

A History of FHWA presence on the Web Site Statistics

From June 1996 up to the launch of this new site on 16 Jan 2009, the WAGS web site had received over **505,000** visitors.

The original site was hosted for 5 years with Murdoch University (1996-2001) and received some **65,000** visitors.

We moved to our own web address at www.wags.org.au on 9 November 2001, and up to the time that *this* new site went live, there were **440,738** visitors recorded.

In the 4 years from Jan 2009 through to Jan 2013 we have changed from recording visitors to a more meaningful measure of page views, and there has been **1,585,827** page views.

The Past

The WAGS Web Site was originally launched in June 1996. From these early beginnings a great deal of effort has gone into improving and maintaining the WAGS Web Site.

WAGS Members and Management are very grateful to the many people involved in the initial development, and for their dedication and ongoing efforts since its inception. In particular the Internet Sub-Committee, led by Marilyn Dimond, with assistance from Jennifer Lydon, Mary Rogers, and Cynthia Brock, has been very active in ensuring that timely and relevant information was available to Members, and the public, and making ongoing improvements to the design and layout of the web site.

The "*net.news*" article in *Western Ancestor* of June 2001 gives a good description of the early development of our web site. This article is available in full, at the bottom of this page.

The Present

WAGS held a Planning Day in November 2006, where it was resolved that WAGS presence on the web could be further improved, that the web site should be upgraded, content enhanced and further developed.

This development is to be progressed in three stages.

Stage One - Create a new WAGS website with; eCommerce, on-line membership management, on-line purchase and event bookings, a discussion forum, and a new "look and feel".

Stage One is complete, and this new website is the result of the work undertaken by the WAGS "Virtual Team", led by Mike Murray up until June 2008, and since that time, co-ordinated by Chris Loudon.

New items and articles are available under the menus, and more will be added in the future.

Additional features will be progressively added, including on line purchasing, event booking, and our Library Catalogue.

We encourage you to check back on a regular basis to see what additions have been made.

The Future

Stages two and three, as outlined below, have been deferred for the time being, but will be progressed as time and finances permit. They have not been abandoned.

Stage Two - Add some of the WAGS databases for members to access via a search facility, with a possible option for non-members.

As at January 2013 - There has been considerable progress in this direction, with numerous databases available in the MOA (Members only area) of the web site, as well as several available to the public; this work is ongoing.

Stage Three - Add direct links to external parties databases for members to search directly from the WAGS web site.

As at January 2013 - This vision is yet to be realised.

The following article, although written years ago, gives the early history of this website. "**net. news**"

Western Ancestor **June 2001**

The WAGS Web Site is 5 years old

As the society's web site officially celebrates its 5th birthday in June 2001, we thought it was an opportune time to review, for the first time, just how it all happened. Today, in June 2001, we would find it strange for the society not to have a web site, an Internet account and email facilities. But, way back in the dark ages of 1995 the Internet was not the popular, accepted and familiar place that it is today. However, along with every business imaginable, thousands of ordinary Australians have now set up a home on the WWW, and email is a popular method of communication for all ages. There are also hundreds of ISP's (Internet Service Providers) to choose from, and aside from the occasional and predictable prosecution for pornography related events, the Internet enjoys mostly positive media coverage in the new millennium.

Unknown Territory

This was not how it was in 1995, as the media focussed regularly and intensely on the negative and dangerous side of the Internet. For many Australians the Internet, the WWW, and even email was largely unknown and somewhat scary territory. It was into this uncertain climate, at a

WAGS Public Relations sub-committee meeting in August 1995, that Marilyn Dimond and Jenny Lydon, both PR sub-committee members, first tentatively raised the issue of the society having its own web page.

It was in this same month that the Public Relations Sub-Committee was given correspondence, that the society had received, from Anne Foxworthy of Coherent Software. Coherent Software offered, at no charge, the opportunity to have limited society information on their new web site, "Australian Family History Compendium". WAGS information was submitted to Coherent Software in August 1995, and Marilyn Dimond offered to ensure that this information was kept current.

With this small exposure, came the realisation that the society should seriously consider building its own, more comprehensive, web site if it was to remain competitive. Marilyn Dimond and Jenny Lydon continued to lobby for the society to do just this, and with the encouragement of the then PR convenor Gail Hay, and the then society president Maurice Weston, Marilyn and Jenny presented their first submission to the Management Committee in February 1996. This submission had the full support of the PR sub-committee, and the following PR sub-committee members; Alan Campbell, Marilyn Dimond, Joyce James, Jenny Lydon and Maurice Weston, who met early in February 1996.

Apprehension - But we go ahead

Although, there was considerable initial apprehension and concern on the part of the Management Committee, and other society members, a "draft" web site was finally produced. This took place when Jenny and Marilyn were joined by fellow member Rob Nelson, in March 1996. Rob and Marilyn tackled the daunting task together of learning to write in HTML, the language for web page writing, with Rob producing the early web pages. By April 1996, Rob had organised a reasonably priced community Internet account with Murdoch University, courtesy of Dr Roger Atkinson. This brave move gave the society a place to put a web site, and an email address.

Following the 1996 AGM, the Internet Sub-committee (ISC) officially became a sub-committee of WAGS Inc Management Committee. The following were the inaugural sub-committee members; Marilyn Dimond (convenor), Jenny Lydon, Rob Nelson, Cynthia Brock and Lyn Watt, with Martin Pinnell, in an ex-officio capacity, as the society's then new president. Although, the society's web site had been on-line for some weeks, in an un-official capacity, it was officially launched in June 1996, and was advertised in the September 1996 issue of the society's journal Western Ancestor.

In September 1996, Rob resigned from the sub-committee and Marilyn took on the task of web page writing and continues to do so. In early 1997, Mary Rogers joined the sub-committee and initiated the WA Surnames List and later the Members' Interest Directory (on-line). In mid 1998, Martin Pinnell left the sub-committee after seeing the web site through its painful birth and initial teething problems. Now its 5 years old and walking.

Now part of WAGS Culture

However, slowly and surely the Internet and our web site became part of the society's culture. It quickly became procedure to include the email address and the web site address on all society printing, and brochures, and the March 1997 issue of Western Ancestor included the society's email address and web site address on the inside cover, for the first time. Also, in the same issue, the first net.news article was featured on page 10, and continues as a regular feature in Western Ancestor. In April 1998, the society's "members only" email based mailing list, known as Wags-net, went "live" with 50 society members subscribed and eager to talk. This was followed by a number of new and exciting features on the web site, including the WA Surnames List, and the Members Interest Directory which are both compiled by Mary Rogers, and uploaded onto the web site by the web site manager Marilyn Dimond.

And, the rest, as they say, is history! Today, as the WAGS web site celebrates its 5th birthday, we can say we have achieved our earlier vision of our own comprehensive web site. And, this web site offers not only an on-line research opportunity for its members, but also presents and promotes the society to the rest of the world. As with all ventures, there are always many people who have been involved, and have contributed along the way, and the formation of the WAGS web site has been no different in this regard. It has, however, been different in that we were going into territory that was totally uncharted, and for that reason there was no map, and the guideposts were few. Largely we made our own maps, often as we went, and even put up our own guideposts and we are still doing that today.

Thanks

The ISC of 2001 - Marilyn Dimond (Convenor), Jennifer Lydon (deputy convenor), Cynthia Brock, Lyn Watt and Mary Rogers, would like thank all those society members who helped, supported and encouraged the ISC (past and present) to fulfill the dream of getting WAGS on the Internet. These society members are not only those who served on committees here in Perth, although their commitment has been considerable, but also those members who live in remote areas and who showed their support by subscribing to Wags-net, visiting the WAGS web site and using email to contact the society. It was bringing these remote members closer that was part of the dream, and we hope that we have managed, even in a small, way to make

WAGS more real for those "out of towners".

Thank you to you all. We have done it!!! And happy 5th birthday to the WAGS web site.

Jenny and Marilyn