

# FROM BARBED WIRE



# BOUNDARY FENCES

The soldier settlers of Tarcutta & Wantabadgery  
1917-1949

## ***STEP INTO THE SHOES OF A SOLDIER SETTLER***

This program has been designed to be used by schools during an on-site visit to the exhibition *From barbed wire to boundary fences*. Students will gain a hands-on experience of what life was like for the soldier settler and his family living in the Wagga District during the period 1917 – 1949.

This kit's focus is a touch trolley containing original artefacts of the type used by the men, women and children who began new lives on soldier settlement blocks like those at Tarcutta and Wantabadgery.

The artefacts are grouped into two themes: **Domestic life** and **Working the land**.

**Domestic life** presents objects which would have been commonplace in the home of the soldier settler, but mostly used by his wife and children.

**Working the land** are objects used by the soldier settler as he toiled to make a living off his land.

Resources incorporate first-hand accounts from local soldier settlers and their families who used these artefacts, and related photographic evidence. This resource material is available online for teachers to access prior to their visit.

These resources also include suggested questions for the students, which can be asked during the object handling session.

These are clearly marked throughout as **Q** (Question) and **A** (Answer).

## **CURRICULUM LINKS**

### **HSIE Stage 1    The Way We Were**

This unit provides opportunities for students to explore the changes and continuities in the ways families have done things over time. The unit focuses on the effects of changes in technology and gender roles.

#### **Outcomes:**

CCS1.2        explains how different generations of people lived in the local area

#### **Learning Sequence 3: The Technology We Use**

This touch trolley, used in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition ***From barbed wire to boundary fences***, provides students with the opportunity to examine genuine artefacts that would have been commonly used by their ancestors.

These artefacts cover the themes of changing technology in the home, looking at the kitchen, bathroom, laundry and living and work areas.



## THEME ONE

## DOMESTIC LIFE

### OBJECTS 1-3 FLAT AND SAD IRONS



**Q.**

Have you ever seen a flat iron?

Take a close look. Do they look like the irons you have at home?

Lift one up. What does it feel like?

**A.**

The women who lived on soldier settlement blocks including Tarcutta and Wantabadgery relied on irons like these to keep their family's clothes looking good.

Although this type of iron has been around for hundreds of years, the soldier settler's wife had no other choice but to use these old fashioned irons, as they did not have electricity in their homes.

**Q.**

How do you think these irons were heated?

**A.**

These irons had to be heated over an open fire, or on top of a coal or wood fired stove.

When using these irons, you had to be very careful not to get burned. This is because when the body of the iron heated up, so did the handle. As a result, they had to be picked up using either a pot holder or thick glove.

Unfortunately, these irons lost heat very quickly, so it was necessary to have two or three heating at the same time.

**Q.**

Have another look at the irons. Can you see a number towards the pointed end? What do you think this number was for?

**A.**

Flat irons came in all shapes and sizes, from tiny ones used to iron cuffs and frills, to very big ones used on tablecloths and sheets.

These basic flat irons were not the only type of iron used by the soldier settler's wives before electricity.

A very popular iron was the Mrs Potts Iron. These irons were better designed.

**Q.**

Look closely at this iron. How is it different from the previous two flat irons?

**A.**

The Mrs Potts Iron is a sad iron. It was an improvement on the earlier flat irons with their solid metal handles. This iron was known as a 'cold handle' sad iron. As you can see, the handle could be removed from the base. This meant that when the base was being heated, the handle would not get hot, because it was separate.

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

The ancient Romans used irons to add creases to their togas!

### **OBJECT 4      PETROL IRON**



After World War II, the soldier settler's wife was able to replace her old flat irons that had to be heated by fire, with an iron that was heated using petrol.

This iron ran on a type of petrol called *shellite*, while others ran on kerosene.

***I was given a petrol iron, I was scared stiff of it!***

***I was scared it might blow up. It used to pt...pt...pt... and I would jump. But it did a better job than the old flat irons. I lit the petrol iron from underneath, but you warmed it up with methylated spirits first then it ignited somehow. It was rather frightening to use and we ironed everything in those days.***

Joan Alston, *Alstonville*, Wantabadgery West

The fuel for this iron is stored in the reservoir (the funny shaped part at the back of the iron). This could also be shaped like a ball. There is knob underneath this which had to be turned on. The iron was then lit using a match. This iron works in much the same way as the gas stoves of today.



Here is a link to a video which shows one of these irons being lit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8S4saKkizQ>



**Q.**

Lift the iron. What differences can you see between it and the flat irons you looked at first?

If you had to iron all of the clothes for your family, which iron would you choose?

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

The first electric iron was patented in 1882, but it wasn't much use if you lived in a house without electricity!

**OBJECTS 5-6****KETTLES**

Here are two different kettles. One is older than the other.

**Q.**

Which do you think is the oldest of these two kettles?

**A.**

The heaviest kettle is the oldest, and is made of cast iron. This is the type of kettle that the settlers at Tarcutta would have used in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It was only later that household implements like kettles were made from lighter metals like aluminium, tin or galvanized iron.

Many of the objects found in the soldier settler's kitchen would have been metal – made from cast iron, enamel, tin, aluminium and maybe even brass, copper, nickel or pewter.

**Q.**

How would you heat these kettles?

What does the way these kettles were heated tell you about the soldier settler's home?

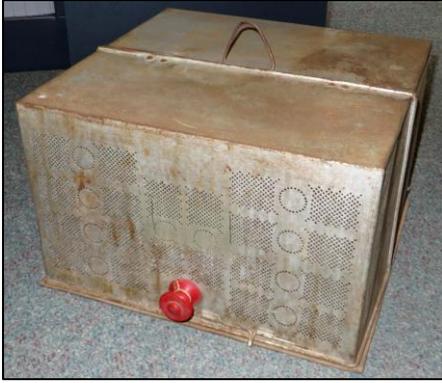
**A.**

Like the irons, these kettles would have been heated either over an open fire or on a stove top.

***DID YOU KNOW?***

Some of the soldier settlers at Wantabadgery had to cook all of their meals on an open fire!

**OBJECT 7      MEAT SAFE**



***Our main diet consisted of mutton, rabbits and home grown vegetables and bread. We had mutton three times a day!***

Enid Scobie, *Shangri-la*, Wantabadgery West

**Q.**

Think about the kitchen in your house. What are some of the appliances in it?

Do you have a dishwasher or microwave? How about a refrigerator?

If you didn't have any electricity, how do you think you would keep your meat and other food cold and fresh so that they didn't go off?

**A.**

Like many of Wagga's pioneers, the soldier settlers of Tarcutta and their families used something called a meat safe to keep their food fresh for longer.

Have a look at the meat safe.

**Q.**

What is it made from?

Why do you think there are small holes in the side?

Can you see the handle on top? Why is it there?

## A.

Meat safes like this one were designed to be hung in a shaded spot, where it could get a breeze. This could be from the branch of a shady tree, or on a verandah. In really hot weather, a wet cloth was hung over the top of the box. When the breeze passed through these cloths, the inside of the box was cooled. This way, food lasted longer.



This is a link to the National Museum of Australia website. Here, the workings of a meat safe are explained:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/engage-learn/schools/classroom-resources/activities/what\\_is\\_this/meat\\_safe](http://www.nma.gov.au/engage-learn/schools/classroom-resources/activities/what_is_this/meat_safe)



To stop meat going off, it was sometimes salted and stored in **brine** (salty water used for preserving meat). This meant that nothing was ever wasted. After all, the shops were a long way away, and there were no supermarkets!

***I remember Mum salting the meat and putting it in the cooler out the back before we got the electric fridge.***

The Hazelwood family, *Karrawarra*, Wantabadgery East

The later soldier settlers who lived on Wantabadgery were luckier than those who settled on Tarcutta. They were able to refrigerate their food. However, as many went without electricity during their first few years, their fridges were a lot different to the ones we have today.

At this time, there were two types of fridges that didn't need electricity. One ran on kerosene (like the iron) and the other was called a **Coolgardie Safe**.

## Q.

Have a look at the Coolgardie Safe which is displayed in the exhibition.

How did these work and keep things cool?

## A.

Can you see the tray sitting on top of the fridge? This tray was designed to hold a large block of ice (or to be filled with water). The ice, which had to be changed often, was delivered to homes by the Ice man. He was similar to a Milkman, but delivered blocks of ice from a factory rather than milk.

You will notice the sides of the fridge are covered with a rough material. This is called hessian. As the ice melted, the hessian would become wet. As the air from outside the fridge passed through the hessian sides, it would cool the contents inside. The tray underneath the fridge was there to catch the dripping water.

These fridges did not keep food as cool as modern fridges, and they did not freeze anything. This meant that food did not last as long as our food today.

***All the meat from the week's sheep killed filled the fridge, which by the end of the week didn't smell too good!***

The Andrews family, *Terlinga*, Wantabadgery West

## OBJECT 8      PRESERVING BOTTLE



***Preserving fruit and jam making was always a seasonal event. The family would sit for hours peeling, packing fruit into bottles, to be preserved for the next 12 months.***

The Andrews family, *Terlinga*, Wantabadgery West

Most of the soldier settlers grew their own produce, including vegetables and fruit. Some had orchards on their block, growing peaches, apples, apricots and other fruits. As a result, the settlers and their families spent a lot of time (during the evening) pickling and bottling fruit and vegetables to stock their pantries.

***We had a lovely orchard at this time so I used to Fowler (preserve) all the fruit, until it run out of my ears!***

Maisie Hartwig, *Coombe-Martin*, Wantabadgery West

As a treat, following a trip into town – either Wagga or Junee – a carton of ice cream might be purchased, and enjoyed by the family with their homegrown stewed fruit.

## **OBJECT 9      MILK SEPARATOR**



**Q.**

Do you have cereal for breakfast? Do you have it with milk?

If you were living on a soldier settlement block, where do you think you would get your milk from?

**A.**

The soldier settlement blocks were not close to towns or cities. This meant that the soldier settler and his family had to be largely self-sufficient.

Self-sufficiency is when somebody has to be able to look after themselves and their daily needs. The settlers grew their own vegetables, raised their own animals for meat, sewed a lot of their own clothes and household linens (e.g. curtains and bedspreads) and even made their own bricks for their homes!

Cows were a necessity on the soldier settler's block, especially for mothers with young children. Here is a photograph of Enid Scobie milking one of the family's cows.



Dairy cows had to be milked every morning. They provided the family with milk, cream, butter and even cheese. Enid kept her milk, butter and meat cool in a drip safe, as her home had no electricity until 1956.

***I milked two cows out in the open, made the butter by a butter churn. It would probably take an hour or more. I would make it twice a week. I used to sell the butter to the hotels in Junee, well I had too much and they were glad always to get home-made butter and things like that. I had 13 fowls, Lou built a little yard, so we had eggs, we had cows to milk – what more could you want?***

Maisie Hartwig, Coombe-Martin, Wantabadgery East

***I used to make butter and milk the cows, and that was one of my jobs to lock the calf up at night. We were given a separator for a wedding present from Aub's parents. My job was to separate and you would save the cream for a day or two and then make the butter. Egg beat it, and add salt and sometimes we used butter milk to make cakes. Occasionally I bought butter. I always made preserves. We had a mulberry tree out the front so I stewed mulberries and made icecream.***

Daphne Howard, Wantabadgery West Homestead

**Q.**

So, what do you think the milk separator is used for?

**A.**

The milk separator (sometimes called a cream separator) was used to separate the cream from the milk. Can you see the two separate spouts on the machine? The skimmed milk came out of one, and the cream out of the other.

**Q.**

So why did the milk have to be separated from the cream?

**A.**

The cream had to be separated, because it was used to make butter. The milk (minus the cream) was used in day-to-day life – on porridge in the morning, tea and coffee during the day, and as a popular drink with the Estate's children.

Can you see the handle on the side of the separator?

As children, one of your chores may have been to separate the cream from the milk. This was done by turning this handle. It had to be turned continuously and fast enough so that the cream became separated, and both cream and milk poured out of their individual spouts.

***The cream was rich, yellow and delicious.***

***Sometimes Mum would beat it laboriously into butter, other times we would just pour it over porridge, fruit or just onto a slice of bread with honey!***

Fred Hazelwood, Karrawarra, Wantabadgery East

Do you like cream? How would you eat yours?

## **OBJECT 10**

## **BUTTER CHURN**



In the old days, butter was made by hand, in something called a **churn**. This churn is made of a bottle, with a lid. The lid has paddles attached inside, and a handle at

the top. Someone had to fill the bottle with cream, and then turn the handle until it created thick, yellow butter... that's a lot of churning!

## OBJECT 11

## BUTTER PATS



The next step in making butter was to take the butter out of the churn, and shape it into blocks using these pieces of wood, called **butter pats**. These came in many sizes. Some were small, others large. These pats could also be handmade on the farm.

The person making the butter would hold one pat in each hand, and work the butter into blocks. Butter pats were washed in salt water to help stop the butter sticking to them.

The inside face of the pat is grooved with lines. The grooves gripped the surface of the butter, and helped to squeeze out any liquid. They also made patterns on the finished butter.

## OBJECTS 12-13

## KEROSENE LANTERN AND LAMP



Have you ever been camping? You might have taken one of these along? This is a kerosene lantern, which are still available today from camping supply stores.

The soldier settlers at Tarcutta in the years after World War I did not have electricity. As we have seen, many of the families who settled at Wantabadgery twenty years later, also lived without power for a number of years.

No electricity meant that there were no toasters, mix masters, frypans, fridges or freezers. There were also no heaters, fans or electric blankets. When it was cold, families had to huddle under old army blankets which didn't provide much warmth at all.

***When we had a social at the hall we all took our kerosene lights to light up the hall.***

Allan and Joan Druett, *Oivi*, Wantabadgery West

***It was a big shock, as there was no electricity, no toilet, just a big hole in the ground!***

Ronnie MacKenzie, *Yamboon*, Wantabadgery West

## OBJECT 14

## CANDLESTICK



Soldier settlers also kept a good supply of candles. Candlesticks, like this one, which is enamel were always useful, especially if you were running low on kerosene.

Some people keep candles and matches in their homes today, in case of an emergency. Have you ever lost power and needed a candle?

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

During the Great Depression of the 1920s-30s, people in Wagga made their own candles using something called tallow (animal fat).

**OBJECT 15****GALVANISED TUB**

***We bathed in a great big round tub in front of the fire.***

Marj Andrews, *Terlinga*, Wantabadgery West

**Q.**

What do you think the soldier settler's bathroom was like?

Did they have running water? A shower? A bath?

**A.**

Many of the soldier settlers took up blocks of land which didn't have any buildings on them at all! Some lived in tents for years, others in sheds or huts which were very old and basic.

The water for cooking, washing and bathing was collected from the creek or river, and everything had to be filled by hand, using buckets. Baths were metal, usually made from galvanized tin or cast iron.

This object is a galvanized tin tub. It was most probably used for laundry, but also as a bath for children. A larger version of this one was used by some of the settlers before they had proper bathrooms built.

***To make a shower we put a 44 gallon drum on top of a stand. We didn't have a bathroom. We got a tin bath, that was a great luxury! We had a pump and it had to be pumped all the time you were under the shower. You only washed the dust off, you didn't waste a lot of water. And you didn't shower every day either.***

Honor Kells, *Kellsdale*, Wantabadgery West

***I did all of my washing by hand in a tub, we bathed in a round tub. You just couldn't buy those types of things in those days, you had to put in for them and it could take 18 months to 2 years, and you would have to take them as they came along.***

Maisie Hartwig, Coombe-Martin, Wantabadgery East

## OBJECT 18 TOILET PAPER



**Q.**

Did the soldier settlers have a toilet in their house?

Where did the soldier settlers go to the toilet?



**A.**

The first toilets on the soldier settler estates were very basic. Some were just a hole dug in the ground!

Even when new homes were built, the toilet was still separate from the house, and stood outdoors, down the back yard. These were known as outdoor dunnies, or the outhouse for short.

Do you think you would like to go to an outside toilet in the middle of the night?

***We shared a washhouse which had a copper and cement tubs. Bathing took place in a galvanised tub in the living room with water being heated in a bucket over an open fire place. The toilet was away from the living area and consisted of a can with a seat over a pit, newspaper being used for toilet paper, phenol was used as a disinfectant – to reduce the smell and the flies.***

The Andrews family, Terlinga, Wantabadgery West

***The toilet was out in the chook yard. The lighting was kerosene lamps, pressure lamps and lanterns.***

Enid Scobie, *Shangri-la*, Wantabadgery West

***The toilet was a pit lavatory down the bank of the creek, where we often found a snake in the summer time. We used to cut up newspapers for toilet paper.***

Honor Kells, *Kellsdale*, Wantabadgery West

***Out the back, past the woodheap, was the pit toilet, complete with resident red backs and any other spider who liked a cool dark place to hide.***

The Hazelwood family, *Karrawarra*, Wantabadgery

## OBJECT 19 FLOUR BAGS



**Q.**

Does the flour you buy in the supermarket come in a bag? What is it made of?

**A.**

In the old days, flour and other goods came in printed cotton bags of different sizes, depending on the quantity inside.

Flour bags were very useful for the soldier settler and his family, particularly during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Flour bags could be recycled and used as pillow cases, as backing on quilts and rugs, and were even made into underpants for the children!

Even the later soldier settlers on Wantabadgery found uses for these bags.

**OBJECT 19****WHEAT BAG RUG**

Wheat bags were also recycled. In the first homes of the Wantabadgery soldier settlers, they were used as carpet and covered bare floorboards or packed dirt floors. To clean them, they were wet and then swept with a broom.

Wheat bags were used to cover furniture and could also be used as backings or inserts for home made rugs and quilts.

The Hartwigs of *Coombe-Martin* had a wheat bag lounge and also a sewn wheat bag door on their outhouse!

***Our living quarters consisted of a double bed, wardrobe, table, four chairs, two bags of wheat each covered with a crochet rug, stove and tilley lamp. After working hard all day, so cold at night, we sat to eat our tea with military overcoats on!***

Maisie Hartwig, *Coombe-Martin*, Wantabadgery East

**OBJECTS 20-21****COPPER and RECKITT'S BAG BLUE**

Even though the soldier settlers lived far out in the countryside, often with no running water or electricity, laundry was something that still had to be done.

Most families washed their clothes in something called a ***copper***.

Q.

Can you find the copper displayed in the exhibition?

Who did this copper belong to, and where was it used?

A.

The copper on display belonged to the Hazelwood family. They lived on a property called *Karrawarra*, which was on the Wantabadgery West Estate.

As you can see, the copper is like a big metal bowl. They could be made of copper, or sometimes, cast iron. They were used as a tub for washing clothes.

Washing was a hard chore that took a long time. First, wood had to be gathered and chopped, so that a fire could be lit underneath the copper to heat the water. The water didn't come out of a tap, but had to be collected from the nearest creek or river and carried back to the laundry in buckets. It may have taken several trips to fill the copper.

When the water was hot enough, soap was added and the clothes could then be placed inside for washing. When they had been scrubbed and rinsed, the clothes were removed, using a large laundry stick.

Q.

Why do you think a stick was needed?

A.

Because the water was kept very hot, as there was a fire beneath the copper.

***There was no bathroom or laundry, so we bought a tin bath tub, a chip heater, a set of cement tubs and a copper. Miller set up a lean-to laundry on the side of an old shed, and used to carry the water up from the creek that ran at the side of the house.***

Honor Kells, *Kellsdale*, Wantabadgery West

***We washed in a copper, boiled up the copper, and then transferred the clothes from the copper with a stick into the tubs and rinsed them by hand. But later on a secured a washing machine, I think I was the first person to have a washing machine, with a petrol engine, a Simpson with a wringer, and I boiled up the copper and put the hot water into the washing machine and then started the machine by pushing my foot down on a little pedal, like starting a motorbike!***

Joan Alston, *Alstonville*, Wantabadgery West

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Coppers were also used to boil fruit puddings at Christmas time. When cooked, they were hung in the laundry until they were ready to be eaten!



**Q.**

What is a blue bag (or bag blue?)

**A.**

When white clothes and other linens are washed, they will start to look grey or yellowish over time. Nowadays, we can buy bleach at our supermarket to remove any stains from our whites, but the soldier settlers didn't have this option.

Instead, they applied something called a blue bag to their wash, in a process known as **bluing**.

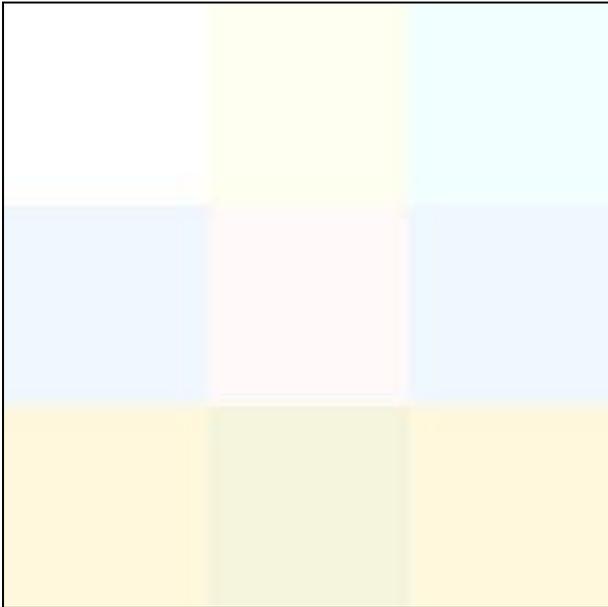
Bluing made whites bright.

**Q.**

How did this little blue bag make whites turn whiter? Why didn't they turn blue?

**A.**

What colours can you see in the square below?

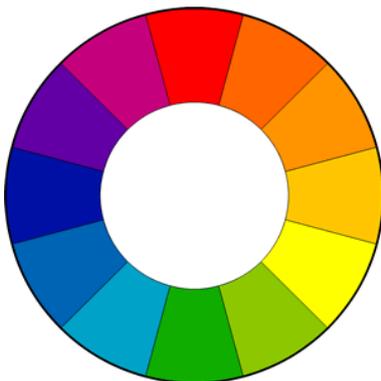


Pink? Yellow? Blue? Green?

Would you believe that all of the small squares in the larger one above are all, in fact, shades of white?

Colour experts can apparently distinguish about 300 different shades of white. Have a look at all of the white things around you. If you look closely, you'll see they are not all the same shade. Of all the shades, the brightest white is the one with a slight blue tone.

Look at the colour wheel below:



You will see that the blue and the yellow are on opposite sides.

When white fabrics are washed over and over again, they lose their bright white appearance, and start to look slightly yellow or grey. If blue is added to something that is yellow-white, the two colours cancel each other out (as they are opposites on the colour wheel), and the garment appears much brighter, as the clothes now have a blue-white tint.

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Blue bags were also used to reduce the pain from bee stings!

### **OBJECT 22      WASHBOARD**



Have a look at this object.

**Q.**

Have you ever seen one of these?

What do you think it was used for?

**A.**

There is a ridged glass panel at the centre, and it stands on two legs.

This is a washboard. These were used in the days before washing machines, and laundry was done by hand.

**Q.**

But how did it work?

**A.**

First, the dirty clothes had to be soaked in hot soapy water, in a washtub or sink. The board stood inside the tub, propped against one side.

Clothes to be washed were rubbed up and down the glass panel at the centre. When the cloth rubbed against the ridges, the soap would pass through the material and carry the dirt away.

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Today, washboards are mostly used as musical instruments!

## **THEME TWO WORKING THE LAND**

**OBJECTS 23-24**

**KEROSENE TIN AND BUCKET**



This is an empty kerosene tin. ***Kerosene***, a type of petrol, was bought in large quantities by the soldier settlers, because it had so many uses both on the farm and in the home.

Kerosene was used to run refrigerators, irons, lamps and lanterns and also motorised farm machinery like shearing gear.

It was also used to light the fires which were needed for cooking and warmth.

Kerosene tins, once empty, were not thrown out. Instead, one end was often cut off, and they became a useful bucket.

**Q.**

There is one of these on display in the exhibition – did you notice what it was used for?

**A.**

The kerosene tin in the exhibition was used to carry water from the creek to the house, which was the only way the bathtub could be filled.

Tins recycled into buckets had a handle added so that they were easy to carry.

These buckets could also be used to carry separated milk for calves, pigs and other livestock.

With one end removed, the inside could be cleaned out easily. After a thorough cleaning, some soldier settlers used them to store preserved (or stewed) fruit inside. When the fruit was cooked, it was poured into the tin with its juice, and the cut-off end was then soldered back into place, until the family wanted to eat the contents.

## OBJECTS 25-26 RABBIT TRAP and RABBIT SKINS



All of the soldier settlers in the Wagga Wagga Land District had terrible problems with rabbits.

While the men were away fighting the war, there were large parts of land with nobody to work on them. This meant that when the soldiers returned after the war, and were given their land, it was often covered with rabbits.

Rabbits were a problem, because they ate everything on the land and the farmers weren't able to grow crops, or have any stock, as there was nothing for them to eat.

So, before the settlers could make a living from their farms, they had to remove the rabbits. Many of the settlers brought traps like these to try and get rid of these pests.

***Aub and I had brought to Wantabadgery with us a couple of hundred rabbit traps – having noticed on our first visit that there seemed to be a few rabbits about. So the first thing we did was to run out some traps in the paddocks and creeks below the house. We used to go around the traps at sundown, then again about ten o'clock, and again in the morning. I can tell you that carcassing rabbits by lantern light on those frosty flats at night was no joke...***

***When the weather warmed up that spring, the rabbits went on the move – suddenly there were rabbits everywhere... we set a hundred traps in the garden around the house, and every time we went around them, there was a rabbit in almost every trap!***

Daphne Howard, Wantabadgery West Homestead

As you have seen, the soldier settlers did not let anything go to waste, this included the rabbits that were killed on their block. A truck came around the Wantabadgery Estates every week and picked up the rabbits that had been killed by the settlers. These rabbits were then taken to the Wagga Freezing Works where their skins and meat was used. The settlers were paid for each pair that they caught.

***In those early days we called lots of meetings to find out the best way to deal with the rabbit plague. A lot of fun was derived from Rabbit Drives, with men, women and children, tin cans and anything that would make a noise, was no trouble snaring up to 1,000 rabbits in these drives.***

Joan Druett, *Oivi*, Wantabadgery West

Rabbits were also a popular (and freely available) food for the soldier settlers. They were even served at social events.

## OBJECTS 27-28 WIRE STRAINERS



One of the first things that had to be done by the soldier settler when he moved onto his block of land was to build fences. These **boundary fences** were required by law, but also kept stock in, and pests out.

When the soldier settlers moved onto their blocks after World War I, there was often no fencing, and it was a long and difficult job erecting it.

**Q.**

Why do you think it was important for the soldier settler to have fences on his land?

**A.**

These fences were important for a number of reasons:

- When the soldier settler accepted his block of land, one of the conditions was that he erected boundary fences. If he didn't he could be taken to court
- Fences kept stock within the bounds of the farm, and kept them safe
- Fences made it easier for catching stock
- Fences helped keep rabbits off the farmer's land

***There was a 250 acre fenced paddock at the front of the block, boundary fences to the north and west only. Horses had to be hobbled in order to catch them and getting the milking cow in was very difficult!***

The Andrews family, Terlinga, Wantabadgery West

The soldier settlers after World War II also had a hard job erecting their own fences. It was law that boundary fences had to be finished within three years of the settler moving onto his block. If this wasn't done, the Government could take the settler to court, and he could even lose his land!

The building of fences, even in the 1950s, was done by hand.

Once the posts were put in place, the wire had to be added. It was important that the wire was pulled nice and tight, so that the fences stayed up, and the stock couldn't get through.

***The first job we had to consider was fencing. The blocks had been designed so that as much as possible the existing fences aligned the boundaries. So there was varying amounts of fencing to be done on the blocks. My Block E took in part of two big paddocks known as Lake George and Sandy, and I had more fencing than anyone else!***

***The fence consisted of 42" net, 1 ¼ inch gauge, wooden posts a chain apart – with five steel posts inbetween with belly wire, netting wire, a plain and a barb on top. The line was hilly, with rocks and creeks and gullies – and the trench for the netting had to be dug by hand – with a pick and mattock. We would stretch a length of tie-wire from one wooden post to the next, and dig along the wire to keep the trench straight. The ground was hard at the time – it was hard work.***

Aub Howard, Wantabadgery West Homestead

One tool that helped later settlers with getting their fencing wire right was the wire strainer. This one was used by Sam Hazelwood on his block, *Karrawarra* (Wantabadgery East). This strainer was attached to the fence wire, and could tension (pull tight) plain and barbed wire.

**Q.**

Have a look at the strainer's handle. Can you see another tool attached that would be very useful when building fences?

**A.**

A removable hammer

One of the original gates from the block Kellsdale (Wantabadgery West) is on display in the exhibition. Have a look at this gate. Can you see that it is covered with wire netting?

Q.

Why do you think netting like this was used on gates and fences?

A.

To keep rabbits and other pests off the farmer's land.

Trenches had to be dug into the ground, and this type of netting buried and covered with dirt, before being attached right up to the top of the gate or fence. Its main purpose was to keep rabbits out. The netting was buried deep because rabbits burrow into the ground.

## OBJECTS 29-30      HAND BLADES and WOOL



Many of the soldier settlers who lived on Wantabadgery after World War II ran sheep on their land.

Sheep have to be shorn every year. This is the process where a shearer removes the sheep's woolly coat (called a **fleece**). The wool is then graded and sold. In the 1950s, wool was worth a lot of money, so the settlers who lived at Wantabadgery were able to pay off their debts and buy goods with the money they made during this boom.

Before electricity, sheep had their wool removed with **hand shears**, or **blades**.

Q.

Have a look at this pair of shears. What are they made of?  
How many sheep do you think you could shear with these?  
Do these shears remind you of anything?

## A.

Blade shears consist of two steel blades arranged in a similar way to scissors. The cutting edges pass each other as the shearer squeezes them together, to shear the wool close to the sheep's skin. Shearing doesn't hurt a sheep, it is just like getting a haircut.



Here is a video showing a sheep being shorn with hand blades:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAZmb-yoPTk>



A professional shearer can shear a sheep in less than 2 minutes and will remove the fleece in one piece. The world record for shearing sheep is 839 lambs in 9 hours by Rodney Sutton of New Zealand (2000) and 720 ewes in 9 hours by Darin Forde of New Zealand. The most sheep shorn in an 8 hour period using hand blades is 50 by Janos Marton of Hungary (2003).

In the days before electricity, hand blades were the only available option for shearing sheep. Later farmers were able to use blades which ran on kerosene, or electricity, which made shearing their sheep faster and easier.

If you look at Arthur Belling's case in the exhibition, you will see two pairs of shears that were used by Arthur after World War I.

<b>OBJECT 31</b>	<b>HANDMADE BRICK, <i>KELLSDALE</i></b>
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Think about the house you live in. What is it made of – is it brick, timber, fibro or something else?

The soldier settlers also lived in homes that were made from many different building materials. These included corrugated and galvanised iron, wood, cement and concrete, fibro sheeting and even canvas, like a tent!

***The soldier settler's first living quarters were very makeshift. Mr and Mrs H. pitched a tent beside a natural spring. Their neighbour Mr K. was out rabbiting one day and, being close by, paid a neighbourly call. He found Mr and Mrs H. at home in their tent... perched high and dry on their bed in a sea of mud caused by a torrential downpour!***

***Mr and Mrs K's first home was the little red hut, kindly lent to them by a neighbouring settler. It has been used for grain storage in the past...***

Tarcutta Stories, 1990

These homes were often temporary. When the soldiers built their permanent homes, they were often made of either brick or concrete.

This is part of a cement brick made by Miller Kells to use in building his home. Does it look like the bricks you have seen?

Miller and his wife lived in a small hut with corrugated iron walls when they first moved onto their block. Below, is a photograph showing the remains of the hut. Can you see the wavy concrete block at the right? This is where the corrugated iron walls fitted against the foundations.



Miller and his wife decided to build a solid brick house. Their bricks were being made at the brickworks which used to operate at North Wagga. Unfortunately, there was a flood and they lost half of their bricks. Their builder suggested that Miller make his own replacement bricks, which could be used on the inside walls.

These bricks were then plastered.

***It was two and a half years until we built our house. We decided what we would build and how much money we could spend. Lou decided he would make a cement block home. So then we decided that we would make all our own bricks and build a house, so we bought the mould and we would sit for days and nights making thousands.***

***You would make a batch one day, the next morning you would gently stack them and water them down for about three days. We did batch after batch until we had enough made. We worked a couple of months on them. We got the sand from the creek at the back. We got the cement everywhere, because you couldn't buy stuff. Lou had to go everywhere, Tumut, Batlow, anywhere to get it!***

Maisie Hartwig, Coombe-Martin, Wantabadgery East

Settler John Clough also made his own bricks, which can be seen on display in the case with Miller's bricks.

John's neighbour Lindsay Longley had a good supply of coarse creek sand on his property, which John was able to use for making his cement blocks. Together, John and Lindsay carted 80 loads of sand in a ute, which took three days.

Handmade bricks were made with a cast iron mould. The only problem with this, was that only one brick could be made at a time.

***The pressure of work meant that the thousands of blocks had to be made after tea on most nights with the aid of a petrol lamp. It was a slow and tedious job.***

John Clough, *Windermere*, Wantabadgery West

The Clough family lived in the original home built by John until it was demolished only a couple of years ago.



John Clough outside the home he built

# THE GREAT SOLDIER SETTLER'S CHALLENGE!

Your challenge is to find out what life was like for Wagga's soldier settlers, by exploring the exhibition ***From barbed wire to boundary fences***. Look carefully at the displays and you will find the answers you seek!

There are two **ballot boxes** in the exhibition. Can you find them?  
Find the case that displays the **small** ballot box.  
In front of it, are the **wooden balls**, or *marbles*, that were used in the ballot process.  
How many are there? \_\_\_\_\_ What are their numbers? \_\_\_\_\_

Look for the colour photograph of Trooper **Ted Hardwick** sitting on his horse.  
In the case beneath, there is a **gold tin** that Ted was given as a gift.  
Who gave Ted this tin? \_\_\_\_\_



Can you find three pairs of **hand shears** used to clip the wool from sheep?  
One pair is displayed with a photograph of Enid Scobie's first **poddy lambs**.  
What are their names? \_\_\_\_\_

If you had a pet lamb, what would you call it? \_\_\_\_\_

Each soldier settler gave his block of land a special name.  
World War I settler **Arthur Belling** called his block **Alloomba**.  
Can you find the names of three other soldier settlement blocks in the exhibition?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you had a block of land, what name would you give it? \_\_\_\_\_

There is a grey **high chair** on display. Can you find it?  
Who used this chair? \_\_\_\_\_



Children had a great time living on soldier settlement blocks.  
What did **Hugh Belling** and his brothers do for fun when they were growing up on their father's block? \_\_\_\_\_

## BE A TIME DETECTIVE!

Over the page are photos of some of the objects that soldier settlers and their families used every day.

Your job is to match the items used by the soldier settlers with their modern day version, e.g. for the soldier settlers, chicken was a luxury, mostly eaten on special occasions like Christmas. So what meat did they eat instead?



**PAST**



**PRESENT**

