

Ethel Urwin Roberts' quilt and Ada Smith's tapestry.

Ethel Urwin Smith was born in August 1887. She died 7 July 1965 and was cremated at Wollongong. She was the daughter of John Urwin Smith and Mary Dent. Her father, John Smith, was killed in the Bulli Mine Disaster on 23 March 1887 aged 45 years. The Illawarra Mercury reported in the following month that Mary Smith was widowed with 7 children between the ages of 2 and 18 years and at the time she was nearing her confinement. Ethel was not born until five months after the mining disaster. She married in 1904 to William Roberts a coal miner. The quilt made by Ethel c1920 remained in the family until it was gifted to Illawarra Museum in 1984.

Illawarra Museum also exhibits a large tapestry of a Rosella crafted in 1896 and 1897 by Ethel's older sister Ada. Ada Smith was born November 1884 and died at a tender age of 15 years on 25 February 1900. She is buried at St Augustine's Cemetery, Bulli. John Urwin Smith's wife, Mary, died on 31 July 1910 aged 66 years.

The museum is fortunate to have two treasured family artefacts relating to a significant period of Illawarra's history.

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