

The Hodge Family of Garema

Written and compiled by Ray Cavenagh



The Hodge Family of Garema

Written and compiled by Ray Cavenagh

*Published in 2017, the centenary year of the acquisition of
the land that became the Hodge family farm, West Ooma*

Online version of this book

A page on WikiTree.com has been created to hold a copy of this book in PDF format. The page can also be used to provide feedback about the book, or any extra information you can provide about the family.

The page is at:

www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:The_Hodge_Family_of_Garema_interest_group

Or search for 'wikitree hodge family of garema' in your favourite search engine.

The PDF version of the book can be downloaded on demand, and then printed on your own printer or uploaded to an online printing service.

Hodge Family of Garema family tree records

WikiTree is a free genealogy website which aims to create a single 'family tree' for everyone. There were already a number of Joseph Hodge ~1808 descendants on WikiTree and we have added records for all those mentioned in the book that were not there.

You can see a summary of all the descendants of Joseph Hodge ~1808 here:

www.wikitree.com/genealogy/Hodge-Descendants-2551.

You can access all the records from there. If you are interested in contributing information or images to any of the records, please contact the profile manager of the relevant record.

© Ray Cavenagh 2017. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-0-6480661-1-8

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who have helped get this story of my mother's family off the ground by providing facts, figures, memories and photographs.

This story could not have been written without the support and co-operation of a lot of people, and many thanks to everyone. I want to particularly note the early research work done by Mona Hodge, and further help in this area from Betty Knight. I also note the help I received from Lyndall Holland's story of the Parker family and also Barbara Downey's story of Joseph Hodge's family. The many conversations with Barry Hodge were both entertaining and invaluable.

I would also like to thank Jacki and Peter Thomas for the work they have put into this book. Jacki's editorial work was extensive and valuable, and backs up the old adage that 'a book is only as good as its editor'. Peter has set up the WikiTree site and made arrangements for the availability of a book-quality version. Together they have made a major contribution to the finished work.

Front cover: *Old farm machinery at West Ooma, 2009*

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
<i>Sam and Isabel Hodge</i>	2
THE CHILDREN OF SAM AND ISABEL	4
THE CONTEXT	6
<i>Gold</i>	6
<i>Wheat and other grains</i>	6
<i>Transport</i>	7
<i>Rabbits</i>	8
<i>Drought and fire</i>	9
<i>Schools</i>	10
<i>The bush worker</i>	11
<i>Women's work</i>	13
<i>Sport and recreation</i>	15
<i>Relatives</i>	17
<i>The farm ... a memory</i>	19
STORIES OF SAM AND ISABEL'S CHILDREN	23
<i>Charles Gordon (Pop)</i>	23
<i>Frederick John</i>	26
<i>Irwin William (Bob)</i>	28
<i>Stanley James</i>	30
<i>Olive Muriel</i>	32
<i>Isabel Sarah</i>	35
<i>Elsie</i>	38
<i>Samuel Richard</i>	41
<i>Thelma</i>	45
<i>Eileen Elizabeth</i>	48
<i>Harold Herbert</i>	51
<i>Finale</i>	53
BEGINNINGS IN AUSTRALIA	54
<i>John Hodge and Elizabeth Parker</i>	54
<i>James Parker and Eleanor Brown</i>	56
<i>John Read and Mary Ann Burr ridge</i>	57
<i>Henry Taylor and Agnes Wilson</i>	59
APPENDIX 1: THE FAMILY TREE	61
APPENDIX 2: THE COUSINS IN ORDER OF AGE; AND WHO BELONGS TO WHOM	62

Introduction

In this brief account I have tried (with a lot of help from a lot of people) to draw attention to the lives of those members of the Hodge family who lived for a time on West Ooma, a small property about six kilometres from Garema along the link road between Garema and Pinnacle. The family comprised Sam and Isabel Hodge and their 11 children, seven of whom moved to the farm with their parents, and four who were born while the family lived at West Ooma. This account has five sections:

This introduction, which also contains the small amount of information we have about Sam and Isabel Hodge.

A short general history of the area, and the circumstances in which the family found itself from 1917 to the late 1940s. I am particularly hopeful this section will give younger generations an appreciation of the difficulties confronting people of previous generations in simply 'making do', and the hard physical work of both males and females that made it all possible.

An account of **the lives of each of Sam and Isabel's 11 children**. This section has some problems of evenness of length because some family members had much more information available about them than others. I am sorry about this, and it could have been avoided if I had started on this work many years before I actually did.

Beginnings in Australia. We have a good deal of information about those who arrived here from the United Kingdom at various times between the 1830s and the early 1850s that has been gathered over the years, and with the exception of the Taylor/Wilson family (Jessie Read's parents) is reasonably complete. Note that it may not all be accurate, as new information keeps turning up, but it is the best we can do at this time. In terms of Australian family backgrounds it is pretty good. Please also note that much of this work has been done by others, and I have tried to recognise this in the text. The family tree is added as appendix 1.

A ready reckoner of family members of the two generations that came after Sam and Isabel, the first of which are the children of Sam and Isabel, and the second being their descendants, or 'the cousins'. I have finished here because going any further makes the enterprise too large, and also because one of the main objectives is to create a 'platform' from which future generations may determine their own histories. The cousins are listed in appendix 2.

It is not possible to get a highly detailed picture of the Hodge family and their involvement in activities in the Garema/Pinnacle/Wirrinnya area, as well as the town of Forbes, so we too have had to 'make do'. We fortunately have the written stories of Isabel, Sam Jnr and Thel, and Betty Knight's story of her mother Eily, which give us considerable information about life on the farm and the things people did to make Garema a community. For the rest I have talked to cousins about moments and memories that largely originate from experiences in our childhoods. It has been particularly valuable to have Aunty Thel at hand, and Barry Hodge has been an extraordinary source of facts and tales. The resulting stories I have included when they seem relevant. It is not a full picture, but is hopefully enough to create an idea about life in those times.

Ray Cavenagh

Sam and Isabel Hodge

Information about Sam and Isabel's family histories is to be found in the *Beginnings in Australia* section.

Samuel Richard Hodge (Sam Snr) was born in Grenfell in 1878. He was the 10th child (of 14) born to John Hodge and Elizabeth Parker.

Sam Snr died of cancer in 1930, when he was 51 and his youngest child, Harold, was one year old. The most significant memories of Sam Snr are in the first-hand stories of two of his and Isabel's children, also called Isabel and Sam, both of whom remembered him warmly and noted his steady character, his skill as a farmer, and his affection for, and support of, his family. His death was a tremendous blow for all the family.



Left: Sam, taken from a picture of him and his son Irwin in a crop some time in the mid-1920s; centre: Sam in his 1926 Rugby Tourer; right: Sam with the very young Harold in 1929.

Isabel Margaret Read (sometimes known as Bella; known as Gran to her grandchildren and hereafter referred to as Gran) was born in Forbes in 1883. She lived all her life in the Forbes district, and died and was buried in Forbes. She married Sam Hodge in 1904, and they lived at Calarie, just north of Forbes. There's nothing much at Calarie these days. The houses in which the Hodge families lived are long gone. The only survival from those days is the school, which opened in 1901 and functioned until the end of 1969. It is now the State Emergency Services building.

By the time the family moved to West Ooma in 1918 or early 1919 Gran had had seven children, and had another four while living on the farm. Her child-bearing years therefore stretched from 1905 to 1929, from the age of 22 to 47.

Gran was the youngest of six children (three of whom died in infancy) born to Frederick Read and Jessie Taylor. Gran never knew her mother, who died shortly after she herself was born. After her mother's death, her father married the housekeeper, Esther Field (1853-1947), and they went on to have another eight children. At the time her father remarried, Gran was just a baby. Her sister Jessica was three years older, but not much more than a toddler herself. We can assume that Agnes (Jessie's child before her marriage to Frederick), who was 12 years older than Gran, was also there, as was Gran's older brother Jack. As they all got older, they would have had to assume increasing responsibility for the running of the house and the care of the younger children.



The photo to the left is the only photo of Gran I have that was taken before the 1930s. She looks about 5 or 6 years old. It is a studio photo, and rather attractive.

The next photo I have of her was taken in 1935, after 11 children and six years of widowhood. It was taken in West Wyalong, with (left to right) Esther Read (nee Field), Isabel Hodge (back), Agnes Swan (nee Read, the oldest of Jessie's children), and Gran, aged 52.



We know nothing of Gran's schooling or adolescent life, and whether she ever had a time of party frocks and dancing shoes, but one suspects her social life was fairly restricted. Still, she did meet Sam Hodge somewhere.

Gran never drank alcohol, and would not allow any in the house (her sons – 'the boys' – would hide their beer in the shed). She was also religious, to an extent, and made her daughters ('the girls') go to the church service held in the Garema Hall. She had at least three cars at different times, but did not drive.

Maureen Gavin, who lived next to Gran in Farrand Street Forbes for three years, said that she was always in Gran's house and often wished Gran was *her* grandmother, 'She was a lovely old lady'. She also noted Gran's hospitality. 'There was always someone there'.

Lots of things about Gran turn up in the stories, particularly those of the girls, and particularly about the range of skills she needed just to keep the show on the road in a house that never had electricity or running water.

Here she is with her chooks, and with granddaughter Meg.



Isabel Margaret's story underpins the story of every one of her children.



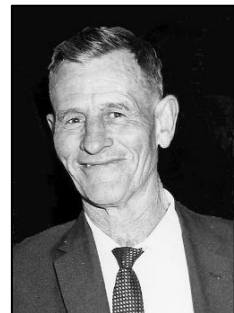
The Children of Sam and Isabel

1. Charles Gordon (Pop, or Larry)



b. 12 May 1905, Calarie
d. 6 September 1996, Forbes

2. Frederick John



b. 12 January 1907, Calarie
d. 9 November 1966
(accidental death in northern NSW)

3. Irwin William (Bob)



b. 25 February 1909, Calarie
d. 4 October 1986, Wentworth Falls

4. Stanley James



b. 8 February 1911, Calarie
d. 20 August 1974, Forbes

5. Olive Muriel (always called Muriel)



b. 10 August 1912, Calarie
d. 15 September 1986, Forbes

6. Isabel Sarah



b. 1 June 1914, Forbes
d. 27 January 2006, Forbes

7. Elsie



b. 1 December 1915, Forbes
d. 18 September 2000, Coonamble

8. Samuel Richard



b. 13 January 1919, Forbes
d. 19 Aug 2009, Bateman's Bay

9. Thelma



b. 28 October 1920, Forbes

10. Eileen Elizabeth



b. 13 April 1923, Forbes
d. 7 February 1990, Balmain

11. Harold Herbert



b. 4 May 1929, Forbes
d. 21 August 1996, Sydney

The Context

Gold

While the rich Lachlan Valley was settled by graziers early in the 1830s, it was the finding of gold in 1861 that created Forbes. The remnants of gold production are still to be found around the town. Forbes was the centre of a large gold-bearing area, but when the alluvial gold ran out it had to be mined from underground gold-bearing reefs. Sometimes it would be mined open-cut, but mostly it was mined from shafts driven down through the clay to the reefs beneath. The ore was crushed with machines which had varying numbers of 'stamps' (crushers) run from a central crankshaft driven by steam. It was a business that required investment and the people who worked in the industry were employees.

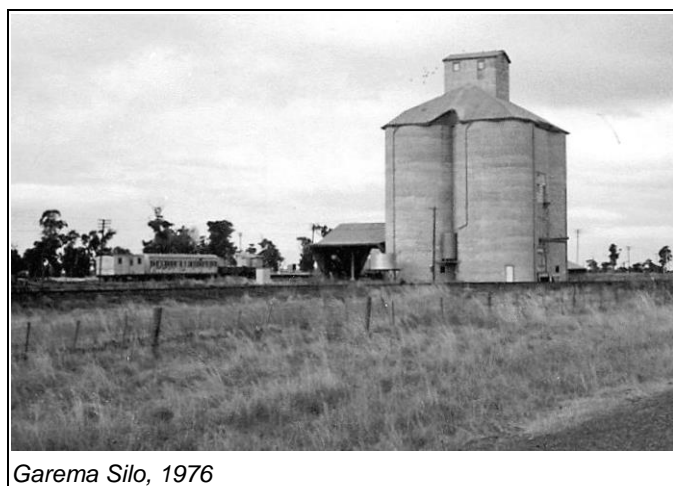
There are many old village sites in the Forbes area, most with little to show of the activity that once took place there. The two areas we are interested in are the Pinnacle area, and the Calarie area. The Pinnacle area had a number of mine sites beginning around 1891, particularly at Ironbarks and on the rich Pinnacle Reefs. Calarie had a large gold-mining industry from around 1895 to 1908. Both of these areas have been re-visited by investors over the last century.

We do not know for sure that our ancestor John Hodge (Sam Snr's father) left the land grant he and his brother Joseph had at Snowball Creek, south of Gundagai, for Bogolong in the Grenfell district because of an interest in gold, but it certainly is a possibility. After a severe rabbit plague at Bogolong, the family did move to the Pinnacle district to work in the gold fields, and later moved into Forbes. We do know that Sam Snr worked as a miner at Calarie, where the family lived, and where the older Hodge children were born.

The gold industry did not finish overnight. In 1915 there were still eight gold mining companies working in or near the town of Forbes, and it should be noted that there is considerable activity in the gold mining industry around the town to this day, especially in geological and exploratory work. However, the Hodge family had well and truly finished with mining work by the time John Hodge died in 1914.

Wheat and other grains

Despite the work of James Ruse, who grew the first successful wheat crop in the colony of New South Wales, and his substantial number of successors, by the end of the 19th century New South Wales was still not self-sufficient in that grain. The problem was that a number of diseases were affecting the crops. Much of this was resolved by William Farrar's development of new wheat strains, particularly the 'Federation' strain developed by 1900 and ready for distribution in 1903. The state's production of wheat trebled over the next 20 years.



Garema Silo, 1976

The NSW government supported this development in ways which affected our family significantly. The principles of closer settlement were reviewed and revised between 1902 and 1914 to make the breaking up of the large properties more efficient, and some of that

activity took place in the Garema/Pinnacle area. Among the beneficiaries were John Hodge's sons Bill in 1910 and Sam Snr in 1917. Sam Snr's block came from what the Lands Department called 'the Ooma estate' and the subdivision was originally for the benefit of returned soldiers, but clearly other applicants were considered. The blocks were just over 600 acres, or about one square mile. At the time of horse drawn agricultural machinery this was adequate. Later, when grains became profitable only as broad acre crops, it was not.

Before the closer settlement programs were established the Garema/Pinnacle area was thinly settled, timbered to varying degrees, used mainly for grazing, and largely unfenced. Land had to be cleared to expand wheat production, and the machinery of ploughing and harvesting was horse-drawn. Barry Hodge can remember his father Irwin working with a horse-drawn plough at West Ooma in the mid-1930s, and Sam Hodge Jnr certainly maintained these skills when he worked on the farm as a young man.

The closer settlement movement (which included soldier settlement) brought into the farming community people who were in the same boat as the early selectors – short on finance but often, as in the Hodge case, long on effort, and blessed with growing children who could help with the things that needed be done on the farm.

While the West Ooma farm had some sheep, cows and horses, the main function of the property was to grow wheat. Barley and oats were also grown. Both of these crops are valuable for stock feed, and barley, which matures earlier than wheat, was a handy cash crop.

Transport

As the wheat crop expanded, the railway system was also continually developed to cope with transport of wheat to cities and ports. Storage at railway sidings in bags was always problematic, and in order to improve storage a very large program of silo building was begun in 1916. By the mid-1930s over 300 of these imposing structures had been built, and as far as I know all of the original silos are still standing.

While the new railway line from Forbes to Stockinbingal was completed in 1918, the silo at Garema was not built until 1930-31. This was when the Cavenagh name arrived in Garema, as Alec Cavenagh was the contractor who built the silo. Alec's wife Ada had died of tuberculosis in 1918 and while working at Garema he met and married Matt Malqueeny, a widow who ran the Garema store, and he remained there until his death in 1947. His son Ron Cavenagh was introduced to the Hodge family on visits to his father, and he married Isabel Hodge in 1937. Harold Cavenagh, another son, was also in Garema regularly, both before and after the war, and he was a great friend of Pop (Gordon) Hodge.

Merle Evans, in her piece in *The History of Forbes, New South Wales, Australia* (Forbes Shire Council, 1997) left a useful picture of the movement of wheat from the farms in the 1920s:

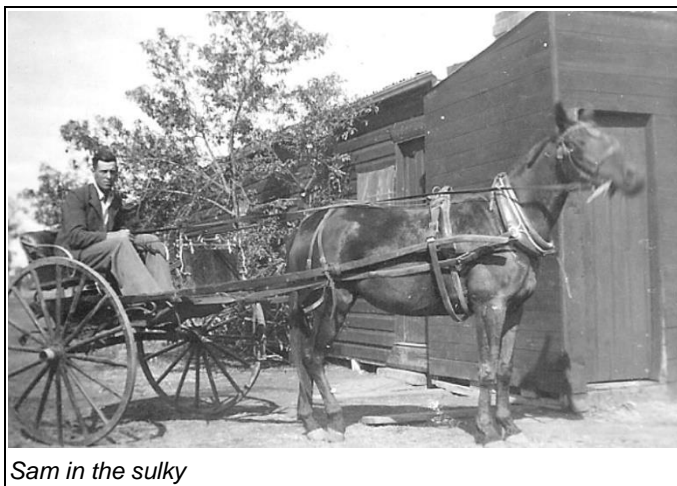
There were no wheat silos at Garema for years, the wheat being stacked in bags on layers of sleepers. Then, when all the bags were stacked, the stacks were covered all around with hessian ... It was stitched together with sewing twine and then the stacks were covered in galvanised iron. The wheat lumpers had a heavy job as they had to carry every bag of wheat on their back from the farmers' wagons to the top of the wheat stacks.

Most farmers carried their wheat on wagons drawn by teams of draught horses but there were also two bullockies who had the toughest job because they couldn't sit

on the wagon and drive, but had to walk along by their teams of bullocks swinging a big whip to keep them on the go.

Grain handling and movement became major parts of that industry and associated skills and activity (such as bag sewing and lumping wheat) became an important part of the casual employment spectrum. If we look at the whole business of growing and delivering a wheat crop, there is a tremendous range of seasonal employment opportunities to be had, at a time when very little was mechanised.

Sam Hodge Jnr's story shows us the connection between crops and horses, and horses were needed for work and for transport. All the boys had sulkies, and the girls were just as able to get a sulky on the road.



Sam in the sulky

The roads were gravel, or dirt. I can remember being picked up from the rail motor at Garema by Eily in a sulky during the war years and she took us down a track that ran along the stock route, and not the road. As country people will remember,

these tracks were often a lot smoother than the built up gravel road surfaces, and of course were common on farms. In *The History of Forbes, New South Wales, Australia*, the writer of the section on Wurrinya states:

The roads weren't formed or fenced in the 1920s. The road was only formed to Wurrinya early in 1930 and gravelled early in 1940. It was sealed many years later.

While the Boyd/Pinnacle area is older than Wurrinya (remembering that Wurrinya and Garema are both artefacts of the rail extension from Forbes to Quandialla in 1918), there is no reason to assume that the roads through Garema to Boyd/Pinnacle, Piney Range and through Ooma Station to Cowra were any better formed. It was the advent and development of motor transport that brought changes to road-making in the bush, and the sealing of most of these roads was post-World War 2.

The train was important in the movement of all kinds of goods. Sam Jnr recalled that not all the milk in the district was used on the farms. Friends living at Glen Eden at Pinnacle who milked cows transported the cream in their horse and sulky to Garema to be taken by train to Cootamundra where it was made into cheese. *'It was beautiful cheese'*, said Sam.

Rabbits

Rabbits arrived in Australia with the First Fleet but didn't become a pest on the mainland until after their introduction to Victoria in the 1860s (they were already a pest in Tasmania).

One of the main tasks of farmers and farm workers until the advent of myxomatosis (a viral disease introduced to kill rabbits) in the late 1940s was to do with rabbit eradication – hunting (including trapping), digging out burrows, trying to keep kitchen gardens rabbit free, poisoning, improving fences, and finally, eating the little buggers. It is hard for us to imagine the actual size of the problem these days, but the numbers were prodigious. In times when work was in short supply, trapping rabbits for meat and skins could be profitable, and most of the Hodge boys did some of this.

Isabel, Thel and Sam all mention rabbiting as a pastime at West Ooma, and rabbits as a food source. Isabel mentions going out rabbiting with kangaroo dogs, with the catch becoming a stew. The kangaroo dog was a purpose-developed hunting dog originating from a greyhound-staghound cross with other breeds coming into the mix from time to time. It is regarded as a 'type' of dog rather than a 'breed'. They were very common dogs on farms of the period, and were highly valued because of their speed and their willingness to pursue.



Rabbits cornered in a netted enclosure in western NSW in 1951

Rabbits will generally live in warrens as protection against predators and extremes in temperature. Red soil is preferred for warrens as it is not as porous as black soil which more readily allows water to penetrate underground burrows. Therefore, the warren preference is not always available in areas dominated by black soil, such as that south of Garema where the farm was:

Even though there was a rabbit plague there didn't seem to be so many on our farm. (Isabel)

At West Ooma the rabbits largely lived in above-ground harbours such as logs, windrows and dense thickets of scrub, or under built harbour such as old sheds and machinery.

Drought and fire

A dry spell in 1918-1920 would not have been helpful for a farmer just starting out. There were also a couple of dry periods in the 1920s and 1930s, and with no running water on the West Ooma farm these would have made life difficult, but they were not severe droughts. There were no significant floods either, so the pattern of weather was generally favourable for the Hodge family.

I don't remember seeing dead stock around when there was a drought. Dad was a good farmer and always had plenty of hay for the sheep and horses. Sometimes however, the cows would have to be fed from leaves on tree branches cut down by the boys. (Isabel).

Pinnacle Creek ran through the farm but was usually dry, so there was no permanent supply of running water:

The water we used for all purposes when there was no drought was caught off the roof into big tanks. But when the drought was on we could only use that water for drinking and cooking. We carted water for washing and baths from the dam [there was a small dam near the house]. If we ran too short we carted water from a well on the Crouch's farm.

But dry spells were regular, and with the dry weather came fire:

When I was about 10 years old a big bush fire that started in Wirrinya came through to Garema. My father and brothers all went to fight the fire so Mum and us kids were left at home. I can recall Mum would not let us sleep in the house that night. We threw some mattresses out on the ground and slept there. (Thel)

One day at school in 1928 a chap called in and told the teacher to send the children home as there was a big bush fire coming our way. It was started by a spark from an old steam train. I can still see Mum wringing her hands and praying. All our hay stacks and fences were burnt. But we were luckier than some as we didn't lose any stock because Dad and Stan had time to get them down to the dams to safety. (Isabel)

Severe fires in the central west of NSW in December 1926 impacted many areas in the Forbes district, including the Garema district:

Fire fiend breaks out afresh through the district – land owners sufferings general: One vast scene of desolation and waste is the only manner to describe the countryside. From rich grass and wheat country that spells prosperity, it has been reduced to one big area of ashes and destruction. Fences, valuable timber, homesteads, sheds, stock, haystacks, stubble paddocks, farming implements, nothing was safe from the holocaust that raged over these two weeks prior to Christmas 1926. The fires rage from Brolgon, Nelungaloo and Gunningbland on a front through to Tichborne, Parkes East, Back Yamma through to Forbes township, where the showground buildings were in great danger, only being saved by the efforts of the local fire brigade. Rain was the saviour, which assisted the fire fighters to quell the flames, which, at times, travelled 15 miles an hour [approx. 24 km/h] and more.

Soon after passing Garema ... there were signs of what the district had suffered ... Desolation more striking than was apparent in the previous Sunday's fire at Daroobalgie and Back Yamma was everywhere to be seen ... the nearer we approached the Pinnacle Mountain, the more apparent was the desolation ... crops gone, fences gone, even homesteads gone. (The Forbes Advocate, December 1926)

Schools

With closer settlement came schooling. The vast majority of the schools of the day were one-teacher schools, which were often only open for a few years. Schools had been started, amalgamated, made half-time, re-named and closed at Boyd (which was a village of some size, now totally disappeared), Piney Range, Pinnacle Reefs (which had been Boyd), Pinnacle South and Ironbarks (another vanished village) from the late 19th century until Piney Range and Pinnacle South, the survivors, were both closed in 1947.

The village of Garema did not have a school until much later, and the school serving that area was on the corner of the Hodge farm. Sam Snr donated the land, and it opened in 1919. It was called Garema School, and most of the Hodge children attended. Isabel, who was born in June 1914, always said that she was sent to school at not quite five when it opened in April 1919 'to make up the numbers'.

There were Quirk kids there, and Ackroyds, and later Bill Crouch started. The school had been built a couple of hundred yards from our place as we were the largest family in the district. (Isabel)

Pop and Fred would have been able to avoid the school, but the rest all attended: Irwin probably only for a short time, but Stan is mentioned by Isabel quite specifically as having been a student at the school.

This school operated until 1942, and Wilma Hodge, Elsie's daughter who lived with Gran, started school there, but it was then closed as a more central school at Garema had been opened in 1941. This school was itself closed at the end of 1971, having hosted Wilma,

and also Pop and Daisy's three kids, and Pam and Marge Hodge. Merle Evans stated that school was held in the Garema Hall but I suspect this would have been a temporary solution while the new Garema school was being built, as there is no reference to an earlier school in the department's records.

The normal school experience for most country children in the pre-WW2 period was to finish school after completing primary school. Until the late 1930s there was actually a pre-secondary school exam called the Primary Final, which at least Isabel and Thel completed. While still attending Garema School, Thel did a couple of years of secondary schooling by correspondence, and Isabel stayed on until she was fourteen and a half. Harold was the only one who went to secondary school at Forbes Intermediate High School, boarding through the week, and finishing around the end of the war with his Intermediate Certificate.

Of course, town children had much better opportunities, although it did depend on the size of the town. Forbes had an Intermediate High School from 1920 (the Intermediate Exam was sat at the end of the current Year 9), but none of the older Hodge children were able to access it, even if they had the interest to do so. Finally, schooling – both in a quality and quantity sense – played a critical role in employment opportunity, then as it does now. The opportunity to gain significant schooling experiences not only affected the Hodge generation who became our parents, but also a number of the next generation of cousins.

The history of our family however, tells us that the capacity to work in a wide variety of jobs also becomes the capacity to learn a wide variety of skills. In rural Australia in the first two-thirds of the 20th century the ability to perform a wide variety of jobs remained as important as acquiring specialist skills and qualifications. This importance has now almost gone, but we must pay tribute to the capacities and skills of those of our family who took on the role of 'bush worker'. The work that our ancestors and cousins did in rural Australia provides a base line for all of us, and it is worth attention.

The bush worker

Much of our 'bushman' literature is about horsemen, shearers, prospectors and bushrangers. Perhaps these are the more romantic of the great mass of people who inhabited rural Australia in the past, but they certainly aren't typical of the thousands who worked on farms or properties, with crops or stock, and who built and maintained (and are still doing so) the vast infrastructure that supports agriculture in Australia.



Cutting hay, 1915 (SLSA B31144)

The characteristics of this work force are:

- Almost all the adolescents and young adults of the period until WW2 (and for some a good deal after) who were raised out of range of secondary schooling, or who were disinclined to pursue it, began their working lives on their family or neighbouring farms. All of them grew up in a milieu of farm work.
- All of the Hodge boys, from Pop to Harold, began their working lives in this way. A number of the next generation – 'the cousins' – also began in the same way

- The key to general bush work was adaptability, which included a capacity to learn new skills – often by trial and error, or by working with an older worker – and a capacity for hard work.
- In most parts of NSW there were opportunities to become a rail worker, a town worker, a postal worker, a driver or some kind of specialised, or semi-specialised worker. The only Hodge speciality was shearing, which is seasonal, so was usually combined with general bush work. For those with a technical bent there were limited opportunities on the railway, or in larger enterprises, or in local garages. The only Hodge boy to follow this path was Harold, who, after a period of general work, was employed by the Australian government Post Master General's Department (the PMG) and remained in that employment until his retirement.
- All the young men of this period were able to kill and butcher beast and fowl but only one member of the family specialised in that area, and that was Ken Hurford, Thel's husband, who worked in the meatworks at Daroobalgie and Forbes for many years.
- Shearing was attractive because it was relatively well-paid. But it was also seasonal, and many shearers travelled far and wide for work. Pop, Fred, and Stan shored locally but would travel when work was distant. Irwin went into the sheds, but specialised in wool pressing.

Bush work itself involved any general work found on a farm. For many of the Hodge family it involved living on a property and undertaking all necessary tasks. Pop and Daisy Hodge, Fred and Elsie Hodge, Irwin and Jean Hodge, Stan and Elsie Hodge, Dud and Muriel Chandler, Ron and Isabel Cavenagh, Bill and Elsie Day, and Sam and Rene Hodge all spent periods of time living and working on properties around Forbes, Cowra, Coonamble and Goondiwindi. Stan stayed on West Ooma until the early 1930s working on the farm for his parents, and Sam remained on the farm during the 1930s, working for his mother. While most of their children, the cousins, avoided permanent work of this kind, many of them worked casually or temporarily in general rural work.



Grenfell Railway Yards c.1947-48: 150,000 bags of wheat and 42,000 bags of oats

West Ooma's main source of income appears to have been wheat, which is the reason the land was opened up for smaller blocks. Barley was also grown, some for sale and some to be used for stock feed. There were sheep on the farm, and Barry Hodge believes there may have been a small one-stand shearing shed on the farm for shearing and crutching, but later on the sheep were taken over to Davies' farm for shearing. Elsie's letter to *The Land* (27 July 1926) says that at that time there were 600

sheep and 400 lambs on the farm. There were also cattle, for meat and for milking.

Dad and another farmer, Phil Quirk, took it in turns to kill a beast and take half each. We had to salt a lot of it as we didn't have a fridge ... Dad also killed sheep when we were out of meat ... There was one tragedy when pleuro [a deadly and highly contagious cattle lung disease] came onto the property and a lot of the cattle died. They had to be burned in the paddocks where they died by stacking timber all around them and setting it alight. (Isabel)

Enter the cool safe:

To keep things fairly cool we had a cool safe [short for Coolgardie safe]. It had a timber frame, with a mesh covering on the outside, with hessian lining all around. On the top was a galvanised tray, which was filled with water, at the top end of the hessian flannel strips were placed in the water, and the water that soaked into the flannel, transferred to the hessian and down the sides of the safe. As the water evaporated the heat needed was taken from the food inside the safe, which became cooler. Later smaller models were made of perforated zinc and could be hung in breezeways.

We also had a big hessian water bag hanging on the verandah. The men took a water bag when they were working in the paddocks. (Isabel).

The small farmer, selector or 'cocky' occupies a particular place in Australian lore, largely because of his need to have a go at all the jobs on his property. Sam Hodge Snr certainly did this – clearing land, fencing, ploughing and animal husbandry in general, but small jobs in particular, such as getting recalcitrant machinery to work, to the point of manufacturing makeshift parts, and building the occasional gate with particular peculiarities of fastening. This is called self-reliance, but there is a good deal of self-belief in it also. We also should remember that Sam Snr built the house on West Ooma. But the cocky was not alone. Many of the young men who started their lives on small farms inherited the capacities and skills of the small farmer. The Hodge boys certainly did, as did many of their offspring.

Of course, the years of WW2 brought other opportunities. There was a great increase in arms production. Some 12,000 people were employed by the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow NSW and many small feeder factories including at Parkes, Dubbo and Forbes.

The munitions factory was established in Forbes in 1942, and employed 350 workers. Bayonets were manufactured, and parts for Vickers and Bren guns and .303 rifles. Eily was the only member of the Hodge family to work there. This work ended in 1945, and in 1946 the tobacco company WD & HO Wills opened a cigarette factory in the building. It employed 80-100 people, and survived until 31 December 1958. Muriel's husband Dud Chandler was a foreman in the factory for a time. Harold's wife Mona worked for this company both in Forbes and Sydney. The building still exists.

Women's work

Daughters were the at-home workforce of rural Australia, helping with all the intensive hands-on tasks of the country home.

One thing we didn't like doing was the ironing. We had heavy irons which we had to put on the stove to get hot. We had to use a pot holder as the handles would get hot too. Later on a new iron came out called 'Mrs Potts'. This one had a wooden handle which clipped onto the iron, so we could use one handle for about three irons. Later on we had the petrol iron. It wasn't really a petrol iron, as it was run on shellite, but we called it a petrol iron. They were dangerous bloody things which often caught fire. Many a time we had to throw them out in the yard when they caught fire. I can still see Thelly ironing away with the cloth on the table on fire behind her. (Isabel)

The Hodge farm never had electricity so the cooking was all done on the fuel stove. This would have made the kitchen extremely hot in the summer, but also provided the only heated room in the house during cold weather. All the girls could use an axe to chop wood for the stove. Fuel was also needed for the outdoor copper, and washing day was all day, once a week. Water was available from the tank, or from the dam near the house, and had to be carried to wherever it was to be used. Almost all the food that was eaten had to be

prepared in some way. Bread was baked at home, with a flour bin for the bulk flour that was needed, and left overnight to rise:

Many a time Mum would cut off some dough and mix in sugar and sultanas and make buns for supper. They were delicious. Other times if there was no bread for breakfast she would take some of the dough and roll it out and cut it in squares and fry them. They were called 'flapjacks'. (Isabel)

There was also a vinegar plant, which was fed with sugar and water, the resulting vinegar being poured off every so often. Vegetables were hard to come by and potatoes and pumpkin were bought in bulk. Green vegetables were scarce, and when in supply were pickled to make them last.

Sam Snr used to go around throwing pine melon seeds into the stump holes. These would grow and provide heaps of melons which Gran made into jam:

I think the work we hated most was standing around the table cutting up pie melons [there were lots of different names for this plant of African origin]. Mum would make pies, jams and pickles. I don't remember Mum making any other kind of jam as fruit was too hard to get. A lot of the jars were made out of ordinary bottles. A loop would be put in a piece of wire just big enough to fit around the neck of the bottle. It would be put in the fire until it was red hot and held on the bottle for a few seconds. The bottle would then be plunged into cold water and the top would fall off. Mum would past brown paper over the top of the bottle to keep the jam. She made the paste out of flour and water. (Isabel)

Visits to Forbes, which according to Isabel were made by sulky until the purchase of a Rugby car in the mid-1920s, would have involved buying some fruit and vegetables when available. According to Thel, it was too dry to garden and there was no reliable water supply, so vegetables were bought in Forbes on the regular shopping trips. However, in Elsie's letter to *The Land* in 1926 she does say that it had been a wet year and 'our garden is looking very nice. Some of the vegetables are eatable' [by that I am sure she meant 'ready to eat']. We should remember that from the early 1920s to the mid-1930s the West Ooma household was very large, although there was obviously a good deal of coming and going of the males who worked elsewhere when not needed at home.

The girls were also in high demand as domestic help during peak periods such as shearing time, when they would often stay on other farms until the work was concluded. They were also in demand in crisis times, such as sickness, when they would be called upon to help out on other farms:

Because Mum had five daughters, if any of our relatives got sick and wanted help in the house, they'd all send to Mum to see if she had a daughter available. I remember when I was about fifteen I had to go to Mary Gee's place for a few weeks because she was ill. Another time I went to Ruby's, another cousin who lived at Thuddungra. Ruby was pregnant and often passed out. I was glad to get away from there. My cousin May Parker was bedridden with a heart problem. I spent a few months looking after her. Poor girl was bedridden for about ten years before she died. (Thel)

My first job earned me 17/- a week doing housework for one of our neighbours ... this entailed cleaning the floors, helping with the washing, doing the washing up and helping prepare the morning and afternoon teas. Sometimes I would take these to where the men were working. I also helped prepare meals. I would walk to our neighbours and walk back home when I had a weekend break. My first pair of shoes

cost me 15/-. (Rene Hodge)

Ivy Drabsch's sister-in-law Flo talked me into having a twenty-first birthday party. I was working for Flo and her husband Victor at the time. So was Gordon, but he used to go home every night while I used to sleep over. (Isabel)

These would have been typical experiences for girls and young women of that time.

Sport and recreation

The Garema Hall played a pivotal part in the social life of the district. Originally with a timber exterior and later clad in corrugated iron, it sat alone in a large paddock for many years with no hint of the many wonderful times so many people had within its walls. It has been well-restored and improved by the current Hall Committee and is seeing a revival of original life, although minus its much-used tennis courts.

There would often be a dance at the Garema Hall and all the Hodge family would attend, regardless of age. The men would find ways to keep their bottles of beer cool and the children would run around with their friends until they were exhausted and would fall asleep wherever they could find a comfortable spot. Country dances were held all over the district and Eily and her family would frequent many of them. (Betty Knight)

Every little village had its own hall and used to hold dances so we would go to Wirrinya, Pinnacle and Garema dances, mostly on a Friday night. I think we kids danced more than the adults. The women of the district would take a heap of cakes and sandwiches to the dance and the highlight of the night was the supper. The country dances were always popular, and sometimes a lot of people would come from Forbes to attend. (Thel)

Garema had sports clubs for tennis, cricket and football. Most of the boys played football and until his death Sam Snr would take the younger children to different places to watch their games. Garema, Wirrinya, Caragabal, Calarie and Bedgerebong all had football teams and home and away games were played. Dud Chandler played with the Hodge boys.



1920s Garema RL team including four Hodge boys
From left – Irwin 2nd, Pop 3rd, Stan 5th: and Fred 3rd from right

Dud and Muriel also played tennis. Isabel certainly played

tennis, and could hold her own on a tennis court quite well. Thel played tennis, but according to her, not very well. Tennis was incredibly popular in the bush until quite recent times because of its social nature – men and women played in the same teams – and it was easy to construct a court or courts. Most of the villages had courts, and many of the larger farms had their own court. The remnants of tennis courts might be the most common man-made sporting item in western NSW.

After my four eldest brothers grew up they played Rugby League with the Garema Rugby Club. By then my father had a car ... and he loved to go and see them play.

Dad had gone down to Sydney with the agent some time in the 1920s [1926] and had bought the car. It was the first time he had been to Sydney. Anyway, he always took some of us kids along to watch the game. Mum never went as she thought it was too rough. She always had a little baby to look after, anyway. [Not so, but between 1926 and 1929 she always had little children to look after.] He always took his thermos flask of tea. (Isabel)

I remember once Calarie had a team and Garema went to play them. Jack O'Connor, who was from Calarie, was playing with Garema as he had a row with the Calarie lot. Half of Calarie was barracking for Garema and the other half for Calarie. I think we watched more fights amongst the Calarie lot than football that day. Irwin was a pretty good footballer. He played with Forbes in the Group competition. In the summer the boys would play cricket with Garema. The ladies would go and get lunch ready in the hall. (Thel)

One day we went to see Forbes and Wirrinya play, but the game was never finished because a woman ran out onto the field and hit the referee over the head with her shoe. That started everyone fighting. (Isabel)

Sam played cricket with the Garema Club for many years in the 1940s and 50s, often travelling to matches by truck with everyone on the back. By this time he and Rene were living back at West Ooma. Sam and Rene also played night tennis with the Garema Club and won the competition one year. When they left Garema to live at Tubbul near Young, they were given presents of a crystal salad bowl for Rene and six blue glasses for Sam. The Garema tennis life was still active into the 1960s.

Some of the Hodge girls were 'tomboys' and enjoyed horse riding, others not so much:

Isabel and Elsie loved horse riding. We had a cousin, Mary Gee, who lived about twelve miles up the road. Often Issy and Else would saddle a horse each and ride up to spend a day with Mary. I never liked horse riding. (Thel)

Elsie and I were real tomboys. We liked nothing better than to climb trees and run around the paddocks with no shoes on. Our older sister Muriel was always more nervous than us. Our feet were tough and we could run through burs and nettles with no shoes on. (Isabel)

Sports days were a popular activity for small farming communities:

We had a school picnic each year. I was a good runner and always won my age race. We received beaut prizes. The Garema ladies would put on a three course meal at midday and later on we would have afternoon tea.

The farmers held a big sports day each year. They would put up a large marquee in a paddock near Garema with tables and seats, and again the ladies would put on a three course meal. They would use camp ovens over an open fire. I really don't



Elsie, 1938

know how they did it. There was no electricity. They did the same for tennis and cricket days.

At the sports day we would have all kinds of events – horse racing, foot racing, egg and spoon, sack races and many more. At night a dance was held in the hall and that would go on until six o'clock in the morning. When the kids got tired beds were made up on the stage for them. (Isabel)

Barry Hodge can remember other events such as stepping the distance – where the men stepped what they thought to be one hundred yards – tossing a bag of straw with a pitchfork, and a straw broom toss for the women.

The gatherings were not all about fun. There was a serious side:

They had debating in the Garema Hall once a month and sometimes Dad would take me along. I remember once the debate was about horses and tractors. Dad had to talk about horses and how handy they were on the farm and so on. I was very proud of my father standing up there voicing his opinion. We never had a tractor on the farm while Dad was alive. (Isabel)

Relatives

Thel can help us sort out who was who in her mother's family:

[Gran's full brother and sister were] Uncle Jack (John) and Auntie Pop (Jessica). Then there was Ag (this was Agnes, Jessie's child before marriage to Fred Read). Her step-brothers were Uncles Bill, Herb, Bob, Reg, and Hartley. The step sisters were Aunties Florry and Zet (Esther). Zet was a cranky old girl. If you went to visit you wouldn't know what sort of reception you would get. Florry was a nice old bird. I only ever remember seeing Hartley once at Uncle Bob's funeral. Reg was a policeman, and a nice man. Uncle Bob was a lovely man. (Thel)

The only grandparent Thel remembers was Granny Hodge (Elizabeth). She lived at Calarie. *'I was six when she died, so I don't remember a lot about her. She smoked a pipe. It was rare in those days to see a woman smoke. It used to fascinate us kids.'* She also gives the only images we have of some of the aunts and uncles:

Mum's stepmother was Granny Read [Esther Field]. She would come and stay with us sometimes, but she was a cranky old girl. Uncle Jack Read (Mum's brother) was a funny old fellow, a real old timer. He worked on the shire all his life, so most of his life he camped out on the roads. If he came to see Mum he would not come into the house, but would sit in his car and talk. (Thel)

They often had visitors to the farm for weeks at a time.

Auntie Lena and Uncle Jack (Dad's brother) would come from Grenfell. Auntie Lena was rearing three of her grandchildren (Boydy, Harold and Peggy Cashman) and she would often bring them with her. Auntie Lena belonged to the Salvation Army and was very religious, so before she came to visit Mum would warn us about swearing. Harold was only little then, and he often forgot about the warning.

Mum had a half-sister who lived in Condobolin who had a mob of kids. I remember one day when Mum was in town, us kids and Larry were at home we saw about four horses and sulkies coming down the road. It was Auntie Florry (Holmes) and her family, coming on a visit from Condo. (Thel)

The Donahoo family, (Gran's sister Jessica and her husband, children and grandchildren) were regular visitors and the Hodge and Donahoo families maintained close contact.

The Donahoo family

Michael Donahoo was born in South Africa, and he married Frederick and Jessie Read's daughter Jessica in Forbes in 1894. Jessica was Gran's only full sister, and was known as Aunty Pop.

Jessica and Michael had three children:

Albert Henry (31.5.1895 – 25.1.1968) known as **Googs**. Googs married Alma Louise Kennerson in 1920 and they had three boys, Leonard John, known as Jack, Harry (1924-1992), known as Whiffy, and William Kenneth, known as Kenny. *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 7 August 1945 reported the death of a 'youth' [Kenny] in the bathroom at Shaw Street, Kensington. The police believed that he was overcome by gas from the bath heater. In World War 2 Jack and Whiffy both joined the RAAF, and Kenny the AIF.

Jessie Vera (1900 – 8.11.1979) known as **Dinah**, married Alexis Aloysius McHugh (Alan).

Bridget (1903 – 30.7.1994) known as **Biddy**, married Frederick J. Cribb in 1926.

Neither Dinah nor Biddy had children. Googs' wife Alma died in 1930.

At some time Biddy won the State Lottery, and this funded the purchase of a corner shop in Kingsford in Sydney, where the three siblings settled.

The Donahoos visited regularly, and there are photos of them at the farm. Whiffy and Kenny would often stay for longer periods. Biddy and her husband Fred also visited Forbes as part of a travelling show.



Donahoo family visit to West Ooma: Biddy, Dinah, Aunty Pop (Jessica), Wiffy and Jack

Every show time, what we called a play would come to town. They would put up a big marqu e, filled with chairs, and with a stage at one end. There would be dancing girls, comedians who told funny stories and so on. We always enjoyed them. I had a cousin (Mum's sister Jessie's daughter Biddy) who travelled around with one show called Coleman's Pantomime Company. She was a dancing girl. Her husband Fred Cribb was an electrician for the show. When she came to Forbes we would mostly get some free tickets. The Donahoo cousins Dinah and Biddy visited the farm whenever they could. Their older brother was called 'Googs'. Auntie Pop [Gran's s only full sister Jessica] always lived in Sydney. She often came and stayed with us. One of her grandsons, Kenny Donahoo, often came and stayed with us on the farm, which he loved. His brother Wiffy would come up at Christmas time and stay. (Thel)

We always liked to go to the Forbes Show each year, and it was always held in September. We would go to a travelling stage play at night. There was a number of travelling groups, and the best-known were Ashton's and Sorlies. My cousin [Biddy]

used to dance in a show called Coleman's. Every year we would get a new outfit. We wouldn't think of wearing something we had worn before. (Isabel)

Dinah and Bidy, as well as Dinah's husband Alan McHugh, are present in the photographs of the Hodge family taken at St Mary's 1968, on the occasion of Bev Cavenagh's wedding.

The farm ... a memory

In January 1942, between the attack on Pearl Harbour and the fall of Singapore, Mum and Dad (Ron and Isabel Cavenagh) sold their house in Baulkham Hills and Mum, Meg and I were evacuated to Forbes to avoid capture by the dreaded Japanese. Only Gran and Wilma were permanently on the farm at that time, as Eily was working in Forbes and Harold boarded in Forbes during the week while he attended high school. While we were there (until May, when Mum took us back to Sydney), Wilma started school down at the corner of the farm. My memories of the time and the house are fairly strong, and the following may have some errors, but here goes.

First some background. After the move to West Ooma, the family lived in a tent for a while:

From the stories told to Wilma Knithakis [nee Hodge], who was raised by Gran on the farm from her birth in 1936 until they went into town in the late 1940s [and who went to Sydney in the early 1950s] her grandmother would often talk about when the family first went to the farm, and how they lived in a tent for some time until Samuel could build a home for his growing family. It is worth noting that upon arriving at West Ooma there were already seven children, with four more to come. (Betty Knight)

Sam Snr had started building as soon as he could. The government lease had certain requirements that had to be met and one of these was the establishment of a dwelling. The house was all timber. Sam owned a wagon, and he could take timber from clearing, mostly grey or yellow box, into Forbes and have it cut for building.

The house was in two quite separate parts joined by a kind of duckboard (wooden slats joined together). The front part (that faced the road) was raised slightly higher than the rear section – which was almost at ground level – but was still quite low at around 30 centimetres off the ground on hardwood stumps (probably also grey box, which was plentiful on the farm).

The front section contained two large rooms, one a kitchen and eating room, and the other a bedroom containing a number of single beds. The bedroom was still called 'the boys' room' although the boys had departed, except of course Harold, and Pop (Gordon) would stay there when he was around. The kitchen had a fuel stove and a large scrubbed table. Meg and I were bathed in a tub in front of the stove, and this had been the bathing arrangement for the family until the bathroom was added. There was no electricity, and any evening activities took place in this room. The lighting was from Tilly lamps.

There was a verandah front and back on this section. A waterbag hung from a wire hook on the verandah, out of the sun but where there might be a breeze. The boys' room was quite large, or seemed to be to a four-year-old, and was lined with metal fold-up beds called 'camp stretchers'. At the end of the verandah was a bathroom with a tin bath and a wash stand. There was no running water on the bath, which had to be 'filled' with a bucket. While we were there it was a time of drought so the amount of water in the bath for any who had the opportunity to use it was pretty sparse. Clearly, the bathroom at West Ooma was still in the developmental stage.

When we first came to live on the farm, and for quite a few years after, we had a dirt floor in the kitchen. We would sweep it up and then sprinkle it with water. We had no bathroom and had our baths in a big tub. We only had a bath once a week because of the water shortage. Other nights we washed our faces and hands and feet and legs in a dish of water ... It was great when Dad built a bathroom on the end of the verandah and a new kitchen with a wooden floor. (Isabel)

The earlier kitchen would have been a separate structure, quite common in the days when kitchens with open fires for cooking were always at risk of burning down. When the time came for a new kitchen with a stove and a chimney, it went into the front part of the house.

There was a downside for the girls with the new kitchen:

When we were old enough we had to get down on our hands and knees and scrub the floors. We were only allowed to use the mop on the verandahs. Sometimes we cheated when Mum wasn't around and we'd use the mop right through. (Isabel)

The earlier rear part of the house was mostly bedrooms. The girls slept here and so did Gran. There was a narrow hall from front to back with two rooms on either side. The first two rooms on the left and right were 'the girls' rooms' and the second pair of rooms were the main bedroom (Gran's bedroom, with its chamber pot under the bed) and the 'front room'. The front room was a kind of sitting room with lino on the floor which had Gran's good things in it – some china, some pictures, and so on. Gran was very protective of these rooms, and we were only allowed in occasionally. There was another verandah at the rear of this building.

Sam Jnr's story tells us the rear of the house was built first, with bedrooms, and the kitchen was outside (probably just a covered area). So we see three stages of the house:

1. a tent (from Wilma's memory of what Gran told her), makeshift while the first part of the house was being built;
2. the first part of the house and the outside kitchen (Sam Jnr) with the dirt floor (Isabel); and
3. the front part of the house, with the kitchen and fuel stove, and later on a bathroom on the back verandah.

A pit toilet was placed well down the yard, and by 1942 was surrounded by the mounds of earlier pits. There was no laundry, but outside in the yard was a copper that had a wood fire lit underneath to heat water. Washing the clothes was a one day a week event (probably Monday). Shards of soap were added to the boiling water in the copper and the washing was moved around and removed with a copper stick (like a broom handle) and then rinsed in clean water and wrung by hand. Anything that couldn't be washed in the copper was hand-washed in a tin tub. It seemed to be pretty much an all-day affair:

After I left school and before I went out to work I helped Mum with the washing. It took us all day. We had a copper in the yard and we would build a fire under it and boil all the whites. Mum made her own soap and we would cut some up and put it in the copper. There were no powders like there are today. Later on there was a tablet came out that was called 'Dad's Tablets'. When they advertised it over the wireless they would say 'Let Dad do it'. We would get the clothes out of the copper with a pot stick and put them in fresh water and wring them with our hands. On the dark clothes we would use a washboard. (Isabel)

This was still the washing day in the 1940s.

The food was plain but plentiful, and we could expect breakfast (usually porridge), morning tea, dinner (middle of the day), afternoon tea (both morning and afternoon tea might have biscuits, scones or a slice of cake), tea (which is now called dinner) and the adults might have late supper of a hot drink and another cake. Wilma, Meg and I generally had Horlicks before bed (Horlicks was a malt powder that was added to milk and blended by hand in a special Horlicks mixer).



Typical scene of washing clothes in an outdoor copper, Norwell Qld (Picture Qld)

Not far from the house, in the generally dry Pinnacle Creek bed, there was a big shade tree:

We loved to play among the branches. When we first came to West Ooma Dad saw this tree and said 'What a good place to keep pigs!' I never remember Dad keeping pigs, but for ever after the tree was called 'The Pig Tree'. (Isabel)

Meg and Wilma and I also played in the pig tree in the early 1940s as did later generations, and it is still there.

The West Ooma lifestyle was not unusual for the time. Rene Hodge wrote of the similar situation the Dykes family had at Pinnacle, not far from the Hodge farm:

The house we lived in at Pinnacle was only small and made from corrugated iron which was very hot in summer and very cold in winter. There were three bedrooms and luckily they were big rooms so we had two or three beds and sometimes three kiddies to a bed! No heating in those days so this was one way to keep warm! The kitchen ceiling was lined with Hessian (a loose-woven baggy material) and the walls were papered with newspapers – these were pasted onto the walls with glue made from flour and water. We didn't have electricity but used lights run on kerosene. Dad didn't like to use candles as he thought they were a great fire risk and being crippled he was afraid of fires. We had no running water and had to cart water from the creek to do the washing and to wash the floors etc. We didn't have carpet on the floors. As we only had rainwater tanks to catch the rain from off the roof we were very careful with water use and only had a bath once a week – in between times we would have a good wash! The washing was done in a copper and tubs in the yard as we didn't have a laundry. This consisted of a copper placed in the top of a 44-gallon drum – once the copper was filled with water, a fire was lit underneath and the clothes placed in to be boiled until they were clean! They were then lifted from the copper with a copper stick (a stick the size of a short broom handle) into a tub sitting on the ground and rinsed, the water wrung out by hand and then they were placed into a tub of blue water [probably from the addition of the famous Reckitts Blue] to keep the whites white!! How hard was that?

Addendum

The available photographs of the West Ooma house are a bit short of detail, but it is clear that when Sam Snr died in 1930 the chimney for the kitchen was only partially built. By the late 1930s not only is that chimney complete but there is another one for Gran's bedroom. This indicates the house was always a work in progress, although it was mostly complete by 1940.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s the house was considerably reconfigured for Sam and Rene. The rear section was demolished and the front section was turned into two bedrooms and a kitchen/sitting area. The bathroom was moved to the other end of the verandah. Around 1950 electricity was brought into the house, although the wood stove and the kerosene fridge were kept. When the farm was sold the new owners built a cottage close by, and the old house became a shed, and then a wreck. It was still there when I visited in 1976, but by the end of the 1970s it was gone.



West Ooma farmhouse in ruin, 1976

Stories of Sam and Isabel's Children

Charles Gordon (Pop)

[Born Charles Gordon, but called Gordon and widely known by the nicknames 'Larry' and 'Pop'. Throughout this publication the name Pop will generally be used.]

Gordon (Pop) was born at Calarie on 12 May 1905. His parents were living at Calarie at the time where his father Sam Snr was working as a miner. Pop started school at Calarie School in 1910. We don't know how long he attended school, probably not very long, but it was long enough to get a good basic education.

When the family moved to West Ooma, Pop and the other Hodge children had to adjust very quickly to a farming life. Pop went on to spend all of his working life in rural work.

Isabel recalls that Pop was one of those bush men who turned their hand to whatever had to be done, but for much of his working life he was a shearer. He was never going to challenge any records, but he was a clean and careful tradesman, and always found work.

When my three eldest brothers left home to go out to work they worked in the shearing sheds at shearing time. Other times they worked lumping wheat or fencing for other farmers. Gordon and Fred were shearers and Irwin was a wool presser.
(Isabel)

Unlike the other Hodge boys, Pop didn't travel a great deal for work, staying mainly in the Forbes district. He had a vivid memory of how cold it was when you'd finished a shed and had to catch a train through 'the coldest bloody place on earth', Goulburn, so he must have worked in the Southern Tablelands at some point.

Pop's 'excuse' for how he came to be a smoker for 53 years, from the age of 14, tells us how little was known at the time about the dangers of smoking. On the first day of a fencing job with his father, Pop kept working during 'smoko'. The next morning Sam Snr handed Pop a packet of tobacco, explaining that he should sit down and have a smoke rather than working while the other men took a break. Of course it became a habit and until he gave up smoking in his late sixties, after being diagnosed with angina, Pop was rarely without his cigarette holder.

Pop didn't enlist during WW2 because he was in a protected industry. For part of the war years he went to live with his sister Muriel to help her out after her husband Dud was called up for war service.

Pop was a bachelor until his early forties when he married Daisy May Holland in 1948, but there are stories of at least one earlier romance (and an explanation of why he was called 'Pop' from an early age):

Gordon became 'Pop' after our father died and he became 'head of the house'. His hair went white 'overnight' after the failure of an early romance. (Isabel)

Maybe. Maybe not. A lot of us have very white hair, so there's a touch of heredity here.

Charles Gordon or Larry or Pop as we often called him was in his forties when he married. I think we were all married before him. I remember him and Mum having some great political arguments, especially before an election, as Mum was a Liberal voter and he voted Labor. (Thel)

Pop had known Daisy for a long time. The Holland farm wasn't far from West Ooma and the Holland girls were friends of his sisters. Daisy brought Hazel into the family as a nine-year-old and she was always seen as a daughter by Pop.

Initially the family lived with Gran in Farrand Street in Forbes. In 1949 Gary was born, and Jacki followed 17 months later in 1951.



Pop and Gary, 1950

In the early 1950s Pop got a permanent job on Uah Station, a large property at Garema owned by the Tout family, and he and Daisy moved into a small cottage on Uah. It was a time when there were still jobs with houses for farm workers, but it was also near the end of the time when such places were available, because by the 1970s many had disappeared.

Gail was born in 1952, soon after the move to Uah. Pop stayed at Uah for nearly nine years, working with the large sheep flock run on the property and getting around the property in a horse and sulky. After leaving Uah Pop went back to shearing at the ripe old age of 53 and the family lived at Bill Crouch's farm near to West Ooma. Bill and his wife Annie (who was Sam Snr's sister) had moved off the farm to live in Forbes.

At the time of the move off Uah, Pop and Daisy had applied for a Housing Commission house in Forbes and one came up for them late in 1961. They moved into 26 Clement Street, which had just been vacated by Harold and Mona Hodge when they moved to Sydney.

Pop continued shearing and other rural work after the move to town, particularly for farmers in the Garema district. Before the telephone was put on at the Clement Street house, the only way for Pop to arrange work was to meet farmers in the pub on a Saturday morning. He was particularly good at spinning a tale as to why this sometimes took most of the day – for instance, a car towing a caravan just happened to get a flat tyre right in front of where Pop had parked his car. This of course necessitated a few more beers while the tyre was changed.

Daisy found work at the Forbes Hospital, a short walk from home. She worked firstly in the kitchen, but later moved to the laundry which was a better fit for family life as it was a day shift rather than the split shift required in the kitchen.

After he retired from farm and shearing work, Pop had plenty of time for his love of growing roses, fruit and vegies. He was especially competitive with his tomato growing and liked to be the first to have one ripen each year, and of course to be the person to produce the biggest tomato each year. He also loved fishing and was known to occasionally make use of strictly illegal fishing traps.

Pop had refused to buy a television set while the kids were living at home and going to school ('too distracting'), but soon after Jacki and Gail left home he bought one and got a great deal of enjoyment from it. He particularly enjoyed test cricket broadcasts, and a good comedy or variety show. Jacki recalls that on visits home to Forbes it was often much funnier watching her father laughing at a show than watching the actual show.

Frederick John

Fred was born at Calarie on 12 January 1907. Not a lot is known about his childhood, although he went to school at Calarie, and most likely left around 11 or 12 years of age. The original Garema school on the West Ooma farm opened in April 1919, so it would have been easy enough for a 12-year-old to avoid the classroom, and his efforts would have been seriously needed on a new farm.

So Fred and his older brother Pop (Gordon) began their lives as bush workers early, as did their siblings, and many of the following generation. Sam Jnr's story tells us that when Fred did start work off the family farm, it was in the shearing sheds, along with Pop, Stan and Irwin. But as Sam also notes, when the sheds weren't working, they all took on other seasonal work.

As a young man Fred had some instruction in boxing from Havilah Uren, a publican at Bogan Gate. Uren was a professional from 1916 to 1926, and held the NSW lightweight title. According to George Small, Fred had some fights in the ring, but a lot more out of it. Barry Hodge said of his uncle, *'It wasn't too hard to pick a fight with Fred'*.

Isabel remembers Fred as a 'kind and loveable person':



Fred and Gordon, 1907

Fred liked his beer but was a kind and loveable person. He sat at the hospital for days by Mum's side when she was dying. He loved to visit his family and relations. He didn't have an unkind word to say about anyone, and all who knew him liked him – except perhaps men he boxed in the ring in country towns. (Isabel)

She also recalls Fred leaving home after a misunderstanding with his father:

Fred and Dad were great mates, but one morning Dad found the farm gate open and all the horses gone. He accused Fred of leaving the gate open ... Fred couldn't stand being accused of something he didn't do. So he harnessed up his horse into the sulky, packed his few belongings and left. Poor old Dad sat down and cried. It was a couple of years before we set eyes on Fred again. (Isabel)

When I asked Isabel what Fred did when he was away from home, she said that she wasn't sure, but he went out into the back country, possibly working with stock. It is also possible that he was in Queensland, and his time there may have led him to return there after WW2.

Fred married Elsie Eileen Bland (born 10 December 1907, West Wyalong, to William and Florence Bland) at Forbes in 1932. Their three boys were all born in Forbes.

For the next decade they lived at Forbes and stayed close to the family. However, in the early war years the family relocated to Surry Hills in Sydney and stayed there for the remainder of the war. Fred worked in the wool industry while in Sydney, probably with one of the large wool handling companies.

After the war they moved to Queensland, first to Texas, and then to Goondiwindi which became the family home, and Fred kept shearing. He would go back to the Forbes area every year up until the mid-1950s to shear.

In 1954 Fred and Elsie bought a house at 56 Herbert Street Goondiwindi, with assistance from son John and his wife Pat, and which later became John and Pat's home.



Elsie and Fred with Les and John

Fred became involved in the very long and bitter shearers' strike of 1956, which was often very violent. During this time he went fencing, and seems to have stayed in that field of work, and other bush work, until he went to work permanently on Tucka Tucka station, across the border in NSW near Toomelah. By this time Fred and Elsie had grandchildren whom they occasionally babysat. Fred was fond of his grandchildren and very good with them.

Fred and Elsie died in a drowning accident in early November 1966. They were both working and living on Tucka Tucka station at the time. On the afternoon of their deaths they were shopping, and then drinking at the Queensland Hotel in Goondiwindi with their friends the

Forresters, and they left the hotel at around 10.30 pm. It had been raining heavily, and their way home via Toomelah brought them to Whalan Creek, which was rising rapidly, and which deterred them from travelling further.

What happened then is unclear, but over the next few days the car was found in the creek, with Fred's body nearby. Elsie's body was not found until a few days later, about one and a half kilometres down the creek. The deaths were a terrible shock to the whole family. Fred was 59 and Elsie 57.

Frederick John was the character of the family. One never knew when he would turn up on one's doorstep. I remember once Blue found him down town, drunk, and decided to bring him home and put him to bed. On the way home he stopped at the Post Office Hotel to buy some beer. When he came back to the car Fred had disappeared. Blue asked some people nearby whether had they seen him and they said that some woman had taken him away. This woman wanted Fred to shear for her the next day, and thought the surest way to get him was to take him out to the property for the night.

Fred and Elsie were at home staying and one night Muriel and Elsie dressed Fred up in women's clothes. They told us kids he was our Auntie Alice. We had an Auntie Alice, but since none of us had ever seen her we believed them. Fred put on a good show and we really thought it was Auntie Alice. Fred's wife Elsie used to come and stay with us a lot even before she and Fred were married.' (Thel)

Details

Frederick John	b. 12 January 1907, Calarie d. November 1966, near Toomelah, NSW
Elsie Eileen Bland	b. 10 December 1907, West Wyalong d. November 1966, near Toomelah, NSW

Children

Frederick John	b. 1933, Forbes (dec)
Leslie Raymond	b. 1935, Forbes
Kenneth Gordon	b. 1936, Forbes (dec)

Irwin William (Bob)

Irwin, who was generally called Bob, was born on the 25 February 1909 at Calarie, and would have started school there with his two older brothers. He probably had at least another year at Garema School, and would have finished at 11 or 12 years of age.

Irwin grew into a strong well-built fellow, well suited to farm work, football and, later on, to soldiering. Like his brothers, his early youth was spent on the farm.

Isabel said that Irwin left home when he was fifteen when he went to work with a dam-sinking outfit at Caragabal:

He came home once a month and we were always glad to see him. He would get a lift with a truck and walk down to the house from the road. If we saw him coming my sisters and I would run to meet him.

Along with his brothers Pop (Gordon), Fred and Stan, Irwin did try shearing, but he apparently didn't take to it. At some stage in one of the sheds Pop suggested that he have a go at wool pressing with much of the wool being pressed into the bale by foot. Irwin was a strong man and became so good at pressing that it became his livelihood for much of his working life. However, he also worked as a wheat lumper, as did his brothers, and was known as a handler of work horses.

Irwin liked a beer, as did most of the Hodge family, and got into the occasional stoush in the Forbes pubs. Isabel reckoned that Fred and Irwin would go drinking and if they couldn't find someone to fight they'd fight each other.

At the age of 23, early in 1932, Irwin married Jean McMahon from Forbes. As a girl she had been athletic as a runner, a swimmer and a diver. Their first child, Barry, was born in Forbes in 1932. It was the time of the Great Depression, but Irwin was later to say that he had work and a car right through the 1930s (although Barry suggested that some of the cars 'weren't too flash').



Jean and Irwin

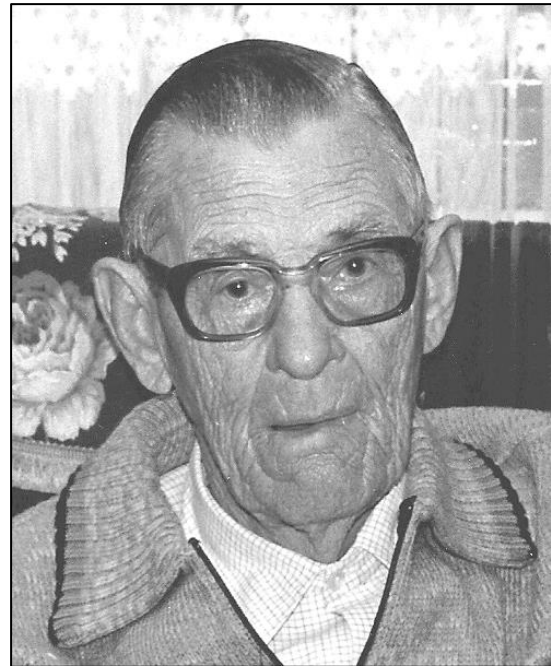
For quite a while the family lived in a house on the Quirk place next to West Ooma. Irwin continued to play football, mostly for Garema, but occasionally for Forbes. He worked on the roads in the Weddin Mountains and continued in seasonal work, in the sheds and on the wheat, and was also available to help out on the farm. A second son, Irwin Paul (always known as Paul) was born in 1936.

Barry remembers his father working with Pop at different times through the 1930s, ploughing and harrowing (a three horse-harrow), and Pop working a reaper and binder on the crop and the boys building a haystack for oat hay, with Pop very much the boss and expert.

The 1939-1945 war brought considerable dislocation to Irwin and his family, just as it did to millions of families around the world. He joined up on 20 January 1942, and only just avoided the last days of Singapore. He was then attached to the 2/3 Infantry Battalion when it arrived back in Australia from the Middle East and Ceylon in

August 1942. In October the battalion was on the Kokoda Track and fought at Eora Creek, then in November at Oivi, and on the Sanananda Track in November and December 1942. The battalion was then withdrawn to North Queensland for extensive training and re-building in 1943 and 1944 (during which time Irwin coached the battalion's Rugby League team), before returning to New Guinea in the mopping-up action in the Aitape-Wewak area from December 1944 to August 1945. Irwin was discharged on 19 December 1945.

While Irwin was in the army Jean and the boys stayed in Sydney but Barry and Paul were farmed out while Jean worked on the buses, and they had spells with Muriel, with Elsie and Bill Day, with a family in Strathfield, and with Isabel. Their time with Isabel was in 1943, after Ron joined up, and not only did they add spice to Isabel's life, but also were heroes to five-year-old me and four-year-old Meg in the fairly isolated house at Moorebank with its paddocks and shallow ponds and proximity to a couple of hundred acres of coastal scrub.



Irwin returned to Grazcos, the agricultural company, and worked with them until his retirement. He rented a house in Baptist Street, Redfern, which became something of a calling-in place for any relative visiting Sydney.

Irwin and Jean's marriage survived, although the challenges were great as Jean became more and more ill and more and more difficult. Irwin displayed great care and loyalty to his wife, right up to her death in August 1957. He also gave great support to his sons.

Irwin had a great affection for animals, and loved gardening.

Later in life Irwin married Linda McMahon, who was the widow of Jean's brother, and they moved to Richmond where he lived quietly and gardened until his death in October 1986 at Wentworth Falls.

Details	
Irwin William	b. 25 February 1909, Calarie d. 4 October 1986, Wentworth Falls
1. Jean McMahon	b. 14 October 1912, Forbes d. 24 August 1957, Sydney
2. Linda McMahon	
Children	
Barry Henry Samuel	b. 1932, Forbes
Irwin Paul	b. 1936, Forbes (dec)

Stanley James

Stan was born at Calarie on 8 February 1911. He was 7 or 8 years old when the family moved to West Ooma and 8 when the school opened. Isabel remembered Stan as having a good deal of difficulty with school, and with school work, and being treated very badly by the teacher who was fond of the cane and served it out to Stan at such a rate that his whole schooling experience was a miserable affair. He stayed at school at least until he was 13, because he wrote a letter to *The Land* on 26 September 1924 telling us that there were 400 acres of wheat in, that he was in Fourth Class, and that he had three sisters also at the school (he doesn't mention Sam, who would have been in Kindergarten in 1924).

All four older Hodge boys worked on the farm but also worked on other properties in the area on seasonal work. Isabel and Thel both remembered that Stan was the older boy most likely to be at home, doing much of the regular work that needed to be done on the farm, particularly when their father became ill in the late 1920s. Stan however, did enough work elsewhere to become a competent shearer. If Stan left school in 1924 (we know that he was at school in that year) or 1925, and went to work in Orange in the early 1930s, he would have had plenty of time during the 1920s to fulfil the role on the farm that both Isabel and Thel describe.

Stan went to Orange in the early 1930s because of the availability of work there, and it was here that he married Elsie May Sam on 17 January 1934. Their daughter Patricia was born in Orange in December 1934, and a son Stanley Keith (always known as Keith) in July 1936. During Elsie's pregnancy with Keith, Isabel and Elsie Hodge went to help out, and they stayed until after the birth. Elsie was a small women, and her son Keith remembers her as having a damaged hip.

The family returned to Forbes before the war and Stan worked as a shearer, and for a while as a farm assistant on Weelong Station. He enlisted in Forbes on 3 March 1944. He became a driver in the 129 Transport Company and served in New Guinea. He was discharged on 23 November 1945. It is uncertain what happened to Stan during the war but the general feeling is that he was badly affected by the experience. He drank heavily, had severe mood swings and his general behaviour became quite erratic and often violent to his family. However, he stayed shearing, and also worked regularly as a wheat lumper until at least the late 1950s.

Stan and Elsie's family grew. Delma was born in 1946, Eileen (generally known as Liz) in 1950, and Robert in 1956. But Elsie became very ill, and had a long period of suffering before her death from cancer in 1958 at the age of 43. Pat and Keith became surrogate parents to the younger children.

The 1950 floods seriously affected Stan and his family. Their home in Forester Street was flooded a number of times, with water up to the windows. Gran was instrumental in the purchase of another house on higher ground.



Stan and Elsie Sam, 1934

Some years later Stan married Kathleen White, known as Queenie, who had a grown family. Relations with his wife and her children were often stormy, and it was not a good time for Stan. His second son Robert tragically died after a car accident in January 1974 at the age of 18.

Stan was admitted to hospital in Forbes in August of 1974 suffering significant injuries and he died the following day.

In my day we never went for picnics very much, so I always remember, when I was about six or seven, all the Garemaites got together and went to Bundaburra Creek and spent a night camping there. We had a great time. The kids went swimming, the men fishing, Stan was about seventeen. He and Norman Drabsch tormented everyone all night so there wasn't much sleep to be had. It has stuck in my memory, as it was the only time we ever did anything like that.

Stanley James worked the farm for years after dad died. After he married he went to Orange to live. He later came back to Forbes and took up shearing. He joined the army and served in New Guinea. He saw a lot of action and I think it changed him. He never drank much before the war but after he came back home he drank a lot. (Thel)

Stan stayed on the farm to help Dad, and after Dad died he stayed on for a while and then went off to work in the gold mines near Orange. It was there he met Elsie Sam and married her. [Keith Hodge disputed the miner claim.]

One night he was put into Forbes Hospital badly hurt, and he died the next day. No one knows how he came to be hurt. (Isabel)



Stan and Elsie Day (nee Hodge), 1960s

Details

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Stanley James | b. 8 February 1911, Calarie
d. 20 August 1974, Forbes |
| 1. Elsie May Sam | b. 16 January 1915, Grenfell
d. 8 May 1958, Forbes |
| 2. Kathleen White (Queenie) | |

Children

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Patricia Dawn | b. 1934, Orange (dec) |
| Stanley Keith | b. 1936, Orange |
| Delma Joyce | b. 1946, Forbes |
| Eileen Margaret | b. 1950, Forbes |
| Robert Leslie | b. 1956, Forbes (dec) |

Olive Muriel (always called Muriel)

[The source material for this account has been provided by Reg Chandler.]

Muriel was the first daughter of Sam Snr and Isabel (Gran) and she was born at Forbes on 10 August 1912. Her first name was dropped and she became Muriel (and then later Moo). When she was born the family were still living at Calarie.

Muriel had fond memories of the school at West Ooma and friends in the area:

She often spoke of enjoying school ... which was located at the front gate [of the West Ooma farm] and treasured a book prize she was awarded. Her teenage years were busy in the family but she had her share of outings. Among her friends were the Chandler girls ... who had been raised on the nearby property of their grandfather. (Reg)

Social life in Garema and the surrounding district was eventful with a great focus on tennis, football, cricket and the occasional school function and dance. Tennis was very popular as it provided a chance for the boys to 'play with the girls'.

After leaving school, along with her family commitments, Muriel assisted with family care for neighbours. During this time her father died and Muriel sought work in Forbes and was employed at St Johns Hostel as a domestic and cook, where she stayed until she married.

A regular visitor to West Ooma was young shearer and farm worker Dud (Dusty) Chandler who was friends with the older Hodge boys with whom he played football in Garema's successful rugby league team. He was four years older than Muriel.

Dud had a black motor bike and whilst it is hard to imagine her [Muriel] on the pillion seat it does add some spice to the romance if you want to believe it! (Reg)

Muriel and Dud married in St Johns Church Forbes in 1933 where she was attended by Elsie and 'given away' by Pop (Gordon). The reception was at Garema Hall and one hundred guests attended from the surrounding districts of Wirrinya and Garema. It was a marriage between two well-known and respected families. Muriel and Dud set up their first home in Wirrinya close to Dud's work in the silos and shearing. The following year they moved to Forbes, living near the showground.

In 1934 their first child Ron was born. The effects of the Depression were still being felt and Dud took work road building and often spoke of the area of road near Manildra where he spent many months away from the family. It would be another four years before the next child arrived and by this time the family had moved to a new home at 29 William Street, Forbes. The new arrival was another boy, Geoff, in 1938. Reg followed in 1940. All were born at Brentwood Hospital, a private hospital in Forbes.

The time in William Street is remembered as a happy time by the boys but Dud was called up in 1942 for war service that lasted till 1945. He was a gunner in the 2/2 Field Regiment



Isabel and Muriel, 1916

(Artillery). Absences were for long periods and involved Dud serving in WA, Qld, and NSW, and in New Guinea for the final 12 months of the war. This put a great strain on Muriel but support came from family, and Pop moved in to help out. Dud was discharged on 8 December 1945. He came home with malaria, from which he suffered for many years.

When the war ended Muriel went to Sydney to meet Dud and they came home to Forbes on the train with many other soldiers to a crowded station including the three boys and many relatives. The war and its impact lived with the family for some time as they adjusted to post-war life.

An offer by Dud's uncle to bring the family to Cooma for a few weeks in early 1946 for Dud to try his hand in his uncle's bakery was taken up. The idea was to see if he wanted to learn the trade and take over from his ageing uncle. While the Chandler boys had a good time in what was then a small town, before the Snowy Hydro Scheme arrived, the new beginning wasn't to be and Dud and Muriel returned to the life they knew in Forbes. Dud said that the early morning starts in Cooma didn't appeal.

Dud then joined the WD & HO Wills staff at the tobacco factory as a foreman. He cycled to cricket every Saturday and started to get back into normal life despite periodic malaria attacks. However Muriel became ill in 1947 and spent several weeks in Sydney. Ron went to Garema to stay with Sam and Rene (attending Garema School). Geoff and Reg stayed with Gran and Wilma at the Farrand Street house.

Muriel recovered and returned home where life settled. Dud accepted a job as stockman at Bogabigal station, a mixed farming property 10 km from Forbes. It wasn't long before it became the place for weekends and holidays for cousins and the four years there seemed to be just one big holiday for the kids. Large numbers didn't seem to faze Muriel and all had freedom to roam and explore.

In 1950 the large billabong filled in the floods and remained that way for many years. The older relatives and friends went duck shooting and fishing, while others roamed the billabong, horse riding, swimming and helping Dud with his work. Tennis was played on a cleared patch with the fence as the net. Most of the Hodge uncles, aunts and cousins visited.

Geoff and Reg went to school on the bus, and Muriel drove herself to town to shop:

Muriel drove the old 1927 Studebaker to town regularly to shop. The only small issue was she didn't have a driver's license and drove to Gran's on the edge of town and parked. (Reg)

In 1953 Muriel and Dud decided that with Geoff starting work at the Rural Bank and Reg starting high school they should return to town. After a brief stay with Dud's mother Nana Chandler, they moved to a new Housing Commission home in Conridge Street. Dud took up shearing after many years lay off and walked straight into a three-month shearer's strike. This caused much hardship with little or no work, but eventually it was back on the job and the industry settled down. Dud stayed shearing for several years and then went to the Grain Elevators Board, working on the silos both part and full time.

Gran started to experience health problems in 1958 and Muriel, Dud and Reg moved in with her in Farrand Street so Muriel could care for Gran. In 1960, while working with the Grain Elevators Board, Dud fell and broke his back.

After convalescing for several months, during which time Gran died, Dud went back to light work and they bought a house in Clement Street. Muriel finally got her driver's licence and returned to work after a 30-year absence. She worked for nearly two decades as a cook at the Mater Hospital, the Town and Country Motel and the Vandenberg Hotel.

Dud suffered another fall on silo equipment and finally retired only to get lung cancer in 1970. Muriel also broke her hip in a car accident. Despite these setbacks Reg remembers they continued to enjoy a good social life. During this time Muriel and Dud also had their first holiday together, without family. They went to Kiama.



Muriel, 1970s

Dud's cancer returned in 1979 and he died in Concord Repatriation Hospital on 31 August aged 71.

As expected it was a difficult time for Muriel, but she was fortunate to have family close by. She started to travel to family members away from Forbes and relied on the independent streak so evident in her lifetime. Quite unexpectedly she died at home of a heart attack (a problem she had kept from her children) on 15 September 1986 aged 74. Both Muriel and Dud are buried in Forbes Cemetery.

Olive Muriel was a person who always foresaw danger. If we kids climbed a tree she would come and plead for us to come down. If a storm came up she would be sure some of us would be struck by lightning. (Thel)

All our family were good runners except Larry and Muriel. Muriel used to tell a story of going to a Sunday School picnic with our cousin Alma Burton. Muriel entered a race and when the word was given to go she set off. After a while she looked around to see where the other kids were and they were going in the opposite direction. (Thel)

Moo was a person who didn't 'beat about the bush'. If she had something to say she said it. She didn't believe in talking behind one's back, as we all found out. She was great at a party and always had us in fits of laughter. She was also wonderful when anybody was sick. (Isabel)

Details

Olive Muriel	b. 10 August 1912, Calarie d. 15 September 1986, Forbes
--------------	------------------------------------------------------------

Dudley Keith Chandler	b. 26 July 1908, Forbes d. 31 August 1979, Forbes
-----------------------	------------------------------------------------------

Children

Ronald Dudley	b. 1934, Forbes
Geoffrey Allan	b. 1938, Forbes
Charles Reginald	b. 1940, Forbes

Isabel Sarah

My mother Isabel was born at Calarie on 1 June 1914. She was very young when the family moved to the West Ooma farm. Farm life was not easy and family resources were limited.

Isabel started school in May 1919, in a schoolhouse built on the Hodge farm. All of the younger members of the family went to school there. Isabel completed the Primary Final exam and had some preliminary secondary schooling prior to leaving school around the age of 14. She was tall for her age, and a good runner, winning prizes of books at local events which much later became her own children's early readers.

After leaving school Isabel started casual domestic work at local farms. Pay was irregular and low. The work was casual, and to an extent seasonal.

In her own story, written for her 80th birthday, Isabel talks about life on the farm, the perpetual round of small jobs to be done, the cooking of breakfast, morning tea, dinner, afternoon tea, tea, and supper. The domestic work all fell on the girls – cows to be milked, rabbits shot, and washing in the copper outdoors. Summer evenings saw games outside, but there was no electricity and work started early.



Isabel and her pageboy, 1937

Life was simple, and although a Rugby car came along in 1926, travel to Garema and neighbours was mainly by sulky. Garema had its own football team, and cricket was played in the village, but there was no organised girls' team sports, although tennis was popular. The girls got their turn at local sports days. Isabel was taller than her sisters, and could run, and she treasured the books she won in various races around the district. Thel did the same years later.

Isabel's father Sam Snr died at in 1930 at the age of 51. Isabel had taken a major responsibility for nursing him at home. After his death she was sent to Sydney for a brief holiday, and saw the sea for the first time. She stayed at San Souci on Botany Bay, probably with one of the Read families.

Isabel married Ron Cavenagh in 1937. They met when Ron went to Garema to visit his widowed father. Ron worked for Babcock and Wilcox, an engineering firm, and after they married he and Isabel went to Wollongong, and then Newcastle, where I was born in 1938. The next move was to Yallourn, then back to Sydney. They bought a house in Baulkham Hills, and

milked a cow and had chooks. World War 2 began on 1 September 1939, the day they got the key for their house, and a couple of weeks before a daughter, Meg, was born.

In between the attack on Pearl Harbour and the fall of Singapore Ron and Isabel sold up and Isabel and the two kids were evacuated back to West Ooma. She stayed there for five months only, and then returned to Sydney. They rented on the outskirts again, this time at Moorebank. Ron joined up in 1943 and Isabel was lonely in the large old timber house some distance from any other houses. The nights were difficult, and she would roam through the house with a torch, looking for the source of strange noises that came from old timbers and galvanised iron roof. She had never been on her own before, and was sometimes fearful. Barry and Paul Hodge came for a while, and Muriel and her boys came

for some time. Finally the Robson family moved in with her and the kids, and the night prowling stopped.

Ron was away for two years. After the war he used his war pay to buy a small cottage at Moorebank. Another daughter, Beverly, was born in 1946 and another son, Alan, in 1949. During this time the old cottage was demolished and a much larger fibro house was built. In 1952 Ron and a mate decided to make some money out of the wool boom and went to Coonamble fencing. He was offered a job there, on a property, and he and Isabel went back to the bush.

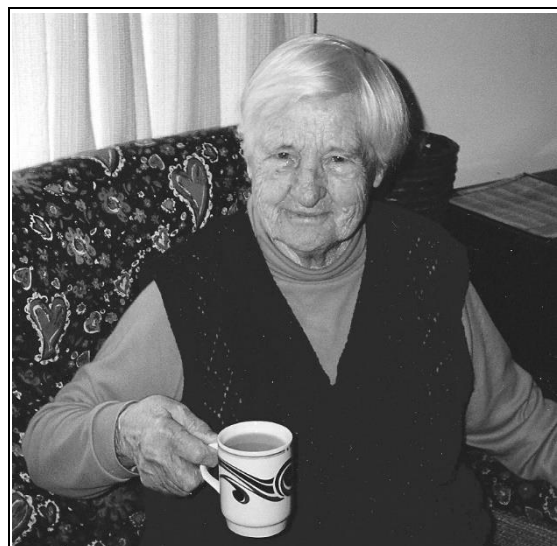
They stayed in Coonamble from 1952 to 1958, and Isabel was happy there. Ron came in from the farm at weekends, the kids were at school, and in 1955 she had another son, Rick, to care for. She had good friends, and enough extra money to enjoy a few beers at the Terminus Hotel. They bought a new car in 1954, a Holden Ute, their first new car since an Austin roadster in 1940.

They returned to Moorebank in 1958, but in 1960 Ron had an accident at work which activated a brain tumour and he died, aged 51, in November that year. There was no compensation and with the boys at school Isabel had to go to work. She cleaned and she ironed, and struggled on, but the house needed major work (it had been built piecemeal, largely by Ron and friends) and in the early 1960s she sold up and moved to St Mary's, to a much smaller place. The three older children were all married in the 1960s. Grandchildren started to arrive, and she lived long enough to know all 16 of them.

In 1975 she moved back to Forbes, but she was lonely again and eventually moved in with her daughter Meg and her teacher son-in-law Mick, in Geurie, near Dubbo. She stayed with them for another 25 years. She also went overseas, with her son Alan, and they travelled Europe for some months in a VW van. This was high adventure, and she relished the different peoples and languages and the lifestyles. She was passionately anti-racist, and hated discrimination.

In 1979 her daughter Beverly died of cancer. This was devastating for Isabel and all her family. In the early 1980s Mick was appointed to Bateman's Bay Primary School, and Isabel spent the following years in that pleasant town, visiting her children and grandchildren whenever possible.

Over the years problems arose. Her memory faded and her behaviour became erratic. She had trouble with vision and hearing. She declined steadily until living with Meg became impossible and she was placed in a nursing home in Forbes. Her anger about what she saw as this treachery and injustice was formidable. She declined rapidly, and lay in care, seemingly unknowing, until her death on 26 January 2006. She was buried in Forbes, only a couple of kilometres from where she was born. There is a memorial to Ron and Bev on her tombstone.



Isabel, c.2000

Isabel was passionate about her family, brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews, and her own children and grandchildren. She was close to her mother, and one of her great regrets was not attending her mother's funeral, so soon after her husband's. She was a physically strong woman, with strong views about what was right and wrong, but was

generous and tolerant towards her children and their problems. She loved a few drinks, a game of cards, and a talk around a kitchen table. She was a woman without pretensions, but with a memorable presence.

My memories of Isabel Sarah are that she always seemed to have a broom in her hand. She loved sweeping. She wasn't home a great deal after I grew up, she would be away working somewhere. (Thel)

Details

Isabel Sarah	b. 1 June 1914, Calarie d. 26 January 2006, Forbes
Alexander Ronald Cavenagh	b. 7 March 1909, Wagga d. 6 November 1960, Darlinghurst

Children

Raymond Hugh	b. 1938, Newcastle
Margaret Ada	b. 1939, Parramatta
Beverley Ann	b 1946, Parramatta (dec)
Alan Richard	b. 1949, Parramatta
Rodrick John	b. 1955, Coonamble

Elsie

Elsie was born on 1 December 1915 in Forbes, so was very young when the family moved to the West Ooma farm. Her schooling was at the Garema School on the Hodge farm.

There was not a lot of opportunity for 'going out' at West Ooma, but the girls' stories tell us that when an opportunity came they all took it, whether it was a Garema event or a Forbes event, a dance or a football game:

Elsie loved going out. The car hardly ever left the farm without Elsie. One day Larry [Pop] said to her, 'Elsie, there is a dog fight on the other side of Bourke. Are you going?' (Thel)

Things improved considerably when the first car, a 1926 Rugby, came onto the farm. Elsie could ride, and there were cousins to visit nearby, and she could also handle a sulky. In the 1930s she went out with two of the Garema school teachers, Alec Elphinstone and Max Gadd.

In 1936 Isabel and Elsie went to Orange, mainly to give support and assistance to Elsie, Stan's wife, who was pregnant with her second child Keith, but it is also possible they worked there. Isabel said it was in Orange that Elsie became pregnant with Wilma. If so, they were there for a long time, because Keith was born in August 1936 and Wilma in December 1936 in Forbes. This means Elsie was five months pregnant when Keith was born, and they would have had to have been in Orange as early as March 1936. Of course, they could have spent periods of time in Orange, and returned to Forbes regularly.

Elsie met Charles William Day in Forbes. Bill was a good dancer, played popular songs on the piano, and enjoyed a drink or two and a night out, so it is not hard to see the attraction. They were married in 1938, and their first child Bobby was born in October of that year. Bill was not prepared to accept Wilma, and so Wilma stayed with Gran, and did so until she left Forbes in the mid-1950s to work in Sydney. Bill was a farm worker, and may have worked and lived on a number of farms in the Forbes area. However, the two most significant jobs he had were at Jemalong, and at Max Mears' place out along the Cowra Road, both of which lasted for some years.

Jemalong was a very large irrigation area constructed as a consequence of government water policies in the 1930s which led to Wyangala Dam (in its first version) in 1935-6, and Jemalong Weir in 1939. The Jemalong and Wylde Plains Irrigation District was created in 1940, and consisted of a large number of smaller properties that fed off a large irrigation process of pumps and canals. Bill's father was an Englishman called Charles and his mother a local Forbes woman called Mary ('Nanna' Day, much loved by all) who also worked at Jemalong. Bill and Elsie and the three boys (Bobby, Ross and Neil) lived at Jemalong during all of the war years.

After the war, the family (now with Marlene who was born in 1946) moved to Max Mears' property. They had a good cottage, and it was right on the river. Bill was not a swimmer, so was always anxious about the kids. They were there during the big floods of the early



Eily and Elsie, mid-1940s

1950s, and like many rural riverside people had great stories of food drops from planes, massive water flows with all kinds of stuff being carried along, and stock losses. They were there for a number of years. Following this there was a period of short term jobs on various properties, often with poor housing. This experience hastened a search for more secure work.

In 1954 the family moved to Coonamble, where Isabel was already living. Bill had a job at a property out along the Carinda Road called Lyola, owned by Dud McKenzie, and they stayed there for a number of years. There was a school bus, and Marlene was able to go to school in Coonamble. They also were able to visit Isabel and Ron on the weekends and have a few drinks, particularly after the newly-legislated 10 o'clock closing time for hotels in 1955 meant pubs no longer had to close at 6 pm.

Around 1960 Bill got a job with the local Electricity Commission workshop in Coonamble, and the family was able to move into town. Finally they built a small cottage in West Coonamble and stayed. After Bill died in 1974 Elsie stayed on in the house, close to children, grandchildren and later great-grandchildren, all of whom visited often. She also had an opportunity to visit other places herself.



Elsie, 1983

My kids always loved it when Mum (Isabel) and Elsie visited. Mum could be a bit tough, but she always relaxed around her grandchildren. Elsie was a treat – warm-hearted, affectionate, and ready to be amused by anything the kids turned on. With them she was as I remembered her from my childhood, a really lovely lady. When Dean spoke at her funeral he reinforced all of those things from a grandson's point of view.

Elsie and Isabel spent a lot of time together as children and young women, and then again in their later years. Marlene said Elsie always reckoned Isabel bossed her around, and I can believe that. Still, being with Isabel gave her an opportunity to get about, and that was something she enjoyed.

Elsie's great heart showed when Isabel's daughter Beverley was dying of cancer. Elsie and Marlene moved in, packed Isabel off for a rest, and took over. The fortnight they stayed was a life saver for Isabel, and her family never forgot it.

Elsie's 80th birthday was held in Coonamble in 1995 with a lot of descendants and relatives in attendance at Marlene and Raymond's place. Elsie had become quite vague by this time, although it didn't dampen her capacity to smile and laugh and enjoy herself. She died in September 2000 and is buried in Coonamble cemetery.

Elsie has always been fun to be with. She adores her children and loves to be with relatives and friends. She loves to go to parties and always enjoys herself ... Else and I would sit up after a party, when everyone else had gone to bed, sometimes until five o'clock in the morning. We would have a few drinks, mostly port, and talk.
(Isabel)

Details

Elsie	b. 1 December 1915, Forbes d. 18 September 2000, Coonamble
Charles William Day (always known as Bill)	b. 1915, Forbes d. 2 February 1974, Coonamble
Child, Elsie	
Wilma Joyce Hodge	b. 1936, Forbes (dec)
Children, Elsie and Bill	
Robert William	b. 1938, Forbes (dec)
Charles Ross	b. 1940, Forbes (dec)
David Neil	b. 1941, Forbes
Marlene Kay	b. 1946, Forbes

Samuel Richard

[This story is based Sam's own story, written in 2005. The quotes are from that story.]

Sam was born in a maternity hospital in Farrand Street Forbes on 13 January 1919, the eighth child of the family and the first of the four children born after the family moved to West Ooma.

My father share-farmed on Oomah station and when it was cut up during the First World War he obtained 700 acres which he called West Ooma. My father built a three bedroom house with a corrugated iron kitchen off the house. After a while he added a kitchen and a bedroom for the boys. I remember lying in bed in the mornings listening to my father whistling while he lit the fire and cooked the breakfast. My Mother was fairly strict but I was able to get away with a few things with Dad! We got two Christmas stockings between us kids, but I don't remember ever getting toys.

Sam went to the school on the farm, starting when he was about four years old. He said the school was of very good timber construction. There was a boy from Uah Station called Bill Chester who rode a horse to school (probably a distance of about 8 km) and he would leave his horse in the Hodge yard until after school. He would carry Sam on his shoulders to school. Riding to school was common at the time. The Davies kids rode as well, and many small schools had horse paddocks for the children's horses.

Sam left school when he was 12 and worked on the farm until he was 23. His first job on the farm was to milk the cows and separate the milk so his mother could make butter from the cream. He got his first new pair of shoes when he was about 14 to go to the Forbes Show:

I put these shoes on and off to the show we went. Well, these shoes nearly burnt the feet off me! Was I pleased to get these shoes off after the show!

When we were younger, we would go to Forbes with Mum and Dad to do the shopping. Mum would give me 2 bob (2/-, 2 shillings – about 20 cents) and I would buy some bananas and return to the car where I would sit and eat them all!

Sam remembered travelling to Grenfell and on the way home calling to see their Aunty May Parker who lived the Grenfell side of Nag's Head Bridge with a lovely peach tree in the yard. That Sam remembered fruit so vividly reflects Isabel's comment about fruit being 'too hard to get'.

Sam's account of events at school tell something about pupil-teacher relationships at the time:

I remember one day in school, Flo Shaw got angry with the teacher and threw the ink well at him (full of ink!!) and on another occasion when I did something wrong (or he said I did!) and I had to go out and have the cane, two strokes. I pulled my hand back and the cane hit the teacher's knee so I got another couple of strokes! Well, being a bit peeved and seeing the teacher riding his bike home after school, I sang out something nasty to him. He pulled up and looked at me and next day he asked me what I had said. I told him I was rousing on the dog! He was a cranky teacher. One of our neighbour's sons seemed to be getting the cane all the time. I only had two teachers, Miss Broome was the nicest.

Cracker night was held on 24 May, Queen Victoria's birthday (Empire Day), and although the Hodge family was not well off, there was always enough to ensure the day was celebrated properly.

Dad had a cattle dog called 'Pepper' and every cracker night he would hang around waiting to catch the crackers as they dropped to the ground. He very seldom missed one! Most dogs are frightened of crackers and run away to hide, some even clear out and leave home, coming back the next day!

Sam's was 11 years old when his father died. He remembered when his Dad was sick in bed before he died, he would sneak through the window and lay on the bed with his father. His clothes would be dusty from playing outside which would make his Mother's white sheets dirty and she would rouse on him. Years later he wrote *'I missed Dad terribly'*.

The older brothers left home to work and Stan did the farming until he went to Orange, and then Sam took over. He would have been about 14. When working the farm he used a team of horses to pull the plough, combine and header. The hay would be cut and stoked and then a haystack constructed to store the hay for later use as stock feed. Gran had some sheep, the horses and a few cattle. There were some cows that were milked every day to supply the family with fresh cream and butter. Gran always made the soap that they used. *'It was pretty hard!'* said Sam. Sometimes when he had time, Sam would go down and help Young Bill Crouch and his dad, also called Bill, on the Crouch property a couple of miles away.

Sam often went fox hunting with a greyhound dog and one day the dog chased a hare back towards him. The hare passed him but the dog ran into him breaking his knee. Neighbours Jim and Reg Quirk were there and Jim went home to tell his father who came and picked Sam up to take him home. Gran and one of the older brothers took him to Forbes to Dr McLean who admitted him to hospital where he remained for five or six weeks.

After I came out of hospital and was in the street, if Dr McLean saw me, he would pull my trouser leg up to see how my knee was going!

Isabel said Sam had gone into Forbes to join up during the war but had been rejected because of flat feet. Marge validated this story. I thought his rejection might have been because of the childhood injury to his leg, which was severe, and which had long-term implications. However, Pam is adamant the flat feet story is accurate.

Sam married Rene Dykes from Pinnacle in 1940. Rene brought 2-year-old Pam to the marriage.



Sam and Rene

Until he moved to Canberra in the late 1960s, all Sam's jobs were working on properties. His first position after he and Rene married was on Uah Station at Garema, owned by Mr and Mrs Stanley Tout. Rene had also worked for the Touts before she was married. Several members of the Hodge and Dykes families worked for the Touts over the years.

At first Sam and Rene lived in the shearers' quarters until Mr Tout built a home for them on the property. In addition to Sam's wage, they were supplied with meat which was killed on the property. Part of Sam's job was to milk the cows, so they also had fresh milk. They

shopped in Forbes once a week or every second week, travelling by horse and sulky. A daughter, Marjorie, was born in 1942.

From Uah the family went to Carrawobitty Station (c.1944), a property on the Bedgerabong Road about 10 km west of Forbes. While working at Carrawobitty Sam and Rene bought their first car, a Chev 4: *'It was second-hand and we painted it with a brush, a nice grey! It was great having a car after travelling in a sulky!!'*

While they were living at Carrawobitty Pam did her schooling by correspondence lessons, but Marje started school at Garema when they later returned to work at Uah (c.1946-7). Pam and Marje rode their bikes to school, first from Uah and later from West Ooma.

Sam and Rene left Uah for the last time around 1949-50 and went back to West Ooma. They lived and worked there until about 1960 when they moved to a property owned by the Touts, called Bald Hills, at Tubbul, near Young.

Trevor was born in 1954. He attended the schools at Thuddungra and Tubbul and went on to the high school at Young. It was while living at Bald Hills that Trevor developed a strong interest in horse riding and they got involved in the pony club, going to many district shows and gymkhanas.



Sam and Isabel, 2000

Sam and his family spent eight or nine years at Tubbul and while there they became very good friends with Les and Jean Atkinson who operated the Tubbul Post Office.

In the late 1960s Les and Jean decided they wanted to go to Canberra to live and they wanted Sam and Rene to go too, so away they all went. Les got Sam a good job at the South African Embassy and they lived in a flat in the Embassy office building, making it very easy to get to work. But this was a very turbulent time with many demonstrations against the South Africans for their policy on Apartheid:

For quite a long time there was a Police Guard at the gates of the Embassy and visitors had to prove who they were and why they were wanting entry! None of our visitors looked like the scruffy professional demonstrators who were around in those days! However, we did enjoy our time there, fifteen years in all and we met some interesting people and developed a keen interest in Proteas.

While working in Canberra Sam and Rene bought a little cottage in Winbin Avenue, Malua Bay, and retired there in March 1984. In June 1984 Sam and Rene set off on an around-Australia trip, returning home in October of that year:

We had a wonderful trip and many wonderful memories of that time remain with us. We enjoyed our time in the cottage in Winbin Avenue, developing a lovely garden with many beautiful Protea bushes etc. and enjoying the view of the lovely Malua Bay beach. We later bought a bigger house in Muwarra Avenue in Malua Bay where we still live. (2005)

Sam and Rene had moved a good way from the farm at Garema, and were both enjoying a different life style when they wrote their story for their children.

Sam died in 2009, aged 90, and Rene died in 2012.

Samuel Richard has always been a quiet old bloke. He wasn't allowed to play football as he'd had a badly broken leg when he was a child. (Isabel)

Details

Samuel Richard	b. 13 January 1919, Forbes d. 19 August 2009, Bateman's Bay
----------------	----------------------------------------------------------------

Irene Dykes	b. 20 July 1920, Grenfell d. 24 May 2012, Bateman's Bay
-------------	------------------------------------------------------------

Child, Rene

Pamela Ann	b. 1937, Forbes
------------	-----------------

Children, Sam and Rene

Marjorie Lorraine	b. 1942, Forbes
Trevor Richard	b. 1954, Forbes

Thelma

Thelma (Thel) was born on 28 October 1920 in Forbes. Some of her first memories are of going to school:

We walked across a paddock to a small school house. It consisted of one room and a porch where we hung our school bags. There was weather shed where we played on cold and wet days. One teacher used to teach all the children. Mostly there was one or more children in each class from first to sixth. Sometimes there would only be about twelve or thirteen kids going to school altogether.

I always loved school and would have liked to have gone to high school. I did two years of high school by correspondence. I also loved reading books. At school every month the Education Department would send our school a box of books. I used to read them all and any book I could get my hands on. I loved poetry, especially the Australian poems written by Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson and Adam Lindsay Gordon. I think their poetry is the best ever written.

Each year in September there would be a school picnic. Thel, like Isabel, usually won her races. They would go to the Pinnacle school picnic and sometimes to the Wurrinya picnic. Every Christmas before school broke up for the holidays there would be a big Christmas tree and party in the local hall.

The social life was very limited. They would only go to town about three or four times a year. They would always go to the local Forbes show and go to town every Christmas Eve.

Sometimes we'd go to town on a Saturday and stay to go to the pictures at night. If you had a boyfriend he'd probably take you to the movies and buy you a chocolate at interval. Sometimes there would be a dance at the Town Hall and we'd go. Every New Year's Eve we went to the dance at the Town Hall.

Clearly Thel's social life was expanding as she moved through adolescence.

Thel could remember the first car her father bought when she was about 6 years old. It was a Rugby. Later on he bought a Pontiac that they had until 1930, when Sam Snr died. When Thel was about 16, her mother bought a Chevrolet.

We had some funny trips in our cars, as in those days the roads were only dirt tracks. Sometimes we might go to town and it would rain while we were there and on our way home we would get bogged. Everyone but the driver would have to get out and push. I think one night we pushed the car nearly all the way home.

The social life of those little villages deteriorated when everyone bought cars and the roads were improved, and people could easily get to town for their entertainment.

Thel remembered when the radio first arrived at the house. One of the neighbours had one before the Hodge family, and they would go to visit to listen to the wireless, as it was called. Thel commented that there wasn't always clear reception: *I think we listened to more static*



Thel and Eily

than music. Eventually Pop (Gordon) bought a radio for his father and when the Australian cricketers were in England playing they would sit up all night listening to the cricket. Thel recalled: *'I can remember when Don Bradman was playing and how sometimes he would make two or three hundred runs'*.

Empire Day was a major event in their lives. Every 24 May the kids would make a huge bonfire: *'Mum would buy us some crackers and our neighbours, the Davies, would come over and help us celebrate. We always enjoyed those nights.'*

Thel's memory was always pretty good, and when she was writing her story lots of events came to mind.

When Sam, Eily and I were kids we mostly spent our Saturdays going hunting for rabbits. In school holidays I would go to the Davies for a couple of nights and one of their kids would be at home. Mum and Mrs Davies would exchange kids throughout the holidays.

I can also remember big dust storms. We would all get inside the house and wait for them to blow over. We would have wet washers on our faces, they were horrible.

We were a healthy lot of kids and didn't have much sickness. I remember once four or five of us had whooping cough. Mum would line us up every day and dose us up with something (I don't know what). I also remember having measles. When Eily was about two years old she had diphtheria. Mum and Dad took her to the hospital. The doctor had to open her throat and put a tube down to allow her to breathe. [This was before mass immunisation programs. Whooping cough and diphtheria were child killing diseases.]

Fred used to bring some beer out [to the dances at Garema] to drink during the night. He'd put his beer in a bag, put a rope on it and pull it up into the tree so no one would pinch it. I remember once Mum, Elsie and I went to a dance at Pinnacle. Isabel was working at Uoma at the time so we dropped her off on the way home, took a short cut and got lost, and couldn't find our way out of a paddock. We had to sleep in the car until day light.

Thel was 19 when war broke out in 1939, and she was in Sydney at the time living with Isabel and Ron Cavenagh at Baulkham Hills. At that time work in Sydney was scarce, so she eventually came home to Forbes. We know that around this time she worked as a domestic at Flannery's Hotel, later the Australia Hotel. Thel married Ken (Blue) Hurford in January 1941: *'I met Ken Hurford ('Blue') at a dance at Garema. Fred had brought him out.'*

Thel felt Forbes was almost a ghost town early in the war as a lot of people had left the town. A lot of the men had joined the army and a lot of men too old for the army moved to towns like Lithgow and Sydney to work in ammunition factories. Eventually Forbes got an ammunition factory and many of the people who had left returned.

During the war we had food and clothing rationing. Every month we would get a rations book. We would have to give the shops so many tickets for a 1lb of butter and a 1lb of sugar. Meat was also rationed, as was tobacco and petrol. Some people had charcoal burners fitted to their cars to save petrol. My husband Blue spent some time in Army camps around Sydney but he eventually got exempted from the Army to go shearing. Shearers were exempted because the wool was used to make Army uniforms.

After Thel and Blue were married they lived with Blue's parents, Nana and Pop Hurford. While Blue was away in the army for a few months, Thel went to live with Jean Hurford

whose husband Johnny was also away in the army. When Blue came home they lived in a small house on Calarie Road.

Thel and Blue swapped the Calarie Road house with another couple who had a bigger house in Barton Street. After that they moved to Wambat Street. While they were there they got word they had been allocated a Housing Commission house in Clement Street. From there they went to Farrand Street and then finally to Flint Street.

Colin and Yvonne were born early in the war years, but Thel lost two little boys who were born later. Allan lived for six months and Bruce for nearly two years:

My son Allan Kenneth Hurford was born on 13 June 1944. He died on 22 January 1945. His heart was on the right side of his body, and I guess some of his other organs were misplaced, because after I'd feed him he'd be in a lot of pain. He was a dear little boy. Bruce Hurford was born on 10 October 1945. He was a very big baby, nearly 11lbs [5 kg] at birth. He died of pneumonia on 28 September 1947.

The loss of Allan and Bruce was devastating for Thel and Blue.

Elaine (Joan), Maureen, Brenda and Greg came along later, and together with Colin and Yvonne formed a large and lively family.

Blue went into the Jemalong Retirement Village in November 1993 but he'd been in hospital for six months before that. He developed pneumonia and died on 18 November 1997. Thel stayed on her own in the Flint Street house for some time, but finally moved to the NSW north coast to be closer to the majority of her children.

At the time of writing Thel is alive and well and living at Alstonville, near Lismore. In October 2016 she turned 96, the longest-lived of all of her family.



Thel, 1997

Details

Thelma	b. 28 October 1920, Forbes
Kenneth Sydney Hurford	b. 16 July 1919, Forbes d. 18 November 1997, Forbes

Children

Colin Sydney	b. 1941, Forbes
Yvonne Margaret	b. 1942, Forbes
Allan Kenneth	b. 13.6.1944 (d. 22.1.1945)
Bruce	b. 10.10.1945. (d. 28.9.1947)
Elaine Joan	b. 1947, Forbes
Maureen Ann	b. 1950, Forbes
Brenda Joyce	b. 1953, Forbes
Gregory Arthur	b. 1955, Forbes

Eileen Elizabeth

[This story has been extracted from the longer version written by Eily's daughter Betty, and amended for this publication.]

Eileen (Eily) was born on 12 April 1923, the 10th child and youngest daughter in the family:

Being the youngest daughter, Eily was rather pampered during her early life – so say her sisters, not that they seemed to mind. (Betty)

Her birthday was always celebrated on 13 April but Eily didn't realise the mistake until she applied for a birth certificate later in life. She was greatly distressed to learn this, so for the rest of her life her family continued to celebrate her birth date as 13 April 1923.

Eily often spoke with warmth of her young years growing up at West Ooma. She stayed on the farm until the early 1940s, but it was a hard life and the females of the household had endless chores to do to help maintain the home.

At the age of three, Eily suffered a serious bout of diphtheria. She was rushed to Forbes Hospital where a doctor cut a hole in her throat and inserted a tracheotomy tube to allow her to breathe – and as long as she lived she couldn't stand anything too tight around her neck. Her brothers and sisters called her 'Spider' as her scars resembled a spider web. Although Eily never said a great deal about her illness, probably because she was so young at the time, it must have been a harrowing time for her and the family.

Eily's schooling was at the Garema school on the West Ooma farm. Her report card from 1933 reflects a capable but talkative student:

Eileen can do real good work, if she likes, but she likes to talk too much at times, and thus her work suffers. She can attempt 5th class work next year. She is quite capable of going into a higher class, and doing the necessary work. [Comment from Eileen's teacher Alex Elphinstone.]

The Hodge children had to make their own fun on the farm. Thel recalled a typical afternoon and evening in the late 1920s when their parents had gone to Forbes. She, Sam and Eily amused themselves by taking a couple of the farm dogs and going rabbiting for a couple of hours, then home for tea and playing cards and Ludo until bedtime.

Eily's first job was working for the Tout family who owned Uah Station at Garema. She cared for their two children and undertook general household duties. Whenever the family went on holidays they took Eily with them. Wilma remembered Eily coming home from a trip to Manly so excited at what she had seen, particularly the white sand and ocean as far as the eye could see.

After working at Touts Eily went to work at the ammunition factory in Forbes for a while during the war years. She boarded with Muriel and Dud Chandler during the week and returned home to the farm on weekends.



Despite knowing that Gran, who didn't drink alcohol, would not like one of her daughters working in pubs, Eily loved working as a barmaid. She worked in pubs in Forbes including the Club House (which became the Forbes Inn), and the Victoria Hotel. Wilma remembered Eily working at the Victoria Hotel with her good friend Freda Hohnberg.

Eily became bored with life in Forbes so she and Freda decided to go to Sydney, probably during 1945. Information about her early days in Sydney is scarce. We know that one of her first jobs was at the Haymarket Hotel and that she also worked for some time at the Petersham Inn Hotel.

Eily loved to dance and in Sydney she attended dances at the Trocadero and other venues. Russell recalled when his mother was working at the Exchange Hotel, just a couple of doors from their house in Mullens Street in Balmain, that after closing and cleaning up the staff would relax with their free drink and the music would be put on and everyone would dance and sing.

When Eily met George Daniel Knight he was in the army. He had enlisted in Lismore on 11 December 1940 and stayed in the army until the mid-1950s. He was stationed in the Middle East during the war in the 105 Light Aid Detachment RAEME (Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers) and served in Japan after the war in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF).

Eily and Freda were working at a clothing factory in Darlinghurst and living in Petersham. George remembered they would walk to work as they couldn't afford fares for public transport. He also told of 'borrowing' food from the army canteen to help feed the girls, even once getting them a spirit lamp so they could cook their meals. George's army records indicate he was fined for this 'borrowing'.

Eily and George were married on 9 October 1952 at the Sydney Registry Office, and lived in a flat (within a house) at 262 Gardiners Road, Kingsford. The accommodation was small, just a bedroom with a common kitchen and bathroom. Betty was born in March 1952, June in November 1953, and Russel in October 1956, so by the time the family left Gardiners Road there were two adults and three children living in this one room. They were very lucky to have Eily's cousins Bidy, Dinah and Henry (known as Googs) Donahoo living nearby who were very good to the family.

In 1957 George decided to leave the army and with his back pay he bought a one-bedroom house at 12 Pashley Street, Balmain. Along with his family he took one of the boarders who had also lived at Gardiners Road to live in the Balmain house. Deborah was born in August 1958, Karen in March 1960, Daniel Wayne (always known as Wayne) in March 1963, and the last of the Knight children, Kim, was born in October 1966. Despite the cramped conditions, Betty recalls they were 'a very happy family and quite privileged to have our own home'.

In 1967 it was time for a larger house and the family moved to 9 Mullins Street in Balmain. The house had three bedrooms, a big lounge room, carpet on the floors and a much larger yard. Betty remembers those first days and the excitement of the move: 'Mind you we only moved a couple of streets away from Pashley Street'.

After leaving the army George got work with the NRMA as a roadside assistance technician through a friend of his from the army. George also worked as a barman at the Unity Hall and Sackville Hotel at Rozelle to supplement the family income, and for most of his life he worked two jobs. When George left the NRMA he went to work for J. Arnald & Sons, delivering Selleys products all over Sydney in his truck, and stayed there until his retirement.

Eily continued to work as a barmaid. Over the years she worked at many hotels, including the Riverview Hotel in Balmain when it was owned by Olympic gold medal swimmer Dawn Fraser. Eily loved working behind the bar and was always popular with hotel patrons.

When grandchildren came along, Eily idolised them and spent a great deal of time with them, which was precious to her as she had been unable to fully enjoy her own children's childhoods because of the need to work to help provide for the family.



George and Eily

Eily was always patient with her children and grandchildren and everything was always 'no fuss no bother'.

Her card games with the kids were something to behold, there was always a lot of laughter, especially when one of the kids got an upper hand and thought they were cheating without her knowing. But sometimes you had to wonder about our dear mother, as she had this way of doing the strangest things. It would be nothing to see her hunting the house in the most peculiar places for money she had misplaced.
(Betty)

Eily died during the night of 7 February 1990 from a heart attack at home at the Mullens Street house. George died six years later, on 28 February 1996, from lung cancer. He also died at the family home in Mullens Street. *'They are buried side by side in the Lawn Cemetery at Forbes, in the town that had offered them and their children a wonderful sense of belonging and many cherished memories.'* (Betty)

Eileen Elizabeth and I were always good mates as there was only a couple of years difference in our ages. She was bridesmaid at my wedding. She worked at Uah station for a long time as a maid, then she was a barmaid at the Victoria and Clubhouse hotels in Forbes. She went to Sydney to live when she was about twenty two and met and married George. She worked in a lot of hotels in Balmain. (Thel)

Eily keeps dying her hair that's why she is not white haired like her sisters. (Muriel)

Details

Eileen Elizabeth	b. 12 April 1923, Forbes d. 7 February 1990, Balmain
George Daniel Knight	b. 11 October 1919, Byron Bay d. 28 February 1996, Balmain

Children

Betty Anne	b. 1952, Sydney
June Eleanor	b. 1953, Sydney (dec)
Russel	b. 1956, Sydney
Deborah May	b. 1958, Sydney
Karen Margaret	b. 1960, Sydney
Daniel Wayne	b. 1963, Sydney
Kim Lorraine	b. 1966, Sydney

Harold Herbert

Harold was born in St Elmo's maternity hospital in Forbes on 4 May 1929. He was born into a family of 10 older siblings, five brothers and five sisters.

Harold was only nine months old when his father died, and consequently grew up in an atmosphere where he had to take on farm responsibilities from an early age.

Harold was good at school, and after completing primary school at the Garema School on the West Ooma farm he went to Forbes Intermediate High. He stayed with relatives in town through the week and returned to the farm for weekends and holidays. He completed his Intermediate Certificate, the highest educational qualification in the family.

After he finished school at the end of 1943 Harold worked for some years on the farm and in other casual jobs in the Forbes area. During this time he often worked with his oldest nephew, Barry Hodge, who was only three years younger than Harold. (Barry left school in Sydney at 14 and spent his time working between Sydney and the bush, often in the Forbes area.)

In the early 1950s Harold met Mona Robb, and they married on 3 December 1953. Mona came from Wongajong, a village on the outskirts of Forbes, and went to school at Wongajong Primary School. After school she did some child-minding, but then worked at the WD & HO Wills cigarette factory in Forbes for some time (when Dud Chandler was a foreman there), and also for a couple of years in their factory at Raleigh Park in Sydney.

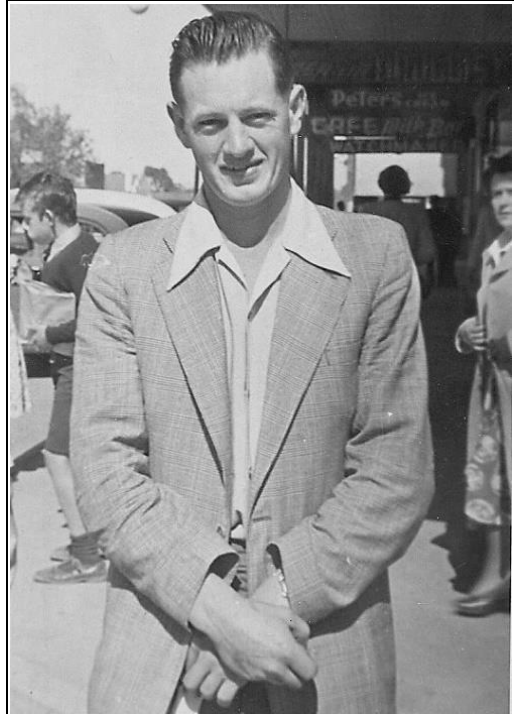
Harold and Mona moved in with Gran in the Farrand Street house. With his first child on the way, Harold joined the Postmaster-General's Department (the PMG) in 1954 and trained as a technician. They were still living with Gran when David was born in 1954, and Lynette (Lyn) in 1956.

The family moved into a Housing Commission house in Clement Street Forbes in 1958 (the house was later occupied by Pop, Daisy and family). Sharron was born in 1958.

In 1961 Harold transferred to Sydney to work for the PMG as it was an opportunity to earn extra income. He travelled to and from Sydney by train and was housed in huts at Wallgrove. Every second weekend he would catch the train back to Forbes to visit his family. He continued to do this until late in 1961 when he moved the whole family to Liverpool to live.

The family rented until Harold and Mona bought a house in Mt Pritchard in 1964. Peter was born in 1967. (Peter is the youngest of the grandchildren of Sam Snr and Isabel.)

Harold worked with the PMG (which became Telecom Australia in the 1970s and Telstra in the 1990s) until his retirement in 1994. During this time he was promoted on numerous occasions. In his forties Harold completed Higher School Certificate level mathematics so he could move into a management position. He was very highly regarded in the workplace,



Harold, late 1940s

Finale

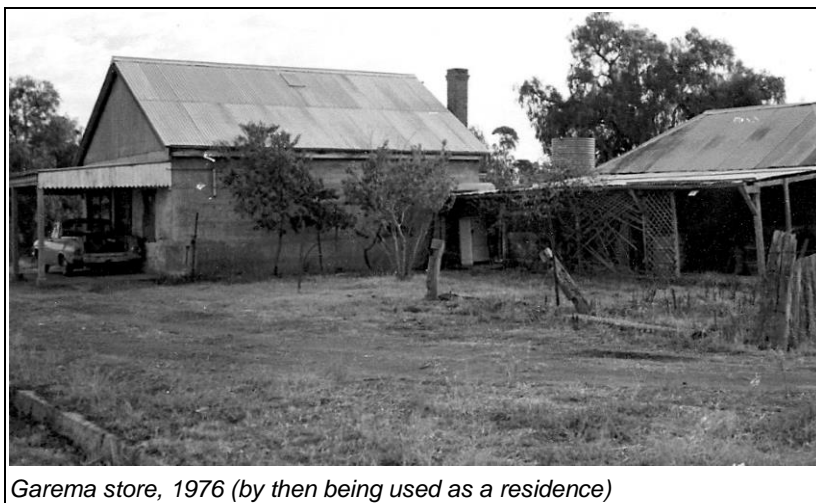
World War 2 brought great changes to the Hodge family. Gran moved into Farrand Street, in Forbes, in the late 1940s. Pop worked on Tout's 'Uah' station for some years and then moved into Forbes. Fred had gone to Sydney during the war and then went to Texas and Goondiwindi in Queensland. Irwin stayed in Sydney after he returned from war service. Stan stayed in Forbes after his stint in the army, and Muriel and Dud also stayed in Forbes when Dud returned from the war. Isabel had gone by 1937. Elsie stayed in the district for some time but in the 1950s went to Coonamble, where Isabel was living. Sam Jnr came back to the farm and stayed until 1960, before moving on to the Young district and beyond. Thel went into Forbes, and Eily went to Sydney after the war. Harold worked in Forbes and went to Sydney in the early 1960s.

By the later 1960s all the family had left Garema, and while Forbes has stayed strong in the minds of the grandchildren (the cousins), West Ooma has faded, living most strongly in the memory of those of us who stayed on or visited the farm. The village has faded too. The school, moved from the farm in 1942, closed in 1971. The store had already been closed (by Rene Hodge's sister Barbara Quirk and her husband Reg) and the building, with its thick concrete walls (very similar in colouring to the adjacent silo), has later been used as a residence. The silo still stands, of course, and the trains still come in to take the wheat crop away. The line itself – from Parkes to Cootamundra – has been kept in good repair, and is used as a major route for goods moving north-south through the state. The hall, once the centre of a lively social life of the village, is still standing, and has been renovated and renewed by a group of locals.

And the Hodges? Well, with 47 grandchildren Sam and Isabel's family has flourished. Hopefully, this small contribution to memory will ensure that Sam and Isabel, their 11 children, and their lives both in and away from Garema, won't be forgotten. The cousins will need to construct their own histories, and I hope that they find a useful platform in these pages.

The Hodges and Garema? From the farm in 1917 to Pop's move from Uah in the late 1950s, and Sam's departure to Tubbul in 1960, which roughly coincides with Pop's move into Forbes, the Hodge family's contact with Garema covers a period of a little over 40 years.

Long enough to create a family history.



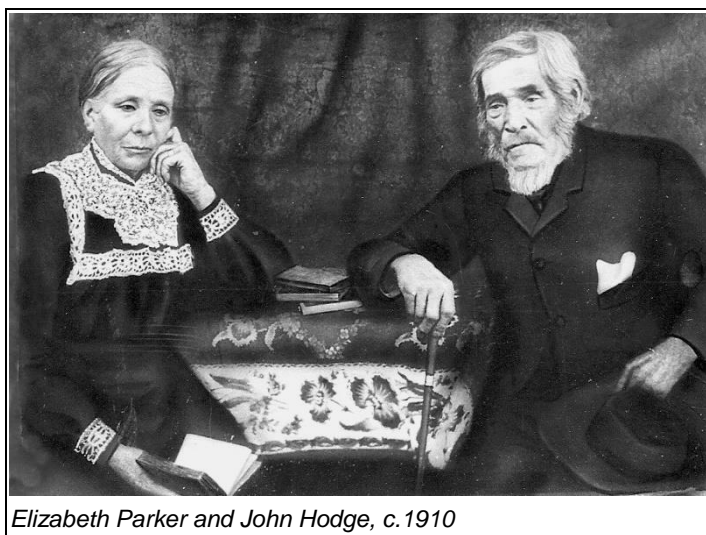
Garema store, 1976 (by then being used as a residence)

Beginnings in Australia

Our ancestors came from England and Ireland and arrived in Australia between the 1830s and the 1850s. Their circumstances were working class, and, with the exception of James Parker, our only convict, they moved to Australia for economic reasons (although clearly the matters that drove James and his brother to theft were also economic). The small family tree is provided as a reference for the four families who make up this story – the Hodges, the Parkers, the Reads and the Taylors.

John Hodge and Elizabeth Parker

The name Hodge originated in the area of the present Scottish Borders in the south-east of Scotland and Northumberland in the north-east of England, probably after the Norman invasion of 1066. Our Hodge ancestors would most likely have migrated to the north of Ireland from this area – officially or unofficially – at some time during the 1700s. They finally settled on the good farming land near the town of Armagh, most famously the place where St Patrick was



Elizabeth Parker and John Hodge, c.1910

said to have based his conversion of Ireland to Christianity. Despite the various problems that the Scots-Irish of Ulster faced, and despite the fact that thousands of them moved on to America, our Hodge family stayed, and the two who did leave chose to come to Australia.

The Hodge family land was five miles out of Armagh on two townlands called Dernasigh and Derrydoragh. The whole of Ireland is divided into townlands, many of them quite small, and these two would collectively not make up much more than a large Australian paddock. Next to Dernasigh is Drumrusk, and then Drumsallen. This area is no more than a couple of miles long.

The parents were Joseph Hodge and Elizabeth Moulden (Muldoon? Meudole?), both born around the year 1800, married in 1823, and both died before 1850. Their children (as far as we know) were:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Samuel | b. 2/8/1824, Drumsallen |
| Margaret | b. 6/3/1826, Drumrusk |
| Joseph | born and died December 1826, Dernasigh |
| Joseph | b. November 1827, Dernasigh (married Mary Ann Peasley, b. Dungannon, in Tyrone in 1849) |
| John | b. 22/8/1830, Dernasigh |
| James | b. 18/2/1832, Derrydoragh |

It was Joseph, his wife Mary Ann and his brother **John** who set sail from Plymouth on 30 November 1849 on the *Oriental*, arriving at Sydney on 17 April 1850, with Mary Ann having given birth to her and Joseph's first child, Eliza Jane, at sea.

From here Joseph and Mary Ann have another story, much of it connected to John and his family. But it is John who we now follow.

The Hodge brothers spent the first few years in New South Wales in the Camden-Picton area, and it is the common starting place for all of our Hodge ancestors. We know that Joseph was in the area until around 1859 because of the recorded births of his children. It is possible that John, whom Lyndall Holland suggests had a fondness of prospecting for gold, was somewhere else on this pursuit. However, John next turns up in Gundagai, where he must have been at least long enough to meet and propose to Elizabeth Parker.

John married **Elizabeth Parker** (parents James Parker and Eleanor [Ellen] Brown) on 4 January 1859 at Yass NSW when she was 16½ and he 28. They were to be married for 55 years.

However, their first child Joseph, according to the NSW Births Death and Marriages records, was born back in Picton. It seems that soon after this the brothers and families moved to Snowball Creek, south of Gundagai, where they had selected land. It is hard to say just how this worked out, although they were there for 15 years. Lyndall Holland has a story that for a while at least the brothers may have carted goods between Sydney and Gundagai by bullock wagon.

Barbara Dowley's story of the Joseph Hodge family is much more certain:

During the 1860s and 1870s John and Joseph operated a bullock dray carrying business, carrying various goods between Gundagai and Sydney. No doubt ... the brothers tried their hand at mining as well. Whether they ever discovered any nuggets of value is not known.

In or near 1875 the Hodge brothers and their families (except for Joseph's wife Mary Ann who had died in 1867) moved to selections in the Grenfell district at Bogolong Creek.

Children of John and Elizabeth Hodge

1. Joseph, born 1860, Picton, married Margaret Forsyth at Forbes in 1891. Settled in Grenfell district.
2. James, born 1862 Gundagai, married Alice Taunton at Grenfell in 1891, and settled in the Grenfell district.
3. Ellen Mary, born 1864 Gundagai. Ellen married William Thomas Field at Grenfell on 5.3.1887. She died at Grenfell, aged 28 years, in 1892 giving birth to her fourth child – children John 1888, Nellie 1889, Joseph 1890, and Elizabeth 1892.
4. Elizabeth, born 1866 Gundagai, married Joseph/Josiah Crouch in 1884 and settled in the Forbes district. Known as 'Annie', and her husband as 'Bill'.
5. John H., born 1868 Gundagai, settled in Grenfell district.
6. William Clement, born 11.9.1870 Gundagai. He married Elizabeth Ann Burton 1.7.1894, and there were nine children of the marriage. William died in Forbes 24.11.1946 at the age of 76. William took up a selection at Garema in 1910.
7. Thomas Alexander, Gundagai, married Lilian Podger at Bourke in 1903
8. Edward, born 1874, Gundagai.
9. Irwin Robert, born 1876 Grenfell. He married Alice Williamson in 1903, but there were no children. Irwin died in Forbes 29.6.1935 aged 58. Alice died in Dubbo in 1965.
10. **Samuel Richard** born 19.8.1878 at Grenfell. He married **Isabel Margaret Read** on 13.6.1904. Samuel died in Forbes 6.2.1930, and Isabel died in Forbes on 6.12.1960.
11. Esther Jane, born Grenfell 1880. Esther married William Standen on 22.12.1897. William died on 3.1.1905, leaving Esther with 4 children. Esther then married David Ramsay and had a further 5 children. She died in Sydney 3.5.1919, one

hour after giving birth to a son, and is buried in Botany Cemetery. She was 39 years old.

12. Margaret Sarah, born Grenfell 1882. Married Charles Dickinson but had no children.
13. Charles George, born Grenfell 1885. He married Ellen O'Keefe 23.8.1907, they had 14 children. Around 1913 Charles and Ellen moved from Calarie to Sans Souci.
14. Oliver G., born Grenfell 1888, never married, died at Forbes.

[Most of these details have been made available by the work of Mona Hodge.]

Elizabeth was known to have smoked a clay pipe:

I remember going to see my Grandmother Hodge at Calarie when I was about five years old. It was winter time and my grandmother was sitting in an easy chair by the fire smoking a pipe! Sometimes when people came to visit, she would put it in the pocket of her apron (or pinny) and you would see smoke coming from her pocket! (Sam)

John was fiercely Protestant, and if there is any lingering anti-Catholic sentiment in the family he is its direct ancestor.

John died at Calarie on 31 May 1914 aged 84, and is buried in Forbes. Elizabeth died in Forbes on 28 August 1926 aged 84, and is also buried in Forbes.

John and Elizabeth Hodge ... movements

Pop told me that his grandfather John – and those younger members of the family who had not left the roost – moved off the Bogolong selection because of the rabbit plague. 'They were eaten out by rabbits,' he said. They first went to the Pinnacle area, and later moved to Calarie, where the site of the house they lived in is down the lane and across the road from the school (est. 1905, now the SES centre) where the older boys, and perhaps even Muriel, started school. John and his son Sam became miners. How long they worked as miners I do not know, but John was 75 in 1905 when the Calarie mine had passed its peak, and Sam picked up a block of land of about 600 acres six kilometres east of Garema in 1917, when he was 39 years old. Sam Hodge Jnr suggests that his father had been share-farming on the property prior to taking up the land grant, and Sam Snr certainly knew a good deal about farming.

The land had been a part of Oomah Station, of 27,000 acres, which had been taken up in the 1850s (prior to the establishment of Forbes as a town) and the Hodge farm was called West Ooma.

James Parker and Eleanor Brown

[Note: We are fortunate in having a very good account of the Parker family written by Lyndal Holland in 1999, and I have used it considerably in this section.]

The first arrival was James Parker on the convict ship *Aurora 1*, which arrived in Sydney on 3 November 1833. At the Norfolk Assizes on 6 March 1833 James was found guilty of stealing wheat and given seven years transportation. He was a brickmaker by trade, illiterate, and was married with a daughter. In the 1837 'General Return of Convicts in New South Wales' his age was given as 42, which would have him born in 1795. However, he may have been younger than this, because his age on his death certificate in 1883 was given as 84 years, which would give him a birth date in 1799. He arrived on the same boat as his brother William, who was convicted of stealing a pig.

James was given a ticket-of-leave in Goulburn in 1838. He married an Irish woman Ellen (Eleanor) Brown(e) in Yass in 1842. We should note that a convict to New South Wales does not seem to have been expected to return to Britain, and return was uncommon, so his previous marriage could be disregarded after a period of seven years. The same law applied to his wife in England.

Eleanor Brown came from County Cavan in the centre of Ireland, and in the 1821 census (which still exists in the Library in the town of Cavan) she was described as the three-year-old daughter of James Browne, blacksmith, and his wife Elizabeth (Gibson) of the townland of Tullyvally near Drung, a village close to the larger town of Cootehill. She was a sponsored migrant (by Mr A.B. Smith), and arrived with her brothers James and Thomas on the *Champion* on the 5 October 1840, when she would have been 22. She was illiterate, and on her *Unmarried Female Immigrant* paper her occupation was given as dairymaid. When she and James were married he was at least 42; she was 24. When James died in Grenfell on 4 October 1883 they had been married for 41 years. Eleanor (known as Ellen from her marriage onwards) died in Grenfell on the 23 January 1906.

Children of James and Ellen Parker

1. **Elizabeth**, born in Camden on 26.7.1842. Elizabeth married **John Hodge** in Yass on 4.1.1859.
2. Mary Ann, born 11.3.1844 at Yass, and died at Gundagai on 11.1.1863, aged 19.
3. James, born Yass on 16.9.1846 and died Camden 27.9.1851 as a five-year-old.
4. William Clement, born Yass 25.1.1849. Married Clara Williams at Grenfell in 1873 and died at Forbes 31.10 1932. 'At least' nine children.
5. Thomas, born 23.5.1850 at Yass. Married Mary Ann Hodge (daughter of Joseph Hodge) in 1871 at Gundagai. He died 17.5.1933 at Grenfell. Mary Ann (b.1852 Picton) also died at Grenfell on 5 May 1941.
6. John was born circa 1853, probably in Yass. He married at Grenfell in 1877 to Eliza Dinner. They had six girls and one boy. The boy, John Henry, died on 17.8.1916 at Pozieres on service with the 45 Battalion AIF, and his name is on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, which means that he has no known grave. Eliza died at Grenfell in 1903, and John senior died at Grenfell on 4.5 1930.
7. Edward was born at Camden on 4.9.1854 and died a year later at Camden on 25.12.1855.
8. James Alexander was born in 1857 at Camden. He married Margaret Brown at Young in 1881. After marriage the family went to Murrumburrah where he died on 12.9.1897. He and Margaret had seven children.
9. Esther was born in Yass on 24 April, 1860. She was married to Samuel Ticehurst (b. 12.8.1853 at Boorowa) at Grenfell on 14 February 1880. They had five daughters; Mabel (1883), Elizabeth (1885), Emily (1887), Mary (1891) and Levina (1897). Esther died at Grenfell on 13.3.1925, and Samuel died Grenfell on 26.9.1930.

John Read and Mary Ann Burridge

The Read families came from Donhead St Andrew and Donhead St Mary, adjoining villages in Wiltshire, England, near the headwaters of the River Don, and just off the A30 as it proceeds east from Shaftesbury towards Wilton. Trish, Jennifer and I briefly visited these villages in 1997, and found two well-to-do comfortable dormitory villages, some thatched roofs on good houses, and nice gardens. They would have been quite different in the 1830s

when a significant number of the villagers departed for a more promising life in New South Wales.

The situation for rural workers in the south-west of England deteriorated throughout the 1820s and 1830s. The Enclosure movement of aggregating small parcels of land, much of it common land, into larger properties had been in progress for centuries, and had added to a loss of self-sufficiency for those who previously had access to common land. Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, a period of economic depression settled on the south-east of England, and the previously thriving carpet industry at Wilton was forced to close. In the 1830s the weather patterns were disastrous, with a succession of wet summers and very cold winters. Land-owners forced reductions in the already small wages of those employed, and the capacity of workers to unite and fight for better conditions was dramatically threatened by Government and land-owners. The Swing Rioters (machine breakers) activities in 1830-31 in Wiltshire led to almost 500 of them being transported. Tolpuddle, the home of the Tolpuddle Martyrs who were gaoled and deported for forming a union in the mid-1830s, was only about 25 miles from the Donheads. In this climate the activity of recruiting agents seeking migrant workers for New South Wales seems to have fallen on fertile soil.

John and Martha (Dennis) Read, both born in 1776, had a number of children, two of whom we know left England for New South Wales. They were:

John Read, and

Charles Read (baptised in Donhead St Mary's 12.2.1809).

John was married to **Mary Ann Burridge** (parents John and Eleanor Burridge). They had a son, John, born on 24 October 1832 (?), but they didn't marry until May 1838, in Wiltshire, just prior to embarkation. It would seem that the reason for this marriage was the custom of many property-owners in New South Wales to sponsor married couples, probably on the assumption that couples would be more stable than single people. They sailed from Plymouth on 14 June 1838 on the *Coromandel* and arrived in Sydney on 2 October 1838. Their migration was sponsored by John Marshall, on behalf of the MacArthur family of Camden.

John's brother Charles and his wife Louisa (Ingram) arrived on the *John McLellan* one day later, on 3 October. They were also sponsored by the MacArthur family.

The records are not easy with this family. According to one source John and Mary Ann had seven children, but only four appear in the NSW records:

John, who came to NSW with them, died at Crookwell on 9 September 1900

Sarah, born 1842, died in infancy

Sarah, born 1844

Frederick, b.18.10.1846 at Camden, died 2.1.1920 Forbes

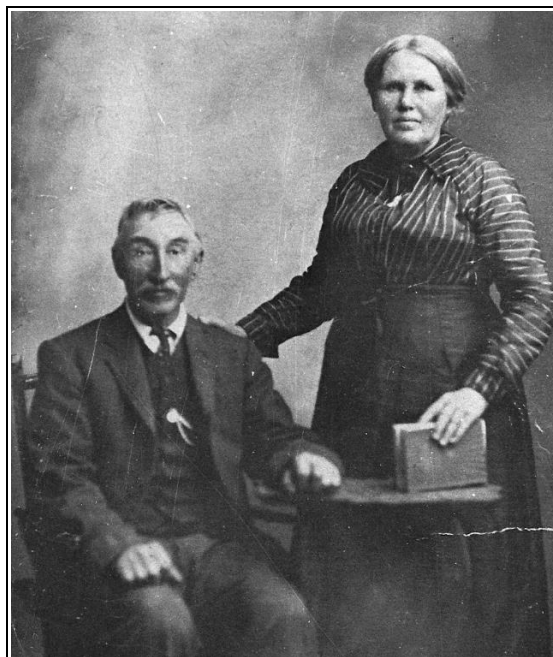
Mary Ann died at Crookwell on 9 May 1872. We have no record of John Snr's death.

The Reads spent some time in the Camden area but soon after Frederick's birth moved to Goulburn, and thence to Binda, near Crookwell. The parents and the older brother seem to have remained in that area. **Frederick** married **Jessie Taylor** at Binda on 14 April 1873, and then moved on to Carcoar, then Forbes. They had six children, of whom only three survived childhood. Isabel (Gran) was the youngest, but Jessie only survived for six months after Isabel's birth.

On 29 November 1884 Frederick married Esther Sophia Field (b.16.11.1853 at Hartley), who had assisted him as a housekeeper. They had a further eight children:

- William Thomas, b.1885
- Esther Sophia, b.1886
- Florence May, b.1888
- Arthur Charles, b.1890
- Robert Erwin, b. 1892
- Hartley, b.1895
- Herbert James, b.1897
- Reginald George, b.1899.

Isabel grew up with these half brothers and sisters, but her daughter Isabel wrote that her mother did not have a happy childhood.



Frederick Read and his second wife Esther Field, 1910

Henry Taylor and Agnes Wilson

The Taylors are a bit of a worry for a family history. Their names appear on the marriage certificate of Frederick Read and Jessie Taylor in 1873, and again on Jessie's death certificate in 1883. Information on this certificate in 1883 tells us that she had arrived in New South Wales from Scotland 31 years before as a two-year-old, born in Scotland, with her parents Henry Taylor and Agnes Wilson. This would have her arriving in 1852. The only appearance of Henry and Agnes on shipping lists to New South Wales on the internet is from the *Emigrant* in 1849, but the two listed are not married to one another but to other people, and there is no 'Jessie' in the lists of children.

We should be able to assume some residence in the Crookwell area, but only because their daughter Jessie was married at nearby Binda on in April 1873. I have not been able to find any reference to other siblings born to Henry and Agnes (there are no registered births to a couple with those names from 1850 to 1870), and neither have I been able to find any meaningful death records.

Jessie married **Frederick Read**, sawyer, in Binda on 14 April 1873. She already had a daughter Agnes, born 21 January 1871 (who is also fairly difficult to track down although family information tells us that she was married to a J. Swan and lived her later life in West Wyalong) and soon after the marriage they moved to Carcoar, where they stayed for some years. The children born to Jessie and Frederick were:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Mary Ann | b. 6.8.1872 Carcoar, died 1873 Carcoar |
| Henry | born and died late 1874 |
| Frederick John (Jack) | b. 12.2.1875 Carcoar |
| Jessica (Aunty Pop) | b.24.1.1876 Forbes |
| Archibald George | b. 1878 Forbes, died 1883 Forbes |
| Isabel Margaret | b. 24.4.1883 Forbes |

Jessie died on 7 October 1883 of pneumonia. Both Jessie and her son Archibald George are buried in Forbes Cemetery in unmarked graves (Forbes Family History Group, 2003).

However, Thel Hurford remembers her mum telling her that Jessie is buried in the Presbyterian section.

Isabel Margaret Read married **Samuel Richard Hodge** in Forbes on 13 June 1904. He was 26 and she 21. When they married they lived at Calarie until they moved to West Ooma in 1918 or early in 1919.



Isabel Margaret Read (Gran Hodge) in late life

Appendix 1: The family tree

<p>Charles Gordon Frederick John Irwin William Stanley James Olive Muriel Isabel Sarah Elsie Samuel Richard Thelma Eileen Elizabeth Harold Herbert</p>	<p><u>Samuel Richard Hodge</u> 19.8.1878 - Grenfell 6.2.1930 - Forbes</p> <p>m. 13.6.1904 Forbes</p> <p><u>Isabel Margaret Read</u> 26.3.1883 Forbes 6.12.1960 Forbes</p>	<p><u>John Hodge</u> 22.8.1830 - Derrydoragh Armagh 31.5.14 Forbes</p> <p>m. 4.1.1859, Yass</p> <p><u>Elizabeth Mary Parker</u> 26.7.1842 - Camden 28.8.1926 - Forbes</p> <p><u>Frederick Read</u> 18.10.1846 – Camden Jan 1920 Forbes</p> <p>m.14.4.1873 Binda, via Crookwell</p> <p><u>Jessie Taylor</u> c.1850 Scotland? 7.10.1883 Forbes</p>	<p><u>Joseph Hodge</u> m 1822, Eglis, Armagh <u>Mary Elizabeth Moulden</u></p> <p><u>James Parker</u> 1798 Norfolk Eng 4.10.1883 Grenfell</p> <p>m.11.11.1842 Camden</p> <p><u>Eleanor Browne</u> b. 1818 Drung 23.1.1906 Grenfell</p> <p><u>John Read</u> 25.10.1808 – Donheads, Wilts</p> <p>m. Wiltshire, May 1838 (?)</p> <p><u>Mary Ann Burridge</u> Sept. 1811 – 9.5.1872 Crookwell</p> <p>Henry Taylor? Agnes Wilson?</p>	<p><u>Clement Parker</u> c.1774 - 1855 East Dereham, Norfolk m. 24.12.1799 <u>Mary Bone</u></p> <p><u>James Browne</u> Cootehill, Ireland <u>Elizabeth Gibson</u></p> <p><u>John Read</u> 1776 Donheads <u>Martha Dennis</u> 1776</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Appendix 2: The cousins in order of age; and who belongs to whom

Barry Hodge	June 1932
John Hodge	January 1933 (dec)
Ron Chandler	June 1934
Pat Hodge	December 1934 (dec)
Les Hodge	January 1935
Paul Hodge	May 1936 (dec)
Keith Hodge	August 1936
Ken Hodge	December 1936 (dec)
Wilma Hodge	December 1936 (dec)
Pam Hodge	November 1937
Ray Cavenagh	January 1938
Geoff Chandler	June 1938
Bob Day	October 1938 (dec)
Meg Cavenagh	September 1939
Reg Chandler	September 1940
Ross Day	October 1940 (dec)
Colin Hurford	August 1941
Neil Day	September 1941
Marj Hodge	September 1942
Yvonne Hurford	December 1942
Allan Hurford	June 1944 (dec)
Bruce Hurford	October 1945 (dec)
Marlene Day	February 1946
Delma Hodge	May 1946
Bev Cavenagh	September 1946 (dec)
Joan Hurford	July 1947
Alan Cavenagh	October 1949
Gary Hodge	November 1949
Maureen Hurford	June 1950
Eileen Hodge (Liz)	October 1950
Jacki Hodge	May 1951
Betty Knight	April 1952
Gail Hodge	September 1952
Brenda Hurford	April 1953
June Knight	November 1953 (dec)
Trevor Hodge	January 1954
David Hodge	July 1954
Rick Cavenagh	November 1955
Greg Hurford	December 1955
Lyn Hodge	March 1956
Robert Hodge	July 1956 (dec)
Russell Knight	October 1956
Debbie Knight	August 1958
Sharon Hodge	December 1959
Karen Knight	March 1960
Wayne Knight	March 1963
Kim Knight	October 1966
Peter Hodge	April 1967

Gordon (Pop)	Gary Hodge	1949
	Jacki Hodge	1951
	Gail Hodge	1952
Fred	John Hodge	1933 (dec)
	Les Hodge	1935
	Ken Hodge	1936 (dec)
Irwin	Barry Hodge	1932
	Paul Hodge	1936 (dec)
Stan	Pat Hodge	1934 (dec)
	Keith Hodge	1936
	Delma Hodge	1946
	Eileen Hodge(Liz)	1950
	Robert Hodge	1956 (dec)
Muriel	Ron Chandler	1934
	Geoff Chandler	1938
	Reg Chandler	1940
Isabel	Ray Cavenagh	1938
	Meg Cavenagh	1939
	Bev Cavenagh	1946 (dec)
	Alan Cavenagh	1949
	Rick Cavenagh	1955
Elsie	Wilma Hodge	1936 (dec)
	Bob Day	1938 (dec)
	Ross Day	1940 (dec)
	Neil Day	1941
	Marlene Day	1946
Sam	Pam Hodge	1937
	Marj Hodge	1942
	Trevor Hodge	1954
Thel	Colin Hurford	1941
	Yvonne Hurford	1942
	Allan Hurford	1944 (dec)
	Bruce Hurford	1945 (dec)
	Joan Hurford	1947
	Maureen Hurford	1950
	Brenda Hurford	1953
	Greg Hurford	1955
Eileen	Betty Knight	1952
	June Knight	1953 (dec)
	Russell Knight	1956
	Debbie Knight	1958
	Karen Knight	1960
	Wayne Knight	1963
	Kim Knight	1966
Harold	David Hodge	1954
	Lyn Hodge	1956
	Sharon Hodge	1959
	Peter Hodge	1967



'The Pig Tree' West Ooma, 2009