



Balwyn Historical Society

*A Compilation of
Newsletter Articles*

January – December 2010

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Early Balwyn and Deepdene Churches

A map of Boroondara in 1871 shows a new Congregational Church in Bulleen Road close to the banks of Koonung Creek. This brick church erected in 1864 was a missionary offshoot of the Kew Congregational Church. It was later closed because of a decrease in the area's population. In 1872 St Barnabas' Anglican Church was erected in Balwyn Road. By the late 1890s the people of Balwyn also had the choice of three other churches in Balwyn Road between Mont Albert and Canterbury roads - a Congregational Church, a Wesleyan Methodist Church and a Baptist Church.

With the subdivision of land and increased population after 1920, additional churches appeared. The 1950s saw some of these original churches replaced by more modern buildings. In the late 1970s Church Union between Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches led to the formation of the Uniting Church. This resulted in name changes for some churches.

1872 - St Barnabas' Anglican Church, Balwyn Road

The first service was held in the church in December 1872. For two years prior to that services had been held in the Athenaeum Hall. The church building was designed by Charles Barrett and built by J. B. Maling. When first erected the church had a wooden shingle roof. Further generations of the Maling family worked on the building as it was enlarged over the years. Additions were made in 1884, 1887 and 1930.

The first vicar was the Rev'd H. E. Taylor and the original vicarage was moved to Port Fairy in 1993.



1909 - Deepdene Congregational Church

Rev. R. A. Betts conducted the first Congregational service at Deepdene in November 1909 and the church, built in Normanby Road (now Gordon Street) near King Street was opened in August 1910. Between 1911 and 1915 the building also housed Deepdene State School. In 1915 the church building was moved in to the corner of Whitehorse Road and Leonard Street. The wooden building was replaced by a brick structure in 1959. The church later became the **Balwyn Gospel Church**.



1910 - Balwyn Baptist Church, Corner Whitehorse & Parring roads.

A small wooden church was built on the corner of Parring Road in 1910. The first preacher was Mr. W. M. Nash. The foundation stone of a new brick building was laid in November 1937 and the new church costing £2,250 was opened in 1938. The pastor at the time was Rev. E. R. Thorne.



<p>1916 -Deepdene Presbyterian Church, Burke Road (The Frank Paton Memorial Uniting Church)</p> <p>Land for a church was originally bought in 1910. However, the first service was not held until 1915 - and that was conducted in the vestibule of the new Deepdene State School. Finally a small wooden church building was opened in November 1916. In 1941 the present brick church building replaced the original church. It was named the Frank Paton Memorial Church to honour Frank Paton for his work in Foreign Missions and in Deepdene. After Church Union in 1977, the church became the Frank Paton Memorial Uniting Church.</p>	
<p>1922 - Our Lady of Good Counsel, Whitehorse Road</p> <p>This was originally built as a Catholic church-school in 1922. The first parish priest was Father T. B. Walsh. For many years the building served as both church and class rooms. Sliding doors at the western end of the church were used to divide that section into two classrooms during the week. With the opening of the new church building in 1959, the old church became part of the school.</p>	
<p>1922 - The Church of Christ, Whitehorse Road</p> <p>Between July and October 1922 a tent mission was held by the Church of Christ on the corner of Whitehorse Road and Weir Street with meetings each Thursday and Saturday. In September that year a call went out for volunteer carpenters and painters to erect a new building. The present church was quickly completed and opened on 8 October 1922. By 1925 it had a membership of 230 with 300 attending Bible school.</p>	
<p>1930 - All Hallows Church, Brenbeal Street</p> <p>In 1930 the new Catholic church-school was blessed by the Archbishop, Rev. Dr. Daniel Mannix. The first parish priest was Father D. Gleeson. The building was used solely as a church until 1942 when the All Hallows School was opened. The foundation stone for a new and enlarged church was laid in November 1961. The original red-brick church (pictured) now serves as the school hall.</p>	

Sources – Allen, J.A., *A history of Camberwell*

Church history booklets – *All Hallows, Balwyn* ; *The Frank Paton Memorial Uniting Church, Deepdene 1915-1990* *Balwyn Church of Christ: Seventy Not Out 1922-1992*; *St Barnabas: a Brief History: Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene: Past and Present.*

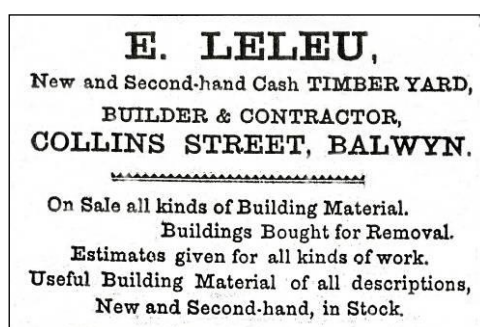
“How the Congregational Witness came to North Balwyn” (written notes)

Photos – Joe Hopwood, Pat O’Dwyer

The Le Leu* Family – Balwyn Timber Merchants and Builders

Edwin Leleu (c1860-1938) and his wife Mary Leleu nee McPherson (c1862-1947) settled in Balwyn around 1890. Their three sons were born in Balwyn – Frederick James Le Leu (1891-1974), Frank Norman Le Leu (1894-1957) and Roy William Le Leu (1896-1950). An infant daughter, Ruby Marion died in 1889 before the Edwin and Mary arrived in Balwyn.

Edwin Leleu, a builder and contractor, first established his business in Collins Street (later Rochester Road) between Mont Albert and Vauxhall roads. As regular advertisements for his business showed, Edwin's timber yard dealt in a wide range of new and used building materials.



Source: *Box Hill Reporter* 16 Mar 1900

According to Sands & McDougall the Leleu/McPherson family lived in the brick cottages which still stand in Rochester Road (nos. 112, 116-118). These cottages which date from c.1891 were possibly the first built houses by Edwin Leleu.(1)

In 1908 Edwin Leleu was a candidate for election to the Camberwell Town Council but was unsuccessful. An advertisement placed on his behalf read:

Having been a resident for the past 20 years, a property owner, engaged in local business, employing labour to a considerable extent, you will see at once the advantages of having a live, energetic man to further your interests, and of the town in general(2)

He gave his address as Whitehorse Road. By 1909 Edwin's business was on the corner of Whitehorse Road and Mangan Street, with his timber yard at the rear.

Edwin Leleu's application for his approval of his premises under the Factories Act was agreed to by the Camberwell Town Council in 1913. Later that year Cr. Bowley reported to the council that in connection with the proposed establishment of a local swimming pool he had received a letter from Mr. Leleu in which he (Mr Leleu) stated:

that he was willing to cede the property (on the corner of Mont Albert and Rochester roads) to the council on condition that the council undertake to convert it into public baths or a municipal reserve, which he claimed would in no way be objectionable to the residents in that part.(3)

This property was most likely the site of the former Mont Albert Brickworks on which an old excavated clay hole - called the "blue hole" by locals - was used by local lads as a swimming hole. The council declined the offer. Edwin later erected houses on the property. Besides building houses in Rochester Road, he also built houses in Mont Albert Road and other parts of Balwyn.

Edwin's sons, Fred and Frank joined their father in the business c1915. In 1916, Fred and Frank Le Leu are listed as timber merchants in Whitehorse Road. Their brother Roy Le Leu, also a builder, saw active service in the Great War and his name is listed on the memorial in Beckett Park.

In March 1923 it was reported that:

Of the business firms established in Balwyn, Messers F.J. & F. N. Le Leu, timber merchants and general merchants...have shown a most progressive spirit. At considerable outlay they have launched upon the enlargement of their premises in Whitehorse Road...One of the attractions will be a showroom for mantelpieces, grates and other requisites of the home...Messers Le Leu are now importing all their builders' hardware direct, which enables them to sell at the lowest rate...They are able to supply the city needs (and deal) with orders from such distant parts as Dandenong, Bayswater, Belgrave, Burwood, Doncaster and Frankston. (4)

In August that year, barely six months later, a disastrous fire gutted the saw mill and timber yard. It also destroyed a single storey building in Whitehorse Road and spread to three other shops owned by the Le Leu family and occupied by Mr. A Day, jeweller, Mr. Harkness, florist and Mr. C. Latters, fruiterer. At that time 30 people were employed at the saw mill, making the Le Leu family arguably the largest employer in Balwyn. (5)

Over the next twelve months the site was redeveloped and in November 1924 seven new two-storeyed shops were opened fronting Whitehorse Road and extending east from Mangan Street. The Le Leus retained the ground floor of 395 Whitehorse Road for their hardware business, while upstairs a public hall was made available for meetings, dances, card evening and other social occasions. (This hall was later known as the *Whitehorse Inn*) The hardware shop was managed by Frank Le Leu. Fred Le Leu managed the saw mill and timber yard. Many members remember the timber yard whistle which blew punctually each morning at 8 am each working day, and which was used by residents to check their timepieces. (During the 1940s this whistle was used as an air raid siren.)

The Le Leu hardware and timber business was replaced by the Safeway store and car park c.1971.

Besides managing their timber businesses the Le Leu brothers also purchased land and built houses in Balwyn and surrounding areas. One of their ventures, the clinker brick flats at 7 Mangan Street (built in 1933) was possibly the first block of flats built in Balwyn.

The Le Leus were well known for their contribution to various aspects of Balwyn's life. Edwin Leleu was secretary of the Boroondara Progress Association and later vice-president of the Balwyn Progress Association. He died at his house in Yerrin Street in 1938. Fred and Frank Le Leu were involved with the Balwyn Ratepayers' Association and both were keen members of the Balwyn Cricket Club and the Balwyn Football Club. Fred Le Leu was vice-president of the Balwyn Brass Band. Frank Le Leu also served as a Camberwell City Councillor from 1935-1948.

* Edwin Leleu's sons spelt their surname not as Leleu but as Le Leu.

1. McWilliam, Gwen & Bremmer, Hamish, *Heritage Walk Balwyn*, 1992
2. Box Hill Reporter, 21 August 1908
3. Box Hill Reporter, 17 October 1913
4. Box Hill Reporter, 10 August 1923
5. Box Hill Reporter, 10 August 1923

With thanks to Ken Lyall for material for this article. (Patricia O'Dwyer March 2010)

Beautiful Balwyn

(Letter to the Editor – Box Hill Reporter 12 May 1922)

Sir, - I think Balwyn an ideal residential area, and I have no doubt that in the near future it will be a great shopping centre as well. Having traveled in many parts of the world, I feel quite safe in saying that it would be hard indeed to find a more beautiful place of residence. The panoramic view obtained from Balwyn is truly magnificent. During the day one can stand on one of the many hills and obtain an uninterrupted view of the surrounding country, which must prove very restful to the tired eyes of the city man; and at night, the adjacent cities, with their millions of lights, gives a truly wonderful spectacle. The pity of it is, or appears to be, the want of building regulations. I notice that many cheap cottages are being erected, many with skillion roofs and on small blocks.* On the northern side of White Horse road, also, one cannot fail to wonder at the unmade roads and the insufficient lighting of the streets. I have recently acquired a property in this lovely district, and I cannot help feeling that when one has a good substantial rate to pay, surely he has a right to expect something for his money. I always understood that the payment of rates was for the upkeep of the street, or road, in which a person has a property, and for the lighting of the locality. I may, however, be wrong in my deductions. If so, will some kind person put me right? I should say that if the authorities expect Balwyn to be the health and pleasure resort it should be, more interest must be taken in the welfare of the people, who are desirous to make their homes in Balwyn. The Progress Association should persevere with their work for the improvement of the conditions generally.

Yours (signed) PROGRESS.

May 1, 1922.

(Thanks to Ken Lyall for this article)

*Editor's note

In 1921 the minimum size of a new house was fixed at ten squares after complaints to the Council of poor houses being built near the corner of Burke and Doncaster Roads. Further council regulations in 1926 decreed that the smallest allotments be at least 50 feet by 140 feet, with no house exceeding fifteen squares unless the frontage was 55 feet. (Geoffrey Blainey - *"A History of Camberwell"* 1964 (p.87))

Sub-Dividing Deepdene and Balwyn after World War 1

A large part of the area north of Whitehorse Road, between Burke Road and Balwyn Road was sub-divided in the years between 1919 and 1925. Until that time much of the area had been used for orchards, market gardens and dairying, with one farm also being a piggery. However, by this time transport was available in the area with the tram along Whitehorse Road and the Outer Circle Railway station at Deepdene. World War 1 veterans had returned home with some looking to build new homes. In 1922 the Council had also passed new regulations regarding municipal taxation whereby land was taxed rather than the buildings on the land. Some large landowners were then prepared (or forced) to sell their land for new housing estates.

When advertising the new estates, agents emphasised the area's proximity to transport, the rich soil for flower, vegetable and fruit-growing, and its suitability for raising poultry. The agents selling the *Tramway Heights Estate* (which included the southern half of Elliott and Monash Avenues) also targeted returned soldiers as purchasers. Like a number of other estates, the names chosen for these streets were those of well known generals from World War 1.

The area already had a Kitchener Street. Now with the new sub-divisions other well-known military leaders were recognized. Some of these officers not only served in the WW1 but, like Kitchener, had seen service in the Boer War. Some also went on to serve in WW2.

The following street names have associations with the 1st World War.

A.I.F Street	Australian Imperial Forces
Bennett Street	Lieutenant General Henry Gordon Bennett (Born Balwyn - 1887-1962). Second in command of 6 th Battalion at Gallipoli. From 1916 he alternated as battalion and acting brigade commander in France.
Birdwood Street	Field Marshall William Riddell Birdwood (1st. Baron Birdwood of Anzac and Totnes) (1865-1951). Second in command under Hamilton at Gallipoli. Formally given command of the AIF in 1916.
Elliott Avenue	Major General Harold Edward “Pompey” Elliott (1878-1931). Commander of the 7 th Battalion at Gallipoli. From 1916 brigade commander of the 15 th Brigade in France.
Haig Street	Field Marshall Douglas Haig (1st Earl Haig) (1861-1928) Commanded the British Expeditionary Force from 1915 to end of war
Ian Street Hamilton Street	General Sir Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton (1853-1947). British general in command of Gallipoli operation.
Kitchener Street	Horatio Herbert Kitchener (1 st Earl Kitchener) (1850-1916). Career soldier. 1914 appointed British Secretary of State for War.
Monash Avenue	General Sir John Monash (1865-1931). Commander of 4 th Brigade at Gallipoli. In command of the Australian army in France, 1918.
Tivey Parade	General Edwin Tivey (1866-1947). Commander of the A.I.F’s 8 th Brigade. 1917-1918 acting commander of the 5 th Division.

Sources: Blainey, Geoffrey - “A History of Camberwell” 1964
Land sale advertisement, *Tramway Heights Estate*, 1921
www.adfa.edu.au/~mallett/Generals
www.adbonline.anu.edu.au
(Patricia O’Dwyer April 2010)

North Balwyn – The Sleeping Giant

by Ken Lyall

In 1901 the area north of Belmore Road represented 28 per cent of the land in Camberwell but only 1 per cent of the population. While the area was seen as part of the Township of Balwyn in the Sands & McDougall directories of the 1880s, at Camberwell Council meetings during the 1920s, it was still often referred to as North Camberwell.

In 1923 the Camberwell Council acquired 38 acres in Belmore Road which it named Myrtle Park (later changed to Macleay Park). For some years Balwyn United (a soccer club) had its home at the park. A cricket club established there in 1927 only became the North Balwyn Cricket Club in 1938.

North Balwyn first appears as a postal district in the Sands & McDougall directory in 1929. Its boundaries were Koonung Creek, Winfield Road, Belmore Road and the east side of Burke Road.

For many years there had been bickering between councils, local railway leagues, tramway leagues and progress associations about the need for transport in this northern area. A railway from Camberwell via Balwyn to Doncaster was considered at a public meeting in Balwyn in December 1887. Shortly after in March 1888, at a public meeting in Kew, a rival proposal was put forward for a rail link between Kew and Doncaster. These proposals led land speculators to buy up tracts of land as they became available. However, the depression of the 1890s and then World War 1 precluded the chance of any form of transport through to Doncaster becoming a reality.

During the 1920s the matter of transport was again vigorously pursued. In 1928 the Railways Standing Committee decided in favour of an extension from Kew Railway Station to Doncaster (near Shoppingtown) with stations at Balwyn and Greythorn roads which would see 71 train services running each weekday, 70 on Saturday and 30 on Sundays. This decision was reversed in 1930. But from that time on the greater part of North Balwyn was subdivided. Blocks of land were eagerly bought despite the fact that there were no roads or services in most cases.

It was to be an extension of the tramway, not a new railway, which was to bring real development to North Balwyn. In January 1925 the tram line was extended from the *Harp of Erin* in East Kew to Burke Road. In 1937 a further extension took the tram to Bulleen Road,. Then in 1938 the line was finally extended to Balwyn Road. Considerable housing development took part along the route. Cream brick veneer buildings were prominent and the houses, in general, were more substantial than those in neighbouring Balwyn and so the name *Little Toorak* was bestowed on the area.

Building came to a standstill with the advent of World War 2 and disgruntled speculators saw blocks selling for as little as £100 during the war years. When building resumed in the late 1940s and 1950s many Balwyn residents gave the area a new nickname - *Mortgage Hill*.

My Memories of North Balwyn in the 1940s.

I lived in Rochester Road and attended Balwyn State School from 1935 until 1942, and together with my schoolmates I wandered far and wide at weekends and during holidays. Around 1940 my mates and I became very familiar with the North Balwyn area. We were Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn and Jungle Jim – explorers and adventurers.

Our first discovery was Glass Creek in what is now the Gordon Barnard Reserve near where the Balwyn pool was built in 1962. We wondered how the creek got its name. It was only years later that we learnt it was named after Hugh Glass, an early pastoralist. We followed the creek to

Macleay/Myrtle Park . The creek bed was almost devoid of water and strewn with all sorts of rubbish. Later the creek was barrelled and the area used as a rubbish dump before being transformed into the parkland it is today.

Greythorn Road had been made in 1938 and the Wild Life Sanctuary opened about 1939. This was another favourite excursion. We passed the violet farm on the corner of Belmore and Greythorn roads – that was for girls and mothers. Sometimes we stopped at a dam near Glenthorn Avenue where we occasionally caught yabbies. We never used meat on a piece of string as some did. We found it quicker to enter the squelchy water in bare feet, wait until a yabby nipped bare flesh, pick it up and put it in a jam tin filled with water. We didn't pay to enter the Wild Life Sanctuary. Instead we climbed the pine trees on the north side that had obviously been planted as a wind break by John Towt and dropped over the fence.

Sometimes we saw the drag that carried visitors to the Sanctuary from the Mont Albert Terminus. A Balwyn friend, Lloyd Hollyoak, and his mates would sometimes hire horses from McColl's Riding School, don cowboy hats and tie handkerchiefs over their faces. Brandishing toy pistols, they would "hold up" the drag on its way to the terminus – much to the delight of the passengers.

McColl's Riding School was situated in Brenbeal Street, Balwyn in the early 1940s. Later it was moved to Kenny's Paddock which was bounded by Caravan Street, Belmore Road and Union Road. The School hired horses by the hour and also conducted trail rides which followed a course along McShane Street, then Walnut Road, eventually terminating at the Yarra River near Bulleen Road. Mrs. McColl, driving a jinker, would follow the group with afternoon tea.

We heard stories from older boys at school about orchardists firing saltpetre at intruders. However, our problem was finding an orchard that contained fruit to our taste. At the back of the Wild Life Sanctuary was Finger's lemon orchard. Another citrus orchard was near the corner of Greythorn Road and Sweyn Street. The streets on that property are now Lemon, Lime and Citrus streets. Eventually we found an apple orchard in Doncaster Road. With our shirts solidly anchored by our trouser belts, we could carry a good number home in our shirts. We were never challenged. Apples in some instances lay rotting on the ground. I have since discovered that when war broke out in 1939 Australia lost 95 per cent of its fruit export market.

On other occasions we made our way to the Koonong Creek via paddocks in Hedderwick and Clifton Streets and were puzzled by the small wooden pegs among the grass. Of course, we later found out that they were put there by surveyors during the 1920s. On the Doncaster side of the creek were the remains of the Morning Star Hotel (delicensed in 1917). The roof was gone but the walls were quite solid and there was an old horsehair divan in one of the rooms. The Morning Star Foundry was built on the site in the late 1940s.

I still remember sitting with my friends in Greythorn Road, looking to the east, and saying, "One day I'm going to live there". In 1955 my wife, Lorraine, and I moved into our new house in Hedderwick Street and have lived there ever since.

Sources: *Argus*, 15 Dec.1887, *Argus*, 13 Mar. 1888, *Sun News-Pictorial*, 14 Dec. 1928, *Box Hill Reporter*, 12 Dec. 1930

Pontefract and the Hordern Family



Pontefract – (under construction)



Pontefract – (completed)

Pontefract, on the corner of Hardwicke Street and Whitehorse Road, was designed for Lebbeus Hordern by the architect, Mr H. J. Prockter. The 11 roomed house was designed with Marseilles pattern roofing tiles, large verandahs, and gables with Tudor detailing which were associated with the “Queen Anne” style of British housing.

Pontefract was built c.1891 on the western side of an allotment of land which comprised nine suburban lots. Sited on the brow of a hill it had superb views – west across the Deepdene ‘dip’ to Burke Road, north to the Great Dividing Range and east to the Dandenongs. Together with the Reid house *Belmont*, which was diagonally opposite on Whitehorse Road, *Pontefract* would have been a significant landmark for anyone travelling from Kew to Balwyn and beyond.

Between the house and Percy Street were paddocks where the Hordern’s horses and cow grazed. The coach house and stables, with driver’s quarters above, were located north of the house.

Louisa Hamilton, granddaughter of Lebbeus and Louisa Hordern, remembers her visits to *Pontefract* which she recalls as being light and airy - not at all like those Victorian houses with their dark and heavy furniture. Lebbeus and Louisa purchased much of the house furnishings when on an extended overseas trip in 1887. Louisa also remembers the large conservatory on the northern side of the house, her grandfather’s photographic dark room beneath the dining room, and playing hide-and-seek in the extensive cellars under the house.

Lebbeus Hordern died in 1931. A few years after his death his widow, Louisa, sold the house and land to the Church of England. Louisa expected the house to become a babies’ home. She was disappointed when the house was stuccoed, the slates removed, an additional wing added and the building converted into six apartments named *Chaddesley Flats*. (The extensions were possibly undertaken by Mr. F. W. Le Leu in 1934). About 1953 the flats became the *Mon Repose Flats*.

In 1934 the land to the east of the house was used by the Church of England to build St. Gabriel’s Babies’ Home which was officially opened in February 1935. (Demolished May 2010)

After the sale of the flats in the 1980s, the new owners, Gerd and Pam Kratzer, began renovating and reconvertng the building to a single house. They also restored the name, *Pontefract*. Subsequent owners continued with the renovations and reconversion. While the front section of the outside of the house approximates the original house, the interior now bears no relationship to the original layout.

The Hordern Family of *Pontefract*



Lebbeus Hordern



Louisa Hordern & daughters
L-R Marjory, Gwyneth, Louisa, Doris & Mabel

Lebbeus Hordern was born in Hawthorn in 1865 to William Hordern and Cicelia Hordern nee Monger. In 1881 he was left a large fortune by a Sydney uncle, also named Lebbeus Hordern.

Lebbeus Hordern married Louisa Dewson Smith in 1887 and four daughters and a son were born to the couple – Mabel Louise (1888-1965), Doris Amelia (1889-1970), Marjorie Cecilia (1891-1980), Gwyneth Marjory (Molly) (1894-1931) and Bruce Lebbeus Doughty (1908-1979). Lebbeus, Louisa, Mabel, Doris and Marjorie moved into *Pontefract* c 1892. Lebbeus worked as a real estate agent and auctioneer. He enjoyed photography and was known locally for his skill with animals. He was also Master of the Lilydale Hunt and Louisa often rode to hounds with him. Their fox-hunting activities led their daughter, Doris, to refuse to wear anything made with fur.

Lebbeus had an adventurous streak. After the Second Boer War broke out in South Africa in 1899, he enlisted in the Natal Carbineers in March 1900, then in the 2nd Brabant's Horse from Nov. 1900 – May 1901. In July 1901 he enlisted in the Bushveldt Carbineers and was eventually discharged from the Pietersburg Light Horse in June 1902. Meanwhile Lebbeus' wife and family were left in Balwyn in somewhat straitened circumstances. After Lebbeus' death in 1931, Louisa remained living at *Pontefract* for a few years until she sold it and moved to Kew. She died in 1951.

The four girls were educated by governesses and at local schools, including Genazzano in Kew and Carisbrook College in Canterbury. Doris finished her schooling at Hessle Ladies College, a progressive school run by Miss Ada Gresham in Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell. Mabel married Sydney Capper. Gwyneth (Molly) died in 1931. Marjorie worked for many years at the Government Serum Laboratories. Bruce married Edna Teele and was head of the accountancy firm Flack & Flack before becoming a manager at Price Waterhouse when the firms merged.

Doris Amelia Blackburn nee Hordern (1889 -1970)

Before her marriage to Maurice McCrae Blackburn in 1914, Doris Amelia Hordern worked as a campaign secretary for Vida Goldstein when Vida stood for a seat in Federal Parliament. Together with her husband, Doris campaigned vigorously against conscription in 1916-17. After the war she continued her involvement in a number of groups pressing for reform. She was president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom from 1928-30. After her husband's death in 1946, she stood as an independent Labor member and won the Federal seat of Bourke, which had formally been held by her husband. In the 1960s she co-founded the Aborigines Advancement League and the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement.

Sources: Birth, Death & Marriages records,
Vol. 4

Butler, Graeme, *Camberwell Conservation Study 1991*,

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/adbonline.htm>

Sands & McDougall Directories

Woolmore, William, *The Bushveldt Carbineers...* McCrae, Slouch Hat Pub., 2002
Interview with BHS member, Louisa Hamilton, daughter of Doris & Maurice Blackburn &
granddaughter of Lebbeus and Louisa Hordern. Photos courtesy of Louisa Hamilton.

(Patricia O'Dwyer) June 2010

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Vale St Gabriel's – 210 Whitehorse Road, 1934 - 2010



Photo – Fay Mills 2004

1934 Original building erected for the Mission of St. James and St. John.

1935 St Gabriel's Babies' Home officially opened

1938 Home registered as a Mothercraft Training School

1962 Matron Brenda Smith commenced at St Gabriel's and oversaw extensive renovations.

1969 New additions and Minna Johnson Toddlers' Cottage opened.



Photo – Steve McLean 2008

In the years 1935 – 1945, 800 babies were looked after at St Gabriel's. Of these 300 were adopted out.

Babies not adopted were generally moved to other mission homes eg. St Luke's in Bendigo or were fostered out. Some returned to their families when family circumstances permitted.

With the opening of the Minna Johnson Toddler's Cottage (1969) some older children were cared for in their own cottage with cottage parents.

Quote from Matron Brenda Smith – "This I think is our greatest challenge; that we give these babies sufficient love and individual attention and mothering so that their developing personalities may be undamaged and whole"

(One of the two cherubs which were either side of the front entrance)



Photo – Eric Humphris 2010

1974 –St Gabriel’s Babies’ Home closed.

The building was sold to the Victorian Government Mental Health Authority

For some years it was used to provide respite care for families.

It was most recently operated by the Department of Human Services. As the Balwyn Centre it provided community care.

May 2010 – The building was demolished

Source of information: Fay Mills, Deborah Martin – July 2010

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Buildings of Interest – 359 Whitehorse Road (now the National Bank of Australia).



This building was originally built for the English, Scottish & Australian Bank Ltd. It was designed by the architects Twentyman & Askew and built by the building firm Hansen & Yuncken in 1930.

The ES&A bank which had been established in 1852 was absorbed into the ANZ in 1970. However, this branch had already been taken over by the National Bank of Australia c1947.

In the *Camberwell Conservation Study 1991* it is described as follows:

Single storey, cement-rendered and neoclassical in style, the bank’s conservative image was maintained by its stylistic references and smooth rusticated finish. Composed in three bays under a broad pedimented parapet, the style used for the elevation is Neo-Grec (sic) or Greek

revival, as commonly seen in commercial buildings of the mid to late 1920s...Doric columns support plain entablatures over the side opening while glazed areas have borders and the main doors appear original.

The study also states that the building is “generally original, except for the probable reglazing of the lower parts of the two windows and removal of glazing bars”.

(Patricia O’Dwyer)

July 2010

Source: Butler, Graeme, *Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, Vol. 4, p.316.*

Photo: P. O’Dwyer 2009

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Recent speaker:

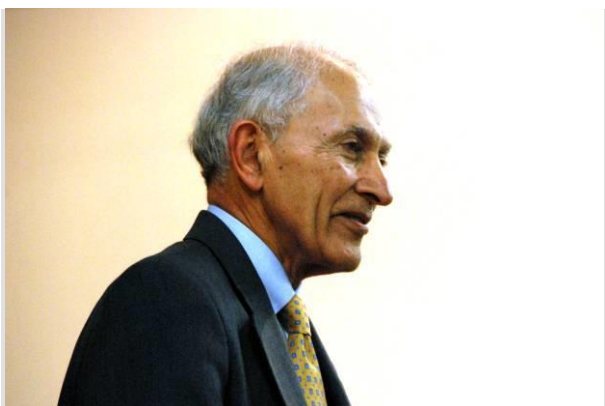
Professor David de Kretser, AC, Governor of Victoria



The Governor & Mrs de Kretser arriving at the Evergreen Centre.
Photo: Gillian Roebuck



L-R Mrs de Kretser, the Governor, Peter Prideaux, Robin Kelly
Photo: Gillian Roebuck



The Governor addressing the BHS audience.
Photo: Tony Michael

We were recently honoured to have the Governor of Victoria address our meeting.

The Governor is Patron of Guide Dogs Victoria and he and Mrs de Kretser were accompanied on their visit by their Ambassador guide dog, Astro.

The Governor spoke about his family's arrival in Australia from Sri Lanka when he was nine years old and his childhood growing up in Ropley Avenue and Metung Street, Deepdene. Ropley Avenue at the time of his arrival was a muddy unmade road and the de Kretser house was yet to be connected to electricity. At that time householders had to buy their own electricity pole.

The creek that once flowed between King Street and Ropley Avenue played an important part in the lives of and the neighbourhood children – the Piddingtons, Deebles, Duncans, Knowles and Vanderluys. Its tall banks and the open paddocks surrounding it provided them with much of their entertainment including yabbing in the ponds and exploring the barrel drain which led from the creek under Gordon Street.

Billy cart races down Gordon Street, building local bonfires and setting them alight for Empire Day and Guy Fawkes night, and the odd dare to pick the fruit in King Street gardens were all part of the Governor's memories.

The Frank Paton Memorial Church also played a large part in the de Kretser's life.



Ropley Ave Bonfire

Back Row L-R David de Kretser, Joan Duncan, Judith Wood,
Leslie Vandersluys – Middle Row Peter Piddington
Front Row: (Second from left) Robin Vandersluys (Kelly)

Photo Robin Kelly



Photo: Tony Michael



Photo: Tony Michael

The Governor spoke very fondly of his years in Grades 5 and 6 at Deepdene State School and his later school years at Camberwell Grammar School, which was then a small school that offered its students great opportunities for leadership. He was involved in a number of sporting teams and the school cadets. His reminiscences included cadets practising their rifle skills with live ammunition on the school rifle range that then backed on to Highton Grove, mortars being fired from the school oval, cadet camps and cycling home with a rifle over his shoulder.

In concluding his speech, the Governor reflected on the fact that children growing up in the 1940s and 1950s led a much freer, less regulated, existence than children today - with freedom to explore the outdoors, take their time cycling or walking to and from school, and sometimes to indulge in risk taking activities. He also commented on the greater stability in families and institutions at that time

The Governor then answered a number of questions from our very large audience.

After his address and question time, the Governor and Mrs de Kretser stayed to join members and visitors for supper. Among those who spoke to him were many who remembered him from his Deepdene days and school days.

Buildings of interest – 361-363 Whitehorse Road



This building was erected c1933. Architecturally, it is in marked contrast to the bank building next door which is of similar age.

No 361 was originally a confectionery shop run by Miss Ethel A Grigg. A very faded advertisement for the confectionary business can still be glimpsed high up on the western wall. In the 1940s the shop became the Whitehorse Café, operated first by Miss M. W. Brown, then by Donald Kenyon and later by D. F. Fraser. About 1952 it became a milk bar. Mr Jackson was proprietor for a short time before the milk bar passed to S. E. Cooper who conducted business there for the next twenty years - possibly longer.

No 363 was the dental surgery of Oswald Amos for over twenty years until about 1954 when M. J. Young then Woolley & Baron, dentists took over. During the 1960s a number of businesses including accountants, solicitors and an estate agency occupied the premises.

In the *Camberwell Conservation Study 1991* the building is described as follows:

Old English or neo Tudor in style, the building possesses the distinctive black and white half-timbering of the time, with stained timbers set against white painted cement sheet. The ground level has blended clinker heeler size brickwork and metal-framed shop fronts, with shop entries set on the splay of a recess and the roof is clad with terra-cotta shingles which complement the earthy display of materials elsewhere....

The study also states that architecturally the building is “a near intact example of a rare style for commercial buildings...”

Sources: Butler, Graeme, *Camberwell Conservation Study 1991*, Vol. 4, pp. 316-317:
Sand & McDougall Directories

(Patricia O'Dwyer)

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The Burke and Wills Expedition - 1860

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Burke and Wills expedition. On 20 August 1860, the Burke and Wills expedition, under the leadership of Robert O'Hara Burke, left Melbourne in an attempt to cross the continent from south to north. The expedition consisted of 18 men, 27 camels, 23 horses, 34 bullocks and tons of supplies.

In August the expedition reached Menindee. Here Burke established a depot and left behind some of the men and equipment. With seven men and 15 camels, he set out for Cooper Creek which they reached on 11 November. On 16 December, despite the summer heat, Burke decided to push on. He left William Brahe in charge of the Cooper Creek depot.

Robert Burke, William Wills, John King and Charles Gray, together with 6 camels, a horse and 12 weeks' provisions made their way north, arriving at mangrove swamps at the mouth of the Flinders River in Queensland late March in 1861.

Charles Gray died on their return trip. Physically exhausted from their journey, Burke, Wills and King arrived at the Cooper Creek camp only to find it deserted. Brahe and the others had waited for four months – one month longer than requested. They had set off south just seven hours before the three men arrived. On finding the provisions buried by Brahe, Burke left a letter and covered in the hole. Rather than follow Brahe south, he decided to make for Mount Hopeless relying on the Cooper Creek for water.

Despite offers of help from local Aboriginals, Burke and Wills died on Cooper Creek in June 1861. The only person to survive was John King who was looked after by a local Aboriginal tribe until he was found in September by a search party sent from Melbourne.



Source: Google Maps

Several suburbs have streets named Burke and Wills. We have an explorers' corner.

Land in the Belmore Park Estate was advertised in the *Argus* in 1884 and 1888. An auctioneer's plan of the this estate (1888), shows the western border as **Burke Road**, with the following new streets – **Wills Street, King Street, Grey Street, Eyre Street and Sturt Street** (possibly the present Gordon Street).

While Burke, Wills, King and Gray were members of the 1860 expedition, Edward John Eyre and Charles Sturt were earlier explorers. After expeditions in New South Wales and Western Australia, Eyre led an expedition north from Adelaide in 1839 which reached as far as Lake Torrens and Lake Eyre. He later explored the Eyre Peninsula and in 1840/41 crossed the Nullabor Plain to Albany, Western Australia.

On his early expeditions Sturt explored the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Darling rivers. On a later expedition, hoping to find an inland sea, he located Lake Eyre and crossed the Diamantina River in 1845. Rather than finding an inland sea, he discovered miles of stony dessert which is now called the Sturt Stony Desert.

(Tony Michael/Patricia O'Dwyer)

Refs: *Argus* 13 August 1844, 16 June 1888, Map collection – State Library of Victoria

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The Sevenoaks Farmhouse



14 Sevenoaks Street, Balwyn - 2005

John Jeffries purchased 33 acres of land fronting Gordon Street in 1895. This land

had previously been owned by Zilpha Small. Jefferies named his farm after Sevenoaks in

Kent, England. The farmhouse, originally called St. John's according to the Camberwell rate books, was said to have had a driveway from Gordon Street (then Normanby Road) which was hedged with blackberry bushes.

Around 1907 the farm was purchased by Mr William Freeman Nott and for a number of years it became Nott's Piggery and then Nott's Dairy.

William Freeman Nott was born in South Australia and as a young man he worked with the Commercial Bank of South Australia. When he moved to Melbourne he took up a position as an accountant with the Colonial Bank in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. Over the years he rose to be the Inspector of Branches and finally Chief Inspector of Branches.

William Freeman Nott served as the Secretary of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce for many years. He was also a Camberwell Councillor, Justice of the Peace and President sides. A number of families lived in the farmhouse in the following years, including the Bennetts, Tozers, Ungars and Crundels. c1966 the farmhouse became a kindergarten and extensive alterations were made to the interior.

When it once again became a private residence the then owner, David Ward, set about reversing the alterations and restoring the interior of the house to its late Victorian

of the Balwyn Progress Association. He died on 25 February 1921 leaving a widow, Isabel Freeman Nott.

After Nott's death in 1921 the farm was subdivided and in September 1922 it was advertised for sale as the Sevenoaks Estate. The sub-division included the following new streets – Sevenoaks Street, Hilda Street, Henley Street, Freeman Street and Nott Street.

Advertising for the sale noted that the land was close to transport with the tram running along Whitehorse Road - the cost to the city being 5 ½ pence (approx. 5 cents). Mention was also made of a Tramways Board proposal for an electric tramway to pass along Belmore Road which never eventuated.

In 1927 the farmhouse and seven adjacent allotments in Sevenoaks Street were again offered for sale. The house was described as a "Good Substantial Brick Villa" of eight fine rooms with a spacious verandah on three origins. The house was most recently sold in 2005. It remains one of the few examples of an early Balwyn farmhouse and is a property of local historical significance.

Sources:

Argus, 26 August 1921, 19 February, 1927
Camberwell City Council, Rate Books
Da Costa, Robin, Sevenoaks Park, Melb., 1980
Sands & McDougall Directories
Photos: P. O'Dwyer

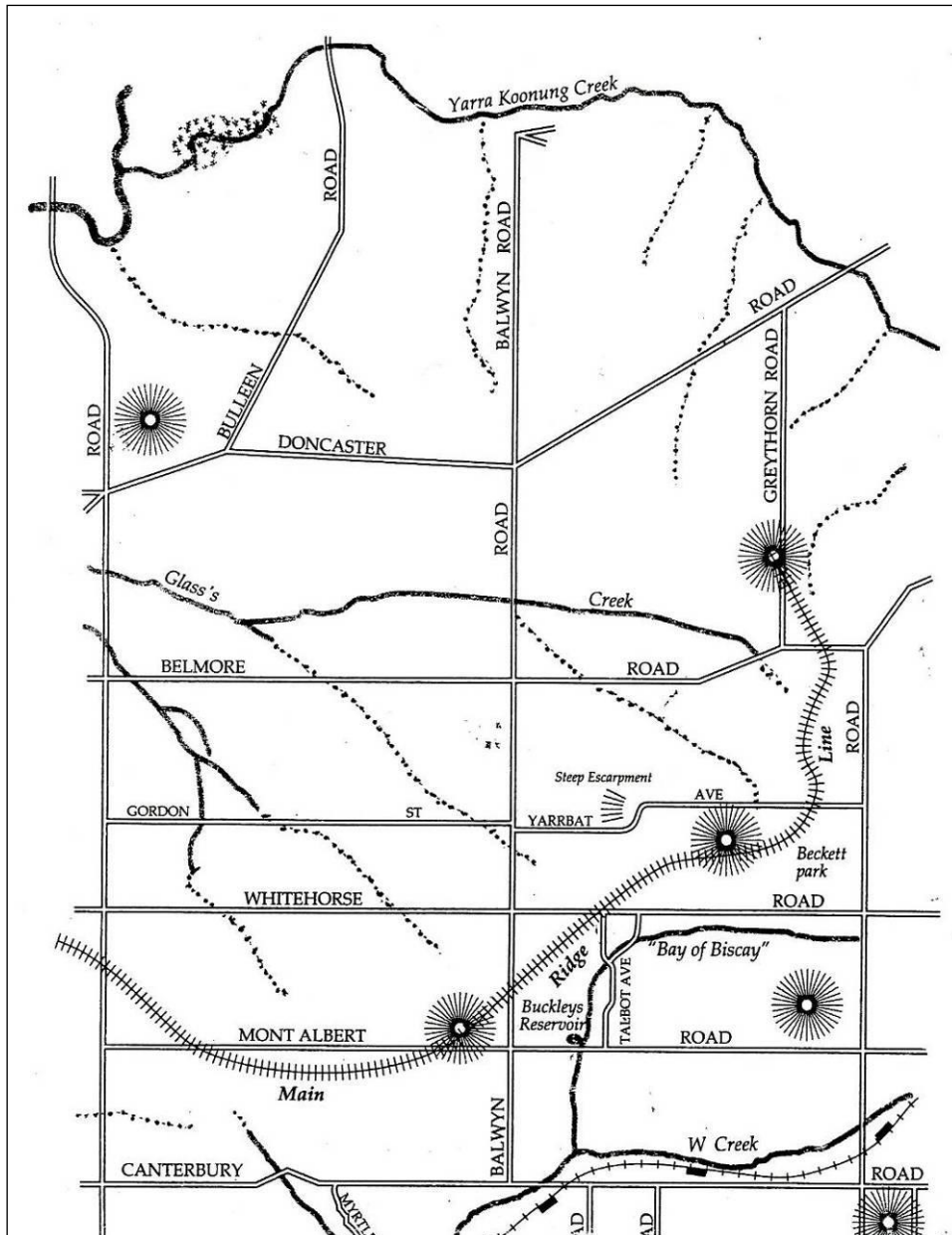


The farmhouse entrance facing Gordon Street - 2005.

Hidden Creeks and Gullies

Many Balwyn and North Balwyn parks contain a secret. Beneath their grassy surfaces lie the remains of the creek systems which once openly flowed to the Yarra. Koonung Creek, Glass's Creek and W Creek together with their tributaries would have been sources of fresh water for the Aboriginals who once inhabited the area and for the early European settlers who took up land in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Some members will remember sections of this creek system. While barrelling of W Creek started as early as 1889, other sections of the system remain un-barrelled until the 1950s. Once barrelled, the creek beds were often filled with building rubble and used as rubbish tips before being transformed into the parks we know them as today.



.....Gullies

Koonung Creek

The northern-most creek of the area. This originates near Springvale Road in Nunawading. Several gullies in North Balwyn feed into this creek. However, the construction of the Eastern Freeway brought about the loss of the creek which is now barrelled beneath the parklands running along the side of the freeway.

Glass's Creek (later Glass Creek)

This creek named after Thomas Glass, an early settler, originates near Minifie Park on the corner of Belmore and Narrak Roads. The course of the creek can be traced through the Gordon Barnard Reserve, Hislop Park, Macleay Park and Myrtle Park.

After crossing Burke Road into Kew it flows through the parkland west of Kew High School, then to Hay's Paddock (where a small vestige of the creek still remains un-barrelled) and into the Yarra.

Several tributary gullies flow into Glass Creek. One gully from near Balwyn Road cut across the eastern end of Gordon Street. The

Hilda Street Reserve marks an area where water flowing down this gully once formed a number of reedy, swampy ponds. Two other tributaries join up in the Ropley Avenue playground. One of these tributaries flows beneath the Gordon Street Park and along Gordon Street. The other crosses Whitehorse Road near Pretoria Street and wends its way between Bennett Street and Wolseley Crescent to Gordon Street, then into the park. The tributary creek's meandering course can then be followed through the parklands to Belmore Road and across Burke Road.

W Creek Tributary

A tributary of W Creek originates near Scheele Street. It flows west parallel with Whitehorse Road to Talbot Avenue before turning south through the John August Reserve to join with W Creek near Canterbury Road. The small lake in the Balwyn Community Centre grounds is a remnant of this creek. Water flowing south from the high side of Whitehorse Road once turned the then Main Gipps Land Road into a boggy morass which the locals called the *Bay of Biscay*.

Source of information and map: Singleton, Colin, *The Invisible Creeks of Camberwell*, *Camberwell City News*, 1991

(Patricia O'Dwyer)

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