



MURRUMBIDGEE ANCESTOR

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

**February 2026
No. 147**

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.

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

Murrumbidgee Ancestor is produced in February, June and October.

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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
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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

New members of our Society

It is hoped that our new members will find being a part of our Society a very productive and worthwhile experience., with a chance to meet new friends and to further your research interests , using the Society's many resources.

Kate Shilling of Mundarlo

Anne & Hugh Gladman of Lake Albert

Graham O'Brien of Gregadoo

It is hoped that our new Members will find being part of our Society a very productive and worthwhile experience, with a chance to meet new friends and to further research interests, using our Society's many resources.



Below: Four happy members - Rob, Wendy, Jan and Fran - celebrating December birthdays.



Editor's Page

Marcia McIntyre – Membership No. 840

Welcome to the first edition of *The Murrumbidgee Ancestor* for 2026. I hope members enjoy reading the articles. Jan Hurcum discusses her battle with acromyns on page 10. On page 13, Jan also gives an example of how coincidence play a big part on family history research.

Also on page 10, Gary Croker tells the story of the Temple and Croker families and the possibility of his ancestor discovering gold before Edward Hargreaves. Barry Williams relates the detailed research undertaken by his cousin, Leon Williams on page 14. On page 18, I relate the colourful story of a slightly eccentric half-sibling to my husband's great-great grandfather.

I have recently been reading an article in *Descent*, the journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists, dated March, 2018, page 8. The author being Rob Wills. The title is *Silences, Fig Leaves and Bizarre Behaviour in Family History*. The author discusses how we, as researchers and writers, treat the discovery of nefarious, scandalous and even outright criminal behaviour in the lives of our ancestors. Do we do a severe edit, and totally erase anything even vaguely controversial, and just publicise the "nice" bits of our ancestry, or do we go the whole hog, and record every detail that we can find, of the lives of our ancestors, and everyone on our family tree, even dodgy distant cousins?

A criminal ancestor can be a sensitive subject. While some people are excited by the discovery, others view it as a source of shame. Living relatives may be unwilling to discuss the topic, creating a roadblock to further investigations. A criminal ancestor can also cause practical problems, as false names, made-up stories and sudden changes of location may enter the mix.

I am personally in favour of publishing every story, from official records and from oral history I can discover about my family, and my husband's family, no matter how controversial and scandalous. What do other Members think?



SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

Jan Hurcum, Member No. 32

There was a very good attendance of members at our October meeting when member Geoff Burch told us about the use of Artificial Intelligence in family history. He is obviously a fan and uses it often, and his power point presentation showed us why it is so useful. Artificial Intelligence is a virtual assistant which can retrieve information almost instantly, restore photographs, create narratives and even translate letters written in another language. As usual, everything should be double-checked as AI is only as good as the information available, and it can get mixed up. Some members are enthusiastic, some are still unsure, and some don't wish to use it at all!

The Combined Societies' Dinner was organised by the Wagga Antiques Society for late October at Wagga RSL Club. Members from Wagga Family History Society, Wagga Historical Society and Wagga Stamp & Coin Club attended, as well as Wagga Antiques Society, and everyone seemed to enjoy the meal and the talk. It is interesting to meet like-minded people and find out what they are doing.



Left: David Payne, speaking at the November meeting.

The guest speaker at the November meeting was David Payne (husband of member Fran Payne), the subject being 'Wagga Wagga's Electorates 1901-2025', so it was more about political history than family history. David had prepared a power-point presentation, and it was surprising to learn the changes of name and area size during that time. Details of

the men in charge were interesting, including the fact that Chris Watson, our first Federal Member, was born in Chile and was Prime Minister when he represented Wagga Wagga in the seat of Bland (he probably didn't have much time to worry about Wagga Wagga!). We all remembered the later Members, including the sole female Kay Hull. Many thanks to David for a very interesting presentation.



December was of course our usual Christmas barbecue, at which 18 members celebrated the end of our year. Many thanks to chefs Rob and John, and to members who supplied lovely salads and sweets to go with our sausages. Our Christmas raffle was drawn, with the winner being Geoff Haddon (who very generously handed his prize to his wife when it was delivered), and second was Deb Van Lierop (who won the same prize last year – how did she do that?). We all enjoyed the night, and are looking forward to a short holiday before beginning it all again in 2026. Best wishes to all members and their families.

Left: Geoff Burch speaking about his experiences with Artificial Intelligence at the October Meeting.

It is January already, and our first meeting of the year is always The Book Afternoon, where members bring interesting books and recommend them to others. 17 members attended, and it was amazing to see the variety of books brought, some fact and some fiction. Two books were about the early Clarence River valley, including “The Bawden Lectures – the first 50 years of Settlement on the Clarence”; one about outstanding lives, and people in Victorian Britain; two books about photography including “The Mechanical Eye” with lists of photographers and where/when they were operating (useful for dating old photos); and several fiction books including some by Laurie Lee (“Cider with Rosie” etc); one about Freddie McEvoy (good-time Freddie!!) and a couple of beautifully illustrated books. One member brought a folder of old letters/ receipts with names of local Wagga people. A very interesting meeting!



NOTES FROM WAGGA WAGGA

Compiled by Leanne Diessel - Member No. 412

NOTES FOR WOMEN by "Dianthus"

Parish Centenary for Wagga

THIS year the **Anglican parish of Wagga** will celebrate its centenary. A hundred years ago, **Bishop Broughton**, the first Bishop of Australia, visited Wagga and held a service on February 9, 1850. I am told that the first Church of England was built in 1859 and the first rectory 1857.

During the centenary celebrations it is planned to portray the history of the church in Wagga with drama, pageantry and music. There will be films and lectures, a missionary exhibition, conference of clergy and special services. It is expected there will be a representative gathering of distinguished clergy from all parts of Australia. The purpose of the celebrations is to stress the importance of the work of the church today and its relationship to the modern world...

Source: Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Wednesday 1 February 1950.

PERSONAL

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Shaylen of Harris Park are staying at **Romano's Commercial Hotel** for a few days. They motored up to bring their son **Bob**, who accepted an appointment with **Messrs. Barry and Norman Coates**.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Sedman and family left Wagga last week for Melbourne. **Mr. Miller** will succeed **Mr. Sedman** as manager of **G. J. Coles' Wagga branch**.

Mr. George Coates, representative for **J. C. Williamson Theatres Ltd**, arrived in Wagga last night to make the necessary arrangements for the forthcoming radio serial play "The Lawsons" which will be presented at Wagga for two nights on February 22 and 23.

Mrs. R. Trescowthick, of "Wokolena" is a patient at **Lewisham Private Hospital**.

Source: Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Wednesday 8 February 1950.

HIGH SCHOOL PUPIL HURT IN ACCIDENT

A high school pupil who was assisting with the school garden yesterday had the little toe of his left foot almost severed when a spade fell on it.

Mervyn Waters, 15, of 70 Docker Street, Wagga, was walking alongside a wheelbarrow which has a spade across it. The spade fell, with the movement of the barrow, on to the boy's foot.

Wagga Ambulance took him to the outpatient's department of the **Wagga Base Hospital** for treatment.

OBITUARY

MRS. H. C. BUCKMAN

Mrs. Rose Adelaide Buckman, wife of **Mr. H. C. Buckman**, of 10 Marns Street, **Wagga**, died suddenly at **Wellington Hospital, New Zealand**, on Thursday. **Mr. and Mrs. Buchman** had been visiting New Zealand, where **Mrs. Buckman** became ill. She is survived by her husband, two daughters, **Edna** (at present in New Zealand), and

and **Dulcie (Mrs. J. Myles, of Elmeo, via Mackay, Q.)**; her son, **Harold W.** (Wagga), one brother, **Mr. Sidney E. Dingle** (Ryde) and tree grandchildren, **Bruce, David and Jillian Myles**. Mrs. Buckman was born at Mosman (N.S.W.), and lived in Wagga for the last 21 years. The body was privately cremated at Wellington (N.Z.)
Source: Wagga Daily Advertiser, Saturday 11 February 1950.

PERSONAL

Mr. A. Henman, snr., of Sydney, has been a guest of his niece, **Mrs. T. Davies**, at “**The Junction**” **Urana Road**.

Mr. C. S. Crennan, of Henty, a principal of the firm **John Crennan and Co.**, stock and station agents of that town has moved his family to reside at 14 Simmons Street, Wagga. Eldest daughter **Shirley**, a pupil of **Mt. Erin Convent**, is studying for her Leaving Certificate this year. Son **Frank**, formerly of **Waverley College**, is now enrolled at the **C.B.H.S. Wagga**.

Sister Lucy Rule, of the **RAAF Nursing Service**, who was formerly stationed at **Forest Hill**, has received an appointment at a hospital in **Japan**.

Mr. Duncan Milne, of Longreach, (Q), is visiting Wagga and is a guest of his daughter and son-in-law, **Mr. and Mrs. R. Nisbet-Smith**.

Mrs. W. J. Morrow, who has been a patient at **Lewisham Private Hospital**, is now convalescing at the home of her sister, **Mrs. W. R. Snodgrass**, in Sunshine Avenue.

Source: Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Tuesday 14 February 1950.

OBITUARY

MRS. TOM CARMODY

Mrs. Tom Carmody died suddenly in Sydney on Sunday night, at the age of 50. She will be buried privately in Sydney today at 10 a.m.

Mrs. Carmody was very well-known in Wagga, and her death will come as a shock to her many friends.

Farewell Social to Mrs. E. M. Cutcliffe

A large gathering of friends attended a farewell social to **Mrs. E. M. Cutcliffe** on the eve of her departure to Braidwood, where her husband has been appointed Rector-in-charge, last week.

On her arrival, Mrs. Cutcliffe was presented with a shoulder spray by **Mrs. E. H. Graham**.

Miss E. Day expressed the regret of those present at the departure of the **Rev. and Mrs. Cutcliffe** and wished them happiness in their new parish. The **Mayoress Mrs. H. E. Gissing** read a long list of apologies and also supported the remarks of Miss Day.

Mrs. J White then called in **Miss. D. Lockett** to make the presentation to the guest. Mrs. Cutcliffe in response, thanked those present and expressed her sorrow at having to leave so many friends.

Source: Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser, Tuesday 28 February 1950.

RESEARCH

Compiled by Leanne Diessel
Membership 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.

Thomas Francis MURRAY who married **Amelia Anne BEST** at Wagga in 1880. Children: **Francis Wilfred Pearson MURRAY, Clara Agnes MURRAY & Edward Charles Oswald MURRAY.**
Contact: Kim ADAMS

James & Isabella KELLY nee DONELEY. Children: **Leo, Austin & Mona.** James died at Wagga 1918. Isabella born 1880 in Qld to **Napoleon & Marion DONELEY nee McFARLAND.** Marion later lived at Cootamundra.
Contact: Paul CULLEN

Edward & Catherine LAW nee O'DONNELL of Mt Joy Wagga.
Contact: Melissa LAW.

James & Bridget CARNEY nee BURKE/BOURKE married Goulburn. Looking for **Bridget** & what happened to her after the birth of her daughter **Ellen** at Juneef Reefs circa July/August 1875.
Contact: Jennifer STEPHENSON

Arthur Drury & Mary Ann DENGATE nee RYAN & family. Arthur died 1957 & Mary 1976, both at Wagga Wagga. Children: Frances, Joan, Arthur & Francis (Frank)
Contact: Barbara KNOX

Leslie & Ellen SHORE nee MELBOURNE & their nine children. Ellen died shortly after giving birth in 1930 at Wagga. Leslie was unable to look after the children so where did they go?
Contact: Stephanie CORNISH



ANNOYING ACRONYMS

Jan Hurcum Member No. 32

I am continually frustrated by not fully understanding articles because of abbreviations. It would be much easier if the article explained at the beginning what the abbreviation stood for, but it is mostly assumed that everyone knows what it means. Unfortunately, mostly I do not!

Some of the shorter, everyday acronyms are easier to understand, even though I may not know exactly what the letters stand for: for instance, USA; ID; WHO; SCUBA. The medical profession has lots like COVID, BCC, SCC; and computer-speak has PDF, WiFi, etc. Then there is the problem of an acronym being the same as another. The usual fun-one is AI – once upon a time it stood for Artificial Insemination, and now it is Artificial Intelligence. It is obvious that this must happen frequently, so I would like to know how many times it does occur. As well, the longer the acronym, the worse it gets!

Another problem is SMS (Short Messaging System. See – I have explained myself at the beginning!). There you come across things like ROFL – Roll on the Floor Laughing; YOLO— and what about LOL – is that Little Old Lady or Laugh Out Loud? I know I am old, but things are getting worse for we who were not brought up with technology.



Finding Gold?

Gary Croker - Member No. 469

Could my ancestor (by marriage) have found gold in NSW before Edward Hargraves? Joseph Temple was born in London about 1814. When he was quite young he was apprenticed to a shoemaker. In 1832 he was brought before the court for stealing. He was found guilty and sentenced to gaol for a year. This was later reduced to a fine. He probably lost his employment at that time. Next year he found himself in trouble again, this time for breaking into a property and stealing a pair of boots. There was no leniency for Joe this time and he was sentenced to 14 years transportation across the seas. Joseph claimed he stole nothing and pleaded a long excuse. But it wasn't accepted. He later claimed his parents were well off and could have helped him. They didn't come forward and Joseph never communicated with them again.

Joseph came to Sydney on the *Hive* and arrived on 11 th June 1834. He was assigned to William Ashby of Parramatta. He later was assigned to other colonists. We don't know what he did during those years, but there were no reports of him offending in any way. By 1841 he was in the Yass district and he obtained his ticket of leave in that year. A ticket of leave gave convicts some relaxation of rules and ability to have more independence.

In about 1845, Joseph met Mary Ann Croker. She had emigrated to Australia with her parents and siblings in 1841 as bounty migrants from Devon in England. The Crokers landed in Geelong, Victoria and made their way to the Yass district overland. James Croker was a farmer and we presume he worked on rural properties between landing in the colonies and when they met up with Joseph Temple. Joseph applied to the Governor to marry Mary Ann, the event happening on 13th May, 1846. Joseph could read and write, but his wife, and her parents could not do either. On the wedding certificate, Mary Ann aged just 16, and her parents as witnesses all made their marks. Joseph signed his name. On 25 th April 1848, Joseph received his absolute freedom, from which point he could travel and live anywhere he chose. Joseph was 30 years of age. Joseph and Mary Ann had their first child in October, 1847 the first of ten children they had together. All their children lived to adulthood, which was unusual for the time. Perhaps Joseph, Mary Ann, and her parents continued to live at Blakeney Creek (near Yass) while James sought out land to buy and while waiting for Joseph's freedom.

In 1848, James Croker bought a block of land of 40 acres with Joseph Temple as a co owner. The block was the first piece of land taken up in the Parish of Oallen. This is situated on the Shoalhaven River near the Wool Road connecting Braidwood and the south coast of NSW. The famous Wool Road was surveyed in 1840 and although it was only a track at first, it became well used taking farm produce to Jervis Bay for shipping to Sydney. There was a track intersecting this road coming from Goulburn, and where this track crossed the river, next to James and Joseph's block, the locality was called Croker's Crossing by James, but became more well known as Oallen Crossing, a name it still bears today.

We don't know when the family moved there, but they would have had to build a hut or house and perhaps clear land before farming could begin. James, his three sons and Joseph Temple farmed this block from the late 1840s and later added to the size of the farm by taking up leases from the Crown or sometimes by purchases. They grew sheep and cattle, but the land was not very fertile, but it did have a good water supply. When I was growing up, Oallen was still in a Croker's name, my great uncle Thomas farmed there.

Joseph Temple died suddenly of a heart attack in 1864, when he was 50 years old. He had no will and his actual wealth was not known. His death occurred soon after his tenth child with Mary Ann was born. He was still working with his father in law at Oallen, and both he and his wife's family showed little obvious signs of wealth. In a strange arrangement after his death, his oldest son and daughter plus two younger children went to a farm Joseph owned at Nerriga and lived there permanently. His six youngest children stayed with their mother at Oallen and she married again less than

two years later. She had a further six children with her new husband.

The Temple family divided at that point and basically remained estranged into the future. Two aspects of the Temple story are mysteries to me. One is that in the 1980s, a family researcher found a residential block of land in Concord, Sydney which was owned for a short time in the 1850s by Joseph S. Temple. The block was then transferred to someone else without Joseph or his family having used or occupied the land. Secondly, there is no doubt that when he died, he owned something of a “farm” near Nerriga, which allowed his eldest children to move there. When he bought this land is unclear, as is whether Joseph intended to ever live there himself.

Gold was officially ‘discovered’ in NSW by Mr Hargraves near Ophir in early 1851. The colony, and indeed, the world went mad with hundreds setting off for the goldfields within days. By year’s end almost all the able bodied men of the colony were either talking about gold or searching for it. Gold was found in many localities, particularly in NSW and Victoria at that time. Gold was later announced to be relatively common in the Shoalhaven River, near where Joseph Temple and James Croker owned land. In the 1930s at least, there were several gold mines. Indeed you can still get gold in every pan you wash from the gravel at Oallen Crossing!

Did Joseph Temple use the proceeds of gold mining to buy land in several localities? Did he find gold before other, more famous discoveries? What I need is a Temple family descendent who can perhaps answer these questions for me. Can you help?



COINCIDENCE

Jan Hurcum
Member No. 32

I often tease our Research Officer Leanne Diessel for being related to most of the older-established families in Wagga Wagga.

Recently, I answered a telephone call at our meeting rooms from a man asking if our Society could help him find the street number of the house where his Grandfather had lived in Docker Street, one of the older streets in Wagga Wagga. As our general meeting was in progress with member Geoff Burch speaking about Artificial Intelligence, I apologised and said I would get someone to call him back.

At the end of the meeting, Leanne quickly found the correct number. She was on the phone for quite a while. Yes, you guessed – Leanne's great-aunt had married the enquirer's grandfather, so he and Leanne were second cousins!



Below: Attendees at the Society's Annual General Meeting in September, 2025.



Searching for William

Barry Williams—Member No. 688

Information submitted by Leon Williams, Barry's cousin. When I was young and busy, managing work and raising children, there didn't seem to be the time nor the need to explore my family history. Growing up I knew my parents and grandparents and that's as far as my world seemed to matter. But, as I grew older and the pace of life slowed down, I felt an overwhelming need to know who my ancestors were and from where they came. My family never openly spoke of our ancestors nor was there any written records to consult. We had no family heirlooms passed down through the generations, no stories of the old country, or of emigration or building a life in a new nation. I increasingly became aware that my story was empty. I didn't want my children to suffer from the same lack of family story and so I started the long search for my family and the slow but rewarding process of documentation.

I knew a bit about my mother's side, called Sharman, but it was the Williams side that was a mystery to me. My father, Albert Williams, had told me little while he was alive. His father and my grandfather, Ernest Williams, died while I was a teenager and I didn't get to ask him. Even more of a mystery was his father, my great grandfather William Williams. I wondered who his parents were, and where he came from. I remembered being told as a young man that he had come to Australia as perhaps a policeman or a member of the British army. There was also a vague reference to him running away from the authorities and settling in New South Wales.

In 2019 with new enthusiasm and curiosity and armed with my Ancestry membership and DNA results, I went searching. I knew details were few when I began, but I did have some photocopied sheets of birth and death certificates sent to me by my cousin Chris Crowley. On William's death certificate it stated he was born in Ipswich Suffolk England. However, on Ernest's birth certificate, it contradicted this by stating William was born in Edley Suffolk. The 1874 parish wedding certificate of William and Mary Ann Glover gives his father as Edward Williams and his mother as Jane Bett. The Suffolk reference I found interesting as I had always considered I was of Welsh origin, because Williams is a common Welsh name.

Another useful source of information was a long article that appeared in the Wagga Wagga Advertiser following William's 100th birthday celebration in 1938. From this we can infer he was born in 1838, but as I would learn, record keeping in the 19th century was not nearly as accurate as in modern times. Amongst other details the article stated he was born in Suffolk and came to Australia on the ship Windsor. It also mentioned that he spent some years working around Victoria before settling in Kyeamba creek near Wagga Wagga. The article unfortunately made no mention of any army service or his family in England.

Barry Williams (William's grandson) had previously engaged a professional researcher in England to locate William's family armed with these details. It seemed a fairly straight forward task, but after much work and expense the researcher could not come to a positive conclusion about who William's parents were.

It wasn't looking good but undeterred I began by searching the Ancestry web site for Edward and Jane Williams (nee Bett) who lived in Ipswich Suffolk but nothing positive was found. I then recalled the town of Edley mentioned on Ernest's birth certificate and wondered if they lived there rather than Ipswich. It became obvious after a bit of searching that there is no town called Edley in Suffolk, let alone the UK. So, what did this mean? Did William make it all up or was it a spelling mistake, or perhaps an error in transcription? William giving his mother's name as Jane Bett seemed quite reasonable and specific. I surmised that if William had made up some details about his life, he would have not forgotten his mother or indeed made up a different name. Similarly, if it was true that he deserted from the army and subsequently changed his name to avoid detection I thought it unlikely he would alter his mother's name. As a result, I concentrated my search for any Jane Bett from Suffolk that could have been of an age to be William's mother given his assumed birth date of 1838. The only person I could find that fitted the dates and lived in Suffolk was a Jane Betts not Bett. She was married in 1825 to Edward Allen, not Williams, and lived in Hadleigh Suffolk. The names of Jane and Edward looked promising, but the rest didn't add up.

Then I had a revelation, could Edley have been Hadleigh? On William's marriage certificate he signs with an 'X' which presumably means he didn't write. Therefore, he would have verbally related the name of the town to the person writing the certificate. The rural Suffolk dialect can be quite strong and there is a tendency to drop the 'h' from words and so Hadleigh could have easily sounded like Edley. I thought this to be quite possible and so I continued with the assumption that Hadleigh was the town he was born, but the Williams surname was still a puzzle. To add further confusion, I came across a wonderful web site listing all the names of families in Hadleigh in the 1830s but it did not show any Williams.

I let this rest for a month or so and concentrated on the Australian side of the story. I found through contacting some of my cousins, that the story of him running away from the army has been repeated by many in the wider family, so I considered there must be truth in it. As a result, I went looking for army deserters in Victoria during the 1850s, particularly any born in Hadleigh Suffolk and hopefully with the surname Williams. My concern all along had been that he may have changed his name, and if so, when did he do it? Was it when he enlisted or when he deserted? It seemed to me that it was entirely possible he may have done it more than once and would make tracing him almost impossible.

My research showed that the two main army regiments in Victoria during the 1850s were the 12th Suffolk and the 40th (2nd Somerset) regiments. The 12th and a portion of the 40th were in Victoria from 1852 and many served at the Eureka Stockade in 1854. My initial thought was that given these dates it was hard to believe that somebody born in 1838 was old enough to have enlisted in the army, trained, and travelled by ship to Australia at that time.

In the newspaper article on William's 100th birthday it mentioned the ship Windsor. I found records for at least two ships named Windsor at various times in Australian waters during the early 1800s. However, there was also

another visit by a ship named Windsor in Melbourne at the end of 1855. This ship arrived with 400 troops from the 40th regiment. This seemed to me to be a much more practical date.

There are many online records of army deserters in Victoria, and it is enlightening to discover the large number that deserted. It was a much more normal occurrence than one might first assume. My search came up with a couple of Williams, but none of the correct age and none born in Hadleigh Suffolk. However, during the search one record kept grabbing my attention. This was for a George Allen. He was born in Hadleigh Suffolk, had enlisted at Sudbury Suffolk and deserted at Ballarat in 1856. Reluctantly I kept dismissing it because, apart from other details, it stated that he was 20 years old at the time of desertion. That meant he was born in 1836 well before the published birth date of William Williams.

I returned to the Ancestry records and looked closely again at the family of Edward Allen and Jane Betts, and I noticed they had a son called George born in 1839. I also noticed that other Ancestry members who had built Allen family trees had extensive records for his siblings, but strikingly George's record was empty apart from a birth date. Suddenly all the little bits of information started to add up.

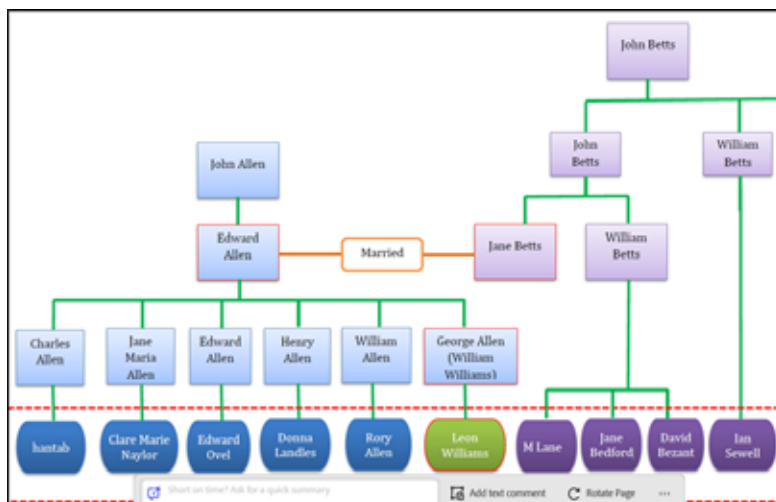
I checked the Hadleigh census for 1841, and George was 2 years old. In 1851 he was 11 (a month short of 12) and in the 1861 census he does not appear.

There are of course many reasons why George Allen would not have been at home on the night of the 1861 census. He could have left home, maybe married, and living at another house. He may have died in the period between the 1851 and 1861 census. He may have simply been working in another town. While nothing is absolute, I have tried to find George Allen in other English records with no success. He does seem to disappear. Not long after this I stumbled across the muster and payroll records for the 40th Regiment of Foot in Australia on the online digital document archive called Trove. They are extensive and each muster contains many details of the regiment. I was able to confirm that a private named George Allen had enlisted in the army in Sudbury. I could also trace his progress through the records from joining the Melbourne barracks in 1855 through to his ultimate desertion in 1856. There was also a short absence in this period where he absconded with a friend named Sydney Bowyer and gave themselves in after reaching Portland in western Victoria. This is documented in a newspaper article at the time. After 1856 I have not been able to locate any reference to this George Allen in any document or newspaper article in Australia. After many months I slowly built-up positive DNA matches with descendants of both Jane Betts and Edward Allen, the parents of George Allen, from Hadleigh Suffolk England. Accordingly, I have not been able to find any links to a Williams family in the UK, nor any indication of a Welsh connection.

Armed with all this evidence my theory is that George Allen ran away from home and family in 1854. Travelled 20km from Hadleigh to Sudbury, lied about his age (he would have been just 16) and enlisted in the army and ultimately assigned to the 40th Regiment of Foot. The muster records show his age as 20 in late 1856 when he deserted. This is quite obviously incorrect and indicates that he told the officials he was 18 at enlistment.

George subsequently sailed to Australia on the ship Windsor arriving in Melbourne in late 1855. Deserted at Ballarat in 1856, changed his name to William Williams, lived and worked in Victoria before moving to Kyeamba Creek in 1870. Here he married Mary Ann Glover and raised a family including my grandfather Ernest Williams.

As further evidence to this theory, the diagram below is a much-simplified family tree showing the confirmed Ancestry DNA matches between Leon Williams and living descendants of the Allen and Betts families.



Postscript: (by Barry George Williams, grandson of William Williams) My father, George Williams, was the second youngest of ten children. He had an older brother called William George Williams. Adding to the mix is another grandson Allan George Williams (son of Ernest Williams, one of the previously mentioned ten children of William Williams).

I believe Leon has made a reasonable case for solving a family mystery. Maybe it is not just coincidence that the name George has been used so extensively in the past. There has long been family lore that old William, a much-respected pioneer of Ladysmith, even at the age of 100, would be teased by his children that “the police will catch up with you one day dad.”



Sugar O'Brien

Marcia McIntyre—Member No. 840

Edward Hines O'Brien was born in Ireland, probably in the late 1790s. O'Brien died at Gundagai, NSW, on 3 December 1855. It is most unfortunate that he died only a few months before civil registration commenced in NSW, as if he had died after March 1856, his parent's names may have been stated on his death certificate and his father's name would then be known and possibly his actual place of birth.

Some early historical articles claim that Edward Hines "Sugar" O'Brien was related to two brothers, early pioneers of Yass, NSW, Henry and Cornelious O'Brien, and that Henry O'Brien was known as "Sugar". That is not correct. The O'Brien brothers of Yass are no connection at all to Sugar O'Brien of Gundagai. And Henry of Yass was never known as "Sugar"! Another article states that Sugar was in the Gundagai area as early as 1829. This is also not correct. There is no evidence of Sugar being in Gundagai until about 1835.

Edward Hines O'Brien was the son of Bridget nee Hines and his father was a "Mr. O'Brien", first name unknown. His parents had three known children, Edward, Mary Ann and another son, first name unknown. It is believed that the three siblings were born in either Co. Clare or Co. Galway, Ireland. (More likely Gort in Co. Galway, as that town is given as the birthplace of O'Brien's half-siblings, the children of his mother's 2nd marriage to John Carrigg. These three siblings also settled in Gundagai. **One half-sibling was William Hines Carrigg, who was my late husband's great-great grandfather.**

The historian James Gormly had a very low opinion of Sugar. One person who Gormly **did** admire was James Tyson, a son of convicts believed to be Australia's first millionaire. Tyson was passing through Gundagai with his stock and requested permission from Sugar to use his stockyard. Sugar refused and Gormly was most indignant about Sugar's refusal! Gormly described Sugar as a miser. Many other residents of Gundagai at that time shared that opinion.

When I came to the river, the land where Sturt saw the stock in such good condition was occupied by a pompous old bachelor called "Sugar" O'Brien....It was asserted that O'Brien got the name "Sugar" because he had operated a sugar plantation in the West Indies.

O'Brien's holding extended from the Gundagai racecourse up the river flat for about three miles..... The homestead and stockyard stood on a high bank of the Gundagai creek, about three miles from the town, the old road from Sydney passing close to his stockyard. O'Brien's holding was bounded by Mingay on the one side and Muttama on the other.

Another comment by James Gormly - O'Brien, who used to dress in a black frock coat and a tall white hat, was a notable figure on his station at Gundagai, and many amusing stories used to be told about him.

Sugar O'Brien! Man who made Local History. - Everybody has heard of Sugar O'Brien, or if he has not, he knows nothing of Bullocky Bill and his immortal dog. The old camping ground of Bill and his fellow teamsters was near O'Brien's Crossing on the Murrumbidgee, a few miles out of town. What brought O'Brien to this part of the world and why he got his cognomen of "Sugar" and how he was caught up in the old ballad are now recounted for the benefit of those who don't know.

O'Brien, who seems to have dropped his Christian name as an encumbrance - for no one appears to have heard that he ever had such a thing - was, of course, an Irishman. He came from that part of the Green Isle where the River Shannon flows, Clare being the county, on whose hills and vales he first opened his wondering eyes.

If we had not been informed that he had been educated for the priesthood, but that having a firm conviction that he was either not worthy enough or had no true vocation for such a life of self denial and holiness, he then took up the study of his country's laws, a profession which does not require from its practitioners a very high degree of virtue - if we had not been told of these early studies, his subsequent activities in the land of his adoption, would lead us to infer that before leaving the Ould Sod he was an intelligent lad, wide awake and self reliant. O'Brien in fact was no ordinary man, his work as a planter in the West Indies and his successful breeding of horses along the valley of the Murrumbidgee show.

When he immigrated from Ireland and how long it took him to make a fortune by growing sugar is not known, nor are we able to say in what ship he came to Australia, or whether he blessed or cursed Captain Cook when he planted his feet on the jetty at Sydney Cove. What we do know, however, is that he came from Sydney to Gundagai - in 1829, so it is said - to take up about 25 miles of scrub on the Murrumbidgee, which the government had granted him shortly after his arrival, and on which he intended to breed cattle and horses.

On his arrival here he rode up and down his property which he later called 'Gundagai Station', was satisfied with his bargain, and without delay set about the task of clearing his land and building his homestead, which was situated about two miles from the site of what afterwards became the town of Gundagai. The name of 'Sugar' O'Brien as he came to be called, spread far and wide throughout the colony and even beyond the confines of our continent. His horses were shipped as remounts for the Indian Army, and the famous OB brand was to be seen on his cattle in most of the settled parts of the colony.

O'Brien never married. He is said to have been a stepbrother of William Hynes Carrigg, Jas. Lynch, and the late Mrs. Ann Mulhere and a near relative of Mr. Plunkett, who after having practiced as a solicitor at Yass, became Attorney General In the first Cowper Ministry.

David Smith, the Clerk of Petty Sessions at Gundagai, as the agent for the Curator of Intestate Estates in Sydney, handled all the paperwork relating to the death of O'Brien. Smith conducted running correspondence with the Curator regarding Edward Hines O'Brien's intestate estate. About 30 years ago I obtained copies of all the documents and letters relating to his estate from the Archives Office of NSW. This is a very large thick file with many documents. It cost me a small fortune at the time for the Archives Office to photocopy everything!

In the Intestate documents is a claim by James O'Connor of Gundagai that he is a first cousin to O'Brien, O'Connor's mother and O'Brien's father being siblings (a roughly drawn family tree is enclosed with the claim, unfortunately it does not mention the brother and sister's names). James O'Connor also submitted an account to E.H. O'Brien's intestate Estate for "*making and mounting a cedar coffin for the burial of E.H. O'Brien - Five Pounds*" and "*make a fence and to enclose the grave - Ten Pounds*".

Many people made claims on O'Brien's estate after his death. David Smith forwarded all these claims on to the Curator in Sydney. Smith had the responsibility of compiling an inventory of O'Brien's assets after his death and arranging for the livestock to be mustered and accounted for. Stockmen were employed to do this work. William Hines Carrigg (Sugar's half-brother), Joseph Mulhare, James Lynch (Jnr and Snr), Patrick Burke, Archibald Scott Smith and Charles Smith (sons of David), Charles Thatcher, Fred Horsley (later owner of Yabtree), Robert Riley (early Gundagai innkeeper), Beetson Cooper, Roger Carey, Thomas Lawler, Michael Dufficey and Patrick Ryan and others submitted claims on the estate for wages. The papers contain many other claims and accounts against O'Brien's estate. The correspondence and documents are too numerous to mention, but all make fascinating reading.

Edward Hines "Sugar" O'Brien is buried in what was an ungazetted, unofficial cemetery in Otway Street, Gundagai. There were many bodies buried there in the 1840s and 1850s. This was originally an empty paddock but probably was considered more convenient to the town than the two gazetted cemeteries, one at the northern outskirts of the town and the other at South Gundagai. These two cemeteries are the present Gundagai cemeteries.

Wooden crosses and headstones in this ungazetted cemetery were destroyed and flattened in the early 1950s to enable the present Gundagai Fire Station to be built. Many older residents remember the memorials in this early cemetery. No one thought at the time to record the names on the crosses and headstones! History lost!

If the Fire Station building was ever demolished in the future (very unlikely) then the remains of Sugar and the skeletons of other inhabitants would be found in the ground! .



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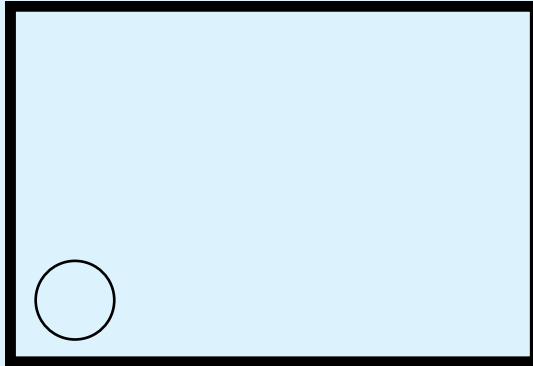
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