



# Leongatha & District HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mechanics' Institute, McCartin St., Leongatha

*Preserving our Heritage*

*Newsletter*      Volume 19 Number 2, May 2022

**President:** Robert Sage

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**Society rooms number:** 56622492

**The Society rooms are open Thursdays and between 12 & 4pm**

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**Website:**    [www.leongathahistory.org.au](http://www.leongathahistory.org.au)

**10 McCartin St Leongatha 3953**

## **Latest News**

### **Keeping the Historical Society rooms open**

In order to open the Historical Society to the public, we need help staffing the facility. Please give us an hour or two of your time in order to have the Mechanics' Institute open on Thursdays and Fridays. We will be holding Learn to Catalogue sessions on Fridays.

## **Some interesting research**

### **1. Jane and Frances Annie Forge, Drapers of Leongatha**

Trevor Forge of Inverloch contacted us for information about his great great aunts who ran a drapery store in early Leongatha. We were pleased to help and provide him with photos.

Trevor relates his family's early days and their connection to Leongatha:

Formerly of Nafferton, Yorkshire, England, the Forge family arrived in Melbourne as unassisted passengers aboard the "Queen of the Mersey" in 1861. One of thirteen children, Frances Annie was born at sea during the voyage. Jane Forge was born in 1849 in Yorkshire. Their parents were Thomas and Eliza (nee Topham).

Thomas Forge and family initially headed to Kyneton where Eliza died 20 July 1863, aged 44. His eldest daughter, Margaret, also died in 1863 aged 16.

Thomas and his children then spent a period of time at Agnes Hill, Kyneton before subsequently settling at nearby Spring Hill. Thomas applied for property at Toolleen in 1868. His eldest son also took up property at Toolleen in 1875. Thomas moved to the Rochester/Echuca area in 1873 when

many families from the Kyneton area took part in a "land rush" to occupy allotments surrounding the Campaspe and Goulburn Rivers.

Eventually, Thomas retired to Echuca where he died in 1890 and was buried in Kyneton with his wife and daughter.

After starting business in Kyabram, Thomas' son Christopher opened a drapery in Echuca in 1876 in conjunction with his wife's brother (Johnson and Forge).

At the time Christopher started the business, Jane and Frances Annie would have been 17 and 15 years old. The girls would have been in their late 20s when their father died. They may have been living with their father and possibly working in the drapery store with their brother. Jane and Frances Annie were confirmed in the Church of England in 1892 at Christ's Church, Echuca.

The next record I have found of Jane or Frances Annie is on the 1903 Electoral Roll in Leongatha – each listed as dressmakers. They would have been 44 and 41 years of age. The family have no idea why the sisters came to a pioneering town like Leongatha and set up a business so far from their family.

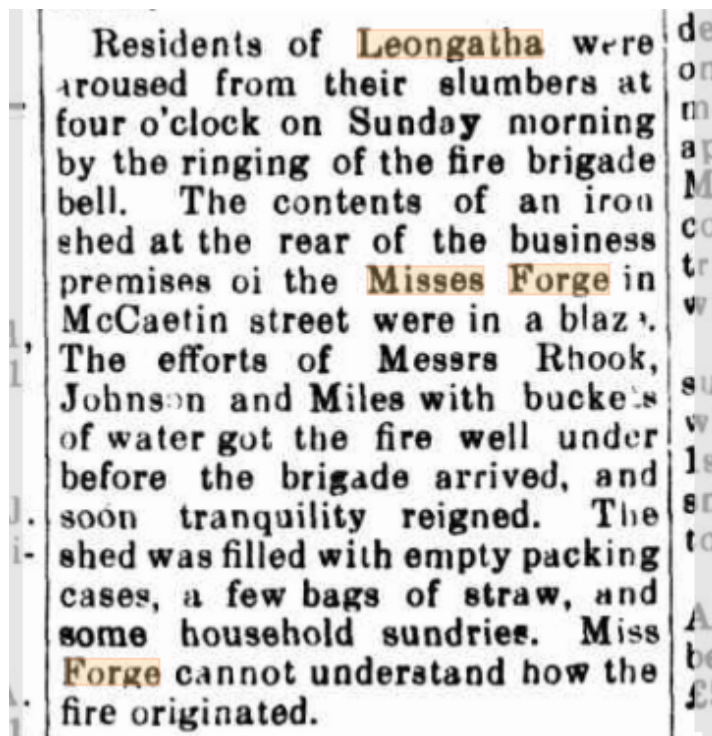
Jane died in North Brighton on 2 December 1939 aged 80.

Frances Annie died in Melbourne East on 31 March 1921 aged 59.

The sisters had a shop in Leongatha from at least 1901 (see the newspaper reports attached.)

Frances' will and probate are on line. These list Real Estate worth £360 pounds and personal assets as £585.11.8. Of interest among the personal assets was Allotment 8 Section 15 in Township of Leongatha, residence £18 pound - this is 45 McCartin St now the Rusty Windmill Cafe. She had half share of stock in the shop £87.10.0 and half share of goodwill in fancy goods and confectioner's business £12.10.0

*Great Southern Star* 18 Sept 1917 p.2



Residents of **Leongatha** were aroused from their slumbers at four o'clock on Sunday morning by the ringing of the fire brigade bell. The contents of an iron shed at the rear of the business premises of the **Misses Forge** in McCartin street were in a blaze. The efforts of Messrs Rhook, Johnson and Miles with buckets of water got the fire well under before the brigade arrived, and soon tranquility reigned. The shed was filled with empty packing cases, a few bags of straw, and some household sundries. Miss **Forge** cannot understand how the fire originated.

Great  
Southern  
Star 17 Oct  
1916 p.4

**Fancy Goods Shop.**  
McCartin-street, Leongatha.  
**J. and F. A. FORGE**  
**K**EEP STATIONERY, BIRTHDAY  
PRESENTS, and WEDDING  
PRESENTS, Confetti, Glass and China  
and all Fancy Goods.  
Materials for Fancy Work.

Weekly  
Times  
October  
1929

and bait stables. E. T. Munro, general  
blacksmith, wheelwright and farm im-  
plement maker. **The Misses J. and F.**  
**A. Forge, drapers and dressmakers,**  
McCartin Street, next to Harden's  
timber yards. G. E. Matthewman di-  
vided their tailor catering between  
**Leongatha and Foster.**

A. R. Simon, hairdresser and to-  
bacconist, next the post office, adver-  
tised haircutting 6d. and shaving 3d.



Frances Annie



Jane



## 2. The search for J W Smith Station Master

We received an interesting request for information about a man called J W Smith who was a Station Master at Leongatha. All the family knew was that he received a silver dish as a gift when he left Leongatha in 1917,

### Research has discovered that:

William James Smith born Beechworth in 1857

Father William and Mother Margaret *McMasters*

He married Alice Harrison nee Tyler (she died in 1884 d. Sunbury 1948 aged 85)

Children

William George b. St Kilda 1885

Harold Curteon b. Prahran 1886 - solicitor d. Regent 1949

Alice Myrtle b. Tallarook 1889

Flora Bertha b. Echuca 1894

John Leslie Harrison b. Leongatha 1898

Claude Redvers b. Leongatha 1900 d. South Yarra 1979

### Electoral Roll

1916 William Joseph Smith stationmaster Leongatha. Wife Alice Harrison Smith

1905 - Berwick

1912 - 112 Hodgkinson Street Clifton Hill

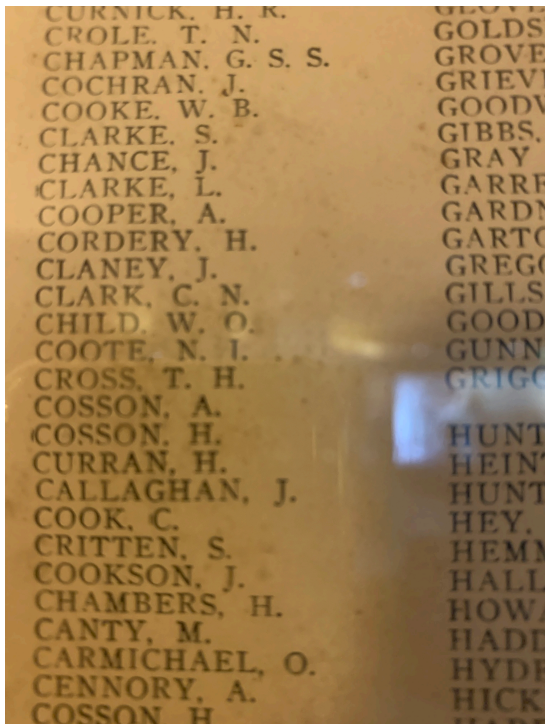
1915 - Upper Fern Tree Gully

1919 - 30 Dickens Street Elwood - independent means

1927/31 "Nautilus" Valletta Street Carrum retired

## 3. Mystery man Jack Callaghan, Calaghan or Gallagher

The following email was received recently:



I recently visited your lovely RSL Club to see if you had any information on J.Callaghan as per this photo taken at the RSL.

I am researching my ancestors and I believe that my great uncle used the Callaghan name on his WW1 enlistment, but if anyone knew of Callaghan or any relatives or what happened to him after returning I would be very interested.

My Great Uncle is in an unmarked grave in Bendigo and the name is Gallagher. I did not know my family until this recent research. They are originally from Maldon area. His sister Margaret Ellen Sweet was living in the Leongatha area at the time also Micheal Gallagher his father. Jack Gallagher never married but lived in a humpy at the back of his sister Clara Thornton

house in a suburb of Bendigo. The Callahan file contains a letter with her address.

The Society set out to find out the story of Jack. John Hyett discovered that Jack Gallagher enlisted in 1915 but deserted shortly after. A Jack Callaghan from Stony Creek enlisted in 1916. The following shows the descriptions of both Jacks. There were many cases of deserters who re-enlisted under another name. John found the following:

**Jack Callaghan 1916**

21 years 9 months, 5ft 7 1/2 inches. complexion dark, eyes blue, hair dark brown, born Maldon  
Next of Kin Michael Callaghan

**Jack Gallager - deserter 1915**

21 Years, 5ft 7 1/2 inches, dark complexion, eyes blue, black hair., born Maldon  
Next of Kin Michael Gallagher

The children of Michael and Ellen (nee Hardy) Gallagher

Tarrisa 1892

Mary Francis 1892

Clare 1893

John Lawrence 1894

Julia 1895

Agnes 1897

Matthew 1900

Ruth 1901

We are assuming John Lawrence is Jack. His family is attempting to have his unmarked grave in Bendigo given a marker to acknowledge his service.

**Jack CALAGHAN**

Regimental number	2535
Religion	Roman Catholic
Occupation	Labourer
Address	Stony Creek, Gippsland, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	21
Next of kin	Father, Michael Calaghan, c/o Watson, Stony Creek Mail, Gippsland, Victoria
Enlistment date	13 April 1916
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	<a href="#">59th Battalion, 5th Reinforcement</a>
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/76/3
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A9 <i>Shropshire</i> on 25 September 1916
Rank from Nominal Roll	Private
Unit from Nominal Roll	59th Battalion
Fate	Returned to Australia 10 June 1919

**A tribute to a past student of Leongatha High School - Janet Williams**

This obituary was posted on the Leongatha High Alumni Facebook page.



# OBITUARIES

## Transformative teacher played key role in enhancing top US garden

**JANET SUSAN WILLIAMS**  
TEACHER, PHOTOGRAPHER,  
GARDEN-LOVER  
24-2-1954 — 28-10-2008

By **DAMIEN JOLLEY**

JANET Williams, who taught in Geelong and Melbourne before breathing new life into the University of California's botanical garden at Berkeley, California, has died of from suspected amyloidosis in hospital in San Francisco. She was 54.

Williams was born in Leongatha and raised in Meeniyan, South Gippsland. She graduated from Melbourne University in 1975, and then taught English, English as a second language and humanities at Matthew Flinders Girls' High School, Geelong, and East Doncaster High School.

In 1985, she emigrated to California with her husband, Mark Wilson, when he was appointed professor of educational measurement at the University of California at Berkeley — a rare honour for someone so young at the time.

Williams supported her husband devotedly in his career as they settled into the community of the university city of Berkeley.

They also began their family, with children Alistair and Penelope born in San Francisco, and she completed a university course that enabled her to find her own fulfilment as director of



development at the University of California Botanical Garden. There, her loves of gardening, photography and education were jointly realised. In addition to being the sole fund-raiser for the United States' leading university garden, she was responsible for membership, marketing and publicity.

UC Botanical Garden, a horticultural treasure, is perched in the hills above the Berkeley campus, and enjoys stunning views across the bay, north to the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, and south to Monterey.

Over 15 years, she grew to know every plant and corner of this luscious domain, and entertained many visitors, during garden tours, with stories and anecdotes about the many interesting features of the garden.

Her obituary on the UC Botanical Garden website

attests to her dedication: "Her official duties barely describe the roles she played. Williams soon became the garden's de facto photographer, in part because of her love of photography and because of her love of plants, gardening and the garden. She left a legacy of thousands of images that demonstrate her sense of design and her love of her subjects."

With support from donors, the garden will establish a bench in her honour in the Australasian section looking through to the Japanese pond, one of the favourite stops on her much-loved garden tours.

She had a great enthusiasm for life and relished the quirky side of human existence with a dry sense of humour.

Together, the family travelled extensively, partly as a result of her husband's collaborations, but also because of her inquisitive wanderlust. At a celebration of her life at Edinburgh Gardens in Fitzroy recently, a procession of speakers, including family friend and Minister for Finance and Deregulation, Lindsay Tanner, spoke of her innate ability to teach, and of her love of literature that inspired others.

Williams is survived by her husband Mark and children Alistair and Penelope, her mother Hazel, brothers David and Rodney and sister Bronwyn.

Associate professor Damien Jolley was assisted by Janet Williams' family.

### The history of businesses in the Leongatha Central Business District

Kellie Smith is researching the uses made of the plots in the town centre from 1889.

This project involves researching the historical documents available for the land allotments, shops, and businesses that have existed in the Leongatha town centre since settlement in 1888. In order to do this research, we need to purchase title history search statements and land index search documents which cost \$20 per search.

We are therefore seeking financial support from the community for this project. Donations to the Society from the business community for the project would be most appreciated.

Kellie has been mapping the distribution of businesses over time based on this comprehensive research.

At our **May** meeting we will be discussing this project and those attending will be asked to record what they remember of the changes in the businesses in the town centre.

At the **June** meeting Penny Clarke will talk about **Mysteries and Strange events in our History**

**Become a member and help the Society preserve our history.**

## **Membership form. For the Year 2021-2022**

The annual membership is now due. \$30 for individuals \$40 for Family

A direct deposit may be paid into the society's bank account at Bendigo Bank, Leongatha:  
Leongatha & District Historical Society  
BSB: 633000 a/c: 182712406

(Please include your name as reference,  
and notify us by e-mail to leongathahistory@gmail.com

You can copy this form, paste it to a new document and email back to us. or post to  
PO Box 431 Leongatha 3953

**New memberships** are welcome or updating your details by completing the form below:  
Membership type: Single \$30 Couple/Family \$40

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

E-Mail: .....