

Boongaroon



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Boongaroon - the Indigenous name for the headwaters of the Yass River.

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Cover Image: **Original watercolour rendering prepared by architects for the Soldiers Memorial Hall in 1922. The building was officially opened in March 1923 but works such as internal plastering of some walls were delayed until further funds were raised.**

[Image: YDHS Archives]

Note from the Editor

We are pleased to receive articles, stories, book reviews and other items of interest to local and family historians for publication in *Boongaroon*. Articles up to 2,500 words preferred but we will consider longer articles if space allows. Illustrations provided must have reproduction permission. Articles for the next issue are required by the end of August. Email to boongaroon@yasshistory.org.au or contact Cheryl Mongan 0413 312 081.

Why would an Englishman want to give his archives to us?

Wayne Doubleday

The following extract is from a paper on the importance of regional archives given by Wayne Doubleday, Manager, at Charles Sturt University Regional Archives at the *Whole Histories* conference held at St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong in 2018. It highlights the relevance of personal collections in developing an understanding of the history and development of the Riverina and sheds light on the origins of one of Australia's most iconic images.

On the 3 April 1981, Don Brech, the first archivist employed by the then Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE), penned a letter to England, with little or no hope of receiving a reply. This is evident from one line taken from Brech's letter: "If you are the person I am seeking or know of him, I should greatly appreciate hearing from you." Brech continued by saying: "The reason for my wanting to get in touch with him is to discover whether he kept any records – letters, diaries, photographs – relating to his life, and if he would be willing to place these in the custody of the Riverina College Archives."¹

Less than three weeks later on the 22 April, Brech received the reply he had been hoping for. He had indeed located the person he had been seeking, but there was a problem, and it was a big one! The respondent informed Don Brech that all his records had already been promised to the Mitchell Library in Sydney on his demise.² Over the following twelve months the two exchanged correspondence on a regular basis, with Brech eventually proving too persuasive – the depositor decided to change his will and the final destination for his collection of archival material would indeed be the RCAE Archives, saying "I agree my records should be in the custody of the Riverina, the area that did its best to shorten by 55 years a life that held some degree of promise."³



Today this collection of records, accessioned as RW283 at the CSU Regional Archives, comprises of seven type 1 boxes of correspondence, diaries, letters and manuscripts, an oversized box of objects and memorabilia, and a remarkable collection of over 700 photos. The compiler and creator of this unique collection was Reginald W Sharpless.

This magnificent collection, which I must admit is certainly one of my favourites from the collections we house at the CSU Regional Archives, documents the amazing life of Reg Sharpless through an array of

Reginald W Sharpless [Sharpless Collection – RW283/56 – CSU Regional Archives]

archival formats and record types. I will now relate to you some of the more interesting tales from a truly remarkable life using the records, diaries and memoir of Sharpless and the amazing photographs he captured with his trusty 3.5 inch x 2.5 inch folding Kodak camera, with an eight exposure film.

Sharpless' memoir is entitled "*Pommy in the Outback*" and was published in 1982. It recounts the period in Sharpless' life from 1923 to 1926 when he travelled to Australia from the United Kingdom and ended up working as a jackaroo on a large sheep station near Mossgiel in NSW.

When attempting to describe the location of Mossgiel to family and friends back in England, Sharpless proffered, "It's on most maps of NSW, a little dot and in very small print in the middle of a wide open area with nothing else anywhere near; but it is never to be seen on a map of the whole of Australia."⁴

Sharpless described his experiences in his memoir in the following way "That underpaid, over-worked jack-of-all-trades, so essential to the running of an Australian sheep station of a quarter million acres, as found out the hard way by a gullible Pommy in the early nineteen-twenties"⁵.

Strangely enough, it is the epilogue of Sharpless' book which is my starting point today. Sharpless writes;

"The year is 1980, and with the passing of nearly a life-time, I have put on permanent record much that I endured, lived through and laughed at, as my Australian education unfolded. On the scoreboard of my life, I mark up those three brief years as the most rewarding of the eighty I have been blessed with."⁶

The reason behind Sharpless' decision to leave England and venture into the great unknown was purely a medical one. Since the age of seven he had suffered increasingly from ill health due predominantly to being a severe asthmatic. At the age of twenty-two, he was offered the opportunity to go to Australia in the hope that a drier climate may alleviate some of his symptoms. Thus, on the 26 October 1923 Sharpless said goodbye to his family, and boarded the ship *Narkunda* for the 12,000 mile journey that took six weeks.

Sharpless was later to admit that he had, indeed brought with him a number of personal items that would perhaps be better described as liabilities rather than assets in Australia. Sharpless had several intriguing pieces of luggage which made the long journey out to Australia with him. One of which actually became quite well known in the Western Riverina, but I'll speak more of this later.

However, it is safe to say that one of his much beloved items which made the long trip out with him, did indeed become one of the liabilities he mentioned, and perhaps even displays some youthful naivety on his part, was his prized Triumph motorbike. He had yet to learn that two-wheel travel and pot-hole tracks did not go well together, owing to the awful condition of the outback roads.



Sharpless off with the mail to the post office on his Triumph motorbike.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/57 – CSU Regional Archives]

Upon arrival in Australia, Sharpless initially settled in Sydney for several weeks, with the Doherty family in Raglan Street, Mosman. Mr & Mrs Doherty had two sons, Norman & Gilbert, who were similar in age to Sharpless. Needless to say the two boys had quite an impact on our Reginald!

“I feel I must record my first reactions to close contact with dinkum Aussies, for Norman & Gilbert were undoubtedly that. Swear words that as a youngster I shuddered to hear and still did at the ripe old age of twenty-two, came out with shattering regularity as part of normal conversation; almost every noun was coloured with ‘bloody’ and the final summing up of most situations was that they were either a ‘fair cow’ or a ‘bastard’. The Australian form of agreement, ‘too right’ instead of ‘yes’ wasn’t so hard to assimilate, so that by the time we had arrived at the Doherty home in their Hudson car, the boys had taught me a lesson in basic Australian speech which I never forgot, and that quite unconsciously I found I was adopting before a year was out.”⁷

Though Sharpless’ stay with the Dohertys was relatively short, he did receive one invaluable lesson that would undoubtedly serve him well later. The family went on a trip to Bowral at Christmas to a holiday riding camp, where Sharpless learned to ride a horse. However, the experience was not a pleasurable one as Sharpless recalls. “I learnt to ride at Bowral, and that’s saying a lot about a very painful subject in a very few words. Whether or not it was because I was the tallest in the party of ten I shall never know, but the hack they sorted out for me was seventeen hands high; that’s an awful lot of horse to mount and a hell of a long way down to earth when you get dumped”⁸.

The Sydney climate however, had brought Sharpless little relief from his ailment. He was advised to get out to a sheep station in the Riverina. Go to the end of one of the

WANTED, by young Man, situation on station, any capacity; competent bookkeeper, and with good knowledge of cars and petrol engines. R. W. Sharpless, Hay P. O.

Whilst in Hay, Sharpless put this notice in the local newspaper.

[Riverine Grazier - 3rd June 1924, p. 3]

two railways – Bourke to the North, Hay to the South. With little to decide between, Sharpless let chance decide his fate, and he tossed a coin, with Hay being the winning destination. The subsequent six hundred mile rail journey took a total of twenty hours with Sharpless getting little sleep on the hard wooden seats of the mail train.

Upon arriving at Hay Railway Station, Sharpless hired a waiting two-horse buggy, loaded on his luggage, and told the driver to take him to a good hotel. The short reply came back, “We’ve only got one hotel here Cobber, that’s Tattersalls”.⁹

Within the space of ten days Sharpless had found himself paid employment on *Mossgiel Station*, owned by the Australian Mercantile Land & Finance Company Ltd., thirty miles from Ivanhoe, as a jackaroo. His biggest problem being that he had no idea what a jackaroo actually did! His interview with Mr Oliver, the boss of Mossgiel station, lasted less than ten minutes. Sharpless was asked if he could drive a car, but strangely enough, not if he could ride a horse!

Another more pressing problem was how to get from Hay to *Mossgiel Station*. In the end Sharpless hitched a ride with the weekly mail truck which made the trip from Hay to Ivanhoe. This included an interesting stopover at the *One Tree Hotel*. Sharpless’ first impression was that he had stepped back into an American Western film from fifty years earlier.



The One Tree Hotel. [Sharpless Collection – RW283/66 – CSU Regional Archives]



***Mossgiel, as seen through
Sharpless' camera upon arrival***
[Sharpless Collection – RW283/56 –
CSU Regional Archives]

"Surely this hotel must have been at the bottom of the last page if all the hotels of the world could have been listed. At the time I was strictly a tee-total and certainly not attracted to beer as a beverage. 'A pint of beer for my driver, and could

I have an orange or lemonade or even a big glass of water', I ordered. Before the bartender had opened his mouth in reply, I could read his answer in his strained facial expression; had I asked for a pork-pie in a Jewish Kosher butcher's shop, I'd have got the same reaction. 'Not on your life mate; it's beer or spirits only here.' Why he didn't just add 'take it or leave it' I don't know. Mulling over this first, and last, experience in an outback Australian pub, I doubt if I could have begged, borrowed or stolen half a pint of drinking water from that god-forsaken outpost – they just didn't have any!"¹⁰

When Sharpless was finally dropped off at Mossgiel, he had an hour to wait until somebody from *Mossgiel Station* came the two miles to pick him up. Sharpless had adequate time to survey and photograph his surroundings. He summed up his first impressions of Mossgiel. "In that time I made a brief and very disheartening assessment of my surroundings; if this was the whole of Mossgiel town that I saw about me, it rated awfully low. A huge, very flat area with little scrub or trees as far as the eye could see in every direction, with this pitiful little group of buildings in the centre which was the township."¹¹



Mossgiel Hall



Mossgiel Store

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/56-57 – CSU Regional Archives]



Mossgiel School and teacher's residence



Mossgiel Post Office

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/56-57 – CSU Regional Archives]

On arrival at *Mossgiel Station* itself, I imagine Sharpless was similarly unimpressed, however in time Sharpless discovered that his job as jackaroo entailed everything imaginable—he was after all ‘a jack of all trades’. The working day began at 7am and did not normally finish until at least 6.00pm. This was the routine, six days a week, with Sunday being a time for rest and recreation.

Again Sharpless documented his surroundings with his trusty camera.



(Above) Station buildings at Mossgiel Station, (below), mailbox and cemetery.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/56-58 – CSU Regional Archives]



Sleeping out veranda (where the jackaroos slept ALL year round regardless of the weather). Sharpless also got a splinter in his foot from this same veranda which resulted in a three day hospital stay.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/56 – CSU Regional Archives]

The list of possible daily duties for a jackaroo was long and varied including sheep maintenance, mustering and droving, crutching, general maintenance of vehicles and equipment, fencing, mending telephone lines and repairing wells, windmills and bores. Sharpless wrote later in his diary that his list of jobs utilised skills and abilities from at least eight different trades including carpentry, painting, engineering, bricklaying, coach-building, plumbing and shepherding. For this type of work Sharpless received food and board, and a pound a week in wages.



“Looking back to the first day I had a hand in it, I came through with a very low rating; in fact, I made a perfect fool of myself. It was all because I couldn’t bear the sight of blood. My job that first year was with the other catchers, grabbing lambs and squatting them on the top rail, and before long I was keeping up with the others. It was about my sixth lamb when that tiny jet of blood landed across the back of my hand and at the same time I noticed spots of blood on the face of one of the other markers. Before long I had that lousy feeling of nausea and faintness growing in my gullet. I was saved by going “out for the count” by the Boss who was standing nearby. “Go and sit on the fence Sharpless and put your head between your knees,” was all he said and I only needed telling once. It took me ten minutes to recover, before I could rejoin the action, but I had my head between my knees three more times before morning smoko. Over the next twelve working days a total of 12,000 lambs were marked.”¹²



Proof that Sharpless had overcome his difficulties with blood, were evidenced the following year when

(Middle and Bottom) The first major job undertaken at Mossgiel Station after Sharpless’ arrival was the annual lamb-marking. As one could imagine, this proved to be a real eye-opener for the ‘pommy’.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/58 – CSU Regional Archives]

Sharpless and another worker performed the lamb-marking “surgery” on 11,000 lambs without batting an eyelid. This surgery included the castrating of over 5,000 male lambs, and it was all done with...their teeth. In the two pictures above, you can see one man leaning over and performing the dreaded castration job. What an initiation to life as a jackaroo!

Mossgiel Station was approximately 250,000 acres in size or alternatively, 350 square miles, with twenty five paddocks ranging in size from two acres to 10,000 acres. These huge portions, in comparison to the ‘mother-land’, were one of countless factors Sharpless had to adjust to in a short time frame. Some things like facing up to mutton three times a day, every day, took longer to get used too. Other essential tasks like learning to crack a whip, Sharpless mastered quite quickly.

“I learned to crack my fourteen foot stock whip, first on the ground which came quite easy, and then sitting on a horse. But the time came when I passed my final test by cutting two inches at a time off a length of tightly rolled newspaper, held in the hand of an offsider until only the last two inches were left. However, I never mastered a co-workers trick called the ‘Sydney Flash’, which was three cracks of the whip in two seconds dead.”¹³

Other inevitable lessons were harder to learn including Sharpless being lambasted by a fellow jackaroo for feeding and patting the colleague’s sheep dog. Sharpless recalled:

“His expression immediately changed to one of stern disapproval and in a voice quite unlike his normal speaking voice he said, ‘You’ve got a lot to learn out here and the quicker you learn it the better; you never, I repeat never, pat, talk to or feed another man’s trained sheep dog.’ After a heavy silence he calmed down and I apologised as best I could and then asked him to explain why. ‘A highly trained dog must know one voice only, be fed, patted, ordered, praised or punished by one man only for absolute obedience and understanding, for the dog with divided allegiances will never serve one master well.’ The proof of this was to be seen when men and dogs would only move at the word or whistle of the owner. I suppose I should have reasoned this out for myself, but I was still a learner of the unwritten laws of the experienced sheepman.”¹⁴

He recounts on numerous occasions his first few encounters with these ‘joe-blakes’ as they were known, with the winner not always being one Reg Sharpless, and I think that from the image below you can see the distance that Sharpless is holding the dead snake away from his body, and can therefore easily surmise that he was not too keen on these particular reptiles. His exact quote was “I too believed a dead snake was a better companion than a live one.”¹⁵ Amongst his snake stories Sharpless recounts his first sighting of an Australian snake with the Doherty boys in the Blue Mountains, an encounter with a brown snake in one of the station dams



Another obvious area of difficulty was the vast differences in flora and fauna that Sharpless encountered. Of these, Sharpless had the greatest difficulty with snakes.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/58 – CSU Regional Archives]

and the tangles with reptiles that Sharpless had, one certainly stands out, possibly because Sharpless was in the company of the Boss at the time. The sighting of a five foot black snake near the tennis courts, prompted the Boss to tell Sharpless to grab the 12 bore double barrel shot gun and two cartridges from the office, whilst he kept track of the snake's movements. But when Sharpless returned with the gun, the Boss told him "No, you kill it". Now Sharpless had killed rabbits, crows, eagles and kangaroos before, but with a .22 rifle, and never in his life had he handled a sporting gun, and a 12 bore at that!

"As I slipped in the two cartridges and snapped the gun to, the Boss added 'Get him at five or six yards Sharpless, that ought to do it.' I walked around so as to be broadside on to Joe Blake and he immediately turned his head and the forepart of his length directly towards me and kept on moving. This was partly my undoing for I didn't give a thought about the heavy recoil a 12 bore will give unless held and fired rigidly by both hands. Hurriedly I raised the gun and fired; the blast nearly burst my eardrums and the mulish kick at my shoulder all but knocked me off my balance, whilst the snake, dead or alive, was obliterated from mind and sight. Through the mental haze that followed I heard the Boss say "OK, you got him, but put down that bloody gun before you get me too."¹⁶

As mentioned previously Sunday was the only day that Sharpless and the other jackaroos on *Mossgiel Station* had off, therefore they were usually used for either rest and/or recreation. Leisure activities involved either picnics, or swimming in the

homestead dam depending on the weather. Hunting was always another popular pastime as is evidenced by this next image.



Though highly illegal now because they are a protected species, this picture shows the enormous size of a wedge tailed eagle shot on the station.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/57 – CSU Regional Archives]



Another option was always a game of social tennis, either against fellow employees or those from a neighbouring station.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/57 – CSU Regional Archives]

Sharpless (commenting on his hairstyle) wrote “In the hot weather I have it shingled”. Perhaps an attempt at British humour! But Sharpless refers to playing tennis even on the hottest of days. Blazing sun and high temperatures were no obstacle, with plenty of tea and lemonade on standby for refreshment. On one particular day Sharpless had come off the court feeling exhausted and wondered what the temperature was, so he wandered over to the office verandah where the thermometer was kept. “I could scarcely believe my eyes – one hundred and twelve degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. Talk about mad dogs and Englishmen out in

the midday-sun. That is exactly what we were.”¹⁷

In terms of social events for a young Englishman working as a jackaroo on an isolated station, opportunities were quite limited as one could imagine. The enormous distances between properties and people added to these difficulties. However, there were two regular events which were never missed by Sharpless and the other jackaroos. These took the form of dances in aid of local hospitals and charities. As a result, people from as far away as fifty miles would attend.

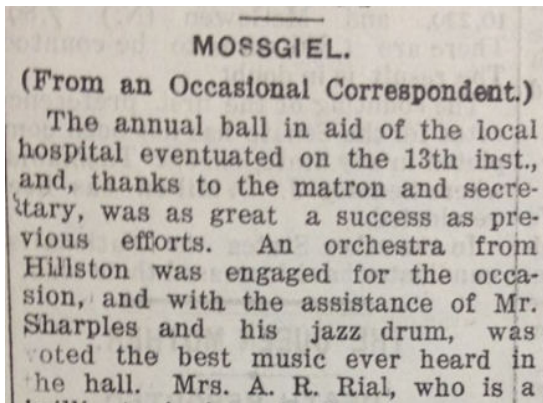
Believe it or not he packed a jazz drum kit with him to bring 12,000 miles around the world. Understandably, Sharpless and his drum kit soon became somewhat of a

novelty right across the Western Riverina. The dances drew large numbers of participants, some three-quarters of which, Sharpless guessed, were there for the festivities and dancing, whilst the remaining quarter had other priorities – usually a booze-up and the inevitable fight or scuffle to settle old differences. Hence the reason why the bar was normally kept a good distance away from the dancing. Sharpless said, “That wonderful first charity ball that I attended in the Australian outback came to an end at around 2.30 in the morning when the dancers and the melody makers alike could go on no longer.

Another odd item that Sharpless brought with him as luggage all the way from England.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/56 – CSU Regional Archives]





A report on Sharpless' debut on the Riverina dance circuit. [*Riverine Grazier* - 24 November 1925, p. 3]

The appreciation we were shown then, which was to be confirmed in the columns of the following week's edition of the 'Riverine Grazier' newspaper in Hay, made it abundantly clear that tom-toms, cymbals and sleigh-bells were to be an established part of all future dance programmes in Booligal,

Mossgiel and Ivanhoe. I knew for a certainty that the far flung fraternity of the Riverina who were keen on dancing had taken an amateur set of jazz-drums to their heart."¹⁸

The above reference in the *Riverine Grazier* from the 24 November 1925 which said "An orchestra from Hillston was engaged at the occasion, and with the assistance of Mr Sharples (they dropped an s) and his jazz drum, was voted the best music ever heard in the Mossgiel Hall."¹⁹ I don't imagine Mr Sharpless however would have been overly impressed with the error in spelling his surname. Sharpless and his fellow jackaroos from *Mossgiel Station* attended dances at Mossgiel, Booligal and Ivanhoe as often as they were staged.

It is obvious from his memoir that Sharpless came to love the Riverina during his three year stint on Mossgiel Station. He had a particular soft spot for Hay, as he explains: "I believe a ship always has an affinity with its port of launching, however long its life or how many or how varied its ports of call. This is the feeling I've always had about Hay, for when I stepped out of the train at the end of the railway line that day in 1924, I was launched into another world...I love it for what it meant for me fifty-five years ago."²⁰

The fact that Sharpless also took 700 photos during his three year stay is further evidence of his feelings for the Riverina. Of these 700 photos one is a standout which has been reproduced more than any other, and I would be surprised if there is anyone who has not seen this image before – it is entitled THE BOG!

Sharpless first saw a reproduction of this photo in the "Rogers & Glyde" chemist shop window in Hay where he had his films developed. This was purely by accident as he had made a trip to Hay to see the dentist, and went to the chemist to pick up some previous photos when he saw them on display in the shop window. On this topic of this famous photo Sharpless makes his feelings abundantly clear in his memoir:

"I have made rather an issue of claim to this most popular picture because it had



'The Bog', an iconic Australian image was never attributed to its maker Reginald W Sharpless until recent years. [Sharpless Collection – RW283/58 – CSU Regional Archives]

come to my notice there are (or were) others in Australia who laid claim to being the photographer. It is ironic that my name has never been associated with its continued use and that I've never been offered a single penny out of the profit it produced. I'm disappointed, but I'm also philosophical, that's life."²¹

In total Sharpless remained at Mossgiel Station for a period of two and a half years, before deciding to return to England, as he had promised his family back in late 1923.

Sharpless said: "Nearly three years had now slipped by and I was beginning to get stabs of conscience about the promise I had made to my parents, about returning home within three years if my health was improved. I had had but one attack of asthma on the station after I had skinned a fox, and that must have been the cause of it, and now I had never given the complaint that I had suffered so much from, a single thought. Had it been otherwise, I doubt if my tenure on Mossgiel would have lasted so long. I knew – though I never discussed it with Mr Oliver – that I did not intend to take up sheep rearing as a profession, and I knew all too well there was the family business of Builders' Merchants awaiting my return in London, that my father expected me to take my place in some time."²²

Obviously this was not an easy decision for Sharpless who had undoubtedly crammed plenty of new life experiences into three years as a jackaroo on a large



A 'Dinkum Aussie' and Sharpless photographed on his voyage to England.

[Sharpless Collection – RW283/58 and RW283/59– CSU Regional Archives]

and remote sheep station. But undoubtedly by the time he set sail home, Sharpless indeed felt as though he was an Aussie!

The importance of this collection should not be underestimated, as it not only illustrates life and work on a large sheep station in the early 1920's, but it gives us a unique outsider's (and perhaps even a non-Australian) perspective on otherwise ordinary events that would not be captured or recorded. I'm sure that part of the charm of Reg Sharpless' collection is his English background, and undoubtedly, he has recorded events and happenings which may not have grabbed the attention of another person who was more accustomed to the sights of Australia and a large sheep station.

The historical perspective on social and everyday life that this collection provides is, I believe, better than other similar collections because it utilises different formats to provide a complete picture of the life and experiences of a pommy in the outback. Not only do we have an extensive number of original photographs, letters, diaries and objects to draw from, but we also have a memoir which is evocative and heart-felt.

Unfortunately, Reg Sharpless passed away in 1985 at the age of 84, but thankfully due to Don Brech's persistence and persuasiveness this fantastic collection remains in the custody of the CSU Regional Archives, and perhaps even more importantly, in the Riverina where it was created, and where it will receive the most use. This is the distinct advantage that a regional archive can offer to the communities and localities it serves.

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1. D.C. Brech correspondence to R.W. Sharpless, 3rd April 1981, RW283 Sharpless Collection Accession File, CSU Regional Archives.
2. R.W. Sharpless correspondence to D.C. Brech, 13th April 1981, RW283 Sharpless Collection Accession File, CSU Regional Archives.
3. R.W. Sharpless correspondence to D.C. Brech, 22nd June 1981, RW283 Sharpless Collection Accession File, CSU Regional Archives.
4. R.W. Sharpless, *Pommy in the Outback*, New Horizon, Bognor Regis, England, 1982, p. 36. Mossgeil is located within the area triangle of Ivanhoe, Booligal and Hillston
5. *Ibid.*, p. i.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
8. *Ibid.*, pp.17-18.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-57.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
15. *Ibid.*, p.105.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
19. *Riverine Grazier* - 3rd June 1924, p. 3.
20. Sharpless, op. cit., p. 142.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-144.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Wayne Doubleday is Manager, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives & University Art Collection. Wayne began his employment with the CSU Regional Archives (CSURA) in 1998 and has worked in a variety of archival positions since that time, including the last sixteen years as Manager. Prior to 2006 Wayne spent the majority of his time in reference services, helping users to locate and understand information, and develop appropriate research strategies to make the most of the resources available at CSURA. On a daily basis this would include liaising with academics and students of the University, professional researchers, genealogists and the general public. Wayne holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in History from Charles Sturt University, a Graduate Diploma of Science in Archives & Records Management from Edith Cowan University and a Diploma of Management from Charles Sturt University.



No locals need apply!

Wanted: A LAD, fourteen or fifteen years of age, to make himself generally useful. Boys having any connexions in Goulburn need not apply, and should he wish to learn the business of an engineer, can do so if found suitable. Wages— 6s. per week, and found. Apply to JOHN BYRNE & SON, Goulburn Foundry. *Yass Courier* 6 April 1880.

The Wool Arch, Federation Celebrations 1901.

Tessa Milne

The tradition of erecting arches as a means of welcome or celebration, which goes back to ancient times, was adopted in the colonies. In 1885, for example, the town of Albury erected a temporary arch created out of greenery to celebrate the linking of the New South Wales and Victorian railways. Town centenaries were celebrated with temporary arches, such as the coal arch erected in Newcastle in 1897. Arches had been erected to celebrate royal visits. When, for example, Queen Victoria's second son, Albert, Duke of Edinburgh, visited the colonies between 1867 and 1868, a series of temporary arches were erected to welcome him.

In keeping with this tradition, temporary arches were erected to celebrate the birth of the Australian nation in Sydney on 1st January 1901. These depicted something of the new nation's industries, the ethnicity of its population, and reinforced its ties to the monarchy.

On the day large crowds lined Sydney's streets to watch a procession pass by of 200 mounted police, imperial troops from Britain and the Indian continent and those freshly returned from fighting in the Boer War, representatives of the trade unions, stockmen on horseback, firemen, politicians, members of the judiciary, representatives of the various churches, both Christian and Jewish, the Chancellor of the University of Sydney and its Senate (all in gowns), foreign consuls, town mayors, the Premier of New South Wales, Sir William Lyne, Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, and first Governor General, Lord Hopetoun. As the procession passed along Sydney's streets festooned with decorations, it also passed through ten highly innovative and artistic temporary arches on its way to Centennial Park for the swearing-in ceremony.

The planning for the January 1st celebrations had begun some six months earlier, following the passing of the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* through the British House of Commons on the 25th June 1900, through the House of Lords on 5th July, Queen Victoria's signing the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* on 9th July, and the appointment of John Adrian Louis Hope, Lord Hopetoun as Australia's First Governor General on the 14th of July, 1900.

As the *Review of Reviews* reported in Sydney, following these events, a 'flurry of committees' were established. Sir William Lyne, Premier of the Colony of New South Wales since 1899, 'naturally insisted' on complete control of the 'general scheme of the decorations' for, as Premier, he was also responsible for their funding. This would not come cheaply. The *Review of Reviews*, for example, estimated that by October 1900 the Government alone would spend 20,000 pounds.¹



The Wool Arch, Bridge Street, Sydney [NLA: PIC/9874/42 LOC Album 321]

Among the planned decorations in Sydney was the construction of ten grand temporary ceremonial arches. Although Premier Lyne instructed the Government Architect, Walter L. Vernon, to take the 'necessary preliminary steps' for their construction, the overall responsibility for organisation fell to the Central Organising Committee chaired by the General Secretary for the celebrations, John Portus, and other committees including a Citizens Committee and a Decoration and Illumination Committee.

This article will focus on one of these arches, the Wool Arch, which was erected outside the woolstore at the corner of Bridge and Loftus Streets.

The first design for this arch was proposed by Hugh Ross. Ross was not only a member of the Celebrations and Reception and Entertainment Committee, but also Labor member of the NSW Legislative Assembly for the rural electorate of Narrabri from 1898 to 1901. Although Ross' occupation was noted as a free selector in the Parliamentary records, it appears he had little personal connection with the wool industry. Born in Murrurundi in 1846, Ross was the son of a wheelwright and carpenter, had served as a Stock inspector, Postmaster and poundkeeper in Quirindi, then in Narrabri as an auctioneer, and clerk and secretary of the Carriers/Teamsters Union.

Ross's proposal for the Wool Arch was ambitious. It was to have two towers joined by an arch 35 ft (10 m) wide and 50 ft (15m) high with a wooden frame, obscured by bales of unpressed wool, valued at some 7,000 pounds and decorated with shields, a huge ram's head, flags and the words 'Welcome to the land of the Golden Fleece'.²

Ross' ambitious proposal was, however rejected on the basis that the Premier had only allocated 300 pounds for the arch's construction. There were also fears among the Committee that if it rained, the bales might sag. These concerns were vindicated, for on the night before the 1st of January celebrations, half an inch of rain fell accompanied by winds of up to 50 miles an hour.

The Committee then turned to Walter L Vernon, the Government Architect, to come up with a design. Vernon put forward two. The first, which was rejected, was for a giant merino sheep standing Colossus-like astride Bridge Street, its feet resting on piers on either side of the road. Such an edifice did eventually make an appearance some 80 years later, also erected to celebrate the fine wool industry—Goulburn's Big Merino.

Vernon's second proposal was accepted. It was based on a combination of the familiar classical rectangular shape of the ancient world, superimposed with a pyramid. While the base of its piers were formed by solid bales of wool laid flat, the rest of the arch consisted of a wooden frame covered in wire netting. Through this, the contents of 30 bales of scoured wool were poked and then brushed.

On either side on the top of the gables was a brownish-coloured merino sheep with gilded horns. The archway was festooned with blue drapes and flags and the arch's summit topped with a crown. On its piers blue shields bore names of pioneers of the wool industry: Dangar, Osborne, Hodgson, Leslie, Mort, Macarthur, Wentworth, Cox, Traill, Hamilton, Denison, Lloyd, Rouse, Chisholm, Suttor and Lee.

Lyon Harvey, under the nom de plume of Edward Porter, described the Wool Arch in his metrical souvenir of the celebrations:

Where piles on piles of fleecy flocks appear,
Crowned o'er with Diadem and ensigns broad,
While bright devices, here and there, applaud
The pioneers, whose famous flocks and herds,
First scared the kangaroo and wingless birds.
While legend fair, whose welcome ne'er shall cease
With pride proclaims, o'er their great names,
'Land of the Golden Fleece'.³

Not all were as impressed. *The West Australian* described the arch as having 'scoured fleeces ... loosely thrown into a wire netted frame' and 'on one side a

poorly designed model of a merino ewe and on the other a ram', both having 'claims upon the giraffe as an ancestor'.⁴

Some members of the general public found it irresistible to pick out small pieces of the arch's fleece. Fortunately, this did not cause any real harm. This was in contrast to the fate of Newcastle's Coal Arch, erected near St Mary's Gate. It was also constructed of a wire frame, wrapped in a skin of netting and filled with coal, donated by the local Newcastle coal companies. It, too, proved irresistible to passers-by. On the 5th of January layers of smooth coal piled up outside the arch's framework collapsed—'almost' burying a man and his daughter. After the debris was unceremoniously cleared away an ungainly barricade was erected around the Coal Arch.⁵

Less than two weeks later, with the celebrations over, on 11th January 1901, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the work of demolishing some of the arches, including the Wool Arch, was now 'in full swing'.

Thus, today all that remains of the highly innovative and imaginative Wool Arch are to be found in a few surviving old photographs. Nor was Sydney the only city in January 1901 to celebrate the birth of the nation with arches. Two were erected in Perth and six in Brisbane.

A second series of temporary arches were erected six months later in 1901 to celebrate that other historic moment in Australia's history, the opening of Australia's first Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne's Exhibition Building by the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George 5th and Queen Mary). Another nine spectacular innovative contemporary arches lined the route.

As the royal visitors embarked on a tour of the new nation, yet more spectacular arches were erected to welcome them; eight in Sydney, six in Ballarat, two in Brisbane, eighteen in Hobart, seven in Adelaide, and twelve in Perth. Each arch was not only innovative in the way it was constructed but in the imaginative artistic decorations displayed. Similarly, when the Royal visitors continued their journey to New Zealand, again they were welcomed by more spectacular temporary arches.

BUT there was only one Wool Arch erected in 1901 to celebrate the birth of the Australian nation.

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Demise of Westpac Bank in Yass.

Nola Bindon

In late 2022 the closure of the Westpac Bank in Yass shocked customers and locals. The impressive two storied building prominent in the main street of town has been part of the town's long history. Its grand and elegant architecture, along with several other buildings of the same era, gives Yass a character that is unmatched in most other towns in New South Wales. It is registered by the National Trust as a heritage building and registered by the Australian Heritage Commission.

The bank building was erected in 1886/7 for the Australian Joint Stock Bank. It was designed by Blackmann and Sulman, and built by Adamson and Dowe, at a cost of £10,500. The AJB Bank changed its name to the Australian Bank of Commerce in 1910 and in 1931 amalgamated with the Bank of New South Wales which moved from premises next door in Comur Street. In 1982 the name became the name familiar to Yass customers – the Westpac Banking Corporation.

Closure of the Westpac has inconvenienced and disappointed many loyal customers who had used the services of the bank for generations, as well as those many employees who had worked for the bank. Local man Andrew Ledger from 'The Mullion', a locality forty kilometres south of Yass, is very sorry to see the bank close. His family had been banking at the Westpac 'since day one', he said.

Teller Robyn Rhind has worked for twenty-seven years with the bank in Yass, and Di Brady is a well-known face at the counter who regrets the closure. She first worked as a sixteen year old as a relief staffer and took up a permanent position at the bank as a nineteen year old, when it was still known as the Bank of New South Wales. All told, Di has worked for the bank in various capacities for fifty-two years, and latterly for twenty-one years straight – loyal service by any measure, and time to build up tremendous customer loyalty.

In 1983 the aging building was renovated extensively, with attention to detail such as original paint colours. The cast iron hitching posts on the footpath at the front



The AJS Bank was completed in 1887 and was taken over by the Bank of New South Wales in 1931. [Image: YDHS Archives]

were retained, and the manager's residence and stables at the back of the building renovated. An invitation was issued to customers and town's people to attend a gathering to celebrate and inspect the work done inside and out. In more recent times the elegant old upper balconies needed new support posts and scaffolding was in place at the front of the building for several months. At all times historic features have been retained to preserve the character of the grand old building.

What of its future?

Such a building is more than just a building. A banking corporation of long standing is a social institution in a town, to which residents of a community have strong attachments. As yet another local who has stood on the footpath opposite in Comur Street and pondered about the future of the grand old lady, I have fantasized about possible uses – Art Centre? Music School? Cultural Centre? – or all of these? What will the future bring?

The bank building must not be allowed to fall into decrepitude like another building opposite in Comur Street, also part of our local heritage.

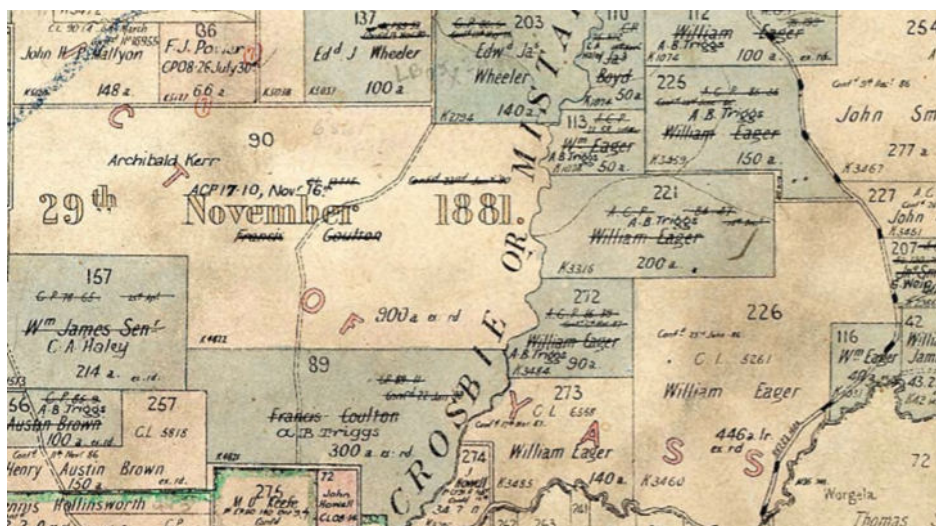
Nola Bindon is a descendant of Charles and Ruth Walmsley whose story she wrote of in Boongaroon October 2022. Her schooldays were spent in Yass, before training as a teacher at Wagga Teachers College where she met her future husband. Teaching appointments took them to Mulwala and Canberra before Peter obtained a position with the Museum of Western Australia for twenty-one years until their move from Perth to Yass twenty five years ago. Her return has given Nola the chance to explore and enjoy her family and local history.

Telling a story from the Yass Archives.

Maureen Collins and Aedeen Cremin

The Yass & District Historical Society Archives are a priceless source of information about the life of our region. This article tells a story which has been built up from just one of its holdings, a NSW Department of Lands map, which shows how the land was surveyed, renamed 'Parish of Crosby' and subdivided for sale to European settlers in the late 19th century. The map shows the sequence of occupation between the 1880s and 1908. The owners and residents can then be tracked through electoral rolls, newspaper articles and other sources available online through Trove, the huge digitised resource run by the Nation Library of Australia. In this instance we are concentrating on *Otterbourne*, a celebrated pastoral property, midway between Yass and Boorowa, on Wiradjuri land, but the same work could be done on any part of the Yass Valley or elsewhere.

The exciting thing about this particular map (and about working in the archives) is that it shows work in progress. It has added significance because it was associated with A.B. Triggs, of *Linton*, a leading citizen of Yass and one who figures large in our story. The printed map is the Fourth edition, published by the Department of Lands in 1903, but this copy has been amended by hand, first in 1905—to include new purchases, some of which we detail below—and presumably at intervals thereafter, until finalised in 1917.



Detail of Crosby Parish, County of King Map (4th Edition, 1903) show land originally owned by Arthur Bryant Tripps and later Alexander Kerr. [Image: YDHS Archives]



Arthur Bryant Triggs, the well known 'Sheep King', twice owned Otterbourne. [Image: YDHS Archives]

The map shows the succession of ownership. It's most easily seen in the large central portion of 900 acres (portion 90). It had been a goldfield, proclaimed in 1881. By 1903 it had been acquired by Francis Coulton, whose name has been crossed out and replaced by that of Archibald Kerr, who we know bought the land in 1908. Today's *Otterbourne* is situated between the Crosbie or Mistake Creek, and the Wargeila road. The sequence of ownership can be observed there too: portions vary in size, from fifty acres (portion 113), 90 (portion 272), 100 (portion 122), 140 (portion 273), 150 (portion 225), 200 (portion 221), to the largest at 446 acres, excluding the road (portion 226), which had extensive frontage onto the

Boorowa River. All of these were first purchased by an Irish immigrant, William Eager (1851-1927), who gave up farming to become a publican and at various times owned the Yass, North Yass and Commercial hotels.¹

Some of Eager's portions and several others were acquired from the 1890s by Arthur Bryant Triggs (1868-1936), a well-connected English banker who had an eye not only for art and antiques but also for good grazing land and the profits to be made from it. He controlled stations from Bourke to Kiandra 'so that his travelling stock was never far from his next property ... and usually ran from 250,000 to 500,000 sheep'.² He enlarged *Otterbourne* to 11,000 acres and sold it in 1902 'for a very high figure' to C.A. Hayley.³ It is noticeable that Hayley's name is *not* shown on this map. Two years later Triggs rented the property back and set about improving it.

Mr. Triggs spent large sums of money in ringbarking, clearing, and fencing. It [Otterbourne] has an acreage of about 12,000 acres, and at present there are 10,000 sheep on it. Just now it is not fully stocked. About 20,000 sheep are to be shorn here this year. The shed has stands for ten machines, and well-planned yards with a dip adjoining the shed. Although the sheep are brought from everywhere, great care is taken in the get-up of the wool. The sheep all look well, and promise to cut very clean fleeces, although a little on the light side. Mr. H. Stewart (Mr. Triggs' sheep buyer) bought a great number of Victorian sheep last year, but finds these sheep do not do very well in this district. He has purchased thousands of sheep from all parts for a good number of years, and finds the New South

Wales bred sheep are more suitable for their own State than any others. The lambing in expected to be very fair, and the ewes look to be able to carry their lambs through with good results. Careful judgment is used in selecting suitable rams. Mr. Stewart has great opportunities of securing the best of flock rams. Mr. Triggs has other properties, and expects to shear about 80,000 sheep this year.⁴

Triggs appears to have bought *Otterbourne* back soon after selling to Hayley, for he was the owner during the devastating bushfires of 1905 when the station was burnt out.⁵ Three years later he sold to Kerr Brothers, of Caltowie, South Australia, and immediately leased it back again. The property was then '15,200 acres with an extensive frontage to the Burrowa River'.⁶

The property was run by Archibald Kerr, who must have owned it outright by the time of his death in 1923, for he divided it among his four sons, only two of whom stayed on.⁷ In 1928 *Otterbourne* was purchased by Mr and Mrs D'Arcy Bucknell, of *Shantalla* in Yass, for their eldest son Eustace (1902-76) on the occasion of his marriage to Alexandra McBean (1905-90), of *Springmount* and *Corona*, North Yass.⁸ D'Arcy Bucknell (1860-1933) was a solicitor and highly regarded in the Yass community for his role in the creation of the Memorial Hall.⁹

Parts of the *Otterbourne* estate (totalling 1950 acres) were sold off in the 1930s, when they were described as 'some of the best wool-growing country in the district'.¹⁰ But *Otterbourne* itself became pre-eminent under Eustace's management. In 1936, for instance, Dalgety & Co reported that:

Our highest price was 32d, obtained for five bales of ex sup of the Otterbourne/Yass clip from Yass, sold on account of E. D'Arcy Bucknell. Other lines of this clip realised, first sup 31½d, sup e 29½d, sup aaa 29d, sup 28d. The wool was of good length, super fine, highly attractive, stylish, soft and free.

The standard and value of *Otterbourne* wool continued to increase and in 1953 Dalgety's was able to report that:

A new State record for comeback wool was established in Dalgety's catalogue for 5 bales of first extra super comeback account E. Bucknell, of "Otterbourne," Yass, at 131d, and 6 bales of super AAA comeback at 129½d of the same brand. Previous record for comeback-crossbred wool for N.S.W. was 125½d.¹¹

The National Library of Australia's *Trove* informs us not only about the great landowners but also about other people associated with the property. For instance we can follow the family of John Henry Poile Mallyon, who by 1889 owned 652 acres (portions 269 and 161), just north of the former goldfield area.¹² He had been

in business in North Yass, then moved to Wargeila, before returning in 1905 to take over the Lynch store in Comur St.¹³ His son James Richard Mallyon stayed on the land and managed *Otterbourne*, from at least 1900.

In 1907, James and his wife, Elizabeth née McGregor, ran a very successful charity ball in the new shearers' accommodation at *Otterbourne*. The *Yass Courier* reported that:

*Elliot's Premier Band supplied the music, and Mr. E. Broderick (violin) kindly played a number of extras. Numerous lanterns hung around the walls thus providing plenty of light. The dancing room was decorated with flags and the effect was very nice. It is expected that the Hospital will benefit to something like £10 as the result of the ball. Mr. and Mrs. James Mallyon are to be congratulated upon the successful result, as are Mr. C.A. Newman and the shearers.*¹⁴

Thanks to *Trove* we can find out that this sort of entertainment was not all that unusual. An advertisement in the *Yass Evening Tribune* of 28 November 1907 invited people to 'A Grand Ball (plain and fancy dress)' to be held in the Mechanic's Institute on 11 December. The very next day there would be a Juvenile Plain and Fancy Dress Ball. The lady in the 'prettiest costume' and the 'Gent in the most original fancy dress' would each receive a prize of 10 shillings—certainly worth dressing up for.

The *Otterbourne* Ball celebrated the work of shearers, who had that week shorn an average of 122 sheep per man. 1922 sheep were shorn by 16 men in one day: Shearers A Young shorn 168 sheep and E Lawliss 162.¹⁵ Shearers were of course essential to the work of the station and successive owners acknowledged that. In 1953, Eustace Bucknell ran a 'surprise party' in the woolshed to celebrate Tim Horton's twenty-five years as a shearer.¹⁶ Over the years *Otterbourne* was subdivided many times and is today much more compact, consisting of only 300 acres centred on the Federation-style house built by Archibald Kerr. The current owners, Sam and Gillian Bucknell, are particularly conscious of environmental issues and are actively regenerating pastureland, reducing the size of paddocks and creating 'tree lines' between them. Their intensive farming method is very successful and *Otterbourne* merinos are still highly prized.

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Maureen Collins is the Archives Co-ordinator and a former secretary and treasurer of Yass and District Historical Society. She is the point of reference for the volunteers who carry out a broad range of tasks in the archives. A keen family historian Maureen is able to use her skills to assist others to learn the ropes and delve into our records to answer the myriad of questions raised by our enquirers. She was made a Life Member of the Society in 2017.

Dr Aedeon Cremin is an archaeologist with degrees from the Universities of Ireland (UC Dublin), Strasbourg and Sydney, and was a lecturer at Sydney for over twenty years. She retired to Yass in 2005 to be closer to her Madden grandchildren but continued to teach, first at the ANU then at the University of Canberra. Her research had focused on large-scale human interaction with the environment but living in Yass has taught her to consider the role of individuals, especially as gardeners.



Yass

Our town is exhibiting improvement in every direction giving promise of future greatness. The plan for the new town laid out by Mr Henry O'Brien is good and we hope that many will be induced to settle amongst us, since Yass presents so many advantages over places that have been longer established. We have now three good stores. Mr Harrison is erecting a commodious building for his united concerns, of bank, post office, and store and we wish the colony had many such enterprising and steady characters to advance its prosperity. Our neat little public library is at present used as a church instead of the court house, until the church is built and the library made use of in the manner intended by the proprietors in its erection. Two Sundays ago we were gladdened by the first bell that these 'valleys and rocks ever heard' and we may say with the poet 'twas 'as if an angel spoke' for the church was crowded and last Sunday the same result followed. This is as it should be, and we rejoice that our respected and zealous minister, the Rev Mr Brigstocke, has at length by any means brought the people to listen, since we feel convinced he will never have to say 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought'.

Sydney Morning Herald, 11 September 1840

Editor: The new town referred to was O'Connelltown in South Yass, named in honour of 'The Liberator' Daniel O'Connell, who achieved Catholic emancipation in Ireland in 1829.

The opening of the Liberty Theatre, 15 December 1939.

Aedeen Cremin

Yass was at war when the *Liberty* opened in December 1939. Prime Minister Robert Menzies having made the announcement of Australia's commitment to the Allies on 4 September 1939, three days after the Nazi invasion of Poland. Within a week the government created a special Department of Information which included a Commonwealth Cinema and Photographic Branch. Cinemas were now an important tool of communication, not just a place of entertainment. The war delayed the opening of the *Liberty* by a month, for the ship bringing carpets from Belgium had been rerouted, but by December the war seemed unreal and indeed was called the 'phoney war' because there had been no combat since the fall of Poland. The people of Yass could therefore allow themselves some time off from the war effort and even look forward to a peaceful Christmas.

The *Liberty's* opening was certainly spectacular enough to lighten the atmosphere. The usherettes wore evening dresses of 'gold-shot taffeta' and magnificent flowers were given to the wives of the various dignitaries. The show lasted till midnight and was followed by supper in the foyer, with speeches by the Goodradigbee Shire President, Councillor C.A. Grogan, by the outgoing Mayor, Alderman E.J. O'Connor, by the local MLA, G.A. Ardill, and, of course, by the owner, Herbert Lewis Phillips, the 'picture show man'. The audience had paid twice the usual amount (four shillings for stall, five shillings for the circle) but got good value, with two short films, one on London, the other a Laurel-and-Hardy knockabout comedy, *Blockheads*, and as main feature the recently-issued British romantic drama, *Goodbye Mr Chips*, starring Greer Garson and Robert Donat.

All of this was set in luxurious and colourful surroundings, as the *Yass Tribune* reported on 18 December 1939:

The theatre is of ultra-modern design with furnishings carried out in green, relieved in fawn. The lighting is of neon; concealed blue is used in the proscenium, while gold is employed in the foyer and under the awning with the vertical sign in green. Auxiliary lighting in modern fittings is amber.¹

The ambient lighting was recessed into troughs which enhanced the fantasy atmosphere. The building was air-conditioned, had excellent sound equipment—supplied by Harrington Raycophone, who sponsored some of the publicity—velvet curtains, mirrors in the foyer walls, 230 velvet-covered twenty-inch-wide seats in the circle and 470 seats in the stall. There was a milk-bar in the foyer, operated by the owner of the adjacent *Liberty Café*. The Municipal Council was so impressed that it had agreed to re-concrete the footpath outside the theatre prior to its opening and also allowed the installation of large neon signs.

Films had been shown in Yass at the Memorial Hall since its completion in 1923; for the first year by J. Stabback, then by H.L. Phillips, from 1924 to 1939. He and his wife, Margaret Lillian, lived in Comur Street, then in Dutton Street and finally at 27 Shaw Street. H.L. was active in the community, acting as secretary for the Greyhound Races and running a Movie Ball as a fundraiser for the Hall. In 1929 he took out 10-year lease on the Hall and was so successful that in 1935 he took the risk of installing expensive sound equipment. The population of Yass was of 3000 people, but one third of that was aged under twenty-one, which provided a ready-made audience. Going to the cinema was by then a normal part of social life, with three distinct audiences: families, who might have regular bookings, children, who attended Saturday matinees, and 'courting couples', for the cinema was a public and respectable place but also offered some privacy. By 1939, there might be shows on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as at the weekend. Seats could be booked by phone and cost two shillings.

In the 1930s Hollywood had taken off, partly because of the exodus of film-people fleeing the Nazis: Marlene Dietrich, Hedy Lamarr, Fritz Lang, Peter Lorre, Billy Wilder, etc. When sound came in, there were musicals such as *The Great Ziegfeld*, and the film that made the child actress Shirley Temple famous, *Little Miss Marker*, both shown in Yass in 1937. Australia had its own film industry: Ken Hall, for instance directed no less than 15 films, mostly rural comedies, between 1932 and 1939.

Phillips' lease of the Hall ran out in 1939 and he decided to invest £13,000 for a cinema complex, which would have both the theatre, seating 700 people, and a commercial premises, the whole situated on Lot 1 of Comur St, a sizeable block (3 roods, 6 perches) backing on to the rail track to the flour mills. The site, known as Carpenter's Corner, had been empty for a long time, because of a dispute over a deceased estate and had last been used for a blacksmith's forge.

**NEW LIBERTY
THEATRE**

Grand Gala Opening
BY MR. G. E. ARDILL, M.L.A.
**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 15th and 16th**

ROBERT DONAT
IN
"GOOD-BYE MR. CHIPS"
Plus
LAUREL AND HARDY
IN
"BLOCK HEADS"
A New Serial "RADIO PATROL"
And a Talkie Short: "LONDON"

The *Liberty* was one of the last cinema theatres built by the firm of Crick & Associates, run by Guy Crick (1901-64) and Bruce Furze (1906-67), who had by 1939 designed over thirty cinemas throughout Australia and remodelled fifty others. They used the distinctive style pioneered by the German architect Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953). He had revolutionised theatre design by doing

Advertisement for the opening of the Liberty Theatre.
[Image: Yass Tribune-Courier 14 December 1939]



The original design for the Liberty Theatre was more curvilinear than the finished building.

[Image: Yass Tribune-Courier 5 October 1939]



Mendelsohn's 'Universum' is still in use as a theatre, now the Schaubühne.

[Image: Wikipedia Commons]



Transfer-printed bone china souvenir plate made by Royal Stafford China, UK, features Cooma Street, Yass c. 1940-50. . The Liberty can be seen on the left of the illustration.

[Image: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney <<https://ma.as/12119>>]

away with external ornament and creating a look which was as modern as the concept of moving pictures itself. His first cinema, the Universum, built in Berlin 1926-28, seemed a 'streamlined navigable disc hurtling across the sky'. That effect was achieved by making the façade curve around a city corner.² The *Liberty* has retained the corner situation but is rectilinear rather than curving.

Professor Ross Thorne, Australia's foremost expert on cinema architecture has written that the *Liberty Theatre* 'is an outstanding Art Deco building with many of its original features intact' and has given it the highest heritage significance.³ It is certainly a striking building and, sadly, one of the very few of its type remaining.

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Aedeon Cremin—see biographical note p26.

Globalisation on a plate.

Aedeen Cremin

A Chinese dinner plate bought in a Yass op-shop, was probably made in the 1990s but reproduces a much earlier style. In the centrepiece is an image of a crested bird with peonies and other flowers, and around the rim is another floral design in green and pink. This design encapsulates centuries of cross-cultural contacts between East and West, largely through the 17th and 18th century officers of the various East India Companies (Dutch, English, French etc.). They had found that they could commission dinner-sets of fine porcelain and have them decorated to their own designs. The dinners-sets were made in the Imperial kilns in China's south-eastern provinces, close to the ports of Amoy and Canton, and manufactured in fantastic numbers, literally tens of thousands of pieces. The East India officers were particularly attracted by 'blue-and-white', as in the famous Willow pattern, but also by the green pigments of 'famille verte' (*wucan*) and pink of 'famille rose' (*fencai*).

Chinese kilns were quick to respond to the demand. They worked to order but also occasionally adapted traditional Chinese motifs to what they understood to be the European taste, based on pictures they were shown. These designs were in turn



The famille rose patterns have remained popular over the centuries. [Image: Author]



Modern copies of traditional patterns are still being made in China. [Image: Author]

copied and recopied. 'Pottery produced at Chelsea in England in the early 18th century imitated Meissen porcelain wares, which themselves imitated Japanese imitations of Chinese vessels'; as a result, 'the world grew closer together through mutual misunderstanding'.¹

This plate was decorated by transfer-printing—a 19th century English technique, far less labour-intensive than the traditional hand-painting, but still demanding. The Liling kilns it comes from had been established in the 1720s by the Qing, China's last

Imperial dynasty, specifically to make goods for export. They closed during the 1930s, a very troubled time in China's history, but were reopened in 1949 as a State-run enterprise, with a research-centre whose job was to study and re-establish traditional techniques.² This plate shows that they succeeded. Nobody would suppose it is an antique, but it is an accomplished piece and, in my view, an attractive one.

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Top Town Competition.

The *Yass Tribune-Courier* of 8 November 1954 gave a very descriptive report on Yass becoming the *Top Town of NSW* in a competition ran by the *Telegraph*. Yass was one of the smallest towns in a group of twenty-two vying for the honour. Locals travelled hundreds of miles collecting votes to ensure that Yass had the best chance of winning the competition against larger communities. An estimated 2,000 people gathered in front of the Memorial Hall for the presentation of the Top Town Pennant to Mayor W Walker (see image p35). The first prize of £1,250 was presented at a concert that evening with over 1,100 people crammed into the hall and annex. The concert featured celebrity artists from Sydney as well as local performers, was broadcast on radio. The prize money went to the erection of the Meehan Street ambulance station.

A Community Icon - the Yass Soldiers' Memorial Hall.

Judith Davidson

The Soldiers' Memorial Hall has embodied so much of Yass's past sacrifices, community spirit, and celebrations. Now it is one hundred years old it deserves a brief look at its beginnings and the part it has played in the Yass community.

Mr Crago, flour mill proprietor, was the moving force behind the idea in 1920 to build a memorial hall to the hundreds of young men and women from the Yass district who fought and died in the Great War 1914 -1918. Mr Crago had lost his own son and, in the letter he penned in May 1920, his passion is obvious. "A large and handsome building, having at the front entrance a spacious vestibule...and on the walls for this and future generations to see, the names of our boys, our dear ones, who went across the seas to fight for us and liberty; those that were slain and those that came back, boys of every faith and condition of life."

Other suggestions were made as to what would be a fitting memorial. Town and country were asked to pull together and delicate negotiations to sell the Mechanics Institute that had served the community so well were entered into. And suddenly this community, struggling with the sorrow and trauma of the war, had a worthy project.

A flurry of fund raising ensued. By 4 October 1920, £2500 had been raised of the £10,000 needed. By 1 November the £5,000 mark had been achieved. Methods employed showed imagination and enterprise. Carnivals, guessing competitions,



The large crowd gathered for the laying of the foundation stone of the Soldiers Memorial Hall by the Governor General Lord Forster in May 1922. [Image: YDHS Archives]



The Soldiers' Memorial Hall shortly after its completion.

[Image: YDHS Archives]

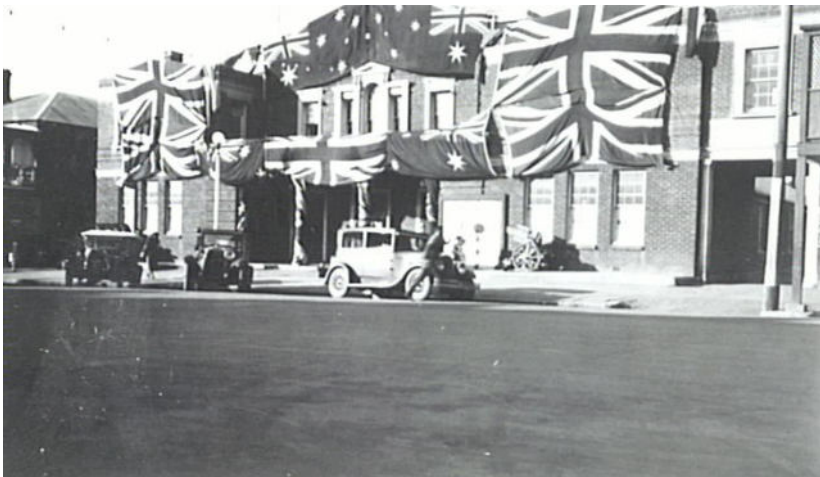
processions and a three-way Queen competition got underway. Mrs Crommelin amassed half of her goal of a mile of pennies by 11 November. The young Henry Harmer who had seen the boys leave for the war but only one come back “sends 5/- for Herb Carey’s sake”

and promised he will give “a shilling of our pocket money each month”. Landowners with deep pockets contributed generously. By 25 November a block of land was purchased from Mr Trigg and plans were called for. By 18 July 1921 the Committee of the Yass Soldiers’ Memorial Hall could report, “It will be a spacious edifice with a memorial vestibule: soldiers’ club, including writing and billiard rooms; hall with gallery to seat 600; 2 cloak rooms; stage, 28 x 20 feet with dressing rooms; and two spacious offices fronting Cooma Street; supper room 21 x 82 feet; a large room for library and reading room”.

So much accomplished by a small community in a short time! With the building complete, the Hall was officially opened on March 5th 1923 by Brigadier General H E ‘Pompey’ Elliott. The upstairs rooms became the home of the Yass Soldiers’ Club that formed that same year. The Literary Institute and Library which had been housed in the Mechanics Institute moved in in 1927. The hall included a movie projection room and was regularly used as a picture theatre as well as a lecture hall. Balls and dances were regular events, often to raise funds for charities and community projects. It was the hub for fund raising and social events during World War II. Additions and extensions were carried out in 1928, 1930 and 1940 and the memorial foyer was updated and refurbished in 1959. It continues to be updated to reflect the ongoing contribution of Yass ex-servicemen and women.

After the Yass Soldiers’ Club moved to their new premises in 1960 vacating the upstairs rooms, Council clerical staff occupied the area. The Yass and District Historical Society Archives moved in in 1982—until they were moved out in February 2023. The hall is also home to the Yass Music Club established in 1953.

And since then? There have been alterations, additions and sadly more honour rolls. The Hall has seen farewells, concerts, pictures, reunions, remembrance services and all those wonderful Balls! This hall has housed the fun and laughter, the joys and sorrows of the people of the district for a hundred years.



The Soldiers' Memorial Hall possibly decorated for the opening of the extensions and improvements made c1940.

[Image: YDHS Archives]



The Top Town celebrations at the Memorial Hall. This fundraising effort helped finance the erection of the Ambulance Station in Meehan Street, now YDHS Archives temporary home.

[Image: YDHS Archives]

Judith Davidson, an almost local, was born in Boorowa, and has settled in Yass after living on Norfolk Island for nineteen years. Initially working as a school teacher she became the Research and Interpretation officer for the KAVHA Research and Information Centre. With the award of a Churchill Fellowship in 2015 Judith travelled to another ten Australian World Heritage listed convict sites to study how the sites were interpreted for visitors. Judith was our Publicity Officer before being elected a Vice-President of YDHS in 2022.

Our first archives: a personal reflection

Cheryl Mongan

For almost forty years the society's archives occupied several upstairs rooms in the Soldiers' Memorial Hall, originally funded by the local community. The central room was originally created in 1923 for the use of the returned servicemen of World War One by a grateful Yass community and the newly formed Yass Soldiers' Club occupied that space and several other rooms added over the next thirty-seven years. During that time, it would also welcome home veterans of World War 2 and the Korean War. In 1960 the growing club moved to its own newly erected premises in Meehan Street. Council staff then occupied the space until the Yass and District Historical Society archives moved into some of those rooms in 1983.

For years our Society advocated for the hall to be repaired and maintained and for more suitable premises for our archives on ground level. However, we were not aware of our permanent eviction by 20 February until an email on 31 January. Conditions enforced by the Yass Valley Council during the removal of the collection restricted our access to the archives and our numbers to just five members overseen by a Council employee. It was a difficult time for our archives volunteers who worked under restrictive circumstances as they prepared and packed the collection of over three hundred and fifty archive boxes, hundreds of maps, thousands of photographs and more than two hundred boxes of ancillary records, books, files, and equipment.

Locating a suitable removalist on very short notice for relocation to an unknown destination was stressful for the committee. We were extremely fortunate that our State Member the Hon Wendy Tuckerman, the then Minister for Local Government was able to secure for us a temporary occupation of the former ambulance station by 20 February. A flurry of activity and sixty-two phone calls that day saw us connect electricity and water, call on volunteers to clean the building and arrange numerous other necessities. The only suitable and available removalist carried out the task of relocating the archives to our temporary Meehan Street home over the next three days.

I woke early on the morning of 24 February with a nagging feeling that something was missing as I hadn't sighted it amongst the truckloads of items transported to our temporary home. I visited the then vacated space for the last time – gone were the Society's shelving units with their hundreds of archives boxes, the map drawers and their contents, filing cabinets crammed with historical information, desks, chairs and the usual office paraphernalia. It was strangely very quiet, subdued, and very empty. For the past thirty-five years I had been an archives volunteer who cared for our historical records, including those of the men and women that the building honoured. I had worked in that friendly space most weeks and indeed sometimes



The quiet, empty central room of our former archives was the original premises of the Yass Soldiers Club formed in 1923. [Image: Cheryl Mongan]

several times a week. Much of the voluntary work the society members carried out in those rooms paid tribute to the lives of other volunteers—especially the servicemen and women of the Yass district. During my time there I had often wondered what we would have learned had those walls been able to talk.

Archive volunteers are currently working on a commissioned history for the Yass Soldiers Club and their records have given us further insight into the happenings within those walls – the visits of officers, a Governor General, politicians and entertainers, numerous reunions, billiard and snooker tournaments, and endless card games. The club was also the scene of meetings where lively debate on many issues took place – support for ex-servicemen as they negotiated benefits, the introduction of poker machines, organisation of fundraising activities, the annual Digger’s Ball and reunions, the decision to sell locally grown and prepared rosemary on Armistice Day rather than fabric poppies from Sydney and the introduction of civilian members and eventually - even women! The original rules of the Yass Soldiers Club were straightforward but were intended to discourage unruly behaviour with Rule No 14 being ‘No climbing on tables is allowed’.

As times became tougher during the Depression the need to support ex-servicemen became even more vital through the club’s Benevolent Fund. Those were the days a paltry sum of as little as two shillings and sixpence (twenty-five cents) made a vital train trip possible. Financial assistance helped with accommodation, travel for medical appointments, milk and dairy products for infants and families, funeral expenses, and headstones to commemorate ex-servicemen. Christmas Cheer, usually a guinea, went to families of destitute ex-servicemen. Their War Chest Comforts at the hospital was overseen by the Matron who supervised the

distribution of cigarettes, tobacco, pyjamas and other necessities to ex-servicemen – those were the days when smokes were considered a necessity! As the depression worsened the committee had to restrict its financial support to only local veterans - there simply weren't sufficient funds to assist every travelling ex-serviceman. Those walls witnessed the highs of victories and the lows that come with the cost of the victories.

Today there is little visible evidence of the club rooms' original purpose. A small niche in each of two fireplaces most likely once held a symbolic eternal flame and in the upstairs floor, the trapdoor where the kegs were hoisted up to the bar area, can still be seen. The present strong room was originally the projection room for films when the building was erected.

In our collection we have several artworks that once adorned the walls of the club including the very large painting *Britannica receiving greetings from the Dominions* by P Prioli donated by Arthur Bryant Triggs and several artworks depicting famous military figures. A small round oak Arts and Craft style table that served as our lunch table for years still bears the burns of cigarettes that once rested around the table's edge. It no doubt was privy to all sorts of talk - reminiscences, gossip, and sporting results and from the rings left by wet glasses of beer, rum and whisky that accompanied the talk.

Was it coincidental that the object that I had not sighted at our new premises and prompted me to revisit the club rooms was related to the very men who were commemorated in that building? It was a lost sock.



That 'darn sock' is a unique memorial, fabricated in 1998 by members of the community through the co-operation of the Yass Branch of the Country Womens' Association. Firstly, it commemorates the one hundred men named on the World War One Honour Roll as having lost their lives. When displayed it shows in chronological order, the death of each man with relevant information and photographs attached to the sock, with most of the photographs coming from the collections of the Yass and District Historical Society. Secondly, it is in recognition of the women who during WW1 provided comforts for those at the front.

Our former workroom after our departure.

[Image: Cheryl Mongan]



That ‘darn sock’ a knitted memorial to the local lives lost in the Great War on display to commemorate the centenary of the Anzac landing in 2015. [Image: Cheryl Mongan]

A third aspect that has been suggested—that it substantially reduced the national wool stock pile. The sock measures some 35 metres in length and having had to move it around I am glad that it is not one of a pair! The sock was found and now in safe keeping at our museum.

Our new premises albeit a temporary one while we search for a permanent home also has a good, friendly feeling about it. Perhaps it shares the same spirit of generosity having been erected by the local community to honour locals. Like the Memorial Hall the disused ambulance station in Meehan Street was originally funded by community fundraising and itself was a memorial dedicated to the memory of two ambulance officers at Yass. Paul Bracken and Kevin Williams had both been ambulance officers prior to enlisting with the 2/12 Field Ambulance in May 1940. They were killed when the Australian hospital ship *Centaur* was sunk by enemy action off the Queensland Coast on 14 May 1943. The plaque commemorating their sacrifices was removed to the new ambulance station adjoining the hospital when it was completed.

Cheryl Mongan has been actively engaged in all aspects of the society since her arrival in Yass in 1988. Awarded Life Membership in 2011 Cheryl is currently President of the Society. She has written two Yass related works on WW1 and Irish female immigration to the district as well contributing to a range of historical publications and websites in Australia and overseas. Her most recent publication *Aftermath; the end of the Second World War* written with Dr Richard Reid was published in August 2020.

A Brief History of the Yass/Boorowa Legacy Group.

Rosalie Bush

This year, 2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of Legacy.

In 1923, Major John Gellibrand formed the 'Remembrance Club' in Hobart after realising the dire circumstances of veterans, widows and children. Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Savige established a similar club in Melbourne named Legacy. Legacy is an entirely Australian in concept and there is no other similar organisation in the world. (1968)

The beginning of Legacy in Yass in 1947 started with two "Contactors" who represented the Yass area in the Goulburn Legacy Group. They were Mr Haddon and Mr Bryson. About 1948, Legacy in Yass became a contact group of Canberra Legacy, with one legatee, being a World War One veteran.

In 1950 it was decided to recruit another Yass member and ex-serviceman, Dr David Graham, to assist in the increased services Legacy extended to the families of ex-servicemen with overseas service, who subsequently died. At this stage there were eight Legacy widows in Yass and eight dependant children. The only fundraising activity was the Annual Button Day Appeal.

In 1954 there was a slump in Canberra Legacy Club's finances. As a result a more extensive appeal was commenced in Yass and local graziers were asked to "sell a sheep for Legacy". The results were so successful that this became a major appeal in Yass. That year well over a thousand pounds was raised in Yass.

In 1955 one grazier alone sold a truck load of sheep for Legacy, raising three hundred and fourteen pounds. The group's strength was doubled with the arrival in Yass of Legatee Don Noble, who was appointed to the Linton War Veterans Home that year.

The late Charles Tracey arrived in Yass in 1956, bringing renewed enthusiasm and new ideas and the Yass Golf Club was persuaded to put on a Legacy Golf Day. In July the Yass RSL Sub-Branch was the first organisation to qualify under the "Certificate of Adoption" for firms and organisations to undertake to raise at least twenty five pounds each year to help the work of Legacy.



**Supporting
our veterans'
families**

Yass member, Dr Graham, became Canberra Legacy's delegate to the Federal Conference in Sydney and became its Club President in 1957. It was decided that Legacy should extend its activities to Boorowa, where two local doctors, Legatees Liggins and Kelf assisted in setting up the group. As the work of Legacy increased, new Legatees were enrolled in 1959, 1963 and then as the need arose. Some of these were bank managers whose expertise was invaluable.

The Yass Group maintained active interest in, and cooperation with, Yass Sub-Branch RSL and the Yass Soldiers Club. Fundraising was assisted by the Golf Day and Bowls Day and a Golf Day at Binalong, Clay Pigeon Shoots and other shoots on various properties. For many years the group and Yass RSL had wood drives, cutting firewood and delivering it to Legacy widows. Two-up on ANZAC Day began in 1958 and continues today. The Yass group billeted and entertained Sydney Legacy children during school holidays. Yass and Boorowa residents have always been generous in their support.

In 1966 Yass/Boorowa group received approval to contribute to the cost of the construction of two self-care-units at Apex Homes for widows. In 1971 a further contribution for two more units and later a further two units were purchased. In 1983 the Yass/Boorowa Legacy group received approval to contribute to a unit in Boorowa. Arrangements are made to have the units occupied by Legacy widows.

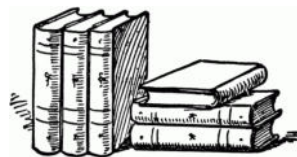
Funds in the early years were remitted to Canberra Legacy. This does not happen today, the funds stay in the Yass/Boorowa district. Canberra Legacy has a holiday unit at Batehaven which is available to Yass/Boorowa widows two weeks a year, free of charge. The Yass/Boorowa Legacy widows attend the Canberra Legacy Variety Concert each year. Canberra Legacy assists our local widows with out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Today Legacy assists dependant widows and children of veterans from all conflicts of war. In Yass/Boorowa there are thirteen legatees caring for fifty one widows, including a mother with two young children. Yass Legacy Group meets once a month and has a representative on the Canberra Legacy Board.

To mark the one hundredth anniversary of Legacy, a Centenary Torch Relay presented by Defence Health will travel from Pozieres, France to London, before arriving in Perth, Western Australia in May 2023. This unique commemorative event pays homage, and acknowledgement of veteran's families and their sacrifices. The Torch Relay will continue its journey throughout local towns and cities across Australia, visiting all forty-five Legacy Club locations, concluding in Melbourne in October 2023. In all the Torch will travel over 55,000 km, through 100 stops carried by 1,500 torch bearers including local Legatee John Heggart .



Review



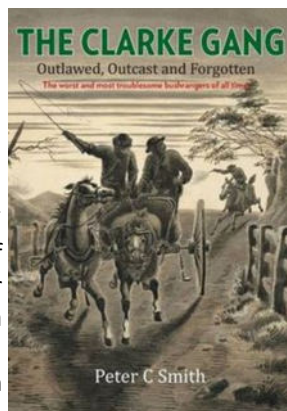
The Clarke Gang: Outlawed, Outcast and Forgotten.

Peter C Smith

Rosenberg Pty Ltd, 2015, 664 pages
with end notes, bibliography, and index.

Reviewed by *Jennifer Brookes*

Paul Briggs' address, 'the Pottingers and the Clarkes', inspired my reading of Peter Smith's masterful history of the Clarke gang. As with Smith, my first appreciation of their activities came from a visit to Nerrigundah, a former gold mining town, where the main street features a monument remembering Constable Miles O'Grady, shot by Tommy Clarke on April 9, 1866. With rolling prose, Smith relates the exciting and terrifying events which led to the homicide of gang member William Fletcher, the murder of O'Grady, and the subsequent declaration of Tommy and Johnny Clarke as outlaws the following June.



Smith's simple descriptive language and clear chronology control his fast-paced narrative, belying the likely chaos. Carefully selected contemporary photos, illustrations, newspaper accounts and quotations, clearly delineated sketches and maps all highlight the motivations and movements of the many and varied characters. Brief subheadings organise the detail and reveal a scenario where community anxiety and fear were palpable, and individual acts of bravery emerged. The cinematic effect encourages page turning.

The Nerrigundah Raid was just one depredation of the Clarke brothers and their associates. Their notoriety began in 1861 after Tommy Clarke's arrest on a charge of stealing a filly belonging to Hugh Wallace, on whose land the Clarke family was then living in the locality of Jingera, below Bungendore and west of the Great Divide. Wallace responded by refusing them access, forcing them to sell their own stock as bail for Tommy, and to find other ways of making a living. Wallace's harsh response caused bitter resentment against property owners and their supporting legal system and led to increasingly audacious and violent raids and robberies. Until the murder of O'Grady and subsequent murder of four special constables at Jinden in early 1867, the gang ensured loyal support from their families and neighbours, encouraging them by judicious distribution of their spoils, much of it to the women.

This compelling narrative, in explaining why the gang's exploits faded so rapidly from historical consciousness, provides a convincing analysis of the factors which led to that activity, and why the broader community was pleased to be rid of them. Contributing factors included isolated matriarchal family settlements of intermarried, mostly Irish and mostly poor and illiterate small farmers; as either newly emancipated convicts or recently arrived assisted immigrants, all scratching a precarious living alongside largely protestant, literate and privileged landholders; their own position made vulnerable by sparsely distributed, barely supported, untrained, disorganised, often illiterate police constables, also Irish, suffering woeful living conditions, and poor quality firearms. The reader is left with a deep appreciation of the complexities of communicating in the geographical area over which the gang ranged. Solely on horseback, the gang cantered over deep gullies, valleys and creeks, precipitous escarpments, and natural forested tracts—equivalent in area to today's state electorates of Bega, Goulburn, and the Monaro.

When their behaviour spun beyond the rule of law, a Commission of Enquiry investigated, among other things, the level of community connivance with the gang's activities, and the complexity of the supporting family networks. One direct cause was the absence of the socialising benefits of elementary education. Within days of the execution of Tommy and Johnny Clarke at Darlinghurst gaol on June 25, 1867, the first half-time schoolteacher was appointed to serve five isolated Jingera settlements.

Jennifer Brookes has been a Secondary School Teacher, Public Librarian, Special Librarian (Australian Archives), Secondary School Librarian, and School archivist. Her favourite appointments were Public Librarian (Gundagai) and School Archivist (Canberra Grammar School).



The History of the Reid Family: from Scotland to New South Wales.

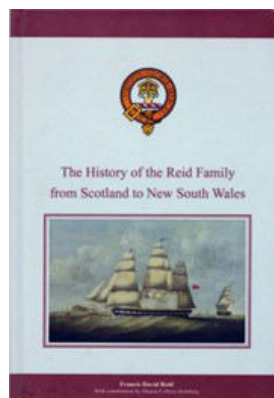
Francis David Reid

Self published, Bowral NSW, 2022, 406 pages.

Reviewed by *Wilma Tanswell*

Have you ever looked through books that have blurred images, maps without specific references, couldn't read 'old English' writing, wondered where did that information come from? Well.... this is not one of those books.

This book of six parts, forty-five chapters and 100 pages of Appendices (Bibliography, Index, Descendants List (charts),



maps, various shipping indents, ship surgeon's reports, wills and testaments, actual documents (copies thereof and made legible), end notes (so much information), 270 pictures/photos and the 'Names Index' of nineteen pages, shows all surnames in **Bold** text making them so much easier to find.

This Reid family originated with Alexander Reid and his wife, Smyth (given name) (nee Kydd), great, great, grandparents of the author, arriving in Australia in 1841. An image of Alexander is on the back cover. The family was affected by the tragic death of Smyth, aged 40, and then Alexander had two more partners and a grand total of thirteen children from all relationships and including an adopted son.

His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, (who became 'mother' after Smyth died) married Charles Jones in 1868 in Yass and they had twelve children. Charles and sons were local butchers and would you believe Charles named one of his sons, Ham?

The book has lots of 'people' pictures, copies of advertisements of the times, certificates, business buildings – garages, blacksmith shops, carriages and wagons sheds, servicemen and women, graves and gravestones, family homes, streetscapes, bridges and ironwork, hotels – all related to Reid family members.

Alexander's descendants were hard working pioneers and have spread out around the country; from Yass and south western districts they, of course, also visited the gold fields and ventured overseas too.

At the time of writing this there is a proposal before Council to name the bridge over the Murrumboola Creek after the Reid family, who also had businesses there.

The book is comprehensive in every way and will leave you with many ideas of how to present your own historical account of your family, should you get around to writing it down.

This review will hopefully inspire those of you who love a good story. The author, Francis Reid, donated the book to the Yass and District Historical Society's library and to the Yass Valley Council Library. It is not available through bookshops but if you would like to order a copy directly, from Francis, you can contact him on 0428 409 057 or email (fdreid49@gmail.com).



Before there was Tinder.

Finding the right partner has always been a challenge. Presumably women with daughters need not apply to the following advertisement.

Matrimony: RAILWAY WORKER (£10 16s monthly) in constant employment, desires to CORRESPOND with young woman (widow with boy not objected to) with view to matrimony. Open three days. Letters to "J R", Post Office, Galong.

Yass Courier 21 June 1915

Society Meetings

General meetings are held on the first Monday of the month, except January, commencing at 2pm at the Uniting Church Hall, Cliff Street Yass. The Annual General Meeting is held on the second Monday of October. Notices of all meetings and activities are circulated to members in *Yandoo*, the Society's newsletter and appear on our website www.yasshistory.org.au.

Membership Subscriptions 2022-2023

New member joining fee \$20.00

Single \$30.00

Double \$40.00

Single Concession \$20.00

Double Concession \$30.00

Student \$5.00

Yass & District Museum

The museum is situated at 247A Comur Street (two doors from the Yass Information Centre) and is open on Sundays and public holidays from 10am to 4pm from the October long weekend through to the June long weekend. (GPS coordinates -34.846457, 148.914576). At other times contact the Information Centre on 6226 2557. Group visits and town tours by special arrangement.

Archives

The Society's archives are temporarily located in the former ambulance station, 88 Meehan Street (entry from laneway to public library) and are open every Tuesday from 2pm to 5pm by appointment only (GPS coordinates -34.841438, 148.910716). Please email yassarchives@gmail.com to arrange a suitable time. Archives volunteers accept written research enquiries from non-resident members. Use of archival resources and written enquiries from non-members attract a minimum fee of \$30.00 for first hour (or part thereof) plus \$10.00 each additional hour and copying charges. Full details are available including online enquiry forms at www.yasshistory.org.au/archives

Publications

Please refer to our website for a list of current publications available for sale.

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