

## william edwin pidgeon (wep)

*wepidgeon wep*

### William Edwin Pidgeon (1909-1981)

#### Biography

- 1909 Born in Paddington, NSW, son of Frederick Castledine Pidgeon and Thirza Jessie (nee White). His father was a glazier who associated with artists like Fred Leist and attended Royal Art Society school and Tech College. As a child he used to go through his father's drawings and old *Studio* magazines. Lived at 290 Glenmore Road, Paddington near the Five Ways in a terrace house built by his grandfather and former mayor of Paddington, John White.
- 1913 Father Frederick died as a result of an accident
- 1920 Glenmore Road Public School, Paddington
- 1921-24 Technical High School, East Sydney
- ???? J.S. Watkins Art School, 6 months
- ???? Sydney Technical College, several months
- 1925 First employed as an office boy at Wunderlich's factory in Surrey Hills where he met Bill Dobell who was employed as an advertising artist.
- 1925 Employed as a Cadet Newspaper Artist *The Sunday News*, Sun Newspapers after his dentist Uncle (Septimus E Patterson) armed with forceps and needles 'intimidated' his patient and editor of the paper, Marmion Dart.
- 1926 First comic strip *The Trifling Triplets* published September in *The Sunday News*, which ran for nine months
- 1928-30 Joined up with Eric Baume and the Packers. Employed as a Newspaper Artist, *The Guardian*, *Evening News*, *Wireless Weekly* & *Smith's Weekly*, Smith's Newspapers Ltd
- 1929 Grew his moustache
- 1930 Acknowledged he was going bald at age 21
- 1930-32 Freelance newspaper artist and contributor to the Labour Daily, *The World*
- 1931 Travels to Dubbo
- 1933 Newspaper Artist, Sydney Newspapers (later Consolidated Press), in conjunction with his friend George Warnecke, created the dummy for *The Australian Women's Weekly*
- 1933 Married Jessie Ann Graham
- 1933-49 Newspaper Artist, Cartoonist, Illustrator; *The Australian Women's Weekly* and *Daily Telegraph*, Consolidated Press and Art Critic, *Daily Telegraph*. Creator of comic strips *In And Out Of Society* (*Women's Weekly*, 1<sup>st</sup> published Sept. 1933), a whimsical look at domestic life and *Worldly Wisdom* (*Daily Telegraph*)
- 1934 Lived at 62 Bundarra Rd, Bellevue Hill
- 1937 Living at Lindfield
- 1941 Mother, Thirza died
- 1943-45 War Correspondent (NX335536)
- 1943 Jul-Sep with troops in Darwin and NW Australia
- 1944 Was asked to review the work of 15 year old local lad, Brett Whiteley and acknowledged that he was the most natural talent he had ever

seen. Brett became a regular visitor to his Northwood home and he was source of much inspiration for the upcoming talent.

- 1944 Jan-Feb in various locations around New Guinea
- 1945 Jan-Feb in Morotai, Malaysia and New Guinea
- 1945 Jun-Aug in Morotai, Borneo, Brunei, Labuan and Phillipines
- 1943 Established home and studio at 85 Northwood Rd., Northwood
- 1944 Son, Graham Richard Pidgeon born
- 1949 Resigned from Consolidated Press in January, but did a deal with Frank Packer to remain as a contributor to The Australian Women's Weekly, an arrangement that lasted for the next decade.
- 1949 Submitted a portrait of Sir Robert Menzies as his first entry for the Archibald Prize
- 1952 Wife, Jess died of a brain tumour
- 1954 Married Dorothy Ellen Lees
- 1955 Submitted portrait *Miss Whiteley* for Archibald Prize (Brett Whiteley's sister Franny)
- 1956 September 22 – December 2 Travelled to Bucharest, Rumania on a cultural exchange program, and briefly visited Vienna, Munich, Venice, Rome, Paris and London
- 1956 Diagnosed with glaucoma in both eyes, which lead to a gradual deterioration of his eyesight and 6 operations throughout the remainder of his life.
- 1958 Submitted winning portrait *Mr Ray Walker* for the Archibald Prize, his first win
- 1959 Son, Peter Nathaniel Pidgeon born
- 1960 Submitted portrait *William Dobell* for the Archibald Prize
- 1961 Submitted winning portrait *Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush* for the Archibald Prize, his second win
- 1968 Submitted winning portrait *Dr Lloyd Rees* for the Archibald Prize, his third win. Only 4 other artists have won more than 3 times (William Dargie 8, W.B. McInness 7, Ivor Hele and John Longstaff 5 each) and 3 others (Clifton Pugh, Eric Smith & William Dobell) have won 3 times out of a total of 47 individual winners over the history of the prize.
- 1970 Submitted *Linked Portrait* to the Archibald Prize, which was rejected, a tryptich completed in conjunction with Brett Whiteley and Tony Woods
- 1972 Last portrait completed of fellow artist and friend, Venita Salnajs
- 1974 Political cartoonist, *The Sunday Telegraph*
- 1974-79 Art Critic, *The Sunday Telegraph*

### Solo Exhibitions

- 1988 War Paintings 1943 – 1945; the Bloomfield Galleries, Paddington, NSW

### Group Exhibitions

- 1941 National Gallery of Canada Catalogue, *War Cartoons and Caricatures of the British Commonwealth*
- 1946 Studio of Realist Art Exhibition, David Jones Art Gallery
- 1949-70 Archibald Prize for portraiture
- 1956 The Australian Women's Weekly Portrait Prize for 1956 (*Wendy Whiteley*)
- 1957 Caltex Art Prize (*Our Changing Cities*)
- 1957 The Australian Women's Weekly Portrait Prize for 1957 (*Diana Judah and Dorothy*)
- 1958 The Australian Women's Weekly Portrait Prize for 1958 (*Liz and Hazel*)

- 1958 Recent Australian Paintings, Farmers Blaxland Gallery (*Liverpool Ranges* and *Girl with Flaxen Hair*)
- ???? Tom Roberts to Jon Molvig, a retrospective Australian Collection, Rudy Komon Art Gallery (*The Waif*)
- 1959 3 Tasmanian Art Gallery Exhibition, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (*Auiud Rumania*)
- 1961 5 Tasmanian Art Gallery Exhibition (*Customs House Newcastle*)
- 1962 Sixth Tasmanian Art Gallery Exhibition, Hobart (*Pipers Gap*)
- 1963 Exhibition of Paintings by William Dargie, William Dobell, Russell Drysdale, George Finey and William Pidgeon; Journalists' Club Gallery (*Urana, Mount Wingen, Near Scone, Pacific Highway, "Auiud" Rumania, Young Boy, Ray Walker, King Watson, Porto Bello Road and Pont Saint Michel*)

### Awards

- 1924 OGU Prize for Drawing
- 1945 First Prize, *Australia At War* Exhibition, *War in the Air* Section 1944 - 1945
- 1945 First Prize, *Australia At War* Exhibition, *Medical Services* Section 1944 - 1945
- 1945 Honourable Mention, *Australia At War* Exhibition, *Medical Services* Section 1944 - 1945
- 1957 Royal Adelaide Exhibition – Industrial Art
- 1958 Archibald Prize for portraiture (*Mr. Ray Walker*, President Australian Journalists' Association)
- ???? Art Gallery NSW Packer Prize (*Liz*)
- 1961 Archibald Prize for portraiture (*Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush*)
- 1968 Archibald Prize for portraiture (*Dr. Lloyd Rees*)

### Collections

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney  
 Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth  
 Australian War Memorial, Canberra  
 Government House, Sydney  
 Newcastle City Art Gallery  
 Parliament House, Canberra (portraits of Sir William Aston, Speaker and late Rt. Hon. H.E. Holt, Prime Minister)  
 Parliament House, Sydney  
 Supreme Court, Sydney  
 University of Sydney  
 University of N.S.W.  
 University of New England  
 University of Newcastle  
 Sydney Teachers' College  
 City Tattersall's Club, Sydney  
 Journalists' Club (now defunct)  
 Children's Hospital, Sydney  
 Royal Prince Alfred Hospital  
 Great Synagogue, Sydney  
 Trinity Grammar School  
 Lane Cove Town Hall (1968 Archibald Prize portrait of Dr Lloyd Rees)  
 Numerous business houses and private collections throughout Australia

## Associations

Australian Journalists' Association  
Lane Cove Art Panel  
Art Judge, Sydney Royal Agricultural Show

## Books Illustrated

*Rhymes of Sydney* (Colin Wills, 1933)  
*Trio* (Limited Edition, 75 copies, Sunnybrook Press first publication)  
*Eureka Stockade* (Raffaello Carboni, 150 copy limited edition printed by Ernest Shea Sunnybrook Press 1937-1943)  
*Come Away Pearler* (Colin Simpson, 1952)  
*Here's Luck* (Lennie Lower, 1955)  
*No Glamour In Gumboots* (Marian Warren, 1958)  
*The Burnt Offering: How Not To Barbecue* (Winsom A Gilbert, 1958)  
*The Christian Gentleman* (G C Davey, 1960)  
*Cop This Lot* (Nino Cullotta, 1960)  
*So, You Want To Buy A House* (Cyril Pearl, 1961)  
*No Kava For Johnny* (John O'Grady, 1961)  
*They're A Weird Mob* (Nino Cullotta, 1961)  
*Gone Fishin'* (Nino Cullotta, 1962)  
*The Best of Lennie Lower* (Cyril Pearl and WEP, 1963)  
*Aussie English* (John O'Grady, 1965)  
*The Things They Do To You* (John O'Grady, 1965)  
*OGF* (Keith Smith, 1965)

## Journal Articles & Other Publications

What price independence (Australian Artist 2 (2) :12-16, 1949)  
Art Critiques, *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*  
Comic strip *In And Out Of Society*; The Australian Women's Weekly  
Numerous covers and other illustrations for The Australian Women's Weekly  
(including 27 Melbourne Cup issues)  
*Wireless Weekly* covers  
Comic strip *Worldly Wisdom*; The Daily Telegraph  
Cover of Federation Daily Telegraph ???  
*Jungle Courage* Sydney, Consolidated Press, [1943-1946] Cover  
Soldiers in north and dream of home *Australian Women's Weekly* 8 September  
1945 Page 17 includes jeep train b&w cartoon illus. Wep byline

## Other

General interests included reading, comparative religion and ceramics  
Web site - [www.wepidgeon.com](http://www.wepidgeon.com)

Sources:

- McCulloch, Alan and Susan. Encyclopaedia of Australian Art. 3rd Edition, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994. Page 570
- Dutton, Geoffrey (ed), Artists Portraits, 1992

- Monash Biographical Dictionary of Twentieth Century Australia
- Oxford Companion to Australian Literature – 1991
- Washington, Judy; Artists of Lane Cove, 1989
- Who's Who In Australia (up to and including 1980)
- Panel by Panel : an illustrated history of Australian comics by John RYAN, Cassell 1979, p30
- The Inked-In Image : a social and historical survey of Australian comic art by Vane Lindsay, Melbourne : Hutchinson, 1979 pp. 68 –69
- The Weekly : a lively and nostalgic celebration of Australia through 50 years of its most popular magazine. by Denis O'Brien, Penguin, 1982
- Humour In The Weekly; Currey O'Neil, 1983
- Australian art and artists to 1950: a bibliography based on the holdings of the State Library of Victoria
- Estate of William Edwin Pidgeon; private letters and papers
- William Edwin Pidgeon, a report for the S.H. Ervin Gallery and Visual Arts Board, August 1984; Prepared by Lawrence Bendle. Special thanks to Dorothy Pidgeon. Assisted by V.A.B
- *Who Was That Woman? The Australian Women's Weekly in the Postwar Years* by Susan Sheridan; UNSW Press 2002 p3 - 6-Jul-51 Federation Jubilee cover (not credited), p4 - WEP covers being the most famous, p80 – 10-Oct-1951 Home Building 1951 style by Wep (not credited)