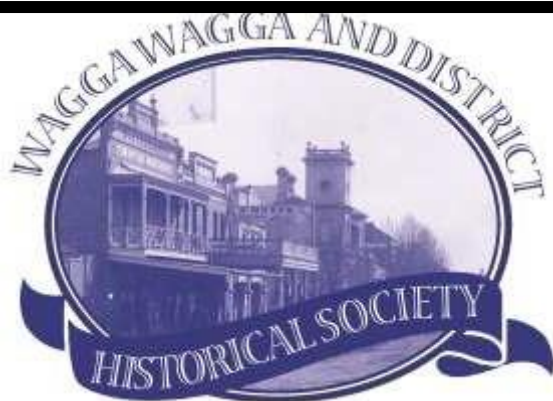




WWDHS NEWSLETTER No. 461 Oct. 2024–Dec. 2024 ISSN 2207-1016

NEXT MEETINGS

The society's next meetings will be held on **Monday 21st October 2024**, at the Museum of the Riverina, Willans Hill site.

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

COMMITTEE

President: Geoff Burch
Vice President: Geoff Haddon
Secretary: Mark Christison
Treasurer: Geoff Burch

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

At our recent AGM all members of the committee from the previous year were re-elected. The officials are unchanged and are as listed above. There were no new nominations for any of the positions. Annual subscriptions remain the same - \$20 for single membership and \$30 for double membership.

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

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.

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

Current Exhibitions



The Incredible Feminist of Wagga Wagga

Wagga Wagga, 1979... Women are restless and unfulfilled. When they try to discover why, they find they are trapped by the patriarchy! Can they escape and become the creators of their own destinies?

Digital Exhibition



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



Marea and 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.

August 17 2024 - December 8 2024

Upcoming Exhibitions



Bald Archy Prize 2024

A hilarious display of Australia's very best satirical portraiture, as judged by the venerable Professor Maude Cockatoo.

From 18 December



The Lex Factor: From Wagga to the World Stage

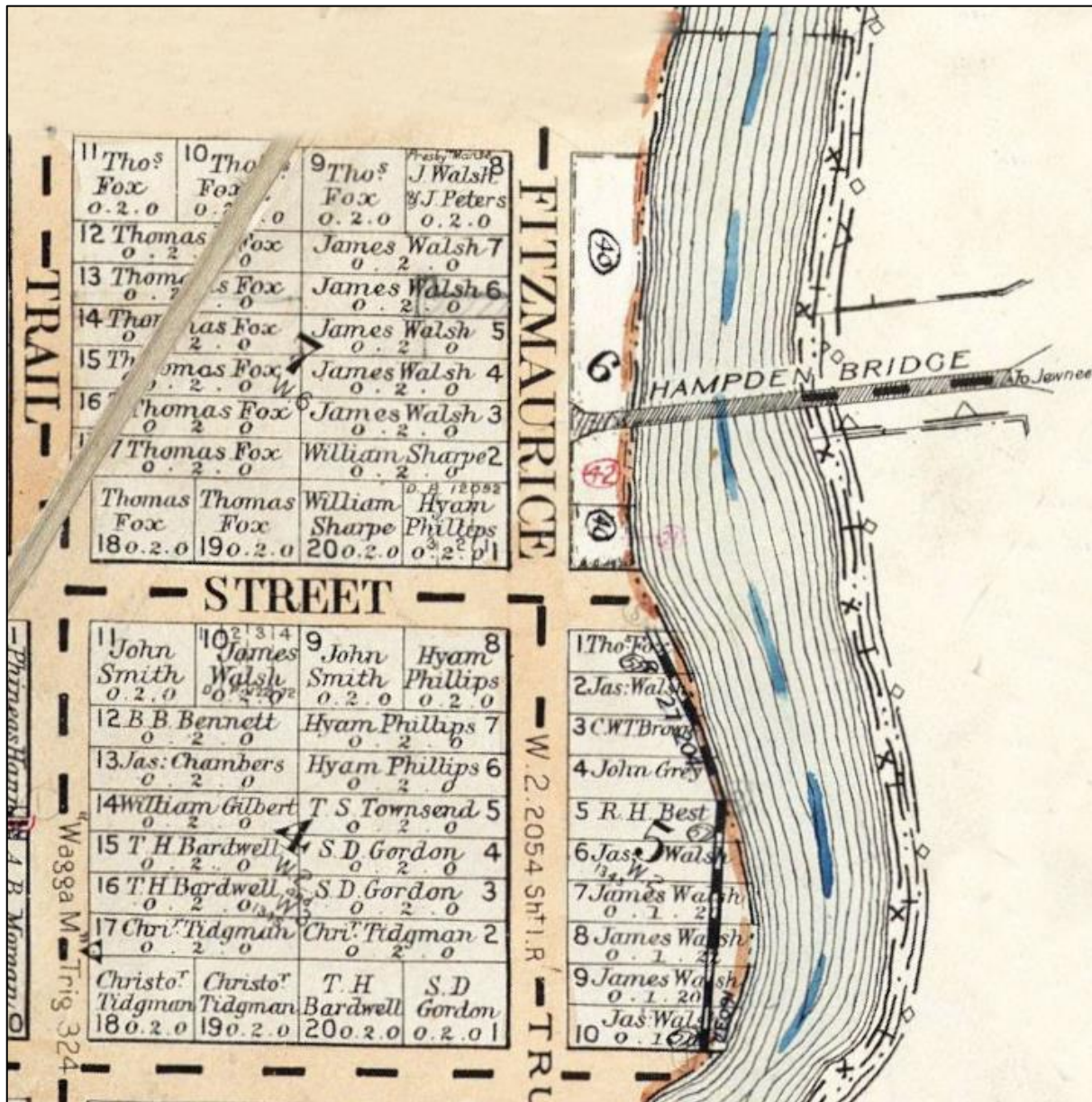
A celebration of the life of Lex Marinos, OAM.

From 18 December

Congratulations to Sophie Magnusson for two excellent Exhibitions – Marea and the Queen's Purse / The Incredible Feminist of Wagga Wagga. So good to have so many talented people at the MoR.

Wagga Wagga Wharf – by Geoff Burch

The Wagga Wagga wharf was located on section 6, in the town and parish of South Wagga Wagga.



Above: Extract from town plan showing section 6, dissected by the Hampden bridge. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services. HLRV.

The notations on the map – no's 40 and 42 – specify various purposes for which the lands within were utilised. These included police purposes [southern end of section 6], protection of the approaches to the Hampden bridge, and public recreation. The Wagga Wagga City Council were appointed as trustees of the land in October 1954.

The earliest paddle steamer to pass through Wagga Wagga was the *Albury*, navigated by Captain Cadell, which reached as far as Gundagai in September 1858.¹ Three months later Cadell navigated the *Albury* on a second trip, from Adelaide, which arrived at Wagga Wagga, with cargo, on the 14th November 1858.²

¹ Australian Dictionary of Biography. Francis Cadell [1822-1879], Ian Mudie. <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cadell-francis-3136>. Accessed 28th September 2024.

² Keith Swan. A History of Wagga Wagga. 1970. p89.

River navigation depended heavily on the amount of water in the rivers. Swan noted that only six vessels reached Wagga Wagga in the two year period 1859 and 1860, and none in the period 1860 to 1865, inclusive. The extension of the rail line to Echuca, from Melbourne, in 1864, considerably enhanced the attraction of river boat transport to that town.

Prior to the arrival of the railway line in 1878 [at Bomen] river transport offered a cheaper means of delivering goods to and from Wagga Wagga – hence the push for a wharf. Periods of high rivers catalysed renewed interest in such infrastructure.



Above: Construction of the Hampden Bridge with the old Company Bridge still standing - on the downstream side. The old wharf can be seen in the background. Courtesy CSU Regional Archives.

In the latter part of 1868, the local Wagga Wagga citizens were expressing their concerns over the delay in the construction of a wharf at Wagga Wagga. A petition signed by eighty three supporters, was sent by George Forsyth to the local member, Mr Macleay, for presentation to the Minister for Works. The petition read as follows,³

“We the undersigned Residents of Wagga and surrounding District taking a deep interest in the Navigation of the Murrumbidgee River, and the great importance of encouraging Steamers to trade thereon, beg most respectfully to direct your attention to a Vote made in the last Session of Parliament for disbursing a sum of One Thousand Pounds in the construction of a Public Wharf on a piece of land reserved for that purpose at South Wagga Wagga, and which was inspected and approved of by Mr. Moriarty, the Commissioner for Harbours and Rivers, as essentially necessary for the loading and discharge of Steamers trading to and from Wagga Wagga, Gundagai,

³ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 5th December 1868, p2.

Narandera, Hay, Darlington, Maude Balranald, and other Towns forming on the banks of the Murrumbidgee. The necessity for this Wharf being erected was fully shown during the last few months, when the River being lower than usual had sufficient depth of water to allow several Steamers to visit Wagga Wagga with cargo and to take agricultural produce in return. The Steamers "Albury," the "J.H.P.," the "Bunyip," and others found great difficulty in shipping and discharging cargo for want of this Wharf. The Site for this Wharf is the only piece of Crown Land available in the town, and has ever since the town was formed been left for wharf purposes. We beg most respectfully to request that, you will as early as possible cause Tenders for the construction of this Wharf to be called for, so that the amount voted for, that purpose may be disbursed and the Navigation of the River encouraged by this erection. Your obedient servants."

The funds for the wharf had been voted for some two years earlier and, presumably, the recent increase in river boat arrivals had provided the impetus for a fresh push.

There was an immediate response from the government, with tenders for the work sought in December that same year [1868]. Tender applications closed on the 2nd February 1869.⁴

There were elements of opposition to the official plans for the wharf. In January an editorial piece declared "*an inspection of the plans will convince every intelligent person acquainted with the locality, and the action of the river,*" of the folly of the proposed structure.

The article claimed the wharf would be a mere four feet above summer levels, which would mean the structure would be twenty four feet under water in a twenty eight foot flood. The editor declared that the floor of the wharf should be level with the bank and finished his argument with the sentence – "*Better have no wharf at all, than the sort of thing being proposed.*" The article noted the erosion of the river bank that had occurred over time and highlighted the need for same to be reinforced either side of the proposed wharf.⁵

Mr Macleay met with Commissioner Moriarty [Commissioner of Harbours and Rivers], who explained that the plans had been "*misunderstood*" and that an explanation would be forwarded to the local press.⁶

There was clearly a diversity of opinions within the community and in February 1869 the local member, Mr Macleay, advised that the process had been halted pending further public consultation. Plans were afoot to send details of local objections to Mr Moriarty's plans for the wharf.⁷ Arguments were not just restricted to the structure itself, there were also arguments over the site for the wharf, including one site nominated by Captain Cadell.⁸ Prior to the establishment of a purpose built wharf, the river bank at the end of Crampton Street was commonly used by those paddle steamers that unloaded cargo at Wagga Wagga.⁹

In June 1869, a letter to the editor, bemoaned the lack of any progress on the project. Two boats had already reached Wagga Wagga and a third, the *Victoria*, was expected shortly, carrying "*about one hundred tons of merchandise.*" The writer suggested it would be a "*simple matter*" to "*level a portion of the bank and make a roadway for carts or drays*" at a spot behind SA Phillip's soda water factory.¹⁰

In October 1869, with the *Victoria* due at any time, a temporary floating wharf was constructed alongside the wharf reserve [section 45]. The edifice consisted of the hull of *PS Nangus* which had been secured to the bank, and a mechanism up on the reserve for drawing the cargo up the slope using horse power.¹¹ This structure was later converted to serve as the "*free bridge.*"¹²

⁴ NSW Government Gazette. 1868, p4579; Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23rd December 1868, p2.

⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 20th January 1869, p2.

⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 27th January 1869, p2.

⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 3rd February 1869, p2.

⁸ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 20th February 1869, p2.

⁹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 7th August 1869, p2.

¹⁰ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 16th June 1869, p3.

¹¹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30th October 1869, p2.

¹² Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 6th April 1870, p2.

The lack of response to the first call for tenders saw a new round of tenders sought in September 1869, for construction of a “*timber wharf*” at Wagga Wagga.¹³ In November 1869 it was announced that the tender of Alfred Treasure and Henry Webb had been accepted.¹⁴

By March 1870, the works were well underway, and a press report provided a detailed description of the object,¹⁵

“The gradient is one in eight, which is in our opinion much too steep; one in twelve would have been preferable. The wharf proper will be planked strongly, over a width of 12 ft. from the roadway to the waterside. The roadway will be 33 ft. wide, formed of rough granite, well compacted by a mixture of sand and loam. The piles along the roadway and river's edge will be 12 ft. apart from the lowest point of the wharf to about half way up the incline, when they will be separated by a space of 20 ft. Saplings will be laid closely in from one pile to the other from the point where they spring from the ground up to the level of the planked wharf, and the interval between these saplings and piles and the planking will be closely filled in with earth well compacted, to give the whole work connection and solidity. The saplings, of course, are to prevent the escape of earth between the cutting and the piles, and to give a perfect face towards the water. Against this face, vessels will be brought broadside, and may load and unload upon the planked platform until the river breaks its bank. The whole of the timber used in the work consists of the very best flooded gum and iron-bark, and has been brought from distances of twenty-eight and nineteen miles; Some of it having been cut near Mr. Mate's and other portions near Mr. Leitch's. The piles will be bound together along the tops by a very heavy solid cap of river-gum, into which their respective heads will be inserted by a mortice about 9 inches square. This will give strength and continuity to this part of the work, and form an excellent burr or set-off to the roadway and edges of the planked wharf on the river's side. There will be a gutter or water-way on the inner side of the cutting to allow the escape of water flowing in from the head of the gang way or over the upper lip of the cutting itself.”

Wet weather during March and April 1870 resulted in a considerable rise in the river, which caused delays in the construction of the new wharf. The railway line from Sydney had reached Goulburn by 1870, and the citizens of Wagga Wagga were already pressing for an extension of the line to their town.¹⁶ Major flooding in May 1870 worsened the situation.

Notice to Consignees per Steamer
“Victoria,” from Echuca.

CARGO will be landed at the WHARF
THIS DAY (SATURDAY).
J. S. EDMONDSON,
Secretary.
Wagga Wagga,
June 11, 1870.

The “Victoria”

WILL BE DESPATCHED for Nar-
andera, Hay, and Echuca), calling
at intermediate places), on MONDAY Next,
the 13th instant.
Wagga Wagga,
June 10, 1870.

In June 1870, William Costain took James Treasure and Henry Webb to court to recover a shortage in wages paid. Costain had been contracted at 7s per day but was only paid 6s. The defendants argued that was all he was worth. The court ruled in favour of the plaintiff.¹⁷

It seems the wharf was operational by June 1870, with *PS Victoria* unloading and reloading there in mid June.¹⁸ The *Albury* followed in August 1870.¹⁹

Left: Notice re arrival of *PS Victoria* in June 1870.

¹³ NSW Government Gazette. 1869, p2449.

¹⁴ NSW Government Gazette. 1869, p2932; Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 17th November 1869, p2.

¹⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 26th March 1870, p2.

¹⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 23rd April

¹⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 11th June 1870, p2.

¹⁸ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 11th June 1870, p3.

¹⁹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 27th August 1870, p2.

The construction was though, as yet, incomplete and there were concerns it would have to wait till summer before the project could be completed. There were still planks to be laid and the roadwork was far from a fait accompli.²⁰

A further report in August 1870 stated that the planking of the wharf and the metalling of the associated road were both half finished. Mooring posts had been fixed, for vessels to tie to. The report complained that the road and the wharf were at the same level, which meant cargo had to be lifted up onto carts.²¹

PUBLIC SALE of GOODS
Ex Steamer "Albury."
STAPLETON MINCHIN
 will SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
THIS DAY,
SATURDAY, AUGUST 27th, 1870,
 On board the "ALBURY" Steamer, at the
 Wharf, at 11 o'clock sharp,
 A Cargo of Goods, consisting of :—
 Sugars
 Teas
 Salt
 Adelaide Jams
 Tomato Sauce
 Tobacco—Barrett's
 Timber
 Portland Cement
 Crockery
 Ironmongery
 Woolpacks
 Sheepshears
 Sewing Twine
 Oilmans' Stores
 Soap.
 One BOAT, OARS, &c.
 5 and 6 feet Palings.
 Terms at Sale.
STAPLETON MINCHIN,
 Auctioneer.

When the *Albury* arrived in August 1870, local agent, Stapleton Minchin, held a sale by public auction, from the vessel.²²

Left: Notice in August 1870 promoting the sale of goods directly from the moored vessel, *Albury*.

In June 1871, *PS Victoria*, with barge in tow, arrived in Wagga Wagga laden with cargo. The local press noted, "*Unfortunately the wharf is where it usually is – under water.*"²³

In July 1871, a function was held at the Commercial hotel to recognise the role played by Mr Berthon, the local representative for Harbours and Rivers, who had supervised the construction of the wharf at Wagga Wagga, which was now completed.²⁴

In August 1871, the "*Free Punt*," recently completed by Mr Chapman, was moored to the wharf, ready to be put into service. The edifice was effectively an expression of dissatisfaction with the fees charged for crossing the Company Bridge, whose owners' authority was enforced by an act of parliament.²⁵

In November 1871, the *Victoria* made the trip from Echuca to Wagga Wagga in eight and a half days, which, according to the local press was "*the shortest time....ever made by a river boat in this part of the world.*" On the return trip back to Echuca the vessel carried 150 bales of wool from

Toyeou [sic].²⁶ In October 1872, the *Victoria* departed from the Wagga Wagga wharf carrying 150 bales of wool from Marrar and another 240 bales from Toyeo.²⁷

To Contractors, Builders, Etc.
FOR IMMEDIATE SALE,
THE whole of the VALUABLE PILE-
 DRIVING MACHINERY, lately used
 in the erection of the Wagga Wagga Wharf,
 comprising -
 ENGINE and MONKEY,
 CRAB WINCH,
 BLOCKS, ROPES, CHAINS, &c., &c.
 For full particulars, apply to
STAPLETON MINCHIN,
 Auctioneer.

In June 1872, the equipment used to build the wharf was advertised for sale.²⁸

Left: The June 1872 sale notice for the equipment used to build the Wagga Wagga wharf.

²⁰ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 2nd July 1870, p2.

²¹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 10th August 1870, p2.

²² Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 27th August 1870, p3.

²³ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 28th June 1871, p2.

²⁴ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 15th July 1871, p2.

²⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 16th August 1871, p2.

²⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4th November 1871, p2.

²⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 30th October 1872, p2.

²⁸ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 8th June 1872, p2.

River boats continued to ply the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers throughout the 1870s, with the *Victoria* being prominent at Wagga Wagga. The *Victoria* commonly carried some one hundred tons of cargo.²⁹

Decency standards were somewhat different in 1873. In March of that year Charles Wall and Edward Ryan were convicted of “*bathing within view of the public wharf and bridge at the hour of 6:30pm.*” Each man was fined 1s plus 5s 6d court costs.³⁰

Steam to Hay and Narandera

—

THE STEAMER

PLATYPUS,

WITH BARGE,

Will leave WAGGA WAGGA for NARAN-
DERA and intermediate places

EVERY MONDAY

—

THE STEAMER

Wagga Wagga

Will be despatched

Fortnightly for HAY.

—

Consignors will distinctly understand that
this Boat can only take Cargo which is con-
signed for stations beyond Narandera.
For particulars of freight, &c., apply to
either of the Captains on board, or to

J. T. LAING,
Manager,
Pastoral Hotel.

The railway line to North Wagga Wagga [Bomen] was officially opened in September 1878.³¹ This did not spell the immediate demise of the river boat traffic, but it did cause a significant decline in the number of trips. In November 1878, *PS Wagga Wagga* was loading cargo, in preparation for a trip to Hay.³² Paddle steamers continued to navigate from Wagga Wagga to downstream destinations throughout 1879, but by 1880 there appeared to be a single vessel operating, the *Platypus*, under the management of JT Laing. The last advertisement for this vessel appeared in August 1880, and it is assumed business gradually diminished from that time forward.³³

Left: The last advertisement found for a river boat servicing Wagga Wagga – in August 1880.

A report in September 1905, confirmed that the steamer, *Wagga Wagga*, was still transporting goods from downstream to Wagga Wagga. The September trip, the second for the season, conveyed some fifty tons of timber from Brewarrina, which was then sent by rail from Wagga Wagga to Corowa. The vessel belonged to Messrs John Roach, sawmillers of Narandera, and had loaded supplies for Wagingoberembie [sic] and other stations downstream, for its return trip.³⁴ It is clear that river boats continued to service Wagga Wagga into the early 20th century.



Left: *PS Wagga Wagga* abandoned near Narandera. Courtesy South Australia State Library.

²⁹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 18th October 1873, p2.

³⁰ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 22nd March 1873, p2.

³¹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 4th September 1878, p2.

³² Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 27th November 1878, p2.

³³ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 5th August 1880, p3.

³⁴ Wagga Wagga Express. 2nd September 1905, p2.



Above and Below: Wagga Wagga wharf [post 1895]. Courtesy CSU Regional Archives [RW.3016-1 and RW.2893-10-348]



WILLIAM JAMES MURPHY - By Sherry Morris

William James Joseph Murphy, the son of a local police sergeant, was one of the youngest men who left Wagga with the Kangaroo March on 1 December 1915.

Sergeant William Murphy was well known in the Riverina. After joining the police force in New South Wales on 10 July 1893, he had been stationed at various areas in the Riverina area including Albury, Junee, Urana and Wagga Wagga. While stationed in Wagga Wagga he had been promoted to Police Sergeant in August 1915. He had married Amy Midgley on 30 June 1896 in the Baptist Church at Granville in Sydney.



Young William (pictured left), born at Junee on 23 March 1897, was William and Amy's oldest son and second oldest child. He had five sisters and two brothers. One of his sisters, Caroline, had died at Junee at the age of 3 in 1907 as a result of 'burns and shock to the system accidentally received'.

At the age of 15, William had left school and taken up an apprenticeship as a carpenter with J. Neill in Wagga Wagga.

Below: Constable William Murphy with two of his daughters outside the Junee Police Station where he was stationed in the late 1890s (where William was born).





Above: William and three of his sisters



Above left: William James Joseph as a young man, before his enlistment



Above right: Amy and William Murphy, William's parents. Photographs by courtesy of Phil Murphy, WA

In November 1915 William had volunteered but he had been found medically unfit at medical examinations in Wagga Wagga and Cootamundra (probably because of curvature of the spine). He was nevertheless allowed to continue in the march as the drummer boy. He beat the kettledrum, which had been donated to the March by the Wagga Wagga Primary School children to assist their Kangaroos with their marching. William was eventually attested at Goulburn on 24 December 1915 and passed his Medical Exam, after the march had concluded, on 10 January 1916. He was only 162 cm tall and weighed about 56 kilograms. He had black hair, brown eyes and a dark complexion. He was assigned to the second reinforcements of the 55th Battalion and embarked from Sydney with most of the Kangaroos on the *Ceramic* on 14 April 1916.



Left: The Kangaroos marching to the beat of the kettledrum. William Murphy is probably the drummer.

After training in Egypt and England he joined the 55th Battalion in the field on 15 August 1916. A month later he attended a School of Instruction on grenades and was then transferred to the 14th Brigade Light Trench Mortar Battery. Unlike Medium and Heavy Mortar Batteries, which were manned by artillerymen, the Light Trench Mortar Batteries were manned by infantrymen. Each brigade had eight 3" stokes mortars, each manned by two soldiers.

In May 1917 the 55th Battalion became engaged in the second attack on Bullecourt, a village incorporated like a bastion in the Hindenburg Line near Arras. This battle raged for twenty-three days and included severe hand-to-hand fighting and intensive bombardment from both sides. However, the Australians managed to make a gap in the Hindenburg line about three kilometres wide. It was a stunning victory against the finest Prussian troops in the German army. During this battle, on 18 May 1917, William was severely wounded in the left shoulder. After being treated at a casualty clearing station and the Canadian General Hospital in Boulogne he was invalided to England and admitted to Kitchener's Military Hospital in Brighton. Just over a month later he was transferred to 2nd Auxiliary Hospital at Southall in West London.

After he recovered from his wounds he was declared 'non-effective' because of Scoliosis and was returned to Australia on the HMAT *Benalla*, which arrived in Australia on 27 October 1917. Two days later he travelled by train to Wagga Wagga.

He was discharged officially as medically unfit on 28 November 1917. He was not granted a pension because his disability was not the result of warlike activities.

A few years after William's return, his father contracted Pulmonary Tuberculosis and by 1921 had to resign from the police force because of his ill-health. He died on 27 April 1922 at the age of 52. After the funeral at the Methodist Church, a detachment of police formed a guard of honour and marched each side of the hearse while mounted police rode in front of the hearse to the cemetery.

A few years later William married twenty-seven year old Ada Louise Nixon, a daughter of Robert Nixon and Louisa Gibbs (and a granddaughter of the Robert Nixon, the first flour miller in Wagga Wagga). The couple had one child, Robert.

By the 1950s they were living in Hurstville, Sydney. William died at Kogarah in Sydney in 1970 at the age of seventy-three. His wife Ada died at Pendle Hill in 1981.

73 Ideal
Elevated
Residential
Sites

EAST WAGGA SUBDIVISION

See Local
Sketch for
Special
Features

Only 240 yards from Wagga Railway Station
To be served by a New Ramp Bridge and full Services

AUCTION SALE

Oxford Theatre

WEDNESDAY
SEPT. 21st, 1927
commencing at 3 p.m. sharp

Wagga's Most Accessible Residential Land Ready to be Built Upon
with Services established

Embracing frontages to Railway, Coleman, Hill, Richmond, Young and Burwood Streets

Because of its elevation, perfect drainage and convenient locality, East Wagga is an ideal Subdivision

This area has been recently resubdivided with Municipal Council's approval and new roads and means of access such as Ramps, Traffic Bridge, are provided for, as well as proposed subway under viaduct.

Just Stroll over the Subdivision and See for Yourself

Convenient Situation

Within easy distances from Railway Station, High School, Mount Erin Convent, Public School, Post Office, Banks, Stores, & Other Business Activities also Park

Commanding all Municipal Services
such as Sewerage Water, Gas, and Electric Light

Frontages vary chiefly from 77 to 50 and 55 feet by Excellent Depths

TITLE TORRENS
Wald & Blair, Wagga, Solicitors for the Vendors

ON EXCEPTIONALLY
LIBERAL TERMS
£10 per block cash Deposit
Balance by Quarterly Instalments over 3 years with interest at 6½ per cent. per annum

MEURANT BLAKE WATTS CLARK LTD.

WAGGA

and

J. JEREMY & CO.

WAUWATIA

AUCTIONEERS IN CONJUNCTION

Above: The WWDHS very much appreciates the various historical items that members of the public regularly donate. The original of this subdivision plan is now held by CSU Regional Archives. Our thanks to John Riddell for his help in digitizing the plan.



Above: Another donation – a photo of the 1950 flood - viewed from Willans Hill.

Meetings and Technology

Face to face meetings are still popular with members of small to medium size community groups but things are changing. COVID changed the way we did things, and now AI is having an even bigger impact. Online meetings are now a regular feature for many groups. They provide access to a wider audience and a global supply of guest speakers.

ZOOM appears to be the most popular software for online meetings but there are many others. The concept of a hybrid meeting – both face to face and online participation brings its own complexities. To achieve equality of participation requires some serious technology – cameras, microphones, mixers, speakers.

Many of us will have attended a larger meeting where a professional team has managed the technology on the day. These are skilled people who do this stuff day in, day out. The cost of the equipment they deploy is way more than a small to medium sized community group can generally afford, and the skills required to manage the equipment are not readily available.

Issues to solve relate to vision [cameras], audio [microphones and speakers], and participation [whiteboards, et al].

Camera and audio placement and room layout - A major hybrid meeting room challenge occurs when remote participants can't see or hear all the people in the room. In a hybrid video meeting, remote participants are in their own squares and can be seen well by everyone. But the meeting room for in-person attendees is usually just one square in the meeting grid, giving a bowling alley view of the conference table. Online participants see the table, and the people, but when they're having side conversations, you can't really hear them.

For many small to medium size organizations the only practical option to make it easier for both face to face and online participants to see and hear each other, is to use developing technology like that which companies like Owl and Logitech make – cameras and rally bars with audio capability.

Center-of-table cameras or rally bars feature cameras that can capture the whole room. AI software in these hardware options identify in-room attendees and places them in their own square. However, this option only works well if everyone is visible to the camera. The AI can recognize who is speaking and switches the camera to that person.

The Centre of table technologies are good for a small to medium sized group sitting at a table, but larger groups require multiple Owls and at around \$2k each it is generally too expensive for small to medium NFP groups. Rally bar setups can cost in excess of \$5K.

The situation becomes much less satisfactory when there are multiple zones in a room – when the chairperson, audience, and guest speaker are in different zones, with a large screen to display the online participants in a 4th zone. It is particularly difficult to coordinate the audio. It requires multiple cameras, microphones, a mixer, speaker, and someone to man the controls.

Hopefully technology will continue to improve and provide greater scope at a lower price. I'm sure many of us would give this technology a go if we knew it could be achieved with just one piece of technology connected to our laptop – like an Owl.

Hybrid meetings provide the opportunity for more members to fully participate in meetings, gatherings, or events like workshops, webinars, and training sessions.

An alternative that avoids the above problems is online only sessions. In this format equality for participants depends primarily on the technology used by the hosts, and secondly that used by each participant.



Left: An Owl 4 with 360° vision and inbuilt audio capability.

Right: A Logitech Rally bar with camera and audio capability.

