

Picnics in Greensborough

This wonderful story of growing up in Greensborough by Society member Val Wilson (nee Rolfs), reminds us of the rural attraction the district once had to city folk for picnics and excursions and of course, the opportunity these occasions provided for local children to join in - with its appropriate rewards and new friendships.

When I first started work in Melbourne, people I met, workmates etc. would ask “and where do you live”, on hearing the reply Greensborough, would invariably say, “Oh I went out there on a picnic once”, and in those days there was no prettier place to have a picnic than Greensborough.

Even in early days, when the train line was newly opened, people would flock out to Greensborough on special trains, to spend the day walking in the bush and would go home with arms laden with wattle. While the little town maintained a rural aspect, there were picnics, all sorts of picnics, Works picnics from factories, Social Clubs, Sunday School picnics, Bush Walking Clubs and yes, there were egg and spoon races, Three legged races, and even Tug of War.

Most of these gatherings could be found down at the Bottom Park, nestled at the foot of Main Street, surrounded on all sides by tree clad hills, with the once pristine Plenty River curving around its edge.



Picnic at Greensborough (1921)

(Photo at Museum Victoria acquired from C. Smith 1991)

And for the curious - Val is certainly not in this 1921 photo !!

Every weekend my friends and I would be on the lookout for any furniture vans full of people in the back trundling down Main Street, and we would be off, down to the park to have a look, hang around the edges, hoping we would get invited to join in the races which of course was the reason we were there, because then you could line up with the other kids for a bag of lollies or raspberry cordial. Many a fine afternoon was spent down at the park enjoying other people’s picnics.

Oral History

We would also climb over the hills, often accompanied by our new friends looking for wildflowers, Early Nancy's. Egg and Bacon, Chocolate flowers, Bread and Butter, Everlastings, Orchids, always hopeful, that this time the flowers would last longer than they did last time.

Of course in the passing of time, the Greensborough I knew was dug up and buried in the name of progress, the availability of the motor car, meant people could venture further for their outings, and suburban rooftops climbed into those bush covered hills.

Isn't it great that they can't take our memories away from us?

Val Wilson (nee Rolfs) - 2011
