

Oral History

MAVIS SOLUM RECALLS:

My parents – Arthur and Amy (Taylor) Thomas, my mother was born in Corryong; father came to Australia from Wales in 1910. My grandfather in Wales created the Welsh Boys Choir.

My family moved from Alphington to Sellars Street, Greensborough in 1932. They ran a chicken hatchery. Alf Davies and his family also moved from Alphington to Greensborough soon after us.

Mr. Iredale had a three roomed house on the cnr of Grimshaw and Sellars Street, with a shingle roof, covered with galvanised iron. There were two bedrooms at the front and one large room at the back.

The house was pulled apart, and the two front rooms were taken down to Cape Patterson to Robin's father-in-law. Then he took the wrest of it, bit by bit.

Locals, there were the Fry's; they had about five acres at the back, which went through to Grimshaw Street. When Mr Fry senior shifted to Ivanhoe, a younger Fry took over the property.

I remember Johnny Black; he had a lot of land, on the boarder of Greensborough and into Watsonia, the side paddock and a paddock out the back, that continued on, I don't know how many acres there were.

Then there were the Iredales, Lorna Iredale and her husband built a house.

There were the Devonshire's; they were at the top of Sellars Street which has now been cut of and part of the Park.

George and Jean Weidlich came later around about late 1940's.

Mr and Mrs Hodges lived in Kempton Street; they were the only people living there at that time. Mr. and Mrs. Hodges were deaf mutes; they had three daughters who helped them, Bertha, Philipa and Elsie.

To go down towards Kempton Street, we used to pass the Hills' property, down a little laneway which led to Boyd Street and from Boyd Street there was log going across the creek, we had to walk across the log to get over the creek.

I remember the times we used to walk to school, the Greensborough State School, one day Betty and I were going to school in torrential rain, and there was no way we could

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get through, so we had to walk along the top of a wire fence. Coming home from school, we used to take a short cut through the Richard's property in Williams Street.

My son has this surveyor's map, which shows the whole area, right up to where the Pink Lakes are at Plenty, it is dated 1940, and I think it is a lot older than that.

He got the map because he was in the scouts. The scout master took the boys for a hike and asked them which would be the best way to go, they decided and moved on and finished up going up near the old signals camp, which was built during the war, and it was unknown to the population, a secret camp, behind Janefield.

I found the camp one day when I was walking, I used to love to walk, suddenly I realised I was under a camouflage net, and then, there were soldiers all around me, the soldiers told me to get on my way and forget I ever saw the camp. It was the second signals camp for Watsonia, in case the big signals camp was bombed.

There was a big open tip on the other side of Sellar Street. There used to be quite a lot of dramas up at the old tip. I saw a fire at the tip one day, so I rang the police, they asked me to stand outside my home as a particular car went by, then asked me, could I identify this car as one I had seen near the tip. Another time my son was out walking near the tip, he saw a man slumped over in a car. When he came home he told me he didn't like the appearance of the man, I rang the police, who investigated, and found the man was dead, he had committed suicide.

There was a man William Pill, murdered in Hurstbridge,

I was in hospital at that time and Donald, who was driving my father's car, a black Oldsmobile, had come to pick me up, on the way home we stopped at a shop in Grimshaw Street to buy ice creams for the children.

I was sitting in the car with the children when another car stopped outside the police station, three men from the car came over and asked me 'where is the driver of this car' I found out they were detectives, I told them he was in the shop. Donald came out with the ice creams; they said to him 'what did you do old Pill in for'? Don, being a joker, said I needed the money, we all started laughing.

Later I had to go to the police station, detective Des McQueen, who I knew, was there, I asked him what was this all about, he told me they wanted a photo of the car to put in the paper because it was the same make and model the killer had used, it finished up on the front page of the Herald.

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Des did tell me they knew who did it, but the mother was covering for them. No one was ever convicted for that murder.

I had a lot to do with the Cordner family; they came from Diamond Creek to Greensborough in 1933, the year after us.

Mrs. Florrie Cordner was a lovely person, she "sort of adopted me", when she was going anywhere she would ring and see if I wanted to go with her, I spent a lot of time at the Cordner house, it was my second home. I knew my way around their house like I did at my parent's home.

Ted treated me like a young sister, he used to tease me and was always joking with me, I have to say, I gave as good as I got.

When they moved to the other house in Eldale Avenue, and particularly when old Doctor Cordner was ill I used to visit them once a week.

June Hall nee Evans

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