

The Dickson Family Story.

When Ray and Bonnie Dickson moved into Lot 92 which became 116 Nell Street Greensborough it was mostly open spaces with few shops and houses. Ray and Bonnie both came from the inner suburbs of Melbourne. Bonnie from Albert Park where her Mother and father owned a grocer shop and Bonnie worked at Head Office of the National Bank in Collins Street Melbourne. Ray lived with his grandmother in Elsternwick and worked for Derite Plaster Works, winning the outstanding Victorian Apprentice Fibrous Award in 1952. The presentation was made by Sir Rohan Delacombe.

Ray and Bonnie met at the Masonic Dance Collins Street Melbourne in 1951. They became engaged in March 1952. Bonnie and Ray looked around Melbourne to settle into married life and chose Greensborough, mainly because Ray's Auntie and Uncle (Ethel and Ron Dickson) lived in Vermont Parade. They were able to buy the Nell Street block from Ray's sister and husband, who had paid £75 and Ray and Bonnie, paid £150 to them for it. They built their house in 1954 and married in June 1955.

Building the house was 'another story'. Due to WW11 restrictions building materials were difficult to obtain so the house was built in stages. Bonnie is proud to tell that they built as they had the money. No credit. Living in Melbourne and having no car the young engaged couple would catch the train in Melbourne to Watsonia each weekend. They would then carry tools and food across the paddocks to 'work on the house'. Cooking at this time was done by outside fire. The frame of the house was built by Jack Maurer. Footings stumps, bearers, plastering and painting was done by Ray. Ray's cousin Bruce and Ray did the electrical work. The first heating was a slow combustion stove.

Neighbours were Joan and Joe Kemp and family (Joan still lives there) on one side. Mrs Nolan (who worked at Trist's Dairy in McDowell Street) and her family lived on the other side.

Oral History

Bonnie smiles when she remembers that Nell Street was a rough unmade road, there were no footpaths and very deep culverts. There were no houses between Nell Street and the Army Camp. Opposite 116 Nell Street was the Greensborough Golf Course with a tin shed for a Club House and Mr Shaw's cattle could be seen in the distance. In later years the Dickson children used cardboard to slide down into the gully and bon fire nights would be held, crackers and all. There was no sewage and "the pan man used to come slopping to the outside toilet". The milk was delivered by Ken Matthews (who lived two doors away, next to Mrs Nolan). The Dickson family bought their eggs from Mr Moth (who lived opposite the golf club house) and who kept his own 'chooks', and gave the children a lolly with each sale. Over the years there was a bread delivery, Slade's Lemonade and a dry cleaning home service. One day Bonnie saw Army personal pacing the paddocks opposite, which became the first stage of the War Service Housing subdivision. When the houses were built, Ray and Bonnie welcomed the new comers into their new homes in Nell Street.

Ray and Bonnie's family grew when Diane, Helen, Russell and Judy were born. They were all introduced to community and sporting activities by their parents.

Bonnie and Ray joined the Greensborough Football Club in 1954. They participated in house parties at the player's homes or socials at the club rooms. There they met their life time friends Betty and Ray Skals, Jack and Elvie Maurer, Heather and Joe Murphy, Kath and Frank Le Gassick and many more. Ray started to play football with the club in 1957. Russell played with the club from 8 years till he joined Collingwood 1983-1987. He once again played for Greensborough before playing with Kyabram Victoria 1993-94. Russell came back to Greensborough again; proudly coaching the Premiership team 2006. In 1981 Russell was selected by the V.F.L. to play in the first school boys team to tour Ireland. The team won 4 games and Bonnie and Ray were so proud to travel to Ireland to see each game. In the summer Russell played for the Greensborough Cricket Club. Ray, Bonnie and Russell are Life Members of the Greensborough Football Club. All the Dickson children attended Little Athletics. Diane captained the St Mary's Little Athletics 1st shield Award in the D.V.L.A. She received the award with Gerard Walsh.

Oral History

The Dickson girls also played tennis, netball and squash

Ray sadly died in 1989.

Bonnie likes to remember: ---

Wonderful picnics at the Bottom Park (now Greensborough Park), Stubley's Grain Store. Green grocer shops owned by Tony Virgona in Grimshaw Street and the O'Neil's in Main Street. The old Greensborough Picture House, Willit's Butcher Shop, Tom Lanes Chemist Shop, Butterworth's Paper Shop. Mrs Lobb's Corner Shop (at Bottom Park, now the Diamond Valley Living and Learning Centre), Foard's Corner Shop (where Safeway is now located), The Health Centre opposite the Greensborough Hotel (now in Ether Street), State Savings Bank, Doctor Cordner's opposite the swimming pool. Diamond Valley Hospital, various craft shops in the Main Street and Greensborough and Watsonia Stations above ground.

Bonnie still works at St Mary's Church School three days a week and is very proud to have 9 grandchildren.

Thank you Bonnie very much for being a wonderful neighbour to me and sharing the **Dickson Family Story** with us.

Rosie Bray.