



MURRUMBIDGEE ANCESTOR

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

**June 2026
No. 148**

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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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June 2026 – No.148



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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	22 May– 5 June	18-25 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	15 February	21 June	18 October

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.

New members of our Society

Glenda Pym of Turvey Park

Patricia Hobson of Allambie Heights

Ellen Parker of Tatton

Jill Rake of Estella

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

Deaths

Current member who has passed away.

Neil Joseph Dallinger

Past members known to have died since June last year.

Ian James Vennell

Phyllis Eileen Bootes

Bronwen Williamson

Deborah Rachel Dawn Tipping

Beverley Ellen Osborn

Kerry Elizabeth Cutting



Editor's Page

Marcia McIntyre - Member No. 840

I wrote an article which was included in the *Murrumbidgee Ancestor*, October 2025 edition - **4th Cousins—The Brave and the Bad**. “The Brave” referred to Private Richard Norden, a Gundagai native, being awarded the Victoria Cross last year, very belatedly 57 years after his bravery and courage in Vietnam in 1968. On Thursday, 14 May this year a statue was unveiled in Carberry Park, Gundagai, depicting the Battle of Coral-Balmoral, the military action in Vietnam in which Richard Norden performed his selfless act of rescuing his section commander, Joe Kelly, from the Viet Kong, thus saving his life. The unveiling was carried out by some of Richard’s fellow soldiers who served with him in Vietnam. This is the only statue of the Coral-Balmoral Battle which has been erected in all of Australia. The sculptor who created the statue was Liam Hardy from Sculpt Studio, Brisbane.

It was a wonderful day for Richard’s family and all the people of Gundagai, who are rightly proud of the town’s home grown hero. Richard’s widow and two sons and daughter-in-law attended. Other attendees in Gundagai on 14 May included the Governor General, Sam Mostyn, two former Governors General of Australia, Peter Cosgrove and David Hurley, the Commissioner of the Federal Police, Krissy Barrett, our local Federal Member, Michael McCormack, and the daughter of his Section commander, Joe Kelly.

The following link is a story from the ABC about the statue unveiling. There were many other news headlines in the Metropolitan and local media on Thursday, 14 May and Friday, 15 May.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-05-16/richard-norden-statue-the-battle-of-coral-balmoral/106665530>

I hope our Members find all the articles in this edition of *The Murrumbidgee Ancestor* to be informative and interesting. On page 10 Robyn Jessiman tells the story of her ancestor, Edward “Ned” Trickett, World Champion rower and sculler. Another article by Robyn on page 18, tells of the village Eyam in England battling the Great Plague of 1666. Jan Hurcum reports on a special birthday on page 15. Margaret Francis, on page 16 tells of her ancestor, a well known author and the importance of recognising that threads can be actual clues to family history research. I was intrigued to discover a grave miscarriage of justice which happened in 1916—not to someone on my family tree, but a relative of a prominent Australian. My article can be found on page 16.



SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

Jan Hurcum - Member No. 32

At our February meeting Member Peter Gissing gave a very interesting talk and display on his Gissing family and their connection to Wagga Wagga. The original patriarch to come to Sydney in the 1850s was George Schipp Gissing; and his son H.E. (Harry) studied as a pharmacist in Sydney and came to Wagga to enter a partnership with Frank Sanderson after serving in World War 1 (field ambulance).



Peter Gissing speaking at the February Meeting.

Harry eventually took over after Sanderson's death and prospered, and having input to many institutions such as RSL, ambulance, scouts, Rotary, as well as being Council Alderman and Mayor. Peter's father Morris (Harry's son) followed the tradition with interests in Apex, Historical Society and also Alderman and Mayor for 5 terms and Deputy Mayor 4 terms. Over 24 years Morris never missed an ordinary meeting of Council. The Gissing family has certainly contributed to the success of Wagga Wagga.

March 20th was a very busy day for the Society. In the morning we organised a New Member workshop (open to all members), which was very well attended. Our stalwart member, Rob Walker, ran the workshop with lots of information on finding records to help with family research.



Maureen Allen (on left) and Fran Payne (on right) telling their “Irish Family Story” at the March meeting.

The general meeting in the afternoon was also well attended, with some of the newer members staying on for lunch and the meeting. The subject was “Your Irish Family Stories” (to coincide with St. Patrick’s Day), and five members spoke. There were some convict and IRA connections, but also more illustrious people mentioned, as well as some who came to the goldfields. Names were: Daley, O’Brien, Waldron, Allen, Treanor, Murphy and Frizzel/le. There were several maps of Ireland displayed, and we even sang a song - “Peggy O’Neill”.

At the April meeting information on recycling was exchanged, so we should all be able to adhere to the rules in the future. Check for the symbol for goods which are able to be recycled. It was useful to learn where collection points are situated, as well as which products can and can’t be recycled. The Gregadoo Waste Management Centre (the tip) is a good one, Officeworks is useful if you are purchasing supplies, and the Civic Centre if you are going to the Library.

Frank Molloy was guest speaker at the May meeting, and his subject was “Family History with an Irish Focus”. Frank migrated from Ireland, and used his own family connections (farmers from Northern Ireland) to illustrate how different happenings affected different people. Northern Ireland farmers with mixed farming practices and maybe larger acreages didn’t have the same problems with the potato famine as those with smaller farms, and potatoes as their only crop. Frank has researched his own family, and gave us suggestions of different places to check for research. However, it seems that Ireland is not noted for its accurate record keeping! It was a very interesting and enjoyable meeting., and perhaps the best thing was Frank’s Irish accent.

NOTES FROM WAGGA WAGGA

Compiled by Leanne Diessel - Member No.412

ITEMS OF NEWS

His **Lord Bishop of Goulburn** arrived in Wagga on Saturday evening, and preached on Sunday at the new **Church of St. John's**, the works at which had been pressed forward with a view to the visit of the Bishop. His Lordship preached at the morning and evening services on Sunday, and in the afternoon held a confirmation at which 35 persons were confirmed, after which we learn that he paid a visit to the gaol, and had an interview with **Boon**. The congregations at both services in the church were very large, and the Bishop congratulated them upon the great improvement which was presented to his observation in the altered church. He urged upon them the necessity of perseverance in the work they had begun, so that the building might speedily be finished.

The Wagga Band resumed their practice of giving promenade concerts, on Saturday night, on which occasion they assembled on the balcony of **Messrs. Roberts, Copland, and Co's** establishment, playing an excellent selection to the apparent enjoyment of the large number of people who on business or pleasure bent, are to be found in the streets on Saturday nights.

An accident of a very painful nature occurred to a son of **Mr. Ferguson, of Newtown**. The lad, we understand, started on Monday on horseback with the intention of going to Goulburn. When about eight miles from Wagga, from some unexplained cause the horse fell, and threw his rider off, and then turned upon him, breaking the boy's arm at the wrist. He was brought back to Wagga, and is now progressing favorably under **Dr. Hillas's** treatment.

We draw attention to the important sale of household furniture and effects at **New Lawn, North Wagga**, advertised by **Mr. A. T. Bolton**, to take place today at 11 o'clock. Mr. Bolton announces that a coach will leave his office in Fitzmaurice-street for the place of sale at half-past 10 o'clock.

We learn that **Mr. D. Bergin** has sold the valuable property so well-known as "**the Coruer**" saddlery establishment with the adjoining business premises in Gurwood-street to **Mr. J. Ryan, of Sebastopol**.

Source: Wagga Wagga Advertiser, Wednesday 17 May 1876, page 2

ITEM OF NEWS

It is with sincere regret we have to announce the death of **Mr. William Bowen, of the Australian Hotel**. Mr. Bowen, it is well-known, was a sufferer from an asthmatic affection for a long time. The attack to which he succumbed came on but a few days ago, and he died last night about nine o'clock. We believe no man has ever gone to his last rest from this community whose death was more sincerely regretted than his will be, for he was literally one of whom all men spoke well, a man without a single enemy.

By an announcement elsewhere, it will be seen that the funeral will leave the Australian Hotel, on Thursday, at three o'clock.

We would again remind our readers that the **foundation stone of the New Wesleyan Church** will be laid to-day at 3 o'clock, and that the anniversary tea meeting will be held at the Masonic Hall in the evening at 6 o'clock. A public meeting will be held at half-past 7, at which addresses will be delivered by the **Revs. Messrs. Kelynack, Glasson, and Stead, and Mr. W. Riley.**

Source: Wagga Wagga Advertiser, Wednesday 24 May 1876, page 2

ITEM OF NEWS

We learn with regret that **Mr. Patrick J. M'Alister** died at the **Australian Hotel**, on Monday night, after a short illness.

We have to record the death of another of the old residents of Wagga. **Mr. John Clark**, of the **Club-house Hotel**, well-known for years as a hotelkeeper in this town and district died yesterday evening after a long illness. The funeral will take place at 2 o'clock on Thursday afternoon.

In our last issue we suggested that the combined choirs of the several churches in Wagga should take into consideration the formation of a **Philharmonic Society**. We are glad to be able to report that the suggestion has been taken up warmly, and that **Mr. Ovendon**, has been requested to write to the secretaries of Albury and other Philharmonic Societies for copies of their rules, and any other information upon the management of such associations it may be within their power to give. A public meeting will be called in a few days, with a view to the formation of the society, and to secure the co-operation of the townspeople generally.

A meeting of the committee of the **Wagga Skating Club** was held at the **Australian Hotel** on Monday. Present – **Messrs. Middleton, Minchin, Cooper, and Gowland**, at which it was decided that the subscription to the club should be 25s per quarter, each member to have the privilege of introducing two ladies to the Skating Rink. The club it is expected will be in a position to commence operations on Saturday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from two to five, and Tuesday and Thursday nights from half-past seven to eleven, being fixed for the skating meetings.

We learn from an announcement in our advertisement columns, that **Mr. John Gordon, architect and surveyor, of Wagga and Albury**, has taken into partnership **Mr. George Sheppard, of Wagga Wagga, architect.**

At the Police Court on Tuesday (before the P.M.) **J.J. Donnelly** was charged with being of unsound mind, and remanded to the 5th June for medical treatment. **William Vincent** was called on summons, charged by **John Sieman** with unlawfully rescuing 30 head of cattle, which had been seized by complainant for impounding. Defendant pleaded not guilty, and was fined £10, and 4s. 10d costs of Court. A summons case, **Flanagan v. Spencer**, was struck out, neither parties appeared.

On Sunday afternoon an accident, fortunately unattended with any serious consequences, occurred to **Mr. Stevens**. Riding a fidgety mare down the main street, he suddenly found himself "slung" with some violence. The mishap occurred in

rather a rough part of the street, and the marvel is that he escaped without injury, beyond a good shaking.

Source: Wagga Wagga Advertiser, Wednesday 31 May 1876, page 2



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.

JORGENSEN family of Wagga c1950s. Also looking for **Gladys JORGENSEN** possibly living in Lismore circa 1980s.
Contact: Denise YOUNG

Isaac & Mary Ann CHAPLIN & family who lived at Wagga. Mary Ann was the daughter of **George & Ann GALVIN nee MAXWORTHY** of Oberne.
Contact: Glen BOYD

William & Mary Ann SMITH nee PRICE lived Junee Reefs circa 1875 when 5 year old daughter, **Caroline** drowned in a dam.
Contact: Lisa SALSBURY

Jessie MOFFATT, born circa 1903, m1921 West Wyalong to **Reginald McEVOY**, partnership2 **Ross Herbert JONES**, m3 1955 Wagga to **Frank NEUMANN**, Jessie died at Wagga 1977 buried Pine Lodge Vic.
Contact: Diane McGILL

Jane RICHARDSON died Wagga 1866. Also **Jane Rochester RICHARDSON** who came to Australia 1858 with son **George Rochester RICHARDSON**, daughter **Eliza-beth TURNBULL** & four granddaughters.
Contact: Roberta MULLER

Harriet NEIL who married at Wagga 1871 to **Alexander WHITE**. She was the daughter (possibly) of **Thomas & Mary Ann NEIL nee MOTTS** who were living in Wagga at the time of Harriet's marriage.
Contact: Nancy SCANLON

McKECHNIE family of Wagga Wagga.
Contact: Danielle ALAN

150th Anniversary of Australia's First Sporting World Championship

Robyn Jessiman - Member No. 283

On 27th June, 1876, that is, 150 years ago, Edward (Ned) Trickett of Sydney, NSW became the first Australian born to win the World Championship in any sport and a position which he held for four and a half years. He was a sculler, or rower. He beat the Englishman, Joseph Sadler on the Thames, the first colonial to win the race against the English, though others had tried.

When he returned from England, Edward was acclaimed a national hero and so many came to be part of the festivities. A hotel was built for him to manage, *Trickett's International Hotel* on the corner of Pitt and King Streets, Sydney.

Ned continued to race for the next few years maintaining his World Championship status, but as happens with all great successes, someone always does better, and though being beaten at times, Ned still had good successes up to 1884. The family moved to Rockhampton in 1885. Edward had become depressed and not very well and it was thought that the warmer climate might be beneficial. The Rockhampton rowing community welcomed him with open arms. However, he needed to have some sort of employment, so gained a liquor licence for the *Oxford Hotel* which later became *Trickett's Hotel* in 1887.

The next few years were very depressing. Ned had to transfer his liquor licence as the hotel could not pay its way, so he and his eldest son, Edward, had to work in the gold mines. There were now nine living children in the family and his wife, Maria, must have looked back to the times when they had paid help in the house and a nurse for the children. So the family returned to Sydney, but the two eldest boys refused to come back.

In the early 1890s an economic depression had hit and Ned spent many days walking the streets of Sydney trying to find work. At times he felt so depressed at his lot in life, in losing his status as world champion, and in unemployment. On one occasion he heard some band music and people singing, then someone speaking about 'hope in times of despair' and 'a light shining in the darkness'. He returned the following day to Moore Street near the Salvation Army Congress Hall and heard speaking a Sydney Barrister, E P Field, who invited him to his rooms nearby, talked to him about Jesus Christ and found him work with the Customs Authority of New South Wales by which he was employed from September 1893 and in 1894 he was transferred to Moama/Echuca on the Murray River. Ned spoke at the Salvation Army Citadel in Melbourne and other places in Victoria of his experiences as a world champion and his conversion to Christianity and was often quoted in *The Riverine Herald*. He became committed to the local Salvation Army Corps until 1st January 1901 when the declaration of the Commonwealth of Australia abolished the border customs. Ned returned to North Sydney, crossing the harbour to work at Customs House at Circular Quay and joining the newly formed Salvation Army Corp at North Sydney.

Periodically Ned visited his son, Fred, in Uralla, near Armidale. Here he found many gold mines in the area and became interested in trying his hand again at gold mining. He proposed to sink a shaft on Fred's property which he began, but wet weather had caused the wooden framework to deteriorate and sadly, Ned was covered with earth and he died and was buried in the Uralla Cemetery with Senior Officers of the Salvation Army travelling to participate, including Adjutant Collins of the North Sydney Corps and the local Methodist Minister, Rev Percy Black who attended and took part.

A splendid monument was erected to Ned's memory by the donations of the local people of Uralla and friends of Ned from throughout Australia.

You might ask just why this man is not better known for his achievement. There are several reasons. The Trickett family was most embarrassed by the fact that Edward Trickett was the son of a convict and that he was a hotelier was anathema to many in the family, so little was spoken about him. His winning of the World Championship also occurred before the Modern Olympics, which only began in Athens in 1896. In more recent times it has become quite acceptable to have a convict in the family and now Edward finally has his rightful place in the Sporting Hall of Fame in Sydney, as the first; a section of McCrossins Mill in Uralla has also been dedicated to him, though he has not replaced the bushranger, Thunderbolt, who has pride of place on the whole ground floor of the Mill, while Edward is relegated to a corner in the upper floor, so notoriety takes precedence over fame.

**Below: The medals awarded to participants
at the 150th Anniversary Regatta to honour Ned
Trickett's win in 1876.**



Celebrations for the 150th Anniversary of Edward (Ned) Trickett's World Championship have so far included the following: on Saturday, 11th April 2026, the Edward Trickett NSW Grade Championship Regatta was held at the Sydney International Regatta Centre at Castlereagh, where the commemorative medals were presented by descendants of Edward or their spouses.

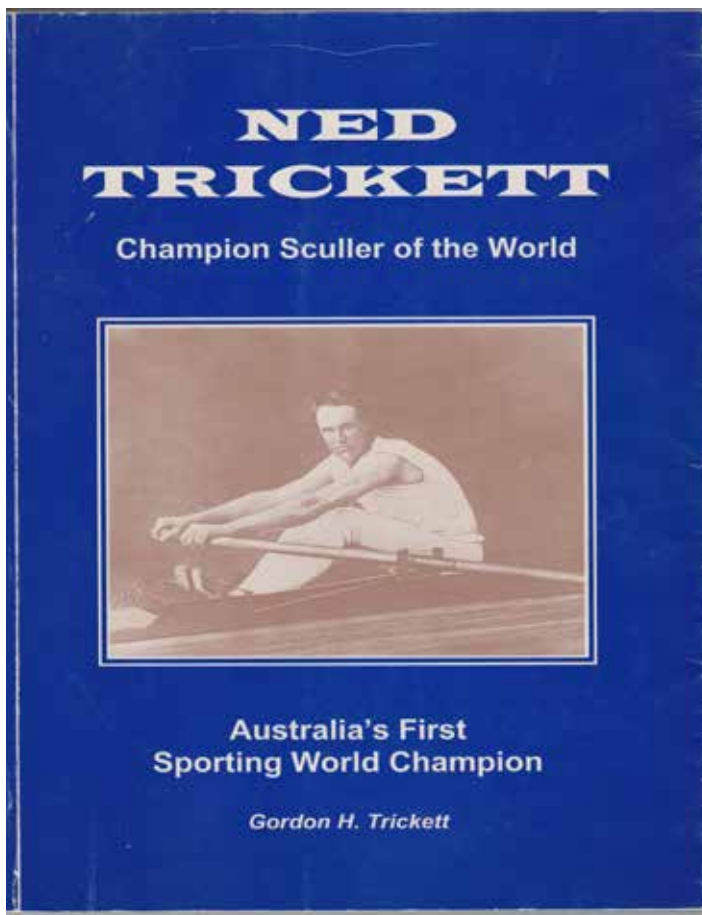
On Sunday, 12th April 2026 at Cabarita Park a family gathering took place with a picnic lunch and then two speeches about Edward, from Stephen Trickett, great grandson of Edward and Jane Faase, great granddaughter of Edward.

Further celebrations will take place nearer the actual date, hopefully including a stamp in Edward's memory, according to Australia Post.

What has Edward left as a Legacy? Libby Lenton our Olympic Swimmer changed her name to Trickett after she married Luke Trickett, a descendant of Edward's brother. Many of Edward's descendants have followed in his sporting footsteps and become scullers such as Cindy Watt, daughter of Alma nee Trickett, granddaughter of Edward; Helen Albury daughter of Gordon Trickett, grandson of Edward, and Helen's two daughters, Nicola Hawtry and Megan Albury and others have followed in the other steps of Edward and become Christians such as Gordon Trickett, who became a Methodist Minister and later Uniting Minister at Hay and Deniliquin and who researched and wrote the definitive book on Edward; daughter of Alma nee Lockrey, Elaine Melzer, OAM, nee Lockrey, who, with her husband, Noel Melzer, a Minister in the Baptist Church, spent 11 years in New Guinea on the mission field, and Jane Faase, nee Trickett and her husband, Karl, a Minister of the Baptist Church and now CEO of Christian Media Company, Olive Tree Media. There are many many others.

Below: Members of the Trickett family commemorating the 150th anniversary of Ned's World Championship Win in April, 2026.



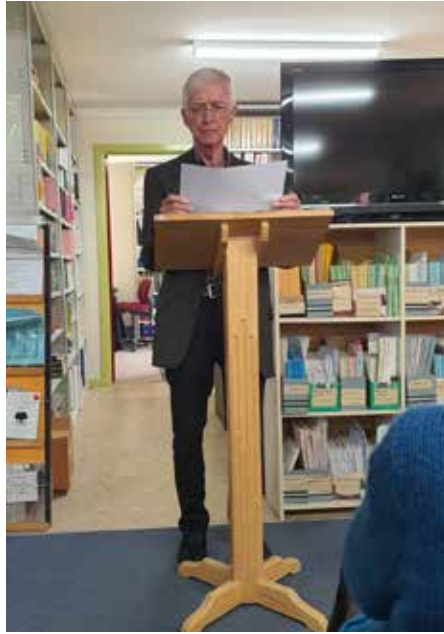


Above: A biography written about Ned Trickett by a relative, Gordon Trickett

In spite of the family's embarrassment at Edward's being the son of a convict and a hotelier, I am very proud to be the great granddaughter of Edward Trickett, granddaughter of Charles Thompson Trickett, and daughter of Mary Clara Williams Cleugh-Black nee Trickett.



Frank Molloy speaking at the May meeting of all things Irish!



Alison telling her Irish family story at the March meeting, and showing some of the counties on the map where her ancestors originated.



CONGRATULATIONS!

Jan Hurcum - Member No. 32

Our Senior Member, Edna Thompson, has just celebrated her 100th birthday. Edna is member number 484 and joined our Society in 1999. An interesting article which Edna had published in our “Murrumbidgee Ancestor” journal a number of years ago was about a family connection who was a teacher and opened the first school in Leeton. He lived in a tent, but asked the Inspector of Schools to supply 8 sheets of roofing iron as he intended to build himself better housing because Leeton was so cold in the winter. Teachers of today, please note!

Edna is a World War II veteran, and served with the WAAAF (Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force). You may have seen her photograph in the *Daily Advertiser* newspaper at the time of Anzac Day. She has featured in other articles in previous newspapers on Anzac Day, and in Michael McCormack’s Anzac Day booklet.

Edna has always been a very busy person, and has been an enthusiastic volunteer in a number of local organisations, including the RSL and pastoral care at the hospital. Well done, Edna! We salute you!

Left: Our Centenarian!



Miles of Threads

Margaret Francis - Member No. 84

Miles of threads/Vic Wilkinson and Edward Miles

For a long time, I've jotted history or family items down on scrap paper ... threads of some memory or anecdote that may one day find their way into my family history files.

I've realised recently, that when I do this, I have an image of Vic Wilkinson, nature's gentleman, who some decades ago at WWDFHS, told me of a family member (was it his grandfather?) who'd left behind small bits of information that helped get him started on research. It was Vic who helped me realise that all threads are OK ... some will grow, some will live on their own...

Some of my threads are organised, some are still simply random notes as with those Vic had mentioned ... some are only in my head ...

I've decided to call them 'Miles of threads', in honour of my First Fleet ancestor, whose surname has already caused some whimsical comments around those who study him...

'Fancy that! Edward Miles lived 30 **miles** from Sydney'

'A list of his descendants would stretch for **miles** ...'

'There are **miles** of memories...'

'Heck... there are **miles** of microfilm!'

'The **miles** between starting our books and finishing...'

Vic Wilkinson had, for a while, tried to find a connection with some relatives of mine, who had his surname. He and they, soon worked out that it wasn't going to happen, however, what we have all shared is the love of the search ... searching along the threads.

Miles of threads/Edward and Stella

My First Fleet convict ancestor, actually left on the journey from England with the surname 'Moyle'. It was on 25th November 1788, several months into his life in Sydney Cove, that his surname was recorded as 'Miles', by a clerk, after Edward had given evidence in an insubordination case. It is assumed by historians that the clerk mis-heard Edward's Cornish lilt. Edward was illiterate. He signed with his mark at his wedding in 1803 and even in a land document in 1832, so the evidence that his name was 'Miles' in the colony, (even with a couple of variations along the way) comes from the writing of others telling us that 'Moyle' wasn't continued. Indeed his 1838 burial certificate and later headstone say 'Miles', so his family must also have continued to use (and spell) that surname.

Four decades later, his middle daughter, by then a respectable elderly citizen of Tumut and already a great grandmother to one little girl, must have then passed on the spelling of the family name to a granddaughter whose first-born was given the names 'Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin'. This baby, when a young woman, and determined to have a career in which she could compete on an equal footing with men, was able to choose a genuine male name from one of her own.

After the donation of Miles Franklin's estate to the nation to found a literary fund to give assistance to authors, that name of a First Fleeter who could not write, is now associated with Australia's most prestigious writing award. Edward's great-great-granddaughter Stella, has brought him fame, due to her own 'brilliant career'.

The Great Plague of 1666 and its effects.

Robyn Jessiman - Member No. 283

Between Castleton, Hope, and Norton in west Derbyshire, England, and Dronfield and Chesterfield to the east is a little village called Eyam. About 1666, when the plague was rife in London, that same plague came to Eyam. The people there did not know exactly how the plague was transmitted, but assumed that it was the wrath of God upon the populace. John Dryden wrote of it thus:

*O let it be enough what thou hast done,
When spotted deaths ran arm'd through every street,
With poison'd darts, which not the good could shun,
The speedy could outfly, or valiant meet,
The living few, and frequent funerals then,
Proclaim thy wrath on this forsaken place:
And now those few who are return'd agen
Thy searching judgments to their dwellings trace.*

(from *Annus Mirabilis, The Year of Wonders, 1666*, by John Dryden)

A novel, *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks, traces the course of the Plague and its effects on this little village of Eyam. My interest is in the methods the people of this town took to contain the Plague and prevent its spreading to the surrounding towns and villages and populations. It is because of their heroism, perhaps that my *Trickett* family exists today. They had lived in the town of Castleton, Derbyshire since 1540.

The following consists of a series of extracts from the book, which, though a work of fiction, is also based on a great deal of factual knowledge about the times.

A young man, a tailor from London, came to Eyam and set up shop with his skills. He acquired cloth which was brought from London, and it is believed, one bolt of this cloth was contaminated with the Plague. He became ill, and on his deathbed told the villagers to burn all his cloth.

Later in the year, two little boys were found playing with dead rats from the woodpile:

Can you believe it, Anna, the two of them were playing with these loathsome pests as if they were poppets. The woodpile's full of them, seemingly. All dead, thanks be for small merciesWhen at last the skies clouded it was almost a relief. The misty rains seemed restful to the eyes, rinsing the landscape. But the damp after the heat brought fleas beyond any infestation I remember. It is an odd thing, how biting pests

how biting pests of all kinds will find one person flavoursome and another not to their liking at all. In my house, the fleas feasted on my tender children, leaving them covered in maddening welts.....Thank you indeed for coming, but Mr Hadfield has sent to Bakewell for the barber-surgeon.....Why do you let yourself love an infant so? I warned you, did I not, to school your heart against this? It was true. Aphra had seen three of her own babies into the ground before their first year, one through fever, one through flux, and one lusty boy, who had just stopped breathing in his bed, with nary a mark on him. It is folly and ill fortune to love a child until it walks and is well grown. As you now see, as you now see. The learned doctors place great faith in these new methods of combating the Plague..... I had already tried cataplasms of Bay salt and rye meal, made into a paste with egg yolk and strapped across a sore with a piece of soft leather.....A receipt (recipe) from the College of Physicians called for the roasting in embers of a great onion, hollowed out and filled with a fig, chopped rue, and a dram of Venice treacle.....Anys brought a cordial that she said was decocted from the tops of feverfew with a little wormwood in sugared sack, also a cooling salve, fragrant of mint.....Another brought a little silk bag.....a palliative.....a dried toad.

After several murders in the village, the justice of the peace from Bakewell refused to come near our village or accept from us any persons for arrest. On the Sunday, the Pastor Mr Pompellion launched into a sermon that sealed our fates, and yet, he is more than halfway into it before anyone in the church realized where he was leading us.

"Greater love no man hath than this, that he lay down his life for a friend"..... Were we not bound to return this love to our fellow humans?

Dear friends, here we are and here we must stay. Let the boundaries of this village become our whole world. Let none enter and none leave while this plague lasts.

He (Mr Mompellion) had written to the Earl of Chatworth House, setting out his proposal and asking aid. The earl had undertaken that if we sealed ourselves off he would provision us all from his own purse with our basic needs in food, fuel and medicines. These would be left at the Boundary Stone at the south-eastern edge of the village, to be collected only when the carter who had carried them were well clear. Those who wished to purchase other items would leave payment either in a shallow spring-fed well to the north of Wright's Wood, where the flow of the water would carry away any Plague seeds, or in holes gouged into the Boundary Stone that would be kept filled with vinegar, which was said to kill contagion.

And so it continued for almost a year, until the Plague had worn itself out.



A Major Miscarriage of Justice.

Marcia McIntyre - Member No. 840

Arthur Gordon Whitlam (known as Gordon) was born at Murrumbeena, Victoria, on 23 February, 1891, the son of Henry Hugh Gough Whitlam and Janet Whitlam nee Steel. Before the First World War, Gordon was employed as chief clerk, cashier, accountant and assistant secretary of the Commercial Travellers Association of Melbourne. He enlisted in the A.I.F. as a Lieutenant in the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column on 15 February, 1915. In 1915 and 1916 he was based at Zeitoun Egypt, the stepping off place for the Gallipoli campaign.

But the lieutenant never made it to a battlefield. He decided to have his batman (a term for a military servant) pack a large box of his belongings that he would not need in Gallipoli and send the box home to his father in Australia. The box contained pistols, saddles, binoculars and clothing. When the box was inspected by Customs at Port Melbourne the contents were deemed to be stolen property. Gordon Whitlam was charged with stealing and held under close arrest for four months. The accused contended that he did not know the articles were in the trunk as it was packed by his batman, Ernest Edward Fowle. He faced a court martial at Sailly-Sur-la-Lys, France, which was held very hurriedly and his defence officer had no time to prepare a defence. The Court accepted the word of the batman, that the Lieutenant had packed the trunk himself. Arthur Gordon Whitlam was found guilty by a General Court Martial on 17 June, 1916, convicted and cashiered. He was stripped of his rank and sent home in disgrace on 5 August, 1916. After the trial, Fowle, the batman, deserted the Army and fled to South Africa. It was believed that the evidence he gave at the trial was not accurate.

Another injustice was perpetuated upon Whitlam. When he was wrongly convicted and dismissed from the Army, the Incorporated Institute of Accountants, when informed by the Defence Department that he had been cashiered after being found guilty of stealing and receiving, refused his professional licence. He was determined to prove his innocence but his appeal to the British Army Council and the Australian Military in 1917 to quash his conviction was denied. Another appeal to the Defence Minister in 1923 was also denied.

In 1926, Whitlam located his former batman in South Africa and obtained additional evidence from him. Other evidence was a letter to Gordon Whitlam's father from his son which stated that his revolver, field glasses, and other equipment were missing from his tent, and might have been packed in his trunk by the batman and that Gordon Whitlam has no knowledge of its contents. This letter was not available at his Court Martial when he was cashiered.

Momentum was gathering for his conviction to be overturned and he was supported in that quest by H.V. Evatt, the Attorney General and the Commander in Chief, General General Thomas Blamey. Billy Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister and Sir Robert Garran, the Solicitor General, also believed that Gordon Whitlam had been wrongly convicted. He spent 18 months gathering evidence in England, South Africa, North America and Europe, spending thousands of pounds in his quest to restore his good name.

Finally 28 years after his original conviction, Arthur Gordon Whitlam had his conviction from 1916 quashed by the Governor General, Lord Gowrie on 19 July, 1944 and his medals, (which were confiscated after the guilty verdict in 1916) were returned to him – the 1914/1915 British Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal, together with Discharged Returned Soldier's Badge No. C- 11151. He waived any right to compensation. Whitlam stated that he just wanted his honour and good name restored.



Above: Lieutenant Arthur Gordon Whitlam

Arthur Gordon Whitlam was the uncle of the 21st Prime Minister of Australia, Edward Gough Whitlam.

References

1. Historically and in modern military terminology , “cashiering” means to officially and dishonourably dismiss someone from service (usually an officer) for a breach of discipline. This type of dismissal typically involves a public degradation ceremony where the individual is stripped of their rank, insignia and honors.
2. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April, 2026, article by Tony Wright.
3. Trove, National Library of Australia, *Argus* (Melbourne), 9 August, 1944, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 August, 1944. The quashing of Whitlam’s conviction was also reported in many other newspapers across Australia..
4. World War I enlistment records, National Archives of Australia. <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au>

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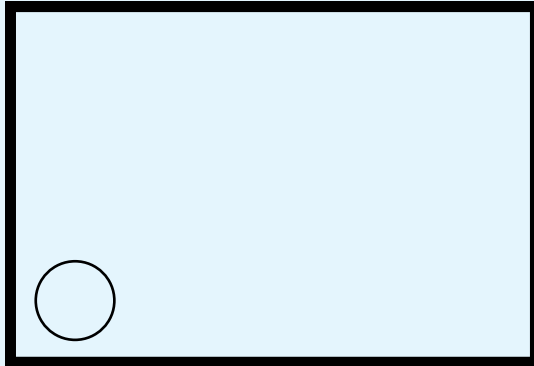
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