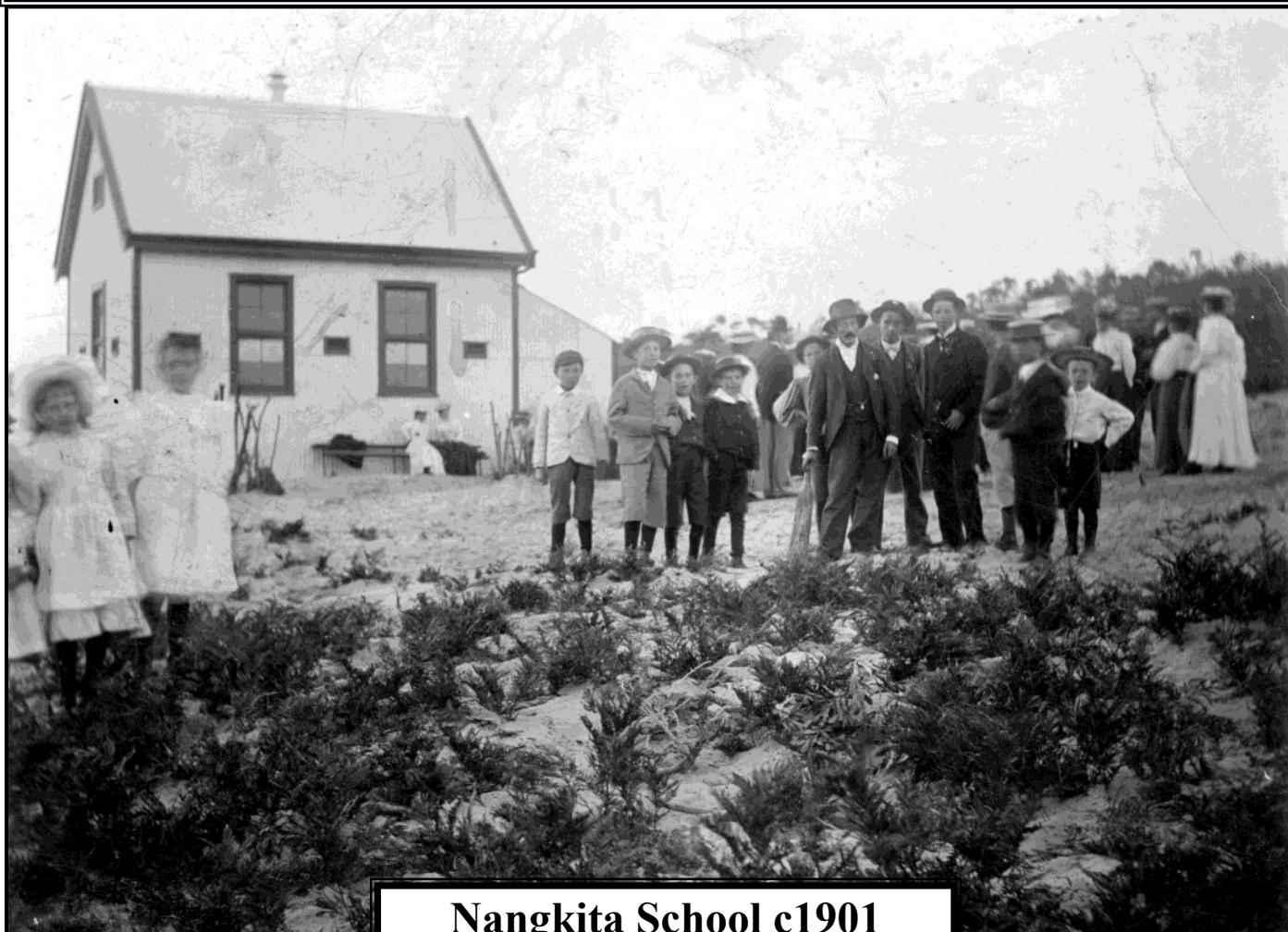


THE MOUNT COMPASS ARCHIVES

CHRONICLE

A FORUM TO PROMOTE THE HISTORY & ARCHIVES OF THE MOUNT COMPASS DISTRICT

No 28 MARCH 2025



Nangkita School c1901

This photograph is one of a number copied into the archives from a wonderful collection handed down by the Wills and Hailstone families to Nangkita resident, Gary Davis. It depicts the **Nangkita Village Settlement School** from about the year 1901, when this new school room was first built.

A small wattle and daub structure built on this site and opened in July 1895, has the honour of being the first school in this district, with Miss Rosa Hodge appointed as the provisional teacher (on probation). There were about thirty five children on the roll at that time, as the school covered the whole district from Mount Compass to Tooperang.

The more substantial timber-framed structure shown above, was erected with the help of parents just a few years later. By the time this photograph was taken, a new school had commenced operating at Mt Compass (from 1899) in the old Roadman's Cottage, with some of the pupils from the Nangkita school transferring there.

Officially known as the Nangkita Village Settlement School, it was originally built following the establishment of a short-lived Village Settlement in 1894. Inside that first school building there was just enough room for four long desks jammed up against one wall, with tall children needing to be careful as they squeezed past, so as not to bump their heads on the roof, with the walls being very low.

This school closed in 1943 (during World War 2), with students transferring to Mount Compass. The man in the centre, leaning on a bat, is believed to be Frank Wills. (*Refer to page six for information on his family.*)

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of the Chronicle for 2025.

We are now a quarter of the way into the 21st century, which seems to be flying by. The 1900s are moving further away from us and just how far is indicated by the information to be found on page 12. A few short lines from two 1996 school newsletters encapsulates the early excitement regarding **internet usage** at the school. The page also includes photos of the school's early laying out of fibre-optic cables, connecting all school buildings to a central file-server. It was noted that Mount Compass was one of the first schools in the state to be prepared for the exciting world of information technology.

Also, it is with thanks to the current school administration, that many items from the **school's archive boxes** have now been scanned into our archives. Over time, some of the vast collection of photographs may find their way into this publication, along with a request for a few missing class photos that neither the school, nor our archives, hold. Watch this space.

The **obituaries page** has proved to be of great interest to our readers. Although the passing of many people can be viewed with sadness, this page offers the chance to highlight some of the positive contributions a person may have made to our community. This is one area that your assistance can be of particular value - please get in touch if you know of someone's passing, and perhaps provide a few lines about them.

The **Wills family** may no longer have a direct family member living here, but thanks to Gary Davis, a Nangkita resident whose family line intersects theirs, we have access to a few classic photographs that help to illustrate an article about their time here. Pages 6 to 8 highlights this family, with pages 13 and 14 covering the lives of two children they were foster parents for.

Sometimes people just want to relax and have fun with like-minded people. This is where the **RAOB Lodge** came in. Many men who came back from World War 2 only saw service within this country and hence could not join the RSL. Some of them found a brotherhood in the Willunga Lodge, which moved to Mount Compass due to the large number of locals who started attending. Their story is on page 10.

Hope you enjoy reading this and helping to keep our local history alive

Steve Kettle (85568 444)

News reports from the past

Dear Sir,—

Will you add the name of Private **Frederic William Olney Dingle**, of Nangkita, to the ever-increasing list of our fallen heroes? Should you be able to spare space for just a few lines in *The Australian Christian Commonwealth*, his friends would be grateful for he was highly respected by all who knew him. A ward of the State, he was brought up by Miss Wills, of Nangkita, from a month old, and much credit is due to his guardian. He was a fine type of an Australian soldier. He enlisted when nineteen years of age, and was one of eight selected from 300 for the machine gun company. Went to Egypt, thence to England and France, and died from gun-shot wounds on October 11, 1917, just after his 21st birthday. His duty nobly done.

Yours sincerely,

R. STONE.

NANGKITA, JAN. 20.

The anniversary of the Methodist Church and Sunday School was held in the schoolroom on the 14th inst. Two sermons were preached by Rev. F. Bullock, from Willunga. While coming here on Sunday he had a nasty spill off his bicycle, but fortunately without any serious results. On Monday afternoon a tea was laid and partaken of by a large number, after which a public meeting was held, presided over by Mr. Bullock. Apologies were read from the members for the district, Messrs. McDonald, Blacker, and Ritchie, M'sP., and Mr. T. Goode, of Goolwa, for their unavoidable absence. Mr. Crisp, from Aldinga, and Mr. Martin, from Willunga, brought a large party from both places, who carried out a splendid programme of anthems, duets, &c. We had also as a visitor, Miss Hall, the champion singer from Broken Hill, who, in addition to helping the choir from Aldinga, sang a duet with Miss Bullock and two songs, "Boy in blue," and "Sing me to sleep," giving the residents a musical treat not often got here. Addresses were also delivered by the Rev. Mr. Bullock and Mr. Crisp. A vote of thanks to the visitors was moved by **Mr. F. Wills**, which was hardly given, with an extra cheer for Miss Hall. The votes were responded to by Messrs. Bullock and Crisp. Supper was then laid a large number partaking of it, bringing an enjoyable and successful anniversary gathering to a close.

Above: Australian Christian Commonwealth, 25 Jan 1918

Right: Southern Argus, 25 Jan 1906

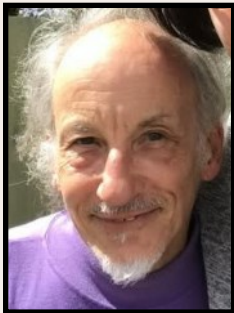
Jean Evelyn Wehrmann nee Bond (1936-2024) passed away on the 8th November. Jean was married to Hartley (1931-2021) for 62 years and the mother of Margaret (dec), Bev, Maxine, Shirley and Sandra. Hartley and Jean owned a dairy farm on Cleland Gully Road which they later sold to the Hicks family. Beverley and her husband Peter Perry are long-term Mt Compass residents.

Willie Innes: Moved to Australia with her parents from Holland at the age of 11. She married Dean Innes in 1965 and in 1967 they bought the Mt Compass Garage. Willie was treasurer of the Tennis Club, School Welfare Club and the Compass Cup Committee during their time here. She also served as the bar manager at the Sports and Social Club (Community Club) and thanks to her work with the Football Club Women's Auxiliary, became the club's first female Life Member.

(There is a heartfelt tribute from Trevor Connor on the following page.)

John Brame (right): Known by some as the 'tree man', John passed away suddenly in December last year at the age of 65. He was a valuable contributor to the Compass Creek Care group during its time here. Operating under the business name of *Fleurieu Natives*, John collected native seeds to grow tube stock on his Waterfall Drive property. His work helped to revegetate many parts of the Fleurieu, including the Mount Compass Area School swamp. His life was honoured with a ceremony on the property he shared with his partner, Andrea, with around 200 people in attendance.

(Includes information from the Nature Glenelg Trust website)



G.W. (Frodo) Krochmal (left): Passed away at the age of 69 in August 2024. Possibly not a well known name in Mt Compass, but to those interested in local history, he is highly regarded for his substantial contribution in this area (amongst his many other community involvements). He proof-read and assisted with transcribing numerous interviews for the Goolwa Family History room, including those of Mount Compass identities. Frodo donated his time, knowledge and quirky humour to anyone who required assistance in that very useful facility at the Goolwa library. A basic search of the internet shows his name connected to sixty two Fleurieu Peninsula history publications.

Audrey Gweneth Griffiths nee Waye (1933-2024) (right): Passed away in October last year at the age of 91. The only child of Albert and Lily Waye, Audrey was raised in what may be the oldest house in Mt Compass, the cottage alongside Roadman's Reserve. This was built by the Roadman, George Waye in around 1872. At various times after leaving school, Audrey worked at both the Co-op store, on Peters Terrace, and the State Bank, which was located on the nearby corner of Tay Road.

Following her marriage to Bob Griffiths (dec'd), they lived on Enterprise Road, at Yundi, where they raised two children, Ashley (dec'd) and Michelle. They left Yundi to live at Mt Barker, where Audrey remained for the rest of her life.

Following a funeral service there, she was brought to the Mt Compass Cemetery for burial. This cemetery is on land that had originally formed part of her family farm and was donated in 1939 by her father, for that purpose.

Audrey's funeral service can be viewed online here:

<https://adelaidehillsfunerals.com.au/livestream/audrey-griffiths-funeral-service/>



Ian Francis: (left) Passed away unexpectedly in February this year. Ian drove school buses at Mount Compass Area School for over 25 years, mainly on the Tooperang/Nangkita route. Amongst his other talents, he and his wife Colleen, had at one stage grown organic vegetables, and baked goods, for their stall at Willunga Farmer's Market.

The mid 1960's saw some important changes in our way of life. The move to decimal currency affected all Australia, but the special change to Mount Compass was the arrival of Dean and Willie Innes, who came from Mount Barker to purchase the Mount Compass Garage (servo). This change immediately had a positive effect on the town. The business became an important hub with the ability to fix anything mechanical that was broken, as well as food and drinks from the small shop within the building.

An important move forward was the introduction of Kawasaki motor bikes, which were a revelation to local farmers (mostly dairy) who previously walked or depended on their children, or an unreliable dog, to get cows in for milking.

However, what really made the difference was the people. Both Dean and Willie made a significant impact on the town and district. Dean was actively involved in the organisations that made our district work so well: CFS, Football, Community Centre, Tennis, Motor bike Club, and anything else that needed help or support. Willie and Dean also produced two sons, Tony and Paul, who themselves, made significant contributions to Mount Compass.



But wait! This article is about Willie, that beautiful young woman of Dutch origin, who was certainly 50% of anything the Innes' did for this town. She always said she considered Mount Compass as home - and chose here to be her final resting place.

Willie was a very special person with unbelievable energy, involved in all family and community activities, which were many and varied. Her service to the football club was outstanding, becoming the first female life member in 1988 in recognition of 20 years service. A special contribution, made among many, was the management of the kitchen and bar of the sports and social club for several years. This was a special effort because, despite the efforts of the committee of the football club following a robbery, the finances were in trouble. Willie took responsibility for sorting this, it could be said she took it by the throat, and believe me, if you did not fulfill your rostered responsibility, she took you by the throat. A very special effort.

In the 1950's and 60's, the end of the football season would be celebrated with a dinner that generally involved some solid drinking, singing, and telling ourselves how good we were. Only men were invited, which was probably how it had always been. It was however, catered for by women, wives, girlfriends, and any other females available, also how it had probably always been.

Willie, always a warrior for equal rights, decided it was NOT ON - and led a campaign to have women included in this celebration. Quite reasonable considering these women had cooked, run the canteen, washed the jumpers, been trainer's supporters and everything else during the football season!

Thanks to Willie Innes, Mount Compass is a much better place. Many people are very fortunate to have known her and although she died following a tough three year fight against cancer, Willie's determination to survive did not surprise those who had the joy of knowing her.



Dean and Willie Innes in a photograph taken by the Victor Harbor Times

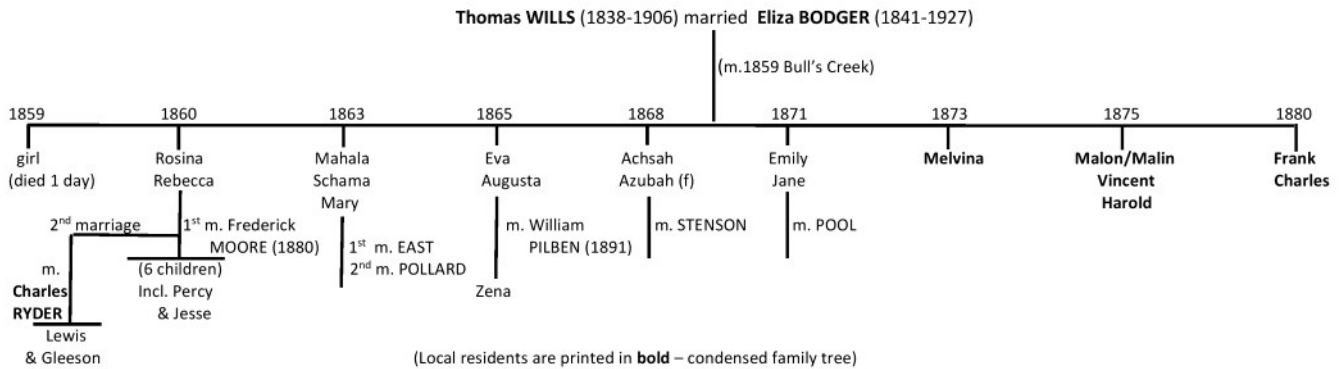
One Hundred Years Ago



This bridge over the **Nangkita Creek/drain** was built on what is now Willowburn Drive, and formed part of the detour of Nangkita Road over the swamp to avoid the steep hillside that locals now know as Connor's Corner. The Hailstone brothers, Bill & Fiddle, who lived close by, are known to have been involved in the construction of this section of the road and are possibly two of the men battling with the plough below. The older gentleman with the white beard (above, far left) is Richard Peters, the local councillor who helped arrange funding for the project. Thanks to Trevor Connor for supplying these photos, taken in around 1925. *(The bottom picture may be our best representation of what the Nangkita swamp looked like before the phragmites reeds became so dominant.)*



The Wills Family at Nangkita



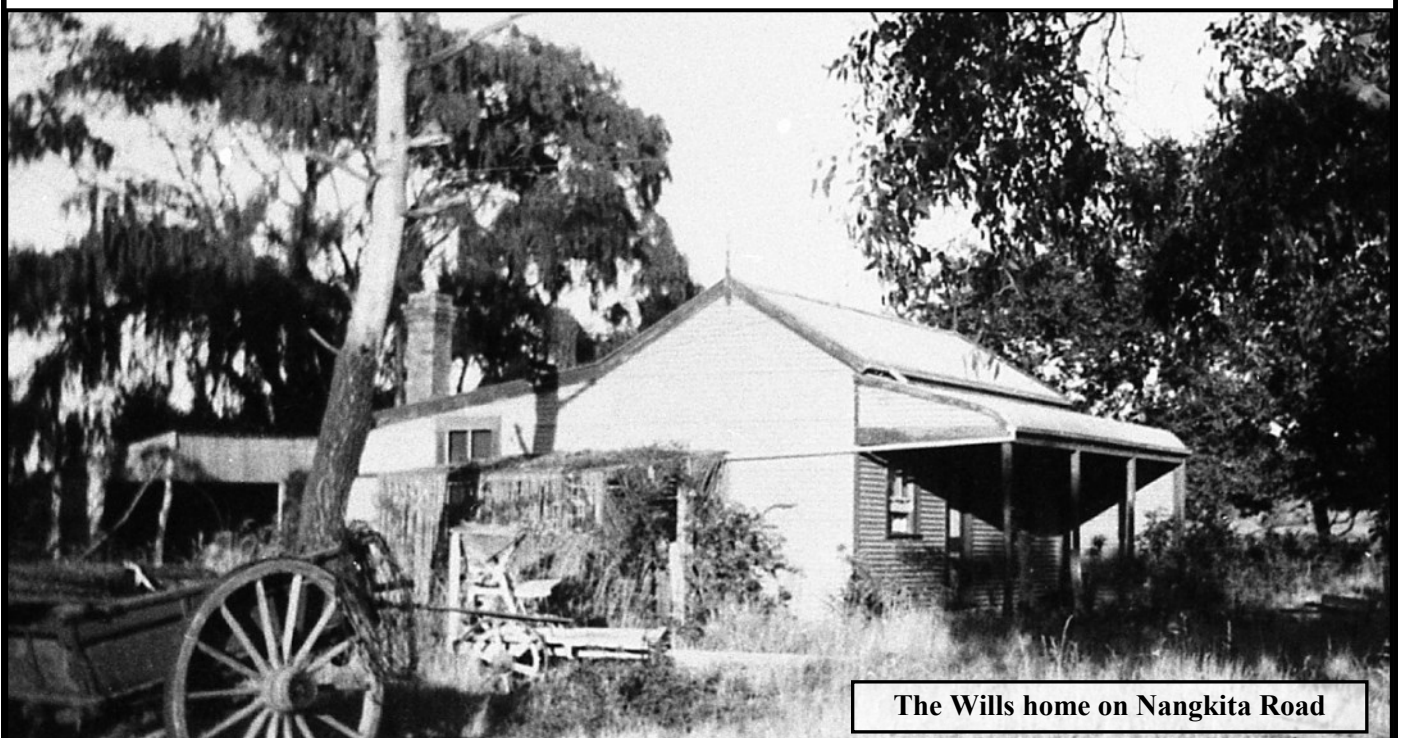
Thomas Wills (bn 1838) and **Eliza Bodger** (bn 1841), seemed destined to marry in South Australia, after both were born in the same ancient settlement of Brigstock in Northamptonshire, England. Eliza and her parents migrated to South Australia first, in 1846, aboard the “Isabella Watson”, with the eighteen year old Thomas Wills arriving here with his parents, aboard the ‘Sumner’, in 1857. Presumably the Bodger family had sent a positive report back to their neighbours in Brigstock regarding life in this British colony.

Two years after the Wills family’s arrival, Thomas and Eliza were married at Bull’s Creek (eight kilometres south of Meadows). Tragically their first recorded child died in that same year (1859), at the tender age of just one day, but the following eight children would all survive to reach adulthood.

The Wills family at Bull’s Creek were closely connected to the Primitive Methodist Church built there in 1861, particularly Thomas, who became a local preacher in the Meadows and Willunga circuits. The Wills and Bodger families were living in what appears to have been a thriving rural community, with some now familiar local names such as Usher, Nicol and Stone. The area’s population in 1890 stood at 142, which would grow to 241 people, living in 45 houses, by 1895.

Eliza Wills was the postmistress at Bull’s Creek from 1891 to 1896 with Thomas’ occupation recorded as a farmer. (The area seemed to have been a mixed farming area at the time.)

In 1891, Section 177 at Nangkita was allocated to Thomas Wills by the Colony’s Land Board. (This eighteen acre block is situated in the heart of Nangkita and would later be purchased by the Thomas family.) The next block (Section 53) was leased to his daughter Melvina in 1893 and the following block (Section 43) was leased to his son, Frank, as a Homestead Block in 1898. Moving into this region was possibly Thomas’ way of helping these two unmarried children gain a measure of independence. A third child also lived here, Malon Vincent Harold Wills,



The Wills home on Nangkita Road

Continued from previous page

(aka Sonny) is recalled as having an intellectual disability, and passed away at Nangkita in 1934, aged 58.

According to Arch Peters' written history notes, Thomas Wills, along with Frank and Melvina, walked here from Bull's Creek each Monday, carrying their week's food supply, and made the return journey on Saturdays. Eventually they built the house that Frank, Melvina and Malon lived in and which still stands today.

Thomas was clearly a devout man, both during his time at Bull's Creek and also later in life as superintendent of Nangkita's Methodist Sunday School. He may have resided at Bull's Creek and also at Nangkita in his final years, as he was listed under both places in the Sands & McDougall Directories. Upon his 1906 death at the Adelaide Hospital (later called Royal Adelaide Hospital) a memorial tablet was purchased with subscriptions from his Sunday School students, members of the church, and local residents, which was unveiled in his honour. He was buried in Adelaide's West Terrace Cemetery, on the same site as his mother, Mary. Thomas' wife, Eliza, would also be buried at this cemetery in 1927.

Various members of the Wills family were foster carers/parents to at least four children, Gwendoline Agnes Hill, Frederick William Olney Dingle, Frederick Twort, and Clifton (Cliff) Stirling McKinnon. Eliza Wills was recorded as Fred Twort's foster mother in his army service records as Thomas, his legal guardian, had passed away by then. Melvina was a foster mother to Olney Dingle, and was a joint foster parent with Frank, for Gwen, whose mother, Minnie Hill, had died during the birth. Whether it was Frank or Melvina, or both, who would officially be Cliff's foster parent is unknown at present. Following his 1934 McLaren Vale marriage to Ruby Jurgens, and after serving in World War 2, Cliff appears to have remained at Nangkita until the mid 1960s, when he moved to Papua New Guinea. He passed away there in 1973, soon after fathering two young children.

Frank and Melvina Wills retired to Strathalbyn, after their family had successfully farmed the Nangkita properties for almost 50 years, and which would then be sold to the Thomas family.



A "State" child living with a resident of Nangkita, had a very close shave the other day, it was busy with others in the field, one of whom had an axe and was cutting wood, the unfortunate boy stooped down for something and put his head in the track of the axe. Before the blow could be arrested the axe descended and sliced down a large piece of the scalp. The boy was brought at once to the local doctor who sewed up the partly severed flap and he was able to return home. It was a very narrow escape.

Above: An article from the **Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser** in 1915. This is possibly one of the boys cared for by Frank and Melvina Wills at Nangkita.

Information from Wills family land titles

*Frank Wills was listed as a labourer at Taillem Bend on the certificate of title to **Section 43**'s twenty acres, in 1912. This block was leased to Lance Thomas in 1946 before being sold to him five years later (1951).*

*On the title for **Section 177** his mother, Eliza Wills, was noted as a widow living at Nangkita in 1912. The land was transferred to her three unmarried children, Malon, Melvina and Frank in 1927 when she passed away. **Sections 290 and 369**, also in Eliza's name were transferred to her son, Frank, upon her death.*

***Section 53** was issued as a Land Grant to Melvina Wills in 1914 and was later leased to Lance Thomas prior to being sold to him in 1951.*

***Sections 366, 367, 368, 370, 371 and 372**, totalling 35 acres, were sold by George & Mary Maybee to Frank Wills over the period 1918 to 1923. This was land further along Nangkita Road (just prior to Waterfall Drive). **Section 367** was transferred to his ward of state child, Gwen Hill, in 1928 as a wedding present. She would take over the remaining blocks upon his death in 1963.*

Continued on following page...

Left: Melvina (aka Melvie) Wills dressed in her best finery, with her foster child, Gwen Hill. Gwen would marry George Hailstone at the Nangkita School in 1928. At that ceremony she was given away her other guardian, Frank Wills.

Continued from previous page

Few people now remember the Wills family, but it is believed that Frank lived with Gwen Hailstone (nee Hill) for the final years of his life, after previously retiring to Strathalbyn with his sister Melvina.

Frank also carted the mail between Nangkita and Mt Compass twice a week by motor car in 1930, according to an agreement he signed with the Postmaster-General's Dept. and witnessed by his earlier foster child, Cliff McKinnon. For this, Frank received £29 per year.

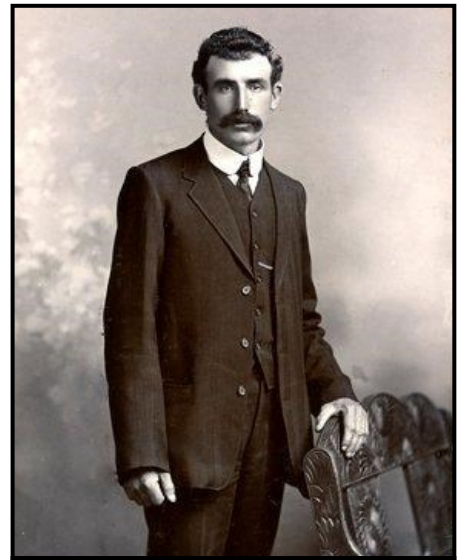
He was apparently given the nickname of 'Choof', due to his constantly being seen with a cigarette in his mouth. Those who did know Frank all those years ago, say he was well spoken of, with no recollections of adverse comments about him. In 1935 he was one of the eleven local men listed as trustees on the Nangkita Methodist Church's land title.

He is buried in an unmarked grave at Strathalbyn Cemetery, alongside his sister, Melvina.

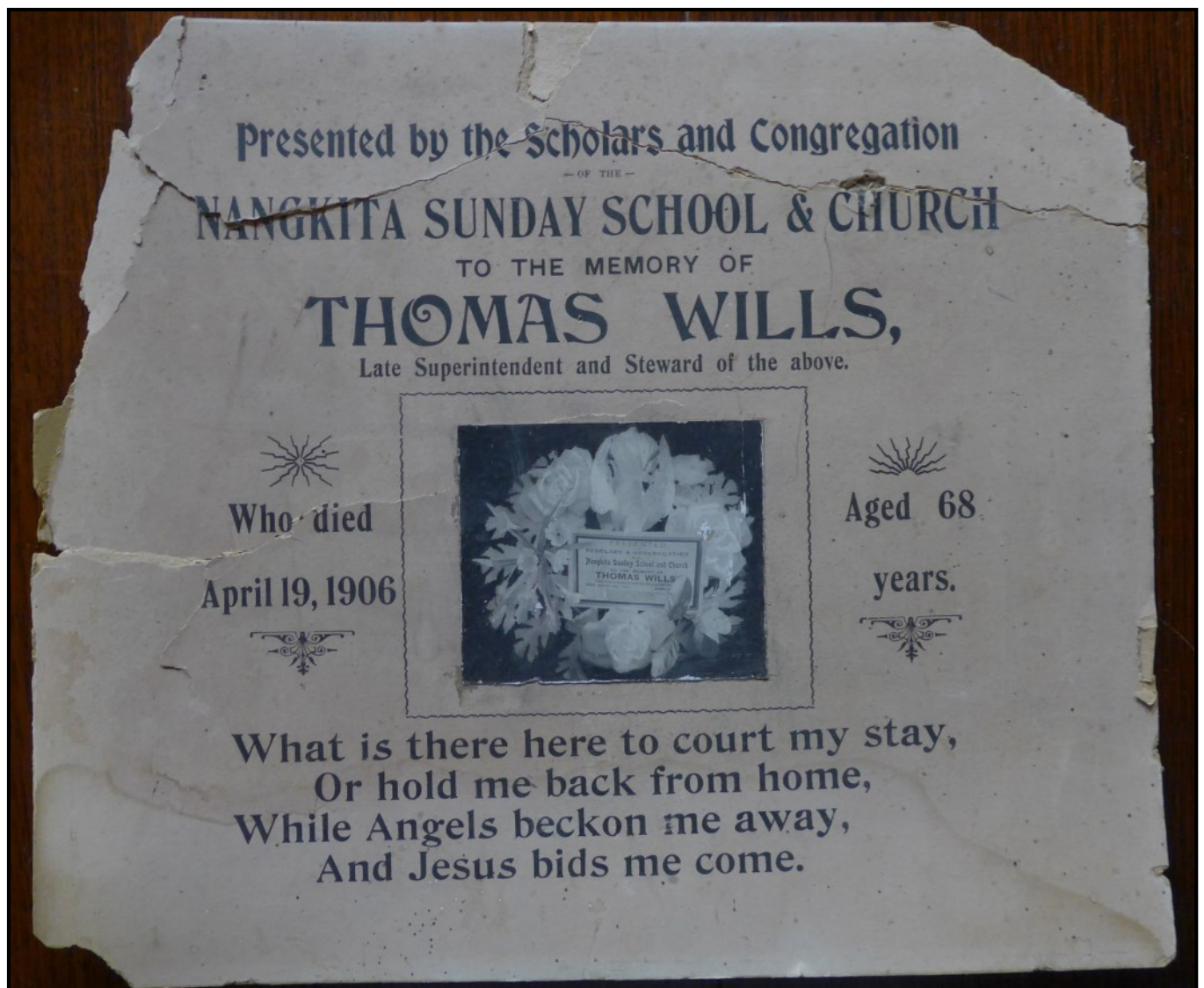
The back page has more photos of this family. Pages 13 & 14 provide more information on two of their WW1 foster children.

*Bull Creek as it is now known, was called Bull's Creek during the time the Wills family resided there.

References: State Library Passenger Records, Boothby Almanac + Sands & McDougall Directories - State Library online records, Arch Peters written history records, Gary Davis, Entre Nous, Family Search website, Ancestry.com



Frank Charles Wills (1880-1963)



This cardboard memorial to Thomas Wills is stored in the Mt Compass Archives. In the centre is a photograph possibly of the plaque unveiled in Thomas' honour, within a floral wreath.

Highlights from State Library WW1 Letters

Eva Augusta Wills (1865-1962), an older sister to Frank & Melvina, married William John Pilben (1864-1936) of Macclesfield, at Bull's Creek in 1891. Three different relatives who were serving overseas during World War 1 wrote to Eva and we are fortunate that these letters and postcards survived long enough to be donated to the State Library. Two of these correspondents, Fred Twort and Olney Dingle, are listed on the Mt Compass-Nangkita Honour Roll, with the third correspondent being Jesse Moore, a son of Rosina Moore (nee Wills).

Frederick (aka Fred) Twort briefly served in the Middle East before being discharged due to his chronic hearing problem. During his time in the army, he sent two letters and three postcards to his relatives, William and Eva Pilben (nee Wills).

A few items of note in these letters are: Fred mentions discovering his enlisted cousin, Perc, was also driving in 'the Artillery' and he hoped to catch up with him. This cousin, **Percy Vincent Rivers Moore**, was the son of Rosina Wills, and would lose his life at the Somme -it is not known if they ever caught up with each other. Fred, also wrote about swimming every day while in camp, and travelling to Cairo to skate in a 'stone rink'. He wrote about his hair being shaved off while in camp, which made him look like "a bald headed rooster".

Jesse Austin Moore, the brother of the Percy Moore mentioned above, also wrote a letter to his aunt, Eva Pilben, from France, during a spell away from the front. In that, he described the weather as very damp with mud and slush being plentiful. He had however, not received all his mail as "we are all over the place in this country". He did know that that Percy (Moore) had been injured during his second 'stint' but had not heard any more.

A young **Frederick William Olney Dingle** also wrote to his Auntie Eva. Olney, as he was called, wrote of his surprise at receiving nine letters at once, all of which arrived while he was away "getting my teeth". (He was possibly fitted with dentures during his period of service.) He too spoke of the cold weather, with the sight of snow making an impression on this young Nangkita man, who then participated in the predictable snow fight. He was disappointed in not yet receiving a letter from his mother, despite writing to her "almost every week".

He was however, not surprised to hear that his cousin **Fred Twort** had been medically discharged, and wondered how he had managed to be sent overseas in the first place. The death of the Nangkita lad, **Jim Langley**, had surprised him and **Miss Wills** (Melvina) had written that since this loss, "everything seemed upset at the swamp".

Olney's only mention of the battlefield was that, in some places, "the fellows are up to their knees in mud". In a letter to his cousin, **Zena Pilben** (Eva's daughter), Olney did let her know that he had served on the front line but had also spent some time in hospital for what was thought to be measles. He was pleased that at the time of writing it had stopped snowing and not so cold, although it was still "awfully muddy". He had also "met a good many chaps" that he already knew over there.

Olney wrote about an issue of rum that night, which was causing "quite a lot of joy in the joint". He again mentioned having not heard from his mother for a long time but had been sure she would have spent Xmas at "the swamp" (ie Nangkita).

For a Ward of the State, raised in the swamps of Nangkita, where he lived in a basic timber & iron home, he had a surprising view of the locals: "I have a very poor opinion of these French people here, they are a very dirty lot. There is not much difference between them and the Egyptians."

Right: A postcard sent from Egypt by Fred Twort, to Eva Pilben (nee Wills), during WW1.



CAIRO - Groupe of Crocodils.

Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (RAOB) Willunga Lodge No.81 (1952 - 1995)

“The Buffalo lodge is a fun fraternity in which men of any religious or political views are allowed to join”.
(Wikipedia quote)

The original Buffaloes were formed in England over 200 years ago by a comedian (William Sinnett) and an artist (Joseph Lisle) to preserve what they saw as a much neglected ballad, called “We’ll Chase The Buffalo”. From this simple bit of tomfoolery, the first lodge was formed from fellow theatre hands and technicians. After gaining a measure of respectability, the Order gradually spread throughout the British Commonwealth, with many Lodges also establishing in Australia.

During the second half of the twentieth century, such a group of men met and socialised at the Mt Compass hall each fortnight. Many of them were returned servicemen from the Second World War who felt comfortable meeting under the regimented rules-based system of the ‘Buffs’ as they were known. Medals (called jewels) were awarded and worn on these evenings along with a uniform, for the senior members, of distinctive cuffs and apron.

Another section of the adult male population of this town opted to join the Masonic Lodge at Goolwa. Whichever organisation a man joined, would likely become his circle of friends and contacts when negotiating the tribulations of life.

The **RAOB Lodge No. 81** was formed at Willunga in 1952, with their inaugural meeting held in Willunga Hall on Friday, 27th June that year. Regular meetings would then be held on alternate Fridays in the Oddfellows Hall.

One of the four original founders who worked through the formalities leading up to this meeting, was Jack Cooney, the local garage owner, having been a Lodge member prior to moving to Mt Compass. In a recorded 2008 interview with his surviving wife, Neta, she recalled this was a time when the town did not have a pub but these meetings allowed the men to socialise and have a drink in the evenings. This was still a time when pubs closed at 6.00pm, creating what was known as the “six o’clock swill”. The lodge meetings were one way that people could legally drink until a later hour (which also applied to the RSL meetings). Members could (and did) also travel to the larger lodge at Victor Harbor, to attend their meetings.

Member of the ‘Buffs’ was open to any man (only men were allowed to join) who was over the age of eighteen and a “True and Loyal Supporter of the British Crown and Constitution”. Men of any religious or political views could join but any discussion of these topics was forbidden at meetings. It has been noted that a number of the lodge’s members were ex World War 2 servicemen who had served only within Australia. As this excluded them from joining the RSL (Returned Services League), they opted to join the Buffaloes.

According to the RAOB Grand Lodge of SA website, their aims are ***“to come together for entertainment, whilst raising money and other benefits for charity. The only obligations on our members are to respect each other and to respect our traditions.”***

For that 1952 opening night, 200 invitations were printed and distributed. Using what would now be viewed as quaint terms, a ‘minstrel’ was engaged for the opening night and a member was selected to provide the ‘grazing’ (food). A decision was made that this Lodge’s colours would be red and white.

Brother Schmidt (members were addressed as brothers) donated a pair of buffalo horns sourced from Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory. Other items donated or loaned included a sword, a set of collars, candlesticks, a gavel, and a constable’s baton. (The reason for these items must be left to the imagination of we non-members.) Wikipedia has the following description of RAOB lodges:

...The standard of dress is usually a shirt and tie, coat or jacket, and trousers. The Lodge is structured like an ‘Ancient City’. The chief officer is called the ‘Worthy Primo’, and subordinate officers, as ‘city officers’. Officers wear chain collar regalia, whilst individual members have their own regalia or medals, known as jewels. Meetings are begun when members are standing and the Worthy Primo constitutes the lodge. This process varies depending on the Buffalo order.

Once this formal part of lodge is complete, the lodge moves into "harmony". During harmony, mock charges are held, or brothers are asked to render items of harmony, which usually includes jokes or songs, sometimes accompanied by instruments... Most lodges meet together for fellowship and mutual social enjoyment. The desire to cultivate the spirit of brotherhood, to pool funds, for the purposes of helping others.”

Continued from previous page

With a growing number of members drawn from the Mount Compass region, the lodge voted in August 1957 to move their meetings to Mount Compass, on the second and fourth Thursday each month, with the first meeting held here on 12th September that year. The Lodge's name would however, remain as Willunga.

Alcohol was an acceptable contribution to the evening's fun, and Primo Underdown was noted as playing his piano accordion during the Mount Compass 'harmony' sessions. The minute book notes that members from neighbouring lodges would regularly attend meetings here, including from those at Goolwa, Myponga, Meadows, Inman Valley, Horseshoe (Old Noarlunga) and Victor Harbor.

In 1959 the Lodge's Secretary (C S Semmens) sought permission from the Mt Compass Community Centre to hang a picture of Her Majesty the Queen, along with the dispensation (lodge charter) and emblem of their lodge. Approval was also sought to hang an illuminated "Lest We Forget" sign. They were meeting in the Supper Room during this period and placed a fridge in the hall for their own use.

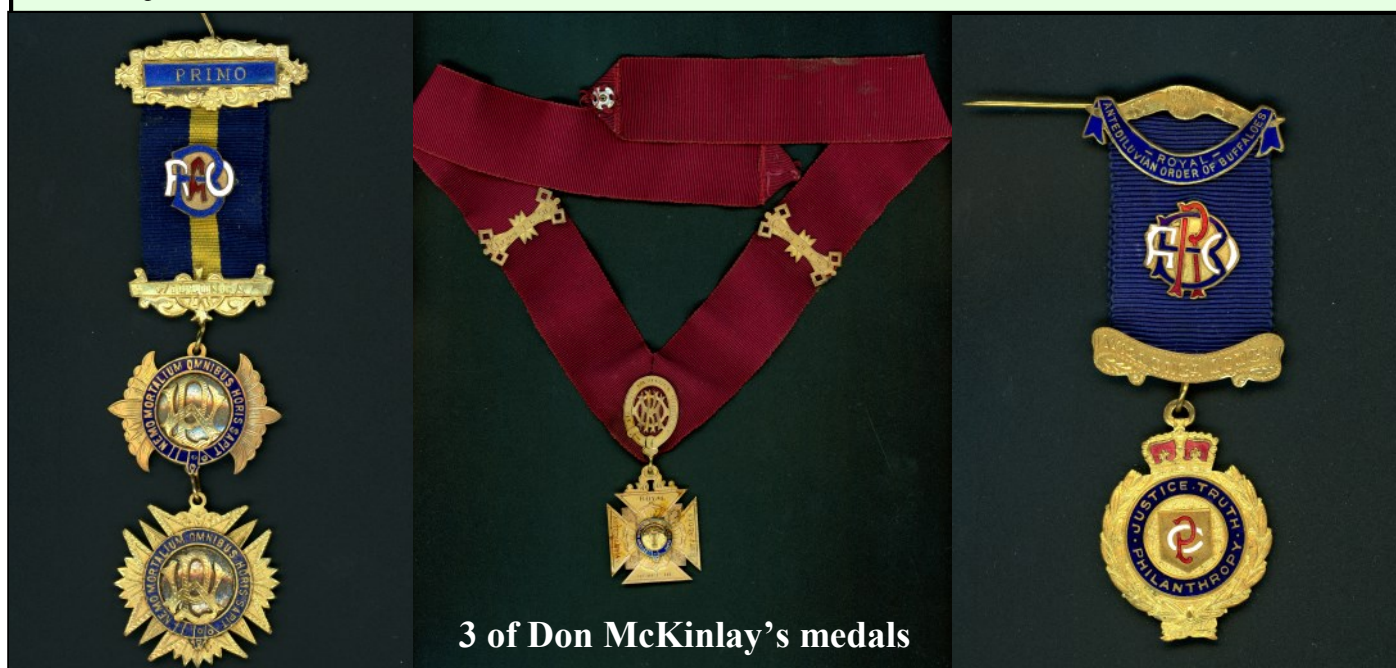
There were four levels of promotion, known as degrees, within the Buffs, including the title of Knight (K.O.H.) and Rt Honourable (R.O.H.) the lodge head was given the title of Primo.

Ceremonies were held to induct new members into the Buffaloes or when they were elevated to the next degree. These were conducted under formalities laid down by the governing body.

The Buffs, although not large in number, with regular attendances of a dozen or so at meetings, appear to have met a particular need for those who joined. Collecting for a Christmas tree fund was an important part of fund raising at meetings, with presents given to member's children each year. A benevolent fund was also kept to assist those in need as the situation arose.

This Lodge folded in 1995, donating their few possessions (a cupboard and chairs) to the Community Centre. The late Donald H McKinlay was initiated and enrolled into this lodge as a 'Brother of the Chapter' on 5th March 1961, after previously being a member of the Myponga Lodge. His family has donated a number of items that Don wore during his time in the lodge, to our Archives, some of which are currently on display in the Hall Foyer.

References: <https://raob.com.au/index.html> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Antediluvian_Order_of_Buffaloes,
Mount Compass Archive RAOB records and interviews.



Some known members of this Lodge

J (Keith) Excell	M B Dunstan	E D Jones	? Virgo	D Turton
W (Bill) Excell	R W (Sam) Coles	Keith Richards	Bill Cook	O Underdown
Don McKinlay	Jack Cooney	Colin Semmens	Ben R Peters	B H Schmidt
Ken Ekers	A E Hunter	Ray Lewis	Leo Corbett	
Clem Tonkin	Don Blakely	A Sorrell	Robin Kelly (Yundi)	
K A Reynolds	R K Blakely	B Evans	C Ekers	
W G Parsons	L J Whyatt	K Burfitt	R Bradley	
T N Schulz	Leslie J Hokin	Roy Payne	Onslow Nicol	
E D Jones	Reg Bradley	? Wood	? Rothe	

The Internet Is Here!

(Mount Compass Area School Newsletter articles from 1996)

From the 24th May 1996 newsletter

The school is now hooked up to the Internet. This will give students a great opportunity to access a lot of useful (and some non-useful) information. Each secondary student will be given a letter explaining about this. Parents of students who do not wish their children to have access to the internet, having read the form which the child will bring home, should contact Mr Bolt at the school to avoid any misunderstandings (eg students making this decision for themselves).

31st May 1996 newsletter (two items)

Five of the network computers are now hooked up to the internet, and approved students are already accessing data (eg minute-by-minute tracking of the Space Shuttle). **We have 2 hours unlimited access per day.**

Floppy Discs Are Fading

It doesn't seem very long ago that the **floppy disc** was a major breakthrough in information storage. It was followed by the double density disc, and that, by the high density and the quad. The next generation - already available - is the 'cartridge' which has the equivalent capacity of 400 floppy discs! (and costs about the same as a floppy used to). It is a very exciting time to be alive?!



Two MCAS students sharing an early computer

In 1998 the school was wired up with fibre-optic cable thanks to sixty volunteers from the school's staff, governing council, parents & students.

Although this project would be unlikely to pass an OH&S test today, it did allow for the school's entry into the world of information technology.



Olney as he was known, was born at Norwood on 23rd September 1896. He may never have known his mother or father, as he became a ward of the state, being released into the care of a foster mother, Melvina Wills, at the age of just 5 weeks. The name of Olney's father does not appear on the birth register, only his mother, Lydia Dingle.

Melvina received a subsidy to care for Olney, but only up to 13 years of age. Presumably after this he was old enough for paid work, although he was 'sentenced' to be a ward of the state until he was eighteen years of age.

Members of the extended Wills family raised at least three other wards of the state, Cliff McKinnon, Frederick Twort, and Gwen Hailstone. (refer page 7)

Olney enlisted on 23rd March 1916 at the age of 19. His service record shows he was an unmarried farmer, who was 6 foot 1 inch (1.84m) in height, weighing 74.8 kilograms and with "a fresh complexion, grey eyes & brown hair". His religion was recorded as Methodist.

When enlisting, he formally declared that he did not want to prepare a will and, as he was by then 19 years of age, Melvina was simply listed by him as a 'friend' under the next of kin section, rather than as a foster mother.

Private Olney Dingle left to serve in France and Belgium via Egypt on 4th May 1916, serving with the 8th Australian Machine Gun Company. It is reported that he was one of only eight men who were selected from 300, for this particular company.

Olney sustained wounds from action in the field (a compound skull fracture from gunshot) on 11th October 1917 and died at the 11th Casualty Clearing Station, aged 21 years. He is buried at Godewaersvelde British Cemetery, France.

In a 1918 letter to the "Australian Christian Commonwealth" paper, outlining Olney's life, Ray Stone of Nangkita described him as "highly respected by all who knew him".

Prior to receiving Olney's war medals, Melvina was compelled to sign a declaration that if a closer relative was to be found at some later date, she would agree to return them. No other relative did come forward.

His foster mother, Melvina Wills, died in Strathalbyn on the 15th October 1956, aged 83, and is buried in an unmarked grave.

Private Olney Dingle is listed on the Mt Compass-Nangkita Honour Roll.

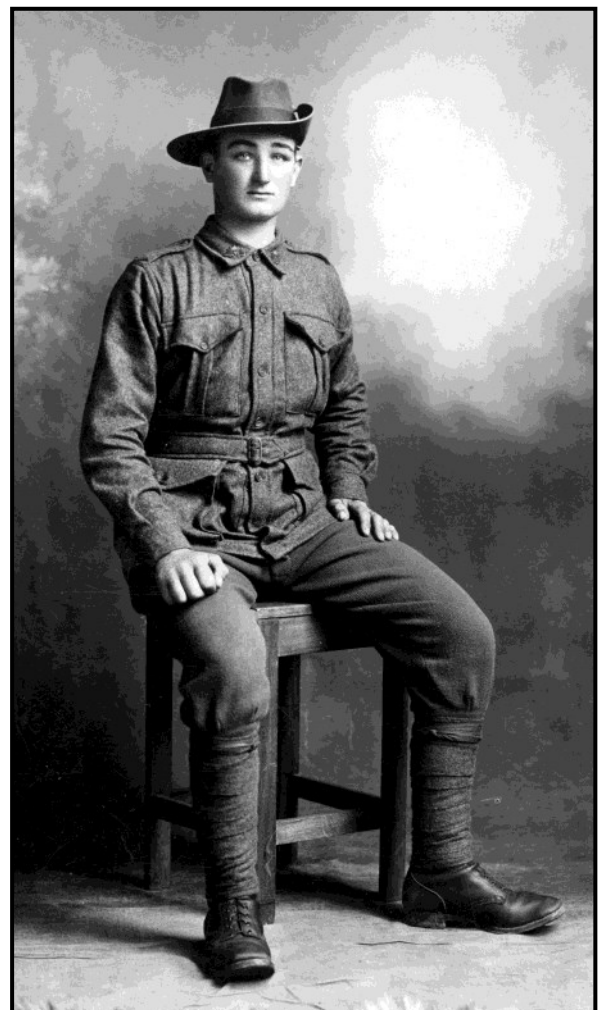
References: National Archives of Australia Service Records, "A Guide Behind The Lines" by Richard Kleinig, trove.nla.gov.au & Mt Compass Archive records.

Below: From *The Express and Telegraph* 2nd Nov 1917

DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

DINGLE.—Died of wounds in France, October 11, Private Frederic William Olney Dingle, aged 21 years. He sleeps in a hero's grave. God's will be done.—Inserted by M. Wills, Nangkita.

Above right: Olney and Gwen Hill Right: Olney in uniform



Frederick Twort WW1

With his mother placed in the Destitute Asylum, Frederick Twort (recorded as John Twort in his 1890 birth records) was briefly admitted to the Industrial School at Magill in August 1892. This school was established by the colonial government for children who were under their care as being either neglected, destitute, or orphaned. They would remain at the school until suitable accommodation was found for them, such as a foster family, which was the case for Frederick (as his name would be recorded from then on). His father was never identified.

Mr Thomas Wills of Bull's Creek took on the responsibility of foster parent, from August 1892 until late 1903 when, at the age of 13¾, Fred was returned to the school as 'unsuitable'. He was then fostered out to various other individuals until 1906 when he reached sixteen years of age. One of these carers did return him for 'misconduct'.

In September 1915, at the age of 24, Fred enlisted for World War I. A short stature man at 5 foot 2¾ inches tall (1.59m) he somehow managed to get through the requisite medical despite having a considerable hearing problem. Although he only lived with the Wills until he was 13, Fred listed Mrs Eliza Wills as his foster mother and next of kin. This was both a touching and a sad commentary on this boy's life growing up without knowing his family.

His occupation was recorded as both a farm labourer, and as an ostler (employed to look after horses), which probably is the reason he was placed with the 9th Light Horse and later as a driver with the (horse-drawn) Field Artillery. In February 1916 he was sent to the Middle East aboard HMAT Warilda, but within three weeks of arriving in Egypt, his deafness was officially appearing in his records, resulting in Fred's return to Australia aboard 'Port Sydney' in June that year. How this hearing problem was not picked up in his initial medical is anyone's guess, but he may have developed strategies to make it less obvious.

Fred's medical case sheet states that he had a 'chronic middle ear catarrh' and had been deaf all his life, with an operation carried out when he was 12 years old, failing to improve his hearing. The report also states that his hearing had not been tested at the time of enlisting and he '*should not have been sent*'. It further states that he had not been able to do any drill work and had been offered a discharge while in Australia but was so keen to enter the war that he declined to be discharged.

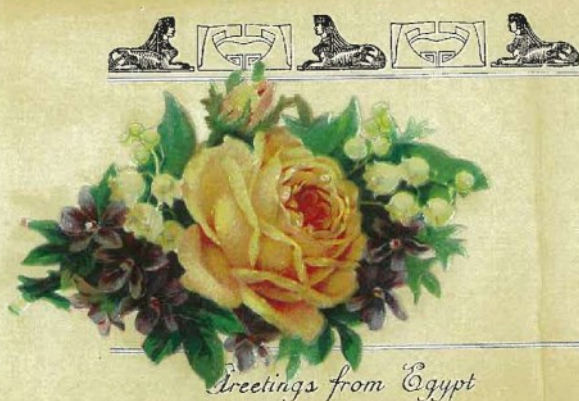
His formal medical discharge due to being '*permanently unfit*' was dated 24th July 1916, but a note did add that his character was 'good'. Three medals were issued to Private F Twort: the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

As he was working at Minlaton prior to enlisting, his name is recorded on the War Memorial there, and is also on the Mount Compass-Nangkita Honour Roll.

Tragically, Fred died in a farm accident at Minlaton in the year following his discharge, after becoming entangled in the belt of a chaff cutter. The following year, the public trustee auctioned off his estate, which consisted of "seven good, medium draught horses, aged 5 to 8 years".

Following a large attendance at Fred's funeral, a headstone (right) was erected by Minlaton's "League of Loyal Women". **There are no known photographs of Frederick Twort.**

Below: *A postcard sent by Fred while serving in Egypt.* Right: *His headstone at Minlaton Cemetery.*



Forget - me - not

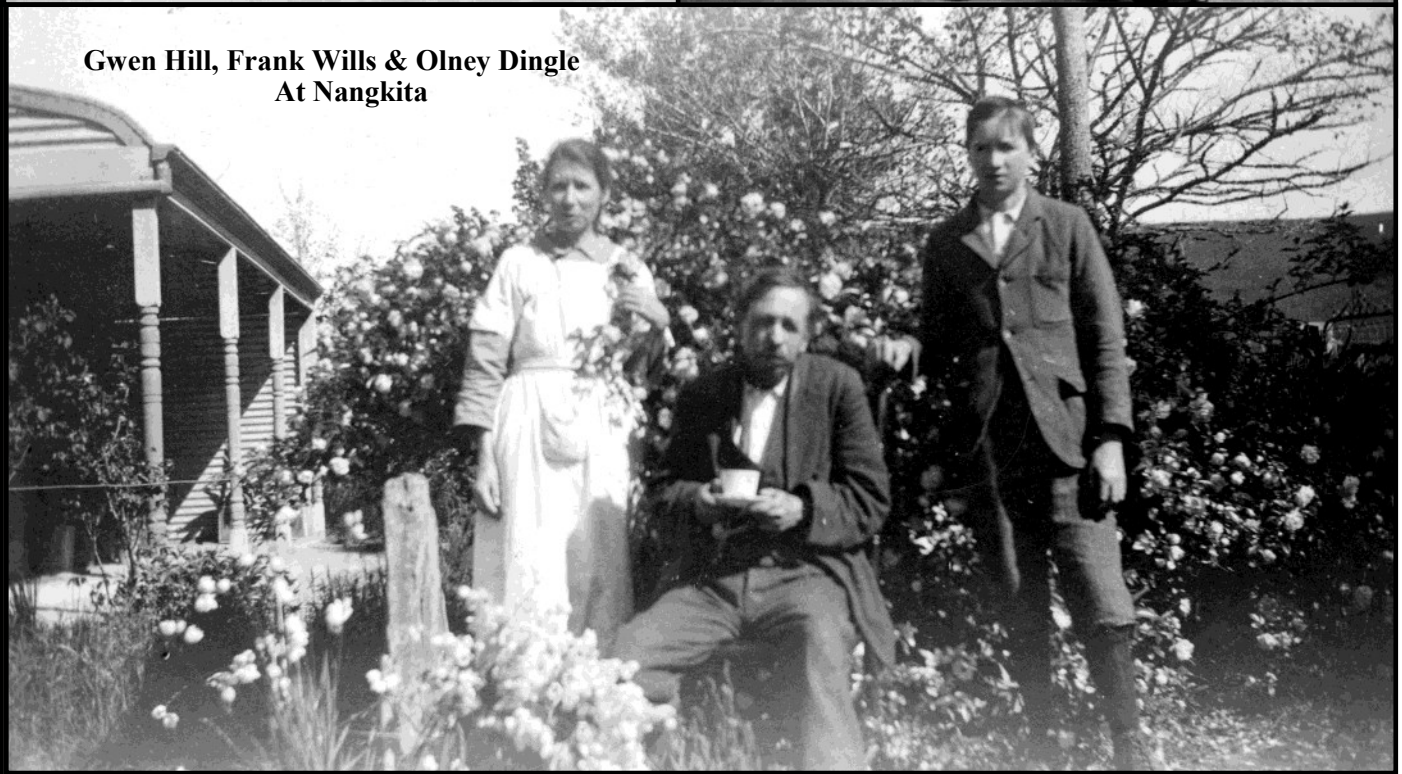
For the sake of those I dearly love,
And in the cause of Liberty,
I've left my southern sunny home,
And crossed the wide and trackless sea.
Heaven guard and bless you, dearest one
Whilst I in foreign lands way roam;
Though I am absent in the flesh,
My tenderest thoughts are of my home
Good luck to you whilst I'm away.
I know the parting cost you pain;
My earnest prayer from day to day is
God be with till we meet again.



Melvina Wills



Gwen Hill



**Gwen Hill, Frank Wills & Olney Dingle
At Nangkita**

The views & opinions reflected in this Journal do not represent the views of the Mt Compass War Memorial Community Centre Inc.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of articles printed here. If you wish to advise of any corrections required or can add further information regarding any item, please contact me using the address below.

Most importantly: if you have any information, documents or photographs that that could be of interest to the Archives please give me a call or send an email.

Steve Kettle (mtcompassarchives@gmail.com)