

THE MOUNT COMPASS ARCHIVES

# CHRONICLE

A FORUM TO PROMOTE THE HISTORY & ARCHIVES OF MOUNT COMPASS

No 24 MARCH 2024



## Fundraising - World War 1

This rare photograph is believed to be of the 1917 Australia Day fundraising event held at Nangkita, possibly on George Stone's property. These patriotic days were held to raise funds during the First World War, with proceeds going towards a 'Wounded Soldier's Fund'. The dates would vary each year, with this Australia Day held on Saturday 24th November. At this time, Nangkita had a population of around 88 people while Mount Compass had grown to around 100 residents.

A record amount of £49 was raised on this day, including £9.11.6 through a 'mayoral election' conducted during the day between two locals, Mr Thomas Wills and Mr Chaplin (with Mr Wills winning). Stalls, tea and supper were donated by the residents and events such as horse races (hurdles, galloping and trots), along with tossing the caber and foot sports were organised throughout the afternoon. (*The average weekly wage was a little over £2 at the time.*)

Amongst the stalls was a fruit & Lolly stand by Mr & Mrs T Wills and Mr & Mrs J Stone, cool drinks supplied by Mr R Coles and Mr Chaplin, a Jumble stall by Mrs F Darwin, tea supplied by Mr & Mrs George Stone, and supper by Mr & Mrs S Simons. To top it all off, a concert was held in the evening.

The very first Australia Day fundraiser was held at Mt Compass in 1915, supported by the Nangkita residents, and which raised £22.18. That day was the first time the Union Jack was hoisted on the hall grounds and also featured a married vs singles football match, while the evening's events included Mr Dowell playing the bagpipes. Mrs G Waye planted a pine tree in honour of Howard Peters, the first Mt Compass volunteer for that war.

A carnival was also held on the Nangkita schoolgrounds that same year, raising £36.10 which was forwarded to the South Australian Soldiers Fund by Mr Samuel Simons. On that day, the Union Jack was unfurled on a new flagstaff by Mrs W Stone (wife of the donor of the flagstaff and flag). Mrs C Langley and Mrs F Darwin were each called upon to plant a tree in honour of their sons (Jim Langley & Harold Darwin) who had enlisted from Nangkita.

Australia Day was also held at Nangkita in 1916, raising £31.12.6, with a concert provided by the Mt Compass school children as arranged by their teacher, Miss Crowley, along with the usual stalls and a sports programme.

The photograph shown above was supplied to the Archives by Mrs Ronda Arthur (nee Peters), with the four people marked with a cross below them likely to be Peters family members.

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## Editorial

Welcome to this 24th edition of the *Chronicle*.

Some of the key people involved in the development of this district are those who took on the responsibility of becoming our **local councillor**. This third tier of governance may not attract the same level of media attention as our state or federal politicians, but it does play a key role in how a region develops.

This story of the **Nangkita Ward** spans one hundred and sixty four years, evolving as the Nangkita and Mount Compass townships expanded. An understandable view held by some from outside this region is that we do not usually elect our representatives - they are chosen from within the community by the community. With the backing of the Community Centre that person has often stood unopposed to represent us.

Of course, as the region has grown and boasts a more varied population, these unopposed elections have now become a less frequent occurrence, and may in fact not be seen again. The history of these council elections and who has been willing to undertake the role of our elected representative, can be found on page 4.

With ANZAC day just around the corner, it is opportune that an article on the **Knitting Guild/Circle** is published here. During both the World Wars, ladies from this area sought to provide items of comfort for those who enlisted. We are fortunate that some of their World War 2 record books have survived and are safely stored in our Archives. They have formed the basis of this story, along with the wonderful treasure that is the National Library's 'trove' website, which provided details of the World War 1 ladies. This website ([trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au)) features most of the past Australian newspapers that were ever printed and is well worth a visit by anyone with even the slightest interest in history.

This year is the centenary year for the **Mount Compass Football Club**. If anyone has old trophies or artifacts that are hidden away in cupboards, please feel free to contact me as they can be included in a hall display this year. Other than that, keep those old photographs coming in.

Steve Kettle  
85568444

### COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Retiring councillors on the South Coast were all returned unopposed when nominations closed for annual elections last Friday. The Mayor of Victor Harbour (Mr. S. H. Lovell) was also re-elected unopposed. Details:—

Victor Harbour, mayor, S. H. Lovell; North Ward, S. A. Tyler; South, H. L. Zerner; West, R. G. Bastian.

District Council of Encounter Bay—Encounter Bay Ward (Mrs.) J. D. Beer; Port Victor, W. T. Henderson; Waitpinga, A. A. Henderson.

District Council of Port Elliot and Goolwa—Goolwa Ward, G. L. Lawrence; Middleton, A. T. D. Higgins; Nangkita, D. A. Black; Port Elliot, L. G. M. Brittain; Sturt R. B. Galpin.

District Council of Yankalilla—Myponga West Ward, R. M. Broadbent; Rapid Bay, R. G. Wiese; Second Valley, E. H. Hunt; Yankalilla, A. M. Bennett.

Left:  
The Victor Harbor Times,  
21st May 1971.  
No elections required on the entire south coast.

Right:  
The Victor Harbor Times,  
11th Aug 1916.

## News reports from the past

### MOUNT COMPASS.

Although the weather was not promising **Australia Day** was successfully celebrated here. The attendance was large. In the afternoon trees were planed in honor of local men who have enlisted—Ptes. V. Hicks, A. Peters, G. Slater, A. Dowell, A. Kiesewetter, A. Campbell, L. Wilson, D. Waye, S. Waye, and W. Trevena. Altogether 20 from this town have gone to the front. A pine tree was planted in memory of Lord Kitchener. Mr. Peters gave a patriotic address. A fruit and lollie stall was conducted by the young ladies of the knitting guild, and did good business. Sports had been arranged for the afternoon, but were abandoned on account of the inclemency of the weather. Tea was provided and was well patronised. In the evening a concert was held. The school children gave many patriotic



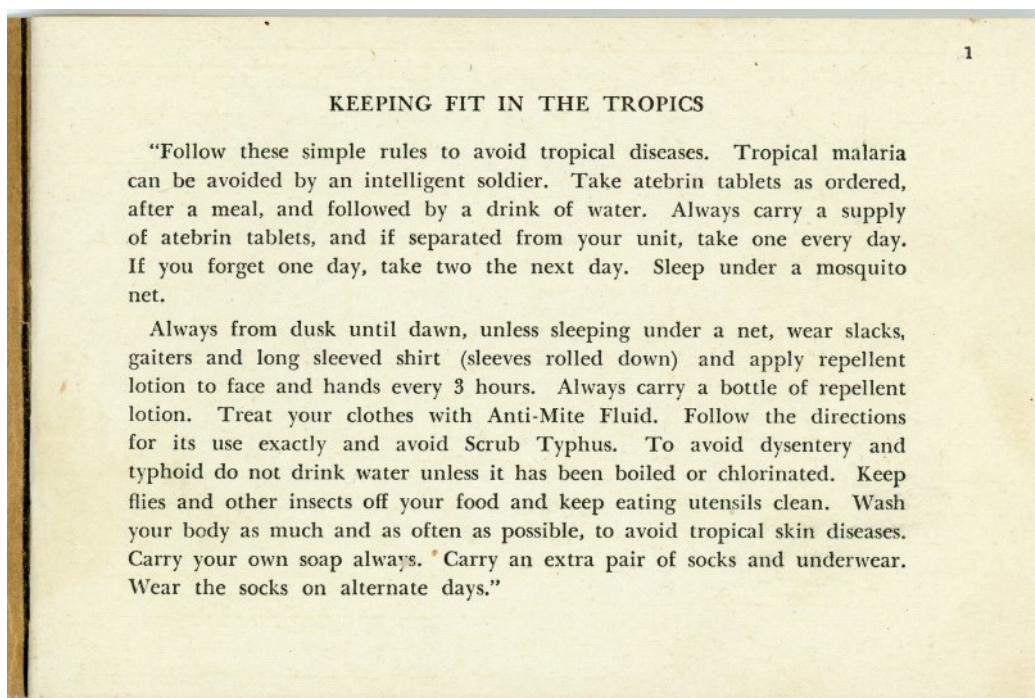
*This section of the Chronicle relies on readers notifying us when those connected to this region pass on.*

**Colin McKinlay (25/1/1936 - 12/11/2023)** was married to Jean (nee Price) for 66 years. Colin was the grandson of two of our earliest pioneers, Harry Pomfrett McKinlay and Sarah (Annie) Jacobs. He was father to Trevor, Suzanne & Michael (dec).

**Olive Eileen McKinlay (nee Whyborn) (1/3/1928 -17/2/2024).** Was married to the late Donald McKinlay (a son of the above mentioned Harry McKinlay and Annie Jacobs). Mother of Barry (dec), Kevin and Trish. Olive & Don had farmed at Enterprise Colony, Mt Moon and Currency Creek before moving to Tumbay Bay in 1979. Olive had lately been residing in Victor Harbor.

**Jacqueline (Jackie) Bishop (24/3/1932 - 18/12/2023)** of 'Koweo', Hope Forest and sister-in-law of Dorothy McKinlay (nee Bishop).

**William Allan Brunton (1/9/1944 - 25/12/2023)** Previously a resident of Mt Compass and known as 'Bitumen Bill'. Lately living at Goolwa North. Husband of Ros.



With Anzac Day approaching it is perhaps appropriate to print this page from **Murray Jack Turner's** AIF "Record of Service Book".

Murray served from 1940 to 1945 including time as a stretcher bearer on the Kokoda Track.

It his hard to reconcile the above instructions with the photo from his Battalion's book: "**The Blue and Diamond at War**".

Murray's story can be found on the Archive's website at:

<https://mtcompassarchives.org/honourroll/ww2/turner-murray.html>



## The Nangkita Council Ward (1858-2022)

*The manner in which local government is delivered in this district changed in 2022 when we switched from a single councillor representing this local ward, to being part of a much larger regional ward with three councillors sharing this responsibility. Although you would have been hard pressed to find anyone who actually lived here in the mid-1800s, this change reflected where our first council experience began in 1858 – part of a large ward which stretched all the way down to the coast. This is the story of that Nangkita Ward.*

On 16<sup>th</sup> August 1853, the **District Council of Encounter Bay** was proclaimed. This covered a large portion of the Fleurieu Peninsula, including the combined Hundreds of Nangkita (as it was written then), Encounter Bay, Goolwa, and part of Waitpinga.

This proved to be too large an area during a period with limited transport options and a poor network of roads which, following an 1856 petition from ratepayers, resulted in this administration being split in two. This created the **District Council of Port Elliot & Goolwa** (consisting of the Hundreds of Nangkita and Goolwa) and the District Council of Inman Valley (renamed that same year to the District Council of Encounter Bay).

The next progression would occur in 1858 when five Wards were proclaimed within this District Council: Nangkita, Hindmarsh Island, Goolwa, Port Elliot, and Hindmarsh Valley.

The Nangkita Ward would contract over the years to be centred around the Mt Compass-Nangkita-Tooperang region, but at that time covered a much larger area with a farmer from Currency Creek, Robert Richard Chambers Sunman, elected as the inaugural councillor.

Following the growth in river port trading, the township of Goolwa boomed as heavy industry, such as iron works and machine shops required for the construction of paddle steamers, became established there. A rapid population growth with all its ensuing infrastructure needs (schools, breweries, courts, customs etc) put immense pressure on the district council, which had a responsibility for the whole area, resulting in some constraints on expenditure in the Goolwa township.

By 1872, impatience with the district council resulted in a petition being sent to the SA Government demanding that a town council be established at the river port. As a result, and despite facing unanimous opposition from the still relatively new District Council of Pt Elliot and Goolwa, The Corporation of Goolwa was formed (aka Goolwa Town Council). This new town council consisted of a mayor and four councillors, who covered two wards and, following a court decision in January 1873, the District Council of Pt Elliot and Goolwa would lose all jurisdiction over these Goolwa ratepayers.

As a consequence, and following an 1875 petition, the word ‘Goolwa’ was dropped from the district council’s name, becoming simply the **District Council of Port Elliot**.

Even back in those days, interest in council elections could not be described as having widespread appeal, with the majority of ratepayers not inclined to register a vote. Indeed, it was often a struggle to find people willing to stand, meaning that many times candidates were elected unopposed.

How these councillors were elected appears to have been a fairly basic process. A notice in the Southern Argus from 1876 notes that a meeting of the Nangkita Ward ratepayers would be held at the Currency Creek Hotel (*later known as Kingsbrook*) for the purpose of electing their councillor. However, should more than one councillor be nominated at that gathering, **and a poll demanded**, proceedings would be adjourned for one month, after which a poll would be taken at the same venue, running from 9am to 5pm.

Even back then, councils had a greater responsibility than just ‘roads, rates & rubbish’, such as in health, where they appointed a medical officer for many years, to assist those noted as ‘*destitute poor and aborigines*’ (from an 1872 newspaper report).

The rates collected in the financial year 1876-77 from the Nangkita Ward (£130/3/6) were the second highest in value, with the most

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The Port Elliot Council Chamber - used from 1879 to 1932



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income received from the Port Elliot Ward (£150/6). In 1876 the rates were reported as set at one shilling in the pound (5 cents per dollar).

In 1909 this council, guided by the Nangkita Ward councillor, played its part in successfully manipulating a vote on the railway extension to Willunga. In a 1913 newspaper report, Mr L I Jacobs explained how, following a poll taken regarding this extension, the whole region, apart from Mt Compass, had voted whereas residents here, for some reason, would vote nine days later.

That first instalment of the poll fell 102 votes short of the required two thirds 'yes' vote and, following some unusual interpretations on who could legally vote, a group of pro-railway supporters hatched a scheme to quickly increase the number of Mount Compass voters who at that time only totalled fifty nine eligible people. This was clearly not enough to overturn the 'no' vote.



The Cittaslow office in Goolwa was the Council Chamber from 1932 to 1958 (it had previously been the Goolwa Corporation's office)

The Chairman of Port Elliot District Council was induced to call a special meeting of the council within one day. This immediate action was required to allow sufficient time to round up new 'tenants in common' landowners, who would then be eligible to vote. Twenty four names were added onto the Wright Brother's land lease as such tenants, and twenty more onto each of the two blocks just below Mt Moon that were owned by Mr D Hutton. Once each of the new leases had been rushed around the district for signing (within the one day) our local Councillor, Mr Charles Hancock, personally delivered them to a meeting of the Port Elliot District Council by noon the following day. Although this created some dissension within the council over the legalities of such a move, they voted in favour and all these 'new' tenants were added to the assessment, allowing them a vote. The end result was that 113 votes from Mt Compass - all in favour of the railway extension, were recorded in a town that a few days earlier only boasted fifty nine legal voters!

Of course, this dubious action was taken to court and was overturned, with the names removed, although that was purely on the grounds that this scheme had progressed with insufficient notice (six days rather than the required seven). The Government (perhaps also favouring this railway extension?) decided to allow a second vote and this saw further devious manoeuvring, all under the watchful eye of the council.

The committee of railway supporters purchased 403 acres from two local citizens, Sam Arthur and Mel Jacobs. This land was immediately cut up into four-acre blocks and sold at 30/- each to 101 individuals. These 'land transfers' were presented at the next meeting of the District Council and, despite strong objections from the railway opposition's legal representative, who also requested a delay of two weeks, the District Council of Port Elliot accepted all of the additional names, enabling the second railway vote to again be won (135 votes for, 1 against).

It is interesting to note that the opposition had sought a two week delay so that they too could purchase a block of land at Mt Compass (from Mr Gowling) and perform a similarly rushed subdivision, but on behalf of the 'no' voters. Facing substantial encouragement from Councillor Charles Hancock (of Woodcone Road), the council seemed to have been a willing participant in this rather unusual stacking of the electoral roll, in order to benefit the region as a whole, with the railway then being extended out as far as Willunga. That line was officially opened in 1915 but was eventually closed in 1972.

*(Note: These unused four-acre subdivisions are the reason why the development of Compass Heights was able to proceed many decades later, once their existence was re-discovered.)*

In 1924 the council would shrink once again when the **Corporation of Port Elliot** was formed. This would follow along similar lines to the Goolwa Corporation, created decades earlier, but would prove to be just a short-lived endeavour by the disaffected citizens of that town. Further changes would soon be on the way.

The river trade through Goolwa had started to decline during the 1890s, and by the 1920s had all but finished, resulting in a reduction of that town's population. In the Commonwealth Gazette for December 1922 was the blunt statement "*establishment of the Port of Goolwa revoked*". This was in the lead up to a period that became known as the 'Great Depression' which brought into question the whole financial viability of small councils, forcing the establishment of a 'Local Government Areas Commission' to consider this issue.

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**The current Council Chambers in Goolwa - incorporating the original 1860 Town Hall, extended in 1878 and 1907 - first used by the council in 1958**

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The result was that in 1932, on the recommendation of this Commission, the two corporations at Goolwa and Port Elliot were amalgamated once again with the **District Council of Port Elliot**, although this decision does not seem to have been popular. The Municipal Council of Goolwa (Town Council) had by then been in existence for 60 years and the Port Elliot Council for a brief seven years.

At the time of merger, the revenue for each of the three bodies was: DC of Port Elliot (in which the Mt Compass, Nangkita & Tooperang regions were included) £1,450, Goolwa £550, and Port Elliot £1,100. Through the work of this commission, the number of councils dropped from 171 in 1932, to 141 in 1936.

In this new council consisting of seven wards with a total of nine councillors, the less populated Nangkita Ward had one representative while the larger wards of Goolwa and Port Elliot, would each have two. The old District of Port Elliot area was now named Sturt Ward, while the wards of Middleton, Hindmarsh Island and Currency Creek made up the remainder.

The Goolwa residents were reported as being dissatisfied with this action by the Minister, as were many residents at Port Elliot, who were alienated further with the council offices now being located in Goolwa. The small Port Elliot Council Chambers, however, were likely just too compact for so many councillors. (*photo on page 4*).

For some unknown reason, even though the meetings were now held at Goolwa, the council name still only referenced Port Elliot and it would not be until 1968 that this expanded council would become known once again as the District Council of Pt Elliot **and Goolwa**.

District Councils were permitted to set their own opening hours for election days whereas the polling hours in metropolitan council elections were all fixed at 8am to 7pm, which was often longer than those of their country cousins. The terms of office for elected members was set at two years.

In 1936 the Council discussed a topical moral dilemma. The Chairman (Mr H A Armfield) stated that he saw no harm in topless bathing (he was presumably talking about the men). The members for the Goolwa, Sturt, Hindmarsh Island and Currency Creek Wards supported his 'broadminded' view. One other was noted as non-committal but the Nangkita representative (Mel Jacobs) was among the three whose opinion was not reported. This may have been because he did not represent a coastal Ward, or he simply may not have supported this daring move.

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During the 1930s, the merged Pt Elliot Council conducted a yearly 60 mile (96km) tour of their district. A 1939 newspaper article reported on that particular council's tour when they were accompanied by a number of notaries including the Minister for Local Government (Mr McIntosh), the Commissioner of Highways (Mr D V Fleming), and Mr A Kidman of Mt Compass.

With Mount Compass designated as one of the areas visited, the information they discovered makes interesting reading. It was reported that:

***“Of all the land seen during the day, that at Mount Compass and in the adjacent districts obviously offers the greatest opportunities for development.... The results which settlers such as Messrs Kidman, A J Roberts, Basil Proctor, Mel Jacobs and the Black brothers have achieved on land which once appeared worthless, has demonstrated in no uncertain manner the productivity of the district. Fifteen years ago virgin land could be bought for 10/- per acre, now scrub country is worth £4/10, and from £15 to £20 per acre if pasture has been established.”***

The apparent reason for this increase in value was the introduction of subterranean clover and superphosphate, with the visitors noting that thousands of acres still remained to be opened up in this area.

It may surprise no-one to know that the Minister for local government on this tour stated that while every effort would be made by the Government to assist in future development by the provision of roads, the settlers who would reap the benefit must be prepared to contribute towards the cost.

The late Dorothy Jacobs researched her father-in-law Mel Jacobs' council records during her own period as councillor, and wrote the following about his time in council (1933-53):

***“Issues are much the same today as they were then ..... roads, access, drainage, building approvals, living in sheds, rubbish collection, a Hindmarsh Island bridge in need of repair (60 vehicles crossed the punt one day in 1943!), the punt (they were asking for a second-hand piece of hemp rope in 1943 to fix up the punt!), staff problems, neighbour's disagreements, section boundary changes, subdivision, drainage, street lights, water supply and its quality, the railway, Abbotts bus (was it always doing the wrong thing?) lavatories, fire control, cemeteries, the POUND (was it legal?) dogs, noxious weeds and the appointment of an official ranger after blood was spilt between two men over a stray cow on a road. Earlier Councils had to approve telephone line extensions and their residents were dependent upon a sometimes interrupted and limited supply of power from Victor Harbour Electricity Co.***



Melphord Jacobs  
Councillor and Chairman

***Wartime created its own problems of shortage of staff and materials. The District Clerk, Reg Bristow-Smith, was in the Army for several years and there was an Acting Clerk. Information from Council sources is that there was a big scare about a Japanese invasion, SO during this time, all the early Council records were burnt to protect the Council area. Only Council records after November 6, 1942 are available.”***

An adjustment to the way councils were led occurred in 1987 when a change was made from having a chairperson, who was elected by fellow councillors, to a mayor who was elected by the ratepayers. The first mayor to be elected directly by residents was Colin A Harding, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1987. Colin had been the councillor for Currency Creek Ward prior to this.

The council re-jigged a few ward boundaries (but not the Nangkita one) to now increase the number of members from nine to ten, plus a mayor. Meetings were held twice a month in the 1980s, on the first and third Mondays, starting at 9.00am. This was despite a move to have at least one meeting held at night, although this would change.

The number of eligible voters in the Nangkita Ward in 1992 was 731, out of the 6,848 in the council district as a whole.

The Nangkita Ward underwent name changes around these times, also being known as the Nangkita-Ashbourne Ward and later, the Nangkita-Kuitpo Ward. The biggest change, however, would occur toward the end of the century at a time when the State Government became keen on the idea of reducing the number of local councils.

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**Alexandrina Council**

A recommendation was made by the ‘Local Government Structural Reform Board’ that five Fleurieu councils merge into one (which included the District Councils of Pt Elliot & Goolwa, Strathalbyn, Victor Harbor, Yankalilla and the southern part of Willunga) - a suggestion which was rejected by all the councils. As a consequence however, in 1997 the two District Councils of Strathalbyn, and Pt Elliot & Goolwa, amalgamated along with part of the southern Willunga council region (including Yundi and Munetta), creating the new **Alexandrina Council**.

This amalgamation was supported by “an overwhelming majority of residents” according to a survey conducted in both council areas. The two mayors and both councils had urged ratepayers to support this move.

According to the head of the Reform Board, this merger would supposedly achieve improved services and reduce the rates by 11.5% over the following four years. A common feeling at the time in this district was that this smaller amalgamation was the ‘least worst’ option when compared to a merger with Victor Harbor, which most residents seemed keen to avoid.

In what was described as a harmonious transition to a new council, Mayor **Kym McHugh** (of P.E. & Goolwa Council, right) and Mayor Val Ball (of Strathalbyn Council) shared mayoral duties for five months with all 20 of the combined councillors remaining until elections were held in November 1997. This merger was seen by some commentators as a role model for any future council amalgamations around the state.



Mayor Kym McHugh at the Mt Compass RSL’s 50th anniversary celebrations in 1998.

The council area was now divided into seven wards but still included a Nangkita Ward, which covered the Mount Compass, Kuitpo and Ashbourne areas. Of the ten new councillors, **Glenda Connor** was elected as the sole Nangkita representative. The council had arranged the ward boundaries to ensure a ratio of approximately 1,300 ratepayers per councillor.

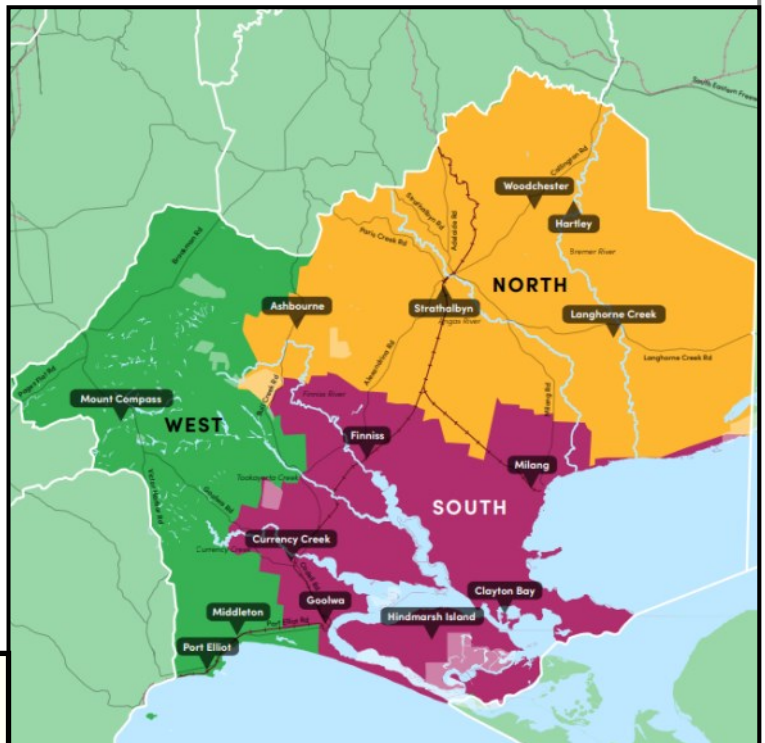
For the 2003 election, the wards were reduced to five while the number of councillors was increased by one with a little re-jigging of the boundaries. The Nangkita-Ashbourne Ward now became Nangkita-Kuitpo Ward, still retaining the one representative. The other four wards were: Strathalbyn (2 reps), Angas-Bremer (2 reps), Port Elliot-Middleton (2 reps) and Goolwa-Hindmarsh Island (4 reps). Each councillor now represented an average of 1,847 electors, and with a voter turnout that year of about 35%.

From 2006 the Council terms were extended to four years, after being increased to three years following the 1997 election.

**Present Day**

In November 2022, the council boundaries were rearranged into three large wards, West, South and North, with the Mt Compass/Nangkita/Yundi/Kuitpo/Tooperang regions located in the **West Ward**. Both Middleton and Port Elliot were also included in this ward and the number of councillors was reduced back to nine (three per ward) plus an elected mayor. **After 164 years, there was now no longer a ward that carried the name Nangkita.**

*Note: There was an earlier Alexandrina Council from 1856 to 1888 for the Lower Finniss area. It had been formed after seceding from the District Council of Bremer but it was later amalgamated back into the same Bremer District Council.*



Right: The current ward boundaries. The **West Ward** (green) covers our area.



## Council Elections for Nangkita Ward - Summary

**Robert Richard Chambers Sunman** of Currency Creek was elected to the Port Elliot & Goolwa District Council as the first Nkangkita Ward councillor in 1858. He was also the Chairman from 1861 to 1868. This ward covered the Hundred of Nkangkita (as it was spelt then), which stretched down to the coast. He remained as the councillor until 1872, only to be replaced by another Currency Creek farmer, **George Drew Nosworthy**.

Mr Nosworthy had unsuccessfully objected to Robert Sunman's 1870 election on account of "*persons voting who had not paid their rates*". In 1872, this George Nosworthy would become a landowner here when he purchased the fifty acre Section 195, near the end of what is now Cleland Gully Road (near Tooperang). The following year he was re-elected unopposed as he would also be in 1877 (no reporting of the 1875 election can be found).

The election in 1879 saw more than one nomination for the Nangkita Ward, with a ballot held in the Currency Creek Hotel. Who this ballot was against, and what the tally was, is not recorded but George Nosworthy was once again elected.

The following year however, (1880) Mr Nosworthy did not stand, with the election held between Edmund Frith and **Thomas William Higgins** (of Currency Creek). Mr Higgins prevailed, but would only serve until the following year. **Mr Edmund Frith** of Finniss, after losing the previous year, would then be elected unopposed in 1882 and remained in office until resigning in 1886.

**James Chibnall (Jnr)** who owned a property on the River Finniss would next serve as the Nangkita representative between 1886 and 1889 followed by **James McLeod** of Middleton for the years 1889 to 1892.

**Benjamin Plummer** another farmer from the Currency Creek district, was the next Nangkita Ward councillor for two years from 1892 to 1894.

In 1894 **John Bradford** of Finniss was the only nomination for the Nangkita Ward and he would remain until 1903, but in a rare occurrence, in 1897 three candidates stood: **John Bradford** (elected with 56 votes), John Nosworthy (20 votes) and Charles Stephen Hancock (nil votes!). Whether this nil vote meant Charles did not even vote for himself, or whether despite his name remaining on the ballot, he was no longer standing, is not known. Charles Hancock was possibly the first truly local candidate to stand for this region, with his property situated along Woodcone Road.

Following the previous three-way contest, it was reported that the 1899 election was expected to provide a "*good deal of excitement*" but later, that the polling was "*not so heavy as anticipated*". **John Bradford** (48 votes) defeated Edmund (aka Edwin) Parry Pitt (8 votes).

From 1903 to 1905, **Thomas Collett** would represent the Nangkita Ward after defeating Edward Dashwood Scott 41 votes to 23, and was re-elected unopposed in 1904. But in an extraordinary council election in 1905, he would now transfer across to be elected as the Currency Creek councillor.

**Thomas Edwin Adams** was elected to take his place in 1905. In that year's contest, Mr Gustav Carl Wehrmann Snr (1849-1925) of Cleland Gully also nominated, but his nomination was declared informal, resulting in the election being declared for Mr Adams. This was the first time council elections were held on a Saturday. Prior to this they had been held on the first Monday in the month.

There was another election in 1907 when Thomas Adams (22 votes) defeated C S Crane (17 votes), but he would only remain in office for one more year.

1908 saw **Charles Stephen Hancock**, with 21 votes, defeat William C Holme who polled 15 votes. Mr Charles Hancock was one of the original Hall Trustees in Mt Compass and owned a large apple orchard on Woodcone Road in partnership with his brother, John. (*More about these brothers in the next Chronicle.*)

Two years later, Charles Hancock, with 32 votes, defeated Mr W D Thompson, on 14 votes. Mr Thompson was one of the original instigators of the Nangkita Village Settlement and had opted to remain after the original Settlement was closed down. There had been a great deal of dissatisfaction directed towards the council over the state of Nangkita Road, and this may have been one of the driving factors in Mr Thompson's attempt to become a councillor.

The contests continued for **Charles Hancock** who, in a low voter turnout, received 15 votes to defeat W H Webber (5 votes) in the 1912 election. His winning streak continued in 1914, although it was a close call. He received 26 votes, the same number as the respected local, Richard Peters, with Thomas Trevena polling just 9 votes

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to finish third. With a tie for first place, the returning officer cast the deciding vote and gave it to the incumbent, Mr Hancock.

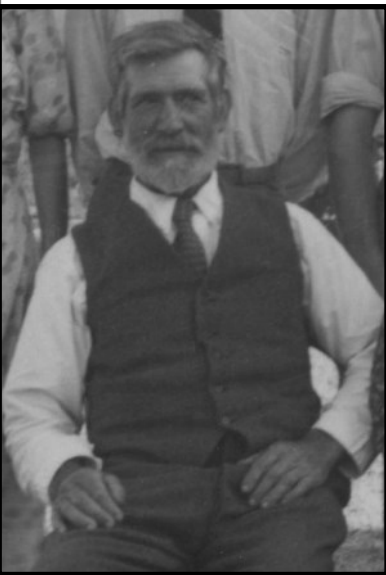
Choosing to stand once again, **Richard Peters** (1857-1938) of Nangkita was elected unopposed in the 1916 election. (*refer to Chronicle No 23 for an article about Mr Peters*).

In 1918 only one ward in the Port Elliot Council had more than one person nominating, resulting in a vote required only for the Middleton Ward, where two people stood. A further example of voter apathy across the state was the excitement generated around the election held at Streaky Bay, which was noted in newspapers as their first election in ten years. The Progress Association there had decided to do something about the general apathy and had canvassed 'assiduously for several weeks' resulting in multiple candidates in all wards. Other councils such as those in Burnside and Walkerville had no need for elections with just the required number of candidates nominating for all their positions.

This region was no different with **Richard Peters** again elected unopposed for the Nangkita Ward (1918).

**Mr A. A. Wellesley Cocks** was making a name for himself in the town by 1920, when he successfully stood against Richard Peters (*refer to Chronicle No 8 for more information on Mr Cocks*).

In 1922 **Richard Peters** would once again become the representative for this ward. The ballot was held at the Mt Compass school (ie. The local hall which he had built) but whether he had an opponent on the day is unknown. The Council meetings were held on the first Friday of each month from 11.00 am. In 1924 Frederick Hammond Taylor, a grazier from Bletchley (near Strathalbyn), decided to stand against Richard Peters but lost.



George Stone c1934

The next election was held in 1926, with an aging Richard Peters declining to stand, resulting in **George Stone** (left) of Nangkita, now elected unopposed to the council. He was re-elected, also unopposed, in 1926 & 1928 but in the 1930 election, he faced a challenger in Mel Jacobs, who was making his first attempt at running for council. George Stone would win this contest by 38 votes to 20.

For the new 1932 amalgamated council, George Stone would remain unopposed as councillor for Nangkita Ward, but only for one more year.

**Melphord Jacobs** (1870-1953), a Mt Compass market gardener, was successfully elected to council in 1933, the only new council member for that year. He managed to defeat the sitting councillor, George Stone, with the ballot held in the Compass Hall. As council elections were staggered each year, five of the members stood for re-election that year, with the remainder standing the following year.

In what would become a normal occurrence for this ward, Mel Jacobs would be re-elected unopposed for the next ten elections (1935 to 1953). He became the District Council Chairman from 1940 until 1953 when he died in office, just a few months after being re-elected. In 1949 this council would pay the fee for the first survey of the Mount Compass township! Mel Jacobs is now acknowledged as being instrumental in developing the road network of the Mount Compass area.

**Donald Arthur Black** (right) of Woodcone Road became the Nangkita Ward's new representative in 1953, when Mel Jacobs passed away while in office. He defeated Alexander Samuel Henry Simons who also contested that supplementary election. Don Black was then re-elected unopposed in the following ten elections (1955 to 1973), representing the Nangkita Ward for a record 22 years.

In recognition of his service, he was presented with a 'wristlet watch and wallet' by an appreciative Mount Compass community upon his retirement in 1975.

In the usual 'in-house' Mt Compass manner, **William Geoffrey (Geff) Duffield** was

Councillor Donald Black in 1969 - he had unfortunately lost one eye through an illness.



Cr Richard Peters c1916





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approached by people from within the community requesting that he nominate following Don Black's retirement. The manager of Willowburn Farm for 33 years at the time of standing, Geoff had been secretary of the School Committee, the Community Centre, and the RSL. He was elected unopposed in that first election (1975) as he would also be in 1977. The 1979 election was one of those rare occasions when two people would nominate. A number of residents now encouraged Colin Lawrence Ekers to also nominate for the Nangkita Ward. He was a stud cattle breeder from Mount Jagged who had also served on many local committees, but would lose this election, 80 votes to 61.

That year (1979) was also the year when the first woman (Mary Dellas Ellis of Port Elliot) was elected to the Port Elliot Council, making headline news in the local papers. Two years later the first woman on the Strathalbyn Council (and a later mayor) would be elected, Valerie Ball, of Milang.

Upon retiring, due to leaving the area, Geoff Duffield wrote of the personal costs involved with this position, such as councillors being reimbursed only around half the actual mileage incurred, although on the positive side, he did add that they would be fed if council meetings went past meal times.



Geoff Duffield in 1998

It may be interesting to some of the older residents that Colin Ekers' brother, Maurice, was elected to this Council as one of the two Port Elliot representatives in 1976 and remained in this position until resigning in 1979. As mentioned, Colin himself stood unsuccessfully for Council in 1979. Another well-known and community minded local identity, Peter Leane, stood for the Mt Jagged Ward of the Victor Harbor Council in 1981, but lost to Eric Ashby of Inman Valley, 248 votes to 156.

**Dorothy Hilda Jacobs** (1926-2022) was self-described at the time of her 1981 election to council as 'a housewife and voluntary community worker.' and she would prove to be an ideal councillor. Dorothy had been elected

unopposed for the Nangkita Ward, fully supported by the local community. This would bring to three, the total number of women now on this council. A considered woman, who took her role with enthusiasm, Dorothy was re-elected unopposed in the next three elections (1983-87). Following numerous complaints about the state of local roads, Dorothy made it her job to regularly drive on every road in the district to report on repairs that were required. The town's water supply was converted to mains water during Dorothy's term in office.

1989 saw Dorothy retire and **Barry (Kym) McHugh** become the sole nomination for this ward, again fully supported by the local community. He was re-elected unopposed in 1991 and 1993.

The following election (1995) saw **Kym McHugh** elected as mayor with 1225 votes



Cr Dorothy Jacobs in 1987 at the opening of the Mt Compass mains water supply.

to 681, defeating Barry Griffin. (A record 265 Nangkita Ward ratepayers voted in this election). A local dairy farmer from Goolwa Road, Kym had served as the deputy mayor for the previous two years. For the following election, in 1997, he would be re-elected unopposed.

Kym remained as mayor until 2014, serving on the council for 25 years (including as mayor for 19 of those years). In the 2006 mayoral vote Kym received 6010 votes with his opponent, Ben Stokes receiving 1270. He also served as President of the Local Government Association from 2011 to 2013, a position which highlighted the respect in which he was held by fellow councillors from around the state. In the 2015 Australia Day awards, Kym was deservedly honoured with an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) "For service to local government, and the community of the Fleurieu Peninsula".

Apart from the already mentioned council amalgamation, two difficult issues that attracted major media attention during Kym's time were the Hindmarsh Island Bridge controversy with its 'secret women's business', and the Millenium drought (2001-2009), with all its downstream impacts for this council area.

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In 1995 **Glenda Connor**, ex schoolteacher and local dairy farmer at Nangkita, was elected unopposed to replace Kym McHugh as the Nangkita councillor. In the following election (1997) Glenda would achieve 568 votes for an election conducted entirely by mail, winning what had become the Nangkita-Ashbourne Ward. With council terms now extended to three years, Glenda would eventually serve this district for twelve years before retiring in 2006.

Her replacement in 2006 was **Grant Gartrell** who was elected unopposed for a four-year period in the re-named Nangkita-Kuitpo Ward. He co-owned the 'Blueberry Patch' farm on Nangkita Road, but had a wealth of experiences behind him through his scientific career with both Naval defence, and in research & development

with the RAAF, along with his business management qualifications. In 2010 Grant defeated Val Caddell by 447 votes to 225. The next election in 2014 saw Grant defeat Nangkita resident, Raymond Bruce Brown, with 373 votes to 237. The development of the town's boardwalk and associated wetlands precinct, along with a significant retail area upgrade, occurred during Grant's period on the council.



Cr Glenda Connor laying the time capsule plaque at the cow sculpture, on 14th December 1996

**William (Bill) Coomans** (pictured in photo below) was elected as the sole, and final, Nangkita-Kuitpo Ward councillor in 2018 after defeating the existing member, Grant Gartrell (223 votes) and Stewart Glass (186 votes), achieving a total of 338 votes in what was a rare three-way battle for this ward.

Following a major change of the boundaries for the most recent election, Bill is now one of three councillors for the new **West Ward**, which includes this district. In the 2022 election, **Bill Coomans** received 734 votes, **Michael Scott** 729 votes, and **Lou Nicholson** 935 votes, to be elected as our three representatives. Judy Newport, Victoria Dybala and Lorraine Rosenberg were the unsuccessful candidates.



Cr Grant Gartrell delivering a council grant to Ruth Harvey of the Netball Club in 2011.

**References:** State Records website. *'Chasing Rainbows in the Rain'* history book by Anne Riddle. Trove.nla.gov.au. Entre Nous newsletters. *"A Brief History of our Local Council from 1853-1997"* by Frank Tuckwell. Wikipedia. Assorted Alexandrina Council annual reports

available online. "A History of SA Councils" by Dr Susan Marden. Dept of Environment & Natural Resources heritage brochure 2006. With thanks to Frank Tuckwell, Kym McHugh, Glenda Connor and Bill Coomans.

\*Another council which covered part of this region was the old **District Council of Willunga** (which included Yundi). The late **Basil St John Proctor** was a councillor, and its chairman for nine years. (He was the only person living at Yundi in the early 1920s and was a major contributor to the development of this region).



A public meeting of council nominees held at Mount Compass in October 2022. left to right: Mayor **Keith Parkes**, Kym McHugh, Cr **Bill Coomans**, Bronwyn Lewis, Cr **Michael Scott**, **Lou Nicholson** and Lorraine Rosenberg.



*During the two world wars, local women banded together to support their sons, husbands, and one daughter who enlisted to carry out what was termed 'their patriotic duty'. In both of these wars, the women initially conceived the idea of making comfort items to send on to their loved ones. The records that have survived in our Archives are only from the Second World War, leaving online newspapers as the only remaining source for information on the endeavours of their Mount Compass sisters from the earlier war.*

The **Mount Compass Knitting Guild** was formed during World War 1 to knit woollen items such as socks, for those locals who served during this war (1914-1918). Although no written records survive from this guild, they are mentioned in numerous articles, such as a 1915 report that suggests these ladies may have evolved from the Red Cross Society. Their aim was to collect money and material in order to make garments for the sick and wounded soldiers.

Most of the early items they made were of warm flannel, which were then forwarded to the Greek island of Lemnos. This island was within 100 kilometres of Gallipoli and had become both a logistical base during the Turkish campaign, and a site for allied hospitals.

During the Australia Day celebrations of 1916, the "young ladies" of this Guild conducted a fruit and lolly fundraising stall on a day in which twenty one memorial pine trees would be planted adjacent to the hall. (These trees were later cut down to allow for the building of the 1958 hall).

In that same month, Private Sidney Waye, the only son of Mr & Mrs W Waye, and who had been born and raised at Mt Compass, was farewelled at a public gathering, with the Knitting Guild taking this opportunity to present him with a "parcel of woollen goods".

Although there is no formal list of the members, an article from 1917 highlights the farewell held for **Miss Thelma Arthur** (right), following all the good work she had participated in with the Guild, but who was now leaving Mt Compass to continue her studies. Misses **Edith Waye**, **L Peters** (below), **F Hutton**, **Eva Waye**, **Freda Jacobs** and **Nora Stoddart** are all mentioned as belonging to this Guild and attending the farewell.

This Guild also organised social events to help their fundraising, such as a night with musical items, recitations and games, held in early 1918, which raised £4.10.0\*.



Thelma Arthur 1918



Lilla Peters

When men from the district held a working bee in 1918 to fence and clear the ground around the memorial pine trees, the day ended with the usual concert and dance, at which the Knitting Guild sold fruit and sweets, raising about £7 for what was called "patriotic purposes".

Even though the war formerly ended in 1918, soldiers were still returning the following year. In March 1919, a welcome home social for Lance Corporals A E Stoddart and H R M Waye was held at which members of the Knitting Guild contributed songs, as they would also do in August, when Trooper F Simons returned from active service in Palestine.

In 1920, two years after the war ended, this group provided a framed display of 25 local soldiers to be hung in the hall and, on the occasion of its unveiling, each soldier was presented with "a final issue of socks from the Guild". A 'patriotic euchre tournament' (card game) to fundraise for this memorial had been held in December 1919.

That framed display is still in good condition and now safely stored in the Mount Compass Archives, but is available for viewing upon request. Copies of all 25 individual photographs are now permanently on display in the Hall Foyer.

With another World War underway, on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1940, the **Mount Compass Knitting Circle** was formed from members of the Church of Christ 'Ladies Auxiliary' and their 'Endeavour Society'. The purpose of this group was to support the 'boys' who enlisted from this district (they were all noted as boys in the Minute Books). Women and girls who were not members of the church were also welcome to join this Circle.

\**(As indicated on page 1, the SA average weekly male wage in 1915 was £2.4.7)*

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The members (always noted as 'ladies') would meet monthly to knit socks, mittens and scarves that could be presented to soldiers at their farewell gathering in the hall. This developed over time to become gift parcels of home-made goods and then evolved to become purchased items that were posted to those serving, especially when wool for knitting became harder to obtain.

The first president of this group was Mrs Hilda Killmier, with Mrs Hettie Peters selected as the vice president. Miss E Jacobs accepted the role of secretary while Miss G Anderson and Miss Mona Verco assisted them as committee members.

From the Minute books it can be seen that most of their meetings opened with a hymn & prayer and closed with the national anthem of God Save the King. The Circle decided early on that each knitter would send their own parcels, and to keep a list of all the boys leaving this state as part of their war service.

In that first year, the ladies raised the funds necessary for the purchase their wool by making pasties that were sold at the football (along with cups of tea), as well as taking a collection at each meeting. Sales at the first two football matches raised £2-12-0 (\$5.20). These matches were likely to have been the men versus women games



Women vs Men football fundraiser - possibly during the war years.  
Many of the women are wearing the men's chocolate-brown football guernseys.

where men dressed as women and vice versa. No organised competition matches were played during the war. Other fundraising events over this period included a bowls evening organised by Mrs Watson, a tennis afternoon, and New Year Day picnics 'at the river'.

At a meeting in August 1940, it was agreed that instead of sending Mr Robert (Bob) McAllan the usual parcel of scarf & socks etc, they would procure the wool to knit him a cardigan (Bob McAllan was one of the oldest men to join up). Several members apparently offered to help knit this item.

The first parcel to be presented at a formal farewell consisted of 1 scarf, 1 pair of socks and 1 pair of mittens from the Knitting Circle, as well as a pair of socks from Mrs Garden and a kharki handkerchief by Mrs H Jacobs, all presented to Charlie Hynd, a farm labourer who had worked for the Jacobs and Peters families.

The following meeting reported seven parcels of knitted comforts had been given out at a farewell evening held at the hall and Mr McAllan's cardigan had been sent.

Four Christmas parcels were also posted out to soldiers serving overseas that first year, for the cost of 5/3 each (53 cents) including postage. Christmas puddings made by Mrs Killmier (wife of the local church minister), along with sweets and nuts were included.

Letters of thanks were regularly received from the beneficiaries of these parcels, with these letters then read out at meetings. Unfortunately, none of these letters appear to have survived the years.

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The Circle also assisted others during these trying times. The Minutes show that they sent a parcel containing seven pairs of mittens and seven scarves to the Greek Comfort Fund.

Mrs Hettie Peters took over the role of President in 1941 when Mrs Killmier left the district, and continued in this role for the remainder of the war. Other positions within the group would also change as the war dragged on. All new enlistments were added to the Circle's growing list once they had been nominated and their acceptance voted on by the group.

The local baker, Snow Beaumont, was approached and readily agreed to supply cakes for the serving men. These were posted in September 1941 as part of a package that also contained half a tin of butter-scotch, two barley sugars, and nuts. The Circle's Minute books record that Snow Beaumont gifted nine Christmas cakes for this purpose.

In January 1942, it was decided to send a further parcel to each of the boys serving. This included a tin of fruit, a handkerchief, sweets, and nuts. The Minutes in May of that year note that five boys were currently serving overseas, and each of these would receive a tin of biscuits.

The availability of wool for this Knitting Circle must have been of concern to these women, as they decided to write to the "*clothes rationing department for particulars concerning wool*". At various meetings, mention is made of 'Canteen Orders' for fixed amounts, such as five shillings (50 cents) which were sent to each of the boys on their list. This possibly allowed them to purchase canteen items from the areas where they happened to be stationed. Newspapers were also collected and sent on to those who enlisted.

As the war dragged on, the ladies were finding it impossible to obtain coupons for the wool they clearly were in need of, forcing them to look at alternatives to knitted comforts.

In September 1942, twenty eight tins of fruit were packed in one afternoon, to be posted out at a final cost of £1 for the fruit and 14 shillings (\$1.40) for the postage. This was a significant amount as their monthly meetings were only bringing in contributions of around six shillings.

Ladies in the district were also requested to supply food items such as biscuits, which were packaged up and sent off with any purchased goods, as the Circle's goals turned towards fundraising projects rather than just knitting.

In November 1943, the only woman to be included on the town's World War 2 Honour Roll, Miss Lorna Rowlands, was added to the Circle's list after being proposed by Mrs Simons and then seconded by Mrs Roberts. This would also bring about a change in the language used by the Circle.

Following the financial success of a New Year's picnic held the previous year, and at which £17 was raised, another was planned to see in the year 1944. Some details are recorded in the Minutes for this event. Items required included: one dozen bottles of cordial, three gallons of ice-cream, sweets, tomatoes, apricots & bananas, and wooden spoons. Two tables and trestles were to be taken for a trading table conducted at the picnic. Transport would be provided for one shilling (10c) and the admission price would also be one shilling.

Mrs Hettie Peters was to arrange the water sports while the school principal, Mr Paul Muller was to be asked to do the same for land sports. Cups of tea were also to be sold at this picnic, helping contribute to the £11.2.9 raised on the day. These picnics were likely held on private property along the Finnis River.

Items such as boxes of dried fruits and nuts, or canteen orders, were regularly sent to all those on the Circle's list. With a growing shortages of basic ingredients for the civilian population, the ladies did enquire about purchasing parcels of biscuits for members of the forces, but none of these were available - the term 'boys' had been dropped by now. Cakes were still available from the Balfour's bakery however, and these were purchased and posted off. As the year wore on, copies of the Readers Digest were posted out in twenty five packages, along with Chronicle newspapers, bought handkerchiefs, and soap.

The 1945 New Years picnic was held at Enterprise Colony where Arch Peters and Mel Jacobs organised water sports, while Erk Anderson and D. Cocks oversaw the land sports. The Knitting Circle took charge of the catering, with this event raising £13.6.1.

The records also show that over £66 was donated to this Knitting Circle from two Sports Days held in Mount



Hettie Peters

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Compass during the war, although who organised these was not recorded.

With the war ending in 1945, a few loose ends needed to be tidied up. Socks that had been knitted were sent to two un-named Yundi men still serving, while the remaining five skeins of wool were to be sold off, as were two pairs of mittens. Other mittens and gloves were donated to the Red Cross.

Forty-nine mulga ink stands were purchased as small gifts and presented to each of those serving members on the Circle's list. These were inscribed with the person's name and "Welcome Home" from the Mt Compass Knitting Circle. The account book shows the ink stands, along with pens and engraving came to a total of £4.10. **(If any of these gift ink stands are still in existence, please let us know.)**

In October 1946, the Minutes note that the remaining money (£4.14.7½) was handed to the Hall Committee to be used "towards an Honour Roll, or whatever memorial might be placed in the proposed new Memorial Hall". Note: this new hall was not opened until 1958, with an Honour Roll then hung in 1959.

The knitted items received by those serving, totalled 38 pairs of socks, 12 scarves, 14 mittens and 1 cardigan. Throughout the war years the Knitting Circle sent parcels to forty-two local members of the services, twenty-one of whom were on active service. Two paid the supreme sacrifice.

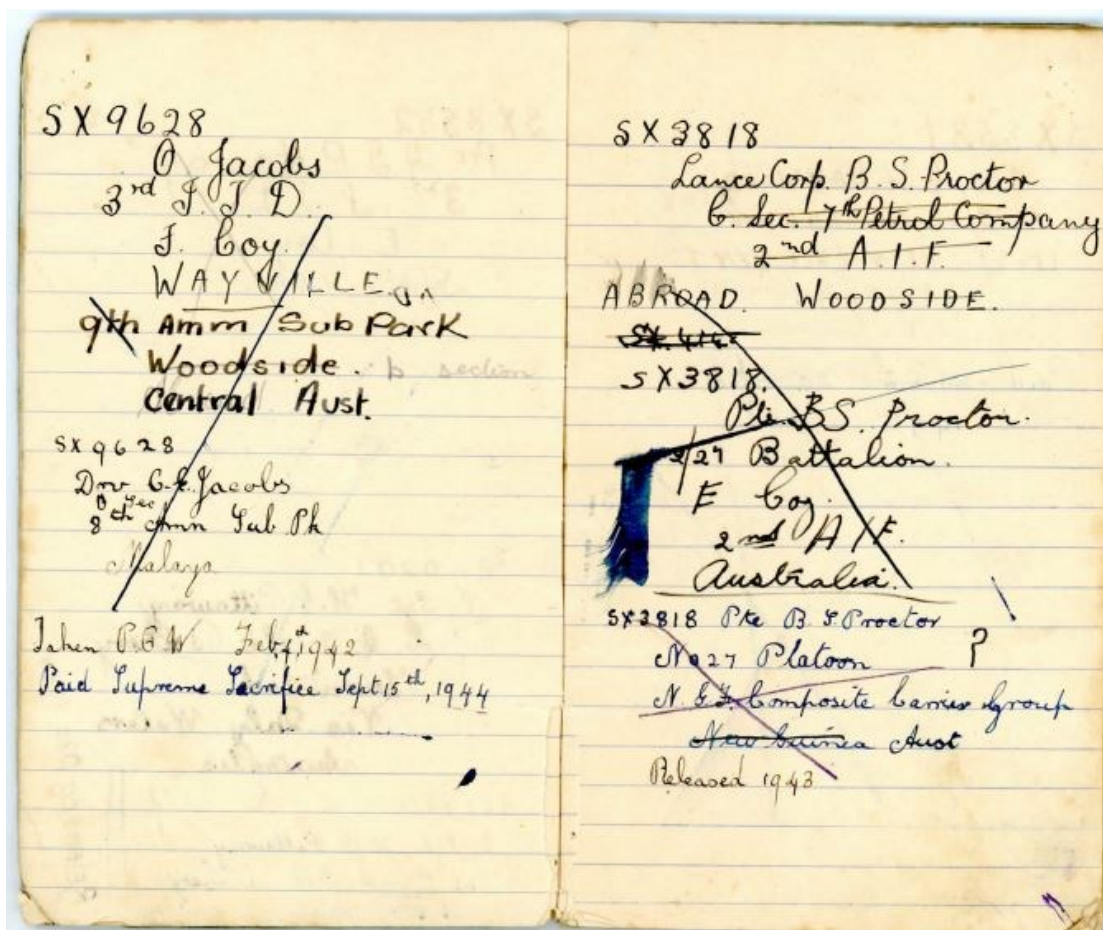
*Information taken from The Knitting Circle's records stored in our Archives and from the 1946 history book "The First Hundred Years" plus trove.nla.gov.au*

Two pages from the Knitting Circle's address book.

These pages show the WW2 contact addresses for two local men,

**Oscar Jacobs**, who made the 'supreme sacrifice' and **Basil Proctor** of Yundi.

This is one of the various historical records stored in our Archives



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.**

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