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# Life on the Range

Historical notes and reminiscences of the Avenue Range district.

Compiled by Brenda Hensel, Phyllis McDowall  
and Judith Mugford

Artwork by Shirley Barnett

National Library of Australia  
ISBN 0 9588265 0 1

Published by the Community of  
Avenue Range.

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Printed May 1986

by Hansen Print, Naracoorte S.A. 5271

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## Acknowledgements

### Special thanks are extended to:

All those members of the Avenue community who responded to our call for contributions to this booklet.

Margaret Hensel for her great help with the typing of the manuscripts.

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## FOREWORD

When I was a secondary student in Adelaide one of my friends from the Adelaide Hills remarked, "Fancy living in the South East - nothing but swamps and sandhills." Up to that stage this was a popularly held view by people from outside the area. In retrospect, I suppose they could be forgiven for thinking so, as in all probability it looked like that when they visited the area.

During the 1930's the C.S.I.R.O. did a lot of research into trace elements and Norman McBain did some pioneering work on strawberry clover on his property near Struan. By 1940, apart from pockets of good country like the red gum country between Frances and Kalangadoo, the volcanic soils near Mt. Gambier and the Millicent Drainage area, the rest of the South East was a sleeping giant just waiting to be awakened.

In the middle of the South East is the Lucindale area which was typical of this undeveloped South East. Eight miles to the west is Avenue Range, an area and a community dating back to the early days of the State, when pioneers like James Brown took up Keilira, Jacky White acquired his station to the east of Avenue, Stewart acquired Cairnbank and McInnes acquired Crower. It was not until 1872 when the railway was pushed through to take wool and produce from the Mosquito Plains or Naracoorte area to the port at Kingston, that some form of closer settlement started.

During World War II the Department of Lands visited the larger property owners in the South East and arranged the purchase of suitable land for the settlement of soldiers who would be returning after hostilities had ceased. Major areas were opened up for settlers at Eight Mile Creek, Penola, Padthaway and Lucindale with smaller areas in other parts of the South East. Some 60 odd settlers were established in the Lucindale District Council area of which Avenue Range had 5, 10 or 18 settlers depending on where one considers the boundary should be.

The 1940's, the '50's and up to the mid '60's saw the rapid development of strawberry clover based pastures on the Avenue Flats and later the establishment of lucerne-based pastures on the formerly useless sandy range country. This book attempts to tell the story of the people, pastures and fortunes of Avenue Range.

Until recent years in the smaller towns throughout the nation, the tendency was for people to come to the area, make their pile and then retire to the city or a large country town taking their money, and more importantly, their memories with them, leaving the smaller country towns with a loss of their roots. Fortunately, in recent years this trend has reversed, with retirement villages, improved services and other amenities to make these smaller towns a retirement alternative, thus helping to make it possible to tap the oral history of the senior

citizens before it is lost forever. It was always a pleasure for me to encourage the older citizens of Avenue Range, such as the late Aitchison Grieve and Mary Smith, to speak of their early years in the area.

With the 150 year Jubilee coming up it is fitting that attempts should be made to record the local history of the districts of South Australia, much of it still unrecorded.

The promoters of this project are to be congratulated on their efforts to get the older residents of Avenue Range to brush up their memories and commit them to paper. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be associated with this project.

Keith Copping  
"Cairnbank", Avenue Range

## Chapter 1

### THE FIRST INHABITANTS

At the time of the first white settlement the Avenue country was occupied by the Mootatunga people whose tribal boundary extended from just south of Robe north-easterly to just south of Lucindale and then in a northerly direction roughly along a line a bit west of Bakers Range to Salt Creek.

They were very gentle people and had a common language with other South Eastern tribes as well as those just over the Victorian border. They also shared major cultural features with other tribes to the north as far as those tribal areas associated with the River Murray. Many of these tribal groups, such as the Mootatunga people had access to the coast and/or to permanent waters such as the Murray and inland swamps and lakes and they were able therefore to develop a relatively stable and settled way of life.

Within this cultural complex, the aboriginal societies developed many sophisticated artefactual techniques, particularly the development of the returning boomerang. The two Ketum-ketum (boomerang) which I possess, belonging to the Mootatunga people, are very delicately made from Ngir (coastal sheoak - *Casuarina stricta*) being extremely thin, but nevertheless a perfect aerofoil and are about 55 cm. long and 7.5 cm. wide. They are much shorter and wider and lighter than other boomerangs I possess which came from western New South Wales and south west Queensland.

Other interesting tribal wooden tools are the Kana, the Malkar, the Kaar and the Plonngge. All of these aboriginal artefacts were collected in the district in 1879 by Alexander Matheson, the first District Clerk of Lucindale.

The Kana, a lubra's yam stick is 66 cm. long and about 5 cm. in diameter at its thickest part. It is very sharply pointed at both ends, which have been hardened by fire. One end tapers very gently to a fine point and is decorated by Karake (ornamental carvings) which in this case take the form of grooves encircling the stick to within 8 cm. of the end. The Kana appears to be made from Mootha (blackwood).

The Malkar, a heavy narrow shield is a metre long and is made from the wood of the Koorra (dryland teatree). This shield is very heavy in comparison with other aboriginal shields and of a quite different design being triangular in cross section. At the centre where a hole is carved for a carrying handle, the shield measures 11 x 11 x 15 cm. and it tapers evenly to a point at each end. The outside face has a slight curve both vertically and horizontally and the Karake (ornamental carving) forms seven interesting patterns of incised angular grooves, each separated by an uncarved band. These bands have been stained with a black dye.

The Kaar is a sharp edged club made also from Mootha (blackwood - *Acacia melanoxylon*). Grub holes in the shank of the Kaar have been filled with yacca resin and the tapered round end finishes in an angular pointed knob. The Karake (ornamental carving) consists of a zigzag and herringbone pattern for about 10 cm. up to the knob with a crisscross pattern and then incised circular grooves on the knob itself.

The Plonngge is similar in shape to the Kana but is used by the Pangal (medicine man) to make magic. The Plonngge is about 66 cm. long, and is made of wood from the Ngir (coastal sheoak). It has a small knob on one end and the body of the implement is a shaft round in cross section with a slight longitudinal curve. The other end is slightly enlarged with Karake of 16 circular grooves.

The tribe also used many stone implements and tools. The most important of these were the greenstone axeheads imported from quarries at Dog Rocks near Geelong, at Berrambool and Barorge near Glenthompson and on Mt. William near Lancefield north of Melbourne.

The Karkobe (stone axeheads) have been found in many places in the Avenue district. I have two such Karkobe, one found near the Ardune homestead and one near Jacky White's Swamp.

Some of the Mootatunga stone implements were obtained from a quarry at Papinue, as well as by trade. These stones were used as millstones, mullers and grindstones. Flint for the manufacture of woakwine points and crescents was imported from the neighbouring Bunganditj people. The flint was collected from beach deposits along the south coast. The Mootatunga people also used the flint for the manufacture of scrapers and knives, which were carried in dilly bags made from rushes. Similar material was used to make the Ngumeroing, a string fringe or apron which all girls wore from an early age.

The tribal lands of the Mootatunga were rich in wildlife and had an abundance of seeds and roots which were harvested. Of course, when white settlement occurred the aborigines found it much easier to hunt the sheep and cattle of the white man and were not to know that that was a terrible crime punishable with death - death, that is, of any aborigine who happened to be found, even if he was quite innocent of the "crime".

The climax of these "punishments" occurred near Keilira where a local landowner mixed a deadly poison (which I believe was strychnine) into a bag of flour which was given to a number of aborigines who lived nearby. The aborigines were encouraged to have a feast with meat and flour supplied.

After they had all died from the poison, the landowner placed the bodies in a nearby cave and covered it in with a tip dray load of rocks which he had prepared.

He then rode post haste to Adelaide and was seen in Rundle Street next morning, which was sufficient to give him an alibi for the crime, as nobody could believe that he had committed the crime when he was seen in the city of Adelaide so soon afterwards. They were not to know of all the horses that had been scattered along the route which made the speed of the journey possible.

## Chapter 2

# FIRST WHITE SETTLEMENT

The earliest permanent white settlers in the South East were the occupiers of Pastoral Land in the Portland District who moved over the border from Victoria into South Australia. As time went by these first occupiers obtained Pastoral Leases from the South Australian Government.

A large proportion of these early occupiers were of Scottish extraction and they quickly sent word back to their clan members in Scotland to get out to South Australia as quickly as possible so that they could take up Pastoral Leases.

The leases in the Avenue Area were as follows: Lease No's 221 and 292, known as Avenue Plains, having a total area of 56 square miles. These leases belonged to T. Morris and covered the Avenue Plains from about Cairnbank to about Crower (221) and an adjoining area (292) including some of the Reedy Creek flood plain.

Lease No. 218 to the east of lease No. 221 having an area of 120 square miles which covered the Ardune Plains and the Joyce Plains and extending south to about Broadlands.

A track extended after some years of occupation from Robe Town through Avenue Plains and Jacky White's lease to Cockatoo lake and the Lochaber country. When I first bought country in the district I found traces of these old highways on Section 68 Hnd Townsend and Section 10 Hnd Joyce.

Very early in the age of occupation a hut called the Accommodation Hut was built along this track. The ruins of this hut on the eastern side of section 50 Hundred Townsend could be seen up to the early twenties. It fell into disuse because a slygrog shop was built on the eastern side of the Avenue Range on the eastern side of section 61 Hnd Townsend. These ruins could still be seen up till the 50's.

In the days of the sly grog shanty the swamps on section 62 and section 78 adjacent to the shanty were densely covered with Kumbungie (Bull Rush) as they were almost permanently wet. The bullock teamsters who visited the shanty allowed their bullocks to graze on these swamps until they either ran out of money or had slaked their thirsts.

On Jacky White's swamp which covers all of section 147 Hundred of Townsend Jacky White used to run a mob of milkers. His yards where the cows were milked were on the east side of what was known as the Almond Hill (during the time it was part of Ardune) amongst the bracken.

Section 50 of Bourne's land

These cattle caused erosion in the area of the yards and when Seckers bought Ardune about 1910 there was quite an extensive blow-out where the yards had been. The area was consolidated by planting Marram Grass and no longer drifts but the blow out still remains.

Jacky White made his milk into cheese and this was carted to and sold in Adelaide by the dray load.

In those days, there was no Drainage Scheme so the water had to find its way across the land both by natural water courses and by seepage.

Water from the Joyce plains flowed through a gap in the Ardune Range where the road and railway now come. This water, as well as water from the south, flowed into a series of swamps on the eastern side of the Avenue Range, and eventually into Jacky White's Swamp. From Jacky White's swamp there was some seepage water south through a valley in the Avenue Range but the bulk of the water escaped by flowing into runaway holes on the western side of the swamp to eventually come up as springs on the Avenue Plain. Similar runaway holes existed on the western side of the Reedy Creek swamp complex. Round about 1900 Fred Feurheerd and his brother from Crower went down one of these runaway holes on Reedy Creek but the cave became too restricted after a distance of 100 feet.

Pat Conrick

## John White

John White (Jacky) was one of the earliest permanent residents in the South East. In 1843 he selected land in what is now the Hundred of Townsend, and in 1846 he increased his holding to 126 square miles. The huge run took in nearly all Townsend and much of the Hundreds of Minniecrow and Conmurra. At the widest point his boundaries extended from almost Reedy Creek to Lucindale.

He had arrived at Holdfast Bay with his brother George early in December 1836 - even before Governor Hindmarsh in the "Buffalo". He settled near the River Torrens for a short time, but then felt the urge to move. He had 500 head of cattle overlanded from Sydney by one Donald Ferguson who later became his overseer. It was not long before he had more than 2,000 cattle at Avenue Range. Returns for cattle were very poor, but with the finding of gold at Ballarat, he set up a butchery and sold meat to the passing gold prospectors and their families. He also ran a dairy on a site called the old garden near Ardune. He no doubt used his produce to supply his accommodation house in Avenue Range. He relinquished his holdings in the South East in 1859 selling to Messrs. Roberts, Charles Stewart, William Stewart and R.N. Falloon.

All that remains of his homestead are a few almond trees and a sandy patch where his stockyards were sited about one mile east of Avenue near the railway line.

Jacky White's drain, east of Avenue, was named after this man. It was dug in 1884 and made much of the low-lying land usable for stock. Stone from the drain was carted for the building of the Avenue Church and School in 1901.

## Chapter 3

# THE OLD FAMILIES

## Naming of Bull Island

Pat Conrick

Bull Island (or as it was once known - Bull's Island) was named by Commander Bull in honour of himself. Commander Bull was in charge of a Royal Naval Sailing Ship sent to Lacedpede Bay to search for survivors of the brig Maria, which ran aground in a storm near the mouth of a small creek, which was later named Maria Creek after the wrecked ship. The Maria was anchored off the coast for a couple of days, in a great storm, but eventually her anchor gave way and the Maria Creek was washed on to the shore and wrecked.

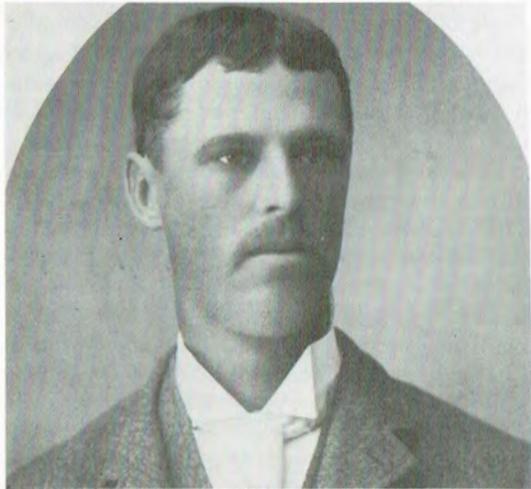
Many of the Bunganditj (Boandik) people visited the area to see the ship, hiding fearfully in the dunes as they watched. Members of the local tribe, the Mootatunga people, also witnessed the ship being wrecked. As soon as the crew came ashore they caught one of the men of the Mootatunga tribe and hung him as an example to the other Aborigines. There were many women and children who reached the shore from the ship, and they, with the surviving men and crew members, set out north west in an attempt to reach Adelaide. They were guided as far as what is now Salt Creek by a Mootatunga warrior by the name of Kiddieburner. He refused to go past Yakile (Salt Creek) because it would be to travel outside his tribal lands and the Coorong Aboriginal tribe (Tanganekaid) were very fierce and warlike.

As the Maria broke up much of her cargo was washed ashore, and some was salvaged from the vessel, including bags of flour and other food. As the Aborigines were hungry they had a great Murapena (Coroboree) and feasted on the flour, eating it dry. Many of the children, especially the very young, died from eating so much dry flour. The Aborigines became very frightened by this and left the area without even burying their dead, but a few came back from time to time to have another look at the figurehead of the "Maria" as they found it very fascinating and a great curiosity.

Commander Bull landed at the mouth of the Maria Creek and led a party from his crew inland from the coast. Despite a very wet winter, the party managed to travel about 25 kilometres inland. From a vantage point on what is now the West Avenue Range, Commander Bull could see a small island in a sea of water, on what is now known as the Avenue Plains. He named this island "Bull Island" in honour of himself. As an afterthought he also wrote in his log - "This country appears to be well watered!"

## Bull Island

William H. Limbert arrived in Australia in the "Psyche" on January 17th 1849 and had a chemist shop in Mt. Pleasant for several years. His brother Henry (1836-1921) joined him in 1858. Henry returned to England and married Jane Harvey on April 15th, 1863. The family returned to South Australia and opened a store and chemist shop at Kingston. In April, 1880 Henry purchased Sections 103, 105 and 107 Hundred of Townsend at auction in Adelaide and moved to Bull(s) Island in September of that year, by which time they had five children - Mary (1864), Frank (1865), Jessie (1866), Edward (1868-1958) and the baby Lillian (1878). In those days the flats were covered with honeysuckle (later cleared for timber to fuel the trains) and Lillian was dressed in red in case she became lost. In 1888 Henry Limbert purchased 3,265 acres in the Hundred of Minnicrow and his daughter Mary 4,232 acres in the Hundred of Townsend. The only one of Henry's children to marry was Edward Harvey Limbert who, in 1900, married Sarah Jane Styles of Kingston, whose father was the Harbour-master there. On Wednesday, 19th February, 1908 J.A. Hensley offered the whole of the Cairnbank estate and outside properties. Edward Limbert purchased Sections 114, 115 and 122 Hundred of Townsend.



*Edward Harvey Limbert*

Edward and Sarah had four sons - Harvey (1902), Lloyd (1905), Gavin (1906) and Melville Louis (1908).

After the Second World War part of Bull Island was relinquished for Soldier Settlement. Harvey and Gavin Limbert farmed together at Bull Island until Gavin's death in 1943, when Harvey purchased Gavin's land. Lloyd had a property at Lucindale and Melville a property at Naracoorte.

In 1933 Harvey married Norah Chaplin and they had one daughter Jennepher (1935) who married Brian Gilkes in 1957. They still run the family property and have three children - Henry (1959), Sarah (1961) and Charles (1964).

Jennepher Gilkes (nee Limbert)



## Ted Tavender — "Walteela"

Towards the end of 1880 or early in 1881, Samuel Tavender and his wife Caroline bought and settled at Bull Island on what was later known as Tavender's "Flat" paddock, after having travelled overland from Angaston by bullock wagon with the bulk of their possessions being brought by sailing ship from Pt. Adelaide to Kingston.

After five years, in about 1886, Mr. Tavender took up more land, some of which was part of the old "Avenue Plains" station, naming the whole property "Walteela" which, according to what has been handed down by word of mouth, is an Aboriginal name meaning 'meeting place' or neutral land where tribes met in peace.

A shearing shed was among the first buildings erected, one of their children being born in it. The house was built in 1888-89 with extra rooms added as demanded by family size. The lime stone and lime for mortar were produced on the property, Mr. Tavender's father David being a stone mason by trade.

Samuel Tavender ran the property from its beginning in about 1886-87 till around 1919, his main interest being sheep grazing. During those years he served on the Lucindale Council for eighteen years, travelling by horse and buggy from "Walteela" to Lucindale to attend council meetings. He was also instrumental in the formation of the South East Drainage scheme, as "Walteela" in common with most properties in the area, had a proportion of flat land which was covered with water in winter time.

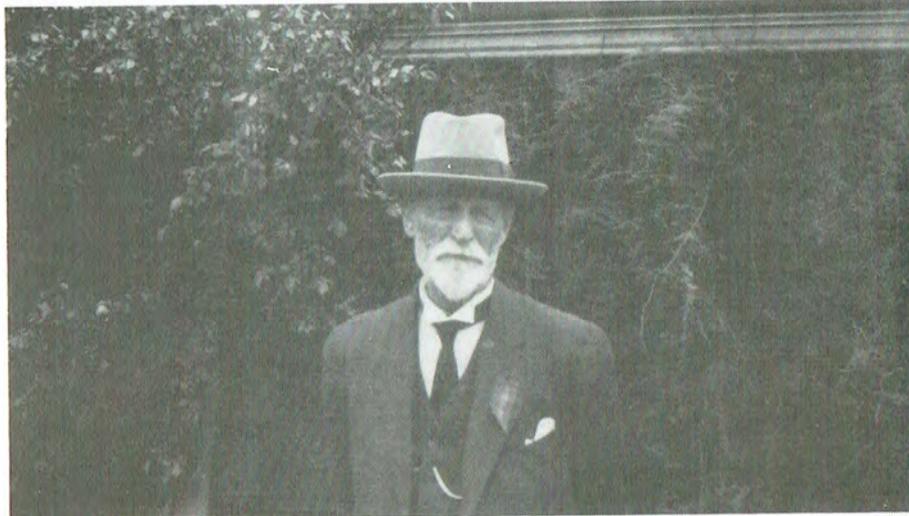
Samuel Tavender "retired" to Naracoorte and ceased to be actively interested in "Walteela" in 1919 when the property passed to his eldest son, Samuel Edgar (Ted) Tavender, who continued as a sheep grazer until his death in 1943, when, under the terms of his will, "Walteela" passed to his nephews Sam and

Peter Altman, the Altman family having lived with Mr. Tavender on "Walteela" from 1930 till 1941.

From 1943 to 1958 the well known Charles and Mary Smith and their family rented the property and lived on it for most of that time.

In 1958 it was sold to Mr. Ken Mattner and later resold to the present owner Mr. Brian Copping.

L.S. Altman



*Sam Tavender in front of the "Walteela" homestead.*

## Brian and Alison Copping — "Walteela"

Eventually I purchased Walteela in 1964 from the late Ken Mattner, who had purchased it earlier from the estate of S.E. Tavender. I purchased 1081 acres of which approximately 250 acres were developed in some form while the fences were almost non-existent. It was running 600 or so wethers, but development has increased it to 3 D.S.E.

My parents had two children - Keith born in 1926 and myself born in 1931. Keith did primary school at Avenue plus two years at P.A.C. I attended Avenue, Naracoorte High for three years and one year at P.A.C.

My own family all attended Lucindale Area School with Janet having two years at M.L.C. Janet worked all over Australia and New Zealand before coming to join me at home. Kathryn did psychiatric nursing before managing a store at an Aboriginal settlement near Darwin for two years. She is now doing whatever work is offering around this district. Elizabeth studied Horticulture at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens and married Michael Young and is living in Merbein, Victoria. Gillian has tried her hand at just about everything as well as doing a two-year photography course. Currently, she is in England for 1 to 2 years. David spends half the year at home and the other half on nearby properties working for others.

Brian Copping

## Cairnbank

Alexander Stewart and his wife arrived from England in 1839 and, after working as a surveyor in the South East for several years, he occupied 79 square miles named "Cairnbank". However, due to the depredations of wild dogs and scab, Alexander did not prosper and left for the Ballarat goldfields in 1852. "Cairnbank" was purchased from Stewart, in 1852 by John Hensley of Meadows in the Adelaide Hills. He moved with his family along the Coorong using a bullock dray and spring cart and droving a mob of cattle.

John Alexander Hensley had arrived from England in the ship "Pestongee Bomangee" in 1838. He remained in South Australia for twenty seven years before retiring to Geelong. John Hensley Jnr. took over the running of the property and was noted for his prowess with horse teams. It is reported that around 60,000 sheep were shorn in the Cairnbank woolshed at its peak. Hensley was instrumental in finding a treatment for scab in sheep. However, he met with leaner times and the whole of "Cairnbank" and all its outside properties including Leasehold land in the Hundreds of Woolumbool, Marcollat and Peacock, as well as Gip Gip, Didicoolum and Bunbury - totalling 188, 456 acres were offered for sale on 19th February 1908. Edward Limbert purchased three sections at this time. However, it is recorded that Hensley did not leave "Cairnbank" until 1915 when he retired to Bordertown.

As far as Brian Copping knows his father purchased "Cairnbank" from the Bank in 1917 after John Hensley had been forced to walk out. Alfred David Copping had come from the well-known family of "Redbank", Lucindale, where they had moved in 1870.

When Alfred took up "Cairnbank" there were no pasture improvements, the fences were in a shocking state and the place was over-run with rabbits. Due to the economic situation at the time, it was impossible to do much to the fences until 1938-39. Then war came and put a stop to fencing, so that by the time materials became available after the war, most of the fences were barely stockproof. One of the problems in the early days at "Cairnbank" was coastiness in the sheep. The paddocks to the west of "Cairnbank" were not too bad, but east of "Cairnbank" had problems. In the 1930's the Department of Agriculture experimented with trace elements in the pastures thus overcoming coastiness and various other forms of unthriftiness.

Isolation was something of a problem until the telephone was connected in 1925. W.A. Paltridge and Sons were connected in 1929 on a party line, so Mrs. Lou Paltridge and Mrs. Copping reduced the isolation by talking together. Alfred Copping married Ina Hemmings, a former teacher at the Avenue Range school, in 1924 and they bought their first car in 1926. The roads, even in Brian's recollection, were not good. He can remember being bogged in the sand in the scrub near Neil Watts' home.

**188,456 ACRES. 188,456**  
**LAND. LAND.**

3,777 Acres Freehold 3,777

184,679 Acres Leasehold 184,679.

**Cairnbank Estate.**

WEDNESDAY, 19th FEBRUARY, 1908,

AT

L. DeGARIS' AUCTION MART, NARACORTE,

AT 12 O'CLOCK NOON.

LUCAS DeGARIS has been favored with instructions from J. A. Hensley, Esq., to sell by Auction, as above, the whole of the Cairnbank Estate and outside properties in lots as follow:

**FREEHOLD.**

- LOT NO. 1—Section 114, Hundred of Townsend, containing 406 acres, partly fenced, permanently watered.
- " 2—Section 115, Hundred of Townsend, containing 356 acres, partly fenced, permanently watered.
- " 3—Section 122, Hundred of Townsend, containing 401 acres, partly fenced and permanently watered.
- NOTE.—Lot 1 will be offered first, and the buyer has the right to purchase Lots 2 and 3 at the same price, and should he exercise this right will have 200 acres of Miscellaneous Lease given in, which is included in same paddock, and joins on the east.
- " 4—Section 10, Hundred of Minnicrow, containing 491 acres, fenced, permanently watered.
- " 5—Section 37, Hundred of Minnicrow, containing 491 acres, partly fenced, permanently watered.
- " 6—Section, Nos. 7, 8e, 14c, Hundred of Minnicrow, containing 812 acres, sub-divided into two paddocks, permanently watered. Part has been cultivated and wire netted.
- " 7—Sections Nos. 92 and 119, Hundred of Townsend, containing 820 acres Freehold. This, and Leases included, comprises the Homestead Block, and the improvements consist of a large and commodious two-storey dwelling, containing 20 rooms, garden, woolsheds fitted with machines for eight shearers, men's huts, drafting yards, stables, three windmills, four waterholes, in fact all the improvements necessary for the working of a station. The land is fenced and sub-divided into seven paddocks. The following leases are included: Perpetual Lease No. 4159 of Section 90, Hundred of Townsend, containing 366 acres. Annual rent, £2 5s. 9d. Perpetual Lease, No. 62, of Section 215, Hundred of Townsend, containing 158 acres. Annual rent 19s. 9d.

**LEASEHOLD.**

The Lessees interest in all Leases is until subject to the consent of the Honourable the Commissioners of Crown Lands.

- LOT NO. 8—Reserved Lands Lease No. 506, of Section 123, Hundred of Townsend, containing 333 acres. Term, 14 years from the 1st October, 1900. Annual rent, £4 3s. 3d. Also Perpetual Lease, No. 780, of Sections Nos. 112, 113, 124, and 125, Hundred of Townsend, containing 1,528 acres. Annual rent, £14 6s. 6d. These leases are fenced into one paddock, are partly cleared and permanently watered.
- " 9—Perpetual Leases Nos. 24 and 25, of Section Nos. 1, 355 and 356, Hundred of Joyce, containing 323 acres. Annual rent, £3 14s. Fenced and watered.
- " 10—Perpetual Lease of Section A, County of Buckingham, containing 18,720 acres. Annual rent £5 9s. 8d. This lease is part of Lowan Vale, and is mostly mallee, suitable for farming, and is situated within seven miles of Border Town. The improvements consist of windmill, bore, well, and fencing.
- " 11—Right of Purchase Lease, 5,250 acres, County of Buckingham. Government purchase money 5s. per acre. This land is fenced into three paddocks, four-roomed farm house, stabling for six horses, two windmills, bore, well, and large dam. Half of this land has been rolled and cultivated; situation, seven miles north of Border Town.
- " 12—Miscellaneous Lease No. 6242, Section B, County of Buckingham, containing 1,920 acres. Term, 21 years from the 1st October, 1897. Annual rent, 15s.
- " 13—Perpetual Lease No. 3,650, of Section No. 6, Hundred of Woolambool, containing 8,770 acres. Annual rent £18 5s. 5d. This block is known as Schofields, is fenced into two paddocks, hut, and yards, and is permanently watered by wells and waterholes.
- " 14—Perpetual Lease No. 3,838, of Section 5a, Hundred of Marcollat, and Section 53, Hundred of Peacock, containing 9,466 acres. Annual rent, £4 18s. 7d. Known as the Mine paddock, fenced and permanently watered.
- " 15—Perpetual Lease No. 4,861, of Sections 7 N.B., Hundred of Peacock, containing 4,335 acres. Annual rent, £2 5s. 2d. Known as Gip Gip paddock, and is fenced and permanently watered.
- " 16—Pastoral Lease No. 624, "Didicoolom," situated north of the Hundreds of Peacock and Lawser, containing 92 square miles. Term, 21 years from the 22nd June 1899. Annual rent, £11 10s. Instalments on improvements, £19 17s. 11d. The improvements consist of huts, cultivation and horse paddock, three large paddocks. All permanently watered.
- " 17—Pastoral Lease No. 1,089, "Bunbury," situated south-west of Keith Railway Station, containing 117 square miles. Term, 21 years from the 1st January, 1902. Annual rent £14 12s. 6d. Instalment on improvements £28 8s. 4d. Good stone homestead, 30,000 gallon cement tanks, stables, cart shed, yards, horse and mustering paddock, and five securely fenced large paddocks well watered. Possession will be given on May 28th, 1908.

Terms: As arranged with Auctioneer.

NOTE.—Lots 10, 11, and 12 are sold in conjunction with Messrs. Hay and Thomson.

**REMEMBER! At NARACORTE on WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19, 1908.**

THE SHEEP, CATTLE, HORSE, AND STATION PLANT WILL BE SOLD ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF MAY.

Further Particulars from the Auctioneer, Naracoorte, Border Town, or write St. Peter's P.O., Adelaide. TEL. 1883.



"Cairnbank" homestead built in 1868 by Smith and Agar in conjunction with W.T. Gore, architect.

**Ted and Shirley Rivett — "Downer"**

Thomas Rivett was born in 1820 and emigrated from England on the ship "Oregon" which left Plymouth in July 1851 arriving in Adelaide in October of the same year. He married Louise Self in 1853 and their family included Zephaniah, Louise, Mary and David. Thomas died on June 27th 1878 and was buried in the Kingston cemetery.

Zephaniah married Mary Ann Serle on the 20th May 1885. They had a family of eleven: Will, May, Perc, George, Sophia, Ethel, Myrt, John, Os, Bob and Gordon.



"Lawser's" the home of Zephaniah and Mary Ann Rivett over 100 years ago.

The Rivett family settled at Avenue Range over one hundred years ago, when Zephaniah and Mary Ann Rivett's first home was on the side of a hill at "Lawsers", a property south of the railway line and which now belongs to Mr. Bub Mason. Their first child was born there in 1886 and some time later they moved to "Downer" where they raised a family of thirteen children. Ten thousand acres was eventually taken over by their son George Serle Rivett, who with his English bride Rose, reared four children - Gertrude, Thelma, William (Bill) and Edward (Ted), but tragically Rose died shortly after Ted was born.

The children were all educated at the Avenue Range School and attended church and Sunday School in the same building.

In 1941 Ted joined the Army and served in the 27th South Australian Scottish Regiment in New Guinea and Bougainville and was discharged in 1945, when he returned to Avenue Range and resumed farming in partnership with his father George and brother Bill. This partnership continued with Bill and Ted after the death of their father in 1957 until 1972 when the land was divided between the two brothers. The creek country on the western side of Avenue consisted of 7,000 acres, but in the early 1960's the District Council put a road through to the Soldier Settlers' blocks at West Avenue, thus dividing the property. Three thousand acres were sold to Haage and Gursansky.

My first introduction to Avenue Range and country life was in 1946, after Ted had been discharged from the Army. Our friendship began during the war when my brother Clem who was in the same unit, brought Ted to our home when on leave. We corresponded whilst he was serving overseas and our friendship continued when he came back to Australia awaiting discharge. I travelled from Adelaide with Ted's sister Gertrude, on that interminable journey by narrow gauge train, arriving at Avenue an hour or so late. (Years later, when my own children, journeying to Adelaide by car, and being asked every few miles, "How much further?" made me think I must have driven Gert mad with the same question).

Our courtship continued but we were only able to see each other three times a year, Christmas, Anzac and Adelaide Show week.

We were married in May 1949 and started our married life in a small two-roomed asbestos cottage with enclosed back verandah. It took us nearly two years prior to that date to obtain a permit for materials to build and it was only the isolated area that enabled us to get that. It was the first house to be built in Avenue Range in twenty-five years, the previous one being Mr. Will Thomas's house, next door. Our bath was a galvanised one Ted had bought from a clearing sale for 2 pounds, likewise the washtroughs which stood at the back of the house with a brand new copper. There I did my washing until the summer of that year, when my washhouse was built of scrub timber and asbestos, and what a luxury to have water connected over the troughs!

The Tilley and kerosene lamps and Mrs. Potts irons were quite different from what I had been used to in Adelaide, but I loved being with my husband in our little home and I adapted to country life quite well. By Christmas we had our own small car, a Morris 8/40, so decided to build a garage. Permits were still needed for building materials - and money - so we resorted to scrub posts, sewed super bags together for the sides and used asbestos over from the house for the roof, and so we had a very neat cover for the car.

In February next year our first child was born, a daughter Christine Kaye.

We enjoyed tennis with the locals at that time, the court being a "dirt" one on the site where the new courts now stand. Cricket was also enjoyed by the men-folk, and we travelled with them to Reedy Creek, Kingston, Joyce, Conmurra and Lucindale. The girls and young men also played basketball together, drawing a court on the ground for that purpose.

Our first son, Michael Edward, was born in 1953 and by that time we had progressed to 32 volt electricity and a kerosene refrigerator. We had purchased stone and roofing materials as we could afford it and started to build our new home. With the walls up and the roof on, Mr. Will Thomas encouraged Ted to put the windows in and gradually, as we could afford it, the walls were plastered and the ceilings put in, then with more encouragement from Mr. Will and my own father, Ted finished the timber work inside the house.

Christine started school at the Avenue School in 1955 when she was dux of the school, but little did we know that it would not re-open at the beginning of the following year. The day that school was due to commence in 1956 we were advised that the children were to go to Lucindale. We continued our Church services there for some years, sitting in the school desks, until it was equipped with pews from the old Joyce Church.

In 1958 our second son, Terry Harold was born and all were educated at Lucindale Area School.

How wonderful it was to have the power supply connected to the district and upgrade from 32 volt and kerosene refrigerators to 240 volts, T.V. and freezers! To be able to use all the appliances and lighting without first having to start the lighting plant! As a family we all enjoyed our sport together, playing tennis for Avenue in the Southern Ports Tennis Association and then later joining the Lucindale Golf Club.



The Rivett family - Z. Rivett, Jack, Will, George, Sophia, Mary nursing Bob, May, Ethel, Myrtle, Oswald and Perc - 1902.

Our daughter Christine (now Mrs. Neil Watts) chose nursing as her career and loves her work at the Kingston Hospital. Her husband, Neil, is a builder and they have one son, Shawn, and we are lucky to have them live next door to us.

Both boys have married, Michael to a local girl, Jeanette Thomas, and they have a daughter, Kylie and a son, Dwaine. Terry married Tania Steinborner from Mt. Benson and they have a son Shane. We are very happy that they have both chosen to stay on the land and are the fourth generation of Rivetts to farm this area.

Shirley Rivett

## Hocking Family

### Kay Hocking

Henry Hocking was born at Burra in 1860. He moved with his family to Moonta when he was four and at the age of twenty he began working with the railways between Bordertown and Tailem Bend. In the late 1880's he married Mary Gibbs, born 23.10.1865, from Mount Benson. He continued to work for the railways apart from a period when he was employed by the South East Drainage Board. During this time he assisted in the digging of Drain K. In the 1890's the family moved into the railway cottages in Avenue Range.

Henry bought 24 acres of land in Downer township and in 1900 built a home there. This home is still standing. In 1907 he leased the water reserve, section number 332 from the Lucindale District Council and the family retained that lease until 1977.

Henry Hocking retired in 1927 and remained in the area until his death in the Naracoorte Hospital in 1937. His wife Mary lived to the age of 95. She was well remembered for her assistance as midwife around the district.

The children born to Henry and Mary were: George Victor, Isaac, Albert, Sydney, Earnest, Elena and Jessie. Jessie, (Mrs. J. Jones), is still alive and living in Adelaide.

George Victor, the eldest son, attended school at Reedy Creek and the old Downer School, which was built in 1890, by W.S. Tavender. He completed his schooling at age twelve and began working for John Hensley at "Cairnbank".

His day started at four o'clock, shooting birds in the orchard and then spent the rest of the day working as a station hand. Other areas of employment included wool picking, boundary riding and general station work at various properties including "Crower" and "Bakers Range". He also grubbed trees for road making in the Tintinara district and assisted with harvesting in the Mallee.

From 1912 to 1921 he managed "Minniecrow" for Mr. W.A. Paltridge. He married Priscilla Pitt from Mount Benson in 1913.

Around 1912 he took up land adjoining Jacky White's drain and purchased section 123, known as "Dead Horse Flat" in 1917. From around this date he rented "The Washpool" from W. Natt and purchased this land in 1930.

Section 71 at Bull Island was purchased in 1921. In 1922 he was granted a slaughter licence and operated a slaughter house and dairy there for many years. Meat was supplied to the local area, Lucindale, Kingston and Mount Benson. The dairy was sold in 1935.

Two well known draught stallions which George stood in the area were "Rob Roy" and "Northern Power".

In 1934 the property "The Poplars", at Conmurra was purchased from the estate of H. Langberg, for 6 pound/12/6 per acre.

George Victor died on 11.10.65, and his wife Priscilla died 1.2.59. Children from this marriage are: Victor Hartley born at Minniecrow 1914, Stanley Francis born at Avenue 1915 and Raymond Henry born at Naracoorte 1921. There was also a stillborn daughter.

All three sons attended school at the Avenue Range School, before working on the land. They managed the properties as one until 1967 when it was divided into three, with Victor and Raymond and their families retaining the sections of land in the Conmurra district and Stanley and his family remaining in Avenue Range.

Stanley married Mary Hodge from Coonawarra in 1940. Their children are Marjorie Veeda and Rexton Kenneth who both attended the Avenue Range School. Rexton attended until the school closed.

Majorie married and moved to the Mount Benson district.

Rexton married Kay Bird in 1965 and they live on "The Washpool" with their family. He spent ten years training trotting horses, including the world record holder "Reichman", in Ballarat, Victoria, until 1980.

During the 1970's sections 143 and 144 were purchased from T. Richman, and sections 83 and 84 were purchased from the Conrick family.

Kay Hocking is the present Lucindale District Councillor for Townsend Ward and was one of the first two women elected to the Lucindale Council. Their children are Janelle Elizabeth and Verity Mary.



*Bull Island Abbatoirs. Run by G.V. Hocking*

## Aitchison Grieve – “Fellwood”

Archibald Carmichael who was a grazier at “Fellwood”, Lucindale, was born in the year 1840 at Islay, Argyleshire, in the Highlands of Scotland. He came to South Australia in 1860 by the sailing vessel “Grand Trianan” and spent several years in the state and near Wellington on the River Murray learning about sheep raising. In 1880 he took up 956 acres in the Lucindale district, which he cultivated for twelve months before launching himself into the sheep raising industry. Meeting with success in the later line he began making additions to his holding until he had about 9,000 acres of freehold and leasehold property.

In the early 1920’s my father, Aitchison Grieve, bought “Fellwood” from Archibald Carmichael. The name had already been given to the property, no doubt referring to the large amount of timber which had to be cleared before development could take place. At that time it included all the area of land (2,455 acres) known as ‘Stewarts’ which was bought by J.C. Smith and Sons in 1938 for 1,100 pounds, and renamed “The Valley”. At the close of World War II a further area was sold for Soldier Settlement. This area was divided into two blocks - “Talbots” (named after a stone cairn at the gateway which led into “The Valley” and known as Talbots Memorial) taken up by Jim McDowall, and “Avenue Plains” (named after the old homestead and woolshed which stood on the same site and once owned by the Morris family) taken up by George Hansberry.

Aitchison lived in the stone hut now used as a laundry for the first few years. When he married Constance Hansen in 1929 he rented the house now known as “Solo” at Crower. It was then owned by the Nosworthy family. He travelled by horse and gig to “Fellwood” each day - in the winter along the ridges not far from the present bitumen road. As there was no bridge the drain had to be forded at a fairly shallow place. However, in a wet winter the water would often be so deep that if flowed through the floor of the gig. In summer he crossed on the flats through the Crower “Lambing Paddock”.

In 1936 the present house was built using the dressed stone taken from the old homestead and woolshed on “Avenue Plains”. The removal of these ruins left the oldest woolpress in the South East standing alone and stark, reminding us of the former station and its owners. To supply lime for the building of his new home, my father used the natural limestone and scrub timber in the paddock now know as “Limekiln” to burn his own. After the stone was burnt it was bagged and carted to the site of the new house on a wagon with a team of four draught horses. Parts of the **old** Fellwood homestead were converted into shearers’ quarters which were used until the early 1970’s. In 1973 these were demolished to make way for the new quarters - a cement brick building with modern conveniences, carpeted floors and plenty of space.

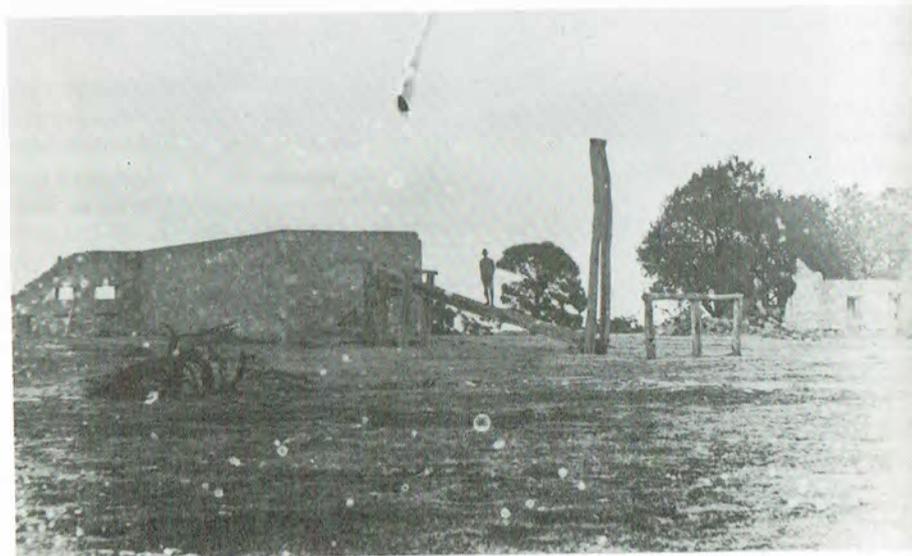
In more recent years homes have been built for Judith and David Mugford, Joe Grieve and Jim and Sue Mugford.

In the early days one paddock was named “Strawberry” because the Department of Agriculture was conducting experiments on the suitability of Strawberry clover for the area. The clover was sown at the rate of a matchbox per acre for the 100 acre paddock. The Department also conducted trials with superphosphate using a “Shepherd” broadcaster to spread the super.

Judith Mugford



*Old woolpress at Avenue Plains Station 1916.*



*Shearing shed, Woolpress and Homestead at Avenue Plains Station 1916.*

## Chapter 4

### SERVICES

#### Railway Line

The first passenger train to travel on the line from Kingston to Naracoorte was on September 1st 1876 with a train consisting of an engine and covered trucks. There were thirteen passengers, who each paid 13/6 for the journey. Mails were also carried. From 10th July 1876 the line had been in use as a tramway for the carriage of goods and mails, the trucks being drawn by horses. Horses were changed at Lucindale. It is generally stated that this service was conducted by William Lucas. On the day before the official opening on January 16th 1877, The Oddfellows Lodge arranged a monster train picnic to Kingston. Five hundred and fifty one people attended and it was a huge success. For many years afterwards there was an annual train picnic to Kingston. Photographs show the crowded trains with a dozen or more carriages hauling their cargoes of chattering holiday-makers on such day trips. One photo shows light canvas-canopied trucks packed with children. The original carriages were unlighted so that passengers took care to provide themselves with candles which, when dark came, were stuck by means of their own grease on the wooden back of the seat in front.

The railway station at Avenue Range used to be a neat little two-roomed weatherboard building with seats outside the waiting room. One night in about 1943 it was burnt down mysteriously, and caused quite a lot of interest in the district. As far as is known, no-one could ever prove what happened, but it was always suspected that one of the local identities had been to Naracoorte for a periodical binge and, after being put off the train at night, had gone to sleep in the station. Sometime during the night he must have dropped a cigarette butt or, maybe, lit a fire to keep warm.

#### Telecommunications History

A Telegraph (worked by telephone) and Public Telephone Office was opened at Avenue Range on 1st September 1915, together with the new Receiving and Parcels Post Office. This followed a petition from thirty local residents to the Deputy Postmaster-General, Adelaide, for the provision of postal and telephone communications.

The Office was in the charge of Lillian Alice Thomas and was conducted in railway premises adjacent to the Naracoorte - Kingston railway line (and a quarter of a mile from the railway station).

Barbara Thomas, the wife of Ganger Thomas, was appointed Postmistress on 1st December 1919 when the Post Office was raised in status to an Allowance Office.

A report in 1919 said that the Avenue Range Office served thirteen householders in addition to about twenty men employed on the drainage works in the district.

By 1923 the Office served approximately 80 people.  
Telephone Office keepers over the years have been:

Lillian Alice Thomas	1.9.1915
Barbara Thomas	1.12.1919
Jessie Irene Jones	1.1.1924
Hilda Elvira Thomas	1.8.1924
(who became Hilda Elvira Thomson on 30.11.40	
N.T. Wood	1.9.1954
R.R. Bengier	1.12.1958
N.T. Whitbread	19.12.1966
E.W.K. Colville	14.5.1973
A. Lloyd	3.2.1975
R. Morley	17.3.1981
S. Kurray	24.3.1985

The Post, Telegraph and Telephone Office was removed from railway premises on 1st August 1924.

A telephone exchange with one subscriber, A.D. Copping (and a public telephone) was first listed in the telephone directory of October 1925.

The November 1928 directory listed two subscribers, A.D. Copping and F. Natt. The May 1929 directory listed three subscribers, A.D. Copping and W.A. Paltridge and Sons shared the first line on a party line basis with numbers 1-S and 1-H respectively, and F. Natt on line number 2. Hours were 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.; 2.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

The number of subscribers lines has been:

Year	Subscribers
1925	1
1930	3
1940	3
1950	7
1960	27
1970	42
1975	41
1979	51

Records indicate that the Post Office and Exchange was conducted for many years in a wood and iron building which had been erected by local settlers. the Post Office and Exchange was moved on 10th January 1955 to a stone building adjoining the general store erected by N.D. Wood.

Continuous telephone service was provided from 1st May 1972.

An automatic exchange with STD was opened on 28th March 1979.



*The Post Office and Telephone Exchange built by settlers. Mary Smith and Hilda Thomson.*



*The last Exchange - Fran Lloyd operating.*



*Railway Cottage, Avenue Range 1920*

These railway cottages were built in the 1890's. Mr. and Mrs. R. Thomas lived there until 1923 when they had a new home built where Mrs. Thomson now lives. Only two of the Thomas family are now living - Lil Dow and Hilda Thomson. Lil was Post Mistress till her marriage on February 8th 1922. The bridal party walked across the railway line to the church for the wedding. Hilda Thomson (nee Thomas) became Post Mistress in 1924 and carried on for thirty years.

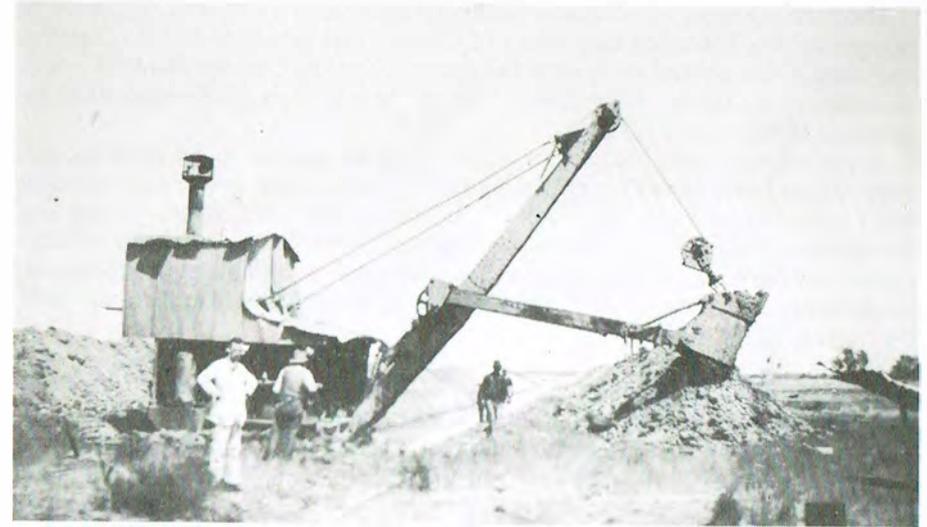
Martha and Os Rivett moved into the cottages in the late 1920's and had a family of nine children all of whom lived there till they moved to Sherlock in November 1947.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Beaglehole lived in the cottages for a short time and were followed by Charles and Betty Kirkham. The Kirkhams raised four children - Lindsay, Lynette, Judy and Greg - while Charlie worked round the district.

Not shown in the photograph was a beautiful tree which in the spring had clusters of white pea-shaped sweet-smelling flowers. Since the cottages were removed in the early 1980's the tree has died. It would have been over 70 years old. The dead tree stands as a monument to the old residents and the younger generation who played under it.

Drains played a very important part in the district of Avenue. Jacky White's drain, east of Avenue, was dug in 1884. This was an asset to the area, it made much of the low lying land usable for stock. Stone carted from the banks of Jacky White's drain was used in the building of the Avenue Church in 1901.

Drain K on Grieve's "Fellwood" property was cut in 1914 and K. L., the complete drain, was finished in 1918. With these drains more of the flats were able to be developed for Soldier Settlement blocks.



*Photo shows drains being dug on "Fellwood". Norman Wallace of Naracoorte in the foreground.*

## Tennis Courts

The first tennis court was in a corner of Stan Hocking's paddock south of the railway line. It was used until the roots of trees made the surface too uneven to play on. In the early 1900's tennis courts were made of scraped earth with the lines marked with a mixture of lime and water.

The next move was to the corner of Thomas' paddock on the western side of the old post office. Here Lou Thomas would skim the weeds as the ground was very hard and made a good surface for a court. In the early 1950's the Avenue Progress Association built the first court on the site of the present courts alongside the cricket pitch.

## Avenue Range Sports Club

For many years the only organized sport played at Avenue was cricket. It is reported in the Naracoorte Herald of January 7th 1936 that on January 4th the Reedy Creek Cricketers travelled to Avenue Range to play a game. Reedy Creek dismissed the Avenue team for 68 runs. Allan Barnett was top scorer for Reedy Creek making 13 runs. K. Thomson, top scorer for Avenue was 32 not out.

Minutes have been found of meetings held on October 29th and November 10th 1938. At the second meeting O. Rivett was elected president of the Avenue Range Cricket Club, G. Natt was vice-president, R. Turnbull - secretary and L.H. Thomas - assistant secretary. The bank balance was 1-8-5 pounds. Membership was set at 5/- and there was to be no ball fee.

The next recorded meeting was held on August 23rd 1946 with A. Grieve as president. The following year when P. Conrick was president and K. Copping secretary it was agreed to open a bank account at the Savings Bank of South Australia in the name of the Avenue Range Sports Club. Subscriptions to be raised to 10/6.

Several dances were held over the next few years and finally, by 1950 enough money had been raised for the purchase of Lawrie Park gravel and Colas to build a tennis court near the oval. Scrub posts were used for the fences and donations of the necessary wire were received. Alec Tobiasen offered to build the first tea pavilion, but it was some time before they were able to boil the water for afternoon tea there. In the meantime, Mary Hocking had kindly made boiling water available each week.

At the Annual General Meeting in August 1953 when D. Mugford was president and Kathleen Smith secretary, Stan Hocking was presented with Life Membership in recognition of his interest over the years.

Guy Fawkes nights and Christmas trees became annual fixtures during the 1950's and early 1960's when there were up to eighty children living within the district. Another tennis court was laid during this period.

Table Tennis was introduced in 1958. The Avenue Association comprised teams from Bull Island, Cairnbank, Vandepers, McLeans, West Avenue, Old Avenue and South Avenue. Each team consisted of four players.

In 1959 a formal lease was obtained from the Lucindale District Council for the South West corner of the Parklands at an annual rental of 1 pound. A second tennis court was laid, a new luncheon shed erected and gas stove installed.

In more recent years the courts have been resurfaced, Mt. Gambier stone kitchen and toilets built and the cricket pitch raised and improved.

In 1985 a new tennis court was laid and a new Onga pump installed to enable the grounds to be watered. It also has a quick-filler for the fire truck. A tractor has been purchased from the Lucindale District Council.

The cricket and tennis teams each play in the Southern Ports Associations appropriate to their sport and have had varying degrees of success.

## Avenue Range C.F.S.

No early records of the Avenue Range C.F.S. can be found, but it is generally agreed that it was started in the mid 1940's using privately-owned fire trucks.

One of its annual jobs was the burning of the railway line from Ardune to Bull Island. In case of a fire getting away the operator on the manual telephone would ring all the subscribers to the exchange to advise them as to whether they were needed. With the advent of the automatic exchange in March 1979 the Fire and Emergency Telephone number 66 0010 was allotted.

Avenue received its first fire truck in July 1982. So that a shed to house the truck could be erected, Mrs. Shirley Rivett donated a block of land near the Sports Ground and the shed was erected by voluntary labour in August of that year.

During the summer months regular practices are held and volunteers are rostered to drive the truck and operate the radio.

## Chapter 5

# SCHOOL DAYS

## Avenue Church and School

On December 9, 1886 the South Australian Government proclaimed the town of Downer (renamed Avenue Range in 1940) around the existing Avenue Range railway siding, about 14 kilometres west of Lucindale.

Four years later a settler, W.S. Tavender, built the Downer School, south of the railway line. But this closed in 1901, when owing to disagreements, John Hensley Junior, of "Cairnbank", built a new school on Council of Education land.

Hensley employed the builder Dick Wakefield, builder's labourer Tom Osbourne and stone carter Andrew Clark to build the school about 13 kilometres west of Lucindale. Clark carted the stone from "Jacky White's Drain", named after one of the earliest permanent residents of the South East. John White settled in 1843 and, within another three years, had a total of 126 square miles in the Hundreds of Townsend, Minniecrow and Conmurra.

Several years later Andrew Perry added the chimney which, one local oldtimer recalls, "smoked like the dickens depending on the wind direction, which was much worse sometimes than others".

Miss Stephens was the first teacher when the school opened in 1901. As far as remembered by Mrs. Hilda Thomson (nee Thomas), who attended the Avenue Range School in 1906-1915, church services were also held there from the first year of the building.

Old books and school records have been lost but a few memories of the early days have survived. Desks seated six pupils and on Sundays they were turned around. Being low, they served as pews with back rests for the congregation.

Three kersene lamps hanging from the ceiling provided light on dull days and at night. The porch was an open verandah with a dirt floor. Miss Matheson (1906-1910) drove out from Lucindale each day and the boys in her tiny class put her sulky in the porch for shelter. Some pupils rode or drove horses to school and left them to roam in the schoolyard. During the lunch hour they had to take the horses to a small trough by a well in Thomas' paddock. It was great fun to ride back for the afternoon lessons with as many children as would fit on to a horse's back.

Trees were planted on Arbour Day, making the schoolyard eventually one of the prettiest blocks in Avenue. There used to be a big flagpole. The flag was raised on Empire Day (May 24), Queen Victoria's birthday, a small ceremony

was held and everyone enjoyed a half-holiday. An underground tank supplied the water. Highlights of the school calendar were visiting days, concerts, sports days, nature walks and snakes under the floorboards!

A popular annual concert was held in the school after the shearing at "Cairnbank", which at its peak shore 60,000 sheep. All the hands took to a makeshift stage to entertain the surrounding families.

Hensley presented the school building to the Methodist Church in 1915 when he and his family moved to Bordertown. June Patterson was the last teacher when the Avenue School closed in 1955. Most pupils transferred to Lucindale School.

Methodist church services continued until 1977. Only two weddings were held there: Lillian Thomas and Percival Dow married on February 8, 1922, and Patricia Watson and Tony Barnes were married on September 4, 1976. In the second wedding the bridegroom, from New Zealand, fainted and caused some anxious moments but he was able to make his vows.

The last Methodist service was held in the building at 2.30 p.m. on June 19, 1977. After the Methodist Church was incorporated in the Uniting Church in Australia, the last regular Uniting service was held on October 30, 1977. The church finally closed with a Christmas Day service at 8 a.m. on December 25, 1977.



Mr. S.E. (Ted) Tavender, first pupil, with Mrs. Nosworthy (nee E.M. Flint) the first teacher. Photo taken in 1936.

### AVENUE SCHOOL TEACHERS

Miss Stephens	
Miss Bourne	
Miss Matheson	
Miss Rabbitt	
Miss Christiansen	1916
Miss Byass	1918 to 1919
Miss Hemmings	1921 to 1924
Miss White	relieving for short period

Amy Humphries	1925 to 1927
Connie Robinson	1928 to 1930
Edna Vickery	1931 to May 1935
A. Watkins	May 1935 to December 1935
Irene Brooksby	1936
Valmai Thomas	1937
Belle McLean	1938 to April 1942
Ronda Brennand	1942 to May 1943
Audrey Rowe	July to August 1943
Beth Rowe	September 1943 to 1946
Mignon Rayson	1947 to 1948
Marion Keats	1948 to 1950
Una Evans	1951 to 1953
June Patterson	1954 to 1955



Knitting Group from Avenue Range School in 1917.  
Teacher: Adelaide Christiansen. Back Row: L. Schrapel, Gordon Rivett, Leo Ruth, Jack Ruth, Ivy Turnbull, Vic Turnbull, Adelaide Christiansen. Front Row: G. Ruth, Ruth, Edna Schrapel, Muriel Lock, B. Schrapel, Bina Natt.

## A Few Memories of my Time at Avenue Range

I was only there for one year, 1937 - a long time ago.

I boarded with Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Copping and family, at "Cairnbank", and remember being made very welcome and treated as one of the family. Mrs. Copping was a great cook, making lovely cakes and most appetising buns.

Mrs. Copping's father, Mr. Hemmings, used to drive us to school in the gig, during the winter months. In good weather I sometimes rode a bike while Keith and Brian rode a pony.

I used to go to church with the family. It was held in the old school building. I also went to C.W.A. with Mrs. Copping sometimes - it must have been on a Saturday.

I have happy memories of the school children, the Rivett children, from across the road and their cousin, Ted Rivett, Brenda Altman and Dorothy Thomas and Keith and Brian Copping.

I used to enjoy a chat with Miss Thomas (now Mrs. Thomson), the post mistress of the little Post Office near the school.

Valmai Knowling, nee Thomas

## Memories of Avenue Range School 1947-48, Mignon Rayson

One hot summer day early in 1947, the Kingston train rocked and rattled along the track, with its load of teachers arriving for the school year. The cheerful guard, Mr. Shurdington, exchanged pleasantries with the old hands and welcomed the two new chums. As the train paused at Lucindale station, a local lad yelled to his friend, "I wonder which one we are getting! The good-looking blonde or the other one?" To his obvious relief, the willowy blonde alighted, and the little plain one was wafted away towards Avenue Range.

In spite of this inauspicious beginning, my two years at Avenue were thoroughly enjoyable. The children were delightful, and on mail nights the entire farming community congregated at the Post Office to exchange local gossip while Mrs. Hilda Thomson sorted their letters and listened sympathetically to everybody's troubles. There was always plenty of entertainment at the Hocking homestead - two memorable occasions were when the shearers raided the clothesline and tied my undies to the top bough of a pine-tree and the night when 3 year old Rexton set fire to the house while experimenting with matches.

Probably the most exciting episode occurred when I was marking essays in the school at dusk, while a freight train crawled towards the coast. (These travelled so slowly that it was possible to jump off the train at Bull Island, pick blackberries to eat, and hop on the back step as it passed). Suddenly I had an eerie feeling that I was not alone, and I crept along the side of the building and found a strange man crawling through the long grass and shrubs behind the school. He jumped up and ran towards me as I leapt on my old bicycle and pedalled furiously down the hill, bouncing over rocks and skidding through the open gate. The school was left open that night, and next day a prison escapee was apprehended by police. His intentions may have been quite harmless, but there was also the possibility that I narrowly escaped the notoriety of becoming the Avenue Range Hostage.

All the young people of the district were involved in the building of the tennis courts, but as our enthusiasm exceeds our expertise, the first heatwave reduced the surface to a texture resembling soft licorice. Max Smith, who was playing tennis without shoes, later found he had developed durable black soles to his feet!

While I was living at "Teremina" I occupied a bedroom with a most distinctive

rose-patterned carpet. In 1978 I was sitting for a Psychology examination in a private home in Hamilton, Victoria, and commented on the antique carpet which had just been laid. It was soon revealed that my supervisor's mother-in-law had inherited the carpet from a relative's estate - what a strange coincidence that it should again lie beneath my feet thirty years later and in another state.

A member of the Avenue School Committee was Mrs. Mary Smith, an experienced teacher whose advice was invaluable. I remember one day when I remarked that a certain student was "getting on my nerves" and she smiled and said, "There is nothing the matter with your nerves. The student is getting on your temper, which is quite a different matter". During thirty years of teaching I have never forgotten this gentle warning.

One morning I noticed a ditty inscribed on the back of the school toilet, and called in the students in order to identify the culprit. Imagine my discomfiture when Vida Smith announced that the poem had been there for years and had been written by the young man I had gone out with on the previous night!

One sad morning Mrs. Paltridge had to call at the school to tell her son that their home had burned down during the night, and that the only possession he now owned was a raincoat from the back verandah. I remember her courage and calmness as she tried to protect her child from distress, making light of what must have been a great calamity in her life.

School inspectors loved the Avenue children and their friendly attitude, so that inspections were quite relaxed events. I recall the delight of one of them, when an innocent little girl wrote a charming illustrated essay about the strange behaviour of cattle she had noticed on the way to school. He insisted on adding it to his file of inspection reminiscences.

During the period at Avenue Range I became local reporter for the "Kingston Weekly", a job fraught with unexpected dangers. I remember Keith Smith's irate reaction to criticism of his bowling in a cricket match, and the resentment of a certain lady whose evening gown was described inaccurately after a local Ball.

The experience of teaching at Avenue Range School inspired me to embark on further tertiary studies in order to become a senior secondary teacher. This was a very positive result, and perhaps it was the remark of that unknown Lucindale youth which was instrumental in shaping my future.

## Avenue School 1951-1953

I had just received my appointment to the one-teacher school at Avenue Range. Avenue Range? Never heard of it! Couldn't remember seeing it on our big map of small schools at Teacher's College so had to buy a map to find out where it was situated. I had lived on a dairy farm at Mount Gambier and Avenue was not so very far away but, oh, to get to it in those days! School was due to open on a Tuesday after the Christmas holidays; I had been instructed at College to arrive early and familiarize myself with the school etc. For me this meant catching the Adelaide-bound train from Mount Gambier, travelling to Naracoorte, waiting all day and then catching the evening rail car to Kingston, which passed through Avenue. This I did but I can't remember how I filled in that day - subsequent days in time I can remember but not that one. The rail car

was quite full and I do remember bumping, shaking, bouncing and rattling on that narrow gauge line, stopping at odd places.

The train slowed down and peering out the window I saw a fairly old building on top of a rise surrounded by nice big trees. That must be the school, I thought. I had gone to school in Mount Gambier and had only been in a small school during my teacher training. Yes, it was Avenue, a railway siding in the middle of where? There were cars and utilities and people who were waiting to collect mail, parcels etc. from the train. Later I was to realise just how much a part of my life that train was to become.

Miss Rosemary Smith, Mrs. Dot McInnes and Miss Mary Le Strange, the post mistress, were the first people I met. It was explained to me that it was not convenient for the Smith family, with whom I was to board, to have me just then as they were installing a new wood stove, so I was to stay with Mary and Mrs. Thomson at the Post Office house.

That evening asleep in a lovely comfortable bed I was awakened by an electric light being switched on and a startled voice asking, "Who are you?" Mrs. Thomson had arrived home from Adelaide and had found a complete stranger in her spare bedroom.

The Smith family were living in an old house on the Tavender property "Walteela" about 2 miles of unsealed road from the school and as I had always ridden about 2 miles on a bitumen road to school myself, was fortunately used to bike riding.

Tuesday came and I was ready to begin my first day of teaching. Both children and parents arrived at the school, the latter, mainly to enrol little Grade I children. How small those children seemed to me, not much more than babies. The first week passed with the usual hassle of getting to know names and personalities of children and the distributing of new books. So school life settled down.

The folk at Avenue were an extremely friendly and sociable group of people and this spilled over to the school children, who on the whole were a wonderful group of children with whom to work. The three older children, Joe, Graham and Marjory were a tremendous help as they not only did their own work well, but were always willing to lend a hand with the lower classes, eg. listening to reading or tables, Grades 1, 2 & 3 were good to teach as the children were bright and in sufficient numbers to make the work more interesting.

We did not have a wireless at the school and as I could not play a musical instrument, decided, with the school committee, to purchase a small radio so we could hear select programmes and special broadcasts for singing and musical activities. To help pay for this piece of equipment we held a couple of table tennis evenings, one in Stan and Mary Hocking's garage and one at Bull Island, to raise the necessary money. The Avenue children had very little in the way of equipment as compared with schools today but they always made their own fun during the school breaks.

Some of the children had a considerable distance to travel to school and, as Avenue was not as yet serviced by any of the school-bus routes, it was generally accepted that the bicycle was the best means of transport. The Thomas children, Malcolm and Heather, rode the furthest distance and sometimes had trouble with the magpies swooping them during the nesting season. In the case

of the Richman children, they travelled to school by horse and buggy. (The buggy being without a hood). Joe travelled with them too. The children managed very well and in my time cannot remember any serious mishap. Not so in my case!

One of the Smith boys kindly offered me a lift to school one morning, just putting my bicycle on the back of the Austin 3-ton truck, without roping it down. Sure enough, over that bumpy road, the bike flew off the back of the truck and was mangled beyond repair. I had never liked that bike very much and was glad to replace it with a new second-hand one.

Avenue was foremost a Church which was leased by the Education Department as a school so the annual Harvest Festival was a great event. Before all the lovely fruit and produce was auctioned, the children gave a few short items which made the evening more entertaining and sociable. For the Lucindale Show which was held in the spring then, the children usually sent along a display of their school work.

Just a few weeks after I had been at Avenue I was confronted by a sleepy lizard on the front porch. Not having had any experience with these creatures, I got one of the older boys to cart it away on a shovel. I can remember having only one snake "scare" at the school. A snake disappeared down a hole at the back of the school, outside the boundary fence. The older boys watched the hole while I ran to the Post Office house for a kettle of boiling water. I am fairly sure that snake **got away!**

One more little story I must tell. I had begun seeing quite a bit of a certain young man and I think this prompted this discussion which I overheard. A couple of the children were trying to work out how old I was. One little chap said he thought I was 29 and then an older one said No, that wasn't right as I hadn't voted. The Avenue school was also a Polling Booth and in those days one had to be 21 before they could vote. The older boy was nearer the mark.

Perhaps I could mention some of the folk closely connected with the school. Mrs. A.D. Copping (an ex-school teacher) was the school committee secretary even though her family had long since grown up. Mr. Bill Hunter often gave the school a supply of firewood which he had cut with an axe. Mrs. Mary Hocking very kindly made hot Milo for the children in the cold weather (this was our own "free-milk scheme"). Mary Richman always sent along a lovely sponge cake for the children to share when one of her own children had a birthday. Daph and Bert Tilley lent their woolshed on many occasions for the folk of the district to have a dance and raise money for school funds.

I also had my 21st birthday in that shed thanks to the Tilleys and the people of Avenue.

Aunt Hilda and Mary were always sympathetic listeners when I called at the Post Office and "unwound" a little before starting the ride home to Walteela. Mary often set my hair too, so I could go to a Ball on a Friday evening.

All the parents strongly supported the school and with their assistance in providing motor vehicles we were able to go on educational visits to nearby towns and an occasional picnic to the beach at the end of the year.

In December we always had a special Christmas Break-up with the children each receiving a gift which had been specially packed by one of the big stores in Adelaide. The children would put on a short concert for the benefit of the

parents and Mrs. Thomson played the organ for us on these occasions.

It was during my time at Avenue that Mrs. Aitchison Grieve, Joe's mother, passed away. It was a sadness felt by all, Mrs. Grieve had brought back from Adelaide for me, one of the prettiest dress lengths which I had ever owned.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Smith divided their time between "Walteela" and their home in Kingston. With five children Keith, Max, Kathleen, Rosemary and Vida in the house at "Walteela", I had "ready-made" "brothers and sisters" which I thought was wonderful as I had only one sister, who was much younger than me. Life was never dull. Kathleen, Rosemary and I were keen basketball players and were members of the Lucindale basketball team which won three premierships in consecutive years. We enjoyed tennis too, either at Lucindale or the social matches we often had on the Avenue court. The latter was a favourite meeting place and at afternoon tea time when the cricketers joined us, Mary Hocking would send over lovely buttered scones topped with a slice of tomato.

My days at Avenue finished when I became engaged to a boy from a neighbouring district. Then, it was expected for a girl to resign from teaching if she was to be married. I can remember telling the Inspector this news during his last visit for the year.

Just before school "broke-up", the last time for me, Kathleen and Rosemary gave me a kitchen evening at Walteela, which I appreciated very much.

I had had a wonderful three years at Avenue with the children and especially with the people of Avenue.

Una C. Curkpatrick, nee Evans

## Avenue School 1954-1955

My memories include riding a bicycle to school with the Richman children along a dirt road, hot in summer and fog bound in winter. When the new road was being built a driver called Hedley with a beautiful red setter always happened to be going past with an empty gravel truck at 4 o'clock. With roads so muddy, we were glad of the ride home with our bikes in the back.

Mrs. Thomson always played the organ for our Christmas concerts which we put on even though there were generally only a dozen pupils in seven grades. One day we went out to play games leaving a naughty boy inside as punishment. However, he had the last laugh, as he locked the windows and door leaving us on the outside until he was ready to let us in.

At a fireworks night I met a Welshman named Taffy who was kind enough to sink a bore in the schoolyard so we could have a vegetable garden. The Paltridges donated a hand pump which was installed along with some wire netting surrounds and our garden was duly started.

The Thomas children came down with mumps one year and passed it along. When my time came I couldn't get to a doctor for a sickness certificate so was obliged to the visiting Baby Health sister who did the honours and attested that my swollen face really was mumps.

Christine Rivett was a new grade I who loved to act out play schools at home. I used to watch her imitating me word for word which was often quite salutary and amusing at the same time.

Being able to shop etc. only in holiday time I arranged a much needed visit to the hairdresser during term time. This meant closing the school for the day and taking "Leaping Lena" to Naracoorte. Of course the men from the Public Works Department chose this day to come and discuss building new toilets. The first man they asked told them exactly where I was but they were tactful enough to make no mention of it.

Before closing the school due to lack of pupil numbers, I had my 21st birthday. The mothers were kind enough to come to the school with afternoon tea and give me a pleasant memory of that time.

I always remember the many freesias and other bulbs making a carpet under the pine trees and the occasional echidna burrowing down in the earth, disappearing under our very eyes. School life wasn't exactly easy although I was young enough to be resilient to the hardships and to enjoy the tennis, table tennis, basketball, dances etc. which were all available somewhere near by.

June Parham, nee Patterson

## School Days

Keith Copping

Being three miles from Avenue Range and having to ride a horse to school and there being no other children on this road, I did not start school until the January after my sixth birthday. Dad rode to school with me and picked me up afterwards for the first two days and then I was on my own. I still remember being afraid of getting lost. Dad had arranged for some of the older students and the teacher to catch and saddle the horse for me. My first teacher in 1933 was Miss Edna Vickery and I thought she was heading for middle age. It was only some ten years later that I discovered that she had her 21st birthday while she was at Avenue! The senior citizens of the school when I started were Ray Hocking, Thelma Rivett and Sam Altman. Of Ray and Thelma, one left at Easter time and the other at the May holidays. Bill Rivett was in Grade 5, Ted in Grade 4, Noel Rivett in Grade 3 and Beryl Rivett and Brenda Altman in Grade 2. At times we had Rex and Colin Jones, cousins of the Hockings, at school. I was a left-hander and naturally tried to write left-handed, but I got a rap over the knuckles with a ruler until I learned to write right-handed.

In May 1935, Miss Vickery was replaced by Miss Watkins who finished the year and was replaced by Miss Brooksby. 1937 saw Miss Val Thomas from Wellington running the school. She was engaged to Ron Knowling from Mundulla. In those days there was no easy road to Desert Camp. Instead, to get to Bordertown one would go to Naracoorte taking 1½ to 2 hours depending on the vehicle and current road conditions, and then a two or more hour drive to Bordertown. I can still remember the excitement on the two faces when Ron made the long trip to pick up his soon-to-be bride. 1938 saw the arrival of Miss Bell McLean as the teacher at Avenue.

At one time a family named McIntyre moved into the old railway cottage near the crossing. Mr. McIntyre was a truckie in the Highways Department and had an eight year old son, Edwin. At that stage Darcy Rivett was only in Grade 1 or

2 but had no fear of picking up stumpy lizards and young Edwin was terrified of the lizards. Darcy would pick up a stumpy and start towards him and Edwin would rush home, screaming swearwords, "You \_\_\_\_\_ I'll tell my \_\_\_\_\_ old man on you". In the end Darcy would just pick up a lump of pine bark and it did the trick.

Mr. Oz Rivett had his Dodge truck on the Highways and apparently Darcy developed an interest in trucks at a very early age. On his second or third day at school he arrived dragging a macaroni box on a piece of string, explaining that it was his truck.

## Avenue Range Church and School

Brenda Hensel

For many years the focal point of Avenue Range was the Church and School which was built in 1901 and was also used for meetings, dances and voting.

Zephania Rivett of 'Downer Farm' who was my grandfather, was a Church Steward and an active member for many years around 1915.

The younger members of Zephania's family of eleven - Will, May, Perc, George, Soph, Ethel (still living), Myrtle, Jack, Os (my father), Bob and Gordon - all went to school there. The youngest, Gordon, left in 1917 and his brother George's eldest child, Gert, started in 1923, followed by Thelma, Bill and Ted leaving a lapse of only six years when no Rivetts were attending the school. In 1930, Os Rivett's eldest child, Noel, began his schooling followed by his brothers and sisters, Beryl, Darcy, Brenda, June, Edna, Helen and Joy. The youngest of the family, Jeff, was too young to be educated there. The Avenue Range School often had very small attendances and at one stage when the enrollment was six pupils, five of them were Rivetts.

I have some good memories of my early years spent at the School and Church. When my husband and I returned to the district in 1954 we worshipped there and our children John, Rosalie and Margaret were christened there.

## Chapter 6

### THE 30's TO 50's

#### Charles and Mary Smith — "The Valley" and "Walteela"

John Charles and Mary Ann Smith both came from families who had lived in the Kingston district for three generations. They sold their property on the Coorong and bought 2,455 acres of land from Aitchison Grieve in March 1938 for 1100 pounds.

Because of the attractive terrain, a long fertile flat with dense scrubby hills on one side and gently rolling hills on the other, it seemed natural to call the place "The Valley".

As there was no house on the property Mary stayed in Kingston so that the younger children could go to school. Charles built a hut and camped there during the week, trapping rabbits, fencing and clearing the land. He would return to Kingston each weekend to have his tuckerbox refilled. One of the first jobs was to put a fence around the hut and to plant some fruit trees. During the first summer Mary and Max who was still a schoolboy, would take turns in going to water the trees, catching the train in Kingston about 7 a.m. to travel as far as Bull Island, then walk the three miles to the garden and spend the day drawing water from the well at the bottom of the hill and carrying it in buckets up the hill to give each tree a good drink. In the evening they would walk back to Bull Island to catch the train arriving home about 8 p.m.

There were a lot of big old wattle trees nearby so Mary enlisted the aid of her old uncle, Sam Cooper to teach Keith, Max and herself to strip wattle bark. There was a market for wattle bark as it was used in tanning leather. In this way they earned enough money to buy a windmill, thus making the watering of the garden much easier. Fifty years later those trees are still bearing their annual crop.

After Max left school the hut was enlarged and Mary and the family all moved out to live on the farm. Keith and Max both worked on the property and occasionally for neighbours. The three girls, Kathleen, Rosemary and Vida, attended school at Avenue Range, either driving a horse and gig or riding their bikes. On three days of the week they could catch the train at Bull Island and take their bikes with them to ride home.

Charles worked hard setting two hundred rabbit traps which he would walk around night and morning, as well as doing the fencing and clearing. The money for the rabbit skins supported the family while the land was being cleared and being brought into production.

In the particularly wet winter of 1942 it was too wet to cross the flooded drain and swamps to go to school so the girls had correspondence lessons. Rosemary remembers well the thrill of opening those big brown envelopes with all the exciting lessons and the wonderful smell of the fresh new papers.

One exciting day in November 1941 the Governor, Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey, came to the Avenue School. The girls had set off for school that day dressed up in their best dresses, driving their horse and gig, and to Rosemary's horror when she got down to open a gate, she stepped on the hem of her dress and ripped it from neck to knee. When the Governor arrived he asked to meet any little girl named Rosemary (as he had a daughter Rosemary), so to her embarrassment she was pushed to the front with her dress hanging half off and pinned up with safety pins. The Governor arrived earlier than expected, at lunch time, while Miss McLean was at home for lunch, so the children all crowded around his car on the side of the road.

Early in 1943 the family moved to "Walteela" to manage the property for S.E. Tavender and after his death they leased that property and continued to live in the old stone house. Rosemary and Vida continued their schooling from there, either riding bikes or a pony or getting a ride with the Grieve children who drove a horse and gig from "Fellwood" every day.

Another exciting day, 15th August 1945 was the day Peace was declared. Mrs. Limbert arrived at the school to tell the children and a holiday was declared - quite unofficially - and they all went out to "Walteela" and had a chop picnic at the spot about where Brian Copping's woolshed now stands.

In the years after the war the company of J.C. Smith and Sons became well known for the good, reliable strain of strawberry clover seed which they grew and harvested on "The Valley" and sold all over South Australia.

Kathleen White and Rosemary Williams

## Max and Mary Smith — "The Valley"

My mother Elizabeth Thomas was born at Avenue Range in 1887, eldest child of ganger Robert Thomas and wife Barbara; the other children were William, Lilian (Mrs. Dow), Fred, Vic, Lou, Bert and Hilda (Mrs. Thomson).

I left Central Telephone Exchange in 1947 and came to my mothers' family home to help with the Avenue Range Post Office which had been managed by our family since 1915. I was there for about 6 years, also spent some time at the Kingston Post Office and was relieving at the Lucindale Post Office at the time of the change over from the Miss Rabbits' shop to the new Post Office building.

I married Max Smith in May 1958; and lived at The Valley and had two children, Fiona and Timothy.

Before the children were school age we gave a home to Mr. Peter Baldwin Wochatick - a wool classer of reknown in his earlier years. He trapped rabbits on

the property and helped in the garden, the children adored him as he belonged to the pre-T.V. era and could recite, sing or juggle and tell stories, all of which he did without much prompting. He died one morning while going around his traps in 1964; he was 83 years of age.

During the children's years at the Lucindale Area School we boarded quite a few school teachers, some of them were school bus drivers - we became fond of all of them and still keep in touch with the majority of them and their families.

Max and I were particularly proud of our home and garden, Max laboured for the old stone mason who built the house from Mt. Gambier stone and he was a hard task master, Max always maintained he knew every stone personally after lugging them up the ladder only to have the old chap reject them and want others. The garden, over the years, became the home for lots of native birds who thrived in the cat-free environment and learnt to take food from our hands or the kitchen window sill; we belonged to the Bird Atlassing Club of Australia and found it very interesting; it was a hobby we shared with Max's brother Keith.

The children both left home to further their careers, Fiona to study in Adelaide and Tim to join the Navy. Fiona is now a podiatrist at Mildura and Tim is a radio technician.

Max bought a small block in Lucindale for our retirement, ensuring that it had plenty of trees and birds to keep me happy; but it wasn't meant to be as he died in his sleep in May 1985 on his 60th birthday - so he didn't have to leave his beloved "Valley".

Mary Smith, nee Le Strange

## Jabe and Rosemary Williams — "Karlakeena"

After Rosemary married Jabe Williams they moved back to their part of "The Valley" - Karlakeena - and lived in a galvanised iron garage for a few years - about a mile from the old "Valley" house and they milked cows in the old "Valley" shed.

The next year, in the wettest August for many years, and after a week of constant rain and thunderstorms, their son Andrew was born 6½ weeks prematurely on the back seat of their bogged car. They had been attempting to get out to the main road to Kingston. There were no roads or houses in that area in those days so Jabe was faced with a long walk to "Walteela" and when he returned on the tractor about two hours later he was greeted by a tiny baby boy howling on the back seat, but everyone survived the ordeal.

Within a few years they had a gravel road, built a new house, a drain was constructed with a beautiful solid bridge and they had a telephone so life was made much easier for them. The four children, Andrew, Patricia, Sally and Nicholas all attended the Avenue Sunday School and went by bus to the Lucindale Area School for the main part of their education.

Andrew is married and he and his wife, Jan, have two children - Nerissa and Peter - and they have recently built a new house on the property. Andrew and Nik both work at home and help run the property. They have recently bought a section of brother Max's land - the original "The Valley". Their two daughters

have left the district. Tricia is married and she and her husband, Chris, live and work in Adelaide. Sally lives in the Northern Territory.

Rosemary Williams

## Alan and Shirley Barnett and Family — “The Glade”

G.B. Barnett & Sons from Reedy Creek purchased our first land in the Hundred of Minniecrow from Howard Flint of Kingston in 1943. The rest was purchased from Mrs. Gavin Limbert in 1949. The whole property was in its natural state when the Barnetts took over. It was over-run with rabbits and carried only one sheep to five acres. Stock were watered by wedge holes as there were no windmills. Initially the property was worked from Reedy Creek, Alan and Peter camping in a tin hut when working for any length of time. The sheep were crutched at Bull Island and driven back to Reedy Creek for shearing and dipping. Riding up on day trips to check the stock and water, they were often invited in for a drink or a cup of tea with Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Limbert at Bull Island or if riding the short track, which was the old mail road, with Mr. and Mrs. Bill Homfray at Long Island. This was always an enjoyable and very welcome break during a long day.

We named our place one day just after we were engaged when we came up from Reedy Creek in a horse and gig to pick out a spot for our home. It was the only clearing amongst the timber along the Minniecrow road, a lovely sight. We fell in love with the spot immediately and decided that “The Glade” was an appropriate name. Our house was started in August 1949. We hoped it would be finished to move into after our marriage in January 1950, but because of building restrictions, caused through World War Two, we were unable to purchase materials and only had a permit to build three rooms.

We arrived after our honeymoon to two partly finished rooms. We had a Simpson No. 2 wood stove, table and chairs, a bed and the bare essentials. There was no bath or shower for the first few months. We washed and showered under the hose each day after the sun had warmed the water, keeping nip for each other in case of unexpected callers. Bore water (260 grains of salt to the gallon) was laid on from a windmill. As the cooler weather crept in, we heated water and bathed in a tub in front of a lovely warm stove. Washing was done outside, but we did have troughs, rubbing board and copper.

We did not feel like newcomers, both having lived at Reedy Creek all our lives. We both knew the locals through cricket, local dances and other social events. We were given a welcome by Bill, John and Dick Paltridge (then teenagers) who woke us one night by turning a hose on us through the bedroom window.

From Avenue at that time, there was a metal road to Cairnbank, but just a winding bush track to “The Glade” and on to Keilira, along which trees met overhead for most of the way. It was well known locally as “Lovers Lane”. We had to wait 15 months for a telephone, just before our first child was born. We had to install it ourselves and hook it up with the party line. We were happy and did not look to go out very much in those early days. Of course life had its ups

and downs. One of the downs being a first attempt at bread making. It turned out too hard to eat so we threw it out for the dogs. It proved too hard for them until a few weeks later when it rained and softened the “bread” enough for them to get their teeth into it. It disappeared eventually. Another attempt was even worse. The dough would not rise. It was duly thrown out, in fact, buried out of sight until the next day when the sun came out to just the right temperature, raising the dough in a healthy white mound above ground level. Droughts, bushfires, blow flies etc. were quite minor compared with these early disasters!

Improvements came gradually on the land. In the summer of 1951-52 myxomatosis was introduced which wiped out an enormous number of rabbits. Trace elements also made a huge difference to the land at that time. This made it economical to develop and improve pastures. Two sub-artesian bores were put down in 1964 - one to water paddocks and another at the house. This made an unbelievable improvement to the flower and vegetable gardens, shrubs, trees and lawns. Until then, bath water, washing water, tea pot dregs etc. were saved during the summer months to water the garden. A few very special plants received pure rain water. The stock close to the house are also watered now from the bore.

Our four children were born between 1951 and 1960. Merrilyn-Anne born 24th March, 1951 married local grazier Andrew McWaters. At present they have three children and live on their Conmurra property “Stone Hut”. Philip Alan born on 2nd December, 1952 married Lucindale school teacher from Glenelg, Lindy Brooke. At present they have one child and have a home in Lucindale. Keith Wayne born 24th December 1955 has a home in Avenue Range. Both Philip and Keith run “The Glade” property as well as other properties each has acquired separately. John Lindsay born 10th April, 1960 has a home and a hairdressing business in Robe. All attended Lucindale Area School. We drove Merrilyn to Avenue every day to catch the school bus. We often became bogged as the roads were bad at that time especially during the winter. After two years of this we boarded the bus driver. The road gradually improved in the 1960's until it was made a main road and bitumised in the late 1960's.

We used to take our sheep to be shorn at “Nettlina” Reedy Creek every year until 1955 when our woolshed was built. Other sheds, shearers quarters, etc. were added as we were able to afford them. Our home was extended to its present size in 1960 to accommodate our family. We are very proud of “The Glade” which we and our children have built up to what it is today. We also feel very proud and fortunate to have been members of the Avenue Range community for 36 years.

## Lyn and Sheila England — “Shepherd's Hill”

When asked to recall some memories of my life on the Avenue Range, my most vivid recollections were, 1) The extreme kindness of our neighbours, and 2) The appalling conditions of the roads during winter.

In October, 1951, after weeks of building delays, we decided to move from “Mt. Scott” to the Avenue Range even though our house was still incomplete.

On the very morning that we arrived with our first load of furniture etc., the delayed builders also arrived to install the ceilings! Thankfully my as-yet-untried stove worked efficiently, or meals for that day would have been very limited. The site of our home was close to what had been a camping area for drovers in years gone by, so the obvious name for the property was "Shepherd's Hill". Lynn's Father had purchased the land from Mr. Hubert Banks some years earlier, but I understand that it was originally a part of the Keilira Station.

Our neighbours were Mr. and Mrs. P. Paltridge, 2 miles to the South; Mr. and Mrs. Romie Paltridge and Mr. and Mrs. Lou Paltridge, approximately 4 miles to the South; the Vandepier property (only Murray being in residence at that time) 3 miles due East; Mr. and Mrs. J. Kelly at Keilira Station, 5 miles to our North; and "Mt. Scott", home of the England family, 6 miles due West. We had lived at "Mt. Scott" for 6½ years prior to moving to our new home, and although we still had lots of forest birds at Shepherd's Hill, I missed the incredible variety of water-birds which prevailed at "Mt. Scott" when the swamps filled up annually - usually from late July until October. One year at "Mt. Scott" when the flood gates had been opened near Millicent, such a volume of water came down the Reedy Creek that we were quite isolated. To reach Kingston we needed to travel in a horse-drawn jinker from the homestead in order to be able to cross the creek. We then transferred to a car which was left on the Kingston side of the creek, often needing chains on the wheels to negotiate the muddy track for some distance. The time of our return from the town was prearranged so that we could be duly met again and safely ford the creek. During the year in which Judith was born, Lynn took the precaution of building a single-plank bridge over the foundations of the old bullock bridge, and set up a hand rail to help me in case we needed to cross without the aid of the horse-drawn vehicle. Thankfully I did not have to make use of it. Our only contact with the outside world was a party telephone line from Mt. Scott to the Blackford homestead (4 miles distant) for use in an emergency. With the advent of the large drains in later years, conditions improved greatly, even though graziers in the area were concerned that a large amount of fresh water was being drained away. The flooded area with which we were familiar is now the Mt. Scott National Park! What a transformation!

"Shepherd's Hill" was not nearly so isolated as "Mt. Scott". The morning after we had arrived at our new home we received a visit from Mr. Phil Paltridge who brought with him a bucket almost full of fresh milk, "For the children", he said, "until you have time to get a house-cow". This was one of the most thoughtful gifts our family ever received, and it gives me great pleasure to record it here. Our 'milkman' continued his deliveries until we acquired our own cows. At Christmas time I suppose I should not have been surprised to receive an invitation from Miss Una Evans (now Mrs. Curkpatrick) for our children to attend the Christmas Tree and social at the Avenue Range School, but this was another very pleasing and unexpected kindness. Our eldest children were then receiving Correspondence School lessons, and had very little opportunity to mix with other children. That Christmas social, with Father Christmas bringing a gift for them as well as for the Avenue school-children, was a never-to-be-forgotten incident in our children's young lives.

I mentioned earlier the doubtful state of our winter roads. Nobody ventured

out unless it was necessary. In wet years, for us to reach Avenue Range we had to wind our way along a well-consolidated scrub track until we reached Mr. Phil Paltridge's home. Here we turned through his front gate, out through his back gate, then through the scrub again until we re-joined the 'road' near Minniecrow. Water covered many sections of the road from there to "Cairnbank"; and from Avenue Range to Naracoorte the whole distance was a series of pot-holes, so all motorists learned to travel cautiously for the sake of both their passengers and their vehicle.

The 63 Telephone party-line north from Kingston was in operation as from 1942, and this was gradually extended to our area, ultimately having 14 subscribers. We were responsible for keeping our sections of line free from tree-branches, and Lynn undertook to check mechanical faults when necessary. On December 5th, 1966, the Keilira automatic exchange was working and the 63 line was taken out of service in March 1967. Some of the wire used in this line in 1942 was wire which had been used in the intercolonial telegraph line from Kingston to Melbourne from 1858 to 1867, so this particular wire was in use for 100 years. This data was compiled from subscriber cards, per favour of Mr. J. Victory.

In 1956 the Keilira school was opened with 13 initial students. Mr. J. Kelly had donated the land to the Education Department, and a transportable building placed there before the beginning of the school year. A school committee contributed a necessary windmill, and popular dances and socials were held to raise funds for school cupboards etc. With the development of country and more employees engaged, the school numbers grew to over 40 pupils, necessitating a second building and a second teacher. The school also served the community as a church, and for meetings. Although it was forced to close in 1981 from lack of pupils (who transferred either to Lucindale or Kingston Area Schools) the building is still being used as a tennis clubhouse when tennis matches are held on the community courts, and as a Church twice-monthly.

Mr. Kelly sold the Keilira property in the fifties. Mr. P. Haines bought the northern section; Messrs. A.J. and P.A. McBride Pty. Ltd. bought the homestead section; and Messrs. T. George, A. McLean and D. Trott each bought sections of the more southerly areas. With increasing population we began to feel quite civilized. Our tracks became gravelled roads. As the result of a petition signed by 22 land-holders and submitted to the Director of Posts and Telegraphs on April 5th, 1956, a mail-delivery service from Kingston to Wimpinmerit was commenced on July 1st, 1957. The initial contractor was Mr. Archie Gibbs, who received 1 shilling and 3 pence per mile! On April 27th, 1959, Mr. Noel Dowling took over the mailrun and served the district for many years. This service amalgamated in 1982 to form what is now the Kingston-Comung-Wimpinmerit run. (Information received from Kingston P/Master, Mr. J. Wilde).

Steady development of pastures took place, scrub being gradually replaced by lucerne on the range, and clovers and perennial grasses on the flats. We usually planned to develop 400 acres annually. By 1962 the road from Kingston past Shepherd's Hill was bitumized. This was an unexpected achievement! and certainly one which I had never thought possible. 240V Electricity was in the pipe-line by 1971 - another boon! No more candles, kerosene lamps, no more

kerosene friges, or 32V windlights for power! Now, in 1986, most homes have 240V deep-freezers, 'fridges', washing-machines, and colour television. Even videos and computers are appearing. Effective fire-fighting units are owned by most land-holders, with a special Keilira Community fire-truck, with 2-way radio, ready for emergency. In just 35 years what a transformation has taken place!

Answering your questions, our children were born as follows: Twins Peter John and Edith Pauline 21.4.45; Judith Frances 6.10.47; Jeffrey Lynn 8.6.49; Christopher Robert 27.12.50. Education was by Correspondence School until 1956, Robert being the only one of our children who attended a school for all of his education. By gaining scholarships the children were able to continue secondary schooling in Adelaide - the girls at Walford, and the boys at Urrbrae Agricultural School. Tertiary courses followed. Peter gained his Bachelor of Agricultural Science; taught at Armidale University, gained his Master's degree in Agricultural Economics; taught at Melbourne University, then at Roseworthy. He married Miss M. Rowell in 1967. They have a son and a daughter, and now live on the Blackford property where they breed A.M.S. sheep. Pauline gained her Bachelor of Arts degree, some subjects being studied as an external student from Adelaide University.

She and Mr. R.S. Johnston were married in 1968, and settled at Kerewong grazing property, Avenue South. They have three daughters. Judith gained her Bachelor of Science degree, then took up scientific Agricultural Research at Waite, then later at the Adelaide University. After some years she applied, and was accepted, for a Computer programmer course. In 1972 she and Mr. D.S. Stewart were married, and soon after moved to a grazing property, Cherrita, Avenue North. They have 2 sons and a daughter. Jeffrey studied at Melbourne University where he gained his Vet. Science degree. He worked with the Bordertown Vet. Clinic until forced to retire temporarily through illness. He and Miss A. Tindall were married in South Africa in 1974. They have 2 sons and 1 daughter, and now run a grazing property near the Kingston-Keilira road. Robert interrupted his secondary studies when he gained an American Field Scholarship at the age of 16 years, and spent 1 year in North America. On his return he completed his Matric. year with A gradings in each subject. He then spent 2 years at Marcus Oldham Agricultural College, and topped his course. From here he returned to Shepherd's Hill and began to put into practice valuable experience gained at M.A.O.C. He and Miss M. Warner were married in 1975, and they also have 2 sons and 1 daughter; and are now running the Shepherd's Hill grazing property, Avenue Range. All 5 of our children take an active part in Community life.

## Clarrie and Flo Thomas

Clarrie Thomas visited the South East looking for a property. Liking the virgin country he finally purchased an undeveloped block from Jim McKie, a man who spent his time working for his neighbours. Clarrie was sure that he could develop the area into a good grazing block - a goal which he achieved over the years.

The family arrived at Avenue on Easter weekend 1949 from Canowie Belt - ten miles east of Jamestown.

Flo's first thoughts were not very happy ones as she felt it was really "black-fellow's country" and they could have it back as far as she was concerned. But over the years things improved with everyone doing their share of the work.

They brought most of their farming plant by train from Canowie Belt. It was lucky that the truck containing the tractor was left at the Lucindale station as the train was derailed between Lucindale and Avenue. They soon put the plant to work clearing the scrub and sowing down the pastures. Fences and windmills had to be erected and bores drilled.

Their first few months of living at Avenue were very different from their life at Canowie Belt. Their property was isolated, had no modern amenities and the roads were shocking. Kangaroos hopping past the bedroom windows at night kept them awake. On one occasion they had friends from Canowie Belt to stay with them and, because of the state of the road to Naracoorte, decided to travel on the railcar. This was the most memorable trip they had ever taken as the railcar rocked and swayed so much that it was necessary to hold on to their seats lest they be shaken off.

They added two rooms to Jim McKie's house and lived there for fifteen years before building a Mt. Gambier stone home of eight rooms. They also built a four-stand dairy and chaff shed when they were milking up to twenty seven Jersey cows, selling their cream to Penola and Millicent. With the improvement in their finances they were able to build a shearing shed, implement shed, fowl run and pig sties.

Flo decided to rear turkeys, as she had at Canowie Belt, and to this end purchased a handsome turkey gobbler. She put him in a high netted yard thinking that he would be safe, but one of the greyhounds got into the yard and killed the gobbler.

One year was particularly wet forcing Clarrie to use the tractor to bring in the milking herd as the water was so deep. One day they had a strong west wind which blew the water across the flat into the cattle yards. It had so much white foam on it that they thought the Kingston Beach had moved inland!

Roads were in a disastrous state with sandhills in summer and water in winter. That same wet year the road was flooded for six weeks making it necessary to carry rubber boots whenever they were making the journey to Avenue. Kangaroos were always a hazard for which they had to be alert. Driving their two eldest children to the Avenue school, a distance of eight miles, was frequently difficult. On one occasion Flo could not drive up a sandhill so walked to Cairnbank, collected the children and walked back to the vehicle to drive home. When she arrived there, Romie Paltridge, Councillor for the Minniecrow area in the Lacepede District Council, was visiting. He was able over the years, to pressure the Council into improving the road until now it is a good all-weather one. After having such poor roads for some thirty years they are very grateful.

The family attended the Avenue Church and Sunday School for many years and Clarrie became circuit steward in the Lucindale Church. He also played cricket for Avenue for several years and then the whole family became tennis stalwarts.

The three eldest children were born at Jamestown and Neville and Jeanette at Kingston. Malcolm and Neville have both married and work the home property. Heather was shop assistant at Avenue for many years before her marriage to Garry Sanders and move to Chinchilla, Queensland. Marilyn worked in an office in Adelaide. She married Paul Ryan and lives in Adelaide. Jeanette worked in a bank in Adelaide and Naracoorte and has married local man, Michael Rivett.

Over the years things have changed considerably and the family now live in a very changed place. 240 volt power and bitumen roads have been great factors in that change, making Avenue a very pleasant place in which to live.

## David and Judith Mugford — “Seriston”

We came back to live in the Avenue District in 1953 shortly after the death of my mother. I had married David in Adelaide and lived there while he was working as a bank clerk and studying accountancy. The transition from bank clerk to farmer/grazier was a giant step not without its difficulties. However, it was negotiated quite successfully and now David is the “complete” grazier.

My father, Aitchison Grieve, made some of the “Fellwood” land over to me and since that time we have been able to buy other areas from Mattners and from his estate. We have worked in various partnerships within the family and have managed to clear, develop and redevelop most of the “Fellwood” land, greatly increasing the carrying capacity of the property.

We have kept up and expanded the Angus Cattle Stud started by my father in 1945. We have had some success in carcass competitions at various times.

Our sons, Jim and Robert, both attended the Lucindale Area and Naracoorte High Schools and Roseworthy Agricultural College. Jim returned to the family farm in 1977 and now has his own home. Rob joined the Department of Agriculture, and after a period managing the research farm at Struan, is now a senior livestock officer at Mt. Gambier.

Judith Mugford

## Chapter 7

### HOME FROM THE WAR

When peace was declared in 1945 and young men returned to the district the Government saw fit to buy underdeveloped land from graziers who had large farms.

Grieves, Limberts, McBains, Seckers and Fosters were some from whom they purchased sections.

Portable homes were erected in Lucindale where families lived while the men camped in a shed, which had been erected on a site on one of the blocks.

The blocks were all cleared, ploughed and seeded, fences and homes were built then blocks were allotted.

In Avenue, district blocks were allotted to Ross Stevens, George Hansberry, Jim McDowall, Jim Bourne, Arthur Hensel, Clive Baker, Denis Small, Max Ewer, Len Miegel, Ted Maughan, Rex Treloar, Alwin Quast, Hugh Bawden, Alwin Wachtel, Bill Tiller, Harry Lomman, Tim Hughes and George Breaker.



*Lands Department ploughing in Limberts 1954.*

## Clive and Beth Baker — “Lanalea”

Clive and Beth Baker with their three children, Jeffrey aged 6, Douglas 4 and Colin 1 year moved to their War Settlement farm “Lanalea” section 253, 254

and 255 hundred of Townsend in July 1954. Clive and Beth had previously lived on Clive's parents farm at Two Wells until 1950, then at Willow Creek, via Victor Harbor. They moved to Penola and commenced working with the L.D.E. in 1952.

When they moved to their farm they lived the first 3 months in an Armco shed while their house was being built. The big problem was the lack of access roads. The L.D.E. had dozed a track, now the West Avenue Road, but it ended at their place, leaving 5 miles of scrub between them and the railway line. When leaving the property it was always a decision as to which way they should go as the hills were sandy and the flats wet. To go to Kingston they could go through Mr. Beggs property - (now Wayne Hancocks) and then to the Bowaka Road - or by the new sandy track to Miegel's corner and then to Avenue. Later the council dozed a track through the scrub to the railway line, but as there was no railway crossing it meant travelling through Mr. Rivett's property to the 17 mile crossing. On one occasion they found the water much deeper than expected on the flat near the crossing. The water reached the step of the Austin truck.

Schooling was a problem, Jeffrey had commenced schooling at Penola so for the second half of 1954 and 1955 he received correspondence lessons. The West Avenue Road was metalled in the latter part of 1955 and a school bus route to Lucindale was established in 1956. The children rode their bikes to Miegels corner (to meet the bus) weather permitting. Jeff continued at Lucindale until he gained his Intermediate certificate, he then attended Unley High School and Adelaide University graduating in medicine in 1970. Doug did the Area School course at Lucindale to leaving level. Colin attended Lucindale then Naracoorte High School where he matriculated, then to Flinders University where he gained his B.A. and Dip. Ed. Jillian was born at Naracoorte in 1957. Her schooling commenced in 1963, the year the school bus was re-routed, as a railway crossing had been made opposite Arthur Hensel's and the West Avenue Road metalled to that point. This meant the school bus now passed the gate. Jill attended Lucindale to Year 10 and Naracoorte High School for years 11 and 12. She trained as a registered nurse at the Adelaide Childrens Hospital and did midwifery at Bendigo.

Kevin was born in 1959 at Naracoorte. He attended Lucindale Area School until year 11 then Naracoorte High School for year 12 and then Roseworthy Agricultural College where he gained his Roseworthy Diploma in Agriculture.

The farm has seen many changes. The 580 acres of flat country was initially boundary fenced and divided into 4 paddocks - there are now 18 paddocks. The scrub country of approximately 950 acres has all been cleared and established into 22 paddocks of lucerne based pasture. Carrying capacity has gone from 400 sheep and 6 cows to 5,000 D.S.E.

They purchased section 26 - (which included the home) when Mary and the late Max Smith's property "The Valley" was auctioned on 25th September, 1985. Kevin married Jacqueline Watson on the 7th December, 1985 and made it their home. Doug who has spent all his life on the home farm, married Rita Quorn-Smith on February 1st, 1986 and will remain to manage the original acres.

Clive and Beth retired to Victor Harbour in June 1981.

## Hugh Bawden – "Dunreath"

With the forthcoming Sesqui-Centenary, for South Australia and the Bi-Centenary which will encompass the whole of Australia, it is now a popular pastime to evaluate what groups of people have been doing over the past few generations and to put down on paper, either in book form or in some paper back type of thing a history of what has been accomplished.

The West Avenue Range group of people will qualify for a special mention in our local archives.

When we refer to the people of West Avenue Range we are referring to a unique group of people who are the product of the successful Soldier Settlement Scheme of South Australia.

This has not just happened, it was brought about by hard work on the part of the people living in the West Avenue Range area and by the expertise of the South Australian Lands Department, the South Australian Agriculture Department, and the Lands Development Executive, which enabled suitable applicants and their families to be placed on blocks of land in the South East of South Australia.

The L.D.E. - or the Lands Department Executive - was the body which undertook the enormous job of developing the land to such a standard that it would support a Soldier Settler and his family in the initial phases of his taking up residence as a potential farmer.

The settler was expected to fence and further develop the land so that it would support him and his family and to enable him to pay for the house, fencing improvements, buildings etc., a rent would be struck in perpetuity.

Most, if not all, applicants eventually worked with gangs of men developing the land for future settlers.

The full and true story of the activities of the Lands Department Executive in the South East of South Australia has not yet been written, I am just scratching the surface.

As this story is about the lives, the activities and origins of the people in the West Avenue Range, it is appropriate that we mention the circumstances by which we came to be living in the area.

I had been in the R.A.A.F. and had been on operational duty in the South West Pacific, and later in a bomber squadron in England. After discharge from the R.A.A.F. I had been mainly involved with farming activities on the West Coast of South Australia and for a time in the South East of South Australia. I had long ago made up my mind to have a go at the much talked about Soldier Settlement Scheme.

So with my youthful background, and with my ancestors' pioneering spirit in me (they were pioneers on Yorke Peninsula), I joined the Lands Development Executive at Penola in 1949.

The first job in the L.D.E. was to be put on the rabbit eradication programme on land being developed for a Soldier Settler family to live on. In most cases, if not all, the land was over-run with large numbers of rabbits.

The land then being developed for blocks had been in and around Penola, Mt. Gambier and Naracoorte area and it was with great excitement we greeted the decision to move operations to what was called the Western Division, which

was roughly a line West from Millicent-Hatherleigh to the Furner-Lucindale area.

In December 1949, four L.D.E. workers, (one foreman and three tractor drivers), of which I was one, loaded up an old ex-military truck with camping gear and headed for the Mount Hope area and set up camp in the middle of a stringy bark range.

Our three tractors and twin disc ploughs followed.

After setting up camp under very primitive conditions we proceeded to plough land that had been ploughed many years previously.

We wondered why there was no grass growing and why the previous owners had not made more of an effort to do more with the land. We put it down to the tremendous numbers of rabbits - the whole South East seemed to be infested with rabbits!

We had been working a few days at ploughing and soon realised that we were going to have to put up with very dusty conditions. The D4 crawler tracks in 3rd gear would throw up dust and dirt necessitating changing the oil-bath air-cleaners every day, not to mention the dust that we would breath in our lungs.

One night we were reflecting on the day's work and thought how good it would be to get rid of the dust in our throats with a beer. One of the lads thought there was a hotel at Rendelsham, he remembered a tall building there - so I was delegated to jump on my Harley Davidson motor bike and reconnoitre the area, but alas, I returned with the sad news that the tall building was in fact the chickory mill.

We had been ploughing for several weeks when a dear old gentlemen came over to us and explained that we would be wasting our time doing all that work as nothing would grow anyway. He knew people who had tried and failed.

This shook us at first. Had we not access to the finest brains in agriculture in Australia behind us, and had we not done an Agricultural course at Wingfield and had been briefed on pasture, trace elements, superphosphate and the beautiful rainfall in the South East? So we just put the old fellow's comments down to the backwardness of the South East and kept ploughing on.

The rabbits were so bad that whenever we reached the centre of an area being ploughed, many rabbits would be left running about. We used to carry a bucket on the D4's filled with stones, and became quite experts in the eradication of the pest by throwing a well-aimed rock.

When our Supervisor was granted a block of land, our gang drove over to Penola to attend a farewell in his honour. Among the many visitors were L.D.E. personnel, local graziers and the chairman of the Lands Development Executive, Doctor Allan Callaghan (Sir Allan Callaghan), "The little doctor" as he was affectionately known to us, gave a speech in honour of our departing Supervisor and gave us the history of events that led to the formation of the L.D.E., and we got it straight from the "Horses mouth", so to speak.

The Little Doctor explained how, during the war he and Land Board members had visited the South East and found that it was backward in all respects of agriculture, and over-run with rabbits. It was owned by persons who held great tracts of land that they could never manage properly.

Something obviously had to be done urgently, so the Lands Development Executive was born.

The Doc got onto his favourite saying that this country would carry 4 sheep to the acre with modern agricultural practices. "If you don't know how, come and see us and we will show you how".

In hind-sight we know that his words were true and that eventually many thousands of acres were developed in the South East, and in fact we started a world-wide trend.

After listening to the Little Doctor we arrived back at Mount Hope camp with renewed vigour, and the day came when we received two brand new tractors, the very first new ones and the only ones for several years. The original tractors we had were all ex-Army and ex-Navy.

We never had much time to think about the good life, the speed with which we were developing the land for Soldier Settlement was all that counted.

We could handle 10 hours a day on the D4, but the 12 hour day was tough and the dust and racket from the D4's tracks almost drove us in to insensibility as we worked a 6 day week. The men would sometimes become ill and would have to see the old ex-military Doctor, (Doctor Pavy) at Naracoorte, and one day there were just too many L.D.E. blokes. "You do twice as much as anyone else and then wonder why you are crook," he said.

There was a well-known supervisor who was appropriately nicknamed because of his huge feet, especially when one of them was placed on the accelerator of a vehicle. He loved to go across country, if it was at all possible, especially if it was to check on one of the gangs, just to see if they were starting on time as their time sheets were suggesting.

Our gang was favoured with an early (6.00 a.m.) morning visit once. Fortunately we were up and busy as he had come in from behind, so to speak, through a stringy bark range.

By 1953 the entire Reedy Creek black flats had been ploughed between the foot of the West Avenue Range and the edge of the Reedy Creek - a strip of land fifteen miles long and varying in width from a mile to a mile and a half.

The stage was set for the sowing down to pasture of this huge area of land.

I had been in charge of a gang of men the previous year and had successfully sown down land in the Biscuit Flat, Comung and Beachport areas. Settlers were already living on blocks in those areas.

I had fifteen men in the seeding gang. Super and seed had to be kept up to the drilling teams, together with grease and fuel for the tractors and food for the drivers. A constant check had to be kept on the seeding mechanism of the drill as vibration would alter the setting.

We made world history for the area of land developed and sown to pasture and in the time we took to do the job.

The politicians were evidently pleased because they continually quoted the figures when they were criticised for not having more blocks developed for settlers to live on.

When finally we came to live on the block allocated to me in March 1954 there were no roads in the area. We had to fit mud chains to our vehicles to get out of the settlement so that we could travel to Kingston or Lucindale. We sometimes had to tow the school bus through bogs and even repair the road with voluntary labour.

The second drainage scheme in the 1950's enabled better roads to be built.

Generally living in the West Avenue Range Soldier Settlement Scheme area has been terrific, but we did have problems with the public servants over rents, drainage rates and council roads.

These problems were resolved. Our children have grown up and done well. The West Avenue Range parents can justifiably be proud of their children. They can claim a Doctor, and Architect, several Diplomas of Agriculture, Sisters in the Nursing profession, Educators, business people and some very civic minded citizens, who are 'responsibly managing their parents' land whilst they are living in retirement.

Hugh Bawden

## Colin and Doris Brown – “Colomay”

I came from Reeves Plains to Lucindale in April 1956 and Doris and the two children joined me in November of the same year. It was December 1959 when we moved to our Soldier Settler farm. The block was allotted to me in July 1959 and was 701 acres in the area known as Biscuit Flat, south west of Avenue Range. The property was all cleared except for 30 acres which I cleared some years later.

We attended Church and the children went to Sunday School from 1960. Doris and I were both Sunday School teachers and I was Church Steward for about 18 years.

Lionell and Beth both travelled to Lucindale by school bus to attend the Lucindale Area School. After leaving school Lionel became a shearer and Beth trained as a nurse.

The Church in Avenue Range closed in 1977 thus ending our association with Avenue Range.

Colin Brown

## Arthur and Brenda Hensel – “Talinga”

It is with a certain amount of pride that I look back on the thirty years spent on our property.

When we were advised that there was not enough land available for all who were waiting for Soldier Settlement blocks and that we would have to miss out Arthur visited Harvey Limbert who very kindly made available Section 264, Hundred of Townsend - the land that we were allotted later. My father, Oswald Rivett, loved to visit us as in the early 1900's he would do the mustering for the late Mr. Limbert on this property.

With John who was two years old and another child due and a fortnight's pay we moved into our new home on September 12th, 1955. Rosalie was born on November 28th, 1955 and some years later Margaret was born on August 10th, 1964.

There were many ups and downs but a very rewarding time to see the progress with more land developed and stock numbers increased. In 1981 we

retired to Kingston, John taking over where his father left off. Now there is another generation coming on with Michael John born in 1985.

Brenda Hensel

## Jim and Phyll McDowall – “Talbots”

My parents owned land at Geranium in the Mallee until Dad enlisted in the army during the Second World War, when we moved to Adelaide. I finished my education at Sacred Heart College and then joined the Navy.

Early in 1950 I started work at “Fellwood”, home of Mr. and Mrs. Aitchison Grieve and family. After Phyll and I were married in April 1950, we stayed on there as a married couple. It was here we first met Ross Stevens who was also working on “Fellwood”, and also Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Smith and family who always held open house at “Walteela” for Saturday night's tea and games.

Horses were very popular and Phyll recalls when we saddled up and rode through the scrub to what is now Miegel's property. Getting off the horse to open the last gate she found it easier to walk than to remount!

We left Avenue after twelve months and returned to the Lucindale district in 1953. Later that year I was called up by the Lands Department to work on the development of land for soldier settlement. For the next eighteen months we lived in ex-army huts converted to accommodate two families. Eight of the units were placed adjacent to the Lucindale District Council Depot. The one we lived in is now used as the Scout Hall.

The men all left early on Monday mornings, returning on Friday afternoons very tired and dusty. This was a difficult time for the women as most families had small children. The grounds of the L.D.E. huts would be wet and muddy in winter and the houses very hot in summer. “Big” Bill Copping and his “helping hand” Mick would deliver milk from his dairy which was on the block next door to Lindsay and Edie Bates' home.

When the land was developed and the houses finished I applied for a block receiving my second choice - 1,036 acres, Section 275 Hundred of Townsend. This land had been purchased from Mr. Aitchison Grieve by the Lands Department for 30/- per acre. After having refused a block on Kangaroo Island I was very grateful that I was considered for another block.

When we moved on to the block in November 1955 the house had been completed, a shed built, a windmill erected and part of the boundary fencing done.

We named the property “Talbots” after a Mr. Talbot who drove a bullock team to cart supplies to the men working on the digging of Drain K. He would spend the night near where our front gate now is. Each time he would add a few more rocks to a pile until he had a sizeable cairn. Unfortunately this was knocked down when the road fence was being erected by a team of Italian contractors.

It was our job to subdivide our holdings for which we were paid per mile - this, and milking cows with cream being collected by Penola, Horsham and Nara-coorte butter factory trucks, was our main source of income in the early years.

Phyll's parents gave us a horse which I rode home from Naracoorte, but it was not long before "Smithy" (Keith Smith) talked me into the need for a "bomb". A 1928 Chev. was purchased in Adelaide, Keith coming with me to help in the decision making. I drove it home and soon had it converted into a work ute.

We had two children when we moved on to "Talbots" - Susanne was born in 1951. She married Gilbert Wood who, with a partner, owns "Lake City Aviation" at Mt. Gambier. They have four children. Rodney was born in April 1953, educated at Lucindale and Naracoorte High and went on to become a school teacher, but after doing an international Scuba Diving course, set his sights on this type of work. In 1982 he left Australia with his wife for Grand Cayman Island in the Carribean, where he is now manager of the Surf Side Water Sports Ltd. - a large diving company. Steven was born in 1956 - the year of the wet. Paddocks were under water and roads impassable in places. Steve has worked on the farm since he left school and has married local girl Julie Wood. They have two daughters, Liana and Jena.

Pauline arrived in November 1960. She has married Graeme Kempe and they live with their two children, Michael and Alice on the Kempe property at Culburra.

As our place was at the end of a school bus run we boarded the teacher drivers for many years - Wally Frank, Laurel Masters (now Schneider), Andrew Dunsmuir, Jeff Barnett, Raelene Kitto and Ken Dunn. We enjoyed their company as we did not have much social life in those days.

In 1966 we put in a swimming pool and in November decided to have a barbecue to open the pool. That day it rained three inches and the pool overflowed.

In 1980 we bought a block of land - Section 186 - from Mrs. Hilda Thomson and built a new home leaving Steven and Julie to continue with the management of "Talbots".

Last year Steven thought he would like to try farming at Esperance in Western Australia as we needed more acreage to make a viable living for both families. However, prices did not meet expectations and "Talbots" still remains with the McDowalls.

## Len and Elsa Miegel – "Kompam"

When I was four years old my father sold his farm at Alectown in N.S.W. and purchased a farm at Reeves Plain near Gawler. The journey from N.S.W., in a covered light wagon with three draught horses and a saddle hack, took us six weeks. After service in the Army in World War II, I worked on Brippick station near Frances, and then for Alf Hannaford & Co. as a seed cleaning operator before starting work with the Land Development Executive in 1951. In 1952 while working in the L.D.E. workshop at Biscuit Flat I and my family lived in the original "Comung" homestead - this was later destroyed in a bushfire. Later that year we moved into one of the L.D.E. flats (Tin Pan Alley) at the rear of the present council depot in Lucindale. Lucindale at that time had become the centre of L.D.E. operations extending from Frances, Wrattontully, to the Hundred of Coles, Spence, Townsend and Conmurra.

I was allocated my soldier settlement block at West Avenue in November 1953 and took up residence on the 3rd July 1954 when the house had been completed. (This block was my third preference in the Land Board Ballot). After an initial good start the L.D.E. reduced the size of my block by 170 acres which were reallocated to two neighbouring blocks. This left me with a block which proved to be substandard, and in November 1960, 200 acres of virgin land was added to my block in an effort to bring it up to standard. This additional land had to be developed at my own expense.

During the first years on our blocks we had to pay agistment to the L.D.E. for the stock which we carried at the rate of 2½ pence per dry sheep, 3½ pence per wet sheep and 1 shilling and sixpence per cow. In order to supplement our income we milked cows. Initially the L.D.E. only allowed us to run six milkers, however this was increased to 30 by 1961. The cows were milked using a 4 stand Moffat-Virtue milking machine, in a shed constructed of materials salvaged from the old "Beggs" homestead on the western boundary of our block. At the time all of our milk was separated, with the milk being fed to calves and pigs, while the cream was collected in 3- and 5- gallon cans twice weekly by trucks initially from the Penola butter factory, and later by a truck from the Horsham butter factory.

When we moved onto our block we had no electricity, no road, no telephone and no schooling facilities. We had to rely on a Tiley lamp and kerosene lanterns for lighting in the house. In 1955 we purchased a Lister 32 volt generating set. This plant had to be started up every night, or whenever the washing machine or welder were used, and along with its bank of sixteen large two-volt batteries provided our electricity until 1974, when we were finally connected to the ETSA 240 volt grid.

Arthur Hensel, Bruce McLaren and I constructed the first road from the corner of Keith Smith's block to Clive Bakers, by first ploughing the "road" with a majestic plough, and then grading it using the old manually operated council grader towed behind an Allis Chalmers tractor. During the winter time the track to Lucindale was often impassable and the only way to get there was to cross the drain and then drive through the scrub to Noorla and then to Crower. The road was gravelled in 1955, however in the wet year of 1956 it often become impassable, and, at one stage, the parents of children on the West Avenue school bus held working bees to keep the road passable.

Prior to getting the school bus in 1956, we gave Darryl correspondence lessons at home, and then later he and Pam Quast (Pope), attended the school at Mount Bruce. Pam and Darryl boarded with Eileen and Tim Hughes, and each day they, along with Paul and Denise Hughes, travelled in a horse and sulky to the Mt. Bruce woolshed corner, where they caught the school bus to Mt. Bruce.

It was during this period that Mrs. Eileen Hughes conducted a regular Sunday School for the children at West Avenue. In association with the Sunday School a Christmas Tree evening was held at Small's woolshed each December.

The manual telephone exchange was opened at Biscuit Flat in 1959, however, in order to get the telephone connected, we had to construct our own lines. Together with Bakers, Smalls and Ewers we purchased the necessary materials (the poles came from the old narrow guage railway line to Kingston)

and constructed 8 km of line from Bakers to the junction with the old Robe road. We had to maintain this party line ourselves until Telecom installed underground cables and the automatic exchange in 1976.

On the 18th March, 1961 a bushfire burnt out all of the flat part of our block, in addition to parts of neighbouring properties and 3,000 acres of crown land (since allocated and developed) to the west of our block. In addition to losing all of our pasture, the fire also destroyed 8 miles of fencing and 39 sheep. Following the fire numerous people throughout the district generously took all of our stock on free agistment until the fences were repaired and the pastures had recovered. Further help came from the Kingston, Lucindale and Greenways R.S.L. Clubs who organized working bees to repair and replace fencing, not forgetting the help offered by many individuals including an anonymous substantial donation of lucerne seed and oats.

During this fire the peat on the Reedy Creek waterway was set alight and continued to burn for 18 months. The fire burnt two feet down to the clay subsoil in places, and the smoke with its peculiar odour, could be smelled as far away as Nhill in Victoria. The areas of peat which were burnt out still remain barren despite many efforts to re-establish pastures.

On 9th February 1973 we experienced our second fire. This time an electrical fault in the 32/240 volt inverter is believed to have started the fire which destroyed our home. Once again the response from the district people to help us was overwhelming. A fund was set up in the Lucindale district and about \$3,000 was raised. There were many donations of bedding, clothing, food.

In 1978 Darryl returned from Papua New Guinea where he had been working as an Agricultural advisor for 7½ years, and purchased a half share in the farm. I then decided to purchase a house and retire in Gawler, leaving Darryl to run the farm.

## **Dennis and Audrey Small — “Gum Brae”**

Dennis and Audrey Small, with their children Darryl, Terry and Rosslyn, left Geranium in 1952 and went to live in the L.D.E. flats in Penola while the men cleared the land in the Biscuit Flat and Mt. Bruce areas. They shifted to their Soldier Settlement block on the West Avenue road, after they were allotted in May 1954, and lived in the shed for three months while the house of the Housing Trust type was being built.

The roads were very bad - almost non-existent. Deep sand covered the hills and the flats turned into thick soup when wet. In wet weather they often had to drive on a track through Parker's (now Smart's) property and along Graetz's road to go to Lucindale. The road out to Reedy Creek and Kingston was among the reeds on a very boggy black flat.

The first year was spent in sub-fencing and improving pastures. They milked cows for a few years for a cash income, after which they turned to sheep and beef cattle. They now have only sheep and grow a few cash crops such as lupins, rape, sunflowers and barley.

Darryl and Terry had to do their schooling by Correspondence for the first two years and then were taken daily to the Avenue School for the last term the

school was in operation. In 1956 a school bus came out their road to take children to the Lucindale Area School. Darryl had to return to Correspondence after a year or two for health reasons, but Terry and Rosslyn completed their education at Lucindale. After leaving school, Terry worked for several years on a farm at Willowie as money was scarce and the family could not afford to have two boys at home. Rosslyn went to Kalamerino Station on the Birdsville Track as a governess. Terry married Maxine Fiebig of Murray Town and worked as a married man at Fellwood and for D.J. Barratt until a house was built for him on “Gum Brae”. He and Darryl now work the farm.

The family had various sporting interests, playing for Avenue, Lucindale, Naracoorte and Robe at various times.

When Dennis died suddenly of a heart attack in 1970, it was decided that the time for Terry to come home was ripe. Since then they have purchased more land - some 250 acres of Powell's Swamp and 400 acres of high ground. They also built a four-stand shearing shed a few years ago.

Rosslyn married a farmer, Peter Hurst, from Lake Hawdon. They now live at Reedy Creek and have four daughters. Terry and Maxine have one son and two daughters - the grandchildren attending the Kingston and Lucindale Area Schools.

Audrey Small

## **Ross Stevens — “Cooinda”**

I came to Avenue Range as a rural trainee in August, 1949, to work for the late Aitchison Grieve at his property “Fellwood” where I stayed for five years, until I was granted a soldier settlers block adjoining “Fellwood”, and owned by the late Harvey Limbert.

In 1958, I married Marcia Wilton and our two children, Wendy, born in 1959 and Tony in 1961, began their schooling in Lucindale.

During this period, because of the influx of soldier settlers the school bus appeared (thanks largely to Len Miegel) and the roads, which at that stage were horror stretches, began to improve. Today the area is crisscrossed with many roads, both sealed and open surfaced.

I count myself extremely lucky to have been an Avenue-ite because of the great community spirit which has always existed perhaps because the Store/Post Office has provided a central meeting place.

## **A.H. and E.S. Wachtel — “Kalimna Park”**

Alwin Wachtel and his family arrived on their property on the West Avenue road on February 10th, 1952 after living at Biscuit Flat for two years. When he and his wife were first married they lived at Mannum and then came to the South East to work for the Department of Lands. Their block was allotted to them by the Department under the Soldier Settlement Scheme.

One particular difficulty was not being able to get out in the winter before the road was built. It was necessary to put chains on the tyres and these had to be removed when they reached the bitumen, and then replaced on the return journey - rather messy in good clothes! Consequently they only went shopping once a fortnight, taking turns with their neighbour and doing each others' shopping.

Bread came from Apsley, being brought by the cream truck on its way from Horsham, Victoria, to pick up cream on the West Avenue road. They milked up to ten cows, which was their only income (apart from payment for fencing by the Lands Department) until their sheep were producing enough to live on a few years later.

Their family consisted of three children when they arrived at "Kalimna Park" - Sue, Wendy and Terry. Julie was born at Millicent some years later. As there was no road, hence no school bus, Mrs. Wachtel had to supervise Sue's correspondence lessons.

All the children were educated at the Lucindale Area School to Intermediate level. Suzanne did her nursing training at Millicent until her marriage. Wendy worked in Millicent and Mt. Gambier and Terry has worked on the farm since he left school. Julie was employed by Dalgetys in Lucindale for 5 years.

The Wachtel's former neighbour, the late Mrs. Tiller, was the founder of the West Avenue Combined Ladies Guild which this year celebrated its 29th birthday. Mrs. Tiller thought this a good way for the women on the West Avenue road to get to know one another, and they have been able to support various charities and Church projects with donations, and also enjoyed Christian fellowship - an important part of their lives.

Another difficulty in the early years in this area was a lack of communication. To make a phone call they had to travel to Conmurra Station and later the E. & W.S. Camp at Greenways. Initially, when the phone was connected they had a party line connected to the manual exchange at Biscuit Flat. Breakers, Hughes, Lommans, Tillers and Wachtels were on the 22 line, and Millards were added to it when they were allotted their farm later.

## Chapter 8

### THE NEW FAMILIES

#### Hugh and Clare Bainger — "Hillcrest"

The property "Hillcrest" of 1,074 acres was purchased in May, 1973 by W.N. & R.N. Bainger Pty. Ltd. from Bert and Daphne Tilley who retired to Victor Harbour. Hillcrest was enlarged in 1980 by 445 acres when a neighbouring block was purchased from the Bagshaw family.

Although the Bainger family had owned land in the Lucindale and Conmurra area for over thirty years it was not until a member of the third generation on the land, Robert Hugh, (son of R.N. of Frances) decided to marry, that any of the family resided in the area.

Hugh and Clare (nee Tuohy, who grew up in the Penola district) were married in the Hillcrest garden in October, 1973. They now have three children - Fleur Clare, Alexis Jane and Charles Robert.

In 1971 the Tilleys had replaced the original freestone homestead with a new brick home. Most of the established garden was left intact, and has been further extended by the present owners.

The property is now used to graze beef cattle and the original freestone woolshed, chaff shed and dairy are used only as storage areas.

#### Gary and Isobel Carracher — "Bogalara"

An Agricultural Graduates Lease was allotted to John Alexander Hensley, a Lucindale farmer on 28th July in 1888. When J.A. Hensley died in 1902 the land was transmitted to James Gibson Ashton of Adelaide Official Receivers and subsequently transferred to Mary Ann Stewart of Payneham.

In 1908 this land was transferred to Matilda Alice Copping of Lucindale. In 1913 this land was transferred to Walter George Copping, a Lucindale grazier.

In 1929 the lease was subdivided between W.G. Copping and Percy William Flint a grazier of Mt. Scott. In 1938 W.G. Copping died and the land was transmitted to Sophia Beatrice Copping and Leslie Walter Copping both of Lucindale.

In 1949 this was transferred to various members of the Michell family. In 1954 the lease was subdivided into two - one being named "Westlands" and the

other "Delkara" owned by H.J. and E.H. Carracher and their son-in-law Bruce Iredell.

Bruce Iredell married Jill Carracher in 1954 and came to live in an old stone cottage on the property later that year. They had been living there for four months when they went away for the weekend and returned to find the cottage burnt to the ground. They had lost everything including all their wedding presents. They lived in a caravan until a Stawell transportable home arrived in May the following year.

Jill had been told there were few snakes about. A rumour she strongly disbelieved after 52 were killed around the house in the first year.

The property which is mostly flat with some banks was very wet in winter until the Jacky White Drainage Scheme was completed in 1963.

Access to the main road between Lucindale and Kingston was hence difficult and a landrover and tractor were the only methods of transport until a special grant was issued for a road in 1958. The grant was issued on the condition that Delkara fence it.

Jill and Bruce had a new car for 3 months before they could drive it onto the property.

It was some years later before the telephone went in.

Bruce Iredell relinquished his interest to Geoffrey William Carracher and Garry Nicholas Carracher in 1963 and the property was named Waipali Estate.

In 1972 G.W. Carracher transferred his interest to Michael John Carracher. In 1974, 2,780 acres of scrub was sold to the Cacas family of Adelaide. This was again sold in 1982 to W.N. & R.N. Bainger Pty. Ltd.

The lease on the remainder of the property was subdivided between M.J. Carracher and G.N. Carracher and the family partnership was dissolved in 1977.

M.J. Carracher named his property Long Island and sold this in 1984 to P.P. Thring and Company.

G.N. Carracher named his property Bogalara and with his family now runs a successful Merino Stud WEST KILMARNOCK. The stud being transferred from his father-in-law R.J. Lawrie who retired in 1983.

## **Margaret and Brian Cronin — "Brymar Park"**

We arrived at Avenue Range on December 4th, 1978, from Parndana, Kangaroo Island. The property was purchased from Keith and Shirley Mules.

After coming from a relatively isolated area we were pleasantly surprised at the better roads, cheaper cost of living, and access to good markets. In our case, the move to Avenue has been for the better, and we have no regrets.

Our three girls were all married prior to our coming to Avenue. Two live in the Kingston area, and one in the Mid North.

## **Kevin and Phyllis Gale — "Ancoona"**

After purchasing the property "Ancoona" from Stan and Helen Cooper, Kevin and Phyllis took possession in March 1973.

The first twelve months were the hardest adjusting from a cropping, dairying background at Strathalbyn to the way of farming in the West Avenue area. A disadvantage of the area is the distance from shopping, schooling and sporting facilities, but the heavy carrying capacity and sureness of rainfall help to outweigh this.

The property has some historical background with the old coach track running through it, with ruins of the stable and inn still plainly visible.

Kevin and Phyllis have four children - Tracey born in 1974, Adrian born in 1977, Anita born in 1982 and Kristy born in 1984.

The two older children attend the Lucindale Area School travelling on the school bus.

Phyllis Gale

## **Ray and Dellrene Phillips — "Delrae"**

Ray and Dellrene Phillips, together with their two teenage daughters Shona and Debra and their young son Matthew, arrived at Avenue Range from Strathalbyn in May 1974 to reside on the farm purchased from Mr. Peter Barnett.

Their elder son Grantley and his wife, formerly Judy Daw of Mt. Barker, came to the S.E. the previous year to live on the land purchased 8 years earlier from Mr. Robert Ferguson. They later moved to their own farm, purchased from Mr. Peter Donaldson. They have two daughters and one son. Shona, immediately on arrival in the South East started her nursing training at the Naracoorte Hospital. She married Philip Hollitt of Coonawarra and they now reside at Glenalta, where they own a business. They have one son and a daughter. Debra attended the Lucindale Area School, and after completion of her studies, entered the National Bank at Naracoorte. After her marriage to Kingsley Sharam of Kingston, she worked at the Kingston Area School. They have two small sons.

Matthew attends the Lucindale Area School and is in Year 9.

The property "The Stone Chimney" was purchased from Mr. Ian Currie and later sold to Mr. Andrew Copping.

Approximately 12 months ago they purchased the West Avenue farm of Mr. Domaschensz.

## **Bob and Enid Pope — "Robeena"**

Bob Pope had lived all his life at Murray Bridge working on two properties with his father and two brothers. After being married ten years we came to the South East with our three children and settled at Mt. Benson in 1960. After

seven years this land was sold and we bought better grazing country at Avenue Range, moving in on New Year's Day 1967.

We purchased 1785 acres from Jim and Alma Bourne. These folks were Soldier Settlers who sold their land within ten years because of health reasons. This property was larger than most allotted to the Soldier Settlers as it had the usual acres to be a liveable size, plus almost 800 acres still scrub and very wet country, all on the same lease. After the Soldier Settler Scheme and before we bought in many drains were put through this country.

Our two daughters went to the Lucindale Area School for a short time, then went to Adelaide to finish their schooling. Dianne graduated as a craft teacher and Pauline trained at the Mt. Gambier Hospital winning a gold medal. Both are now married and living and working on the land.

Jeff who had passed his Intermediate in Kingston, decided to be a grazier and work with his Dad. They soon got busy with big tractors etc. and started clearing and seeding down what was previously too wet to handle. This now is some of our best country, growing lush clovers, and other pastures. On this land we now graze 1,500 ewes plus their lambs, 2,000 wethers, 120 cows with their calves and 50 unmated heifers. Approximately 10 years ago we started a Poll Dorset Stud now carrying 70 ewes. Six years ago we started a Murray Grey Stud - now unregistered - and we run 25 of these cows.

Early in 1985 we were successful in putting down an artesian bore. After all these years of having salty water it is pleasing to have very good water suitable for lawns and gardens. We hope to pump this water into every paddock on the property.

When Jeff and Pam married in 1975 we, Enid and Bob, moved into a small transportable house not far away. Four and a half years ago we sold the transportable house and built a large brick home on the same spot. In 1985 Jeff, Pam and family moved into their new big brick house on the old site.

Jeff and Pam have two sons and one daughter.

Enid Pope

## Lindsay and Faye Pratt — "Kallinga"

Lindsay and Faye Pratt moved to Avenue Range from Two Wells with three of their four children on June 4th, 1978.

They had purchased their farm, "Kallinga" - 1,001 hectares - from John Newberry, a chemist in Adelaide. This property was once part of Bull Island.

Since their arrival they have extended the size of the house from three to six rooms and built a raised board shearing shed. Bracken fern appeared a problem, but they found, by chisel ploughing and planting lupin crops they are able to keep the bracken under control.

Of their four children Leanne lives on the Adelaide plains, is married with two sons - Garry, a shearer, has played cricked for Avenue and football and basketball for Lucindale. He married Jane Ellison of Conmurra South. Noleen

attended the Lucindale Area School for two years and is married to Ian Bricknell of Lucindale. Michelle is still attending Lucindale Area School.

Faye Pratt

## Mark and Catherine Thring — "Westlands"

Mark and Catherine arrived at Avenue in early February 1980 from Urania in the Riverina district of New South Wales. They were, however, both from the Adelaide Hills area.

"Westlands" was purchased by P.P. Thring & Co. Pty. Ltd. from the Adelaide Steamship Company Ltd. who in turn had bought it from G.H. Michell and Sons. Previous to that it had been owned by David Barratt and earlier still by Harvey Limbert.

Mark and Catherine manage "Westlands" for P.P. Thring and Co.

The main improvement concerning stock since they arrived has been the introduction of selenium into the diets of the young sheep. This has meant a profound difference in the health of their weaners over the last four years.

Mark and Catherine have two boys - David, born in June 1982 and Dougal, born in June 1985.

John and Cassie Thring came to "Westlands" in May 1983 as newlyweds. In July 1984, P.P. Thring and Co. purchased "Long Island" from Michael Carracher, and since then have resided there as managers.

## Laurie and Nell Bagshaw — "Skilly"

In 1965, R.L. Bagshaw and his son Richard acquired land from Brian Coping, the land being portion of "Cairnbank". The Bagshaw family were early settlers and pioneers on York Peninsula and the forebears of Laurie arrived in Australia from the Isle of Man, in 1838 - just two years after the settlement of the colony.

R.L. and his wife, Ellen Grace, had three children: Jan, who married Mark Roberts, an architect formerly of Tasmania. Their wedding was the first marriage ceremony celebrated in the new Anglican Church of St. Andrews in Lucindale in 1965. They have two daughters, Sally and Alison. Richard married Patricia Mary Wilson, daughter of Dr. R.K. Wilson and his wife, Joan who was formerly Joan Daw, whose forebears resided at "Fairview". They have two sons born at Avenue. In 1980 Richard and his wife and family transferred their interests to land in southern Queensland - they now reside at Goondiwindi where Trish has resumed her teaching profession. Richard was an ardent footballer and supporter and gained life membership of the Lucindale Football Club. The second daughter of Laurie and Nell was Julie Elizabeth, a triple certificate nursing sister who died in Greece in 1977, when with a nursing friend was motoring to Geneva from Athens to nurse with the World Health Organization. All the trees planted along the driveway up to Laurie and Nell's home were given by friends of Julie's as a memorial to a beautiful girl.

Laurie and Nell still reside in the homestead portion of their holding where they have great interest in local affairs and the By the Way project.

Nell Bagshaw

## Chapter 9

### PERSONALITIES

#### Hilda E. Thomson

No book on Avenue Range would be complete without a tribute being paid to Hilda Thomson for her contribution to the district.

Hilda was born in 1901 and was educated at the Avenue School. She has spent most of her life helping people of the district in many ways.

The Post Office which she looked after for so many years was one way in which she helped. People were very wary when the telephone first came to the district. They would ask her to relay messages, a thing she was very happy to do. When people from outlying farms came in once a week to collect their mail, Aunt Hilda (as she is fondly known) would always have time to lend a listening ear to their problems.

Aunt Hilda has set a good example of life style for our generation to follow and may the rest of her life be spent with the people of the district whom she treats as her own family.



*Back Row: Liz Thomas, Hilda Thomas, Lou Thomas, Vera Byass - teacher, Alma Schrapel. Front Row: Will Thomas, F. James, Fred Thomas, Wally Schrapel.*

## A Long Life Well Lived

Mary Ann Smith

With the death of Mary Ann Smith on August 29th, 1985 we saw the end of a life lived with distinction, dignity and enthusiasm.

To the last hours of Mary's life of 94 years, she shared the full experience of family life, with a family that took in not only her sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, but a host of loved and loving friends, she was "Mother Smith and Granny" to so many of us.

Born on the 15th May 1891, at Wangolina, Mary was one of the 10 children of John and Margaret Cooper. Being the eldest of the 5 girls in the family, Mary held a special place in the lives of the three remaining sisters, Terradel, Eileen and Daphne.

Always a great story teller, she loved to recount tales of her early years at Wangolina and Blackford. Tales of true pioneering experience. It is really a part of local history that ends here.

In 1912 Mary graduated as a teacher and went on to be teacher-in-charge of White Hut, Blackford, Mt. Schank and Coomandook schools.

Mary and John Charles Smith were engaged throughout World War I, with Charles serving with the Light Horse and Camel Corps in the Middle East.

They were married in Kingston church March 25th 1920. All the family have enjoyed the story of their "Honeymoon" spent at Tumby Bay with Mary living in the hotel and Charlie and his brother Bob trapping rabbits a number of miles from town. Added to this Mary was seasick on the boat trip - both ways. Mary always said that this was the only time in her life when she had nothing to do and she hated it.

The following years saw them managing "Dalkeith", Joe Gall's property on the Coorong, with their 3 boys, Sydney, Keith and Max and a daughter Kathleen. Their experiences with passing travellers and swagmen during the Depression years are legend. Mr. Gall had told them never to turn away a hungry man and at times, up to 7 men slept in the travellers hut, fed with vegetables from Mary's garden and rabbits from Charlie's traps.

Education for the family was difficult, so far removed from town, so when Kathleen was due to start school the family returned to Kingston where 2 more daughters, Rosemary and Vida were born.

The tragic death of the eldest son, Sydney in 1937, aged 16, was a shock which effected the family for many years and was partly responsible for the family shifting from Kingston to their property "The Valley" at Bull Island and then again to Avenue Range, where all the young people of the district knew there was a warm welcome, a batch of scones and a word of encouragement.

Although Mary was always busy with her family, her cows and her sewing machine, she still took a most active part in community affairs, she was honoured to be made a Life Member of the C.W.A. on her 80th birthday. For many years she was an active member of Red Cross and was in 1959 appointed the first woman Justice of Peace in Kingston. Probably the civic service giving Mary most satisfaction was her 18 years on the Hospital Board.

A teacher to the very end, she was vitally concerned with the education of her family, her grandchildren and took delight in her great grand daughters newly

acquired skills in reading. A Scrabble player "Par Excellence", she was as delighted when her opponent got a high score as she was when she did herself, with a wonderful interest in words - a new word was welcomed like a new friend to be treasured.

As a child of 7 or 8 she was taught to do Patchwork by her Grandmother and this lasting interest became her major activity following a broken hip when she was 90. She played a major part in making a handsewn patchwork for each of her 3 daughters in these final years.

A widow for 28 years, Mary's life was enriched by sharing the experiences of her family and grandchildren. Her strength of character, lively intelligence and vital interest in the wider spectrum of life endeared her to many and leaves a lasting influence on all of us.

The death of her 2 remaining sons in recent months was a sad blow, but was met with dignity and courage, she accepted her increasing infirmity the same way.

This little verse was written several years ago for Mary Ann by Vida.

Life is rather like a patchwork quilt

Bright patches and dark patches

All stitched together with love, patience and determination to keep going

You are one of the bright patches in my quilt.

## E.W. Grieve — A Happy Family

I can hardly claim to be one of the old residents of Avenue, not having come to live at Fellwood until I married Aitchison Grieve in 1954, but I must say how happy I have been to be so readily accepted by the Avenue people. I soon felt one of a very happy family which this tiny settlement is - everyone is so friendly and ready to help in any way they can if anyone should be in trouble.

When I first came here there was no telephone as far as Fellwood, only home generated electricity, no school buses, and the most awful roads. There was no road of any sort between the railway line and Crower, so if anyone was wanting to go in that direction they had either to go through Lucindale or travel on the dirt track past Fellwood.

But we did have a train three times a week! It was quite an event to go in to the store in the evening to collect mail and catch up on the local news.

I shall never forget the winter of 1956 and the ROADS! There were swans on the swamps everywhere and one didn't dare go out without rubber boots. It was nothing to be bogged in front of Ross Stevens' home, and as far as Drain K near Ross Johnston's on what was a much-used road. The truck collecting cream came through twice a week and was more often than not, bogged there. If my husband and I were going to Naracoorte we left armed with our boots and the boot of the car filled with newspaper. The men at Fellwood watched until we were safely past the drain without having to send up a smoke signal telling them we needed help!!

There have been many changes since those days - good roads, lots more houses, electricity, telephones, but the friendly spirit prevails and the new comers soon settle into our happy family.

E.W. Grieve

## Doddy Natt

An identity of Avenue Range and one everyone remembered with affection was Doddy Natt. When Mr. and Mrs. Fred Natt lived at "Teremina" it was his job to do the garden of which he had every reason to be proud.

His main income came from trapping rabbits, "Papinue" being his trapping ground. Dod was very fond of cards and would spend many an evening at the home of Os and Martha Rivett, along with other locals, playing well into the night. In later years he tended the vegetable garden and did odd jobs on the Paltridge properties. He adopted the Paltriges as his family and they enjoyed many a ride in his T-model Ford not knowing what was round the next corner of the track or how good were the brakes. He begged for a long time to be allowed to take John Paltridge to his hut over the range for a night and to make him some rabbit rissoles. At last John was old enough and they set off on this adventure. The rissoles were good, but sleeping in clothes with doors and windows barred against ghosts was another experience. In later years he was often seen riding his pushbike along the right hand side of the road to visit Phil Paltridge or go round his traps. As soon as he heard someone coming he veered shakily over to the left hand side of the road only until the vehicle passed by, giving the oncoming driver quite a start. Doddy died in his sleep at a Salvation Army Home where he enjoyed his retirement.

## William Homfray

William Homfray married Evelyn Natt in July 1930 and went to manage "The West" for Mr. Walter Copping. There was no woolshed on the property so the sheep were droved to "Cairnbank" for shearing and dipping.

They did not have a motor vehicle until the early 1950's so that a day out meant driving the horse and gig to Bull Island to catch the train by about 8.30 a.m., then reversing the trip that evening usually after dark. Therefore days out during the winter time were very rare.

Evelyn had to spend several weeks in Naracoorte before each of her children were born in case she went into early labour.

"The West" was sold to G.H. Michell and then again in 1954 to Carrachers. At that stage Bill and Evelyn moved to Lucindale.

Nancy Smith

## Fred and Bett Smith

Fred and Bett Smith arrived in Avenue Range with Lynette (4) and Gail (3) from Semaphore Park, Adelaide, on April 2nd 1951. The first person they met was Mary Le (Smith) at the Post Office.

Fred worked at "Fellwood" as a station hand for about 12 months when he joined forces with Alex (Toby) Tobiasen. Bett had been in the Air Force with Shirley.

They lived in caravans in Lucindale for a time and Wayne was born in Naracoorte on 11.6.52.

About the time Wayne was born they bought 9 acres from Bob Hill and John Petersen and built a shack and then a house where they lived for the rest of their time in Avenue.

Francesca (Fran) was born in Naracoorte on 21.9.56.

Fred worked at Ray Hocking's garage in Conmurra for 4½ years. When the road through Fellwood to Crower became impassable in the wet weather Fred had to travel to work through Lucindale. They eventually opened a garage on their own house property in May 1957 and remained in business until they retired in 1981.

Bett Smith

## Margaret and Brian Wood

We came to Avenue in January 1956 from Pt. Augusta to help Brian's brother Norm, and his wife Deirdre in their store and Post Office at Avenue. We only stayed with them for 6 months as we were offered a house and job with Bill and Ted Rivett. We stayed with them for 6 years. In that time we had 4 daughters. Julie was born in February 1957, Robyn in January 1959 and twins Sharon and Sandra in January 1961.

In 1962 we left the Rivett brothers and shifted out on the Keilira Road into a 3 roomed asbestos house which we rented from Shirley and Alan Barnett. About 2 years later we bought the house plus 20 acres of land.

Margaret and Brian Wood

## Norman and Deirdre Wood

Norm and Deirdre Wood arrived in Avenue 1954 at the time of Rosemary and Jabe William's wedding. They looked after the Post Office while Aunt Hilda Thomson went to the wedding. They lived in a caravan in Aunt Hilda's yard while they built the Post Office, shop and house. It took 6 months.

They left Avenue in December 1958.

The Blue Bird used to arrive in Avenue at 6 a.m. Some mornings Norm and Deirdre slept in and the Blue Bird would blow its horn and if there was no response the driver would back the Blue Bird back opposite the shop and toot. If still there was no response he would run across and wake them up.

**RUTH** - Richard and Isabell Ruth came to Avenue Range about 1914 to work in the railways. They lived in one of the cottages near the railway station. There were four children - Peter, Geraldine, Jack and Leo (twins). Geraldine married Ernest Jolly and their daughter, Mrs. Shirley Dicker has music books belonging to her Uncle Peter who was taught music by Miss Rabbitt, teacher at Avenue in 1916.

**BEGGS** - Teddy and Ivy Beggs were a family of true pioneering descent. They came from Ararat. They worked at "Fellwood" in the 1920's. Their family were Bob, Eunice, Kit, Sandy, Cal and Bill. Bob attended Avenue

School for a short time. The family finally settled at Reedy Creek where Hancock's now live.

**COOPER** - Ray Clarence Cooper was born in 1907 and is now living in the Retirement Village at Kingston. He is a son of the late Henry and Selina Cooper who lived near Cairnbank. Roy attended the Avenue Range School in 1913. His father moved into one of the Railway cottages and worked for the railways.

**TURNBULL** - During the war years 1914-1918 school children from Reedy Creek, Avenue Range and Lucindale knitted garments for soldiers for the Red Cross Branch, quite a commendable effort. Ivy Wright (nee Turnbull) speaks of knitting garments having learnt at a young age.

**BARNES** - Lilian Edith Barnes, mother of Evelyn Shirley, is now living in a Home for the Aged at Albany in Western Australia. She celebrated her 102nd birthday on August 2nd 1985.

Lilian was born at Avenue Range, being the eldest child of Edward George Marshall who, when Lilian was about three years of age, went to live at Frances, where he was a ganger on the Railways. Lilian went to school in Frances and at the age of fifteen went to live in Adelaide with her paternal grandmother, Eliza Argall. Her mother died when Lilian was seven years old, so she lost contact with relatives on that side of the family after her father's remarriage. Lilian's mother was Elizabeth Thomas, a name which still lives on in the Avenue district.

## Chapter 10

### DO YOU MIND THE TIME . . . ?

#### “But we had a Telephone” —

Reminiscences by Elva Paltridge

It was in the September of 1932, in the middle of the depression, and after a very wet winter in the South East. My first trip through the Coorong and an introduction to the famous pipeclay strip where we did skim over it in our old car. Kingston at last, but no passable roads, so on to Robe with a leaking radiator, quickly filled with a tin pannikin from water on the road-side. Right round through Furner, Lucindale, Avenue and into Cairnbank. Now dark, we were taken into the big kitchen where I had never seen so much food nor so many men to eat it. Mrs. A.D. Copping, whose home it was, was to be my great friend and neighbour for many a year. Minniecrow at last, with Phil Paltridge to greet us with the “Boss” (my father-in-law) in the background. We made short work of the two baked ducks keeping warm in the wood stove.

What a different life! Blowflies in millions blew our new blankets, cluttered up the windows, and made carving the men's dinners a two-person job - one to keep them off! Fleas were next, necessitating frequent trips to the bathroom, strip off, shake clothes over the bath into water, and also bed hunts before retiring. Mosquitoes on long mustering days tormented horses, riders, dogs and stock. Anyone walking had to keep a tree branch swishing in all directions.

Swarms of Rosellas, Blue Mountains and Parakeets screeched from the gums before descending onto the orchard. The old Rosella stuck to one apple to finish it, but all the others pecked here and there, knocked the fruit off until under every tree was a carpet of chewed apple. The magpies ate the figs and the galahs stripped the almonds.

Loneliness wasn't helped by the dogs yowling and wailing as the men left in the cart for a day's fencing or cleaning of waterholes.

The first lesson to learn was the value of rainwater. The big underground tank, with a hand pump, was the coolest place for milk, butter and cream to be lowered down in billy cans until wanted. Sweets and puddings were cooled in the bath. My father-in-law was very deaf and while here for shearing went to wash his hands in the basin, latching the door. All my hammering wasn't heard, but for once he saw the dishes in time before he threw the dirty water into the bath!! My husband built me a wash-house of bush timber and iron with room for a bath and shower for the switch to hard water for ablutions during the summer.

I was bathing when the door rattled and gave way to a hard shove. I stood up, wrapped the cotton shower curtain round me and waited. A great roar of "Why didn't you bolt the door or yell out, Elva?" Nothing wrong with his eyesight and I had done both.

Horses were used for all work, the cart, wagon, buggy, trolley, dray, ploughs, harrows and super-spreader. The horse paddock was mustered each morning for the day's work. A white pig attached himself to them and seemed to enjoy trotting along and accompanying them back to their paddock when work finished. My nursing came in handy to help with sick animals as the vet wasn't as handy as he is today.

Shearing was in November when the men lived on the place and worked on Saturday mornings. One team of brothers had been coming for years and loved to go shooting. We cooked everything they brought home and had to be careful that the big black duck was served to the rightful owner. We would listen at the window for any adverse remarks after a silent inspection. They had one failing - they dearly loved their plonk. Our precious milking cow was being chased by one in a nightshirt, fired at, but luckily missed. It was a sorry team that tried to keep going on the board next morning.

One daily task was to fill all kerosene lamps, trim wicks, wash lamp-glasses. How delicate was the mantle for the Aladdin Lamp and very dear to replace in those lean times. One touch and it crumbled. Candles were handy too. When you think of walking sheep to Avenue, trucking by train to Naracoorte for sixpence a head you can imagine that ten shillings was a fortune for a box of home-made butter sold to the store at Lucindale. It was all stirred by hand, too!!

No washing machine but the sheets were soaked in the copper overnight and boiled next day, hauled out with a copper-stick, into rinse water, through the wringer into the blue, back through the wringer and out onto a long line held up with a prop. My best copper-stick was broken when used to kill a tiger snake by lantern light. All white cottons, towels, tea towels were boiled and the rest done by hand. The washing board was good for working shirts and trousers. My husband helped if no-one was around but if he heard Mr. Kelly from Keilira coming he would rush to the vegetable garden to soil his hands. We knew it was Mr. Kelly as he was the only person who came from that direction nine miles away. We visited them once in the buggy and pair. Time to leave and pitch black, which meant straining our eyes to try to follow the bush track. It took hours feeling our way in the dark and once we stopped abruptly, I held the reins while Lou clambered down to find a horse each side of a tree. They backed quietly for him and were led to a clearer space and we went on again. It was the longest journey I ever remember and home was never so good.

We hadn't a wireless, but we read a lot, sometimes a week's newspapers at once. We were never bored, healthily tired, and weekly letters from parents and friends kept us in touch with the outside world.

One day we drove in the cart to try to find Paddy Dempsey who was trapping out in the scrub and hadn't been seen for a while. Finding tracks we called and whistled. Slowly a dilapidated figure appeared from the trees, peering round and wiping an ugly weeping cheek with a piece of hessian bag. It was a result of a kangaroo attack. His first words were, "Can you tell me what day it is?" I

was horrified but was assured that he would recover, he did. Later in life while sitting by a fire he fell in and didn't.

Samuel Sutcliffe Williams came from retirement in Adelaide to work in the shearing shed and to trap. A little man, he had worked hard all his life, some of it at Keilira and some at Minniecrow. His great delight was to bring us small gifts. Once it was unbreakable cups (unheard of) which he demonstrated by hurling them down onto cement. They withstood the test to our relief and his smiles. By this time he was an old age pensioner and was so hurt when the shearers called him a bludger which he never was! One year old Same didn't return from his shoot. The district joined in the search and his body was found on the side of a hilly bush track with his gun and the largest bag ever - three kangaroos and many rabbits. As the plane carrying his body to Adelaide flew overhead the Paltridge brothers raised their hats to a grand old-timer who always wanted to fly in an aeroplane.

It was a good life for children, inventing games and interested in all nature had to offer. Soon they were able to explore on their horses. The dogs killed a hare with young. They did a post mortem, raced home to empty pockets of leverets for me to save. Alas, they were bald with closed eyes and beyond any human aid.

Great excitement when people came to stay or called unexpectedly. Screams and yells from the wash-house where my sister was showering sent me pelting down the path imagining snakes - but no - blowflies and boys! My sister, not taking kindly to cold hard water and persistent flies, looked up from her ablutions to see four heads telling her they had something to show her. I whisked them away mid indignant protests, "She's fussy, isn't she? We only wanted to show her this beetle".

The odd truck to come our way could be heard long before it came into view and all would rush to see who it could be. One day it wasn't one but an earthquake. I rushed from the kitchen to see my husband on a ladder slowly moving away from the wall he was painting - frightening but no damage done.

There were winter roads and summer tracks with one short stretch of metal between here and Avenue. When under water the grass each side told us we were safe in the middle. The men chopped logs to make a corduroy road and even travelling slowly wasn't safe for expectant mothers who had to walk that stretch. The children stayed in the car for the fun of a bumpy ride. It took five hours to drive to Naracoorte. Very rarely did we go anywhere without car trouble or getting bogged. In some cases it was off with your shoes, tuck up your skirts, and walk, with one child on your back, nursing another and Dad leading the way loaded likewise.

There were swaggies passing through - once a cart and horse with an aboriginal family aboard. They camped in the hut and were grateful for food, not causing us any trouble. One day a lone figure on a bike came down the road, slowly, nearer and nearer. I had three small children and no men at home. He was from some religious order and talked at me in a mumble without listening to me or making a move to go. He had ugly crooked eyes so with children clinging to my skirts I closed the door. He rode off at length - it was chilling.

In those days there were many swamps which attracted a variety of bird life. The ducks nested, hatched their young and swam about unmolested. The frogs croaked high and low sounds all night. As the water receded cranes, egrets, ibis and spoonbills came in great flocks to feed. The drains have altered the countryside as it takes a very wet winter for water to appear and it drains away fast.

Clearing and new roads have taken most of our wildflowers, orchids, buttercups, red, pink and white heath and our happy families of birds no longer flutter from the trees with their soft whistles to each other. We cared for an injured bird once and his mates gave him a rare welcome back to the family - dancing round him and accepting him as they flew off together.

The children had correspondence lessons, posted fortnightly, sessions on the wireless (a treasured acquisition) and Mail Bag Sunday School. Their caravan called to see us each year.

The first tractor was a big twin cylinder Hart Parr with iron wheels. "Puffing Billy" we named it and we had entered the noise age.

In 1927 Lou and Romie Paltridge, using bush timber, put up a telephone line to Cairnbank where we were connected to Avenue Post Office on the party line with Mrs. Copping.

1942 was a very wet year when the four boys had whooping cough badly including a baby of six months. We had nightmare journeys to Naracoorte for injections which made them even worse. Hilda Thomas at the Post Office would keep the phone open whenever there was sickness - a veritable lifeline. Perhaps we lacked a lot BUT WE HAD THE TELEPHONE!

## Roads

Until 1937 there was no made road from Avenue to Reedy Creek. In the summer time one could get to Kingston by following Jacky White's drain down to what is now Thring's and travelling north to Mt. Scott and across to Blackford and thence to Kingston. On several occasions my father judged the horses at the Kingston Show which has always been on the long weekend Monday in October, and we usually went via Blackford. However, one year was a very wet winter and spring and I remember Dad milked the cows in the early hours of the morning and we had breakfast in the dark. We got in the old Oakland tourer car about half-light and with Brian and me wrapped up in rugs in the back we drove to Kingston via Avenue, Lucindale, Conmurra, Woodleigh (now Greenways) across to Robe and up to Kingston - a distance of ninety miles.

At that stage the motorist was confronted with sandhills in the summer and up to three or four feet of water in the Reedy Creek in the winter. The original road to Bull Island went along the south side of the railway line and it was not until 1936 or 1937 that the road was pushed through from Avenue to Reedy Creek. Most of the hill near the school was removed for gravel for this road. On the western side of the hill were a number of large dome shaped boulders which had to be drilled and blasted, throwing rocks for several chains, one going through the rainwater tank of the railway cottage rented by Mr. Oz Rivett.

Keith Copping

Roads in the Avenue district were almost non-existent in the early days. The railway line between Naracoorte and Kingston made an ideal hiking trail in the late 1800's for the James girls - Sarah and Liz - to walk to school from their home at Bull Island (the site of which is still marked by a huge mulberry tree). Sarah often mentioned the fact that if it happened to rain and they got to school soaked they immediately had to walk back home. The school they attended was not the one on the hill, now the 'By the Way Gallery', but another one across on the south side of the railway line still marked by a blue bush hedge and a few fruit trees. This later became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dick Turnbull.

Mary Smith

## Lost

Edie Tavender, aged three years, was lost at Avenue Range about 1895. She was missing for two days and was found towards evening on the second day by Mrs. Thomas; the child was well but distressed.

In the early 1900's Grandpa Natt was lost. It was February and very hot and his body was found a week later in very thick wattle scrub not far from his home. The body was swarming with ants.

Mary Smith

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In the early 1960's Peter Barratt who was staying with his aunt and uncle, Judith and David Mugford, disappeared from their home. When he could not be found after an hour or so, they notified the police at Lucindale who then rang the fire siren. About one hundred men turned out to search and the child, who was about three years old, was not found till nearly midnight, asleep in a dense patch of bracken in the scrub with surrounded the Mugford's house. He suffered no ill effects other than a severe case of mosquito bites.

Judith Mugford

## Gluepots

I didn't take long to learn that the Fellwood sheep brand was a stylised gluepot. At the time I couldn't see the connection. However, in the following winter I very quickly discovered what gluepots were, and more importantly, how to avoid them.

Sometime that July, Noel Grieve had ridden into Avenue on George, his horse to take delivery of a bull which had been railed to Avenue. Noel got the bull started without a great deal of trouble but south of Avenue past George Rivett's place the bull tried to escape by jumping the fence into Bull Island country and each time sank belly deep into a gluepot.

Actually the gluepots were instrumental in quietening down the bull as by the time Noel had reached the Fellwood boundary with him the bull was quite content to walk along the centre of the gravel formation at a very sedate pace.

Since those days the gluepots have, due to extensive pasture development, been covered with grasses and clover and are no longer the problem they once were.

Pat Conrick

## Weddings

The first wedding at the Avenue Range Methodist Church - and the only one for 60 years - was held on February 8th, 1922 when Lillian Thomas and Percival Dow were married. Lillian was married from her home, the Railway Cottage, and she drove from there to the Church in a buggy with one horse, driven by her uncle Fred Natt. Her bridesmaid, Hilda Thomas (now Thomson) drove with her. The bride wore a white voile frock with fine lace insertion and a veil of white tulle hand-embroidered by Alma Schapel, who also made the wedding frock. The bridesmaid wore beige voile trimmed with brown piping and a hat in the same colours. The best man was Arthur Williams of Conmurra, the officiating minister was Rev. L.G. Hunt and Alma Schapel was the organist. After the ceremony the bridal group and friends walked from the Church across the railway line to the bride's home where the reception was held under the back verandah. The meal consisted of sandwiches, sausage rolls, scones, small cakes and tarts. The bride was up at 4 a.m. on her wedding morning to finish making puff pastry which was cooling off on the top of a tank as there were no refrigerators.

The bride's flowers were three or four white hollyhocks and the maid carried pink erica which was also used in the church decorations. The wedding cake was made by the bride and her aunt Mabel Natt iced and decorated it with artificial flowers. The young people decorated the gig with the usual boots and tins etc. ready for the take off, when, lo and behold! one of the first cars in Lucindale arrived and bore off the happy couple much to the disgust of the well wishers. The gig was owned by the bridegroom and the car by Mr. Davies from the Lucindale Hotel. The couple did not have a honeymoon but went straight to their home "Tumbe Munda" in the Joyce district.



Percy Dow and Lillian Thomas on their wedding day, February 8th, 1922.

The only other wedding to be held in the Avenue Church was between local girl Patricia Jane Watson and Tony Barnes from New Zealand on September 4th, 1976, the officiating minister being Rev. Brian Young of Lucindale.

Another Avenue wedding in 1910 between Lena Woods and Harry Howell was held in the railway goods shed where the reception and dance were also held. The music was provided by Harry Hocking with a button accordion. The guests' children were put to sleep in the railway station office.

Mary Smith

## Getting the Job

During the war years and my time in the R.A.A.F. I was stationed in many parts of Australia. After the war I applied for Soldier Settlement in South Australia and in 1946 decided to move to the Lucindale District to get experience in farming in these high rainfall areas as against the Pastoral Zone where I had lived since discharge. My experiences during the war years had led me to believe that the Lucindale District offered the greatest opportunities for settlement of all the farming districts I had seen. As a consequence I wrote to a friend, Mr. Knuckey, in an endeavour to find a job on a farm in the District. Mr. Knuckey had run the General Store in Lucindale for a good many years, and he was able to put me in touch with Mr. A. Grieve of Fellwood.

As a consequence I set out from Hawker for Avenue Range in October '46 to start work at Fellwood.

When I arrived at Naracoorte on the Wednesday day train I put my suitcases at the entrance to the "Green Grass Hopper" and found a seat in the middle of this railcar.

A young lass advised me not to leave the suitcase there as it was bound to fall off the rail car before many miles had been travelled.

The young lass turned out to be Beth Rowe, the school teacher at Avenue Range, who boarded at Fellwood. The first job I had next day was to get in the horses and harness "Nosey" (I believe that was his name) into the gig so that Beth could drive the children into school at Avenue.

The journey to Avenue was a new experience in train travel and my suitcase would certainly have been lost overboard had I left it at the end of the Green Grass Hopper, even before we reached the first stop at Stewarts Range.

In the years prior to this day, I had travelled on many trains throughout Australia including the Siver City Comet, the East-West, the Ghan, the Blue Bird and many others, but never before had I been in such a midget that seemed determined at anytime to leap off the rails and plough into a nearby swamp or even just take to the air and fly across endless miles of scrub. After what seemed an eternity, at least an hour and a half, with stops at Stewarts, the Gums, and Lucindale, we eventually arrived safe and sound at Avenue, due entirely, I believe to the skill and dedication of the driver Mr. Shurdington (Shurdy).

The Boss was at the Station to meet me in his Plymouth and after what seemed forever, we reached Fellwood where a hot meal was waiting and I began a new chapter of experience.

Pat Conrick

## Classing the Clip

During the 1947 shearing the Boss had to take a day off to attend a Lucindale Council meeting, of which he was chairman.

Just before he left I was given a lecture on woolclassing and then appointed head classer during the boss' absence.

I reckoned that when the Boss arrived back about knock off time I would face a certain amount of criticism. As a consequence I had a look through the AAA line the Boss had already classed and found two yellow fleeces I didn't like the look of, which I stored temporarily in an unused corner of the shed.

I then continued on with the shed-had work and classing for the two shearers working the shed.

Just before knock off time I saw the Boss return from Lucindale and come walking down to the shed, so I quickly collected the two yellow fleeces and displayed them prominently in the AAA Bin, one at the top and one halfway down and both along side other very white bright fleeces.

Well, the Boss took one look at the AAA Bin, raced over and grabbed the offending yellow fleeces and throwing them into BB said "You **don't** put yellow fleeces into the top line". He checked the bin over pretty carefully too, but couldn't find any other mistakes!! I thought it was a great joke but wasn't game to tell the Boss the full story - not for some years anyway.

Pat Conrick

## Mr. Beaglehole

On one occasion I was sent to muster a Fellwood paddock adjoining Drain K. On the way back I found a chap by the name of Beaglehole bogged to the eyeballs in the middle of the road, about half a mile or so south of the Fellwood homestead. Beaglehole and his wife were sitting in the vehicle like the Micawbers waiting for "something to turn up".

Although the road was pretty well cut up it was well grassed and still pretty firm. I suggested to Mr. Beaglehole that he put his car in reverse and back up the road for about three chain or so, and then make a run along the side of the tracks on the grass to avoid the boggy path. I also told him that if he was still there by the time I got the sheep in the shed I would come back for him on the tractor and pull his car through the boggy patch.

I got back to Beaglehole about two hours later and pulled him through. Just before he drove off towards Avenue I asked him why he had sat there for so long instead of following my suggestion. He said to me in all seriousness - "I couldn't do that as I only have just enough petrol to get to Lucindale!" Well, I knew petrol was rationed in those days but I never knew they could cut it that fine.

Pat Conrick

## Building the Tennis Court

The Saturday following my arrival at Fellwood was Show Day at Lucindale, so I decided to ride into Lucindale on George a 16 hands bay gelding, and compete.

Unfortunately nominations for horse events had closed earlier in the week before I had even arrived in the District. This I discovered after I had George measured by Beau Stott the measuring steward.

However, all was not lost, I met Keith and Max Smith and Ted and Bill Rivett and Noel and Darcy Rivett at the Show Grounds Bar - a little galvanised iron shed with Sandy Concannon Mine Host.

In the course of the conversation Keith happened to mention that what we needed at Avenue was a tennis court so that those not in the cricket team could play tennis instead of having a boring afternoon watching cricket.

I replied "Why don't we build one" and proceeded to calculate the amount of gravel required for a court foundation 4 inches deep, by doing my sums with a stick on a bare patch of ground nearby. Somehow or other I got my sums wrong and calculated ten truck loads which was a lot less than we actually carted. However, this miscalculation made the job seem well within our capabilities so we immediately made arrangements to gather at Avenue next day to start on the Project.

After lunch on Sunday I decided it would be a good idea to ride a bike into Avenue for the Busy Bee. It seemed as though I would never get there and I was, on eventual arrival, almost too exhausted to work. The next time I made sure to ride a horse in.

At that time Noel Rivett had a tip truck which he used carting gravel for the council, Darcy also had a truck and with all the Smiths, all the Rivetts and Lou Thomas, Stan Hocking and myself we proceeded to the 17 mile crossing to load the trucks with pipe clay gravel dug from near the road.

It was a slow and tedious job and after carting the first 10 loads we could see that we still had a long way to go, but keep going we did, and eventually sometime in January '47 we decided that the foundations were sufficiently complete.

More work then on the site to level and roll the foundations, and watering them down with water pumped from a well on Tavender's block (now the Fire Station Site).

Then the big day - the day we had all been waiting for, the day we openend the drums of Colas and spread it with buckets and brooms across the surface and on top spread sand.

By now we were getting more people on Sunday afternoons and the work of fencing was soon completed. The netting was all donated and mostly second hand from local landowners, and the net too was donated.

Opening day was late January, a very hot day, when more sand needed to be spread where the court surface lifted a little. However it was a beginning, a court built more with enthusiasm than with knowledge. A beginning too, of the Avenue Range Sporting Association which was formed on that opening day.

Pat Conrick

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When I returned to Avenue after 18 months in Somerton Crippled Childrens' Home, Miss Beth Rowe who was teacher at that time, made me warmly welcome. She was not at all impressed with the singing ability of the school and anticipated greater talent from me because she knew I'd sung on the radio, in the Somerton choir, on three occasions. She was disappointed to find I was not one bit better than the others. What she had not realized was that the Somerton Choir was chosen from those who could walk, not those who could sing, because 5KA really couldn't take wheelchairs in their lift.

Vida Maney

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Os. Rivett was very good to all the school kids, she frequently fed one of us along with her own if we forgot our dinner or if the ants got into it. There was one day when I was riding the pony to school I fell off into a puddle just before reaching the school. I really expected to get sent home and so a day off, but Mrs. Rivett found me some clothes to wear while she dried mine out beside the fire.

Vida Maney

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Rowe always made quite something of our birthdays when she was teaching. I can remember feeling rather disappointed on my tenth birthday when there was no big "Happy Birthday" in the morning.

At recess time Miss Rowe sent me down to the post office with a note for Mrs. Thomson - a great honour. Usually Mrs. Thomson sent us back to school very promptly but on this occasion she seemed to be in the mood for a chat, then Mr. Lou suggested I wait while he get me some pears to take back to school. Mrs. Thomson then gave me the note to take back. As I walked up the hill to school I remember thinking I might be in trouble because the kids had all gone back into school.

As I opened the door rather apprehensively and probably with an excuse ready - they all called out "Happy Birthday". Then I had a guard-of-honour to the stage and they all sang Happy Birthday.

The pears even provided a ready made party.

There is a little sequel to this story.

On the Friday it was my turn for the real big sweep up and clear up and as I emptied Miss Rowe's waste paper basket into the bin I spilt some and among the rubbish I noticed that familiar little note the one I'd carried to Mrs. Thomson and back. My curiosity got the better of me and I must confess to taking a peep.

Miss Rowe had written to Mrs. Thomson that she was planning a surprise for me and to keep me talking for a while.

Mrs. Thomson's reply was short - "That should not be too difficult" she'd written.

Vida Maney

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On the day the war ended Mum drove us to school in the horse and cart. I'm not sure if she went in to find out the news - we were frequently without a wireless battery - or if she knew and wanted to share in the excitement. I really feel we didn't know till we got there. There were several other parents at the school and Mum said we couldn't have an ordinary school day that day, we just had to celebrate! So a holiday was declared and we all met at the open section at "Walteela" for a "chop picnic" dinner. I remember playing hide and seek among the yaccas. At dark most folk congregated at "Walteela" for a sing song around the piano.

The official holiday was some days later.

Vida Maney

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In the years while Rosemary Smith and June Rivett were in grade six and seven the great game was Prisoners' base. A unique variation of the game that I've never met since. It involved bases and 'blocks of gold' and intensely fought out. I introduced the children at Cannawigra to the game but they did not take to it with the same enthusiasm while the games at Avenue were real test matches and could last all the week. Like test matches too the "toss" was all important for then the captain had first pick to choose her team. Rosemary and June were always leaders being about equally matched for speed and leadership, next to be chosen were usually Edna and Helen Rivett who were great team members being not only fast runners but great dodgers - a most valuable skill, then Mary and Jennepher and then the dregs - the little ones and me. One of the aspects of the game was that if you made it to the enemy base you had the choice of rescuing a captured team mate or taking a block of gold. I often had the humiliation of being passed over for an old stone. I frequently spent whole recess times in prison. The golden years of Prisoners' base came to an end when Rosemary and June left school and the Rivett family moved to Sherlock.

Vida Maney

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When I was a small child my father, Aitchison Grieve, drove his horse and gig the five miles from Crower to Fellwood each day. I went with him most days. On one occasion a thunderstorm came up in the very late evening as we started on our return journey. The night became so dark that even the horse could not find his way. Dad had to walk along feeling the fence and leading the horse for most of the five miles. I was lucky as I was wrapped up in the 'kangaroo rug' and made comfortable on the seat of the gig, but he was walking through pouring rain. During the night we caught up with Wacka and Harry Copping whose horses had taken fright in the storm and bolted. They were sheltering in a clump of broombush and sheoaks.

We reached home about 10.00 p.m. very cold, tired and hungry. On inspection next day it was found that a shaft of the gig had been broken when it had accidentally bumped the fence.

Judith Mugford

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In 1943 the Smith family moved from their property "The Valley" to manage "Walteela" for Mr. Ted Tavender. When they were starting a garden at "Walteela" they were given by Mr. Lou Thomas, a dahlia called Miss Audrey, a lovely orange-flame decorative type. With every move the members of the family have made they have all taken and grown this beautiful flower.

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Over the years, Avenue has become recognised for the masses of freezias which cover the hill, each spring scenting the air. There are also a lot of seedling fruit trees growing round the old school. These are probably a result of children dropping the seeds from their school lunches.

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While attending the school at Avenue, Kathleen White (nee Smith) recalls that there had been a big windstorm during the night and the top of a young pine tree was bent over. As part of an impromptu nature study lesson, their teacher, Miss McLean took the children out to put a splint and bandage on the tree. This tree is still growing in the grounds.

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An underground tank with a ground-level opening was the only water supply at the School for many years. One buxom lass while reaching for a cup of water, slipped and fell in and Lou Thomas, himself a student had great trouble hauling her out as her voluminous bloomer legs held quite a deal of water.

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At one time my father, Aitchison Grieve, leased an area of peat country near Powell's Swamp. On this he grew rape and mustard for summer feed. This necessitated the movement of a large mob of wethers to the Creek after shearing each year and bringing them back before the winter. I often accompanied him on these droving trips. We always carried a packed lunch, quart pots and a waterbag and lit a campfire while we gave the sheep and horses a spell at lunch-time. After we delivered the sheep and checked the windmill we would often ride on to visit Mr. and Mrs. Ted Beggs and their family who lived a short distance away. Mrs. Beggs invariably gave us a cup of tea and fruit scones with sugar on top - I think she called them 'shearers buns'.

Judith Mugford

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*In the 1920's many of the young local lads made a living from trapping rabbits. Edgar and Wally Schrapel were very proud of their catch as shown by this photo. Lou Thomas is using his pushbike to carry his catch.*