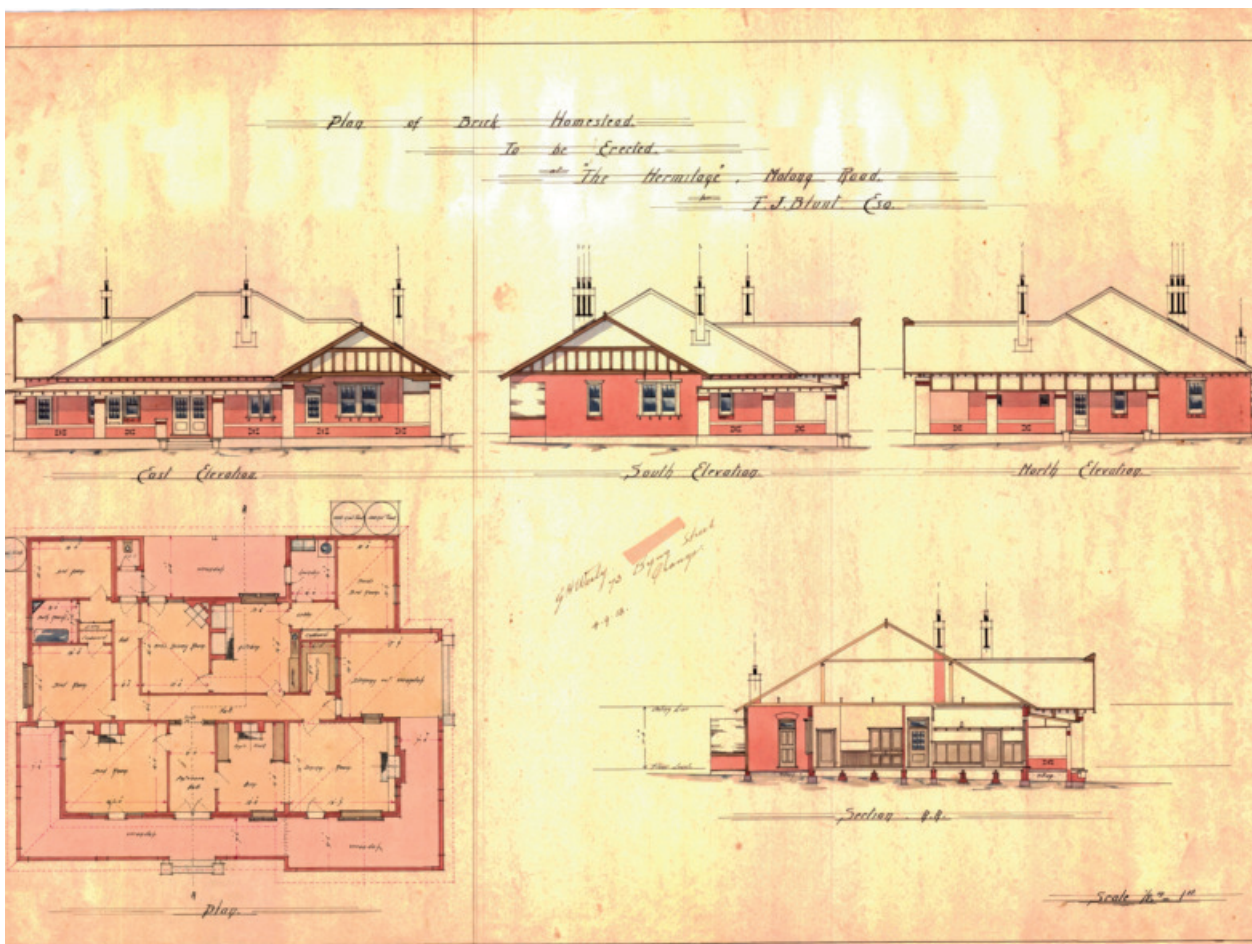


History alive

Orange & District Historical Society newsletter

Winter 2022



Historic Orange house plans discovered



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Dalton, McKillop items donated

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Cover image

House plans drawn up by architect George Herbert Weily for Mr T J Blunt of Molong Road. See full story pages 4 and 5.

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.

Orange & District Historical Society

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Griffin

Membership fees from January 2022

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

Contact secretary or treasurer. Please pay promptly.

Research inquiries:

The Research Officer, Orange & District Historical Society, P O Box 1626, Orange, NSW 2800

Please supply an A4, stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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

Hi Members,

I hope you and your families are keeping well. Unfortunately, the pandemic continues and now influenza is affecting many people. Our winter here in Orange does not help matters. So with the cold temperatures it is time to stay indoors and keep warm. We do have some bright sunny days, which is wonderful.

Our society's display at Orange Show, a one-day event, was held in one of the older pavilions. It was managed by Karen Kloosterman and included a display of historical photos of the Bushman's Carnival, which was popular in Orange during the 1950s and 60s, as well as a selection of interesting historical items from our collection. Thank you to members who assisted in setting up the display and manning the site on the day.

In May we organised, with the support of Orange City library, Michael Webb to talk about his research and findings on mining engineer Josiah Holman. This English-born pioneer started his journey in Canada, eventually coming to Australia and the Orange district. He worked as mine manager at Cadia in the early days. This was of particular interest to the audience of the well-supported event. Unfortunately, not a lot was said about his Cadia exploits.

Our History Alive meeting, 'Delivered to your Door', was held in May. It proved a good topic with great speakers including Merv Wilkie, John Smith and Steve Brakenridge. While there was only a small audience, those attending enjoyed hearing tales of home deliveries, including milk, bread, newspapers and groceries.

Our volunteers continue to work on Mondays when Phil Stevenson and Sally Watson meet Monica Engel from Orange City Council to assist with accessioning the collection. On Wednesdays, our main meeting day, volunteers work on documenting photos from the Central Western Daily, updating the database and sorting CWD negatives as well as helping members of the pub-

lic with their inquiries. Friday is Electrolux collection day, when our team identify people in photos from the vast Electrolux collection. And lastly, on Saturdays whenever available, Phil Stevenson, Julie Sykes and Liz Edwards meet to sort, scan and catalogue items in the plan cabinets. Thank you to all those involved for their continued efforts each week.



Research inquiries continue to come in and keep Julie, Phil and Liz busy in their spare time answering as many as they can. Inquiries can take a lot of time looking for the correct information. Our fee is \$25 and is great value as many hours can go into researching a topic.

This month we have some wonderful articles in the newsletter, including one by our railway buff Euan Greer. This is the first of two articles on the history of the East Fork rail terminal and depot. There are two articles from Rosemary Curry. One is about time capsules and how easy it is to lose track of where they are. The other marks the centenary of Orange-born George Finch's attempt to climb Mount Everest.

Donations for our collection come in weekly, adding significant items of high quality. I thank members and the community for their generosity.

Our annual general meeting will take place in August. We need our members to come along and be updated on the operation of the society, our achievements and our goals for the next 12 months. As well, it's a great opportunity to meet the incoming committee and have some afternoon tea.

Cheers for now.

- Dave Sykes

Display at Orange Show



Our society once again organised a historical display at Orange Show in May. Pictured are members John Smith, Steve Brakenridge, Judy Agland, Bob Curran and Karen Kloosterman with a photographic display from Bushman's Carnivals as well as a number of interesting items from our collection.

AGM coming up

Our society's annual general meeting will take place at 2pm on Saturday 20 August in the West Room at Orange Regional Gallery.

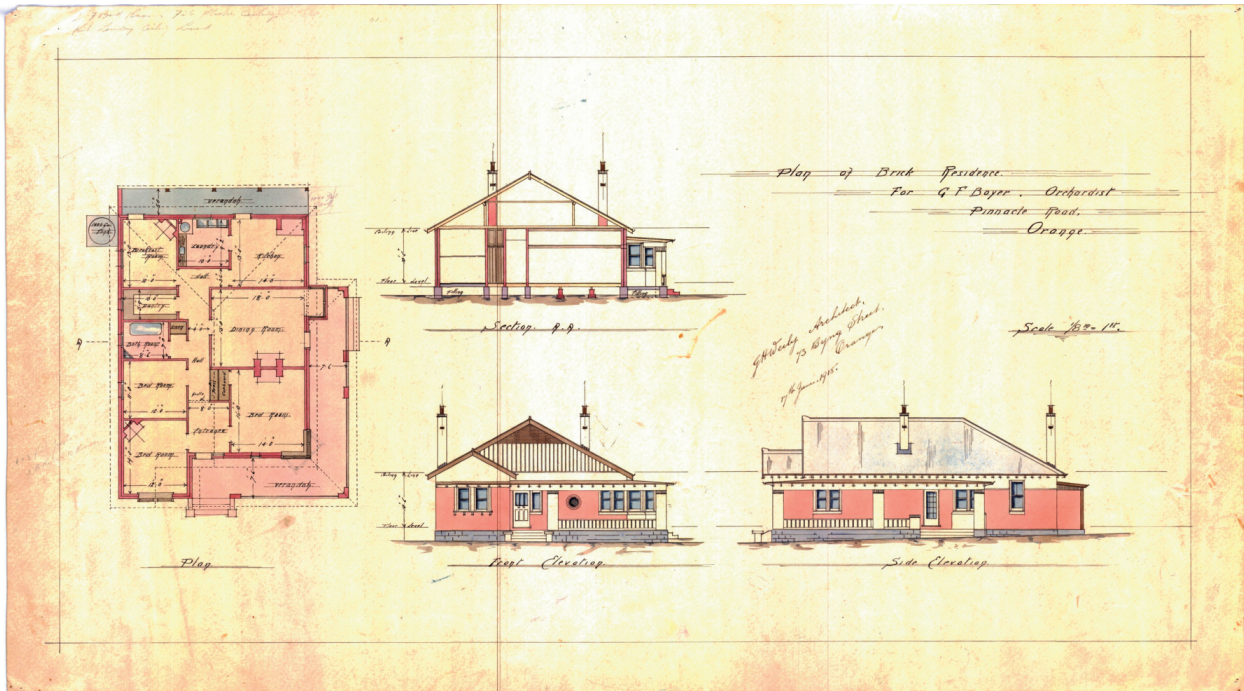
At the meeting nominations will be taken for positions on the committee and executive for the coming year.

Because of Covid restrictions, we have not been able to hold an AGM for the past two years, but now that things are back to normal, we look forward to seeing members again.

During the past two years the committee and executive have continued their duties.

Nomination and proxy forms will be sent out at the end of July.

George Herbert Weily's legacy: historic



Plans drafted by George Herbert Weily for orchardist G F Boyer, of Pinnacle Road.

By Elisabeth Edwards

Volunteers recently met descendants of architect George Herbert Weily, grandson of one of Orange's pioneers. George Herbert was born in 1884, the son of George Weily II, and grandson of George Weily, Orange's first policeman.

His grandfather had started a cordial manufacturing business in Orange, which his father continued, but George Herbert wanted to be an architect. He was very competent at drawing and good at mathematics and started formal training at Sydney Technical College in 1907.

While he designed buildings in Sydney and produced plans for a fruit-packing station at Narromine, he was also active in building design in Orange from around 1917, about the time he was married to Muriel Nancarrow.

George Herbert's grandson Warrick Burns, his wife Pam and cousins Wendy Ma-

zoudier and Brant Weily visited the society last month to show us some remarkable plans of houses and commercial buildings drawn by George Herbert.

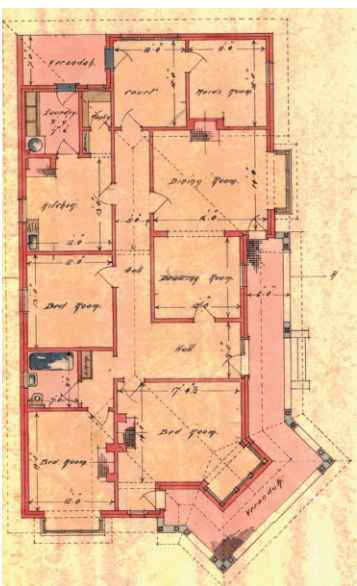
They were discovered in a cupboard when Warrick was going through his late parents' house in Wollongong.

"When we found them we were ecstatic," Warrick said. "There is a real social history in the plans – some of the houses showed rooms for maids, for example."

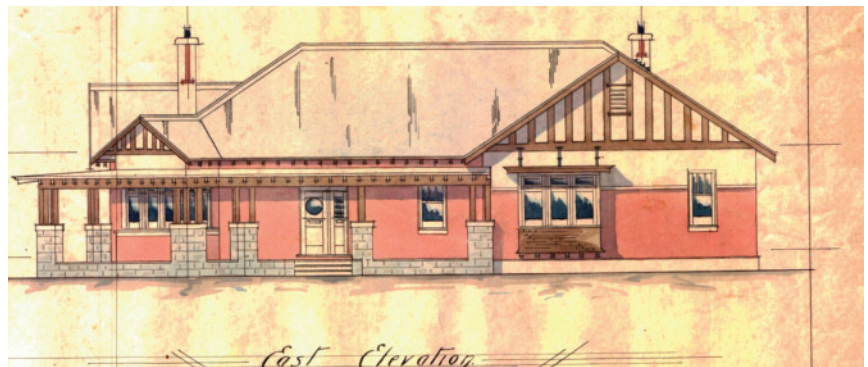
Among the private residences George Herbert designed was one named The Hermitage on Molong Road for Mr T J Blunt, another for Mr G F Boyer, an orchardist of Pinnacle Road, one in Hill Street for Mr J M Paul, and one for Mr Fox Martin on the corner of Summer and Sampson streets. There are plans for a row of shops and offices in Summer Street, which became known as Satchell's Buildings, and a shop and residence in Summer Street for W B Edye.

Not only are the plans exquisitely drawn but they are delicately tinted in water colour.

The Weily family gave our society permission to copy the images using special equipment used for scanning large documents.



Left and right: Plans for a brick house for Orange pharmacist Mr Fox Martin on the corner of Summer and Sampson streets.

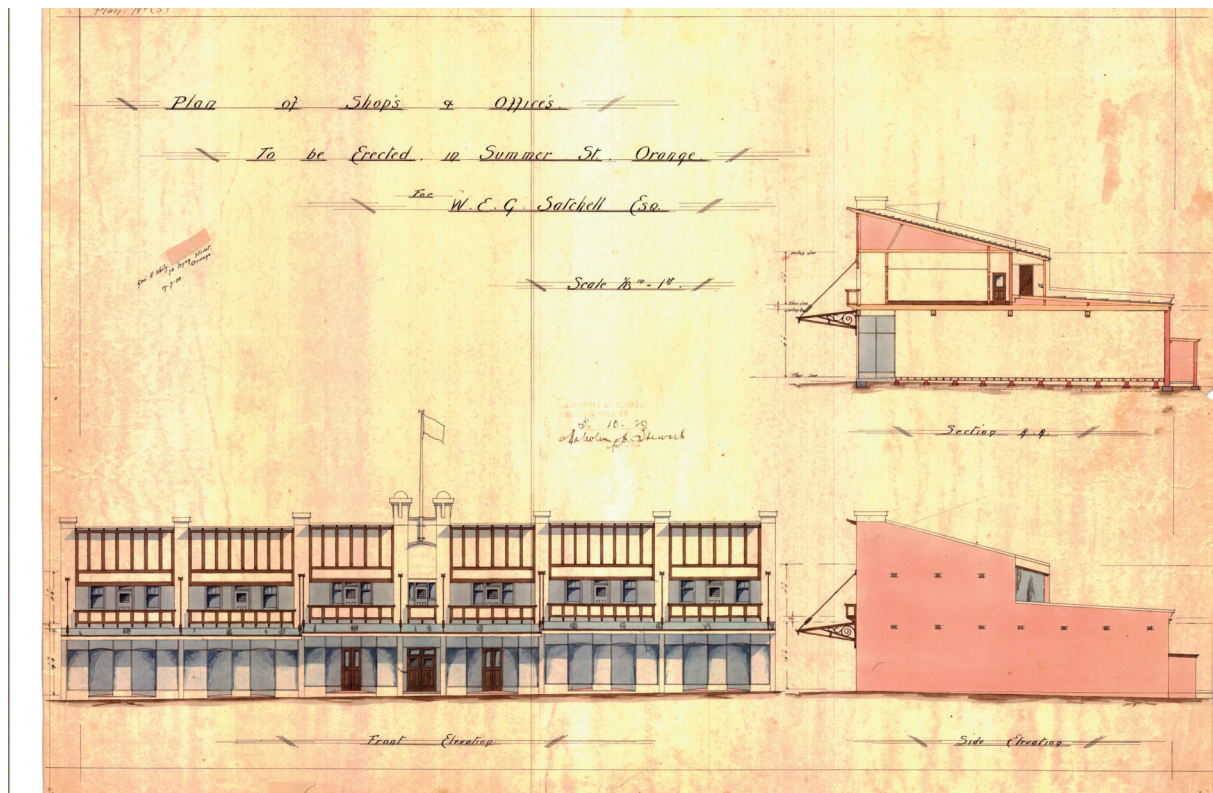
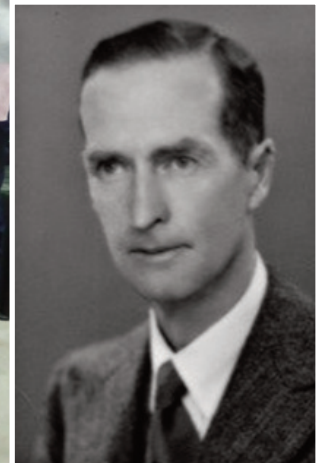


house and building plans discovered



Left: Phil Stevenson scans building plans watched by Brant Weily, Wendy Mazoudier, Warrick and Pamela Burns.

Inset: George Herbert Weily.



Plans for Satchell's Building in Summer Street, which was erected in the early 1920s. English-born William Edward Satchell moved from Wellington to Orange with his wife, son and three daughters and opened a newsagency and stationer's shop in Summer Street opposite Dalton's Store. The business was so successful that he decided to erect a large building containing six double-fronted shops on the southern side of the top block with a suite of offices and a ballroom upstairs. Mr Satchell did not live long enough to enjoy his new enterprise, dying in 1926 aged 62. However, his son Fred continued the business and opened a newsagency in the building.

Lost in time: capsules buried in Orange

By Rosemary Curry

During my time going through copies of the *Central Western Daily* for a digitisation project for the Historical Society, I've discovered there was a popular period for burying time capsules. If only people remembered where they were!

One was instigated by Orange Lions Club in 1973, but organisers had trouble finding enough people to provide material to put in it.

As the club intended to give citizens a 'ladies rest room' (toilet) incorporating a bus shelter in Robertson Park, they asked for people to send a letter on the subject. The CWD stated the capsule ultimately was crammed with many hundreds of envelopes, all asking for a toilet in the park.

They also asked people to put a photo in with their letters, as 'you will not be here when it is opened in 2023'. At least we will see this one opened next year, as its position is marked with a rock.

This is unlike the capsule placed where the 'new' Parliament House in Canberra sits: it has been searched for but disappeared in the foundations, never to be seen again.

Jim Watson, once on the maintenance crew at Orange's Email factory, tells me a time capsule was buried near the front gate of the factory, outside the main door. No one has been able to locate it since, unfortunately.

Another time capsule, with much hidden history concealed in it, is, so I'm told, in the culvert at the Ophir Reserve.

Reg Golding tells me it is full of letters and much information about the 'Stop the Base' fight [this concerned a controversial proposed army base north of Orange], and also includes bottles of wine. Reg says he even contributed a poem. As well, I understand there is a footprint embedded in the concrete belonging to a Ted Barrett. If some of these capsules are eventu-



Orange Lions Club members with a giant time capsule in March 1973, to be buried in Robertson Park. Pictured are project chairman Jim Moore (standing at left), Geoff Newham (front, kneeling), and Robert Dunesny. At right are Orange Lions Club president Ted Evans and club member Don Means.

The 6 foot 6 inch capsule was made of copper by Orange Technical College students.

ally found, let's hope they are not as mouldy as the bible was in Confederate General Robert E Lee's time capsule uncovered recently in the United States.



The Robertson Park time capsule site. The capsule will be unearthed next year. Inset: detail of time capsule plaque.



Editor's note: Although it was made in 1973, the Robertson Park time capsule was actually buried, by Member for Orange Sir Charles Cutler, on 29 June 1974. However, the date for it to be unearthed is 29 June 2023, 49 years later. It will be interesting to see what it contains after all these years.

History Alive: delivered to your door



Speakers at the 'Delivered to Your Door' History Alive meeting, held in May: Merve Wilkie, Steve Brakenridge and John Smith with Bob Curran (left) and Phil Stevenson (second right).



Members of guest speaker Merve Wilkie's family Joy Tobin, Susie Hines, Sammie Spicer and Judi Spicer.



Julie Sykes and camera operator Karen Kloosterman.

Three excellent speakers ensured we had an interesting and entertaining History Alive meeting in May.

The subject – Delivered to your Door – explored the myriad types of home deliveries made in decades gone by, before the advent of one-stop supermarkets.

Both speakers and audience had experiences of milk, bread, fruit and vegetables, newspapers and ice delivered to their homes.

And we heard that those who, as children, went to local bakeries to collect bread, without fail dug into the warm, freshly baked loaves to enjoy the treat long before they returned home and faced the music as their mothers were handed over mutilated loaves.

Merve Wilkie talked about his family milking their cows on their property in Frost Street, before it became a residential area, and delivering milk around Orange.

At first, Merve and his brothers used push-bikes to carry the milk cans; later a horse-drawn cart was used, and Merve's father's car was also commandeered. They had to make deliveries twice a day before and after school, as well as clean the receptacles after each delivery run.

John Smith delivered milk to the city and surrounding districts, having bought a milk run. He delivered bread as well but could only do that outside the city limits so as not to disadvantage bakeries in Orange.

He said he worked very long hours, but to be successful one had to be reliable.

Steve Brakenridge started delivering newspapers as a 14-year-old, keen to earn money to buy floral shirts and records.

His run covered parts of East Orange and he earned \$3, working seven days a week.

His shift started in the paper shop at 5am, rolling papers for delivery and serving early customers.

Steve confessed to driving the delivery vehicle when he was only 15, long before he got a licence.

He remembered waiting for the whistle to sound at Macquarie Worsteds at 4.10pm, then standing outside ready to sell papers to the workers as they left work.

100 years since first Everest attempt by Orange man

By Rosemary Curry

When I first met Peter Finch, the Academy Award winning Australian actor, to ask for an autograph, I had no idea his adoptive father was an internationally known mountaineer and scientist who came from where I now live, Orange.

Mountaineer, rock-climber, speleologist and Canberra Climbing Society journalist Armando Corvini, has supplied us with information we should have known as part of our history.

We now have learned more with the help of Ross Maroney and Orange City Library as well as Trove to complete the picture.

Last month we celebrated the centenary of George Ingle Finch's famous attempt to climb Mount Everest in 1922. He and his climbing companion, Geoffrey Bruce, climbed higher than anyone else previously, reaching an elevation of 27,300 feet (8321 metres). Mount Everest is 8849 metres (29,029 feet).

They turned back after one climber collapsed and Bruce became unable to continue, with Finch helping him to climb back down. "We were well within half a mile of the summit . . . so close indeed that we could distinguish individual stones in a little patch of scree lying just underneath the highest point," Finch wrote in his journal.

Newspapers in every state of Australia, including the *Orange Leader*, followed the Orange man's climb with excited headlines. Finch's altitude record was unbroken until Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reached the peak 31 years later, equipped with oxygen apparatus designed by Finch.

Finch was born in 1888 at Nubrygyn Run (now called Maroombah) north of Orange in a home which was originally mud-brick, and later added onto by his grandfather, Charles Wray Finch. One of Charles Wray Finch's children, Charles Edward, married Laura Black and their children were George Ingle, Maxwell and Dorothy.

In their teens, the family moved to Sampson Street in Orange and George attended Wolaroi Grammar School. Their father encouraged them to hike, climb and explore the bush around them. George wrote in a book on mountaineering published in 1924, "We scrambled up to the summit of Mount Canobolas . . . Such a vision I'd never dreamed of - miles and miles away, the white-washed roofs of the township of Orange . . . I made up my mind to see the world from the tops of mountains."

When the family travelled to Europe, Laura and the children remained while Charles returned to Australia. George finished his education in England, France and Zurich, where he continued to climb and trained to be a physical scientist.

He continued as a scientist for the next 40 years and in 1944 was awarded the Hughes Medal, the same



Scientist and mountaineer George Ingle Finch.

medal earned by Alexander Graham Bell and others.

Distinguished for his knowledge of chemical physics, electrochemistry and much more, the results of his research have been published in some 50 papers.

Finch used his scientific knowledge, combined with his love of climbing, to develop ideal oxygen supplies for extreme altitude climbing. The British Alpine Club of the day did not approve of his 'unnatural procedure' but he knew it was essential.

Working in Georges Dreyer's lab at Oxford, he devised an economiser that stored oxygen during the climber's expiration so that it could subsequently be inspired. It was used on his own expedition.

Hilary and Tenzing wore the oxygen gear designed by Finch on their victorious climb in 1953 and climbers today also use it.

Ever a climber and scientist, Finch also designed better wear for high altitude climbing. Many climbers were at that time wearing tweed! Finch designed more suitable clothing, a quilted eiderdown jacket made of aeroplane fabric.

Not admired at the time, this style is now marketed as the 'puffer jacket' and is standard equipment for mountain climbing.

All the above is why this man from Orange is worth remembering. Finch was the first to climb over 8000 metres and his alpine clothing, and scientific oxygen apparatus are still in use today.

His portrait now hangs in the Orange Civic Centre along with other significant past citizens. It is 100 years since he made his mighty climb. May we not forget him.

His books are written in English, French and German and worth a read if you are interested in climbing.

Commemorative Dalton, McKillop items

We were delighted recently to receive two commemorative silver trays from member Jim Dalton, who lives in Queensland.

One of the trays was presented to Jessie Dalton, nee McKillop, when she left Orange in February 1925 to live in Sydney.

Mrs Dalton, the widow of Edward Bede ('Dick') Dalton, had been one of the leading lights of the Orange Players, who performed musicals at the Australian Hall over many years, with proceeds being donated to worthy local causes. An accomplished singer, she was also a member of the St Joseph's Church choir. She supported many local charities.

Her husband had died in June 1919, leaving her with five children; a sixth child was born in March 1920.

When the public heard she was about to leave Orange, a committee headed by the Mayor, Ald Arthur Colvin, was formed to ensure she was given an appropriate farewell.

On 5 February the Australian Hall was filled to capacity and a program of music and song started, interspersed with speeches from many who had witnessed Mrs Dalton's generosity and community spirit.

The Mayor presented Mrs Dalton with a handsome silver-mounted dressing case with an inscription engraved on a silver plate, and a specially bound album containing a large number of photos of local views.

Mrs Dalton was either unable or unwilling to respond, but her brother-in-law Michael Dalton spoke on her behalf. She left Orange soon afterwards but returned in future years.

It is not known what happened to the dressing case or the photo album, but at a lunch in Orange recently, Jim Dalton presented members of the society with the tray, which will be a valuable addition to our collection of Dalton papers, photos and memorabilia.

The second tray had been presented to Jessie Dal-



Historical society committee member Phil Stevenson, Dalton descendant Robert Bruce, committee members Liz Edwards and Karen Kloosterman, Anne Bruce, and Dalton descendant Jim Dalton with the silver trays donated to the society.

ton's father, J A McKillop, at a gathering at the Royal Hotel in Carcoar in May 1888.

Mr McKillop, manager of the Commercial Bank at Carcoar, had been secretary of the Railway League and the Carcoar Progress Committee. The presentation was made as a mark of appreciation for his public services, especially in campaigning for a railway line from Blayney to Murrumburrah via Carcoar to connect the main Western and Southern lines.

He was presented with a gold watch and chain, a sovereign purse and a silver tea and coffee service on a silver tray with an inscription acknowledging his various public services, especially in regard to the railways.

The whereabouts of the tea and coffee service is not known, but the tray remains as a testimony to his community service.



The silver tray presented to Mrs Jessie Dalton.



Detail on the silver tray presented to J A McKillop.

The mysterious Springside School symbol:

By Euan Greer, Bob Curran and John Kich

Just to refresh your memories, in Part 1 of this article about the meaning of the symbol in the brickwork of the chimney in the 1878-79 Springside School (see photo at right) we were unable to come up with a conclusion. Part 2 takes the story a little further.

Offerings from The Old Orange Crew

The Old Orange Crew is an online Facebook group of people interested in Orange history. They have been helpful to ODHS previously when we have been looking for information. Bob and John are active participants in the group and we decided, at this stage, to put the question in front of them – does anybody know what this symbol might mean?

There were a number of responses including one from Genevieve Reeves whose father was the last teacher at the school when it closed in 1972, but nothing which gave a definite answer. The peace sign was suggested by a couple of people but quickly discounted. The Old Orange Crew discussion for the same reasons we did earlier. However, two possibilities were put forward.

Wendy Mazoudier Machin wrote “Just did a quick search. The only symbol that came slightly close was the symbol for phosphorus. Perhaps the original founder of the school had a particular philosophy that this symbol represents.” To former scientist Euan this was an intriguing proposition as the only symbol for phosphorus he knew was a capital P. A Google search of ‘symbol for phosphorus’ (accessed 1.02.2022) yielded fascinating information.

On 3 September 1803, English chemist John Dalton introduced his table of symbols for the then known chemical elements. They were all either a pure symbol or a capital letter, each enclosed within a circle. The symbol for P was almost identical to that in the chimney except that the lower segment was smaller than the segments on either side. Looking a little further, an alternative version was proposed in which the segments created by the three-pointed star were of equal size, a dead ringer for the chimney. As a school, one can see a relationship between the chemical symbol and education but why it was seen as appropriate for a country primary school at the time it was built in 1878 is unknown. Perhaps Wendy’s suggestion of a particular philosophy held by someone associated with the construction of the school holds a clue.



Detail of inlaid brickwork symbol in chimney, Springside School. Source; John Kich, 1979.

Phosphorus is an important fertiliser in agriculture. Springside was an orcharding, horticulture and cropping area. It seems likely that the families who campaigned for the school would have appreciated the contribution of phosphorus to their financial wellbeing and may have seen it as appropriate for their new school to recognise that fact. The educational link to chemistry as a subject would provide extra justification.

Jim Coffey also proposed a plausible explanation: “The brickwork being done in 1879 (sic) could be the key. The circle cut in three, represents the clock (24 hours) divided into 8 hours work, 8 hours rec, 8 hours rest; and the ‘8 Hour Day Movement’ was at its height at the time this school was built. Maybe ‘the bricky’ was supporting the cause.”

A search online revealed that, according to Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight-hour_day, accessed 07.02.2022) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA) (<https://nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/eight-hour-day>, accessed 07.02.2022), by about 1856 onwards most workers in the building trades had won the eight-hour day. The movement actually had its first success during the building of two churches in Sydney marked with a celebratory dinner on 1 October, 1855. This was followed by a successful strike by stonemasons working on Tooth’s Brewery on Broadway in Sydney in early March 1856. Bricklayers are closely related to stonemasons in their skills so it seems probable that that

But wait, there's more to discover!

trade would quickly have won the eight-hour day.

Jim's theory supports our earlier contention that the circle is part of the design, not just a decorative border. It represents the face of a clock which the three-pointed star divides into three equal segments of eight hours each. The NMA records that the campaign made wide use of the ditty:

Eight hours to work,
Eight hours to play,
Eight hours to sleep,
And eight bob a day,
A fair day's work,
For a fair day's pay.

as a slogan (NB. A 'bob' was slang for one shilling which became 10 cents when decimal currency was introduced).

Quite why a brickie who already only worked eight hours would be building the symbol into the chimney in 1878-79 is unknowable. A possibility is that it took a long time (until 1948) for all workers to get the eight-hour day in Australia; there may indeed have been a period of greater agitation when the school was built and the brickie indicated his support by incorporating the symbol into the chimney.

Just what the authorities of the Schools' Board thought after the brickie had made a political statement on a building owned by the government can only be imagined.

The intertwined (think of the Olympic rings) numbers 888 were widely used as a symbol to promote the eight-hour day campaign, particularly, it seems, in Victoria. We have not been able to find an illustration but it is possible to imagine them intertwined side by side, with the middle 8 intertwined with the top or bottom loops of its companions on either side or in triangular format. The nearest symbolic use of the triple 8s we have found is on a monument to the campaign in Melbourne (https://oldtreasurybuilding.org.au/protest/workers_rights/, accessed 18.02.2022; citycollection.melbourne.vic.gov.au/eight-hour-day-memorial/, accessed 21.02.2022).

Despite these well thought-out suggestions we still do not have a conclusive answer to what the chimney symbol represents. Of the two discussed above we lean more towards the phosphorus theory given that there is



The Eight-Hour Day memorial in Melbourne.



Close-up of the three 'eights' surrounding the memorial.

conclusive proof that the chimney symbol is the same as the later version of Dalton's symbol for phosphorus. As such, the symbol would be much more likely to receive approval from the educational authorities for inclusion in the school. We are less inclined to the eight-hour theory as there is currently no strong evidence for its widespread use in the industrial campaign as opposed to the intertwined '8s'. Neither can we envisage official sanction for its use in a government building.

In summary, we have three plausible explanations:

1. The brickie was merely demonstrating his skills by constructing a complicated decorative motif in the chimney (see Part 1).
2. He was instructed to include the chemical symbol for phosphorus in the chimney, at the same time exhibiting his bricklaying skill.
3. He built the motif in the chimney to prominently indicate his support for the eight-hour day campaign.

The problem is that plausibility is not proof. The situation remains that we do not know the reason the symbol/motif was built into the chimney

And we probably never will.

As so often happens when researching history, we are simply left with more questions!

Postscript: Thanks to an accidental find by Liz Edwards, we have been able to confirm the date of the Springside School photo. The teacher, Thomas Bond, was promoted to headmaster at Newbridge School and took up the position in early July 1899. The photo cannot thus have been taken after that time and gives credence to our conclusion of 1897-98.

Locomotive depots of Orange Part 1:

By Euan Greer

A Brief History

Orange has been the home of two locomotive depots, the first dating from 1877 and the second circa 1937.

In official NSW Government Railways (NSWGR) language a depot was a place where train operating staff belonging to the Mechanical Branch were located without necessarily also having an allocation of locomotives stationed at that place. In the early days of railways, steam locomotives required servicing about every 50 miles (80 km) so facilities for doing so were located about that far apart along the line.

The first steam locos on the NSWGR were small and low powered,

thus they could only pull small loads at low speed. Add to that the early railways were built economically meaning light weight track (dictating equally light weight locos) and steep grades (further limiting load weight and speed) resulting in slow journeys. The low speeds also meant that by the time the 50 miles to the next depot were covered, the working hours of the train crew (driver, fireman, guard – plus on passenger trains, conductor – were up and it was time for them to sign off.

The Great Western Railway from Sydney to Bourke reached Lithgow in October 1869 and Bathurst, a further 50 miles (approximately) in 1876 and loco depots with staff and locos were established in both places at those dates.

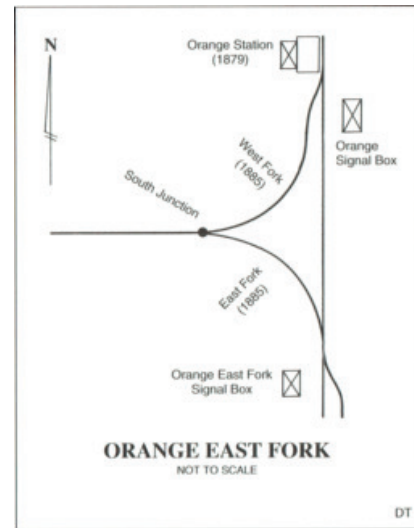


Image 1. Simplified schematic diagram of Orange Station and Orange East Fork. Courtesy Love (1998), p.9

Orange loco depot in the station yard

The railway from Bathurst via Blayney to Orange, another 46½ miles (Lee 1988, p.72) as the line ran, opened on 19 April 1877 and was the terminus of the GWR for three years until the extension to Wellington opened in 1 June 1880. From the day of opening in Orange an area was set aside in the yard opposite the station for servicing the steam locos before they returned to Bathurst. While no engines were initially allotted to Orange, operating staff were, and it was officially a loco depot.

It is unclear what facilities were actually provided in the beginning but early records state 'Orange Depot opened' while in 1879 there was 'room for four engines'. The railway importance of Orange increased rapidly over the next few years. A branch line, commencing at East Fork, to Molong and onwards to Parkes and Forbes was built from the early 1880s while construction from Wellington to Dubbo and out to Bourke

with various branch lines opened up large areas of agricultural land, all generating increased traffic for the railways. A major event for Orange was the transfer in 1891 of the highest ranking railway officer in the area, the district superintendent, from Wellington to Orange.

The residents of Molong were very unhappy in 1875. The extension of the railway from Orange to Dubbo was proposed to go via Wellington. Despite a vociferous campaign for it to go via Molong, Parliament decided otherwise in 1877 (Lee, p.81). When it came to getting to Forbes, surveys in 1878 offered two routes which passed south of Molong because the town was surrounded by ranges making railway access difficult. This snub was just too much for Molong. An even more vigorous campaign persuaded the government to send the railway through the town. However, it had a long wait as the railway did not reach Molong until the end of 1885 (Lee, p.82).

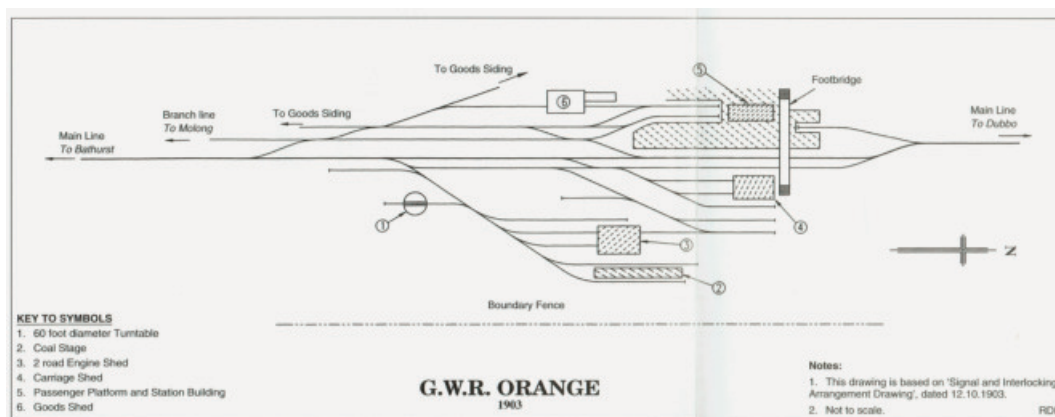


Image 2. 1903 sketch of loco and station layout at Orange on what was then known as the Great Western Railway. Courtesy Love (1998), p.18.

There were two consequences of this for Orange. Firstly, the railway to Molong branched from the Bathurst to Orange line a little south of Orange which meant that trains from Orange to Molong had to retrace their steps to the junction, the points for which faced

Orange. To save trains from Sydney and Bathurst bound for Molong and Forbes having to go into Orange and then reverse, another junction point was laid so that trains could go straight to Molong. This new arrangement of tracks created a triangular junction with the

Orange station loco depot 1877 - 1937



Image 3. Orange station, yard and loco depot from 1907 panorama. The loco shed, no.3 in the previous diagram, is in the middle foreground. In Image 4 below, note the extra tracks on the open ground to the right of the loco shed above. Courtesy Neich Family, digitally restored by Robert Bruce.

main line as its base. The side of the triangle from/to Orange was known as the West Fork while the direct side from Bathurst was East Fork. Over time the entire area of the triangle became known as East Fork and became very important to railway operations.

Secondly, the opening of the railway to Parkes and Forbes, and later to Condobolin, resulted in the construction of a new two-road engine shed opposite Orange station in 1894. During 1902 the coal stage and some sidings in the loco depot were extended while in October that year a 10,000 gallon water tank was installed at East Fork.

Between 1902 and 1906 the depot area in Orange was improved further for both locos and staff. Even more facilities were added in 1912-13.

As rail traffic increased over the years, so did the task of the locomotive depot in the Orange yard. Facilities continued to be improved and enlarged but by the mid-1920s they were just too small and overtaxed.

The situation was exacerbated by similarly increasing complaints of noise, smoke and dirty washing from the many nearby residents. By 1930 the depot was over-

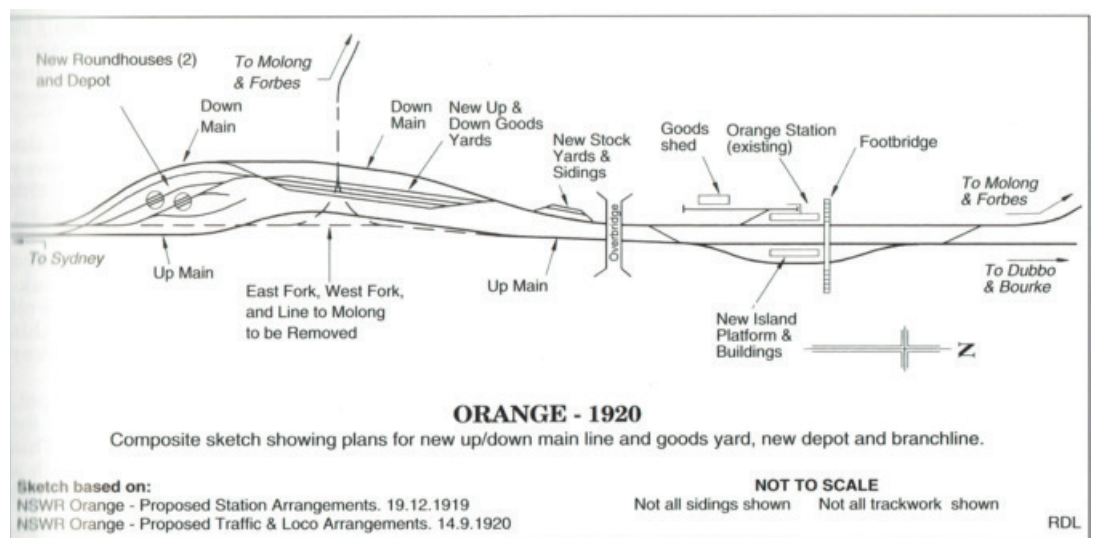


Image 4. The old depot at the station in 1933. Steam coal grabs are coaling the tender of a locomotive from the trucks on the track behind. The engine shed roof is seen in the right background. *SRA Archives* from Love (1998), p.9

crowded and difficult to operate.

Plans for a new depot, yards and platforms were drawn up over a 15-year period to 1930 but nothing ever happened (see for example the composite sketch by Ray Love in Image 5).

Image 5. Composite sketch of proposed loco depot and station arrangements for Orange in 1920. Courtesy Love (1998), p.29



Eventually, designs were prepared for a completely new and modern depot on the land enclosed by the triangular junction at East Fork.

Construction commenced no later than 1936 and by the end of that year equipment was being removed from the old depot and installed at the new while the old

depot at the station continued to service engines as it had since 1877. It finally closed with the transfer of all operations to the new East Fork Loco Depot by September 1938 after a busy life of 70 years.

*** Continued next page**

Diary July - September 2022

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

Millthorpe Golden Memories Museum: Open weekends and public holidays plus school holidays 11am-3pm.

Molong Museum: During renovations for the next few months the museum will be closed to general visitors. It may be open on Thursdays but please phone ahead to book an appointment.

Contact secretary Sue Milne on 0400 425 015 or email: susanmilne55@gmail.com

Wentworth Mine: Open Saturday and Sunday on the first full weekend of the month 10am-2.30pm.

See www.orangemuseum.com.au/wentworthmainmine

Wednesdays and Fridays: 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.

Wednesday 6 July: ODHS committee meeting, 5pm.

Wednesday 3 August: ODHS committee meeting, 5pm

Saturday 20 August: ODHS Annual general meeting 2pm in West Room, Orange Regional Gallery.

Wednesday 7 Sep: ODHS committee meeting, 5pm.

Orange station loco depot 1877 - 1937

* From previous page

Acknowledgements.

Much of the information in this article was found in the excellent monograph on Orange locomotive depots by Ray Love (1998).

References:

Lee, Robert, Colonial Engineer. John Whitton 1819-1898 and the Building of Australia's Railways. (Australian Railway Historical Society, Redfern), 2000, pages as shown in text.
 Love, Ray (1998). The Steam Locomotive Depots in NSW. Locomotive Depot No.29: Orange. In *Byways of Steam. Encore.* (Eveleigh Press: Maitland), 1998, pp. 6-101.

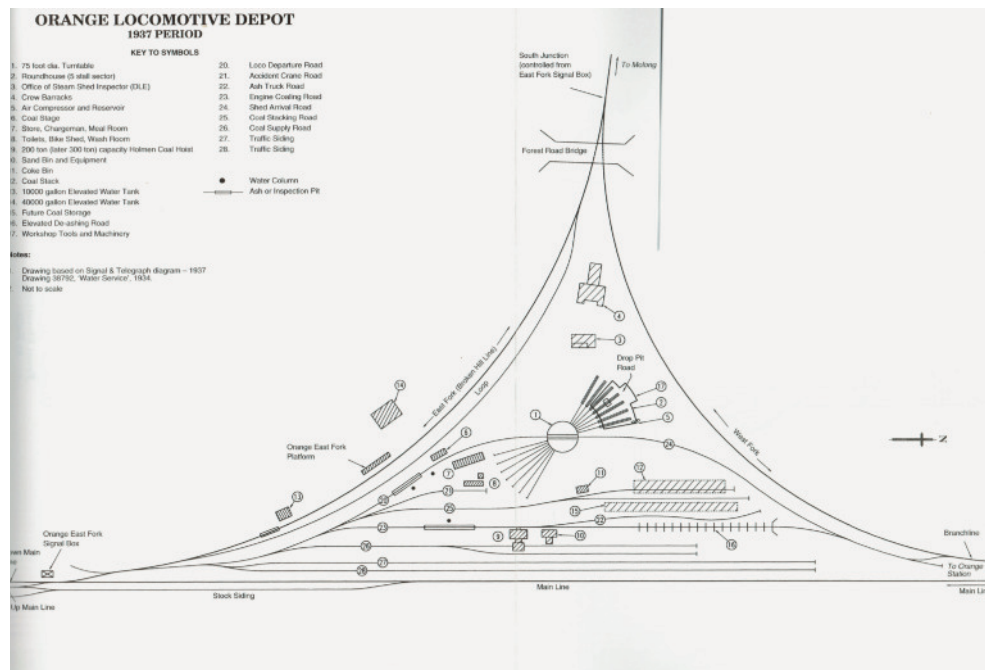


Image 6 (above): Sketch plan of Orange East Fork Loco Depot ca, 1937. Courtesy Love (1998, p.37)

Image 7 (left): The loco administrative offices have already been removed to the new East Fork Depot. This photo from the Rablah Family Collection shows the old offices in the station depot just before their demolition. Courtesy Love (1998), p.12.