

FURPHY FARM

A black and white photograph of a horse-drawn water tank. The horse is harnessed to the tank, and a person is standing behind it. The word 'FURPHY' is written on the side of the tank.

WATER TANKS



**HERITAGE
SERIES**

FURPHY FARM WATER TANKS

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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Name: Furphy Farm Water Tanks
Company: J. Furphy & Sons
Established: 1864 (Kyneton)
Founder: John Hoare Furphy
Known for: Furphy water tanks

Furphy water tanks were produced by 'J. Furphy' foundry established 1873 at Shepparton. Furphy continues to be synonymous with Shepparton to this day.

John Furphy was born 17 June 1842 at Moonee Ponds in Victoria Australia, eldest son of Samuel and Judith Furphy. His parents were bounty immigrants who arrived in Australia the year before. He attended school at Kangaroo Ground and Kyneton before becoming an apprentice to Kyneton blacksmiths (Hutcheson & Walker).

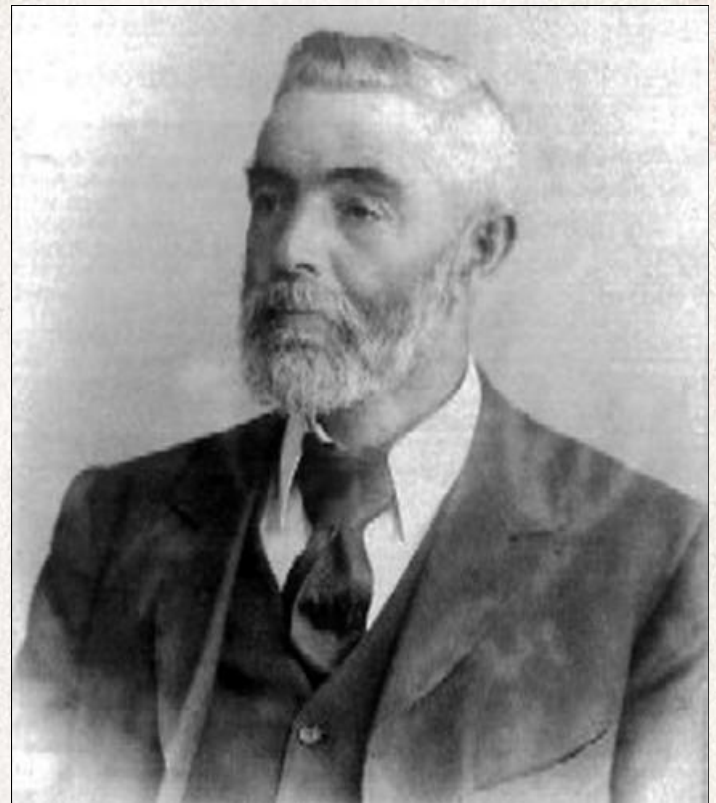
In 1864 John established himself as a Kyneton blacksmith. He married Sarah Ann Vaughan 25 May 1866 at Kyneton, and had four daughters and five sons.

In 1873 he moved to Shepparton where he opened the district's first blacksmiths and wheelwright.

By 1888 his business had grown into a successful blacksmiths and foundry, the largest business of its kind in northern Victoria.

The business primarily produced farming implements and equipment, though also became known for their ability to modify existing equipment for local conditions.

John was an inventor of sorts, winning recognition for his grain stripper in 1884 and again in 1888 and 1889. He also won fair praise for his furrow-plough and his swingletree (a device to help balance the pull of horses) again in 1888 and 1889.





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However, the Furphy name became most recognised for their water cart, an invention which was never patented and was copied by at least 15 other companies. The first Furphy cart was a 180 gallon (818 L) cylindrical iron tank mounted on a simple cart with cast iron wheels and a basic wooden frame. The carts became known as Furphies and were sought after by farmers wishing to move water around their properties. At the height of their popularity, around 300 water carts were being produced annually.



*Produced 1898-1920
Courtesy Andrew Thomas*

John was a deeply religious man, and a founding member of the local Methodist church - which in 1873 had its first service in a building at the rear of the foundry. John functioned as a preacher in the church from time to time as well as filling all other Church roles as required.

He used his prominent position in the business community to have influence in the early political affairs of Shepparton and district and supported many local activities and groups. He also used his water carts as a promotional platform, having messages reflecting his beliefs and morality written prominently on the ends of the carts. These messages changed over the years, and a webpage illustrating these changes can be found on the current Furphy website (www.furphys.com.au).

In 1906, the business moved from Wyndham Street, to a larger modernised site near the railway station. This new site was powered by a gas driven DC generator, and represented the first electric engineering works (blacksmith) in northern Victoria.

In 1909 aged 67, John left the Shepparton district, moving to Page Street, Albert Park in Melbourne. Not long after this, World War 1 broke out, Furphy Water Carts were used



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by the military in Australia, with a small number purchased by the Australian Military at the Broadmeadows camp. Around 300 copies of the Furphy tank were produced by HV McKay and J.A. Lawton under contract by the Australian military, for use overseas. Ironically, these tanks were called Furphy tanks, though were not made by J. Furphy & Son.

John died at his home 23 September 1920 aged 78. The Furphy business was left to his three sons William, George and Charles. In 1978, the business moved to a large industrial site at 21 Drummond Road, Shepparton and in 1983 production of the water cart ends ceased, being replaced by modern galvanized tanks.

On the 24 October 1985, a Historic Engineering Marker created by the National Committee of Agricultural Engineering was unveiled at John Pick Reserve, Shepparton by Mayor John Weir. Furphy family members present included: John S. Furphy (grandson of John Furphy). It was later removed by the Shire of Greater Shepparton at a time unknown and placed in the foyer of the Greater Shepparton Doyles Road Complex.

A book called 'Furphy: The Water Cart and the Word' was first published 2005 and is considered as the definitive historical resource on the Furphy Water Carts. The book can be purchased from the Furphy company website below.

In mid 2014 the contents of a small museum previously located at J. Furphy & Sons in New Dookie Road, was relocated to the a specially build area at Shepparton's Motor Museum on the Goulburn Valley Highway. The items formed the basis for the new Furphy Museum which opened 16 August 2014. The Shire of Greater Shepparton released the Furphy Historical Marker (formerly located at the Doyles Road Complex) to the museum in time for the opening of the Furphy Museum.

A bronze statue and memorial to novelist Joseph Furphy, brother of John Furphy, is located beside 138 Westford Street, Shepparton. A large piece stone inscribed with a short history of Joseph Furphy stands behind the statue. They can be viewed later in this factsheet.



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The Furphy name continues to be synonymous with the district, with two Furphy run business's currently operating from within the city of Shepparton:

1. **J. Furphy & Sons** (www.furphys.com.au).
Steel tank fabrication, laser cutting and GV Galvanizing business.
Divisions: (i) Furphy Engineering
(ii) Furphy Laser (Cutting)
(iii) Furphy Galvanizing
106 New Dookie Road, Shepparton, 3632.
Adam Furphy as the current Chief Executive Officer.
2. **Furphy Foundry** (www.furphyfoundry.com.au).
Specialising in the design and manufacturing of street and park furniture.
Drummond Street, Shepparton, 3632.
Company run by Sam Furphy.



Wiki



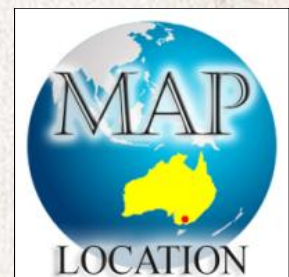
*J. Furphy
& Sons*



*Furphy
Foundry*



*Water Cart
ends*



*Furphy Museum
(Opening soon)*

TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

- 1842** J Furphy and Sons Founder, John Furphy, was born June 17 in Moonee Ponds, Victoria.
- 1864** John Furphy establishes a blacksmith and wheelwright business in Piper Street, Kyneton. The business continues until John decides to relocate to Shepparton.
- 1873** At the age of 31, John purchased 10 acres of land facing Tocumwal Road and sets up his blacksmith and wheelwright business.
- 1878** A cupola furnace was installed and the cast iron foundry section of the business became commonly known as “Furphy’s Foundry”. It employed about 38 men and boys with an annual payroll of £2,500; manufacturing a number of unique products and inventions including Spike Rollers, Horse Works, Swingle Trees, Troughs and the now famous Farm Water Cart.
- 1893** John takes his two elder sons George and William into the partnership. The business is called J Furphy & Sons.
- 1898** John adds an inscription on the cast iron ends of the water cart. It reads:
- “Good, better, best, never let it rest, till your good is better and your better is best”.*
- 1906** J Furphy and Sons moves from Wyndham Street to Hoskin Street, opposite the railway station. The factory incorporates a gas driven generating plant, making it one of the few electrical powered factories in Victoria and the first in the Goulburn Valley.
- 1914** WW1. Furphy Water Carts used by the AIF lead to the word “Furphy” to describe rumours generated by troops gathering around the water carts for a drink.
- 1920** John Furphy dies.



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- 1925** John Seeley Furphy, son of George and grandson of the founder John, started with the business and took over most of the casting work in the foundry and supervised the assembly side. He worked closely with his cousins Fred and Albert, looking after general production and administration.
- 1938** The partnership of J Furphy & Sons was made a company and J Furphy & Sons P/L was incorporated.
- 1950** Second generation Furphy's William, George and Charles were bought out of the business by the third generation – Fred, Albert and John.
- 1960** John (Jack) Furphy acquired the share of his two cousins, Fred and Albert. Throughout the 60's Jack was joined by his sons Roger, Andrew and Timothy.
- 1960s** J Furphy and Sons erected new buildings at the Hoskin Street site to accommodate the growth of secondary industries in the Goulburn Valley such as the rapidly growing food process industry.
- 1978** Continued growth demands the relocation from Hoskin Street to a 10 acre site on the corner of Dookie and Drummond Roads. Modern offices, engineering buildings and plant were set up, a new foundry and a small outlet for steel sales.
- 1983** Australia's first regional/inland galvanising plant is built in Shepparton. Furphy Water Carts switch from cast iron ends to galvanised steel.
- 1985** On 24 October a Historic Engineering Marker created by the National Committee of Agricultural Engineering was unveiled at John Pick Reserve, Shepparton by Mayor John Weir honouring the Furphy Water Cart.
- 1987-88** Iconic decorative balustrading around Circular Key in Sydney were



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supplied by the Foundry. Other large contracts secured at this time included Telecom manhole covers and tree guards at the Melbourne Art Gallery.

- 1989** Andrew and Roger split the foundry and the engineering sections of the business, with Roger Furphy being Managing Director of Furphy's Foundry P/L and Andrew continuing as Managing Director of J Furphy and Sons.
- 1991** J Furphy and Sons enters into a new partnership establishing an additional galvanising plant in Geelong.
- 1983** Sam Furphy joins his father Roger at Furphy's Foundry.
- 1995** J Furphy & Sons establishes another galvanising plant in Jindera, outside of Albury. Furphy's Foundry establishes a new company, Urban Maintenance Systems P/L, led by Sam Furphy.
- 1997** Andrew Furphy's son Adam joins J Furphy & Sons and becomes Managing Director in 1998.
- 2004–2005** Furphy's Foundry commences plant modernisation to cater for increasing demand for street and park furniture. J Furphy & Sons undertake investments in extended fabrication workshops, laser cutting machines, plasma welding equipment and other fabricating equipment.
- 2008** Furphy's Foundry builds new facilities in Drummond Road to cater for a now national and international market. Urban Maintenance Systems is recognised as one of Australia's fastest growing companies, employing 370 staff throughout Australia.
- 2009** J Furphy & Sons erect a 32 metre high fabrication tower to accommodate the growing demand for large capacity storage tanks.
- 2014** Fifth generation Adam and Sam Furphy continue to actively lead



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their respective companies with the valued support of over 200 employees.

August 2014

The Greater Shepparton City Council released the Furphy Historical Engineering Marker and an old Furphy cart from one of its depots, to the Furphy Museum in time for it to be set up for the opening of the Museum.

2014

On 16-17 August the Shepparton Furphy Museum first opened to the public. Located at the Shepparton Motor Museum, it represents the single largest collection of Furphy farm equipment ever collected in one location.

10 August 2016

A historic furphy water tank was stolen from the Furphy Museum.

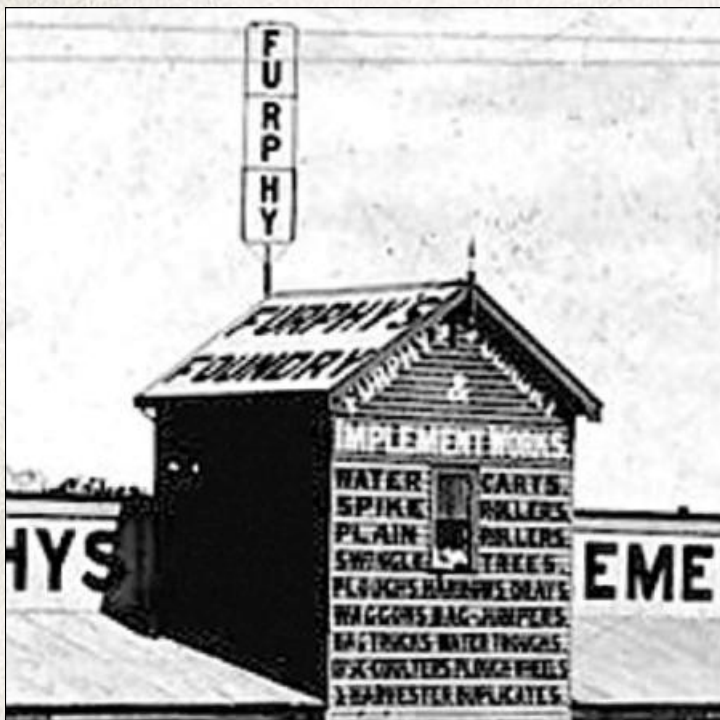
GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



**Furphy Water Tanks on display at the
Furphy's Implements Works 1905**

Courtesy Museum Victoria 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Horses towing a line of Furphy Water Tanks in 1905

Courtesy Museum Victoria 2014.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



**J. Furphy & Sons foundry,
Shepparton circa 1915.
The railway station is
clearly visible.**

Courtesy State Library Victoria. 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Author and feminist Miles Franklin (1879–1954) with a Furphy Water Cart in 1937

Courtesy State Library New South Wales 2014

**Miles
Franklin**



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Produced 1920-1930

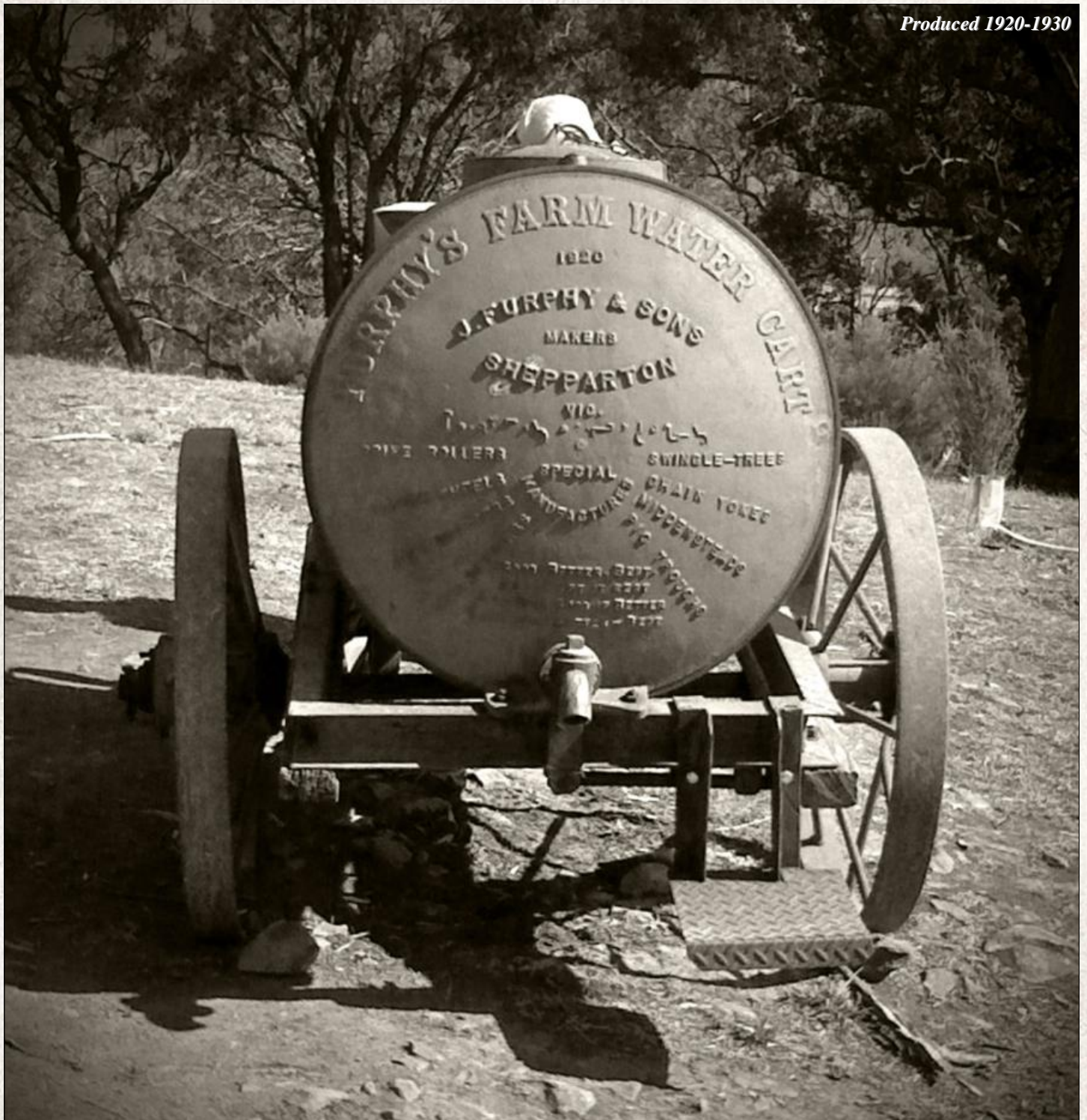
**An early Furphy Water Cart now located at the Longreach
Stockman's Hall of Fame and Heritage Centre.**

www.outbackheritage.com.au

Photograph © Travellingstrom 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Furphy water cart located at the Kerrisdale Mountain Railway in April 2008

Photograph © Fred & Robin CB 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



**Furphy water cart, Shire of Greater Shepparton - Doyles Road Complex,
Shepparton July 2014.**



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Furphy water cart on display at the Beaconsfield Museum, Tasmania in 2010

Courtesy Peripitus CCL2.0

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY

Photograph © Copyright Bryan and Cherry Alexander.

Carts produced 1942-1965



Rusting Furphy water tanks at the abandoned ANARE base. Atlas Cove. Heard Island. Sub Antarctic Islands. Furphy tanks were used worldwide, and even in extreme conditions, thanks to their high quality and design.

Professional photographers Bryan and Cherry permitted to use this image free of charge, as it was being used to promote the history of the Furphy carts through a free heritage project. We are extremely thankful to them both for their kindness.



Check out articphoto.com for more great photographs from Bryan and Cherry Alexander.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Produced 1898-1920

Furphy water cart end near Shepparton

Photograph © Andrew Thomas 2014



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



A Furphy Water Cart located at J. Furphy & Sons, New Dookie Road, Shepparton



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Furphy Tank end used as a wall feature with a functioning tap included

Photograph © Lloyd Foster 2015



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



A Furphy Water Cart located at J. Furphy & Sons, New Dookie Road, Shepparton

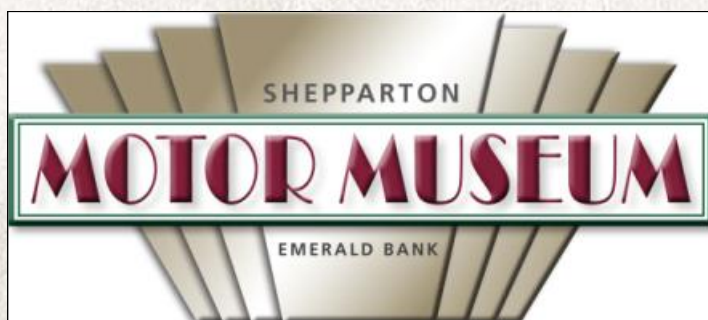
OTHER

RELATED ITEMS



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

SHEPPARTON FURPHY MUSEUM

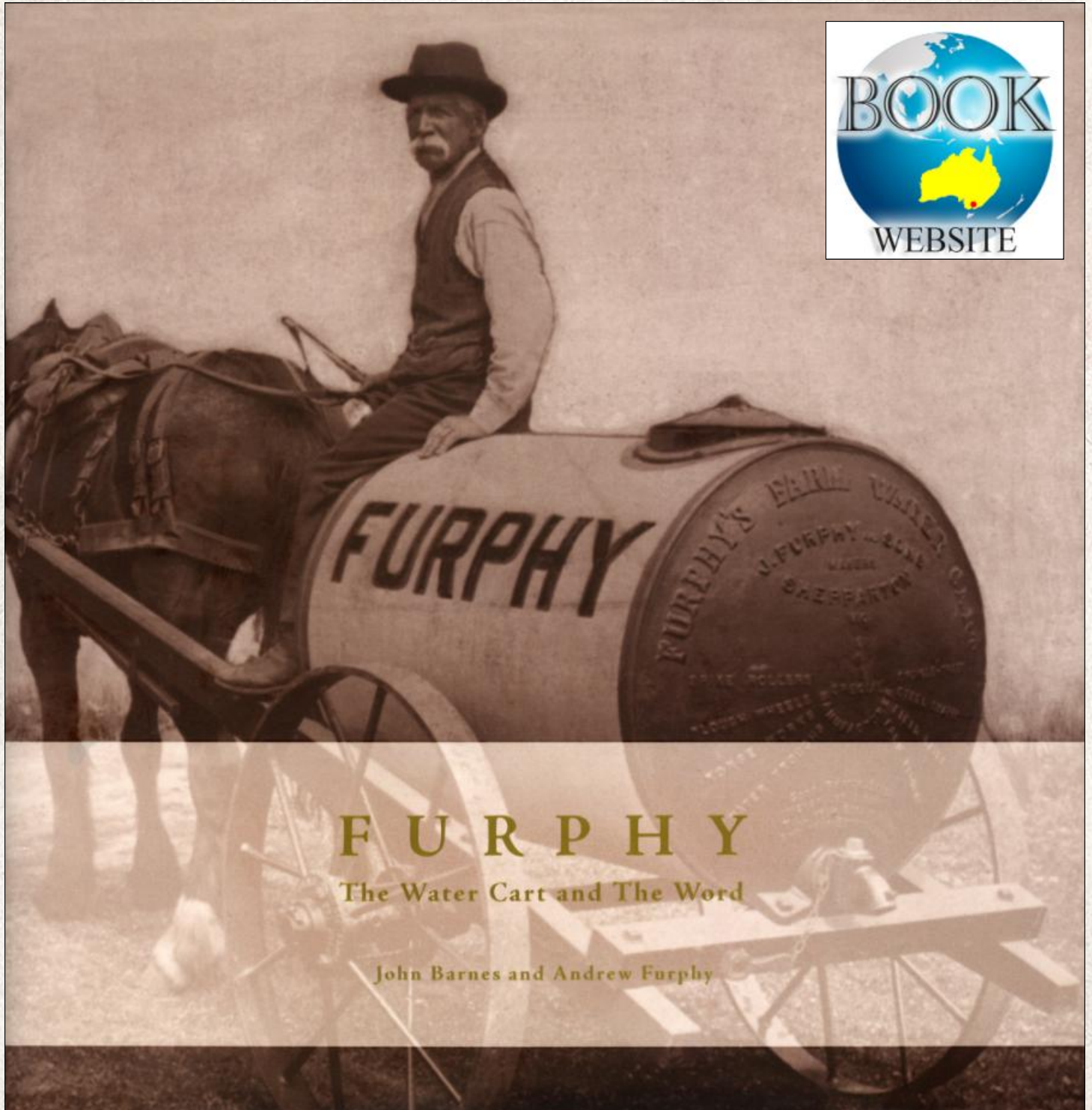


The Furphy Museum opened 16 August 2014, displaying the largest collection of Furphy memorabilia ever collected in one location.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

THE WATER CART AND THE WORD



FURPHY

The Water Cart and The Word

John Barnes and Andrew Furphy

The definitive history of the Furphy Water Cart written by Professor John Barnes and Andrew Furphy, and published in 2005. It is a 'must have' for those interested in Australian history.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER



Second Historic Engineering Marker in a series of markers by the National Committee of Agricultural Engineering. It was unveiled 24 October 1985 at John Pick Reserve, Shepparton by Mayor John Weir. Furphy family members present included: John S. Furphy (grandson of John Furphy). It was later removed by the Shire of Greater Shepparton and placed in the foyer of the Doyles Road Depot Complex where it remained until August 2014.

In July 2014 Andrew Furphy contacted the Shire and arranged for the marker to be moved to the new Furphy Museum in August 2014.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

FURPHY ALE



Furphy Ale in 2017

Photographs © Anthony Dykes 2017

JOSEPH FURPHY

BROTHER OF JOHN FURPHY

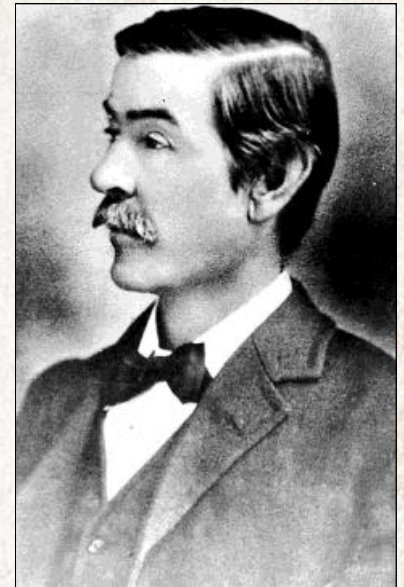


HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BROTHER: NOVELIST JOSEPH FURPHY



Joseph Furphy, author and poet, was the younger brother of John Furphy. He was a worker at John's foundry for 20 years, writing in his spare time. He is widely regarded as the "Father of the Australian Novel". He wrote under the pseudonym 'Tom Collins' and wrote many classics, including "Such is Life" which he penned in 1897 and was published 1 August 1903.



Joseph was born 26 September 1843 at Yering Station, Yering, in Central Victoria. Like his brother John, Joseph was initially educated by his mother before attending school at Kangaroo Ground and Kyneton when their families moved to those areas.

As a young man Joseph became a hay and corn merchant before leasing a farm and buying a threshing plant circa 1854. Ten years later in 1864 Joseph purchased a further threshing outfit and travelled to the Daylesford district where he worked the outfit.

He met Leonie Germain (then aged 16) and married her two years later in 1866. He carried on the Germain family farm for a period when Leonie's mother travelled to New Zealand. Two years later he took up a selection at Colbinabbin, though was unsuccessful in farming the land due to the poor soil quality. In 1873 he sold the farm and purchased a team of bullocks which he worked successfully for a number of years, before suffering hard times and losses during the drought of 1884. The same year he accepted a labourers position at his brother John's foundry in Shepparton, where he worked for 20 years. During this period he would read and write at his home during the evenings.

As an older man he moved to Western Australia where he joined his sons who had established a successful foundry. He died 13 September 1912 and was buried in Karrakatta Cemetery.

Such is Life can be downloaded as a pdf and read on your mobile device by clicking on the "Download" button on the right.



Statue of author Joseph Furphy

Westford Street
Shepparton



Location of the
Joseph Furphy Statue
and Memorial Rock





Joseph Furphy
writer
using the pen name
Tom Collins
("a spreader of rumours
and yarns")
He lived and wrote here
(where a small cottage
ever-looked a bend
of the Goulburn River)
while working by day
in his brother John's
foundry.

These trees
a wilga and a kurrajong
he brought back
from his outback journeys
as a bullock driver
and carrier
in the northern Riverina
of New South Wales.

His novel
SUCH IS LIFE
uniquely expressed his love of learning
life of hard work
egalitarianism
and the
humours and narratives
of an almost vanished
AUSTRALIA

It has always been loved
by the wise

Joseph Furphy
1843-1912
The Illustrious Author
of
Such is Life
Planted this tree

JOSEPH FURPHY

1843-1912

THE ILLUSTRIOUS AUTHOR
OF

SUCH IS LIFE
PLANTED THIS TREE

LET AFFIRMED BY GRACIOUS REPLY
OF MRS. E. M. FAWCETT 25-29

The young Wilga Tree located directly behind the statue in 2015 was seeded by a Wilga Tree and planted by Joseph Furphy. It has since died.



Wilga Tree



*Good, better, best, never let it rest,
till your good is better and your better is best*