

### I loved Greensborough

A story of childhood memories from Society member, Val Wilson. Val recalls many memories which will be familiar to those of you who grew up in small, semi rural towns like Greensborough. Today, it is a busy suburb where the simple joys of childhood as Val recalls in her story, are long gone and sadly missed.

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I loved Greensborough, to me it was a magical place, full of steep hills, winding roads, always something for my imagination around every corner, it was a green haven with gum trees aplenty.

The earth would bake hard in the hot summer sun, one of my pleasures was walking in bare feet scuffing the dirt, to me it felt like silk between my toes, and when the Northerlies blew they brought hot and dusty days. Greensborough certainly had its extremes of weather, as the winter winds were icy. When the winds blew from the south, my world would become white, a winter wonderland of morning frost. There would be the sound of crunching, a lovely sound, as we ran through the grass on our way to school. The enjoyment of sampling our frozen saucer of water we had left out over night, a delicacy! And throwing stones at the trees, each of us yelling and screaming when the fairyland of ice came showering came down on us.

It was on the way to school one morning that I stopped at the bottom of the hill, and saw that the pond was covered in ice. This is when we were living in Eldale Ave. and the pond was in Grimshaw Street down behind Stubley's. I had just finished reading the book Silver Skates and my head was full of visions of sparkling skates flashing over the ice. I looked at the pond and could see no difference at all between Holland and this little pond tucked away in the bottom of Australia.

So it was then I decided I had to explore the glories of skating and winning for myself. As ice skates seemed to be in short supply, I decided my runners would do the same job, so the next morning; I packed my runners in my schoolbag. It was not that easy to leave home with the runners, there was a discussion, as to why I needed them, sports day was not till the end of the week.

But off I set for school accompanied by my brother Kevin and picking up the Simons kids along the way. When I told them all that I was going skating on the pond, I guess astonishment was the main reaction and varied cries of "Mum will go crook at you" by Kevin to Lennie Simons solemnly stating an obvious truth "It will never work".

By the pond I took off my shoes and socks and put on my runners, yes I thought, the pond was covered in ice, so off I lunged with what I imagined to be a swooping glide across the ice. I really did let my imagination run away from me. Instead of the glory I had imagined all I found was freezing slushy water, muddy reeds and legs and feet that had turned blue. Kevin was dancing up and down, "I'm telling on you", the Simons' were standing staring at me with a look of sneaking admiration mixed with disbelief that anyone could actually be that stupid.

## Oral History

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It was a look I was to come across more than once in later years. I had no way of drying my feet and legs so had to get my shoes and socks on as best I could and get myself to school in a hurry, very damp around the edges.

In those days there was always a fire burning away in the classroom. Upon getting to school I made straight for the fireplace holding out my legs towards the lovely heat. Clouds of steam rose from around me, my teacher Miss Ladd came towards me saying, "For Heavens Sakes Valerie, what have you been up to?" and then the onlookers found voice, "She's been skating Miss". That look again, only in adults they manage to shake their head at the same time.

When Mum found out, there was more than heads shaking, but after a smack on the backside she said to Dad, "Well at least there was no chance of her drowning, the pond would be lucky to cover her ankles!" I guess how deep the pond was never entered my mind, it would have been irrelevant to my vision of swooping and gliding with ease across the ice, sadly it was never to be.

**Val Wilson (nee Rolfs)**  
2011

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Many thanks again to Val for sharing her memories with us. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but Val's stories are a wonderful reminder to us all of what our memories mean to each of us and how they can be shared by simply writing them down.