

## **Kelly Families**

**There are two Kelly families with a history in Pemberton for their contribution to the community. The first is early settler 'Ossie' Kelly and his son Roy. The second is Arthur Ralph Kelly, who received a British Empire Medal for his service to the community.**

**"Ossie" Kelly** was born in Victoria in 1885. He came to Western Australia where he met and married Nita Lawrence at Greenbushes. They had thirteen children: - Vic, Roy, Connie, Ossie, Hughie, Phyllis, Nita Rex, Ray, Mona, Yvonne, and Glenis. The family first lived at Deanmill and then Jardee before moving to Pemberton in 1924. Ossie drove horses in the bush for twelve months then got a job running guard on the Mill's train, later to be promoted to Foreman in charge of locomotives. Unfortunately, he was killed in a railway accident, aged 45 years. His son Roy also worked for the mill on the trains, taking men to and from work as well as carting logs.

**Roy Kelly** tells many interesting stories of his childhood in Pemberton, which can be found in 'Locomotive Man' in *Pemberton Family Stories*, Alison Daubney (ed) 2001. One story he tells is of a robbery that occurred around 1926/27.

*The mill pay was always brought in on a motorised trike and the mill accountant, Frank Leeman, driver Jigga McGregor and the bank manager were coming through a cutting at Barronhurst Hill when they had to stop because of bushes across the line. As soon as they stopped a voice came from the scrub at the top of the cutting ordering them to hand over the money, The robber didn't show himself, but they could see a gun pointing at them. The bank manager drew his own gun and the robber fired shooting the manager's thumb off. The robber then made them walk down the line away from the trike while he collected the money.....A black tracker was brought in and he followed the tracks to the single men's huts at the back of the mill. The money was found but the robber was never caught. The whole event became known as the Barronhurst Robbery. (Daubney, 2001 p. 63-64)*

Roy married Mavis McLeod in 1934, and they had five children: - Maureen, Royce, John, Kay and Wayne. When he retired from the mill in 1983, he was the longest serving employee on record.



**Arthur Ralph Kelly** had a great vision for Pemberton and helped create four major projects that helped make the town it is today.

The first project was the construction of the town swimming pool in 1929. Despite the local population working long hours, people were willing to help build the wall that first created the pool. Very little machinery was available, so all the work was done using picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. Over the years the pool has been used by locals and tourists, with many children learning to swim there and many adults attending locally organized events.

The second project in which Ralph was involved was the introduction of trout into local streams. Dr Abbott, Ralph and Mr Glew, headmaster of the local school first imported trout eggs from Victoria, hatching them in a small Trout Hatchery first built just above the swimming pool. In 1931, Ralph was elected chairman of the Warren Trout Acclimatisation Society, and later Chief Executive Officer of the Hatchery Board. The Trout Hatchery was eventually taken over by the state government in 1972 and is still operating today.



The third project was the establishment of the Pemberton Tourist Bureau in 1940. He was Chairman for twenty years and a member of the management committee until 1972. During this period he was responsible for the building up of many attractions, including Beedelup Falls and The Cascades.

The fourth project was the establishment of the caravan park. Toilet blocks were established and powerlines were laid down. Onsite vans and site chalets were set up. The Pemberton Caravan Park was known as one of the best in the South-West.

(Information comes with thanks from George South and the Pemberton Library, Shire of Manjimup.)