

MIDGE STALKER IS 102 going on 103. Hard to image that — being born before the First World War, at Six Mile Flat, out of Braidwood, one of ten children.

Her parents, Richard and Ellen McDermott were farmers and Ellen found time to between juggling children to run a post office agency on the property.

As Midge recalls, “We were self-sufficient for food in those days. We killed our own sheep, we grew our vegetables and fruit. We made our own butter and milk from the cows. Even in the Depression years we had enough food.

“They were hard workers and our dad used to work for the Shire as well. He worked very hard. Our place was quite close to the road and we had what they called a ‘receiving office’, like a little Post Office. You could post mail at our place and it would be picked up at eight o’clock at night, go to Tarago to be sorted and be in Sydney the next day.

“After school each day I helped with the mail and the telephone. We only had three subscribers at our exchange but I had to put them through by plugging the wire into the correct hole.

“I did rather well at school. I walked a mile each day to the one-teacher school at Clift Hills. My first teacher was Mr Avery and I remember Mr Ted



MIDGE RECEIVING HER AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD AS ‘2012 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR’ FROM AMBASSADOR WARWICK NOWLAND.

Our Centenarian

Midge Stalker talks to *BWD* about her (long) life

Cleaver as well. When I was fifteen I received my Certificate. Every week we used to travel by horse and buggy into St Bede’s for Sunday Mass.

“We were a happy family. We might have had a bit of an argument or difference of opinion, but there were never bad scenes. Of course by the time I arrived the eldest boys were

working in Sydney and there were only two or three at home.

“When you think of all the washing my mother had to do by hand in a tub and all those clothes. We don’t realise anymore how hard it was back then. But she could sew and we were always respectably dressed. They were hard working people my parents.”



“THE BOXING DAY PICNIC AT WARRI — WE TRAVELLED OUT BY HORSE AND SULKY. LOOK HOW THE MEN ARE ALL DRESSED IN COLLAR AND TIES. WE’D TAKE OUT ALL OUR FOOD AND GO FOR A PADDLE AFTER LUNCH. I DIDN’T GO SWIMMING BUT I DO REMEMBER SITTING OUT IN THE SUN TO GET MY LEGS BROWN ... (LAUGHS) AND I’M SUFFERING THE SPOTS FOR IT NOW.”

RIGHT: MIDGE’S MOTHER AND FATHER AT THE FARM ON THE GOULBURN ROAD.

Midge, starting life as Margaret McDermott, met Vic Stalker at a local dance during the Second World War.

“I have very fond memories of learning to dance as a girl while listening to the gramophone. That and playing cards with my father who taught me euchre and five-hundred,” says Midge.

In 1942, Vic Stalker who was with the Railway Construction Corps in the Solomon Islands, took time off to marry Midge at St Bede’s Catholic Church in Braidwood. The newly-weds were driven to Goulburn and from there by train to Sydney for their honeymoon.

Following the war Midge and Vic moved into their own home in Duncan Street. Then came the children, Richard in 1946 and Marcia in 1952.

Vic Stalker worked as a linesman for the County Council and tragically, at the age of 42, was electrocuted while working on powerlines. Midge was suddenly alone with two young children and very little income.

Goulburn Legacy provided some



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