

Olive Dorothy Sparling Wellard

These notes from a letter, dated Sept 1989, from Olive Wellard to her granddaughter Rachel Barnes.

I was born in 1905 in a very small house in Helena St in South Dunedin. I was a very lucky baby, being born into a caring Christian family.

In 1910 we moved to Napier. While there, there occurred one of the unique experiences of my life. One night my father wrapped me in a blanket and took me outside to see the night sky. The clear star-spangled sky was a marvellous sight, with the great tail of Halley's Comet sweeping across it. I can still see it in my mind's eye. My father told me that if I lived to be a very old lady I would see it again. I lived long enough, but alas the comet's return was a non-event. It did not enter the Earth's atmosphere and was barely visible.

In 1933 I was married, and again I was lucky. My husband and I had 50 happy years together. Another unique experience occurred many years later. My husband and I were camped on the shores of Lake Waikaremoana. In the morning we were wakened by the dawn chorus. The Rata trees were in full flower and thousands of bell birds had gathered to sample the honey. I had read the description of the chiming of the bellbirds from early settlers from Capt. Cook onward, and they really did toll.



In these days so much of our forests in New Zealand have disappeared and with it gone so many of our native birds. It is doubtful of the dawn song of the bellbirds will be heard from again.

I wish you all the best in the years to come. Rachel, I am sure that you will make a great success of your chosen profession. May you have many years ahead of you and enjoy good health. All my love Rachel and God bless you.

Granny.

PS. I should have explained my names which have often been an embarrassment to me. My grand mother was Olivia Sparling, hence the Olive Sparling. Dorothy was the name of one of Dad's sisters who died shortly before I was born.

PPS. Great grandmother was born in Germany in the Palitinate. The family came to Britain as refugees during the reign of Queen Ann. They finally settled in Ireland where many of their descendants live today.