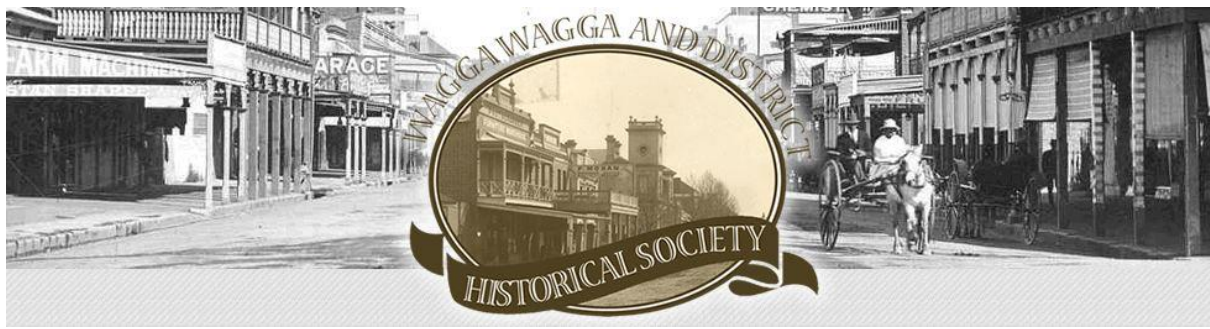




Sherry Morris Life Membership presentation:

Citation presented by Past President, Geoff Burch

19th August 2015

To my fellow members, friends, and to our special guest, Marcia Fife, I say welcome and thank you for being here tonight.

I would like to thank Gary Croker and the Family History Society for allowing us to share this evening, and for allowing our society to make a special presentation tonight.

It is my privilege tonight to present a life membership to an esteemed member of our society.

Our constitution states that, and I quote, “The committee may appoint as honorary member of the Society any person, who in its opinion, has rendered valuable service, or made notable contribution to the Society.”

Previous life members have included the two gentlemen without whom there would not be a society and a museum, as we know it today; I refer to Keith Swan and to the Hon. Wal Fife, who was the responsible minister at the time. Finding a site at the time was proving difficult and elusive, taking some years to achieve an outcome. Without Wal’s strong support we would not have secured the site.

Other life members have included Morris Gissing, who through his influence, as Mayor and an alderman, at WWCC was able to provide major assistance to the society. Another is Phyllis de Jersey, who through her contribution to the society, as president, archivist and other roles, and with her contribution to various publications.

All of these people have made significant contributions to the society and its objectives over an extended period of time, and tonight’s nominee is no

exception to such dedication and application.

Guidelines prepared by Henry in 2013 further defined the criteria that should apply. Henry stated that:

“Life membership of the Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society is given to people who have given tangible and significant assistance in furthering the Society’s aims and Objectives.

In particular, people offered life membership will have fostered and encouraged significant participation in historical research in Wagga Wagga and District; they will have promulgated and fostered such interest and research through presentations and through suitable publications, either themselves or through others; and/or will have encouraged and assisted the Wagga Wagga City Council in the operation of the Museum or the Riverina at one or more of its sites.”

Our recipient tonight meets all of these criteria, and more. Tonight’s presentation is, as some of you may have guessed, to someone of whom we are all very proud,

.....I refer of course to Sherry Morris.

While Sherry was doing all the things I am about to mention she was also looking after Peter and raising a family.

Since 1989 Sherry has served on the committee of the society in various roles. Sherry has served as secretary, she has been involved with organizing guest speakers and excursions, and is one of our regular supper volunteers.

On top of all this Sherry was the editor of the Society’s newsletter for a period of some twenty two years. Few people will truly appreciate what sort of commitment that would have been. During that period Sherry wrote the majority of articles that appeared in the newsletters. Meeting the deadline for publication with new articles imposes a constant and demanding schedule, which must have been very onerous at times.

Sherry has also worked at and with the Museum of the Riverina – both before and after the handover to Council. She is respected by all who are connected with the Museum for her willingness to provide assistance to fellow researchers.

In a wider context Sherry is by far the most prolific author of local and regional history in our region. Her output has been absolutely astounding and Sherry

continues to publish on a regular basis.

Her preeminence was recognized when she was asked to write a history of Wagga Wagga, which she did, and for which she was awarded the NSW Premiers History Prize in 2000.

Sherry's earliest book was ***We Shall Not be Moved: A History of North Wagga and its School***, which was written for the Centenary of the school, in 1980. Her latest publication, that I am aware of, is *The Kapooka Explosion*, which was released earlier this year to coincide with the annual commemorations that now take place on the 21st May each year.

I don't know what Sherry is working on now but I'm willing to bet there is more than one more book or other project underway.

Sherry has written more than 150 articles for the Daily Advertiser, during the period 1994-1997.

Sherry's interests are not just confined to Wagga Wagga. She has carried out major works for Junee and other towns including Batlow.

She has covered a wide variety of subjects – Soccer / the Base Hospital / the RSL / the Kangaroo March / the Uranquinty migrant centre / Kurrajong Waratah and more.

More recently Sherry was chosen to record a series of interviews with those affected by the 2012 Wagga floods. Some of those recordings are now featured on the State Library's website.

One of the great things we all like about Sherry is her willingness to share with others – both with her experience and her knowledge. One of the standard references for any researcher in our region is Sherry's Biographical Index, which she has so graciously shared with the rest of us.

To quote Claire Campbell, manager of the WW City Library:

"The Wagga Wagga community, both now and into the future, have a better understanding of their own history because of her invaluable contribution to the preservation of our local stories."

I could go on for hours listing other ways that Sherry has contributed to our

community but in order to keep the proceedings brief I will stop at this point.

In summary Sherry's contribution to our Society and to the primary objectives of our Society has been immense. There is no one else who has contributed so much in terms of published material.

I will now ask our President, Peter Gissing, to come forward and present the award on behalf of the Society.