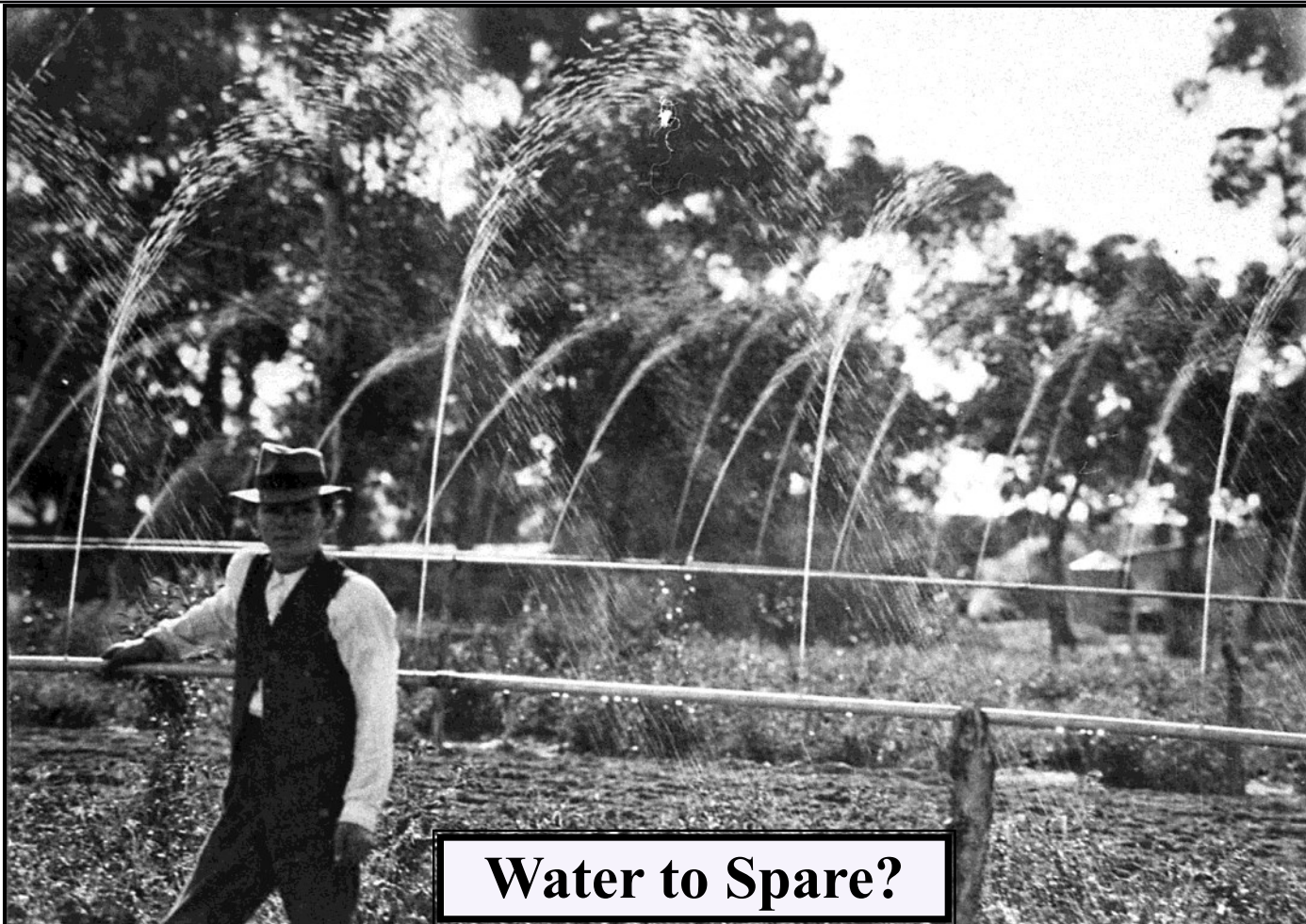


THE MOUNT COMPASS ARCHIVES

CHRONICLE

A FORUM TO PROMOTE THE HISTORY & ARCHIVES OF MOUNT COMPASS

No 29 JUNE 2025



Water to Spare?

With this year's extended dry season finally ending, the photograph above is a reminder of when fixed irrigation systems were first introduced to the Tooperang district by Horace Green, in 1928.

This photo shows a young member of the Green family standing alongside his father's **Skinner Irrigation System** soon after it was installed on their property, located between the Nangkita and Cleland Gully Roads (Section 255a).

Irrigation of the vegetable crops in that area had previously been carried out by flooding, where the channels (drains) were temporarily blocked until they overflowed. In 1928 Horace Green (1884-1972) installed that area's first overhead sprinkler system with the water pumped through the structure. In that year, he is reported as growing tomatoes, pumpkins of every variety, and a patch of maize, along with root vegetables and his apple orchard.

In 1944, Horace wrote that practically every holding in the valley had, by then, an irrigation system watering the higher land away from the swamps. This, he noted, greatly improved the value of properties with dry land that had been considered useless.

The Green family arrived here in 1900 when the district was still called 'Black Swamp'. The family's vegetables were hawked at Finnis and Milang using their horse and spring dray, before progressing to a four wheeled cart.

Horace and Jessie Green made this area their home for over sixty years, living in a wattle and daub house that was situated in the spot where the Waye's house now stands.

Editorial

Welcome to this 29th edition of the Chronicle. As a heads up to all of you, this may be the penultimate edition, with September's (30th) Chronicle looking like the final one.

That nice round number is a suitable figure to go out on, allowing me to return to what I really enjoy doing - collecting and preserving our local history in the Archives. A backlog of items (including many photographs) that need to be scanned and sorted has been steadily piling up, and now requires more attention from me.

Who knows, at some point there may be an opportunity to publish a further newsletter but for now, the regular quarterly editions will come to a halt in three month's time.

There are a variety of articles included in this edition, such as the early history of **Waterfall Drive** on page 5, with its generally unseen waterfall.

The **obituaries** page has proved to be required reading for many of you. Not all deaths are printed in the paper, with many going un-noticed for those who were neighbours or acquaintances from prior days. Sadly, some do pass before their time, with these pages serving to acknowledge their achievements in our community.

The **digital Honour Roll**, honouring those who served in the two World Wars, remains a work in progress, with this edition highlighting two more men - I K (Kelly) Arthur and Clifton McKinnon. Our Archives website contains the thirty one profiles completed to date (<https://mtcompassarchives.org/honourroll/>).

We are fortunate that due to the word spreading about our Archives, various artifacts and documents are finding their way to us. On the back page are two of these - salt and pepper shakers with a painting of the Mount Compass War Memorial Hall on the front. Recently donated by Marty & Jana McKenzie, their history is still not known so if anyone has any thoughts please let us know. Around the same time, Gilbert Haywood has also donated two sets of replica WW2 medals from two of his relatives listed on our Honour Roll (see page 7).

With our Archives now having been in existence for over fifty years, it has grown to become a valuable repository for small artifacts such as these.

Hope you enjoy this edition

Steve Kettle (8556 8444)

News reports from the past

his demise. Mr. Adams was a son of the late Mr. T. E. Adams, and was born in 1874. He resided practically the whole of his long life in the town after spending his young days with other members of the family in the Black Swamp area.

As a youth he associated himself with the legal busi-

Above: A part of the 1954 obituary, in the *Southern Argus*, for Mr W. Adams, who spent his early years on the section reported here, and known in those days as "Black Swamp".

Right: *Southern Argus* 23rd March 1905. The swamp land on section 238 (just below the waterfall) is completely destroyed by fire (refer page 5).

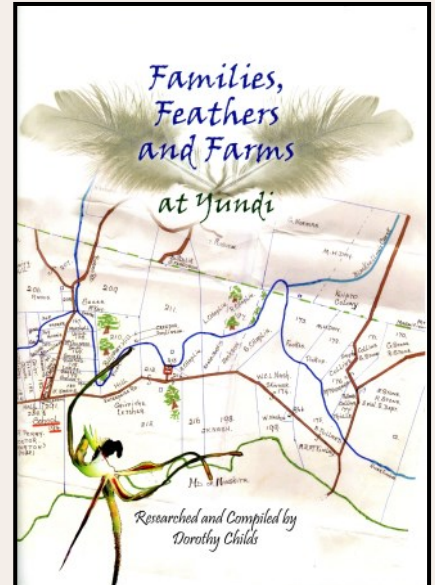
provement have been made, is the road leading to the settled swamp, as no effort has been made to improve the track, except for a grant made by the Government, when the place was first settled, to construct the road. We have now, through the united efforts of our members, got another grant of £50 towards the improvement of the road.

A heavy fire started on Monday on the scrub land behind Adams' section, and swept down to the swamp, completely destroying the swamp land and burning the division fences of all the blocks on the line of swamp. Only for the united efforts of Mr. R. Coles and Mr. Langley the whole of the cultivated land as well as the uncultivated would have been ruined; as it is the damage done is heavy. The swamp is still burning.

The monthly meeting of the Band of Hope was held on Saturday night. A fair attendance was presided over by the president, Mr. F. Wills. A good programme was gone through, presented by the following:—Songs, R. Ryders and A. Coles; recitations, W. D. Thompson, senr. and junr.; readings, R. Coles and F. Wills. A character sketch entitled, "The Dark Photographer," was well

Dorothy (Dot) CHILDS nee Rothwell (1922-2025): Editor, researcher and compiler of the 2009 local history book, **“Families, Feathers and Farms at Yundi”** (right). Originally from Meningie, Dot married Ron Childs in 1944. After a diverse life together, and raising three children, they purchased their property at Yundi in 1973. Having trained as a nurse during the second World War, Dot now returned to this profession, at the Old Reynella Nursing Home. She retired in 1994 after working as their Director of Nursing.

Experienced horse people, Ron and Dot Childs were known all over South Australia for their work with Clydesdales. Winning many prizes in this field, they also participated in countless parades, charity rides and open days. Dot spent her final years at the Ross Robinson village at Victor Harbor, passing away in February at the age of 102.



Helen Mae FISHER nee Gabrielson, (1930-2025): Wife of Bill (dec'd) and mother of four boys, Tim, Bronte, Bob and Mick. She passed away on 25th February this year at Aldinga, aged 95. Following their move here from Willunga, in the early 1960s, Helen became the first president of Mount Compass Football Club's Ladies Auxiliary (in 1964) and along with Bill, was a regular at many dances and balls.

Helen taught typing at the Mt Compass School during her time here but after all of their boys had left home, the couple moved to Moana.

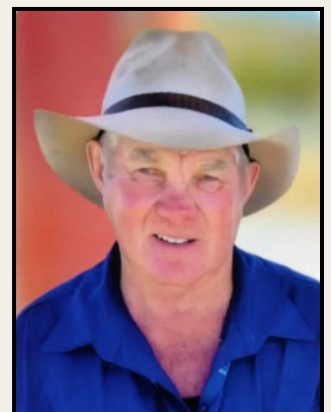
She was the grandmother of local community stalwart, Kelly Hicks nee Fisher (plus grandmother to nine other children). The funeral service can be viewed at: Alfred James Funeral Service:

<https://streaming.naoca.com.au/e/91b490f8-79bb-41c8-a226-e14eb7c6c873>

Michael George LEWIS (1945-2025): (Right) Lately of Tintinara, passed away on the 14th of March this year. He was the husband of Cathy and father of Matthew, David and Sharon.

Michael's parents were George and Shirley Lewis of Mt Magnificent (Section 1958). He attended Mount Compass Area School, completing year seven, before then studying at Urbrae Agricultural High School.

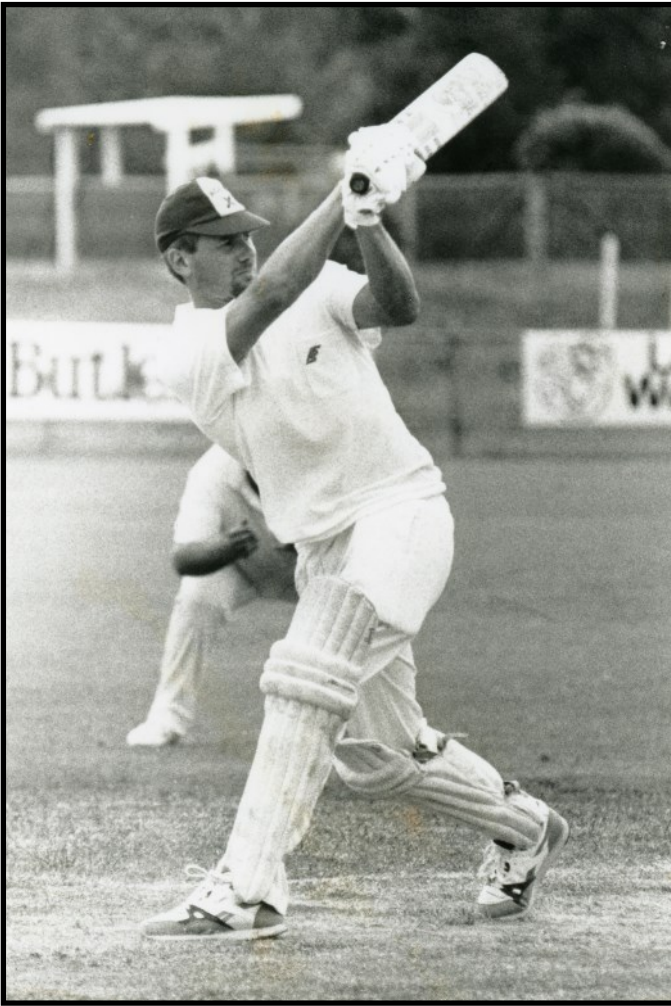
Along with his brother John, Michael took over the family farm until the 1990s when he and Cathy moved to Tintinara.



Dave (Burga) BURGESS (1967-2025): Dave passed away in March this year at too young an age. He was married to the much-loved Natasha (Tash) of Melitas's IGA, and father to Sheldon. He was the son of Ken and Laraine Burgess, with Burgess Oval named in honour of his father, who originally owned the land.

Raised and educated at Mt Compass, Burga (pictured left as a coach) was a keen footballer at Mt Compass, starting in 1981 with the Junior Colts, through to the A-Grade side. He served the club during some tough times, and was a coach for the Under 17s, Reserves, and A-Grade teams. Last year he was awarded a Life Membership of the club.

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Cricket was a passion for Burga (*pictured here in the 1990s*). He was a Life Member, President, and triple 'Cricketer of the Year' for the Mount Compass Cricket Club (MCCC).

He excelled as both a fast bowler and as a batsman, proudly serving as the winning captain for two Mount Compass Colts sides (1981 & 1982) as well as two A-Grade premiership teams.

Burga will be remembered not only as the prodigious young player who played A-Grade at the age of 15, and went on to achieve status as one of the best cricketers to play in the great Southern Association, but also as one of the MCCC's best team men.

Dave's blistering pace and strong competitive streak saw him twice achieve eight wickets in an innings and gain selection for the State Country eleven. All this while maintaining his reputation for good sportsmanship

Carrying on his father's vision of Burgess Oval becoming one of the best ovals on the Fleurieu, Dave Burgess would spend 10 to 15 hours a week preparing the oval's much admired turf wicket.

His ashes have been scattered on his beloved Burgess Oval cricket pitch.

(with reference to articles by Bill Jerram)

Ronald Karl (Ron) Nitschke (1936-2025). Ron passed away on May 30th, the husband of Dawn, and father of three girls, Jenny, Kathy and Sheryn. Known for his good humour and cheerful disposition, he participated in many facets of life here. Ron had first moved to Mt Compass in 1938 with his parents, Herbert William (Bill) and Doris Nitschke, when he was aged two. For four years during the 2nd World War he attended the Mount Compass School.

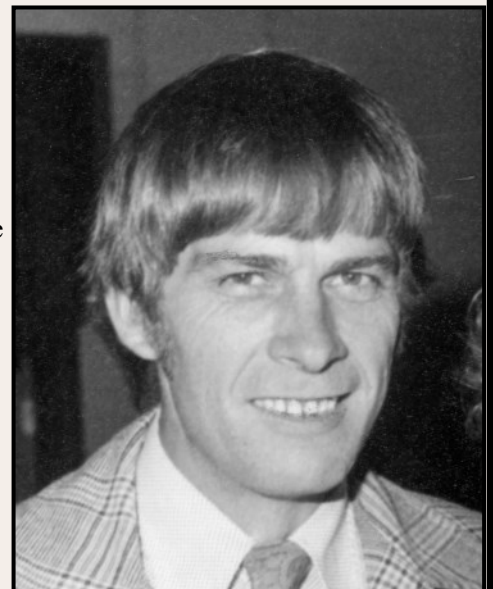
His parents left Mt Compass soon after the war but, following the death of his father, his mother returned to their property on Arthur Road in 1956. The recently married Ron also returned with his new bride, Dawn.

Their property included land that would be partially sold off to both the school and the Community Centre, as the town expanded. His mother, Doris, also donated the land that the Mount Compass Lutheran Church was built on.

Ron contributed in numerous ways to this town. He helped with the building of the 1958 Memorial Hall, was on both the Community Centre Committee and its Social Committee, helping to raise funds to pay off the new hall's debt. He was a member of the CFS, and awarded a Life Membership by both the football club and the tennis club for his valuable services.

Ron and Dawn moved to Strathalbyn in 1979 but their contribution to this town's progress is still recalled by those who had the pleasure of knowing them.

Ron has been buried in the Mount Compass Cemetery.



In 1897, part of the land along the 'black swamp' at Nangkita was surveyed for subdivision into "Working Men's Blocks" (later to be called "Homestead Blocks").

These smaller blocks of land, usually close to 20 acres in size, were considered of sufficient size to support families trying to escape unemployment during a period of economic depression. Waterfall Drive came into being when the track alongside these blocks found itself ending in an unplanned, albeit man-made, waterfall.

This manner of intensive agricultural development received a major boost with the Nangkita Village Settlement, where twenty-five Port Adelaide men and their families instigated a community style agricultural settlement here (refer Chronicle Nos 21 & 22). Although this scheme failed within a short time (1894-96) it would have a profound effect on the landscape of these swamps.

Draining of these swamps had begun prior to this particular settlement however, with a number of property owners aiming to make their rich peaty swamp soils available for more intense agricultural purposes.

Among the early settlers of this district, Mr William Porter, whose property was six miles further along towards Currency Creek, had in 1888 devised a method of draining his swampland for just such a purpose. He in turn voluntarily advised the new Village settlers on how to drain their land.

A little further upstream of the Village, the Wills family also dug their own drain around this time, with a newspaper article from June 1894 mentioning how its banks had broken during a heavy rain.

Another drainage system in swampland had been carried out close to where the Nangkita and Cleland Gully (Tookayerta) Creeks combine on section 429, with seventy of its 499 acres being swamp. Owned by Mrs Jane Adams, the draining of this land had begun in 1888, possibly by Mr Jonas Watson, who sub-leased part of her land that year, and lived on the property with his wife and family. This Mrs Watson, it was remarked in a newspaper article, was *"the first white woman that ever trod this place."* (Although possibly not correct, it does illustrate how remote this land was.)

Thirty acres (possibly the same land?) would also soon be sublet by Mrs Adams to a Chinese man named Ah Long. He continued draining that property, growing fruit trees, vegetables and tobacco, but did not remain there for long. The agricultural potential of the swamplands in this area were now becoming an attractive proposition.

Perhaps the earliest draining of swamps in this area occurred in 1884 when the Cleland brothers were granted permission to drain their leased swampland in the Gully that was named after them (refer Chronicle No 16).

It was not seen as unusual then, for the Village settlers to immediately begin digging a drain to convert their swamps into usable farmland. This was hard, back-breaking work which soon sorted out those who were committed to the community scheme and those who preferred to head back to the city as soon as employment again became available. By March 1894, the settlement's main drain had been dug for a length of more than 100 metres, which was then extended to half a mile in length by May.

After a lot of hard work, eighty acres of the Village's swampland were finally cleared, with drains now a mile in length. To irrigate their new agricultural land, the settlers had positioned the drain so that, although it was gradually falling, it also travelled up the shallow embankment, enabling the crops below to be flood irrigated by temporarily blocking the drain, and overflowing its bank.

This is where something unplanned happened. Where the drain ended and ran down to the lower swamp, it eroded through the sandstone formation, resulting in a waterfall forming within a year, and which still exists to this day.

In 1984, **Arch Peters** described the drain and settlement in this way:

"On St Patrick's Day 1894, the first party came to what is now known as Nangkita, built several humble homes and began to clear the land. One of the first big tasks they undertook was to build a drain one mile long, 7 to 8 feet wide and 2 foot 6 inches deep, on the southern side of the property. The earth was thrown up on the low side and this way it would carry a greater volume of water. The work was all done with a pick and shovel.....The drain was dug with very little fall - almost level, so by the time it reached the end, it was 20 feet or more above the level of the swamp. Within a year or two it washed out quite a big hole which left a very picturesque waterfall".

This drain did change the area dramatically, constantly eroding back through the sandstone and forming a narrow

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gully, until reaching the position it is in today. This falls with a drop of about 20 metres into a small pool which then flows through the eroded gully back into the creek, eventually flowing into the Finnis River.

A Southern Argus newspaper report from 1900 mentions the waterfall as being *“comparatively unknown but being worth the journey to see”* (from Strathalbyn). The author went on to state: *“through the continued percolation of the water there is a hole forty six feet deep by between thirty and forty feet wide. The sight after even this phenomenally dry season is grand.”*

Although the waterfall and pool became a picnic spot for various locals over the years, it has always remained on private property, **so cannot be viewed by the general public.**

To prevent the waterfall eroding even further back along the drain, a cement lip was built possibly in the 1960s and seems to have been successful in this objective.

In 1964 the Mt Compass CWA visited the waterfall as an outing, with Blanche Jacobs writing:

“Birds sang from tall pines and the music of water falling in cascades from red sandstone cliffs forty feet high, to a straight 12 foot drop into a deep willow fringed pool.”

She also mentioned that this channel was *“now partly cemented”*. In 2005, Linton Jacobs wrote:

“Fifty years ago, the water fell directly over the top of the sandstone, but now it has washed a 20 metre deep channel about 50 metres long through the sandstone. Someone has cemented where the water falls from the channel, and I would not expect it to wash further back in the near future.”

The swamp drains have required constant maintenance to function as they were intended.

In a 1984 interview, Sam Curnow spoke about the effort required by landowners with regard to these drains:

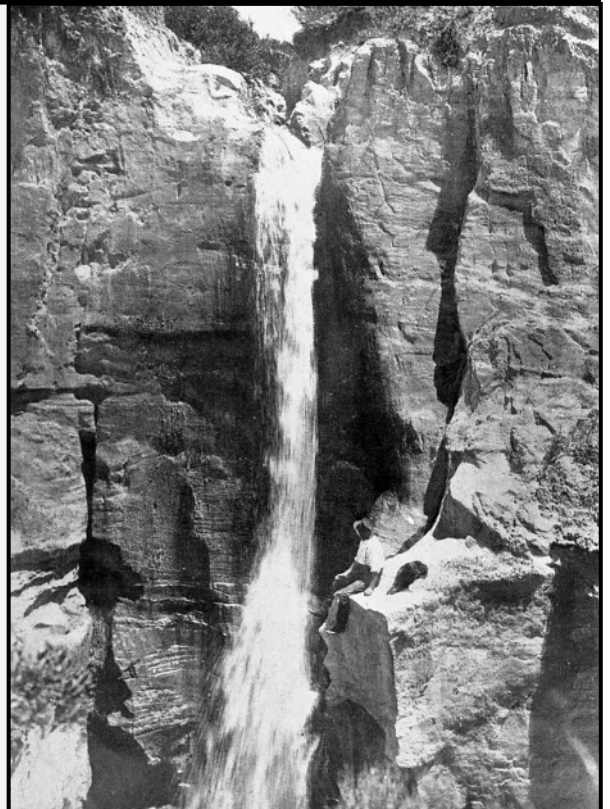
“Yes, we dug irrigation channels that we’d bring the water round the side of the hill, and we used to flood it onto the paddocks, by blocking the channels and that irrigation channel had to be cleaned out every year, sometimes twice a year. It would block up with rubbish. You’d get a heavy thunderstorm and a heavy downpour of rain and it would wash in different places and would fill up with silt, and you’d have to go along, and by hand with a spade, and bend the back and get into it. It was the only way you could do it.

If you didn’t do that then you didn’t have water, that’s all there was to it.”

New drains had continued to be dug into the 1900s, with the Lagoon area (strawberry farm) being drained using a 15 foot deep drain, dug by Mel and Ern Jacobs in about 1910. Ross Simons can also recall his father, Alb, telling him as a youngster, about the drains he had been employed to dig by hand during the early 1930s. These were in the area leading to the waterfall, with the

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Left: A view of the erosion as the waterfall cut through the sandstone and eroded back. (Date unknown)



A 1923 photo of the waterfall—note the gentleman sitting on the ledge alongside.



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family living temporarily, while undertaking this work, on what would become Linton and Dorothy Jacobs property on Cleland Gully Road. The actual name “**Waterfall Drive**” was not included in the 1940 listing of Mount Compass road names that were suggested by the Agriculture Bureau (*see Chronicle 16*). The earliest known mention of this name in newspapers occurred in 1981.

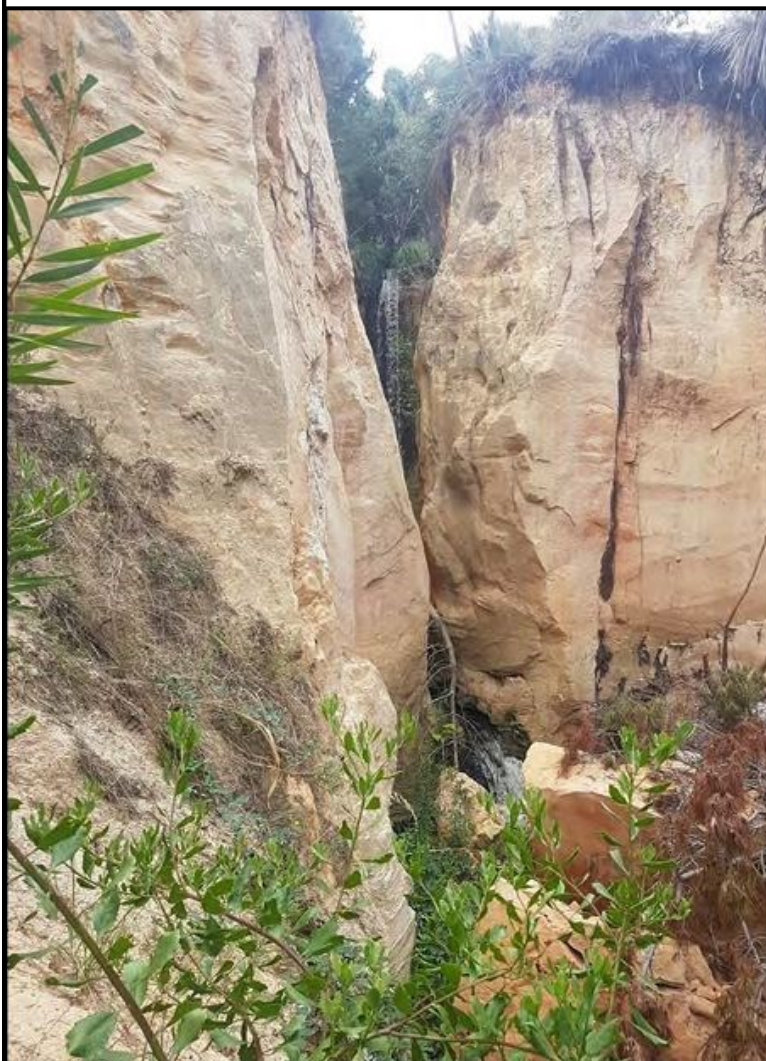


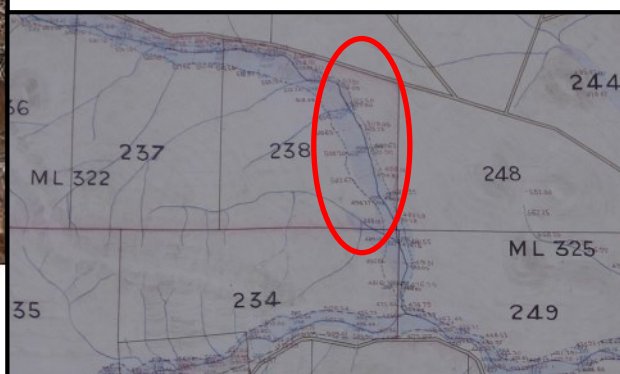
Figure 3.7: The present appearance of the artificial waterfall created at the terminus for the upslope bypass drain constructed at Nangkita in the early 1890s. Note the substantial effects of 125 years of erosion.

Since those pioneering days, there has been little co-ordinated effort to keep the drains cleared, which has no doubt contributed to the number of occasions when bank walls have been damaged following heavy rains. A **Compass Creek Care** group did exist for about eleven years from 1993, that valiantly managed to repair some of the damage caused by floods and drain washouts, but the consequences of constructing the original drains (and waterfall) more than 130 years ago is still impacting on landowners today.

References: trove.nla.gov.au, Mt Compass Archives, “Where the Compass Leads You”-Linton Jacobs, Nature Trust Glenelg, “Chasing Rainbows in The Rain”- A Riddle, Robert Hancock.

Left: A photograph of the waterfall erosion from a 2017 Nature Glenelg Trust publication which focuses on the Tookayerta catchment.

Below: A section of the Hundred of Nangkita map from 1888 showing the merging swamps from what became the Nangkita and Cleland Gully Roads. Waterfall Drive would later be cut through section 238 (as indicated) .



Donation to the Archives

Gilbert Haywood recently donated two replica sets of WW2 medals to our Archives. One is the full set of medals awarded to George Haywood (see below, right), the other is the boxed set of medals awarded to Harold Pittaway (one of his clasps is shown below, left).

Both of these men are listed on the Mt Compass-Nangkita Honour Roll, with George’s replica medals currently on display in the foyer of the War Memorial Hall.



Clifton Stirling McKinnon

Born on the 20th of December 1910, at Mt Gambier, Clifton (Cliff) McKinnon was one of four foster children cared for by the Wills family at Nangkita.

Why he became a ward of the state is not known at this stage, although his father was wanted by the police for non-compliance of a maintenance order when Cliff was one year old. His father's name had not been recorded at the time of birth, only his mother's, Irene Rebecca McKinnon. Cliff was then 'committed' to the industrial School at Magill from July 1911 to March 1912, which was usually the first step taken to becoming a ward of the state. When the Wills family cared for him, Cliff attended the Nangkita School and is recorded as playing for Nangkita Cricket Club when he was aged fifteen.

During the second World War, Cliff joined the Citizens Military Forces (CMF, or militia) on 28th of November 1940, before enlisting with the AIF (Australian Imperial Forces) in November 1942.

He served in a medical capacity with both the CMF and AIF, based solely within Australia. He undertook at least two chiropody courses during his time in the CMF, serving in the Camp Hospital Unit and the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC).

His enlistment papers note that Cliff was born at Burra on 20th December 1908 and was a married man. He may not have known his true place of birth (Mt Gambier), and often mis-recorded his actual year of birth (1910). Cliff had married Ruby Amelia Jurgens (bn 1916) on the 20th January 1934 at the Methodist Manse in McLaren Vale. Cliff was apparently an unemployed farm labourer and motor driver when he enlisted, with his address given as Mt Compass. He was noted as having five children under sixteen, and one over that age, as his dependants.

Cliff's name is among those listed as having volunteered their time to build the new Methodist Church at Nangkita, which was opened in 1935. His father-in-law, Alfred Jurgens, was also included in that list, while his foster father, Frank Wills, was one of the church trustees.

By 1943, Amelia's address had changed to High Street, Strathalbyn, after previously moving to Milang. The 1943 electoral roll has Clifton listed as a labourer at Milang, although Ruby was not recorded as living there. Her family lived on Nangkita Road (sections 410 & 356) in the 1940s and 1950s. *(part of this is now my property –Ed.)*

During his years of service, Cliff was placed in a variety of roles, including as a medical orderly at the Woodside Hospital (site of army barracks). He had achieved the rank of temporary corporal but reverted back to a private, at his own request, in order to join the AIF.

This must have been a form of army protocol as once he was transferred, Cliff was promoted to acting corporal within the AAMC.

Cliff completed a Hygiene and Sanitation course in 1944, serving with the 7th Australian Personnel Staging Camp (APSC), followed by joining the 6th APSC. These staging camps were sites where troops would be fed and housed in preparation for movement elsewhere. Camp hospitals were raised in almost every staging camp around the country, with Cliff also serving with the Australian Field Ambulance at Alice Springs.

In 1944 he served at the 35th Australian Camp Hospital in Camooweal, Queensland (the various camps around the country were all allocated an individual identifying number). This hospital covered staging camps spread along the roads from both Mount Isa and Alice Springs, to Larrimah. During the second world war, Larrimah, which is 430 kilometres south of Darwin, had an important role as the staging camp for over 350,000 army personnel, with its own hospital and communications

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Clifton McKinnon (right) from his WW2 service record.



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centre, and was the end of the line for the North Australia Railway.

Cliff was promoted to S/Sergeant in 1946, after the war had ended, but was discharged on compassionate grounds, at his own request in April 1947. He had served for a total of 1,834 days on active service by this time.

At some stage, Clifton appears to have moved to Papua New Guinea where, in later years, he became a father to a boy (1967), and a girl (1972), with a Papua New Guinian woman (Rambo Paille). He died there in 1973, with his occupation being recorded as a maintenance officer. Clifton Stirling McKinnon was buried at Rabaul Cemetery, in the province of East New Britain.

Ruby McKinnon passed away in 1967 at Whyalla, where she was buried.

References: *National Archive Service Records, Ancestry.com, State Records online, Mt Compass Archives,*

https://birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/35th_Australian_Camp_Hospital

*Also known as **Camp Hospital Warradale** when it was formed with 30 beds in January 1940. During the reorganisation of Camp Hospitals in June 1942 it was renamed **35th Australian Camp Hospital**. In May 1943 the hospital moved to Camooweal in Queensland, providing detachments to staging camps along the Mt Isa to Larrimah and Alice Springs to Larrimah roads. As troop numbers in the Northern territory declined, the hospital was disbanded in May 1944 with the detachments taken over by the 55th Australian Camp Hospital.*

Excerpts from Mrs Isabella Martin's Diary 1952 - 57

"I am trying to write a record of what has happened and is happening here since we arrived at Nangkita."

- Mrs Isabella Martin

This unpretentious diary, now copied into the archives, offers a rare insight into what everyday life was like for a humble farming family in Nangkita during the mid-1950s.

The repetition of Isabella Martin's everyday life was broken by visits from her family, or when neighbours generously delivered cases of surplus fruits to be converted into bottles of jams or preserves. While 'the men' (her husband, Don, and 19 year-old son, Brian) were either working off-farm or out in the paddocks on one of their never-ending farm projects, Mrs Martin would often list washing and ironing as her notable entries for many of her days.

The Martins arrived from Hamley Bridge in a Chevrolet car along with a truck loaded with their 211 fowls and 11 ducks, on the 17th October 1952. A '**big lorry and trailer**' with their furniture had arrived an hour ahead of them.

As an indication of the personal service they would receive, the postmistress (Helen Tonkin) called them a few days later to advise that some mail had arrived.

Within a week of arriving, nineteen year old Brian and his father would spend three days planting potatoes in their number one block and their first heifer calf would be born. The butcher also called in with his meat delivery. After completing their potato planting, Brian "**went out shooting for an hour or two**".

The following week saw three more days of planting potatoes in number two block, only to then move on to number three block. That week also saw them purchase a cow at Mt Compass for £30.

It must have been a cold start to November, because they lit their first fire in the sitting room with the weather being "**wild & woolly**".

Brian had planted gladioli, and the following month, dahlias, presumably as an extra source of income, and Mrs Martin noted that they had taken 60 dozen eggs to Strathalbyn. She had also weeded their rows of onions.



Mrs Isabella Martin (1890-1965)

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On Saturday 7th November they were invited to a firework display, which must have been the annual Guy Fawkes night and bonfire, held at Nangkita. They decided to stay at home by the fire however.

Burning yaccas seemed to have occupied their time during the first half of November, prior to the '**ban on outdoor fires**' which came into effect on the 15th. Meanwhile, Mrs Martin continued her weeding of the onion crop. That month her son, Brian, did the milking for the first time on his own, and their first milk cheque arrived, with the entry for the 15th of November stating: '**sent over 2 cans of milk this morning**'.

Mrs Martin boiled peas and broad beans at home, selling them a few days later - 4½ lbs of peas to Mrs G Stone at 1/6 (15c) a pound (0.45 kg). This was soon followed by sales of 20 lbs to '**one of the shops in Compass**' and a further 6 lbs to the post mistress. By December they were buying '**very nice**' beef from the Tonkins at 1/- lb and selling their peas to the Co-op Store in Mt Compass.

On Christmas Day that first year was the following entry: "**Our men had to milk this morning to have milk ready for 6.30. We had our Xmas parcels to open after breakfast. Had poultry & plum pudding for dinner. Jellies & fruit salad & poultry (cold) with lettuce, cucumber & beet & traditional Xmas cake. Stone's meadow hay was cut today.**" (they helped cart this hay three days later).

New Years Eve saw Mrs Martin listening to the tennis in Adelaide, with Frank Sedgman (Aus) battling Tony Trabert (USA) in the Davis Cup, while her 'men' were preparing for another line of fencing.

January saw apricot jam being made, using 26 lbs of fruit and 24 lbs of sugar.

There were regular entries such as the butcher calling twice a week, fencing work, and Sundays at church, plus Mrs Martin's shopping trips to both Compass and Strathalbyn.

On the 6th of February it was noted that four more rabbits had been caught in the traps. During the next few days the men finished another 800 yards of fencing. Also, over a period of three hours, Don & Isabella picked 14½ lbs (6.5kgs) of blackberries. The men again spent time 'killing' (or grubbing) yaccas this month, as they would continue to do for many years to come.

During April 1953, Don and Brian also helped the Tonkins to fight a fire they had lit. In the days following, Brian ploughed firebreaks on their own farm. Nine days after the Tonkin's fire, Brian and Don received a phone call to also help the Harts with a fire out of control on their property.

In June that year, local shop owner, Mr Ken Lewis called on the Martins to inform them he was starting a grocery round twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, the same day as the (Mt Compass) butcher.

Mrs Martin was by now attending the local CWA meetings and would soon join their committee.

Brian attended a number of military camps from 1952 through to 1954, such as an overnight camp at Victor Harbor and a two week camp at Lincoln Gap on the Eyre Peninsula.

Mr Gropler was mentioned as the local butcher in January 1954.

The family's plantings included peas, potatoes, turnips, maize, triamble (pumpkin), mangles (beets) and onions.

At 4.00am on Monday 1st March 1954, there was "**a terrific earthquake**" although no damage was mentioned in the diary.

The joys of being a volunteer clearly haven't changed, Mrs Martin wrote about going to the Mt Compass Show in March 1954, but "**did not see the show as I was busy in the kitchen.**"

In March that year the Queen visited SA, with Brian and his mum taking

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A young Brian Martin (right) in his National Service uniform



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the opportunity to attend Adelaide's Victoria Park Racecourse (along with 150,000 others) to watch a 40 minute long fireworks display held in the Queen's Honour. In Isabella's diary, she described this as a **'marvelous sight'**.

During this period, Isabella, who often diarised the congregation numbers when attending the Nangkita church, noted that the number attending had dropped to as low as seven, but hovered around twelve or so people, increasing to thirty eight in 1954. A church anniversary did manage to draw a crowd of over one hundred people however.

At various times, members of the Martin family would help others with cutting or carting hay, or with potato crops etc, for people such as Lance Thomas, various members of the Stone family, plus the Beaumonts, Tonkins, Diments, George Lewis and the Hailstone families. Whether they were paid in kind or cash was not noted.

July 1954 was census month, with Mrs Arch Peters calling on the family for their return.

During these years, Mr Martin had a few off-farm jobs, utilising his previous trade of carpentry with work at the Post Office (which continued for a few months), or similar work for the Thomas', the Arthurs, Ern Jacobs, and the Peters family, also a concrete tank at Doug Stone's and a painting job for Ray Stone.

On Saturday 18th September 1954, Brian is noted as having attended that year's GSFL Grand Final, watching Mount Compass winning their first ever Premiership. The family was still raising chickens, selling 22 dozen eggs to one business at 2/6 a dozen in Oct 1954. On the dairy side, all their cows had been given individual names.

In one historic occasion, January 12th 1955 was the first day for their **'automatic phone'** (refer Chronicle No.18).

Mrs Martin noted that she was now attending Guild meetings (church) and visiting the pictures at Victor Harbor.

Thursday the 3rd of October, 1955, saw Mrs Martin attending a bible society movie that was **'in colour'**. This was also the month that Keith Dix wired their house for electricity – a job that seems to have taken three or four days to complete. The following week a man called to inspect Keith Dix's work and the power was switched on. The next week saw Mrs Martin undertaking her first ironing with this new system. She made no comment on whether this new development had any impact on her life .

In August 1956 Brian began working part time at the new milk factory, spending two days there to start with.

The summer of 1956-57 saw Mrs Martin write: **"We have had a very dry spell and have had to use spring water (creek water?) for washing, bathing and household purposes."**

Isabella Marion Martin passed away in 1965 and is buried in the Mount Compass Cemetery.



Brian Martin in front of their disused dairy in 2016

Living At The Nangkita Waterfall

The Memories of Robert Hancock

In 1961 our family came from Clare to Nangkita, to a 40 acre property at the end of what is now called Waterfall Drive. We brought with us four horses and six goats, and later on we also had about eight milk cows. The horses were used for riding with the Strathalbyn Hunt Club.

I went to Victor Harbor High School for the next three years, travelling there on the Abbotts' school bus driven by Arthur Tune. To catch the bus I had to ride my bike about 3 kilometres to his house on the Nangkita Road, to get there by 7:45 am when he left. At night I got back home at about 5:30 pm after a 10 hour school day. Whenever the track across the swamp to our house was flooded, which happened quite often in winter, I had to stay home from school. From 1964 to 1967 I went to school and university in Adelaide and boarded there during the week, coming home for weekends and playing football for Mount Compass.

My other leisure time activity was scouting; Peter Stone used to take myself, Bill Nash and John Stone up to the Prospect Hill troop led by Deane Michelmore. Later Peter started the 1st Nangkita troop, meeting in a shed on Stone's property. It then moved to "Willowburn", led by Max Dahmes. Leigh and Colin Duffield joined the troop then. Then it moved to Mount Compass, led by Don Jacobs and Colin Langford, and meeting in Jacobs' old house on the main road.

My father Harold Hancock (known as "Lal") worked in the Dairy Vale milk factory for about 10 years as operator of the steam boiler. He liked keeping birds and we had several kinds including peacocks, pigeons, ducks, pheasants, a sulphur crested cockatoo and even a couple of kookaburras. The peacocks used to roost up in the tall pine trees where they were safe from foxes, and the rest were in cages. One day the cocky got loose and found his way up into the big crack of the waterfall and wouldn't come out, so Dad climbed down a rope about 15 metres into the crack, grabbed the cocky, put him in a bag and brought him out. (This was when I was away in the army at Townsville).

The swamp was inhabited by millions of frogs that croaked us to sleep every night, as well as hordes of red-bellied black snakes that feasted on the frogs. There was also a goanna with one foot missing (probably from a rabbit trap) that lived around the farm for several years. Water birds were nearly always present, including ibis, egrets, spoonbills, blue cranes and various wild ducks.

The waterfall area was made into a garden, with a little Dutch windmill, rustic bridges over the creek and various flower beds between the bird cages. Below the waterfall there was a spring which ran all year round and the pool was inhabited by a few rainbow trout. We frequently had visitors coming to see the waterfall.

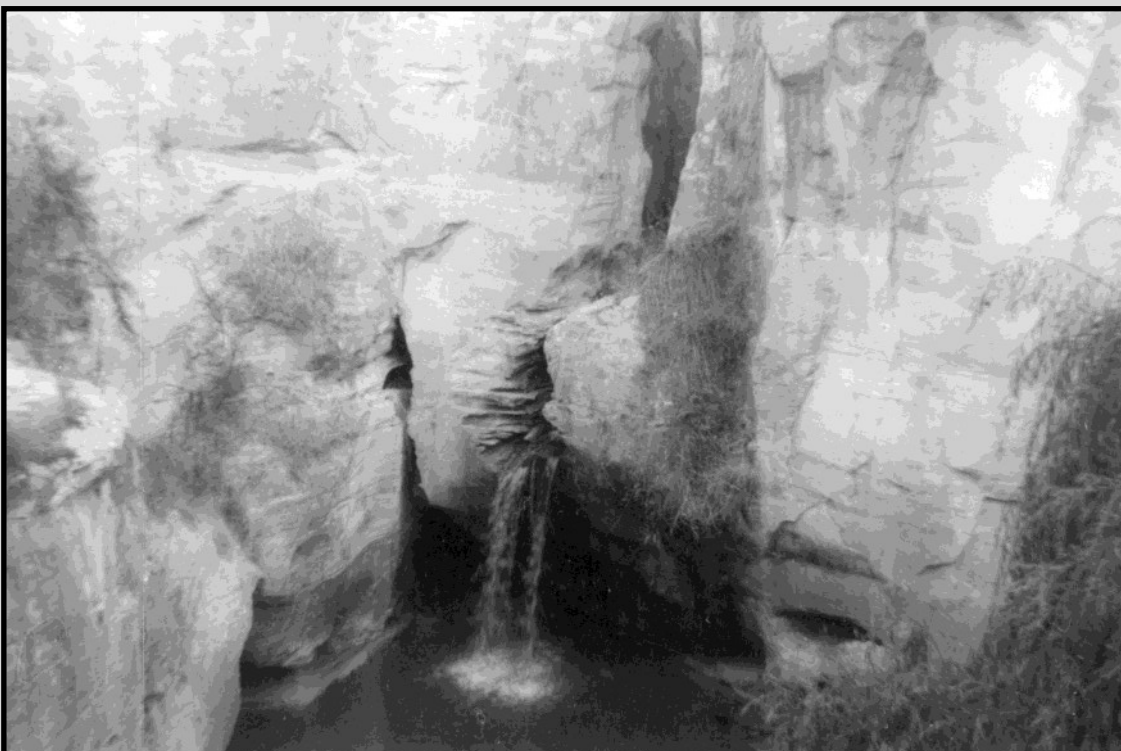
When my father died in 1973 the farm was sold and my mother and I moved to Port Elliot.

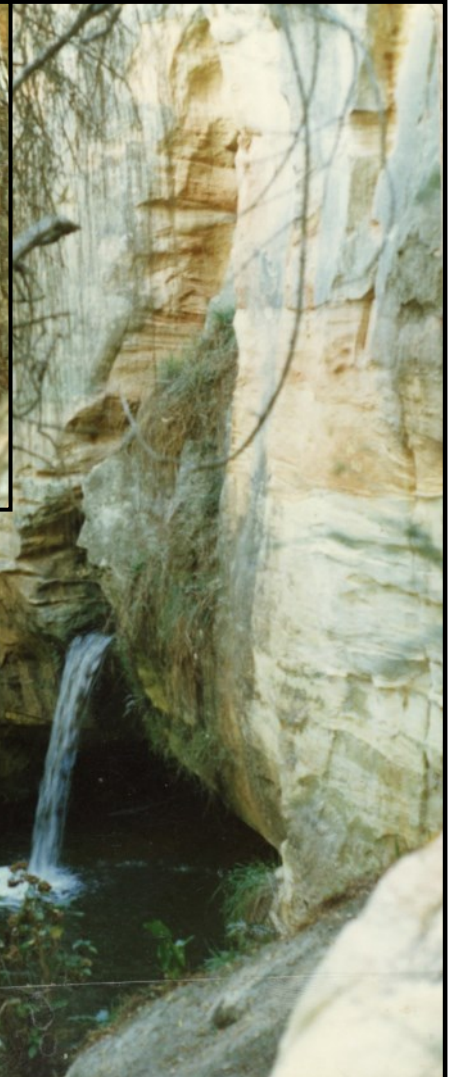
Robert Hancock
15/4/2025

Right:
The waterfall
from 1962.

This was one of numerous photographs displayed by Robert when he spoke at a public meeting in April, on the history of Waterfall Drive.

(More photos on the following page.)





A few of the Hancock family's photographs taken during a visit back to their property in 1978. This garden was built by Harold Hancock.

Above: a bridge across the creek.

Right: The small waterfall at the end of the gully.

Below: A view of the unusual garden.

Left: A children's windmill in the garden.



A Donation from the Ladies

Following a recent historical walk of the Mount Compass retail area, the women's Lifestyle Group made a generous donation of \$100 towards the town's Archives.

This enthusiastic group of ladies have been meeting in the hall every Monday morning for the past ten years, which is quite an achievement in this day and age.

Pictured is the group's co-ordinator, Carole Perry, presenting Steve Kettle with the donation.

Checkout their facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Mount-Compass-Lifestyle-Group-100067080451604/>

Or just turn up on a Monday morning to share a cuppa and a chat.



Ivor Kellow (Kelly) Arthur

Ivor was born on 26th August 1914 to parents Samuel Arthur & Maude Arthur (nee Galbraith). He attended the Mt Compass public school for most of his education, leaving at 14 years of age, as did many children in those days.

His father Sam was to pass away in that same year (1929) leaving Ivor & his brother George to carry on with the farm, growing vegetables and keeping a few cows.

Ivor, or Kelly as he was known locally, enrolled in the Reserve RAAF on 6th December 1940 following an earlier unsuccessful attempt to fill one of the few vacancies then on offer. Following his successful enrolment, he was then called up for full time service on 14th January 1941, at the age of 26 (right).

Perhaps a good indicator of this man's strength of character is that on his enlistment form, where many other people had written 'yes' in the section that asked if you were a British Subject, Kelly Arthur had written **Australian**. (Of interest nowadays is that the RAAF also had the phrase "*or a Naturalised British Subject of pure European Descent*" included as part of this question.)

His service trade (known as mustering in the RAAF) was welder, having initially joined as a trainee mechanic. Like many Mt Compass residents at that time, his religion was recorded as Church of Christ, while his listed occupation was "garage proprietor". This garage, which he had operated for three years, was situated where the Mt Compass Hotel now stands and was adjacent to his parent's family home (Weeroona).

Two glowing references had been supplied to help his RAAF application, one from Mel Jacobs JP and the other from Mr B G Dunstan, the District Clerk of the Willunga Council. Mr Dunstan verified that I K Arthur personally repaired motor cars, motor cycles, motor trucks, tractors and stationary engines at his garage.

The RAAF apparently required detailed personal record keeping, with Kelly's character being graded from 'good' to 'very good'. His General Conduct sheet on which all offences are recorded (including a specific column for drunkenness) was formally certified as having '*no entry*'.

He did have a 'yes' recorded on his enlistment form for the blunt question - can rough it? While the personal description of him included: "*Quiet manner, answers well, a capable sort of chap*".



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He was initially sent to Laverton in Victoria for his training followed by periods at bases such as Mallala, Wagga Wagga and Werribee before heading overseas to Milne Bay, Goodenough Island and Noemfoor Island (also known as Numfoor), all in New Guinea.

Kelly was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the Pacific Star, War Medal 1939-45, Australia Service Medal 1939-45 and the 'Returned from Active Service' badge. He passed a number of training courses while in the RAAF which no doubt served him well upon his return to civilian life. Courses undertaken included fitter, mechanic and welding.

He was 'demobilised' on 10th October 1945, "to resume civil employment as an Engineer," having served four years and seven months with the Royal Australian Air Force. Once he arrived back in Mt Compass, Kelly expanded the garage and started to employ workers.

In 1950 he married local girl, Ronda Peters, and not long after, they moved into one of the houses along Nangkita Road that was built by Ronda's grandfather, Richard Peters. Kelly closed the garage and moved his business to their home property in about 1954.

Kelly, a very thoughtful and practical hands-on man, invented and patented the Arthur Rotary Slasher in 1952 after seeing how difficult it was for his father-in-law, Arch Peters, to cut down bracken and reeds by hand. At this time there were no rotary lawn mowers or slashers anywhere in Australia.

As a community minded achiever, Kelly contributed to numerous local organisations. He spent 40 years on the Mt Compass Community Centre Committee, was a local RSL member from its inception (also made a Life Member) and was a member of the Mt Compass CFS for whom he built many of their early vehicles. Other community involvements included membership of the Mt Compass School Council, a Charter member of the Lions Club, member of the Literary Society, and also the Football Club - with the list going on.

In 1986, in the first such award bestowed upon a Mount Compass resident, he was named 'Citizen of the Year'. I K (Kelly) Arthur passed away in July 1989 and is buried in the Mt Compass Cemetery.

References: Mt Compass RSL records, Entre Nous newsletters, RAAF Service Records, Ronda Arthur, Mt Compass Archives.

Below: Verne Arthur, the nephew of I K Arthur, presenting the Acclaim for his uncle at this year's ANZAC Day dawn service held in front of the Mount Compass War Memorial Hall.



Archives History Group



April's Archive History Group meeting was the first to be held under a new public format, a presentation evening on the history of **Waterfall Drive** (see page 5).

This change proved to be successful with forty people attending on the night. A section of the attendees are shown in the top photograph.

Following the success of this meeting, there will be similar events featuring various local history topics over the coming months (refer below).

Right: Robert Hancock was one of the speakers on the night, reminiscing about the years when his parents owned the waterfall property. Alongside him is Chris Jerram, one of the attendees, and Marlene Connor a member of the History Group.

The Archives History Group will be hosting three more events this year, under the heading of "Know Your Town". Mark these dates in your calendar:

1st July @ 7.00pm - Our Retail History
2nd September @ 7.00pm - Ovals & Facilities History
(both of these will be held in the hall foyer)

2nd November (Sunday) @ 10.00am - History Walk along Peters Terrace. (Commences at Roadman's Reserve.)





Have you seen these salt & pepper shakers before?

In March this year, Marty and Jana McKenzie kindly donated these priceless salt & pepper shakers to the Mount Compass Archives.

They came into their possession after Jana's cousin had purchased them at a disposal/pawn shop in Pt Adelaide.

They are a delicate, light weight pair and we are lucky they have survived to this day. Absolutely nothing is known about their origin, so we are looking for help from anyone who may be reading this.

They could be from the hall opening celebrations in 1958, but were they a one-off - or were there others produced? The quality of this set hints at their being professionally made rather than by someone who dabbled in this as a hobby.

They are individually hand-painted, showing the hall with a white timber fence across the front and pine trees behind. One of them has "Mount Compass S.A." painted on the front.

Any help you can offer would be greatly appreciated. The set is currently on display in the hall foyer, if you would like a closer look.

It is amazing that after all this time, something as delicate as this set would find its way back to the hall it commemorates. Thank you Marty and Jana.

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)