



*Hugh and Margaret Youdale 1896*

## **Hugh Youdale**

By Alan McKenzie

Hugh Youdale was born in Guildford in England in 1871. He was the oldest son of Hugh Youdale and Eliza Chitty. The family emigrated to New Zealand in 1881 and Hugh is recorded as attending Timaru Main and Claremont Schools. The family farmed in the Claremont area.

In 1896 he married Margaret Jane Armstrong. Margaret was the daughter of farmer Mathew Armstrong and Sara Gillies. They lived at *Glenlaverock* the two storeyed wooden house on Brockleys Road. After their marriage Hugh and Margaret had five children and farmed at Southburn. Hugh was involved with the South Canterbury Mounted Rifles. The South Canterbury Museum holds a photograph of the 1902 shooting team. It includes Corporal Youdale.

Margaret died in 1906 and soon after Hugh left his family of five children and disappeared to Australia. It is thought that he worked in isolated Winton in Queensland for a time then in New South Wales. He had no contact with his family after 1910 and at one stage they believed he was deceased. Family legend suggested either he had disappeared somewhere in

outback Queensland on an expedition looking for the remains of explorer Ludwig Leichhardt or that he was killed during the war.

There are however, records that do put together some pieces of his mysterious jigsaw puzzle life. He did serve in the Australian Army as there is a record that Sergeant Hugh Dale (he changed his name) enlisted in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Australian Signal Corps and that he embarked on active service on the 20th October 1914. He was discharged medically unfit in July 1917 having served in Gallipoli, Egypt and France. Also included with his war records are letters from the NZ Government Insurance Department (1923) and from the Timaru law firm W H Walton (1926). Both letters were seeking information about his place of residence and record "he was seen about this time (1915 in Egypt) by a member of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who was of the opinion that he was then going under the name of Hugh Dale". In 1926 there were also newspaper advertisements in Australian newspapers seeking his whereabouts. The letters probably related to an Armstrong family bequest that had been left to his deceased wife.

On his return from overseas service he continued life in Australia under his new name. Then in 1922 he married Irene Hamilton at Peak Hill, but forgot to disclose his past! They had one son Hugh Malcolm Dale. Hugh Malcolm eventually came in contact with Youdales in New Zealand and some of Hugh Youdale/Dale's past history was discovered. Hugh died in Newtown, Sydney in Australia in November 1945.