

## James Waddell. 1891-1976

James (Jimmy) Waddell was born in Forfar, Scotland on 2nd October, 1891, ( in the grounds of Glamis Castle). His mother died when he was very young and though his father married again, he was brought up by his grandmother, who was a very strict disciplinarian, and frugal Scottish lady. At the age of 12 years, then the official leaving age, in spite of receiving a book prize for being Dux of his school, he became indentured as an apprentice grocer, much against the family's wishes as the rest of the family always worked in the linen mills.

It was quite an extensive training scheme. All stock was delivered in bulk and had to be broken up, weighed and repackaged. The skill of making a 'paper cone' s for small quantities was taught. The apprenticeship was completed at 19. Jim and a mate, Jim Lumsden(butcher) and Tom Elder(baker) decided to seek employment overseas. They chose Canada, but could not get in, so selected Australia with paid fares not as assisted migrants. In 1910 they departed. Leaving his family was so traumatic, particularly his grandmother, it haunted him to his final days where he reverted to his broad Scottish accent, when reminiscing.

They sailed on the S.S. "Thermistocles" with all their savings. Unfortunately Jim's was stolen on board containing over 20 sovereigns, which would have set him up in Australia (Maleny) at the time. Jim Lumsden bought a property at Bald Knob, near the old Bald Knob School of Arts. Jim was employed at Gay's farm (Collards) felling pine. Without any money he had to work in his best suit and hat.

Jim met Elsie Annie Rees, Welsh originally, but spent most of her time in London. She came out to visit her Uncle and Aunt, Henry Oliver Rees, after whom Reesville is named. Elsie's brother Reginald John Rees, was a builder and helped build the Maleny Baptist Church and "Allawah" guest house. (where co-op store is) Reg enlisted in the 9th Batt, 1st AIF, and died of wounds in France, in August 1916. Jim and Elsie married in 1915.

In 1917 Jim worked as a grocer for A. M. Hunt and Coy. They bought a small farm on Mountain View Rd, west of Wood's farm. The A.M. Hunt and Co. occupied the building now known as Boxsells. Jim used to ride around the various farms collecting orders which were later delivered by a horse drawn cream truck (it doubled as a hearse as required).



After several years the business was purchased by Frank Hirst and Bob Myers, who traded under Myers and Hirst. Country stores were really general stores in those days, and traded in everything - groceries, drapery, hardware, medicines (no chemist shop), building materials, paints and later, car parts. Much later whilst rummaging around in the basement, Vic found coffin handles and dinner plates.

In 1923, the family moved to a house in Maple st., two houses up from Tesch park. I was about this time, that Elsie's father,

**Edgar John Rees**, moved out from England. He was a widower, Mary Ann Rees died in April 1918. The post war years were extremely difficult in England.

1924 Jim & Elsie moved into a new house in Palm St. (later owned by Percy Freeman) Jim opened his own store trading as JAS WADDELL, on the site of the present Maleny Kitchen.

In the early 1920s, motor vehicles began to arrive in Maleny, and in about 1926 Jim bought a 1919 Ford Ute (45 pounds). It was usually difficult to start each morning. Besides priming the plug hole it was necessary to jack up one back wheel until the motor fired. Another idiosyncrasy was to maintain a left hand turn even after the turn was completed.

The family moved again, to a larger house in Tamarind St (Jack Fritz's), when Elsie's youngest brother **Edward Douglas** arrived to join the family. Only one was left in England, **Oliver Edgar**, a London policeman. He died in the early years of WW11.



Edgar John Rees



Jim Waddell joined Myers and Hirst Ltd. as a third partner, but the name was not changed. It didn't turn out to be a very amicable arrangement. Mr. Hirst sold his share provided Jim move houses down the road in Tamarind St (?) on 5 acres. ( This home was bought in later years, by David & Jan Wilson). Myers and Waddell Pty. Ltd. was born.

Good times were not to last for ever, and the country was in the grip of the 'Great Depression'. Unemployment was every

where. Vic had to leave school at Grade 6, ( even though his sisters attended Somerville House in Brisbane.)

As was the custom during the Depression, the ' man of the house ' collected a ration ticket from the police station on Fridays. This entitled the man, his wife and family to 30 shillings. (about \$3) rations for the week. The items he could buy were listed on the reverse side of the ticket. I remember the senior grocer 'bending the rules' and substituting something else eg., a reel of cotton (6 pence) or a tin of tobacco (2oz) 1 shilling 10 pence, or some other 'luxury' item.

The Depression eventually caught up with Myers and Waddell. Because of the antiquated accounting practice (for all businesses) of not chasing payment of bills for sometimes more than two months, the firm went into voluntary liquidation in about 1932. Bill Burnett purchased the building.

Jim reopened as Waddell's Economy Store. They expanded in 1937 by buying Noel Raddatz's store in Bulcock St, Caloundra, which specialised in fishing gear and hardware. Working hours were 12 hours a day for seven days. It was sometimes longer during the holiday periods. With war clouds developing over Europe, in 1939 the Waddell's made the agonising decision to sell Caloundra (unfortunately - Maleny was actually going ahead faster than Caloundra at this stage-

but it proved the wrong decision). Vic joined the RAAF at this time. At the end of the war he was appointed partner of the Maleny firm.

It was not until during the war that electricity came to Maleny. Trading was still on the old fashioned 30 day basis, no one would accept the 'new' cash payment for business. The so called wealthy farmers were very reluctant to pay their bills on time and some accounts were not followed up. With the credit squeeze of 1960/61, and the changes to the butter factory- the move from butter to casein, and fresh milk, then dropping dairying for macadamia nuts, avocados, the complexion of farming was changed.

In 1961, Waddells Economy Store closed its doors for the last time. Consequently Jim and Elsie moved to Moffatt Bch to a very modest fibro cottage, and Vic and his young family moved to Brisbane (with virtually the clothes on their back to start again).

**Jim** was a keen sportsman, interested in soccer and golf. He was very community minded, and supported the show society, (Maleny AIP & Society) and was made a life member, and served on business committees and progress associations, and the Presbyterian church Committee. During WW11 he served as Q.M. of the local Volunteer Defence Corp. He was a foundation member of the Rotary Club as was Vic, who during his time as president, opened the Mary Cairn Cross Park. Jim's greatest interests was Craft Freemasonry, being a member of Dunlop Lodge. NO 230 UGLQ. (now Maleny) the Grand Lodge recognised his services as Life Governor of the Aged Masons, Widows and Orphans Fund. He was Justice of the Peace, as was Vic and his son Graham. Jim worked at the Moffatt Beach post office for many years until his sight failed. In 1973 both he and Elsie moved to the Freemasons Home at Sandgate. Elsie passed away on 30th May, 1975. Jim never recovered from losing Elsie. His health failed further, and he was totally blind. He passed away 25th August, 1976 of a broken heart.

#### **Elsie Annie Waddell (nee Rees) 1885-1975.**

Elsie Annie Rees was born in Cheltenham, County of Gloucester, on 20th January, 1885, the eldest child of Edgar John and Mary Ann Rees. After a short schooling, she was apprenticed to a dressmaker. Her eldest brother Reginald John had earlier migrated to Australia, working as a builder in Maleny. Her uncle Henry Oliver Rees and family lived at Howells knob, now known as Reesville.

She met Jim through mutual friends, the Hunts. Elsie and Jim had three children, Vic, Eunice and Betty.

She worked long hours in the shop. She was also a hard worker within the community, with the Women's Progress Association, and an early member of the Country Women's association, and later assisting with scout stalls. She also lent a hand at the Hospital. She was a staunch worker of the patriotic fund and other wartime charities during WW11, and there was always a bed for some lonely serviceman or woman during the war who convalesced in Maleny.

Both she and Jim loved playing cards, eg., bridge, whist, canasta, or thirty one. Whatever was popular. She played golf for a time, and lawn bowls.

#### **Victor Norman Waddell. O.A.M. (1916-1994)**

Vic Waddell as born in Maleny, and joined the family store from primary school year 6, (as during the Depression years there were no local Secondary schools). In spite of this set back he never passed up a chance to advance his knowledge - in the R.A.A.F. he gained aircraft mechanical engineering skills, then externally, courses in business, advertising and graphic design work for the family business, and attended night classes at Tafe during the 1980's taking courses from writing to lathe work. As a youngster, Vic learnt the violin, and enjoyed playing rugby league but had to stop that when the game day was changed from Saturday to Sunday (his parents wouldn't allow him to play on a Sunday), so he joined the Scouts. Unfortunately it closed after two years because of the unavailability of leaders.

1936: he re-started the Maleny Scout Troop at the local school and became Scout Leader. A highlight during this period was a camp on the Obi Obi to introduce youngsters with proficiency credentials. He also joined the Dunlop(Maleny) Lodge.

1939: he joined the RAAF at the outbreak of WW2. Vic served for 6 years in various locations both in Australia and overseas; 13 sqdn ('The Devil's Brothers') in Darwin, 18 sqdn (Netherlands East Indies sqdn within the RAAF.)He was a fitter 2E Pine Creek, Gould Strip, Batchelor NT.,13,2,15,77 sqdn's. 5 EFTS, 12 EFTS, 60 TU survey flight.

1943: Married Doris Williams, who was in AWAS (army records at Warwick). They had three children over the years, now living in Brisbane and Eumundi. At the end of the war Vic re-joined the family business and re-activated the Maleny Scouts, introduced Cubs, and built a den.

1946: Secretary of Maleny RSL.

1947: Group Scoutmaster, (over the next 13 years "Emu", his woodcraft name, played a major role in Scouting on the Sunshine Coast), and with Freemasonry.

During the 1950's he was appointed Assistant Grand Superintendent in Freemasonry, Assistant District Commissioner in Scouting and Foundation Vice-President of Maleny Rotary Club.

1960: As President of Rotary, hosted the Governor, Sir Henry Abel Smith and opened Marycairnross Park in Maleny, bequeathed by the Thynne family.

1961: After 50 years the Waddell family's general stores (both in Maleny and Caloundra) closed due to financial problems. Vic and Doris lost their home but another door opened. Vic accepted a professional appointment as Field Commissioner for the Scout Association of Queensland, and the family moved to Brisbane. For 13 years he travelled by passenger and goods trains all over Queensland, from Thursday Island to the NSW border and west to Longreach and Mt. Isa and all in between, as a Scout trainer. He met with youth leaders, civic dignitaries, and community associations. Then for 3 years was given a car to use but missed the more relaxing train travel. Today these long distance trips are covered by aeroplane.

1964: Vic was Foundation Treasurer of Baden Powell Lodge and then spent 19 years as Secretary. (Then in 1986 was Worshipful Master as well as being a member of other lodges.)

1974: he was appointed Property and Administration officer for the Scouts Qld. which meant he could work in Brisbane, which he did until his retirement in 1980, but continued as a volunteer with the Scouts until his death.

He continued as Editor of "Queensland Scout" magazine and Lodge publications and Secretary of various RAAF associations. His "Old Timer" column in the 'Scout' magazine still continues. He was heavily involved with the publishing of books, "Thirteen Squadron Story" (RAAF history) and "In the Light of the Years" (Scout history in Queensland.) during his retirement.

One of his greatest contributions to the community was the establishment of the Baden Powell Scout Museum at Samford in Brisbane, in 1984. From 1982, he virtually solely set-up and managed what was considered the best scout museum in Australia, a 'living' testimony to his 67+years of service to Scouting. He was also President of the Aspley Scout Group at the time of his death.

Vic was recognized for Scouting with the



Vic & Doris Waddell with Granddaughter Rebekah 1987



Vic Waddell ,1989

Medal of Merit in 1960, in 1968 the Silver Acorn and later, bar to the Silver Acorn, and then the highest Scouting Award, the Silver Kangaroo in 1989.

1989: Doris passed away suddenly.

1992: He received the Medal of Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours for his service to scouting. He lived by the TOC H Maxim: "Service is the price we pay for our place on this Earth".

1994: Vic passed away from a short illness, never really recovering from his wife's death.

**Betty Waddell** married Reg Hardie (an Army officer, prisoner in Changi during the war) who was Mines Inspector for Queensland, had four children.

**Eunice Waddell** married Walter 'Chum' Rigby, who was in charge of Repatriation (Public Service Dept) for Australia, had three children.

### **Edgar John Rees.**

He was married to Hannah. He may have moved from Pontypridd, an industrial town near Caerleon, Wales. He was known to close friends as Ted, but to most people in Maleny as 'Dad Rees'. During the First World War 1, he served with the London Special Police and stationed at Woolwich Arsenal. He recounted experiences of when the German Zeppelins came over and when the first one was shot down. He was a groom by trade and served in seven stables, one of which was Gilbey's (of gin fame). He was also a laundryman, and when he came to Maleny took a job as wardsman at the hospital.

He enjoyed a pint or two, and was quite a character from all accounts. He loved playing cards and also crib, and also listening to the cricket on the radio during his last few years when the family got their first wireless. Ted was a very staunch church goer. He passed away in 1933.



Regional John Rees

### **Reginald John Rees.**

He arrived in Australia before Elsie, and was a builder. Two of his jobs were in the Maleny Baptist Church and 'Allawah' guest house now the Co-Op store. He enlisted in the AIF and was severely wounded in the back and died of these injuries on 20th August, 1916. He was interred at Becourt Military cemetery (Bullecourt) France. His name is also perpetuated at Villiers-Bretonneau, France.

### **Henry Oliver Rees.**

He lived at Reesville, Maleny, which was named after the Rees family. He was an uncle of Elsie's.

**Edward Douglas Rees. (1902- 1970)**

He came to Australia about 1925 and lived in Maleny for several years. He enlisted in the Australian Instructional Corps (AIC) commencing as a W.O.2. In Maleny he became an active member of the 2nd Light Horse Regiment, and became Sergeant. During WW2 he gained his commission and served with various units. He retired with the rank of Major. He married Nell Larkin in 1935.

PS one of Doug's AIC mates was W.O. George Herbert Williams, and through Doug the Waddells met the Williams family, who visited Maleny, holidayed at Caloundra. Vic married Doris Williams.



Edward Douglas Rees & Vic Waddell at family home Maleny, in uniform of WW11

*Elizabeth Mabb*