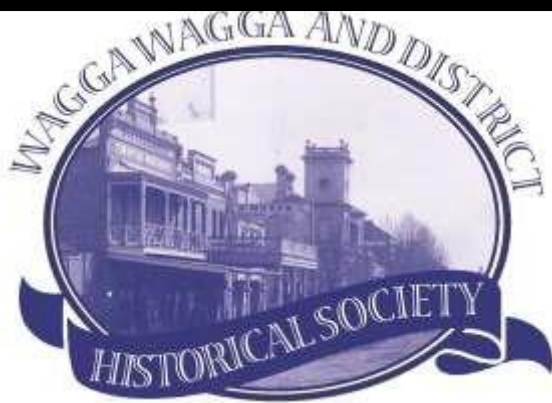




# WWDHS NEWSLETTER No. 459 April 2024–June 2024 ISSN 2207-1016

## NEXT MEETINGS

The society's next meetings will be held on **Monday 15th April 2024, at CSU Regional Archives [main campus - William Merrylees Library building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor].**

**Committee meeting at 1.30 p.m.**

**General Meeting at 2.00 p.m.**

**The general meeting will feature an outline of the archive's holdings – by a staff member.**

## COMMITTEE

President: Geoff Burch

Vice President: Geoff Haddon

Secretary: Mark Christison

Treasurer: Geoff Burch

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

## Dates to remember:

**Event - Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April at 1pm in the old school building, MoR, Willans Hill site – Thomas Graham, former curator of the Museum of the Riverina will talk about his time at the MoR.**

**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](mailto:info@wwdhs.org.au)

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

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

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

**Disclaimer:** The Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society Inc., and/or its members, through this newsletter, endeavours to provide accurate and reliable information, but does not warrant or make any representation regarding the accuracy or reliability of information contained within this newsletter. To the maximum extent permitted by applicable law, the Society and/or its members shall not be liable for any damages of any kind relating to the use of this information, including without limitation, direct, indirect, special, compensatory, or consequential damages, loss of profits or damage to property, even if the Society and/or its members have been advised of the possibility of such damages. Anyone acting on the information contained within this newsletter does so at their own risk.

**Another Bunnings Sausage Sizzle** – the WWDHS was the host for a Bunnings Sausage Sizzle on Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> March [Easter Saturday]. This followed a previous day back in December 2023. Easter Saturday was a hot day and we sincerely thank those that were able to man the stall and support a very successful day. A full report will be presented to the April meetings. Our thanks to Bunnings for providing this valuable community service, and to Riverina Ice who have provided support on both occasions.

## **Museum of the Riverina [MoR]: Exhibitions - current and upcoming.**

### Current Exhibitions



**Tom Castro: The man who never was**

Man, myth, would-be baronet, peep show oddity and pauper, who was Tom Castro, and did he ever really exist?

From Friday Dec 22 2023



**Lazy Days in Wagga Wagga**

Experience everyday Aussies enjoying picnics, games, dancing and larking around, with each photo brought to life through the addition of colour.

From Friday Dec 22 2023



**Australian of the Year 2024**

Learn about the 2024 Australian's of the Year and what inspired them to achieve greatness in the travelling exhibition from the National Museum of Australia

29 February - 28 April

### Upcoming Exhibitions



**There's more 2 HerStory**

A companion exhibition to 2019's HerStory, this exhibition documents and presents through objects and photographs new stories of even more women who have contributed to the development of the Wagga of yesterday and today.

Coming August 2024



**The Queen's Purse**

Join us for a whimsical, life size illustrated exhibition telling the incredible story of Marea Bright, world class milliner and Wagga Wagga character.

Coming August 2024

### Bald Archy

Congratulations to the MoR and the Wagga Wagga City Council for another very successful Bald Archy – the 28<sup>th</sup> in fact. The winning entry was announced in Canberra on the 15<sup>th</sup> March to a large gathering of the public, artists, and media. The winner in 2024 was Judy Nadin for her work, titled, *Flippin' Kerfection*.

Thanks to Luke Grealy and everyone else at the MoR who do great work promoting this fantastic event. Thanks to Maud [the white cockatoo who selects the winning entry each year] – long may she live.



**WINNER:** The 2024 Bald Archy winner Judy Nadin, 'Flippin' Kerfection', 2024

March Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker in March was member Barbara Barclay who gave a very interesting and well researched presentation on Andrew George Scott [alias Captain Moonlight]. The topic was timely given an impending author talk at the Wagga Wagga City Library for a new publication on this subject, and a push for the graves of Moonlite and Nesbitt to be placed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

No. 2170

Name *A. G. Scott als Capt Moonlight*

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Date when Portrait was taken, *26<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1879*  
*8264.79*

Native place *Ireland*

Year of birth *1845*

Arrived in (Ship) *Eden Allen*

Colony (Year) *1871*

Trade or occupation (previous to conviction) *McCoy's*

Religion *C of E*

Education, degrees of *None*

Height *5* feet *9 1/4* inches

Weight (On committal) *143*

In lbs. (On discharge)

Colour of hair *Brown*

Colour of eyes *Gray*

Marks or special features

Where and when tried *Sup. Ct. Court*  
*11 Dec. 79*

Offence *Murder*

Sentence *Death*

Remarks *Executed*  
*20 Jan'y. 1880.*

(No. of previous Portrait)

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS

| Where and When.            | Offence.               | Sentence.                   |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Sydney, Dec. 20 '70</i> | <i>False pretences</i> | <i>12 months St. Andrew</i> |
| <i>do. do. 21</i>          | <i>do</i>              | <i>18 do do</i>             |
| <i>Ballarat, 1872</i>      | <i>Bank robbery</i>    | <i>10 years Roads</i>       |
| <i>Gold. 40.</i>           | <i>under Arm.</i>      |                             |

Left: An extract from Scott’s goal record sheet.

Below: Photographs of Scott and Nesbitt.

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## CLAUDE COTTON - By Sherry Morris

Claude Ernest Cotton was one of the first men recruited for the Kangaroo March, the longest of the recruiting marches held in New South Wales and Queensland during the First World War. Although of average height (175 cm) and weight (70 kgs), he was an unlikely soldier. He had a pale complexion, very poor eyesight without his glasses and had a slight stammer. He had grey eyes and light brown hair.

Born in Wagga Wagga on 25 March 1895, Claude was the oldest of the five children of Alfred George Cotton and May Jane Cotton of Railway Street. He had attended school in Wagga Wagga and served three years in the school cadets. Since leaving school he had been working as a postal assistant and was still living with his parents.



*Left: Wagga Post Office where Claude Cotton worked prior to the First World War*

Claude enlisted as early as 22 October 1915. The local doctor, Dr Weedon passed him as fit for service but only with the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC). Claude nevertheless had decided to wait and march to Sydney with the Kangaroos on 1 December 1915.

After the march he completed his basic training with the Kangaroos at the Goulburn training camp. After the Kangaroos departed for overseas, he remained at the depot for another two months before he was transferred to the AAMC on 10 July 1916. However within four months he was discharged as 'medically unfit' after the Medical Board found that he was 'practically blind in both eyes' without his glasses, a disability which had dated from birth.



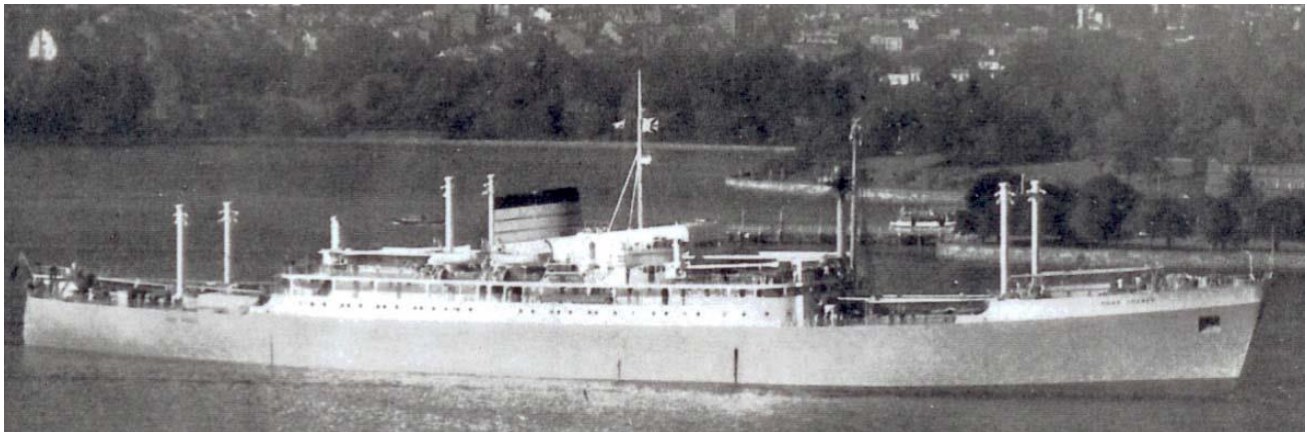
*Above: The Kangaroos at Wallacetown, north of Wagga Wagga, with the Kangaroo banner, the Union Jack and the ensign proudly displayed behind the marchers*

On the day of his discharge he immediately enlisted for home service. From 7 December 1916 to 5 March 1917 he was assigned to hospital work at the Field Hospital at the Liverpool Camp. In an unfortunate accident a few days before Christmas he fell while carrying a Dixie, which landed on his hand and fractured his wrist. He was admitted to the Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Randwick and remained until the end of January 1917.

By early 1917 the number of invalids returning to Australia sick, wounded or suffering from venereal disease was increasing rapidly and the strain on the hospitals and the medical profession was profound. The hospitals run by the Army needed more staff. Claude seized the opportunity and then applied to enlist on 16 February 1917. Although his sight was still extremely poor, he still had a stammer and now weighed 76 kilograms, he was accepted by the AAMC.

Initially he was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital at Randwick and then at Liverpool for a couple of weeks and then South Head from 19 March to 29 June 1917. Then, in preparation for overseas service, he was involved in practical training and exercises, infantry training, stretcher exercise, treatment of wounds, tent pitching, technical duties in trenches and the transport of the wounded. At the end of his course it was reported that he was 'competent to carry out hospital work', his intelligence was 'good' and his application 'good'. He was given his inoculations and over twenty fillings in his teeth.

On 5 November 1917 he embarked on the HMAT *Port Sydney* with general reinforcements for the AAMC, disembarking at the Suez on 12 December. A few weeks later he was transferred to England, on the *Tarranto*, arriving on 4 January 1918. He marched in to AAMC at Parkhouse the following day. He worked there for the following six months apart from twenty-five days with mumps and thirteen days with influenza.



*Above: The Port Sydney which transported Claude Cotton to Egypt at the end of 1917*

As the military situation in France became increasingly critical and more medical staff became crucial he was sent on the *Fovant* on 1 August 1918 to work in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian General Hospital at Abbeville in France. This was the headquarters of the Commonwealth lines of communications and several hospitals were located there. Most of the wounded came in by train and some seriously wounded by barge. At this stage of the war some of the wounded were arriving direct from the front on motor vehicles or other transport. From September an increasing number of influenza patients were admitted.

While serving at Abbeville, Claude was officially admonished for the first and only time during his war service on 25 November 1918 when he was charged 'with neglecting to obey a routine order concerning German Labour'.

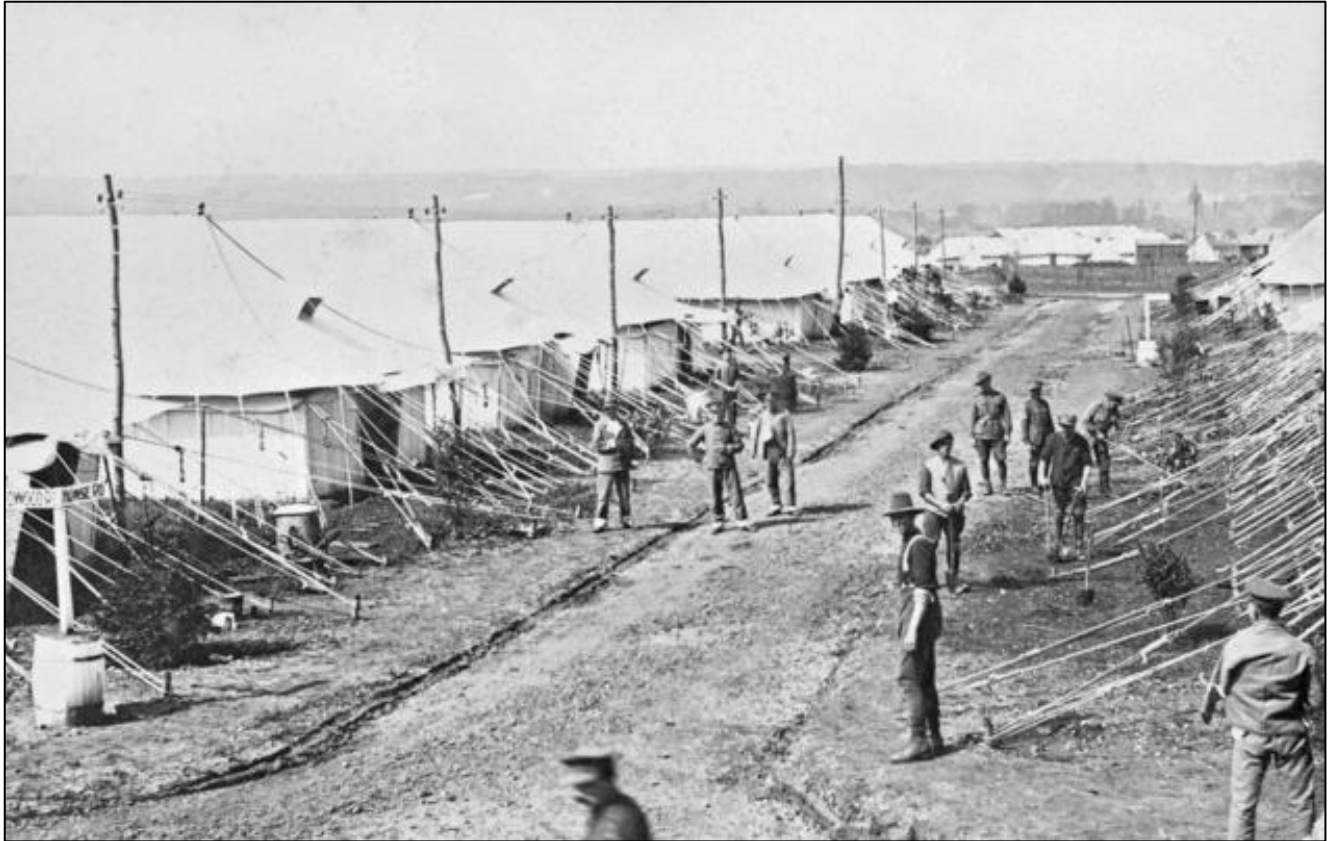
In March 1919, several months after the war had ended, he was returned to England in preparation for demobilization. He was immediately granted three months' leave to attend a telegraph school at Westham camp at Weymouth.

He returned to Australia on the *Ulysses* on 22 July 1919. Despite his initial rejections because of his medical unfitness, through determination and perseverance, Claude had managed to serve in the AAMC for two years 336

days including one year 305 days on overseas service.

On being discharged on 5 September 1919, he stated that he intended to live at Railway Street, Wagga Wagga, with his parents. Unfortunately his father died just three months after his return.

Claude moved to Sydney about 1922 after his first marriage to Amy Beatrice Liversidge who died in 1947. Two years after Amy died he married Mona Thelma Austen at Ashfield in Sydney. He worked as a public servant in Sydney for many years.



*Above: 3 Australian General Hospital, Abbeville, France, where Claude Cotton worked in 1918. Source: Australian War Memorial*

Thank you, Sherry, for two interesting articles.

## Herbert Ernest Murphy, A Popular Larrikin - By Sherry Morris

During the First World War several recruiting marches were organized in New South Wales and Queensland to encourage eligible men to enlist. The Kangaroo March was the second and the longest of these recruiting marches. It commenced in Wagga Wagga on December 1, 1915 with about eighty-eight marchers and arrived in Sydney on January 7, 1916 with a nominal strength of 222 after a march of 350 miles (560 kilometres).

One of the first to volunteer for the Kangaroo March was Herbert Ernest Murphy on 10 October 1915. Born in Bathurst on 24 April 1881, he was the son of Daniel and Mary Murphy of Wellington, NSW, the oldest of ten children. A short and wiry man, he had been a well-known popular dealer and carrier in Wagga Wagga for some time. He was described as aged 34 years, 5 months, 162.5 centimetres in height and weighing 60 kilograms. He had dark complexion, blue eyes and brown hair.

According to *The Daily Advertiser*, in September 1915, he had attended a recruiting meeting and challenged a speaker, a big strong lad, asking him why he had not gone to the front. Apparently the speaker had already been rejected owing to a physical defect that was not obvious but he responded by saying he would if Murphy would. When both he and Murphy fronted the medical the following day the speaker was rejected and Murphy accepted.

Murphy was drafted to the Cootamundra Camp but was co-opted to return to Wagga Wagga to participate and assist with the transports in the memorable Kangaroo March. Murphy donated his own transport, which he had used in his business.

He decorated it with the Australian coat of arms and the crest of the Wagga Wagga Municipal Council, two crows with the motto, *We live to crow* (see right) and the words *Murphy's coming*.

Murphy drove his own transport and looked after all the transports. Although not a vet, he also looked after the horses. In fact, his knowledge of horses and his makeshift repairs of the wagons proved invaluable during the march. For example, when the wheels of his own wagon were collapsing he secured some saplings and fencing wire and managed to brace the wheel so that it was, he claimed, 'stronger than ever'. When the Kangaroo March arrived in Sydney there were four wagons (and a water cart) which a reporter for the *Daily Telegraph* claimed looked like 'a cross between a menagerie and a pawnbroker's shop on wheels'.

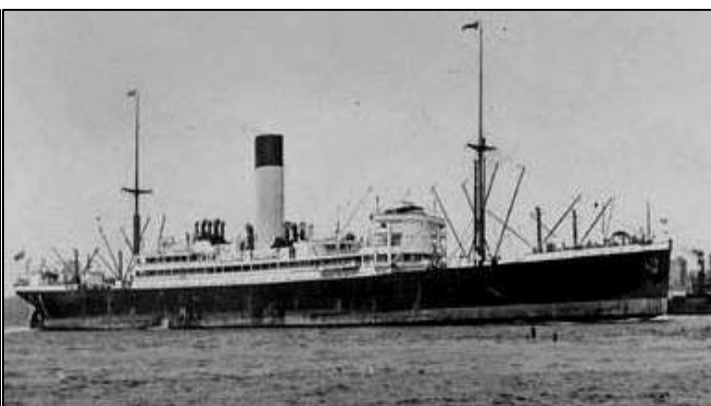


A master of repartee and invective, Murphy became passionate about recruiting and always did his best during the march to encourage others to swell the ranks of the Kangaroos. When the Kangaroo March arrived in Sydney, the *Daily Telegraph* reporter was full of admiration for Murphy, stating that he was 'renowned for his fiery eloquence when trying to persuade the unemployed to enlist'. He had amused a little knot of spectators when he challenged a young fellow, who had facetiously asked if his transport was an ambulance, to 'get into the dungarees'.

After a couple of months of training in Goulburn, Murphy and several others from the Kangaroo March were transferred to the Liverpool Camp. He subsequently embarked with at least sixteen other Kangaroos on the *Nestor* (pictured right) on 9 April 1916 as 17<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion.



*Above: The transports at Mittagong. Murphy's transport is on the left displaying the Crest of Wagga Municipal Council with the motto, 'We live to crow', supported by two crows and two kangaroos. On the right of this are the words 'Murphy's coming'.*



*Above left: Herbert Ernest Murphy.*

*Above right: the Nestor which transferred 'Murphy' to Egypt.*

After about two months' training in Egypt, he was one of the first of the Kangaroos to be transferred to France and joined the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the field on 19 August 1916 – just after the disastrous battle of Fromelles, the first major battle on the western front involving Australian soldiers. Within a week he had been partly buried by a shell at Pozieres and suffered shellshock. He was transferred back to England to the Tunbridge Wells Eye and Ear Hospital in Kent with pleurisy. He was discharged two months later and returned to France in February 1917.

Two months later he was a Prisoner of War, captured during the ill-conceived and costly attack on Bullecourt near the Hindenburg Line. The 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade including the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been ordered to capture German lines and push on towards Riencourt. It was a cold and windy night and snow covered the ground. Despite heavy enemy fire they managed to drive the enemy out of their trenches in close fighting with bayonets and bombs. For a while the Australians held part of the Hindenburg Line but they were cut off. During their hasty retreat casualties were severe and 1170 Australians (including Murphy who had been wounded in the leg by shrapnel) were forced to surrender.

On 11 April 1917, Murphy had been reported as 'missing in action'. Later it was confirmed that he had been captured at Riencourt and was a prisoner-of-war (POW) in Germany. Initially he was held at the Minden Camp for about nine days and then Dulmen Prison Camp for a few months. Then he was transferred to Stammlager, Preussich Holland, in East Prussia on August 30, 1917 for the remainder of the war. In Prussia he was kept in a compound with wooden barracks, each accommodating 250 prisoners. He had to work on farms, for example, cutting and carting hay and digging potatoes, in harsh conditions. He described the food as sloppy, without nourishment and 'anything but clean'. The women used to spit in his face and use insulting gestures while the guards often struck him with rifle butts. One guard twisted his arm around his back and threw him in a barrel, breaking his arm.

He believed he was able to survive because of the Red Cross who regularly sent parcels which contained solid foods 'which were most acceptable for starving men'. It was also through the Red Cross that he was able to let his friends and relatives know that he was in good health. Typically he made light of his situation maintaining 'it was all in the game' and that he kept on smiling. He managed to write a letter to his sister Ivy in Wellington, NSW and expressed concern about his two brothers, Arthur and John, who were both on active service. The Red Cross kept him informed on Arthur who had trench fever and on John who had been wounded and gassed and was in hospital in England, telling him that he was 'doing well'.

After the war, he was repatriated to England, arriving on New Years Day 1919. He was eventually returned to Australia on the *China* on 10 June 1919. Eleven days later *The Daily Advertiser* advised that he was to arrive in Wagga Wagga by the mail train that day and take up residence for a while with Phil Benson in Crampton Street. In the 1920s the indomitable Murphy again established a second hand dealer shop at 165 Fitzmaurice Street in Wagga. About 1925 he married Eva Mabel Clair in Wagga Wagga and by 1930 he and Eva had moved to Gosford, NSW, where he worked as a labourer. Eva died on August 12, 1938 at the age of fifty-three. Murphy died on March 22, twenty years later at the age of seventy-seven. He was buried in the Roman Catholic Section of the Point Clare Cemetery in the Gosford area.



Above: Minden POW Camp where Murphy was held after his capture in 1917.