

MY MARYSVILLE MEMORIES

by **ANDREA CASEY (NEE COYLE)**

I fell in love for the first time in Marysville.

A widowed friend of my mother's included me with her three (younger) children on a week's holiday at Mount Kitchener House (now Mountain Lodge). This was in 1959 and I was fourteen.

I soon found Marty's riding stables (situated on the corner of Pack Road and Murchison Street where the Marysville Bakery now stands). It was run (and owned?) by Mrs Marten (Marty to everyone) who had a reputation for being sharp-tongued and eccentric. I remember her as small, wiry, energetic, bright-eyed, with a no-nonsense air but a kindly manner towards a shy, gangly teenager.

My spending money only allowed me two rides for the week. She allocated me a large brown horse with a black mane cut in a crewcut and a black tail, called Quiz "because he was so intelligent". I fell in love. The days I couldn't ride him I bought an apple from the fruit shop opposite the riding stables and found grass and the dandelions he loved with which to feed him, and spent several hours every day with him. The paddocks where the horses were kept when they were off duty was behind the fruit shop, occupying the corner which now contains the minigolf course and the fern walk. The present ski shop is where the fruit shop used to be and I remember Falls Road as a bush track with no sign of its houses and mills through the trees as seen from the corner of Pack Road and Murchison Street.

Mount Kitchener House was run by Marshall Hull and I remember it as friendly and unpretentious. We reached our rooms by an outside veranda and the walk up and down the hill of Mount Kitchener Road to the riding school felt very adventurous.

I said goodbye sadly to Quiz at the end of the week and when we returned in 1960 the riding stables were my first port of call. No Quiz. Marty explained that the horse would not let anyone else ride him after I left and she had to sell him. Perhaps my love was returned.

It was not until 1982 that I returned to Marysville and was introduced to 81 Falls Road – the former dwelling of Mr Geoffrey Cobb and his wife Ann. It was an old railway man's hut that had been used when the Healesville railway was being constructed in the 1880's (?) and brought onto the nearly 3 acre (1.2 hectare) property by Mr Joe Hill when he bought the land from the Crown in 1930.

When I first visited, the property was still three-quarters covered with blackberry brambles. Over the last 20 years Allan Casey and I have reduced the blackberry (to about one quarter at writing-it is an ongoing battle) and made gardens.

The twenty or so 40 metre tall pine trees (our "pine forest") were planted by Mr Cobb to sell as Christmas trees from his wayside shop (now converted to a sleepout) but he never go around to cutting them down.

Mr Hill grew potatoes in the bottom paddock abutting the Steavenson's River and for years no blackberries grew there. If we could work out the secret of why this was so, our future would be made.

Over the years we have watched Marysville evolve from a typical dying rural township to a beautiful, vibrant country village. I have fallen in love again-this time with Marysville itself.