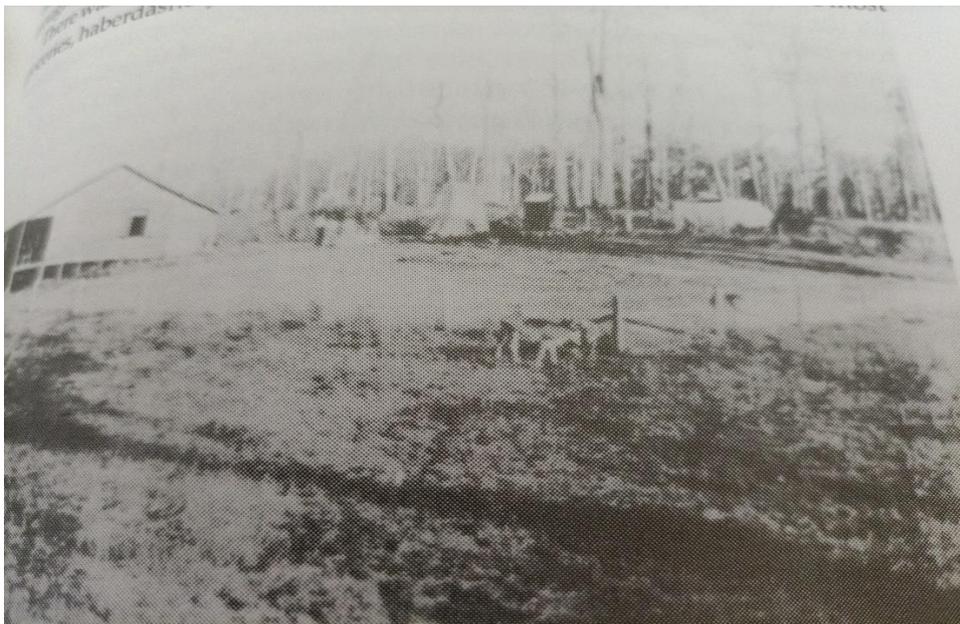


Wellburn Family

Bob and Elizabeth Wellburn (nee Greenhow) came from Sunderland in Northern England. They married in 1920. Bob was a blacksmith in a shipyard but was made redundant due to a lack of ship orders following World War One. They heard about a migration scheme to Western Australia and decided to take their chances, sailing for Australia on the 15th January 1924 and arriving in Fremantle in February 1924. At the time they had two small children, Robert and Anita.

Along with another family, they came by train to Diamond Tree Siding to take up a vacancy on Block 65, arriving at 10pm in the pitch dark with no one to meet them! They were advised to continue onto Pemberton to spend the night, returning to the siding the next day to be taken to their block on North Pemberton Road, Eastbrook. Below is an excerpt from Elizabeth's description of their arrival there.

Our arrival was unexpected, however the foreman soon showed us our huts. These were built of corrugated iron, without doors, windows or floors, but each contained a wood stove. I can remember Bob removing a sheet of iron from each wall to let the air flow through as the weather was terribly hot and coming from England and the winter we all had on thick, warm clothing and stockings with heavy shoes. We soon learned to wear the lightest of clothing and the children went barefoot. Water was drawn from the well at the bottom of the hill and served twenty families. Our menfolk carried water for our use during the day. Kerosene tins were used for this purpose and we women often carried more while the men were at work. (Wellburn 1984, p2)



Original house on farm at Group 65

The Wellburn's third child Frederick James (Fred) was born in 1929, just in time to receive a china cup and saucer to mark 100 years of settlement in WA.

The Depression hit the Group Settlers very hard. After years of struggle, Bob decided that the family should leave their farm and move to Pemberton. When Robert left school he worked at the Mill, joining the army in WW2, serving in New Caledonia and New Guinea. He returned a very sick man, but later married Ann Kingston. Anita stayed in Pemberton and later married Ronald Thompson. Fred also joined the army and went East where he met his wife, Barbara.

Bob died in 1975, aged 76 years following a fall from his roof. Barbara died in 2006, aged 105 years.. Bob and Barbara truly lived an amazing life.

As a boy, Fred worked for Thompson's butcher and later at the mill till he joined the army.

(For a wonderful account of life as a Group Settler, see Elizabeth Wellburn's Elizabeth and Bob, A story of group settlement in the Pemberton Area, WA (Wellburn 1984) – available in the Pemberton Library.)