

**WWDHS
NEWSLETTER
No. 456
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NEXT MEETINGS

The society's next meetings will be held on Monday 21st August 2023, at the Museum of the Riverina, Willans Hill site.

**Committee meeting at 1.30 p.m.
General Meeting at 2.00 p.m.**

Guest Speaker: Brian Andrews

COMMITTEE

President: Geoff Burch
Vice President: Geoff Haddon
Secretary: Margaret Hill
Treasurer: Geoff Burch

Committee Members: Brian Andrews, Judy Buik, Mark Christison, Leanne Diessel, Craig Dixon, Dianna Lovett, Peter Morris, Sherry Morris, Margaret Nowlan-Jones, Rhonda Reedy.

Dates to remember:

September, 18th – WWDHS AGM

October, 21st & 22nd - RAHS annual conference

**WWDHS Patron: Michael McCormack,
Federal Member for Riverina,**

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

President: Geoff Burch [mob. 0417 277 592]
Vice-President: Geoff Haddon
See society website for additional information.
Newsletter Editor: Sherry Morris
Email: info@wwdhs.org.au
Web site: www.wwdhs.org.au

Committee meetings: 3rd Monday of the month
General meetings: 3rd Monday of the month

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

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HAPPENINGS

Funding Projects

The WWDHS has recently contributed \$1,000 towards the digitisation of the Coolamon Ganmain Farmers Review. The Coolamon Historical Society, who initiated this project, has collected another \$4,000, which will see the period 1906 through to the end of 1918 added to Trove – hopefully by March 2024 at the latest. No doubt many of our members will find this a valuable addition to Trove.

The WWDHS has agreed to contribute \$1,500 towards the purchase of blinds for the community meeting room in the new MoR building on Willans Hill.

Lord Baden Powell Road

Road works on Lord Baden Powell Drive are underway, which will cause some interruptions to traffic flows over the next couple of months. When finished, access to the museum, for motor vehicles and pedestrians, will be significantly enhanced.

Donation

A recent donation to the MoR is additional material from the late Heather Mortlock. An initial donation consisted of a variety of WW2 paraphernalia, which included a wonderful collection of uniform patches, badges, etc. The latest donation consists of hundreds of letters from soldiers who had a connection with the Wagga Wagga region. The MoR are well underway with indexing the initial collection.

Early thoughts are that we should digitize the collection of letters and this could be the basis for a grant application in 2024.

Excursion

Your committee has tentatively agreed to a bus trip to Griffith later in the year – possibly early November. Destinations would include the Griffith Pioneer Park and the Hermits Cave.

Museum Redevelopment

The new MoR building on Willans Hill is well and truly open to the public, but work on the original back section continues. These latter works should be finished shortly, which will mean we can move into the room reserved for the society. We have a backlog of archiving and filing to carry out and hopefully after that we can start work on some overdue projects related to the materials we hold. These would include digitisation of some records and indexing of others.

Webinars

The next scheduled webinar from the MHNSW [formerly State Archives] will be held on Friday 25th August @ 10:30am. The subject will be the Court of Claims.

The Court of Claims heard the claims of all persons holding or claiming to hold lands where grants had been promised and claiming to have grants delivered to them.

This webinar will explore the fascinating records of this Court, how to find them and what they can tell you about land ownership in NSW in the 19th Century.

This is a free event but participants must register online [on the MHNSW website]

Online Plans

A large collection of subdivision plans is now available to view on the NSW State Library website. These are incredibly interesting poster plans of various subdivisions, including a number of Wagga Wagga subdivisions. These can be searched at the following link,

<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/significant-collections/subdivision-plans>

3rd Subdivision
GRAND VIEW ESTATE
OVERLOOKING TOWN OF WAGGA WAGGA

FOR SALE BY PRIVATE TREATY
With the Vendor
J. H. WOODEN, ESQ.
Baylis Street, Wagga Wagga.
from whom full particulars are obtainable on application.

EASY TERMS
10 Per Cent Deposit.
(Minimum Deposit £10 per block)
Balance £2 per block per month
including Principal and Interest
at the rate of 6 per cent.

TORRENS TITLE.

Trevor Jones & Lappin.
Solicitors to the Estate,
WAGGA.

A. C. Landon.
Licensed Surveyor - RPA
WAGGA.

WOODEN ST
LINDSAY ST
TREVOR ST
COLEMAN ST
MACCLEAY ST
STREET 66' WIDE
STREET 66' WIDE
ROAD 99' WIDE

WAGGA WAGGA LOCAL SKETCH

1882

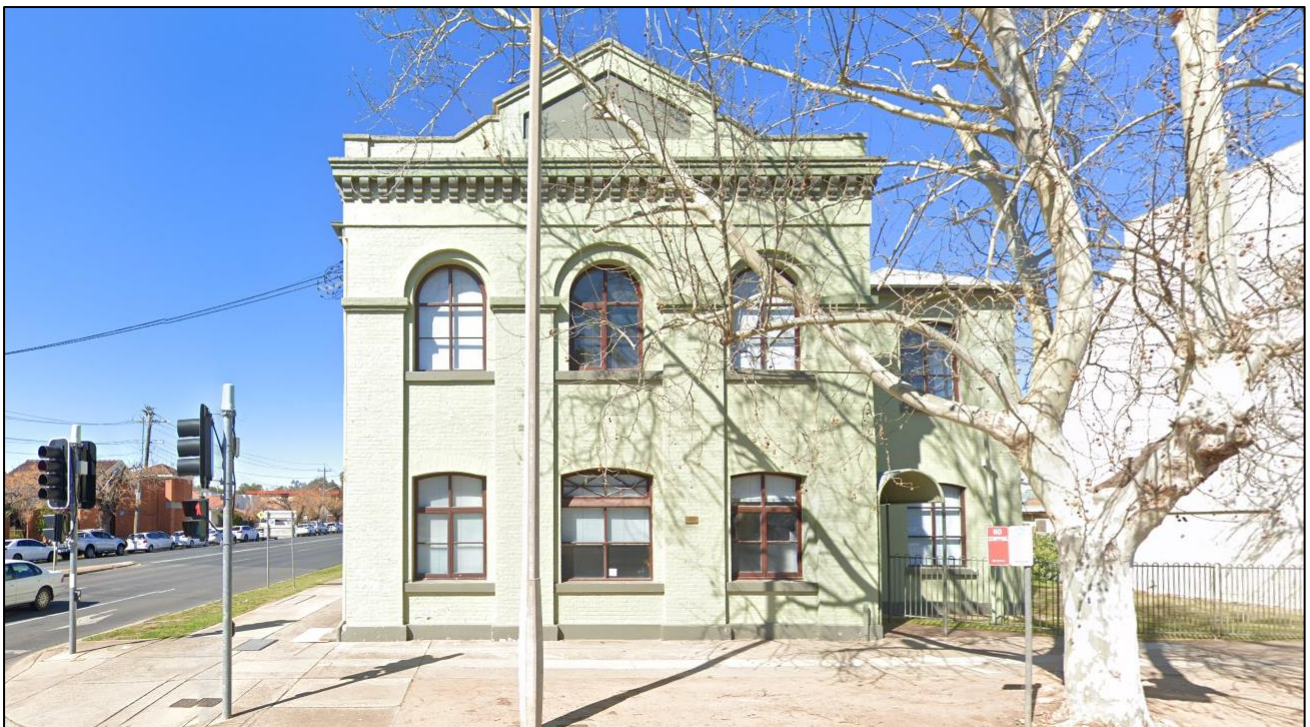
F. Cunningham & Co. Ltd., Litho, Sydney

Above: One example of the plans available. Courtesy NSW State Library.

WAGGA WAGGA'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Above: The charming building at 86 Johnstone Street, Wagga Wagga, which backs on to the Wollundry Lagoon. Built by the Brunskill family to accommodate their children while they were attending school in Wagga Wagga. Occupied by Jim and Moira Webb at one time. Currently undergoing a major redevelopment. One of many historic buildings in Johnston Street. The Riverina chapter of the National Trust no longer exists, and we now rely on the city council to protect and preserve our heritage structures. Courtesy Google Maps.



Above: The former Lands Department building. Currently being vacated by NSW Crown Lands. Waiting to see what the future holds for this historic building. Courtesy Google Maps.

MISS 'BESSIE' LOUGHLIN AND WAGGA WAGGA DISTRICT HOSPITAL

By Sherry Morris



Elizabeth Loughlin ("Bessie") was an unusual woman for her time, highly intelligent, extremely energetic and regarded by some almost as a saint.

Bessie was the eldest daughter of a hale and hearty Irishman named Martin Loughlin who had emigrated to the Victorian goldfields and participated in the riots at the Eureka Stockade in 1854. She was born in Ballarat and educated at the local Catholic School before moving to Wagga Wagga with her parents. A staunch Roman Catholic family, the Loughlins participated fully in the religious and secular life of the community. Martin was popular as the publican of the Bridge Hotel in the late 1870s and then at the All Nations in Baylis Street. He later had a farm and vineyard at Lake Albert. After attending school at Mount Erin in Wagga Wagga, Bessie began a nursing career at the St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. Unfortunately, her father became very ill after sustaining a serious internal injury in a fall from his horse and Bessie returned home to nurse him. After his death on October 20, 1899 she remained in Wagga Wagga and assumed control of her family's affairs. Her mother died of pleurisy and paralysis on June 17, 1913. Deprived of her nursing career, Miss Loughlin devoted her time and energy unselfishly to charitable and public causes, including the Hospital.

As she was a big woman with a severe hairstyle and a forceful personality, she made rather an imposing figure. Gradually, however, she became well known as the champion of the underdog and was respected in Wagga Wagga for her great depth of human sympathy. She unostentatiously performed a large volume of work on behalf of the poor and suffering of which only those concerned had any knowledge. She was also admired for her broad vision and quick understanding, for her faculty for analysis which enabled her to size up a situation promptly and for her master of detail and unique organising ability.

NEW HOSPITAL 1910

From the 1890s, women were beginning to take an increasingly active role in raising funds particularly for the Hospital, appealing for subscriptions, making collections and canvassing for the Hospital Ball. Miss Loughlin was the Secretary of many of these Ladies' Committees. In 1905 the Hospital Committee heartily thanked her for her generous effort and hard work as Secretary of the Hospital Ball Committee declaring that *no one could carry out the work more energetically and with greater tact than that lady*. She was also particularly zealous and enterprising in the Hospital Saturday Collections. A new hospital was built in 1910 and officially opened on September 7, 1910 by the Premier C.G. Wade.



Above: Official opening of the new hospital by the Premier C. G. Wade

In 1910, Matron Blanche Mabel Wiseman, Sister McGregor and Nurses Nicholls, McGuinness, Dodwell, Regan, Tidex and Loder moved into their new quarters. The distance from the town worried the young ladies at first but the Hospital Committee (probably at the suggestion of the Secretary of the Committee, Bessie Loughlin) set aside ten pounds per annum for their conveyance to and from the town, and a horse and sulky were made available to them. Other important innovations were made to improve their quality of life. A piano was purchased and on October 15, 1913, the nurses tendered an evening to celebrate its arrival, a “dainty supper” being provided by the medical staff. Moves were also made to establish a tennis court. The much loved Matron Wiseman resigned in December 1911 to “retire into private life”.

Although the Hospital Committee appreciated the efforts of Miss Loughlin and the other ladies, it was shocked in 1912 when three ladies were nominated for election to the Committee itself. None were more horrified than the retiring President, H.E. Mitchelmore, who felt that ladies would be “out of place on a committee ... sitting in deliberative assembly with gentlemen”. Miss Loughlin pointed out that he could give no sound reason for his objection and demanded to know “if he was suggesting that the ladies were lacking intelligence or that the discussions at the Committee meetings were such as not to be proper for the ears of ladies”. She explained that the women nominated did not wish to interfere in financial affairs (which the men considered their prerogative) but only to act “in their own sphere”. Nevertheless, as expected, the ladies were defeated in the ballot (and in fact it was to be another seventeen years before ladies were to sit in “deliberative assembly” with gentlemen on the Hospital Committee!

As a compromise a Ladies Advisory Committee was formed to relieve the gentlemen of what they called “the objectionable duty of going through the ladies wards” and to control the Hospital Saturday Collections and the Hospital Ball with the assistance of a sub-committee chosen from the General Hospital Committee. The first advisory committee consisted of Mesdames J.D. Norman, P.H. Bradhurst, O.A. Willans, J. Irving, W.R. Eyles, A.V. Booth, J.H. Skudder, T. Dobney, J.H. Baillie, W. Hinton and E.J. Heydon. In its first enthusiastic year it raised over eight hundred pounds including five hundred and fifty pounds at a bazaar; and in each of the following years raised between four and five hundred pounds.

As the Secretary of the Ladies’ Advisory Council and later as the Hospital Collector’Organiser and Secretary of the Children’s Ward Committee, she proved indefatigable. By 1921 the grateful Hospital Committee had increased her salary to one hundred and thirty pounds per annum. She was appointed the Secretary of the Hospital

Committee as well as Collector/Organiser) on January 23, 1922. As such she was required to attend and assist at all local functions arranged for the Hospital and receive the cash; to keep the patients' fees ledger and render monthly accounts; to organise all Town and Country efforts in aid of the Hospital and to see that the proper balance sheets and returns were furnished; to collect annual subscriptions and donations; to enter in the Hospital books the dates of admission and discharge of patients, fill in patients' cards and do all clerical work at the Hospital.

By 1921, the grateful Hospital Committee had increased her salary to one hundred and thirty pounds per annum. On March 14, 1921 she was also appointed Secretary to the Children's Ward Committee. Again she proved to be extremely efficient particularly in her organisation of the travellers' days which raised over two thousand pounds and of the open air fares held in the Southern Cross Gardens which raised almost nine hundred pounds for the Children's Ward. It was due to her efficient organisation that expenses were kept so low. By 1921, the grateful Hospital Committee had increased her salary to one hundred and thirty pounds per annum.

Due to her unremitting care and her energy, the accounts were kept up to date; many country efforts were organised to assist materially the finances of the institution; town and country subscriptions were collected promptly; and, in addition, she gave every assistance possible to the Hospital Committee.



Children's Ward



The Hospital in 1924

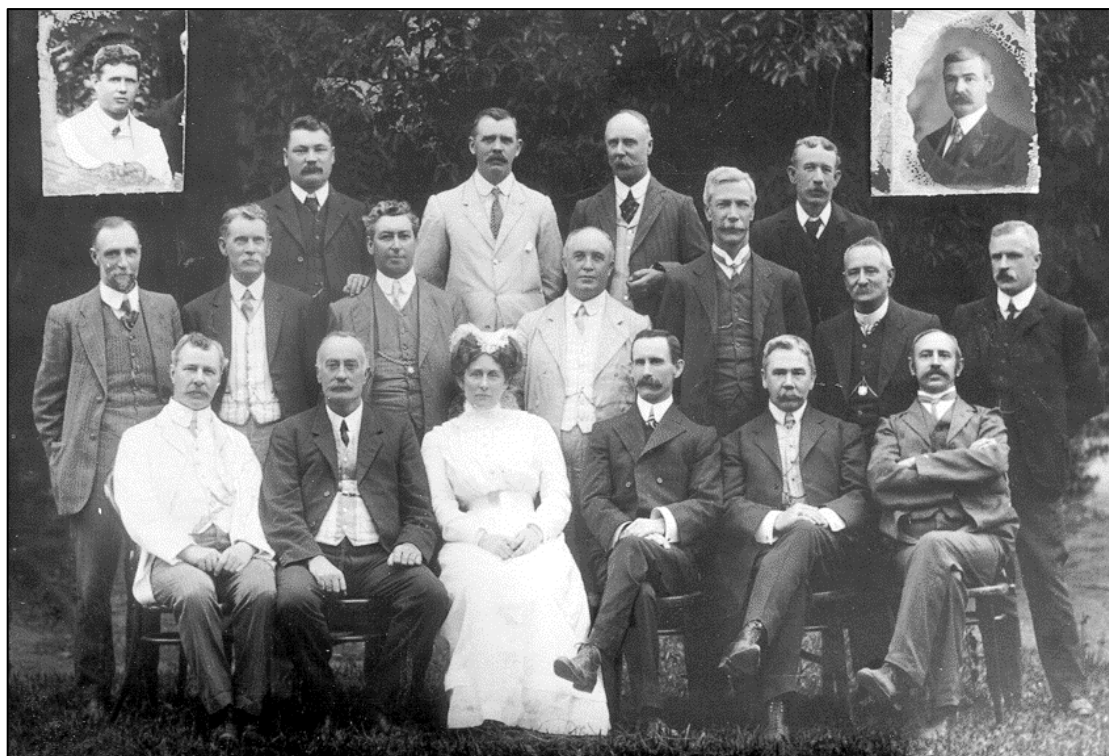
Miss Loughlin continued to play an active role in numerous charitable organisations especially the various Catholic societies. She was Secretary of the Wagga Benevolent Society for many years and was made a life member of the Murrumbidgee Turf Club. For some years she was a prominent member of St Michael's Literary and Debating Society and took part with much success in amateur theatricals.

She also played a prominent part in political campaigns. When Sir William Lyne was ill during one of his campaigns, she took over the work of organising his return to Parliament and carried it through to success in a most capable manner. So pleased and grateful was William Lyne that he gave her a six months' holiday in Tasmania and presented her with a gold watch. She was also the Chief Organising Secretary for Beeby in his election campaign. She was a keen writer and for some years contributed largely to the columns of the *Daily Advertiser* as a social writer and as a critic in the art, domestic work and school sections of the Murrumbidgee Pastoral and Agricultural Association Annual Shows.



Panoramic View of the Hospital and the Nurses' Home in 1925

**Official Opening, Wagga Wagga District Hospital, September 7, 1910.
The Committee, Medical Staff, Matron and Secretary of the Wagga Wagga
Hospital.**



Back: P.J. Johnstone, E. E. Collins, W.F. DuRieu and J. H. Skudder. **Middle:** A.V. Booth, O.A. Willans, Dr. T. W. W. Burgess, Dr. W. Leahy, P.H. Bradhurst, J.H. Wilkins and L. Aveyard. **Front:** A.F.D. White (Secretary), H. S. Headley (Vice President), Miss B.M. Wiseman (Matron), H.E. Mitchelmore (President), J.D. Walker (Vice President) and T. Dobney. **Absent:** Doctors Moncrief (pictured top left) Dr Stoker (pictured top right) and Warren, R.S. Heydon, J.J. McGrath and J.J. Scott.

Hospital Secretary

Eventually Miss Loughlin was appointed the Secretary of the Hospital Committee (as well as Collector/Organiser) on January 23, 1922. As such she was required to attend and assist at all local functions arranged for the Hospital and receive the cash; to visit the Hospital at least once a week to confer with the matron about patients' fees; to keep the patients' fees ledger and render monthly accounts; to organise all town and country efforts in aid of the Hospital and to see that proper balance sheets and returns were furnished; to collect annual subscriptions and donations and outstanding accounts; to enter in the Hospital books the dates of admission and discharge of patients, fill in patients' cards and do all clerical work at the Hospital.

During World War I she was a prominent member of the Wagga War Service Committee, Secretary of its Returned Soldiers Aid Sub Committee and on the Sub Committee formed to welcome home the Anzacs. She resigned from this Committee in 1917 when John Martin Loughlin, known as “Dick”, the only child of her brother, John (a widower and a private in the army serving overseas) became very ill and eventually died in October that year. Her brother, Joseph, a well known stipendiary steward died from meningitis on June 20, the following year.

In December 1924 she was given a bonus of thirty pounds in appreciation for all her hard work in the previous year. Her salary gradually increased over the years and by 1929 she was receiving five hundred pounds per annum.

RED CROSS

Bessie Loughlin was also devoted to the Red Cross and held several positions in the Wagga Wagga Red Cross.



Red

*Cross ladies with one of the boy scouts who assisted them
Bessie Loughlin is on the left in the second row.*

Back row : Mrs Langlay, Mrs Ellis, Marie Blake, Mrs Charles Davidson, Dorrine Sullivan, Gladys Dunn Mrs Mick Raleigh, Lady Piddington, Ethel Booty, Vi Dunn, Maisie Hardy, Kath Dosbery, Win Fletcher, Kath Bradhurst, Jackie Higgs (England) and Aggie Maloney/

Middle row: Bessie Loughlin, Enid Badgery (later Mrs Alex Davidson), Abie Sullivan, Aileen Irving, Ann Gowland, Rene Hinton, Miss Nash, Miss Harding, Mrs J. Jeremy, Mrs H. Hardy, Mrs F. C. Thomas

Front row: Mrs-, Vera O'Reilly (Mrs Forde), Thelma Angel, Marj, Headley, - Cameron, Miss Nash, Boy Scout, Rene? Ferguson, Emma Collins, - Cox

Miss Loughlin was appointed as its secretary in 1917 at twenty pounds per annum. Once again, with her mastery of detail, her enthusiasm and her organising ability, Miss Loughlin proved very valuable and by 1919 was appointed Collector and Organiser for the Hospital Committee itself with a salary of thirty pounds a year plus 10% Commission on all monies she collected. On March 14, 1921, she was also appointed Secretary to the Children's Ward Committee. She proved indefatigable particularly in her organisation of the travellers' days which raised over two thousand pounds and of the open air fares held in the Southern Cross Gardens which raised almost nine hundred pounds for the Children's Ward. It was due to her efficient organisation that expenses were kept so low. By 1921 the grateful Hospital Committee had increased her salary to one hundred and thirty pounds per annum.

Miss Loughlin herself became seriously ill in 1929 and was forced to resign on July 30, that year. The Hospital Committee placed on record *the highest appreciation of her valuable services during her term as Secretary*. By December 1929 a public appeal was being held *in appreciation of her zeal, organising ability and wonderful capacity for sustained effort in the performance of her services to the charitable and public institutions of Wagga, cheerfully undertaken*. She died in January 1930 and her funeral was attended by representatives from all sections of the community - professional, commercial and rural.

Miss Loughlin's obituary in the *Daily Advertiser* was indicative of feeling in the community. It stated: *It can be said that no other woman occupied just the position in relation to the community as did Miss Loughlin. Among all sections, and by all individuals, without regard to calling or social position, she was accepted as one of themselves. She filled a niche in the lives of the people which was unchallenged, and her death will break many a lifelong association in which personal friendship and appreciation for her great work were closely mingled. It was not only in the homes of her friends, or by those who were her colleagues in public matters, that her true worth was known, but among those also who were in distress and needed a friend and a helping hand. Many a poor family, many an old age pensioner, and many an unhappy "down and out" had Miss Loughlin to turn to in their troubles. Many a letter was written, many a case was taken up with the authorities, many a domestic difficulty was straightened out and many an old person was lifted out of the slough of despond by the kindly ministrations of Miss Loughlin.*

Miss Loughlin was survived by her sister Gertrude who later conducted an employment agency in Wagga Wagga; by her sister Mary, Sister Mary Columbiere of the Brigedine Convent at Echuca in Victoria; by her brother, John, and her brother Thomas, who had been the licensee of the Carrington Hotel and the Red Lion Hotel in Wagga Wagga.