



**The National Council of Women NSW
and
Australian Federation of Business and
Professional Women**

**23rd Annual Jean Arnot
Memorial Luncheon**

**Honouring ladies in their 90th year and older
For service to their community**

**Friday 8th May 2015
The Strangers' Dining Room
Parliament House, Sydney**

Printed by courtesy of the State Library of NSW

This booklet contains the stories of those ladies
in their 90th year and older who received
Certificates of Appreciation from

The Hon. Susan Ryan AO
Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner

at a ceremony held in conjunction with the

23rd Annual Jean Arnot Memorial Luncheon

on 8th May 2015 in the

Jubilee Room, Parliament House
Sydney, NSW

These histories outline the efforts these ladies have
made over many years to improve the conditions for
women and children in their communities



**Miss Jean Fleming Arnot, MBE FLAA
(1903-1995)**

Contents

Miss Jean Fleming Arnot MBE FLAA	7
History of the Jean Arnot Luncheon	8
Betty Bunce	9
Ena Gill.....	10
Elaine Mary Goggin	11
Betty Lane Holland OAM	12
Dr Thelma Hunt.....	13
Irene Koutsounadis	13
Doreen Matthews	16
Marie McCann OAM.....	17
Pauline Milton	18
Betty Noble.....	19
Jean Nysen.....	21
Eileen Portley.....	23
Florence Shellard	24
Gwen Symons	26
Valerie Trevivian	27
WHO WAS Violet McKenzie ? ?	28
Sponsor Acknowledgement.....	30-31
<i>Photos of Miss Jean Arnot</i>	4 & 6



Jean Arnot (right), 1964

National Archives of Australia, A1501, A5216/1

Miss Jean Fleming Arnot, MBE, FLAA (1903-1995)

Jean was educated at Fort Street Girls High School and hoped to attend University and study science. This could not be realised due to her need to assist financially in her home. She started as an apprentice librarian at the State Library in 1921. Through application, study and hard work she progressed to become acting Mitchell Librarian and head cataloguer at her retirement in 1968.

As the family bread-winner Jean became aware of the disparity between male and female rates of pay. This led her to undertake the campaign for equal pay for equal work from the early 1930s.

For 42 years, Jean Arnot earned less than male employees – even subordinates. Sadly, it was only in the last five years of her employment that she benefited from her efforts to achieve equal pay for equal work in the Public Service.

Jean took an active role in many women's organisations, her trade union and professional association. She was President of the Sydney Business and Professional Women's Association and National President of the Australia Federation of Business and Professional Women.

She was also very active in the National Council of Women, NSW. She was President and Vice President for over nine years, during which time she wrote the history of NCW NSW. Jean was elected Honorary Life Vice President of the NCW.

Jean was Honorary Life Vice President of the Pan Pacific and South East Asian Women's Association and a member of the Board of Directors of The Women's Club.

Jean was awarded the MBE in 1965.

History of the Jean Arnot Luncheon

In 1993, the National Council of Women of NSW (NCW NSW) and the Federation of Business and Professional Women of Australia (BPW Australia), and supported by the State Library, joined together to plan the celebration for Jean's 90th birthday. Because of the great success on that occasion and at Jean's suggestion the Committee decided to continue with a Jean Arnot Annual Luncheon which remembered Jean's contribution to the struggle for equal pay.

The Lunches were initiated by Val Buswell OAM (BPW Australia) and Joan Elliston AM (NCW-NSW). Following Miss Arnot's death, the luncheons continue to honour all women in their nineties who have worked for women and their communities. Val and Joan were co-convenors until Val's passing in 2005 and Joan continued this tradition with great distinction, assisted by Marlene Arditto and others until 2012.

The organisation of the 23rd Luncheon is by fantastic volunteers from NCW NSW, BPW Australia, with State Library support provided by Richard Neville (Mitchell Librarian).



Betty Bunce

Betty was born in 1925 in Double Bay where her family had a busy chicken wholesale business in Guilfoyle Avenue. She and her two younger sisters attended the local public school and they were often seen riding their pony around Double Bay! They finished their schooling at SCEGGS Darlinghurst.

After completing Business College, Betty joined the Bank of NSW and later served in the Land Army,

In 1947, she married Tim Bunce, a dashing young pilot who had served with distinction in WW2 with the Sunderland Squadron. Together, they set up home in Sydney's eastern suburbs where they raised three daughters. In 2010, Tim passed away after 63 enormously happy years together.

Betty has continued to lead a very active and independent life. She is an avid movie-goer, enjoys bridge and bowls with friends; and for 55 years has played golf. For 15 years, until it closed, Betty was the Captain of Woollahra Park Golf Club. She is also an intrepid traveller, always planning her next adventure.

However, nothing gives Betty greater pleasure than her four grandchildren and three great grandchildren, all of whom adore her. Betty has indeed been blessed with good health, a loving family and a circle of devoted friends.

Ena Gill

Mrs Ena Gill has been a great leader and supporter of the Girl Guides and the Boy Scout Associations, and the P&C Ladies Auxiliaries in both Primary and High Schools in the Chatswood area over many years.

Since 1964 until present time, Ena has held many positions in the Girl Guide Movement and has served on several State Committees at Guide House.

Starting out as a committee member in her parent's local groups, she became a uniformed member of the Girl Guides, serving as a District and then Division Commissioner. These roles involved assisting where possible and attracting new leaders, as well as supporting all the leaders of the Units in her area. During this time a Guide Hall was built which required many fund-raising activities and working with the fathers and tradesmen to achieve the successful erection of the much needed hall in the Chatswood area.

Her volunteering work has continued over many years. As a member of Northbridge-Castlecrag Trefoil Guild, Ena shared the responsibility of overseeing the renting out of the local Guide Hall. At Glengarry Trading Post (a Guide Shop at Glengarry), Ena has continued to be a regular volunteer.

Willoughby Council honoured Ena in 1982 as Citizen of the Year for Services to Guiding in the Willoughby area. The Local Scouting Group awarded Ena the Supporter's Badge for her fundraising efforts.

Ena is a shy person and does not like attracting attention to herself or her efforts which she has undertaken in a responsible and generous manner. She is highly thought of by her many friends.

Elaine Mary Goggin

Elaine's early education has equipped her to take on the many responsible roles she has chosen throughout her life. Having been dux of her primary school, Coogee Public, she went on to Sydney Girls High School, gaining her Leaving Certificate in 1940. She graduated B.Sc. from Sydney University and trained as a dietitian, working in several hospitals in Sydney and Melbourne, and gained further qualifications in nutrition, as well as a Dip.Ed.

In 1956, Elaine volunteered her services at the Melbourne Olympics. She has worked overseas in London, Italy and Germany and has also worked on ships and trains. With her Dip.Ed., she has spent some years teaching at Newcastle CAE and at the Correspondence School.

Elaine's professional associations have included those relating to dietitians, food technology, nutrition education, home economics and sports administration. The latter comes from Elaine's attention to fitness which has seen her being active in golf, tennis, horse riding, skiing, ice skating, ballroom dancing and croquet.

Within the sport of croquet, Elaine has been a player, coach, referee, administrator and tournament manager. She is a Life Member of Croquet NSW and a Life Member of Womensport and Recreation, NSW.

Her voluntary work over the years has included school canteen, P&C Association, Meals on Wheels, Vision Australia (talking newspapers), 'Grandma' reader in local primary school, Manly Precinct Committee, Manly Sports Facilities Committee, Manly Art Gallery and Museum as a guide and a long-time member of International Toastmistress Clubs (ITC), now International Training in Communication.

Betty Lane Holland OAM

Betty has the distinction of being the first female racehorse trainer in Australia. Prior to becoming a trainer, she was magazine editor of *The Australian Horse and Rider* (1952-1957) and, when this was taken over by the magazine *Hoofs and Horns*, she became its NSW editor until 1962.

In 1962, before there were anti-discrimination laws, Betty Lane (as she was then known) applied to become a racehorse trainer at Randwick. She was told it was not their policy to license women. At that time, women could not be trainers, could not be jockeys, could not ride trackwork and could not even be a member of the Australian Jockey Club.

Betty was determined to break down the barriers against women in racing and went to the country, where she became the first woman to be licensed. She battled for several years, gradually gaining more and more success, until in 1974, she won the training premiership for the Western Districts of NSW, beating over 160 men. Records were checked in England, America and New Zealand and she was believed to be the first woman in the world to win a major training premiership. Betty did it again the next year and again the year after.

Once more, Betty applied to the Australian Jockey Club to train at Randwick and, with her record, this time they could not refuse. After three years, she was graded as a No. 1 Trainer, first-ever female in Australia. Betty was the first female trainer at Randwick (and the only one for 15 years) until she retired in 1991. Gai Waterhouse gained her licence a few months later but, to date, no other females have been licensed at Randwick.

Betty also paved the way for females in the racing industry to become apprentice jockeys. She applied for, and was granted, permission to

apprentice the first female in Australia and she won the fight to change the age limit for apprentice jockeys. As a role model for women in the racing industry, Betty set the highest standard.

When Betty retired, she was commissioned to write a book, *Kevin Bacon – Australia's Extraordinary Horseman*, published by Watermark Press. She has also published another book, *The Orphan Foal*.

In 2007, Betty was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). She was also awarded a Long Service Medal by the Australian Red Cross, in recognition of her many years of service as president of the Woollahra-Darling Point Branch.

Dr Thelma Hunt

In 1997, Thelma Hunt joined the Embroiderers' Guild NSW Inc. and has been an active member ever since as a member of the Miranda, Carrs Park and Tuesday Stitchers Groups.

She has skills in a wide range of techniques and is willing to use her work and knowledge to promote the Guild and help fellow members with their embroidery. For example, she recently was one of the volunteers to staff the Guild's table at a Strathfield Council Seniors Week event. Thelma has sponsored a number of junior members through the distance children's course.

Thelma plays an important role in the Guild's communications to members. Every month she helps prepare envelopes for the mailing of our newsletter. It is not a glamour job – but it is an essential task.

Being a regular Bush Care volunteer with the City of Canada Bay Council on the waterfront at Prince Edward Park, Thelma's passion is

to keep weeds out of the samphire on the water's edge. The Bush Care Group has awarded Thelma the 'Golden Trowel' for her work with them. The Bush Care volunteering enables Thelma to continue to pursue her love of gardening and geology which developed after her retirement. Thelma is also a member of the Breakfast Point Probus Club.

Thelma studied medicine at the University of Sydney, graduating with honours in 1945. After a residency at St George Hospital in general medicine and pathology, Thelma studied in London at the Postgraduate Medical School of London for her Diploma of Clinical Pathology. After returning to Sydney she joined a private partnership in Macquarie Street where she became a Senior Partner. In 1987 Thelma retired from the pathology practice.

Irene Koutsounadis

Irene was born in the village of Viki the island of Chios, Greece, on 2nd May 1922, the fifth of seven children of Stamatis and Kaliopi Fotinos. At the age of 7 years, she was taken to the capital of the island and was a companion to a wealthy elderly widow, Smaragi Horemis, who owned a large estate and Irene grew up there. She assisted with the various tasks of running the estate and, as she grew older, managed its affairs. She was treated well and loved by her aunt, as Irene called her, as an equal member of the family. She taught her to write and count, be independent and make her own decisions. Irene remained there until her aunt died when she was 22 years old, then went back to the village.

She married Constantine (Con) Koutsounadis during the war in 1942 and had three children, Paraskevi (Vivi), Yianni (John) and Stamati (Steve). Con was a merchant seaman and was away for years at a time. Therefore, in 1954, Irene's brother Nicholas Fotinos

nominated the family to come to Australia for them to be together and to educate and give a better life to the children.

The first job Irene had in Australia was at Weston's Biscuits factory where she packed biscuits in front of a machine which was going too fast and the lady boss used to scream at her and the other women who were Greek and when the biscuits, which were hot, fell down, she hit them on the hands. One day, Irene had enough and, when the lady boss was hitting her hands, she threw the biscuit tin she was packing with the biscuits, and the apron on her head and complained to the Manager, through another woman who spoke English, that this was unacceptable and she was leaving. After this, the women told her that conditions were better at work and the foreman was sacked.

Irene's brother sold his shop, the Chios Milk Bar in Redfern, to the family and Irene and Con worked in the shop from 6 am to 12 midnight, seven days a week for 30 years. The shop became an unofficial welfare agency, as many migrants and Aboriginal people went there for help with their many settlement problems, as there were no settlement services for migrants at the time.

Irene and Con became involved in Greek community affairs and they volunteered their time for the church, the brotherhood, the Greek afternoon schools the children attended to learn Greek and be bilingual. She assisted with cooking for various functions to raise funds to build child care centres, an aged care hostel for Greek and other people in the community and assisted people who were in need. For nearly 60 years, although Irene is 92, she is still involved in some of these activities.

Irene has also been providing support to her daughter, Vivi, who is an active leader in the Greek and Australian community, a passionate exponent of multiculturalism, social justice and human rights. Irene has not only been Vivi's role model, mentor, adviser and inspirational support over the years, she has worked to make a difference to the lives of many people lives of many people.

Doreen Matthews

Doreen Matthews, aged 91 years, has lived in Gwynneville, a suburb of Wollongong NSW, in excess of 50 years and has been very involved in the Catholic Parish of Gwynneville and the community in general. Doreen was a foundation member of the Gwynneville Branch of Catholic Women's League (CWL) and was awarded Life Membership for her long time dedication to CWL and its ideals. As a delegate representing her Branch at Wollongong Diocesan Council meetings over many years, she has played a very supportive role at Diocesan level.

Additional voluntary work undertaken by Doreen have been active roles on the Committee of the local school, St Brigid's Primary and on the Committee of St Mary Star of the Sea College, which involved the organisation of the College's annual International Night. For many years, Doreen has volunteered at the local St Vincent de Paul Op Shop, including involvement in Meals on Wheels in her area.

For over 30 years, Doreen has been a member of the "Bethzatha Fellowship with the Disabled" and is still assisting with organising and attending the monthly Disco/Dance.

Doreen was instrumental in the formation of the By-Laws for the Diocese of Wollongong CWL and still enjoys involvement when Constitutional issues arise at meetings. The Catholic Women's League Australia, Diocese of Wollongong is thoroughly supportive of Doreen being honoured at today's function.

Marie McCann OAM

Born in 1925 in Melbourne, Marie was educated at Presentation College to matriculation, a BA at the University of Melbourne and M.Theol, BD at the University of Sydney. Marie is the mother of five children and a grandmother.

Marie's many church activities include National Catholic Girls Movement, Parish of Chatswood; convener and organiser Meals on Wheels; President Parish Ball Committee; Secretary Chatswood Catechists for five schools and 29 catechists; President Loreto Parents and Friends Committee; Member Catholic Women's League; Organist East Roseville Church and Star of the Sea Milson's Point.

In 1977, Marie became a Catholic representative to Australian Church Women (ACW) NSW State Unit and held a number of positions before becoming State President in 1979. From 1989-91, Marie was ACW National President. For over 30 years, she has been actively involved in ACW in many ways. She has given her time, abilities and gifts generously and has been a great influence and encouragement to many along the way. Because of Marie's involvement with ACW and ecumenism, she was made the first woman Director of the Catholic Weekly.

Marie was made a NSW State Life Member in 1997 in recognition of her leadership and friendship in Christian Service.

Marie attended the 1982 Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC) assembly in Bali and was a delegate to the 1990 ACWC meeting in Bombay. She toured China with nine theologically trained Asian women and was a speaker on the position of Australian Children and their concerns in Colombo, Sri Lanka. She

also attended the 1980 Fellowship of the Least Coin Silver Jubilee in Manila, Philippines and the 2006 ACWC Assembly in Kuala Lumpur.

Recognition of Marie's contribution to Australian Church Women, Melbourne Alumni (Sydney Branch) and Australian (NSW) Children's Film and Television was given in 1997 when she was awarded an Order of Australia Medal.

Pauline Milton

In 1948, Pauline embarked on quite an adventure – she and her husband flew in a Constellation from England to Australia.

They settled into their new community, produced two children who then gave them five grandchildren. Pauline now has six great grandchildren. She has always been involved in the community, starting with the children's schools which led to the usual other areas as the children grew.

Additionally, Pauline became very involved with her family's church, St Michaels' Anglican Cathedral in Wollongong. As the coordinator with a group through the Uniting Church, Pauline assists members to have opportunities of sharing craft, talents, knowledge and friendship.

Pauline is also a member of the Alzheimer's Carers' Groups. Having lost her husband to the disease, Pauline understands what the carers need, especially since most of them are women.

Another area of Pauline's involvement is with the Management Committee for Family Day Care. This group provides home care for pre-schoolers, a great boon for mothers. For many years, Pauline has been active participant.

Betty Noble

Born in 1924, Betty had a very happy childhood with loving parents who took a great interest in her schooling and were very supportive. Seeing how much they gave to the community through their own deeds, instilled in Betty a respect for them and their principles which she has tried to continue throughout her own life.

At age 16, Betty studied shorthand and typing as well as machine book-keeping after which she joined the ES&A Bank, Martin Place Branch. It was 1940 which, of course, was wartime. Until this time, all book-keeping in the bank was done manually, by men. So it was quite a change in the bank to have the girls, with their “modern” machines, take on this task.

Martin Place was the focal point for concerts, rallies, parades (particularly Servicemen marching before leaving for overseas) and great celebration on VE and VP days. She witnessed it all. At this time, girls were dependant on one another for their social life, and they had holidays together and found some interesting occupations to do in spare time such as cooking classes and craft. They also made camouflage nettings on a huge loom in their lunch room – that was their war effort.

In 1949, Betty married Andrew, who had returned from being a POW of the Japanese in Singapore and on the Burma Thailand Railway. On his return, his interest was on finishing his studies in Accountancy and to get on with life. It was not until their three children, and then grandchildren, started to ask questions about the war, that he spoke about his dreadful experiences. He kept in touch with many from his 2/30th Battalion, so it was no surprise that, in 1963, he was keen to join Legacy to help some of the families without a dad. Black Jack

Galleghan, Commander of the 2/30th was also a member of Sydney Legacy. During all this time, Betty became active helping at the children's schools, serving on several P & C Committees, often as treasurer, plus tuck shop duties, sewing for fetes and physical culture concerns. It was always busy.

Betty also joined the Women's Auxiliary of Sydney Legacy, which was an active "hands on" group. This group assisted by stocking a pantry, cooking and serving the Thursday Luncheon on a weekly basis, because at that time all the men were in the workforce. Betty had many sore hands from carving 7 or 8 legs of lamb whilst the other ladies made salmon pies and salads or whatever the men liked. The women loved spoiling them, especially in July for changeover weekend, when they served the famous Legacy Curry!!!

The Auxiliary held monthly meetings at Legacy House where Betty was Treasurer for 12 years and later President, which she enjoyed so much. When Betty and her husband decided to move to Bowral, she was able to continue with their Legacy work in the Berrima Division. The Women's Auxiliary meetings were held at the Moss Vale Holiday House where NSW widows could go for a wonderful holiday. Both auxiliaries raised money to help Sydney Legacy with the upkeep of their beautiful property. Betty was Treasurer for eight years until her branch closed through lack of membership – age was catching up!! Until they were both in their eighties, Betty and Andrew continued to deliver "Meals on Wheels" in the Bowral area. Betty always speaks highly of the wonderful friendships she and Andrew made in Legacy. During the time when Andrew was President, they travelled extensively, particularly in country NSW and Melbourne.

Betty's hobbies include sewing, patchwork and quilting. Her quilting group has made countless baby quilts for "Blankets of Love" and have used their Annual Quilting Exhibition to raise funds for various charities. Betty is now knitting squares for "Wrapped with Love".

Recently Betty moved back to Sydney where she is happily living in a Retirement Village in Croydon which is close to some of her wonderful family.

Jean Nysen

Jean Nysen, nee McKenzie, has had a very distinguished involvement and career with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). She was born in December, 1922, on board the *Jervis Bay* during its maiden voyage to England.

As the daughter of a RAN officer, LCDR Donald McKenzie (RAN Fleet Entry of 1913), the family moved every two years including two postings in England. Jean's father was one of the few Australians present at the Battle of Jutland and was one of the first telegraphists to be appointed in the RAN. In 1929, the family returned to Australia on board *HMAS Canberra* settling in Flinders Naval Depot, then Garden Island, Sydney.

Jean remained in Sydney for her secondary schooling which she left at the age of 15 to study at the National Art School in Sydney. When WW2 broke out, Jean was 19 years old and worked as a qualified commercial artist whilst continuing her art studies at the Dattilo-Rubbo Art School.

When *HMAS Sydney* was sunk by the German auxiliary cruiser *Kormoran* in November 1941, Jean decided to become involved in the war effort. She joined the Women's Emergency Signalling Corp (WESC) and six months later, in June 1942, arrived at Harman Naval Wireless Telegraphy Station in Canberra as WR87 in the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS), as a fully qualified wireless operator.

(Jean has a family connection with the person who established WESC and who is attributed as having been responsible for the formation of WRANS. Her name is Florence Violet McKenzie, whose Tribute Profile is printed in this booklet.)

From 1942-45, Jean worked six-hour watches in the Harman wireless room, transmitting coded messages between allied shore establishments worldwide and allied shipping in Australian waters. In 1945, Jean was sent to Molonglo, a sub-station in rural Canberra now known as Fyshwick, where she worked with 30 other WRANS in communications between the Admiralty and the 336 ships of the British Pacific Fleet which had set sail from northern waters in January to help finish the war with Japan.

After the war years, Jean was able to return to her artistic skills. In 1985, she was invited to design the WRANS commemorative stained-glass window for the Naval Chapel on Garden Island which was unveiled by the wife of the Governor-General, Lady Stephen, at a large official ceremony in 1986, the year the RAN celebrated its 75th anniversary. More recently, Jean has donated the ship's bell from *HMAS Otway* and the ship's compass from *HMAS Canberra*, salvaged by her brother, to the Naval Heritage Centre on Garden Island.

Women's involvement in the RAN has been publicly esteemed by the chief of Navy, Vice-Admiral Griggs, who acknowledges that women play vital roles in all parts of the Navy. Accounts of their experiences, including Jean's, are printed in the book "*Winning at Sea*".

Eileen Portley

Eileen was born in Westham, England 93 years ago. She immigrated to Australia as an infant, settling in Sydney.

During World War II, Eileen enlisted in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) and trained as a telegraphist in Melbourne. Eileen was stationed in Brisbane working in General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters in Brisbane until the war ended.

Following her discharge from the WAAAF, Eileen worked in Post War Reconstruction based in the Grace Building in Sydney. It was here that Eileen met her husband Leslie Portley whom she married in 1948. Together they had three children. Throughout their children's schooling, Eileen supported their schools, joining the P & C organising school fetes and attending canteen duties.

In the 1960's both Eileen and Les volunteered their services to the Bankstown Legacy Branch when it was formed in 1961. Les worked as a Legatee whilst Eileen assisted with fund raising, badge selling in local factories and shopping centres.

In 1984 when Leslie was appointed President of Sydney Legacy, Eileen joined the Sydney Legacy Women's Auxiliary and was an active member until 2014.

As a Member of the Sydney Legacy Women's Auxiliary, Eileen helped prepare and serve lunches on Thursdays, assisted with fund raising and card days. Eileen also held the position of Catering Officer for 10 years, then Vice President for 3 years. The Sydney Legacy Women's Auxiliary raises money to help with the upkeep of Moss Vale Legacy Holiday House which has been

Florence Shellard

Florence Caroline Williams was born in Leeton in 1924 to George, a war veteran and accountant and Helena, a milliner. She went to school there until the family relocated to Vacluse in Sydney when she attended the Opportunity Class at Woollahra and then was selected for Sydney Girls' High School. She gained a scholarship to study Art at East Sydney Technical College but had to leave to care for her father and work to support the family. She met John (Jack) Shellard at St. George's, Hurstville and corresponded with him for five years during his service in WW2. They married in 1946 while Jack was studying Education.

By 1953, they had three children and the family embarked on a ship to Tanganyika where they were to work under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society at the Dodoma Alliance Secondary School. They started learning Swahili on the journey over and Florence's aptitude for the language proved invaluable in establishing links across the whole community. Jack became headmaster and then, after their fourth child was born, founding headmaster in Musoma, which became a leading school in Tanzania.

Florence ran Mothers' Union classes for local African women on issues of public health, mothercraft, nutrition, sewing, literacy and the Bible. She took on the role of School Matron, in the morning running a dispensary that queued at the front of the house and, in the afternoons giving access to the sewing machine and knitting lessons. She was the welfare and medical first responder for a school of hundreds plus staff. Florence is a gifted gardener and began developing those skills early in their time in Tanzania, beginning with saplings in very deep holes and achieving the beautification of the surrounding area with extensive gardens and tree-planting.

Her support of Jack in every endeavour included hospitality to one and all, from lepers to governors, including the Archbishop of

Sydney and the President of Tanzania. She is remembered to this day for the many acts of kindness and the charitable service she offered those who came to her door. In being a catalyst for transformation in the lives of those with whom she worked, she built relationships that took as foundational a common human family in the light of God's love.

She was committed to the care of those around her and not least her children. That is what brought them home to Australia in 1967 with five children and a sixth expected. Florence joined Bible Study Fellowship in Chatswood, led women's groups there for seven years and was an active member, along with the family, of St Philip's, Eastwood. In 1981, she was a founding member of the Mission Aid Group which was formed to respond to Tanzania's extreme poverty and which has sent shipping containers of supplies for the past 33 years.

Florence has tirelessly sourced many items: MAG like Singer sewing machines to train women in self-sufficiency; hospital beds and medical supplies for maternity hospitals; and books and stationery for schools and theological colleges. She also taught Scripture in Primary Schools for many years.

In 1986, Florence and Jack moved to the Blue Mountains where their beautiful garden has been opened regularly for Garden Festivals to raise funds for the Blue Mountains Hospital and other charities. She has been an active member of Holy Trinity Anglican Church particularly as a Women's Leader, Op Shop volunteer and visitor of the elderly. She is a member of the Blue Mountains Garden Club and the local Historical Society.

Jack died just after their 60th Wedding Anniversary. Florence continues to live independently and maintain her beautiful garden. She nurtures a wide range of interests and is an avid reader of current affairs. She is a wise mentor and a generous support to all of her family, including 24 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

Gwen Symons

Gwen was born on 5 September 1924, one of three children in the Howard family, and lived in Beecroft until her teenage years. After finishing her schooling, she attended Business College and trained as a stenographer.

In 1942 at the age of 18, Gwen enlisted in the Australian Women's Army Service and after initial training, was posted to Bathurst and served in the Ordinance Corps for three and a half years in secretarial duties. When peace was declared, Gwen renewed her friendship with a school friend from Beecroft Primary School, Dick Symons, after his return from active service in the Royal Navy as a navigator.

Gwen and Dick married in 1947 and had four children (two sons and two daughters). They spent most of their married life in the Beecroft, Eastwood and West Pennant Hills areas.

In 1967 Dick joined Sydney Legacy and worked tirelessly helping widows and young children. Gwen joined The Women's Auxiliary of Sydney Legacy in 1973 and became one of the "Blue Belles" working mainly in the kitchen and dining room in Legacy House catering for lunches for the Legatees and other societies. This was an important fund raising activity for the Auxiliary whose main aim was to raise money for Moss Vale Holiday House where war widows and their children were able to enjoy a much needed break. Gwen also helped to run the bi-annual card days and other fund raising functions.

When Dick became President of Sydney Legacy in 1991, both Dick and Gwen gave much time and energy raising the awareness of this wonderful organisation. Visiting many suburban and country branches, meeting with Legatees and thanking their many supporters was an important part of their duties.

Gwen, for many years, sold Legacy badges on the annual Legacy Badge Day mostly at Beecroft station then later in Bowral.

After some years in retirement, Dick and Gwen moved to Bowral and became active in the Berrima Legacy group. It was not long before Dick became President again and a short while after, Gwen became President of the Women's Auxiliary.

Gwen was made a Life Member of the Women's Auxiliary and, whilst no longer an active member, still enjoys keeping up with their activities and maintaining friendships.

Valerie Trevivian

Valerie Trevivian was born in Newtown in Sydney in 1915 and likes to be called "Val".

Her marriage was to Frederick Trevivian. Before meeting Val, he had served in the army in World War II and his army friends would regularly gather, especially to be part of ANZAC celebrations. They would watch the parade on TV and then the football. Val used to cook stew for everyone. She remembers those times as being lots of fun. Sadly, those times were not long as he died of cancer after little more than a year of their marriage. A daughter, Pamela, was born and Val now has the pleasure of being a grandmother to her two children. Both grandchildren now live abroad.

Val worked all her life in the shoe department of David Jones. It was here that she was well regarded for her attention to customers. Her greatest hobby is reading, preferring semi-classical, romantic, historical adventures and popular classic books and magazines. Travelling used to be a great enjoyment. She has been to USA, Japan, Hong Kong and many European countries.

There are many other activities she has enjoyed in her life, having an interest in horses, all kinds of sports, especially swimming. These days she likes watching ABC and Current Affairs programs.

W H O W A S FLORENCE VIOLET McKENZIE ? ?

She was one of those women who, in earlier times, showed that women had skills and talents equal to men.

Florence was born on 28 September 1890 in Melbourne. When she was four years old, her widowed mother remarried and Florence adopted the new surname of Wallace. She was called by her second name, Violet and, as Violet Wallace, she was educated at the Girls' Public High School, Sydney (now known as Sydney Girls' High School).

From a young age, Violet had an independent interest in electricity and invention. As she recalled in an oral history interview in 1979: *I used to play about with bells and buzzers and things around the house. My mother would sometimes say "Oh, come and help me find something, it's so dark in this cupboard" – she didn't have very good eyesight...So I'd get a battery and I'd hook a switch, and when she opened that cupboard door a light would come on...I started sort of playing with those things.*

At the University of Sydney, in 1915, she passed Chemistry I and Geology I, then approached the Sydney Technical College in Ultimo to enrol in the Diploma of Electrical Engineering, graduating in 1923 with a diploma—probably the first woman in Australia to have received such a qualification. Whilst studying, Violet bought a radio sales and repair shop in the Royal Arcade, Sydney and worked as an electrical engineer and contractor, even experimenting with television. Violet later said it was schoolboys visiting her shop who first introduced her to Morse code. Australia's first weekly radio magazine was conceived at the shop. "The Wireless Weekly" became the monthly magazine "Radio & Hobbies", then "Radio, Television & Hobbies", and finally "Electronics Australia", and remained in circulation until 2001. In 1924, she became the only female member of the Wireless Institute of Australia and travelled to the United States where she was welcomed and interviewed.

In December 1924, Violet married Cecil Roland McKenzie, an electrical engineer with the Sydney County Council. Violet closed her radio shop, continuing her work as an electrical contractor, became an enthusiastic ham radio operator and was the first licensed woman in the country. In the 1930s, Violet was experimenting with improving the science of television through the use of chemistry. She was also turning her attention to teaching other women about electricity and radio, opening a Women's Radio College on Phillip Street in 1932 and, in 1934, founding the Electrical Association for Women (Australia) where women could learn to use an electric kitchen and modern appliances and attend meetings and lectures. She published the EAW Cookery Book, the first women's guide to cooking with electricity and numerous articles on electrical safety.

In July 1938, Violet joined the Australian Women's Flying Club, was elected treasurer and became responsible for training women pilots in Morse code. In 1939, Violet established the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps (WESC) which ran free courses. When World War II began, Violet McKenzie had already trained nearly a thousand women in signalling subjects; she went on to train some two thousand more, a third of whom joined the forces.

Violet, affectionately known as 'Mrs Mac', hoped that the Royal Australian Air Force would recruit her telegraphists but, even when the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force was formed in March 1941, the Advisory War Council resisted. In April, Violet persuaded the Naval Board in Melbourne to accept fourteen of her operators for the navy. **These women formed the nucleus of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS).**

It quickly became apparent that men in the armed forces also urgently needed training in wireless communications and Mrs Mac's female trainees were in a position to train the male servicemen directly.

By the end of the war approximately 12,000 servicemen and recruits had been trained in Morse code, visual signalling and international code at the WESC school. In appreciation of her work, Mrs Mac was appointed an honorary flight officer in the WAAF.

After the war, Violet McKenzie's school continued voluntarily teaching signalling courses and, by 1952, had trained 2,450 civil airline crewmen and 1,050 merchant navy seamen. In 1950, Violet was appointed OBE. She closed her school in 1955 and became patroness of the Ex-WRANS Association in 1964.

Following a stroke that confined her to a wheelchair in 1976, Florence Violet McKenzie unveiled a plaque in her honour at the Mariners' Church, Flying Angel House, Sydney, in 1980. She died at Greenwich on 23 May 1982.



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to honour these wonderful women.**