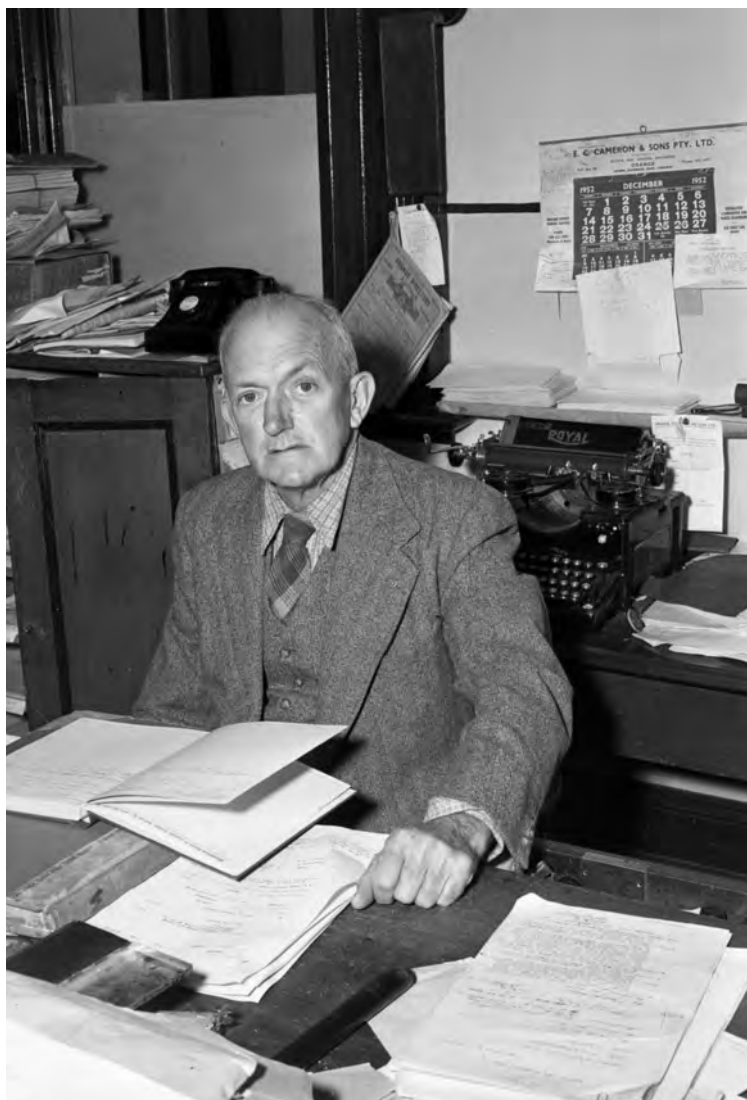


# History alive

Orange & District Historical Society newsletter

Summer 2023-24

Founding  
president  
traces  
origins  
of our  
society



Mystery  
surrounds  
one of  
Orange's  
oldest houses

## In this issue



Why is that laneway there?  
Page 4



End of year celebration  
Page 5



More progress at Eugowra Museum  
Page 6



George Melick's views of Orange  
Pages 8 - 9



Early days of Historical Society  
Pages 10 - 12

### Cover images

Foundation president of Orange & District Historical Society Dick Sheridan, 1955.

Photo courtesy CWD Negative Collection

Historic house in Sampson Street.

Photo courtesy John Kich.

This newsletter is designed to keep members and other interested people informed about the society's activities as well as matters of interest in the wider field.

If anyone would like to contribute to it they should contact editor Liz Edwards.

Our newsletter requires a considerable amount of money to produce each quarter with paper, printing and postage all adding to the cost.

Therefore, wherever possible, we email it to those members and others on our mailing list who have an email address.

However, if anyone with an email address would prefer also to receive a paper copy, they may do so simply by contacting the secretary.

Those who do not have access to email will continue to receive their copies by ordinary mail.

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### Membership fees from January 2023

Family \$45; individual \$30; single concession \$20; couple concession \$30.

Contact secretary or treasurer. Please pay promptly.

### Research inquiries:

For research inquiry and membership forms, see our website, above.

Cost: \$25 for the initial inquiry (plus additional charges for more extensive research).

Please provide your name, address, phone number and email address, details of your inquiry, any information you may already have, and the reason for your inquiry.

### Bank:

Orange & District Historical Society, Orange Credit Union, BSB 802-129, A/c No 34252 (please include name and reason for payment). If you are transferring money from your account at Orange Credit Union, please add \$1 to our account number.

# A message from the president

This quarter started with Liz Edwards gallivanting off overseas for a little while, leaving the rest of us workers to struggle on – alone! But we managed very well with the always efficient Julie taking on the role of secretary and doing a great job.

During the quarter a large number of old photos were brought in by members of the public plus other items. As a result, accessioning is a little behind at the moment, but we plan to make an extra effort to catch up.

It's hard for us to say no to great donations but there are some we must refuse because we have to strictly limit items to those pertaining to the history of Orange and district.

The CWD Negative Collection continues to take up lots of our time but the massive number of hits on the site Recollect Central West has shown its popularity is only increasing. There are 15,000 photos and 900 documents on the site. If you haven't looked at it yet please do, and tell your friends; I know you will find it interesting.

Liz had the task in recent months of dating all the 35mm negatives from the 1970s, which for some unknown reason had not been done by the CWD photographers. It meant matching negatives with photos in hard-copies of the CWD. It was a difficult undertaking but it has now been finished, making it easier for us to identify images when people inquire.

Meanwhile Tony Bouffler, Rosemary Curry, Jim Coffey and I continue to make a database of all the photos appearing in the CWD from 1971 to the mid 1980s. This too will be invaluable for research purposes.

The year ended with our guru Phil Stevenson attaining the great age of eighty. This remarkable man is the main cog in the engine of the Orange and District Historical Society. Decades of selfless volunteering have seen Phil gain and share a wealth of knowledge and we would be totally lost without him.

His birthday celebrations comprised a morning tea at the cottage and a dinner at the Millthorpe Museum where he volunteers as well, and it was a great night thanks to his fellow volunteers.

Now, if you haven't been to the Millthorpe Museum recently, do yourselves a favour: it's a superb display of district memorabilia and extremely well presented. This is what I would like to see in Orange but it would take a huge effort to raise funds and, much more importantly, a team of volunteers.

From the entire team I wish you all a merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year. And I ask for your continued support in the year ahead.

**Bob Curran**



Top right: MC Neil Jones sings Phil Stevenson's praises at this 80th birthday celebratory dinner at Millthorpe Museum. Above left and right: Birthday morning tea at the cottage.

# Why is that laneway there?

By Rosemary Curry

We've read that Orange City Council plans to repaint and decorate that strange little laneway connecting Summer Street to Central Square car park. Presently plastered with graffiti, we must accept that a town is a living organism which changes and grows, but what is its history and why is it there?

Leslie Fardell has been able to tell us with her oral history she kindly passed on to us.

One of our early hard-working citizens, William Cecil (Cec) Bernasconi and his wife May Violet, owned a hotel right there. Leslie was the youngest daughter.

It seems that hotel clients would come down this alley to settle their horses and carts behind the hotel, prior to making themselves comfortable for the night in the warmth of the Central Hotel.

Leslie also recalled that during the Depression people would come to the hotel hungry, asking for food. Her mother would send them down the laneway to the hotel kitchen at the back where they could collect a food parcel.

The Bernasconi family continued to influence the growth of Orange and when Cec died, Leslie's mother took over running the hotel. Times were difficult, and being concerned that her children may not have a job, Mrs Bernasconi sold the hotel and bought or leased a milk bar in the Top Block for her daughters Peg and Daphne to work in.

It was known as Bernasconi's Milk Bar, but when the Theatre Orange next door became the Coronet in the Queen's coronation year, the milk bar changed its name to the Coronet Milk Bar.

The business thrived and Leslie helped her sisters on picture nights. Interval crowds were so busy that



Bernasconi's Central Hotel circa 1930.

Photo courtesy Rob Bartlett.

clients spread cross the road, filling a second milk bar.

Daphne and Peg's bar was particularly popular as patrons could walk directly through their shop to get to the front seats of the theatre.

Daphne continued running the bar for some years, with Leslie helping her on busy picture nights.

Ultimately the Coronet Milk Bar was owned by others while still advertising 'warm milk-shakes' for cold Orange nights at the pictures.

Snider and Dean sold the Coronet Theatre when movies succumbed to television, but the Coronet Milk Bar continued to trade under the Coronet's name with its original sign. Today it has moved across the road. Its sign is unchanged and it still serves from its solid wood counter dating back to the 1940s. The Bernasconi Milk Bar will go on forever!

The old Bernasconi Hotel laneway is about to be painted and rejuvenated by artist Daniel Templeman. In its upgrading do you think it might feature the name Bernasconi for old time's sake?



Entrance to the laneway.



Graffiti in the laneway.

Photos Rosemary Curry.

# Christmas dinner for members and friends



Left: Steve and Anne Brakenridge. Centre: Julie Sykes, Jeff and Karen Kloosterman, Dale Sykes. Right: Christine Williams and Tony Gordon.



Euan Greer and Dorothy Noble.

Susan Hines and her father Merv Wilkie.

Russell and Anne Tym.



Left: Yvonne and Charlie Everett. Centre: Bob and Judy Curran and Jim Coffey. Right: Doug and Pam Brooks.



Left: Judy and Josefine Agland. Centre: Phil Stevenson and Matt Jeffery. Right: Jeff Kloosterman and Dinah Hayter.



Far left: Jeff and Karen Kloosterman. Left: Robert Bruce and Jim Coffey. Right: Dale and Dave Sykes.



Photos taken by Liz Edwards at Kate Jones restaurant on Friday 1 December.

# Progress on conserving Eugowra items



Volunteers listen to instructions.

Photos courtesy Phil Stevenson.

A third workshop was held recently to continue the work of preserving items from Eugowra Museum, which had been badly damaged in floods in November 2022.

Volunteers from a number of regional museums attended and worked under the guidance of conservators Kay Soderlund and Tegan Anthes. Orange City Council and Orange Regional Museum staff also attended with facilitator Hayley Lavers.

This session concentrated on conserving materials such as paper archives, show ribbons, embroidery and leather items, which had been put in freezers at Orange Cool Stores to stop them deteriorating further.

Some workers scraped mud off items with spatulas and brushes while others washed delicate items with mild detergent before hanging them out to dry.



Cleaning materials.



Left: Volunteers work on materials, washing them with mild detergents and placing them on flat surfaces or hanging them on a line to dry.

Right: Conservationist Kay Soderlund examines an item which had been stored in a freezer to stop it deteriorating.





# Mystery surrounds Sampson Street house

By Elisabeth Edwards

Matching negatives with photos from the 1980s in the Central Western Daily recently, I came across an article and a photo of a very old house at 118 Sampson Street, Orange.

The article suggested that as it was situated between Prince and Dalton streets, it could have been originally an inn because it was near the old zig-zag route through Orange linking the Bathurst and Wellington roads.

It was of 'board and batten' construction where the joins between wide vertical wooden boards were covered with narrow strips of timber. The iron roof extended to a bull-nose cover over the verandah and there was a squat chimney in the centre of the roof. There were dirt floors until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The windows had the standard twelve panes of the colonial period.

It was said to be one of the oldest surviving houses in Orange and possibly a rival for the much grander Endsleigh House, which was built for early settler Joseph Moulder in East Orange in about 1858.

So, what do we know about the owners of the house? The land was first granted to James Hall in 1861. A man of that name had been the successful tenderer in 1860 to clear trees and stumps from Sampson Street between Summer and Byng streets in September and October 1860.

The block of land was sold to Dennis Hanrahan in 1863. Hanrahan was an early hotel keeper and landowner in Orange and one of the first Councillors on Orange Municipal Council, which was formed in 1860. In the late 1840s he built and ran the Limerick Castle

Hotel, opposite the Greengate Hotel, and by 1864 he was the proprietor of the Wellington Inn on the corner of Summer Street and Lords Place (now the Royal Hotel).

The land was then sold to various people, including Forbes surveyor Edward Coombes (1864), and Orange farmer Robert King (1874). King took out a series of mortgages on the property and, after failing to pay his last mortgage in 1901, it was sold to Margaret Fitzgerald.

The Orange Heritage Study of 1984 states construction of the house was about 1865, so only six years after the building of Endsleigh House.

However, architectural historian James Nicholson suggests the house was built between 1876 and 1880, well after Endsleigh House was constructed.

If the house had been an inn at some time, there is no record of a liquor licence being issued (although it could have been a sly grog shop).

The Orange Heritage study notes that along with two old houses opposite, the group may have formed an early settlement of Orange.

The house survived until the late 1980s when it was demolished and there is now a duplex on the site.

Last year a number of people, some of them descendants of later owners, notably the O'Neil and Fewings families, forwarded their memories of the house to the website The Old Orange Crew, but much uncertainty remains as to its origins. If only an archaeological 'dig' had been made before the house was demolished, we may know much more about its origins.

With thanks to John Kich for his information and advice.

# Piecing together the story of Orange

This is part 2 of a two-part article by Jim Coffey

## Photographer

From the records in various sources and available on-line it is not clear when George Melick went into business as a photographer, but the earliest advert found is from December 1926. This display advert reads: "Get Acquainted with our Same Day Service/For Better Results From Your Films – Melick & Dean/Sporting Goods Specialists/42 Anson Street, Orange". In early 1927 they had a display advert that espoused "We Strive To Please" in the range of 'Sport, Photography, Stationery'; and on 13 April ran an advert that put the emphasis on tennis and their racquet repair abilities. Notably, however, Melick & Dean had this latter advert run again just two days later, but now the address is given as: 'Summer Street (Bank of NSW Building)'. It is not clear if they moved premises, opened a second shop, or if the shop was on the corner and now used two entrances.

In September 1927 plans were announced by the businesses on Summer Street to initiate the 'Great White Way'. The plan was to place a bright white light every 12 feet (about 3.6 metres) along Summer Street, from Lords Place to Sale Street, at the front of the shops and businesses (under the awnings), on both sides of the street. The intention was to 'result in an elaborate beautification of this already beautiful town' and that 'the night aspect will take on a new glamor, and a new pleasure will be added to shopping'. Each block had a committee to establish it, the secretary for the north side, between Anson Street and Lords Place, being Mr Melick; and for the opposite side, Mr Fox Martin.

In December 1927, Melick & Dean ran a new display advert for their business, which now added the street number – 82 – to their Summer Street shop. This advert highlighted that they sold pianos by Gulbransen and instruments by Sonora. They also featured in the silent film 'Orange, NSW, C1927', demonstrating tennis racquet repair, though the repairer shown is not individually named. The business also had a half-page display advert in the book *Orange & District Illustrated – 1928 – Historical, Statistical & Descriptive* which detailed their sporting goods selection and services, their same-day photo service, and their stationery for sale.



Their regular advertising in the *Leader*, the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Catholic Press* continued well into 1928. Then in June a major change occurred. An advert appeared in the *Wellington Times* advising that Mr. N. L. Dean, late of Melick and Dean Orange, was opening a store, 'Sports Depot' in Lee Street in that town. It would open next Thursday and all kinds of repairs on tennis racquets would be offered. The NSW Government Gazette, on 22 June, published a notice advising that the partnership between R. S. Dean and G. C. Melick (sporting good specialists, stationers and tobacconists) had been dissolved by mutual consent and that Rupert Samuel Dean would carry on the business alone, but as Melick & Dean as previously. Alfred Baldock was the solicitor as witness to the notice. The business advertising continued thereafter, but only in the *Freeman's Journal*; and ceased advertising altogether after a last advert appeared therein on 24 January 1929.

Meanwhile, on 10 January 1929, George's mother, Mrs Melick, died, late of William Street, Orange East. Her obituary noted that she was an old resident of Orange and had at one time kept a store on the corner of William\* and Kite streets. Only George is mentioned as surviving her. Her funeral was at St Joseph's, and she was buried in the Catholic portion of the Orange Cemetery. The inscription on her grave includes 'my loving mother' as distinct from 'our loving mother'. She was 59 years old when she died.

Later that year, Mr Aziz Bey Melick, one of the principals of the warehouse firm Stanton, Melick, and a prominent member of the Lebanese community, died in Sydney aged 53. The notice made mention that Mr G Melick of Orange was a relative. It is difficult to determine their relationship in the absence of records for George's father Callil (Charles).

From 1930 through to 1980 the Electoral Rolls for Orange, as well as other places, are available on-line. On the 1930 roll, George is shown as Melick, George Charles, Victoria Hotel, photographer, M (male). It is possible that George resided with his mother, up to her death, and in the next year was living at the hotel. It is not known where he conducted his photography business at this time. The next advert to survive for that appears in the local paper in 1935.

## Tennis, anyone?

In the meantime, George seems to be most interested in tennis. In February 1932 he appears in the results for the St Joseph's Tennis Club – in one match being beaten by J. Cuneen; and in another drawing with Martin Fahey. The following week he is defeated by James Say. On March 2 the annual meeting of the club is held where it is noted that the club is just 12 months old, has constructed a second court and clubhouse, and has been very successful. George is re-elected to the committee.

\* in 2023 this street is named Endsleigh Avenue



# photographer George Melick

At the club's meeting in July George was appointed to be the MC at the club's annual dance. In September he repeated this role at the club's annual ball and presentation night.

By 1934 George is Secretary of St Joseph's Tennis Club. In July members of the club made a journey to Cowra to play matches against the club there. However, on the trip George, "the popular secretary of St Joseph's ... met with a serious motor accident, as a result of which he now is a patient in the Woodstock Private Hospital. Miss Tess Frecklington, another well-known exponent of the game and member of the team for Cowra, who was accompanying Mr Melick, was also seriously injured and is a patient at the same institution. It is expected that both will not be able to return to Orange for some time".

In October the Orange club again visited their sister club from St Raphael's at Cowra, and after the matches a social evening was held, including games, where 'Mr. Geo Melick was the mainstay'. In the report on the match results, where George did not play, he was described as 'the Club's genial secretary'. At the end of December 1934, George resigned as secretary of St Joseph's Tennis Club, and was replaced by Miss Mollie Moraghan. No reason was printed in the club notes.

## Pictures again

The following December, a display advert for Melick & Dean again appeared in the Leader. It only mentioned photography, viz: "Perfect Service with Every Order / Melick & Dean / Commercial & Outdoor Photographers / 208 Summer Street (next to Moran & Cato's) / Screen Advert Slides a Specialty / You'll like a 'Leica Snap' taken by us - They're all the rage. Make an appointment now!"

In April 1936 a photograph appeared in the Land newspaper portraying the Minister for Defence, Mr. A Parkhill, officially opening the recent Blayney Annual Show. The Minister was in a group of about 20 people, and the photo was credited to 'Melick and Dean'.

The next display advert appeared another two years later, headed 'Quality Costs No More', and dealt with portraits, pictures, films and enlargements. It had a footnote that they also carried the finest array of Catholic piety goods in Orange. Thereafter, no more newspaper advertising appears for Melick and Dean, nor for George Melick. However, it appears he was still in business. The 1936 and '37 Electoral Rolls give his address as 208 Summer Street and his occupation as photographer.

In early 1942 his business once again appears in the Government Gazette. This time the notice states that the partnership carried on by George Charles Mellick (sic) and Neville Linton Dean, under Mellick & Dean at 170 Summer Street, Orange, was dissolved by mutual consent on 1 December 1941. "Mr G C Mellick will continue to carry on the business" and the solicitor this time is T A Whiteley. The 1943 roll has George at 170 Summer Street, occupation, photographer.



## Marriage

In early 1945 George, at 47 years old, was married. The bride was Miss Teresa (Tess) Frecklington, 43, second daughter of Mary and the late William Frecklington of March Street, Orange, and formerly of Cargo. Father (later Monsignor) Sheahan performed the rites, with Miss K Miskell and Mr. W Fardy the witnesses. It is here noted that George's new wife is the lady involved in his motor accident back in 1934.

The 1949 and 1954 Electoral Rolls have George still at 170 Summer Street, as a photographer, and now Tess is shown there with him, with her occupation as home duties. However, by 1958 they have moved. They are shown at 29 Maxwell Avenue, George is still a photographer, but now Tess is a storekeeper. The next roll, 1963, has almost the same details, although the street number is now 39. Whether they moved, the numbers changed or the '39' is a typo, is not known. However, Ross Maroney's 'Notes' have an entry: Melick, G C & T, smallgoods store, 29 Maxwell Ave., Orange (1959-64), Phone 3827 (1964), indicating a typo in the roll.

And then, on 5 May 1964, aged 67, George Melick collapsed and died at his home. He was not admitted to the Base Hospital, but his body was taken to its mortuary the next day, where it was later collected by Keith N Baker. His obituary noted that George was a 'life-long resident of Orange, had conducted a mixed business and photographic business in Summer Street, before taking over the shop in Maxwell Avenue'. He was survived by his wife. George was buried in the Catholic portion of Orange Cemetery, near his mother.

In 1968 Tess lived at 79 Hill Street, Orange, aged 67, and has the occupation of home duties. There is no other Melick on this roll for Orange. She died the following year, on 2 April, and was buried next to George in Orange Cemetery. There are no indications that George and Tess had any children. Thankfully, for lovers of history, George Melick has left behind a legacy of fine photos of the scenes, buildings, and people of Orange.

# The Banjo Paterson memorial led to

*This article was written by Orange & District Historical Society's founding president Dick Sheridan in March 1969 and published in the Central Western Daily.*

Thirty years ago it was not generally known that Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson had been born at Narrambla on the Ophir Road, three miles from Orange.

At the time of registration of his birth at the Orange Court House, his parents had not decided on a Christian name and 'Not Named' was entered in the register. The date of birth was given as 17 February 1864.

There was no proof that this registration referred to 'Banjo'. It was not known if Banjo's baptism was recorded at any of the Orange churches.

I decided to make a search. I started at Holy Trinity Church of England. With permission of the Rev A G Halliday, I searched the first baptism register. I was delighted to find Banjo's baptism recorded.

He was baptised by the Rev Robert H Mayne, then Rector of Holy Trinity, on 11 March 1864 and given the names Andrew Barton.

Under the Birth, Death and Marriage Registration Act it was possible for the parent of a child 'Not Named' at the time of registration to obtain a certificate from the minister baptising the child, and on production of the same to the registrar and payment of a fee, to have the name given at baptism recorded in a special column in the register.

At this time Banjo was dead (he died in 1941) and his parents had been dead for years. Could such an entry now be made?

I reported the facts to the Registrar-General, Sydney, I asked his permission to insert the names 'Andrew Barton' given at baptism in the register.

The Registrar-General approved of my doing so. I obtained the necessary certificate from the Rev Halliday, paid the fee and made the notation on 10 October 1945.

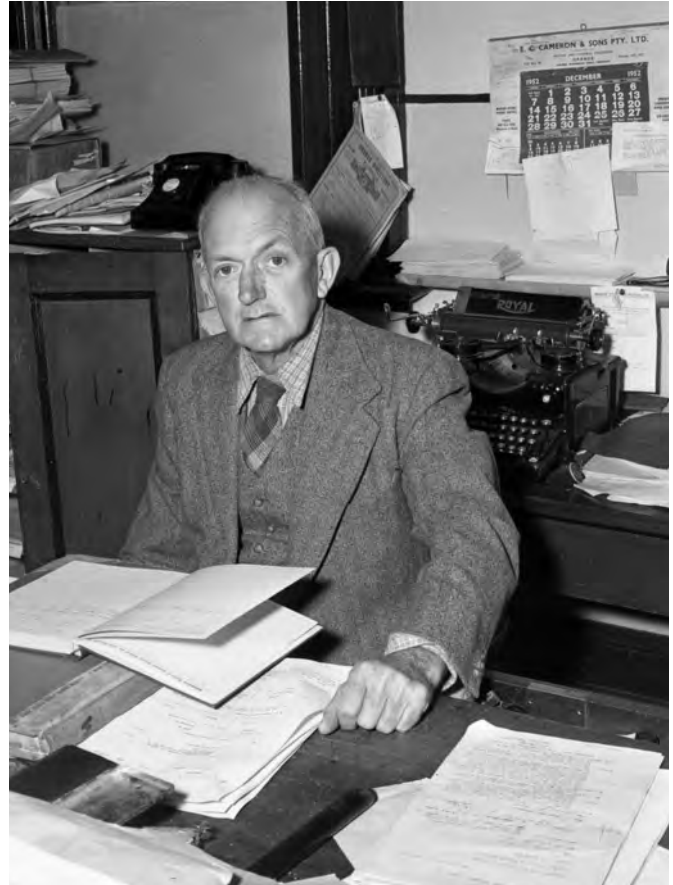
Unknown to me, Banjo's widow was temporarily residing at Orange about this time. She heard that I had completed Banjo's birth registration. She called at my office and I showed her the registration. She, naturally, was delighted and invited me to visit her home.



Left: The Banjo Paterson memorial on Ophir Road.



Right: Templers Mill before it was demolished in November 1971.



Dick Sheridan in his office at Orange Court House, 1955.

Photos courtesy CWD Negative Collection.

I did so and she showed me much of interest regarding Banjo, going right back to the Boer War days when he was a correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the Melbourne *Argus*.

She showed me the Paterson family Bible and I was delighted to see Banjo's birth and baptism recorded. I found that he was actually baptised in his great-uncle's (Mr J A Templer's) home at Narrambla by Rev Mayne. I found also that Rev Mayne had married Banjo's parents on 8 April the previous year.

Banjo's father was Andrew Bogle Paterson, grazier of Buckinbar station near Molong, and his mother was Rose Isabella Barton of Boree.

Rev Mayne was one of Banjo's godparents and the other two were R D Barton (an uncle) and Emily Jane Smith, a daughter of Mr and Mrs John Smith of Gamboola.

Before tracing Banjo's birth and baptism at Orange, it was freely stated that he had been born at Molong, while Yass residents claimed that he had been born there. Banjo had gone to the Yass area with his parents as a child.

Following publicity of the fact that Banjo had been born at Narrambla and his birth and baptism recorded at Orange, local and district people became very interested. As the

# formation of Historical Society

outcome of a suggestion by the late W R Glasson of Gamboola, Molong, a committee representing the Orange Municipal (later City) Council and the Canobolas Shire Council was formed with the object of erecting a suitable Banjo memorial on the Bathurst Road at the approach to Orange. The late Mr Bill Folster (who had done much research into early Orange history) and myself (I had already written numbers of historical articles) became co-opted members of the committee.

Both Mr Folster and I were strongly in favour of the memorial being erected in its present position – on the roadside opposite the actual place of birth at Narrambla. I remember Jack Jaeger, then Mayor of Orange, strongly supported the Narrambla site. We eventually swayed the committee to have it erected there. In the meantime Mr E A ‘Dick’ Rennie, health inspector for the Orange Council, had been discharged from the Army and was also co-opted to the committee. He also supported the Narrambla site.

The argument against us was who would be bothered driving out on that dusty road to see the memorial? Twenty years later the road was bituminised and hundreds of visitors now inspect the memorial and the old mill [this article was written before the mill was demolished in 1971].

Mr Rennie, with the full support of both councils and of the committee, took charge of arrangements for the erection of a memorial. The work was carried out by voluntary labour.

Mr Tracy Lane, owner of the property, offered a portion of land as a site for the memorial. His offer was accepted.

Working bees were held several weekends each month and rapid progress was made.

Those I remember taking part in the working bees were: Mr Rennie (in charge), myself, Percy Griffith, Don Murray, Bert Beaulock (stonemason), Vic Griffith, Arthur Machin, G ‘Sarge’ Kimber, W Christian, Les and Dick Brown, Alfred Stephen, Bob Harris, Les King (he faced and inscribed the stone, Bill Agland, Harry Martin. ‘Snowy’ Holmes gave us the fenceposts, Dr Arthur Colvin donated the memorial stone (it came from Duntroyleague).

Mr McFarlane, curator of council gardens, planted the trees around the memorial, a Mr Baker gave the gate, and Ian Carpenter surveyed the site.

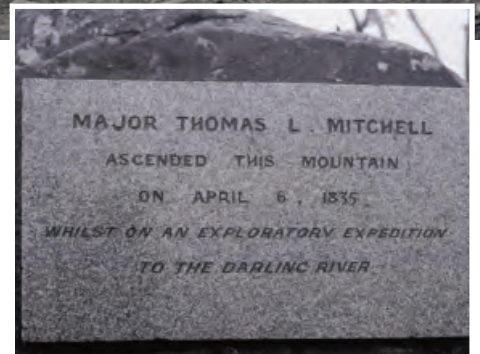
Mrs Bill Agland and daughter and Mrs Wilcox provided us regularly with afternoon teas: how we enjoyed it!

It was the result of discussions at these working bees that a decision was made to form a historical society.

Work having been completed on the memorial, the widow, who was then living in Sydney, was invited to come to Orange and unveil it. This she did on 20 December 1947 in the presence of a large gathering. Many visitors were present.



The Major Mitchell Memorial which was unveiled on Mount Canobolas in 1949. It disappeared sometime after 1963.



The selection of an extract from one of Banjo’s poems for the memorial caused a lot of discussion. In the end Messrs Folster, Rennie and I were asked to agree on an extract and to have the work put in hand without further delay.

Over the weekend I read a book of Banjo poems and marked two extracts, one from *Clancy of the Overflow* and the other from *The Man from Snowy River*.

The three of us met on the Monday: which one was it to be? The unanimous decision was the one from Clancy of the Overflow. That afternoon monumental mason Les King began cutting the inscription: ‘And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended. And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.’

The widow was delighted with our selection and told me if she had been asked to suggest an extract she would have made the same choice.

Arrangements were made to form the Historical Society and early in 1949 our society got underway. I became the first president and Mr Rennie, secretary.

We soon went into action and on 1 October 1949, in the presence of about 300 people Mr C Price Conigrave, a fellow of the Royal Australian Historical Society, unveiled the Major Mitchell Memorial on the top of Mount Canobolas.

\* Continued next page

# Diary January - March 2024

**Orange Regional Museum:** Open daily 9am-4pm, free.

**Millthorpe Golden Memories Museum:** Open weekends and school and public holidays 11am-3pm, entry adults \$10, children \$5 and families \$25.

**Molong Museum:** 20 Riddell Street opposite RSL Club. Open Thursdays and Sundays 10am-2pm or by appointment. Entry adults \$10, concession \$5, members \$5, families \$20. Phone 0400 425 015.

**Wentworth Mine:** Open Saturday and Sunday on the first full weekend of the month 10am-2.30pm. See [www.orangemuseum.com.au/wentworthmainmine](http://www.orangemuseum.com.au/wentworthmainmine)

**Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays:** ODHS volunteer working days at Heritage Cottage. Visitors with inquiries are welcome. Phone Liz Edwards on 0408 390 918 before your visit so we can start working on your inquiry.

**Please note the cottage will be closed from Thursday 21 December and reopen on Wednesday 31 January.**

**Wednesday 7 February** ODHS committee meeting, 5pm.

**Wednesday 6 March:** ODHS committee meeting, 5pm.

## Early days of Orange Historical Society

### \* From previous page

The inscription reads: "Major Thomas Mitchell ascended this mountain on 6 April 1835 whilst on an exploratory expedition to the Darling River."

Like the Banjo Memorial, this work was also carried out by working bees. Those who assisted were Mr Rennie (in charge), myself, Percy Griffith, A G Kimber, Don Murray, Fred Rauchle and probably one or two others. Harold McMurtrie, monumental mason, cut the inscription.

Our next big job was the Ophir Centenary celebrations in 1951. The City Council and the Canobolas Shire Council were right behind us. The *Women's Weekly* gave us great publicity. A few months before the celebrations a lady reporter and a photographer came to Orange.

Mr Rennie and I spent two days at Ophir with them, camping overnight.

As Ophir was described in the early days as being near Bathurst we asked the Bathurst Historical Society to join with us in the celebrations. Their delegates attended a number of meetings of our society. A number of their members were present at Ophir for the centenary celebrations.

The Minister for Mines, Mr Arthur, came up for the celebration and probably the biggest crowd at Ophir since the gold rush days was present.

The roads then were not like the present ones and in parts it was impossible for vehicles to pass. The police came to our assistance and introduced one-way traffic at certain times. I had had a busy three years as president and did not stand for election at the annual meeting in 1952.

I was asked to accept the position as patron. I did so and have held that position ever since. During my term as president I arranged all the publicity for the society.

Another memorial with which I was connected is the bronze plaque on the Court House verandah recording

the visits to Orange of Bishops Broughton and Barker in 1851 and 1855 respectively. They both held services in an early Orange Court House.

The society gave me permission to raise the necessary money (about \$180) and left all arrangements in my hands.

This plaque was unveiled by the Hon Leslie Herron (later Sir Leslie), Chief Justice, on 12 May 1964.

It was a big day in Orange. Law Term church services were held at both Holy Trinity and St Joseph's churches before the unveiling of the plaque and the official opening of the court.

Another matter in which I assisted and gave up a lot of my time was the preparation of the Orange Centenary Book for Orange City Council. The book was published in 1960.

I was asked to assist Mr James Jervis, a Fellow of the Royal Australian Historical Society, who had been engaged by the Council to write the historical section of the book.

Mr Jervis rewarded my efforts by naming me as a co-author of this attractive publication.



The plaque at Orange Court House.