



Record that's hard to lick . . . Wallacia's current postmistress Margaret Fowler.

Picture: TRACEE LEA

Family's century of mail bonding

By EDITH BEVIN

IT'S a western Sydney dynasty that dates back 100 years and has left its stamp on a whole community.

On April 1, Wallacia post office will celebrate the 100th anniversary of being run by the Fowler family.

The post office has changed location since John Fowler took over as postmaster from the Wallace family — who Wallacia is named after.

And while many of the associated businesses and services — the manual telephone exchange, newsagency, general store, and riding school — have disappeared over the years, the Fowlers are a constant presence.

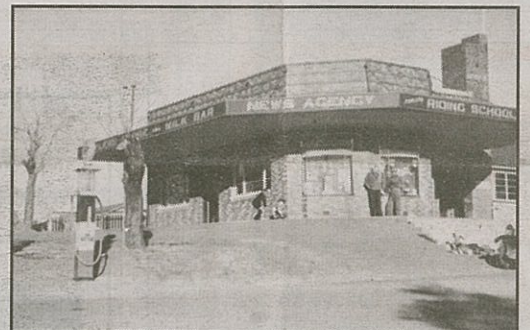
By the late 1930s responsibility for running the post office had fallen to John Fowler's son Bernie. Then six weeks after he married Camden phone exchange operator Marjorie Parson in May 1940, he enlisted — leaving his new bride to run the post office and phone exchange for the five years he was away at war.

Bernie returned in 1946 and his father died two years later. In 1954 the post office and phone exchange relocated to its present site in Mulgoa Rd, Wallacia, just a few doors up from the local school.

The young family lived at the back of the post office.



Bernie and Marj Fowler



Dynasty . . . the post office back in 1930

Marjorie continue to run the post office while raising her family and helping her husband out with his various business ventures. The whole family — including their two young sons Ross and John — became experts in operating the telephone exchange until it became automated in 1976.

Following Bernie's death in 1981 Marj was officially appointed as postmistress and at the time of her retirement in 1993 — at the age of 78 — she had notched up 53 years of continuous service behind the counter at the post office.

In 1993 Marj's daughter-in-law Mar-

garet Fowler took on the post office licence and continues to run it today.

"It's funny in a way," Margaret said. "It is a bit of dynasty — and one I doubt we'll see again. I certainly never imagined I'd be running a post office."

Mrs Fowler, a trained nurse before she met and married Ross Fowler, said she believed the dynasty would end with her.

"I don't think my children will carry on the tradition, their careers are very different," she said.

From 10am on Tuesday, April 1, Mrs Fowler will host a community morning tea to mark the milestone.