio)

Costumes and choreography (pictured) devised by Madge Wallace, are still performed at the City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod.

Through the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, dancing sections have continued to form the majority of entries received for the City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod. Third and fourth generations of some families are performing and, although they may be seen as ‘outdated’ by some members of the community, dance routines and costumes dating from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s continue to be seen each year. These nostalgic glimpses of the early to mid-20th century form a gentle counterpoint to the contemporary additions of hip-hop and funk dance styles.

As the *Daily Advertiser* quoted over forty years ago in 1965 the ‘Eisteddfod has survived the test of time.’

‘A Chip Off the Old Block’ – Wagga Wagga eisteddfod during WWII

In 1942, the *Daily Advertiser* reported in patriotic tones that:

Wagga is indeed fortunate that, in spite of mounting wartime handicaps, it has again been found possible to hold its eisteddfod, the annual festival which is eagerly looked forward to by aspiring competitors from near and far, as well as by the general public of the town and district who form the audiences. England has already given a lead in the matter of wartime eisteddfods. During those terrible days in 1940 when the might of the German Air Force was being hurled against English cities … notices were appearing in the newspapers, stating that … if a hall happened to be wiped out, the eisteddfod would be carried on in an alternative hall … Now that this country is being threatened in turn, Australia can show that, in the matter of its cultural activity, it is a chip off the old block.70

Financial restraints saw a drastic cut in prize money and certificates were presented in place of medallions for second placings. Restrictions on the availability of materials and trimmings were also put in place from 1942 until the end of WWII, which pushed many mothers to innovative lengths when creating and sewing the costumes:

My mother knew someone working in a local haberdashery store and she was able to purchase sequins, “under the counter”. They were odd colours and sizes, but that didn’t matter. My mother also made the blouse and jacket to wear with my kilt for Highland Dancing. The kilt was second hand as well and because it wasn’t a new and professionally made outfit I was ineligible to enter the “Best Dressed Laddie or Lassie” section at Highland Dancing competitions, but that didn’t worry me.\footnote{P. Harvey (personal communication, October 8, 2004)}

Transport to and from dancing events was also governed by wartime fuel rationing according to Harvey. ‘During WWII, I travelled to the Wagga Eisteddfod on the back of
my mother’s bike, balancing a suitcase full of my costumes. There was no petrol available due to rationing.  

Fig. 8.45: Wallace School of Dancing concert program, 1943  
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis  
Concert and eisteddfod performances were used as fundraising events during WWII.

Venues for the various events were also restricted during the war years, with the 1942 eisteddfod spread across three venues. With the usual venue, the Wonderland Theatre, being used for ‘patriotic purposes’, eisteddfod sections were held at St. Andrews Hall, the Masonic Hall and the Plaza Theatre. Eisteddfod sections returned to the Wonderland Theatre after WWII.

\[^{72}\] P. Harvey (personal communication, October 8, 2004)
'The Most Coveted Dancing Trophy’ - The Carabost Cup

The Carabost Cup was donated to the City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod Society in 1944 by Mr. G.R. Kiddle, the owner of Carabost Station, situated near Tarcutta New South Wales. Involvement by the Kiddle family with the Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod can be traced back to the 1930s, where Mrs. H.V. Kiddle is recorded in archival documents as a ‘musical secretary’.

Always attracting dancers of a high standard, the highlight of the Carabost Cup’s sixty-four year history was the 1975 staging of the championship section when the Daily Advertiser reported that:

More than 250 people saw what the adjudicator termed the “perfect performance” at Wagga Eisteddfod last night. Miss Cherin Pullar of Caves Beach, in Newcastle, was awarded the maximum of 100 points – the first time in 55 years of the Wagga Eisteddfods. Miss Pullar, aged 14, danced for four minutes for the perfect score to win the open tap dancing championship.73

Fig. 8.47: Pauline Kenyon, winner of the Carabost Cup tap dancing championship Wagga Eisteddfod, 1946
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown)

Fig. 8.48: First prize certificate awarded to John Shephard – Carabost Cup tap dancing championship, 1946
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis

Many previous winners of this championship tap dancing section have continued on to successful careers as dance teachers, adjudicators or professional dancers. They include: Pauline Kenyon (Harvey); professional dancer/ dance teacher, Sandra Haddow; dance teacher/ adjudicator, John Shephard; dance teacher, Yvonne O’Connor; professional dancer/ dance teacher, Cherin Pullar; dance teacher/ adjudicator, Donna Marks; dance teacher, Kirsty Martin; principal dancer with the Australian Ballet Company, Scott Gunther; professional dancer and Jane Hinton; professional dancer.
Fig. 8.49: Yvonne O’Connor (right) winner of the Carabost Cup tap dancing championship, 1966
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)

Winners of the Carabost Cup - 1944 to 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner 1</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner 2</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>John Shephard</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Yvonne O’Connor</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Kylie Jacobson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Pauline Kenyon</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Narelle Mountney</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Janet Kayess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>John Whitford</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Lyn Upton</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Kirsty Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>John Whitford</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Lyn Upton</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Scott Gunther and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kirsty Mansfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Janet Hodgson</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Lyn Upton</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Scott Gunther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Janet Hodgson</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Cherin Pullar</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Scott Gunther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Lois Wyatt</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Cherin Pullar</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Andrew Harrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Nola Chalker</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Lyndell Sweetman</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Scott Gunther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Robert Carswell</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Leanne Haste</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Renee Kears and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gary Stocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Robert Carswell</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Leanne Haste</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Gary Stocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Robert Carswell</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Donna Marks</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Rebecca Burton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Sandra Haddow</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Tracy Cowan</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Jane Hinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Di Talbot</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Tracy Cowan</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Gaby Poloniato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Sandra Haddow</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Tracy Cowan</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ruan Brell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Tom Platt</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Donna Marks</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Ruan Brell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Carole McKay</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Caroline Chant</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Ruan Brell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Wendy Jenkins</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Julie Meaker</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Sam Boesen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Wendy Jenkins</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Julie Meaker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For people living in Riverina communities of the 1920s and 1930s there was no television to turn on and radio was still a rarity. Newspapers, and women’s magazines to a lesser degree, were the sole purveyors of national and international news items and the chance to discuss these sometimes life-changing events was eagerly sought after by many people. Placed in a context of relative isolation and a lack of what are now common forms of communication, the popularity of debating societies can be appreciated.

The Wilna Wattle Debating Club was just one of many such clubs or teams which operated in the Riverina during the first half of the 20th century. Other debating teams at that time included: Temora School of Arts, Teachers, Presbyterian, Methodist, St Josephs, Trungley Hall, Coolamon, Barellan, Henty, Ardlethan and Junee. Periodic visits by debating teams from outside the Riverina were also a feature of the local calendar. It was hoped that the 1933 appearance by the Sydney University Debating Team in Temora ‘would prove an education and give an insight into the way in which debating was conducted by the top-notchers.’

---

‘Above Monetary Value’ – Creating the Wilna Wattle Debating Club

The Wilna Wattle Debating Club was formed in 1923, as the initiative of Mr. John J. Fitzpatrick, the headmaster of Wilna School, built on the property, Wilna. The first meeting of just a few people, to discuss the formation of a debating club, was held at the residence of Mr. A. Reinhold, the owner of Wilna, on the 1st of August 1923.

According to the club guidelines drawn up by J.J. Fitzpatrick, the primary objective of the club was ‘to build up strong characters’ and this was seen by Fitzpatrick as an asset ‘above monetary value.’ There was much criticism of the club in the early years of its formation, with the Temora Independent newspaper estimating in 1923, that the group would have only ‘six months to live.’ The condemnation was to prove inaccurate, with the club maintaining a strong and consistent membership over the eleven years of its existence.

![Fig. 8.51: J. J. Fitzpatrick (back row 4th left) and ex-pupils, c1930](Collection of Temora Rural Museum (Photographer: Unknown))

After initially condemning the formation of the Wilna Wattle Debating Club, the local press offered strong support, and representatives of the Temora Independent and the Star were to be found in attendance at many club functions. Lengthy and precise coverage was given to debates, lectures and dramatic productions. These articles often provided an entertaining insight into the club’s activities for those members of the community who did not attend.

---

76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
With many roads unsealed and roadside lighting at a premium, travel to and from club meetings and functions was often a challenge. As a *Temora Independent* article said of a 1925 Wilna Wattle Concert:

> Our Temora friends patronise us well. Tis a nice car run for them – about ten miles. The only obstacle in the way is the bad piece of road leading to the hall. I feel sure that our worthy engineer and councilors will have that put in order some day.78

![Fig. 8.52: Cloth badge, Wilna Wattle Literary & Social Club, c1923](image)

Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Local roads were notorious for their poor construction and remained so, well into the 1930s. After the change from horse and sulky to motorised transport, ‘struggles with tyre chains’79 were a common event in wet weather and ‘Sinclair Lane was a synonymous term for bogging.’80 Mrs. Nora Wardleworth, who was a member of the club, also remembered that ‘the boys of Wilna Wattle used to stand on the running boards of the cars, to watch out [for obstacles] on foggy nights.’81

---

78 Combaning concert. From one who was there. (1925, August 5). *Temora Independent*, p. 2.
80 Ibid.
81 N. Wardleworth (personal communication, May 12, 2004).
‘A Very Dainty Supper’ – The 10th anniversary reunion 1933

In September of 1933, special tenth anniversary celebrations were held for the Wilna Wattle Debating Club. Mr. J.J. Fitzpatrick, the former headmaster of the Wilna School, and his wife, returned to the small community of Combaning for the event.

Members of the Wilna Wattle Debating Club listed during the tenth reunion year of 1933 were: Miss N. Overs, Miss R. Overs, Miss M. Moroney, Margaret Moroney, Miss B. James, Miss J. Timmins, Miss N. Timmins, Miss V. Murphy, Miss M. Byrne, Mr. E. Sinclair, Mr. J. Linklater, Mr. J. Moroney, Mr. T. Timmins, Mr. A. Timmins, Mr. E. James, Mr. J. Quirk, Mr. F. Krebs, Mr. D. Krebs, Mr. D. Clark and Mr. J. Donnelly.

A signature tablecloth was signed by club members and embroidered as a memento of those tenth anniversary celebrations. According to the memoirs of Mrs. Norah Wardleworth, ‘lady members of Wilna Wattle always provided a lovely supper, while the men took part in debating.’ It was at fortnightly club meetings and special functions such as the tenth anniversary celebrations that the ‘lady members’ of the club were recognised in their roles of cook and hostess. In a club report for May 1933, it was noted that ‘the evening concluded with a very dainty supper provided by the ladies’.

---

82 J.J. Fitzpatrick was remembered with great fondness by community members, even after his departure from Wilna School.

83 N. Wardleworth (personal communication, May 12, 2004).

‘The Battle of Tongues’ – Debating and drama

Inter club debates were contested by teams of three and points were awarded for debating, reply and teamwork by the appointed adjudicator. Subjects debated between the Wilna Wattle Debating Club and the other clubs were varied and quite often provocative, with topics debated by the Wilna Wattle club including: ‘Trade Unionism Is a Menace to Industry’, ‘Free Trade vs. Protection’, ‘A Dictatorship Would Be a More Satisfactory Form of Government than the Current Democratic System’, ‘The Mechanisation of Industry Has Proved Detrimental’, ‘The Modern Craze For Speed Is A Menace’ and ‘The Modern Press Has a Greater Force For Good Than For Evil’.

Fig. 8.54: Invitation card, Wilna Wattle Re-union Dinner and Social, 1933
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)
Held in June 1928, the last named debate, which was against Trungley Hall, centred on the positive and negative aspects of the popular press, and was headlined by the *Temora Independent* as the ‘Battle of Tongues.’

The Referendum on Prohibition, held on Saturday 1st September 1928 also provided Wilna Wattle Debating Club members with a topical and challenging subject, with the *Temora Independent* noting that the ‘Wilna Wattle Club having accepted the challenge of the Temora Club to debate the Prohibition issue and having chosen the negative side.’ Although the *Temora Independent* notes in a later edition that '[a] very interesting debate ensued', the winning team is not named.

---

87 A local fundraising event featuring young women as ‘Queen’ candidates. There was also a ‘Commerce Queen’ mentioned in the *Temora Independent*. (1925, July 25)
Fig. 8.56: Headline of referendum results, 1928
Temora Independent

The dramatic productions were particularly popular with club members and audience alike, with many of the productions used as fund raising events. A concert held at the Combaning Hall on 29th July 1925 raised money for the ‘Digger’s Queen’ candidate, with the *Temora Independent* reporting that, ‘Mr. J.J. Fitzpatrick (the Father of the society), should feel a proud man at the success of his club in every movement they undertake.’

Concerts and dramatic productions were produced using the talents of many local people and not only were the actors drawn from the surrounding community, but so also were the costume designers and makers and the designers and manufacturers of props. Among the dramatic productions performed were: ‘The Mummy and the Mumps’, ‘The

---

88 Combaning concert. From one who was there. (1925, August 5). *Temora Independent*, p. 1.

The *Temora Independent* of 8th September 1933 filed the following report on the play, ‘The Bathroom Door’:

The last item before the break was a farce in one act – “The Bathroom Door” – with the following cast: The Prima Donna, Miss J. Sinclair; the young man, Mr. J. Donnellan; the young lady, Miss V. Murphy; the old man, Mr. F. Krebs; the old lady, Mr. J. Quirk; boots, Mr. D. Krebs. The scene was set in a leading hotel in front of the bathroom, between rooms 66 and 67, at a respectable rising hour. The plot centres around the closed bathroom door, five lodgers desiring admission, and a prima donna with an apparently suicidal husband.⁹⁰

---

8.9: ‘Who’ll Take a Glove?’ - The Jimmy Sharman tent boxing troupe

James (Jimmy) Sharman was born in Narellan NSW in 1892, one of a family of thirteen children, and was attracted to the sport of boxing from an early age. In 1906, at the age of fourteen, Sharman walked forty three kilometres to the Campbelltown Races and won £11/16/0 in a sideshow fight. By the age of sixteen Sharman was shearing, labouring, water-carting and boxing in the Cowra district. A successful, ‘southpaw’ [left hand] lightweight fighter, Sharman claimed to have won all but one of his seventy eight bouts between 1908 and 1912.

Fig. 8.59: Jimmy Sharman Senior, c1910
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

The switch from fighter to fight promoter was claimed by Sharman, to have been brought about by ‘his alarm at the injuries he had inflicted on [Jack] Carter in a 1920 bout, staged at the Olympic Skating Rink Hall in Wagga Wagga. This story was alternated by Sharman with one involving a bottle of ‘exploding ammonia’ and the ensuing damage to his eyesight. As historian and author Peter Corris points out:

---

91 In 1907, Justice Higgins passed the “Harvest Judgement” in the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, establishing the basic wage concept. The minimum wage, for unskilled workers, was set at £2/2/- per week or 7/- per day.


93 Ibid.
Whatever the reason, Sharman began promoting in Temora and staged some successful bills with the local mayor as referee [and] presumably inspired by the tent shows he had known as a youth, Sharman decided to take to the road.  

Corris states that Sharman ‘hired a tent, borrowed some piano cases for the boxers to line up on, and began to apply to the local shows for permission to stage boxing.’ The first fifty requests were denied, however the Leeton Show finally approved an application and Sharman’s career as a successful tent boxing promoter was launched. Sharman went on to become a member of the Showmen’s Guild of Australasia and was eventually turning away more offers from show societies than he could fit into his boxing troupe’s annual calendar.

The Sharman boxing troupe travelled by train in the early years, however, by the 1930s the troupe was a self sufficient entity, travelling by truck and complete with boxing tent, large sleeping tent and their own cooking equipment. Travelling for around ten months of the year and attending between forty-five and fifty shows, rodeos and carnivals, the Sharman troupe dominated travelling boxing shows throughout Australia for two generations and the cry of ‘Who’ll take a glove?’ became the trademark call of Sharman. The only interruption to the routine of the Sharman boxing troupe was during WWII, ‘when many of the shows were shut down’ due to the introduction of petrol rationing.

---

94 Ibid.  
95 Ibid.  
Sharman’s link with Temora continued for the duration of his time as manager of the boxing troupe, with the family spending their rest period each year in the town. Close friendships were formed with many local families, in particular the Moses family. The *Temora Independent* of September 1933 reported the return of the Sharman Boxing Troupe:

> Jimmy Sharman, the always welcome showman, has arrived from his Queensland tour and will be making his re-appearance at the Temora Show. He brings with him a troupe of boxers, wrestlers and ball-punchers that is voted by sporting experts to be the best that has ever toured Australia.97

Jimmy Sharman junior ran the boxing troupe until his retirement in 1958, when he handed the business over to his son, Jimmy Sharman Junior. Indigenous athletes predominated in the line-up of Sharman’s ‘boxers, wrestlers and ball-punchers’. Boxing was, for many Indigenous men such as Leslie Burns, a hoped for escape route from the constant cycle of unskilled labouring jobs or the unemployment and poverty of the period.98 Sharman’s trainers were also among ‘the best that has ever toured’, including retired Sharman boxer Rud Kee, who had a fifty-six year association with the troupe.

98 With the disbanding of the Sharman tent boxing shows in 1971, rugby league and Australian football have taken on the role of sporting ‘escape routes’ for many Indigenous men.
Warren ‘Wally’ Condon, who grew up in Wagga Wagga, was too young to ‘challenge’ Sharman’s boxers in the 1950s and 1960s. Condon, however, does remember the illicit delight of crawling undetected beneath the tent sides to watch the boxing matches at the Wagga Show.99

Steve O’Halloran, writing in The Days That Are Gone, also refers to undetected entry into the boxing tent, known as ‘scaling’:

> Scaling, simply meant getting into any side-show tent by any subterfuge, without paying for a ticket. The “Fat Lady” and Old Man McIntyre’s magician were easy. Coming out we noticed Jimmy Sharman haranguing a big crowd. We liked big crowds. “Rud Kee”, his evergreen Chinese boxer and five other boxers in trunks were lined up on the platform outside the tent. The “Old Maestro” having coaxed four local boys to “take a glove”, was earnestly selling a fifth man an opportunity to make an easy “tenner”.100

O’Halloran and his brother Tom then decided to ‘slip around to the rear [of the tent], remove a tent peg and slide under the canvas … Waiting for an extra roar from the patrons inside we slipped under the loose tent flap. As we rose to our knees, Rud Kee very solidly booted us out head first.’101

With the changing trends in popular culture and stricter regulations surrounding the sport of boxing, the last appearance of the Jimmy Sharman travelling boxing troupe was at the Shepparton Show in 1971. Regulations such as restricting boxers to only one fight

---

100 O’Halloran, S. (c1970). The days that are gone. Wagga Wagga NSW: S. O’Halloran. p. 35.
101 Ibid.
per week and the enforced resting of boxers who had sustained head injuries, along with changing public tastes, were responsible for the demise of travelling tent boxing shows.

Fig. 8.63: Boxing ‘hopefuls’ line up outside the Sharman tent Wagga Wagga Show, c1960
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)

Although Corris describes tent boxing as ‘a parody of the professional ring’\textsuperscript{102} he also points out that ‘the aim of the showmen and the boxers [was] to generate as much excitement as possible’,\textsuperscript{103} a principle practiced by the Sharman Boxing Troupe until its final bout in 1971.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
‘The Little Chinese’ - Rud Kee

He was known throughout the show venues of the eastern states as ‘the little Chinese on the door of Jimmy Sharman’s boxing tent.’ Born in Canton China in 1895 and named Chong Lee, he was brought to the Ravenswood goldfields of North Queensland with his family in the early 1900s.

Interested in travelling, Chong Lee ran away from home in his early teens and changed his name to Rudd Kee. His first fight was in 1913 in Newtown, Sydney, where his win gained him two tickets to the main event two nights later. Moving to the New South Wales country town of Forbes in 1916, Rudd Kee decided to leave the boxing scene and worked behind the counter of a general store. It was here that Rudd Kee was visited by Jimmy Sharman, in town with his boxing troupe. Jimmy Sharman had heard of Rudd Kee’s boxing success and appealed to him to join his troupe and return to the travelling circuit.

As Rudd Kee explained to journalist Ian Gleeson ‘I decided to join his troupe for a six week trial, to see if I liked the life.’ Six weeks translated into fifty-six years, with the first sixteen spent as the main fight attraction with Jimmy Sharman’s troupe, averaging

\[\text{Fig. 8.64: Rud Kee – boxer and trainer with the Jimmy Sharman Troupe, Wagga Wagga Show c1960 (CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)}\]

\[\text{[Photocopy of newspaper article, source & date unknown]. Temora Rural Museum Archives}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
around four fights per day over sixteen years and ‘generally [knocking] out about two men a day.’

Rud Kee remained with Jimmy Sharman until the troupe was disbanded in 1971.

Fig. 8.65: Jimmy Sharman Junior and Rud Kee, Wagga Wagga Show, c1960
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)

106 Gleeson, I., Rudd’s right helped to prove the yokels wrong. [Photocopy of newspaper article, source & date unknown]. Temora Rural Museum Archives
Leslie ‘Bronco’ Burns

Leslie ‘Bronco’ Burns was born in Brewarinna, New South Wales on 26th October 1928 and grew up in a family of four brothers and three sisters. After his marriage to Wilma Hughes in Forbes, Leslie Burns and his family moved several times, with Griffith, Condobolin, Goolagong and Wagga Wagga among their places of residence.

For more than twenty-five years Leslie Burns was employed as a boxer by several tent boxing troupes, including Jimmy Sharman, Roy Bell107 and Brophy’s.108 Leslie Burns also held the title of the ‘greatest fighter’ in Dubbo for many years.

Among his many victories in the prize fighting ring, was a bout against Jack Hassen,109 a well known and hard punching fighter of the 1940s. Fight promoter and trainer Vic Patrick,110 was also a witness to Leslie Burns’ skill in the tent boxing ring. An offer of further training and the chance of overseas fights under Patrick’s guidance were refused by Leslie Burns.111

---

107 Roy Bell – Started touring a boxing tent in 1924.
108 Brophy’s Boxing Troupe is still touring in Queensland.
109 Jack Hassen – Born in Cloncurry, Queensland and raised in a boys’ home on Palm Island. A lightweight boxer, Hassen retired from boxing in 1951 and his record stood at 36 fights for 29 wins. Hassen died in 2002 aged 78.
111 Burns family. (Personal communication, March 4, 2007).
Fig. 8.67: Rud Kee (centre) with two Indigenous boxers (names unknown), Wagga Wagga Show, c1960 (CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)
8.10: Summary

These objects and their attendant stories of entertainment cover a timeframe from the late 1800s to the 1970s and evoke a much more unsophisticated time when children and adults alike would stand and wonder ‘when the circus came to town’.\(^{112}\) When the beat of a bass drum, in community halls or in side-show alley, the tapping of dancers’ feet, the soaring notes of singers and the suspense of a dramatic performance drew the people of the Riverina from their homes and lightened the burden of their everyday lives.

The history of various entertainment events and organisations in the Riverina, such as concerts and balls, circus performances, agricultural shows, the City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod, the Jimmy Sharman tent boxing troupe, the Wilna Wattle Debating Society, the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra, the Madge Wallace Dance Studio, and the Jindera Town Band. Many of these organisations are now defunct and the recording of their stories is vital. While the documenting of these events and organisations is of primary importance, it is the stories of the individuals involved which add depth and substance to the retelling.

Stories of the members of the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra; the dance organisers, the dance attendees, the eisteddfod performers, the dancing teacher, the tent boxers, the tent boxing attendees, the debating club members, Temora’s ‘Irish songbird’, Marie Narelle, and the performance in Adelong of the ‘wonderful dog Jonathan’\(^{113}\), bring to life the history of entertainment in the Riverina.


Part 3 – Conclusion: Stories and more stories

Introduction

The aim of this research was to discover local stories and augment existing histories, in order to ‘activate’ the knowledge of objects and collections in the Riverina museums more effectively. The research focused on two questions:

1. What are the relationships between the objects and the stories?
2. How important are the stories to museums?

The objects and collections, dating from the mid 19th century to the late 20th century, which were identified and included in this research, have covered a diverse and often surprising range of artefacts, through which the stories of farmers, shopkeepers, sailors, seasonal workers, schoolgirls, musicians, brides, nurses, nuns, housewives and school teachers have been interpreted. Together with their stories, the artefacts examined in this research offer insight into cultural and technological changes in the Riverina in areas including transport, agriculture, education, entertainment and commerce. Many of the objects have also pointed to personal stories connected to World Wars I and II, immigration, domesticity and women in Riverina communities.

In contributing to connecting stories with objects, this body of research has made these collections more accessible to museum audiences. By grouping multiple micro-narratives together in selected themes the research has revealed a further layer of analysis which both linked and transcended the micro-narratives and objects. An outcome of this research is a body of interpretive data linked to museum objects and collections in Riverina museums. This research material is ready to be utilised by Riverina museums and national collecting bodies in both print-based and electronic formats.

Thesis Summary

The issue motivating this research was the desire to add depth and rigour to already existing information contained in statements of significance attached to objects and collections in Riverina museums and to make the data accessible. The research data was expanded
through a process of library and archive searches and personal interviews. The information sourced from interviews was arrived at through recorded conversations, phone calls, emails, written letters and field notes. All the material gathered was connected by a common thread of remembering and more often than not, accompanied by a strong sense of nostalgia. For the interviewees, this process of storytelling and remembering acted as an aid to reconnecting the specific object or collection to its making, ownership, place of use and function.

The thesis is structured in three parts:
Part I - Outlined the application of ‘significance criteria’ to Riverina museum collections and the resulting projects which were generated, explored the process of storytellers and storytelling, and located the research within the Riverina region, and discussed the methodology, theoretical framework and literature review.

Part II – Discussed the objects, collections and stories as a series of case studies, which were evaluated and analysed under the themed headings of: Stories of Agriculture (Chapter 1), Stories of Commerce (Chapter 2), Stories of Transport (Chapter 3), Stories of Women (Chapter 4), Stories of Making Do (Chapter 5), Stories of Education (Chapter 6), Stories of WWI and WWII (Chapter 7), and Stories of Entertainment (Chapter 8).

Part III – Contains the conclusion, bibliography and a series of appendices which include research data of images, interviewees, a statement of significance and significance criteria.

Findings

The findings from the research are focused in three groups: objects, stories and themes.

1. Object status and significance

The first group of findings comments on the status and significance of objects and collections in the museums that were surveyed. It was found that the objects and collections had become disconnected from their stories since becoming accessioned. It was discovered after extensive research, that these same objects and collections not only carried a ‘single’ story, but carried multiple layers of micro-narratives. These museum objects and collections grew in significance with the re-attachment of these narratives and micro-
narratives and it has also been found that they continue to attract and generate additional stories from both visitors and volunteers. It was also found that the historical and cultural influence of these objects and collections extended beyond the boundaries of the museums and into the wider community.

These findings led to the first conclusion that each object was interpreted through a series of stories. Those same stories were remembered and re-told from different perspectives, depending on the personal experiences or biases of the storyteller. These same processes of ‘storytelling and remembering’ were utilised by museum visitors to reconnect objects their own particular place, time or event. Through a multi-faceted approach in documenting the object’s history, the potential to effectively engage audiences utilising objects in a mnemonic capacity was maximised.

2. Stories and storytellers

The second group of findings is centred on the stories and storytellers uncovered during the research process. Both written and oral histories were delivered by a demographic of Riverina or expatriate Riverina people aged sixty years and over, with the exception of one respondent aged in his fifties. It was found that a majority of the stories fell into a local or family history genre, with some of the most interesting stories uncovered among infrequently accessed sources including women’s magazines, local newspapers, trade catalogues, trade and commercial advertising, performance programs, unpublished memoirs and court registers. Many of the stories discussed trade skills, agricultural technologies, lifestyles and events which have disappeared or are now rarely seen. By following these non-traditional lines of enquiry it was found that many of these stories activated rarely heard historical voices, including those of women, children, Chinese workers and business owners, rural contract workers, members of the Riverina German community, travelling hawkers and entertainers. These stories have added depth and vitality to already existing museum collections and library archives.

These findings led to the second conclusion that the predominantly non-linear nature of the narratives echoed the periodic relocation of people in the Riverina. This peripatetic nature of some communities has meant that the voices which have activated the stories stopped
and started, and increased and decreased in intensity, and jumped from one theme to another. They acted much in the same manner as a social conversation between family, friends or colleagues. It was this notion of the social or community-focused narrative that has served to intensify this body of research.

3. **Thematic connections and crossovers**

The third group of findings uncovered connections and crossovers between objects and stories in different themes and accentuated the non-linear nature of the narratives and micro-narratives. This was seen to give added focus to seldom heard ‘voices’, such as migrant groups, women and rural contract workers. It was also realised that these same thematic approaches could be applied to other regional areas and collecting institutions.

These findings led to the third conclusion that many of the stories, while relevant to specific themed headings in the museum case studies had connections to objects and collections discussed under other thematic headings. This interweaving of narratives and micro-narratives from theme to theme served to highlight the non-linear sequence of many stories and the interconnection of contrasting objects. For example, while the millet thresher (Agriculture) and the row boat (Transport) are disparate objects, they have both been used to explore stories with links to the Blowering Valley. The millet thresher (Agriculture), Wilna Wattle collection (Entertainment), *PS Wagga Wagga* log books (Transport) and Peanut Dolls (Education) were all interconnected through stories of fundraising in Riverina communities.

The Mt. Erin collection (Education), the Gertrude Purtell wedding gown (Women), and objects and collections connected to the Riverina German communities, the watering can/human yoke (Commerce), the Tumut tobacco collection (Agriculture) and the *PS Wagga Wagga* (Transport) are all interconnected by stories of migration. Micro-narratives which tell of the important role played by Pastoral & Agricultural Shows in Riverina communities are attached to the Edith Short samplers (Education) and the Jimmy Sharman collection (Entertainment). Stories of farming selectors, rural seasonal workers and contract farm labourers were interconnected through the Garth Jones collection (Agriculture), tallow vat (Agriculture), tobacco collection (Agriculture), millet thresher (Agriculture), pack
saddle (Transport), AWLA collection (WWI & WWII), and Chinese market garden collection (Commerce).

What was also uncovered in this process was the pivotal role played by storytelling and storytellers based in the Riverina in uncovering the many voices which ‘speak for these objects and collections’. In this body of research the stories of the millet harvester, the farmer, the Chinese market gardeners, the river steamer captains, the musicians, the dancing teacher, the school teachers and countless other Riverina individuals were rescued from what E. P. Thompson referred to as the ‘enormous condescension of posterity’.¹

While it is understood that current museum practice seeks to catalogue objects into groups, by their very nature, many of the stories are much more difficult to index. Interwoven and inseparable, from theme to theme, and object to object, the stories refuse to be contained to these ‘artificially’ imposed barriers.

**Contribution to Knowledge**

The research data contained in these case studies has contributed to the interconnection of narratives and micro-narratives to objects and collections. By grouping the stories together under selected thematic headings, the research has revealed further layers of meaning which both transcend and unite the narratives and objects. An outcome of these case studies is a body of interpretive data linked to museum objects and collections in Riverina museums, which is ready to be utilised by Riverina museums and other collecting bodies in both print-based and electronic formats.

The stories and the storytellers form the centrepiece of this body of invaluable and, in the case of the oral history interviews and written field notes, irreplaceable information. This research has enhanced local histories, focused on the Riverina region and presented the data in an accessible format. As Peter Burke points out, ‘local historians … become responsible for keeping memory alive [and these] memories add to their community a dimension of time which can never be procured or artificially created. Once lost, it is irreplaceable.’²

---

Text and graphics included in this research have been utilised for use in tourism brochures and interpretation signage. Narrandera Shire Council has used a section of text from the stories of the *PS Wagga Wagga* log books and the river charts for inclusion on an interpretation sign at the site of the *PS Wagga Wagga* wreck on the Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera. The story of the *PS Wagga Wagga*, taken from this research material, has also been uploaded to the NSW Maritime Heritage website.

Tumut Shire Council has utilised text and images from the stories of the broom clamp and millet thresher on advertising pull-ups promoting tourist locations in their area. Coolamon Shire has taken text from the Mabel Lewis filet crochet story for use in a tourism brochure, and text and images from the Garth Jones stories has been used in interpretation panels within the Garth Jones exhibition space at the Up To Date Store. Research material on education, commercial enterprises and entertainment in Adelong has been utilised on interpretation panels and as brochures in the Social History Gallery of the Adelong Alive Museum.

Research data connected to objects and collections from the Temora Rural Museum, Museum of the Riverina, Tumbarumba Museum, Jindera Pioneer Museum, Woolpack Inn Museum, Tumut and District Historical Museum, and Lockhart Historical Society Museum all have links on the NSW Migration Heritage website, under the *German Towns German Stories* link. The research information contained on this website has generated a response from people locally and outside the Riverina, with requests for further information on German settlers and their descendants in the area. Enquirers often expressed the desire to visit the Riverina and travel to each of the sites mentioned, specifically for family research purposes. Anecdotal evidence tells of at least one local family of German origin being reconnected with a distant cousin3 from Germany, and the placement of additional information on-line can only make future contact between family members easier.

---

3 The Hartwig family from Temora was contacted in the 1990s by a distant Hartwig cousin from Germany who, after losing all his family members during WWII, had been raised in an orphanage. He was delighted to find 'blood relatives' living in Australia.
Data compiled for the Pauline Harvey collection (Museum of the Riverina) and the Barnes family wagga rug/Riverina Flour Mill stories (Museum of the Riverina) was used in text panels for the in-house exhibition, *Made In Wagga* (2004), while research material gathered for the Mitsue Stockley collection (Museum of the Riverina) was utilised in a text panel for the in-house exhibition, *From All Four Corners* (2007).

This process of keeping memory alive has been achieved through a research process which has accessed and recorded the memories of Riverina community members, past and present. Much of this research data has been accessed through the collections of local museums, historical societies, libraries, and archives and has brought to light infrequently explored material, which is often overlooked by professional historians. As academic Mark Hutchinson proclaims, these ‘are no longer the preserve of the dedicated amateur … they are resources of national importance’⁴.

Given the advancing age of many of the interviewees, the compilation of these stories is timely and urgent, and in many cases will never be repeated. By melding objects and stories into a unified package, the problems, identified in the introduction, of objects and stories becoming disconnected, will not be perpetuated. These research outcomes, particularly if they can also be presented on-line, ensure that this material will be included in the broader lexicon of Australian history.

The final contribution to knowledge is the availability of these museum case studies to Riverina museums, and other collecting bodies in regional areas of Australia, as a resource for further research.

**Further Application of Research**

All of the museums involved in this research project have links to already existing websites. These are generally Shire or Council based sites, with the Museum of the Riverina, Gundagai Historical Museum, Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum, Pioneer Women’s Hut, and

---

and Adelong Alive Museum also linked to the Collections Australia Network (CAN). Uploading sections of the case studies to these already existing sites could be undertaken, facilitating the construction of a digital ‘Riverina Museum Trail’. Creating on-line versions of the case studies would, ultimately, be keeping faith with the Riverina museums involved in the initial Riverina 100 Objects of Significance Project, who had been assured that this would be a future outcome of the project.

These digital stories could be theme specific, for example: agriculture, commerce and industry, with German and Chinese stories added to migration heritage sites. Museum-centred websites could also be constructed by collecting together all related stories such as: the Bebe Elliot collection (Tumut), the Miles Franklin collection (Tumut), the Butter Factory (Tumut), the portable millet thresher (Tumut) and the broom millet industry (Tumut). These same web-based stories could also be made available as interactive CDs, to each of the museums involved. Additional audio and video material, which has not been included in the print-based thesis, is available for inclusion in web-based stories and interactive CDs.

This body of Riverina-focused research data represents a microcosm of the wider population, reflecting changes in technologies, social customs and responses to local, national and international events from the mid 19th century to the late 20th century. Conversion of this material to a digital format, will add an extra dimension to already existing histories. Digital reproduction will also ensure that the many ephemeral sources identified, such as the original correspondence contained in the Australian Women’s Land Army (AWLA) collection, are replicated and catalogued, against the unthinkable occurrence of their loss or destruction.

**Summary**

The gathering of data for this thesis has involved a survey of published and unpublished sources of Riverina history, much of it falling into the categories of local and anecdotal
areas of research. It has been through this process of uncovering and recording these small
details of history that the artefacts now operate on a much more personal level.

It has been demonstrated that these museum case studies have generated interest and
discussion at a local level, with the locally based narratives and micro-narratives already
adding to historical patterns on a national scale. These Riverina-focused narratives act as an
accessible and valuable compilation of historical and cultural resources for professional and
amateur researchers. By utilising both print-based and oral storytelling to reconnect these
museum objects and collections to their multiple narratives, I believe the ‘chattering voices’
of Riverina history have been activated and reconnected to the communities and individuals
who originally gave them vigour and voice.


Bibliography


A charcoal cool safe for country homes. (1942, December 1). *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, 53, 547-548


Adelong Court of Petty Sessions. Registration of applications for auctioneers’, hawkers’ & other licenses, 1898-1958. SA96/1 Riverina Archives: Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga NSW.


Adelong school concert. (1916, December 15). *Adelong & Tumut Express*, p. 3.


An appeal. To the girls of New South Wales. (1914, August 22). *Woman’s Budget*, p. 20.


Blacksmithing on the farm. (1906, May 2). *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales. 17*, 477-479.


Bradley, C. (n.d.). *Life as a stockman.* Unpublished manuscript, Bradley family, Tumbarumba NSW.


British fair play to German Australians. (1914, August 8). *Temora Independent*, p. 2.


Care of dray & cart wheels. (1905). *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales, 11*, 300.


Combaning concert. From one who was there. (1925, August 5). *Temora Independent*, p. 2.


Concert. (1902, April 1). *Sydney Morning Herald*, p. 4.

Coolamon Interstate Ploughing Carnival. (1907). (Souvenir Booklet). Up To Date Store Archives, Coolamon NSW.

Cootamundra show results. (1897, September 18). *Temora Independent*, p. 5.


Death of Sam Yet. (1903, June 26). *Narrandera Argus*, p. 5.


Elliot Collection. Tumut NSW: Tumut & District Historical Museum.

Enemy aliens. (1940, August 2). *Temora Independent,* p. 3.


German spy. (1914, October 7). *Temora Independent*, p. 6.


Gleeson, I. (n.d.). Rudd’s right helped to prove the yokels wrong. [Photocopy of newspaper article, source & date unknown]. Temora Rural Museum Archives, Temora NSW.


Hamilton, Paula and Paul Ashton. (2003). ‘At Home with the Past: initial findings from the survey’ in *Australians and the Past*. St Lucia: API Network and UQP.


Hofsteede, S. (c2001). *Coolamon’s Up To Date Store*. Unpublished manuscript, Up To Date Store Archives, Coolamon NSW.


'Kitchy Koo'. (1933, April 26). In our letter rack. *Woman's Budget*, p. 31.


Local news. (1893, September 15). *Narandera Ensign*, p. 3.


Local news. (1893, October 27). *Narandera Ensign*, p. 3.


Miss “Bebe” Elliot farewelled. (1942, April 14). Tumut & Adelong Times, p. 3.


Narrandera Argus. (c1966). (Photocopy from Parkside Cottage Museum). Narrandera NSW.


National Archives of Australia (NSW): Department of Defence; C123/1 9689; Heckendorf, John (Box 293).

National Archives of Australia (NSW): Department of Defence; C123/1 9690; Heckendorf, Henry (Box 293).
National Archives of Australia (VIC): Department of Defence; MP 367/1/0 567/3/4154; Paech and Wenke’s file.


Obituary. Mr. Antoine J. Valery. (1934, October 9). Narrandera Argus, p. 5.


Our Honour Roll. (1915, May 1). Woman’s Budget, p. 20.


Public opinion. To the editor. (1918, August 23). Tumbarumba Times, p. 2.


Social life around the camps. (1944, October). The Land Army News. p 2

State Library of New South Wales: MLMSS 364/104 Volume 3; Miles Franklin Papers; Papers re service with Scottish Women’s Hospital for Foreign Service, 1917-1919; A, B & C.

State Library of New South Wales: MLMSS 364/108 Volume 4; Miles Franklin Papers; Letters received from relatives, 18-, 1873-1938; MS and typescript.


Temora. (1880, December 29). Sydney Mail, p. 3.

Temora show results. (1897, September 18). Temora Independent, p. 5.


Untitled. [Chinese tobacco growers] *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales. 9.* (1898, March) 335.


Wagga contestants to fore as eisteddfod sessions begin. (1951, October 3). *The Daily Advertiser*, p. 2.


We are ready for the school days! (1910, January 21). [Advertisement]. *Coolamon & Ganmain Farmers’ Review*, p. 4.


Woman’s Budget Bureau. (1915, June 19). Woman’s Budget, p. 5.

Woman’s Budget Bureau. The editor’s mailbag. (1915, July 10). Woman’s Budget, p. 10.


Words To The Wise. (1933, August 16). Woman’s Budget. p. 15.


Acknowledgements

This research material has been gathered together over the last eight years with the help of many people, most of them based in the Riverina. I have spent countless hours in museums, libraries and archives during that time and I have been made abundantly welcome by many people in their own homes across the Riverina. The compilation of this research material would have been impossible without the assistance of the following people:

**Charles Sturt University:**
Dr. Neill Overton, Dr. Grace Cochrane, Dr. Margaret Woodward, Julie Montgarrett and Dr. Susan Wood, Professor David Green, Richard Pickersgill, Christopher Orchard, Robyn Lonard, and Dianne Lane.

**Powerhouse Museum, Sydney NSW:**
Graham Clegg, Rebecca Pinchin, and the Powerhouse Museum library staff.

**National Archives Canberra:**
Michael Wenke.

**Wagga Wagga:**
Warren Brown, Dr Helen Wood, Christina Reid, Michelle Maddison, Alexis Horsley, Mitsue Stockley, Pauline Harvey, Christine Harley, Marcia Riley, Sarah Hofsteede, Robyn Willis, Alma Skeers (d.), Pat Jackson, Amy Lewis, Barbara Seymour, Anne Hamilton, Oliver Barnes (d.), Betty Owen and Wally Condon.

**Coolamon:**
Liz Lawton, Garth Jones, David McCann, Stan Heffer and Laurie Gaynor.

**Cootamundra:**
Betty Punnet

**Narrandera:**
Susan Kilham, Roy Wade, Mary Wade, Dolly Williamson, Mervyn Shung (d.), Bill Choy, Alexander ‘Nugget’ Waller, Ted Kirk and Norm Kelhear.
Temora:
Bill Speirs, Ron Maslin (d.), Nell Maslin (d.), Gay McGeorge, Harold Fritsch and the Hartwig family.

Tumbarumba:
Wendy Hucker, Ann Thoroughgood, Elsie Shepard (d.), Norman Bradley (d.), John Foster and Monica Talbot.

Tumut:
Sheila Garner, Trish Rochester, Rolf Bridle, Geoff Wortes, Harry Hill.

Adelong:
Mark Lipscombe, and the volunteers of the Adelong Alive Museum.

Lockhart/Milbrulong:
Margaret Hill, and the volunteers of the Lockhart Historical Society Museum.

Gundagai:
Barry Luff, Ian Petty, Joe Reardon, Cindy Smith, and the volunteers of the Gundagai Historical Museum.

Batlow:
Eileen Birch, and the volunteers of the Batlow Historical Society Museum.

Holbrook:
David Cathcart.

Jindera/Henty:
Alan and Lois Lieschke, and the volunteers of the Jindera Pioneer Museum.

Hay:
Jenni Japp
## Appendix I: List of Images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Museums and Objects/Collections Discussed in Thesis</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>Map of Australia showing NSW and Riverina (Artist: Christina Reid)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>Riverina place names (Artist: Christina Reid)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Menneke bullock bell, c1890 Collection of Museum of the Riverina (Photo: M. Maddison)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Bride doll, c1960s Collection of Hay Gaol Museum (Photo: J. Japp)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi</td>
<td>Oliver Claude Barnes and Mary Jane Baxter (nee Barnes), c1964 (Photo: A. Owen, collection of A. Brown)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td>Norman Kelhear, Narrandera, 2002 (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td>Barry Luff, Gundagai NSW 2002 (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix</td>
<td>Wilna Wattle concert programme, 1933 Collection of Temora Rural Museum (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Women admiring aprons, Wagga Wagga c1960s (CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Captain Charles Sturt 1895 (National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an9941030)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Murrumbidgee River Gundagai NSW c1886 (National Library of Australia: nla.pic- vn4312940)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Map of Riverina Stations (<em>Pioneering Days</em>. p. 75.)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Up To Date Store Coolamon NSW 2004 (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Jones family East Yalgogrin c1930 Image courtesy of Garth Jones (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.6 Garth Jones and horse team 1949
Image courtesy of Garth Jones
(Photographer: Unknown)

1.7 Map – Jones farming properties
(Artist: Christina Reid)

1.8 Chock and log fence, Bogong High Plains
VIC c1996 (Photo: A. Brown)

1.9 Mortising joins - post and rail fence
(Agricultural Gazette of NSW June 1906)

1.10 Chock and log fence c1933 (Photo: A. Brown)

1.11 Contractor erecting a post and rail fence
(Agricultural Gazette of NSW July 1902)

1.12 Advertisement for fencing contractors
(Narrandera Argus 1876)

1.13 H.V. McKay ‘Sunshine’ metal farm gate c1904
(Photo: A. Brown)

1.14 Children playing on swing c1912
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an24577507)

1.15 Children playing on swing gate c1925
(State Library of NSW: BCP 02833)

1.16 Windmill c1940. Garth Jones Collection,
Up To Date Store, Coolamon NSW (Photo: A. Brown)

1.17 Dam sinking on Goldenhope, c1940s
Image courtesy of Garth Jones
(Photographer: Unknown)

1.18 Raising a water tank on Goldenhope, c1940s
Image courtesy of Garth Jones
(Photographer: Unknown)

1.19 Furphy Foundry Shepparton Victoria, c1895
(Museum Victoria: MM6586)

1.20 Wattle Grove Henty NSW, c1906
Image courtesy of A & L Lieschke
(Photographer: Unknown)

1.21 Original farm buildings of pug and log construction,
Wattle Grove, Henty NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)

1.22 Harvesting on Wattle Grove, c1906
Image courtesy of A & L Lieschke
(Photographer: Unknown)
1.23 Milking on the Wendt family farm, Trungley Hall NSW c1900 Image courtesy of Hartwig family (Photographer: Unknown)

1.24 Chaff cutting on Wattle Grove, c1900 Image courtesy of A & L Lieschke (Photographer: Unknown)

1.25 Wendt family, Trungley Hall NSW, c1910 Image courtesy of Hartwig family (Photographer: Unknown)

1.26 Set of 4 cow horn funnels, c1900 Collection of Lockhart Historical Museum (Photo: A. Brown)

1.27 Hoffman family making sausages, Victoria c1900 (Museum Victoria: MM 001328)

1.28 Sausage meat mincer, c1910 Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum (Photo: A. Brown)

1.29 Original shop fittings with wooden drawer labelled ‘Sausage Making Supplies’ Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum (Photo: A. Brown)

1.30 Chinese growers harvesting tobacco leaf, Tumut Plains NSW, c1880s Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photographer: Unknown)

1.31 Drying tobacco leaf, Tumut Plains NSW c1900 (E. G. Brown - right) Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photographer: Unknown)

1.32 Loading tobacco for transport to market, Tumut Plains NSW, c1900 Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photographer: Unknown)

1.33 Portable millet thresher, c1930s Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photo: A. Brown)

1.34 Chaff cutting using a horseworks, Walgett, NSW, c1904 (State Library of NSW: bcp-03171)

1.35 Millet thresher, showing knife tray and knives (detail) (Photo: A. Brown)
1.36 Portable millet thresher in use, Blowering Valley c1940 (Rolf Bridle – left) Image courtesy of Rolf Bridle (Photographer: Unknown) 75

1.37 Millet threshing contractors setting up camp, Blowering Valley, c1940 Image courtesy of Rolf Bridle (Photographer: Unknown) 75

1.38 Hand operated millet hackler or thresher (Agricultural Gazette of NSW 1914) 76

1.39 Tumut Plains Hall, 2004 (Photo: A. Brown) 78

1.40 'Debutantes' Millet Cutters' Ball Tumut Plains Hall 1959 (Tumut & Adelong Times, 21 April 1959) 78

1.41 Cast iron tallow vat manufactured by R. Dawson Foundry, Sydney, 1844 Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum (Photo: A. Brown) 80

1.42 Map - Red Hill Station (NSW Lands Department Historic Maps Register) 80

1.43 Tallow trade advertisements (Sydney Morning Herald 1844) 81

1.44 Casting plate – R. Dawson Iron Foundry Sydney c1844 NSW Collection of Powerhouse Museum, Sydney NSW (Photo: Graham Clegg) 82

1.45 Tallow vat (Detail) (Photo: A. Brown) 83

1.46 Steamer Croesus, 1854 (National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an8008809) 84

1.47 A B 'Banjo' Paterson (right) Jindabyne, c1920s (National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an21273582) 85

2.1 S. Richards & Co. building Narrandera NSW 2003 (Photo: A. Brown) 89

2.2 Staff - S. Richards & Co. Narrandera NSW c1930 Collection: Narrandera Library (Photographer: Unknown) 90

2.3 ‘Sunshine Dry Cleaners & Laundry’ Narrandera NSW 2007 (Photo: A. Brown) 91
2.4 Tumut Street, Adelong NSW c1915
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an24307178)

2.5 Chas. Passlow coachbuilder's advertisement 1858
(Adelong Mining Journal)

2.6 Tumut Street, Adelong NSW 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.7 Royal Hotel advertisement 1906
(Adelong & Tumut Express)

2.8 Royal Hotel Adelong NSW, 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.9 Tumut Street Adelong NSW, c1915.
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an24307162)

2.10 Post Office Hotel advertisement 1926
(Adelong & Tumut Express)

2.11 Moses Deep and his hawker’s wagon c1906.
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

2.12 Galvanised metal cream can c1920 – 1940
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.13 Milking machine demonstration, Women’s Exhibition
Sydney 1906 (Agricultural Gazette of NSW)

2.14 ‘Victory’ brand mechanical butter churn 1909
(Agricultural Gazette of NSW)

2.15 Tumut Butter Factory c1940
(Tumut & Adelong Times)

2.16 Alfred Le Fevre and Bobby Hargreaves c1940s
(Image from Memories of Tumut Plains)

2.17 Tumut Butter Factory building 2004
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.18 Harry Hill c2000 (Left)
(Google Images)

2.19 ‘Titch slowly withdrew his arm’
(Image courtesy of Harry Hill)

2.20 Metal watering can c1930 to 1950
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.21 Bill Choy, owner Sunshine Dry Cleaners & Laundry,
Narrandera NSW 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)
2.22  *John Loo & Co.* advertisement  
*(Narrandera Argus 1908)*

2.23  Site of the Shea family’s general store,  
East Street Narrandera NSW 2007  
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.24  Site of George Hock Shung’s store,  
Narrandera NSW 2007  
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.25  Chinese market gardens on the Murrumbidgee River,  
Narrandera NSW c1920s  
Collection of Narrandera Library

2.26  Alice Langham c1920  
(Photographer: Unknown, collection of A. Brown)

2.27  Oliver Langham Barnes c1920  
(Photographer: Unknown, collection of A. Brown)

2.28  Headstone of Thomas Tip Nooey and  
Caroline Tip Nooey, Narrandera NSW 2007  
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.29  Up To Date Store, Coolamon NSW, 2003  
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.30  Loading wheat bags, Coolamon railway station c1900  
Collection of Up To Date Store  
(Photographer: Unknown)

2.31  Nadin Iverach & Denoon’s Up To Date Store,  
Coolamon NSW c1910 (Up To Date Store)

2.32  Interior of the Up To Date Store - shoe department 2004  
(Photo: A. Brown)

2.33  Up To Date Store advertisement, 1909  
*(Coolamon & Ganmain Farmers’ Review)*

2.34  Up To Date Store advertisement, 1909  
*(Coolamon & Ganmain Farmers’ Review)*

2.35  Up To Date Store Christmas advertising, 1924  
*(Coolamon & Ganmain Farmers Review)*

2.36  W. Iverach and family, c1930s  
Collection of Up To Date Store  
(Photographer: Unknown)

2.37  Lamson cash carrier, c1909  
Up To Date Store, Coolamon NSW  
(Photo: A. Brown)
2.38 Lamson cash carrier - wooden cash ball carrier and wire return basket. (Detail) (Photo: A. Brown) 127

2.39 Lamson wire ‘flying fox’ cash carrier or gipe. Mellors Pty. Ltd. Gayndah, QLD (Photo: K. Winkworth) 128

2.40 Lamson cash carrier – cast metal brand name (Detail) (Photo: A. Brown) 129

2.41 Class 500 mechanical cash register, c1911 Collection: Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum. (Photo: A. Brown) 130

2.42 S. Richards & Co. store and staff, c1915 Collection of Narrandera Library (Photographer: Unknown) 131

2.43 S. Richards & Co. staff, c1930s Collection of Narrandera Library (Photographer: Unknown) 133

2.44 Richards & Co. advertisement, 1947 (Narrandera Argus) 134

2.45 S. Richards & Co. advertisement, 1946 (Narrandera Argus) 134

2.46 Class 500 cash register (Detail) (Photo: A. Brown) 135

2.47 National Cash Register promotional image for the Class 500 cash register (Retrieved 16/07/2002, from web site: http://www.ncr.com/history/history.htm) 137

2.48 Broom clamp used in the Queen Broom Factory, Tumut NSW, c1950s Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photo: A. Brown) 138

2.49 Exterior - Tumut Broom Company building, Tumut NSW, 2002 (Photo: A. Brown) 139

2.50 Straw brooms ready to be trimmed, Tumut Broom Company, 2002 (Photo: A. Brown) 139

2.51 Rolf Bridle hand stitching a millet straw broom, Tumut and District Historical Museum, c2000 Image courtesy of Rolf Bridle (Photographer: Unknown) 140

2.52 Tumut Broom Company label (Photo: A. Brown) 142
2.53 Millet straw broom cover, made from felt, 1933
(Woman’s Budget) 140

3.1 Wagon and bullock team, Wagga Wagga c1900
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-vn4313053) 146

3.2 Historic Echuca wharf 2002
(Photo: A. Brown) 147

3.3 Risby & Co sawmill staff, Narrandera NSW c1900
(Photographer: Unknown, collection of A. Brown) 148

3.4 Wreckage of PS Wagga Wagga, Murrumbidgee River,
Narrandera NSW, 2002
(Photo: A. Brown) 149

3.5 Constructing a river steamer, c1914
(State Library of South Australia: PRG1258/2/1946) 149

3.6 PS Wagga Wagga and crew
(Captain Thomas Bynon right), c1900
Collection of Narrandera Library
(Photographer: Unknown) 150

3.7 Advertisement - Steamboat Excursion, 1893
(Narrandera Ensign) 151

3.8 PS Wagga Wagga and ‘excursionists’, 1893
Collection of Narrandera Library
(Photographer: Unknown) 152

3.9 Log book of the PS Wagga Wagga
Collection of Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum
(Photo: A. Brown) 153

3.10 Page from PS Wagga Wagga log book, February, 1885
Collection of Narrandera Library – Microfilm copy 154

3.11 Payments made to woodpile owners, November 1891
Collection of Narrandera Library – Microfilm copy 155

3.12 (Detail) Death certificate of David Evans
(NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages Historic Register) 156

3.13 Rolled Murrumbidgee River cloth chart
Collection of Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum
(Photo: A. Brown) 157

3.14 Captain Arch O’Connor reading cloth river chart, c1974
(State Library of South Australia: PRG 1258/4/77) 158

3.15 Captain Ritchie reading cloth river chart, c1970s
(State Library of Australia: PRG 1258/4/56) 159

3.16 Cloth river chart showing image of
woolshed at Mildura, VIC (Detail) (Photo: A. Brown) 160
3.17 Chinese trading junk
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an2310331)

3.18 (L to R) Selina, Thomas Junior, Captain Thomas Bynon and Ethel c1913
Image courtesy of Norm Kelhear
(Photographer: Unknown)

3.19 *PS Wagga Wagga*, c1900
(State Library of South Australia: PRG 1258/1/3899)

3.20 (L to R) Steamer Captains George Grundy, Edward Creamer and F. H. Kruse, c1875
(State Library of South Australia: B6424)

3.21 Derelict wagon Coolamon Road, Wagga Wagga, 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)

3.22 Advertisement - Robert Murray Riverina Carriage Works, Ganmain NSW, 1909
*Coolamon and Ganmain Farmers’ Review*

3.23 Advertisement - Narandera Carriage & Waggon Co., 1892
*Narandera Ensign*

3.24 Wagon manufactured by J. T. Close Finley Foundry c1920s
Garth Jones Collection, Up To Date Store, Coolamon NSW (Photo: A. Brown)

(Photographer: Unknown)

3.26 Interior - Close Engineering Works, Finley NSW, 2007
(Photographer: Unknown)

3.27 J. T. Close wagon (Detail)
(Photographer: Unknown)

3.28 James Bennett wool wagon, c1900 (Detail)
Garth Jones Collection, Up To Date Store, Coolamon NSW (Photo: A. Brown)

3.29 James Bennett wool wagon, c1900
(Photographer: Unknown)

3.30 “JOHN BULL” wagon loaded with wool bales, Rosevale, Illabo NSW, c1920
Image courtesy of Reg and Ann Hamilton
(Photographer: Unknown)

3.31 Robert Hamilton, Rosevale, c1920 (Left)
Image courtesy of Reg and Ann Hamilton
(Photographer: Unknown)
Advertisement for George T. Bennett, Prize Coach and Waggon [sic] Works, 1899

*Adelong Argus*

J. T. Close wagon – Detail of wheel

(Photo: A. Brown)

Map – Neurenmeranmang snow lease (top right)

(Andrews: *The First Settlement of the Upper Murray 1835 to 1845*)

(L to R) Frank Eagan, M S Bradley and William ‘Tiny’ Grey, c1930s

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

L to R) T C Bradley and grand-daughters Phyllis and Betty, Neurenmerenmang hut, c1940

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

(L to R) T C Bradley, M S Bradley, Selwyn and Norman Bradley (on ponies), Neurenmerenmang hut, c1930s

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

(L to R) Selwyn Bradley and Norman Bradley – Junction of Tumut and Yarrangobilly Rivers, c1939

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

McLachlan’s hut, c1930s

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

T C Bradley with newly broken in horse, Neurenmerenmang cattle yards, c1930s

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

Rex O’Brien with his horse and dog, Neurenmerenmang area, c1940s

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

(L to R) M S Bradley and T C Bradley, c1930s

Image courtesy of Norm Bradley

(Photographer: Unknown)

Pack saddle, c1920s

Collection of Tumbarumba Historical Museum

(Photographer: Unknown)

Pack saddle (Detail)

(Photographer: Unknown)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>Drovers’ camp – Riverina, c1950s</td>
<td>(National Archives of Australia: A1200: L8969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>Drover with horse and cart, c1920</td>
<td>(Museum Victoria: MM6337)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Drovers and wives in camp, c1950s</td>
<td>(National Library of Australia: nla.pic – vn3099626)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>‘Swannee’ Smith with his drover’s cart, Gundagai, c1950s (Right)</td>
<td>Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Goldsborough Mort advertisement, 1953</td>
<td>Gundagai Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>‘Swannee’ Smith’s drover’s cart, c1930s to 1950s</td>
<td>Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>The Kinred Star possum rescue boat, c1968</td>
<td>Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>(L to R) Alan Manns, Dooley Manns and Spike the dog, Blowering Dam, May 1968</td>
<td>Australian Women’s Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>‘Operation Noah’s Ark’ Blowering Dam, May 1968</td>
<td>Australian Women’s Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>‘The Rescue of Mrs. George’, May 1968</td>
<td>Australian Women’s Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>Frederick Kinred (1851 – 1931)</td>
<td>Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>The Bebe Elliot collection display case, 2002</td>
<td>Collection of the Tumut and District Historical Museum (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Ten Mile Creek horse racing advertisement, 1875</td>
<td>Albury Border Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Pure bred Saxon rams</td>
<td>(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-vn4228857)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Headstone of Ellen Pabst (died August 1888) Holbrook cemetery NSW, 2009 (Photo: A. Brown) 208

4.5 The Mangles (State Library of Victoria: H92.410/20) 209

4.6 NSW Parish Map showing Ten Mile Creek, c1880s (Parish Map Preservation Project: Run No. 320 – Map No. 10119901) 210

4.7 Wedding group, c1900 (State Library of South Australia: B61902) 211

4.8 Pabst/ Purtell marriage certificate (Detail) (NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages Historic Register) 212

4.9 The Gertrude Pabst wedding gown, c1874 Collection of Woolpack Inn Museum, Holbrook NSW (Photo: A. Brown) 213

4.10 Dressmaking advertisement, 1874 Albury Border Mail 214

4.11 Fashion plate from the 1870s (Google Images) 215

4.12 Gertrude Pabst wedding gown, showing hand crocheted lace on bodice. (Detail) Collection of Woolpack Inn Museum, Holbrook NSW (Photo: A. Brown) 216

4.13 Kohlhagen family wedding, The Rock NSW, c1890s Collection of Museum of the Riverina (Photographer: Unknown) 216

4.14 Bridal veil with myrtle wreath, encased in a glass fronted box frame, c1880s Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum (Photo: A. Brown) 217

4.15 Kohlhagen wedding breakfast table, c1890s Collection of Museum of the Riverina (Photographer: Unknown) 218

4.16 Postcard showing Albury Street Germanton NSW, c1900 (Collection of A. Brown) 219

4.17 Lt. Norman Holbrook on board HMS Adamant, December 1914 (Australian War Memorial: G00453) 220

4.18 Dolly Wilson (left) and Heather Shung (right), both aged 5 years Image courtesy of Dolly Williamson (Photographer: Unknown) 221
4.19 Heather Shung (left) with ‘Nigger’ and Dolly Wilson (right) with ‘Snip’, c1940 Image courtesy of Dolly Williamson (Photographer: Unknown)

4.20 Criterion Picture Theatre, Bolton Street Narrandera NSW, c1960s Collection of Narrandera Library (Photographer: Unknown)

4.21 Miss T. Hook Dressmaker advertisement, 1937 Narrandera Argus

4.22 The balcony of the former Chun Cheong Bros. building, East Street Narrandera NSW, 2007 (Photo: A. Brown)

4.23 (L to R) Dorothy, Hazel and Thelma Hook, c1966 Narrandera Argus

4.24 Bannerhead, ‘Sensational Plane Crash’, September 1945 Narrandera Argus

4.25 Headstone of Corporal Hilton Shung, Narrandera War Cemetery NSW (Photo: A. Brown)

4.26 St. Thomas’s Anglican Church, Narrandera NSW, 2007 (Photo: A. Brown)

4.27 (L to R) Bridesmaid, Dolly Wilson, Groom, Hector Kenn, Bride, Heather Kenn (nee Shung) and Best Man, William Curtis, 29th September 1948 Collection of Parkside Cottage Museum Narrandera NSW (Photographer: Unknown)


4.29 Wedding gown worn by Heather Kenn (nee Shung), 27th September 1948 Collection of Parkside Cottage Museum Narrandera NSW (Photo: A. Brown)

4.30 (Front) Mitsue Iwai aged 5 years with her mother and two older sisters, Kure Japan c1930s Collection of Museum of the Riverina (Photographer: Unknown)

4.31 Traditional Japanese kimono, c1970s Collection of Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga NSW (Photo: A. Brown)
4.32 Mitsue Stockley with women’s group, Wagga Wagga, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.33 Cover of Hiroshima commemorative booklet, c1970s
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley

4.34 Mitsue Iwai, Kure Japan, c1950
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Roy Stockley)

4.35 Mitsue Stockley (middle row, right) and Japanese war brides before embarkation aboard the MV Taiyuan, 1954
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.36 Wedding portrait of Roy and Mitsue Stockley, Kure Japan, 1954
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.37 Mitsue Stockley with crochet work, Wagga Wagga, c1955
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.38 (L to R) Jeffrey and Wayne Stockley Wagga Wagga, c1960s
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.39 (3rd and 2nd right) Japanese Lions Club exchange student and Mitsue Stockley, Wagga Wagga c1970s
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.40 (Front row right) Mitsue Stockley and staff members of Best & Less, Wagga Wagga c1980s
Image courtesy of Mitsue Stockley
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.41 Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin, aged 18 years
(NSW State Library: a673004)

4.42 ‘Wambrook’ 28 Grey Street Carlton NSW was home to Miles Franklin from the 1920s until her death in 1954
(NSW State Library: a677002)

4.43 Miles Franklin, c1900
(NSW State Library: a673008)
4.44 Miles Franklin, Brindabella NSW, c1939
(NSW State Library: a673014)  242
4.45 Miles Franklin, Sydney c1940s
(NSW State Library: a673022)  243
4.46 Miles Franklin at home, ‘Wambrook’
Carlton NSW, c1950s
(NSW State Library: a673026)  244
4.47 (Left) Miles Franklin, Wentworth NSW, c1950s
(NSW State Library: a673018)  244
4.48 Graham Hepburn carrying rock from the shoreline
of Blowering Dam, 1979
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: B. Seymour)  245
4.49 Unloading rock at the site of the Miles Franklin
memorial, Talbingo NSW, 1979
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Society
(Photo: B. Seymour)  246
4.50 Work on the Miles Franklin memorial at Talbingo
begins, 1979
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: B. Seymour)  247
4.51 The Miles Franklin Memorial Talbingo NSW, 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)  247
4.52 Caplet made from Macedonian coins and
Macedonian goat bell, c1917
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)  248
4.53 Miles Franklin, in the uniform of the Scottish
Women’s Hospitals, c1917
(NSW State Library: a673009)  249
4.54 Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot on skis, c1930s
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)  250
4.55 Site of the ‘Lorraine Frock Salon’, Tumut NSW, 2004
(Photo: A. Brown)  251
4.56 Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot, c1918
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)  252
4.57 Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot (L), and unidentified partner,
in gypsy costumes, c1922
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)  253
4.58 Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot on horseback, c1920s
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 253

4.59 (Front row 3rd left) Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot, c1943-45
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 254

4.60 (2nd left) Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot holding sign reading ‘TOJO HERE I COME’, c1943-45
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 254

4.61 (Right) Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot and unidentified army colleagues, c1943-45
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 255

4.62 (Right) Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot and unidentified friend, c1943-45
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 256

4.63 Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot, Rabaul Papua New Guinea, c1953-56
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 256

4.64 Farewell letter signed by Qantas staff members, c1956
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photos: A. Brown) 258

4.65 Eveleigh Hotel, Abercrombie Street Redfern NSW, c1956-63
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 259

4.66 Ruth ‘Bebe’ Elliot, Sydney, c1956-63
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 260

4.67 (Left) Mary ‘May’ McLean and her father, John McLean, Big Ben c1920s
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 262

4.68 (Left to right) May and Isabella McLean at the ‘McLean Registered Dairy’, Big Ben c1930s
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 263

4.69 Mary ‘May’ McLean, with hooped embroidery, c1890s
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown) 264
4.70 (Left to right) Frances and May McLean holding a crazy patchwork quilt, c1940s
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.71 May McLean (left) and great-niece, Honor, collecting firewood, Big Ben c1950s
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

4.72 Elizabeth Fry reading the bible to convict women, 1780s
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an8934785)

4.73 Crazy patchwork tea cosy, made by May McLean, 1900-1940
Collection of Gundagai Historical Museum
(Photo: W. Hucker)

5.1 Laurel Kerosene advertisement, 1923
Woman’s Budget

5.2 Cretonne covered kerosene boxes, made into a combination storage unit and chair, c1930s
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.3 Wilkinson family baby cradle, c1852
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.4 Wilkinson family baby cradle, c1852 (Detail)
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.5 Baby in improvised clam shell cradle, 1892
(Museum Victoria: MM030058)

5.6 Women with new born infant, c1900
(Museum Victoria: MM001739)

5.7 Rocking the Cradle ceremony St. Mary’s church, Blidworth UK, c1980s
(www.collectionspicturelibrary.co.uk)

5.8 Crochet lace made by Louisa Meacham, c1890
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.9 Draught horse feed trough Quandong Park, Milbrulong NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.10 Woman’s Budget, front cover, September 1922
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photo: A. Brown)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>Crochet lace patterns, 1922 <em>Woman’s Budget</em>&lt;br&gt;Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Crochet cotton advertisement, 1934&lt;br&gt;<em>Australian Woman’s Mirror</em>&lt;br&gt;Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>Trigalong homestead, c1930s&lt;br&gt;(Image from <em>Temora Yesterday and Today 1880-1980</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>Louisa and John Ferguson on their wedding day, 1906&lt;br&gt;(Image from <em>Temora Yesterday and Today 1880-1980</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>Crochet lace made by Louisa Meacham, c1890&lt;br&gt;Collection of Temora Rural Museum&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>Crochet lace patterns, 1923&lt;br&gt;<em>Woman’s Budget</em>&lt;br&gt;Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.17</td>
<td><em>Poa sieberiana</em>, growing at Dry Plains NSW, 2005&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>Tussock grass hat, made by Margaret O’Neill at Dry Plains NSW, c1880s&lt;br&gt;Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>Berlin wool work sampler worked by Frances O’Neill, c1880s&lt;br&gt;Collection of Monica Talbot&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>Embroidery wool, cotton and silk, circa late 1800s&lt;br&gt;Collection of Monica Talbot&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>Headstone of Simon and Frances O’Neill,&lt;br&gt;Old Adaminaby cemetery, NSW&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Catholic Church, Cooma NSW&lt;br&gt;(Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>Margaret Casey (nee O’Neill) wearing the tussock grass hat, c1920s&lt;br&gt;Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba&lt;br&gt;(Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.24 Coiled work basket made by Margaret Casey (nee O’Neill) from tussock grass, c1920s
Collection of Monica Talbot
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.25 Coiled work baskets made from Watsonia leaves, 1931
Woman’s Budget
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba

5.26 Bush-crafted high chair made from sallie bush, c1920
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.27 Fireside chair (wood and hessian) made by
Bill Shore, c1920s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.28 William ‘Bill’ Shore, c1930s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.29 The Shore family home, c1970s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.30 Amy Shore, c1980s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.31 Ration book advertisement, March 1942
Daily Advertiser

5.32 Sugar rationing article, 1941
Woman’s World
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.33 Aunt Mary’s Baking Powder advertisement, September 1944
Australian Women’s Weekly
(Collection of A. Brown)

5.34 Victory garden promotion, January 1944
Australian Women’s Weekly
(Collection of A. Brown)

5.35 Ted and Clarice Fritsch, c1940s
Photo courtesy of Harold Fritsch
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.36 Home-made preserving pan, c1940s
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)
5.37  Fowlers Vacola advertisement, 1935
Australian Woman’s Mirror
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photograph: A. Brown)

5.38  Front cover Fowlers Vacola catalogue, c1943
Collection of A. Brown
(Photograph: A. Brown)

5.39  Verso cover Fowlers Vacola catalogue, c1943
Collection of A. Brown
(Photograph: A. Brown)

5.40  Charcoal cool safe, c1930s to 1950s
Collection of Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum
(Photograph: A. Brown)

5.41  Interior of charcoal cool safe, c1930s to 1950s (Detail)
Collection of Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum
(Photograph: A. Brown)

5.42  Coolgardie safe diagram, 1912
Agricultural Gazette of NSW

5.43  Charcoal cool safe, collection of the Whitton Museum
(Photograph: A. Brown)

5.44  Franc Sadlier Falkiner, c1900
Collection of Peppin Heritage Centre, Deniliquin NSW
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.45  Sheepyards at Widgiewa, c1920s
Collection of Peppin Heritage Centre, Deniliquin NSW
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.46  Charcoal cool safe diagram, December 1942
Agricultural Gazette of NSW

5.47  Cool safe advertisement, 1944
Daily Advertiser

5.48  ‘Swagmen’ on the road, c1920
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic – an24284739)

5.49  Oliver and Doris Barnes and trout catch, Albury, c1960s
Collection of A. Brown
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.50  Tiger the cat on wagga rug, c1970s
Collection of A. Brown
(Photograph: O. Barnes)

5.51  Wagga rug made by Doris Barnes, c1960
Collection of A. Brown
(Photograph: A. Brown)
5.52  John Foster’s wagga rug, c1950s
Collection of Pioneer Women’s Hut, Tumbarumba
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.53  John Foster’s Bedford truck, c1970s
Photo courtesy of John Foster
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.54  Foster family clothesline in a snow storm,
Tumbarumba NSW, c1960s
Photo courtesy John Foster
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.55  John Foster’s wagga rug (Detail)
(Photo: A. Brown)

5.56  Foster family home Tumbarumba NSW, c1960s
Photo courtesy of John Foster
(Photographer: Unknown)

5.57  Murrumbidgee Flour Mill, c1890s
(CSU Regional Archives)

5.58  Apron made from a ‘Wagga Lily’ flour bag and
cotton gingham, c1980s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.1  Cowra Public School, c1950
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an23697892)

6.2  Adelong National School advertisement, 1859
Adelong Mining Journal

6.3  Adelong Public School, 2008
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.4  School cadets, Adelong Public School, 1900
Collection of Adelong Alive Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.5  Adelong Superior Public School, Honour Board (detail)
Collection of Adelong Alive Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.6  Quandong Park homestead, Milbrulong NSW, 2006
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.7  Milbrulong Public School, c1918
Image courtesy of Margaret Hill
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.8  Milbrulong Public School, c1925
Image courtesy of Margaret Hill
(Photographer: Unknown)
6.9 Milbr ulong Public School, 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.10 Lutheran Manse Milbrulong NSW, 2004
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.11 The Susan Hoad Sampler, 1866 (Detail)
Collection of Tumut and District Historical Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.12 Sampler made by Agnes Millar Stewart. Date and
place of making unknown.
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.13 Cross-stitch sampler showing brightly coloured
‘Berlin’ wool thread, c1890
Collection of Monica Talbot
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.14 Headstone of George Hoad (d. 1896) and
Mary Ann Hoad (d. 1908) Tumut Pioneer
Cemetery, NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.15 Headstone of Angus Cameron McCallum
(1878-1879), infant son of Susan (nee Hoad) and
Richard McCallum. Tumut Pioneer Cemetery, NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.16 The site of the Richmond House Boarding
School Tumut NSW, c1990s
(Photo: Sheila Garner)

6.17 Catholic Church Tumut NSW, 2010
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.18 Fig. 6.18: The Susan Hoad Sampler, 2010
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.19 Edith Short needlework sampler, c1894 -
Edith Short sampler collection
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.20 Buttonhole sampler, c1894 –
Edith Short sampler collection
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.21 Temora tent school, c1880
(Temora yesterday and today 1880-1980)

6.22 Temora Public School, c1901
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)
6.23 Advertisement for the Private School of Mrs. Louis J. Wilson, 1895
*Temora Independent*

6.24 Sewing class Bondi Public School, 1916
(State Library of NSW: d1-31330)

6.25 Needlework sampler worked by Edith Short, 1892 – Edith Short sampler collection
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.26 Temora P. A. H. & I. Show, 1907
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.27 Temora P. A. H. & I. Show, 1910
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

6.28 Temora Show first prize card ‘Edie Short – Buttonholes – 1894 – Edith Short sampler collection
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.29 Needlework exhibits Wagga Wagga Show, c1960s
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)

6.30 Peanut dolls made by the Sisters of St Clare’s Convent, c1900
Collection of Woolpack Inn Museum, Holbrook NSW
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.31 Sister Mary Augustine Doyle, c1890s
(Image from *Their Story 1882-1982. Sisters of Saint Joseph North Goulburn New South Wales.)*

6.32 St Clare’s Convent Holbrook NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.33 St Patrick’s Catholic School Holbrook NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.34 Burial site of Sister Mary Julian,
St Clare’s Convent Holbrook NSW, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.35 St. Bridget’s Convent Albury NSW,
designed by Gordon & Gordon in 1868
(Photo: A. Brown)

6.36 St. Patrick’s School Hall Albury NSW,
designed by Gordon & Gordon in 1885
(Photo: A. Brown)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>The Riverina Hotel Holbrook NSW, designed by Gordon &amp; Gordon in 1893 (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>Ladies at a fundraising bazaar, St James Church of England, Traralgon Victoria, 1886 (State Library of Victoria: H40181)</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>Fundraising stall, Baylis Street Wagga Wagga, c1960s (CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>Peanut Man, 1927 Woman’s Budget</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>Peanut Mandarin, 1934 Woman’s Budget</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>Beleek milk jug, c1870s Collection of Mt. Erin Archives (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>Holy card, showing the image of the Five Angels, c1874 Collection of Mt. Erin Archives (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>Mother Mary John Byrne, the foundress of Mt. Erin Convent Collection of Mt. Erin Archives (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>SS Northumberland, 1873 (State Library of Victoria: mp002003)</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>Mt. Erin Convent, Wagga Wagga NSW, c1876 (State Library of NSW: on4-40541)</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>Mt. Erin Convent, Wagga Wagga NSW, 1876 Wagga Advertiser</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>Book prize, awarded to Victor Haberecht for academic achievement at Henty Public School, c1915 Collection of Museum of the Riverina (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>Henty Public School band c1917, Victor Haberecht back row - fourth from left (CSU Regional Archives – Photographer: Unknown)</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>Army trunk lid, c1939-1945 Collection of Museum of the Riverina (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.51 Victor Haberecht with year 3/4, North Wagga Public School, 1948
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown) 377

6.52 Rolling chart, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photo: A. Brown) 378

6.53 Vic Haberecht and staff members cleaning up after a flood, North Wagga Public School, c1954
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown) 378

6.54 Victor Haberecht painting a rolling chart, North Wagga Public School, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown) 379

6.55 Rolling chart contents showing the ‘Great Cities of England’, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photo: A. Brown) 379

6.56 Rolling chart, showing detail of a social studies section on ‘Papua – Land of fuzzy haired people’, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photo: A. Brown) 380

6.57 Rolling chart, showing ‘nature study’ images, c1950s
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photo: A. Brown) 381

6.58 Victor Haberecht and year 5/6, North Wagga Public School, 1959
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown) 381

7.1 Mabel and Herbert Lewis, c1920
Image courtesy of Pat Jackson and Amy Lewis
(Photographer: Unknown) 384

7.2 Red Cross fundraising Coolamon NSW, c1914-1918
Collection of Up To Date Store
(Photographer: Unknown) 385

7.3 ‘ANZAC 1915’ Filet crochet album cover made by Mabel Lewis (nee Pearce), c1916-1920
Collection of Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum
(Photo: A. Brown) 384

7.4 SS Kyarra embarking from Melbourne, 1914
(Australian War Memorial: P00356.001) 387
7.5 Private Wilfred Ernest Pearce and the
*SS Kyarra*, c1916-1920
Collection of Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum
(Photographer: King Studios, Sydney NSW)

7.6 Private Edmond Pearce and the
*TSS Ceramic*, c1916-1920
Collection of Coolamon RSL Memorial Museum
(Photographer: King Studios, Sydney NSW)

7.7 ‘GOD BLESS OUR BRAVE BOYS’ filet crochet
jug cover made by Mabel Lewis (nee Pearce),
c1916-1920
Collection of P. Jackson and A. Lewis
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.8 ‘FOR KING AND COUNTRY’ filet crochet
pattern, 1916
*Woman’s Budget*

7.9 ‘ANZAC DAY APL 25 1915 LEST WE FORGET’
filet crochet pattern, 1916
*Woman’s Budget*

7.10 Australian national flag, front cover,
*Review of Reviews For Australia*, 1901
(Australian National Flag Association website:
www.flag aust nat.asn.au)

7.11 August and Emma Hohnburg and family,
Trungley Hall, c1900
Image courtesy of the Hartwig family
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.12 Members of the Kohlhagen family, The Rock, c1900
Image courtesy of the Kohlhagen family
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.13 Union Jack flag, c1910
Collection of Tumbarumba Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.14 The Union Jack war memorial, Tumbarumba
NSW, 2008
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.15 Private Herbert Heinecke (L) and
Private George Heinecke (R)
Collection of Tumbarumba Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.16 Union Jack war memorial, showing the
names of the Heinecke brothers (Detail)
(Photo: A. Brown)
7.17  Coloured chromolithograph print of Kaiser Wilhelm II, c1900
Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.18  German internees Holdsworthy NSW, 1914
(Australian War Memorial: P00595.094)

7.19  German internees Holdsworthy Internment Camp,
c1914 to 1918
(Australian War Memorial: H17380)

7.20  Member for the state seat of Albury,
Alexander Mair, c1943
(State Library of NSW: gpo1_22572)

7.21  Memorial plaque, Trungley Hall Lutheran
Church, 2007
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.22  Sister Alma Pearse, RAAFNS, in winter uniform, c1941
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.23  Sister Alma Pearse, RAAFNS, in dress or mess uniform, c1942
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.24  RAAFNS uniform cape worn by Sister Alma Pearse,
c1941-1945
Collection of RSL Memorial Museum, Coolamon
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.25  3RAAF Hospital Richmond NSW nursing staff,
Sister Alma Pearse (back 2nd left) and
Matron Doherty (front centre), c1941
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.26  Staff quarters at 3RAAF Hospital, Richmond
NSW, c1941
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.27  Sister Alma Pearse (back left), nursing staff and
convalescent patients, 3RAAF Hospital Richmond
NSW, c1941
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.28  Sister Alma Pearse, RAAFNS, in summer uniform,
c1942
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)
7.29 Hospital tent, RAAF 3 MRS Hospital, Townsville QLD, c1942-43
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.30 Operating theatre tent, RAAF 3 MRS Hospital
Townsville QLD, c1942-43
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.31 Sister Alma Pearse and two medical orderlies,
RAAF 3 MRS Hospital, Townsville QLD, c1942-43
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.32 Sister Alma Pearse (Back 3rd right) and nursing staff,
1 RAAF Hospital, Wagga Wagga NSW, 1944
Image courtesy of Alma Skeers
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.33 Aerial view, 1 RAAF Hospital, Wagga Wagga NSW, c1944-45
(Australian War Memorial Museum: 043241)

7.34 Australian Women’s Land Army, recruitment poster,
c1942-45
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.35 Land Army girl and orchard owner picking apples,
Batlow, c1942-45
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.36 Batlow NSW, c1944
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.37 Australian Women’s Land Army recruiting poster,
c1942-1945
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.38 Work boots worn by a member of the AWLA,
Batlow NSW, c1942-45
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.39 Khaki cotton work shorts worn by a member of
the AWLA, Batlow NSW, c1942-45
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.40 AWLA service record book, c1942-45
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)
7.41 AWLA members, Batlow NSW, c1942-45
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.42 Wakehurst Hostel under construction,
Batlow NSW, c1943
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.43 Letter from Frances Hollins to H. V. Smith,
24 November, 1942
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.44 (Front row centre) Lord and Lady Wakehurst and
official party visit the AWLA girls at Batlow NSW,
March 1942
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

7.45 Women’s Land Army dance and card party
advertisement, March 1945
*Tumut & Adelong Times*

7.46 Front cover of *The Land Army News*
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

7.47 AWLA girls relaxing on the sundeck of Wakehurst
Hostel, Batlow NSW, c1945
Collection of Batlow Historical Society Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.1 Wirth’s Circus arriving at Wingham NSW, c1920s
(State Library of NSW - 01535)

8.2 Les Schultz with his accordion, Temora NSW, c1980s
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an7497136-122)

8.3 Tenor horn, used by a member of the Jindera Town
Band, c1880 to 1910
Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

8.4 Jindera town band, c1880 to 1910
Collection of Jindera Pioneer Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.5 Advertising poster for Abdy’s Bird Circus, c1860-1896
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an13416619)

8.6 Advertisement for Homann’s Brass Band, 1903
*Tumut & Adelong Times*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Advertisement for Misses Madigan and Alpen dancing classes, 1899. <em>Tumut &amp; Adelong Times</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>St Matthews debutante ball, Albury 1957. Collection of A. Brown (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>Advertisement for dance in aid of Miss Australia entrant, c1956. <em>Gundagai Independent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>Advertisement for Youth Association Dance, 1959. <em>Tumut &amp; Adelong Times</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>Three original members of the Nutcrackers’ Orchestra, c1940s. Image courtesy of Barry Luff (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>Cheer Up Club advertisement, 1945. <em>Gundagai Independent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>The Nutcrackers’ Orchestra on stage, c1950s. Barry Luff (front centre) Image courtesy of Barry Luff (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>Barn dancers in full swing, Gundagai, c1950s. Image courtesy of Barry Luff (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>Headstone of James (Jazza) Hawthorne, Gundagai NSW. (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>On stage at the McLeod/ Day wedding, Junee Reefs NSW, c1950s. Image courtesy of Barry Luff (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>Catering ladies, St John’s Hall Gundagai, c1950s. Image courtesy of Barry Luff (Photographer: Unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>Nangus Hall, 2007. (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>Muttama Hall, 2007. (Photo: A. Brown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.21 Bass drum, showing hand painted outer skin
Collection of Gundagai and District Museum
(Photograph: A. Brown)

8.22 Combaning homestead, birthplace of Catherine
Mary Ryan
(Image from Temora Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)

8.23 Funeral of ‘Queen Narelle’ of the Moruya Tribe,
Wallaga Lake NSW, 1895
(National Library of Australia: nla.pic-an2438405)

8.24 Marie Narelle, c1899
(Temora Rural Museum archives)

8.25 Marie Narelle, c1908
(State Library of Victoria: H37081/21)

8.26 Marie Narelle concert advertisement, 1908
Temora Independent

8.27 Marie Narelle concert poster, c1908
(State Library of Tasmania: AUTAS00112597531)

8.28 Holy Trinity graveyard Chipping Norton
England, c1980
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: John Lyons)

8.29 Unpacking the ‘Marie Narelle’ headstone,
Temora Rural Museum, c1980
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.30 Headstone of Marie Narelle
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

8.31 Pauline ‘Peggy’ Kenyon, c1930s
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.32 Pauline Kenyon in ballet pose, c1940s
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.33 Pauline Kenyon (sixth from left) and the Tivoli
dancers, Melbourne c1946
Image courtesy of Pauline Harvey
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.34 Pauline Kenyon - Tivoli promotional portrait, c1946
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)
8.35 Advertising poster for Guys & Dolls, 1981
Collection of Pauline Harvey

8.36 Madge Wallace, Murrumburrah NSW, c1910
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.37 Highland dancing group – Wallace Dancing Studio, Junee NSW, 1918
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.38 Madge Wallace (centre right) and ballet examination students, Wagga Wagga c1940s
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.39 Charles Jacobi and Madge Wallace (Jacobi), c1930s
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.40 Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod Society competitor’s tickets, c1940s
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: R. Willis)

8.41 Robyn and Barry Sadlier – Wagga Eisteddfod tap dance performers, c1950
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.42 Sarah Brown - National Character performer, c1985
Collection of A. Brown
(Photographer: Freeman Studio)

8.43 Wallace Studio winning demi-character troupe, City of Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod, c1944
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis
(Photographer: Unknown)

8.44 Tap dancing costume worn by Pauline Kenyon during WWII
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photo: A. Brown)

8.45 Wallace School of Dancing concert program, 1943
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis

8.46 Wagga Eisteddfod advertisement, 1942
Daily Advertiser

8.47 Pauline Kenyon, winner of the Carabost Cup tap dancing championship Wagga Eisteddfod, 1946
Collection of Museum of the Riverina
(Photographer: Unknown)
First prize certificate awarded to John Shephard – Carabost Cup tap dancing championship, 1946
Image courtesy of Robyn Willis

Yvonne O’Connor (right) winner of the Carabost Cup tap dancing championship, 1966
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection)

Membership badge, Wilna Wattle Society, c1920s
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

J. J. Fitzpatrick (back row 4th left) and ex-pupils, c1930
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

Cloth badge, Wilna Wattle Literary & Social Club, c1923
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Wilna Wattle signature cloth, c1933
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Invitation card, Wilna Wattle Re-union Dinner and Social, 1933
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photo: A. Brown)

Liquor referendum voting advertisement, 1928
 Temora Independent

Headline of referendum results, 1928
 Temora Independent

The cast of ‘The Mummy and the Mumps’, c1933
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

Cast of a Wilna Wattle dramatic production (title unknown), c1930
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

Jimmy Sharman Senior, c1910
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)

Sharman tent boxing troupe, Sydney Royal Easter Show, c1951
Collection of Temora Rural Museum
(Photographer: Unknown)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8.61   | Sharman Troupe advertising banner (detail)  
Collection of Temora Rural Museum  
(Photo: A. Brown) |
| 8.62   | Side show alley, Wagga Wagga c1960,  
showing Sharman’s tent at right of frame  
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection) |
| 8.63   | Boxing ‘hopefuls’ line up outside the Sharman tent  
Wagga Wagga Show, c1960  
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection) |
| 8.64   | Rud Kee – boxer and trainer with the Jimmy Sharman  
Troupe, Wagga Wagga Show c1960  
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection) |
| 8.65   | Jimmy Sharman Junior and Rud Kee,  
Wagga Wagga Show, c1960  
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection) |
| 8.66   | Leslie ‘Bronco’ Burns, Brewarrina NSW, c1990  
Collection of Museum of the Riverina  
(Photographer: Unknown) |
| 8.67   | Rud Kee (centre) with two Indigenous boxers  
(names unknown), Wagga Wagga Show, c1960  
(CSU Regional Archives – Tom Lennon Collection) |
Appendix II: Significance

The following information has been sourced from *Significance 2.0: A guide to assessing the significance of collections* (Russell and Winkworth). A complete version of *Significance 2.0* can be downloaded from the Federal Government’s Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities website, by clicking on the Heritage link, followed by the Publications and Resources link.

What is *Significance 2.0*

*Significance 2.0* outlines the theory, practice and many applications of the concept of significance in collection management. It takes readers through the key concepts and steps in assessing significance, for single items, collections and cross-collection projects. With examples and case studies it shows significance in action, in a wide range of applications.

This is a new and revised edition of *Significance; a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage collections*, published in 2001 by the Commonwealth of Australia on behalf of the Heritage Collections Council. This second edition extends the scope of significance to demonstrate its use with a wide variety of collections across the four major collecting domains—archives, galleries, libraries and museums.

Since the publication of the first edition, many collecting organisations across Australia have embraced the concept of significance, using it in many facets of their work—in collection policies, for acquisitions and deaccessioning, in conservation, planning, promotion, advocacy, education, online access, and in innovative collaborative projects. Significance is now widely used by collecting organisations in Australia and it has a growing number of supporters overseas.

Who is *Significance 2.0* for?

*Significance 2.0* is for anyone who is curious about collections and their meanings.

*Significance 2.0* is for all collecting organisations, agencies and owners that manage or hold collections. This includes everyone working with or associated with collections in any capacity—archivists, conservators, curators, educators, heritage managers,
librarians, policy officers, interpreters, private owners and collectors, registrars, researchers, scientists, and students, whether as paid workers or volunteers.

**How can Significance 2.0 help?**

*Significance* 2.0 is designed to work for all types of collections, giving collection managers throughout Australia a shared framework and standard process to analyse and communicate the meanings and values of collections.

Collecting organisations will have different uses for significance, depending on their circumstances and collections. While some collecting organisations are using significance in all aspects of their collection work, others find it useful for occasional or specific applications, such as supporting acquisition proposals to boards, or before conservation work. Some collecting organisations mainly use the single item assessment process, while others will find the whole collection process more useful.

This guide provides ideas, examples and suggestions that can be adapted to suit the needs of all kinds of collections.

**Using Significance 2.0**

This guide explains the concept of significance, the assessment process, how to draft a statement of significance, and gives examples of many different applications of significance.

It is designed to work with a suite of online resources including a workbook and e-learning module for developing practical skills in assessing significance, and other supporting online resources.

Examples and case studies in *Significance* 2.0 are tightly edited and may not fully convey the significance of the item or associated research. Further, more detailed case studies will be added online in the future. The first edition of *Significance* contains other case studies, and remains available online.
### Appendix III: Other Selected Museums in the Riverina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Museum</td>
<td>Albury NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariah Park Museum</td>
<td>Ariah Park NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barellan Museum</td>
<td>Barellan NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop’s Lodge Historic House and Garden</td>
<td>Hay NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradman’s Birthplace Museum</td>
<td>Cootamundra NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway Museum</td>
<td>Junee NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cootamundra Heritage Centre</td>
<td>Cootamundra NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganmain Historical Society Museum</td>
<td>Ganmain NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith Italian Museum</td>
<td>Griffith NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith Pioneer Park Museum</td>
<td>Griffith NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Gaol Museum</td>
<td>Hay NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Memorial High School Museum</td>
<td>Hay NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay POW and Internment Camp, Interpretive Centre</td>
<td>Hay NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monte Cristo Homestead</td>
<td>Junee NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Heritage Museum</td>
<td>Wagga Wagga NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundhouse Museum</td>
<td>Junee NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shear Outback</td>
<td>Hay NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temora Aviation Museum</td>
<td>Temora NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Wyalong Museum</td>
<td>West Wyalong NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitton Historical Museum</td>
<td>Whitton NSW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV: Statement of Significance – Menneke bell

Item name:
'Menneke' Bell - bullock bell manufactured by North Wagga blacksmith August Menneke

Date:
c1870s - 1911

Place of manufacture:
North Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

Name of manufacturer:
August Menneke

Former place(s) of use:
Unknown

Location:
Museum of the Riverina, Botanic Gardens Site, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.

Owner:
Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society – Museum of the Riverina

Description:
Cast iron bullock bell comprising: one sheet of metal wrapped around to form body, with a second flat piece soldered on at top. A square handle, and the crudely shaped tongue are held in place with a square nail. Stamped on side 'A Menneke / Blacksmith / North Wagga Wagga'. Near the top there is an identical stamp. Lid is stamped with the initials 'AM'.

Condition:
Good condition, considering age and storage. Interior is partly rusted, bottom edge is bent and there is a crack. The bell is structurally sound.
History:

**August Menneke and his Bells**

August Augustus Menneke was born in 1838 in Bakenem, Germany. He emigrated to Australia, arriving in N.S.W. in about 1858. Immediately after serving an apprenticeship in the blacksmithing trade, he established his own business in North Wagga, next to the Black Swan Hotel (c. 1867).

August Menneke

August married an Irish woman, Maria Mary. Together they had three sons - Frederick, Bill and Albert - who all helped him in his blacksmith shop.

Bill Menneke

Bill also became a famous bell maker, his best feat being the making of a bell from a piece of crosscut saw.

August remained in North Wagga for several years. By the 1870s, he had won fame, particularly for the goods he manufactured for bullock drivers. He had a perfect ear for the sound of a bell, and his bells had a clear tenor quality, which could be heard miles away. These bells were used on a leader in a bullock team, or on other stock so they could be easily located.
According to legend, a test was carried out on top of Mt. Kosciusko to find the best bell maker in Australia. The two rivals were August Menneke and Anthony Mongan of Albury. Menneke won when his bell could be heard ten miles away.

During the 1940s, Dame Mary Gilmore was quoted as saying that a Menneke bell was worth almost its weight in gold. She immortalised August Menneke in her poem Bells and Bullocks:

*Once in a while we ask if he hears
The sound of Mennicke's (sic) bells
Deep in the pits of his ancient ears
Repeating their olden spells

'Mennicke's bells?'... Then he'll say
Never heard none like 'em;
Mennicke, he had the way
No one else could strike 'em

August Menneke died on 11 May 1904 aged 66, and is buried in the Wagga cemetery.

**Blacksmithing during the 19th century**

Although they were not always treated as such, blacksmiths ('smithys') were a vital part of nineteenth century communities, especially on the frontier.

They were usually located adjoining or next to hotels, which also served as refreshment stations for coaches and courier services. However, blacksmiths did far more than just manufacture horseshoes, nails and shodding horses (although all of these were very necessary and important tasks in a society so heavily reliant on horsepower).

Blacksmiths also made bows for the bullock yokes, repaired chains, made crook wedges, put clips on wheel spokes and repaired ploughs and drays.
Regional Context:

Menneke arrived in Wagga just before the increase in horses and the improvement in roads during the 1870s which led to an explosion in demand. By the 1920s, most of the blacksmiths in Wagga, along with saddlers and coachbuilders, had been replaced by motor garages. One of the last to go was Harry Hand's smithy opposite Huthwaites Department Store on Baylis Street, which was demolished during the 1930s to make way for Geale's Hardware.

Until the 1860s most pastoralists in the Wagga region transported their wool by bullock train to Sydney. Later, many sent their wool by steamer down the Murray to South Australia and then by train to Melbourne. When the railway line was extended to Wagga in 1880, the heyday of the bullock team was over.
The Menneke bell was nicknamed "The Wagga Pot" by bullock drivers.

The bell was made in North Wagga and relates to a time when the village was an important stopover for potential selectors, coaches and bullock trains. The item also relates to a time when Wagga was a frontier society.

August Menneke has been honoured in recent times with the naming of Menneke Park, which is bordered by Pugsley Avenue and Gunn Drive in Estella (1992). The request to name a park or street in Estella was made by the Kiwi and Kangaroo Bell Club of Beverley Hill, N.S.W.

Menneke is still remembered throughout Wagga as one of the finest blacksmiths and legendary bell-maker.

**Statement of Significance:**

**Primary Criteria**

**Designation:** Historic

Cattle and horse bells were once used extensively throughout the Australian countryside. The first ones were imported from England and America, but gradually local blacksmiths started turning out their own bells.

That the days of the bullock bells are gone is a pity… to quote Alan Marshall:

*There's no sweeter music in the bush than the sound of bullock bells on a frosty night. There was a time when men of the outback took as much pride in their bells as a drover does in his dogs. I remember talking to an old bullock driver over a campfire in western N.S.W. He'd just belled his bullocks and it was noticed that the one he put on the straggler had a more penetrating note than the others. "It's a Menneke bell", the bullocky said "and no better bell has ever been made. You can hear it five miles away on a clear night".*

**Degrees of Significance**

**Using Comparative Criteria:**

**Rarity:**

On 20 November 1958, The Daily Advertiser ran a story titled "Grandson of Maker Seeks One of the Famed Menneke Bells". Fred Menneke had in his possession a bell, which was supposedly an original Menneke bell, but it was lacking the trademark 'AM' initials with which August marked his goods. He was seeking anybody with an original, which he could purchase for his collection.

Four days later, the Advertiser ran another story titled "Menneke Bell Still Heard Over Riverina". Four people from centres as far away as Cloncurry, Queensland and as close as Wagga itself had contacted Fred regarding original Menneke bells in their
possession. One bell, held by Mr. Jack McCrea of "Kinnilla", Marrar stands over a foot high, and was used to summon workers for meals.

People throughout the district (and even throughout Australia) possibly hold Menneke bells in their possession. They are however, rare in museum collections.

Although this particular Menneke bell is not well documented, it is rare as a surviving example of August Menneke's work.

**Representativeness:**

Various museums listed on the AMOL site have stock bells in their collections, including the Newcastle Regional Museum, the Museum of Victoria and the Queensland Museum. These bells are Condamine, calf or cow bells. There is one bullock bell (of English manufacture) in the Museum of Victoria.

![Cow bell in the Newcastle Regional Museum - part of the A.R. Lane Collection (photograph from AMOL website)](image)

The Museum of the Riverina has several bells in its collection, similar in type to those shown on AMOL. Only one is a Menneke bell, some are unmarked, and there are some Condamine Bull Frog Bells, which were manufactured by S.W. Jones (and are also immortalised in poetry and song).

**Intactness and Condition:**

The bell is sound, and intact. The bell shows no special features or is in particularly good condition for its type. Importantly however, it does display two stamps, plus the trademark initials 'AM', which identify it as an original Menneke bell. The famous tenor quality of Menneke's bells is no longer present in this example (possibly due to the small crack in the casing).

**Provenance:**

The Menneke bell was donated to the Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society in April 1970 by Fred Menneke, grandson of August and son of Bill. The donation appears to have been facilitated by WW&DHS member A.H. Seccombe. Fred acquired this bell after The Daily Advertiser ran his story regarding the search for an original Menneke bell. It was found by a shearer in a shed in the Holbrook region. Unfortunately there is no further information pertaining to this particular bell, such as who used it and how.
**Interpretative Ability:**

The Menneke bell is currently featured in a display as part of the permanent collections of the Botanic Gardens Site. It is included with various artifacts, which portray fragments of Wagga history (for example; a brass fireman's helmet and a baton presented to Wagga Citizens Band conductor Mr. Homann).

The bell will also be featured in the upcoming BGS exhibition 'Made in Wagga'.

The Menneke bell could be included in numerous displays, incorporating the themes of local legends, local manufacturers, blacksmithing, transport and famous residents.

**Bibliography:**


Australian Folklore, by W. Fearn-Wannan - mentions bells made by other blacksmiths, including Mongan of Albury and Menneke.

Such is Life, by Tom Collins.

Written and compiled by Michelle Maddison
Museum of the Riverina
Wagga Wagga
November 2002
Appendix V: Garth Jones’ Collection Questionnaire

Canola Adventurers’ Group

Your name and phone number (optional):

Wooden Feed Trough
Do you have any memories/ stories connected to wooden feed troughs?

J. T. Close Wagon/ James Bennett Wagon
Do you have any memories/ stories connected to wagons or horse teams?

‘Sunshine’ Gate/ Wooden sheep yard gate
Do you have any memories/ stories connected to farm gates e.g. installing or repairing gates?

‘Sunshine’ Gate/ Wooden sheep yard gate
Do you have any memories/ stories connected to games played on or around gates or games played around the farm, the backyard or at school (outdoor games)?

Your time and effort in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated.
Annette Brown
Museum of the Riverina
Wagga Wagga
Appendix VI: Interviews (CSU Ethics Protocol Number: 2004/090)

Wherever possible the informant was interviewed in person and the interview was tape recorded. Many informants were unwilling to be tape-recorded and in these cases field notes were written during the interview. A small number of informants were contacted by phone or email, and some responses were in the form of a letter. In some instances, a questionnaire was mailed to potential informants.


Oliver Barnes interviewed by A. Brown, July 1, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.

Oliver Barnes interviewed by A. Brown, July 18, 2005, field notes held by A. Brown.

Norman Bradley interviewed by A. Brown, October 1, 2004, field notes held by A. Brown.

Rolf Bridle interviewed by A. Brown, October 10, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.

Warren Brown interviewed by A. Brown, April 16, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.


Margaret Campbell interviewed by A. Brown, April 3, 2005, field notes held by A. Brown.

David Cathcart interviewed by A. Brown, January 20, 2004, field notes held by A. Brown.


Warren Condon interviewed by A. Brown, February 18, 2006, field notes held by A. Brown.

John Foster interviewed by A. Brown, September 4, 2004, field notes and tape held by A. Brown.

Harold Fritsch, telephone conversation with A. Brown, November 24, 2005, field notes held by A. Brown.

Sheila Garner, letter to author, June 12, 2002.

Sheila Garner interviewed by A. Brown, July 1, 2002, field notes and tape held by A. Brown.
Laurie Gaynor, response to questionnaire, February 9, 2003, questionnaire held by A. Brown.

Hartwig family interviewed by A. Brown, April 3, 2005, field notes held by A. Brown.

Pauline Harvey interviewed by A. Brown, October 8, 2004, field notes held by A. Brown.

Stan Heffer, response to questionnaire, February 9, 2003, questionnaire held by A. Brown.

Margaret Hill, email to A. Brown, May 13, 2004.

Sister Alexis Horsley interviewed by A. Brown, April 23, 2007, field notes held by A. Brown.

Pat Jackson interviewed by A. Brown, August 4, 2003, field notes held by A. Brown.

Garth Jones, letter to A. Brown, July 7, 2008.

Ted Kirk interviewed by A. Brown, July 31, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.

Amy Lewis interviewed by A. Brown, August 4, 2003, field notes held by A. Brown.


Barry Luff, interviewed by A. Brown, March 6, 2003, field notes and tape held by A. Brown.

Nell Maslin interviewed by A. Brown, July 26, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.

Rhona Morton interviewed by A. Brown, September 15, 2005, field notes held by A. Brown.

Jenny Newbound interviewed by A. Brown, November 2, 2005, field notes held by A. Brown.

Rex O’Brien, interviewed by the O’Brien family, c2000, tape held by A. Brown.

Betty Owen interviewed by A. Brown, May 16, 2008, field notes held by A. Brown.

Norma Plumb, letter to A. Brown, October 25, 2002.

Betty Punnet interviewed by A. Brown, July 26, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.

Joe Reardon, interviewed by A. Brown, November 19, 2004, field notes and tape held by A. Brown.

Effie Ray, interviewed by A. Brown, August 12, 2002, field notes and tape held by Hay Gaol Museum, Hay NSW.
Barbara Seymour interviewed by A. Brown, August 15, 2003, field notes held by A. Brown.

Barbara Seymour interviewed by V, September 3, 2004, field notes held by A. Brown.

Barbara Seymour, email to A. Brown, November 7, 2008.

Mervyn Shung interviewed by A. Brown, July 31, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.

Alma Skeers interviewed by A. Brown, June 16, 2003, field notes held by A. Brown.

Alma Skeers, interviewed by A. Brown, June 23, 2003, tape held by A. Brown.

Mitsue Stockley interviewed by A. Brown, July 18, 2006, field notes held by A. Brown.

Monica Talbot interviewed by A. Brown, December 3, 2004, field notes held by A. Brown.


Roy Wade interviewed by A. Brown, April 15, 2007, field notes held by A. Brown.

Alexander Waller interviewed by A. Brown, July 31, 2002, field notes held by A. Brown.

Norah Wardleworth interviewed by Gaye McGeorge, May 12, 2004, field notes held by A. Brown.


Geoff Wortes interviewed by A. Brown, November 18, 2003, field notes held by A. Brown.