

VALE Mary Lucina George (1929 – 2013)

After a period of illness, Mary died on 19 September. She was a life member of the Society and a long-time volunteer at the Museum. Her good humour and willingness to help others made Mary a delight to know and makes her passing a greater loss.



William and Kathleen George had five children of whom the second was Mary. She was born and lived her entire life in the same house, *Bethania* at 145 Princes Highway, Dapto. The house was built on a portion of *Fairfield*, the farm of her maternal grandparents – John and Catherine Moran. Mary's father operated a blacksmith and farrier shop in Dapto. Her mother was a well-known local piano teacher.

Mary attended St John's School at Dapto and later travelled daily by train to Wollongong to attend St Mary's College. When she left school, Mary worked at Mac Andres's music store. The shop was located in Bright's Arcade which stood on part of the site now occupied by Crown Central shopping centre in Wollongong. She subsequently worked for Roy Giles who owned several jewellery shops in Crown Street.

In 1957, Mary joined the newly opened Saunders jewellery store which soon after became Angus and Coote. Mary was appointed manager of their new store at Warrawong in 1960. She owned and operated *Mary's Jewellery and Gift Gallery* in the Dapto Mall from 1972 to 1985.

Mary was a proud and enthusiastic member of the Dapto community. She was a life-time parishioner of St John's Roman Catholic Church and staunch supporter of many other community bodies. During the 1950s, Mary organised dances and balls at the Dapto Agricultural Hall. The proceeds were divided between St John's Church and St Joseph's Convent School. For many years she played the piano at debutante ball rehearsals.

Over the years Mary participated in a wide range of societies, committees and other activities particularly in Dapto. Her long contribution as a volunteer at the Illawarra Museum was recognised by the award of life membership of the Illawarra Historical Society in 2010.

Mary was a font of knowledge about past events and people at Dapto. It was a knowledge that she was always willing to share. Some of her memories were captured in 1987 as part of a publication - *West of the Water East of the Line: Dapto an oral history*. At the end of her recollections, Mary observed that in 1872 her great, great grandfather (Martin Moran) had been the first of her family to be buried at the West Dapto Catholic Cemetery. It was fitting that Mary was also buried there with her parents, siblings and other members of her extended family.