

# Ellen Waugh

*Greg Ryan*

Few females have been recognized over the time that this feature has been running in the *Border Mail*, and usually only remembered as the wife of a prominent male.

Ellen Waugh was often referred to as the lady mayoress, wife of Alfred Waugh. In 1946, the *Border Morning Mail* ran a *Then & Now* series featuring local identities with Mrs Waugh being the only woman recognized.



Alfred and Ellen Waugh on the balcony of the Albury Town Hall in December 1935, after visiting the Netherlands where Queen Wilhelmina received Alfred as an officer of the Order of Orange Nassau [Albury LibraryMuseum Collection]

She was born Ellen Cockerell at Woods Point where she started school, Her father, a railway worker, moved to Benalla where Ellen completed her schooling. In time the family moved to Corowa where Ellen's path crossed with Alfred Waugh and they married in 1895.

The Waughs settled in Albury with Alf working for a local butcher before he opened his own business in the late 1890s on the south-west corner of Townsend & Smollett Streets. Alf was invalided in 1915 and for the next thirty years Ellen continued the business of retail butcher. Her husband was quoted as saying "Under my tuition, my wife became the best butcher in Albury. Since 1915 I have not done a hand's turn in the shop and she has done my share and her own too."

During World War I Ellen organised fund raising activities and continued the effort after hostilities ended. The 1946 BMM article describes a range of local groups for which Ellen Waugh played a leading role. She was part of a women's committee that worked for a new hospital on Wodonga Place. "To raise their share the women's committee got down to business in earnest. Concerts, dances, card parties and other forms of entertainment were held in Albury, Howlong Brocklesby, Jindera, Wodonga and other district centres. This committee was the forerunner of other associations of women that raised thousands of pounds for the hospital."

In 1946, the BMM reported that "last year her total disbursement was £334, divided among 21 different bodies in proportion as Mrs Waugh thought fit. Hospital, orphanage, ambulance, Scouts, Girl Guides and others receive their share."

An ambulance service was opened in Albury in 1927 and Ellen Waugh officially opened the Dean Street station in 1934. For over twenty years she was president of the ambulance auxiliary.

The Waughs sold their butchery in 1944 and purchased *Kia Ora*, in Townsend Street as their retirement home. Ellen Waugh died in 1956 and is buried next to her husband at Albury's Waugh Road Cemetery.