

NEWSLETTER

June 2023

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

17 Myokum Street MULLUMBIMBY 2482

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OPEN: TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS 10 AM – 12 PM

MARKET DAYS (3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH) 9 AM-1 PM

More From The Bookshelf

In addition to the 'School History' books mentioned in the last newsletter, we also boast many 'Family History' stories in various forms, either held on our bookshelf, in filing cabinets or archive boxes, the list viewable at [Family-Histories.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](http://Family-Histories.pdf(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au)). Amongst the collection is a 42-page folder of *Biographies and Autobiographies of Women, Written and Compiled by Members of the Mullumbimby Branch of the Country Womens Association - in Our Bi-Centennial Year*, presented to BVHS on 14Dec1988. There are 14 stories, the one titled 'My Paternal Grandmother's Life', by **Pearl V.I. McPaul**, winning the lucky dip to be summarised here.

But whether Pearl's grandmother was lucky remains a mystery. An article in the *Darling Downs Gazette* of 16May1913, headed '*The Wirth Millions*', speculated that **Mrs Jacobina Hart of Mulimbimbi...**, was a likely beneficiary. The *Mullumbimby Star* of 22May1913 let the cat out of the bag in broadcasting her correct name when repeating a brief version of the story, likely gaining potential heiress Jacobina many new friends. She was actually **Jacobina Wilhemina Giles**, the daughter of German immigrants **Peter** and **Jacobina Wirth**, nee **Preiss**, and eligible for a cut in her uncle's Will through the following connections:



Jacobina W. Giles
(Courtesy Harth Web)

Peter Wirth (5Dec1829 Bosenbach, Germany – 14Nov1889 Toowoomba), the son of **Johannes Peter Wirth** and **Maria Margaretha Gilcher**, migrated from Germany to England late1840 and married **Jacobina Preiss** (10Jul1833 Bosenbach – 8Jan1921 Wellcamp, Toowoomba), daughter of **Jacob** and **Anna Sara**, nee **Gilcher**, 31Jul1854 London. They left England 24May1855 per 'Merlin' and landed in Melbourne 21Aug1855. Peter became an itinerate musician with '*Wirth's Brass Band*', touring with brothers **Jacob/Joachim** (16Nov1831 Jettenbach – 28Mar1903 Parramatta), who married **Catharina Preiss** 2Jul1854 St George's Lutheran Church, Whitechapel, London, and **Johannes/John** (11Apr1835 Jettenbach – 10Jul1880 Sydney). A brother **Phillip** (4Dec1827 Bosenbach – 26Jun1859 Sydney) was also likely to have been a member of the band. Peter, Jacob and Johannes formed *Wirth's Circus* in 1880, which *by the end of the decade was Australia's premier circus...* says Peter's great, great, granddaughter, **Laraine Green**, in her book *The Travelling Wirth Family*, published 2018 (see FAMILY CIRCUS: Gladstone

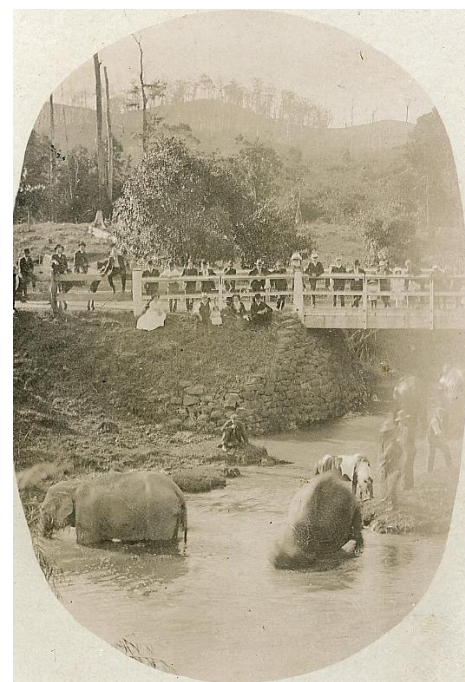


Elephant helps unload Wirth's Circus, Mullumbimby Station, 1910.

After a huge logistics exercise, involving 2 special ships to Byron Bay and 2 special trains to Mullum, *Wirth Bros Circus* gave its first performance in town 28May1910, with John's son, **Phillip Wirth** (1864-Aug1937), as ringmaster, entertaining a crowd of 2000.

(For the record, the first circus to come to Mullum was '*Foley's Circus*' in 1903, followed by the combined *Ashton and Baker Circus* in 1908, then *Eroni Bros* and *St Leon's United* along with Wirth's in 1910. Circuses were regular visitors thereafter.)

(Photos annotated 'Fogarty's house in background' and 'elephants at Chinbible Creek'.) At Mullum in Jun1937 **Mr Phillip Wirth senr.**, who is known personally by so many of us here, still leads his mighty array of performers and animals.... Attractions included 'Clever bicycle riding by the Four *Miss Wirths* in their thrilling basketball on wheels, and 'skilled horse riding' by **Phillip Wirth junr.**, including A monkey and pony act....



[woman's link to big top royalty | The Courier Mail.](#)) Laraine says *Johannes, Joachim and Peter Wirth travelled around the goldfields putting on shows in small country towns.... Peter's wife Jacobina and his baby daughter Rosa travelled with them. Eventually the brothers settled in Dalby, Queensland, but continued to travel the back roads playing music.... And see [Australharmony - Biographical register W \(Will-Wiz\) \(sydney.edu.au\)](#) for more detail on the 'Wirth family of Musicians'. Plus many more references through Mr Google.)*

Peter and Jacobina begat:

1. **Rosa** (12Aug1854 London – 6Jul1930 Gladstone). Married **Heinrich Harth** 26Feb1873 Lutheran Church Toowoomba.
2. **Margaretha** (13Apr1856 Sydney – 3Jul1936 Oakey). Married **Ernest Frederick Darr** 6Feb1872 Toowoomba.
3. **Jacobina (Benne/Bennia) Wilhemina** (5Sep1858 Sydney – 12Sep1934 Argyle St., Mullumbimby). Married **Robert Giles** (12Dec1851 County Kerry, Ireland – 19Jul1925 Argyle St., Mullumbimby) 15Oct1875 Cunnamulla, son of John and Sarah Ann, nee Gibson, and begat:
 - a. **Francis** (1Aug1876 Bourke – 11Mar1877 Toowoomba)
 - b. **Robert** (9Jan1878 Toowoomba – 6Oct1942 Mullum). Married **Alice Jane Harriss** (15Aug1887 Robertson, Southern Highlands NSW – 13Dec1970 Lismore) 15Jun1910 Mullum and begat
 - (i) **Viola Phyllis Jane** (3Apr1911 Mullum – 7Apr2001 Tenterfield), married **Roy James Thomas Armstrong** 12Oct1966 Lismore.
 - (ii) **Pearl Violet Isobel** (11Nov1912 Myocum – 6Oct2008 Bangalow, buried Mullum), married **Robert Oswald McPaul** (Jun1903 Bega – 7Nov1993 Mullum) 6Apr1940 Mullum.
 - (iii) **Elvin Charles Robert** (2May1916 Mullum – 24Jan1967 The Pocket), married **Dorothy Mary Johnston** 11May1940 Mullum. (Byron Shire President 1959-1967.)
 - (iv) **Cecil Eric** (21Sep1919 Mullum – 6Mar2007 Mullum), married **Ellen Jane McAuley** 31Jul1943 Mullum.
 - (v) **Leslie** (1921 Mullum – 7Feb1983 Mullum), married **Clare McAuley** 9Dec1944 Mullum. (Byron Shire Councillor 1978-1983.)
 - c. **William Richard** (15Apr1880 Toowoomba – 29Jul1954 Sandgate, Qld), married Mary May Winfield 24Jul1907 Murwillumbah.
 - d. **John** (19Jul1883 Mitchell Downs – 3Aug1955 Lismore), married Annie Dutton 1911 Lismore.
 - e. **James** (17Nov1886 Dulvadilla, Roma/Mitchell – 12Aug1960 Qld),
 - f. **Sarah Ann** (1Apr1889 Mangar, Maryborough – 10Jul1977 Qld), married Henry Shum 1907 Murbah and William Gibson 1920 Lismore.
 - g. **Elizabeth Jane** (24Nov1891 Bexhill - 22Sep1959 Brisbane) married Arthur Ernest Nipperess 1912 Mullum.
 - h. **Isaac Albert** (4Dec1893 Mullum – 7Feb1959 Qld), married Victoria I. Crozier 1919 Murbah.
 - i. **Alice Rachel** (11Dec1896 Mullum – 23Aug1960 Lismore), married **Roy J.T. Armstrong** 1914 Wickham.
 - j. **Rabe/Rabie Ellen** (11May1899 Mullum – 26May1916 Mullum).
 - k. **Charles Edward** (11Nov1904 Mullum – 13Feb1972 Qld), married May Ross 28May1939 Qld.
4. **Sarah** (8Apr1861 Burrangong/Binnalong – 27Jul1920 Toowoomba), married Carl Wilhelm Augustus Liebke (1865 Prussia, Germany - 12Feb1956 Oakey) 25May1883 Aubigny, Toowoomba. (Carl remarried Ada Blanche Robinson, nee Wood, 1926 Moree.)
5. **Peter** (6Apr1863 Bowenfels, Lithgow – 9Nov1942 Toowoomba), married Bertha Emilie Augustina Frohling 9Jan1889 Toowoomba.
6. **John** (9Oct1865 Aubigny – 22Aug1947 Toowoomba), married Mary Ann Reiss (18Jul1867 Rosalie Plains – 24Jun1959 Toowoomba) 8Jul1889 St James Toowoomba.
7. **Elizabeth Edin** (9Jul1868 Toowoomba – 14Oct1935 Crows Nest, Toowoomba), married James Alfred Blinco (1864-1942) 9Nov1887 Qld.
8. **Henry** (16Oct1870 Toowoomba – 13Oct1937 Toowoomba), married Frances Chapple 1893 Newtown, Sydney, and Ellen Tweedie 19Mar1932 Toowoomba.
9. **Catherine** (25Jun1873 Toowoomba – 2Jul1943 Balmain), married (1) James Jeremiah O'Sullivan and (2) Thomas William New 24Mar1909 Wagga
10. **Christina Matilda** (14Oct1875 Toowoomba - 16Oct1957 Toowoomba), married Michael Walsh 22Feb1898 Qld.

After their marriage at Cunnamulla in 1875 **Robert** and **Jacobina Giles** spent some time on nearby Bundaleer Plains Station and further afield on Mitchell Downs Station, with interludes in Toowoomba and other places. In 1889 they set out for Mullumbimby and 3mths later pitched their tent near where St John's School now stands. But Robert was unsuccessful in obtaining a selection in the Brunswick District and moved on to Bexhill to work for the railway contractors. They followed in the wake of the line until it reached Mullum, where they put down roots at the insistence of Jacobina, well and truly over the joys of camping. Robert built a pit-sawn slab hut on what is now Stewart Park next the swimming pool, from

where he continued working for the railway until 1902 when he took up work as a road builder, subsequently building many of the roads in and around Mullum.

The camping adventure had meant regularly moving home, which consisted of two tents and a galley for cooking.... Water was taken from nearby creeks. First it was strained through a hessian chaff bag, then boiled and skimmed. The cleaned water for drinking was put in a kerosene can and two cups of oatmeal were stirred in and allowed to settle. This method was carried out to prevent dysentery.... Monday was always washing day and Tuesday was for ironing and mending....

After her arrival in Mullumbimby, my grandmother went on to have the next four children (1893-1904) with only an aboriginal woman to help her. The dark woman was very clean and carried out the instructions to sterilize and boil everything..., also to place a scorched rag over the baby's navel each day to heal and dry it off.... (In a similar vein, **Dorothy Maud White**, nee **Garrard** (1899-1967), recounts in her memoir left with BVHS, that for years after we came to live in Mullumbimby a family of blacks... used to do the washing and scrubbing for my mother....)

With Mullumbimby Creek so close at hand, all the children learnt to swim in a big pool which became known as the Public Swimming Hole....

With careful living and two incomes (presumably from Robert Snr and Jnr), she was able to save enough money to move into her first sawn mill-timber home, which was built two blocks down on the left from the present-day Recreation Ground gateway in Byron Street.... When Grandfather retired from road building, the couple bought a little home in Argyle Street. The house still stands next to the little shop on the right-hand side..., where they both lived until death and a Methodist farewell ceremony, he in 1925, she in 1934.



Staff of the Reid & Dean 'Railway Store', Station Street, ~1904
Pearl's father, **Robert Giles jnr**, standing left. Alfred Reid sitting left and James Dean sitting right.

Robert Giles gave up store keeping in favour of farming sometime after marriage to farmer's daughter Alice Harriss, daughter of Charles and Mary (nee Sweaney) of Billinudgel Road. Robert and Alice eventually settled on 'Roseville', a dairy farm at the end of Pine Avenue.



Railway Stores, about where the Council car park now lives (shortly to be rebirthed as 'affordable housing'), ~1905.
Reid & Dean leased the place from Charlie Simpson Sep1903 and passed it to Henry Bennett Aug1904.

Robert Giles Snr's Northern Star Obituary of 28Jul1925 said he was Born in the North of Ireland and came to this country with his parents when only a child.... In early life he followed the occupation of a carrier in Northern NSW and Southern Queensland, but mostly in the latter State, at a time when the railway system of Queensland extended no further west than Ipswich. His calling sometimes took him as far as Charleville, Cunnamulla, and as far west as the Barcoo and the Diamantina country. In later life he followed railway construction work.

Coming to this State about 1891, he worked on all three sections of the present Lismore-Tweed railway line, eventually settling in the Mullumbimby district. At that time the village of Mullumbimby consisted of one hotel, store and post office combined (the latter being kept by Mr H. McD. Livingstone, now of Kingaroy, Queensland), a hall and one or two private houses.... The business portion of the present town was then scrub and jungle....

The Mullumbimby Star added that the Methodist Irishman was born in County Kerry, South West Ireland, and was of a

retiring nature.

Jacobina's 1934 obituary merely said she was *an old identity of the Brunswick River district...* who left 9 children, 42 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren....

Pearl's CWA story is updated and amplified in the 'Giles Family', pgs 88-90, and the 'McPaul Family', pgs 139-141, in *What They Did; Families of the Brunswick 1880-1950*, by Neta MacKinnon, edited by Robyn Gray, published by BVHS 1998. Also on the BVHS shelves is a 16pg rendering of *The Giles Family Tree, compiled by Pearl McPaul, Apr1997*. (Pearl was an exceptionally civic-minded citizen, becoming Patron and Life member of the Red Cross, Founding member, President and Patron of the CWA, Charter Secretary, President and Patron of the Quota Club, Life member of the Agricultural Society, and Patron of BVHS.)

The 14 stories in the CWA booklet are: *A Grand Old lady, Our Maudie James* (nee McKeown) by Alice James; *Miss Dorothy Argue – Her Story; Flood Drama in February, 1950* (Featuring Mrs Susie James); *My Mother* (nee Alice Harriss) by Pearl McPaul; *Excerpts From an Interview with Mrs Ada Bower*, by Diane Giddins; *Some Anecdotes of Floods and Their Aftermath on the Tweed and Richmond Rivers in the early 1940s* by Phyllis Batty; *My Mother In Law* (featuring Emma McPaul, nee Blacker) by Pearl McPaul; *Bush Characters and the English Bride* by Thelma Russell; *Early Days at The Pocket* by Grace Gawler; *The Coming of the Storm* by Phyllis Batty; *Growing up in the Fifties and sixties* by Diane Giddins; *My Paternal Grandmother's Life* (featuring Jacobina Giles, nee Wirth) by Pearl V.I. McPaul; *My Family History* by Marion Bower; *Sydney... Wartime... Through the Eyes of a Child* by Phyl Richards.

Some other interesting random facts unearthed in the archaeological dig through the bookshelf:

Violence in the Classroom

The Goonengerry Public School 1899-1999 Centenary Booklet reminds us that in the good 'ol days corporal punishment was the favoured means of reinforcing knowledge and curing delinquent behaviour. The escalating scale of punishment for misdemeanours was prominently displayed, with strokes of the cane awarded thus:

1 stroke for 'Carelessness in arithmetic...; Not staying in when told...; Laughing in school...; Letting slate fall; Dirty copy book; Ink throwing; Fooling about.'

2 strokes for 'Altering work; Not answering when spoken to; Blotting copy book; Laughing and disorder during teacher's absence; Swearing; Fighting...; Laziness; Scribbling on desk; Urinating behind a tree'.

3 strokes for 'Breaking glass and denying it; Playing on the way to school; Idleness; Telling a falsehood; Copying; Inattention to directions.'

4 strokes for 'Scribbling on copy book; Laughing and lying; Swearing; Giving the wrong answer; Disobedience; Teasing a little girl.'

5 strokes for 'Playing on the way to school and a falsehood.'

6 strokes for 'Admitting to swearing a filthy word; Forging teacher's signature asking for tobacco from resident.'

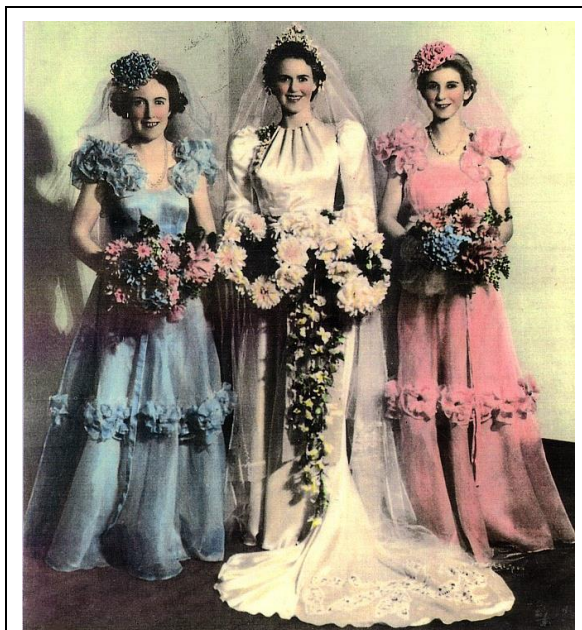
7 strokes. Too dreadful to list?

8 strokes for 'Playing truant for ¾ hour.'

[Prior to 1899 those Goonengerryans game enough to learn arithmetic had to trek to Jasper Public School at Federal, where the first teacher was 22yr old **Joseph Basil May** who retired as Headmaster of Cammeray Public School in 1938, still of the view that sparing the rod spoilt the child. "There is no doubt that you cannot do without the cane as a deterrent to wrongdoing.... There is to-day a tendency to 'namby-pamby' methods, especially where female teachers are concerned, and there is often too much coaxing employed...."]

Medical Advice

Amongst our collection is *The Bushman's Companion, A handful of hints for Outbackers, Prepared by J. Flynn* (aka 'Flynn of the Inland', founder of the Flying Doctor Service), *Issued by the Home Mission Committees of the Presbyterian Church*



Pearl Giles became Pearl McPaul Apr1940 Mullum

L to R: Viola Giles, Pearl McPaul, Joy McPaul.

The bride... wore a bridal gown of silver satin and an embroidered tulle veil held in place by a coronet of orange blossoms, which were worn by her mother on her wedding day. The bride also wore a spray of orange blossoms with a gold and silver brooch, which belonged to her great grandmother.... The frocks of bride and bridesmaids were made by the chief bridesmaid Miss

Viola Giles....

Pearl and her illustrious husband Os McPaul made their home at 'Overlook' on Main Arm Road. Viola married her Aunt Alice's widower, the prominent Roy Armstrong, Chairman of the BGF.

in Victoria and New South Wales, Second Edition, published 1910..., and donated by **Audrey Mabel Hoving** (nee Grant).

The book was the constant companion of her father, **Robert Anthony Grant** (1888-1963), on his tours around Southern Queensland on behalf of the *Foreign Bible Society of Australia*. His visits to remote properties often required him to dispense medical advice and treatment as well as spiritual guidance.

The book identifies and provides remedies for various ailments, including *HYSTERICIS (In young girls as a rule)*:

SIGNS: Patient gets into comfortable position, then begins laughing, crying, kicking, and generally "letting herself go." Eyeballs may be turned upward; froth may appear at mouth; not properly unconscious.

TREATMENT: 1. Be very firm; if threats fail, flood with cold water. 2. Afterwards see that a doctor is consulted, without long delay. Something is wrong.

Phyllis Alice Richards (15Aug1932 Sydney - 21Dec1995 Mullumbimby)

Audrey Hoving has also left us with a profile of her friend **Phyl Richards**, nee Beeby, who had many achievements under her belt, not least being the instigation of Adult Education. Mullumbimby District Cultural Centre (MDCC) *started in the business of adult education in 1977 with the lease... of the old army drill hall.... It was the first such organisation in NSW but the idea took on quickly throughout other country towns. Phyl organised tutors and students for craft courses and art.... The state government recognised this community self-help and contributed \$2000pa for a part-time co-ordinator – Phyl had done it for free! – and the new group was known as Mullumbimby Adult Learning Association (MALA)....* She also had a long involvement in community work, was a President of the CWA and in 1983 Byron Shire Citizen of the Year.

Mrs Phyl Richards was one of the compilers, along with Mrs Eileen King and Ms Noni Bryan, of *The First Fifty Years; Mullumbimby Branch of the CWA of NSW 1926-1990* (disbanded 1930-1944), consisting of 101pgs hand-assembled in a spring-back folder on the BVHS bookshelf.

Audrey Hoving was also a stalwart of MDCC, which became affiliated with MALA in the 1990s, and was honoured with the naming of the *Audrey Hoving Studio* for display of ceramics and sculpture. She was also a member of BVHS and compiled and edited the book *Centenary of Rail; Lismore to Mullumbimby 1894-1994: stories of the line*, BVHS 1994, and *Mullumbimby Cemetery Records 1980-1995* in conjunction with Kim Russell. She died 5Jun2011 Ballina.



INTRODUCING OUR NEW PATRON

At our May meeting we were delighted to have Shire Councillor Mark Swivel present. He has kindly agreed to become a patron of our society. Mark is currently on the Council Heritage Advisory Group. His comment on being asked to be a patron of the society was *I'm flattered to be asked, to be honest.... My dad was a history (and English) teacher, so history is in my bones and key to imagining our futures.*



We look forward to his support and promotion of the society.

For more information about Mark click on his profile on the Byron Shire Council website: <https://www.byron.nsw.gov.au/Council/Mayor-and-councillors/Meet-our-Mayor-and-Councillors/Cr.-Mark-Swivel>

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

This newsletter is written by and for the members of the BVHS Inc

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Roland Sjoberg

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Roland Sjoberg,

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Jacqueline Smith

Heritage Panel Representative

Chris Cooney

Newsletter: Members

WFD Supervisor:

Dr Frederick Theiss

Public Officer: S. Tsicalas.

All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter

Please email contributions for the newsletter to

admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au

*Deadline for newsletter items
LAST FRIDAY of the month

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 13th June
@10.30am

**MUSEUM HOURS – Tuesdays
and Fridays 10.00-12.00**
Market Saturdays 9.00 - 1.00

**MULLUMBIMBY COMMUNITY
MARKET**

Next Market- Saturday June 17
mullumbimbycommunitymarket.com.au



Brunswick Valley Historical Society
**CELEBRATING
 FORTY YEARS**

At the May market the Maypole was enjoyed immensely by all as they created a plait on the pole as seen here in photo on right. A pattern, the Gypsy's Tent, was also created off the pole.

Coming up at the June market is a **banana throwing** competition
 For the July market there will be a **treasure hunt** for children
 August market will be our **official celebration** for the anniversary.



A NEW ACQUISITION



This interesting medal, which is about the size of a 10c coin, was sent to the historical society by the late postmaster's wife at Bega. It had been sent to Bega by Mrs B Vanderwolf of Maryborough Qld. She had earlier forwarded some 'snaps' featuring the Hawes family to Bega, having overlooked the medal at that time. It would be great to track down those 'snaps', but the Bega recipient is a mystery. (As is whether a Mullum jeweller supplied the medal and did the engraving. And whether the medal was a standard farewell memento. By the start of WW1 it seems *presentations of the usual wristlet watches to the departing guests...* were the go at Main Arm, at least for enlistees.)

Stephen William Hawes married Alice Moffit in Bega in 1901. In 1903 they had a daughter Victoria May, born Bega. It is not known when the family moved to Main Arm.

The Hawes family (George Hawes, wife Maria, and 9 children including Stephen aged 14) came from England in 1888 on *Duke of Argyle*, landing at Brisbane and moving to Bega to take up dairy farming.

In 1907 Stephen's mother (Maria Priscilla nee Archer) and a sister visited Stephen and his family at Main Arm. His father George had died in 1903.

In Oct & Nov 1908 the *Mullumbimby Star* had advertisements to sell the *whole of his first class dairy herd and plant & clearing out of splendid dairy herd*. Stephen moved to Graham's Creek in Qld where he worked on the railway as a bridge builder for 17 years. In 1909 his mother, brother Edwin and 2 sisters also moved to Queensland.

In 1913 his wife and daughter visited Main Arm to attend a wedding and gave a gift of coloured glass salt cellars.

Stephen W. Hawes died at Graham's Creek on 25 Jan 1927 and was buried in the Maryborough Cemetery. His wife Alice, mother Maria, brothers Edwin & Thomas and sisters Marion, Elizabeth and Jane are all buried in the Monumental section of the Maryborough Cemetery.