

THE ADOLPHSON FAMILY IN RINGWOOD 1920-1966

By Jan and Susan Adolphson.

2025





• George and Annie Adolphsons

wedding day with guests

The Adolphson family in Ringwood 1920-1966

Our Grandparents were George and Annie Adolphson. This is an overview of their married life in Ringwood from 1920 – 1966.

They were married 20th November 1920 in St Barnabus Church of England Balwyn. George was 23 and Annie was 22.



Georges mum Sarah (Lovett) and father Frederick Adolphson with 3 older sisters, Ethel, Alice and Elsie.



45 acre farm in Motala, Ostergotland, Sweden



Georges father Frederick was born in Motala Sweden in 1858 on a 45 acre potato farm. He allegedly ran away to sea to avoid National Service. He arrived at Williamstown Australia in 1885, on board the Cloncaird, and deserted along with 10 other sailors and was wanted by the police. He thought it was a good idea to get away as far as possible so he hid out in Ferntree Gully and eventually found work on Dobsons farm, where he met his future wife Sarah who was pregnant and on probation to Mrs Dobson. She had been charged with trying to burn down her employers house in St Kilda at the age of 15. Fred eventually took on the mother and child. They were married in 1891 and went on to have another 9 children, George being the only son.

George with his mum and 8 out of nine sisters on his wedding day 1920



George Frederick Adolphson 1897-1946



George Frederick Adolphson was born in 1897 in Ferntree Gully.

He was knocked back from joining the army for the first world war because he had impaired hearing from an explosion at the Ferntree Gully quarry where his dad worked. He also lost an eye from a piece of steel at Wonga park when he was in his early twenties.



George left home at a young age building silos in rural Victoria.

George was working up in Albury, N.S.W. in 1916 when his father died from a tragic accident at the Fern tree gully quarry, whilst at work.

George couldn't be contacted straight away. He didn't make it home in time for the funeral which greatly distressed him.

According to Auntie Lil, (Georges sister) while George was working in Albury he met his future wife Annie Ellis who was living there at the time with her Auntie Hettie Charlton, were they both worked in service.

James Ellis with his children taken 1899, 3 months after his wife's death. Annie is the baby.



Annie's mother Elizabeth Ellis nee Charlton



Annie Elizabeth Ellis was born in 1898 in Wangaratta. She was the youngest of seven children. Her mother Elizabeth died of blood poisoning after giving birth to Annie. The children were split up after their mother's death. Baby Annie was adopted and raised by Elizabeth's spinster sister Henrietta Charlton. Annie's father Jim, was a man with a secret past. When he married Elizabeth, unbeknownst to Elizabeth or her family, he already had a wife still living, 6 children, and 5 stepchildren in Adelaide, whom he had deserted. The police were looking for him so he disappeared, eventually turning up in Wangaratta in 1888 and marrying Elizabeth in 1889. She gave birth to seven children in nine years!

• **Annie Elizabeth Ellis 1898 - 1966**

Annie aged 20



Annie with her Auntie Hettie



At the age of 15 Annie moved to Albury with her Auntie Hettie and was sent out to work in domestic service.

In 1916 at 18 Annie met George in Albury and they courted for four years.

At 11 years old Annie learned Highland dancing and was a member of a highland dancing troupe, which toured Victoria in 1909.



Wonga park 1920 - 1925
Moondai, Vergers property, Jumping creek road.



After their wedding George and Annie moved to Wonga Park where they lived in a shack on Vergers property.

They called themselves the Pioneers.

They had chooks, Dolly the milking cow and Toby the dog.





They grew crops and threshed wheat amongst other farming pursuits. George also worked at a mine in Warrandyte at this time.



**Their first 3 children were born at Wonga Park, Eric, Robbie and Freddie.
Sady they lost Eric who suffocated at birth.**

- **Eric Adolphson 1921-1921 (stillborn)**
- **Robert Adolphson 1922-2001**
- **Frederick Adolphson 1923-1943**





Baby Robert George, c1922



• Robbie and Fred c1924 • Melbourne Museum

In 1925 George bought a two roomed house at Lot 3 Maidstone st, Ringwood.

Saturday, 15th March, 1913
At 3.30 p.m. on the Property

Tucker's Estate

Almost Adjoining Station

RINGWOOD.

To be Sold by Auction under instructions from Mr. Edmund Tucker

43 BUILDING BLOCKS

Range from 60ft. x 140ft. to
1, 1½ & 4½ ACRES

and comprises some of the
PICKED BUILDING SITES
Right in the important progressive
Suburban Semi-terminus Centre
and Railway Station

RINGWOOD

THE WONDERFUL GROWTH in the last few years of this thriving township must have been noted and marvelled at by all travellers on the Lydiade and Fern Tree Gully lines, while the public spiritedness of its townspeople gives assurance of even greater developments in the near future.

TUCKER'S ESTATE, being within a stone's throw of the Station, lets in it must rapidly increase in value with the growth of the township.

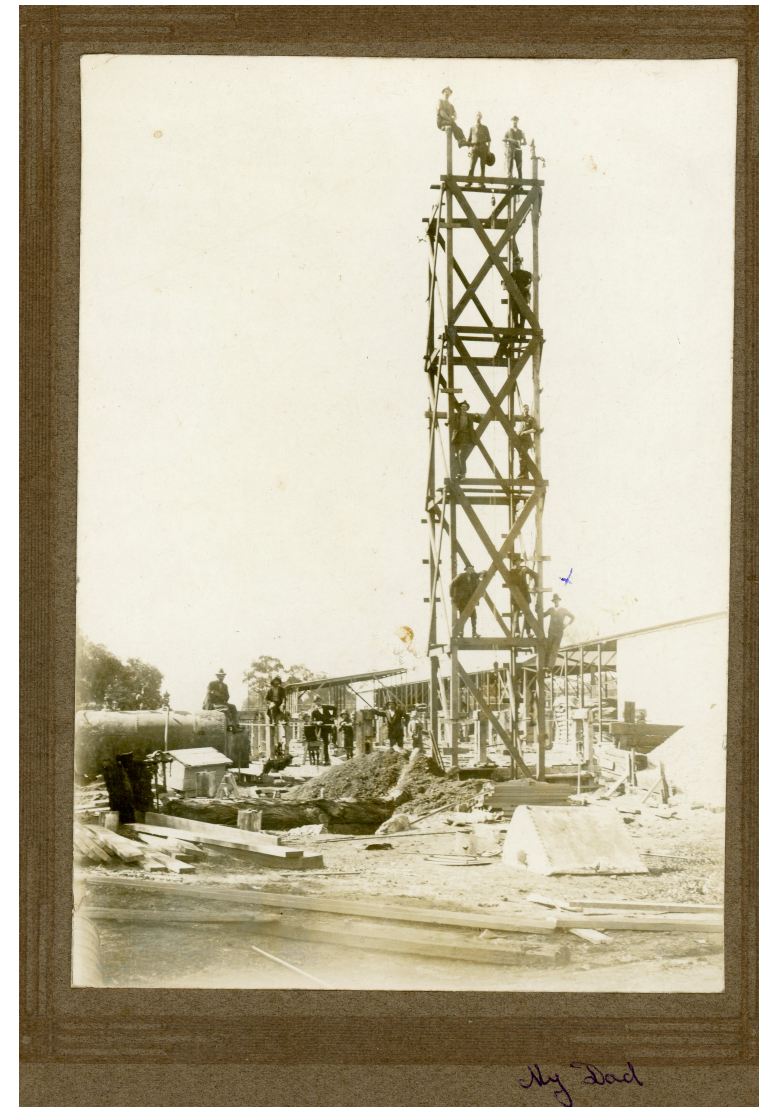
THE EASY TERMS offered, £5 per lot deposit, and balance quarterly over 5 years, place a block within the reach of any careful person, and gives the speculator a chance to secure a number of blocks without much outlay.

Coghill & Haughton
Auctioneer and Estate Agents
79 Swanston Street, Melbourne
Auburn and Canterbury

W.B. Villa
"Kororua" Visit Ringwood
See its Growth
View the Estate
Judge for Yourself
and
You are sure to Buy
TITLE
Certificate

- George worked at Tessellated tiles, Mitcham for 21 years. He started working there in 1926.

George began working with Tessellated Tiles in Mitcham in 1926. He rode his bike to work each day, some 3.5 miles away from his home.



- Born in Ringwood

Betty Hazel
1926-2007

Joan Margaret 1929 -1934.

William John (Bill) 1930-



Betty Hazel was born in 1926, Joan Margaret in 1929 and William John 1930. Billy had meningitis when he was a baby and was not expected to live for long. Annie fed him milk with a spoon because he was too weak to suck and nursed him tirelessly and proved the doctors wrong. He is going to be 95 in a few weeks time.

The great Depression struck in 1929, George retained his job at the tile works at first, but in 1931 his job was cut back to 4 days.



In 1932 George opened a shop in Adelaide Street called Adolphson Rabbits. He also sold Fish and Chips there on a Saturday. After delivering fresh fish on a Friday to his customers. He would catch the last train out of Ringwood to Melbourne, on a Thursday night, then sleep in town before heading to the market to buy fresh fish and bring it back in a suitcase. Bob and Fred would attend the Saturday matinee at the town hall and let their dad know when it was due to finish for him the get the fish and chips ready for the crowds.



GOOD NEWS FOR RINGWOOD

FISH! FISH! FISH!

FRESH DAILY

G. ADOLPHSON

IS OPENING A

FISH AND RABBIT STORE

TO-MORROW (FRIDAY)

Next to

ROWE'S BUTCHER SHOP

ADELAIDE STREET, RINGWOOD

Home called on for orders, which
will be delivered



- Annie and Georges youngest child Lindsay Gordon was born at home, Maidstone st, on Australia Day in 1933. The family was complete. Annie with her 6 children

1934



**FOOD POISONING
SUSPECTED.**

**Children Discharged from
Hospital.**

The two little children, Robert Adolphson, 11 years, and Elizabeth Adolphson, 7 years, who were admitted to the Children's Hospital on Monday suffering from food poisoning, made a good recovery, and were discharged from hospital yesterday. Mr. and Mrs. Adolphson and another of their children, Frederick Adolphson, 10 years, have also recovered from the effects of the poisoning. The members of the family became ill after eating a meal of meat. One of the children, Joan Margaret Adolphson, 4 years, succumbed to the poisoning.

On the 19th February 1934 Tragedy strikes the family. Annie and Georges four year old daughter Joan died from food poisoning. A doctor was called to the house but she couldn't be saved. The whole family fell ill with Robert and Betty hospitalised. Annie, George and Fred recuperated at Home. The two younger children were fine, not having eaten the same meal. National Newspaper articles at the time reported Joan's death with varying causes. It may have been the steak and kidney pie or the blackberry pie.

DEATHS.

ADOLPHSON.— On the 19th February, at her parents' residence, Ringwood, Joan, the dearly loved daughter of George and Annie Adolphson, and loving sister of Robbie, Freddie, Betty, Billy and Lindsay, aged 4 years and 10 months

All the Adolphson children attended Ringwood State school for their entire education. They walked across the paddocks to school.



Lindsay even played the drums in the school band.



1930's fancy dress competitors

Annie entered her children in dozens of concerts and pantomimes. She was invested in making the costumes and supporting the local productions in Ringwood.





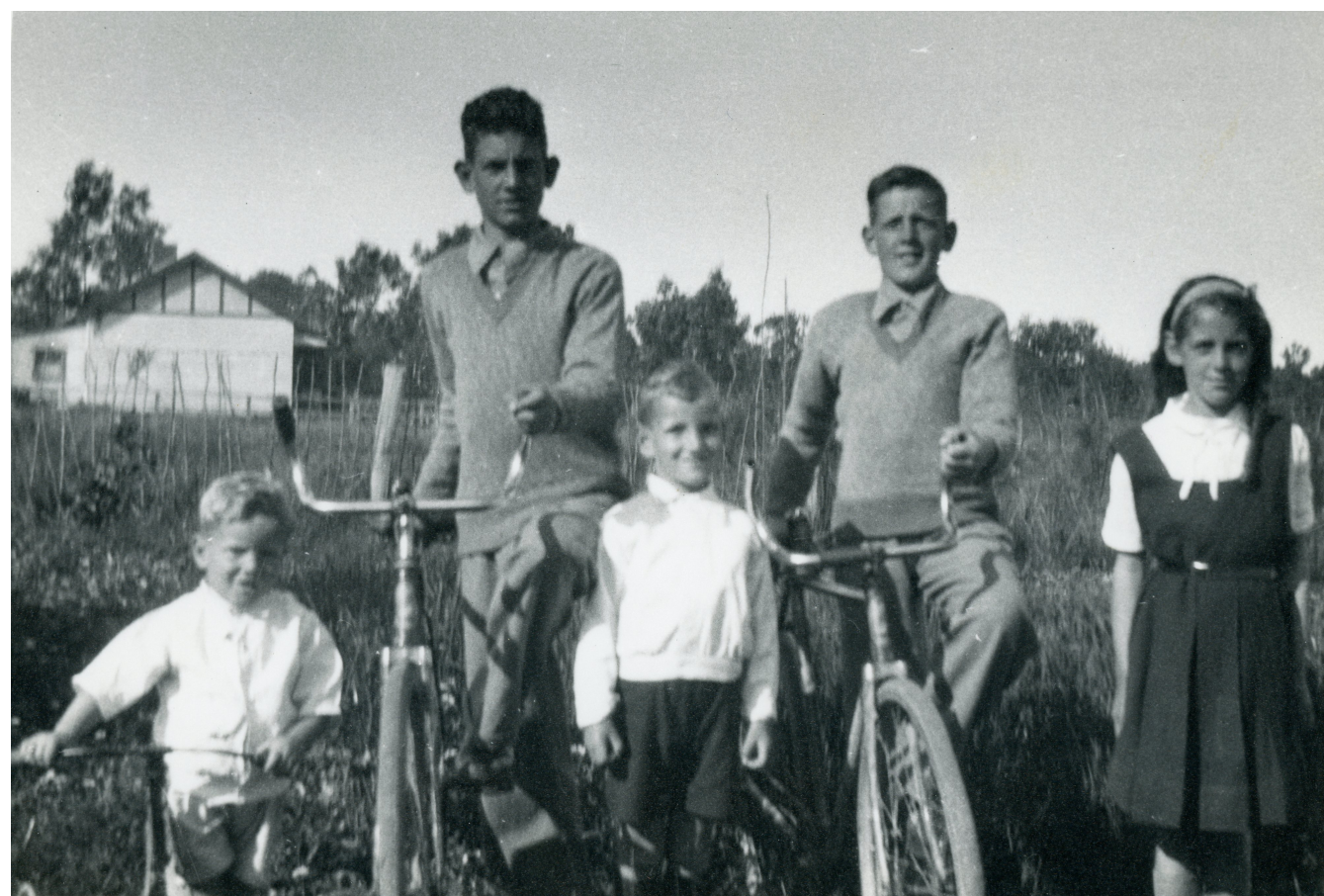
In 1936 Annie joined the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society (PAFS) of Australasia and started up a junior group that would meet in the Church of England hall every fortnight. She worked tirelessly on fund raising activities to assist local families in need of funeral or health assistance. Lots of activities, playing games and outings for the kids. In 1938 The Grand Council awarded Annie, their sister, for valuable services rendered as the Worship Mistress, a framed certificate standing four foot high and two and half feet wide. This certificate was elaborately hand painted, with her photo and the motto: "Let Brotherly Love Continue."





These photos show an outing at St Kilda with all the other PAFS groups. This one is the Ringwood group with my dad Lindsay looking about 10 so Annie was still involved with PAFS in in the mid 1940's.

After leaving school Bob was an apprentice carpenter to Mr Wilson and Fred was a fibro plasterer. Fred also worked after leaving school for M.L McIntosh at Junction Stores Ringwood.



The five Adolphson kids growing up pre WW2.



George and Annie's two oldest sons Robert and Frederick enlisted in 1941 at the ages of 18 and 17. Fred had left home months earlier after a disagreement with his father and was living in a room at the Coffee Palace. He lied about his age and said he was 21 ½. Being over 21 meant that he did not have to have his paper signed by his father. It also meant that Robert was believed to be his younger brother and that the military records at the time were incorrect.





The boys were in the 2/2nd Pioneers battalion and sent to Singapore after their basic military training

Following the fall of Singapore in 1942 the brothers were taken prisoner of war and sent to work on the Burma railway.

In October 1941 the boys were farewelled at the Ringwood town hall. Guests of honour were : W.A.F Duke, J.L.R Flynn, R.G Adolphson, F.A Adolphson & D Russell. Presentations were made to the Adolphson brothers by the Mayor on behalf of the church of England vestry and congregation, of prayer books, in recognition of their association with the church.



Annie worked tirelessly for the war effort. She was dedicated to the soldiers organising relief parcels. She joined the Home League and would go to meetings in rooms above Flinders Street Station. She continued working with them for years after the war ended.



Fred died POW 26th September 1943, 19 years old at Thai camp Burma, of dysentery, malnutrition and malaria. His parents were finally informed 5 months after his death. Sadly, Fred and his dad were never reconciled after their estrangement before the war.



Singapore October 1945



Bob remained a POW until the end of the war and was released in September 1945. When he returned home Bobs hair had turned white from all the hardship. He was only 23 years old. He could never speak to his family about what he had endured throughout the war.





The house, which had a verandah spanning the back of the house was covered in, and became the boys room. No windows, just open trellis. A cover would be put over the bedding during the day otherwise condensation would drip and dampen the bedding.



George received a legacy from his Swedish grandmother in 1931 worth 58 pounds. Over many years George managed to purchase a block of land for each of his children in and round Maidstone St.



Young Billy worked for C.V Wards, first doing the paper round before school then later on he looked after the stall on the Ringwood station from 4.30 to 6.30 He left school at 13 ½ and had to wait until he was 14 to work so he did odd jobs like picking fruit and lawn mowing. When he was old enough he commenced a 5 year building apprenticeship with Mr Roy Wilkins, ex ringwood councillor and ended up working for him for 10 years.

When Bill was 18 he wanted to build on the block his father had gifted him, 15 Maidstone st. He could not get a permit to start building but Roy Wilkins said he would sort it out. Not only did he do that he also organised the timber for the building materials to be delivered on the condition that Bill took out an account with the local building society and paid 10 pounds out of his pay. He did this until he was 21 and could get a loan and was able to pay Roy Wilkins back. Mr Wilkins didn't want any interest at all. A very helpful and generous man.

Georges bedtime ritual was winding the clock on the mantlepice, putting his glass eye in a glass of water and playing the violin before retiring.

He was a keen Fitzroy supporter and also loved cricket. He passed that passion on to all his children. He cleared and maintained a cricket pitch opposite their house for all the kids in the street to play backyard cricket on.

Despite his disabilities George was a hard working, forward thinking man who supported his family through a depression and a war. He worked long hours but also managed to grow a big vegetable garden to help feed his family. He also managed to buy a block of land for all his children to give them a great start to their adult life.

George fell ill in 1944 and was no longer able to work at the tile company. He helped out local builder Mr Wilson, digging trenches on his local building sites, which must have been hard work considering his bad health. He died aged 49 on the 31st December 1946 from dust on his lungs, caused by 21 years at the Tesselated Tile Co.





Before the war Rob played cricket for North Ringwood, after the war he played a very good game of golf

After Bob's return from the war he married Joyce Benson (1947) who had waited for him. Bob went on to establish Heatherdale Joinery.

Bob and Joyce had three children, Lesley Joan(1947), Allan Frederick(1949) and Gary Robert(1951).



Betty started working at Melbourne Textiles as a machinist when she was 14 years old. After four years she left to work at the cool stores in Ringwood. She thinned, picked and packed apples. She moved from there to work for John Vergers in Ringwood. She married Bruce McKenzie in 1947 and they lived with her mother Annie and her two brothers Bill and Lindsay for 3 years along with her 2 children. A bit cramped in the house one would think. Her brothers built Betty and Bruce's first home on the land George had gifted her at 14 Maidstone st. The house is still standing.

Betty and Bruce had three daughters, Heather Rose(1947), Faye Jeanette(1949) and Cheryl Joy(1950).



In 1947 Annie became a devoted grandmother which kept her busy, now that she was a widow. Two years later Annie's Auntie Hettie died leaving her an inheritance which she proceeded to spend. First thing she bought was a car for her family to drive her around.



Lindsay played football for East Ringwood and Bill was on the committee. Annie and the family liked to go and watch him play.





Bill married Joan (Carter) in 1952 at Box Hill. They had three children Karen (1954), Jillian (1956) and Wayne (1958)



- Lindsay married Marion (Sloan) in 1954 at Croydon They had four children Neil Lindsay (1955), Jan Maree (1957), Susan Joy(1959) and Kaye Lynette (1962)

Lindsay was a builder by trade, having served his apprenticeship under his brother Bob.

Bill and Lindsay went into a building partnership and worked happily together for many years. They built over 1200 homes in Mooroolbark.



MOOROOLBARK

is Melbourne's fastest-growing residential



By 1954 all of Annie's children had married and moved out of home. For the first time since 1924 her house was empty. Within the year she took in post-war immigrants as boarders. In 1961 her boarders moved out and Annie moved back into the master bedroom after many long years of makeshift accommodation.



Not long after she had a small win on the lottery and purchased a television. She loved watching IMT with Graham Kennedy and also had the telephone connected and became the messenger for her neighbours.

She was a truly community minded person who laboured tirelessly for her family, friends, neighbours, town and country. Annie passed away in 1966 at the age of 67 from a stroke. Deeply mourned by the family she left behind.



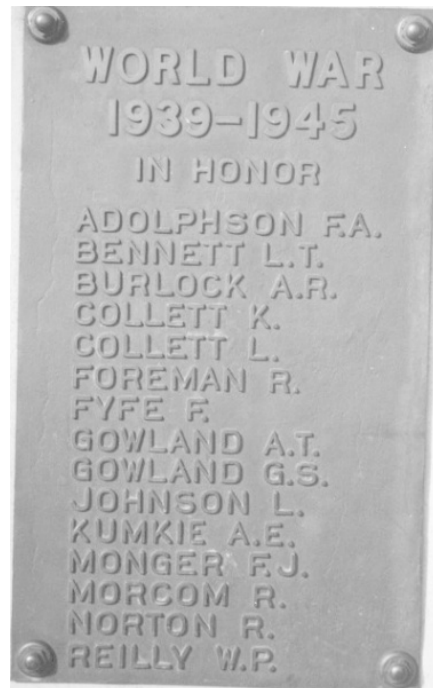
George and Annie had 7 children, 13 grandchildren, and 26 great grandchildren.

Freds name appears on the clocktower and there is also Adolphson Avenue named in his honour.

For 46 years the Adolphson family lived in Ringwood, contributing to the towns growth and community.



MURRAY VIEWS NO. 2. MEMORIAL CLOCK, RINGWOOD, VIC.



Adolphson family christmas party at Maidstone st 1957.

