Interview with Mrs Margaret O’Connor – 17 Greenhill Road, Greensborough.

*September 2017.*

*By Dawn Bennetts (nee Petts)*

*The following is an account of how Margaret (Mrs ‘O’) remembers early Greenhills.*

Margaret and Jim O’Connor purchased their 1/3 acre block of land at 17 Greenhill Road, Greensborough around 1953. They began building their home in 1954. Some construction materials were not easy to purchase at that time, so whilst waiting for plaster to become available for the house, Margaret and Jim lived for a few months with neighbours Mr and Mrs Turner of 11 Greenhill Road.

An interesting fact is that there is no number 13 Greenhill Road.



*17 Greenhill Road, Greensborough.*

Mrs O remembers the neighbours that were living on the same side of Greenhill Road - beginning at St Helena Road were: a vacant block of land, then Ian and Lois Robertson with two children, then Bill and Sylvie Birrell who won a prize in Tatts which enabled them to purchase more land and build a new house to replace their very old house – they had four children. Next to that were Fred and Dot Turner with four children, then Les and June Thorp with two children, followed by Jim and Margaret’s home with eight children. No wonder Mrs O told me that she was always busy having children!

Next to O’Connor’s property were originally three further house blocks for sale. These were divided into ten shop sites, but failed to sell. The land was then divided into a laneway, a shop, a park, offices, three shops with dwellings at the rear and another laneway. The next house was Don and Joan Rogers with four children, followed by the house on the corner of Bruce Street, being Jack and Edith Sutherland with five children.

Adjoining the rear of the O’Connor’s property – and located in Willis Street, were Malcolm and Daphne Blair.

Opposite the shops in Greenhill Road around the late 1950’s to early 1960’s was Mrs Meade who owned a small farmlette. That site is around where Baranbali Grove is now. Mrs Meade sold eggs and cream etc before she retired and moved to Preston.

Greenhills was a very treed, bushy area in the 1950’s and 60’s and Mrs O can remember the procedure for when a bushfire was approaching. The alarm would be sounded from the Milk Bar which was just a few doors up. The local women would take knapsacks from their homes to a more bushy area down nearer to Carnon Street or Hebden Street where the men would arrive to collect the knapsacks and go to fight the fire.

Not everyone had cars in the early days, or even if the family had a car, the husband might have taken it to get to work.

When Mrs O needed to visit the local doctor – which they chose to go to Dr Keith Alexander in Montmorency – she would push the pram with children, all the way to the doctor’s surgery in Mountainview Road, Montmorency. It was just part of what you did in those days.

Mrs O remembers a house fire in Greenhill Road – possibly during the late 1950’s. The house was very old and situated just down from Carnon Street. Sadly, one of the boys who unfortunately was handicapped, died in that fire.

Another memory was one day when an old house was being transported from Thornbury to Montmorency – and it got stuck in the cutting in St Helena Road!

Greenhills was a very different area in those days. They were all large blocks of land, several poultry farms in the vicinity, unmade roads and the dust!! Oh the dust!!

Mrs O still lives at number 17 Greenhill Road and it was obvious that she has enjoyed and still enjoys life and living in Greenhills.