

Ann Dickson

MAKING OF A SUBURB

Industry

The presence of the Carrum Swamp which stretched across the top of Westernport Bay restricted development of the area. Major drainage works were undertaken to control the creek waters which fed the swamp. The government was then able to encourage international manufacturers to establish and invest in plant and equipment in the Post-War redevelopment. The current migrant program would provide the workforce.

William A Smith (Victoria) Pty Ltd - the lace factory

The first factory in the area, was known as 'The Factory' and traded under the name William A Smith (Victoria) Pty. Ltd. Mr. Alan Smith, a son of William A Smith, says that at the time they purchased, the area was all known as Dandenong.

Their factories were built on the western side of what is now known as Lace Street, but was Powers Road then. They started to build in 1949 and commenced operating in 1949-50 in the first of their two factories, which made handkerchiefs, napery and veils. Two managers' residences were built with this factory. They then built a lace factory in 1953, as well as a third manager's residence. Employment for 84 people, including management, was provided at the two factories.

According to Mr Smith, Lace Street is actually the extension of Powers Road. It would have cost too much to build a bridge over Eumemmerring Creek at that point to take heavy trucks, so they re-routed Powers Road around the creek to the highway.

Mr William A Smith had been offered a 52 acre site, later to become the General Motors site, with a weatherboard house on it for £7,500. He was also offered the site which would later accommodate the Heinz Company for £20 per acre, but he declined it as it was thought too swampy. He eventually purchased 7 acres immediately east of Eumemmerring Creek and on the northern side of the Gippsland Road, for £60 per acre.

The company ceased manufacturing operations in Doveton in the early 1980s when import tariffs were removed. They were then unable to compete with cheaper imported goods. The Doveton site was sold to developers when operations were moved to Collingwood where the company operates as an importer under the name William A. Smith (Aust) Pty. Ltd. This name was first registered in 1932.

Grassmere land sale notice. Courtesy City of Berwick

GRASSMERE

HEIGHTS OF DANDENONG

200 ACRES OF GRASSMERE WAS SUBDIVIDED INTO 70 GRANT ALIQUOTS FROM ONE AND A HALF ACRES TO FOUR AND THREE QUARTER ACRES AND THE JOINTS REPORTED LATER "THEY BEING VISITORS FROM NEARLY ALL PARTS OF THE COLONY, BUT THE GREATER NUMBER OF THE BLOCKS WERE BOUGHT BY RESIDENTS OF DANDENONG, OSMATON AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS. 15 BLOCKS WERE DISPOSED OF UP TO 60 POUNDS AN ACRE, GIVING AN AVERAGE OF 40 POUNDS 10 SHILLINGS AN ACRE SOME OF THE BIDDERS THAT DID NOT REACH THE RESERVE, HADY SOME BEEN SOLD AT SATISFACTORY PRICES

NOVEMBER 1955

Tuesday, 30th October
THREE O'CLOCK,
IN THE ROOMS.
MUNRO & BAILLIEU
WILL SELL
AREAS,
2, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 20 Acres.
LIBERAL TERMS.

JOHN L. BILLY
Surveyor
Victoria Buildings

A SPECIAL TRAIN
Will be provided to allow intending Purchasers
to inspect this Real Estate Property on
FRIDAY, 26TH OCTOBER.
See Daily Papers for Full Particulars