

Mayoral Report 1959

### MRS MATILDA THOMPSON MBE

On the 7th of April 1959, the City of Ballarat lost one of its most outstanding personalities in the passing of Mrs W D Thompson. Ballarat citizens had been aware that Mrs Thompson had been in indifferent health for some short while and that she had been confined to hospital. Her death, however, was received as a shock to very many people. Mrs Thompson's death concluded a life which had been marked by outstanding service and Citizenship. She was deeply loved in very many spheres of public activity not the least being in the hearts of the former Service-men of this City and District. She was an untiring worker for patriotic activities and wherever help could be given to others. She was a very generous lady and her passing was deeply felt by all who knew and loved her.



The Council decided as a tribute to her life of service to the community that an appropriate area in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens should be set aside as a memorial corner to the late Mrs Thompson and this suggestion has been endorsed by Service Organisations.

In the Ballarat Botanical Gardens there is the Tilly Thompson garden, a semi-circular area near the Bunya Bunya pines. There is also a small area of camomile lawn and a plaque which mentions the gratitude of the Rats of Tobruk for her work in the rehabilitation of returned servicemen. (April 2010)

Obtained the Will and Probate Papers of Matilda Louise Thompson from PROV North Melbourne Friday 16th April 2010.

The Courier, Ballarat, Wednesday 8 April 1959 p 3, col 3-4

### MRS. W.D. THOMPSON'S LIFE OF SERVICE ENDS

With the death yesterday of Mrs. W. D. Thompson, Ballarat lost a citizen who was both an institution and a well-loved personality.

Mrs Thompson did not only contribute generously to Ballarat's history, but herself will be remembered as a colourful part of that record.

Born almost 88 years ago, on April 28, 1870, as Matilda Louise Clennell, "Tilly", as she became affectionately known, was endowed with unquenchable enthusiasm and ability to inspire loyalty in her associates, and spent her own life working for others.

All her life she lived close to the Lake, of which she was so fond, for "Sunways," her home on Wendouree Parade, was built on the site of the house in which she was born.

An early pupil of the Wendouree School, she was closely associated throughout her life, with the nearby Jubilee Methodist Church, and maintained her interest in all its activities. Her many gifts to public bodies included that of a tennis court for the church.

In 1905 she joined the staff of E. Lucas and Co., and the firm soon felt the impact of her exceptional character and forceful personality.

Rising rapidly, she became its first interstate representative, and made history, nearly 50 years ago, as Australia's first woman commercial traveller.

The next step was a trip abroad, as a buyer for the firm, before she returned to take charge of the staff of 500 girls.

It was during this time that Mrs Thompson conceived the idea which was to make her "Lucas Girls" famous, and to give the city its Avenue of Honor.

The girls made a voluntary tax upon their earnings, and raised money in numerous ways to make the scheme possible.

Between June 3, 1917, and August 16, 1919, 3912 trees were planted in the 14-mile avenue. Mrs Thompson and her "girls" then set about raising another amount for the Arch of Victory. The cost of the avenue and arch totalling £10,600.

Both during and after the First World War, and in the midst of this project, Mrs Thompson was engaged actively in a variety of patriotic work, including the arrangement of suitable welcome home celebrations for returning servicemen.

This activity was recognised by the RSL Federal Executive, which awarded her its Certificate of Appreciation and gold medal, an annual gift to one chosen woman in the Commonwealth. Another recognition of her public-spirited activity was the award of the honor of Member of the Order of the British Empire.

After 45 years in business, Mrs Thompson retired and took a trip abroad, returning to Ballarat in 1933 after five years' travel in 20 different countries. While overseas she became interested in the Bagot-Dtack system of health exercises, and on her return conducted large classes in Ballarat and Victorian country centres.

Profits of these classes were expended on the construction of a roll of honor near the premises of the Ballarat Golf Club, recording the names of the servicemen honored in the Avenue of Honor. Maintaining her interest in physical education and naturopath work, she continued, when no longer able to play an active personal part, to make her home available for these activities, as also a centre of much social and community life.

It will be a long time before another personality of her ability and generosity appears on the Ballarat scene, and the special place which she made for herself in the community is unlikely again to be filled.

At Mrs Thompson's request, there will be no flowers, and the funeral which follows a service at her home this afternoon will be a private one.

*The Courier*, Ballarat, Wednesday 8 April 1959 p 22

#### **Deaths**

THOMPSON - On April 7, at Private Hospital, Ballarat, Matilda Louie Thompson, of "Sunways," Wendouree Parade, Ballarat, beloved wife of the late William Daniel Thompson. In her 88th year.

THOMPSON, Matilda Louise. - Loving memory of Mater. Step-mother of Mrs Florrie Allan (NSW), Mrs Winnie Carr (Hall's Gap), Mrs Bessie Hall (Melbourne), Mrs Pearl Walker (Mornington), Fred Thompson (dec.) and Mrs Doris Palmer (NSW).

THOMPSON, Matilda Louise. - The much-loved aunt of May (Mrs E Quayle), Elsie (Mrs C Wright) and Harry Clennell.

THOMPSON - On April 7, at Ballarat, Matilda Louise, respected Past Director of E. Lucas and Co. Pty. Ltd., and dear friend of Management and Staff.

THOMPSON, Matilda Louise, - A tribute from the Members of the Lucas Welfare Association, Ballarat and Melbourne.

THOMPSON - A tribute to the memory of Mrs W D Thompson. M.B.E., our esteemed Member and Patron, who passed to higher service April 7, 1959. A life well spent in service to others. - Inserted by Lucas Past Employees' Auxiliary.

THOMPSON (Matilda) - A tribute to the memory of a sincere friend.

"Father, in Thy gracious Keeping  
Leave me now Thy servant sleeping."  
- Marion and Ern Brown and family.

THOMPSON - On April 7, at Ballarat, Matilda Louise, dearly loved foundation committee member. A tribute from the Avenue of Honor Committee.

THOMPSON, Matilda Louise. - Most loving memories. She has left her footprints in the sands of time. Pearl and Stan Walker, Mornington.

THOMPSON (Matilda Louise). - A tribute to a valued friend and neighbor of Elsie, Bill and Jack Mitchell.

THOMPSON - A loving tribute to dear Auntie Till, who passed away April 7. Sweet memories. - Ray, Roy, Edie and Marjorie.

#### **Funeral Notices**

THOMPSON - The funeral service of the late Mrs Matilda Louise Thompson will be conducted by the Rev D Lloyd, at "Sunways," Wendouree Parade, Ballarat, This Day, Wednesday, April 8, at Two-thirty (2.30)

o'clock, and will be followed by a PRIVATE INTERMENT at the Ballarat Old Cemetery. NO FLOWERS, BY REQUEST.

F W BARNES & SON, Ballarat. B5479.

THOMPSON (Mrs W D). - Members of Lucas Past Employees' Auxiliary Meet "Sunways," at 2.15 to attend Service.

*The Courier*, Ballarat, Thursday 9 April 1959

#### Deaths

THOMPSON, Matilda L. - A loving tribute to the memory of a lifelong friends and revered member of the congregation. We thank God for the wonderful life of service, the memory of which will ever live with us. - From the Trustees, Officers, Congregation and Kindred Societies of the Jubilee Methodist Church.

*The Courier*, Ballarat, Friday 9 April 1959 p16

#### Deaths

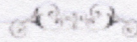
THOMPSON - (Mrs M L ). - Cherished memories of one who was a friend indeed. - From Arthur and Doris Lelean.

THOMPSON - In loving memory of Till. - Albert and Tot.

*The Courier*, Ballarat, Friday 9 April 1959 p 34

#### Deaths

THOMPSON - In loving memory of my devoted friend Mrs W D Thompson. You died as you lived, everyone's friend. - Inserted by her demonstrator, Hilda Comrie (nee Johnson).



Ballarat Old Cemetery - panel in entrance building.

#### Tilly Thompson

In 1905 Tilly (Matilda Louisa (sic)) Thompson lioned the Lucas Factory, famous for its high quality garments. She became the first female commercial traveller for Lucas and is credited with being the first woman in Ballarat to gain a driving license (sic). Tilly was responsible for the Lucas girls raising money for the building of the Arch of Victory and the planting of trees along the Avenue of Honour. She died in April 1959, aged 87. Photo caption: Tilly Thompson presenting a pair of pyjamas to the Prince of Wales, 1920. Collection: Central Highlands Regional Library. BURIED BLOCK F2, SECTION 15, ROW 1, GRAVE 12.



F2 Section 15 is first from Creswick Road boundary, numbered to 28 to the west. Graves are counted from S to N.

Memorials F2.15. R2

WARD, 11 MITCHELL (bare), **12 THOMPSON (bare grass)**, 13 GARNER (bare), 13a GAMMON Daisy d 1955, Harry d 1947. Abide with me., 14 UREN (bare), 15 CURNOW (no inscription other than surname), 16 SMITH (bare), 17 CARBURY Mary d 1946, Edwin d 1950.

**Old Cemetery Register** pdf 540

THOMPSON Matilda Louisa, 87 yrs, Widow, 418 Wendouree Parade, Ballarat, bur 8 Apr 1959, F2.15.12.R1  
Also in this grave is

THOMPSON Anna Mary, 78 yrs, Spinster, 17 Lexton Street, Ballarat, bur 24 Feb 1945, F2.15.12.R1. Full Anna Mary THOMPSON d 1945 aged 78 yrs Ballarat d/o William THOMPSON/Agnes TODD [Vic 16187]

THOMPSON William Daniel (sic) purch 25 Jan 1898, Burnbank Street, F2.15.11.R2

THOMPSON William Daniel purch 12 Oct 1899, Burnbank Street Ballarat, F2.15.11.R1

THOMPSON William Daniel purch 30 May 1900, Ballarat, F2.15.12.R1

THOMPSON William Daniel, 69 yrs, Legal Manager, Wendouree Parade, Ballarat, bur 17 May 1927  
F2.15.11.R1 (with his first wife Sarah)

THOMPSON Sarah Ann, 49 yrs, Wife, 502 Wendouree Parade, Ballarat, bur 28 Jan 1913, F2.15.11.R1

VIC BDMs

John CLENNELL m 1862 Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 4266]

Children of John CLENNELL and Matilda McINTOSH:

1. Betsy CLENNELL b 1863 Ballarat d/o John CLENNEL/Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 18534]  
2. Ann CLENNELL b 1864 Ballarat d/o John CLENNEL/Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 19899]  
Ann CLENNELL d 1864 aged 7 days bp Ballarat d/o John CLENNEL/Matilda - [Vic 7183]  
3. Thomas McIntosh CLENNELL b 1867 (no place) s/o John CLENNEL/Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 607]  
Thomas McIntosh CLENNELL d 1867 aged 6 wks bp Ballarat s/o John CLENNEL/Matilda - [Vic 515]  
4. Frederick John CLENNELL b 1868 Ballarat s/o John CLENNEL/Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 6947]  
5. Matilda Louisa CLENNELL b 1871 Ballarat d/o John CLENNEL/Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 7149]  
Matilda Louise THOMPSON d 1959 aged 87 yrs Ballarat d/o John CLENNELL/Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 22106]  
Matilda Louisa CLENNELL m 1914 William Daniel THOMPSON [Vic 7191R]  
Also Matilda Louisa CLENNELL m 1914 William Daniel THOMPSON [Vic 7191]  
William Daniel THOMPSON b 1858 Ballarat s/o William THOMPSON/Agnes TODD [Vic 11844]  
William Daniel THOMPSON d 1927 aged 68 yrs Ballarat s/o William THOMPSON/Agnes TODD [Vic 4093]  
Agnes THOMPSON age 78 Widow, 17 Lexton Street, Ballarat, bur 18 May 1909 BOC GN.10.1  
William THOMPSON purch 14 Jun 1882 Ballarat BOC GN.10.1  
William THOMPSON age 64, Railway Employee, Lexton Street, Ballarat, bur 8 Mar 1896 BOC GN.10.1

William Daniel THOMPSON bp Ballarat m1. 1882 Sarah Ann BOSHER bp Wendouree [Vic 3506]  
Sarah Ann BOSHER b 1862 Wind(emere) d/o David BOSHER/Elizabeth BULT [Vic 533]  
Sarah Ann THOMPSON d 1913 aged 49 yrs Ballarat d/o David BOSHER/Elizabeth BULT [Vic 171]  
Children of William Daniel THOMPSON and Sarah Ann BOSHER:  
1. **Florence Finetta THOMPSON** b 1883 Ballarat d/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 6852] Known as Florrie m ALLAN (NSW)  
2. **Harold Stanley THOMPSON** b 1885 Ballarat s/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 23020]  
Harold Stanley THOMPSON d 1886 aged 4 mos, Ballarat s/o William David (error)/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 106]  
Harold Sharley THOMPSON (error) age 4 mos, Burnbank Street, Ballarat, bur 4 Jan 1886 Ballarat Old Cemetery F2.15.2.6  
3. **Edith Winifred THOMPSON** b 1887 Ballarat d/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 491] Known as Winnie m CARR (Halls Gap)  
4. **Elizabeth Agnes THOMPSON** b 1890 Ballarat d/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 535] Known as Bessie m HALL (Melbourne)  
5. **Annie Pearl THOMPSON** b 1892 Ballarat d/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 29344] Known as Pearl m Stan WALKER (Mornington)  
6. **Albert William THOMPSON** b 1897 Ballarat s/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 496]  
Albert William THOMPSON d 1898 aged 1 yr Ballarat s/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 5688]

Albert William THOMPSON age 1, Burnbank Street, Ballarat, bur 16 Apr 1898 Ballarat Old Cemetery F2.15.2.6

7. **Frederick Daniel THOMPSON** b 1900 Ballarat s/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Sarah Ann BOSHER [Vic 431]

Frederick Daniel THOMPSON d 1934 aged 35 yrs Essendon s/o William Daniel THOMPSON/Annie BOSHER [Vic 4802] Fred dec by 1959, not bur Ballarat

8. Doris m PALMER (NSW)

6. Robert George CLENNELL b 1874 Ballarat s/o John CLENNEL/Matilda McINTOSH [Vic 273]  
Robert George CLENNELL d 1875 aged 1 yr s/o John CLENNEL/Matilda Lau McINTOSH [Vic 5526]

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Friday 16 April 2010 PROV North Melbourne  
Probate and Administration Files  
VPRS 28/P0004/2187

561/460 THOMPSON Matilda Louisa, Ballarat, Widow, died 7 April 1956, Probate Date of Grant £12,559

*J. Burrell Feb 2011*