

ELLEN & ALFRED WAUGH

Edited talk by Patricia Young, grand niece of Alfred Waugh (presented at A&DHS General Meeting, July 2014 and reprinted from A&DHS Bulletin No 548)

One can only imagine how Alfred Waugh felt at the age of 10, leaving England with his parents and four siblings arriving in Australia, viewing this vast land of ours. They brought with them a few pieces of furniture. One such piece was a chest of drawers, that has been passed on through the families and I believe is still in use. Alfred lived in North Melbourne and Moonee Ponds where two more siblings were born. Like his father he sought out new horizons. Alfred, having acquired a trade as a butcher, moved first to Corowa and then to Albury. When the butcher shop that he was employed at failed and he lost his job, I think it made him more determined to be in charge of his own destiny.

Alfred loved Albury and finding a butcher shop that he could purchase, confirmed in his mind that this place was to be his home. It was with this same sense of purpose that he stepped forward and ran for council; I believe one of his little sayings was, "Nothing ventured— Nothing gained." Apart from the obvious main council projects that he was involved with, there were lesser ones that would have gone un-noticed. One such project was the introduction of kerbs and drainage. On one of his business trips to Melbourne he inspected and sought out the firm of Coates & Co and he brought back a photo booklet by Sun pictures of samples of kerbs. Alfred came from a part Scottish background, where you did an honest day's work for an honest day's wage. He had no time for liars or bludgers, but during the depression when times were really tough, he did whatever he could to help those most in need with food parcels.



ALFRED WAUGH

His father, a tailor; taught him to dress well, even in his early years, when he didn't have much money. Ellen, his wife, was a daughter of a railway worker, who took up dress making as a career. This was to stand her in good stead throughout her married life.

When Ellen's brother Richard, died during his wife's pregnancy when expecting their second child, Alfred and Ellen both stepped in to give assistance to their sister-in-law, Kathleen. When the baby was born, she was named Ellen. So began the close relationship with my Mother.

It's my understanding that Alfred and Ellen took in my mother, Ellen Cockerell, after Ellen's primary school education. The Waugh's sent her to evening school to broaden her education, particularly in book-keeping, an essential. It was her job to assist in keeping the books at the butcher shop. One could imagine the confusion in the shop when someone called out Ellen and two heads popped up. To stop this confusion Ellen Waugh decided to be known as Nell. Her family and close friends commonly called her that, however for official occasions and press releases she would always be referred to as Ellen.

Alfred joined the Masonic Lodge in 1900 and the Albury Racing Club a little later. In the following years he joined many other clubs such as Rotary, reaching out to people to see what he could do for the community. He did not big note himself, quite the opposite. To quote Canon Statham from his eulogy at Alfred's funeral, "Mr Waugh, who had played a big part in the building of the city of Albury. Anyone who knew anything of the city's history knew that which was the best in it was due to his patient service and public spirit. From his many splendid

qualities I must single out one, the indomitable will to carry on despite his disability. He faced the up-hill road unflinchingly, displaying fortitude more often found in women than in men." He continued to say "Another of his great qualities was his generosity. He gave himself, his time and his money, to the people and city he represented. Had he devoted his great ability, sound judgement and tenacity of purpose towards furthering his own ends, he would have become a very wealthy man. But instead he practised the ideal of service." One such auspicious occasion was in 1901, when through his determination, their Royal Highnesses, the Duke & Duchess of Cornwall & York stopped at the Albury Railway Station. Again when he organized and chaired the Hume & Hovell Centenary Celebrations in 1924. Not even the plight of the Uiver would change his thinking. I think you will find that it was the Dutch who chased him to give him their knighthood award. When he did receive it he took it in his stride but was overawed by the reception they got in Holland. As he repeated so often, he did it for the people of Albury.

Alfred saw Albury as a central region between Melbourne and Sydney, for he believed that Albury should have all the facilities and amenities of the cities. This was none more evident than when he asked the State government for funds to build an Ambulance station and to provide an Ambulance. Word came back, build your own Station and we will provide an ambulance. Not to be put off from this, Alfred's sister Marion and his wife Ellen set about forming a charity group to raise funds, not only for the Ambulance station, but for the new Hospital as well.

In 1918/19 when the Hume Dam plans were drawn up and the first shovel of earth was turned, Alfred was there. When it opened in 1936 he was there. Alfred loved the water, whether sailing on it, swimming in it or even having a tippie of Scotch in it. In 1944 Alfred and Ellen sold their butcher shop business to Mr R J Hickey. They then bought "Kia-Ora," 471 Townsend Street. Albury. Their plan was to see out their retiring years there.

Alfred retired from the Council in May 1948, due to ill health, just three months before his death, and sadly he was never to see out a full retirement. According to my mother's handwritten notes, he was invalided in 1915 with rheumatoid arthritis that then developed into osteoarthritis, resulting in the use of crutches from 1922. This did not perturb him, but made him more driven to help others. He was retired for approximately 40 days before his untimely death. Paul Harris was the founder of Rotary International. In his book 'Peregrinations' written in 1935, he wrote of Alfred, "He is a cripple and has been his people's choice for Mayor sixteen years, with prospect that he will continue to be their choice as long as it remains his desire to hobble about in their service." This in itself is an accolade to his tenacity and his strength of character. Alfred had received a beautifully crafted booklet from the Local Government Association of New South Wales with beautifully inscribed signatures. It was a true testimony of how the Council Association felt about him. He was very much loved and respected, and this was demonstrated when they built a Memorial Fountain in Dean Square in his honour after his death. I'm sure a glass of water and tippie of Scotch would have been raised the day it was finished!