

NOTES FOR HISTORICAL HIKE OF HEATHMONT

Recollections of early Heathmont by Frank Secomb with assistance from Doug Muller

January 1994

10/11

BUSH ROAD FROM HEATHMONT TO STUD ROAD

On the Southern boundary of the H.E.Parker Reserve there was a wooden bridge over the Dandenong Creek made from local trees connecting a bush track from Heathmont to a track in the location of Waldheim St which connected with Stud Rd at Mountain Highway.

Above the bridge a German settler named Mr Busch dammed the Creek with a concrete retaining wall to make a large Dam. He installed a hydraulic ram to supply water for washing and the garden at the Guest house which he developed with bungalows and a skittle alley. He had a Boat on the Dam and vandalism caused him great concern, when building his house in 1946 Frank Secomb remembers Mr Busch approaching in an agitated state with a shot gun looking for vandals.

The Guest house was named Waldheim and guests were taken on walking tours to see the new developments at Heathmont. It was also a pleasant walk for Heathmont residents to go down the bush tracks to have afternoon tea at Waldheim.

The area near the present Bowling club was at one stage a Piggery with access across the railway line to Allens Rd. before Heathmont Rd existed.

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An area North of Campbell St to the top of the hill on Canterbury Rd was cultivated by Mr Herman Pump as an Orchard. Four blocks of his land were purchased by the Methodist Church and later the home of Herman Pump was purchased for the Methodist Parsonage, it was replaced by a new Parsonage about six years later. Mr Jack Sanders purchased the block on the corner of Canterbury Rd and Campbell St and built the first Garage in Heathmont, the site is now occupied by the 7-11 store.

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Mr Arthur Sharp and later his son Ron cultivated an Orchard from Allens Rd to Canterbury Rd and down close to the Railway line. Mr John Harper a Melbourne Solicitor purchased a triangular block bounded by Allens Rd and the Railway line with access to Canterbury Rd. after the War they built a home and retained the bush setting.

Mr John Pump had an Orchard north of Allens Rd and east from Canterbury Rd. Further along the north side of Allens Rd there was also an Orchard cultivated by Mr Lew Miller. From Allens Rd east towards Armstrong Rd there was a prosperous Lemon grove developed by Mr Frank Clota.

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Before World War 1 Mr Doug Mullers grandfather Mr John William Muller developed an Orchard from Dickasons Rd down to the Dandenong Creek and from Barnic Rd to the east. His family home was in Dickasons Rd opposite Bennett Av. His son Mr

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George Muller served in World War 1 under Sir John Monash and was mentioned in despatches. On returning from the War George Muller developed an Orchard bounded by the present roads Heathmont, Orchid, Dickasons, and Canterbury. The family home was close to where the Ampol service station now stands. The address was Dickasons Rd Ringwood as Heathmont had not been named at that time. As there were only 12 potential students 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.

The property was later purchased or inherited by Mrs Bertha Bennett the daughter of Sir John Monash and subdivided under the name of CHARM VIEW ESTATE about the time that Heathmont was named and the Heathmont Railway station was built. Because of the depression in the late 1920's and 1930's the land did not sell readily. George Muller's home was moved to a new site on Heathmont Rd where it still stands. Mr Doug Muller now lives on the corner of Canterbury and Heathmont Rds adjoining the old family home.

In 1936 Frank Secomb's father built a home on the east side of the Muller family home for Mrs Angus and her daughter. Frank learned to ride a motor bike in the section of the Orchard which is now Bennett Av. After Franks war service in world war 2 he purchased the block of land on the corner of Heathmont Rd and Bennett Av. for ninety five pounds and the adjoining block for ninety pounds through Carter the Ringwood Estate Agent and built his homewith the help of his father and brothers.

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The Orchard of John William Muller was purchased by Mr Eric Nichols a well known Tennis player in the district. The Orchard between Orchard Grove and Barnic Rd was developed by Mr Ferdinand Wieland and later purchased by Major Barrow whom Frank Secomb first met when the Major was Drome master at the WAU air strip on the side of the Owen Stanley ranges in New Guinea, the Japanese bombers took 11 minutes from take off at SALAMAUA to drop bombs on us at WAU. Mr Nichols and Mr Barrow decided to subdivide at about the same time and named the road between the properties BARNIC Rd, KENBRY Rd was named after Eric Nichols sons Ken and Brian, MULLER Ct was named after the original owner and POSSUM La. after the local inhabitants. BARROW Dr. is named after the Major. The present scout hall is located at the bottom of Mr Barrows property.

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The Washusens developed an orchard south of Canterbury Rd. between Sunset Dr. and Orchard Grove. In the early 1950's the Washusens allowed their old homestead to be used for the formation of the Heathmont Scouts and Cubs.

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The Heathmont tennis club originally had an asphalt tennis court and shelter beside the entrance to the Heathmont railway station. The main players after World War 2 were the local orchardists who fielded teams in the Ferntree Gully and district tennis association with considerable success. The Pumps, the Sharps, the Washusens and the Nichols were all talented players. About 1950 the tennis club constructed two sand courts on Council land on the corner of Canterbury Rd and Waterloo St. These were later changed to En-tout-cas and extended to five courts with a new club house in later years.

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The Heathmont progress association were very active in the early days, leading to the establishment of the railway station. After World War 2 the Heathmont Advancement League was formed, some of the early enthusiasts were John Harper, a Melbourne Solicitor, Bill Duke, a Banker, Eric Nichols, an Engineer-Orchardist, John Burgess, a Business Executive, Arthur Cutting, Doug Muller and many others. Frank Secomb acted as their honorary Architect and George Browning a Heathmont artist, volunteered to paint murals on the end walls of the pre-school and community hall which the League proposed to build.

(It is worth the effort to go and see these murals).

The Heathmont advancement League met in Arthur Cuttings grocery store, built on the corner of Canterbury Rd and Heathmont Rd (now the A.N.Z. Bank) the only other shop in Heathmont at that time was Elizabeth Mardens store some 300 metres to the South, Ada Marden later ran the store where she also had a Post Office from 1929. The members of the League sat on packing cases with the President and Secretary behind the counter.

The League purchased two blocks of land in Viviani Crescent and the pre-school and Community Centre was erected about 1952 with much of the work being done by working bees. This was the first public building in Heathmont. Unsuccessful overtures were made to have a co-operative church established however the Catholic Church was the only user of the building on Sunday's. Square dances were held about once a month for a year or two. The League endeavoured to purchase the land on the south of the building but it was sold to another person who built a house on the land and staged a move to have the centre closed to public use after 5 p.m. Although the night usage was extremely light he was successful in having the building closed after 5p.m. The purchaser left the area shortly after having succeeded in his objective.

1954 →
It was
built.