

Aldo Mecchia

14.6.1911 - 7.10.1981

Our father, Aldo Mecchia, was born at home in Magnanins of Rigolato, Udine. His parents, Giovanni Battista (Magnanins) 24.3.1880 - 27.10.1976 was a bricklayer, and mother, Romana (Di Vora), was born in Valpicetto 30.9.1886 - 27.2.1961. There were two other children born in Magnanins: Amerigo 4.4.1914 - 7.11.1998 and Terzina Mary (Nicolussi) 5.3.1919 - 24.9.2004. Norma (Toson) 29.7.1930 was born in Sydney, Australia. Dad went to school in Rigolato and Tolmezzo, excelled in his school work and was very keen to become an architect.

Nonno had great difficulty finding work in Italy and in 1925 sailed to Sydney, Australia, where he found employment

as a bricklayer. After settling in, Nonno sent for Dad, who had not long finished school, to come out to Australia and work to save enough money to bring out the rest of the family. In 1927, Dad then aged 16, sailed to Australia. I remember Mum saying, Dad told her "it was not a very pleasant trip!"

After Dad arrived in Sydney, Dad started work at Jackson Bros (makers of fine furniture) in Parramatta Road, Leichhardt as an apprentice woodturner. The Sydney suburb of Leichhardt later became known as "Little Italy" and still is today.

Nonno wanted Dad to learn English as living and mixing with other Italians. Grandma (Mum's mother) took in

borders and it was there our Mum, Edna Mary Riddell (15.12.1917), would help Dad with his reading. The rest is history. The Italians living in Sydney, gathered together as a community at weekends and it was there that Dad met Giulio Gonano (also from same area as Dad) and a friendship was struck.

Dad decided in 1939 to come to New Zealand, and work for a few years as the Government was seeking qualified tradesmen. Giulio Gonano was already here and was working with Jim McNicol (The Royal Furniture Co in Brooklyn Road, Claudelands, Hamilton). Dad sailed from Sydney

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and settled in Hamilton. Giulio Gonano, arranged for Dad to work with Jim McNicol where he worked for some years.

It was decided that Mum should come to N.Z. and arrived in Auckland on the 18.12.39, came to Hamilton and were married the next day, 19th December, at the then St. Mary's Catholic Church. The plan was once married, to stay for a few years and then return to Sydney, but the war started and us children came on the scene and so Hamilton became our home!

In 1947 Dad decided he would like to work for himself and so began Waikato Turnery in Alexander Street, Hamilton. Dad later moved to larger premises in London Street where eldest son Jim started working as an apprentice woodturner. Years later Jim, and his wife Margaret, bought

the business and moved to larger and present premises on the corner of Lake Road and Empire Street, Frankton. In the early 1960's Dad started making Spinning Wheels and would then start manufacturing Weaving Looms with son Jim. They were not only sold in New Zealand but were exported as well. Jim's son Gavin and wife Karina, are now the owners of the turnery - now a third generation business and proudly known as "Waikato Turnery Limited - Furniture by Mecchia." This year they will celebrate 60 years in business.

As children we remember regular weekend outings to Matamata Hot Springs for a day with other Italian and European families. The day always finished with music and a singalong. Also remember the Italian socials held in a hall, complete with great Italian food and music. Other times there were get togethers at different homes along with Italian food and music - piano

accordions, guitars and mandolin! I remember Mum and Dad and Aunty Mary and Uncle Dick would place an order with a Wellington firm for various pastas, tins of olive oil, salami and green coffee beans which Dad roasted himself.

Dad's daily breakfast was bread dunked in bowl of milk coffee. Lunch was always salami and cheese sandwiches. Spaghetti bolognase was definitely a once a week happening and any leftovers was breakfast for the first up the next morning! Dad also enjoyed outdoor bowls and was a regular player and longtime member of the Hillcrest Bowling Club.

Mum and Dad were very proud of their children, grandchildren (18) and great grandchildren (so far 18)! Dad is survived by his wife, Edna.



PAT, JIM, BILL, NINA AND ELDA