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Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 08, 2023

6.30 pm, Uiver Hangar, Airport

Topic: Restoration of the Uiver Memorial DC2



Shearing the Rams, Tom Roberts, 1890

LAVINGTON LIBRARY
Faces of DSI (Borg-
Warner, BTR, ION, Geely)
March 4 to June 17

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR MARCH

Many accolades have been expressed to acknowledge the contribution to our community by the late Patricia Gould OAM. A number of our members attended Patricia's funeral to mark her role as one of our Patrons. The Albury and District Historical Society was one of 72 community organisations which directly benefitted from Patricia Gould's involvement. We acknowledge her remarkable 42 year career as an elected member of the Albury City Council and thank her for her support during that entire time. Rest in Peace.

We started the year with a remarkable address by Robyn Hawking detailing her family research which led her to the Tom Roberts masterpiece "Shearing of the Rams". There was a large attendance in anticipation of Robyn's talk. We also heard the Cooper Tools story prepared by Kevin and Jan Daniel and were given a preview of exhibitions coming up in 2023 at the Albury LibraryMuseum.

In the February Bulletin there was an article about Trove funding. The ongoing funding by the federal government for Trove is under threat. This is a critical issue for us and your committee is taking all possible steps to secure funding. I respectfully ask members to read the on-line petition, which is linked in our recent email to members, and consider signing it. The petition has been published on the House of Representatives website which is, I think, an indication that the government wants to know the amount of interest in the broader community.

Our next meeting on 8th of March will be held at the Uiver restoration hangar at the Albury Airport (see map on cover letter with this month's mailout) at the earlier time of 6.30pm. A light tea will be provided by the Uiver team as a fundraiser.

THE USE OF DNA TO FIND THE PARENTS OF CHARLES WILLIAM SHARMAN WHICH LED TO ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERY

Robyn Sharman Hawking

This is the story of how DNA analysis assisted with establishing my great grandfather's origins, a hundred years after his death, and established a connection to a well-known Australian icon.

Charles Sharman drowned in the Murray River at Corowa, in March 1910. His death certificate states he was a native of Launceston Tasmania, as does his marriage certificate and his two sons' birth registrations.¹ But why did he state his parents as unknown, if he knew where he was born? Charles was a reasonably well-educated man for the time; he could read and write. For many years my Aunt Nestor Sutherland (*née Sharman*) searched Australia far and wide looking for his birth. Her father, James Sharman always stated '*Dad didn't have parents!*' But his wife Dorothy Sharman said '*the Sharmans have a secret*'.²

As the years passed and researching became easier, I undertook the task to find Sharman's parents. English records were searched at length, as Sharman is an English name, although I always felt this line of our family was Irish. Thus Irish and Scottish records were also searched, but nothing substantial was found. Additionally, all Australian state records, and in particular Tasmanian records were accessed, with visits to the Tasmanian Archives in Hobart. But again, nothing found. Several years ago, I thought I had found his birth in England, however eventually I found this man in New Zealand where he lived and died. A huge disappointment, so I decided to move on, and commenced writing my family story without knowing any more about Sharman. We'd done enough. But it nagged at me!

As technical improvements in DNA testing occurred and became more affordable, my cousin and I decided to take a DNA test in 2016. Family members were sceptical and said '*you may not like what you find*'. However, I was convinced DNA would at the very least confirm the other lines of my tree, establish my genetic makeup, and the best outcome would be to link C W Sharman with a family.

The results did all that and more!

The test instructions were easy to follow; the seven-week wait was the hardest part. At first, I did not see the connection, as I was still looking for the name Sharman or a variation of. Eventually, I queried '*why was our DNA matching as 'extremely high', matches with people I have never heard of or who had no surnames in common?*' On the DNA site, information was provided about which common ancestor these matches share. It appears this would be at least one great great-grandparent.³

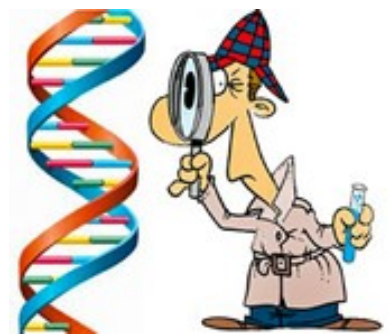
Excitement was building, the matches were examined, and it was discovered the matches had common gg grandparents who had lived around Launceston. The common ancestors were Christopher James Coffey and his wife Bridget Gilligan.

Could this be right, our family DNA is matching with an Irish convict named Christopher Coffey, not someone named Sherman, Shannon, or Shearman; just a few of the surname variants that had been searched over the years?

Emails to the Coffey DNA matches were sent, with one of Coffey's descendants, Andrew Coffey, stating '*Oh you would be descended from the missing boy*'.⁴ Apparently their family stories indicate there was another boy in this family, who was connected to Corowa. DNA had proved their family story was correct.

Christopher and Bridget Coffey had three children: William Coffey (*Charles William Sharman b. 1856*),⁵ James Coffey (*b. 1858*)⁶ and Mary Coffey (*b. 1860*).⁷ The Archdiocese of Hobart Archive confirms the birth and baptisms of their two sons, William and James,⁸ whilst Mary's birth was registered at Port Sorrell where the couple lived. Bridget Coffey appeared in a court during July 1857 with '*a child in her arms*',⁹ which would have been William Coffey, later CW Sharman.

Christopher Coffey was baptised in Westmeath, Ireland in March 1820. He was transported to Tasmania in



1. NSW BDM Death of Charles William Sharman March 1, 1910, District of Corowa, Reg. 1218/1910

2. Memories of Jim and Dorothy Sharman

3. AncestryDNA Matching White Paper. <https://www.ancestry.com.au>

4. Personal Communication with Andrew & Valmai Coffey Warrnambool 2017

5. NSW BDM. Walter Sharman, February 1891 Reg No 1891/11505 and James Sharman July 1892, District of Corowa Reg No. 724454

6. SJ Coffey headstone, Kyneton Cemetery. Victoria

7. Tasmanian BDM, District of Port Sorrell birth registration 574/1860

8. Archdiocese of Hobart, Archives & Heritage Collection Baptism details of William Coffee, April 13 1856 & James Coffey April 4 1858.

9. 'Notice' Cornwall Chronicle, Launceston, Tasmania Wednesday July 15, 1857, p5

1843 for stealing his aunt's three sheep.¹⁰ Coffey was pardoned in 1853, and by July 1855 he had married Bridget in Westbury, Tasmania.¹¹ The marriage did not survive as Coffey placed a public notice in the *Launceston Cornwall Chronicle*, stating 'Bridget had left home without just cause, and he would not be responsible for her debts'.¹² Bridget partnered with a convict named Michael Finnerty, giving birth to a daughter Ellen in 1865, the first of several more children.¹³ Finnerty and Bridget never married and they too parted.

What happened to her three children with Coffey, who were all under six years old when she left Christopher? It appears her two-year old daughter Mary went with her mother. Mary married a John Davison in 1881,¹⁴ and he was born in the Circular Head area of Tasmania, the same region as Bridget and Michael lived. Research has found evidence of Mary Coffey's (Davison) sons attending Finnerty family funerals and noted as nephews. No evidence has been found that either of her sons were known to Bridget's second family. To date, the whereabouts of Charles William and James from 1862 until the mid-1880s has not been established.

DNA has established Charles William was definitely Christopher Coffey's son but was he also Bridget's son?

The answer again was provided by DNA. Many Sharman descendants have DNA matches with descendants of Bridget Coffey and Michael Finnerty's children. These matches indicate Sharman was indeed the son of Christopher and Bridget Coffey. Several other matches with Bridget's maiden name of Gilligan have also been established.

The question for the Sharman descendants is 'why did Charles William Sharman fail to note his parents on his marriage registration, and change his name from Coffey to Sharman'? It is assumed the eldest child would have known his name, as his younger siblings James and Mary Coffey certainly did. Was he fostered, and were the boys neglected after the marriage failed?

There are many Sharman families around the Launceston/Deloraine area of Tasmania. Did he live and work with one of these families, or did he wish to remove himself from the perceived convict taint and take any name?

Matches with Coffey Descendants					
	Relationship	Centimorgans (cMs)	DNA Segments	Centimorgans (cMs)	DNA Segments
		Kerry			
Robyn	1st Cousins – our great grandfather was Charles William Sharman	821	42		
Shared matches with Coffey descendants		Robyn		Kerry	
Andrew	Grandson of Samuel Coffey	172	8	41	4
Jennie	Great granddaughter of Samuel Coffey	109	6	33	4
Annette	Great granddaughter of Samuel Coffey	97	6	22.9	2
Patricia	Granddaughter of Mary Coffey	45	3	65	3
Maryanne	Great granddaughter of Mary Coffey	28.6	5	24.3	2
Jason	Great grandson of Mary Coffey	18.9	1	0	0
Paul	Great grandson of Mary Coffey	16.2	4	11.2	2
Yarrum	Great great granddaughter of Kate Finnerty, daughter of Bridget Coffey/ Finnerty (as per public ancestry tree)	14.6	1	14.7	1

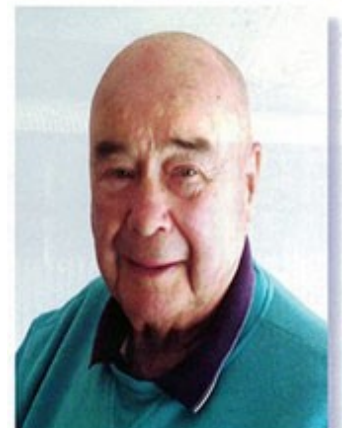


Table: Matches with Coffey Descendants. A number of matches were noted on AncestryDNA with other Coffey descendants, with several being 'extremely high' ie greater than 150 cMs. However, as personal contact has not been established with these matches, they have not been added to the table.

Quarterly Journal of the Genealogical Society of Victoria.
Vol 34, March 2018 by Robyn Sharman Hawking.

Many family members have noted facial resemblances between the Sharman and Coffey male lines. James Sharman 1970 (top), Andrew Coffey 2014 (bottom). Author's collection.

10. NSW & Tasmania, Australia Convict Muster, 1806-1849. <https://search.ancestry.com.au>

11. Tasmania BDM, District of Westbury, marriage registration, 1252/72

12. 'Notice' *Cornwall Chronicle*, Launceston, Tasmania April 23, 1862

13. Birth of Ellen Finnerty 1865 'Cries from the Past' Les Shearer Evans Family Genealogy ISBN 97806446948584

14. Tasmania BDM Marriage of Mary Coffey and John Davison Sept 21, 1881, Reg. 664

The Coffey children were not recognised in Bridget and Michael Finnerty's family, as none are noted on Bridget's death certificate, following her death in Rosedale, Victoria in December 1911.¹⁵ We wonder if mother and sons ever met after Bridget parted from Christopher. *Did Charles and James stay with their father Christopher?* Although it is highly likely their father drowned during a storm at Broulee near Moruya in 1866.¹⁶ The boys were not admitted to any Tasmanian orphanages. But somehow both survived!

So many unanswered questions which we may never know the answers to, but whatever the reason, William changed his name from Coffey to Sharman. DNA has provided our family with our great grandfather's origins, extended our family connections, and our longstanding brick wall has crumbled.

Family Resemblances



Charles W Sharman Daniel Coffey James Coffey James Sharman
Daniel is James Coffey's son and James Sharman is son of Charles Sharman.

The earliest evidence found of Sharman's presence on mainland Australia was noted when as a 29 year old he participated in a ballot to purchase land in the Riverina area of NSW in April 1885.¹⁷ He did not win the ballot. At some point he moved to Corowa, possibly as early as July 1885, as several unclaimed letters were noted at the Corowa Post office.¹⁸ Later he married Aimee Wealands in 1890,²⁰ producing two sons, Walter and James Sharman (*author's grandfather*) born 1891 and 1892 respectively. Charles

Sharman resided in River St, South Corowa until his death in March 1910.²¹

Coincidentally or not, Sharman's younger brother James Coffey arrived in Corowa in 1887, and the birth of several children were registered between 1887–1892.²² The 1891 census for Corowa notes an 'S Coffey (*likely using S for Samuel, an alias*) and family' residing in River St, South Corowa.²³

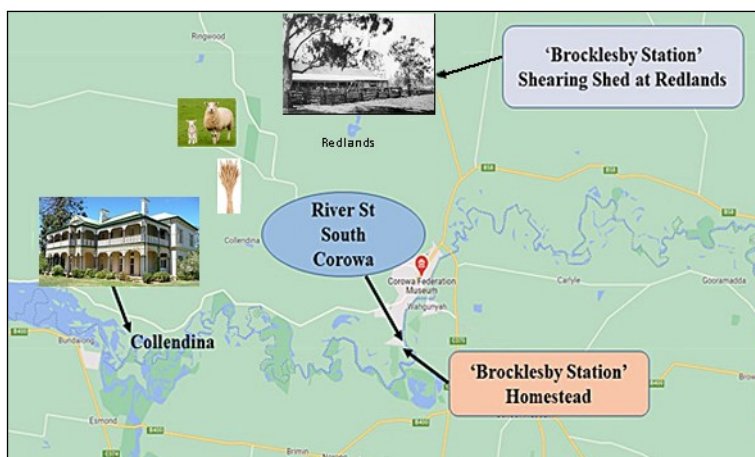
Did the brothers acknowledge each other? We would assume so, as they both lived in South Corowa.

A few months earlier in December 1886, an English born artist named Tom Roberts travelled to Corowa to attend the wedding of his cousin to Janie Anderson, the daughter of the Anderson family who, with the King family, owned the large property named 'Brocklesby Station'.

The property extended from the homestead at South Corowa to Redlands and Savernake.²⁴ In the 1880s Corowa was surrounded by several large pastoral properties such as 'Brocklesby Station' and 'Collendina', which employed many of the local population.

The family connection with 'Brocklesby Station' provided Roberts with accommodation and access to the shearing shed near Redlands. The shed provided the backdrop for his iconic painting 'Shearing the Rams'. Roberts commenced sketching during the shearing season of 1888, and continued in the 1889 season.

Brocklesby Homestead was built on land overlooking the lagoon in the backwater of the Murray River in South Corowa, and is still standing next to the Corowa Golf Club, on the western side.



15. Victorian BDM. District of Rosedale Death of Bridget Finnerty, December 19, 1911. Reg No. 14685

16. Inquest into drowning at Broulee Island, Empire (Sydney, NSW: 1850-1875 Tuesday January 8, 1867, p8

17. Land Department Records, District of Corowa August 6, 1885, Conditional Purchase 10

18. NSW Government Gazettes. July-September 1885. Pg nos. 4585 & 6209. Accessed on Ancestry.com

19. NSW BDM, Marriage of CW Sharman & AL Wealands registration 3205/1890

20. NSW BDM Walter WW Sharman, February 1891 Reg. No. 011505 & James Sharman July 1892 Reg. No. 724454

21. NSW BDM. Death of CW Sharman, March 1, 1910 District of Corowa, Reg. 1218/1910

22. NSW Registration of BDM Coffey birth registration, 13785/1889, 11565/1891, 12021/1893 District of Corowa

23. State Archives NSW, New South Wales, Australia Census 1891. Series NRS 683, Book1 Item 2/8419, Roll 2532. Ancestry.com

24. 'History of Brocklesby Station.' Researched and assembled by Corowa District Historical Society. Booklet in Authors possession



Jack Wise c1882

The 1890 Tom Roberts painting was part of our family stories, as we have always known of the connection with the second shearer, Jack Wise. Following the death of CW Sharman, his widow Aimee married her widowed neighbour Jack Wise, the second shearer in the painting.²⁵ She cared for his three younger children, and he was always known as Grandpa Wise to our family. Aimee and Jack Wise relocated to Sydney in 1938, where he passed away in 1946, and was buried at the Rookwood Cemetery.²⁶ Aimee died in 1948 and was buried with her first husband Charles Sharman in the Corowa Pioneer Cemetery.²⁷

Whilst writing the Aimee Sharman and Jack Wise story, an idea developed. Was Jim Coffey, the central shearer in the painting, our great uncle James Coffey, who was probably called Jim by the men in the shearing shed? Seemingly Roberts picked the 'most characteristic and picturesque of the shearers and roustabouts, and paid them £12 to model for him. Further research was required to establish the identity of Jim Coffey.

Extensive searches of birth, marriage and death records for Corowa and surrounding areas failed to find anyone with the Coffey surname between 1885 and 1895. Undoubtedly James Coffey and family lived in Corowa between 1887 and 1894, as indicated by the birth registration of three children and the death of a son in 1887. Also noted in 1895 was a Thomas Coffey of Corowa. However, names and dates of family members do not match.



James Coffey c1895

The Corowa Historical Society supports this by noting the boy's death, as the son of James and Susan Coffey, of the *Shearing the Rams* painting.²⁸ As does the obituary of Coffey's wife Susan in 1942, which notes 'Jim and Susan Coffey arrived in Kyneton from Corowa around 1895'.²⁹ Not absolutely correct as Coffey was sentenced for larceny in 1895, and spent several months in the Launceston gaol. Furthermore, their last child Gerard was born in Tasmania in 1898.³⁰ Later the couple are noted on the 1919 electoral roll for Kyneton.³¹ Susan's obituary adds to the evidence that the same James Coffey and family were definitely in Corowa.

James Coffey was a larrikin who fell out with the law many times. In January 1894 he was charged with theft, and left Corowa quickly by train under the assumed name of James McFannan.³² He also used the name Samuel Coffey. By January 1895 the family had returned to Tasmania and James was quickly arrested, convicted of fraud and incarcerated in Launceston.³³ No further information has been found on James Coffey until the family relocated to Kyneton, Victoria where he worked as a poultry farmer until his death on December 8, 1927.³⁴

Prior to his conviction in 1895, James Coffey lost three fingers on his left hand.³⁵ Although his fingers appear intact in the painting. Perhaps the result of a shearing accident? Machine shears had recently been introduced in the Corowa area, however Tom Roberts preferred to paint hand held shears, as he felt they added to the atmosphere and meaning of the painting. It is also noted that all the young men in the painting have long dark beards. Was this Roberts' preference or the fashion of the day?

Many descriptions of James Coffey exist, and it is questionable if he had a beard. This is supported by the team at the National Gallery who have established Tom Roberts painted the beard on the central shearer much later, and the model was probably clean shaven.³⁶

Prior to sketching the painting Roberts travelled abroad, and was influenced by 'the impressionist style', which explains the reason the central shearer is depicted in a pink shirt. During my research I needed to keep reminding myself *this is a 'painting' not a photograph*, and the models are not exactly reproduced, but as Roberts wished to portray them.

25. Australia, Marriage Index, 1788-1950 Marriage of John Wise and Aimee Louisa Sharman Reg. 1444. Ancestry.com.au

26. Corowa Free Press Friday May 10, 1946, p 3

27. NSW BDM. Aimee Wise death certificate No.1948/13382

28. Corowa District Historical Society Information Booklet, page 7. Information accessed from Corowa Free Press & Early Settlement of the Upper Murray.

29. Obituary of Susan Coffey. December 2, 1942. In authors possession

30. Birth of Gerard Coffey September 30, 1898 Reg. 1206

31. Australia, Electoral Rolls 1903-1980. Susan and James Coffey 1919. Kyneton. Ancestry.com.au

32. Victorian Police Gazette. January 31, 1894 p.44 Ancestry.com.au

33. Tasmanian Police Gazette, James Coffey arrest February 8, 1895

34. Victorian BDM Death of James Coffey 1927 Reg No. 14966

35. Tasmanian Police Gazettes, February 19/20, 1895, Conviction and Description of James Coffey

36. National Gallery of Victoria. <https://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/creative-life/restoring-shearing-the-rams>. Accessed July 25, 2018

In their research booklet the Corowa Historical Society note: 'To residents in this district the painting has more than a general interest, for it is essentially a picture of Corowa'.³⁷

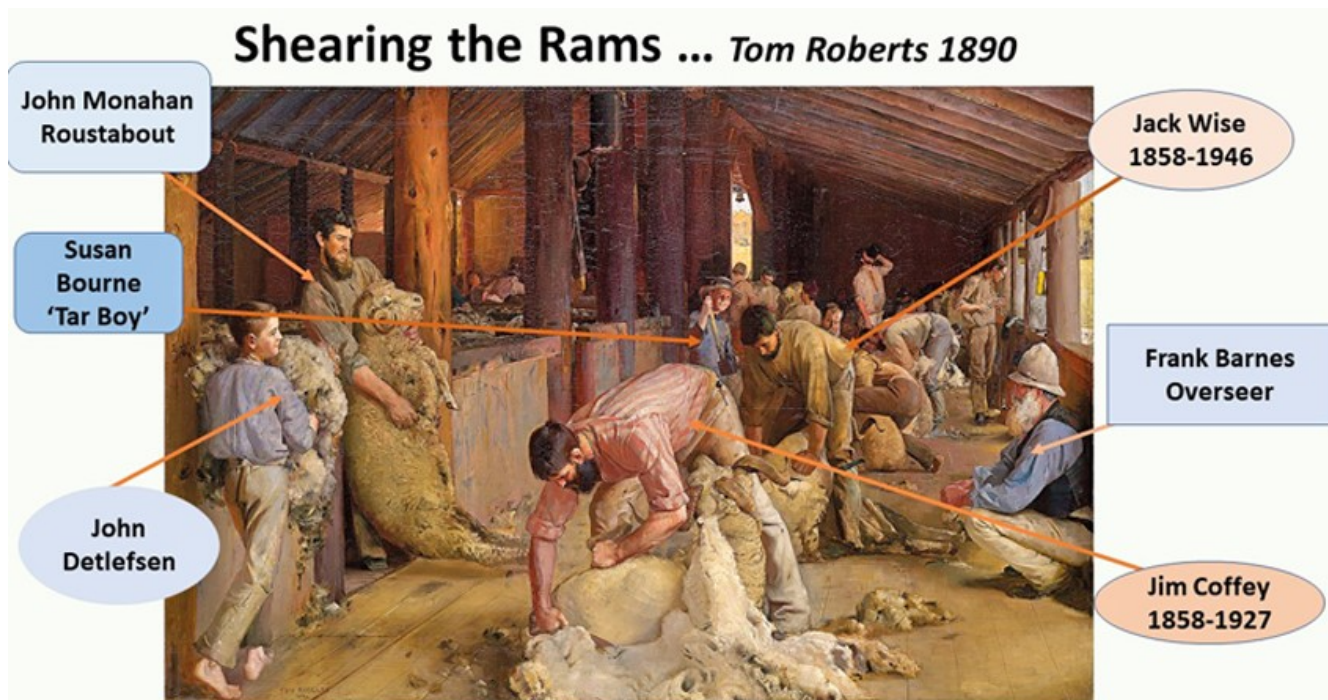
The original shearing shed was later named 'Killeneen', and although the old shearing shed eventually burned down in the 1960s due to wood rot and age, one side is still able to be seen from the road running past the property. This road has now been officially named Tom Roberts Road.³⁸

The evidence has clearly established that our great uncle James Coffey was undoubtedly 'Jim Coffey' the model for the central shearer in the 'Shearing the Rams' painting.

Without the use of DNA to establish the birth name of Charles W Sharman, this link would never have been uncovered.

37. 'History of Brocklesby Station.' Researched and assembled by Corowa District Historical Society. Booklet in authors possession.

38. 'History of Brocklesby Station.'



THE PEOPLE IN THE PAINTING

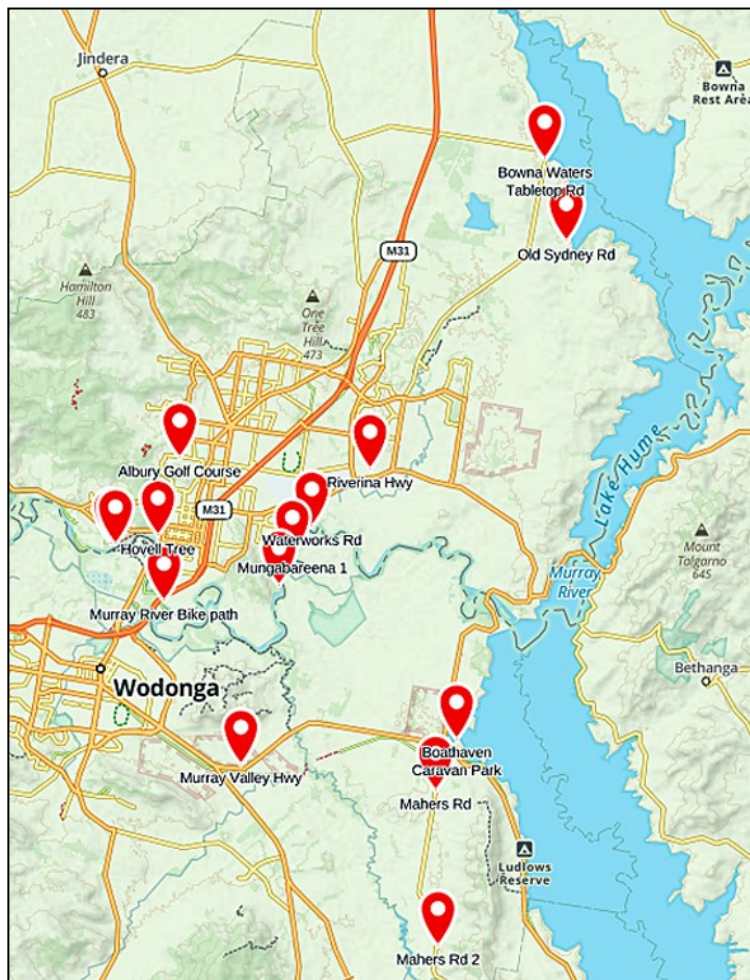
1. **Frank Barnes**, the bearded, pipe-smoking overseer is squatting on the right. He had a supervisory role and owned land at nearby Redlands.
Died: 9th April, 1907 - age 72 years
Buried: Pioneer Cemetery, Corowa (headstone)
2. **Jim Coffey**, the shearer in the centre, was a local district shearer.
3. **John (Jack) Henry Detlefsen**, the lad with the fleece in the left of the painting, was 14 years of age.
Died: 8th June, 1945 - age 70 years.
Buried: Pioneer Cemetery, Corowa (unknown grave)
4. **John Monahan** (age 27 years), the roustabout with the sheep, was a local farmer who must have been working for Andersons during the shearing season.
Died: 13th June, 1922 - age about 60 years
Buried: Catholic Cemetery, Corowa (unknown grave)
5. **Susie Bourne**. The Tarpot "boy", ready to staunch away accidental wounds was in fact 8 yr old Susie Bourne, daughter of a local stockman. She received additional sixpences from Roberts for keeping dust kicked up to create a hazy atmosphere. Born in 1881, she married John Davis in 1901. In the latter part of her life she lived with family in South Corowa and Wahgunyah.
Died: 25th September, 1979 - aged 98 years
Buried: Corowa Lawn Cemetery
6. **Jack Wise**, the second shearer.
Died: 1946 Buried: Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney.
7. **Alexander Anderson**, the man framed by the back window and one of the owners of Brocklesby Station. As a J.P., supporter of the Corowa Hospital, Pastures and Stock Board and Show Society, he was a key figure in Corowa.
Died: 14th February, 1919 at "Brocklesby House" South Corowa - age 79 years.
Buried: Corowa Pioneer Cemetery (family grave)
8. **Charles Anderson**, facing Alexander Anderson, was his brother and business partner. He was not involved in public matters and was unmarried.
Died: 9th January, 1917 - age 79 years
9. **Robert Kennedy**, one of the workers in the rear was about 19 years when the painting was done.
Died: August, 1947 - age 75 years.

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Alongside my Hume and Hovell bike ride project I have been trying to connect an aboriginal aspect to the ride. One activity has been to find local Aboriginal Ring Trees.

Ring trees are trees that have been modified by grafting two branches together such that the joining forms a ring. These trees are significant in that within their traditions they act as markers of boundaries, or markers or places like corroborees, meeting places, pathways or maybe birthing trees. Some trees can have multiple rings.



The map shows the locations of some of the trees that I have found in our area.

Top left: one such tree on private property south of Wodonga.

Bottom left: a tree beside the River at Mungabareena .



Visit our website for photos of old Albury, history articles, past Bulletins and much more. Go to:
<https://alburyhistory.org.au/>



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Facebook

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Have you visited our YouTube Channel?

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDzIPypinJegksrO-lzssVg>



Kevin and Jan Daniel both worked in Albury for about twenty years for Cooper Tools. Kevin prepared an outline of Cooper Tools' Albury operation for presentation at the February meeting of our Society.

The Cooper story started in 1833 when brothers Charles and Elias Cooper started a foundry on their Mt Vernon, Ohio farm. It was very basic, with a horse hooked up to turn the wooden blades of a fan to provide the air blast for the crucible. The horse was finally replaced by a steam engine built by the brothers.

The main products from the foundry were farm ploughs and other farm items. Word spread and soon local farmers were ordering Cooper products. The Cooper brothers manufactured the first steam powered farm tractor. While being powered by steam it still needed two horses to steer it. The brothers turned their skills to building bigger steam engines for the expanding manufacturing market.

By the year of 1897 many small manufacturing businesses had started up, these included Ajax drilling engines, Gardner speed governors, Lufkin log measuring rules, Crouse-Hinds electric powered items and Wiss, Crescent and Plumb tools. These company names are just a few of those that became part of the Cooper Group. After merging and/or acquiring several well known brands, the company registered as "Cooper Tools" – the press of the day referred to them as "The Tool Basket."

It was decided that a Cooper distribution centre was needed in the South Pacific area. Australia was chosen and after review of possible locations, Albury was selected, being midway between the two main markets of Sydney and Melbourne, and an incentive program encouraged businesses to set up in regional areas.

A suitable building in Nurigong Street, owned by A P Delaney, was leased in 1971. The new facility was placed under the management of Jack Kosis from the Raleigh, North Carolina office. Arrangements were made to ship Lufkin measuring tape parts from the plant in Barrie, Canada for assembly at the Albury plant. Sales teams were set up in each Australian state as well as New Zealand and New Guinea.



Initially Lufkin measuring tapes were the only production items while other imported hand tools were warehoused and distributed. Then in 1973 Weller soldering Iron assembly was set up. With USA electric power running at 110 volts, their electric powered tools were not suitable for the South Pacific markets that run on 240 volts. Prior to the set up of the Albury plant the Weller soldering stations were marketed in Australia by an agent with the power pack produced by one local company and the soldering irons assembled by another company. The agent would then package the complete station and distribute them.

The Sydney company assembling the soldering irons, T&K Products, was asked to organize the change of the entire Weller soldering iron range from 110 volt to 240 volt operation so that the Albury plant could start production of the Weller range of products. The changes required redesign of the elements and fittings to gain Australian electrical approval. After gaining approval, the Sydney Company accepted an offer for one of the partners to come to Albury to set up the Weller production. After Weller production started, I, the K part of the Sydney company, T&K Products, was asked to work at the Albury plant. I accepted and moved to Albury, becoming Product Engineer for the entire Cooper range.



My first target was Lufkin. It was decided that we should move into producing the tape parts rather than just importing them. A tapeline printer became available at the Barrie plant in Canada so I imported it and set it up. I also had to build tape spring steel surface treatment and painting equipment. To add to the in-plant production, an injection moulding and tooling machine was purchased to mould the measuring tape cases and fittings.

From the start, my goal was to achieve the Australian Made criteria for as many products as possible. Where necessary, unfinished parts were imported, finished and assembled. We purchased tooling to mould handles for the Crescent brand range of screw drivers. The blades were imported then assembled to the handles. Crescent tool production moved on to pliers, cutters and other grip tools that were imported as basic forged parts that were finished and assembled in Albury. This involved induction hardening, assembly, surface treatment and

adding grip surfaces.

Nicholson files, another Cooper product that the Albury plant was warehousing, became a local product when Cooper purchased the Australian file company, Wiltshire Files. While the files were still produced in Melbourne, the product was shipped to Albury for carding and distribution.

There are many Cooper plants around the world, so the Albury plant had me attend annual engineers' meetings staged at different plants. At these meetings each attendee brought the meeting up-to-date with processes and product knowledge from their home plant. This was a vital part of producing the best possible product using the best production methods.

The Albury warehouse distributed many of the Cooper Tools family of products, as well as those manufactured in Albury. These included top of the range products such as Plumb axes and hammers, Wiss snips and scissors, Exelite precision tools for the electronics industry, Crouse-Hinds safety items and others.

After a number of name changes, the business became Apex Tools Group. Unfortunately their Albury plant ceased production in March 2021. Anthony Bunn reported in the *Border Mail* that 50 jobs were lost. He wrote that Cooper Tools "was well known for its community largesse, sponsoring the Albury Gold Cup, Albury Football Club and the Border Bandits Basketball Club."



UGLIEST MAN COMPETITIONS

Greg Ryan

The *Albury Banner* reported in October 1900 that an 'ugliest man' competition would be held as part of a 'Hospital Carnival' to raise money for the Albury District Hospital.

"In the award for 'ugliest man,' the competition will perhaps be limited by the inherent diffidence of the average male person. He may know that he is very ugly indeed, but with the becoming modesty characteristic of his sex, he will not be able to rid himself of the suspicion that quite a number of his fellows have a stronger title to the award. The greater courage and self-reliance of the ladies, on the other hand, will probably enlarge the field competing for the prize for the prettiest woman."

Such competitions appear to have become quite popular in the local district 1930s and 1940s as part of fund raising events. For a small fee, a vote could be cast and the man voted ugliest would be announced at the completion of the event.

Albury Rotary Club took a different approach in 1940 when they conducted an 'ugliest man' competition as part of a Rotary Patriotic Carnival, raising money for the war effort. In the couple of months prior to the October Carnival local men were nominated as 'ugliest man' and for five shillings they could transfer the 'title' to another 'uglier man.' The *Border Morning Mail* informed readers that the first nominee was Dudley Gordon Padman, Mayor of Albury. His friends "proclaimed his 'ugliness' to the world" via a message in a window of Mate's Store in Dean Street.

Alderman Padman paid his 5/- and a few days later the paper reported that the title "has descended in succession to Messrs D A Thompson, J L Taverny, C Lillyman, R M Taylor, L J Colquhoun, F Roach and L Ryan." Other names of 'Ugliest Men' published by the *BMM* included Willson White, B Hutchinson, H M Turner, Ron Caldwell, Alf Chick, L H Paech, Les Chick, T Nesire, W T Buckley, W E Corban, Les Harris, A M Abikhair, T Barnes, Joe Assad, J E Arnold, C H Griffiths, John Hunter, Roy Collings, Dick Walker, Jim Lee, Frank Ecker, T A Horan, R M Strong, Superintendent Armstrong, Rob Thornton, H F Johnson, J J McCarthy, Gordon Davidson and C Kimball.

The list of 'ugly men' grew longer and when the balance sheet was published after the Carnival, it was revealed that the competition had raised £25, implying that 100 local men had worn the title of Albury's 'ugliest man.'

Raising far more money was the 'Popular Girl Competition.' There were three nominees, Miss Ruby Carroll nominated as the business girl, Mrs 'Sandy' Mair the nurses' representative and Miss Betty Young the sports girl nominee. Locals could cast a vote for one penny. The progress of votes for each girl was recorded at the Town Hall and a coloured flag for each girl, red white and blue, on the Globe Hotel flagpole, adjusted daily informing locals of the current standings. Boy Scouts helped their favourite candidate with a line of pennies stretching along Dean Street which shoppers could add to. The competition raised £826/12/0 equating to almost 230,000 votes, Ruby Carroll winning with 91,385 votes.

After deducting expenses, the Carnival raised £1964 which equates to almost \$180,000 In 2023 money.

EARLY CASUALTIES

Howard Jones

Soldiers of the newly-formed 2/23rd (Albury's Own) Battalion were marching from Albury to Bonegilla on September 25, 1940, when one man collapsed just after crossing the Union Bridge. Private Walter Goodwin, 38, a motor-mechanic from Mirboo North was assumed to have had a heart attack and was rushed to Dr Frank Grant's surgery in Wodonga, but pronounced dead there. He left a widow and two children. He was buried at Mirboo North.

Three weeks later, another 2/23rd private, Robert Luscombe, 21, of Geelong, died at the Albury hospital, four days after being injured when an Army truck and a bus collided near Bandiana. He was buried at Geelong.



AGRICULTURAL SHOWS IN NSW

The Royal Australian Historical Society is pleased to announce the launch of [Competition, Community and Country: Agricultural Shows in NSW](#), a new website that aims to introduce the history of NSW agricultural shows to students, teachers, and researchers.

The Agricultural Shows' homepage contains five different themes for people to explore. The topics were chosen through a collaboration between RAHS staff, Councillors and a Macquarie University intern. The themes highlight the social, cultural and educational significance of agricultural shows in NSW, from the early colonial period to today. The website is also a platform for members of the public to share their own stories of local shows, which are highlighted in the 'Community Contributions' section.

Agricultural Shows will be regularly updated with new information and content from our councillors, members, affiliates and more.

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Meetings: Second Wednesday of the month
(except January) at 7.30 pm usually at the
Commercial Club Albury.

The Committee meets on the third
Wednesday of the month at 3 pm
at the Albury LibraryMuseum.

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