



## **Autumn Newsletter 2023**



### **Mt Horrocks Historical Society celebrates 40th Birthday**

On Sunday March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the MHHS celebrated its 40th year, with celebrations held in the pleasant surroundings of the John Horrocks Cottage in Penwortham.

Around 30 members, guests and locals attended. The MHHS patron Ady Pearse and Pamela McTaggart (both descendants of Arthur Horrocks) were present and Geoff Brock MP, Member for Stuart.

Society President Wendy Spackman explained how the society was formed with the first meeting being held in the Watervale Uniting Church on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1983. The first committee, with Jaime Sobels as President applied to the Jubilee 150 board for funding and asked for enough money for a building. That request wasn't granted, but they did receive \$4000 and were granted the use of a room at the Watervale Institute/Library for rental of \$20 per annum.



Pamela McTaggart, Ady Pearse (Descendants of Arthur Horrocks) and MHHS President Wendy Spackman

Guest Speaker for the afternoon was Helen Perry.



Helen until recently was the Information Management Consultant with the Education Department. She provided support and advice to 527 Primary and Secondary Schools in SA. Whilst searching through and digitizing records, Helen found lots of interesting information regarding families, some dating back to the early 1900s.

Today the Society has 97 members and is the custodian of historical records in the Penwortham, Watervale and Leasingham districts.

## **AGM**

**MHHS Annual General Meeting**

**Monday June 5th 10.30am**

**Guest Speaker Meredith McInnis  
"Searching for Tom"**

**Light Lunch available**

**All Welcome**

**RSVP 29-5-23 0427051881**

# AN ANZAC LOVE STORY

Local Watervale resident Sue McKee tells a story of her Uncle George “Doc” Edwards.



“My Uncle George from Clare enlisted in WW1 and went over to France and served in the Second Division motor transport AIF. During his time in France, he fell in love and married a French woman, Mademoiselle Ernestine Sueur from Amiens.”

On one particular day in June 1917, Ernestine was in charge of conveying some medical materials. She needed a driver to drive her truck. A young Australian soldier who didn’t speak a word of French was assigned to her. George and Ernestine drove as far as Rouen and got to know each other.

Before and after the great battles at Villers-Bretonneux, Ernestine ran a café in Amiens ‘Rue La Martine.’ She was a favourite with the Diggers, who personally conducted her to safety on March 26th 1918, when all civilians were evacuated from shell strewn Amiens.

“Doc” Edwards was her hero and had promised to marry her. Mademoiselle hurried to Villers-Bretonneux after the Armistice was signed to rejoin her fiancé.



The following news report details the marriage in 1920 in the magnificent Amiens Cathedral.



Another newspaper report reported that Ernestine had written to Australia to enquire if Doc was already married or had a criminal record. “I discovered this 3 weeks after the wedding. Crickey I was wild” he retorted.

“Doc” and Madame continued to run the Hotel La Martine after the war and had a fleet of cars to take tourists to the battle areas, which turned out to be a flourishing business. They had to leave France in 1940 due to the German occupation.

In 2016 as part of the commemorations of the First World War, the Friends of the Cathedral of Amiens performed a concert with the theme of the evening being the true story of an Australian soldier who married a young girl from Amiens.



‘Doc’ George Edwards with Ernestine

## LOCAL ANZAC SERVICES



MHHS Secretary Mal Paterson leads the Penwortham Dawn Service



At the Watervale evening service

Geoff MP Member for Stuart, MHHS member Leonie Moore, Clare and Gilbert Valley Mayor Alan Aughey and Penny Pratt MP Member for Frome

## WATERVALE INSTITUTE TO BE SOLD

The Watervale Institute was built in 1915 on the burnt out 1850s creamery site.



It is situated in a prominent position at the intersection of the Horrocks Highway and Bryksys Hill Road.

Over the years it has served many purposes and is currently occupied by the Mt Horrocks Historical Society as an archive/ research Centre. The Society is custodian of a substantial collection of family histories, local cemetery records, memorabilia and historical documents. The collection also includes diaries, journals, memoirs and an extensive assortment of old photographs.

The building is presently owned by the Clare and Gilbert Valley Council who wish to sell off several of their assets, Watervale Institute being one of them.

The Council has offered the building as a lease or gift however neither the MHHS nor the Watervale Community Association is in a position to take up this offer.

At a recent Council meeting, elected members voted to initiate the land revocation process only after the Society has digitized their records and found a suitable place for their memorabilia.

The Society at present has no other suitable place to house the records and memorabilia.

The Society is “deeply disappointed” that the council was proceeding with revoking the community land status of the Watervale Institute. ‘I am disappointed that council are not going to retain the building and let us continue there’ President Wendy Spackman said.

Talks with Council are continuing.

## HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED

Minutes of Meeting held of the Upper Wakefield Council 26<sup>th</sup> February 1867

*Mr. Lawrence applied on behalf of Mrs. Chambers as being a destitute person (whose husband had been committed for trial for a felony) for enumeration for her keep and forward her to the Destitute Asylum in Adelaide. Clerk to provide funds for sending her down and to pay Mr. Lawrence £1/7 for keep.*

The Destitute Asylum, established in 1851 was situated in Kintore Avenue and was built to accommodate the poor, infirm and orphans. It operated until 1916 and provided financial assistance and temporary accommodation to the needy. Most of it was demolished before 1950. The Migration Museum now occupies the last surviving buildings.



The Destitute Asylum

## Committee Members

President	Wendy Spackman
Newsletter	Jim Morran & Meredith McInnis
Vice-President	Janet Morran
Minute Secretary	Jim Morran
Secretary	Malcolm Paterson
Publicity	Meredith McInnis
Treasurer	David Spackman
Public Officer	David Spackman
Patron	Adrienne Pearse

## WELCOME VIKTORIA

Viktoria Cormack, who was originally from Sweden, emigrated to Australia in 1995 and moved to Alice Springs with her husband Fraser, as his family were there. Fraser's family emigrated from Zimbabwe in 1983.

The family lived in Alice Springs for 21 years, where Viktoria had employment in an admin role. They have 4 children.

The couple moved to Watervale in 2022 when Fraser gained

employment with the Clare and Gilbert Valley Council.

Viktoria joined the Society after enquiring about an old grave at the back of the Uniting Church manse where she and Fraser live. She is keen to learn more about the local history of the area.

Mt Horrocks Historical Society extends a warm welcome to Viktoria and is very pleased that she has joined the committee.



### Contacts

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Details of charges for research undertaken by the Society are available on request.

Website: <https://www.mthorrocks.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MHHSinc/>

