

Wrayton Farm, Wickepin

The Wrayton Farm I knew, was a small holding by today's standards, being 1261 acres. It's bounded by the Shire of Narrogin to the west and is situated 5 miles west of the township of Wickepin.

The farm was made up by 8 surveyed blocks and considered to be first-class land of a light sandy nature. It was timbered with whitegum, *Eucalyptus Wandoo*, red morrel *Eucalyptus longicornis*, york gum, *Eucalyptus loxophlebra*, mallet, *Eucalyptus astringens*, sheoak, *Casuarina fraserian*, jam tree, *Acacia acuiminata* and a quantity of the poison shrubs York-road. *Gastrolobium* and Box *Oxylobium* The two latter are low scrubs, highly toxic to stock and need to be totally eliminated before grazing.

A small portion of location 10621 was deemed to be second and third-class land, gravelly and sandy. This location was valued at 8 shillings and 6 pence per acre and was purchased at a later date by William Swinbank when it was deemed an abandoned grazing lease. This block is situated on the northern portions of the Horseshoe Range that divides Wrayton in the Wickepin Shire and the Yilliminning Valley in the Narrogin Shire. It is one of the highest points in the Shire of Wickepin and commands impressive views of the surrounding countryside.

From this point tributaries of two rivers start. One flowing south to the Yilliminning River and on to the Blackwood River and the other flowing east to join Yarling Creek, eventually becoming the Avon River which flows into the Swan River.

William Swinbank (c1869) selected this virgin land in 1901 and subsequently named the property Wrayton after the small hamlet in Westmoreland England, his birth place. William Swinbank was a member of a sect called The Church of the Firstborn, founded by the charismatic James Cowley Morgan Fisher in Victoria.

In early 1900 J.C.M Fisher became aware of land being offered by the Western Australian colonial government in a push to attract newcomers with a generous policy of land allocation. Settlers could select up to one hundred acres at ten shillings per acre with the cost spread over twenty years. Free homestead blocks of up to sixty acres were also offered. Farmers had to meet residence and improvement conditions.

Fisher therefore instructed two of his sons, Solomon and Samuel to go and investigate this district. Their satisfactory report on land in the Yarling Creek locality resulted in over 70 followers taking up land in the district.

The Western Australian media took a great deal of interest in the group reporting their activities naming them the New Jerusalem Settlement. It has been well documented that the sect, worked their properties on a communal basis, helping each other to get their property established. Records show they were a hard-working group, many taking leading roles in the development of the Wickepin district.

William Swinbank 1869 –1932

William Swinbank was the 6th child of Septimus and Isabella Swinbank. He was born in a small, pretty hamlet, Wrayton, Westmoreland, England in 1869.

William's siblings were Christopher 1861, Jane 1863, Thomas 1862, John 1863, Alice 1868, James 1871, and Richard 1873.

Williams parents were listed as cow keepers in the 1871 English census. In the 1881 census Isabella is recorded as widow and head of the household.

William Swinbank born in Wrayton, must have had a special affection for this tiny hamlet as he named his farm in Wickepin Wrayton.

The tiny hamlet Wrayton, Westmoreland. England.





In 1886 William aged 18 and his brother John aged 22 emigrated as unassisted passengers on the S.S. Liguria arriving in March at Melbourne Port.

There are few records of William's movements after he arrived in Victoria except a reference to the purchase of land in Jindivick in January 1900.



Twelve years after his arrival in Victoria, William married Julia Kelford FISHER in 1898. Julia FISHER was the daughter of the aforesaid James C M FISHER.

A son William James was born to William and Julia in Drouin Victoria in 1900.

William Swinbank died in February 1932, age 64 He is buried in the Narrogin Cemetery R18 Anglican section. Also buried in the grave is his son William James Swinbank 10-10-1984 and the ashes of William James wife Joyce.

MIZPAH

'May the Lord watch between us'

(Photograph Alison Karpeta).

Wrayton offered for Sale.

In December 1933 his son William James Swinbank placed the farm for sale. It was obvious from the for-sale advertisement complete with photographs of the property placed in Elders Weekly December 14th 1933 that William Swinbank Sen. had been a successful agriculturalist. As well as establishing a thriving 3-acre orchard and parkland area in the homestead block, Location 1562 was planted with numerous ornamentals, pines and conifer trees.

Page 904 of the Elder's Weekly advert reads.

High Class Wickepin Farm.

1261 acres, 5 miles from

Wickepin, fenced into 11 paddocks

1100 acres cleared, 200 acres fallow,

3 acres orchard, good house

and out buildings. Ample

water supply.

This is a highly improved property, well situated and inspection can be thoroughly recommended.

Price 2-pound 10 shilling. Per. acre (687)

ELDER, SMITH & CO LTD

PERTH

The property was again advertised in 1934 at a reduced price of two pounds two shillings per acre including; full plant, 11 Pedigree Clydesdale, Jersey cattle, Collinsville sheep.

The property was purchased by Herbert. A. Gamble in early 1934.

Wickepin Argus Thursday 8th March 1934

The sale of their farm and the forthcoming departure of the Swinbank family for England broke another link with the early, often wrongly-called Jewish settlement of Wickepin. The family was one of a religious sect. who selected land around Wickepin, calling their settlement the "New Jerusalem." They were led by a very able man (J.C.M Fisher) and made good headway under his fraternal leadership and were noted for their generous hospitality to all comers. At his death the sect became absorbed into other Christian bodies.

Herbert Alexandra Gamble

Herbert A Gamble purchased Wrayton in 1934 from William James Swinbank with a walk-in walk out agreement for an undisclosed price. He was the third son of a family of 5 boys and 3 girls, the children of Robert and Catherine (nee Carlton) Gamble. The family farmed a property in Kondinin under the title of R. A. Gamble and sons, in the late 1920's. Herbert Gamble married Lillian May Gardiner on 11th February 1931. They remained at the Kondinin property until the purchase of Wrayton. The elder brother Arthur continued at Kondinin. Two daughters were born to Herbert and Lillian Gamble. Patricia Gladys in 1932 and Phyllis 1936. Little is known about the Gamble's time at Wrayton, except to several references of Wickepin Agricultural Show awards in the local newspapers. According to Herbert Lange's diary he helped Herbert Gamble prepare for a sale on 14th May 1945, and a sale of stock and plant was held on the property on 15th May 1945. It was obvious Herbert Gamble desired to sell Wrayton as early as 1944, because an advertisement was placed in the West Australian on Saturday 14th October 1944.

FARM FOR SALE, WICKEPIN,

1,261 acres, 3½ miles from Wickepin: 4 miles rabbit-proof fencing, 14 paddocks, 1,150 acres cleared; 100 acres fallow, 3 acres orchard, 4-roomed house and outbuildings. Well-watered by soaks, dams and well; 400 sheep and working plant.

This is a good mixed farm well equipped price £2/15/ per acre. walk in, walk out. Elder Smith & Co. Limited, Perth.

There is no record but it is possible that the property may have lay abandoned for a short time as Herbert Gamble and family moved to a farm in the Manjimup district and by 1949 Herbert Gamble had re-located to Perth with an occupation as a carpenter.

Wrayton offered for Auction in 1946

An advertisement in the Narrogin Observer read as follows: -

LAND AUCTION WICKEPIN PROPERTY

1,261 Acres

ON FRIDAY MARCH 22 1946 AT THE NARROGIN SALE YARDS

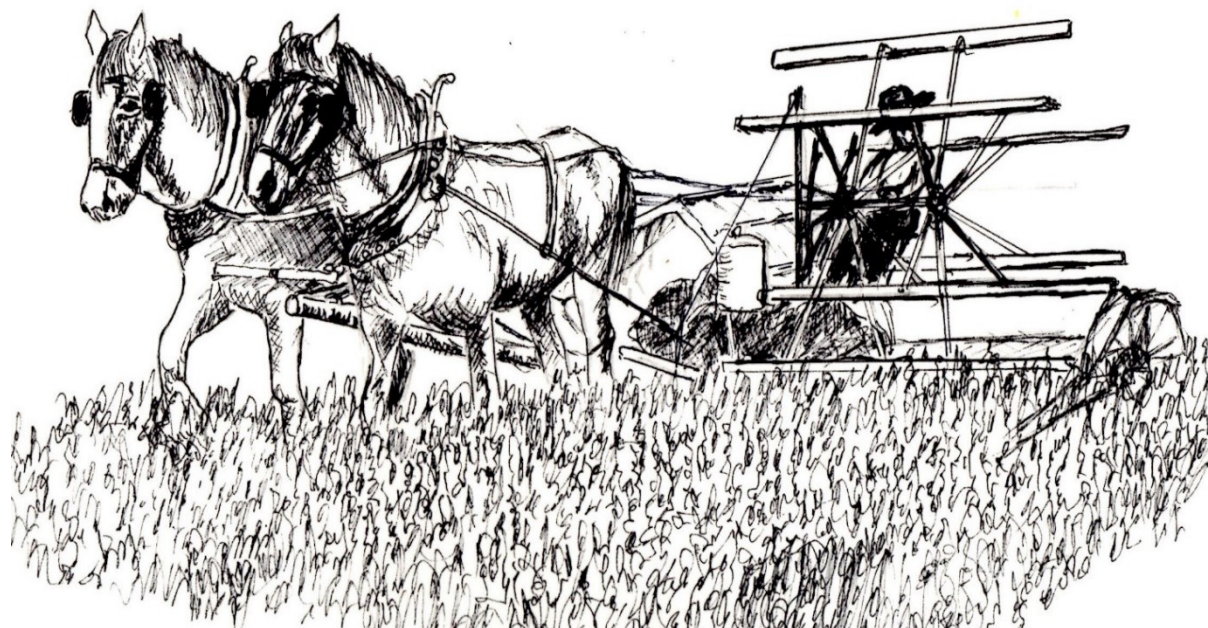
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE USUAL STOCK SALE ELDER SMITH & CO LIMITED

Under instruction from H.A. Gamble will offer by Auction as above. Well known Wickepin Property consisting of approximately 1,261 acres of freehold land situated 5 miles from Wickepin.

IMPROVEMENTS: All fenced except 115 acres. 14 sheep-proof paddocks. Approx 1,150 acres cleared, 115 acres poison. Watered by 5 permanent soaks and 2 dams. About 100 acres fallow. 4-room house, hay and shearing sheds, usual outbuildings.
REMARKS: This is a well-equipped farm in a reliable rainfall.

There is no record if Herbert Lange successfully bid on the property on March 22nd 1946 or negotiated the sale after. The eventual price paid was not disclosed. His hand written diaries show he became the next owner of the Wrayton farm that year. His diaries also made many references to cutting and carting hay from Gamble's farm, Wrayton, as early as 1943. It was apparent Mr Gamble had reduced the stock numbers on Wrayton so the need by Herbert Lange to feed a working team of horses, 14 milking cows and a run of sheep on the smaller holding of Brookland, it was essential to find additional hay. He already had a good knowledge of the farm most of his life as the East Narrogin Wardering Lange farmers and the previous owner William Swinbank were companionable neighbours.

*My personal comments are recorded in italic script
For further reference to the 115 acres of poison Location Block 11754
see page 20.*



*Two horse team and Hay Binder for sheaf hay from the 1940's.
drawing Rhonda Bartlett.*

A small fact of historical interest.

As the number of East Narrogin Lange Settlement families dwindled with the sale of properties and members retiring to other districts the Wardering School and Church were demolished. The school was rebuilt as a class room at the Wickepin Primary School in c.1952.

The Lutheran Church was eventually rebuilt, brick by brick in Narrogin, in 1954 where it still stands today.

Herbert Edward Lange from Brookland Wardering to Wrayton

Brookland Farm



Herbert Lange born 1909 was the eldest son of Alfred and Johannah (nee Zerk) Lange. His early years were spent at Brookland Farm attending the tiny one teacher Wardering School, and attending services in the Lutheran Church Wardering, both built on Melrose, the property of William Lange Sen. He enjoyed an active social and sporting life and learning the skills of farming from his father.

Herbert Lange and Gwendoline Mary Blyth were married in the Lutheran Church Wardering in 1939. After their marriage Herbert and Gwen Lange worked the Brookland Farm (as Alfred Lange, then a widower, had retired to Albany to live with his daughter). However, by 1945 it became apparent that rising salt made a portion of the farm, including the homestead block unviable.

Wrayton Farm had been offered for sale by Herbert Gamble and after Herbert Lange purchase Wrayton in 1946, the Brookland's Locations, were purchased by Ray Newbold and Sons. On the death of Mr. and Mrs Ray Newbold their eldest son, Vern Newbold, continued working the Greendale and Brookland properties.

Herbert and Gwen Lange moved their growing family of 3 daughters to Wrayton on 24th February 1947. It would appear from his diary that he continued to have access to Brookland for a number of years, as his 1947 annual returns report stated Wrayton, 23 acres hay, 215 acres grain; Brookland 176 acre. Stock was moved between the two properties for a number of years, as a number of the Wrayton property paddocks were unsuitable to support stock, particularly Location 11754.

The 115 acres were totally overgrown with re-growth poisonous shrubs. Herbert Lange gradually dismantled many of Brookland's sheds, the weather-board garage, the grating from the shearing shed was salvaged, also an outbuilding shed and wash-house and relocated them to Wrayton. These two outbuildings were again moved to the site of the new house, to house the 32volt lighting plant engine and batteries. The large hay shed attached to the chaff room was constructed from iron cladding and timber he salvaged from Brookland. The house at Brookland was also dismantled, the bricks carefully cleaned and stored at Wrayton and later used in the construction of the veranda and sleepout at the new house built in 1951 -52. All this dismantling was done over a number of years and it was not until 1950 when he finally dismantled the weather-board barn complete with its tree trunk studs and rebuilt it at Wrayton. *The barn studs just happened to be the same height as a tennis net and I remember spending hours hitting a tennis ball against the barn wall. Hitting the ball too low or into the net height was penalized by having to climb under the barn to retrieve the ball. Sadly, all these workouts did not make me an accomplished tennis player, as I was no more than "gun-fodder" for the champions.*

Clearing the fence lines, repairing fences and poison picking appeared to be the priority for him those first years, as there were many references in his diary to this task. This clarifies the need to the agistment of stock at Brookland.

Wrayton Farm connection with the 1909 - 1914 Railway Line

The connection of Wrayton Farm to the Narrogin -Wickepin Railway Line is the original line first skirting Wrayton's Location 11402 then turning to run through the farm, passing only metres from William Swinbank's Homestead on Location 1562 and exiting on the NW corner of Yarling Reserve It then proceeded to the townsite of Wickepin. When the line was deviated in 1914 the railway line reserve Location 12671 became part of Wrayton.

Prior to this, the line trans versed the East Narrogin district properties of the Lange's German Settlement. Properties of Carl Edward Lange Lilydale, Fredrick William Lange Sen. Lanesville, later renamed Melrose, Alfred Edward Lange Brookland, and lastly the property of Fredrick William Lange Jun. Greendale, which shared the boundaries of Wrayton. The Railway siding to service this area was built on land purchased from the Lanesville property. (*See page 14*) This siding was named Wardering then later re-named Ockley.

Narrogin Wickepin Railway Line

With the rapid development of farming properties in the East Narrogin and Wickepin Road Boards, and because of the distance to cart their produce to Narrogin or Cuballing by road, the nearest rail head, it quickly became apparent that there was a need of a railway service. However, three alternative routes were put forward with each group passionately defending their chosen circuits.

Narrogin- Wickepin Spur-line League

During a visit to inspect the districts farming progress by the Minister of Lands and Agriculture Mr N.J. Moore on January 12th 1906, landowners from the Narrogin- Wickepin Spur-line League first began petitioning the Government for a rail way line to service the Wickepin area.

Wickepin Farmers Spur-line League. Cuballing route

Despite vigorous petitioning by farmers to the North-West of Wickepin town-site for the spur-line to commence from Cuballing to Wickepin and after three years' battling against political aspirants (*opponents*) of Narrogin it became clear that the spur -line beginning from Cuballing would not go ahead.

At a 1907 meeting of the League Mr. T. Pauley, chairman, thanked the committee who had petitioned so hard.

Western Mail 27th July 1907

The East Narrogin Lakes Progress Association

Deputations for a deviation of route were presented to the Premier by the East Narrogin Lakes Progress Association.

The Premier response. [Edited Text]

This deputation had waited until the survey had been completed, plans submitted, and the Bill passed by Parliament. To consider their suggestion now would mean delay in the building of the line. It would interfere with the calling for tenders.

The Government had arrived at the conclusion that to extend the line from Narrogin 'would be in the best interests of the people' the line will serve the 160,000 acres of Crown lands which were being subdivided at the present time. While they were anxious that the line should serve as many of the settlers in the district as possible, they were particularly anxious that that land should be served by the railway. If, however they could show that they had justification for asking for another line to serve their particular district it would be considered.

Narrogin- Wickepin Spur-line League

Narrogin Observer Sat 2 Feb 1907

The Wickepin Railway.

In spite of ill-advised opposition to the proposed route of the Wickepin Spur line we are pleased to announce that the Premier has defiantly confirmed that the line is to be constructed from Narrogin. On the 20th of December 1907 an Act (No. 26 of 1907) to authorise the construction of a Railway from Narrogin to Wickepin was passed, surveyed, and a Description of Line of Railway was published.

"Commencing at a point in or near Narrogin Townsite on the Great Southern Railway and proceeding thence in a generally Easterly direction for about 7 and ½ miles; thence in a generally North-Easterly direction for about 22 miles and terminating at a point in or near the Western boundary of Williams Location 4914 Total length about 29½ miles.

In order to carry out the wishes of the Government to construct a railway in agricultural areas as cheaply as possible, lines were built with 45 lb rail sections which practically followed the surface of the ground with, earth ballasting, half round timber sleepers, providing the bare minimum station facilities. The sleepers were cut from the Eucalyptus Wandoo. The wood of this species is extremely dense and is used for a range of

heavy duty construction purposes, including the original railway sleepers of the Narrogin -Wickepin line. These days the wood is not available, as the wandoo forests are preserved.

Appreciation must be recorded to Jeff Austin of Rail Heritage W.A. for the following information:

The original railway from Narrogin-Wickepin was designed, surveyed by the Public Works Dept. They called for tenders for the construction and this was awarded to Messrs Rennie & Hill on 4th May 1908. Their contract price was 17,864- Pounds 15-shillings 5 pence. This included the earthworks, tracklaying, bridges, buildings, sleepers and labour. The Government paid for the rails and fastenings, design, survey & drawings and land resumption The line was 42.8km long and included steep grades of 1in40. The steel rails were 45lbs per yard. The contractors commenced, almost immediately hiring locomotives from the government for the haulage of materials and ballasting. The completed line was opened by the minister for Works Mr Gregory at Yarling (Wickepin) on 15th February 1909. The final cost was 37,829- Pounds 2shillings-5pence.

This line was intended as a light agricultural branch line and hence the steep grades and light rail. By 1914 when the railway had been extended to Corrigin and Merredin, this section required urgent attention- as described by the Commissioner for Railways in 1914 WAGR Annual Report

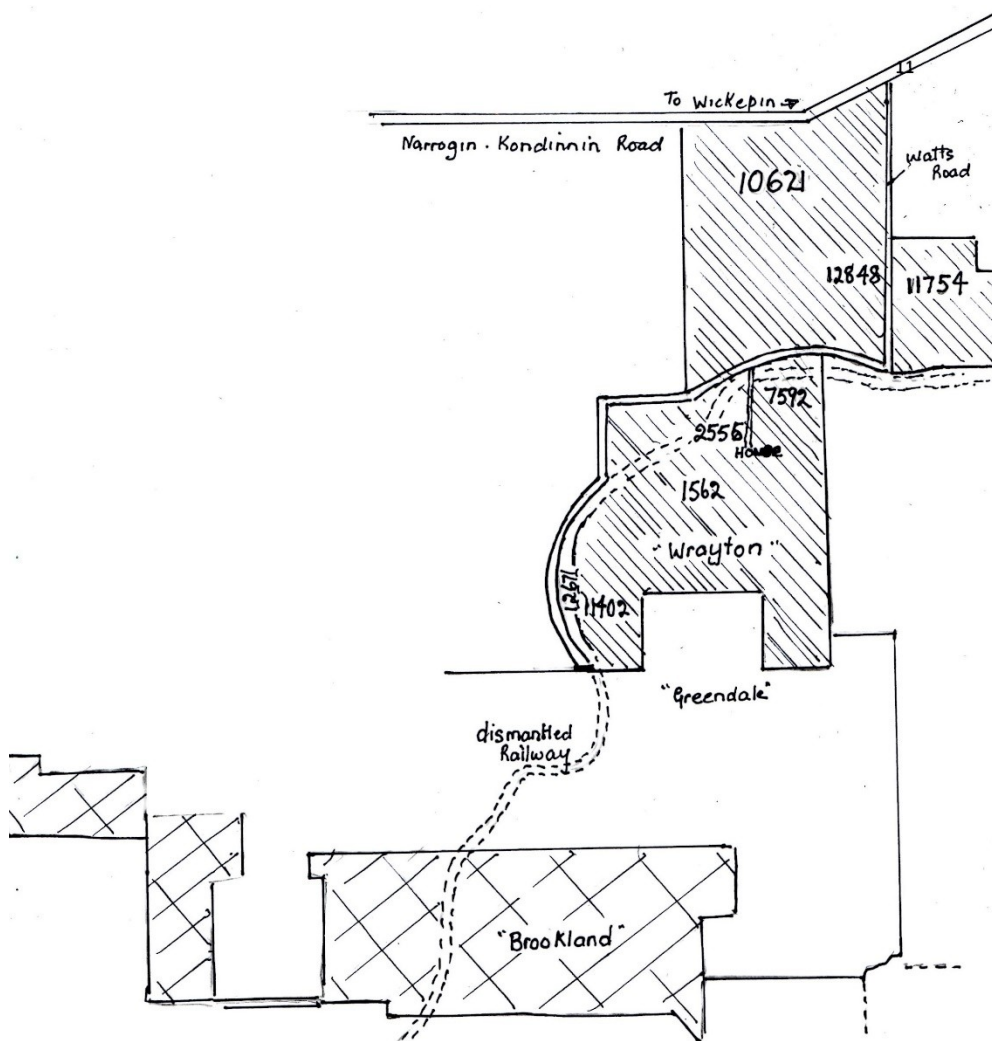
Narrogin-Wickepin Section

There is one work of such importance as to demand special reference, i.e. the re-laying, regrading and partial re-location of the section between Narrogin and Wickepin. This line, which was originally constructed as a light agricultural railway, now forms part of the important loop connecting the Eastern Goldfields with the Great Southern and South Western railways. When the construction of the Wickepin- Merredin section was decided upon it was necessarily specified that it should be built on main line standards. In order, therefore, that the value of the loop may be utilised to its full and proper extent, it is necessary that the gap of line between Narrogin and Wickepin be realised to a similar standard i.e. 60 lb rails, larger sleepers, ruling grade of 1in 80, sharpest curve of 15 chains radius and fully ballasted. Heavy rails for this purpose were imported some time ago.... Its cost, as far as can be judged in present circumstances, will amount to about 80,000 pounds.

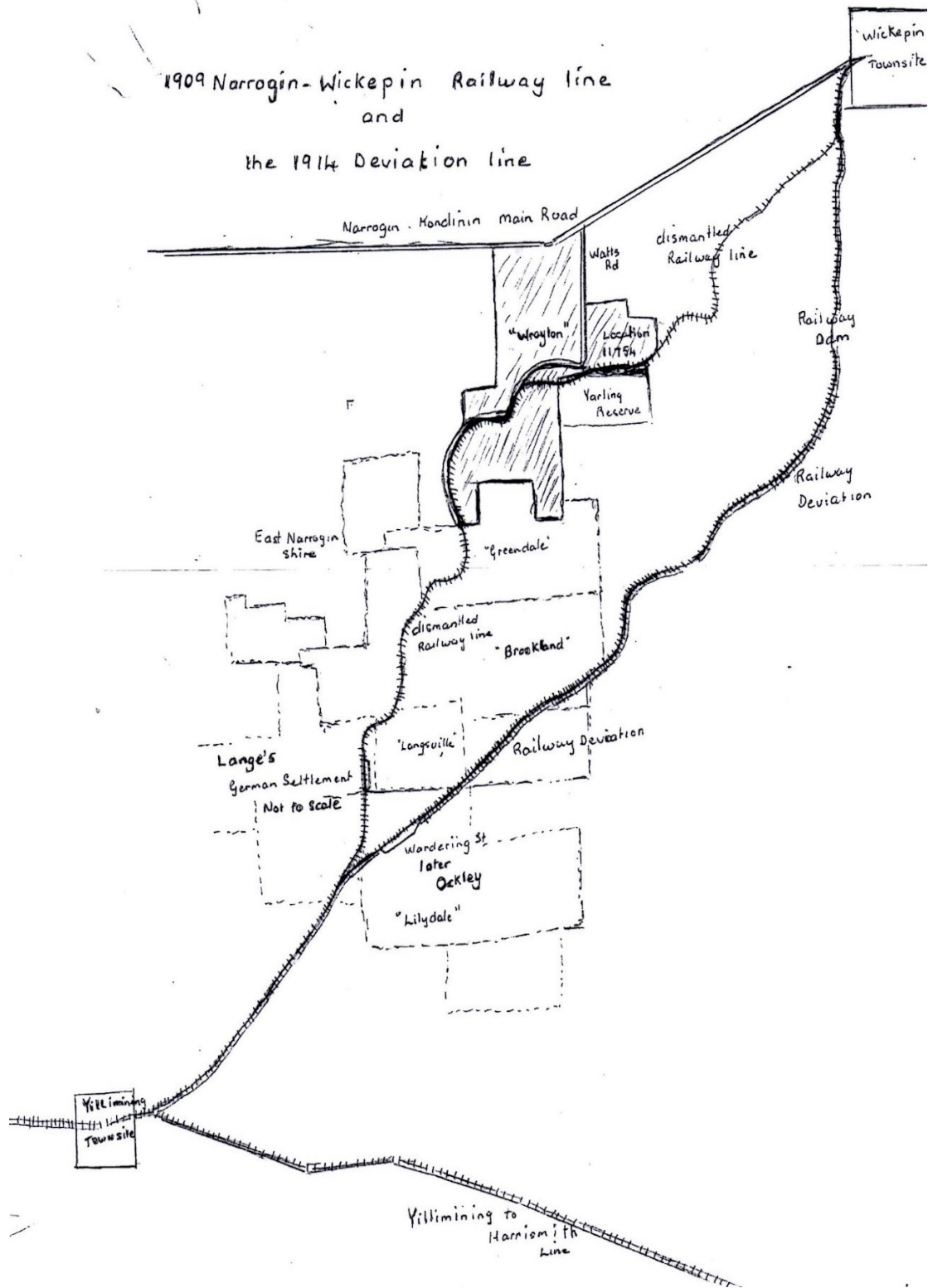
The design and construction work commenced in September 1914 and continued through 1915. There were three deviations of the existing line [however the section involving Wrayton Farm was the Wardering deviation]

Wardering deviation- this commenced just to the south of Wardering siding and was re-aligned 13.7 km towards Wickepin, on easier grades and curves. Wardering siding was removed and placed nearby on the new route and renamed Ockley in 1938. [the reason being the similarity of the name Wandering Shire to Wardering]. The deviation was completed on 23rd December 1915. These 60lb rails are still in place today. The 45lb rails, sleepers and fastenings from the old line were recovered and used elsewhere on the WAGR system.

Sections of formation of the original Narrogin Wickepin line were still visible on Wrayton Farm in the 1950s when the property was then owned by Herbert Lange. A small wooden culvert could be seen in the Yarling Reserve.



Mr Austin kindly supplied a mud map of the line however as I had a survey map and desired to show Wrayton and the Lange Settlement of that era I have redrawn the map to show these properties. n.b. the Lange properties are not to scale.



Map hand drawn by Rhonda Bartlett from survey location map.

Railway snippets of historical interest

Wickepin Railway Facilities. Sat 26th November 1910 Wickepin Argus [Edited Text]

The inadequacy of the railway facilities at Wickepin is becoming more pronounced than ever and a longer ramp is urgently required. We understand an officer will be placed on constant charge on the first of December but more than this is wanted for instance, no privies for the use of the travelling public are anywhere. True, *the convenient tree* is adjacent, but decency is a natural attribute of Wickepin folk and those who visit here. ---we pause in astonishment at the shameful manner in which the people of the country districts are treated.

Narrogin Observer Sat 20th Feb 1909

Great excitement prevailed all along the Narrogin-Wickepin railway line when the first load of produce was hauled into Narrogin by the engine on the 12th February. It was indeed a splendid sight to see the well-filled trucks leaving the different sidings along the line: in fact, there was such a quantity of stuff awaiting haulage that the engine had to return for a second load, and then again on the 15th as the train steamed out of the Lanesville siding there were no less than 19 well-filled trucks and vans, so that there was little hope on that date of easing the accumulation of wheat, bark, etc., at Crooked Pool and Hamming sidings.

On Thursday at the Langsvile siding, there were no less than 10 16-ton vans and wagons and 4 ordinary trucks loaded to the limit with chaff, wheat, bark, etc. Despite the Department's effort to supply sufficient trucks, large quantities of produce are arriving at this latter siding daily and is being dumped down all over the place awaiting a farther supply of trucks.

No doubt in the future the Narrogin-Wickepin line will prove one of the very best paying spur lines in the State.

[Note Lanesville siding incorrectly named in the Narrogin Observer's article was Wardering, later re-named Ockley, serviced many surrounding farmers including Mr. Swinbank of Wrayton.]

Narrogin Observer March 1911 page 5
[Edited text]

The speed at which the Narrogin- Wickepin train travels is astounding. Leaving Narrogin at 5.30 am on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, the train, driven at this frantic pace sometimes covers the distance to Wickepin in three hours. *(the editor concluded)* The Railway Department should be more careful; such speed is reckless.

Wickepin Notes. Narrogin Observer Saturday 18th March 1911

The number of agricultural implements of various kinds unloaded at the Wickepin station during the past three months has staggered even the Station Master. ; "Why !" said that gentleman, "the yards are more like Claremont at show time than a country siding."
 Which goes to prove that Wickepin has a grand future.

Great Southern Leader Friday 20th March 1911

UNSIGHTLY.

The work of erecting the 25.000 gallon tank on a 40 ft. stand in the station yard is now nearing completion. It is a great pity the Railway Department could not have found a more suitable spot for it. Situated where it is, it is an unsightly object.

Great Southern Leader Friday 24th April 1914

WATER SCHEME.

The water tower in the station yard has now been completed, and the plumbers are now engaged in erecting the 25,000gallon tank which is to supply both the railway and domestic requirements of the town. The tower, which is a most substantial looking structure 40ft. in height, provides quite a landmark in the town, and should prove a very suitable and convenient place to affix the town clock and fire bell in time to come.

Great Southern Leader Friday 19th June 1914



Railway Tank: Slow progress is being made towards erecting the tank on the stand in the station yard. A gang of men have been working on it for some considerable time past.

September 1979 the Railway Tank a land mark in Wickepin for 65 years, was demolished much to the disappointment of Wickepin residents as it was only a week before the Back to Wickepin Celebrations for the W.A.150th Year, WAY79

The Narrogin, Wickepin to Merredin loop line has been downgraded to a tier 3 line and no longer operates

Personal comments.

Wrayton through the eyes of a small child

My first recollections and most lasting memory of Wrayton, would have been the three cedar pines by the gate near the sheep yards, growing tall and majestic, with branches reaching out and touching the ground.

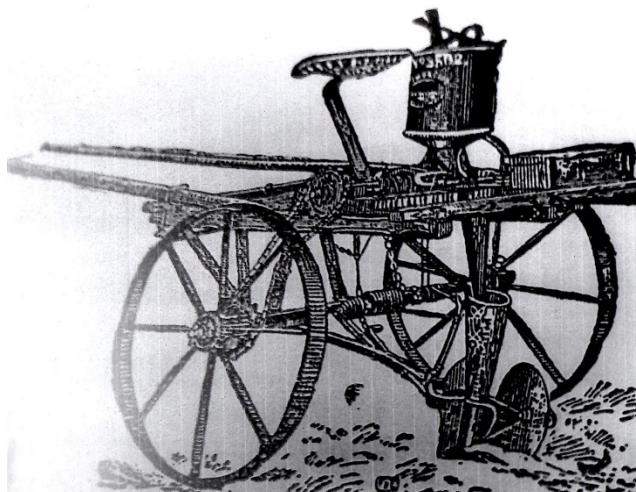
Through the lower branches a tangle of wild oats and dry grasses grew. Numerous well-worn rabbit runs, parted the grass where many rabbits were seen running for cover. It was the first time I had seen the farm. It would appear from father's diary, that, although he purchased the property in early 1946, he did not move the family to Wrayton until February 24th 1947. That day the family had driven from the Farm "Brookland" East Narrogin, through the property Greendale, then owned by Ray Newbold arriving at the south side of the homestead. Daily entries in his diary revealed that seasonal farm work on both Wrayton and Brookland including seasonal work and shearing contracts with surrounding farmers, there had been little time to make the Wrayton house liveable before this date.



The W's of Wrayton

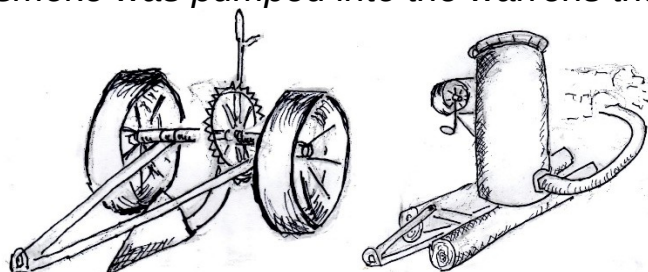
The Warskly Wabbits of Wayton,
W'an for cover when we a'wived.
Their little white tails a'wavin',
Without wis'ing us goodbye.

Only a small child could think of "Wabbits" as "Warskly", so please dear reader, allow me some "fairy tale fantasy" in this narrative, because mother was also a great one for telling us imaginary stories. The one I recall most was about when she was helping harvesting wheat and how she saw a group of mice playing cricket using a grain of wheat as the cricket ball, three stalks as the wickets, a tiny bat they had carved from a tree branch. Describing in detail each bowling delivery and runs they made. It is a pity she never had the opportunity to publish her stories. Mother always had an inclination towards preforming arts, but except for the CWA drama evenings, there were little opportunities in a small country town.



However, back to the rabbit problem. In respect to the landowners of the 1940's -1950's, and now through the eyes of an adult, I must admit the rabbit plague of those times was, a farmer's number one problem, and at its height in 1946, when father took over Wrayton. His diary made many references to his efforts to eradicate them by trapping, fumigating, warren ripping and poisoning. Farmers of the Wickepin district obviously share this equipment as I only remember the poison cart being part of Wrayton's plant.

The cart, being light, could be drawn by "Bess", the remaining Australian Stock Horse who lived out her life on the farm. The small tank was filled with a mixture of bran and pollard and a poison phosphorus as the cart moved it would cut a furrow and small moist pellets would be deposited at regular intervals. The warren ripper, pulled by a tractor was used to destroy warrens in open land, while the fumigator could be used in rocky outcrops. A fire was lit in the tank using charcoal and the resulting smoke was pumped into the warrens that were then sealed off with soil.



When old enough I helped Mother with setting the traps. One night I recall vividly, we were checking traps in the jam tree thicket just up from the house, and found a very angry race-horse goanna caught by its front toe, I was holding the lantern as Mother using a long stick managed to release him. At that very moment, the whole sky lit up and without thinking I ran, with the lantern, trying to get out of the thicket to see what had caused this flash of light, leaving Mother in the dark, with this now free enraged goanna, rabbit holes all around her that she could have easily fallen into, calling me for every-thing she could think of. It must have been a falling meteorite, but the memory of its brightness stays with me to this day

The original house at Wrayton.

*The four-room house was surrounded by an overgrown garden filled with plants of many origins, including a [rotten meat lily] *Dracuncrilus Vulgaris* which caused much interest to us when it flowered for the first time. A climbing grape vine and flowering creepers almost covered the wattle and daub walls and a local stone inglenook fire place stood in the parlour.*

Probably the most memorable room was the kitchen, the inside wall was lined with hessian and it became a regular task to first glue and paper over any hole in the hessian and paint the lining with white wash. In June 1947 a lean-to was added to the rear of the house adding a third bedroom, a bathroom and a utility area, which housed the kerosene refrigerator, large food safe and a wooden wall telephone.

The telephone was a party line one, sharing with two neighbours. I remember the number for Wrayton was 8D, and one would know the call was for us, when the phone rang the code, long-short-long – long-short-long etc.

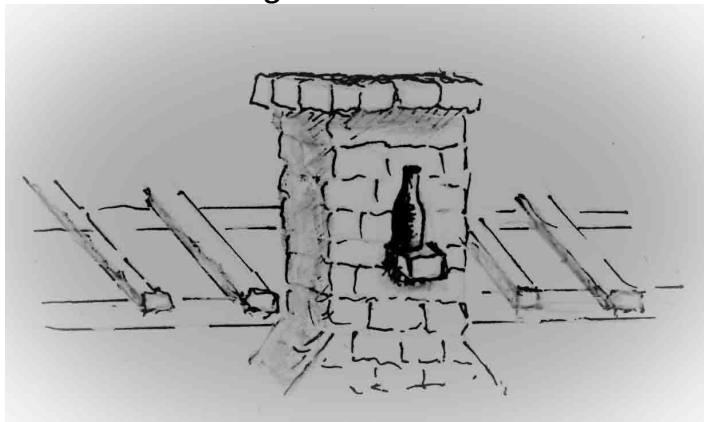
There was no running water to the house. Water was collected from an outside rain water tank in an enamel bucket. Electricity was not available at first however a 32-volt plant was installed on the 30th April 1951. House lights were turned on by pulling a cord which hung from the ceiling. The luxury of owning an electric washing machine for the first time was one Mother valued.

The large 3-acre orchard, depleted somewhat by probably the rabbit plague of that time and termite attack, held many hours of adventure for us girls, with its huge fig tree and two large mulberry trees to climb and feast on its fruits. Several plum trees, three pear trees, a large apple tree and an avenue of grape vines had survived. Abundant almond trees grew around the farm sheds. A parkland of many pines and ornamental trees surrounded the homestead block, a legacy of William Swinbank's vision for a future house

The Wandering Dunny from Wardering Brookland a play on words!

One amusing entry 10th March 1947 " Pulled down and brought up the Lav." This pan lavatory, an interesting construction, had two seats. An adult size seat with a child height and size seat side by side. Later to be relocated to service the new house built in 1951-1952 and eventually demolished when a septic- system was installed in the house in 1967

The **new house 1951- 1952 built by S.W.**
Hawkes & Sons Narrogin. After 4
 to years a new house was to be built much
 the pleasure of Mother who watches the
 progress of construction with the
 dedication of a hen to her chickens. One
 the dispute she had with the brick-layer over
 lounge chimney was that it was not upright,
 even proving her point. However, the builder decided to play
 a joke at her expense, while building the kitchen stove fireplace
 chimney, he extended one brick and cemented an empty beer bottle to
 the back. Inviting her to come and see if this chimney was "upright".



The joke was received in good humour and no damage was done as the brick was sawn off before the chimney was cement rendered.

Another event that totally bemused her, the carpenter had left the nail from his string line in a veranda post and the painter when painting the house just painted over the protruding nail when she protested that it should be removed. His reply "I'm the painter, that's the carpenter's job"!

However, the incident most talked about by the family for years was the time father was trying to catch the ram with fly blown horns, eventually isolating him in the new house yard. Unfortunately, in the ram's fight for

freedom he chose of all places, the door opening, of the partly constructed house smashing into wall panels of the kitchen and bathroom. Blood, from the rams damaged horns and the smashed wall panels made the building look like a homicide scene and a number of wall panels consequently needed replacing.

Fathers diary recorded that in December 1950 he carted rocks and sand ready for the veranda foundations. A start on the jarrah timber construction was made in 1951. The bricks brought up from Brookland were used in the chimneys, veranda and sleepout. From entries in his diary it was apparent that father was involved with some of the construction and had to cart most of the building materials, tiles etc,

His neighbour, Mr Hogben, carted the asbestos wall cladding, the weatherboard shed and wash-house, originally from Brookland, was relocated again from the old house, the shed, to house the 32volt lighting plant. Mr Binns, an electrician, then wired the new house in June 1952. Much later the floorboard from the old original house were dismantled and used as the floor of the sleepout. This gave the new house a total of 5 bedrooms, much needed, as by now the family had increased with the addition of another daughter, with the youngest daughter born later in 1956.

Probably the biggest disappointment would have been the large water tank constructed at the house. Panels of iron sheets were bolted together and a concrete floor was poured. It leaked and although father tried unsuccessfully to line it with a hot tar coat eventually the tank was turned into a storage shed.

A water supply for her beloved garden was Mother's greatest wish. I have lost count of how many times she spent with a tiny hand auger trying to find an underground fresh water stream near the house, always ending in tears when she struck rock. She appeared to have the skill to divine for water with a length of bent wire. Firmly believing that she could do the same for gold, because of the rumours that the first owner had not believed in banks and had buried a forgotten stash of gold sovereigns somewhere on the farm.

Eventually, when finance permitted, a large concrete tank was established on a high point up from the house and kept full from a fresh water well in location 10621, about two miles from the house. Her garden flourished, I have never seen her so happy, growing roses, flag irises and chrysanthemums to name a few of her favourites.

Entering in the Wickepin and Narrogin Agricultural and flower shows. Her one ambition, which she achieved before her untimely death on the 30th November 1969 age only 54 was to win a crystal bowl for each of her five daughters.

To my eyes they worked hard

To father, the farm was his whole life, very seldom going on holiday, in fact, Mother used to joke that he believed if he did go away, "He half expected the farm would just disappear and be a big hole in the ground when he got back. Always breathing a sigh of relief as he rounded the bend and saw it was still there"!

"Picking stones today!" was a constant diary entry. As a young child, I remember his hands, his fingers cracked and sore from stone picking, totally wrapped in lengths of Elastoplast strapping tape, we used to call them his "dollies".

In retrospect, as now acknowledged as an adult, but a consequence lost on a child, my parents worked very hard in their earlier years. Father battling to recover from the debt to buy out his sister and brother's share of the Brookland farm. Mother doing the work of a man. Driving the tractor for hay cutting and harvesting when farm machinery needed two people to operate.

Many stories have been related to me by mother of those times. The time when she needed to build a type of cubby house from newly cut sheaf hay for her three eldest, then tiny toddlers, while driving the tractor, as father worked the binder, and pray all the way around the next cut that we would be still there when they got back. Milking at least 14 cows by hand and sending cream to the Great Southern Butter Co. in Narrogin, packing and sending eggs to the Narrogin Egg Market, often while father was away shearing to supplement the farm income. And then after putting us to bed at night having to go around the rabbit traps. Rabbit skins were another source of income for them in those earlier days. The rabbit carcasses never went to waste as there was always a recycled 4-gallon kerosene tin on a camp- fire down by the sheds where they were boiled up to fed to the pigs, a good source of protein (?) but discontinued when the Myxomatosis virus eventually reached this area.

However probably the most amusing story mother happily related was the first time she was to take a shift ploughing "Keep the tractors front

wheel in the furrow” were the instructions. Determined to make a good impression, she did not take her eye off the furrow, eventually reaching the corner of the paddock and glanced back, only to find that the plough had unhitched its-self at the starting point.

She made a hastily return with the tractor, only to find father, totally speechless, hands on hips, his usual stance when he was annoyed, and one we children also quickly learnt to interpret.

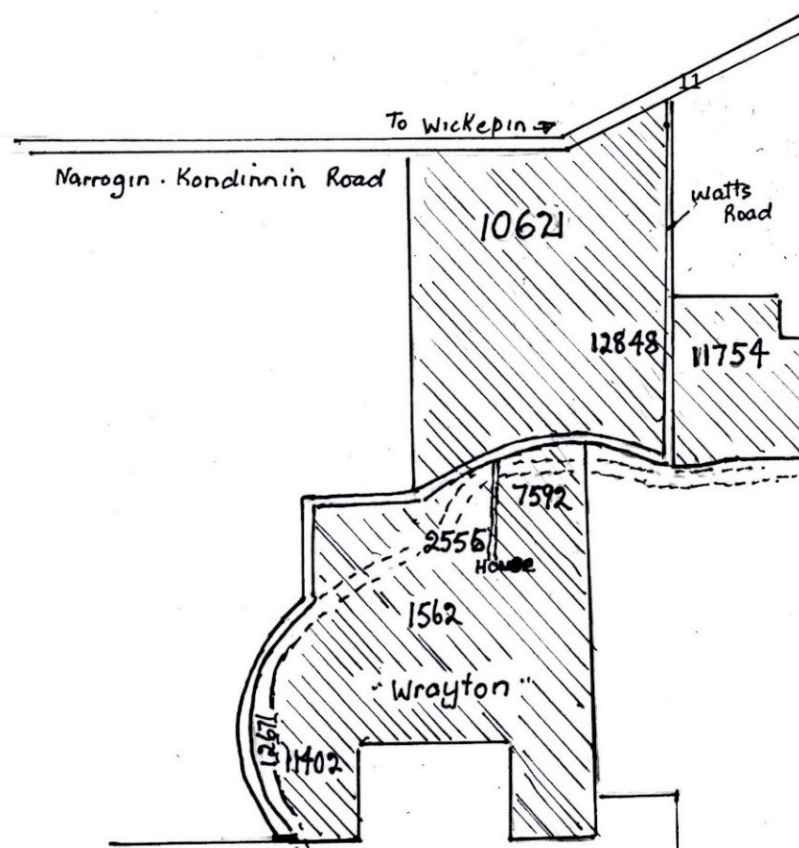
In July 1950 mother channelled her interest in establishing a Jersey Stud, purchasing the matriarch cow of her stud “Sue” from Mr and Mrs Mervyn Stott. Wickepin.

A two-plant milking machine was purchased which was a revelation after years of hand milking, however the milk still needed to be separated by hand turned separator, this operation always created a thick froth on the milk. The froth and some milk were always put in a large dish for the shed cats and they used to tunnel into the froth almost disappearing from sight to get to the milk. The Narrogin butter factory closed in 1952. Therefore, having to send the cream to the Albany factory resulted in the cream not arriving as fresh and was sometimes was disappointingly downgraded. However, she “soldiered on” and had developed a good milking herd. However, after her death the stud was disbanded as father did not have the same interest in cattle.

There was always just another patch of land to clear! It seemed to me that father was always carving out a few more acres by clearing and burning pockets of timber. More roots to pick- more stones to pick!

For years a deep dry creek ran through location 12848. Gouged by winter rains. I remember walking in it as a child and in places it was above my head. This creek cut that paddock in two. When the idea of contouring land to prevent washaways, the creek was filled in and contours were formed in August 1960. The last time I saw this paddock [more than 55 years later] the contours had performed very well, there is no washaway there at all.

In May 1961 he hired a contractor to bulldoze the remaining railway line formation in Location 11402 it was a large elongated mound which was cutting that paddock in two.



School Bus Days

Although Wrayton was only 5 miles from the town of Wickepin there was no school bus servicing that area, so the two eldest girls were boarded in Wickepin with the Cutler family. In 1949 the school bus, owned by Mr Delf Ahrens, route was extended to include properties along the main Narrogin- Kondinin road, picking up Gordon Hogben and my eldest sister and myself. At first the daily bus trip was very harsh, we had to walk the two miles to the bus stop and were first on and last off. The round trip being close to an hour and a half, which took in farming families north of the main road. Eventually with the help of letters by the family doctor Dr Jacobs the route was changed to a weekly timetable of first on first off; last on last off; by then the bus also travelled up Watts Road cutting off over a mile of walking to the bus stop.

Location 11754.Wrayton.

When father purchased Wrayton in 1946 a reference in the advertisement was 115 acres poison. This paddock on the east side of Watts road had the appearance of being cleared once but had been left with regrowth of mainly York-road and Box poison. Thick, tall and gnarled bushes covered the whole location. With so many other farm maintenance tasks this block was left untouched until 1957 when I made the decision to clear it. What a sight it must have been, me a fifteen-year-old with just a mattock in hand, shrub growth over my head,

grubbing away. Within a few days I could see the futility of the task. Well! Father after humouring me at first, took pity and with mechanical help and hard work we set about clearing this location. It took several years to complete.

The whole family became involved in this project. even "Old Charleston" the one remaining work horse was hitched up to the farm cart to help haul scrubs and roots to the fires. He was, a cunning old veteran, who would not be led to the fires, so Charleston, wearing "blinkers", the cart had to be manoeuvred backwards if we did not want to carry the load a distance to the fires.



It was then several more years before this paddock could be used to graze stock due to the constant regrowth of new seedling poison plants. On the North side of this location was a surveyed road reserve to lead to a rifle range, however the abandoned railway line reserve on the south side proved an easier alternative road. This becoming known as Normans Road in later years.

It took a number of years of constant lobbying the Government to grant this northern side road reserve as part of location 11754

Fathers main argument, the area was overrun with rabbit warren and poison shrubs spilling seed onto the adjoining land.

There was an attempt to establish a rifle range in 1917 for the local 10th Light Horse Brigade members to train, however I can find no record of its whereabouts. The Rifle Range that I remember, was established on the government resumed land of location 12513 in 1943, eventually closed in 1957. It was about this time that Ron Norman took up several locations in that area, on land adjoining Wrayton, clearing the land which until then had remained in its natural state and establishing a farm.

1974-1980

On the 4th of June 1974, after signing the farm over to his fourth daughter Herbert Lange retired from Wrayton to live in Wickepin. His daily diary about Wrayton and his life he so diligently recorded for 40 years stopped on that day, therefore, with no diary reference a chapter on these years of June 1974 to August 1980 is one that cannot be written.

Herbert Lange died 6th August 1980.

Despite his best intentions of keeping Wrayton in the family, the farm was sold by December 1980 to Doug Martin and son, except for the location 11754

The Martin family, are well-established pioneer farmers from the Malyalling area have retained the Wrayton's farm name, and have owned and farmed the remaining property longer than any previous owner.

Location 11754 a 115-acre paddock was held by a family member until it was sold in 2014 to John C Smith.

Post-script: It saddens me to know that location 11754 is not part of Wrayton nowadays, particularly remembering the hours of labour put in to restore it to viable farming land. However, the remaining Wrayton property is well managed and hopefully will remain in the Martin Family for many generations.

