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HEATHMONT RECOLLECTIONS

2006

HEATHMONT RECOLLECTIONS 2006

Published in 2006, this is a collection of articles written during the previous decade.

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HEATHMONT RECOLLECTIONS, 2006

1. David Allen

Written in 2006

"After my father returned from World War I, my parents were married in Auburn, and purchased the block of land at the corner of Canterbury Rd. and Marlborough Rd, to Cuthbert Street.

My father, a carpenter and joiner, commenced to build our home while he worked at Bamfords, corner of Whitehorse and Warrandyte Roads, Ringwood.

I was born on 8th August 1925 at the Pines Private Hospital, Adelaide St, Ringwood, now part of the Eastland complex. My father was caught in the Depression and was unemployed for more that three years. He never returned to the building trade.

As a child, I attended Ringwood State School. There was no school at Heathmont. Canterbury Road was a narrow bluestone road. The side roads were not made. We had no electricity or water laid on, with kerosene lamps and tank water. Until I was a teenager, only the back half of our weatherboard home was complete. Milk was delivered from Hills dairy in Wantirna Road, Ringwood, bread by Guests Bakery of East Ringwood, and groceries by Stacey's of Mitcham. Stacey's collected orders on a Monday and delivered on a Friday.

Heathmont consisted mainly of orchards, with owners such as Pumps, Sharp, Washusen, Crouch, Fitzell. There was only one shop, owned by Ada Marden. Train services operated only as far as Ferntree Gully. There were no bus services.

From Canterbury and Wantirna Rds. corner, there were only about ten houses, six in Marlborough Rd. and only two in Cuthbert Street. The family Penn lived right on the creek at the end of Marlborough Road, and were often flooded. Like others, they grew flowers and vegetables. A Mr. Bremner took produce from his property, now Ringwood Golf Course, to Victoria Market, Melbourne, by horse-drawn lorry each week. Mrs Penn also had a horse and cart, and each Sunday she drove the local children to the Salvation Army Sunday School, Warrandyte Road, Ringwood.

During my six years at Ringwood State School, like other children I crossed Canterbury Road and walked through the bush to City Road, which was closer to school. There were many snakes in the area, and I was brought up to believe that the only good snake was a dead one.

My parents visited two residents only, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Walters, who lived on Canterbury Road just below Waterloo Street, a small cottage with a wooden floor, but always clean. Mr. Walters had lost a leg in an accident and had made his own wooden leg, apparently very effective but it had a regular squeak. Another friend lived in Marlborough Rd., a Mr. Jim Bissitt who was a Victorian Railways bookkeeper in Melbourne Goods. He lived in Sandringham, and kept his Marlborough Rd. home as a s "weekender." He was a keen gardener. It was only in later years that his property was subdivided.

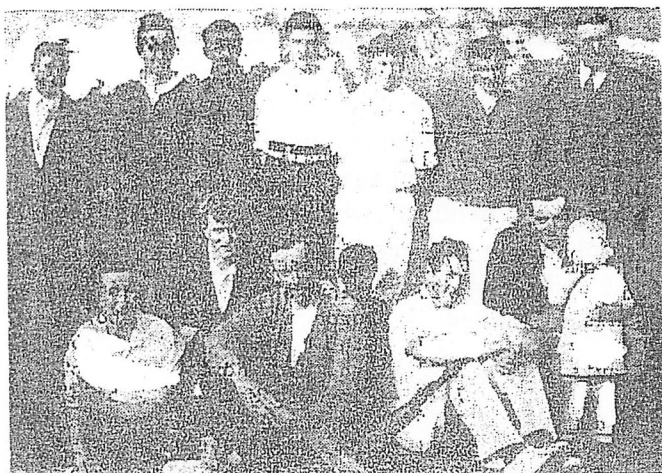
While I was still at school there was a bad accident at the railway bridge at Heathmont, a Shell tanker came down the hill from the Bedford Road corner, hit the bridge on the station side, bounced across to the Bayswater side, crashed through the timbers and slid backwards down onto the railway track. No loss of fuel, but a long delay to railway services.

As I grew up, I took an interest in sport, playing cricket with Heathmont while I was still at school. I was encouraged by Ron Sharp and George Pump in particular. Saturday afternoon was the social occasion, the ladies providing a great afternoon tea. I was there the afternoon Mr. Herman Pump indicated his proposal to subdivide his orchard. It created a stir, something I never forgot. Sunday afternoon was tennis on the court which was railway property adjacent to the present station building. Ron Sharp and his wife Enid were very good players.

The Sharp family property was on the east side and when the house was moved and the property subdivided, the shops were established in the Heathmont village."

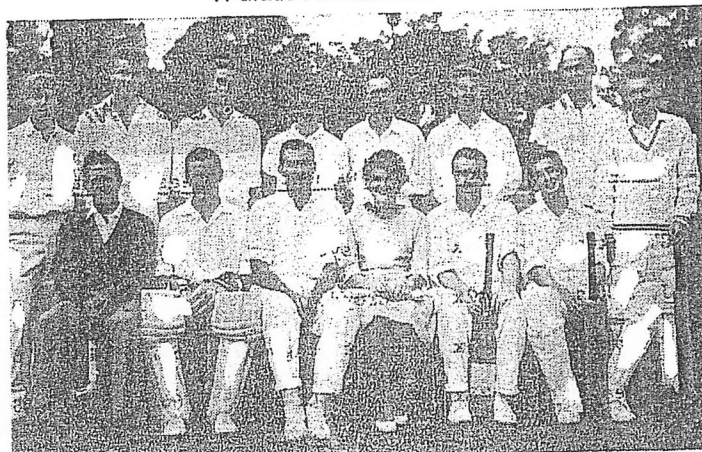
* * *

Heathmont's First Cricket Team 1922



Back Row: F. PUMP, H. PUMP, H. NOBBS, W. PUMP, S. WIELAND, B. GODFREY, F. WIELAND, (President)
Front Row: F. PUMP, E. PUMP, C. MILLER, N. WIELAND, F. CLOTA, (Capt.),
Children: DUDLEY SHARP, DOROTHY SHARP.

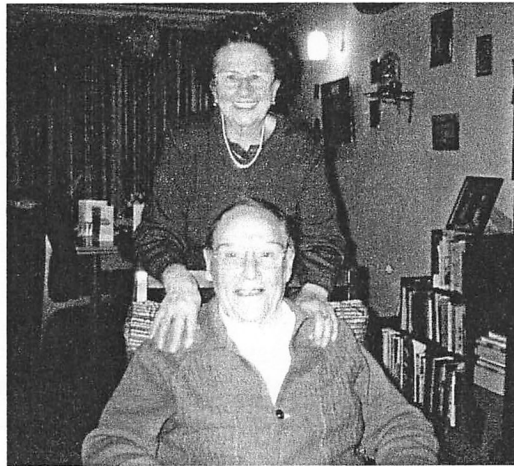
A Grade Premiers 1963-64



Standing: C. HARRIS, A. JONES, J. CHAMBERS, R. HALL, L. CALLEN, L. THATCHER, I. BARRETT, R. SMITH.
Seated: W. DEAN (President), J. CLARK, R. CURNOW (capt.), Mrs. N. CALLEN (scorer), B. GOODEAR (v.capt.), J. BATTEN.

2. Vera Alsop

Written in 2000.



64th wedding anniversary photo, 2003 (Vera 87 and Jack 89)

"We lived in Canterbury Road from April 1953 until October 1970, when my husband's work brought us to Canberra.

The Methodist Church had just been built and was used for school grades up to four. Our two eldest children were just eligible to attend and were there until the school was built where at least one of my four attended continuously until 1967. Throughout these years I was one of the very busy mothers of the P.C.A., raising funds and making friends.

We were also involved with the building of the kindergarten hall in Viviani Cres. which was also used as a Community Hall. Sadly, a nearby resident (who moved out later) protested about evening functions, which was upheld, so it never realized its full potential. I remember my day atop a ladder painting the ceiling 'joists' (?). I am enclosing a copy of the opening night notice we extended to many new arrivals.

An Open Invitation

HEATHMONT ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE

The President, Officers and Members
of the
Heathmont Advancement League
have pleasure
in extending a cordial invitation
TO ALL NEW AUSTRALIANS
IN HEATHMONT
to come to a "Welcome to Heathmont" Party
on SATURDAY EVENING,
7th AUGUST, 1954, at 8.15 p.m.
at The Kindergarten Hall, Viviana Crescent,
Heathmont.

There will be various items of entertainment
provided by well-known artistes.
Supper will be served at 9.30 p.m.

There is, of course, no charge for admission, and
children will be as welcome as adults.

PLEASE DO COME ALONG.

WE SHALL BE HAPPY TO KNOW YOU
BETTER

Zaproszenie

HEATHMONT ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE

— LIGA WZAJEMNEJ POMOCY
ZAPROSZENIE DO WSZYSTKICH
PREZES, ZARZAD I CZŁONKOWIE
Heathmont Advancement League
MAJA ZASZCZYT PROSIC
WSZYSTKICH NOWO PRZYBYŁYCH
DO AUSTRALII W HEATHMONT
O PRZYBYCIE NA ZEBRANIE TOWA-
RZYSKIE "WITAJCIE W HEATHMONT,"
KTÓRE ODBEDZIE SIE. W
SOBOTE, 7-GO SIERPNIA 1954
O GODZINIE. 8.15 WIECZOREM
W The Kindergarten Hall, Viviana Crescent,
Heathmont

W CZASIE WIECZORU ODBEDA
SIE. WYSTĘPY ZNANYCH ARTYSTÓW
O 9.30 ODBEDZIE SIE. WSPOLNA
KOLACJA

WSTĘP WOLNY DLA WSZYSTKICH
STARSZYCH I DZIECI ZADNE OPŁATY
NIE BĘDĄ. POBIERANE ZAPRASZAMY
WSZYSTKICH SERDECZNIE
BEDZIE NAM BARDZO MIŁO POZNAC
CIEBIE I TWOJĄ RODZINĘ.

Einladung

HEATHMONT ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE

Der Präsident und Mitglieder der
Heathmont Advancement League
gestatten sich herzlichst einzuladen
ALLE NEU AUSTRALIER IN HEATHMONT
zur "Seit willkommen in Heathmont Feier am
SAMSTAG den 7 AUGUST,
um 8.15 Abends
in der Kindergarten Halle, Viviana Crescent,
Heathmont

Um gute Unterhaltung wird besorgt, denn im
Kunstlerischem Programm werden berühmte Artisten
teilnehmen.

Das Nachtmahl wird um 9.30 p.m. serviert
EINTRITT IST FREI. Eltern können auch ihre
Kinder mitbringen.

Bitte entschlossen euch alle zu kommen denn wir
werden glücklich sein Euch besser zu kennen.

Invito

HEATHMONT LEGE D'AVANZAMENTO

Il Presidente gli Ufficiali e i Membri della
Lega d'Avanzamento hanno il piacere
d'estendere un cordiale invito a
TUTTI I NUOVI AUSTRALIANI DI
HEATHMONT

di partecipare a "Benvenuto a Heathmont"

La feste si terra
SABATO SERA. 7 AGOSTO, 1954,

alle ore 8.15 p.m.

nella Sala dello Asilo, Viviana Crescent,
Heathmont

Durante il trattenimento verranno presentate varie
recite con artisti ben conosciuti.

La cena occre servita alle 9.30 p.m.

Non si paga per la entrata, e logicamente non vi
sarre nessun preferenza, possono partecipare pure i
bambini.

Siete pregati gentilmente di far parte alle feste a noi
saremo felici di conoscerli meglio.

I watched from my back porch as beautiful trees were felled to make way for houses, which many folk built themselves. It was a common sight to see only the footings laid, the garage first as a temporary dwelling, sometimes for many years.

We were sorry to see the "Dandy" creek altered shortly before we left. Being car-less, our regular Sunday outings were taken there, the whole family and often a few strays laden with tiny barbecue, food, etc. tramping down Waterloo Road and back after our happy day among the gums. We hardly ever saw the boys in school holidays, every spare minute spent making tree huts and bringing home all kinds of pets, including baby ringtail possums that had been left homeless and were sneaked into bedrooms, staying hidden all day and coming alive at night to play havoc in the house. I was often awakened by little padded feet scampering over my forehead!

Two sights seen in the early days come to mind. Beneath the long bench in the station waiting room in winter was a long row of gumboots and muddy old shoes discarded for the trip to work and retrieved for the homeward trek. The other was the scene at the corner of Great Ryrie Street and Canterbury Road on the vacant block where the trunks of two trees could hardly be seen for the many milk, bread and letter boxes nailed on at random, the roads being unmade and taboo to the delivery vans, even horse drawn. . .

My husband Jack joined the cricket club soon after our arrival and was president for a few years at the same time that Bill Dean, "Mr. Cricket," was a member. We remained friends and were saddened by his death a few months ago."

* * *



Members of the Heathmont State School P.C.A. AT Sherbrooke, October 1968 –
"just before Sherry time," suggests Vera.

3. Alan and Phyl Blackbell

Written in 2006

“Our first knowledge of Heathmont was in 1945. Phyl (then a Davison) and her mother were on a train trip to Ferntree Gully as a rest day from Mum’s work in Williamstown. They were so attracted by the trackside flowers that they got off at a station they found to be Heathmont. They wandered along tracks through the heath and orchids, saw a fibro-cement “for sale” notice on a stump, and at once bought the block from a Mr Telford for 75 pounds!

When their husband/father returned from the War, he built his house in Balfour Avenue, moving in to it in 1948. From 1950, with the help of his future son-in-law, Alan, he built our house in Orchid Street, and we moved in there in 1952. We lived there until moving to Kitson Street in 1978, and have been here since – although about to move this year to a village in Wantirna.

Our memories of early rural Heathmont are vivid and very pleasant. Alan has many sporting memories, both of cricket and football, with matches as far afield as Yarra Glen and Mulgrave. He was the first captain of the newly formed Heathmont Football Club in 1956, when they finished third. The next year, under new captain-coach Fred Cook, we won the premiership! Football was huge in those years, with great support from the community, including the new businesses and shops. A particularly clear memory is of hot dogs and sags in the copper, warming the spectators. Phyl’s father Tom was the first to be awarded Life Membership of the Heathmont Football Club

We recall Canterbury Road as little more than an bush track, we remember fondly Dr Thom, at first above Lavis’ hardware then across the road, and of course the wonderful Sissy Purvis, and Miss Marden’s awfully jumbled shop and Post Office. Alan recalls collecting the bundle of Saturday night pink “Sporting Globe” papers from the station, and Phyl remembers buying cheese, butter, biscuits, jam and Adams cake in a way very different from how these are bought today.

Phyl took the minutes for the Heathmont Advancement League from about 1948, with her mother Joyce Davison and Eric Nickels among those prominently involved. Also there were the CWA, the early Youth Club, the kindergarten (an early one, maybe the first in the district, was on Phyl’s mother’s back verandah), and the formation by Jack Egan, Jim O’Brien and Phil Jones of the gentlemen’s “Heathmont Club,” which soon became the Heathmont Bowling Club when it was realised that it needed a sporting connection to receive a liquor licence. As well as being involved in the early Heathmont years of many of these organisations, we also fondly remember less formal occasions such as the local street parties, where lifelong friendships were formed. The difficulties of summer dust, winter mud, no cars nor telephones, and constant house building and garden formation welded the local folk together and made for a very friendly atmosphere in the newly settled town.

There were many meeting places for the local people and families in those early days - the churches (we have attended Christ Church – our son Leslie was baptised in a marquee in the first service held on the church site in Canterbury Road, July 11th 1954),

the sporting clubs (football, cricket, tennis, baseball, and netball, then called basketball), scouts and guides, and school and kindergartens with their fundraising, especially fetes, the centre of the town was of course the shopping centre as it developed along Canterbury Road each side of the bridge near the station. Yet for many years we did not have to go there all the time – bread, milk, greengroceries, newspapers, ice and even dry cleaning were home delivered in response to orders that were collected previously, sometimes on the same morning. We remember shopkeepers such as Don Nicholson and Estelle Spargo. We remember many others on either side of Canterbury Road - Ian Cairnduff's cake shop, Barry Hall the chemist on the "other side", Ken Johnson's newsagency on "this" side of the road, Jack Egan the butcher, Phil Jones' hardware, Christelle's (Mrs Cutting) florist, Mason's furniture, Howard Brown's tyres, Barbara Curtaine's real estate agency, our daughter Jeanette's hairdressing business above Bert Lavis' hardware, White's shoe shop, Archie Patterson's milk bar. Yes, a shoe shop, and a milk bar! We remember when there were also haberdashery shops, a boot repairer (Jack Faulkner), banks and petrol stations, long before the present-day video shops and restaurants."



The first Heathmont Football Club team, 1956 – and 1980!



4. Myrtle Carruthers

Written in 2006

"My husband Walter and I, when living in Kendall St. Ringwood in the early 1940's, enjoyed walking around the district. We were keen to rear our children in an open country setting, so when we saw some vacant land in Marlborough Road in 1943 we purchased it – five acres of "jumped land" for 100 pounds. It cost another 300 pounds to search for the title! We had 30 years of great enjoyment at our "Godden Green" property.

Walter developed a large (1/3 acre) vegetable garden, I milked the cow, the kids had horses, watched the platypus colony and caught minnows and trout in our Duck Creek, which formed our west boundary, caught fish and eels in Dandenong Creek, and roamed the bush. "Bush" reminds me of one of their other favourite activities - to play around (and perhaps even torment) the German Mr. Busch at his weir upstream a bit. Their freedom was something they enjoyed, and Walter and I were always pleased that they grew up in such an environment. Maybe they were a bit less than pleased on the occasion when one of the wild bulls which roamed with the wild pigs down towards the creek charged them, and sent three terrified children scrambling up a tree.

As well as plants, animals and fish, bird life was also abundant. However, suburban housing was encroaching on nature, and some bird species gradually disappeared. One that I remember as particularly attractive, and no longer in the area, is the delicate little fairy wren.

An interesting introduced plant was the basket willow. The German farmers in Bayswater planted them along the creek in order to use the canes to make containers for taking their produce to market.

There were scattered houses, with few amenities – no gas, pit toilets, and we were the only house in the immediate area with a telephone, so we had it installed near the front door to allow any neighbour in need to use it. Of course for years the roads were unmade, and when it was needed, Walter had gravel spread along Marlborough Road. We were more fortunate than some, for Walter had a company car from Cottles in Blackburn, where he was eventually the manager. But he had it, and for me and the children, trips to Ringwood and Heathmont shops were by foot. I remember once in Canterbury Road going up the hill, I killed a snake, and certainly the state of the roads and the distances involved made shopping and visiting difficult.

We attended the Presbyterian Church, where I took Sunday School classes, minded the infants, helped with the fund-raising – all the community things all us mothers did in those days.

When the road-making began and the bills for guttering and kerbing came to over \$11,000, we sold in 1972. Our home was eventually demolished to be replaced by the the Marlborough Gardens retreat for the elderly.

Carruthers Court and Bellbird Court, off Wantirna Road, were named by my husband."



Carruthers' home in the middle, between Marlborough Rd. and Duck Creek. Canterbury Rd. boundary of "Godden Green" at left. Cuthbert St also clear.



Looking north-east. Canterbury/Wantirna Rds corner, bottom left. Note the horse-breaking track at bottom, and Tech School at top.

5. Philip Casan

Written in 2004

"I have never resided in Heathmont, but as a dentist here for the 30 years since 1975, I do have considerable knowledge of the area, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to offer some recollections.

During the 30 years, some things have remained the same but others have seen substantial alteration. Some aims have been realized, but in other cases, plans have not been fulfilled. A classic case of the latter directly concerns my practice, for the planned shopping row in Campbell Street opposite the railway station (hence the shortened blocks, including my number 101) has never been built!

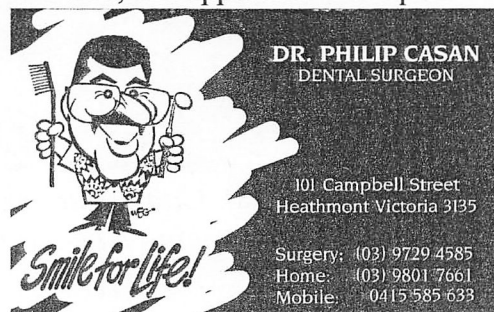
Heathmont has remained a pleasant place, and many of my patients have become my friends. A benefit of being in the one practice for so long is that I now treat the children of many who were themselves my child patients years ago, and this atmosphere of familiarity has given the area a village spirit still evident despite the rush of modern life. Most of my patients are from postcode 3135, although an interesting development reflecting people's greater mobility is the number of new patients from other areas, espelly Wantirna and Knox.

No doubt some of my new patients are attracted by the technological changes I have introduced, during the last 10 years especially: digital X-rays, air abrasion, laser cutting tools, tooth whitening techniques. Of course all our records are now computerized, and two other changes of interest to the social historian are the replacement of Saturday morning surgery by the popular Thursday evening, and the lessening of formality – it is many years since I was regularly addressed as "Doctor" – even though "Phil" is not a sweet word for a dental patient!

In thinking of Heathmont overall, the change I have noticed mostly has been in the shops – years ago we could not have imagined that there would now be no milk bars or garages in Heathmont, no hardware shop nor State Savings Bank and only one medical facility, but three optometrists and a host of eating places and food take-aways. Another very obvious and regrettable change has been the alteration of Canterbury Road from a very pleasant treed two lanes to the modern coldly efficient divided thoroughfare.

I have been asked about two other matters: famous patients, and standout events in Heathmont. My instant answer to the first query was the outstanding Herald cartoonist "WEG," the initials of Heathmont resident Bill Green, a man of outstanding warmth and friendship as well as artistic talent. His caricatures of me are featured in the surgery and on my business card. As far as I can recall, the history of Heathmont is not one of prominent events, but one which did become a talking-point for us all was the day some years ago when we had quite a heavy snowfall.

Overall, my main recollections of Heathmont are of the people. I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to know many of them well, and appreciate their qualities and the community spirit of so many of them."



6. Mervyn Chivers

This is chapter 2 of "From Corrorobee to Computer: a short history of Heathmont East Primary School."

"My parents, Walter and Irene Chivers, having purchased the school land in 1921, took up residence in their newly-built home in 1923.

Our land was part of a large tract purchased from the Crown by W.Burge on 6th April 1875, extending in area north and south from Canterbury Road to Mountain Highway and east and west from the now City of Ringwood boundary to slightly west of the top end of Pleasant Drive. The back fence of the school is the municipal boundary line, Ringwood on the west, Croydon on the east.

As far as can be ascertained, this land was subdivided about the First World War period into six-acre (almost three hectare) blocks by the simple expedient of putting a road through the middle and erecting a few post and wire fences.

The severe world-wide economic depression of the '30's had repercussions even in Heathmont, and although a few residents arrived, the township remained basically unchanged for quite a number of years. Still only one store and still run by Miss Ada Marden, but on the other hand we had a tennis court next to the station and a new cricket ground in Canterbury Road on the corner of Sunset Drive.

There was no school, so we walked to Bayswater State School, all six of us.

During World War II, Heathmont still remained a quiet little area, however the post-war period saw a dramatic change to our peaceful way of life. Many new residents were attracted to Ringwood and Heathmont. Orchards, farms and bush paddocks were subdivided into housing estates; water, electricity and the telephone were made available, and as houses were built, so also were the shopping complexes.

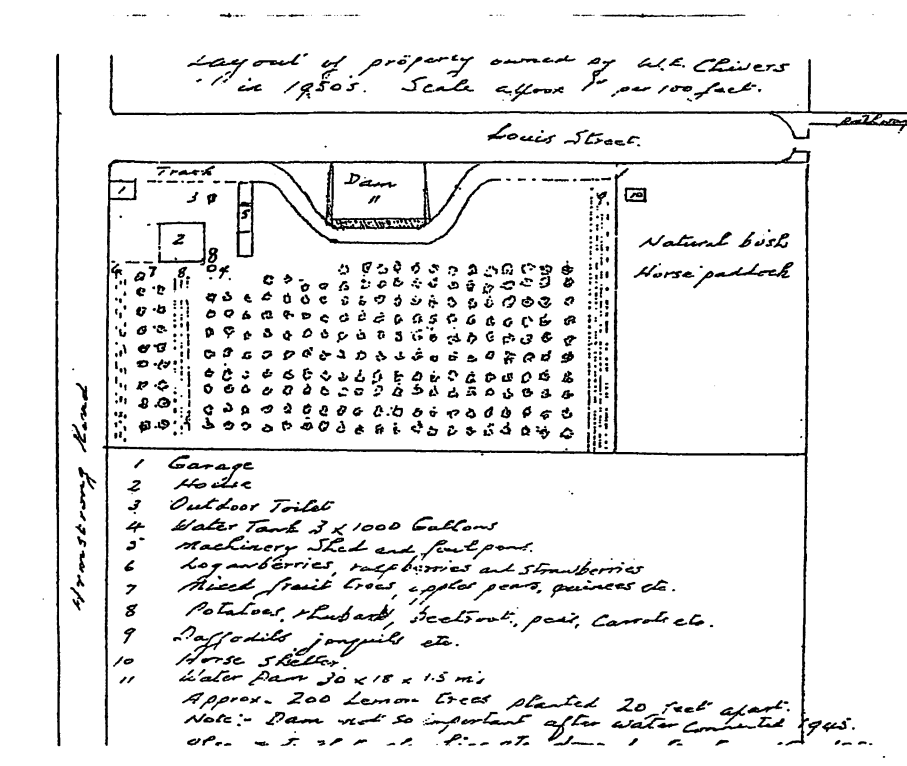
Progress was rapid, and with a population of almost 22,000 in 1960, His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, General Sir Dallas Brooks, proclaimed Ringwood as a City. . . .

Armstrong Road, which remained a dirt track for almost 50 years, was probably so called to honor the pioneer farming family of that name who settled the area in the late 1800's. Their land was on the south side of the junction of Bedford and Canterbury Roads, and the huge family home "Aringa," situated at the end of Aringa Court, commanding an excellent view of the Dandenongs, was for many years the home of Dr Colquhoun, a medical practitioner who also served for a period as a Ringwood Borough Councillor.

To return to our school land, the ownership has been Crown to Burge 1875, Burge to Chivers 1921, Chivers to Education Department 1957. With regard to usage of the land, there have been minor changes only. Doubtless, sawmilling and woodcutting would have cleared most of the land in the late 1800's. My family's land is in a relatively elevated position with a gentle slope giving good drainage without erosion. There are no rocks, and it is ideal for many purposes, including the growing of vegetables, fruit, etc., so with these things in mind my father began clearing and cultivating it. The work was done in the evenings and weekends as it was what we today call a hobby farm. The growing of fruit, berries and vegetables, however, was to help feed and clothe a hungry family of six. The lemon orchard was planted to provide an income after Dad's retirement from the S.E.C.

The accompanying sketch will enable readers to picture the layout of the place as it was before everything was cleared to enable the school to be built. Our house was on the spot now occupied by the art centre. Our garage was near the corner of Louis Street, leaving enough room for access to the orchard. The school assembly area is on the site of our dam, which provided water for the horse, cow, goat, fowls and ducks – even bath water in particularly dry periods – all this apart from its main purpose, to irrigate the orchard.

The rows of mixed fruit, berries and vegetables ran north and south near Armstrong Road, the lemon orchard occupied the centre, and the back paddock was natural bush for the horse. We lost our horse paddock when Louis Miller subdivided.



Although electricity and reticulated water were connected to the township of Heathmont in 1939, it was not until December 1945 that these services were connected to Armstrong Road. My Father, then 69 years of age, had never lived in a house with an electricity supply. Coal, coke and wood were used for heating and cooking, kerosene and candles for lighting. . . .

Prior to our arrival in June 1923, there were four houses in the whole length of Armstrong Road, two on the left and two on the right. The first house on the right, as you look towards the train line, the Gowlands', is on the land on which the Humphrey Law factory is situated, The house, at the rear of the property, can be more easily seen from the top of Pleasant Drive. The second house on the right, the Eastwoods', now renovated and enlarged, is No.64, a weatherboard house just before Martin Street.

On the south side of the railway line, on the left where the netball amenities block is now situated, was the Copleys' small one-bedroom house. Again on the left, and over Dandenong Creek, was Harry Hickman's house, the entrance of which was marked by two magnificent cypress trees. The house is still there, No.5 Neal Court. . . .

Two blocks down the road from us an elderly, well-educated gentleman, a Mr Brooks, lived in an old horse-drawn wagon which never moved as far as I can remember.

This block was purchased by the Sheridan family in 1942 – hence the name Sheridan Court when the land was subdivided into building blocks.

Until the 1970's, Armstrong Road boasted a bridge over the Dandenong Creek, and at that spot was quite a reasonable swimming pool created by damming the creek with logs, branches, rags, stones, anything that was available. The bridge made an excellent diving platform. Christmas bush, ferns and shrubs along the creek made it the most picturesque place for miles around; however, as the area was subject to flooding, the Dandenong Valley Authority was formed and drastic changes made.

When the creeks were flooded, both at Armstrong Road and Canterbury Road, we walked along the railway line to Mountain Highway to reach the school. Why did we walk? Everybody did. Our first car, an old Oakland, was not purchased until 1938. Trips to Dad's family in Templestowe were by horse-drawn wagon. Bread was delivered three times a week, meat and groceries once a week, all by horse-drawn vehicles. We had our own horse, cow, fowls, ducks, vegetables, fruit, and berries. Life was very different then!

. . . .In the original purchase of the school land, the sale was arranged so that our home was left on a quarter-acre block, leaving another quarter acre block on the corner of Louis Street. This block was purchased by the Westons who built the house now used as the infant school. Mrs Weston did not have to move far from home to her new house, her maiden name being June Sheridan. This house was later purchased by Dennis Camp, who in turn sold it to the school.

The success of Lou Miller's subdivision further east prompted Jim Miller to subdivide his Armstrong Road block. This was done by forming a road down the middle, calling it Harriet Street, named after his wife Harriet, nee Maggs, a well-known local pioneer orcharding family.

It was in this period, the 1950's, that many subdivisions took place as the price of land had risen to at least ten times its pre-war value. After Jack Miller's death, his family, Lou, Les and Gwen, arranged the subdivision of the property into building allotments with the formation of Milton, Heath and Mont Streets and later Pleasant Drive.

Frank Clota's lemon orchard, which adjoined the south side of Uncle Jack's orchard in Allens Road was also subdivided with the formation of The Boulevard and its courts. The land on the north side of Jack Miller's, still in Allens Road, formerly Armstrongs', the Dr Colquhoun's, remained a heavily timbered bush block until it was subdivided as recently as 1986.

Having established that, there was a change from "broad acre" holdings to building lots. We should not forget that the developer's responsibility in those days was merely to form a dirt road, gravel it, and leave it to the lot owners to persuade the S.E.C., M.M.B.W, and the P.M.G. to provide the essential services of water, electricity and telephone. . . .

About this time my father decided the orchard was too much to handle and placed the property on the market. The Estate Agent who had previously been asked by the Education Department to find suitable land for a school arranged for an inspection to be made. The land being suitable, in 1954 the Department gave notice of its intention to purchase, and the sale was arranged in 1957.

* * * *

At "The Cuckoo" in Olinda for a kindergarten fundraiser in the 1960's



(LtoR) Alan and Pat Ryan, John and Helen Bell, Betty (Kinder assistant) and Ted Lewellin, Connie and Pat Noble.



(LtoR) John and Pat Ulrik, Dud and Mary Wadsworth, Pam and Lindsay Spencer, Jenny and Ken Rose, Geoff and Kath Clarke, Ted and Lou Davies, Peter and Margaret Bouvier, Pam and Nicholas Grose, with Val and Don Davidson in the foreground

7. Neil Clark

Written in 1997

Farm:

"In 1932, for 350 pounds, my father, John Clark, bought two blocks, comprising about six and a half acres, in the Garden Farms Estate, which was situated at the corner of Armstrong and Canterbury Roads. The area was bush and scrub land.

We cleared the trees and scrub using an axe, mattock and trewhalla jack. This latter implement, which was borrowed from Bert Adams, a market gardener at Bayswater who grew magnificent cabbages, was used to remove tree stumps by easing them out of the ground. I broke the jack twice, and had to take it to "Lorry" Flynn, who was one of two blacksmiths in Ringwood, to have it repaired. Lorry's shop was near the early fire station. He was a well-known character in the area.

My father and I used to collect water from the tank at Heathmont Station so we could boil the billy to make tea at lunchtime.

After clearing the land, we commissioned W.& J. Perman of Box Hill to build a house. I feel the house could be one of the first brick veneer constructions in the area.

We named the house and farm "Roslyn." The building cost, including a garage, feedshed and workshop was 750 pounds. The entrance was initially through a fence in Armstrong Road, which was then an unmade road. We later made a driveway to Canterbury Road, as we would often get bogged in Armstrong Road. Today the house is situated at the top of Lucinda Close, number 4. (In February 1985, it was advertised for sale by H.G. McLean for \$87,500)

On the rest of the land, we subsequently planted 500 lemon trees and built two big poultry pens. Around three sides of the property, except the Canterbury Road frontage, I planted rows of cypress trees for wind protection.

When we bought the land, we were living in Mont Albert. As the land was cleared before the house was built, this meant traveling from Mont Albert to Heathmont. I travelled on push bike, while my father travelled by train. I used to carry the tools tied to my push bike's bars, except for the trewhalla jack, which, due to its size, we used to hide under scrub. My bike trip was made difficult as, in 1932, Canterbury Road was a country gravel road, except for a small bit of bitumen from Heathmont to the Bedford Road corner. I never knew why that bit was sealed. We later acquired a small second-hand Ford 1928 "A" van, (registration no. 146342) which made traveling much easier. Due to financial stress, we had to sell this to Tates Motors, Croydon in 1935 – I remember it well, for Dad and I had to walk home after the sale.

Our first row of fowl pens was 120ft. x 18ft., divided into 10 pens, and a brooder house 30 x 12 divided into 6 or 8 pens. Our second row, built by a Mr Aitken and myself was approx. 80 ft x 20 ft.. All had concrete floors which I hand mixed. Although we had a lot of problems with the birds, we eventually had a flock of close to 1000, and for several years I had a retail and wholesale egg delivery round in Mitcham, Box Hill and Ringwood.

My father died in 1937, and my mother unfortunately sold the property in 1942 while I was away in army service. It was subdivided by a subsequent owner.

General area:

In 1933 there were only four houses between Heathmont Station and Armstrong Road on the south side of Canterbury Road: the Wales, the Russells (in a house named "Aringa"), John Pump and the Sharps.

Opposite "Roslyn", on the other side of Canterbury Road, was Jackson's apple orchard and McCallum's dairy farm. Our immediate neighbour was Jim Miller, who lived to our east and also had a small peach orchard to our south. Walter "Wally" Chivers and his family were our next neighbours along Armstrong Road. The closest electric street light to our property was on the corner of Bedford and Canterbury Roads. I think it was a 60 watt globe, as all street lights were then. At home, lighting was by kero lamp, as it was until well after 1942.

As far as water was concerned, there was a stand pipe at the corner of Dublin and Bedford Roads. This facility enabled water tanks on trucks to be filled for emergency supply. We once used this supply to water our lemons in a very dry season. I took up a petition for a water main to be laid eastwards along Canterbury Road. This was later installed.

In 1932, Marden's Post office and small store stood near the present Heathmont Post Office. In 1946, Cutting's Grocery Store was established nearby, on the site later to be the ANZ Bank. Heathmont Station had a single platform in 1932, lit by oil lamps. After the electric light was installed there, the last passengers would turn off the lights for the guard after the last train. Due to the unmade paths, passengers often wore old shoes to the station. They would change into their dress shoes at the station, leaving their old ones under the seat, to be collected and put on again after the return journey. Train fare to Melbourne from Heathmont was 2/10 first class return and 2/- second class return.

Personal:

Prior to my position in the Rate Office, Borough of Ringwood, I often used to work for Ted Dawes on his orchard in George St, East Doncaster. I would leave Heathmont at 6.30 a.m. on my Malvern Star push bike, work a normal day and leave there at 5 p.m. to ride home. However on days when I was working at the Regal Theatre at Hartwell at night, I would leave East Doncaster at 4 p.m., pedal home, wash, have tea, then pedal back to Ringwood and leave my bike under the Presbyterian Church in Adelaide Street, catch a 6 p.m. train to Camberwell, then to Hartwell. After the theatre closed for the night, I made the reverse trip home, with an acetylene bike lamp, and eventually eat supper left by mother alongside the kero lamp. Often, next day I would have to be up at 6.30 and off to East Doncaster on my trusty Malvern Star."



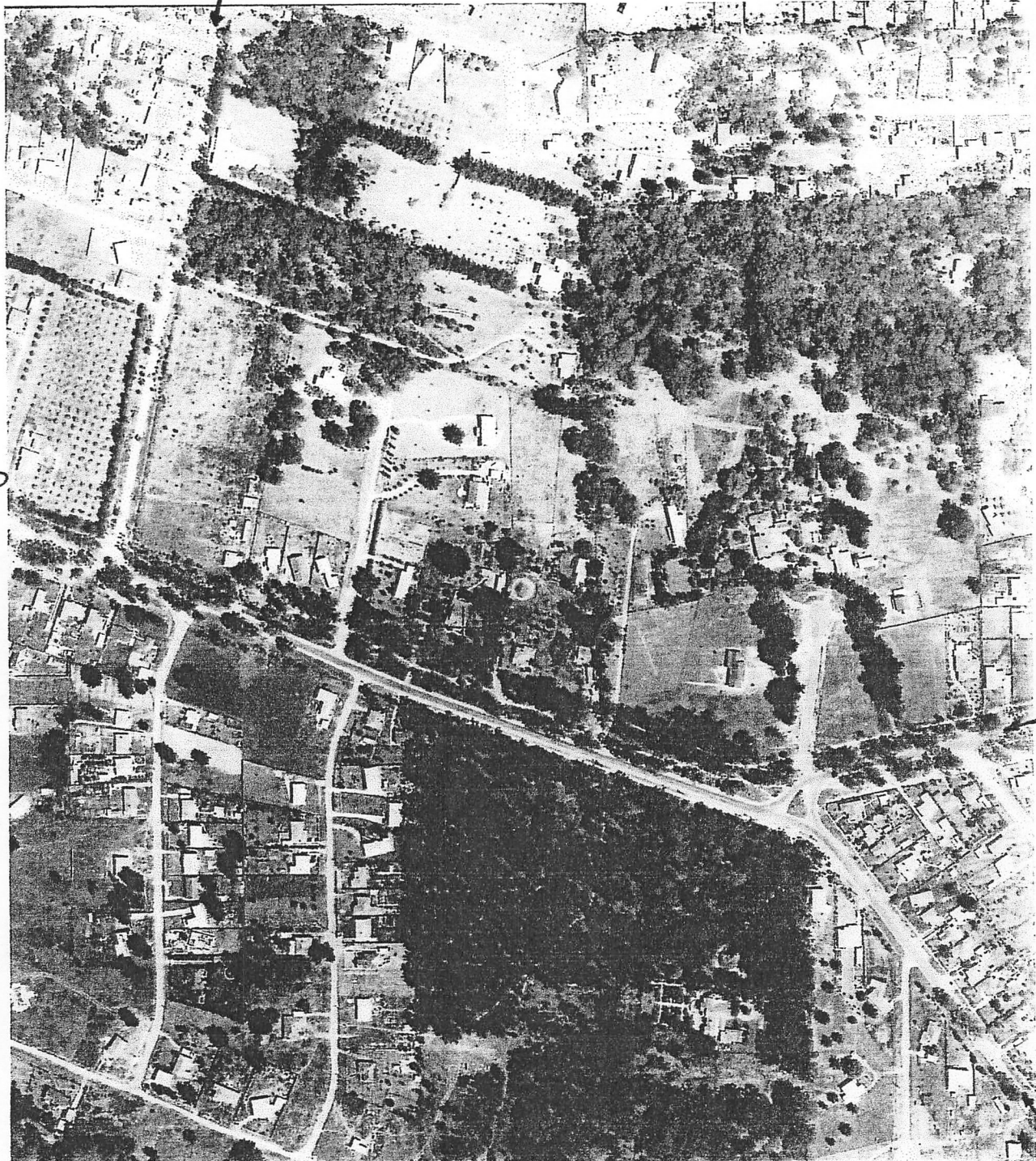
***"Roslyn," the Clark family residence, 1933.
(Now, no. 4 Lucinda Close)***



***"Roslyn" 1937
Lemon orchard and driveway to Canterbury Road.***

PART OF
Heathmont
Circa 1960

ARMSTRONG RD.



CANTERBURY
RD.

BEDFORD
RD.

Photo by Peter Payne

WOMBOLANO
PARK

8. Bambra Cohen

Written in 2006

“With my husband, Reeve, I came to Heathmont as a newly-wed in 1956. For a year we lived with my father and mother at No. 33 Canterbury Road, where our bedroom was a caravan, before Reeve built our own home in what is now Banksia Court, 1956-57. The caravan was not unusual – throughout the Heathmont hills and valleys, up and down unmade roads of dust and mud, there were very many couples living in garages, caravans, shacks, even car cases, as they built their own homes. Often this took quite a time, in part because of the difficulty of obtaining materials in this post-war era.

There were only about six houses in our part of Heathmont, surrounded by lots of bush, especially past the top end of the road, up near Dr Colquhoun’s large property.

But the hardships and isolation were soon outweighed by the fellowship, especially among the mums. In those days, with new babies, we mums didn’t go out to employment. To get to shops, friends, health centres and doctors, we pushed pushers and prams along unmade roads with no footpaths, sometimes even crossing creeks, oldest children walking alongside, nature all around us, often going all the way to Ringwood to such as Hattams, Moran & Cato’s, and Coles, for there were very few Heathmont shops.

Soon we were all heavily involved in the fun of fund-raising – for kinder, schools, churches, sports and scouts. For some years I was secretary of the parents’ association at Heathmont State, where, as in all other local interests, we had a wonderful group of mothers, forming strong friendships as we worked on the canteen, made sports uniforms, chatted at the school gates and did all the other supportive activities. My husband Reeve was a leading figure in the foundation of Scouting in Heathmont – I remember the first parent meetings at Marj Sinclair’s home in Bedford Road, then of course the first Scout nights at Washusen’s, with Scoutmaster Wally Haines, and the Barrow family’s kind donation of land for the scout hall.

The warmth of a country village was also obvious in the shopkeepers. A few of the many who come to my mind are the wag Jack Egan, butcher, the “lolly shop” of the Stocks, then of Jean and Bill Strong, Frank and Mavis Lucas, Jack and Ruth Sanders (in whose garage, after hours, Reeve used to fix our car at no cost). And many others, invariably kindly, pleasant folk like the dear old greengrocer Mrs. McRae, sitting outside her shop shelling the peas and “top ‘n tailing” the beans for her customers while they finished their shopping nearby. Not only do I and my dear friends recollect the shopkeepers, but also the shops themselves, often different from today, A particular example is the grocery – Cuttings, then Don and Minnie Nicholson’s, with products such as cheese, biscuits and butter weighed, cut and wrapped by the shop assistant behind the counter.

Indeed, this is our strongest recollection of Heathmont – caring, wonderful friends meeting together formally and informally, “up the street” and on committees, making hundreds of lamingtons, our young families pushing up unmade roads with casseroles for fund-raising Saturday night progressive dinners.

And the icing on the cake is that this community spirit is not just a recollection, for it still exists today, 50 years on, in my case particularly in the “Heathmont Tuesday Girls who meet on Monday” – Helen Rees tells me she is saying more about them. (us!)”

* * *

9. Ross Cowling

Written in 1998

"When Joyce and I came to Heathmont to reside at 14 Viviani Crescent at Easter 1957, the railway was a single track through bushland mainly, and Canterbury Road was an attractive two-way tree lined entry from either direction – east or west. The bridge over the railway line was so narrow that shoppers would be splashed crossing over. The only shops were on the north-west side of Heathmont and trees sheltered the shops from Canterbury Road, providing a most picturesque setting in a village atmosphere. A small embankment markedly reduced the noise from the road. Canterbury Road and Campbell Street were the only two sealed roads.

The only garage then was Sanders on the Campbell Street corner where the '7-11 shop' now stands; the only doctor, a very overworked man in a rapidly growing community, Dr. Murray Deerbon, who lived and worked in Campbell Street. Only one orchard remained, that of Alan and Kath Washusen, on the west side of Lowan Avenue, their dam being located where a house now stands, on the corner of Canterbury Road. Beware all home buyers! Some fruit trees still stood in Ron Sharp's orchard on the south side of Allen's Road and on the west side of Barnic Road - probably Barrow's orchard. Mr. Barrow donated the land for the scout hall, built in the 60's beside the creek at the southern end of Barnic Road, beyond Barrow Drive.

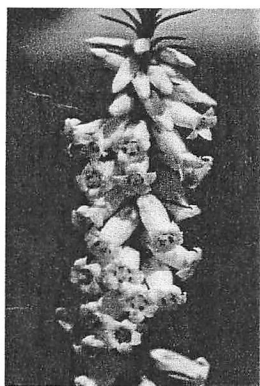
West of Washusen's was woodland to the creek and to Rick Finlayson's, then the only resident by the creek, with no tennis court nor school. A fox came regularly to eat from the plate of Rick's dog, which was quite tolerant of the intruder. In the woodland a tree house had been built of scrap iron sheets. Repeated banging drew our attention to it as kookaburras continually attacked it, beaks first.

Opposite us in Viviani Crescent, kookaburras nested in the hollow limb of a tree; around us white plumed honeyeaters, wattle birds and golden finches nested, and mudlarks fed at our back door and nested in the larger trees near the railway station. Rosellas, robins, pallid cuckoos and pardalotes visited, but with increased settlement came Indian mynahs, sparrows, starlings, blackbirds and cats, and a corresponding loss of the native animals, which included blue tongue lizards (good snail catchers) and skinks (good fly catchers).

Just behind us in Balfour Avenue was the first school in Heathmont, newly built but already with added classrooms to cope with the rapidly expanding population. Kevin Gerraghty was the popular Head teacher, who claimed that until the school population reached 400 he could remember the name of every child. At the peak, some classes exceeded 60 children, and Mrs. Fulton lamented her inability to give adequate attention to the infants she taught.

Balfour Avenue then terminated in the creek below Viviani Crescent, and in common with most of Heathmont's roads, was unmade, being dust in summer and mud in winter, without footpaths, and with very smelly gutters because kitchen wastes then drained into the streets. Toilets were remote from the house unless residents provided a septic tank, otherwise a pan system was used. For schools, the mud and dust carted in onto uncovered floors provided problems for cleaners.

At this time it was always pleasant to walk around Heathmont at weekends to see what native plants were in bloom along the roadside and the railway line. Six species of "egg and bacon" (pea plant) could be found, also the Running Postman, Kennedia,



Epacris impressa
Common Heath

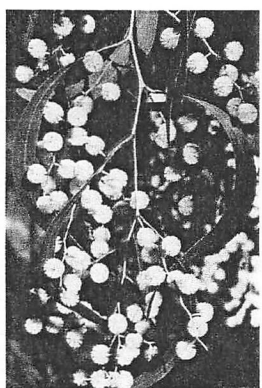
Family: EPACRIDACEAE
This small woody shrub is Victoria's floral emblem and has both pink and white forms. The compacted tubular flowers can be seen from March to Spring. One of two *Epacris* in Maroondah, the other (*Epacris gunnii*) being less frequent.

Hovea, orchids and wattles, especially the myrtle-leaf wattle. Heath and teatree blossoms were common then, adding colour in winter. Indeed, Heathmont was once an attractive place, according to our neighbour, Herb Jenkins. It was a mecca for metropolitan Sunday School picnics, which were held in what is now Heathmont Park, not then cleared for tennis courts and other sports. I have seen purple eyebright growing there, and the hyacinth orchid. The last stems of a once pure stand of casuarinas grow near the tennis courts in Canterbury Road. The dainty little feather tailed glider, small enough to fit into a matchbox, once lived in this bushland.

In 1957 the only hall available to the Heathmont residents was the Kindergarten Hall in Viviani Crescent behind the shops. It was also the Baby Health Centre and the common meeting place for all community concerns. It was built by the Heathmont Advancement League as a service to the community. Another major objective of the League was the preservation of the natural beauty of Heathmont., but as usual the natural beauty fell to the avidity and stupidity of we humans.

The Methodist and Anglican churches were established, but there was little for the activities of the youth – no scouts or cubs or adequate sports areas. The Dandenong Creek was not then the cleared and channeled drain it is now, but, being clothed in shrubbery and trees invited attention and even shooting and fishing. This is how one Heathmont boy lost his life as the gun of another accidentally discharged.

Dense fogs were not uncommon, so that drivers had to grope their way along, as kerbs were not visible. Due to increased population, or perhaps the decrease of wood fires, such fogs do not now occur. [



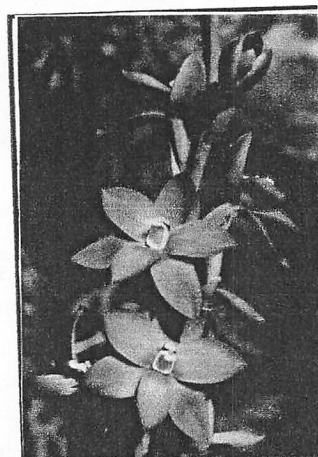
Acacia pycnantha
Golden Wattle

Family: MIMOSACEAE
Australia's Floral Emblem. Leaves are variable in width, distinctively pointed downward and curved. This tree is well represented in local reserves and flowers from July until around September / October.

Among the eucalypts growing in Heathmont were red stringybark, long-leaf box, peppermints, messmate (stringy bark) and trees known locally as mealy stringybark, but identified by a forester as silverleaf stringybark (*E. cephalogarpa*); it was the poorest firewood I have ever tried to burn. The biggest golden wattle I have ever seen grew just below the Kindergarten Hall in Viviani Crescent; lightwoods (another wattle) grew in the grounds of the State School and in Dickasons Road at the lower end.

Bellbird Park has disappeared; it was a large woodland adjacent to the Dandenong Creek and Wantirna Road extending to Canterbury Road with some housing in that area. Alas, the trees and all the animals and birds dependent on them have gone to create the Ringwood Public Golf Course. At that time there were many billboards around proclaiming "Why Ringbark Ringwood?" but the Ringwood Council was less sympathetic to that slogan than to the catchcry "Progress and Development." The main attractions of Heathmont in 1957 have been progressed and developed to oblivion."

* * *

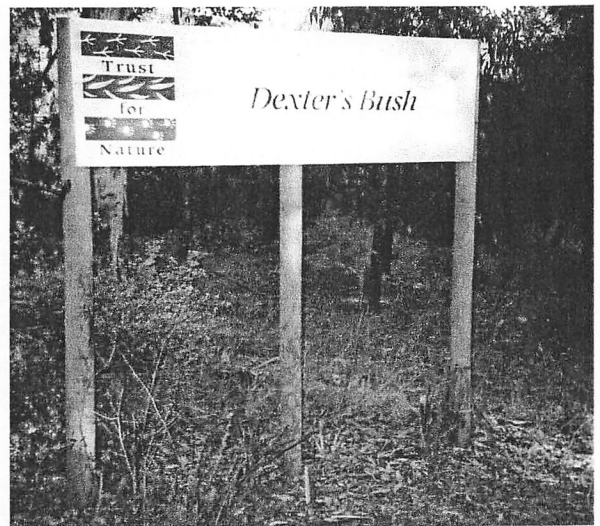
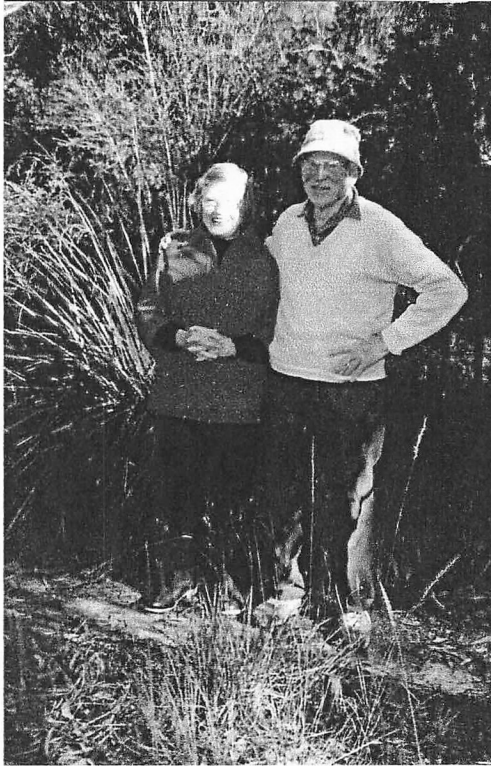


Thelymitra media
Tall Sun-orchid

Family: ORCHIDACEAE
This orchid is quite large (as the name suggests) and has a long, single leaf which is variable in width. Flowers open during daylight hours and there may be up to 30 on one plant. Locally significant species.

10. Liz and Mick Dexter

Written in 2005



"We found our land in 1956 and built in 1958. On moving in, (November 1958) we found life very different from the inner suburb of Kew. We really felt we were in the bush.

Canterbury Road was a narrow bitumen strip with wide grassy verges and flowering gums on part of it. Lots of the roads in the new housing areas were unmade; residents had to organize a yearly load of gravel for them. Footpaths were a rarity and so were telephones. We were still waiting for one in December 1960 after we had been living in our house for two years – but telegrams and mail were delivered, mail twice a day. We had to install a private water line, as the main finished at the top of the hill. We all had septic tanks and those awful grease traps, or there was a collection of heavy metal "thunderboxes" by the dunny cart. There was no gas. Most houses had one car, or none, but school was close and kids walked to school. Milk was delivered every night by horse cart – you left a carrier of clean milk bottles at the gate at night and in the morning we had fresh milk for breakfast. Someone came once a fortnight to collect the money you owed. Milk was not homogenised so you could pour off the "top" milk to use as "cream." Similarly, bread was delivered to the door or put in a container at the gate – the choice was brown or white! There was no weekend baking, so Monday was the day kids ordered lunch at school. The grocer in Ringwood visited early in the week and wrote down your order and then delivered it on Thursdays. Greengrocers did the same if you left a list at the shop. Even the dry cleaner called once a week in the hope of a job, and delivered the

garments. All the big department stores in the city delivered shopping for nothing, and they didn't have to be large purchases.

Kindergartens were in great demand, not expensive but quickly filled, so we had one kid briefly at the original Heathmont kinder, the next one had to go to a Baptist one in East Ringwood, and the last to the Presbyterian one in Heathmont. Heathmont Primary was excellent, with Mrs. Fulton an institution in Prep. – she always knew the older siblings of the new one. Mr. Milligan was an enthusiastic, dynamic Principal, and the place really hummed. He had some excellent teachers, Mr. Brown being outstanding in Grade 3.

We didn't lock our houses or cars and the keys were usually in the ignition. There were four service stations in Heathmont over the years with full mechanical service: attendants put in the petrol and checked oil and tyres.

There was a shoe store here and the milk bars were always open, but no coffee shops. We had three banks and quick teller service without charge. The Manager stayed for years, and personally approved loans.

The railway station had a live-in ticket seller and general dogsbody. She had her own house provided and so could keep an eye on the facilities. Toilets there were open and had no graffiti.

The H.E.Parker Reserve was a dense mass of tea tree and eucalypts before the ovals were made, and it was easy to get lost..

Dandenong Creek was just that. It twisted and turned, and was clean enough to swim in in the early 1950's. Platypus had been seen in it. In the bush around the creek there were snakes (Copperheads and black), blue tongue lizards, an echidna, lots of blue wrens and other birds. There were many wildflowers like orchids, blackeyed susan, egg and bacon, even some pink heath on the walk home from school. Unfortunately our bit of the Dandenong Creek was destroyed by the Dandenong Valley Authority in the late 60's when it was converted into a drain. They wouldn't get away with it today!

There were still lots of orchards between Heathmont and Vermont, with a cool store in Ringwood. The Washusens was the last working orchard in Heathmont – we used to call in and buy apples by the case.

There were empty blocks and paddocks where horses were kept by quite a few kids, and it was an easy and safe ride for our kids to Pony Club in Cheong Park via Wombolano Park. Horse floats hardly existed. For long distances, one of the locals loaded horses into a truck. In Dickasons Road, one neighbour bred, milked and showed goats on her five acres, another had a large poultry shed, and others put in large crops of tomatoes or pumpkins to sell commercially.

Kids roamed free and explored abandoned houses, the creek and the bush. They built cubbies, played backyard cricket, and Guides and Scouts flourished. We built bonfires and could buy fireworks for Empire Day (May) and Guy Fawkes Day (5 November).

Mothers Club was big at the primary School and fathers attended working bees at weekends. Everyone contributed to the school fete.

It was a simple, enjoyable, safe, healthy life."

* * *

11. Betty and John Evans

Written in 2005

Betty:

“My very first memories of Heathmont started when I was 12 years old. I came with our group of Girl Guides by train from Glenferrie to an apple orchard for tracking exercises. It must have been where Barnic Road now is, as I well remember a very, very steep hill. We were told we could take as many apples as we wished, but were not to touch any on the trees. Beautiful red Jonathons. They were just great.

A second memory was when I was about 16 or 17. I was very keen on horse riding, and we used to come by train to a stable owned by Mr. Godfrey opposite Mountain View Road, where it now is, and before the road was excavated. A tiny little wooden bridge over the railway line, only a very few cars, and a gallop along Canterbury Road through the bush was Heaven.

John built our home in Heathmont in 1958, and for many years was a builder in the district. It does seem sometimes we have been here for ever. We came here with 4 children from Box Hill South. In those days Heathmont was still a beautiful bushland, although many homes were now appearing.

Our bread and milk were delivered to the front door, each from horse and cart. There was a tennis court where the car park is now at the station, and it was not unusual to find wild flowers, including orchids, growing there along the walk way.

The little Post office, run by Mr. and Mrs. Bungie, was attached to the tiny supermarket next door, owned by Frank and Mavis Lucas. It was divided by an open doorway covered with a red curtain. Funny the little things one remembers. The eggs from the shop were always stored in the P. O.

The area which is now the main shopping centre was then part of Sharp's orchard, and we all moaned the day we found a large sign saying that shop sites (24 I think) on Canterbury Road were to be auctioned.

We had one train line only, and had to wait for the train to return from Bayswater to go to Ringwood and the city.

It was a lovely area in which to bring up a family, and to make friends. We found that everything we went along to support - Scouts, Girl Guides, schools, church, etc. - were all patronized by the same wonderful people - one great big fabulous family.

Dr Alec Thom's first surgery, when he came from Creswick, was above Mr. Lavis's hardware shop. He later moved over to the old cottage where the carwash now is. A dear little place, complete with verandah. He later requested that John build him a new surgery next door, similar in character to the old.”

John:

“ Here is a humorous memory:

Somewhere about 45 years ago, Dr. Thom, one of the earliest GP's in Heathmont, practised from 1 Dickasons Rd. in a building which was probably somebody's holiday shack before W.W.II.

To say the building was in good order would be a very big fib, as the timber had rotted and it was overdue for demolition. However Dr. Thom, being the great doctor and innovator that he always was, gave the place an enviable atmosphere that his patients enjoyed.

One day I, a builder before retirement, was called in to do a few urgent makeshift repairs, and was replacing floor boards to the main entrance verandah, when Dr. Thom came out of the surgery and said, "Jack, have you got a hacksaw?" to which I replied :Yes." Without further explanation, he borrowed it and disappeared into the building, to return after a few minutes with the hacksaw and a huge grin on his face. "You should have seen the young kid's face when I walked in with the hacksaw and started cutting the plaster cast off his broken arm!"

Our first Scout hall was in Washusen's orchard in their old family home. Scouting numbers increased so rapidly that eventually larger premises were required. The land at the end of Barnic Rd. became available and a Building Committee formed. This consisted of the two Scout Masters, Wally Haines and Alan Carter, and John Evans.

As funds were very limited, and after much discussion, the Committee decided to engage Holdsworth Constructions, who specialized in steel form buildings, who gave the most space for less money. When the Ringwood Council was approached for a building permit, and due to the fact that the land was flood prone from the Dandenong Creek, which formed the southern boundary, we were obliged to site the building on the hillside part of the block, well above the 1934 flood level benchmark.

This involved cutting in to the hillside to form a level bench, which was done by Harry Beard of Canterbury Road, Heathmont, who ran a bulldozing business. Holdsworth put up the building on a concrete floor slab to lock-up stage, and thereafter we were in business. Money was raised by the Scouts' parents having regular bottle and paper drives. Internal improvements have been done over many years, and today the set up has internal toilets, kitchen, meeting room and equipment rooms, facility for basketball, parades, parking area, separate lockup structure for paper and bottles. Furthermore, it is somewhat isolated from the residential segment, and has been a valuable medium for Heathmont."



1946



1996

12. Gwen Fairweather

Written in 1998

"In the 50's and 60's the Immigration Scheme was in full swing and some wonderful, young talented people arrived in Heathmont and built homes the hard way. The pioneering spirit was alive and well, and the "handout" was unheard of. We were blessed to have many good friends from both old Australians and new arrivals.

Len and I bought our block of land on the corner of Eden Avenue and Cuthbert St. for 150 pounds around about 1950, and a couple of years later a home was built to lock-up stage. No running water and no light connected. A 44 gallon drum used to be filled with water and rolled down the road to our home. Our lighting was a kerosene pressure lamp, our cooking a small kerosene stove, and an open fire for heating.

Miss Ada Marden had the Post office and a store of sorts. We collected our mail once a week. The cat sat on the bag of sugar more or less permanently.

There was another store on the corner of Heathmont and Canterbury Roads, originally commenced by Arthur and Chris Cutting. As Len and I both worked and it was 7 p.m. or later when we arrived home the store was closed, so all shopping had to be carried home in dilly bags on the train. We did this for quite a few years.

No roads were made and there was very little street lighting. What a struggle it was, in the middle of winter especially, coming home at night from work – the roads were a quagmire. Very few people owned cars and train travelers used to leave their muddy shoes at the railway station and wear clean shoes to their destination and on the journey home change back to muddy shoes to walk home. It really was hilarious to see a great pile of shoes at the station.

Canterbury Road was un-made and deeply rutted. On one occasion Len and I were riding bicycles down the hill toward Wantirna Road and the chain came off his bicycle and he passed a very surprised gent on a motor bike. A pile of screenings at the foot of the hill finally pulled Len up.

The Tennis Club was in its infancy. There were two sand courts when I started playing there, and the club house was little more than a lean-to. The afternoon tea was put into a sort of meat safe until arvo tea time. Many an afternoon, ants were picked out of the cakes before being offered to visitors.

There was no "canned" entertainment. Families got together on a Saturday night for games and community singing. Square dancing was popular too."

• * *

SUN 5/8/94
WILLIAM ERIC NICKELS

Friendly sportsman left lasting impression



Eric Nickels

Heathmont and Ferntree Gully identity.

Born: December 4, 1911.

Died: July 20, 1994.

ERIC Nickels left a lasting impression on the outer Melbourne suburb of Heathmont.

He bought a local apple orchard in 1946 and three years later subdivided it as the young suburb began to grow.

Mr Nickels was a founder member of the Heathmont Progress

Association which built the local hall and staged many dances.

A keen sportsman, he was a longtime member of the local tennis club and won 10 A-grade premierships. "He was a friendly and hard working contributor in many family, sporting and community activities," said his son Mr Ron Nickels.

Born and bred in Yarraville, Mr Nickels married Doris Booth in 1935 before moving to Heathmont.

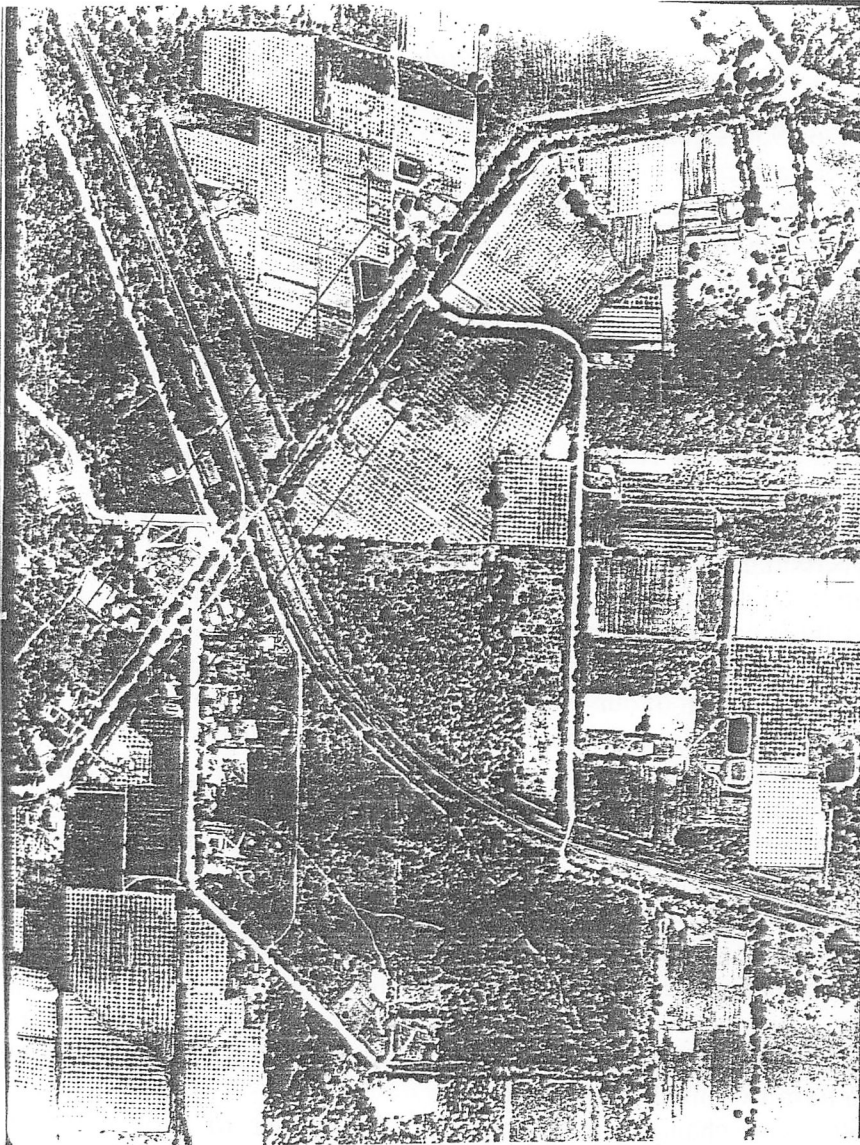
In 1960 his first wife died, and he

married Lillian Pickett. The couple lived in Ferntree Gully.

Mr Nickels was president of the Ferntree Gully and District Tennis Association and the Ferntree Gully Bowling Club. For more than 25 years he worked as a toolmaker and foreman with Luke and Singers in Mitcham after starting his career with Richardson Gears in Footscray.

Mr Nickels' funeral was held on July 26. He is survived by three sons, 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

ORCHARDS AND ORCHARDISTS



1945: including Pump's in the north, Sharp's in the centre, previous to the shopping centre, Washusen's and Barrow's to the south. Name the roads!



Wilf Pump and Ron Sharp, 1996

13. Rod Fraser

Written in 2006

"I remember in the 1950's going for a Sunday afternoon drive up Canterbury Road to the Dandenongs. It was a narrow single lane strip of bitumen road, with a few houses on either side, and lots of trees and scrub. New housing estates were being opened up.

I arrived in Heathmont to live with my wife in 1964. We had built a new home in Sheridan Court. The land cost \$2800 and the three bedroom home \$3500, which was the maximum you could borrow from the Commonwealth Bank in those days.

I worked in Prahran. Without a car, I had a 20 minutes walk to the station via The Boulevard and Salisbury Court. Walking up the hill there, you could tell if you had to run because you could hear the train leaving Bayswater station.

Shopping was limited in Heathmont, and I bought most of our groceries and vegetables at Prahran market and brought them home on the train.

Two doctor's clinics were in Heathmont, always busy with lots of babies being born. Dr Murray Deerbon had a practice with several doctors in Canterbury Road next to the Methodist Church. Dr Thom was joined by Dr Francis and Dr Barker in Dickasons Road. In those days there was no locum service. One of the doctors was on call from his home. I remember Dr Francis sounding unhappy when I had to ring him twice during the night prior to the premature birth of our first daughter.

We joined Heathmont Baptist Church on our arrival in Heathmont. It was a 30 minutes walk until we met friends who gave us a lift. The church had been established in Balfour Avenue in 1954. Peter Manton was the first senior pastor (to be followed by Norman Wright, John Wright, Harley Kitchen and presently John Smith – each with his special gifts has been able to guide the church to its place in the community today). Peter was a young man, with outstanding preaching ability and with a young family this fitted in well with all the new families arriving in the district. The first person I remember was Mr Roy Alexander Fraser (no relation), dressed in a suit, as we did then. He had given himself unsparingly to the work. He was one of those senior men who you never felt comfortable calling by their Christian name – just so different today. In 1965 a group of ten members left to form Boronia Baptist Church.

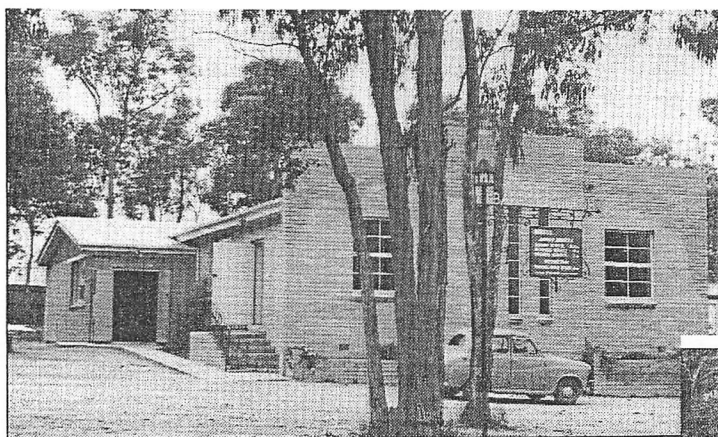
The late 60's saw changes in church life. The order of service was very traditional with four hymns which finished with singing the Amen. The use of this sung Amen was discontinued in 1967. It was normal practice for ladies to wear hats to church, and men to wear suits with collar and tie. Most Baptist ministers after ordination wore a clerical collar in church, and for special occasions. I was part of that change because I was appointed as church secretary in 1965 and during the next four years we experienced such growth that we sold the Balfour Avenue site and moved to three acres in Cuthbert Street,

Just 11 years since the opening of the Balfour Avenue building, a new building was opened in the Cuthbert Street site on June 21, 1969. The present Worship Centre was opened in 1992.

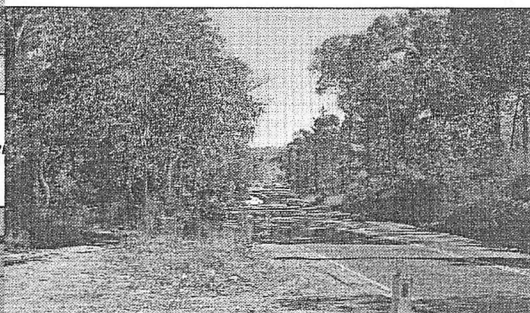
One of the most exciting experiences for me was in 1975. I was involved in a major project called "Operation Makki." In April, 1973, a severe landslide above the Makki mission station, Irian Jaya, brought down tons of earth and rock into the Makki River. A team of 16 from Heathmont built two new mission houses within six weeks. We worked and shared communion with the Danis, and found language was no barrier. All of our lives were changed by that experience. From it, the Church approved the

establishment of Operation Barnabas Fund in 1976. It has assisted church members in short-term specific projects. Many people of all ages have since been involved in projects within Australia and overseas.

I moved from Heathmont in 1982 and returned in 2001. I have witnessed many changes in the community and in church life. It has been exciting to be part of Heathmont and see its development from a small town to a large vibrant community in the 21st century. I am grateful to God for all the experiences I have known as a resident of Heathmont."



Official Opening of Balfour Avenue Church Building on June 21, 1958
L-r: Frank Groom, Rev Sam Watson, Tom Carey, Bert Harvey, Bill Dick, Alec Fraser, Marjorie Fraser, Rev Jack Manning

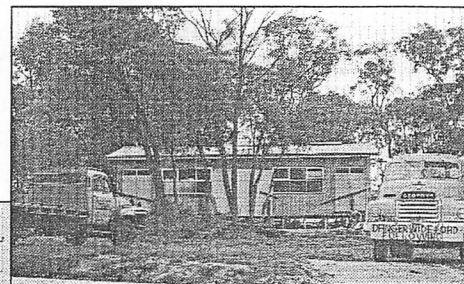


Canterbury Road hill looking west from Balfour Avenue 1969

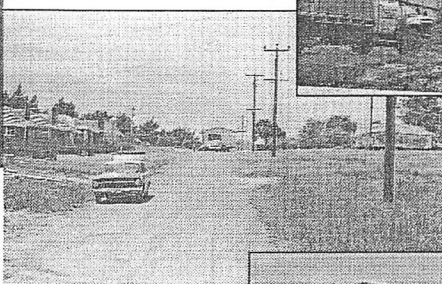


Moving from Balfour Avenue to Cuthbert Street - February 1969

Kindergarten Hall in Balfour Avenue ready for its move to Cuthbert Street



She's coming - along Cuthbert Street John Evans escorted the moving of the hall across Canterbury Road to the new site on his Police Motor Cycle



Kindergarten Hall in its final resting place waiting for the experts (brickies) to build up the sides. Now permanently part of the Cuthbert Street complex. Hardly recognisable today. First meeting place for worship on new site.



14. Keith and Jean Hardy

Written in 2006

“We knew Mike Ringrose from Mont Albert days. He built a home in Bennett Avenue, and when Keith helped him he liked the area, so in 1947 we bought a block of land in Balfour Avenue for 63 pounds from George Marden. (We could only afford the 10 pounds deposit)

From Mont Albert, Keith rode his bike everywhere – to work at Spotswood and on the weekends to Heathmont to clear the block with tools kept in a tent on the block. It was hard getting materials, for example, we had to wait from an Easter to the next Christmas to get the 4x2 framing timber.

In 1949 we had the excitement of moving in to our own home. It was still unlined and baby Jenny’s cot had to be in the bathroom for a while, but it was our own home!

For some time, Keith rode to his railways job in Spotswood, but in 1949-50 he left that job to study at night school and become a plumber, an occupation he enjoyed from 1950 to 1986. Often at first he rode to his jobs. Later he was able to borrow a car from Jean’s aunt, and he would use this to carry his tools to the job site, then Jean would drive it to the Council to obtain permits. When they were able to buy their first car, it was a Holden ute from Preston Motors in the city, and the whole family went in on a Saturday morning to bring it home, Keith and Jean feeling like the King and Queen!

Plumbing then was often hard pick & shovel work, sometimes with pressure to get the job ready for the Board of Works inspectors, but it was also very rewarding work as we helped the new community get going. Like most of the local couples, we were battling financially, but enjoying the community life. They were grateful for Keith’s work installing spouting, downpipes, chip heaters and septic tanks, and changing tap washers, often for no charge. Fixing leaks, too – one that comes to mind was when the efforts of George Browning in Campbell Street to change a washer resulted in a 15 foot spout! We made many friends: the Harpers, the Wielands where we went on Saturday nights after 1956, for they had a TV set, Keith Austin, first president of the Baby Health Centre when Jean was secretary, and his wife Joyce, shopkeeper Estelle Spargo – friends then who are friends still, 50 years later. We also recall the wonderful dedication of Dr Murray Deerbon, who would visit folk in their own homes, up and down unlit, muddy streets, and often late at night,

The community spirit was very strong. Well-known examples of this included the many fund-raising activities, mostly organized by the women, and the many working bees, mostly for the dads. The Easter Fair was an annual highlight, with Dorrie Nickels in charge of cakes, and John and Joan Harper selling plants. The wheelbarrow race from Ringwood to Heathmont via Heathmont Road was a great attraction. Square dances were also great for fun and funds.

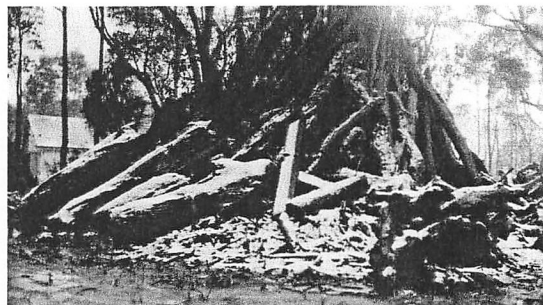
These were the days of the Heathmont Advancement League – Frank Secomb, John Harper, and others, sitting on the sacks and boxes at Arthur Cutting’s store, with Jean as Secretary. Their successful concerns included retaining some open space in Campbell Street and some trees at the shopping centre being developed at Sharp’s orchard site, and although the plans for a community centre in Viviani Crescent, then at H.E.Parker did not eventuate, the League’s pre-school centre was a great boon to the community.

They were great days – not much money, but huge community goodwill.”

Features common in Heathmont in the 1950's and 1960's:



The grandparents visit the happy young couple at the block (here, Jean Hardy's Nan & Pop)



Trees felled and stacked at the back of the block ready to be a few years' firewood.

The finished house, owner-built, and with as many trees retained as possible. (here, Keith & Jean Hardy's, Balfour Ave.)



* * * *

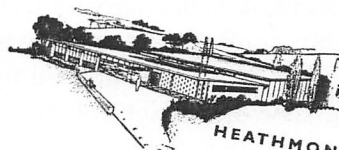
HEATHMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE

It has long been a dream of Heathmont residents to erect their own Community Centre, one that could be of use to the whole of the Community, regardless of race, colour or creed.

To bring this old dream to reality, we are proud to announce the official start of a campaign aimed at raising funds to enable the first stage to be built immediately.

The Council of the City of Ringwood have granted this Centre a tract of land on the H. E. Parker Reserve in Heathmont which will be developed according to previously agreed plans.

Remember!—this is **YOUR** project! It is being built with **YOUR** money! It will be developed and operated for **YOUR** use.



HEATHMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR PERIOD
1st. JULY 1966, to 30th. JUNE, 1972.

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
Rent	1563. 52	Building Costs	71. 26
Donation Heathmont Advancement League	140. 00	Furniture	307. 50
Loan A.E.Law	150. 00	Insurance Power & Sundries	501. 33
Bank Interest	61. 26	Repayment Loan to Heathmont Youth Club	1196. 00
	\$1914. 78		\$2076. 11
Balance at 1/7/66	194. 57	Bank Balance 30.6.72	33. 24
	\$2109. 35		\$2109. 35

(Signed) Albert E. Law
President

E. Cook
Treasurer

I have examined the Cash Book and Bank Statements of the Heathmont Community Centre Committee and report that the statement of receipts and payments for the period 1st. July 1966 to 30th. June, 1972 is in accordance with these records. I have also examined the vouchers covering receipts and payments and have accepted the explanations of the President and Treasurer as satisfactory.

(Signed) K. Roberts

PRESIDENT
A. E. Law
VICE PRES.
C. M. D. Dwyer

15. Joan Harper

Written in 1997

"Heathmont in 1939 was a quiet, delightful little hamlet, a one-lane road fringed with nodding greenhoods and mainly an orchard area. Unfortunately the Second World War changed most lives and certainly delayed our building and coming to live at "Uambi" until 1948, by which time Heathmont was growing apace. Our acres had been on the market for 17 years before which, I believe, they supplied oil for a eucalyptus factory in Burnley and partly planted as a market garden. We paid 425 pounds for this lovely setting.

As we moved into the fifties and more children arrived, the Heathmont Advancement League applied to the Government for funds to build a kindergarten and community hall. A 2 for 1 grant would be available, provided a pre-school group was established, so the "littlies" met three times a week in two private homes for many months. School children had to catch the train to Ringwood. Lyn Washusen collected a group to walk to Ringwood for Sunday School, and if it was wet they all piled into our big old Fiat. Meat came on the train, fruit and vegetables chosen from a truck that called each week, bread and milk delivered each day by horse and cart, and ice three times a week in summer.

Our social life was centred around fund raising. The Autumn Fair was a day for everyone to work for and enjoy, trees for street or home planting were obtained each year from the Forestry Commission, quiz nights were held, progressive dinners when each course was held in a different home and fashion parades when a garment had to be made and modeled for under two pounds (Croydon Market cotton could be bought for 2/6d per yard and sometimes the new-fangled zip was the most expensive single item). Slide nights were held, and of course the projector nearly always broke down, except when Albert Law showed us his marvellous slides of the local flora. Square dancing became the rage, and the numbers doubled when we moved into the new Kindergarten and Community Hall which was opened by Lady (later Dame Robena) Angliss in 1952. On that exciting day the delightful mural, painted by local artist George Browning was unveiled, The hall was the centre of our activities and it was a shock when a neighbour took the League to court, complaining of excessive noise even though functions ended at 11.30 p.m., but as Brownies opened the hall at 8.30 a.m. on Saturdays, the judge considered the noise could be too great and ruled that the Kindergarten be the sole user. A Health Centre was built on the land next door and opened by Lady Dallas Brookes in 195_.

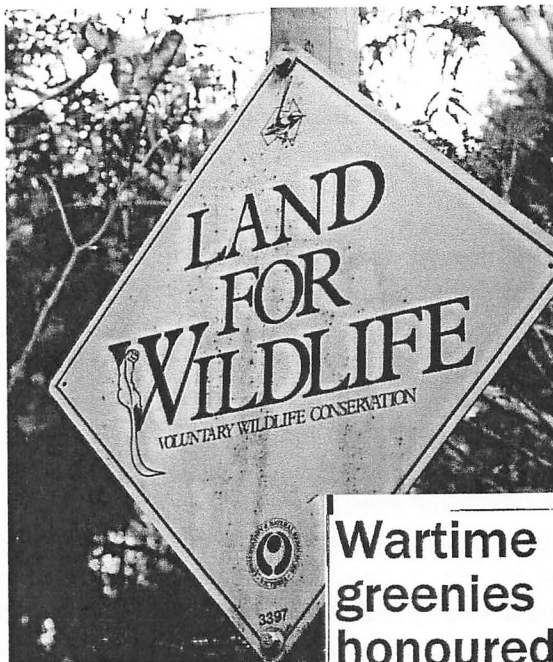
All this time, sporting facilities, the Red Cross and C.W.A. groups were springing up. "Why Ringbark Ringwood?" was perhaps the first environmental sign supported by any local Council.

I wonder who remembers Naval Engineer Captain Eddie Nurse and his solar hot water system in his front garden, his telescope which allowed so many of us to follow the first Sputniks across the sky and his home-made water clock given to the Museum and now in storage at Scienceworks (Reg. no. 29857). It keeps excellent time by a drop of water every minute turning a cog wheel made from the lid of a Mira plum jam tin! And Heathmont has been home to other personalities – Ron Clarke, Ron Barassi and WEG, for instance.

One of the main delights of living in Heathmont was, of course, the orchards. Their beauty in Spring was undisputed, and if you haven't tasted a Sharp's windfall apple

you have missed one of life's joys! The day Ron's orchard was razed was one of the saddest days I remember. Progress means change, and it is disappointing that 45 years on, the Heathmont Primary School is to be closed and merged – but then I never imagined that one day I would enjoy a Saturday morning wine tasting at the Heathmont Cellars, on the site of Miss Marden's store!

The centenary of the Pump's arrival, held last year, reminded us how important it is to preserve as much of Heathmont's natural beauty as possible. With this in mind, Heathmont Bush Link meets and works regularly. Three private areas have been given to the Victorian Trust for Nature, to be held in perpetuity, so that parts of Heathmont will always remain a 'bush setting'."



Wartime greenies honoured

THE Harper family of Heathmont have always been concerned for the bush, and their efforts over the years have earned Maroondah council's recognition and support.

On behalf of the council, the Mayor of Maroondah, Councillor Maureen Naylor, presented a "letter under seal" to the family at a council meeting on August 2.

Cr Naylor described the Harper's dedication to the environment as "outstanding."

Mr John Harper and his wife, Joan, have harboured a love for native bushland since the 1940s when they bought the 14-acre property, Uambi, also known as Harpers' Bush, in the heart of suburban Heathmont.

In the '60s and '70s, when landclearing was popular, their care of the bush was unusual.

By the late 1980s, the Harpers decided that the best way to continue caring for the bush would be to donate four hectares to the Trust for Nature.

However, the Harpers still take an active interest in the bush by regularly removing weeds during their frequent walks through the property.

Their son David is also a keen conservationist. He said the family was very appreciative of the council's recognition and thanked it for the honour.



Bush legacy: Joan Harper and her son David at the family property Uambi, part of which they have donated to the Trust for Nature.

Picture: Liz

16. Alison Ingamells

Written in 2005

“David and I have lived in Milton Street, Heathmont for 48 years, and have found it a wonderful place to live. Here are 3 unrelated, true stories which occurred in 1958-59.

Milk-o

We spent our honeymoon night in our new, almost completed home at 6 Milton St. In the darkness about 4 a.m. there was a knock on our bedroom window, which faced the street. “How many pints of milk do you want?” David was alert, and replied with the precise number of pints and the date we would arrive home from our honeymoon.

The milkman, obviously aware of a potential customer, climbed back into his cart and the horse went clip-clopping down the unmade street to the also unmade Allens Rd.

Gumboots

We both went to work by train and although the distance from our place to Heathmont Station was not very far, there were a few obstacles to overcome. In winter, our unmade street was a quagmire and to save walking along the equally muddy Allens Road, we would walk through Sharp’s orchard – now Salisbury Court. To be able to do this, we spoke to Mr. Sharp and gained his permission to negotiate the track in the orchard. The track went down a short distance, then through a creek, up the hill amongst the apple trees, and on to Canterbury Road. We were allowed to pick up the windfall apples from the ground, but never to pick them from the trees.

The ten minute walk was not good for the shoes we had to wear at work, so we had to wear our gumboots each winter’s day. So did many others, and the waiting room of the weatherboard station building was lined with gumboots and old weather-beaten shoes, all neatly arranged under the waiting room seats in a three-sided square. On our return at night, we donned the gumboots for the walk home.

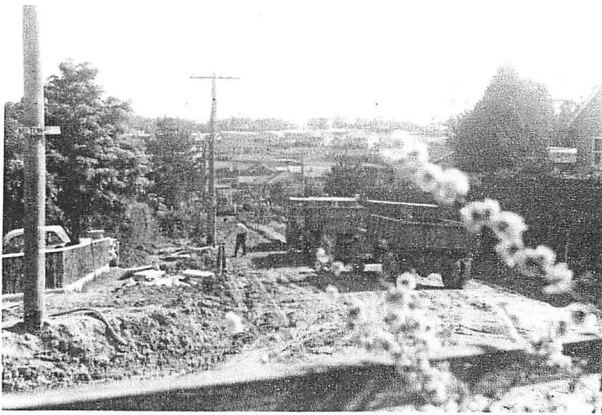
The Station Light

Nightly, the last train arrived at Heathmont at 12 midnight, and the last passenger alighting was required to turn out the station light as the station was unmanned at that hour. In our younger days, we had our fair share of doing that job!

One evening we arrived home to Heathmont station about 10 p.m., and were asked to help the Station Master who was still on duty, but unable to leave his post. He had received an urgent message re a family bereavement for people in a house in Station St. (now Wainui Avenue). He asked us if we would take the station signal lamp and walk to that house to deliver the message. So, on a foggy, still night we walked down Station St, swinging the station light.

Obviously the family, like us, did not have a phone at that time (the late 1950’s). There was a waiting list of 1-2 years for a phone, but we were fortunate in having a public phone box on the corner of Milton St and Allens Rd – long since gone, of course. It was always in demand, and often there was queue at the phone box – a good way to have a chat with your neighbours while waiting your turn.”

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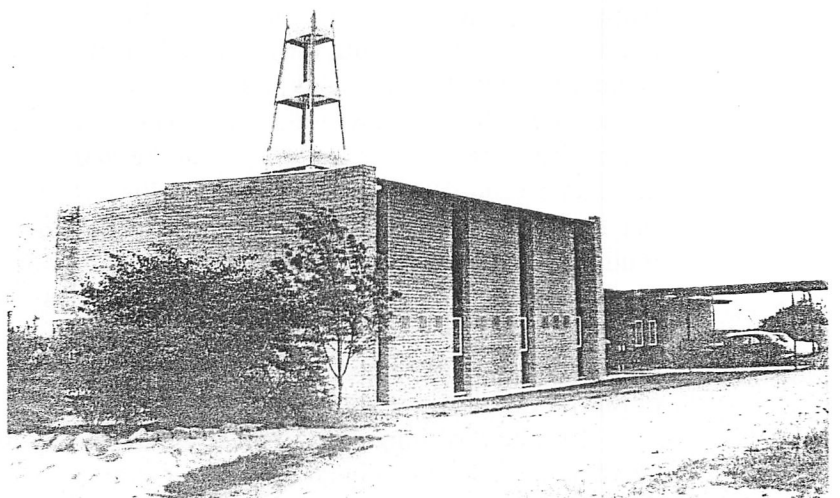


Making Milton Street, 1962

* * *



*Heathmont Methodist Church
1956*



*Heathmont Methodist Church
1974*

17. Jim and Garry Jago

Written in 1996 and 2006

"The Jago family, parents Bern and Diana and sons Garry and Jim, lived in Heathmont at 47 Canterbury Road (corner of Alvena Crescent, eastern side) from August 1948 to August 1957, when we moved to Tasmania to go dairy farming. When we first moved into Heathmont, we were one of the few houses in about 15 acres of former orchard. Although there were only a few fruit trees left, the mounds and furrows of the orchard were clear. Mum and Lila McRae used to be able to shout to each other across the paddock. We picked blackberries on the block behind our house. The whole of Heathmont was semi-rural then; by the time we left, it was rapidly becoming suburbanized. Both Mum and Dad were prominent members of the tennis club, and Dad was active on the school Parents and Friends Association, including a time as Chairman.

The Heathmont Tennis Club was very successful during our time at Heathmont. The other day, Ron Sharp told me (*1996 – Ed.*) membership is now about 80, compared with 420 at its peak. When we arrived in Heathmont, the cricket ground was down at the corner of Sunset Drive and Canterbury Road, but the only tennis court (asphalt) was near the station.

The State School opened in the Methodist Church, which was still very much part of an old orchard, with half a dozen loquat trees in the grounds. One of my abiding memories is that Dad and Jack McRae seemed to be forever rearranging either the church pews or the school desks. Other people such as John Harper and Ron Sharp would also have been involved. Of course we went to the Methodist Church, so the school furniture was pretty obvious on Sundays. We had mixed feelings when the school shifted to the permanent site on Balfour Avenue, because although the facilities were much better, it was further away.

Kevin Gerraghty was the best headmaster I remember at Heathmont. He was the first headmaster to attempt to develop any sort of school pride and character. He organized the school into "Houses." Probably politically incorrect these days, but it made an enormous difference to our performance in such things as the combined school sports. He had an original turn of mind, naming the houses after plants, and with non-standard colours such as pink, gold, brown and purple. Previously we had been a bit of a joke apart from a few good individuals, but after his arrival we at least competed reasonably well. In 1955 we even won the marching competition at the sports. It was in that same year, 1955, that Heathmont State school played its first football match. We played Bayswater at Bayswater, and got a bath in all senses of the word. It was a wet, muddy day. I (*Jim*) was captain. Peter Sharp was our only player that did any good. Our score was one point, which I kicked after a charity free kick. I cannot remember what Bayswater scored, but it was a lot more than one point. We played them at cricket later in the year and managed to win, much to their disgust. Peter Sharp made most of our runs. Grant Tudor and I each took 3 wickets.

One item of interest was what we always used to call "Bushies' Weir," although we had no concept it had been built by a German named Busch.

I remember the surprise I felt as a boy when my dad told me that Arthur Cutting was to be the inaugural captain-coach of the Heathmont Football Club, and further that he had been a top class player with Williamstown in the VFA, and had jointly won the VFA Best & Fairest award in 1938. In fact, I have now recently seen his portrait on some of

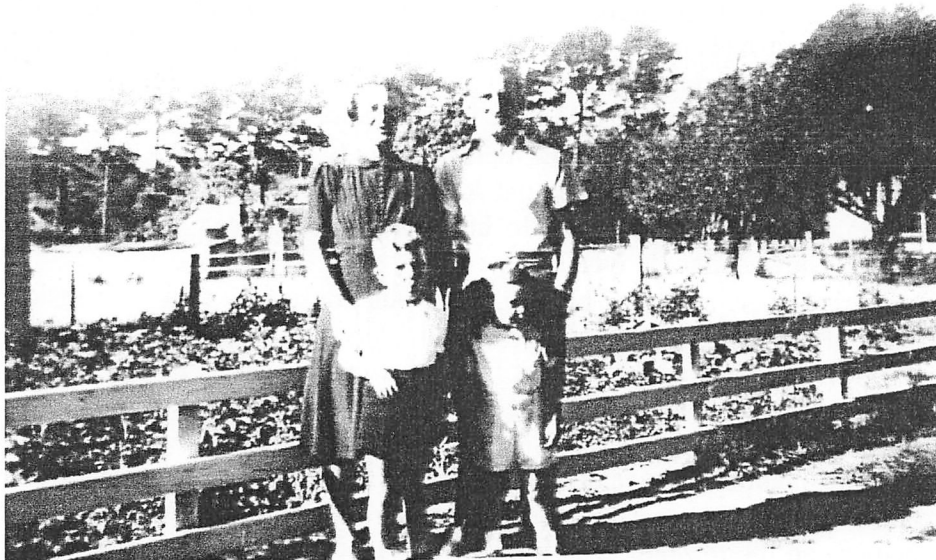
the cigarette and licorice cards of the 1930's. I think I was surprised because Arthur was only an average tennis player. Presumably his connection with Williamstown was the reason Heathmont wore blue and yellow. I remember that Heathmont's first game was against Mulgrave, the eventual premiers. Along with some other kids I tried to operate the scoreboard. At three-quarter time we were 35 points behind and Arthur's pep talk was along the lines of "all I want is six goals," which even to a kid seemed pretty optimistic. However, amongst great excitement, Heathmont got up to win by a point, mainly due to Mulgrave's bad kicking, because the final score was something like 13.7 to 10.24. Incidentally, I think that was Arthur's last game as a playing coach.

Here are some other random thoughts about our time in Heathmont:

- In our early days at Heathmont, one of my distinct memories is the clip-clop of the milkman's horse as he delivered milk early in the morning. The milk came straight from the can and into an enamel billy that Mum used to put out. Compulsory pasteurization presumably killed this off. I am not sure what happened in hot weather; possibly everyone was awake because they could not sleep. In any case, Dad used to catch a very early train.
- Also in those early days, the baker used to deliver by horse and cart.
- The snow fall of July 1951
- When we first arrived at Heathmont, Canterbury Road was lined both sides by quite a lot of vegetation, including large gum trees. There was quite a distance from the front fence to the actual roadway. Alvena Crescent was not formed at all when our house was built. Even after houses started being built along it, it was only a dirt track. I do not think it was sealed even when we left in 1957. Incidentally, in a 1946 Gregory's street directory, Alvena Crescent, Coleman Street and Royal Avenue were all shown, although they were not actually there. One other point of interest is that the part of Royal Avenue that meets Alvena Crescent is called Leonard Street in the 1946 directory.
- When we first lived in Heathmont, there were only two shops, Arthur and Chris Cutting's on the corner of Heathmont Road, and a post office-cum-newsagent a bit further up the hill. Mum used to buy our groceries from Moran & Cato in Ringwood. They used to deliver.
- Dad and his father, a former builder, built our house at a time of considerable shortages of building materials after World War II. I remember Dad telling me that at one stage he managed to get hold of a much needed bag of cement, the only problem being that he had to lump it up the hill from the station, which he did without stopping because he did not think he could lift it again if he put it down. Mum mentioned recently that there was a shortage of bricks when they were building the house. The house had weatherboards on the bottom part and fibrocement on the top half. The bricks were needed for the chimney. Dad often told the story of how he was shocked when he found that someone had bought a nearby block of land for 50 pounds. "They will never get it back," was his comment. In 1957 we sold the house for 3,400 pounds. In about 2001, Adrienne and I saw it for sale at \$195,000, before the recent real estate boom.
- As with many people at that time, we had no phone, and used the public phone at the corner of Canterbury and Bedford Roads.
- We had a fox terrier called Bill, an excellent watch dog. But a problem because he used stop almost anyone coming into the house. Outside of the immediate family, Jack McRae was one of the few people that Bill would allow into the yard. It got

to the stage that the night cart man would not enter the yard unless Bill was tied up.

- Dad and Jack McRae used to race to the station to catch the train.
- When the tennis club first moved to the present location at the corner of Canterbury Road and Waterloo Street, the club house was made out of old packing cases. Once I (*Garry*) set alight some of the tarry paper that was lying around. This resulted in thick smoke drifting across the courts. I was not popular.
- We headed for one Sunday School picnic, probably to Seaford or Carrum, in the back of a cattle truck. On the way it rained like blazes so we turned around and finished up in the newly built Sanders' Garage at the corner of Campbell Street and Canterbury Road.
- When I was in Grade 6, Kevin Gerraghty used to come into the class and ask for "Half a boy" to go and collect firewood to heat the school. What he meant was that he wanted two boys to collect wood in a rubbish bin. The "half a boy" came from the fact that the two boys would talk so much that they would only be as effective as half a boy, but he needed two boys to carry the bin. Three boys were regarded as "no boys."
- In 1957, my (*Garry*) Grade 6 teacher was Bob Barclay, a mad St. Kilda supporter, and a heavy smoker. In about 1986 or 1987 I happened to pick up a Melbourne "Sun" in Smithton, Tasmania, and there was a photo of Bob Barclay on his last day as a teacher.
- The first milk bar in Heathmont was a shop not far down the hill from the Methodist Church. It sold both "Clinkers" and "Ripe Raspberries" at 6 a penny.



Berne, Diana, with children Jim and Garry Jago outside 47 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, Easter 1949. The two trees on the right are plum trees left over from the old orchard. The house in the background over Diana's right shoulder is on Bedford Road and belonged to Mrs. Stubbs. This was an old house and a landmark in the area; it appeared on old maps. The pine trees are on the other side of Bedford Road. The crop in the front yard is potatoes prior to planting a lawn, a frequent practice then.

18. Rita Johnson

Written in 1997

"My husband and I arrived from the U.K. in March 1952, and 'discovered' Heathmont in September of that year.

We purchased our block and started building in December '52 and in March '53 we moved into a temporary 'dwelling' on our property. There were many D.I.Y. builders in Heathmont at that time. With the great influx of migrants, rental properties were almost non-existent. The Council knew of the existence of these temporary homes, but as long as the house building was progressing at a steady rate, and the work complied with the building regulations, they tolerated the situation.

Canterbury Road was a formed gravel road. The road from there to Eden Avenue was just a track. We had a post at the front of the block where we hung the billy at night for the early morning milk delivery. The milkie was very generous most of the time; we were almost the last street on his round (horse and cart, of course), so received a good measure. We had ice chests and in the hot weather the iceman would call twice per week. He had access to all his customers' homes, knew where all the keys were, and we trusted him implicitly.

There was no electricity in Eden Avenue – the nearest power pole was in Cuthbert Street at the end of the road. The S.E.C. agreed to connect the power to our block (and our neighbours) if we provided the pole. My husband, a neighbour and another very helpful neighbour who owned a Citroen car converted to a sort of truck, set off to Nunawading to cut down a nice straight gum tree very suitable for an electricity pole. As it was being transported to Heathmont, the truck had a puncture, and two very worried men had to hang desperately on to the side of the truck whilst the owner fixed the puncture, for there was a great danger that the truck, loaded with tree, would tip over completely. The pole was eventually unloaded at the designated spot, where a hole had been dug. With lots of assistance, advice and swearing the pole was finally coerced into the hole. With great anticipation we and our neighbours arrived home from work next day expecting to find the power lines connected. To our great surprise and disappointment, we found that the S.E.C. had run its power lines from the street below via another temporary home! So, the pole had to be chopped down again – the wood was useful in the winter. It was the only gumtree that we know of that was chopped down twice in two days! We still laugh about the incident, although it was a lot of needless work on a very hot day.

The camaraderie of the neighbours was marvellous, and we newcomers to Australia soon felt very much at home."

The Johnson's house stumps at 5 Eden Avenue, looking east over Barrow's orchard and the Dandenongs. 1953



19. Bruce Kaighin

Written in 2006

“As the suburbs began to spread eastward in the 1950’s, the name “Heathmont” drew nothing more than a puzzled frown until we recalled the railway cuttings clothed in red and white heath. Seeking a block upon which to build our first home, we found Heathmont to be a beautiful rustic village, rather self-contained, in a district of apple and lemon orchards, poultry farms and an active timber mill.

We were offered a large block by the local agent, Mr. Hargreaves, a sort of squire in the local community. He operated from his mansion in the newly created Boulevard. The Hargreaves shared their tennis court with all of their new neighbours.

In those days there were no sealed roads, just acres of poor subsoil which was dry and cracked in summer and muddy slush in winter. Gardening was difficult until we learnt to gather buzzer chips from the timber mill and manure from the poultry farms. When mixed into a large pile, the steaming mass was in danger of spontaneous combustion, but when mixed into our “soil” the results were spectacular. After trips to the poultry farm, I was usually ordered to de-odorise the car.

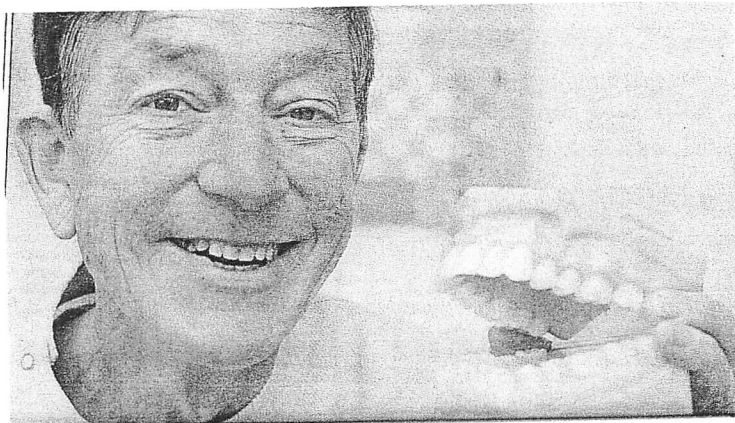
We soon found the nearby blocks being settled by other newly-weds, and many valued friendships developed as children arrived. There were soon many teams of playmates. Across the valley we could see many Hills hoists with white nappies flapping in the breeze – no disposables in those days. Most of these friendships have continued for our lifetime.

Among our close neighbours were the Barassi family. Our kids roamed over a wide area, with no fears of molestation in those days. Mrs. B. would summon them home by beating a large cowbell. As footy season approached, Ron Barassi would run countless laps of the Boulevard. When this was ankle-deep in mud the training routine would have met with approval from Percy Cerutty.

The joke was not so funny when I had the daily cleaning of four sets of muddy schoolshoes. The children walked across the open paddock of the Greenlea’s old property. This contained many ponds teeming with frogs and of course tadpoles. We enjoyed bringing them home to observe their metamorphosis, although today this would be banned on environmental grounds.

Garden waste was gathered in a huge pile in the paddock behind Galletly’s, to be ignited on Guy Fawkes Night with crackers exploding everywhere. How did we escape injury?

Our problems of those days seem minor now, or do our memories retain only the best? Perhaps that’s the way it should be.”



20. Mary Knafelc

Written in 2005

"We arrived from Canberra in 1969 and were living temporarily in a unit at Bonbeach. Each weekend we would drive to different places looking for land on which to build a house. One Sunday afternoon, driving along Canterbury Road, on our way back from an outing in the Dandenongs, we happened on the Heathmont area, noting that Parkhaven Drive (which had made roads) had two vacant blocks adjoining. The whole area was quite lovely, with lots of eucalypt trees. One block had a board with phone numbers on it, and on reaching our place at Bonbeach, we promptly rang to enquire about the larger one, only to be told it had just been sold. So we rang the number of the smaller block and after some negotiation, bought it for \$4,500.

We promptly found a builder. Whilst excavating the foundations of the house, we found to our dismay that there was quite a lot of water in one of the top corners of the block, so the foundations had to be dug deeper, with our budget stretching ever leaner. We were fortunate that the clump of eucalypts at the front were able to be retained, as we loved the trees and have since planted more. We moved into our new house in 1971 with great excitement. A number of people who moved into adjacent homes around the same time became good neighbours and friends.

In those early days Sunset Drive, which we had to traverse to get into Canterbury Road was just an earth road with a sign "Drive Slowly – Dust." We were so happy when the road was finally sealed. Canterbury Road was just one way up and one down, and at the intersection of Wantirna Road was a roundabout consisting of clinker bricks. My husband, along with several male neighbours, walked together up to the station Monday to Friday to catch a train to the City, where most of them worked. This left the family car for us wives to take turns driving our children up to the Francis Street Infant or Junior school, then do the food shopping either "up the street" or over in Ringwood at the Eastland Shopping Centre. Over a period of time most of the men, including my husband, were awarded "company cars."

I remember going to Eastland shopping one day after a heavy downpour of rain. I managed to get through Great Ryrie Street. On the way home there were a number of cars stalled and stopped under the railway bridge near the Maroondah Highway and Bedford Road, but my little VW valiantly kept going, so I was able to get to school and collect my son and some other local children and ferry them home. I think the Council must have done something to counteract the flooding, as I remember only two occasions when the flooding was as bad as that time.

In those early younger days we were good friends with about six families who lived close to us. We used to have Christmas gatherings in each other's homes. My husband helped one of our neighbours to move some large rocks into place on his garden embankment, and in return we had a spotlight put in (he was a qualified electrician) to show one of my paintings to advantage. Over the years families have moved away for various reasons, and our children have grown up and moved into their own homes. Now in 2005, after 34 years, we are still living in Parkhaven Drive, along with only four of the original families. We are enjoying our retirement, with lots of stimulating activities, and still taking our walks by the Dandenong Creek – in dear old Heathmont."

21. Mary Le Get

Written in 2005



Edna Street, December 15th 1957

“In 1957, our small new weatherboard house in Edna Street, Heathmont had 2 bedrooms, a sitting room and kitchen. We had a new baby, unmade streets, the garden had been rotary hoed and was mud, and to get to the front door we stepped over planks of wood. In winter at the weekend we prepared wood for the open fire, but by mid-week Peter had to chop more, in the dark, to keep us warm!

To go on the train to Camberwell to meet my mother every Wednesday was a highlight. Muddy shoes were left in the station waiting room and were always there when I returned (even 10 p.m.).

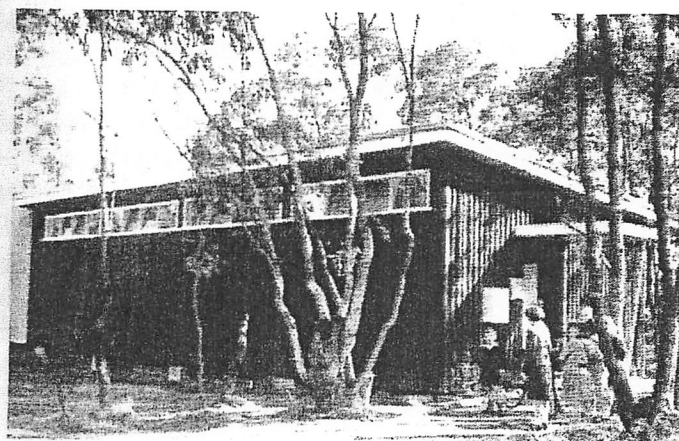
The small group of shops on the corner was a sociable place, and as we had no telephone or car, walking everywhere meant you chatted to people on the way. Eventually kindergarten was a way to make enduring friends, and our Anglican church membership was important. I still have a group of ladies who meet regularly, from our times waiting to see the Health Centre nurse – we had to sit on chairs and move closer to the office in the Viviani Crescent Kindergarten, one afternoon a week, to have the baby weights and measured.

Life was simple, practical, and as we still live in Heathmont, has been very important in our family life. There is still a feeling of community in Heathmont, gum trees, and people, and friends we have made over the years.”

First Service on the Christ Church Property



*The First Service in a Marquee on the Church Site on 11 July 1954.
The ladies were from left Else Rickard, Margaret White, Phyl Blackbell,
Norma Robson, Elsa Durling and Betty Kean, with The Rev'd John Bishop.*



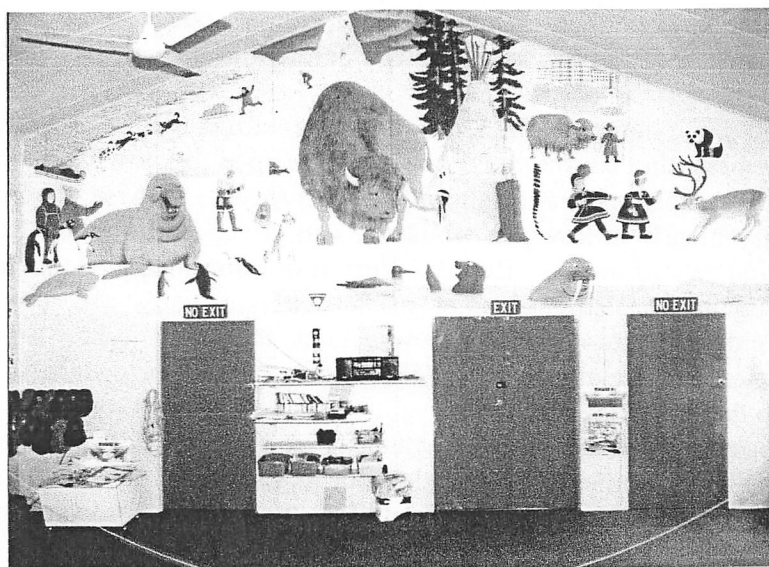
*The First Building on the Church Site
Dedicated by Archbishop Booth on 31 March 1956*

HEATHMONT PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE

*Built for the Heathmont Advancement League
in 1951-52 at 41 Viviani Crescent
President: Mr. John Harper O.B.E., M.A., LL.M.*

Building opened in 1952 by Lady (later Dame Rowena) Angliss

*Honorary Architect: Mr. Frank Secomb, F.R.A.I.A.
Honorary Artist: Mr. George Browning, A.M.*



The tropical and polar murals painted by George Browning in 1952.

22. Marion Marshallsea

Written in 2005

"On reflection, I suppose 50 years of residency in Heathmont makes little things mean a lot.

During October 1955 a block of land in Mountain View Road was bought with our precious savings. The former owner was the son of a former flower grower by the name of Wieland. Whilst we were anxious to find a block for building our first home, he was ready to purchase his first car.

The large windows of our 10 ½ square home in weatherboard overlooked the large apple orchard of Mr. Barrow. His property butted onto the other orchard families, Washusens on one side and Nichols on the other. The steep, wide rough road between dropped down to bushland and a creek. It was called "Barnic Road" after a combination of the neighbouring orchards. Our home was soon erected by a Dutch builder, Mr. Vant' Riet, from Kilsyth.

As we watched each stage of our home being built, we observed a small vehicle (an Austin 7) parked at the corner of Mountain View and Dickasons Roads each weekend. We learnt from our neighbours that it belonged to an elderly couple who stayed in a roughly built wooden hut down near Dandenong Creek to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the secluded area.

By summer 1956, my husband had learnt the names of many local people through the Heathmont Tennis Club. 50% of its members thrived on this sport to relax from pruning, picking and packing the orchard fruits. Also at this time, in Spring, the fizzy-popping noise across the valley was heard. It was the acetylene gun set up to deter the birds from eating the ripe cherries.

By the time our second son was born, I was involved with plans for and the completion of a Baby Health Centre next to the well established Kindergarten Hall in Viviani Crescent. The first of the 50's families had a head start on us, with the first borns ready to commence their elementary education at classes set up at the Methodist Church. This was a temporary arrangement before the school was built in Balfour Avenue.

By the 60's, the homes of the Heathmont hamlet had mail, paper, bread and milk deliveries. The horse in "Harringtons" bread cart seemed to know how long to hesitate for its lady in grey coat and trousers to do her deliveries. Likewise, the mailman's van also rolled conveniently in low gear whilst the van driver ran to both sides of the road. He was affectionately known as "Bunny." Very few homes had a telephone (we waited 6 years for a connection) so any parcel, packet letters or cards were a welcome mail. The other friendly door-to-door service was Fred, the Dry Cleaner. Suits, coats and jackets often needed that attention, for the wearers often got caught in all weathers racing to catch the train to work.

In the local main street, business was flourishing. The mothers showed off their new baby, with their toddler sitting on the foot of the pram in a special seat that was strapped to the frame. Either side of the railway line was a hardware, haberdashery, hairdresser, butcher, baker, milk bar and chemist. When Sharp's orchard was subdivided on the south side of Canterbury Road, new shop sites became available. Both "Pop" Sharp and Mr. Pump retired with time to watch the fruits of their labour of past decades. Streets filled with a new generation, with whom both of these pioneer gentlemen found time to chat. The Post Office didn't move. Mr. Lavis had set his

hardware shop further back from the curbside. This provided a recess area for the street stall to be arranged on trestles. Later on, the Council provided a small caravan. Use of this needed to be booked in the Ringwood Town Hall office. Next to the Lucas supermarket was a huge gum tree. Actually it was in Mrs. Fairhurst's garden. Here, many mothers and children enjoyed an ice block from the little milk bar before pushing up the hill and down home. One day the tree was removed and the garden block became the site of the new chemist, Helen Robertson. Her skilled friendliness was a bonus to many families. This was extended when Dr. Thom, with Sister Hayley, set up his surgery opposite, in a small house at the corner of Dickasons Road. Population growth soon had Dr. Thom's waiting room full with folk waiting for him to return from an urgent house call – this was possible in those days. Also, many families who had their first-born delivered by Dr. Deerbon in the small hospitals in Ringwood continued to benefit from his skills for their medical consultations for many years. He died quietly at his desk between patients, at 80 years of age.

The well designed Kinder hall in Viviani Crescent was in an attractive setting outside, and the multi-coloured mural-like interior walls made it an asset for the community. At that stage, at night you had the Square Dance craze and the regular Barn Dance. When available, it was used for church services on Sunday. Saturday fetes, Fashion Parades, etc. would gather for fun and fund raising – but the problem of noise became a bit much for the now closely settled residents nearby. This issue wasn't taken lightly. After much "ado," it was sorted out, but not without cost, and a new regulation for its use had to be drawn up under a Court order.

Extensions were added to the back or side of many houses, and some put on a second storey. This extra room was often made available for groups to have a "Progressive Dinner" for the annual fund-raiser. These remained in favour for several years. Tired sporting participants or weary garden makers did not have to face the winding roads up the hills or travel into the city for a pleasant evening.

Not all the women returned to work. Many stayed on in the home to cook and sew for school and church fetes, annual concerts and plays. Other halls were built – for Youth Club, Scouts and Guides. The couple in the Austin 7 ceased making their visits to the wooden hut by the creek. Mr. Barrow donated his land near the same creek to the Scout movement. Many boys have taken advantage of the training and skills given to them by dedicated leaders in the hall that was built back then. Inside, names of all the Queen's Scouts are displayed on the wall.

All along the creek, the sealed, wide path gives safe walking for new generations to enjoy birdsong, bush and fresh air. Let's keep it that way."

Opening day, Heathmont Presbyterian Church, 1959



23. Ian and Margaret McKellar

Written in 1997

"Heathmont in 1957 was a very different place to what it is today. Canterbury Road was very narrow and overhung with tall gums interspersed with wattle trees. Of course there were no formal edges to the roads, just steep gravel shoulders. The railway bridge was re-built in 1958, changes from an ancient wooden bridge with no footpath and barely room for two cars to pass. The new bridge itself had to be widened later when Canterbury Road was duplicated.

In 1957 there were about 24 shops in Heathmont, all on the north side of Canterbury Road.

Traveling west from the railway bridge, on the corner of Heathmont Road there was Mr. Nicholson's grocery shop, Berries Fruit Supply, Mrs. N.W.Methven's milk bar, the E.S.& A. Bank (open two half days a week), G.T.Press' fish and chip shop, Russo Bros. fruiterers, Ken Ward's newsagency, Estelle Spargo's haberdashery, Lavis' hardware (with a hairdresser upstairs), J.J.Egan (butcher), the post office and Lucas' self serve grocer.

Going east from the railway: on the corner of Heathmont Road was Jack Sanders garage, Mrs. McRae had a fruit shop (she used to sit outside the shop shelling peas or polishing apples and always had a cheery greeting), Keith Cullen (hairdresser), a drive-in electrical service run by Phil Jones, Tinsleys were in the milk bar which was owned by E. and V. Scott (who lived in the set back house next door), L. and C. Grasby (butcher) came next, then Mrs. Brady's haberdashery, Heathmont Pharmacy then owned by Barry Hall but later in partnership with Wes Moritz (this shop was set back and up a few steps). Roy White's shoe shop came next, the T. Moes' electrical goods and lastly an estate agency. . . .

We first came to Heathmont in 1959. The shops were pretty much as listed above. Canterbury and Bedford Roads were sealed, but without kerbs or gutters. We remember Mr. Lyon, the Heathmont newsagent at the time, getting bogged when he got too close to the edge of Bedford Road after a fairly wet winter. In summer there was always dust rising from the many unsealed, unmade roads in the area.

Train travel to and from Heathmont was very popular in the '50's and '60's. The carriages were invariably very crowded during peak periods. The trip was frequently made in clattering maroon and grey "dog box" carriages with a series of enclosed compartments in each. There was a heavy swing door on each side which you hoped could be opened when you got to Heathmont and which required a hefty push to slam it shut. The other rolling stock were the sliding door "Tait" cars which were very drafty. It was sheer luxury to get into one of the blue, sliding door trains which were introduced from about 1956. There was a choice of first or second class, in each of which there were smoking and non-smoking compartments. In those days, too, the line from Ringwood to Ferntree Gully was a single track with a passing loop at Bayswater. At Ringwood, our train often had to wait for the "staff", which was not released at the signal box until the track was clear. The release was heralded by a metallic "clank" up in the signal box just before the signaller emerged from the signal box, strapping it to a large metal ring as he brought it across to the driver.

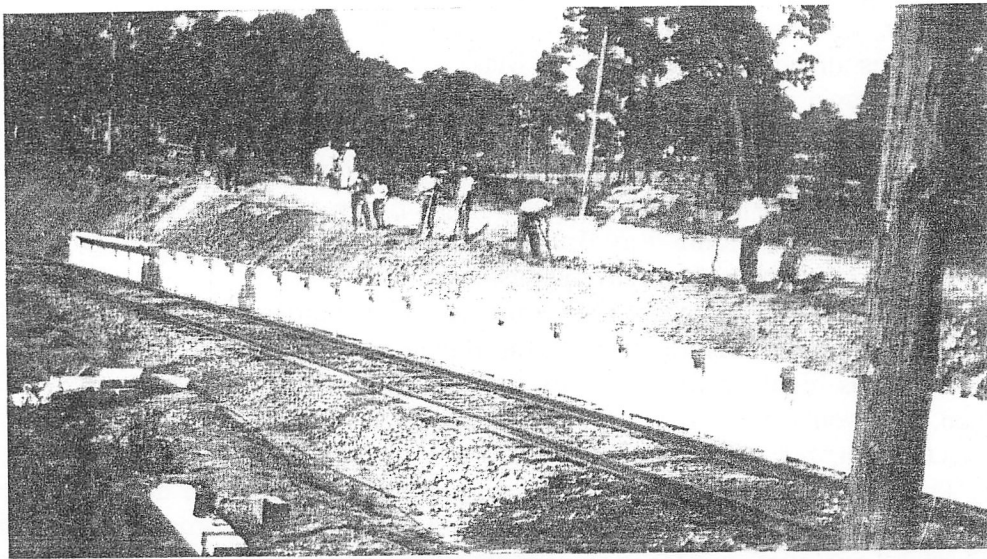
Our fading personal recollections also come back to various natural disasters that affected the district, for example the extensive bushfires that occurred around Warrandyte in 1962. They reached the Maroondah Highway at Heatherdale. There seemed to be no

stopping them and the hot north winds dropped ash and partly burnt leaves over Heathmont. About the same time, a fire burned through Wombolano Park. On this occasion the M.F.B. attended, but were called away to other fires before this one was blacked out. They rushed away, leaving hoses and hydrants behind, so that we residents had to assemble the hoses and try to tame the thrashing nozzles to finish the job.

We also have vivid memories of the unusually heavy hailstorm which dumped the equivalent of four inches of rain in the space of less than an hour. This was on Australia Day holiday 1963. In all, the rainfall was over five inches (130 mm). The highest rainfall in a short period was 770 points (200 mm) during the Easter holidays in 1970.

However, despite these events, our earliest and most enduring impression of the area has been the feeling of peace and quiet in contrast to the noise and bustle of the city."

* * *



Wielands and other orchardists build the railway station, 1926



Canterbury Road 1923 from Bedford Road. Railway bridge at foot of hill

24. Hec McLean

Written in 1997

"It's Sunday, 13th April, 1997. Hector Mclean is my name. I am 83 years old. As my wife Margaret and I drive down the Newell Highway from Brisbane where we have been enjoying a pleasant weekend at the Amway Convention, my mind goes back to 1949 when I purchased 3 shop sites at 108 Canterbury Road, Heathmont, for 150 pounds each, from Craig Robertson who was the owner and who operated an Estate Agency in the Ringwood Station entrance, trading as Ringwood Real Estate Agency. On one of the allotments I erected a timber and cement sheet shop, paid one pound for an Estate Agents Licence and opened my real estate agency which traded for some years as Heathmont Estate Agency.

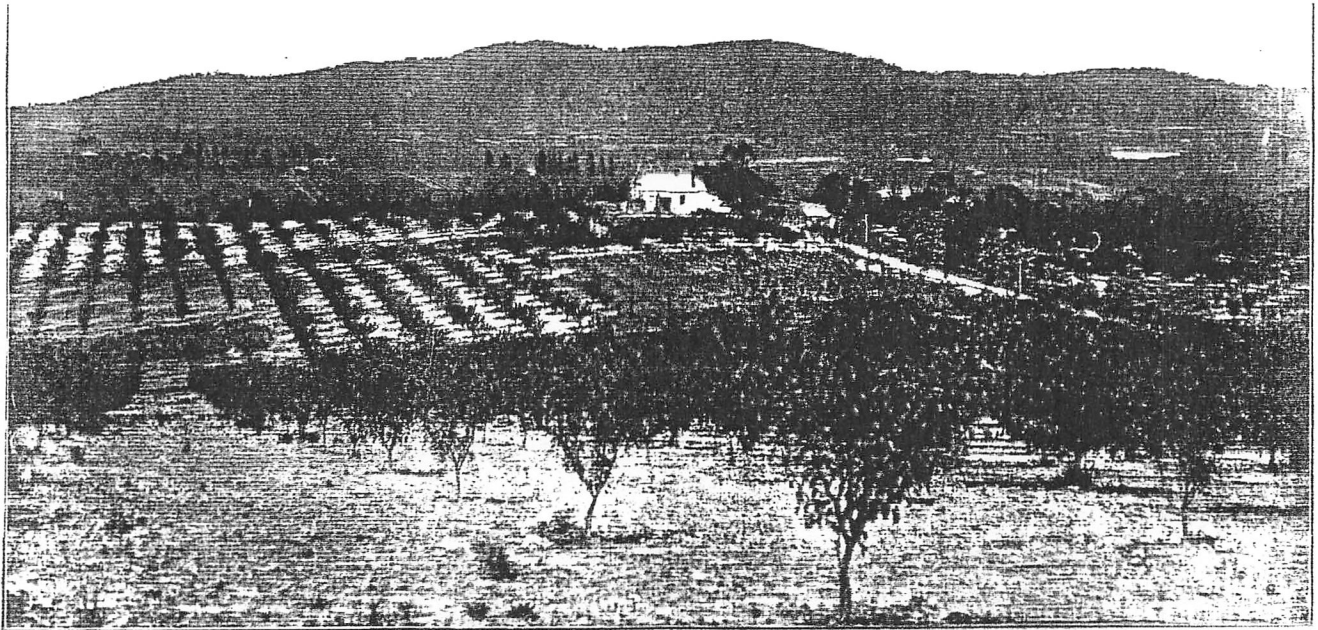
As I was already a member of the Master Builders Association, I was precluded from using my own name in the estate agency, as it was considered this would be a conflict of interest. Some years later, I demolished the old building and built the modern one which stands on 103 Canterbury Road, then decided that the north side of Canterbury Road was better for business and purchased a shop site at number 166, and built the present Estate Agency building. Ray Brunton, who initially started working for McLeans in 1963, now currently owns and runs the business.

In 1940 McLeans purchased several acres of orchard on Allens Road from Mr. Fotheringham, manager of Huttons Hams and Bacon, and developed the subdivision Alto estate, which was highly commended by the then Ringwood City Engineer, Mr. Alan Robertson. We would have liked to name the major street "Gordon Crescent" after our only son, Gordon, but there is already a Gordon Cres. off Wantirna Road, so it was named "The Boulevard." But then eldest daughter Beverly and third daughter, Wendy, were chosen and used, and as there is a Heather Court off Wantirna Road, Heather's second name, Anne, was used for another court off the Boulevard.

People are often bemused by the name "Jarma" Road, off Canterbury Road, This was named after the Creaser family from whom I purchased the land, using the first letter of their Christian names. Other names in that Estate include Valerie, after a salesman's wife, and Adrian, after the receptionist's son.

Other developments of McLeans were Westmore Drive and Vale Street, named after their respective owners. Jan and Jill Courts were Mr. Vale's granddaughters. Subsequently I purchased a cabbage farm from Mr. Volemhello in Gracedale Avenue, and named Raymond Street after the owner of McLeans Agency Raymond Brunton.

Over all these years, Canterbury Road has changed from virtually a bush road with only a narrow stretch constructed for vehicles, rabbits running down the main street and a semi orchard/farming community into a busy strip shopping centre with dual highway, traffic lights and very little vacant land to remind us of its early days. As it developed after the War, Heathmont became a popular suburb for young families because of its openness, scenic views and proximity to the Dandenongs. The railway was then the chief means of transport to Melbourne for the people going to work, as few people had cars to drive to work, and most walked to and from the station, morning and night. Runner Ron Clarke used to run to Melbourne from Heathmont Station. Ringwood and Croydon markets were in full swing still, with young families enjoying the visits to the animal sales in their pens – now sites of Supermarkets!"



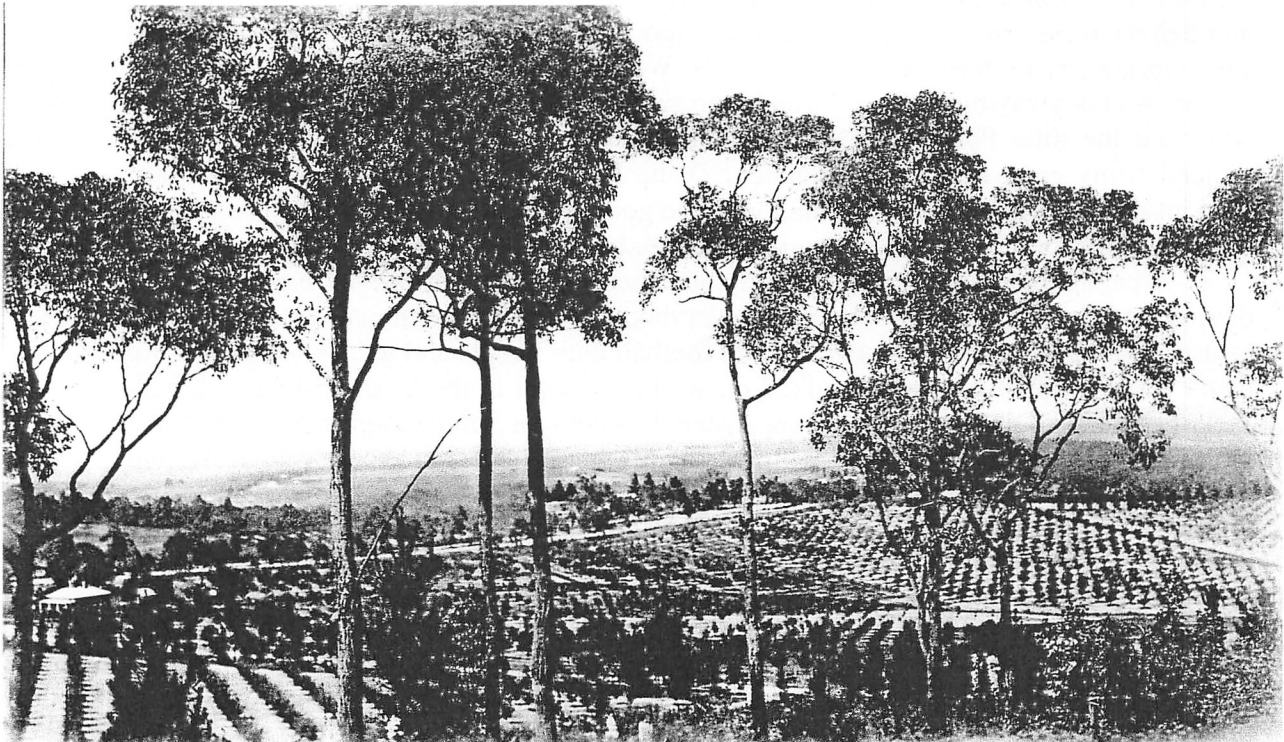
PANORAMIC VIEW TAKEN ON THE ESTATE

VIEW OVERLOOKING MARTELL'S ORCHARD,
HEATHMONT

1923

TAKEN FROM CNR CANTEBURY RD AND BALFOUR AVE LOOKING SOUTH,
DANDENONG CREEK JUST BEYOND HOUSE, WASHUSEN RD ON RIGHT,

Note that, as with many other photos of the time, the land developers have added a background mountain range to the south, to increase the appeal of the area!



1909, looking south from Bedford Road

25. Lila McRae

Written in 2006

"In 1948 Jack and I bought Lot 19 in Bedford Road (later no. 176) for 50 pounds. We always wished we could have afforded the adjoining one, too, for 45 pounds.

So began many wonderful years in a quite delightful village area surrounded and supported by many great friends.

It took us nearly a year to build the house, for materials were very hard to get – we had to use second-hand bricks, and our bath, also second-hand, was a lucky find in Bendigo!

Orchards were around us, not as prolific nor prosperous as they had been, for the area was fast changing from country to city. But there was still plenty of fruit for us – apples, pears and cherries freely available, and for many years there were fruit trees in orchard remnants. Opposite us in Bedford Road were the market gardens of the Bloods and the Woods. A stronger visual recollection is of the quite beautiful hilltops of heath, acres of it, often picked in the basketful or even truckful by weekend visitors, presumably to sell at city markets. It is hard for people today to visualise the immense natural beauty Heathmont had.

It is probably also hard for people today to imagine other characteristics of Heathmont back then. Of course we had bread and milk deliveries, and ice, and the delightful Fred Motteram with his Dry Cleaning van in the back of which Jack was accidentally shut one day. There were also mail deliveries – Merv Bungey closed the Post Office for an hour daily while he delivered letters to local houses. But we also had other salesmen come to the house – the "iceman," a "fish man," "a rabbit man" on his bike, an "egg man", even a quaint "honey man!" The main orders were collected on Mondays and delivered on Fridays, for Thursday was pay day for our husbands, and we relied on each week's pay to meet each week's needs. We couldn't drive to the shops, for we had no car! And anyway there were virtually no shops in Heathmont – just Cutting's general store and the little Post Office. We walked everywhere, or sometimes biked – I well remember my good friend and neighbour Diana Jago minding our two children while I rode into Ringwood to shop, returning with the goods in string bags on the handles. I also rode to Ringwood Church of England before Heathmont's opened.

Imagine also, the great friendship and the mutual support we all enjoyed as we developed our own little community. Everybody got behind each cause – baby health centre, kinder, school, church, tennis club, football club, scouts and guides – what fun we had. While a school was being talked of, we held school in the Methodist Church hall. Jack, Bernie Jago and other men were rostered to help on Sunday nights remove all the pews and store them in an old shed on Pump's land, replacing them with desks and blackboards ready for Monday morning. Meanwhile we were raising money for amenities for the new school. We even fitted out the staff room with chairs, a couch, an urn, crockery, etc. On parent–teacher nights we made casseroles for the teachers. Fund raising was by street stalls, fetes, progressive dinners, Melbourne Cup Day parades at Harper's property with floats and flowers, Guy Fawkes bonfires, even a garden party in our front garden when 3UZ came out to interview us for its "women in the community" programme. The Harper family home was the hub of many meetings and functions. Any idea was warmly accepted by them. One of the best nights we ever had was when it was the Dads' turn! They decided to show the womenfolk how to run a function without all

the fuss and planning! The music was supplied by "Winifred Atwell" who was Ross Cowling miming one of her records, supper was fish and chips (delivered at 10 o'clock) to avoid washing up, and it was a great night of fun – and funds!

This community friendship and support was not only from fellow mums and dads we met socially, but in my case I have fond recollections of many others, such as the neighbourly visits of the wealthy Mr Frank Walker from his beautiful old home in what became Wombalano Park after he donated it to the community, and Dr Widmer and Dr. Hewitt of Ringwood, who made so many home visits and did not charge us at all until he thought we could pay! Another person whose contribution to our life should be well remembered is Audrey Lavis, wife of Bert, Heathmont hardware store owner and Mayor of Ringwood. Her work on the kinder committee was exceptional. Committee meetings and fete meetings were held at her home, she was one of the "lamington ladies," very adept financially, and for years we refused to accept her annual effort to resign! My husband Jack was also a local councillor for 14 years, and like Bert Lavis, was Mayor of Ringwood (1970-71). Unfortunately, ill-health forced him to resign from the Council. Another local identity was Keith Hardy, the plumber, who rode his push bike around Heathmont with his tools strapped on the back, and was always available night and day to attend to emergencies – and there were many! He and his wife Jean were yet another couple heavily involved in all aspects of our community – kinder, library, schools, hospital, etc. There were other emergencies, too, more important than a leaking pipe. I recall the great community support, featuring a Heathmont Lions Club appeal, when Diana Carter's house burned down and when her husband Graeme died. Another financial response was when our community through fetes, competitions and barbecues raised over 6000 pounds in just a few weeks to pay for the court costs in the case involving the nighttime use of the kinder hall – and as no doubt other writers have recalled, the people who objected soon sold up and moved out! Another example of community spirit was when TV was introduced in 1956, Ron and Enid Sharp bought one, and soon so did Fred and Flo Motteram. We were always welcome to drop in to their homes and watch the magic! George and Edie Donovan from Tagell Road were yet another couple involved in everything. George had the first taxi in Heathmont, and if he passed us by, pushing a pram with toddlers beside us, he would always stop, pick us up, and run us home – all for no charge, of course!

This wonderful community spirit has always been my "Heathmont highlight" – life-long friendships which have endured and indeed been strengthened by minor and major family crises, and which have endeared Heathmont to us."



1961
*This time the fun(d) -
 raising is for the school.
 HatFashion, featuring:
 (Lto R back) Joyce Outhred
 Bambra Cohen
 Marj Bullock
 (front) Flo Motteram
 Lila McRae
 Wyn Reilly*

26. Kaye Moulynox

Written in 1994

"A few mentions might be of interest:

- "Washusen Street" – Kath and Alan Washusen were the last orchardists in Heathmont. I well remember their send-off 22 years ago in the little hall, now a scout hall, at Parker reserve. That hall was part of a grand dream – it was to be a library in the first stage of a Heathmont Community Centre. It never took off, but Keith Hardy, Jack McRae and Mr Lavis (the Councillor) and others put a lot of effort into it. In the first years after it was built only the Heathmont Badminton Club used it regularly, running quite a few teams in a hall not really suitable for badminton.
- Campbell Street – unmade, creek in valley, quite often cars couldn't get through it or Great Ryrie Street.
- Flora and fauna – there is a little bit fenced off on the corner of Cuthbert and Waterloo Sts., fenced off under pressure from a lady who said the native heath would otherwise be lost forever.
- Railway station – my early memories are of all the muddy shoes left at the station daily. Now, not even staffed.
- Heathmont Primary – the hall which faces Balfour Avenue was originally the Baptist Church. Now there is a grand big one in Cuthbert Street on original Washusen land.
- Dandenong Creek used to be a great place for kids – blackberrying, fishing and picnicking, before it got turned into a drain. The kids used to catch eels there."

* *



27. Doug Muller

Written in 2006

"My early recollections of Heathmont began in 1926, when I was 4 years old. This was the time my father's orchard was sold for subdivision and the family home was moved from Canterbury Road to Heathmont Road, as it straddled several blocks. The move was not successful as the view of the mountains was obscured in a few short years by the growth of gums to the East. About this time I attended the Ringwood State School 2997, mostly walking in the direction through Bamford's paddock and Corbett's orchard after crossing a small creek which meandered under the trestle railway bridge.

In those days of my youth, Heathmont was solely comprised of orchards. Mostly early German settlers took up the land. At that time the following families were predominant: Wieland, Pump J and H, Miller, Muller, Sharp, Washusen, Clota, Martell, Gerlach.

I have a vivid memory of my father cultivating his orchard on the area enclosed by Dickasons Road, Canterbury Road and the railway. My father never owned a motor vehicle, and consequently his fruit had to be transported to Melbourne Market by a horse-drawn canvas-covered wagon, which entailed many hours' travel.

At this time the most popular fruit case was the "kero," which was originally produced for the conveyance of kerosene. It neatly held two kerosene tins, approximately 9 inches square and 18 inches deep. This case was ideal for apples, but not suitable for soft fruits, which required a shallow case to avoid bruising. I recall my father taking a load of apples to market, and being offered less than a shilling a case, then bringing the load home to feed the fowls and pigs. This period of course was approaching the Great Depression years. My father could not make a living from the orchard, so sold out for subdivision and was fortunate to secure employment with the Amalgamated Wireless Ltd as a clerk.

I bought back a block of land in the original estate and built a home alongside the family home where I had been born in 1922.

There was a general store in Heathmont on the site that is now the licensed grocer's back pre-Second World War days. This was operated by Miss Ada Marden, and stocked groceries, cigarettes, newspapers, stamps and medications. Adjoining the store was a building which we termed a fernery, where all local functions were held, in the absence of any other hall. One I remember was the occasion of the switching on of lights in Heathmont, 1937.

Few people will remember that at Allens Road there was a railway crossing which was controlled by Bert Godfrey, who lived on what is now the bowling green and a couple of residences, on the road now called the Greenway. He was a very good wood carver who produced bats made out of local willow for the local cricket team.

The requirement for the railway crossing was brought about by the small creek channeled under the railway embankment in large pipes, which formed quite a respectable chasm between Orchid Street and the Greenway. This creek precluded access to Mr. Godfrey's property. Evidence of the gate provided for the rail crossing still exists in the form of a steel post with a secure latch."

* *

28. Keith Norris

Written in 2005: "Recollections of early Heathmont from a resident now in his 85th year."

"My parents brought my brother and me to Heathmont from Hawkesburn in 1924, when I was three years old. We as a family arrived at Ringwood Station, the nearest railway station at that time to Heathmont. We then transferred, plus luggage, to a horse-drawn Hansom cab, climbing aboard by means of a step at the rear of the cab. This then was the final part of the journey to this place named "Heathmont" The address: Waterloo Street. From memory, I think the cab proprietor was named Hussey. I think the fare cost my father two shillings. Heathmont at this time was in name only, so we for many years felt, and related to Ringwood. All facilities were located in Ringwood, such as doctors, police, churches, schools, etc. When someone asked you where you lived, you always said Ringwood, for if you said Heathmont, the reply was always, "Where's that?" In later years I often wondered how our parents found this place and decided to purchase and settle here. To me, it seemed a real pioneer venture. There was no electricity supply – kerosene lamps only – no laid-on water - rain water tanks only – no sewerage – outdoor toilets and dispose of your own. When the night-cart service was introduced – well, that was something! Thick bush, roads in name only, just dirt tracks, for example Canterbury Road was defined by horse-drawn vehicles' wheels, which made deep furrows, and for even these vehicles to negotiate in wet weather, the many "pot holes" were patched up temporarily by a resident with brick batts or other suitable rubble. The first real attempt to form Canterbury Road into a roadway (unsealed) from just beyond Marlborough Road to the sealed section at Dickasons Road was undertaken with materials extracted from a quarry on the north side of Canterbury Road opposite Sunset Drive. At that time this was quite a major project and certainly upgraded that section of Canterbury Road, although still unsealed. Whilst on the subject of Canterbury Road, Heathmont, we always referred to the hill commencing where the Anglican Church now is as the "Big Hill." On one occasion in particular the road was in an almost non-negotiable condition and this must have become known to a motor cycle club as on this particular day the roar of many motor cycles could be heard coming from the direction of Wantirna Road and so a few of us local lads thought the Big Hill was the place to be and sure it was for when the bikes and riders hit the Hill the fun started – bikes in one direction, riders in another, and mud in every direction. What a show for us kids, and it was free – and what a contrast to the dual lane road that exists today. In those early days it was not surprising that the houses were sparsely situated, turning from Wantirna Road going toward Heathmont and there were no houses on left side until almost Waterloo Street and only four or five on the right side and a similar situation from Waterloo Street to the top of the Big Hill.

The only store we had in Heathmont in those days was run by the Marden family, eventually located on the north side of Canterbury Road almost opposite Dickasons Road. This was small geneal store plus Post Office, etc and a public phone box stood outside. As far as shopping business went, Heathmont remained dormant until post war 1940's, when a general grocery business was established on the corner of Heathmont Road by Mr. and Mrs. Cutting. Of course we have to keep in mind that many basic food commodities were delivered to the homes from Ringwood. One could say without doubt that the construction of the Heathmont Railway Station was the first major move in the creation of Heathmont, and the determination and hard work of those early Heathmont people was monumental. I was five years old on the day the station was opened and if my

memory serves me right I seem to recall a large marquee erected for the auspicious occasion near the Canterbury Road entrance to the station. In that marquee was the greatest spread of treats any five year old could set eyes upon. I and other kids had a ball while the adults' primary interest was the opening and acquisition of their very own station.

Also, later, if my memory serves me correctly, I feel sure the sad news came through that the station booking office and waiting room, etc. had burnt down. I feel I went to view that event. What year that was I cannot recall. I might add that up to recent times, Heathmont was on a single line from Ringwood to Ferntree Gully, and had a single platform, and this resulted in long waiting times between trains. If you missed your train at Heathmont you jumped down on the rail track and made haste to Ringwood, rather than wait for the next train to arrive at Heathmont. Young and fit, I did this on a number of occasions. In those days, Heathmont Road did not exist.

I recall cricket played on a ground between Marden's store and what is now Heathmont Road for some years, prior to Heathmont Oval being established off Canterbury Road, with its original entrance from Sunset Drive, with the original pavilion near the entrance. Tennis courts in those early days were situated on railway station property, and in constant use. Football did not come to Heathmont for many years.

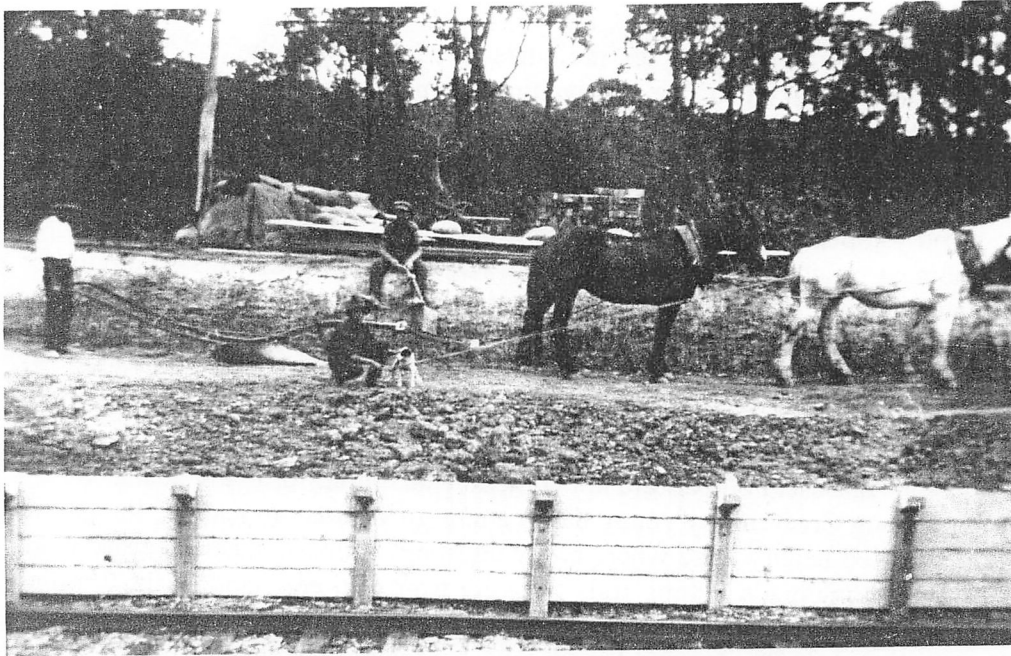
The Dandenong Creek in my young days cannot go without a mention, Its natural attraction and unspoiled beauty were where many days and hours of sheer pleasure were spent. We lads with homemade fishing rods catching trout and eels, and in the warmer months enjoying a swim in the clear flowing waters and picking large quantities of beautiful size blackberries. To me, that was a time when the Dandenong Creek was a truly beautiful place from Heathmont to Wantirna Road (Bellbird Park), with its willow trees - nature at its best, in a rustic setting. I have on many occasions seen the Creek in flood from various vantage places, and it was quite awesome. We as a family were visited by our many friends, particularly from inner Melbourne, and a "must do" was a casual stroll down to the creek, taking in its beauty and solitude. At the creek end of Waterloo Street in those days lived an elderly man very much into radio, crystal sets, battery sets, etc. He installed wires along the creek attached in places to existing post and wire fences stretching quite some distance, and he would take earphones with him to plug in wherever along the creek bank he wanted to relax. Occasionally he would invite us kids to listen in, which we thought was terrific sheer brilliance. How the world has moved forward.

Ringwood Primary School was our school, so for us Heathmont kids we had a two mile walk through the bush or longer. If the famous track was too wet to traverse, then we had to walk Canterbury, then Wantirna Roads, which was longer. We kids would gather together to go through the bush track where it started, which appears to me today to be about Ross Court, to walk through various properties, arriving at the corner of Haig St. and Greenwood Avenues, entering the school by the east gate. A fair hike, especially for young kids. No being driven to or from anywhere in our day. Nevertheless, thinking back, it was a healthy walk full of interest and many aspects of nature and some times taking a risk crossing a creek halfway between home and school, following heavy rain. This creek was a tributary that eventually passed under Canterbury Road then ran parallel with Marlborough Road and finally emptied into the Dandenong Creek.

As I come to the end of this resume, I make mention of the bushfires which were frequent in the hot summer months.

When I pass through Heathmont today I think of the place as it was all those years ago and I am quite amazed, but then suburbs are in some ways like human beings: infancy, middle age, full maturity. Heathmont has now arrived as a thriving suburb. I was

fortunate to experience in those early years of Heathmont the freedom to roam over the whole place, and although lacking some of the amenities available nearer Melbourne, life was good, simple and sometimes challenging."



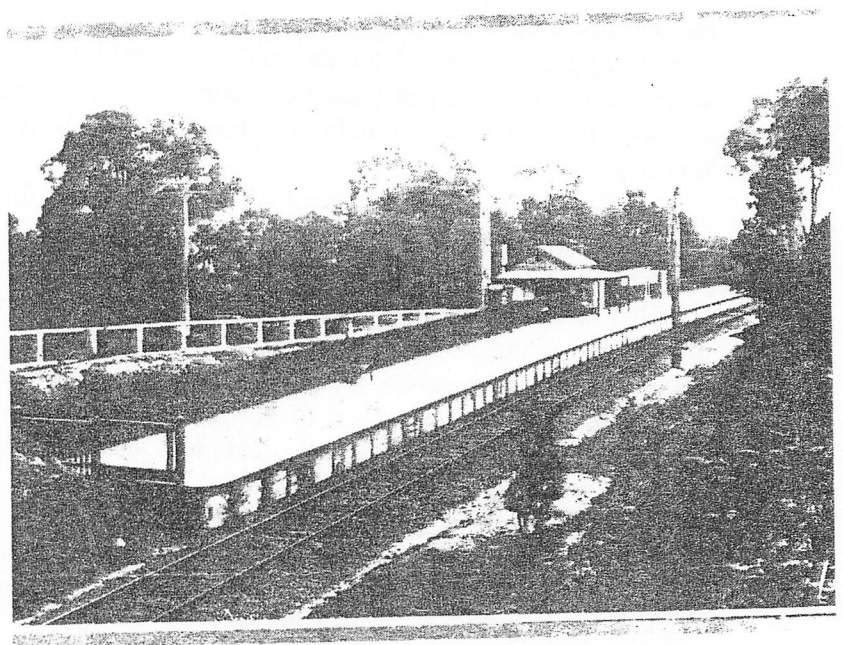
Building the station, 1926

May 1st.
1926 - 1996

Happy
Birthday!

It is exactly 70 years ago
today that Heathmont
Railway Station was
o p e n e d

Opening Heathmont Railway
Station, May 1st 1926



HEATHMONT ELECTRIC RAILWAY STATION.

29. Roy Norris

Written in 2003

"We arrived at Heathmont in 1924. Our little two roomed house is now a centre for the visually impaired. Canterbury Road was unmade with ruts and potholes. We used to have a horse and buggy phaeton, and spring cart, and the easiest way to negotiate the road was to stay in the wheel ruts. The people at the back of us had the chassis of an old car that they had taken the engine out of to make a saw bench. A lot of kids in the district used to push it up the hill just past where Lowen Street is now, then we would all hop on and ride it down to Wantirna Road. At least we had the old mechanical brakes.

As kids we used to go fishing down the Dandenong Creek to catch eels and blackfish. Once when all the boys were swimming down there in the nude (probably could not afford swimming trunks) , we decided to go over and help ourselves to Mr. Pike's plums. He saw us and came down and took all our clothes off the bank. It took a lot of courage and ingenuity to go and ask for them back. The Dandenong Creek was our source of water in one or two droughts that we had. We would go there with the horse and cart and some drums to fill, as we only had tanks. We had no laid-on water nor electricity, and used to boil a 4 gallon kerosene tin in the back yard for the weekly bath, and all had to use the same water. After that, we had a copper, and thought we were made when we had a chip heater over the tin bath.

The people all knew each other the whole district around, and it was a real country atmosphere where one would help the other. We all went to Ringwood State School and had to walk through the bush. If the creek was flooded we had to come back and walk beside the railway line.

In the 1934 flood all the kids got down on Wantirna Road where the Dandenong Creek is, and as the water was over the road, if a car got stuck trying to get through, we would ask for sixpence or a shilling to push it through, though there were very few cars in those days. The other extreme we had was bushfires and in a very dry summer it was a real worry.

As kids we used to be able to just go out and pick a variety of orchids, but even in the bit of bush we have left they all seem to have gone now. We used to have the old swagmen come around to our house and we would give them a billy tea and a sandwich. We often wondered why they always seemed to come to our place and not the place next door, then one of them told us they used to have a grapevine among themselves and sometimes would put a stone on the gate post to let the next one know you could get a feed there. They used to camp in an old shed in the recreation ground on the other side of Waterloo Street.

We had a job once picking strawberries down Waterloo Street for 1/2pence a box – and they were large punnets in those days. The chap had a dam and we used to put our buggy and cart wheels in it to swell the wood and keep the spokes tight. A chap over where Great Ryrie Street is now used to have a market garden and after he had taken what he wanted for market, we would go over with a big bag and fill it up with vegetables for one shilling. At birthday parties, if you had one in the fruit season, you would get a box of peaches or plums or whatever was around for a present from the orchardists, as everybody did not have much money.

My brother went to the opening of the Heathmont station, and I remember it getting burnt down.

We had plenty to do when you came home from school. You either fed the fowls, the horse, or milked the cow. We had to get wood for the one fire stove that we had. I'd say we were poor but happy.

There was a quarry opposite Sunset Drive where the stone was dug out to try and make Canterbury Road a bit more negotiable.

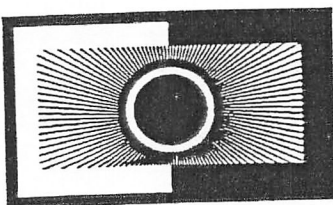
After the war, the place started to get developed, the bush was bulldozed and as the years went on the orchards disappeared. About half a kilometre on the north side of Dandenong Creek was reserved for a green belt, and when people thought it could not be subdivided, they sold it. Soon after the developers bought it, it was taken out of the green belt and subdivided.

Soon Heathmont was just another suburb where instead of knowing more people we seemed to know less."

* * *



Canterbury Road 1957



PENUMBRA CENTRE

INC.
ESTABLISHED 1978

A community supported multi-disability day care centre

268 CANTERBURY ROAD, HEATHMONT, VIC, 3135. TELEPHONE 729 7269

"Penumbra," now in the former Norris home.

30. Beryl Paul

Written in 2006

"We bought two blocks of land in Orchid Street, Heathmont, in 1951, for 90 and 60 pounds respectively. They had been owned by Mrs. Bennett, the daughter of Sir John Monash. With our two young children, each weekend my husband George and I travelled from Chatham by train to build our house. First, George built a shack or shed in the back yard. I had better call it a shack rather than a shed, for it included two bunks for Meryl and Sandra. George was a very talented craftsman, as evidenced by the high quality of our house now 50 years old. Many other locals were also owner-builders. Indeed, many came up on the train early on Saturday and worked for the weekend. Not only men, too, for our neighbour Nell Wheatland herself built much of her house. There was a great companionship among all of the locals, and tools and information could be swapped and borrowed. We could leave some equipment and half-finished buildings for the week without any fear of robbery or vandalism.

It was fortunate that we had good friends, for we relied on them for our water, as there was none connected to our blocks. Nor was there electricity, of course, nor gas, nor made roads, nor phone – nor, for some years, could we afford to own a car. Bread, milk and ice were delivered. We had a wood open fire, an outside lavatory, and a copper in the washhouse where we bathed the kids in the troughs.

Like lots of others, we moved into the house when it reached lock-up stage, and continued to complete building it for some years. I well remember George having the saw set up in the loungeroom area, with only a curtain separating this "room" from the kitchen, where I was baking a cake. We used to joke that the sawdust was cake decoration!

There was a creek running between our blocks and down through the farm which is now Parker Reserve, to the Dandenong Creek. Cows used to wander up to our place, and snakes were prevalent. Wildflowers, including orchids after which our street was named, were everywhere, delighting our family and our visitors, whom we would invariably take for a stroll and picnic through the bush down to the pine forest, the weir and Waldheim tea-house.

We walked a lot, and generally on very unmade roads. Even Canterbury Road was very rough and difficult. I often walked to the station up Heathmont Road, a rise which surprises others, but I am only too aware of it, after countless trips with two young children. We then went by train to Ringwood, to shop. Of course we also shopped at Heathmont, although in our early days here there was only one shop (Cuttings') and a rather chaotic little store and Post Office (Ada Marden's). Later I worked part-time for some years at Frank and Mavis Lucas' shop – lovely people!

Among my other memories are the very kindly and well-loved Sister Fraser, a local World War I nurse, who was an invaluable community helper; Crouch's Sunday School in a shed on the land where Bert Lavis later had his hardware shop, and Sunday School anniversaries at their house; and Meryl losing her Ringwood High School hat in the creek at the bottom of Campbell Street while riding to school. I also remember a local lad being drowned in that creek, which of course is no longer there.

Above all, I remember the community warmth of those days. We didn't have the conveniences and gadgets of today, but we had great village-style friendship, making lifelong friends with many of our neighbours and other Heathmont people."

31. Bessie Penn (Carmichael)

Written in 1997

“Wilfrid and Sarah Penn settled on 14 acres on ground along the north side of the Dandenong Creek in 1919. At the time they had 8 children: Annie, Ernest, Laura, Daniel, Alice, Walter, Florence and Marie. Later Nancy, David and Bessie were born. We kids had a menagerie of animals and dad had fowls, a market garden, and a small herd of cattle which grazed in bushland adjoining our property. This bush belonged to a family named Scott and was bordered by Marlborough, Cuthbert, Waterloo Street and the creek on the south side. In those days the creek was a clear running stream, which we drank, and was inhabited by black fish, trout, eels and a platypus family living in the bank opposite our house. This really was an idyllic place for us to live, especially us kids.

There were annual holiday houses along the creek toward Wantirna Road and during holiday time David and I ran wild through the bush with the visiting kids, and most other times as well. We never had to do chores as there were plenty of older siblings to cope with them. One day we were yabbing with the holiday kids when one pointed to a yabby on the bank and another chopped his finger off. I can still see the white finger lying there. Needless to say, we didn't have too much fun during the rest of that day.

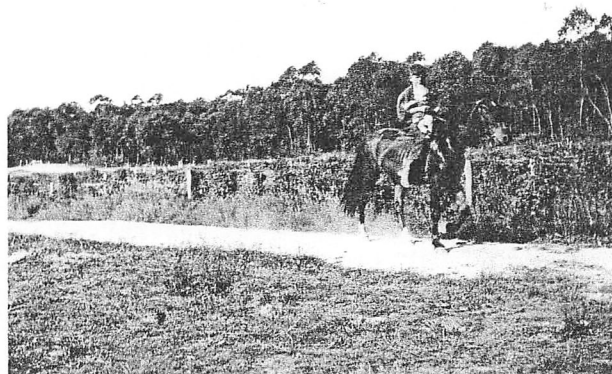
Every so often the creek flooded and ran under the house, but in November 1934, when I was ten, we had a huge flood, and had to be rescued. Sam Brown, who owned a timber yard in Ringwood, arrived with a big draft horse and dray to get us out of the house. He loaded all 8 of us in, but the current was so strong, horse, dray and us were being swept away, when a big log jammed in the wheel spokes and anchored us. Obviously we weren't meant to drown. Sam loaded 2 of us kids on the horse, undid the traces, hopped on himself, and took us to dry land. He did this on several occasions, then the police boat arrived and took my parents off the dray. Unfortunately, many years later, Sam Brown was drowned while fishing off San Remo.

We never returned to live at the creek. My eldest brother Ernest built a house at the highest point of our land, and my parents sold. The house is still in Waters Grove, opposite the school, with a second storey addition.

My brother Daniel started work at 14, working on the making of Wantirna Road, and eventually became a company director at Repco.

During the 1934 flood, the new high level bridge in Wantirna Road was washed away, but the old low level bridge survived.”

*Down near the Dandenong Creek.
Wallace Penn (about 16) with Ron
Kallock, the Penn's oldest grandson.
Note the berry vines and cow shed in
distance.*



32. Florence Penn (Tutton)

Written in 2006

"I was born in Blackburn in 1915, the seventh of eleven children. We moved to Ringwood/Heathmont in 1919. I remember us and our belongings being loaded onto a horse and dray for the trip from Blackburn to Ringwood, as it was called then – now Heathmont. Our property was near the Dandenong Creek. The house was built very close to the creek with a steep twenty-foot drop to the water. My father made a fence by opening out forty-four-gallon tar drums along the top. This fence had a dual purpose, serving as a safety barrier for us children, and in times of flood, the water was diverted from the house. I remember many times during floods lying in bed listening to the water trickle under the house. This fence worked well until the big floods of 1934, when everything was swamped and some of the family nearly drowned. On that terrible day I was at work and arrived home after it was all over. Bess, being a child at the time and one of those caught in the flood has more memories of it. My mother was so traumatized by the events that she refused to go back there to live.

As a child, it was a wonderful life. Although there were no conveniences, it was so free, plenty of room to play, we would fish and swim in the creek, ride bikes and horses. In the evening, we would see the platypus come out to play. No houses had keys to their doors, life was great, and even though it was during the Depression, we never went hungry as we had eight acres of land, we had a cow for milk, cream and butter, and chooks, and we grew enough vegetables to feed our large family. Dad also grew berries that were sent to AJC. Our job after school was to remove the shucks off the strawberries and blackcurrants before the jam company accepted them, and to this day I hate strawberries. My father and older sisters Anne and Laura would each carry two buckets of berries from our property two and a half miles to the Ringwood station. Dad later removed the berry plants and grew flowers. I can remember the paddocks making a beautiful sight covered in masses of flowers, mainly violets, boronia and gladioli.

One day my brother Dan, who was twelve, got bitten by a snake. As we were so far from a doctor, no phones or transport, Mum saved his life by tying string very tight above and below the bite, then getting a turpentine bottle and pressing hard on the bite area. The bad blood dripped into the bottle and he lived to seventy-nine

When we started to work, in the winter months we had to wear old shoes till we got to Canterbury Road then we put them under a bush and would get them on the way home. Marlborough Road was very muddy and rough with lots of potholes. We didn't use Heathmont station on work days, even though it was a lot closer than Ringwood, a lot of trains from Ferntree Gully used to express through Heathmont, giving us less choice. We often caught the train from Heathmont to Ferntree Gully at weekends and when on holiday."



Before roads were formed
1951

33. Jill Pump (McMahon)

Written in 1994

“Childhood was family orientated, due to living in an orchard with few neighbours. My only playmates were my older brother Brian and a neighbour of the same age, Ian Sharp. We had to be self-sufficient, healthy, contented with life and our own company. As a pre-school child, the highlights of the day were listening to “Kindergarten of the Air” and visiting my grandfather and single aunt, who lived together on the orchard, too.

I commenced school at Ringwood State on my 5th birthday – the separation from my parents was traumatic! I travelled to school by train under the care of my older brother Brian. Later, when we attended Box Hill High, two elderly ladies from Ferntree Gully cared for me on the train to school. We learnt which train to catch home by the signals at Ringwood Station – I caught the Lilydale train only once, and had a long walk home. From 1949 onwards the suburban sprawl extended to Heathmont, eliminating orchards by degrees, and giving me more children to befriend and walk to school with. In 1953 Heathmont State commenced in the Methodist Church hall, but local children in Grade 6 remained at Ringwood State then most attended Ringwood High when it opened in 1954. Some of the boys went to The Gully Tech.

Family activities included bush walking with parents on a Sunday afternoon. I took little specimen boxes to collect insects, leaves, nuts, etc. During summer, Saturday afternoons were spent watching Dad play cricket – all local children enjoyed the atmosphere there. Winters were spent indoors playing family games – Ludo, Snakes and Ladders, cards, etc. I also enjoyed drawing, reading, dressing my dolls, knitting and crafts. My Mum and Aunt taught me to knit when I was 4 years old, hence I was making my own jumpers and cardigans when I was 10. The wireless (no TV) was only turned on for the news and serials – Martin’s Corner, Dad and Dave, Killers of the Sea – and sport – cricket – as it was operated by battery. Mother made all the family clothes. Many garments were made from recycled clothes (clothing was rationed during the War), using a Singer Treadle machine. In the house there was an open fire and a wood fire stove – the only form of heating. We had no electricity until I was 10 years old. We used kerosene lamps and Mum boiled the clothes in a kerosene tin on the stove then carried this into the bathroom and rinsed the clothes in the bath and wrung them out by hand – she did this for the first 17 years of married life. We only had tank water. Brian and I had a bath every night – I had the first kettle of hot water, then a second was added for him. Food was kept in the Coolgardie safe under the tank stand where it was cool. A meat safe hung in the fernery – meat kept fresh for 5 days. It was purchased from W.Say in Richmond, who packed it and sent it by train to Heathmont. Station once a week. Order was phoned in (Grandfather had the phone). Groceries were delivered from Ringwood – Beilby’s , corner of Melbourne St and Whitehorse Road (where Dimmey’s is now). The order was collected on Monday and delivered on Thursday. Bread was purchased from Guests Bakery, Ringwood, delivered daily by horse and cart. The baker also delivered the mail and daily newspaper. We had our own cow and later there was a daily milk delivery in a billy hung on the front gate.

There was one shop in Heathmont, a small general store and P.O. (Mardens). Later a corner store opened on the corner of Canterbury Road and Heathmont Road (now a bank),

When older (10-12 years) after school I played tennis by the atation, where there is now a car park.

Heathmont was noted for the many native orchids and wildflowers growing in the bush. Many excursions were organized by Melbourne Uni. to our area. There are many varieties of heather, too. One notable fungi authority from Melbourne Uni., Mrs. Sophie Ducker. from Kew, would often visit us.

By the time I went to High School, automation had arrived in the Pump household, and our life was the same as most others of that era. Youth activities mainly revolved around the church – (YAF at St. Paul's, Ringwood) and the Tennis Club."



Herman and Louisa and four of their children



Herman and Louisa Pump



The Pump home (later, Methodist manse)



Wilf and Lil Pump 1996

34. Russ Read

Written in 2006

Heathmont was that place across the creek south of Ringwood where I had lived for almost all of my early years from 1938-1961.

Ringwood State School was where all the local kids went and we got to know some of the Heathmont kids. Some even in my grade. Brian was a mate of mine and his family the Pumps, were real pioneers of the Heathmont area.

Ryrie St went nowhere down toward the abattoirs. Heathmont Road was a donkey track and it was a real challenge to get down there to Canterbury Road which was hardly worth the effort being a single bitumen strip amongst the gums.

Occasionally we would sneak through the bush south of Heathmont to "Bushies Weir" where as like as not you would get chased out by an irate landholder with a fierce reputation but as far as I know, no kids were ever lost down there.

Wind the clock forward a few years 1950-1966 and my team East Ringwood in the later years played footy against Heathmont on the Canterbury Road ground at the corner of Sunset Drive. We usually won but some of them were tough players and I remember coming up against Stan Jones who was one of my first opponents who truly had "white line fever".

Heathmont was changing and access by this time was lots better with Heathmont Road and Great Ryrie Street being very smooth roads and Jubilee Park being the home of the Ringwood Teams.

Fast forward to my engagement to the girl I would marry, Wendy Manderson, and we decided to buy a block of land for our future home in late 1950's.

We decided to look in the Ringwood – Heathmont area and found our home site through Dicksons Estate Agency on Schultz's old orchard in Coleman Street where we finally built in 1963 and brought up our family.

We married in 1961 and used T J (Jack) Milner's black Hudson taxi as our wedding car. T J Milner's taxis ran from his motor vehicle repair shop in the station entrance at the Ringwood station and his son George was my close mate in those days and George was the reason that I finished up playing for East Ringwood as his Grandfather Harry Cope was an early President of the Club.

Shauna(1963), Kim (1966) and Jacquie(1967) grew up in Coleman Street and when finally Kim went to Viviani Crescent Kindergarten in 1970 then began my association with Committees, starting there and followed by Heathmont Primary where all the girls attended and saw dad on school committee and attending many working bees. All good fun.

"Harold the Posty" was regularly met at the gate by the girls as he delivered the mail on his trusty pushbike and would always stop for a chat if the girls were waiting and the bottled milk was delivered daily initially by the milkman from his horse drawn cart very early in the morning with the reassuring clip clop of the horses hooves sometimes stirring ones sleep or keeping Wendy company as she fed the babies in the early hours.

We paid the milk bill to Mr Matthews who wandered around on foot to pick up the money.

The girls were often sent for extra supplies to the milk bar run by Bill and Jean Strong which was just up the hill from the Ferres' service station.

Our oldest daughter attended Heathmont Technical College in Heathmont Road and her two sisters went to Ringwood High School in Bedford Road.

2.

Cricket came into our lives again then after many years absence as I was coerced by neighbor Barry Richardson about 1970 to have a game with Heathmont Methodists playing again on the Canterbury Road ground. The ground was pretty rough as were many of the sports grounds in the area and it became available to the Meths as H E Parker Reserve was developed for the main Heathmont teams.

Shortly after I was introduced to Heathmont Lions with Ken Craigie and Maurie Ferres (Proprietor of the Service Station on the corner of Canterbury Rd and Campbell Street.) and so followed 10 happy years (1974-1984) with the Lions and their ladies attempting to do some useful things in the area. The Carnival we ran on the Railway land in Campbell Street was a yearly highlight for a few years.

The street construction took place in our area in the early 60's and then sewerage finally came and did away with the thunderbox in our backyard which if you left the door open , gave a nice view of the Dandenongs whilst one caught up with the news in the paper.

Canterbury Road was now a divided road and the shopping centre catered for almost all family needs. Two service stations, three milk bars and two banks plus supermarkets and two doctors provided most needs with the doctors always available for house calls.

With the closure of Heathmont Primary and its amalgamation into Great Ryrie Primary I wonder what the future holds.

Our observations have gone from being the young family in our street with lots of mature aged residents to the present situation where we are the senior residents and the younger brigade are doing up and extending the older homes and having lots of children which now reverses our role in the street.

The Railway Station was not a big feature of my early years but now it gives ready access to the CBD should one wish to venture there with an up and down platform to service the regular timetable.

Heathmont is a great place to live and I am sure that it will remain a very livable part of the metropolis.

* * *



35. Helen Rees (Bell)

Written in 2006

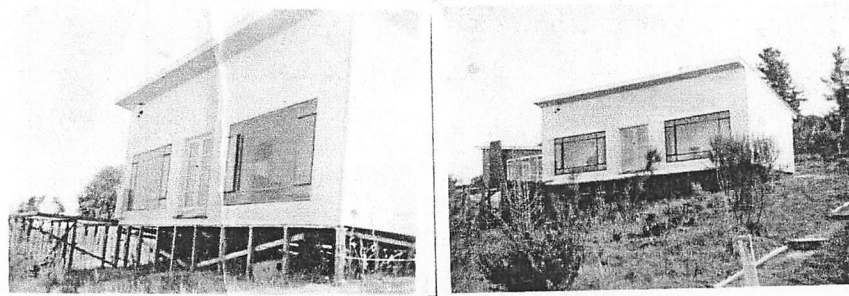
"I came to Heathmont in 1956, and with my husband bought a block 90 by 229 feet in Leawarra Drive. (Actually it was not the aboriginal name "Leawarra," then, but rather "Herman Street." Some residents objected to this German name, and in the post-WWII atmosphere, Council agreed to change its name, despite the local historical importance of Herman Pump)

I know that some of my best friends have also written their recollections, and in recent discussions we have had great fun recalling earlier days of a hard-working, pioneering village atmosphere, of a precious and long-lasting camaraderie, with all kinds of highlights – Diane Carter organising canteen rosters, our babies and infants shivering in the big unheated hall at the Health Centre, fund-raising which was also fun-raising, chip heaters, Frank and Mavis Lucas being granted the liquor licence, paying for the construction of our streets, the huge strife over the Kindergarten Centre entertainment hours, the very many well-liked shopkeepers - there are so many memories.

We have decided that my focus will be on two related aspects. Firstly, the wonderful community spirit and mutual help offered so freely. It has for many of us been the crucial part of our enjoyment of living in Heathmont. I had direct experience of this warm spirit at the time of the untimely death of my first husband, and there have been countless less dramatic examples, especially as we enjoyed the fetes, fairs and "drives" of fund-raising.

I have also been "chosen" by one particular Heathmont group to tell something of our recollections. Our group has a unique name – "The Heathmont Tuesday Girls who meet on Monday!" Since 1979, with our children now at or past their secondary schooling, so no longer the parent associations, sports days and fetes to keep us together, but with a firm resolve to maintain our friendship, we have met regularly, originally on a Tuesday, but now the day earlier. What marvellous times we have shared! Food, fun and fellowship. And yet, old habits die slowly, so we have retained the fund-raising, and to the degree that by each just putting in a few dollars at our gatherings, we have been able to donate over \$10,000 to a variety of local and national causes!

The girls all want to have their names in this booklet, so here they are: "*Heathmont Tuesday Girls- Monday*" - Helen Rees, Jenny Rose, Joyce Ball, Mary Barro, Nancy Barry, Gwen Buchanan, Bambra Cohen, Val Davidson, Jean Head, Joan McConchie, Lila McRae, Connie Noble, Jane Rodgers, Pat Ryan, Lorraine Seeley, Joan Shaw, Mary Wadsworth. A fine bunch indeed!



Typical Heathmont 1956 – the home of John and Helen Bell (Rees), 5 Leawarra Drive, in its incomplete stage – in which they lived for more than two years.

36. Alan and Betty Ritchie

Written in 2006

"We came to Heathmont in 1959, having bought our block of land in Campbell Street from next-door neighbours and subsequent life-long friends Max and Lois Hunkin. Like many others in the district, we were attracted to the area by the availability of the land and its natural bushland, and soon we started to build our own home.

Alan was at his employment all the week, so the building was at weekends or even after work on weekdays. I (Alan) have vivid memories of felling the trees (13 large ones), using axe and saw and Beards trucks from down Canterbury Road to help grub out the stumps. Alan often brought my tools by motorbike. Next was digging the foundations, sometimes even after dark, with a torch tied to a spade, and using barrow and buckets to swap clay for silt from the creek just down Campbell Street, which was unmade and cut by the creek. It was hard yakka, but buoyed on by the progress and the satisfaction, by using a range of sub-contractors, our house was built in under a year.

As soon as we moved in we attended the Methodist church, and it has been a very important part of our life ever since. Apart from the friendships we have enjoyed, features we recall include the first minister, Rev. David U'ren, Frank Secomb being important in arranging for the old buildings from Ringwood to be brought on site for an extension to the original church, Sunday School teaching and Alan's lay preaching, and tiered platforms for up to 300 children in annual Sunday School anniversaries, The Ladies Guild where Joan Browning organised a monthly "make and mend day" for the Burwood children's home, membership of the Property Committee, and much later the formation of the Uniting Church as we joined with the Presbyterians. Perhaps the most vivid particular memory comes from a 1962 event – Alan was up the back of the tiered platform and about to sing "How Great Thou Art" when a message was passed back to him (no mobile phones then!) that third daughter Heather had just been born!

One of the unifying forces within the church life was sport. For many, this was cricket, but with three girls, for us it was basketball, nowadays called netball. Melva Muller started the Heathmont Methodist (later Uniting) Netball Club, firstly playing on a working-bee constructed court where the church is now, then at the State School (and later HEPS and H.E.Parker). Elizabeth, Jocelyn and Heather all played, as did nearly all the girls in the district, many for our Club. We recall excellent players such as Cheryl Hunkin and Judy White, the umpiring of Marie McBurney and the barracking of Barry Richardson! The many badges on the tartan netball uniforms showed how successful the club was.

Not only did the district provide a pleasant environment (our children enjoyed yabbing in the orchard dams), a unifying church life with lots of activities for young and old, and plenty of sporting opportunities, but we were also always very pleased with the quality of local education, be it in Heathmont Primary with teachers of the calibre of Madge Blake, or Ringwood Tech. (where Alan taught and administered), or "Ringy High" where our girls went, luckily during the years when Mr. Ron Hodge was an excellent Headmaster.

Although we have now moved from Heathmont, and our children have also left the district, we have many pleasant recollections of being part of a community during its evolution from an orcharding village to a residential suburb."

* * *

37. Ken Roberts

Written in 2006

"Marj and I arrived in Heathmont in March 1962 to our new home in The Boulevard, which had taken 18 months to build because neither we nor the builder could borrow the money to finish it, due to the 1961 credit squeeze. We had electricity, but had to wait another year for a phone line. Meanwhile we walked over muddy unsealed roads to a public phone in Allens Road. It took another several years for Allens Road to be sealed, and although that was great we were sad to see the demise of the beautiful avenue of Cootamundra wattles.

We liked Heathmont because of its village atmosphere and community spirit. In those days many local folk were involved in a wide variety of committees, initiating and building up community facilities such as pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, sporting clubs, churches, Lions Club and others. While committees can be time-consuming and frustrating, they were wonderful opportunities to meet and be involved with a wide variety of people, and those of us who participated had a great sense of ownership and achievement as the community developed.

One of my early activities was with the Viviani Crescent pre-school. In those days, the Government's only contribution was to pay the director's salary, and the committee really did run the pre-school, and through fund-raising provided all the facilities and supplies. When I became president, I lacked both the time and the ability to do as much work as some previous office-bearers, so we organized the committee to give each member specific responsibilities, thus being able to enthusiastically utilize their individual skills. Another very hard working local committee later established a new Heathmont East pre-school in Pleasant Drive, which our third and fourth children attended.

Another exciting involvement for me was with the Heathmont East Primary School committee when the new Principal, Vin Blatch, was developing the culture of the school. He had enormous enthusiasm, and blended commitment to discipline with a very successful drive to instill pride in the school in students, staff and parents. He particularly encouraged care of the grounds, and participation in sport, with doing one's best being as important as winning.. The president of the school council was Bob Marsh, who at that time was building our new home in Mont Court. Our block required extensive excavation, and the school required fill for a level sports oval, so for six days loaded trucks rolled down the hill from our block to the school! The school got a cheap oval, and we got a cheap excavation! I also remember that as a school committee we were able to buy a house located in a corner of the school property, strip the inside walls and with the help of a parent/architect, construct a very creative Prep Centre with its own separate facilities, to help young children in their transition into school. While this is common today, it was a very innovative idea in the 1970's.

Our family have also been strongly involved with the Heathmont Methodist (now Uniting) Church. The original buildings are still there, but in 1967, after much planning and the involvement of many people, the brick church was built. The square design encouraged an atmosphere of closeness and involvement as distinct from the remoteness sometimes felt in the traditional long central aisle design. The large foyer, allowing people to socialise under cover after services, was another new feature for its time.

Although Heathmont has grown significantly, it retains its village atmosphere, and we enjoy meeting people with whom we have been involved over many years."

38. Isobel Robin

Written in 2005/6

"1949. Asking "Where's Heathmont?" Finding I'd been through it on the train a thousand times but never really noticed the pretty little station with its trees and grazing cows. Buying a block of land on unmade road with nothing to guide us but surveyors who were working on the estate. No electricity. No road. Nothing much at all, but lots of promise.

1956. House built and moved into. Dirt road, but electricity and water on. Houses being built all around us. The birds' early morning chorus giving way to the whine of saws and the banging of hammers. Accumulating more and more neighbours. Making friends. Lending and borrowing and minding each others' children. One man had a motor mower, one woman a floor polisher. I had a jam boiler. In our small street, these did the rounds. So did the children. Somehow we always felt safe about the kids. They played in each others' houses, or played outdoors, in the pine trees high in Royal Avenue. An adventure playground, shared with their dogs. Dogs running everywhere with the kids, doing no major harm. Just part of the gang. Mud. Mud. Mud. Children getting half-way to school and falling over in the mud, coming home wet and filthy for a change of clothing. The road to school was an adventure in itself! Lots of babies – prams and pushers and expectant mothers. The verandah at the Campbell Street surgery of the young and popular Dr. Murray Deerbon. A real "mothers' club" atmosphere. The indomitable "Sis" – Sister Purvis – we believed her to be the next best thing to the doctor himself when it came to patching you up. Kindergarten - The building provides one example of the way in which local people were involved in the creation of a great atmosphere in the district. The wonderful animal murals painted on the wall by local and esteemed artist, George Browning.

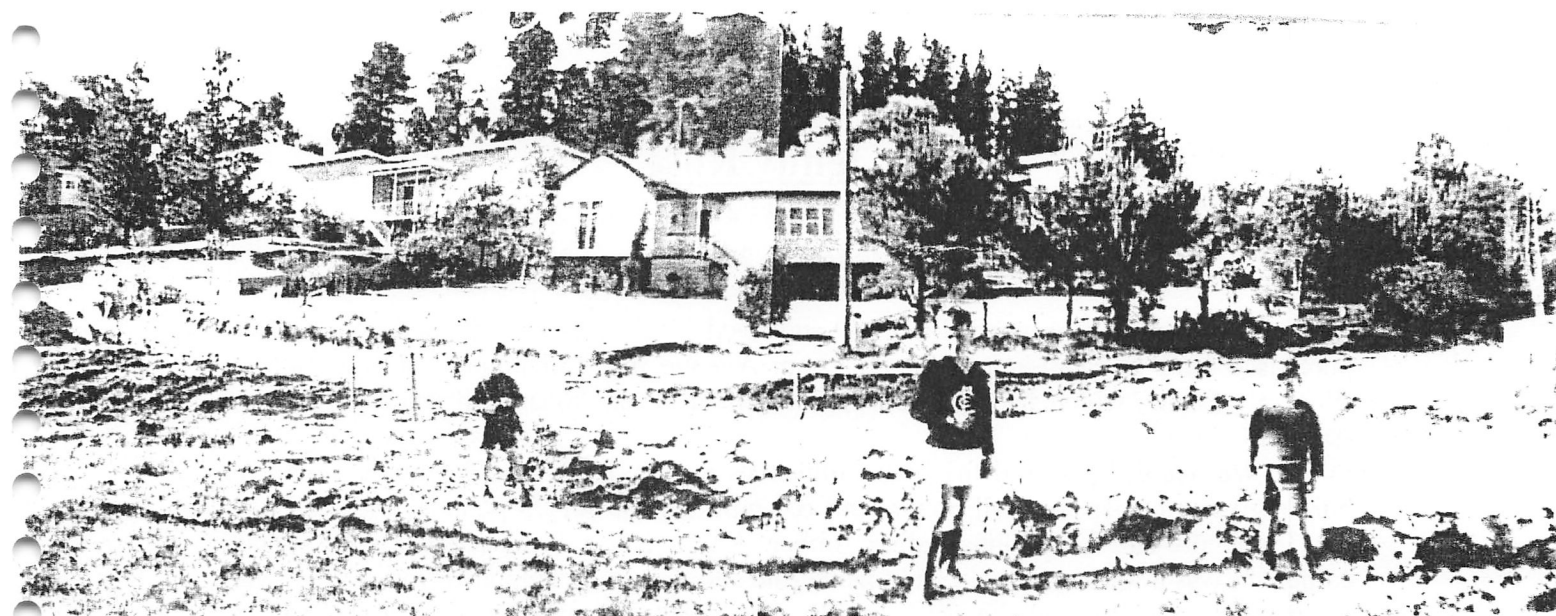
Around 1971: Road-making. Mud, noise, confusion - all in a good cause. Watching in horror as my 8 year old daughter climbed a pile of dug-out mud and began to be sucked down into it. Getting her out minus one gumboot, which probably remains to this day, way under the Royal Avenue intersection, awaiting the admiration of some future archaeologist. A welcome end to heavy boots, galoshes, etc. lined up under the bench in the station's waiting room – left these all day until their owners returned from work or travel and put them on for the muddy trudge home. (Only one pair of shoes that I know of was stolen – and they were mine!) Speaking about shoes, what about ballet shoes? Here, in the kindergarten building, those well-known dancers and superb teachers Bruce and Bernice Morrow, began what grew to be the Ringwood Ballet Group, which has produced professional dancers as well as introduced so many children and parents to the beauty and health-benefits of ballet. The railway station "back then." A gem. One platform, one rail track, trains far apart, but personal, intelligent and constant service from real people behind the ticket window, from the first morning train until the last one at night had rattled past. No ticket machines to be "out of order" when most needed. Someone was there, usually Mrs Cotter or her daughter Marj., to give information and sell tickets. And a waiting room, and – yes – toilets, a bit yukky, but there when needed. The waiting room provided shelter from the icy winds that still sweep along the platform to the accompaniment of rain and sometimes hail. Today? No human beings. A locked-up toilet, and bars that keep us out of the waiting room. Frozen passengers have been heard to remark that it should be full of politicians so that we can feed them peanuts. The

“railway house” was where the Cotter family lived. Mr Cotter was, I think, foreman of the gang of workers who kept the railway track maintained and safe. Now it’s done by far fewer human beings and a tribe of juggernaut machines that belong in Jurassic park and make a lot of noise. That house has been demolished. Now, as well as a car park, we have a fast-food outlet. “Don’t Ringbark Ringwood” – a sign that stood near the pathway to the station. It disappeared mysteriously overnight, when work had begun on the removal of the lovely indigenous trees that lined Canterbury Road, prior to turning this delightful roadway into a speed course of several lanes and lots of shops, and a few trees. And where the pseudo-log cabin now stands, selling swimming pools and their needs, there was once a single tennis court where a small payment would let you hire it for a game or two. Well, I guess the situation is still given over to sport, although it costs a lot more to buy a swimming pool than to hire a tennis court.

Some things, however, have turned out to be for the better, although others have vanished altogether, like two of the once three banks, and all of the once four petrol stations. We have, however, at my last (probably inaccurate) count, about fourteen eateries, ranging from elegant restaurants to a fish and chip shop which has always been there, it seems. Once we had two small pharmacies, and now we have one big one, although the service is still friendly. And it is good to see that Herbert Strommer’s jewellery shop, which moved from the other side of Canterbury Road to its present location some years ago, still carries his name, thanks to two of his lovely daughters (we can remember when they were born – I think!). And there is a book shop, albeit mainly for educational books. The original bookshop there was opened by Margaret Matthews, who also began a small lending library, which we enjoyed for a while. We had, with the aid of many hard workers, good schools in the district – but what has happened to two of them, now wrecks, empty and ugly? A library was an urgent necessity, A group of us from an Adult Education book-lovers club, lobbied the Council, even getting up a kind of petition. These stalwart Heathmont ladies kept up the pressure with Council, with fellow parents and with neighbours. One of us even gate-crashed a meeting to put the case before a slow-moving group of important people. I don’t claim that we were the only reason that Ringwood (and therefore Heathmont) got that library, but I think we helped it come sooner rather than later.

Heathmont has grown up, and some of the things we worked for so hard and enthusiastically are now gone or, in the case of two fine and useful schools, closed down and left to decay very horribly. But we have gained in other directions. And it seems to me that, after a period where our children had grown and gone, young people seem to be coming back. There are mums (and dads) with prams and pushers, but they don’t have to push their kids around on rutted dirt roads, or watch out for snakes in the deep overgrown gutters of my own early Heathmont days. And there is something very pleasant about sitting at a table on the footpath, outside one of the restaurants, with a coffee and a muffin, watching people go by. And very often there is someone who you have known for a long time – since Kindergarten Committee days or the Cubs and Brownies. Now you can get together, forgetting about the traffic tearing by, and talk about grandchildren.

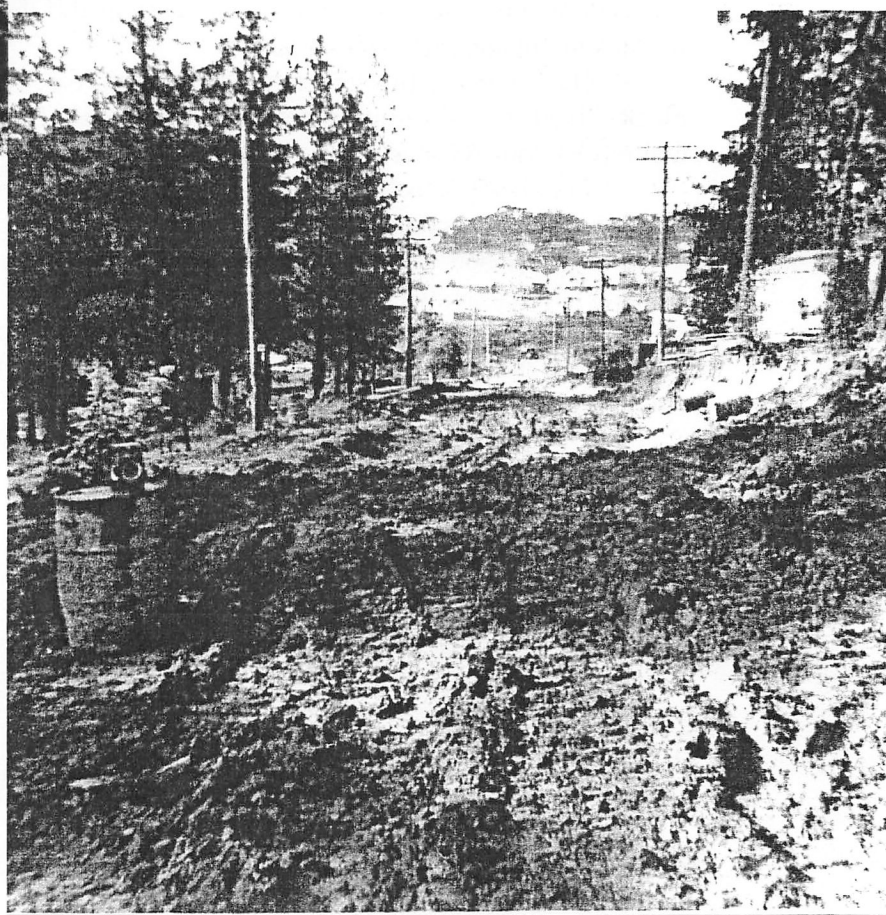
Memories don’t stop drifting almost randomly in and out of the mind. These are just a few “stream of consciousness” images and episodes that come when reflecting back on fifty years in the one district – indeed, in the one house. Heathmont was a great place to be then. It is a great place to be now. Aren’t we lucky?”



*Road-making 1961:
Royal Avenue and Herman St.
(later named Leawarra Drive)*



*The land-owners paid
for the road, e.g. cost
for 3 Herman Street
(Leawarra Drive) was
539 pounds 4 shillings.*



39. Jenny Rose

Written in 2006

"Ken and I were married in 1949 and lived for 2 years in Ashwood. In 1950 we purchased land in Heathmont, Lot 66 Leoni Avenue, for 135 pounds. It was part of Whelan's Estate, which had been an apple orchard. Their house still stands in Devon Avenue.

We decided to build the house ourselves and in 1951 paid 3 pounds 5/6 for a building permit, then in April bought our red gum stumps for 23 pounds 16/8, and had our frame pre-cut from Nunawading timber. Ken's eldest brother Jack, who was a carpenter, was a wonderful help and together he and Ken, with help also from Ken's twin brother Ray, commenced the work, which they had to do at weekends. Jack lived in Bentleigh, and he and Ken came by bus and train and walked from Heathmont station, carrying all their equipment, etc.

Ken and I bought an Austin 7. One day when we were travelling along Canterbury Rd. near Waterloo Street, Ken cried out "Get out quickly, Jenny!" The car had caught fire. We had 2 cans of Creasote on board to paint the stumps, so you can imagine the panic. Fortunately a man rushed out with a baby bath of water and threw it over the car. (He said he had taken the baby out of the bath!)

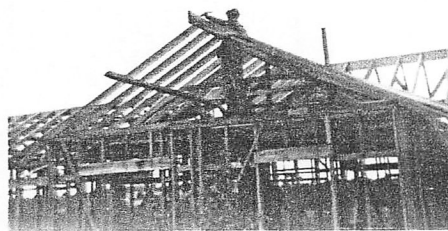
We eventually moved into our home in 1953, and although it was not finished and had no plaster, we were happy. Andrew was born in August and Philip in 1955. The roads were unmade and the baker wouldn't come down, so delivered the bread at the corner. The milkman managed in his horse and cart, as did the dustman, iceman, and nightman – we had an outside toilet with a pan.

Ours was the first to be built in Leoni Ave. At that stage, people in surrounding blocks lived in make-shift shacks and car cases. To get water, we had to tap from the main in Balfour Avenue.

The Baby Health Centre was in the Kindergarten, which was built by the Heathmont Advancement League. When the boys went to kindergarten, I became Secretary. We had many functions such as barn dances and fetes. Our directress was Barbara McKenzie, who I still keep in touch with.

Our boys went to Heathmont Primary at the top of the hill and to this day a group of mothers meet monthly and have raised many thousands of dollars for various collections.

We have grown old in Heathmont and have always loved the village atmosphere. We hope to live here for many years to come."



1951: Ken building the house at 13 Leoni Avenue. 1957: Philip in the bath!

40. Joyce Rowlands

Written in 1998

"We bought our block of land in Eden Avenue in 1953. It was part of an old lemon orchard belonging to the Crouch family, and next door to Washusen's orchard. It had no water or electricity or made road, but did have the most wonderful view of the Dandenongs. We had a choice of three blocks, and we bought the cheapest one for 250 pounds – Lot 24 or no.9, just opposite the old house, which is still there. We inspected the block on the corner of Cuthbert and Orchard Grove, but rejected it because of the thick blackberries and a creek running through it. Down the road from us – today numbers 3 and 5, Rita and Jack Johnson, and Doreen and Fred Taylor were living in their garages while building their homes. Downey's house was on a double block behind us in Orchard Grove.

Two criteria were paramount in our choice – the block had to be within walking distance of the railway station and close to a tennis club. We used both to the full. We had great games of tennis at the new courts in Canterbury Road, and fondly remember Enid Sharp, Di Jago, Denise Scouller, Eric Nickels and Murray Marshallsea as wonderful partners. Canterbury Road was unmade until the bend and it was rough and stony. When our house was built, we had a wonderfully clear view looking east across Barrow's orchard and the low hills towards the Dandenongs. From the kitchen sink we were often amused to notice people, in the distance, walking down their back path to the outdoor dunny. Such was the open nature of the terrain, with few houses and trees, which is quite the opposite today.

Milk was delivered daily (nightly, actually!) by horse and cart, and we paid our bill to Mr Pavey at the dairy in Thanet Street, Ringwood.

We all made wonderful friends with the neighbours. One was Marion Marshallsea from 6 Mount View Road, across Barrow's orchard. We had an arrangement that a green towel hung on the Hills hoist meant that I was home and a red one told her I was going out, so it was no use coming to see me.

The roads in our neck of the woods were just stony tracks, and as we walked everywhere, we wore out at least two pushers with two children in and one walking whilst hanging on at the side. Eventually the road was made, but it took more than a year, as the first contractor went bankrupt and it had to be re-advertised.

When Barrow's orchard was put up for sale, we went and dug up a Satsuma plum and transplanted it in our back yard. It is still growing lovely fruit even after 40 years and they are always great to eat and too nice to cook.

It was a great time to raise a family among other young people doing the same. The local shops were busy with such friendly traders as Arthur and Chris Cutting, Grocers, and Mr Strommer the Jeweller, and our shopping strip is still vibrant today.

Heathmont has always been a great place to live."

SUBURBAN PIONEERS

THREE STAGES VERY FAMILIAR TO ALL THE FOLK WHO SETTLED IN HEATHMONT IN THE '50s AND '60s

On the block, dreaming.

Here, Joyce Rowlands in Eden Avenue, 1953, loves the view over Downey's house in Orchard Gve. with Barrow's orchard and the Dandenongs in the distance.



Actual Cost of Home.

Date	Item	Amount
March 1	Building Permit	5 5 6
April 2	Subcontracting, masonry	50 - -
" 4	W & Pk - Kitchen Pkts	33 16 8
	Allyes Emporium 405	35 - -
May 19	Auto caps base	2 8 -
June 1	Garage skabanes	5 11 7
Oct 25	Subcontracting, timber	50 - -
Dec 2	Subcontracting, masonry	4 12 6
March 2	Subcontracting, masonry	35 16 -
April 5	Roof, tiles, ridge, barge, etc.	17 3 10
July 4	Shells	8 5 -
July 19	Paint, wood, etc.	15 - 6
July 22	Roof - tiles	15 6 -
August	Roofing, etc.	4 3 6
" 11	Roofing	9 - -
" 13	Roofing	4 12 6
Oct 19	Roofing	2 10 -
Oct 3	Roofing	23 15 0
" 20	Roofing	2 10 -
Oct 1	Roofing	61 8 -
" 6	Roofing	125 - -
" 7	Roofing	1 6 -
" 8	Roofing	5 5 4

The budget for the new home.

Here, a page from the "Vana" exercise book in which Ken and Jenny Rose recorded all their financial details, 1951, in pounds, shillings and pence!

It's started!

Here, the stumps (and Joyce Rowlands) at no. 9 Eden Avenue, May 1955.



41. Frank Secomb

Written in 1996

“My recollections of early Heathmont date from 1936 when I learned to ride my big brother’s Norton 500 motor bike up and down between fruit trees in Mr. Muller’s abandoned orchard in a location now known as Bennett Avenue. My father and brother were building a house for Mrs. Angles on the corner of Heathmont Road and Bennett Avenue.

My next visit to Heathmont was whilst I was still in the Army Engineers, just after the end of the war with Japan, 1945. Betty and I were just married and debated whether to build on Loughnan’s Hill or the corner of Heathmont Rd. and Bennett Ave., opposite Mrs. Angles. Both had excellent views, and the proximity of the Heathmont railway station was an important consideration.

Before World War I, Mr. Doug Muller’s grandfather Mr. John William Muller developed an orchard from Dickasons Road down to the Dandenong Creek and from Barnic Road to the east. His family home was in Dickasons Rd opposite Bennett Avenue. His son George served in World War I under Sir John Monash, and was mentioned in dispatches. On returning from the war, George Muller developed an orchard bounded by the present roads Heathmont, Orchid, Dickasons and Canterbury. Their family home was close to where the Ampol service station now stands. The address was Dickasons Road, Ringwood, as Heathmont had not been named at that time. As there were only 12 potential pupils in the area, no school was built, and Doug Muller had to walk across the paddocks and cross a creek to get to the Ringwood school. In 1926 Mr. George Muller’s orchard was subdivided and named “Charm View Estate,” but because of the Depression, very little of it was sold. The estate was then owned by Mrs. Bertha Bennett, the daughter of Sir John Monash. We purchased two blocks, for 90 and 95 pounds, through Carter, the Ringwood real estate Agent. The land had a good patch of heath of different colours, which survived another 20 years. There was a clear view of the Dandenongs, and because of the decision of the late Mr. John Harper and Mrs. Harper to retain the whole of their property as bush land, we have continued to enjoy a pleasant rural aspect without any other house having been visible from our living areas for the past 50 years.

The original orchard of John William Muller was purchased by Mr. Eric Nickels, a well-known tennis player in the district. The Washusens developed an orchard between Sunset drive and Orchard Grove. In the early 1950’s their old homestead was used for the formation of the Heathmont Cubs and Scouts.

Using my deferred Army pay to finance the cost of the house, my father, brother and I plus an elderly Cornish stonemason, worked on building the house during early 1946. Betty and I moved in when it was at a very early lock-up stage, no electricity for the first few weeks, and it took most of my spare time for several years to complete the house and garden.

At the south eastern end of Heathmont Road, the bush track made a right hand turn and passed over the Dandenong Creek on a substantial single track wooden bridge made from local trees, linking with a track in the location of Waldheim St., connecting with Stud Road at Mountain Highway. In 1946, the bridge did not appear to have been used by vehicles for many years, but was used regularly by the Waldheim Guest House visitors. Just upstream from the bridge, a German settler, Mr. Busch, who owned and developed the Guest House, built a concrete retaining wall across the Dandenong Creek to make a large dam. He installed a hydraulic ram to supply water for the Guest House

garden, bungalows and a skittle alley. The guests from Waldheim often took walking tours up Heathmont Road to see the new developments in Heathmont. On occasions we also walked down to the Guest House to have afternoon tea. Mr. Busch had a boat on the dam and vandals caused him great concern. When we were building our house, I remember Mr. Busch approaching up Heathmont Road in a very agitated state with a shot gun over his arm, looking for the vandals who had just sunk his boat.

The area near the present bowling club was at one stage a piggery with access across the railway line to Allens Road before Heathmont Road existed.

We remember Miss Marden's general store in Canterbury Road, which was also the Post Office and the only shop in Heathmont until 1946. The store was extremely small, perhaps 4m x 4m, and if one wanted to use the only public phone in Heathmont, a stack of soft drink crates had to be moved to gain access to the phone. Leaning on the front of the counter were large bags of bulk bran rice and other produce.

In the absence of an adequate Sunday train service on the single line track we had to walk the length of Heathmont Rd. often through dust 10 cm deep to get to church in Ringwood. A year or so later a Mr. Alf Clarke purchased a T model Ford made into a van with seats down each side. He picked up the Norris family in Canterbury Rd. then picked us up at Cuttings store, making a second trip in the afternoon to take children to Sunday School. It was nicknamed "The Gospel Chariot."

When we joined the Heathmont Tennis Club in the early post-war years, they had an asphalt court and shelter beside the railway station where there is now a carpark. The main tennis players in those days were the orchardists, who fielded teams in the Ferntree Gully and District Tennis Association with considerable success. The Pumps, Sharps, Washusens and Nichols were all talented players. To accommodate the increasing number of players, the club built two sand courts on the corner of Canterbury and Waterloo Roads. Working bees erected the fencing, the shelter and did much of the work on the courts. The courts were later extended to 5 en-tout-cas courts and a new club house.

The Heathmont Progress Association was very active in the early days, leading to the construction of the railway station in 1926. After World War II, the residents formed the Heathmont Advancement League. Some of the early enthusiasts were John Harper (a solicitor), Bill Duke (a banker), Barry Smith (an Estate Agent), Eric Nickels (an engineer/orchardist), John Burgess (a business executive), Arthur Cutting, Doug Muller and many others. John Harper was our honorary solicitor, George Browning our honorary artist and I was the honorary architect. The Heathmont Advancement League met in Arthur Cutting's grocery store, the largest commercial building in Heathmont at that time. The members sat on packing cases, with the president and secretary behind the counter. The League purchased two blocks of land in Viviani Crescent and erected a pre-school and community centre on the land in about 1952, with much of the work being done at working bees. This was the first public building in Heathmont. George Browning created two delightful murals, one on each end wall, the full width of the building. It is such a pity that these murals are not now seen by the wider public. Unsuccessful overtures were made to have a combined church, however the only church to use the building was the Catholic Church. Square dances were held in the Community Centre about once each month for a year or two until disaster struck. The League endeavoured to purchase a block of land on the south side of the Centre, but were outmaneuvered by another person who built a house on the land and started a move to have the building closed to public use after 5 p.m. Although the evening use was extremely light and well controlled, he was successful in having the building closed after 5 p.m. He left the district soon after.

The Ringwood Methodist Church purchased two blocks of Mr. Pump's orchard land facing Canterbury Road, erected a timber church on one block and handed it over to the local Methodists, who later purchased two more adjacent blocks of Mr. Pump's land and also his original residence which was altered to use as a parsonage. The first minister to use it was Rev. David Uren and his family. We used to enjoy the appearance of the greenhood orchids on the roadside outside the church until they succumbed to road widening and development."

HEATHMONT

(16½ miles from Melbourne by rail, within the Ringwood Borough)

1953

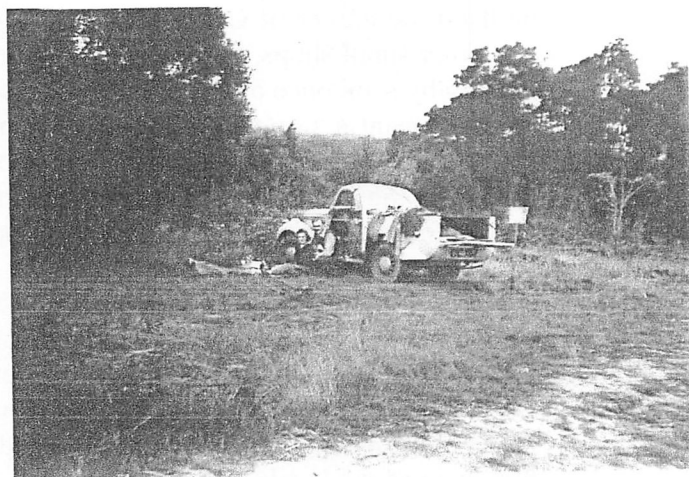
Baker, J. & N. R., strkprs
Baldwin, Geo. J.
Bennet, Hector
Carey, Wm.
Chivers, Witr. E.
Clark, Colin H.
Colquhoun, Dr. W. L.
Colvin, Jos. H.
Connell, Stnly.
Corr, Jno.
Covell, Thos.
Crouch, Mrs Charlotte

Cullen, Gilt. K.
Duke, Wm.
Elsworth, Frank R.
Finn, Adrian T.
Fulton, Jss. M.
Godfrey, Bertram
Greenwood, Frank L.
Griffiths, Roy P.
Hargrave, Regd. D.
Heathmont Mrs, erge
Heazlewood, Clive W.
Holloway, W. Janson

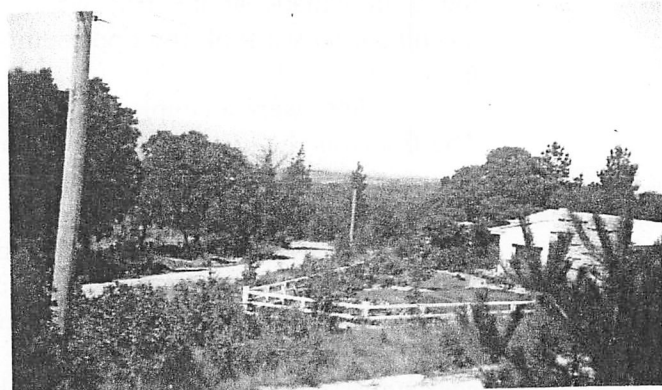
Lane, Wm. H.
Luxton, Clrnce. G.
Marden, Geo. W.
Marden, Miss A., strkpr &
P.O.
Marsh, Jno.
Medlicott, Albt. A.
Miller, Louis N.
Moran, Lrmd.
Muir, Nrmn. S.
Newson, Mrs Vera
Nickels, Wm. E.

Peck, Fredk.
Pridham, Edmund F.
Pump, Fredk., orchdst
Pump, Herman, orchdst
Riwy Stn
Ramsay, Robt. G.
Robertson, Mrs C. S.
Sanders, F., mtr engr
Scott, Eric M.
Secomb, Frncs. N.
Sharp, Arth. S.

Sharp, R. S., orchdst
Sharp, Stephen A., orchdst
Skepp, Alexr. F.
Smith, Mrs M. E.
Sykes, Alfd. J.
Veroos, Wm.
Ward, Knnth.
Washusen, A. M., orchdst
West, Eric
White, Noel G.
Wieland, S. E., orchdst



A familiar Heathmont picture in the 40's and 50's:
"On our block" – here, the Secombs, March 1946



Down Heathmont Road in the 1950's

42. Ian Sharp

Written in 2005

"In the early '50's we saw the last of the orchards and the start of suburbia as houses replaced fruit trees. Orchardists of long standing (Millers, Pumps, Crouchs, Weilands, Barrows, etc.) were selling their properties to developers. Washusens and Sharps were the last orchards to go, in the mid 50's. A few of the early houses were still being lived in, but most went with the subdivisions. (Sharp's original house finished life as a fruit case store rooms and packing shed).

It was about this time that the Fergy or Fordson replaced the draught horse. Horses were still being used for pulling the plough, spray pump or trailer (variably used for fruit picking, general cartage and occasional children's entertainment.). Our horses roamed Harper's bush paddock when not working the orchard. We also had a house cow which grazed in the railway paddock (now the Pool Shop and F.J.C.Rogers Reserve).

Amenities such as banks, churches, shops, cool store, etc. were generally located at Ringwood. Heathmont had a general store on the west corner of Heathmont and Canterbury Roads (Cuttings and Wrights were owners around this time, I think) and the P.O. (Miss Marden – post mistress), 400 yards along Canterbury Rd. Sanders garage was built on the corner of Campbell Street, followed by Jones Hardware (now Retravisation) and other small shops. Serious shopping involved trips to Ringwood. There was a trip to the city by train once or twice a year – a school holiday treat if we had been good boys! It usually meant a stop-off at Tim the Toyman's on the way back to the train. One other treat was the occasional sixpenny bag of broken biscuits (scraps left in the bottom of the tins) from the local store (again, only for those who had been 'good').

Sunday outings were often a trip down to the Dandenong Creek for a walk, some fishing (mainly eels), or a stroll over the swing bridge near Bush's weir. The weir was accessed through the end of Orchid Street. Just upstream from the weir was the local swimming hole where the local lads spent time in summer (skinny dipping was the norm, and no girls). There are a few stories better not told about red-faced picnickers on Mr Bush's side of the creek. In spring, creek visits were replaced by walks along the railway reserves in search of terrestrial orchids and other wildflowers. There were very few patches that escaped the locals' endeavours.

The steam trains still ran from Upper F.T.Gully to the city on Sundays. Kids came from all directions to watch it pass under the Canterbury Road bridge when they heard the train whistle at the Bayswater crossing. Road traffic was very quiet on Sunday mornings, so we took the opportunity to run our billy carts down the Canterbury Road hill.

There were a couple of occasions that still stand out in my memories of this time. The first was the revue/dance held for the opening of the Humphrey Law sock factory in Armstrong Road. It was held in the shell of the factory prior to the installation of the machinery, and every local was there. One of the star acts was Walter Chivers playing his button accordion, a squeezebox of quite some antiquity), The other was events that were held in the new Community Centre in Viviani Crescent. There were film nights (8 mm) on occasions, which included one showed by Phillip Law on his early trip to Antarctica. Other night included documentaries and short films on loan from petroleum and sports companies, etc. There was one that showed the A-bomb being dropped on Hiroshima at the end of W.W.II that is still quite graphic today. One other popular activity at the Community Centre was the regular Saturday night square dances. They attracted quite a

crowd, and lots of fun was had by all, with supper included. They came to a fairly abrupt end when the nearby residents complained (about the noise, and not us kids running around the streets).

Sport was popular in the town, with tennis and cricket clubs being well established. The tennis club had just joined the cricket club with new courts being constructed at the Heathmont Reserve. The old Lysterfield sand court adjacent to the railway station soon fell into disrepair and finally gave way to a carpark. The cricket club decided to field an U16's side around 1952. As most of the team was made up of 10 to 12 year-olds, the less said about their performances, the better. The most notable achievements were surviving the ride on Jack Lamb's "Cottees" tray truck (free cordial supplies), and the mandatory raids on Washusen's cherry patch after practice. Unfortunately for later teams, Washusen's was subdivided a couple of years later, and with Sharp's also going, ended the era of orcharding in Heathmont. Along with these subdivisions came more shops, churches, primary school, etc., forming the township much as it is today."

WEDDING BELLS

SHARP—WASHUSEN

St Paul's Church of England, Ringwood, provided on Saturday, July 19, the setting for the marriage of Enid Agnes, second daughter of Mr and Mrs A Washusen, Canterbury road, Heathmont, to Ronald Stephen, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Arthur Sharp, Canterbury road, Heathmont.

Both families are well known and highly respected in the district.

The ceremony was performed by Rev V G Carver.

Given away by her father, the bride presented a charming appearance in a lovely gown of magnolia cloque, fashioned in princess style, on close fitting lines. The skirt fell into a long train, and the silk tulle veil, which was worn by her mother at her wedding, was caught to the head with a coronet of orange blossom. She carried a bouquet of white roses.

The ring which was used for the ceremony was 64 years old, and was used by the groom's grandmother at her wedding.

The bride was attended by her sister Margaret as bridesmaid, and her frock was of blue marquisette, trimmed with cyclamen. Her short matching blue tulle veil was held with a top knot of daphne. Her bouquet was of cyclamen and daphne.

Mr Dudley Sharp, brother of the groom, acted as best man.

Mrs Binns officiated at the organ.

The breakfast and reception was held in the Parish Hall and 60 guests were received by Mr and Mrs Washusen and Mr and Mrs Sharp.

Mrs Washusen chose a frock of navy blue with navy blue accessories and a spray of red roses. Mrs Sharp's frock was of teal blue with brown coat and accessories. Her spray was of pink roses.

Rev V G Carver acted as chairman, and the usual toast list was honored.

The two tiered wedding cake was successfully cut by the bride.

The couple were the recipients of many useful gifts, including many cheques. Amongst the gifts was a prayer book, presented to the bride by the Sunday School children.

The happy couple left during the evening on their honeymoon which is being spent at Daylesford. The bride's travelling dress was an ice blue frock with brown coat and accessories.

Residence will be taken up at Canterbury road, Heathmont.

The bridegroom is well known in sporting circles and has for some years been one of the leading batsmen in the Heathmont Cricket team. Last season he captained the team and was their most prolific run-getter.



HEATHMONT'S BEST TWELVE



LES BLACKBELL

JOHN CHAMBERS

RUSSELL HALL Captain

IAN SHARP

DEAN FREEMAN

MAX ROGERS

LLOYD CALLEN

JIM CLARKE

DAVID BOXSHALL

HARRY MARSH

RAY CURNOW

RON SHARP

The squad also consisted of the following players:

Noel Eddy, Mick Wharton, Wilf Pump, George Pump, Ken Beavis, Graeme Beavis, Colin Fletcher, Paul Goldberg, Laurie Thatcher, Ian Castle, Paul Reilly, Pat Haggarty, Lew Germaine, Geoff Anderson, Ivan Barrett, Ernie Pietsch, Barry Goodear, Mick Freeman, Mathew Moore, Chris Harns and Brett Northage.

The selection panel was Bill Dean O.A.M., Ian Callen & Alan Batten.

SPECIAL AWARDS

Administrator
BILL DEAN O.A.M.

Ringwood Districts only Test Cricketer
IAN CALLEN

43. Ron Sharp

Written in 1995

"The Sharp family came to Heathmont from Williamstown in 1903. There were in Heathmont lots and lots of wildflowers, donkey orchids and black and green cockatoos, hares, spider orchids - four different varieties, plus greenhoods galore. Heathmont was known for the most prolific variety of orchids and many schools came out from the city to study them. Today you are lucky to find only a few, for when the railways stopped burning off, so did the orchids.

The Cricket Club was on private property behind the Post Office, and if you landed a ball in the Caltex service station, it was a six.

The bridge over the railway line was a one way bridge and on the 29th May 1942, a tanker went over on the left hand side facing Melbourne and fell over backwards on to the line, taking all the power lines and making a bend in one of the train tracks. A crane came out from North Melbourne depot and carted the tanker back to Bedford Rd. crossing. The tanker had been on fire having a load of 900 gallons of petrol on board in three tanks, and one split, spilling its 300 gallons, which caused a decent fire.

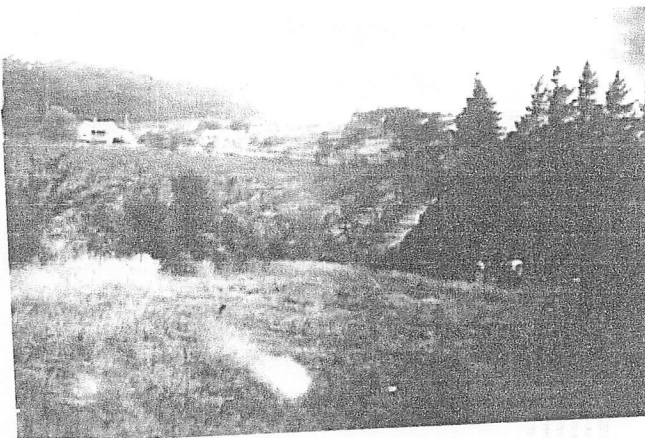
In early days, Canterbury Road was only a dirt track wandering through the trees, with natural gravel in some places. The road was eventually made asphalt from Bedford Road to Foodtown Self Service, which was a store and post office.

In a 1 km distance from the Post Office there were 14 homes and 220 acres of orchards. Around the Post Office was 40 acres of natural bush. There were quite a lot of snakes around, some rabbits, plenty of bird life, brushtail and ringtail possums.

Until 1924 the main transport was horse and cart and/or Shanks' pony, supplemented by one family with a motor bike and side car which most times carried 3 children and their parents.

The early settlers facing Canterbury Road were Harry Gerlach, Russels, John Pump, Herman Pump, Robert Sharp, F Wieland, Martels, A Washusen, and Dickason's Road residents were Mr. G Muller and Mrs. Peddle.

For the male children around here, their toys were bow and arrow, and shanghai, which were to shoot bandicoots, which were in good numbers, especially in gully areas. Also, when neighbours killed a pig, you'd hang around to get its bladder for a footy."



SALISBURY COURT
1972

Looking from Sharp's orchard to Miller's

44. Estelle Spargo

Written in 2006

"Even though we knew of Heathmont, it was 1949 before the Spargo family arrived, Ken and Estelle with 6 year old Lynda, Donald 4, and 7 months baby Albert. We had moved 6 times in 6 years during World War II. Nearing the end of the war, ken caught a train to Belgrave. The idea was to look for a cheap block of land, build a house for our family and live happily ever after. Well, we achieved the end bit, however the train stopped so long at this place called "Heathmont," which was heavily timbered with gums and heath, that he decided to get off and look around.

Walking down Heathmont Road towards Bayswater, he met a friendly housewife who asked if she could help the lonely soldier. It turned out that she knew a lady who had two beautiful blocks to sell in Dickasons Road. We bought these blocks, paying 20 pounds on the black market to a lady who worked in Parliament House.

From then on, I proceeded to get lost in the trees, going from block to station. We all walked everywhere in those days.

Ken returned to his position at the Myer Emporium and with his War Gratuity money we arranged for Mr Secomb to draw us a beautiful ranch-type plan, but we got caught up with a no-good builder who took our money, dug out the clay shape of our 3 bedroom plan, went bankrupt, and we lost our money. Fortunately for us, the house next door to our blocks came on the market and with War Service Homes and family help, we were able to buy our own two-bedroom fibrolite and timber home for two thousand, five hundred pounds, including the green refrigerator – much better than the ice chest or Coolgardie safe with hessian strips hanging in a tray of water, which I'd been used to in the rented terrace house in Richmond. . Now I'd better stick to small stories.

There was a general store in Canterbury Road run by Mr. Marden and his spinster daughter. It had three facets: the groceries, the newsagency where it sold 20 copies daily of the evening paper, "The Herald," and the Post Office. Mr Marden sold to Tom Drury, who opened a separate P.O. run by his daughter Madelaine in the 1950's. Eventually Frank and Mavis Lucas bought the store and this is maybe when Alan Lyons took over the newsagency and Dot and Merv. Bungy ran the P.O.

Meanwhile in Canterbury Road, 3 or 4 blocks down towards the station, stood two maisonettes, these days probably called Duplex. They were owned by a Mrs. Byrne, whose family were orchardists in the Ringwood area. After seeing a "for sale" sign on these Duplex, Ken and I visited Mrs. Byrne one night and asked her had she thought of putting up three shops in the front gardens of the Duplex. Well, she did just that, and offered us first choice of shop – and that's how "Estelle Spargo, Your Friendly Draper," came about. There was my drapery, then Mr Lavis' hardware, then Bob and Nancy Russo's fruit shop. The tenants behind the shops were the Wards and the Painters.

About the same time a grocery shop was built on the Canterbury/Heathmont Roads corner. This was run by Arthur Cutting, an ex-Williamstown footballer, and I can remember lots of us sitting on boxes in that shop attending Heathmont Advancement League meetings, watching mice scamper around.

These were wonderful days in this ever-so-pretty place to live, where everyone knew everyone (even on the station) and better still, we were all working for the same cause, "to better Heathmont," and I'm sure we did. Especially prominent were the Harper family and the Nickels family. Arthur Cutting, together with Mr. Good and

family, had a lot to do with starting the Heathmont Football Club. My Ken played football once or twice, but his age showed cricket was a better choice.

One morning I went across our front lawn to get the milk (delivered in bottles) and as I turned to come back, saw a snake on the lawn between me and the front door. Naturally I called Ken, and "naturally" he came – in the nuddy, for he was about to shower in order to catch the famous 10 to 8 train to Melbourne. All three children rushed out also. Absolutely useless. Thankfully across the road there was a nice couple who were building additions to their home. He walked up a plank from his front door to the road, picked up a stick, and killed the snake while we all looked on, amazed.

Dickasons Road in those days was a dirt road with potholes and deep open drains either side. Because of this I used to wear my hard-soled slippers up the road Sundays on my way to the Heathmont Methodist church, then change into nice high heels at the door of the church. Unfortunately, the word got around that Mrs. Spargo wore her slippers to church!

Ken organized three "Radio Auditions" nights in the Ringwood Town Hall to raise money for the building of the kindergarten.

Our opposite neighbours in Dickasons Road were the Nickels, Dorrie and Eric, and children Ron and Brian. They had cows and chooks. Quite often we would go over and buy scalded cream to put with jam on our home-made scones. Eric was a tireless worker in every way and helped tremendously to start our very own Square Dancing nights where you brought a plate of food. Ken and I knew Les Schroder, a square dance caller from Middle Park, and after much persuasion we obtained his services for this very popular social activity.

Cars were still a luxury in Heathmont. Four years after starting my shop, in the year of the Olympic Games, 1956, we were able to put a deposit of 25 pounds on the first new Holden after the FJ. Ken was 36 and I was 32. Ken had his licence from the Army but I needed to take driving lessons. I got my licence with three children sitting quietly in the back, and unfortunately one of my only mishaps was to bump into one of the three huge gum trees which were still growing in front of the three shops. Even if couples had a car, most of the husbands travelled by train. The 10 to 8 to Flinders Street was very popular.

I used to sit on the railway station, 8 p.m. nightly, waiting for Ken to collect parcels for my shop from the parcel train, which only went as far as Ringwood. Luckily, Ken had a yearly train ticket which he used, then we would go back to the shop and cost the goods, ready for the next day. Luckily I had good children who realised mother was working for the benefit of the family.

Richard Harper attended the Anglican church at the football ground end of Canterbury Road. Donald Spargo attended the Methodist church the other side of the railway. These boys attended State School in Heathmont together, and were the best of friends, but when church Cup Day picnics came around, Richard couldn't understand why they had to go in different directions.

Around 1950, when our Donald turned 5 and needed to start school, the nearest was Ringwood State, where we had been taking Lynda by train. Ken decided to let the Education Department know how much our little town of Heathmont was growing. On the morning the Department representative was coming, we had arranged for all children of school age to meet outside Miss Marden's General Store. Well, it turned out to be a very long queue – 70 children, so needless to say it wasn't long before we had our own little State School.

Heathmont has the best and most willing plumber anyone could have on their side: Keith Hardy and his wife Jean are still our friends today.

At one of the Heathmont Advancement League's meetings the Heathmont Easter Fair was born. This was always to raise money, but I suspect mainly to build a kindergarten, which was badly needed., because up to then I and many others used to help Joan Harper with kinder mornings in her house. The Fair was held on the station land in Campbell Street. We had all sorts of stalls, most stocked with produce made by the stall-holders themselves. I dreamt up a "fruit salad and ice cream" stall which sent me from door to door asking for fruit donations. At the same time I asked people to make trays of ice-cream (we all made our own ice cream in those days), not realizing how difficult all the pick-ups would be by foot. However, lots of helpers gathered around our dining-room table cutting fruit into cubes. Next problem: how to mix it up. Jeanie Paul, who lived next door in a house called "Fiddlers' Green," suggested our bath, and after much cleaning, we did just that! All was a great success on the day and we made lots of money, with no expenses.

It was a very auspicious occasion when the Mayor and Mayoress of Ringwood, Mr. Harper (President of the Heathmont Advancement League) and Mr Spargo (Chairman of the Money-raising Committee) opened the kindergarten in Viviani Crescent. Praise must be given to all the willing workers who gave of their time and money to this marvellous community effort.

I recall many local folk: The Harpers, of course, community leaders and supporters; other tireless workers such as Keith and Jean Hardy, Eric and Dorrie Nickels, Win Jones, Lindsay and Pam Spencer; good friends Ian and Barb McDonald, Maurie and Jean Head, Jim and Win Holmes; shopkeepers Stommers, Keith Cullen (whose wife Betty was a Washusen), Ian Cairnduff, Bob and Nancy Russo, Bert Lavis, Alan Lyons, Jack Egan, Helen Robertson, Lila McRae.; my drapery assistants, including Joyce Thompson, Elsie Fisher, Shirley Sterling; Mrs Giddy, who bought out my entire stock of towels (12!) at my first drapery sale, 2/12/1952; Kevin McQuay, who had a fight with our Albert on their first day at State school then remained friends with him for life; Mrs. Cotter at the station; local identities WEG, Ron Clarke, Ron Barassi, George Browning; Ron Tudor, later of Fable Labels record company; Keith and Jen Hamer, whose daughter wed Richard Law of sock fame; Colin and Nan Clark on the 10 to 8 train; and many others."

* * *

Grade
3
1954



45. Pam Spencer

Written in 2006

"In June 1952 my husband and I, with our 6 month old daughter Susan, came to Heathmont to live in our new home. We came up the gravel Canterbury Road in the back of a furniture van, with our furniture.

Lindsay was an engineering pattern maker, working at Tottenham, leaving on the early train and returning at 6 p.m.. The Spargo family and Judy London were our neighbours and made us welcome, and remain good friends today. Captain Eddie Nurse (RAN retired) and his wife Marie and daughter lived at the end of our street. He was an inventor, and constructed a solar hot water heater which he turned manually to follow the sun's path. Their brick house, built on sloping hill, was air-conditioned by pushing the cool air from under the house up into the living room using the motor from a hair dryer! He simply removed part of the floor board in summer and replaced it in the cooler months.

The community was very friendly and helpful in times of difficulties – neighbours would mind, or collect older children willingly, or pick up shopping as needed. It was three years before we had a car – a second-hand Standard Tourer.

Milk was delivered – we left our billy on the corner of Dickasons Road each night. Later, when it came in bottles with tinfoil lids, we had problems with magpies picking through these lids. When our street was sealed (1957?) our son Richard was four, and he used to ride in the Council water truck with Doug, a kind council worker who taught him to sing "You are my sunshine." One wet morning Richard was watching the road works from our garden when he tumbled down the embankment and fell onto a granite rock, resulting in a cut to his forehead. Doug drove us into Ringwood for Richard's head to be stitched.

There were pleasant social gatherings as the community raised money to build the kindergarten, equip the school, and the Anglican church in which our family was involved, and the scout hall. Lindsay remembers a call to all dads to bring their hammers to the kindergarten, prior to its official opening, to hammer the nails down in the floor.

A vacant block separated us from Margaret and Clarrie Beard. Margaret was a gentle and kind woman, who introduced me to the love of gardening. She was also an accomplished pianist. I used to sit in the paddock while my children had their daytime sleep and listen to her practice her music.

John and Alice Blogg came to live next door, and when our children were sick in bed Alice would bring them sweet strawberries from her garden, or a brown paper book filled with lovely pictures cut from a magazine.

When we first came to Heathmont, meat was ordered from Vermont, and vegetables were boought from a market gardener who came each week in his horse and cart. Sadly I have forgotten his name, but I remember the lovely fresh produce.

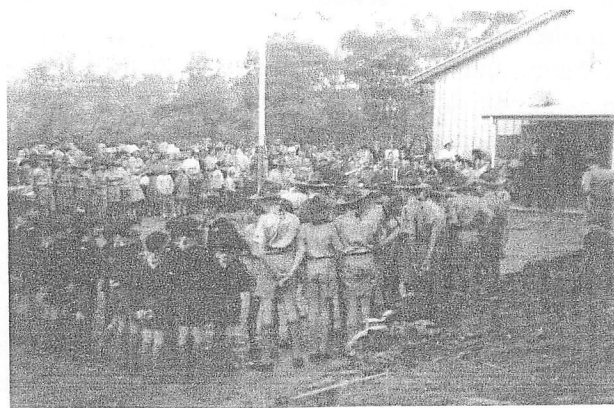
Opposite our house was an apple and pear orchard owned by John and Kath Barrow. After the birth of our fourth child in December 1960, we had the opportunity

Barrow. After the birth of our fourth child in December 1960, we had the opportunity to buy their house, "Ranikhet." We enjoyed the extra space of a bigger house and our children loved the big garden. The boys could run through the bush to scouts, and the row of tall pine trees on the western fence line provided endless fun climbing, and other games. However the long driveway to our front gate caused endless arguments, as each morning someone had to ride their bike up the drive to collect the milk.

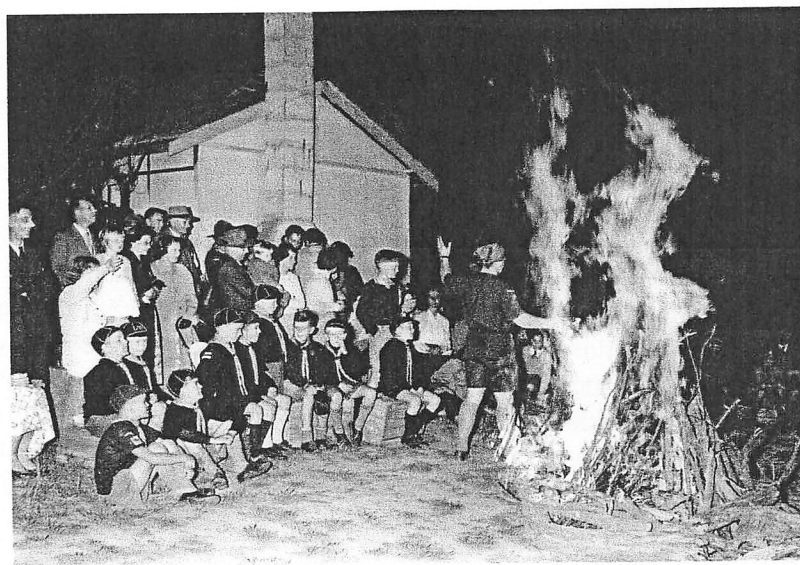
Our children walked to school, and were allowed to take a short cut through Washusen's orchard. Picking up windfalls was allowed, although I'm sure this privilege was sometimes abused. Alan was very patient with the children. One weekend as we were eating lunch, Kath Washusen rang to say that one of their packing sheds was on fire and two fire engines were in attendance. We all went around and Kath made cups of tea and all the neighbourhood kids got to sit in the fire engine – once the fire had been extinguished.

We enjoyed agisting a friend's horse and foal, kept a lamb which grew very quickly into a large sheep, and kept chickens and a goat at various times. It was a lovely twenty year period in our family life, and remembered with much affection by us all."

* * *



Scouting was very strong in the district. In 1964, the 3rd Ringwood troop came to assist the celebrations as 1st. Heathmont opened its new hall on land donated by the Barrow family. The investiture included a campfire on the Washusen orchard property where the troop had formerly met. (below)



46. Desi Stevens

Written in 2006

"My husband Ray and I settled in Douulton Avenue in Heathmont in 1955, on land which had been Wieland's orchard. There were about 20 houses in the street – well, about 6 "builder-built" and completed, and the others at various stages of being "owner-built," often with the couple living in the on-site garage, bungalow or even caravan while taking some years of weekend work to complete their home.

Of course at this time we had no electricity nor gas, no telephone, no car until we could afford a little Ford Prefect in 1958 and no made road (until 1965 – and we had to pay for it, adding to our financial strain). Milk, bread and mail were delivered. As did many other men, Ray bought the paper at the station in the morning, and I read it after 9 at night when the kids were in bed and the dishes and the ironing done.

We walked everywhere – the men to the station to catch the train to and from work, the women to the shops in Heathmont and Ringwood, and to the Infant Welfare Centre in Viviani Crescent, and taking the schoolchildren to school with younger sisters and brothers in and on the pusher.

A vivid memory I have, and one which shows such a different lifestyle from today, is of walking to Ringwood for some shopping, and having to cross the creek in the ditch in Great Ryrie Street, near where the schools are now. We have three children, and like other mums, I would have the baby lying in the pusher, the next in the seat on its handles, and the eldest walking with me. Between the axles, I had a board, and when we got to the creek – a terribly smelly, blackberry and rubbish infested ditch - I brought out the board and put it across the creek, then one by one took the children over, then proceeded on what is quite a long walk – and seemed longer on the way back, with shopping as well as the winter mud or summer dust! Such was life 50 years ago.

Heathmont shops included Patterson's milk bar, Bert Lavis' hardware, White's shoe shop, and the Misses Brady's haberdashery (we knew their names were Ruth and Ivy, but each was always "Miss Brady"), and Johnson's library. Today, although there are at least 5 times as many shops as there were then, none of these types exist any more - there is no milk bar, no hardware, no shoe shop, no haberdashery and no library! There were once 4 garages, too, and none now. I also remember Alan and Helen Robertson's chemist shop and Nicholson's grocery.

Other features of our life then were the same as for many in the community – church, Sunday School picnics, cubs (we were both Cub leaders, as were our two daughters), scouts, brownies, guides, softball, annual holidays at Rosebud (two trips for the Prefect, one weekend for the gear, the next for the five of us) or Wilson's Prom, and once even to Queensland.

Once the children were all at school, I obtained employment from the Ringwood Council as a housekeeper, cleaning and cooking for some very interesting old ladies. One I well remember was Ivy Bamford, who with husband John was the landowner of the area sold to the Education Department for development as Ringwood Tech. in Great Ryrie St. After Heathmont State, our children went to the Tech., then on to various employments.

A particular feature of the early days, which were often hard-going physically and financially, was the great friendship and fellowship among neighbours. Although some have died, and others moved away, we still have warm friends who we've known and lived near for 50 years."

47. Bill and Beryl Waddell

Written in 2006

“In 1949 we bought two blocks of land , one in Canterbury Road, for 132 pounds, and the other at the back of it, in Viviani Crescent, for 98 pounds. We had previously lived in Brighton, and the folk there could not understand why we were moving out into the bush. We moved here on December 10th 1955, our house on the front block. The rates were four pounds for the front, two for the back block. We had three sons and Bill earned five pounds a week, so after a couple of years had to sell the back one to save rates and to buy a refrigerator and other goods.

When we bought the land, there was a shop in Heathmont, and Jack Sanders garage on the corner of Campbell Street. The week before we moved in, Canterbury Road was sealed in front of our place, from Wantirna Road to the bridge. There were orchards all around us. Over the road from us was Washusen’s, with a dam where our boys used to go tadpoling. A gun was fired on the orchard, to frighten the birds.

Not owning a car until 1963 and two more boys later, to get to Ringwood to the dentist in Midway Arcade, Beryl had to walk, pushing various pushers, etc.

Dr Deerbon had his surgery in Campbell Street, where we had to sit out on the verandah as we waited to see him. He also had a practice in Bayswater. He did his rounds after evening surgery, and it was nothing for him to arrive at midnight. He gave the children their injections while they were asleep so he wouldn’t hurt them. He used to day to leave the front door open and he would let himself in. A bit different from today!

There was an old lady, Mrs Bailey, known as “Aunty,” who lived off Waterloo Street with her chooks and goats. We had no telephone until well into the 1960’s. Our toilet facilities evolved from a “little house” down the back yard, to a dry septic system, then a 6-pint flush, and finally the sewer connection in the 60’s.

Four local families, including us, settled here in late 1955. Between us, we had 19 children – 14 boys and 5 girls. Now in this immediate area, there are no children – how times change!

We remember thinking when the first shop went “over the other side” of Canterbury Road that it would never work out. How wrong we were!

When my brother bought a couple of blocks in the Boulevard, he was told that that was the edge of the green belt, and no houses would go beyond that. How wrong they were!

Most of the streets were unmade. This resulted in dust in summer – we could see it rolling across the road from Sunset Drive, opposite us. It also resulted in winter mud – our boys used to deliver the morning papers down in Waterloo and Marlborough Streets, and they had to get off their bikes in winter and wade through the mud. When I used to walk to Ringwood with pushers, etc., Great Ryrie Street was not made and there was a little creek down in the low part, so I had to find pieces of wood and branches to push across. Campbell Street was divided by this same creek, so was impassable for some years. Behind our place in Canterbury Road there was a quarry which was eventually filled with Insulwool, and there was a squab farm just up the road from us when we bought the land in 1949.

The pace of life today is quicker and life is busier. In the 1960’s, our next-door neighbour sat out the front all day and counted the cars – 60 went past. Contrast that with today! Yet Heathmont remains a great place to live.”

48. Alan and Kath Washusen

Written in 1994

"Mr. August Martin Washusen bought 24 acres of virgin land in Heathmont , 12 acres of which was cleared and the rest was scrub, for 20 pounds an acre in 1913. This land fronts Canterbury Road, and extends to Dandenong Creek, with its sides to Balfour Avenue and part of Sunset Drive, where the Baptist Church now stands. He and his wife Agnes Emily came to live in a small house on the property in 1917. August worked away from home to support his family while he planted the orchard. This was of apples, pears, lemons, apricots, peaches and a few cherries. They raised two sons and five daughters. Alan is the elder son, and these are his memories.

Mr. Wieland was the first settler in the Heathmont area. He was German and there were several German families in the Bayswater area. Gerlachs were also early settlers. They lived on the corner of Canterbury and Bedford Roads. Other orchardists in those days were Martells, Fitzells, Travis, Herman Pump, Mullers, John Pump and Arthur Sharp. In Armstrong Road were Millers and Frank Clota. In those days, Canterbury Road was a dirt road between Dickasons Road and Marlborough Road. Apart from the orchards, the rest of the land was bush. The area was a children's paradise with plenty of wild flowers and the bush to play in, eels and fish in the creek, and it was not unusual to see platypuses swimming in the creek when the water level was high. Heathmont was one of the best places in the State for wild flowers. The children called them by these names because of their resemblance to birds and animals. There were different spiders, several varieties of green hoods, rabbits, hares, flying ducks, mosquitoes, blue and green crows and vanillas. When the bush dried up about Christmas time, blue beards or Father Christmases were abundant, followed by naked ladies, similar to Belladonna lilies but taller and with smaller flowers.

The fruit picked at the orchard was carted by horse and wagon, and this journey to Melbourne took about 5 hours. The load was usually about 30 cases of fruit. The route taken was Canterbury Road, then Wantirna Road and Whitehorse Road.

In the early 1920's, development took place. The railway station was built, local people with horses, ploughs and scoops doing the earthwork. Electricity was installed in the Washusen home about 1926, also the telephone. Water was laid on from Wantirna Road to Waterloo Street, and not taken further, as the M.M.B.W. authorities said the hill in Canterbury Road was too steep to get enough pressure. August applied to tap the main to the orchard from Waterloo Street to Balfour Avenue. This was a great event for locals and the board workers as they all turned out to see what water flowed from the pipe. When they got a reasonable flow of water, a 20 foot pipe was erected upright to see if the water would flow under those conditions. After this successful experiment, water was then extended to the Heathmont area.

The first cricket ground was in a paddock between the post office and Heathmont Road, a sand pitch covered with matting. The improvements consisted of a padlocked tin trunk which was large enough to hold the matting and equipment. This trunk was about 8 to 10 feet long. It was a permanent fixture under trees on the south side of the ground. Heathmont Park was bought by the Ringwood Council and the locals then cleared the area, put a concrete pitch in and built a tin shed for a pavilion. These works took place from 1920 onwards. The first tennis court was built on railway land alongside the cricket ground.

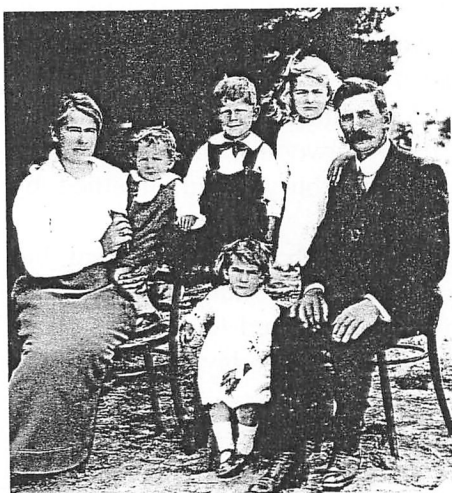
The nearest doctors were in Ringwood. Alan remembers a Doctor Langley who visited the family at their home. Shopping was done mainly in Ringwood, although Alan remembers some shopping trips by train to Smith Street in Collingwood where the larger stores had the overhead wire system for sending money to the office, and change and dockets were then returned. This was a capsule type of container, the money was placed inside, then it was attached to the wire, a handle was pulled, and the capsule shot along the wire to the office.

About this time a move to have a school was brought forward, and the Education Department looked at two acres of land situated near Canterbury Road and Sunset Drive, but the Department said there were only about 20 children to attend the school at this time, so the proposal was dismissed. The present school was built on land owned by a Mr. Handasyde, which was bought about 1946. The Education Department bought part of this land in 1950 and the school was opened in 1952 or 1953. The school children were accommodated in the Methodist Church hall until the school was opened.

There was 50 acres of bushland fronting Canterbury Road and Balfour Avenue sold for 17 pounds an acre at auction in 1946, so the values of land had not appreciated much from 1913 to 1946. There was a gravel pit on Frank Peacock's land between Waterloo Street and Sunset Drive, and gravel was carted across the creek to Bayswater. There were bearers across the creek in Nicholson's paddock, Washusen's paddock and another set in Wielands near Barnic Road.

The Washusen children all attended Ringwood Primary School. A track through the bush via Heathmont Park and what is now Jubilee Park, a distance of nearly two miles, was walked each day, morning and afternoon. In the autumn, mushrooming before school was usually done bare footed to avoid getting boots and shoes dirty and wet. Alan remembers the H.E.Parker Reserve was always referred to as the peach orchard, but he doesn't remember any peaches growing there during his days growing up. He was born in 1918, so it must have been earlier than 1920.

Alan and I were married in 1946 and moved into the little house in the orchard. August had the misfortune to develop rheumatoid arthritis, which crippled him severely, so Alan worked the orchard. In 1954 we built a new home in Cuthbert Street. Our five children, Margaret, Jeff, Lindsay, Russell and Gary all attended Heathmont State School before going on to either Ringwood High or Ringwood Technical School."



1922: Agnes and August Washusen, with Herbert, Alan, Enid & Margaret

1966

Pioneer family
Pioneer orchardists in the Heathmont district, Mr. and Mrs. A. Washusen, are leaving the district, and will be guests of honor at a farewell family social evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Washusen and their six children have been very active in community affairs, and this farewell evening has been arranged by the Heathmont State school, the Scouts and the Church of England — three groups with which the family has been closely associated.

Mrs. Washusen was president of the Heathmont Baby Health Centre when it was opened by Lady Brooks.

Their parents were pioneers of the Heathmont district, and history was made with the recent sale of their property — it was the last district orchard to go under the auctioneer's hammer.

The family has bought a mixed farm near Benalla, and will move to the new property next month.

This community farewell for the Washusen family will be held on Cup Eve, Monday, October 31, at 8 p.m., in the Heathmont Community Centre, and an invitation is extended to the whole community to attend.

Leaving Heathmont

Heathmont's going to miss the Washusens. The orchardist Washusens pioneered Heathmont, and Mr. and Mrs. A. Washusen senior will still be with us. But son Alan and Margaret with the family are off to a mixed farm near Benalla.

These two have been in the forefront of Heathmont development. The baby health centre, scouts and guides, state school and the Anglican Church have all benefited from their energy and drive. The people of Heathmont know this and the groups are combining in a big farewell on Cup Eve at the Heathmont Community Hall at 8 p.m.

49. Barry and Elaine Weston

Written in 1996

"We were married in 1956 and built our home at No. 14 Orchard Grove, which enjoyed beautiful mountain views over valleys of apple orchards, which was the primary land use at the time, until land subdivisions gained momentum. Prior to our marriage, we both lived in settled and fully serviced suburbs, closer to Melbourne, and we were quite unplanned for the transition to unformed and dusty roads, a few services (only electricity and telephone), mail and milk deliveries, water by private main, no gas, no sewerage, no public transport other than rail, some bumpy 15 minutes via Simla Court to the station.

Television and the Olympic Games made 1956 notable.

Our neighbours, like ourselves, came here to enjoy the cleaner air, beautiful views, bushland, etc. and were prepared to suffer the disadvantages while raising their families. Families were 2-3 children, all of whom enjoyed so many friends and places to explore. A good place to raise a family! Of course, the availability of cheap land was an economic consideration which enabled the ownership of one's home to become a reality. We had a Housing Co-operative loan with an annual interest rate of 3.3%, which varied little over the long term.

In 1956, Canterbury Road was formed and graded only, from Vermont to all points east, and not a traffic light to be seen. Dust was always a problem. Heathmont shopping centre was originally west of the bridge, traders including Chemist (Norman and Helen Robertson), Hardware (Bert Lavis, later Mayor of Ringwood), Ladies Hairdresser (Garry Agostini), Supermarket (Estelle Spargo), Milk Bar and Sub-News, Men's Hairdresser (in Heathmont Road), Post Office, Butcher, etc. Dr Alec Thom's medical surgery still remains at no.1 Dickasons Road opposite the above-named shops, and is now the Heathmont Medical Clinic, Dental and Veterinary practices. Dr. Deerbon practised from his home East of the bridge. Heathmont Real Estate (later H.G.McLean?) – Hec McLean – was active in area development, as now. The Bax family were also builders in the locality.

Our 5 children all began life in Heathmont and the older three their days in Viviani Crescent kindergarten, Primary School (Frances Street), Heathmont Presbyterian Church (and tennis) in Waterloo Street, Scouts (6th Ringwood, Barrow Drive), Guides (in the Methodist (now Uniting) church in Canterbury Road.

We, like many of our neighbours, joined local committees to assist existing organisations and to press for area improvements by the Ringwood Council. We were successful in establishing the first school crossing in Canterbury Road, manned by rostered mums and the ever-reliable Bob Pattison.

As the years progressed, roads and services caught up with the development, but at considerable expense to the home owners for many years, and not helped by the road contractor becoming bankrupt during construction, which was delayed for months and a source of local concern, as evidenced in the local paper of the day, much to the consternation of the local Council!

In conclusion, we note some of our neighbours, as recalled:

Orchard Grove: 1-Vacant land for years; 3-McFarlane, Gibbs, Dalton; 5-Johnson; 7-Stewart; 11-Yates; 13-Evans; 15-Thompson; 17-Dick; 19-Barrow (John -Original orchardist, subdivider), Le Get.

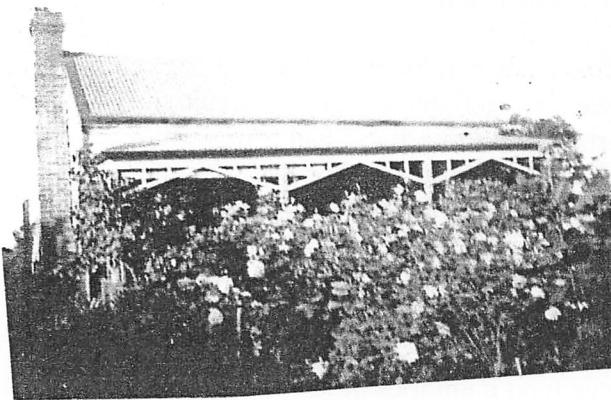
Orchard Grove, west side: 2 –Stirling?; 4-Durling; 6-Nixon; 8-?; 10/12-Downie; 14-Weston; 16-MacDonald; 18-Holmes; 20-Tuckett – Roy held acreage and later extended the subdivision in Orchard Grove.

Eden Avenue: Head, Tamblyn, Rogers, Taylor

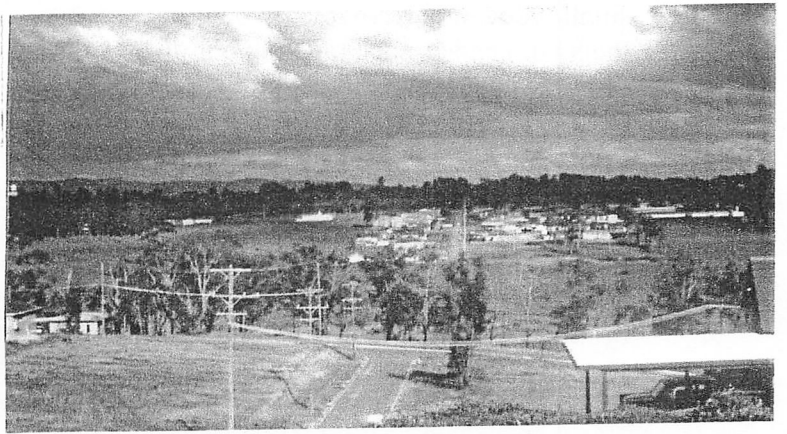
Cuthbert Street: Cairnduff (Ian later established a local bakery shop), Bicheno, Booth

Balfour Avenue: Maynes. ”

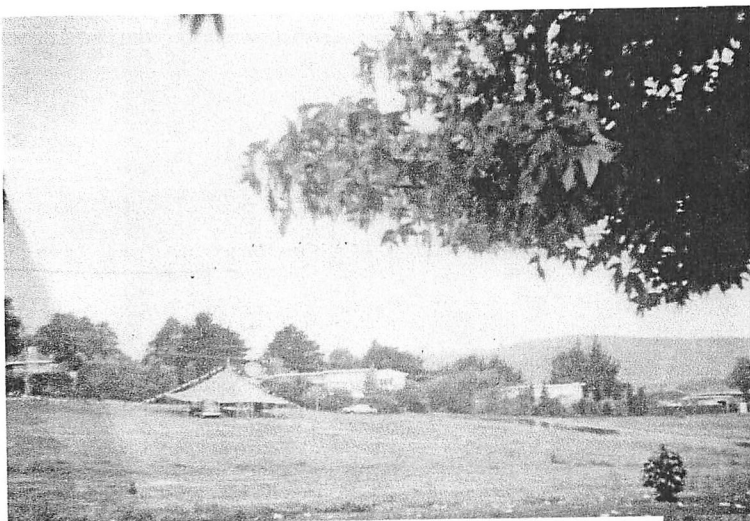
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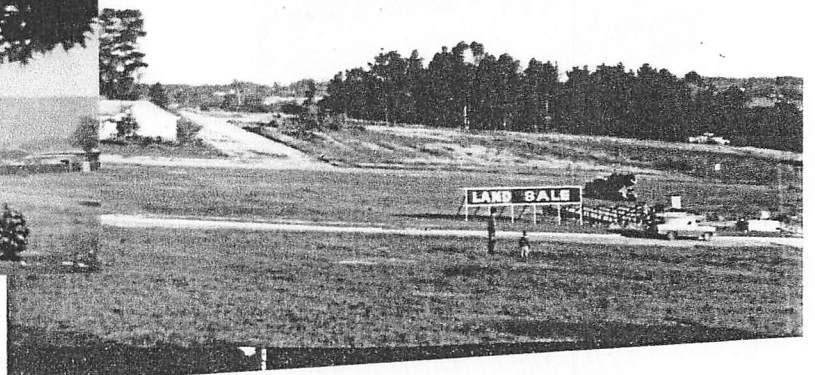
*Original Washusen house,
later, a scout hall*



*Early 70's: looking south across
Dandenong Creek to Bayswater.*



Washusen's auction day, 1967



50. Thelma Wilmot

Written in 2006

"When I was very young, I well remember the first small general store and post office. It was well before Cuttings' general store. It was owned by a Mr. George Marden and was run by his daughter Ada. Every Cup Day there was a picnic held behind the building, where there were no gum trees, only a few small shrubs. There was always a cricket match held there on that day. A treat to us small children was that there was always an ice-cream, which we very seldom had. It would come to Marden's store in a small wooden barrel which would contain dixie ice-creams. There was nowhere to keep them cool and as such much to our dismay they were always melted and looked like a cup of milk. They were still delicious.

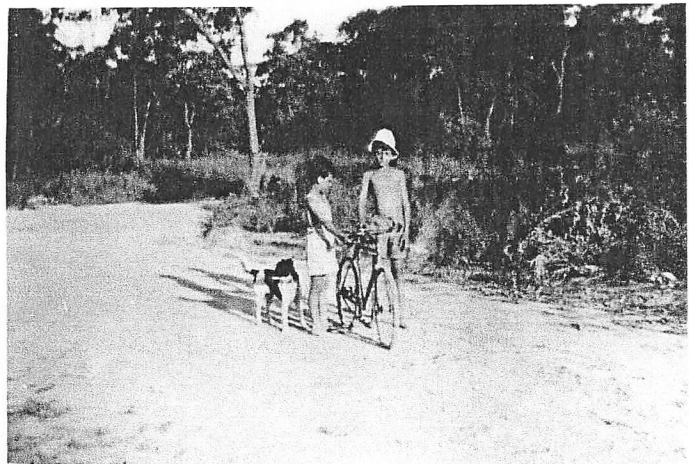
We lived in Allens Road on an orchard which was owned by my father and uncle, Louis and Les Miller. I can remember at weekends we were delighted to go and watch the trains go past at the bottom of Allens Road. The road was closed and had a big white woode gate on either side of the line. We went to the market on a Friday or Saturday in a lovely wooden jinker drawn by our old horse called "Prince." I used to go up the hill when I was small and play with the two girls Pump. They were Ethel and Greta and had 3 or 4 brothers. Allens Road was only a dirt road and very, very dusty. Canterbury Road as I recall was a narrow strip of bitumen and quite often we could walk up the middle of the road and never see a car or a horse-drawn vehicle.

It was a beautiful country town and I have very fond memories of it."

* * *



*Thelma on the wooden gate
at the end of Allens Road.*



*Can anyone identify the children and
the dog, on the corner of Great Rynie
and Viviani Crescent, 1953*

51. Gertrude Wilson

Written in 2005



"The year was 1958. The orchard country had been subdivided for closer settlement. Many orchardists were relieved of a struggling existence, and town people took advantage of country blocks on which to build a dream home. The house we had been occupying in Canterbury had been sold over our heads. Our keen interest was in wildflowers and birds, so we chose our Boulevard block in 1956. Arranging finance to build and completion took till July 1958, when our furniture and belongings were loaded on to a truck, and we set out. What devastation! The lemon orchard had been bulldozed! No fences. Soon our truck was bogged and needed a tractor to pull it out. For 3 days, everything was in our carport. A break in the weather enabled transfer to our upstairs rooms and gradual settling in.

We had a clear view of the Dandenongs from Mt Dandenong to Olinda, Donna Buang on a clear day and the Scoresby Hills. No made roads, only tracks used by the orchardists, were a quagmire in winter and a dust bowl in summer. One train an hour. People wore old shoes to the station and changed into good shoes, leaving old ones under the seat to be used again on return.

Despite these drawbacks, a splendid spirit prevailed. Co-operation in sporting ventures, churches were important, Red Cross, schools, Scouts, Guides, tennis bowls. Being interested in wildflowers, our family each weekend walked along the railway line to Bayswater to find spider orchids (3 varieties), donkey orchids and a fair sprinkling of other wild flowers. Uambi forest, bequeathed to the nation by the late John Harper, contains many native species. Ron Clarke lived here – and Ron Barassi. They gave character to the district. Dr. Thom and team, and Dr. Deerbon and clinic cared for the health of the newly settled district.

It was a good place to settle in and now, almost 50 years later, it is a bustling centre, catering for almost every need – a pleasure to shop here and return home. Many of

the original residents have completed their course, and newcomers have re-furbished homes, and so life goes on."



● MEMBERS of the first executive performed the cake cutting ceremony. Mrs Jean Hudson, who has been a member since the first meeting in 1965, cuts the cake while the first treasurer, Mrs Margaret Lord, left, the first secretary, Mrs Beryl Powell, and the current president, Mrs Gertrude Wilson, look on.



Red Cross tenth birthday, 1975

Wilson House, The Boulevard. 1958

52. Anon.

Written in 2006

Here is a note of one family's early Heathmont memories, with only the name of the street and the contributor changed for the sake of anonymity, as identification could still be embarrassing. The events and people described here were real and while it could have applied in any new outer suburb at the time, for the young, fairly innocent couple that we were it was a salutary range of experiences.

We came to Heathmont as young married's in the late 1950's. We had both lived in Hawthorn before marriage and, as an infant was on the way, needed to establish ourselves in our own home. Why Heathmont? Well, we had an introduction to an estate agent and, with our limited resources, knew we needed to go a long way out (which Heathmont was then) to be able to purchase a property, even with family assistance. The other main reason was proximity to the railway as we had no car and, having family and friends all closer in, as well as my employment in the city, needed reliable public transport.

The agent showed us several weatherboard houses, all either just completed or about to be. The one in Adam Avenue was our choice, two bedrooms, priced at £3,300 on a nice large sloping block with plenty of gum trees at the back. The builder was a pleasant fellow, who did some modifications for us and later we met him at the tennis club. With hindsight, a couple of the other areas developed more quickly into attractive streets and would have eventually been better choices. Canterbury Road had only recently been upgraded from a gravel road, Heathmont Road was still gravel, as were most of the suburb's minor roads. The railway bridge was in its first of many phases of widening and the shopping centre was limited to the north side of Canterbury Road, though on both sides of the railway. Trains ran on time, sometimes even early, a trap for the unpunctual, and often consisted of the old dog-box carriages.

Our street was unmade for some years, until a roadmaking scheme came to the whole area. It was never impassable as it had sufficient slope and drainage for water runoff. There was no phoneline through for several years and when it came only three households, including ourselves, elected to be connected initially, so we sometimes had the nextdoor people requesting the phone for inward or outward calls. The street ran downhill to a dead-end although there was a rough walking track which gave access out through the scrub. Most families as well as ourselves didn't have motor-cars, so anyone from further down had to head past our gate in order to reach shops, school or transport, and we became familiar with them for that reason.

Our neighbours on one side were Dutch migrants, the husband friendly and outgoing, but the wife reclusive, and on the other side were friendly, but somewhat strange. Eventually we learned that every house contained a different story, but as we were somewhat wet-behind-the-ears, from a fairly sheltered background, we had not been much exposed to suburban life in all its variety. Our first real experience of neighbourly relations was when we brought our new baby home and family assistance had departed, the young wife

two doors down, probably herself quite lonely, insisted on coming in each day, giving unnecessary advice and eventually completely overstaying her welcome. Upon being politely told that we didn't need her around each and every day she flounced out and never spoke to us again.

Chronologically, the next thing remembered was standing out in the front garden with baby asleep inside and wondrously looking up to see a small moving light in the heavens. It was the first Sputnik, which was quite unbelievable to behold at the time. Some time after this was our next unusual neighbourly experience when one cold Saturday evening, in a thick fog which was prevalent in those days but doesn't happen often now, father-in-law was driving us, including baby, home from Hawthorn. As we headed down Adam Avenue a forlorn little half-naked figure loomed up out of the fog in the middle of the road. It was a very young child and when we investigated, a neighbour pointed out which home he came from, further down the road. The front door was open, lights on, another child crying in a cot, but no sign of adults. All we could do, with the neighbour's help, was to put the young one back to bed and wait until the parents appeared which they eventually did reasonably unconcerned, having left the children asleep while they were out socially. As a new father at the advanced age of fully 24 years, I then found myself in the role of berating these older people for such neglect.

The next step in relationships was with the Dutch family next door. We had a friendly relationship with the husband in brief chats, though we didn't have much in common, and their younger children hung over the fence. My wife in neighbourly fashion invited the lady in for coffee and a chat but she was too shy or withdrawn to come, at this early stage of her life in an unfamiliar country. Over the other side fence we became accustomed to bumps and raised voices in the night without realising until later that it was for real. They were pleasant enough during the day, although the wife had quite a strange manner, but domestic violence was not something we were familiar with.

Diagonally over the road were a family involved in the church, where the husband played a leading role, as well as holding a responsible marketing job during the week. The wife was generally well-spoken and certainly well-read but every now and then lapsed into uncouth speech and dishevelled appearance. Again we were slow to read the signs but it appeared she had a problem with alcohol. Their daughter seemed to cope well but their son was slightly retarded. Another hidden family story. The wife every now and again used to lurch down the road with a bottle in tow to indulge her weakness with another family with a similar problem. Thank goodness we were fortunate with the neighbours over the road, a lovely family somewhat older than us, with young children, members of the Methodist church congregation, who provided some day-to-day normality, as well as advice and assistance when needed.

Several doors down on the other side was a couple with a young daughter where the wife talked very sweetly, and the husband appeared small and meek. However with windows open on summer nights we were privileged to hear some blazing rows which belied their daytime appearance. Further up the hill was a family, a little older than us who, since

both wives were due to give birth at the same time, we became friendly with. The husband was involved in the church and the wife's somewhat controlling mother lived with them. One day we discovered that out of the blue the husband had cooked the books at work and taken off with the proceeds, never again to return to home and family. The wife was understandably distraught and became dependent on her mother whose control over the household only intensified. Just round the corner on the main road was the "eyes and ears" lady of the district who, since everyone heading on foot to the shops or station had to pass her front gate, knew all that went on and was ever ready with comment or advice. Around the corner in the other direction was a family headed by a tough-looking police officer, with the house guarded by an equally formidable dog. The rather meek, but very pleasant wife eventually became our baby-sitter for special occasions but in order to reach the front door to contact her the dog had first to be confronted. I used to suspect that it was lying in wait for me and certainly on one occasion it managed to take a chunk out of my leg as I fled, but as they had no telephone I had no other means of bypassing the beast.

Looking back though, the piece-de-resistance of all was the family a few doors down on the other side. I don't remember a father, but there was a group of young red-headed boys with a heavily-built, roughly-spoken mother who however was pleasant enough in passing the time of day. After a while we used to notice a series of young ladies heading down the road to this house late in the afternoon, friends of the family we thought staying the evening. The same ladies then walked back up the road in the morning, presumably headed for the railway station. We thought no more of it until it was pointed out that these ladies were in fact engaging in the oldest profession, under the supervision of our large female neighbour, the madam of the house. To think that this was happening in a quiet suburban street right under our noses indeed gave us something to consider.

I should hasten to explain though, that despite the above peccadillos our neighbours were not petty criminals or no-hopers. As far as is remembered the others were all normal friendly people going about their business, with whom we used to converse as the occasion arose. No doubt though each family had their own story to tell, which will always be the case. It just seemed to us when we looked around the immediate neighbourhood that we had more than our share of abnormal situations close by. Maybe in fact they were all normal people and it was we who were the odd ones ! I should once again emphasise that there was no doubt you could have found the same mix of situations in any similar suburb, and there could have been no particular stigma attached to that part of Heathmont.

As events turned out, our early experiences didn't serve to turn us away from the area as we are still around after all that time, and in due course we came to regard those times as part of the rich tapestry of family and suburban life. We have made many friends over a long period though we did move on from Adam Avenue as the family expanded. I just wonder now what became of all those neighbours, although in saying that I do suspect that some are still not far away and finding Heathmont as ever an attractive place to be.

* * *

1958

