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AMBROSE GEORGE THOMAS SAUNDERS
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'UNCLE' GEORGE AND 'BIMBO'

George Saunders was a popular 'radio uncle' and, at the height of his career, he received 150 letters a day addressed simply to 'Uncle George'.

In addition to his daytime work on children's programmes, he read bedtime stories over the wireless every evening.

He always promoted good manners for children such as the occasion when he announced a whistling competition for boys and concluded with the admonition "nice ladies never whistle".¹

George Saunders was born at Bourke on 16 May 1895 and, after receiving his education at Narrabri, at the age of 17 he went to the United States of America and Canada where he worked in vaudeville in Vancouver.²

He returned to Sydney in 1914 and enlisted in the 1st battalion of the Australian Imperial Force.

He was wounded and lost the sight of one eye on 25 April 1915 at Gallipoli. His sight was restored after an operation in 1936.

He was discharged from the A.I.F. in December 1915 but then joined the recruiting staff and improved his fluency by addressing rallies in Martin Place.

After the war, he began visiting children in hospital and he became known as 'the story man'.

In November 1923, 2BL Broadcasters (Sydney) Ltd., the first licensed radio station in Australia, began broadcasting. Saunders became Australia's first professional radio announcer and, with his fine baritone voice, he also sang in the opening concert.

Children's programmes were popular from the beginning and 'Uncle George' became involved with birthday calls, special greetings, particularly to children who were long-term patients in hospital, songs, things to make and do and drama serials.

