



MURRUMBIDGEE ANCESTOR

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

**February 2025
No. 144**

WAGGA WAGGA AND DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

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Meetings

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

Monthly Meetings: Third Wednesday of each month 1.30pm.

Location of Meetings: Society Rooms, 24 Tarakan Avenue, Ashmont

Annual Membership

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

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

MEMBER ENTITLEMENTS

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

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

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

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February 2025 - No. 144



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Journal Contributions 2025

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

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

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



**A recent milestone birthday celebrated by our President, Rob Walker.
Helen Lubke served the birthday cake!**

CONTINUING MEMBERS

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

President's Report

Rob Walker – Member 696

Welcome to a new year, and for some trivial reason I am prompted to comment that we are nearly a quarter of the way through this century. I guess that means we should be taking stock of what the future holds for our own Society and how much more relevant can we make it, to future proof our library.

Since my report to the AGM last September, we have accumulated a large number of books from several sources. One such source came with the closing of the Wal Fife Room at Mt Erin and the personal book collection that Wal held. An article by Leanne Diessel on this room can be found on later pages. With the agreement of the Fife family, we sorted through to keep books relevant to our region, or of family history significance, or duplicates of those already in our Library. Consequently, we forwarded several boxes to Wagga Wagga Rotary for their book fair later in the year.

Other sources are through donations of new titles, member libraries and books that are offered gratis. I note that we receive books for which we already hold copies and as many of these books are of a regional relevance we decided to put those aside and have them as sale items, and thus another income stream. Unfortunately, we also have limited space available and, rather than have the sides of the building bulging, some books, such as the Quee Collection and others of doubtful relevance, have been deaccessioned and will go to the Rotary Book Fair. Consequently, we must also create a listing of these sale titles and make that available to the wider audiences of our Webpage and Facebook sites.

Another outcome from the closure of the Wal Fife Room was our acquisition of six good quality 4 drawer filing cabinets which allowed us to replace some older versions and make filing of the newspaper clippings/Surname index records less of a chore. One issue currently causing concern is the mechanics of keeping the Rooms open, available and encouraging to members and visitors to make use of the resources. This is now more about manpower than any other issue. We need people who are prepared to spend a morning or an afternoon in the rooms to find out in detail how the place works and how it could be improved. The obvious message is that we are getting older and less able to do what needs to be done. This doesn't just mean Duty Officers who have made a commitment.

We have finally come to terms with the workings of our Webpage and although we don't have a designated Webmaster, we have several members learning the skills to keep the page relevant. That is not to say that we wouldn't welcome an offer from somebody to take on the role. Geoff Burch continues to keep the Facebook page alive, and the number of followers is steadily growing.

Our newest member on the Committee, Annette Brown, has been given the role of overseeing our Projects. I'm sure that most members would be unaware of the breadth of projects that have been completed or are on-going thanks to some hard-working individuals.

There are also projects which could be commenced if only there were new people prepared to give some of their time.

Our general afternoon meetings got underway again in January with our traditional “Book Afternoon” and some good reads were identified. There should be a commentary on the titles later in the journal. I don’t however want to give the impression that these meetings just occur by magic, they don’t, and I must say that beyond the next in February where Neil Dallinger will be talking about Rex Stanton’s Surname Search Program, the rest of the year is a blank canvas. So, if there are members keen to speak on issues or can suggest appropriate speakers, please speak up. There is also the matter of authors for articles for the journal. Now there is a challenge. For the remainder of this year, we hope to publish two Journals, June and October. How many new contributors will we see? No contributors, no Journal.



Editor’s Report

Marcia McIntyre – Member No. 840

Welcome to the first edition of *The Murrumbidgee Ancestor* for 2025. I hope this year will be a very good year for all our Members.

As usual, some interesting contributions by Members. Leanne tells of the closure of the Wal File room at Mt Erin on page 13. The history of early hotels in Adelong is set out by Annette on page 16 and Jan recounts her childhood memories visiting a hut built by her grandfather—with her dog Rover!

I have re-discovered information which I originally found two or three years ago, about a gentleman in 1907, supposedly a Wagga resident. His name was Clive Darril, and he is mentioned very frequently in newspaper articles, both in Australia and Britain, mostly during March and April of that year. The newspapers stated that Clive claimed to be the son of a wealthy farmer from Wagga Wagga. When his father died, Clive inherited a “comfortable competence” and with this inheritance, decided at the age of 24, to do a grand tour of England and Europe.

He was known as “The Australian Giant” and was reputed to be 7 foot, 8 inches tall, (well over 2 metres) although some newspaper articles said that he was 8 feet tall! His father (the Wagga Wagga farmer) was supposed to be “the tallest man in Australia”. Clive also had two sisters who were also more than 2 metres tall. Did the sisters live in Wagga Wagga?

Whilst in England, he heard about a giantess named Maria Mariedl, aged 23 years, from Austria, who was appearing as a freakish attraction in an exhibition at the London Hippodrome. Clive fell instantly in love with Miss Mariedl and pursued her with unbridled passion, proposing marriage. But his ardour came to nothing and I can find no record of them marrying. Maria returned to Austria in poor health and passed away in 1917.

I have searched the NSW births, deaths and marriage index at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/family-and-relationships/family-history-search> and other records all over Australia and found no record of a Clive Darril, or any of his family. This surname does not pop up anywhere in Wagga records (that I can see). I have also found no record of the surname “Darril” anywhere in Australia.

Possibly the name “Clive Darril” was a pseudonym, adopted by the giant, and he may have selected Wagga Wagga as his birthplace, as a location having a remote and exotic flavour to it.

If this story excites the curiosity of any of our Members, the story of Clive Darril can be found in the British newspaper website at <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> or at our own Trove at the National Library of Australia - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>. There is a small charge to access the British newspaper site, unlike our wonderful Trove, which is free!



Peter Batey O.A.M.
The subject of Luke Grealy’s talk in October.



**Clive Darril on the right, with an unknown gentleman on the left, possibly included so a comparison in height can be made.
Question: Was Clive really the son of a wealthy farmer from Wagga Wagga?**

SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

Jan Hurcum—Member No.32

Our speaker at the October meeting was Wayne Doubleday, who is Regional Archives Manager at Charles Sturt University Archives. He gave us his insights on digitisation, and whether it is the be-all and end-all solution to problems of retaining documentary information for the future. The Archives must keep records pertaining to the University, and also all records before 1980, but these can be digitised to make them accessible for general use and preserve/conservate the records. Digitisation is both time consuming and expensive, so not everything needs to be digitised. There are 4 professional staff at the Archives, and they receive between 500 and 600 enquiries per annum. Visitors to the Archives are 70% from the general public, 30% CSU students, staff and professional researchers.

Members Leanne Diessel and Wendy Bellany have been working on digitising the Goulburn Small Debts books for the State Library (with some help from Jan Hurcum and Geoff Burch), and have now completed and validated the section they were working on. Lots of other people have been working on Small Debts books for other towns in NSW – could be interesting to check it out.



Our November meeting was a lively one, with Luke Greal of the Museum of the Riverina bringing us up to date on happenings at the Museum, and also some insights into the life of Peter Batey, who was the instigator of the “Bald Archy Awards”. Due in part to COVID and other interruptions, the Museum’s redevelopment did take at least three years longer than planned, but it is open and functioning beautifully now. There are separate sections, which will make it very easy to change displays to make it more interesting.

Above: Wayne Doubleday speaking at the October meeting

Peter Batey had a very varied career, and apparently by chance visited Coolac and decided to buy the Windmill restaurant and to settle there in the old school house. Luke named Peter Batey a ‘provocateur’, as he liked to make fun of authority and created the Bald Archy Awards in order to do so.

As an aside, the Museum is collecting eulogies of local people, and will scan them and return the original to the owner.



Above: Luke Grealey giving an update on Museum happenings at the November meeting

Another project completed recently by Leanne Diessel and Rob Walker was assisting the Fife family and Riverina Archives staff clear the Wal Fife room at Mount Erin Convent, as the room is now needed by the convent as an office. Thanks to the generosity of the Fife family, our Society now has a collection of interesting books, 6 x four-drawer filing cabinets, and a beautiful 'Open' sign which has been adapted for our use by John Diessel.

Our December Christmas get-together was enjoyed by 25 members – many thanks to chefs Rob Walker and John Diessel, and members who provided a selection of salads and sweets to accompany our barbecue. Our Christmas raffle was drawn, and Wagga's eastern suburb of Forest Hill was lucky – winners being members Leanne Diessel and Debbie van Lierop. There was also a silent auction of a collection of wood turning gems made by a previous member, Colin Honeyman, for which we thank him very much.

Members were looking forward to the Christmas/New Year break from 11 December to 6 January, and then it is all go-go-go again!

We began the year 2025 on 6 January, and our general meeting on 15 January was the usual Book afternoon – in other words members bring an interesting book and tell everyone about it. We have some enthusiastic readers among our members on very varied subjects, and not all relating to family history.

- We heard about “Mind Mapping made easy for Family Historians” (I’m still not sure about that one!);
- Len Beadell, surveyor, who was involved in the first road through Central Australia east to west; “Tin Tickets” 2 convict girls from England to Tasmania in 1836;
- Isambard Kingdom Brunel, early British engineer involved in bridges/ railways/tunnels/buildings/ships;
- “Georgina Molloy – the Mind that Shines” Australia’s first female botanist (Western Australia);
- “The Light between Oceans” lighthouse- keeper/shipwreck; plague in village England.
- One member spoke about 2 dolls made of peanut shells she saw in a museum at Holbrook, which led her to read about architecture in the Albury area by Gordon & Gordon of Albury.

In the middle of this interesting meeting, we had a very noisy storm with lots of thunder & lightning.



NOTES FROM WAGGA WAGGA

Compiled by Leanne Diessel - Member No. 412

PERSONAL

Mr. Horace Mitchelmore is spending a fortnight with his parents, **Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Mitchelmore**, of Tompson street, Wagga.

Miss Molly Oxley, of the Union Bank, Sydney, spent the Christmas vacation with her parents, **Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Oxley**, Tompson-street, Wagga.

Mrs. Chauncey, of Rabaul, is spending a few days with **Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Cunningham**, of Best-street, Wagga.

Mr. H. Schofield, of the railway superintendent’s office staff at Junee, has been transferred to Dubbo as train controller.

Source: Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Tuesday 2 January 1934

PERSONAL

Mrs. C. E. Oliver, of Johnston street, Wagga, has returned to her home after a trip to the United States of America in Monterey.

Mr. and Mrs. L. Stinson and family, of Tarcutta, who have been on a holiday at the seaside, are returning to Tarcutta to-morrow.

Ronald Patterson, of **8 Peter street, Wagga**, student at the **Wagga High School**, has received notification that he has won the **Hemingway and Robertson** scholarship awarded to the Wagga High School. This entitles him to free tuition in the A.B.C. of business course by Messrs. Hemingway and Robertson.

Source: Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Thursday 1 March 1934

PERSONAL

At 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon the river at Wagga had receded 7ft 9in.

Mrs. J. W. C. Beveridge, of the **Billabong station**, has been appointed a delegate to the Pas Pacific conference of the C.W.A., to be held in Honolulu in August.

Miss Joyce Patterson, daughter of **Mr. R. J. Patterson, of Harefield**, is a patient at the Wagga District Hospital. On Friday she underwent an operation to the ear. She is now making satisfactory progress.

Miss M. K. Rigg, of the Wagga branch of the Bank of New South Wales, has been transferred to West Wyalong. On Saturday the staff at Wagga presented her with a leather suitcase.

The manager of the Commonwealth Bank, Wagga branch (**Mr. W. R. Alexander**), has commenced three weeks holidays. **Mr. C. P. Aldridge**, of the Sydney office, is relieving Mr. Alexander.

At the annual University law examinations, **Mr. Keith Blamey**, son of the late **Mr. R. H. Blamey and Mrs. Blamey**, of Fox street, Wagga, was successful in passing his final examination for the L.L.B. degree. Mr. Blamey will receive the congratulations of many of his old Wagga school mates. He was dux in the jubilee year at **Wagga Rural School** and, winning a scholarship, passed on to the **Wagga High School**. Mr. Blamey secured honors at the leaving examinations and went to **Newington College**, where he won an exhibition. He was prefect at Newington, and at the end of his term took articles with **Messrs. Garland Seaborn and Abbott** and entered the law school.

LARGE WHIRLWIND

About 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon a whirlwind occurred at **North Wagga** and sent a column of dust hundreds of feet in the air. Persons walking along Crampton-street, in the direction of the **Hampden bridge**, were amazed at the height of the column of dust which at one stage, on account of its dark color, resembled smoke. The whirlwind was coming in the direction of Wagga, but it had already spent its main force by the time it reached the **Murrumbidgee River**. The river did not entirely stop its progress, for it continued its journey on the southern side of the river just below the Hampden bridge, and finally petered out near the sale yards.

Source: Wagga Daily Advertiser, Monday 12 March 1934



RESEARCH

Compiled by Leanne Diessel—Member No: 412

Information required on the following places & people:

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

Information on **Matilda Jane WILSON** b1881 Young, daughter of **Thomas & Matilda WILSON nee GARBITT**.

Contact: Pamela BEXLEY

Information on **John GORDON & family** of Borambola

Contact: Roslyn BURGE

Information on **McCRONE & DAVIS** families of Wagga & Temora

Contact: Cathy McCRONE

Information on **Hazel HENNINGHAM** descendant of **Henry ANGEL**

Contact: Jen BROWN

Information on **Robert STRATTON** (School Principal)

Contact: Phillip & Ash STRATTON

Information on the **PINCOTT family** of Currawarna

Contact: Janice MARKS

Information on **Ethel SCHOER** married Cootamundra 1953, daughter of **Mr & Mrs W Schoer** of Cootamundra; also **George Henry COLLINS** b1881 Inverell, to **Ethel SHOER**. Wanting to know if there is a distant connection.

Contact: Ron BARTON

Information on **Edward BEAVER, publican & son Edward James, jockey & family** of Wagga

Contact: Deirdre PULLEN



Wal Fife Room Closure

Leanne Diessel– Member No. 412

On Wal Fife's moving off the family farm at Harefield to Canberra, he was wanting his 'home office' housed somewhere in Wagga. The Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga agreed to take on the collection. In 2014 the Wal Fife Room Library opened in the small parlour formerly Mt Erin Convent, set up in a similar fashion to his office at 'Gundry'.

Wal Fife had served in both State (Wagga Wagga) & Federal (Member for Farrer) Parliament from 1957 until his retirement in 1993. Some of his manuscripts are in the National Library in Canberra (Ms 7626) & some family material (Ms 8183) The collection kept in Wagga included framed photographs, certificates of office, family history files & correspondence, a large collection of books including Political biographies & autobiographies, town & school histories, memorabilia, NSW & Commonwealth Hansards, newspaper clippings & scrapbooks.



Left: Hon Wal Fife; Right: Part of the Wal Fife Room Small Parlour Mt Erin – 2014 (Wal Fife website)

An Advisory committee was formed with Wal & Marcia being the Patrons.
Chairperson – Gary Croker (later Wayne Doubleday)
Deputy Chair – Judy Buik
Secretary – Leanne Diessel
Family Member – Sue Killalea
Sherry Morris
2 representatives from the Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society Inc. – Peter Gissing & Geoff Burch

2 representatives from the Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society Inc. – Gary Croker & Rob Walker (later Leanne Diessel)
Manager, Riverina Archives – Wayne Doubleday (later chairperson)
Archivist Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga – Kay Judd

Meetings were regularly held at Gundary, later at CSURA & during/after Covid via zoom. A catalogue of the items & books held in the room was compiled & a website developed.

The room was open to the public on a number of occasions, mostly on a Saturday. The room was open at other times by appointment.
Wal Fife passed away on the 16 November 2017 with the advisory committee still having a meeting to keep the room going.



Above: Wal Fife Room Open Day 2018 (L. Diessel)



Above: Wal Fife Room, Rob Walker & Peter Gissing 2019 (L. Diessel)

Early in 2023 notice was given to the committee, by the school that they were in the process of redeveloping the Boarding school over the next 2 years, this included the large & small parlours meaning the Wal Fife Room needed to move.

How do you take apart a valuable collection & where does everything go?

After a number of meetings with the committee & Fife family, items have now been dispersed to family, the National Library of Australia, NSW State Library, CSU Regional Archives, St John's Anglican Church Archives Wagga, Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga & District Family History Society Inc. & Mt Erin Heritage Centre. The room was emptied by November 2024.

Right: Removing filing cabinets from the Wal Fife Room, November 2024, Rob Walker, John Diessel & Wayne Doubleday (L Diessel)



The catalogue has been altered to say where items have gone & the website will still be available. It is hoped in the future that Wal's scrap books & newspaper clipping files will be digitised & added to the website.

Website: www.walfiferoom.com



Hotels in the Early Years of Adelong NSW.

Dr Annette Brown – Member No. 766

For many of the 'new chums,' hotels were often their first point of contact with life on the Adelong gold diggings. Apart from the service of alcohol and the offer of rooms, hotels formed an integral part of the local information network. It was here that groups of men gathered and where news of the latest finds and failures on the diggings were discussed. Hotels provided relaxation and companionship and above all, job opportunities. Local newspapers would be read aloud, or passed from hand to hand, with 'wanted' ads being eagerly perused. Work on the diggings and in the town was also gained by 'word of mouth', with many potential employers rubbing shoulders in the various hotels with the newcomers.

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

They provided the most up-to-date service in beverages for the men of Adelong and district, with the *Pride of Galway* offering 'American Drinks – prepared after the most approved fashion of the United States'. Along with ale, porter, wines, spirits and cordials, the imported drinks were no doubt on offer to cater to the influx of American men working on the Adelong diggings.

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

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

J.R. Paul, the proprietor of the *Pride of Galway* offered his customers “Extensive Stabling” in October of 1858, with stables *kept supplied with the best of forage.....travellers may therefore rest assured that their horses will be carefully attended to, as an attentive Ostler (horse handler) has the entire management of that branch of the business.*

Along with the rough and tumble of the gold rush years came the establishment of the retail and civic sector of Adelong township. Publicans still jostled each other for the patronage of travellers and locals alike, but enticements such as Bagatelle tables and American drinks had been replaced with proposals of a more genteel nature.

Although pastoralists and the workers of the diggings could still be found in local hotels, patrons also included commercial travellers, solicitors, doctors, retailers and civil servants. In effect, hotel patronage had grown to include a clientele who would expect the ‘careful and civil attention’ which was advertised by the proprietor of the *Royal Hotel* (formerly the *Pride of Galway*), H.W. Wilkinson in October 1901.

Until the late 1960s women were never seen in the public bar area of hotels. It is however, interesting to note that many Australian hotels, from the 1800s until the present day, have been run by women.

Although ‘mixed drinking’ was frowned upon, women as publicans, has always been an accepted practice with several hotels in Adelong and districts having female proprietors during the early 1900s: *Royal Hotel* (Adelong) – Mrs. John, *Shamrock Hotel* (Grahamstown) – Rose Gorman & Elizabeth McNamara, *Cosmopolitan Hotel* (Grahamstown) – Margaret Ryan.

Publicans, both male and female were well-known and highly respected members of the Adelong community and change of ownership of local hotels was often a major event.

ADELONG HOTEL,
TUMUT STREET,
ADELONG.

William Murphy

BEGS to announce to the Inhabitants of the gold fields that his new house was opened on the 1st instant. He has spared no expense, either in the fittings or luxuries, to make the house the first in the township.

The Ball Room,
forty feet by twenty, is unequalled, and the most fastidious may trust themselves there, in the hands of Terpsichore, assured of good company, and the most perfect harmony.

The Bar
is fitted up in the Sydney style, and the Liquors, Wines, &c., are the best to be procured.

The Bed Chambers
will be found in accordance with the other parts of the house.

TO
The Stabling,
W. Murphy has determined to devote his particular attention, and he trusts by civility, punctuality, and care, to obtain the patronage of his friends.

DANCING !
on
Monday, Friday, and Saturday
Evenings.

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

Adelong Argus 25 February 1902

THE ROYAL HOTEL
ADELONG,
 Is one of the Largest and best kept Hostelrys in the Southern Districts.
MRS. JOHN, Proprietress,
 (Late of TUMBARUMBA HOTEL),
 The Very Best Brands only of Wines and Spirits, &c.
THE STABLING
 Equals, if not surpasses anything in the Southern Districts, and the Most Careful and Attentive Grooms are kept.
 A Fine Billiard Room and Table under the care of an attentive Marker.
 Every convenience required by customers is obtainable at the Royal Hotel
A FULL STAFF OF CIVIL and OBLIGING SERVANTS KEPT.
 Booking Office for Mail Coaches running to Gundagai Tumut, Tumbarumba, Batlow, and all outlying places.

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



THE HUT ON THE HILL

Jan Hurcum
Member No. 32

In 1880, my grandfather, James Thomas Osborne, selected 733 acres of mostly mountainous land five miles south-east of Bendemeer which he named *Rose Mount*. He married Mary Brett in 1885, and built a house at *Rose Mount*. However, Mary preferred to live in the village of Bendemeer close to her family, and also there were Osborne children to be schooled. The house was dismantled and rebuilt on a block of land on the river at Bendemeer and grandmother Mary was happy (but grandfather had to ride his horse to *Rose Mount* to check the sheep and cattle!).

When I was about five years old, my father decided that some accommodation would be handy at “Rose Mount”. The first job was to prepare all the raw materials for a superior hut. Relatives and friends were rounded up to strip big sections of bark from gum trees and weigh them down with rocks to straighten them. Next, saplings were cut for uprights, and flat stones collected for the fireplace. When the bark was straight enough, the relatives and friends were called upon again – just like a barn-raising you read about in America.

The hut was erected on the site of the original house, near the sheep yards and under the shade of the old elm trees. The uprights were sunk in the ground, then the bark sections were stood up for the walls, overlapped and held in place by more saplings on both inside and outside (and probably fastened by fencing wire if my father had anything to do with it!).

The roof was second-hand iron, as was the wall which contained the fireplace and stove. The chimney and fireplace were built by my grandfather Farrell, and he built a very handy wide stone mantelpiece above the fireplace. The stove was also a cast-off and was in an alcove.

The dirt floor was covered by an old carpet, and the furniture was an old double bed, shelves for provisions, a small table and two chairs, and a hanging meat safe.

The battens on the inside of the walls were handy as shelves, and large nails were hammered into the uprights for hanging clothes. There was a lantern for outside, and a kerosene lamp for inside – the dunny was behind a convenient tree, some distance from the hut.

Rabbits were in plague proportions, so my mother, father and I lived in the hut in the winter and waged war on the pest. The traplines were checked night and morning, dead rabbits skinned and bowed to dry; the carcasses were boiled in a big drum for the dogs. It is no joke getting a finger caught in a rabbit trap on a cold winter morning!



Above: Jan and her dog Rover at Rose Mount Hut.

When I last saw the hut it was in a very dilapidated condition with the roof caving in. I have been told that a new owner has erected another (and probably much more sophisticated) building, but has retained the chimney – original builder my grandfather would be very pleased!



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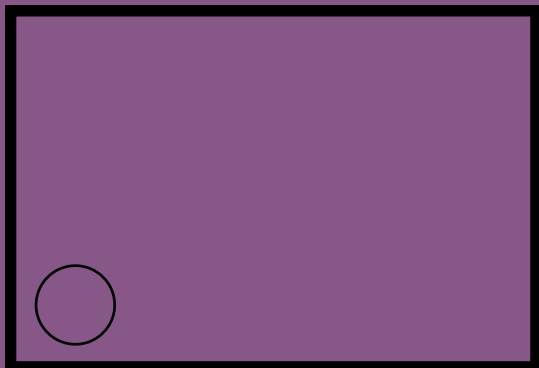
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