

COMMUNITY NUMBERS:

Police & Emergency Services - 000

Lifeline - 13 1114

Accident Towing Service - 13 1176

Maroondah Hospital - 9871 3333

Poisons Information - 13 1126

Parks Victoria - 9844 2659

Wildlife Rescue - 0500 540 000

RSPCA - 9224 2222

Origin Energy - 132 691

TXU - 131 799

Yarra Valley Water - 132 762

Manningham Council - 9840 9333

Child Protection Service - 13 1278

Infant Welfare Centre - 9876 1881

Park Orchards Community House - 9876 4381

Park Orchards

A Brief History

In 1838, James Anderson established a sheep station on the Yarra in Warrandyte. His sheep grazed on the area now known as Park Orchards.

To the east, James Dawson ran cattle on ten square miles and on the west, Rossiter had a licence for eight square miles. Anderson left the district and in 1852, Major Charles Newman leased a large portion of land that included The Park. He was the largest landowner in the district.

His homestead "Pontville" was a source of employment while new landowners waited for their farms to produce. One such newcomer was Thomas Stinton from Suffolk, England. He worked for thirty-five pounds per annum plus rations.

In the 1850s there were two huts in the Park Orchards area, and a stockyard where the Primary School currently stands. Bush tracks wound through to Andersons Creek gold fields in one direction and east to Brushy Creek and Lilydale.

By the late 1850s, many far-sighted settlers saw their future in the orchards rather than in the market gardens or vineyards.

In 1852, Park Orchards was crown land and Francis McDonnell purchased much of it for one pound per acre. The land was sold to Tom Petty in 1902 who immediately cleared it. It had been described as "poor pasture, heavily timbered" with wattle, stringybark, and peppermint gums.

In 1902, Tom began work on an ambitious 300 acre orchard. W.A. Williams was another to establish an orchard. He was later to be known as the first person to grow citrus fruit in Doncaster.





Arundal Road.
East of Knees Road, 1956

Tom Petty continued to clear and when the land was ready, rows of pine trees were planted as wind breaks between the sections of orchard. These gave the appearance of a park. The men began to call the area "The Park" and so the name "Park Orchards" arose.

Petty, together with Serpell and Theile were the first Australians to export pears to the UK, made possible by the invention of cold storage. In 1905, the first government cool store in Victoria was opened.

In 1913, the area, consisting of 428 acres was sold to Eva Jane Gibb, Mini Gibb and William Sell. In 1922-23 the land was sold to Sharp and Taylor, timber merchants. They saw the value in the orchards and had them managed by a man called Domeney who today, has a reserve and pavilion named after him.

After WWII the land was sold to Berry Baskets who commissioned Tuxen and Miller to survey the land. They had worked with Walter Burley Griffin in designing the Ranelagh Country Club at Frankston.

Their concept was an elaborate one, which was to include a country club exclusively for the residents; a cricket ground, tennis courts, a bowling green, parks and gardens, playgrounds and so on. They could be purchased on the condition that the estate would be closed to the general public with gates at either end.

After such big promises, only a football ground, a croquet lawn and a tennis court were built.

The scheme was not successful with increases in construction costs. In the 1930s, the depression destroyed the concept and most of the land was not sold until after the WWII.



Arundal Road.
East of Knees Road, 2001



The 100 acres opening, 1980
Photo by Rick Cook

