



## MUGGA-MUGGA

**MUSIC PERFORMANCE: Griffyn Ensemble**  
**Sunday 4 December**

### HISTORY

This simple cottage was originally built for the head shepherd of Duntroon estate, it is preserved as it was in the time of the Curley family who made it their home from 1913 to 1995. The original four room stone cottage was extended around the 1860s including the slab bedroom and verandah at the front, and the kitchen and dining room at the back. The apartment attached to the main house was added to provide modern conveniences in the 1950s, after which the original cottage was not lived in. The buildings at Mugga-Mugga evidence a long tradition of 'making-do' with whatever was at hand. They are built of stone, slab, brick, shingles, machine-dressed timber, galvanised iron and asbestos cement.

In 1995 the lease was transferred to the ACT Government. Mugga-Mugga has been furnished, and the gardens replanted, according to Sylvia Curley's memories of the family's time there.

### THE CURLEY FAMILY

Patrick Curley lived and worked at Duntroon with his wife, Annie Elizabeth and their three girls: Ada, Sylvia and Evelyn. Duntroon estate was acquired by the Commonwealth Government and converted into the Royal Military College of Australia. The Curley family moved to Mugga-Mugga on a cold, wet, windy day in August 1913. Their new home was relatively isolated compared to the close-knit village life of Duntroon. The family made the property their own, ordering wallpaper and large household items from Sydney by mail order. A vegetable garden was established near the creek, and the flower garden surrounding the house was a focus of effort and pride.

### MUSIC

For the Curley family music was woven into the fabric of everyday life at Mugga-Mugga. As a rural worker on the Duntroon Estate, Patrick Curley learned to play the fiddle by ear and was invited up to play for the Campbell daughters' dancing lessons. His own daughters received piano lessons in Queanbeyan and took part in family musical gatherings with neighbouring families. The small cottage surrounded by paddocks was often brought to life by the sounds of popular songs, classical piano repertoire and traditional Irish dance tunes. We know about Patrick's talents from oral history records, documents and family memoirs. The sheet music collection belonging to Mugga-Mugga survives, as does the collection of 78 records played by the family and these are an invaluable source of information to enable contemporary musicians to recreate a sense of the musical life of the house.



ACT  
HISTORIC  
PLACES

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