

Memories of the Ferguson



- Compiled by -
Steve & Terri Gibbs

FERGUSON - WELLINGTON MILL - CROOKED BROOK

BACK COVER: Opening of the new pitch - team members of Ferguson Cricket Club 1905, at the opening of the new pitch behind the district hall. Standing left (with beard) is Samuel Gibbs. The child standing to his right is Walter Fowler. Standing far right (with beard) is Bob Gardiner and sitting third from right is ? Brockman.

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DISCLAIMER

Information gathered for this book is as accurate as we could get it. There will be some stories that contradict each other. Please remember that these recollections are the memories of the storytellers and may differ from your own.

Some dates and spelling may be incorrect or differ throughout the book; every effort has been made to get this right.

Photos were hard to get so please see those we have included as being representative of what most people in the district did. We were lucky enough for a few families to have had cameras in the early part of 1900 so we used these.

We also acknowledge that there are a lot more stories that have not been included. We apologise if we have missed a family or an important story. Please remember we are not writers and are just trying to capture some history for the enjoyment and enlightenment of those who live in our Valley now and also the generations to follow.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all the people who contributed their story, it has helped build a picture of the district.

To Bill Ratcliffe, who kept me on track - his effort in recording his own life story was an inspiration to me to finish this book.

To Christine Hunter for all her help in editing and setting up for printing.

To Terri Gibbs for all her research and help in setting up stories and doing interviews.

To Tom and Lesley Gibbs for going without, to give us a good start in life. To Iris and Cecil Mountford for being the best in-laws you could wish for. And to all who pioneered this magnificent country, thank you.

Steve Gibbs

FOREWORD

As I am the oldest male member of any of the first pioneering families of the Ferguson Valley, I must express my appreciation to Steve and Terri Gibbs, the authors of this book, and congratulate them on the time and effort they have put into their research.

They have interviewed all the present families of the original pioneers to obtain their information.

This book of the Ferguson will partly reveal to you the strong characteristics that the first settlers of this area possessed and the hardships they had to live with.

Undoubtedly, it only scratches the surface of the problems and heartaches that they really suffered, but it may go to help the present and future generations realise how lucky they are to have all the modern conveniences in transport, electrical equipment etc.

The pioneers had nothing but a horse and cart and many had to walk, carrying their requirements. We have come a long way in the past 63 years, since I first took my bride to the Ferguson to live. We had no telephones, no electricity, no water laid on to the house and no conveniences, so you can imagine what it was like when the first settlers arrived.

There were no roads and they had to cut tracks through the bush to get to the land that had been allocated to them, it was just virgin bush.

Steve Gibbs' great grandfather was one of the first settlers. I can remember him and his wonderful wife when I first started school. They were the kindest, most caring couple anyone could meet and they would have been very proud of Steve's effort in producing this book.

***WH (Bill) Ratcliffe, aged 89 years
September 2002***

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AUTHOR'S MEMORIES

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who contributed articles to this book. In the time that it has taken to compile, it has brought back many wonderful memories for Terri and myself.

Through the pages that you read you will find many wonderful stories and you will find that, for each of you, a different memory will be ignited in your mind. We have tried to get a good cross section of stories to give people reading this in years to come an understanding of what the community was like. It has been difficult to get stories about the pioneering women of the district. The districts covered here - Wellington Mills, Crooked Brook and Ferguson - were integral to each other in the development of the area. The families in this small area all combined to be part of a wonderful part of this State.

There have been changes all through the short history of the area, from the first European settlement in the early 1840s when there were not many people at all in the State. Then to the start of the 1900s when the population of the area was large with Wellington Mill (for more information on Wellington Mill contact Wellington Mill Community Association) creating employment opportunities for many people.

After timber milling slowed, the population drifted off and in the period from the 1950s to 1980s the area was quiet remote and hardly heard off. Now, at the start of the 21st century, the area is very popular and the population is growing again as people are looking for an idyllic lifestyle away from towns.

You will find when reading this that different stories overlap; we have left these in, as they are important to each memory. Also, you will find we have included quite a background from articles written on where each of the families came from. It is fascinating to read and understand what people did and how far they travelled in the early years to find a better life.

From my point of view, Ferguson has many wonderful memories as I grew up there.

My life, as many others, took shape in the district. As everyone knows our life has many swings, from joyous times to quite sad and it is the strength of a community that works together that can get you through the tough times.

For me, the district means great friends, great lifestyle and memories. I remember riding my bike to school as a five year old with Mum driving behind me because I did not want to ride on my own.

The skin we lost from falling off our bikes, most of it has grown back.

Being part of a school that only had 14 kids in seven grades, and marching around the big tree while Mr Droppert played that mongrel mouth organ.

Who remembers the stone bruises from walking barefoot on the stones and honky nuts?

Canon Henn, for religious studies (affectionately called “Boom Chook”). Catching rabbits to earn extra money.

Helping Keith Butcher shear his sheep.

Getting the cows in on a frosty morning and running to where they piddled so you could warm up your feet.

Racing Dad up to the house after milking (I was 16 before I could beat him and he was wearing rubber boots).

Catching gilgies in the creek.

Trying to shoot silvereyes in the orchard (I must have shot a couple of tonnes of rocks into the trees).

Listening to my favourite uncle Hal recite Banjo Paterson poetry. Learning to drive before I was 14.

Our great fun spotlighting nights with Bruce and Greg Gibbs, Chris Gardiner and Graeme Fowler.

The high school bus.

The tennis nights when we had to stay in the car. The baddy nights.

The youth club.

Mrs Nell Piggott playing piano at the local dances.

Watching Doody Fowler's Cocky send the sheep dog off after the sheep, he had learnt this from listening to Doody whistling the dog from the verandah. The poor old dog would get the sheep in and then be chastised by Doody as he had not sent him.

Spraying suckers in what Dad called "the billy goat country". Dad would drive up the hills with the front wheels of the tractor off the ground, using the wheel brakes to steer.

We have wonderful memories of our childhood and as we get older we understand what our parents went through to give us the best that they could. You do not understand how tough it is until you have kids of your own and you are trying to give them the best, sort out your own life and hold down a job to pay for it all.

I think we all need to reflect on what our parents and grandparents did to give us the lifestyle we all enjoy now. We may not agree with their reasons or why they did what they did. We all make decisions as we go through our life that ultimately shape us into the person that we are.

I remember vividly a turning point in my life when I was at Cecil and Iris Mountford's, New Year's Eve in 1976. That was the night I decided I was going to marry their daughter Terri. Five years later we were married in the Ferguson Church.

We lived in Ferguson for a while after we were married, most of the time me being away shearing. This was not good for our relationship so we decided to start growing tomatoes in the early 1980s. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and I did not have any then. Chanelle, our first daughter was born during this time and still to this day will not eat tomatoes.

We picked a time when prices were at a low and we were slowly going under. One final attempt we planted 18,000 broccoli to grow through winter. This was a wonderful crop and ready to pick.

We had sent 1000 to market and got \$1 each for them, this was going to get us out of trouble. Two days later a hailstorm destroyed the lot. We were broke and disillusioned.

I went back shearing to pay my debts, this time Terri came with me. During this period was one of my saddest times, we lost a baby 18 weeks into Terri's second pregnancy, that was a tough time and thanks to our close family group we got through this. We had a very interesting lifestyle for the next five or six years.

Shearing all over the South West, travelling to Qld (Terri and a friend were cooking on a wood fire in heat up to 53C for 18 people while I was shearing in Qld) and then to New Zealand. Our second daughter Rhianna was born the year before we went to New Zealand.

I was shearing until I was 30, obviously takes a while to realise that it is a tough way to make a living, my back was bugged. My best tallies were a 263 at Boyup Brook and a 315 in New Zealand. I crutched 1100 in one day in New Zealand, about 50 tonne of sheep to be dragged out of the pens, I enjoyed a few beers that night. Shearing seven days a week is what wrecked my back, as it never got a rest during the season. I remember one season shearing 17,000 sheep in 14 weeks and only had two half days off due to wet weather.

All this time Terri was with me - I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the wonderful life we have shared so far. It is the strength of a good relationship that gets you through the tough times.

We have three wonderful children Chanelle, Rhianna and Jordan.

We have been lucky enough to be able to move back into the Ferguson district (when we finally build something) and we are both looking forward to the next stage of our lives - living in a district with so many wonderful people.

So, in reading the pages that follow, reflect on your life and most of you will realise that we are blessed with a good life in this wonderful part of the world.

One thing that I ask is that you get things written down for generations to come. During the process of doing this book, my father passed away and we did not get a comprehensive account of his life. Everyone has a story to tell, we may not think it interesting though I am sure you will all find interesting, a glimpse of other people's memories that follow.



The Gibbs family - Terri, Steve, Jordan, Chanelle and Rhianna

HERITAGE FRAMEWORK

- Jesse and Jane Gardiner settled in 1842.
- Jesse donated land for Church and cemetery with graves dating from 1842.

1850-1885

- Mr Fowler, a sandalwood trader, carted on the Ferguson.
- Emma Gardiner (nee Gibbs) was a midwife and delivered most of the babies in the district.

1885-1914

- Davis' mill was built on Wellington Location 352 and then the larger mill was built at Wellington.
- The train from Wellington Mill to Dardanup was not only used by the mill people for transport but there were sheds at Fowler Hill, Nine Mile, Ironstone Road, and the Five Mile for pick up and delivery of goods.
- Mail was delivered by horse to the Upper Ferguson Postal district three times a week.
- Cream separators were used instead of standing milk for cream.
- Gold was found; JJ Chapman dug a 100-foot deep hole at the back of what is now Geoff Harris' property.
- Alluvial gold was taken from waterfall gully.
- Ferguson hall was built in 1905.
- Mounted police collected statistics forms.

1914-1945

- Clover and super phosphate increased farming production.
- Most of the original settlers had grazing leases in the bush. Bob DeCain had the Ironstone lease; he ran sheep there until the fifties. Red runner and water bush were excellent feed though the zamia palm gave cattle the rickets, though sheep rarely succumbed.
- Forestry cattle runs were closed.
- Cricket pitch on what is now Geoff Harris' property was home to Ferguson cricket team, which won country week in 1928, and won the Donnybrook premiership in 1949. Ferguson also won the Henry Gubler trophy and the Boans trophy.

- Buckenara had a telephone line put in from Dardanup.
- BHP sunk two bores in the district to 1080ft and 600ft, gold was found but not in paying quantities.
- Eustace Fowler was lowered into an old gold shaft about 100ft deep to rescue a dog for Mr Bob DeCain.
- The last passenger train from the mill was in 1929.
- Last train was in 1934, then for some years motor powered tram ran occasionally.
- Joe Zagami ran a covered-in truck as a bus from Wellington.
- There were cattle drives to Dardanup sales, when required, up until 1940.
- From January 1920 to December 1923 H Gibbs delivered mail in a sulky, after this Mr Humes did the run by car

1945-1975

- Jungle warfare training was conducted in the forestry near Wellington Mill with live ammunition and bombing of Bald Hill.
- Quota milk started in July 1957.
- Fire destroyed much of Ferguson in 1950.
- Church rebuilt in 1954.
- New hall built in 1966.

Bob Wight, Enid Hall, Syd Gardiner, Ray Gardiner, John Gardiner, Howard Gibbs, Eustace Fowler, Bill Ratcliffe and Edgar Parkin gathered this information for the Dardanup Shire for their research into Heritage Sites

NAMING OF THE “FERGUSON RIVER”

Information found during the research of this book, shows that the Ferguson River was named after Dr. John Ferguson.

Surveyor H.M Omanney named this river in 1844, the point that it was named was at Latitude 33° 23', Longitude 115° 45'.

Remarks on the survey sheet showed that the river, “flows through property surveyed by H.M Omanney in 1844 for Dr. John Ferguson”.

DR JOHN FERGUSON

Physician & surgeon was born in Dundee. He obtained his MRCS at Edinburgh in 1822 and practised Auchtermuchty Fife from 1828 to 1835. He married Isabella, eldest daughter of James Maxwell of Dundee and Jamaica. On his departure for Australia he was presented with a silver plate by the townsfolk in testimony of their high regard.

Ferguson arrived in Western Australia with his wife and two children in the Trusty and landed at Leschenault on December 6th 1842. He intended to take up farming in the new settlement of Australind and selected Wedderburn as his home site, but his medical skill was soon in demand. He attended many early settlers, among them, Mrs. Molloy (q.v.) in her long and fatal illness. Australind was already failing when in 1843 he was made a magistrate. On the retirement of Dr. Joseph Harris in 1847 he became the colonial surgeon. Ferguson claimed to have been the first in the colony to use chloroform when in 1849 he amputated an Aboriginal's leg. His order for chloroform was dated April 13th 1848, only six months after its first practical test in England. He also showed clinical acumen by warning the colonial secretary in August 1852 that the whooping cough cases in the Anna Robertson could be very dangerous to the Aborigines who, having no previous contact with the disease, were extremely vulnerable. He thus anticipated by many years hypothesis concerning immunity. During his term as colonial surgeon he held various other official posts. In 1852 he was the medical officer for convict road parties working on the Perth- Fremantle Road. In 1861 he was on the Central

Vaccination Board. In 1867 he acted as immigration agent and medical officer for the Perth poorhouse. Official duties did not completely stifle his wish to become a landowner, but he had learnt enough at Australind to avoid virgin areas. In 1859 he bought an estate on the Swan which had been the property of Colonel Houghton and Messrs Lewis and Yule. There were a few vines on it and his first year's yield of wine was twenty-five gallons. Later the Houghton vineyards won international repute.

Ferguson lived in St. Georges Terrace nearly opposite Government house. In August 1879 he retired on a pension of £216. He died on September 11th 1883 and was buried in the East Perth cemetery. His widow lived in Mount Street until her death at the age of 91. Of his six children, Charles married Dora, the daughter of Dr. Viveash, Elizabeth married W. Clifton, collector of customs, John became a sea captain and timber merchant and Isabella married L. Luke in Deepdale, Toodyay. His descendants erected a lichgate at St. Mary's Church Middle Swan, in 1959, to commemorate the centenary of his association with the district.

***AUSTRALIAN DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY GENERAL
EDITOR, DOUGLAS PIKE, VOLUME 1 1788-1850***

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE EARLY DAYS

“We were all scratching a living in those days,” said one old colonist.

It was an uncouth, narrow but on the whole good-natured backwater of society.

For the more pleasing features of the district one must look afield where, along the coast road northwards, down the coast southward to Minninup and inland along the valleys of the Preston and the Ferguson, small men were taking up their land, building thick-walled, low ceiling white houses, and in an isolation that narrowed them but at the same time made them resolute and careful of what they valued, were rearing their families, chopping down trees, burning off, putting up split rail fences, ploughing, running stock and making a home the centre of their whole life.

They were tough and they were optimistic. In a form more consciously literary, than they customarily used, their condition was described in the annual report of the Southern Districts Agricultural Society for 1862, which, after recounting progress and potentiality, flood and drought, increase and loss declared:

“It is a source of unfeigned pleasure to the Committee to be able to congratulate the members of the society upon the manly spirit which has been displayed by all parties, in battling against innumerable and unexpected difficulties, and they have no hesitation in saying that they look forward, with most hopeful feelings, to the future prosperity of a people who have such a contented spirit under such adverse circumstances, who, with good land for agriculture, good pasture for stock, a good climate for themselves, and last, though not least, the blessing of the Almighty, cannot fail to prosper and, though unable to amass much money, may yet live happy and peaceful life in the land of their adoption.”

***FROM PAGE 84, “THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY” THE EARLY YEARS OF JOHN
FORREST***

BY SIR PAUL HASLUCK

A TRIP TO THE FERGUSON

Just now, when the summer, with its clinging fondness for the sun’s rays, causes old mother earth to look sere and brown, when the brooks have left of running and the rivers have narrowed down to tiny streams, just now, I say, is hardly the time to go on pleasure bent or to feel the pulse of nature recreating a new earth. Spring and early summer are the most favouring periods for observations such as I have been commissioned to make. But we conjure up a feeling of enjoyment in making comparisons, so the change from spring to summer and from autumn to winter becomes pleasant, for each season tempts comparison with its neighbour. Mark Twain was right when he said that a climate of perpetual sunshine, where it was possible to always wear the same clothes, was monotonous in the extreme and could not compare with the more temperate zone, with its marked changes of heat and cold, the outdoor life of summer and the pleasant fireside of winter.

But in the district, with which these chronicles have to do, the year has been kindly, and the flats along the river are still green and still wear something of the aspect of spring.

Farming on the Ferguson is of the mixed variety, and just now is the winding up of the fruit season, the gatherings in of the later apples and pears and sending them off to market. The stone fruits have been prolific this year, but apples are not so plentiful, the recompense, so the farmer thinks, will be an enhanced price. Fruit crops have also been a partial failure in the Eastern States, which is a further guarantee to the Ferguson farmer of compensating values.

Down in the valleys or on the slope of the hills the growth of trees is equally vigorous, the generally healthy appearance of the orchards testifying to the excellent quality of the soil, but the observer from other parts is readily reminded that the soil might be kept cleaner, as weeds are unpleasantly conspicuous. Here among the hills should grow the fruit which should make Bunbury a great fruit exporting town, but it will need fresh life and blood to take up running where the present farmers have left off, for the latter are content with the present and trouble not about anything more than supplying local demand. Since the opening of the goldfields an era of prosperity has prevailed with the Fergusonites and their purses are fat and bulging, and they are content. I had better gang warily here. They are content with their condition of material prosperity, but of course, there is the usual fly in the ointment, and in this place it is the Postal Department who have deposited the said insect there. The old delivery of the mail by carrier is done away with, and that enigma of the South West, Millars' Combine is to deliver same with the utmost regularity - or irregularity, as the settlers affirm.

This phase of postal arrangements has aroused the ire of the Clan Gardiner, which is in fighting trim, and headed by its chieftain, who is descended from one of the sons of Joseph, by name, is out on slaughter bent, and the motto, like that of Tom Sawyer's, is "Berlud". Whatever may be said on either side of the question, the postal officials have shown a lack of courtesy to the oppositionists which in Parliament would bring about a vote of want of confidence without premeditation.

A description of the various farms and homesteads would need the discursive faculty that supported Mark Twain when he edited an agricultural paper, but

not being so abundantly blessed, I must fall back upon the prosaic and try to write of things they are, and not as fancy would have us to do.

One of the prettiest homes on the Ferguson is Mrs Bocker's. The house is built of local stone, with brick facings, is pleasing to the eye, and is the style of building warranted to stand for centuries. The adjacent orchard is young and vigorous, and although only a few acres in extent, is of better quality than many larger but not so well tended orchards. Nearer the town Mr Bocker is calling into existence a strawberry plot, and having the genius for work, he has every prospect of achieving success from the experiment. The Fergusonites are waiting anxiously for Hymen to assert himself on the Bocker's behalf, and that, having the house, it will not be long before it will be adorned with a graceful presence, "May I be there to see".

Close by is the homestead of Mr Ephraim Gardiner, JP. Mr Gardiner is small of stature, therefore unusually assertive, and he is the pivot round which most of the life of Ferguson centres. Pardon the digression, but what would the world do without little men who give the spur to life and role away the logs which the hulks stride over? Ephraim was the most assertive among the tribes of Israel, and the name is one to conjure with. Old Bill Shakespeare was wrong when he made Juliet exclaim, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name".

At Carlaminda is a very large vineyard with the luscious grape waiting to be converted into the "wine that maketh the heart of man," as well as taking away his wits at times. The orchard is an excellent one, and should make the name of Carlaminda stand well in the fruit market. The sheep on the hillsides and on the well grassed lands would make any dweller in the city break the last commandment and go in for Wagner's "Simple Life".

Then we move on further, and at the foot of what we considered the Hill of Difficulty (Foley's hill) before the advent of brakes, is the residence of Mr Buckenara, a "bloomin tothersider," but he has seized hold of a very considerable slice of WA. He has added acre after acre and sheep to sheep and that by force of energy and perseverance. He is a man of substance, it was he who gave the land whereon the Agricultural Hall stands, and on his river flat the men of bat and ball do mighty deeds, and score many a century in imagination.

Over the hill Mr Pat Slattery and Mr John Flynn have their residences, both are men of the type which one naturally pictures in the mind's eye as makers of homes in the wilderness.

At the foot of the hill nestles the school house, and here Miss Jeffrey brings up the coming race of Fergusonites and teaches the young idea how to pronounce the aspirate, and incidentally, bestows upon her charges as complete a mental outfit as is possible to extract from the State curriculum. Rather a lonely life is that of the back country teacher, when school is out and night time leaves the house and its quarters silent and deserted.

And now, getting near the end of our journey, we come to the homestead of pleasant, kindly Joe Chapman. Here is to be found a commodious milking shed, the dairying element predominating. Mr Chapman is a successful farmer of the right sort, possessing land and cattle, substantial in himself and blessed with goods substantial.

And now we come to Sergeant Dale, the end of our journey, and right glad we are. We went in summer clothing, and the night fell there was a keenness in the atmosphere of the hills not noticeable along the coast, and you draw in deep draughts of it and feel that life is worth living after all. Mr John Fowler, the owner of Sergeant Dale, is now, after years of hard work in the clearing of his land and the bringing of it under cultivation, crippled by a spinal affection and the spirit which conquers difficulties has, perforce, to remain idle, though inwardly chafing at the bodily restraint. He is always genial and pleasant, fond of a good yarn and a keen joke. Here the orchard is the chief contributor to the establishment.

Fruit and sheep and poultry raising constitute the common round, the daily task, and the life, like the air, is pure and good, and there is time for cricket and other sports, and poverty looks in at no window on the Ferguson. The rest of the Clan are inoculated with the virus of prosperity and piece, and old George Snelling keeps on growing cabbages and potatoes, and the youngsters grow fat, and the families increase, and the silveryeyes keep up their reputation, and the canny Scotchman is above all and says everything is unco' guid.

***BY THE "BUNBURY HERALD" SPECIAL COMMISSIONER
BUNBURY HERALD, MONDAY MARCH 5, 1906***

SERGEANT DALE – A FERGUSON FARM

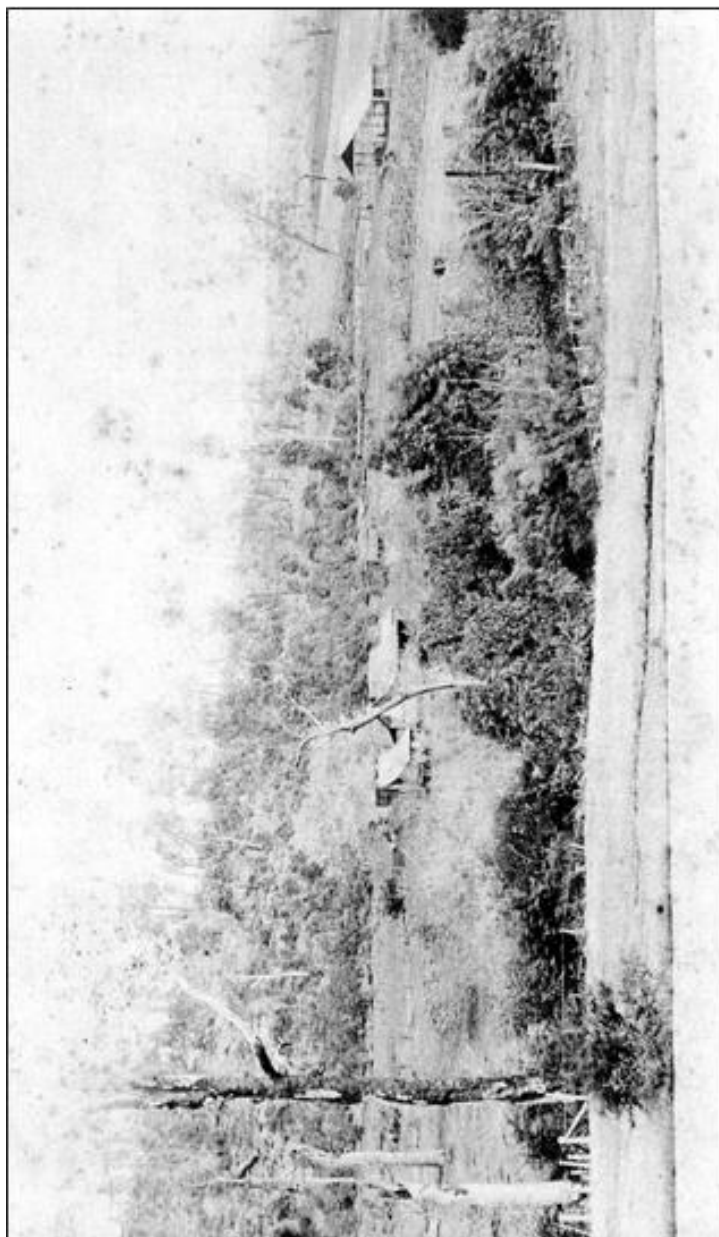
Along the Valley of the Ferguson lie the comfortable farms and happy homesteads of many of our best-known farmers.

It is pleasant to travel along the road on a sunny day in spring, when the hillsides are clothed in suit of green, and the eye is pleased with the ever-changing scenery. The town bred man laughs at his country cousins, and shrugs his shoulders at mention of the rural life, but there is no life under the sky of Australia with as much of the elements of freedom underlying it. Intercourse between farm and farm is frequent and the life is a mixture of work and pleasure, in which all join, and the weaker is not pushed to the wall.

The homestead is always in process of evolution and grows in size by expanding wings and an addition to its length every 10 years. You look from one room into the other through the window, which once gave light to the original building but is now useful to hear what goes on in the next room. The house is a castle of freedom, and the social life in its borders is natural and without restraint.

The farm itself consists of some 1000 acres of land and rocks. The uplands are well grassed, and the valleys, in some instances, are not “clothed with corn”, but the common fern maintains its hold of the best country. Some 400 sheep are pastured in the paddocks and constitute the best asset on the financial side. The orchard is well developed and consists of an ad-mixture of fruits of various varieties. The apple grows to perfection, and the Cleopatras, Dunns seedling, Johnathon and a dozen other varieties tempt the taste of epicure.

***EXTRACT FROM AN ARTICLE IN “THE BUNBURY
HERALD” FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 1906***



Sergeant Dale - the Fowler property (1880s).

HENTY

It would appear that Henty made a further visit to Port Leschenault, for on the 3rd May 1830 he again wrote his father as follows.

“The back of the interior lands of the Swan are certainly not equal to those at the south at Port Leschenault. I have no doubt as to the ultimate success of the colony, provided we can be supplied with labour at a cheaper rate than at present. A carpenter’s wage is 10/- per day and a common labourer 5/-. This makes indentured servants dissatisfied. By far the best plan would be for parishes to raise money on their rates and send their surplus poor out as free servants. They are sure of employment and handsome wages. The land on the coast has invariably been found to be inferior, but when we once penetrate the ranges I have no doubt of finding country as they have beyond the Blue Mountains in New South Wales. We have seen in all between Port Leschenault and Vasse about 300 natives, they are ignorant and on the whole harmless. I would not however trust them too far. We are never allowed to see the women and children, scarcely one has been seen and that by accident. They are expert fishers and throw the spear beautifully and imitate sometimes closely everything you say. They go quite naked. From the position we stand in, I think at some period we are likely to fully realise this becoming a favourite place for Indians to recruit their health. My land at Port Leschenault will afford keep for a large flock of pure merinos and also a tolerable herd of cattle. Our population consists of 3000 souls”.

Here we have a description of the land embracing Waterloo, Burekup, Dardanup and much of the Ferguson Valley. Today there are hundreds of farms scattered over the area, all contributing to the State’s wealth.

EARLY HISTORY OF BUNBURY

SETTLERS TO THE REGION

The region of the Upper Ferguson was made accessible for settlement with the construction of the railway from Bunbury to Boyanup.

This line, the preliminary stage of railway construction into the South West and the timber resources of the natural forest, was opened for traffic on March 12, 1891.

Railway, Forestry and Timber mill workers, were in a position to select land in the newly opened regions of the forest on the newly legislated conditions of land settlement as enacted in the Acts of 1887-1893 and 1898. With the erection of a dwelling on the selected site, the families set about clearing land, while the wages of the husband and father sustained their livelihood. Progress was measured in the developing stages of subsistence farming on cows, poultry and pigs, and on pasture, fruit and vegetables.

The Land Regulations as proclaimed on March 2, 1887, set out the conditions of selection and the purchase of farm blocks in four of the Alienation Act, sections 44 and 45 dealing with the free selection and the conditions of purchase of not more than a 1000 acres.

The tenure of settlement was further defined in the "Home Stead Act" of 1893, and again through the Land Act of 1898, where, in part eight, conditions for free Homestead Farms were set out.

The Land and Surveys maps of the period show the Upper Ferguson region surveyed in 160 acre Homestead Farms.

WALTER GABLE

FROM THE BOOK “EARLY HISTORY OF BUNBURY”

“Two other doctors, whose memory we honour are Drs I J Flynn and S C Joel.

Both arrived in Bunbury as young men, both married and raised their families here. Dr Flynn held the appointment of Commonwealth Medical Officer and built up a large private practice. On one or two occasions, Dr Flynn visited England for refresher courses, studying modern medical practice.

Like other doctors he had a keen love for the land and his large farming interests at Brunswick, Ferguson and Sandridge are still in the family. Mrs Flynn is best remembered as a mother of a large family, a charming hostess and ready at all times to respond to the call of charity.”

***SET UP AND PRINTED FOR PUBLISHER G E CLARKE
OAKLEY ST, BUNBURY
THE COLOUR TYPE PRESS LIMITED, 874 HAY ST, PERTH***

JESSE GARDINER

Born in England May 21, 1809. Father Daniel, mother unknown. Married Jane Butt at the Bisley Church January 23, 1832. Bisley a little village south of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Four children, Edward, Arthur Bradley, Owen and Christopher were born and baptised in Bisley. Jesse was a sawyer by trade.

Quoted from “Old Australind Recalled- Beginnings of Australind Settlement” published by the 150th Committee (March 18, 1979) for the April 8, 1979 reunion.

During 1840 in London a Western Australian Company was formed for the purpose of promoting a large scale settlement scheme in WA based on principles of emigration and colonisation put forward by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, which had already had some success in South Australia, and later exerted considerable influence on development of New Zealand. The Company acquired from Colonel Lautor and Sir James Stirling about 165,000 acres of land that stretched

from a few miles North East of Bunbury, to three miles inland deep into the Darling Ranges. It was proposed to resell the land in 100 acre allotments and thus create a rural community, based on the new town of Australind.” Wakefield’s theories represented a shift of thought away from the convict system and his main aim was to transfer surplus capital and labour from England to the vast empty lands and thus create new self-governing colonies under the British Crown.

During years 1840-1843, the ships *Island Queen*, *Diadem* and the *Trusty* brought some 460 people to Australind on this scheme.

Jesse and Jane Gardiner with their four sons came out from Water Lane, Bisley Village, Stroud, Gloucestershire, England under this scheme arriving on board the *Trusty*, December 6, 1842.

Quoted from the “Western Australian Historical Society from Publication *Early Days*” -

‘Difficult years’

When the Western Australian Company was wound up in 1846, the people at Australind were abandoned to their own devices which meant that they had to find some way to provide themselves with food and shelter out of their own resources. Their financial resources were limited, the majority being officially labourers and the minority who had some capital had already used much of it bringing themselves to Western Australia. By April 1, 1844, of those who had come to Australind, only 125 remained, representing 12 establishments on the townsite - company officials and labourers - and seven farming ventures in the rural area. In the next month the last shipload arrived from England with 21 more immigrants and two more settlers. These people had to concentrate on subsistence farming for survival; they had few supplies and no markets that would provide income enabling them to make use of diversified urban industry. The remnants of the Australind settlers who remained in the district did not become pastoralists.

Jesse and Jane Gardiner had a further five children in WA - Silas, Bethia, Sarah Ann, Amy and Ephraim.

From “They Made Their Destiny” by AC Staples:

Jesse then took up land at the junction of the Wellesley and Brunswick Rivers. It seems he was rewarded this land for working with Marshall Waller Clifton at ‘Alverstoke’ for some time after the WA company failed. The land was the angle made by the junction of the two rivers at the very western end of Melville Road. His son Bradley settled on this farm selecting the name “Water Lane” to remind him of a village not far from Battlescombe in Gloucestershire.

Jesse transferred his interests to land on the Ferguson River - vacant Crown Land purchased from the Government. Land in the Ferguson was outside the land allocated to the Western Australian Company.

In 1851 a change of Government Land Regulations allowed for the purchase of Crown Land in 10-acre blocks at one pound per acre, when previously the minimum had been 160 acres except in special cases. The difference between 160 pounds and 10 pounds provided opportunities for settlers with little capital to buy land for sons growing into manhood. This was the price of all Crown Land from 1841-1887. The price was prohibitive to most settlers and very little land sold. What were sold, were small blocks and under land regulations gazetted in 1848, depasturing permits and grazing licences were issued for unoccupied land surrounding these permits. Land in Donnybrook also purchased from the Crown, but much later, around 1880.

Jesse bought Crown Land Wellington Location No’s 73 (10 acres), 75 (10 acres), 136 (13 acres), 137 (18 acres), over from where the Church St Aiden’s Ferguson stands and cemetery is today. Here Jesse and Jane lived until they died.

Jesse was a keen gardener and as long as he lived grew a large vegetable patch, also had a vineyard and made their own wine. This was surveyed by R Austin in 1855. (NB, survey usually took place some years after a location was granted to the settler).

Jesse built his first home of slabs and clay, as did his son Edward. They dug their wheat in with spades, reaped it with a sickle or scythe, it was then taken by horse and cart to Forrest's Mill at Picton. The milling was paid for with wheat. They lived with their family at "Blackberry Valley Farmhouse". Jesse was illiterate, Jane was well educated. Jane died on July 8, 1885. Jesse lived with Edward in the years after Jane died. He died on April 26, 1893 at Ferguson. Both are buried at the Ferguson Cemetery.

Edward, Owen, Christopher and Ephraim of this family all lived in the Ferguson until they died.

The family of Jesse and Jane Gardiner:

1. Edward married Margaret Manogue (11 children)
2. Arthur Bradley married Elizabeth Marsden Hooper (12 children)
3. Owen married Emma Gibbs (8 children)
4. Christopher married Jane Gibbs (no children)
5. Silas married Mary Ann Wood (10 children)
6. Bethia married Joseph Hough (17 children)
7. Sarah Ann married George Giblett (6 children)
8. Amy married John Charlton Fowler (4 children)
9. Ephraim married Christina Fowler (7 children)

Excerpt from Bunbury Herald newspaper dated Wednesday May 3, 1893:

Mr Jesse Gardiner aged 84, an old settler on the Ferguson, died on Wednesday last. Mr Gardiner arrived in the colony a little over 50 years ago, having as fellow passengers, Mr William Forrest (father of Premier), Mr William Spencer (Mayor), Mr James Maguire of Dardanup. There are now, we are informed, only 110 or 112 of the Trusty passengers remaining in or near the district.

COMPILED BY LEONIE GARDINER (Nee GILES)

AMY and JOHN CHARLTON FOWLER of “SERGEANT DALE”

Amy Gardiner, born 1850-53 at “Blackberry Valley”, actual birthdate unknown and little else known about Amy.

She was the eighth child of Jesse and Jane. On August 18, 1875, Amy married John Charlton Fowler (born May 7, 1849), son of John Fowler and Elizabeth (nee Dicey), of Preston, brother of Christina.

Amy and John had four daughters and they lived at “Sergeant Dale”, Ferguson. It is believed that Amy died in childbirth in May, 1881. John later married Amelia Gibbs and had a further seven children. He died on June 1, 1934. “Sergeant Dale” is today still in the Gardiner family.

Family of Amy and John Charlton Fowler:

1. Grace Minna married William Jackson (3 children)
2. Florence (Flora) Kate married Benjamin Darby (2 children),
Alan Clifford Guthrie (no issue)
3. Elizabeth Eva married Alexander Forrest (5 children)
4. Amy Elizabeth married Henry Lion (3 children)

COMPILED BY LEONIE GARDINER (Nee GILES)

JAMES DAGLEY GIBBS

James Dagley Gibbs was born in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, UK in 1821.

He left there for Australind WA in 1844 on the ship Trusty which was making its second voyage to the settlement, having been out previously in 1842. He married Charlotte Narroway at Australind on January 7, 1845. They had seven children.

Family of James Dagley and Charlotte:

1. Emma married Owen Gardiner
2. Fanny died young
3. Robert, no further record
4. Jane married Chris Gardiner who died. She later married George Snelling
5. John married Sarah Wisbey
6. Harold William married Amelia Wisbey and later Maria Gardiner
7. Samuel (my great grandfather) married Lavinia Hurst

Charlotte died on March 28, 1862 and James remarried, to Alice Maria Parkes in 1862? And there were nine more children resulting from this marriage.

James was a carpenter by trade, presumably working and living in Bunbury. I have been told that James spent his last years living with his daughter Amelia in the Ferguson Valley. Amelia had married John Fowler. James died on January 3, 1905.

Samuel Gibbs

Samuel Gibbs was the youngest child of James Dagley and Charlotte Gibbs, born November 11, 1860. His mother died when he was very young. Evidently his eldest sister Emma thought he was being ill-treated by his stepmother, so she took him home and brought him up with her own family at Ferguson. Emma had married Owen Gardiner and was living on Wellington Location 197, which was the first block of land taken up in this area.

Samuel applied for and was granted a lease of Wellington Loc 661 of 100 acres. The field surveyor's notebook states it was surveyed in his name on November 11, 1883. The title was granted on July 20, 1895. He later acquired two more blocks adjoining - Wellington Locs 892 and 3336, each of 100 acres, making a total of 300 acres. He also had another block, No 1829 of 200 acres, at the head of Paddys Brook, which runs into Joshua Brook.

As well as farming, he was also a timber worker, cutting sleepers and squaring piles in the surrounding bush. As there was no school at Ferguson during the time of his childhood, he received no formal education.

He married Lavinia Hurst on May 21, 1886. They built a home near the northern boundary on Block No 661, where they raised their family of nine children, the eldest of which was my father, Herbert, who was born on March 16, 1887.

Family of Samuel and Lavinia:

1. Herbert Cleveland married Mary Flynn
2. Basil Narroway died World War I
3. Minnie married Charles Gittos
4. Genesta married Harry Pugsley
5. Evangeline married Randall Trigwell
6. Harold Ferguson married Effie Gardiner
7. Ivy May married Mervyn Muller
8. Rhoda Maria married Charles Gittos after Minnie died
9. Clarence Leicester married Margaret Heeps

Samuel and Lavinia's home was burnt in 1937(?) while being occupied by Harold and Effie Gibbs. Only a few trees, fruit and ornamental, now mark the spot.

Samuel and Lavinia left Ferguson in 1923 to retire in Australind on the old Hurst family property on the banks of the Collie River. It is situated between the river and the Clifton Park Golf Course.

He had a very moral code, never using bad language and frowned on alcoholic drinks and tobacco smoking, and would not allow playing cards in his home. He also appeared to be very stern and did not laugh or smile much. I have very pleasant memories of holidays during my childhood spent with my grandparents at Collie Bridge. They used to often take us fishing in his old wooden boat on the river. Grandmother used to spend a lot of time in the evening untangling the old cord fishing lines that were in use in those days. We always managed to foul them up somehow. We also learned to swim in the river. The house was only about 100 metres from the riverbank.

Samuel died on August 12, 1939 and Lavinia on June 4, 1936. They are buried in the Congregational section of the Bunbury Cemetery.

Herbert Cleveland Gibbs (16.3.1887-17.7.1947)

Herbert was the eldest son of Samuel and Lavinia Gibbs' children. He was born on March 16, 1887. At the time I think the family was living at a block about two miles up the road, Block No Wellington 426 or 729. They moved down to Block No Wellington 661 prior to 1893. I do not know exactly the year the house was built, but they were probably living there when Herbert started school, which was in 1893. The house was destroyed by fire about 1937.

The Upper Ferguson School opened in 1893, so he would have been one of the first pupils to attend the school. I have a book that was awarded to him as a prize for good work. It is dated December 20, 1893 and also stated that he was in 2nd Class Infants. The book is titled "Stories from Shakespeare".

In 1915 he acquired a half of Block 661. At this time it had been halved to two 50-acre blocks. Herbert got the southern half. Whether he bought it or whether it was given to him, I do not know.

On July 8, 1915, Herbert married Mary Flynn and they moved into a newly built house on the eastern side of Block 661. The house was of all wooden construction. The two front rooms and passage are lined with jarrah, which is still in good condition after 77 years.

He earned a living by working at timber cutting and small time farming. He and his brother Basil had leased a run in State Forest from the Government. This run they had to fence to enable them to graze sheep on it. He also worked for neighbouring farmers.

Another source of income was building bridges for the Dardanup Roads Board. From 1920 to 1923 he did the mail run to Dardanup and Wellington Mill, using horse and sulky.

He bought the adjoining block of land, Loc 2508 of 182 acres, from John Flynn in 1922. It was originally of 200 acres, but 10 acres had been excised from the north eastern corner and attached to Loc. 2509. Another eight acres west of the road had also been excised. This small block he later purchased from Michael Flynn during the late 1930s I think. This small block has a separate title.

Herbert was a self-taught carpenter and he built a number of houses in the district as well as his bridge building on the local roads.

During the Great Depression of the early 1930s he went back to sleeper cutting to supplement his income, either riding a horse to work each day, or if it was too far to ride, he camped in the bush.

In 1923 his parents retired from their Ferguson property to live at Australind where they had purchased the original Hurst property from Lavinia's brother.

Herbert rented part of block Wellington Loc 892 from his parents, which had a small orchard and a shed on it - only just a few acres, probably eight or 10. From then until about 1936 he made money by selling apples to Perth markets. During this period, his brother Harold (Hal) rented the northern half of Loc 661 and the rest of Loc 829 and Loc 3336. After Samuel's death, Herbert inherited the northern half of Block No 661 and Harold got Block Loc 892 and block Loc 3336. The two blocks that Harold inherited are now farmed by Clarence Gibbs' son Thomas.

In his younger days Herbert played cricket for the Ferguson Club. He was an accomplished batsman and we have two medals awarded to him for the highest batting averages. The one I have is dated 1909-1910.

He died on July 17, 1947 at the age of 60 and is buried in the Congregational Section of the Bunbury Cemetery.

Howard Gibbs

I was born in Bunbury on July 4, 1921. At the age of six and a half I attended the Upper Ferguson School, which is almost three miles away. My brother, two sisters and I used to walk there, except occasionally getting a ride with a passing motorist. It was a one-teacher school with an average attendance of about 20 or so. The teacher had to teach seven or eight classes. At the age of 14 I left school and worked on the farm for my keep and a bit of pocket money. Occasionally I did a bit of work for neighbouring farmers, keeping the money I earned.

In 1942, at the age of 20, I joined the Australian Imperial Force just about the time Australia was threatened by an invasion by the Japanese. I had been exempt from military service as I was working in an essential industry. I had to get my parent's consent to enlist.

I spent the first three months training in the Perth area doing infantry training and attending a driver mechanic school. I was then drafted into a unit called the 5th Army Ordnance Workshop, later changed to the 5th Infantry Troops Workshop, Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

About August, 1942, the Unit moved to the State Farm at Wongan Hills, where we set up our equipment on the property. During this period I started working in the motor vehicle repair section, where I received a trade grouping one and later trade grouping two, which meant a pay rise from six shillings per day to seven shillings and then eight shillings.

After spending approximately a year at Wongan Hills we loaded everything onto the train. At Kalgoorlie we had to reload from 3ft 6in railway to 4ft 8½in gauge. After travelling to Port Augusta in South Australia, it meant shifting everything again to narrow gauge railway to travel to Alice Springs. There we unloaded and travelled to Mataranka by road. After spending about eight months there we moved onto Adelaide River, where I still served in the vehicle repair section.

In August, 1944, I was sent to Melbourne to attend a fitting and welding school. I had almost finished when I was notified that I was going back to Perth to be discharged from the army. Unbeknown to me, my parents had applied to the manpower authorities to have me returned to help run the farm. I was discharged on October 20, 1944 after two and a half years service.

On returning home I entered into a partnership with my father until his death in 1947, only three and a half months after I had married Dorrie Gladys McSwain, of Bassendean on March 29, 1947. I then entered into partnership with my mother until eventually renting the property, which had been bequeathed to me, but not during my mother's lifetime. I began renting the property in January, 1951 and continued to pay rent until the end of 1976 when the property was transferred to me. There were the Blocks Wellington Loc 661 and part 2508.

In 1962 I bought Block No 2509 of 110 acres from L McDonald. It had been taken up originally by my grandfather Michael Flynn during the 1880s.

In 1969 we bought the Joshua Brook Block of 200 acres from Tom Panizza - Block No Lot 1 3363. We then owned 600 acres.

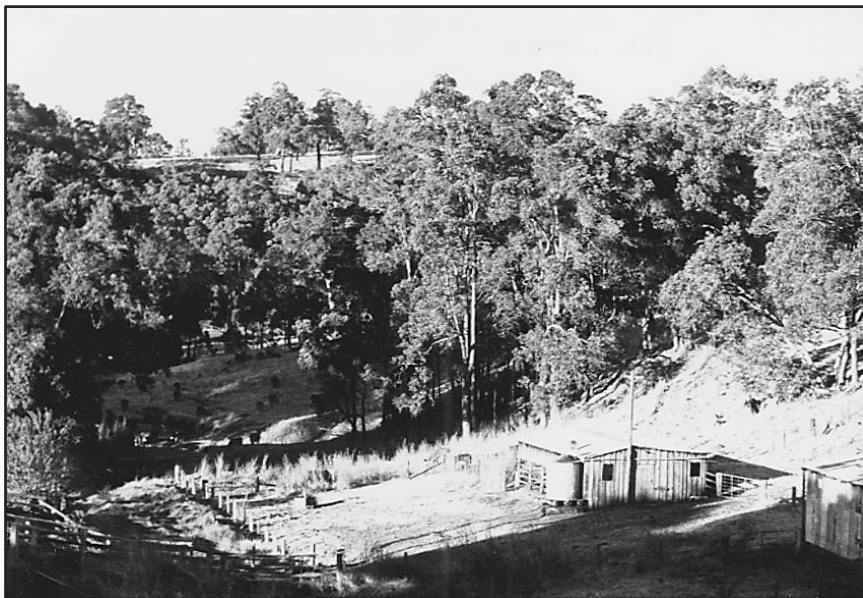
Up until 1953 our dairying operations involved separating the milk, the cream being sent to the butter factory and the skim milk fed to calves and pigs. At that time I decided to send the whole milk to Harvey instead of keeping the pigs and rearing calves. I think I was the instigator of the sending of whole milk from the Ferguson district.

In 1960 I was having a fertility problem with the herd so I called in a vet who recommended I contact the Artificial Breeding Centre, which was located at Wokalup. This I did and we were the first dairy farmers on the Ferguson to use artificial insemination.

In 1967 we decided to give up dairying and change to beef production. This was not difficult, as we were running Australian Illawarra Shorthorn cows. We bought a Hereford bull and we were into baby beef production within a few months.

In 1979 I decided to retire and rented the property to sons Bruce and Gregory. In July, 1985 I transferred Block No 2509 to Bruce, and Block No 2508 to Gregory. At the time of writing (March, 1992) we still own the original Gibbs holding of 661 and the Joshua Brook Block Lot 1 3363.

WRITTEN BY HOWARD BASIL GIBBS MARCH, 1992



Dairy - Gibbs family's old dairy in 1981 on Ratcliffe road; built in 1939 and used until 1965/66

EPHRAIM and CHRISTINA GARDINER of “GREENWOOD”

Ephraim Gardiner, born May 10, 1854 at “Blackberry Valley”, 12 years after Jesse and Jane arrived in Australind.

Ephraim completed his education at Paisley School, Bunbury. Prior to his marriage, he was a surveyor with John and Alexander Forrest and helped survey the North West of WA and also carried out surveying in and around Bunbury, Margaret River and Augusta.

On May 1, 1876 at the Church of England, Picton, Ephraim married Christina Fowler (born July 18, 1852), daughter of John Fowler and Elizabeth (nee

Dicey), of Preston, a younger sister of John Charlton who married Amy, Ephraim's sister.

After his marriage, Ephraim was among the survey team on the overland telegraph line (Murchison River-Roebourne) with John Forrest. Later he became a farmer, purchased land held by his father at Ferguson and farmed the property "Greenwood" for many years. Ephraim was appointed a Justice of the Peace. He was the first chairman of the Dardanup Roads Board (1895-1904) and a member of the Roads Board (1905-1921). His hobbies were gardening and playing his violin. Ephraim and Christina had seven children; Cecil died in infancy. Christina died on December 18, 1935 and Ephraim on May 23, 1944, both are buried at the Ferguson Cemetery. "Greenwood" is still being farmed by his grandson and family.

Family of Ephraim and Christina -

1. Louisa Maude married Wilhelm Conrad Bocker (1 child)
2. Mabel Elizabeth married Cunningham Campbell Forrest (5 children)
3. Julius Maitland Gardiner married Louise Marie Alexandria Bocker (4 children)
4. Cecil Mervyn died in infancy
5. Edith Minna married Arthur Lincoln Trobridge (3 children)
6. Godfrey Mervyn married Dora Evelyn Manning (5 children)
7. Guy Ronald married Dorothy (Daisy) Marguerite Smith (3 children)

COMPILED BY LEONIE GARDINER (Nee GILES)

JOHN FOWLER and ELIZABETH FOWLER (nee Dicey)

John Fowler was born at Redbourne Hall, Lincolnshire on December 31, 1817 to Richard Fowler (born 11/8/1780) a land surveyor and farmer and Ann Charlton (born 9/6/1786) of Chilwell Hall, Nottingham, daughter of Thomas and Ann Charlton.

John and his twin brother Thomas were the eighth and ninth children of Richard and Ann and due to childbirth complications Ann Fowler died the same day (31/12/1817), being 31 years old.

John and his twin Thomas were educated at Louth Grammar School, Lincolnshire founded by King Edward VI.

At the age of 20, John Fowler decided to emigrate to the Swan River, as he could not get on with his stepmother, and with his father's help in acquiring all the necessary farming implements and his own personal goods, he set sail from London on the Britomart for the Swan River Colony on July 3, 1838 arriving at Fremantle on December 5, 1838.

Once his goods and farm implements were unloaded at Fremantle, he went up the Swan River game shooting and to his utter dismay - on his return - all was destroyed by fire. This setback so disheartened John Fowler that he decided to return to England.

In the meantime, he met Elizabeth Dicey. She had come out to the Swan River in 1835 on the Giraffe with the Children's Friends Society under the protection of Mrs Wittenoom, mother of the colonial chaplain, and was apprenticed to HC Sutherland Esq, the collector of Colonial revenue.

John Fowler and Elizabeth Dicey were married on May 17, 1840 by the Colonial Chaplain JB Wittenoom, being the 35th marriage registered in the colony.

It was not long after this that John and Elizabeth moved to "Coombana Farm" near Bunbury and it is recorded that in 1841 another lot of farm goods was sent out from his father, Richard Fowler, in England.

John and Elizabeth also farmed at Dardanup, Belvidere, Ferguson and Roelands before finally settling at Preston Park, Lowden.

It was at "Dardanup Park", managing the farm for Mr Little, that John Charlton Fowler was born on May 7, 1849 - who later established "Sergeant Dale" at Ferguson.

It was in the 1850s, John Fowler was farming at Ferguson and he hired a convict, Mr Joseph Farrall, to tutor his children from 1856 to 1860. John and Elizabeth had 12 children - 11 living to adulthood and Emma dying in infancy and buried at the Picton Church cemetery.

John Fowler died at Lowden on 14/2/1902 with Elizabeth passing away on 2/4/1912. Both are buried at the Lowden Cemetery.

MICHAEL HALL

FOWLERS in FERGUSON

My great grandfather moved to Ferguson some time before 1856.

It is recorded at the Battye Library that Mr John Fowler of Ferguson engaged a Mr Joseph Farrell as tutor for his children from 1856 to 1860. Mr Farrell was a convict who came out in 1856 and was pardoned in 1860.

My grandfather John Charlton Fowler was born in the original house at “Dardanup Park” in 1849. Rev Wollaston christened him in the old Picton church.

The farm at Ferguson eventually became part of “Carlaminda”, as did several others in the area.

His eldest son Richard later took up land at Ferguson and was postman for several years.

John Charlton Fowler eventually established his own farm further up the Ferguson River and called it “Sergeant Dale”.

He harvested sandalwood from way out near Wagin way with a friend and took it through to Thomas Haywood’s for shipment to China. He used to tell how the dingoes followed them for miles sometimes and one night there was a terrible fight with his dog, which nearly died.

He cleared the land by “ring barking”. Grandma used to help. All the family was born in the old house. Her sister was the midwife.

He planted wheat and the natives used to help him harvest. He paid them with flour, plug tobacco, clothing and red material. They loved red. He also learnt to speak their language.

ENID HALL (NEE FOWLER)

Specification for erecting a 4 roomed house per plan.
 for Mr. H. Fowler 4 rooms (Verandah front & back)
 Tender - £34 4. Matter to labour for Carpenter -
 to carcass 4 x 3. Windows & doors 2 coats of paint.
 Flooring joists 4 x 2. also ceiling finish (stone colour)
 Top & bottom plates 3 x 2. Braces 2 x 3/4
 Corner studs 3 x 3. Cottar ties 3 x 2
 Rafters 4 x 2. Ridge boards 4 x 1
 Purlins 3 x 1 1/2. Angle stops 3 x 1 1/2
 Heatherboards 4 x 5/8. steps -
 Carriers 6 x 1 1/2. flooring boards tongue & groove (second class)
 Verandah ^{part} 5 x 5 dressed. Verandah plates 4 x 2.
 4 inch fascia. 5 D. M. doors. door frames 1 1/4
 4 top frames & sashes. 4 lights. 5' 10" x 2' 10" x 1 1/2
 5 ft butt hinges 3 1/2 inch 5 rim locks.
 4 sash fasteners. 4 pair sash lifts. 3 inch aschattens
 inch & half section. 16 inch ridgeing. 5 inch putty.
 3 inch down pipes on 2 corners.
 2, no. Basswells bricks local -
 2 x 1 1/2 dado mould. 1/4 round corners.
 2 x 1/2 garrak dressed to cover ceiling joints.
 1 garrak mantle piece about 44" x 20"
 1 kitchen shelf on brackets. 6 plaster vents inside
 No 1. Mitters store. 4 plaster vents for outside
 2 x 1 1/2 nosing under windows. 5 sets of door stops.
 roof to be covered with 26 pape roofing. gips.
 ceiling in 3 rooms & passage with 3 ft garrak dado.
 All materials delivered at Dardamup station
 Freight on Millars line to be paid by proprietor.
 All material to be carted to the job from siding.
 & sand for chimneys & water by proprietor.
 Signed -

The cost of a house - Copy of quote to build a four-roomed house
 for W. Fowler, around 1920.

FLYNN

Henry Stanes Flynn was thought to have been born on December 25, 1828, however the records are somewhat hazy and he could have been born sometime close to this date.

What is known for certain is that in 1846 he appeared in the Middlesex Sessions [court], charged with stealing “four pieces of the current silver coin of the realm called shillings”. His address was then the Parish of St John, Hackney, north east of London, about four miles from St Paul’s. It was recorded he was single and could read and his occupation was errand boy or labourer. He had one previous conviction for felony and one previous acquittal.

Henry was found guilty and his judgement was:- “Convicted of simple larceny, is adjudged and ordered to be transported beyond the seas to such a place as her Majesty by and with the advice of her Privy Council shall appoint for the term of seven years to be computed from the said twelfth day of October instant and is committed to the House of Correction at Westminster commonly called New Bribewell until departure.”

After one month, Henry was transferred to another prison, Millbank, where he spent seven months. (Millbank is known today as the Tate Art Gallery). He was again transferred to another prison, Parkhurst, on the Isle of Wight, off the south coast of England. He was to spend two years here. The boys at Parkhurst were given a rudimentary education and taught trades as well as working on the prison farm. It was more a reformatory than a prison.

Henry’s transportation began on July 4, 1849 where he was taken aboard the MARY for the sea voyage to the Swan River colony. During the three and a half months at sea, the Parkhurst boys and the servant girls had the opportunity to make garments for which they were paid. On reaching Fremantle on October 25, the boys were escorted to the Immigration Depot, where they were under the care of FD Wittenoom. Henry was now officially a Government Juvenile Immigrant in a colony of about 5000.

Henry’s first work was on the roads and with surveyors in the Gingin area for five months. In 1850 he commenced work with a B Elms as a farm servant located at Ommanney Road, Australind. When Elms gave up his farm Henry

was indentured to Cliftons at “Rosamel”. On October 29, 1851 Henry became a free man. He was given two pounds, five shillings and 10 pence (\$5) to close the books by Wittenoom. It took him two years to obtain his freedom.

He continued to work for Marshall Waller Clifton on his properties “Rosamel”, “Alverstoke” and several others. It was around this time he met his future wife Mary Crowe, who was an Irish girl, brought out on the immigrant ship Travencore. Mary and Henry were married on June 5, 1854. It was possible at the time that Mary was in the employment of the Forrest family and one of her charges was young John (later Sir John).

We don’t know where they established a home, but the next reference is to their first born child John Terence Flynn, who was born at Leschenault Cottage on March 14, 1855. His employer was W Pearce Clifton. When their second son Henry (Harry) was born on November 6, 1856 they were living in Dardanup. Henry was employed as a barman.

On October 31, 1859 Michael (my great grandfather) was born. Another son William was born in 1862 but died at 10 weeks. The next child Mary was born on February 26, 1866 followed by the last child Joe on February 27, 1868. When the last two children were born their address was farmer of Ferguson.

The records show that Henry received a tillage lease grant of 150 acres, Location 338. Freehold was granted on September 15, 1876. This is opposite Ironstone Road, currently planted to a vineyard. Known in those days as “Brookfield”, the land was subsequently mortgaged but, unable to repay the loan, the land was lost in March of 1878. However, in 1882 his eldest son, John repurchased the same property.

Mary died in 1884, aged 54, from hepatitis and was buried in the small graveyard behind the Catholic Church in Dardanup.

Family of Henry and Mary:

1. John married Jane Gardiner in 1883 (7 children)
2. Harry married Helen Hartnett in 1881 (10 children)
3. Michael married Leticia Maslin in 1886 (3 children)
4. Mary married Pat Slattery jnr in 1887 (6 children)

5. Joe married Amy Watkins in 1903 (8 children)

Around 1889, Henry and family moved further up into the Ferguson valley. John, Michael and Mary all remained in the local area. Joe moved to Collie and Harry moved to Worsley.

Henry spent his latter years living with family and had built a humpy on land belonging to Michael at Location 2508. His humpy was removed in about 1955 by my father, Nugget. The humpy consisted of one room about 15 feet square, built of split jarrah slabs and sealed with clay. The floor was 6" x 1" jarrah floorboards with a corrugated iron roof.

Henry had contact with the local Aborigines, who called him Donger Boola or Donga. In fact, the area known as Dongara Ridge was named after him and should, in fact, be Donga Ridge. Apparently, it was also locally called Donga's Folly, due in part to the fact the Henry heard that the Bunbury jetty was to be extended so he proceeded to cut jarrah beams for that project but somehow they were never used and remained in the bush.

With his advancing years, John became concerned about his father and brought him back to "Brookfield" to live. Being an independent man, Henry "escaped" several times and had to be retrieved in a horse and sulky from his humpy until feebleness prevented any further escapades. John's wife Jane looked after Henry until his death on July 13, 1915 from "senile decay; broncho-pneumonia; and heart failure".

***A SUMMARY OF THE FLYNN FAMILY HISTORY AS TAKEN
FROM A BOOK WRITTEN BY NORM FLYNN IN 1995 "FLYNN
OF THE FERGUSON"***

SUMMARISED BY GREG GIBBS FEBRUARY, 2001

OWEN and EMMA GARDINER of “MOUNTAIN SPRING”

Owen Gardiner was born in Bisley, England on March 17, 1839, the third of Jesse and Jane's children and arrived in Australind on December 6, 1842, aged almost three years and nine months.

He was married at the Picton Church on May 30, 1866 to Emma Gibbs (born Australind, March 28, 1846, oldest daughter of James Dagley Gibbs and Charlotte Narroway). Emma was the first midwife of the Upper Ferguson District.

Owen took up land at the top of the Ferguson Valley, 46 acres in 1867 (October 25, 1867) Wellington District Location No 197, this being “Mountain Spring”. Here, he and Emma lived and had eight children. Later Owen acquired an adjoining 100 acres - Wellington Location 398, one of the first titles, on September 17, 1879.

Owen and his family had a cattle run as well as their homestead block, and ran their cattle in the bush from Ferguson to Damper Flat near Collie. They referred to this as the “Station”, many were the tales they told of the station days.

The homestead block was put in with oats. They chaffed the oats with the old horse works, bagged them in a bagging hole - which was a hole dug in the ground, and the chaff went to feed the horse teams at Wellington Mills.

They milked cows by hand each year until Christmas day, then bells were put on the cattle. They were then taken to the bush where they were left until early June. To find the cattle, they broke camp at daylight and listened for the condbine bells, which could be heard 10 to 15 miles away. Butter was made by hand. In the early days, the milk was set in flat dishes overnight and skimmed by hand. Later, separators took over this task. Butter was put in large earthenware crocks and buried up to their necks in the ground in a cool place, this kept the family supplied with butter during the summer. Butter was sold in Bunbury.

Owen died at Ferguson on July 22, 1886, aged only 47 years. Emma died on July 2, 1927, aged 81 years. Both are buried at the Ferguson Cemetery. Today, “Mountain Spring” is still in the name of Gardiner, farmed by great grandsons.

Family of Owen and Emma:

1. Charlotte Sarah married Henry Cain (12 children)
2. James Owen married Johanna Ali (6 children)
3. Robert married Ellen Eliza Gardiner (2 children)
4. Rachel Jane married William Henry Gould (2 children)
5. Christopher married Bertha Maria Trigwell (7 children)
6. Beatrice married Henry Malcolm Gibbs (4 children)
7. Fanny married Robert Anderson Lowrie (4 children)
8. Lucy Emma married William Gordon Goodson (3 children)

Christopher Gardiner, born in Bisley, England on February 20, 1842, was almost 10 months of age when arrived with his parents at Australind. In 1870 he married Jane Gibbs (born April, 1850), a younger sister of Emma – Owen’s wife. It is believed that Chris was killed by the kick of a horse when only 30 years of age (March 2, 1872). Jane later married George Snelling (she died August 27, 1929). Both are buried at the Ferguson Cemetery.

COMPILED BY LEONIE GARDINER (NEE GILES)



Gardiner homestead - the day before it was pulled down in 1927. Marg and Jake are pictured standing at front.



Chaff cutting - back block of Gardiners

EXTRACT FROM TITLE DEEDS FOR OWEN GARDINER

Form No. 18

Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith. Be, Be, Be. To all whom these Presents shall come, Greeting. Know ye, that we, of our Especial Grace, certain knowledge and meremotion, have given and granted, and We do by these Presents, for us, Our heirs and successors, in Consideration of Twenty three pounds sterling, paid in the satisfaction of our Governor of our Colony of Western Australia Give and Grant unto Owen Gardiner of Garden Valley in the district of Wellington our said, Colony Yeomen all that tract or parcel of land situate and being in the said, Wellington district containing forty six acres more or less, marked and distinguished in the Map and Book of the Survey office of our said Colony as Wellington location no. 197 Bounded on the North by a east line of seventy three chain from or up sixty five chain sixty six links to East and one hundred and seventy three chains thirty links South from the South East corner of Wellington location 157, on the West by a South line of Twenty chains from spot aforesaid and on the South and East by lines parallel and equal respectively to the North and West boundaries, all bearings being true or thereabouts the measurements more or less and squared post all the said corner of the location.

**TITLE VERY DIFFICULT TO READ (SOME WORDING
COULD BE INCORRECT)**



***Transport - Jake and Neville Gardiner
on an Ariel Motorbike just after WWII***



Shifting Timber - Randell Gardiner drags a log into place

THE KERR FAMILY

Archibald Kerr, who married Agnes Thompson in Ballantrae, was born and spent most of his life at Kirkcolm, Scotland - the nearest village to Ireland.

They had 13 children - five girls and eight boys.

Michael, the fifth child, went across to Ireland to work when he was 19 years old. I do not know if he had relations living there. Michael was born at Kirkcolm on April 8, 1821. He married Elizabeth Brown Strachan, who was born on March 23, 1830 in Newfoundland.

Family of Michael and Elizabeth:

1. His daughter Isabella Kerr, born June 12, 1830 in Newfoundland married George Armstrong in Colac, Victoria (no children).

2. James Ford Strachan Kerr, born November 21, 1855, Fiery Creek, Victoria, married Lucy Gilbert, six boys, two girls, lived in Colac all his life.
3. Elizabeth Kerr, born August 14, 1858 - married George Inglis, a school-teacher, lived in Colac (no children). Elizabeth was a great sportswoman - hockey, golf and later bowls. She had a write-up in a Victorian paper when she died.
4. John Calvert Kerr, born December 16, 1866 - married Jane Swinton in Swinton's sitting room, October 8, 1891, Warrnambool. She was 21 and he 24 years old.

But to return to Michael Kerr - he was contracting in Newfoundland with his brother-in-law and Mr Murray Smith. They both came to Australia - Murray Smith to NSW where he became well-to-do. They had a place up in the Blue Mountains where they had several servants. Michael went up to the Victorian goldfields, beyond

Ballarat, where he opened a general store, but the starving miners used to loot his store on the way up. So he moved to Beac and took up a farm, "Goody Farm". It was there that John Calvert Kerr was born a 16lb baby. Michael Kerr was growing onions and had a gang of Chinese working at weeding the plants, they were very excited to see the big baby.



Milking time - Melbournup milking shed in the late 1920s

When James Ford Strachan Kerr married he took over “Goody Farm” but later moved to Colac where he built a house and worked for JG Johnston as a stock agent. Michael Kerr moved over to Western Australia and became manager of McNeils timber mill at Jarrahdale. It later became Millar’s Timber and Trading Co.

The manager’s house had 13 rooms built in part of Borneo timber. Many years later the position was offered to John Calvert Kerr but he refused it.

Michael and his wife left the family in Victoria. John being sent to Geelong Grammar School till he was 16 years. Michael gave up the post after 10 years. McNeil used to bring different women down and stay with them.

They went back to Victoria and Michael became a director on the Victorian Railways. John, when he turned 16, applied to another director for work, then told his father he had a job and was not returning to school.

He was working on the Warrnambool-Port Fairy extension as a surveyor when he met and married Jane Swinton.

He lost his job in the big Depression, also 2000 pounds savings. But he got work in the government office of the Melbourne Victorian Railways. They lived in Moonee Ponds and their first child was born there, John Strachan Kerr. Then he was out of work again. Jane went back to Warrnambool to keep house for her elder brother William Swinton and his young son Wallace, as the wife had died.

Then William married again and Jane and her elder sister Mary Steel, who was a widow with one daughter, opened a baker and lolly shop in Timor Street. Jane’s sister Annie (Mrs Willie Brown) gave John Calvert Kerr 50 pounds to go over to Western Australia and try his luck on the goldfields.

He joined a party of about eight men and went prospecting. They did no good, though the main shaft of the Sons of Gwalia mine was sunk where the dining tent stood.

He returned to Victoria as Mary Steel was marrying again (to Adam Aberline) and was going to live on his farm. John Calvert Kerr (JC) took another

appointment with the WA government as a surveyor. He brought his wife and son JS Kerr back to WA with him and Mr Briggs, of Claremont built them a wooden house in Princess Road, Claremont. Herbert Swinton Kerr was born there.

JC was then up at Cue, building a railway dam. The child was six weeks old when he saw him.

JC went back to Victoria with his family and was farming there for a short time at Timboon in the Otways. The eldest boy went to school there.

Then JC applied for a job with Millars WA as a surveyor and went to Denmark to the timber mill, in six months he was manager.

The third boy Robert Armstrong was born there.

JC's nephew Gilbert Kerr was working in a bank in Colac but came over to WA to work in the mill office. He was 19 years old and lived with JC. He spent the rest of his working life with Millars at Wellington, Kirup and Jarrahwood - the last three places as manager.

JC was then sent to open a new mill at Worsley. I first went to school there. Then Millar's was asked to recommend a surveyor and timber man by Jardine

Matheson Co. Ltd, of Shanghai. JC was sent to Manchuria to scout for suitable mine timber. His wife and three boys lived in a galvanised iron house at Woodbridge during his absence. The two older boys walking a mile to the Guildford State School.

When JC returned he had found no timber. He worked in Millar's Perth office for a time and built a brick house at Servetus Street, Swanbourne. The railway station was then called Condon Street and then Osbourne St. before becoming Swanbourne.

Then JC went to Wellington Mills as caretaker for six months when the manager Mr Yelverton died. The position was promised to Mr Davies.

JC was very taken with the country and took up 300 acres to the south of the mill, about one-and-a-half miles away. He got men to clear a few acres, then he was called by Jardine Matheson Co. Ltd again, this time to go and look on the island of Saghalin. The name is spelt in several ways. The agreement called it Sachalin. The site to be surveyed was on the river Pilievo. The whole island was a Russian convict settlement for banished murderers.

JC and three other men were dumped off at Pilievo River in a ship's boat with their camping outfit by the ship going up the coast to Aleksandrovsk. The Pilievo River runs into the sea at a marshy flat about half a mile wide, between steep hills.

At the mouth of the river they found a settlement of Gilliaks, a remnant of a distinct race of small boned people. Their summerhouses were wooden huts on stilts and were surrounded by racks of drying fish, which stunk. There were a lot of husky dogs. In the wintertime they lived back in the timber in dugouts, with a fire in the middle and their dogs to keep them warm. They used dog sledges in the winter.

Near the settlement lived a Russian couple, Mr and Mrs Smurnoff. They had both walked across Siberia.

She had killed her lover with a flat iron and he also had killed a man. Smurnoff was living there alone. One day a boat came down from Aleksandrovsk with Russian officers and 16 women on board. He was asked his name, was he living alone? Yes, "well that is not good, you can have your pick of these women for your wife". Later they became quite prosperous. There were no children.

JC and party stayed with them for a time, she was a very good cook.

Good timber was found up the river, so JC made his report and returned to WA.

JC and son John Strachan (JS) went up to the block at Wellington and they built a two-roomed cottage on the clearing. JC's house at Swanbourne was on two large blocks and two cows were kept on the back block, also there were four hives of bees.

Then word came from Jardine Matheson, would JC go to Pilievo as manager of a timber concession. Pit props for China, This was logs used in underground mining to hold stopes

The salary was to be £1200 a year for a five-year term.

JC was very keen to go but his wife said we will all go, too. So, in a few days the house was rented, the cows were sent bush, a governess was obtained for the two boys and we were off to Colombo to join a German liner for Shanghai.

Then a Russian ship for Vladivostok. When JC walked in to Mr Bryner, the agent's, office he said, "What are you doing here, we have not got the concession from the Czar yet."

So we stayed for three months at Vladivostok, at the Palace Hotel run by a Mr and Mrs Slyvinsky and their daughter Angeliki.

They spoke English but the shopkeepers did not. Most of the shops were run by Germans and Alberts was the biggest on the Str Lanki. We saw our first fall of snow, our first submarine submerge and our first cinema, it was a German film. There was a motor road race across Siberia and, of course, JS was in it. He said they drove all over the road and on the footpath. This was in 1908.

During our stay in Vladivostok, Mr Bryner took us over to his ranch on the mainland. He had a deer farm. There was a good sale for the horns to China. But they were rather troubled by tigers, which grew to a big size in that part of the world.

At length we got away on our charter ship Selson, a Norwegian ship from Bergen.

Captain Hoobrenda was a nephew of the owner.

JC was very worried how he was going to unload so many stores without barges. But when he got to Pilievo he saw quite a number of Japanese fishing Tungasses up on the beach. The Japs were poaching. They were very agreeable to unload the ship for him if he would keep quiet on their poaching.

We left JC and JS, who was 16 years old, to live in tents and iron huts during the building of log houses and we went back in the ship to Shanghai. I got very sick and the cholera was very bad so mother was advised to go to Nagasaki in Japan where there was a better climate. We were recommended to a hotel run by an English family.

The Selson was on a coaling run.

Women with small baskets loaded the ship.

The steward took us to the custom's house where the men kept us purposely till the train whistled out. We had to stand three hours on the platform, then when we were half way we had to change trains at a place called Wakamatsu. Then we arrived at Nagasaki at 10pm, pitch dark, just paper lanterns on the station. We got into two rickshaws and got to the hotel, the proprietor had gone to bed so we had to get him up again. His mother and young sisters lived in a private house at the back. They were very good to us during our six-week stay but the climate was humid, our boots got whiskers and the pillows at night smelt musty. Then we heard from the captain that we had to join the ship at another coal port Ataric, again we got there at night.

There was a short, fat Englishman Mr Carr on the station. He was the agent and the ship was not in. There was no accommodation, save his Japanese paperhouse. He lived there with 16 dogs. Next day the ship came in and we were pleased to get on board again. There were several ships in and the captain was going to make a night of it but the first officer came in to say the glass had gone down and there was every indication of a typhoon.

So the ship took to sea. We were kept in our cabins, fully dressed, for three days. When we reached Vladivostok, Mother rushed us ashore, forgetting the customs. She was after letters. The captain had to keep plying the men with drink till our return.

We called at several places, one place there was a silver lead mine and the ore was so rich the Chinese had a heap that would go in a wash basin, trundling in an iron wheelbarrow. It was so heavy Mother could not raise the barrow handles.

In another stopping place there was a beautiful harbour, quite deserted, with a timber concession at the top end. The place was called Gue Chue Hay or it sounded like that. The meadows were covered with mushrooms.

The captain took Mrs Baird (the governess) - I went as chaperone - sailing in the harbour. I remember we stuck on a large rock just under the surface. I seem to be a Jonah in a small boat. At Denmark I was in a small boat which struck a snag and sprung a leak. The men took off their boots and the ladies bailed while the men rowed frantically to shore.

Near Sachalin the ship ran into fog which did not lift till we got in near the mountains. JC and JS were soon on board to meet us.

JC could hardly get up on the ship. He had injured himself somehow. The Russian doctor was drunk so sent for the Japanese one, who could not speak English. The Japanese fishing concession was about two miles up the coast. JC was soon better.

JS had an adventure. He was fishing in the river in a small, flat-bottom boat when he lost an oar. The boat was caught in the rapids and went out to sea. He was not missed till nightfall. He spent all night keeping the nose of the boat to the waves. The Japanese fishermen found him next day and towed him home. He was then asleep in the bottom of his boat.

The island was volcanic and the soil was incredibly rich. The posts around the gardens all grew. There were wild strawberries, gooseberries and a blackberry on the hills called yargodys. I believe they are cultivated in the USA where they also grow wild.

The natural grass grows six feet high. Also the sea was alive with fish.

The summer climate was lovely but the spring and autumn were too severe. The concession had to be self-contained, there was a baker and his wife. The bread was cooked in 5lb wash-up basins (white and rye). The rye bread we used to cut into slices, toast in the oven and make into light beer which the Russians called kvass.

There was also a sergeant of police and five soldiers. The carpenter made Bob and myself a small sledge for the winter. They had a son Ivan who used to come and play with us some times. We knew a few words of Russian.

JC and JS used to have lessons in Russian from a Mr Moilete, they corrected his English.

There was an American Mr Sanderson, who was married to a Japanese woman, also a Canadian, a Norwegian and another Australian. In the winter JC used to have people in the house playing cards. Our house had nine rooms, some quite big. We had two Chinese boys. The houseboy Sind Ging Tong spoke four languages. He spoiled us two boys, he would have liked to come back to Australia with us.

We had three New Years - the English, Russian and Chinese. For the Chinese we were invited to their barracks for dinner one night. Outside the front door they had two Chindits, which were made of snow then water poured over them, which made them look like glass. There was a lighted candle placed inside. The Chindits are a cross between a lion and a dog. Inside the hall they had a long table down the middle, loaded with food. Above the table they had many paper lanterns cut out as lobsters, fish and other things. There was a hare cut out of paper, which kept jumping about. They had a fishing line attached and the other end was tied to a man's foot up on a balcony.

The Chinese thought Mother was a wonderful wife and how lucky Dad was - three sons and no daughters.

We were also invited to Mr and Mrs Smurnoff's one night. We had to enter the house through the kitchen and there was a sow and 12 young in a pen under a table in the kitchen. I remember we had paper-thin pancakes but I do not remember the rest of the meal. Mrs Smurnoff came to visit mother and governess. Her brass jewellery had verdigris on it. We two young boys had to sing songs to entertain her as the language barrier was there.

JC had brought several small horses up from Vladivostok and the carpenter made horse sledges.

In the winter, the men used to drag a sledge to the top of a high hill, then pile on and shoot down to the bottom.

The cemetery was also at the top of that hill but none of the suicides or murdered men were buried there. In the winter the ground was frozen solid.

There was a mortuary building near our house where the bodies were kept on blocks of ice sawn from the river, which was frozen in the winter. JS had skates but there were none for the smaller boys.



*Melbournup homestead 1926 - built by J Chapman in the early 1900s
and purchased by JC Kerr in 1925.*

The Russians stuck a cart axle in the ice and put a wheel on it with several poles out from it and one long pole about 45 degrees sticking out and fastened our small sledge to the end and then invited one of the women to sit on the sledge. On the outside she was going around at a great speed, one of the women fell off and knocked down three men spectators.

The sea was also frozen over. Icebergs came down from the north and froze together but they were still lifted by the tide, which was about five feet. It also pulled up the bridge piles that spanned the river which was a pedestrian

crossing as well as boom for logs coming down the river. It would freeze round them then it would break away as the water level fell, leaving the piles sticking up in the air.

In the winter JC took the family up the river to the timber cutters' camp. We went by horse sledge. The police came with us and I remember the sergeant put his foot through the ice and took off his knee boots to dry out the water and I saw toe rags not socks. He wound strips of calico or linen round his feet, how he kept it in position I do not know.

The timber was cut in the winter when the sap was up and the logs were stacked on the banks of the river waiting for the thaw to set in, when they came down the river to be caught by booms stretching across.

When the family came up from Vladivostok, it towed a small launch, which was to tow the logs out to the ships. However, it went ashore at the first winter storm and was a total loss. JC and JS, with several others, went out in the storm to rescue the crew but they had got ashore and had taken shelter. JS and another man got their toes frost bitten.

During the winter our mail was brought down from Aleksandrovsk, the administrative centre of the island, by the hang man who apparently had his slack periods. He entertained JS by descriptions of some of his executions.

The log houses had a wind-swept driveway round them. Then the snow was piled up six feet deep. The windows were double and were frosted over so the light came in but you could not see out. There was sand insulation under the floorboards and sand in the ceiling, sometimes a little would trickle down on us. Between two rooms there was a round black stove reaching to the ceiling, it was about three feet across. The fire was lit in it and then it was sealed up, the flue was crooked to the chimney top.

The water was carted from a spring at the side of a hill and kept in barrels inside the house. All the clothes had to be dried inside the house in the winter, as sheets would freeze stiff at once.

In a previous page I mentioned a launch being towed behind the Selson. I see by one of JC's letters he asked for a launch drawing not more than 30 inches,

which could enter the river for shelter. But he was sent a small tug, coal burning and drawing about six feet of water and it took three men to work it. The river was quite wide but shallow. I, at 10 years old, could wade across it.

In the summer we went on several outings to the Japanese fishing village, only about two miles along the beach, just the other side of the state boundary. It seemed a shame they were boiling down many tons of fish and putting the boilings in a press to extract the oil used in Japan for cooking. The fishmeal was used for manure. There were two Japanese fishing camps. One was on the Russian side of us.

Pilievo was on the inside of the island and the sea was not very wide across to Siberia.

The Russians would not keep their contracts and were too fond of vodka, which sent them mad. So, before the second winter the concession was abandoned. In loading the people onto the ship, one woman fell into the water but she had such wide skirts on that she floated like a water lily immersed up to the waist.

I do not know what salary JC got but it was not near 5000 pounds, as promised. Mrs Baird got a position in Shanghai and went to England where, as she was going deaf herself, she learned lip reading and came back to Australia.

The tenant had just left the house at Swanbourne, so we settled in again. JC went back to work for Millar's. Then he became under-manager at Brown's mill, Greenbushes. JS went to Scotch College for a time then was apprenticed at Millar's, Yarloop as a fitter and turner. He also obtained an engine driver's licence there.

Bob and I went to the State school till 1913. Then D Elerton Brown went to Tasmania where he was drowned trying to save a girl who had fallen in the water and JC became manager and moved into the manager's house where he had a housekeeper for a time, Katy McLane. He left, so Mother let the Swanbourne house. I was sent to Scotch College as a boarder. Bob went to the mill State school. The war broke out and JS went to Greenbushes for a time and then enlisted and was sent to Egypt and was in camp at Heliopolis for some time, then was shipped to England and went to France. In England, on leave, he stayed with Mother's cousin Mrs Birch (Alice Page) at No 19 The

Common, Woolwich. Major Birch had been in the Indian army where he had picked up a wog and was in reserve there.



Threshing grain - Bob Kerr threshing grain with a Winnower on Melbournup in the early 1930s

JS returned to Australia in charge of married Australian servicemen after the war.

In the meantime, in 1913 JC had a house built on the farm at Wellington and 600 fruit trees planted.

So when JS returned, JC sold him the farm and furnished house for 1700 pound through the Repat and JS married Edith Lucy Rose. He stayed on the farm till 1926, then walked off and went to Palgarup.

I was at Scotch College for two years and was there when war broke out. Then went to "Brookside", the farm, for a few years then over to Warrnambool. I was with the Swintons for three years. When JS came back from the war he had to take his group to the Eastern States, so he called in at Warrnambool and when he saw me he said, "Did you shave with a fork this morning"? One of the

men in the shop Jack Shannon said, "Is that your brother? What big feet he has!" JS had on white canvas shoes with wide soles and they did look big. I returned to the west and was on the farm at "Brookside" at Wellington till JS married and then JC bought "Melbournup" from Joe Chapman. It was an improved farm of 500 acres. Bob was in charge of that place.

After we returned from Saghalin, JC wanted a daughter and on July 6, 1910 William Michael Kerr was born at Swanbourne. When he was about six months old he fell off the double bed onto his forehead and at the age of 15 he started to take fits. He died at "Swintonvale Farm" on the Ferguson at the age of 25 in one of his fits.

JC was manager of Greenbushes for 23 years. When the timber concession was cutting out he obtained another for Millar,s at Palgarup - buying a 2000-acre mill site off J Rose, of Wilgarup. There was a store on the mill but it was not satisfactory so he offered it to me and guaranteed me for 200 pound. I was to live on two pound a week.

In 1926 I had done very well but wanted a holiday. JS walked off "Brookside" so he managed the store and I went for a four-month trip to England, giving him five pound a week to look after the shop. I went by Orient boat the Orama and returned on the Ovato.

On the boat I made friends with Robert Price and his wife from Randwick, Sydney and so got off the boat with them at Naples where I went to see Pompei and by train up to the Mt Vesuvius, we then went by train to Rome. The Prices knew a certain monsignor who arranged a public interview with the then Pope.

We saw St Peter's and drove out to the Church of St Stephen's where we went down to the catacombs below the church. We also visited the Church of the Holy Stairs, which were taken from Pilates' house in Jerusalem. From Rome we went by train to Nice and stayed at Greens Hotel, Rue Victor Hugo. From there we went to Monte Carlo and up to the scent factory at Grasse.

Then we caught the Blue train for Paris Waggon Litz arriving at the Gare de Norde in the morning. We stayed at Hotel Montrose, Rue Hantville and used to walk along the Boulevard Italians to Cook's office where we took tours to Versailles, Malmason and to Fontainebleau.

I then left the Prices and took a French plane to London, a four-hour flight in those days. There were about 20 people on it. It was very rough and noisy, I was sick over the land but all right when I got off, spent six weeks in London. Stayed at the Shaftsbury Hotel opposite the museum. Went to the theatre a lot and did a trip down to Brighton with Sir Hal and Lady Colebatch.

JS went into Millar's when I returned to the shop and I stayed in the shop till the Depression closed the mill. When I got rid of the stock, I returned to "Swintonvale". JC had retired by then in JS's favour. Bob had married Stella Forrest in Bridgetown and was milking at "Melburneup". JC divided the 500 acres and built a house called "Swintonvale", which was to have been William's farm.

In the Christmas of 1933 I went east to visit my relatives in Colac and Warrnambool. Then caught a small passenger vessel the Canberra, a Burns Philip boat. One of their ships had been sunk in the 1914-18 war and after the war this German vessel had been handed over as compensation.

It was slow but comfortable. I was in a six-berth cabin. There were two brothers Len and Ray Warfe going north to try to find work at Cairns. We became quite friendly before they left the ship and I used to write to Ray Warfe afterwards.

The Canberra called at Sydney and I called and saw Wallace Swinton and his family, they lived at Wollstonecraft over the bridge, we also called at Brisbane so Alf Kerr (Gilbert Kerr family?) came to the boat to see me. I recognised him because he was like his brothers. He was working in the railways. The ship also called at Townsville and I went out in the launch to see Magnetic Island, so named by Captain Cook. At Cairns I went out in a launch to see Green Island and by train up to Kuranda, up on the Tablelands. From Cairns there were only 16 of us on board. We lost several more at Darwin. The next stop was Surabaya, Batavia, Banjiwange, then Singapore.

I went ashore with a Mr King. He invited us to go north with him and join the WA boat at Port Sweternbain. But the coloured clerk in the shipping office told me the ship was not going to call there, so I had to stay three weeks in Singapore and move to a cheaper hotel - The Metropole, in the Brash Balda Road. However, it was very comfortable. I did not enjoy the trip down the WA

coast. The passengers had all gone up in her and were very clicky and the Chinese food in Singapore had not agreed with me.

At the end of May, 1938 Ray Warfe wrote to me saying he was going to England with an old friend Ray Marsh and their ship the Orama would pass through Fremantle in about a fortnight, would I care to go with them?

I did want to. JC was not very well but the doctor assured me he would be all right. Bob drove me to the station in his new T-model Ford and I caught the diesel coach from Picton.¹

***FROM DIARY KEPT BY HS (BERT) KERR
COMPILED BY MAX KERR***

SLATTERY of DARDANUP and UPPER FERGUSON

The descendants of Patrick Slattery and Rose Hanlon Slattery of Dardanup and then the Upper Ferguson in Western Australia can trace their ancestry to the parish of Killeentierna, the townland of Kilcow, in County Kerry, Ireland.

¹ Bert's diary carries on with trips to Europe, Singapore and Eastern Australia. On the death of JC Kerr, Bert lived with his mother and farmed "Swintonvale" until 1953 when he leased the property to myself (MS Kerr). On his death at 73 years on August 18th 1972 he willed "Swintonvale" to me.

Bert is buried alongside his mother, father and brother William in the Ferguson Cemetery, adjoining the church he helped build and maintain.

"Swintonvale" is now farmed by the Great Grandson of JC Kerr, Max Kerr (Jnr.) his wife Ruvé and two children, Taneta and Samantha, who are living in the original house built in 1925.

Historically though, the names Slattery, O'Slatara and O'Slatraigh (meaning strong) originated in Ballyslattery in East Clare.

On February 17, 1816 in the parish of Killeentierna, a young farmer named Patrick Slattery married Ellen Daly of the same parish. In a ceremony performed by the Reverend D Dwyer. The witnesses were Daniel Slattery and Joan Daly.

Patrick and Ellen Slattery had three children in the following years, named Patrick, Ellen and Timothy. Patrick was baptised on May 20, 1829, the same year as the founding of the Swan River Colony to which he would later be transported. His sponsors were John Daly and Mary O'Sullivan. Ellen was the next born, and she was baptised on April 14, 1832 with Michael Quinlan and Kate Burns as sponsors. The third child was a boy Timothy who was baptised on May 27, 1835 and sponsored by Michael Daly and Mary Daly.

Convict No 2515

Between 1845 and 1851 Ireland was devastated by a famine which prompted waves of emigration and petty crime. At the height of the famine young Paddy Slattery was arrested for committing burglary. At the time he was described as an unmarried labourer with a prior conviction. He was tried at the Tralee Summer Assizes on Monday, July 15, 1850 before the right honourable Lord Chief Justice Blackburne. Paddy was sentenced to 10 years for burglary and robbery and was sent to Newgate Prison to await transportation. Another Slattery named Cornelius of the same parish and probably a cousin of Patrick's was arrested in 1852 for larceny. Cornelius, who was 26 at the time of his trial on April 13, was sentenced to seven years transportation. He was not so lucky as Patrick, for he died in Spike Island Gaol, County Cork, on April 2, 1853 while waiting transportation.

Swan River Colony

Patrick Slattery arrived in the Swan River Colony on August 31, 1853 on the Phoebe Dunbar. The ship's manifest lists him as five foot six-and-a-half inches, brown hair, dark blue eyes, round face, sallow skin, stout and slightly freckled. Patrick was held in Fremantle Gaol from September, 1853 to August, 1854, where his demeanour was described as "quiet but indifferent". On August 24, 1854 Patrick was granted a ticket-of-leave and on September 1 he

was employed under that scheme. One of the projects Patrick was supposed to have worked on as a ticket-of-leave labourer was the Church of Immaculate Conception in Dardanup, the foundation stone of which had been laid by Bishop Salvado in March, 1854. The church was blessed and opened on April 19, 1857. Family legend has it that because of his early association with the church, Patrick tipped his hat to it every time he passed.

Dardanup

It is probable that in the mid 1850s Patrick was an employee and tenant of Thomas Little, a prominent landowner in Dardanup. At this time, Little was attempting to establish a Catholic community in the area by marrying off former convicts to young Irish girls brought to the colony as domestic servants and then settling them on small leaseholds. This is perhaps how Patrick Slattery was introduced to 20-year-old Rose Hanlon, whom he married in 1859. Rose was the daughter of Bernard Hanlon, a farmer of County Tyrone, and his wife Catherine Slavin. Rose arrived in the colony in 1858 on the Emma Eugenia, and married Patrick on May 16, 1859 in the Church of Immaculate Conception, Dardanup. Both were living in Dardanup at the time, so Rose may have been a domestic servant to Mr Little. Joshua Wood and Helena Burke, a nurse who arrived with Rose on the Emma Eugenia witnessed the wedding.

Soon after the couple was married, on October 10, 1859, Patrick was granted a conditional pardon. Patrick and Rose settled on a small leasehold property in Dardanup, which later became known as “Paddy’s field”. It was here that their eight children were born.

The eldest child Patrick was born in 1860, followed by Mary Anne in 1861. In 1863, Bernard was born and was followed by Daniel in 1865 and James in 1868. In 1864 Patrick employed ticket-of-leave man Richard Downes for a short time. In the mid 1860s Patrick applied for 40 acres of crown land in the Wellington district. In February, 1867 Patrick wrote to the Surveyor General Septimus Roe complaining that the land he had been assigned was not that for which he applied. To make matters worse, the 40 acres he wanted had been assigned to Mr Gardiner.

Patrick requested a refund of his two-pound deposit if the matter could not be rectified. In December, 1867 Patrick finally secured his 40 acres.

In any case, Patrick must have begun to prosper as in 1870 he employed James Divine as a general servant. In 1874 Patrick also employed James Gifford as a servant. In the 1870s Patrick began to build up his landholdings by taking out special occupation leases. The ticket-of-leave men were probably employed to help Patrick clear the land so he could meet the conditions of the lease. In September, 1876 Patrick wrote to the Commissioner for Crown Lands requesting that the 28 acres adjacent to his existing 100 acres be surveyed so he could start fencing. In May, 1877 he acquired a further 86 acres.

In 1879 Patrick wrote to the Commissioner for Crown Lands requesting the title deeds for the 40 acres he acquired in 1867. He had first written for them in 1877 but received no reply.

While Patrick's landholdings at Upper Ferguson increased in the 1870s, so did the size of the Slattery family. Another son Edward was born in 1870, Catherine was born in 1874 and Rose Ellen, the youngest, was born in 1876.

Eventually, the Slattery family moved to Upper Ferguson where the slopes had been grassed with chaff from "Paddy's field". The chaff cutting at "Paddy's field" was not without incident. Daughters Rose and Kate were playing with the cutter when the wheel turned, severing Kate's finger at the knuckle.

The Slattery's Ferguson property was named "Brooklawn" and a house was built of pit-sawn timber with plaster and paperbark (mud mortar) walls and a shingle roof. There was a verandah on the front and sides, which were later enclosed to form four more bedrooms in addition to the three main rooms. The kitchen was at the back of the house and in easy reach of a small orchard with pear and fig trees. Patrick grew potatoes on the well-drained slopes reminiscent of Ireland and later established a dairy.

Tragedy struck the family on July 27, 1885 when Edward, youngest son of Patrick and Rose, died, reputedly of snakebite complicated by pneumonia. He was buried in Dardanup Cemetery.

Two years later Patrick and Rose celebrated the marriage of their eldest son Patrick to Mary Flynn, the daughter of Henry and Mary Flynn, of Ferguson.

Bernard Slattery, a policeman and later farmer, became the second to marry when in 1893 he wed Mary Agnes Bird, daughter of Charles and Bessy Bird. His sister Mary Anne Slattery married Thomas William Harris, of Dardanup in November of 1893. Kate Slattery and two Harris sisters were bridesmaids and the wedding banquet was held at "Brooklawn".

In 1898 Kate Slattery married George Harris, brother to Thomas Harris. A year later he was tragically killed when was struck on the head by a winch handle while working on a bore, leaving Kate with infant son Gregory George Patrick. Kate married William Henry Prout in 1908 and had four more sons.

Rose Ellen Slattery, the youngest in the family, married James Rodgers in 1902 and Daniel and James Slattery never married.

In later years Rose Hanlon Slattery kept in contact with her sister Margaret who had emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts and married junk dealer John Noonan. The Noonans had a large family of 10, only three of whom married. Two sons graduated from Harvard University, one as a doctor and the other as a dentist.

On January 4, 1905 Rose Slattery died, aged about 65. She was a deeply religious woman who played a big part in educating her children. Sadly, she spent her last years in blindness.

Patrick entertained his growing number of grandchildren by taking them to Australind on weekends in his horse and sulky. His horse was known as "Hobbity Dick". One day while driving his young granddaughter Kathleen from Ferguson to church in Dardanup, his hat blew off. He sent Kathleen to retrieve the hat and when she returned continued on. At that moment a tree branch crashed to the road in front of them. If they had been moments earlier they would have been killed. The pair could not move the branch so did not make it to church that day.

Patrick also ventured out of Western Australia in his latter years, visiting the Eastern States at least twice.

On August 20, 1915 Patrick died of a heart attack, aged about 86. He had gone for a walk after tea along the railway line and collapsed where it crossed the Ferguson River. He was buried at the Dardanup Cemetery.

Patrick's sons took over the farm at Ferguson and in 1929 the old house was pulled down. The property was sold and changed hands six times before it was eventually bought by its present owner and descendant of the Slatterys, Geoff Harris.

Seven children, 30 grandchildren and 90 great grandchildren survived Patrick and Rose.

GEOFF HARRIS

EDWARD and MARGARET GARDINER of “EDEN”

Edward was born in Bisley, England on October 7, 1832. He was nine years of age when he left Stroud in Gloucestershire, England with his parents and three brothers Bradley, Owen and Christopher in 1842. They embarked on the sailing ship Trusty arriving at Australind on December 6, 1842. After a few years at Australind they ventured further afield taking up land at what was known as Ferguson Valley around 1850.

Edward married Margaret Manogue (born March 18, 1833) who came from Ireland on the sailing ship Sabrina on her way to an uncle in Victoria. The ship stopped at Bunbury on June 13, 1853, she was to embark another. In the meantime she met Edward, so decided to stay. They married in Bunbury on April 23, 1855.

Edward selected land “Eden” adjoining his father's property where he farmed with cattle and horses. At times he did sandalwood carting. The sandalwood was carted into Bunbury on horse drawn drays and wagons and exported to China where it was used extensively for ceremonial occasions. Joss sticks are made from it and are burned as incense. He also had a vineyard, growing grapes and making wine.

Edward and Margaret raised a family of four sons and seven daughters who were all educated at a school on Edward's parents' (Jesse and Jane) property. They were noted for their hospitality, people staying there when travelling through the district. Also the happy times the family had in their big kitchen. In 1884 their son Jesse died (aged 19 years) of measles. An epidemic went through the State causing many deaths and much sadness in the families. Later Margaret met with an accident, was thrown out of a horse-drawn carriage, injuring her back. From then on she was in a wheelchair, dying November 8, 1892. In 1899 Edward remarried, to Ann Trigwell, she died September 19, 1908. Edward passed away on September 21, 1916 and all are buried in the Ferguson Cemetery.

Family of Edward and Margaret:

1. Jane married John Terence Flynn (7 children)
2. Elizabeth married Joseph Chapman (no children)
3. William married Harriet Agnes Trigwell (6 children)
4. Bethia married Richard James Trigwell (5 children)
5. Fanny married Alfred Trigwell (8 children)
6. Owen (Jack) was single
7. Ellen Eliza married Robert Gardiner (2 children)
8. Jesse died aged 19 of measles
9. Sophia married William George Armstrong (no children)
10. Sarah married Edwin Trevena (2 children)
11. Henry married Agnes Ann Buchanan (5 children)

***STORY BY MISS DORIS TREVENA COMPILED BY LEONIE
GARDINER (NEE GILES)***

BETHIA and JOSEPH HOUGH

Bethia Gardiner, born August 23, 1846, was the eldest daughter and sixth child of Jesse and Jane. In 1861 she married Joseph Hough (born 1840, England).

Joseph came out from England with his parents James and Elizabeth (nee Room), on the Parkfield under the same scheme as Jesse and Jane, arriving Australind March 18, 1841. First lived at Australind on the Collie River. Later

took up land at Ferguson, Wellington location No 74 (30 acres), No 123 (30 acres) and 2 x 20 acre blocks, known today as “Carlaminda”.

Joseph ran this farm when his father left to take up butchering. He took up butchering himself, selling the Ferguson property and then later purchasing the old homestead and farmland on the Collie River. Bethia and Joseph had 17 children. Bethia died on November 3, 1891. Joseph later married Elizabeth Delaney and had a further seven children. To this day, the property remains in the Hough family. Joseph died on May 31, 1926. Both are buried in the old Bunbury Cemetery.

Excerpt from the South Western Times newspaper dated Saturday, June 12, 1926:

“A Pioneer’s Passing. The late Mr Hough”.

The death of Mr Joseph Hough makes another gap in the fast diminishing ranks of old pioneers. With his parents, he arrived at Bunbury in the ship Parkfield in 1841 with a contingent of settlers for the old Australind Company. Too young at the time to share with his people the disappointment at the collapse of the Company, he experienced all the hardships those settlers had, but his long life is a striking example of the strenuous time, hardening a constitution instead of undermining it. With his parents, he first lived near Australind on the Collie River and from there, took up an area at Ferguson, what is now known as “Carlaminda”. Later, the father opened a butchering business in Bunbury on the site now occupied by North’s Building in Victoria St. Mr Hough then took over the Ferguson farm and continued working it until he commenced butchering on the present South Western Times site. Selling the Ferguson property to the late Mr H Stanley, the founder of the legal firm of Bath, Eastman and Jenour, he decided to purchase the old homestead on the Collie River, which is now owned by his son Peter.

Twice married, first to Miss Gardiner by whom he had 17 children, second time to Miss Delaney by whom another seven children were added to the family. Mr Hough probably

established a record in the South West for the largest number of children. Four sons saw war service and put up a creditable record, whilst all the others are well and favourably known in the district. Mr Owen Hough, who recently retired from the Customs Department and Mr JG Hough Contractor, of Bunbury are probably the best known to our readers.

Like all the settlers, Mr Hough was a strong supporter of his church whilst his father conducted the first Congregational service at Australind. Mr Hough enjoyed the friendship of the late Mr Haywood and Mr EM Clarke and, for many years, joined them in shooting trips. Keen on this class of sport, he ranked as one of the best shots in the district. The writer recollects a wallaby hunt many years ago, when Mr Hough returned to the camp at mid-day with the biggest bag of the afternoon. The keenest rivalry existed and, at sundown, the scores were Hough and Clarke tied with Mr Haywood one behind, whilst the writer and many other members of the party were also rans. A fine type of the old pioneer has gone. Living up to the best traditions of that worthy band, he enjoyed the respect and esteem of a large circle of friends, a credit to the State and the district, and now resting with others who helped lay the foundations of Bunbury.

Family of Bethia and Joseph Hough:

1. Christopher James married Isabella Ann McConnell (8 children)
2. Robert Arthur died aged two and a half
3. Owen William married Eva Agnes Ramsey (4 children)
4. Rhoda Jane married William Edward Carter Burcham (2 children)
5. Robert married Harriot Agnes Trott (6 children)
6. Jesse Josiah died aged 17 years
7. Caroline married Reginald Whitelock Wood (2 children)
8. Sarah married Robert Donald (4 children)
9. Louisa married Charles John (Joseph) Haynes (6 children)
10. Joseph George married Rose Amelia Warner (5 children)
11. Amy Maria married Evelyn Pierrepont Erskine (9 children)
12. Charles Felix married Edith Amelia Chapman (4 children)
13. David Edward Austin married Martha Ann Dee (5 children)

14. Rebecca died aged 10 years
15. Cecil Seymour married Mabel? (2 children)
16. Isabella Minna died aged 30 years, single
17. Geoffrey Malcolm married Dorothy May Bright (5 children)

COMPILED BY LEONIE GARDINER (NEE GILES)

BUCKENARA

Angelo Buckenara, born in 1830, Antwerp Belgium, migrated to South Australia in 1852.

He married Alice Clegg on April 5, 1860 in the district of Talunga Gumeraca, South Australia. Their first child born was Edward (July 5, 1860), second born (my grandfather) Peter (September 28, 1861) at Kynton Valley, South Australia. Angelo worked as a labourer, as a railway employee and gardener. Alice, a dressmaker, was born in 1835 at Kynton Valley, South Australia. They had a further five children.

Alice's father was Edward Clegg and mother was Mary Posthewaite, according to available records they farmed at Talunga.

Angelo came to Western Australia in 1897, prior to this Peter Buckenara migrated to Western Australia in the late 1880s. Records showed he landed at Cossack in the north west of Western Australia and he worked on a station as a jackeroo. He travelled to the Kalgoorlie Goldfields area where he had some success finding gold. Angelo lived with Peter Buckenara and family until his death in 1919.

Peter Buckenara met and married Amy Maria Wright from the Upper Capel, they were married in the Bunbury Anglican Church on November 2, 1892. Peter had acquired land at Ferguson about 12km from Dardanup where they farmed with their family until 1920, when they sold up and bought 600 acres two kilometres south of Dardanup. They had sheep, cattle and horses and were pretty self-supporting. They had five children Len, Roy, Aubrey, Peter and Dora. All the family were schooled at Ferguson and the boys taught farming

and played a lot of sport locally. They commuted to Bunbury by horse and sulky for most of their needs, those not available in the little grocery shop in Dardanup.

Dora Buckenara, the youngest in the family, was born in Bunbury on November 6, 1912 at the Stirling Hospital. Started school at Ferguson and in 1920 completed her schooling at the Dardanup State School. She learnt piano at the local convent school. She assisted in farm activities, sheep and cattle husbandry as well as domestic duties.

Dora was always involved in playing tennis, cricket and hockey with her brothers and the local young folk in the Dardanup area.

In the late 1920s Peter purchased their Ford car, mainly driven by the boys as the horse and sulky days die hard. They also had a telephone (believed to have run a single wire from the Ferguson property to Dardanup so they could have a phone) and later a radio. Their home was a sizeable timber and iron structure believed to be an old mill house from Wellington Mills. In 1933 Dora met John Henry Bensted from Kojonup, also a farmer and shearer. On March 7, 1934 they were married at the St Mary's Anglican Church in Dardanup.

Peter Buckenara gave Dora and Jack a parcel of uncleared land of 100 acres south of his "Lyndon" homestead. This property became known as "South Lyn".

Mum and Dad built a small mud brick house and shed for milking the cows, they slowly cleared the property getting more stock and chooks and growing vegetables. Jack also doing contract shearing to make ends meet.

Peter Buckenara's property - 100 acres given to his daughter Dora and Jack Bensted, 200 acres given to son Peter, 300 acres kept for himself and son Aubrey till Peter senior died in 1948. Len went to Burekup and later lived in Boyanup, in a house he built with his wife Nelly and daughter Loma; he served in World War II.

Roy farmed for a brief period at Coolup, but sold and went to Kalgoorlie in the mid 1930s. Later, in the 1940s, he came to live in Busselton. He never married

but had a flamboyant life in his younger days, he played tennis with some distinction and cricket in Busselton and was also a very keen bowler.

PETER BENSTEAD

THE SKIPWORTH FARM

Our house had four rooms, the front room was the parents' room and behind it was the kitchen.

The room next to the kitchen was where we, as little kids, slept. The room was lined with hessian.

In summer, Mum and Dad would sleep up one end of the verandah and the kids would sleep down the other end. I remember after the war having lots of visitors to stay, uncles, aunts and kids, goodness only knows where they slept.

Everyone would enter the house through the back door. Originally there was a vineyard out the front with a big hedge. The hedge was seldom trimmed and as kids we used to climb it.

We milked cows, though not many, and the cream went once a week. The milk would be separated on the back verandah, this was the closest thing we had to a dairy. We also grew spuds, we had a few sheep but mainly for our own rations.

Father always did work for neighbours. Father had a decent wagon that could be pulled by five horses normally three. The Hartnetts grew spuds and Dad would cart them. Hay was very important then and Dad had very good equipment, the winnower, the header and a good binder and really good horses. Dad always fed the horses well before they worked and when they had finished. Other people would just turn them out into the paddock after they had finished, but my father believed in the value of the horses.

The hay was done up with the binder and tied up. It was pitched up into a wagon with a fork. And then stacked in the big shed on the farm. It was stored

here for later use. When it was needed, it then went through the chaff cutter where there was a mouse-proof bin, which would hold several bags of chaff.

At times we would paddock horses for the spot millers, that were around and working in the bush near our farm.

We had a small orchard down towards the creek and we used to send fruit to Cottesloe Beach (now Mosman Park) to some people called Coker. These people had a greengrocer's shop just opposite the railway station.

At the end of the big shed we had cow yards and the pigsty. Before the big shed was built we had horse works as we used to call them. Chief and Jinny were two of our horses. Chief was always a good worker and good horse. Jinny was an old bitch of a horse, terrible lazy, old thing. Agnes and I, as kids, our job was to be outside throwing stones at Jinny the old horse. And every now and then father would yell, "Get up" as the chaff cutter would be slowing down. This old Jinny would be the villain and was not working. We would have to throw stones at her.

***TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD) FROM INTERVIEW
WITH GEORGE SKIPWORTH***

LIFE of MUM and DAD by BILL RATCLIFFE

(April, 1999, at the age of 86)

The first Ratcliffe to settle in the Dardanup district was William Ratcliffe. He was born at Stafford, England on January 19, 1862, the son of Elijah and Jemima Ratcliffe.

Like most boys he did not like school. Education was not compulsory in those days so he went to work in a brick kiln at a very young age without any education. He worked there until about the age of 14 then started as an apprentice butcher. When qualified he ran a shop of his own until late in the 1880s when he sold his shop. He and his brother George came out to Australia and settled in Queensland, where he and his brother opened a butcher's shop

which they operated very successfully, but it was not long before he got the urge to move and so he left the shop to his brother.

He then came over to Western Australia and settled in Broomehill, where he got a contract to cut sandalwood until just before the turn of the century. He then came to Bunbury with his two horses and dray. He started work on the roads and other contracts.

About the turn of the century he was in Bunbury when a 300-acre bush block in the Ferguson district was auctioned. Without seeing it, he bought the property. The next week, with his two horses, dray, some chaff and groceries, he set out to find the block, travelling through the bush without even a track for the last few miles. He arrived at a farmer's home, which turned out to be the next farm to the block he had bought. It was owned by the Gardiners, one of the first pioneers of the district. So he asked them, did they know where the block was? They told him it was just up the top of the hill. He said, "Well, I bought it." As soon as he drove on they laughed and said, "We'll see him going back tomorrow." When he arrived at the block it was almost dark and raining. There was no time to pitch a tent so he just put a few bags of chaff under the dray and slept the night. Next morning he pitched the tent to live in, took the bark off some of the jarrah trees and made a lean-to, to light the fire, to boil his billy, and cook in when it was raining.

After settling in for the next few years between jobs, with the help of a handyman he started to clear the land, and built a small house and a large shed.

In 1903 he met Mary Jane Elson, daughter of George and Elizabeth Elson, who had a very hard life. She was born in Bunbury on February 21, 1881. She had two older brothers but at a very young age her father died and the boys were fostered out by families in Capel. She was fostered out by a couple by the name of Salter in Dardanup, where she did not receive very much education.

On November 23 they were married at the Congregational Church in Bunbury. After the wedding they were given a very nice wedding reception by the residents of Dardanup, where they received some nice presents. I think it would have been one of Mother's happiest days as, after the reception, they went straight to the farm where she commenced the hardest life anyone could ever imagine, because in the next seven years there were six babies born. Two died when they were babies. At the same time, as well as attending to the

babies - bathing, washing, nappies, clothing, feeding, etc - she had to go out and help Dad with the farm work and cook and wash for themselves, with absolutely no conveniences.

Then in 1912, although pregnant again, Dad decided to go back to England to visit his relations. She was left there, as I said, with no conveniences, no means of contact with anyone, 20 miles from the nearest doctor, right down the end of the bush track where nobody went past, and had to attend to the farm as well. This went on for months, as you know how long the boats took to do the trip in 1912. Eventually he arrived back and said some of the family was coming out to stay next year so they had to get busy putting another room and more verandahs on the house. After it was completed they went on with the farm work. Early next year a baby was born. This was the first boy so you can imagine they were very pleased, but Mum did not have much time off. It was work as usual.

Not long after, one of Dad's sisters Mary and her husband and five children and his sister Harriet and one child arrived, so you can imagine the house was full with seven of their own and nine from England in the house. But soon after the ones from England rented the house down Crooked Brook on a farm which my parents bought many years after. The family of seven bought the block of ground not far from where they were living and settled there and their grandson still owns it but sister Harriet went home to her husband in England.

Life went on just the same. Although Mum had five children and the eldest was only nine, she would have to go out in the paddock and help Dad with the work - could be planting potatoes or doing a bit more clearing, or whatever was going on.

At the same time Vera, the nine-year-old, would have to look after the other children. Mum would come home and prepare the lunch for them, then go back out in the paddock and help Dad, knock off in the evening, prepare tea, get all the children washed and fed and into bed; then, if they were planting potatoes, they would carry a few bags into the room, tip them in front of the fire, cut ready to plant the next day. Or, if they were clearing, they would go and pack the fires. It would always be about midnight before they got to bed. Mostly of a Sunday she would go up on the hill, cut a bag of firewood and carry it down to the house.

About this time Wellington Mill was working in a very big way so Dad decided he would re-commence butchering, so they started delivering meat, fruit, vegies, eggs, butter, etc up to the mill once a week, which was only five-six miles away. But at the same time they started the run in Bunbury as well, once a week, which was over 20 miles away, so it was a long day into Bunbury with the horse and buggy. By the time they had delivered all around it would be well over 40 miles and they had to leave at about 5.30am and would not get home until after dark with the old hurricane lamp to light the way.

My mother mostly did the trip, not always, because in the next 10 years there were four more babies born. When the children got old enough they would take the fresh horse about four miles down the road to meet them, to change the horse to come over the hills. But one of the trips Dad did - he used to like whisky - and must have had one too many. I took one of our beautiful draught mares down to meet him. We changed the horses and everything went well until we just got inside our top gate. He gave the horse a hit with the rein. It was a downhill run and she set off in a gallop down around the shed where there was a two-furrow plough alongside the road. He just caught the side of it. It went rolling down the hill and the mare kept going until she came to a stop by the stables, miraculously without doing any harm. So he just got out, went down to the house and got into bed. Next morning when he got up, I said, "Why did you run over the plough last night?" and he said, "Because I couldn't get under it."

Another episode not long after, there was only a small load to deliver so he took the sulky. Must have stopped too long at Bunbury, then set off to come home. There were no cars in those days and very little other traffic. The old horse managed quite well without any controls until she got almost home where you turn off the road into Ratcliffe Road. It was much different in those days but the road was very narrow, the bridge across the gully was one car's width. The handrail had been missing for some time but that day someone had cut a sapling and barked it, and put it on the bridge. When the old horse got there it was nearly dark. When she saw this white rail she moved away from it and the wheel went up the side of a big tree and tipped the sulky over. Dad went out. He was sitting in the middle of the road cooe'e'ing. The old mare just stood there. I don't know how long he was cooe'e'ing for but eventually a farmer from about a quarter-mile away heard and went to see what it was. He just tipped the sulky back onto its wheels and put Dad back in. The old mare brought Dad home safely.



Ratcliffe homestead - built by William and Mary Ratcliffe around 1900

One incident which happened many years before – this was not funny – there was a very big load to go into Bunbury and Mum had a young baby.

They decided they would take the buggy and pair and would both go. I suppose you know what I mean by pair. Instead of one horse with a shaft on the buggy, you had a pole with two horses. The difference is, the horses with the shaft allowed them to sit back going down the hill and steady the cart, where the one with the pole attached to their neck and they have no control. You must rely on brakes to steady it.

They set off going down the big hill, which was always known as The Forty-Acre Hill. They just got a start down the hill when the brakes failed and the buggy started to push the horses, and they went quicker and quicker until they were galloping. The road was very narrow, there was little you could do. They could not try jumping out as they had a little baby in a basket under the seat, but luckily just when they felt it was the end Dad was able to steer the horses to

the side of a very narrow road. And saplings that were growing there were big enough as they were pushed out onto the ground, to steady and eventually stop the horses and buggy without smashing it up. Unbelievable but true.

I found out just what it must have felt like years later. As the road was much better and wider I always put the utility I drove in a lower gear to go down the hill. But one morning I was running a bit late to meet the stock agent down at the corner, so when I got to the bottom of the first big hill, I put it back into top gear to go down around the next small hill over a bit of level ground before I got to the next one, left it a bit late. When I went to double the clutch to change down, a pebble got between the floorboards and accelerator and jammed it. The gravel on the road was just like marbles so the brakes were no good. It was going faster and faster so I thought all I could do was go straight ahead through the fence, but at the last minute I decided I would have a go at turning the corner. As I turned the wheel the back flew around in the loose gravel. I thought it was going to tip over when the step hit a big underground blackboy and stopped it from going over. It went straight ahead. It must have given the blackboy a nasty jar because it died soon after and I can assure you it made me realise just how Mum and Dad must have felt with a small baby and all the rest of the children at home. As I was the only one in the ute, I could have jumped if I'd wanted to.

Just after this Dad decided he wanted to breed a foal out of his delivery mare, so he bought a horse from Mr Nuttall. It was supposed to be a good worker but when he got it home it turned out to be what we term a "jib". Sometimes it would go off, other times it would just stand there and refuse to move, so you can imagine what you would feel like after getting ready to go at 5am and the horse would not budge. The horse just kept turning his head and Dad grabbed a lump of wood to give it a belt on the neck. Its head hit his arm and he hit it just behind the ear and the horse dropped dead. They had to go and get another of the other horses and prepare it, so they were running late and all the time they had been on the farm they had never had a horse like it before.

But just after this he got one of the draught mares in foal to a pedigree trotter. When it was old enough to break in the cart it turned out to be the same as I said before. There was a hill up from the house to the top gate. So long as the buggy would just move off on its own she would move off in front of it, would then continue okay. So when they were going to drive her to Bunbury the night before they would have to load the buggy, get one of the draught horses, take

the buggy up through the top gate, put a couple of chocks in front of the wheels, and cover the load up. Next morning take the horse up, put her in the buggy, kick the chocks away and off she would go and be no more trouble for the rest of the day. Sounds silly but it's true.

The mare I said they were going to breed had a lovely filly foal. When it was old enough to break in they decided they would send it to Bunbury to get broken in. It would then be used to the traffic. When they got it back home it was in such poor condition they felt it would never make the trip to town so they turned it out in the paddock and fed it up. A bit later Mum was going down to the Nine Miles to pick up a parcel brought up on the train. At the time the train ran from Dardanup up to Wellington Mill.

They had a little siding anywhere they crossed the road and would deliver anything for the settlers or bring you truckloads of manure etc. They would also bring empty trucks and leave them for the farmers to load potatoes or whatever they had. Well, Mum decided she would ride the filly, named Fanny. She went quite well until Mum picked up the parcel and something frightened her. She went to gallop off, Mum held her back and she started to buck, sent Mum flying and broke her wrist.

When she got home she said what happened. Dad did not believe that she would buck. It was not long after Dad decided he would go down to the other block he owned to get some shingles off the old roof. So he said he would take me for a ride with him. I was very young and thought it would be lovely but he got the old mare saddled up for me, saddled Fanny up for himself, put me on the old mare, jumped on Fanny. She made off. He tried to stop her so she turned in front of the shed in the hardest, driest, stoniest place there was and set into a buck. He went flying. Picked himself up and went down to the house, so he was quite sure she could buck. I was not as worried about that as I was about not going for a ride.

Soon after this two of the sisters and Mr Parkin and his son drove cattle down to the plain block. On the way home Parkin stopped to talk to someone then came galloping up behind the girls. Muriel was riding Fanny and she wanted to go. Muriel held her back so she set off into it again and threw Muriel against a big tree. It's a wonder she never broke her back. But from then on she got a lot more work and turned out to be not only a good hack but also a good delivery horse.

There were so many episodes on the farm it would be impossible to relate them all, but some are the day peace was announced in 1919. They were shearing at home, there were three men shearing with the old blades and somebody called to say the war was over. All the ones in the shed cheered in a very loud voice. George was only three or four, grabbed the hammer and gave the tank a hit, busted it. As water was a very scarce commodity and it was the beginning of summer under normal circumstances he would have copped it but Dad said even at his age he must have Lesley^{76d} the importance of the announcement.

It was not long after Mum and Dad were picking over potatoes in the shed. There was a hole dug in the ground by the chaff cutter which was used to put a bag down to bag the chaff at the other end of the room where they were working. In the winter it would fill up with water. They thought they heard a funny row. They went to see what it was and George had moved the cover over, fallen in, they could just see his hands above the water. They got him out, turned him upside down, a lot of water ran out of his mouth. He spluttered and was okay, but in a few more seconds he would have been dead.

A few years later they were once again shearing. They had the wool bales slung from four wires to the roof, and used to throw the lambs' wool straight into it, the fleece in the corner until later. While they were shearing a big sheep, George came up to the shed, climbed into the wool bale, played for a while, then went to sleep. They started shearing lambs and Dad just threw the wool in it. When it was full he got in to tread it down, never knew that George had got into the bale, was treading away for a while then thought he felt something hard in the bale. So he stopped and dug down. It was George's head. When he dug down and pulled him out, his face was that red. If he had not noticed something hard in the bale they would never have thought about him being there when they searched for him. He would have finished up over in England.

As well as these episodes you might say there were daily accidents when Mum had to become a doctor. Just to mention a few, when Dad told us not to climb up the fruit trees as we would knock them off, temptation was too much for one of the boys. He climbed up a big peach tree and slipped. As he fell a spike jammed in his groin and made an awful gash. He went screaming into the house, blood running down his leg, and when they said, "What have you done?" he said, "Old Snowy poked me". Old Snowy was the cow and Dad was

very concerned but when Mum went to dress it she guessed what had happened but never said a word in front of Dad.

Another time I was riding the old horse home from out the back. Dad stopped to do something and the horse went between a big tree and the barbed wire fence. It ripped the meat from my ankle. Mum once again treated it.

Joe drove the axe through his big toe and split it in half. Harriet drove the axe in her leg. I can go on and on. When we were going to school we never had boots, often we trod on a stone causing what we call a stone bruise. All the blood would congeal, causing like a big boil on the sole of the foot. Mum would put hot poultices on it and bring it to a head, then lance it with a razor and we would be ready for school again.

In those days there were no antibiotics or penicillin or the like. Mum would just tip kerosene on it if it was a cut to stop the bleeding and from then on use a disinfectant called Lysol in very hot water to stop any germs, then use Rexona ointment to heal. I firmly believe it was equal if not better than today's treatments.

By the little background I have given you of my parents' life I do not suppose there would be many who would like to go back to those days. Because Mum, as well as being a wonderful mother, was able to cope with all the work in the house such as bread making, jam, butter, and drying fruit to have in the winter as there was no such thing as bottled fruit. In those days, as well as all the other work in the house, she could do all the farm work as good as any man, kill, dress and cut up an animal. She carried on this sort of life until about 1929 when they bought a Chev 6 truck. She no longer had to do the run into Bunbury with the horse and cart and five out of nine children were adults, the other four were all going to school. The eldest daughter, Vera, was the only one who was left in the house to help. The others all had to do farm work. At a very busy time Vera would have to go out and help in the paddock.

By this time, they had bought two other farms, as well as two bush blocks and started an enormous project on one farm of straightening the brook through it on what is known as the Crooked Brook. That is how it got its name. I would say it was the biggest project ever carried out by a family in the 1920s and '30s but after this was completed life became a little more relaxed.

By 1935 they owned five farms and six houses in Bunbury, not bad as they started off with nothing and very little education in 1903. As Dad was over 70 they decided they would make the farms over to their sons and paid the transfer and gift duties but still continued to carry on farming in the same way. But then Dad and Mum went over to Melbourne to visit their daughter Mary, who was now married and living over there, and left me to run the farm. They were away for a couple of months. When they came back they were quite happy the way things were going so Dad did not worry about things so much after that. As Vera was married in 1932 and Harriet was working in Bunbury, Mum still had plenty to do, but was not under the pressure that she had been all her life.

We continued on this way until about the last day of 1936. Dad had a drink too many and got up in a cantankerous mood. He decided there and then they would move. So everything had to be packed and some loaded on the truck while they packed the rest and moved it down to the other farm, put it in the house and went back for more, got it all shifted by night and set up. All the rest of the family, except Muriel and I, moved down there and Muriel helped me on the old farm until I got married in 1938.

They settled in down there quite well and in 1938 went off on another trip over to Melbourne to see their new grandson. They were away when I got married. Mum was quite pleased as she thought Dad might have had one too many and upset things. They stopped for a couple or three months then just came back and took things steady until early 1941. As George was to be married that year, they moved into one of their semi-detached houses at 24 Charles Street, Bunbury. From then on, Mum had the life she was entitled to. Everything went quite well. They only came back to the old home twice but were very pleased with the way we were going.

Everything went quite well until October 30, 1946 when Dad passed away and Mum did not want to live in Bunbury. So she spent the remainder of her life living amongst her children and I am sure 14 years helped to compensate for the hard life she had spent on the farm but naturally would like to spend the longest period of time on the old farm.

During this time she had her first flight in a plane when she went over to Melbourne once again to see her daughter, son-in-law and grandson. It was something she thoroughly enjoyed and always talked about. She passed away

on her eldest daughter's farm, which is only about one mile from her original home.

Bill Ratcliffe prepared this at the age of 86 and just for the records, here are the names and ages of the parents and surviving children:

1. William Ratcliffe, born 19/1/1862, deceased 30/10/1946 Mary Jane Ratcliffe, born 21/2/1881, deceased 8/12/1960
2. Veronica Agnes Mountford, born 5/4/1904, deceased 27/12/1993
3. Muriel Joy Gardiner, born 9/6/1905, deceased 24/12/1984
4. Mary Coffey, born 28/4/1907, deceased 2002
5. Harriet O'Meara, born 22/01/1910
6. William Henry Ratcliffe, born 16/3/1913
7. George Thomas Ratcliffe, born 21/2/1916
8. Joseph James Ratcliffe, born 26/8/1918, deceased 8/3/1998
9. Fred Ratcliffe, born 29/9/1921
10. Elizabeth Ella Hastie, born 15/6/1924, deceased

GIBBS FAMILY in FERGUSON VALLEY

*History compiled from information (via newspapers/researchers etc)
collected in WA and England by family members – and from
recollections of the current generations...*

The history of the Gibbs family of Ferguson Valley is closely linked with the development of the Bunbury region from the mid 1800s, with family members engaged in a variety of business pursuits that helped establish a strong and thriving community.

The Gibbs family name is entwined with many of the pioneering names of the time and it surely would please our ancestors to know that the relationships forged from the middle of the 19th Century continue through to today, with successive generations enjoying lasting relationships or friendships among families boasting ties for more than 150 years.

The Gibbs family farming properties in the Ferguson Valley are now in the hands of the children of first cousins Howard and Thomas Gibbs...but how did this come about?

In a publication “The Gibbs Family, of Buckinghamshire 1495-1924” from AJ Clear, printer, Winslow it notes – “the oldest existing family in Winslow is that of Gibbs or Gybbes. It is a Saxon name. The family may well have been settled at Winslow, Claydon or Grandboro’, or perhaps in the three, as far back as the time of Edward the Confessor, or may have helped to drive back the Danes to the forest of Bernwood 100 years earlier: at any rate the mention of them occurs in the Manor Rolls of St Albans Abbey (to which Winslow was at that time attached) at a very early date. It is significant that the earliest piece of land traceable after the breaking up of the common field (or Virgate system of holdings) bearing a personal name was theirs, early in the 15th century.

“In 1495, Richard Gybbes held at Middle Claydon 2 messuages and a yard of land and 2 half lands, paying rent of 16/- and service to the Court.”

Variations of the name appear thereafter – Gybbes to Gibbs. The publication continues...”In the Whitehall Evening Post of November 1754 was a paragraph stating that Robert Gibbs of Winslow had six sons – Robert, John, Richard, Thomas, William and Stephen, who rang the bells of Winslow Church for 40 years in succession, commencing in 1747...”.

The son Robert established the family’s Aylesbury branch, from which the Gibbs family of Ferguson Valley descends.

Much of the family history information can be traced through common names like Robert and John, and while dates may appear to differ on occasions, the general lineage is accepted.

The first Robert lived from 1674-1742 and married Sarah Sutton. Their son William (1705-1768) or another, John (1710) married Ann (?) and had a son John (1743-1826) who, in turn married Ann Thorpe about 1765.

Their eldest son Robert (1776-1808) married Ann Miller (1765-1835) in 1791; while the ages appear biologically possible but socially unacceptable for the

times, these dates have been accepted in the absence of other information (birth year probably 1766).

Robert (a clothier, shoemaker and dealer in second hand clothes) and Ann (Miller) Gibbs had five sons and a daughter – the oldest, John (1792-1860) married Mary Rolls (1787-1853) and had 12 children and he was prominent in business, politics and church life in Aylesbury.

John Gibbs (1792-1860) was a leading Liberal non-conformist member of the Aylesbury business community, working as an auctioneer, estate and house agent, valuer and with later family ties to furniture making, publishing and the undertaking business. He had strong political views and established the Aylesbury News in 1836. John Gibbs' Will was a detailed document disposing of about 70 properties among his children.

One of his children, Robert, brought a box of matches home from London in 1827 – Mary (his mother) refused to have them in the house! In his adult life, Robert published the monumental work "The History of Aylesbury", a copy of which is owned by Tom and Lesley Gibbs, Ferguson Valley.

John's brothers Samuel Miller, George Washington and Richard were all involved in businesses in the UK, some of their descendants making their way to Australia as the years went by.

His other brother, Robert (1794-1826) married Jane Dagley in 1819 and the couple had four children – Robert (1819), James Dagley (1821, died at three days), James Dagley (1821-1905) and Jane (1823).

James Dagley Gibbs immigrated to Australia, arriving on the *Trusty* on May 22, 1844, this ship's second trip to Australia. Passenger lists at the time were not conclusive (some family history has him arriving on the *Diadem* the previous year) and his name does not appear, however reports are he travelled with Benjamin Piggott and John Allnutt, all from the Buckinghamshire area.

James was employed as a carpenter, first in Picton and then at Australind. Historian Charles Staples ("They Made Their Destiny" – a history of the

Harvey district) noted – “Perhaps Crampton (William Crampton) came to the conclusion that the heavy soil of the Mornington River flats was too wet in winter and too hard and dry in summer and had discovered that James Dagley Gibbs, who seemed to be the possessor of No 53 Stanley Road on the margin of the Myalup Swamp, was prepared to lease and perhaps sell the farm...James D Gibbs had in 1850, and in partnership with William Pretious, purchased 53 Stanley Road from William Pead who had it from WR Bunbury in 1848...Pretious soon abandoned his share of the land to Gibbs and obtained employment at Albany as Pilot and Harbour Master. If Crampton followed what seems to have been the usual practice, he leased, or was employed on, No 53 Stanley Road for a term before purchasing it from Gibbs in 1853, and then built his own farm house on the low bank overlooking the Swamp.”

James Dagley Gibbs married Charlotte Narroway (born 1823) in Bunbury on January 7, 1845. It is believed she also travelled to WA on the 1844 Trusty journey – her family name is associated with The Church of St Nicholas at Australind (again, from Charles Staples – “Immediately across Paris Street, a tiny timber cottage was built by (or was taken over by) William (?) Narroway on his arrival in 1844 when he obtained employment from Allnutt. In the fifties it was converted by Allnutt into an Independent (that is, Congregational) Chapel, but years later it was purchased by the Anglican Church and consecrated ‘The Church of St Nicholas’.”

James Dagley Gibbs and Charlotte Gibbs (Narroway) had seven children Emma (1846) married Owen Gardiner and had seven children; Fanny May 1847-1848; Robert (1848), no records; Jane (1850) married Chris Gardiner then George Snelling and had two children; James Dagley (1854-1865); John (1856) married Sarah Wisbey and had seven children; Harold William (1859) married Amelia Wisbey and had four children, then Susannah Maria Gardiner and had five children; Samuel (1861) married Lavinia Hurst and had nine children.

Charlotte Gibbs died in 1862 and James Dagley remarried later that year, to Alice Maria Parkes (1840?-1894). They had nine children – Charlotte (1864) married George Harwood, two children; Amelia (1865) married John Fowler, six children; Ernest Alfred (1867) married Alice May Campbell, four children; Wallace A (1869) did not marry; Lilian (1871) married Alfred Brown, three children; Ethelbert (1873) married Jean Arnott, three children; Alice Maria (1875, died in first year); Atholstan <Athelstan> (1876) married Millicent

Manning, no children; James Dagley (1879) married Eva (?), no children; there's also mention of a Lola, died aged 18. Members of this side of the family are scattered throughout the South West.

When Charlotte died, youngest son Samuel was aged only two and he was handed into the care of his oldest sister, Emma who had married Owen Gardiner, "Mountain Spring", Ferguson Valley. He was the son of pioneers Jesse and Jane Gardiner who settled Location 197 in 1842. Samuel made his home with Emma and Owen and their eight children and was educated in Ferguson.

Owen and Emma's children were Charlotte who married Henry Cain (grandson of Abraham and Anna Hurst); James Owen married Johanna Ali (tie into Mountford and Stone families); Robert married Ellen Gardiner; Rachel married William Gould; Frances married Robert Lowrie; Beatrice married Henry Gibbs; Christopher married Bertha Trigwell; and, Lucy Emma married William Goodson.

Aged about 20, Samuel took up the property adjoining Emma and Owen Gardiner, Lot 661 surveyed in 1883 of 320 acres; it was taken up as conditional purchase land earlier.

In 1886 Samuel married Lavinia, daughter of Basil and Maria Hurst of Australind who had landed (the Hursts) on the Trusty in 1842 and lived in the district all their lives.

Samuel and Lavinia made their first home where Ernie (Jake) Gardiner farmed (now in the hands of his son Chris). In those days women were frequently left at home for lengthy periods while their men went to earn a living, carting sandalwood or cutting timber etc. During these times, yockines (as the natives called dingoes) would howl around the Gibbs house at night and Lavinia would shoot at their eyes in an effort to scare them away.

When they moved to their permanent house, "Sunny Corner" (just up the road towards "Mountain Spring" from Tom and Lesley Gibbs' home), life was easier as they had near neighbours in the Gardiners. Imagine clearing the heavily forested land with axe, grubber and fire and a horse to snig logs together. Nevertheless, it was done as many a family can testify.

Had it not been for the timber mills in the area, many farmers could not have carried on. Work, and markets for their produce, were provided by these mills.

Enough wheat was grown to make flour for a year. The grain was carted to Forrest's flourmill in Bunbury with enough to pay for the gristing being left at the mill. Fruit and butter, eggs, vegetables etc were sold to customers in the towns and mills.

Samuel and Lavinia Gibbs had nine children – Herbert Cleveland married Mary Flynn and had children Arnold, Howard, Beryl and Mavis (Midge); Basil Narroway, died in World War I; Minnie married Charlie Gittos and had children Samuel (dec), Joseph and Eunace; Genesta married Harry Pugsley and had one son, William; Evangeline married Randall Trigwell and had two sons, Lester and Neil; Harold Ferguson married Effie Viola Gardiner, no children; Ivy May married Mervyn Muller and had sons Lindsay, Eric and Athol; Rhoda Maria married Charlie Gittos, no children; and, Clarence Leicester married Margaret Heeps and had children Lavinia Merle Elizabeth and Thomas Heeps.

In 1923, Samuel and Lavinia moved to Collie Bridge to the original home of Lavinia, where she died in 1936. Samuel died three years later.

The Ferguson property was carried on by Herbert and Harold and is now in the hands of descendants.

Samuel Gibbs owned land at Collie Bridge (300 acres), Picton (200 acres), Boyanup (200 acres), Donnybrook (200 acres) and Ferguson (320 acres). The Boyanup land is now in the hands of the Walton family.

The Collie Bridge property descended through Lavinia's family, her pioneering grandparents Abraham and Anna Hurst leaving their home in Leicester in the English Midlands and arriving in Australind on the Diadem on April 10, 1842 with their children Sarah, Basil, Ann, Elizabeth, Alice, Thomas and Abe (John died during the sea journey). For many years descendants believed that sons Abe and Basil never married, however records show that Basil married Maria Gardiner at Australind when aged 25. Their children were Abe, Thomas, Alice, Jack, Annie, Lucy, Lavinia, Matilda, Minnie and Belle.

Abe may also have married but records are sketchy.

The daughters and granddaughters of Abraham and Anna married into well-known South West families including Payne, Wood, Hough, Roberts and Cain and descendants of the Hursts still farm in the Boyanup area. Abraham Hurst was 38 years old when he arrived in WA.

“Greenwood” (Collie Bridge), Australind the family’s original property is now known as the suburb of “Clifton Park”.

Samuel and Lavinia Gibbs retired to the Collie Bridge property and ran a few sheep. After their deaths, the farm was handed to their youngest son Clarence and his wife Margaret who farmed the property till 1963. They had 2000 chickens, these were sold to shops in Bunbury Chad and Witty, Carlson’s in Rathmines and Arthor Repocholi’s. They also had about 20 cows.

Clarence and Margaret retired to Bunbury. The Collie Bridge property was purchased by developers and subsequently subdivided into the popular suburb it is today.

Clarence and Margaret’s children were educated in a small school at Australind along Estuary Drive, riding horses the three-mile journey each day. During World War II, the students were moved to the Rathmines school, East Bunbury for safety reasons as the Japanese were seen to be getting too close.

Daughter Lavinia Merle Elizabeth married Harold Gardiner and moved to the Harvey district where the couple raised their nine children (Lorraine, Len, Clive, Graeme, Rosalind, Marianne, Susan, Carolyn and Alison <dec>).

Son Tom worked on the farm and in the Bunbury-Eaton area, at Cumming Smith Mount Lyall, also helping to clear the Clifton Park Golf Course. He was a major help to his uncle Harold (Hal) following the disastrous bushfires of 1950, spending six months helping rebuild fences etc.

Tom and his wife Lesley (nee Townsend, married 1956) left their Collie Bridge home in 1962 to make a new life as dairy farmers on the property owned by Harold in the Ferguson Valley. They lived for two years in the weatherboard house on Ironstone Road, now in the Scott family and then owned by Tom’s cousin Arnold Gibbs and his wife Jennie, while they awaited the completion of a small cottage for Hal at the Upper Ferguson farm.

The couple and their three eldest children, Beverley (Lyndie), Steven and Christine moved into the farmhouse in 1964. The following year they welcomed twin sons Colin and Barry into the family.

Tom worked enthusiastically and vigorously to develop the 200 acre property (of which only 80 acres was cleared) over the next 40 years. He milked a mixed breed herd of 15 cows in the early days, selling the butterfat to SunnyWest. Over the years the farm has been extended (purchasing 190 acres from Doody (Walter) Fowler in the early '70s) and more land in recent years from holdings owned by members of the Gardiner family. Today, Tom, Lesley and sons Colin and Barry run a top-producing Holstein herd on their 700-acre property also leasing 700 acres in the district. A beef unit supplements their income.

The year 2000 has seen great change in the WA dairy industry, affecting dairy producers who have run their business within a market milk quota system for more than 30 years. At this stage, it is still too early to predict, but the future of dairy farming in the Ferguson Valley is precariously balanced.

Who knows where the future will take the next generation – Barry's children Georgia and Darcy – as they shape their future at the farm now known as "Brackenridge". The descendants of Herbert and Mary Gibbs continue to farm "Sunny Corner".

Oldest son Arnold (Pug) and his wife Jennie raised their six daughters Derryle, Anne, Pat, Lesley, Julie and Vicki at the farm 'Melbournup', formerly owned by Chapmans and Kerrs and now in the hands of Barry and Ruth Scott and family. For many years, Jennie ran the local telephone exchange from her family home, this task moving into the hands of her second daughter Anne (Piggott) in later years.

Second son Howard (Nug) and his wife Dorrie raised their three children Ruth, Bruce and Greg, at "Sunny Corner".

Over the years Bruce and Greg have maintained a beef component on the farm, supplementing with a fencing business. In the early seventies Bruce purchased the property formerly owned by Sam and Joyce Gardiner, adjoining "Sunny Corner", on Ratcliffe Road.

The future of “Sunny Corner” lies on the hands of Herbert and Mary’s great grandchildren, Ryan, Geoffrey and Lauren – the children of Greg and Lyndie (the daughter of Tom and Lesley Gibbs). In these changing times, the family is establishing grapevines (for wine making) on a section of the property – looking at alternative farming practices to ensure a productive and profitable future.

Samuel and Lavinia Gibbs’ second son, Basil Narroway, is one of thousands of young Australians buried in the fields of France.

Private Basil Narroway Gibbs (3109) of the 28th Infantry Battalion AIF was, like his brothers and sisters, born and educated at Ferguson. He enlisted in August 1915 and after training at Blackboy Hill sailed per the SS Medic on January 18, 1916. He arrived at Marseilles on March 27, 1916 and joined up with his Battalion at Armentieres about 11 weeks later. He was wounded during the Somme engagement on July 28, 1916 but not seriously and he rejoined his Battalion soon after. He was killed in action at Fleurs, France on November 5, 1916 (or between 3-6 November) and is buried in the war cemetery there.

In family folklore, there’s a tree on the embankment in the “maternity paddock” on Tom and Lesley Gibbs’ farm (between the dairy complex and Ratcliffe Road) known as Basil’s tree, as that’s one of the last remaining memories his family has of him – sitting beneath the tree while taking a break from tending the potatoes planted in the rich river flats before he went off to war.

Samuel and Lavinia’s third son, Harold (Hal) also went to war – his brothers Herbert and Clarence not seeing service as they were manpowered. Private Harold Ferguson Gibbs (2913) of the 51st Battalion, 28 years of age, enlisted on July 1, 1916 and commenced training at Blackboy Hill on July 11, 1916, sailing on the Argyleshire on November 9, 1916 for England. He continued his training at Codford but while there was taken dangerously ill (pneumonia). For a while after this he transported prisoners of war to Ireland and four months later, on January 12, 1918 was invalided home.

LESLEY GIBBS (NEE TOWNSEND) 2000

INTERVIEW WITH JOHANNA STONE (nee Gardiner)

Johanna Gardiner was born on November 19, 1907 in a small nursing home in Bunbury.

She does not remember the location. Her mother's doctor was Doctor Samson.

Up until the turn of the century many babies were born at home. Her grandmother Emma Gardiner was a midwife and attended many births in the Ferguson area and told Johanna she only lost one baby at childbirth in the years she attended the mothers. The baby had turned and could not be born. It died but the mother survived.

People wanting to see a doctor had to travel to Bunbury on horseback or in a sulky or buggy. Once, when her mother (also Johanna) was sick, her brother Owen Gardiner rode on horseback into Bunbury to get medicine for her. The roads were gravel and when the weather was bad, wheel ruts formed, making it difficult to drive horse-drawn vehicles along them.

Johanna does not remember ever having seen a doctor when she was young and attributes this to her fitness, having always had to walk to visit, to go to school, or collect wildflowers and also money for the church.

The family, her father Jim, mother Johanna, brothers Bill, Ralph and Owen and her sister Elizabeth (Lizzie) lived off the farm. They ate the meat of pigs, sheep or cattle they raised, sometimes eating kangaroo. They also grew all their own vegetables at home. Johanna remembers bugle pumpkins growing down from a vine which grew along a fence. They also grew tomatoes, cucumbers and beans. Her father Jim grew field peas which, once ripened, were picked, stacked and dried and fed to the pigs. The children ate peas straight from the paddock.

Her mother baked all of their own bread and made all their jam. They went to Bunbury only to buy groceries, flour, sugar, tea etc.

Their cows (Jerseys) were milked twice daily and the milk was immediately separated. The cream was churned into butter and the separated milk was fed to

calves. Calves were sold, although heifers were often kept to join the milking herd. The calves and any cattle to be sold were driven to the saleyards at Dardanup or Boyanup or loaded onto a train at Dardanup and trucked to Midland.

The butter they produced was taken to Wellington Mills to sell to the residents.

They kept a few cows, year round, to provide milk and butter for themselves but most of the cattle were dried off during the summer.

The clothing they wore was of good quality. Johanna Gardiner (mother) made a lot of clothes on a Singer treadle sewing machine. At the age of 12, Johanna began making her own clothes, sewing blouses, skirts and dresses. Dress materials were purchased from Hayward's in Bunbury. Hayward's also stocked men's work clothing.

Clothes for special occasions were bought from shops in Bunbury and made of more interesting materials.

There was a passenger train to Dardanup, which stopped at No 9 station (just a small shed) at the corner of the Wellington Road and the Upper Ferguson Road. Passengers could catch the train here or have deliveries made by the train.

The trains took passengers and timber from Wellington Mills to Dardanup.

Washing was done early in the week, often on Monday and took much of the day as it was a long process. Clothes were soaked in a tin tub then, if they needed it, scrubbed on a washing board. They were then placed in a copper and boiled, then placed in blue rinse and then rinsed and wrung by hand. Jim helped on wash days.

Ironing was done either with a flat iron, which was all one piece and had to be held with a cloth (as the handles were hot) or a "Mrs Potts" which had detachable handles and several irons.

There was no money for the family to holiday and they could not have left the farm unattended although they did go to the beach when they went to Bunbury to shop for the day.

SOCIAL OCCASIONS

People attending dances drove sulkies or buggies and tied up horses at the front of the Ferguson Hall, which was built in 1908? (Part of the ceiling of the hall was burnt in the fire 1950 and it was later demolished and a new hall built and opened in 1966).

Dances were held frequently at Ferguson and people came from many areas, including Wellington Mills, to attend. Johanna remembers attending social occasions at Dardanup, Boyanup and Wellington Mills.

Weddings were usually held at the Ferguson Church and the reception at Ferguson Hall. Catering was often done by someone outside the family.

Johanna's wedding dress, crepe de chine and lace with a net veil, was made by the leading dressmaker at Bon Marche in Bunbury. Her husband Walter Stone and her father bought new suits for the occasion and wore orange blossom in their lapels. Her bridesmaid was her cousin Effie Gardiner (Victor's sister) and her flowergirls were Marjory Gardiner and Ivy Mountford. Fatty Gardiner was best man.

The old Ferguson Church was used by the Congregational Minister and the Church of England Minister. There was no Sunday school.

SCHOOLING

Johanna's Aunt Lucy Gardiner was one of the first students to attend the Ferguson State School. The original school, near where the current church stands, was too far for children of her family of the previous generation to walk because of the dangers of wild animals, bulls and pigs and Aborigines who still roamed the bush at that time. They lived at "Mountain Spring". Consequently her father had no schooling at all and was taught to read and write by her mother.

Johanna started school at Ferguson aged six and finished aged 14. Her family could not afford to send her on to high school. She walked the two and a half miles to school, which started at 9am and finished at 3.15pm each day. She walked home again and helped with farm chores, like milking, after school.

After that she helped with the housework and farm work. There was little or no work for girls in the area then so they remained at home until they married. Dardanup had a few shops but these provided little opportunity to work.

COOKING

Johanna and Jim had a Metters No 3 stove, a large wood fire because bread was baked in it. Some people cooked bread in brick ovens outside the house, which were heated by burning the wood inside down to coals and then placing the bread in it to cook.

Johanna's mother often roasted meat and vegetables from the garden.

When her father killed a pig, some fresh portions were kept for immediate needs. The side was rubbed with saltpetre once a week until cured and then placed in a smoking house to smoke. The remaining meat was placed in brine to corn.

GARDENING

Elizabeth tended to the house garden before she was married and then Johanna looked after it. There were roses, hollyhocks, cacti, fuchsias and larkspurs. The seeds were kept from year to year and replanted. They also grew herbs like thyme and sage. They also grew fruit trees and grapes, the latter being used to make jam but not wine.

The house was surrounded by a wire fence and a firebreak, a couple of metres wide, had to be cleared each year around the house to protect it from fire.

The house consisted of two bedrooms, one for the parents and one for Lizzie and Johanna, a kitchen/dining room and a storeroom. There were verandahs at the front and back of the house. Another room was built separately from the house for the three boys to sleep in.

Johanna and Jim had their own bedroom suite with curtains draped at the head of the bed, a smaller one for the girls' room, a table and chairs in the kitchen, a sideboard and mantelpiece. Furniture and linen could all be bought in Bunbury but money was scarce. Her mother made their own wardrobes, hanging a pipe or dowel and by draping a curtain in front of it.

Johanna remembers her father Jim working, when he was younger, for a shilling a day doing farm work. Many goods were exchanged through bartering rather than for cash. Some items were bought on hire purchase.

CROPS

Jim cleared land with a "Grubbo", a spade and an axe and used a horse drawn plough to prepare ground.

Jim and his brothers Jim and Bob put in an annual crop of oats and wheat, about 40 to 50 acres (where Bob Gardiner farms now). This was cut, stooked and carted in a wagon and stored in a shed near Victor Gardiner's old house. A threshing machine was used to get seed for the next year's crop and a chaff cutter, operated by a walking horse, chaffed the crop as feed for horses and the dairy cows.

Potato crops were grown too but individually rather than as a group.

JANICE CALCEI August 4, 1984

THE SKIPWORTH FARMS at CROOKED BROOK

Four of the Skipworths had farms at Crooked Brook, mostly having been taken up early this century.

Possibly Albert Edward, third son of Daniel and Susan, would have been the first as it is known he was established in the area in 1898.

Daniel is known to have been on his property early this century and Isaac George (always known only as George), second son of Isaac, was establishing

his farm of some 300 acres “Lintondale”, in the early 1900s after moving from the Boulder mines.

There was an apparent close working and family relationship between the families. Isaac did not live on or farm his own small property, this being done by brother Daniel and family. George would refer to Daniel as “my Uncle Dan” with apparent affection and pride.

All of these farms were sold between 1920 and 1930. Following the death of Daniel in 1914 the farm was carried on by his son Ernest William and then sold, together with Isaac’s property, to people from Scotland named Archer. The Archer’s married daughter (Mrs Yoonbusch) and her husband took Isaac’s farm adjacent. This would have been in 1920 or thereabouts. Arthur Wicksteed of the family connection with the Barbarys and the Daniel family married a Yoonbusch daughter (Annie) and later purchased both properties. That farm has since sold again.

(Isaac) George Skipworth, wife Elizabeth and their children moved back to Cottesloe Beach very early in 1927 and later the “Lintondale” farm was sold to Mr Billy Ratcliffe of Upper Ferguson, whose son George became the owner. The farm of Albert on the Crooked Brook (between the farms of Ernest and George) was also purchased by Mr Ratcliffe for another son (Joe). Albert had not actively worked his land for many years as he was a publican at Dardanup and also had another property near to Dardanup township.

GEORGE SKIPWORTH (hand written)



*George Skipworth - carting hay on his
"Lintondale" farm at Crooked Brook*

SALE OF AGREEMENT

I Isaac Skipworth having sold to Louis Yoonbusch land being CP Lot 1516 with house and improvements thereon, and the western half of CP Lot 1237 in all about 150 acres for the sum of £180. And this day have accepted £20 deposit on sale the balance of purchase money being payable on completion of transfer.

SIGNED ISAAC SKIPWORTH

(This agreement was on a piece of paper too difficult to copy. It was dated December 10, 1921. In another piece we found during research, Mr Yoonbusch bought a car the following year for £120).

PARKIN

John Parkin (my maternal grandfather) was born in Cornwall, England in 1882.

He was the third child of Thomas Vivian Parkin and Mary Selina Tippet. He had one older brother Henry (known as Harry) and three sisters Jane, Bertha and Beatie. His father was a farm labourer and blacksmith.

John followed in his father's footsteps and became a competent farm worker, blacksmith and was exceptionally capable with horses.

On October 31, 1903 (when he was 21) he married Susan Ellen Bilkey, daughter of Robert Dennis Bilkey and Philippa Mary Solomon at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Union Place, Truro, Cornwall. Ellen was from a large family of 17 children so was a capable housekeeper and mother-helper at the time of her marriage. On the same day John's sister Jane married Henry James. The couples were witnesses for each other.

On December 23, 1911 John Parkin and his brother Henry sailed from London on the SS Orsova, a small sailing vessel of 11,000 tons. On board were 223 passengers and four restricted immigrants. They arrived in the port of Fremantle, Western Australia on January 23, 1912.

John left his wife Ellen and three children Edgar, Ruby and Doris (my mother) in Cornwall until he had sufficient money for their fares to Australia.

Jack and Harry, as they became known in Australia, worked for some time in the wheatbelt area of Carnamah. Harry later brought wife Philippa Mary (known as Minnie) and his five children Olive May, Mary Ellen, Beatrice Maud, Thomas Henry and Mildred Maud to Carnamah. Henry later built and ran the power station in the town for many years. A stone monument stands on the roadside to commemorate his contribution to the town.

Jack Parkin moved south to Wellington Mills, a thriving three street timber town. Millar's owned the main store but there was a bakehouse and two schools. He rented a four-roomed house, bought an acre of land and prepared to bring his family to Australia. His first job as a night watchman affected his health because of the lack of sleep. After obtaining a doctor's certificate he was

able to get a day job as a mill hand. He developed a thriving vegetable garden bought some hens and a cow, so was almost self-sufficient. The surplus was sold to less enterprising residents.

Ellen Parkin and her children sailed from Liverpool on the *Belgic* arriving at Fremantle on July 3, 1913. They were met by Jack and two of Ellen's sisters, Edith and Gladys, who were working in Perth. The family was soon established in the house at Wellington Mills. Jack could turn his hand to many trades, mainly because of sheer necessity. During this period he made a sideboard with a curved top, table and kitchen chairs and a long form or stool which seated six people.

Jack later bought 250 acres in the Ferguson Valley from Dan Slattery. It was almost all virgin bush, with only the swamp cleared. The soil in the swamp was moist and rich loam, which grew wonderful potatoes, and every kind of other vegetable during the summer months.

My sister Maud and I had some wonderful holidays on the farm with Grandfather, Uncle Fred and Aunt Ruby when we were in our early teens. Grandfather was quite serious and of Victorian standards, neither drinking nor smoking. He was an outstanding horseman, blacksmith and farmer. A real pioneer of the Ferguson district.

I remember my grandfather well, as I was an adult with three children when he died in Bunbury in 1968.

Susan Ellen Bilkey (my maternal grandmother) was born on June 14, 1877 and christened on August 19, 1877 at St Newlyn, East Cornwall. She was the seventh child of Robert Dennis Bilkey and Philippa Mary Solomon, who had a large family of 17 children. Her father was a farm labourer living at Trenance at the time of her birth.

Susan had very little education because of the large family and the low wages. Her father could not afford the penny per week school fee but she attended when possible. She was able to read and write her name. My mother told me Grandma had a unique style of writing backwards in a mirror-like style. She could play the mouth organ with no formal training.

Before she was eight years old, Susan could help with most of the housework but sometimes had to hoe turnips for her father. This was cold, dirty work for a young child but everyone helped in those days. At the age of 11 she went to work as a live-in housemaid for her aunt Mrs Mitchell. The pay was two pound 10 shillings per year with keep. During her stay she was known as Ellen because Mrs Mitchell's daughter was also named Susan. The name remained through her life.

Sometime later Ellen worked in the fields, hoeing or weeding crops for local farmers for nine pence per day. This was quite an increase in wages.

By the age of 15 Ellen was a competent cook and housemaid, working for Mrs Roberts the wife of a wealthy farmer who owned land, stock, a carriage and a driver. The Bilkey girls were well known for their ability and industry so were sought after by the local wealthy families.

A few years later Ellen took a job in London, at Park Green the home of a draper Mr Dunstan. She was a general housekeeper and nanny to their two children Edgar and Mildred. After her marriage Ellen named her eldest son Edgar to remind her of the happy times she spent with the Dunstan family.

During the summer she went back to Cornwall as a nanny to the children when the Dunstan's had their holiday.

The Bilkeys were Methodists attending church as often as possible. Ellen loved singing and sang hymns anywhere, at any time without embarrassment. It was her delight to learn and to sing new hymns.

On October 31, 1903 Ellen married John Parkin. She was very proud of her bought gown because almost all of her clothes were homemade and this had been made by a dressmaker. It was cream silk but my mother could not remember the style, although her mother had told her about the wedding dress many times.

In 1911, when Ellen had three children Edgar, Ruby and Doris, John left England for Australia in an effort to make a better life for the family. Ellen saved every penny, cared for her children and waited for the time when she

could join her husband in Australia. By the time she sailed she had 200 pounds sewn into her inner garments.

Ellen and the three children sailed from England on the *Belgic*. During the trip she stayed in her cabin as much as possible because she did not approve of the rowdy behaviour of many of the passengers. At Cape Town many left the ship, leaving their children to the care of stewards. On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia Jack and her two sisters met her.

The family soon settled in Wellington Mills in a comfortable mill house.

Three years later her fourth and last child Fred was born.

Ellen led a quiet life as a homemaker, rarely going out. Later she moved to “Hilltop Farm” where she lived quietly in a small, unlined timber house with very few modern conveniences. Times were hard, as money was scarce while the family carved a home from the bush. The nearest town or shop was miles away. Ellen reared her family but unfortunately died at the age of 57. I cannot remember her but my mother Doris Mountford has told me her life story.

WIN MCGILL (Nee MOUNTFORD)

MOUNTFORD

Joseph and Mary and their children Joseph, Harold, George, Frank and Edith migrated to Australia in 1913.

Joseph was the head potter's dipper at the Twyford pottery in Burslem, Stafford, England. He became seriously ill from the accumulation of powders and chemicals from the glazes with which he worked. His doctor advised him to leave dipping immediately. Sir Thomas Twyford offered him a job as a supervisor at the pottery in Dresden, Germany, because of his skills with mixing glazes.

This, together with the fact that the owner of the house that they had lived in for many years died and the house was now to be sold, caused Mary much

concern. She wrote to her brother William Ratcliffe, who was farming in Western Australia, telling him of their predicament. He wrote back telling her of a small, uncleared block of 100 acres adjoining him in Ferguson which could be cleared by the three eldest boys and that there was also work available in a nearby timber mill.

Mary, being a thrifty person had saved money from her husband's wages (he earned 30 shillings a week, compared to the basic wage of 15 shillings) and had enough for the deposit on the block. Her brother would lend them the balance. They had no relatives in Germany so the decision was made to migrate to Western Australia.

The family, together with Mary's sister Harriet and son Arthur, left London on the Armadale on April 10, 1913 and arrived in Fremantle on June 10, 1913.

They purchased the block in Ferguson and while the house was being built lived for a while with William Ratcliffe and then in a small house on Albert Skipworth's property in Crooked Brook, which William bought in 1920 and is now owned by his great grandson Stephen Mountford.

The house that the Mountford family built was divided into two parts with a hallway down the middle. Harriet and Arthur lived in one side and the Mountford family on the other, sharing the kitchen. This was later changed when Harriet and Arthur went back to England for Arthur to marry his childhood sweetheart.

They called the farm "Brampton Hill". The four sons adapted to their Australian life, clearing and fencing the property and earning extra money by working at the nearby timber mills.

Mary grew vegetables, raised poultry and made butter. She and her youngest son Frank drove their sulky to Wellington Mills, a thriving timber mill town where they sold their excess produce.

Unlike his sons, Joseph never adapted to farming (the physical work and hard working clothes, he never seemed to cope with). He was seen many times walking through the bush wearing a dark suit and black shiny shoes, during the heat of the West Australian summer. Eventually he found clerical work at a

timber mill. This did not satisfy him and being disappointed with his life here, decided to look for work in South Australia, leaving wife Mary and sons to run the property. He returned in 1931 for the wedding of his only daughter Edith to Ralph Gardiner and stayed on in Ferguson to care for his invalid wife until her death in 1937. They lived in a small house behind Edith and Ralph's. Joseph was well liked in the district and known to the locals as "Old Joe". He remained there until his death on May 27, 1941.

The Mountford sons

Joseph joined the forces during World War I and later worked at a timber mill in Nannup. He married Hilda Lines in 1925. He finished work at the mill and ran a bookmaker's shop in Nannup for many years. Later, they retired to Stirling Street in Bunbury. They were not blessed with children.

Joe was very fond of his mother and during his war years sent many letters and cards home, starting with "my dearest Mother". He also sent money home to help with the repayments to his uncle.

Harold married Elizabeth Jane Gardiner in 1917 and moved to Perth and found a job with the Swan Brewery. They had three children Ivy, May and James. Elizabeth died in 1943. Harold remarried in 1944, to Murial Barrett Lennard.

George and Frank paid their mother out and worked year about on the farm and at the timber mill to make ends meet. They also grew potatoes, milked a few cows and put in an orchard and ran a few sheep.

Frank had seen a property in Dardanup and decided he would like to buy it. About this time Frank married Doris Parkin, he had had his eye on her for quite a while and said to someone when she was a teenager that he was going to marry that lovely girl. Her father had other ideas, when Frank called on them he thought at first it was to see him. He soon realised it was Doris that was the attraction and forbade him to come near the place. Eventually Frank and Doris eloped. John Parkin finally forgave all when his first granddaughter arrived. Frank and Doris had five children Winifred, Maud, Allen and twins Walter and Iris.

George bought him out and Frank shifted to Dardanup, he grew vegetables and potatoes and milked cows. Frank obtained a hawker's licence so he could sell produce in the nearby growing town of Bunbury.

George married Veronica Ratcliffe in 1932 and together they started dairy farming. They had five children Fred, Cecil, Eunice, Ron and Norma. Vera still managed to look after five children and milk the cows with George as well. They also had pigs as a sideline. In 1946 they bought the adjoining property from the Hartnetts. This had the Crooked Brook running through it and was much easier to work than the hilly property where they lived. They still proceeded to grow a summer and winter crop of potatoes. This was hard work as the digging was done by hand, several times working in mud when they had had a lot of rain. They had two draught horses "Dolly and Prince" who were used to plough the paddock ready for the potatoes and then helped to "sled" the bagged potatoes off the paddock. These were well cared for, gentle horses, which lived to a ripe old age.

Fred married Gaye Edwards in 1954 and moved to the Edwards property at Waterloo to milk and farm there with Gaye's grandfather. They had five children Annette, Allyson, Susan, Raymond and Christine.

Cecil and Ron continued to help on the home farm, growing melons and tomatoes for pocket money. In 1957 Cecil started work in nearby Boyanup at SunnyWest Dairies butter factory. He bought an old International ute to take him back and forth to work. He married Iris Simmons in 1958 and they had three children Stephen, Terri and Erin.

Fred bought a property in Ferguson on Ironstone Road belonging to Dick Prout. About this time Cecil and Ron went into partnership with him and they ran the Waterloo, Ferguson and Crooked Brook properties, milking at Waterloo and Ferguson.

Joe Ratcliffe offered his Crooked Brook property to Ron and the partnership helped him take it up. In the meantime, Fred decided to make a move to Manypeaks and after a couple of hard years started to get on his feet. It was time to break up the partnership. It was a very good partnership with everyone getting on well and Fred pulled out on good terms with Cecil and Ron. Fred later bought a property in Albany and his son Ray now runs the Manypeaks farm.

Cecil and Ron stayed in partnership for several more years. They bought a property called “Grassy Gully” from Tom Panizza on Crooked Brook Road, they worked together for a couple more years before the partnership finished. Cecil and Ron milked in two separate dairies for several years until Ron decided he needed to take up more land and, as there was none available nearby, decided to buy a property on the North Boyanup Road and offered his Crooked Brook place to Stephen, Cecil’s son. Stephen, now in partnership with his father, took over the property in 1984 and still runs it.

Ron has since moved to Rosa Brook and dairy farms there. He married Heather Milner in 1966 and has two children Bradley and Shelley. Bradley now works with Ron running the farm.

George Mountford enjoyed his cricket and played until he was about 56 years old. He was a good wicketkeeper and played for Ferguson and later for Dardanup.

In 1951 the Dardanup team won the Bunbury District Cricket Association’s A grade grand final. Fred and Cecil also played in this game. He was an avid supporter of the South Bunbury Football Club and keenly watched his talented son Fred play many games for them. Also a keen fisherman, he spent many days in and around Augusta with his old mates, Harold and Clarrie Gibbs, Doody (Walter) Fowler, Fred Parkin, George Houden and Mick Simmons just to name a few. Not the best of drivers, he backed the ute into the river while trying to load the boat on more than one occasion.

In the early days Vera and George would holiday in Augusta for several weeks. Vera’s mother would come out and look after the boys. She loved parrot pie and the boys would often shoot them for her with their gings. In those days milking was seasonal, giving them time for holidays between January and March. The milk was separated for cream and picked up every second day. In earlier times, the pick-up was done by John Davies and later on the cream round was taken on by Bill Prout.

***IRIS MOUNFORD (Nee SIMMONS), CECIL MOUNTFORD,
WIN MCGILL***



Fresh Produce – Digging spuds on Mountford property



*Digging Spuds – Mountford Property (1950's) with a Petrol Kero
Massey*



Bagged Spuds – Mountford property, Crooked Brook, 1950s



*Wedding - Transport for George and Vera Mountford at their wedding,
William Ratcliffe senior holding horse.*

“LINTONDALE”

My father had a farm at Crooked Brook, about eight miles east of Dardanup on the west side of the hills forming the Upper Ferguson Valley.

It was rightly called Crooked Brook. It rose on a farm owned by Mr W Ratcliffe, adjoining ours, and meandered through our property and on its way. The farm called “Lintondale”, consisted of about 215 acres, partly hilly, partly flat and partly cleared, plus about 90 acres on either side of the road which was uncleared jarrah country, adjoining a farm owned by Albert Skipworth, a cousin of Dad’s.

I was born on the farm, as was my eldest brother George. Mrs O’Neill, known to us all as Granny O’Neill, was the midwife on both occasions. Mother felt that home births, so far from help in the days before motor cars were the normal mode of transport, were a risky business. George was actually born before Dad could get the midwife out to attend. Eight miles each way in a horse and sulky or buggy, over a rough sandy track.

My father built the house, a jarrah weatherboard construction with iron roof, consisting of four rooms with back and front verandahs. The entrances were directly into the living room and the kitchen, from the verandahs. There were two bedrooms, so that when there were four children, two boys and two girls, the boys slept on the front verandah, which was sheltered with blinds, probably made of jute bags. The linings and ceilings in the living room and main bedroom were of compressed tin. The other two rooms were unlined and unsealed. In fact, the wall between the kitchen and back bedroom was hessian only. One end of the back verandah was used for separating cream from the milk and for making butter. Also a Coolgardie safe was there.

No electricity, no refrigeration in those days! No bathroom, we bathed in a tub on the kitchen floor, in front of the stove fire in winter. Our hot water system was the copper in the laundry, a separate building outside. Our lighting was kerosene lamps, and for the two main rooms, gas lights. Carbide gas was manufactured in an old water tank outside the house. We had only one tank of 1000 gallons for rainwater, so in summer we had to carry water in buckets from a well about a quarter of a mile away.

Farming was mixed, cows to produce milk and cream, which was sold to a butter factory, potatoes for sale, oats for chaff, a few sheep, mainly for our own use for meat and wool to be sold. Two draughthorses for work and one lighter one for the buggy, a few pigs and some poultry. We had a fairly big orchard with all kinds of fruit, I don't remember if any of the fruit was sold. Apart from that, Dad cut sleepers for use in the construction of railway lines. We must have been fairly poor, we never had any money for anything but essentials.

About 1924 Dad bought a chassis of a Ford truck and built the body himself. During part of the time he had the truck, he had the contract to deliver the mail from Dardanup to Wellington Mills, via Ferguson. Each mail day one of us, I think usually either George or myself, would be picked up from school and taken along to help with the mail. Our job was to put the mail in the boxes. Dad would slow down, we would alight, place the mail in the box, run on and catch up to the truck and hop in again, without the truck actually stopping. I seem to remember that we really enjoyed this operation.

When I was about four years old I narrowly missed death or serious injury. During hay carting, my father enlarged his sleeper carting wagon, heavier than a normal wagon, by building a framework of bush timber, three poles wide, all around the top of the wagon, making it wider and longer. These were bolted together at the corners. After unloading one load of hay, he was on his way to get another with George and me in the wagon. We were supposed to sit on the floor of the wagon but because the floorboards moved with the motion and pinched our bottoms, I decided to sit on the middle rail of the front frame, leaning on the outside one.

After shutting the gate, Dad started the horses moving and proceeded to swing himself up onto the wagon by grasping the other end of the front rail. You've guessed it! The bolt on my end had come out, and as the end pole swung out, I went down, flat on my face and the front wheel passed over part of my back. Dad saw what was happening and halted and reversed the horses, causing the wheel to reverse also. That was the end of hay carting for that day! I had to be taken by horse and buggy - different horse - to Dardanup, then by train to Bunbury (one train per day) to the doctor. Fortunately, no serious injury and no ill effects.

EMMA BILNEY (NEED SKIPWORTH) TAKEN FROM A SHORT AUTOBIOGRAPHY WRITTEN BY EMMA IN 1998.

CROOKED BROOK FARM - CHRISTOPHER JOSEPH TWOMEY AND KATHLEEN MARIA TWOMEY

Our grandfather Michael Cornelius O'Regan (Con), a baker from Fremantle, bought the farm called "Crooked Brook Farm" from Mr W Armstrong for £200 in December 1928.

Because of his commitments to the bakery in Fremantle, Con asked our father Chris to run the farm for him. Chris had newly arrived from Cork in Ireland and after a stint working in the cane fields in Queensland he took over the running of the farm in February 1929.

Times were very tough during the Depression. This was a mixed farm of cropping and grazing. We have the farm ledger which records the purchases of pigs, sheep and a fairly large dairy herd. There are payments to V. Page for droving sheep, L. Poat for a sow, C. Prout for groceries, L. Gardiner for meat. According to the ledger the main income was from the dairy but pigs and sheep were sold, potatoes were grown, pumpkins were another crop and fruit from the orchard was taken to the Fremantle Markets.

During these years, the early '30s, Chris was courting Kathleen (Bub) O'Regan, the youngest daughter of his landlord. She would come to visit him on the farm occasionally. One evening they went to a dance at the Ferguson Hall. Bub had her dress in the saddle bag and the women got dressed at the hall. When returning home by moonlight in the early hours of the morning an unexpected event occurred. Chris had put Bub, the city girl, on his best horse Prince, no doubt to impress her. He was riding a grey mare called Judy. As they went over a bridge in the Ferguson in the moonlight Prince got spooked and bolted with Bub clinging on for her life and screaming her lungs out.

Chris was a pretty skilled horseman, but it took all he knew to get his horse alongside the bolting Prince on a dark track to grab the reins and bring him under control. Maybe that's when she decided to marry him.

Chris married Kathleen in June 1934 and they settled in the little farmhouse near the spring which is the source of Crooked Brook, hence the name of the farm. This farmhouse was a small weatherboard cottage built by Mr. Potter. It was surrounded by an orchard with a great variety of trees. I remember

mandarin trees, oranges, pears, mulberry and persimmon. When they came out in blossom they made a very pretty sight, especially the large almond trees. Further up the hill was the dairy, hay shed, pig sties, a blacksmith forge and various yards. All this was protected by a windbreak of large pine trees to the west, which moaned mournfully in the slightest breeze.

Charlie Mortimore came to work for them around 1937 and continued till he was called up in 1941. He returned after the war and continued till he got his own farm some time in 1946.

Though this was a rather isolated farm and after the city I imagine Bub would have felt very lonely at times. Chris played hockey with the Ferguson side. He also tried football but gave it up when he broke George Hulme's nose in a game.

There was a small community of neighbours who were always ready to help out. The Ratcliffe's, the Parkins, George and Vera Mountford, the Aldersons were all good neighbours. There was a great tradition of helping each other out in a crisis. One hot summer's day Dad and Charlie were having a rest before evening milking. I slipped out with a box of matches and began lighting small fires along the creek bank and stamping them out. Suddenly, one fire took off and it got too big to stamp out. I ran for the house shouting, "Dad, Dad! There's a fire." Dad came out the back door smiling at my little joke. "Jesus Christ" he swore seeing the smoke billowing into the sky and the creek banks well alight. "Charlie, get the bags". A fire on such a day could be disastrous. They ran out with wet bags belting at the flames. Next thing men and horses came from everywhere as the smoke alerted the neighbours. It burnt about five acres before they controlled it. I certainly won no popularity votes that day and got a hell of a hiding later. I never played with matches again.

Visits to town were rare. Billy Prout came to collect the cream three times a week and he bought papers, mail and some supplies. They went to Bunbury about once a month and to church in Dardanup once a month. The only other link with the outside world was through the wireless.

Still they were pretty busy with the work on the farm, visits from relatives from Fremantle. Con O'Regan used to ride his bike from Fremantle to the Ferguson and he was always a welcome visitor. He was killed by a drunken American sailor in late 1941, run over on his bike in Palmyra.

Then the children began arriving. Pat was the eldest, Jill followed two years later. Robin was born in 1941, Mick in 1944 and David in 1951. Pat and Jill went to board at the Nun's in Dardanup and came home for the weekend with Billy Prout on the cream truck. When it came time for Robin and Mick to go to school it was decided to move closer to Dardanup so the kids could ride bikes to school. Accordingly, Chris and Bub bought a property on the flats further down Crooked Brook from Mr. A. Skipworth. After much clearing and fencing the family was moved on May 6th 1946. Crooked Brook Farm was sold to Fred Parkin.

PAT RICHARDS AND ROBIN TWOMEY

BERTHA E HARTNETT

Born Bertha Carroll, April 28th 1872.

Mother and father lived in Bunbury until after I was born, we then moved to Clifton's near Collie Bridge. My little sister was born there and we called her (Racheal). From here we moved to Brunswick. Harry was born there. Then to Bendigo Mill. Father drove a team carting timber from there to Bunbury. This mill was owned by MC Davis, the engine was driven by J Hill. The boarding house was run by Mr. Aliton, the butcher shop by Charlie Fowler. Davis owned the store where anything could be purchased, jam was 1/- a tin. This mill was built on Hough's Brook going into the Ferguson near Dardanup.

There is information missing here, the letter goes on...

We found him, he put us in bed and rode to Bunbury for medicine then back to the Henty. In the morning we made our way back to mother and the baby. Our baby sister died that night, father then went to Olive Hill to bring Gran Fisher. She stayed a week. Father took the baby's body by horse and cart to Bunbury to be buried. The rest of my brothers and sisters were born here, eight of us surviving. Some years later my father was killed by a fall from a horse. He was then 39 years. Mother was left with us eight children. I went to live and work at Forrest's at Picton. Mother took the family to live in a house at Picton opposite what is now the superworks. I worked there until I was married. I

lived then in Donnybrook, my first two children were born here. We moved to Crooked Brook, my husband Micheal Hartnett and three babies. While at Crooked Brook I had an occasion to visit Wellington Mills again to see my sister. It was a well established place, the railway line was built from Dardanup to the mill site and all the machinery was transported via rail, later the timber was returned by train along this line. The engineer is believed to be a Mr Higgins.

While on this visit we did a little prospecting in a gully my brother-in-law found a few specks. He washed a quantity and then applied for a miner,s right. three of them, my husband and brothers also applied for rights to mine the gold. Not finding anything of value they decided to approach an English company to carry on and develop the works. They sent samples with the engineer that was there to London but as the quality was very poor they decided against investing money and developing the mine.

About this time another mill opened up, this one was called little Wellington. In later years it was owned by a man named Mr. Snelling. He also planted an orchard. On my return journey to Crooked Brook we passed through farming properties owned by Mike Flynn, Sam Gibbs and Owen Gardiner.

When we left Crooked Brook I had four children. We bought two blocks of land at South Bunbury and built a house. My next two children were born in Bunbury, my husband was cutting and carting wood this time. After some years we sold our home and land and went to Capel.

At Capel we bought three blocks of land and built a small house, by this time I had eight children, seven of my children attended the Capel School and grew up here at Capel. When my youngest son left school we sold this property and moved to Cundinup. Here we purchased a farming property, my husband and two sons.

***THIS IS A LETTER WRITTEN BY BERTHA HARTNETT
WHEN IN HER 90'S - RETAINED BY BERTHWYN HASTIE***

FERGUSON ROLL OF HONOUR

On Wednesday afternoon a very interesting ceremony took place at the Ferguson State School in connection with the unveiling of the roll of honour of former scholars, who, at the call of Empire, went forth without demure to fight for honour and freedom in the world's battlefields. The attendance of local residents was very large and among the visitors from other parts were the following; Mr WL Thomas, MP, Mrs Thomas, the Mayoress of Bunbury (Mrs Baldock), Mr Foreman, Mr Maddern, Rev W Roger (chairman of the District Board of School Management), Mr Paisley (secretary of the board), and the Rev SE Edwards.

Prior to the unveiling ceremony, the members of the School Board addressed the children and congratulated the head teacher, Miss Branch, upon the splendid results of her work and the attractive appearance of the schoolrooms.

Mr WL Thomas, MLA, presided over the subsequent gathering. He said that the occasion was most solemn and most worthy of the fine attendance of relatives and friends. They had assembled to do honour to the heroes of the Ferguson, who had gone forth to the firing line, brave fellows who had realised their responsibility as citizens of the Empire in the hour of the nation's peril.



Roll of Honour - the district honours those that served in WW1, 1920s

They had taken the honour of Australia and their own in their hands and their stirring deeds had won for their native land and for themselves in fame which would never perish. He who heard one mother say that it had pained her to let her son go to the front but that she would rather suffer that pain than the sorrow and shame of having her boy stay at home in inglorious ease whilst the noblest young men of the country were doing their duty in the defence of all they held dearest. That was the glorious spirit that had animated the parents of the men whose names were upon the roll of honour. He congratulated Miss Branch upon the success which had attended her efforts to secure a fitting memorial of the deeds and heroism of the young fellows who in the days of their boyhood had received their education in the Ferguson school. If every school in the State were as patriotic and worthy as that it would augur well for the future of the country. About 44% of the old time scholars of the school who had reached military age had enlisted and thought that that was a record that all might well applaud.

Mr Lowry, in referring to the absent soldiers, declared that he would do anything that was possible for those boys, and for their parents, for the lads were defending their homes and their country and deserved the best that could be done for them when they returned home. When they returned they should not be sent outback, to lonely places, but should be settled where they could have comfort and company and no place in the State was more suitable than the South West.

Mr Paisley, whose kindly interest in the young people makes him a welcome visitor in all the schools in the district, declared that among other causes which had influenced their young men to enlist had been the conviction that it was their duty to defend the liberties of the weaker nations who had been oppressed and downtrodden by the Central Powers.

The sons of Ferguson had put on their armour and had gone forth as knights to right the wrongs of the world. He hoped that when the war was over there would come a better feeling among the nations and also among the various classes of people in the homeland. The speaker very graciously expressed the sympathy all present felt for those who had lost their loved ones and were in the midst of hardships and dangers at the front.

Mr Buckenara spoke in terms of welcome for the visitors, who had generously come long distances to attend the celebration.

The Rev SE Edwards was pleased to assist in the unveiling ceremony. He reminded the audience that the State School had next to their parents, exerted more influence upon the brave young fellows who had gone to the front than any other cause. No one could estimate the extent of the splendid influence of the teachers who had charge of the education of men and the children of the present generation should feel proud to sit at the desks of the fellows who were now fighting for them.

In a brief address, Mr E Gardiner declared that their boys had fought a good fight and they should never be forgotten.

Mrs Thomas said that, as a woman, she valued the privilege of doing honour to the men who were defending their homes and liberties and she hoped that all who had survived until that time would presently come home in honour and health. The roll should be an inspiration to every child in the school for all time. She had great pleasure in unveiling the roll of honour.

***FROM A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE FROM AROUND 1918
ORIGIN UNKNOWN***

WORLD WAR I

The following is a list of people whose names were on the honour board at the primary school for serving in World War I. Those with an asterix next to them were killed in action.

(The honour board was lost to the district when the school closed in 1973, we have been unable to find what happened to it after the Education Department collected everything from the school)

ROLL OF HONOUR UPPER FERGUSON SCHOOL

ALBERT CANTWELL	LEONARD BUCKENARA
ALFRED GARDINER	MARK FLYNN
* DOUGLAS GARDINER	GEORGE FLYNN
LEA GARDINER	* DANIEL SLATTERY
WILFRED GARDINER	JOSEPH SLATTERY
KEITH GARDINER	WILLIAM COOMBS
RUEBEN CHAPMAN	* PERCY WILLIAMS
WILFRED CHAPMAN	* JACK WILLIAMS
* BASIL GIBBS	JOHN HANRAHAN HAROLD GIBBS

WORLD WAR II

GARDINER AD	HARTNETT DLC	TOOKE WA
GARDINER CK	HARTNETT PE	
GARDINER PJ		WICKSTEED JN
GARDINER RC	KERR M	WIGHT JE
GARDINER RJ		
GARDINER SM	LOWRY J	WOMEN
GARDINER EC		GARDINER BE
GARDINER RN	PROUT AF	HARTNETT DM
GARDINER SJ		TOOKE BA
	RATCLIFFE F	WICKSTEED H
GIBBS HB		
GROVER RW	SEARLE J	
	STEPHEN RA	
HARDISTY C		
HARDISTY J	TOOKE HA	
HARDISTY R	TOOKE JS	

This list of people researched by Bonnie Quadrio mentions those who enlisted through the Dardanup office. There are, no doubt others who enlisted at other centres, and we apologise for not having their names.

Others we have been able to find are B.Gardiner (Korea). CD Hartnett, P Prout (Borneo) F Meyzer (Vietnam).

PRISONERS OF WAR

During the 1940s war we had some Italian prisoners of war sent out to Australia and the government of the day thought it wise to send them out and help on the farms.

I was lucky enough to have three issued to work for me. One was a barber, another a farmer and the third a coffee shop owner. Two were good workers, but the third was always sick or said he was.

Every week or so a portable canteen would come around to supply their needs, he was a man called Toby Ferguson Stewart. Also another man, who was an interpreter, and they could buy things from the canteen that we could not get from anywhere else. They would buy lollies for Faye, who was very young at the time.

I remember one day the fellow from the coffee shop calling out loud “Torri” (bull), when I went to find him I could not see him anywhere. When I did find him he was up the only gum tree in the paddock, about 20 feet from the ground to the first limb. The bull turned out to be an old cow and I had a job to get him down. He was the only one who wrote to me and asked me to sponsor him to come back to Australia.

They were good workers but could not handle horses, it was before I had a tractor, but they helped with the piggery and dairy and other farm work.

Arthur Wicksteed down the road also had one working for him and they would exchange visits every Sunday.

I remember when my wife was in hospital, they were going to cook some spaghetti for me, but the fire went out about halfway through and the stove being hot, the kero he threw on it vaporised and exploded. He had the pot of spaghetti in his hand when it exploded and he went running out the door and across the paddock leaving a trail of spaghetti all the way.

GEORGE RATCLIFFE

WORLD WAR II

One of my earliest memories is of my father announcing to someone who was walking down our garden path, "It has begun - they have sunk the first ship."

Something of the enormity of what was happening must have been conveyed to me by my father's tone of voice for the memory to have remained with me.

The war in Europe was so far removed from our peaceful little world and yet as the ripples go outward when a stone is thrown into a pool of water, so the effects of the war reached even to our little valley. Not with the ferocity and devastation at its midst but in so many small ways and when Japan joined the conflict the worry and fear of the adults, although never voiced, became almost tangible. I remember the ration books, petrol, meat, sugar, tea, butter and clothing all required coupons, while many other items simply disappeared from our daily lives. Such things as chocolates, sweets and jellies became a rare treat, kept beneath the counter for regular customers.

During those years it seemed as though our lives revolved around the radio - our one piece of modern equipment! Dad would hurry in to hear new bulletins and it was only years later that I realised what an anxious time it must have been. My mother's two brothers were both away fighting the Japanese and it seemed Australia would be invaded any day.

My father, like many farmers, was "man powered" to stay on his farm and produce food for the soldiers. One of the things he did that has stayed in my memory was to grow cabbages. Hundreds of them, and gherkins, which I believe, were for the Americans.

While Dad grew things, Mum was kept busy with her own war effort. She knitted garments in the ugly khaki or grey wool. A balaclava, strange headwear that covered all but the wearer's face, also socks and scarves. Even I managed to do my little bit by knitting a scarf! Mum also worked tirelessly at fund raising for the Red Cross, making everything from beautiful toys to potholders, which were sold at monthly dances held in our local hall.

Those Red Cross dances have remained a vivid memory for me, as in those days, with no such thing as babysitters and everyone expected to support a

worthy cause, children went along and actually played a part in the proceedings. We were pulled around the dance floor on sacks, a great way to polish the floor and provide us with some fun at the same time. We also walked around the hall selling posies of flowers and raffle tickets.

There was always a stall selling all kinds of homemade goods, from aprons to cakes. There was a great deal of rivalry between “the top end” and “the bottom end” as the district had been divided in two for this Red Cross fund raising.

I loved watching the dancers and listening to the music and then there was supper. Water for tea and coffee was boiled on open fireplaces and the food was carried around the hall. I have many memories of those days but those Red Cross dances are the most vivid.

JUDITH MULLER (Nee FOWLER)

WORLD WAR II

I remember the early years of the 1940s when World War II was in progress.

The Japanese were threatening our coastline and several children from seaside towns were sent to our school to avoid the ravages of war.

Motor cars and trucks ran on gas producers, headlights were 95% blacked out, homes had to draw their blinds after dark and ration tickets were issued for petrol and most foods.

Rabbits roamed the hills in the thousands.

COLIN RICHARDS

HAWKERS

There was a hawker who visited the town, an Indian man named Tommy.

He had a horse and cart, the cart being his home. The cart had a canopy high over the top. Tommy came to Wellington Mills perhaps about every six months, not frequently. He brought dresses, bath towels, fancy shirts, good shoes, heavy working boots with toe plates, heel irons and hobnails and good old, hard working dungaree trousers with double knees together with pockets riveted on the sides and back. Many workers preferred them because the work they performed was hard on their clothes.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

MEMORIES OF THE FIRE

My most frightening memory of Ferguson Valley was in 1950 when the bush fire went through, burning houses and many acres. We were let out of school early on the Thursday afternoon, around 2 pm, as the fires were raging around Wellington Mill. We could see the thick, black smoke billowing above the hills as we walked through the paddocks to our home in Crooked Brook. There was a smoke hue on the skyline.

The next day my father and brothers went off to Wellington Mill to fight the fire. From the steep hill where the Mountfords' old farmhouse stood, I saw smoke rising up from the triangular section of bush below, where the road leading up to our house branched off.

I called to my mother, there was a fire in the triangle, but she did not believe me. She thought I was imagining things. All of a sudden, within 10 minutes or less, the fire was licking up the gum trees leading towards our house. I have never forgotten the roar and crackling, and the heat given off by the fire.

I remember my mother huddling with me inside our lounge room at the front of the house. I could see flames licking up the pine tree we had at the side of the house. I just thought, "this is the end, we will both be burnt". Time seemed to stand still. All of a sudden the noise of the fire died down and we were game to go outside, only to see everything for miles burnt black. Sheep in the paddock, burnt black, their legs up in the air - cows were smart enough to get in the little

creek we had, and were saved. The old hay shed was left standing, some hay left, how this happened was a miracle.

NORMA MARTIN (Nee MOUNTFORD)

WAGES

Workers started in the morning about 7am, took an hour for lunch and finished at 5pm.

When John Parkin began working at the mill, workers were paid eight shillings a day, working all weekdays and Saturday morning, a total of 48 hours a week. During his time there the rate changed to nine shillings a day. John Parkin translated the pay change to one of the Italians and the man protested, “Too much, too much!”

Edgar remembers only once going to Bunbury for a holiday where John, Helen and the children stayed at Beach House. Passengers caught the company train to Dardanup and the government railway to Bunbury. The Millar’s train hauled timber trucks, one carriage with seats positioned across the carriage and a “dog van” (the guard’s van) which had a seat along one wall.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

THE EARLY WINE INDUSTRY

Thomas Little planted 10 acres of vines on the south of the existing Dardanup townsite about 1855.

The unusual aspect of his planting, by today’s standards, is that the plot contained 40,000 vines.

He named his vineyard “Constantia” and I assume he bought his cuttings from South Africa, from the area of the same name. He exported wine to England and won a gold medal in 1862.

Some time in the 1860s his vines were attacked by a root fungus and that was the end of stage one of the local industry.

In the 1920s there came the first influx of Italian migrants and with them came stage two. At first, people grew grapes and made wine for their own families. By the 1930s it had developed into a flourishing industry with kegs going from the Dardanup and Waterloo sidings to all parts of WA.

After World War II, the industry declined as beer became the liquor of choice.

The Dardanup post-war wine industry was reduced to a few second-generation Italian families making a drop for their own consumption. However, with John Gladstone’s paper in the 1960s comparing Margaret River with Bordeaux and the subsequent development by Dr Cullity at Vasse Felix and Dr Hagen at Xanadu, Cullens and others, it was inevitable that other areas would try to see whether they could grow quality grapes.

Mt Barker and Pemberton became fledgling areas, but not until the mid ‘80s were there attempts by anyone in the Dardanup area.

The Giumelli family (“Ferguson Falls”) planted a small patch of cabernet on their Pile Road property about 1990. Wansborough Wines (the first commercial vineyard in the modern era) produced their first vintage in 1991 and opened a café and cellar door on January 9, 1994. Kingtree Wines opened their cellar door sales about three years later.

A subsequent explosion of small vineyards in the district saw the new growers mainly sell their grapes to bigger producers.

Four years later, the Dewar family’s “Willowbridge” changed the face of the local industry by planting 200 acres (80ha) of vines and producing on a large scale with a multi-million-dollar investment.

In the last five years there has been a further increase in plantings of small vineyards, with the prospect of some of these developing cellar door sales - the new vineyards mainly being in the Ferguson area.

BRIAN WANSBOROUGH

WINE

During the early years of settlement of the Ferguson area, many people grew vines for their own use.

You will read in some of the stories in this book that many of the early plantings were made by Dr Ferguson, the Gardiners on “Greenwood” (these vines not far from where Giumellis are now) and Fowlers on “Sargeant Dale”. There were vines on “Carlaminda” and a lot of the smaller farms.

Vineyards and wineries, in addition to the ones mentioned by Brian Wansborough, include: Wellington Mill area - Kim Robinson; Peter Partridge; Rob and Lois Doherty; Jim and Maria Short; Phil and Colene Pullinger; Hugh and Jan Watkins; Grant and Penny Johnston; David and Cheryl Rourke (“Kingtree Wines”). Ferguson area: Rod and Allison Bailey (“Myrtle Hill”); Max and Ruve Kerr; Greg and Lyndie Gibbs; Jeff and Kerry Ovens, Michael and Jenny Stacey, Ron and Elly Hewitt (“Hackersley”); Dr Levi; Dr Olsthoorn; Phil and Mary Smith (“St. Aidans”); Geoff and Sarah Brandli; John and Rosa Maddigan; Rick and Fran Stacey; Peter and Pauline Hume; Merv Hart (“Ferguson Hart”); Joe Mosca; Kim and Jane Skipworth; George Cardona; Martin Buck; Chris and Christine Summerell; Gavin, Pauline, Geoff and Vicki Dewar (“Willowbridge”), Geoff Prosser; Brian Allen; Don and Karin Williams (“Henty Brook Estate”); Boyd and Vicki Cottrell; Jeff and Lindi Ingram; Peter and Jackie Van Leeuwen; John and Jillian Banks; Crooked Brook; Alex and Catherine Williams.

STEVE GIBBS

RAILWAY

On Millar's railway line there were little sidings on the line to Dardanup.

These sidings were established in recognition of the farmers allowing the line through their properties. Millar's gave, in return, free freight to these sidings. One siding was called the "Eight Mile", not far from Barry Scott's entrance, just around the corner. Farmer Wilson owned the property. His two daughters went for the paper one day and at the siding was a drunk man, his pants were undone and a piece of string tied his penis to a post at the siding. The guard on the train must have secured him to the siding. A young farmer from the next farm arrived for his paper to find the girls rather alarmed at the view.

One day the train was on its way from Dardanup to Wellington when the guard felt the need to relieve himself. He had been drinking at Dardanup. He stood in the guard's van with the door open and proceeded to do so while passing one of the sidings. Two young ladies waiting were sprayed. A week later there was a dance at Ferguson and the guard, together with some friends, went down but on seeing the young ladies from the siding inside, refused to go in.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

TIMBER YARDS

I have previously spoken about the timber yards in Dardanup, and that they employed around 25 people.

The timber came from Wellington Mills. Three trains came down every day with timber. Sometimes it would be taken straight into Bunbury to the wharf. Other times it would be stacked in the timber yards to dry out or be available when the boat came in unexpectedly and then it would be reloaded and taken into Bunbury. The journey to Wellington was about 12 miles by rail, and that got rid of a lot of timber, that's when the big mill was going. Then it closed down, I think it was about 1914. Later on they milled on the same site and the timber once again was bought down to Dardanup. It was taken overseas to

many different countries. In fact, I remember where they cut pieces of wood about 8x4x4 and they were used for paving blocks for roadways in London.

This train, when it would come down, the guard on board was old Mul Binks, he'd go to the hotel and he'd have his little order made out from all the different workers up there, and the hotel proprietor would pack them up, and up it would go to Perth and they would be all very happy when it arrived.

Also, that train was used on the weekends. If it was a football match between Dardanup and Wellington, the train would come down to transport us up or likewise if it was Wellington playing Dardanup it would bring them down here. So it was a great day's outing.

The railway line up to Wellington, quiet a bit of the land was given by the farmers to the Millar's Timber and Trading Company, and other parts Millar,s bought. In exchange for the land Millar,s would transport any of their produce, free of charge, down to Dardanup. So that was a great help to the farmers in the Ferguson and Wellington districts.

***FROM INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM PROUT
by JUDY CLARKE, 1986***

HORSES

John Parkin had two ponies.

One day, Edgar was out riding and approaching the town from the west. The hill at that end of town was much steeper than it is now. The pony, feeling a bit playful, kicked up her heels and galloped off down the hill.

Edgar slipped along her neck and landed on the road in front of her. The horse stood looking at him as if she was wondering what he was doing on the ground. Edgar took her to a tree stump, climbed up onto her back and continued on. He rode without a saddle for two and a half years before the saddler at the mill told him that he had an old saddle and if Edgar could find another old one he would make one up for him. He did this.

On another occasion, while visiting the town with his father after moving to Ferguson, Edgar was racing a pony along the flat road from Marty White's entrance towards the mill. The pony, having been reared on the mill, knew all the tracks and he tried to turn down over the bridge in front of "The Cottage" and up the creek on the other side. He couldn't make the turn and rider and horse went headfirst into some tall bushes. One of the bushes hit the horse in the chest and pulled him up to a walking pace. Edgar went over his head and over the top of the sapling, making a very uncomfortable landing. He heard the friend he was racing with calling out to John Parkin (who was accompanying them), "Where has he gone?" They came back to find Edgar and the pony sorting themselves out from the bushes.

There is also the story of a man called Powell, from the bush camp, who wanted to come into Wellington for the weekend. The bush boss, from Wellington Mills Mr Goodson, left his horse for the man to ride in after work and himself caught the train back to town. The man set off late in the afternoon to ride to town but the horse was accustomed to doing a round rather than going direct. The horse took over and visited all the spots he was accustomed to before reaching the town late in the night.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

"DOBBIN"

Mark Flynn told Edgar the story of how, one day, some dignitaries and their wives from London came into the bush to see the mill and the men at work.

They were looking at trees being felled, the bark taken off, the log cut off and loaded onto the whim. One lady asked permission to stroke one of the big horses. The teamster thought he would have a little joke and standing away back near the whim, he called out in a harsh voice, "Come here back Dobbin!"

The horse snatched its head away from the lady, obeying the command. The lady thought she had offended the teamster and begged to apologise.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

MAIL DAY

The Foley's were a very old family, in fact I have a document here from the Foley's where they purchased some cattle from my Grandfather Mr. Slattery, where eight of those cattle were sold for £34. It was a bit of a barter deal because it had to be paid for in exchange of so many bags of crushed flour and so many bags of chaff, that was in 1884.

Other families in the district, well up Ferguson way, there was the Coombes, the Houghs, they had big properties up there. The Houghs property is now known as Carliminda and that has been subdivided on many occasions. In fact the flat, about 30 acres of it that runs along the Ferguson River, that was all vineyard and they had a wine crushing plant up there. The vines were grown by Mr. Stanley. The man came over from South Australia to be in charge of the wine making, in about 1900, he was a Mr. Trevina, he stayed there for several years and he left to take up property at Preston and his son carried on when Mr. Trevina died. Then the vineyard was pulled up, I'm not sure of the date, but wine was made there in 1900.

The clearing up in Ferguson Hills, I remember a lot of it being done. A lot of Italians came out and they used to do that plus some of the old settlers sons were there and they were always keen, the farmers, to have a piece of wet ground, so they had to divert the creeks to give them a straight run with the water, so they'd have that nice flat to grow potatoes and vegetables or whatever it may be. I remember one fellow, he put through a lot of drains, but on one occasion on his farm, he had to dig the drain 4ft wide at the top, taper it in to 2ft 6in at the bottom. Sometimes it would be 2ft deep and others up to 4ft deep. Now he dug that by spade for 6/- a chain.

A lot of the properties had saplings, they called them, that was young trees growing up, they used to do what you call ring barking. You hit the bark with the back of an axe, the bark slips, and that got rid of them. They used to do it for 2/6d per acre.

Now the people in the Ferguson Valley received their mail twice a week by horse and sulky. I remember when a Mr. Gibbs used to do the delivery. Later on his sisters took over and after that Gladdy and Ellie Gardiner, they were the last to take the mail up by horse and sulky.

***FROM INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM PROUT
by JUDY CLARKE, 1986***

PADGETS

The Padgets had moved out along a disused railway formation and selected a block of land about four miles from Wellington.

The track is now known as South Road. Unfortunately, Mr Padget became very ill and died (1919 or 1920?).

After Mr Padget died, Mrs Padget and her daughters Eva, Flo and Nancy and sons Ted and Jumbo came back to live in the town during the late early 1920s. Eva (known as “lolly legs” because of her thin legs) was being courted by Chum Fowler, who used to ride his horse to the home and tie it up to the picket fence of the hospital.

In the town, a chap called Marny Bowles, a timber feller, used to write small articles and send them into the paper and one of the articles was a song he had heard Eva singing to herself, “I love my little Chummy, I will get him yet as sure as you can bet!”

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

**PAGES FROM CASHBOOK
of MR HERBERT GIBBS 1915-1916**

Date	Money Received 1915	£	s	d
Sept-1	Money in Hand	27	2	7
4	1 Cow	7		
	Bricks		3	6
Oct-1	Bringing Binder from Dardanup		10	
Nov-26	Shearing for W Grover		9	
	Cutting Crop for Mr Kerr	1	15	
Dec-12	For Wool	5	3	4
	For Meat		2	
24	Work for Father	2		
	Total	44	5	5
1916				
Jan-3	Carting hay for Mr G Snelling		10	
15	Wool Money	30		
	Mr Flynn for Sheep	1		
18	Falling trees for John Hurst	2		
26	Planting Potatoes for W Ratcliffe		10	
Feb-2	Threshing		6	
	1 Bike Wheel		12	
	Meat		4	3
3	Planting Potatoes Jas Slattery	1	4	
21	Sheep	2		
	Shearing for M Flynn		17	
	Wool	2	16	6
24	Meat		2	10

Date	Money Received 1915	£	s	d
	Threshing		7	
26	Making Gates for W Ratcliffe	2	16	6
28	Cultivating Potatoes		4	
March-28	Sheep	22	6	8
May-9	Wool	5	10	9
	Total	73	0	4
1915		44	5	5
		11	5	9
			7	

Date	Money Spent 1915	£	s	d
Sept-1915	Meat		9	4
	Groceries	1	1	6
	Onion Plants & Manure		9	
	Butter		5	3
	Groceries	5	10	
	Meat		9	2
	Safe		9	2
Oct-1	Groceries & Butter	4	8	
	Drapery	1	17	6
	Groceries & Meat		4	2
	Photos	1	14	10
	Groceries	1	1	9
	Meat		6	6
	Drapery		17	5

Date	Money Spent 1915	£	s	d
	Groceries		2	10
Oct-21	Phonograph & Records	9	5	
	Sundries		10	10
	Meat		6	10
	Crackers, Dress & Butter		6	
	Butter & Train Fare		8	6
	Jam & Church Subscription		2	
Nov-11	Train Fare & dinner		12	3
	Records		17	3
	Calico & Show Tickets		8	
15	Butter & Stores		11	2
	Stores	1	1	4
	Church Subs, Vinegar & Onions		5	7
	Groceries etc	2		
	Lollies, Lime juice, Whiting & Butter		13	6
	Total	22	7	6

MR WALLIS

Born in Perth, Mr Wallis built an exterior section of St George's Cathedral before he moved to the country.

Around the 1830s his father arrived from England with the Hentys, who later went on to Victoria to write their page of history.

Mr Wallis met his future wife while putting up additions on the Venn property in Dardanup in the late 1880s. Mrs Venn described him as a “ most arrogant man” because he asked for white sugar in his tea.

He built the all-denominational church in the Ferguson Valley and was married in it. It was burned down on the 60th anniversary of his wedding.

Mr Wallis later built the Stirling St Methodist Church in Bunbury and the old Parkfield hospital. He erected the brick section of the Picton Primary School in 1895.

A man of impressive proportions (6ft 4in) - Mr Wallis was master-of-hounds for Bunbury Hunt Club about 1907.

FROM NEWSPAPER CLIPPING - ORIGIN UNKNOWN

BOB (Robert Stanley) GARDINER

Bob was born in Bunbury, his parents were Ralph James Gardiner and Edith Mountford.

He has an older sister Joan, married to Ken Fowler and now living in Donnybrook.

Bob has lived on "Hillview" all his life. In early days, what we call "Tussler's" paddock today was "Peter Hill", a home where Ruby and Owen Gardiner (sons Ted and Basil) lived until the late '40s, they milked cows across the road and Tusslers lived there years later.

In Bob's early years both families of grandparents lived in homes in close proximity, now where a large workshop and hay shed stand.

Bob's father Ralph was a cook in the airforce during World War II. Enlisted in July, 1941 and discharged in January, 1947. His mother during these years milked dairy cows and used to wheel the cream on a wheelbarrow three times a week down to the main road, to be picked up by Bill Prout, the Dardanup carrier.

In the early '50s Bob did district contract supering, hay making and carting stock to market.

In 1955 his mother died, after which he and his father batched for five years. His dad then remarried, to Muriel Bell (nee Ratcliffe). They went on dairying until after the SEC went through in 1963. Bob bought Slee's block (Loc 916) 211 acres from Bob Slee in June, 1962 at 16 pound per acre. This block belonged to Mr Ramsay years ago.

In October, 1964 Bob and myself married, his Dad and Muriel moved to Bunbury to live. In 1966 we bought Swampy Marsh's block 600 acres (up Wellington Mills Road) for \$2000. Then Stephen's blocks in 1968. These Bob has leased from Ted and Ray Stephen since 1957. Land we still own today. It belonged to John Charlton Fowler "Sergeant Dale" - the old home where Fowlers originally lived was pulled down and a cottage rebuilt in 1980. Slee's, Marsh's and Ray's blocks now belong to Richard Brown-Cooper.

Bob's old home was burned down in September, 1981. A home was rebuilt and Sherilee, our younger daughter, and family live there. Our elder daughter Allison and family live on Stephen's block, now called "Myrtle Hill". Myrtle bush covered some of the hills a mass of pink in October-November in years gone by, apparently the introduction of superphosphate gradually killed some out.

Allison was one of the first pupils to attend the Dardanup Primary School, when Ferguson, Waterloo and Wellington Mills schools all closed in 1971.

The big fire in April, 1950. St Aiden's rebuilt by folk of the district. Reopened March 26, 1954. A mission church so-called, this meaning open to all denominations for weddings, baptisms etc.

Ted Tooke, in older days, was the first milk tester in the district and used to travel by horse and cart and stay the night at people's places.

Today the Ferguson is a place of great change, much subdivision, new homes and hobby farms, vineyards going in all around; they say this is progress.

LEONIE GARDINER (NEE GILES)

HAROLD FERGUSON GIBBS (26.5.1898-10.4.1969)

Uncle Hal

After moving from Collie Bridge, we lived on Arnold Gibbs' property (Slee's) on Ironstone Road.

While we were there Dad built a small cottage for Uncle Hal to live in and we moved into his house.

Uncle Hal was like a grandparent to us, he came for tea every night. One night while he was over for tea, Colin (who was only two or three years old) was very sick and had a convulsion. Uncle Hal rang the doctor and looked after us until Mum and Dad got home. We were always trotting over to his place for a visit, there was always one of us over at his house.

In the summer we would sit on his back porch and watch him shoot parrots. These were made into parrot pie, a delicacy for the old timers. I remember watching him pluck them.

Wintertime was spent sitting with him by his wood stove, teapot brewing on the side, this he would drink all day. It was through Uncle Hal that we learnt the Australian classics of Banjo Paterson. He would recite "The Man From Snowy River" and "A Bush Christening" off by heart. I loved the way he recited poetry. Along with my Pop, Clarrie, Doody Fowler and George Mountford they made many pilgrimages to Molloy Island fishing. I can remember Uncle Hal walking across from his house through our yard to his car shed with loads of camping and fishing gear getting packed ready for their big trip. In latter years Fred Parkin, George Houden and Mick Simmons joined the party. Uncle Hal had the boat, which they loaded on Pop's ute.

One fishing adventure involved a trip to Bremer Bay. The Bremer River is notoriously shallow. Apparently Clarrie was standing in the bow giving directions for navigation. Unfortunately he didn't see a big rock and the boat stopped but he didn't and ended up quite wet. The usual practice for fishing was to hang a sugar bag with fish over the edge of the boat to keep them fresh. Once they forgot to pull them in when they moved and they lost their entire catch.

He was also a good teacher on making gings. He would sit on the back verandah and ping stones down into the orchard below his house. The boys were always trying to out shoot him.

Mum went to town one day on her own and left the boys (Barry and Colin) in Dad's care. Dad was building the dairy with Brian Wells. When Mum arrived home some hours later she went looking for Dad and the boys. She said to Dad, "Where are the twins?" To Dad's horror he hadn't seen them for ages. Mum, Dad and Brian went about looking for them, in sheds, up and down the creek, all over the vicinity. Mum went racing into Uncle Hal's house, only to hear silence but on looking further found Uncle Hal on the bed with both his arms stretched out, one twin on each side of him, all fast asleep. It was the summer of 1968 and stinking hot. Barry remembers waking up drenched in sweat. The boys were three years old.

Uncle Hal always had a fabulous vegie garden and kept Mum and Dad in fresh vegies all summer. He had special spots that remained damp all summer, it was these places that he kept his gardens. At one time his garden was up the gully and he would lug kerosene buckets of chook and cow manure all the way by foot. On his return trip the bucket would be full of the tastiest tomatoes or beautiful apple cucumbers. We used to sit on the back verandah and shell peas and broad beans. This is how we remember Uncle Hal. With much affection, Lyndie, Steve, Christine, Colin and Barry Gibbs.

LYNDIE GIBBS



Hal Gibbs - on BSA motorbike.

EARLY RADIO

Edmund Stephen had the first radio in the district, this was in the late 1920s. The radio could only be listened to by the use of headphones and was very crackly. Many people from the district would come to our house to listen.

Especially when the cricket was on.

Having access to radio at a young age encouraged us to be involved in radio and we started servicing them 1936.

Ray started this and was given a district by CS Baty & Co from Hay Street in Perth. This was the name of the radio and was a fully-owned Western Australian company. The radio was model 211 and was four valve.

The areas that we covered were Collie, Arther River, Mornington, Treesville, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Dardanup, Harvey, Boyanup and all areas in between.

The radios needed very high aerials to get a good reception, these were put in place by using a wooden pole from the forestry. One time when off to Darkan to install a radio, Ray was stopped by the police in the main street of Collie. He was dragging a pole through the main street with his car, he had just cut the pole on the other side of town and was hoping to get through town early.

Another episode with an aerial was at Worsley - putting up a demo we would throw the aerial over a tree to get a better reception. On this occasion we used one of our spanners as a weight to get it over the tree, this got stuck in the tree. With a little bush ingenuity we got out the rifle and Ray shot the spanner down.

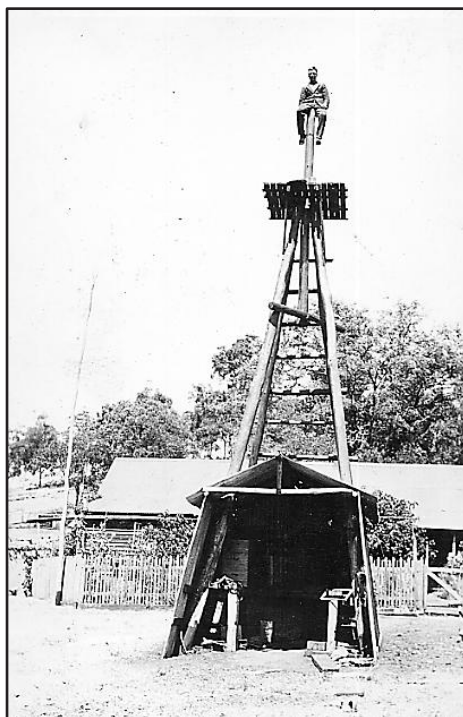
The batteries on these radios would last about six months and then would have to be recharged; this was usually done in the garages of the towns.

People in Darkan would pay off the radio with a £2 deposit and pay the rest of the £20 off when the wool cheques came in.

RAY and ERNIE STEPHEN



Logs for Wind Light - on Stephen's property, the horse's name was "Manager".



Wind Light - Ray Stephen, sitting on top of Wind Light during construction.

RICHARDS FAMILY in FERGUSON

I was brought up on “Hillside Farm” Ferguson, owned by my parents Hector and Marjory Richards, with elder brother Colin and sisters Averil and Beverley.

Our parents met while both living in Dardanup, Mother coming out from England in her early twenties on a working holiday and meeting Dad while she was working for Mr and Mrs Craig.

They married and bought 200 acres of virgin land in Ferguson, next to the forestry. Dad had to clear a track out to the main Ferguson-Wellington Mill Road, two-and-a-half miles to enable him to carry on his shoulder a can of cream to be picked up by the cream carter.

They bought an old mill house from Wellington Mill, which was erected on the property, consisting of weatherboard and iron, hessian walls and pressed tin ceilings, which lasted until 1938 when a new house was built.

Also at that time, we bought a new 1938 Chev ute. Both cost 580 pounds. Dad set about clearing the land of large jarrah and redgum trees, by ringbarking and grubbing suckers.

He planted one-and-a-half acres of apple and stone fruit orchard. Started milking a few cows, then clearing the flats around Hough Brook, which flows through the farm, to plant summer vegetables, such as tomatoes, rockmelons, watermelons, pumpkins and potatoes. He bought a second hand Chev ute to cart his produce into Bunbury. The track Dad previously cleared was formed into a road and later named Richards Road.

I started at Ferguson school in 1939. My day began with helping with the milking and separating milk and after breakfast would run Colin, barefoot to school, two-and-a-half miles. Sometimes in pouring rain, with just a super bag for cover. Sitting in class damp all day. Several of us boys would take it in turns to cut the wood and light the fire in the schoolroom for warmth.

Some vivid memories of school days was when standing in front of class with four others and getting eight cuts with the cane for being involved with the others for lighting a fire which got away and burnt out 200 acres of farm land. Another incident was when I was not paying attention to Mrs Hilber and received a smack over the knuckles with a blackboard ruler, which broke a finger.

Another memory was playing in the C grade cricket school team, which barely had the numbers and won the competition three years running against other schools, retaining a shield which was donated by DK Carmody of the WA Sheffield Shield team.

After leaving school I worked on our farm for about five years. In that time my brother Colin and I would often trap rabbits which we sold as meat and the skins were stretched out on a wire to dry and later sold to make army hats.

Apart from playing cricket, I took up bike riding and joined South Bunbury Cycle Club. Racing in road and track racing until I went into National Service, then left the farm to work in the building trade in Bunbury and married Lauraine Rendell in 1955, who I had been courting for three years.

DENIS RICHARDS

MRS AMELIA FOWLER

Mrs Amelia Fowler, who in died 1953 (daughter of James Dagley Gibbs and his second wife, Alice Maria Parkes), noted that she had been associated with the early settlement at Ferguson, being “among the early pioneers who struggled under considerable difficulty to establish farming properties in the area”.

It continues, “the late Mrs Fowler had spent 65 years (she died aged 88) of her life at Ferguson. Mrs Fowler’s father, Mr Gibbs, was a building contractor in Bunbury and was also a lay reader at the Congregational Church and also at the Australind Church. After her wedding 68 years ago to the late John Charlton Fowler, of “Sergeant Dale” the late Mrs Fowler moved from Bunbury to establish her own home at Ferguson...She was always ready to assist the needy cases, and in the early days of road travel she had an open house where travellers were always made welcome...Mrs Fowler’s life was not a very easy one. She reared a family of 11 children and her household chores and work on the farm provided her with very little leisure time.”

A LOCAL NEWSPAPER OBITUARY- ORIGIN UNKNOWN

MY LIFE IN FERGUSON

Born at Wellington Mill, March 16, 1913, the sixth child and eldest son of Mary and William Ratcliffe of “Brampton Springs”, Ferguson, where I was taken straight from hospital and for many years after that I never went anywhere unless it was to see the doctor or dentist.

My parents were so busy earning a living and trying to make a farm for their young family, they never ever went out to any entertainment or enjoyment for themselves.

However, when I was about two months off the age of seven, I commenced school, which we had to walk to morning and night about four-and-a-half miles. We were very unfortunate when I first started school because we had a teacher who got his degree because he was a war cripple and really did not have quite the qualifications necessary for a school like the Ferguson School.

There were around 30 children in about seven different classes all in the one room. As you can imagine you would have to be very qualified teacher to carry out this duty. However, I went to school until about three months off the age of 14 when I left school for good with very poor education. When I left school all we had done mainly was work on the farm, which we were taught to do properly but this was not any help with your education.

About this time Jack Nuttall, who ran the Toronto house in Bunbury, had a big old draught horse running out on the farm. He asked Father if he could get the horse into Bunbury for him and he said, “Oh yes Bill will ride it in for you” and as my mother used to deliver goods, butter meat eggs etc into Bunbury and deliver it around every Thursday everything was set.

I had to ride the big old draught horse behind her when she had the buggy going into Bunbury. Everything went quite well, no problem at all, because I had done a lot of horse riding before this time, I was on horses from the time I was a small kid. When we had arrived in Bunbury mother had delivered things around the rest of the homes. We got down to the Victoria Street where she stopped where the two Miss Mitchells lived at the top end of Victoria Street and she said, “You can go on down, just take the second turn there and go into the back of Nuttall’s and deliver the horse”.

Well, that was quite okay, there was no problem with that and I thought nothing was wrong but as I rode across the intersection towards Bon Marche, one of the girls in the window doing something, rushed inside and must have said, "Come and have a look at this". They all rushed out onto the footpath and laughed. It was not because there was a horse going down the street, no doubt about that because there was nothing else but horses in those days, you never saw a car. It must have been that I looked so funny, this little wee thing like a pimple on a pumpkin going along on such a big horse. Nevertheless I delivered the horse to his yard and that day he give me a free meal for delivering the horse 20 miles into town.

Just about this time my father was doing improvements to the block he had near Dardanup. Any day that was a spare day he and two of my sisters and myself would get into the old cart and drive from home down to the block to do a day's work and then return home that night. On the days when we did not go down to the block it was not a free day, we always had work to do. The girls were found work to do and I was always sent out to do a bit of ring barking it was called then. It was knocking the bark off the saplings so they would die or else going around and cutting the suckers off the ones we had done the year before so there was never any free time.

As we were going to be busy at home for the next week, Father said if I liked I could stop down at the paddock where we had a little humpy and an Italian working and spend the week down there to help the chap with the work. I thought this was absolutely marvellous to get away for a break and I agreed yes I would go, so they took me down on a day when we went to do the work and I was prepared to settle in for a wonderful week. However after being used to being at home and all the ones around of a night when we went down there, there was no wireless and no gramophone, nothing to do at night after you had tea. It became that boring by the time the week was up I did not want any more holidays or working away down at the paddock.

So when they came back the week after, the first thing I did was pack up my goods and chattels and moved back home to the farm and after that just went down to the paddock any time any of the rest of them was going down to work.

This was during the winter months when we were not planting potatoes at home or ploughing to sow the oats or something like that. We went down there to do the work, but nevertheless when the summer months came on we done all

the work as usual at the beginning of the summer, such as digging potatoes or cutting hay and carted it all in.

BILL RATCLIFFE



Carting Hay - Ratcliffe brothers, pictured carting hay in the Ferguson Hills in the early 1930s.

RECOLLECTIONS of FARM LIFE at WELLINGTON MILLS

Kevan and his brother Ron Stone bought the 308-acre farm at the end of what is now Stone's Road, Wellington Mills in 1953.

It then consisted of three blocks, one of 200 acres, one of 100 acres and another of eight acres. Parts of the farm had been owned in the past by the Potters and the Ratcliffes.

The former owner, Fisher Muller, ran a mill on the property. Kevan bought out Ron's share of the farm and after we were married we moved onto the property in October, 1958. Most of the land was still covered with bush and scrub, mainly jarrah, redgum or marri, blackbutt and banksia.

Fisher Muller's mill operated until 1960 when a fire destroyed it on November 3, 1960.

We lived in the half-built weatherboard farmhouse that had been started by Fisher Muller. The only rooms completed were the lounge, the kitchen and a bathroom/laundry, which came off one end of the verandah. The toilet was in the backyard. We lived with three children and ourselves sleeping in the lounge room for several years. The house was gradually completed over 15 years, eventually comprising four bedrooms and a large lounge and kitchen. With four children by that time, we needed a big home.

The bathroom was renovated in 1972, the old copper removed and a modern bath, a new shower and tiles installed. Kevan dug in a new septic system and a further addition was made to the back of the house, coming off the verandah, to add a laundry area and bring the toilet inside (almost). The house is still standing and newly renovated by Perth owners.

In the beginning we were unable to survive off the property and Kevan needed to find other work for quite a few years.

Eventually we built a dairy and started milking cows as most other farms in the district had been doing for years. We started milking with 12 cows but numbers increased as land was cleared and put to pasture. At that time, cows were dried off during the summer. We bought a milk quota and from then milked cows all year round.

In the late 1970s we sold the quota and converted to beef production.

Although the early times were difficult financially, there was always enough food and during these years our diet consisted mainly of kangaroo, rabbit and wild duck. Kevan would bring the ducks home for me to pluck, clean and cook. After a few years I had had enough of the plucking and cleaning so told Kevan

I would only see to the cooking of them and after that the ducks became very scarce.

There were always plenty of potatoes and our kind neighbours supplied us with fruit and other vegies. We also managed to grow a small garden ourselves using the bath and washing water. Kevan also dug a small well from which we hand pumped into buckets and then onto the garden.

There was no question of growing a flower garden at this stage.

Our children attended Wellington Mills Primary School until it was closed at the end of 1971 and then they had to travel to Dardanup to the new school built there.

The farm has been broken up in recent years. Our daughter and son-in-law, the Calceis, bought the eight-acre block in 1988. We sub-divided the 200 acres into two blocks and sold both of them - one in 1997 to the Tyler family from Wyalkatchem and the other in 1998 to the Pullinger, Short, Johnston, and Watkins families from Perth. They have planted wine grapes on the property.

Our children were introduced to hard work very early in their lives and always helped in the dairy and feeding calves. They would also have stacked thousands of bales of hay and picked up tonnes of potatoes during the digging season. They also picked up sticks and rocks by the trailer load.

However, I don't think any of us could complain as we enjoyed extremely good health and every few years managed to get away for a holiday at Augusta, which we still do now but more often.

LILLIAN STONE, February, 2001



Ferguson School - believed to be the School house built in the early 1900s

SCHOOL - BRIEF HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN FERGUSON

The first record I have seen is - a Mr Joseph Farrell was tutor to Mr John Fowler's children from 1856 to 1860.

Presumably this took place on the Fowler property.

The next information came from a book called "The Brand on his Coat" written by Rica Erickson. It is a biography of some of WA's convicts. This mentions that a W Carmichael taught at Ferguson in 1865, TEH Browne from 1866 to 1869 and Mr T Beeko, also in 1869. These men were listed as Bond class men who taught in WA schools. A Miss Sarah A Gardiner is also

mentioned in 1869. This school was situated on the Gardiner property, which is opposite the Ferguson church.

At one stage school was also held in the back room of the church which was destroyed by fire in 1950. I have no record of the teachers or the period that this took place, except the Sarah Gardiner mentioned earlier.

The Upper Ferguson School was opened on January 1, 1893 as a Board School under the jurisdiction of the Wellington District School Board centred in Bunbury. The Education Department headed by a Cabinet Minister was not implemented until 1896. The road past the school was then known as the Kojonup Road.

The first application through the Wellington Board to the Central Board of Education in Perth was made on April 22, 1890, with the Local Board's endorsement and full recommendation. The applicants were Ephraim Gardiner, Richard Gardiner, James Carroll, W DeLaporte, H Flynn, Emma Gardiner, Alfred Wood, John Fowler and John Flynn. There was also a list of their children of school age. Nothing came of the application so they re-applied on November 17, 1890.

On January 14, 1891 the Assistant Inspector of Schools submitted his report, strongly recommending a School at Upper Ferguson be established, stating that the proposed school site of one chain frontage on the Kojonup Road was close to water and required little clearing, Mr Pat Slattery donating half an acre of land and the settlers willing to erect the school.

The efforts of the local community so impressed the Inspector General that he dispatched a special request to the Central Board for a sum of 60 pound for building material, as the settlers were not in a position to supply material or money, but were willing to give labour. The Central Board haggled with the parent group, limiting its contribution to 50% of the cost, or a minimum of 30 pound, the locals to provide materials and labour. The parents were delayed another year and granted permission to commence building. This was June 10, 1892.

Eventually after many delays, the building was constructed ready for school to commence on January 1, 1893. The Government subsidy amounted after all to

£23.19.8d. Furniture and apparatus cost the Government £17.8.7d. And £18 for the teacher's salary for the year, this to be supplemented by the pupils' fees of £8.17.3d.

I have no information on the teacher's living quarters except that it was converted to an extra classroom in 1913 when the present quarters were erected. The old quarters or second classroom was removed to Parkfield in 1923. The second school building was erected during the early 1900s. This building was eventually condemned and a transportable building was in use for a short period before the school was closed on December 17, 1971.

***HOWARD (Nugget) GIBBS, FROM INFORMATION FROM
WALTER GABLE***



Butterflies - school concert 1916: Rhoda Gibbs, Andrea Gardiner, Flossy Slattery, Mary Ratcliffe, Ella Gardiner, Silvia Skipworth. Front: Mona Bocker



School Concert 1916 - Frank Sherry, Flossy Slattery, Albert Gardiner, Lola Fowler, Jack Lowrie, Fred Sherry, Muriel Ratcliffe. Sitting: Aubrey Buckenara, Rhoda Gibbs. Sitting: (Queen) Ella Gardiner, Ruby Lowrie, Peter Buckenara, Noel Gardiner (with wig), Dick Wilson, Silvia Skipworth, Effie Gardiner. Kneeling: Mary Ratcliffe, Clarrie Gibbs. Front, sitting: Mona Bocker, Andrea Gardiner

HAVING CONTACTS

Having built the school, Miss A Buchanan was appointed to the position of teacher and an enrolment of 25 pupils was made up of 11 boys and 14 girls.

Rural schools erected in the 1890s usually included accommodation for the teacher's living quarters. The teacher's quarters provided at the Upper Ferguson, according to the Building file, sufficed until 1913 when they were replaced with new quarters. The old structure was converted into an extra classroom, which continued as such until in 1923, when it was removed to Parkfield.

Establishing a school in the 1890s was fraught with difficulties, especially in the newly settled farm areas that did not have direct vested interest of an elected Member of Parliament. It was a period too, of intense government cost cutting. The newly created State of Western Australia was involved in the state projects of railway construction, water supplies, the Fremantle Harbour and the construction of government buildings such as the museum and the library.

The Upper Ferguson, it would seem, struggled, as did many other newly settled regions on the outer fringes of the colonial Blue Blood Establishment.

WALTER GABLE



Ferguson School 1931-1932 - Standing: E (Jake) Gardiner, Dorothy Gardiner, Mavis Gibbs, Dulcie Grover, Fred Ratcliffe, Howard Gibbs, Marjorie Gardiner, Ernie Stephen, Eric Gardiner. Front: Enid Fowler, Bessie Ratcliffe, Jim Fowler, Betty Gardiner, Shirley Grover

STUDENT LIST FOR SCHOOL

“ To the Central Board of Education” Gentlemen,

We beg to request you will establish a Government School at the Upper Ferguson under the provision of the Education Act of 1871.

We submit the name of Miss Sherwood as the teacher, knowing her to be a person of good moral character and believing her to be competent to perform the required duties.

We have the honour to be, Gentlemen, Your obedient servants, Ephraim Gardiner, James Carroll, Richard Fowler, H Flynn, Emma Gardiner, Alfred Wood, John Fowler, John Flynn.

Parents	Distance	Children	Age	Religion
Ephraim Gardiner	2.5 miles	Louisa	12	Church of
		Elizabeth	9	England
		Julius	8	
Richard Gardiner	2 miles	Rose	14	Church of
		Christina	12	England
		George	10	
		Joseph	8	
James Carroll	2.5 miles	Rachele	13	Church of
		Henry	11	England
		John	9	
		Louisa	6	
Wm DeLaporte	1.5 miles	Thomas	6	
H Flynn	1 mile	Rachele	6	Roman Catholic
Emma Gardiner	2 miles	Christopher	14	Church of
		Beatrice	13	England
		Fanny	11	
		Lucy Emma	7	
Alfred Wood	2 miles	Sarah	9	Church of

Parents	Distance	Children	Age	Religion
		William	7	England
		Max	6	
John Fowler		Grace	14	Church of
		Flora Kate	13	England
		Elizabeth	10	
		Amy	8	
		Lynette	6	
John Flynn		Mark Terence	3	Church of
				England

TEACHERS OF THE UPPER FERGUSON SCHOOL

Year	Teacher	Sewing Mistress
1893	Miss AA Buchanan £48 p/a	
1894	Miss AA Buchanan, till September Miss BE Gilmour	
1895 1898	Mr MJ O'Dea £90 p/a	
1899 1901	Miss Marion Buchana £90 p/a	
1902	Miss Cora Anderson £130 p/a	
1903 1912	Miss Mary Jeffrey, till March £120 p/a Mrs Alice Hannant	
1913	Mr John Leeder £160 p/a	Dorothy Wilson
1914 1915	Mr Albert Cantwell £180 p/a	Sarah Cantwell
1916	Mr Joseph Dwyer	Sarah Cantwell
	Albert Cantwell enlisted for War Service Miss Ivy Gibbs, probationary teacher £24p/a	
1917	Ethel Branch £170 Miss Ivy Gibbs, probationary teacher £30p/a	
1918	Ethel Branch, part year	

Year	Teacher	Sewing Mistress
	Clive Hall, part of year Miss Ivy Gibbs, Monitor £50 p/a	
1919	Mr John Davis £200 p/a Miss Ivy Gibbs, Monitor £50 p/a	Nellie Davis
1920 1922	Mr John Davis	Nellie Davis
1923	Mrs Mildred Murdoch	
1924	Mr Fred Connelly £192 p/a	..
1931	Miss Loraine Cole, relief while Mr Davis sick Miss Sybil Elliot, relief while Mr Davis sick	Miss Ella Gardiner
1932	Mr Stanley Tonkin	Miss Mollie Boxall
1933 1934	Mr Stanley Tonkin	Mrs May Tonkin
1935 1939	Mr Lawrence Lambert £263 p/a	
1940 1944	Clare Boxall £329 p/a	Mrs Mollie Boxall
1945	Mrs Margaret Hilber	Miss Linda Strachan
1946 1948	Mr Walter Sontag £329 p/a	Miss Norma Fowler
1949	Mr William Kemp £585 p/a	Miss Cynthia Hardie
1950 1953	Mr Donald Atwell £470 p/a	Miss Anne Tooke
1954 1955	Mr Percy Punch	Mrs June Punch
1956 1957	Mr Peter Mills	Mrs Fleur Mills
1958 1961	Mr Ernest Kidbey	Mrs Edna Kidbey
1962 1966	Mr Gerard Droppert	Mrs Dorothy Fowler
1967	Mr Barry Cattach	
1970	Mr Barry McKeaig, relieved	Mrs Dorothy Fowler
1971	Mr Colin Smith	

WALTER GABLE

NO SHOES

I started school in 1928 at the age of seven years because I had to walk three miles with my older brother and sister.

We never wore shoes to school and it was very cold on frosty mornings.

We attended the Upper Ferguson School which was a one teacher school, averaging about 25 pupils. There were three or four in my class.

In my last year I saved up my money and with the aid of my father, was able to buy a bicycle to ride to school. It was a great treasure, more than the first car for today's teenagers I think.

Occasionally my Dad came in his Durant car to get us if it was very wet. We were always glad of a lift with anyone with a vehicle going our way.

We usually managed to have plenty of fun going to and from school and came home starving to raid the grapevines and fig trees or other fruit in season.

I left school as soon as I turned 14, to go and dig potatoes. That was done with a five pronged fork, no mechanisation in those days. So my working life began.

HOWARD (Nugget) GIBBS

BARE FOOT

I remember in 1937, at the age of six years, that I commenced my schooling at the now closed Ferguson School.

I would leave home early morning to walk the two and a half miles barefoot along a road, which was 80% covered by bush. The remainder open paddocks, mostly with large bulls and cows grazing. This for a little fellow like myself was a very harrowing experience.

COLIN RICHARDS "HILLSIDE" RICHARDS ROAD

THOSE COLD MORNINGS (mid 1950s)

I rode my bike to the Ferguson School each day with Elna and Lynette Gardiner, Donald Ratcliffe, my brother Bruce and Wayne and Keith Muller.

Being practical people my parents decided to buy me a 26" boy's bike with the bar across the top to learn to ride on so that it could be passed on to my two younger brothers. As a five-year-old my legs were not long enough to reach the pedals even with the seat removed and I had no hope of balancing as a precursor to riding. Finally they saw reason and traded the 26" bike in on a red 24" girl's bike, which just saw me through my primary school life.

I was forever breaking mudguards and getting punctured tyres. I wasn't the best rider in the world and had frequent crashes, which inevitably meant more skin off my knees. In the warm weather the abrasions would become infected and my knees seemed always to be covered in scabs. I still have scars to show for them today.

The cold weather was the bane of my life when I was riding my bike to school and we all used to wear knitted woollen gloves in an attempt to keep our hands warm. I can remember crying all the way to school one day when I forgot to take my gloves. The gloves used to wear out with monotonous regularity but I was lucky because I had an aunty who used to keep me well supplied.

RUTH HAYNES (Nee GIBBS)



Ferguson School 1949 - Mr Kemp and pupils at the old tennis court.

Back row - Avril Richards, John Gardiner, Barry Hardy, ?.

Second Row - Beverly Richards, Ron Mountford, Tom Hardy, Eunice Mountford, Judith Muller. Row 3 - Helen Creek, Dawn Ratcliffe, Deryl Gibbs. Front - Valerie Gardiner, Faye Ratcliffe, Norma Mountford, Betty Creek



Ferguson School 1924 - Teacher Fred Connolly.

Back: Fanny Lowry, Thelma Flynn, Cynthia Gardiner, Sam Gardiner, Doris Parkin, Bill Kerr, Harriet Ratcliffe.

Second row: Bill Ratcliffe, Hazel Flynn, Ken Gardiner, Belle Garcia, Reg Grover, Vivian Grover, Lionel Gardiner, Pearl Flynn.

Front: Arnold Gibbs, Beryl Gibbs, Fred Parkin, Daphne Grover, George Ratcliffe, Lynda Flynn, Strickland Gardiner. Sitting: Randal Gardiner, Ray Stephen, Ian Gardiner

Mr LAWRIE LAMBERT

Ferguson Primary School was opened on January 1, 1893 with 23 students. My father Guy Gardiner first attended in 1898.

My school career began in 1935, at Ferguson Primary, the attendance being about 25 students from grade one to grade six.

We rode our pushbikes three miles on gravel roads, well corrugated, punctures were common as were many spills resulting in lots of skin off knees and elbows. My first teacher was Mr Lawrie Lambert, a young Englishman, fresh from training college, who hated flies and snakes, which were very common. He was an excellent teacher and a great sport. He loved hockey, cricket, tennis and marbles. He would begin at 10.30am recess, pick sides for one or another sport. He was always involved, so much so, that many times lessons would not resume again until 1pm. He was instrumental in building a clay tennis court in the school ground, which took many hours of toil by pupils and himself. It produced some excellent players and many great tournaments were the result.

He was transferred in 1940 and was missed not only by the pupils but also by the residents of the district who held him in very high regard.

Our own five children attended the school until it eventually closed and transferred to Dardanup.

BRIAN S GARDINER



Ferguson and Wellington Schools, at Royal visit - Back: Dennis Richards, Murray Hardy, Fred Flynn, Les Gardiner, Fred Mountford, Avril Richards, Judith Fowler, Eileen (Dotty) McLeod, Jeanette Weetman, Lorraine Weetman.

Front: Ron (Boofy) Hardy, John Muller, Cecil Mountford, Ronnie Mountford, John Dow, John Gardiner, Ray Gardiner, Bob Dow, Tom Hardy, Coral McLeod, Beverly Richards, Val McLeod, ? Seated at front: Joyce Paget. Kneeling front right with hat: Ailsa Shaw.

WARM COCOA

The schoolroom had an open fire blazing during winter and because the majority of children came from dairy farms it was no problem to take a bottle of milk each day.

This we heated up in a billy over the fire to make cocoa to have with lunch. You had to be an expert to avoid lumps during the mixing process and to know when to take the billy off the fire so the milk did not boil over.

We had a clay tennis court at the school and during the tennis season we used to rush out at recess times to try and be first on the court to have a game. A convenient wattle tree on the sidelines was the perfect place to sit in to keep score if you weren't quick enough to get a game.

After school everyone would rush out and be on our bikes and on our way home before the teacher even got to the door. One headmaster's wife said she had never seen children leave so quickly. It wasn't that we didn't like school, it was just something everyone did. To achieve this fast getaway we had to put our cases on our bikes at afternoon recess.

Some children had a basket on the handle bars to put their case in, some had a carrier on the back with a spring loaded grabber, but I had to keep my case on with a leather strap around the carrier, through the handle and fastened with a buckle. Over the years my case became undulating on top caused by the strap being too tight. At least it didn't have holes in it like those who had a grabber and my case didn't often fall off.

RUTH HAYNES (NEE GIBBS)

SCHOOL BUS

I started driving a school bus at the age of 17, which was an International Van, used to convey high school students down to Dardanup to meet the bus coming from Donnybrook.

This vehicle belonged to my father Arnold Gibbs and I drove it from 1962-1964. I then started driving a three-ton Austin for Harry Wallace in 1980. In 1981 Harry bought a five-ton International bus. Boy!! I thought to myself, I am in the big time now. In 1982 we purchased the bus and contract from him. In 1988 a brand new seven-ton Hino was put on the run.

This vehicle survived the Valley for 11 years before it was replaced in 1999 with another new seven-ton Hino on air bag suspension, which is currently in use today. "Wow", what a difference from the days of the Austin.

I have now been driving for 20 years on the current contract with in excess of 600,000km, and I think I know the Ferguson road fairly well. I am now starting to carry grandchildren of some of those who I carried on Dad's old Inter van.

I have very fond memories throughout this period of time of all those children I have had the pleasure of taking to school. Maybe their memories of me of being a grumpy bus driver are not so memorable for them.

October 2000, Anne was awarded Bus and Coach Driver of the Year for Western Australia, sponsored by Mercedes Benz.

ANNE PIGGOTT (NEE GIBBS)



***International school bus - owned by Arnold Gibbs
and driven by his daughter Anne.***

MEMORIES OF SCHOOL DAYS and GROWING UP

The parents had a roster for school lunches on a Friday. I particularly remember the piping hot soup and fresh bread rolls. Seem to remember homemade apple pie too!

Calling local farmers to get rid of dugites - under the old school and under the shelter shed. Little kids weren't allowed to ride down the school hill, so one day I was walking my bike down the hill when a big snake slithered across the road in front of me and went on his way. Other kids were more scared than me cos I didn't really notice it.

Playing "Hatari" - someone was elected gamekeeper and the rest of us were the wild animals and the gamekeeper had to catch us and put us in his truck (the old truck donated to the school by Max Kerr)

Building cubbies in the reeds etc in the small creek at the back of the school grounds. There was always a challenge between the boys and girls regarding whose cubby was the best and definitely no boys at girls' camp or vice versa.

Getting (tinned) Carnation milk instead of fresh milk like the city kids did. Karen's (Jorgensen, nee Gardiner) came out of her bike basket one day while riding home and went between the spokes of her front wheel and down came Karen, bike and all at the Up and Down Hill.

Karen and I riding home from school in the rain one afternoon and this kindly man offering us a ride home in his truck. But we didn't recognise him and having been told about "Stranger Danger", refused. Dad told us years later that the man was George Chapman, of Wellington Mills, and that they'd had quite a chuckle over the incident.

Fridays we had to take our cup and face washer home - that meant good fun under the bridge at Kerr's corner on the way home. Often we'd play so long the bus from Bunbury with the high school kids would beat us home from school!

Mum said she'd pick up Karen, Colin, Barry and I from school on her way home from town but she was running late and assumed someone else would

have got us. So she drove past, much to our dismay - not only because by now it was getting dark, but more so because we'd miss that night's episode of "Bellbird".

Mr Smith and his punishing get fit regime, up the hill round the power pole at the "top" and down the other side. Also, as an avid golfer, he would hit golf balls into the paddock and we had to find them.

School sports training was always taken very seriously, we just had to beat those kids from Wellington Mill, Burekup, Bengier and the like. Training would start almost as soon as the school year - and winning the marching trophy was extremely important to all schools.

Our final school concert which closed Fergy for good in 1971. The stage was the verandah of the transportable school and in one act us girls had oversized hats put over us with faces painted on our bellies and we did a dance with partners. The guys had waistcoats in the same colour as our hats, I think that's how it went. I know we were afraid we'd fall over the edge but no one did.

Also, bonfire nights and the old weatherboard district hall, though I can't remember much about that, as I was only little when things all changed. There's lots of happy memories of Christmas tree nights and, later on, the many dances at the Ferguson Hall; music often supplied by Bardy and the team from Blue Velvet Rhythm in my teenage years. Mastering the Boston Two Step on a slippery floor was quite a feat.

Night tennis at the old courts near the hall. Us kids were told that we had to stay in our own cars but we used to sneak between cars and think our parents didn't know. We'd also lean out windows to talk to each other. Bed for us Gibbs kids was fashioned by a bench placed between the front and rear seats of the old FJ, to provide more room in the back!

In this Olympic year - memories of playtime Karen Jorgensen (Gardiner) and I. We used to take our dolls up the creek towards Ratcliffe Road and the waterfall, chuck 'em in and train them for the swimming events at the Olympics.

Dad often recalled the story of Terri Gibbs (Mountford) and I up the apple tree with the old bull looking on. We were terrified but the old bull was more interested in eating apples than “going for” us. Dad and Mum spent awhile chuckling at our misfortune before Dad came to the rescue.

Youth club at Wellington Mill with Ray Gardiner and others taking the reigns.

The Meckering earthquake and how the water tanks wobbled and we weren’t sure what was going on.

Mrs Dorothy Fowler teaching us our sewing skills.

CHRISTINE GIBBS, 2000

“VALDAREE VALDERAA”

One of my favourite memories of the Ferguson School days was when the newly-arrived Dutch teacher Mr Gerry Droppert would march we students, barefooted, up and down the Ferguson hills playing “Valdaree Valderaa” and other favourites on his “squeeze box”.

MERRILYN GARDINER

BUS RUN

The children of the Ferguson and Wellington Mills areas who reached secondary school age in the 1950s and early ‘60s were taken by a feeder service to meet with a bus travelling from Donnybrook to Bunbury.

The changeover point was Dardanup. This feeder service was run from its inception by Arnold Gibbs. In the early ‘60s it was apparent that numbers in the district were growing to a point where this system could no longer cope, so a school bus run was established.

The original bus tender was won by Cooper's bus service of Bengier and the route established was from Bunbury High School to a terminal at Wellington Mills via the Upper Ferguson Road. The first bus was a 34 seat Austin, powered by a Perkins diesel motor. It was a unit originally purchased by the Clontarf boarding school in Perth and had been involved in a horrific accident when fully loaded with students.

It collided with a tray top truck, which sliced through the side of the bus and caused terrible injuries to many of the students. The bus was duly repaired and repainted then purchased for the purpose of the high school run.

The bus run commenced at Wellington Mills at 7.30am, travelled to the junction of Wellington Mills Road and the Upper Ferguson Road then turned toward Bunbury. That route has never been changed and the present bus service uses exactly the same route.

Arrival at the unload point in Bunbury was at 8.35am. The disembarkment point was the war memorial in Stirling Street and the bus rank in Princep Street. The first driver to make the journey was Jim Kinnell, who after a short time, alternated with Alan Cooper. This arrangement lasted a very short time before Ray Gardiner was recruited and he carried on for seven years with a six-month break when Barry Cane was the driver. After Ray Gardiner, David Connor took over and drove until the contract was lost to another company.

Pick up in the afternoon was at 3.45pm and in Princep Street bus rank. The children would make their way down the hill in fairly brisk time and wait in a group for the arrival of the bus. Behaviour was always good and very little difficulty with children was experienced.

The bus was loaded with any children for Dardanup primary and those who attended special classes at Bunbury Central School. Also primary and secondary students for Marist Brothers College which is now Bunbury Catholic College, this was a boy's school, the female students for Catholic school were taught at the Central Convent in Wittenoom Street.

Discipline on the bus was by agreement between the driver and the students. The unwritten agreement was that if behaviour was considered less than acceptable the guilty bodies would miss their home stop and get off at the next stop in turn. This could, of course, represent a considerable walk. It was

seldom used but when it was it created long and heated discussions among the travellers, it was never raised with the driver unless it was considered that the wrong person had taken the blame.

Some of today's very senior citizens were brought into line during those days by this method. It must be said that, good humour was always the overriding factor in all of these instances.

There was indeed, a common respect between the students and the driver and jealously guarded loyalty between them was apparent. An incident to demonstrate this point took place one winter's day. The bus journey would commence in the afternoon at Princep Street loaded with high school and convent students.

Some primary students would be picked up on the way out of town, then the next stop would be at the Marist Brothers College near Wilkes Crossing, where Bunbury Machinery now stands. There were two sizeable bus shelters at this stop to accommodate substantial numbers of boys embarking or disembarking on or from various buses travelling in and out of Bunbury.

It happened that boys who were waiting for later buses at this stop would enthusiastically bid farewell to the departing buses and students, they did this by hurling apple cores, orange peel, small water bombs etc at the windows of the stationary bus while the travellers got on. They did this in a planned manner, usually waiting until the last student was on and the bus was about to move. Sometimes nothing at all would happen and complacency on behalf of the already seated children would cause them to leave windows open. This was of course an invitation and on such occasions a barrage of fruit bits would be pelted with good aim, bringing about cries of foul and threats of revenge.

It was an intolerable position, according to the senior students on the bus (they always sat up the back). They made an appeal to the driver and a plot was hatched between them. The bus was fitted with a full size central rear door for emergency exit only. This door was never touched by any person on the bus unless a dire emergency was occurring. The seniors made the plea that this Marist Brothers scene was an emergency. The driver agreed and a plan was made. The boys grouped at the front and rear of the bus and the instant the vehicle stopped at the crowded bus stop both rear and front doors flew open

and the boys rushed out roaring at the top of their voices and causing a scene of panic.

The unexpected noise and action was too much for the boys on the ground and they flew in all directions at maximum speed. Some went into the swamp, which existed where the row of shops now stands, others went back towards the school while some simply hid in bushes nearby.

No one was ever in any danger but the chase and frightened faces had to be seen to be believed. Everyone returned to the bus and great excitement was evident that they believed they had solved the problem. They were right, nothing of that nature ever happened again.

The bus run carries on to this day and is instrumental in creating many life-long friendships of the travellers now as it has done since those first wonderful years.

RAY GARDINER



Ferguson School 1957 – Back, Norma Mountford, Mavis Tussler, Valerie Gardiner, Faye Ratcliffe, Arthur Tussler, Middle, Meryl Ratcliffe, Linda Tussler, Anne Gibbs, Ken Tussler, Peter Prout, Wayne Muller, Front, Dianne Hardisty, Donald Ratcliffe, Harry Prout, Ruth Gibbs, Pat Gibbs, Keith Muller

DEVIL'S GRIP

I started at the Ferguson School in 1947.

I had turned six, six months before but having so far to ride my bike to school, Dad and Mum left it until the next year.

I walked through the paddocks to where I had left my bike at Hal and Effie Gibbs' place, as it was too hilly as a small girl to ride to my home.

After school, I would return to Uncle Hal and Aunty Effie (as I called them) to leave my bike there. They would have a lovely afternoon tea awaiting me then I would leave for my journey through the paddocks with a sugar bag with the bread and mail. One morning I had walked through the paddocks and was within 400 metres of Gibbs' place and I needed to go to the toilet, so I walked all the way back home, which was approximately two miles. Of course, I was hoping Dad might feel sorry for me and run me to school, but NO, they were still busy milking cows.

On the way to school on my bike, I often caught up with Bobby Gardiner and rode with him. Me only being young, he used to tease me terribly. There was an old man (Mr Page) who lived in Dardanup and often walked up the Ferguson. I was so frightened of him. One day Bobby dropped my coat near him so I would have to go near him.

I had my cousin Norma Mountford staying with me while her Mum and Dad (George and Vera Mountford) were on holidays. I taught Norma to ride a bike. One morning we were riding to school, she was going really well, I was praising her. The more I praised her, the faster she went. We were approaching "Devil's Grip" and she couldn't stop and went straight into a strainer post and knocked herself out. I was so frightened and thought she was dead. Luckily along came Jack Hardisty on his bike and he attended to her, then Fisher Muller, who was in a car, took her home. That was the end of my teaching bike riding lessons.

One of the most memorable things was Hilda Gardiner teaching Derryle Gibbs, Val Gardiner and myself the piano. Hilda always gave us a choice of morning

tea. My favourite was watercress sandwiches. I never made it as a pianist, but did enjoy my morning teas and we all loved Hilda.

I became a Sunday school teacher with Judith Muller (nee Fowler). I did manage to play the organ. I treasure those years. My brother Don was in my class and he used to play up on me, so it was in the corner for him. Years before, I treasure the memories I have of when I went to church and Miss Gladys Gardiner would drive her little Morris ute to church.

She would be dressed so beautifully, gloves, hat etc. Then in 1987 I started work at a frail aged home in Donnybrook, Tuia Lodge, and Miss Gardiner was a resident there. I helped look after her for many years and listened to her fascinating stories, until she shifted to Bunbury Nursing Home. She now rests in the Ferguson Cemetery.

DAWN JACKSON (NEE RATCLIFFE)



Ferguson School 1968 - Fourth row: Don Gardiner, Steve Gibbs, Greg Gibbs, Ken Gardiner, Peter Gardiner, Gwynfor Ashton, Stephen Mountford. Third row: Merri Gardiner, Rhonda Fowler, Lyndie Gibbs, Lyn Butcher, Annette Mountford, Julie Gibbs, Janet Gardiner, Susan Mountford, Allyson Mountford. Second row: Karen Gardiner, Christine Gibbs, Vicky Gibbs, Tracy Butcher, Terri Mountford, Sherilyn Fowler, Christine Mountford. Front: Bill Kessell, ?, Mark Fowler, Ray Mountford.



Ferguson School 1965 - Back row: Teacher Mr Gerry Droppert, Grahame Droppert, Paul Fowler, Peter Gardiner, Peter Butcher, Greg Gibbs, Ken Gardiner, Steve Gibbs. Middle row: Lyn Butcher, Annette Mountford, Annette Droppert, Wendy Gardiner, Julie Gibbs, Janet Gardiner. Front: Stephen Mountford, Merrilyn Gardiner, Rhonda Fowler, Lyndie Gibbs, Susan Mountford, Allyson Mountford, Mark Fowler, Donald Gardiner

CORRESPONDENCE

I started my schooling with correspondence, there were four of us doing this in 1923 as it was considered to be too far to get to school.

We lived in a four-room house, Agnes and Jack in the front room and me and Bertha in the kitchen doing our lessons, with mother supervising.

I am afraid I used to play up a bit too much. My work would come back for a second time as the teacher refused to mark it, as it was too untidy. With this mother comes back into the kitchen with the paper and saying, "Here it is again, if it comes back like this again you are off to school."

Mum stormed off to do some more housework and when she was out of sight, I said, “Don’t worry Bertha she won’t send us to school” (she used to bluff a lot with us kids and we were awake to that). Mum heard it.

She said, “THAT’S IT, YOU’RE OFF TO SCHOOL, MONDAY.” And we did.

It was August and I had just passed into third standard (year four now), Bertha was the year below me.

I would come home bragging about how great school was to the other kids, still doing correspondence at home. After begging Mum to let them go to school, Agnes and Jack went to school in January. Jack was big enough by then to walk to school, he was seven. Agnes, although 18 months older, ended up in the same year as I because she had not completed the year I was starting. So we spent the rest of our school years in the same class.

TERRI GIBBS
FROM TAPES RECORDED WITH GEORGE SKIPWORTH

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS/CAMPS

A highlight of my early schooling at Ferguson involved a really exciting trip to Perth. Mum even made me a new outfit - it must have been in the latter part of the year because I actually had the choice of wearing a newly-made dress or new, lavender-coloured “hot pants” with a frilly white blouse. Hot pants were the in- thing, so they got the go-ahead. Two new outfits probably meant the Brunswick Show (though we rarely went to that) or Christmas Tree were fast approaching - we always got a new outfit for the Christmas Tree.

It was an early start as we caught the Australind train for our journey to Perth. The trip took a few hours, but we didn’t care - for many of us, I’m sure it was our first really big train ride! From memory we toured the newly-built Council House in the centre of Perth. That was particularly memorable because the lift went really fast. I think we also went to the Perth Zoo.

From March 12-28, 1971, the schoolkids from Wellington Mills and Ferguson joined students from Gairdner River and Newdegate at the Education Department's Point Peron camp school (near Rockingham, I think). Bower Bird that I am, I still have a copy of my "official" camp magazine which tells me that 107 children attended the camp. Our headmaster Colin Smith and Wellington headmaster Allan Ward had parent helpers in Dorothy Fowler (Ferguson), Chrissie Wight and Dot Bennett (Wellington) and were joined by parent helpers and teachers from the other schools as well as teachers' college trainees, physical education and camp staff. It was a fabulous two weeks for us kids from the country, many of whom had never experienced anything like it before.

We were housed in big dormitories and were marked on how well we kept them tidy, and how well we made our beds. I can remember how upset a lot of us were when one particular girl (not from Ferguson or Wellington) won the bedmaking competition because we all knew that the older girls and a parent had made it for her!

We were encouraged to join different clubs and we had swimming lessons and day outings.

Clubs included sport, nature, dance and drama, gymnastics, and a radio club. We also had jobs like setting tables and serving meals, cleaning, and peeling vegetables. At night, there would be dances and games.

To end our camp, we enjoyed a concert, with items from different classes and feature presentations from the four schools. We were encouraged to write about our experiences and many of the "little stories" were placed in the camp magazine. It's fun reading them all these years later, to remind me of the innocence and freshness of childhood.

CHRISTINE GIBBS

These descriptions were written by senior pupils from both schools for inclusion in the Point Peron camp school magazine.

Upper Ferguson

Upper Ferguson School is situated in a quiet and pretty area about seven miles north east of Dardanup. Since the school opened in 1893 there have been three school buildings.

The original building was replaced in the early 1920s with a brick building, which is still standing and is used by the present school children for some school activities. School is now held in a new transportable building, which was opened in September 1970.

It is anticipated that in 1972, this school, together with the neighbouring schools of Wellington Mills, Waterloo and Dardanup will close and the pupils from these schools will go to a new “cluster” school, which is to be built in Dardanup. At present, Ferguson has 12 pupils from grades one to seven.

The Ferguson district nestles at the foot of the Darling Range about 15 miles south east of Bunbury, which is the main shopping centre for the people of the district. There is no actual town of Ferguson. The only buildings are the school and a hall about a quarter of a mile apart.

The area is very hilly and extremely pretty, especially in winter when everything is green. The people of the district are nearly all involved in cattle farming - either beef or dairy - as the climate and the country are very suitable for this. There is a good supply of water with many farms sitting astride the Ferguson River. Although they are only 15 miles from the large Wellington Dam, the people cannot draw water from it and therefore all drinking water is from tanks or private dams.

Dairy farming makes it difficult for the farmers to participate in sport as they have to milk cows morning and evening, consequently only individual members of the community compete in golf, tennis, hockey, cricket and football. There are no district teams and most players travel to Bunbury, Capel or Donnybrook for their sport.

Badminton is played in the local hall and has a large following because it is played at night after milking is completed. The children of Ferguson school

enjoy sport and for the past four years have won both champion school and champion marchers pennants.

There are many wild animals and birds around Ferguson as there is still a great deal of timber left on the farms and in the forestry reserves. In a short period, one could see 20 or more varieties of birds, ranging from the tiny blue wren to the large barn owl and the even larger wedge tailed eagle.

Probably the most common animal is the possum which has become quite a nuisance in many houses due to its habit of living in the ceiling and making scratching noises and fighting during the night hours.

Outside activities of the Ferguson children include a basketball club in Dardanup, seven miles away, and a youth club in Wellington Mills, five miles away. Children can be taken to swimming at Bunbury which is only a short drive on a good bitumen road.

***SENIOR PUPILS OF UPPER FERGUSON SCHOOL, POINT
PERON CAMP MAGAZINE 1971***



Ferguson School 1964

Wellington Mills

Once a bustling timber town of 2000 people, Wellington Mills is now a small, scattered group of houses nestled in the Darling Ranges.

A few tall jarrah trees and the Forest Department's station are the only links with a short but industrious past.

Today, all that remains of the old townsite is the old weatherboard library and billiard saloon, now used as a hall, the spacious house, with its servants' quarters and palm trees that belonged to the mill manager, and the small post office which also serves as a store.

These three, plus a church, a house and the school are all clustered in a valley surrounded by steep grass covered hills.

Wellington Mills is a five-year-old classroom. The original school was burned in a fierce bushfire, which destroyed most of the town in 1950.

Two miles from the school is the Forestry station with its six houses, offices and garages for equipment.

To travel from Bunbury to Wellington Mills, one passes through Picton Junction, Dardanup and Upper Ferguson. Two miles from Dardanup the bitumen road meets the Ferguson River and follows its winding course for another 10 miles to where two streams join and form the river's head. At the junction of these streams is the town settlement.

Nearby on Mt Lennard is the transmitter for TV channels 3 and 5. Below this flows the Collie River with its beautiful forest clothed stretches of water. On the bank of the river is the army's jungle training centre and a few miles up stream is the Wellington Dam, the largest water storage in the State.

Heavy rainfall and excellent soil gives this area thick bush and giant trees. Jarrah and blackbutt remain despite heavy falling in the past. Marri or red gum are very common. The pinus-radiata variety of pine tree is being planted with extremely good results.

Amongst the timber grow numerous varieties of flowering bushes and shrubs.

With a climate and soil such as this area has, good pastures can be grown for dairy and beef cattle. This form of farming has almost completely replaced the sheep farming, which opened up the area four or five generations ago.

Whilst timber milling is fast disappearing, the felling of smaller trees for poles for telegraph and electricity lines is still taking place. In a few years, pine trees planted 15 years ago will be ripe for felling.

Each day milk leaves the area for the milk factory at Harvey and frequently beef cattle are trucked to local and Perth abattoirs.

The dense bush provides a home for many forms of wildlife. Animals such as brush and grey kangaroos, rabbits, possums and foxes are common; reptiles and insects of wide variety are easily seen. The bird life covers a great variety ranging from the great eagle hawk and emu to the tiny blue wren and scarlet robin. Gilgies and marron are to be found in the many streams.

Wellington Mills is a fine place to live. Close to the large town of Bunbury, one has the quiet of the country with the wonders of nature and beauty all around.

It is a healthy and beautiful home for the 15 children who live there.

***COMPILED FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED AND
ARTICLES WRITTEN BY THE CHILDREN OF WELLINGTON
MILLS PRIMARY***

SCHOOL, POINT PERON CAMP 1971



Last class - Ferguson School closed in 1971. Ferguson, Wellington Mill and Waterloo children all went to Dardanup after this. The transportable school building can just be seen, this was built after the old wooden one was condemned. Pictured: Robyn Gardiner, Don Gardiner, Barry Gibbs, Karen Gardiner, Michael Telini, Tracy Butcher, Val Woods, Christine Gibbs, Linden Telini, Stephen Mountford, Andrea Telini, Beth Fowler, Colin Gibbs, Terri Mountford, Mel Woods, Jon Woods, Louise Gardiner, Mark Fowler.

Teacher Colin Smith took the photo.

THE LAST TEACHER

My first impression of Ferguson was of its beauty and peacefulness.

The school site was idyllic, even in the middle of summer at the beginning of 1971. The house was quite fascinating because of its age and its positioning on

the side of the hill with the front of the house virtually built at ground level and the back of the house some 10 or 12 steps above the ground. In the 12 months we were there we only ever opened the front door twice as far as we can remember. Anyone who visited us always drove into the school ground and across the netball court. There wasn't even a recognisable path to or from the front door and the little front gate was not opened while we were there.

By the obvious lack of signs to show otherwise, I gather many of our predecessors did not use the front door either. It was quite fascinating to sit on the bed in the main bedroom and bend down as low as you could so that by looking up you could see the milk trucks go past along the road only metres away and level with the roof of the house.

The second memory is our surprise when entering the lounge room for the first time and finding it full of silk worm cocoons. As I was later told, these were a result of a project which my predecessor Barry Cattach had been running in the school. He told me he had left them because he thought I might want them but we spent considerable time clearing them out of every nook and cranny in the room, especially around, and in, the fireplace and chimney.

Before Ferguson, we had been at a small Wheatbelt school of Kweda, which was between Brookton and Corrigin. We were in the house for a full five days before we saw any signs of the human residents, and that was the dust of a car as it sped by on the road about 300 yards away. After a full seven days we saw the locals playing tennis at the courts about a 100 yards away but no one showed any sign of seeing our car in the driveway or recognising that someone was in the house.

When they all left at the end of the day the last car drove over to the house and the occupants introduced themselves. How different it was at Ferguson where only two hours after we arrived, Jenny Gardiner drove into the grounds and parked on the netball court. She introduced herself, gave my wife two buckets of tomatoes and invited us down to her place to have a shower, as the water situation at the schoolhouse was far from satisfactory.

Barry Cattach had apparently been raising some calves and some of them had scours. As there was no shed, he kept them under the house where there was plenty of headroom. Unfortunately, the combination of cow manure and fodder was also a great attraction to the rats of the district and we had some huge

specimens in the roof and running around inside the unlined sleep-out where I had my desk and bookshelves set up to use as a study. I approached the Government Employees' Housing Authority representative in Bunbury and told him of the problem, as we were concerned for the health of our six-month-old baby (and ourselves). His solution was to send out a pest control representative who placed two packets of Ratsack in the ceiling and gave me a spare one in case we needed it. I placed the spare in the study and paused during my studies that night to watch a couple of very large rats tear the box open and pig out on the poison.

When all three packets of poison had been consumed I again reported the infestation to the GEHA, but this time to the manager in Perth, as I had to see him on another matter which I will mention later. On my return to the house, I was visited by another pest control officer who threw a liberal amount of 1080 rabbit poison into the ceiling. The rats disappeared pretty quickly from that day and we saw no further signs of them. Surprisingly, we had no odours from the rats, which obviously died, and we can only presume that they went into the bush before dying.

I have mentioned previously that I went to Perth to see the GEHA manager and that the water situation at the house was far from satisfactory. There were three 1000-gallon tanks with bases level with the back verandah floor. From these the water was piped to the bathroom, kitchen (on the same level) toilet and washhouse, both of which were at ground level. As all three tanks were coupled up it meant that once the water level got down to the level of the upstairs taps no water would run through them, although water was still available in the toilet and washhouse. Barry told us that, once this occurred, his family used to heat water in the copper in the laundry and carry it by bucket up the 12 steps and into the bathroom. I decided we were not going to do that so I asked the manager to supply a pressure pump to be fitted into the pipe between the tanks and the upstairs outlets. He did not know what a pressure pump was but while I was in his office he rang the Bunbury representative, told him what I wanted and ordered him to supply it.

In due course the rep turned up with an electrician and a plumber and they wandered around talking about heights of tank stands, electrical cables etc so I once again explained that the school was closing at the end of the year and all I wanted was a pressure pump. They must have decided I was nuts because they paid no attention and a week later the plumber and two apprentices arrived

with a tank stand and tank from a school which had closed down somewhere just north of Augusta. I can never remember its name, something like Dudarding. They worked for four days and then an electrician and two more apprentices worked another full day. At the end of a week we had a large tankstand, a tank, a pump to pump water from the existing tanks up to the new one, a new cistern and lots of electrical wiring and extra pipes. At the end of the year the house and land were sold and between the closing of tenders and the purchase date someone went and stole just about everything that had been put in, including the toilet bowl. And they had to be all replaced again as per the tender documents, so the Government paid a lot of money, twice, when all I wanted was a \$90 pressure pump to be fitted and a bit of electrical work.

In my first week at the school I found that I had to carry out what I consider to be the worst duty I ever had to do as a teacher. The old school toilets still operated on the pan system and it was my job to clean those pans each week for which I was paid the princely sum of 20c per pan. I had to first dig a hole big enough to hold all the contents of the three pans, which were then emptied into the hole. The hole was then quickly covered over and the pans were washed out. I used to pour phenyl and water into the bottom of each pan to try to keep the odour reasonable for the next week.

During the winter I used to go to golf at Donnybrook on the weekend and I developed a very sore muscle high on the back of my left shoulder near my neck. My wife Jan tried unsuccessfully to get me to give up golf until it got better but to no avail. However, I missed one weekend of golf for some reason or other and my shoulder was very sore on the Monday. To my relief we were able to trace the problem to the activity of digging in the clay soil when emptying the toilets. Being left handed on the shovel, I was lifting too much clay in each shovel load.

By taking smaller bites of the clay each time I soon cured the problem and was able to continue golf with a clear conscience. Incidentally, while talking about golf, I should mention that travelling to and from the course with Keith Butcher and Syd Gardiner was one of the highlights of each week. We ended up betting 20 cents each day with the losers paying the winner. It was a very small sum of money but became quite a talking point at the golf club and it was surprising how many members would meet you as you came off the last green to find out whether your score was better than the two who had already finished. Of course, the most important aspect of this was not the money as

winning the day gave you crowing rights for the trip home. You could say that the toilet pans more than paid for the losses and if I jagged a win (which was rare against those two pirates) I was able to nearly double the toilet money.

One of the most notable things about Ferguson was the generosity of so many of the residents. We found that out in so many ways but none more so than when the apples came into season. We had so many offers of Granny Smith apples that we were embarrassed to accept them.

But after finally giving in and picking, what we thought, was a huge amount we were flooded with apples from other people and had to take a huge bag up to relatives in Perth to avoid wasting them. At one stage we had two tea chests full of apples on the verandah by the back door. We were upset when we came out one morning and one of us picked up a lovely big apple from the top of one of the boxes and went to bite into it. Before the bite was taken we noticed that a large part of the apple, and some others as well, had been eaten and we thought our rat friends had come back.

However, that evening our little dog was very agitated and was barking at something outside. When I took the torch to have a look I found her at the top of the steps barking at something up above her but away from the house. When I shone the torch up where she was looking I found a really large possum, with a white tip to his/her tail, sitting on top of the ventilator pipe from the toilet. Apparently that species of possum is quite rare and the Ferguson area was one of the few places they could be found, or so I was told. I never checked to find out the accuracy of that though. To avoid us finding any more half eaten apples in the boxes, each night I used to take two or three smaller apples and reach up and place them in the gutter above the verandah so the possums did not have to come down to get them. The animals must have appreciated the move because we never had another apple eaten from the box.

The stupidity of the bureaucracy was never better demonstrated than with the distribution of the school milk to the Ferguson school. In those days, all children attending primary school in WA were given a free small bottle of milk each morning. Remembering that Ferguson was in the middle of a flourishing dairy farming area it would have been reasonable to assume that the children would be easily, and readily, supplied with high quality milk but this was not the case.

I cannot remember whether the bulk milk collecting contract from the local dairies was held by Brownes or Masters but whichever it was, the other had the contract to supply the school milk. For some reason or other, the supplier was not allowed to bring a truck onto the collector's run. Because we could not be paid for making a trip into Dardanup every day to collect the milk, the powers-that-be made the decision that the children would be supplied with canned milk which the teacher (me) could mix up at the prescribed proportion with water and give it to the children in that manner. The parents decided that it would be easier to simply distribute the cans to them once every month or so and they could take the responsibility for giving their own children the fresh milk which they had on most of the farms anyway. I think there were a lot of recipes going around where canned milk was used.

Jan was kept pretty busy looking after our young baby but she also felt frustrated that she had been made to leave school half way through the leaving year (year 12 nowadays). Her mother was a widow and she felt that Jan should leave school and earn some money the way her older sister had done. Jan decided to finish leaving English by external studies and spent much of what little spare time she had studying for the exam at the end of the year. Becoming pregnant with our second child early in the year made things all the more difficult but she battled on to a successful result but there were plenty of traumas along the way. Not the least of these was her fear of spiders, and there were some really good specimens of the furry variety around the house. She managed to find several on different occasions when she took the washing off the line and put her arm into the sleeves of jumpers or cardigans to turn them the right way out. It was surprising how those spiders found their way into the warm sleeves.

They just about succeeded in driving her into a nervous wreck. This was made even worse just before the big exam day. She was often having nightmares about the spiders and these became worse towards the end of the year and she became quite ill. One of the doctors in Bunbury told her she had a heart complaint which made her feel really bad but we went to get a second opinion she was told she had pneumonia with pleurisy and was put in hospital for a couple of days until the drugs took effect. Once she was better, the nightmares left but she still has horrible memories about washing days in Ferguson. (About the only negative memories we have of the place).

We thoroughly enjoyed living in the schoolhouse and there were some really fascinating aspects of the place, not the least of which was the huge brick fireplace and chimney. This served the oven in the kitchen, a big open fire in the lounge room and another in the main bedroom. In fact, the whole house had dropped away from this brick structure so that the floor around the fireplace had not moved but the rest sloped away towards the corners and outer walls of the house.

We had the small kitchen table against the wall under the window and anything round, such as a pencil or marble, if placed on this table would simply roll into the wall and drop onto the floor. No containers of liquid such as glasses of water, jugs of milk or cups of tea could be filled and then put on the table because the slope would mean that the fluid would run over the lip onto the table. This slope did have one big advantage for me in the lounge room. If I wanted to practice my putting for golf (and I certainly needed it) I could putt along the wall containing the fire place and the ball would roll away from the wall and end up in the corner diagonally opposite where it started.

It made putting quite interesting but I think my game was beyond help because the time spent practising never showed up as improvement in my scores.

As we had never had much to do with farm animals but both of us love animals of all shapes and sizes. It was fascinating for us when the paddock around the school was used to agist a group of cattle. The house garden consisted mainly of a lawn of overgrown kikuyu grass which was too thick to cut with a lawn mower.

We managed to keep it in check to some degree by getting two sheep, which we tethered on the “lawn” and they kept it to a reasonable length. However, the cattle soon realised that the grass was greener on our side of the fence and they used to line up breasting the fence, especially early in the morning or at dusk. It gave us great pleasure to go out and pull large tufts of grass and feed them over the fence but the fun really started when one of them became too eager to reach the grass on its own and fell through the stranded wire fence into the house block.

This happened several times during the year and it was quite a task to herd the animal up the school driveway and out onto the road so that it could be guided down to the entry gate into the paddock 100 metres or so down the road.

I was the last teacher-in-charge of the school before it closed down and amalgamated with Waterloo, Wellington Mills and Dardanup at the new school built in Dardanup. I think that a great pity that such a special small country school was to lose its identity purely on the basis of financial expediency.

The Education Department only had to pay one principal and some teachers instead of two principals, two teachers-in-charge and some teachers and there was a reduction in duplication of services and stock. From my point of view there was only one good point about the closing of the school and that was purely selfish. I was told the school was going to close when I was appointed so I was prepared well in advance. At the end of the year I had to get together all left over stock in the form of books, pads, reading books, duplicators etc and deliver them to the new school.

All records, departmental forms etc had to be sent to the Education Department to be placed in the archives. Sorry, I can't recall what happened to the Honour Board that was mentioned. I seem to remember seeing it but thought I would have given it to Dardanup school or sent it to the Department. The more I think about it, because I would hate to think I had caused it to get lost, the more I get the impression that maybe one of the locals was given it to place in the hall or in the church. Maybe someone in the shire would know if it had been given to it.

COLIN SMITH



School Centenary – Cecil Mountford and Nug Gibbs in front of the old school site January 1993



Teachers – 3 of the teachers that attended the Ferguson School centenary, L to R Percy Punch, Lawrence Lambert, Gerard Droppert, Cecil Mountford MC.



Ferguson Halls – Old and the new 1966



Ferguson hall 1940s



Demolition begins 1966

FERGUSON AGRICULTURAL HALL

The Ferguson Agricultural Hall was built in 1905, situated on the lower end of the Ferguson Valley. It served the farming community as a venue for many varied occasions such as dances, weddings, annual school Christmas trees, euchre parties etc. Also a meeting place for many district events.

Records from October, 1916 show a public meeting was held for the purpose of forming a hall committee. The names of many district identities are recalled being CF Flynn, B Slattery, P Buckenara, W Bocker, Ephraim Gardiner and others.

A collection for funds was undertaken and the sum of 15 shillings and sixpence was collected. Accounts for payment totalled nine shillings and seven pence being for various expenses and insurance.

During World War II Red Cross dances were held each month and visitors from far and wide would arrive, dance to music provided by different bands, some good, others only fair. The big attraction was the sumptuous suppers provided by the local ladies, dozens of cakes, cream puffs, lamingtons, sausage rolls etc. These functions were always a great financial success. As time progressed, the hall fell into obvious stages of disrepair and in August, 1964 after much deliberation the residents decided to construct a new building. A busy bee carried out demolition of the old hall. All materials were salvaged, much of the old timber, still in good condition, was placed in lots together with roof iron and flooring. An auction was advertised and held on site, the Local Elders auctioneer Mr Bernie Nuttall did a splendid job extracting over £400 for the old material. That money was used to purchase 80 new chairs for the new building.

Plans for the new hall were drawn up and a loan of £5000 was raised to be funded by property owners in the East Ward of Dardanup Shire. Mr Ron Butcher submitted the prepared tender and work soon began. Various residents put the materials on site with their own trucks at no cost and working bees were held to carry out other requirements, which enabled the building to be erected within the funding loan.

Opening day arrived, being February 14, 1966, conversion date for decimal currency. Mr Iven Manning, the local MLA, officiated and Mr Charles Flynn cut the ribbon for official entry. The new building was filled to overflowing and judged a huge success.

As in former years many functions are held with badminton being most popular. A stage was added later, plus a few minor alterations.

The new building was named Ferguson District Hall.

BRIAN S GARDINER

THE LOCAL DANCE

Mrs Hilda Gardiner was a great identity of the Ferguson District. Many times she held afternoons at her home for the ladies of the district, often for the Anglican Guild, or to arrange a special function.

She was my aunt and she would take me out to her home for a weekend when I was a student at the Bunbury High School in 1940.

Because it was wartime a dance was held every month in the Ferguson Hall to raise funds for the war effort.

We always wore long dresses and, as I had nothing like that, Auntie Hilda always managed to find me something nice to wear. I well remember getting ready by candlelight to attend the dances.

The suppers supplied were always sumptuous, and a lot of work for the local ladies.

Of course, as a young girl, these occasions were delightful to me, especially as there were quite a number of young men in the district. It was there that I first met my future husband, Howard Gibbs.

DORRIE GIBBS (NEE MCSWAIN)

RABBITS IN THE HALL

Tennis we played on Sunday on two hard courts across the road from the Ferguson Hall. We played against Wilga, Lyalls Mill, Noggerup and Yabberup clubs.

Badminton was played in the hall, also. To make up a team everyone played from 10 years to 60 years and it was enjoyed by all. The hall floor was very low one end where rabbits had dug a burrow. One wise crack was heard to say as he stood down that end, "We should win this game, we've got the wind behind us."

JUDY TOOKE



Ferguson Junior Cricket Team mid 1940's – Back, Gerald Hardy, Ron Donnelly, Colin Richards, Dennis Richard., Middle, Fred Flynn, Fred Mountford, Bob Chitty, Les Gardiner, front, Bob Gardiner, Cecil Mountford, Barry Hardy, Syd Fowler.

JUNIOR CRICKET

During 1947/48/49 we used to play games between two Donnybrook teams, behind the Ferguson Hall in a cow paddock.

Always a bit short of players, so no trouble getting a game. Sometimes we would invite a couple of kids from Dardanup to make up the numbers.

When it was our turn to travel to Donnybrook we would pile into the back of a ute and off we would go. Ralph Gardiner and Charlie Flynn come to mind as two of our drivers.

From those very modest games, some very good cricketers emerged, notably Barry Shepherd who went on to captain the State and play Test cricket.

GERALD HARDIE

PARROT SOUP

28 Parrot or Black Cockatoo 6 parrots cut in half

Soak in salt water for at least 1 hour, longer the better

Rinse and boil until tender, with 1 teaspoon of thyme, ½ cup pearl barley, 1 small onion, salt and pepper to taste

3 pints of water may need a little more while cooking Serves four people

Mum used to use bread croutons with this soup. Very tasty!

LAVINIA GARDINER (NEE GIBBS)



Ferguson hockey - Standing: Brian Gardiner, Victor Gardiner, Neville Gardiner, Howard Gibbs, Bump Tooke, Keith Butcher, Sam Gardiner. Sitting: Dick Gardiner, Ron Prout, Murray Hardie, Arthur Headley, Jake Gardiner, Tony Forrest



Ferguson hockey premiers 1936 - Back row: D Prout, R Prout, RJ Gardiner, J Davey, P Gardiner, CS Gardiner, SM Gardiner. Middle: K Taylor, K Gardiner, L Lambert. Front: V Gardiner, A Hedley, J Hardisty



Ferguson hockey team early 1950s - Back: Brian Gardiner, Jake Gardiner, Gerald Hardie, Fred Flynn, Ted Tooke, Tom Gibbs, Neville Gardiner. Kneeling: Keith Butcher, Syd Gardiner, Dick Gardiner, Peter Hough, Syd Fowler. Front: Murray Hardie, Colin Richards



Hockey 1939 - Back: Sam Gardiner, Straw Gardiner, John Davey, Paddy Gardiner, Ron Prout, Strickland Gardiner. Middle: Arthur Headley, Howard Gibbs, Ken Gardiner. Front: Ian Gardiner, Victor Gardiner, Jack Hardisty.

BADMINTON AND TENNIS

When I was quite young I recall playing both badminton and tennis at the old hall.

The old hall was in front of the present day Ferguson Hall. The floor area was not quite long enough for a badminton court so the lines were marked up the wall at either end about six inches. We didn't know any different so we were happy with this arrangement. The ceiling was also very low so you couldn't hit the shuttle very high.

The tennis courts used to be on the other side of the road to the hall and were connected to power with floodlights. During the summer months we used to play once a week in the evenings. This was always a great social outing. My greatest recollection is of old Jake Gardiner lobbing the ball so high it used to go out of the lights.

The tennis courts were demolished when the road was widened and the corner truncated.

GREG GIBBS

ANNUAL CRICKET MATCH

Sport has often been the lifeblood of many country districts and Ferguson is no exception.

The residents took their annual cricket match against the Dardanup Lions Club very seriously.

One and all turned out for the great day, which would always start in an orderly manner but slowly deteriorate as the day wore on - and usually with a mix of talent and a great deal of hilarity!

Cricket matches have always been played on a wicket in the middle of the paddock behind the hall - now part of Geoff and Christine Harris' property.

There was no shirking district pride when the annual "us versus them" match drew near and on game day all the blokes in the district - from 10 to 80 years - came forward to play.

I will never forget one particular match.

It was a glorious day but the dreaded east wind was playing havoc with batsmen and bowlers alike - well, that was their excuse, at any rate!

John Gardiner (“us”) was batting at the time when Fred Clarke (“them”) came in to bowl. Fred bowled a VERY short-pitched ball - the wind blew strongly and picked up the pitch matting, launching it into the air, the ball glided the full length of the pitch and cleaned bowled John at the other end.

The game couldn’t continue because of the laughter - and players adjourned to the shade for refreshments and to offer their opinion about what really happened!

LESLEY GIBBS (NEE TOWNSEND)



Cricket - Back: Frank Mountford, sixth Guy Gardiner, seventh Bert Fowler, ninth Mervyn Gardiner, eleventh Ephraim Gardiner. Girls: Ivy Gibbs, Liza Flynn, fourth Miss Flynn, sixth Anthea Gardiner. Front: second Jim Wight, third Harry Gardiner, fourth Charlie Flynn, sixth W Fowler.



Ferguson cricket team - players unknown.

YABBERUP

Fifteen years old and mad about cricket, Dad organised a game for me in the Ferguson B Grade team to play Preston on the Yabberup cricket ground.

Dad arranged with Uncle Hal Gibbs to take me, as he was playing on the day (as long as I walked over from home at Crooked Brook to pick up the ride). I was so excited about playing I arrived when Uncle Hal was still having breakfast. He had been net fishing the day before and I was amazed to see him polish off about 10 sand whiting in one go.

Finally we were ready to go and Uncle Hal told me on the way that he could feel a really good innings coming on.

The Yabberup ground was ringed with very tall trees and when Uncle Hal went into bat with the score two for very few, pieces of wood from the tops of the trees started crashing down all around the spectators who were sitting underneath. I spent most of his innings finding the ball and then rushing back to see him crash the next one for another six.

Strick Gardiner, who had a farm next to the oval, was umpire and lost about a case of apples from his orchard and vowed to call him out if he continued to wreck his fruit trees.

FRED MOUNTFORD

No 25 ^{paid in 27/11/49} 3rd December 1949
Received from Torquian Club
 the sum of One pounds
ten shillings pence
 being Registration 15 players
 £1 : 10 : 0
 Dennybrook Cricket Ass
 Per F. Mountford
 Hon Secy

DUTY STAMP

Cricket Club fees 1949

STATEMENT

PHONE FERGUSON 1

31. 10. 1949.
 - M^r C. S. Gordonis.
 Secretary Ferguson Cricket Club.
 in account with Ferguson.

- E. A. STEPHEN
 DARDANUP

RADIO AND HOME LIGHTING
 - - SALES AND SERVICE - -

3 only Keith Miller Bat @ 94/9 ss. 14 3 3.

1 " Star chutograph Bat @ 100/6 5 9 6

~~2 " for.~~

2 " for N^o 2 Batting Pado @ 39/3 for. 3 18 6

1 " for N^o 4 Batting Pado @ 42/3 for. 2 2 3

2 " for R.H Batting gloves @ 20/6 for. 2 1 -

1 " for Inner gloves padded @ 12/6 - 12 6

freight - 3 -

6 " Platypus 2 pair balls @ 14/7. 4 7 6

32 17 6

Paid less commission

3 - -
 29 17 6



E. Stephen

Cricket Club account 1949

MEMBERS of the FERGUSON CRICKET CLUB 1920/1921

The following was taken from the minute book of the Ferguson Cricket Club...

Members fees to the club for season 1920/1921 to be 5 shillings.

W Gardiner, H Gardiner, Merv Gardiner, Guy Gardiner, Ralph Gardiner, Owen Gardiner, J Wight, Jim Gardiner, A Gardiner, N Gardiner, Chum Fowler, Vic Gardiner, E Rose, Hal Gibbs, C Gibbs, Jas Slattery, Maitland Gardiner, G Foster, Bert O'Neill, Jack Lowrie, J Mountford, J O'Neill, C Johnson, F Nawell, R Lowrie, M Flynn, C Flynn, R Buckenara

FROM CRICKET CLUB MINUTES BOOK

FERGUSON CRICKET CLUB MINUTES September 17, 1920

Fourteen members of the local club were present for the meeting of the club.

Was proposed by Wilf Gardiner and seconded by W Fowler that Mr J Horsford be elected president of the club.

Vice presidents to be J Rose, Mr Kaishajen, E Rose, Mr F Birm. Patrons to be Mr G Money, Mr J Chapman.

Proposed by W Gardiner and seconded by E Rose that general committee and selection act as one committee as follows - Merv Gardiner H Gardiner, W Fowler, E Rose, Ralph Gardiner, W Gardiner, Mark Flynn and J Wight.

Proposed Mr J Wight and seconded by Mr R Buckenara that H Gardiner remain captain.

Proposed by W Gardiner and seconded by H Gardiner that Merv Gardiner remain vice captain.

Proposed by Guy Gardiner and seconded by Mark Flynn that the fielding rule be allowed. From the president, rule that each fielding votes be averaged, in the number of games he played and must play in half the matches Proposed by H Gardiner and seconded by W Fowler that the secretary write and thank Miss Jeffrey for the dance run by her for the club.

Proposed by W Gardiner and seconded by Mark Flynn that the committee are authorised to assist the secretary in keeping the finances of the club in order.

Proposed by H Gardiner and seconded by Mark Flynn that 3 medals be given, B team be given the same condition as A grade. Any player playing in the team he played the most matches with and carry his average from the team to the other.

Proposed by W Fowler and seconded by M Flynn that a ball fee of a shilling be made on all players in each match.

Guy's trophy be awarded to Harry Gardiner.

Proposed by Mr Gardiner and seconded by J Wight that the Cricketer's ball be held on October 22nd.

C Flynn elected Secretary. Mark Flynn elected assistant secretary.

FROM MINUTES BOOK KEPT BY ENID HALL (NEE FOWLER)(DIFFICULT TO READ SOME SPELLING, PARTS COULD BE INCORRECT)

TENNIS MEETINGS

Meeting held at the Ferguson School on Sunday October 5th 1947

Those Present

J Gardiner; N & P Tooke, V Gardiner, R Gardiner, S Gardiner, W Tooke Snr, W Tooke Jnr, C Flynn, K Butcher, M Hardie, J & E Fowler, L McDonald, W Sontag, G Mountford, V, G & B Gardiner.

The purpose of the meeting was the forming of a tennis club.

W Sontag was elected president. E Fowler elected Secretary.

After much discussion Jim Fowler was elected Captain and Murray Hardie vice-captain.

It was moved by V Gardiner sec. by C Flynn that each player has his own racquet.

An amendment was moved by G Mountford sec. S Gardiner that it is desirable that each member has his own racquet, thus if the club be financial to purchase racquets.

The amendment was carried.

On the motion of G Mountford and S Gardiner the annual subscription was fixed at 5/-. Carried.

Moved by M Hardie sec. by B Gardiner that the net be purchased by the club. Carried.

Moved by Mrs V Gardiner sec. by M Hardie that a bumping board be set up. Carried.

Moved by Mr G Mountford sec. W Tooke Snr that guests of the club be allowed to play free. Carried.

Moved by G Mountford sec. Miss N Tooke, that the following organising committee be appointed

Captain, Vice Captain, Hon Sec. Mrs V Gardiner, Miss J Gardiner. Carried.

Moved B Gardiner sec. V Gardiner that the children of the school be debarred from playing on the court on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Moved Mrs V Gardiner sec. G Mountford that a dance be held for the club. Carried.

The meeting closed at 4.15pm. LT Gardiner

Chairman.

The following are extracts from meetings of the Tennis Club

23rd November 1947

One tea towel was donated by Mrs V Gardiner.

Half a pound of tea was donated by Miss J Gardiner.

It was decided to approach Mr De Cane for a grant of land on which to build two courts and if he be agreeable to order sufficient wire netting for two courts.

On the motion of N Tooke and S Gardiner it was decided that the secretary write to local Roads Board members to ask for their assistance in obtaining the hire of the grader for the purpose of levelling the site.

4th April 1948

Moved by M Hardie sec. E Fowler that advantage sets be played. It was agreed that a 2-shilling entry fee per player be charged.

2nd March 1951

Move E Fowler sec. G Hardie that members be entitled to use the courts any time except during club hours without paying any fee, provided they either supply their own balls or use balls discarded by the club.

On the motion of CS Gardiner and W Ratcliffe it was decided that a case of cool drink be purchased and sold to members at a profit.

Moved by E Fowler and sec. by R Gardiner that the committee already formed be an all-purpose committee to deal with all problems and affairs appertaining to the clubs welfare.

Date and year 1952 ???

After a lot of discussion it was decided to put up the lights on the tennis courts and see if they were any good, moved R Gardiner sec. W Tooke. It was left for the secretary to get six, 100-watt globes.

Mr E Fowler made a suggestion that we put up a fence to keep the children off the courts. The secretary was left to get the wire.

Date and year ????

Moved E Fowler that every endeavour be made to raise sufficient funds for "Colass-ing" the club courts. Sec. N Gardiner.

Donation for crockery, was moved by W Tooke that the club donate two pound to the hall Committee, sec. Jake Gardiner.

Report of committee December 3rd 1955

Couch eradication, it was decided to spray the courts with Arsenic Pentoxide.

Colas to be sprayed. Mr Gregson to Survey.

11th October 1956

A financial report showing a credit balance of £19 -18-3 was presented to the meeting.

The secretary was instructed to write to both Mr Maguire and Bill Prout thanking them for their voluntary assistance in carrying out the colas work.

18th October 1958

Subscriptions – 15/6 for adults, 7/6 for juniors

7th September 1959

The delegates asked to press for extra sets on association days and to abolish morning teas.

Move S Gardiner sec. J Tooke that two umpire's chairs be made. K Stone offered to make and weld them out of piping. EJ Gardiner donated the pipe.

24th October 1963

Those who promised money to put lights on. WH Ratcliffe £10-0-0

AC Gibbs	£10-0-0
JE Gardiner	£10-0-0
JK Butcher	£10-0-0
R Kerr	£5-0-0
CS Gardiner	£10-0-0
VR Gardiner	£4-0-0
B Gibbs	£5-0-0
AF Prout	£5-0-0
Farmers Union	£10-0-0

22nd April 1964

Moved E Fowler an hourly basis of two hours charged at 5/- an hour and after that a charge for a full night sec. N Gardiner.

30th November 1966

Meeting held at Sam Gardiner's house.

Balance sheet was read with balance of \$150.81, moved Don Haynes sec. Syd Fowler.

Moved Jake that subs and ball fees be \$2 subs and 20 cents ball fee. Fred moved hire of courts be \$2.50 per night and 50c per hour.

Last entry in book was 14th January 1969 (by candlelight)

Held at the Ferguson Hall

Meeting attended by six people and President and Secretary.

Minutes were read and confirmed on the motion of John Wicksteed and seconded by Jackie.

Correspondence received from Commonwealth Bank, Sports Depot and Burekup Tennis Club, moved by Lyn seconded by Bruce.

A credit balance of \$89.28 accepted on the motion of Bruce seconded by Barry Scott.

John Gardiner was re-elected as President by Lyn seconded by Barry. John Wicksteed nominated as vice president, seconded by Jackie.

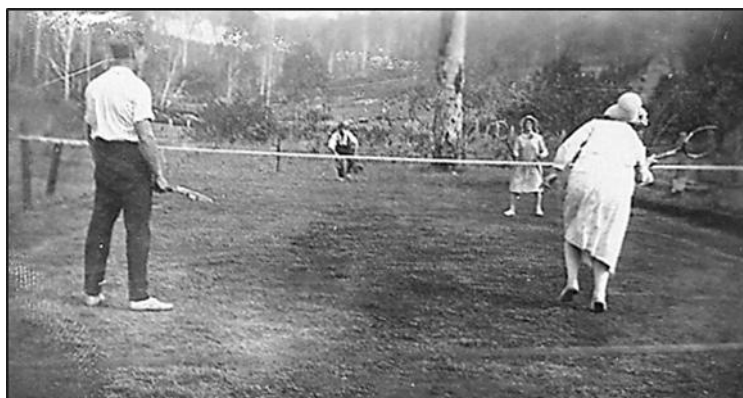
Elna Gardiner was elected as secretary by Barry Scott and John W. General Business

A suggestion was made that play commence on the 23rd January 1969 with tools etc. to use before play.

Subs to remain the same as before also ball fees and hire of courts owing to the fact that half the season had already gone.

The president gave a report on last year's play of success and fun had by all. Meeting closed 9.15 (in darkness).

COMPILED FROM THE MINUTES BOOK OF THE TENNIS CLUB THIS BOOK KEPT BY MARGARET GARDINER AFTER THE CLUB CEASED



Tennis in the 1920s - at Victor Gardiner's property



Tennis - at Melbournup in the late 1920s



Tennis - at Victor Gardiner's property

EXTRACTS FROM HALL COMMITTEE MINUTE BOOK

Following are the minutes from the first meeting held by the committee in 1916.

Minutes of Ferguson hall com' held on the 11th Oct 1916 at 8pm

A public meeting was held in Agricultural Hall for the purpose of forming a new hall committee.

Present were B Slattery, C Flynn, Ep Gardiner, P Buckenara, H Gardiner, A Gardiner, R Buckenara, Chris Gardiner, W Bocker, J Gardiner.

The committee formed were Eph Gardiner (Chairman), P Buckenara, B Slattery, C Flynn, A Gardiner, W Bocker and R Buckenara (Sec'y).

Proposed by P Buckenara Sec. by Eph Gardiner, that the meetings should be held quarterly, first Wednesday in each quarter.

Decided that all members should meet at hall on Saturday afternoon Oct. 21st and have a bee day cleaning around the Hall.

Ephraim Gardiner, Chairman

We have taken extracts of the minute book to put in here, not using full minutes.

July 6th 1917

It was moved by Mr Slattery & sec. by Mr Eph Gardiner that Mrs Wilkins be allowed the use of hall piano providing she dust and clean piano. (Carried).

Sept 10th 1917

It was suggested by the Sec. that a Treasurer and secretary should be appointed to the War Patriotic Fund, so as cheque could be signed and sent to patriotic fund at once. Moved by P Buckenara & sec'd by Eph Gardiner that B Slattery be appointed as Sec'y & W Bocker as Treasurer to Patriotic Fund & that their specimen signatures be sent to Bank as soon as possible.

With a vote of thanks to the Chairman the meeting was closed.

Nov. 3rd 1917

Moved by Mr Chas Flynn & sec. by Mr P Buckenara that the secretary should get a new broom. (Carried).

4th August 1921

Moved by Mr B Slattery, sec. by Mr G Gardiner that a letter of thanks be addressed to the ladies committee for their valuable services in collecting to repay the cost of the lighting plant.

5th Sept 1922

A discussion ensued re the anniversary ball. The date was fixed and other necessary arrangements were made. It was proposed by Mr R Buckenara sec by

Mr Slattery that the Jazz Trio be engaged. Admission 3/6 for Gentlemen and 1/6 ladies with doubles being 4/6.

8th September 1929

Arising out of correspondence from a letter from Messrs Eastman and Jenour Solicitors Bunbury repaying £1-1-0 to them for the use of the music on behalf of the Copyright & Publishers Association.

23rd July 1930

The Euchre party and dance was held on the 23rd July 1930 as was agreed upon the weather was all that could be desired and there was a good roll up.

Voluntary music was supplied by Messrs Hal Gibbs and W Grover on the accordion, Mrs Alf Gardiner & Miss Andrea Gardiner on the piano & Miss Myrtle Gardiner on the piano and Mr Irwin Keddie on the violin.

14th June 1933

Mr Tonkin then informed those present that there was a Mackay Trust Fund with the sole purpose of helping all Agri folk throughout Australia. He moved sec. by Mark Flynn that secretary writes them informing them of our intention of enlarging the hall & to get their help if possible on a £1 for £1 basis. (Carried)

21st September 1941

Mr Flynn was away on military duty.

19th October 1943

Considerable discussion then took place on the difficulty of lighting.

Mr Boxall moved, sec. by Mr Brown that the committee investigates the matter of installing lights through hall, run by 12-volt batteries.

19th August 1944

Mr Hardie moved a hearty vote of thanks to the retiring Chairman Mr CS Flynn who had been on the hall committee for the past 34 years.

16th March 1955

It was also decided that Mrs Flynn purchase tea towels and straw broom for hall. Rat sack was also to be got and put down for the rats.

18th May 1962

It was moved that a lock be purchased for the rear door. Moved HB Gibbs sec.

E Marsh

24th August 1964

Price list for materials for Ferguson Hall

Gang nail trusses	£160
11/8 T&G flooring included below	
No wall framing	
Floor framing	£550
New joinery	£392
Sink and cupboards and 4 drawers	£84
Serving bench	£60
Stainless steel urinal included below	
Vanity tops	£28
72" Septic tank	
2 WC cisterns	
Sink, vents earthenware cold water service	£305
Shadow line	£200
Hard board lining	£160
Super six including 10ft ridging and flushing	£207
Asbestos lining & ceiling to toilets	£65
Total	£2211

***THESE EXTRACTS HAVE BEEN MADE POSSIBLE FROM
THE HALL COMMITTEE MINUTES BOOK, KEPT ALL
THESE YEARS BY BRIAN GARDINER.***

NETBALL

There are a number of sports stories among these pages, especially concerning men's hockey and cricket. But, what about the girls?

Brings me to wonder how many young Ferguson lasses enhanced their sporting skills in the game of netball, under the patient guidance of Sheila Butcher and helpers. If I remember right, the teams were called Dardanup but they always included a healthy contingent of Ferguson girls. There was quite a lot of success over the years with many players going on to represent their respective high schools in local, interschool and country week competitions. It was often said that because most of the schoolkids rode bikes or walked to school they were very fit; this was emphasised by the Ferguson children's success in school sports and weekend competition in Bunbury in the Sixties and early Seventies.

CHRISTINE GIBBS

EARLY CARS

One of the early cars that I can remember in the district, was old Mervyn Gardiner's, he had a Buick. There were a couple of miles of bitumen in those days over near Burekup. They had come home from Perth in the new Buick and did 45 miles per hour on the bitumen.

The Gibbs' (Nugget's dad) had a T-model Ford first. Herbert was quiet a progressive sort of bloke, and soon realised there was better. He purchased a Durant. It was built by Rugby Durant. Pug was always the preferred driver. I don't know if old Herbert ever drove it. If there was a Red Cross or Church function Pug would always be the driver. Pug even took the Gardiner boys to Perth to visit us after we left the district and he had no problems driving in Perth.

The cars had no gears, they had bands, with only two forward speeds. Unless you had a Ruckstell axle in them, which gave you a split diff. The one Dan Slattery had, had a Ruckstell axle in it. We borrowed it when we were carting spuds because going in spud country you wanted more than two gears. It had three peddles, the one on the left was low gear and clutch, the one in the

middle was reverse and the one on the right was the foot brake. They all worked from bands from the transmission. It had a hand brake that worked on lines to the rear wheels. To start it up you used your hand brake, it was connected to the transmission, which you brought up to almost on, but not quiet, it was marked and that put it into neutral. Also the low gear the first inch of travel was neutral. The bands on the transmission would kick in and off you would go. When you got to seven or eight miles per hour it would automatically drop to top gear, you did not have to worry about it.

They struggled on some of the hills back in those days. To get over the school hill in top gear from Upper Ferguson you had no chance, coming back the other way half way up was a right angle corner. Miss Hussey lost control there one day. Coming from where we lived in Crooked Brook, we had a short run from Slattery corner (Ironstone Road) to get up the hill. Only once did we get over the hill in top gear.

The car had 32 x 4½ inch tyres on the back and 30 x 3½ on the front, without even carrying a spare, they did later on. The engine and chassis cost 133 pound 10 shillings, I can still see the cheque. It was expensive, when you bought 150 acres of land with a house for 180 pounds three years earlier.

The Model-T that Herbert and others in the district owned were 150 to 160 pounds. A person with a good job was earning three or four pounds a week. Cars are a lot cheaper to buy now.

***TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD) FROM INTERVIEW
WITH GEORGE SKIPWORTH***

OUR DAM

At about the time our son Peter was 17 he had come home from Harvey Ag School, Keith's dream to irrigate a portion of our farm began to be a reality. A small dam where two gullies met became the site. A huge scraper belonging to Robinson and Cavallaro was bought in with a driver called Charlie Chapman (Bloody Charlie I called him). We had just had our house painted (first time).

The Ag Department had spent time drawing up specifications of wall height, depth and dimensions, a chap called Ken Southern we think, was very encouraging and informative, this was done free of cost to the farmers. The

topsoil, a dark loam, was first removed and this just came over our house in huge thick clouds of dust. From dawn until dusk, driven by the easterly winds, which prevail all summer. This went on seven days a week. I had to wash my clothes after b..... Charlie knocked off at night and get them in before sunrise in the morning. The house windows, white woodwork and walls inside all became covered in this filthy dust. (Divorce seemed to be in the pipeline).

It was the year I turned 40 in the February, Lesley Gibbs and Keith organised a surprise party amidst this mess, a great party.

The dam covers seven acres and is 23 feet deep, the wall 230 yards long and the base being about 80 feet through at the bottom, and has a capacity of seven million gallons. A diesel pump was mounted in 1970 and seven acres of land on the east side of house between dam and house was laid out with plans from Elders Smith. Neil Halden, Peter and John Piggott helped Keith lay the pipes. I remember Neil placed the plan up one of the pipes for safe keeping from the wind, and someone filled it in and he could not remember which pipe he had placed it in. In the 1971 summer the first irrigated farmland in Ferguson began under sprinkler system.

The next year Keith had another dam further up the same gully put in. This was deeper and holds more water. Years later when we gave away whole milk, we had approximately 35 acres of land under sprinklers, as the lowest dam emptied we gravitated the water from the top dam.

They say farmers have destroyed the land, but our dams now supply water to three homes and gardens where women can enjoy gardens and pools for children. Also as I look out my window I see beautiful sunlight and moonlight dancing on the water, also many birds, pelicans, black and white spoonbills, water fowl plus many others. Mudlarks build their nests in the green willows.

Our children have learnt to swim, canoe, surf and fish for marron and coonacks and have had many hours of fun on the dam, these things would not have been possible with out "OUR DAM".

SHEILA BUTCHER (NEE HOUGH)

CATTLE DRIVE 1940's

The annual drive of surplus cattle to the saleyard in Dardanup was a huge event for all participating and I thought myself very lucky if I happened to be holidaying with Uncle Hal and Auntie Effie on one of those occasions.

Many of the local farmers drove their cull cows, bulls and also steers from Uncle Hal's corner to the saleyards. Maitland Gardiner's cattle came down from the farm now owned by Chris Gardiner. The Ratcliffes and Parkins drove down collecting Herbert Gibbs' on the way, and Victor and Lionel Gardiner met at the front gate, where they formed one mob. On the way to Dardanup they collected any further cattle from the various farms along the road. Usually about 30-40 cattle made the trip. Uncle Hal had decided to sell his Jersey bull this particular trip but the bull had other ideas and jumped Owen Gardiner's fence and came home. Victor Gardiner, a renowned horseman, was elected to get him back into the mob from the thicket he was hiding in and finally managed to get him back into the herd.

The whole trip usually took about three hours with the final run being down the main street of Dardanup to the sorting yards. Usually five or six horsemen made the trip with the other farmers arriving by car in time to sort the cattle at the saleyards. I always went with Uncle Hal in his Buick. We also had the important job of doing the shopping at the local store with the exciting prospect of a bag of sweets at the end of the day.

TOM GIBBS

CARTAGE BUSINESS

Arnold Gibbs, my husband, began a cartage business in 1940 to make extra money.

He began by collecting cream or the milk from the farmers who had dairies. He went out as far as Lowden and then back to Bunbury's SunnyWest Dairies milk factory. This was done two or three times per week.

As far as I can remember the factory was where the Entertainment Centre is now.

One unfortunate incident in 1960 was when my husband was on his run one morning going up to Wellington Mills. Lucky the milk cans were empty. As he was rounding a corner after a bit of rain, the truck got too far over and rolled over. It took all day to get it back on the road again. This created quite a lot of excitement for a while, luckily no one was injured.

JENNIE GIBBS (NEE RICKSON)

SEAGULL MOTOR

Two visiting cousins wanted to go diving for crays, and seeing Dad's fishing craft (a 10' bondwood boat and trusty 3hp Seagull outboard) thought that was the way to go. By the time we arrived at Peppermint Grove we had collected a couple more keen fishermen, making a total of five of us.

Of course, after we'd launched the boat and clambered in there wasn't much freeboard but at least the ocean was dead calm. We boated out to the secret cray spot and caught our quota, so we then decided to come in. Unfortunately the weather had changed a bit and we were taking in the odd wave.

About 50 metres from shore the two divers decided they would abandon our trusty outfit and swim in, thinking it might be safer. But when they went overboard the boat dipped on one side, taking on voluminous amounts of water and, having absolutely no inbuilt flotation, we started sinking like a diving submarine. I turned to see the skipper hanging onto the tiller of the Seagull and leaning forward, urging it on as the water was going up to his chin and over his head.

There we were, 50 metres from shore in two and a half metres of water with our boat sunk and five of us trying to salvage our catch firstly then the boat - much to the amusement of all on shore where numbers were gathering to watch the entertainment.

Eventually we managed to salvage everything, including the boat, and got to shore, loaded it on the car trailer and headed for home. Amidst the excitement of cooking, cleaning and devouring the catch it completely slipped our minds

on doing any maintenance on the outboard other than to return it to its usual corner in the shed.

About two months later Dad and his mate decided to take the same outfit fishing. When they arrived home with their catch we inquired curiously how the Seagull performed, to which Dad replied, "Just pull on the rope as usual - good motors these Seagulls." This motor still runs today. I wonder if the outboards of today can compete with this.

TREVOR HOUDEN

THE BULL FIGHT

I was about six or seven (late 1930s) at the time and out having one of the many holidays I spent in the Valley with Uncle Hal and Auntie Effie Gibbs.

Most of the farms around the district milked a few cows, mainly for cream or butter, which they sold in Bunbury and all had Jersey bulls.

There were four bulls around Uncle Hal's corner. His, Victor Gardiner's, Ralph Gardiner's and Uncle Herbert Gibbs'. On this particular day, Uncle Hal's bull decided to go visiting Victor's bull, then Ralph's and Herbert's thought they would join in the fun. The four bulls fought continually for a day and a half with no one able to separate them until Victor and Ralph got among them on horses with stockwhips. Victor Gardiner was renowned for his horsemanship.

It took a week or so for all the neighbours to clean up the fences which was all the more fun for me.

TOM GIBBS



*Post splitting - Tom Gibbs with a tree that he split about 400 posts from;
Steve Gibbs sitting on log, mid 1960s.*

THE VALLEY

Time had stood still in the valley of my childhood - first because of the Great Depression and later, when money was becoming a little more plentiful, World War II broke out and once more progress was halted.

But there was another reason for this lack of progress and that lay with the valley folk themselves, I believe. For they were content with a simple lifestyle where there was time to chat, a lifestyle that while frugal - especially by today's standards - had the comfort, perhaps even I would say, the luxury, of security and continuity so often lacking in today's frantic world.

Their time warp - this lack of progress - allowed me to grow up in a gently unhurried world. A world devoid of gadgetry. So basic and not experienced by many of my contemporaries who grew up in towns. It was a world without electricity, running water - the things that today we take for granted. My

mother had very little in the way of household appliances any different to those of the first settlers to the valley who came across the seas in their sailing ships.

It was not only the household equipment which was basic, the farm chores were also performed using age-old methods. We sat on wooden stools and milked the cows by hand. My father ploughed his land with the simplest horse-drawn device and we used a wooden sledge, again horse-drawn, to transport all manner of goods from one part of the farm to another.

We pulled water from a well, used kerosene lamps and our lives were governed by the seasons.

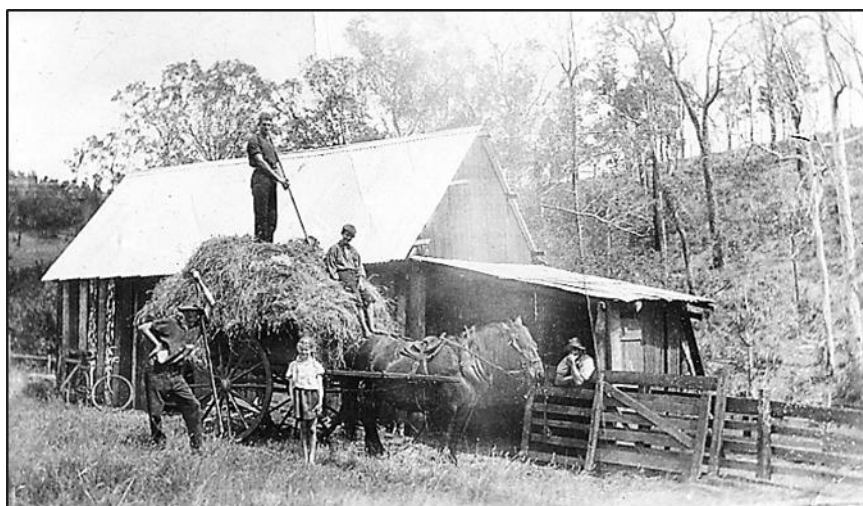
JUDITH MULLER (NEE FOWLER)



Binding hay - Bob Gardiner, Chris Gaerdiner, Jim Gardiner.



Binding hay - Jim and Bob Gardiner at "Mountain Spring", 1913.



Carting hay - Gardiner property; Sam, standing on hay; Randal, sitting on hay; Chris, leaning on rail; Lionel, with pitchfork; Marg, at front.

BRANDING

I am not sure where Mum was this day, Sam and Mike were staying with Auntie Ellen.

Jim and Dad were branding cattle in the yards and the two young boys were not allowed down there as it was considered dangerous. Being adventurous boys and wanting to find out what was happening, they headed off to the yards while Auntie Ellen had an afternoon sleep. When they got to the yards they hid behind the trees to watch Dad and Uncle Jim branding the cattle. There was lots of action and as they had not been discovered they decided to head back home.

When they got home Sam put the fire poker in the fire to heat it up. They were copying Dad. When it heated up Sam got it out of the fire and said to Mike, “When I stick this on your bum you baaar like the calf.” Mike had a very good burn on his behind for some time.

MARGE WICKSTEED (NEE GARDINER)

CROOKED BROOK

One of the biggest projects I think that any family ever carried out and that was on the other farm that we owned down on the Crooked Brook.

It was called the Crooked Brook because that is exactly what it was, a brook that wound its way from one side of the farm back to the other all the way down through the farm. Dad made his mind up he was going to put the drain straight down through the middle so then you could work the rest of the ground. As it was, there was no way you could plough or do anything because the brook ran from one side to the other. This was an enormous undertaking which he took on because as soon as the brook stopped running and all the work was finished, as I said all the hay and that, we would have to go down and start grubbing all the trees down along the bank of the creek. It ran all over the farm and without chainsaws or nothing, just axes, shovels and grubbers.



Crooked Brook - Bill Ratcliffe on his horse, in the drain.

We had to fall the trees, cut the big stems up first, put them in the bottom of the brook and just pack all the limbs over the top of the stems. When this was done you had to break the sides of the bank in so when we wanted to take the soil, the horses were able to walk over the brook and back without their legs going down between the logs which were in the bottom of the brook. It was an enormous job, nobody could imagine just what it was unless they were involved in the particular job.

And with this in place, it was practically done with the Father who you could say was the supervisor and two of the girls and myself and we employed one man to work the scoop which we used to dig the big drain. But before you could do anything, as I said, you had to get the old creek filled up to where you could drive the horses backwards and forwards over it. When this was done we started off then, I was driving the horse and there was a chap living over the road by the name of Hartnett who did all the scoop work. He had done this work before, he was very good at it although he was not a very reliable chap, you did not know when he was going to go on the booze or when he wasn't.

But anyway, we never used to give him any money until we were ready to knock off the job for a while. The scoop that was used was only a very small scoop, held about as much as a fair sized wheelbarrow. You could just imagine when you had to take the load of dirt from there right around where the old brook went it was pretty often about five chain from the new drain it was a terrifically slow process but nevertheless we continued. The first year we got about seven or eight chain of the drain put through which was 14 feet wide and four feet deep at the shallowest part of it.

Everywhere the drain passed over where the old brook went backwards and forwards there had to be a big slab fence, you might call it, put up to stop the dirt from washing back from the old brook into the drain. Making this involved splitting big slabs from the jarrah trees and these slabs were anything from 10-12 inches wide and two inches or so thick. You had to have a rail along the bottom, with two posts at either side and a rail along the top, and then put all the slabs across where the old brook had been. Then fill it in with dirt to make it waterproof so the dirt could not wash away down from the old brook into the new drain. This went on all summer and before winter came on we had to discontinue it because you could not work through the wintertime.

This had to finish for the season just where the new drain ran into where the old brook went straight across it so the water could continue on for the rest of the winter along its old course.

It was such a big project I do not think any of the farmers around there thought it would ever be completed because, at one stage of the game, one of the neighbours was riding past behind a sulky that another one was driving and I was working there, he didn't see me and he said, "I think old Billy's bit off more than he can chew here." I was very pleased Father didn't hear it else he would have drove us twice as fast in case he didn't last long enough to prove he could do it, which he did, and it definitely was finished in the end. While we were carrying out the operation I had to camp down at the farm, there was an old house there and I camped down on the farm and they brought the meals down every day, the two girls or whoever came down to do the work.

And mostly they had to walk from home down to the farm which would be, I suppose, well over a mile and a half up and down steep hills before they got to work and then have to return up and down the hills the same to go home at

night. Nobody would believe it was possible for just a family to carry out the work that was done there.

I think it took us about six summers to do the whole job. That was from the start of the farm right through the middle of the farm down to the next door neighbour's. I'll tell you everyone was very, very happy when that was completed, though it didn't mean to say we wouldn't have any work to do because there was still plenty of other work to do on the farm. Even down there where the brook had run all through and there was soil washed from mud up in the hills into the low-lying ground. There were ferns growing about six or seven foot high, you can't imagine how healthy they were.

After we got the drain through we had to turn round and plough all those ferns out and kill them because they were, at that time, the only place you could grow any potatoes. In the summertime this was in natural dampness so this gully had quite good patches of natural dampness and we used to plant potatoes there in the summer time and grow them. Although this wasn't a great success because we had very dry summers and a lot of the ground dried out far too much for the potatoes but we still done it and we got a certain amount of potatoes. It didn't matter how much work there was so long as everyone had a small profit, you just done it and that's the way farming was with my father in those days.

Anybody passing along the road where the farm is now would never ever credit it, you could never ever believe what had taken place there, even if you went and had a look and saw the drain that was put there and followed the old. The old brook, where it went, you would never credit it could be done as a family project with the exception, as I said before, of one or two paid men. And it was absolutely a credit really, not only to the father but the whole family, because they were all involved in it.

BILL RATCLIFFE

MY MOTHER

Like most of her contemporaries, my mother worked hard for there was no easy way of doing things in those days.

I see her now, rolling pastry, scrubbing clothes and floors, sewing, and so often she sang as she worked. She had a very pleasant voice and had sung at Belgium Relief Concerts and other social events at Wellington Mills when she was young.

Her singing made the house come alive for me and I learnt from her so many of the lovely old songs - "The Miller's Daughter", "There's a Long Long Trail Awinding", "Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes", "After The Ball", "When They Cut Down The Old Pine Tree" and "It's Only a Beautiful Picture in a Beautiful Golden Frame" - but Mum never sang them in a sad tone, so I enjoyed them anyway.

Social occasions were few and far between, so often we went for long walks, mostly on moonlight nights and usually accompanied by our cats. From the hills above our house we could see the lights of Bunbury and it was always a thrill to me, like catching a glimpse of another world.

Mum was a keen gardener and grew so many of the flowers she remembered from her English childhood. Forget-me-nots, violets, marigolds, snowdrops and the beautiful, highly perfumed English lilac. In summer she would pull buckets of water from the well to keep her beloved garden alive.

Her hands were never idle, sewing - she made almost everything we wore. Knitting - not only for our family but for the Red Cross war effort as well. Crocheting, cooking, painting - the list goes on. I marvel at how she found the time. She loved people and visitors were always welcome.

JUDITH MULLER (NEE FOWLER)

ENGLISHMAN

A farmer near Wellington had horses running in the bush.

He decided he would run them into the paddock and sort them out. A relative of Edgar's was working for the farmer. One day, they got two good riding horses, rode through the paddock to the bush and opened the gate, leaving it open to drive in the horses. The farmer warned the young Englishman, "Boy, if you have anything you want to do for yourself, you had better do it now. There'll be no time later when we find the horses. All you will have to do is follow me!" They found the horses and galloped after them, heading them back to the paddock gate. The floor of the bush was clear enough for a fast and exciting ride, quite an experience for a young Englishman.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

THE SCHOOL

Just a mention of my school days brings such a jumble of impressions, all jostling, one on top of the other and my pen can't keep up with this kaleidoscope that flashes before my eyes.

So perhaps I will start with the building itself and what a strange little building it was, with its enormous roof, quite out of proportion to its one room. I presumed that those steep roofs of my childhood were a "left over" from England, where they would have allowed the snow to slide off. However, in all my later travels around England, I never saw a building which resembled our school!

It would have been hard, even in those days of basic premises, to find a less imposing structure than our tiny, one-room school. Hard to compare it with its less than basic equipment, with today's sophisticated "halls of learning". Yet we did learn a great many of the basic skills, in spite of the fact that as many as 10 classes studied in that one room, with that one teacher, the different grades chanting their times tables or reciting poetry in "sing song" voices. It meant

that any of us who were even slightly interested, knew most of the oral work two or three classes ahead.

The reason for so many classes attending our little school at any one time was that there were always older children, usually up to 14 years, finishing their education where they had begun it - in that little room! Few people had the opportunity to go away to either the high school in Bunbury or to college. In my case, I completed three years of secondary school there, doing correspondence lessons, supervised by the local teacher. Each two weeks a "set" of work was completed and sent off to Perth to be marked. At the end of those three years I sat the Junior exam and passed - as far as I know the only time someone did that from Upper Ferguson School.

But to get back to the school itself. In addition to that one basic room it boasted a porch which ran across the front of the building and had one end partly enclosed, where the washbasins were located, and hooks on the wall held our coats and bags. Inside the schoolroom itself there were two large windows in the back wall, an open fireplace in one corner and a large cupboard in the other. Three blackboards and old-fashioned wooden desks, complete with inkwells, made up the furnishings.

In the grounds, a small building with walls around three sides was known as the "shelter shed". The boys used it for their woodwork class on the days when we girls did sewing. It was also used as a place to eat our lunch when the weather was not suitable to eat outdoors.

Then there were the toilets! We called them lavatories in those days, or more crudely by the boys - "dunnies"! These two structures were placed some distance from each other and well away from our schoolroom as being the pan variety it would not have been hygienic to have them too close. The toilet pans were emptied once a week by two of the senior boys who actually vied for this horrible job - as it was paid by the government and money, especially, for 14 year old boys, was scarce. There was a small area of bush in one corner of the school grounds and it was here the boys dug holes to empty the pans. In summer the ground would have been so hard, I wonder just how deep they dug those holes!

During the war years everything was in short supply and I can remember the feeling of excitement on being issued with a new writing pad and pencils. We

wrote on both sides of the paper and when every inch of our paper was completely filled, it was then placed in the toilet, there being no such luxury as proper toilet paper.

Our school possessed very few books and I had read them all - some several times - by the time I was 12. However, one of the highlights of the school year for me was the arrival of Hadley's Travelling Library. Twice a year, a large, very solid wooden box would arrive on the mail truck. This box, full of books, was an absolute treasure trove to me and I know not who Hadley was, but I am forever grateful to him or her.

Most of the students who shared my school days would have much preferred to avoid any formal education at all and made it obvious that their hearts were not in their studies. I remember one likely lad telling the teacher that his grandfather had never learnt to read or write and had lived quite successfully. With such an attitude it was not much wonder they didn't show a great deal of enthusiasm for their lessons.

JUDITH MULLER (NEE FOWLER)

MILKING

The Parkins and other families were getting their dairies going.

They originally milked by hand out in the open but milking machines made their way into the Valley. John Parkin had the second milking machine in the area. Walter Grover milked cows and cut sleepers and claimed he would give up the timber work as soon as he had 15 cows to milk. However, once farmers had milking machines, they increased the number of animals they milked so the farming never became easier.

Walter Grover (Grover's lived down opposite the landslide where old fruit and flame trees still grow) began a cream round for the Bunbury Butter Factory which started up in about 1926. After this, people were not allowed to sell their cream and butter locally.

Cream was separated from the milk, put into cream cans and taken down to the main road for the truck to pick up. At this time, the Parkin family was living in what is now known as Parkin Road, via Ratcliffe Road, and they left their cream at the corner of the Upper Ferguson and Ratcliffe Roads.

Sam McLeod was carting timber using a horse and dray during the mid 1920s. McLeods were living out along the Lowden Road. On returning home one day, heading from the bush either along South Road towards Wellington, or on the Lowden Road heading for their farm, a limb dropped from a tree onto the dray and killed Sam's brother Ronnie.

Johnny Morgan was a benchman at the last mill in Wellington (late 1920s). He used to ride a motor bike, an army BSA. He had been to Dardanup one day and come back with some drink but decided, on finishing it, to set off and get some more. He pulled the bike out onto the road, near the hospital and stood trying to start the bike. Dooley O'Neill was living in the hospital building at the time and was out the front watering his garden. He sprayed Morgan with the hose and laughed while Morgan cursed that he was being rained on besides everything else going wrong.

Bob Ferris was the caretaker at the town some time after the mills had closed, in the mid 1930s. He used a railway trolley to travel to Dardanup to fetch supplies as the locos were no longer running (approx 1932-1937). On one occasion, Ferris and Chris Evenson, having already had quite a bit to drink, took it into their heads to take the trolley to Dardanup for more grog. Apparently Ferris tied Evenson to the trolley to ensure he wouldn't fall off.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

LUCKY TO SURVIVE

I was born in 1925 at Bridgetown.

As a 2.5lb premature baby, I was not expected to live. Humidicribs were unheard of in those days. Ingenuity was required, so the old nurse wrapped me up and put me in a shoebox on the hobs at the side of her stove. Obviously, I survived.

I eventually went home to my grandparents' place and my aunt told me how she woke one night to hear someone pumping up a bike tyre. It turned out to be this tiny baby crying.

Later I married Howard Gibbs and lived in Ferguson where we ran a dairy farm and later beef cattle. We raised three children and spent 51 happy and healthy years on our farm at Ferguson.

DORRIE GIBBS (NEE MCSWAIN)

MARRIED IN 1947

I married Howard Gibbs in 1947.

Our home was a two-roomed cottage which had belonged to an elderly bachelor Johnny Gardiner and was on the property of his nephew Victor Gardiner. The cottage was known as "Uncle Johnnies".

There was a front verandah and my husband built another verandah on the back with a bathroom at one end. Washing was done by hand in troughs on the back verandah, with the aid of a wood-fired copper, in which to boil the clothes, situated a few yards away in the back yard. The toilet was about 20 yards away out in the paddock.

When our daughter was born, she slept in a doll bed my grandfather had made me years before. My husband put railings along one side and the other side was

against the wall, so she was quite safe while she was tiny and slept there until we obtained something more suitable.

We lived in Uncle Johnnies for about two and a half years. Then we moved to an unfinished home built on our own farm.

My husband had purchased it from the Roelands Mission Farm because they did not require it any more. We needed a permit in those days to build a house so we were glad to acquire this one. After marking each weatherboard he pulled it down, bought it home and rebuilt it. It was gradually finished with our daughter sleeping through the noise of hammering.

DORRIE GIBBS (NEE MCSWAIN)

FERGUSON TELEPHONE EXCHANGE FROM 1941

I came to Dardanup in 1935 with my parents.

My father bought the bakery. I met a Ferguson boy Arnold Gibbs who I married in 1940. We bought a farm from Bob Kerr and it had the Ferguson telephone exchange.

The switchboard was on the back verandah of the house, a bit cold in the wintertime. It consisted of four lines but only had one subscriber who was number one, ER Stephen, and the main trunk line. The district had to come down to the exchange to put calls through. We had to go through the Dardanup exchange to get to Bunbury then. But after a while the PMG, as it was known then, put a direct line through to Bunbury which made it much better.

Also, as time went on more people wanted the phone and so a large and modern switchboard was needed. Also, we had renovations done to the house and were able to have the exchange inside, which was good.

With the new board we were able to have a Party Line with four or five subscribers on it as most of the district wanted to be connected. It was quite a busy exchange, we were supposed to have set hours and close at 7pm and

12pm on Saturdays and only a few hours on Sunday. Not opening until 8am in the mornings. We had to be flexible as the district gave me a day or two each week to go to Bunbury shopping.

When our family grew up we could manage a lot easier and like all country folk we helped each other out. Of course, urgent calls were put through anytime.

We also had a telegram service that was quite a bit extra work, as it was a very popular way of sending greetings, especially Saturday weddings.

We sold our farm in 1968 and the new owners did not want the exchange, so as automatic connections were coming in Ferguson, was put on automatic.

JENNIE GIBBS (NEE RICKSON)

RIDE IN THE CATTLE CRATE

As I sit in our caravan at Old Onslow, I am inspired by memories of my father who was also a keen fisherman and caravaner.

I guess one of my earliest memories is of my father when he had the milk trucks. He would cart milk from Ferguson/Wellington Mills to the Harvey milk factory. At the time there were a lot more people milking cows, all supplying a few 10-gallon milk cans of milk. My father Arnold Gibbs was the biggest supplier on his milk round with about 12 cans a pick-up. He collected milk twice daily from the suppliers of the district to deliver to the Harvey SunnyWest milk factory and not returning home until nine o'clock some nights.

My sisters and I would take turns in doing this trip with Dad. We loved the trips around the area. We mostly did the morning trip as it was too late at night for us returning home. We were only very young. At the same time Dad had the local fuel run, delivering 44-gallon drums of fuel to the various farmers. He also delivered fertiliser as far as McAlinden. As children we were very lucky to have these opportunities to see the area and to know where everyone lived. As

we grew up we joined the badminton and tennis clubs and many good times were had at badminton each week.

Dad had the local high school bus, which picked up all the high school students and took them to Dardanup. We took the bus from the Boyanup area through to Bunbury.

I clearly remember when the big flood prevented the buses from getting through to Bunbury in 1964. School exams were on and I thought this was OK to miss a few of them, but Dad thought differently. We all had one day off and then he picked everyone up in the truck with the cattle crate on and we made our way to school via the Moonlight Bridge at Glen Iris which we managed to cross in the truck.

I thought I would have front seat of the truck with Dad, as I was first on having left home with Dad. But he had different ideas and I had to ride in the cattle crate with everyone else so the two older girls could ride in the front, so much for being the driver's daughter.

While Dad was doing all this, along with running the farm (with some hired help), Mum had the local telephone exchange to contend with plus six children and a workman to feed, wash and clean for, although some of my sisters were now helping her. It was pretty busy time for both of them. Mum kept the exchange going until they sold the farm and the area was connected to direct dialling.

LESLEY HOUDEN (NEE GIBBS)

POWER TO THE VALLEY

In 1961 I was given the task to survey the Ferguson district to check the viability of putting a power line through so the people of the valley could connect to the State grid and move away from 32-volt power.

The following is a list of names and how many cows they were milking, this would determine if it was viable to put the district on mains power.

G Duce	25 cows.....	Summer milking
G R Gardiner	4 acres of irrigation	
B Gardiner		
Fowler.....	30 cows.....	Very young bloke
Prout	60 cows.....	Building new house.
Slee	30 Cows.....	Trying to milk in summer.
Flynn.....	40 Cows.....	in conjunction with AC Gibbs
AC Gibbs.....	30 Cows.....	With Slee
HS Kerr	40 Cows.....	4 Acres orchard
K Butcher	50 Cows	
R Gardiner.....	40 Cows	
HF Gibbs.....	20 Cows	
L McDonald.....	40 Cows	
HB Gibbs	30 Cows	
CS Gardiner	30 Cows	
VR Gardiner.....	30 Cows	
N Gardiner	25 Cows	
W Ratcliffe.....	45 Cows	
G Mountford	40 Cows	
J Ratcliffe	40 Cows	
Stone.....	10 acres irrigation,	Check this
E Gardiner.....	25 Cows	
McKenzie.....	20 Cows	
E Marsh	15 Cows.....	Just started.
G Ratcliffe.....	50 Cows	
J Dellis.....	Few acres orchard	not living there.
AT Wickstead.....	35 Cows.....	11 month milking
GT Houden	20 Cows	
Horsford	35 Cows	

This information was used to determine if power would go through. That was the end of my part in the project and power went into the district in 1962.

STUART MORGAN

LETTER FROM ANNETTE WOOLCOCK (nee Droppert)

Extract: Annette's father taught at the school in the early 1960s, and this letter was sent to Mrs Dorrie Gibbs in response to the 100-year celebration of the school.

I think often of the Ferguson I knew, it is a very beautiful part of the world. Remember the magpies, about three of these became pets. How they pecked at the heads of the kids and Mark Fowler wore a helmet to beat them.

Making propellers from the beautiful gum tree bark. And pipes out of the honky nuts.

The little tins of Carnation milk. The fancy dress ball, Peter Butcher went as Robin Hood. I remember Wendy was not at all happy when I said I would be Maid Marion.

Then the long afternoon playing cricket on the new tennis courts. Safari after "Born Free", we were all different animals.

DAD'S NEW CAR

What excitement there was when in 1929 my Dad arrived home with a Durant Tourer.

It was a very posh car with canvas hood and side curtains, which could be clipped on, in very wet weather. Otherwise the sides were left open and we had a breezy and sometimes cold trip.

The Durant Tourer was bought from Langland Motors in Bunbury. It had four-wheel brakes, a red triangle on the back was an indication of this fact, and to advise that the vehicle could stop suddenly.

We had this vehicle for 24 years.

HOWARD (NUGGET) GIBBS

REGGIE GROVER (1920s)

As school kids we would occasionally go up past “Melbournup” (Chapman’s) and go and have a swim in the river.

Then cut across the hills and get home late from school.

This particular day we went right up to the Nine Mile. Reggie Grover was there with his new motorbike.

The bike had just been unloaded from the train - the train was an integral part of life in those days. Farmers had been given concessions to use the rail for the use of their land to run the line through. These sidings were about every mile up the line and usually had a small tin shed where produce or goods were left.

Reggie could not start it, when Edgar Parkin came along. Edgar started it - you had to push it to start it. I don’t even know if Edgar could ride a pushbike. From the railway crossing at the Nine Mile was a very rough bridge where the creek came in. Anyway, Edgar pushes it and it starts, he was wobbling all over the place, he got over the bridge, rode it up the road, turned around and came back.

Reggie Grover took it home after that. Edgar was a wizard with machinery. It was very exciting for us to see a motorbike.

TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD) FROM INTERVIEWS WITH GEORGE SKIPWORTH

1950 FIRE

In April, 1950 Ferguson experienced a great fire.

It started near Burekup, but, with the wind behind it, in a few days most of Ferguson was black.

It was a terrifying experience. The church was burnt down and several houses lost.

We were lucky as the fire tore through Donga's Range on the other side of the road from our house and our farm was not burnt. The fire just tore through the tops of the trees and the roar was so loud and frightening that it was absolutely awesome.

Our only water supply was from tanks. I filled all the buckets I could find and put them around the house but they would have been of little use if the fire had come our way.

DORRIE GIBBS (NEE MCSWAIN)

1940-1960

When I was growing up in Ferguson it was between 1940-1960.

Most farmers killed their own sheep for meat but the highlight of the week was a butcher by the name of Andrew Garbelini from Dardanup, who would call from house to house around Ferguson in an Inter or Dodge ute with a cupboard of meat on the back, mainly beef and sausages and, of course, all the news.

An elderly gentleman whose name was Joe Zagami picked up the mail out of everyone's letterbox. He came from Wellington Mill every Tuesday and Friday. He would take the mail to be posted in Dardanup. On the return trip he bought the incoming mail and parcels. He drove a very old 1930 truck with seats on the sides and a canopy on the back.

JUDY TOOKE

THE FOX

I remember in 1942, at the age of 11 years while walking to school one morning, I came across a fox caught in a rabbit trap.

The fox had pulled the pin out of the ground and with the trap attached was heading across the paddock towards a fern patch, I took off in hot pursuit.

Time somehow was not one of my concerns eventually I arrived at school three quarters of an hour late. The teacher Clare Boxall was not impressed. I received two cuts, one on each hand, for my early morning adventure.

COLIN RICHARDS

60 YEARS IN THE FERGUSON VALLEY

My recollection of a life in the valley goes back to when I was four years old and Dad took me up to Parker Browne's place (now Geoff Harris) on the front of his horse. Dad did not drive a car although he always owned one. It was during World War II, petrol was rationed so the car was used sparingly. Perhaps because of the war people born and living in the area were very resourceful. Nobody threw anything away because it may be useful later. Red Cross dances were held in the old hall for the war effort. Many recycled goods made from oddments were sold or raffled at the dance held every month.

The community was made up of mostly farmers so everyone had a common interest. Cricket, hockey and tennis were the main sports of the day. Many high performers with bat and ball have come out of the Ferguson with Perth Country Week being the highlight. Today hockey still commands a serious part of the younger one's social life.

Change has not been fast happening in the Ferguson, in fact few tractors were seen on farms till after the war. Horses were used for supering, mowing hay and planting potatoes. Potato crops were very much part of a production cycle in the '40s and '50s but I do not think I have seen a crop for over 20 years.

With machines being able to do more farming activities, more livestock appeared and with the extension of the whole milk south, pressure of poor returns for butterfat saw some of the small farms bought by neighbours or irrigation dairy farmers to run dry stock.

This saw a number of families leave the valley in 1960-70 and the closure of Wellington Mills and Ferguson schools. My father attended the original school and the one I and my eldest daughter Louise started at. So we had three generations receive the foundations of their learning at the one-room, one-teacher school. Dad told me the tale of when it was being built, the teacher of that time had a cat which was always scavenging their lunch bags. One day the cat was a bit slow and was caught. The builder was doing some soldering and had left a container of spirits of salts and a bottle of turpentine. There was a mixture made, the cat's backside was seriatly placed in the flat container. The result was quiet extraordinary. The cat took off propelled by only its front legs, dragging its tail on the ground making "cat calls" echoing well up the valley. The cat never showed its nose down by the school again.

My father was not known as being vindictive but he had a way of doing his own justice it would appear. One hundred years ago wine was produced on the property by Edward Gardiner. Dad related how his elder brother Mervyn and he were sampling a few grapes one day and Uncle Ted took after them with a stock whip. They waited till Sunday when the church service was held and the way over the creek from Uncle Ted's was a plank suspended from each bank. The boys had sawn through the underside of the plank so it was holding up but would break if pressure was applied. Unfortunately, being a thorough gentleman, Uncle Ted let his wife cross first. The result was not pretty, imagine all that petticoat and bustle floating around her waist.

The wine cycle, it would appear has come around again, we now see many 5–20 acre vineyards in the valley with one investment of several million dollars and wine of high quality.

I guess it is a case of when one door closes another opens. Where there were nearly 30 dairies operating in the area there are now only three all year and two winter dairy farms. Beef cattle production has also fallen and few lambs are bred now where once Dardanup Butchering Company would buy high quality sucker lambs from a number of fat lamb producers. Dardanup Butchering Company used to run a meat wagon (unrefrigerated) in the 40s twice a week,

calling at most farms on the way through to Wellington Mills. On a hot day it was fairly dubious whether the sausages needed frying at all.

The fire of 1950, which swept through the district, is still well remembered by many of us. We lost our old church of 80 years, but was rebuilt very quickly by the community. The railway line from Wellington Mills to Dardanup was rendered useless as all the bridges were burnt out and the mill itself was razed to the ground and Syd and Joan Gardiner never lived in their new home as it was burnt to the ground two days before their wedding.

I mentioned the closure of Wellington and Ferguson schools, I wonder if we had not lost our population whether we would have maybe saved one. When the school closed there was no longer much common interest to keep the sporting clubs going as it was centralised to Bunbury. Most of us will remember “Hay Park” on Saturday.

In conclusion I guess the most significant change I have seen in the 60 years is from where everyone who lived in the valley worked their farms and earned a living from the land. Today we have many people who have made their homes here and work elsewhere.

This includes sons and daughters who have, because of declining rural incomes, had to find other careers, rather than follow in their parents’ footsteps. Their roots are firmly embedded here and realise the benefits there are in raising a young family here and soon maybe we will have enough population to crank up some of the sporting teams Ferguson was well known for 80-100 years ago.

JOHN E GARDINER

SNAKES

I remember in 1943 one Sunday Gerald and Barry Hardie paid a visit to our property.

Being adventurous boys we went for a walk through Edger Parkin's property along Houghs Brook. To get to the other side we chose a log to walk on. Gerald led the way. As he came to the end, a large snake suddenly uncoiled himself.

Gerald jumped in the air, his hat fell off and landed next to the snake. We all took to our heels, bugger the hat. The following week on the way home from school I ventured back and collected the hat and returned it to its owner.

COLIN RICHARDS

AUGUST 1964 FLOODS

It had been raining all day and my sister Christine had very bad tonsillitis.

Mum decided she had to take her to the doctor. When we got a doctor's appointment it was 3.30pm and already dark and gloomy.

When it was time to come home, we went to our grandparents' house where Mum rang the police to find out the best route to go home. The best way was over the Moonlight Bridge in Glen Iris. Volunteers were draping bags over the radiator to stop the water getting into the car. Mum was told that once she got to the hills she would be OK, but we soon realised that was where all the water was coming from. Our car was a FJ Holden.

The Ferguson River on the Bunbury side of the church had burst its banks and the water was going sideways across the paddock and road. Mum started driving slowly through the water and to my horror the water started coming into the car. Steven, Christine, my cousin Sheree and myself were told to stand on the seats.

After going through that bank of water the car had lost its brakes, so when we got to the top of the school hill Mum walked to the school to ask Gerry Droppert what she should do. He said to drive home in first gear. Then we got to the bridge at Kerr's and the water was going over that too. I can still see Mum walking through the water to see if the bridge was safe to drive across.

Dad remembers hearing the roar of the car coming and Mum's legs were like jelly, she didn't think that she would make it home.

Apparently Bob and Leonie Gardiner got through after us and then the bridge was washed away. It was 5.30pm by then. The piles under the bridge were washed away and the bridge sunk about four feet. The shire put gravel at each end of the bridge so it could still be used.

LYNDIE GIBBS

MY FUTURE HUSBAND

Advances in transportation and communication over the years have certainly made our world a much smaller place.

In the year 2000 I'm sure it must be difficult for my grandchildren (with their own cars and independence at 17, buses to school and parents taking them back and forth to school functions, sport etc and Internet access to the world), to imagine that in my childhood a trip from Bunbury to Ferguson was a major project that took many hours of preparation - and equally as many hours of travel on bumpy, winding roads!!!

One of my happiest memories of childhood was my family's annual pilgrimage to the Ferguson Valley.

Dad and Mum had an old Rugby ute that got us as far as it had to - it was our only means of transport and had its quirks. Dad would spend the week before our planned picnic checking the old ute.

A trip of such magnitude, while a special treat for us kids, sometimes tested Dad's and Mum's patience for as well as keeping our spirits in line, they also had to stop at several of the creeks we passed along the way to top up the radiator!

The main reason for our trip was to gather mushrooms - and a rabbit or two if we were lucky.

But first stop was always Arnold Gibbs' piggery. Sometimes we saw piglets and Mum and Dad usually had to drag the three of us back to the ute for the rest of our journey.

My next venture into the Valley started when Mum and Dad took up playing badminton. Their town team would challenge the Ferguson team and we would go to the match with them.

The old Fergy hall was quite small and the court was marked part-way up the wall at both ends.

But my most treasured memories of this time were the suppers - what a feast! The town ladies were always nervous that they could match the superb supper when the country team came to town for return matches!

When I was 17 I met my future husband, Tom Gibbs, whose family had a long association with the district. Soon after we met I started going to the very popular Fergy dances with Tom.

It wasn't long before I developed a strong love for the valley and the people who made me feel so welcome, and "at home".

It's often funny how life's journey goes. Certainly, as a young child and teenager I had no visions that Ferguson would play such an important role in my life - but I'm very happy to have been able to call Ferguson home and it's people my friends for the greater part of my life.

LESLEY GIBBS (NEE TOWNSEND)

THE OLD "GING"

I remember in 1944 on a warm summer's day, we had just left school to walk home.

Armed with our ging, we made our way up the hill to the corner of Richards Road where a mailbox was fixed to the side of a tree. Target practice began, each took in turn to see who was the best shot.

My turn came around and so as not to be outdone I took aim and fired the stone. It hit the side of the box and ricocheted off, hitting Pauline Gardiner above the eye, drawing blood. Fearful of the consequences, the session soon broke up. We quickly made our way home, where a few days later when word had got out, I was duly dealt with.

COLIN RICHARDS

GUY FAWKES NIGHT

I have so many happy memories of being part of the Ferguson District, and bringing up our family, I think was the happiest.

We all had some marvellous times over the years. One of which was Guy Fawkes Day and Bonfire night on November 5, an annual celebration we all enjoyed. Also we had so many events in the district hall, 21st birthday parties, wedding receptions and the weekly sports night, mainly badminton on Friday nights. I could go on but that's enough from me, but it was a great day when we moved from our old house to our new one, when we bought Snee's farm.

So that's my memories of living in the Ferguson, a very lovely place, where I spent many happy years.

JENNIE GIBBS (NEE RICKSON)

WE SHOULD HAVE STAYED FISHING

I remember in 1943 one day on a weekend my brother Dennis and I made our way on foot across to the Ferguson River to do a little fishing for minnows.

After sometime at the river it was suggested that we walk a mile or so up the old railway line to Wellington Mill. Arriving at the old mill site we found an old four-wheel trolley. A thought developed to a point that if we put the trolley on the line, being all down hill it was an easy way home.

We started slowly but soon gathered speed. Rounding a bend and nearing our destination, we saw a white ant nest built over the line. The order was given “bail out” which we duly did. Just before impact, the trolley hit the mound and bounced into the air, and derailed. We made our way home.

COLIN RICHARDS



Bert Kerr in his Morris - believed to be in the late 1930s.

BERT KERR

My memory - in the later years of my schooling, riding my bike to school and home again, always stayed with me (1956-1959).

It was the ride home that was made memorable because there was usually six or seven of us of all ages and we usually (sort of) rode together. It was when we got to Bert Kerr's place that made it enjoyable because he would be waiting for us, like working in his garden or just waiting at the gate. He would supply us with apples, lollies or whatever.

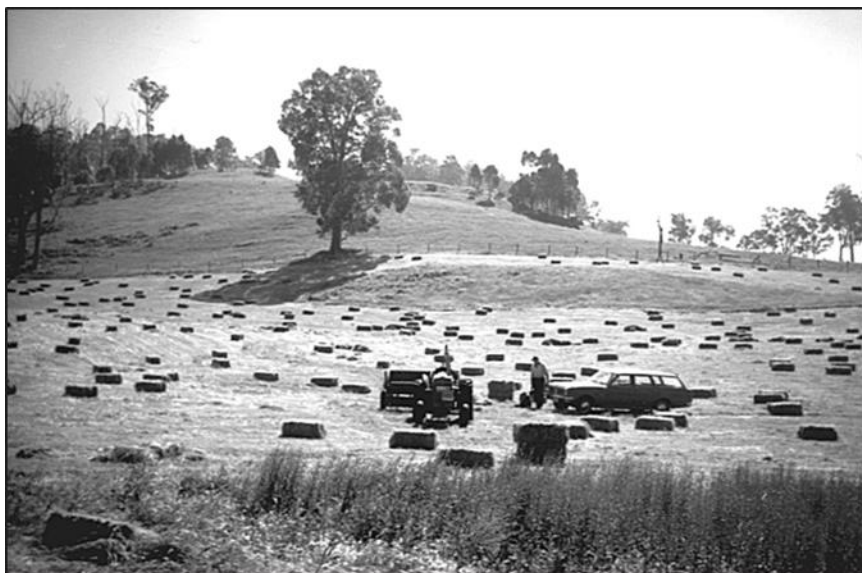
If we needed a drink we would go to his rainwater tank outside the back door of his house where there would be an enamel cup alongside the tap. If he was not able to be there he would leave the goodies on his gate post or the ground alongside. We often stayed too long, as he seemed to like our company.

Riders included Donald Ratcliffe, Lynette Sexton (nee Gardiner), Ruth Haynes (nee Gibbs), Bruce Gibbs, Keith Muller, Kenny Tussler, Elsie Tussler and Elna George (nee Gardiner). These treats went on for many years and are remembered by most whom went to school during the time that Bert Kerr was there.

ELNA GEORGE (NEE GARDINER)



New Tractor - Sam Gardiner, driving his brand new B250 International tractor, with daughters Lynette and Elna, and Robert Dixon on the hay on the super spreader.



Square Bales - an unfamiliar site nowadays, the district used to be covered in these square bales during hay season, now large rolls have taken their place.

Pictured is Sam Gardiner baling on "Ferndale" in the early 1970s.

1080

When I was about 12, I remember Mr Tickner coming into the district to poison the rabbits with 1080 poison.

This was an exciting time and a sad time for me. It was exciting as I was allowed to ride in the green Landrover while he was putting out the poison. Mr Tickner would have the bags of 1080 mixed oats and would pour this into a hopper on the back of the car - this was on top of a disc that would dig a small furrow along the paddock. As he drove along the poisoned oats would drop into the furrow. It was a sad occasion as well, as I made a lot of money out of trapping rabbits (20 cents for the big ones and 10 cents for the little ones).

When Mr Tickner had finished poisoning I was not allowed to trap rabbits and sell them until after the first rain and the oats had all sprouted. This is when Dad believed they were safe to eat again. A lot of these rabbits were sold in Bunbury. I would take a potato bag and set of and check my traps before school and again after school.

I also remember not showing Mr Tickner one section on the farm where there were rabbits as there was a big white one there and I did not want him to be poisoned. I also would not set traps in this burrow. He stayed there for quite a few years.

STEVE GIBBS

“HOWARD BASIL GIBBS IS MY GRANDFATHER AND GOOD FRIEND”

Howard, better known as “Nugget” or “Nug” by all who knew him, was born in a small hospital in Zoe Street Bunbury, on July 4, 1921.

He was the second son and third child of Herbert and Mary Gibbs (nee Flynn).

He had two sisters and one brother Beryl, Arnold and Mavis.

Howard’s father Herbert was a farmer and spent much time as a timber worker, cutting sleepers from the jarrah forests of the Ferguson. His mother Mary was a housewife.

Howard was raised in a house on the original farm of the pioneer of the Gibbs family, Samuel Gibbs, and lived there until 1947. The house, built of local timber and iron roofing, is still standing on the farm now belonging to Howard’s son Greg.

Due to the lack of building materials in the aftermath of World War II and the fact that no permits were issued for new houses, Howard opted to dismantle, transport and re-assemble a house from Roelands Mission, approximately 30 kilometres from Ferguson. He meticulously assembled the house from establishing stumps to painting the walls.

One of the highlights of Howard's life was his father's purchase of the family's first motor car. It was a T-model Ford bearing the original licence plate of DA 58.

Every day from the age of six-14, Howard walked nearly three miles to school, usually with neighbouring farmers' kids if he could catch up with them. There was an average of 25 students in the one-room single-teacher school between Ironstone Road and Richards Road. Walking to and from school he never veered too far off the makeshift road in case somebody with a car came along to give a ride. Never was a ride to or from school knocked back.

Howard left school at age 14 to work on his father's and neighbouring farms.

Apart from army service, Howard never received a regular wage or salary.

Apart from a few years when food was delivered from Bunbury, Howard and the family had to travel a 25-kilometre journey for supplies. Bread was delivered from 1936-1988 from the bakery at Dardanup to each farm's "breadbox" on the side of the road.

Until the mid 1950s, before conventional refrigeration was introduced, cool safes were used to preserve food. These safes consisted of a pan on the top with a hessian bag down the back. Water ran through this system and cooled the food. In the mid 1950s, a kerosene powered refrigerator was purchased. An electric refrigerator was purchased when power was delivered to the Ferguson in 1961.

Howard enlisted in the army in 1941 at the age of 20, and spent the first six months of service in the Perth metropolitan area. He was then transferred to the state farm at Wongan Hills for 12 months. In 1943 his unit was moved to Mataranka in the Northern Territory for eight-nine months. He was then transferred to Melbourne for three months until transfer to Perth for discharge. His father was ill and his assistance was required to work the family farm.

Upon return from service, Howard entered into partnership with his father and on July 17, 1947 his father Herbert died at the age of 60. In March, 1947 Howard Basil Gibbs married Dorrie Gladys McSwain, of Bassendean and on April 29, 1948 their first child Ruth Jesse Gibbs was born.

When Howard took over the farm in 1947 there were 290 acres of which 145 were cleared. In 1962 he purchased 110 acres near his original block and developed it into good farming and grazing land. In 1970 he bought a further 200 acres at Joshua Brook. He never sold any land and passed around 500 acres to his son Greg. During his time running the farm, he built the stock numbers from 50 to 400 by the time he retired.

In 1953 Howard bought his first car, a Holden utility. In 1956 he bought a kerosene powered David Brown tractor and this was traded in 1967 for an updated diesel powered model.

Howard changed from cream production to whole milk production in 1954 and gave it away in 1970. His brother Arnold, Max Kerr and himself established a milk collection service in the Ferguson Valley.

Howard played a variety of sports including hockey for Ferguson, tennis at the Ferguson Hall, cricket at Ferguson, rifle shooting and badminton.

Howard and Dorrie's first son Bruce was born on May 21, 1950 and their second son Greg on July 18, 1955.

Howard and Dorrie travelled much of the world including many trips around Australia and trips to New Zealand (1974), America and Canada (1980) and England in 1984.

Howard was especially proud of his children's academic achievements in

obtaining leaving certificates, not available to him when he was schooled. He was also proud of his farming achievements and those of Greg for turning his business from a border-line operation to a successful business.

He was father of three and grandfather of six - Donalie, Bruce and Cleve Haynes, as well as Ryan, Geoffrey and Lauren Gibbs.

RYAN GIBBS, AGED 14, 1995

LANDSLIDE 1940

I remember the morning we had a landslide on our property, just near the house.

There were several springs underground and it was a wet morning, about July I think. Anyway, about 7.30am I felt a tremor. I was in the kitchen getting breakfast when someone rushed up from the dairy to tell me there had been a landslide, it was a really eerie feeling and caused a lot of excitement and interest for a long time.

JENNIE GIBBS (NEE RICKSON)

TELEPHONES DURING THE FIRE

This was another very anxious time for everyone when the big fire came through from Collie on Friday April 13, 1950.

There was a very strong wind that day and a warm day too. The fire just raced through and the entire district had to work continuously to keep it under control. Our district church was burned down and it was only the work of all the men that no houses went and because, at the last minute, the wind changed and took it away.

We had a huge amount of people who met at the exchange, women mainly manned their houses and kept up the refreshments, as we had to try and keep the telephone going for messages and instructions. I am pleased to say we were blessed with a lot of luck and good faith, as it was really a miracle that we saved the sheds and house. Only with the great work of the volunteers, it was a very frightening experience.

Our eldest daughter Derryle, who would have been about nine at the time, worked as hard as the adults, carrying buckets of water from a nearby trough and watching the flames. She did a sterling job and helped save our house.

JENNIE GIBBS (NEE RICKSON)

PARTY LINE

Before the telephone system went digital there was a system of telephone exchanges all over the State operated by local people. Usually each district had its own exchange. To be able to contact the exchange you had to give one long ring on your hand-operated telephone, this was done by winding the handle in a clockwise direction. The person at the exchange would answer and you would ask to be put through to the person you wanted to talk to. Sometimes this meant going through many exchanges to get connected.

Within most districts there was also a system called the party line, this meant that there were people you could ring without going through the exchange. To contact a particular person you would ring their particular "Morse Code" and they would answer if they were home. After you had finished you would give one short turn of the handle so that other people on the party line would know that you had finished.

The Ferguson party line comprised six contact points - Bill and Gwen Ratcliffe's call signal was three shorts; for Sam and Joyce Gardiner it was long, short, long; Neville and Babs Gardiner a long then two shorts; Victor and Hilda Gardiner a short, long, and short; Nug and Dorrie Gibbs two longs and a short; Hal Gibbs (later to be Tom and Lesley Gibbs) two shorts then a long.

There was also a party line which went through to Wellington Mill and one in Crooked Brook.

Other people had their own line and could be connected through the exchange; some of these numbers are as follows:

Stephen	1
Prout	2
W Fowler	3
R Gardiner	4
Flynn.....	6
E Fowler	8

There were many others - I have just used the above as an example. The district went to digital phones in 1972.

BROOKHAMPTON DANCE

I remember when my four brothers Pete, Sam, Mike and Ken decided to go to Brookhampton for a dance.

They saddled up the horses and set off, it is quite a distance to Brookhampton from Ferguson. They headed straight through the bush. When they got there they had a great time until the small hours of the night. Finally it was all over and they headed off back home. After a while they realised they were not real sure where they were. One advantage of a horse over a car is that it knows where it is going.

The brothers let the horses have their head and they arrived home safely early in the morning. They were not let to forget this little incident for a long time.

MARGE WICKSTEED (NEE GARDINER)

THE INTRODUCTION OF TELEVISION INTO MY LIFE

Babs and Neville Gardiner were the first people to have TV in our locality of Ferguson.

We were invited up to their place after school to watch TV with their children Janet, Ken and Karen and also Greg Gibbs. We didn't dawdle home from school because that meant we missed precious TV watching time. Shows that we remember watching were "The Adventures of the Seaspray", "Lassie", "Adventure Island" and "The Flowerpot Men". It was a special privilege to be able to go up to their house on a regular basis to watch TV.

I remember bowling into our house after school one day and seeing a TV set up in our house. Mum and Dad got a lot of pleasure out of seeing the excitement

on our faces, they had kept it a huge secret and, of course, we were all very happy about it.

Another time of great excitement was in 1969 (I was 12 years old), when the whole Ferguson Primary School, 15 students in total, and the headmaster Barry Cattach were invited to my place to watch on TV “man walk on the moon”. The anticipation of what might happen and the excitement of seeing Neil Armstrong as the first man to walk on the moon is something I will never forget. There was a real buzz in the air. I can still remember my great grandmother, who was born on January 1, 1881 saying that she never thought she would live to see man walk on the moon. She was 88 years young.

LYNDIE GIBBS

MATES

I remember standing on Nan and Pop Mountford’s verandah watching these men packing their fishing gear, supplies and Pop’s kitchen tent into the back of the white Holden ute.

For some reason I always remember several white Holden utes driving out and Pop’s towing his boat.

The names on these fishing trips I remember were my grandfather George Mountford, Hal and Clarrie Gibbs, Doody Fowler and Fred Parkin. This was in the days when turning 65 meant retirement and the age pension - you could then turn the farm over to the sons and live quite comfortably on the pension.

Molloy Island and Scott River were the destinations. They had a preferred campsite near Molloy Island somewhere. I am not sure how good the river access was though I know on at least one occasion George backed boat, trailer and ute into the Blackwood River. George was known for his loud revving and excessive use of the clutch. (He must have worn out more clutches than anyone else in the State).

An integral part of the fishing trip was not the bait but your packet of tobacco and papers. These were the days when smoking was just a habit, not a health hazard. George was a chain smoker - he would have set out with one smoke in his mouth and one behind each ear. The Gibbs brothers were practical jokers and on one occasion while George was rolling these smokes for the next fishing session the Gibbs boys rolled a smoke and put some kangaroo dung in the middle of it and put the specially rolled smoke with George's smoke.

The offending smoke was rolled to perfection, as Clarrie was renowned for rolling the perfect smoke. George thought something was going on, so he put the neat smoke on the seat in the boat next to him and went on fishing.

Meanwhile, Doody had finished his supply. Seeing the smoke on the seat, he said to George, "Mind if I have that smoke", George did not mind at all. I am sure they all sat there very sheepishly waiting that first puff but the first puff went by without incident and the second puff. It was not until the third puff that Doody got the taste and with a cough and a splutter heaved the smoke overboard, to the laughter of the others.

When my mother's father (Michael "Mick" Simmons) retired he was asked to come along to keep up the numbers, along with newly retired George Houden, who became known as young George.

Now Mick was a man the Depression had left a big mark on. He never threw anything away. While packing for a fishing trip he picked up a jar with what appeared to be sugar and refilled it not wanting to throw away the bit that was left. He topped it up and gave it a shake. All went well until the second day of the fishing trip.

After breakfast they loaded up the boat for the morning's fishing and set off to the middle of the river. No sooner had they thrown their lines in that Mick announced, "I think we had better head for the bank", with that George said, "Mick I think you are right". The minute they hit camp there were men and spades and shovels heading for the bush.

After they had composed themselves and decided a cup of tea was called for, they sat and contemplated the sudden bout of diarrhoea hitting the camp. Young George noticed his tea curdling. The milk was not off and with that

Mick stuck his finger in the offending jar of sugar. It was salty; he had filled the Epsom salts jar with sugar.

On another occasion it was a clear blue-sky, winter's day in August and the river was crystal clear. Mick had a beauty on his line - they could see it however his line became snagged under a log. The others said, "Cut the line, you will never get him out". With that Mick stood up, stripped off, long johns and all and dived in to the sounds of, "You idiot, you will kill yourself ". He unsnagged the line, swam back to the boat and pulled in the fish, got dressed and shivered for the next two hours.

They always seemed to arrive home in the dark, lights of the ute coming up the hill. The men sorting out the fish from the icebox, joking and laughing about who got the biggest bream (they usually tasted muddy). Over the years the faces in the torchlight changed as the fisherman passed on. Every year there seemed to be one less to go fishing. Then when Pop (George Mountford) died, I remember my Uncle Fred coming to pick up the boat and the three brothers contemplating what to do with the kitchen tent. It marked the end of the great fishing trips.

Years later I remember when Steve (being the grandson of Clarrie) and I got engaged, Nan saying with a tear in her eye what a shame the old fishermen were not here for this wedding.

TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD)



Good fishing - George, Vera and Norma Mountford with a good catch

SPORTS DAY

Sports day was a very big event on the school calendar.

The night before or the morning of the day someone, usually the youngest member of the family, had to go and shut the gate over the hill so the cows wouldn't be too far away when arriving home late.

One was always bribed with this task by Dad saying he would be quick enough for sports day. The sports were always held at Donnybrook, Dad would pick up the flags, tins, and balls required and any child who didn't have ride and drive to Donnybrook in the Dodge truck. A great day would always be had with Ferguson School winning the small schools competition many times. Also have

many champion boys and girls. We would arrive home sunburnt and very tired after a fantastic day.

This was during the fifties as I attended Ferguson School from 1955-1961.

LYNETTE SEXTON (NEE GARDINER)



Binding - Sam Gardiner and his mates binding hay on “Ferndale” in the late 1940s.

MY TIME IN FERGUSON

It was March, 1946 when I was 16 years old. I was placed in care and employment by the Roelands Native Mission to Mr and Mrs Arnold (Pug) and Jennie Gibbs on “Melbournup Farm”, Ferguson.

I can well remember the day and the bendy gravel road that went up into the Ferguson Valley. I thought we weren’t ever getting there. Finally we arrived to this beautiful old house, which was home for five lovely years.

With gratitude Arnold and Jennie made me feel like one of the family. Also the whole community in the district for accepting me as I was.

I would like to say “thankyou all” because I feel and know it was the foundation to my success through my life.

There were three girls in the family, the second girl was at that difficult age when Mum could not get her to eat her meals, so I used to make Anne sit next to me on the stool and feed her which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Another occasion was when I was playing hockey with the boys, it was Saturday morning and Arnold was going to Nugget’s to help him with something, so Arnold told me to clean the dairy and check the cows as we were expecting some calves. I did that and decided to check some rabbit traps at the same time. I took the rifle with me as usual, just in case I saw a rabbit on the way.

I was up at the Nine Mile paddock and it started to rain so I sheltered under one of the trees. After a while the rain stopped and when I was uncocking the rifle, the bolt slipped out of my fingers and the shot went through my foot. When I arrived home Jennie told me that Fred Flynn, our neighbour, had rang to let us know he was leaving for hockey and that he was taking me. When I told Jennie that I had shot myself she just about took a back flip.

I spent a week in hospital. The police paid me a visit while I was there and got the story from me. Finally we were fined one pound, five shillings each, Arnold for letting me have the rifle and me for not having a licence.

Another day Arnold and I were down the dairy, the girls were on the verandah (the house was well off the ground). Suddenly they saw something wriggle past on the ground, “Mummy, Mummy, there is a big wriggly here” and when Jennie looked it was a big snake going into the front garden. Of course, we did not waste any time getting rid of it.

It was 1953 when I left the Gibbs family to get married. We kept in touch from time to time while I was in Carnarvon. After a few years up north, I returned south where I was employed in the Forestry Department at Wellington Mills and in Collie as an overseer in the pine nursery in charge of unemployed gangs.

In 1975 I left to take employment at the Collie District Hospital where I spent 20 years working as an orderly. I have now retired to my six acres of land with my partner where we grow wholesale chrysanthemums as a hobby. With all my grandchildren and flowers there is little time to be bored.

BOB CHITTY

DANNY THE LAMB

Uncle Hal had a pet lamb called Danny, although those terms did not accurately describe him. He was more like a big savage rogue wether who liked nothing better than to flatten anybody he caught unawares. Danny lived around Uncle Hal's house, which is next to where Colin and Jane Gibbs now live, about 50 metres from the road.

Uncle Hal and Danny co-existed peacefully enough until Danny dropped his pellets on the verandah where Uncle Hal used to sit in the afternoons. When this happened, Uncle Hal would whack him with a piece of poly-pipe he kept by his chair for this purpose.

As a young teenager, I would go and yarn with Uncle Hal if he was on the verandah when I went past on my bike, but I was always wary of Danny. One afternoon Tom Gibbs was with Uncle Hal so I stopped with the intention of going over to them both. After carefully checking the vicinity and seeing no sign of rogue sheep, I got through the fence and headed for the house. When I reached no-man's land, about two-thirds of the way, Danny burst out from where he'd been lurking behind the house awaiting his chance. I knew I was in trouble because his timing was perfect.

I couldn't make it to the house because that's where Danny was coming from at a great rate and I was doubtful if I could get back to the fence before Danny got to me. I made a bolt for the fence and I could hear Danny behind, hell-bent on mayhem, and, he was fast gaining ground on me. I made it to the fence just before Danny but it was too high for me to jump and I was in a hurry. Somehow, I got through the wires almost at full pace, but made an awful mess of it and ended up in a very undignified heap on the other side. Danny virtually

stood over me with a look of triumph tinged with some frustration. Triumph after putting me out of his paddock but frustration that he actually hadn't got me.

The ignominy of being "put" by a pet lamb was bad enough but, of course, Uncle Hal and Tom both saw the whole thing and Tom still delights in telling the story.

BRUCE GIBBS

RAILWAY THAT DID NOT HAPPEN

In the pedestrian and halcyon days of the final decade of the last century, the small community of Bunbury - its townsite, which then ended at Stirling Street on the south end, was the smallest in the State - had its persistent annoyances.

But none bugged the community so much as the fiasco of the Bunbury-Boyanup railway...

...Its peculiar history bears repetition. The Government completed building the line in 1887 because of the burgeoning timber export industry. But no steam train was destined to run on it for four years! Even though two specially-imported locomotives were landed at the port to service the line a few weeks after it was built!

...On Christmas Eve, 1888, a few weeks after the line had been laid, residents felt like throwing their toppers and their bowlers - the male headgear of the day - into the air when the barque Rewa anchored in the Bunbury roadstead...

...The iron barque Rewa had sailed from Gravesend to Bunbury in 107 days; but what interested residents more was that she carried rolling stock for the Bunbury-Boyanup railway...

...Seven days later the blow fell. The resident engineer received a telegram from the Director of Works in Perth saying the Government did not intend to put the rolling stock for the Bunbury-Blackwood line together for the present but to store it in the sheds.

...The news was described as “very vexatious” because the citizens had expected to see a train running on that line at least once a week within a short time.....Citizens promptly called a public meeting to petition Railways Commissioner H.W Venn not to shut up the line...

...An outspoken critic was James Moore, who said at the meeting that the line had been an extremely expensive job...

...It was a farce and had been made crooked to run through Mr Venn’s land at Dardanup he maintained...The line ought to have gone up the valley of the Ferguson, where they would have got good land, plenty of timber, stone and clay for tiles and bricks. If Western Australians could not make things pay there, Mr Moore said, they should get out some Germans, as the South Australians had done, and thriving German settlements would have been formed in the valley....That would have been far better than taking the line across the barren Dardanup plain!

FOOTNOTE TO STORY: The line was officially opened on March 13, 1891 after residents had fought to keep the locos in Bunbury (one had been sent to Albany, the other to Fremantle, with the latter one being returned to Bunbury).

Nearly 700 people crowded into six carriages, two guards’ vans and nine wagons of the first train out of Bunbury...Buried in musty Public Works Department files is the real reason the Government didn’t commission the line earlier - it thought it wouldn’t pay!

***FROM “SOUTH WESTERN TIMES” CENTENARY SOUVENIR
LIFT-OUT***

***THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 1988 EXCERPTS FROM “RAILWAY
FIASCO” STORY BY PAUL WOOD***



“The Graft” - one of the locos that hauled timber from Wellington to Dardanup.

From left, Guard, R Spruhan; Fireman, H Hannan; Driver, J Harbick “Hellfire Jack”; Loco cleaner, not known.

MEMORIES

I have many rich memories, particularly of neighbours Keith and Sheila Butcher, who treated me with such respect and love.

I always remember Keith and Sheila’s home as a “refuge” and a place where I could go and talk, eat great tucker and simply feel safe. Keith was my hero and Sheila was the archetypal wife I dreamed I would someday have!

Other kind neighbours to me included Sam Gardiner, Bob Slee and Max Kerr.

I always appreciated the community of Ferguson, particularly the many happy times we had in the hall playing cards, having Christmas parties, or playing tennis outside. The terrible bushfire of 1950 was an example of a community pulling together, particularly as friends and neighbours in Dardanup took cows to pasture when the Ferguson Valley was burnt out. This cooperation among people impressed me as a kid.

I was pretty hopeless at school, but I do remember Peter Mills as a great teacher. I also remember walking home from school with Faye and Merryll Ratcliffe and Norma Mountford and being amazed at how far they had to walk! They would stop in at our place for afternoon tea and “fuel up” for the remainder of their trek home.

When I was 17 my parents went to Japan for an extended holiday (in 1962) and left me to manage the farm. Every night during the four months my parents were away, I would go up to Keith and Sheila’s for tea and they even loaned me their Austin car to go on a special date! At other times I would drive the tractor to Dardanup on Saturday night to pick up a ride to the Rowing Club dance. I did use the truck on occasion, but it broke down, hence the resort to the tractor!

I managed to secure an orphan lamb during this time to give to one of my girlfriends as a birthday present - very romantic! I picked up the lamb in the morning and left it in the house in the afternoon while I went to milk.

A couple of days later when Sheil was cleaning the house she found these little black pellets throughout the house! She was not impressed when I owned up to penning a lamb in the house for an afternoon!

During the same time my parents were away I decided to bake a sponge cake for myself. After several failed attempts (even Dooda the dog wouldn’t eat the result!), I phoned Jennie Gibbs for help. Jennie said not to worry and that night Syd Gardiner brought me a truckload of cakes and biscuits on the milk run! Good old Jen had opened the exchange line and sent an SOS around the district! Dooda and I ate like kings for ages after that!

PETER PROUT

THE GATE

A final story about my management of the farm while my parents were away involves one of our neighbours who should have been a Formula One driver.

I had to break in a dozen heifers for milking and one gave me a particularly hard time. The dairy was right on the road going to the Butcher's farm, with the entrance to the milking yards off the road. The heifer in question would not follow the other cows into the yard but would run up and down the road, refusing to enter the yard.

Since I could not be in two places at once (!) chasing her in and heading her off, I hit upon a brilliant farmer's solution! I took a piece of ringlock wire and strung it across the road to direct the reluctant bovine into the yard. Success at last and I hurried in to start milking, forgetting the wire across the road!

Many of us will remember John Gardiner as the "low flying" driver of Ferguson. John knew two speeds in his car – "stop" and "flat out". On the day of my innovation to get the heifer into the yard, John decided to visit Keith and Sheila during milking time. I happened to see John coming (I actually felt the windblast first!), just as I was bending down to take off tit cups. In that sickening moment I remembered the wire across the road!

I also instantly knew I was in big trouble!

John hit the wire in an explosion of metal, gravel and wire! I stayed low, taking an eternity to take off four tit cups! I finally moved in a crouched position to the next cow, thinking John may not see me! However, out of the corner of my eye I see John walking rather forcefully up the short drive of the dairy. I cannot print the greeting but the body language was not a pretty sight!

To give John credit, he was kind to me (I am still alive to tell the story!) and he did accept my apology and understood my frustration with the heifer. Fortunately there was little damage to John's car, although he did wreck my gate! I cannot remember how I dealt with the cow again, but I don't think I used the gate across the road again!

Since leaving the Valley I have travelled in many parts of the world and I can honestly say the Ferguson Valley is the most beautiful real estate I have seen. The people of the Valley who nurtured me when I was a kid were also the most special of all I have met.

***PETER PROUT WIFE - PHYL (BORN IN RED DEER,
ALBERTA, CANADA) DAUGHTERS - KATE 22, SARAH 19,
RACHEL 15***

FLOODS

Apart from all the water, my recollection of the floods we experienced in 1964 was that on the evening of all the rain we were going as a family - Mum, Dad, Ruth, Bruce and myself - to the old Ferguson School for a film evening.

The school had recently been given a 16mm projector and every month we were sent down a box full of movies and documentaries. Because this was such a novelty, the schoolmaster Mr Droppert used to show these films to anyone who would like to go, once a month, in the evening.

Anyway we were driving down the road until we got to the Ferguson River bridge by Kerr's place and water was flowing over the top of it by quite a few inches. The handrails were clearly visible on either side.

Dad started to drive across very slowly through the water. The next thing that happened was the front of the car dropped with a real "bang" into a big crack in the bridge. We couldn't reverse so we all had to get out in the flowing water and push the car backwards.

Fortunately we got out and went straight home. The next morning the entire bridge had dropped about four feet into the river as the poles had been washed out from underneath it. We used to drive over it with gravel at either end for several months after.

GREG GIBBS

MY MOTORBIKE

Father told me if I ever bought a motorbike he'd put us both out the top gate.

I got sick of being on the farm with no form of transport, so I went into Bunbury one Saturday night and without any qualification to ride a motorbike I bought one on Saturday night when there was late shopping. Just about nine o'clock at night I rode it right down to the middle of town, right home to the farm about 20-odd mile away at Ferguson. The next morning I got up and thought I'd put the bike away where father wouldn't see it so I could ride to work on it.

I went to get the bike to push it out of the shed by the house to put it up further in the shed and as I did I grabbed the horn and it gave a terrific blare. Next thing I saw the father peering from over the fence, he just looked over and said, "Give a fool some money and he'll waste it". Unfortunately the father never used to give us money at all, all the money we got was for growing potatoes or something like that.

Everything settled down and we just went on as usual, and some time later I ended up friends with a girl from Collie Bridge. We used to go out now and again, never had a great lot of time, it was always work, but about this time father made the farms - he had three or four - over to his sons. Christmas, 1936 he moved from the farm and went down to live on the next farm with Mum and the rest of the family. One of the sisters stopped with me on the farm to do a bit of cooking and look after things etc.

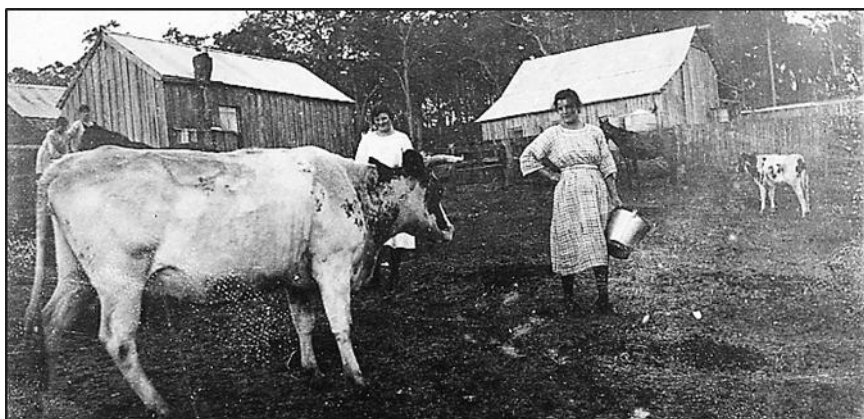
But to make up for me disobeying him and buying a motorbike when he told me not to, he moved everything off the farm, everything out of the house, leaving only just what belonged to the sister. Never left a kettle or light or anything in the house and moved them all down to the other farm. Well, we found an old hurricane lamp hanging in the shed which we put some kerosene in and lit for the night, and found a can and boiled some water and had a cup of tea. Although I had very little money the next day we went into town and bought a few bare necessities like cups and saucers, pots and things like that and started off on the farm. At that time there was nothing to do, no cows milking, nothing at all, so I went down to Dardanup to dig potatoes to get a few bob to buy groceries etc. Fortunately a couple of years before that I had bought

a lot of little poddie calves that were for sale for 7/6d each which had grown into very nice heifers.

They were calving that year and I went down to the Dardanup sale and there were some old cows in very poor condition with a couple of calves and I bought those for about a pound or 25 shillings each and I took them home. I thought, well I'll start off milking one for the house so when I got them home I killed the calf belonging to one of the cows and sent it to market, the first thing I'd ever sold off the farm. Unfortunately I didn't stop to think that driving it from Dardanup it was so hot by the time it got to market it had turned green and was condemned so I lost the first sale off the farm.

But soon after that the cows started to calve and we separated a few and used to milk the cows by hand and separated the milk and got half a tin of cream. One of the young brothers came up there and was playing around on his pushbike, hit into the half tin of cream and spilled it and that was the second thing I had for sale that was gone.

BILL RATCLIFFE



Milking cows in the paddock - Vera and Muriel Ratcliffe in the early 1920s.



Carting wool - from the Ratcliffe farm, late 1920s.



Heaping hay - George and Joe Ratcliffe on "Brampton" farm.

I started to see more of the girl who lived in Collie Bridge and worked in her mother's tea rooms and we got friendly and I suppose a few years after I took over the farm, we got engaged and then we were married.

Although she was used to everything she wanted before she got married, it was much different when she came out to the farm because I was still struggling along there and she had to have whatever we could afford. We just bought what furniture we really needed for the old house and settled in happier than what the ones do nowadays with a full house of furniture. It was October 3, 1938 that we got married and we let our hair down and went to the Royal Show for three or four days.

When we came back we decided we had to do the work on our own because the sister had a job she was going to. She gave us a couple of months and, although Gwen had never milked a cow, she came up to the cow yard, got the bucket and got going and was able to milk the cows and help with the milking.

That year the sister left and we were left on our own, the cows were doing fairly well, milking quite well. We decided the next year we would get a milking machine, which was a big expense in those days, as far as we were concerned. We had very little money, and you had to have the cash to pay for everything you bought in those days, there was no time payment.

We got the new cowshed built and got the milking machine and separator and all and it cost a large sum of 166 pounds, which luckily we had the money to pay for. When the chap came to put in the milking machine we had quite a few cows milking, Gwen had to get breakfast for the chap that was installing the machine and then go up and watch the separator etc.

We would then go and cut the chaff for the cattle, just the two of us, dust flying everywhere and cut the chaff and bag it. We used to carry it on our backs from the chaff room up to the cowshed.

BILL RATCLIFFE

RABBIT HUNTING

Growing up on the Ferguson in the '50s and '60s was great.

There were plenty of rabbits around then, and as kids, my brother and I would take our dog Scamp and go rabbiting. Scamp was a great rabbitier and could often run them down and catch them.

When she chased a rabbit down its burrow we would help her dig it out with spades. We spent hours digging out burrows like this and sometimes we would get a whole litter of little ones as well as the adult rabbit. Once Scamp was on to a sure thing there was no escape for the rabbit.

I started trapping rabbits at six or seven years of age. Not being strong enough or heavy enough to set a trap, I would bring it to the wood heap behind the house and place it under a big wood block, which I levered up with a stick. I would then stand on the block, which gave enough weight to set the trap and then slowly get off, lift the block with the lever and extract the set trap.

Then I would carry the set trap to the burrow - sometimes a kilometre from the house. Sometimes I would drop a rock on the trap when covering it with dirt and set it off which meant a trip all the way home to reset it.

I remember the excitement of catching my first rabbit just over the creek, 100 metres from the house. I heard it squeal as it was caught only an hour or so after setting the trap and I was there in a flash to claim my first victim.

Ten or 12 years and hundreds of rabbits later, Tom Gibbs and I had nearly 200 traps set on a neighbouring property he had bought that had a huge rabbit problem. We'd go around the traps with his tractor and carry-all in the morning, afternoon and after dark catching hundreds of rabbits in a few weeks. We'd gut them and I'd take them and sell them to a butcher in Bunbury.

BRUCE GIBBS

RABBIT PLAGUE

During the 1940s we had the rabbits coming in, we had plagues of rabbits, they absolutely ruined the feed for the cattle.

We decided something had to be done so I bought all rabbit-proof fence and totally rabbit-proofed about 100 acres around the house and got rid of all the rabbits out of that and went on and fenced the other 200 acres. It was an enormous job, where there were ferns, trees and logs, to try and get rid of the rabbits.

So a few years after I got going I became quite good so as I got money I spent it but in a sensible way. We decided we might try the first wheeled tractor that was ever introduced to the district. They all thought I was mad, "You'll never do it with a wheeled tractor on the hills".

But I had my mind made up what it would be used for, it was to more or less use in the summertime to get rid of the ferns and rubbish around the farm and then work up around, putting in early feed for the cattle which you couldn't do with a couple of horses. So we got going with that and for the first lot of the rabbit-proof fencing I put up I got some of the next door neighbours to do the work. I used to cart the posts and lay them on the line and do all that type of work and they'd come along and put up the fence. We were able to do that in between milking and put up the 100-acre fence - it made all the difference to the quality of feed for the cattle.

BILL RATCLIFFE

DONGA BULLA

My great, great grandfather Henry Stanes Flynn moved into the Ferguson district circa 1866. He was granted a lease of 150 acres of land in 1876, Location

338. He subsequently lost this due to financial hardship, after a mortgage of 100 pounds was unable to be repaid. After several transactions, the property was bought by his son John in 1882.

This property was known as “Brookfield”, approximately 500 metres south east of Ironstone Road. Currently it has grapevines planted on it.

After Henry’s wife died in 1884, he continued to live in the area with various members of his family.

During his time on the Ferguson Henry, like most early settlers, was involved in the timber industry to help supplement his income. One of his ventures was totally unsuccessful. He apparently heard that the Bunbury jetty was to be extended, so he went into the bush and cut and trimmed some long jarrah beams. I would assume most of the work would have been done with an axe and broadaxe. Unfortunately, for some reason that’s where they remained.

The area he cut these from is known by locals as Donga’s Ridge. I have also heard from my father that it was unofficially known as “Donga’s Folly”. Unfortunately it is incorrectly signposted as Dongara Ridge. The name Donga is thought to be Nyoongar Aboriginal, of which he was reasonably familiar, having had a deal of contact with the Aborigines when he first moved from Perth to work at Australind in the early 1850s.

As the story goes, the correct name was Donga Bulla or Donger Booler, thought to mean - wise, to know much.

One can only imagine the time and effort that went into preparing the timber that he was unable to sell. Even in modern times, with chainsaws and tractor, the work would have been quite difficult.

***WRITTEN BY GREG GIBBS, WITH REFERENCE TO A BOOK
“FLYNN OF THE FERGUSON”, WRITTEN BY NORM FLYNN***

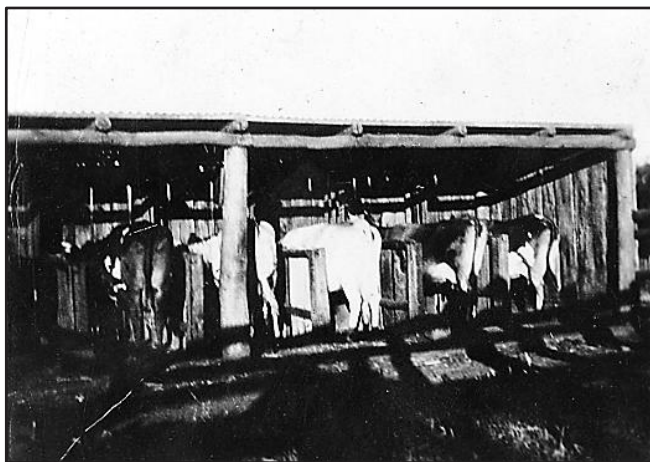
LEARNING TO DRIVE

Just before it was milking time we would get the old utility which we had been able to buy.

It was old and in very good order and we used it for carting out the hay. The chap that was installing the milking machine would stop work to watch - he reckoned it was a circus as Gwen was just learning to drive. I had to stand on the back with the pitchfork, throwing the hay off as she went along all around the cow shed. It was a very steep hill.

It was all right going down the hill but when she turned to come back up the hill the wheels would spin. She would give it a bit extra petrol. It would be a bit too quick and would throw me and the hay off. The chap that was installing the machine said it was the best circus he had seen for a long time. I did not enjoy it too much. Gwen would go to the top of the hill before she stopped, I would have to run up the hill to catch up.

BILL RATCLIFFE



*Modern dairy - one of the first cow sheds to be built
in the Ferguson, on the Ratcliffe property.*

MILKING

During our early years of dairying, we milked about 25 cows and sent cream to market.

We also ran pigs. After some years we realised that we would have to upgrade our herd and apply for a quota. This entailed many things as we only had a small block at home, with a much larger block three miles away.

While considering all this, my husband was very ill and was not able to work for several months. However, as the cows started calving, several friends and relations very kindly took about a dozen of the cows and milked them for us, and the rest of the cows reared their calves. After about six months, we were able to resume milking and with the help of friends and relations we built a dairy at the back paddock and started milking there. This meant milking at home for a few weeks and then moving out to the back paddock for longer periods and then back home again.

Owing to his illness my husband could not lift heavy things so this meant I had to go with him to help lift the cans of milk, as the milk truck did not go out to the back block. As we had three children it meant leaving the three-year-old at home in her cot, with the two older ones, who were aged seven and nine. We left home at 5.30am and returned around 7.45. And again at 3.30pm and back at about 5.45. The children knew that they could always call on an aunt who lived quite close. This was during the mid sixties. We eventually were able to lease and later buy more land and this meant we did manage to get our quota.

Owen and Emma Gardiner took up the old farm known as “Mountain Spring” in November 1867, when the Ferguson was known as “Garden Valley” - and to this day has a direct descendant Ken Gardiner as the owner. Owen’s sons Chris, Robert and Jim took up land around the original 46 acres.

BABS GARDINER (NEE FOWLER)

RED CROSS DANCES

Other memories of the Ferguson started back in 1942 when we used to go to the Red Cross dances in the Ferguson Hall.

Petrol was rationed, so we all used to pile into Dad's Chev truck and head for Ferguson's dance on the second Saturday of each month. Roads were not graded often and our blackout lights did not help the driver, especially when we often headed into fog as we neared the Preston Valley. Ferguson relied on us, as we relied on Ferguson and Wellington, to make our dances. We picked up young and sometimes the older ones at a number of places on our way across to Ferguson.

I remember on a few occasions as we went through Wellington Mills we picked up a family who had walked in from the forestry settlement. They carried their dancing shoes and the girl wore a very long frock. After dancing till nearly one o'clock we dropped them off on our way home and they changed their shoes again and walked home up a very steep hill back to the forestry settlement.

We had many wonderful times at those dances and many pounds were raised for the Red Cross. There were many ways of relieving us from our small change and the suppers were really good.

BABS GARDINER (NEE FOWLER)

BUSH LEASES

In the early days, the farmers leased big runs of bush and ran their stock out there.

They had little land cleared at home. The farmers kept the bush well burnt, as often as possible as the regrowth was excellent stock food containing most of the required minerals. There was much less danger of very big bush fires. In the years when the mills were operating and when cattle and sheep runs were used, the bush was relatively clear of undergrowth. Farmers and bush workers

burnt the bush regularly and it was apparently quite normal to be able to see hundreds of metres through the bush. Edgar remembers on one occasion, one of the boys from school lighting fires in the summer on the hillsides near town and there being no danger posed by them.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***



Sunday School – L To R, Donald Ratcliffe, Ruth Gibbs, Bruce Gibbs, Gwen Ratcliffe, Wayne Muller, ?, Elna Gardiner, ?, Faye Ratcliffe, Lynette Gardiner, Lesley Gibbs, Keith Muller, Valerie Gardiner, Meryl Ratcliffe, Norma Mountford, Anne Gibbs, Pat Gibbs, Judith Fowler



ST AIDAN'S CHURCH
FERGUSON

The old...

There was an old white chapel
At the foothills of a range
Raised to God's own glory
By a grand pioneering strain.
One by one the builders
Beneath its shade were laid,
Father, son and grandson,
Till it five generations made.
Then through this out-back district
A great conflagration came,
Consuming church and church-yard
With all-devouring flame.
But again there is a chapel
At the foothills of the range,
Built by the descendants
Of that same pioneering strain.

—G.T.G.



The new...

St Aidans Church.



Inside of old church



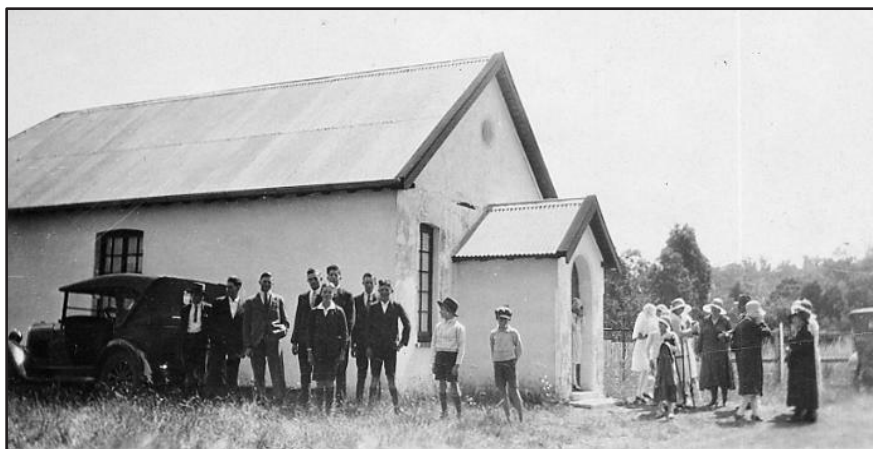
Sunday School in the early 1950s - Dawn Ratcliffe and Judith Fowler with their Sunday School children



Opening of new church 1954



Ferguson Church in the 1920s



A wedding in the 1930s

GUILD MEETINGS

After the church was burned down in April 1950, the Ferguson people worked hard to raise money to rebuild the church.

It wasn't until 1953, not long after I was married, that we had our first guild meeting, which was held at our home. As chairs were few, we had boxes and planks covered with rugs as seats. We had a very good attendance and Mrs Mountford and Jean Ratcliffe walked over the hills from Crooked Brook and then home after the meeting and afternoon tea. When the church was finally opened all the furniture had been donated by families of the district or in memory of old members. The church is a great credit to all the old and new members of the district who lovingly cleaned, polished and looked after their little church.

BABS GARDINER (NEE FOWLER)



Felling trees - cutting timber in the early 1900s; George Mountford, sitting



Sleeper cutting - accommodation while cutting sleepers in the bush, Hal and Clarrie Gibbs

SLEEPER CUTTING

Between early 1932 and 1937, Edgar operated a team of sleeper cutters and ran 10 men in the forestry and 15 in paddocks cutting a huge variety of sleeper sizes to send to Persia to build railways.

Edgar was sub-contracted to a Mr Lionel at Bowelling who was in turn contracted by Millars to cut sleepers. Edgar finished cutting from the forestry in 1936 and cut timber from paddocks until 1937. Edgar and Flo were married in 1935. Edgar bought a property from Gardiner brothers in Richards Road in 1931, another adjoining property from Strachans in 1947, then a further property from Mackenzie in the late 1950s. They had 800 acres of farming land. They milked cows, grew potatoes and ran beef before selling the farm in 1971.

When carting sleepers from Donga's Range in about 1933, a sleeper cutter, Herbert Gibbs, called Edgar to have a look at a tree stump. The diameter of the tree was around four feet and six inches. In the centre of the stump was a patch of charcoal about the size of a hen's nest. This tree must have been somewhere near 1000 years old. Herbert said that this was proof of bush fires in the days when natives were living around the area.

In a creek nearby, were found some native grinding stones, used to grind seeds. Dongara Ridge Road (derived from Donga's Range) was named after Donga Flynn, a farmer on the Ferguson. It is said that he had heard that beams would be required for the building of the Bunbury jetty (what year roughly? at or before the turn of the century?) and obtained permission to go out a cut some in readiness in the area of the present road but for some reason they were never used and the beams stayed in the bush until burnt by fire.

One hundred acres of the area where Stone's farm is now situated was known as Ginger's Brook and was also owned by Millars. Edgar Parkin applied unsuccessfully to buy the property in 1928 or 1929. For some time, the Potter family owned a 200-acre block adjacent to this property. Fisher Muller bought the entire 308 acres much later in the 1950's and ran a mill on the property for some years. The creek running through the three blocks was washed for gold but nothing substantial was ever found. Two shafts were sunk, one immediately south of the 100-acre block and one between the south west corner of this block and the Queenwood Road.

There is a large jarrah tree to the south east of the farm which has never been felled because it is too gnarly. Edgar remembers it was marked by Cliff Williams (sometime 1932-1936) as a possible tree to fell. Dooley O'Neill, the faller took a look at it, then cut a slot out up the trunk and, placing a board in it to stand on, climbed up to have a closer look. "Can you see Jesus Christ's footprints somewhere down there?" he joked to Joe and Cliff Williams. It was an old tree but no good for timber and it remains there today.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***



Log Transport - horse team pulling log using a whim - Wellington Mill area early 1900s

CLEAN CLOTHES

I remember when Ken was only a boy. He and his father went out to catch the horse. Ken wanted a ride, so he hot-trotted off across the hill above the house. Somehow he fell off and rolled down the hill. That morning he had put on a set of nice, clean clothes. Clean clothes no longer, as he must have rolled through every cow pat on his way down the hill. Mum was not impressed.

BABS GARDINER (NEE FOWLER)

DENTIST

Mr Potter was a carpenter. His son was trained as a dentist but was unable to practice because he had a drinking problem. He owned one of the first cars in Bunbury but did most of his work in the Ferguson and Wellington area. Edgar remembers an argument had developed between Lofty Eligett and Alister Potter.

One day, Potter was pulling a tooth for Eligett and had the forceps on his tooth so that the man was unable to move. Having the upper hand, Potter then attempted to strangle Eligett and probably would have succeeded if it hadn't been for a couple of ladies looking on who managed to pull Potter off.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

FIRE CONTROL

I recall one April night in the mid sixties, Stephen and I were left with Nan and Pop while Dad and Uncle Ronnie met Keith Butcher to burn off the steep slope between them. Dad and Ronnie turned up with the tractor, knapsacks and rakes etc while Keith turned up wearing black footie shorts and with a box of matches in hand. I am sure he would have also bought his wit, charm and good sense of humour. We sat on the front verandah and watched the slope glow with flames.

TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD)

TOO MUCH TO DRINK

Edgar remembers a binge by Potter on one occasion which nearly killed him. Edgar and Walter Grover were cutting sleepers in the bush near Grover's. They went down to Grover's house for lunch and found Potter there lying in the front room. Walter's wife Mrs Grover explained that Potter had drunk a bottle

of brandy that morning. Potter had asked her to mix two drops from a bottle he had given her with water and to give it to him to drink. The bottle was labelled "Poison" but as Walter advised her that he believed that Potter probably knew what he was doing, she went ahead.

Edgar and Walter had started back to the bush when they heard Mrs Grover shouting for them. They returned and found Potter had staggered from the house to a nearby shed and then collapsed, completely unconscious. He was ill for a couple of days and was tended at the Grovers shed by his father.

Dolly Stanton lived with Potter and his parents and helped him out when drinking got the better of him. One day, however, when she was not there, he managed to load a .22 rifle and shoot himself, sometime in the early 1940s.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

RAILWAY

In 1937-1939, the Gardiner brothers Ron and Reg (sons of Maitland) had a mill opposite near Tyrrell Road during World War II.

A rusting boiler still marks its location. It began by cutting sleepers and it was intended eventually that it would cut wood for fruit packing cases. This work never eventuated. However, the mill supplied sawn timber to Millars as late as the mid 1940s. The "Samson No 2" locomotive shifted this timber to Dardanup until the mill closed in about 1946. The "Samson No 2" remained at Wellington where it was later broken up for scrap.

While working at this mill one day, Edgar remembers a chap, who looked in a hurry, stopping his car for directions to Lowden. He left, still in a hurry, and it turned out that he was picked up at Lowden by the police, accused of being a spy.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

THE BUSH IN SPRINGTIME

The bush in the springtime was beautiful.

The fresh, clear air, the scent of all the wildflowers. There were primrose orchids, donkey orchids, and spider orchids. Climbing runners with red flowers shaped like sweetpea flowers, clematis with its white starlike flower, wattle of many kinds with yellow flowers and pink and white myrtle, and the “water bush” with its eggs and bacon colour flower, together with its strong aroma.

The bush, being kept well burnt and the regrowth kept down, you had a good view of the wildlife. There were big brown kangaroos that stood as high as a man. A smaller type called a “brush” was silver grey in colour. A much smaller type called a quokka was dark brown in colour. Native cats, grey with white spots, were very savage.

There were silver grey opossums, ringtail opossums, called so because when at rest they coiled their tail into a ring. There were many nocturnal animals. Bird life was abundant; the mopoke, the boobook owl, 28 parrots, rosellas, king parrots and flocks of parakeets, together with small birds, robin red breasts and yellow breasts, blue wrens, splendid wrens, finches, magpies, kookaburras, squeakers, woodpeckers, wattle birds, fantails, willie wagtails, butcher birds and many others. Edgar hates to think of spring burning heavy undergrowth saved up for years, scorching the tops of the trees with hot flames and what happens to the little birds which nest at this time. Nocturnal wildlife up in the hollow limbs of the trees was also affected. This all happened after the farmers mustered the last of their stock and gave up their lease of runs in the bush. The undergrowth grew up, choking out big trees.

There were honeybees in the bush, they were brought into the country in the early days. They produced swarms and the hollow trees and limbs made good hives for them.

There were jarrah trees, peppermint trees, blackbutt trees, river banksia, bull banksia, our famous black boy with its long rod high above its head, covered in tiny white flowers. All these trees produced nectar in the order as written. There were many other smaller flowers. The jarrah blossom came early in the spring, and the others followed with the red gum (or marri) later in the

summer. About the middle of March, some mill people would go out into the bush searching for beehives.

When the bees had collected a considerable quantity of nectar, and the hive became crowded, they would cluster on the outside of the hive. The nectar would be ripened into hone, a process of evaporating the water from the nectar. People who didn't mind a few bee stings would look for hives with bees clustering outside. They would fall the tree, in most instances the tree being a red gum, as bees don't like jarrah. They would light a fire close by, get it burning well, add some green bushes to produce smoke, then get up onto the log with the axe and chop into it, splitting off pieces of wood until they reached the honeycomb. They took out the comb, cut off the brood comb and put the honeycomb into a couple of buckets. They then put out the fire, picked up the axe, sticky with honey, gathered their buckets and went off home.

The price of the honey was a good number of bee stings around the face and arms. Edgar did this with some friends. They looked on it as a bit of a sport as well as a way of getting some honey for the winter. The bees seldom survived, depending on whether the queen bee lived or not.

If the bees were able to keep warm a piece of brood comb, containing brood not more than three days old, they could build queen cells and rear another queen. This seldom happened.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

FUNNY SHAKE

I will never forget the first time I met Jake Gardiner.

Tom and I had gone out to Ferguson to a dance and we had hardly walked into the hall when this very large man came up to us and said, "Hello, so your Tom's girl eh, let's dance."

With that we hurtled around the hall with him chatting and me rather in awe of this very friendly fellow. Jake was famous for his gigantic vegetables and we never went to a party in Ferguson without the hapless person of the moment would get an elaborately wrapped turnip or swede which he was made to open in front of everyone. Colin and Barry adored “Funny Shake” and we were never allowed to drive past Jake and Shirley’s farm without a visit, especially in the summer when there was always a feed of watermelon to be had on the lawn.

LESLEY GIBBS (NEE TOWNSEND)

‘EAU DE COLOGNE’

As a young bride from “town”, one of my first chores on the farm was to take the morning and afternoon tea down to the shearing shed.

I felt sorry for the shearers working with such a smell, and would race in, drop the food, rush out, nose covered with hankie swamped in eau de cologne.

After many years of doing the shed beat, my olfactory nerves have become fine tuned and my favourite aroma these days wafts up from Fremantle Harbour (close to our house) on sheep loading days giving off that healthy, earthy, tangy perfume - far superior than Chanel No 5.

MAXINE GARDINER

DINGOES

The first dingo Edgar saw was sneaking along the front of a slow burning bushfire, expecting to find something fleeing from the fire.

He heard later that some dingo pups were found in a hollow log and the dingo bitch had been caught. A friend of Edgar’s, an excellent bushman and a very good shot off the shoulder with a rifle, was in the bush one day and in the

distance noticed something flick up into the air from behind a log. He approached the log quietly, keeping a keen eye around it and stood about 50 yards away, rifle at the ready. After a short time, a dog's nose appeared at one end of the log.

He waited and a little time after the nose appeared at the other end of the log. The dingo had smelt an enemy nearby. The man waited quietly and after a while the dingo decided to go. The man made an imitation dingo call, stopping the dog in its tracks, raised his rifle to his shoulder and shot the animal. There was a £15 bounty for a dead dingo. The shooter, Mr James Gardiner in 1924.

Edgar had a dingo trap, found with a front paw in the trap. The trap caught between two big rocks. The dingo couldn't pull the trap and bit its paw off to get free. Dog trappers never fastened their traps down. They allowed the dog to pull the trap. Otherwise the dog would bite its paw off. The skid marks made by the trap were not hard to follow. The jaws of the trap didn't close tight together so as not to cut into the dog's paw. The trapper made this adjustment.

Dingoes would enter a property from one direction and, if possible, leave the property by another, thereby not getting caught by a party in ambush. The dingo did not kill for a big feed of meat.

They punctured the rib cage and got the blood from around the lungs and heart.

The following incident didn't happen near Wellington. Edgar was on a bush track returning from King Canyon to Wallara Roadhouse. He caught up to a dingo on the track and slowed down. The dog ran in front for a short distance, skipping from side to side in a playful manner, then went into the bush. Edgar stopped the car, his relations wound down the window and got good photos. The dingo stood out in the clear as Edgar started off down the track, imitating the dingo call. The dog followed for a while but they went through some bulldust and that was the last they saw of the dog.

Dog trappers would apply natural dog habits, as near as they possibly could, to lure dogs into traps. They would study the area, the roads and tracks, and learn how dogs approached and left the area. Then the traps would be placed near the end of a log, or a tree, close to a road or track where the dogs were travelling.

Whenever possible, the trapper would collect urine from a female in season and place it on the end of the log above the trap or on the tree above the trap. The traps were well concealed under soil turned by a spade, not by hand which would leave a scent.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

GOOD SHOT

A local farmer, after having problems with foxes, went out spotlighting with his mates and his brand new gun.

They had spent some time driving around the farm looking for foxes. A set of eyes was spotted at about 300 yards across the dam a good aim and the shot hit its mark.

He relayed the story of his prowess with the gun the night before at the breakfast table. His children promptly ate breakfast and set off for the dam to investigate. However, on arrival at the dam, the children found the beloved family ginger tomcat “dead” - shot between the eyes.

If anyone wants to know who this good shot was, ask Trevor Houden!

TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD)

WILD HORSES

There were a few brumbies in the bush near Wellington in the 1920s.

Corbetts, on their property, not far from the mill, kept a working horse. When not in use, they turned her out in the bush. After a day or two in the bush, she would return home for a feed of chaff. On returning one day, she had with her

a young brumby she was fostering. It turned out to be a good riding pony and they called her Peggy.

In the very early years (Edgar thinks 1890s possibly) men interested in catching brumbies would go into the bush, select a place for a yard and build a small yard. It needed to be about nine feet high. Then, from the entrance to the yard, on both sides, they would build wings, that is, rails tied to trees and going away out into the bush. The wings would be wide apart at the outer ends. Rails would be ready to close the entrance when needed.

Three or four horsemen would ride into the bush, find the brumbies and slowly drive them towards the wings of the yard. Once between them, they would hurry them along a bit faster. This helped to stop them dodging back. By the time the brumbies were in the yard, the riders would be putting the rails up at the yard entrance. Edgar had seen the remains of one of these yards, not burnt down at that time.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

TO POST A LETTER

Early last century a certain young lady, renowned for her wit, had an urgent letter to post in Dardanup. It was quite a ride from the top of Ferguson to Dardanup and the train from Boyanup was due past in a couple of hours.

This young lady had to ride the horse hard to catch the post and by the time she reached Dardanup the horse was covered in a lather of sweat.

As she tied the horse to the hitching rail a local farmer appeared asking, "What have you done to that poor horse?" To which she replied, "You would look the same if you had been between my legs for two hours too!"

***STORY TOLD TO TERRI GIBBS DURING RESEARCH FOR
THIS BOOK***

SWIMMING IN THE COLLIE

In the Collie River, at the point where the wall now stands, there was a waterfall, dropping about 20 feet.

Below the fall, there were holes in the rock, bored by hard pieces of rock being spun around by the water and wearing away the softer rock. It must have required many rocks and years of hard grinding. One hole, about two feet in diameter at the top, opened into a small cave, all of this under the water. There was one big rock hole, on the side of the river.

Some young men were swimming there. One could not swim. A man named Nannup Gibbs thought he would play a joke on the non-swimmer. He worked him across to the edge of the deep rock hole and gave him a good push. The non-swimmer was quick and caught Nannup by the arm. They went into the deep hole, the non-swimmer refusing to let go. They were both drowning. The others rescued them. The joke had backfired. The non-swimmer was Herbert Gibbs, Howard Gibbs' father.

***JANICE CALCEI FROM INTERVIEW
WITH EDGAR PARKIN IN 1995***

CANDLES FOR LIGHT

My first memories of Crooked Brook involve driving out to the Mountford's farm on this winding, sandy track that went around large trees and seemed to take forever to get there.

Cecil and I were married in April, 1958 and moved into our partly-finished fibro house in time for Christmas the same year.

The winters were freezing as we only had a No 2 Metters stove in the kitchen in our new house in 1958 to keep us warm. Sitting in front of it with our feet on the oven door and listening to the radio was our evening's entertainment. We had lamps and candles for light until we bought a second-hand lighting plant, which consisted of a generator and some 12-volt batteries.

Cecil made a shelf for the batteries on the back verandah. The engine was in a shed nearby that we started up to run the generator to charge the batteries. It was wonderful - we could turn our lights on with a switch, just like I had when I lived in Bunbury.

Things I will never forget...

On my first visit to the Ferguson Christmas tree held in the local hall, I was amazed at the sight of supper, it was more like a banquet. I will never forget Mrs Flynn with her suitcase packed with sausage rolls. Whenever there was a function on, this very generous lady would turn up with a small suitcase full of sausage rolls, cakes or sandwiches.

Taking Stephen and Terri over the Ironstone Road to school at Ferguson. The road was quite a bit rougher and windier than it is now.

Ringling Sheila Butcher to see if the bridge was still passable after floods.

School lunches prepared by the mums, consisting of soup, rolls and apple slice.

The close knit community we had in the district before the school was closed down.

Playing tennis on the court opposite the hall in the summer and night badminton in the Ferguson Hall during the winter, with the kids tucked up on the back seat of an unlocked car.

IRIS MOUNTFORD (NEE SIMMONS)

WELLINGTON MILLS BURNS

Wellington Mills burnt in 1950.

The summer had been hot, long and dry and as a result the countryside by April 14 was tinder dry. A fire started in rubbish somewhere near Burekup a week before the fateful day and eventually made its way into the forest.

Despite best attempts by the limited fire crews, the head fire quickly spread and set up a front too wide and hot for any effective break to be made.

By Thursday the 13th the fire had crossed the Collie River and burnt its way into the lower Ferguson Valley. The night of the 13th saw a front on the Ferguson hills with a burning rate little slowed by the cooler air.

The morning of the 14th dawned hot and windy with the westerly blowing straight up the valley. All firefighters had either retreated to a distance far enough ahead to set up a burn back, or were singularly employed to try and save their homes and or property.

As school children we were still doing our reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic even though the dense smoke was causing a distinct darkening of the light. At 9.30 or 10.00 the Wellington Mills site caretaker came to the school and informed the teacher Mrs Isobel Weetman that there was no need to worry as the fire had not crossed the road. As one of the elder boys in the school (I was nine) I was instructed to fill a bucket with water and at play time look for sparks which may fall on the playground.

At that time the roar of the fire was apparent and the wind was at gale force. We stayed in the school even though we were being affected by smoke and could hardly hear one another for the roar.

Suddenly a fire crew arrived on a truck, they were from Donnybrook. The man in charge quickly informed Mrs Weetman that we were to be evacuated immediately. Despite her protest, the man said forget trying to save anything, just get in the truck. We got in the truck, all 11 of us, and were driven through Wellington Mills towards Lowden. The fire was burning ahead of us and on all sides and the truck was forced to turn back after less than one kilometre. It returned to the Post office where we disembarked and cowered out of the wind and smoke and heat on the lee side of the old building. At every lessening of the wind's roar, the men ran around the outside of the house extinguishing any hot spots.

Buildings exploded nearby as if filled with petrol, giant trees burnt in seconds and pieces of burning wood and debris flew through the air at frightening

speed. The wind was so strong that it was carrying sand and small stones at head height and without shelter it was impossible to stand up to it.

It lasted for little more than 30 minutes at the huge rate of wind, fire, flying debris and heat. When the wind abated the scene was total devastation, practically all of the unattended buildings, which included workshops, store rooms, mills and houses were burnt or burning.

All of the school's children were at the Post Office, with four men from Donnybrook the postmistress Mrs Hulm and the mill caretaker and his wife Mr and Mrs Ferris. At no stage did I see panic from any of them, though everyone was very frightened.

Our school was gone with all the other wooden structures but miraculously the hall stood unharmed in the centre of the destruction. This building was to become the school by the middle of the next week.

The area of Wellington Mills was ruined. All the bridges were gone, there was not a green leaf for miles, stock and fences were gone.

The people were stunned and shocked by the extent of the damage. On the night after the "Big Fire", as it became known, it rained lightly - the recovery had begun.

WELLINGTON MILLS/FERGUSON YOUTH CLUB

The youth club started in 1965 with its meeting centre at the Wellington Mills hall. This was an original mill building converted from a billiards room with library attached. It has history of its own, suffice to say it was utilised for meeting purposes and social gatherings for the district. There were 14 original members with an age spread from six to 16 years.

The meeting night was Friday each week and activities included such physical work as springboard and horse. At the outset none of these devices were available, so we used some bed mattress for floor work and taught kids how to perform tumbling figures.

At the time of the start up of the youth club, Ray Gardiner was the high school bus driver. He, together with Wellington Mills schoolteacher Alan Ward, instigated the formation of the club. Because of this pair's association with the children of the district they were able to influence the attendance. As popularity of the club increased, parents took greater interest and with their assistance money raising functions were carried on. The intention being to purchase more and better equipment for the children to use. Thus the expensive items such as the vault horse and springboard were commissioned to be made locally.

Don Hewison at Dardanup made the items for cost and after a few months the club had good solid units to use. The children took to it readily and some became clever performers. The club numbers had risen with the increased district involvement and some Friday nights up to 28 participating members would arrive.

Money raising was still on the agenda and one of the better ventures as far as profit was concerned was catering for the Chippendale 100. This was a horse and rider marathon, which started in Boyup Brook and ended in Dardanup. The youth club undertook a refreshment post at the Collie River crossing. Virtually all night the volunteers made cups of tea and sandwiches for the tired riders. It was a great success financially and socially because of the efforts put in by the parents and children. Two of these marathons were catered for in the late '60s.

When Wellington Mills Hall was demolished in 1968 the youth club moved its headquarters to the Ferguson Hall. The club's activities continued there for several years and were supervised by Barry Scott. Waning numbers eventually brought about the wind up of the club and in 1972 the club was no more.

RAY GARDINER

MILKING IN THE SIXTIES

I remember Dad knocking part of the orchard out to make way for the new dairy, which had a modern design with a pit instead of the old walkthrough style.

It could milk eight cows at a time, four on each side. The herd comprised about 40 cows.

As kids, our job was to feed the calves and watch the milk at the same time (which was by no means an easy task).

In those days the milk would run down a water cooler suspended from the roof. The biggest problem was that the cans always filled at different rates, depending on whether the cows were just starting to be milked or a cow was still milking when the other three were finished, and for some reason the back two cans under the cooler always filled at twice the rate of the three cans at the front.

There were five holes for cans and only four stoppers - the idea being that at the end of milking all the cans would be full, bar the last one. So, what you would do is prop the stoppers in the back cans to slow them down while you went out to feed some of the calves.

But if for some reason a calf wouldn't drink or was sick or got out and took longer to feed than you thought, you would arrive back at the milk room in time to see the milk flooding the floor. This to me was never the major problem - the real problem was the fact that all the water from the milk room ran past the front of the pit and under the gaze of Dad. The other problem to overcome was the more you tried to water the milk down, the bigger the spill looked.

"Bloody hell" money would be running down the drain, along with Dad's patience and good humour.

We would hear the milk truck coming as it changed gears when entering the narrow lane towards the dairy. It was always driven by one of the Mr Gardiners

- Syd, Ray, or Les (who was admired because he was a champion log chopper). The sound of the cans would echo over the noise of the milking machine. The empty cans made a ching sound as they were hurled across the milking room floor before crashing into the other empty cans. The full cans would make a thud as they were lifted on to the truck from the ramp at the edge of the milk room.

The milk truck doubled as a courier service for the district. The driver would deliver all the papers “urgent supplies” from the vet, medicine to groceries to women’s essentials. I guess this service was as important to the district in the Sixties and early Seventies as the train was in earlier times.

TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD)

RIVENDELL FARM

We lived in Bunbury and dreamed of the time when we would find a little place in the country.

This was the time of “Back to Earth” and “Self Sufficiency” but we were to discover much later that the local produce store doesn’t take kindly to being offered vegetables and a carved leather wallet in return for a sack of chicken feed!

One morning we had the rare pleasure of sharing a peaceful breakfast together, the children had gone to school and we had a quiet cup of coffee and read the papers. Suddenly Marc said, “Hey, listen to this. Sixteen acres with a house in Ferguson Valley, \$10,500.”

I don’t remember whether we stopped for a shower or not but within an hour we were standing on what we knew was to be “our place”. The estate agent tried to point out that the ceilings were falling in, that most of the trees in the orchard needed knocking over, that there was no telephone, electricity or water but his comments fell on deaf ears.

What we could see was a house that was strong and had been built with love and care, soil that was rich and a view to die for.

The house was condemned and there was a heap of work to do before we could live there, so evenings and weekends were taken up with trying to conform to the list of standards required before the order could be removed. We made our imprint on the valley when a machine we had hired to deal with the waist high grass around the house sprang a petrol leak and started a fire. For years after

that when we met someone from the valley and were introduced they would say, “Oh... you’re the people who started the fire!”

We worked hard. We made many mistakes but each mistake was an intense learning experience and one of the lessons was to “make haste slowly!” We established herbs on terraced gardens, restored the orchard and, when the herbs were flourishing, started using them in natural skin and hair preparations under the name “Rivendell Farm”, we sold the business after a few years but it still flourishes under a new owner.

We opened a restaurant called “The Prancing Pony”. People were sceptical about this venture but it was successful with clients coming down from Perth and up from the south to enjoy the views over the valley and fresh, organic food.

After many other adventures we realised that Rivendell was organising us and not the other way around! I wanted to write books but there was simply no time - the land is a hard taskmaster. We decided to move on while we still loved the place.

Since leaving I have written 10 books for which I thank our time on the farm, as without the experiences there I doubt that I would have written anything at all.

We spent six years exploring Australia in an old school bus and now are back living in a house.

We are looking to the new millennium but remembering with thanks that what we are today is partly a result of what we learned from the people and land in the Ferguson Valley.

MARC AND NERYS PURCHON

FARM EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

The farm could not survive without these emergency pieces of equipment - baling twine, wire and the tail tag. I wonder if the government knew what a truly great idea the tail tag was. These pieces of equipment could always be found in the Ute or the truck, either on the floor or in the half-opened, cobweb-ridden, rusted glove box, ready for every emergency.

TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD)

BORN IN THE WASHHOUSE

Cecil George Mountford was born on September 16, 1934.

Vera, his mother, had not been feeling well in the morning when George, his father, decided to take son Fred to see his grandmother Mary Mountford, who was living with Edith and Ralph Gardiner about one-and-a-half miles away over the hill in Ferguson. Vera, as was her nature, didn't want to cause a problem and said nothing. When they returned home she was well into labour and George went back over the hill to Ratcliffe's to bring back her mother and send Bill into get Dr Flynn.

While he was away, Vera went out to the washhouse and this was where Cecil decided to be born.

By the time George and Mary Ratcliffe got back, she had bundled the baby up and got herself back into the house. Meanwhile, Bill had trouble with the lights on the old Chev truck and, thinking he could not take the doctor out to Ferguson without lights, looked for Mr Springman, the local taxi driver. As it was late at night, the neighbours were none too happy as he searched the neighbourhood for the right house.

Dr Flynn finally arrived and found that Vera and Mary had handled the birth very well and Cecil was a healthy baby.

IRIS MOUNTFORD (NEE SIMMONS)

RAINFALL ON THE FERGUSON – 1939 - 2002

YEAR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total mm
1939	51	31	0	13	25	267	250	271	23	59	45	1	1035
1940	15	-	-	-	-	-	179	75	74	27	31	21	-
1941	0	0	13	100	139	187	318	131	171	48	37	16	1260
1942	1	11	41	70	205	280	134	247	158	80	11	28	1266
1943	32	7	124	78	91	63	158	149	140	16	0	25	882
1944	2	0	21	51	158	179	238	140	48	69	50	65	1021
1945	5	3	25	33	213	485	111	267	111	15	39	37	1343
1946	0	0	21	53	194	209	444	126	35	9	78	25	1192
1947	0	0	2	71	270	409	121	98	104	87	1	37	1199
1948	0	0	22	71	21	204	274	218	175	56	36	35	1111
1949	5	0	32	115	18	144	256	161	81	107	34	0	952
1950	10	12	0	11	136	207	196	162	131	73	78	13	1028
1951	9	12	5	81	98	304	99	130	45	83	37	34	937
1952	1	4	39	4	166	299	134	137	88	70	31	8	938
1953	1	44	3	15	189	231	143	64	63	129	38	1	919
1954	8	6	11	74	174	209	94	165	73	70	48	13	943
1955	10	115	1	63	158	113	193	343	145	108	16	24	1289
1956	0	0	64	55	272	189	200	59	73	33	33	11	988
1957	2	0	21	126	174	421	107	145	53	61	5	1	1116
1958	18	10	1	34	199	122	375	74	41	51	57	14	995
1959	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	119	16	114	40	38	-
1960	74	10	73	96	160	161	267	65	55	26	6	7	1001
1961	13	7	46	106	76	352	188	170	-	-	-	-	-
1962	-	-	-	-	-	120	143	220	80	67	83	16	-
1963	23	6	1	34	265	260	194	295	122	45	18	0	1263
1964	0	2	10	45	47	389	366	374	61	76	28	45	1345
1965	3	3	63	58	231	211	165	173	88	140	73	41	1248
1966	5	3	8	55	78	242	192	94	114	63	18	24	894
1967	4	14	12	71	185	315	265	116	38	32	34	28	1112

YEAR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total mm
1968	54	1	71	109	51	247	200	101	122	95	13	7	1078
1969	4	0	8	126	68	220	97	56	22	2	6	17	625
1970	3	52	2	63	111	239	193	64	96	78	24	3	927
1971	9	22	97	13	195	173	146	113	216	118	49	1	1156
1972	0	1	13	38	89	118	143	242	67	61	12	3	789
1973	4	3	0	90	236	183	291	134	188	62	42	1	1237
1974	0	14	0	60	291	195	310	266	64	148	18	1	1370
1975	0	0	28	27	123	192	207	108	121	32	2	3	867
1976	65	3	3	111	179	86	121	175	79	65	106	16	1010
1977	13	3	4	1	116	126	136	237	76	152	21	4	891
1978	1	13	7	13	303	190	186	51	134	73	26	40	1037
1979	4	7	15	49	66	127	206	52	68	70	74	7	750
1980	1	32	6	138	121	190	43	37	33	19	15	9	1116
1981	0	1	18	64	142	189	167	140	125	49	88	16	999
1982	176	10	3	0	66	238	154	137	100	50	5	22	961
1983	2	44	8	33	110	364	176	202	158	27	29	9	1162
1984	0	0	8	80	219	162	109	128	106	33	108	29	982
1985	4	41	33	184	79	216	148	200	56	49	56	8	1074
1986	7	69	48	18	140	115	185	123	64	67	42	0	878
1987	5	0	32	77	66	194	128	96	56	26	49	22	751
1988	0	3	24	36	197	296	157	166	165	68	53	2	1167
1989	27	72	3	56	105	54	171	125	107	111	18	27	876
1990	25	24	53	163	112	149	268	147	87	72	39	9	1148
1991	6	11	4	53	191	233	269	149	146	53	74	9	1198
1992	2	28	28	44	157	318	175	152	102	13	104	15	1118
1993	4	0	96	45	70	91	272	143	161	59	38	3	984
1994	2	13	7	7	173	221	213	101	67	34	18	0	856
1995	0	1	3	21	165	134	273	99	72	78	30	31	907
1996	0	0	6	6	97	224	323	184	218	52	53	47	1210
1997	3	78	8	29	147	203	159	152	95	41	87	0	1002
1998	8	0	102	22	91	200	126	153	156	61	13	18	950

YEAR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total mm
1999	4	0	28	12	242	275	184	200	153	122	23	3	1246
2000	46	0	59	87	37	170	300	201	81	18	38	3	1040
2001	0	0	0	4	173	36	100	147	119	18	35	84	716
2002	8	0	18.5	77.5	109.5	219. 5	218. 5	153					804.5

These rainfall figures have been taken from records held by Anne Piggott (kept by Arnold “Pug” Gibbs) from 1939 to 1950. Then by Howard “Nug” Gibbs from 1951 to 1997. The recording has been taken over by Bruce and Greg Gibbs.

The numbers in “points and inches” that were used before metrics in 1966 have been converted to millimetres.

FIFTEEN YEARS YOUNG

As a child, I have been fortunate enough to grow up next door to my grandparents.

I believe I am lucky as I am very close to my grandparents and I am lucky to know them and to be their friend. A number of stories spring to mind when I think of each and everyone of my grandparents. Stories have also come from my experiences of growing up in Ferguson Valley. A number of these stories are funny and a number are sad but all are very memorable.

Some of the best times I had with Grandma (Dorrie Gibbs) were when I was four or five. I used to dress up in her old clothes and pretend to be “Mrs Kafoops”. Grandma was “Mrs Jones”. I remember playing shops where Grandma would put prices on things.

I remember it being a lot of fun. I also remember when Dad, Grandpa (Nug), Uncle Bruce, Ryan and Geoff were working in the stockyards; Grandma and I would cook them scones, chocolate cake and “Geoffrey biscuits” (ANZACS) for their morning and afternoon tea.

Grandpa was always interested in the bush, wildflowers and birds, as was Grandma. I remember going bushwalking with them. Mum said that one time we were in the bush looking for wildflowers and while Grandpa was holding me he lent over a log and dropped his glasses. It was a coincidence that Mum looked over the log and found them again. Grandpa also always kept a vegetable garden and I remember spending many afternoons picking strawberries with the theory of “one for me and one for the bucket.”

Whenever I used to stay at Granny and Pop’s (Lesley and Tom Gibbs), helping in the dairy was a big deal. I never actually milked the cows because frankly, getting that close scared me, but feeding the calves was always a novelty. They were so cute and not so threatening as the big cows to a little girl. It was fun to get outside and get my hands dirty.

Another story that I found quite embarrassing was the time when my bike tyre blew up. Everyone in the family decided that it was time for me to start riding down to Granny and Pop’s. Anyway I got my bike, took it to the shed to where Geoff was and pumped up the flattened tyre. Once that was done, I rode back to the house to get a few things.

Kabomb! As I got to the end of the driveway, I heard this bang, saw a truck go down the road, saw a car go up the road and I had no idea what had happened. Next thing I heard was Mum screaming as she was hanging out the washing, “I thought I told you boys not to use the gun near the road!” By this time the shock had begun and I was in tears. Ryan was giving Mum weird looks as she came into the house because he’d heard what she’d said and he was sitting at the computer nowhere near the gun. There I was bawling my eyes out while Mum had lost it laughing.

Later on in the day, when Mum finally drove me down to Granny and Pop’s, the first question posed at us by Granny was, “Did Greg have to shoot a cow or something?” Again Mum lost it laughing, only this time I joined in. It took us a while to come around and tell Granny that, in fact, that noise was my bike tyre blowing up. All I can say to that is, I don’t think that I have ever been on a bike since.

When I was really little I remember going down to the creek with Ryan and Geoff. We had been building dams down there and having fun but this particular day Mum deliberately told us not to get wet. So there we were

walking down the creek trying not to slip and in typical Geoff fashion he slipped on a rock and fell in. He thought he might as well make the most of it so he jumped right in. When we finally returned home the fact that he got wet didn't go down well with Mum but Ryan, Geoff and I found it hilarious.

One day, Dad and I were trying to move this bull into a new paddock. Being the stubborn, arrogant type the bull would not go over the creek. We were on the motorbike and we went through the creek down one side but we didn't quite make it up the other. Well, we fell in, didn't we! Being a little girl, I started crying as I was absolutely drenched and my leg was caught under the bike. Dad was wet too, of course, and his foot was stuck. It was just before we had to go to Grandma's for Grandpa's birthday lunch and it really gave us something to laugh about. We didn't end up moving the bull that day.

We once had this rooster called Charlie and did he hate me! He was white and very, very fast and I remember dreading having to go over to the chooks, as he would always chase me from the chook house to our sliding door. Everyone would know if I'd gone over to the chooks because they could hear me screaming and the thump of my feet until I was safely inside with the slamming of the sliding door. I remember rejoicing the day he fell off the perch and the nightmares I had for years afterwards. The pictures of this chook waddling after me still haunt me.

I have had an awesome childhood and would never swap it for anything. These stories are all important memories of my life growing up. The great memories I have with each and every one of my grandparents are important. The Ferguson is a great place to grow up and everything I've done has taught me something important for later life.

LAUREN GIBBS

DOUBLE TROUBLE or TWICE BLESSED!

Grandma Ollie Townsend vividly recalls Dad taking her up to the original St John of God Hospital in Bunbury to see our twins shortly after they were born in May, 1965.

Two little “skinned rabbits”, one 3lb 4oz and the other 4lb 10oz, side-by-side in a humdicrib. How on earth could they survive, she secretly wondered as she joined in Mum and Dad’s joy at their safe arrival.

But strong wills saw them thrive and they were taken home to the farm, only for our family to realise their premature birth wasn’t going to be the only scary moment in their lives!

Like the time Dad and Uncle Hal found them playing with a bottle of strychnine, cork removed, around Uncle Hal’s car shed. Steve and Malcolm Gardiner had been kicking a footy near the shed and the ball had shot up and (unknown to them) dislodged the bottle from a rafter in the shed. Dad and Uncle Hal asked Colin and Barry how the cork had come out of the bottle and Barry said, “Colin went like this Dad” (and simulated how Colin had put the cork in his mouth and twisted the bottle with his hands to remove the cork). Mum said she had never

seen Dad so upset as that day. They phoned Uncle Nug and asked him what they should do and he said that if Colin had ingested any of the strychnine he’d already have died.

Another time they got to some cow anti-abortion pills. Mum had been rolling her hair and with one side in curlers and the other still to do, she picked up Colin and Barry and raced them into the doctor. On hindsight, Mum hates to think what she must have looked like as she raced into the surgery, two little grubby boys at her side and her hair half done!

Both incidences proved to Mum and Dad that no matter how high or how securely you store poisons and the like, children will find a way to them.

So too was the story of the axe. Typical of any wood-heap, the axe was always firmly planted into the jarrah chopping block at the finish of work. One day

Mum had just arrived home from town with Colin and Barry - two cute little blonde-haired boys, aged about two, dressed beautifully in the clean white trousers and royal blue knitted jumpers.

Dad was helping Mum unload the car when they heard a noise. Barry had got Colin to put his hand on the chopping block so he could cut off his fingers like Dad cut the wood - and he very nearly succeeded, with Colin wearing the faint scars to this day!

There were lots of light-hearted times as well. Like their great rapport with Uncle Hal - they'd call out across the paddock to him each morning, "Hal", "Hal" or "G'Day" - and fondness of Funny Shake (Jake Gardiner) and Hally Wally (Harry Wallace at the Dardy garage).

They loved fossicking for bugs and would spend hours (and walk for miles) lifting cow pats (often with Mum's spoons etc) fallen branches and the like looking for bugs. Who knows how many cutlery sets are out there in the hills of "Brackenridge". Grandma recalls one day Mum was baking pastries and the kitchen table was loaded with all kinds of cooking when Colin and Barry raced in to proudly show Mum their day's work, tipping their jar of bugs all across her cooking!

The boys' arrival meant we had to sell our faithful FJ and the family car became a cream Holden panel van. Mum would put the boys in their twin pram and wheel the pram into the back of the panel van. No seat belts or restraints and no air conditioning but for the side windows of the van. Mum would park the van out the back of Sherry's shop in Bunbury and while she and whichever kids she had with her completed the rest of Mum's business in town, Mr Sherry would put together Mum's grocery order and pack it into the car.

Colin and Barry's first year of school coincided with the final year of the Ferguson Primary School. Us kids used to ride our bikes the two-and-a-half miles to school but for a fair part of 1971 we had the luxury of a car ride because Mum and Dad reckoned that if they let Colin and Barry ride the distance they'd never make it to school - their busy, inquisitive natures would have taken them on far more important adventures!

CHRISTINE GIBBS

POTATOES

During the war we had a lot of truck work to do. Produce had to be grown for the army and civilian people but this area was noted as a potatoe growing district. We carted about 300 ton of potatoes down to the Swanto orchard at Argyle. They had a refrigeration there to keep the potatoes. Another 400 ton was carted up to Ferguson and they were stored under the big peppermint trees along the river to try and keep them cool.

***FROM INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM PROUT
BY JUDY CLARKE 1986***

CYCLONE ALBY

Event impacts

Category	Impact
Human Casualties	Killed - 3 Person(s)
Human Casualties	
Human Effects	Injured - 10 Person(s) (approx)
Human Effects	Affected - 4000 Person(s) (approx)
Financial	Homeless - 20 Person(s) (approx)
Financial	Insured Loss - \$m39
	Total Estimated Cost - \$m 170 (approx)

Severity

Type	Rating
Maximum recorded wind gust in km/h	150 (measured on 04/04/1978)

Source of Information

Source	Type	Source Description
Government Agency		Australian Bureau for Agricultural Research & Economics
Business or Professional Association		Insurance Council of Australia
Government Agency		Bureau of Meteorology

Related Events

South Western, WA: Bushfires - 4/1978

The formation of Tropical Cyclone “Alby”, 1000km north-west of Port Hedland, north of Perth, was detected on March 27. The cyclone moved on a south-west course.

On April 3, the cyclone appeared to be weakening and although Alby lost its tropical cyclone characteristics, it still had gale-force winds associated with it and gale warnings to shipping continued to be issued at six-hourly intervals. Early on April 4, it changed direction and moved rapidly south-east, passing close to the south-west corner of the State and caused the most widespread cyclone damage in WA’s history.

Perth experienced wind gusts up to 130km/h, the strongest April winds on record.

The South West towns of Collie, Bunbury and Albany reported even higher gusts. The high winds fanned more than 70 bushfires in Perth and regional areas, whipped up dust and sand storms from surrounding dry areas, caused widespread power blackouts, and drove heavy seas into coastal towns.

Five people lost their lives in the cyclone (3) and bushfires (2) and many others narrowly escaped serious injury. Cyclone damage to property alone was estimated at \$50m (in 1978 values).

(FROM EMA DISASTER EVENTS DATA TRACKING SYSTEM, PAGE 12).

“CYCLONE ALBY”, for example, 280,000 acres of farm and forest land were destroyed by uncontrollable bushfires. Most of the fires were either already alight or had been deliberately lit on the day of the event as part of traditional burn-off of agricultural land in autumn prior to the onset of the winter rains.

Timely warning could have prevented a lot of the fire damage that resulted. By comparison, 48 hours advance notice was given to fire authorities in April 1991 associated with Cyclone Vincent. This allowed the extinguishing of existing fires and the deployment of additional firefighting staff during the period of maximum fire risk.

The resulting damage bill for Cyclone Vincent was below \$US1m.

***GARY R FOLEY AND BARRY N HANSTRUM, BUREAU Of
METEOROLOGY WA, 1998***

Cyclone Alby was one of those things people thought would never happen. It was April 1978, and the burning-off season had opened.

Around the district, permits had been given allowing people to burn-off and the forecast was fine.

Except for Cyclone Alby, that had blown itself out at sea.

A couple of days later (April 4), the wind began to pick up and it blew a gale all day. When I left work, I recall thinking how glad I would be to get home as we were well protected from the wind.

There were trees down on the road all the way home, but apparently I followed Brian Kessell all the way and he had cleared the road as he went. However, when I got home I noticed the cows still out in the paddock.

As I walked into the house, Mum said Dad and Ronnie were fighting a fire on the top of the ridge and we would have to milk. No sooner had we got the cows to the dairy and the power went out. About then, Dad came home to ask Mum to ring and get some more help and he said just let the cows go in the green flats below the dairy; that was the only time I ever remember the cows to miss milking.

It was about then that we decided to pick up Nan as we had tried to ring but there was no answer. I drove up in my car - as I turned the corner just past the dairy, the road looked like a timber yard with trees down all the way along it. So I took the motorbike up through the paddocks, parked it at the fence and ran inside. I was shouting as I ran in and out of the rooms, so as to be heard over the sound of the wind and the loose tin half blowing off the roof. Nan was not there.

I remember my eyes stinging from the dust and smoke in the wind.

I got back to the dairy as Ronnie turned up on his tractor, so he drove up to look for Nan. I remember thinking she must have gone down to the dam because of the fire.

About 15 minutes later Uncle Ron turned up with Nan, on the tractor. Nan told us that because the tin was blowing off the veranda she went out to turn the power off in case the house caught on fire. While doing this she felt like the wind was blowing her over so she lay down until the gust had eased before returning to the house.

I walked into our house in time to hear Mum on the phone to a lady from Bunbury, who had a block up the top of the hills right where the fire was, asking if she could ask Dad to go and let the horses go.

Mum looked up at the hill covered in smoke and flames and said, "Yes, I will tell Cecil".

About half an hour later Dad came home for some more water and to tell us Fay Searle might be on her way over as Don Ratcliffe and Ronnie Mountford were trying to stop the fire heading any closer to her house. Unfortunately, Faye's pump for her water was electric and the power was out, so she had no water.

So Dad came and went without a word from Mum about the lady and her horses. I just asked her if she had forgotten and I got a swift reply, "No, your father and those men's lives are worth more than a few horses. The horses will have to fend for themselves like our cattle at Grassey."

Faye had told us the next day how she had packed the car with the photos and girls' baby photo albums and had collected up her prize possessions as it looked like she might not have a house to come back to.

Nan and I sat on the back patio watching the smoke and flames on the top of the hills. She said it was worse than she had seen in the 1950's fire. As it got dark, the smoke faded into the sky and it was replaced by an iridescent red and orange glow. It was about then that Mum came outside to suggest the traditional fire food of tomato sandwiches and a cup of tea was ready inside.

We got up and followed Mum inside. No sooner had I shut the back door than there was an almighty bang and crash outside. I reopened the door to a tree lying straight across the patio where Nan and I had been sitting.

Then I remember Pam Kessell's ever-smiling face appearing in the door like a breath of fresh air.

Brian Kessell brought down Pam and the kids, Bill and Maryanne, because he didn't want to leave them in a timber house, especially since he still had quite a bit of dry grass stockfeed in the paddocks around the house. They had decided that if the phone rang the house was still standing.

So just before Brian left for the burning hills, armed with a couple of Thermoses and the inevitable Tupperware box of sandwiches and tin of biscuits, he rang the phone and it gave the disconnected signal. White faced, he turned to Mum and I and said, "Don't let Pam ring, I can't get through", and left.

So, for the next half an hour or so, we kept Pam busy with sandwich making. Then there was a knock at the front door so we knew it was someone we didn't know. Mum opened the door to find a young Ron Moffat, the local radio announcer, and two other people standing there. They were concerned about the horses the lady had phoned about earlier. Mum told them it was too dangerous to try and go any farther toward the block and perhaps it would be wise to wait to hear from Dad when he came back. They hardly said a word all night; I thought he was very quiet for the person we used to hear on the radio.

As Mum escorted the guests into the kitchen, Pam announced, "Well my house is still there", much to our surprise. The phone must have just been jammed or something when Brian had tried it.

The house did survive, though the fire had burnt right down close to it. I think Kessells lost a few sheep and a couple of cows; they were the only stock losses.

Dad came back to explain that there were actually two fire fronts - one had jumped from one hilltop to the next in the wind and there was a second front burning slower behind it. Unfortunately, the gale-force winds were blowing the topsoil away. Dad said it felt like the tractor was going to be blown over and someone was pulling your hair.

I think it was Keith Butcher and Barry Scott who had just finished discussing what to do and had just walked off when a big limb fell just where they were standing. Over at Faye's place, someone had just hopped in a vehicle when a piece of tin went flying into the ground - it could have cut them in half.

Dad had tried to get through to "Grassy", our other farm at that time. He found Uncle George on the road half way up there, trying to get to his block, and had come back as the bush was burning and limbs (on fire) were blowing off trees. Uncle George had a brand new tractor in his shed and the old one outside - the fire burnt down the shed around the new tractor but didn't harm it. The other tractor had its tyres burnt.

Finally, in the middle of the night, Uncle Ron got through to "Grassy". I remember him saying it was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen when he

got to the top of the range - to see most of the area's cattle, the lady's horses, emus, kangaroos and racehorse goannas all standing in Woods' dam.

The cattle must have gone through the fences across the top of the range and then down the steep slope to the dam. The next day we realised there was not a fence standing between here and Donnybrook.

We spent the next week rounding up and sorting out cattle, what belonged to who! And where to put them!

Uncle Ron had a mate named "Grievesy" who came out to help sort out the cattle. One of our two-year-old steers was a real mongrel because Stephen had made it fight with the grain bucket when it was a calf.

It had "put" Mum through the fence when it had just been weaned. It would stand in front of you with its head down, just looking at you, but the minute you took your eye off him he would bunt you.

Ron had warned Grievesy about not taking his eye off the offending steer - all went well until Grievesy turned to shut the gate and the steer got one of his knobly horns under Grievesy's black footy shorts and put him over the gate.

I remember taking a cup of tea up to Dad and Tom Gibbs, who spent days helping re-fence "Grassy", and them sitting on a burnt-out log surrounded by black to drink it. Dad and Ronnie had cut a tree off the fence line at the top of the hill between "Grassy" and Woods' place. The stump of the tree was so heavy with dirt as they sawed through it, it stood upright again. About 10 minutes later a bewildered-looking Mr Woods turned up, as he had happened to glance at the top of the hill as the tree stood up.

The SEC said 3000 homes were without power and our farm was the last place to have power restored a week later because we were on the end of a different spur line and the SEC were not aware of it.

Over the following days and weeks, we realised the value of the district, as offers of help, hay and agistment came forward.

I hope the sense of community prevails well into the future because that is what makes the district special and home to me.

TERRI GIBBS (NEE MOUNTFORD)

CONTRACT PLOUGHING

During the early 1950s, my brother Jack and myself used to plough patches of ground in the Ferguson area with our teams of Clydesdale horses.

We were the last of the horse-drawn contractors to work in the area as tractors took over in the late 1950s as they could get more area ploughed in a day.

The first ploughing job I did was on the Butcher property when I was about 15. The horse's name was Silver, he was owned by the Butchers. I would have to climb up onto the horse to harness him, as I was not tall enough. This horse, when it worked out you were taking it to plough, would stop and dig its hooves in; sometimes I would not be able to move him for quite some time.

At the start of the season, usually around the middle of June, we would organise our supplies for our horses and ourselves from George Harris' general store in Dardanup. When we had the chaff and pollard, and ploughs, chains and swings we would load it into Dad's (Paolo) ute and deliver to the area we were to work. When that had been done we would walk the horses from Dardanup to Ferguson. We would sit on our pushbikes and let the horses pull us up there. Once there we would set up an area under some trees that we could leave the horses in overnight, this was so they could not eat the green grass. If they ate green grass they would not have as much energy as when they only ate chaff and pollard. The people we were contracting for were mainly Italians who would lease the ground off the farmers in the Ferguson area so they could plant their winter crop. Some of the farmers were Bob Gardiner, Bob De Caan, Brian Gardiner, Guy Gardiner, Mervyn Gardiner, Torch Offer, Joe White and Keith Butcher.

We would ride our Swansea pushbikes to work each morning, about eight miles and home at the end of the day. First thing to do when we got to the

paddock was to get the horses out and harness them up to their ploughs, this would usually take about 10 minutes. Some mornings, when it was frosty, it was very difficult to harness the horses.

My horses' names were Dom and Prince while Jack's were Nuggett and Punch. We would harness up to a number 10 mouldboard plough with a long mouldboard so that the soil was completely turned over. This plough had wooden handles.

We would start ploughing and usually work an eight-hour day with an hour for lunch; this would give both the horses and us a rest. Lunch was usually a loaf of bread made into sandwiches at home before we left for work. We carried our water in a water bag or drank out of the creek.

The size of the plot to be ploughed depended on the licence that each person had. We ploughed in what was called lands, each land was 24 boots wide (measure by using our boots), there were eight rows to each land and these were three boots apart. We did most of the ploughing when we were young and barefoot. We would usually be able to plough about one acre per day per team, and during the winter season would plough about 50 acres between us. We would get paid five pound per day for each team of horses.

The planters would follow behind us, three people per team of horses. They would have a four-gallon drum with a leather strap on it to sling over the shoulder, this was filled with manure (potato E) and spread along the furrow made by the plough. Then the potato seed (this came from Albany for the winter crops) was planted on this about, 13 to 14 inches apart. The planter cut down a potato bag to sling over his shoulder to carry the seed potato. It would take about eight bags to the acre for seed and one ton of potato E for fertiliser. When the seed was planted then the team of horses would plough another furrow to cover the seed, and then do two more furrows for the next line of seed to be planted. There had to be a gap of two furrows so the horse could walk down later to scarify the weeds.

During the growing season the weeds had to be controlled, this was done by scarifier with the horses or by hand with a hoe. If the weeds were not kept down the clover flea could get into the crop. Also, with potatoes.

During the summer we would plough the summer crop on the flats in Dardanup where the crop could be irrigated; these crops the lands would only be eight boots wide so they could be watered. This ground would use about 10 bags per acre of seed (the seed came from the Bengier swamp for summer crops) and the same manure as in sometimes a cutworm would get into the crop, this was controlled by putting DDT into a potato bag and shaking it along the rows of potatoes.

In about October, it was time to dig the potatoes; teams of diggers would come in to do this. Some of these men could dig and bag 40 bags in one day, some did up to 60, and most people averaged 30 to 40 bags. They would get three shillings per bag with some of them working up to 14 hours per day. Good pickers would drag the potato bag by their belt and use both hands to pick with. When they had been bagged the owner of the potatoes would follow along and sew the bag with a bag needle and string.

After the crop had been removed, the farmers usually disced the patch and planted pumpkins or millet.

When they were all dug, Bill Prout would come along to load onto his truck and cart to Dardanup siding to be loaded onto the train and taken to Perth. I have seen the full length of the Dardanup main street lined with railway wagons waiting to be loaded the winter crop. When digging, this would average about 10 ton to the acre. Summer crops could be affected by the potato fly.

Bags to put the potatoes in for the winter crop came from Mill Wares in Perth, these were laid out on the ground before picking so they would stretch and you could get more potatoes in them. The bags used for the summer crop were usually old manure bags that had been soaked in the creek and hung on the fence to be dried. This was done so the fertiliser did not rot the bags.

People that had a potato licence would have their own stencil made from galvanised tin. Their name and licence number would be cut out with a chisel and then stencilled onto the bags. Jack and I did this for about 12 years.

JOE ITALIANO FROM INTERVIEW WITH STEVE GIBBS

ROAD BOARD

The following people served on the Road Board for Dardanup shire between 1895 and 1961.

The * denotes they served time as chairman.

Name	Dates
Gardiner E	1895-1896
Gardiner EPH	1895-1902 *
	1908-1911
	1916-1921
Buckenara P	1895-1899
Hough J	1901-?
Lowrie RA	?-1911
Fowler R	1903-1904
Chapman JJ	1911-1920
Gardiner W	1914-1933
Kerr JC	1920-1922
Slattery B	1921-1932
Kerr JS	1924-1926
Flynn M	1926-1941
Gardiner JM	1933-1947
Hardie AE	1941-1946
Gardiner GR	1945-1960
Tooke W	1946-1952
	1955-1958
Mountford G	1947-1950 *
	1954-1961
Twomey C	1950-1961
Gardiner CS	1950-1952
Gibbs HB	1952-1953
Wight RW	1952-1955
Gardiner Mrs EM	1953-1955

Name	Dates
Ratcliffe WH	1955-1961
Fowler JCP	1958-1961
Gardiner BS	1960-1961

TAKEN FROM THE BOARD IN THE SHIRE OFFICES

SHIRE COUNCIL

In 1961 the Road Board was changed to the Shire Council. The following people served on the Shire Council for the Dardanup shire between 1961 and 2001. The * denotes they served time as chairman.

Name	Dates
Gardiner EJ	1961-1964
Mountford G	1961-1966 *
Twomey C	1961-1980
Ratcliffe WH	1961-1983 *
Gardiner BS	1961-1981
Gardiner SJ	1964-1976
Ratcliffe GT	1972-1988
Kerr MS	1976-1987 *
Gardiner JE	1981-1987
Gibbs TH	1983-1992
Sherwood JL	1990-1993
Giumelli PD	1993-1996
Mountford CG	1996-
Gardiner JE	1998-

TAKEN FROM THE BOARD IN THE SHIRE OFFICES

OTHER FAMILIES

During the course of researching this book we came across many names that we did not get any information on, or any stories. The following is a list of these families, by no means everyone.

Boxall	Horsford	Nawell	Lambert
DeCain	Jeffery	Connolly	Boxall
Foley	Wedge	Thomson	Strauhgan
Brown	Lowrie	Lorkin	Manson
Wilkins	Elligitte	Tonkin	Marsh
Rose	Hitchin	Hazelton	Morgan
Higgins	Snelling	Armstrong	Ramsey
Scott	Tussler		

MEMORIES OF A GOLDEN CHILDHOOD

(Excerpt from an article,
Donnybrook-Bridgetown Mail, Tuesday, August 28, 1990)

“ I grew up in the Ferguson Valley on my parents’ farm. The area was very beautiful back then – not like it is now”, she reflected.

The young Gladys would walk six kilometres (two and a half miles) to school at the church with her two sisters and three brothers.

“Often, someone’s parents would convey us by horse and buggy if we were lucky,” she said, with a smile. Gladys left school at 16 and then went back home to farm.

She recalls those days, when the family grew wheat and oats, with affection. “Sometimes, I would travel home on a sheaf-laden wagon - all the children would lie in the wagon for the lovely journey home on warm afternoons,” she said.

“My father and brothers would make the sheaves into a stook and if the bull caught sight of something and got excited it used to toss the sheaves everywhere!

“It was a time when cream and beef mattered most and father had a Jersey herd.

“He also had 20 or 30 hack horses. I’m a real cocky’s daughter!” she said, with a cheeky giggle.

“We children had to peer at them through the picket fences - they were beautiful. Father used to call them down from the paddock of an evening for feeding.”

The memory of those beautiful horses from the days of her youth brought a tear to her eye.

“When all the men, including my brothers, left the district because of the war, a great many things were lost and had to be given up.”

All three of Gladys’ brothers went away to fight in the Great War, but her eldest brother did not return with the others.

He went missing from the Somme, and one of Gladys’ most treasured possessions is a birthday card he sent her just before this happened.

Gladys rarely travelled far from her farm and has only left the State once in her life, when she and her family went on a holiday to the Eastern States during the Second World War.

Gladys said her only regret was not seeing more of the world. “I’d love to have seen Europe in the springtime,” she said, wistfully.

Although she has not journeyed far from the Ferguson Valley, Gladys found plenty of interesting things to fill her days. Gardening and house decorating are two she enjoyed, but there was another which was her greatest pleasure.

“Dancing – really and truly, that was our chief pleasure,” she said.

“Every week in the summer, after the cricket, we would have a dance, but at 12 o’clock, it was ‘stop shop’!” she said, thumping the table with a grin.

Like many small communities, those who lived in the valley had to make their own entertainment, but there was a vibrant social life.

“Going to church was another chance to meet all your friends and relatives,” she said.

“If you go to our little church, you will find it was originally built as a mission hall and school. All the headstones have history inscribed on them.”

Gladys has always been, and still is, very active, as her friends at the lodge will testify.

“Even at 80, Miss Gardiner would climb onto her homestead roof armed with a poker to kill the possums!” said one of her friends.

Gladys’ response to this was, “What else was I to do?”

She spends much of her time now with more peaceful pastimes in the garden at her new-found hobby, growing azaleas.

She said with glee as she showed-off the glorious pink blossoms, ‘My pride and joy, these azaleas have been blooming since June.’

Like her azaleas, Gladys too, is still blooming.

FROM STORY BY ANDREW MCFARLANE, TALKING TO 91-YEAR-OLD GLADYS GARDINER OF DONNYBROOK’S TUIA LODGE ABOUT LIFE IN THE DISTRICT BEFORE THE GREAT WAR

