

**WWDHS
NEWSLETTER
No. 464
July 2025–Sept. 2025
ISSN 2207-1016**

NEXT MEETINGS

Please note – no meetings in July

The society's next meetings will be held on **Monday 18th August 2025, 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.

REMINDER – MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE ON THE 1ST JULY 2025 for the FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026.

Payments can be made to our Commonwealth Bank account.

BSB:062 600

Account: 00800270

Membership fees are unchanged - \$20 for single and \$30 for couple.

**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

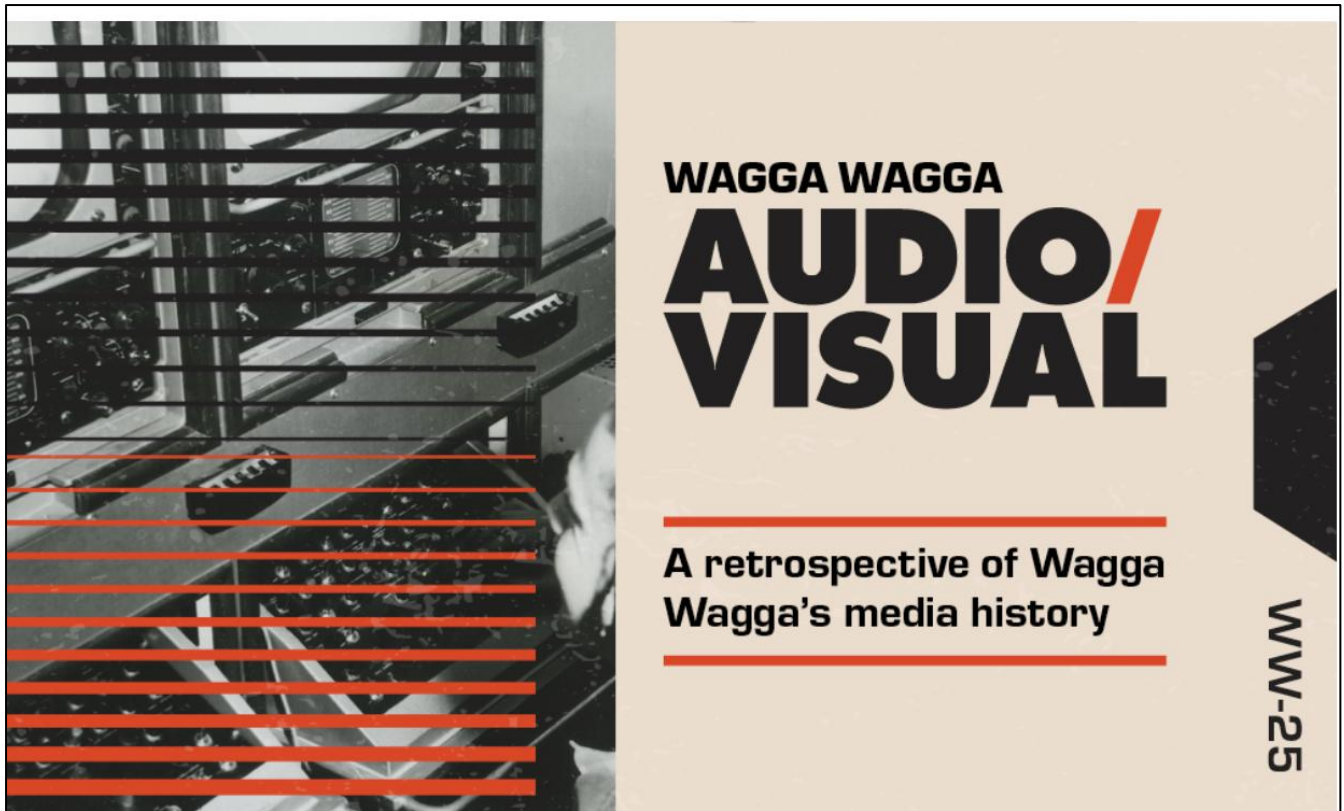
Email: info@wwdhs.org.au

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

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

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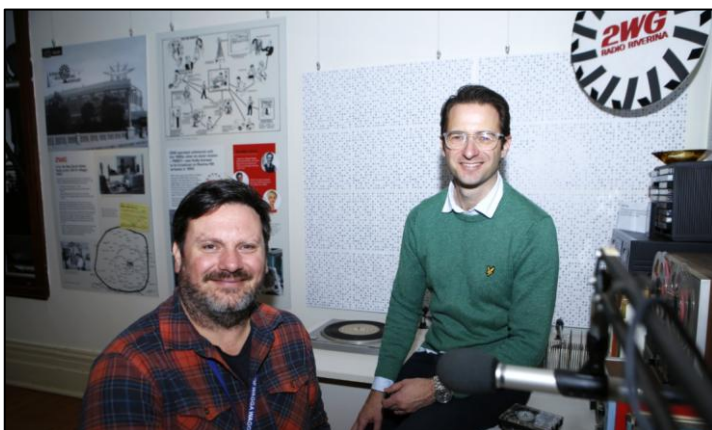
Museum of the Riverina [MoR]: Latest Exhibition.



Wagga Wagga Audio/Visual is a snapshot tour of Wagga's homegrown media history. From newspapers, to radio and television, and beyond; go back to a time when media was completely local - hear the stories of those who worked in the industry and see the technology they used with professional precision in light of an ever changing media landscape.

Visit the Exhibition

- Opening times: Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm, Sunday 10am to 2pm, closed Mondays.
- Dates: 11 June 2025 - 14 December 2025
- Location: Museum of the Riverina Historic Council Chambers site, corner Baylis Street and Morrow Street, Wagga Wagga
- Cost: Free



Congratulations to John Riddell who put the exhibition together.

Photo: John Riddell [left] and MoR manager Tim Kurylowicz [right]

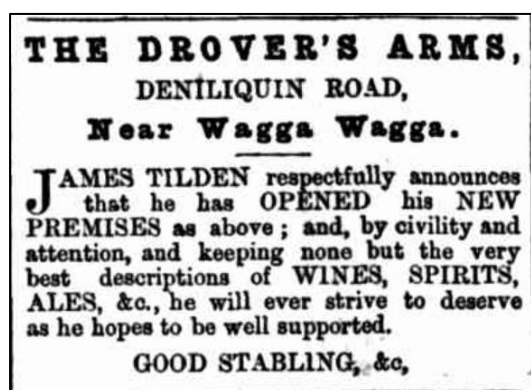
FEATURE ARTICLE 1

Drovers Arms / Dew Drop Inn

The flood of May 1870 would have been a set back to James Tilden's plans to open a new hotel directly opposite Flowerdale. Tilden had let the premises to a man and his wife with their small child. Shortly after dark on Wednesday 4th May the river breached the bank on the south side and water flowed into the town. There was relatively little inundation up until midnight when with a sudden roar the buildings in town were submerged in several feet of water. Out at Flowerdale, Mr Jacob's house, which stood on a sandhill, was safe but surrounded by water. Jacob could hear screams for help but could do nothing. James Tilden had removed his family to Jacob's house but the man and his wife, who was "on the eve of her confinement" declined to leave, declaring "he was very comfortable where [he] was." Fortunately the woman secured a ladder and climbed onto the roof, so as to avoid being trapped in the flooded building. The family were discovered on top of the zinc rooftop on the following morning [Thursday 5th], just out of reach of the flowing waters. Mr Jacob was able to secure a manned boat from town, which rescued the family and a number of other people, including two men on top of a haystack on McAlister's Warby's Island. All of whom were taken to safety at Flowerdale.¹

Two months later in July 1870, James Tilden was granted a publican's license for his new hotel, the Drovers Arms, for the period 1st July 1870 to the 30th June 1871.²

One source recorded the location of the Drover's Arms as being on the road from Wagga Wagga to Urana.³ The local paper recorded the address as "Deniliquin Road, near Wagga Wagga."⁴ Both were correct as the old Edward Street West road led to both towns. The traffic to Urana branched off at the Cross Roads [Collingullie].



Left: James Tilden's advertisement for his new hotel in July 1870.⁵

A letter to the editor, from an irate ratepayer, in July 1871, referred to "that portion of the Deniliquin (down river) and Urana road between Flowerdale and the Drover's Arms," declaring "It is needless to expatiating upon the dangerous condition of this execrable man-

and-horse trap. Everyone who has had the misfortune to be compelled to travel that way knows that whether he rides or drives it is at the imminent risk of life or limb, to say

¹ Wagga Wagga Dvertsier. 7th May 1870, p4.

² NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1870, p1996.

³ NSW Government Gazette. Publican's Licenses. 1870, p1996.

⁴ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 20th August 1870, p1.

⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 20th July 1870, p3.

nothing of stuck teams, breakages, and the ill usage of unfortunate dumb brutes.”⁶ The letter was signed “Ratepayer” and one wonders if James Tilden may have been the author.

James Tilden’s father, described as an old resident of Wagga Wagga, passed away unexpectedly at the residence of his daughter in law on the 21st July 1871, while visiting Wagga Wagga.⁷ His son, James Michael Tilden, the licensee of the Drover’s Arms hotel, had passed away earlier in the previous year.⁸ No precise date could be found for the death of James Michael Tilden but a report on the 14th December 1870 placed Tilden on his property inspecting a well, while his wife sought probate jurisdiction on the 17th

January 1871, suggesting his death had taken place between the two dates.⁹

James Michael Tilden’s estate included a town lot, specifically allotment 6 of section 50 in the town of South Wagga Wagga. In September 1871, his widow and administratrix of his estate, Sarah Tilden, applied to convert the deed to Torrens title.¹⁰ In November 1871, Sarah filed another similar application for allotment 4 of section 67 and a part of allotment 1, section 67.¹¹

In November 1871, the Drover’s Arms hotel was up for sale by public auction.¹²

Left: Sale notice for several properties, one of which was the Drover’s Arms hotel.

The property did not sell and Sarah retained ownership up until 1876, when the mortgagee forced a sale.

SALE OF
**Valuable Freehold Property in
Wagga Wagga.**

STAPLETON MINCHIN
S has received **POSITIVE** instructions from the Mortgagee to sell by Public Auction at the **AUSTRALIAN HOTEL,**
On **TUESDAY, 21st NOVEMBER,**
at 3 p.m.,

The following Valuable Freehold Property :
Allotment No. 4 of section 50, situated in Baylis-street, opposite the Newtown Store, together with THREE SUBSTANTIAL BRICK DWELLING-HOUSES, and the premises at present in the occupation of Mr. J. D. WALSH erected thereon, and producing a well paid rental of £80 per annum.

Also,

The Inn and Premises known as
THE DROVER'S ARMS,
Situating on the Deniliquin Road, adjoining the Municipal boundary, together with about 50 Acres of Land attached.

TITLE GUARANTEED.

* * The Auctioneer would specially call the attention of Capitalists and others to this sale. The Properties are all splendidly situated, and must positively be sold.

TERMS (WHICH ARE LIBERAL) AT SALE.

For particulars, apply to **WILLIAMS and WINDEYER, Solicitors, Wagga Wagga,** or at the Offices of the Auctioneer.

In January 1872, George Ray was granted a license for the Dew Drop Inn for the period up until 30th June 1872.¹³ The former Drover’s Arms hotel was now the Dew Drop Inn.

⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 29th July 1871, p3.

⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 22nd July 1871, p2; NSW BDMs. Death registration # 5980/1871.

⁸ NSW BDMs. Death registration # 5952/1871.

⁹ NSW Government Gazette. 1871, p185.

¹⁰ Sydney Morning Herald. 30th September 1871, p2.

¹¹ Sydney Morning Herald. 25th November 1871, p2.

¹² Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 8th November 1871, p3.

¹³ Wagga Wagga Express. 10th January 1872, p2c1; NSW Government Gazette. Publican’s Licenses. 1872, p828.

On Friday the 7th June 1872, the second son of George Ray, a ten year old lad, fell some thirty feet into a well to the rear of the Dew Drop Inn, while fetching a bucket of water. Fortunately for the boy he held onto the well's rope and was able to attract the attention of a neighbour, Mr Tilden, who pulled him up.¹⁴

No record could be found for renewal of the license in July 1872, and it appears the hotel did not trade after this date.

To Let,

THE "DEW DROP INN" HOTEL,
situated about a mile and a half from
Wagga Wagga on the Deniliquin Road.
Grass Paddock of 25 Acres, and Kitchen
Garden attached, good well of water. Rent
very reasonable.

Apply to
STAPLETON MINCHIN,
Auctioneer,
Or to **Mr. W. F. TILDEN,**
Springvale, near Pomingalarna.

In July 1873, the Dew Drop Inn hotel on the Deniliquin Road was advertised to let.¹⁵

Left: July 1873 sale notice for the Dew Drop Inn.

In August 1874, George Davis drove two horse teams towards Pomingalarna. One, his own, and the other belonging to Mr W Hammond of the Cross Roads. As he approached the lagoon on the eastern side of the Dew Drop Inn he chose to drive his team, with dray, across the lagoon, which was flooded, rather than divert a distance of fifty yards to go around the lagoon. Halfway across the horses were forced to swim and the weight of the dray caused the team of five horses to drown. Davis had only recently purchased the horses at a cost of one hundred pounds – the result of years of savings.¹⁶

George Ray died in March 1899, and a press report revealed that he had been the licensee of the Albion hotel [later known as Club House hotel] in Kincaid Street, also the Farmers' Home hotel on the east of Wagga Wagga, and lastly the Dew Drop Inn.¹⁷ On the 28th March 1899, George's widow published a *Return Thanks* message to those who had provided support and condolences. In May 1899, Mrs Ray published the following message,¹⁸

"It having been rumored that I received Large Subscriptions from the public on the occasion of the accidental death of my husband, George Ray. I wish it known that I have not received one PENNY from ANYONE, although faithfully promised at the time of the accident."

¹⁴ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 12th June 1872, p2.

¹⁵ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 9th July 1873, p3.

¹⁶ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 29th August 1874, p2.

¹⁷ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 28th March 1899, p2.

¹⁸ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 18th May 1899, p3.

Valuable Freehold Properties.

WEDNESDAY, 7TH JANUARY, 1880.

A. T. BOLTON has received instructions from John F. McMullen, Esq., Inspector and General Manager of the Union Bank of Australia, to sell by auction, on Wednesday, the 7th of January, 1880, at the Masonic Hall, at 3 o'clock p.m.,

The following Very Valuable

FREEHOLD PROPERTIES:

WARBY'S ISLAND,

Containing an area of 179 Acres 1 Rood 25 Perches of Magnificent Agricultural and Grazing Land.

This certainly is one of the most valuable properties in Riverina, considering its extent, the soil being of the richest possible description. A very large portion of it having been grubbed and cleared at very considerable cost, could be used for agricultural purposes without further outlay; whilst for grazing purposes it is unsurpassed in the colony.

DEW DROP PADDOCK

adjoins the above, comprising an area of 39 acres 24 perches of very rich Agricultural Land, which has all been cleared and cultivated, and upon which is erected a Brick House, originally occupied as an hotel, all securely fenced.

In January 1880, the old Dew Drop Inn building was again up for sale, along with some forty acres of land. The land adjoined the property known as Warby's Island.¹⁹

Left: The January 1880 sale notice for the Dew Drop Inn property.

In May 1901, the Dew Drop paddock was up for sale by public auction as part of an amalgamation with surrounding portions of land, specifically portions 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, and 193, split into two lots.²⁰

Right: The May 1901 sale notice that included the Dew Drop paddock.

Lot 2 included the Dew Drop paddock and the old Dew Drop Inn building. The exact location of the old hotel is not known but it is believed to have been located on the south east corner of portion 193, adjoining the Horse Shoe Lagoon, and facing onto the Denilquin Road. Lot 2 is also of interest as this was the location of the Best family's original settlement in 1832.

Valuable River Flats.

The Dew Drop Paddock.

(Within 2 miles of the town.)

SATURDAY, 25TH MAY,
At 3 p.m.

HEATH & IRVINE (in conjunction with W. J. BLAKE) have received instructions from Mr. A. T. Bolton to sell by public auction at the Pastoral Hotel, on Saturday, the 25th May, at 3 p.m.,

That splendid river frontage estate known as

The Dew Drop, also the Plain Paddock.

LOT 1.—Portion 110, containing 48a. 3r., know as The Plain Paddock. Rich agricultural and grazing land.

LOT 2.—Portions 193, 192, and 188, containing an area of 71a. 33p., having full frontage to the river. All cleared, nearly all fenced, the very richest of river frontage to be found in the district, and almost adjoining the town boundary.

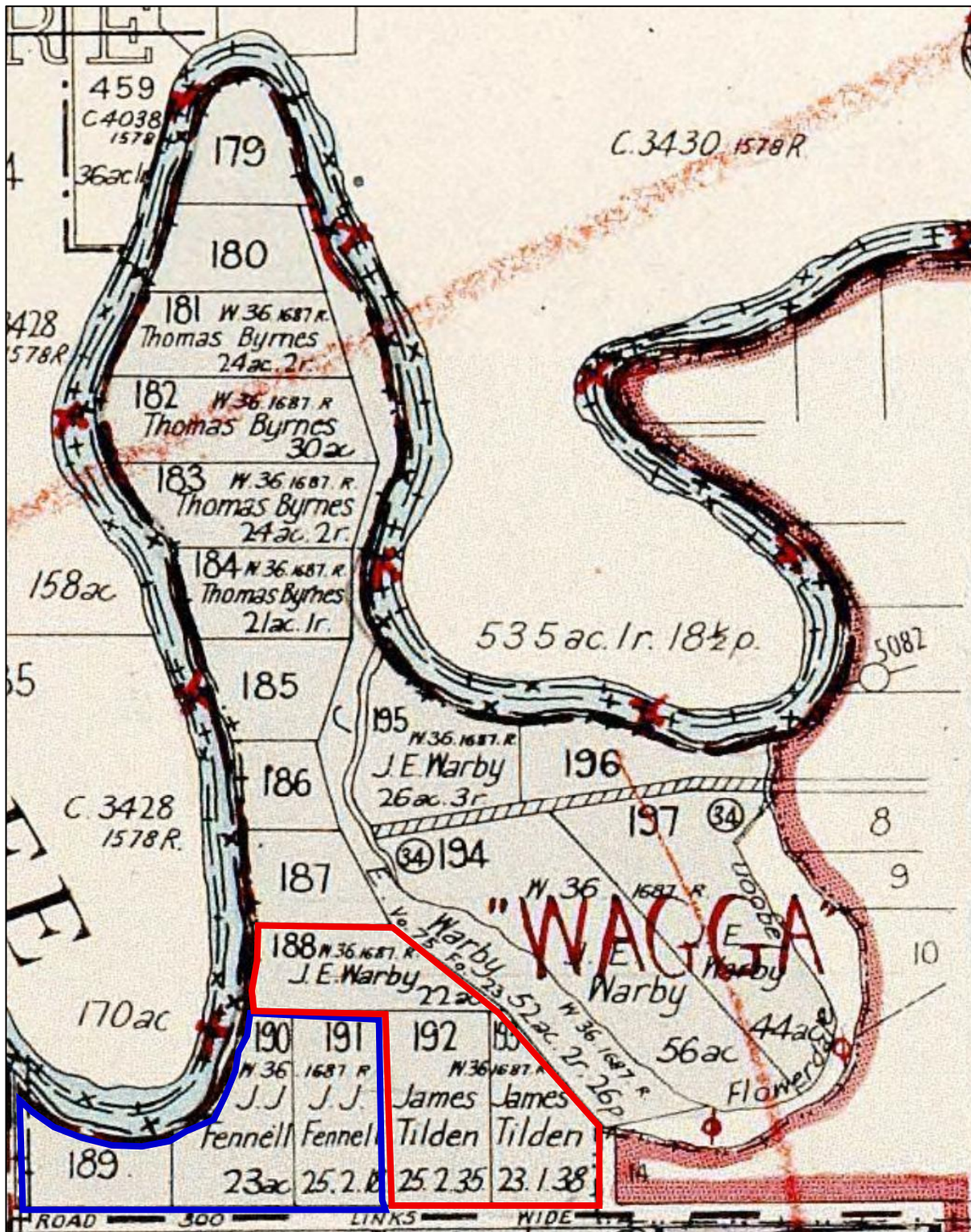
LOT 3.—Portions 191, 193, and 189, containing 64a. 18p. Adjoining Lot 2, of similar character, and having frontage to the river.

This is without exception one of the very best blocks on the river. Mr. Bolton having sold all the other adjoining lands and having entered into business in Sydney has determined to sell to effect a clearance.

Exceptionally easy terms at sale, or to be learned on application to the auctioneers.

**HEATH & IRVINE,
W. J. BLAKE,
Auctioneers in conjunction.**

¹⁹ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 6th December 1879, p4.
²⁰ Wagga Wagga Advertiser. 11th May 1901, p5.



Above: An extract from 1967 parish map showing lot 2 [red boundary] and lot 3 [blue boundary] as defined in the May 1901 sale notice. Courtesy NSW Land registry Services. HLRV.



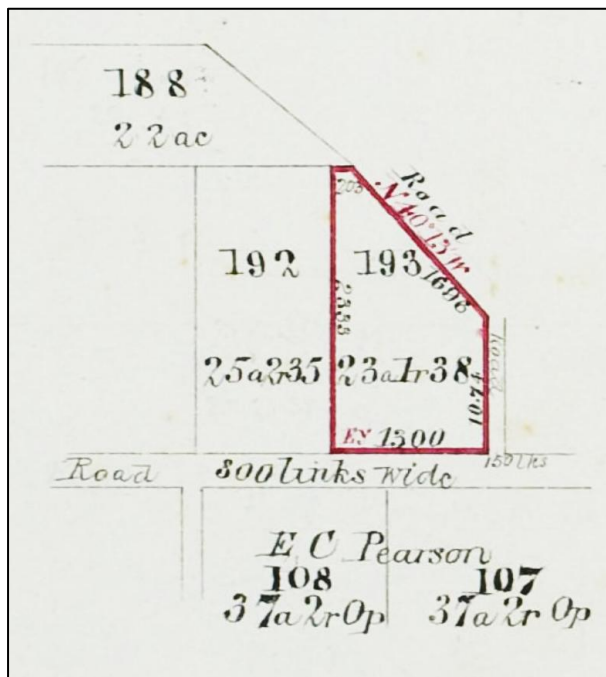
Above: A 1944 aerial view demonstrates the absence of any building on portion 193. Courtesy Wagga Wagga City Council. Intramaps.

It is not known when the old hotel building was demolished, only that it was after 1880 and before 1944.



Left: A 2014 aerial view of the site. The red circle defines the Flowerdale homestead site. The yellow circle defines the probable site of the Dew Drop Inn.

Freehold History of Portions 192 and 193.



On the 20th February 1864, James Tilden purchased portion 193 from the Crown. The property had an area of 23 acres, 1 rood, and 38 perches, for which he paid the sum of twenty three pounds, nine shillings and sixpence.²¹

Left: Portion 193 as purchased from the Crown by James Tilden in February 1864. Courtesy NSW Land Registry Services. HLRV.

On the same day, 20th February 1864, James Tilden purchased the adjoining portion, number 192, with an area of 25 acres, 2 roods, and 35 perches, for which he paid twenty five pounds, fourteen shillings and five pence.²²

In August 1870, the property was mortgaged to Robert Angel. The latter passed away on the 20th May 1870 and the mortgage passed to the administrator of Robert Angel's estate, Mr Henry Angel, a farmer of Wagga Wagga.²³

On the 13th May 1876, Henry Angel forced a sale of the property to William John Bowen and Peter McAlister, both innkeepers of Wagga Wagga as tenants in common.²⁴ The latter two men had also purchased portion 192 and the two portions were now combined under a single title, albeit under two different deeds.²⁵

On the 16th November 1877, the mortgagee, the Australian Joint Stock Bank, forced a sale to Robert Henry Warmoll and Richard Henwood Blaymeyer, both of Wagga Wagga, and tenants in common.²⁶

²¹ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 19, folio 138.

²² NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 19, folio 139.

²³ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 19, folio 138.

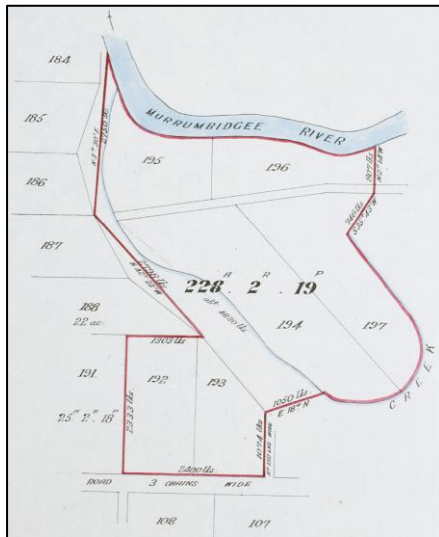
²⁴ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 19, folio 138.

²⁵ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 260, folios 123 & 124.

²⁶ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 260, folios 123 & 124.

In May 1879, Blamey's share was transmitted to Alfred Sandeman, the assignee for the insolvent estate of Robert Henry Warmoll.²⁷

On the 15th December 1879, Sandeman sold the properties to John Franklin McMullen, a bank inspector of Melbourne.²⁸



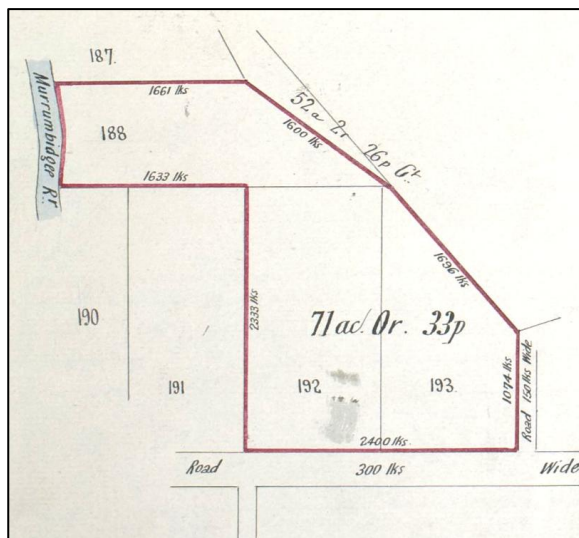
Portions 192 and 193 were now part of a larger conglomeration of properties.²⁹

Left: The collection of portions held by John Franklin McMullen in December 1879. Courtesy NSW land Registry Services. HLRV.

On the 23rd June 1880, McMullen sold the holdings to William Alexander Long, esquire, of Sydney.³⁰

On the 20th October 1899, William Alexander Long sold part of the holdings to Christopher Hodgson Brunskill. This transaction did not include portions 192 and 193 [see volume 1299, folio 181]

On the 28th October 1899, William Alexander Long sold the remaining part of his holding to Alexander Thorley Bolton.³¹



Left: The lots purchased by Alexander Thorley Bolton in October 1899. Courtesy NSW land Registry Services. HLRV.

On the 31st July 1901, Bolton sold the three portions to Telacon Lloyd, a stock dealer of Wagga Wagga.³²

²⁷ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 323, folios 38 & 39.

²⁸ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 323, folios 38 & 39.

²⁹ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 481, folio 73.

³⁰ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 481, folio 73.

³¹ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 481, folio 73; Volume 1301, folio 85.

³² NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 1301, folio 85.

On the 11th August 1902, Telacon Lloyd transferred the three portions to Arthur Harry Ashcroft, a grazier of Wagga Wagga.³³

On the 16th November 1906, Arthur Harry Ashcroft transferred the holdings to James Bolger, a grazier of Tootool.³⁴

On the 4th September 1919, James Bolger transferred the three portions to John Edward Lloyd, a grazier of Wagga Wagga.³⁵

In April 1929, Lloyd created a new deed for the three portions. It is not known why a new deed was necessary as the three portions appear to be unchanged.³⁶

On the 23rd March 1928, Lloyd sold part of the holdings to Albert William Hartland. This transaction was registered on the 15th July 1929.³⁷ This transaction included portions 192 and 193, plus the addition of portions 187, 188, and 191.³⁸

The residue of Lloyd's holdings were sold to Wilfred Ernest Spokes on the 4th March 1929.³⁹ This transaction did not include portions 192 and 193. It consisted of a conglomeration of portions to the north of portions 187, 188, 192 and 193. [See volume 4487, folio 185]

On the 12th April 1933, Albert William Hartland sold the holdings to Kerry Sullivan Pierce, a grazier of Wagga Wagga.⁴⁰

In November 1946 the properties were transmitted to Kerry Peirce of Wagga Wagga, and Jean Jessica Sim, the wife of William Cecil Rhodes Sim, a radiologist of Sydney, as joint tenants.⁴¹

On the 2nd April 1947, Kerry Peirce and Jean Jessica Sim, transferred the properties to Thomas Herbert Harold Robbins, a farmer of Wagga Wagga.

In May 1971, the holdings were subdivided to create two new lots – DP.546041/1-2. [Volume 11601, folios 123 & 124]. Now computer folios.

³³ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 1301, folio 85.

³⁴ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 1301, folio 85.

³⁵ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 1301, folio 85.

³⁶ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 1301, folio 85; Volume 4264, folio 124.

³⁷ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 4264, folio 124.

³⁸ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 4302, folio 189.

³⁹ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 4264, folio 124.

⁴⁰ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 4302, folio 189.

⁴¹ NSW Land Registry Services. Title deed. Volume 4302, folio 189.

FEATURE ARTICLE 2

FIRST THREE KANGAROOS KILLED IN ACTION AT FROMELLES, 19 JULY 1916 - By Sherry Morris

Thomas Norman Baker, known as 'Tom', Henry John Fleming known as 'Harry' and William Henry Harden known as 'Will' all participated in the Kangaroo March which left Wagga Wagga on 1 December 1915. They were the first of the 'Kangaroos' to be killed-in-action.

Tom, a labourer aged 20, had enlisted on 22 November 1915, with the permission of his mother Ellen Baker of Beckwith Street (his father was deceased).

Harry, aged 26, was the son of well-known local monumental mason in Baylis Street, James Fleming who died from Bright's Disease eight months before the march. Harry listed his occupation as a monumental mason.

Will, a painter aged 22, came from Narrandera and joined the march at Junee.

All three had dark complexion, brown hair and brown eyes. Harry was the tallest at 174 centimetres high while Harry was 169 centimetres and Will 164 centimetres. All three weighed about 60 kilograms. Tom, Harry and Will, like most of the Kangaroos were allocated to the second reinforcements of the 55th Battalion and left Sydney on the *Ceramic* on 14 April 1916.

While training at Tel el Kebir in Egypt some of the Kangaroos were drafted into some of the battalions of the 14th Brigade stationed at the Suez Canal, about to leave for France and in need of reinforcements.

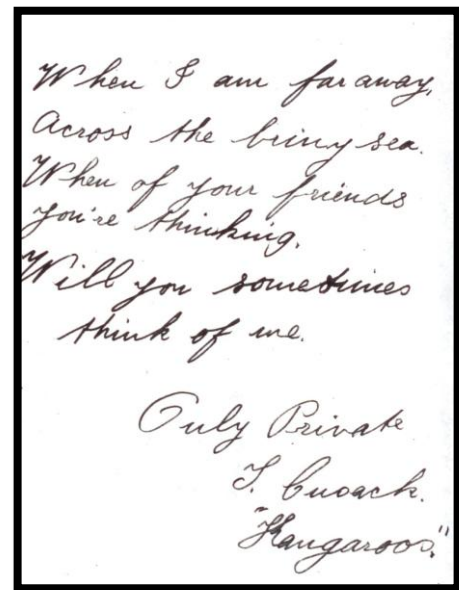
Tom, Harry and Will with Bob Pettiford and Tom Cusack were all drafted to the 53rd Battalion. They travelled on the *Royal George* to Marseilles in France and moved to a safe area near Armentieres where they were to undergo acclimatisation in the trenches to gain experience and to participate in trench raids in the area. However within a few weeks they were thrown into battle – at Fromelles on 19 July 1916.

This was the first major battle on the western front involving Australian soldiers. Merely a feint, it was intended to make the Germans think it was a prelude to a major attack and thus deter them from reinforcing the Somme. It proved to be an unmitigated disaster.

After intense fighting throughout the night of 19 July, Australia's Fifth Division alone lost 5533 men in less than twenty-four hours. About 2000 had been killed in action, over 3000 were wounded and about 300 to 400 or more had been taken prisoner. Some perished in the seven-hour bombardment prior to the attack (some from German artillery fire and some from their own inexperienced artillery). Others were mown down by heavy machine gun fire almost immediately after the attack began at 6 p.m. (still in daylight) when they were ordered over the top heavily laden with scaling ladders, picks, shovels and bags of grenades. They had to cross between 80 and 400 metres of open ground under the direct observation from the German lines particularly from a strong redoubt known as the Sugarloaf overlooking most of the advancing troops. Thousands lay wounded in No-Man's Land calling for help.



Above: Tom Baker (left) and Will Harden (right)



*Above left: Tom Cusack, who marched with the Kangaroos from Wagga Wagga to Sydney.
Above right: Left: Tom Cusack's contribution to the autograph book signed by many of the Kangaroos and held by Jack Ellis of Wagga Wagga*

Some of the Australians (including the 53rd Battalion) had reached the German trenches. They held their second line for a while but were stranded when the Germans were able to move through breaks in the Australian-held second line back to their former front line. These Australians were all killed, wounded or captured trying to escape through the German lines to their own trenches.

Initially 1335 Australians were listed as missing. These included Tom, Harry and Will while Bob Pettiford was badly wounded by a bullet in the face and was later invalided to Australia. The fortunate Tom Cusack was only slightly wounded in the arm.

The first news of Kangaroo casualties reached Wagga at the end of July 1916. Tom, Harry and Will were listed as missing. Their relatives were devastated and desperate for further news. When no news had been received by November that year the Reverend Canon Joseph Pike from the Wagga Wagga Anglican Church wrote to Base Records on behalf of Ellen Baker (Tom's mother) telling them that "she is very anxious and would be glad if you could tell her anything". He pleaded with them to 'do your best for this heart-broken mother'.

A week later Canon Pike was informed that no further particulars had been received about Tom but, he was advised, the overseas authorities were doing their utmost to trace members of the forces reported missing and if any further reports come to hand Tom's mother would be 'promptly advised'.

Will's brother, James Harden, wrote asking for further word and apologising for bothering Base Records. Nellie, the sister of Harry (pictured right), pleaded with the Minister for Defence for more information as her 'mother was stricken to her bed with a dreadful illness'. They had not told her the news because they thought 'it would kill her'. However it was fourteen agonizing months after the battle of Fromelles before a Court of Enquiry held on 2 September 1917 found that they had been killed in action and then officially informed the Next-of-Kin.

The grieving relatives continued to ask for more information about how the men died and where they were buried but were merely told that 'an intensive search is being made over all battlefields with a view to locating unregistered graves' and that the Next-of-Kin would be notified if anything was discovered. The bereaved also pleaded for some of the effects of their loved ones to have something to hold onto or to grieve over but none of their belongings could be returned.

However, suddenly, in 1920 Ellen Baker did receive her son's Identity Disc, which had been returned to Australia on the *Boorara* but despite the pleas of Ellen and Tom's cousin, A. Ritchie, both were informed that all that was known was that he had been killed when taking part in an operation in France on 19 July 1916 and that no burial particulars had been received. It suggested that the disc was probably found during the intensive search being made over old battlefields with the view of locating unregistered graves.

The names of the 1,299 Australian soldiers, including 190 from the 53rd Battalion who fell at Fromelles and whose graves were not known, were listed on a stone wall at VC Corner of the Australian Cemetery. In addition there are lawns, which contain 410 unidentified bodies of soldiers who fought at Fromelles. The inscription reads: 'In honour of 410 unknown Australian Soldiers here buried who were among the following 1,299 officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Australian Imperial Force, killed in action at Fromelles, 19-20 July 19th and 20th 1916'.

Since 2008, DNA testing has been used to identify over 100 of these bodies but unfortunately Tom, Harry and Will have not yet been found.



Wagga Wagga Town Hall gardens. Courtesy MacLeay Museum, Kerry & Co. Collection.