

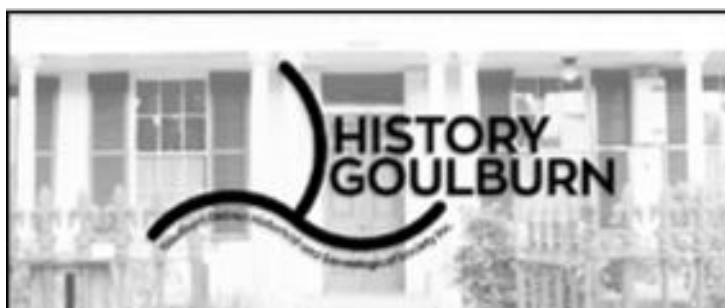
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Goulburn District Historical and Genealogical Society Inc.

Trading as HISTORY GOULBURN

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Meetings

General meetings will be held on the 4th Thursday of February, April, June, August (AGM) and October at the Goulburn Workers Club, McKell Place at 10.30am. All are welcome. December Christmas functional location to be decided.

Access to Archives

Public access to our archives is available at the temporary research centre situated at 324 Sloane Street between 10am and 4pm every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, or by appointment by ringing (02) 4821 1156. Research material is also available at the Regional History area of the Goulburn Mulwaree Library.

Research

Research enquiries welcome.

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Membership Fees:

Junior (under 18 years)	free
Single	\$15.00
Family (2 adults)	\$20.00
Corporate	\$150.00

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear members,

I trust all members, friends and families had a happy and relaxing holiday period as we head into 2023 – hopefully an auspicious year for History Goulburn. We do hope to finally, though softly, begin the move back into St Clair in October. The conservation will not be finished but we plan to be at least able to have an open weekend to guide people through our wonderful old building, and reveal the incredible work that has been done on St Clair and the embedded history of its construction.

Meanwhile a group of our volunteers continue working on updating the cataloguing of our collection, making some intriguing discoveries along the way. One of the areas on which we have been focusing is the Miriam Chisholm collection (which includes masses of photographs from the first half of the 20th century). Miss Chisholm was a keen astronomer and so is Dr Toner Stevenson of the University of Sydney.

Dr Stevenson will be our fascinating guest speaker at our next members meeting on **Thursday 16 February** at the Goulburn Workers Club. Starting at 11am, her talk is titled **The Goulburn Eclipse Chaser of 1922: Miriam Chisholm**. Dr Stevenson will relate the Chisholm story as well as others about total solar eclipses.

Before the talk we shall have a 30 minute meeting at 10.30, so if members have any questions or comments related to History Goulburn matters, please email in advance to historygoulburn2580@gmail.com

Looks like we are having a positive start to 2023 – if only we aren't flooded

Jennifer Lamb

Congratulations to Garry White for his most recent award.

Long-serving volunteer Garry White was recognised for his dedication to Goulburn's history when he was presented with an IMAGinE award in December 2022. It was one of only five such awards issued across the entire state by Museums and Galleries of New South Wales, after his nomination by the council's museum co-ordinator, Julie Salway.

Earlier in the year, Garry and Robyne White were named Senior Community Group of the Year during Seniors Week, for almost four decades of dedication to the History Goulburn Research Team. Congratulations Garry! What are you going to do next?



The History of Goulburn Ambulance

By Roger Bayley © 2023

Nobody thinks about ambulances until they need one. Then, at that terrible time, there is no sweeter sound than the wail of an approaching siren, and the reassuring voice of a first-aider.

The concept of First Aid is fairly modern. In olden times, accident victims had no competent support, unless they were lucky enough to be near a doctor. The priest or the pastor often arrived before the doctor did, just in time to administer the last rites.

Beginnings.

Armies and navies led the way in providing medical aid. The Order of St John was formed during the Crusades in the 11th Century, taking the symbol of the Maltese Cross, but many more centuries passed before the heavy machinery and scalding steam of the industrial age placed lives and limbs at risk.

The first ambulance service appeared in 1881, due to a smallpox epidemic. The New South Wales Board of Health provided horse-drawn vehicles to carry infectious patients into quarantine, but they weren't available for general use.

A First Aid demonstration by the Army Medical Corps in 1887 led to the formation of the No. 1 Ambulance Corps in Sydney, which attended major sporting events such as horse-racing.

By 1894 the Redfern Bicycle Club boasted the first bicycle ambulance, which could reach the scene of an accident "with dazzling speed."

These humble beginnings led to the formation of The Civil Ambulance and Transport Brigade on April Fool's Day in 1895. Their motto was "For the Love of Life" and they operated from an old Police Station at Railway Square in Sydney with two staff, one stretcher, and a telephone.

It would take decades for the service to be extended to rural areas outside of Sydney.

The Railway and Tramway Ambulance Service.

The first attempt to train First Aiders in Goulburn came from the New South Wales Government Railways, who recognised that steam locomotives and rolling stock made for a dangerous workplace. "The Railway and Tramway Ambulance Service" was established here in 1888, not long after it was pioneered in Sydney. (1)

Goulburn became the training hub for the southern district, and the courses run by Doctor Burkitt were comprehensive, even by today's standards. Accidents could happen a long way from town, so gangers and fettlers were taught to improvise stretchers and splints from anything that lay at hand. Competitions pitted teams of porters against guards, gangers, drivers, engineers, station staff and workshop staff, for which trophies were awarded. The Yarra gang impressed everyone with their improvisational skills by using the poles and flags carried on their rail trolley to make a stretchers, bandages, slings and splints, and using the bark of the stringybark tree to make rope.

The courses were so popular that men turned up for training in their own time, and townsfolk hobbled and limped to the lectures to obtain free treatment in front of the attentive class.

So many railwaymen signed up that the Goulburn Railway Ambulance Corps formed a social club, which eventually fielded several cricket teams (including a women's team) on their own pitch in Blackshaw Road. There was also a Rifle Club.

The Volunteer Infantry Corps formed its own ambulance unit in 1897, and when the Railways appointed a Mr. Milne as First Aid Instructor in 1898, employees of the local flour mills prevailed upon him to instruct them on Saturday evenings.



Robert Whitelaw worked as a plumbers assistant at Loco between 1890 and 1920, and was part of the squad that won the annual Challenge Shield competition twice.

In this photograph he appears as a member of the Volunteer Infantry Corps Ambulance Brigade, which was formed in 1897, when he was 39 years old. Can you pick him out?

St John's Ambulance Association arrived in 1898, and enlisted Dr. Burkitt to run classes for women. These were attended mostly by nurses, who achieved high marks in their examinations. (2)

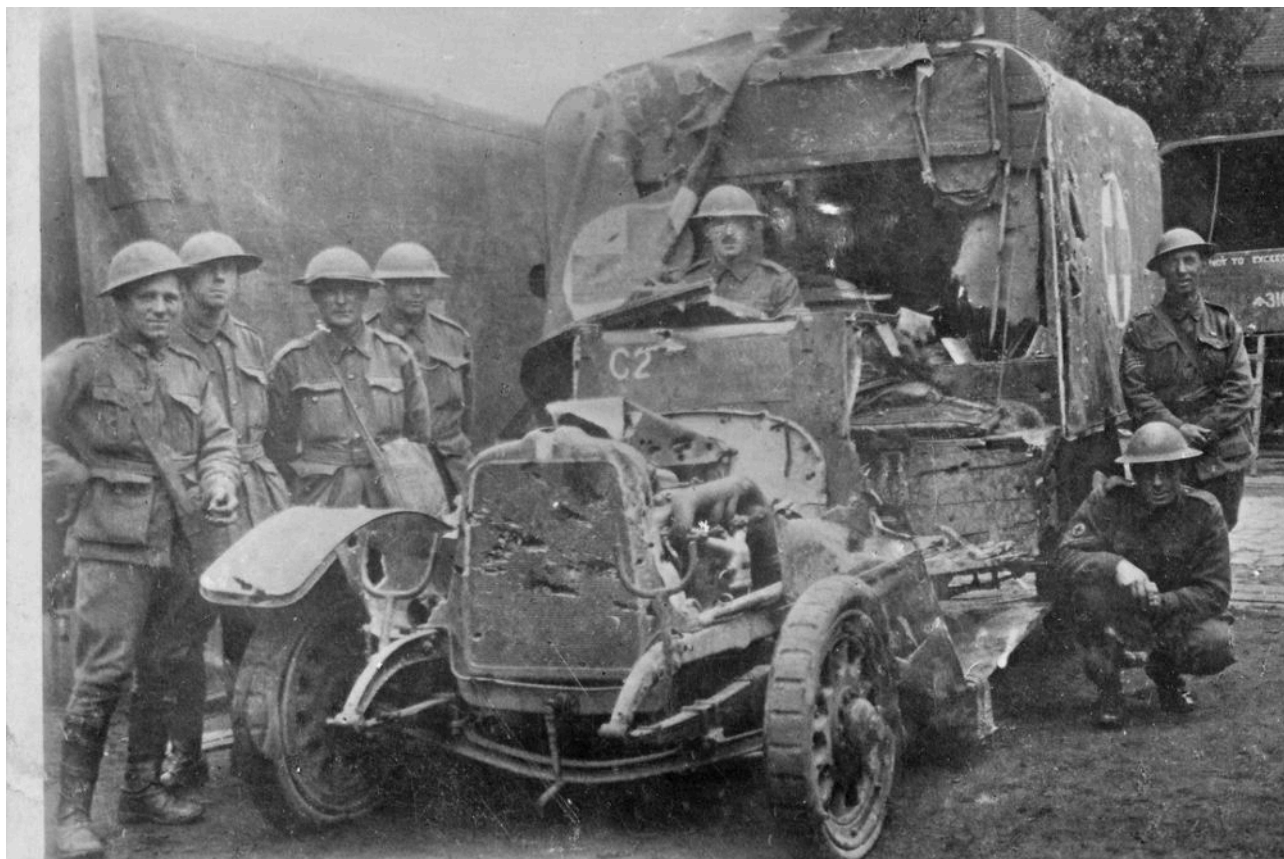
Goulburn's mania for learning the principles of First Aid paid off, and examples are many. Ganger Owen McGrath's son was bitten by a snake a week before Christmas in 1899, but McGrath had just passed his First Aid examination, and was able to save his life. Another man crawled for two miles to Towrang Railway Station where the stationmaster and porter splinted his broken leg with a set of cricket leggings, enabling him to be transported to Goulburn by train, where he made a full recovery at the hospital. (3)

Goulburn's first ambulance went as fast as two men could run.

The Railway Station was provided with a wheeled litter in 1897. It was a canvas stretcher with large wheels in the middle, and a canopy to keep out rain and prying eyes. It could be operated by one man or two, and was so successful that the Goulburn Railway Workshops made another for Goulburn Hospital. It was our first public ambulance, available night or day, and it could travel as fast as two men could run, while yelling at everyone to clear the way.

The first civilian ambulance group was formed in Sydney in 1893. Officers performed their duties on foot until a horse-drawn ambulance was acquired six years later. As time went by, the ambulance corps spread to the suburbs, and the first motorised ambulance was introduced in 1912.

When the Great War broke out thousands volunteered to join the Australian Army Medical Corps, or serve as stretcher-bearers. These unarmed heroes ventured onto the battlefield with no protection other than a red-cross armband, and many fell beside the men they were trying to save. Kenmore Asylum and the Goulburn Railway Ambulance service sent a large contingent, and the names of the latter are enshrined on a plaque at the railway station.



This picture is of Robert Muir's shell-shattered ambulance in France, WW1. Robert is probably the man kneeling on the right. He was a railway man from Goulburn.

At the end of hostilities the men came home with an awareness of the value of First Aid. When the Influenza epidemic spread around the globe, the need for an ambulance service became obvious to prevent patients spreading infection on public transport. The Ambulance Transport Service Act was legislated in 1919, and a Board was established to administer the Act. They divided the State into districts, with Goulburn at the centre of the Goulburn Ambulance District. It was up to the local people to elect a committee and raise the money to establish the service.

A good example of the plight of accident victims is the sorry tale of Mr Bowes, who was knocked down in Auburn Street and had to lie in the gutter for an hour whilst a stretcher and splints were sent for, before he could be carried up the hill to the hospital. (4)

After several false starts, a man with the necessary drive and determination stepped forward. His name was W.N. Gunn. Under his vigorous leadership a committee was formed in January 1923 to establish an ambulance service and raise funds to buy a motorised ambulance. The Goulburn Motorcycle Club organised a racing carnival and donated the proceeds. The Red Cross kicked in, an Art Union was organised, Bungonia Progress Association ran a Social, and Dr. Faithful donated the

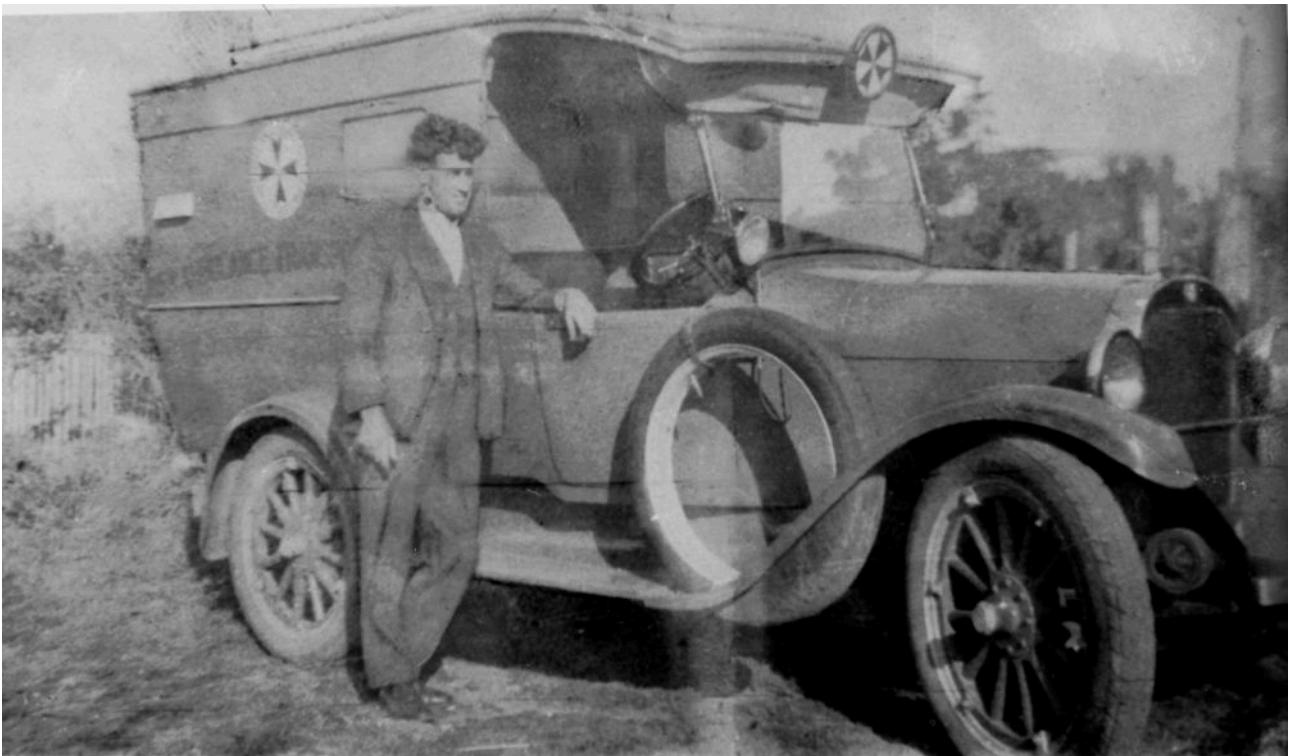
proceeds of the sale of his racehorse. Individuals gave generously, and by October, enough money was raised to order a Dodge ambulance from Tetley's Garage in Verner Street.

On the 15th of November, an Ambulance Board was elected in a public meeting at the Town Hall, and Mr. Gunn was installed as Chairman of the Board, just in time to greet the arrival of the shiny new ambulance:

"At 10.30 last night, the Goulburn and District Motor Ambulance arrived in Goulburn direct from the Dodge Company. Mr. J. Wallace, employed by Mr. Tetley, of Verner Street, piloted the ambulance, leaving Sydney at 2.30 p.m. yesterday. Pedestrians in Verner and Auburn streets gazed in amazement, finding it hard to believe that Goulburn's ambulance had at last arrived." (5)

The vehicle cost a total of £640 (\$1280) and was wholly owned by the people of Goulburn.

"The vehicle is a beautifully finished job, upholstered in brown leather, with a body of wood panels of the highest-grade maple, giving a highly polished interior. The canvas stretcher is very comfortable, and slides into brass channels on the floor of the cabin. In addition the seat in the cabin for nurse or attendants is collapsible and has been specially constructed to provide for an extra stretcher. The top and walls of the cabin are louvred for ventilation purposes. The conveyance has been painted a dove grey. That the car is economical in regard to spirit consumption is demonstrated by the fact that on the trip to Goulburn six gallons only of petrol were used to cover the distance." (Goulburn Evening Penny Post, Saturday 17 November 1923, page 2).



The first patient was transported the very next day. Fees were set at ten shillings within a two mile radius of the Post Office, and another 10 shillings, plus a penny per mile, beyond. No charge was made for conveying patients to the public hospital.

J.W. Wallace, who had a St John's First Aid Certificate, was retained as the driver, and the vehicle was housed and serviced at Tetley Motors, where assistance was available day or night by asking the telephone operator to connect to the Ambulance.

A branch of the St John's Ambulance Brigade was established on February 24th 1924, to work in conjunction with the Ambulance Committee to form the Goulburn and District Ambulance Corps. Legend has it that it was formed after an injury was sustained by a wealthy and influential Polo player.

The Corps was funded by public donations and government subsidy. Mr. Wallace was the first Superintendent and the only employee. Others, mostly railwaymen, served as volunteers. Their motto was "Always Ready."

John Walter Wallace was required to work six days a week for £300 per annum, with two week's annual leave. When driving the ambulance he was required to observe the speed limit, and see that infectious patients provided their own bed-linen.

At a special meeting of the Ambulance Board to celebrate his appointment, Mr. Wallace reminisced about the days before the arrival of the motor ambulance:

"In one case they dropped a patient in the street, and didn't know until they got to the hospital and discovered that the man was not still there."

Mr. Gunn replied: "... we had an old wheelbarrow contraption. Patients were stretched out on an old bag with their feet sticking out six inches at one end. During the 'flu they died like flies before they could be taken to the hospital." (7)

Within the first 6 months the Dodge carried 137 patients over 700 miles. (8)

Goulburn was the headquarters of the Mid-Southern District, covering the shires of Nattai, Wingecarribee, Mulwaree, Crookwell, Gunning, Goodradigbee, Yaralumla, Tallaganda, and the municipalities of Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale, Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Braidwood and Yass. The Hume Highway was just a dirt road. (9)

During the 1926 financial year the ambulance attended 303 cases and travelled 1457 miles. The hardy Dodge was reported to be in excellent condition, although Wallace stated that "it will require a new accumulator (battery) shortly".

In 1927 more fundraising events were organised, but profits were small. Many patients who could afford a donation took advantage of the rule to transport the sick to a public hospital for free, and others could not afford to pay at all. The committee faced financial crisis when the Government Subsidy distributed by the Central Ambulance Board (in Sydney) was halved. Allegations flew that, although the Government had increased funding to the Board, the members had used the money to give themselves a substantial pay rise, whilst calling for staff cuts in country areas. The Chairman of the Central Ambulance Board (Mr. Henderson) called the local service a "lame duck," and advised that Wallace should be replaced by an officer appointed from Sydney, and that patients should be charged for the service.

Wallace remained, but changes were made. Compulsory fees were introduced, and an Ambulance Fund was established – for an annual fee, subscribers could travel for free on production of a

membership card. This put the finances back in the black, but bad feeling remained for Mr. Henderson. Goulburn lobbied for rural services to break away from the central committee.

(A decade later, in State competition, the Goulburn won the annual Henderson Shield three times in a row. They were the only rural team to steal the trophy from the Sydney teams. In 1939 they also won the State Shield. This was sweet revenge on the man who had called the Goulburn a “Lame Duck”).

By 1929 a second ambulance was needed. A Buick chassis was paid for by the citizens of Goulburn, and fitted with a custom-built ambulance body by a local firm, Penberthy and Donnelly. It was delivered on “Ambulance Day”, February 28th, 1930, and housed at Lowe’s Garage. Mr. Lowe’s partner, Rex Smith, obtained his First Aid Certificate and volunteered to drive it.

Superintendent Wallace was replaced by W.G. Muller in 1929, who, in turn, stood aside for Arthur Wingate in 1931. He asked for an assistant, and was told that he could have him if he paid for him out of his own wages. Wingate persisted, and a second employee was added in September.

Arthur Wingate was a tireless fundraiser. By that time, the service relied on public contributions of 3d (two cents) per week. Wingate attracted 250 new subscribers, set up an Ambulance Art Union, and started fundraising through local charities and organisations. Outlying towns and villages hosted Ambulance Benefit balls and dances. Greenwich Park continued this tradition for many years with woolshed dances, as did Windellama Hall. Chocolate Wheels and Raffles would become a common sight around Goulburn.



Scrutineer and Berrima District Press, Saturday 7 December 1935, page 2; “Ambulance Overturns - Returning to the ambulance station after taking a patient to hospital, the Goulburn District Ambulance car, a new vehicle, was involved in a serious accident on Thursday, when, after being struck by another car at the corner of Bourke and Goldsmith Streets, it continued out of control for 40 yards before overturning. The ambulance driver, A. Wingate, escaped with a shaking, and Harry King, driver of the other car, which had the front wheels torn off, also escaped injury.”

The service was now operating out of Brampton Cottage in Citizen Street, but a few months after Arthur Wingate’s appointment, the Committee opened a bank account for the erection of a purpose-built ambulance station. In March 1932, a sketch was handed to the architect, Mr. Manfred, to draw up the plans.

In May the bank agreed to advance £1500 for the project, and fundraising began in earnest.

The Ladies Ambulance Auxiliary Committee swung into action. The Grand Mauve Ball at Windellama was the first of many functions held in aid of the Ambulance Building Fund. Due to

scarceness of money during the Depression, the ladies suggested that it would be easier to raise funds if contracts were awarded to local companies who employed local tradesmen.

H.C. Manfred drew up the plans and H.C. Gould supervised construction. The building in Clifford Street was opened by Mayor T.P. Manion in front of 400 people on February 15th 1933. The Lady Mayoress cut the ribbon with a pair of silver and gold scissors.

It was just in time for an outbreak of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever.

The Service continued to grow and prosper under the guiding hand of Arthur Wingate. The 1939 Financial Year showed that finances were in a healthy state, and the service had attended 7990 call-outs and made 4072 journeys for a total of 121,731 miles. The Superintendent was assisted by 12 staff officers, 2 collectors, an office assistant and 20 honorary officers. That was the year that Goulburn won the Henderson cup for the third time.

By 1943 Goulburn led all other rural districts in the number of cases attended and distance travelled. When Arthur Wingate stepped aside in 1944, he handed over a well-oiled machine to his successor, Superintendent McRoberts, who saw the service into the modern era. A new ambulance was donated by Inspector T.J. Ellis as a result of a Police Charity Drive in 1948, and two-way radio was installed in the vehicles in 1956.

This brings us to the era that is still remembered by many, when people could wander into the Station to have minor wounds and dressings attended to. Splinters were removed, cuts, grazes and sprains attended to, foreign objects washed out of eyes and ears, dislocations reduced, and simple fractures plastered on the spot. Wally Gorman was a popular officer who was always ready to identify a spider captured in a jar by wide-eyed children, and send the feared funnelwebs off to the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories for milking, to make anti-venine.

The Modern Era

District Committees were phased out in mid-1975 when the NSW Department of Health assumed control of Ambulance services. Walk-in patients with minor injuries were now directed to visit the base hospital, and Goulburn became the administrative centre for the South-Eastern Region Ambulance Service.

By 1983, there were 24 permanent officers, one honorary officer, 10 clerical staff, a storeman, a sales representative and four mechanics. Darcy Kennedy was employed there as foreman mechanic, and tells the story of how a funnelweb in a jar was the centre of discussion at the morning-tea table one day. "Somebody raised the old furphy that funnelwebs could jump," said Darcy, "So some wag upended the jar onto the table to prove it. We never found out whether it was true or not, because everyone jumped away before the funnelweb did."

Darcy recalls that he attended the Breadalbane bus crash around that time. When there were too many accident victims to fit into the available ambulances, he was asked to drive a Toyota Coaster bus to the scene to pick up the walking wounded.

He also relates that many volunteer officers gave up their time to fill the roster. Whenever a permanent position was available they applied, but if it came down to a choice between two applicants, the one with a trade usually got the nod. In quiet times at the station, painters could be

seen wielding brushes, carpenters making first-aid chests, and panel-beaters and welders converting panel-vans and station-wagons into ambulances.

Before the onset of helicopters, Darcy remembers fixed-wing aeroplanes with specially-adapted stretchers flying to and from the airport.

In 1992, John Wasley was appointed the first Divisional Superintendent of the enlarged Southern Division of the Ambulance Service of NSW. This incorporated the old districts of Illawarra, South Eastern and South West regions, with headquarters in Goulburn. He was responsible for 56 ambulance stations and 480 staff spread across thirty percent of the State. The area covers 214,146 sq. km. stretching from Helensburgh to the Murray River, Hillston, Young, Bowral and the coast. 56 ambulance stations operate 242 ambulances in the Murray, South-Eastern, Riverina and Illawarra districts. (9)

In the 1992-93 financial year the NSW service attended 530,000 cases and covered over 13 million kilometres, with 230 uniformed officers, 200 admin and technical staff, 5 helicopters, 4 aircraft and 800 vehicles operating from 222 stations.

In May 2017, New South Wales State Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced the plan to build a new Ambulance Station in Bourke Street. It was opened on the 20th of April 2020.

The Southern Sector of New South Wales Ambulance now covers the whole state south of Bowral, encompassing a land mass of about 158,000 sq. km. It incorporates 63 ambulance stations in summer, plus Perisher during the snow season. The sector has 238 operational vehicles and nearly 1000 staff, including volunteers.

Goulburn is the administrative centre of the sector, employing 24 clinical staff, and runs 6 category A Ambulances, support vehicles, and shares a multi-purpose vehicle and four-wheel-drive with Crookwell. The MPV is a large vehicle that can carry patients that require bulky life-support equipment.

Brian White is the ADCO (Associate Director of Clinical Operations). Brian was a Crookwell lad who started his career as a wardsman at Goulburn Base Hospital, joined the ambulance service, and served all over the State. 44 years later he is back in Goulburn, in charge of the Southern Sector.

In 2023 Goulburn Ambulance is approaching its Centenary. It has grown from a one-man show to become the administrative centre for the Southern Sector of NSW, covering the area from Bowral to the Victorian border, and from Helensburgh to Eden on the coast and almost to Pooncarie in the west. The Sector has more personnel and ambulance stations than any other in N.S.W.

Now THAT is something to be proud of!

Sources:

“Five Decades of Serving the Community” by Peter Kenny (Goulburn Post 22/2/1983 pages 8-9). Notes from Ray Leeson’s files (Ray Leeson was the editor of the Goulburn Post). “NSW Ambulance Service Centenary 1895-1995” by John Wasley, (Superintendent), “The Goulburn & District Magazine” March 6 1995 p. 13. “Grand Goulburn” by Stephen Tazewell, pages 54-60.

Footnotes:

A Goulburn branch of the Railway Ambulance Corps was proposed on 10/6/1886, and the NSW Railway Ambulance Association was established in January 1888 (GEPP 21/1/1888).

² Goulburn Evening Penny Post 9/8/1898 and 24/9/1898.

³ Goulburn Herald 18/12/1899 p. 3.

⁴ Goulburn Evening Penny Post 20/2/1923.

⁵ Southern Morning Herald, Friday 16 November 1923, p. 2.

⁶ Goulburn Evening Penny Post, Thursday 28 May 1925, page 7.

⁷ Goulburn Post 14/6/1924.

⁸ Goulburn Post 14/6/1924 & 20/10/1925.

⁹ Goulburn Post of 8/7/1992.



Horse drawn ambulance, A/O Max Dukes in uniform. Lilac Time Procession (circa 1980)



Hand Litter S/O Les Schapher, Greg Taylor



A/O Ron Catlin, A/O unknown, Patient Paul.