

NOTES OF HEATHMONT

FROM POME (Extracted by Russ Haines c2006)

BEGINNINGS

William Wedge Darke, a nephew of John Helder Wedge of the Port Phillip Association, [The East Ringwood Wedges are related directly to John Wedge.] completed a survey of the land between the Yarra river and Western Port Bay in May 1843. He determined that Whitehorse Road was the best route from Melbourne to Gippsland and Alexander. All the members of his survey party were convicts. Further surveying of the roads was done by William Bennet Hull in 1854-55 and by Clement Hodgkinson, District Surveyor, in the next few years.

Surveyor NM Bickford, and leader of the Clement Hodgkinson's field party, named the area the Parish of Ringwood in 1857, which eventually became part of the Mornington County. It later became part of the Shire of Berwick, severing in 1871, then part of the Shire of Lillydale. The parish stretched from Mullum Mullum Creek in the north, Dandenong Creek in the south, west to Heatherdale Road. This area contained what was to become the towns of Heathmont, Ringwood, East Ringwood, North Ringwood and Croydon.

The following year, the first land auctions took place with Nelson Polak buying much of Ringwood. Morton Moss obtained a large tract of land (405 acres) reaching below Canterbury Road to Dandenong Creek and stretching from Heatherdale Road to the extension of Washusen Road. He disposed of an area amounting to almost 100 acres lying between Canterbury Road and Dandenong Creek and from Heatherdale Road east to the present Belgrave Street about 1860. The purchasers were the Piggott family who held it until 1887 when much of the land was disposed of to Peter Farmilo.

[West Prussia (Wantirna) Road probably had German roots.]

PIONEERS

Joseph Pett, a farmer at Pentridge (Coburg), was very upset when he missed out on the 79 acres forfeited by James Watts Knight (finally obtained by George Pratt). He wrote on 8 February 1869:-

"Sir, I hope you will consider my application for that piece of land and grant it me I saw in the paper a piece for sale under the 12 clause 1 rote to the man he gave fool directions were to find it I went and saw it the next day I came to the Land office and made inquiries about it a clerk told me that Mr. Knight had time to pay up I told him he wanted to sell it I ask him to read Mr. Knights note to me he did ..."

No luck, so Joseph took out a licence on 28 April 1869 for allotment 40, a block of 80 acres on Dandenong Creek. After living there for six years, during which time he built a four-roomed weatherboard house with a shingle roof and a slab kitchen with a brick chimney, Mr Pett was disgusted to learn that his application to purchase the property in August 1875 was held up for some time by an objection, pending a decision on the route of a railway to Fern Tree Gully. This objection still existed in November 1876, when Pett's agent protested to the Minister. The Grant was made 10 January 1878

William Burge became Pett's next-door neighbour during the course of his struggles with the authorities. John Boyle, also of Pentridge, took up the land in November 1869, but he died in February 1873 leaving one child by his wife Elizabeth, who died less than two months later. Burge applied for a licence to allotment 39 (127 acres) on 16 November 1874, which was made up of 80 acres taken under Section 31 of the 1869 Act and 47 acres that had been transferred to him in Boyles' will. In present-day terms the land stretched from Dandenong Creek to Canterbury Road and east to near Coven Avenue. However, almost four months went by before it, was dealt with. Burge had by then improved the property with 127 chains of assorted fencing, had cultivated six acres with vines, fruit trees and garden, and had erected a six-roomed weatherboard and paling house, stables of bark and spars, a 12 by 10 foot slab and

bark chaff-house, a pigsty, an outhouse, and a storeroom. It was undoubtedly one of the best selection farms in the district.

On 4 August 1869, Thomas Moncrieff signed with his mark the application papers for an allotment of 75 acres lying along the western edge of Joseph Pett's property. Although he worked at Romsey and was not regularly living in the selection, Thomas had put up 120 chains of post and rail fence and had erected a 26 by 12 foot dwelling when he applied to purchase the land in September 1875. Asked whether he considered the land fit for cultivation, District Surveyor Callanan replied with devastating frankness - "I don't know this small piece of land particularly, but I can state that I never yet saw a piece of land in Ringwood fit for cultivation". In spite of this jaundiced view, Moncrieff was forced to wait until 1877 before obtaining his grant.

Henry Wilmot Smith, whose sons, William and James, discovered the antimony mine in Ringwood, owned 164 acres of land at the present day Heathmont, within the truncated triangle between Bedford and Canterbury Roads and east of Balfour Avenue.

Herman Frederick Pump was born in 1874 at Ahrenlohe, north of Hamburg, and like many of his countrymen left to avoid in the Prussian army. Apparently he went first to Denmark and then, 16 years, sailed for Australia in 1890. He was met at Port Melbourne his uncle Johann Pump who had been 30 years in Australia, and taken by horse and dray to Doncaster, where he worked for some years. For a he was employed at George Fankhauser's orchard and market garden East Burwood for 2s 6d a week and his keep, but wanted land of his own.

At Doncaster suitable ground was far beyond the means of Herman Pump, so he sought cheaper land, and in 1896 he bought 40 acres of timbered land in what is now Canterbury Road and grubbed the native trees and planted fruit. During the six or so years before his trees bore fruit, Hermann and his wife Louisa (Zerbe) lived in the usual way by labouring jobs and cutting and carting firewood, as well as growing vegetables. He built a four-roomed dwelling facing Canterbury Road in 1899 when he married Louisa.

Herman's older brother John also married a Doncaster girl (Caroline Aumann), and bought land in the area now named Heathmont. John, who died at the age of 73 years in 1940, was the father of four boys and two girls. Herman was not quite so fruitful in raising boys, he had four daughters and one son. One of the daughters, Reta, kept house for her father after the mother died in 1937, while the others married and moved to other suburbs. As children, the Pumps walked the two miles to the Ringwood Street school where Hocking was Head Teacher and Miss Bailey the Infant Mistress. They also did jobs such as picking cherries in the morning until the eight-thirty train went through and then they left for school.

Hermann Pump, like his fellow orchardists, travelled to the Victoria Market - and sometimes to the 'hill market' at South Melbourne - three times a week for a period of 50 years. He would leave home after loading his wagon at ten o'clock at night; along the road to town the wagons would come out of the side tracks and join together in a procession along the rough blue metal road, the men mostly walking and yarning to pass the hours until they arrived in Melbourne about three o'clock in the morning.

A great change in his life took place in 1926 when he bought a Chevrolet motor truck with a body built by Rook and Rook, coachbuilders, suitable for transporting fruit. Herman was now able to remain at home until about two o'clock in the morning when he drove to the Queen Victoria Market with his load of fruit. By eight o'clock he would be finished, and within an hour he would be home again. But unlike most of his fellow fruitgrowers, Herman was most active in local affairs, and besides his work for the Railway League and the Progress Association, he was a member of the Ringwood Cool Stores Committee for 40 years and President at the time of his death in 1954. He was a member of the Ringwood School Committee for 13 years, one of the original members of the Horticultural Society and a President of it in the days when it held the second largest Show in the State, and a foundation member of the Ringwood Bowling Club, although he never took up the game.

BEGINNING OF HEATHMONT

Heathmont did not exist as a township until about 1925, when the Heathmont Railway League began to win the battle for a Railway Station (Herman Pump was President of the League), which was opened the following year. The first shop, which opened in 1923, was Miss Elizabeth Marden's little shop selling lollies and general goods which she ran in her front room. When she returned to England her brother and sister-in-law took it over, but after continued representations by the Heathmont Progress Association (of which Herman was an active member) a Post Office was established in the house in 1929 with a daily exchange of mails with Ringwood. No other business existed in the area until 1946.

SCHOOLS

State School No.4688 Heathmont, opened in the Heathmont Methodist Church building (now the Uniting Church), Canterbury Road in February 1952. Mr A. McKinley was the first Head Teacher and there were 80 pupils. Mr J.B. Harper was the President of the Parents and Citizens Association and Mr H. Walker the Chairman of the School Committee, while B. Jago acted as Secretary to both bodies. A site on the corner of Francis Street and Balfour Avenue was purchased and after a prefabricated aluminium building of four classrooms and an office had been erected, was declared officially open by the Hon. A.E. Shepherd, MLA. on the 21 April 1953.

The enrolment grew rapidly and additional classrooms had to be added. As with all the local schools the Community worked hard to improve conditions. During Cr J.M. McRae's term as Chairman, the parents and Bay School Committee terraced the playground, formed a football oval and for sealed the basketball court and assembly area. The Crj.M. McRae Arts Centre opened in 1966, and was designed by Salvatore who acted as Honorary Architect. By 1969 the school population had increased to 620 and the adjacent Baptist Church property had been purchased to provide extra accommodation and playing space.

State School No. 4688, Heathmont housed pupils living in the Heathmont East zone until June 1962 when SS 4819 Heathmont East, a six classroom building, was opened. The land on which it was built was owned by the Chivers family who purchased the block in 1921 and moved into a new house there in June 1923. When Mr Mervyn Chivers spoke about the property to school children many years later, he asked them to picture the layout of the school land as it was when his family lived there:-

The house was on the spot occupied by the Arts Centre, our garage was near the corner of Louis Street, leaving room for access to the orchard. The school assembly area is on the site of our dam which provided water for the horse and cow, fowls, even bath water in particularly dry periods, and for irrigation. The rows of mixed fruit, berries and vegetables ran north and south near Armstrong Road, the lemon orchard, the centre, and the back paddock was still natural bush for the horse.

The children then transferred to the new school buildings under the supervision of Mr J. Elliott. Pupils from Eastwood, Bayswater and North Bayswater increased the enrolment to 113. Mr Elliott had been responsible for establishing the school in temporary premises, moving and settling into the new buildings and setting up the parent and community associations. At the beginning of 1963 Mr Elliott returned to his position as assistant Head Teacher at Heathmont School and Mr R. Warriner was appointed as Head Teacher. He received promotion to Ringwood State School in 1964 and Mr P. Walls became the Head Teacher from 1964 to 1967.

The local community enthusiastically supported the school and by 1970 the enrolment had reached 450. Many of the early settlers had descendants at the school. A small area of bushland at the rear of the school was fenced to preserve the Pink and White Heath, Climbing Sarsparilla, and other native grasses and plants. In 1966 the school won the Australian Natives Association School Gardens Competition.

CHURCHES

The Pentecostal Church of the Assemblies of God in Australia, opened a new Church in Viviana Crescent, Heathmont, on Saturday 30 August 1958. The Church was built on land donated by Mr Edwin A. Smith of Balfour Avenue. The foundation members and those responsible for the building were from the Pentecostal Church in Bridge Road, Richmond. Skilled men and volunteers spent several months erecting the weatherboard building which enabled the Church to be opened free of debt. Pastor Luke

from the Richmond Temple took the Heathmont Pastorate and conducted morning worship and Breaking of Bread, afternoon Bible class and Sunday School and evening Gospel Service each Sunday.

RAILWAY

From Melbourne to Hawthorn in April 1861, then to Camberwell on 3rd April 1882, and Camberwell to Lilydale on 1st December 1882, finally Ringwood in 1889.

G.M. Mueller was the principal mover in the agitation to get a Railway station situated between Ringwood and Bayswater. Towards the end of November 1922 he called a public meeting at which a Railway League was formed with Herman Pump as Chairman. A deputation to the Chairman of Commissioners, Harold Clapp, was told residents would be required to find the finance to pay for the Railway Station. In June 1925 the estimated cost was £3392 for a platform and a residence, later reduced to £2800, but the local people claimed they could only raise £1792 and pointed out that no residence was needed at other places. The Railway Station was finally completed and opened in May 1926 by Mrs. H. Pump, who cut the ribbon across the entrance.

ELECTRICITY

By mid-1927, the Heathmont Progress League was asking the Council for help in securing an extension of electric lighting to the area, but the SEC. District Superintendent maintained the population was too scattered. One scheme put forward was to pay the interest charges on the building of a sub-station at the corner of Canterbury and Wantirna Roads, so raising the guarantee to the Commission to £215, and possibly enabling feeder lines to be taken to the west along Canterbury Road and also along Wantirna Road. Nevertheless, it took almost ten years to achieve a proper electric lighting extension to Heathmont. To bring lighting from the corner of Bedford and Canterbury Road for some 55 chains, the SEC required an annual guarantee of £164 for 5 years from 14 consumers. If the Council installed six street lights in the area the cost was reduced by £30 a year, and with the Railway Department buying £12 worth of electricity for the Heathmont Railway Station, the cost to the residents came to a reasonable amount, the League believed.

Turning on electricity at Heathmont by the Mayoress, celebrated in fernery at Maiden's shop, 1937.

INFANT WELFARE

During 1964, more than 5000 children attended this Centre, while several more thousand went to those at Lawrence Grove, Ringwood East and at Viviani Crescent, Heathmont, both of which were opened towards the end of 1960.

DOCTOR

A Melbourne graduate of 1924, Dr William Leslie Colquhoun practiced in Heathmont. He was a Councillor for two periods, in 1932-33 and 1937-39, and died in 1973. During the 1940s, Drs Kelvin Gardner and A. Hughes were assistants to Dr Colquhoun for about a year. A number of doctors worked in Heathmont in the 1950s; Dr Murray Deerbon had a practice in Campbell Street in 1954 which was later situated at 18 Canterbury Road. He was joined at various times by other medical practitioners, including M Tows (1960-75), F.V. Spitte (1970 onwards), G. Cummings (1975-87), and M. Sosmin (1987 onwards). Dr A.L. Thom commenced his practice in Dickason Road, Heathmont, in 1955, where he was joined by Dr P. Francis, who moved to anaesthetics, and then by Dr M. Barker and Dr J. Ward.

RESERVES

The battle to obtain a reserve at Heathmont was fought during 1928. In April of that year a deputation from the Heathmont Progress League led by G. Marden, President, and G. Muller, Secretary, approached the Borough Council once more on the subject of ground being acquired in their district. Apparently there were three possibilities; Scott's land was 'ideal' consisting of eight blocks bounded by Canterbury and Williams Roads and Cuthbert and Waterloo Streets, and Ingwersen's 13 acres in Allen's Road was their second choice, and Bloom's Peach orchard, 13 and a half acres also in Allen's Road with three acres of trees and a frontage to the Dandenong Creek, was inexplicably third on the list. A second deputation came to the Council the following month, again urging *'the desirability of the acquisition of a suitable site at Heathmont for a park'*, and complaining that three years had passed since Council had agreed to

help the residents obtain a recreation reserve, which would preferably be Scott's paddock. Already they possessed good cricket and tennis clubs that would be assisted by getting this land. The Mayor in thanking the deputation said he was glad to see them anytime because it enabled the Council to get first-hand information, but received the retort courteous from Mr Clota who replied, 'Get Bedford Road done [up] and we'll come often'. In August 1928, the Borough Council paid the estate of IW Scott the sum of £450.

Twelve acres were purchased from A. Duncan in 1938. The land situated in Wantirna Road near the Dandenong Creek was a natural park, but since timber was being removed from the bush, a fence was required. At the time of the Parliamentary Inspection in May 1938, Ringwood Borough Council listed six open spaces under its control - Heathmont Reserve (six acres), Miles Park (31/2 acres), Bamford Park (two acres), Ringwood Park (17 acres), Ringwood East Reserve (14 acres), and Ringwood Reserve (seven acres).

KINDERGARTEN

In 1949 the Heathmont Advancement League was formed and money was raised to build a community hall that could be used as Kindergarten. Funds came from personal loans by members which enabled three blocks of land to be purchased and the combined Hall built here was opened in 1952.

SUB-DIVISION

In 1914, AM Washusen decided to go farming and bought 25 acres of bushland bordering a dirt track (now Canterbury Road) for £500, and over the years he cleared it and laid out an orchard of apples, pears, cherries, peaches, and lemons. When it was up for subdivision into 100 allotments in 1968, Washusen now 84 years of age, shook his head in disbelief because he had sold it to his son only a few years before he retired, and now he wanted to sell and go farther out. *'I certainly never foresaw this day when I started out'*, the old Man said, *'but that's progress, I suppose'*.

PARKS

When he bought the property of Mr Barnes at the junction of Canterbury and Bedford Roads in 1914, Frank Walker was described as a 'decorative artist of Collins Street'. During his lifetime, he made the gift of about 20 acres of natural bush parkland to the people of Ringwood in perpetuity, and retained only five acres around his home named 'Wombolano'. It was soon after the Walkers moved in that John Shum was taken by his father on the first of his visits to this large property. The house was surrounded by a four-foot high brick wall and the long drive of rough cream-colored in Lilydale gravel was entered through handsome wrought-iron gates obtained from some building wrecker. John Shum remembered being welcomed by a pack of yapping, excited Australian Terriers and then taken on a tour of the old rambling house that had been extended and renovated using secondhand doors, windows, and timber, including both jarrah parquet floors and wooden interior lining. Every inch of wall space appeared crammed from floor to ceiling with oils, watercolors, etchings and drawings of all kinds by many well-known artists. There were glass cabinets everywhere filled with treasures. In the early 1920s, Frank Walker bought three adjoining wooden cottages in Darling Street, South Yarra, and converted them into the Reception Centre famous as 9 Darling Street. Walker took leaves and flowers down from Heathmont each day to decorate the tables.

FROM RHS ARCHIVES

HEATHMONT PROGRESS LEAGUE

From a letter dated 12th August, 1926 from GW Muller, Hon. Secretary, to McCaskill, stating that the above league has been formed and that the President, EF Wieland, will be running in the next elections.

July 1928 Deplorable condition of Canterbury Road

13th February, 1939 Heathmont water extension proposals of £1,442 for option 1 via Canterbury, Dickason, Allens and Heathmont roads. Option 2, £1,056, for option 2 via Dublin and Bedford roads to Canterbury road.

LETTER FROM ADA MARDEN 16th May 1973

Dear Brian,

I am sorry, I haven't got much to send you. The only snap I have is of the station. I didn't think that the old times would ever be thought of again.

My mother was the first postmistress. My aunt, Miss Elizabeth Mary started the shop in a very small way. When she returned to England, my mother and father took it over. We had a large old room which was called the fernery in which the old pioneers met and we had parties and evenings to raise money for things in Heathmont.

My father was interested in the cricket which, I think, your grandfather started. The Tennis club in Heathmont and the Progress League were there too. The late Mr Walter Chivers was a great entertainer with his accordion. He and my father had their birthdays on the same day and, for twenty years, my father gave him a pipe and he gave my father a pumpkin.

We had many good times in the fernery and it is very nice of the young people to think of us old pioneers, in the days when there was no water or electric light, or roads made. We use to get our papers from Ringwood at first and later my father bought the authorized newsagency and he used to walk around with the papers.

After the war, when building materials were very hard to get, Mr and Mrs. Baker lived in the fernery until they could get materials for their home. We had a garage where we held the voting and also the Sunday School, and it was useful for many things.

It will be very interesting to read all about Ringwood in the old times, when you have finished. Your father would remember all this but you wouldn't. Hope this will be of some use to you. I am sorry I didn't keep the old snaps. My father later built the brick Post Office which I think is still used.

Thanks Brian for remembering us old pioneers. Hope you family are all well.

Yours sincerely,
Ada Marden.

A HISTORY OF THE LAND ON WHICH HEATHMONT EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL IS BUILT **By Mervyn Chivers, 1985**

I am pleased to have this opportunity of passing on to you what information I have regarding the history of this land which my parents purchased in 1921, arranged to have a house built. and on its completion in June, 1923, moved into it. I have lived, first in the house and then in the area ever since, so I know it well and hope that after my talk, you too will know it better.

During the second world war, I was overseas in the R.A.A.F. and later on, having resumed work with my pre-war employer, I was moved interstate on several occasions, but this has been my permanent address and I have always been pleased to return home.

A history is a story or record of what has happened in the past, and in this instance relates to, the ownership and usage of a small block of land in area slightly less than three hectares on the corner of Armstrong Road and Louis Street, Heathmont, in the City of Ringwood, which was previously part of the Shire of Lillydale. To confine my story to this small block of land would not be very interesting so I shall give you some information on the area surrounding the school as well.

The history of Melbourne began when a riverside settlement was established in 1835 by colonists from Tasmania led by John Batman and John Pascoe Fawkner, likewise the history of the Lillydale area begins when some adventurous souls moved out of the confines of the settlement of Melbourne and took up residence in various districts, some of them in the Lillydale area. Records show that there were settlers in this area in 1837, no doubt looking for larger tracts, seeking, in particular, the fertile soils of the river flats.

The first industry was the growing of grape vines at Yellingbo and Yering, vineyards ultimately occupying hundreds of hectares in the Lillydale area. Sawmilling was the second industry, and once the trees were cleared, farms and orchards began to appear.

Bullock teams and wagons were the only available means of transporting goods to and from Hawthorn, then the rail terminus for this area. The round trip, along bush tracks, over creeks and gullies, took two days or more.

When the vineyards, farms and orchards became established and productive Lillydale grew prosperous and was created a District in 1856. One of the tasks of the District Officer or Administrator was to establish law and order, and he very soon arranged for a District Council of reliable citizens to be formed to assist him in his many duties. The first Council meeting in 1862 was held at the Black Springs Hotel, in that period, a well-known meeting place, situated on the main road to Melbourne (now called Maroondah Highway) about 4 kilometres on the Melbourne side of Lillydale approximately the Chirside Park Shopping Complex.

Councils were formed to ensure water supply, sanitation, transport, roads, lighting, orderly building, etc. Councils were also invested with the authority to collect rates or taxes to finance their work. The Council's work today is similar and ensures continual upgrading of these facilities; however their task now is a lot more complex, additionally providing and maintaining recreational, garden and sporting areas, as well as many welfare, health and public service facilities.

With a population of 700, Lillydale was proclaimed a Shire in 1872 and in 1882 was connected by rail to Melbourne. So important was this occasion that a local Public holiday was declared to allow all to greet the first train. The original railway station was moved to Yarra Junction; however, with the discontinuation of the rail service to Warburton, this railway station is now a museum.

The street trees in Lillydale were planted in 1897 to honour the 50th Jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria.

The first settlers in Ringwood arrived in 1858 and Ringwood in 1924 was a quiet town in a rural area, 54% of which was covered in orchards. Previously the South West Riding of the Shire of Lillydale, the area,

with a population of 2,000, was created the Borough of Ringwood, on 18th October, 1924 and comprised the towns of Ringwood, East Ringwood, North Ringwood and Heathmont. In those days, Heathmont consisted of a few houses, one store, where the Post Office is now situated, but no railway station.

Ringwood railway station was a busy place, the terminus of the electrified section of the railway (switched on 1923). Passengers for the Ferntree Gully and Lilydale lines had to change to steam power for the remainder of their journey. A horse-drawn coach took passengers to Warrantdyte.

Main Street, Ringwood, that part of Whitehorse Road or Maroondah Highway through the town proper, was still a graveled road and most of the traffic was horse-drawn vehicles. The increasing use of motor vehicles, however, soon made it essential the road be sealed to combat the dust menace. Perhaps this progress was also due to the fact that our own Borough Council was operating, the first Council meeting being held in the Mechanical Institute In 1924.

Our Council rates were now payable to Ringwood not Lillydale.

Neighbouring towns were increasing in size. Populations were rising the progress was so rapid that the Ferntree Gully line was electrified by the end of 1925. The Heathmont railway station was built In 1926 only after the residents agreed to pay the cost of it. The Station was officially opened on 1st May, 1927 by our local Member, Mr. Everard, M.P. We now had only one mile to walk to the station instead of two.

The severe world-wide economic depression of the '30s had repercussions even In Heathmont, and although a few new residents arrived, the town was basically unchanged for the next twenty years. Still only the one store, however, we had a station and a new cricket ground In Canterbury Road. As there was no school, we walked to the Bayswater State School, all six of us.

The post-war period saw a dramatic change to our peaceful way of life. Many new residents were attracted to Ringwood and Heathmont, indeed to the entire Eastern suburban area. Orchards, farms and bush paddocks were subdivided Into housing estates, water and electricity were made available and as houses were built so also were shopping complexes.

Progress was rapid and Ringwood was proclaimed a City In 1960.

To summarise, we have established that our school land originally Crown land, once it was sold came under the control of the Lillydale District, then in turn the Shire of Lillydale, the Borough of Ringwood and now the City of Ringwood.

The land has been subject to minor changes only since the arrival of the new settlers. Doubtless sawmilling would have cleared most of the area In the late 1800s and further clearings of secondary growth have 'taken place since then. To define a major change, I give as an example the Ringwood Public Golf course constructed on low-lying ground filled with layers of rubbish and top soil from road works. Ideal for a golf course, but not for building as the cost of foundations would be very high.

Our land is in a relatively elevated position and has a natural gentle slope giving good drainage but no erosion. There were no rocks and it is ideal for many purposes including the growing of vegetables, fruit, etc. so with those things in mind my father purchased the land and began clearing and cultivating it.

This work was done in the evenings and weekends, as it was, what today we call a hobby farm. The growing of fruit, berries and vegetables, however, was to help feed and cloth a hungry family of six. The lemon orchard was planted to provide an income after dad's retirement.

You will have to use your imagination to picture the layout of the school land when it was still our property. Our house was on the spot occupied by the Arts Centre, our garage was near the corner of Louis Street, leaving room for access to the orchard. The school assembly area is on the site of our dam which provided water for the horse and cow, fowls, even bath water in particularly dry periods, and for irrigation.

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

Although electricity and reticulated water were connected to the town of Heathmont in 1939, it was not until December, 1945 that these two services were connected to Armstrong Road.

My father, then 69 years of age, had never lived in a house with an electricity supply. Most of his life had been spent on orchards, farms and big timber country. Coal, coke and wood were used for heating and cooking, kerosene and candles for lighting. After our arrival from Western Australia in 1921, we lived in East Richmond and that house used town coal gas for those services.

We have now determined the usage of the land, sawmilling, perhaps some grazing for cattle, firewood from the secondary growth, fruit, berries and vegetables together with a lemon orchard and now a school.

The next step is to trace the ownership of the land from the early days. A fire which burned down the Shire of Lillydale Council Offices destroyed most of the records, but we have been able to obtain a lot of information from early survey maps. My thanks go to the President of the Ringwood Historical Research Group, Mrs. E. Pullen, M.B.E., who provided me with some important information.

Our land was part of a large tract purchased from the Crown by W. Berge on 6th April, 1875. and extended in area North to South from Canterbury Road to Mountain Highway and East to 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 boundary line, the City of Ringwood on the West, the City of Croydon on the East.

As far as can be ascertained this land was subdivided about the first World War period into 7 acre (almost 3 hectare) blocks, by the simple expedient of putting a road through the middle and erecting a few post and wire fences. Armstrong Road may have been so called to honour the pioneer farming family of that name who settled in the late 1800s in the area on the south side of the junction of Bedford and Canterbury Roads. Farming was discontinued about the first World War period and the farm, 130 acres, was subdivided. The huge family home, "Aringa", situated at the end of Aringa Court still commands an excellent view of the Dandenongs and was for many years the home of Doctor Colquhoun, a medical practitioner who served for a period as a Ringwood Borough Councillor.

On the other hand, Armstrong Road may have been named after the Estate Agent, Norman Armstrong, who arranged the sale. This road remained a dirt road for nearly 50 years.

Prior to our arrival in June, 1923, there were four houses in Armstrong Road, two on the left and two on the right. The first house on the right was on the land on which the Humphrey Law factory is situated. The house is still there at the rear of the property and can be seen more easily from the top end of Pleasant Drive. The second house on the right, now renovated and enlarged, is no. 64 Armstrong Road, a weatherboard house just before you reach Martin Street.

On the South side of the railway line and on the left where the netball courts' amenities block is now situated, was the third house, really only a hut, and again on the left of the road over the creek was the fourth house. Two blocks down the road from our house, an elderly well-educated gentleman 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 approximately 1942, hence the name Sheridan Court was bestowed when the land was later subdivided into building blocks.

Until the 1970s, Armstrong Road boasted a bridge over the Dandenong Creek and at that spot was a reasonable swimming hole created by damming the creek with logs, stones, branches of tea-tree, anything that was available. The bridge made an excellent diving platform. Christmas bush, ferns and

shrubs along the creek made this the prettiest area for miles around, however, as it was subject to flooding, drastic changes were made.

When the creeks were flooded, we walked along the railway line to Mountain Highway and to school. Canterbury Road was often flooded at the creek area, and that was the only reason my parents allowed us to use the railway bridges.

Why did we walk? Our first car, an old Oakland, but wasn't 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. However, we must get back to history, not sentiment.

We have established the ownership of the land to be:-

Crown to W Berge 6.4.1875, W Berge to WB Chivers, (possibly a speculator In between). Notification to purchase from Education Dept. in 1954. Purchase finalized 1962.

You may wish to ask a few questions which I shall be pleased to answer if possible, and if time permits I shall give a brief history of the area surrounding the School.

The Miller family settled in the area in 1860 and records show on the 1.4.1880, Frank Miller purchased the land adjoining the East side of Berge's property, i.e. the land on the south side of Canterbury Road from Coven Avenue to Bungalook Creek, along the creek to meet again with Berge's block, a quadrant shaped area.

(M Frank Miller's sons, Jim, Jack and Max, also a daughter, Lucy), all settled in the area. The house, "Trees" No. 385. on the South side of Canterbury Road between Coven Avenue and Poulton Close is no doubt so named because of the two huge oak trees which flanked the entrance to the Miller property. You drove through an apple orchard to Jim's house on top of the hill (now a completely rebuilt and modernized No. 42. Coven Avenue). then followed a track running East along the crest of the hill to Lucy's house and further along the track was Max's house.

In the 1940s the Miller Estate was subdivided to give each of the families their own block of land, but selling approximately 5056 of the entire area to provide some cash and make life more comfortable. After this subdivision, Lucy and Max shared a separate entrance from Canterbury Road (now Miller Road).

Within a couple of years the families had sold their blocks and further subdivisions took place and with the forming of Miller Road and Coven Avenue; home building allotments took the place of orchards and cow paddocks. The before-mentioned half of the original Miller Estate had been purchased by Alan and Herb Washusen who cleared some of the land, Herb planting an orchard on his part.

With the value of the land increasing, this project was discontinued in the mid 1950s and the land was again subdivided into building allotments with the continuation of Coven Avenue to meet an extended Miller Road. Previously Coven Avenue terminated at a point in line with the rear fence of my property,

The location of the Millers' houses can be determined by the pine trees planted to give shade and shelter. Max's house, long demolished, was situated at the rear of the now No. 20 Miller Road. Lucy's house, also removed, was situated at the end of (since a further subdivision) Poulton Close.

The house, the rear of which fades the end of Louis Street, was built for Herb Washusen, and although access was available from Canterbury Road near Bungalook Creek, Miller Road and Coven Avenue, as there were no roads or even tracks, the easiest access was via the track alongside our orchard. It suited my father, it suited Herb, and the ploughing of the orchard was done by Herb and his tractor, as we, the family, had got rid of Dad's horse and the associated hard-work equipment.

The block of land on the North side and similar in size to the school block was subdivided by Louis Miller with the forming of a street on the South side of the property, naturally, named Louis Street and I was

perhaps the first to buy one of the building allotments, paying for it on the 5th July, 1949, only weeks after the subdivision.

With the forming of Louis Street, access for Herb was made easier; power, light and the telephone made it more practical for Herb to build his home, although water was still per courtesy of old Walter Chivers. Even when I built in 1952, we still had only a temporary water supply in the form of a pipe connected to the irrigation supply for the orchard.

Louis Street remained a dirt road, graded and graveled at our expense until the building of the School in 1962, when the road was completed as you know it today.

To date I have not mentioned another of Frank Miller's sons, Jack, my uncle, who had settled in Allens Road and his orchard covered part of the property which extended East to Armstrong Road opposite the school. The Armstrong Road block was not turned into orchard but was cleared of undergrowth, a dam was formed. and it was used as a horse paddock. Uncle Jack's house has been restored and is now No. 25 Allens Road.

After Jack Miller's death, his elder son. Louis, arranged the subdivision of the property into building blocks by the formation of Heathmont and Milton 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 in the early 1950s with the formation of The Boulevard and Its Courts.

The land in Allens Road on the North side of Jack Miller's, formerly Armstrong's, then Doctor Colquhoun's is still a heavily timbered bush block. Coming back to near the school the original 3 hectare block on the North side of Louis Millers was owned by Jim Miller' who subdivided this block in 1950 with the formation of Harriet Street named after his wife.

I hope this talk will have given you some information about the school land and the surrounding area.

Mervyn E. Chivers, 15 Louis Street, Heathmont,
2nd April, 1985.