

WWDHS NEWSLETTER No. 430 April 2018 – May 2018 ISSN 2207-1016

Next Meetings:

Monday 16 April 2018
at Museum of the Riverina, Willans Hill. Committee Meeting @ 6:15pm
General Meeting @ 7:30pm.

Monday 21 May 2018
Committee Meeting @ 6.15pm
General Meeting @ 7.30 pm
Museum of the Riverina, Willans Hill

Antiques Society at ARCC Hall, Tarcutta Street
20 April 2018: Patricia Ewers, 'Styles and the history of vintage and costume jewellery'.

18 May 2018: David Blackman, 'The History of our Currency from 1788'.

21 May 2018 at Kapooka: Kapooka Tragedy Memorial Service; Remembering the tragic loss of twenty-six young men in the Kapooka Explosion, 21 May 1945.

GUEST SPEAKERS

April: David Walster on his recent book, *Yesterday in Junee: The Early History of Junee told in period photographs*. David plans to choose some images and spend a few minutes talking about each. See page 3 for details.

May: Tony Dunn: 'The Dunns of Oura and Book Book'

EXCURSION: SATURDAY 5 MAY 2018, 10.30 a.m. at CSURA
A behind the scenes tour of Charles Sturt University Archives

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT ANNUAL FEES ARE DUE ON 1 JULY 2018

WWDHS Patron: Michael McCormack, Federal Member for Riverina

WAGGA WAGGA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. PO BOX 90, WAGGA WAGGA. 2650.

President: Peter Morris Ph 0427229332
Vice-President: Peter Gissing Ph 6922 3213
Vice-President: Geoff Haddon Ph 6922 4403
See our web site for additional details.
Newsletter Editor (Acting): Sherry Morris
Email: info@wwdhs.org.au
Web site: www.wwdhs.org.au

Committee meetings: 3rd Monday of the month
6:15pm at MOR, Willans Hill site.

General meetings: 3rd Monday of the month
7:30pm at MOR, Willans Hill site.

Annual Subscriptions: Single: \$20, Couple: \$30.
Corporate: \$50. Due 1st July each year.

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VALE BRIAN LYNCH, collector extraordinaire and Wagga Wagga Icon, who died on 23 February this year at the age of 77. Brian and his wife Barbara had been collecting items for over fifty years and always keen to show off the collection. Many members of the society visited on several occasions.



Above: A wooden wall telephone probably from the 1930s and an old telephone book



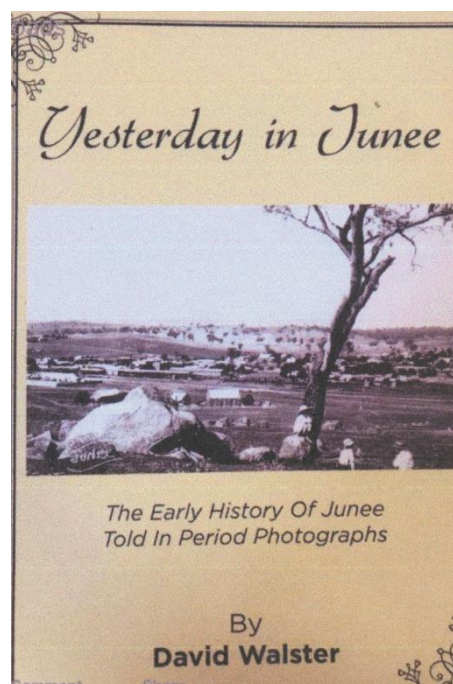
Above: One of several room displaying numerous items in his interesting collection

SPEAKER FOR APRIL: DAVID WALSTER

David will be speaking about his book is *Yesterday in Junee*, the early history of Junee told in period photographs. The book is the result of four years' work following a request from the Junee Historical Society curator at that time for David to assist the curator with identifying early photographs held in the collection.

David's father's family came to Junee in 1892 while his mother's family arrived in 1878. It is from these family memories and shared history as well as his excellent memory and attention to detail that David has selected a series of images that have enabled him to not only describe the detail in the photo but to depict a 'picture' of life in Junee at that particular time. There has been significant input from recording of historical events in newspapers and other historical writings.

There are interesting references to the relationship and feelings between Wagga and Junee.



David plans to choose perhaps several images he considers especially interesting or significant and spend a few minutes talking about each one.

Speaker in May, Tony Dunn, will talk about the Dunns of Oura and Book Book.

Right: Robert and Hannah Dunn and the 'Kurrajong' property at Oura.



Digitisation of the *Wagga Daily Express* 1919-1929

The digitisation of the Wagga Wagga newspaper, the *Daily Express*, has now been listed on the "Coming Soon" list. The funds for its digitisation (\$25,000) were raised by our society with the assistance of Charles Sturt Regional Archives, Wagga Wagga City Council and a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society (each \$5000).

Errata: Please note that it was the NSW State Library which refused to contribute its own funds because of the incomplete issues of the newspapers (and not the National Library of Australia) as mentioned in the last newsletter.

EXCURSIONS

CSURA BEHIND THE SCENES

Charles Sturt University Archives Behind the Scenes, Saturday 5 May 2018 at 10.30 a.m.



TEMORA EXCURSION (Proposed)

Our excursions organiser, Geoff Haddon, is also arranging a trip to Temora to visit the Temora Railway Precinct and Museum and at least one of the two other well-known museums in Temora, the Aviation Museum and the Rural Museum.

The Temora Railway Station was officially reopened on 4 April 2016 at the completion of a two-year restoration project. On 17 March this year, a railyard trail was opened and a statue named 'Boofhead the Railyard Dog' was unveiled. The railway trail has nine interpretive panels placed along a 1.4 km walking trail, taking in the silos, the former roundhouse, wool transport, Pardey's flour mill as well as the stories of those who worked during Temora's railway era.



A book by Neville Pollard, *Crown Land to Closer Settlement*, which documents the role of the railway in opening up southern NSW for agriculture and rural settlement, was also launched.



The Bundawarrah Centre was established in 2011 because of the growing diversity of the Temora Rural Museum site. It also houses the Ambulance Museum, exhibitions, the Temora Local and Family History Research Centre, Temora Shed for Men, Mother Shipton's function centre with state-of-the-art kitchen facilities and the Visitor Information Centre.

The Temora Aviation Museum, which was established in 1999, was based on the collection of David Lowy, the founder of the museum. It has numerous former military aircraft ranging from the World War II era to the Vietnam War.



HARDEN MURRUMBURRAH (another possible excursion)



Harden-Murrumburrah has a rich gold rush history and interesting historic buildings including the former Murrumburrah Mechanics Institute (left) and Council Chambers (right)

Gunning Francis Plunkett

by Geoff Burch

Gunning Francis Plunkett was born on the 8th November 1846, at Newcastle.¹ He was the son of George Argyle Plunkett and Catherine Mary Plunkett (nee Milliken). His parents had married on 6th April 1842 at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney.² George was a teacher at the Campbelltown Catholic School at this time. As was common in those times George would have moved around from one town to another in order to advance his career and his children would have regularly adjusted to the environs of new schools and different towns.

By 1867, the twenty year old Gunning Francis Plunkett was living at or near Gundagai and had been granted a hawkers' license.³

In November 1870, he was the manager of the Commercial Store, at Adelong.⁴

On the 26th December 1870, at Tumut, Gunning married Matilda Mary Theccla Bollard, the 4th daughter of the late Mr John Bollard, of Picton.⁵

By August 1874 the couple were living at "*Strathmore*", Little Billabong, where Matilda gave birth to a daughter.⁶

In January 1878, Gunning gave notice that he and Charles S Smith had formed a partnership, trading as Plunkett & Smith, general store keepers of Bethungra.⁷ Smith was his brother-in-law.⁸

In that same year, 1878, the partnership opened a butcher shop⁹ and a branch general store at Junee Reefs,¹⁰ along with a branch general store at Bomen¹¹ [where the railway station had been opened that same year].

It is not known why, but by December 1879 the partnership between Gunning Francis Plunkett and Charles Sydney Smith had been dissolved, effective the 8th December 1879.¹² It may have had something to do with the fact that, in the same year, Gunning's father, George, was transferred from Gulgong to be the head teacher at the Bethungra Public School, a position he held until his death in 1902.

¹ The Catholic Press. 21st June 1902, p22.

² Sydney Herald. 7th April 1842, p3. / Australasian Chronicle. 7th April 1842, p3.

³ Tumut & Adelong Times. 9th September 1867, p3c3.

⁴ Gundagai Times. 19th November 1870, p2c5.

⁵ Gundagai Times. 31st December 1870, p2. / NSW BDM. Marriage registration # 3610/1871.

⁶ Sydney Morning Herald. 26th August 1874, p1.

⁷ Cootamundra Herald. 22nd January 1878, p5c3.

⁸ Cootamundra Herald. 10th October 1896, p6.

⁹ Cootamundra Herald. 18th June 1878, p4c3.

¹⁰ Cootamundra Herald. 2nd July 1878, p4c3-4.

¹¹ Cootamundra Herald. 10th September 1878, p3c1.

¹² Cootamundra Herald. 27th December 1879, p4c3-4.



Above: The Yerong Hotel. Photo courtesy Gdaypubs.



Above: The bar inside. Photo courtesy Gdaypubs.

George's wife took over as head teacher following his death, but after some time she resigned in favour of her youngest son, Frederick. The latter only held the position for some twelve months before he was struck down by consumption.¹³

In December 1881, Gunning was still living at Little Billabong but had purchased the valuable property of Mr J Weir, at Clarendon.¹⁴

In February 1882, a sale was advertised, on behalf FG Plunkett of Little Billabong (who was leaving the district), of general store stock, horses, cows etc.,¹⁵ and in the same month it was reported that Gunning, formerly post master and store keeper of Little Billabong, who had recently purchased the property of Mr D Weir, of Clarendon, had taken possession and had removed his penates to his new home.¹⁶

It didn't take Gunning long to become involved with the local community and in May 1882, he was appointed secretary of the Clarendon Progress Committee.¹⁷ A month later he was also elected treasurer of the Clarendon Progress Committee.¹⁸

By January 1883, Gunning was an agent for the auction sale of cattle at Clarendon,¹⁹ and by April 1883 he was advertising his services as Auctioneer, Stock, Station, and Commission Agent, of Clarendon, and agent for R Goldsborough & Co. Ltd.²⁰

By 1884 Gunning had made a decision to move from Clarendon to Yerong Creek and to build a new hotel there. In July 1884, the Wagga Wagga Licensing Court issued a conditional publican's license to Francis Gunning Plunkett, for a new hotel to be erected at Yerong Creek.²¹

In July 1884, Gunning sold off his store business at Clarendon [Eurongilly], with work progressing on his new hotel at Yerong Creek, in which he proposed to combine hotel keeping with a store.²²

On the 10th January 1885, Gunning Francis Plunkett was granted a license for the Yerong Creek Hotel.²³

His community involvement continued in 1885, when in August it was gazetted that he had been appointed to be 2nd Lieutenant in the Wagga Wagga Corps, 1st Regiment, NSW Volunteer Infantry. He had also recently been appointed secretary of the Yerong Race Club.²⁴

¹³ Cootamundra Herald. 10th October 1896, p6.

¹⁴ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10th December 1881, p2c7.

¹⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4th February 1882, p3c8.

¹⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 28th February 1882, p2c7.

¹⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 20th May 1882, p2c7.

¹⁸ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 3rd June, 1882, p2c7.

¹⁹ Gundagai Times. 12th January 1883, p3c6.

²⁰ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 5th April 1883, p4c7.

²¹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 12th July 1884, p2c8.

²² Southern Cross. 19th July 1884, p2c1.

²³ Government Gazette. 1885, p1409.

²⁴ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 22nd August 1885, p2c4.

On the 8th September 1885 Gunning's father, George Argyle Plunkett, passed away at Bethungra, aged sixty six. He had been employed as a teacher by the government for some forty years. One of his sons, GJ Plunkett, was the master at the North Wagga Wagga school.²⁵



Above: Gunning Francis Plunkett

In April 1891, it was reported that Messrs Tompson, Manning & Jeremy had established new sale yards at Yerong Creek. The firm had been holding monthly sales in the town for some six to eight months prior to erecting the new yards. Before the erection of the new yards sales were held at GF Plunkett's hotel yards.²⁶

By December 1893, Gunning was trading wheat, when he advertised for up to 30,000 bags.²⁷

²⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 8th September 1885, p2c5.

²⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 28th April 1891, p3c1.

²⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 2nd December 1893, p3c7.

The Farmers' and Settlers' Association.

On the 21st April 1892, a local member, James Gormly, attended the Mundawaddera school picnic on Easter Monday. Gormly travelled by train from Sydney to be there to speak on the subject of the present land laws. The event was hosted by the Yerong and Brookong Farmers' Unions. There were some five hundred people in attendance with delegates from the Mundawaddera, Yerong, Brookong, Pleasant Hills, Henty, Burrumbuttock and Walla Farmers' Unions. GF Plunkett was elected chairman for the event. Gormly gave a stirring and extensive speech outlining his opposition to the proposed extension of long term leases, which locked up large tracts of land in a few hands. He encouraged a petition and a deputation to the relevant minister.²⁸

As a follow up, in May, the Mundawaddera and Yerong Farmers' Unions sent out a circular to the various farmers' associations in the Riverina. They proposed that three delegates from each of the farmers' unions in the Riverina and three agricultural representatives from areas where there were no farmers' associations attend a conference to be held at Wagga Wagga on the 23rd, 24th and 25th of May. The idea was to present a united front in opposition to the impending changes to the land laws that would see large leases renewed for up to twenty-eight years. It was stated that:

We must strive also to unite all our union under one executive body, having the same simple and practical roles and united for all further great operations. Trusting you will see the absolute necessity now without any delay for a conference, and call a meeting of your union to select three representatives willing to attend a conference at Wagga, May 23, and give a reply with the names chosen as soon as possible, in order to allow further arrangements to be made at once. -We are yours faithfully. M. M. RYAN, Hon. Sec, Yerong and Mundawaddera Farmers' Union.²⁹

The conference was subsequently delayed until the 21st June, with the circular now being distributed to associations all around the colony, inviting their delegates to the event at Wagga Wagga. The circular was signed by GF Plunkett, president and MM Ryan, honorary secretary, Mundawaddera and Yerong Farmers' Association.³⁰

The Wagga Wagga conference elected the following persons to officiate:

Chairman – GF Plunkett; Vice-chairmen – JJ Miller (Cootamundra) and David Reid Moorwatha); Secretaries – MM Ryan (Mundawaderra) and JT Williamson (Wagga Wagga). By the end of the conference Plunkett was being referred to as the president of the association, whilst Miller and Reid were being referred to as the Vice-presidents.

By September 1892, a platform, or draft constitution, had been developed, for a united body covering all subsidiary associations, with the latter to be called the NSW Farmers' and Settlers' Association.³¹ The driving force behind the progress was still Plunkett and Ryan, as representatives of the Mundawaddera and Yerong Farmers' Association.³²

²⁸ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 21st April 1892, p2.

²⁹ Evening News (Sydney). 21st May 1892, p3.

³⁰ Wagga Wagga Express. 18th June 1892, p4.

³¹ Gundagai Times. 27th September 1892, p4.

³² Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10th September 1892, p2.



Above and Below:
Delegates to the
1892 Wagga Wagga
Conference of the
various Farmers' &
Settlers'
Associations. Photos
courtesy CSU
Regional Archives
(RW61)



On the 30th June 1893, a second conference was held at Cootamundra, where an executive was elected and a constitution adopted. The elected executives included the following:

President - GF Plunkett (Yerong); Vice-presidents – JJ Miller (Cootamundra) and D Reid (Moorwartha); Treasurer – F Pinkstone (Grogan); Secretary – MM Ryan (Mundawaddera).

The name of the entity remained as the NSW Farmers' and Settlers' Association.

Whilst Gunning Francis Plunkett is revered by many as the instigator of the NSW Farmers' and Settlers' Association, Ryan considered that James Gormly was the catalyst for its inception. A travelling correspondent met with Ryan, a school teacher, in April 1894 and gave the following account:

I had, while on the present tour, the pleasure of meeting Mr MM Ryan, one of the organisers of the land conference, a description of an interview with that gentleman should be interesting, now that he has resigned the secretaryship of the Farmers' association, and will ere this is published have left our shores in order to resume his studies for the legal profession in his native country, Tasmania.Mr Ryan related to me the origin and growth of the Farmers' & Settlers' Association, and with becoming modesty took little of the credit of the movement, and thought it ought to be known that our member, Mr James Gormly, should get most of the kudos. Briefly stated the whole affair arose out of a picnic which was held annually at Mittagong on Easter Monday. Mr Ryan had been organiser of the movement and during his absence it was decided to exclude certain sports from the programme, and a split occurred in the camp, with the result that Mr Ryan got up a general picnic and wrote asking Mr Gormly if he would give an address on the land question on that day. Mr Gormly delivered a rattling speech on the central division leases in particular, and denouncing the land laws in general. It was from this speech that Mr Ryan conceived the idea of bringing all the farmers unions in the colony into some central place to discuss the land laws, and with the assistance of Mr Plunkett, the present president, a land conference was held at Wagga Wagga in 1892, and which has since developed into one of the most important organisations yet formed in NSW.³³

While Gormly may have sparked the idea, there can be no doubt that it was Plunkett and Ryan who drove a series of events that brought about the establishment of the NSW Farmers' and Settlers' Association.

The Death of Gunning Francis Plunkett.

On the 7th October 1896, Gunning's mother passed away and was buried in the Bethungra cemetery.³⁴

³³ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 12th April 1894, p3c2-3.

³⁴ Cootamundra Herald. 10th October 1896, p6.

On the 7th June 1902, Gunning Francis Plunkett passed away at his residence, the Yerong Creek Hotel.

A report on his death noted that Gunning had:

Carried on business as a storekeeper at Eurongilly, and about 16 years ago built the Yerong Hotel, and carried on the business up to the time of his death. A widow and 11 children (7 daughters and 4 sons) survive him. He was very popular with a wide circle of friends which he had formed, and was an active figure in sporting life and in public movements. He was for many years secretary of the Yerong Race Club, and a member of the committee of the Murrumbidgee Pastoral and Agricultural Association. He was, perhaps best known in connection with the Farmers' and Settlers' Association of New South Wales, of which he was one of the founders, and president since its inception some 15 years ago. The funeral was largely attended, the procession to the cemetery comprising 30 vehicles and 22 horsemen. The remains were interred in the Yerong cemetery.³⁵

Another report noted that:

The deceased had also a number of other interests which he conducted with much success. A keen politician, Mr. Plunkett took a deep interest in public affairs, and for the greater part of his career was especially active in all that related to the settlement of the people on the soil of the country, and the establishment of equitable land laws. In furtherance of this object he was chiefly instrumental in conjunction with Mr. M. Ryan, the then public school teacher at Mundawaddera, in forming the Farmers and Settlers' Association which for the first few years of its existence was mainly confined to this portion of the State. At the first conference of the Association held in Wagga and comprising delegates from all the branches, Mr. Plunkett was unanimously elected president and that position he retained until last year, when failing health necessitated his retirement. Under his presidency the Association attained very large proportions including in its ramifications the greater portion of New South Wales. That it has had great influence in shaping the land policy of the State during late years, has been acknowledged by more than one Minister charged with control of the public estate, and it goes without saying that Mr. Plunkett's name will be always held in grateful remembrance by the members of this now powerful organisation."³⁶

and,

Throughout life Mr. Plunkett was noted for his manly, straightforward character, his nice sense of honor in connection with business and other transactions being a frequent matter for comment. In all relations of life, indeed, he showed himself to be a valuable citizen, and it is not too much

³⁵ The Catholic Press. 21st June 1902, p22.

³⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10th June 1902, p2.

to say that his death will be deeply regretted by all brought into contact with him either in a public or private capacity.³⁷

A third report noted that:

One of his early school masters at Camperdown, near Sydney, was Mr. J. M'Inerney, his successor to the office of president of this association. And the friendship formed between them, had warmly increased and intensified during the whole of his life. Mr. Plunkett had been engaged for a number of years in commercial pursuits, and had all through his life been in constant touch with the farming interest. For many years previous to the time of his death he was host of the important hotel and premises at Yerong Creek, on the Southern line of railway. Like all inland business people, he felt severely the presence of large squatting runs surrounding a small town, and the impossibility of people obtaining land to settle on or cultivate. And the further evil of most of the holders of small sections in this locality and other parts of the Riverina having to sell their holdings to the squatters or other large landholders, causing the locality to become depopulated. And with the object of trying to amend this state of affairs he consented to join his friend, Mr. Martin M. Ryan, in forming the Mundawaddera and Yerong Farmers' and Settlers' Association, and soon afterwards to add his name to the famous manifesto issued by them, in May, 1892, denouncing the action of Mr. Copeland, then Minister for Lands, entertaining the demand of the large lessees in the Central Division of this State, being granted a renewal of their leases of many million acres of land for 28 years. And this now historical manifesto, to settlers throughout the State set forth the many pressing needs for a conference of the settlers, selectors, and others, to boldly oppose any renewal of their leases, to also discuss subjects of pressing interest to the selectors, and finally devising means for forming a great united association containing branches throughout the States to send delegates annually to fixed centres of population in order to discuss the operations of the Land Acts and land settlement, and to assist Parliament in passing good measures of land reform. The Wagga Conference in June, 1892, lasting four days, was sufficiently successful in restraining the Minister's action until a further conference was held in August, 1893, at Cootamundra, when, in addition to discussing useful measures of land settlement, the platform and constitution of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, submitted by Messrs Ryan and Plunkett, and largely assisted by most of the members of the present Executive, was adopted, and Messrs. G. F. Plunkett and M. M. Ryan were elected first president and secretary respectively. Mr. Plunkett retained his position until the time of his decease last month.³⁸

³⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10th June 1902, p2.

³⁸ Albury Banner. 25th July 1902, p23.

On the 25th July 1903 a memorial was unveiled at Yerong Creek in the form of a monument to perpetuate the memory of the late Gunning Francis Plunkett.

The function took place in the prettily situated Roman Catholic cemetery, some two miles from the village, and there was a large and representative gathering of friends and members of the various F. and S. Associations, amongst whom were, Mr. Gordon M'Laurin, M.L.A. (Hume), Messrs. James M'Inerny, President N.S.W. F. and S. Association (Gundagai), T. I. Campbell, General Secretary (Sydney), W. P. Dyce (Currawarna), Cartwright (Temora), Crawford (Urangeline Creek), C. R. Smith, L. Cox (Kyamba), Geddes (Yerong Creek), members of the Executive Council N.S.W. F. and S. Association, Very Rev. M. Slattery, V.G., Dr. Cameron (President Henty Branch), Messrs. Mitchellhill (Grubben Station), M'Geoch Bros. (Egan Creek), E. R. Nelson, Mrs. Plunkett and family, and many others. It may be remembered that last year the late Mr. Plunkett was about to celebrate his ten years presidency of the association, and steps were being taken by that body to present him with a suitable testimonial for his valued services in connection therewith. Prior to his retiring, grim Death, however, intervened. With the family's permission, the present monument was erected over his grave. It took the form of a beautifully designed white marble column on freestone kerbing, the interior surface being covered with black and white chips, with the letters R. I. P. The inscriptions, on the face of the column were: 'Erected by the Farmers' and Settlers' of New South Wales in memory of Gunning Francis Plunkett, first President of the Association, 1891 to date of death, 1902,' and on the reverse side, 'In memory of our dear father, died June 7th, 1902, aged 55 years. May he rest in peace.' Mr. M'Inerny said they had assembled to show their respect and tribute to their late President as a man in every sense. It was little enough return for what he had done for the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, extending as it now did from the Murray waters to the Queensland border. The loss sustained by the association has been as great as that of his own family. Mr. Crawford (Urangeline Creek) said he was sorry and proud at the same time, to be present to honour the departed. Mr. Plunkett had started the Association from its infancy, and had fostered it to what it is today. It was extremely gratifying to know that their little tribute of respect would last for ages.³⁹

The memorial was supplied and erected by Messrs. H. Taylor and Co., of Elizabeth-street, Sydney, at a cost of £50.⁴⁰

Gunning's wife, Matilda Mary Theckla Plunkett, passed away, at the age of eighty three years.⁴¹ The death took place at her residence, "*Heatherlie*", Neutral Bay.⁴²

³⁹ Albury Banner. 31st July 1903, p36.

⁴⁰ Wagga Wagga Express. 28th July 1903, p2.

⁴¹ Albury Banner. 28th June 1935, p46.

⁴² Daily Advertiser. 22nd June 1935, p6.