*The Roberts family, June and Brain and their children, lived in Hume Street for 45 years from 1956 - 2001.*

*The house stood on 10 acres of apricot orchard when bought by the Robinson family in 1940. By the time the Roberts family bought it in 1956 it had been reduced to three & a half acres still containing 40 apricot trees.  In 2001 the Geer family bought the 1 acre+ property and to date 2017 are still in residence.*

**Late thoughts! - 1978**

I have thought for some time that one day I should jot down a few everyday things about Greensborough and Briar Hill before my middle age declined into old age!

I had even thought about keeping a journal when I first came to the district twenty-two years ago – this didn’t eventuate as one year rolled into another, there seemed no urgency, later would do. Now I’ve decided later is here! All the changes that are happening to the area as a whole make it imperative for me to record a personal if not accurate reminiscence of what it was like in the late 50’s. Please don’t be upset if you have lived in the area since the year dot and you think some aspects aren’t factual – you can remedy the situation by writing your own account for posterity…this for me is to satisfy a personal whim.

Twenty-two years ago, when I first came to Greensborough it was a fairly small sleepy shopping centre. I must say there were times I wished it were larger – for instance it was impossible to get the newer delicatessen lines such as continental sausages and cheeses. Plenty of good old Australian Cheddar, “none of that fancy foreign stuff”. For special occasions a trip to Heidelberg was necessary for these extra ordinary provisions – a new Continental Delicatessen had recently opened there. In trying to recall what was where in the township I enlisted the aid of Grace Cavill who has worked in the district for twenty-eight years and whose recall is much better than mine. Grace worked at Griffiths Haberdashery and Wool shop in Main Street for 18 years with Jess Middleton. In my mind at the time I always thought of them as the ‘Griffiths girls’… always friendly and helpful to the idiot knitter and would be needlewoman.

My main recollections are of the people I traded with in my early days here. Most of the shops were positioned down the hotel end of Main Street. Next door to the pub, before the bottle shop’s time was a grocer, Mr Doolan, where things like biscuits (and broken biscuits) were weighed out by the pound – always time for a chat. Similarly, two doors up was the greengrocer Mr O’Neill and his wife – where service was relaxed and friendly, a ripe banana given to a toddler at heel to keep her happy whilst mother gossiped. Rob Willett next door, a cheeky fellow full of good humour, his red-haired assistant named Gil found favour with all the little girls who came into the shop by calling them “Lucy” whatever their names were. The Post Office was accommodated at a counter in the General Store – Grace thinks it was Smith and Barnett’s. At this stage, there wasn’t a mail delivery to Hume Street, one could either pick up the mail from the Post Office or have a delivery made to a post box on the edge of Mr Pope’s land on the Greensborough side of the river in Flintoff Street. Tom Vickers Chemist shop was situated between Willett’s and O’Neill’s on the hotel side of Main Street, some years passed before he moved to the newly built premises across the road.

When I think about it I had very little occasion to cross Main Street for any of the family needs or provisions – even the picture theatre was there near where Venture Stores are now…Grace remembered its name, The Ashril, I’d forgotten, with Mr Durham’s shoe repair shop next door. Apart from Stubley’s Hardware, the SEC and the PMG, the Methodist Church and the large grounds of the Church of England there was little else between Hailes and Grimshaw Streets on the hotel side. One or two houses with fences right on the pavement were still there, but not for long.

On the other side of Main Street there wasn’t much activity – between Para Road and the car park entrance (next to Vickers) the main ones that Grace and I recall were Stubley’s Garage, Butterworth’s Newsagency, a Bank, the Baby Health Centre housed in an old house, a Men’s hairdresser and Stan Ashley’s Men’s Store (or did that come later?). Constance Burkett across the road near the railway line was there too. I believe that from where Vickers Chemist Shop is now up to Grimshaw Street on that side of the street was mainly paddocks, a few houses, maybe a greengrocer (Hewitts?), Stubley’s Hay and Grain Store and one estate agent.

In my opinion Greensborough ceased to be a small community shopping centre when the Church of England sold most of the church grounds to Coles; the demolition of the little wooden church in its natural paddock/bush setting spelt the death knell of any hopes of retaining some semi-rural flavor and took the green out of Greensborough as far as the township was concerned. Shortly afterwards it seemed, Coles built, and across the road 20 new shops appeared and we all wondered how they could possibly thrive…and look what’s happened to our township now!

Enough of the township…a little of the Hume Street area, as I said earlier to the best of my knowledge but apologies if it not 100% accurate…I will be pleased to be corrected.

In the late 50’s the suspension bridge which had been erected by the army some years earlier, had been swept away in a flood, the crossing consisted of only a few logs. A few of the locals, mainly those involved in the Greenhills Progress Association and those who were greatly inconvenienced by the tenuous crossing banded together to form work parties to rebuild the bridge. Many mothers were only too pleased to offer their husband’s help as it was a tricky business negotiating the logs with a pusher and impossible with a pram – and let’s face it, the area where we settled was known by the locals as ‘fertility hill’ – some said it was something in the soil!

Many long months later the suspension bridge was completed, some direction and engineering advice having been given by Heidelberg Council whose city or shire embraced us at that stage. A great sense of community developed with these activities – many earlier residents of Greenhills and Briar Hill having made firm friendships whilst being in work parties for stage one of the Greenhills Hall. Further local involvement arose due to the bad state of the roads. The residents of Hume Street and I think some nearby streets banded together and with a grant from Council, as well as the hat handed round for contributions, graded and metaled the roads as required. Most of the residents joined in, as this was the only way to ensure access in winter for services such as the doctor, SEC and the PMG. By the way there was no Greenmyer Court then as the Sondermeyers had not subdivided – I recall there was only a foot track between Pope’s horse paddock and the Sondemeyer’s land leading down to the suspension bridge.

In 1956 the only homes in Hume Street as far as I can remember were the following, beginning at the St Helena Road end: Sondermyers, Rouston (Mr Rouston deceased, Mrs Rouston moved to Greensborough), Roberts at 59, Craig (Mr Craig deceased, Mrs Craig moved to Greensborough), Vale (the two-storey white house) moved interstate, Ballard (moved), Wall (moved), Buckle/Heather (now demolished), Cleeve – the nursery on the corner of Mountainview Road (moved), Wraight on the other corner (still there in 1978), Strickland (deceased) and Stephens (still there in 1978)

Whilst I appreciate that these jottings may only interest a handful of people I hope at least it will stir a few to keeping track of changes in the area and commit as much to paper as possible even if it’s only for your own family.

**June Roberts**